

A Special Type of Aeneolithic Dwelling. *Unicum* or Deficiency of Conservation?

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Rezumat: *Deși de dimensiuni mici, așa cum, de altfel, sunt cele mai multe dintre locuințele Gumelnița B1 de la Bucșani, având nu mai mult de 22 m², locuința care a prilejuit aceste observații se înscrie într-o categorie aparte, puțin sau chiar deloc cunoscută nu numai în aria gumelnițeană dar și în întreg neo-eneoliticul balcanic și central-european. Fiind prima construită din cele șase locuințe ale nivelului superior din tell-ul de la Bucșani, locuinței i s-a amenajat în prealabil solul de la care a pornit construcția. După săparea unui gol, pe o rețea de butuci relativ scunzi și neîngropați a fost ridicată platforma, realizată din blăni de lemn (scânduri). Pe marginea acesteia și în exteriorul golului săpat au fost ridicați pereții, fără îndoială, cu o structură de stâlpi înfipti, la partea inferioară, într-o talpă (în esență o scândură mai groasă decât cele folosite la platformă). În zona exterioară de nord și vest locuința era completată de o anexă, demonstrată de existența a patru gropi de stâlp și de sedimentul specific din interiorul său. Atât cuptorul, de mici dimensiuni, situat în această anexă, cât și vatra din interiorul locuinței au fost refăcute - refacerea cea mai importantă a fost însoțită de consecrarea celor două instalații de combustie. În primul caz a fost depus un saltaleone din aur, în cel de-al doilea două frecătoare. Ceramica din locuință, fragmentară și puțin întregibilă, nu atrage în mod deosebit atenția. Singurul element de real interes este jumătatea inferioară a unei străchini realizată din nisip aurifer - de asemenea, un unicum, nu numai în aria Gumelnița. Întreaga locuință - soluțiile tehnice alese pentru ridicarea sa, tratarea spațiului interior, reconsecrațiile instalațiilor de combustie, piesa de aur, vasul din nisip aurifer - se înscrie în cadrul elementelor deosebite, cu analogii foarte puține sau chiar deloc în aria gumelnițeană.*

Cuvinte cheie: *eneolitic, Gumelnița B1, diagramă stratigrafică, locuință suspendată, consecrare, nisip aurifer, aur.*

The independent treatment of an Aeneolithic dwelling is possible only considering the fact that the settlement, although part of a whole, represents itself a whole though its qualities, which any new construction owns. Each constructive initiative has the value of a new beginning. The chosen area, the building, the integration in the ensemble are elements which depend both on those erecting from the dwelling and on the whole community. The dwelling is assimilating with a unique *axis mundi*, in the same way that any settlement represents a center.

The last settlement¹ from Bucșani-tell *La Pod*, to which the dwelling that draw our attention belongs, was established after an abandon phase of the mound (C. Bem 1999). The flood that altered the intermediary level (C. Bem 2000, p. 20) had some stratigraphic consequences: the disappearance of a possible further habitation, and the process of homogenisation at least of its upper part and consequently the modification of dwelling micro topography as a result of the alluvial deposition. For the moment we do not know at what extent the location of the zone of maximal altitude from the river meadow changed. The new habitants, those who founded the last "village" from Bucșani, did their new activities, which had stratigraphic implications. It is certain that these are concentrated in the southern topographic centre of the mound, in the area of maximal altitude (fig. 1) – whether it coincides or not to the area before the flood is less important here.

We must bring some explanations regarding the beginning of the stratigraphic development of the upper level. The stratigraphic diagram of this level is not one of the most complicated – on the contrary, even this represents a surface of significant size (856 m²), it doesn't comprise more than 450 stratigraphic units (the majority being concentrated in the dwelling and its internal arrangements). The unsatisfactory preservation of the last level sediments (Silvia Marinescu-Bîlcu *et alii* 1998, p. 95 and next; A. Bălășescu 1998, p. 99; Iulia Tomescu 1998, p. 107) is also expressed by this relatively small number of stratigraphic units. Presenting interest for our study, only 68 of such stratigraphic units were detected between the beginning phase of habitation on the last alluvial level and the construction of the others dwellings and the beginning of forming its exterior occupational levels. We consider that one stratigraphic unit represent not only any deposition independent individualised (B. Randoiu *et alii* 2000, *passim*), but also any human activity, which is detected during the archaeological research (even during digging it has an abstract nature). We also include in the diagram a series of consequences of some well defined actions

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¹ Both the last level and the intermediary one are attributed to Gumelnița B1 culture (C. Bem *et alii* 2001).

– deposition of consecration pieces (which, in fact, are not related to an accumulation of sediments) or the surplus of sediments removed from the pits or resulting from the levelling of the soil. Although they are a direct outcome of some past activities, they must be assimilated (even if indirectly) to a new succession of human activities.

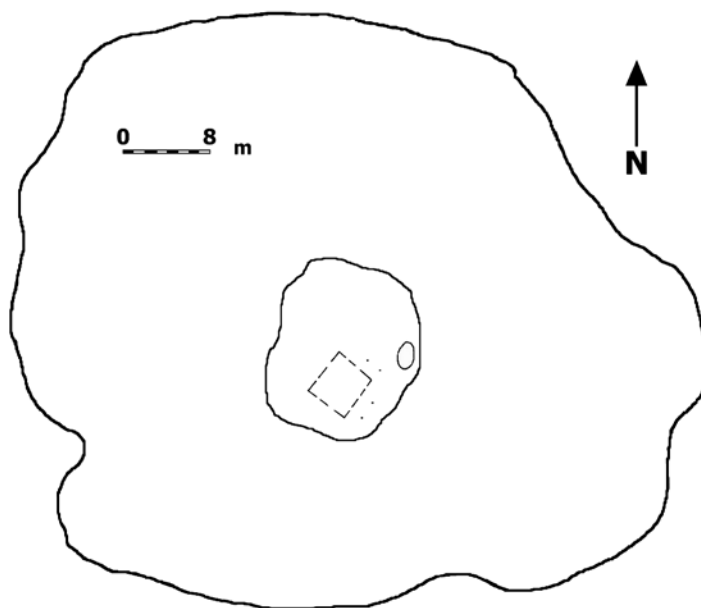


Fig. 1. The location of dwelling no 9 (dotted outline) of the annex (the four black points indicate the posts) and of the pit for the aurochs (the hatching) as first chrono-stratigraphic elements of the upper level. Depending on their seize, those two uninterrupted outlines stand for the area of the maximal altitude and, respectively, the limits of the settlement as they were during the period between the end of the formation of the alluvial accumulation and the first stratigraphic consequence belonging to the upper level.

Amplasamentul locuinței nr. 9 (conturul punctat), al anexei (cele patru puncte negre indică stâlpii) și a gropii de bour (hașura), ca prime elemente crono-stratigrafice ale nivelului superior. În ordinea mărimii, cele două contururi continui reprezintă zona de maximă altitudine și, respectiv, marginile așezării așa cum se prezentau în perioada dintre sfârșitul formării depunerii aluviale și primele consecințe stratigrafice aparținând nivelului superior.

The first two stratigraphic phases² (pl. I) of the upper level may not be directly connected. We consider the time flowing between the actions, of whose outcomes they are, short enough not to allow a millenary conservation of sediments which to chronologically separate them. The first one, we may observe the action of digging the pit where the aurochs was laid, its treatment and the animal's burying, a subject dealt on other occasions (C. Bem 1999; idem 2000, p. 20). This stratigraphic phase comprises five units direct or indirect individualised. These are: the digging of the pit, the burn of its bottom (its consequence of this actions is an ash mark of maximal 8 mm thick), the laying down of the animal, its covering and the abandon of the excess of sediment initially removed from the pit. We don't analyse here other details regarding this discovery. We limit to the observation that those five stratigraphic units (pl. I) depending on their nature may be groped in two sequences (B. Randoin *et alii* 2000, p. 218).

Secondary, we consider another initial stratigraphic phase regarding the levelling of the soil, in order to build the dwelling no. 9. We can not establish the existence of the vegetation that needed to be removed through fire or not – there is no stratigraphic mark in this regard. Nevertheless, we may suppose that, whether, between the end of the flood phase and the arriving of the new population, past at least a warm season, and than the vegetation from the river meadow would have certainly developed. We may at least consider the fact that the grains flowing with the alluvial sediment had favourable conditions and enough time to germinate and grow. The first known for sure stratigraphic units of the first sequence

² About the definition, the components and the role of the stratigraphic sequences and phases, in detail, see B. Randoin *et alii* 2000, *passim*

included in this phase is the action of digging an alveolus, on the interior perimeter of the future dwelling (pl. II).

Paradoxically, towards the upper part of the slope, to the North, the depth of the hole underneath the dwelling is very small (pl. V). It rather looks like a mere cleaning of the soil, dragging the upper part of the alluvial sediment, between 3 and 10 cm. The bottom of the initial slope of the dig often reaches 25 cm. That is why it becomes obviously that there was not the intention of levelling the surface of the construction. On the contrary, to the initial angle of the *tell*, it was added that resulting from the excavation, the level difference between the maximal limits (at the northern side of the dwelling) and the minimal one (towards the southern part) doesn't reach less than 51 cm. The chosen solution seems abnormal in this situation. The only explanation is that of the necessity of a hole under the platform of the future dwelling. It becomes relevantly the fact that four out of those seven dwellings at Bucșani have a free space between the soil and the platform. The reason for choosing this technical solution is, unquestionably, the protection of the interior and of the walls against humidity. The wind circulation would have been more efficiently in this case.

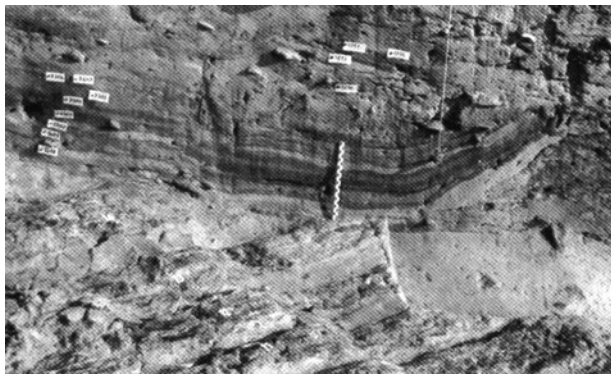


Fig. 2. The platform from wooden boards (in surface) and successive plasters with clay (remade) of the floor (in profile) of a Gumelnița A2 dwelling from Hârșova (after D. Popovici, Y. Rialland 1996).

Platforma din scânduri de lemn (în suprafață) și lutuielile succesive ale podelei (profil) ale unei locuințe Gumelnița A2 de la Hârșova (după D. Popovici, Y Rialland 1996).

On the largest part of the alveolus perimeter (which has a quasi-rectangular form with rounded off angles at the northern side), its walls are almost straight. Usually, the areas around the corners of the future dwelling, where they are oblique, in gentle slope, make an exception. It is difficult to admit whether the alveolus margins were somehow strengthened. If boards existed along its walls, they did not leave any traces, although at least the marks should have preserved, if this is the right situation. The surface (and implicitly the perimeter) of the hole on the pit underneath the platform is smaller than that of the interior of the future dwelling. That indicates not only the fact that its walls were built far in the exterior of the hole, but also the fact that the margins of the clay-made platform (and obviously of the wooden one) surpass the alveolus's margins, over a strip of 12-20 cm soil³. Until present only case of such type is known – under the platform made out of wooden boards and clay of a dwelling from Hârșova-*tell* was dug a pit which seems to have the same features as that in our case (D. Popovici, Y. Rialland 1996, p. 26, fig. 21-23). Yet, there is an important difference – the platform of the dwelling at Hârșova was “suspended” over only what is interpreted as a “sanitary void” (fig. 2) and not over the rest of the surface, unlike the construction at Bucșani with at least three sides completely suspended. It was considered that “the sanitary void” was made starting from the same reasons as the whole action of suspending the dwelling from Bucșani – in order to isolate the interior against humidity (D. Popovici, Y. Rialland 1996, p. 26). It is difficult to explain how could, practically, a hole closed with a lid, represented by the platform, guarantee a satisfactory air circulation. Its utility may have been another.

³ We shall return to these margins of the alveolus - although we haven't identified any proof in this regard, it is not excluded that the northern margin would have been protected by a board the heads of the others boards forming the platform were supporting on.

After the alveolus was made, in the case of dwelling no. 9 from Bucșani, followed the arrangement of the perimeter of the future wooden platform. The logs were raised in order to sustain the whole platform and the dwelling itself. It must be mentioned that the logs were erected not only on the dwelling's perimeter, but also inside the surface. As in other cases (Silvia Marinescu-Bîlcu *et alii* 1998, p. 96 and next; C. Bem 2000, p. 20), they were relatively short, unburied, of progressive variable length, obviously depending on the slope differences. What we have ascertained at only 3-5 cm deep are not pits, but the outcome of the action of sinking the logs as a result of the weight they beard. The *log* term, although a reality, is not one of the most proper. The *post* would be more proper to a biographical utility, but it would not correspond to reality because in this case it represents a wooden buried structure.

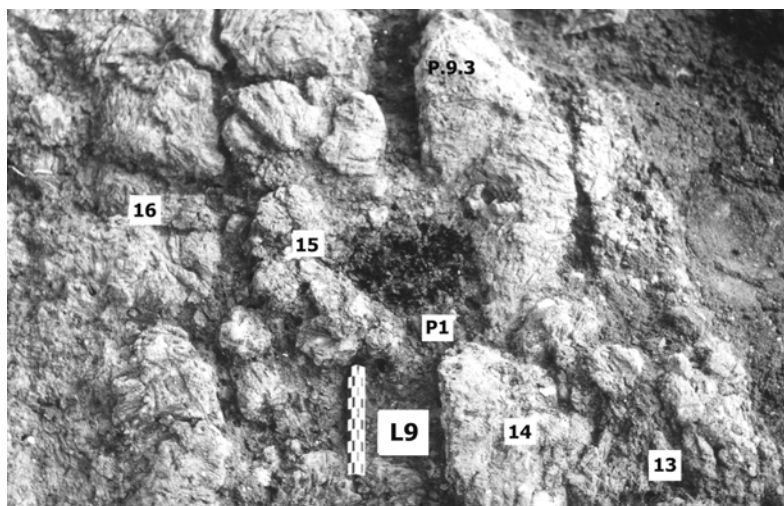


Fig. 3. Detail of the platform of dwelling no. 9 (P.9.3) and the upper part of a log (P1=L1).
Detaliu al platformei locuinței nr. 9 (P.9.3) și partea superioară a unui butuc (P1=L1).

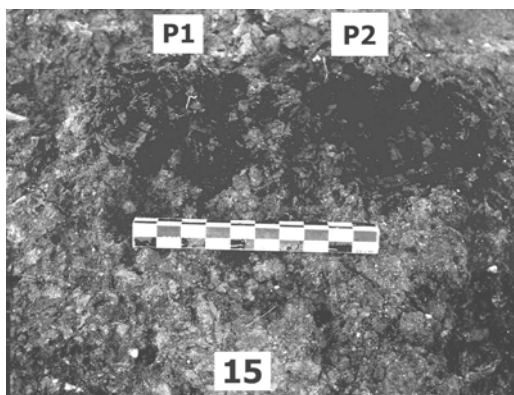


Fig. 4. The 1-st (P1=L1) and 2-nd (P2=L2) logs from the cell.
Butucii 1 și 2 din alveolare.

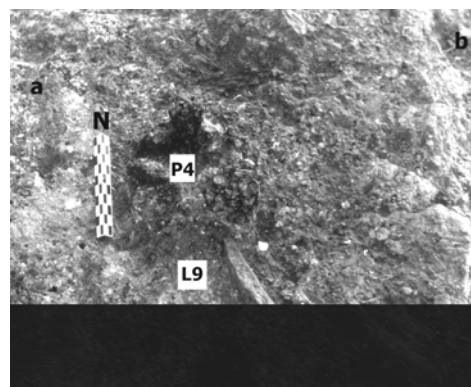


Fig. 5. The position of the 4-th (P4=L4) log in relation with the wall of the dwelling (a) and the cell (b).
Amplasamentul butucului 4 față de peretele locuinței (a) și alveolare (b).

Unfortunately, the process of degradation of the organic material from the upper occupational level includes also the majority of the posts. Only four samples, whose charcoal was preserved, were found. Most probably, the dimensions they had at the discovery were smaller than the initial ones. If we may assume that, after they burnt, they could loose approximately 20% from their thickness (including here the bark first destroyed without leaving marks), we estimate the diameter of those four found logs at 13 (L1 - fig. 3-4), 14.5 (L2 - fig. 4), 16 (L3) and respectively 17 cm (L4 - fig. 5). The first two were placed one next to another, almost in the middle of the surface and had a high of 8 and respectively 10 cm, both

supporting the same wooden board of the platform (no. 15 - pl. II; fig. 3). Evidently this wasn't the initial height, as both stakes were synced (thrust) in the sediment underneath the dwelling with 3 cm. If we take into account the level difference between the point of highest altitude, situated in the northern side of the dwelling, and the area where these logs were located, then their height must have reached approximately 35-40 cm, in order to realise the horizontal line of the platform. The absence of more than half of the whole material is only a millennial consequence of the action of pedological degradation. The third found log was also placed in the alveolus, at almost 70 cm distance of the anterior log, supporting up the board no. 18. The line between the three posts is quasi-parallel with the short sides of the dwelling. This means most likely that they were firstly supporting a transversal board on which all the other longitudinal boards were propped up. This is not the first case at Bucşani, when the majority of the preserved posts concentrate along a line (C. Bem 1999). It is extremely difficult to explain the conditions of burning in a certain area of the fired dwellings – it is not excluded that even the experimental archaeology may not bring a surplus of information in this regard.

The fourth log was identified, this time, outside the alveolus, between its upper limit and the space destined to the previous Western wall (fig. 5). Although it is the thickest, it doesn't reach more than 5 cm high, including those 2 cm of sinking. Undoubtedly, it is included in the category of the posts meant to support the edges of the platform and, not less, the walls and the basis. At the lower part of the slope, the alveolus extremities are more removed from the limits of the future walls, thus ensuring a better stability of the construction, hindering the dislocation of the sediment, the leaning of the logs and, implicitly, of the platform and of the walls.



Fig. 6. Two of the un-buried logs of a construction from Ialomița County.

Doi dintre butucii neîngropați ai unei construcții din județul Ialomița.



