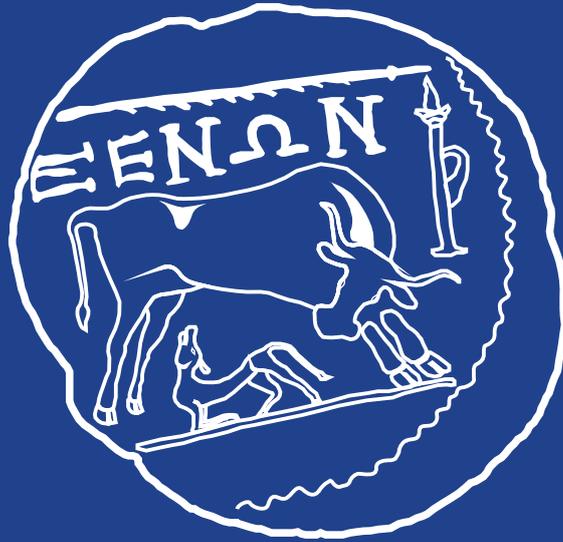


MUSEUM ARAD



ZIRIDAVA

STUDIA ARCHAEOLOGICA

39

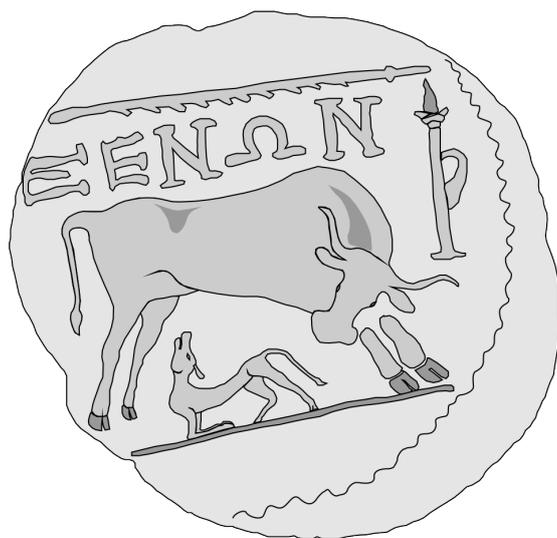
2025

ZIRIDAVA
STUDIA ARCHAEOLOGICA

39

2025

MUSEUM ARAD



ZIRIDAVA

STUDIA ARCHAEOLOGICA

39
2025

Editura MEGA
Cluj-Napoca
2025

MUSEUM ARAD

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editors: Victor Sava, Florin Mărginean

Editorial Assistants: Ioan Cristian Cireap, Vlad Murgu, Andrei Mărincean

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Vitalie Bârcă (Institute of Archaeology and Art History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Adina Boroneanț ("Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest, Romania)

Marin Cărciumaru (Valahia University of Târgoviște, Romania)

Sorin Cociș (Institute of Archaeology and Art History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Dragoș Diaconescu (The National Museum of Banat, Timișoara, Romania)

Daria Loznjak Dizdar (Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb, Croatia)

Florin Drașovean (Romanian Academy, Timișoara branch, Romania)

Alin Frînculeasa (Prahova County Museum of History and Archaeology, Ploiești, Romania)

Erwin Gáll ("Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest, Romania)

Florin Gogâltan (Institute of Archaeology and Art History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Adrian Ioniță ("Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest, Romania)

Hrvoje Kalafatić (Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb, Croatia)

Aleksandar Kapuran (Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade, Serbia)

Rüdiger Krause (Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Germany)

Tobias Kienlin (Universität zu Köln, Germany)

Valéria Kulcsár (University of Szeged, Hungary)

Sabin Adrian Luca (Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu, Romania)

Barry Molloy (University College Dublin, Ireland)

Sorin Nemeti (Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania)

John O'Shea (University of Michigan, USA)

Karl Zeno Pinter (Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu, Romania)

Ioan Stanciu (Institute of Archaeology and Art History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Imre Szatmári (Munkácsy Mihály Museum, Békéscsaba, Hungary)

Miklos Takács (Institute of Archaeology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary)

Ioan Marian Țiplic (Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu, Romania)

In Romania, the periodical can be obtained through subscription or exchange, sent as post shipment, from Museum Arad, Arad, Piata G. Enescu 1, 310131, Romania.

Tel. 0040-257-281847.

ZIRIDAVA STUDIA ARCHAEOLOGICA

Any correspondence will be sent to the editor:

Museum Arad

Piata George Enescu 1, 310131 Arad, RO

e-mail: ziridava2012@gmail.com

The content of the papers totally involve the responsibility of the authors.

