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"FUNERAL" AND "DOMESTIC" IN THE LATE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AT BUCUREŞTI–*BĂNEASA, STRADA GÂRLEI* (SOUTHERN ROMANIA)

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Abstract: *The relationship between the deposition of human bodies in the domestic space and the deposition of isolated human bones and body parts in different contexts is a characteristic of the Late Iron Age north to the Lower Danube. The diversity of deposition practice also appears in the case of the dog skeletons found in the settlements. In the present article, we try to interpret these deposition practices using as a case study some contexts from the Late Iron Age settlement at Bucureşti-Băneasa, Strada Gârlei, in southern Romania (dated between the 2nd and the 1st century BC), investigated between 2008 and 2013. Children skeletons were discovered in C555 and C519A pits. The comparison between the structure of these pits reveals a certain contrast between their "domestic" aspect (similar to the other pits from the same settlement) and the formalism of the children deposition: placing them on the southern edge of the pits, the deposition at a certain moment of the filling, the crouched position on the right side, a certain bipolarity of the orientation of the bodies. This contrast is highlighted more clearly by the deposition of the child from pit C519A, that (also due to the discreet presence of the domestic waste) evokes a certain ceremonial gesture, characteristic of a burial act. Furthermore, a necklace of glass beads and bronze links (probably combined with iron links) builds the funerary identity of the child. In the case of pit C555, the elements with funeral characteristic are included in the continuous stream of the pits' filling, marked by the uniformity of the its content composition, as well as by the presence of the domestic waste underneath, among and above the human body. The "melting" until blurring of the images that evoke "the domestic" and "the funerary" is highlighted by the presence of a perforated calvaria fragment belonging to an young adult in the filling of pit-house C585. The fragment was treated like an artefact, in the sense that it has been preserved, used and discarded in the pit-house filling similarly to the other disused objects.*

The same complete-fragment concept, as well as the relationship between the structural character of the deposition (similar to a funeral), and the deposition of the disused objects and consumption waste can be also established in the case of the dog skeletons and of the isolated bones. Although the processing of the faunal material

from the whole settlement is in a preliminary stage, a certain opposition relationship between the age of the human skeletons and that of the dog skeletons emerged. On the one hand, the complete human skeletons belong to children, while the only skeleton fragment belongs to an adult. On the other hand, the complete dog skeletons belong to mature or old individuals, while the isolated bones discarded in the filling belong mainly to juveniles.

In a wider geographical area, the relationship between the deposition of bodies and the community of domestic waste and the disused objects with which they are associated in the filling of pits often fades the borders between different contexts (habitation, grave, "pit fields", "places of worship"). The "funerary" and the "domestic" images are transferred from a domain of the social space to another; they are combined in diverse material communities, building distinct meanings of an "everyday domestic life" impregnated by "funerary" and mortuary practices that are incorporated in the "domestic" materiality. The everyday space of habitation is a combination of practices which join to the "domestic" images of its death. The death of houses, workshops, and pits is knitted in certain significant moments with the death of objects, people, and dogs.

***Rezumat:** Relaţia dintre depunerea în spaţiul domestic a corpurilor umane şi depunerea în diferite contexte de oase umane izolate sau părţi din corp este o caracteristică a celei de-a doua epoci a fierului din spaţiul de la nordul Dunării de Jos. Această diversitate a practicii depunerii există şi în cazul prezenţei scheletelor de câini în aşezări. În articolul de faţă încercăm să interpretăm aceste practici de depunere folosind drept studiu de caz câteva contexte din aşezarea din a doua epocă a fierului de la Bucureşti–*Băneasa, Strada Gârlei*, din sudul României (datată în sec. II-I a.Chr.), cercetată în anii 2008 şi 2013. În gropile C555 şi C519A au fost descoperite schelete de copii. Compararea structurii acestor gropi relevă un anumit contrast între aspectul „domestic" al acestora (similar celorlalte gropi din cuprinsul aşezării) şi formalismul depunerii copiilor: plasarea la marginea de sud a gropilor, depunerea la un anumit moment al umplerii acestora, poziţia chircită pe partea dreaptă, o anumită bipolaritate a orientării corpurilor. Acest contrast este evidenţiat mai clar de depunerea copilului în groapa C519A, care (şi datorită prezenţei discrete a resturilor menajere) evocă o anumită gestică ceremonială, caracteristică actului înmormântării. În plus, un colier de mărgele de sticlă şi verigi de bronz (combinate, probabil, cu verigi de fier) construieşte identitatea funerară a copilului. În cazul gropii C555, elementele cu caracter funerar sunt incluse în fluxul continuu al umplerii gropii, marcat de uniformitatea compoziţiei umpluturii, dar şi de prezenţa resturilor „menajere" sub, printre şi deasupra corpului uman. Topirea până la indistincţie a imaginilor care evocă „domesticul" şi „funerarul" este subliniată de prezenţa în umplutura gropii bordeiului C585 a unui fragment perforat de calotă aparţinând unui adult tânăr. Fragmentul de calotă a fost tratat ca un artefact, în sensul că a fost păstrat, utilizat şi aruncat în groapa bordeiului într-un mod similar celorlalte obiecte scoase din uz.*

În cazul scheletelor şi oaselor izolate de câini se constată aceeaşi prezenţă întreg-fragmentar, aceeaşi relaţie dintre caracterul structurat al depunerii (asemănătoare unei înmormântări) şi depunerea similară a obiectelor scoase din uz şi a resturilor consumului. Cu toate că prelucrarea materialului faunistic din întreaga aşezare este într-un stadiu preliminar, se conturează totuşi o anumită relaţie de opoziţie între vârsta stabilită pentru scheletele umane şi de câini. Pe de o parte, scheletele umane descoperite întregi aparţin unor copii, în schimb singurul fragment (calota) provine din craniul unui adult. Pe de altă parte, scheletele de câini aparţineau unor indivizi maturi sau bătrâni, în schimb oasele izolate, aruncate în umplutură, proveneau cu preponderenţă de la exemplare tinere.

Într-un spaţiu geografic mai larg, relaţia biunivocă dintre depunerea de corpuri şi comunitatea de resturi menajere şi obiecte scoase din uz cu care acestea se asociază în umplutura gropilor estompează adeseori graniţele dintre diferite contexte (locuire, mormânt, „câmp de gropi", „locuri de cult"). Imaginile „funerare" şi „domestice" sunt transferate dintr-un domeniu într-altul al spaţiului social, se combină în diverse comunităţi materiale, construiesc semnificaţii diverse ale unui „cotidian domestic" impregnat de „funerar" şi ale unor practici mortuare care incorporează materialităţi „domestice". Spaţiul cotidian, al locuirii este un amestec de practici care alătură „domesticului" imagini ale morţii acestuia. Moartea locuinţelor, atelierelor şi gropilor este împletită în anumite momente semnificative cu moartea obiectelor, oamenilor şi câinilor.

***Keywords:** Late Iron Age, burials in the settlement, isolated human bones, dog burials, "domestic waste".*
***Cuvinte cheie**: a doua epocă a fierului, înmormântări în aşezare, oase umane izolate, înmormântări de câini, „resturi menajere".*

INTRODUCTION

The presence of complete or fragmented skeletons in "non-funerary" spaces from the Late Iron Age is interpreted by some researchers as a possible clue for discoveries with a "sacrificial" characteristic[1]. As it has been observed, most of the children skeletons from such contexts are incomplete, often with traces of sectioning or smashing[2], observations that led to different assumptions about sacrifices, "ritual operations of trenching corpses", or about "practices involving exposure/decomposing"[3]. Without rejecting these assumptions, in the present paper we try to shift the focus on the interpretation of the endpoint of these possible (successions of) practices, *i.e.* the deposition of bodies or body parts in different contexts which could mark specific moments, with certain meanings referring to the status of individuals "buried", or to the time and space of the community.

As it is emphasized by the contexts from the settlement at Bucureşti–*Strada Gârlei*, in southern Romania, the pit-houses, the workshops, and the pits have a biography that continues after the end of their function. This post-abandonment biography is materialized by a certain "style of filling" the pits, which is dynamically defined by the movement and succession of gestures and, from a more static perspective, through an "aesthetics" of depositing[4] the disused objects and consumption remnants that provide the final appearance of the pit. Human bodies and scattered bones are introduced in different ways in the abandonment process[5], in the filling flux of the pits, forming different constellation together with the elements of material culture they are associated with. Also, we try to compare the diversity of practices for the deposition of the human body with those reserved for the skeletons and isolated dog bones[6].

These structured depositions of human and animal bodies could be gateways for reading a cultural semantics of the Late Iron Age – to use a concept defined by Jan Assmann who refers to "the great narratives and guiding distinctions that orient a society in the world and in time and that become obvious in its founding myths, symbols, images and literary texts"[7]. From this point of view, the inclusion of bodies of children and dogs in the living space must be related to the renewal of space and to the domestic and funerary practices of the Late Iron Age.[8]

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1 Sîrbu 1985, 104-105; 1993; 1994; 2008; Davâncă 2015, 115.

2 Sîrbu 1985, 90, 92, 95-97; 1988-1989, 69-75; 1993; Sîrbu and Anastasiu 1985, 128; Davâncă 2015, 86, 91-93, 116.

3 Sîrbu 1993; 1994; Davâncă 2015, 86, 91-93, 117.

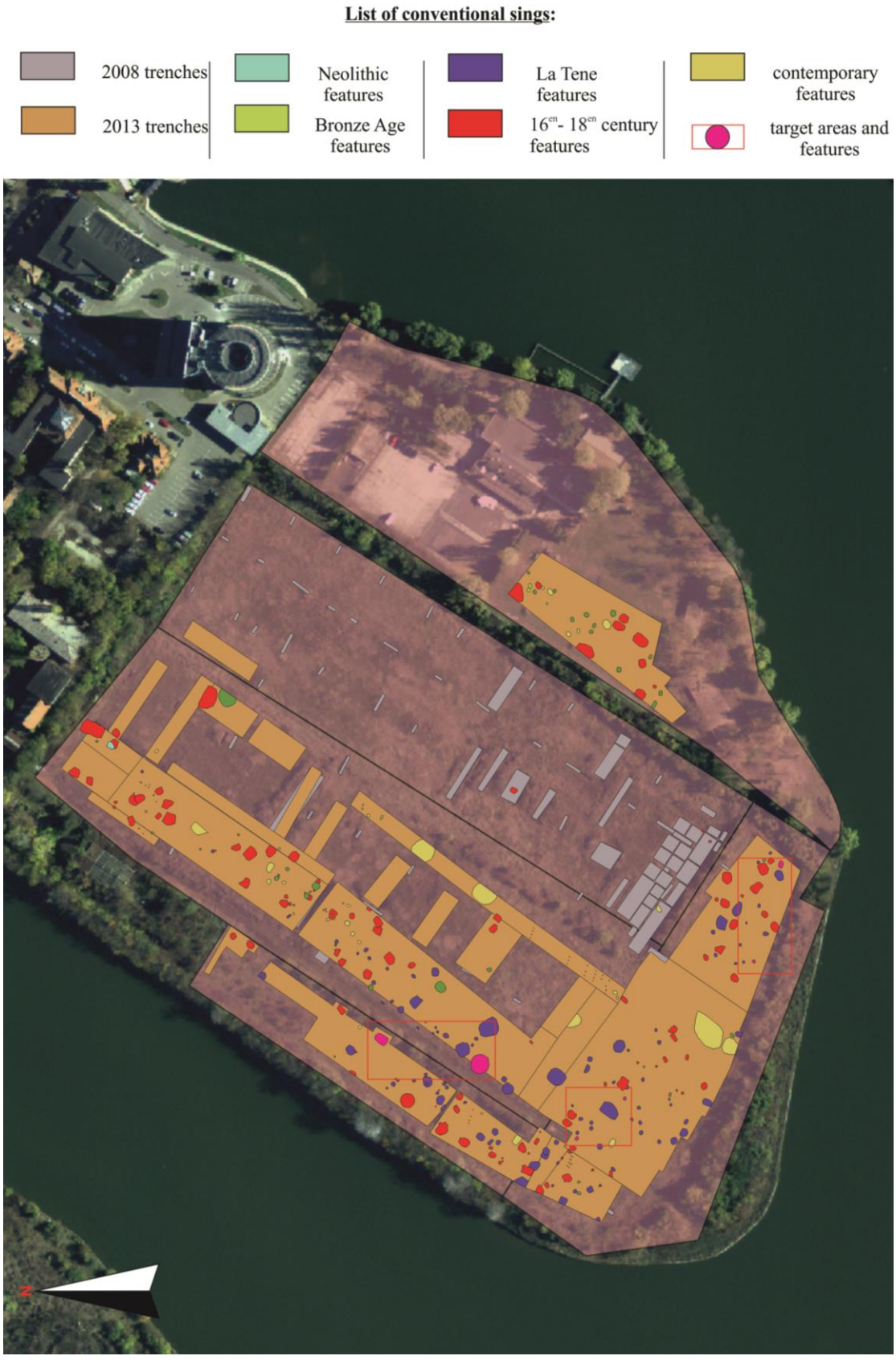
4 *cf.* Pollard 2001.

5 A synthetic discussion about abandonment, Steffens 2016, 21-33.

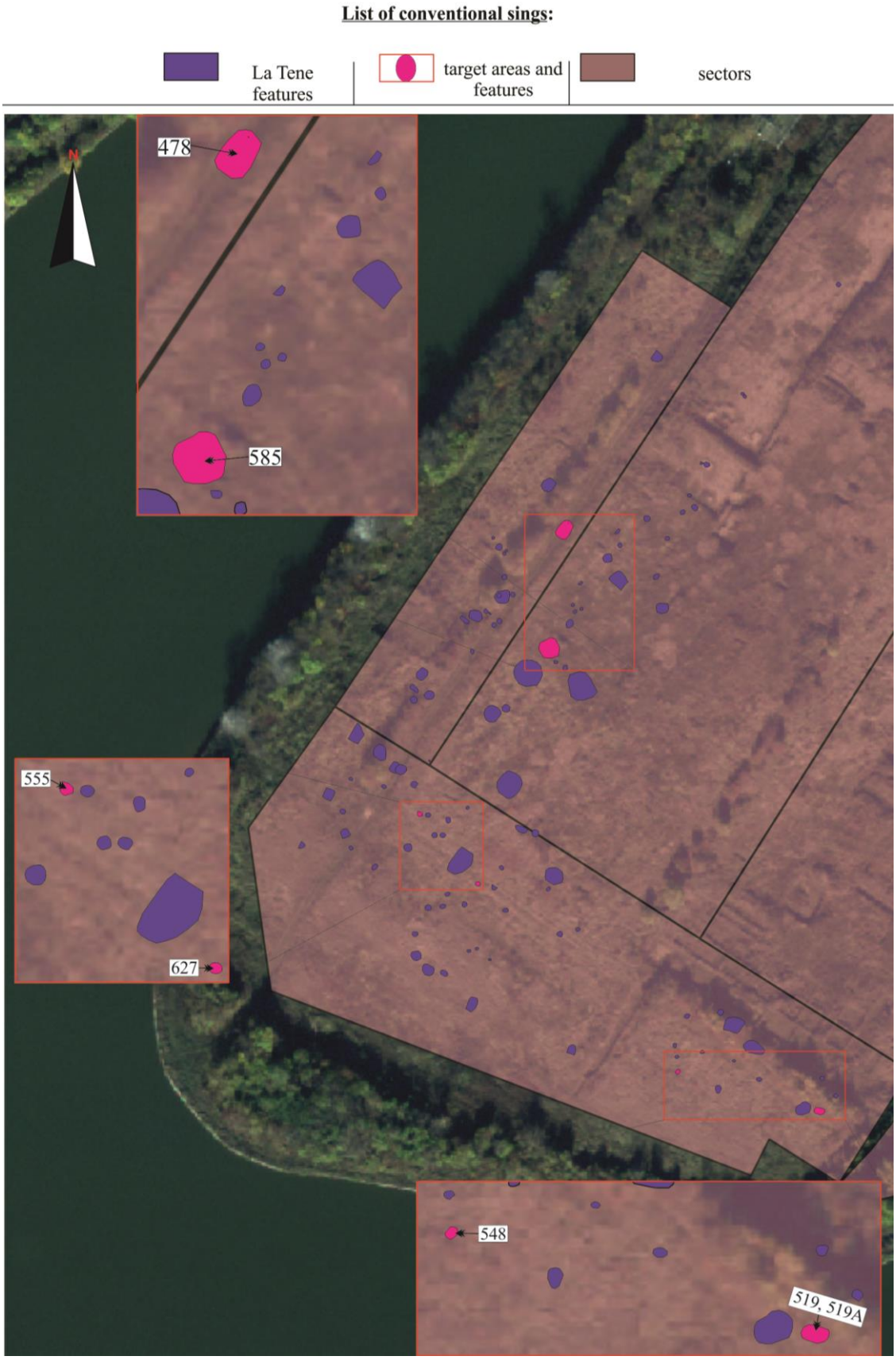
6 The anthropological study was conducted by Gabriel Vasile after the completion of the archaeological excavation. Unfortunately, no anthropologist was involved in the research team of the site, fact that explains the lack of detailed observations. The absence of certain bones is due to the fast pace at which we were obliged to conduct the research. The faunal remains from the discussed contexts were examined by Adrian Bălăşescu, except for the dog skeleton from pit C548 (Popa 2013).

7 Assmann 2012, 20-21.

8 Sîrbu 1993; Sîrbu 1994; Sîrbu 2001; Davâncă 2015.



Pl. 1. Bucureşti-*Băneasa, Strada Gârlei*. Plan of the investigated area.



Pl. 2. Plan of the Late Iron Age settlement.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT BUCUREŞTI–*STRADA GÂRLEI*

In 2008 and 2013, a team of archaeologists from the National Museum of Romanian History conducted a series of rescue excavations at the Bucureşti–*Băneasa, Strada Gârlei* site, situated on the north bank of Băneasa Lake. The contemporary aspect of the landscape is the result of the extensive works conducted throughout the entire modern period in order to change Colentina River into a string of lakes. Before the transformation during the recent period, the present day "peninsula" was, in fact, a terrain defined by a meander of the river. A study about the evaluation marks and the soil quality[9] shows that "at contact with Băneasa Lake, on a 30 m distance, the terrain descends slowly with a 2-5% slope. The terrain has an absolute altitude of about 85 m towards north and slowly descends to 81 m towards south and east"[10]. The contemporary landscape appearance is the result of the uninterrupted works conducted by the Central Station of Research for the Cultivation and Industrialization of Tobacco from 1925[11] until the early 2000s, when the area was on the point of "deindustrialization" process. As it was observed from the diagnostic stage of research, the terrain was strongly affected by the ploughings, whose numerous traces can be observed in the natural yellow clay deposit in different parts of the terrain[12]. Furthermore, the above-mentioned study established that in 2000 one could still recognize on the surface "micro-depressions and fairly visible mounds of anthropogenic nature, resulting from ploughing with the mouldboard for a long time". The terrain, "over-fertilized with nitrates and cultivated with tobacco – Bărăgan variety", was characterized in concise terms as follows: "Biotope: flat terrain, mechanized 100%"[13]. The site's stratigraphy consists of a natural yellowish clay that contains carbonates and a lot of sand, with a low degree of compactness, medium saturated; this is overlapped by a compact, homogeneous, permeable, medium saturated, yellow-brownish clay deposit which, in turn, it is overlapped by a 0.30-0.35 m layer of cambic Chernozem, sometimes with a brown nuance, homogeneous, compact, with a low degree of saturation and by a 0.10 m greyish vegetal layer with a small degree of compactness, unsaturated, homogeneous, containing organic materials and sometimes contemporary archaeological material[14].

In the arable greyish layer, we discovered objects from different periods originating from the destruction of certain archaeological features, but also from the period in which tobacco was cultivated in the field (industrial parts, coins, even rope fragments); even on the hearth of some destroyed ovens we found contemporary glass fragments. The ploughings and the successive levelling of the terrain have destroyed the different habitation levels, any footpaths, hearths, agglomerations of disused and discarded objects, traces of postholes which held the wooden or adobe structure of constructions. In short, the natural yellow clay deposit is the material support in which the traces of the past were printed, a support which registered only the "underground" dimension of past spaces: the deep part of the

[9] Conducted in 2000 by the Institute of Pedological Research and Agricultural Chemistry, under contract to The National Society "The Romanian Tobacco".

[10] Dumitru et al. 2000, 5.

[11] When, by a decree was founded the Experimental Institute for the Cultivation and the Fermentation of the Tobacco.

[12] Damian et al. 2014.

[13] Dumitru et al. 2000, 5, 10.

[14] Damian et al. 2014.

construction pits, of the refuse and/or extraction pits, or the pits with other functionality. Taking into account this observation, we adopted a method of mechanical excavation in the open area, keeping only some stratigraphical baulks, which allowed conducting in a short period of time the research of an impressive number of features (about 850) distributed over a large area (Pl. 1). These features are dated to the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Late Iron Age, Early and Late Middle Ages, World War II, but also to the recent and contemporary past.