Fig. 7. A construction raised on logs from Ialomița County.

O construcție ridicată pe butuci din județul Ialomița.

Summing up the relatively small number of dates that we own regarding the logs⁴, we may have some conclusions. The first is that, after digging the alveolus underneath the dwelling (smaller than its internal parameters) the logs were placed on one side on the dug area, reaching bigger height (almost 50 cm) and, on the other side, outside the alveolus, reaching heights, which compensated its depth. The first

⁴ We refer here also to the other cases of suspended dwellings from Bucşani – some details are unpublished, others have been presented on different occasions (see the Bibliography regarding Bucşani).

logs were meant to support the wooden platform and the whole interior of the dwelling, the second group supporting, mainly, the walls. This doesn't mean, however, that those two units were not forming a whole and were not together completing a unique quasi-horizontal surface through the upper basis of the cone trunks that were the posts. The wooden platform of the dwelling was constructed on it. We do not know why this solution was chosen and why the burring or at least the thrusting of the structure in the ground was not applied (as it seems to happen in some cases on the settlements of Petrești culture - I. Paul 1967, *passim*; idem 1992, p. 31 and next). We may only suppose that the posts were beaten in order to assure their steadiness – they had for sure, a quasi-cylindrical form (slightly tron-conically) and there are no pits; thus, however their beating was attempted, the chance of sufficiently deep burying them is non-existent. Their steadiness was practically be assured by the further construction, by the platform and the walls' weight, by the junction between the boards of the platform and those of the basis and the posts of the walls; briefly, through what formed, beneath the posts, a perfectly united cube. The logs network was only meant to support the cube, protecting it against humidity. It is very likely that this prevented the thrust of some real pillars in the soil, which were submitted to rot. An unburied log resists much better to humidity than the part buried under the soil and that part immediately over it of a post. In addition, the appearance of the danger of rotting in this area could determine shreds of the complete ensemble causing serious problems of maintaining its horizontal plan, which could only lead to the collapse of the dwelling. If one or more of the posts have given up, they would have raised more serious problems than those produced if the logs had collapsed. The zone of contact between the wood and the moist soil is incomparably larger in the posts' case and the destruction of a wooden portion, significant for the steadiness of the dwelling, was unexpected and required long time to be reconditioned, as the "sliding" of the dwelling to be irreversible. Not the same thing happened with the unburied stakes. Even if they were implying a more difficult action of stability, once it was done, the collapse of 1-2 cm from one or more logs was insignificant as regards the whole dwelling.

We remind here the case of a construction placed inside the courtyard of the forest range at Bordușani. It is raised on unburied stakes without a hole dug underneath it. It is provided with a platform made of boards and the walls on bases. Here it presents no importance the fact that the reasons of its construction are linked to the protection against the rottenest. It worth to be retained the fact that its posts, although fixed on the soil at the end of the 80's of the XX century, are in perfect state, except 1-2 cm from the thickness of the base (fig. 6). Such constructions (fig. 7) are ethnographically noticed in numerous occasions (P.H. Stahl f.a., *passim*) – we do not insist on this aspect⁵, we only remind the case of a construction at Periș-Prahova, built in the same manner during the XIX century and which was still lasting in the 50's of the 20 century (P.H. Stahl 1969, p. 129 and next, fig. 46). The evidence of the existence of such a construction seems sufficient.

Whether, mainly, all the posts were similar in dimensions with those four discovered by us, we may estimate that two young oaks⁶ with the base diameter no larger than 30 cm were needed only for this element of construction (0.015 m³).

The following constructive phase is, as we have previously reminded, the assembly of the wooden platform. Directly over the posts, unquestionably, built in quasi-parallel rows, transversal boards were laid (we use these notions depending on the form and the dimensions of the dwelling). We may suppose that on a length of approximately 5 cm, at the most five rows of logs at a distance of approximately 1m was sufficient enough. This happens only when on the northern side, including the points of maximal altitude, the boards of the platform could prop directly on the soil or even on a wide board placed on the exterior of the alveolus. Thus, those five suspended transversal boards were to support the whole construction. A sixth one could be added, placed along the northern limit of the dwelling, fixed directly on the soil. The action of attachment of those five boards on the log network could be superior made through the simplest joints (fig. 8). As the logs were not sharp, they allowed a good stability of those five transversal boards. Undoubtedly, these boards were of the thickest and perfect moulded. The need of a straighten surface, at least in the zones where they were to be joint, compelling the builders to made an additional effort. Over

⁵ There are cases when blocks of stone, obviously unburied, replace logs of wood, – this is a piece of information offered by Mr. Adrian Bălășescu, whom we thank on this occasion.

⁶ The wood coming from three others logs, two of them from D4 and one from D1=D7, was specifically determined – all three emphasised the oak tree presence (Iulia Tomescu 1998, p.109 and next).

the transversal boards are afterwards added all the others, which form the genuine platform of the dwelling. In this case, also it is supposed that, junction, cutting up from the transversal boards, spaces with more or less parallelepiped forms, needed to fix the longitudinal ones with them. If their surface must have been flat, horizontal at least in the areas of connection from their bottom, their upper part would have been sometimes curve; the way it is established also through the marks preserved on the daub of the platform.

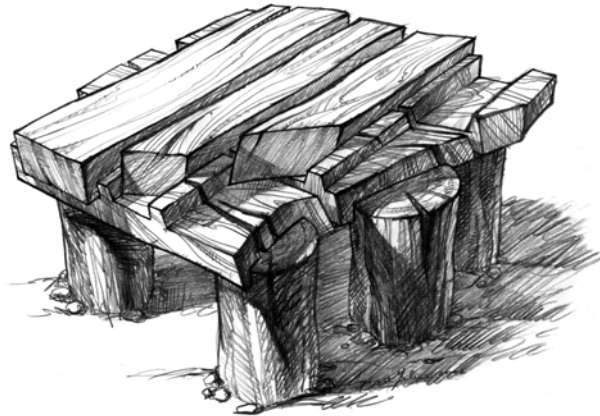


Fig. 8. Artistic schedule of some possible joins.
Schiță artistică a unor posibile îmbinări.

It is hard to say whether the first and the last of these longitudinal boards became basis for the posts of the western and the eastern walls of the dwelling or other two boards were previously added. Nevertheless, it is logically that the longitudinal marginal boards firstly fixed were preferred, eventually wider and thicker boards being used. A straight platform was thus built (even if veiled by some boards of curve surface), having the longitudinal margins higher than the rest. The attachment of the northern and southern basis, joined at their heads with the western and eastern ones, increased the stability of the platform. Those at least 27 longitudinal boards (out of which two were similar to the basis) were fixed in this way, on one side, in the crossed boards in six places, and, on the other, in those two crossed basis.



Fig. 9. Partial view of the platform of the dwelling no. 9.
Vedere parțială asupra platformei locuinței nr. 9.

The possibility that the technique of fastening with plagues, genuine wooden nails, was included into the baggage of construction techniques of the inhabitants from Gumelnița culture, is not excluded. Their usage was naturally increasing the steadiness of the ensemble.

Over this wooden platform, the walls would be subsequently raised. The pillars were fixed in special made pits, in those four basis joined at their edges. Through the methods still used nowadays, the bottom basis were doubled, the upper part of the pillars being fixed in the so-called knit. The action of fixing the pillars, both at their upper and lower part and the action of joining the boards of the knit at their edges assured a surplus of stability to the construction. Those seven pillars, identified during the archaeological research, are concentrated in the northern third of the Western wall, the best-preserved zone of elevation of the walls. They are all circular in cross-section. To the pillars was not added a wattle, as, at least, the destruction remains and the walls elevation prove. However, the distance between the pillars, not bigger than 25 cm between centres, hardly would have allowed the accomplishment of a wreathing. Whether we also take into account the thickness of the pillars (that is between 7 and 10 cm) than the real distance between two successive pillars is only of maximal 17 cm, at least for the part of the wall better preserved.

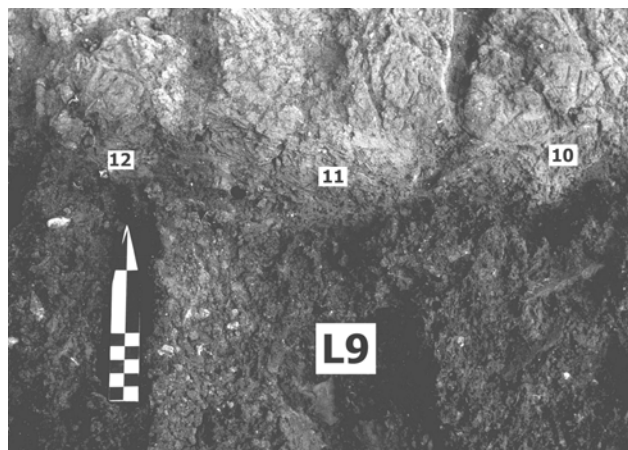


Fig. 10. Detail of the section through the platform of the dwelling no. 9 (P.9.3) – the numbers mark the evidences of the daub on the wooden platform.

Detaliu al secțiunii prin platforma locuinței nr. 9 - cifrele marchează individualizările chirpicului platformei pe scândurile de lemn.

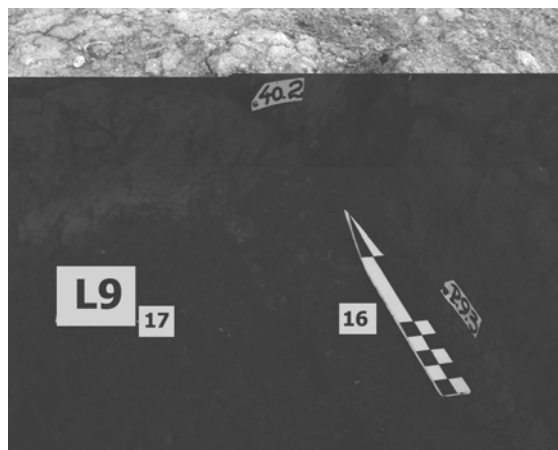


Fig. 11. Detail of the section made in the platform of the dwelling no. 9 (P.9.3) and the first phase of the hearth (40.2).

Detaliu al secțiunii practicate în platforma locuinței nr. 9 (P.9.3) și prima fază de utilizare a vetrei (40.2).

The boards of the platform were, mainly, of medium seize. On the base of the dwelling's plan and of the marks preserved on the daub of the clay-made platform, we may establish the main dimensions of the horizontal wooden elements of construction. Thus, the length of the boards was of almost 5.30-5.40 m, as long as the north-southern sides of the dwelling. The thickness of the marks, in other words the width of the boards, varies between 9 and 29 cm (fig. 10-12). This may prove the employment at the platform's construction whether of a whole tree, not only of its thicker base, or of some young trees, of small thickness (of only 10-12 cm in diameter). In addition, it may be noticed a certain alternative of the boards which is in fact quite normal, meant to cover integrally the surface proposed for the construction. Some of them were placed the other way round, in other words the large base of some boards alternated with the little base of others, in order to compensate the dimensions of the small bases of the trapeziums formed by the longitudinal sections of the boards. For instance, the board no 18 was wider towards South and less wider towards North, while the adjoining board, no 19, was the other way round.

We consider it is unnecessary to describe either every board in part, or the way of their accomplishment. The experimental archaeology successfully explain the way of preparation of the timber needed for erecting a construction, the necessary time for it and the aroused inherent difficulties⁷. We may establish the total volume of the wood used for the boards at 2m³. The identification of a construction of moulded timber leads to another view regarding the people having lived 6000 years ago. Not only that they were able to highly process the timber, but they

⁷ Among the numerous works published during the last decade we mention only one – J.-L. Monnier *et alli* 1991.

also possessed knowledge of how to acquire the stability of the future construction. We believe that some comparisons to the up-to-date principles of the material's resistance are not exaggerated. The knowledge of making correctly junctions where they were needed made possible the firmness of the dwelling at Gumelnița culture.

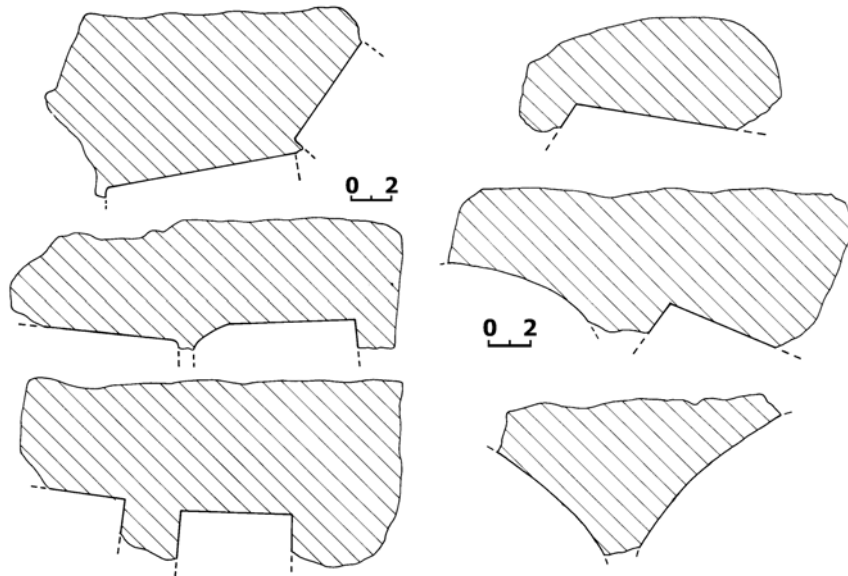


Fig. 12. Profiles of fragments of the platform in clay. / *Profile de fragmente ale platformei din chirpici.*

The fact that there are no marks of rods let us presume that the moist clay, including important vegetal elements, as cereals, was rammed between the pillars⁸, surrounding them. This first sedimentary element of construction of wall (S.U. 43.1), with a thickness varying between 12.5 and 19 cm at its bottom, was thus placed between the pillars and was covering them on the inside and on the outside. Unquestionably, the two plasterings with clay (S.U. 43.2 and 43.3 - pl. II-III) were made, after it had dried and, implicitly, cracked. This technique is still used nowadays on provincial houses⁹ – the first plastering, however it was, on the outside or on inside, were only meant to airtight the wall, to cover its fissures. The number of the consecutive plasterings varied depending on the degree of homogenisation of the used clay and on its might of drying without cracking. As in the case of some ethnographic samples (P.H. Stahl f.a.), the clay used at the plastering was pure, with no cereals, unlike the proper wall. Most of the interior or exterior reconditioning of the walls, as the archaeologist believes them, often considered equivalent to progressive stages or phases, stand for this type of secondary consecutive actions.

Some of the pillar we have identified, especially those of small dimensions, might be in fact mere sticks thrust only at the inferior basis. Of dimensions smaller than those of the walls, of 1-1.50 m, they were installed only for the steadiness of the clay. The same situation might be found at the upper part, too, with sticks fixed only in the wreath (the upper basis) – similar examples at the constructions from the 19th and the 20th century (P.H. Stahl f.a.). After the clay from the wall had been rammed, follows its dryness, which implies its crack. The wall would cease cracking after several successive plasterings with clay. It is impossible to calculate the quantity of wood necessary for erecting the wall because it is impossible to separate the proper posts of the short ones and it is not known the exact number for every category in part. However, it is estimated to almost 0.40-0.50 m³ (if the posts were placed at every meter and the intermediary elements at half a meter distance of them) and to almost 0.55 m³ (if there were only proper posts with a distance of 0.25 m between the central points).

⁸ We don't know whether the beating of the clay was made in a boarded shuttering, the way it is still practised nowadays – there is no proof in this regard, but it is supposed that such a technical solution was known by the inhabitants of Gumelnița culture.

⁹ It is not necessary to remind the whole series of ethnographic works that describe or contain references to the diverse traditional techniques of construction – a *sumum* of these techniques, made on the basis of the information gathered during 20 years of ethnographic investigations, is sufficient enough for what interests us (P.H. Stahl f.a.)

We suppose that once the walls were raised, the next constructive stage was not the roof, but the completion of the platform (fig. 10-11). Its sediment (P.9.3) is subsequently laid in comparison to those two plasterings of the wall. It is prepared similarly to the clay of the proper wall, with an addition of cereals; its thickness reaches here and there 11-12 cm, although in the northern third of the dwelling reaches only 2.5-5 cm thick (pl. V). Towards the middle of the dwelling, approximately between the eastern first and second third and the southern first and second third, an oval space was spared in the platform (fig. 14). It reaches maximal 29x43 cm in dimensions and its margins are smoothed – the interruption of the platform may only be explained through the whole space underneath the dwelling. It was probably used for easily evacuate the domestic scraps from the interior, and was unquestionably provided with a lid most probably made of wood. It is not excluded that this perforation of the platform corresponded to a central post of the dwelling, meant to support the top of the roof. Its form and especially since there is no hole to have supported the post, make us deny this hypothesis.

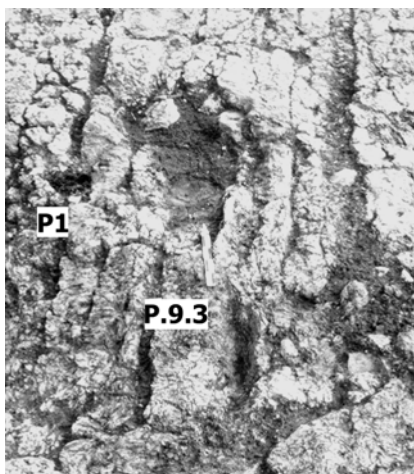


Fig. 13. The oval space spared in the platform of the dwelling no. 9.

Spațiul oval cruțat în platforma locuinței nr. 9.

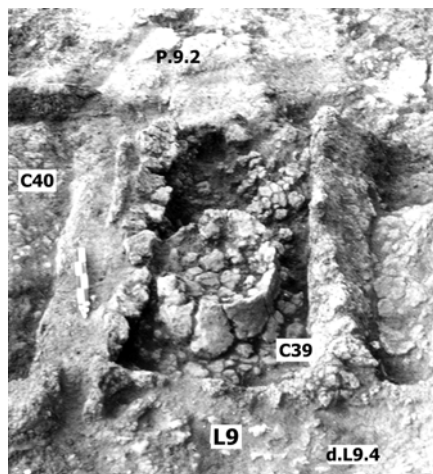


Fig. 14. The pedestal and the "box" (C39) of clay attached to the hearth (C40).

Socul și "cutia" din lut (C39) adosată vetrei (C40).

