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“LIVADE-ĐURĐEVAC” NEAR PANČEVO. RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH OF MEDIEVAL CHURCHES AND NECROPOLISES 2009–2013

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*Vojislav Đorđević***

Keywords: Banat, churches, cemeteries, Middle Ages, Late Middle Ages.

Abstract

The article presents the results of the archaeological excavations of two medieval village churches and cemeteries with several stages of burials at the “Livade-Đurđevac” site near Pančevo in the southwestern part of the Serbian Banat, carried out in 2009–2013. The older church (Church 1) belongs to the 12th–13th centuries. After the demolition, a new church (Church 2) with a slightly different plan was built on its foundations, which belongs to the late medieval Gothic period (14th–15th centuries). Buryings took place around both churches during the entire medieval period. The horizon of burials from the 11th century, before the construction of churches, was also singled out. We connected the late medieval Church 2 with the settlement of “Sent-Đurađ”, known in the area of Kovin County in written sources from the 14th and 15th centuries.

The site where the medieval churches and cemeteries were explored is located in the cadastral municipality of Pančevo, about 6 km east of the outskirts of the city and just as far north-east of Starčevo, in the southwestern part of the Serbian Banat. It is located on the right side of the Pančevo-Kovin main road, about 550 m away from the left bank of the Nadela River. This site was first spatially observed within the “Livade” area, located north of the Pančevo-Kovin main road. However, the site is occupied by the “Đurđevac” area, which extends south of this road. Therefore, it will be marked as “Livade-Đurđevac” (Pl. 1/1, 2). The site is located on a barely visible and gentle hilly elevation with a diameter of about 40m. The mound’s height above sea level is 79.56 m, and concerning the surrounding terrain, it is raised by about half a meter (Pl. 1/3). Until 2010, the site was located within the cadastral municipality of Starčevo, and under the name “Starčevo-Livade”, it entered the professional literature.

The site was registered for the first time during the systematic archaeological reconnaissance of the terrain in 2007, as part of the “Archaeological Topography of Banat” project, when a large amount of construction debris (fragmented bricks, mortar) was discovered on the surface of the mound, as well as fragmented and crushed parts

of human bones. The first probing archaeological excavations were carried out at the end of 2009¹. The existence of the medieval cemetery was then confirmed, and 22 graves were investigated out of a total of 28 that were found (graves No. 12, 13, 15–18 were not investigated). Excavations were carried out at the highest part of the mound, where the concentration of construction rubble was the densest. In 2011, trial excavations with a system of trenches continued, which did not confirm the existence of a church building, but five more graves in the medieval cemetery were investigated (graves No. 29–33). In the following year (2012), a more extensive excavation confirmed the remains of the foundation of the west and parts of the foundation of the south and north walls of the

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¹ Archaeological excavations from 2009–2013 were carried out by the archaeological team of the Pančevo National Museum under the direction of the signatory of this article. Financial resources for the research were provided by the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia, the Provincial Secretariat for Culture and Public Information from Novi Sad and the City Administration of Pančevo.

church building, and an additional 28 graves were investigated within the necropolis in the area west of the church (graves No. 34–62). Finally, in 2013, a systematic excavation of the church building was carried out, which was discovered in its entirety, and 18 more graves were investigated within the medieval cemetery (graves No. 63–80), mainly along the north and south walls of the church and in the area east of the church apse. In the same year, during the investigation of the interior of the church building, except for one grave from the oldest medieval burial horizon, in the southeastern part, an ocher-grave of the Yamnaya culture with the deceased in a crouched position from the Eneolithic period was discovered, whose skeletal remains were preserved and in an undisturbed shape were transferred to the Pančevo museum in 2014².

Between 2008 and 2011, an early medieval settlement was investigated on a larger scale in the area of “Livade” north of the Pančevo-Kovin main road³. Within its framework, two settlement horizons are distinguished, the older ones from the 8th–9th centuries and the younger ones from the period of the 10th – the first half of the 11th century. South and southwest of the “Livade” area, on the left bank of Nadel towards the hinterland and Starčevo, there is the “Đurđevac” area, where surface archaeological finds from several settlements from the 11th–13th and 13th–16th centuries are registered, as well as a group of ten mounds, which probably originate from the Eneolithic period⁴.

The results of archaeological excavations of medieval churches and cemeteries at this location have only been partially published. In the works dedicated to the research of medieval settlements

at the “Livade” site, a brief overview of the oldest burial horizon from the 10th–11th centuries was provided,⁵ while the results of the research of the church and medieval cemeteries are summarized in the Catalog of the exhibition, which was organized on the occasion of these researches⁶. Therefore, the report in this volume represents the most comprehensive presentation of the archaeological works that were carried out on this part of the “Livade-Đurđevac” site.

Medieval churches

The assumption about the existence of two chronologically different church buildings, which we made during the probe excavations in 2012, was confirmed by the systematic excavations in 2013. Namely, the stratigraphic superposition of the walls of the “younger” church building (marked in light grey on Pl. 2/2 below referred to as Church 2) with the “older” church (marked in dark grey on Pl. 2/2 below referred to as Church 1) was confirmed. It was established that the entire length of the western wall of the older church was negated by the west wall of the younger church, and the same negation was confirmed in the middle of the length of the southern and northern walls, as well as in the middle of the apex of the apse. From this, it can be concluded that the foundation of Church 2 was made over the foundations of Church 1, while the foundations of the younger church completely follow the orientation of the foundations of the older one. Both churches are oriented in the northeast-southwest direction, and they deviate from the east-west direction by 25° towards the north. In both churches, the entrance was on the west side, and the altar space was directed to the east.

Church 2 has a simple plan (Pl. 2/1, 2). It is a one-nave building with a semicircular apse, 12.7 m long and 7.4 m wide. The length of the central nave is 7.8 m, the length of the altar space is 4.9 m, and the width of the apse is 5.8 m. The outer faces of the walls of the church are broken by rectangular buttresses, along the north and south walls, with three each, as well as two buttresses at the corners of the west wall of the church. The foundations

² Ocher-grave from the Eneolithic period will be discussed in a separate article.

³ Jelena Đorđević-Vojislav Đorđević, Preliminary Results of Archaeological Research at the Medieval Site of Starčevo-Livade 2008–2010. I. Pantović (ed.), *Research, Preservation and Presentation of Banat Heritage: Current State and Long Term Strategy*, Vršac (2012), 75–84; Jelena Đorđević-Vojislav Đorđević, Ranosrednjovekovno naselje i groblje “Livade” kod Pančeva. Ka utvrđivanju hronologije ranosrednjovekovnog perioda u Banatu. O. Rumjanceva, S. Trifunović (eds.), *Balkan, Podunavlje i Istočna Evropa u rimsko doba i u srednjem veku: Materijali II rusko-srpske arheološke konferencije “Sloveni u svetu Balkana i Istočne Evrope: istorijsko-arheološka panorama” (14–21. maja 2017. g. Moskva)*, Moskva, Institut arheologije ruske akademije nauka, Muzej Vojvodine (2022), 184–207.

⁴ Jelena Đorđević-Vojislav Đorđević (eds.), *Arheološka topografija Banata*, vol. 4, Pančevo (2020), 418–419, Map 212 (Eneolithic mounds); 446, Map 217 (settlements from 11th–13th centuries); 448, Map 218 (settlements from 13th–16th centuries).

⁵ J. Đorđević- V. Đorđević, *Preliminary Results...*, 81–84, Fig. 8–9; J. Đorđević-V. Đorđević, *Ranosrednjovekovno naselje i groblje ...*, 197–198, 199, Fig. 9.

⁶ Jelena Đorđević-Vojislav Đorđević, *Livade kod Pančeva. Srednjovekovna crkva i nekropola na eneolitskoj humci. Rezultati arheoloških istraživanja 2009–2014. godine*, Pančevo (2016), 1–35.

of church 2 consist of dark brown compacted clay mixed with larger and smaller pieces of broken stone, broken bricks, and smaller and larger pieces of mortar (Pl. 3/1). Crushed human bones, animal bones, fragments of pottery, and even metal finds (iron clamp) were also found in the charge. The foundations were found at a depth of 0.6 to 0.83 m and were dug to a depth of 1.07 m. The width of the foundation is average of about 1 m. At the top of the apse, on the outside, an oval-shaped pit measuring 2 × 1 m, 1.23 m deep, was found, filled with rubble, in which five rows of regularly built, horizontally arranged bricks were found in an undisturbed form, which can be assumed to be “slipped” from the foundation (Pl. 3/2). This concentration of bricks speaks in favour of the fact that the church in the above-ground part was built of bricks, and the masonry started from a depth of 0.58 m. The preserved concentration of bricks could be the rest of the buttress on the outside of the top of the apse, created in the later stage of the church’s duration and repair. On the other hand, it is not excluded that it is the rest of the traces of looting of the altar area in search of relics. A similar phenomenon was registered in the altar spaces of the Romanesque monastery complex Dumbo in Rakovac and the nearby parish church of St. George on Klisa⁷. The digging of this pit damaged the foundations of the younger church, as well as the foundations of the older church. During the excavation, no remains of roof bricks were found, which indicates that the church’s roof covering was probably made of wood or some other perishable material. Two rectangular concentrations, filled with dark brown solid compacted clay measuring 1 × 0.83 m and 1 × 0.9 m, are located on the west side, about 0.7 m far from the foundation of the west wall, and also belong to Church 2 (Pl 3/3). These concentrations could have had the function of the foundation/support of the pillars of some construction on the outside of the western side of the church, and the possibility that they are the pillars of the church bell tower should not be ruled out.