Layout: Francisc Baja, Florin Mărginean, Victor Sava

DTP: Petru Ureche

ISSN 2392-8786



EDITURA MEGA | www.edituramega.ro

e-mail: mega@edituramega.ro

This volume is dedicated to Florin Draşovean at 70 years

Acest volum este dedicat lui Florin Draşovean cu ocazia împlinirii a 70 de ani



Contents / Cuprins

Laudatio	9
-----------------------	---

Research papers / Studii

Cristian Eduard Ștefan

Vidra Type Axes Revisited: The State of Research Nearly Two Decades Later	17
---	----

Andrei Mărincean

Inside Daub: A Preliminary Study of Burnt Wattle-and-Daub from the Late Bronze Age Site of Sântana-Cetatea Veche	25
---	----

Feraru Remus Mihai

Theos Megas Derzelas, an Enigmatic Deity of Odessos: Cult and Iconographic Representations. A Numismatic and Epigraphic Study	51
--	----

Florin Mărginean, Erwin Gáll

Revised Information on the Early Avar Period Grave from Sânpetru German-Magazin	67
---	----

Călin Cosma

Social and Gender Symbolism of Earrings in the 7th–8th Century Avar Communities of Transylvania	77
---	----

Dan Băcueț-Crișan

Less Discussed Aspects in the Research of Early Medieval Wares from Romania: Purpose, Use, Re-use, and Recycling. Theoretical Interpretations and Archaeological Realities	115
---	-----

Imre Szatmári

The Round Church of Battonya	129
------------------------------------	-----

Augustin Mureșan, Adriana Gașpar

The Fortress of Pomezau (Bihar): History, Heritage and Conservation	153
---	-----

Timea Major-Keresztes

Adornment, Status and Mobility: A Hairpin from Zalău-Valea Miții (Sălaj county) and Its Place in Early Modern Material Culture	179
---	-----

Field reports / Rapoarte asupra cercetărilor de teren

Vlad Murgu, Victor Sava, Ioan Cristian Cireap, Andrei Mărincean

Tehnici de teledetecție și cercetări de suprafață. Contribuții noi la cunoașterea așezărilor din zona Olari, județul Arad 187

Sofia Berteș, Victor Bunoiu, Iulian Leonti, Vyara Stancheva, Andrei Geor-gescu, Răzvan-Ioan Pinca, Bogdan Calotă, Patrik Ostaș, Dragoș Diaconescu, Robin DiPasquale, Ionuț Marteniuc

The Archaeological Excavations at Susani – Grămurada de la Jupani:
Report on the 2025 Field Campaign 233

Victor Sava, Florin Gogâltan, Marian Adrian Lie

Excavations at the Late Bronze Age Mega-Fort at Sântana – *Cetatea Veche*.
The 2018 Field Campaign 243

Ioan Cristian Cireap

Illyrian Drachmas and Late La Tène Iron Items Discovered at Monoroștia – *Dâmbu lui Hârtici*
(Arad County) 385

Cătălin Discă, Iulian Leonti

The Roman Roads South of Berzovia: Some Observations and the Results of New Research 291

György Kerekes, Zoltán Rózsa

Árokos. The Success Story of Identifying an Archaeological Site in Mezöhegyes – Revisited 317

Reviews / Recenzii

Alpár Dobos, Sándor Berecki (Eds.), *The Migration Period Cemetery from Ernei*. Bibliotheca Musei Marisiensis Series Archaeologica XIX. Mega Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2023, ISBN 978-606-020-636-1, 192 pages.
(**Erwin Gáll**) 333

Vidra Type Axes Revisited: The State of Research Nearly Two Decades Later

Cristian Eduard Ștefan

Abstract: In the last third of the 5th millennium BC, a rather interesting item begins production in the workshops of the Eneolithic craftsmen, namely the Vidra type axe. It emerges to the north and south of the Danube in various contexts, domestic, cult or burial-related, exhibiting similar shapes, yet different lengths and weights and is believed the most sophisticated creation of the period in the field of metalworking. We attempt here to clarify their possible functions in the context of increased metalworking activities by late Eneolithic: weapons, power and status marks, metal hoarding forms? It is possible that once with the population growth and extended competition for resources there also occur physical confrontations between the social Eneolithic groups? Is this item suitable for use as weapon?

Keywords: metalworking; axe; Vidra type; Gumelnița; Cucuteni.

Introduction

In a study published almost two decades ago, we attempted to update the information on an interesting type of item of the late Eneolithic, namely the Vidra type axe. We noted then that the item type spread in the Gumelnița and Cucuteni environments, with only a few exemplars present in farther areas, likely “imports” to respective areas. Intuitively and in accordance with the available literature of the time, we succeeded to collect data on forty-three examples of the type, present to the north and south of the Danube, in both domestic and burial contexts¹.

In this brief contribution we propose to upgrade the data corpus on Vidra type axes, also including the most recent finds as well as the exemplars not included in the 2008 study, further discussing such novel data.

Newly discovered/published exemplars

A relatively recent and spectacular find is represented by the Polkovnik Taslakovo hoard, near the city of Dulovo, in the Silistra province. Twenty-two copper items were discovered there accidentally, of which eighteen flat axes, a Pločnik type axe and three of type Vidra². The Vidra axes are of different weights (501, 404, respectively 443 grams) and different maximum lengths (15.5, 15.7, respectively 16.4 cm)³. Moreover, one of the Vidra axes has also been tested elementally (97% Cu, with traces of Pb, Fe, Al, Si, Sn and Ag)⁴.

