

# Contributions to the Study Methodology of Dacian Pottery

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**T**HIS PAPER aims to identify new ways to follow in the study of the Dacian pottery discovered in Romania by discussing concepts and working methods formulated and tested in the international literature on pottery. Starting from the local contributions, I have tried to create a methodological model which should include the foreign theoretical developments, and which could become a real starting point in a future pertinent and fresh analysis of Dacian ceramics. A detailed study of this aspect regarding Late Iron Age archaeology in Romania is necessary given the real methodological crisis in the literature published after 1989<sup>1</sup>, characterized by the lack of a theoretical framework or by the perpetuation of obsolete analysis models.

Discovered in large quantities on Dacian archaeological sites, in numerous studies written by the Romanian archaeologists pots were discussed less than other categories of materials found in excavations (jewelry, weapons, tools etc.). I shall briefly present the contributions in this field of research, with emphasis on the main topics of interest debated in the bibliography. I consider that presenting the principal notions expressed in the international stream of ideas is essential; consequently I dedicated a part of this paper to this topic.

## Methodological concerns in Dacian archaeology

**T**HE EFFORTS to produce a synthesis on Dacian pottery<sup>2</sup> were neither numerous nor fruitful. There are only two such attempts<sup>3</sup>, to which a book regarding painted pottery<sup>4</sup> was recently added. The number of articles and studies (sometimes comprised in site monographs) is bigger, but visibly it does not cover

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the immense quantity of material unearthed during the archaeological campaigns. Nevertheless, Romanian authors debated with interesting results the most important aspects of pottery study, from defining its role to suggesting solutions for the future.

Thus, the importance of ceramics in the study of Dacian culture was outlined. Most authors have briefly pointed out pottery's role as a chronological indicator<sup>5</sup> that was used to obtain relevant information on the history of pre-Roman Dacia. This aspect required some refinement, meaning that archaeologists noticed the high level of relativity of the data resulted from pottery analysis<sup>6</sup>: pots can't provide chronological information unless correlated with other types of artifacts<sup>7</sup>. The theory that pottery could be an ethnic indicator marking the effective presence of the Dacians has been treated with caution by the majority of the authors<sup>8</sup>. In addition, archaeologists commented on the relevance of the social and economic information provided through the study of pottery<sup>9</sup>.

In terms of pottery origins, two hypotheses have been formulated: the first one considers that the Dacian society produced ceramic types that evolved from prior autochthonous forms and that acquired from abroad new manufacturing techniques and secondly a few vessel types<sup>10</sup>; the second one speaks of a local cultural background that generated basic ceramic shapes, along with foreign contemporary influences, especially from the Greek-Roman world<sup>11</sup>.

The most studied topic concerning Dacian pottery was its classification. Each author used at least one classification criterion, but usually several criteria were employed. In terms of frequency of use, the technological approach (modeling, firing) is the most common<sup>12</sup>, followed by the typological (shape, morphological characteristics, dimensions)<sup>13</sup> and the functional ones (main use of the pot)<sup>14</sup>. On several occasions it has been highlighted that a clear and logical classification should be conceived by eliminating the abundant subtypes and variants which could be in fact the results of local taste and/or the potters' level of skill<sup>15</sup>.

Style and decoration techniques were also of much interest to Dacian archaeology specialists. In general, authors only listed, and sometimes defined, different ornamental procedures. The topic enjoyed much attention; a national colloquium, named "La Tène Pottery Decoration in the Getic Territory", was held in Iași, on 17-18 of November 1994<sup>16</sup>. As I already noted, Dacian painted pottery was featured in a recent monograph.

In the last decade several pots bearing *graffiti* from Grădiștea de Munte – *Sarmizegetusa Regia* have been published<sup>17</sup>. This analysis is important, because the subject is a small category of vessels with a limited variety of shapes; however, these pots could have had the same function, considering the incised signs on their surfaces. In this regard, it is possible that the *graffiti* incised on tableware are symbols of private property and could prove some convivial relationships, whereas the one incised on storage vessels and lids may be interpreted as quantity or content markings; last but not least, some *graffiti* could have been potter's/workshop's marks<sup>18</sup>.