A church of a similar plan, with two buttresses on the north and south walls of the church, was excavated at the site of Paphalom near Senta, which is said to belong to the Romanesque period, and then to have undergone Gothic interventions⁸. Churches at the Csorvás and Kaszaper sites

⁷ Nebojša Stanojev, *Rakovac, Gradina, Klisa*, Novi Sad (2015), 93, 242.

⁸ Nebojša Stanojev, *Nekropole X–XV veka u Vojvodini*, Arheološko društvo Vojvodine, Novi Sad (1989), 105, 108.

in Békés County, Hungary, were built in the 11th–12th century and had buttresses added in the 15th century and similar plans⁹. In the mountainous part of the Romanian Banat, a church of comparable dimensions with buttresses was excavated in Berzovia (connected to the village parish church of Remetea, known from documentary sources from the beginning of the 15th century), which differs from the church in the “Livade-Đurđevac” site by its rectangular apse and added sacristy, and it is cautiously attributed to Gothic architecture in Banat¹⁰.

The foundations discovered along the inner side of the foundation trenches of the western, northern and southern walls of Church 2 at a depth of 0.8 m can be attributed to the older *Church 1* (Pl. 2/1, 2). The walls of the older church completely follow the direction of the walls of the younger one. The foundations of Church 1 have been preserved at a length of 6 to 6.6 m along the north and south walls. The width of the foundations of Church 1 along the north wall of Church 2 is 0.8 m, and along the south wall, 0.62 m. The depth of the sinking is 1.4 m. They were also confirmed in the area of the top of the apse, preserved in a length of 1.2 m and a width of 0.4 m, where they were damaged by the sinking of the buttress from the youngest phase of Church 2 or by a pit created during the possible looting of the altar space of the younger church. The foundations of Church 1 clearly differ in the quality of the charge, and it is a light brown clay charge without any traces of rubble or additions of stone or brick, sunken in light yellow subsoil (Pl. 4/1, 2). In the area of the western half of the central nave of the church, directly next to the inner edge of the west wall, there are the foundations of a rectangular platform measuring 3.4 × 0.8 m, made of solid dark brown compacted clay mixed with bricks, which are densely arranged in the upper parts of the platform, at a depth of 0.58 m (Pl. 4/2, 3). This platform could represent the foundation, i.e. the support of some architectural element inside the church, perhaps a gallery (empora) on the first floor, which is one of the main characteristics of church architecture of the 12th–13th centuries in the much broader framework of medieval Hungary¹¹.

⁹ Imre Szatmári, *Békés megye középkori templomai*, Békéscsaba (2005), 106, 174, Fig. 6/2 (Csorvás); 179, Fig. 23/2 (Kaszaper).

¹⁰ Dumitru Țeicu, *Mountainous Banat in the Middle Ages*, Cluj-Napoca (2002), 93, 104, Fig. 27.

¹¹ For numerous analogies with literature, see: Jelena Đorđević, Vojislav Đorđević, and Dejan Radičević, Pozni

The plan of Church 1 is simple. It is a single-
nave building with a semicircular apse. Apart from
the two outlets to the outside in the form of but-
tresses (pillars 2 and 3) in the middle of the western
wall – which probably represents the remains of
the supporting pillars of the church bell tower, no
buttresses were found along the longitudinal walls
of the church. Judging by the numerous traces of
bricks in the cultural layer, also the extensive use of
bricks during the construction of grave structures
in the younger phase of burials, it is likely that the
older church in the above-ground part was also
made of bricks.

The closest analogies for the plan of Church 1
are found in nearby Omoljica, only 8.2 km to the
southeast, where a village church was excavated,
most likely built in the last decades of the 12th or
the beginning of the 13th century, and which was
assumed to have been demolished in Mongol inva-
sions in 1241/1242¹². The research of the church
in Omoljica did not confirm the remains of the
supporting pillars of the church bell tower from
the outside, which probably existed on Church 1
at the “Livade-Đurđevac” site. A church with
a similar plan was partially explored at the site
“Grad” in Dupljaja, where, based on findings from
graves within the churchyard, it was dated to the
12th – first half of the 13th century¹³. Dupljaja’s
city church and cemetery were probably used
until the Mongol invasion¹⁴. An almost identical
plan of the church with the foundations for the
columns of the church bell in the form of outlets
on the outside of the west wall can be seen in the
church discovered in Gádoros, in Békés County,
Hungary¹⁵.

Medieval cemeteries

During the archaeological excavations at this
position, a complex vertical stratigraphy was

srednji vek i novo doba. Jelena Đorđević and Vojislav
Đorđević (eds.), *Arheološka topografija Banata*, vol. 4,
Pančevo (2020), 444.

¹² Jelena Đorđević, Vojislav Đorđević, and Dejan Radičević,
*Arheološka istraživanja srednjovekovne crkve u Omoljici:
preliminarni rezultati*, *Glasnik Srpskog arheološkog društva*,
XXII (2006), 159–166; Jelena Đorđević, Vojislav Đorđević,
Dejan Radičević, *Srednjovekovna crkva u Omoljici:
istraživanja u 2006. Godini*, *Glasnik Srpskog arheološkog
društva*, XXIII (2007), 187–192; J. Đorđević-V. Đorđević,
Arheološka topografija, 167–169; J. Đorđević, V. Đorđević
and Radičević, *Pozni srednji vek*, 443–445.

¹³ Dejan Radičević, *Medieval Fortification in Dupljaja near
Bela Crkva (Southern Banat)*, *Studia Universitatis Cibiniensis*,
X (2013), 88–89, 97, Fig. 13.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 89.

¹⁵ Szatmári, *Békés megye*, 114–115, 177, Fig. 12.

noted, especially outside the church buildings and
between the graves. The first stratigraphic layer
(1st and 2nd excavation layer) consists of mod-
ern humus and ploughing layer, which extends to
a depth of 0.33–0.38 m. It is composed of dark
brown compact earth in which many small frag-
ments of broken bricks and mortar are found, and
at the bottom of this layer, dislocated human bones
begin to be registered. The next stratigraphic unit
(3rd excavation layer) consists of a layer of light
brown loose earth that extends to a depth of 0.62–
0.65 m and is filled with the amount of dislocated
human bones. The third stratigraphic unit (4th
excavation layer) consists of a layer of light brown
loose earth that extends to a depth of 0.82–0.9 m,
in which a number of dislocated human bones,
fragments of finely broken bricks, and mortar also
appear. The last stratigraphic unit (5th excavation
layer) consists of a layer of brown earth with a large
amount of dislocated human bones, which extends
to a depth of 1.2–1.24 m, on which appears sterile
subsoil without archaeological finds.

A total of 73 graves belonging to the medieval
period were investigated¹⁶. The number of investi-
gated graves does not correspond to the number of
recorded burials (80). A large number of cases of
mutual overlapping and negation of burial units,
the burying of graves one above the other, and
construction of the foundations of the walls of
the younger Church 2 over older medieval graves
are recorded, which testifies to the long duration
of the cemetery. We will mention the more sig-
nificant and relatively chronologically indicative
cases of grave overlap. Children’s graves No. 6, 7,
and 8 were buried over and above grave No. 9,
the bottom of which has charred wood. On the
other hand, this grave negated grave No. 10, which
belongs to the oldest medieval burial period in the
cemetery (Pl. 10/1, 4a). Children’s graves No. 3
and 5 were buried above grave No. 10. Child grave
No. 4 was buried above and over the lower part
of grave No. 11 and can be a family burial. An
example of a family burying can be seen in child
grave No. 2, which was buried to the right of grave
No. 23. Grave No. 19, in which an anonymous
silver denarius, possibly minted during the reign
of King Stephen III of Hungary (1162–1172),
was found and was buried over graves No. 20 and
21 (whose bottom pit also has a “carpet” made of
charred woods), as well as over a child grave No. 28.
Grave No. 14 was buried in children’s grave No. 25
(with a brick construction), and, this grave is one

¹⁶ Anthropological processing of the skeletons is ongoing.

