

NEW MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCHES IN THE REGION OF PANČEVO

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In this communication there will be exposed the recent results of the archaeological researches „Staro Selo” from Idvor, Domovašćoska Țigłana (Pančevo) and „Preko Slatine” from Omalița. The excavations made between 2002-2005 came to the interest of the National Museum from Pančevo.

The Idvor village lies at the north-western limit of the Southern Banat, on the left part of the loess- terrace of river Timiș at 31 km away from Pančevo. The „Staro Selo” site lies at 1.5km from the village's church and it can be easily noticed from the southern entrance in the village, as well as from the west, the north and from the both sides of Timiș river. We are talking about a plateau situated 10 km above the surrounding site which is formed on the riverside of the Timiș river and his tributary, Tukoș. This loess holm rectangular-shaped measures 40 m in width and 60 m in length, being tied through a isthmus to the north-western edge of the nowadays village of Idvor. When Timiș' water level rises, „Staro Selo” is totally surrounded by water.

The first archaeological discoveries from „Staro Selo” are registered between 1956 and 1958 during the researches made by the archaeologists from the museum of Pancevo, when they found a dwelling with multiple layers. In the middle 90's of the previous century, at the north-western edge of the village excavations were made in order to continue the workings on the tiles, unfortunately, several archaeological entireties were destroyed. For their research and preservation, the Museum from Pančevo undertook several actions in 2002. In the north-east of the tilery-hole 9 sections were opened, and during 2003 – 2004 more excavations were made in the central, southern and south-western part of the village.¹

During this excavation there were discovered parts of a settlement belonging to the Starčevo culture, the iron age, the 5th century, the 10th – 11th centuries, the 14th - 15th centuries and the 17th - 18th centuries. There

¹ The archaeological excavations were made during 2002 – 2004 in several campaigns. They were supervised by Voislav Djordjević, the custodian of the Museum of Pančevo together with Jelena Djordjević, custodian at the same museum.

was also discovered a part of a necropolis from the 14th - 15th centuries (Fig. 1). At their best preservation there was the 17th - 18th centuries culture stratum, and the archaeological entreties from this period have destroyed and beared upon the objects and stratum from the previous periods. From the 5th century there have been preserved the remains of two circular-shaped holes with a diameter slightly over 1m, dug not too deep in unspoiled earth. In the first hole there was a deposit of metallic objects. In the north-eastern part of the settlement there discovered objects from the 10th - 11th centuries, forming the remains of two former half-buried earth-houses, which were mostly distroyed during the excavations made by the tilery's workers. Both had probably a square shape, dug between 0.25 - 0.45 m in unspoiled soil; one had the floor made of battered earth and a rectangular dado. During the 14th - 15th centuries there were discovered traces from the settlement situated north-east of Staro-Selo and a part of a necropolis situated nearby the left riverside. Two houses were found (one above the earth-level and another one half-buried) and a furnace of large dimensions. Inside the necropolis there were found 6 tombs orientated towards west-east. The corpses laid on their backs with their arms crossed over their chests or abdomens. In one tomb a Hungarian silver coin from 1427-1430 was found. The best preserved settlements are the ones from 17th - 18th centuries with 15 houses and different economic enlargements (cottages, foundations and dust holes). During the excavation there was also found numerous and diverse archaeological mobile material (Fig. 2).

In the first hole there was found the deposit of metallic objects. In the soil inside the hole big fragments from the wall's jonction were found, which presented traces of wattle and daub. Most objects presented traces of burning, even if no signs of ashes an cinder were found inside the hole. The metallic objects from the deposit are: an axe (Fig. 2:3), pieces of three tongue bits, a small scythe, a sickle and an unknown conical object which resembles the most a piece from a shield. Besides a grey conical polished bowl (Fig. 2:2), inside the hole there was also found parts of a cup adorned with a windy ornament (Fig. 2:1).

By analogy to the discoveries from other settlements, the objects from the deposit can be dated back to the 5th century, more precisely its first half.

In the houses from the 10th - 11th centuries there have been discovered kitchen ceramics which consist of pots turned on a slow potter's wheel, with this period's distinctive ornaments (Fig. 2:4,5).