The total volume of the sediment reaches at 1.2 m^3 - cca. 1220 litres (obviously, estimated during the period of its destruction). Undoubtedly, the volume of the unburned material was larger. We add to this volume the sediment needed for the walls (supposing they reached a medium thickness of 20 cm) and for the construction of the hearth and for the "box" from the north-western corner of the dwelling (C39 - fig. 14; pl. II-III). Then we may estimate the total volume of clay prepared for the initial stage of construction to 7.5 m^3 .

Therefore, this first stage would have been completed after the roof was made¹⁰ (most likely this was a saddle roof) and after the hearth and the remind "box" were made. Most probably, both could belong to the first constructive-progressive stage of the dwelling, although there is no stratigraphic contact between those two complexes and, implicitly, no possibilities of chronological disjunction. The hearth was built on its own platform (40.2 - fig. 11) in very sandy sediment including an insignificant addition of cereals laid on the platform of the dwelling. The bed of the hearth became, after the "chime" (40.3) was built, a surface of utility, where the fire was made. On some portions of the hearth perimeter, its platform overlaid the "chime", but this action did not become a plan of construction. It was much reduced, close to disappearance. In the northern zone it preserved its height, not surpassing 26 cm from the construction level. Its moulding at the upper part provided its convex surface. It doesn't had a wooden structure of resistance – anyway it would have been useless for its small height.

¹⁰ Since we don't have any piece of archaeological information about the roof, we can make only assumptions. The appeal to ethnography is, in this case, unconvincing (fig. 21), since any technique could have been applied. Therefore, for this time we don't try to find solutions.

Unquestionably, at a short period followed the construction of the "box" from the north-western corner of the dwelling – built directly on the platform of the dwelling (P.9.3); between its walls, had a surface no larger than 0.175 m². Just like the chime of the hearth, it had no wooden structure and its total elevation reached only 18 cm. It was closed to the Western wall of the dwelling, with a general form reminding of a pawn of chess. Unfortunately, we can not explain the reasons of the construction of this interior arrangement – there could not be found carbonised grains or any other kind of organic material, in spite of our efforts. At the moment of discovery, it contained only crumbled burnt daub resulting from the degradation of its walls and the western one of the dwelling.

Therefore, in its first stage of evolution, the way we may perceive it nowadays, the dwelling had in its motionless inventory, the interior hearth and the clay-made "box". Besides, we ascribe this first stage, both the accomplishments of the annex and of the exterior oven. In order to avoid an excessive fragmentation of an evolution which must have been absolutely unitary, in its second stage we have integrated both the reconditioning of the platform, of the chime and of the surface of utilisation of the hearth, and the construction of the others interior arrangements. Chronologically, the first action of reconditioning was meant for the chime of the hearth – three successive plasterings were made and simultaneously constructed, closed to the exterior of the chime. Just like the initial element, they were made of sandy sediment with a small addition of straw. They belong to the same constructive sequence and implicitly, stratigraphic. This is established not so much through the fact that all three were made directly on the platform, but especially by the fact that all of them were overlaying two exactly in the north-western corner of the hearth (one made of lime stone, the other of silex) - pl. XIV/4-5. The action of laying them must be understood in connection to the action of remaking the hearth. The consecration of the combustion outfits from the settlement of Bucșani is quasi-present – either on the outside, or on the inside of the dwelling, all the hearths and ovens analysed, in proportion of at least 50 percent¹¹ are followed of such kind of depositions (C. Bem 2001b).

To a reconditioning of small extent of the platform (P.9.4), probably meant to straighten the surface of the floor, followed an important one (P.9.2), that must have integrally covered the interior space of habitation. The "scrape" of the dwelling altered in great extent this new floor, integrally destroying it in the eastern third of the dwelling and partially in the rest. It is made of very sandy sediment with no vegetal addition (except some leaves - fig. 18), just like the last partial remake of the floor (P.9.1).

A new "box" made out of clay (C 38), belonging to the second stage, attached to the chime of the hearth and built over the integral remake of the platform, sheltered a base in the shape of a truncated cone. The walls of this new interior arrangement present the same constructive features as those of the margins of the hearth and those of the "pawn". They have no wooden structure, consist in sandy sediment with very few vegetal remains; the maximal preserved elevation does not surpass 19 cm. It wasn't probably much higher. Nevertheless, if we consider the presence of the base, an annex of the hearth, it compels the height of the walls, not to excel the height of the hearth's chime. Unlike the "pawn", inside this box were found those seven fragments of weights (pl. XIII, XIV/1-3) and pieces of three pots (pl. VII/1, VIII/3, XI/6). A eaves was made of the same kind of sediments as their walls, between those two complexes, only of 53 cm long. Being made on the reconditioning of the platform (P.9.2), its upper margins were moulded on the walls. We could not find for the moment its role.

Although we do not possess very clear details, we may suppose that "the door", the space of connecting the dwelling with its outside, was placed in the north-eastern corner. This may be the significance of the interruption of the platform and of the northern wall in this zone.

Most probably, the annex is part of the first constructive phase of the dwelling, as we have previously remind. It was built towards north and east those four pits for a post that were discovered (only two of them containing wood charcoal) defining the space. It was organised along the walls of the dwelling no. 9 and had no more than 1.80 m wide (pl. III-IV). Because there are notable differences between the sediment from its outer side and that accumulated in its inner side during its utility phase, there must have been an obstacle. This obstacle was needed to be a genuine wall in order to allow the

¹¹ The hearths of dwellings no 1, 4 and 11 were not integrally investigated, either because parts of them were included in the profile, or because they are the subjeet of a subsequent for a previous research.

storage of different sediment on one side and on the other of the line made by the pits for posts. Even if it did not consist of a stratigraphic component in other words, of an addition of clay, the wall must have had at least a wattle fixed by the numerous posts. The distance between the posts are quasi-equal - 1.42 m, for the northern couple and 1.56 m, for the eastern one. Identically, their diameters have almost the same size, varying between 9 and 13 cm. If we consider the distance of 1.50 m being a standard and the annex completely surrounds the northern and eastern sides, then at least other fired posts must have supported the wreath and its roof. We found no mark regarding it. We consider that it was quasi-horizontal, at least on its eastern side, in the continuation of the roof of the dwelling.

Inside the annex, a small oven¹² (C12) was built (pl. III-IV). Although we did not found pits for posts in its western zone, it certain belonged to the same structure of habitation, with the condition that the occupational level of the annex covered the constructive elements of the oven. The oven was built in a hole dug in the same alluvial deposit as the alveolus underneath the dwelling no. 9; this was a simple, but uncommon solution, at least if we analyse it from the point of view of our nowadays knowledge. After the pit had been dug, sediment having a sandy texture and including a series of fragments was prepared. We should notice the fact that these fragments are not somehow ordered, but they are components of the sediment, and, moreover, it was impossible to distinguish two for belonging to the same pot. Most likely the inhabitants used what they had discovered at the surface of the soil and belonged to the anterior level of habitation. The sediment, thus prepared (S.U. 12.5) was used to the arrangement of the bottom and of the walls of the pit; it was also made with no wooden structure, an elevation beneath the soil for the construction of the vault (fig. 15). If its thickness in the central zone of the hole was of 26 cm, it had no more than 4.5-5.0 cm on the walls and on the vault's zone.

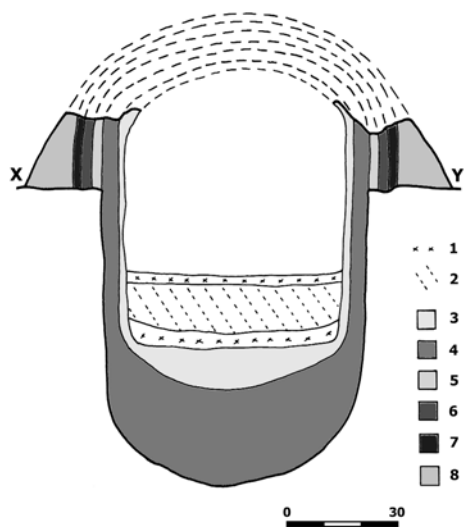


Fig.15. The profile of the hearth from the annex of the dwelling no 9 - 1. rests of burning (12.2-12.3); 2. sterile sediment which contained the golden piece (12.4); 3-8. constructive elements (12.1, 12.5-12.9).

Profilul cuptorului din anexa locuinței nr. 9 - 1. resturi de cremație (12.2-12.3); 2. sediment steril care conținea piesa din aur (12.4); 3-8. elemente constructive (12.1, 12.5-12.9).

Another constructive unit followed (12.1), owning the same characteristics (moreover, it included pebbles and a series of pieces - two polished *astragalus* of sheep, a fragmentary blade of silex and a clay-made piece, probably an anthropomorphous figurine - fig. 16). These four objects, stored in the north-western corner of the oven, seem to have been intentionally laid, as they are comparable to the consecration of the oven. Just like the first constructive unit, it is thicker in the central zone of the burning area (12 cm), on walls and towards the vault having only 1.2-2.5 cm. The lay out of the upper part of the vault was completed through the addition of four other plasterings with clay levels (12.6-12.9). The three first ones (12.6-12.8) are at the surface of the soil, quasi-circumscribed to the pit, thin (2-3 cm), vertical, made of fine sandy sediment and the fourth (12.9) presents the same features, but being more thicker towards its exterior (14.5 cm).

¹² At the moment this oven was found (1998) the vault was preserved in 70% proportion; the indifference and indolence of the actuals inhabitants lead to its destruction, only a little part of it preserving to the moment of the effective investigations.

We must suppose that all these plasterings, not only those coming from the pit, but also those starting at the surface of the soil, appertain to the same constructive stage. Similar to the case of building of the walls of the dwelling, after the plastering was carried out, its drying was waited for and the carving out of a new one followed until the clay ceased cracking. From this reason, we may not assert that this oven suffered any reconditioning. It seems to have been unaffected after a first phase of utilisation (12.2), whose marks are only an important quantity of ash and very little charcoal. A stratigraphic unit, archaeologically quasi-useless (12.4), covered the entire zone of burning and was excessively thick (10-13 cm) so as the sandy sediment, accumulated may come from more or less natural causes. Moreover, this stratigraphic unit contained a fragment of burned wood of large size (15x12x21 cm) - the only discovered type of coal - which could not burn instantly, and a golden *saltaleone* (fig. 17). We believe it is the same phenomenon - act of consecration of the structure of fire. Another functional stage (12.3) followed afterwards. The anthracologic analysis pointed out the presence of the alder tree, willow and wax cherry tree, totally different species of those used in the construction and for the interior arrangements (Iulia Tomescu 1998, p. 109 and next). This only proves that all the features of the wooden species around the settlement were not unknown for the inhabitants.

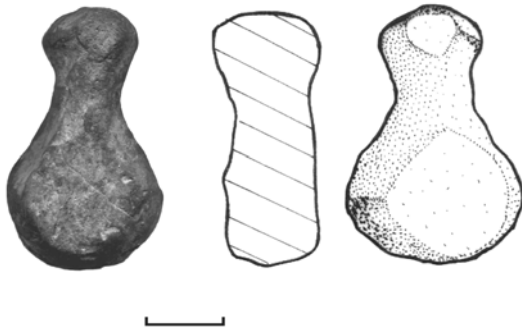


Fig. 16. Anthropomorphic piece put in the sediment used in rising the hearth from the annex of the dwelling no. 9.
Piesă antropomorfă descoperită depusă în sedimentul utilizat la ridicarea cuptorului din anexa locuinței nr. 9.

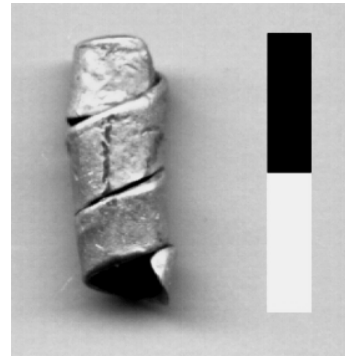


Fig. 17. Golden *Saltaleone* put in the sediment which separate the two important moments of the using of the hearth.

Saltaleonele din aur depus în sedimentul care separă cele două momente importante de utilizare a cuptorului.

The discovery of an ample destruction of the oven conducted to the belief that its final alteration must have been in connection with the fire and the destruction of the dwelling. As we have mentioned, the vault of the oven was admirably well preserved - whether its abandon had been caused by the irreversible degradation, firstly of the oven, it wouldn't have been so well preserved after approximately 6000 years. Moreover, the well state of conservation makes us suppose the existence of a roof having been protecting the oven; the annex was the only construction meant to protect it, although the line of the pits for posts seems to end around the oven.

The destruction of the dwelling happened after a fire. We won't analyse here the causes of its outbreak. We only want to mention that an important temperature was needed so that the sedimentary material of the platform would become red - brick coloured and extremely hard, a temperature which implies a considerable quantity of wood. Both these features seem to be carried out by the fact that the dwelling was built on logs and had a boards-made platform. It is important to remark, however, that the timber of the platform was not directly submitted to the fire, if the latter broke out from the interior. Similarly must have happened to the wooden structure of the walls, indirectly touched by the fire, thanks to the protection offered by the clay. At least in the southern zone of the dwelling, where the succession of the reconditioning of the platform was preserved, we were able to establish a certain fact. If the fire advanced beneath the platform, their colour degradation is the other way round than we would have supposed. The last reconditioning (P.9.4) is superficially touched by the fire and is of black-grey colour, those two intermediary reconditionings (P.9.2 and P.9.4) are more burnt, being of beige-yellowish colour, while the so-called platform (P.9.3) is extremely well burnt, as we have mentioned. On the other hand,

however, both the walls (as they were preserved) and those three interior complexes and the intermediary reconditioning (P.9.2) in the northern zone of the dwelling are burnt to red brick-coloured with yellowish hue. Therefore, we are constrained to accept the existence of two centre of the fire - an interior one, localised somewhere in the northern third, and the other under the platform of the dwelling, deriving advantage from the wood already existent, localised somewhere in the southern third of the dwelling. The first centre may have been caused by an unhappy accident, broken out around the zone of the hearth, close to which combustible may have been enough for a quick propagation of the fire (and even elements of inventory of timber and eventually forage). The second one could not break out without a dose of intention. The present case is only meant to draw the attention upon a theory of work opposed to the usual one, a theory of continual undesirable accidents - in other words, opposed to the taken-roots-theory admitting the aberrant attitude of man's passivity faced with the fire. We shall discuss on other occasion about the phenomenon of fire and of intentional destruction of some dwellings.

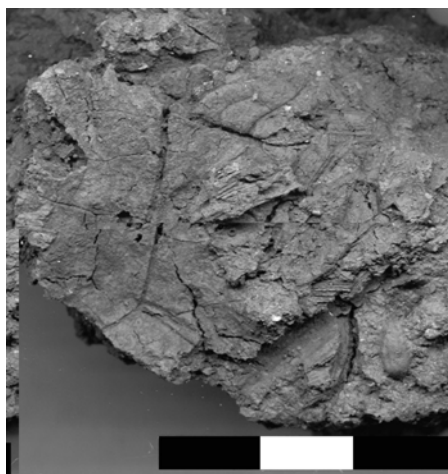


Fig. 18. Stamps of leaves preserved in the clay of the platform of the dwelling no. 9 (P.9.3).

Amprente de frunze păstrate în chirpicul platformei locuinței nr. 9 (P.9.3).

An extremely odd fact is the absence of the so-called "destruction level". What we have noted in our stratigraphic diagram (pl. I) with the sigle d.L9.1-d.L9.4 represents only some elements. They were initially components of the walls of the dwelling and its arrangement, which are however the result of the degradation in time of the basis of the walls preserved and the result of the interior complexes of the dwelling. The total volume of the sediment discovered only in their surroundings and along the walls doesn't exceed 0.5 m³.

The absence of the burnt daub, a result of the pulling down of the walls, may have, generally, two meanings. The most at hand of them, which the specialists obviously take it *a priori*¹³ in their calculations, is that of reusing of the material. It is well to know that a "ready-made" material, such as the burnt adobe, may successfully be part of two types of elements of construction. These depend on those two qualities it acquires as a result of the burning - it becomes more fireproof than any other prepared raw material (we don't include here the rock) and increases its degree of impermeability. Therefore, firstly it may be part of the core of some hearths and of other complexes of the same nature. A single structure of combustion from the upper level (out of those five investigated, excluding those two of dwelling no. 9) - the hearth of the dwelling no. 2 took advantage from a supply of such a material used at its reconditioning (C. Bem, 1999). But the walls of the dwelling no. 9 comprise however straws.

However, crumbed the reused adobe would be, it would preserve the prints of cereals, whether they were included in its initial composition. Moreover, it must be mentioned that starting from the first constructive phase of the hearth of the dwelling no. 2 the chime did not preserve - it is not excluded that its material was reused for reconditioning. Nevertheless, the volume of the sediment from the second

¹³ We shall discuss on other occasion the risk the axioms represent for the historical investigation, thus for the archaeological one too (C. Bem 2001).

phase of the hearth of the dwelling no. 2 is not by far equivalent to that of the walls, only if they were of 15-20 cm high.

Another reutilization of the daub material is determined by the increasing of the degree of impermeability, as we have previously reminded. Theoretically, any new construction or inner arrangement may use for certain constructive units this type of material. Generally, the burnt daub may form the so-called "bed of the arrangement"¹⁴ in the case of a certain category of dwellings. We shall not insist upon some details that are not the aim of these lines. The only dwelling of the upper level which was built directly on the soil, without a platform of wooden boards and, from this reason, the only for which a "bed of arrangement" could be built, is of the dwelling no. 3 (Silvia Marinescu-Bîlcu *et alii* 1998, p. 96). This, however, has, under the clay-made platform, only the soil it has been built on. Therefore, there are no situations which may permit us to consider the reutilization of the burnt daub of the walls in the construction of other walls or at the reconditioning of the varied arrangements.

We have found agglomeration of burnt daub in the exterior of the surface occupied by the platform (pl. IV), towards east, probably immediately in its continuation (unfortunately, the pits do not allow a more exact specification), covering at least 1.5×3 m, and having an approximately rectangular form. Since it overlies directly the occupational level of the annex of the dwelling no. 9, and since the exterior level of the dwelling no. 2, as the entire dwelling, covers it, there is no question regarding its belonging. Those two pits, rather alveoli, little deep perforate through the occupational level of the annex and are covered by the same exterior level of the dwelling no. 2. They are even filled with the same sediment.

