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FINE ARTS

1. FEATURES OF SOME CULTURES OF THE CERAMICS OF THE EARLY HALLSTATT COMPLEX WITH INCISED AND ENGRAVED CERAMICS ON THE TERRITORY OF ROMANIA

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Abstract: *The present study will only refer to the Early Hallstatt, Ha A-B, the beginning of the first Iron Age brought important transformations recorded in ceramics, once the production forces started to develop because of the spreading of iron metallurgy. In a time when ceramics suffers major transformations regarding forms and decor – we are talking here about the first period of Hallstatt (the early one) – the Hallstatt Complex with incised and engraved ceramics completes the image of pottery at that time, together with the other great cultural unity (the horizon with fluted ceramics).*

Key words: *flute, torques, metope, torsade, Hallstatt*

1. Introduction

In the entire Iron Age²⁰³, agriculture becomes more and more intense (by the generalization of the usage of iron tools, of the plough with an iron coulter), and grazing sheep is now a basic occupation which brought wealth. Still, step by step, because of the limitation of migrations, people will come back to sedentarism and the infiltrations of Eastern groups will continue in the entire Europe in the Iron Age. Craftsmen have a special place in society; merchants appear, because goods are more and more intensely traded. The society continues to have more and more distinctive classes. The consolidation of the union of tribes will lead to bigger conflicts. Regarding the field of ceramics, pottery continues to develop itself, the wheel of the potter now becomes an important tool. The Celts bring their advanced technique for the fast production of pottery by using the wheel.

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²⁰³ Approximately 1 150/1 000 – 50/70 B.C.: the date of birth of the Dacian State. Cf. Dinu C. Giurescu, *Istoria ilustrată a românilor*, București, Ed. Sport-Turism, 1981, p.25; Constantin C. Giurescu, Dinu C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor din cele mai vechi timpuri și pînă astăzi*, București, Ed. Albatros, 1971, p.30; Vasile Pârvan, *Getica. O protoistorie a Daciei*, București, Ed. Meridiane, 1982, p.174; H. D., in Radu Florescu, Hadrian Daicoviciu, Lucian Roșu (coord.), *Dicționar enciclopedic de artă veche a României*, București, Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1980, p.155, s.v. fierului, epoca

2. Discussions

In the first period of Iron Age²⁰⁴, Hallstatt²⁰⁵, the identity of Norther-Pontic tribes is crystallized; now, the separation of Proto-Thracians takes place, they divide themselves into North-Danubian Geto-Dacians (what is specific to them is ceramic cultures decorated with flutes) and South-Danubian Thracians (who are known for imprinted ceramics, in the meridional Thracian group). New aspects of Bronze spirituality are added to the old ones: the perpetuation of the solar cult, the diminishing of the number of necropoleis, the simultaneous practicing of inhumation and cremation, but during Late Hallstatt, cremation will gradually expand itself (later, in Latène, this ritual became fundamental)²⁰⁶. We also have to mention here that there is a transition period from the bronze Age to Hallstatt, called Ha A (the 12th century – the 11th century B.C.). A cultural and territorial reorganization (due to the stabilization of the situation from the south of the Danube River) marks this transition period, characterized by instability in the relationships between communities and groups of communities (cultural zones), but also characterized by a relatively unitary economy.

The composite aspect of the decor of pottery which characterized the end of the Bronze Age would also continue at the beginning of the Iron Age, in Ha A. The predominantly pastoral character of economy is reflected in the zoomorphic clay figurines which were found in large numbers (Lechința from Mureș, *the flock of sheep from Lechința* represents many species of domestic animals).

Subsequently, once Early Hallstatt started (Ha A-B)²⁰⁷, an unseen period of development of production forces would start. Economy is also based on agriculture and shepherd activities. The fact that the migrants from the south of the Danube simply quieted also had consequences on the northern territory by a new attempt of instauring stability, the local fond assimilated new western views. The new forms of organization, far from statal forms (still, the Thracian tribes on the territory of our country have known a process of unification), allow the resistance to exterior pressure. Now, collective consciousness is crystallized, and also the unity of common myths (among which there is also the myth of Zalmoxis) and of the first unitary beliefs.

Two great cultural complexes appear now on the territory of Romania: the cultural complex with fluted ceramics and the early Hallstatt complex with incised and imprinted ceramics²⁰⁸. From the first complex (of fluted ceramics), the following are considered its components: the **culture Gáva-Holihrad**, the

²⁰⁴ Approximately 1150/800 – 450/300 î.Hr. Cf. A. Vulpe, M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, A. Lászlo, Cap.III. *Epoca metalelor*, in Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Alexandru Vulpe (coord.), *Istoria românilor*, vol.I, *Moștenirea timpurilor îndepărtate*, București, Academia Română, Ed. Enciclopedică, 2010, p.289; H. D., in Radu Florescu et al. (coord.), *op. cit.*, p.155, s.v. *fierului, epoca*

