

# THE ANTHROPOMORPHOUS STATUETTES FROM THE SITE STÂNCA DOAMNEI, ȘTEFĂNEȘTI, BOTOȘANI COUNTY

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**ABSTRACT:** In the summer of 1974 preventive excavations were conducted by Anton Nițu and Paul Șadurschi on the Prut river terrace, at the site Stânca Doamnei from Ștefănești town, Botoșani County, Romania. Here were excavated four houses and six pits. Inside the dwellings and in the pits interesting ceramic material was discovered. Unfortunately, no field notes were found, but there is a preliminary report where the excavation plans were published. The archaeological material resulted from researches was marked, specifying both the site and place of their discovery. This aspect facilitated the work of identifying the materials found in this site. The most spectacular items found at Stânca Doamnei are the ronde-bosse anthropomorphic representations. Until now we identified (in the exhibition and deposits of the Botoșani County Museum) five anthropomorphic statuettes, previously unpublished by the research team. Considering the importance of such objects, we described them in an extensive manner and made some observations relating the possible analogies of the objects to other statuettes discovered in the Cucuteni-Trypillia culture. The anthropomorphic statuettes have

most of the analogies in the eastern part of the Cucuteni culture. From the technological point of view, these are specific to phase B of the Culture. The statuettes were made of fine, homogeneous clay, with a high quality burning. Most of the statuettes were covered by thin clay, polished, sometimes covered with red or yellowish white slip. Some of them preserve traces of paint, red or black.

**KEYWORDS:** Cucuteni culture, Botoșani County, anthropomorphic statuettes, representations.

**REZUMAT:** În vara anului 1974 Anton Nițu și Paul Șadurschi au efectuat cercetări arheologice preventive în situl de la Stânca Doamnei, oraș Ștefănești, județul Botoșani, România. Au fost cercetate 4 locuințe și 6 gropi cu un interesant material ceramic. Cele mai spectaculoase descoperiri au fost statuetele antropomorfe care fac obiectul studiului de față. Din punct de vedere tehnologic statuetele identificate sunt specifice fazei B a culturii Cucuteni.

**CUVINTE-CHEIE:** Cultura Cucuteni, statuete antropomorfe.

## THE HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH – THE ORIGIN OF THE ARTIFACTS

The researches from Stânca Doamnei, Ștefănești, Botoșani County were performed in 1974, coordinated by Paul Șadurschi from Botoșani County Museum and Anton Nițu from the Institute of Archaeology Iași. The only report existing at the moment, was published in 1994, by Anton Nițu and Paul Șadurschi under the title: *The rescue excavations at „Stânca Doamnei”, (Stânca-Ștefănești village, Botoșani county)* in the journal *Hierasus*, IX, editors: Emil Ioan Emandi, Octavian-Liviu Șovan, Ionel Bejenaru, Iași – Rădăuți, *Glasul Bucovinei*, 1994, pages 181–194. In the scientific archive located in Botoșani County Museum are preserved the original plans drawn by the research team and a series of photographic clichés taken during the research. There also is a file containing

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the analytical record sheets drawn up by Paul Șadurschi at the Botoșani County Museum, signed (only a few) as made on April 6th, 1987. All record sheets include black and white photos and color drawings attached, some of them with mentions that they are sent to print for the next issue of *Hierasus*.

Unfortunately, the field notes of the research team have not been found, so this is the only source to which we refer regarding the materials from the site. All the material resulting from the rescue research conducted at Stâncă Doamnei was marked, specifying both the site of origin and the place of its discovery, which facilitated the work of identifying the materials from this site. The ceramic material, both restored and fragments still in storage at Botoșani County Museum, will be the subject of a future study.

The most spectacular items found at Stâncă Doamnei are the anthropomorphous statuettes. So far we identified (in the exhibition and in the deposits) five fragmented items (including three registered in the museum heritage list), previously unpublished by the research team. We note that the number of statuettes is surprisingly low, given that 4 homes and 6 pits were investigated (Fig. 8).

Regarding the area studied, in the excavation report were made some clarifications related to the situations found (Fig. 1/2). The excavations at Stâncă Doamnei<sup>1</sup> were the result of the construction of some facilities, respectively the parking of the transport vehicles and the road between the parking lot and the construction site itself at Stâncă-Costești dam. The landmarks are the concrete poles for the electrical lines.

Eleven trenches were laid on a NE-SW direction, in accordance with the terrace that was to be dug (Fig. 1/3). We note that one of the most important discoveries in this site is represented by a cross-shaped hearth in Dwelling 3<sup>2</sup>, restored and exhibited in the permanent exhibition at the Botoșani History Museum.

## THE CATALOGUE OF THE ITEMS

1. Female anthropomorphous statuette (Fig. 2/1–2). Inventory number MJB: 808. Context: Pit 4, under Dwelling 1 (Trench S. III). Maximum depth of the pit is 1,54 m.

The statuette is preserved almost entirely, with the sole and body. Upright position. Oxidizing burning, brick-colored. Fragmented above the breasts, in the shoulder area. The head is missing. The artifact was modeled on a circular wooden stand, and it is hollow. The trace of the circular stand is visible on x-ray<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 7/1). The body is flattened, the breasts small, barely outlined, and rendered by two oval swellings. The waist is narrow. The hips are oversized and each presents a transversal perforation. The abdomen is slightly swollen (showing a possible pregnancy status), with the navel marked by a semi-perforation which does not reach beyond the abdominal wall. Immediately below the waist is a very shallow incision that separates the hips from the body of the statuette. The buttocks are oversized and were made by the intentional addition of material after modeling the statuette. The lower part looks like a “bell-shaped” dress that narrows at the bottom and opens slightly at the base. Both at the front and the back the legs are demarcated by an incised line, slightly deepened in the paste of the artifact. At the front, the line is an extension of the horizontal line demarcating the hips and is drawn slightly careless, with a stick. At the back the line is drawn from the buttocks and it goes down slightly obliquely to the left until the ankles, where the artifact has the smallest diameter. The entire outer surface of the statuette shows traces of red and black painted lines, but given the deterioration of the decor, it cannot be reconstructed. The clay used is a good quality, fine paste, well mixed, with few inclusions that are visible only as a

