ANALELE BANATULUI, S.N., ARHEOLOGIE – ISTORIE, XXII, 2014
http://muzeulbanatului.ro/mbt/istorie/publicatii/ab.htm

SCHELA CLADOVEI 1982 – A SUPPLEMENT TO THE ORIGINAL EXCAVATION REPORT OF VASILE BORONEANȚ

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Keywords: *Schela Cladovei, Iron Gates, Mesolithic, Early Neolithic, 1982 excavations, burials*
Cuvinte-cheie: *Schela Cladovei, Porțile de Fier, Mezolitic, Neolitic timpuriu, cercetări din 1982, morminte*

(Abstract)

Schela Cladovei is one of the most important Mesolithic–Neolithic sites in Southeast Europe. It belongs to a group of Stone Age settlements that were discovered ahead of dam construction in the Iron Gates section of the Danube valley in the second half of the twentieth century. It is arguably the only one of these settlements to escape flooding when the river was impounded, although the rise in the river level has led to extensive erosion of the site. However, like most of the sites investigated, published accounts of the excavations at Schela Cladovei are few and lacking in detail. In this paper we review the results of the 1982 season of excavation at Schela Cladovei, directed by Vasile Boroneanț. Our account places emphasis on both the burial remains and the pit and hearth features and is based largely on the original field notes, plans and photographs of the excavations.

1. Introduction

Schela Cladovei, in a suburb of Drobeta Turnu-Severin in southwest Romania, is a key site for the Mesolithic and Early Neolithic of Southeast Europe. It is one of a number of well-preserved open-air settlements in the Iron Gates section of the Danube Valley dating to the early post-glacial period before 5500 cal BC, which were discovered and investigated prior to the impounding of the river by the Iron Gates I and II dams (Fig. 1).

Traces of Mesolithic and/or Early Neolithic settlement in the area of Schela Cladovei were identified at several locations along the bank of the Danube, the main site investigated being Schela Cladovei-Canton.

The first series of excavations at Schela Cladovei-Canton took place in 1965 and 1967–1968 during the construction of the Iron Gates I dam[1], in response to the discovery of Early Neolithic remains eroding from the riverbank. Since the site was downriver of the Iron Gates I dam and would not be flooded by its accumulation lake, between 1968 and 1981 V. Boroneanț concentrated his excavations on more threatened sites further upstream (Alibeg, Veterani, Răzvrata, Icoana) or downstream (Ostrovul Mare). The excavations at Schela Cladovei resumed in 1982, in response to the increased erosion of the site (and the risk of partial flooding) caused by the construction of a second dam (Iron Gates II) some 75 km downriver, and continued until 1991. Between 1992 and 1996 the excavations became a joint Romanian–British project co-directed by V. Boroneanț and C. Bonsall. They continued in 2001–2002 (director A. Boroneanț) and from 2007 onwards they were again a joint Romanian–British research project (co-directed by A. Boroneanț and C. Bonsall).

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[1] V. Boroneanț 2000, A. Boroneanț – V. Boroneanț 2009, A. Boroneanț – Bonsall 2013.

The archaeological investigations at Schela Cladovei during and after the construction of the two dams have resulted in a large quantity of archaeological features and artefacts being uncovered but the published accounts/field reports of the excavations are sparse and lacking in detail – as is the case for most sites investigated in the Iron Gates area. Thus their publication will be a lengthy task. New data summarizing the results of the first three years of excavations (1965, 1968–1969) and the more recent ones dating to the period of the first Romanian-British joint project have been published in the past few years[2]. In this paper we summarize the results of the excavations on the main site – Schela Cladovei-*Canton* – in 1982.

2. The 1982 excavation

2.1 Location and methods

The 1982 excavation at Schela Cladovei lasted for 28 days, from 16 July to 12 August, and was directed by Vasile Boroneanț. The following account is based on the field notes from 1982, a brief report published 1992[3], and the unpublished field plans and photographs.

At that time, the main part of the site (between the river and the railway line) was a restricted area patrolled every few hours by the military, with restricted access to the beach for the local people. The military also used the area for training, and pits and trenches were occasionally dug into the site. Previously the land had been cultivated for agriculture/horticulture.

In V. Boroneanț's excavations trenches were labelled according to their size and purpose. The main trenches were referred to as *Secțiune* (S) and extensions to these trenches were designated as *Caseta* (Cas). Thus, the main 1982 trench was labelled as S VI, and its extension as Cas II. Features that were interpreted as 'pit dwellings' were given 'C' numbers (from the Romanian 'complex'), other pit features were given 'G' numbers (from the Romanian 'groapa'), while burials were assigned 'M' numbers (from the Romanian 'mort').

S VI was dug directly adjacent to riverbank, initially with a length of 10 m but later extended to 18 m. The width of the trench was variable (2.5–4 m) as a result of the irregularity of the riverbank. The western (upstream) end of S VI overlapped trench SB4 that had been excavated in 1968–1969 (Fig. 2).

Over its initial 10 m length S VI was excavated down to the gravel of the riverbed, while the rest of S VI was only excavated (in 1982) to a depth of 0.45–0.50 m.[4] The entire trench was divided into grid 'squares' 2 m in length and variable in width, numbered from 1 to 9.

Cas II (4 × 1 m) was opened later to the north of S VI in the area of grid squares 3, 4 and 5 in order to fully expose one of the burials (Fig. 3.1).

No optical surveying instruments were available to the excavators. Trenches were laid out and plans drawn with the aid of measuring tapes, and levels were recorded in relation to the ground surface at the nearest point rather than a fixed datum.

In contrast to the earlier excavations (1965, 1967–1968) no sieving was employed. Digging was done in unit levels ('spits') of circa 15–20 cm (one spade depth) and trowels were used when features were encountered. When recognized, features were excavated separately, usually down to the base. The surrounding areas remained at the level at which the features were first observed until the latter had been completely excavated.

2.2 Stratigraphy

The dark-brown topsoil – reworked by cultivation and other activities – had a reported thickness of 0.2–0.3 m.

Below the topsoil and extending down to 0.60–0.70 m depth an Early Neolithic 'cultural layer' was identified with abundant pottery sherds and introduced stones.

Below this 'layer' was a yellow ('sandy') soil containing Mesolithic remains, extending down to 1.50–1.55 m depth and underlain by river gravel. According to V. Boroneanț, between the yellow soil and the gravel was a very thin layer of darker-coloured silt.

Early Neolithic features were frequently observed to cut into the yellow 'Mesolithic' soil, and on occasion also into the gravel. The published field report mentions two 'sub-layers' within the yellow 'Mesolithic' soil, the upper one darker in colour. Mesolithic remains, comprising flint and quartzite tools and debitage, animal remains, antler, bone and boar tusk tools (complete or fragmentary) were found 'scattered' through the yellow soil. The field report refers to two phases of Mesolithic occupation, corresponding to the 'sub-layers' within the yellow

[2] A. Boroneanț – Bonsall 2013, A. Boroneanț – V. Boroneanț 2009, Bonsall et al 2013, A. Boroneanț – Bonsall 2012.

[3] V. Boroneanț 1992.

[4] V. Boroneanț 1992, 7.

soil. More recent excavations and soil studies at Schela Cladovei, combined with single-entity radiocarbon dating of bone artefacts and human remains,[5] have confirmed the existence of Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic occupations but found no evidence to justify the stratigraphic subdivision of either phase[6].

