

Lăpuș II – Gáva I Discoveries in the Plain of Satu Mare

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The archaeological researches conducted over the last decade have led to the discovery of a new cultural horizon in the Plain of Satu Mare, dated in the late Bronze Age, after the end of Suci de Sus culture and before the beginning of the fully shaped Gáva inhabitation horizon. The first identification of this cultural horizon was made based on the extensive archaeological excavations carried out in the settlements of Petea–Csengersima – *Vamá*¹ and Lazuri – *Lubi tag*. Its presence can be well observed in the materials discovered in the settlement of Culciu Mare – *Sub Grădini* as well. This cultural horizon, named Lăpuș II–Gáva I could also be identified on the occasion of some smaller scale archaeological researches undertaken in the sites of Dorolț – *Pescărie/ Nagy Homokos* and Călinești-Oaș – *Strada Horburilor* (Pl.1/1), based on the materials collected from the surface of some settlements². The presentation of these late findings is likely to provide data on the composition of the inhabitation during the end of the 2nd millennium BC in the Plain of Satu Mare, providing connection elements with the Gáva I discoveries located to the west and to the north, respectively, with those of Lăpuș II type located to the east and to the south.

The settlement of Dorolț – *Pescărie/ Nagy Homokos* was investigated when arranging a small lake for fishing at its border. It is located on the terrace of a dried-up valley, on which a small lake was arranged in the spring of 2001. The small-scale rescue archaeological research aimed at investigating a small area (24 x 4 m). A refuse pit (Pl. 2/A) and a part of a burnt-clay platform, originated probably from a fired dwelling (Pl. 3/10-12) were researched in the uncovered surface. Both the archaeological complexes had a rich inventory. Judging from some specific shapes of vessels - the large, big-bellied amphora with hypertrophied protuberances and the low cup with greatly over-raised handle - they can be attributed to the horizon Lăpuș II – Gáva I. Ceramic fragments with excised decoration, of the Suci de Sus Ila type³, originate from the surface of this settlement.

The archaeological site of Călinești-Oaș is located on *Horburilor* Street, no. 473. Its existence was reported by Mr. Gavrau Vasile, the landowner. In the spring of 2006, he notified the County Museum of Satu Mare of the discovery of some pottery shards while performing some agricultural works. After checking them out, in the spring of 2006, we found that the materials brought to the surface originated from a single amphora. The area where the amphora was discovered was located on a gentle slope going down from the south-west foot of Hedi Mare Hill (Pl. 1/B). On May 1, 2006 along with Dan Pop and Zoltán Kádas, we opened a cassette of 2 x 3 m, in the impression of which we found two small pits (Pl. 2A / cas.1). The first of them contained fragments of the amphora that were partially removed by the discoverer (Pl. 5/1), while in the second one a half bowl was buried (Pl. 5/2). A year later, on March 12, 2007, Mr. Gavrau Vasile informed us that, while digging with a spade, he found again pottery fragments and a grinder. On March 16, 2007, a cassette was opened (Pl. 2/cas. 2), in which a small pit was discovered containing objects deposited into a vessel preserved up to the area of its maximum diameter⁴. Three larger-size archeological surveys were conducted in the period July 28 to August 4, 2007⁵, in order to establish the nature of the deposit (Pl. 2/S1, S2, S3). No other archaeological remains were discovered, except for some ceramic fragments present in the agricultural layer. On March 21, 2008 a new cassette was opened to the south of the previously studied area (Pl. 2/cas. 2)⁶. Four small pits were outlined below the agricultural

¹ Marta 2009, p. 54-93.

² Botiz–Togul Călugărițelor/ Apáczá Tag, Roșiori–Teglărie, Valea Vinului–Valea Lipăuțului.

³ Marta 2002, p. 128.

⁴ The archeological excavations were performed by R. Gindele, A. Ciprian, Z. Kádas and L. Marta.

⁵ The researches were attended by a group of volunteers from I. Slavici and M. Eminescu High Schools of Satu Mare, coordinated by their teacher, Octavian Onac.

⁶ The research team consisted of Babolcs Andrea, Mester Andrea, Kádas Zoltán and Liviu Marta.

layer, 25 cm deep, three of them containing fragments of vessels that were partially damaged by the agricultural works (complexes 4, 5 and 6).

Description of the archeological complexes:

Complex 1 – pit with round mouth, diameter of 60 cm, curved walls and bottom (maximum depth 20 cm) (Pl. 2). 49 ceramic fragments from the same amphora with those discovered by the owner (Pl. 5/1) were discovered in it. The exterior of the ceramic fragments is brick-like colored, with black spots and it is decorated with wide channels and ribs. It is not certain that the vessel was complete at the time of its deposition.

Complex 2 - pit with oval mouth (70 x 50 cm), detected at a depth of 25 cm (Pl. 2). The filling was brown-gray, with traces of ash and charcoal. The pit walls are slightly curved and the flat bottom occurs at a depth of 30 cm from the outline. Pottery fragments which reconstruct half of a deep bowl were deposited in the pit (Pl. 5/2).

Complex 3 – pit outlined at a depth of 25 cm. It used to contain the remains of an amphora buried in a vertical, upside down position (Pl. 2). The dimensions of the pit were similar to those of the amphorae deposited in it. The vessel, placed in an *in situ* position was preserved in the area located under the maximum diameter (Pl. 6/6). Numerous ceramic shards broken away from the amphorae were scattered nearby. Inside the vessel, in its upper part, there were fragments of two pots made of a porous paste (Pl. 6/1, 4). North of them, also inside of the amphora, there was a whole hand grinder (a fragment broke away while digging the land (Pl. 6/3). Another grinder was previously removed by the owner, while performing some agricultural works (Pl. 6/2). After removing the vessels, it was found that the pit had dimensions almost similar to those of the large amphorae in which the other objects were placed.