Another interesting hoard consisting of a Vidra type axe and a bracelet was discovered at Lișmănița, Darabani commune, Botoșani County. The axe was cast by the lost wax method, in a closed mould, and has a maximum length of 13.4 cm, weighing 361 grams. The bracelet is sized 7 x 8.8 cm and weighs 116 gr, namely approximately a third of the axe weight and also benefited of a spectral test⁵.

A hoard composed of an Vidra type axe and a bracelet, entirely similar to that of Lișmănița was discovered at Călărași, in the Republic of Moldova. Unfortunately, further details are missing, the axe being used as example in a discussion about a different find⁶.

¹ Ștefan 2008, 79-88, Fig. 1-3.

² Chernakov 2018, 7, Fig. 8-9.

³ Chernakov 2018, 3, Tab. 2.

⁴ Chernakov 2018, 10, Tab. 3.

⁵ Mareș 2012, 301-302, Pl. 11/2397, 40/2398, 64/2397, 81/2398.

⁶ Dergachev, Parnov 2022, 30, Fig. 20, 21.

Another interesting hoard was identified at Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, nearby the *tell* of Bereketska mogila, at ca. 500 m westwards. Two Vidra type axes were found one on top of the other, covered by the scattered fragments of an additional metal object. One of the axes had a maximum length of 19 cm and weighed 1000 grams⁷.

An older find, of Dragoman-Slivnica, Bulgaria, is represented by a hoard composed of two Pločnik type axes and one of type Vidra⁸. Although Todorova framed the Vidra type axe in the class of Pločnik axes, B variation, its shape and general appearance clearly ascribe it to type Vidra, like in fact very well noted in the academic literature⁹.

A copper axe of Vidra type was discovered during the recent archaeological excavations conducted in the *tell* at Geangoești-Hulă, Dâmbovița County. The specimen has a maximum length of 16 cm and weighs 590 grams. It was discovered in a house from one of the upper levels of the Gumelnița settlement, a radiocarbon sample taken from this level indicating a value of 5352±30 BP, which, in 2-sigma calibration means 4322-4055 cal BC¹⁰. Another exemplar was discovered in the *tell* type settlement of Gărăgău-Măgura din Luncă/Măgura din Islaz, Vărtoape commune, Teleorman County, however no further details are known except for a photo¹¹. At Provadia-Solnitsata, in Bulgaria, was discovered a Vidra type axe associated with a biconical cup, which was interpreted as a possible cenotaph¹². Other details are not provided.

A series of isolate finds are also worthy of attention, therefore, we shall review these below. One find was yielded at Sadovec, in Bulgaria, by a Sălčuța-Krivodol settlement. The item is slim, with a maximum length of 15.7 cm and weight of 283 grams¹³. At Coțofenii din Dos-Cetatea Jidovilor, in the well-known La Tène site, there was discovered an item in the same class, whose maximum length was of 12.8 cm and weight of 312 grams. Since the axe was found in La Tène milieu, the authors of the