The inventory of objects from the 14th - 15th centuries mostly consists of pottery made on a fast wheel, with sand in it and without any

adornements (Fig. 2:6,9). There have also been found lids with button shaped handles and fragments from a cup with ripped horizontal lines (Fig. 2:10).

The most numerous and varied are the 17th - 18th centuries' objects, one may notice some very different types of pottery: Hungarian, Austrian, Turkish, Serbian and Habanian (Fig. 2:11-14), bronze and silver objects, pins and cramps, silver and bronze coins based upon which the development of Staro Selo can be divided in two: the 17th and the 18th century. The first written testification of Idvor dates from 1663, when the inhabitants gave money and food to the Ipek patriarchate².

The archaeological settlement "Donjo Varoska Ciglana" from Pančevo lies along the western edge of Topola suburbs, 5m west of Pančevo-Starčevo highroad. The settlement is located where the former industrial tilery ("Naieva țiglana" - in the specialised literature) once was, where in 1947 conservation diggings were made³.

Due to the long activity of the tilery, most parts of the settlement were destroyed. There was preserved only a narrow screed along Topola slough 300m long and up to 150 m wide. In 2003 – 2004 there have been made excavations organised by the Museum of Pančevo and the Medieval Archaeology Department from the Philosophy College of Belgrad⁴.

The remains of the archaeological site are located 4-5 m height on a loess terrace on the riverside of Topola slough, one of Timiș' backwaters which surrounds the settlement and separates it from the swamp around it. This place is located at approximately 1.5 km from where the Timiș River drains into the Danube.

The excavations had a probe characteristic. There were dug 4 ditches and 2 sections toward the northern and eastern part of the tilery, the analysed area measuring around 180 m². There has been discovered an archaeological site with many culture levels, with stratum and objects that date from the middle brazen age, the iron age, the Middle Ages and the modern ages (Fig. 3). The necropolis and the settlement belong to different periods of the Middle Ages: an isolated woman's tomb from the 5th – 6th century, a earth habitation from the 10th century, a furnace from the 11th –

² Sveta Pecinjački, *Pančevački distrikt 1717 – 1773*, Novi Sad, 1985, p. 139-140.

³ G. Mano-Zisi, M. Liubinković, M. Garašanin, J. Kovačević, P. Veselonović, *Zastitno iskopavanje kod Panceva*, Muzeji I Beograd, 1948, p. 53-95.

⁴ The archaeological excavations have been supervised by Djordje Janković and Jelena Djordjević and professor Dejan Radičević, assistant at the Medieval Archaeology Department from the Philosophy College of Belgrad.

13th century, a house from the 15th - 16th century, three smaller hearts from the 12th - 13th century and also a necropolis from the 16th - 17th century.

The migration period is attested by the discovery of a woman's grave at the depth of 1.10 m. The grave, quite difficult to be noticed, is orientated from west to east. The corpse was laid down on its back, its arms along the body, the skull being artificially distorted. Based upon the funeral material found, which consists of bronze pieces (earrings with a polyhedral shape), the grave can be dated back to 5th - 6th century.

Inside the second section we discover a dug house, having a square shape and the sides of 3.3 m; the building is orientated towards north-east, south-west. In the north-eastern corner there is the hearth, made of grind stone and in the south-western it was found another hearth made of burning umber. The floor was made of battered earth and in the north-western part it went 10 cm down near the deposit pit from the ancient period. In the earth from the house there were found fragments of ceramics turned on a slow potter's wheel and encrusted to a special comb which dated from the 10th century (Fig. 4:1-3).

At 50 m south-west and 0.6 m deep, there was discovered a bigger furnace, dome-shaped with the diameter of 1m and the foundation 1m thick. The furnace towards north-south presents an oval access-port. Very likely it is about a furnace which had different uses. Based upon the ceramic fragments discovered, especially the one turned on a slow potter's wheel, this kit can date from 11th-12th centuries (Fig. 4: 4-5).

