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CUGIR III BRONZE HOARD. AND SOME ADDITIONS REGARDING THE BRONZE HOARDS FROM CUGIR

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Abstract: In 2025, a bronze hoard was discovered in Cugir, on a first terrace of the Cugir River. The hoard that we named Cugir III, consists of three artefacts: two Transylvanian-type socketed axes and a sickle with a tang handle. Although numerically reduced, bronzes benefit from decorative elements that allow them to be related to similar finds. The socketed axes are decorated with vertical ribs, with close analogies in central Transylvania. They are linked to neighbouring centres in northwestern Romania and Banat, where such pieces are frequent finds. The hoard can be dated to the Bronze D-Ha A period and comes from a settlement that probably belongs to a late stage of the Noua culture, from its western outskirts. The study also analyses the other hoards previously discovered: Cugir I and Cugir II. Unfortunately, confusion was created in their numbering, in the toponymy of places, and in some cases, the data proved insufficient. This is why we analysed again and ordered them: Cugir I (Valea Dăii), Cugir II (Pârâul Gugului) belonging to the Cugir-Banat group, and Cugir III (Gura Luncilor). We also have new information about the Cugir I hoard, found in the 1950s. Although we only know of five artefacts today, at the time of finding the hoard, it consisted of 12 bracelets chained in the form of a necklace. The hoard is the southernmost of its type in the Uriu-Opályi hoards area. It probably links to post-Wietenberg. A particular problem is raised by a possible hoard (Cugir IV?) consisting of a sickle and a few arrows, reported in several publications dedicated to pupils from 1979–1980, discovered on *Țara Vânturilor (Mucea lui Gheorghe)*.

Keywords: *Bronze Hoard, socketed axes, sickle, Late Bronze Age.*

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2025, Gheorghe (Gelu) Coroabă from Cugir accidentally discovered two bronze objects in the ploughing field from *Gura Luncilor*. The artefacts were handed over to the Cugir city hall, in compliance with the legal provisions. On the same day, together with their discoverer, Gheorghe Coroamă from Cugir¹, we checked and located the area where the artefacts were found, without identifying other materials of archaeological interest. Later, a third piece was recovered from the ploughed field. The three bronzes formed a small accumulation of metal from the category of hoards.

LOCATION

The discovery was made on the first terrace on the right bank of the Cugir River, downstream from the city (**Fig. 2**). Heavily anthropised in prehistory,

¹ We also thank the discoverer for the necessary information.



1



2

Fig. 1. Cugir-Gura Luncilor-ob.2. Images of the site of bronze discoveries forming the Cugir III hoard: view to the north (1) and south (2) (Photo: C. I. Popa, 2025)

the terrace was divided by us into several sectors, using its traditional toponyms, which illustrate distinct archaeologi-

The artefacts that form the small hoard were found on a plot that, at the time of our research, three decades ago, was



Fig. 2. Location of the discovery of the Cugir III bronze hoard (Gura Luncilor-ob. 2)

cal sites: *Făgețel*, *La Bălți*, *Gura Luncilor*, *La Arini*. Since the toponym *Gura Luncilor* covers a larger area, parallel to the Cugir River, we considered it appropriate to delimit two distinct sites – objective 1 and objective 2 – this is also justified by the different habitation stages of the two points of archaeological interest. *Gura Luncilor-ob. 2* is located north of ob. 1 (**Fig. 8**), being bounded on the south by a small ravine and on the north by a small water drainage channel².

covered with young *Robinia pseudoacacia*, commonly known as black locust. Recently, the area was deforested and reintroduced into the agricultural circuit (**Fig. 1**). It was ploughing that brought the bronze objects to the surface, so we are dealing with a chance discovery. The artefacts appeared on an area of approx. 2 sqm, close to the southern boundary of the terrace spur.

² See POPA 2011, 684, nr. 43, Fig. 148.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ARTEFACTS

The hoard, in the form recovered in 2025, consists of three pieces, namely two socketed axes and a sickle.

1. *Transylvanian-type socketed axe*, with slender body, arched outward at the two extremities. The edge of the mouth is flared and veiled, with a more pronounced thickening to the right of the grasping loop and its opposite side. Viewed from above, the mouth has an oval shape, thus evidencing the different thickness of the walls. From below the rim start two vertical facets, arched, sharply narrowed towards the edge. The decoration consists of vertical ribs, rather weakly embossed. One rib each descends along the middle, on the two sides, only to the middle. Two other ribs, less visible, descend on the two lateral facets, being shorter than the central rib. The loop is deformed. The blade is wide and straight, without traces of use. The socketed axe was poured with a bivalve mould. The artefact is covered with a light green patina.

Dimensions: total length = 11.5 cm; maximum width of the cutting edge = 5.1 cm; diameter of the clamping mouth, on the outside = 3.3 cm; depth of the clamping hole = 5 cm; weight = 331 g (Fig. 3).

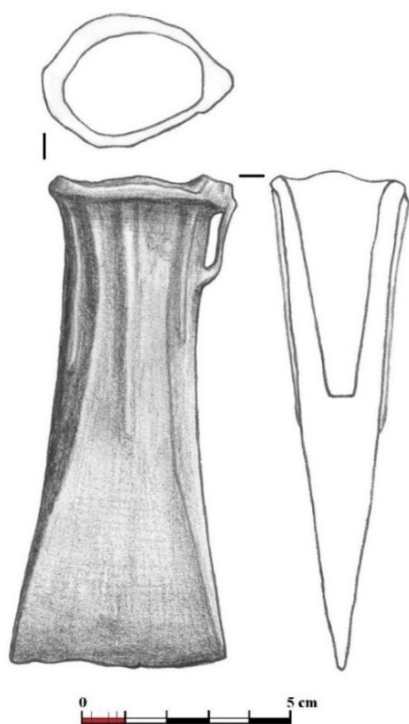


Fig. 3. Socketed axe 1 from the Cugir III hoard (drawing and photo: C. I. Popa)

2. *Transylvanian type socketed axe*, with characteristics similar to the one described above, with a slender body, arched outward at the two extremities. The edge of the mouth is flared, with a more pronounced thickening to the right of the grasping loop and its opposite side. Viewed from above, the mouth has an oval shape. From below the rim start two vertical facets, arched, sharply narrowed towards the edge. Add to these the lateral facets, on both sides. The decoration consists of vertical ribs, rather weakly embossed. One rib each descends along the middle, on the two sides,

only to the middle. Two other ribs, shorter than the central rib, less visible, descend on the two lateral facets; they have different dimensions. The loop is slightly thinned in the central area. The blade is wide and straight, without traces of use. The edge thins sharply across a width of approx. 1 cm, after a slightly noticeable sill. The socketed axe was poured with a bivalve mould. The artefact is partially covered with a light green patina.

Dimensions: total length = 12 cm; maximum width of the cutting edge = 5.3 cm; diameter of the clamping mouth, on the outside = 4.9 x 3.6 cm; depth of the clamping hole = 6 cm; weight = 329.57 g (Fig. 4-5).

3. *Sickle with tang handle*, with a small portion missing from the top. The handle, with a straight base, is decorated with three vertical ribs, two on the edge and one central, joining in two ribs parallel to the edge of the blade. The median rib on the handle ends angularly in its lower part with two rows of ribs, reminiscent of the tail of an arrow. The piece retains the casting stump, unbroken. Dimensions: tang width = 2.25 cm; maximum blade width = 3 cm; weight = 109 g (Fig. 6).





Fig. 4. Socketed axe 2 from Cugir III hoard (photo: C. I. Popa)

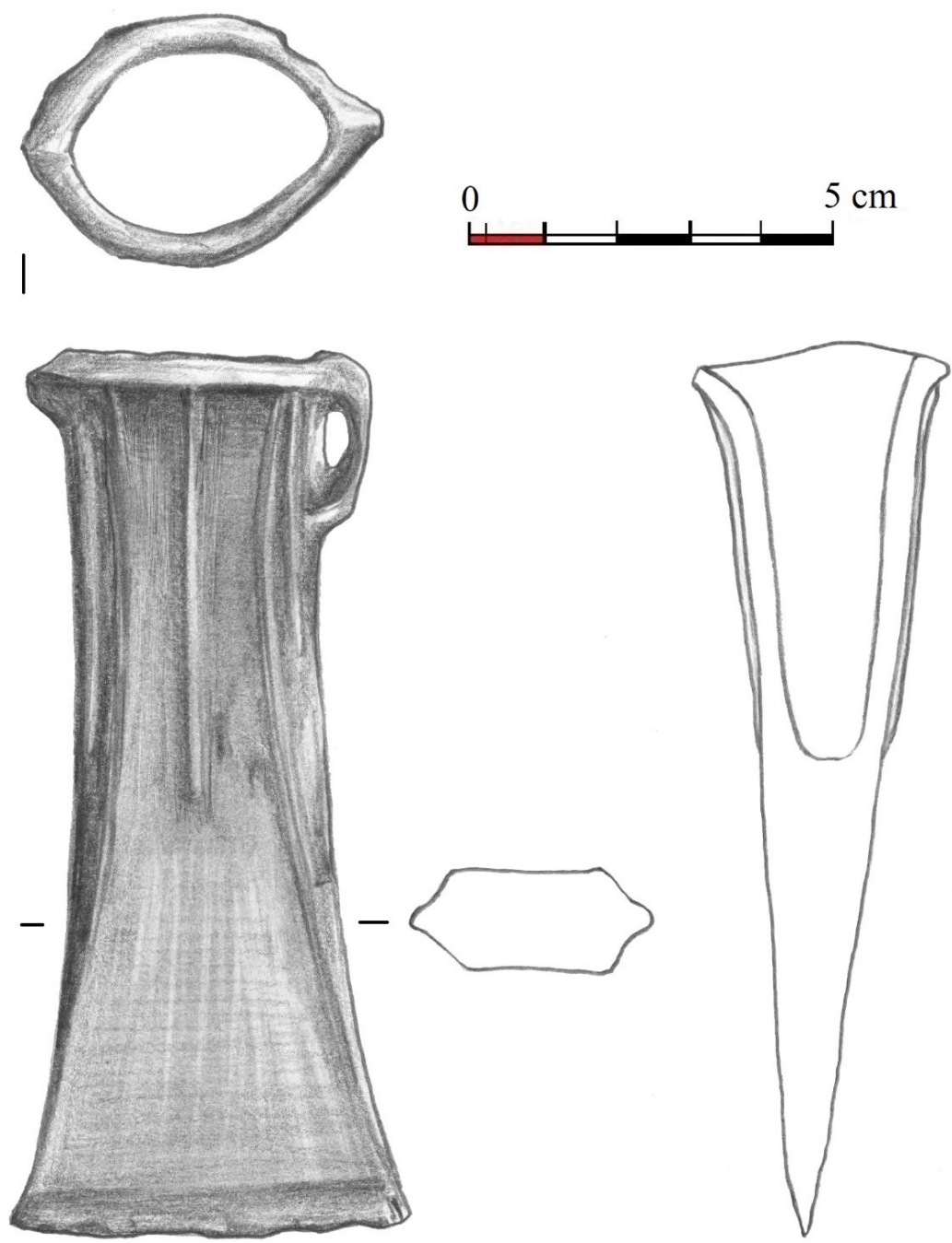


Fig. 5. Socketed axe 2 from Cugir III hoard (drawing: C. I. Popa)