Less debated in the literature was the issue of terminology. We notice that the main tendency was to retain ceramic types' names on the grounds that these have already become common in the archaeological language (such as: "jar-pot" = *vas-borcan*, "fruit bowl" = *fructieni*, "Dacian cup" = *ceașcă dacică*). Therefore, few authors discussed the opportunity of using one term or another<sup>19</sup>. Endeavors for adopting a unifying terminology were undertaken by many Late Iron Age archaeologists and materialized in the drafting and publishing a set of definitions (mainly of ceramic types), after two round tables organized in Deva (1996 and 1997)<sup>20</sup>.

While firing in oxidation or reduction atmosphere, as well as other manufacturing techniques like hand building, wheel-throwing or molding were subjects frequently approached by Romanian authors, many technological aspects were left aside. The exceptions are few and they consist of physical-petrographic analyses – used for determining the firing temperature and character,<sup>21</sup> and chemical analyses – used for identifying temper features<sup>22</sup>.

Last but not least, observations, criticism and suggestions completed the majority of the studies mentioned above. These focused on the necessity of publishing all the material excavated from the Dacian sites<sup>23</sup>, drawing up a reference work in the field and adopting a unitary methodology<sup>24</sup>, publishing potsherds on closed complexes<sup>25</sup>, performing conclusive laboratory analyses on relevant samples<sup>26</sup>, or carrying out exhaustive archaeological research on a particular site.<sup>27</sup>

Before presenting the international historiography on ancient ceramics, I would like to point out some of the gains of the Romanian literature on Dacian pottery. Vasile Pârvan paid much attention to the functionality criterion (even if not explicitly) and to the terminology. He proposed approaching the subject in a larger context (contemporary pottery) and the analysis of the main influences; he also noted the pot assemblage aspect in closed complexes.

Ion Horațiu Crișan remains the author of the reference book on Dacian pottery, his typology being used in every paper in the literature. He indicated the appearance of emblematic ceramic types in Dacian culture: the "jar-pot," the "fruit bowl," the "Dacian cup," the "luxury jug," or the strainer; also, he observed the particularities of the vessels discovered at *Sarmizegetusa Regia*, the fine quality and high level of finish, introducing in the literature the concept of "court pottery," typical for the area of the Dacian Kingdom's capital.

Ioan Glodariu underlined the necessity of studying pottery by closed complexes, with a well established chronology, identifying ceramic assemblages, building progressive and chronological poles, and the mandatory laboratory analysis for identifying production centers. It is worth mentioning that Valeriu Sirbu proposed his own methodology for studying Dacian pottery, which he applied on the material unearthed at Grădiștea (Brăila county), starting with the typological criterion and considering paste, temper, modeling, decoration techniques, patterns and functionality.

The recent contributions of George Trohani confirm that the study of Dacian pottery is in a continuous progress; his main efforts are related to laboratory analysis

(paste composition, firing temperature and features), quantification (statistics for several sites), and the study of Dacian pottery from a specific region, the Romanian Plain (hence the possibility of noticing local characteristics and phenomena).

## Western Ceramic Studies

**T**HE LIMITS of this paper do not allow me to outline the whole international historiography on the subject. The volume of information is continuously and rapidly growing; the restricted access to international bibliography that Romanian researchers “enjoy” further complicates the matter. A selection of the cited sources is unfortunately difficult to avoid, and represents a reality I assume.

The reason I chose to point out the coordinates of ancient pottery analysis in the international literature is linked to portraying the mentality of the Western researcher<sup>28</sup>, but also to identifying and importing a viable methodological model<sup>29</sup>. These coordinates are: pot analysis, pot classification, quantification, identification of production centers and distribution areas, pot functionality.

Since 1956, from the publication of the synthesis by American researcher Anna Shepard<sup>30</sup>, it has been outlined that the technological study of pottery was a must in order to correctly interpret the data obtained: the ceramologist has the obligation to understand all the steps of the entire fabrication process of a pot, to know the methods of analysing ceramic paste, and the techniques used by potters to make ceramic vessels<sup>31</sup>. There are two main categories of laboratory analysis: physical and chemical. The physical (or petrographic) analyses aim to specify the region where a vessel was made by identifying its geological features and also aim to investigate the numerous technological aspects regarding raw materials<sup>32</sup>. Chemical (or compositional) analyses provide valuable data on the type of clay used, and also on the level and character of the firing<sup>33</sup>. Recently, American literature nuanced the way in which laboratory data are interpreted, focusing on the validity/necessity of these methods, in terms of building a paradigm or outlining an aspect related to human behavior (such as ceramic production or trade)<sup>34</sup>.

