

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON 21 DECEMBRIE 1989 BOULEVARD NO. 5 FROM CLUJ-NAPOCA

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Abstract: Rescue archaeological research on 21 Decembrie 1989 Boulevard no. 5 from Cluj-Napoca was carried out in occasion of the development works for “Sora” shopping center. The area is located nearby the eastern town of the Roman city. Due to medieval and modern interferences, stratigraphy was largely destroyed. The research revealed only the first three Roman levels. We discovered two kilns of a metal processing workshop. A bronze mould of good artistic quality depicting Hercules with the club in the right hand and the Nemean lion skin in the left hand as well as an unfinished statuette of Jupiter come from there.

Keywords: kiln; slag; workshop; Hercules; statuette; Roman period.

Rezumat: Săpăturile arheologice de salvare de pe Bulevardul 21 Decembrie 1989 nr. 5 din Cluj-Napoca au fost ocazionate de extinderea magazinului „Sora”. Zona este situată în imediata apropiere a zidului de est al orașului roman. Datorită intervențiilor medievale și moderne, stratigrafia a fost distrusă în mare parte. În urma cercetărilor au fost identificate doar primele trei niveluri romane. S-au descoperit două cuptoare aparținând unui atelier de prelucrare a metalelor. De la acesta provine o matriță de bronz de bună calitate artistică, reprezentându-l pe Hercules cu ghioaga în mâna dreaptă și cu blana leului din Nemea în mâna stângă, precum și o statueta a lui Jupiter în curs de prelucrare.

Cuvinte cheie: cuptor; zgură; atelier; Hercules; statueta; epoca romană.

In August 2002, in occasion of the westward development works of “Sora” shopping center (Pl. I¹; I/1), we were informed that archaeological remains had surfaced. Respective area was strongly affected both during the modern period and by the civil works carried out by the shopping center developer.

The Roman archaeological finds nearby this site are rather many, which is only natural since they are most likely located inside the Roman town or in its immediate vicinity¹. On 21 Decembrie Boulevard (former Lenin), a 1.40 m wide and 2.00-2.40 m deep ditch was dug in the 60'ies of the last century, resulting in the discovery of the Roman level, emerging at -1.80-1.90 m deep. Among the Roman materials unearthed then, we mention a lamp with three burners, stamped ATIMETI². An architectonic *stela* with *attica* and medallion³ was discovered when building works were performed on 21 Decembrie Boulevard no. 6. On the same Boulevard, at nos. 25-27 this time, four kilns⁴ were identified. Deemed originally baking ovens by

¹ Voișian, Bota, Ciongradi 2000, 270.

² Mitrofan 1964, 200.

³ Vlassa 1965, 36; Pop 1968, 484-485, Fig. 9; Țeposu-Marinescu 1982, 120, no. 71, Taf. VIII; Bianchi 1985, 275, no. 160, Tav. XXXII, Fig. 83.

⁴ RepCluj, 139; Ardevan 2001, 320-322.

the excavator, they were later published as pottery kilns⁵. It seems these kilns were used though for refuse purposes⁶.

Still from the area comes a Dacian cup, which was found in the excavated earth following the building works for the kindergarten by the junction of Dávid Ferenc and Brassai Sámuel streets, behind János Zsigmond High school (former Brassai Sámuel)⁷.

Unfortunately, since news about the shopping center's development works reached us long after their initiation, until our arrival, large part of the surface had been excavated. In certain areas, without archaeological supervision, excavations were performed up to a depth of -2.50 m from the current surface. Hence, large part of the surface was destroyed and we could only excavate five trenches on a 120 m² surface (Pl. I/2).

Trench S1 (10.50 × 2.00 m) was oriented east-west (Pl. II/1-2). Stratigraphy: a filling level of maximum 1.00 m thickness, where Roman and modern potshards were identified. It was followed by the second filling layer, with a maximum thickness of 0.40 m, at whose base, between meters 9.00 and 10.20, we identified a 0.05 m thick burning layer. Between meters 4.00 and 6.30, on the ancient humus, we found several reused architectonical fragments (some funerary), forming a platform sized 2.30 × 1.10 m. We did not identify a clear settlement level. The ancient humus emerged at -0.70 m deep and was approximately 0.30 m thick. At -0.80 m deep, the trench was flooded by rain and underground waters.