1.20 m south of the amphora found in the complex 3, at a depth of 15 to 30 cm, there was an accumulation of small sized stones and pottery fragments (diam. 5-10 cm). They were arranged in an approximately rectangular area with the dimensions of 120 x 30-40 cm.

Complex 4 – a 45 cm diameter pit, with curved walls. 48 ceramic shards originated from the lower part of an amphora, which could be restored only partially, were preserved in this pit (Pl. 5/3). The fragments of its upper part, numerous and small, suggest that the vessel was destroyed during the agricultural work (Pl.2). The lower part of the amphora was deposited on the bottom of the pit, with dimensions identical to those of the vessel.

Complex 5 – a 40 cm diameter pit, with 29 ceramic shards originated from an amphora deposited in a fragmentary state (Pl. 5/4). The pit also contained a ceramic fragment originating from the leg of a portable cooking vessel.

Complex 6 – agglomeration of pottery fragments originating from one vessel. They were located at 25 cm depth, immediately beneath the agricultural layer.

Complex 7 – pit identified in the sterile soil (-23 cm). It used to have a slightly oval mouth (56 x 47 cm), brown filling, with a lot of clay-and-straw mortar and fragments of burnt wood. The pit walls, oblique or slightly curved used to go 16 to 18 cm deep and the bottom of the pit used to be flat.

The vast majority of the vessels and objects discovered at Călinești-Oaș were deposited in small sized pits. In four of the cases, the pits were dug in order to place vessels (or parts of vessels) on their bottom, in an upright position (three amphorae and a bowl). The upper parts of the amphorae were probably destroyed during the agricultural work. Pit no. 4 contained fragments of an amphora, deposited piled up. The lack of any trace of a settlement in the discoveries area removes the possibility of considering the archaeological complexes of Călinești-Oaș as ritual deposits in settlements, such as those discovered in other sites from the same timeline frame⁷.

But the lack of human bones makes it difficult to clearly link the findings of Călinești-Oaș with the funeral field. It must be noted, however, that this interpretation cannot be completely excluded because the human bones are missing from most of the tumuli during the 2nd phase of Lăpuș necropolis, too. A large number of small pits containing whole or partially replenishable vessels (sometimes with the upper part cut off) are present in some of

⁷ Stapel 1999, p. 104-106; V. Szabó 2004, p. 86; Marta 2007; Marta 2009, p. 47.

the type 3 tumuli of Lăpuș⁸. The whole or fragmented grinders are well represented in the necropolis of Lăpuș or in the ritual deposit of Libotin⁹. The lack of tumulus from Călinești-Oaș may be due either to its absence from the very beginning or to its destruction due to repeated agricultural works, as in the case of the discovery of Libotin¹⁰.

The Cultural and Chronological Frame of the Discoveries

The materials found in the presented sites contain elements specific for the pottery present during the end of Reinecke Bz D stage, Ha A stage respectively in the Plain of Satu Mare. This pottery has close analogies with the early Gáva pottery in northeastern Hungary and northwestern Romania (the Plain of Carei), respectively with the pottery of Lăpuș II type located towards south-east (the Depression of Lăpuș and the Valley of Sălaj). Part of the vessels are brick-like colored on the inside and black on the outside (Pl. 3/2, 5, 10-12, 5/4), only a limited number of dishes/bowls being black on the inside and brick-like colored on the outside (Pl. 3/6, 4/2,3). One of the most specific shape for this type of discoveries is the amphora with wide rim, cylindrical neck decorated with wide horizontal channels (Pl. 3/10, 5/1), sometimes provided with small handles (Pl. 3/10). The hypertrophied protuberances (Pl. 3/2.10 to 12, 5/1,4, and 6/6) are specific for the amphorae in the I-st phase of Gáva culture¹¹, the cultural group Lăpuș (phase II), respectively¹². In the Plain of Satu Mare, they are present in the settlements of Petea–Csengersima¹³ and Lazuri¹⁴. This decorative element is found on amphorae of Gáva II phase, on a limited number, however¹⁵. Instead, handles like those appearing on the upper part of the amphora of Dorolț (Pl. 3/10), are present only in the Gáva I și Lăpuș II¹⁶ type pottery. As with other vessels assigned to Gáva I or Lăpuș II, the pottery discovered in the sites of Satu Mare have as specific decoration the wide horizontal channels on the neck or the vertical and oblique ones on the body. The associated presence of the structural and ornamental elements on the same vessel is likely to provide a dating of the amphorae during a period corresponding to the first phase of Gáva culture¹⁷. None of the amphorae on the sites assigned to Lăpuș II–Gáva I horizon contains ornaments specific for the Gáva II phase in the Plain of Satu Mare: registers of narrow channels, arranged in garland, horizontally, vertically or obliquely.

Another shape characteristic for the Lăpuș II–Gáva I inhabitation horizon is represented by the bowls with thickened inner rim, sometimes decorated with horizontal channels (Pl. 3/ 6.8 4/2.3). It has been found that this type of ware represents 50.8% of the total number of vessels present in the complexes of the Petea-Csengersima settlement¹⁸. Bowls / terrines with thickened inner lip are present in a large number in the Lăpuș II¹⁹ or Gáva I²⁰ type discoveries. The bowls with thickened inner lip continued to be used only on the early sites of Gáva II phase, but to a much smaller extent than in the sites of Gáva II phase²¹.