Many and diverse criteria were proposed for classifying ceramic vessels. Anna Shepard chose the geometrical one (the pot could be described by comparing one or more geometrical shapes)<sup>35</sup>; Jean-Paul Gardin opted for the formal criterion (the vessel’s morphological characteristics are each individualized and encoded)<sup>36</sup>; Bernard Dedet and Michel Py used the mathematical criterion (defining a ceramic type by mathematical relations between its main dimensions<sup>37</sup>; Hélène Balfet and her collaborators sorted pots using typology<sup>38</sup>, while J. Theodore Peña selected the functionality criterion<sup>39</sup>.

No matter what criterion is chosen, the goals of any classification are to quantify the potsherds, identify the ceramic assemblages, and relate them within a given ar-

chaeological site. It is not always easy to operate with these concepts frequently used abroad (especially in the Anglo-Saxon literature), given the fact that the archaeological theories that produced them (processualism, mainly) are not fully understood and thoroughly studied in Romanian literature. However, some remarks should be made.

Quantification requires the quantitative analysis of the pottery from a site. This primary sense was criticized by the Anglo-Saxon historiography: it is possible that the material from a site could not be entirely recovered or it was not discovered *in situ*. Thus we might not ever know which vessels from a ceramic assemblage ended or not their prime use life<sup>40</sup>. Instead of using quantification for comparing two or more ceramic assemblages, it was suggested to take into account some variables: the level of completeness, breakness, and vessel dispersion surface<sup>41</sup>.

I mentioned above that an important aspect of laboratory analysis is the identification of production centers. But, along with the fabrication technology itself comes the production process (the organized socio-economical context)<sup>42</sup>. Drawing distribution maps may prove extremely useful for marking and later interpreting the producer-consumer relationship,<sup>43</sup> but other notions should be brought into discussion as well, such as standardization of production (a process that operates in time over ceramic assemblages, noticeable by comparing the decrease in the variability rate of technology, style or surface treatment, and morphological features) or intensification of production (an economic process in which human and material resources are invested in mass production, through specialized activities)<sup>44</sup>.

Vessel functionality is the result of several cumulative factors: the technological process (including raw materials), the potter's intention, consumers' preferences and taste, use life etc. As the difference between prime use, secondary use and recycling should be made clear<sup>45</sup>, the same applies to residual (organic materials extracted from the vessel's pores) and laboratory (the pot's level of permeability and fire resistance) analysis results<sup>46</sup>.

If I were to choose an example for the direction taken by ancient pottery studies, from the many conclusions expressed in the international literature I consulted, it would be this: there is no need for only one valid ceramic theory<sup>47</sup>. There is no universally accepted methodological paradigm; hence the number of distinct points of view is constantly growing. Even so, I could notice some ideas that many authors embrace: caution is compulsory in formulating notions, hypothesis or models; methodology should be integrated in a theoretical system; when commencing research, one must precisely establish its dimensions and goals, as well as clearly mark the steps of the scientific approach; the conclusions should be completed with other aspects pertaining to the material and spiritual culture; the research should be an interdisciplinary one; theoretical works are needed in order to discuss issues and raise questions; the author's attitude should be both critical and self critical.

## What is to be done?

IT IS unfortunately obvious that the study of Dacian pottery does not rise up to the international standards. The reason is not the poor quality of the specialists (on the contrary), but in the difficulty of assimilating Western theoretical and methodological concepts. “Site formation processes,” “middle range theories” or “ceramic ecology” are not easily translatable notions, and therefore the efforts required for connecting to the international stream of ideas are ever growing. Choosing a paradigm and applying it without fully understanding its advantages and disadvantages is a risk that must be avoided.

I consider we should start with a pertinent and simple system of analysis, with a precise and feasible aim (e.g. drawing up a pottery determiner for a Dacian archaeological site). A model to follow is the paper on the ceramic material discovered in the Celtic *oppidum* at Mont Beuvray – *Bibracte*<sup>48</sup>; this work is both a reliable research instrument and a methodological approach (it discusses pottery types, terminology, and aspects related to firing, paste, style, origins etc.).

Along with a unitary and eloquent illustration, the system should contain a comprehensive working sheet. I believe this sheet should cover the following aspects (in random order): denomination of the potsherd, storage location, context of discovery, dimensions, modeling technique, firing type, paste features, style, dating and bibliographical references. The colors of the ceramic fragments should be determined using the Munsell system<sup>49</sup>, a method already established in the international<sup>50</sup> and Romanian<sup>51</sup> literature.