of the youngest in the cemetery. Grave No. 32 is negated by the burying of graves No. 33 and 56 (in the filling of pits, traces of construction debris were discovered) and grave No. 54 (which has a brick "carpet" above the grave pit). This specific grave (54) was also buried over graves No. 39, 45 and 51. The foundations of the western wall of the younger Church 2, apart from negating the foundations of the older Church 1 during construction, damaged a series of graves (No. 40, 41, 42, 44, 47, 48, 58 and 59) along their entire length (Pl. 13/2). These graves extended to the foundation of the western wall of the older Church 1 and chronologically correspond to it. The very chronological group includes the graves that were damaged by digging the foundations of the northern (No. 45, 49, 52, 57, 60, 61, 62) and southern supports of the pillar structure (No. 40, 41, 44) from the outer west side of the younger Church 2. Graves damaged by the construction of the foundations of the southern (No. 63, 66, 67) and northern walls of the younger Church 2 (No. 68, 71, 76, 77, 79) can be added to them. These graves extended along the foundations of the southern and northern walls of the older Church 1, which were also negated by the construction of younger foundations. From this group of graves, we can single out grave No. 68, which was buried above the pit of grave No. 77, in which iron wedges left from a wooden chest, were found, and the other hand, it was damaged by the brick construction of grave No. 78, which belongs to the youngest burial phase. No graves were found in the interior of both church buildings that corresponded to their duration. Only one grave (65), belonging to the oldest medieval phase of the cemetery before the construction of the church, was discovered in that area (Pl. 2/2; 10/2), as well as the mentioned ocher-grave from the period of the Eneolithic Yamnaya culture. Based on all the presented stratigraphic facts, at least three burial horizons can be reliably distinguished within the medieval necropolis at this position.

The oldest horizon of the medieval cemetery (*Phase 1*) was formed before the construction of Church 1, and four graves can be attributed to it (graves No. 10, 20, 45 and 65). One of the reasons for the small number of graves in this phase may lie in the assumption that the excavations probably covered the periphery of this oldest cemetery. Another reason is the long-term intensive burying carried out within the younger phases of the cemetery, which led to the devastation of the oldest horizon of the graves. The graves were dug at a depth of 0.7 to 0.95 m. In terms

of orientation, they clearly differ from the graves of the younger phases of the cemetery, e.g. grave No. 10 (Pl. 10/1). They are oriented west-east, with a deviation of 20–31° towards the north. The deceased were buried freely in burial pits without structures, and in one case, an oval-shaped pit was recognized. Only one skeleton has been preserved as a whole, although extremely bad (grave No. 65), which was buried in the area that was inside the church in the subsequent period when it was built, and the building of the church somehow saved it from destruction, while the rest of the skeletons were damaged by the burials of younger graves. Of one deceased, only the pelvis and the upper parts of the femurs were preserved (grave No. 20, Pl. 11/1). Something more can be said about burial customs for the two graves. The deceased were laid on their backs with their head on the nape and their legs extended. The arms are bent at the elbows and crossed on the abdomen, or one arm extended next to the body, and the other placed on the abdomen. Grave goods and pieces of jewellery and costumes are scarce, although this is the richest burial level in terms of finds. In grave No. 10, in the area around the skull, a pair of earrings-links made of circularly bent silver wire 0.1 cm thick, folded ends, was found (Pl. 5/2, 3), and on the ring finger of the right hand – a cast bronze ring with an approximately triangular cross-section 0.2 cm thick, decorated with alternating embossed lines (Pl. 5/1). Similar links appear over a long period from the second half of the 10th century until the end of the 12th century, after which they disappear in burial assemblages, while finds of rings with a notched link are a frequent find in the Carpathian Basin, typical for burial assemblages of the Bijelo Brdo culture and more sensitive for dating, placed in the time range from the beginning to the end of the 11th century, that is, from 1000–1060¹⁷. In grave No. 65, on the ring finger of the left hand of the deceased, a cast bronze ring-link with separated and somewhat thinned ends, rectangular cross-section 0.2 cm thick, characteristic of the 10th and 11th centuries, of the same date as the ring from grave No. 10, was found (Pl. 5/5)¹⁸. A silver coin minted at the time of the Hungarian king

¹⁷ Jochen Giesler, *Untersuchungen zur Chronologie der Bijelo Brdo-Kultur. Ein Beitrag zur Archäologie des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts im Karpatenbecken*, *Prähistorische Zeitschrift*, LVI, 1 (1981), Pl. 4/33; Silviu Oța, *The Mortuary Archaeology of the Medieval Banat (10th – 14th Centuries)*, Leiden-Boston (2015), 116, 136, 230, Pl. 2/3, 241, Pl. 13/13.

¹⁸ Giesler, *Untersuchungen*, Pl. 4/27; Oța, *The Mortuary*, 135, 241, Pl. 13/7, 8.

Stephen I (1000–1038) was found in the skull of this deceased (Pl. 5/6)¹⁹. Part of the inventory from the graves of this horizon, which was disturbed by younger burials, was found in the cultural layer, outside the destroyed burial units, e.g. a silver ring made by casting, with a round link of rectangular section, decorated with clusters of granules (Pl. 5/8), as well as a fragmented ring or earring made of fivefold twisted silver wire (Pl. 5/7). Similar findings were registered at the Farkaš Tanja (Farkas Tanya) cemetery near Senta, dated to the 11th century, by a coin of Stephen I (1000–1038)²⁰. For rings made of twisted wire are believed to be typical of grave assemblages of the Bijelo Brdo culture²¹. Grave No. 45 could also belong to the oldest horizon of graves, based on the stratigraphic position and orientation, in which the lower part of a fragmented bronze, S-earring was found in the region of the skull, extremely poorly preserved so that more could be said about it (Pl. 5/4).

Based on the proximity of the positions, we can assume that the inhabitants of the investigated settlement on the left side of the Pančevo-Kovin main road, about 150 m in the north direction, were buried in this cemetery. In the rubble layer of one of the houses, a bronze Byzantine anonymous follis of class A2 minted at the turn of the 10th to the 11th century (976–1030/1035) was found, which dates the younger horizon of this settlement to the end of the 10th and the first half of the 11th century²². The oldest burying horizon contains elements of the Bjelo Brdo-type necropolis horizon typical of the 11th century, and the settlement and necropolis at this position were probably in operation during the conflict between the local lord Ahtum (Ajtony) and King Stefan I during the first third of the 11th century over supremacy in the southern areas of medieval Hungary at that time²³.

Graves that were devastated or damaged during the construction of the foundations of Church 2 and its bell tower, and by graves from the youngest burial phase, can be included in the next burial

horizon (*Phase 2*). A total of 42 graves belong to this group. The number of skeletons is poorly preserved – in some cases, only the lower parts of the lower limbs (lower legs) or individual parts of the upper limbs, which is a consequence of very intensive burying. Dislocated bones of previously buried deceased are often lined up along the edges of the graves. Based on the stratigraphic position, a group of graves can be distinguished that could be relatively chronologically older within this phase of burying, and a total of 9 graves belong to it: grave No. 28, all graves with traces of soot and pieces of charred wood under the skeleton at the bottom of the pit, wherein the form of the substrate on which the deceased was laid, they properly cover the entire surface (graves No. 9, 21, 22, 41, 44, 51, 69 – Pl. 6; 10/4a, b; 11/1), and grave No. 77 with several iron wedges arranged around the skeleton, indicating burial in a wooden coffin (Pl. 6; 11/2). The case of the superposition of graves No. 19 and 21 (Pl. 6; 11/1) is indicative, where the deceased from grave No. 19 (with the find of an anonymous silver denarius from the 12th century) was buried over the deceased from grave No. 21, in which the remains of soot were found at the bottom of the pit. The same was noted in grave No. 27, which was dug over the older grave No. 22 with the soot at the bottom of the burial pit. The remains of charred wood in the burial pits are generally interpreted as a trace of the practice of “purification” of the tombstone by burning it, probably before the burying of the deceased, which is rarely in Banat²⁴. This custom is also registered in graves within the older phase of the cemetery in nearby Omoljica and in two graves in the churchyard at the site of “Grad” in Dupljaja²⁵.

Graves from Phase 2 of the cemetery were dug at depths of 0.54 m to 1.18 m. The orientations of the graves generally follow the orientation of Church 1. In two cases, they are ideally oriented in the west-east direction, while in other cases, deviations from this direction range from 14° to 43° to the south. The deceased were mostly buried freely without burial structures, and only in three cases were rectangular burial pits with rounded edges observed. As in the case of graves of the oldest phase, all the deceased are on their backs, with the skull on the back of the head in the west and the legs extended. Due to poor preservation, it is only possible to determine the position of both

¹⁹ Obverse: in the middle, a one-pointed cross in a circle of beads, between the arms of the cross wedges, around the inscription STEPHANVS REX. Reverse: REIIACIVITVS*, same as the obverse (cross with wedges). Read by: Ladislav Réthy and Günther Probst, *Corpus Nummorum Hungariae*, vol. I, Graz (1958), No. 1; Lajos Huszár, *Münzkatalog Ungarn. Von 1000 bis Heute*, Budapest (1979), No. 1.

²⁰ Stanojev, *Nekropole*, 113, Fig. 615; 114, Fig. 620.

