

# A SETTLEMENT FROM THE LATE MIDDLE AGES NEAR VRASHKA CHUKA, VIDIN REGION, NORTHWEST BULGARIA

Elena VASILEVA\*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *perioada romană, Evul Mediu târziu, aşezare, obiecte de podoabă, monede.*

**Keywords:** *Roman period, Late Middle Ages, settlement, adornments, coins.*

**Rezumat:** *Situl 1/1000 a fost cercetat în contextul construirii gazoductului Balkan Stream, în 2019. Situl acoperă mai multe perioade: epoca bronzului și începutul epocii fierului, perioada romană, Evul Mediu și Evul Mediu târziu. Materialele arheologice și structurile care pot fi datate în perioada otomană (secolele XV–XVII), pe baza materialului ceramic și a multor alte descoperiri, au apărut în principal în partea de vest a sitului și sunt probabil locuințe temporare. Au fost cercetate două locuințe, două cuptoare metalurgice și numeroase gropi. S-au descoperit numeroase obiecte de metal, datate în această perioadă. Printre acestea, podoabele sunt deosebit de variate și impresionante: inele, cercei și pandantive pentru urechi, pandantive de diferite forme, monede perforate, piese de centură etc. Acestea sunt realizate în tehnici complexe, cum ar fi filigranul, granulația etc.*

**Abstract:** *Site 1/1000 was explored in connection with the construction of the Balkan Stream gas pipeline in 2019. The site spans several periods: the Bronze Age and the early Iron Age, the Roman period, the Middle Ages and the Late Middle Ages. Archaeological materials and structures that can be dated to the Ottoman period (15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries), based on the ceramic material and many other finds, were found mainly in the western part of the site and are probably temporary dwellings. Two dwellings, two metallurgical furnaces and numerous pits were investigated. Numerous metal objects were discovered for this period. Among them, the variety of adornments is particularly impressive—rings, earrings and ear pendants, pendants of various shapes, pierced coins, belt pieces, etc. They are made in complex techniques such as filigree, granulation, etc.*

The object 1/1000 is located at the foot of the isolated height of Vrashka chuka, locality Baba Velika, land of Izvor village, Kula municipality (**Fig. 1**). During the archaeological rescue investigations in 2019, archaeological structures from the Middle Bronze Age, the Early Iron Age, the Roman period and the Late Middle Ages were investigated.

---

\* Elena VASILEVA: National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia; e-mail: helengnom@gmail.com.

The Middle Bronze Age and Early Iron Age settlement traces identified during the archaeological investigations were from short-lived residential and economic establishments. A number of natural stone accumulations were noted, beneath which compact accumulations of archaeological material were examined. The diverse ceramic material sheds new light on the development of local cultures and their relations with neighbouring areas. Of particular interest for the early Iron Age is an excavated burial pit hewn into the natural rock. Pieces of burnt destruction, fragments of various pottery vessels and small pieces of charcoal were discovered in the pit, lying close together. At the western end of the pit, a fragmented funerary urn was discovered with the remains of a human person, burnt debris, charcoal, pottery, bones and stone balls. The materials from the early Iron Age find their parallels and match the characteristics of the early iron cultures in eastern Serbia. The results of the archaeological research have made a great contribution to the study of the development dynamics of the Bronze and early Iron cultures in this part of Europe.

Archaeological materials<sup>1</sup> and structures that can be dated to the Ottoman periods (15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup>) centuries, based on the ceramic material and many other finds, were found mainly in the western part of the site and are probably temporary dwellings. Two dwellings, two metallurgical furnaces and numerous pits were investigated. Numerous metal objects were discovered for this period. Among them, the variety of adornments is particularly impressive—rings, earrings and ear pendants, pendants of various shapes, pierced coins, belt pieces, etc. They are made in complex techniques such as filigree, granulation, etc.

The information obtained from the studies relates the Bulgarian lands to the context of the early iron culture from the region NE Serbia, proves the well-developed culture of the Middle Bronze Age and antiquity, and also complements the available data on the developed mining in the region of NW Bulgaria, as well as the production of jewellery and other jewels, the circulation of coins, etc. during the Ottoman period.

This article also looks at the structures from the Late Middle Ages—kilns, dwellings, finds and ceramic material. The Iron Age structures were published by Zheni Vasileva<sup>2</sup>. Bronze Age structures are under print.

At this point it should be noted that all the structures recorded and investigated at this site are temporary settlements. This applies to all epochs. For this very reason they are not well preserved and, on this basis, full reconstruction is very difficult. Therefore, any over-interpretation is avoided. Therefore, more attention is paid here to the materials found during the survey.

## Roman period

The Roman period of the site is represented by two structures—a dwelling and a pit. They are numbered 29 and 31. Structure No. 29 has a quadrangular shape, is aligned N-NW and S-SE and has the following dimensions: length 3.50 m and width 2.50 m. It is a dug out, the southern part of which is bordered by a natural stone

---

<sup>1</sup> The coins were determined by Rosen Peevski (National museum of history Sofia) and Prof. Konstantin Dochev (NAIM-BAS).

<sup>2</sup> VASILEVA 2022.

row and the north by a stone border and a grey-black layer interspersed with small stones. In its northwestern part, it is bordered by a natural mainland. A circular shape and a diameter of about 0.50 m were recorded on the discovery level. Two levels were noted in the structure, with pottery fragments from the Late Roman period, animal bones, charcoal, etc. (**Fig. 2**). A bone needle and a silver coin come from structure No. 29. Needle worked rib bone, ancient object, 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century. Bevelled at one end, half of the circumference cut into triangles. Two graffiti, one is a straight human figure, schematic body with X in front of torso, arms raised. The second figure is that of a horseman galloping to the left with sword raised. The figures are rotated along the vertical of the bone, height 7.5 cm; width 1.9 cm; fat 0.27 cm; height in the figures–3.4/1.5 cm. This type of finds is discussed in detail in a publication by K. Koycheva. She defines these finds as flat needles and dates them within broad chronological limits—from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Observations on their distribution show a connection with domestic production, but the possibility that they were also used apotropically is not excluded<sup>3</sup>. The coin is silver. It's a Roman denarius of Emperor Lucius Verus (161–169 AD.). A small part of the coin is broken off. The reverse shows Concordia seated left (Ø 1.70/1.80 cm; W–2.41 g.). From this structure is also a ceramic vertebra for the spindle, secondary made from the base of a vessel; Ø 3.5 cm; thick 1.5 cm, and an iron knife, sharpened on one side, length length 6.5 cm; width 1.6 cm (**Fig. 2a**).

