

## AN EARLY MEDIEVAL POT DISCOVERED AT CURTUIȘENI (BIHOR COUNTY)<sup>1</sup>

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**Rezumat.** În anul 2013, în localitatea Curtuișeni din județul Bihor, la numărul 203, a fost descoperit întâmplător un vas ceramic. Este o oală-borcan, care din punct de vedere tehnologic, tipologic și stilistic se încadrează larg în perioada secolelor VIII–X, pentru o datare mai strânsă autorul optând pentru secolele IX–X.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Curtuișeni, județul Bihor, oală-borcan, secolele IX–X.

In the spring of 2014, the colleagues from Satu Mare County Museum reported us that at Curtuișeni they discovered at haphazard an early medieval ceramic pot that was in the possession of the citizen SZABOLCS Dörner from Sanislău (Satu Mare County). Taking the connection with the citizen in question, we have learned that he made the discovery in the household no. 203 from Curtuișeni belonging to the inhabitant Alexandru BARA, on planning of a cellar in August 2013. On the spot, the discoverer reported us that the pot appeared in the western wall of the cellar hole at the depth of 0.30 m, being seated with its mouth down. He did not noticed clues that the pot would be made part of a complex. To check if there are other vestiges he caved around the pot on a radius of 0.20 m up to the depth of 0.40 m without finding anything. Inside the pot, they found stiff ground that he emptied, without referring the presence of other materials, deposition of organic nature or soot, and then washed the pot by hand. The discoverer says that the gap from the wall of the pot is not due to his intervention being made in ancient times.

As ceramic type, the container is a pot-jar gently asymmetric with the walls strong arched on the maximum diameter line located in the upper third of the height, towards the bottom narrowing up emphatically. The neck is well defined, the mouth flared, the edge thickened and the bevel rounded. Its dimensions are: height = 24 cm, mouth diameter = 19.84 cm, bottom diameter = 10.30 cm, maximum circumference = 22.86 cm, wall thickness = 0.55 cm (**Fig. 1, Drawing 1, 2**).

The pot was modeled of homogeneous paste, well battered, containing medium grain sand, at a wheel that did not have the speed to get to the appearance on the interior walls of the bumps in the form of grooves or ribs. The walls relatively thin have

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**Fig. 1. Early Medieval Pot from Curtușeni.**

the surface slightly rough to touch. Following the complete and uniform combustion in oxidizer environment, they obtained the tile - brown color both on the surface and in the profile. It does not show traces of secondary combustion or indications that might have been used. From shoulder down towards the bottom it is decorated with narrow lines in wave with wide loop, spaced, discretely traced. The same decoration was printed on the inside front of the lip. The bottom shows no sign but just some parallel dislevelments printed on the wheel disc from which it was detached.

As shape, it is one of the most common types of pot during the period of the 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries. In a typological series of the saucepots without handle from settlements in the northwestern Romania the saucepot from Curtuișeni falls within one of the variant of type 2, which seems to be the most elegant<sup>2</sup>. In a near area, they have identified resembling shapes at Dindești<sup>3</sup>, Foieni-*sultésztag*<sup>4</sup>, Biharea-*SA Baraj*<sup>5</sup>.

In terms of the ornament, the belt of lines in wave was next to the belt of straight lines one of the elements most commonly found in the ceramic repertoire of the 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was found that at the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century and in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, especially the ornament was apportioned almost throughout the whole body of the pots, leaving only a small portion of the non-ornamented lower area<sup>6</sup>. The ornamentation of the lip is used less. We can find copies of the same type, in the same manner worked, to which the lip was also decorated in settlements such as Porți-*La Baraj* (Sălaj County) in a dwelling of the 7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup><sup>7</sup> centuries and Șimleul Silvaniei-*Nagy Pista* on a pot dating from the 7<sup>th</sup>/8–9<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>8</sup>. Although the method of adorning of the lips inside is valued as specifies especially the 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is met also in the following period<sup>9</sup> as proof the discoveries from the necropolis of Blandiana<sup>10</sup> where one of two pots comes from a tomb of inhumation dating in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>11</sup>.

On the bottom of the pot from Curtuișeni it was printed no sign. The marks/signs of potter are characteristic to the pots of common use from the early medieval era. The appearance, symbolism and their spread was treated in a catalogue of the discoveries in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space<sup>12</sup>. The potter's marks made on the bottoms of the saucepots are a presence that can be considered starting with the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the process of stamping knowing, however, a wide use, with the 9<sup>th</sup> century, but especially with the 10<sup>th</sup> century, with a maximum development in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, being attested until the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Cosma, 2002, p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> Stanciu, 1996, p. 73, 77, pl. V/15; Cosma, 2002, p. 104, 189, pl. 98/4.

<sup>4</sup> Stanciu, 1998, p. 326, pl. 186/13.