2.3 Pit and hearth features

During the 1982 excavation eight features were identified: one assigned to the Mesolithic (C7), six to the Early Neolithic (C1–C6), and one sunken 'hut' dated to the 18th–19th century (Fig. 2, 3.1).

2.3.1 Mesolithic feature

C7 (sq. 4, Fig. 6.3) was first observed at a depth of 0.75 m. Initially described as 'a concentration of stones', it proved to be a larger, pit feature extending down to 1.05 m depth (Fig. 6.3). Directly underneath the stone concentration were found flint and quartzite flakes and fragments of animal bones, while 40 cm to the west of these was a concentration of deer bones. This feature was identified as a 'circular hearth' and described by V. Boroneanț in his brief report as being associated with deer bones[7].

2.3.2 Early Neolithic features

C1 (S VI, sq. 3 and 4, toward the north wall of the trench, Fig. 2, 3) appeared as an agglomeration of stones and pottery of rectangular shape with rounded corners (2.40 × 1.90 m) (Fig. 3.2). It was first recognized at 0.45 m below the ground surface becoming smaller with depth (2 × 1.90 at 0.55–0.60 m, and 1.80 × 1.82 m at 0.75 m). The convex base of the pit was reached in sq. 3 at 0.75 m. Apart from stones and pottery sherds, other items recovered were flint artefacts (including a blade segment with sickle gloss), bone and antler tools, a large boulder (0.60 × 0.30 × 0.42 m) with a flattened face in which was a depression, and daub and hearth fragments (the latter located mainly on the north side of the pit).

C2 (S VI, sq. 2–4, Fig. 2, 3.1) was an oval concentration of mainly stones and pottery, circa 5 m long, and with a surviving breadth of 1–1.4 m – part of it had been destroyed by riverbank erosion. It was first noticed at 0.45 m depth but extended down to 1.45 m, cutting the southernmost part of C1. The infill of this pit contained pottery sherds (some painted black on a red slipped background), daub fragments (some with wattle impressions), fragments from altar pots, flint artefacts, bone tools (including an awl), a fragment from a small polished stone axe, animal bones, and a human mandible. On the convex base of C2 was noted an oval hearth with beaten and/or burnt soil at its base (1.06 × 0.60 m and 3–7 cm thick); many of the stones forming the base of this feature were burnt on one side. At its base C2 was circa 3 m long with a maximum (surviving) breadth of 0.90 m.

C3 (S VI, sq. 1–2, Fig. 2, 3.1) was another agglomeration of stones and pottery, also first observed at 0.45 m depth. Its base was at 1.40 m depth. Part of this feature had been destroyed by riverbank erosion; the surviving dimensions were 1.20 × 1.60 m. The pit infill contained – in addition to pottery, stones, animal bones and daub – fragments of antler and boar tusk tools, a pendant, and a large stone with a shallow depression on one side.

C4 (S VI, sq. 1, Fig. 3.1) was also only partially exposed, at the northwest corner of S VI. The base was reached at 1 m. No other details are recorded in the field notes.

C5 (Cas II and S VI, sq. 3–5, Fig. 2, 3.1, 4) was described as a 'trapeze-shaped' feature (Fig. 3.1, 4), with the small base toward the Danube, unlike the trapezoidal 'houses' at Lepenski Vir, Padina and Vlasac in Serbia, which usually had the large base facing the river. It was first noticed at 0.75 m as a 'pit containing bones and stones' – labelled initially as G1 (V. Boroneanț, 1982 field notes). At that depth the infill contained pottery sherds including several fragments of pedestalled cups and altar pots, as well as a human metacarpal bone. The bottom of the pit was reached at 1.40 m. On its eastern side, in a depression in the soil circa 20 cm below the base of C5 was a large boulder with a shallow, round depression. The base of the pit feature was 'convex' and lined with five successive layers of beaten soil. From the infill of C5 were recovered a few fragments of white-on-red painted pottery (network pattern motif) and several human bones.

C6 (Cas II and S VI, sq. 5, Fig. 3.1) was only partially exposed by S VI, but appeared to be circular in plan. The base of the pit – showing traces of burning – was reached at 1.45 m depth.

[5] Bonsall 2008.

[6] V. Boroneanț *et alii* 1999.

[7] V. Boroneanț 1992, 9 – although the hearth was mistakenly published as being located in sq. 5.

2.3.3 Post-Neolithic features

C0 (S VI, sq. 4–5, Fig. 3.1, 5) was first observed at 0.65–0.70 m depth, but probably originated at a much higher level. It was filled with dark-brown soil containing mixed Mesolithic and Early Neolithic finds together with 19th century pottery, iron objects and brick fragments. The pit was 1.55 m deep, and was dug approximately 15 cm into the river gravel. C0 was probably rectangular in shape, with rounded corners (3.10 m × 2.05 m, but continuing beyond the north wall of the trench). It was interpreted as a modern sunken hut, with the entrance on the west side.

2.4 Burials[8]

Five burials (M1 to M5) were uncovered in 1982. The descriptions presented below are based on information from field notes, photographs and plans. In no case could the limits of the grave be observed. The skeletons were all found within the yellow sandy soil from which the majority of the Mesolithic remains were also recovered.

2.4.1 M1 (S VI, sq. 4, 0.85–1.05 m, Fig. 5)

M1 was extended on the back with the head toward the Danube. The skeleton lacked the right femur[9] and the feet of both legs; the feet were considered to have been disturbed by M2 (Fig. 5). The arms were along the body, slightly flexed at the elbow so that the hands rested on the pelvis. A kneecap (patella) was found under the right ilium (Fig. 5.1). Underneath the head were found two quartzite artefacts[10] but it is unclear whether these were grave goods or accidental inclusions in the grave infill. The field notes also mention a fragment of a bone spatula/point found on or near the proximal part of the right humerus. The individual was identified by D. Nicolaescu-Plopșor as an adult, with complete but heavily worn dentition.[11]

2.4.2 M2 (S VI – Cas II, sq. 4, 0.85 m, Fig. 5)

M2 was in a fragmentary state, with only some of the bones from the lower part of the body present – the left femur and tibia and a fragment of the pelvis[12]. If these bones were part of an originally complete skeleton, then the individual was probably lying on the back, with the head away from the Danube. A few stones were found under the knee joint and several pottery sherds were observed near to the pelvic fragment. D. Nicolaescu-Plopșor identified the remains as those of an adult male.

2.4.3 M3 (S VI, sq. 3, 1.05 m, Fig. 5.1, 6.1)

M3 was also in an extended position, but turned slightly on the left side – judging by the position of the pelvis[13] – with the legs slightly flexed. It was oriented more or less parallel to the Danube with the feet (which were very close together) pointing downriver. A large part of the upper body (cervical vertebrae, skull and most of the arm bones) was missing. In the photograph (Fig. 6.1) the lower part of the right humerus is visible, though it is not shown on the field plan. The field notes record that under the left femur and the pelvis were three stones forming a curved line. The orientation of the skeleton was W–E.

2.4.4 M4 (S VI, sq. 3, 1.05 m, Fig. 5.1, 6.2)

It is unclear from photographs, field notes and plan whether this was a complete skeleton of a neonate or a group of disarticulated bones. The field notes list fragments of a skull, humerus, fibula, ribs and vertebrae.