⁸ Kacsó 1990, p. 89.

⁹ Kacsó 1990, p. 81, 89, pl. 11/5.

¹⁰ Kacsó 1990, p. 91.

¹¹ Gávavencselő and Nagyálló (Kemenzei 1984, pl. 129/1, 130/1-2,7, 131/10,15, 133/1), Vajdacska (Kemenzei 1981, p. 151-159; Mozsolics 1985, p. 210-211, pl 158/1a-b), Borša (Demeterová 1986, pl. II/4), Bervenii and Carei (Németi 1990 fig. 6/1, 13/1).

¹² Lăpuș (Kacsó 2001, pl. 12-15).

¹³ Marta 2009, pl. 4/8.

¹⁴ Marta 2007, pl. 1. 8.

¹⁵ Poroszló (Patay 1976, pl. 2/1, Teleac (Vasiliev–Aldea–Ciugudean 1991, fig. 29/9,13-14,18), Grănicești (László 1994 fig. 29/7), Mediaș (Pankau 2004, pl. 31/13, 48/6,7).

¹⁶ Nagyálló (Kemenzei 1984, pl. 130/1,3-4), Tiszakeszi (Kemenzei 1984, pl. 134/14), Lăpuș (Kacsó 2001, pl. 20), Lazuri (Marta 2007, pl.1.8), Petea–Csengersima (Marta 2009, pl. 9/1).

¹⁷ Vasiliev 2008, p. 9.

¹⁸ Marta 2009, p. 70.

¹⁹ Libotin (Kacsó 1990, pl. 9/7), Suci de Sus–Pe șes (Kacsó 1993, pl. 1/4, 11, 7/3, 9/2, Kacsó 2003, pl. 1/1,12, 7/5, 9/6-8), Groșii Țibleșului (Kacsó 2003, pl. 13/5), Lăpuș–Cioncaș (Kacsó 2003, pl. 13/4), Lăpuș–Tinoasa (Kacsó 2003, pl. 8/6,7).

²⁰ Bervenii (Németi 1990, pl. 5/2,4).

²¹ Marta 2009, p. 70.

As in the case of the bowls, some of the pots of the Lăpuș II–Gáva I type discoveries have faceted rim (Pl. 4/4, 11). As decorative elements, they have small conical knobs on the upper side of the wall, below the mouth of the vessels (Pl. 6/1, 4). The pots in the presented sites as well as in the settlements assigned to Suciul de Sus and Lăpuș II–Gáva I cultures of Petea–Csengersima²², lack the thumb-impressed appliqué belt. In the Plain of Satu Mare it appeared only in a late phase of Gáva culture, as in the case of the Gáva–Holihrad findings of Moldova²³. The short cups with greatly lover-raised handle (Pl. 4/6) are specific for the Lăpuș II–Gáva inhabitation in the Plain of Satu Mare, type of vessel that has a large share in the category in the settlement of Petea–Csengersima²⁴. Fragments of portable cooking vessels found in Călinești-Oaş and Roșiori indicate that the channeled pottery found inside of them still belong to Lăpuș II–Gáva I phase, the cooking vessels being no longer used in the Gáva II pottery²⁵.

The Lăpuș II and Gáva I discoveries are closely related to the HaA chronological stage, the possibility of dating them even during a later period of Bz D phase, being an issue open to discussion. The possibility of dating during the last of these periods is quite difficult because they appear in some bronze pieces in both the Uriu–Ópályi deposits as well as in the Cincu–Suseni / Kurd ones. It is also the case of the disc-butted axe of Roșiori²⁶, of which we have reliable data that it was discovered on the outskirts of the settlement with pottery of the Lăpuș II–Gáva I type²⁷. The disc-butted axes are present in a large number in the Uriu–Ópályi type deposits. However, they continue to register an isolated occurrence in deposits of the Cincu–Suseni / Kurd type²⁸.

Considerations on the Discoveries of Lăpuș II–Gáva I Type

The discoveries of Lăpuș II–Gáva I type originate from eight places located in the Plain of Satu Mare. Seven of them are settlements while the discovery of Călinești-Oaş is a ritual type deposit, related either to the funerary field or to the worship / festive one.

The settlements of Lăpuș II–Gáva I type are located close to the Someș Valley, only the discovery of Călinești-Oaş being farther. The settlements of Culciu Mare and Roșiori are located close to the river (the former stream), the other ones being located near to some effluents of Someș River. The discoveries of Valea Vinului and Călinești-Oaş are located on hill areas while the settlement of Roșiori is located on a high plain area. The other discoveries are located on low plain or valley areas.

The Lăpuș II–Gáva I settlements have similar locations as the settlements of Suciul de Sus II phase, on five sites. A direct successive inhabitation of Suciul de Sus / Lăpuș II Gáva I type is not in discussion in the case of the settlement of Dorolț because this settlement is assigned to Suciul de Sus IIA phase. In contrast, for other settlements (Culciu Mare–*Sub Grădini*, Lazuri–*Lubi Tag*, Petea and Valea Vinului) this possibility is maintained, given that the Suciul de Sus type inhabitations from here were assigned to the final phase of the culture (IIB). Certain genetic links between the sites with excised-incised pottery (Suciul de Sus IIB or Lăpuș I) and the sites with black, channeled pottery (Lăpuș II or Gáva I) found within the necropolis of Lăpuș and in other sites of the area²⁹, or in the case of the settlement of Petea–Csengersima³⁰ could be brought into discussion also from the perspective of the large number of Lăpuș II–Gáva II settlements that are located on the same locations as the sites where the Suciul de Sus pottery was used.