<sup>1</sup> Nițu, Șadurschi, 1994, p. 181

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 188, fig. 4

<sup>3</sup> Image obtained through the kindness of Mr. Dohotariu Daniel, manager, Iuliana Zaharia and Anamaria Obrocian, assistants at Laboratory DDI – X-ray diagnostics, Botoșani

result of the radiography, in the foot (Fig. 7/1). The surface of the artifact was very well smoothed before applying the layer of paint. The sole is flat, with a circular perforation located centrally. The statuette belongs, according to its size, to the category of steatopygous statuettes, with a cylindrical bottom terminated by a disc-shaped support, defined as a separate category (group A<sub>2b</sub> of the period Cucuteni B<sup>4</sup>) after D. Monah. Dimensions: Preserved height = 147 mm; Shoulder width = 67 mm; Shoulder thickness = 23 mm; Hips width = 72 mm; Maximum diameter = 78 mm; Foot diameter = 74 mm; Base perforation diameter = 17 mm.

2. Female anthropomorphic statuette (Fig. 3 / 1–2). Inventory number MJB: 816. Background: Trench S. XI.

Statuette preserved fragmented, a fragment of the torso, hips, knees and part of the single foot that ends the statuette. Standing position. Oxidizing burning, brick colored. The upper part is fragmented in the torso area. The torso has an oval section. The statuette widens in the hips' area, with a small perforation on each hip. The abdomen is slightly bulged, with the navel marked by a very small perforation placed horizontally. The hips are underlined by two very shallow incisions, visible only in the front. On the back side there is a single line, barely visible above the buttocks. The front legs are demarcated by a 4 mm deep incision, starting from the lower horizontal line to the knees. The knees are marked by a slight swell, suggesting a possible flexing. On the back side the buttocks are highlighted through the same technique, an incision made with a stick. The knees continue with the single, cone-shaped leg, broken in the area of the maximum diameter. All over the surface of the artifact are visible traces of red painting, organized in bands. The torso and thighs show marks of red lines that were placed obliquely. The two incised lines in the waist area were highlighted each with red paint. The lower part of the leg, from the knee down, show traces of circular, transversal lines. One can see the trace of 7 parallel lines. The statuette belongs, according to size and realization technique, to the category of spindle-shaped statuettes. Dimensions: Preserved height = 123 mm; Body width = 15 mm; Body thickness = 10 mm; Hips' width = 29 mm; Hips' thickness = 21 mm; Leg diameter = 24 mm.

3. Female anthropomorphic statuette (Fig. 4/1–3). Inventory number MJB: 817. Context: Dwelling 4.

Statuette preserved fragmented, a fragment of torso, hips and partially the legs, approximately to the knees. Originally the preserved part had been fragmented (probably during the research), showing traces of recent fragmentation at the left thigh and missing half of the left buttock. The piece was pasted with a strong, translucent adhesive immediately after discovery. Sitting position. Oxidizing burning, brick colored. The left leg shows traces of secondary burning. The upper part is fragmented in the torso area, which is oval in section. The statue widens in the hips' area, where there is a flattening, the material being gathered towards the center, where it forms a small abdominal bulge (suggesting pregnancy). The bust is tilted slightly outwards. The thighs are separated from the hips by a barely visible incised line. The legs were modeled separately by rolls of clay and are separated from each other. On the dorsal part, the buttocks were demarcated through an incision that ends in the area where the legs are separated. The genital area is represented only by a vaguely incised triangle, but according to the posture and the bulged abdomen, the artifact is supposedly a female statuette. The entire surface of the artifact (besides the areas with secondary burning) shows traces of a linear decoration painted in black. On the right leg, on the side, are very hardly visible six black lines going diagonally on the leg. Noteworthy on the right side of the torso, in the fragmentation area, is the caryopsis trace from a grain of wheat (Fig. 4/3). Dimensions: Preserved height = 52 mm; Body width = 32 mm; Body thickness = 18 mm; Hips' width: 50 mm; Hips' thickness = 30 mm; Legs' length = 59 mm; Leg diameter = 21 mm.

<sup>4</sup> Monah 2012, p. 137

4. Female anthropomorphic statuette (?) (Fig. 5/1–2). Uninventoried. Context: Dwelling 2, Trench V.

Statuette from which half of the left leg was preserved. Standing position. Oxidizing burning, brick color; the outer surface is polished. The thigh is well illustrated. Under the thigh one can observe seven parallel transverse lines, which probably surrounded the leg, made with black paint. The object has been broken in old times. Dimensions: Preserved height = 81 mm; Leg diameter = 30 mm; Preserved thickness = 20 mm.

5. Female anthropomorphic statuette (?) (Fig. 6/1–2). Uninventoried. Context: Trench VIII.

Statuette from which only a small part of the head and neck was preserved. Standing position (probably). Oxidizing burning, brick color; the surface is well smoothed, with sanding marks on the dorsal side. The head has relatively oval shape, is stylized, made by pressing together the two parts, forming two lobes separated by a pronounced median rib, which is the nose. The eyes were marked by two circular perforations placed anatomically. It has no mouth. The neck is cylindrical and is in direct extension of the head. Inside the perforations are traces of friction from a rope (probably). The back side is relatively flat, with a very slight bulge in the middle. The head probably belongs to a large spindle shaped statuette. Dimensions: Preserved height = 52 mm; Face diameter = 38 mm; Face thickness = 26 mm; Neck diameter: 21 mm.

## DISCUSSIONS AND ANALOGIES

The anthropomorphic statuettes from Stânca Doamnei-Ștefănești have the most numerous analogies in the eastern area of the Cucuteni Culture, considering the expansion area of the Culture. The analogies correspond in terms of technology to the statuettes specific to phase B of the culture, observed by D. Monah. He notes that at this stage the statuettes are modeled from a very good quality, homogeneous paste, and the artifacts presented are not an exception in this regard. From the viewpoint of combustion, they are generally very well burned, probably in the pottery ovens. Most statuettes of Cucuteni B phase are distinguished by a harmonious, proportionate shape.

