

# NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES AT MORUNGLAV – GURA IAȘULUI / LA HOTAR, OLT COUNTY (PRELIMINARY STUDY)

Florin CIULAVU<sup>\*</sup>, Mihaela BLEOANĂ<sup>\*\*</sup>

**Abstract:** In an intrusive archaeological diagnosis made at Morunglav (Olt County), caused by the discovery with the metal detector of two ancient silver coins, another 12 coins were discovered – Celtic imitations after the Macedonian tetradrachms of the Philip II type, a Roman brooch, a pendant from a silver earring dating from the early Middle Ages (11th–12th centuries), but also ceramic fragments that can be chronologically framed in the early Bronze Age. Through this discovery, a new archaeological site at Morunglav was to be introduced in the National Archaeological Repertoire, located on the high terrace of the Olteț River, at the border between the localities of Morunglav and Comănești.

**Keywords:** Morunglav, Bronze Age, Celtic coins, Roman era, early Middle Ages

Following a discovery with the metal detector of two ancient silver coins, at Morunglav – *Gura Iașului* (Morunglav Forest, Drumul Dealului, La Hotar) (**pl. 1/1–2**), in February 2022, the steps were taken to obtain an archaeological diagnostic authorization, in order to recover all the objects and the archaeological context, but also to delimit the archaeological site, in order to include it in the National Archaeological Collection. The discoverer of the two coins – passionate about metal detection, announced the authorities, after discovering the first two pieces and marking with sticks the places where the detector sounded (**pl. 2/2**).

The discovery was made on the high terrace of the Olteț River, in a wooded area, close to the edge of the terrace (**pl. 1/2; 2/1**). The intrusive archaeological diagnosis (**pl. 2/3; 3/1–2**) was concentrated in the area where the metal detector sounded, with dimensions of 5 × 2 m (10 sqm) (**pl. 5**). There were discovered materials from the early Bronze Age (ceramics), the Antiquity (monetary hoard and a brooch) and the early Middle Ages (pendant from an earring<sup>1</sup>).

From the area where the mentioned materials were discovered, no other discoveries made in the course of archaeological research are known. Furthermore, a discovery made with the metal detector, in the same forest, reveals a Roman ring with *gema*<sup>2</sup>, found about 1.5 km to the north.

Nearby, in the area of Morunglav, discoveries were also reported. From the second Iron Age, it is known a Dacian fortress, identified by surface research conducted by Octavian Toropu<sup>3</sup>, being located on a promontory with two steep sides, which was fortified in the north-eastern part

<sup>\*</sup> Olt County Museum; florinciulavu@gmail.com.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Olt County Museum; mihaela.bleoanca@yahoo.com.

<sup>1</sup> The object is to be studied and published separately.

<sup>2</sup> An intrusive archaeological diagnosis was made at the site of the ring, and no other archaeological materials or traces of habitation were discovered. The research team was formed by Mihaela Bleoancă – person in-charge, Florin Ciulavu – collective member (MJO).

<sup>3</sup> Toropu 1969–1970, p. 5–7.

with ditch and vallum<sup>4</sup>. An archaeological survey was conducted by Constantin Preda in 1973, the discoveries being only mentioned<sup>5</sup>. The site is also mentioned by Florentina Preda, Petre Gherghe, Dragoş Măndescu, Cătălin Borangic and Cătălin Nicolae Pătroi<sup>6</sup>.

Two more monetary hoards are also known in the locality. The first dates from the 16th–17th centuries, discovered in 1955 on a path that connected the localities of Morunglav and Călu. In a leather bag, 24 coins were discovered: 18 Dutch thalers and six pieces issued by the city of Embden<sup>7</sup>. The second was buried in the eighteenth century, containing 161 Ottoman silver coins; it was discovered in 1977<sup>8</sup>.