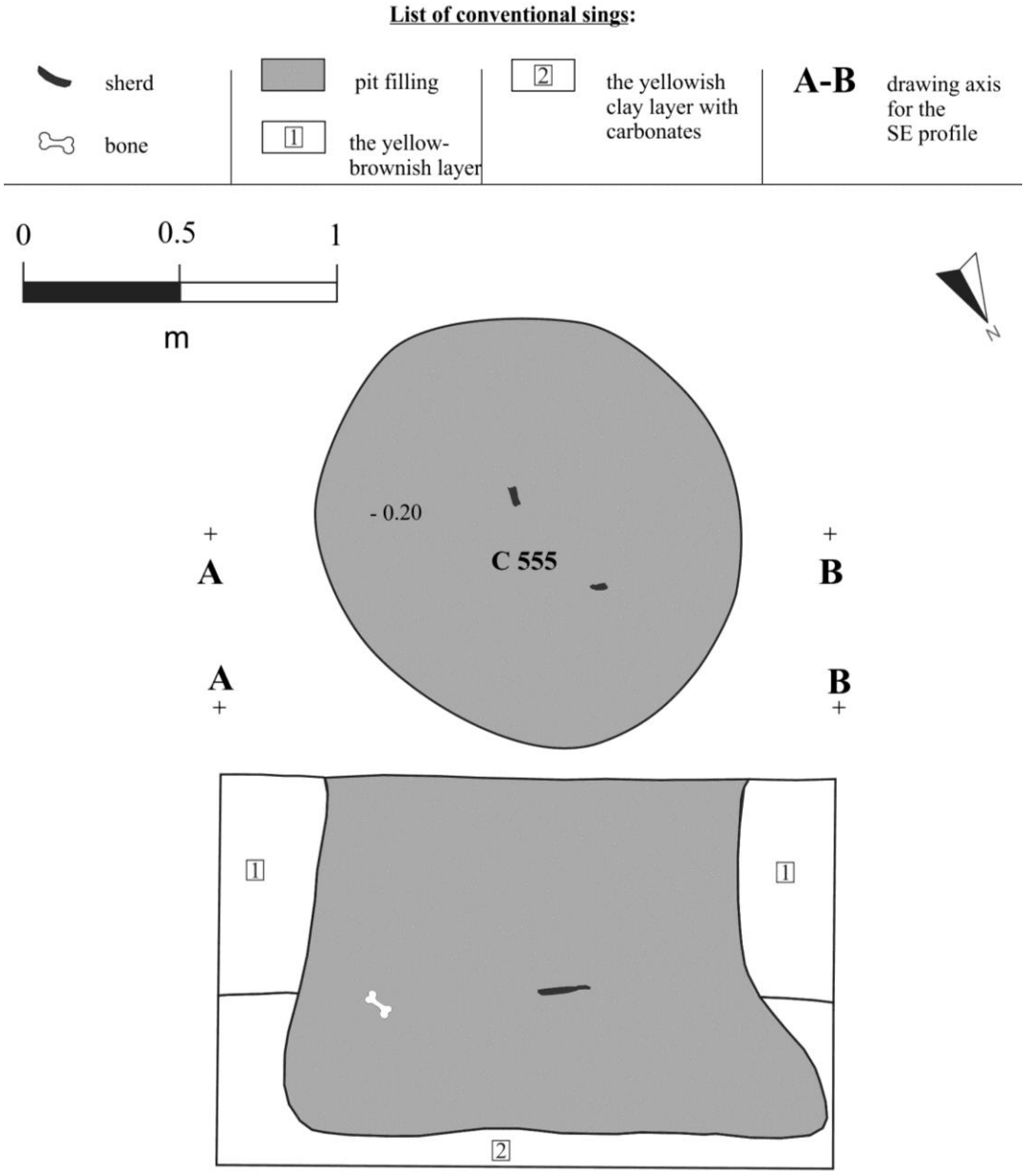
LATE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT

The fragmented character of the habitation from Bucureşti–*Strada Gârlei* is emphasized especially by the traces from the Late Iron Age that are the most numerous from the investigated site (Pl. 1). The settlement from this period has not been fully researched because of the ruined buildings and greenhouses of the laboratory of the research station, of the gravel road (6 m wide) that crossed the land, of the rows of shrubs who delimited different lots, and of the compact tree groups that mark the lakeside[15]. The interventions from the modern period erased the upper parts of the pits, thus we do not have the full picture of their dimensions, of the expense of social energy to dig them, of the potential surface houses or outside hearths. Only in the southern part of the site, due to the presence of a "mound" which separates the two lots of the experimental station, we caught an "intermediary" layer, between the greyish and the yellow clay deposits. Unfortunately, despite of the numerous sherds and other elements of material culture characteristic to the Late Iron Age discovered in it, a habitation layer marked by features was not found in this limited preserved area. As it appears after the land transformation, the habitation from the Late Iron Age is a network of pit-houses and pits with different shapes, dimensions, functions, all concentrated on the bank of the peninsula (Pl. 1-2). The features are evenly distributed on the identified surfaces of the site: 13 pit-houses with ovens, 2 pit-houses whose walls contain reverberation ovens, 9 rectangular or oval shape pits of large sizes that can be interpreted as pit-houses, but without fire installations, and 124 pits.

The pit-houses are rectangular and have various orientations. In several cases, in one of the walls of the pit, ovens of circular shape were dug. Pit C369 contains two such ovens; also, pit C531, of small dimensions, is rather an oven with an access pit. Two of the pit-houses, located somehow at the outer edge of the settlement, have rather special traits due to the constructive style of the kilns, with two chambers – one for fire, divided by a central wall, and another for burning process. The perforated plate, sustained by a central wall, was preserved only in one kiln. Usually, the function that is assigned to this type of reverberation kiln is the production of pottery[16]. In the case of the two features from the site of Bucureşti–*Strada Gârlei* we have to emphasize the presence of the slag fragments and iron blooms in the pits of the constructions. The slag fragments where manipulated in different contexts in the settlement, from the pit-houses without a fire installation to the pits. The ceramic material is fragmentary, but covers a broad spectrum of shapes such as jars, pedestal-platters, jugs, *amphorae*, storage vessels. It is worth mentioning a fragment of an imported painted *kantharos* of Hellenistic tradition and a moulded bowl imitation.

[15] Damian et al. 2014.

[16] Leahu 1962, 30, 33 fig. 12, 35, fig. 35.



Pl. 3. Plan/Profile of pit C 555.

Spindle whorls were discovered in the filling of certain pits, and the filling of construction C634 contained a copper or bronze object. In some of the contexts (pit-houses with or without a fire installation; pits) fragmented iron pieces, like spikes, nails and a bit were found. The preliminary analysis of the ceramic material from the excavated features suggests that the settlement had two distinct stages, dated to the 4th–3rd centuries BC and the 2nd–1st centuries BC. The contexts discussed in this paper belong to the latter stage.

PIT-HOUSES, PITS, AND "DOMESTIC WASTE"

Pits are documented on the entire excavated area of the settlement; usually they have a circular or oval shape and a cylindrical or a bell-shape in cross-section, being deepened in the natural yellow clay and in the white-yellowish layers rich in carbonates. After the fulfilling

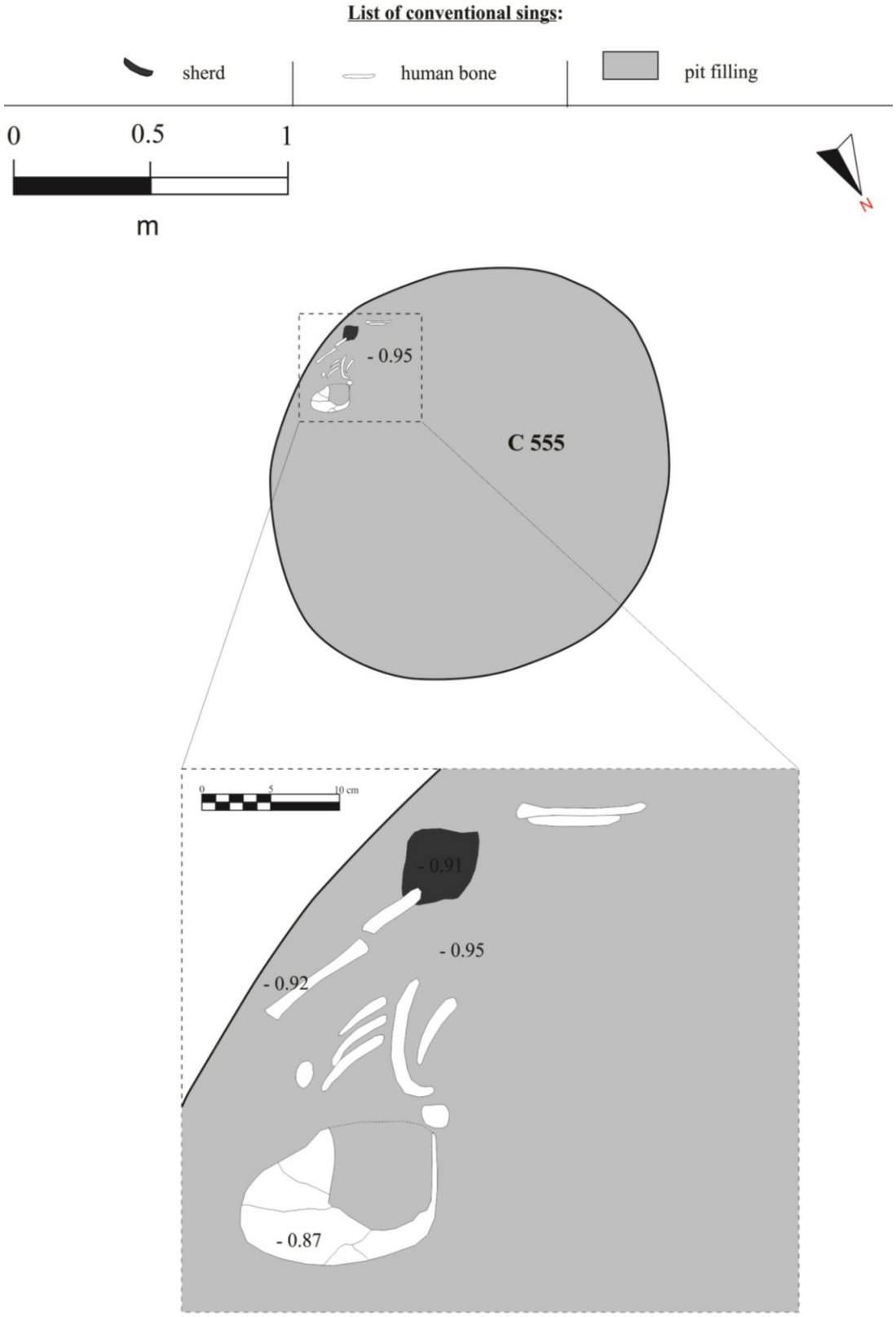
the purpose for which they were dug, the pits can be differentiated according to style of filling and by the "deposition aesthetics".

There is a type of pit with a domestic nature, which, regardless of its original function, contains many sherds in the filling (at different depths or only in some of the layers), associated sometimes with other disused objects (spindle whorls, glass beads, and iron fragments), casting scraps (slag) or animal bones. The yellow clay lenses derived from the collapse of the walls suggested that some of the pits stayed open for a while until they were naturally filled up to a certain level.

Pit C555 is part of this community of contexts with a "domestic" refuse character: it has an oval shape (D = 1.40 m × 1.10 m), a bell-shaped profile (D = 1.80 m) and deepens with 1.10 m in the yellow clay and in the white-yellowish natural layers rich in carbonates (Pl. 3). After accomplishing the function for which it was dug, the pit was evenly filled with brown colour sediment resulting from a mix of yellow clay, greyish sediment and ash, with small fragments of charcoal. In this filling 296 sherds were discovered: an almost complete jug, fragments of broken jugs, jars, storage vessels, bowls or pedestal-platters, an incense burner and two *amphorae* fragments (Pl. 5). All of them have a high fragmentation index (Table 1). We also found 16 animal bones (four of cow, one of goat, five of ovicaprine, two of pig, and the rest undetermined), a piece of sandstone, and some slag pieces. At a specific moment, on a level found at 0.50 m above the pit's bottom, in its south-eastern limit, a child oriented NE-SW was deposited on his right side (Pl. 4).

Table 1. The fragmentation index of the sherds found in the discussed features.

Feature	No. of sherds	Fragmentation index (cm)				
		≤ 2,5	5	7,5	10	≥ 10
C519A (pit; child skeleton)	60	16 *(26,67 %)*	38 *(63,33 %)*	4 *(6,67 %)*	1 *(1,67 %)*	1 *(1,66 %)*
C555 (pit; child skeleton)	296	18 *(6,08 %)*	166 *(56,08 %)*	65 *(21,96 %)*	42 *(14,19 %)*	5 *(1,69 %)*
C585 (pit-house; perforated human *calvaria* fragment; dog bones)	2446	162 *(6,62 %)*	1359 *(55,56 %)*	684 *(27,96 %)*	223 *(9,12%)*	18 *(0,74 %)*
C478 (pit-house; dog bones)	536	43 *(8,02 %)*	277 *(51,68 %)*	146 *(27,24 %)*	52 *(9,7 %)*	18 *(3,36 %)*
C548 (pit; one dog skeleton)	233	8 *(3,43 %)*	123 *(52,80 %)*	69 *(29,61 %)*	25 *(10,73 %)*	8 *(3,43 %)*
C627 (two dog skeletons, bones belonging to a third dog)	101	22 *(21,78 %)*	56 *(55,45 %)*	17 *(16,83 %)*	3 *(2,97 %)*	3 *(2,97 %)*



Pl. 4. Pit C555. Plan of the level in which the child skeleton was discovered.

The skeletal fragments are relatively well preserved (grade 2), the skeleton being nearly complete[17]. The neurocranium is fragmented and does not present the petrous part of the right temporal and the occipital; from facial skeleton only the zygomatic bones, fragments from the sphenoid and maxilla, and the mandibula were preserved. The clavicles and the *scapulae* have slight damages, and from the pelvic girdle only the right ilium was found. The costo-vertebral sector is well kept; from the upper limbs, the right forearm bones are missing, while the lower ones are complete. The bones belonging to the hand and foot skeleton were not found. The age of death was estimated taking into account the morphology of the deciduous mandibular molar crowns that are fully developed, and by the sequence of formation and eruption of teeth. Both methods indicated an individual with an age of the death somewhere between six and nine months. Additionally, supporting the methods in which dentition was used, we should mention the fact that the fusion of the two half mandibles on the symphysial level occurred recently, being almost fully completed (these bones fused close to the end of the first year of life), and the maximum size of the humeral, femoral and tibial diaphysis indicates the same age, *i.e.* six months – one-year interval. The stature was estimated on account to the left tibial diaphysis[18] to (674.3±97.0) mm. Table 2 shows a series of cranial and postcranial dimensions.

In this particular moment of pit's biography, elements of intentionality regarding the corpse deposition (the placement at the edge of the pit, the tendency to arrange it on the right side) intertwine with its inclusion in the "domestic" waste disorder that also contains

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[17] The conservation status of the skeletal material was estimated based on the model proposed by Brickley and McKinley (2004, 15-17). This involves the classification of the bone remains in seven grades of erosion and/or abrasion, using a scale starting from grade 0 (the morphological aspect: clear bone surface, visible, unaffected) and til the 5+ degrees (the degraded bone remains, strongly affected by the taphonomic agents). To establish the status of representation of the skeletons we followed the recommandation of Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994, 7). So, a whole skeleton is registered as being approximately complete when over 75% of the components are present; the bone remains located at the edge of the 25-75% interval define a partial represented skeleton and a poor represented skeleton is when are identified no more than 25% of the elements. To estimate the age of death for the subadult individuals (children <12 years-old), we used the measurements recorded from the *pars basilaris ossis occipitalis*: maximum length, sagittal length and width, in accordance with the results of the study performed by Scheuer and Maclaughlin-Black (1994, 378). The dentition was used also to estimate this parameter. In this regard, we followed the sequence of formation and eruption of teeth proposed by Ubelaker (1980, 46-47), as well as the chronology of teeth formation and resorption of the roots of deciduous canines and molars according to the study of Moorrees, Fanning and Hunt (1963). Also, we used a series of morphological characteristics using the treaty of fetal and juvenile osteology of Schaefer *et al*. (2009) or metric data, based on the maximum length of some of the long bones diaphyseal according to an appropriate intervals age, after the sequence proposed by Ubelaker (1980, 48-49). In order to assess the adults subject's age, we used the degree of obliteration of the cranial sutures, after the recommendations proposed by Meindl and Lovejoy (1985). The age categories were as described by Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994, 9). The skeletal stature could be estimated based on the regression equation obtained by Visser (1998, 415), that take into account the full length of the humeral, femural and tibial diaphysis. After Buikstra and Ubelaker approach (1994, 45), we calculated a number of cranial and postcranial feasible dimensions only for the newborn age range of 12 months-old.

[18] Although we benefited from the humerus and femur diaphyseals, the stature was estimated based only on the maximum length of the tibial diaphysis, the equations derived from them having a higher accuracy.

sherds, pieces of casting and animal bones. The elements with a funeral character are included in the uninterrupted flux that fills the pit, marked by the uniformity that characterizes the composition of the filling, and also by the presence of "domestic" scraps under, with and above the human body.

The melting until complete lack of distinction of the "domestic" and the "funeral" images is also emphasized by the filling of the pit-house C585. It has a rectangular shape (6 × 6 m) and deepened with 0.60 m in the yellow clay layer (Pl. 6). It did not have any fire installation, hearth or oven. 2446 sherds were found in the pit-house's filling (Table 1). They belong to hand-made or wheel-made pots (Pl. 7) – jars, bowls or pedestal-platters, cups or strainers, storage vessels, a miniature bowl, jugs, a moulded bowl imitation, an *amphora* foot and an incense burner. The sherds were associated with a spindle whorl, pieces of hearth and 140 pieces of mammal bones, from which 80 were determined to the species level (3 horse bones, 38 cow bones, 1 sheep bone, 1 goat bone, 17 ovicaprine bones, 19 pig bones and 3 dog bones).

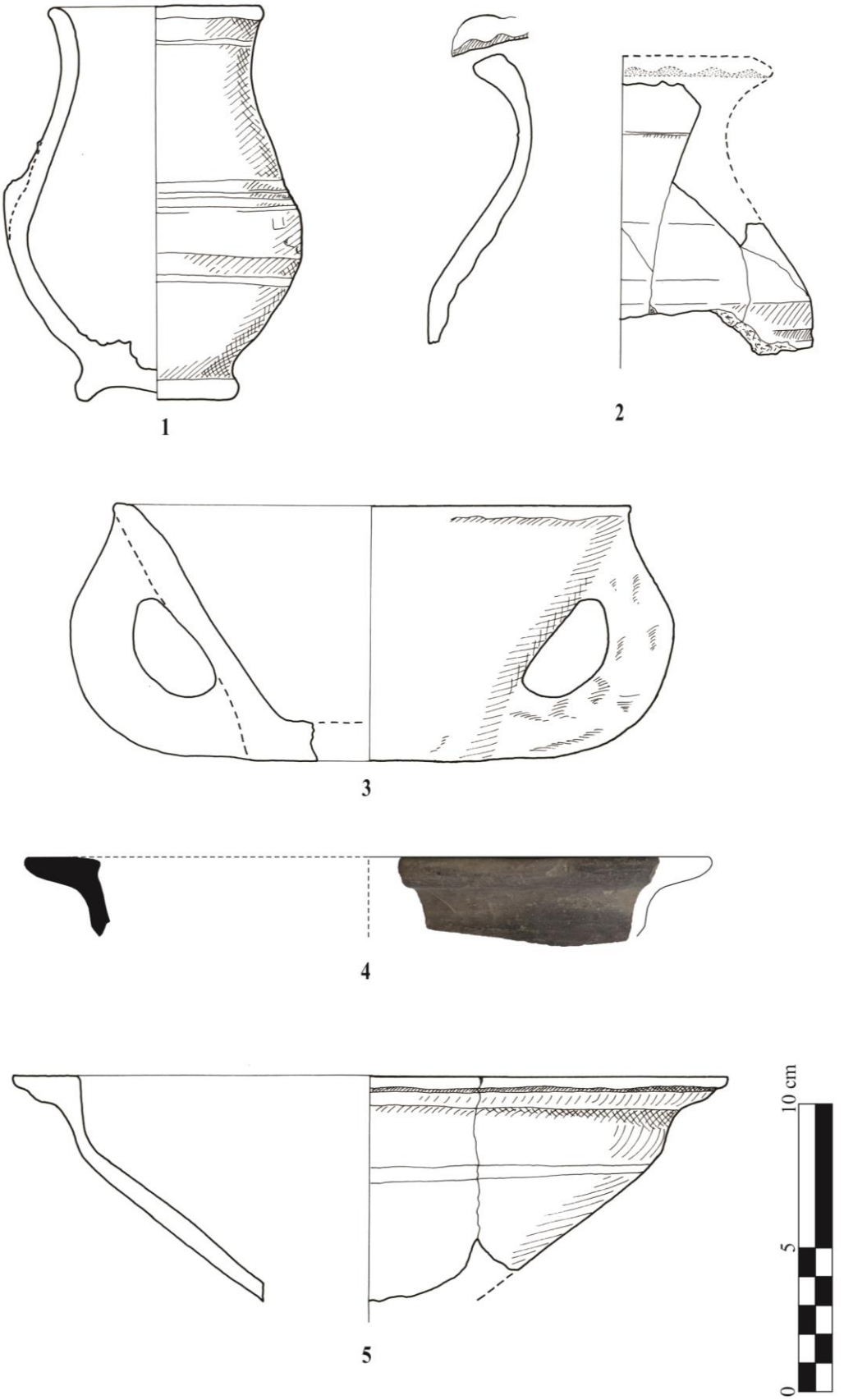
In the NW part of the filling, at the depth of -0.31 m from the level of identification of the pit, we discovered a bone fragment (Pl. 8) located in the right frontal and parietal area, which includes segments II-III of the coronal suture and the temporal lines of the frontal and parietal bones. On the frontal bone we identified intentional changes, in the form of an approximately circular-shaped cavity that perforates the bone entirely. Its diameter is 9.76 mm on the exocranial face, 10.12 mm on the endocranial and of 8.34 mm in the centre of the cavity. On the exocranial face, the perforation is accompanied by two shallow incisions (with the lengths of 8.01 mm and 4.52 mm), perpendicular on this one and which is not in simultaneity report, the incisions being made at an earlier date. We note also the presence of a glossy surface on the endocranial front, circumscribing the perforation, possible result of the usage of the bone. The minimum grade (1) of coronal suture obliteration from the coronal median and pterion cranial points, indicates an individual with an age of death included in the category young adult.