At 10 m east of the 10th century dwelling, there has been found another one. Dug not too deep in the prehistoric stratum, it has a trapezoidal shape and has a west-east orientation. It presents a small hearth in the north-eastern corner and a battered earth floor, damaged in many places by the diggings made for the later graves. In the drawn-out soil have been discovered a lot of earthenware. There are also a few types turned on a slow potter's wheel encrusted with the help of a special comb or with a sharp tool in various techniques (Fig. 4:6-10). There have also been found several fragments belonging to clay boilers of various types (Fig. 4:11-14). All these artefacts date from the 12th - 13th century dwelling. The settlement where this dwelling was located, must have been deserted during the Tartar invasion. The life in the settlement went on during the 15th century. This fact was attested by the remains of a dwelling dug not very deep, at 0.6 m. It has an oval shape, the floor is made out of battered earth on which there were found parts of a construction built above the earth. Inside it there is a circular dado. There, it has been found earthenware from the 14th - 15th

century, pots turned on a fast wheel, cups, caps and fragments of pitchers (Fig. 4:15-19).

In the north it was discovered a part of a necropolis which can be dated from 14th - 15th century (Fig. 3). The tombs are dug among older medieval objectives. There were 8 tombs. All corpses were lean back in rectangular cells with the arms on the chests or on the abdomens, and were orientated east-west. Near some corpses were found clothing and jewellery remains: bronze buttons, hairpins and rings.

„Preko Slatine” is located at 20 km south-east of Pančevo, to the border of Omolița village. The settlement is situated to 5km north-east of Omolița's center, on the left side of Slatina river. It has an upper part which once followed the river's flow. The discoveries from the surface indicate that on an area of 1ha, one may assume the existence of a settlement dated from 12th - 13th century. The place on which it lays, is located at 4-5m height from Slatina's channel.

The settlement was first signalized in 1971, on the occasion of a recognition mission undertook by *The Regional Institute for the Protection of the Cultural Monuments of Novi Sad*. Afterwards it has been explored and mentioned in various publications speaking about medieval discoveries from the territory of Pančevo. Based upon the surface traces, is also supposed the existence of a medieval church⁵.

The research team of the Museum of Pančevo last explored this place at the beginning of 2002. The existence of an area with high concentration of bricks and rubble was confirmed. In the autumn of 2004 were made probe excavations; these backed up the hypothesis regarding the presence of a churchly structure. The systematic diggings started in the summer of 2005, when it was discovered the foundation of a nave-church with a semi-circular apses to the east, and also parts of another construction located to the south of the church (Fig. 5). A part of the cemetery around the church was explored, too⁶.

The length of this church is around 12 m and the width is 6.3 m. The bed made of battered clay was discovered at 0.30 m. The wall's footing varies from 1.3 m to 1.3 m. In the western part were discovered the remains of a brick-made-construction with an approximative rectangular shape,

⁵ M. Brmbolić, *Srednjovekovna nalazista na području Narodnog Muzeja Pančevo*, Glasnik Narodnog Muzeja Pančevo, 3, 1991, p. 60.

⁶ The researches are lead by the Museum of Pančevo hand in hand with the Medieval Archaeology Department from the Philosophy College of Belgrad.

having the dimensions of 3.1x1.1 m. The footing is destroyed by the deep furrow, but in some places was preserved the first layer of lime mortar mistook by bricks, while in places along the walls' edges real bricks were preserved. Were found 3 different kinds of bricks.

The footing was dug trough an older culture layer, into the unspoiled earth, to 1.2 m deep. During the excavations made inside the church, a circular dado with the diameter of 2 m was found. On its bottom there were found fragments of earthenware turned on a fast wheel, dated from the 4th century.

At the south and at the east of the church 16 graves were explored. The corpses were orientated west-east, with small exceptions. They were buried lean back, their arms on their chests or on their abdomens or even along their bodies. There were attested 2 inhumation horizons, the elder one forgoes the edification of the church. When the western wall's footing was dug, 3 older graves were cut. Inside were found human bones loosen into the soil from the graves, while the affected bones were discovered inside the cells, put near the latter corpses.