Whether this burnt daub stands for the remains of the walls of the dwelling no. 9 and there is no question about it, however, the problem still stands. The total volume of the sediment used at the elevation of the walls would reach at least 6.7 m³. That means a perimeter of approximately 18.80 m, a medium thickness of the walls of 0.20 m, and their height of 1.80 m¹⁵. We eliminate the quantity of burnt daub from outside the dwelling (cca. 0.9 m³), that caused by the degradation (cca. 0.5 m³) and the very one preserved in the remains from the elevation (cca. 0.3 m³). Thus, it remains a difference of about 5 m³ or so. It is very difficult, regarding the present state of investigation, to explain this absence of almost three-quarters from the material used at the construction of the walls. As it was the first dwelling built by the new arrivers that founded the last village of the tell, it might suffered a certain treatment between its consequences being its removal from the platform and, undoubtedly, the removal of the burnt daub. What have remained seems to be indeed the result of a scrape of vast proportions of the dwelling after the fire had destroyed it. The more we advance towards the eastern part of the dwelling, the more we notice the rise of the absent material. Along the preserved walls and the interior complexes more or less well maintained remains of degraded daub still exist and the platform and its reconditioning are intact. Starting with the eastern third, not only that the remains of destruction does not exist, but also the platform and especially its reconditioning, suffered modifications from an action similar to this scrape. Although we consider we are not far from reality, we can not tell for the moment the aims for which such a solution was preferred.

A description of the ceramic inventory of the dwelling no. 9 should be integrated in the ensemble of the ceramic complex, at least of the upper level. We shall make only concise references, since what has preserved from the pottery of the dwelling is not characteristic for the whole.

¹⁴ We discuss only this possibility because at Bucșani there is no other type of arrangements which to be suited to the reutilization of the burnt daub at their construction. A "box" made out of clay, belonging to the "porch" of the dwelling no 2 was built of vertical stripes of sediment (C. Bem 1999). Their maximal thickness reached only 8 cm at the bottom and 5 cm at the upper limit of the preserved elevation. Technically, it is impossible to build of reutilised material such an arrangement that had at least 37 cm high (that was only what remained until its discovery). The fact that the vessel sheltered by this "box" has more than 1 m high may be in concordance with its real dimensions, emphasising the impossibility of its raise. Even if a wooden shuttering was needed to secure its lasting, its subsequently removal would have determined the breakdown of the walls of the "box", whether they had been made out of burnt daub.

¹⁵ Even if they seem to be low dimensioned, these values may be very close to reality. However, the more they increase, the more the used quantity of clay increases – and the problem becomes more critical.

Considering that what remained from the vessels of the house is not typical from the whole, we shall make only brief considerations about them. The scraping ("the cleaning") of the space of former dwelling affected even the inventory of this. Not only it is poorer than that of the other dwellings (Silvia Marinescu-Bîlcu *et alii* 1998, p. 98) but, because is not completed, it cannot offer a complete image for requiring a very detailed debate. We shall briefly describe the general features of the pottery from the whole upper level, at the same time making references to their correspondents inside the dwelling no. 9.

The ceramic complex of the first level from Bucșani is extremely unitary.

The mixture used at the fabrication of the pots is extremely sandy. This leads us to the idea of the using of the alluvial deposits directly, in its moist state or not, without any special treatment of the natural deposits. These were numerous on the bank, waterside meadow liable to inundation and the terraces of the Neajlov river (otherwise, the areas along the present flow and on its left terrace which could have been formed clay and sand quarries for the Aeneolithic community were identified). The differences regarding the quality of the paste, the different kinds of pots are made of, consists in the type of natural deposits used as sources of raw material. Unlike other dwellings, there is not what usually is called fine ceramic. We are dealing with a paste containing a lot of medium and coarse sand obviously naturally homogenised, which may be integrated in the so-called category of "intermediate" paste, from other dwellings. It represents almost 40-45% from the entire quantity of pottery from the first level at Bucșani and in the same proportion it is rediscovered between the fragments preserved in dwelling no. 9 (pl. VI/1, 3, 5-8; VII/3-6; VIII/3-4; IX/5-6; XI/6). In very few cases (less than 2%) a scanty quantity of chaff and/or chopped straws were added to this kind of paste made before its moulding. It is hard to believe, however, that an accident played any role in the fabrication of this mixture that was discovered in the case of some anthropomorphic and zoomorphic statuettes - therefore we may consider a rather special destination of the vessels made of this type of mixture. The intermediate paste, including remains of cereals in its composition, was used only at the fabrication of the vessels with broad mouth, as the bowls and the tureens.

The vessels made of intermediate paste with chaff are especially of small and medium dimensions, even there is also a series of vessels of greater proportion - the entire range of the pottery from the first level is typological made of such a paste. The more the seize of the vessels rises, the more the percentage of those made of intermediate paste decreases.

The intermediate pastes contain, consequently, besides clay, medium (0.25-1 mm) and coarse (1-2 mm) sand in important quantities. The presence of fine and very fine sand (up to 0.25 mm) is not excluded, but the seize of the grain does not allow a macroscopically individualisation - however, the presence or the absence of these categories does not alter the characteristics of this type of paste. The fine and medium sands appear in the natural deposits either in association with coarse and very coarse sands with pebbles, or forming independent deposits. Both situations can be found in the Bucșani area on the deposits from the terraces or from the bank, while one of the sources were the mixed deposits, a certain treatment of sorting the sands having dimensions of less than 2 mm was accomplished by the handcrafts men. The existence only of the "clean" deposits, including only sand, seems to exclude this practice.

The number of vessels made of this category discovered in dwelling no. 9 raises to 59, most of which (48) being represented by a single ceramic fragment. Since the dwelling was "scraped" we can not accurately ascribe every element of inventory to one or another of its evaluative-constructive stages. It is certain that the potsherds belonged to the vessels used in the dwelling along its existence, in the analysis being investigated only what was covered by the remains of the destruction level and certainly they did not result from the previous deposits. Otherwise, naturally, all the ceramic fragments were stored in the western third of the dwelling, the one less affected by the action of removal the daub caused by the burning of the walls.

A single vessel was made out of this category of paste, including a vegetal addition (pl. VI/1).

The majority of the paste used at the fabrication of approximately 55-60% out of the entire number of the vessels from the first level, and from dwelling no. 9 too, is the so-called "coarse". It also comprises natural sources, made of sandy-clay and deposits with variable components of very coarse sand and pebbles. Unlike other cases, the coarse paste does not comprise other addition - potsherds, chaff or something else. We consider this as another argument for the existence of some natural sources directly explored, whose raw material needed no other degreasing substances to be suited to moulding

and burning. As far as we know, this is the only settlement that used in such a manner the possibilities offered by the environment.

Usually, the coarse paste was used at the fabrication of the vessels of large size, globular or simple biconical, but, there are also, for instance, miniature vessels made out of the same material. A situation extremely important, we believe, that needs to be remarked - the miniature vessels made out of coarse paste, are only those fabricated in customary size. For instance, on the one side, the bowls and the tureen exclusively made out of intermediate paste were miniature reproduced only of intermediate paste. On the other side, the quasi-cylindrical or slightly biconical vessels, which had been made out only of coarse paste, are reproduced in miniature exclusively of the same material.

The coarse paste (pl. VI/2, 4; VII/1-2, 7-9; VIII/1-2, 5-6; IX/1-4, 7; X/1-4; XI/1-5; XII/1-5) in dwelling no. 9, as in the entire upper level, contains besides clay, very coarse sand (the size of 2-mm) and pebbles with the grain's diameter of 5-5.5 mm. Their association on the natural deposits from the area indicates sources of raw material. Even the same deposits contains some sands with smaller grain, a fact that reflects in pottery as well, that doesn't impose the need of variation in the paste's categories. The needs of the community imposed the use of some raw materials that composed not of very coarse sands and pebbles, besides clay and sands with smaller grains.

The number of vessels estimated for dwelling no. 9 for this category is of 94, but similar to the case of the proceeding dwelling, most of the vessels (69) are represented by a pottery fragment. One of the vessels (of which only the upper part was preserved - pl. VIII/1) was made out of a paste of the same structure but likely including a kaolin addition. The white-yellowish colour acquired after the burning is very rare at Bucșani - only other six potsherds from the upper level own this feature. Chemical and/or microscopical analyses would give more details.

The decorative work includes in what is already known about Gumelnița B1, as typological *sumum*, being represented by incisions and fluting plastically elements and paintings. We shall not detail in the background case, because, as we have previously mentioned, the pottery preserved in dwelling no. 9 does not carry out the features of a representative pattern.

The incised decoration is most of the times unorganised, generally consisting in incoherent ensembles of fine cut lines (similar to mere scratches) that form stripes or spaces slightly triangular and trapezoidal (sometimes integrally or partially covered by a red colour) always in association with the plastic background. This category is absent however from the inventory of the dwelling no. 9. When the incision participates indirectly at the accomplishment of the decoration, generally, geometrically the lines forming the motives are deep (pl. VII/1; VIII/4; IX/7-8) and not only shallow as in other situations.

The printings are very numerous - we notice only the arrangement of some - more or less quadrilateral on grooves (pl. IX/6) and a series of little holes covering the whole surface of a vessel (pl. IX/5).

The plastic decoration is always associated the one incised, printed or in relief (pl. VIII/1, 3, 6). We shall not insist here on some details, we limit to remark only the fact, very rare on these settlements that the plastic decoration made out of slip is not to be found. The quality of the paste, naturally homogenised or not, and the unoxidating burning, permit the accomplishment of the tightness of the vessels only through a smoothing out of their surface. Consequently, the slip lost its role. What was accomplished in other sites by the slip (especially the protuberances and the so-called *vârci*) is here directly made of the paste from the wall of the vessel (pl. VIII/1, 3, 6; X/1-2; XI/5; XII/1).

The groove rarely associated to another decorative element is characteristic for what is known as belonging to the B1 phase of the Gumelnița culture - wide (sometimes-reaching even 1.5 cm) and deep, horizontally disposed and very rarely slanting (pl. IX/1-2, 4), especially at the upper part of the vessels of large dimensions. Their surface is always very well smoothed out, sometimes even polished.

Since in the dwelling no. 9 painted ceramics were not discovered, we shall not discuss about this category.

An element of a special interest is the half inferior part of the bowl (fig. 19), at least from the point of view of the relations the little and apparently isolated community had with other settlements. Its decorative motives are frequent in the area: spiral in deep incised strip and filled with unorganised incisions, starting from the circle of the bottom of the vessel. In spite of this, it is rarely in the upper level of Bucșani I. The action of polishing the surface, filling the spaces between the spirals of this vessel, is an

extremely rare method in Bucșani settlement. The sand mixed in the clay paste is auriferous¹⁶, as far as we know, a unique discovery in the whole area indicates, if not a foreign origin of the vessel, however an "import" effective of raw materials. This sample must be in connection with the golden piece discovered in the oven of the annex.

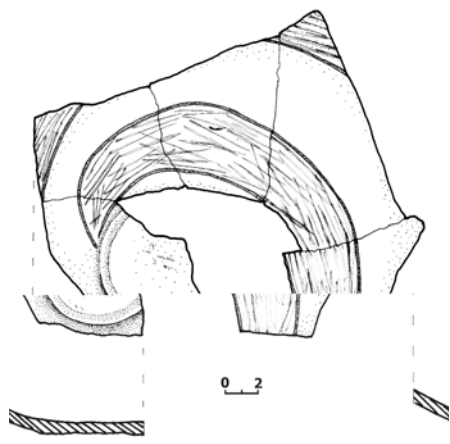


Fig. 19. Fragment of dish whose paste contains golden sand.

Fragment de strachină a cărei pastă conține nisip aurifer.

We believe it is unnecessary to insist upon the existence or absence of the suspended dwelling. Although the discovery of such constructions in the Petrești cultural area (I. Paul 1967, *passim*; idem 1992, p. 31 and next) was put to doubt, the criticism was based exclusively on the discovery of cucutenian dwellings (Traian, Hăbășești, Glăvănești Vechi, Berești, Cucuteni, Ruginoasa - VI. Dumitrescu 1968, p.389 and next) and pattern of the upper level from Căscioarele (VI. Dumitrescu 1968, p.389). Indeed, the fact that there were not suspended dwellings in the settlement does not imply that this type of construction was unknown (fig. 7, 22). Moreover, the idea according to which the models in miniature of the dwelling provided with four little legs are actually "representations of sanctuaries in the open air" (for ex., Șt. Cucoș 1989, p.56) is not supported by any reasonable argument. Therefore, the possibility of the existence of some suspended dwellings¹⁷ in the marsh and hill areas is in principle accepted (VI. Dumitrescu 1968, p.394). The painted representation of such a pattern on a pottery fragment from Turdaș (I. Paul 1967, p. 19 and next) is interpreted as a miniature copy of a "dwelling on the bank of the river" (VI. Dumitrescu 1968, p.395), while the model of a dwelling found at Aldeni (Gh. Ștefan 1941, *passim*; I.T. Dragomir 1962, p. 393 and next) corresponds to a model in full size (VI. Dumitrescu 1968, p.394).

It is far from any doubt the existence of representation of suspended dwellings painted or moulded in clay on an extremely large space, at least at the Aeneolithic level from Balkans and Central Europe (Gumelnița, Cucuteni, Petrești - pl. XIII-XIV). The presence must imply the existence of a model in full size. All the miniature representations discovered in this space, of any size, have models in reality - we find it possible that this evidence can be applied to the suspended dwellings was well.

Four out of the six dwellings forming the upper level of Bucșani settlement were suspended, built on trunks. Those two simple erected directly on the soil - dwelling no 2. and 3, are located in the area of maximal altitude (at north and west, respectively from dwelling no. 9) where the slope of the tell started to increase more prominent and where the rain water or/and the alluvial water could easily flow down. It also must be noticed, whether the solution of suspending the dwellings and the action of digging some traces on the slopes of the tell needed for smoothing out the surface (this was a difficult operation implying much more effort and time than if cutting and moulding some logs). The necessity of protecting against humidity must have been the main reason for this technical choice.

Until similar discoveries, the case of the settlement from Bucșani remains unique in the area - the possibility that certain dwellings already investigated had been part of the same category is not excluded,

¹⁶ The analyse was made by Doina Șeclăman.

¹⁷ A special interpretation given to some of the miniature models of suspended dwellings is that of the representations of the two-storied dwellings, excluding the possibility of the post existence (Silvia Marinescu-Bîlcu 1974, p. 35, n. 68).

but the unsatisfactory preservation of their remains could not have allowed the identification of the essential elements.

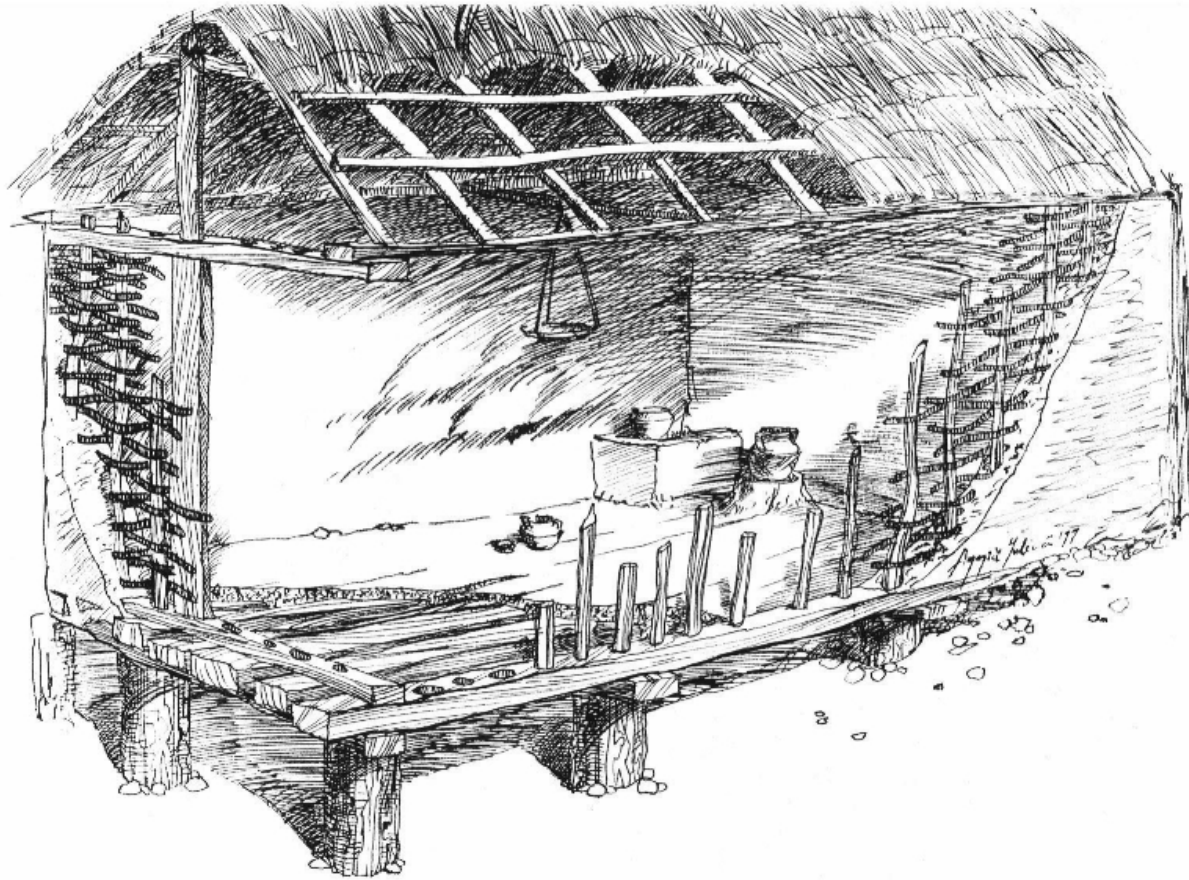


Fig. 20. The artistic reconstruction of a house on logs. / Reconstituirea artistică a unei locuințe pe butuci.

Annex

The **lithic** inventory of the dwelling is extremely poor – to these few waste materials of processing and fragments of silex are added only a series of fragments from grinding tools and sharpeners. Further, we present a list of them, including petrographic¹⁸ details:

- four fragments of a grinding stone, used on both sides, belonging to a crystalline mica-schist with fine rolled plates and quartz intercalations.
- two fragments belong to another grinding tool (sharpener), made out of a red, fine, crumbly quartzite grit stone with ferruginous cement;
- two fragments of grey, coarse, friable, grit stone, with mica, belonged to another grinding stone;
- other fragments of a grinding stone made out of a quartzite schist (or feldspat-quartz) with fine schistosity and fine crystalline.