2.4.5 M5 (S VI, Cas II, sq. 3, 1.05 –1.25 m, Fig. 5.1, 7)

Burial M5 is unusual; it was uncovered in two parts, found at different depths. The first series of bones were noted at 1.05 m depth (roughly the same depth as M3 and M4) and comprised fragments of the skull, the lower half of the right radius and fibula and 2/3 of the left radius, part of the lower limbs (the right femur and the right tibia and ulna). On the plan and photographs are also visible the lower 2/3 of the left femur. The right kneecap was found 20 cm to the right of the right femur. The arms seem to have been extended along the body. Between the femora, near to the right femoral head, was the tibia of a neonate. Also, close to the proximal epiphysis of the right ulna and tibia was observed a coxal bone of a neonate. The second part of the skeleton was exposed at circa 1.20 m depth, including the right coxal bone,

[8] The physical anthropologists, D. Nicolaescu-Plopșor and Nicolae Mirițoiu, were present on site when the skeletons were exposed and lifted.

[9] The field notes mention that the head of the femur was present though, still articulated to the pelvis. The left tibia did not appear in the photos since – according to the field notes – it was found a few cm deeper.

[10] In the field report they were mistakenly published as being found under the iliac bones (V. Boroneanț 1992, p. 7).

[11] V. Boroneanț 1992, 10.

[12] On the plan there is also a large bone that appears to be half of the pelvis.

[13] V. Boroneanț 1992, 7.

a fragment of the left ulna and the upper half of the right radius and ulna. Five centimetres lower down (at 1.25 m) were found the bones of the feet, vertebrae, the left coxal bone, fragments of the scapula, more skull fragments, and the upper part of the left femur. When lifting the skeleton under the right femur were found two flint artefacts, while a quartzite artefact was found under the right coxal bone. There is a mention in the field notes of baby bones having been found in the area of the feet, but they are not visible on the field plans or photographs.

2.4.6 Loose bones

Apart from the articulated skeletons described above, there were also loose human bones found in various contexts, either Mesolithic or Early Neolithic, suggesting either the existence of other burials that had been disturbed by later archaeological features or, perhaps, secondary disposal. A list of these loose bones (as compiled from the field notes of V. Boroneanț) is as follows:

- S VI, sq. 1, depth unknown – a fragment of a human maxilla;
- S VI, sq. 3: at 0.80 m – a fragment of a human jaw, human femur; below 0.80 m various other human bones; and at 1.05 m (in G1) a bone from the big toe;
- S VI, base of C2 – a human mandible
- S VI, C5 – a human ulna and other (unlisted) bones

2.4.7 Osteological analyses

To date, only four[14] of the skeletons from the 1982 excavations at Schela Cladovei[15] have been located among skeletal collections from the site housed in the 'Vasile Pârvan' Institute of Archaeology. These four skeletons were re-examined by one of us (KM), and summary descriptions are presented below. It should be noted that the osteological examination was done without reference to excavation plans or photographs (not available at that time) and there are a number of discrepancies between the examined remains and the excavation records, which have yet to be resolved. Therefore, the following information should be regarded as provisional:

M1 was an older adult males, aged over 50. Living stature was calculated at 179.21 cm (based on measurement of the femur). Pathology includes: widespread osteoarthritis of both shoulders, the spine, both elbows and right wrist. Infection of the alveolus indicated the presence of periodontal disease. All teeth were present at death but the upper anterior teeth were worn down to the roots.

M2 comprised a left femur, tibia and fibula, according to the excavation plan and photographs (the field notes also mention the presence of a hip bone, but this is not thought to be from the same individual). The remains are those of an adult male, stature 184.13 cm (based on the combined lengths of the femur and tibia). An additional left femur (male?, stature 178 cm) not mentioned in the field notes is present in the collection, but given the storage circumstances it is impossible to say to which of the burials it belonged.

M3 was an adult female. Stature was calculated at 159.09 cm (based on the combined lengths of the femur and tibia). Pathology includes: enthesopathic lesion at the attachment for the adductor longus on the right pubis (possible parturition scar; the left pelvic bone was not present); spinal degeneration; osteoarthritis of both hips, both feet and ankles; osteomyelitis of the right tibia.

Red staining on both surfaces of the ilium is consistent with the presence of red ochre.

Additional bones: thoracic vertebra (epiphyseal ring fusing), left innominate (male?).

M4 was not found.

M5 was an older adult male. Stature was calculated at 180.53 cm (based on the length of the right femur). Pathology includes: a healed skull fracture of the right frontal, orbit and cheek bone; spinal degeneration in the lumbar spine; osteoarthritis of the right elbow and wrist (the left upper limb was not present), both hips and both knees. Additional bones: immature right tibia (65 mm long, aged neonate to 6 months?)

A summary of the osteological data is presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Age-at-death and sex of the skeletons.

M No.	Sex	Stature (cm)	Age
M1	M	179.21	older adult
M2	M	184.13	adult
M3	F	159.09	adult
M5	M	181.53	older adult

[14] Unfortunately, M1 and M2 seem to have been packed and stored together, bearing the same label. The separation of the two skeletons was made based on the field notes, plans and photographs. M4 has not been identified.

[15] We should like to thank Dr Andrei Soficaru for his help.

Table 2. Incidence of pathologies.

M No.	Age	Sex	Area affected	Type of disease	Bone	Comments
M1	older adult	M	shoulder	joint	both scapulae	
			spine	joint	vertebrae	most of spine affected
			upper limbs	joint	both elbows	
			upper limbs	joint	right wrist	
			dentition	periodontal	mandible/maxilla	
M3	adult	F	pelvis	trauma	right pubis	parturition scar?
			spine	joint	vertebrae	most of spine affected
			lower limbs	joint	both hips	
			lower limbs	infectious	right tibia	2 sinuses & thickening
			lower limbs	joint	left ankle	
			feet	joint	both feet	
M5	older adult	M	skull	trauma	frontal	healed fracture
			spine	joint	lumbar vertebrae	
			upper limbs	joint	right elbow	
			lower limbs	joint	both hips	
			lower limbs	joint	both knees	
			upper limbs	joint	right wrist	

3. Discussion

3.1 The pit-features

Vasile Boroneanț interpreted all six 'Early Neolithic' pit features as house foundations – at that time a usual explanation – but this is unlikely in all cases. Only C1 was fully excavated, although a large part of C2 and C5 were exposed. It is difficult to form an opinion about the other pit features, since their dimensions are unknown and no associated hearths or postholes were mentioned in the field notes. However, C7 could be the remains of a Mesolithic structure – possibly a circular stone hearth. Deer bones were reported as having occurred both on and around it, but neither the field notes nor the published report mention any traces of burning, ashes or charcoal.

C5 is a particularly interesting feature. The apparently trapezoidal outline of this feature, if it has not been 'distorted' later disturbances, is unusual in the context of the Iron Gates Early Neolithic and more in keeping with the Late or Final Mesolithic, where the trapezoidal house plan is common. From the photographic evidence (Fig. 4) it is possible that the large hollowed stone and the white-painted pottery were deposited in an Early Neolithic pit that was cut into an older trapezoidal structure (C5), and that the outline of the pit was subsequently 'erased' by soil forming processes.

3.2 The burials

A previous osteoarchaeological study of Late Mesolithic human remains from Schela Cladovei concluded that people were tall and robust, with many adult males reaching around 183 cm[16] while average stature for females was 1.65 m[17]. The 1982 skeletons fit this pattern.

Though relatively healthy, the Schela Cladovei Late Mesolithic population was not disease free. Arthritis was quite common and widespread throughout the body, evidenced in burials M1, M3 and M5. Periodontal disease was also present (M1). Among the morphological adaptations, heavy attrition of the teeth was also noted (M1). All of these skeletal manifestations are linked to advanced age, as was certainly the case with M1 and M5. Heavy dental attrition also characterized the Mesolithic skeletal populations from Padina and Vlasac in Serbia[18].