Very often the artifacts were covered by a thin layer of clay, polished, sometimes covered with red or yellowish white slip, which is seen on statuette no. 4. At Caracușani we find the same way of making the leg, as in the case of statuette no. 4 (Fig. 5/1.2). The position of the statuette is vertical, with several transversal lines painted on the legs<sup>5</sup>.

Most statuettes continue traditions started in earliest stages of the culture, like the head of statuette cat. no. 5 (Fig. 6/1–2), whose origins, in terms of representation, are placed in the early periods of the Cucuteni Culture, namely phases A3-A4<sup>6</sup>. Similarities in terms of shape and production technology can be found in phases A-B in Vladimirovka<sup>7</sup>, Iablona<sup>8</sup>, Traian<sup>9</sup>, and other sites. This type of head continues to be represented in this typical manner, with no mouth, with a pronounced median rib and one or two perforations in the area of the eyes, throughout the development of phase B, being found in numerous cases<sup>10</sup>. In D. Monah's opinion, the slender body, with the breasts marked by small applied pills, would suggest the virginal or adolescent status of the character<sup>11</sup>. The statuettes with one leg, its ending with a

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 384, fig. 110/8

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p. 136

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p. 384, fig. 110/1–2; Ibidem p. 393, fig. 119/3

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 385, fig. 111/2, 3, 4

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 388, fig. 114/5

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 135

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 136



small cone or a very narrow base, such as the statuette. no. 2, have the closest analogies in phase A-B at Rakovec<sup>12</sup>, Lipcani<sup>13</sup> and phase B at Ghelăiești<sup>14</sup>.

The statuettes in sitting position are numerous and typical for many sites from Phase B. The fragment discovered at Stâncă Doamnei, cat. no. 3 (Fig. 4/1–3), is unfortunately too affected by secondary burning and too poorly preserved in order to draw detailed conclusions. What we note is that the feet of the statue were modeled separately, through rolling, and the body was attached separately. As far as one can observe, the statuette's legs were not bent.

A special statuette is the one preserved almost complete, cat. no. 1 (inv. MJB. 808). It was modeled on a timber structure, possibly a circular tree branch, and the body was flattened after modeling the foot. The manner of modeling on a wood structure can be related to the technological necessities, since the artifact was large compared to the average existing objects. A clear example regarding the mark of a tree-bark is identified on the statuette from Borzești-La Iaz, village Ungureni, Botoșani County<sup>15</sup>. This one is large; just the lower, preserved, part of the artifact has 17.5 cm (Fig. 9/5).

This single leg, with the disc that gives stability to the statuette, determines an obviously vertical position of this category of statuettes. In the case of the artifact from Stâncă Doamnei even the perforation in the disc is preserved. The closest analogy that we have identified so far, was discovered in the site from Brânzești VIII, Republic of Moldova, by V. Marchevici<sup>16</sup> and published later by Sorochin<sup>17</sup>. The figurine from Brânzești VIII shows the same technique, is hollow on the inside, but with a flat, discoid, unperforated base (Fig. 9/1). On the body and legs the black bars form angles pointing up or down<sup>18</sup>, possibly suggesting the drapery of the dress. The genital area is marked by a triangle painted brown, and the legs are demarcated in the same way as on the statuette from Stâncă Doamnei. At Brânzești VIII were discovered several fragments belonging to this type, unfortunately so fragmented that the upper part cannot be reconstituted<sup>19</sup>. Statuettes of the same type are found at Moldova<sup>20</sup>, Čičirkozivka<sup>21</sup>, Soroca<sup>22</sup> (Fig. 9/4), Krinički<sup>23</sup>, Nemirov<sup>24</sup>, Suskovka<sup>25</sup>, Roskoshovka<sup>26</sup>, Koshierzyniec<sup>27</sup> and Cerkassov Sad<sup>28</sup>. In terms of production technique, we observed several similar pieces, including the Platar collection<sup>29</sup>. Four of the statuettes from Nemirov, some found in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, have been recently reviewed<sup>30</sup>. The statuettes are of considerable size; they would have exceeded 20–25 cm, if they were complete. Their lower part is constructed the same as the artifacts from Stâncă Doamnei and Brânzești VIII, relatively cylindrical with a flat bottom. The artifacts from Nemirov are hollow, but there also are small technological differences: some are

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p. 405, fig. 131/2

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p. 407, fig. 133/6–7

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, p. 423, fig. 149/9

<sup>15</sup> Diaconescu 2006, p. 175–180

<sup>16</sup> Thanks to our colleague Mariana Vasilache-Curoșu from the National Museum of History of Moldova, Chișinău, who kindly provided us the photos of this artifact.

<sup>17</sup> Sorochin 2001, p. 137–155

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 143

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem p. 140, Fig. 2/11; p. 151, Fig. 8/1; p. 152, fig. 9/1

<sup>20</sup> Monah 2012, p. 430, fig. 156/5

<sup>21</sup> Monah 2012, p. 470, fig. 196/4–7

<sup>22</sup> Pogoșeva 1985, p. 200, abb. 691

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 73, fig. 21/6; p. 198, abb. 661

<sup>24</sup> Monah 2012, p. 401, fig. 127/10

<sup>25</sup> Pogoșeva 1983, p. 78, fig. 22/1

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, p. 78, fig. 22/2

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. 78, fig. 22/4, 7

<sup>28</sup> \*\*\*, *Enciclopedia Tripilskoi Civilizații*, vol. I, Kiev, 2004, p. 445; Monah 2012, p. 474, fig. 200/10

<sup>29</sup> \*\*\*, *Enciclopedia Tripilskoi Civilizații*, vol. I, Kiev, 2004, p. 372, 374, 386, 387

<sup>30</sup> Старкова 2014, p. 41–53

hollow on their entire length (Fig. 9/2), while others only have hollow body (Fig. 9/3), with solid, full legs<sup>31</sup>.

The discovery of a fragmented statuette at Iablona, with hollow legs, but still well demarcated, belonging to phase Cucuteni A-B, determines us to believe that, technologically, the modeling of this type has origins earlier than phase B<sup>32</sup>. Also, in phase A-B we notice a widening of the hips, sometimes with perforations, which begins to lead to a change in the manner of realization of the statuettes, like at Traian-Dealul Viei<sup>33</sup>.