The friability of some of these fragments did not permit the exact determination of the type of tool. Moreover, it must be mentioned that except three fragments of silex that had belonged to an initial phase of habitation (having been discovered under P.9.2), all other lithical pieces belonged to the last phase of habitation.

¹⁸ The petrographic determinations and the description of the fragments belong to Mr. Constantin Haită (The National History Museum of Romania – The National Centre of Plural disciplinary Researches), whom we thank on this occasion.

The source of raw material, at least for the unsiliceous stones, must not be searched far from the bed of Neajlov River, or the terraces from the immediate vicinity of the settlement.

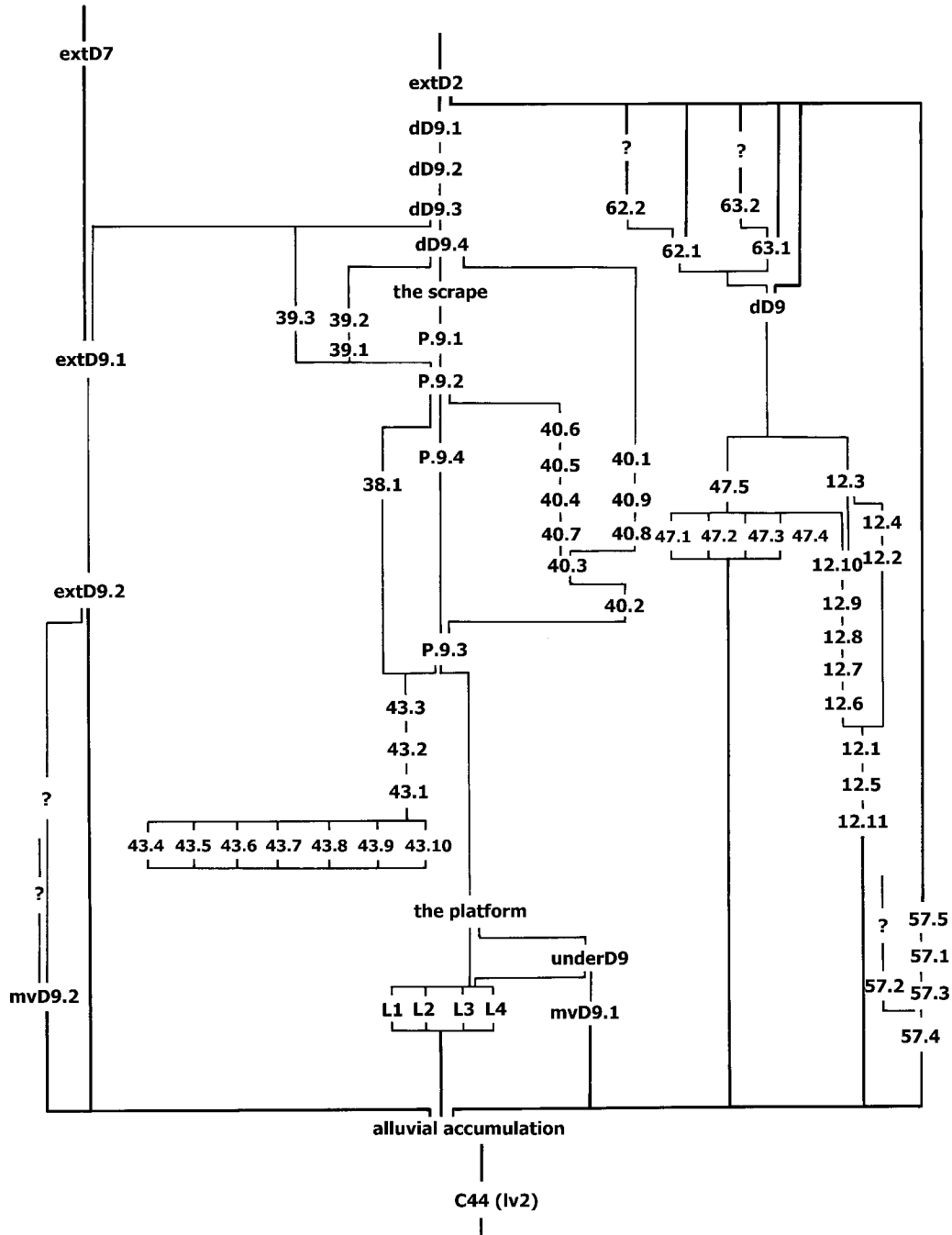
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Abrevieri:

<i>AMJTA Giurgiu</i>	Anuarul Muzeului Județean "Teohari Antonescu". Giurgiu.
<i>AMN</i>	Acta Musei Napocensis. Cluj.
<i>CA</i>	Cercetări Arheologice. MNIR București.
<i>CCDJ</i>	Cultură și Civilizație la Dunărea de Jos. Călărași.
<i>PZ</i>	Praehistorische Zeitschrift. Berlin.
<i>Suceava</i>	Suceava. Anuarul Muzeului Bucovinei. Suceava.



Pl. I. The key of the stratigraphic diagram. / *Cheia diagrammei stratigrafice*.

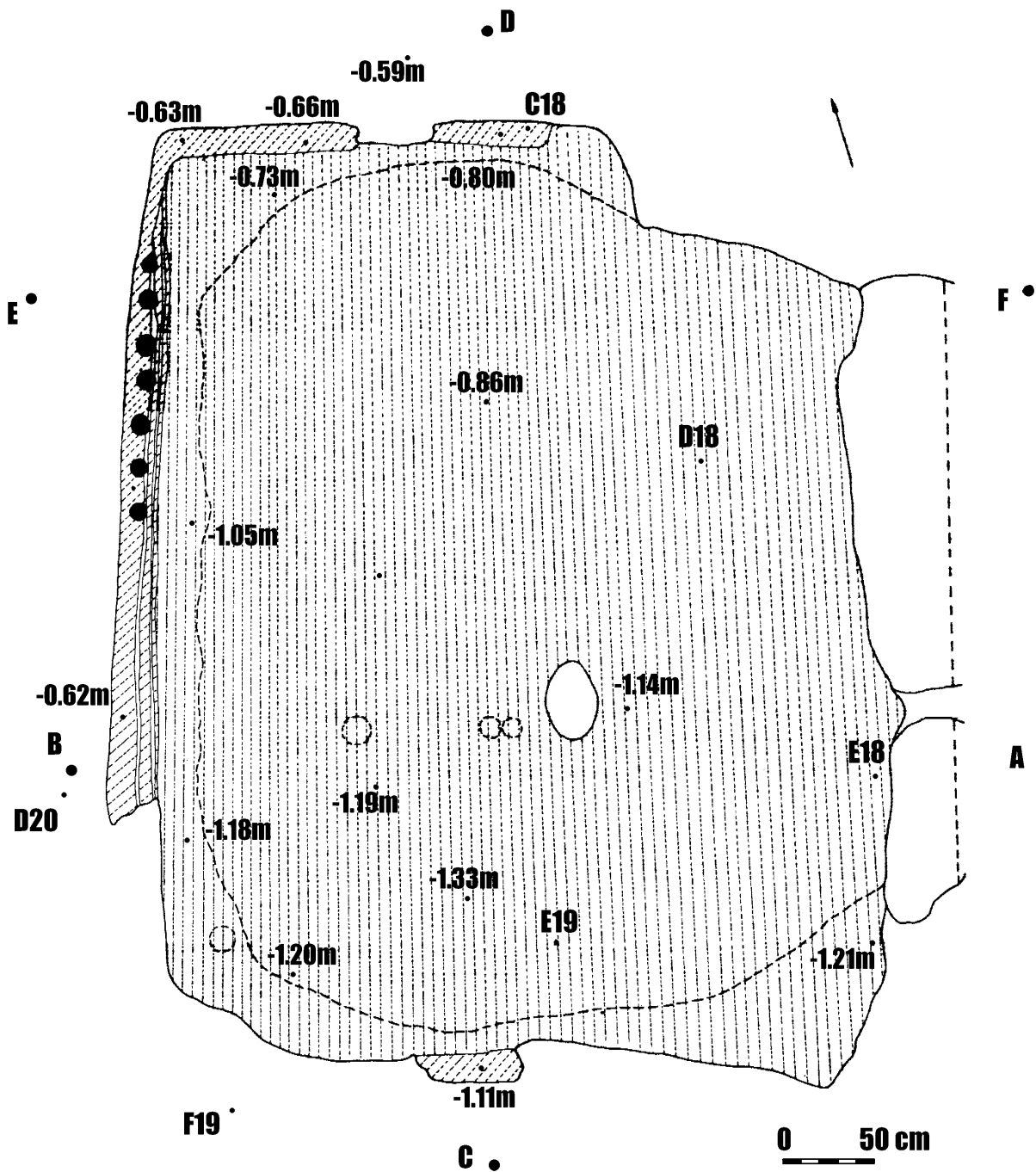
ext.L2, ext.L7 (as a stratigraphic stage) – represents the totality of the exterior occupation levels of the dwellings no. 2 and no. 7, respectively.

the scrape – without being physically present, it stands for the action of removing the remains of the destruction and burnt walls.

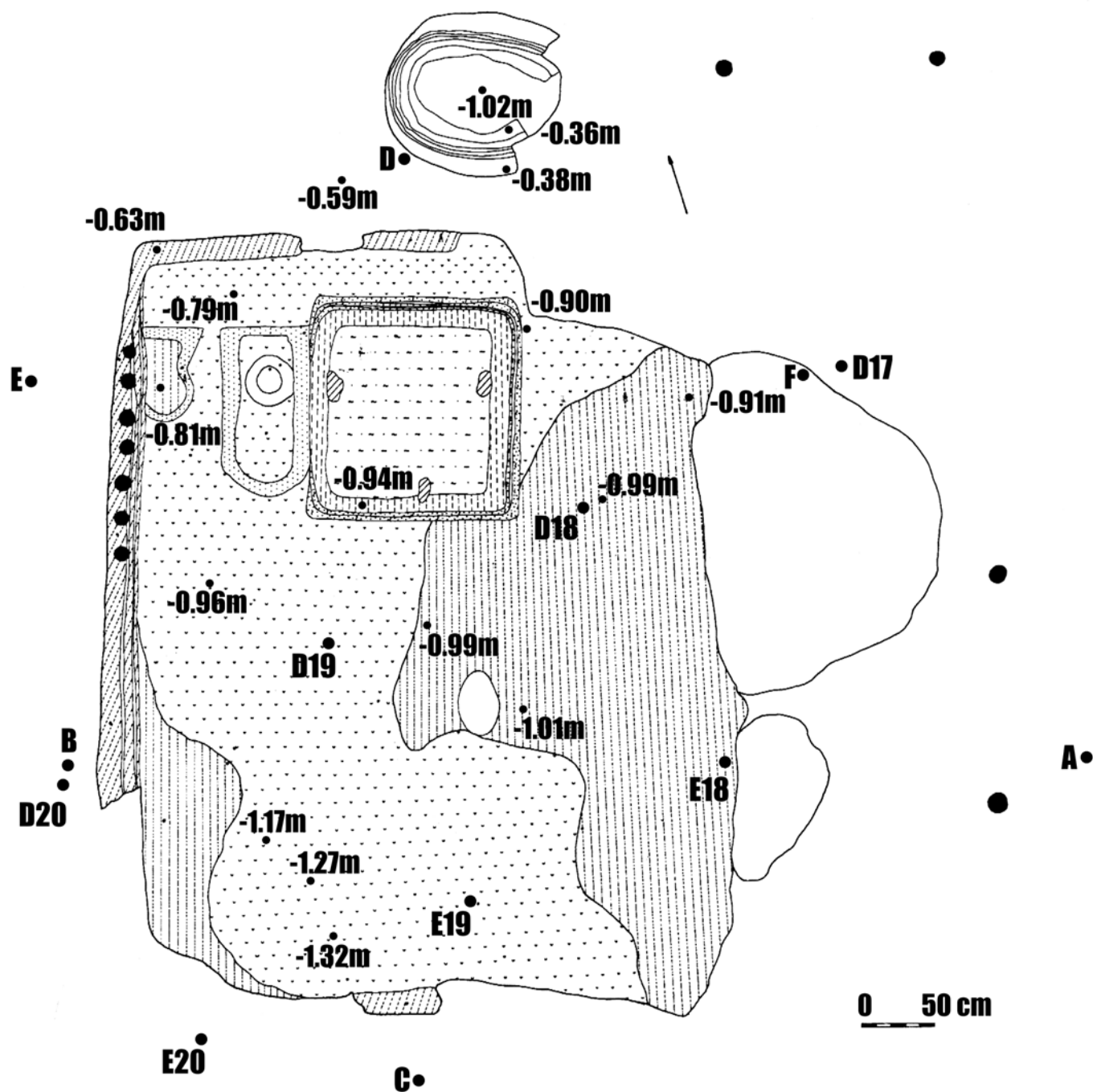
d.D9.1, d.D9.2, d.D9.3, d.D9.4 – forming a single stratigraphic stage, they represent, each in part, moments of the degradation of the walls and of the interior arrangements of dwelling no. 9 – they are subsequent to the fire, to the destruction of the walls and to the scrape of the platform.

ext.L9.1, ext.L9.2 – stand for the exterior occupation levels of dwelling no. 9, identified only in the Western and Southern sides of the dwelling, which could be integrated, together with 47.5 and under D9, to a single sequence.

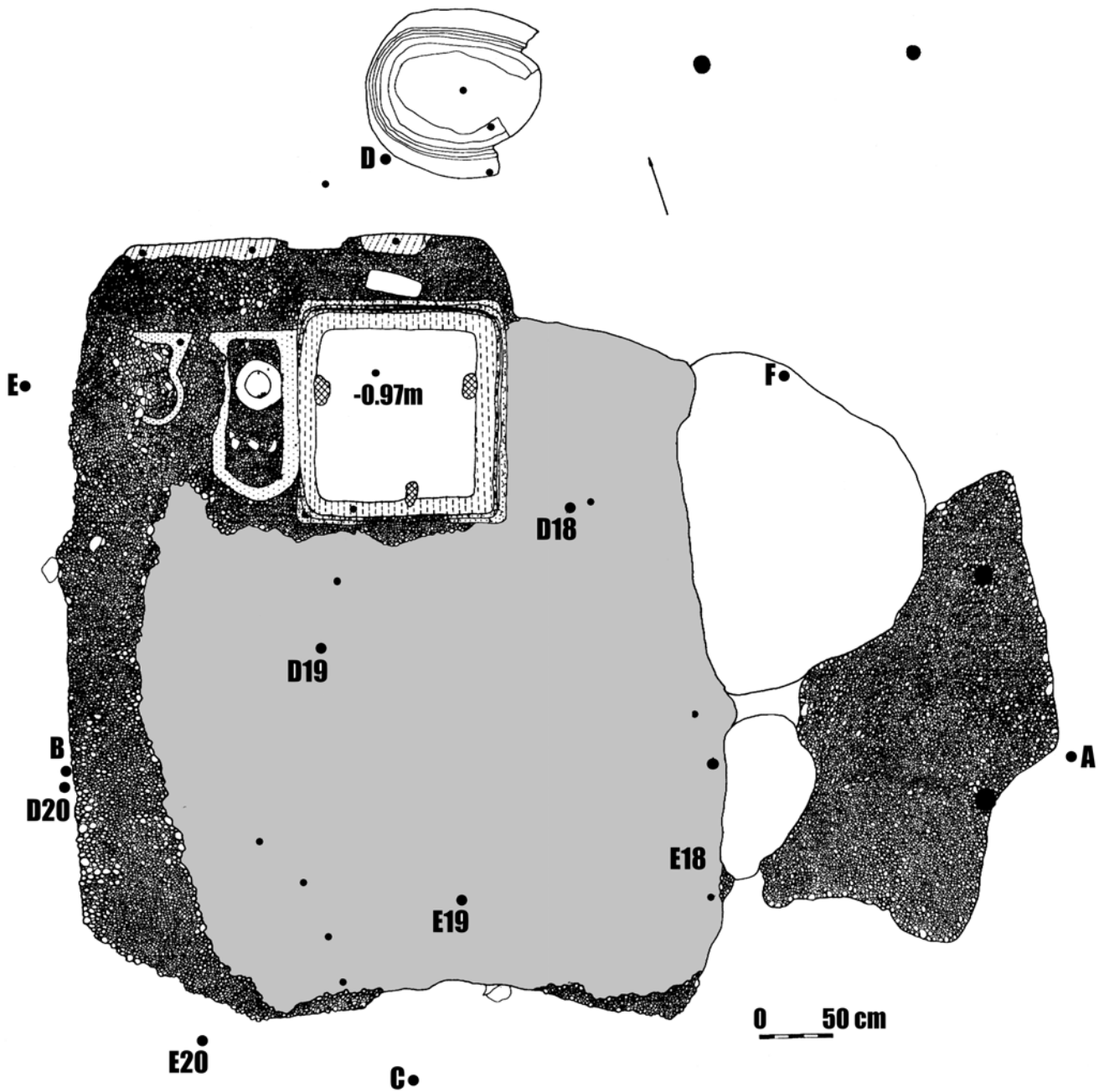
- 43.1, 43.2, 43.3** – designate the constructive components of the wall from dwelling no. 9 (C43).
- 43.4-43.10** – stand for those seven stakes identified in the Western part of the wall of dwelling no. 9 (together with 43.1, 43.2 and 43.3 may be grouped into a single stratigraphic sequence).
- P.9.1** – the platform's first discovered restoration, cronologically the last.
- P.9.2** – the platform's second discovered reconditioning.
- P.9.3** – indicates the platform of dwelling no. 9.
- P.9.4** – chronologically, the first reconditioning of a platform of dwelling no. 9 (together with P.9.1 and P.9.2 form a single stratigraphic sequence).
- 40.1** – the burning zone of the second phase of utilisation and reconditioning of the hearth dwelling no. 9 (C40).
- 40.2** – the first burning zone of the hearth of dwelling no. 9 (which, at the same time, can be assimilated to a platform for its first phase of utilisation and reconditioning).
- 40.3** – the border of the hearth's dwelling no. 9, first stage.
- 40.4, 40.5, 40.6** – stand for those three constructive elements of the border (which can be integrated to a single stage), together with 40.3 form the hearth's dwelling no. 9, second stage.
- 40.7** – without having a composition of sediments, stands for the act of reconsecration of the hearth of dwelling no. 9; it consists only in those two pebbles, subsequently used as rubbers. (together with 40.1, 40.4, 40.5 and 40.6, correspond to a single stage).
- 40.8, 40.9** – stand for two little reconditioning of the mozaical surface of the hearth of dwelling no. 9 (dating from the first phase of functioning); (together with 40.2 and 40.3 form a single stratigraphic stage).
- 39.1** - "the wall" of the complex 39, stuck to the hearth of dwelling no. 9 and lodging the socle made of daub.
- 39.2** – the socle made of daub from C39 (together with 39.1 form a stratigraphic sequence).
- 39.3** – the channel between C38 and C39.
- 38.1** – stands for the wall of the „box" made of clay, layed in the prolongation of C39 and stuck to the wall (C43) of dwelling no. 9 (itself a single stratigraphic sequence).
- P.1, P.2, P.3, P.4** – are those four unburied logs, which were supporting the platform of dwelling no. 9.
- the platform** – gathers the marks of those 25 boards which formed the wooden platform of the dwelling (together with P1, P2, P3 and P.9.3 form a single sequence).
- 47.1-47.4** – indicate those four stakes/posts of the annex (C47) – gathered into a single sequence.
- 47.5** – stands for the occupation level of the annex of dwelling no. 9.
- d.L9** – stands for the burnt daub from the eastern part of the platform, accumulated in the forward space consecrated to the annex (it constitutes a single sequence).
- 12.1** – stands for the initial vault and for the walls coating the hole of the oven from the annex of dwelling no. 9 (C12).
- 12.2, 12.3** – correspond to those two stages of utilisation of the oven.
- 12.4** – stands for the stratigraphic unit, this time sedimentary, where the piece for the reconsacration of the oven was laid.
- 12.5** - "the bed of adjustment" of the oven's hole.
- 12.6-12.9** – those four exterior plastering with clay of the hollow where the oven was built, together with 12.1, 12.5, 12.10 and 12.11 form the same stratigraphic stage, showing the structure of the oven.
- 12.10** – indicates the action of digging the hole where the oven would be built.
- 12.11** – stands for the sediment removed from the hole and afterwards abandoned (the sediment, was, obviously, formed before the action of digging the hole of the oven).
- 12.12** – correspond to the oven's deterioration and to its elements of destruction.
- subL9** – the indicative which stands for the sediment discovered between the flood deposit and the wooden platform of dwelling no. 9 (unquestionably, it represents the result of what have stored in the space underneath the suspended dwelling – obviously, it doesn't surpass the limits of the alveolus above which the platform was fixed).
- V.S.L9.1** – stands for the action of levelling the space underneath dwelling no. 9 (in principle, the action of digging the alveolus).
- V.S.L9.2** – stands for the sediment removed from the alveolus (together with V.S.L9.1 form a single sequence).
- 57.1** – correspond to the action of digging the hole, where the ox squeleton would be laid (C57).
- 57.2** – the indicative for the sediment removed from the hole and subsequently abandoned.
- 57.3** – stands for the ashes discovered on the bottom of the ritual hole (together with 57.1 and 57.2 form a single stratigraphic stage).
- 57.4** – without a sedimentary component, stands for the animal's skeleton deposited in the hole.
- 57.5** – correspond to the action of filling the hole of the ox skeleton (together with 57.4 form a stratigraphic stage).
- 62.1 and 62.2** – stands for the action of digging and for the sediment removed from the hole found in the north-eastern corner of the dwelling no. 9.
- 63.1 and 63.2** - stands for the action of digging and for the sediment removed from the hole found in the south-eastern corner of the dwelling no. 9, (together with 62.1 and 62.2 form the same stratigraphic sequence).