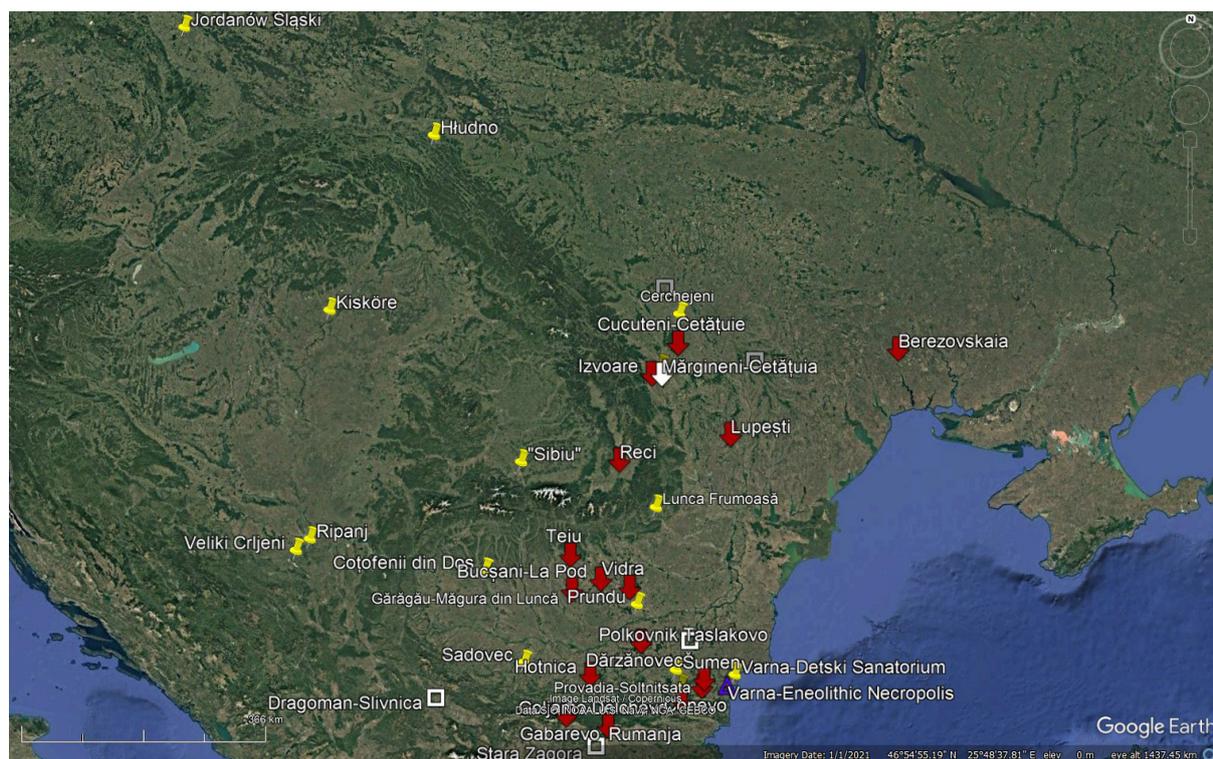


Fig. 1. Diffusion area of Vidra type axes (red arrow – settlements/houses; white arrow – sanctuary; blue triangle – graves; white square – hoards; yellow pin – isolate finds).

⁷ Ivanov, Avramova 2007, 144, Fig. 3, 4.

⁸ Todorova 1981, 35-36, cat. No. 93, 94 and 100, Taf. 6/93, 94, 100.

⁹ Vulpe 1975, 23, note 12; Băjenaru, Ridiche 2013, 116, Fig. 1/2.

¹⁰ Ilie 2020, 487-499, Pl. II, III.

¹¹ Spiru 2014, 101, 185, photo 25; Pătrașcu 2002, 22.

¹² Nikolov *et al.* 2013, 79.

¹³ Pernicka *et al.* 1997, 72, Fig. 10/5; Băjenaru, Ridiche 2013, 116.

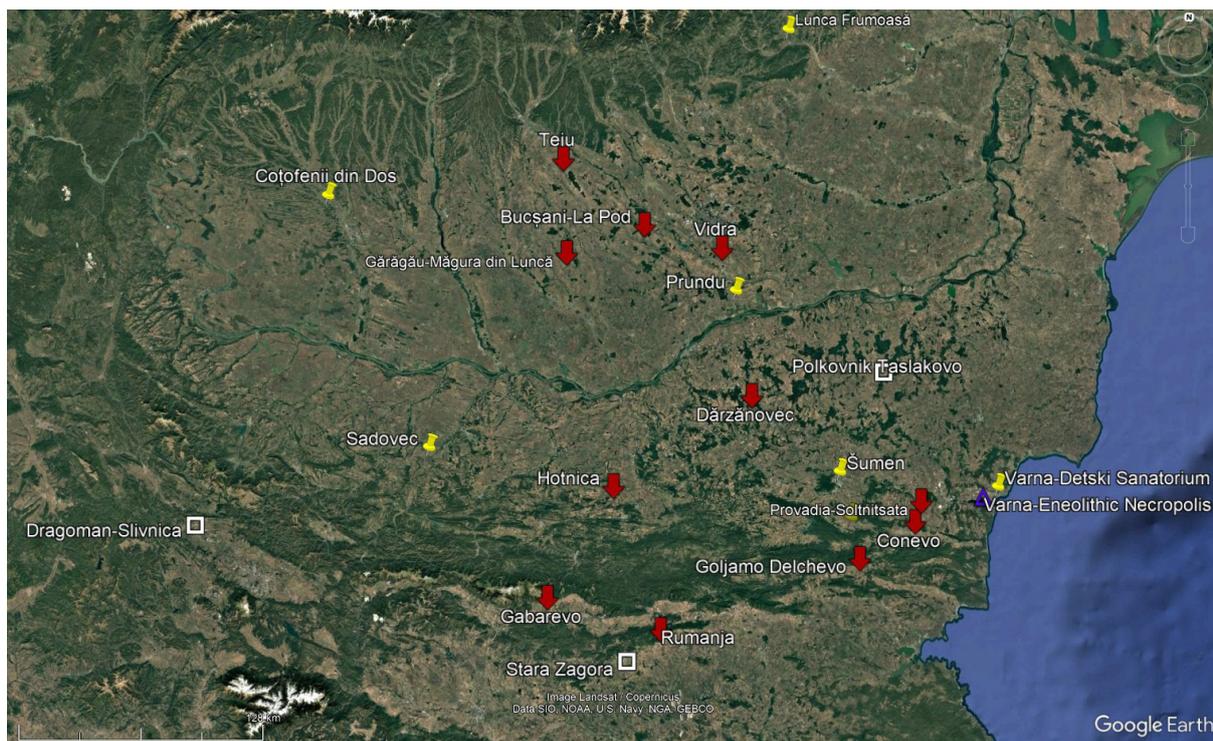


Fig. 2. Diffusion area of Vidra type axes in Gumelnița-Karanovo VI (red arrow – settlements/houses; blue triangle – graves; white square – hoards; yellow pin – isolate finds).

study assumed rightfully, that it was discovered during this period, preserved and abandoned during the same period in respective site¹⁴.