Immediately east of structure No. 29, structure no. 31 was discovered—a circular pit dug into the natural subsoil and dating from the Roman period (**Fig. 3**). No finds were found in this buried structure, but its proximity to structure No. 29 allows us to assign it to this chronological period.

The finds that refer to the Roman era are several coins. No other structures from the Roman period were discovered. Isolated coin finds provide evidence of settlement, albeit temporary on the site during this period (**Pl. 1**). The only very well-preserved coin is:

1. Roman Republican denarius of the magistrate L. Titurius, Lf. Sabinus from 89 BC. Averse: SABIN A T V., head of King Tatius to the right. Reverse: L. TITURI. Two Roman soldiers each carrying a woman to Sabinus; Ø 1.68/1.88 cm; W–3.62 g.

Unstruck provincial, copper coins, from the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century are:

2. Coin, copper alloy, fragments broken off at the periphery, folded; Ø 2.06/2.28 cm, W–1.57 g.

3. Coin, copper alloy, Ø 1.5/1.7 cm; W–1.50 g.

4. Coin, copper alloy, Ø 1.35/1.45 cm; W–1.10 g.

From the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century come depersonalised antonyms:

5. Coin, copper alloy, Ø 1.8/1.9 cm; W–1.85 g.

6. Coin, copper alloy with a hole in the rim, Ø 1.8/1.94 cm; W–2.28 g.

7. Coin, copper alloy, with a hole to the side of the centre; Ø 2.00/2.10 cm; W–1.86 g.

From the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century:

8. Numus of Constantius II (347–355 AD.). Type: Soldiers with standard; Ø 1.34/1.55 cm; W–0.94 g.

<sup>3</sup> KOYCHEVA 1994.

Other finds from the 4<sup>th</sup> century include several impersonal coins:

9. Coin, copper alloy AE-4, Ø 1.40/1.60 cm; W-1.40 g.

10. Coin, copper alloy AE-4, Ø 1.28/1.38 cm; W-0.64 g.

11. Coin, copper alloy. Slide. Cut from centre to reverse; Ø 2.0 cm; W-2.83 g.

12. Coin, copper alloy, Ø 1.40/1.50 cm; W-1.51 g.

This temporary settlement is situated on the road between Bononia and Singidunum, namely at Vrshka Chuka, the most north-western pass of the Balkan Mountains (Haemus, Stara planina). It is possible that there is another larger and permanently inhabited settlement nearby.

## Medieval period

No structures are known from the Middle Ages, but the few materials found indicate a settlement from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is indicated by the two Latin imitations-Coin, copper, Constantinople, series D-W, (1215–1250 AD.), type O; attachment hole; Ø 1.9/2.2 cm; W-1,08 g. (**Fig. 4.1**); Coin, copper, Constantinople, series D-W, (1215–1250 AD.), type O; attachment hole, Ø 2.12/2.60 cm; W-1.73 g. (**Fig. 4.2**) from the 13<sup>th</sup> century as well as the very well preserved coin of Andronicus II Paleologus, which were widely used in the kingdom of Vidin-Coin, copper alloy, Stamina of Andronicus II Paleologus (1282–1294 AD.). Struck in Thessaloniki in 1282–1305 AD.; Ø 2.33/2.50 cm; W-1.83 g. (**Fig. 4.3**).

## Late Medieval Period

The survey in the eastern sector recorded some natural stone accumulations (limestone or sandstone) with faint traces of temporary occupation and a low concentration of archaeological material-pottery fragments, charcoal and shapeless pieces of plaster. The ceramic material consists mainly of vessels made of relatively purified clay with impurities of fine sand, with incised decoration characteristic of the period and sgraffito pottery characteristic of the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Archaeological materials and structures that can be dated to the late medieval and Ottoman periods (15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries) based on the ceramic material were found mainly in the western part of the site and have the character of temporary dwellings. This statement applies to structures from all recorded eras. A number of facts can be cited as evidence, such as: the thin cultural layer, the flat recorded rock masses, the environment unfavourable to life, namely numerous bogs and the absence of a spring or river nearby.

An example of this is Structure No. 17/Dwelling No. 2 (**Fig. 5**). Large limestones with an average size of 0.25 – 0.30 m were found delimiting a rectangular space and resting in a natural cairn to the southeast. The dimensions of the house are 7.30 × 3.80 m and are oriented from south to north. Inside the dwelling, an inhomogeneous layer with a high concentration of 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century ceramic material (**Pl. 2**), charcoal, animal bones, and single household objects can be observed: iron knives, blades, a drill and other metal objects as well as a bone handle with incised decoration, buttons, etc. (**Pl. 2a**).

Structure No. 30 is also a late medieval dwelling (**Fig. 6**). The interior consists of a fill of fine limestones, fragments of late medieval pottery, including floors and

walls in situ, animal bones and plaster fragments. In the NW corner, the outline rests on the rock (green sandstone). The natural formations-sandstone and horizontal stone lines crossing the site in SW-NW direction-were probably used in construction. In the corner SW there are lined nests of approximately oval shape ( $\varnothing$  0.10-0.15 m, depth 0.10 m) and plaster around them. It is probably a wooden structure/shed hewn into the rock for better stability and lined with medium sized limestones. Of Structure No. 30/Dwelling No. 1, only two walls of limestone of different sizes have survived. The dwelling is built on the continental rock and it is probably only temporary.

In the same sector, two metallurgical furnaces-structures nos. 6 (**Fig. 7**) and 7 (**Fig. 7a**)-were recorded and investigated on the site. They are large, round patches of rotten earth. They are only preserved in the negative, which was clearly visible when the sections of the installations were made. Pieces of iron slag were found in both, and the ceramic material points them to the late Middle Ages.

