

# RITUAL AND INVENTORY IN A DACIAN SACRED ENCLOSURE - PIETROASA MICĂ - GRUIU DĂRII (1<sup>st</sup> century BC-1<sup>st</sup> century AD)

Valeriu Sîrbu (Brăila – Romania), Sebastian Matei (Buzău - Romania)

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**Abstract.** The mound deposits and *in situ* fireplaces indicate specific rituals, as we know these vestiges could not have been simply thrown in them. The cleaning of the area for the upcoming deposit, the ring of stones and the fireplace set into place, the deposits of items, the successive layers of materials etc., all these constitute with no doubt a certain ritual. The ample fitting outs in the area, the walls that were put into place and maintained, the rich inventory and the rituals that took place here stand proof of the importance of the enclosure to the sacred life of the Dacian communities in the area. The monumentality and richness of the votive deposits in *Gruiu Dării* constitute incontrovertible proof that this was a major sacred center for the Geto-Dacians, an impressive *temenos*.

**1. Introduction.** Since our purpose is to merely introduce some of the features of the inventory and a few possible rituals, we shall not insist on other aspects of the site, which can be found in the monographs and studies already published (Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001; Sîrbu 2004, p. 183-214 ; Sîrbu, Ștefan, Garganciuc, Matei 2004, p. 72-75 ; Sîrbu, Matei, Dupoi 2005). We shall only refer to the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC – 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, the period for which we have enough data, as the discoveries from the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC are too few and their nature is still unclear. It is necessary, however, to introduce the main features of the site in order to have a full understanding of the topics we shall approach.

**2. Topography.** The site is on a promontory (altitude 534m) of the Istrița massive, in the Southern Sub-Carpathians, looking truncated, with three steep sides and the fourth, to the west and north-west, being a gentle, accessible slope; to the north and the east, the cape is bordered by the river Dara.

**3. The enclosure.** Only about 2500m<sup>2</sup> of the enclosure have been preserved, since the sides to the south and the east have been destroyed, in time, by the limestone quarries; perhaps, in the Dacian era, the enclosure had about 3500m<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 6).

**Terraces.** A number of terraces were built, one to the north and several the south of the enclosure, towards the plains.

**4. Fortification system.** Since the southern and eastern sides of the enclosure were destroyed by the limestone quarries, we cannot say anything about the fortification that was once there. As for the north-western and northern sides, the foundation of the walls, sometimes even the first slabs of the elevation have are still standing. One could notice two stages in the construction of the walls, which, for the most part, follow the same route. The wall from the last stage is 2.00-2.20m tall and the inner wall face was preserved for a height of 1.20m at most, mostly the foundation, with eight apses. The slabs, usually polished on the visible side, were

held together with a white-yellowish bonder. The *emplecton* consists of small and medium-sized pebbles, bonded with yellow soil (Fig. 5).

**5. Chronology.** Only 11 complexes and isolated items have survived from the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, but their chronology is tight: Greek-amphorae stamps, fibulae, coins, Dacian vessels etc. (Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001, p. 22, 42-43 ; Sîrbu, Matei, Dupoi 2005, p. 15-16).

The 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC – 1 c. AD period is well documented in terms of the stratigraphy and complexes, as well as of the large variety of items, where the dozens of fibulae are clear chronological markers (Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001; Sîrbu, Matei, Dupoi 2005).

**6. Type of complexes.** In the almost 1200m<sup>2</sup> that were excavated so far, one has found, from the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC – 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, only three types of clearly defined complexes: a) mound-like deposits, mostly with rings and fireplaces *in situ* or deposited, b) isolated fireplaces and c) pits. In the 2001-2007 interval alone, in the over 300sqm excavated in the enclosure and on Terrace I, one has found 111 complexes: 70 mound-like deposits, 14 isolated fireplaces and 15 pits; there were also another 12 complexes, with unclear typology (Sîrbu, Matei, Dupoi 2005, p. 15-20, 65-90, plus the discoveries from the 2006-2007 campaigns) (Fig. 1-4, 7-8).

The research on Terrace I, from 2006-2007, has determined that such votive deposits were also outside the enclosure; the situation on the other terraces remains to be established by future excavations.

The previous campaigns, from 1974-1989, when about 800sqm were researched, found the same kind of complexes; although their numbers were not clearly established, based on the documentation preserved, there were about 100 of them (Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001, p.18-20).

It is difficult to estimate, before researching the entire enclosure, what is the number of complexes and if there are some location and orientation patterns. On the other hand, we can say that in all of the areas researched, in various parts of the enclosure, one has found all the types of complexes. Only the south-western side of the enclosure, where the rock reaches the surface, is less likely to have had such complexes.

We also do not know how these deposits were made - in a certain direction or clustered – because of two things. On the one hand, we do know, for sure, which was the entrance to the enclosure and, on the other, not all the complexes included items with a narrower dating, which would establish a clearer chronology (Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001, p. 22, 42-43 ; Sîrbu, Matei, Dupoi 2005, p. 65-90, annex 1).

We will now discuss the types of complexes in the enclosure.

a). *Votive mound deposits with ring at the bottom* – 53 instances, 9 of which have *in situ* fireplaces and 8 deposited fireplaces, are the most diverse, in terms of shape, contain the richest materials and pose the hardest problems, so they can be considered characteristic of the enclosure. Round or oval, with diameters ranging between 0.40 and 1.80m, they have a ring, more or less compact, at the bottom, made of stones of various sizes, sometimes including even Hellenistic-Roman grinders or grinder fragments. Some of the deposits, such as C16 and C19, look like genuine shrines, since they are massive stone constructions, high above the fitting out level, and the burnt fireplaces prove that rituals were performed on them (Fig. 3-4).

Sometimes, there is a mother-ring and other circular or semi-circular fitting outs, either inside it (e.g. C46) or attached to it (e.g. C3, C29), where individual item deposits were found.

In some cases, *in situ* fireplaces were found in this type of complexes, usually smaller ones, but sometimes using its entire surface (e.g. C16, C19 – Fig. 3-4). No fire remains were found on these fireplaces (coals, ash) and, usually, no whole items either. The height of these

complexes, probably hemispheric, is difficult to establish, given their erosion in time; the heights preserved are between 0.20 and 0.50m.

Inside these complexes, one found fragments of dwelling walls or fireplaces, stones, animal bones and, rarely, pieces of coal, plus an archaeological inventory – entire or fragmentary items (**Fig. 3-4**). We are often dealing with whole items, including clay vessels, sometimes broken *in situ*.

b) *The ring-less votive mound deposits* – 17 instances, consist of agglomerations of stones (e.g. C48), of animal bones, rarely anatomically connected (e.g. C49), of pieces of burnt dwelling walls (e.g. C24) or of pottery fragments, animal bones and stones (e.g. C61). In these deposits, one has found fewer whole items, such as tools, weapons, adornments etc., but these did show up in all of the areas researched.

c). *Isolated fireplaces*. Also, in all of the areas researched, but in different concentrations (for instance, in S17, out of three complexes, three were fireplaces) one has found isolated fireplaces (14 instances) of various sizes, with more or less intense signs of burning. There are cases where one fireplace succeeded another (e.g. C52, C68 and C79). The remains of the fire were almost never found deposited on the fireplace or around it. This observation could mean they were connected to the mound deposits in that, after the rituals were performed, the remains of the fire were deposited in this type of complexes. There is also proof to that end: in S9, half of a destroyed fireplace (C10) was placed in the mound deposit next to it (C3).

d) *Pits* – 15 instances, are a type of complex spread in all of the areas but containing poor, unrepresentative inventory; sometimes, there are many rocks in them.

From *Terrace I*, where the excavations have only just begun, we will introduce two complexes, both of them from the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC – 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD.

Complex C201, of the mound type, oval in shape, has included a large amount of fragments of burnt dwelling walls and numerous vessels and vessel fragments, but no animal bones. Another interesting thing is that although the walls were strongly burned, there were no signs of coals or ash in the complex. Some of the vessels were deposited whole, vertically, and broken afterwards; there are no traces of ulterior burning (**Fig. 17/1**).