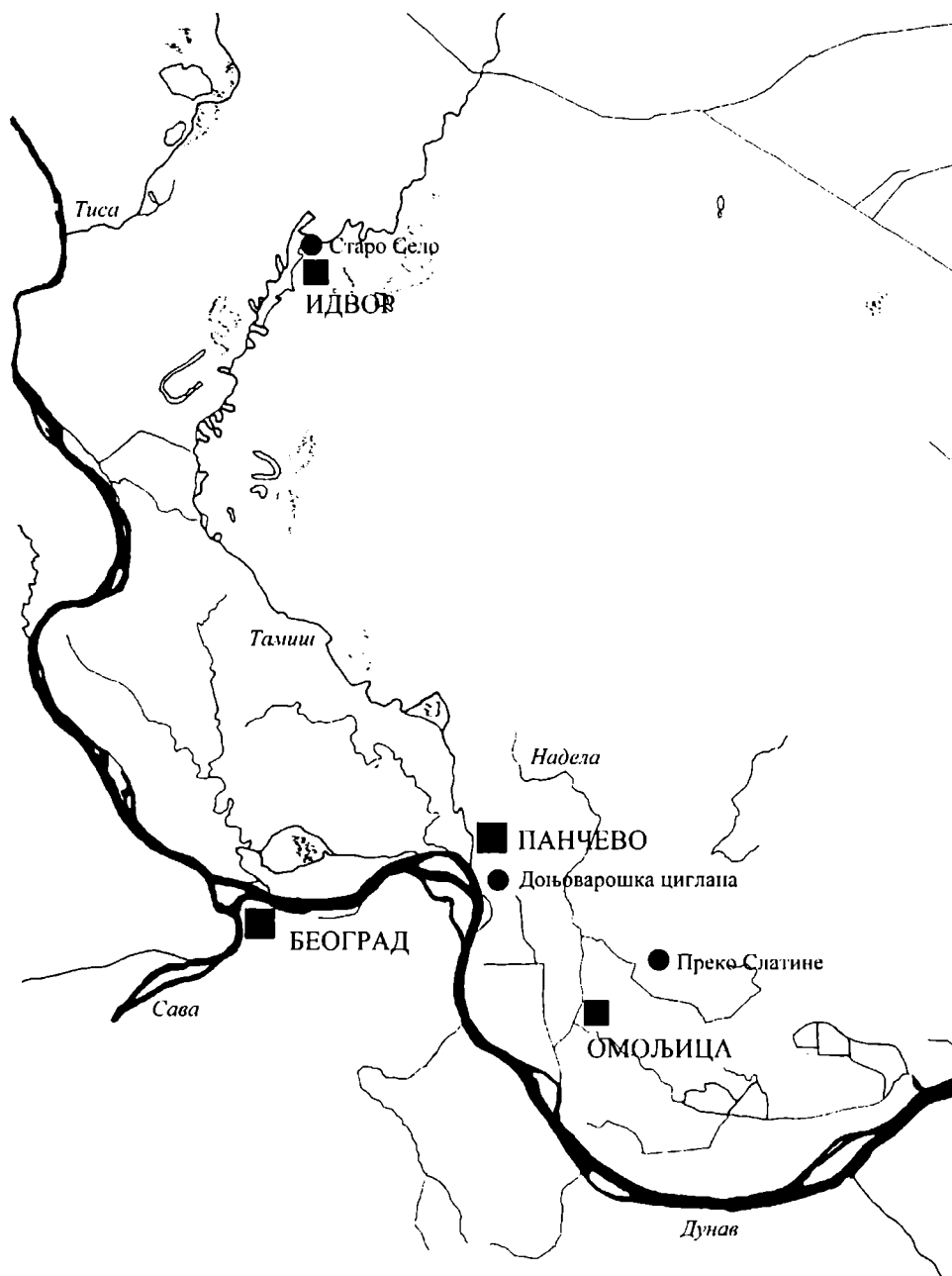
The funeral inventory found among the loosen bones may be dated from the elder horizon. There were discovered many twisted earrings, ended in „S”, bracelets with glass-paste pearls, an artless ring made of a thin sheet metal, and some Hungarian bronze coins dated back to the reign of king Bela the IIIth (1173-1196) and king Andrew the IInd (1205-1235).