Structure No. 18 is a fireplace. A patch of small stones, charcoal and a one-handled pot were found in the field (**Fig. 8**). The vessel is made of clay mixed with fine and coarse sand. The colour is smoky brown to grey-black. The bottom shows traces of cutting with a thread. The decoration consists of single straight incised lines on the neck, a belt of straight incised lines on the shoulders and a white engobe design on the neck, shoulders and handle. It dates from the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Pits and structures with the character of shallow excavations have been recorded on the site, the functions of which are not clear (**Fig. 9**). Their fills consist of charcoal, bones, ceramic fragments, iron slag, metal objects, knives, etc.

Numerous finds have been discovered from the time of the late Middle Ages, which we will discuss later in the text. The fact that such a large number of artefacts were found during the survey, most of which have exhibition value, indicates to us the importance of this settlement, which was obviously inhabited either seasonally or in connection with the nearby fair, which is mentioned in ethnographic sources. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the fair moved to the town of Kula (Adlje), 13 km from Vrashka Chuka<sup>4</sup>.

The finds from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries are, as mentioned above, large in quantity. They are over 60 coins, as follows:

**Mehmed II (1451–1481 AD.) (Pl. 3)**

1. Akçe, silver;  $\varnothing$  1.0/1.1 cm; W-0.72 g.
2. Akçe, silver. Molten from burning;  $\varnothing$  1.05/1.20 cm.
3. Mangir, copper alloy;  $\varnothing$  1.40/1.65 cm; W-3.14 g.
4. Mangir, copper alloy;  $\varnothing$  1.30/1.50 cm; W-2.55 g.
5. Mangir, copper alloy;  $\varnothing$  1.1/1.2 cm; W-0.75 g.
6. Mangir, copper alloy;  $\varnothing$  1.10/1.20 cm; W-0.75 g.

**Bayazid II (1481–1512 AD.) (Pl. 3)**

7. Akçe, silver;  $\varnothing$  1.10/1.20 cm; W-0.73 g.
8. Akçe, silver;  $\varnothing$  1.04/ 1.20 cm; W-0.70 g.

<sup>4</sup> KANITZ 1879.

9. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.00/1.04 cm; W-0.64 g.
10. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.00/1.06 cm; W-0.75 g.
11. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 1.30/1.55 cm; W-1.58 g.
12. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 1.05/1.15 cm; W-1.18 g.

**Selim I (1512–1520 AD.) (Pl. 3)**

13. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.10/1.18 cm; W-0.69 g.
14. Akçe-fourré, copper alloy, imitation of Selim I's; Ø 1.06/1.37 cm; W-0.44 g.
15. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.03/1.1 cm; W-0.56 g.
16. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.04/1.14 cm; W-0.55 g.

**Süleyman I (1520–1566 AD.) (Pl. 4)**

1. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.14/1.22 cm; W-0.68 g.
2. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.00/1.16 cm; W-0.68 g.
3. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.00/1.10 cm; W-0.71 g.
4. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 1.0/1.1 cm; W-0.63 g.
5. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.10/1.20 cm; W-0.68 g.
6. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.02/1.21 cm; W-0.64 g.
7. Akçe, silver. Hole to rim; Ø 1.12/1.30 cm; W-0.63 g.
8. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.19/1.21 cm; W-0.43 g.
9. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.04/1.14 cm; W-0.66 g.
10. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.00/1.15 cm; W-0.68 g.
11. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.00 cm; W-0.41 g.
12. Akçe, silver; Ø 0.9/1.08 cm; W-0.70 g.
13. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.10/1.15 cm; W-0.39 g.
14. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.10/1.05 cm; W-0.54 g.
15. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.00/1.05 cm; W-0.73 g.
16. Akçe, silver; Ø 1.15/1.22 cm; W-0.67 g.
17. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 1.27/1.57 cm; W-2.55 g.
18. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 1.58/1.62 cm; W-2.76 g.

**Murad III (1574–1595 AD.) (Pl. 4)**

19. Akçe, silver; Ø 0.95/1.10 cm; W-0.38 g.

**Silver unknown akçes (16<sup>th</sup> c.) (Pl. 4)**

20. Akçe, silver, with hole in the rim; Ø. 1.30/1.42 cm; W-0.43 g.
21. Coin, imitation of an Ottoman akçe-fourré. With hole in the rim; Ø 1.22/1.27 cm; W-0.64 g.

**Copper alloy unknown mangirs from the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries (Pl. 4)**

22. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 1.10/1.15 cm; W-0.21 g.
23. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 1.3/1.6 cm; W-2.61 g.
24. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 1,04/1,30 cm; T-1,18 g.
25. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 1.2/1.33 cm; W-0.40 g.
26. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 1.32/1.65 cm; W-1.90 g.
27. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 1.3/1.1 cm; W-1.18 g.

28. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 0.92/1.15 cm; W-1.11 g.
29. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 0.95/1.0 cm; W-0.26 g.
30. Mangir, copper alloy; Ø 1.00/1.10 cm; W-0.50 g.

Several later coins of Ahmed III (1703–1730 AD.), Mahmud I (1730–1754 AD.), Mahmud II (1808–1839 AD.) as well as Western European coins-early 18<sup>th</sup> century Austrian silversmiths and brass trade tokens of early 19<sup>th</sup> century German and Austrian companies were also found at the site.

The chronological overview of the coins generally shows that the pipeline route passes through a settlement of the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, which was intensively populated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was abandoned towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There is probably a connection to a medieval settlement of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which is indicated by the two Latin imitations from the 12<sup>th</sup> century as well as the very well-preserved coin of Andronicus II Paleologus, which were widely used in the kingdom of Vidin.

Without digressing unnecessarily, given the small area under investigation, I would suggest with greater certainty that the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century settlement was depopulated by the departure of its inhabitants or was destroyed by the Kardschalis and the rebellion of Osman Pazvantoğlu in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. This can be clarified on the basis of the other movable finds discovered during the investigation. I am inclined to suggest this dating because of the absence of the typical and numerous silver coins of Sultan Mahmud II (1808–1839 AD.), which are too numerous in Bulgarian lands.

