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Michele BERNARDINI, Alessandro TADDEI

with the collaboration of

Michael Douglas SHERIDAN

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*In memoriam of Professor Ernst Grube*

## KÜTAHYA POTTERY FOUND AT THE PRINCELY COURT OF SUCEAVA

Paraschiva-Victoria Batariuc  
*Bukovina Museum, Suceava*

Niculina Dinu  
*Braila Museum "Carol I"*

Many years of archaeological excavations in Suceava (the fortress, the princely court, and town) have unearthed a great deal of Miletus and Iznik pottery, but none — or nearly none — of Kütahya. The research at Suceava has focused mainly on early medieval architecture (the palace, local houses, commercial buildings, and workshops), pottery (local productions and stove tiles), and metal finds including coins, and all of these feature a sizable bibliography. There has been some interest in the spectacular pottery and tiles of Iznik, but only for those pieces discovered almost intact during the excavations of 1950–1960 (Nicolescu 1966: 94-102; Nicolescu 1967a: 245-51; Nicolescu 1967b: 287-308). Other studies focus on Miletus ware (Batariuc, Dinu 2008: 755-67), Chinese porcelain (Batariuc, Dinu 2013: 291-6), or other pieces found in the collections of the Bucovina Museum (Batariuc, Dinu 2009: 421-4).

The princely court of Suceava was erected at the end of the 14th century in the east of the city, and underwent numerous changes and additions through the 18th century. In the first phase, at the end of the 14th century, the court seems to have been a wooden building and timber-framed construction with one level and a cellar. In the 15th century, a complex of stone buildings began to be constructed, and this was subsequently reworked and modified over the course of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Extensive repair work was done in the middle of the 17th century during the reign of Vasile Lupu (1634-53). Craftsmen from Bistrița worked on the doors, windows, and arches, and the complex was fitted with new stoves, some of whose walls were covered with polychrome tiles. This work was carried out simultaneously with the restoration of the princely court complex at Jassy, which had become the capital of Moldavia in 1564 after Suceava. The Suceava court and complex came to an end in the last years of the 17th century (Batariuc 2011: 58-60). In 1675, the fortress was destroyed by Prince Dumitrașcu Cantacuzino on the orders of the Ottomans, and the court was gradually abandoned. Around 1700, a member of the Polish mission to Istanbul, Rafael Leszezynski, was passing through Suceava and described how “near the church of council is a princely stone palace, desolate, as before, in ancient times, dwelt here rulers of Moldavia”. At the end of the 18th century, following the occupation of the northern part of Moldova by the Habsburgs, some Jewish merchants began to construct booths and houses atop the ruins, some of which remained standing through the fall of 1974, when they were demolished so that archaeological research could resume. During the 1974 excavations into the rubble filling the basement on the east-southeast side, fragments of Ottoman pottery and decorative tiles were discovered together with other ceramics, stove tiles, etc.

Among the hundreds of finds from the court at Suceava, certain fragments capture the attention due to their form and colors: fragments of small bowls with a white background and polychrome floral designs in blue, black, turquoise, dark violet, red-brown, and olive, which could indicate the presence of Kütahya pottery owing to their quality clay, fine drawing, and colors. The importance of these discoveries begins with the initial location: cellar no. 5 of the princely court, where many fragments of Iznik jugs, lids, and mugs from the 16th century and tiles from the 17th century were found among the rubble.

A small bowl shard (Fig. 2.1a-b) is drawn with black outline on both sides and colored in olive, with a schematic tulip outside and inside, as well as part of another flower. The next two fragments (Fig. 2.2-3) seem belong to the same cup or bowl. These shards are more akin to the Kütahya style: a black line set around the edge of the cup/bowl, an interior drawing of

small flowers with three blue petals as well as blue with turquoise, and on the exterior some black spots. The colors used to fill pass over the outline. Thus the style is more reminiscent of that from Kütahya workshops, and even the clay itself is hard and of good quality.