In the case of C206, under an oval fitting out of river stones, pottery fragments and rare animal bones, there was a rectangular area made of stone slabs and, underneath it, a layer of black soil with traces of Dacian vessel fragments (**Fig. 17/2**)

Overall, although one has researched an area of about 1200sqm, no *in situ* huts, surface dwellings or workshops were found. Therefore, one unresolved issue is the inhabitation area for those that guarded and maintained the fortifications or those that performed the rituals – inside the enclosure or outside it?

**7. The inventory** found is rich and varied, with many items deposited whole, including clay vessels, some of them broken *in situ*. Although there are “richer” and “poorer” complexes, no silverwork or coin treasures were found, as have not been any deposits of other categories of items (tools, weapons, wearable items, clay vessels)(**Fig. 9-16**). No typical inventories, namely characteristic item associations can be made for a representative number of complexes. Of course, the importance of the deposits depends on the value of the items in their time and their ritual meaning.

However, the inventory found in the enclosure suggests some selection of the deposits did take place. Otherwise, it would be difficult to account for the extreme scarceness of certain types of items, such as the basic tools for farming (coulters and plow blades, hoes, sickles, rakes), wood processing (axes, saws), blacksmithing (anvils, pincers, hammers) or stone

quarrying (pickaxes, large chisels), all the more so as the area is in a region rich in limestone and forests. On the other hand, there are quite a lot of clay vessels, iron knives and fibulae; the presence of bridle bits and spurs is worth noticing. Another interesting aspect consists of the Hellenistic-Roman stone grinders, whole or fragmentary, deposited either inside rings or included in the rings themselves; their presence points to the presence of certain rituals that implied the ritual grinding of cereals.

**8. Rituals.** Of course, with no written or iconographic sources to rely on, it is difficult to interpret the rituals that took place here. However, based on the discoveries made so far, one can imagine a certain ritual scenario that applied to the mound deposits with rings and fireplaces.

First, they cleaned the area of the future fitting out, built the stone ring and the fireplace, followed by various rituals in the presence of fire; the existence of isolated fireplaces next to the mound deposits suggests these rituals took place here, not just on the fireplaces inside the complexes. The remains of the fire were carefully picked up, from both the fireplaces in the complexes and those outside them. Inside the rings, they deposited pieces of burnt clay walls, fireplace fragments, animal bones, whole vessels, vessels broken *in situ* or just fragments, as well as other categories of items, whole or fragmentary. It was all covered, in a more or less compact fashion, with burnt wall clay or stones.

There are instances where they deposited, in successive layers, vessel fragments, burnt wall clay or pieces of burnt wall and stones, such as complexes C29, C41 and C45.

Some of the complexes are massive, occupying large surfaces (2-4sqm), have an elevation of at least 0.40-0.50m and contain a rich inventory, such as deposits C2, C16, C19, C33, C41, C45, C63 and C75. There are also many instances where the main ring has smaller rings attached to it, inside or outside, and items were deposited in them, such as complexes C21, C29, C45, C63, C80 etc.

There is also significant variety in terms of the mound deposits – 70 cases. If we look at it from the perspective of the rituals alone, then we could associate the mound deposits (70 instances) with the isolated fireplaces (14 cases), which results, practically, in the existence of a single fitting out of, and manner of performing, the sacred acts. The manner of fitting out the mound deposits and the inventory in them stand proof of the existence of ritual norms, since it is obvious that the presence of vestiges in the enclosure is no accident, but the result of cult acts. The presence of pieces of burnt dwelling walls in most of the complexes is important, but they are never the result of the *in situ* collapse of dwellings or other types of edifices. Instead, the pieces were always brought in and deposited in the mound deposits, with or without rings.

Most of the complexes hold vessels, whole or broken *in situ* (e.g. C1, C2, C4, C18, C24, C33, C43, C45, C80). Importantly, there are cases where the vessels were filled, exclusively, with pieces of wall clay or of fireplaces (e.g. C2, C24) or with vessels with “lids” containing some offerings (e.g. C18, C45)(Fig. 1/6;8). The depositing of whole items, some of them valuable (coins, fibulae, bridles and bridle bits, spurs, pendants etc.) does not make any sense without a strong cult motivation; we are generally dealing with used items, because they show signs of wear and tear.

One has found some human bones – skeletons from two adults and three children, plus four isolated human bones, all of them from adults (Dupoi, Sîrbu 2001, p. 62-63, fig. 18, 123 ; Soficaru, Stan 2005, p. 107). For the time being, we cannot account for the presence of these human bones – whole or partial skeletons, some of them dismembered and incomplete, plus the isolated bones, in these complexes. In our opinion, they fall in the category of “non-cremated human bones in non-funerary contexts” and could be from human sacrifices or corpse exposure /

decomposing or dismembering practices (Sîrbu 1993, p. 31-36 ; 1997, p. 193-221 ; 2006<sub>1</sub>, p. 138-151).

We have no proof in favor of associating the discoveries here with the funerary practices, although the lack of tombs from the Geto-Dacian inhabitation area throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC – 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD is an archaeological and historical fact (Sîrbu 1986, p. 91-108; 1993, p. 39-40; 2006, p. 128-136; Babeş 1988, p. 3-32).

The fact that most of the animal bones are from dry or little-meat body parts (head, member extremities, ribs) suggests that some selection took place and that the rest of the body – with a high nutritional value – was consumed during rituals or, simply, at regular meals. This sort of disproportion between the fauna remains could not have been possible in a settlement, where parts from all of the body parts are discovered in equal percentages. Also, the obvious preeminence of the pig – almost 40% of the remains – compared to the other species (Bălăşescu, Stan 2005, p. 109-117), is unique among contemporary Dacian settlements.

It is important to point out the importance of the fire in the rituals performed here, as proven by both the isolated fireplaces and the fireplaces inside the rings of the complexes, plus the many fragments of fireplaces inside some of the deposits.

Also, in the case of the items deposited whole – where the observations have relevance – one has found that they were not put through fire on purpose.

Undoubtedly, the discoveries made so far point to the sacred character of the deposits from the enclosure and Terrace I.

## 9. Final observations.

Where are the offering makers from?

Besides the ample fitting out works of the area for the future enclosure and the erection of the walls, there must have been some people for guarding the enclosure and maintaining the walls, plus the “specialists of the sacred”, which performed the rituals here. All these required important human and material resources that could not be secured solely by the contributions of the surrounding communities, to the extent that we know of them up until now. Close to *Gruia Dării*, one has found Dacian vestiges, not many up until now, so it is possible that the makers of offerings are from the immediate vicinity of the site, based on these facts. Therefore, we believe the offering makers are from communities from a wider area, but one that is impossible to determine.

How can we account for this variety of items?

The study of other cult sites, with varied sources, including written or iconographic ones (*Gifts to the Gods* 1987), suggest that this diversity could be the result of worshipping several deities or of the different occupations of those that made the deposits, or both.

To which deities were these rituals dedicated?

Because, for the time being, no sanctuaries or major figurative representations were found, we cannot opt for any particular deity.

There may have been fitting outs or edifices dedicated to the cult that we have not found yet; if, however, they were in the destroyed area, we will never have any data on them. The discovery of many fireplaces, in mound deposits with stone rings or isolated ones (23 cases), shows, however, that some rituals took place in the open.

The size of the enclosure, the monumental size of some sections of the wall and the long period during which rituals were performed here – about two centuries -, stands proof of the importance of this place as a cult site. The fact that the rituals happened on a tall plateau, around the fire, some of them clearly in the open, and that most of the rings were round could indicate

beliefs and practices dedicated to a solar deity.

On the other hand, the presence of many fragments of dwelling walls and of their inventories, as well as the fireplace fragments, could point to rituals connected to the cult of the household, the hearth and the fire. To that end, we can bring into the discussion, as further proof, the presence of the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, namely items that are characteristic of magic practices or witchcraft (Sîrbu 1993<sub>1</sub>, p. 58-70; 1993<sub>2</sub>, p. 129-175), and the lack of outstanding figurative representations.

Although, as we have already said, some selection is visible, the inventory diversity and the lack of clearly-defined deposited sets of goods are generating some extra problems when it comes to identifying the deities that the offerings were made to. In the absence of written sources, it is difficult to comprehend the meaning of the various categories of items present in the cult sites.