Signs of trauma, often of violent origin, are not uncommon among the Schela Cladovei Late Mesolithic population and are represented here by M5. Blows to the skull were also noted in the case of M42 and M48 from Area III–IV excavated in 1991–2[19].

Mortuary patterns in the Iron Gates Mesolithic show significant variability in the treatment and disposal of the body. There is evidence of primary[20]

[16] Bonsall *et alii* 1997.
[17] Boroneanț *et alii* 1999.
[18] Bonsall *et alii* 1997.
[19] Boroneanț *et alii* 1999.
[20] Primary inhumation burials (where the body was buried soon after death and the skeleton is still articulated) are well represented in Iron Gates Mesolithic sites. Within this category

and secondary inhumation[21], single and collective burial, and cremation[22]. At Schela Cladovei both primary and secondary burials were made in simple pits, although for the great majority of burials the shape and depth of the grave pit could not be discerned, and this was the case for the 1982 burials.

All burials in 1982 appear to have been individual graves that, with the exception of M4, also contained additional bones.

M1 was a primary burial, but the missing right femur (Fig. 5.1) may indicate re-opening of the grave, removal of the bone and perhaps its secondary re-burial. It is also possible that M1 was disturbed in the area of the feet when M2 was emplaced or (at least in the case of the right foot) by the construction of C0. The femur head mentioned in the field notes and shown on the plan (Fig. 5.1) was actually a humeral head, again suggesting a re-opening of the grave.

In the case of M2 (Fig. 5.1, 5.2), it is possible that only a part of the body (the long bones of the left leg) were buried; the burial could have been truncated by the modern pit-feature C0, but that would not account for the absence of the right leg. The foot bones are missing, and a hipbone was found in their place.

In both the field notes and the published report, V. Boroneanț suggested that the grave of M3 had been disturbed by burial M4 (a neonate). However, from photographs (Fig. 6.1, 6.2) M4 appears to be some distance away and the limits of its grave are not discernible. Therefore, unless M4 was buried in a very large grave, it is likely that M3 was either disturbed by another feature or only the lower part of the body had been buried.

It is unclear from the photo (Fig. 6.2) and the field notes whether M4 was an articulated infant skeleton (primary burial) or a group of loose infant bones (secondary burial). The skeleton has not yet been identified in the collection of the 'Vasile Pârvan' Institute of Archaeology and no plan of this burial is available.

The situation is more complex in the case of M5. V. Boroneanț assumed that the body had been buried in the extended supine position with the head away from the Danube, and subsequently disturbed. The plan presented in Fig. 7.3 was redrawn based on the assumption that the same axis was used when planning both parts of the skeleton but, from the photos, it is likely that the two parts were further apart than indicated in Fig. 7.3. The bones comprising the two parts of M5 appear to be from the same individual. However, from the positioning and apparent state of articulation of the bones (Fig. 7.1, 7.2), it is not clear if this was a single inhumation followed by exhumation and secondary burial of bones or body parts, or the division of a corpse soon after death and separate burial of body parts, or incidental post-depositional disturbance of an originally intact corpse or skeleton. Of the infant bones mentioned in the field notes and shown in Fig. 7.1, only the right tibia has been found.

Placing burials in areas that had previously been used for settlement, burial or some other activity – as often was the case in the Iron Gates – and then refilling the graves with material from the pit or surrounding areas, means that objects found with a burial cannot always be securely identified as grave goods. For example, the bone artefact found near the humerus of M1 may have been an incidental inclusion within the fill of the grave or a later intrusion. Similarly, the quartzite artefacts found under the ilium of M1 were perhaps introduced accidentally when the grave was dug, while the pottery sherds found near M3 were presumably later intrusions. In the Iron Gates sites, it is not unusual for primary burials to have no grave goods. Ochre is also less common than expected and usually occurs in the area of the chest and pelvis, as may have been the case with M3.

4. Concluding remarks

In the present paper we have endeavoured to summarize the main findings of the 1982 excavation at the Mesolithic–Early Neolithic site of Schela Cladovei, Romania, incorporating new information from a study of the human remains and unpublished plans and photographs. Our focus has been deliberately on the burials and the

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of burial several different body positions are represented: in extended, supine position – on the back, body straight out with the hands by the side or resting on the abdomen or chest (Icoana, Lepenski Vir, Padina, Vlasac and Hajdučka Vodenica, Kula, Ostrovul Corbului and Schela Cladovei); on one side, with the legs straight or flexed, and the arms flexed in various positions (Lepenski Vir, Vlasac, Kula, Vajuga-Pesak and Velesnica), in a sitting position, usually with the legs crossed (Padina, Vlasac, Kula, Ostrovul Corbului). For a lengthier discussion see A.Boroneanț, Bonsall 2012.

[21] 'Secondary burial' implies a two-stage or multi-stage process in which final burial takes place sometime after death and the skeleton is disarticulated. In the Iron Gates this includes secondary inhumation burial of individual human bones, groups of disarticulated bones, and body parts (bones in articulation suggesting they were still held together by soft tissue, i.e. not completely defleshed, when reburied). Sometimes these were added to graves containing primary burials or buried separately. It is also possible that in some cases the loose bones resulted from the disturbance of earlier burials (A. Boroneant – Bonsall 2012).

[22] A. Boroneanț – Bonsall 2012.

pit-features, using information contained in the very brief initial report by Vasile Boroneanț but relying mainly on the original excavation records. Our reconsideration of this evidence further demonstrates the importance of the site for Southeast European prehistory. A large quantity of artefacts (mainly lithics and pottery) and faunal remains were also recovered in 1982 and subsequent excavation seasons. These will be the subject of later publications, which will also provide more detailed information about the human remains.

The excavations at Schela Cladovei were arguably the highlight of a very distinguished archaeological career, and it seems fitting that this paper should appear in a volume in memory of Vasile Boroneanț who made such an important contribution to knowledge of the prehistory of the Iron Gates.