Trench S2 (7.50 × 2.00 m) (Pl. III/1-2; VI/2; VII) was oriented east-west, being parallel to S1 and located at 19.00 m distance from it. Stratigraphy: between meters 0.00 and 4.90 we are dealing with a filling layer of maximum 0.40 m thickness, where Roman potshards and slag were found. Below this level we identified a walking level maximum 0.15 m thick, spreading from m 0.00 to m 5.00, where it climbs to the preserved soil layer. From m 3.00, at -0.55 m deep, there surfaced another filling layer of maximum 0.55 m thickness. Under it emerged a walking level made of battered earth with burning, 0.15 m thick. This level was cut at certain point by the previously mentioned layer. Between meters 0.00 and 4.40, at -0.60 m deep, there emerged another filling layer of 0.85 m maximum thickness, below which we identified a burning layer climbing at m 4.40 to -0.70 m. At -1.50 m deep, the trench was flooded by underwater. Between meters 4.00 and 7.50, at -0.90 m deep, there emerged a filling-construction layer of 0.40 m maximum thickness, below which surfaced a construction layer of 0.05 m thickness. These two levels were cut by the previously mentioned burning layer (Pl. VI/2). The ancient humus appeared at -1.10 m deep. Still in this trench, by its eastern corner at 0.60 m deep, we identified a part of a wall (Z1) (Pl. VII). The wall is oriented east-west, has a preserved length of 2.50 m and is 0.55 m thick. Its northern side surfaced at 0.70 m distance from the northern profile, being placed by mid trench.

Trench S3 (16.5 × 2.00 m) (Pl. IV/1; VIII-IX) was oriented north-south and placed between S1 and S2. Stratigraphy: a filling layer of 0.40 m by the southern end, descending to -1.10 m by the other end. This level is cut between meters 3.40 and 6.20

⁵ Ardevan 2001, 321-322; see Rusu-Bolindeț 2007, 49 and note 275.

⁶ Rusu-Bolindeț 2007, 50.

⁷ Find by E. Bota, the cup being delivered to Mrs. Viorica Crișan from the National History Museum of Transylvania.

by a modern pit descending to the ancient humus (-1.50 m). Inside this pit were identified four wooden poles of 0.20 m in diameter. The first two poles survived on a 1.50 m length and the other on a 0.60 m length. Below the filling layer emerged a walking level of battered earth with burning traces in the upper part on the entire surface. This level is maximum 0.15 m thick and was cut by the modern pit between meters 3.40 and 4.50. Below this ground level follows a filling-construction level of 0.70 m maximum thickness, cut by the modern pit between meters 3.40 and 4.20. In the two filling layers fragmentary Roman pottery, animal bones and slag were identified. Next came a ground level of battered earth, with strong burning traces, with a maximum thickness of 0.20 m. Below, followed the ancient humus, the maximum reachable depth (due to the underground waters) being of 2.00 m. By the end of the trench, on the northern profile, above the ancient humus, we identified the building level of wall Z1 on an approximate distance of 1.00 m.

Trench S4 (8.00 × 3.00 m) (Pl. IV/2-3; X/1-2) was oriented north-south and placed at a distance of 1.00 m from S1 and at the same distance from S3. The stratigraphy is almost identical to that in S3 - two filling layers and two settlement levels with strong burning traces. On the first walking level preserved from above the lower part of two kilns, numbered C1 and C2, was identified. C1 is placed at 1.10 m from the northern profile and at 0.10 m from the eastern profile. It is oval-shaped and sized 0.30 × 0.40 m. Kiln C2 is placed at 1.70 m from the northern profile and cuts 5 cm off the western profile, having a diameter of 0.30 m. On this level we identified much slag as well as bronze and iron residues. We also discovered a bronze unfinished statuette depicting Jupiter⁸ as well as a bronze mould for votive tablets⁹. The mould represents Hercules framed in an *aedicula* (Pl. V/2). The character is depicted nude, bearded, leaning his bodyweight on the right leg, the left leg being slightly bent. He holds in the right hand the club and in the left - the Nemean lion skin¹⁰. The mould was corroded so that Hercules's face is no longer visible and the depiction of the Nemean lion skin did not survived well, while the overall work is of very good quality¹¹.

Trench S5 (12.00 × 2.00 m) (Pl. V/1; XI/1-2) was oriented north-south and is located at 2.00 m distance from S2, perpendicular on the latter. Stratigraphy: it preserved a filling layer with Roman pottery, with a maximum thickness of 0.90 m. Between meters 2.20 and 5.00, this level was cut by a modern pit, with a maximum depth of 0.60 m, and from m 7.00 to m 12.00 it preserved a level of contemporary debris from the shopping center's construction, with a maximum thickness of 0.45 m. In the southern end, below the filling layer, emerged a ground level composed of well hardened earth and stones with burning traces, 0.05 m thick. This level too is cut by the modern pit bottom. The settlement level, from m 3.50 to the end of the trench, is composed of a mortar level 5 cm thick. From m 7.70, this level is covered by a cluster of limestone stones. Below this level there is another filling-construction layer, with a maximum thickness of 0.65 m, where fragmentary Roman pottery was discovered.

⁸ The statuette is currently examined for conservation and restoration in the laboratory of the National History Museum of Transylvania.

⁹ Voişian, Ciongradi 2004, 479-480.

¹⁰ Voişian, Ciongradi 2004, 479.