E. G. Starkova identifies analogies for this type of artifacts in the area of the settlements on the Bug, and places them chronologically at the middle and final stages of phases Tripyllia B II and C I<sup>34</sup>, in accordance with the opinions issued by Pogoševa<sup>35</sup>, phases that correspond to the end of phase A-B and early phase B. Regarding the classification of the statuettes from Stâncă Doamnei, they correspond to material from the Ukrainian area to phase Tripyllia C I (Cucuteni B2). The spindle-shaped, single-legged statuettes appear in stage Tripyllia B II (Cucuteni B1) and their production continues until phase Tripyllia C I, respectively phase Cucuteni B2<sup>36</sup>.

The most important aspect to note for this particular type of statuettes is that, although similar in shape and technology, they do not form series; each of them is actually unique. This is the case for the artifact from Stâncă Doamnei too, which may have had the hair represented, and perhaps a haircut, which unfortunately was not preserved.

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Drawings of the objects were made by Sebastian Ciupu, graphic designer, from Botoșani County Museum.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, p. 49

<sup>32</sup> Monah 2012, p. 379, fig. 105/6

<sup>33</sup> Monah 2012, p. 383, fig. 109/5

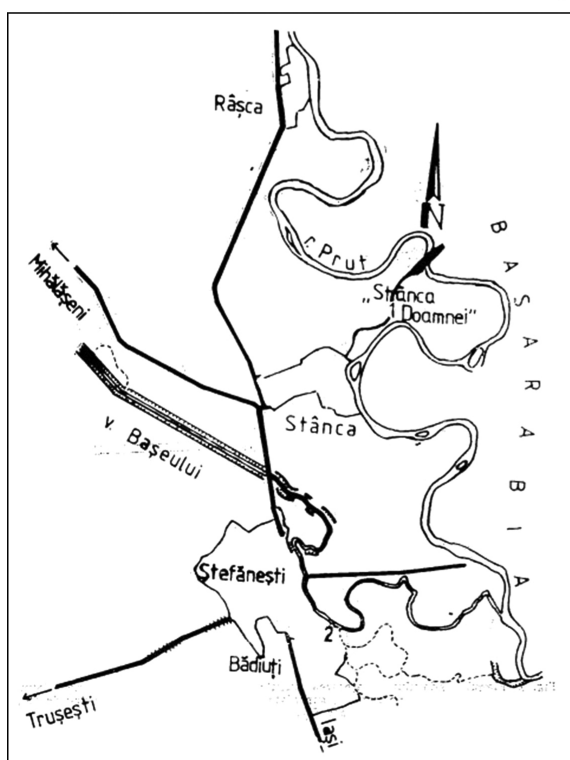
<sup>34</sup> Старкова 2014, p. 50

<sup>35</sup> Pogoševa 1983, p. 85

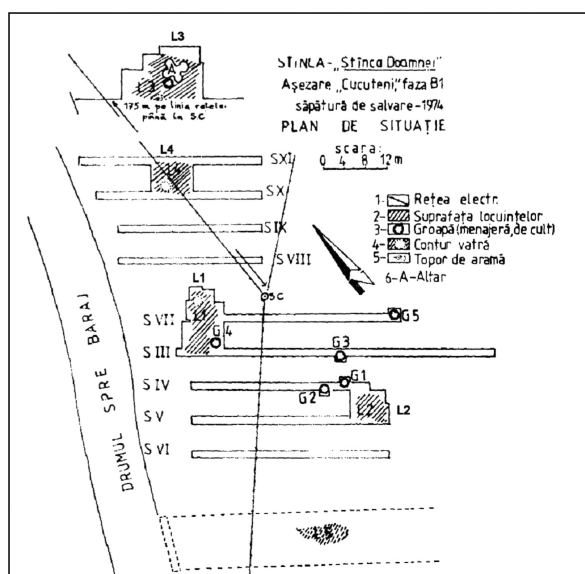
<sup>36</sup> \*\*\*, Enciclopedia Tripolie, vol I, Kiev, 2004, p. 372



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Fig. 1. Amplasarea sitului Stâncă Doamnei. 1. Poziționarea sitului din Google Earth; 2. Poziționarea sitului conform raportului de cercetare din 1994 (Nițu, Șadurschi, 1994, p. 185, fig. 1); 3. Planul cercetărilor efectuate în anul 1974 (Nițu, Șadurschi, 1994, p. 186, fig. 2)

Fig. 1. The location of the site from Stâncă Doamnei; 1. The location of the site from Google Earth; 2. The location of the site according to the research report from 1994 (Nițu, Șadurschi, 1994, p. 185, fig. 1); 3. Excavation plans from 1974 (Nițu, Șadurschi, 1994, p. 186, fig. 2)