²² Marta 2009, p. 88.

²³ László 1994, p. 93-94.

²⁴ Marta 2009, p. 74.

²⁵ Marta 2009, p. 68-69.

²⁶ Bader 1996, pl. 14/3.

²⁷ The place was indicated by Mr. Gh. Borșe, the discoverer of the axe (field researches performed on May 9, 2007, together with D. Dărăban, M. L. Nagy and J. Bakos).

²⁸ Vulpe 1970, p. 88-89, 96-98; Mozsolics 1985, p. 19.

²⁹ Kacsó 1975, p. 62-63; Kacsó 2001, 235-236.

³⁰ Marta 2009, p. 88-89, 91.

The comparing of the pottery in the Plain of Satu Mare to that of the sites in the neighboring regions shows that it is very similar to the pottery of Lăpuș II and Gáva I phases. The differences that appear in the pottery of these groups are minor, being attributable to the bordering cultural environments or to the local heritage expressed by each of the ceramic lots from the various regions on the lower stream of Crasna and Somes, the basin of Upper Tisa, respectively. The main elements individualizing the pottery of Upper Tisa region are as follows: the amphorae with a single row of protuberances, decorated with wide channels or ribs, several types of bowls that have the inner lip thickened and are decorated with horizontal (never oblique) channels or facets, the short cups decorated with knobs and fitted with a greatly over-raised handle. Besides these main elements, there are other elements clearly individualizing the pottery in the Upper Tisa as compared to the pottery in the neighboring cultural environments: Igrîța (Bihor area), pre-Gáva (the area of Middle Tisa) or the discoveries of Cugir–Band type (Transylvania). The pottery in Satu Mare area provides a number of common elements between Gáva I and Lăpuș II types of pottery, which raises the question of assigning them to the same cultural horizon, well individualized as compared to the surrounding cultural environments. At the same time, these pottery elements clearly differentiate the discoveries of Lăpuș II–Gáva I type from the previous inhabitation of Gáva II type.

In the Plain of Satu Mare, a continuation of a Lăpuș II–Gáva II type of settlement during Gáva II phase can be considered only for the settlement *Lubi Tag* of Lazuri. In fact, starting from this point, major changes in the material culture can be noticed, even if the use of channeled pottery continues. In addition to a substantial increase of the black / red dichromate fired pottery, new ceramic shapes and decorations appear, such as the amphorae with cone-shaped mouth that start being decorated with garland-shaped channels or the vessels with large lobes on the rims, decorated with wave-shaped incised bands. A new element that occurs in the Gáva II type pottery is the bowls with oblique-elongated channels / facets as predominant decoration. Even though there are some transmitted ceramic elements - the differences between the types of ceramic or metal parts, respectively the differences in the types of deposits³¹, or the emergence of the large, fortified settlements specific to Gáva II phase – indicate that there are major differences between the two phases assigned to Gáva culture that could be attributed to more than a simple transformation of the material culture.

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³¹ In the case of the bronze deposits, there is a shifting from the deposits of the Cincu-Suseni/Kurd type, with many fragmented pieces, to the ones of Turia–Jupalnic and Mograd–Tăuteu/ Hajduböszörmény types, in which the complete metallic pieces are predominant. Similar transformations can be observed with respect to the ceramic deposits as well: if in the Upper Tisa Basin there is a large number of deposits with fragmented items during Ha A stage (both in settlements and in necropolis), during Gáva II phase the deposits of complete vessels are predominant (Marta 2009, p. 86-87, 102-103).