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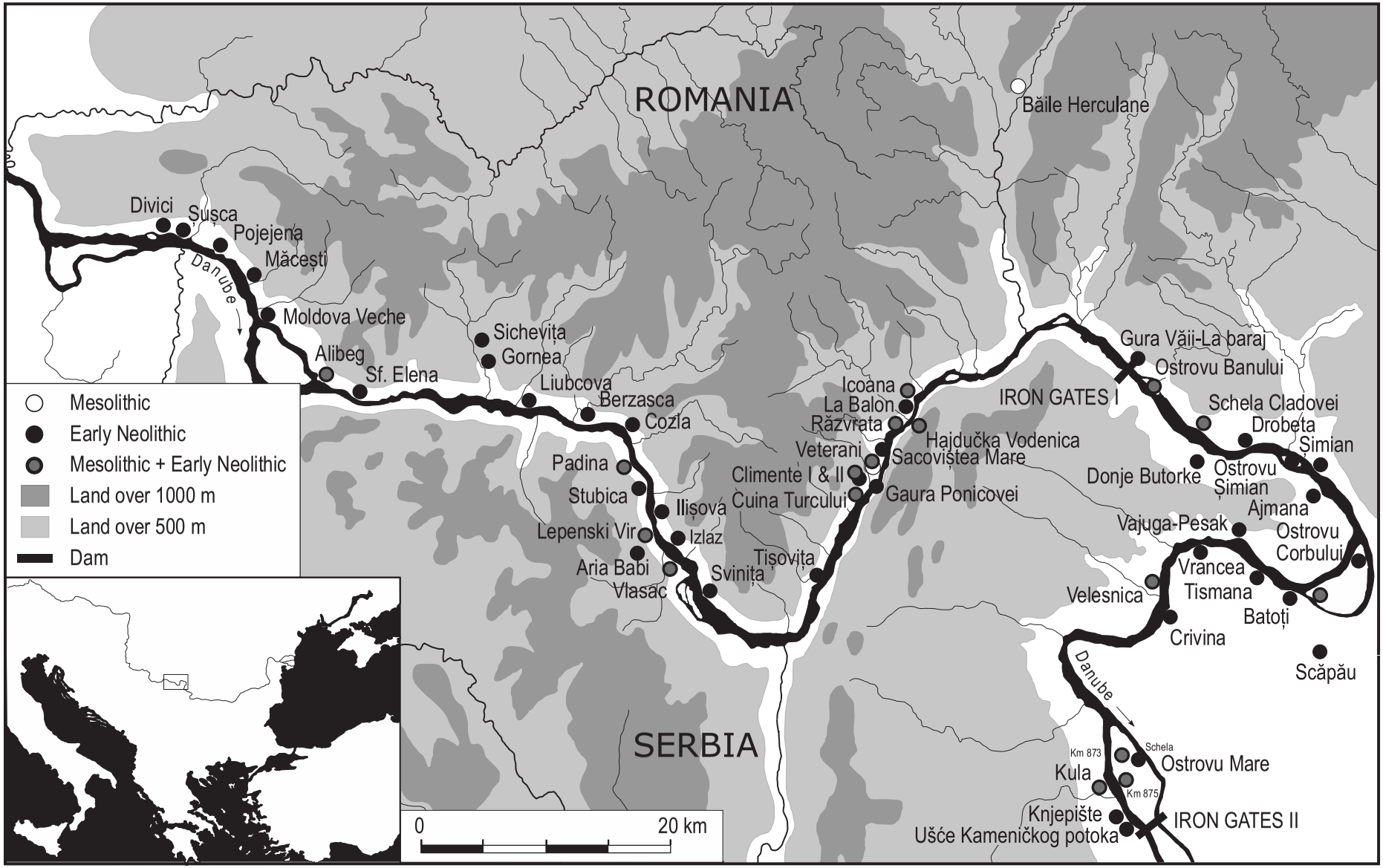
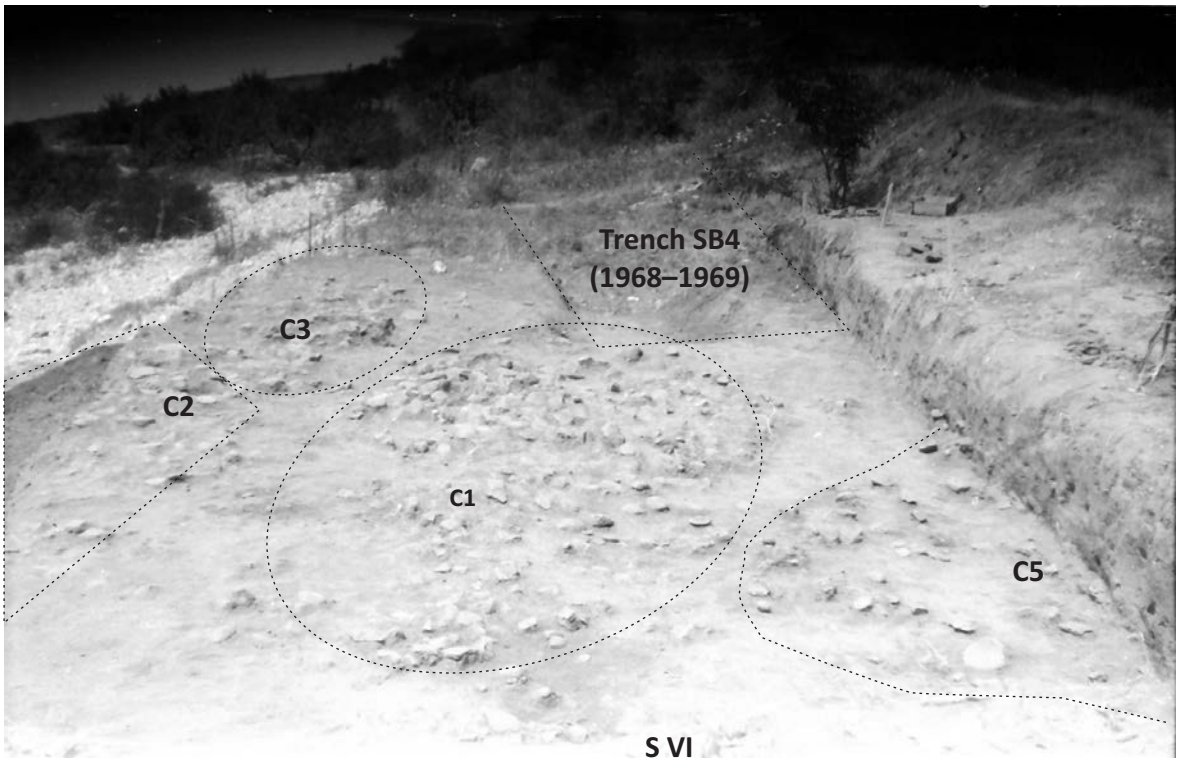


Fig. 1.Map o f Mesolithic and Early Neolithic sites in the Iron Gates region. / *Harta siturilor mezolitice și neolitice timpurii din zona Porțile de Fier.*



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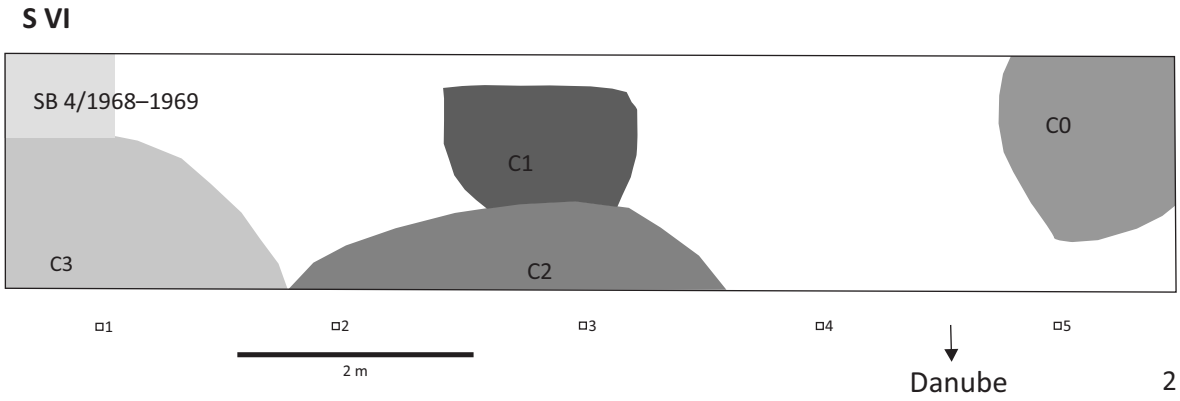

2

Fig. 2. 1: Features C0, C1, C2, C5 at 0.45 m (photo V. Boroneanț); 2: Ground plan of S VI at circa 0.40 m. / *1: Complexele C0, C1, C2, C5 la 0,45 m (foto V. Boroneanț); 2: Planul secțiunii SVI la circa 0,40 m.*