As already mentioned, most of the finds date from the late Middle Ages. They are a large number of adornments typical of this period. Adornments are a constant and topical subject of archaeological research. They are important in solving a range of social and cultural problems. Not only are they a marker of society's taste, the level of aesthetic criteria, but in the context of scientific research they are one of the most important chronological reference points and researchers of different periods prefer them as objects of study. For a comparison of the finds found during the 1/1000 site survey, the late medieval adornments used in the dissertation<sup>5</sup>, which were found in archaeological contexts on the territory of Bulgaria, are used as examples, as is the typology developed in the thesis.

The rings found at site 1/1000 represent a significant part of the finds. They are representative specimens typical of the period from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and, more importantly, of the area in north-western Bulgaria where one of the largest jewellery-making workshops was located in that period. The school in Chiprovtsi<sup>6</sup> was known throughout the Empire and its production spread throughout the Balkan Peninsula.

The rings will be presented typologically as follows:

### **Type I-simple rings**

The rings of this type are simply cast rings, usually made of copper, bronze or silver. Specimens made of bone or glass. Without or with decoration. They are open and closed. Some publications dealing with jewellery claim that these rings were

<sup>5</sup> VASILEVA 2019.

<sup>6</sup> SOTIROV 1984.

among the most common types of rings in both the Early and Late Middle Ages<sup>7</sup>. However, analysis of the available material in the necropolises studied shows that this was not the case at all in the period from the late 14<sup>th</sup> to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. This type is hardly to be found among the grave finds. However, these rings are also found, albeit in small numbers, in necropolises dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Specimens were found in "St. Archangels Michael and Gabriel" (Arbanassi), "Sv. Nicholas" (Poroishte village, Razgrad region), Cape Chirakman (Kavarna).

There is a ring of this type here (Pl. 5.1)-Ring, copper alloy. Open ring with thin ends and thickened central part. Unadorned; Ø 1.40/1.65 cm; width 0.8 cm.

Analogies: type "rings of group I", according to the classification of B. Pisarova<sup>8</sup>; E. Zechevich<sup>9</sup>; E. Maneva<sup>10</sup>; type I according to the classification of V. Grigorov<sup>11</sup>; type "banded rings" according to L. Dumitriu's classification<sup>12</sup>; Milošević<sup>13</sup>; Bikić<sup>14</sup>.

### Type II-rings with profiled rings and tiles with/without decoration

These are solid specimens made of bronze or silver. Cast. The rings are profiled on the upper side, directly under the plate. Specimens are found with decoration on the ring and the plate. This type of rings is widely researched from Serbia and Macedonia. They date from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and in later variants up to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Here this type is represented by four specimens: Ring, copper alloy. Deformed. Consists of a ring with a flat cross-section, the plate is raised on a low clear pillar of conical form. The plate is almost circular, flat with decoration of radial incisions towards the rim. 17<sup>th</sup> century; Ø 1.20/1.35 cm-tile; 0.6 cm-ring (Pl. 5.2); Ring, copper alloy. Closed ring. Narrower at the bottom, widening towards the plate. Visible decoration of wavy incisions. The plate is oval. Raised on a narrower rim than the ring. Decoration of incised ornament, similar to f, with elongated bands; Ø 2.3 cm; height 2.7 cm; width 0,72 cm (Pl. 5.3); Ring plate, bronze, with a small part of the ring preserved. Oval flat, small neck. Decoration of wavy horizontal lines; Ø 1.3/1.5 cm; width 1.3 cm (Pl. 5.4).

Analogies: Stancheva, Pisarova<sup>15</sup>; Maneva<sup>16</sup>; Dumitriu<sup>17</sup>; Ivanih<sup>18</sup>; Georgieva, Buchinski<sup>19</sup>; Nikolova, Robov<sup>20</sup>; Margos<sup>21</sup>; Maneva<sup>22</sup>-type: 'massive walls with

<sup>7</sup> MANEVA 1992, p. 83.

<sup>8</sup> PISAROVA 1988, p. 156, tab. I 1,2.

<sup>9</sup> ZEČEVIĆ 2006, cat. No 40-42.

<sup>10</sup> MANEVA 1992, T. 75, 86/19, 93/14, 93/15.

<sup>11</sup> GRIGOROV 2007, fig. 57, 1-3.

<sup>12</sup> DUMITRIU 2001, III.1.1.1. tab. 5/1-4.

<sup>13</sup> MILOŠEVIĆ 1990, cat. no. 81.

<sup>14</sup> BIKIĆ 2010, 91, p. 1-3.

<sup>15</sup> STANCHEVA, PISAROVA 1989, p. 106, fig. 8B.

<sup>16</sup> MANEVA 1992, cat. no. 58/31.

<sup>17</sup> DUMITRIU 2001, tabs 16/8, 82/13.

<sup>18</sup> IVANIĆ 1995, p. 37, cat. no. 91, p. 39, cat. no. 100.

<sup>19</sup> GEORGIEVA, BUCHINSKI 1959, tab. XVIII, fig. 10.

<sup>20</sup> NIKOLOVA, ROBOV 2005, tab. XXX-9, 10,11, tab. XXX-1, 2, 4.

<sup>21</sup> MARGOS 1983, tab. XV, vol. 1, tab. XVI-4.

<sup>22</sup> MANEVA 1992, type: massive walls with adjusted decoration and profiling of the head and T. 96, P/6, P/10.

adjusted decoration and profiling of the head; Zečević<sup>23</sup>; Milošević<sup>24</sup>; Bajalović-Hatsi-Pešić<sup>25</sup>; Radojković<sup>26</sup>.