In terms of naming the ceramic types, I opt for translating the terms acknowledged in the Western literature<sup>52</sup>, utilizing explicative dictionaries, both Romanian and foreign. It is desirable to eliminate the denominations which, in translation, would create confusion or an inaccurate perception (e.g. *fructiēm* = “fruit bowl”).<sup>53</sup>

The interpretation of ceramic vessels should follow the scheme: fragment → pot → assemblage → context → site → micro region → region, with emphasis on analysis, and not on social or anthropological observations. The application of the quantification method should be integrated in a computer database whenever opportune; nevertheless, the resulting data have to be treated with caution. The publication of ceramic material has to continue, much of it being already lost or lacking an appropriate documentation.

The chosen methodology does not have to be definitive and rigid; professional error is a reality, generally objective and it must be assumed. While ceramic theory is developing continuously and rapidly, this does not have to be an impediment, but rather a stimulus for integrating the study of Dacian pottery in the international ancient pottery science.





## Notes

1. Gelu A. Florea, "The 'Public Image' of the Dacian Aristocracy," in *Studia Historia UBB*, 51/1, 2006, p. 2.
2. By "Dacian pottery" I understand the local ceramic production, dated in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC–beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. See Aurel Rustoiu, *Războinici și artizani de prestigiu în Dacia preromană*, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, p. 29-40, with the bibliography.
3. Ion Horațiu Crișan, *Ceramica daco-getică. Cu specială privire la Transilvania*, Bucharest, 1969 (= Crișan 1969); Emil Moscalu, *Ceramica traco-getică*, Bucharest, 1983 (= Moscalu 1983).
4. Gelu Florea, *Ceramica pictată. Artă, meșteșug și societate în Dacia preromană (I. a.Ch. – I p.Ch.)*, Cluj-Napoca, 1998 (= Florea 1998).
5. Vasile Pârvan, *Getica. O protoistorie a Daciei*, Bucharest, 1926 (= Pârvan 1926), p. 561.
6. Crișan 1969, p. 11, 17.
7. Mihail Macrea, Ioan Glodariu, *Așezarea dacică de la Arpașu de Sus*, Bucharest, 1976 (= Macrea. Glodariu 1976), p. 86.
8. Crișan 1969, p. 217-232.
9. Pârvan 1926, p. 562; Crișan 1969, p. 11-12; Florea 1998, p. 227-254; Vasile Dupoi, Valeriu Sîrbu, *Incinta dacică fortificată de la Pietroasele-Gruin Dării, județul Buzău (I)*, Buzău, 2001 (= Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001), p. 21.
10. Crișan 1969, p. 212-213.
11. Pârvan 1926, p. 563.
12. Aurel Buzilă, "Despre ceramica daco-getică lucrată cu mâna de la Bîtca Doamnei, Piatra Neamț," in *Memoria Antiquitatis*, II, 1970, p. 237; Aurel Buzilă, "Despre ceramica daco-getică lucrată cu roata de la Bîtca Doamnei, Piatra Neamț," in *Memoria Antiquitatis*, IV-V, 1972-1973, p. 93; Macrea, Glodariu 1976, p. 80; Moscalu 1983, p. 6; Silviu Sanie, "Cetățuia dacică de la Barboși," in *Arheologia Moldovei*, XII, 1988 (= Sanie 1988), p. 66; Nicolae Lupu, *Tilișca. Așezările arheologice de pe Cățânaș*, Bucharest, 1989, p. 61-70; Aurel Rustoiu, "Ceramica dacică de la Florești-Cetatea Fetei' (jud. Cluj)," in *Revista Bistriței*, VII/1993 (= Rustoiu 1993), p. 64; Vasile Ursachi, *Zargidava. Cetatea dacică de la Brad*, Bucharest, 1995, p. 148; Dragoș Măndescu, *Cetățeni. Stațiunea geto-dacică de pe Valea Dâmboviței Superioare*, Brăila, 2006, p. 33; Radu Vulpe, Silvia Teodor, *Piroboridava. Așezarea geto-dacică de la Poiana*, Bucharest, 2003, p. 68; Gabriela Gheorghiu, *Dacii pe cursul mijlociu al Mureșului*, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 139.
13. Pârvan 1926, p. 566; Crișan 1969, p. 17 (although the author expressly states the fact that he uses mainly the typological-stylistic criterion, his classification starts with the technological one: there is rudimentary and fine pottery); Ioan Glodariu, *Așezări dacice și daco-romane la Slănnic. Contribuții la continuitatea dacilor în Dacia romană*, Bucharest, 1981, p. 39-40; Gelu Florea, "Materiale ceramice descoperite pe terasa a VIII-a de la Grădiștea Muncelului (I)," in *Ephemeris Napocensis*, III, 1993, p. 96; Valeriu Sîrbu, *Dava getică de la Grădiștea, județul Brăila (I)*, Brăila, 1996 (= Sîrbu 1996), p. 16-17; Ioan Andrițoiu, Aurel Rustoiu, *Sighișoara-Wietenberg. Descoperirile preistorice și așezarea dacică*, Bucharest, 1997 (= Andrițoiu, Rustoiu 1997), p. 84; Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001, p. 21.
14. George Trohani, "Ceramica geto-dacă din secolele II a.Chr.-I p.Chr. din Câmpia Română" (PhD thesis abstract), in *SCIVA*, 52-53, 2001-2002 (= Trohani 2002), p.