The perforation of the *calvaria* belonging to a child from Teliţa-*Celic Dere* was interpreted as a result of a trepanation made "right before the death or immediately after"[19]. In the case of the *calvaria* from Bucureşti–*Strada Gârlei*, the edges of the cavity are rounded, both exocranian and endocranian, and do not exhibit the markers of a lasting healing (the bone matrix with the formation of bone callus and/or bone remodelling processes). Therefore, the intervention was made post-mortem, ruling out the possibility of a trepanation, *i.e.* of an antemortem intervention; instead, we do not have any argument to make us believe that the perforation could not be carried perimortem, more exactly, immediately after the death of the individual. Whether or not it represented the material for a disc[20], similar to the clay pieces[21], we can say that the fragment of *calvaria* was treated as an artefact, in the way that it was kept, used and discarded in the pit-house's filling in a similar manner as the disused objects.

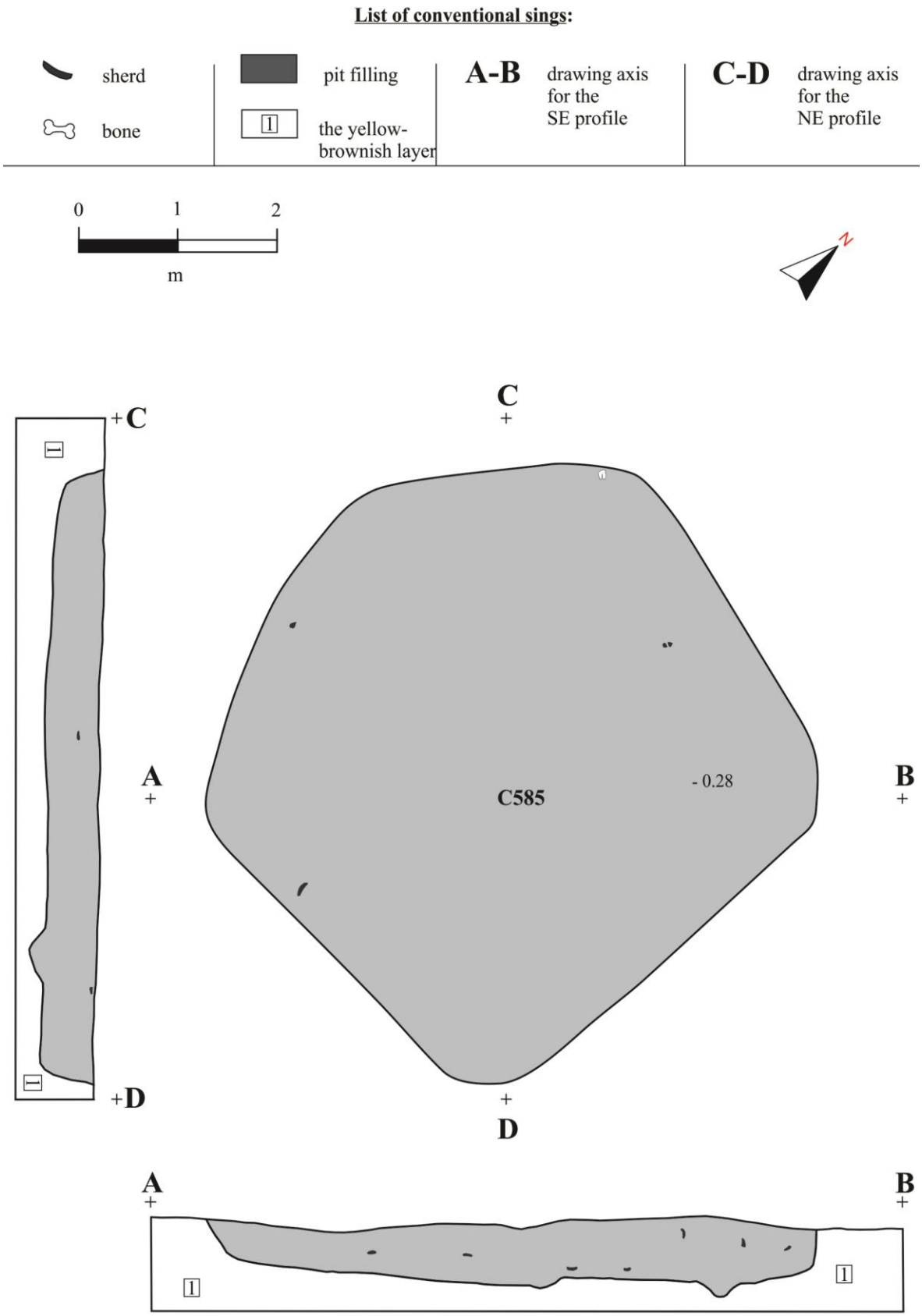
[19] Davâncă 2015, 65, 226 fig. 84/8.

[20] *e.g.* Rousseau 2011, 122-123.

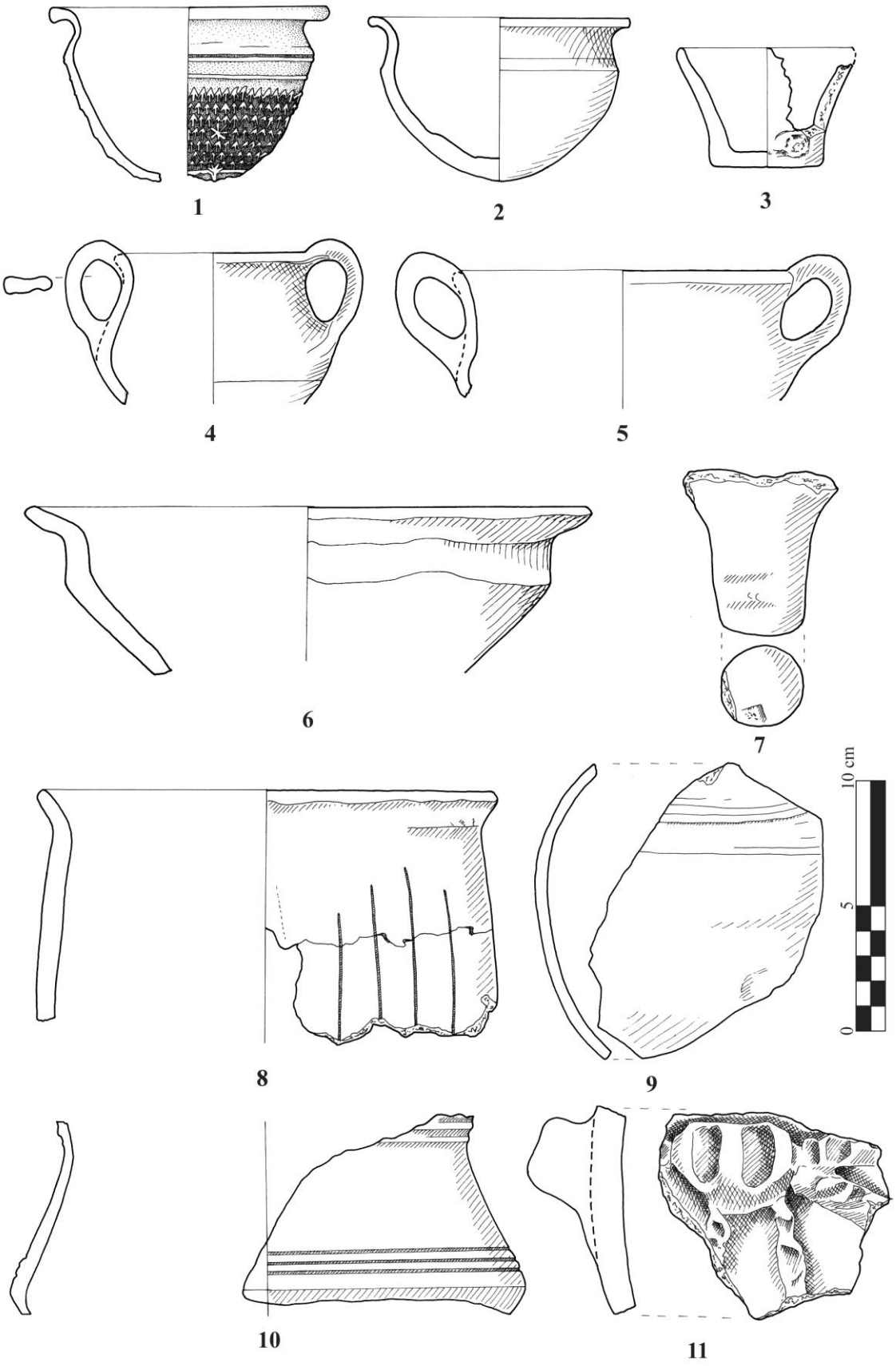
[21] *e.g.* Trohani 2006, pl. 142.



Pl. 5. Pottery from pit C 555.



Pl. 6. Plan/Profile of pit C 585.



Pl. 7. Pottery from C 585.

In the contexts discussed above, the human body and the *calvaria* fragment are elements closely related to the abandonment process that constructs certain "domestic" refuse aesthetics in the filling of the pits. In the case of pit C555, the disused objects, the food waste, and the human body form a single constellation; together with the sediment that is the filling, they are materiality of the same gestures that mark the end of the original function of the pit and transform it into a refuse pit. As indicated by the situation from pit C585 and other similar contexts, this change of function is also present in the case of the pit-houses, their "filling" being similar to the one of the pits. The fragmentary state of the pottery (Table 1), its distribution within the filling, and also the association with the animal bones (that grants a "domestic" refuse appearance), indicate that they were discarded after the abandonment of the construction[22]. Therefore, the research of these contexts captures the act of abandonment of these constructions, and not a frozen image of the daily inventory. In the specific case of the pit-house C585, the abandonment process shows that the human bones were treated like any other disused artefacts with which they are associated in the filling. The end of pit C555 and of pit-house C585 biographies are materialized by a certain abandonment practice in which the images evoking the "domestic" (consumption, discarding of the domestic waste) and the "funeral" (human bones and body parts) melt until total lack of distinction.

BURIALS, DOMESTIC PRACTICES AND THE TIME OF ABANDONMENT

In contrast to the refuse pits, the other pits have less artefacts and bones in their dull content of the filling. Among the former we find pits (some large and very deep) filled up to a certain point with yellow clay, with little archaeological material. On the top part, the pit filling consists in a greyish sediment in which the sherds and the animal bones are very well represented. Pit C519A belongs to this type.

The pit has a circular shape (D = 1.80 m) and deepens with 1.40 m in the yellow clay layers and the white-yellowish deposit with many sand particles (Pl. 9). The pit started to be filled with yellow clay that contained lenses of white-yellowish clay and lenses of greyish sediment and charcoal. It thus formed a layer of filling (519A-3), with the thickness of 0.70 m, in which we discovered small pieces of reddish burnt earth and two sherds: one non-diagnostic, from the body of a pot modelled by hand from a reddish paste, and a *kantharos* handle, decorated with middle grooves, of reddish paste, of Hellenistic or Roman tradition, which could be dated to the 2nd-1st century BC[23] (Pl. 12/2).

After the first moment of filling, a newly born child was deposited in this pit (Pl. 10). The skeletal remains are relatively well preserved (grade 2), the skeleton being partially represented. The neural skull is highly fragmented, especially at the squamous portions, best kept being the mastoid and petrous part of the temporals, the basilar parts and the lateral masses of the occipital, and from the facial skeleton, the sphenoid and the two half mandibles. From the postcranial segment, the left clavicula, some vertebra and ribs, the left *os coxae* and the right *ischium* were missing. Only some elements from the right side of the the upper limb skeleton were present, while from the lower limb only, the right femur, the tibias and a fragment from the peroneal diaphysis were found. The large majority of the bones from the hands and feet were missing.

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[22] The same observation was made in the case of the researches at Căţelu Nou, Chirnogi, Grădiştea; Sîrbu 1985, 102; Sîrbu, Anastasiu 1985, 127-128, 135; 1992, 149-152.

[23] We thank Adela Bâltâc for this information.

The age of death was estimated on account of the maximum width (16.6 mm), sagittal length (14.1 mm) and maximum length (18.6 mm) of pars basilaris. According to these values, the individual had an estimated age of two months. The age was also estimated after the sequence of formation and eruption of teeth. According to these criteria, the individual had a biological age comprised in an interval between the birth newborn and six months ± two-three months. Also, the development of mandibular deciduous molars (the dental crowns are half complete), indicates an individual with an age of death somewhere around three months-old. So, the analyzed individual was included in the age category *infant*.

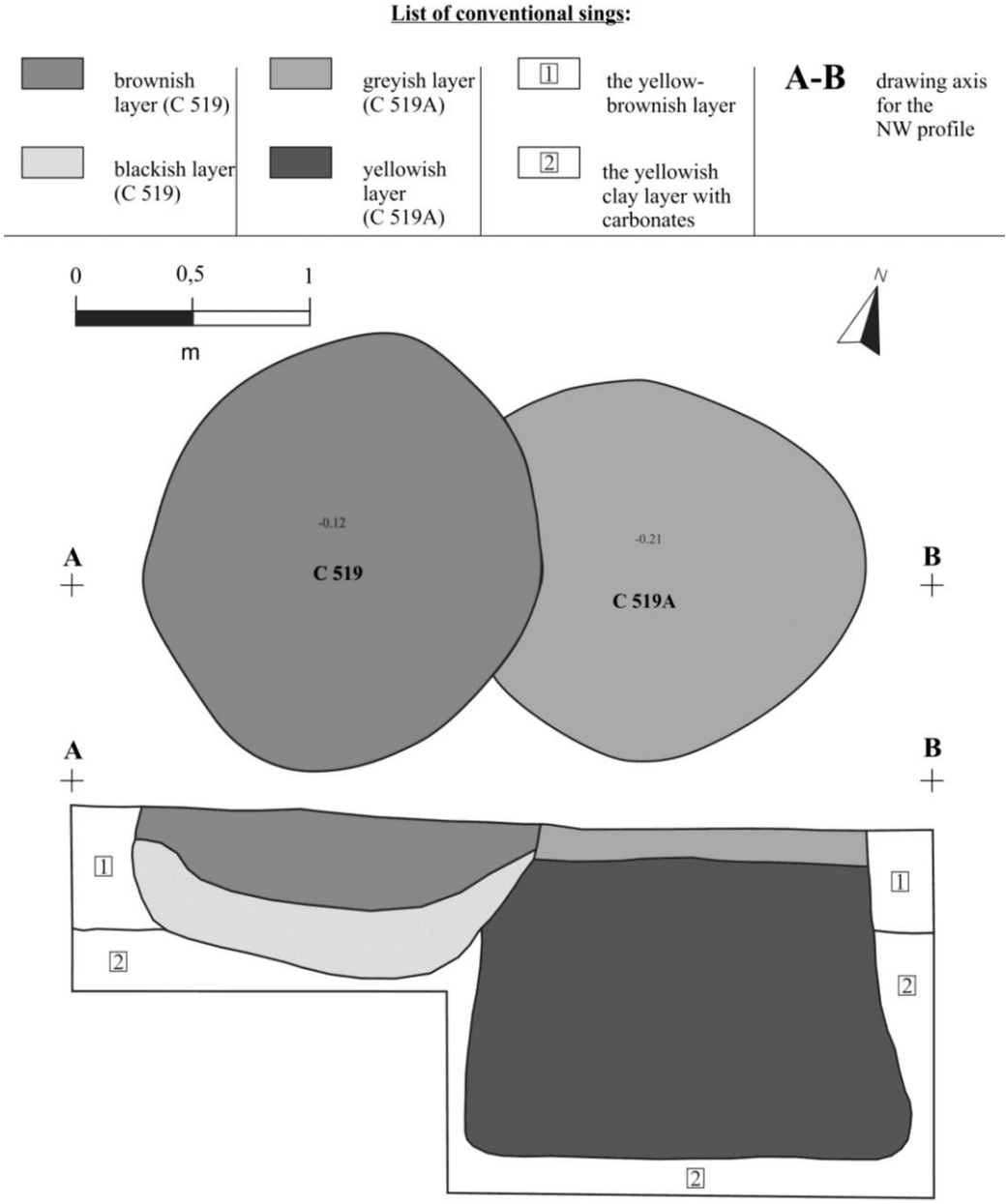
a - *Calvaria*, exocranian view **b** - *Calvaria*, endocranian view

Pl. 8. Piece of *calvaria* found in C 585.

Several cranial and postcranial dimensions could be calculated, as shown in Table 2.

The child was deposited in a small niche dug in the southern wall, in a sand lens collapsed in the yellowish filling, same as in the case of C555, at the edge of the pit (Pl. 10). Unlike the former context, the child from C519A was crouched on the right side, oriented WNW-SSE, and had a necklace in which glass beads alternate with metal links (Pl. 10/1–9; 11/1–9). One blue coloured glass bead with a relief decoration in the shape of an "eye", painted in yellowish colour, was discovered in the neck area (Pl. 10/1; 11/1), while under the nape, four bronze links alternate with four beads (one cylindrical, of blue colour with a blue ribbon that marks the diameter, two translucide, of dual-frustoconical shape and tube shape and one cylindrical, weathered, that, taking into account the high concentration of iron oxides and manganese, is possible to have been bright green coloured) (Pl. 10/2–8; 11/2–9). As indicated by a fragment kept on the inside of a bronze link (Pl. 10/7;11/7), most likely the necklace also contained iron links, which were not preserved. Another iron fragment was conserved on the inside of the tubular bead made from translucent glass (Pl. 10/2; 11/2). That is why we can assume that the beads were stretched on a wire from the same material. Traces of gold were found on the inner side of the dual frustum conical bead, possibly from the contamination with a thread that was lined up in an earlier period, before its inclusion in the necklace. The microscopic analysis also showed that traces of textile and leather are visible on the surface of

some of the bronze links[24]. The necklace gathers beads of older tradition (such as the dual-frustum conical shape bead) and forms that can be dated to the classical period of the Late Iron Age (1st century BC–1st century AD)[25]. The simple bronze links, similar to the pieces from C519A, are commonly found in different contexts from the classical period of the Late Iron Age (2nd–1st century BC)[26].



Pl. 9. Plan/Profile of pit C 519/519A.

[24] We would like to thank Zizi Ileana Baltă who kindly provided this information.