¹¹ Voişian, Ciongradi 2004, 479.

Follows another walking level with burning, 0.15–0.20 m thick, below which the ancient humus is found. This trench too was flooded by underground waters.

Following the investigations in the area, we identified only the first Roman levels. The stratigraphy was destroyed by the development works for the building extension. In trench S4 we identified the traces of a metal processing workshop in the second construction phase. Unfortunately, there is no element allowing a more restricted dating of the three levels identified during excavation; however we believe they do not exceed mid-2nd century AD.

The discovery of this workshop for metal processing correlated with the relatively recent discovery of a pit with pottery scrap in the courtyard of a building on Iuliu Maniu St. no. 4¹², recording the existence of pottery production in the area¹³, beside the brooch workshop identified on Memorandiștilor Monument¹⁴ as well as the discovery of a very large slag quantity during the excavations in the Unirii Square¹⁵ confirm the hypothesis of the existence during the first layers of the Roman town of a workshop area in its south-eastern part¹⁶.

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¹² Mustață et alii 2008, 111.

¹³ Rusu-Bolindeț 2007, 51.

¹⁴ Cociș, Voişian, Rusu-Bolindeț 1995, 24; Cociș 2004, 35–36.

¹⁵ New excavations E. Bota, V. Voişian, C. Ciongradi.

¹⁶ Bota 2007, 27.

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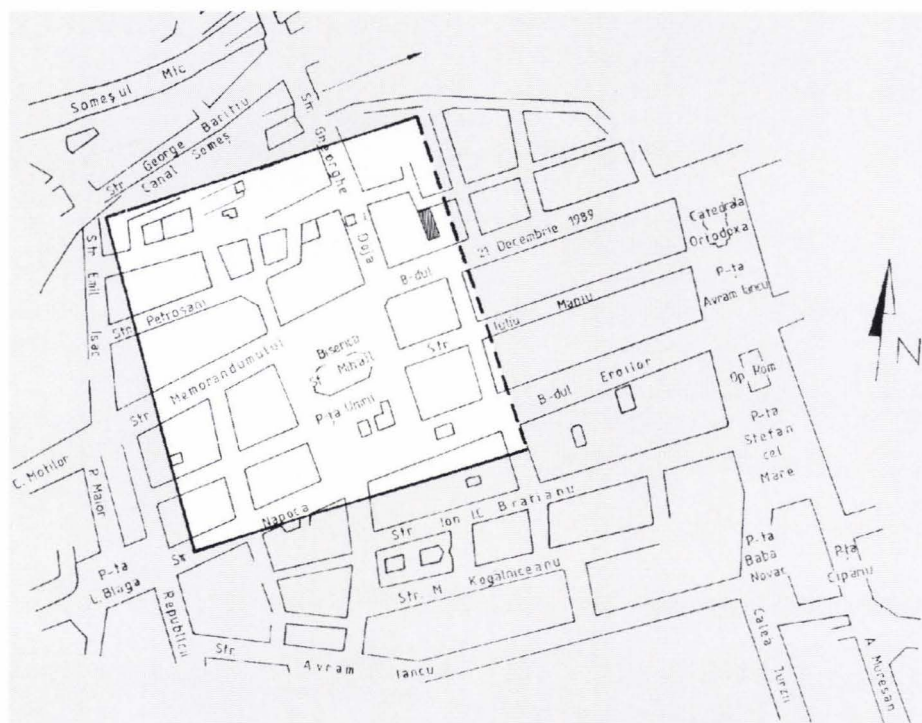
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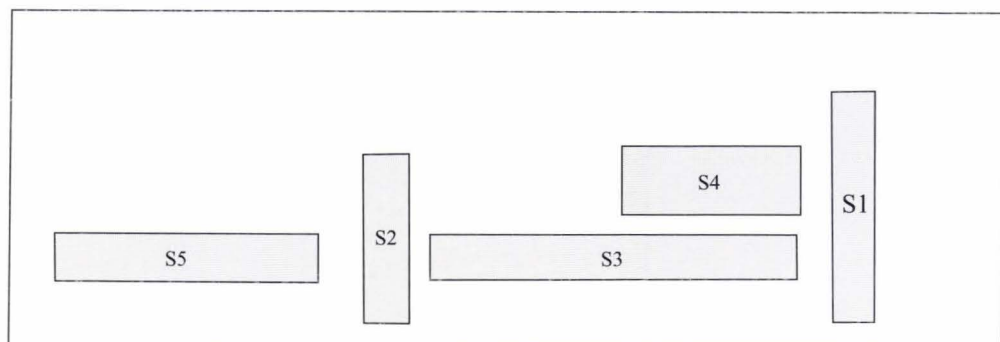
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Central area – Cluj- Napoca