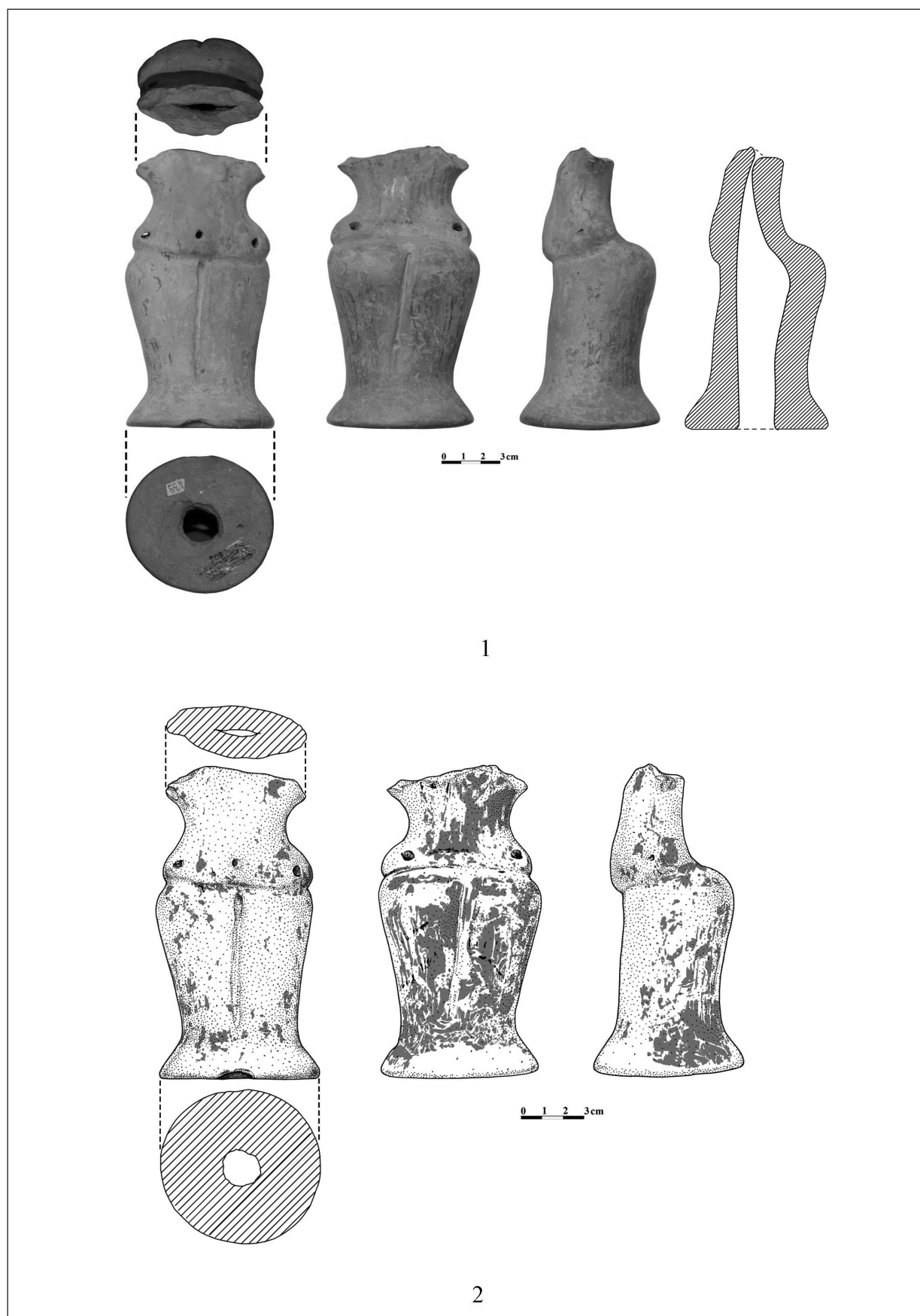


Fig. 2. Statueta nr. 1 (nr. inv. 808); 1. fotografie; 2. desen

Fig. 2. Statuette no. 1 (Inv. no. 808); 1. photo; 2. drawing



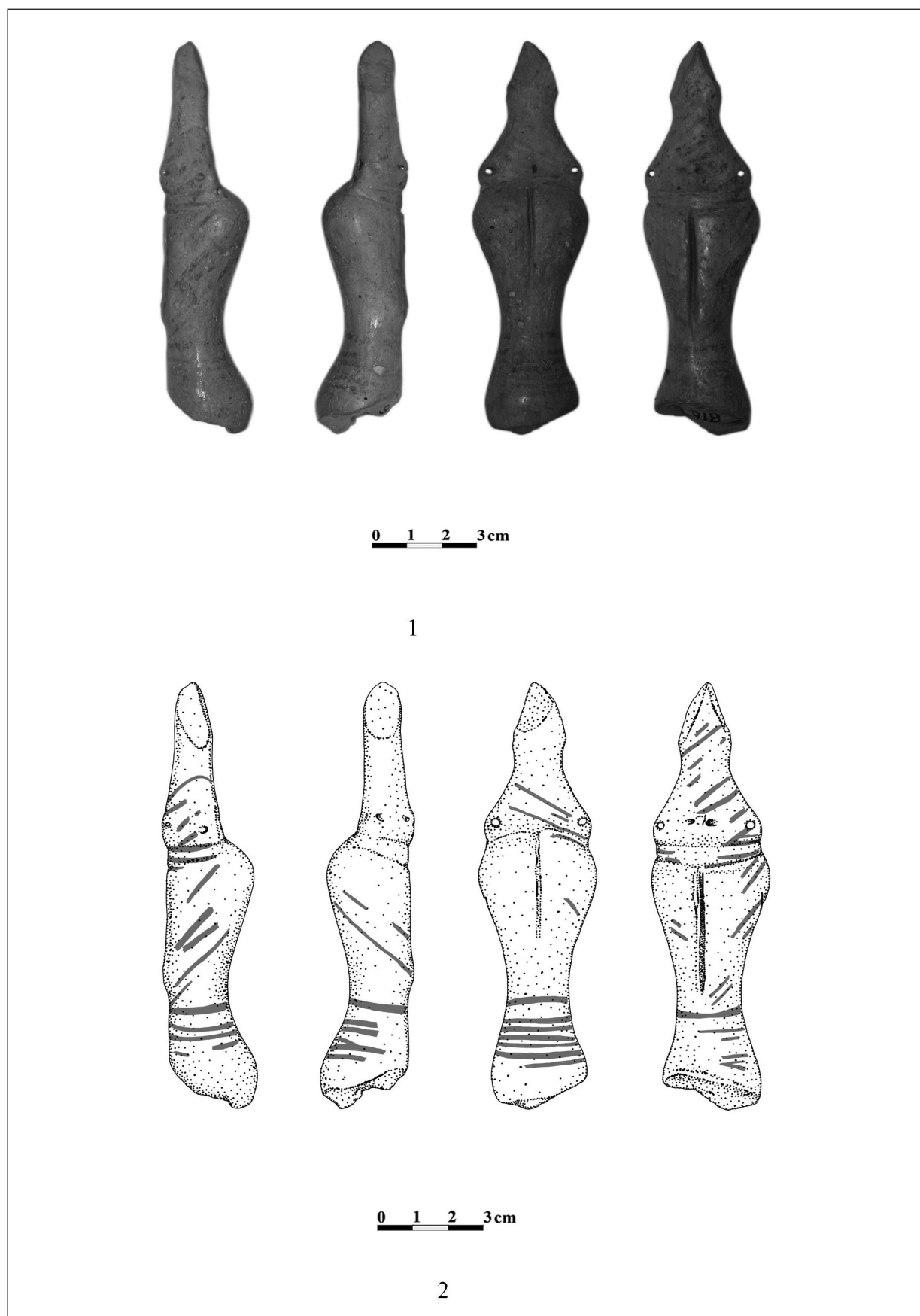


Fig. 3. Statueta nr. 2 (nr. inv. 816); 1. fotografie; 2. desen

Fig. 3. Statuette no. 2 (Inv. no. 816); 1. photo; 2. drawing