The general purpose of the archaeological diagnosis was to highlight the archaeological heritage present in the place and in the proximity of the place where the two coins were discovered<sup>9</sup>. The particular goals of the research were a better understanding of the discovered archaeological heritage, its analysis and publication from a scientific point of view.

The recorded discoveries fall into four historical epochs, as follows: the Early Bronze Age (**pl. 7/1–7; 8/9–17**), the Celtic Age (**pl. 6/1–2**), the Roman Era (**pl. 6/3**) and the Early Middle Ages.

The sounding with the dimensions of 5x2 m shows the following stratigraphy (**pl. 4/1–2**): 0-0,16/0,19 m – yellowish-brown (vegetal) layer with ceramics, coins and brooch; 0,16/0,19-0,32/0,34 m – yellow layer with few ceramic materials and coins; 0,32/0,34-0,50/0,54 m – loamy yellow layer (archaeologically sterile).

During the archaeological diagnosis, atypical ceramic fragments were discovered, which, according to the fabric composition, can be attributed to the early Bronze Age (**pl. 7/1–7; 8/9–15**), a polisher made of stone (**pl. 8/16**) and a whetstone (**pl. 8/17**), which probably belong to the same period. The identified ceramic material is in a fragmentary state, it lacks décor, and much of what has been preserved is part of the body of some vessels. However, the presence of a few rims and bases allows us to identify some forms of vessels. Ceramic fragments that fall into the category of fine and coarse ware could be identified.

*The lithic equipment* discovered here is represented by a polisher (**pl. 8/16**), which was most likely used for finishing the vessels, being irregularly shaped, brown in color, showing traces of use at the top and on the edges, being sharp at the tip. Another piece that belongs to this category is represented by a river stone that was used for sharpening (whetstone) (**pl. 8/17**), of approximately circular shape, having a dark-gray color, and on the flat side, traces of wear are observed.

*The bowls* (**pl. 7/4; 8/9, 11**) were identified in very small numbers. In the research carried out by us, there were also found some ceramic fragments, having arched sides and flat base, the fabric is brick-red, having in its composition crushed quartz, pebble sand and crushed ceramics; the décor is missing.

*The conical vessels* (**pl. 7/1, 3, 5, 7; 8/12, 13, 14, 15**) are represented either as bowls or medium-sized vessels. This type of vessels have a conical body, tilting walls and a flat or everted rim. The colour varies from brick-red to yellowish-brown or grayish-brown. The fabric has in its composition quartz, large-grained sand and crushed ceramics. The décor is missing.

*The biconical vessels* (**pl. 7/2, 6; 8/10**) are medium in size, having a cylindrical neck, reverted or flat lip, bulging body, a conical lower part and a flat base. The fabric is brick-red and

<sup>4</sup> Cărăbişi 2015, p. 332–333.

<sup>5</sup> Preda 1986, p. 114.

<sup>6</sup> Preda 1980, p. 61; Gherghe 2001, p. 81; Măndescu 2010, p. 110–111; Gherghe 2012, p. 16; Borangic 2017, p. 103; Pătroi 2020, p. 212.

<sup>7</sup> Rădulescu 2013, p. 107–111.

<sup>8</sup> Ionescu 2013, p. 213.

<sup>9</sup> Steps have been taken to include the site in the National Archaeological Repertoire (RAN code 127634.01).

grayish-brown, having in its composition quartz, sand with large grain and crushed ceramics. The décor is missing.

From this area, there are not known, in the specific literature, the discoveries attributed to the early Bronze Age. In general, from the current territory of Olt County there are few points with discoveries from this period: Brebeni<sup>10</sup>, Brâncoveni<sup>11</sup>, Cârlogani<sup>12</sup>, Criva de Sus<sup>13</sup>, Drăgăneşti-Olt<sup>14</sup>, Găneasa<sup>15</sup>, Perieţii de Jos<sup>16</sup>, Rădeşti<sup>17</sup>, Sineşti<sup>18</sup>, Slatina<sup>19</sup>, Văleni<sup>20</sup>, Voineasa<sup>21</sup>.