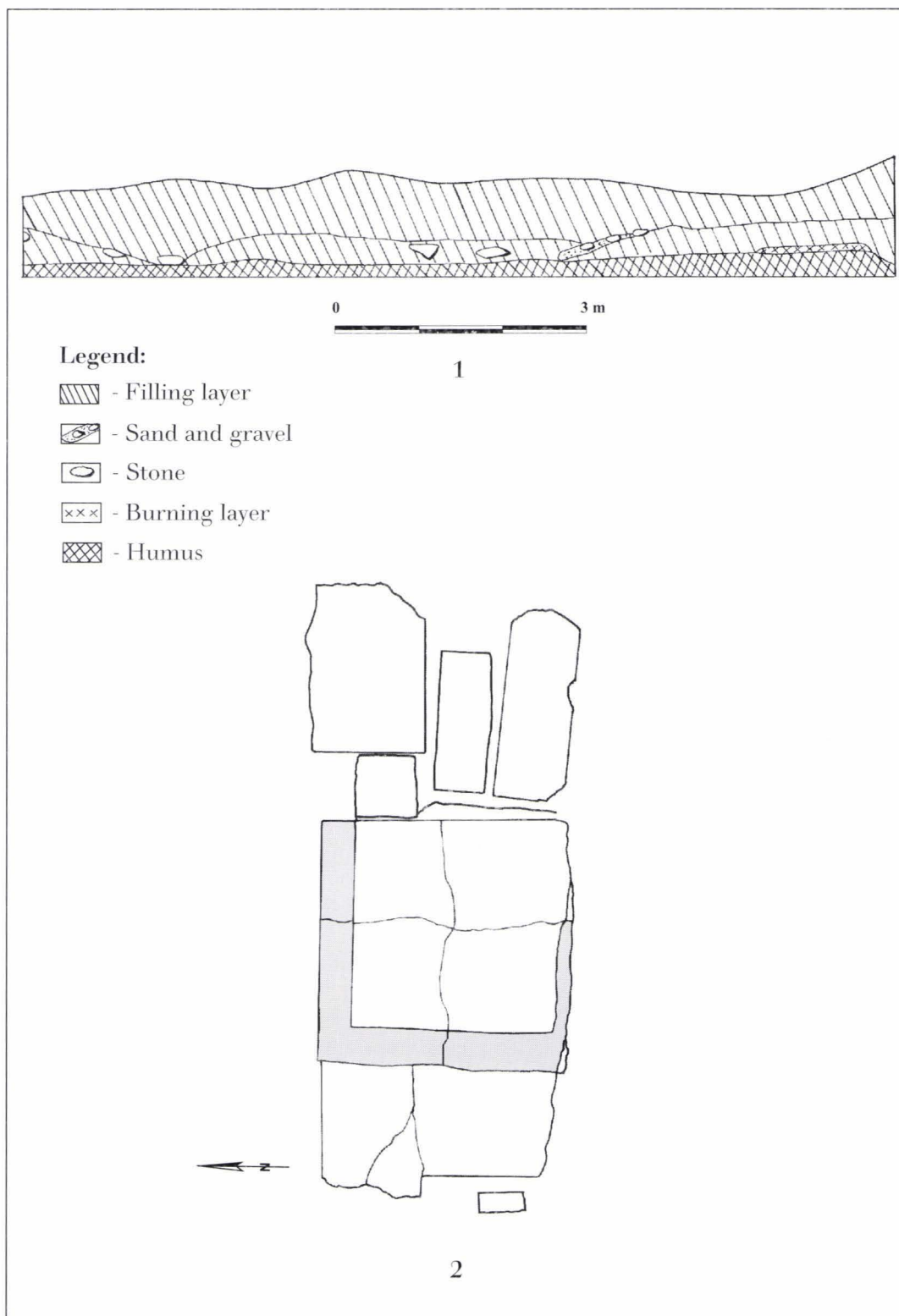
■ - Extension – Sora Shopping Center

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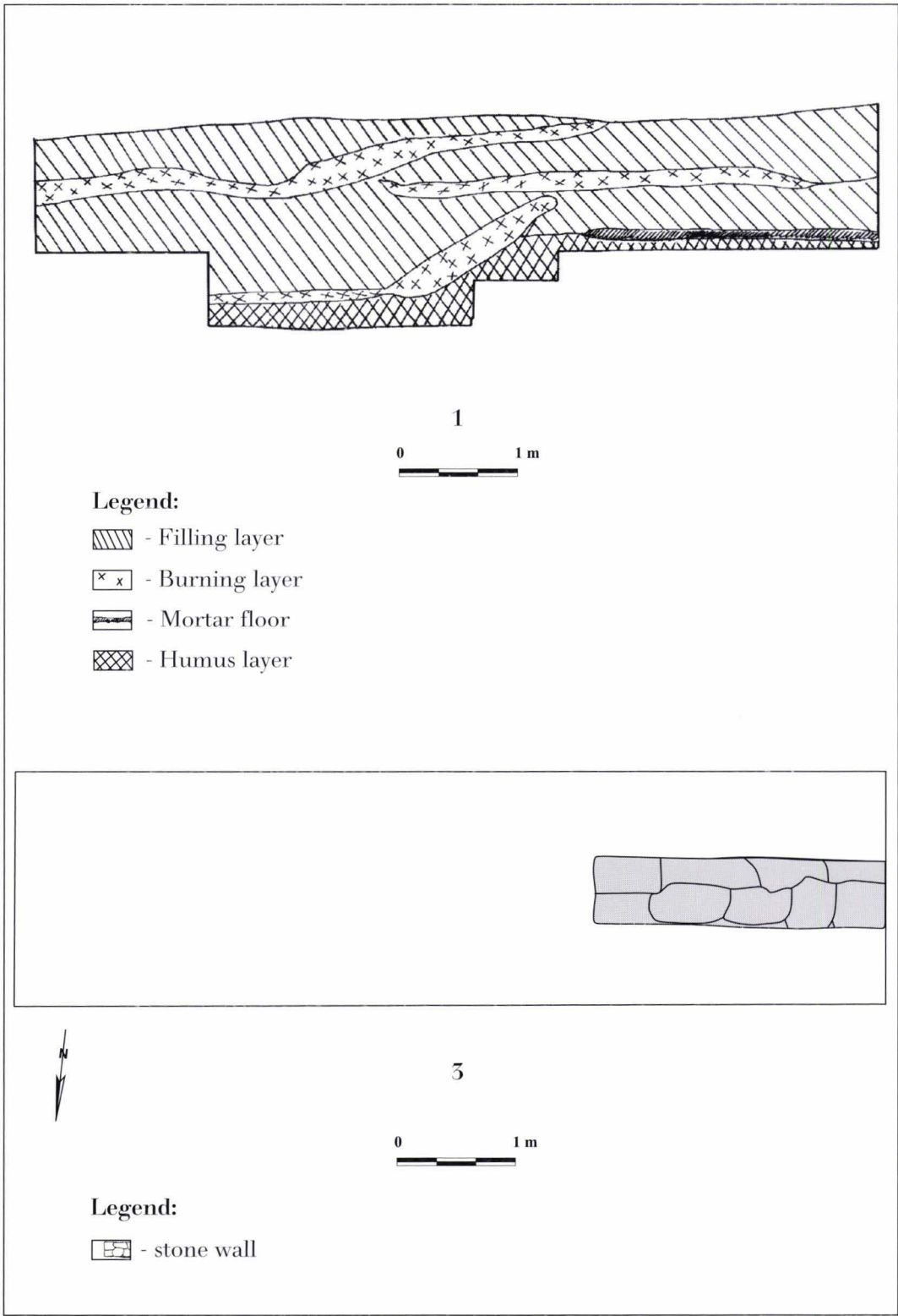