### Type III-rings with profiled rings and profiled plate

These rings are composed of a thick, profiled ring, profiled plate, and a bud located opposite the plate. There are also found specimens with a profiled ring decorated with cassettes which are formed by removal of material and decorated with stylized branches. The tile is elliptical, decorated with floral motifs obtained by withdrawal and filled with green enamel. A form without decoration is mentioned by M. Stancheva and V. Pisarova, as it was placed in the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>27</sup>. More rings without decoration are known from Serbia. The same form is found in two specimens from Macedonia. The dating of one specimen, found in the necropolis of Kratovo, is from the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and of the other from the necropolis of the Church of St. Nikola" in Prilep, is 12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>28</sup>. E. Maneva places the form generally in the 13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> c.<sup>29</sup>. Rings of this type have been found in the study of the one of the necropolises in the municipality of Bratya Daskalovi, Chirpan region<sup>30</sup>. The necropolis is dated to the 16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Rings were included in the study, "St. Peter and Paul", "Sv. Ivan Rilski (Veliko Tarnovo), Archangels Michael and Gabriel (Arbanassi), Nedelkovo (Trun municipality). This ring type is represented here by four specimens: ring, bronze, cast, with triangular section of the ring. Smoothly thickening towards the plate, decoration of incised lines on the left and right of the ring. By slight beveling follows a high plate 0,4 cm. With elliptical shape tapering at the ends. Decoration of two Xs in the periphery and two I I I vertical lines in the centre or (X I I X). Thickened bud at base of ring; Ø 2.2/2.5 cm; thick 1.1 cm (Pl. 6.1); Ring, copper alloy, part of the ring missing, small ladies or children. The ring consists of a flat plate merging into a plate tapering towards the tip. Decoration of incised spiral lines. Decoration of the plate—a vertical line and several incisions at acute angles to the main line. Geometric motif; ap. Ø 1.65/1.70 cm; thick 0.9 cm (Pl. 6.2); Ring, copper alloy, closed ring of equal width. Pyramid-shaped plate protruding from the ring. Shaped like a small circle. Decoration on the underside of the ring—large embossed bud. Shoulders with five horizontal incisions, a fifth incision crosses the base of the plate. Small vertical lines underneath. The decoration of the tile consists of two opposite spirals and an incised line along the entire circumference; Ø 2.2/2.6 cm; 1.0 cm; thick 0.2 cm; Ø of tile 1.0 cm (Pl. 6.3); Ring, bronze, thick ring, flat, semicircular section, passing into thickened shoulders and low cast plate. Bud at the bottom. Overall incised decoration. The tile has two zigzag horizontal lines, the shoulders with five transverse lines. Below with two opposite S-shaped motifs. The bud with radial incisions; Ø 2.3/2.42 cm; width 1.0 cm; Ø tile 1.0/1.5 cm.

<sup>23</sup> ZEČEVIĆ 2006, p. 110–111, cat. nos. 62, 138, 139, 141, 142, p. 107, cat. no. 82.

<sup>24</sup> MILOŠEVIĆ 1990, types 2, 3, 7, 53.

<sup>25</sup> BAJALOVIĆ-HADŽI-PEŠIĆ 1984, T.VIII–6.

<sup>26</sup> RADOJKOVIĆ 1969, cat. nos. 112, 113, 114, 117.

<sup>27</sup> STANCHEVA, PISAROVA 1989, p. 107.

<sup>28</sup> MANEVA 1992, tab. 96, 26/5 and tab. 93, 65/18.

<sup>29</sup> MANEVA 1992, p. 102.

<sup>30</sup> TONKOVA, IVANOV 2011.

Analogies: Stancheva, Pisarova<sup>31</sup>; Maneva<sup>32</sup>; Zečević<sup>33</sup>; Milošević<sup>34</sup>; Tonkova, Ivanov<sup>35</sup>.

### Type IV-rings with round, elliptical or square plate with/without decoration

These rings are solid specimens made of bronze or silver. The technique of manufacture is casting. The rings usually have a semicircular cross-section and are expanded into plates of various shapes (square, round, etc.) with or without decoration. As a type it has evolved from the earlier periods and in the Second Empire it is probably also the most common type of ring, which is mainly due to its easy and quick production. It is widespread in Serbia, Macedonia and Romania. L. Dumitriu defines this type as “rings with a flat shield”, with a great variety of decorations consisting of simple incised lines, geometric and floral motifs, etc<sup>36</sup>. In all studies, this type of ring is dated in the wide range from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, depending on the chronological framework of the site. Rings of this type were found during the excavation of the late necropolis (16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century) in the municipality of Bratya Daskalovi, Chirpan region<sup>37</sup>. In the investigated necropolises are found in: Archangel Michael and Gabriel”, “Nativity of Christ” (Arbanasi), “St. Dimitar”, “St. Nicholas” (village of Poroishte, Razgrad region), “St. Nicholas” (village of Poroishte, Razgrad region). Ivan Rilski”, “St. Peter and Paul” (Veliko Tarnovo), “St. Ilija” (Iliyantsi district, Sofia), Priboy (Pernik municipality), Vaksevo (Kyustendil municipality), Nedelkovo (Tran municipality), Nisovo (Ruse region), Chirakman (Kavarna municipality). Here this type is represented by five specimens: Ring, copper alloy, closed ring, thickened to the plate. Direct transition into an elliptical tile arranged along the length of the ring, without underlay. Vertical and horizontal incisions. Tile decoration of two spirals running in opposite directions with several vertical slashes. Deformed ring; Ø 2.1/2.53 cm; Ø tile 1.3/1.85 cm (Pl. 7.1); ring, bronze, cast together with the plate. Periphery of the plate in symmetrical floral grooves. Without decoration. Decoration below the shoulders, with bundles of incised lines; Ø 2.2/2.8 cm; width 1.4 cm (Pl. 7.2); Fragment of a bronze ring. The plate is cast with the ring. Oval without decoration; Ø 1.25/1.60 cm (Pl. 7.3); Ring, copper alloy, thin, closed ring, semicircular in cross-section. Leading into a round, flat plate. Decoration of incised lines angled to a central vertical line; Ø 1.9/2.1 cm; width 0.95 cm (Pl. 7.4); Ring, copper alloy, with elliptical cross-section. At the shoulders it widens and becomes an elliptical plate. Flat on top, traces of silver solder. Probably had an additional soldered decoration, now missing; Ø 2.1/2.2 cm; Ø of the plate 1.15/1.5 cm (Pl. 7.5).

<sup>31</sup> STANCHEVA, PISAROVA 1989, p. 107, v. 10/c, d.

<sup>32</sup> MANEVA 1992, tab. 96, 26/5 and tab. 93, 65/18.

<sup>33</sup> ZEČEVIĆ 2006, type 7, cat. nos. 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74.

<sup>34</sup> MILOŠEVIĆ 1990, p. 113, 115, 116, 118–163, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172.