The coins discovered are imitations of tetradrachms of the Philip II type, probably made during the 3rd century AD. In total, 15 such pieces were discovered<sup>22</sup>, of which five outside the survey (including the two originally discovered) and 10 pieces inside the sounding (**pl. 5**). Being an intrusive diagnosis, it could not be made on a very large area, which is why the area where most of the coins were concentrated was investigated (10 sqm). From the specialized literature, it is also known an imitation of Philip II type tetradrachma, discovered on the territory of Olt County, in Cârlogani<sup>23</sup>, and from Voineasa, there are mentioned other coins-imitations of the same type<sup>24</sup>. For discussions on imitations of Philip II coins, see Iudita Winkler<sup>25</sup>, Constantin Preda<sup>26</sup> and Tiberius Părpăuţă<sup>27</sup>. Most of the pieces of this type on the territory of Romania are known from discoveries south of the Carpathians<sup>28</sup>.

Within the same archaeological diagnosis, a Roman brooch (**pl. 6/3**) was discovered, at a depth of 5 cm, of the type with the foot turned underneath<sup>29</sup>. The foot is short, fragmentary and no longer has the portagraph. From a chronological point of view, the piece can be framed in the last decades of the 2nd–3rd centuries AD<sup>30</sup>.

Taking into account the archaeological and numismatic materials discovered, it is certain that the investigated area is very rich, and it is necessary that after the inclusion of the site in the National Archaeological Collection, the steps to be continued in order to research the entire terrace, where, based on the archaeological data known so far, we assume that there are several sites from Prehistory and Antiquity.

<sup>10</sup> Butoi 1999, p. 7–8; Butoi 2013, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Butoi 1999, p. 10; Butoi 2013, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Butoi 1999, p. 10; Butoi 2013, p. 11–12.

<sup>13</sup> Butoi 1999, p. 21; Butoi 2013, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> Butoi 2013, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> Butoi 2013, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Butoi 1999, p. 20; Butoi 2013, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Butoi 1999, p. 20; Butoi 2013, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> Butoi 1999, p. 22; Butoi 2013, p. 20.

<sup>19</sup> Berciu, Butoi 1961, p. 139; Butoi 1999, p. 24; Butoi 2013, p. 22.

<sup>20</sup> Butoi 1999, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Butoi 1999, p. 35; Butoi 2013, p. 29.

<sup>22</sup> The coins are to be studied and published separately.

<sup>23</sup> Purece 2003, p. 127–128; p. 133, fig. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Butoi 1999, p. 34.

<sup>25</sup> Winkler 1966, p. 75–89.

<sup>26</sup> Preda 1998. Also see Munteanu 2000–2001, p. 419–426.

<sup>27</sup> Părpăuţă 2006, p. 47–49.

<sup>28</sup> Preda 1998, p. 138.