The fragment of bowl no. 4 (Fig. 2.4a-b) has, on the inside, a floral design with a medallion in dark blue in the middle, and from here to the edge drawings of oblique flowers with thin black-olive leaves and purple points (or small flowers). The exterior design is more complex, with a possible *cintamani* pattern or similar model in purple and blue. The entire design is drawn in thin black-olive on a white background. No. 5 is also a bowl, but with an unusual interior drawing (Fig. 2.5a): in the middle is a circle with a triangle inside, painted with thick black lines on a white background and on each side a more or less stylized flower; the middle of the triangle has a flower with black and olive in the middle, while the flowers on the borders are purple-brown. From this circle radiate two groups of three circles in three dimensions, one above the other — two purple and one olive — and between these is a stylized dark blue flower. Outside this drawing is simpler, with two olive leaves and a black line circling above the foot on a white background (Fig. 2.5b). Analogies for these bowls can be found in Brăila, with the difference that here the fragments clearly originate from Kütahya workshops of the 18th century.

Fragment no. 6 (Fig. 2.6) belong to a jug and features two shades of blue on a white background. The fragment preserves part of the neck and belly, separated by a band with sinuous lines. The design is exquisite and schematically has analogies to pottery found at the princely court at Jassy (Andronic, Neamțu, Dinu 1967: 227-32). The last fragment, no. 7 (Fig. 2.7), probably belongs to a mug, and features a white background with two flowers. The first flower is a light-purple tulip with a blue-black stem and four leaves of the same color, while the second seems to be a stylized hyacinth with three small light blue flowers and blue-black stems.

All these shards are covered with a lead glaze laid on rather thickly, especially in the case of no. 5. The bodies are of white-beige kaolin and hard clay covered in white slip, indicating that they were good products and perhaps even expensive, unlike the usual Kütahya coffee cups made of soft paste with mixed colors and lines, such as were common in Romania in the 18th century. All the finds could be dated to from the end of the 17th century to the middle of the 18th century, barring stratigraphical work at the place of discovery and lacking clear analogies elsewhere in Romania.

Excavations from the surrounding town of Suceava do not indicate the presence of Kütahya pottery, such as the variety of quality work found in Jassy, the Moldavian capital, or Bucharest and other Wallachian towns, or even in towns of Dobrudja such as Tulcea, Isaccea, Babadag, Târgușor-Ester (Dinu 2010: 303-20), and Vadu-Ghiaurchioi (Dinu 2009: 323-43).

On the other side, Karl A. Romstorfer — the Austrian architect who made the first excavations at the Suceava fortress at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century — noted a Kütahya egg, among other finds, and under these he wrote “Suczawa”, without any mention of the place of discovery (Batariuc, Dinu 2013: 411-7). Information about life in the town in the 18th century is virtually nonexistent. In *Descriptio Moldaviae* (1714-6), Dimitrie Cantemir notes that “Suceava ... is entirely empty; everything was shattered after moving the court to Jassy”. A document dating to between 1764 and 1767 mentions the existence of some townspeople’s houses on the area of the court, and around 1800 the walls of the palace began to be used as supports for a house (perhaps the same that was demolished in 1974).

Questions about the presence of Kütahya pottery in the town of Suceava remain open, as it is unusual to find such ware in a former capital, one not as fashionable in that century as Jassy or even other Romanian towns. Some Kütahya products may, however, be related to the existence of an Armenian community, especially in the Moldavian capital.