Another item of the type was identified by chance at Cerchejeni, Sulița commune, Botoșani County, on the site known as *Tăblița* or *Movila la Fundu Viei*. Its maximum length is of 15.7 cm, while the

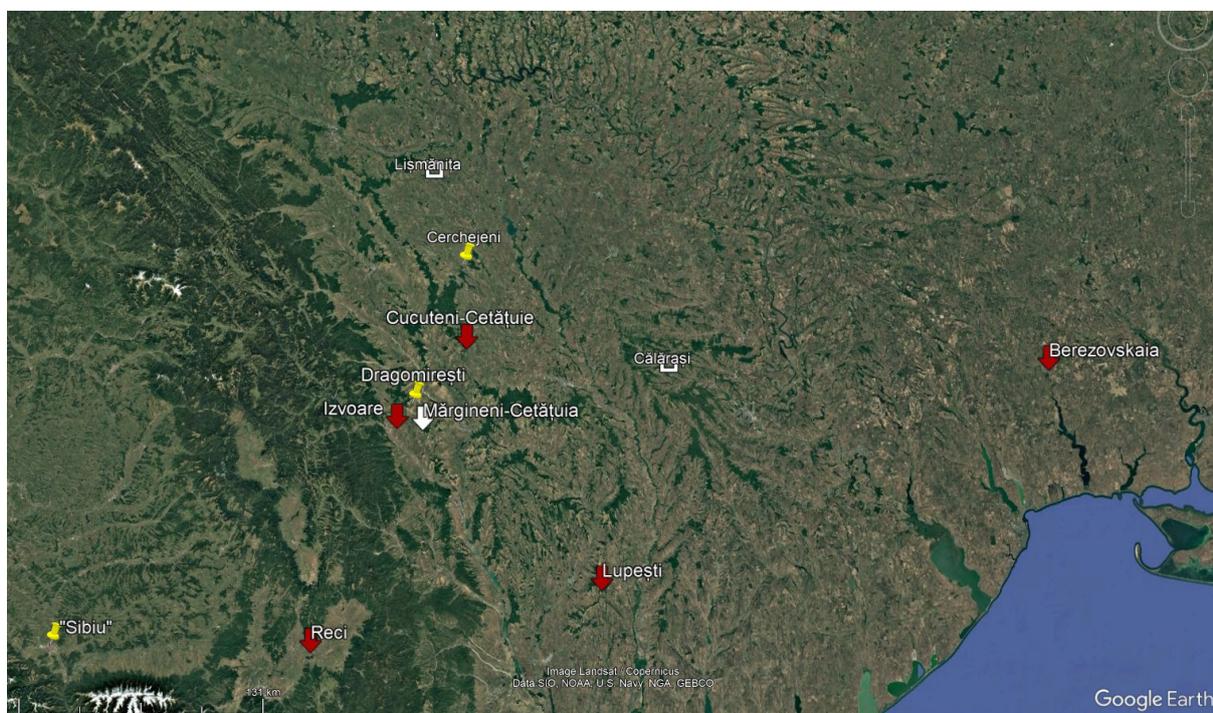


Fig. 3. Diffusion area of Vidra type axes in Cucuteni-Tripolie (red arrow – settlements/houses; white arrow – sanctuary; white square – hoards; yellow pin – isolate finds).

¹⁴ Băjenaru, Ridiche 2013, 115, Fig. 1/1.

weight is unknown¹⁵. A last item that we report, the most recent of which we are aware, was discovered fortuitously near Valea Frumoasă village, Buzău County. The axe has a slim body, a maximum length of 17.2 cm and a weight of 292 grams. The metal composition analysis revealed a percentage of 98.33 Cu, with other small percentages of Si, P, Cr, Fe and Ni. One may argue that part of the so-called isolate exemplars, especially those discovered in highlands, were intentionally hoarded¹⁶.

Discussions

The diffusion area of this item type comprises mainly areas where pottery styles Cucuteni-Tripolie and Gumelnița-Karanovo VI had spread, however there are a few specimens outside these areas, evidence that long distance trade exchanges occurred (Fig. 1-3). Since the type is rather heterogeneous, we are likely dealing with the dissemination of the item's representation system among Copper Age metalworkers. We also note that information was compiled over the course of time, from the few items discussed by Vulpe in 1975, across our map in 2008 until that of today (Fig. 1).