²¹ Ota, *The Mortuary*, 135, 241, Pl. 13/11.

²² J. Đorđević-V. Đorđević, *Ranosrednjovekovno naselje i groblje*, 196, Fig. 8/18.

²³ Petar Rokai, Zoltan Đere, Tibor Pal and Aleksandar Kasaš, *Istorija Mađara*, Beograd (2002), 24–25.

²⁴ For all registered examples in Banat, see: Ota, *The Mortuary*, 57.

²⁵ J. Đorđević, V. Đorđević and Radičević, *Srednjovekovna crkva*, 189; Radičević, *Medieval Fortification*, 89.

hands in 14 of the deceased, and they are very different. The most numerous are the deceased with their arms outstretched next to their bodies, a total of five cases (graves No. 28, 52, 67, 75, 76); they are followed by two cases with both arms bent at the elbows and placed on the abdomen (graves No. 43, 26) and with both arms bent at the elbows and crossed on the abdomen (graves No. 68, 19). Individual cases were recorded where the right arm was bent at the elbow and placed over the abdomen, and the left arm was extended next to the body (grave No. 9); the right hand bent at the elbow and placed over the abdomen, and the left hand placed on the left pelvic wing (grave No. 42); both arms bent at the elbows and placed over the abdomen (grave No. 47); the left arm bent at the elbow and placed on the abdomen, and the right arm extended next to the body (grave No. 48); the left arm bent at the elbow and placed between the pelvic wings, and the right extended next to the body (grave No. 61); the right arm bent at the elbow and placed on the abdomen, and the left arm bent at the elbow with the fist placed on the shoulder of the same hand (grave No. 55).

The graves of this phase are very scarce in finds of grave goods. In the majority, Hungarian silver coins were found, placed in the mouths of the deceased or thrown into the ground during burial. An anonymous silver denarius from the 12th century was found on the upper jaw of the deceased in grave No. 19, possibly minted in the time of King Stephen III of Hungary (1162–1172) (Pl. 6/2)²⁶. An anonymous silver denarius from the 12th century, minted most likely in the time of King Béla II of Hungary (1131–1141), was found in the earth that buried grave No. 26 (Pl. 7/1)²⁷. An anonymous silver denarius from the 12th century was found on the upper jaw of the deceased in grave No. 55, also possibly minted in the time of Stephen III (1162–1172) (Pl. 7/2)²⁸. In the earth with which grave No. 48 (Pl. 6/12) was filled, as well as on the skull of the deceased in grave No. 61 (Pl. 6/11), specimens of silver coins were found which, even after conservation treatment, could not be read due to high corrosion and poor quality of silver, but based on the dimensions they can be attributed, to anonymous Hungarian coins from the 12th century. Apart from coins, only

32 glass beads found in the area of the upper arm and shoulder of the deceased in grave No. 21 were recorded among the other burial goods, so it can be assumed that they were part of a necklace (Pl. 6/1). The beads are of uniform dimensions, maroon-red, brown and green. Bead necklaces that were found in burial complexes in Banat date back to around 1200, and after that date, they are rarely deposited as grave goods²⁹.

Five more Hungarian coins were found in the cultural layer outside the burial units. 1. An anonymous silver denarius from the 12th century possibly minted at the time of King Stephen II (1116–1131) (Pl. 7/6)³⁰. 2. An anonymous silver denarius from the 12th century³¹. 3. An anonymous silver denarius from the 12th century (Pl. 7/7)³². 4. An anonymous silver denarius from the 12th century, possibly minted in the time of King Béla II (1131–1141) (Pl. 7/9)³³. 5. An anonymous silver denarius from the 12th century, possibly minted in the time of King Stephen II (1116–1131) (Pl. 7/8)³⁴. In addition, a certain number of iron wedges, clamps and fragments of forged iron knives (Pl. 7/10) were found in the cultural layer, as the coins were part of the grave inventory or the remains of metal parts of wooden chests of devastated graves.

This horizon of burials (Phase 2) in the cemetery dates from the 12th–13th century, but we cannot precisely date the end of the burials in the previous horizon and the beginning of burials in this phase. In any case, burials within this horizon were carried out at the time when Church 1 was built and lasted until its use ceased.

The youngest burial horizon (Phase 3) includes graves dug after the demolition of the older Church 1, i.e. graves contemporaneous with the newly built Church 2. This group consists of a total of 15 graves (5 children's), with human skeletons almost entirely preserved and undisturbed by subsequent burials. A particular phenomenon for this phase is a "carpet" made of broken bricks arranged over the burial pit or directly over the deceased (e.g. graves No. 54, 78 – Pl. 8/3a; 9). There are also grave structures made of vertically or horizontally

²⁶ Réthy and Probszt, *Corpus*, No. 129; Huszár, *Münzkatalog*, No. 117a.

²⁷ Réthy and Probszt, *Corpus*, No. 81; Huszár, *Münzkatalog*, No. 96.

²⁸ Réthy and Probszt, *Corpus*, No. 137; Huszár, *Münzkatalog*, No. 127.

²⁹ Oța, *The Mortuary*, 104.

³⁰ Réthy and Probszt, *Corpus*, No. 71; Huszár, *Münzkatalog*, No. 84.

³¹ Most probably: Réthy and Probszt, *Corpus*, No. 120; Huszár, *Münzkatalog*, No. 141.

³² Réthy and Probszt, *Corpus*, No. 87; Huszár, *Münzkatalog*, No. 99.

³³ Réthy and Probszt, *Corpus*, No. 74; Huszár, *Münzkatalog*, No. 89.

³⁴ Réthy and Probszt, *Corpus*, No. 78; Huszár, *Münzkatalog*, No. 94.

arranged bricks along the edge of the grave or under the feet and above the head of the deceased (e.g. graves No. 14, 25, 53 – Pl. 8/1, 2; 9; 12/3, 4). Burial pits, recorded in five cases, are mainly rectangular in shape, in one case with rounded edges. In five cases, the graves were filled with, in addition to earth, the remains of construction rubble (finely broken bricks, mortar). In one grave, the remains of wood were discovered, which may represent parts of a chest, or a board placed over the deceased (grave No. 54 – Pl. 8; 13/1b). The burying depth of the graves of this phase ranges from 0.41 m to 1.57 m. The orientations of the graves follow the orientation of Church 2, deviations from the west-east direction range from 2° to 43°. The deceased are on their backs in a stretched position, and the head is on the nape on the western side. In the case of the nine deceased, it is possible to determine the position of the hands, which is very uneven. In four cases, both arms were bent at the elbows and placed on the abdomen (graves No. 14, 23, 26, 54). Individual cases stand out where: both arms are extended next to the body (grave No. 33); the right arm extended next to the body, the left arm bent at the elbow and placed on the abdomen (grave No. 46); the left arm extended next to the body, the right resting on the pelvis (grave No. 56); the right arm extended next to the body, the left arm bent at the elbow and placed on the chest (grave No. 72), and the left arm extended next to the body, the right arm placed on the abdomen (grave No. 53). Based on the careful way of making the grave structure (“carpet” made of bricks, parts of the tomb structure inside the grave, the remains of a wooden chest), the depth of burial of the tomb (1.57 m) and the central position in front of the western entrance to the Church 2, grave No. 54 can be singled out and assumed to be the burying of a significant member of the community that lived here.

A major characteristic of this phase is the complete absence of grave goods, which significantly complicates its more precise dating. Late medieval necropolises in Banat, dated after the first decade of the 14th century and last until the 15th century, are classified in the so-called “Angevin and post-Angevin” necropolis horizon³⁵. Many cemeteries also have a church and are characterized by the absence of grave goods in the graves. For now, the last phase of burials at the “Livade-Đurđevac” site can only be broadly dated from the end of the 13th – the beginning of the 14th to the 15th century.

Finally, we should mention the group of 10 infants graves (graves No. 1, 3, 6–8, 30, 31, 37, 70 and 74), which could not be divided into separate phases of burying. No grave goods were found, so these graves can be broadly assigned to the period from the 12th to the 15th century only based on the orientation of the skeletons, which generally follow the basic positions of the churches.

Conclusion

At the complex site “Livade-Đurđevac” on an Eneolithic mound, a cemetery was formed at the end of the 10th or the beginning of the 11th century, which was used by the inhabitants of the simultaneous settlement, which extended about 100 m to the north. According to its characteristics (method of burial, typological features of the finds), it would belong to the circle of the necropolis of the Bijelo Brdo burial horizon. Buryings at this cemetery took place during the 11th century, but due to the small number of investigated graves, we cannot determine its upper chronological limit. Nevertheless, certain continuity can be observed, because in the following period, the same place was chosen for burying.