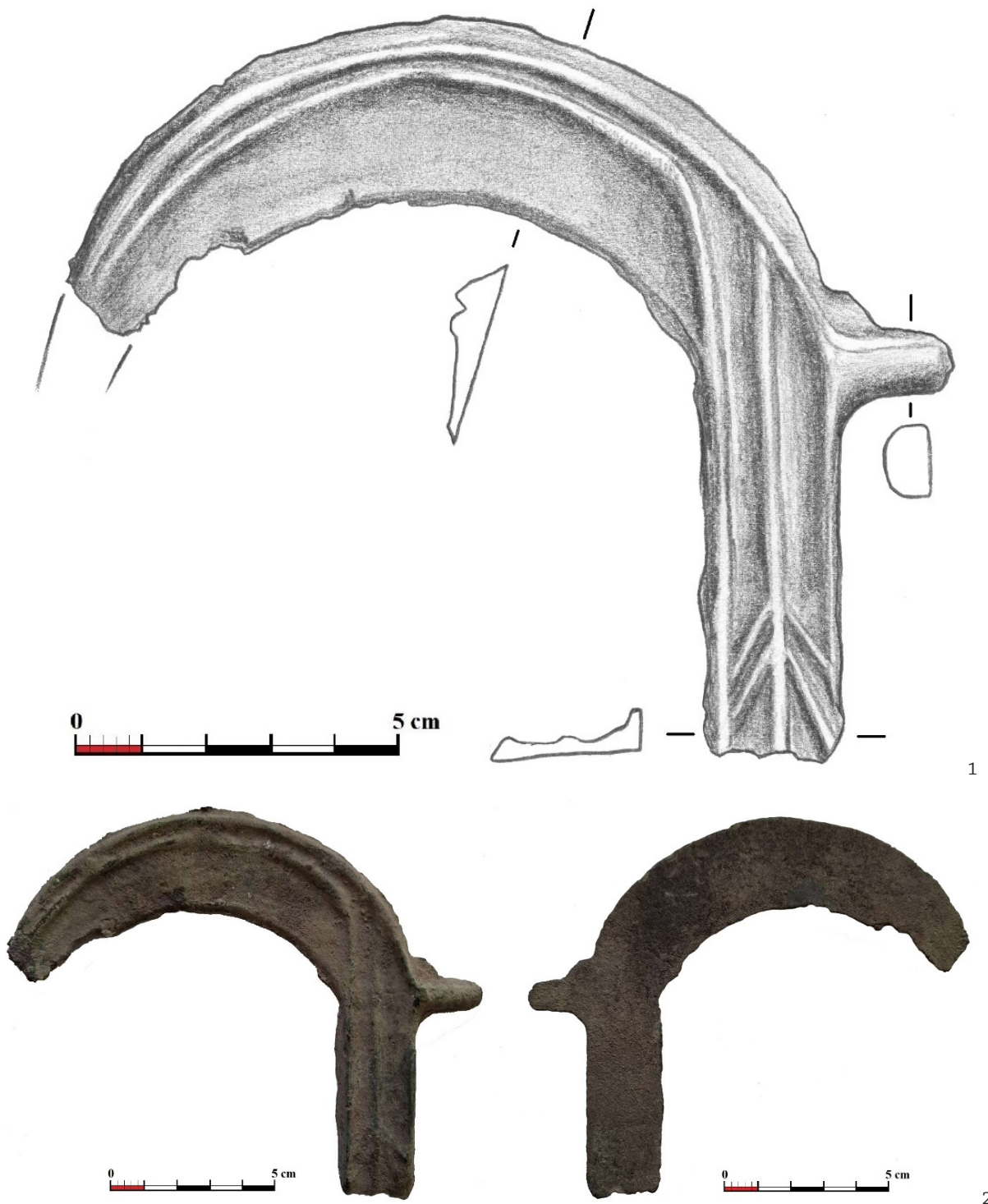


Fig. 6. Sickle from Cugir III hoard (drawing and photo: C. I. Popa)



Fig. 7. Sickles with the handle tang decorated with the “arrow” motif: Cugir (1), Pânade I (2), Kemece (3), Caransebeş (4), Uioara de Sus (5, 8), Apagy (6), Bogdan Vodă (7), Războieni (9), Lopadea Nouă (10) (unpublished – 1; after CIUGUDEAN 2015b – 2; JÓSA/KEMENCZEI 1965 – 3, 6; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977 – 4, 10; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978 – 5, 8–9; KACSÓ 2010 – 7)

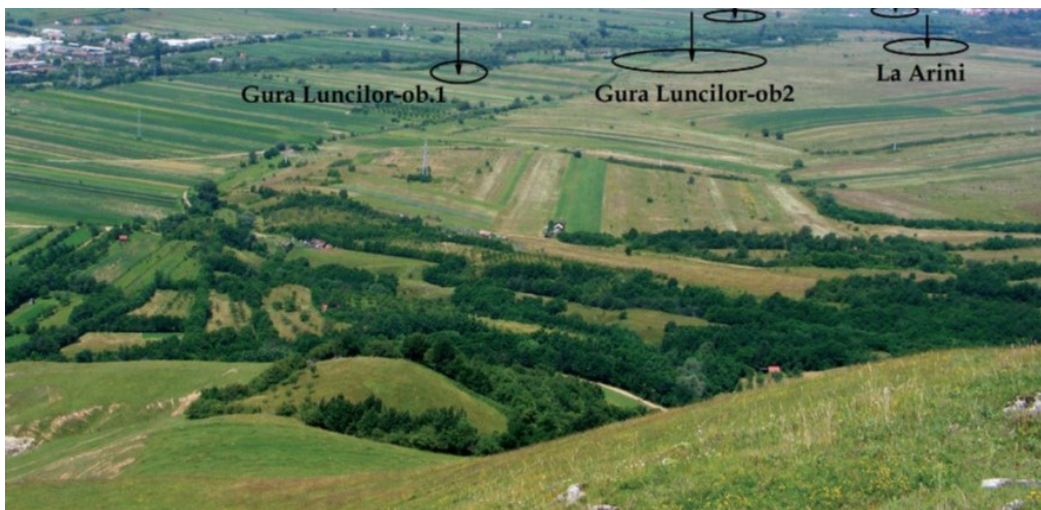


Fig. 8. View of the Cugir sites-Gura Luncilor – ob.1 and ob.2 (image from the Cugir-Piatra Pleşii site) (after POPA 2011)

DISCUSSIONS

Apparently, a common presence among prehistoric bronzes, socketed axes and sickles present, in the case of this new hoard, some peculiarities on which we will insist. These details will help to better understand some connections with local or regional metallurgical production centres.

Socketed axes (Fig. 3–5)

The two socketed axes display similar morphology and decoration, so we will treat them as a whole. If the measurements had not revealed differences in size and weight, we would have said that they were moulded in the same cast, but this is not the case. Morphologically, the pieces can be

classified in the main variant B, defined by Mircea Rusu for the Transylvanian type socketed axes³. The plan shape of the shafting mouth can be classified as type 4 in the recent classification made by O. Dietrich⁴, with a deformity caused at the socketed axe no. 1. When cast, one of the walls is thinner.

The peculiarity of the two artefacts in this hoard is given, however, by the decoration, rather archaic and austere, formed by the vertical ribs that are, in both cases, rather vaguely embossed. By the aforementioned characteristic, they can be circumscribed to well-defined areas in which such products are present at the end of the Bronze Age. Brief references on the socketed axes ornamented with vertical ribs are succinctly treated in the Romanian literature⁵. The topic has been discussed more widely in foreign literature. Valentin Dergačev observed a large agglomeration of discoveries in the Chişinău area, outlining also the groups in Banat, respectively, south of the Danube. He included all socketed axes with loop and decorated with vertical ribs made in trapezoidal facets, in the Jupalnic type⁶. He would later revisit this classification, grouping the celts of this type, without loops, within the Vyrbitzy type, belonging to Period III, that is, the 11th–9th centuries BC (with possible beginnings as early as the end of the 12th century BC)⁷. Oliver Dietrich also studied the classification of medial ribbed socketed axes over a decade later; he includes them in *type C3, variant f⁸*. A distinct group of socketed axes, with a hole, bell-shaped facets and vertical ribs under the rim, with several variations, have been discussed recently by O. Dietrich; it was established they spread along the Lower Danube line and in the Balkans. Exceptions reach as far as Turkey, Moldavia, and Transylvania⁹.

Given the cultural links of the Cugir area in the Bronze Age, we will consider relevant the Western analogies that can be identified, as well as the Transylvanian ones.

The first area where vertical ribbed socketed axes are documented is the one in northwestern Romania. Some socketed axes from the Pocluşa de Bihor hoard (Ha A) are decorated with a vertical rib, along with lateral ribs, but they begin from below other embossed motifs¹⁰. A socketed axe found isolated in Sighetu Marmăţiei bears a decoration consisting of only three vertical ribs¹¹, similar to others in the Crasna Vişeuului¹² and Bogdan Vodă hoard¹³, while at Tăut, a socketed axe has a vertical rib¹⁴, like one from Zăuan¹⁵. Another socketed axe, from the former county of Solnoc-Dăbâca, also dated to the Ha A period, depicts a complex,

unique motif, including vertical ribs¹⁶. Further north there is a very large number of vertical ribbed socketed axes in present-day Poland, where they form the vast majority of those decorated¹⁷.

Another relatively well-defined area, with which the Cugir III socketed axes could be connected, is that of the Serbian and Romanian Banat. We recall here the discoveries of Futog and Topolnica¹⁸, Tirol¹⁹, Iablaniţa²⁰, Pescari²¹, Fizeş²², but especially those in the Banatski Karlovac hoard, where the vertical ribs represent a constant in the decoration of the socketed axes²³. Among the later Banat specimens, we mention the Igriş socketed axe (Ha B)²⁴.

The closest analogues for the vertical rib on the facets of the socketed axes from Cugir are in the intra-Carpathian space, in the hoards from Aiud²⁵, Guşteriţa II²⁶, Petroşani II²⁷, Şpálnaca II²⁸, Zagon I²⁹, Uioara de Sus³⁰, the hammer-axe from the Dipşa hoard³¹ or isolated finds (Dumbrava)³². In the Ampoi valley, we mention the Zlatna III hoard, with four similarly decorated socketed axes³³; another one with similar decoration was recently published from Zlatna³⁴, may not be an isolated find, but actually belongs to the same Zlatna III hoard.

Other types, with motifs including vertical ribs, are known from the Guşteriţa II, Şpálnaca II³⁵, Predeal³⁶ or Streisângeorgiu³⁷ hoards. A socketed axe from the former collection Fr. Mauksch from Sebeş benefits from the same characteristics³⁸. Not long ago, a socketed axe decorated with three vertical ribs was recovered from southeastern Transylvania, from Apaţa³⁹. A similar discovery is also known

¹⁶ KACSÓ 2007, 12–13, 63, Abb. 4/9.

¹⁷ KUŚNIERZ 1998.

¹⁸ BORIĆ 1997, p. 45, 64, Pl. IV / 40.

¹⁹ DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 244/1000.

²⁰ DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 288/1132.

²¹ SĂCĂRIN 1977, 111–112, 114, Fig. 1–2; Pl. II/1–2; DIETRICH 2021a, 490, Taf. 370/1641.

²² BOZU 1982, 143, Pl. II/3–4 = III/3–4.

²³ GOGĂLTAN/FELEA 2022, 15–16, Pl. 12–5; 2/2–3.

²⁴ DIETRICH 2021a, 526, Taf. 415/1876.

²⁵ DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 142/0646; 143; 282/1110; see also PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIŢA 1977, Pl. 101/11.

²⁶ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIŢA 1977, Pl. 148/1–2; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 288/1128–1129.

²⁷ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIŢA 1977, 102, Pl. 178/5; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 288/1130.

²⁸ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIŢA 1977, Pl. 195/5; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 144/0647.

²⁹ DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 144/0649.

³⁰ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIŢA 1977, Pl. 216/12; 217/14–15; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIŢA 1978, Taf. 162/38; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 290/1135. Other socketed axes with two or three vertical ribs, in the same hoard (PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIŢA 1978, Taf. 161/15; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 636/2771; 637/2772).

³¹ GOGĂLTAN 2005, 349, 352, Taf. III/16; CIUGUDEAN/LUCA/GEORGESCU 2006, 22, Pl. XXVII / 4.

³² DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 288/1131.

³³ BERCIU/POPA 1967, 73–74, Fig. 4/4–7; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIŢA 1977, 119, Pl. 278/2–3, 6–7; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 142/0642.

³⁴ DIETRICH 2021a, 527, Taf. 415/1881; DIETRICH 2021b, 67, Abb. 28/091.

³⁵ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIŢA 1977, Pl. 193/14; 195/3–4, 6–7; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 298/1188, 1191–1192; 299/1189; 307/1248.

³⁶ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIŢA 1977, Pl. 292/2.

³⁷ ANDRIŢOIU 1976, 403, Pl. III/1; DIETRICH 2021a, 684, Taf. 637/2768.

³⁸ DIETRICH 2021a, 420–421, Taf. 289/1134; DIETRICH 2021b, 61–62, Abb. 23/062.

³⁹ BEJINARIU/MOŢEI 2021, Fig. 6; 7/1.

³ RUSU 1966, 9–10, Fig. 2.

⁴ DIETRICH 2021a, Abb. 8.4/4.

⁵ KACSÓ 2016, 90, nota 23; POPESCU/HORTOPAN/SÂRBU/CRISTEAN 2021, 210–213; GOGĂLTAN/FELEA 2022, 16–17.

⁶ ДЕРГАЧЕВ 2010, p. 124–125, 135–139.

⁷ ДЕРГАЧЕВ 2011, p. 108, 110, 130, 132, 271, 279, Fig. 59; 76/2–43; 101; Pl. 13; 18/17–25; 19; 22–27.

⁸ DIETRICH 2021a, 489–491, Taf. 288/1128–1129; 368/1635; DIETRICH 2021b, 46, 64–65, Abb. 26/078.

⁹ DIETRICH 2016, 93–100, Abb. 1, 3–5.

¹⁰ See KACSÓ 2016, 89–90, Fig. 2; 6/5–6.

¹¹ KACSÓ 1994, 14, Abb. 3/3.

¹² KACSÓ 1996, 250, Abb. 4/2; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 373/1664.

¹³ MOTZOI-CHICIDEANU/IUGA 1995, 144, Abb. 2/15; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 298/1184.

¹⁴ MOZSOLICS 1973, Taf. 48/6; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIŢA 1977, p. 113, Pl. 213/8; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 014/0048.

¹⁵ DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 369/1646; 404.