With regards to the maximum length of the items, which could be documented for only forty-five of the specimens, it varies between 10.2 and 24.7 cm (Fig. 4). Because we had access to a wider range of information, especially on the more recently discovered items, we may now specify the weight of some of these specimens, which varies between 283 and 1724 grams (Fig. 5).

From the point of absolute chronology, we noted in the 2008 study that many of the Vidra type axes were discovered in contexts belonging to phase B1 of the Gumelnița culture and A3 of the Cucuteni culture, namely, widely, to the last third of the 5th millennium BC¹⁷. This is still valid in the current state of research and is rather reinforced by the new advances in the absolute dating of late Eneolithic in south-eastern Europe. We mentioned above the absolute date of the

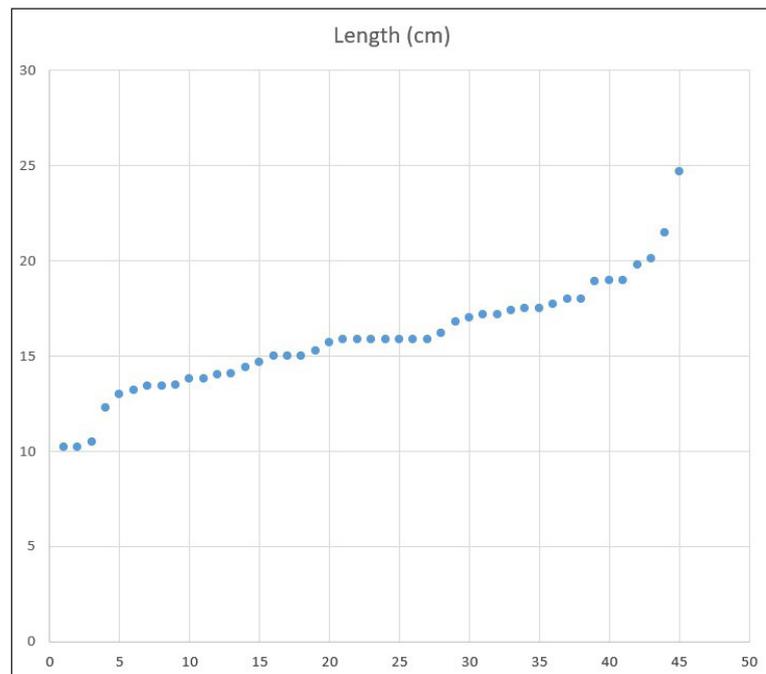


Fig. 4. Item maximum lengths.

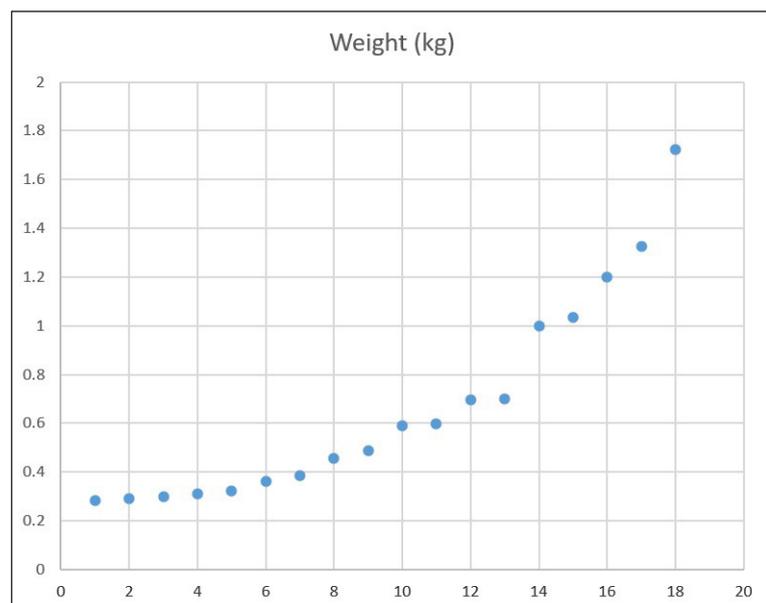


Fig. 5. Item weights.

¹⁵ Mareș 2002, 204, Pl. 14/6; Mareș 2012, 269, Pl. 12/2391, 64/2291.

¹⁶ Munteanu *et al.* 2020, 62, Pl. II.

¹⁷ Ștefan 2008, 79.

Geangoești late levels, which comprise, among other items, also a Vidra type axe (see *infra*). On the other hand, phase A3 of the Cucuteni culture is well delimited from the point of view of absolute dating, approximately between 4350-4150 BC¹⁸.

From the point of view of the find contexts (Fig. 6), we note that Vidra type axes are present in the Varna cemetery, particularly in cenotaph graves, which evidences the rather special symbolic importance of this item type¹⁹. Some of these graves are quite lavishly furnished, further emphasizing the importance, by association, of Vidra type axes. We consider here Gr. 4, for instance, which contains golden objects, other items of copper, an idol *en violon*, a gold painted vessel, a jade chisel, long flint blades, etc²⁰. North the Danube, this item type is present in settlements/houses, hence in rather domestic contexts. A possible exception is represented by the axe in the Cucuteni A2 feature of Mărgineni-Cețățuia, interpreted as sanctuary. The item was lodged in the floor and covered by the collapsed walls, being associated with other objects, like for instance Cucuteni A2 pottery fragments, a possible clay idol, but also an anthropomorphic head provided with a circular pedestal²¹.