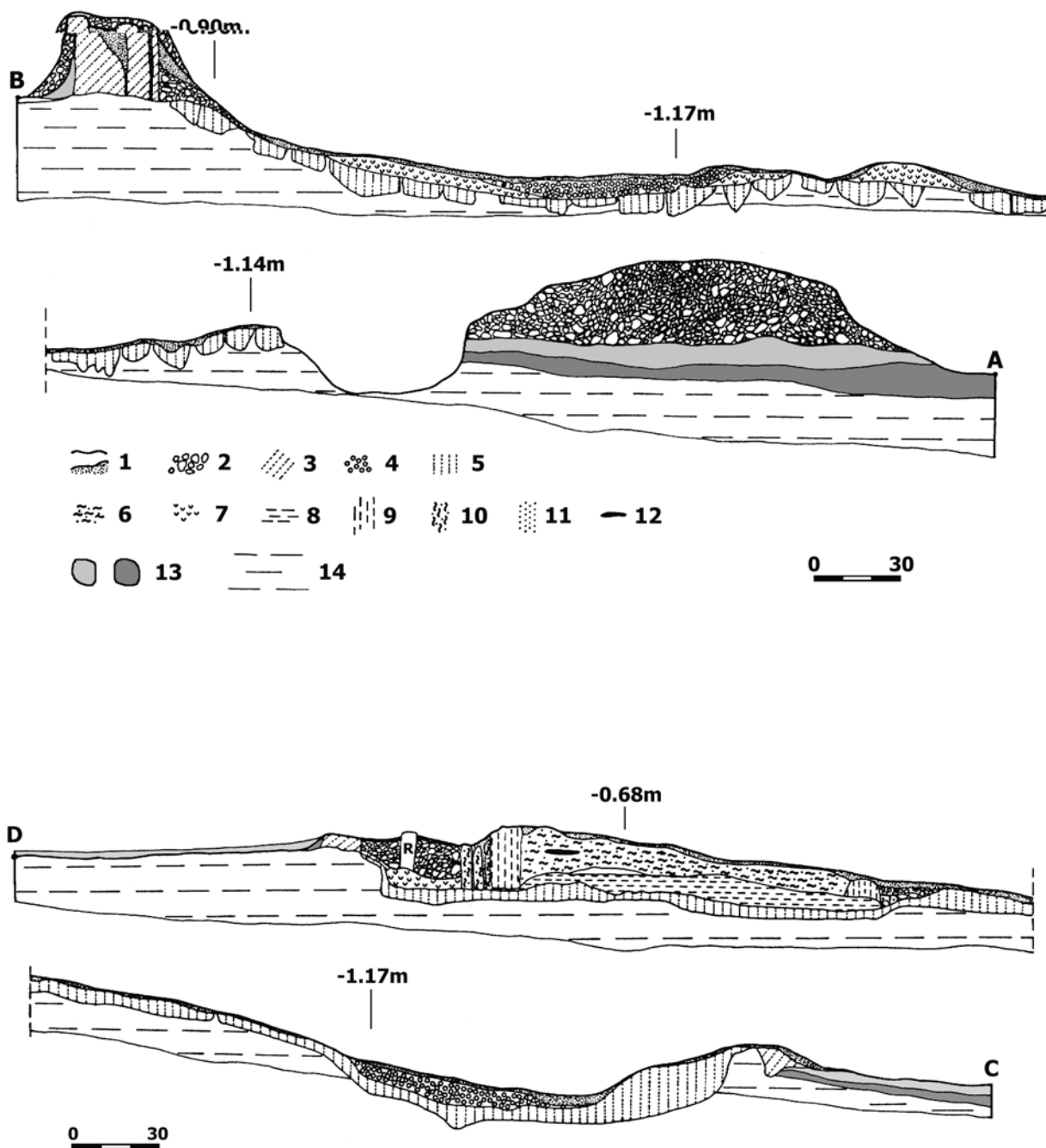
Pl. II. The initial constructive phase of dwelling no. 9 (the legend is common with the other ones).
 Faza constructivă inițială a locuinței nr. 9 (legenda este comună cu a celorlalte planșe și se regăsește la pl. V).

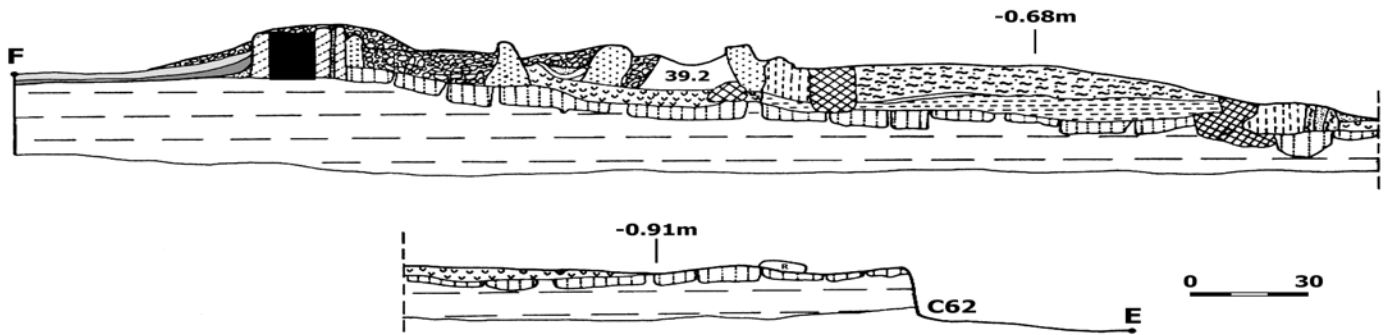


Pl. III. The plan of the last phase of utilisation of the dwelling no. 9. / *Planul ultimei faze de utilizare a locuinței nr. 9.*



Pl. IV. The plan of the dwelling no. 9 after the firing and the scraping of the inhabited surface.
 Planul locuinței nr. 9 după incendiu și răzuirea suprafeței locuite.

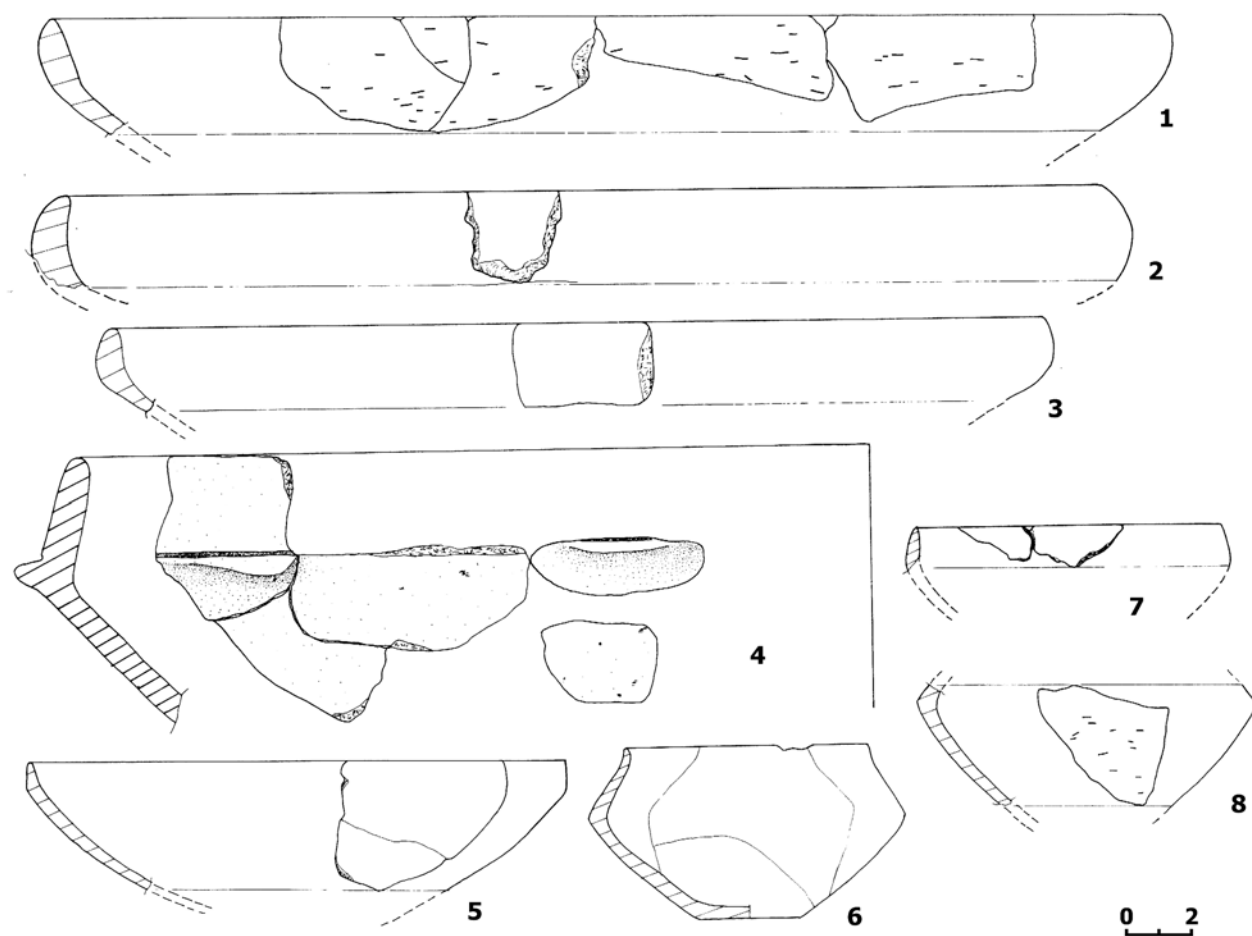




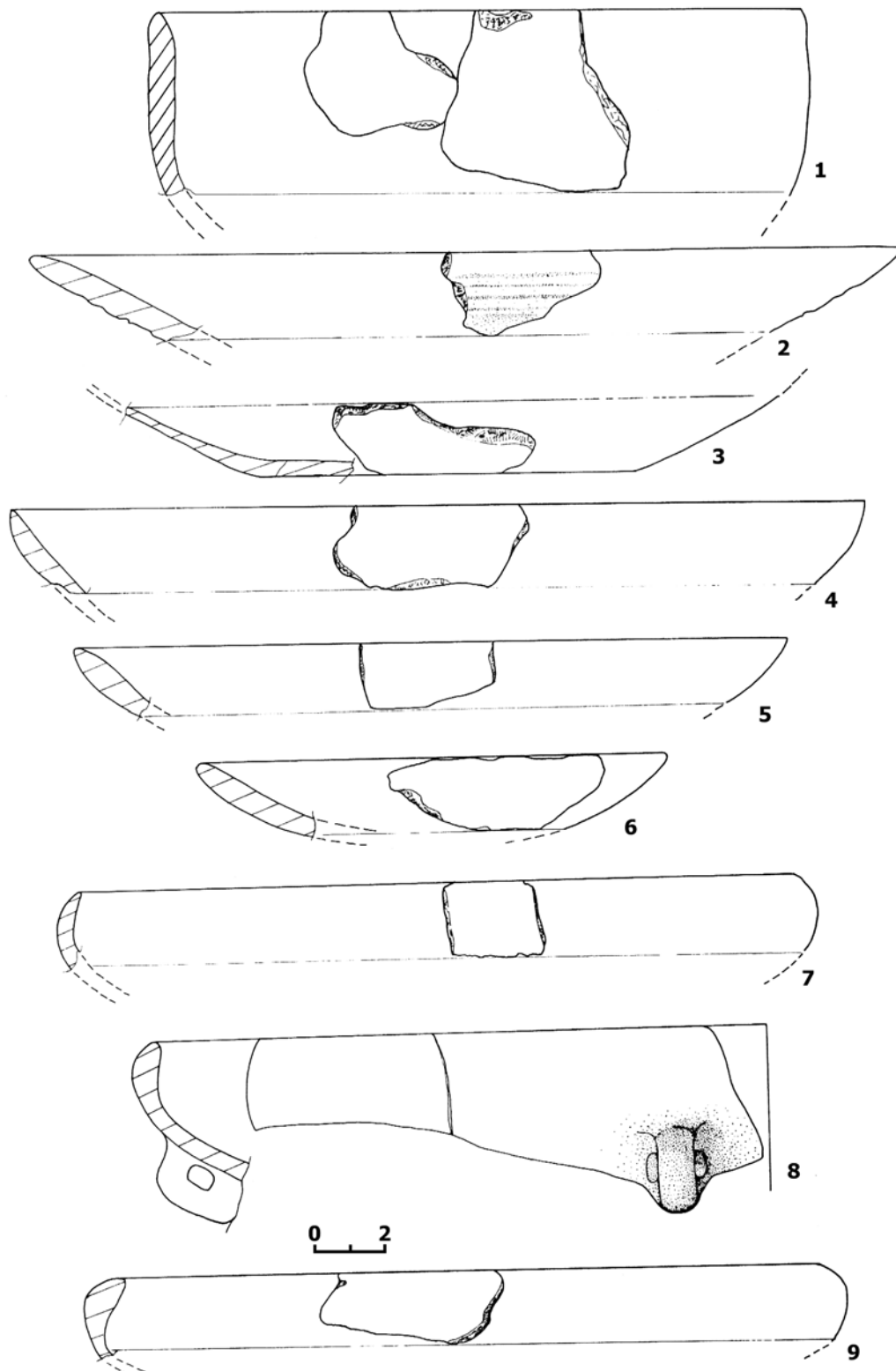
Pl. V. The profile of the AB, CD, EF sections made in dwelling no. 9 (the route of the sections is recovered in pl. II-IV) 1. The deterioration of the walls and of the interior arrangements of dwelling no. 9; 2. The destruction of the walls of dwelling no. 9; 3. The wall of dwelling no. 9; 4. The last reconditioning of the platform; 5. P.9.3 (the platform of dwelling no. 9); 6. The burning zone of the second phase of utilisation and reconditioning of the hearth dwelling no. 9 (40.1); 7. P.9.2 (the first refection of the platform of dwelling no. 9); 8. The first burning zone of the hearth of dwelling no. 9 (40.2); 9. The border of the hearth's dwelling no. 9 first stage (40.3); 10. Stand for those three constructive elements of the border (40.4-40.6); 11. The borders of C38 and C39; 12. Burnt wood; 13. The totality of the exterior occupation levels of the dwelling; 14. C44 (Level2).