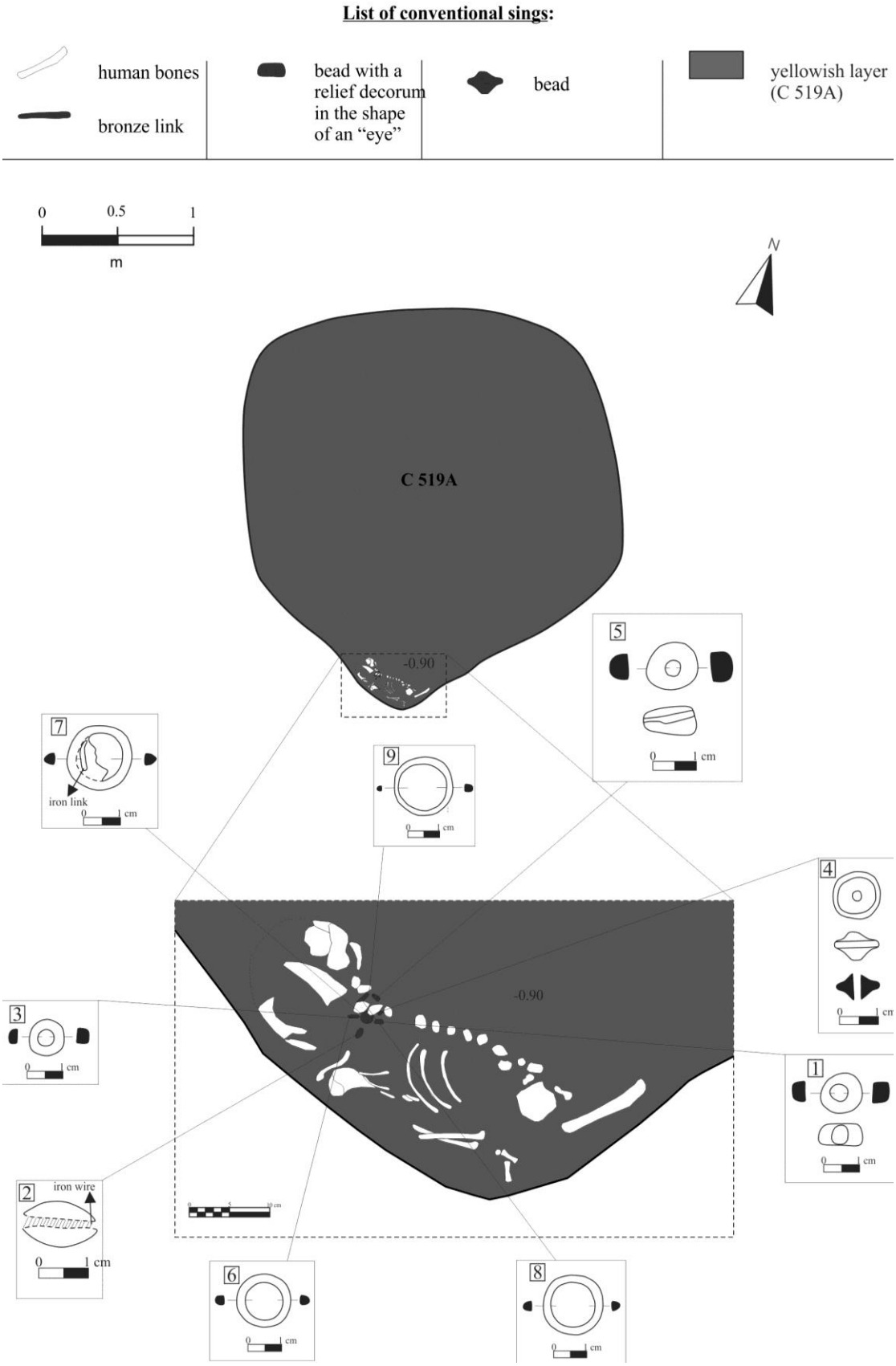
[25] Ocniţa (Berciu 1981, pl. 120/1-8, 10-12, 14), Zimnicea (Alexandrescu 1972, 21 pl. I/5-11; Sîrbu 1993, 186 fig. 16/5-8), Pietroasele–*Gruiu Dării* (Dupoi and Sîrbu 2001, 39, fig. 59/1-5; 64/5-7, 10-11), Mereşti (Crişan 2000, 138, pl. 110/3), Răcătău (Căpitanu 1991, 103, 122 fig. 12/1,4,13,15), Poiana (Teodor *et al*. 1997, 29-30, 45 pl. 12/8; 47 pl. 14/4-9).

[26] Rustoiu 1996, 105, 288 fig. 52/8-27.

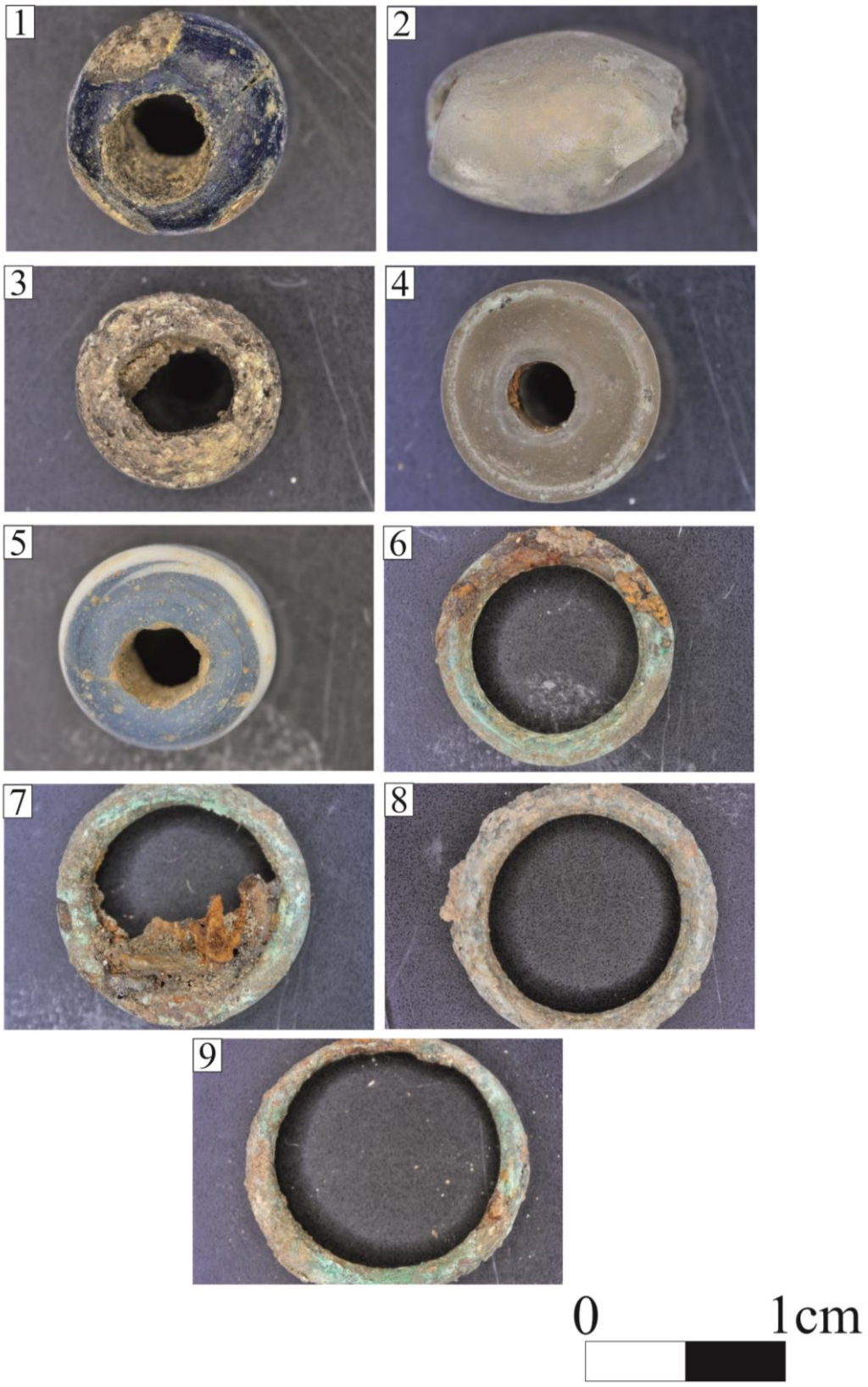
Table 2. Cranial and postcranial measurements highlighted in individuals aged up to 12 months.

Cranial measurements [27]		
Dimension	**C519A**	**Cpl 555**
Lesser wing of the sphenoid		
1a. length	21	
1b. width	14	
Body of the sphenoid		
3a. length	17	
3b. width	21	
Petrous and mastoid portions of the temporal		
4a. length	47 (R)	50
4b. width	22 (R)	22
Basilar part of the occipital		
5a. length	14	
5b. width	17	
Zygomatic		
6a. width		30
6b. width		24
(Hemi)mandible		
8a. length of the body	40	
8b. width of the arch	17 (R)	
8c. full length of half mandible	52 (R)	
Postcranial measurements		
Scapula		
10a. length (height)	40	42 (R)
10b. width	30	33 (R)
10c. length of the spine	34	
Ilium		
11a. length	42 (R)	46 (R)
11b. width	38 (R)	41 (R)
Pubis		
13a. length	19 (R)	
Humerus		
14a. maximum length		79
14b. distal width	20 (R)	21
14c. maximum diameter in the middle		8
Ulna		
15a. length	67 (R)	
15b. maximum diameter in the middle	5 (R)	
Femur		
17a. maximum length		97
17b. distal width		24
17c. maximum diameter in the middle		9
Tibia		
18a. maximum length		80
18b. maximum diameter in the middle		9
Fibula		
19a. maximum length		78 (R)
19b. maximum diameter in the middle		4 (R)

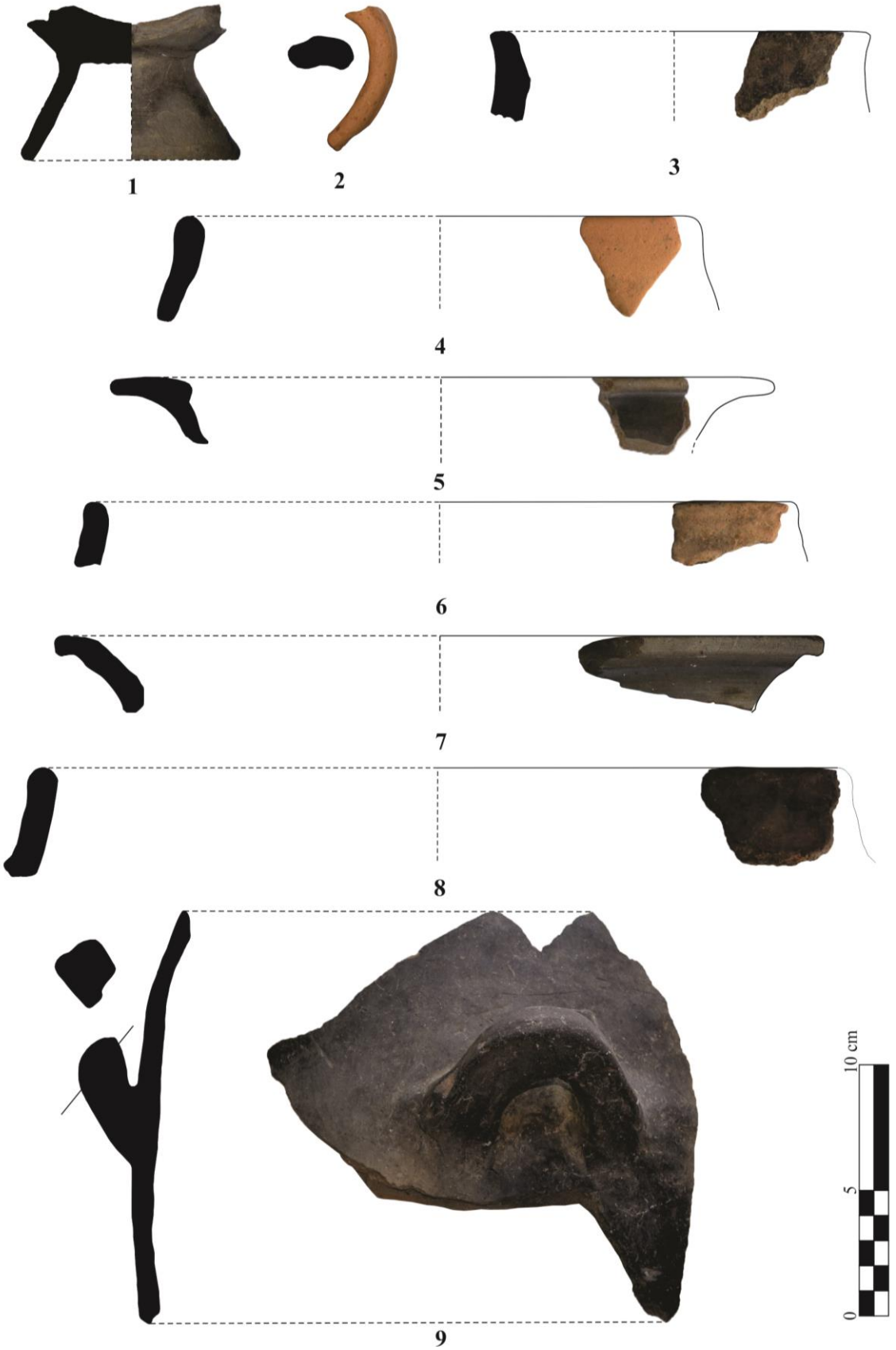
[27] The table values are given in millimeters and they were rounded. In the case of the bilateral measurements, the left side was used. When there were no elements on the left, they were measured on the right, and the values were accompanied with the "(R)" symbol.



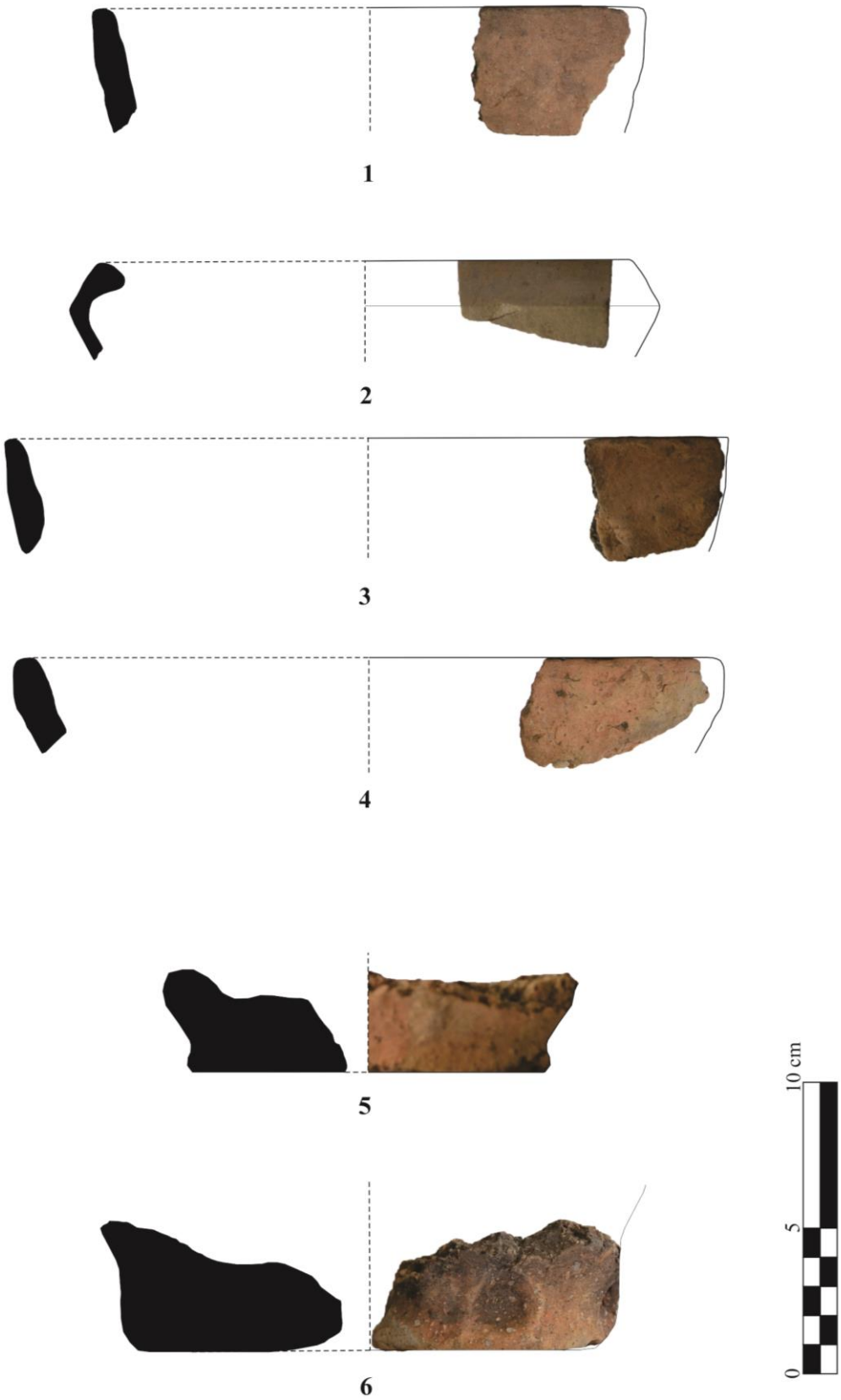
Pl. 10. Pit C 519A. Plan of the level in which the child skeleton was discovered.



Pl. 11. Pit C 519A. Bronze links and glass beads.



Pl. 12. Pottery from pit C519A.



Pl. 13. Pottery from C519.

After the moment of the child deposition, the pit continued to be filled with yellow clay mixed with greyish sediment, without archaeological material (519A-2). This filling was overlaid by a compact layer of greyish sediment (519A-1) whose top part was destroyed by the agricultural works. The filling contains a piece of burnt soil, a fragmentary grinder, 58 sherds (Table 1; Pl. 12): some non-diagnostic pots modelled by wheel, of greyish paste, some fragments (foot and rim) belonging to pedestal-platters, the thickened rim of a jar of small dimensions, and a bowl rim. These fragments, which can be dated to the classical period of the Late Iron Age, were associated with several other pottery fragments (most of them non-diagnostic, but also six rims of bowls and of pots with a cylindrical neck) belonging to pots modelled by hand from greyish, yellowish, or reddish paste, and also with a body fragment of a *krater* from greyish paste, modelled by hand, strongly polished, which can be dated to the 4th–3rd century BC (Pl. 12/9).

We could say that, similarly to pit C555, the degree of pottery fragmentation (Table 1) would indicate a "domestic" appearance of the pit. But, as shown by the *krater* fragment, some pottery fragments were driven from the older levels into the soil excavated during the digging of the pit, subsequently becoming part of the filling. Also, some "weathered" sherds (including the handle of the Hellenistic or Roman style discovered under the level of deposition of the deceased) suggest that at least part of the archaeological material from the filling was located in a tertiary position, after some exposure time outdoor. Unlike pits with an obvious "domestic" character, in the filling of pit C519A we discovered only four animal bones (two of cow, one of sheep and one of pig). Lacking the "domestic" appearance, pit C519A does not have the strict funeral characteristics either: the child was deposited on a certain level of the filling, and the marginal position of the body (in the wall area), similar to the position of the child from pit C555 and of other deceased from contemporary contexts[28], highlights that this was not the central element of the practices conducted in this context. The filling structure confirms the "domestic" character of the pit, similar to other pits in the settlement.

In addition to this, after the completion of the filling, the pit in which the child was deposited did not become a place of memory. At a certain time, in the eastern side of the filling, another pit was dug (C519; oval in shape; D = 1.90 × 1.70 m), orientated NE-SW, that deepened until the yellow and the white-yellowish deposits (Pl. 9). In its filling, we found 35 sherds modelled by hand and three sherds modelled by wheel that could be also dated to the classical period of the Late Iron Age (Pl. 13): an incense burner base marked by a string of impressions, two jars bases, a fragment decorated with striations (probably belonging to a cup), a bowl or a pedestal-platter rim, bowl rims, and several bases belonging to pots made of rough paste.

The comparison of pits C555 and C519A structures revealed a certain contrast between their "domestic" nature and the formalism of the deposition of children bodies, such as placing them on the southern edge of the pits, their deposition at a certain moment of the filling process, the crouching position on the right side, a certain bipolarity of the bodies' orientation. This contrast is underlined more clearly by the deposition of the child in pit C519A, which, because of the discreet presence of the domestic waste evokes a certain ceremonial ritual, characteristic to the burial act, stressed by the necklace that builds the funerary identity of the child. In the area north of Danube, this kind of glass bead necklaces, sometimes combined with copper/bronze links, constitutes the usual set of children buried in the area of cemeteries (at Brad, Bugeac,

[28] Such as from Brad, Grădiştea or Ocniţa (Sîrbu 1985, 91; Davâncă 2015, 174-176 fig. 5/2; fig. 7-8; 211 fig. 61).

Olteni, Platoneşti, Stelnica, Zimnicea), as well as in some "non-funerary contexts", such as those at Brad, Hunedoara, Orlea, Poiana, Grădiştea[29], Sighişoara–*Wietenberg*, or Stolniceni[30]. Glass beads were also discovered in relationship with the deposition of mature individuals in settlements or in "pit fields"[31].

Therefore, we can say that more obviously than in the case of pit C555, in which the child was intimately inserted in the "domestic" refuse filling, the deposition of the child from pit C519A, emphasizes this funeral episode added to a certain domestic practice and marking the end of pit biography. This episode marks a significant moment that temporary suspended the filing process. Taking into account the homogeneous structure of the filling in which the two deceased were "inserted", it results that the funerary episodes were short ones. This "small" interruption of the abandonment sends us to other contexts from the settlement of Bucureşti–*Băneasa*, tăiat *Strada Gârlei*, in which the "domestic" dynamics of the pit are temporarily frozen into images of the daily practices. For example, after the abandonment of the pit-house C543, a firing place was arranged on a certain level of the filling. Also, at a certain time of the filling, the function of the pit C634 was suspended; the walls were adjusted to gain a rectangular shape, and an oven was placed in a corner.

"DOMESTIC" AND "FUNERARY": DEPOSITION OF DOGS IN THE SETTLEMENT

In the case of isolated dog skeletons and bones discovered in the settlement of Bucureşti–*Strada Gârlei,* the same presence of the whole and of the fragmentary, the same relationship between the structured nature of the deposition (similar to a burial) and the submitting of similar disused objects and domestic waste are established.

On the one hand, in some of the habitation contexts, isolated dog bones and body parts are present. As we mentioned above, in the filling of pit-house C585, besides the perforated *calvaria* fragment, we also discovered three dog bones. They are one proximal, an epiphysis right *ulna*, one right diaphyseal from a *femur*, and one left diaphyseal from a *tibia* which are broken and fragmented, belonging to the domestic waste category.