The analysis of the inventories found in a number of south-Thracian cult sites has stressed the diversity of the categories of items deposited in them, a large percentage consisting of adornments, tools, utensils and miniature items (Domaradzki 1994, p. 69-108; Tonkova, Savatinov 2001, p. 95-126; Tonkova 2005, p. 163-185).

If we talk of just the grinders, items so often found in *Gruia Dăriei*, their presence in a cult site means at least three possible interpretations: a) accessory for preparing the food and drinks for the deities or the ceremony participants, b) *ex-voto* offered to the agrarian deities by the farmers and c) chthonian offering, buried so as to secure fertility and the resumption of the agricultural cycle (Poux 2006, p. 193).

That fact that this enclosure is fortified should be no surprise, since most of the important sacred sites of the “classic” or “barbarian” civilizations were fortified. *Gruia Dăriei* needed to be fortified for several reasons. As one knows from the general history of religions, the sacred spaces need to be delimited from the profane world and the access to them needs to be restricted (Eliade 1986). Also, on the one hand, the sacred area and the deposits must not be profaned by animals and the goods donated to the deities needed protection from potential robbers. Even in the Dacian world, the important sanctuaries were either inside the fortified area or next to the fortress walls (Daicoviciu 1972, p. 204-266; Crișan 1993, p. 78-122; Antonescu 1984, p. 43-95; Sîrbu 2006<sub>1</sub>, p. 21-62).

So far, we have no proof that, initially, a fortress or fortified settlement was here but that, starting at some point, the enclosure was used for votive deposits. Even if the variety of the deposits is higher in the layers from the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC and the mound deposits from the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD are much more numerous and “standardized”, there are no dwellings from the initial stage either, while the mound complexes are present from that time.

We would like to that three-four layers with this sort of mound deposits from the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC – 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD were found (Sîrbu, Matei, Dupoi 2005, p. 15-20, 139-141, fig. 12/2; 13).

Why was this place chosen?

As known from the general history of religions, the choice of a sacred site is based on both objective and subjective factors. In *Gruia Dăriei*, we could determine only the objective characteristics of the site (dominant topographic location, visibility, conditions favorable to defense etc.). The subjective arguments are a matter of the epiphany of some deity here, of some meaningful act that happened in the area, of the manifestation of some natural phenomenon (Eliade 1986 ; 1992, p. 21-63), which we cannot know for lack of written or iconographic sources or of oral traditions. The unique character of the monument makes it even more difficult to understand the meaning of this place and the rituals that took place here, in *Gruia Dăriei*, but, perhaps, other such sites existed elsewhere too.

We find necessary to stress that, not so far away (about 15km in a straight line), there were two important Dacian cult sites that co-existed throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, *Pietroasele-Gruia Dării* and *Cârlomănești-Cetățuie* (Babeș 1975, p. 125-139; 1977, p. 319-352; Babeș *et al.* 2004, p. 76-77; Gugu 2004, p. 249-251).

The situation can be approached a) geographically – the fact that they take care of the sacred aspect in two different areas, b) in terms of the typology of cult sites, in that *Cârlomănești-Cetățuie* was a center of the official religion, while *Pietroasele-Gruia Dării* was a regional cult center or c) as expressing beliefs and rites dedicated to different deities.

Surely, the classification of the cult sites can be based on several criteria, such as: their importance in the Dacian world, topographical location – inside or outside other types of sites, the presence or absence of temples (perhaps also based on their types), the category of artifacts found in them – cult gear, offerings (Conovici, Trohani 1988, p. 205-217; Sîrbu 2006<sub>1</sub>, p. 73-75; 2006<sub>2</sub>, p. 60-62).

Based on the role and importance of the sanctuaries in the Dacian world, we can distinguish several categories of cult sites.

a). The pan-Dacian religious centers stand out because of the concentrations of various types of sanctuaries, meant to impose certain cults favored by the central political and religious power and served by a hierarchical clergy, as is the case in *Sarmizegetusa Regia* (Daicoviciu 1959, p. 379-401; Daicoviciu *et al.* 1959, p. 391-399; Daicoviciu *et al.* 1961, p. 301-320; Daicoviciu 1972, p. 207-218, 238-260; Crișan 1993, p. 82-97; Glodariu *et al.* 1996, p. 109-130), *Tipia Ormenișului* (Glodariu, Costea 1991, p. 21-40; Costea 2006, p. 175-208), *Melcia* and *Rudele* (Daicoviciu 1959, p. 386-391; 1960, p. 311-313; Glodariu 1976, p. 256-257; Vulpe 1986, p. 101-111), and, possibly *Cârlomănești*. Almost all of these discoveries are in the mountains, most of the them are concentrated in the area of the Dacian capital and no relevant figurative representations, treasures or rich offerings were found in them. The exception, from the discoveries made so far, is *Cârlomănești-Cetățuie*, located on an impressive erosion marker from the Buzău valley where, so far, five temples have been found, some of them with and expressive zoomorphic and anthropomorphic plastic art (Babeș 1977, p. 319-352; Sîrbu, 2006<sub>1</sub>, p. 36-39).

b) The regional religious centers are represented by enclosures that, because of their size and the wealth of the inventories found in them, could only have been “managed” by larger communities. In *Ocnița*, one has found underground chambers that point to the performing of rituals and the depositing, afterwards, of rich and varied offerings (Berciu 1981, p. 74-101); it is also in them that one found many fragments from massive walls that could have been from sanctuaries, as also suggested by the pit alignments. The failure to find sanctuaries in other important enclosures, such as *Pietroasa Mică-Gruia Dării* or *Măgura Moigradului* (Macrea, Rusu, Mitrofan 1962, p. 485-502; Matei, Pop 2001, p. 253-277), is merely the result of the stage of the research or the partial destruction of the site. The many fireplaces, sometimes ornamented, illustrate the important role that fire played in the rituals performed here (Trohani 1986, p. 661-666; Gugu 2004, p. 249-257; Gergova 2007, p. 149-165). Also, one has found zoomorphic and anthropomorphic statuettes and figurines or figurative representations in these sacred enclosures, sometimes skeletons or isolated human bones, a rich and diverse inventory, often consisting of items that are whole or broken on site, sometimes bronze figurative representations (*Ocnița*). Such enclosures were found in almost the entire area inhabited by the Geto-Dacians, but the presence of some notable differences between them in terms of the type of complexes, cult gear and offerings suggests either the existence of beliefs and rituals characteristic of just some of the communities in the area or shared beliefs expressed differently

(Sîrbu 2006<sub>1</sub>, p. 35-46).

c) The cult centers of one or more smaller communities, with a local impact, include discoveries with a smaller number of complexes, with less valuable and diverse artifacts. In some cases, the rituals were performed on that site, such as in Bănești (Peneș 2001, p. 33-34 ; 2002, p. 51 ; 2004, p. 52), but in other cases, only the offerings were deposited, as the cult acts were performed elsewhere, such as in Zvoriștea (Ignat 1983, p. 383-409).

d) Sacred areas were found in almost all of the important Dacian *davae* (those in which ample excavations took place, of course), represented, largely, by rectangular sanctuaries with apses or simple, circular ones, such as in Brad (Ursachi 1995, p. 62-69), Popești (Vulpe 1960, p. 307-310; 1966, p. 27-29), Piscu Crăsani (Conovici 1994, p. 61-83) or Pecica (Crișan 1978, p. 106-108). Usually, there was a single sanctuary and the next ones were built on the same spot. Most likely, on certain occasions, the members of the communities nearby participated in the ceremonies. One did not find valuable figurative representations in these sanctuaries either. Moreover, in Răcățiu (Căpitanu 1994, p. 335-343) or Brad, the outstanding figurative items were not found in the area with the sanctuary. However, since the items were found in pits or the layer, it is difficult to say whether their position here is secondary, so we do not know if they were used in the cult.

Also, votive deposits or the result of ritual acts were found outside the sanctuary or the settlements.