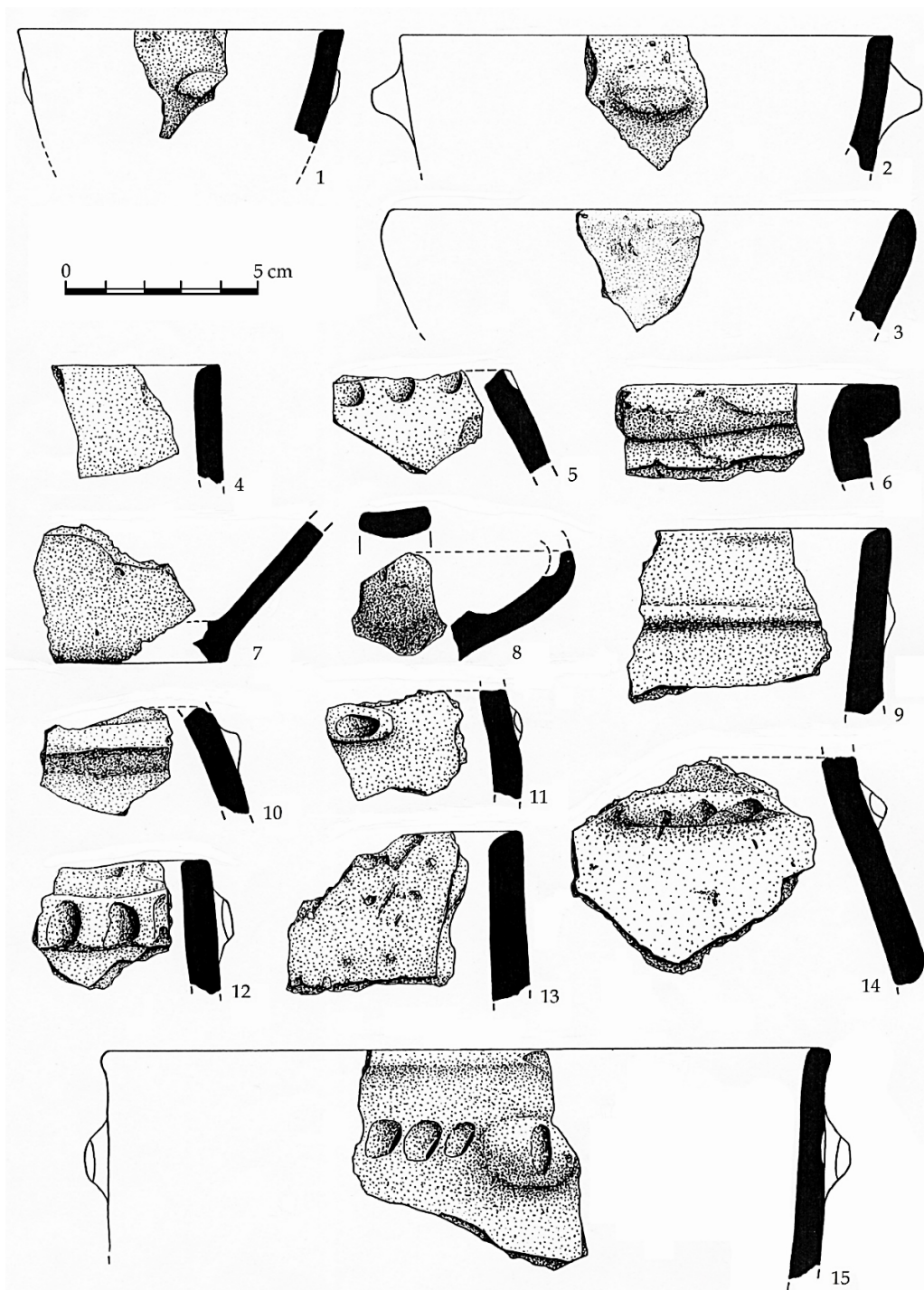


Fig. 9. Late Bronze pottery from the settlement where the Cugir III bronze hoard was found (after POPA 2011)

from northern Oltenia, from Gornăcel⁴⁰, which we can add to the one from southern Oltenia, from Mileni⁴¹.

Last but not least, relevant to our discussion is the presence of such socketed axes in the composition of the hoard discovered also at Cugir, in Pârâul Gugului (Cugir II), which contains at least three or four such artefacts; the presence of other socketed axes⁴² decorated with median ribs is unclear,

⁴⁰ POPESCU/HORTOPAN/SÂRBUCRISTEA-STAN 2021, 207–213, Pl. 2–4, Map 1.

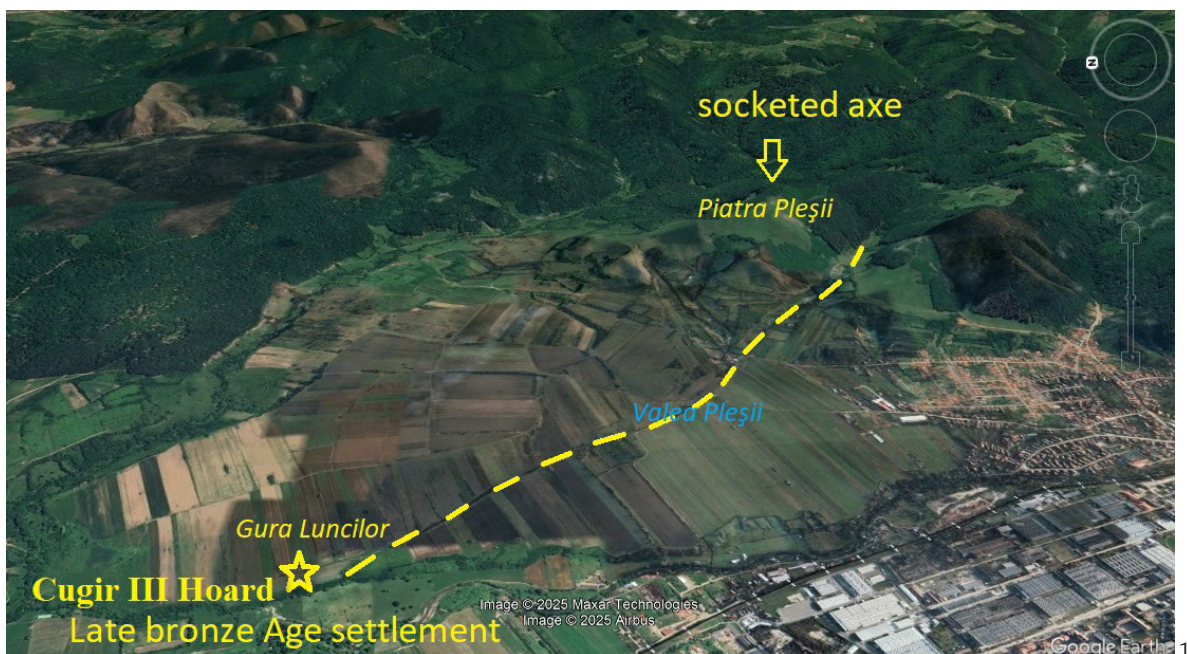
⁴¹ CRĂCIUNESCU 2005, 211, Abb. 3/4 = 5/4; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 368/1638.

⁴² CIUGUDEAN/ALDEA 1997, 104–105, Fig. 5/2–3, 6, 11; CIUGUDEAN/ALDEA 2005, 98–99, Abb. 5/2–3, 6, 11.

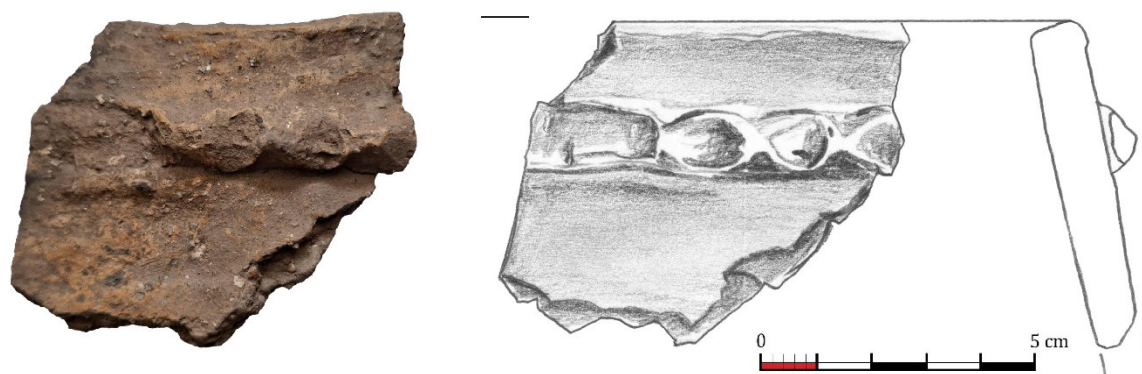
since the drawings published so far are not particularly informative⁴³. With the exception of a socketed axe, in the case of which the median ribs start from below a horizontal rib, in the aforementioned artefacts, the ribs start directly from under the rim, similar to the Cugir III hoard socketed axes. The association of the socketed axes with the sickle, specific to the Ruginoasa-Cara hoards, cannot be taken into account, since the sickle type is different and the area is eccentric to the central-Transylvanian one⁴⁴.

⁴³ We refer to the drawings of the socketed axes published in CIUGUDEAN/ALDEA 1997, Fig. 5/8; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 316/1411.

⁴⁴ REZI/GOGĂLTAN 2019, 204–206.



2



3

Fig. 10. Cugir-Piatra Pleșii. Bronze socketed axe-scrap (1–2) and Late Bronze ceramic fragment (2) (after POPA/TODERESCU 2025)

Since the chronology of Transylvanian artefacts is not very precise, the discussion spans across a wide chronological timeframe, in some cases in the Ha B, we believe that a good part of the west Transylvanian socketed axes, through their context, can be dated, broadly, to the period Bz D-Ha A. Proximity and suspected contemporaneity with the Cugir-*Pârâul Gugului* hoard, whose dating in Ha A is also provided by the Cugir-Band vessels in which the bronze and gold artefacts were deposited (see discussion below), is not certain. The Transylvanian space also knows more recent vertical ribbed socketed axes, but on morphologically different types. The Cetea hoard, containing socketed axes decorated with vertical ribs, belongs to the Moigrad-Tăuteu series (Ha B₁)⁴⁵. Other similar socketed axes have been classified in Ha B₂, and they come from the hoards Gușterița I⁴⁶, Șpălnaca II⁴⁷, Hunedoara II⁴⁸, Sâmbriaș⁴⁹, Lopadea Nouă⁵⁰, „Transilvania I”⁵¹ and from isolated finds, from Blandiana⁵² or Rusciori⁵³.

Sickle (Fig. 6)

The peculiarity note of the Cugir III sickle is given by the ornamentation of the handle with a median rib, concluded at the bottom in the shape of an “arrow tail” (Fig. 6; 7/1). Few sickles have handle decorations of this type. The closest analogues come from the Pânade I hoard (Fig. 7/2), included in the Cincu-Suseni series (respectively to the Cugir-Band cultural group)⁵⁴, from the Kemece hoard (Hungary)⁵⁵ (Fig. 7/3) and from the Uioara de Sus hoard⁵⁶ (Fig. 7/5). A sickle from Banat, Caransebeș hoard⁵⁷, bears one with two angular-arched ribs (Fig. 7/4). A sickle from Maramureș, the Bogdan Vodă hoard, depicts three angular ribs placed in the upper part of the handle⁵⁸ (Fig. 7/7), like a specimen from Apagy (Hungary)⁵⁹ (Fig. 7/6), with four ribs we have in the Războieni hoard⁶⁰ (Fig. 7/9), and with multiple ribs in the Uioara de Sus⁶¹ hoard (Fig. 7/8). Others, simple ones, occur in Șpălnaca II⁶², Cincu⁶³, Vurpăr (Sibiu County)⁶⁴, Uioara de Sus⁶⁵, “Bács-Bodrog County” hoards⁶⁶. In one case, the decoration is present even on a socketed axe, in the Dipșa hoard⁶⁷. Much more common finds are the handles ending

with a simple (unornamented) angular rib; they are spread in a wider central-European area, in which Transylvania represents the eastern area (Bz. D: Jibou⁶⁸; Ha A: Aiud⁶⁹, Cincu⁷⁰, Gușterița II⁷¹, Vânători⁷², Rapoltu Mare⁷³, Sighetu Marmăției I⁷⁴, Suseni⁷⁵, Uioara de Sus⁷⁶). Typologically, the sickle is closest to the Uioara 3 type as defined by Petrescu-Dîmbovița⁷⁷.

PREHISTORIC BRONZE HOARDS IN CUGIR. NECESSARY CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

The problem of bronze hoards discovered over time in Cugir is marked by a series of confusions. That is why some clarification is needed. Some are caused by the inadequacy or veracity of information, others were created artificially, over time, through misunderstandings of local realities. Evidence for this is represented by the fact that serious misunderstandings concerning the numbering of hoards, toponyms or the precise number of hoards discovered persist.

