

# THE EARLY MIDDLE AGE CEMETERY FROM BLANDIANA (DISTRICT OF ALBA)

## SUMMARY

The article presents the results of the excavations in an Early Middle Age cemetery, partially destroyed by the river Mureş, near the Blandiana village. There were discovered eight burial graves, seven of them (graves number 1, 3 — 8) containing pottery, iron knives, ornaments (bronze ear-ring and glass bead) and sometimes animal oblations. These graves may be dated in the second half of the IX<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the X<sup>th</sup> century and belong to the Dridu culture of the local population. The grave nr. 2, with its completely different inventory, represents a foreign nomadic element, probably connected with an early Hungarian raid on the Mureş valley in the first half of the X<sup>th</sup> century.

The settlement and cemetery (A) from Blandiana, are of the same date as those from Alba Iulia, Sebeş, Ghirbom, Ciumbrud, etc., all of them representing a group of discoveries which may indicate the existence of a autochthonous principality (the so-called „principality of Bălgrad — Alba Iulia“) on the middle flow of the Mureş river.

## EXPLICATION OF FIGURES

*Fig. 1.* Map of excavations.

*Fig. 2.* Pottery from the graves 1 (1), 4 (2—3), 5 (4—5) and 7 (6—7) or discovered fortuitously in the previous years (8—9).

*Fig. 3.* Amphora-shaped jugs from the graves 3 (5) and 6 (4) or discovered fortuitously (1—3).

*Fig. 4.* 1 — grave nr. 2; 2 — grave nr. 8; 3—6 — objects from the grave nr. 8.

*Fig. 5.* The funerary inventory of grave nr. 2: 1 — bone amulet (?); 2 — silver tube; 3 — unknown iron objects; 4 — ankle bones; 5—7 — bronze buckles; 8, 10—12 — iron buckles; 9 — iron bit; 13 — iron plates of the saddle; 14—16 — iron stirrups; 15 — cameo (enlarged image of the positive).

*Fig. 6.* 1,5 — pottery from a destroyed grave; 2 — vase from the grave nr. 3; 3 — iron knife from the grave nr. 8; 4,8 — pottery from the fireplace discovered in section III (XI<sup>th</sup>—XII<sup>th</sup> century A.D.); 6—7,9 — pottery from the fireplace discovered in the section IV (XI<sup>th</sup>—XII<sup>th</sup> century A.D.).

*Fig. 7.* Pottery from a dwelling (X<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) belonging to the settlement contemporaneous with the cemetery.