Sometimes, animal offerings and items are discovered at the edge of lakes, such as in Conțești (Vulpe, Popescu 1976, p. 217-226), other times – vessels deposited in wells, such as in Ciolănești din Deal (Petrescu-Dâmbovița, Sanie 1972, p. 241-258) or various categories of items found on islands, such as in Căscioarele-*Ostrovel* (Marinescu-Bîlcu 1966, p. 113-123 ; Trohani 2005, p. 221-225).

Quite numerous are also the buried treasures consisting of wearable items, the kind we have in Lupu (Glodariu, Moga 1994, p. 33-49), of coins and silver items (Horedt 1973, p. 127-167), whose features prove we are dealing with votive deposits; there are also the deposits of iron “looking glasses”, tools and weapons, such as in Lozna (Teodor, Șadurschi 1979).

These discoveries prove that, besides a number of types of sanctuaries that are rather widespread, suggesting similar deities and rituals, namely the official cult, served by a hierarchical clergy, we need to accept a higher diversity of regional beliefs in the Geto-Dacian society, as proven more and more by the archaeological discoveries (Sîrbu 2006<sub>1</sub>, p. 99-102).

The many unknown aspects aside, it is crystal clear that the size and wealth of the votive deposits make *Gruia Dării* an important Dacian sacred center, an impressive *temenos*, and that researching and analyzing the vestiges here has substantially enriched our knowledge of the Geto-Dacians' spiritual life.

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Fig. 1. 1. Complexes C16, C17, C18, C19; 2. Complex C16; 3. Complex C19 (detail); 4. Complexes C16 and C19; 5. Complex C17; 6. Complex C18 (after V. Sirbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).





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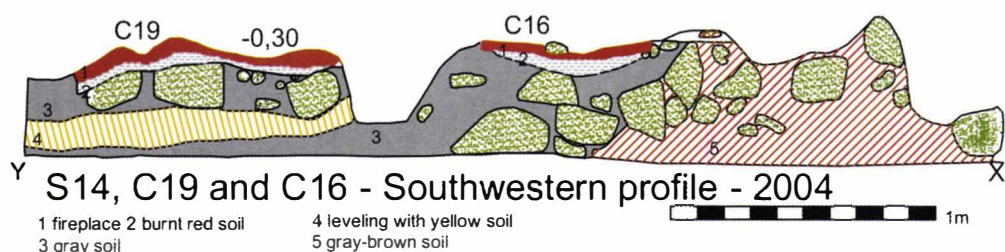
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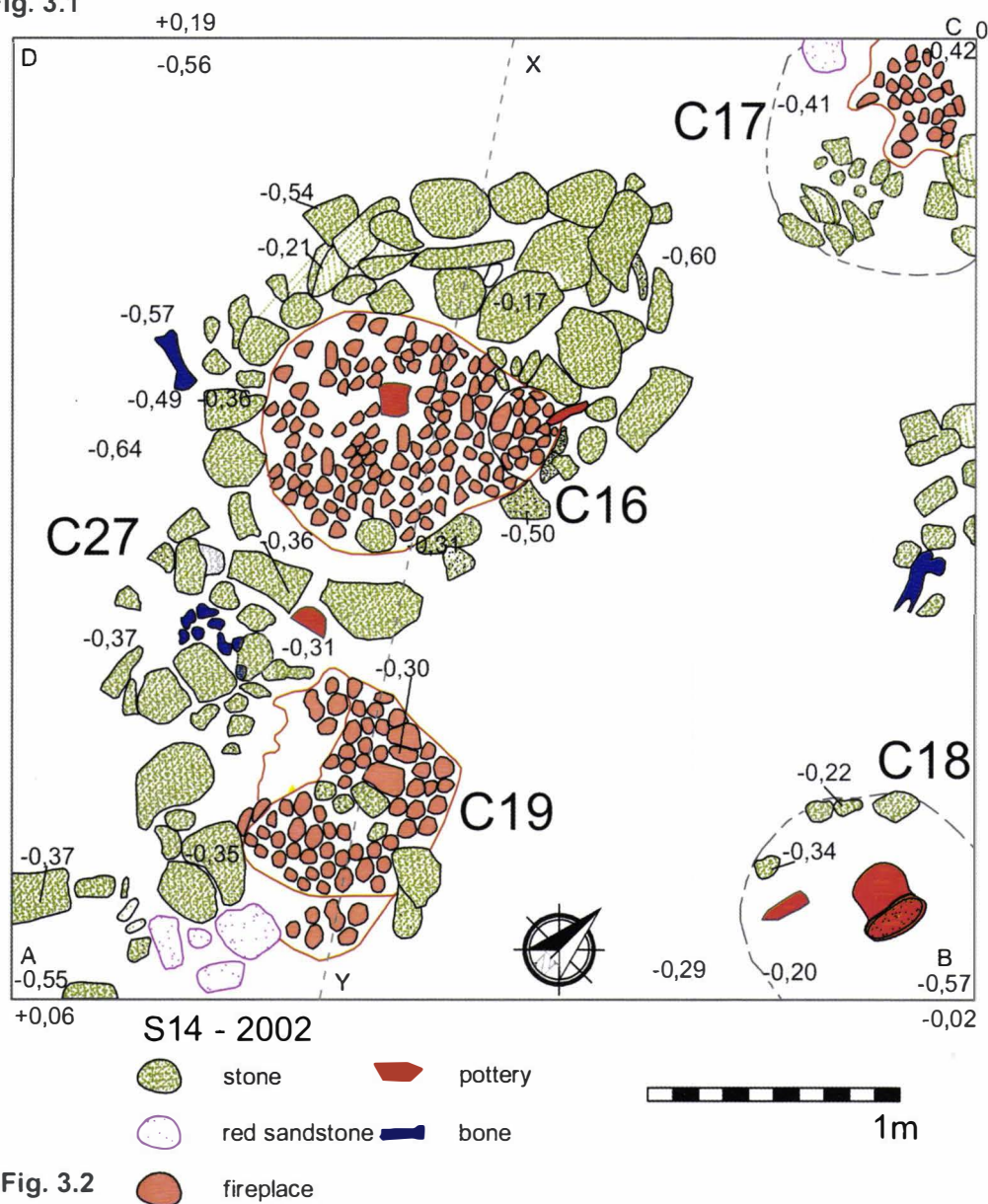
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Fig.2. Complexes C25 (1), C28 (2), C80 (3), C86 (4), C47 (5), C75 (6-8)  
(after V. Sîrbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).