<sup>5</sup> Dumitrașcu, 1994, p. 195-197, pl. CXII/1.

<sup>6</sup> Cosma, 2002, p. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Matei, Băcuet-Crișan, 2011, p. 21, 48, 63, pl. 31/3.

<sup>8</sup> Băcuet-Crișan, 2006, p. 114, pl. 28/1.

<sup>9</sup> Cosma, 2002, p. 36.

<sup>10</sup> Anghel, Ciugudean, 1987, p. 190-191, fig. 6/1,2.

<sup>11</sup> Anghel, Ciugudean, 1987, p. 195.

<sup>12</sup> Paraschiv-Talmațchi, 2006.

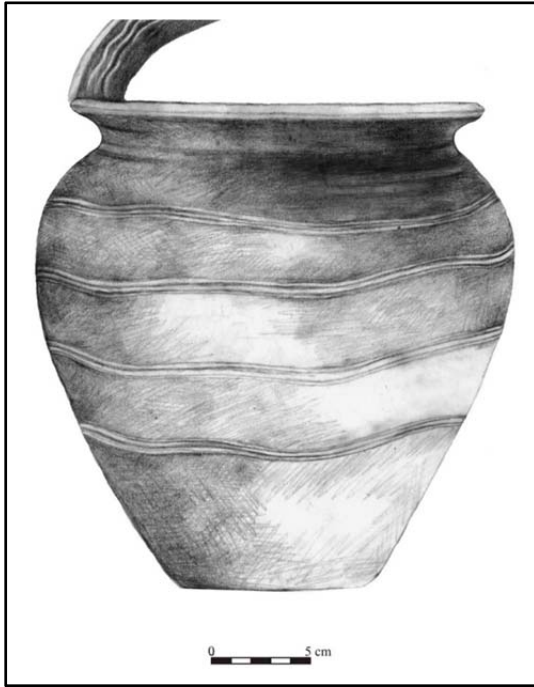
<sup>13</sup> Paraschiv-Talmațchi, 2006, p. 39; Crișan, 1995, pl. XII/2.

On the considerations outlined above, we fit widely the pot from Curtuișeni in the 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries, the careful and precise manner with which it was executed our option tilt to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. As an isolated discovery, its destination will probably remain unknown, this type of pot being found both in complexes of settlements and in tombs. It joins the older findings documenting the existence at Curtuișeni of an early medieval level of housing<sup>14</sup>. The peregrination carried out under adverse conditions showed that the land on which stands the household where it was discovered the pot contains vestiges consisting of ceramic material in a highly fragmentary state and has the structure resulting from a long habitation. Found in perfect condition, except for the gap, and without any trace of use the pot from Curtuișeni may be a technological scrap, or, in case it got the domestic-household circuit, its breaking was produced shortly afterwards. Otherwise, it is a successful exemplary carried out by a skilled and experienced artisan in the field. As a result of the donation made by the keeper, the pot entered the collections of the Țării Crișurilor Museum of Oradea<sup>15</sup> under the inventory number 23528, being one of the few entire pots dating from this period, a piece of a definite scientific and museum value.

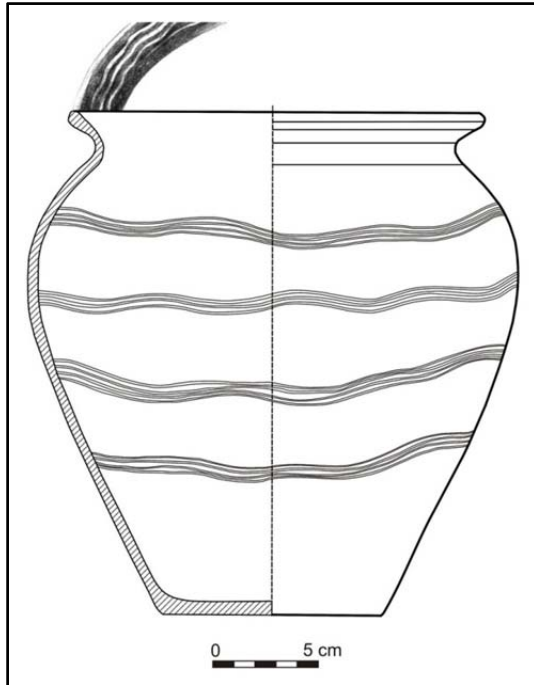
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<sup>14</sup> Rusu, 1960, p. 9, n. 14; *Repertoriul Bihor*, p. 30; *Repertoriu Carei*, p. 41.

<sup>15</sup> We thank also on this way to Mr. SZABOLCS Dörner.



**Drawing 1. Early Medieval Pot from Curtuişeni.**



**Drawing 2. Early Medieval Pot from Curtuişeni.**

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