Locuirea culturii Coţofeni de la Deva-Magna Curia, judeţul Hunedoara / The Coţofeni Habitation from Magna Curia, Deva, Hunedoara County

Abstract:

In the second half of 2012, at the base of the hill of Deva fortress (in its southeastern part) preventive excavations were conducted to investigate a perimeter of 187 m2 affected by a project to rennovate the backyard of the Magna Curia building in Deva, Hunedoara county. The most intensive traces of prehistoric human activity were encountered in the northeastern part of the site. Here, at a depth of about 2.4 m, five prehistoric features were found, three of which were from the Coţofeni culture, while the other two contained materials specific to the Şoimuş cultural group. The three complexes, dating from the end of Eneolithic, appear to be part of a group comprising a housing structure (Cx 9) and two pits (Cx 10 and Cx 8), the first of these being inside the dwelling. Inside, several fragments of pottery, animal bones, pieces of charred wood and heavily burned scraps of adobe splice were found. In the central part of the structure, an andesite grinder and other lithic fragments of the same local rock were discovered. The contouring of the northern part of the house presented intense traces of arson, delimited to pit Cx 10. On the bottom of the pit, a thick layer of ash and blackened earth was deposited, while the walls were heavily burned, the clay being reddened to a thickness of about 10 cm, indicating that a fire started here. The pit contained very little soil, and was filled with large fragments of adobe splice which bore impressions of rods and beams, some of which had been burned to the point of vitrification. In the upper half of the complex, especially in its southwestern part, a cluster of pottery finds were made. These fragments, which came from several pots (some were also found whole) seem to have been deposited in a large, undecorated pot. Above this group of vessels, bearing secondary burning to the point of vitrification, large pieces of andesite had been placed, which sealed the deposit. Two adjacent fragments were found, most likely from a supplies vessel (amphora), whose main decoration renders a spectable pendant, made using a technique of successive stitches. Based on the pottery finds, especially those from pit Cx 10, we estimate the chronology of this habitation to be from the Coţofeni culture. The types of vessels and their decorations are specific to phase III of Coţofeni culture and have many analogies from settlements in southwestern Transylvania and surrounding areas in Banat. The locality of Deva was settled by Coţofeni communities from the early stages of this culture. The settlement of Magna Curia had a complementary relationship with the nucleus of habitation on Fortress Hill, proving once again the importance of this area for habitation from the end of Eneolithic and early Bronze Age.

Keywords: *late Eneolithic, Coţofeni Culture, settlement, dwelling, ritual pit, pottery.*