**Fig. 3.1**



**Fig. 3.2**

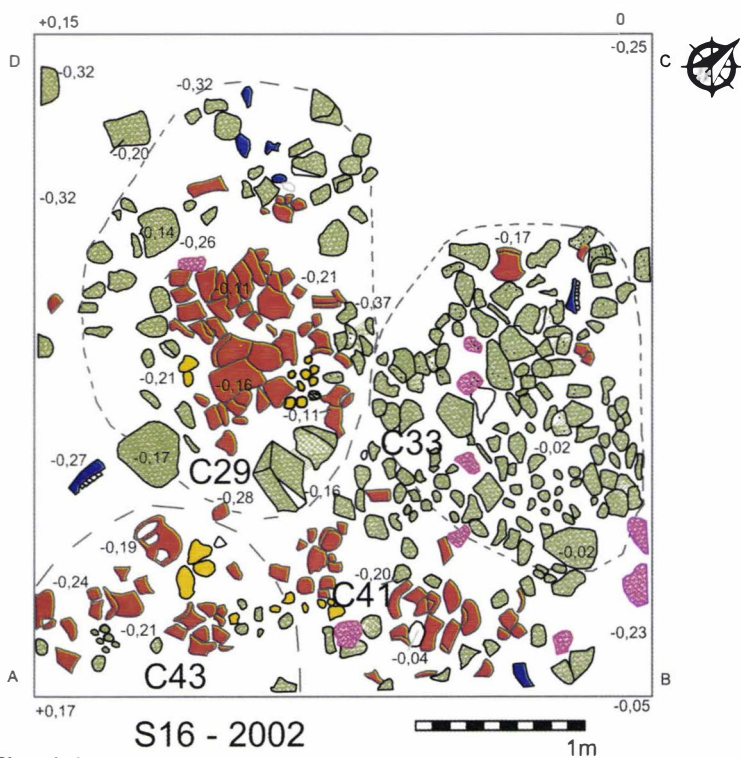


Fig. 4.1

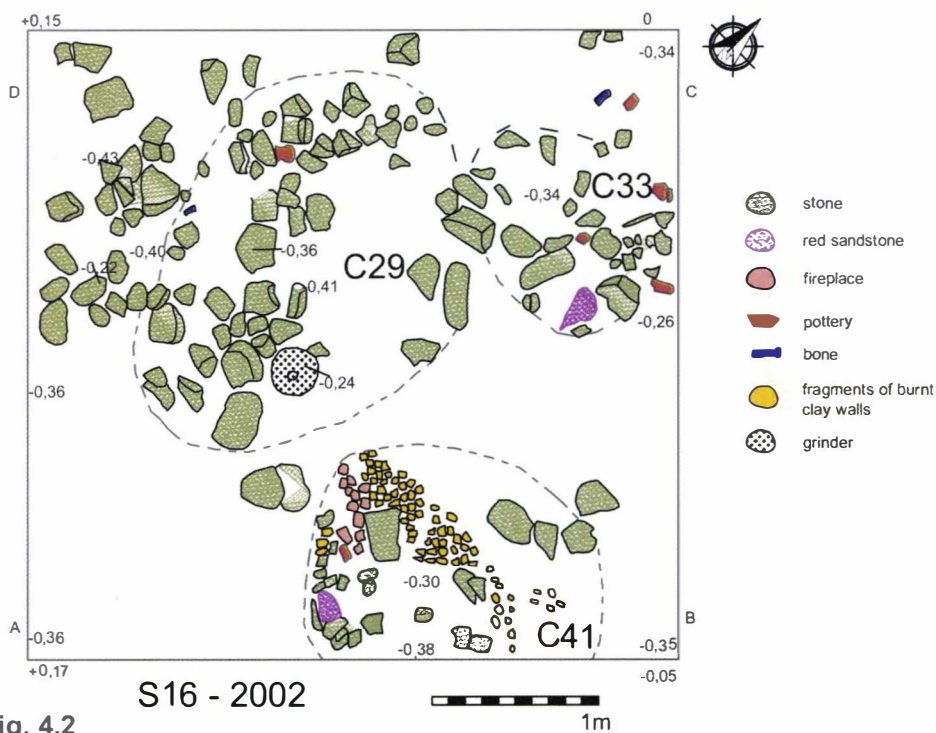


Fig. 4.2





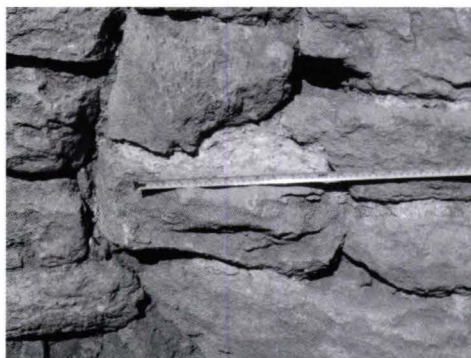
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Fig. 5. Aspects of the western (1-4), northern walls, of S10 (5-6) and S12 (7-8) (after V. Sîrbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).





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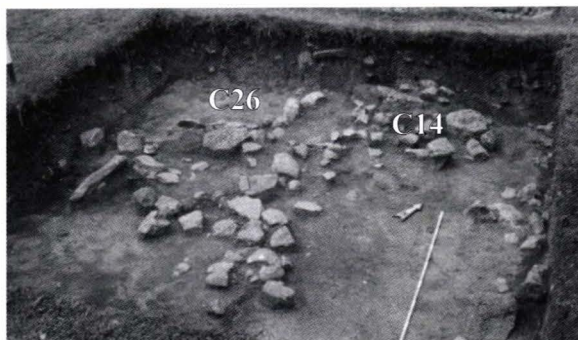
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Fig. 6. Enclosure aspect of the excavation (1) and Surfaces S12 (2), S11 (3), S14 (4), S15 (5), S20 (6) (after V. Sîrbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).

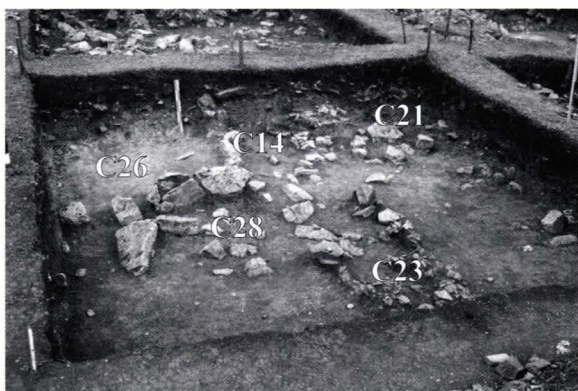




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Fig. 7. Surface S11. Complexes C14, C21, C23, C26, C28 and C42 (after V. Sîrbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).





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Fig. 8. Complex C45, during different phases of the excavations (after V. Sîrbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).