Profilele secțiunilor AB, CD și EF practicate în locuința nr. 9 (traseul secțiunilor se regăsește în pl. II-IV)

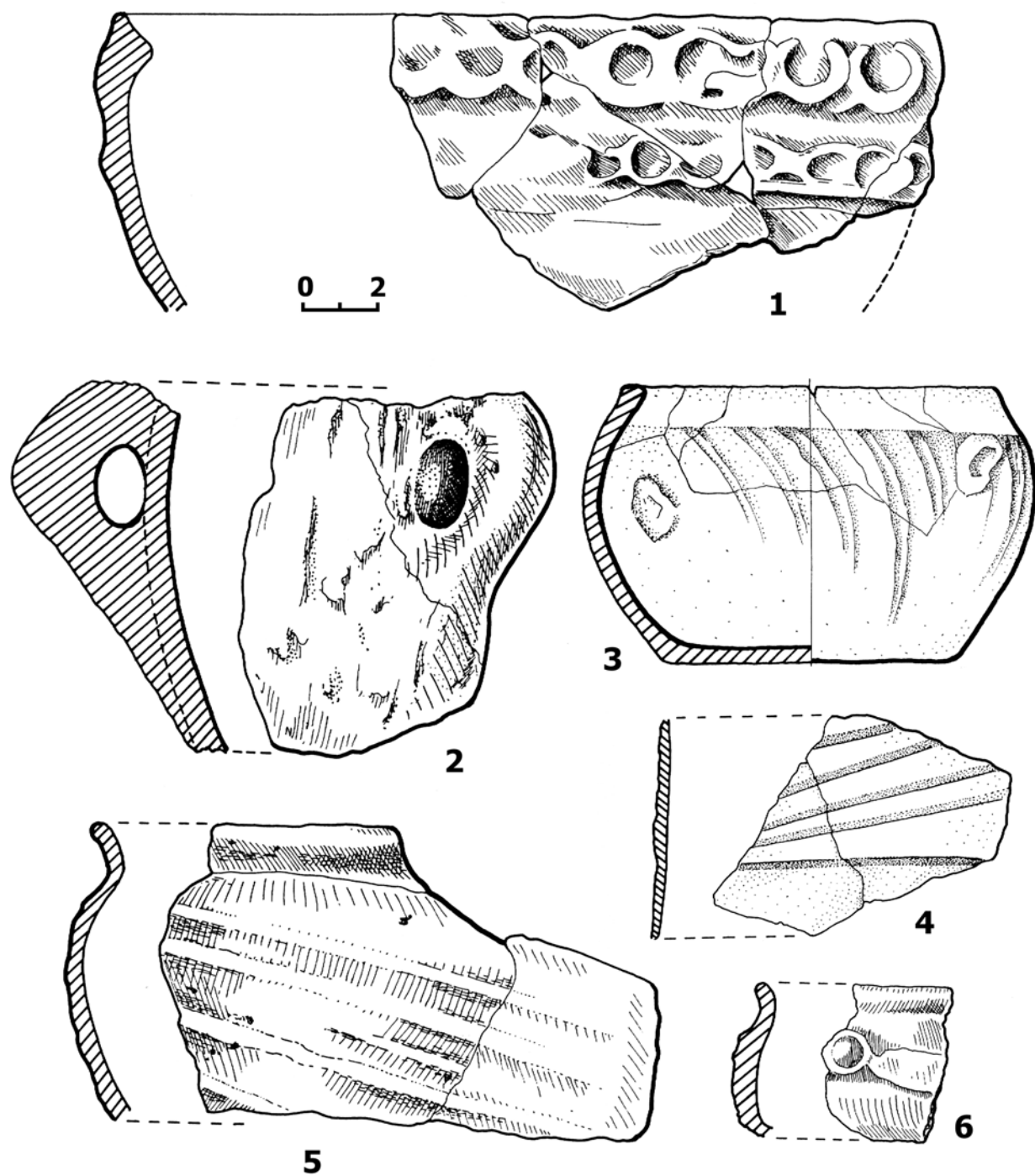
1. Degradări ale nivelului de distrugere și ale complexelor interioare ale locuinței nr. 9; 2. Resturile nivelului de distrugere; 3. Peretele locuinței nr.9; 4. P.9.1 (ultima refacere a platformei); 5. P.9.3 (platforma locuinței nr. 9); 6. Prima fază de utilizare a vetrei locuinței nr. 9 (40.1); 7. P.9.2 (prima refacere a platformei); 8. A doua fază de utilizare a vetrei (40.2); 9. Gardina vetrei (40.3); 10. Refaceri ale gardinii vetrei (40.4-40.6); 11. Pereții C38 și C39; 12. Lemn ars; 13. Depuneri exterioare locuinței; 14. C44 (Nivelul 2).



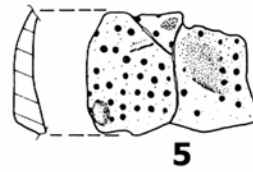
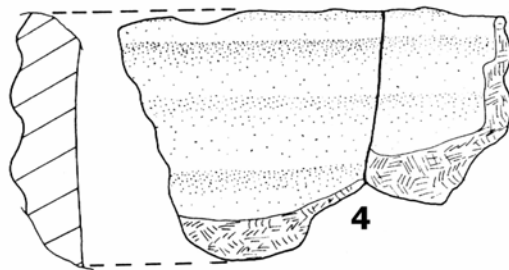
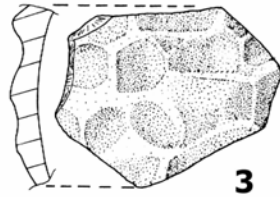
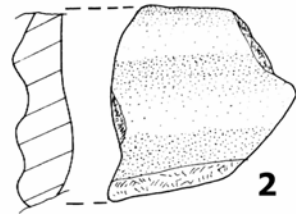
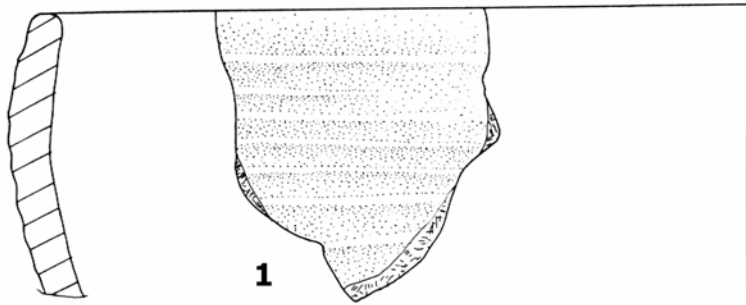
Pl. VI. Pottery from dwelling no. 9. / *Ceramică din locuința nr. 9.*



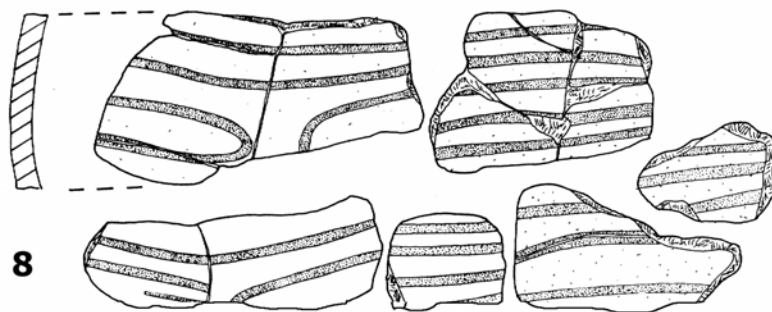
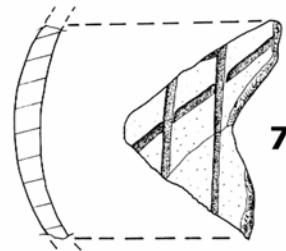
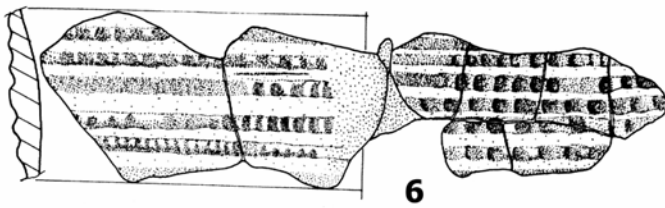
Pl. VII. Pottery from dwelling no. 9. / *Ceramică din locuința nr. 9.*

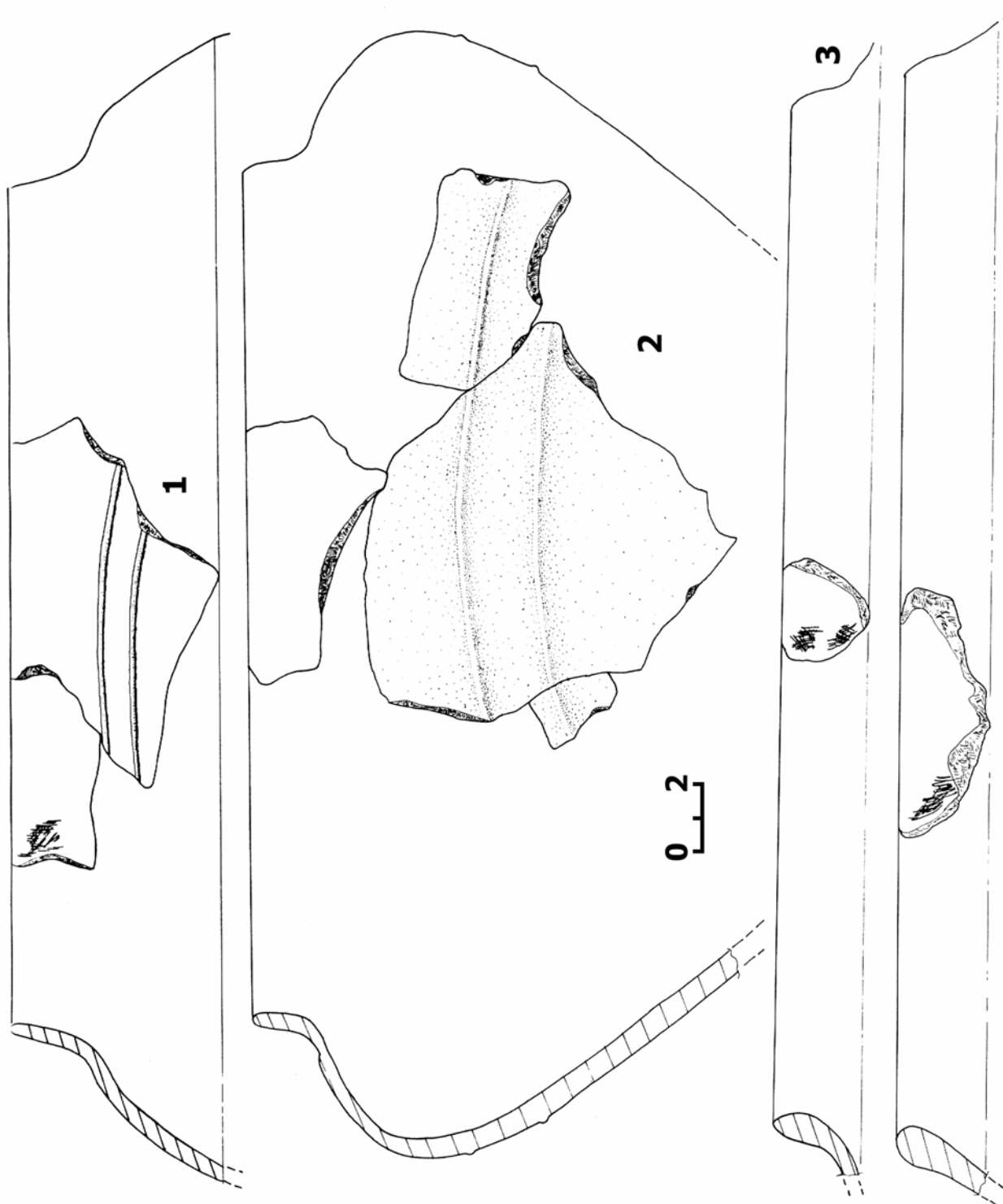


Pl. VIII. Pottery from dwelling no. 9. / *Ceramică din locuința nr. 9.*

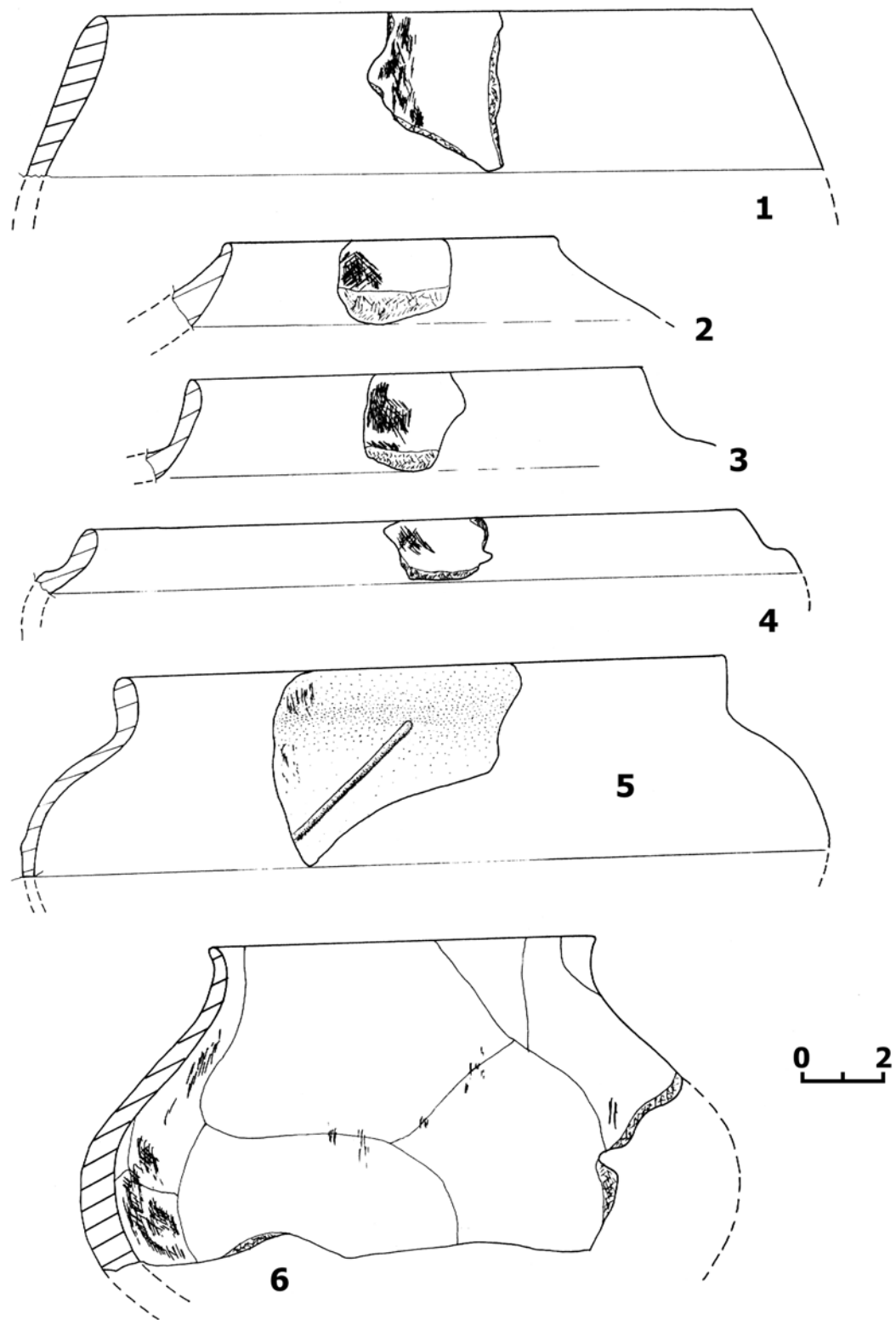


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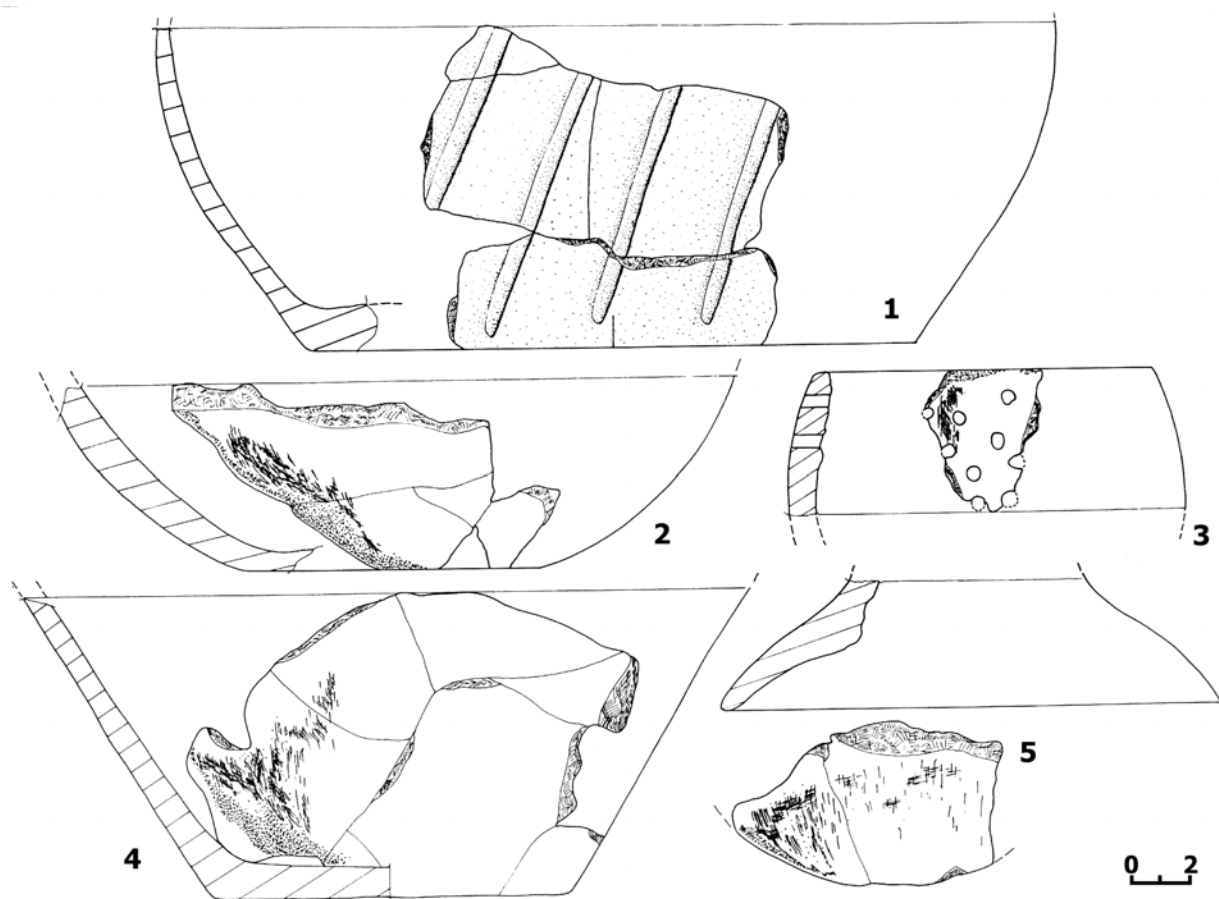