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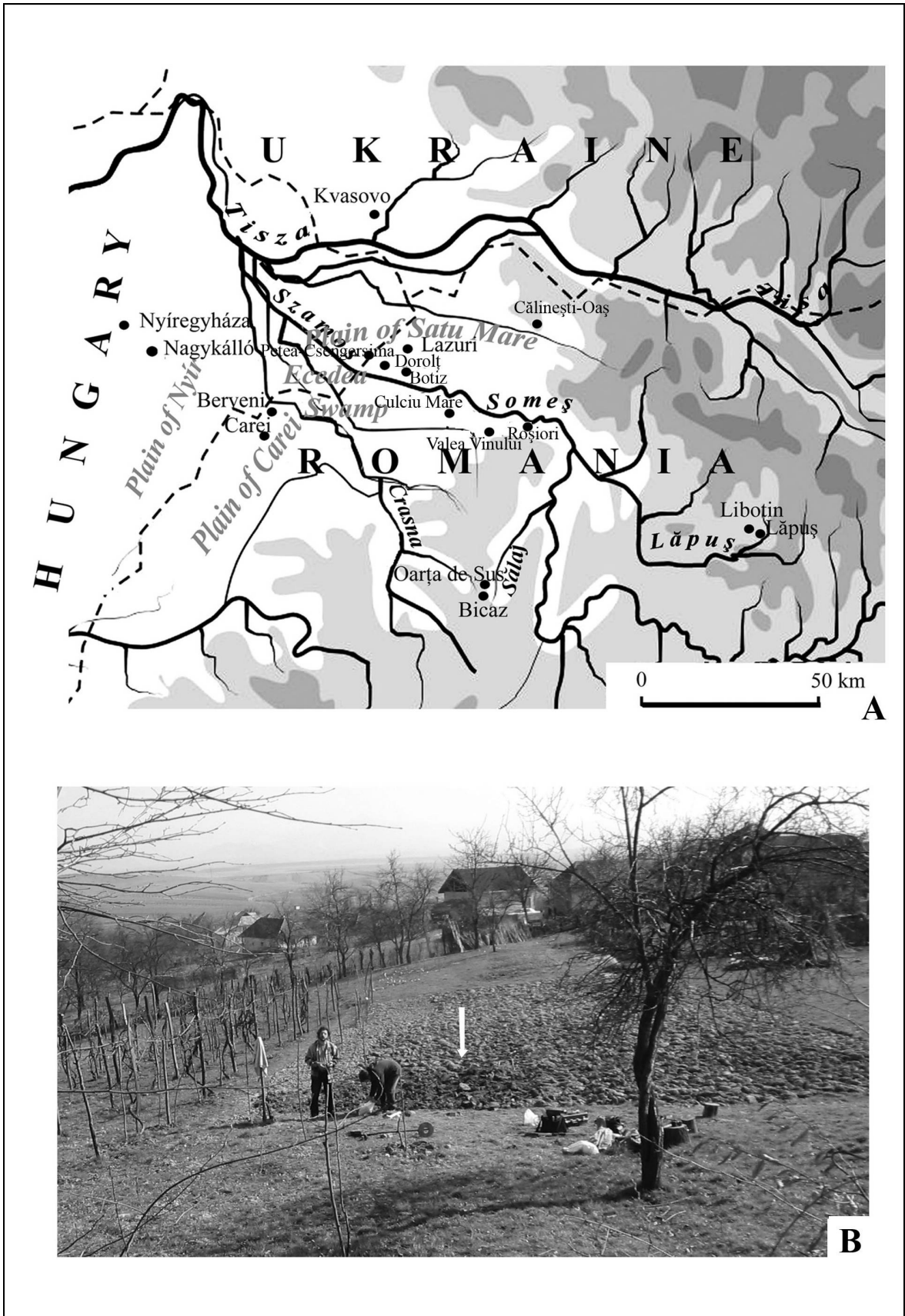


Plate 1. A) Sites containing finds of type Lăpuș II and Gáva I that have been mentioned in the text. B) Călinești - Oaș. The discovery site.

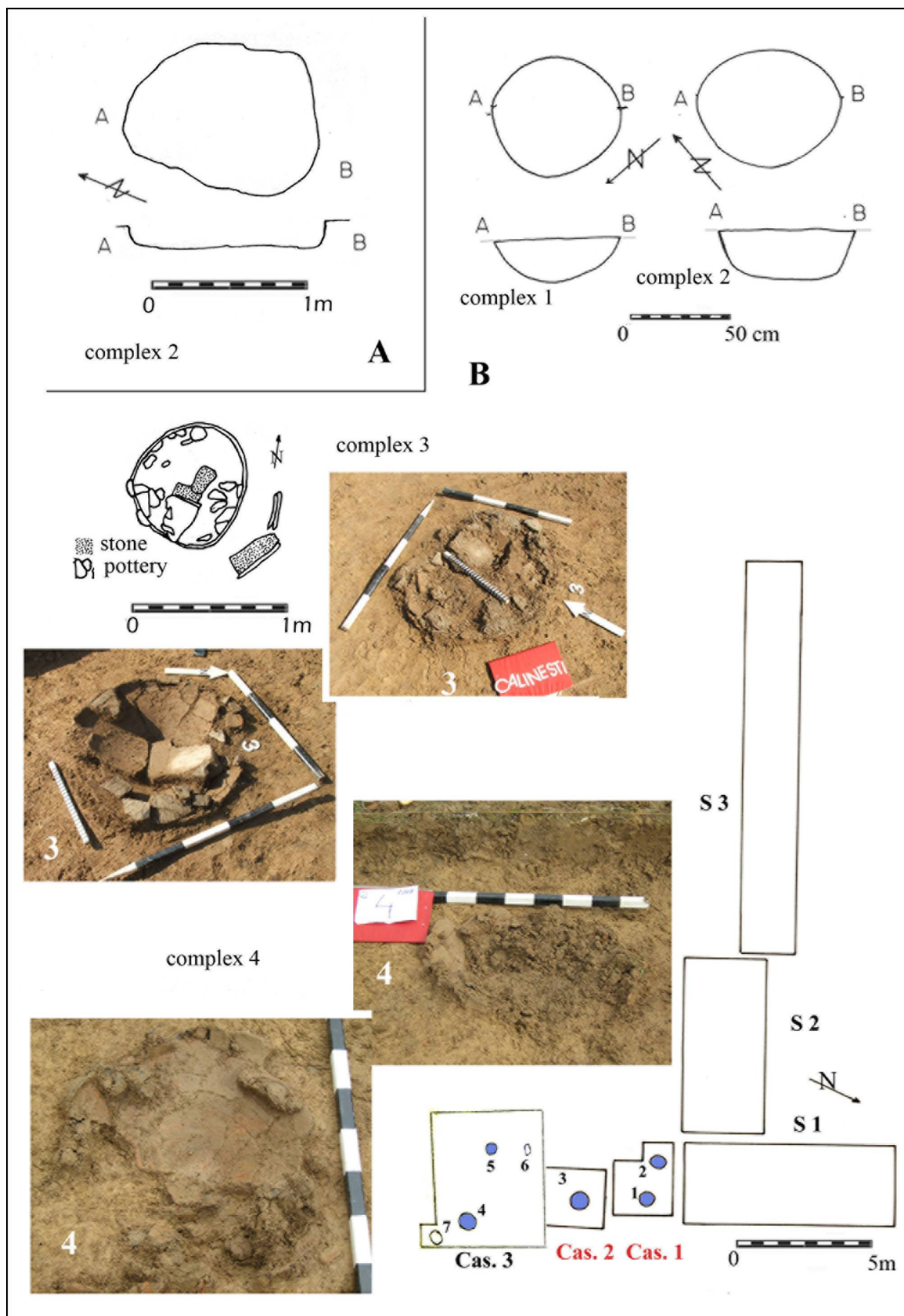


Plate 2. A) Dorolț – Complex 2. B) Călinești - Oaş. Plan of the excavations, drawings and photos of the discovered archeological complexes.