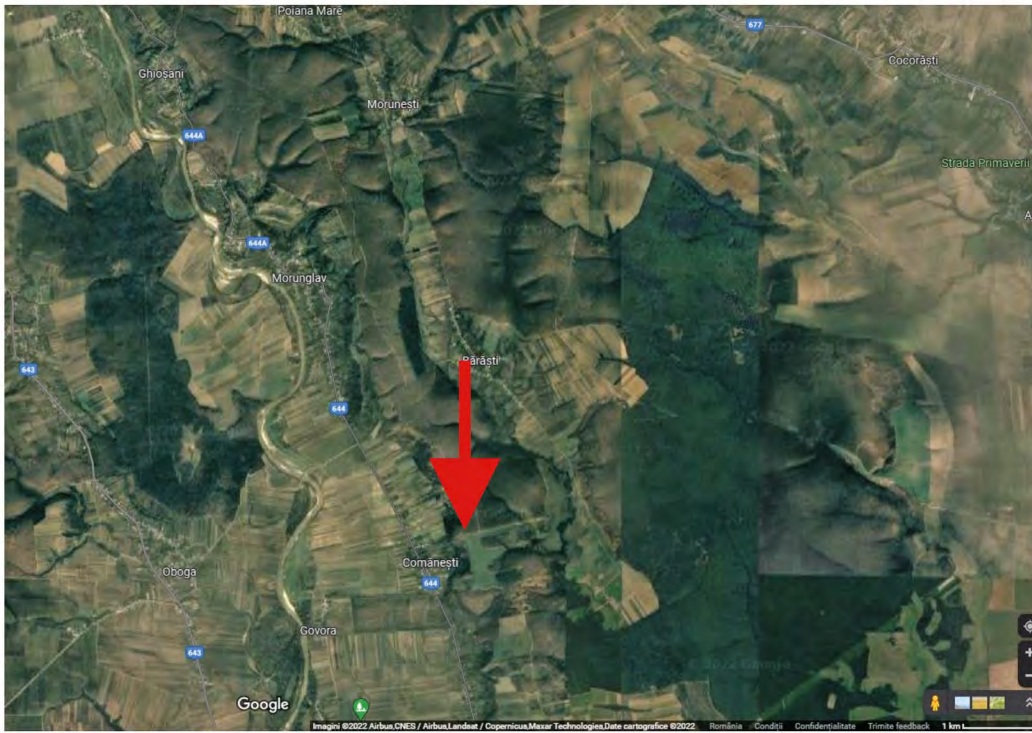
<sup>29</sup> Cociş 2004, p. 142–143, tip 37a; pl. CXXXVI/1882–1889.

<sup>30</sup> The expertise of the piece was made by Sorin Cociş, PhD, whom we thank.

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2

Pl. 1. Framing in the area: a. on a satellite map (taken from Google Maps); b. on a photograph (photographer: Florin Ciulavu).





1



2



3

Pl. 2. Aspects of the place of the coins discovery (photographer: Florin Ciulavu).





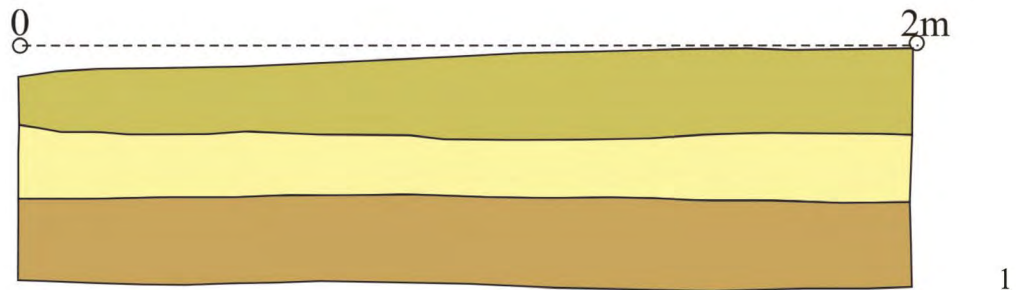
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Pl. 3. Archaeological sounding (photographer: Florin Ciulavu).