In the southern part of the church there were found the footings of another building, which touched the southern wall, but had a slight different orientation (Fig. 5). These footings are also dug on an ancient grave. At their south there was a construction made of stone, brick and mortar, which looked like a basin. It has a rectangular shape with the length of 1.6m and the width of 0.7 m. Its edge is made of vertically and transversally assembled bricks and of stone mixed with mortar. The base is quite different; it's made of horizontally assembled bricks. Underneath this construction, on different levels there were found 2 children graves, inside the older one was found the bracelet and one of the coins.

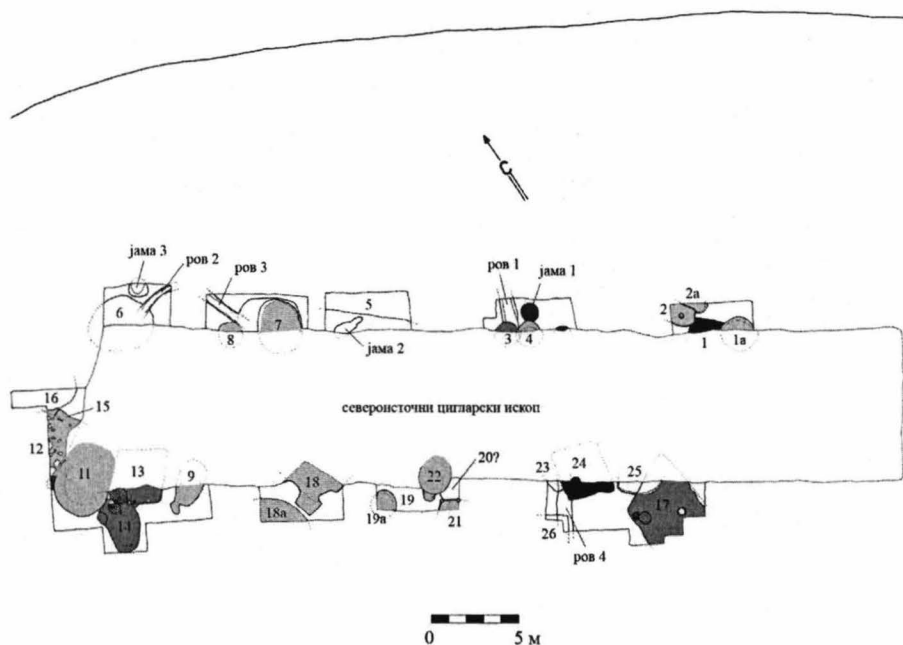
More recent traces are represented by two dadoes, one dug in the north-western corner of the church and the other one outside it. Both digging belong to the period when the church was ruined.

On the occasion of building the socle inside, the rectangular brick-construction was partially damaged. Both sockets were filled with brash. There were also discovered some small earthenware fragments, dated from the late Middle Ages.

The Omolița researches will go on, the next one being undoubtedly directed to solve the problem of constructions and the cronological reports between the church and the building that laid to its south (the one which has the basin shape), as well as their destination. Based upon the preliminary results of the first campaign one may assume that is all about the remains of the church which belonged to the nearby settlement built in the last decades of the 12th century or the first ones of the 13th century. Most likely it has been destroyed during the Tartar invasion, and the fact that it wasn't rebuilt latter is also confirmed by the excavations dedicated to late Middle Ages.



Map 1. The plan of the settlement.



позајмиште земље

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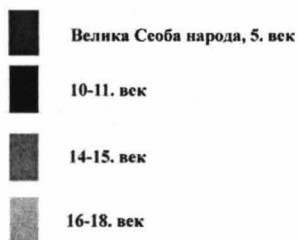
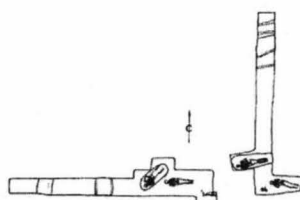
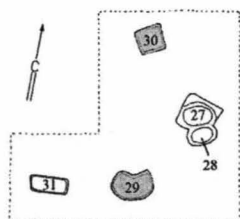


Fig. 1. The plan of the diggings from the tilery.