- 246-247. This criterion is recently gaining territory in the classification of Dacian ceramic types: Sanie 1988, p. 66; Rustoiu 1993, p. 64; Sîrbu 1996, p. 17; Andrițoiu, Rustoiu 1997, p. 84; Valeriu Sîrbu, Sebastian Matei, Vasile Dupoi, *Incinta dacică fortificată de la Pietroasa Mică-Gruuiu Dării, com. Pietroasele, jud. Buzău (II)*, Buzău, 2005, p. 49.
15. Ioan Glodariu, "Contribuții la cronologia ceramicii dacice în epoca Latène târzie," in *Studii dacice*, Cluj-Napoca, 1981 (= Glodariu 1981), p. 162.
  16. Following this colloquium, some studies were published in *Arheologia Moldovei*, XVIII, 1995.
  17. Gelu Florea, "Vase ceramice cu inscripții (graffiti) de la Sarmizegetusa Regia," in *AMP*, XXIII/2000 (= Florea 2000).
  18. Florea 2000, p. 276. Other fragments bearing *graffiti* were also recently published by the same author: Gelu Florea, "Noi fragmente ceramice cu semne grafice de la Sarmizegetusa Regia," in *Studii de istorie antică. Omagiu profesorului Ioan Glodariu*, Cluj-Napoca, 2001.
  19. Pârvan 1926, p. 583; Crișan 1969, p. 122-124, 153; Sîrbu 1996, p. 17; Trohani 2002, p. 246.
  20. "Propuneri pentru un dicționar de termeni în arheologia celei de-a doua epoci a fierului," in *Sargetia*, XXVII/I, 1997-1998, p. 210-211. Unfortunately, the authors of this text failed to impose and sustain those denominations.
  21. Ion Horațiu Crișan, *Ziridava*, Arad, 1978, p. 291-313; Moscalu 1983, p. 149-153 (the author makes a few remarks related to experimental archaeology); Trohani 2002, p. 246.
  22. George Trohani, *Locuirea getică din partea de nord a Popinei Bordușani, comuna Bordușani, județul Ialomița*, Târgoviște, 2006, p. 73-75.
  23. Pârvan 1926, p. 571, Crișan 1969, p. 12.
  24. Sîrbu 1996, p. 16; Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001, p. 21.
  25. Glodariu 1981, p. 146-147.
  26. Glodariu 1981, p. 163.
  27. Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001, p. 21.
  28. There are several research groups and specialists' associations which study pottery of a given time period or on a given territory, as well as specialized research institutes, such as the Laboratoire de Céramologie de Lyon (UMR 5138 «Archéométrie et Archéologie», Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée Jean Pouilloux), Société Française d'Étude de la Céramique Antique en Gaule (SFECAG), Study Group for Roman Pottery (SGRP), Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautores (RCRF).
  29. Moreover, the model doesn't reduce itself to interpreting ceramic material, but includes different stages in the research process (all equally relevant!): recovering and documenting pots, processing and publication, the impact of the study in the general context of ancient pottery.
  30. Anna O. Shepard, *Ceramics for the Archaeologist* (12<sup>th</sup> ed.), Washington D.C., 1985 (= Shepard 1985).
  31. Shepard 1985, p. 1-5.
  32. Clive Orton, Paul Tyers, Alan Vince, *Pottery in Archaeology*, Cambridge, 1993 (= Orton, Tyers, Vince 1993), p. 140-144; Prudence M. Rice, "Recent Ceramic Analysis: 2. Composition, Production, and Theory," in *Journal of Archaeological Research*, 4, 3, 1996 (= Rice 1996 b), p. 167.