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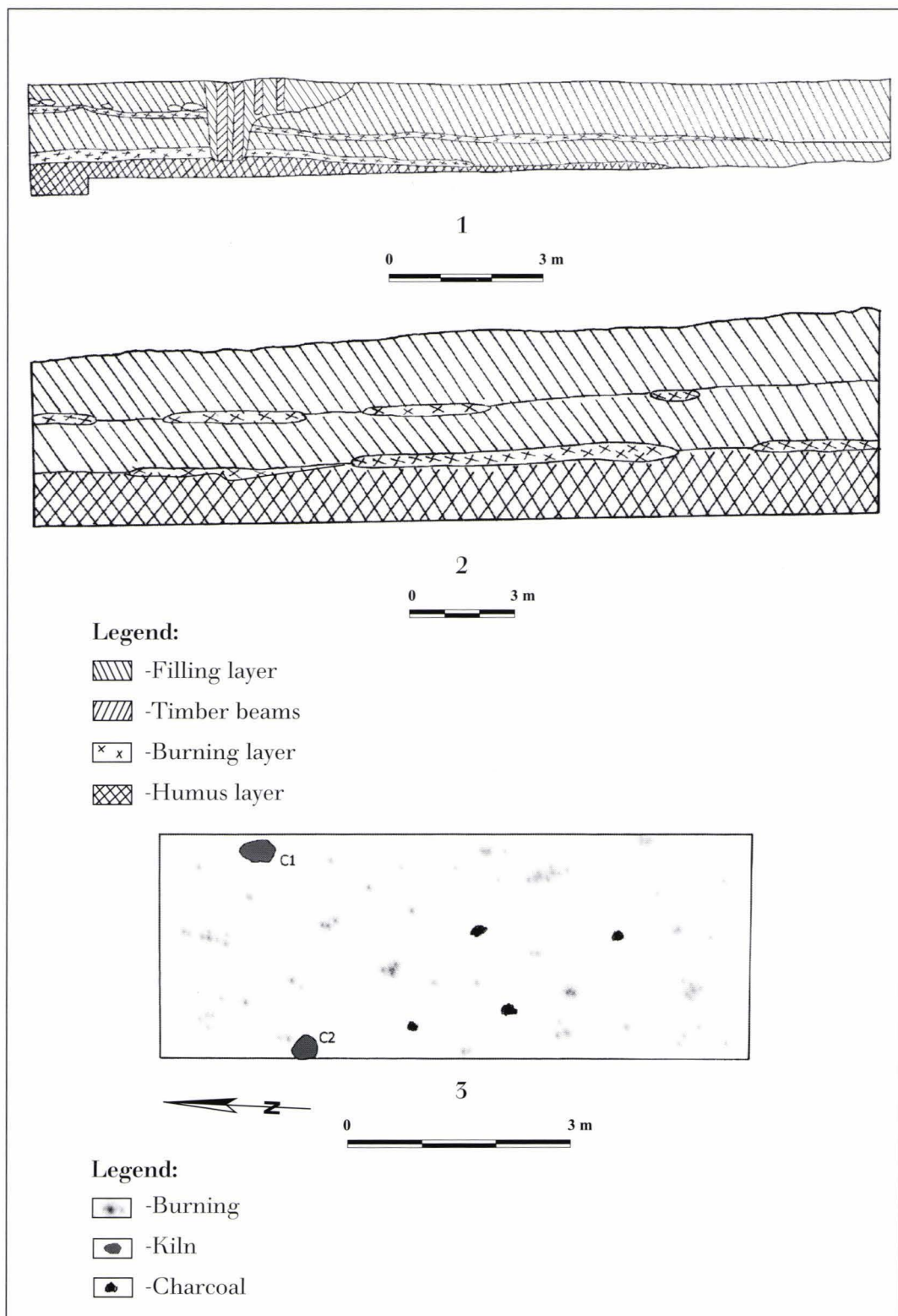
Pl. I. 1. Plan of the central part of city of Cluj, locating the site; 2. Site plan.