A proof of this is the frequent confusion regarding the numeral next to the accumulations of metal. Valentin Vasiliev, the first to include numerals in the terminology of these hoards, used the name *Cugir II* for the hoard found at Cugir-*Pârâul Gugului*, without specifying which hoard is *Cugir I*⁷⁸, but we suspect he was familiar with it. The confusion was heightened two decades ago when Horia Ciugudean began using the name *Cugir I* with reference to the same deposit⁷⁹. We have already drawn attention to the unnaturalness of the situation⁸⁰ and we’re doing it now, again. In order to avoid the perpetuation of such vagueness in the future, we remain consistent in continuing terminology already used, the argument being the one already invoked (the first numbering, used by V. Vasiliev), but also the chronological one: *Cugir I* for artefacts found on *Valea Dăii* (‘50s) and *Cugir II* for the *Pârâul Gugului* hoard (1973). The last of the certain hoards, the one found in 2025, we have named *Cugir III*, although, as we will see below, it is not completely excluded that another warehouse was found in the late 1970s (Table 1).

⁴⁵ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, Pl. 127; 302/20–21; 303/6.

⁴⁶ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, Pl. 348/1; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 415/1874.

⁴⁷ DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 416/1879.

⁴⁸ DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 416/1875.

⁴⁹ REZI 2010, 49, Pl. 3/6; 5/6.

⁵⁰ CIUGUDEAN 2015b, 27–28, Fig. 2; 7.

⁵¹ CIUGUDEAN/LUCA/GEORGESCU 2010, 32, Pl. XVI/2.

⁵² ALDEA/CIUGUDEAN 1988, 774, Pl. III/2; ALDEA/CIUGUDEAN 1995, 220, Abb. 3/11; POPA 2020, 94, Fig. 8/1; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 414/1872.

⁵³ DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 416/1879.

⁵⁴ CIUGUDEAN 2015b, 34, Fig. 6.

⁵⁵ JÓSA/KEMENCZEI 1965, Pl. XXXI/2.

⁵⁶ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978, Taf. 175/325.

⁵⁷ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, Pl. 125/3; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978, Taf. 87/9.

⁵⁸ KACSÓ 2010, Pl. 7/1.

⁵⁹ JÓSA/KEMENCZEI 1965, Pl. II / 34.

⁶⁰ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978, Taf. 280/670.

⁶¹ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978, Taf. 4/706; 175/340.

⁶² PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, Pl. 198/6; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978, Taf. 3/461.

⁶³ SOROCEANU 1996, Abb. 7/7.

⁶⁴ CIUGUDEAN/LUCA/GEORGESCU 2010, 27, Pl. XIII/1.

⁶⁵ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, Pl. 229/6; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978, Taf. 172/274.

⁶⁶ KEMENCZEI 1996, Fig. 4/8.

⁶⁷ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978, Taf. 93/B3.

⁶⁸ BEJINARIU 2018, 55, Pl. 23/1.

⁶⁹ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, Pl. 105/3, 6.

⁷⁰ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, Pl. 129/8; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978, Taf. 2/379.

⁷¹ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, Pl. 150/13; 151/7; 153/1, 3; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978, Taf. 2/412; 108/216; 109/147.

⁷² KACSÓ 1993, p. 172, Fig. 1/5.

⁷³ BASSA 1968, 36, Fig. 13.

⁷⁴ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, Pl. 186/4, 10; KACSÓ 2009, Abb. 17/3–4, 6.

⁷⁵ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, Pl. 189/4; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978, Taf. 136/15.

⁷⁶ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, Pl. 225/1, 8, 10, 14; 226/8–9; 230/4; 231/3, 5, 9; 232/4; 233/3, 5; 234/10; 236/6, 9, 13, 15; 238/6; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978, Taf. 2/542, 591; 169/217–219; 170/221–222, 225, 227–230; 171/238; 172/267–269; 174/317, 320; 176/344–346; 177/369; 183/494, 496–497.

⁷⁷ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1978, 32–33, Taf. 5A; 292/B.

⁷⁸ VASILIEV/ALDEA/CIUGUDEAN 1991, 128 (chronological table); VASILIEV 1994, 235; VASILIEV 1996, 140; VASILIEV 1997, 505.

⁷⁹ CIUGUDEAN, ALDEA 2005, 95, nota 2; CIUGUDEAN 2010; CIUGUDEAN 2015a, 13.

⁸⁰ POPA, TOTOIANU 2010, 203; POPA 2011, 259.

1. CUGIR-Valea Dăii (Cugir I hoard⁸¹)

We relied, until recently, concerning the hoard and its location on the information provided by Gabriel T. Rustoiu: on Valea Dăii, a left tributary of the Cugir River, in the late 60s, a pupil of the general School No. 1 from the village discovered, under conditions unknown today, several bronze bracelets, five published (**Fig. 22/1, 5**), that belonged to a hoard. The lot would have been purchased later, in 1973, by Gheorghe Nedea of Cugir, a well-known tourist and history enthusiast⁸². Later, we added a sixth bracelet (**Fig. 22/6**), which was mistakenly believed to have come from Dealul Cetății⁸³. We had no other information.

The recent publication of the journal of archaeological excavations on Dealul Cetății from Cugir is likely to shed further light on the data related to the hoard. At the end of the journal of the first campaign, from 1977, the following are recorded: "At the Secondary School Number 1, professor Ana Todoran showed us several ceramic fragments belonging to the Wietenberg and Dacian culture discovered in the fortress by students, she also showed us a necklace made of bronze bracelets brought by a student. Together with her, we went to the resident Marcu Vasile from Valea Dăii, today Str. Nicolae Copernic no. 46, who told us that about 20 years ago, while digging in the courtyard of the house, he discovered this chain made up of approximately 12 bracelets. The bracelets kept at Secondary School Number 1 were handed over to us by our fellow teacher, comrade Anca Todoran. Cugir, September 6, 1977, I. H. Crișan, Fl. Medeț". Just two months after writing his diary entries, I. H. Crișan published a manifesto article in the *Magazin istoric* magazine, announcing the discovery of the Dacian fortress, and the editorial team illustrated on the second cover the items recovered from the locals in Cugir: the bracelets from the hoard, several Macedonian tetradrachms, and a Dacian coin⁸⁴ (**Fig. 11**).

Thus, to sum up, it is clear that the hoard comes from the very southern foothills of Dealul Cetății, in Valea Dăii, being found either in the mid or late 50s, by Vasile Marcu (str. Nicolae Copernic, no. 46) while digging in the yard of the house⁸⁵ (**Fig. 23/1**). The hoard consisted of approximately 12 bronze bracelets that formed, by chaining, a necklace. The artefacts were preserved in the collection of General School No. 1 of Cugir until they were handed over by professor Anca Todoran to the archaeologists' collective in 1977. Therefore, we now know for sure that the deposit does not come from the settlement, but from its foothills. Secondly, we are not too surprised by the number next to the number of bracelets, 12. The unsuitable storage conditions at the time of the hoard's publication (having entered the collection of General School no. 2), unfortunately, created the circumstances for the loss, appropriation, and destruction of some of the bracelets by the pupils⁸⁶. Proof of this is also the recovery of

a bracelet after Rustoiu published the repository. Last but not least, an important information is that of how the bracelets were found, in the form of a necklace⁸⁷. On the other hand, the correction must be made that it is not Gheorghe Nedea who, in 1973, would have recovered the hoard, but the archaeologists who were digging on Dealul Cetății.



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Fig. 11. Bracelets from the Cugir I hoard (in the foreground, in background Macedonia Prima tetradrachms and Dacian type) at their first illustration (cover 2 of the magazine *Magazin istoric*, 11/1977); 2 – photo: C. I. Popa, 2025

⁸¹ Hoard called Cugir II, at CIUGUDEAN 2015a, 13; REZI/GOGĂLTAN 2019, 199 and footnote 8; 201, 221, no. 62.

⁸² RUSTOIU 1998, p. 91–94, Pl. I.

⁸³ POPA 2005, 10, photo 1/2; POPA/TOTOIANU 2010, 201–202, Pl. 71; POPA 2011, 250, Pl. 126/2.

⁸⁴ CRIȘAN 1977, coperta 2.

⁸⁵ We are grateful to the discoverers granddaughter, Mrs. Lucia Bondoc, for the image of the house's courtyard and for some of the information.

⁸⁶ See the case of the bracelet from the hoard, published by us, which was greatly deformed and broken recently (POPA 2011, 250, Pl. 126/2).

⁸⁷ CRIȘAN/MEDELEȚ/ANDRIȚOIU 2020, 38–39.

2. CUGIR-Valea/Pârâul Gugului (Cugir II hoard)

The hoard was discovered by chance on February 15, 1973 in the meadow on the right of *Pârâul Gugului*, very close to the mouth of the Cugir River, on the occasion of digging pits at a great depth. Due to the awareness of the importance of

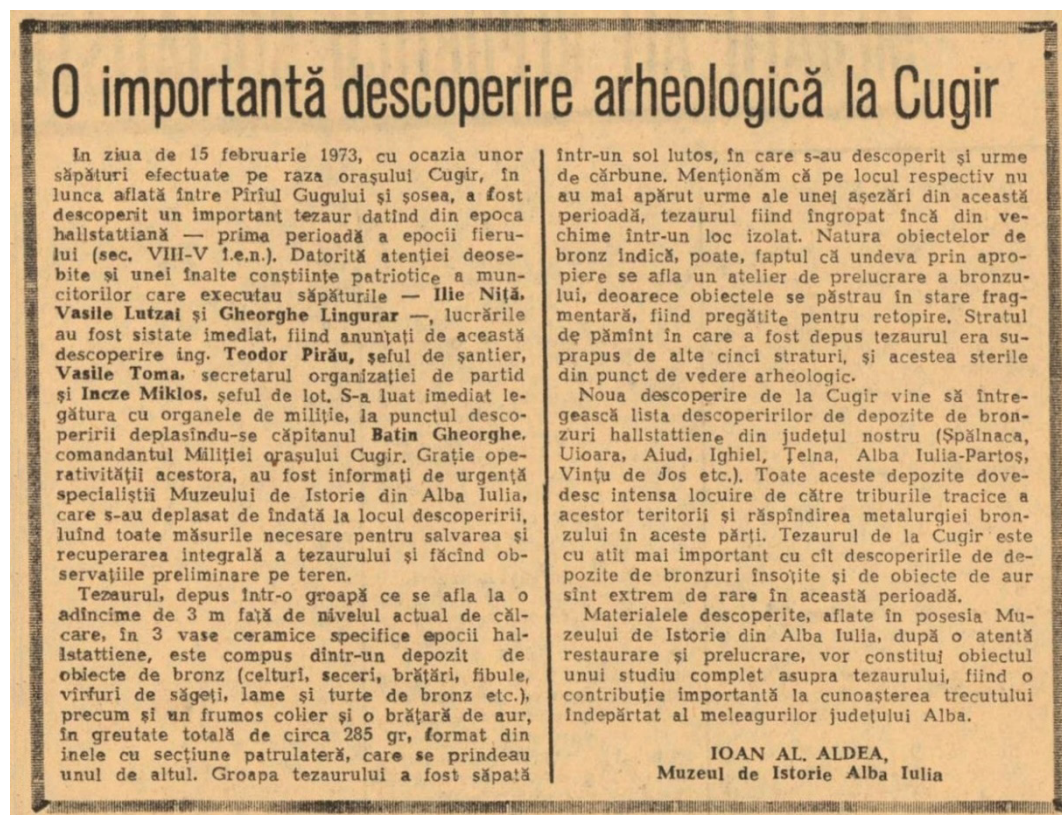


Fig. 12. The first mention of the discovery of the Cugir-Pârâul Gugului hoard, in the newspaper *Unirea* of 17 February 1973

the discovery, the works were interrupted and the authorities were informed; I. Al. Aldea arrived on the behalf of the Alba Iulia Museum. The aforementioned archaeologist also made the only observations at the site, reported two days apart in the newspaper *Unirea*: compared to the tread level, the pit in which the three vessels were located was 3 m deep and was dug in a clayish soil, with traces of charcoal. Above the mentioned layer, the stratigraphy comprised five other levels, with no archaeological interest. To this day, this first information remains the most relevant regarding the context of the hoard⁸⁸ (Fig. 12). The central propaganda press also took over the news⁸⁹. A year later, in 1974, the vessels, already restored, together with the gold pieces, were illustrated in the monograph of the Cugir plant⁹⁰ (Fig. 14).

The bimetallic hoard (Fig. 13), assigned to the Cugir-Band cultural group, respectively to the Cincu-Suseni series, contained 298 pieces of bronze and 24 pieces of gold⁹¹. The

⁸⁸ ALDEA 1973, II.

⁸⁹ "The Cugir hoard", *Scântea* 9445/11 March 1973, 2; "Treasure discovered at Cugir", *România liberă* 8836/22 March 1973, 2. The novelty element is that the discoverers were military men (corporal Ilie Niță and privates Vasile Lutzai and Gheorghe Lingurar) (Major Gh. Chivu, "Trei ostași au descoperit un tezaur", *Apărarea patriei*, 12/21 March 1973, 2; ALDEA 1973, II).

⁹⁰ IMC 1974, 10, Photo 2.