33. Orton, Tyers, Vince 1993, p. 144-145.
34. Rice 1996 b, p. 168-172.
35. Shepard 1985, p. 226-235.
36. Jean-Paul Gardin, *Code pour l'analyse des forms de poteries* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Paris, 1985, p. 14-17.
37. Bernard Dedet, Michel Py, *Classification de la céramique non tournée protohistorique du Languedoc méditerranéen*, Paris, 1975, p. 26-28.
38. H. Balfet, M.F. Fauvet Berthelot, S. Monzon, *Lexique et typologie des poteries. Pour la normalisation de la description des poteries*, Paris, 1988, p. 7.
39. J. Theodoro Peña, *Roman Pottery in the Archaeological Record*, Cambridge, 2007 (= Peña 2007), p. 20.
40. Shepard 1985, p. 332-333; Orton, Tyers, Vince 1993, p. 166.
41. Orton, Tyers, Vince 1993, p. 167; Rice 1996 b, p. 183.
42. Rice 1996 b, p. 173.
43. Orton, Tyers, Vince 1993, p. 199-201.
44. Rice 1996 b, p. 176-182.
45. Peña 2007, p. 8 *sqq.*
46. Orton, Tyers, Vince 1993, p. 220-226; Prudence M. Rice, "Recent Ceramic Analysis: I. Function, Style, and Origins," *Journal of Archaeological Research*, 4, 2, 1996 (= Rice 1996 a), p. 141-147.
47. Rice 1996 b, p. 186.
48. Daniel Paunier *et alii*, *Système de description et de gestion du mobilier céramique* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Glux-en-Glenne, Lausanne, 1994.
49. *Munsell Soil Color Chart* (revised edition), New Windsor, 1994.
50. Orton, Tyers, Vince 1993, p. 136-138.
51. Cristina Popescu, "Sigillate orientale B ("Ceramică samiană") descoperite în așezarea geto-dacică de la Poiana, jud. Galați," in *Fontes Historiae. Studia in honorem Demetrii Protase*, Bistrița-Cluj Napoca, 2006, p. 267; Viorica Rusu-Bolindeț, *Ceramica romană de la Napoca*, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 58; Mariana-Cristina Popescu, "Pre-Roman Dacia within the Trade with the Hellenistic and Roman World. Eastern Sigillata B," in *AMN*, 43-44/I, 2006-2007 (2008), p. 91.
52. A polyglot dictionary (in French, German, English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Dutch) was published more than two decades ago: *Lexique plurilingue pour la descriptions des poteries* (H. Balfet, M.F. Fauvet Berthelot, S. Monzon eds.), Paris, 1988.
53. The terminology must be completed with the recent contributions in geoarchaeology: C. Ionescu, L. Ghergari, "Modeling and Firing Technology – Reflected in the Textural Features and the Mineralogy of the Ceramics from Neolithic Sites in Transylvania (Romania)," in *Geologica Carpathica*, 53, 2002; Corina Ionescu, Lucreția Ghergari, "Mic glosar de termeni geologici utilizați în studiul ceramicii arheologice," in *CA*, XIII, 2006.

### Abstract

#### Contributions to the Study Methodology of Dacian Pottery

The goal of this paper is to present the main contributions of the Romanian archaeological literature regarding Dacian pottery and the most cited Western papers concerning pottery studies. Furthermore, I have tried to outline the possible directions to follow in promoting Dacian pottery

studies and to connect those to the principal theories on ancient ceramics. Authors researching Dacian pottery seldom discussed theoretical concepts regarding ceramic methodology, generally taking for granted the ideas presented earlier in the literature. This practice led to the perpetuation of some incorrect denominations, to dissensions in choosing the proper terminology, to many and different classifications, and to virtually little progress in the field. However, I chose to present the positive contributions of the Romanian archaeologists, as these are still fundamental to any approach on Dacian ceramics. Studying the international literature confirmed my initial belief that the study of pottery does not require a single rigid methodology, but a simple and pertinent one, ready to adapt to the new theoretical tendencies.

### **Keywords**

Dacian culture, methodology, ceramic theory, Dacian pottery