Somewhere during the 12th century, this sacred place acquired a religious character when the village Church 1 was built. Buryings continued around the church, and this horizon includes graves dated based on coin finds from the 12th–13th centuries. The beginning of buryings around the church can perhaps be linked to the legal provisions related to village churches enacted during King Ladislaus I of Hungary (1077–1095), which ordered that village cemeteries must be located near church buildings³⁶. The large amount of bricks that were used to mark the graves, as well as the filling of the burial pits of the last burying phase (14th–15th centuries), in which there is a lot of construction rubble, leads us to the conclusion that village Church 1 was demolished at one point, and that its remaining construction material used to build a new village church and used for the construction of grave structures during buryings. This is evidenced by the partial negation of its earthen foundations, with better-made earthen foundations of the new church. The reasons for the demolition of the first village church are not known, but perhaps they can be linked to the Mongol campaigns at the beginning of the fifth decade of the 13th century and the consequences they left behind. The same

³⁵ Ota, *The Mortuary*, 194–196.

³⁶ Zoltan Čemere, Mreža srednjovekovnih katoličkih crkava u Banatu, *Glasnik Muzeja Banata*, VIII (1998), 70–71.

fate befell the church in nearby Omoljica. On the other hand, it is not excluded that the older church perished in the events of 1280/1281, when during the Cuman rebellion against the Hungarian king Ladislaus IV the Cuman (1272–1291), the southern parts of medieval Hungary perished, and in the northern Banat they have burned churches in the vicinity of Ostojićevo³⁷.

Unlike the religious-sacred complex in Omoljica, a similar complex was rebuilt at the “Livade-Đurđevac” site, as evidenced by the newly built village Church 2. In terms of the architectural style, this church fully corresponds to the Gothic period. Around it, burials were carried out within the last horizon of graves, which we dated to the period from the end of the 13th – the beginning of the 14th to the 15th century, and which is characterized by the complete absence of grave goods in the graves, as well as burials in tomb structures made of bricks.

We also do not know the reasons for the termination of the function of the younger village church, with the open possibility of its demolition, and the reasons for the termination of burials are also unknown. We have no archaeological evidence that burials were carried out in this place during the 16th and 17th centuries and later. Ottoman raids on southern Banat during the 15th century, which were especially frequent after the capture and destruction of Kovin in 1460,³⁸ probably led to this church being abandoned, and after that, it remains gradually collapsed and disintegrated.

The village of “Sent-Đurađ” (*Zenth Gyurgh* 1389, 1432; *Zenthgyerg* 1458; *Zenthgergh* 1472) is mentioned in historical documents related to the settlements of Kovin County in the 14th and 15th centuries, whose location has not yet been resolved³⁹. Some researchers (P. Engel, N. Stanojević) connect this settlement with the area “Đurđevo” which is located in the cadastral municipality of Pločice in the municipality of Kovin⁴⁰. However, this is unlikely, given that this area is located in the often flooded alluvial plain of the Danube,

and so far, no surface archaeological findings have been confirmed on it, which would indicate the existence of a settlement from the late medieval period⁴¹. A different proposal was presented by F. Mileker, who located the settlement of “Sent-Đurađ” on the area “Đurđevac” on the coast of Nadel, northeast of Starčevo and east of Pančevo⁴². During the Turkish rule, in 1579, the uninhabited place “Kuručeva Dolina”, or “Mali Đurđevac”, was mentioned⁴³. According to maps and documents from the 18th and 19th centuries, this area is uninhabited and is mentioned under different names (*Jorgiovaz*, *Zsurgovacz*, *Juriovacs*, *Jurgovacs*, *Jorgovaz*, *Gyrgovatz prae.*, *Gyrgyevatz*)⁴⁴. In fact, it is an area in the northern part of which medieval village churches were explored (Pl. 1/1), which would support the location of the “Sent-Đurađ” settlement at this place. About 850 m southwest of the investigated church is the dominant mound, “Đurđevac”, with an altitude of 81.4 m. In the southwestern part of the “Đurđevac” area were registered surface finds that indicate the existence of a larger settlement from the 13th–16th century, which would correspond to data from historical documents⁴⁵. It can be assumed that the inhabitants of this settlement used the younger village church and its cemetery in the northern part of the “Đurđevac” area.

At the current level of research, it remains an open question whether both village churches from the “Livade-Đurđevac” site could have functioned as parish churches. There is a well-known regulation from the time of King Stefan I (1000–1038) that every tenth village had to build a parish church⁴⁶. Church 1 from the 12th–13th centuries could have been the parish church of numerous contemporaneous settlements, whose surface archaeological remains have been registered near it or along the left bank of the Nadel,⁴⁷ but we have no confirmation for this assumption in written sources. On the

³⁷ Rokai, Đere, Pal and Kasaš, *Istorija Mađara*, 89; Čemere, *Mreža*, 72.

³⁸ Aleksandar Krstić, Iz istorije srednjovekovnih naselja jugozapadnog Banata (15. vek – prva polovina 16. veka), *Zbornik Matice Srpske za istoriju*, LXXIII (2006), 38.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 52; for historical data on the settlement of “Sent-Đurađ” and various proposals for its location, see: Aleksandar Krstić, Srednjovekovna toponimija. Jelena Đorđević-Vojislav Đorđević (eds.), *Arheološka topografija Banata*, vol. 4, Pančevo (2020), 459.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 459; Nebojša Stanojević, *Edikt*, Novi Sad (2014), 34 (marked as Skorenovac).

⁴¹ Perhaps we could take into account the surface finds from the “Velika Greda” and “Borum” areas, which are located north of the “Đurđevo” area in the cadastral municipality of Banatski Brestovac (sites No. 23 and 24), but they belong to the period of the 16th–18th centuries, see: J. Đorđević-V. Đorđević, *Arheološka topografija*, 89–90, Karta 218.

⁴² Bódog Milleker, Délmagyarország középkori földrajza, *TRÉT*, XXIX, 1–2 (1913), 28.

⁴³ Krstić, *Srednjovekovna toponimija*, 459.

⁴⁴ Milleker, *Délmagyarország*, 27–28.

⁴⁵ J. Đorđević-V. Đorđević, *Arheološka topografija*, 323–325, 328–330, T. 208/6–8 (Starčevo, sites No. 29 and 33).

⁴⁶ Rokai, Đere, Pal, and Kasaš, *Istorija Mađara*, p. 31.

⁴⁷ J. Đorđević-V. Đorđević, *Arheološka topografija*, Karta 217.

other hand, in the lists of papal tithes from 1333–1335, one can see a weak representation of parish churches south of river Tamiš, where parishes are mentioned in Halas (Čenta) and Želj (Opovo) in the southernmost part of the Archdeaconry of Torontal, as well as in Vršac and Hram in the southern part of the Archdeaconry of Krašov, while the parish churches from the south area of the Archdeaconry of Kovin of the Čanad Diocese are not mentioned at all in these documents⁴⁸. The possibility that the younger village Church 2 at the site “Livade-Đurđevac” had not yet been built at the time of the list of the papal tithes should be ruled out, because not much time had passed since the demolition of the older church, which took place sometime between 1241/1242–1280/1281, before construction of the new church, no later than the beginning of the 14th century, which is again significantly earlier than the data from the list of the papal tithes. The fact that parish churches from the area of the Archdeaconry of Kovin are absent from the list of papal levies has been interpreted in different ways and remains unclear. The possibility was highlighted that the river Tamiš

represented the borderline between Byzantine and Hungarian, that is, Hungarian and Serbian church organizations, and that the southern parts of Banat were under the strong influence of the Orthodox Church at that time, but also that they were less populated than the middle and northern Banat⁴⁹. On the other hand, groups of the Serbian population inhabited the area of Kovin County since the second half of the 14th century, and religious pressure on the Slavic and non-Catholic population of Kovin and Krašov Counties in 1366 during the reign of King Louis I of Hungary is also documented⁵⁰. It is recorded that in 1433, mixed Catholics and Orthodox lived in Kovin⁵¹. The question of the confessional and territorial affiliation of the younger Church 2 at the “Livade-Đurđevac” site remains open at the current level of research.

Based on the historically confirmed name of the settlement “Sent-Đurađ” (Saint George), to which the younger church belonged, as well as the preserved toponym “Đurđevac”, we cannot rule out the possibility that this warrior saint was also its patron.

⁴⁸ Čemere, *Mreža*, 70, 73, Karta 1; Krstić, *Iz istorije*, 32; Krstić, *Srednjovekovna toponimija*, 454.

⁴⁹ Čemere, *Mreža*, 70, 73.

⁵⁰ Krstić, *Srednjovekovna toponimija*, 454.

⁵¹ Krstić, *Iz istorije*, 32.