In the small size pit C478-3 (D = 0.60 m) we discovered the remains of a foreleg from a young dog, with an estimated age between 6 and 12 months-old [32], but also of an older individual with the age over 1.5 years (a *radius* and an *ulna*)[33]. The pit was dug from the bottom of the pit C478-2 (of oval shape that deepened with 0.40 m in the yellow clay layer), before it was filled with a yellowish-brown sediment, with many sherds, a spindle whorl, an iron spike, lumps of adobe and animal bones. The pit represents the deepened part of a rectangular shape pit-house (with dimensions of 4.40 × 3.30 m, oriented NW-SE) (Pl. 14). After the pit-house's abandonment, 536 sherds – strainers, *amphorae*, jars, jugs, storage vessels of reddish paste, one column-shaped vessel were discarded in the filling (Table 1; Pl. 15).

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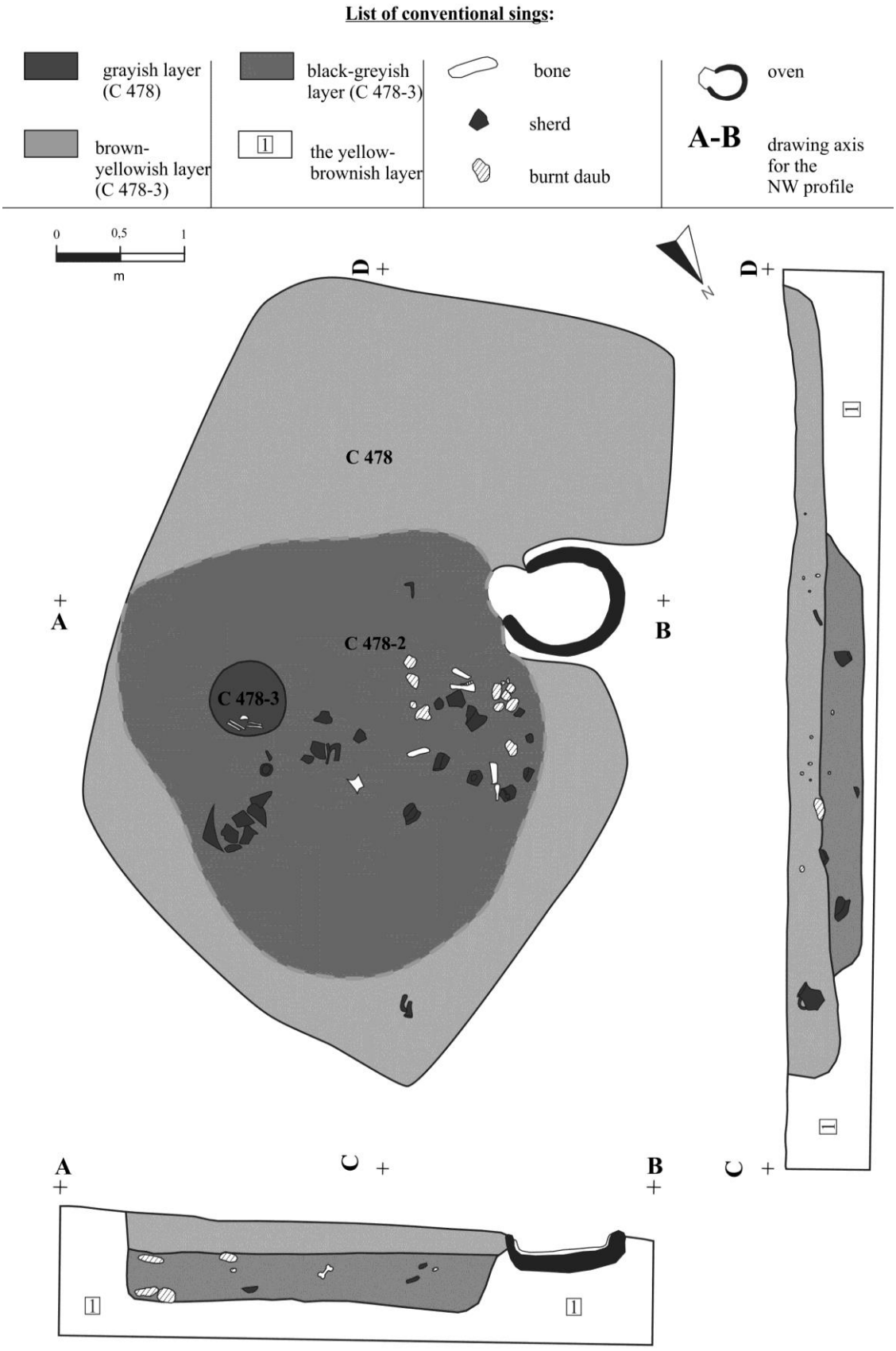
[29] Sîrbu 1985, 91.

[30] Sîrbu 1985, 91; 1993, 90; Davâncă 2015, 103.

[31] Pietroasele–*Gruiu Dării* (Dupoi and Sîrbu 2001, 39-40), Moigrad (Sîrbu 1985, 97), Poiana (Sîrbu 1985, 98), Grădiştea (Sîrbu, Anastasiu 1985, 128).

[32] The skeletons age of dogs were set after Schmid 1976.

[33] The shoulder height estimation of this dog according to the *radius* has a value of 52.9 cm (Koudelka index), or 54.2 cm (Harcourt index) and an index of gracility index of 7.17. This values indicates to a dog of overmedium size and a middle ruggedness (Udrescu et al. 1999, 108).



Pl. 14. Plan/Profile of pit C478.

This association of bones belonging to two dogs as well as the small dimensions of the pit differentiates this context from the other refuse pits in the settlement, and suggests a certain selection of the bones and a certain purpose of their deposition. Unfortunately, we cannot connect these practices with a specific moment of the pit-house's biography, from the bottom of which the small size pit with the bones was dug. These remains were either submitted or marked the beginning of habitation (like a foundation ritual), to emphasize a significant moment that took place during the pit-house's functioning. There is another possibility – that the deposition of the dog bones marked a change in the pit functionality, from the original to the refuse one, in a manner similar to other pits (C537, C599) in which the construction of a hearth immediately preceded the filling process. Regardless of these observations, in the case of pit C478-3, and in contrast to pit C585 and other contexts in which isolated bones were present, the intention to separate the dog bones from the domestic nature of the pit-house filling is obvious.

On the other hand, the dogs that were deposited in two of the pits in the settlement evoke – similarly to the above-mentioned children – the same funeral images in which the body is either "melt" until lack of distinction in the filling flux, or mark more obviously a short pause of the abandonment process. In the north-eastern part of the pit C548 (circular shape; D = 1.10 m; with a bell-shaped profile) (Pl. 16), in a filling layer of greyish colour, near the bottom, a dog was deposited on the right site, orientated NW-SE (Pl. 17). According to the preliminary archaeozoological study, the dog (a female "with the dental age no more than six years-old") died under natural conditions, from old age[34]. The dog's body [35] was then evenly covered with overturned hearth fragments (probably broken on the spot). After this moment, the pit was filled with greyish sediment that contained also pieces of charcoal. At different depths, the pit contained 233 sherds (Table 1), some secondary burnt (two cups of greyish paste, with a bottom ring, both with a broken handle – Pl. 17/1-2; jar-pots; bowls or pedestal-platters; storage vessels), a stone artefact, a dual frustum conical secondary burnt spindle whorl. It is noteworthy that in the filling, among other animal bones (seven of cow, five of ovicaprine, three of pig), we found other two bones from another dog; these are a right mandible, found relatively complete, and a right radius diaphyseal with traces of gnawing at the extremities level (epiphyseal).

Unlike this context, the presence of two dogs in another pit (C627) associates the "domestic" refuse stream of filling with the ceremonial image of the intentional deposition. The pit has an oval shape (D = 1.90 × 1.70 m), it was NE-SW oriented, and deepened with 1.60 m in the yellow and white yellowish clay; also, it has a bell-shaped profile (D = 2 m) (Pl. 18). In the lower part of the pit there is a brown-yellowish filling with yellow clay lenses. On top of this, a thin layer of white-yellowish clay (6 cm) was deposited, in which numerous big sherds from large pots, two dog skeletons and the bones of a third dog were discovered (Pl. 19). The first dog was laid on the left side, oriented NW-SE; the second dog was also on the

[34] Popa 2013, 37, 48.

[35] The medium shoulder height estimation of this dog is 59.9 cm (Koudelka index) based on seven whole bones (the *scapula*, the *humerus*, the *radius*, the *ulna*, the *femur*, the *tibia*, the *fibula*; the limitations between 57-63 cm) and of 60.5 cm (Harcourt index) based on five whole bones (*humerus, radius, ulna, femur, tibia*; the limitations between 59.7-61.2 cm). The animal is at the limit between overmedium to big dogs size category and of middle ruggedness (Udrescu *et al.* 1999, 108).

left side, oriented NNE-SSW. One dog was a mature adult[36] (worn dentition; the bones are all epiphysis > 2 years-old), of female gender (lack of the penian bone). The other dog[37] is an old adult (with an extremely worn dentition), of male gender (the presence of the penile bone). In the space between the skeletons, seven other bones were scattered (one *tibia* and six metapodial bones), belonging to a third dog. In this pit, five bones belonging to a *fetus* pig (one *scapula*, one *humerus*, one *coxal*, one *femur* and one *tibia*), and coming from the same individual, were also discovered. Based on the length of the *humerus* and the *tibia*, we can estimate the age of this animal to 95 days, indicating either the case of a sow that had foetuses, which was slaughtered; alternatively, we can think of an aborted *foetus*[38]. Up to the point that was identified, the pit contained two types of filling – a brown-yellowish and a greyish one –, in which we discovered 101 sherds (Table 1) belonging to some wheel- or hand-made pots, mainly of greyish paste: an *amphora* handle, bowls or pedestal-platters rims, jugs, and jars (Pl. 20).

Summarizing, the deposition of dogs in pits is structured in a style characterized by a balance between the whole and the fragmented. In pits C548 and C627, the deposition of mature dog bodies combined with the discarding of isolated bones belonging to younger individuals. The image of C627 combines the careful deposition of the dog bodies with the disorder of the domestic waste in the pit they were incorporated in. The disorder is emphasized by the lack of symmetry of the dogs position relative to each other, and by the scattered bones belonging to the third dog. Instead, the deposition of the dog in pit C548 and its covering with fragments of a hearth suggest a ceremonial interlude in the filling stream. The deposition episode combined funeral images (dog's position and its covering) with some "domestic" ones (the disused hearth), which creates a contrast between this stop-motion and the disorder and the fragmentation of the objects from the filling.

ABANDON, DEPOSITION, AND SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS

The relationship between the deposition of human bodies in the domestic area (in a manner similar to the burials themselves), children having an important place, and the deposition of scattered human bones or body parts is a characteristic of the Late Iron Age in the area north of Danube [39]. The same diversity of deposition practices also exists in the presence of dog skeletons in pits[40]. In the deposition area there is a privileged relationship between humans and some species of animals (dogs especially), expressed by a certain aesthetic, defined by the relationships between complete bodies – selected bones, and between structured depositions (similar to a burial) – depositions similar to the disused objects and of consumption. In the particular case of the settlement at Bucureşti–*Strada Gârlei*, although the processing of the whole faunal material is in a preliminary stage, we can still note that a certain relationship opposition emerges between the age established for the human and for the dog skeletons. On the one hand, the complete human skeletons belong

[36] The shoulder height estimation of this dog its 53.5 cm (Koudelka index) and of 51.9 cm (Harcourt index) and was estimated according to a whole humerus. The animal it was part of the overmedium size category and is characterized by a middle ruggedness (Udrescu et al. 1999, 108).

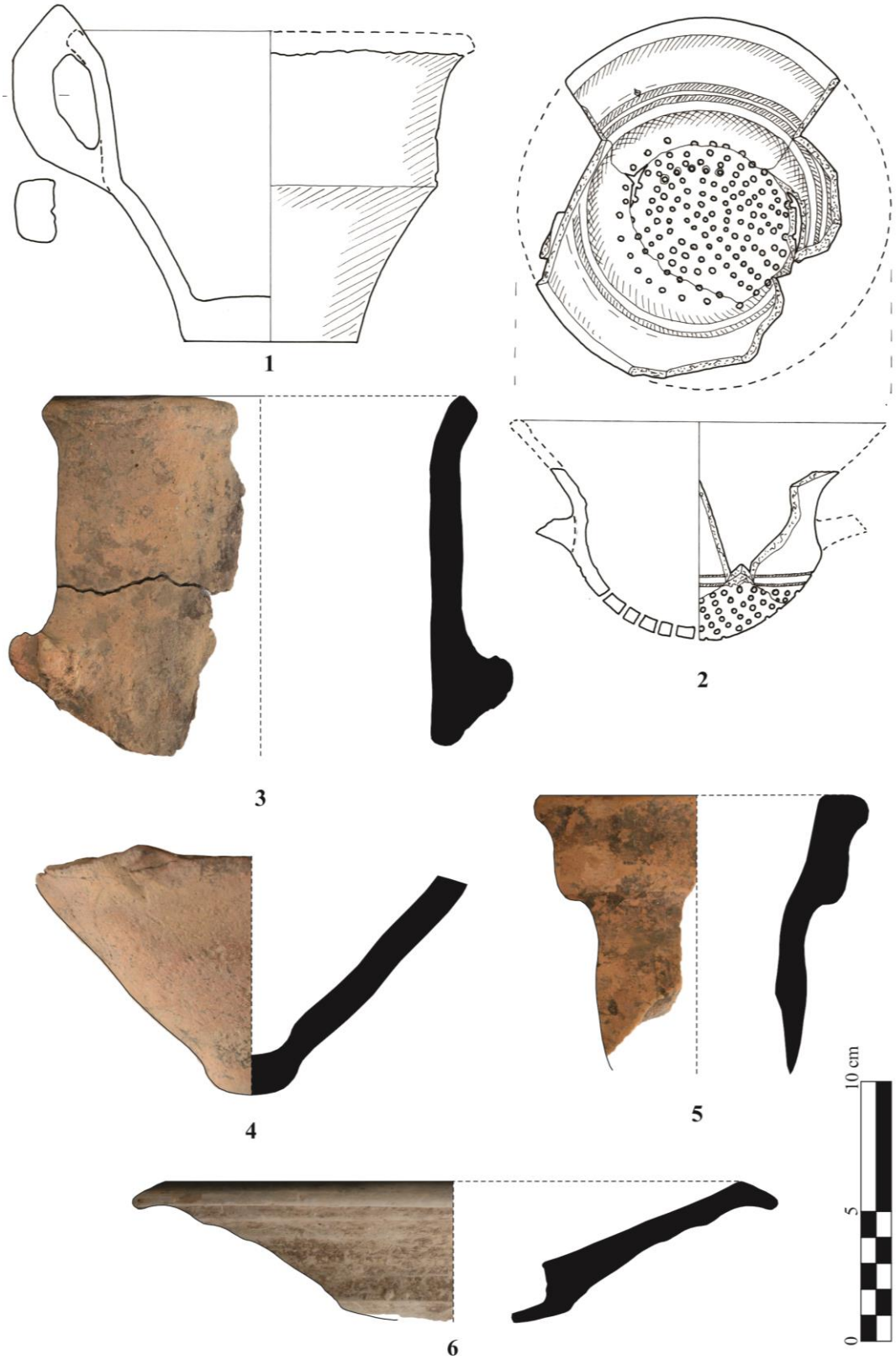
[37] The medium shoulder height estimation of this dog its 52.3 cm (Koudelka index) and of 53.7 cm (Harcourt index) and was estimated based on five whole bones (the *humerus* pair, the *ulna*, the *femur* and the *tibia*). The animal was part of the overmedium size category and is characterized by a middle ruggedness (Udrescu et al. 1999, 108).

[38] Prummel 1989, 78.

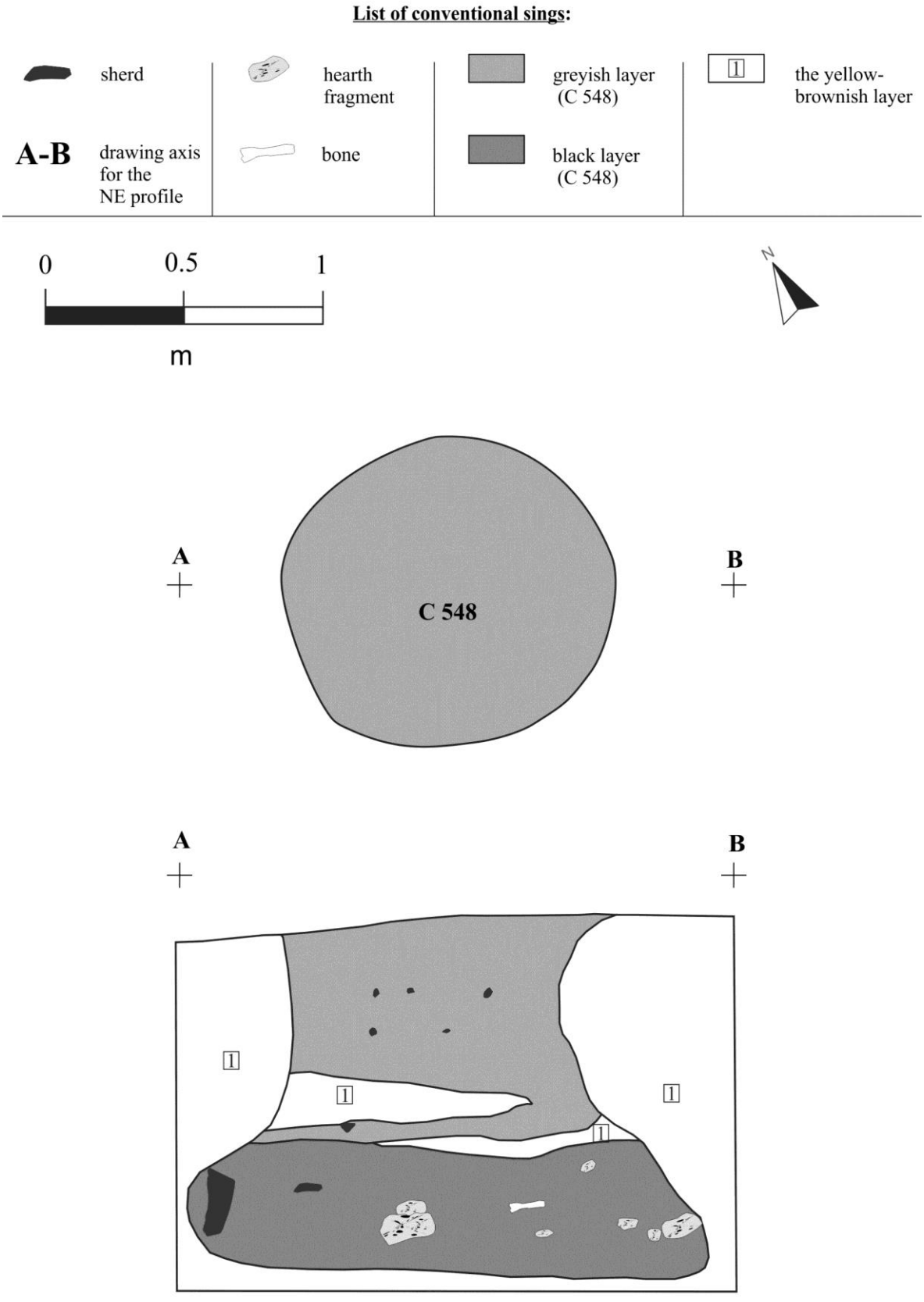
[39] Sîrbu 1985; Sîrbu 1993, 31-36, 86-94; Sîrbu 1994; Sîrbu 2008; Davâncă 2015.

[40] Sîrbu 1993, 46-57, 101-109; Sîrbu 2001.