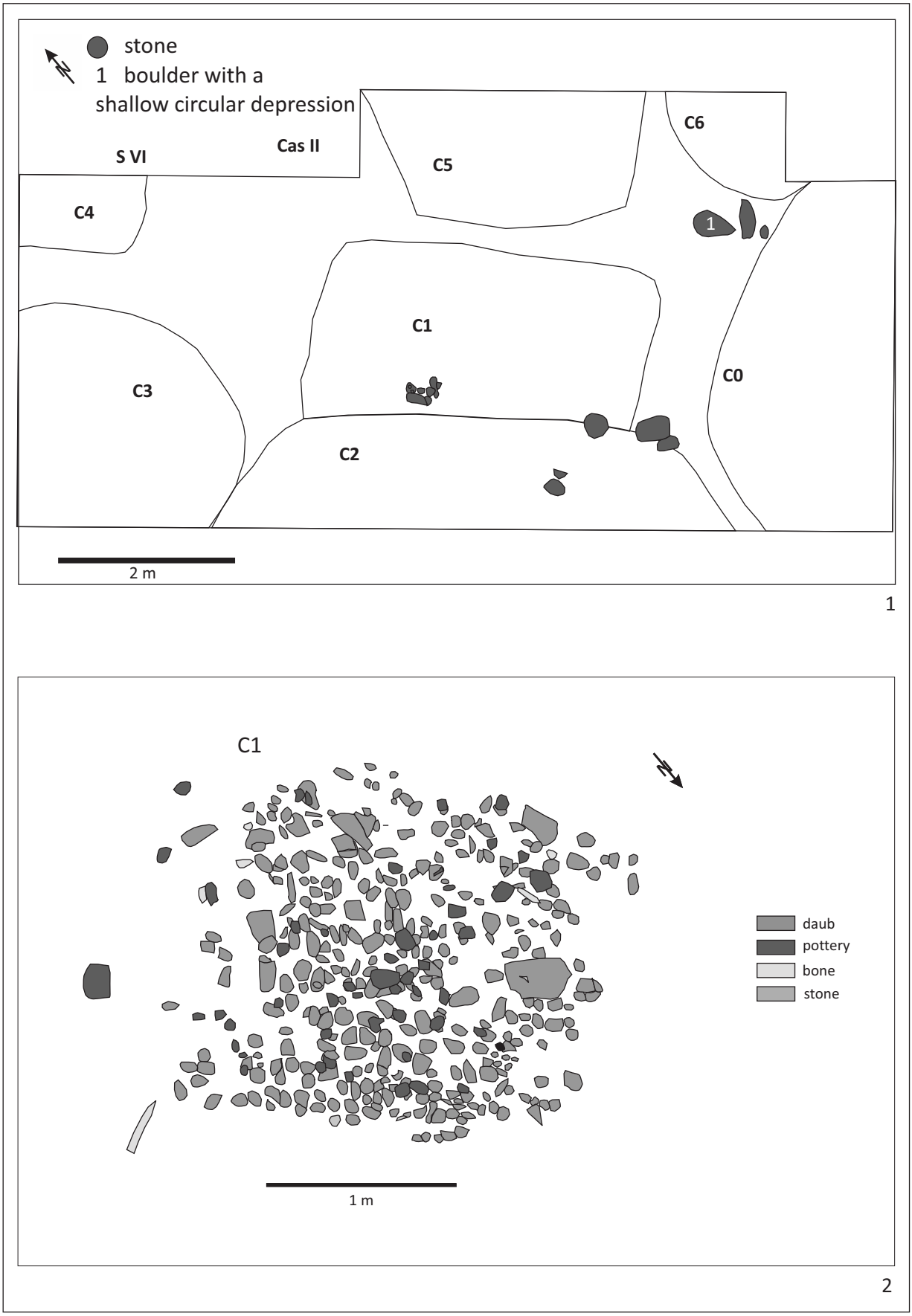

Fig. 3. 1: Plan of the features at 0.75 m (compiled from several plans of V. Boroneanț); 2: Plan of C1 at 0.60–0.75 m. / *1: Planul complexelor arheologice la 0,75 m (prelucrat după o serie de planuri originale executate de V. Boroneanț); 2: Planul complexului C1 la 0,60–0,75 m.*

1

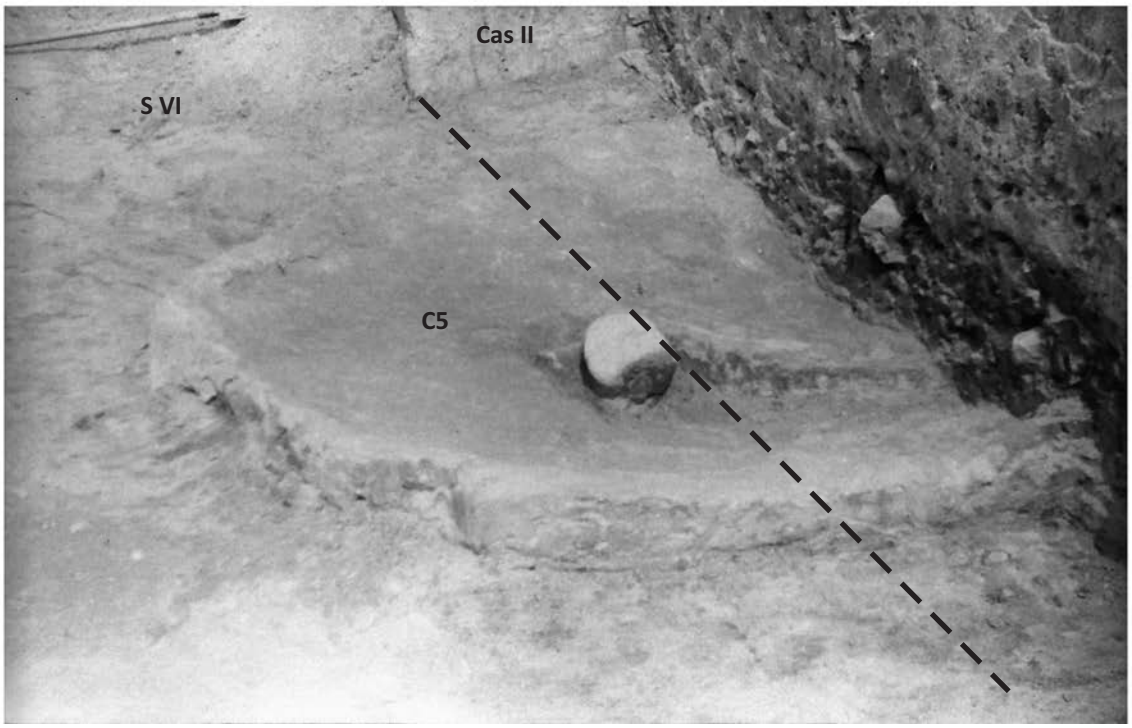

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Fig. 4. 1–2: Feature C5 (photos V. Boroneanț). / *1–2: Complexul C5 (foto V. Boroneanț).*