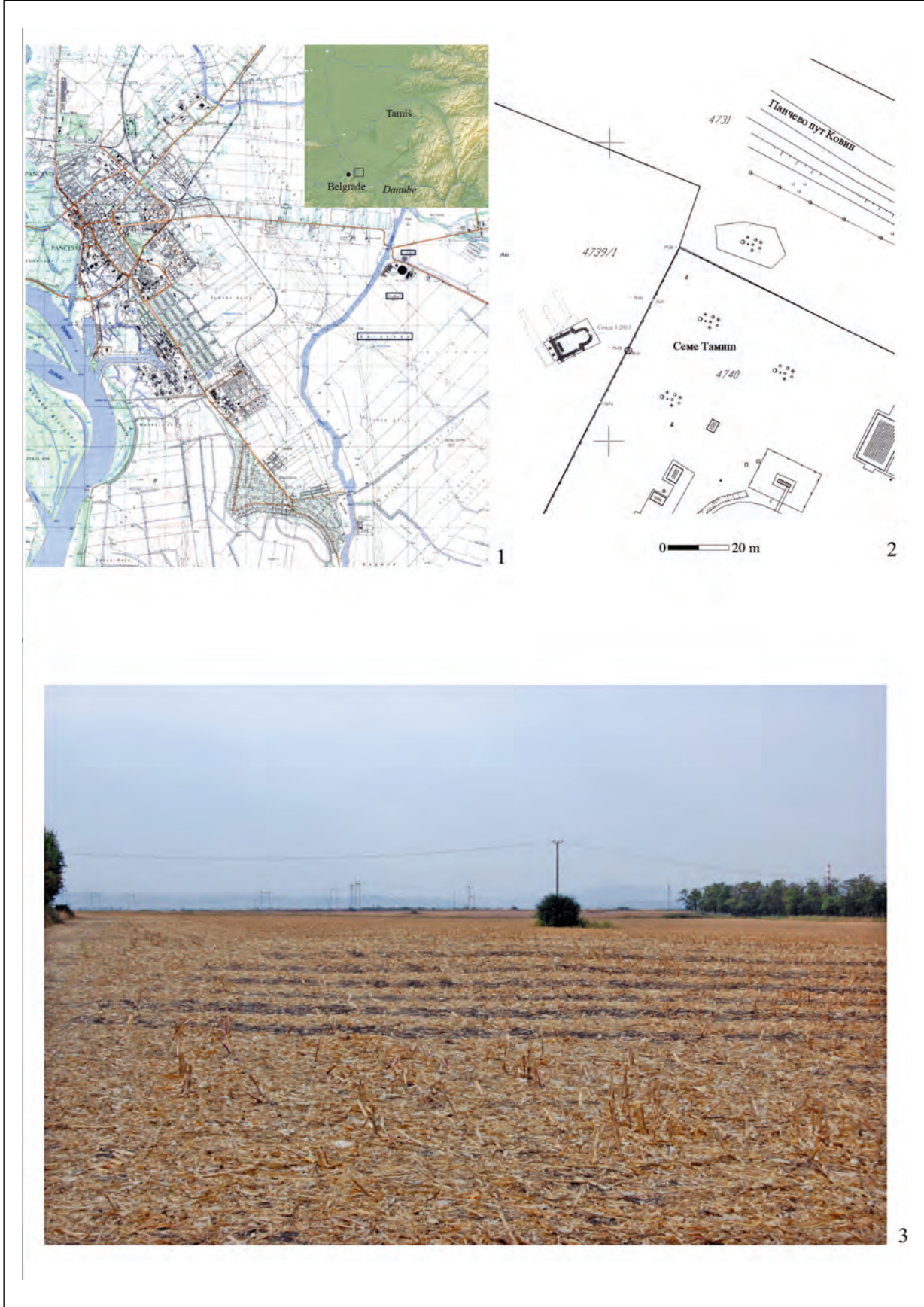
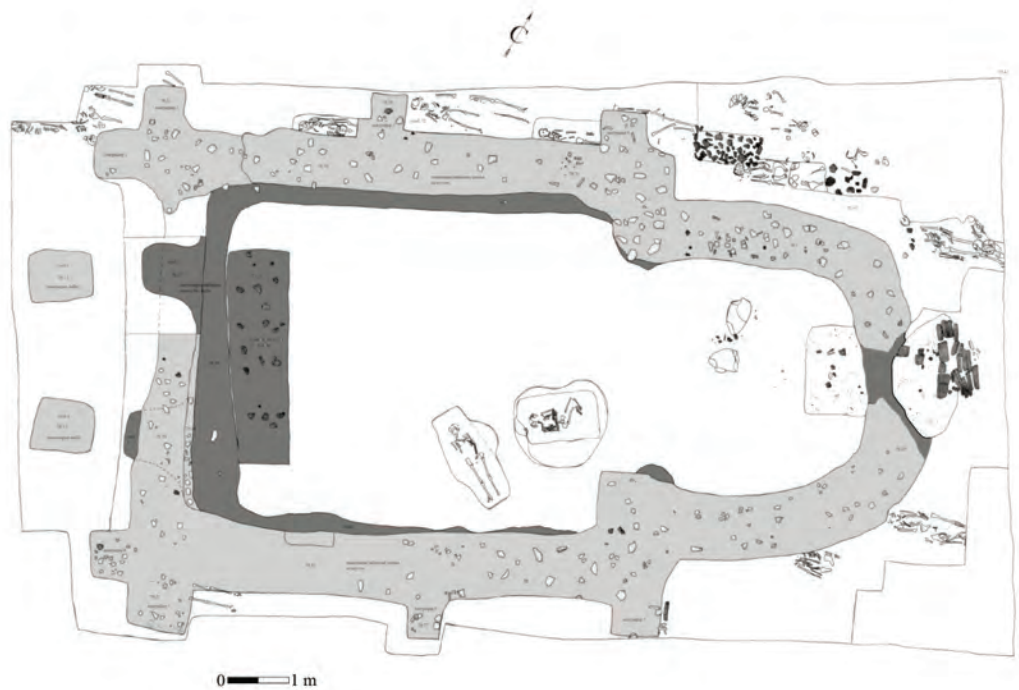




Plate 1.1 – location of the “Livade-Durdevac” site, with the marked positions of the “Livade” and “Durdevac” areas and early medieval settlements; **2** – situational plan of the archaeological excavation; **3** – the appearance of the site.




1



 stone  brick

 foundations of the Church 2 (14th-15th centuries)

 foundations of the Church 1 (12th-13th centuries)

2

Plate 2. 1 – situational plan of medieval churches; 2 – the appearance of medieval churches.



1



2



3

Plate 3. 1 – view of the foundations of Church 2; **2** – the appearance of the pit with rubble and bricks at the top of the apse of Church 2; **3** – view of the foundations of the belfry pillars west of Church 2.



Plate 4. 1 – the relationship between the foundations of Church 2 and Church 1; 2 – cross-section through the foundations of Church 2, Church 1 and the platform in the western part of Church 1; view of the platform in Church 1 western part.