<sup>35</sup> TONKOVA, IVANOV 2011, PIN 246, 71.

<sup>36</sup> DUMITRIU 2001, p. 36–39.

<sup>37</sup> TONKOVA, IVANOV 2011, p. 72.

Analogies: Zečević<sup>38</sup>; Stancheva, Pisarova<sup>39</sup>; Maneva<sup>40</sup>; Dumitriu<sup>41</sup>; Ivanić<sup>42</sup>; Georgieva, Buchinski<sup>43</sup>; Nikolova, Robov<sup>44</sup>; Margos<sup>45</sup>; Tonkova, Ivanov<sup>46</sup>.

### Type IVA-rings with core/sheet metal plate

The rings of this type consist of a solid flat ring with a plate in heart or leaf shape. The pointed part is usually festooned. The plates usually have stylized decorations, including a human face on a specimen from Serbia<sup>47</sup>. This type is attested by a few finds in Serbia. The type appears in the late 14<sup>th</sup>-early 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the examined necropolises it is found in: Archangel Michael and Gabriel", "Birth of Christ" (Arbanassi), Nedelkovo (Tran municipality), cape Chirakman (Kavarna municipality), as it probably appeared later as a type on the Bulgarian territory. Here this type is represented by one specimen: Ring, bronze. Closed ring of uniform width. Decoration of three symmetrically arranged relief borders below and on the shoulders of the ring, two and one incised. The ring stands on a pyramidal, bevelled base. The flat rim is divided into eight petals. Imitation flower. On top a decoration of spirals, 4 arranged crosswise. Radial slashes. Incised band around the entire circumference, 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century; Ø of the ring: 2.4 cm; Ø of the plate 1.63/1.85 cm (Pl. 8.1).

Analogies: Zečević<sup>48</sup>; Milošević<sup>49</sup>; Radojković<sup>50</sup>; Georgieva, Buchinski<sup>51</sup>; Sotirov<sup>52</sup>.

In the present text we could not present all the finds, so we limited ourselves to individual specimens to illustrate the diversity of the adornments. And since we are on the subject of rings, will introduce three blanks for this kind of jewellery. The blanks are cast, but not finished. These finds indicate that there was production in this settlement, even if it was only temporary-casting for the making of a ring. Horseshoe-shaped. The flat transverse part has a hole. There is excess material on the periphery; height 3.45 cm; width 2.8 cm; thick 1.1 cm (Pl. 8.2); Ring blank, lead. Open ring with flat cross-section. The plate is solidly elliptical with incisions on the periphery. Deformed; Ø 1.4/1.9 cm; height 1.8 cm (Pl. 8.3); Ring blank, bronze. Cast in a mould and undecorated; height 2.1 cm; width 1.4 cm (Pl. 8.4).

The adornments on the site are also represented by neck ornaments, as well as components of various pieces of adornments (earrings, bracelets, strings), which are known as 'treпки' (shakes). These will be briefly introduced as follows: Medallion,

<sup>38</sup> ZEČEVIĆ 2006, cat. no. 58.

<sup>39</sup> STANCHEVA, PISAROVA 1989, p. 106, 8B.

<sup>40</sup> MANEVA 1992, cat. no. 58/31.

<sup>41</sup> DUMITRIU 2001, tabs 16/8, 82/13.

<sup>42</sup> IVANIĆ 1995, p. 37, cat. no. 91, p. 39, cat. no. 100.

<sup>43</sup> GEORGIEVA, BUCHINSKI 1959, tab. XVIII, fig. 10.

<sup>44</sup> NIKOLOVA, ROBOV 2005, tab. XXX-9, 10,11, tab. XXX-1, 2, 4.

<sup>45</sup> MARGOS 1983, tab. XV, vol. 1, tab. XVI-4.

<sup>46</sup> TONKOVA, IVANOV 2011, PIN 108-2, 183, 205.

<sup>47</sup> MILOŠEVIĆ 1990, cat. no. 190.

<sup>48</sup> ZEČEVIĆ 2006, type 6, cat. no. 65, 66.

<sup>49</sup> MILOŠEVIĆ 1990, cat. nos. 188, 189, 190, 191, 192.

<sup>50</sup> RADOJKOVIĆ 1969, no. 152.

<sup>51</sup> GEORGIEVA, BUCHINSKI 1959, p. 111, tab. XVIII, model 7.

<sup>52</sup> SOTIROV 1984, fig. 105.

bronze. Shape of an openwork cross. Flat with four symmetrical holes in the corners. Four buds at the periphery. In the upper part a loop through which a wire ring is pierced. The cross is incised in the centre. Unicoloured; height 2.2 cm; width 1.5 cm; thick 0.2 cm (Pl. 8.5); Cross, lead. Flat square. Maltese type. With sharp busts extending from the centre to the rim. One of the busts had a suspension loop, but it is broken off. Flat, small, roughly cast; length 1.8/2.0 cm; thick 0.35 cm (Pl. 8.6). The shakes (treпки) are small plates cut into various shapes-triangular, diamond-shaped, round, etc. They are made of thin copper alloy sheet into which, after cutting, the desired number of holes are drilled for sewing or hanging (Pl. 8.7).

The information available and presented leads to the following conclusions: The gas pipeline passes through a settlement with the highest settlement intensity in the period from the early 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the chronological periods recorded earlier (Bronze Age, Early Iron Age, Roman period and Middle Ages) the settlement of the site was apparently insignificant, and one should look for larger and more populated settlements nearby. This intensity in the Ottoman period can of course be seen as temporary or seasonal, as mentioned above. The presence of non-permanent residential buildings, the remains of hut furnaces and storage pits for various materials indicate that the settlement most probably either served the aforementioned fair or existed in connection with the road to the border zone that passed in the immediate vicinity. It is also likely that it was a small production centre, as evidenced by the various tools found-awls, axes, knives, wedges, whetstones, etc. At this stage of archaeological research in Bulgaria, a settlement of a similar character and from this period has not yet been investigated, so it is difficult to make a proper comparison.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

BAJALOVIĆ-HADŽI-PEŠIĆ 1984–1985 – M. Bajalović-Hadži-Pešić, *O lunulastim naushnitsama iz ostave XVII veka u Muzeju grada Beograda*, Zbornik Muzej primenje umetnosti 28–29 (1984/1985), p. 93–100.