⁹¹ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, 91, Pl. 134/15–25; 135/1–23; BADER 1983, 32, nr. 15; CIUGUDEAN 1994a, 62, 70, Fig. 6/1–4; CIUGUDEAN

importance of the discovery is given by the gold pieces found in the small biconic vessel, included in an archaic weights and measures system, respectively, the Aegean shekel; at least two weights and measures standards are observed⁹².

A problem on which we did not intend to return, but we have to, is the one regarding the toponym/hydronym where

the Cugir II hoard was found, in 1973. Although we have already expressly mentioned that the locals call it *Lunci*, we chose to keep the hydronym and not the toponym⁹³ since further confusion has already been created. From a regrettable error, starting with Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița, the name of the valley where the discovery was made was published as *Pârâul Bugului*⁹⁴, although he in 1978, in the series *Prähistorische Bronzefunde* publishes, it under the toponym *Pârâul Gugului*⁹⁵. Later, Horia Ciugudean took over the mistake⁹⁶, which others, unfortunately, even very recently, have perpetuated⁹⁷. The very insistence with which it was insisted that the toponym *Pârâul Gugului*

is wrong, the right one being *Pârâul Bugului* is incomprehensible for us,⁹⁸ even more so because one of the authors of the study with that errata, Ioan Al. Aldea, was he who first mentioned the discovery under the hydronym *Pârâul Gugului* (!)⁹⁹. The contributions of linguists aside, who recall the hydronym¹⁰⁰ and who do not confuse it with the river

1994b, 26–27, Fig. 6/1–4; CIUGUDEAN, ALDEA 1997, 99–120; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1998, 77, 129, 144, 146, 169, 179, Taf. 63/776; 108/1463; 120/1645–1646; 122/1689; 146/1991; 156/2203; CIUGUDEAN 2004a, 12; CIUGUDEAN, ALDEA 2005, 96–107; POPA 2011, 221, 226, 250–260, 690–691, nr. 64, Table 1, Fig. 147, Pl. 127–132; CIUGUDEAN 2013, 26–26 (photo); CIUGUDEAN 2014, 227–228, Fig. 31.1–4; DIETRICH 2021a, 13, 72, 77, 81, 94, 96, 104, 106, 196, 218, 297, 346, 352, 361, 426, 448, 664, 687–688, 710, 776, 780, 804, Taf. 5/20; 104/449; 177/745; 193/818; 295/1162; 316/1411; 617/2670; 641/2792–2794; 660/2941–2945.

⁹² CIUGUDEAN 2010; CIUGUDEAN 2014, 227.

⁹³ POPA 2011, 226, 251.

⁹⁴ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, p. 91.

⁹⁵ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1998, 77.

⁹⁶ CIUGUDEAN, ALDEA 1997, 99; CIUGUDEAN 2004a, 12–13; CIUGUDEAN 2014, 227; CIUGUDEAN *et alii* 2019, 95. Although in MOGA, CIUGUDEAN 1995, 87, no. 57/8 provided the correct toponym.

⁹⁷ SOROCEANU 2011, 284; DIETRICH 2021a, 196.

⁹⁸ CIUGUDEAN, ALDEA 2005, 95, footnote 1.

⁹⁹ ALDEA 1973, II.

¹⁰⁰ PĂTRUȚ 1984, 32; see also POPA 2011, 625. Most likely, the hydronym was formed due to the presence of the prominent shape of the hill called today *Țara Vânturilor*, a classical "gugă" from the toponymic point of view, at the foot of which passes the *Valea/Pârâul Gugului*.



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Fig. 13. Part of the bimetallic hoard from Cugir-Pârâul Gugului, in the exhibition of the Alba Iulia museum (2) (after CIUGUDEAN 2014 – 1; photo: C. I. Popa – 2)

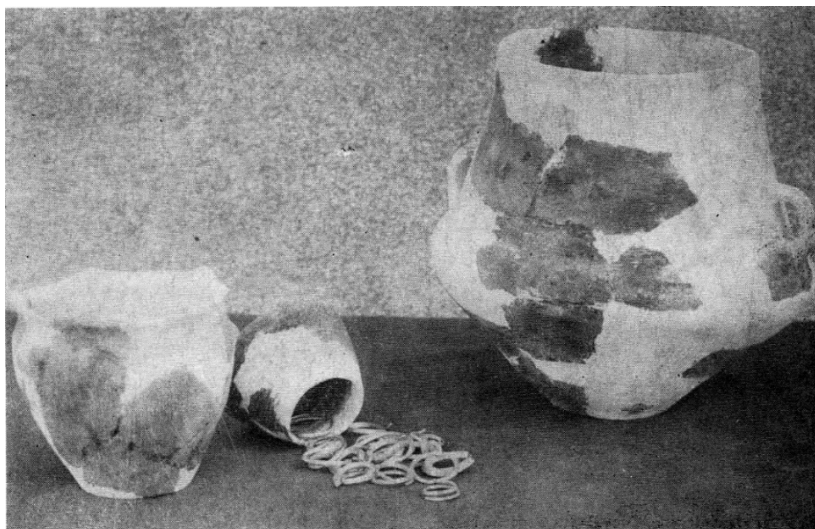


Fig. 14. The first illustration of the bimetalic Cugir-Valea Gugului hoard, in 1974 (after IMC 1974)

where Burebista’s eastern rule would have stopped, we reinforce our demonstration also with the fact that, as a local from Cugir, this is how the locals always knew it¹⁰¹. *Quod erat demonstrandum*.

3. Cugir III hoard (Cugir-Gura Luncilor)

The hoard, found during 2025, on the first terrace to the right of the Cugir River, in the place defined by us as *Gura Luncilor-ob.2*, was scattered in the field. Three bronze pieces,

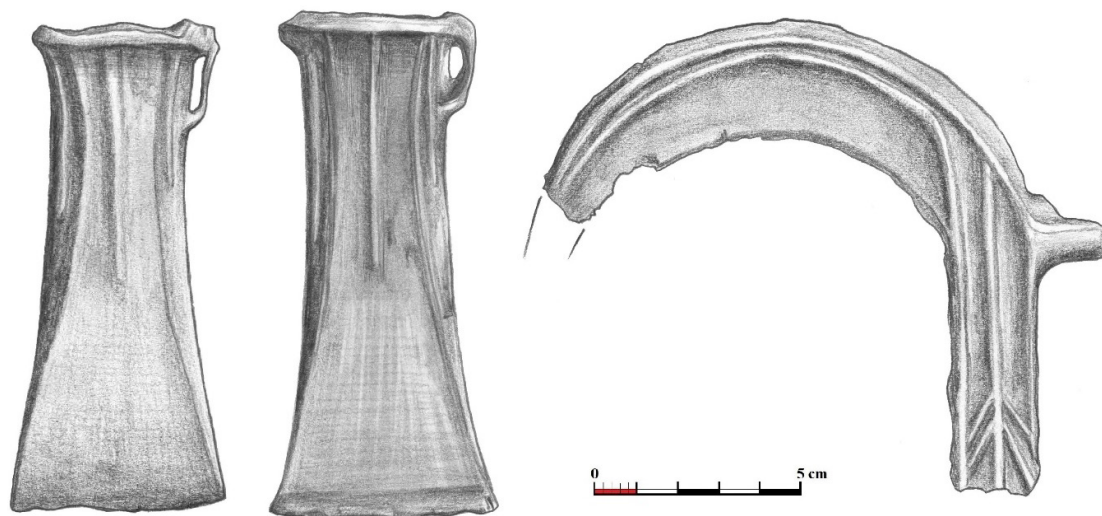


Fig. 15. Cugir III bronze hoard (drawings C. I. Popa)

two Transylvanian-type socket axes and a sickle with a tang handle were recovered (**Fig. 15**). On the site is a Late Bronze settlement, in relation to which we consider the hoard to be

¹⁰¹ For references to *Pârâul Gugului* in Cugir, in the contemporary press at the time of the hoard’s discovery, several articles may be cited which refer to it in the following terms: “At Cugir, on the bank of the Gugului stream” (Valentin Cirstoiu, “Un nou cartier la Cugir”, *Scântea*, no. 9187/23 June 1972, 2), “In the area near the Gugului stream in the town of Cugir” (Valentin Cirstoiu, “Primele blocuri într-un nou cartier al Cugirului”, *Constructorul*, no. 32/12 August 1972, 1), “the treasure from Valea Gugului” (Marian Niculescu, “CUGIR: simbol al vremilor ce le trăim”, *Munca*, no. 20/15 May 1986, 5).

located. The Cugir III can be dated to the period Bronze D-Ha A.

4. Cugir IV hoard at Țara Vânturilor (Mucea lui Gheorghe)?

Acknowledging the novelty and ambiguity of the sources from which the information derives, remaining known only to a small circle of enthusiasts. In 1982, the pupil magazine *Luminița* narrated and illustrated the story of three children (Mirela Bolunduț, Gabriel Crăciun and Gheorghe Teodor) who, on *Mucea lui Gheorghe* from Cugir, would have found several prehistoric bronzes in the cleavage of a fault detached after the passage of winter (**Fig. 17/1**). One of them, Gheorghe Teodor, would have noticed the objects, which he took to his history teacher; he was a pupil at the Cugir elementary school no. 3. He, in turn, would have shown them to the archaeologist Ion Horațiu Crișan (**Fig. 17/2**), located in Cugir on

the construction site *Dealul Cetății*; the pupils received for their discovery the distinction “Meritul pioneresc”. From those described, a sickle and some arrowheads were found, next to which would have been the handle from a pot of burnt clay¹⁰². Furthermore, from a 1980 issue of the pioneers magazine *Cutezătorii*, we learn that the three students of General schools no. 2 and no. 3 of Cugir were distinguished and received congratulations from I. H. Crișan for discover-

ing a Bronze Age settlement on *Muchia lui Gheorghe*¹⁰³. The discovery, however, appears indirectly reported in December 1979, when there is talk of finding a Bronze Age settlement on *Mucea lui Gheorghe*¹⁰⁴, suspecting that it could also be the year the bronzes were identified. Another chronological landmark is also that of the “archaeological site recently opened near the city”¹⁰⁵.

As the story involved Gheorghe Nedeia once again, I asked him for additional information. In the aforementioned magazines, he appears as the coordinator of history and tourism activities with the students who allegedly found the artifacts. From his testimony this year (2025), I learned that *Mucea lui Gheorghe* is the old toponym of the place known

¹⁰² STRĂUȚ 1982, p. 5. Bronze arrows were discovered in the Bronze Age site *Dealul Cetății*, a specimen was found in a closed complex belonging to the Late Bronze (CRIȘAN/MEDELEȚ/ANDRIȚOIU 2020, 51).

¹⁰³ *Cutezătorii* 64 (June 19), 1980, 4.

¹⁰⁴ DIACONU 1979, 7.

¹⁰⁵ STRĂUȚ 1982, p. 5.



Fig. 16. View of the Țara Vânturilor (*Mucea lui Gheorghe*) in Cugir – the place of origin of the possible Cugir IV hoard?

today as Țara Vânturilor (*Land of Winds*). The location is still on the *Pârâul Gugului*, on the left side of the valley. Below the hilltop, on the eastern and northern sides, anthropogenic terraces were built in prehistoric times, partially destroyed by the construction of a shooting range (**Fig. 16**). The discovery is believed to be authentic, as the objects were found by him and his students near a spring located below the summit, on the northern side, in a break in the slope. The pieces were presented to I. H. Crișan, who visited the site, but as they were prehistoric, they were not considered of interest for systematic research. The bronze objects were handed over to the aforementioned archaeologist and kept alongside many other chance discoveries from the Cugir area, together with those from the systematic excavations on *Dealul Cetății*. It was recently stated that the latter were thrown into the Cugir River in a completely inexplicable manner and were irretrievably lost¹⁰⁶.

The morphology of the hill, with dacitic tuff rocks appearing on the surface, created an environment conducive to habitation on the eastern and northern slopes. In fact, in addition to the Coțofeni settlement we reported, with anthropic terraces¹⁰⁷, S. Schiau mentioned Wietenberg-type materials here¹⁰⁸. We recently learned that during the leveling work for the construction of a shooting range in the 1980s, many ceramic vessels were discovered here, of which about 7–8 were intact.



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Fig. 17. Drawings published in the magazine *Luminița*, with the discovery of a bronze hoard at Cugir-Țara Vânturilor (*Mucea lui Gheorghe*) and presentation of the artefacts to the archaeologist Ion Horațiu Crișan (after STRĂUȚ 1982)

¹⁰⁶ RUSTOIU 2020, 9.

¹⁰⁷ POPA 2011, 100, 105, 129, 147, 149, 690, Fig. 24, Pl. 33; 63–66; 68/16.

¹⁰⁸ SCHIAU 1993, 23. Habitation that we have questioned, in the absence of discoveries in our research (POPA 2011, 169).