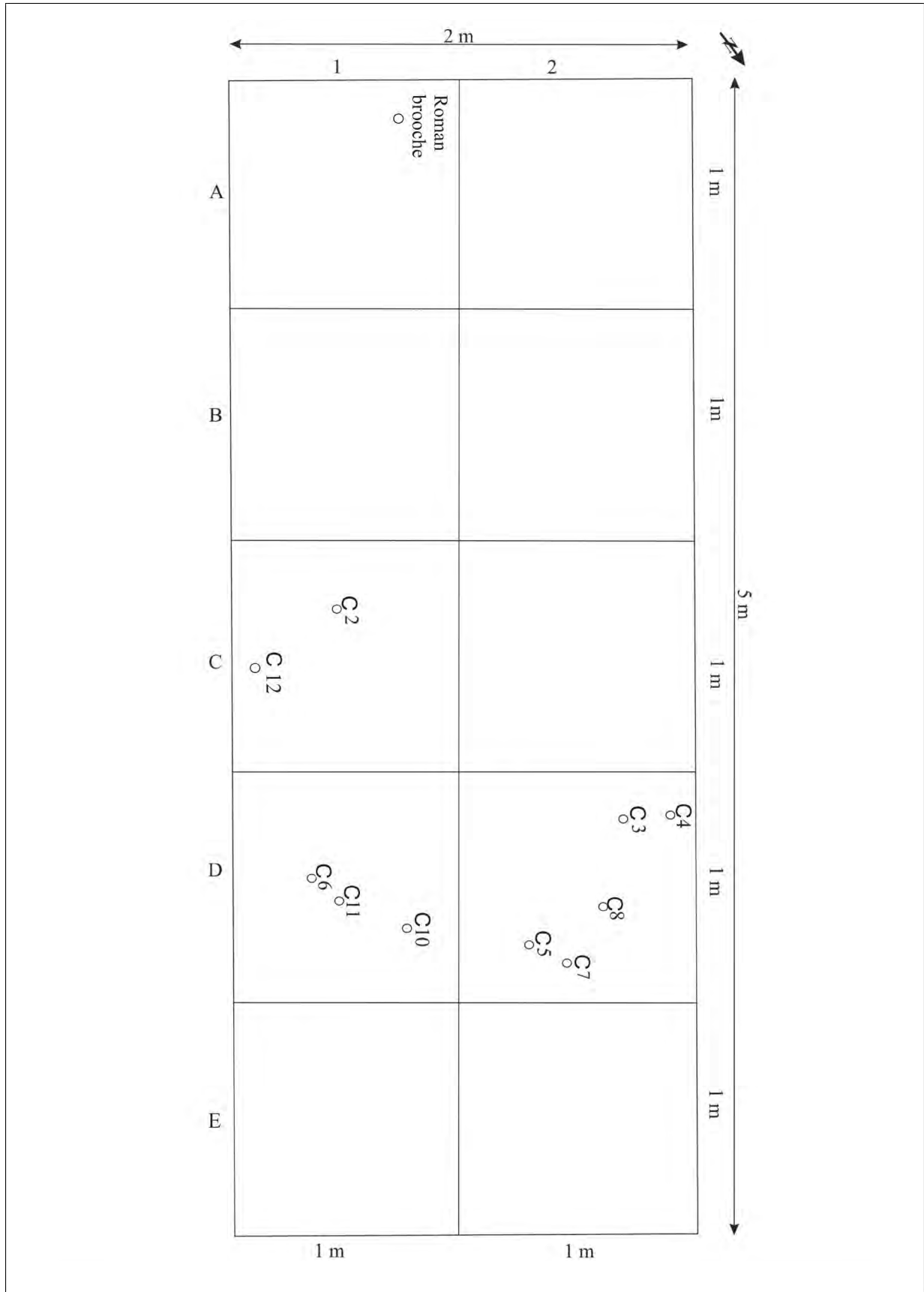
**LEGENDĂ:**

-  Strat brun-gălbui (vegetal) cu ceramică, monede și fibulă
-  Strat galben cu puține materiale (ceramică)
-  Strat galben lutos (steril)



Pl. 4. Aspects of the research (SW profile): 1. sketch; 2. photograph.