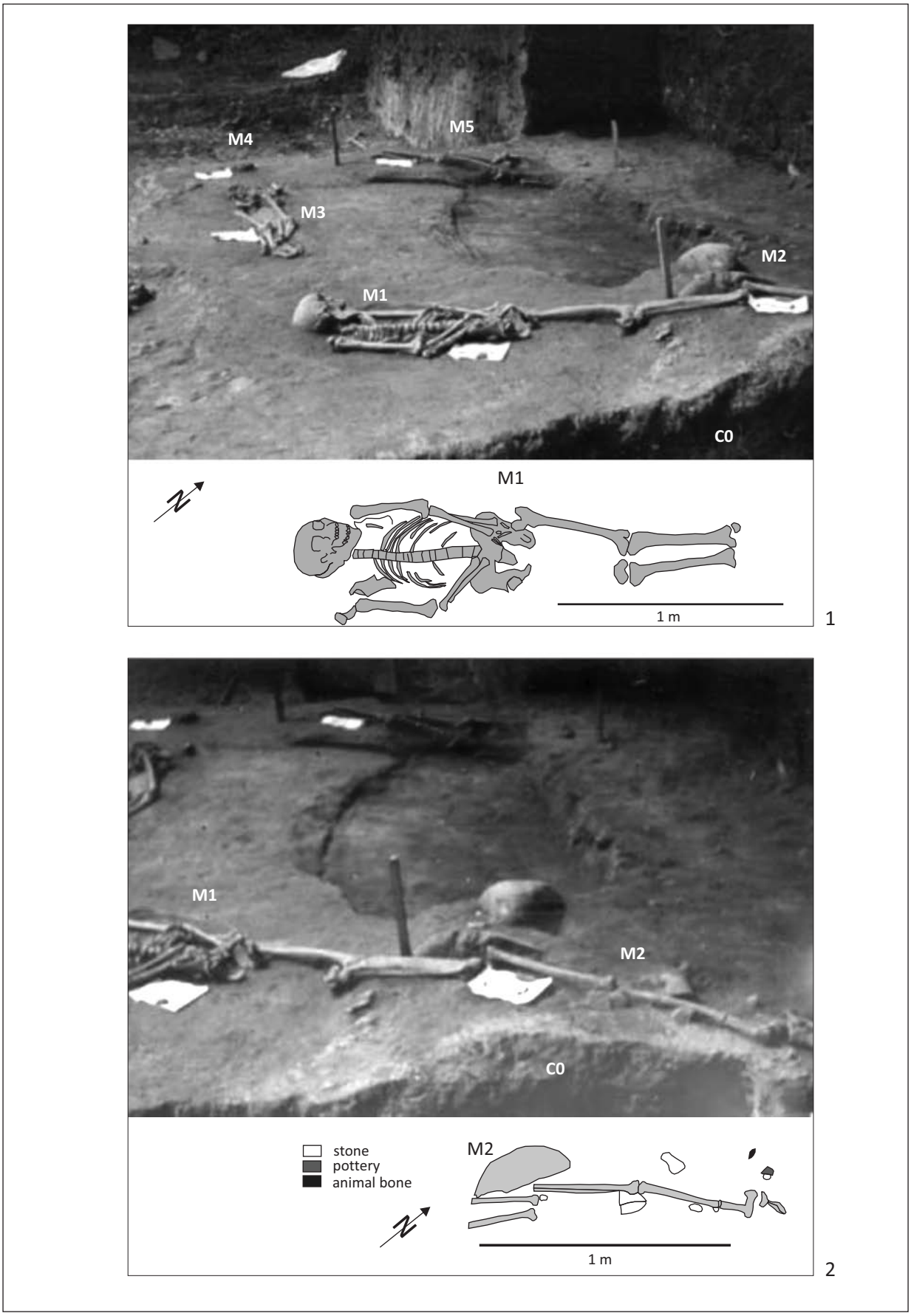
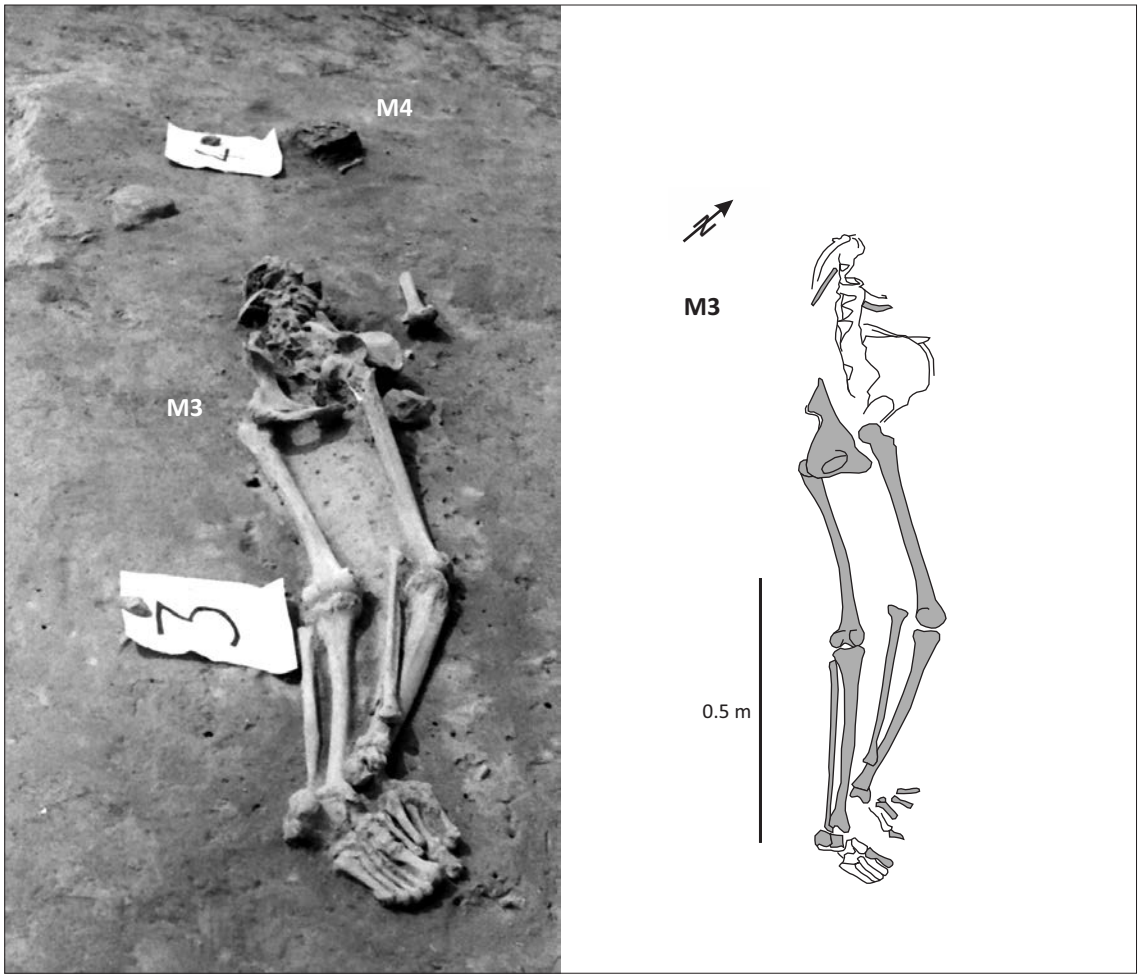


Fig. 5. 1: Location of the burials and plan of M1; 2: Location and plan of M2 (photos V. Boroneanț). / *1: Localizarea mormintelor și desenul lui M1; 2: Localizarea și desenul lui M2 (foto V. Boroneanț).*