Part of the Vidra axes is found in hoards (Dragoman-Slivnica, Stara Zagora, Polkovnik Taslakovo, Lișmănița and Călărași). Their structure indicates either their association with other axe type or other object types, like for instance bracelets. The composition of the Dragoman-Slivnica and Polkovnik Taslakovo hoards evidences at least the partial contemporaneity of the Vidra and Pločnik axe types, as previously believed²². The almost identical structure of the Lișmănița and Călărași hoards (axe and bracelet) is striking, the Lișmănița bracelet weighing approximately a third of the axe weight. This may be indicative of possible standards or incipient measurement units, however such hypothesis cannot be surely substantiated in this state of research.

It is possible, as noted elsewhere²³, that at least a part of the isolate finds of Vidra type axes represents intentional hoarding. The find at Lunca Frumoasă, on a slope of a rocky terrain, could evidence a possible offering²⁴. This may also be valid for the item at Cerchejeni or the Lișmănița hoard, however supporting arguments are missing, which makes it difficult to accept this hypothesis without reservations.

A question with a rather difficult answer is whether this item type is suitable for use as weapon. It is possible that some of the Vidra type axes had also fulfilled this role in the context of possible rivalries or conflicts for resources among the Eneolithic communities by the Lower Danube by late 5th millennium BC. Some “battle axes” in Corded Ware environments of later date, present within graves (Steenwijkerwold, the Netherlands for instance) or depicted on burial stelae (Trento, Italy) do not differ morphologically very much from some Vidra type axes, like that of “Sibiu”²⁵. Nevertheless, until conclusive evidence is found in this respect, the issue remains open to debate.

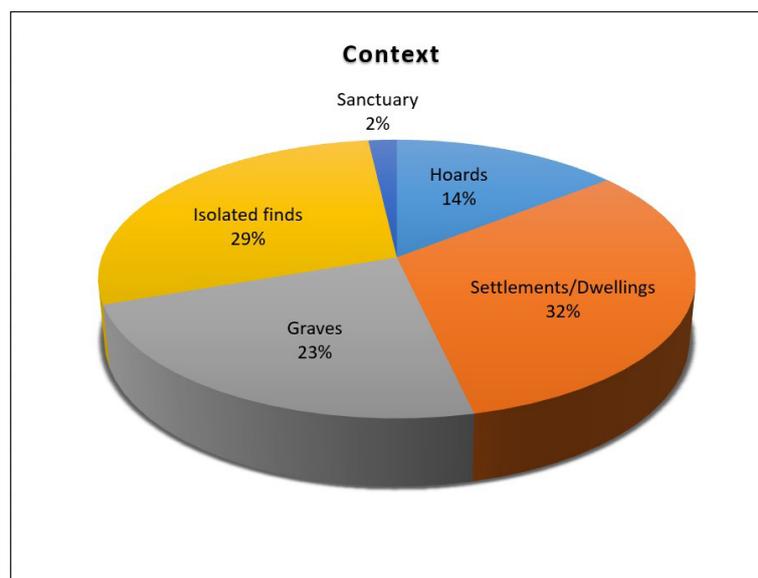


Fig. 6. Context of Vidra type axes.

¹⁸ Popovici, Drașovean 2020, 367-368.

¹⁹ Ștefan 2008, 83-84, cat. no. 28, 30-33, 36, 37, 39, 40.

²⁰ Ivanov 1988, 51-52, Abb. 21-24.

²¹ Monah 2012, 54, Fig. 3/4; 5.

²² Vulpe 1975, 23, note 12.

²³ Munteanu *et al.* 2020, 62.

²⁴ Munteanu *et al.* 2020, 61.

²⁵ Compare Vulpe 1975, 22, cat.no. 27, Taf. 3/27 with Guilane, Zammit 2005, Fig. 44 and Pl. 22.

Conclusions

The Vidra type axe is one of the most sophisticated creations of the Eneolithic period in south-eastern Europe. Most likely, it is an innovation of the artisans in the Gumelnița-Karanovo VI cultural area, possible south of the Danube, later diffused northwards, in the Cucuteni-Tripolie communities. It is a rather heterogeneous type, two types (long and short)²⁶ being established north the Danube and three variations (A, B and C)²⁷ to the south of the Danube. Furthermore, exemplars that could be weighed indicate a rather wide weight range.

A possible future project related to this beautiful item might consider the draft of photos and drawings of all available specimens in a unitary system (together with their accurate measuring and weighing). Also, sampling the items and determining the origin of the raw material with the aid of Pb isotopes, could establish, even though partially, the routes of the Vidra type axes circulation between the Eneolithic communities by the Lower Danube.