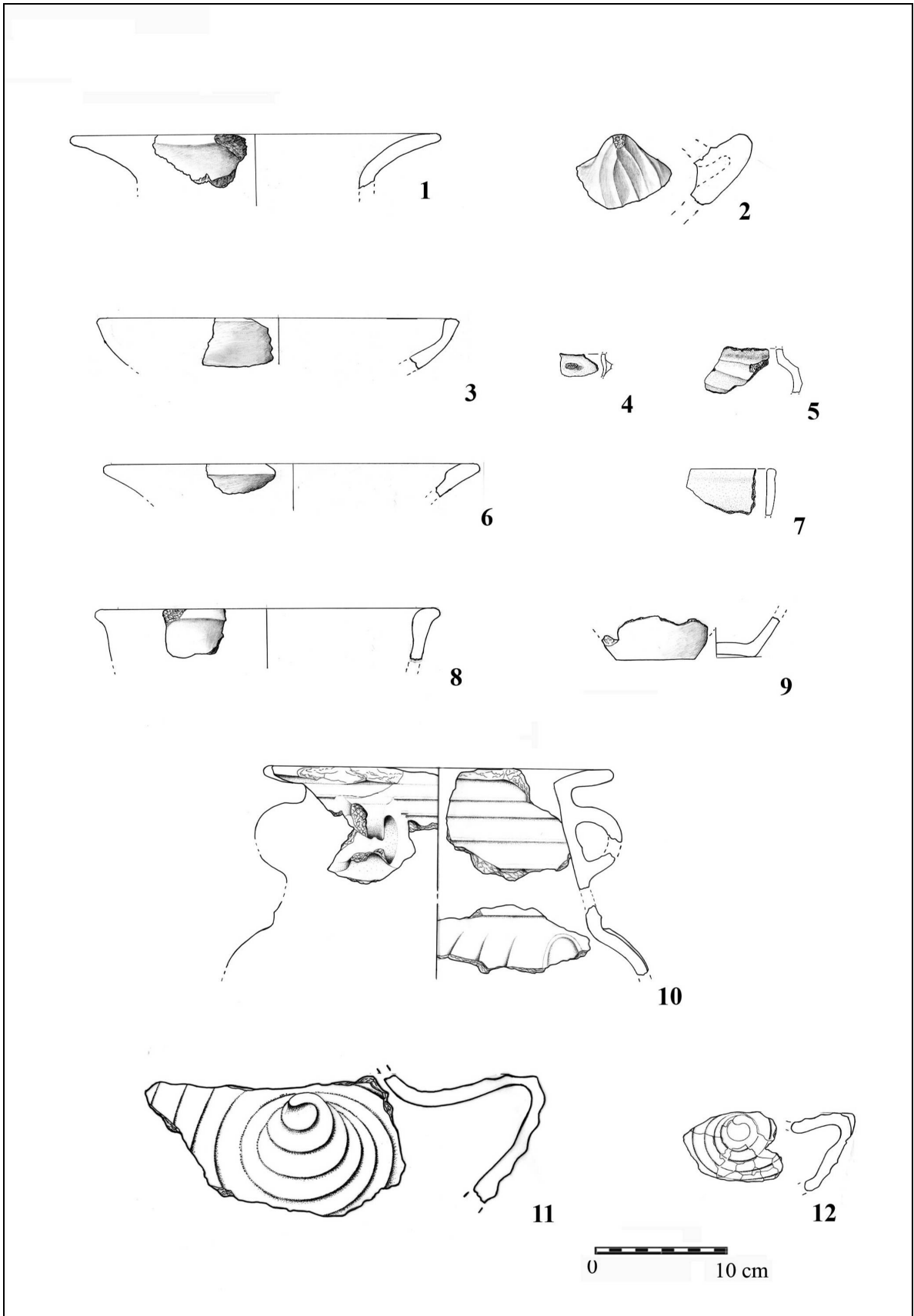


Plate 3. 1-9 Botiz; 10-12 Dorolț- Complex 1.