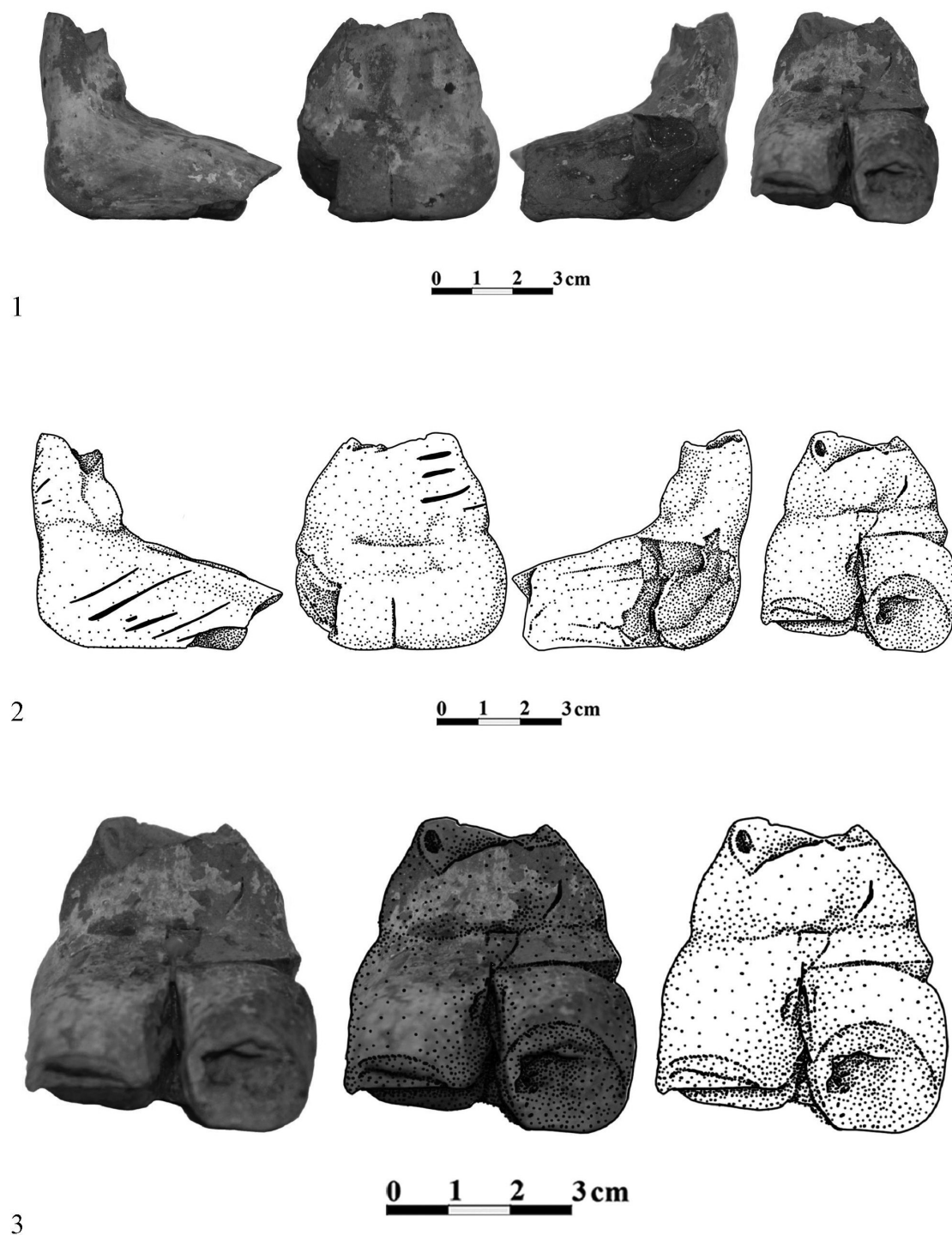


Fig. 4. Statueta nr. 3 (nr. inv. 817); 1. fotografie; 2. desen; 3. desen și fotografie cu detaliu asupra cariopsei de grâu din abdomen

Fig. 4. Statuette no. 3 (Inv. no. 817); 1. photo; 2. drawing; 3. Photo and drawing detail of the wheat caryopsis from the abdomen