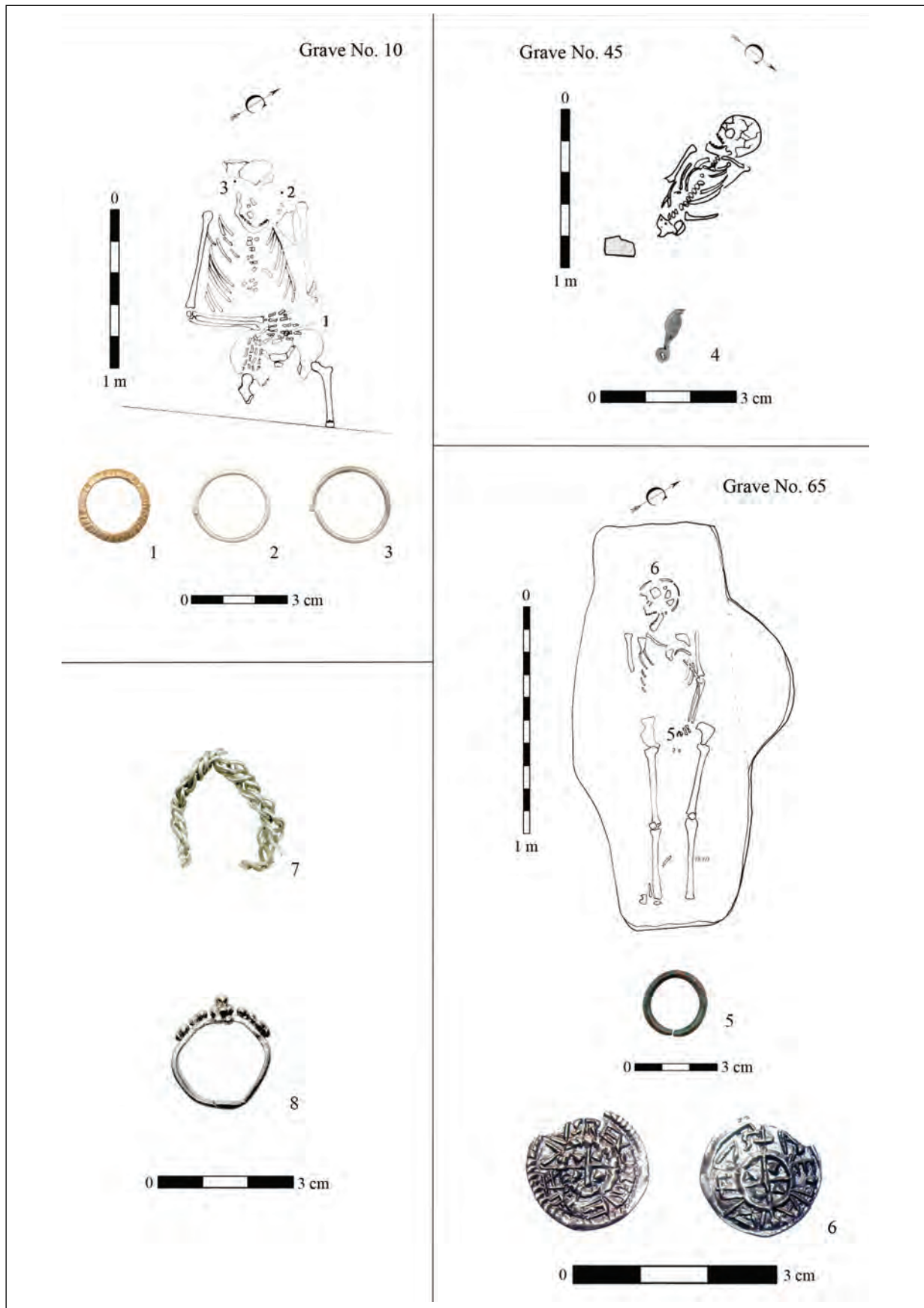


Plate 5. Graves and grave goods of Phase 1 of the cemetery (11th century) – graves No. 10, 45 and 65; 7–8, the finds from the cultural layer outside the graves.

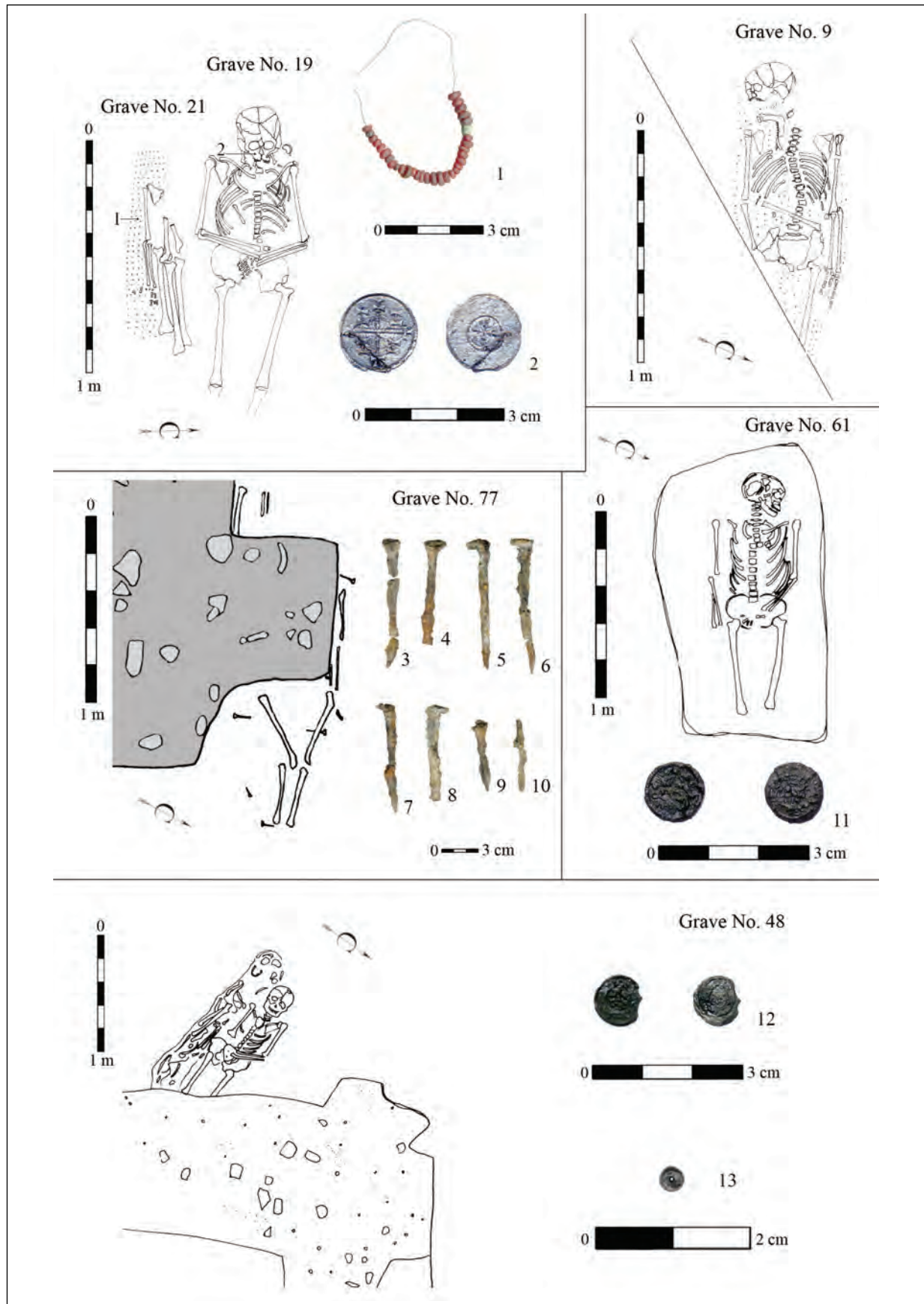


Plate 6. Graves and grave goods of Phase 2 of the cemetery (12th–13th centuries) – graves No. 19, 21, 48, 61 and 77.

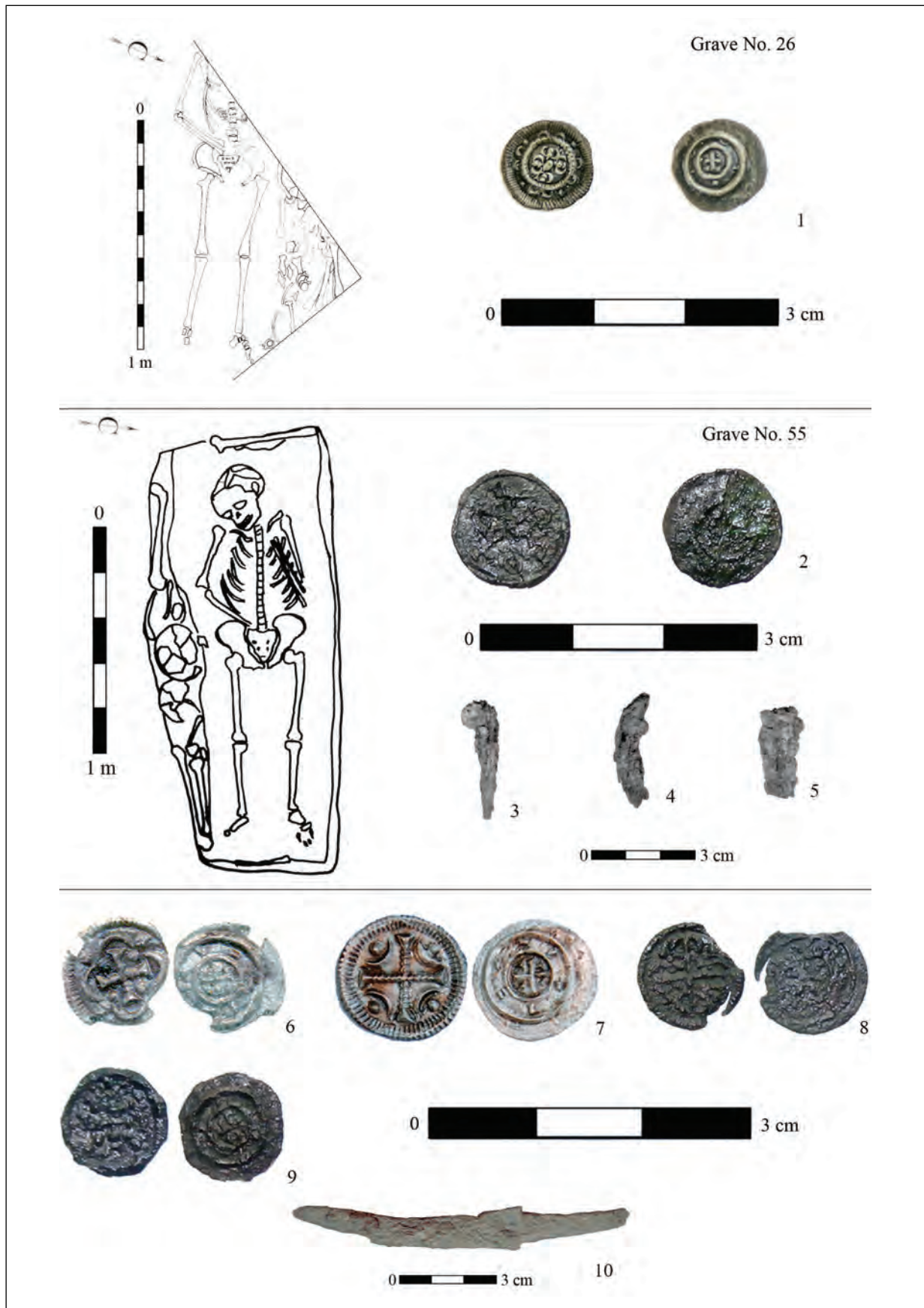


Plate 7. Graves and grave goods of Phase 2 of the cemetery (12th–13th centuries) – graves No. 26 and 55; 6–10, the finds from the cultural layer outside the graves.