Table 1. Bronze hoards from Cugir

Warehouse	Cugir I (Valea Dăii)	Cugir II (Pârâul Gugului /Lunci)	Cugir III (Gura Luncilor)	Cugir IV? (Țara Vânturilor/Muchea lui Gheorghe)
Discovery year	1950s	1973	2025	1979?
Composition	Bracelets, in the form of a necklace	bimetallic hoard, discarded bronzes and gold bracelets	tools	sickle and arrowheads
Number of artefacts	12, chained	298 bronze pieces 24 gold pieces	3	a sickle and a few arrows
Classification	Bz D (Uriu-Opályi)	Ha A (Cincu-Suseni, Cugir-Band cultural group)	Bz D	Bronz? Hallstatt?

Table 2. Isolated bronzes from Cugir

Place and year of discovery	Cugir- unknown place	Cugir- unknown place	Cugir-Piatra Pleșii	Cugir-Vârful Brădetului	Bu- curu- Vârful Brădetului	Bucuru- Creasta Văiții	Goasele- Sasu	Vinerea- Centru
Discovery year	the first part of the 20th century	end of the 20th century	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	1996
Discovered artefact	Bronze sock- eted axe	Bronze sock- eted axe	Bronze socketed axe fragment	Bronze knife	Bronze sock- eted axe	Bronze knife	Sickle fragment	Andesite mould for socketed axes
Classification	Ha A	Ha B	Bz D-Ha A	Ha A	Ha A	Ha A – Ha B	Ha A	Ha A

Unfortunately, we cannot recover any more information¹⁰⁹. However, we must return to a report by Mircea Avram from Cugir, published by us in 2011, in which we recounted the discovery in the same place of a large (prehistoric?) vessel filled with charred grains, but which also contained pieces of copper or bronze. There was a large quantity of them (according to the discoverer: “as much as would fit in a bucket”). The only pieces described with any clarity are several spiral bracelets with leaf-shaped ends¹¹⁰. Iron pieces are also mentioned in the same context, but we do not know whether or not they are related to the discovery. What is certain is that we now have more information that all points to the discovery 3–4 decades ago of bronze (and copper?) objects, apparently accumulated in the form of deposits, on Țara Vânturilor (*Muchea lui Gheorghe*). Their dating to the Bronze Age seems likely. Some aspects remain unclear. In the excavation journals, Ion H. Crișan does not mention this hoard. To this must be added the efforts to obtain further information – efforts which proved fruitless – even from one of those praised for the discovery, who, to our surprise, declared it was the first time he had ever heard of such a thing¹¹¹. Therefore, we must accept that the information in magazines intended for students was subject to communist propaganda at the time. It is possible that in the future the questions raised by us will be answered.

From the presentation of the three hoards found in Cugir (to which we add with question marks another, possibly) some observations are required and some contextualizations are required. First of all, we note that the phenomenon of metal deposition in the Bronze Age, at least until now, was

put into practice only in the lowlands. In the classification of T. Soroceanu¹¹², all three hoards at Cugir are connected by the proximity of some flowing waters. The most obvious situation is that of the Cugir II hoard, deposited in the floodplain of two waters (*Pârâul Gugului*, the river *Cugir*), Cugir III is on the terrace adjacent to the Cugir River, and Cugir I was found at the base of a slope, about 20 m from *Valea Dăii*. *Pârâul Gugului* hoard was dug in the clayish soil of the floodplain, in the vicinity of the spill in the Cugir River, on the lowest landform in the area. The traces of coal detected by I. Al. Aldea in the soil where the pit was dug, where the three vessels with gold and bronze artefacts were deposited, suggests anthropogenic activities, but at the same time, possible ritualistic ones. As we will not know more, most likely we are faced with a storage of a metalworker, involved in trade, with trade experience if we look at the presence of gold pieces through the prism of their value as pre-monetary goods in an ancient weights and measurements system. The hoard discovered¹¹³ in *Pârâul Gugului*, through the ceramic vessels in which the gold and bronze objects were deposited, allows the find to be attributed to the Cugir-Band cultural group (Ha A). Here, however, we must take into account only the bronze items, since the small biconical vessel with the gold bracelets (**Fig. 18**) may be associated with the Banat Hinova–Mala Vrbica group; its similarity to the vessel – also containing gold bracelets – from Hinova¹¹⁴ is evident. T. Soroceanu, focusing on the mode of deposition of the items in the three vessels, notes the special situation and considers that two distinct divisions were applied: an initial

¹⁰⁹ Information kindly provided by Prof. Gheorghe Nedea from Cugir.

¹¹⁰ POPA 2011, 655, 690. The description could theoretically bring them closer to the Regelsbrunn type (?), specific to the Late Bronze Age.

¹¹¹ Information, courtesy of prof. Alin Toderescu from Cugir.

¹¹² SOROCEANU 2012, 240–241.

¹¹³ CIUGUDEAN 1994a, 62, 70, Fig. 6/1–4; CIUGUDEAN 1994b, 26–27, Fig. 6/1–4; CIUGUDEAN 2013, 25.

¹¹⁴ DAVIDESCU 1981, 7–17, 19–20, Fig. 1–12; GUMĂ 1995, 108–110, Pl. X / 9–35.

separation of the gold items from the bronze ones, followed by a division of the bronze items through their deposition in two ceramic vessels¹¹⁵.



Fig. 18. Hinova-Mala Vrbica type clay pot with gold bracelets from the Cugir II hoard

The Cugir III hoard, located a short distance downstream from Cugir II (approx. 700 m), was found on the first terrace of the Cugir River, within a settlement from the Late Bronze. We appreciate that the hoard and the habitation are contemporary and, therefore, we will try the cultural classification, in addition to the chronological one. A first possible clue is provided by the similarities between the vertical ribbed socketed axes found in the *Gura Luncilor* hoard (ob. 2) and those in the warehouse mentioned above. However, several important nuances must be taken into account. At the time of the publication of ceramics from *Gura Luncilor*-ob.2, we emphasised the specific characteristics of the Noua culture on its western outskirts (**Fig. 9**). In making the attribution, we have taken into account both the existence of a settlement with similar material opposite the site at *Gura Luncilor*, at the spot known as *Sub Peret*, and the nearby presence, downstream, of a grave typical of the Noua culture, at *Vinerea-Zăvoi*¹¹⁶. These are realities that we are obliged to take into account. At the same time, one can notice the lack in the pottery of the settlement from *Gura Luncilor*-ob.2 of the typical elements that define the Cugir-Band type ceramics¹¹⁷. Although strictly speaking, in the pottery we have illustrated from this site, one can also discern elements

that may extend into the Ha A period, we consider that the absence of the decoration, forms, and fabric characteristic of the Cugir-Band group pottery does not support a similar cultural attribution for the Cugir III hoard. Rather, it would seem more appropriate to place it within the phase of the Late Noua culture, as part of the Uriu-Domănești (?) series.

If both mentioned hoards are at an elevation below 300 m altitude, or at a slightly higher altitude, but not by much, we must place the Cugir I hoard. It was found on the course of *Vălea Dăii*, close to the waterline, at the southern foot of *Dealul Cetății*. A special case is the possible Cugir IV hoard, which was found in *Țara Vânturilor (Muceha lui Gheorghe)* near a spring, at an altitude of approx. 370 m. The proximity to a water source falls into a typology with Transylvanian examples such as those from Brâglez, for example¹¹⁸. We recall that we recently published another discovery from the area of a spring, namely a fragment of a bronze sickle found at Goasele, in the *Sasu* mountain¹¹⁹.

The Cugir I hoard illustrates the hoards of artefacts from a single category, in this case, adornments, respectively, of bracelets. Therefore, we can consider it a “clean” hoard, with only four known examples in Transylvania, Cugir being isolated as the southernmost discovery and the only one in the southwest of this province¹²⁰, and that is why the discovery has special significance in the context of the phenomenon. Note also that in the Cugir I hoard, each bracelet has a different decoration, and an artefact does not present any decoration. In terms of the number of pieces deposited, ca. 12 in the case of the Cugir I, it is high, especially since, as we pointed out, we are outside the specific area of such deposits. A number of 12 adornments can be found in the bracelet hoard, votively deposited on the slope of a hill at Vadu Izei, in Maramureș, attributed to the Uriu-Dragomirești series¹²¹. Some common elements among the Cugir-*Vălea Dăii* and Vadu Izei hoards are perhaps not accidental (type of deposition on the slope, deposition composed exclusively of bracelets, number of 12), it can express a possible type of social practice of deposition. Another hoard in Ukraine, Kljačanovo V, consists of 12 decorated bracelets and an undecorated one and 12 foot links¹²², reminiscent of the pieces from Cugir, in which a bracelet is not ornamented. The most recent analysis of the hoards with bracelet depositions from the Carpathian area (omitting the hoard from Cugir), due to C. Kacsó¹²³, places this practice in the upper Tisza area, attributing it to the Uriu-Opályi series, Bronze D¹²⁴. Kacsó relied on their

1994; CIUGUDEAN 1994b; POPA, TOTOIANU 2010, 212–217; CIUGUDEAN *et alii* 2019.

¹¹⁸ VEZI BEJINARIU 2007, 37; BEJINARIU 2018, 55 and, in particular, SOROCEANU 2012, 239.

¹¹⁹ POPA/TODERESCU 2025, 155, 158, Fig. 4, 19–20, 24.

¹²⁰ REZI/GOGĂLTAN 2019, 199 and note 8; 201.

¹²¹ NISTOR/VULPE 1970, 623–630, Fig. 1–4.

¹²² KOBAL' 2000, 82, Taf. 25/1–12; 26A.

¹²³ KACSÓ 2007, *passim*.

¹²⁴ A number of hoards containing at least ten bracelets can be cited as examples: Căpleni (PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, 54, Pl. 29/11–14), Bogata de Jos (KACSÓ 2007, 83), Lelei (PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1998, 69, Taf. 55/636; KACSÓ 2007, 96 – hoard with 25 bracelets), “Maramureș III” (KOBAL' 2005, 248–249, Abb. 3/1–10 – 10 decorated bracelets), Meseșeni de Sus (KACSÓ 2007, 97), Bodrogkeresztúr (MOZSOLICS 1973, 123, Abb. 7B), Nyiregyháza (KACSÓ 2007, 99), possibly also the “former Szolnok-Doboka County” (KACSÓ 2007, 30–32, 96, Fig. 5–6; 7/1–6, 8–9 – the former Cireșoia III hoard) etc.

¹¹⁵ SOROCEANU 2011, 274, 277, 284, Abb. 1/6.

¹¹⁶ POPA 2011, 226, 263, 684, nr. 43, Pl. 115.

¹¹⁷ For defining the specific pottery traits of this group, see CIUGUDEAN

section in the classification of bracelets, classifying those with the round section in the same series of Uriu-Opályi hoards¹²⁵, a classification preferable to that proposed by Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița in his synthesis¹²⁶.

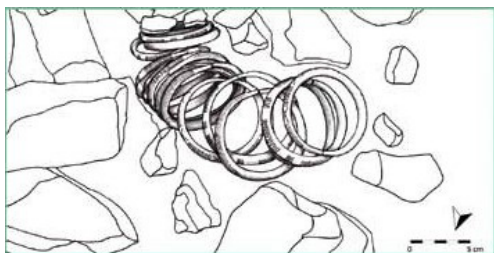


Fig. 19. Bükkzsérc-Hódos bracelet hoard, *in situ* (after SZABÓ 2017)

Unfortunately, we are deprived of knowing the social practice behind the gesture of placing bracelets in the ground. Finding them chained, in the form of a necklace, may be an indication of how they were intended to be deposited as an offering to a particular deity. Equally, the necklace could simply reflect how they were transported by the merchant and how they remained with the new owner, as they looked in the prehistoric fair where he procured them from. As few hoards of bracelets have been documented *in situ*, we refer, for example, to a relatively recent discovery in Hungary, from hoard 1 at Bükkzsérc-Hódos, in order to observe how the deposition of the 14 bracelets (Ha A) was carried out there. Their original position indicates that they were probably tied together with a cord, forming a “cylinder,” and were protected by a slab¹²⁷ (Fig. 19). In both cases, either their chaining as a necklace or tying them on a string was aimed at the unity of the pieces that were to form an indestructible whole.

Table 3. Weighing the bronze bracelets (Cugir I hoard)

Cugir I	Bracelet 1	Bracelet 2	Bracelet 3	Bracelet 4	Bracelet 5	Bracelet 6
Weight (g)	14,98	24,70	31,48	38,49	40,89	44,49
Equivalence with Fig. 24	24/1	24/2	24/3	24/4	24/5	24/6

Chains of bracelets similar to those from Cugir are known. In the Hășmaș (Sălaj county) deposit the 26 links (bracelets and foot links) were chained at the time of their finding¹²⁸, as well as six of the bracelets found in the Nyiracsád hoard¹²⁹. Gold links and bracelets were much more frequently and in greater numbers deposited, connected one to the other, as we know them from Sărăsău or Gemzse¹³⁰. Weighing the bracelets revealed significant differences in weight (the closest values being between bracelets 4 and 5), which rules out any discussion of their pre-monetary value¹³¹ (Table 3). Equally, one of the bracelets presents a decoration similar to that of a

Domănești type bracelet, of the seven belonging to different types, located in the *Pârâul Gugului* (Cugir II) hoard¹³².