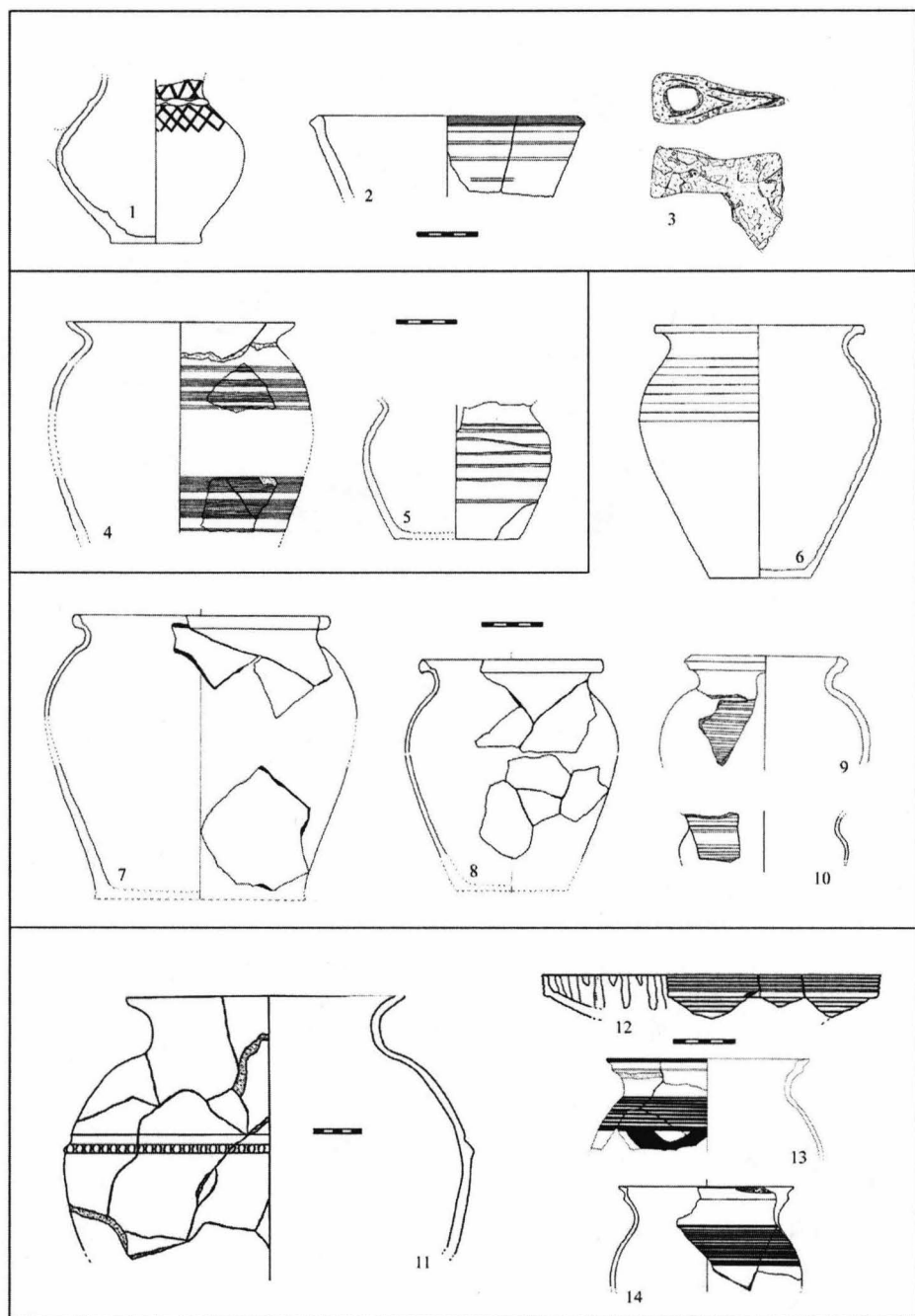