²⁰⁵ Up to the year 800 B.C., it has been a period which is often confused with the end of the Bronze Age. Cf. H. D., in Radu Florescu et al. (coord.), *op. cit.*, p.155, s.v. *fierului, epoca*

²⁰⁶ Constantin Buzdugan, *Riturile funerare ale comunităților hallstattiene târzii din Moldova*, in *Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis*, II, 1980, Vaslui, p.51

²⁰⁷ Approximately 850/800 – 650 î.Hr. Cf. A. Vulpe et al., *op. cit.*, p.294

²⁰⁸ *Idem*, p.301

horizon with fluted ceramics from the south-west and the south of Romania and the **culture Corlăteni-Chișinău. Gáva-Holihradý** is called after a settlement from Hungary and another one from Ukraine and its area of spreading is Tisa basin (the north-east of Hungary, the south-east of Slovakia, the north-west of Romania and trans-Carpathian Ukraine), and it later expanded in the south-west of Romania, the submontane area of Ukraine, the Plateau of Suceava, the North-West of Moldavia, the south of Poland and also the basin of San River, a confluent of the Vistula. The cultures Otomani, Suci de Sus, and also Cruceni-Belegiș can be found at the basis of formation of the culture Gáva-Holihradý.

In the **horizon with fluted ceramics from the south-west and the south of Romania**, a series of cultural groups evolved: **the cultural group Susani** (in the centre and the north of Banat, having as a basis the group Balta Sărată), the **group Bobda** (in the west and the north-west of Banat, the north-east of Vojvodina – appeared from Cruceni-Belegiș), on the same cultural basis was formed the **group Ticvanu Mare-Karaburma III** (in the contact area between the western piedmont of Banat, the south-west of Banat, the south of Vojvodina); and we also add here, taking into account the contribution of Cruceni-Belegiș culture, the groups from the south of Banat and Oltenia: **Moldova-Nouă** and **Hinova**; their evolution will be interrupted in Banat by the short appearance of the culture Gáva-Holihradý, also interrupted by the appearance from the west of the group **Gornea-Kalakaca** (the south of Banat).

The **culture Corlăteni-Chișinău** (having an origin which is not very well defined) is also part of the first cultural complex of fluted ceramics; it was named after the discoveries from Corlăteni and the ones from Chișinău and its spreading area is the hilly region and the forest steppe from the Eastern Carpathians and the basin of the Dnestr, except for the northern part occupied by the culture Gáva-Holihradý. From the second complex (of incised and imprinted ceramics), the following are part of: the **culture Babadag** (spread in the north-east of Muntenia, the south of Moldavia and the north of Dobrogea, the north of Bulgaria), inside which the **group (phase?) Târnăoani** (the south of Moldavia, the north-east of Muntenia and the north of Dobrogea) was created; step-by-step, the culture from Babadag expanded in the entire Dobrogea and Muntenia, when there is the period of relative cultural unity with the **group Insula Banului** (Porțile de Fier) and with the **group Cozia** (the south and centre of Moldavia). What is special (or maybe a protraction of phase III of Babadag Culture – according to some researchers) is the **group Stoicani** (the south of Moldavia), named after the necropolis from the eponymous place.

The ceramics of this period has elegant shapes and a more and more simplified decor – but this does not lower expressiveness, but on the contrary, it becomes more refined –, a gradual change of the formal and ornamental vision is step-by-step recorded. Technically speaking, the characteristic shine imitates metal pots.

3. The Early Hallstatti Complex with Incised and Imprinted Ceramics

Except for Babadag culture, this ceramic complex encapsulates two important cultures. Ceramics from the **group Insula Banului** has a decor *imprinted with torques*²⁰⁹, smooth, having horizontal registers, but there are also metopes – on the neck of the pot²¹⁰. The variety and richness of this cultural group refers both to technique (impressions, flutes, incisions, reliefs – all combined), and to forms (bitronconic pots with a flaring lip; cups and mugs; bowls and pots; jars; a double vase with a median holder – called *salt cellar* – was discovered in Vârtop, Dolj County, where a pot for making fire was also found, being supported by three legs under which fire can be made), and also motifs (tectonically oriented, especially geometrical-spiral-like, though the fir motif can be considered of vegetal inspiration).

As far as the motifs are concerned, we remind here: strips of hachured lines, strings made of small rectangles or concentric circles or circles with a small cross, a rosetta or a point in the middle, strings of S-shaped volutes, sometimes having chained ends (forming running spirals, brackets, horseshoes, potcoave, Ws, Ms).

As far as the decoration system is concerned, for example, under the stay band below the bandy lip, we find horizontal strings of impressions and a ricrac with circles printed at its tip. In other cases, the neck is decorated with horizontal strings of different impressions or a series of parallel horizontal flutes, just as the ones which can be seen on urns, having the neck decorated with horizontal strings of impressions, under which garlands of large flutes can be noticed. The decor of the pot's neck can also be vertical, for example: 4 series of two strings of circles impressed in the area between neck and the bellied part of the body. Or a vertical string of impressions having a M-shape which descends up to the horizontal strip with impressions near the prominences. The vertically truncated firs appears vertically on the surface of the neck, being placed at equal distances, the metopes formed between them are incomplete, but there are also complete metopes between the vertical S-s which are imprinted and which go down the prominences.