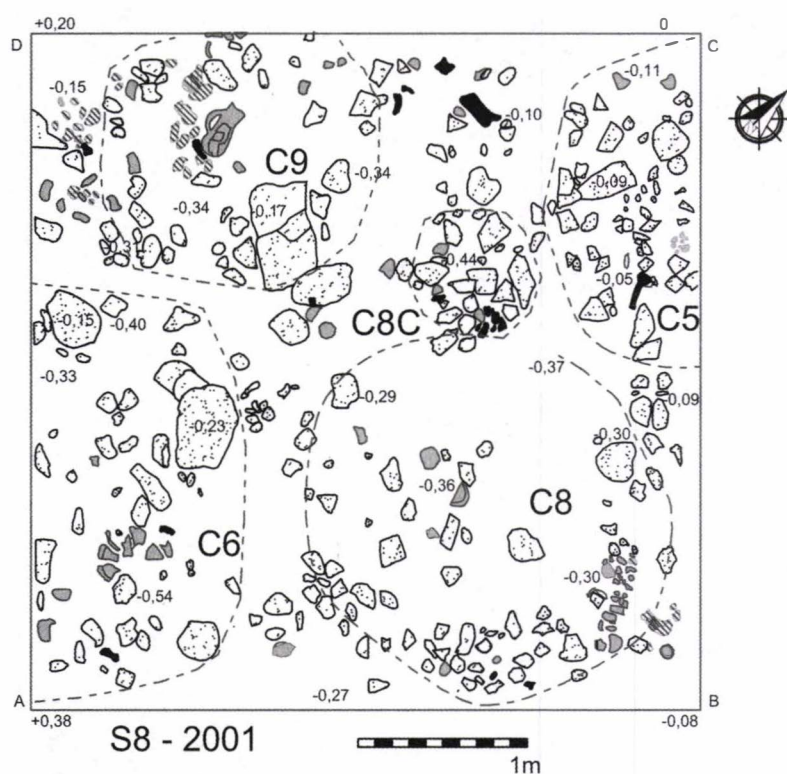


Fig. 9.1

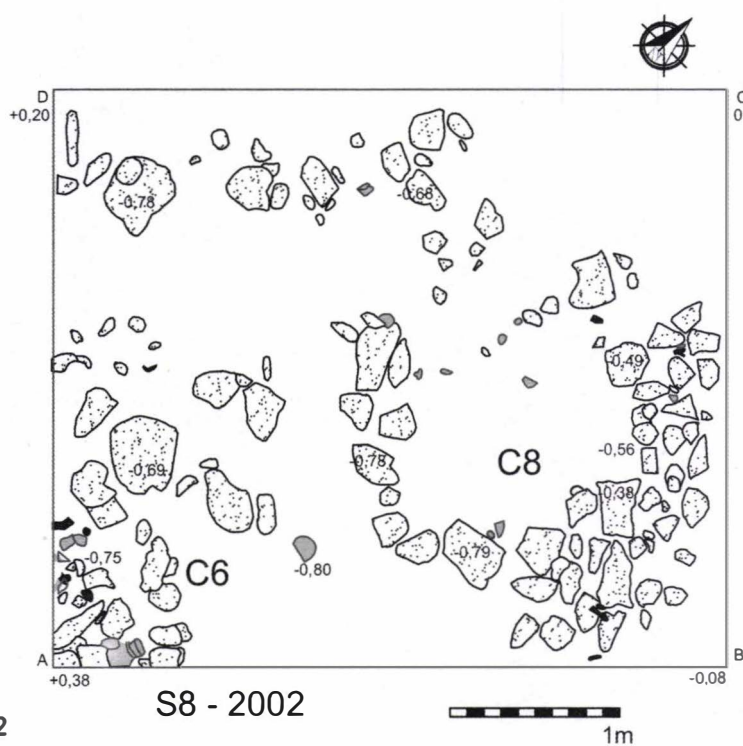


Fig. 9.2

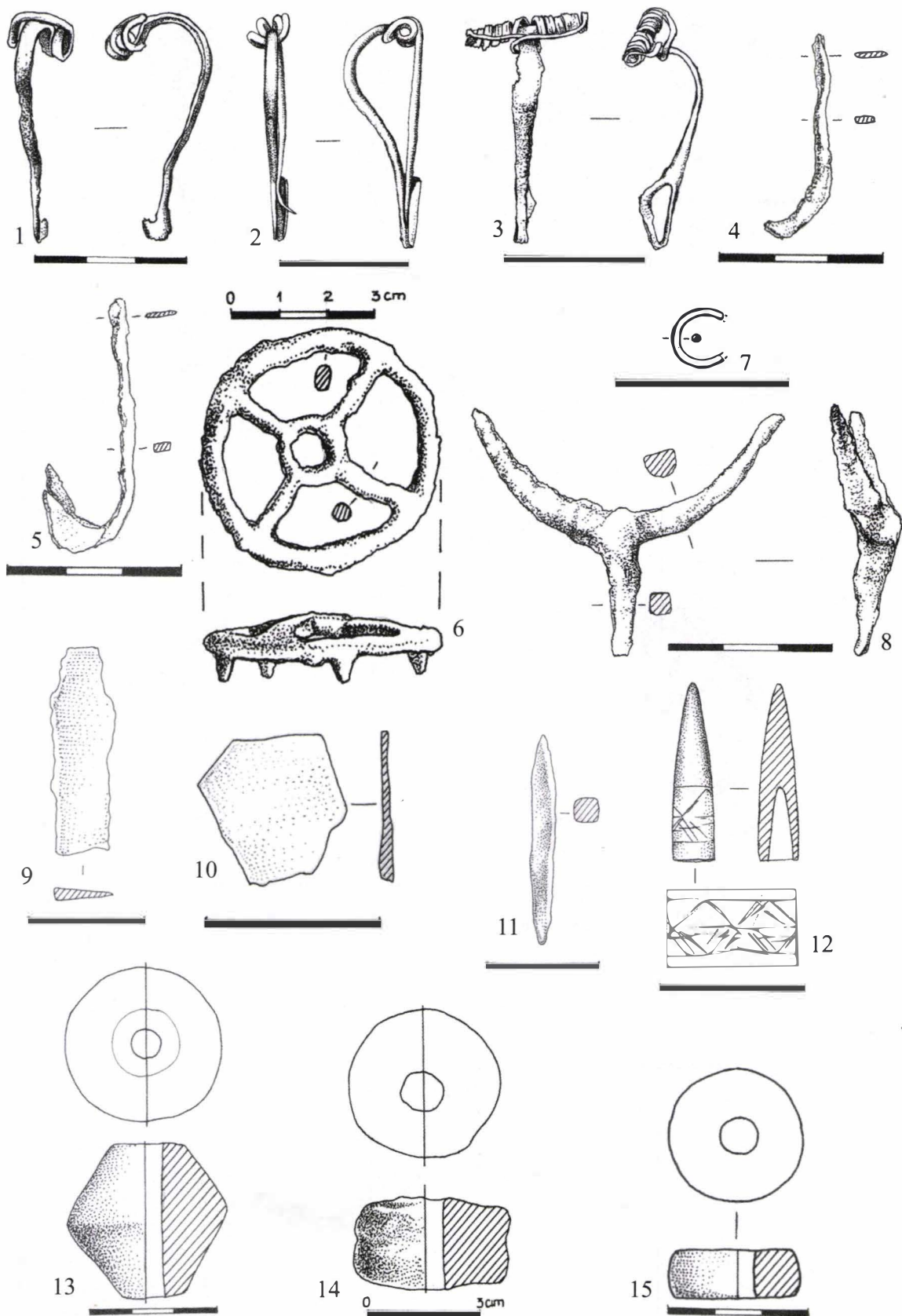


Fig. 10. Items from Complex no. 2 (after V. Sîrbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).



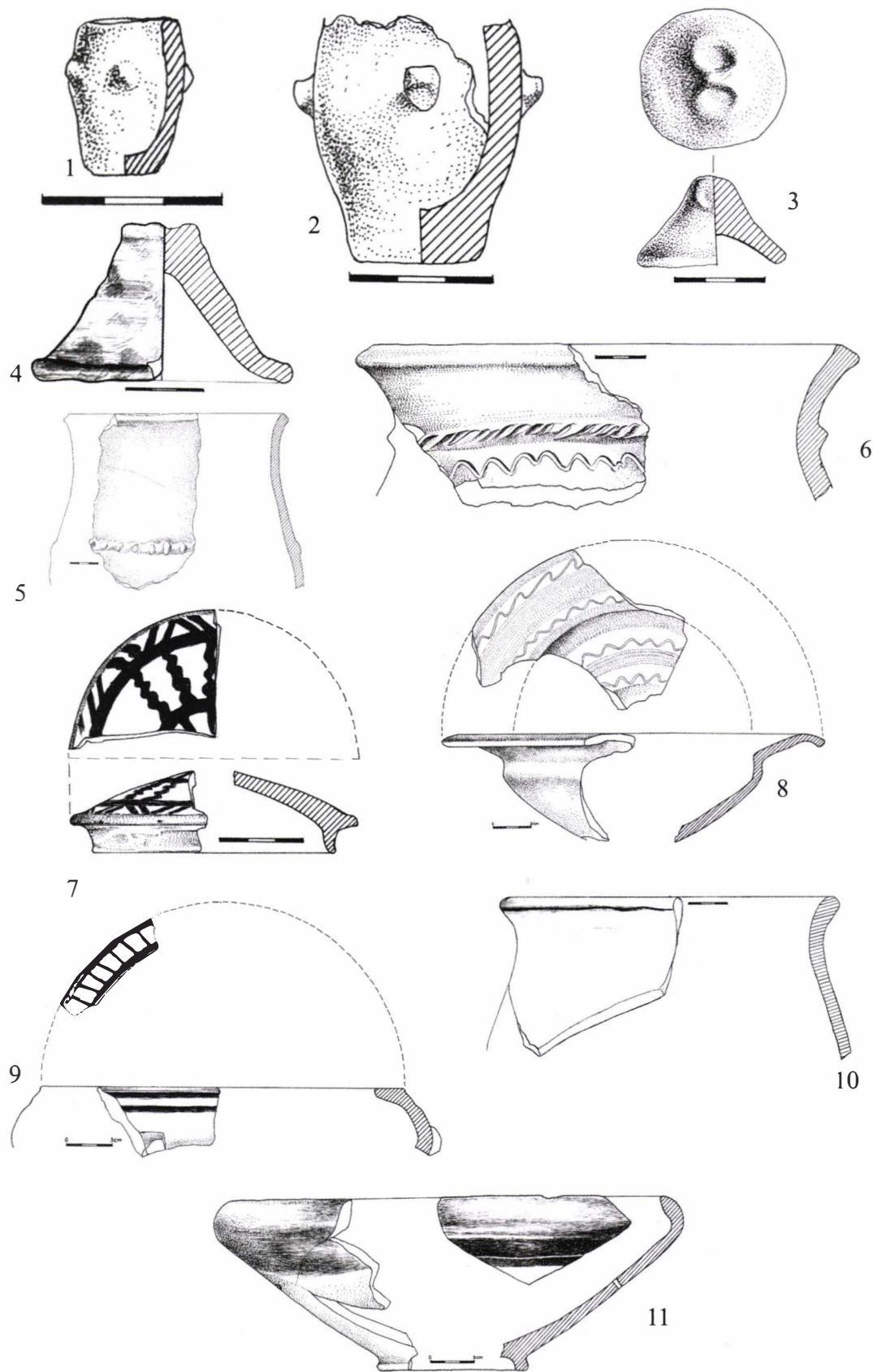


Fig. 11. Items from Complex no. 2 (after V. Sîrbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).