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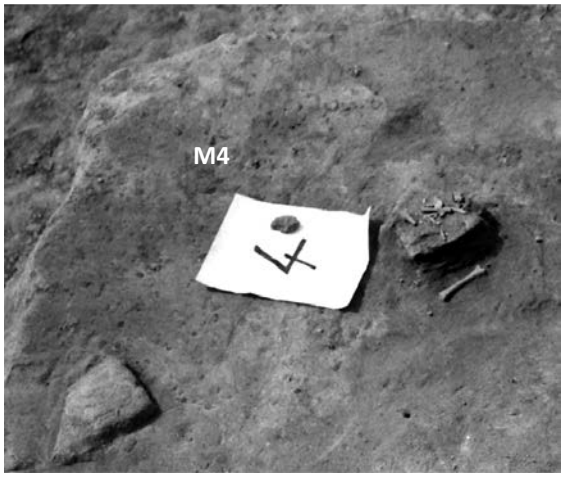

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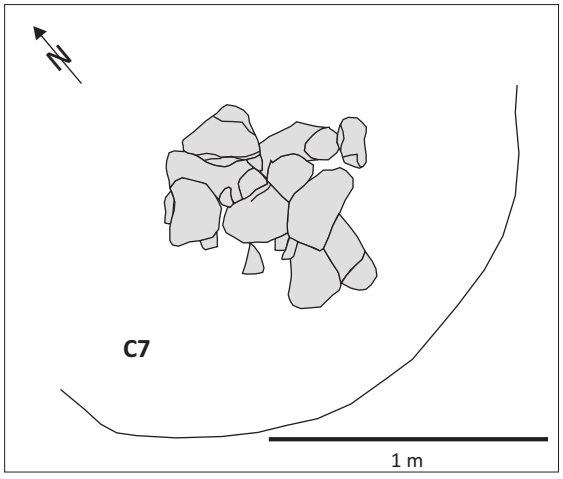
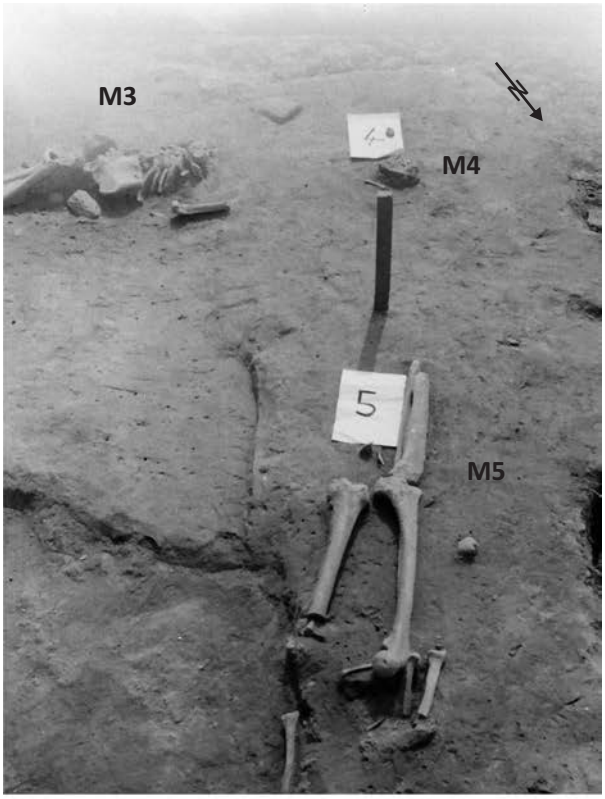


3

Fig. 6. 1–2: Burials M3 and M4 (photos V. Boroneanț); 3: Feature C7, sq.4, 0.70 m. / *1–2: Mormintele M3 și M4 (foto V. Boroneanț); 3: Complexul C7, carou 4, 0,70 m.*



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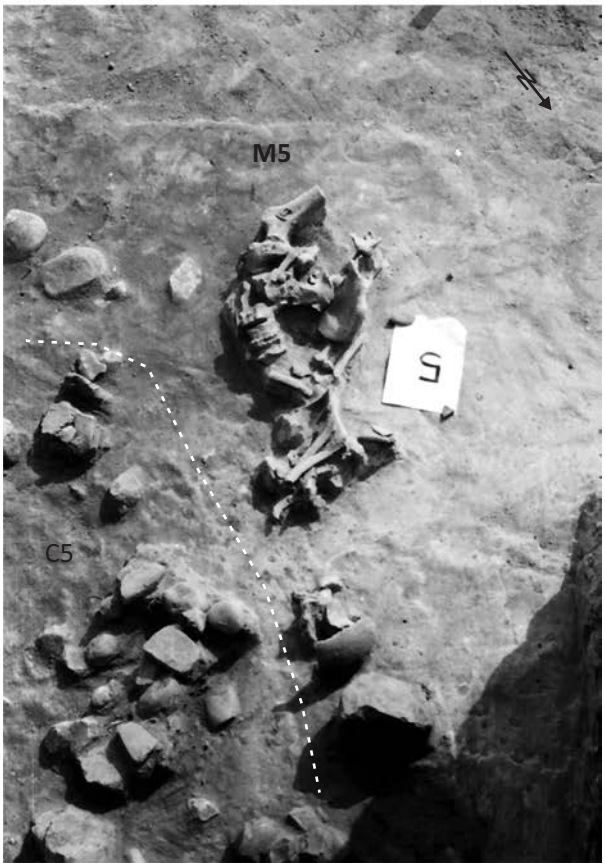

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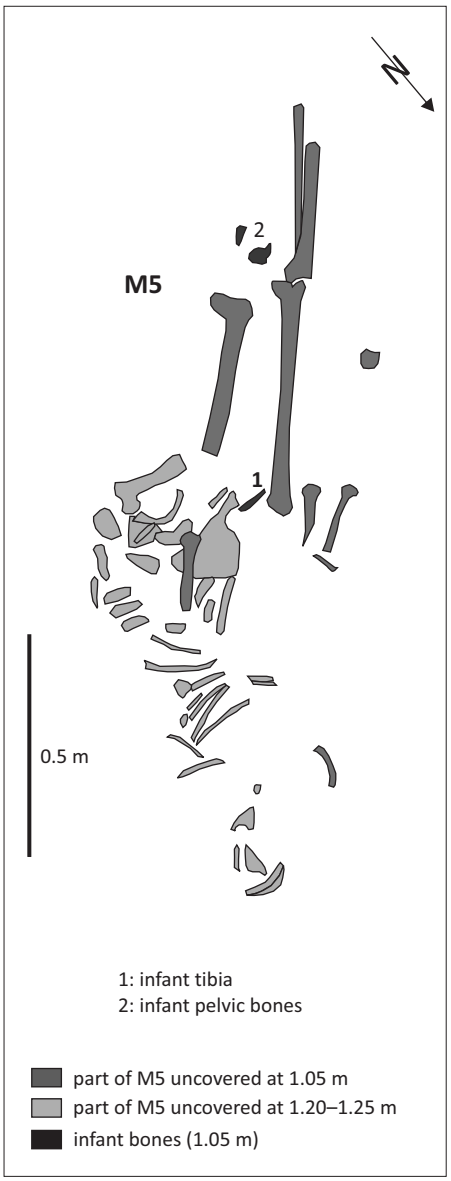

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Fig. 7. 1–2: Photographs of the two excavated parts of M5 (photos V. Boroneanț); 3: Plan of M5 (from the overlapped partial plans of M5). / *1–2: Fotografii ale celor două părți ale lui M5 (foto V. Boroneanț); 3: Planul lui M5 obținut prin suprapunerea celor două planuri parțiale).*