BIKIĆ 2010 – V. Bikić, *Vizantijski nakit u Srbiji: Modeli i naslede*, Beograd, 2010.

GEORGIEVA, BUCHINSKI 1959 – S. Georgieva, D. Buchinski, *Staroto zlatarstvo vav Vratsa*, Sofia, 1959.

GRIGOROV 2007 – V. Grigorov, *Metalni nakiti ot srednovekovna Balgariya (VII–XI v.)*, Sofia, 2007.

DUMITRIU 2001 – L. Dumitriu, *Der mittelalterliche schmuck des unteren Donaugebietes im 11.–15. Jahrhundert*, Bucuresti, 2001.

IVANIĆ 1995 – B. Ivanić, *Nakit iz zbirke Narodnog muzeja od 15. do početka 19. veka. Katalog zbirke Umetnost pod turskom vlašću*, Beograd, 1995.

KANITZ 1879 – F. Kanitz, *Donau-Bulgarien und der Balkan. Historisch-geographisch-ethnographische Reisestudien aus den Jahren 1860–1879: Bd. 1–3*, Leipzig, 1879.

KOYCHEVA 1994 – K. Koycheva, *Kostni izdeliya ot rannovizantiyskata epoha*, Godishnik na muzeite v severna Balgariya 9 (1994), p. 237–261.

MANEVA 1992 – E. Maneva, *Srednovekoven nakit od Makedonija*, Skopje, 1992.

MARGOS 1983 – A. Margos, *Kasnosrednovekovna tsarkva v s. Harsovo, Razgradski okrag*, Izvestiya na Narodniya muzey Varna 19/34 (1983), p. 133–141.

MILOŠEVIĆ 1990 – D. Milošević, *Nakit od XII do XV veka iz zbirke Narodnog Muzeja*, Beograd, 1990.

NIKOLOVA, ROBOV 2005 – Y. Nikolova, M. Robov, *Hramat na parvite Asenevtsi. Tsarkvata „Sv. Dimitar“ vav Veliko Tarnovo, Veliko Târnovo*, 2005.

PISAROVA 1988 – V. Pisarova, *Srednovekovni prasteni ot fonda na Okrazhniya istoricheski muzey v Kyustendil*, *Izvestiya na natsionalniya istoricheski muzey* 7 (1988), p. 156–168.

SOTIROV 1984 – I. Sotirov, *Chiprovskata zlatarska shkola*, Sofia, 1984.

RADOJKOVIĆ 1966 – B. Radojković, *Srpsko zlatarstvo XVI i XVII veka*, Beograd, 1966.

STANCHEVA, PISAROVA 1989 – M. Stancheva. V. Pisarova, *Kolektsiya ot prasteni v muzeya za istoriya na Sofiya*, *Serdika* 2 (1989), p. 98–132.

TONKOVA, IVANOV 2011 – M. Tonkova, Y. Ivanov, *Trako-rimski dinastichen tsentar v rayona na Chirpanskite vazvisheniya, obshtina Bratya Daskalovi*, Sofia, 2011.

VASILEVA 2019 – E. Vasileva, *Nakitat prez XV-XVII v. ot balgarskite zemi*, *Disertatsiya*, 2019, *in print*.

VASILEVA 2022 – Zh. Vasileva, *The Early Iron Age pottery assemblage from site 1/1000 at the foot of Vrashka Chuka, northwest Bulgaria*, *Bulgarian e-Journal of Archaeology* 12/2 (2022), p. 183–215, doi:10.57573/be-ja.12.183–215.

ZEĆEVIĆ 2006 – E. Zećević, *Nakit Novog Brda. Iz Arheološke zbirke poznog srednjeg veka*, Beograd, 2006.



Fig. 1. Aerial photos of the gas pipe route and site 1/1000.

