



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Quaternary International

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/quaint](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/quaint)

## Daily life objects of bone and antler in the towns of Medieval Moldavia. Case study: Old Orhei (Republic of Moldova)

Ludmila Bacumenco-Pîrnău <sup>a, b</sup>, Luminița Bejenaru <sup>c, d, \*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Institute of Archaeology, Romanian Academy – Iași Branch, Iași, Romania

<sup>b</sup> Academy of Sciences of Moldova, Institute of Cultural Heritage, Stefan Cel Mare Bd., 1, MD – 2001 Chișinău, Republic of Moldova

<sup>c</sup> “Olga Necrasov” Center of Anthropological Research of Romanian Academy – Iași Branch, Iași, Romania

<sup>d</sup> “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Faculty of Biology, Carol I Bd., 11, 700506 Iași, Romania

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 28 February 2017

Received in revised form

27 November 2017

Accepted 29 November 2017

Available online xxx

#### Keywords:

Bone

Antler

Artefacts

Medieval Moldavia

Old Orhei (Orheiul Vechi)

### ABSTRACT

The present paper comprises research results regarding the usage of bone and antler artefacts by the inhabitants of Medieval Moldavia, taking as a case study an assemblage discovered in the medieval site of Old Orhei (Republic of Moldova). Numerous artefacts in different stages of manufacturing were identified, as well as artefacts with different wear levels. Our study emphasizes an important diversity in the typology of artefacts and in the anatomical and taxonomical selection of raw materials. The current paper seeks to continue the analysis of these types of objects that began a decade ago, when a part of bone and antler artefacts recovered from the archaeological excavations conducted in Old Orhei during the years 1947–2001 was investigated. The rich collection of bone and antler objects gained in the last six decades, illustrating the different segments of daily life, represents a valuable testimony of the urban material civilization during this historical period.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd and INQUA. All rights reserved.

### 1. Introduction

The bone and antler artefacts represent a substantial category of material evidences that illustrate various aspects of the daily life history of the inhabitants of medieval towns in Moldavia, such as Baia, Siret, Suceava, Iași, Târgu Trotuș, Bârlad, Vaslui, Old Orhei (Orheiul Vechi), Lăpușna, Cetatea Albă (White Fortress) etc. (Fig. 1). Townspeople used a wide range of objects made of bone and antler, such as household items (handles of knives, needles, pointed pieces, polishers etc.), warfare and hunting weapons/objects (arrowheads, hunting knives; plates for the decoration of horse saddles and arrow bags etc.), toiletries and clothing accessories (combs, buttons, appliqués), game pieces; religious items (little crosses) (Bejenaru, 2012).

In the towns of Medieval Moldavia, skilled craftsmen in bone and antler manufacture were encountered. This is confirmed by the discovery of artefacts, such as fragments of hunted red deer antlers, unfinished objects of cattle and sheep/goat bones, or rejects, in the

archaeological sites of Baia (Neamțu, 1997), Iași (Andronic, 1986), Roman (Mircea and Hănceanu, 2013). In Suceava, a 15th century workshop for processing deer antlers, for the subsequent production of handles of knives, buttons and ornaments was discovered (Matei, 1970; Emandi, 1996). In Târgu Trotuș, the archaeologists excavated a workshop with a large deposit of cornual processes left behind by the processing of cattle horns, dated to the 15th – 17th centuries (Artimon, 2003).

Some toiletries of antler (combs) or weapons made of ivory, used by the representatives of the social elite, were imported from other countries. Testimonies on the use of ivory and pearl objects exist in the documentary sources, such as the property inventory of Petru Schiopul, Prince of Moldavia. It comprises, besides numerous expensive jewelry and clothes, dishes and cutlery used by the royal family, a hunting knife with white handle of ivory, inlaid with precious stones; a knife with black handle of ivory, with turquoises and rubies, nacre boxes for toiletries etc. (Zahariuc et al., 2014).

Less attentions has been paid to the zooarchaeological analysis of the worked bone, antler and tooth objects from Medieval Moldavia so our study will represent an important comparative material at regional, even macroregional, level. Our work contributes to recognize of formal types and technical style of bone and antler objects as they relate especially to the local hinterland. We

\* Corresponding author. “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Faculty of Biology, Carol I Bd., 11, 700506 Iași, Romania.