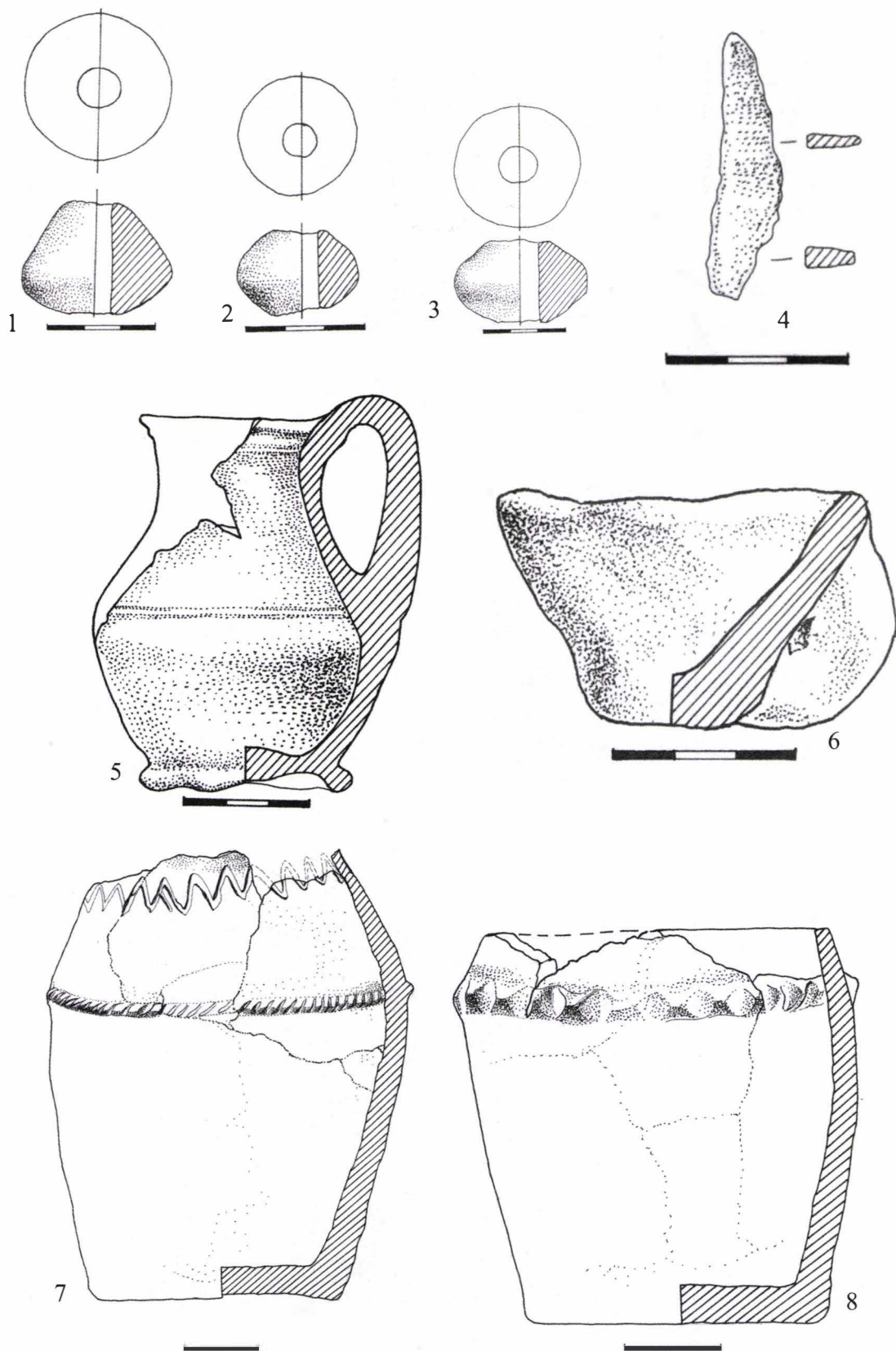


Fig. 12. Items from Complex no. 2A (after V. Sîrbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).



Fig. 13. Items from Complex no. 18 (after V. Sîrbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).



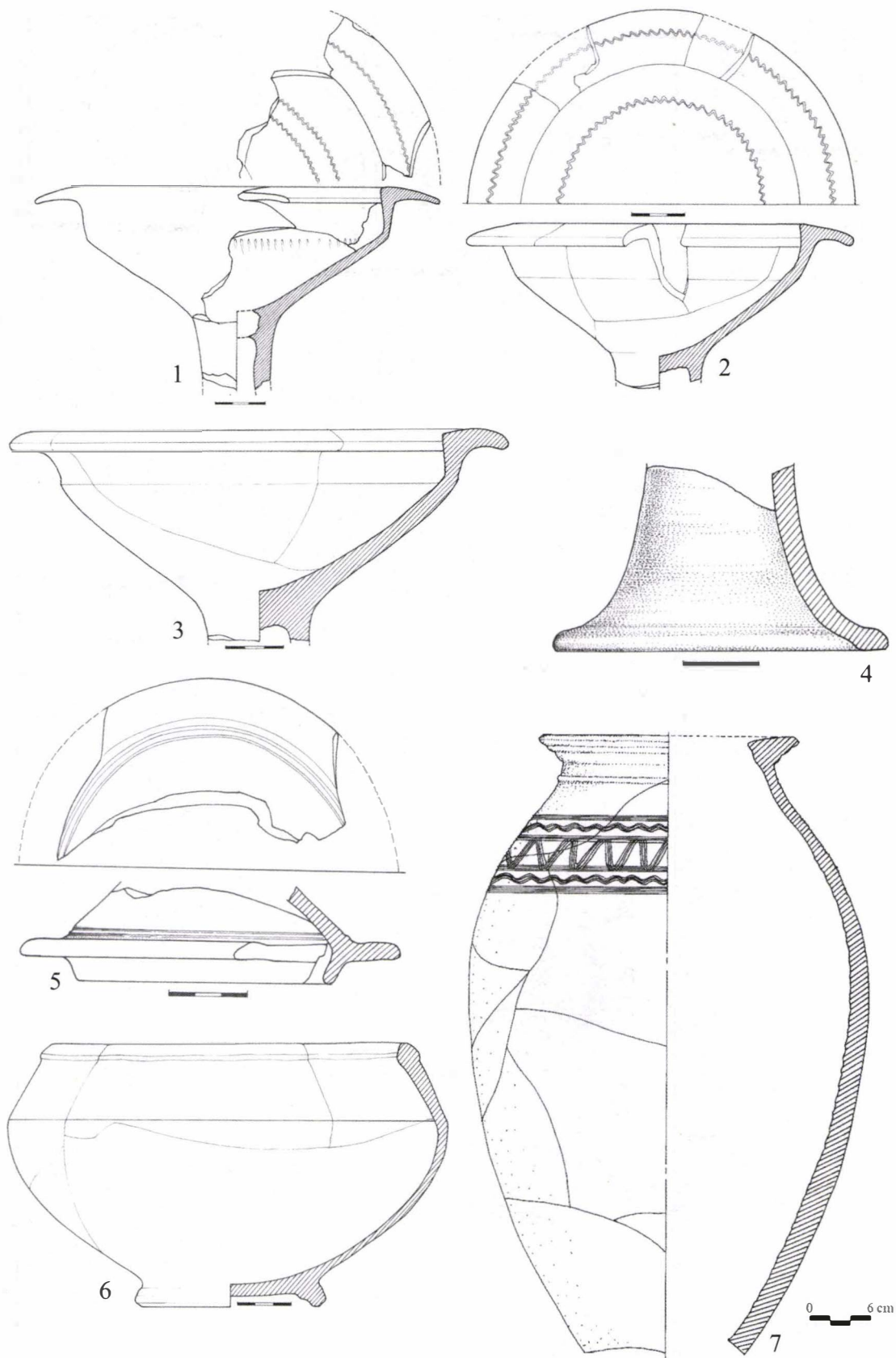


Fig. 14. Items from Complex no. 45 (after V. Sîrbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).