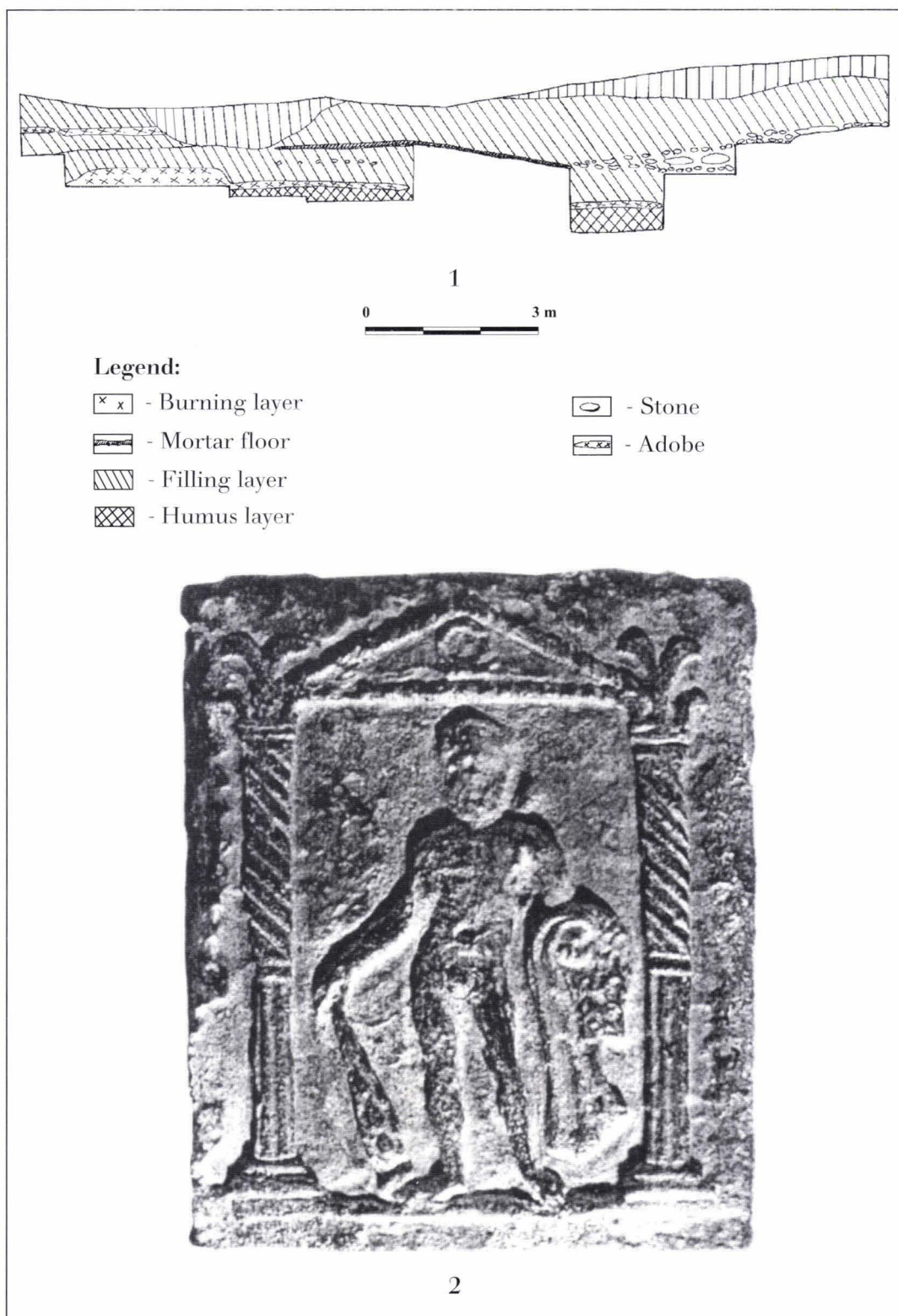
Pl. II. 1. Excavation unit S1, southern profile; 2. Excavation unit S1, reused architectural fragments.