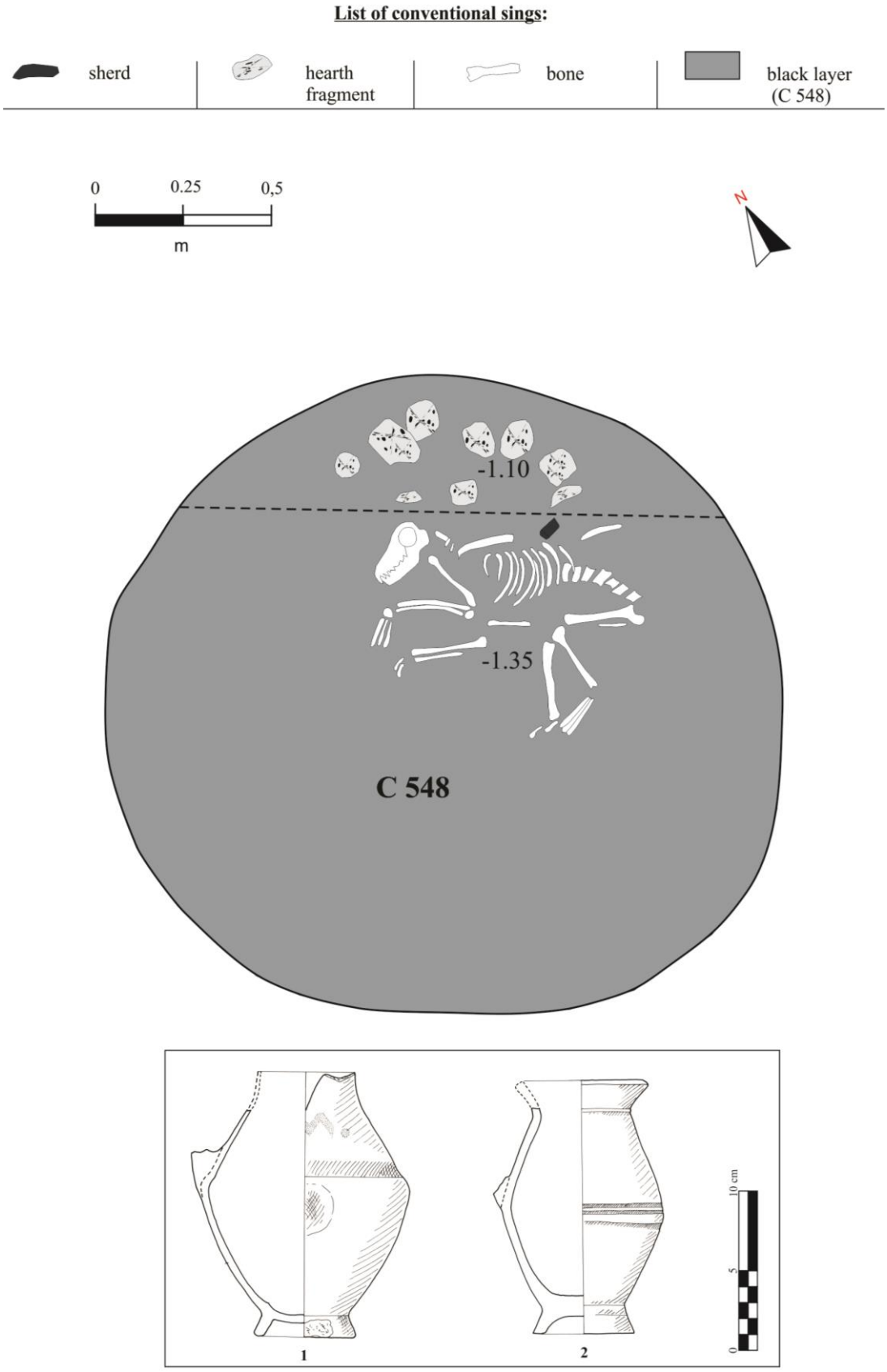
to children, with only one fragment – the *calvaria* – coming from an adult's skull, while on the other hand, the dog skeletons belong to mature or elderly individuals only the scattered dog bones discarded in the filling coming mostly from juveniles.



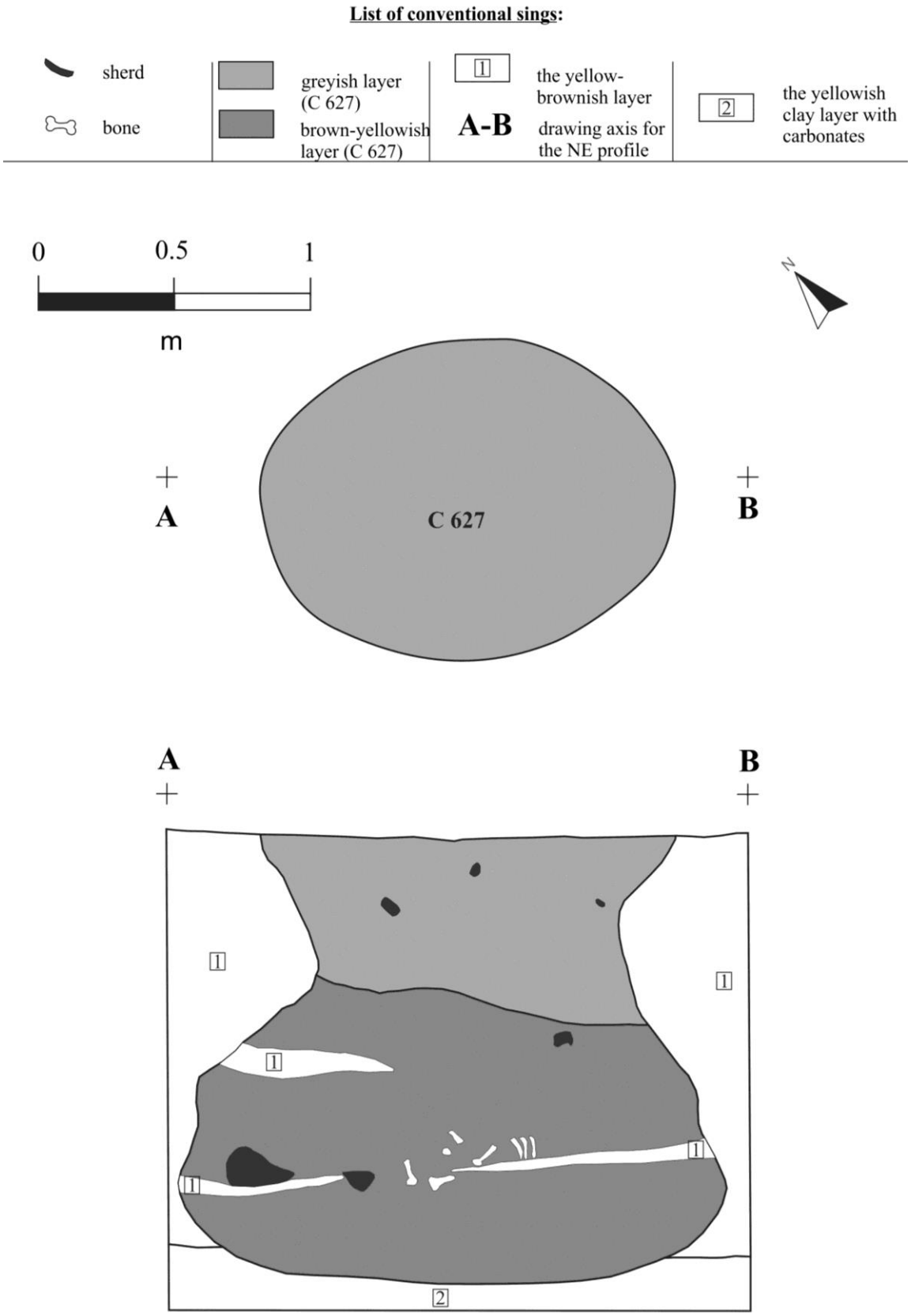
Pl. 15. Pottery from C478.



Pl. 16. Plan/Profile of pit C548.



Pl. 17. Pit C 548. Plan of the level in which the dog skeleton was discovered. 1-2. Jugs from the pit.



Pl. 18. Plan/Profile of pit C 627.

In a similar manner to the numerous refuse pits from the area north of Danube[41], in this structural relationship between the whole and the fragmented, we have to mention a unifying element: the presence of the disused objects and domestic waste. A two-way relationship between the waste and the deposited bodies from the pit can be thus established. By associating in the filling of the pits the human and animal bodies (or certain parts from their skeletons), with the objects and with the consumption waste, we reach the conclusion that it also contributes to what we might call cultural semantics. On the one hand, the human bones could be equated with the disused objects, with which they are associated in different contexts; the *calvaria* fragment from pit C585 could be included into this category. On the other hand, the attitude to what we call today "garbage" or "domestic waste" probably had a different meaning in the Late Iron Age.

This relationship fades the borders between different contexts (houses, graves, "pit fields", "worship places"). In the deposits located on the bank of the Bîrcă Lake at Conţeşti, in a place located in the exterior of any settlement and interpreted as a "place of worship"[42], cremated animal bones and pottery fragments with a "domestic" appearance were associated, in a similar manner to the filling of certain pits, domestic contexts, or so-called "pit fields" in the proximity of the settlements[43]. In a layer from the mantle of the Stolniceni mound, the skeletons of several individuals were associated with dismantled and "fragmented clusters of hearths", pottery fragments and animal bones[44], forming a constellation of depositions similar to some of the domestic contexts. At Cetăţeni, hearths were also arranged in the vicinity of a context in which several children were deposited[45]. Therefore, the "funerary" and the "domestic" images are transferred from one social space to another; they also combine in different material communities, constructing diverse meanings of a "daily domestic" impregnated with the "funerary". We could also add that the diverse funeral practices incorporate "domestic" materiality.

The body (or parts of it) is inserted in different "knots" of meaning networks in which the domestic and their instruments[46] meet, interfere, join, merge with the formalism of the burial act or with human bones treated as artefacts, source material, processing waste, "domestic waste", "offerings", etc. However, this kind of body deposition contexts – human and dogs –, or in which isolated human bones are handled, is no more than an occasional practice in the settlement at Bucureşti–*Strada Gârlei*. Despite the extensive excavation, such discoveries appear only in five contexts. Also, from all the representative settlements from Colentina Valley that forms a dense network of habitation (to which the settlement at Bucureşti–*Strada Gârlei* belongs as well), similar contexts are mentioned only at Bucureşti–*Tei*, a site considered to be uncertain or, anyway, dated to a later period[47]. Therefore, these deposition practices with a wide regional distribution have a particular character in each site. In other words, this deposition style belongs to a cultural semantics only as long as it is also structured by other elements. One such element would be what we call "significant moments".

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41 Sîrbu 1985, 90-91, 93, 102; 1993; Davâncă 2015.

42 Vulpe and Popescu 1976; Nicolăescu-Plopşor 1976.

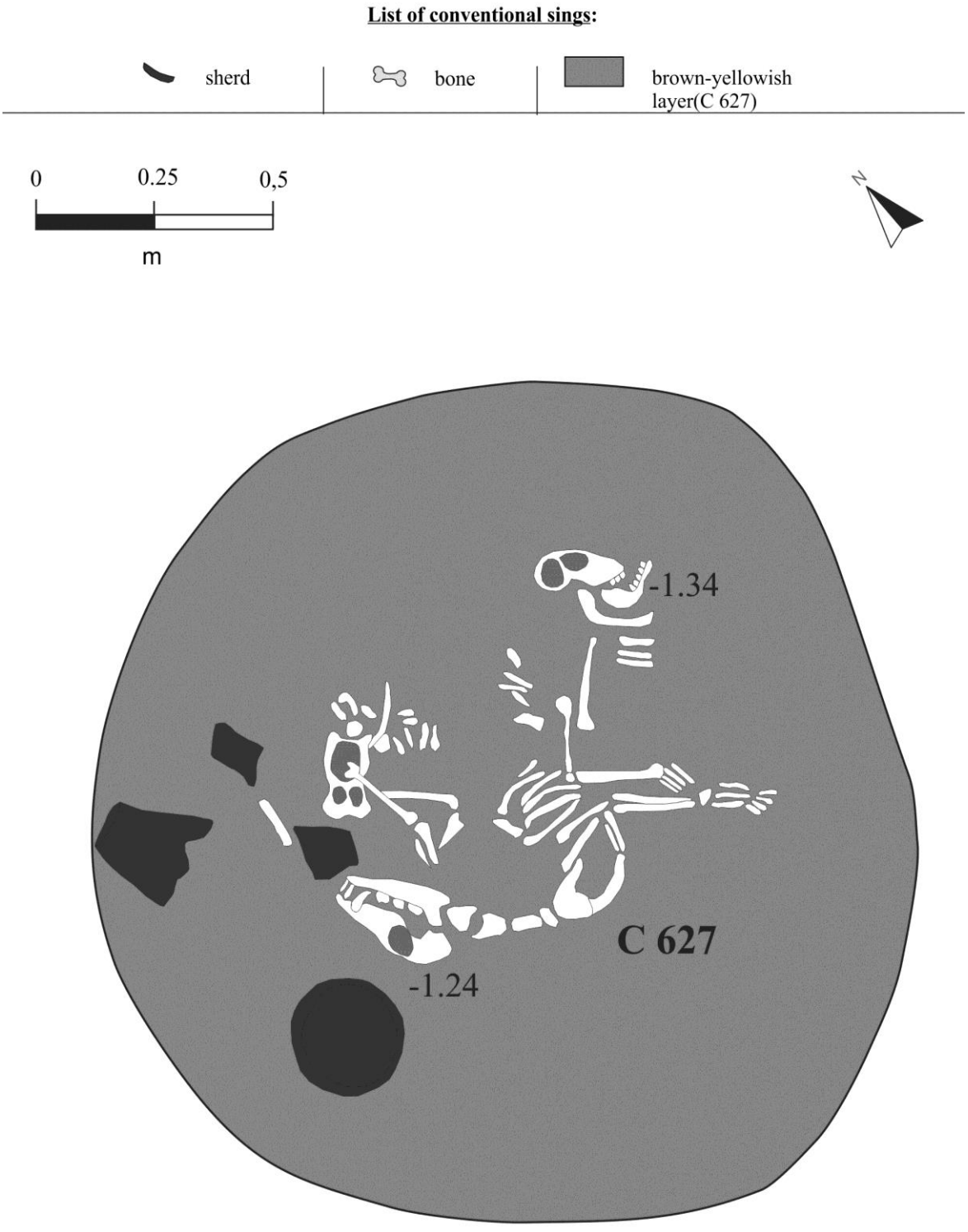
43 *e.g.* Andriţoiu and Rustoiu 1995, 430; "pit fields": Sîrbu 2006, 52-55; Sîrbu, Davîncă 2014.

44 Sîrbu and Arnăut 1995.

45 Sîrbu 1985, 95-96.

46 Like the grinder from C519A or the spindle whorl and the two sickles discovered in one feature of this kind from Sighişoara-*Wietenberg*; Andriţoiu and Rustoiu 1997, 72.

47 Sîrbu 1993, 93-94, 107.



Pl. 19. Pit C627. Plan of the level in which the two dog skeletons were discovered.

In certain settlements from this period, bodies of children and dogs are both handled in such contexts as they could be interpreted as material expressions of sacrifice/foundation rituals): in pit-houses fillings (Cățelu Nou, Celei, Chirnogi, Grădiştea, Unirea); near houses (Poiana); or on sites, before building the future houses (Borduşani) or the hearths

(Măşcăuţi, Căscioarele–*Şuviţa Hotarului*, Cucorăni)[48]. With the exception of the deposition of dog bones from pit C478-3, such practices were not documented at Bucureşti–*Strada Gârlei*. Here, the contexts involving human bodies and bones are materialities of some gestures and practices relating to the abandonment. The spaces end their habitation, storage or extraction function, and enter the new biographical stage of abandonment, constructed by a number of filling gestures of pits which need certain dynamism and a certain rhythm. As we have seen, the presence of a child skeleton and of the perforated *calvaria* fragment in pit C555 and in pit-house C585 is not distinguishable from the disused objects and the consumption waste (animal bones) with which they are associated in the filling. The piece of *calvaria*, considered by some scholars as a defining element for the practice of cannibalism[49], clearly suggests the fact that, after the death of the individuals, the human bones entered the same field of significations together with different artefacts. They could be selected and stored ("treasured") to be later deposited (discarded) during some important moments. Such moments could be precisely related to the pit and/or the pit-house abandonment; alternatively, maybe their space became one of deposition during other events with a certain meaning.

On other occasions, the "domestic" rhythms were temporarily suspended by the ceremonial stillness of the body in a certain position, by the jewellery that builds the funerary identity of the child, or by the hearth "snatched" from the daily life and deposited over the dog's body. This stillness defines moments opposite to the founding time. In the fortress of Măşcăuţi a hearth was later arranged on the spot where the fragmented body of a child was deposited[50]. Also, at Căscioarele–*Şuviţa Hotarului*[51] and at Cucorăni[52] the dogs have been deposited in pits dug on the spots where hearths were subsequently arranged. The relationship between the dog and the disused hearth from pit C548 is reversed to these foundation practices. In a way, in the pit is buried the symbolic daily link between the hearth and the dog, precisely buried there. In a larger geographical space, the act of human or dog bodies deposition involves the use of ashes, pieces of charcoal, and hearth fragments[53]. The daily space of housing is a combination of practices that joins together the image of the "domestic" and the death of it. The death of the houses, workshops, and pits is "braided" in some significant moments with the death of the objects, people, and dogs.

[48] Trohani et al. 1972; Sîrbu 1988-1989, 70; Sîrbu 1993, 86, 89, 91, 93, 103; Sîrbu 2001; Sîrbu, Anastasiu 1980, 209, 212; Sîrbu et al. 1995; Trohani 2004; 2005, 11-12; Zanoci 2004, 47-48; Sîrbu, Davâncă 2013, 195; Davâncă 2015, 79, 86, 118.

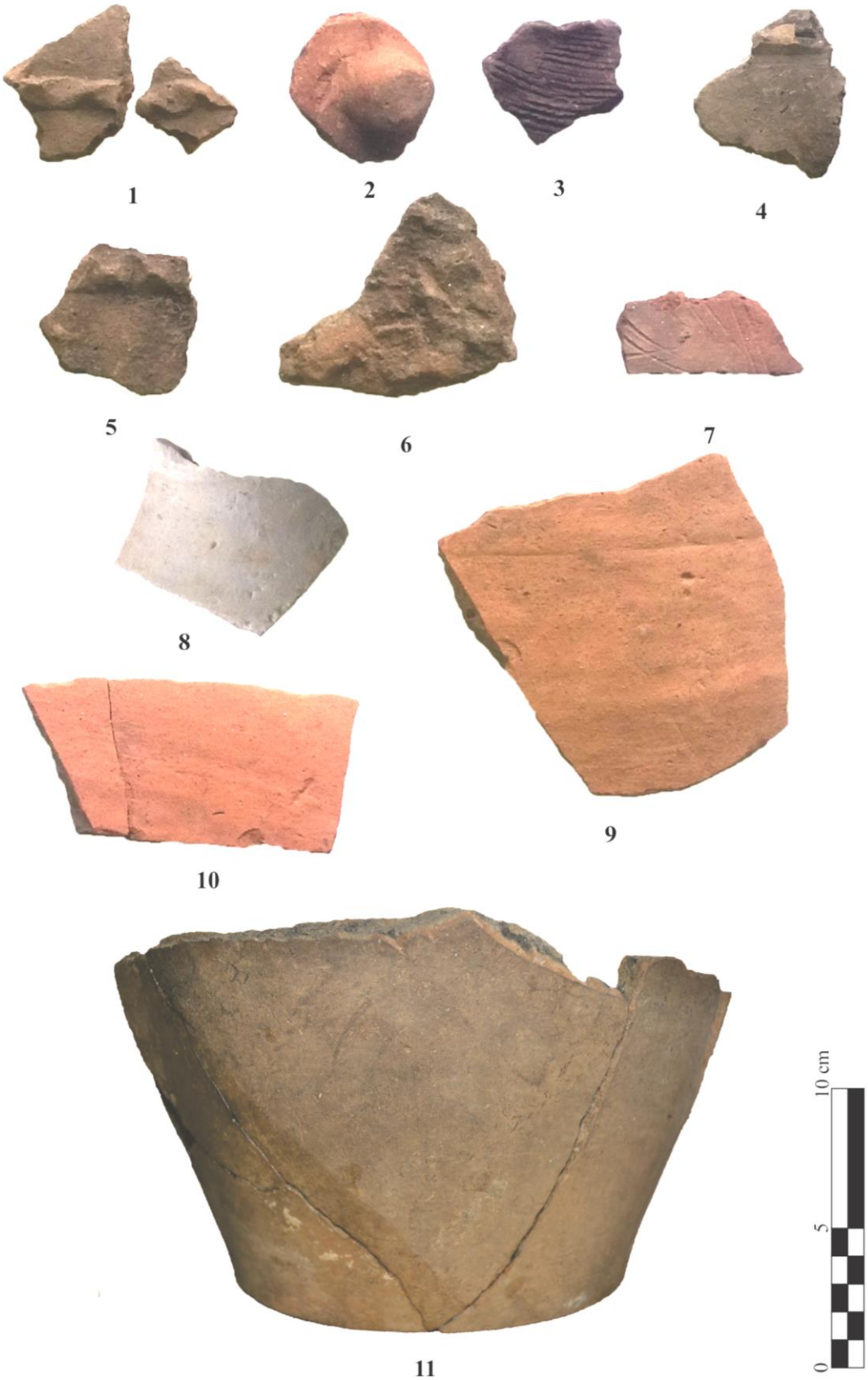
[49] Sîrbu 1993, 33.

[50] Zanoci 2004, 47-48; Davâncă 2015, 48-49.

[51] Sîrbu 1993, 103; 325.

[52] Teodor 1975, 127-128, fig. 6/b; Sîrbu 1993, 104; 2001, 325.

[53] *e.g.* Sîrbu 1985, 90, 94, 100, 102; Sîrbu 1988-1989, 65; Sîrbu 1993, 89-91, 102-103; Andriţoiu, Rustoiu 1995, 430; Andriţoiu, Rustoiu 1997; Sîrbu, Davâncă 2013.



Pl. 20. Pottery from pit C 627.