The belly of big bitronconic pots (clearly separated from the neck) is decorated horizontally, combining big prominences in this area. But there are also examples in which the neck's profile smoothly passes in the central part, without a strong arching, the marking-out is made by the presence of prominences. This central part of the pot is entirely decorated with horizontal flutes, sometimes there are horizontal strings of impressions at the upper limit, under which there are other strings of impressions, fluted garlands or garlands of small impressions, or groups of arched flutes under fluted prominences. On a pottery fragment, above the bellied area, there is a horizontal string of concentric rhombuses, a concentric rhombus also decorates the prominence²¹¹. A large pot for supplies, bitronconic, from Ostrovu Șimian (Drobeta-Turnu Severin), is decorated with horizontal flutes

²⁰⁹ Ion Miclea, Radu Florescu, *op. cit.*, p.121

²¹⁰ Vladimir Dumitrescu, *Arta preistorică în România*, vol.I, București, Ed. Meridiane, 1974, p.429

²¹¹ *Idem*, p.431-432

on the neck and with a rope-moulding profiled strip, having handles placed at the meeting of the shoulder with the belly²¹².

The cups have especially fluted decorations, with two horizontal registers. The one from the upper part, under the lip and the one which is bellied, belonging to the body – they are vertically decorated. The one below the lip is composed of a string of small circles. The cup belly has garlands of flutes, with strings made of sawlike lines, strings of printed small circles. Between the upper and the lower register, strings of motifs go down, vertically (small circles, W-shaped motifs). The vertical strings of impressions also decorate the handles (for example, two vertical strings of concentric small circles having a point in the middle, on the one side and on the other side of a string of W-s)²¹³.

The bowls have less decor: oblique facets or large flutes on the lip which is turned towards the interior. Some bowls have ornaments on both facets: garlands of flutes – inside and strings of impressions – outside. For example, under the fluted lip, on some bowls there is a horizontal string of hachured triangles on the interior side, a string of ricrac, a string of tangent circles, a string of Ws, of running spirals, of reclining Ss²¹⁴. The relief decor of jar-pots – an alveolar strip, then strings of alveoles – it does not have a great artistic value.

The forms found in the ceramics from the **cultural group Cozia**: urns having the shape of sacks, bitronconic or egg-shaped, bowls, glasses, pots having a pronounced shoulder²¹⁵. For the decor, the features are alveolar strips, small prominences, but especially the impressions inlaid with white and, sometimes, combined with incisions²¹⁶. Because of the absence of complete, undestroyed pots, the syntax is not easy to establish. But what is obvious is the horizontal development and the geometry of motifs. Large, ricrac strips are dominant, they are made of 4-8 parallel lines, bordered by a linear strip made of 2-3 strings of impressions. These ricrac strips do not always completely surround the pot, but they are sometimes closed by a printed vertical line or by small alveoles at the end of each line.

Outside the alveoles, there are also small imprinted circles, having a point, a cross or a smaller circle in the middle. What appears rarely is represented by the obliquely hachured triangles, the girdle with impressions, flutes or incisions, always combined with printed motifs. The incisions represent ricrac strings, hachured triangles under a printed strip or the motifs specific to a fir bough²¹⁷. Regarding a flat glass, entirely preserved, the central part which is curved outside is the only one which is decorated, being surrounded by a large strip with an interior pseudo-ricrac, while on the lateral area, outside the strip bordered by a string of impression, there is another one. On a pot fragment having a vaulted

²¹² Ion Miclea, Radu Florescu, *op. cit.*, p.123

²¹³ Vladimir Dumitrescu, *op. cit.*, p.432

²¹⁴ *Ibidem*

²¹⁵ R. F., in Radu Florescu et al. (coord.), *op. cit.*, p.119, s.v. *Cozia*

²¹⁶ Vladimir Dumitrescu, *op. cit.*, p.433

²¹⁷ *Idem*, p.435

body, the ricrac is composed of 4 strings of impression under 3 strings of horizontal impressions. On another fragment, a ricrac strip having wide strings of impression has small circles with a point inside of them in the triangular spaces which are left above and below the strip. Well, under two belts covered in incised pseudo-ricrac, were ingrained hachured triangles. In the case of bowls, only the thick lip is decorated: it has oblique sequences of impression.

4. Conclusions

During this period, the surface of ceramic pots is treated in such a way that they suggest bronze pots. A composite aspect of the decor which characteries in general the end of the Bronze Age will continue at the beginning of the Iron Age. The cultures which are part of the early Hallstatt complex with printed and incised ceramics on the territory of Romania help us understand this important moment of Prehistory in our country, joining the important cultures which form the other cultural horizon (the one with fluted ceramics) of the moment, especially regarding the ceramics rich in forms and decorations, diverse motifs are combined on the surface of pots.

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