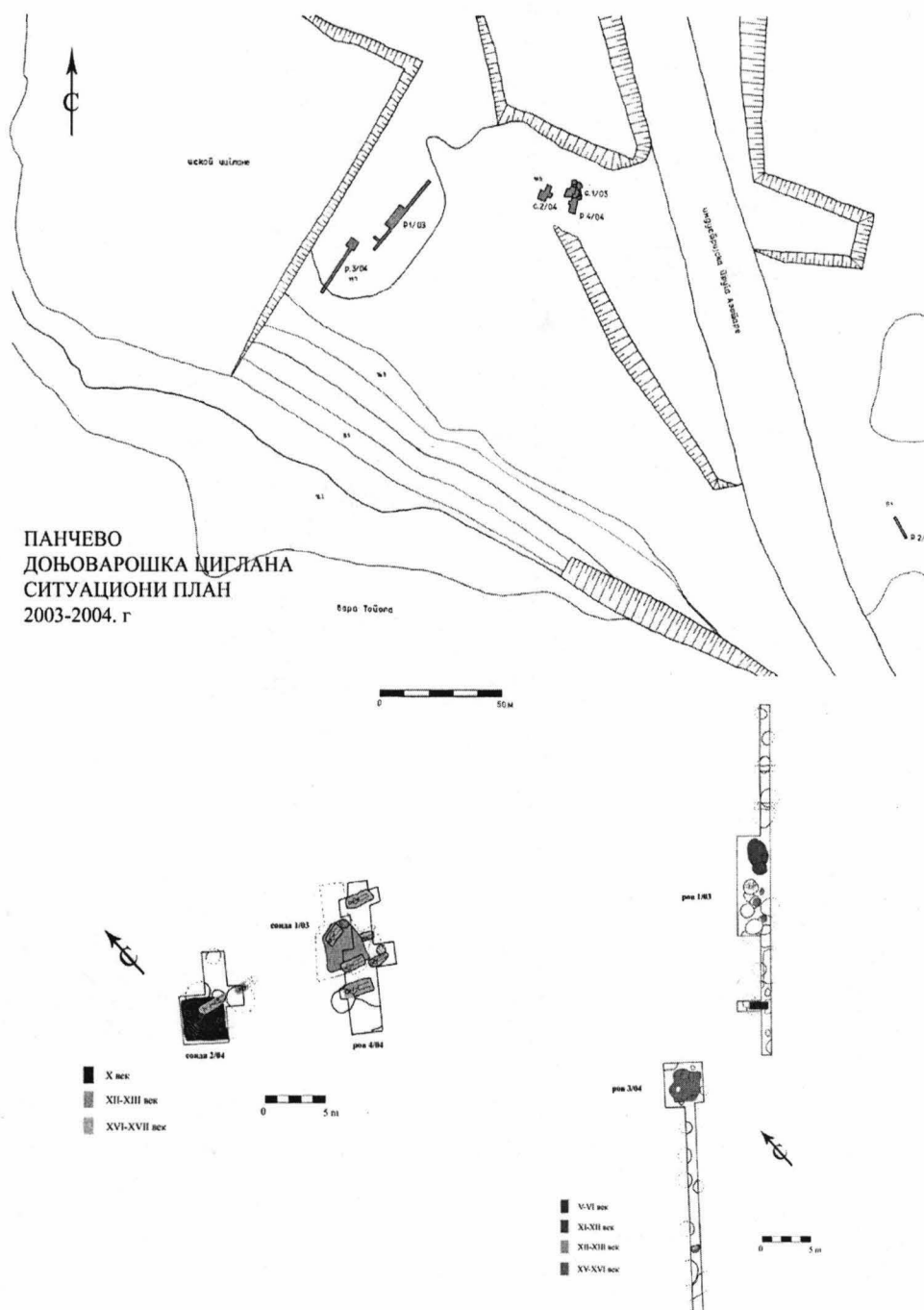