E-mail addresses: [ludmila.pirnaeu@gmail.com](mailto:ludmila.pirnaeu@gmail.com) (L. Bacumenco-Pîrnău), [bejlumi@yahoo.com](mailto:bejlumi@yahoo.com), [lumib@uaic.ro](mailto:lumib@uaic.ro) (L. Bejenaru).



Fig. 1. Location of towns in Medieval Moldavia.

have to note that the area to the east of the Carpathians, included within the boundaries of the Mongol Empire, was the western periphery of the Golden Horde (Fedorov-Davydov, 1984). In this context, the city of Sehr al-Gedid (later Old Orhei), as well as the rest of the territories under the Khan of Sarai from the Lower Volga region, Crimea, Horezm and North Caucasus, developed a material culture with interference of oriental tradition, not encountered in the Central and Western European regions (Spinei, 1994), which are also found in the sample of horn and bone artefacts.

The aim of the current paper is to provide new data on the bone and antler objects used in the medieval town of Old Orhei situated in Moldavia. The study is mainly focused on the technical and formal features, emphasizing the archaeozoological approach (mainly anatomy and taxonomy). The finds of the medieval Old Orhei are relevant for the reconstruction of the everyday life on a local scale. On the other hand, these finds are important when compared with finds of the same period in other regions of Europe.

The archaeological complex Old Orhei (14<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries) is situated on a dominant height, being surrounded on three sides by the meandering Răut River (a tributary of the Dniester River), in the district of Orhei, at 60 km to the North-East of Chișinău (Republic of Moldova). It includes many cultural levels, from Prehistory to the late Middle Ages, as well as the Golden Horde period. The urban settlement founded during the Mongol domination, known in most sources as the Sehr al-Gedid City (= *New Town*), was an important political and economic center in the region during the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century (Abyzova et al., 1981; Yanina, 1977; Spinei, 1994, 1996; Postică, 2005). The citadel and the medieval town of Orhei were founded on the ruins of this Mongol urban settlement (Byrnia, 1986, 1997; Postică, 2006). Citadel, commercial areas, workshops, the district of the urban patriciate, homes of city residents, workshops, churches, cemeteries etc. (Fig. 2), were identified in the archaeological campaigns of the 1947–1963 period by G.D. Smirnov, in 1968–1991 by P.P. Byrnia, in 1993–1995 by I. Hîncu and in 1996–2001 by Gh. Postică (Smirnov, 1960; Abyzova et al., 1982; Byrnia, 1991; Bîrnea, 1997; Gorodenco, 2000; Postică, 2006, 2009).

## 2. Material and methods

The material studied in the present paper represents the bone and antler artefacts recovered from the archaeological excavations made in 1947–2001. The artefacts with manufacturing marks were collected separately by the archaeologists. According to the archaeologists, the artefacts belong to the period of the 14<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries (Postică, 2006). The artefact studies were carried out in the museum complex Old Orhei (Republic of Moldova), using comparative materials, which allowed recognition of technical style and formal type. The artefacts referred to in this paper include: about 70 pieces representing isolated artefacts, both finished and unfinished, found on the surface of the settlement (most of them made from antler and bone); a sample of 326 unfinished products of scapulae; two samples of 32 and 18 respectively scapulae with processing traces and semi-finished plates.

The archaeozoological methodology resided mainly in anatomical, taxonomical and taphonomical identifications, encoding and quantification of data (Udrescu et al., 1999).

## 3. Results and discussion

Archaeological research carried out in the perimeter of the medieval Old Orhei site revealed various categories of bone and antler artefacts used by the townspeople in everyday life, classified by functional criterion into five groups: 1. Working tools and household items (handles of knives, muffs, cooking utensils, needles, pointed pieces, polishers etc.); 2. Warfare and hunting weapons/objects (arrowheads, hunting knives; pads for the decoration of horse saddles and arrow bags, handles for riding crops etc.); 3. Toiletries, adornments and clothing accessories (combs, buttons, beads, appliqués etc.); 4. Game pieces and musical instruments (whistles); 5. Religious items (little crosses).

Most of the artefacts identified in the site of Old Orhei are unfinished products, discovered in 1972 and dated to the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, representing a sample of 326 scapulae plates. According to the authors of the discovery, these pieces belong to large animals, and they come from the same workshop (Byrnia, 1974; Abyzova et al., 1981). Reconsidering this discovery, we found that

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7450040>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7450040>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)