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Settlements of Life and Death. Studies from Prehistory to Middle Ages, Cluj-Napoca, 2016, 313-330

SETTLEMENTS OF LIFE AND DEATH: HUMAN INTERMENTS IN LATE IRON AGE SITES FROM THE SIGHIŞOARA REGION (MUREŞ COUNTY, ROMANIA) *

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***Abstract**: Human interments in settlements are a quite regular feature in pre-Roman Dacia. These are frequently encountered in the Sighişoara region in the 1th century BC–1th century AD. Pits containing human skeletons have been identified in rural settlements on the valleys of the Târnava Mare River's tributaries, for example at Sighişoara–*Valea Dracului *and Albeşti–*Valea Şapartocului*, and also in the fortified settlement at Sighişoara–*Wietenberg*. The latter ones are representative for the entire region due to the large number of discoveries and the diversity of contexts containing human remains. Archaeological excavations have been carried out at Sighişoara–Wietenberg in several stages covering nearly a century: in 1902–1904 and 1938 (by C. Seraphin and K. Horedt) and in 1991-1995 (by I. Andriţoiu and A. Rustoiu). Pits containing human skeletons have been found both inside the settlement and in its immediate vicinity, where the presence of a ritual or sacred area has been presumed. The features from Sighişoara–*Wietenberg *belong to several categories of archaeological contexts. Regarding the skeleton's position and treatment of the body, the following contexts have been encountered: complete skeletons in supine position (mostly children); complete skeletons in contorted positions; damaged or dismembered skeletons; isolated human bone fragments (maxillas or ribs). Regarding the number of individuals, the pits contain: one complete individual; one complete albeit dismembered individual; fragments of one individual; several complete individuals (matures and children); several dismembered individuals (mostly matures); one complete together with one fragmentary individual. In general, children (infans 1) were more carefully treated, according to some ritual norms that have also been identified in other settlements. The presence of several children in a single pit could indicate a concomitant death caused by illness. Isolated skeleton parts or dismembered skeletons could indicate practices of exposure – decomposing of the corpses or grave opening, followed by bone selection and re-inhumation. Mature skeletons bearing traces of violence could indicate the practice of human sacrifices. One of the features from the settlement could indicate a founding ritual (of the entire community or of a group from within). From the funerary perspective, the body of most members of the community was treated in an archaeologically "invisible" manner. Some members of the military elite were cremated and then laid together with their panoplies of weapons in flat or tumulus graves, close to the settlement over which they ruled. The body of some women, probably priestesses, who worn rich sets of silver ornaments was also treated in an archaeologically "invisible" manner upon death, but their costume and other objects (ceramic and metal vessels) related to their function were also removed from the world of the living and buried in pits which were probably located in sacred areas from the settlements' vicinity. Therefore, the presence of human skeletons in settlements indicates the existence of different manners of treating the deceased, directly related to the social or symbolic categories to which they belonged: very young children, ancestors, local and alien individuals who were sacrificed, individuals suffering an unusual death etc.*

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Rezumat: *Înhumările umane în aşezări constituie un fenomen obişnuit în aria Daciei preromane. Ele sunt frecvente şi în zona Sighişoara în sec. I a.Chr.–I p.Chr. Gropi cu schelete umane au fost identificate în aşezări rurale situate pe văile laterale ale râului Târnava Mare, cum sunt cele de la Sighişoara–*Valea Dracului *şi Albeşti–*Valea Şapartocului*, dar şi în aşezarea fortificată de la Sighişoara–*Wietenberg*. Acestea din urmă sunt reprezentative pentru întreaga zonă, atât din punct de vedere al numărului mare de descoperiri, cât şi al diversităţii tipurilor de complexe cu înhumări umane. Cercetările de la Sighişoara–*Wietenberg *s-au desfăşurat în mai multe etape care se întind pe o perioadă de aproape un secol: între 1902 şi 1904 şi în 1938 (săpături C. Seraphin şi K. Horedt); între 1991 şi 1995 (săpături I. Andriţoiu şi A. Rustoiu). Gropi cu schelete umane au fost descoperite atât în interiorul aşezării, cât şi în imediata ei apropiere, unde s-a presupus existenţa unei arii rituale sau sacre. Aceste contexte de la Sighişoara–*Wietenberg *acoperă un spectru larg de situaţii arheologice. Din punct de vedere al poziţiei şi tratării corpurilor defuncţilor au fost identificate următoarele situaţii: schelete depuse în poziţie anatomică (mai ales copii); schelete întregi în diferite poziţii; schelete răvăşite sau dezmembrate; părţi de schelete (maxilare sau coaste). Din punct de vedere al numărului de indivizi gropile conţin: un defunct întreg; un defunct întreg dar cu oasele răvăşite; părţi de la un singur individ; mai mulţi indivizi întregi (maturi şi copii); mai mulţi indivizi dezmembraţi (mai ales maturi); doi indivizi din care unul parţial şi altul întreg. Se observă în general o tratare mai atentă a copiilor (infans 1), conform unor norme rituale care se repetă şi în alte aşezări. Prezenţa mai multor copii într-o singură groapă ar putea indica decesul lor concomitent datorită unor boli. Părţile de schelete descoperite izolat sau scheletele cu oase răvăşite ar putea indica practici de expunere-descompunere a cadavrelor sau deshumarea şi reînhumarea unor părţi de schelete. Scheletele de maturi cu urme de violenţă pot să indice practicarea unor sacrificii umane. Complexul nr. 8 din săpăturile lui C. Seraphin ar putea reflecta un ritual de fondare comunitar (al întregii comunităţi sau al unui grup al ei). Din punct de vedere funerar, marea majoritate a membrilor comunităţilor erau trataţi într-un mod „invizibil" din punct de vedere arheologic (poate incineraţi, resturile arse fiind împrăştiate în ape, în locuri din afara aşezărilor etc.). Unii membri ai elitei militare erau incineraţi şi depuşi împreună cu panopliile lor de arme în morminte plane sau tumulare în apropierea aşezărilor pe care le stăpâneau. Femeile posesoare ale unor bogate garnituri de podoabe din argint, probabil preotese, erau tratate funerar într-un mod „invizibil" arheologic, dar ornamentele şi vasele ceramice de metal erau „ucise" şi „înmormântate" în gropi practicate probabil în locuri sacre din apropierea aşezărilor. În acest context, depunerile de schelete umane din aşezări reflectă o tratare diferită a unor indivizi care constituiau din punct de vedere ritual categorii aparte ale societăţii: copii înainte de vârsta iniţierii, strămoşi, subiecţi (intra- şi/sau extra-comunitari) supuşi unor sacrificii, subiecţi care au suferit decese ieşite din comun etc.*

Keywords: *Late Iron Age, Lower Danube, unusual burial, personhood, fire installations.*
Cuvinte cheie*: a doua epocă a fierului, Dunărea de Jos, înmormântări neobişnuite, amenajări pentru foc.*

INTRODUCTION

Two decades and a half have passed since Ulrich Veit, among others, argued in favour of "archaeology of death" beyond the limits of the cemetery[1]. In the intervening period the number of funerary discoveries from settlements belonging to different historical periods has increased significantly across Europe. However, the questions regarding their interpretation are similar to those posed two or three decades ago, in spite of the progress in analysing archaeological evidence both at theoretical and interdisciplinary levels. Can settlement burials be considered "graves" or they belong to another ritual or spiritual domain? Who are those interred in settlements and those found in cemeteries? Why individuals were treated differently and which are the ritual differences between these two types of interments? To what degree the difference in the funerary rite and ritual expresses differences in the social structure of the communities? And lastly, how the frontiers between the living and the dead were defined and maintained within settlements and communities?[2] These are some of the questions posed by the human

[1] Veit 1992.
[2] Veit 1992, 107-108.

interments encountered in some settlements. The answers can be offered, up to a certain degree, by the analysis of the contexts of discovery and by their comparison, on one hand, with the entire range of funerary practices of a community, and on the other hand, with the social structures of the community. From this perspective, the present article, which is the expanded version of a poster presented to the symposium from Tulcea dedicated to the aforementioned topic, brings into discussion the human interments discovered in settlements belonging to the period of the Dacian Kingdom from a micro-region in central Transylvania which is well-defined geographically and culturally.

Fig. 1. Settlements from the Sighişoara region in which pits containing human remains have been found: 1 Sighişoara–*Wietenberg*; 2 Sighişoara–*Valea Dracului*; 3 Albeşti.

In this context, it has to be noted that human interments in settlements are a quite regular feature in pre-Roman Dacia[3]. These are also frequently encountered in the Sighişoara region in the 1th century BC–1th century AD. Pits containing human skeletons have been identified in rural settlements on the valleys of the Târnava Mare River's tributaries, for example at Sighişoara–*Valea Dracului*[4] and Albeşti–*Valea Şapartocului*[5], and also in the fortified settlement at Sighişoara–*Wietenberg* (Fig. 1). The latter ones are representative for the entire region in question due to the large number of discoveries and the diversity of contexts containing human remains.

[3] Babeş 1988; Sîrbu 1993. The practice of interring complete corpses or parts of them in settlements is also encountered on many other areas across Iron Age Europe, but also in other historical periods, so the respective bibliography is vast. See, for example, Delattre et al. 2000; Landolt et al. 2010, 220-223; Ailincăi 2015; Trebsche 2016 etc.

[4] Unpublished, excavated by I. Pascu in 1996; see also Andriţoiu, Rustoiu 1997, 75.

[5] Sîrbu 1993, 95, no. 5; Baltag 1994, 76.

Archaeological excavations have been carried out at Sighişoara–*Wietenberg* in several stages covering nearly a century:

First stage: 1902-1904 and 1938 – excavations by C. Seraphin and K. Horedt[6].
Second stage: 1967-1970 – excavations by G. Moldovan (unpublished)[7].
Third stage: 1991-1995 – excavations by I. Andriţoiu and A. Rustoiu[8].

Pits containing human skeletons have been found both inside the settlement and in its immediate vicinity, on a height located to the north-east, where the presence of a ritual or sacred area has been presumed (Fig. 2).

PITS WITH HUMAN SKELETONS LOCATED OUTSIDE THE SETTLEMENT FROM SIGHIŞOARA–*WIETENBERG*

The pits from the settlement's vicinity have been investigated by G. Moldovan, though his results are still unpublished. The Museum of Sighişoara holds photos of the contexts containing human skeletons[9], though other documentation is missing (Fig. 3-6). Consequently, the information concerning the number of pits and their contents is contradictory: seven pits containing 17 skeletons; 18 "inhumation graves"; 19 skeletons; 28 "graves" etc[10]. However, it is quite clear that there are two types of round pits. The first type includes pits containing ash, charcoal and ceramic fragments (probably remains of collective feasts[11]). The second includes pits containing human remains. Most of these pits contain children skeletons (one or several: Fig. 3), one pit contains a mature man, a young woman and a baby (the three could have been a family: husband, wife and child)[12] (Fig. 4), while another pit contains seven mature individuals (Fig. 5) etc. In the case of pits containing mature individuals, photographic documentation sometimes shows traces of violent blows on bones, which may suggest the cause of death (Fig. 6). At the same time, the contorted position of these skeletons indicates that they were put in pits shortly after death, before *rigor mortis* set in. The pits' inventories are unknown. Some of the deceased were surely dressed, hence the discovery of garment accessories, like the leather belt with bronze fittings and a bronze buckle of the late La Tène type which were found in one of the pits containing mature individuals[13] (Fig. 5).

6 Horedt, Seraphin 1971.
7 See some information in Rustoiu, Comşa, Lisovschi-Cheleşanu 1993, 81-83, with previous bibliography.
8 Rustoiu, Comşa, Lisovschi-Cheleşanu 1993; Andriţoiu, Rustoiu 1997.
9 Handed over to Aurel Rustoiu by G. Baltag in 1991; some of these photos were also published in Sîrbu 1993, Fig. 58/1-2, 59/1; Sîrbu 1997, Fig. 12/2, 13/2 etc.
10 Horedt, Seraphin 1971, 18; Sîrbu 1993, 98; Babeş 1971a, 387.
11 See Andriţoiu, Rustoiu 1997, 76-77.
12 Nicolăescu-Plopşor, Wolski 1975, 143-151.
13 Babeş 1983. For this type of belts, see recently Guštin 2011.

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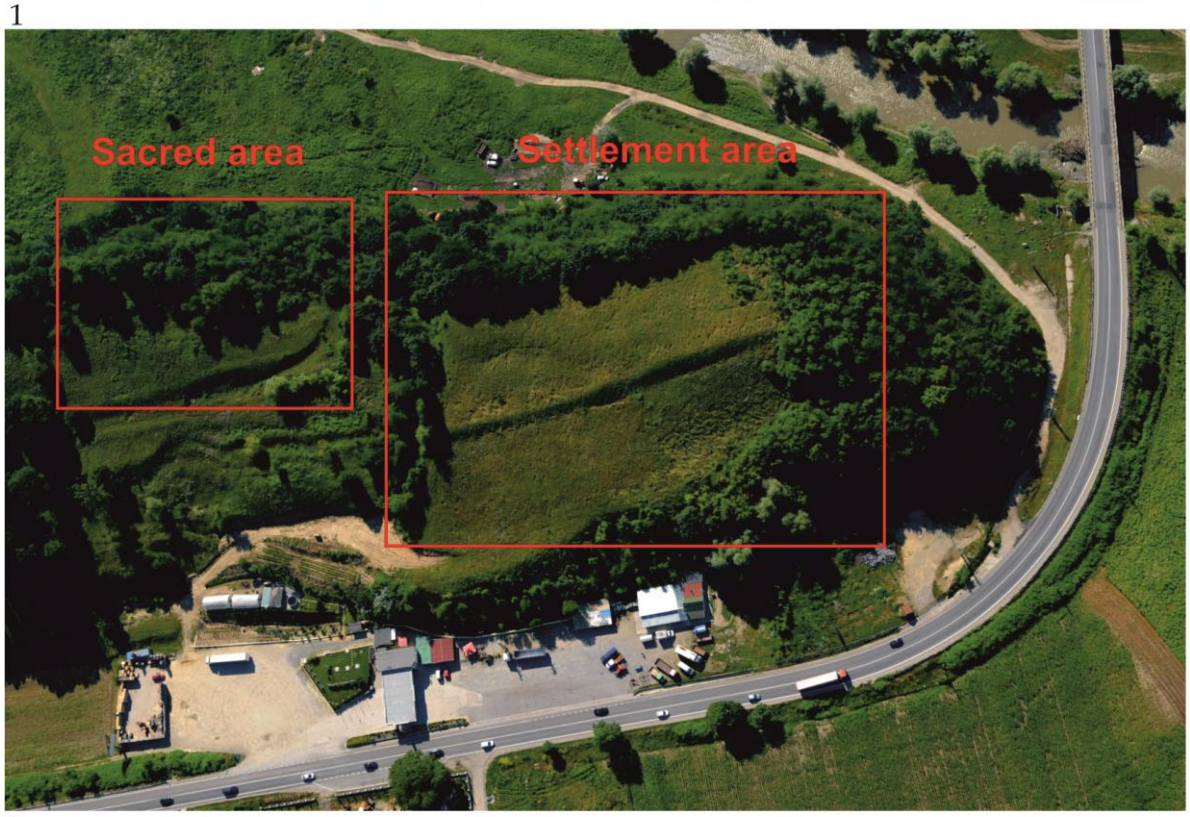

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Fig. 2. The settlement at Sighişoara–*Wietenberg* and the inside and outside areas in which pits containing human remains have been found (photo Z. Czajlik).

Table 1. Features containing human remains found by C. Seraphin.

No. Context	No. individuals	Skeleton preservation	Skeleton position	Age	Gender	Type of pit	Ritual evidence	Inventory
1	1	Maxilla	?	Mature	F?	?	Found at 1.4 m deep; traces of ash above it	?
2	1	Left half of maxilla	?	Mature	F?	?	Found in a jar decorated with four knobs	?
3	1	Ribs	?	Mature	?	?	Found in a fragmentary vessel	?
5	1	Complete	Supine	Infans 1	C	Refuse pit	Found in a vessel laying on its side, at 1 m deep	Fragments of several ceramic vessels
6-7	2	Complete	One on top of other	Infans 1	C	Purposefully made?	?	No inventory
8	1	Damaged	Supine	Mature	M	Purposefully made?	Skeleton found at 1.40-1.50 m deep; a layer of ash above it. Re-inhumed?	Half of a spindle whorl and 2 fragmentary iron sickles near skeleton; 1 spindle whorl and 1 miniature cup under skull
9	2	1 fragmentary bone and 1 complete skeleton	1 rib (lower pit); 1 laid on right side (upper pit)	Mature	?	Purposefully made	Rectangular pit (at –1.86 m) containing 1 human rib, ash, charcoal, 37 iron nails. Above it, at –0.80 m was 1 complete skeleton	1 small iron knife together with the human rib; 1 silver button near skull of complete skeleton
10	1	Complete	Supine, right hand on pelvis	?	?	Purposefully made at 0.30 m deep (?!)	?	No inventory

PITS WITH HUMAN SKELETONS LOCATED INSIDE THE SETTLEMENT FROM SIGHIŞOARA-WIETENBERG

In the settlement, the investigations of C. Seraphin uncovered eight features containing human bones (Table 1). Another one was found in 1992 (Fig. 7–8). In three cases fragments of human skeletons (maxillas or ribs) have been found, three (or perhaps four – no. 7) pits (including the one from 1992) contained children, and one pit contained the damaged skeleton of a mature individual. One particular case is feature no. 8. Although in general it is considered that the deceased were put in refuse pits from the settlement area, at Sighişoara–*Wietenberg* the pits were purposefully dug out for human interment. Furthermore, they preserve traces of the rituals performed during interment. This is the case of the pit containing the skeleton of a child (*infans I*) discovered in 1992 (Fig. 7). The deceased was laid in supine position in a purposefully dug pit, on top of a layer of ash covering the pit's bottom. The pit was then filled with a layer of soil which was covered with a layer of clay.

On top of the latter was found another layer of ash probably resulting from the rituals associated with the sealing of the pit. Inside the pit were found fragments of ceramic vessels and one complete miniature vessel (Fig. 8). They were accompanied by animal bones probably coming from the meat offering[14].

Fig. 3. Human interments outside the settlement. Left: pit containing partial skeletons. Right: pit containing the skeleton of a child – infans 1 (photo G. Moldovan).

[14] See a wider discussion in Rustoiu, Comşa, Lisovschi-Cheleşanu 1993.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The pits containing human skeletons identified at Sighişoara–*Wietenberg*, both inside the settlement and outside of it, belong to several categories of archaeological contexts.

1. Regarding the skeleton's position and treatment of the body, the pits contain: complete skeletons in supine position (mostly children); complete skeletons in contorted positions; damaged or dismembered skeletons; human bone fragments (maxillas or ribs).
2. Regarding the number of individuals, the pits contain: one complete individual; one complete albeit dismembered individual; fragments of one individual; several complete individuals (matures and children); several dismembered individuals (mostly matures); one complete together with one fragmentary individual.

Fig. 4. Human interments outside the settlement. Pit containing the skeleton of a mature man, 40-45 years old (left), and of a woman, 15-17 years old (right); one baby was laid between the man's right arm and body. (photo G. Moldovan).

3. In general, children (*infans* 1) were more carefully treated, according to some ritual norms that have also been repeatedly encountered on wider areas in Dacia, both inside and outside the settlements. The presence of several children in a single pit could indicate a concomitant death caused by illness. Usually children were interred without being hacked off or dismembered, unlike the adults found in some pits. At the same time, in numerous situations the pits in which they were laid were purposefully dug out for inhumation. For example, in the settlement from Brad the deceased were laid on the bottom of the pit or on "beds" carved out of the lower side of the pit. Regarding the children burials outside the settlements, the recent discoveries from Hunedoara–*Grădina Castelului* are relevant for the manner in which they were treated upon death in a community from the inside of the Carpathians during the last decades of the Dacian Kingdom[15]. They are frequently accompanied by garment accessories and other artefacts, much like in the case of normal burials. Moreover, the presence of garment accessories and ceramic or other offerings was also noted in the case of some children burials from settlements[16], this being for example the case of the miniature vessel found in the pit excavated in 1992 at Sighişoara–*Wietenberg*.

Among the ritual elements that can be recognized on wider areas are also those identified in feature no. 6 (see Table 1) discovered by C. Seraphin in the settlement at Sighişoara–*Wietenberg*. This is a pit containing the skeleton of a child who was put in a vessel laid on its side. Some children burials with similar characteristics were also found in the Roman provincial cemetery at Enisala, in Dobrogea[17]. Here burials begin in the last decades of the 1st century AD, M. Babeş considering that the first are contemporaneous with the last

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[15] Unfortunately, the authors of archaeological excavations at Hunedoara–*Grădina Castelului* published some contradictory information, so the studies regarding this important cemetery have to be critically read. For example, the first archaeological report in which grave no. 7 is mentioned states that it belonged to an **inhumed** child (probably an infant) and contained a spearhead, a curved dagger of the *sica* type and an arrowhead, among other things. The inventory also probably contained "one Roman denarius made of bronze (*sic!*), which was issued by Trajan in AD 98-99", so the mentioned funerary context was dated to the period of the Dacian – Roman wars at the beginning of the 2nd century AD (Luca et al. 2003). In subsequent publications, grave no. 7, later designated as deceased no. 7 from feature no. 12, became a **cremation** burial belonging to a male deceased who was 21-22 old, according to the anthropological analysis. The "denarius" of Trajan (later dated to AD 100), which was initially associated with this grave, was this time listed as found nearby; the burial itself was dated to the beginning of the 2nd century AD and the children burials in general were interpreted in connection with the Dacian – Roman wars: "it is possible that many of the children deposits took place in a very short period of time, and the cause could be an exceptional event (the wars between the Dacians and the Romans, the young warrior's death of the Grave 7?)" (Sîrbu et al. 2006, 189-190, Fig. 7). Later, the cremation burial containing the panoply of weapons that is more likely specific to the Padea–Panagjurski kolonii group was dated to the 125–50/25 BC or 125–51 BC. In this study, the finally correctly identified bronze aes of Trajan, which previously caused dating problems, became an "isolated discovery" and was not associated with the grave (Sîrbu et al. 2007a, 156-157; Sîrbu et al. 2007b, 24-25, 51). Aside from these embarrassing contradictions, it has to be noted that the cemetery from Hunedoara–*Grădina castelului* illustrate a series of funerary practices specific to different social and age categories.