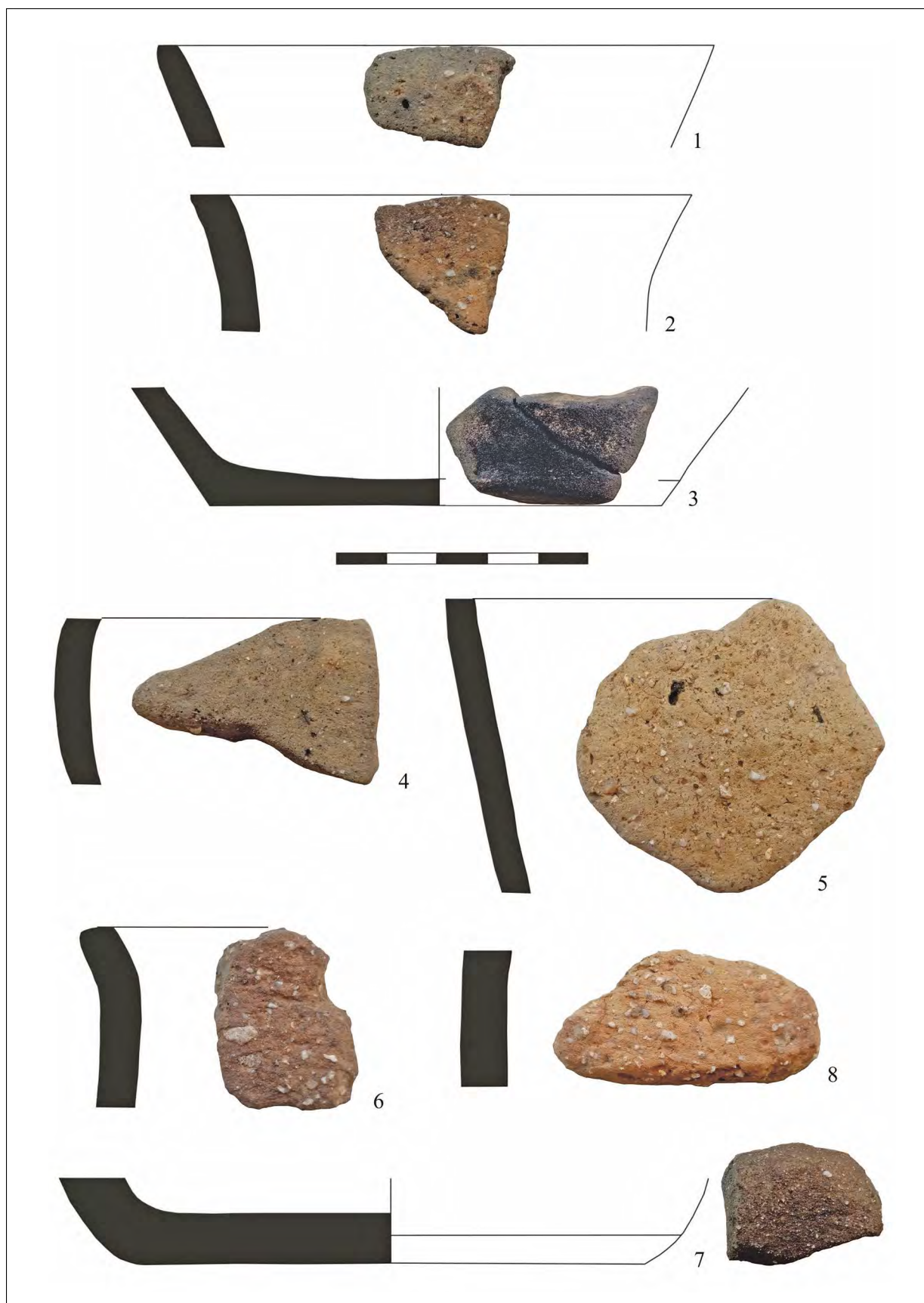


Pl. 5. The plan of the research with the delimitation of the grids (sketch and digital processing: Mihaela Bleoancă).