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## Turkish Abstract

Suceava'da kale, saray ve şehirde yapılan kazılarda birçok Milet işi ve İznik seramikleri bulunmuş olmasına rağmen Kütahya yapımı örnekler hiç rastlanmamıştır. Suceava sarayı 14. yüzyıl ortalarında yapılmış ve 18. yüzyıla kadar değişiklik ve eklerle yaşamıştır. 1564'den itibaren başkent değildir, 1675'de tahrip edildikten sonra yavaş yavaş terkedilmiştir. 18. yüzyıl başında tamamen yıkıntı olduğu kaynaklarda belirtilir. 18. yüzyılın sonunda Moldova'nın Habsburg işgalinden sonra bazı Yahudi tüccarların burada kurdukları dükkanlar 1979'daki arkeolojik araştırmaya dek varlığını sürdürmüştür. 1979'da yapılan kazılarda moloz içinde diğer seramik malzeme arasında beyaz zemin üzerine polikrom boyalı, kaliteli hamurları, ince çizim tekniği ve kullanılan renkleriyle Kütahya üretimi olduğu anlaşılan küçük kase parçaları bulunmuştur. Kurşun sırla kaplı, beyaz-bej kaolin ve sert hamurlu bu parçalar Romanya'da 18. yüzyılda kullanılan Kütahya fincanlarından farklıdır. Diğer Moldova ve Romanya şehirlerinin aksine Suceava'da başka örneği bulunmayan Kütahya seramiklerinin bu eski başkentte bulunmasının nedeni bilinmemekle beraber, Ermeni topluluklarla bağlantılı olması mümkündür.

## Biographical Note

Paraschiva – Victoria Batariuc (1948 – 2016) former archaeologist of the Bukovina Museum, Suceava. She was PhD in History at the Al. I. Cuza University Iași. Her main field of research was medieval archaeology and especially tile stoves and monumental ceramics from Moldavia. She published works on medieval archeology, tile stoves, ecclesiastical architecture and art history in over 100 articles and books.

Niculina Dinu works at the Brăila Museum Carol I. She is PhD in History at the Al. I. Cuza University Iași. Her main field of research is Ottoman archaeology, especially Ottoman ceramic from Romania.

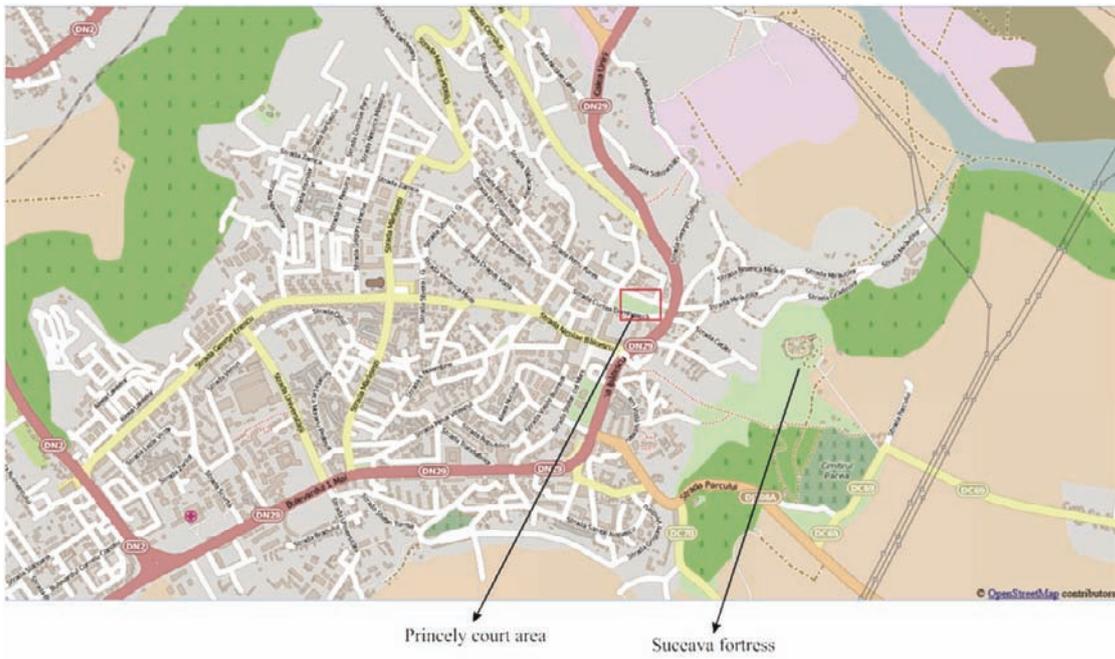


Fig. 1. Suceava street map – Princely court and Fortress (geo-spatial.org)



Fig. 2. Suceava, 1974, Princely Court, cellar no. 5.  
Ottoman pottery, Kütahya workshop (end of 17th–18th century)  
(©Nicolina Dinu)

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