[16] See, for example, the children burials from Brad: Ursachi 1995, 259-262.

[17] Babeş 1971b, 26-27.

archaeological layers of the Dacian settlements at Răcătău, Brad or Ocniţa, all from the north of the Danube[18].

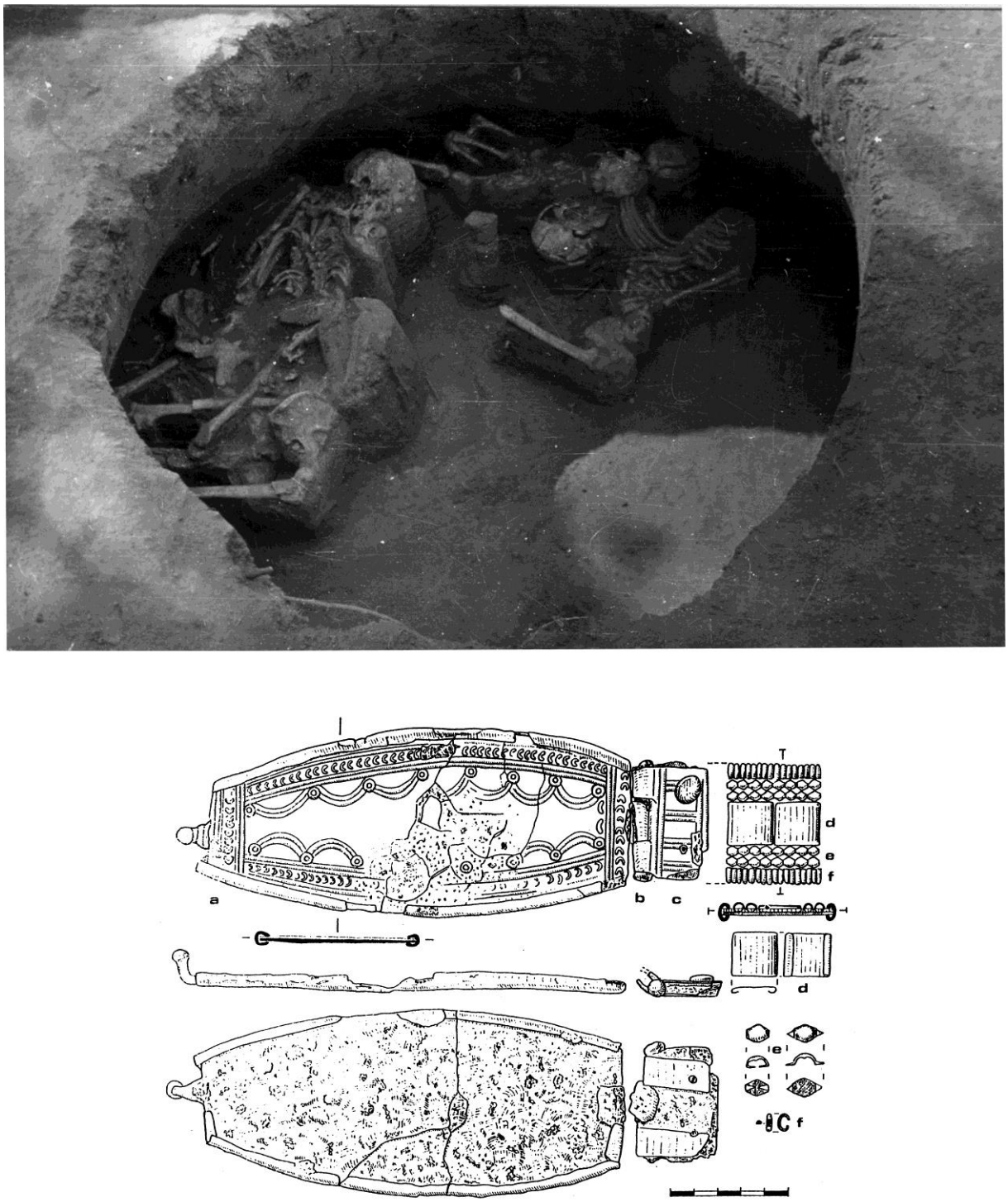

Fig. 5. Human interments outside the settlement. Pit in which seven individuals were carelessly thrown (photo G. Moldovan) and buckle and belt with bronze fittings found in the pit (Babeş 1983).

[18] Babeş 1971b, 28-31; Babeş 1988, 8, n. 18.

The presence of similar children burials in a cemetery probably belonging to an indigenous community from the province of Moesia indicates, on one hand, that these features belong to the funerary domain, and on the other hand, that such funerary practices are encountered on wider areas in Dacia. This hypothesis is also supported by other discoveries. A grave containing the skeleton of a child (*infans* 1) placed in a ceramic vessel was recently unearthed at Luduş, Mureş County, in Transylvania. Calibrated ^{14}C dating of the skeleton indicates that the feature belongs to the 1st–2nd centuries AD[19]. This dating also corresponds to the chronology of the aforementioned graves from Enisala and probably of the one from Sighişoara–*Wietenberg*.

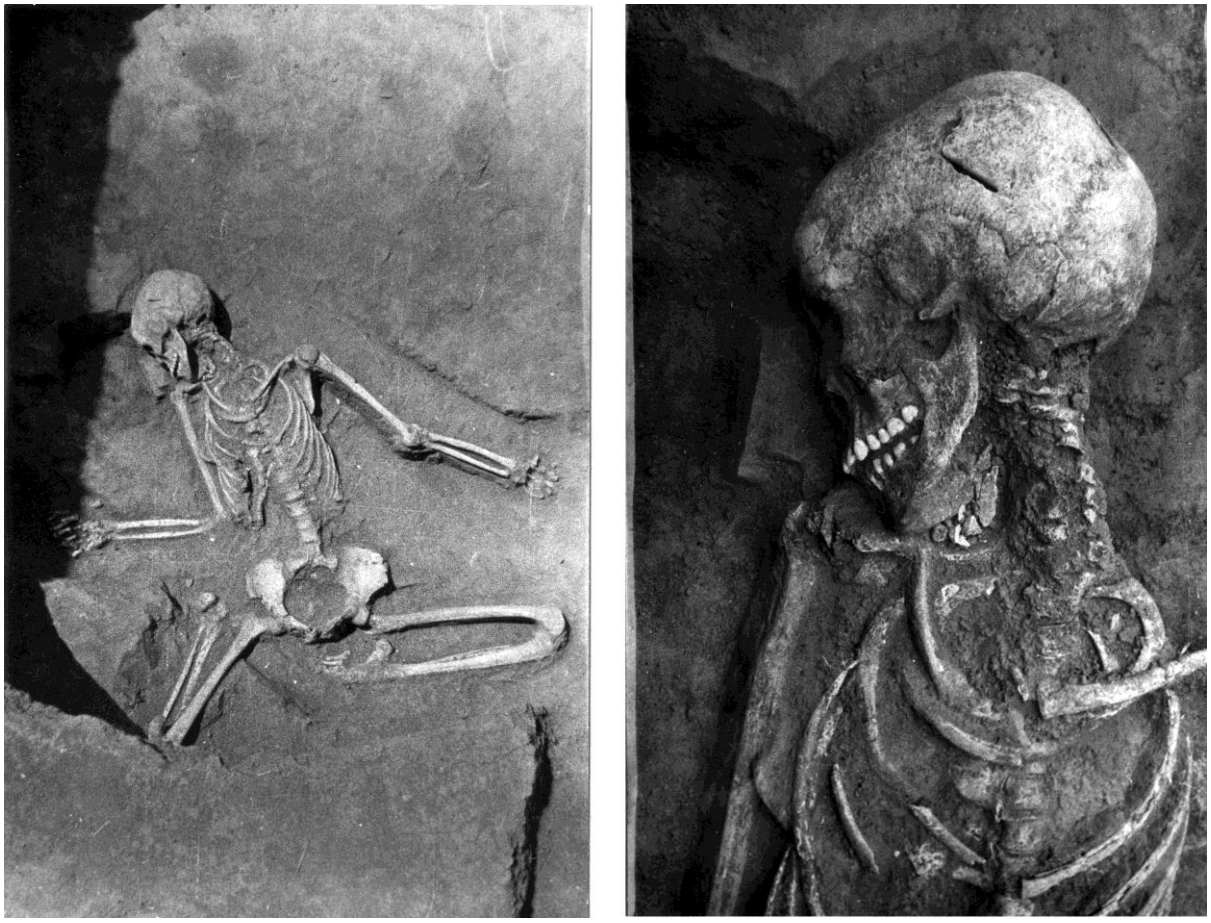

Fig. 6. Human interments outside the settlement. Pit containing one skeleton whose skull displays a blow trace resulting from a sharp instrument (axe or sword): general view and detail (photo G. Moldovan).

In conclusion, there are sufficient arguments to consider that the children (*infans* 1) burials are common funerary manifestations. In spite of some differences in ritual and in the manner and place of interring the corpse (sometimes in pits inside settlements, other times in consecrated areas outside settlements etc.), there are some rituals which are repeatedly encountered in different communities on a wider area: the corpses are never dismembered, the deceased are often accompanied by personal objects or offerings, the

[19] Berecki, Cioată 2015, 90-91.

interment is associated with a series of rituals, some being archaeologically visible (placing of complete or broken vessels, meat offerings, burnt traces or ash layers resulting from different practices etc.). All of them indicate that children were treated differently upon death among the communities from the Dacian Kingdom and also in the case of some provincial indigenous population, and this difference is also visible archaeologically[20].

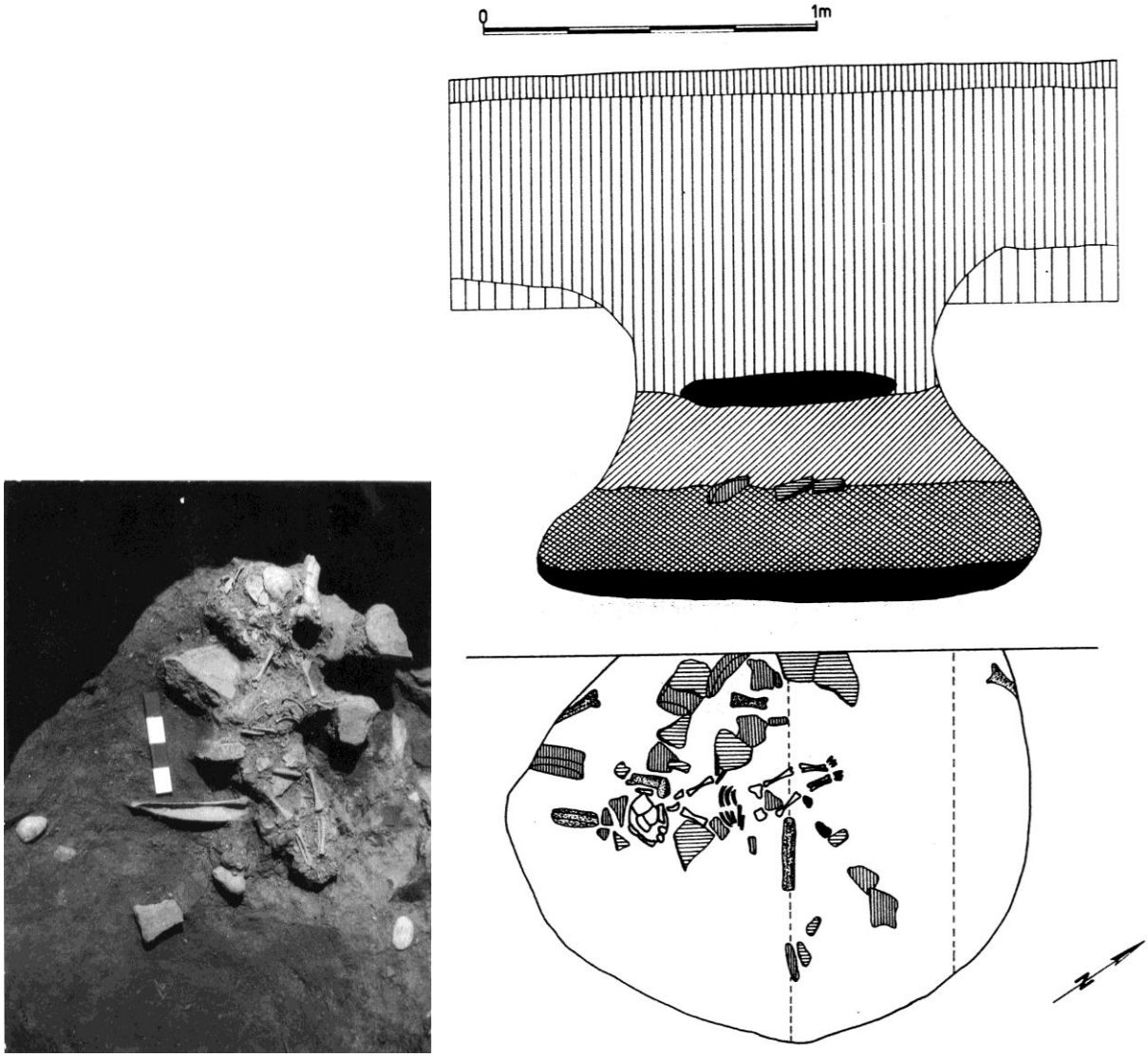

Fig. 7. Pit containing the skeleton of a child (*infans* 1) discovered in 1992 inside the settlement (photo and drawing A. Rustoiu).

[20] The distinct funerary treatment of the deceased according to their age is also documented among other populations, see Weiss-Krejci 2013, 285, with further bibliography. For similar variations related to age or social group in pre-Roman Dacia, see Popa 2014.

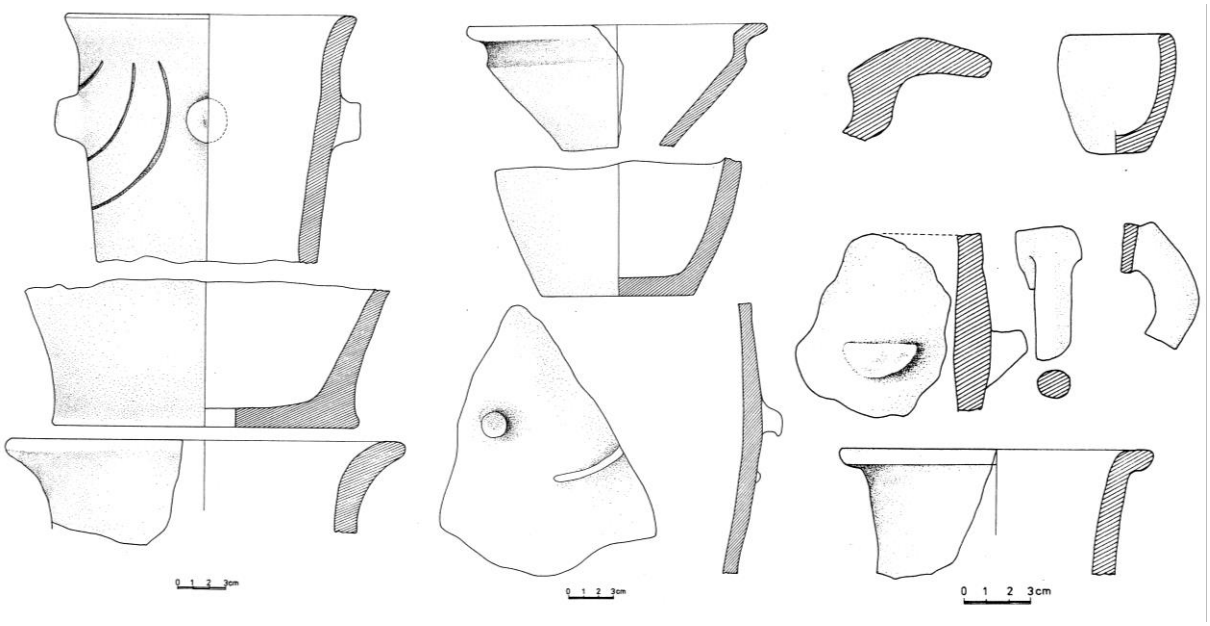

Fig. 8. Ceramic inventory from the pit containing the skeleton of a child discovered in 1992 (Rustoiu et al. 1993).

4. Isolated skeleton parts or dismembered skeletons could indicate, as already presumed[21], practices of exposure – decomposing of the corpses or grave opening, followed by bone selection and re-inhumation[22].

5. Mature skeletons bearing traces of violence could indicate the practice of human sacrifices.

6. Feature no. 9 from the excavations of C. Seraphin could indicate a founding ritual (of the entire community or of a group from within) where the human rib found in the rectangular pit could have belonged to a "founding ancestor" who was buried elsewhere and whose remains were unearthed and brought over to contribute to the establishing of a new settlement. When this relic was reburied, it was accompanied by a human sacrifice (the complete skeleton being laid above the founder's pit). A similar situation seems to occur in another fortified Dacian settlement at Sprâncenata, Olt County, south of the Carpathians. In the centre of this settlement, located on a height on the left bank of the Olt River, was found a rectangular pit which was dug below the habitation layers of the site. The pit was lined with timber to form a funerary chamber. A coffin carved into a split tree trunk was placed on the pit's bottom. The coffin was empty but "one radius and a few phalanges belonging to the skeleton of a teenager" and a few ceramic fragments were recovered from the pit's filling on the bottom[23]. According to the published archaeological documentation[24], this funerary feature more likely belongs to the second layer of

[21] Sîrbu 1993.

[22] Babeş, Miriţoiu 2011.

[23] Preda 1986, 50-51.

[24] Preda 1986, 16-19, Fig. 4 and Fig. 6: plan and profile of trench V in which the grave was found.

habitation, which can be dated to the end of the 2nd century and the first half of the 1st century BC. Its characteristics suggest a "founding" ritual in which an important individual was interred in a way which differed significantly from the funerary practices of the rest of the community. From this point of view, it is relevant that the grave is located in the centre of the settlement and belongs to the habitation layer corresponding to the fortification phase. The absence of the skeleton and funerary inventory from the coffin may suggest that the deceased was later exhumed and re-inhumed in another place.

7. Unlike the period of the 5th–3rd centuries BC, when dozens of cemeteries consisting of hundreds or even thousands of cremations (and also inhumation) graves are known from the Lower Danube region and Transylvania[25], during the Dacian Kingdom of the 1st century BC–1st century AD the cemeteries are almost non-existent, and when some do appear, they seem to belong exclusively to certain social groups. From the funerary perspective, the corpses of most members of the community were treated in an archaeologically "invisible" manner. Perhaps they were cremated and remains were scattered in water bodies or other places outside the settlement[26]. One discovery made several decades ago offers an image of one such sacred place located outside the settlements. Its location and characteristics may explain, up to a point, the difficulty in identifying these ritual spaces archaeologically. A "platform" of ash having an oval shape and the dimensions of 13.5 × 8.5 m and a thickness of 0.25-0.30 m was accidentally found (while digging a drainage trench) at Conţeşti, Argeş County, south of the Carpathians, in an isolated area on the bank of a lake located between to hilly ridges. Burnt ceramic fragments (some belonging to cooking vessels, others to tableware and some to storage vessels including Greek amphorae), 45 iron arrowheads, 12 kitchen knives, iron nails, a few garment accessories (brooches of the middle La Tène type), one Dyrrachium silver drachma and some small bronze and glass bits were recovered from its surface. The garment accessories and the Greek coin date this feature to the end of the 2nd century and the first half of the 1st century BC. On the ash "platform" were also found more than 3400 fragments of cremated bones[27]. Their analysis has shown that the majority of the burnt remains belong to domestic animals from which mostly the limbs were selected for sacrifice[28]. Its topographic and structural characteristics and the inventory suggest that the feature from Conţeşti belongs to the ritual domain, probably illustrating a collective sacrifice. This kind of isolated sacred places, located far away from settlements, could have also been used for funerary purposes, so the cremated remains of the deceased, subsequently scattered around, are difficult to identify archaeologically.

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25 For the Lower Danube region see Măndescu 2010, with further bibliography; for Transylvania see Rustoiu 2015a, with further bibliography.

26 Regarding the scattering of cremated human remains in landscape features or rivers during the European Bronze Age and Iron Age, and for ethnographic analogies from Nepal, see Kaliff, Oestigaard 2004; Rebay-Salisbury 2010, 65-66.

27 Vulpe, Popescu 1976

28 Nicolăescu-Plopşor 1976.

However, certain social categories belonging to these communities were treated differently upon death. For example, some members of the military elite were cremated and then laid together with their panoplies of arms in flat or tumulus graves, close to the settlement over which they ruled[29]. The body of some women, probably priestesses, who worn rich sets of silver ornaments was also treated in an archaeologically "invisible" manner upon death. Their costume and other objects (ceramic and metal vessels) related to their function were also removed from the world of the living by "killing" and then burying them in pits which were probably located in sacred areas from the settlements' vicinity[30]. Therefore, the presence of human skeletons or part of them in settlements indicates the existence of various manners of treating the deceased, according to the social and symbolic categories to which they belonged: very young children, ancestors, local and foreign individuals who were sacrificed for various purposes, individuals suffering an unusual death etc.

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[29] Rustoiu 2008, 135-163; Rustoiu 2015b.

[30] Egri, Rustoiu 2014.

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