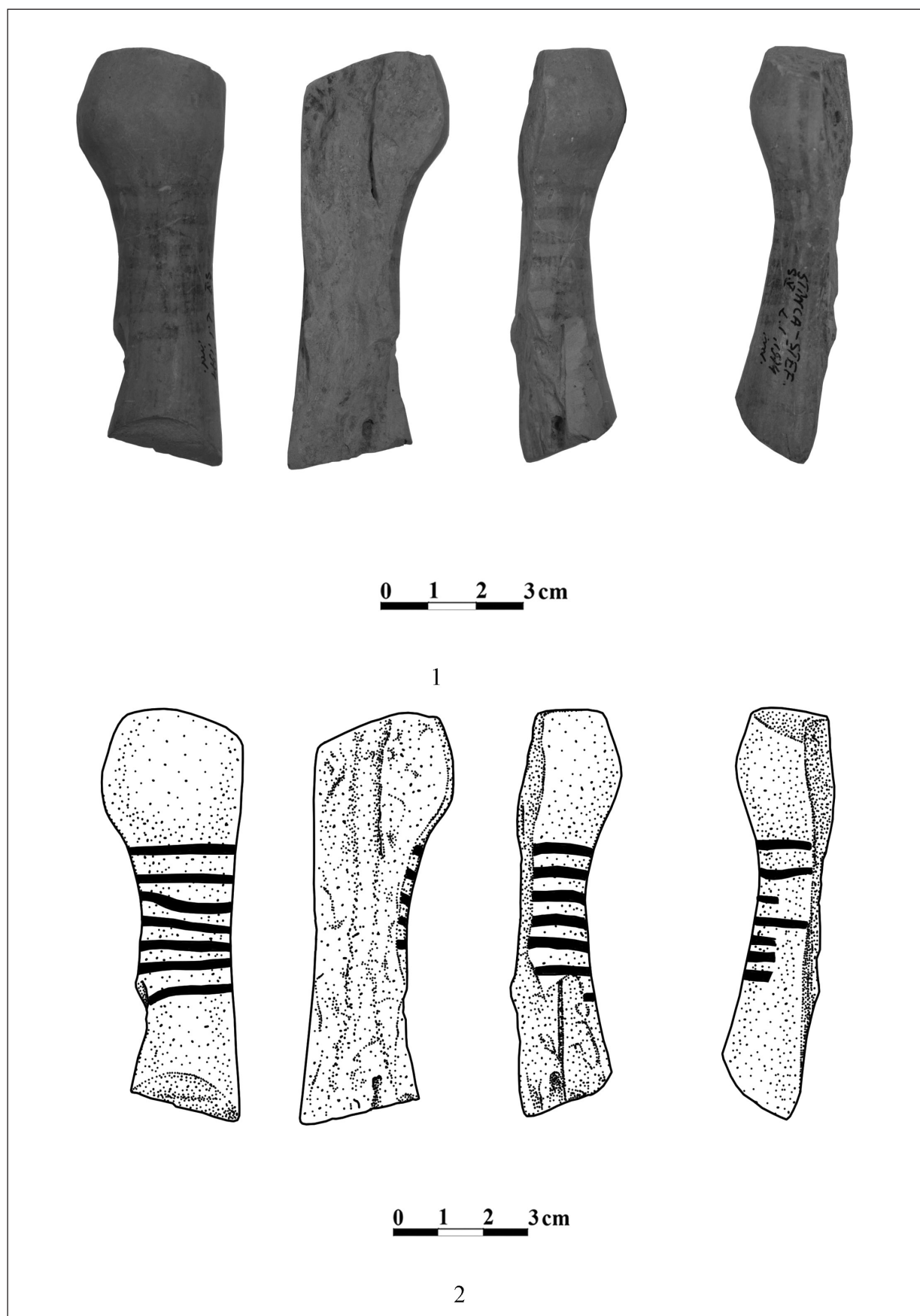


Fig. 5. Statueta nr. 4 (neinventariată). 1. fotografie; 2. desen

Fig. 5. Statuette no. 4 (uninventoriated); 1. photo; 2. drawing

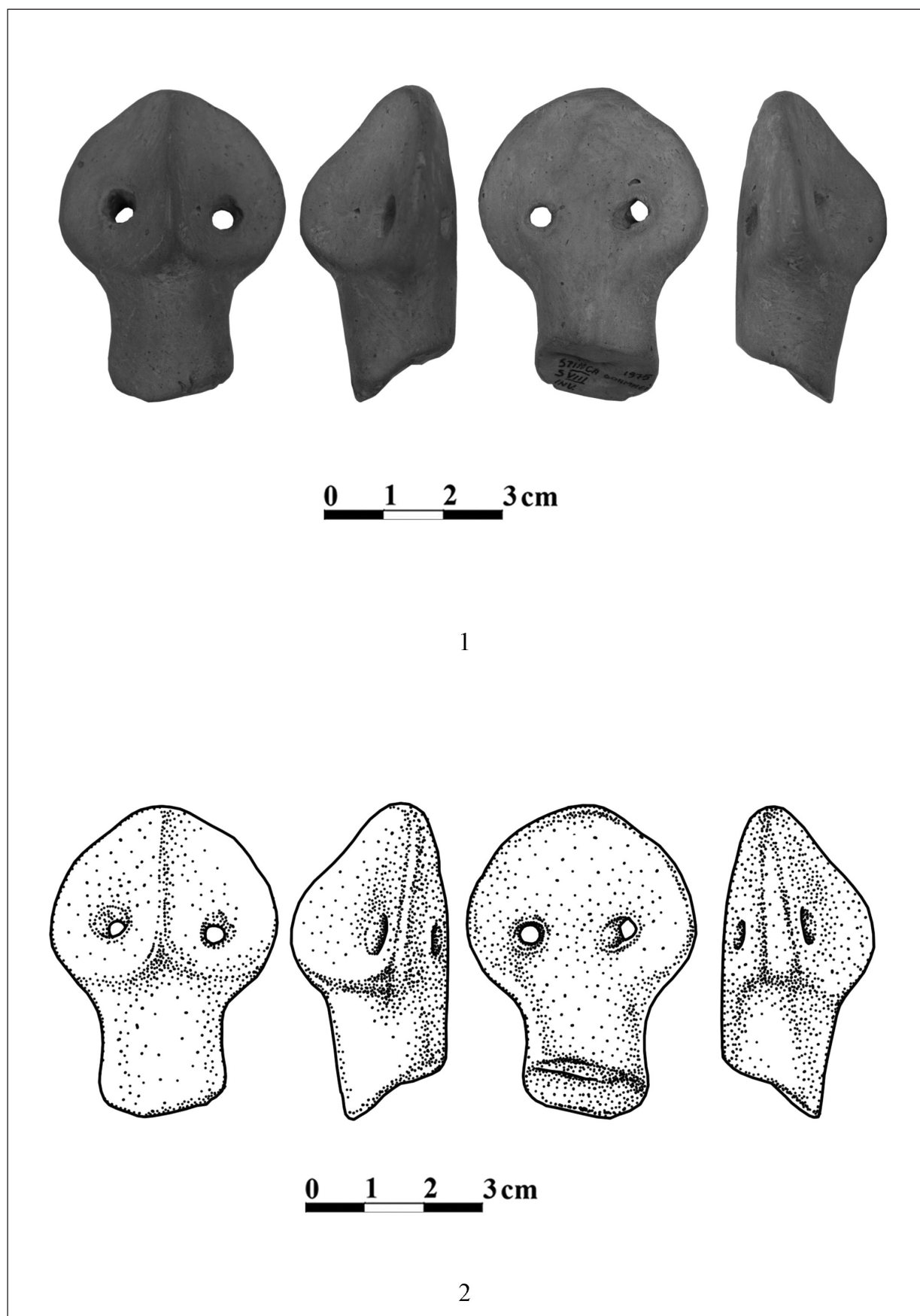


Fig. 6. Statueta nr. 5 (neinventariată). 1. fotografie; 2. desen  
Fig. 6. Statuette no. 5 (uninventoried); 1. photo; 2. drawing