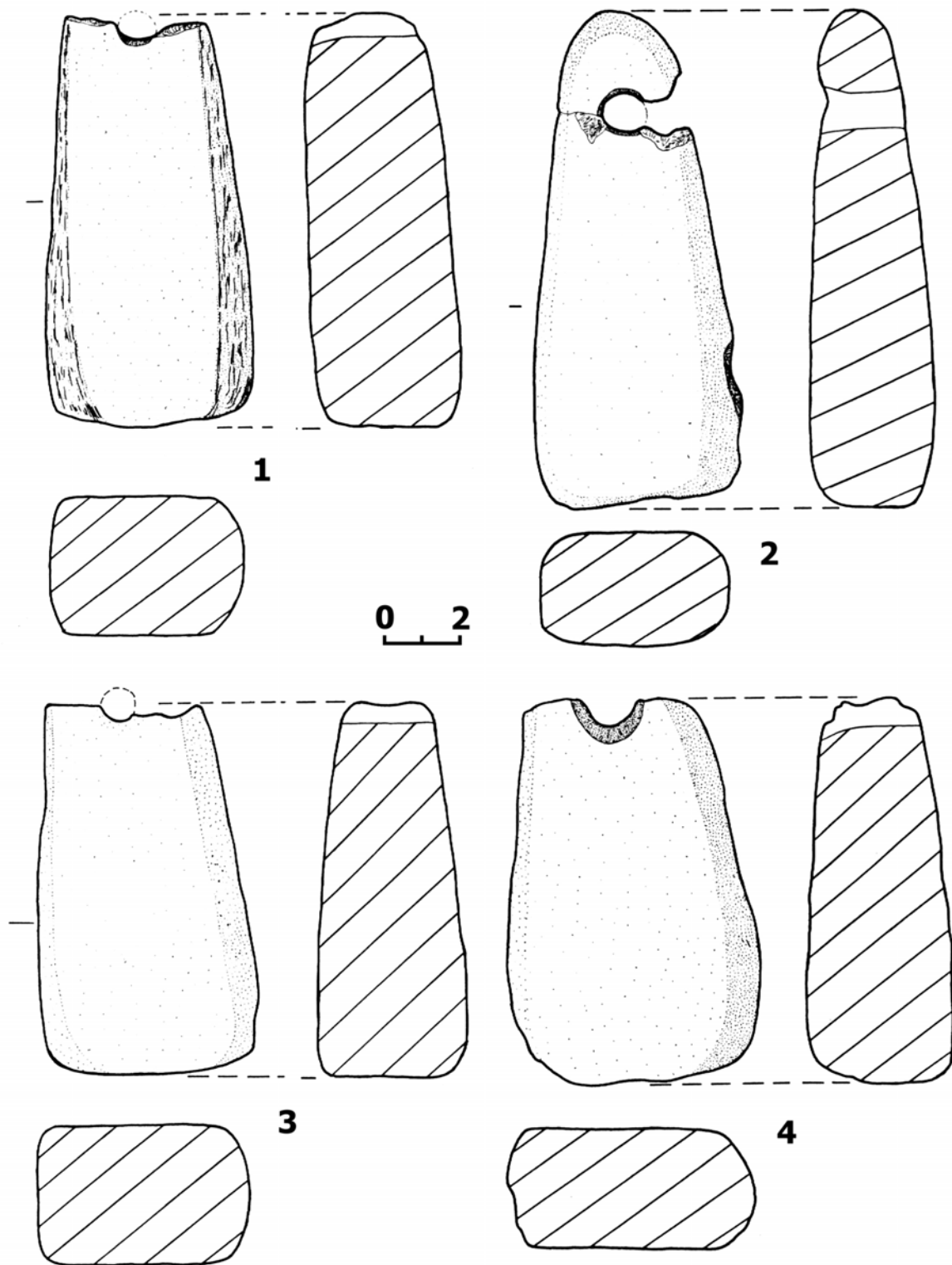
Pl. X. Pottery from dwelling no. 9. / *Ceramică din locuința nr. 9.*



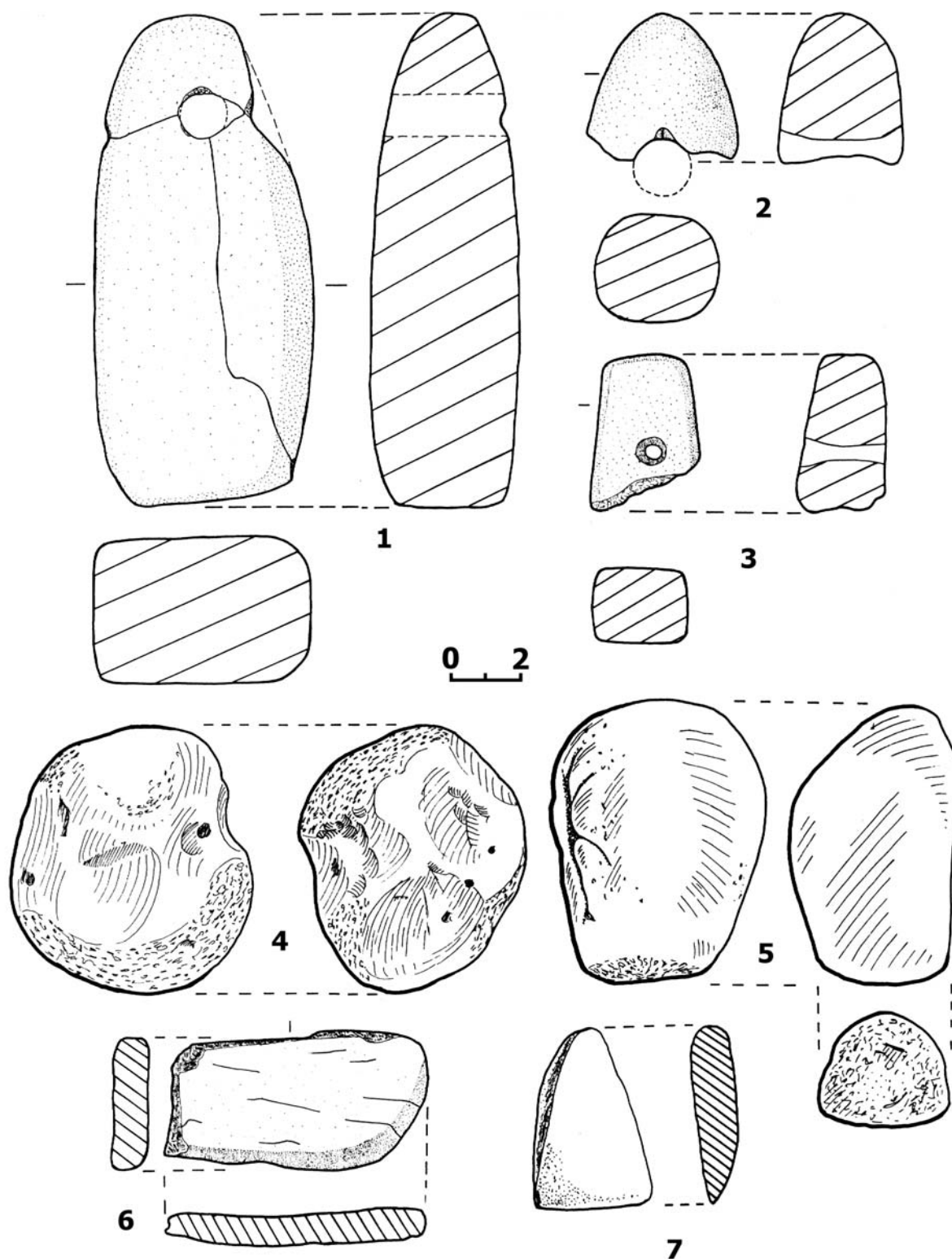
Pl. XI. Pottery from dwelling no. 9. / *Ceramică din locuința nr. 9.*



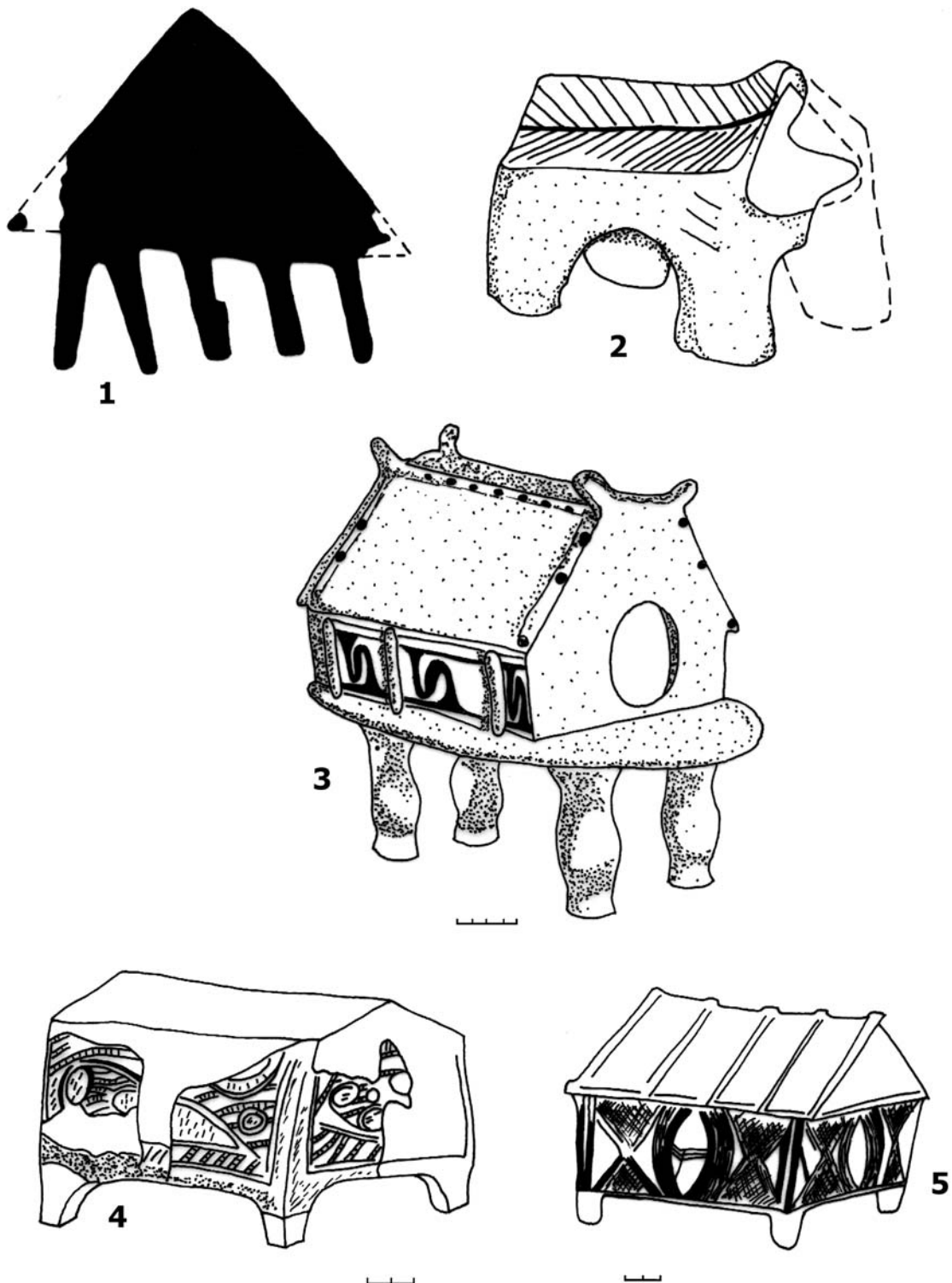
Pl. XII. Pottery from dwelling no. 9. / *Ceramică din locuința nr. 9.*



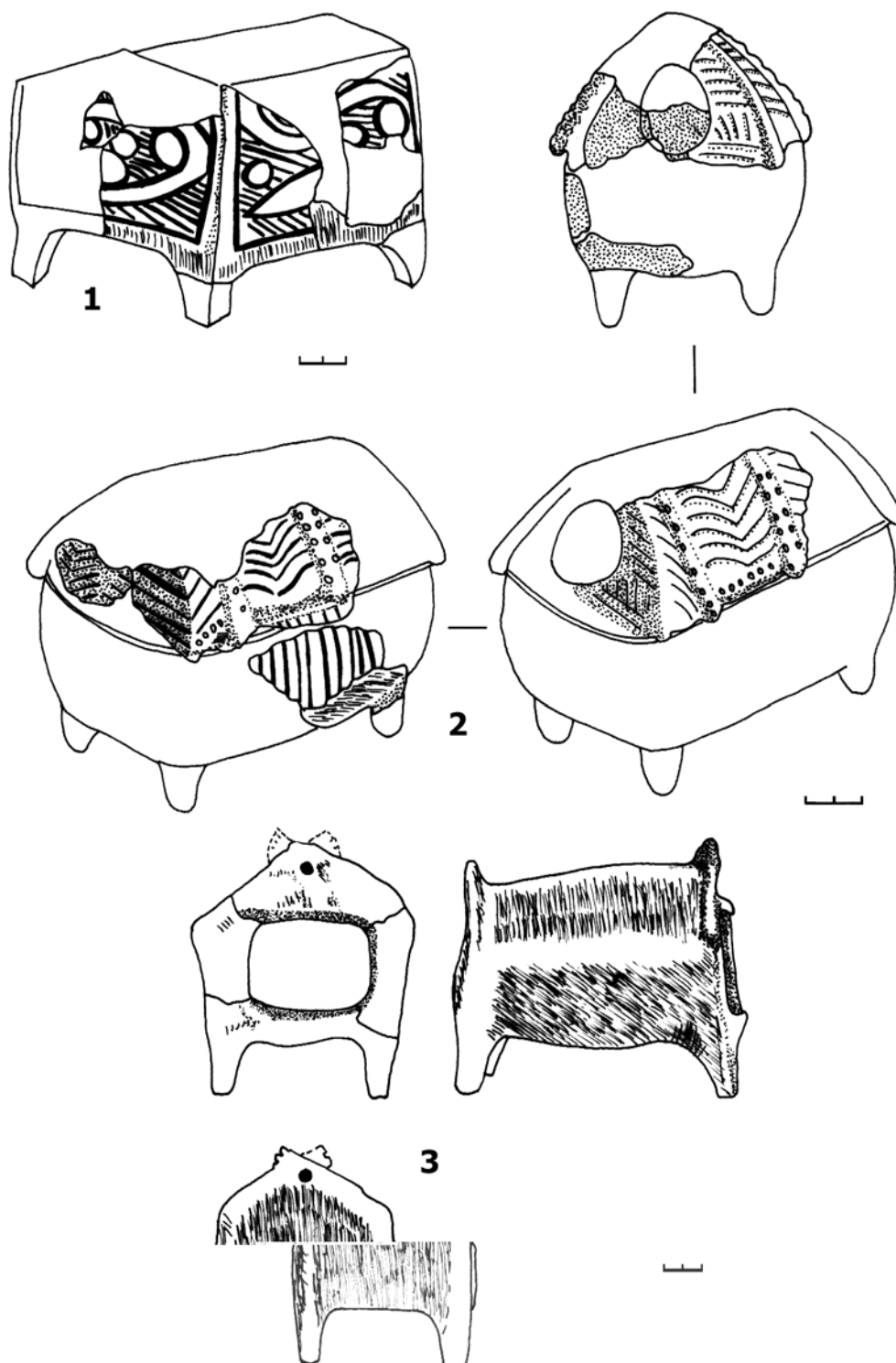
Pl. XIII. Weights in clay discovered in the clay-"box" attached to the hearth.
Greutăți din lut descoperite în "cutia" de lut adosată vetrei.



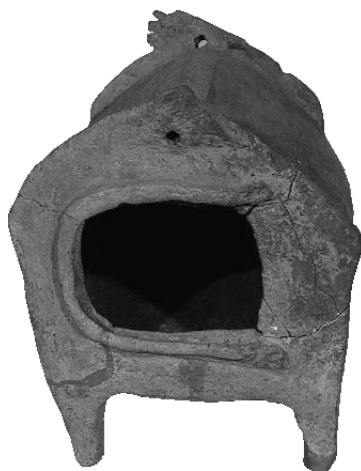
Pl. XIV. Weights in clay discovered in the clay-"box" attached to the hearth and pieces from dwelling no. 9.
Greutăți din lut descoperite în "cutia" de lut adosată vetrei și piese aparținând inventarului locuinței nr. 9.



Pl. XV. Models of dwellings on logs (?) or pillars (?) from different cultural areas – 1-2. Vinča; 3-5. Cucuteni. 1-2. Turdaş (after I. Paul 1967); 3. Voroşilovka; 4. Okopi; 5. Costeşti IV (after S.A. Gusev 1995).
Modele de locuinţe pe butuci (?) sau piloni (?) din arii culturale diferite - 1-2. Vinča; 3-5. Cucuteni. 1-2. Turdaş (după I. Paul 1967); 3. Voroşilovka; 4. Okopi; 5. Costeşti IV (după S.A. Gusev 1995).



Pl. XVI. Models of dwellings on logs (?) or pillars (?) from different cultural areas – 1-2. Cucuteni; 3. Stoicani-Aldeni.
 1. Okopi; 2. Kolomișcina (after S.A. Gusev 1995); 3. Aldeni (after Gh. Ștefan 1941).
 Modele de locuințe pe butuci (?) sau piloni (?) din arii culturale diferite – 1-2. Cucuteni; 3. Stoicani-Aldeni.
 1. Okopi; 2. Kolomișcina (după S.A. Gusev 1995); 3. Aldeni (după Gh. Ștefan 1941).



Pl. XVII. Models of dwellings on logs (?) or pillars (?) from Poduri (1) – Precucuteni culture and Aldeni (2) – Stoicani-Aldeni culture.

Modele de locuințe suspendate de la Poduri (1) – Precucuteni și Aldeni (2) – Stoicani-Aldeni.