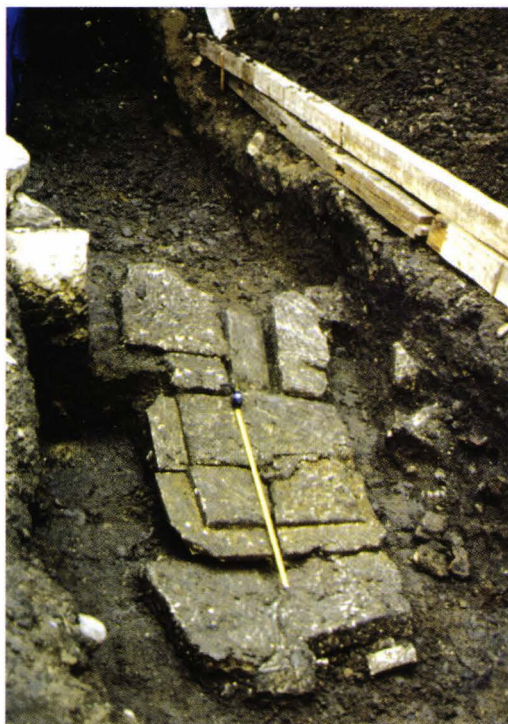
Pl. III. 1-2. Excavation unit S2: 1. Southern profile; 2. Plan.



Pl. IV. 1. Excavation unit S3, southern profile; Excavation unit S4: 2. Western profile; 3. Plan.



Pl. V. 1. Excavation unit S5, western profile; 2. Mould with the depiction of Hercules.



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Pl. VI. 1. Excavation unit S1, reused architectural fragments; 2. Excavation unit S2, ground level with burning.



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Pl. VII. 1-2. Excavation unit S2, general views.



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Pl. VIII. 1. Excavation unit S3: northern extremity of the excavation unit, with ground level and burning; 2. Excavation unit S3, southern extremity of the excavation unit.