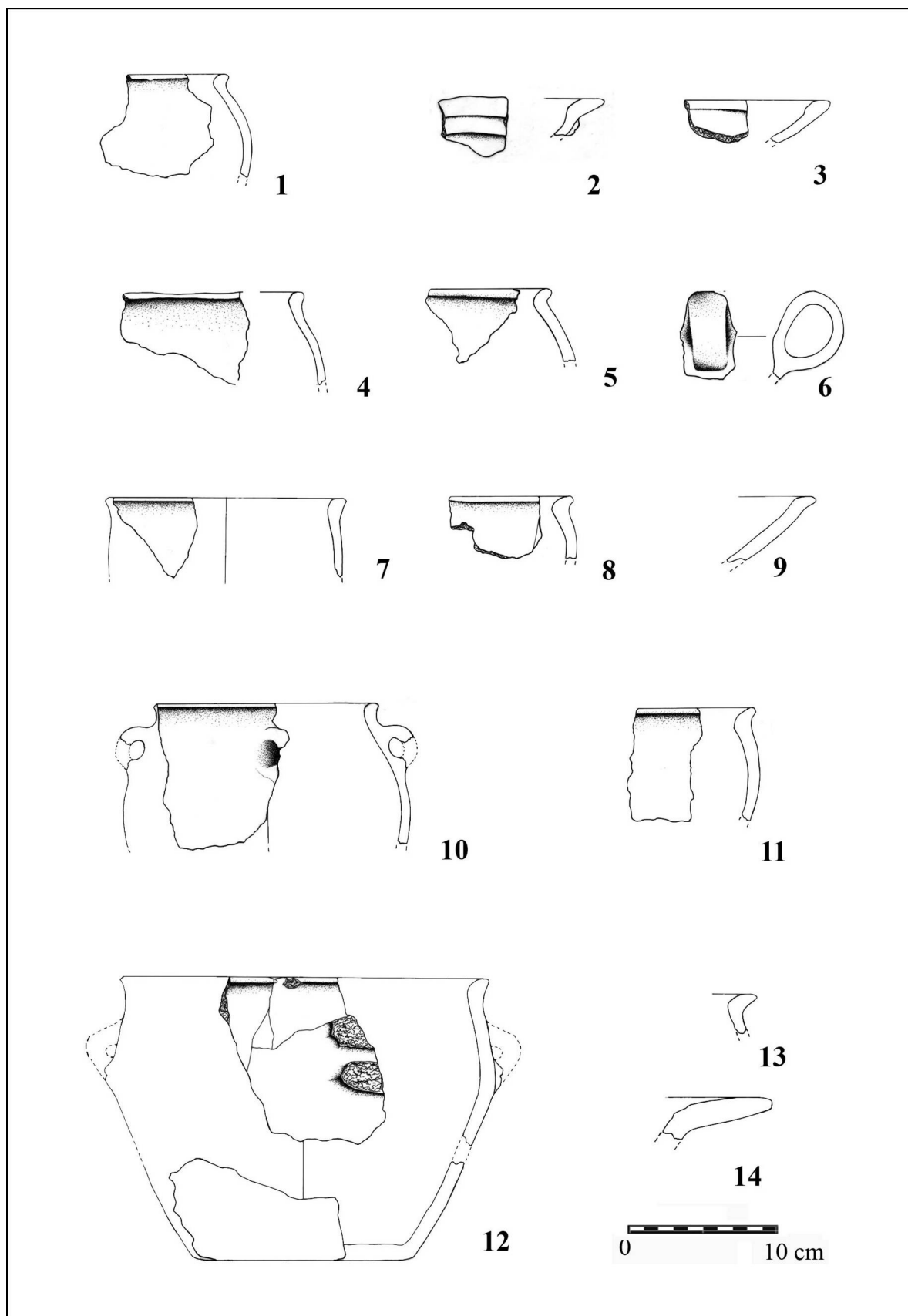


Plate 4. Dorolț – Complex 2.