The proximity to the extensive and intensive Bronze Age habitation – essentially of Wietenberg type, mixed with foreign Eastern and Western elements¹³³, as well as others belonging to the Late Bronze Age (probably including Ha A/Ha B)¹³⁴ – makes it plausible to associate the deposition of the bronze bracelets from the hoard with the Late Bronze Age habitation phase on the hillfort, which broadly corresponds to stage Bronze D. In fact, several bronze pieces are mentioned here from systematic excavations on *Dealul Cetății*. A field survey conducted this year (2025) allowed, however, a large calibration of the relationship of the Cugir I hoard with a much closer habitation. Above Valea Dăii, in the area of the aquifers of the city, on the low, eastern ridge of *Dealul Cetății*, which descends parallel to the valley, at a distance of just over 150 m from where the bracelets were deposited, an unknown Wietenberg habitation has been identified¹³⁵ (Fig. 20; 23/2). The pottery found on the surface, which comes from large and small vessels, indicates a stable settlement, from which adobe traces were also discovered, datable in phase Wietenberg III, possibly also IV (Fig. 24).

The provenance of some of the socketed axes accidentally found in Cugir (Table 2) over time remains uncertain¹³⁶. In none of the cases do we have any indication that it belonged to a hoard. One of them has the best analogies resulting from the association of form and other ornaments in Ha B₁¹³⁷ (Fig. 26). In contrast, the Cugir socketed axe with zigzag decoration, which can be dated in Ha A, was reported in M. Roska¹³⁸ and originally illustrated by I. Andrițoiu (Fig. 25/2), without a correct drawing, a row of zigzags was not drawn¹³⁹. Recently, it was also illustrated in this incorrect form by O. Dietrich¹⁴⁰ (Fig. 25/3), although we published the socketed axe and commented on the mentioned shortcoming¹⁴¹ (Fig. 25/4). The hypothesis of finding the artefact on *Dealul Cetății*¹⁴² as an almost unique solution in the context

¹²⁵ KACSÓ 2007, 76, 82.

¹²⁶ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1998. See criticism of typologies at KACSÓ 2007, 78.

¹²⁷ SZABÓ/BÍRÓ 2009, 76, Fig. 10–11; SZABÓ 2017, 121, Fig. 13.

¹²⁸ MOZSOLICS 1973, 117–118; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1977, 60, Pl. 49/6–8; KACSÓ 2007, 86.

¹²⁹ MOZSOLICS 1973, 160, Taf. 57/B/21.

¹³⁰ MOZSOLICS 1973, Taf. 66/7; 92.

¹³¹ See the discussion at NISTOR/VULPE 1970, 629–630.

¹³² CIUGUDEAN/ALDEA 1997, 103, Fig. 4/8; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA 1998, Taf. 63/776; CIUGUDEAN/ALDEA 2005, 98, Abb. 4/8.

¹³³ The discussion concerning the numerous Bronze Age finds on *Dealul Cetății* see POPA 2011, POPA 2011, 170–171, 174, 203–205, 220, 222–223, 225–226, 263, 682, pct. 34, Fig. 27; Pl. 91–102; 114; 125/13, where we published a very large batch of artefacts from what we defined as *Dealul Cetății*-ob. 2. Other information comes solely from the pages of excavation journals recently exploited for historical purposes, not archaeological ones (CRIȘAN/MEDELEȚ/ANDRIȚOIU 2020, *passim*), without any possibility of ever recovering the material culture uncovered during the more than ten systematic excavation campaigns conducted here.

¹³⁴ See, for example, the notes from the site’s journal, in which are mentioned discoveries, including complexes from the “final stages of the Bronze Age and the passage to Hallstatt” or materials from the “first Iron Age” (CRIȘAN/MEDELEȚ/ANDRIȚOIU 2020, 51–52).

¹³⁵ Field survey undertaken together with prof. Alin Toderescu from Cugir.

¹³⁶ See POPA/TODERESCU 2025, 160, Fig. 21.

¹³⁷ CIUGUDEAN/LUCA 1997, 51, Fig. 1/6; POPA 2011, 271, Pl. 134/1; DIETRICH 2021a, Taf. 617/2670.

¹³⁸ ROSKA 1942a, p. 40, nr. 98; ROSKA 1942b, p. 144, no. 332.

¹³⁹ ANDRIȚOIU 1970, 633–637.

¹⁴⁰ DIETRICH 2021a, 361, Taf. 193/0818.

¹⁴¹ POPA/TOTOIANU 2010, p. 218, Fig. 12; POPA 2011, 241, Pl. 134/2.

¹⁴² ANDRIȚOIU 1970, 634, hypothesis found also in DIETRICH 2021a, 361.



Fig. 20. Location of the Cugir I (Valea Dăii) hoard, in the context of the bronze age discoveries from the *Dealul Cetății* perimeter

of summary information from five decades ago is obsolete today, since the dynamics of discoveries in the Cugir area suggest many other potential places where it could have come from.

On the other hand, the inclusion of the Gugului Valley hoard (Cugir II) among those defined as “workshop hoards”, as well as the existence of the stone mould for casting Transylvanian-type socketed axes discovered at *Vinerea-Centru*, in the plain area of Cugir Valley, indicates that such pieces were made right on the spot¹⁴³.

CONCLUSIONS

The discovery of a new bronze hoard in the perimeter of Cugir (Cugir III) underscores, if needed, the great archaeological potential that the area has in terms of metal artefacts from the Bronze Age (Fig. 21). Along with these, the five Late Bronze pieces, also found this year in the high area of Cugir, have recently been published¹⁴⁴, only confirm what has already been said, and join the two socketed axes found in isolation in the past. Lesser-known and probably lost forever are also the prehistoric bronzes discovered on *Dealul Cetății*¹⁴⁵. In the 1982 campaign, “a bronze knife belonging to the Bronze Age”¹⁴⁶ was found in a possible Ha A complex, along with an arrow¹⁴⁷; from a Wietenberg dwelling comes “a bronze ring (loop earring) with willow-leaf-shaped ends”¹⁴⁸, a reality that confirms the presence of metal items in the Bronze Age habitations from this site.

The small number of pieces that make up the Cugir III

¹⁴³ POPA 2011, 260; POPA/TODERESCU 2025, 160.

¹⁴⁴ POPA/TODERESCU 2025.

¹⁴⁵ We can suspect that I. Andrițoiu was referring to these artefacts when he included Cugir among the settlements where bronze pieces were found (ANDRIȚOIU 1993, Pl. I, no. 19).

¹⁴⁶ CRIȘAN/MEDELEȚ/ANDRIȚOIU 2020, 53.

¹⁴⁷ CRIȘAN/MEDELEȚ/ANDRIȚOIU 2020, 51.

¹⁴⁸ CRIȘAN/MEDELEȚ/ANDRIȚOIU 2020, 68.

hoard can be explained by the fact that they were goods that came from within a settlement, so they could constitute the tools of an inhabitant of the prehistoric village here and not a hoard with a possible ritual character. For now it is the smallest hoard in the Cugir area, and not only¹⁴⁹. The hoard, due to its composition consisting of socketed axes and sickles, belongs to the most common type of hoards from the Late Bronze in southwestern Transylvania¹⁵⁰.

From a cultural point of view, the bronze accumulations

belong to the cultural groups that define the evolution of the Late Bronze in this southwestern part of Transylvania, also present on the course of the Cugir Valley. It is difficult to specify the cultural environment from which the Cugir III hoard originates, possibly late Noua, at the confluence of other Western cultural spheres, not excluding early Cugir-Band elements (Fig. 9). It is appropriate to recall that we recently published the fragment of a socketed axe found at Cugir, on *Piatra Pleșii* (Fig. 10/2), along with ceramics specific to the Late Bronze (Fig. 10/3). The map on which we mark the link between the *Gura Luncilor-ob. 2* site and *Piatra Pleșii*, throughout *Pleșii Valley*¹⁵¹ (Fig. 10/1) is gaining more importance today, as it now seems even clearer that the limestone height was used for various occupational activities by those from the settlement on the bank of the Cugir. The bracelets that form the *Uriu-Opályi* type hoard on *Valea Dăii* can be related to a late bronze age habitation (Bz D) documented both in the settlement on *Dealul Cetății*, while the hoard from *Cugir-Pârâul Gugului* and the fragmentary sickle from *Șibot*¹⁵² can be attributed to the Cugir-Band group, which is associated with specific ceramics¹⁵³. The knife from *Cugir-Vârful Brădetului*, an isolated find in the hilly area, probably belongs to the same cultural environment, its analogies being relevant in *Turdaș* sites¹⁵⁴ but also from *Șoimuș* (Alba County)¹⁵⁵. To these are added the prehistoric bronzes

¹⁴⁹ There is a consensus that at least two metal artefacts can constitute a hoard. But there are cases in which a single bronze artefact can be interpreted as the remainder of a depositing gesture (BRADLEY 2013, 131–132; BLITTE 2019, 29).

¹⁵⁰ REZI/GOGĂLTAN 2019, 199, Fig. 8–9.

¹⁵¹ POPA/TODERESCU 2025, 153, 159, Fig. 8–10.

¹⁵² We refer to the tip of a sickle found in the perimeter of a settlement at the point *La Baltă-ob. 2* that we dated in the range Bronze D-Ha A (POPA 2011, 259, Fig. 29).

¹⁵³ POPA 2011, 260, 264–265.

¹⁵⁴ CIUGUDEAN *et alii* 2019, 98–99, 103, Pl. XIV/4.

¹⁵⁵ CIUGUDEAN 2004b, 180–181, Fig. 2/4.

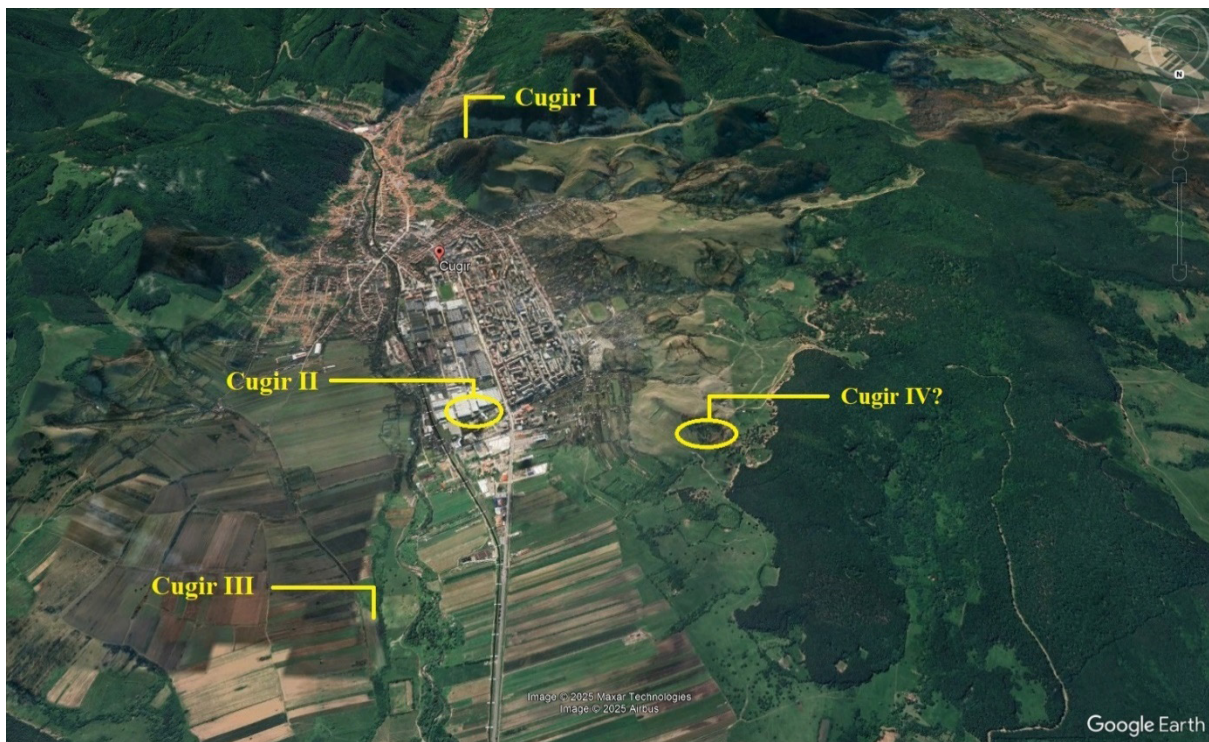


Fig. 21. Map with the location of Cugir bronze hoards: **Cugir I** (Valea Dăii), **Cugir II** (Pârâul Gugului), **Cugir III** (Gura Luncilor) and, possible, **Cugir IV?** (Țara Vânturilor / Muchea lui Gheorghe) (processing after Google Earth)

found at Cugir, in Țara Vânturilor (*Muchea lui Gheorghe*), which, if we are to believe the information contained in what we have called “Cugir IV?”, seem to constitute another hoard, not yet reported as such.