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Fig. 7. Statueta nr. 1 (nr. inv. 808). 1. imaginea statuetei la radiografie-profil; 2, 3. aspecte din Laboratorul imagistic DDI – X-ray diagnostics, înainte de efectuarea radiografiei

Fig. 7. Statuette no. 1 (Inv. no. 808); 1. x-ray image of the statuette – profile; 2, 3. Aspects from Laboratory DDI – X-ray diagnostics, before the radiography



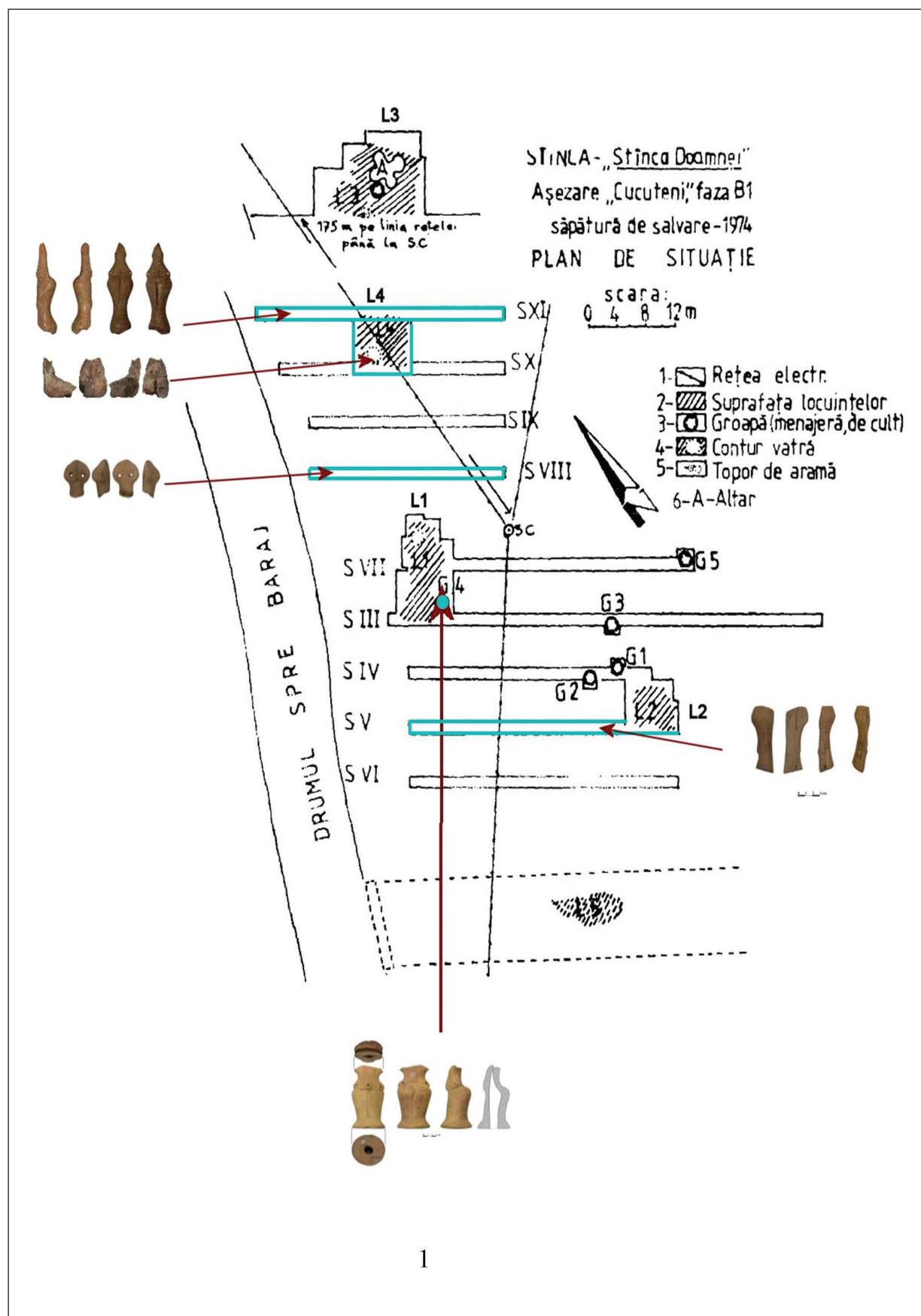


Fig. 8. Amplasarea locurilor de descoperire pe planul de cercetare de la Stîncă Doamnei

Fig. 8. The place where the statuettes were found, according to the research report from 1994 (after Nițu, Șadurschi, 1994, p. 186, fig. 2)





Fig. 9. Analogii cu privire la Statueta nr. 1 (nr. inv. 808). 1. Statuetă descoperită la Brânzeni VIII (foto Mariana Vasilache-Curoșu); 2. Statuetă goală pe interior de la Nemirov (Српкова, 2014, p. 45, fig. 3); 3. Statuetă cu corpul gol și picioarele pline de la Nemirov (Српкова, 2014, p. 46, fig. 4); 4. Statuetă cu corpul gol în interior de la Soroca (Pogoșeva, 1985, p. 200, abb. 691); 5. Statuetă goală pe interior de la Borzești-La Iaz, jud. Botoșani (foto Maria Diaconescu)

Fig. 9. Analogies for statuette no. 1 (Inv. no. 808). 1. Statuette discovered at Brânzeni VIII (Photo Mariana Vasilache-Curoșu); 2. The statuette of Nemirov (Српкова, 2014, p. 45, fig. 3); 3. Statuette with hollow body and legs from Nemirov (Српкова 2014, p. 46, fig. 4); 4. Statuette with hollow body from Soroca (Pogoșeva, 1985, p. 200, Abb. 691); 5. Statuette with hollow body Borzești-La Iaz, Botoșani County (photo Maria Diaconescu)