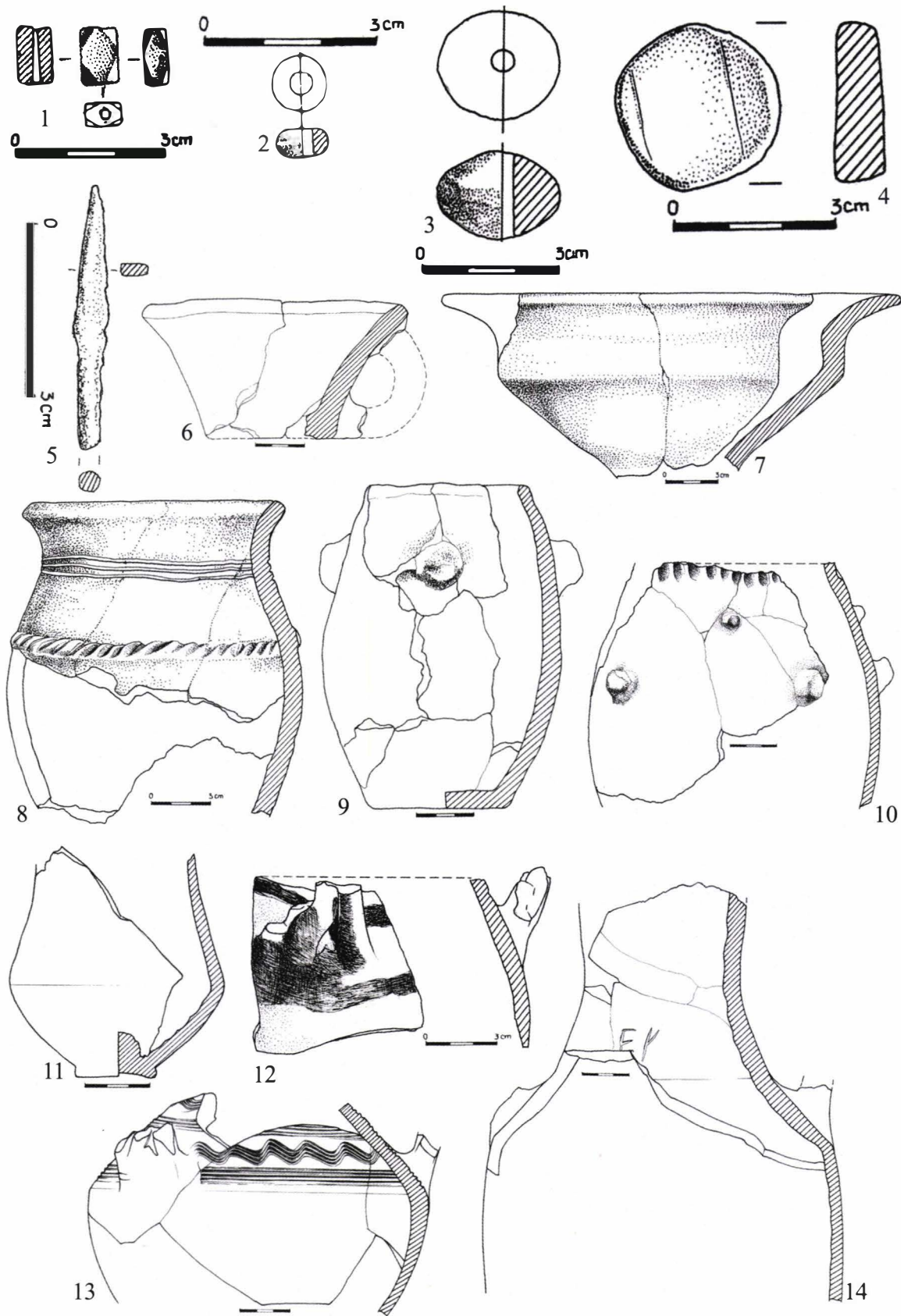


Fig. 15. Items from Complex no. 45 (after V. Sîrbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).

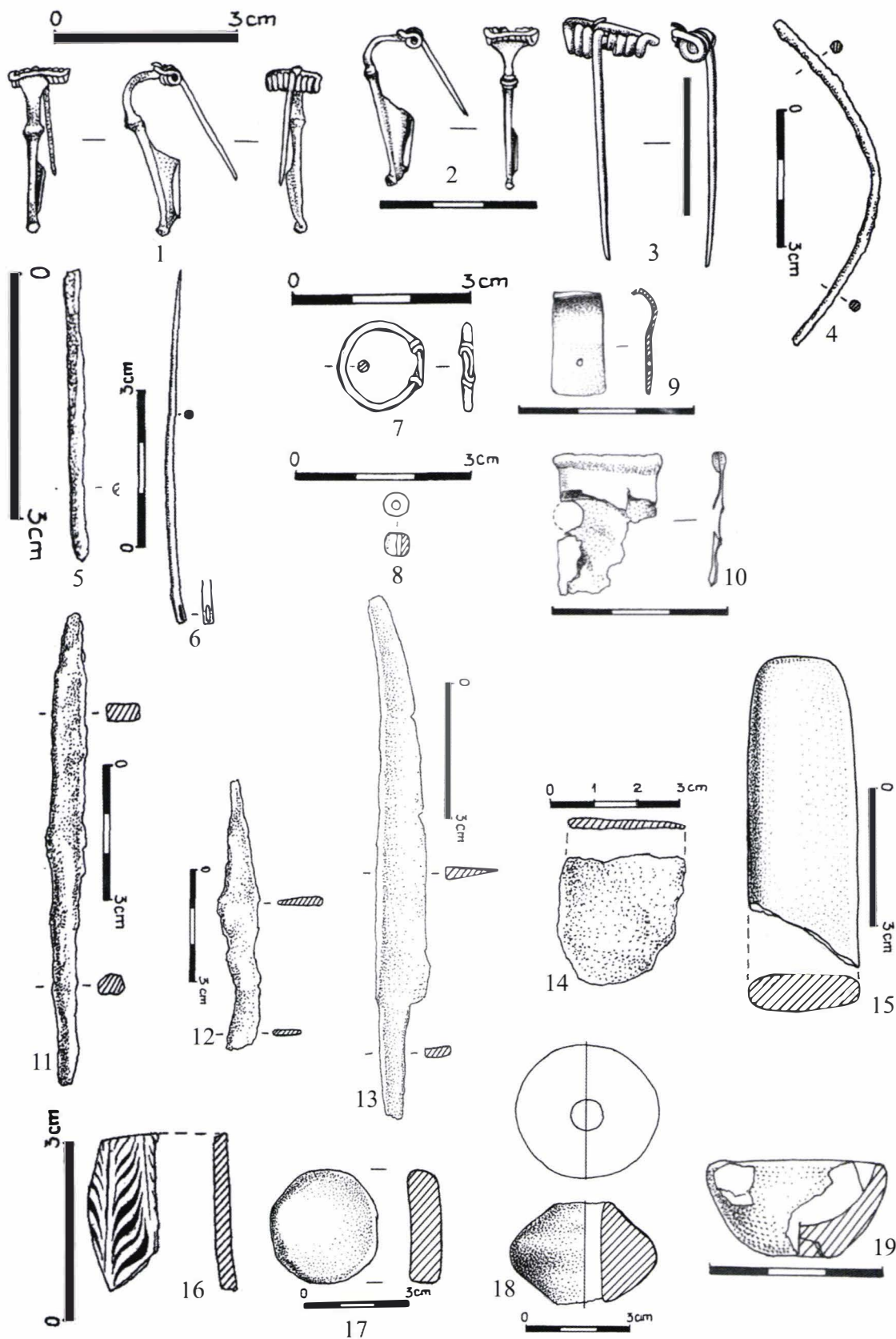


Fig. 16. Items from Complex no. 63 (after V. Sîrbu, S. Matei, V. Dupoi 2005).





1a



1b



1c



2a



2b



2c

Fig. 17. Terasse no. 1. 1a-c Complex no. 201; 2a-c Complex no. 206.