Fig. 2. Idvor-Staro, selo, 1-3: 5th century; 4, 5: 10-11th century; 6-10: 14-15th century; 11-14: 17-18th century.



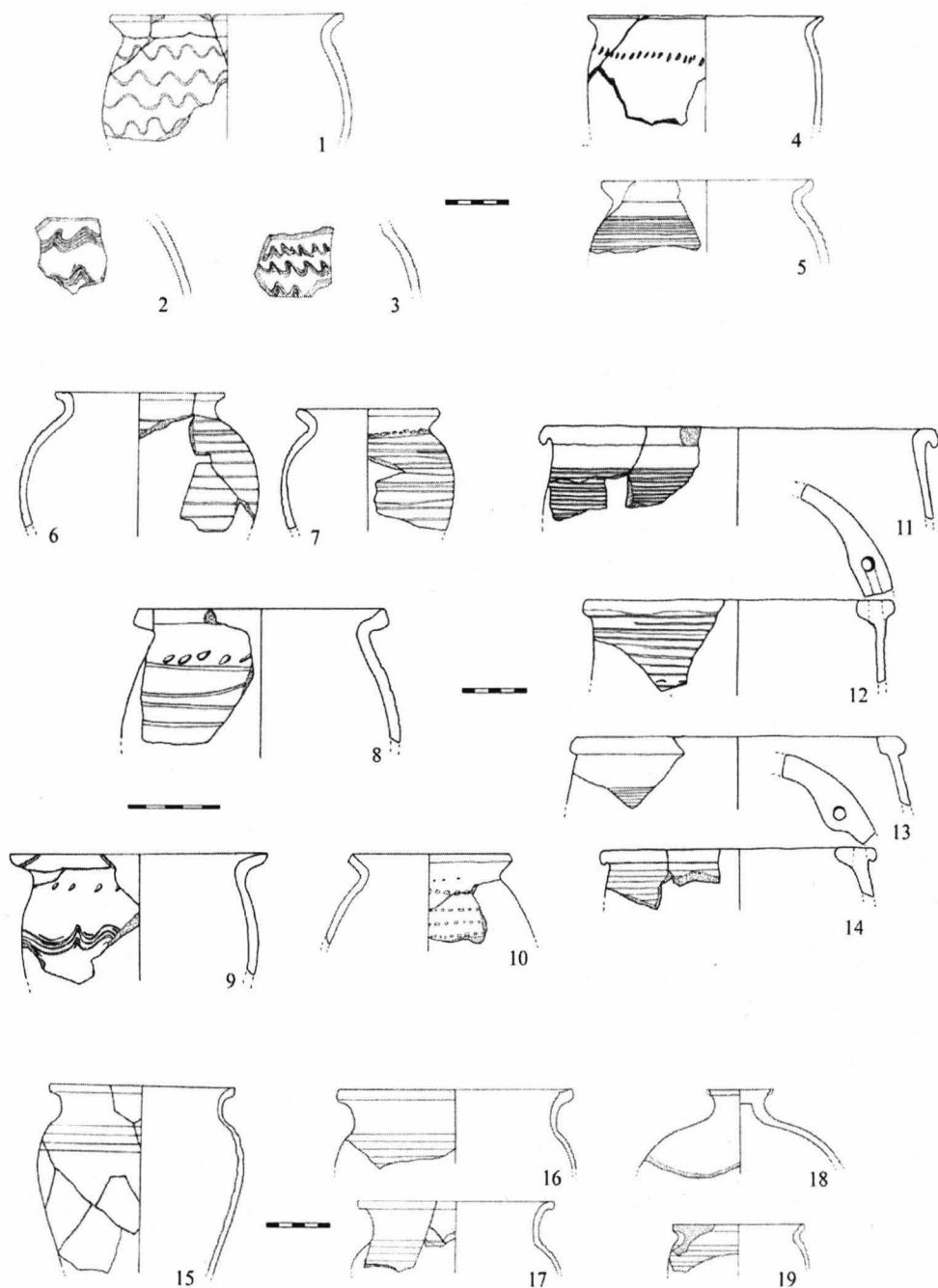


Fig. 4. Pančevo-the tilery from downtown, 1-3: 10th century; 4,5: 11-12th century; 6-14: 12-13th century; 15-19: 14-15th century.



Fig. 5. Omolița – “Preko Slatine” the westernside of the church's base.