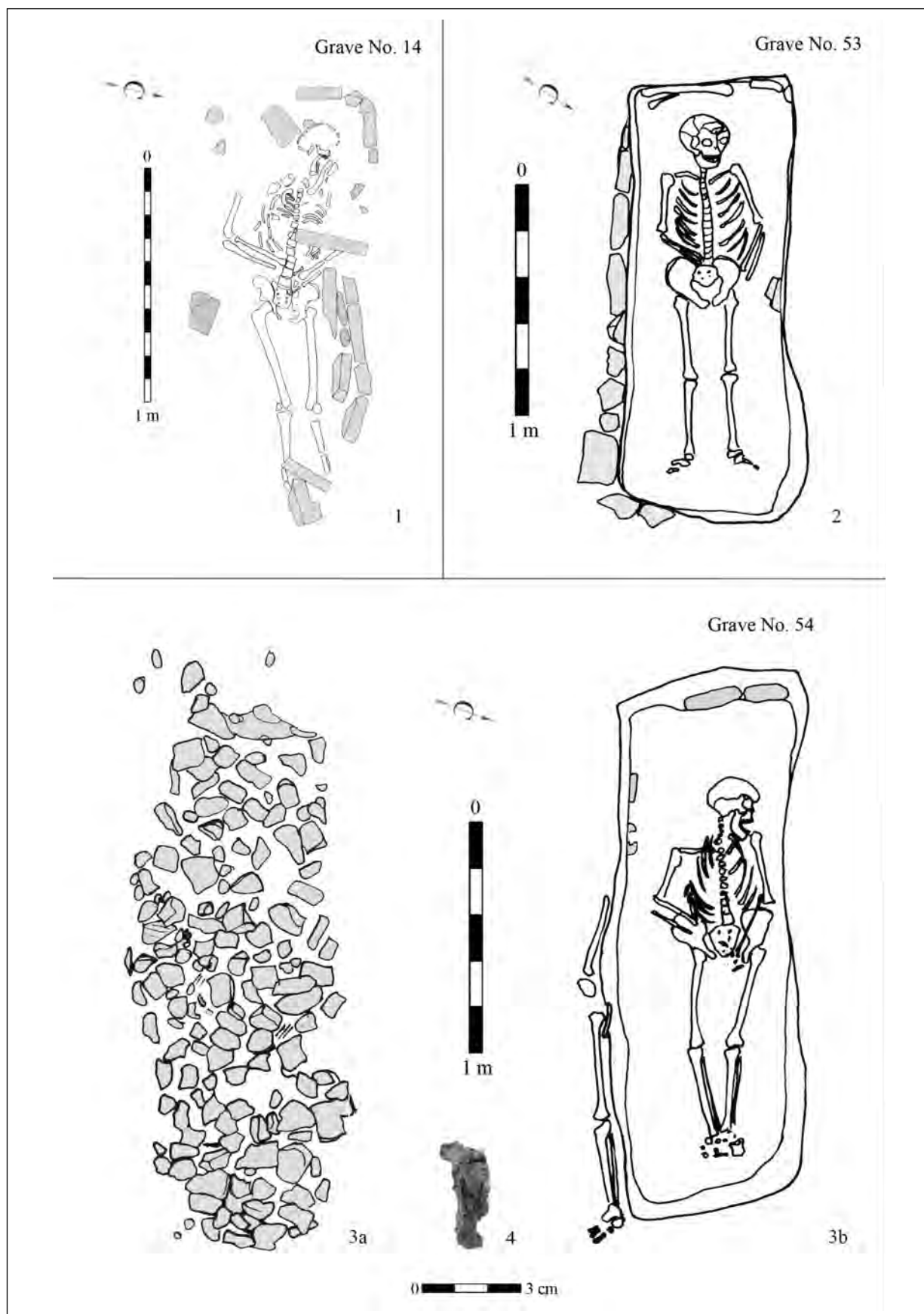


Plate 8. Graves and grave goods of Phase 3 of the cemetery (14th–15th century) – graves No. 14, 53 and 54.

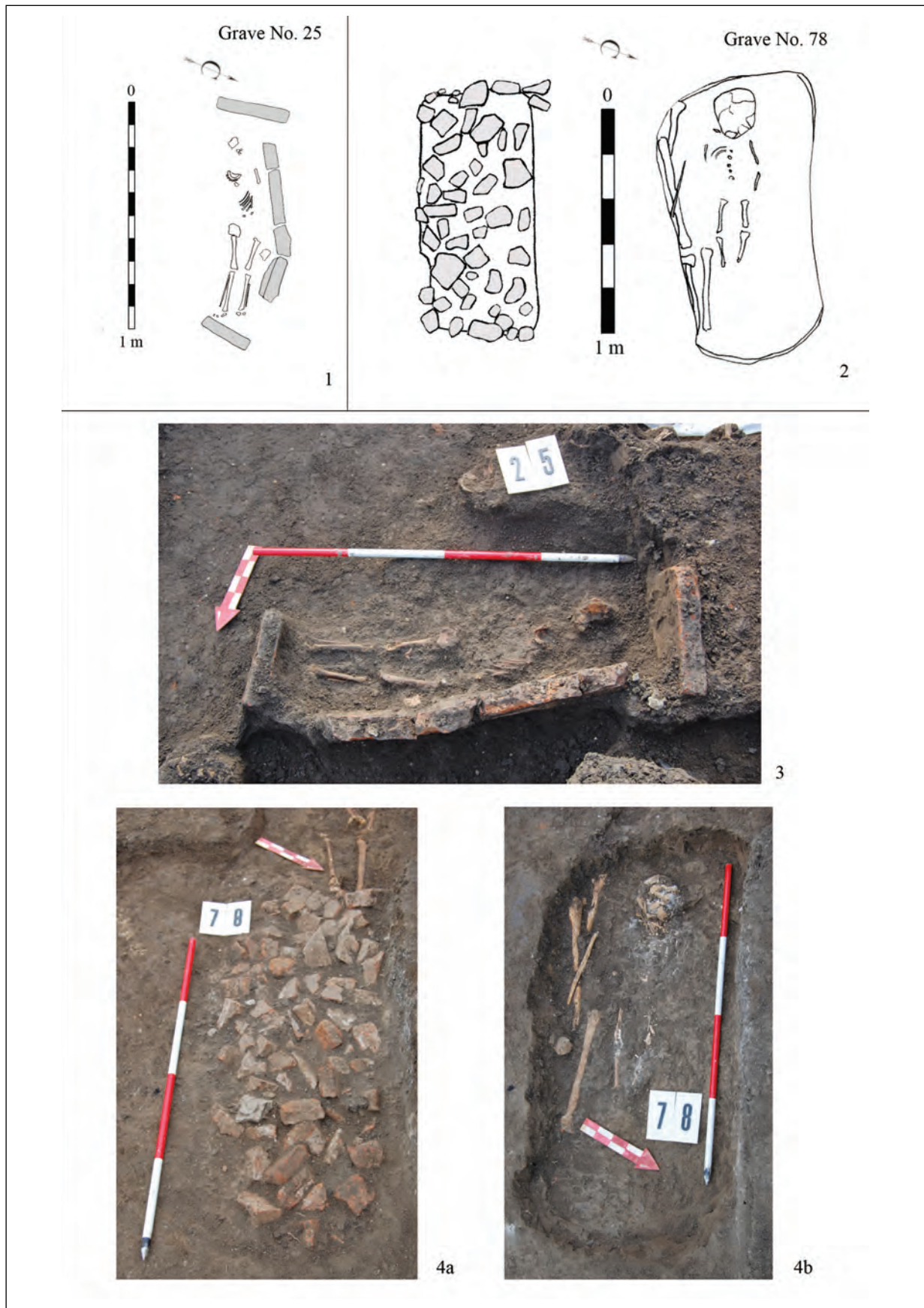


Plate 9. Graves of Phase 3 of the necropolis (14th–15th century) – graves No. 25 and 78; 3, 4a-b – the appearance of graves No. 25 and 78.



Plate 10. The appearance of graves No. 9, 10, 45 and 65.



Plate 11. The appearance of graves No. 19–21, 26, 48 and 77.



Plate 12. The appearance of graves No. 14, 53, 55 and 61.



1a



1b



2

Plate 13. The appearance of grave 54; damage to the graves of Phase 2 of the cemetery by digging the foundations of the western wall of Church 2.