Substantially enriched in the last year with new metal pieces, the “official” archaeological map of Cugir, still incredibly “blank” (further, with only one site ranked and protected in the urban area, the rest being mountainous, without great destructive impact!) demonstrates the dynamics of complex habitation and occupational or cultic activities in prehistory. One thing is certain: in the present-day area of Cugir, in the Bronze Age, there were also individuals with opportunities to accumulate significant wealth, as is the case with the Cugir II hoard (*Pârâul Gugului*). The observation is independent of the nature of social practice (storage, votive deposit, concealment, etc.).

(translated by Cosmin Mihai Coatu)

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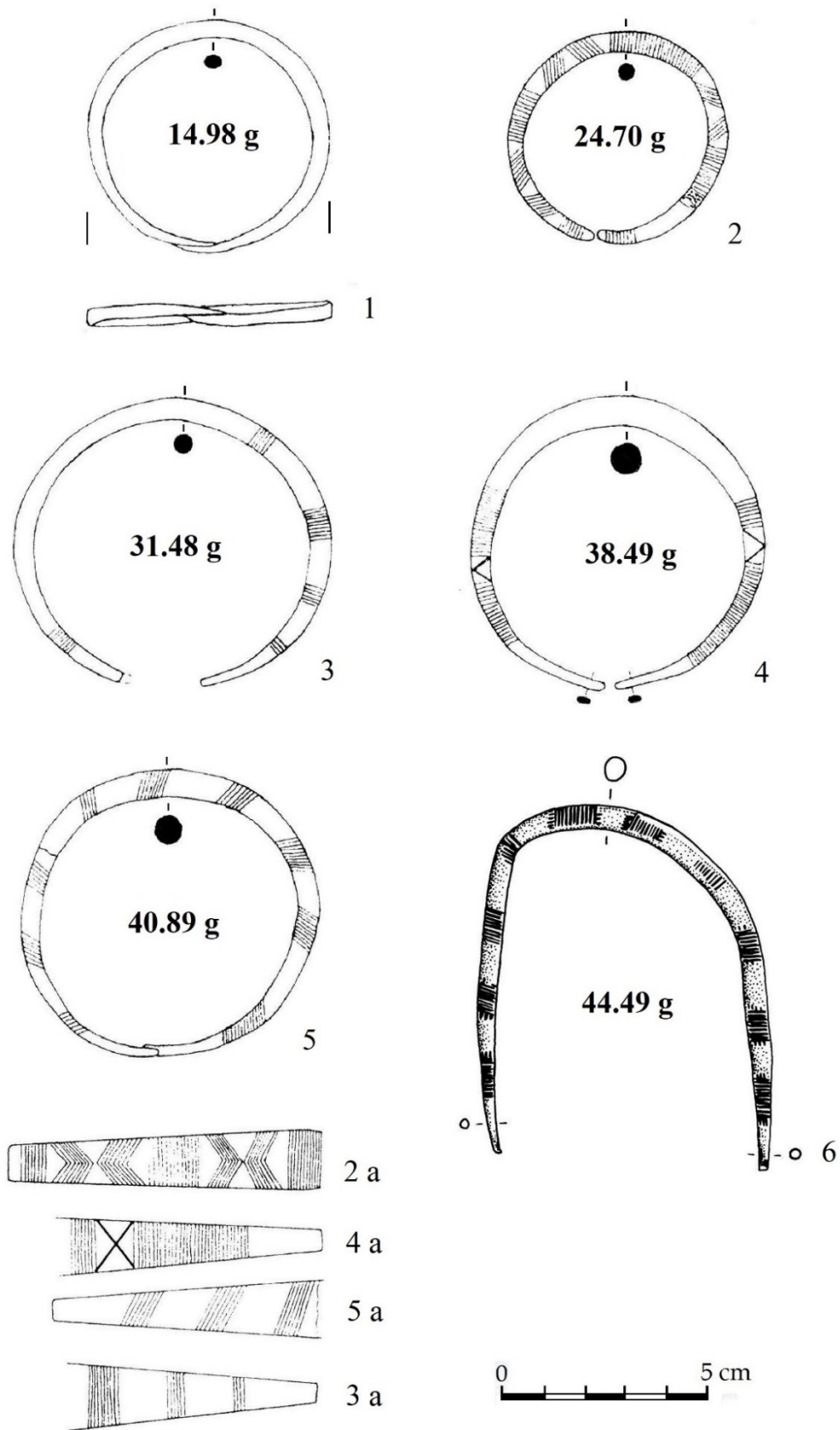


Fig. 22. The Cugir-Valea Dăii bronze hoard (Cugir I)
 (after RUSTOIU 1998 - 1-5; POPA 2011 - 6)



Fig. 23. The courtyard of the house in Cugir-Str. Copernicus, no. 46, where the Cugir I bracelet hoard was discovered (1); view of the Wietenberg dwelling above Valea Dăii (2) (Photo: Lucia Bondoc – 1; Cristian I. Popa – 2)

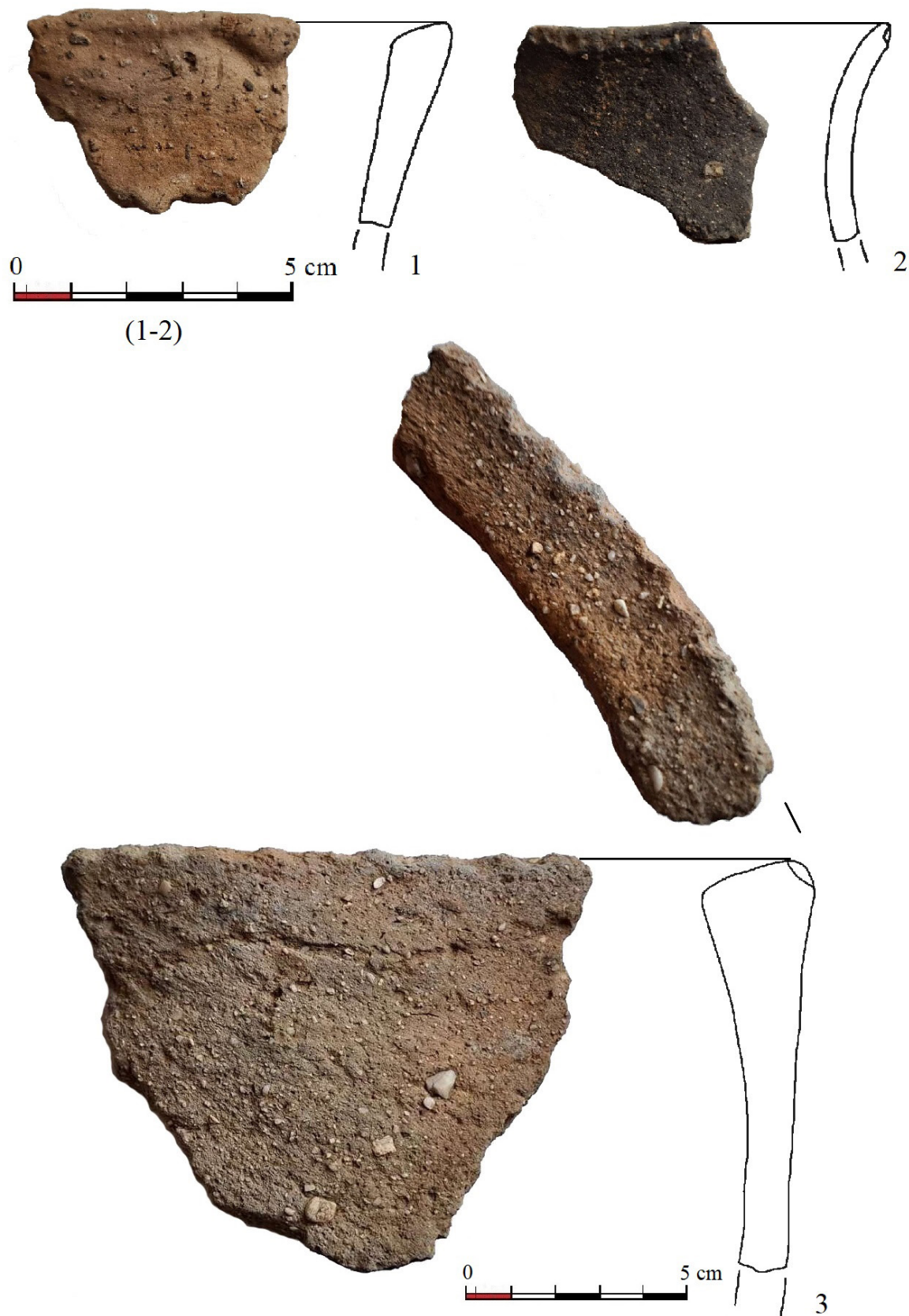


Fig. 24. Wietenberg pottery discovered at Cugir-Dealul Cetății-water basins
(photo: C. I. Popa)

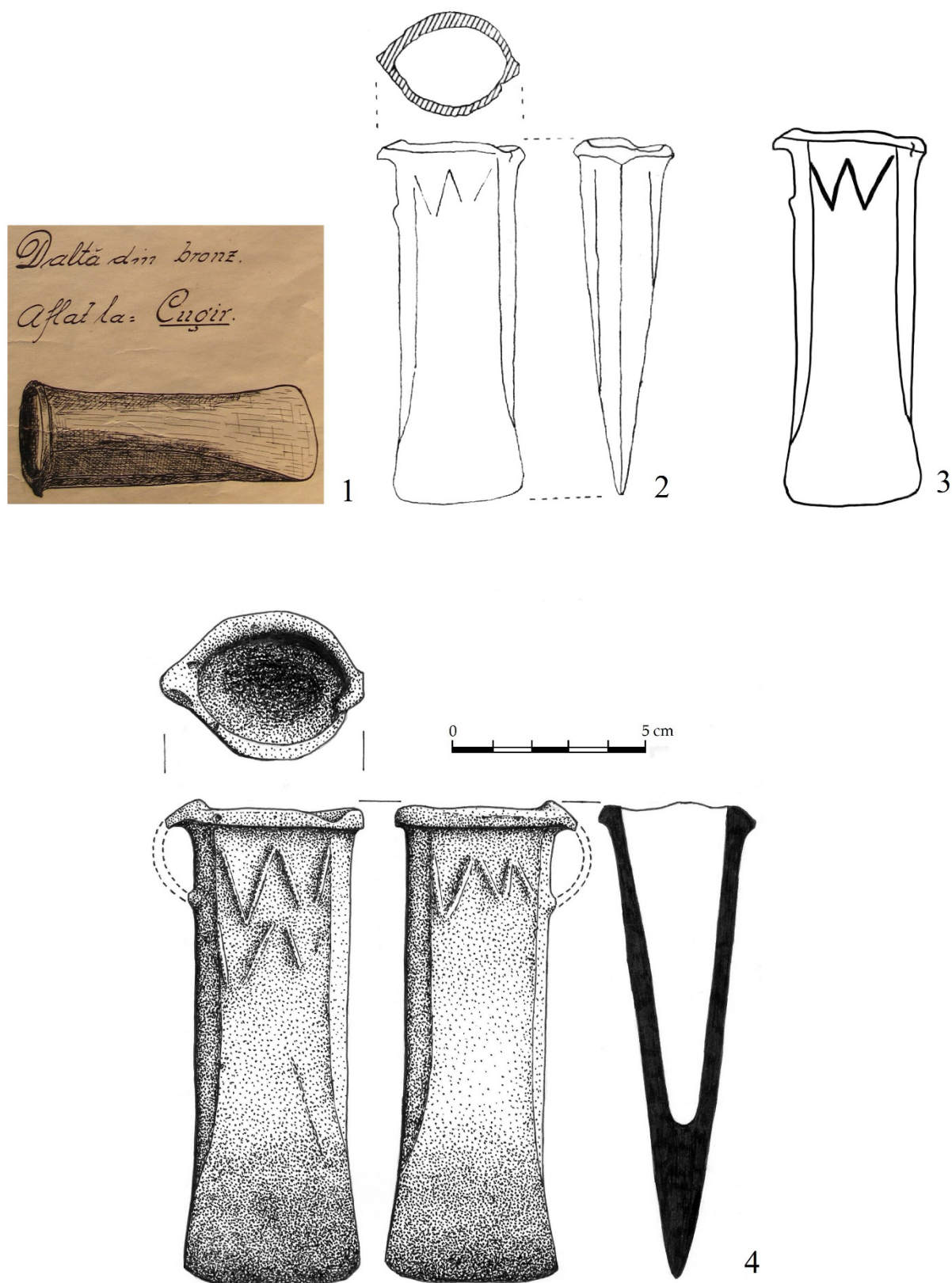


Fig. 25. Bronze socketed axe discovered by chance at Cugir (after the inventory registry of the Deva Museum – 1; ANDRIȚOIU 1970 – 2; DIETRICH 2021a – 3; POPA 2011 – 4)



Fig. 26. Bronze socketed axe discovered by chance at Cugir (after CIUGUDEAN/LUCA 1997 – 1; DIETRICH 2021a – 2)