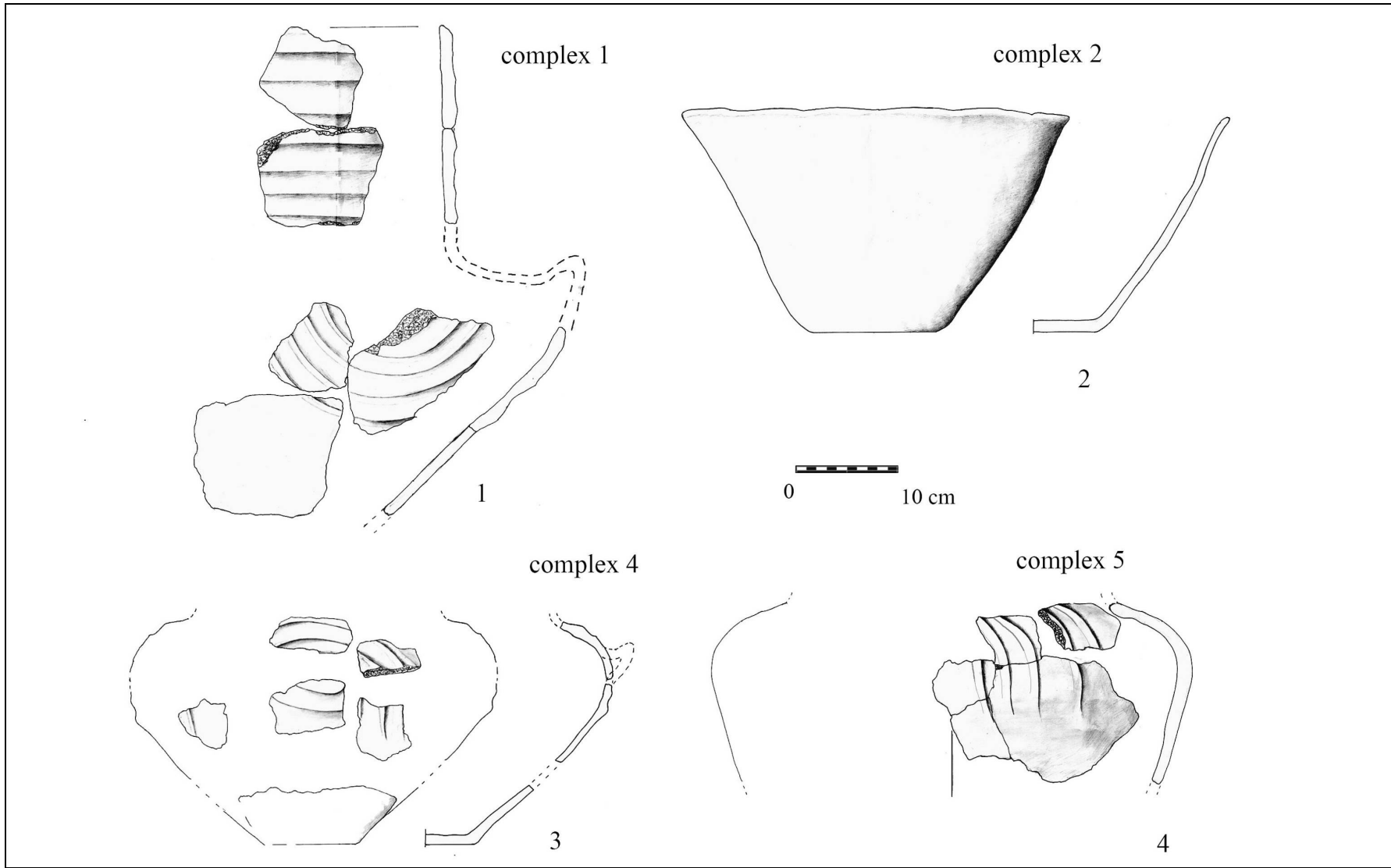


Plate 5. Călinești - Oaș.

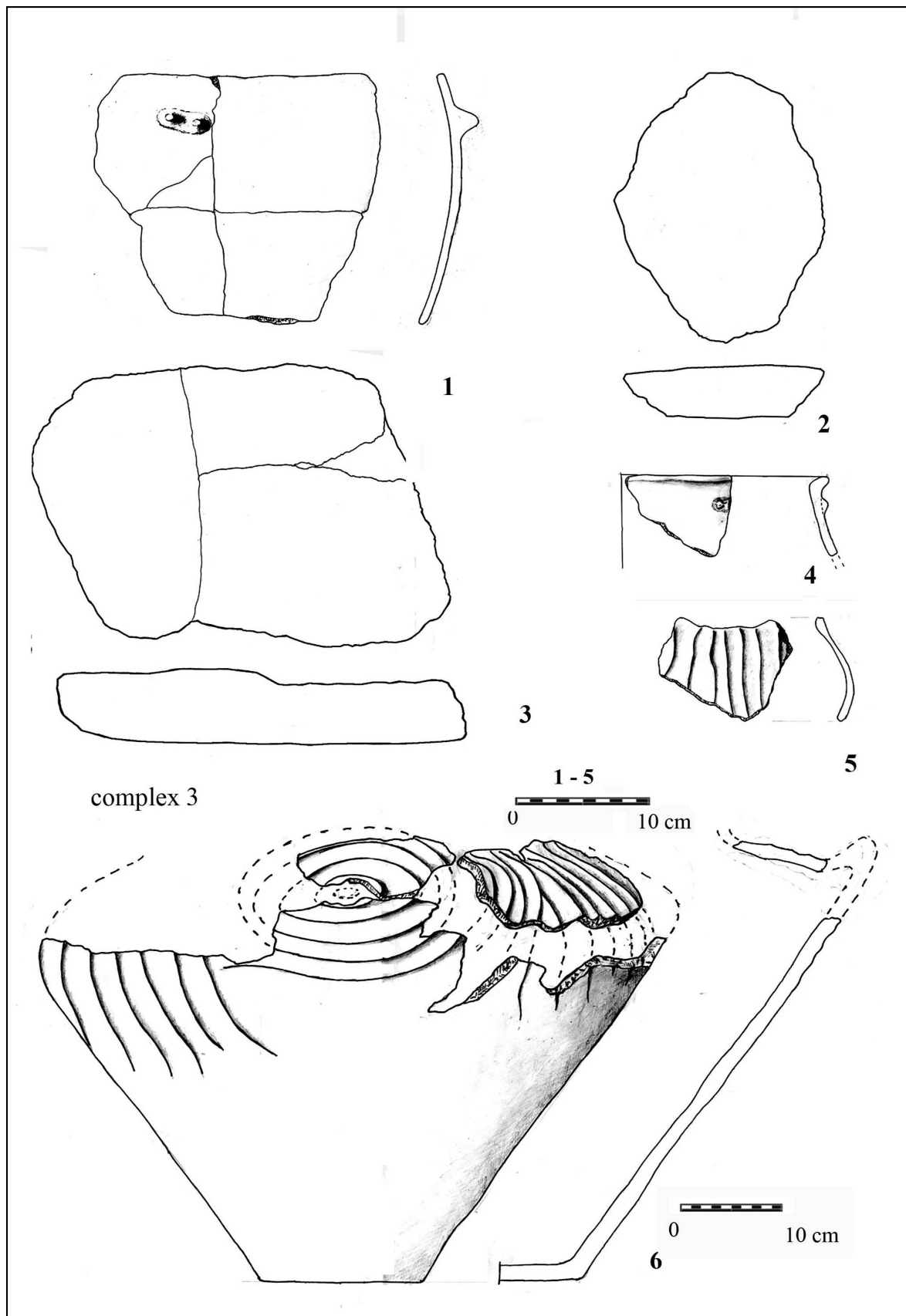


Plate 6. Călinești - Oaș. 1, 4-6 pottery, 2-3 stone.