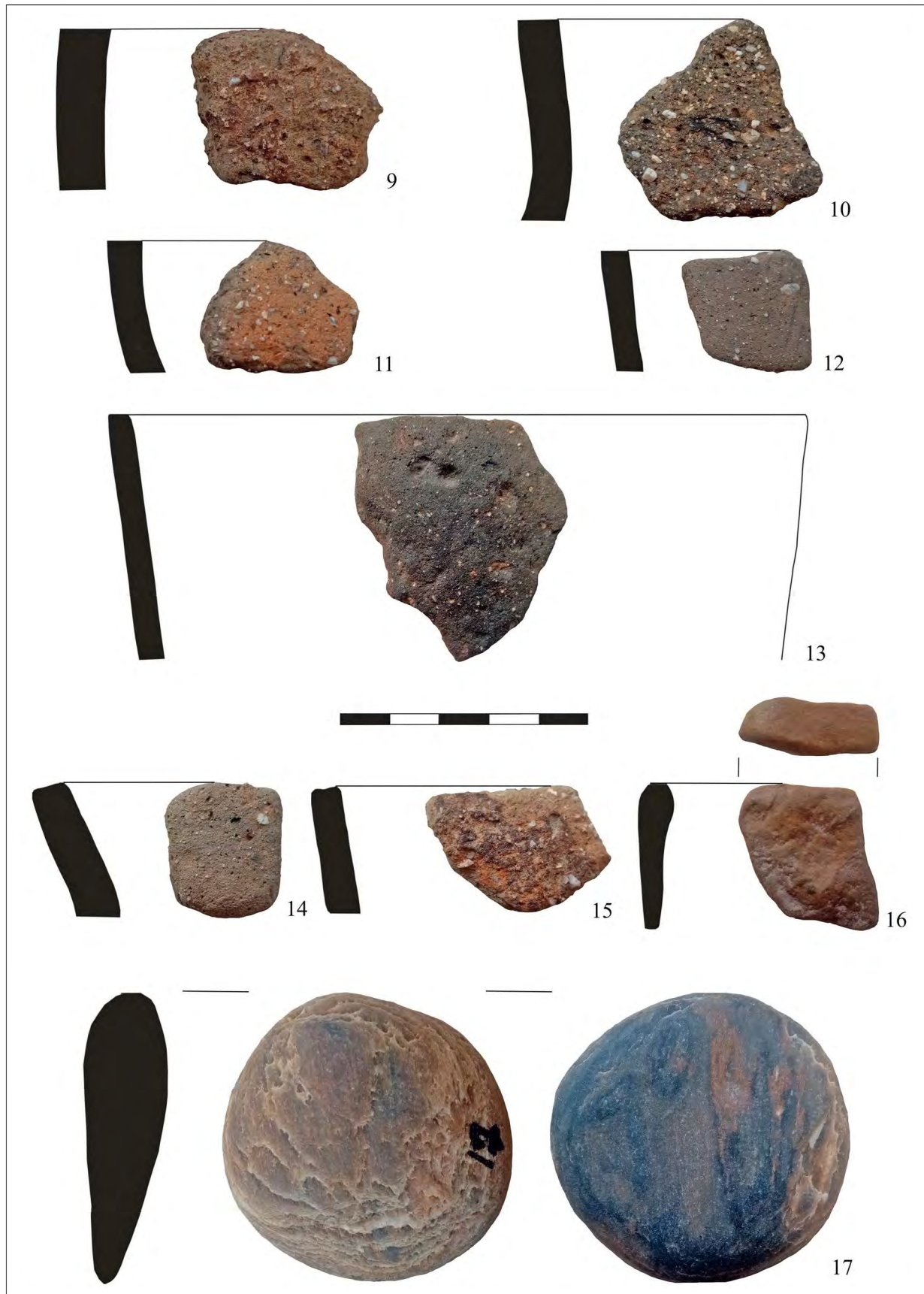


Pl. 6. Aspects of the research: 1–2. *In situ* coins; 3. *In situ* Roman brooch (photographer: Florin Ciulavu).





**Pl. 7.** Ceramic fragments discovered at Morunġlav  
(photographs and drawing by: Florin Ciulavu and Mihaela Bleoancă).



Pl. 8. Ceramic fragments (9–15), polisher (16) and whetstone (17) discovered at Morunglav (photographs and drawings by: Florin Ciulavu and Mihaela Bleoancă).