Cristian Eduard Ștefan

The “Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology,
Bucharest, RO
cristarh_1978@yahoo.com

REFERENCES

- Băjenaru, Ridiche 2013 R. Băjenaru, F. Ridiche, *Un topor de tip Vidra din Oltenia*. In: S. Stavilă, D. Micle, A. Cîntar, C. Floca, S. Forțiu (Ed.), *Arheovest. I. In memoriam Liviu Măruia. Interdisciplinaritate în arheologie și istorie*, Timișoara, 7 decembrie 2013. Szeged 2013, 115-118.
- Chernakov 2018 D. Chernakov, *A New-Found Hoard of Chalcolithic Heavy Copper Tools from Northeastern Bulgaria*. *Archaeologia Bulgarica* XII, 2, 2018, 1-13.
- Dergachev, Parnov 2022 V. Dergachev, V. Parnov, *The Condrița Hoard*. Chișinău 2022.
- Guilaine, Zammit 2005 J. Guilaine, J. Zammit, *The Origins of War. Violence in Prehistory*. Oxford 2005.
- Ilie 2020 A. Ilie, *Piese de cupru descoperite în Locuința nr. 2 de la Geangoești-Hulă, jud. Dâmbovița*. In: A. Melniciuc, B.P. Niculică, S. Ignătescu, S.-C. Enea (Ed.), *Eternitatea arheologiei. Studii în onoarea profesorului Dumitru Boghian la a 65-a aniversare*. Cluj-Napoca 2020, 487-499.
- Ivanov 1988 I. Ivanov, *Die Ausgrabungen des Gräberfeldes von Varna (1972-1986)*. In: A. Fol, J. Lichardus (Hrsg.), *Macht, Herrschaft und Gold. Das Gräberfeld von Varna (Bulgarien) und die Anfänge einer neuen europäischen Zivilisation*. Saarbrücken 1988, 49-66.
- Ivanov, Avramova 2007 I. Ivanov, M. Avramova, *Two New Chalcolithic Copper Axes Discovered in Bulgaria*. In: M. Stefanovich, C. Angelova (Eds.), *PRAE. In Honorem Henrieta Todorova*, Sofia 2007, 141-144.
- Mareș 2002 I. Mareș, *Metalurgia aramei în neo-eneoliticul României*. Suceava 2002.
- Mareș 2012 I. Mareș, *Metalurgia aramei în civilizațiile Precucuteni și Cucuteni*. Suceava 2012.
- Monah 2013 D. Monah, *Plastica antropomorfă a culturii Cucuteni-Tripolie (Ed. a doua, revăzută și adăugită)*. Piatra Neamț 2012.
- Munteanu et al. 2020 R. Munteanu, D. Garvăn, D. Cristea-Stan, *Un topor de tip Vidra descoperit pe Valea Buzăului*. *BMJT* 12, 61-67.
- Nikolov et al. 2013 V. Nikolov, P. Leshtakov, M. Liuncheva, K. Bachvarov, N. Hristov, S. Trifonov,

²⁶ Vulpe 1975, 22.

²⁷ Todorova 1981, 37-39.

- I. Parinova, E. Purnarova, V. Stoițova, M. Slavkova, T. Maltev, I. Ilieva, E. Anastasova, *Arheologiceski prouchvania na Provadia-Solnitsata. Arheologiceski otkritia i razkopki prez 2012 g.* Sofia 2013.
- Pătrașcu 2002 I. Pătrașcu, *Așezările culturii Gumelnița din bazinul Vedei și Teleormanului (partea I).* *Argesis. Studii și Comunicări XI*, 2002, 19-29.
- Pernicka et al. 1997 E. Pernicka, F. Begemann, S. Schimtt-Strecker, H. Todorova, I. Kuleff, *Prehistoric copper in Bulgaria. Its composition and provenance.* *Eurasia Antiqua* 3, 1997, p. 41-180.
- Popovici, Drașovean 2020 D. N. Popovici, F. Drașovean, *Despre evoluția culturilor Precucuteni și Cucuteni. Analiza bayesiană a datelor ¹⁴C vs. crono-tipologie.* *Cercetări Arheologice XXVII*, 2020, 331-386.
- Spiru 2014 I. Spiru, *Arheologie și numismatică în județul Teleorman. Articole, studii și note (Volum îngrijit de Pavel Mirea).* Pitești 2014.
- Ștefan 2008 C. E. Ștefan, *Some observations on the Vidra type axes. The social significance of the copper in the Chalcolithic.* *Studii de Preistorie* 5, 2008, 79-88.
- Todorova 1981 H. Todorova, *Die kupferzeitlichen Äxte und Beile in Bulgarien.* PBF, IX, 14. München 1981.
- Vulpe 1975 A. Vulpe, *Die Äxte und Beile in Rumänien II.* PBF, IX, 5. München 1975.