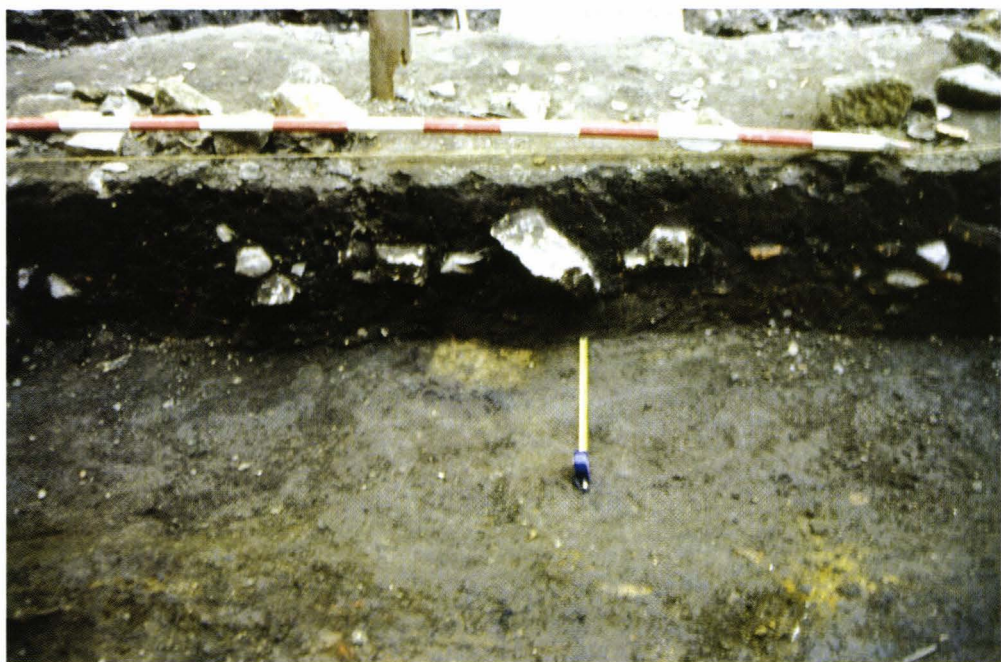


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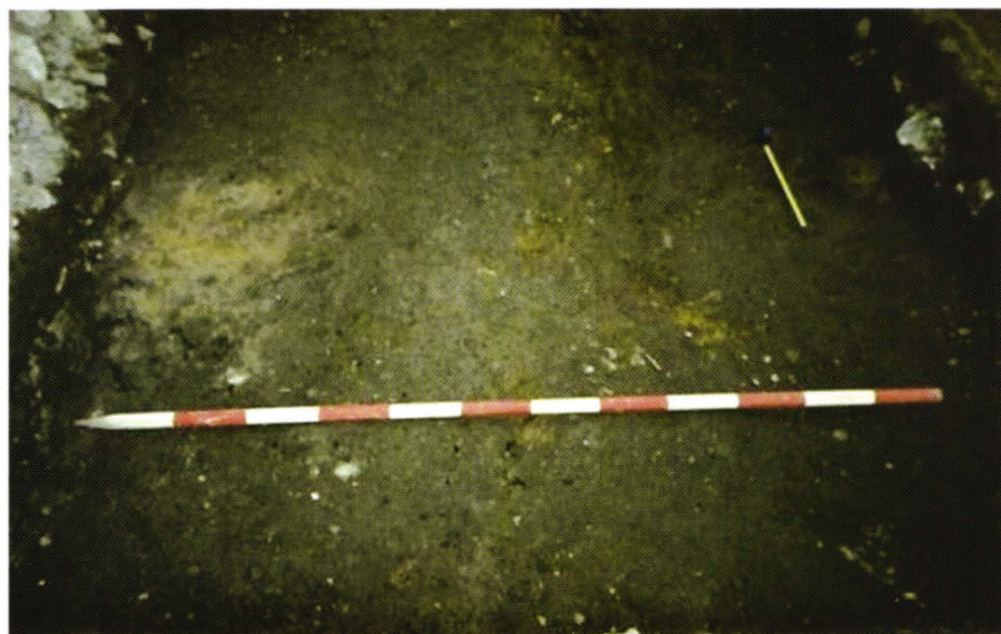


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Pl. IX. 1-2. Excavation unit S3, northern extremity of the excavation unit (details).



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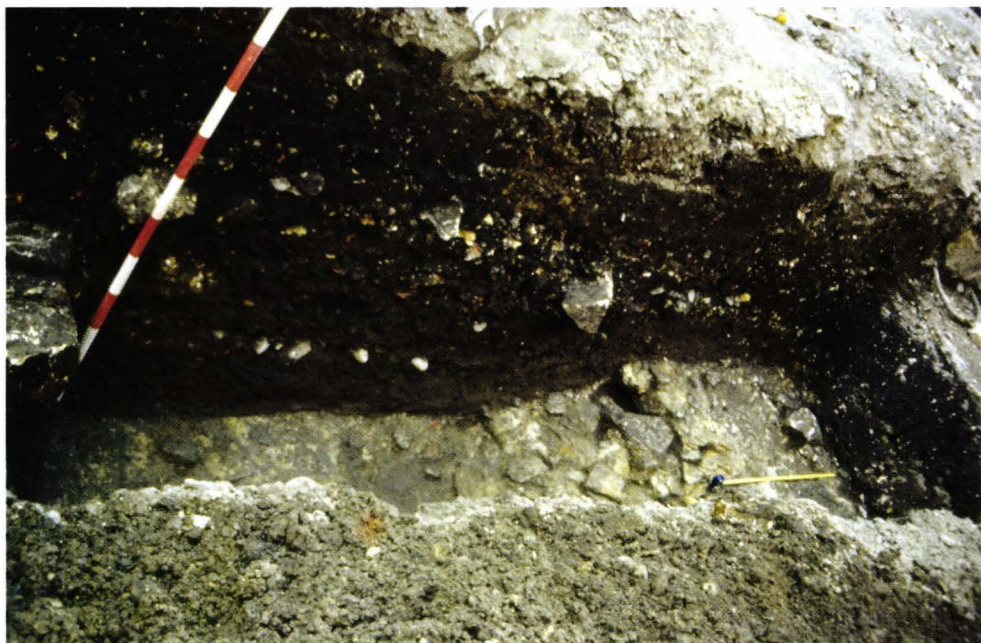


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Pl. X. Excavation unit S4: 1. C1 kiln print; 2. C2 kiln print.



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2

Pl. XI. 1. Excavation unit S5; 2. General view and detail.