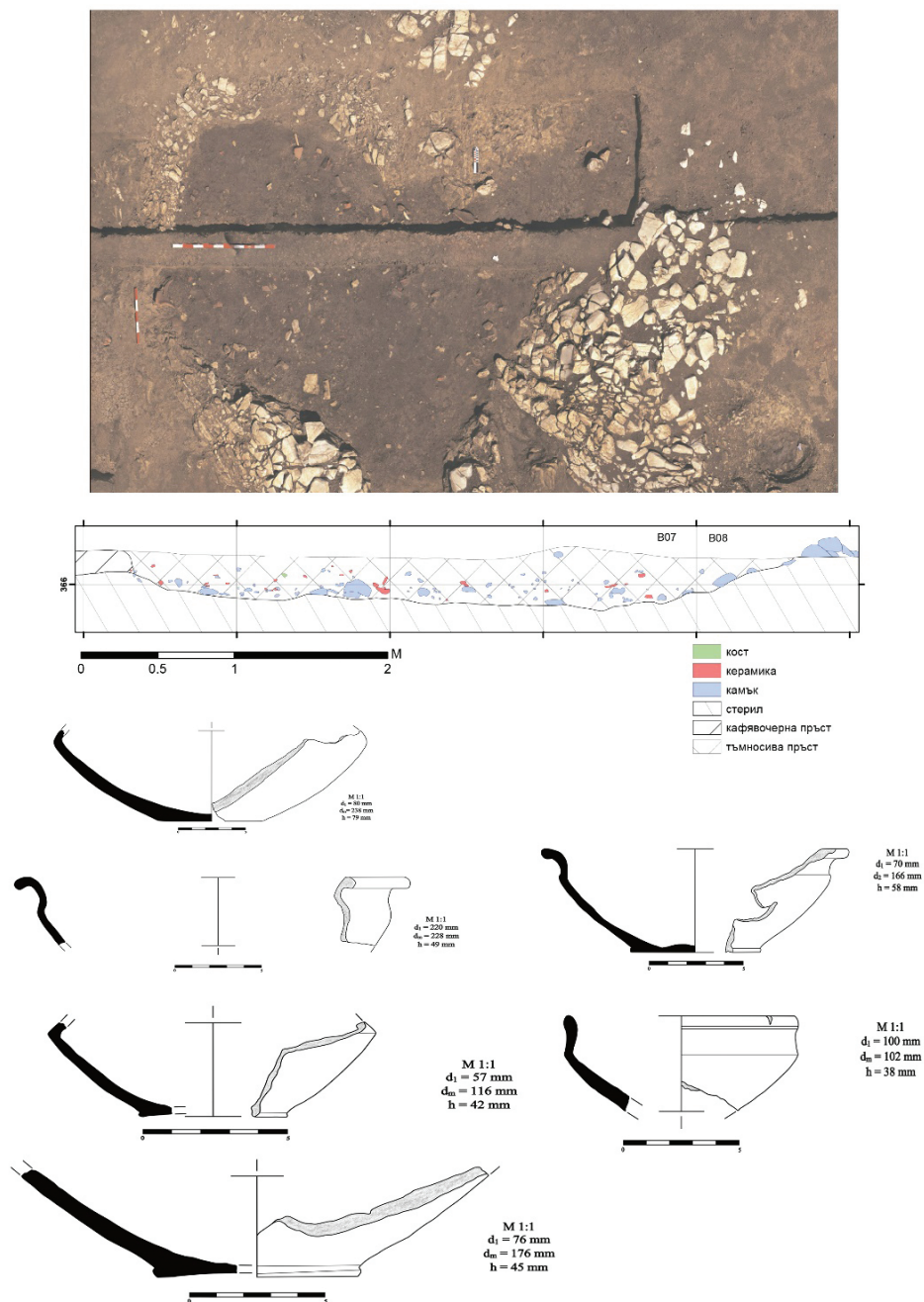


Fig. 2. Structure no. 29 of the Roman period, profile and pottery found.

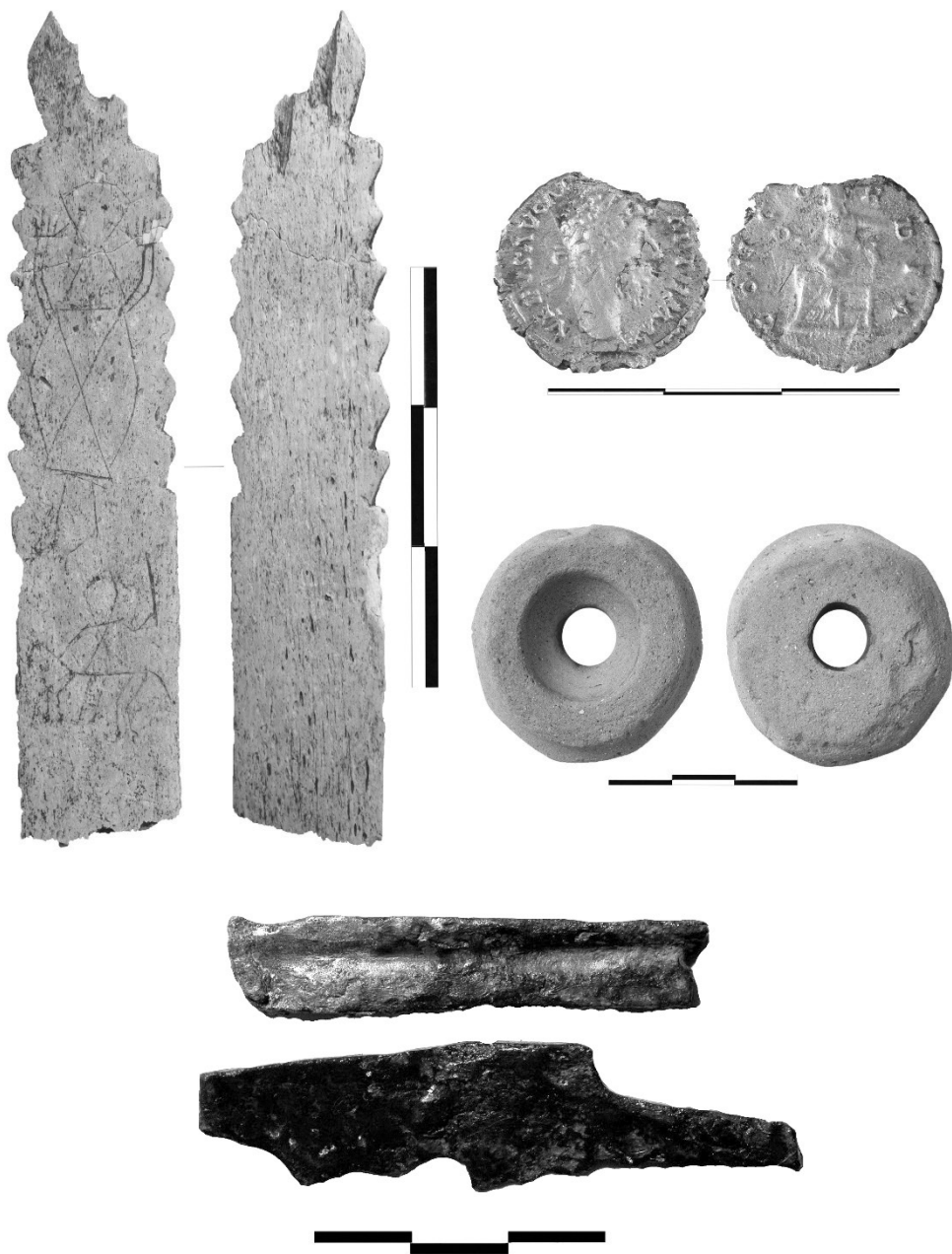


Fig. 2a. Finds from Structure no. 29-bone needle, ceramic spindle vertebra, silver coin and iron knife.



Обект 1/100С  
Връшка Чука  
05.08.2019г.  
структура 31  
Квадрат В08

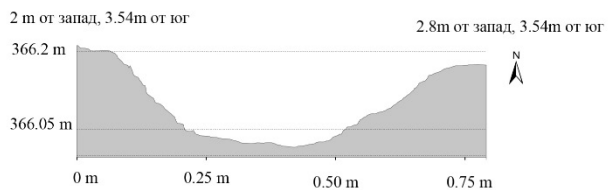


Fig. 3. Structure no. 31- pit from the Roman period.

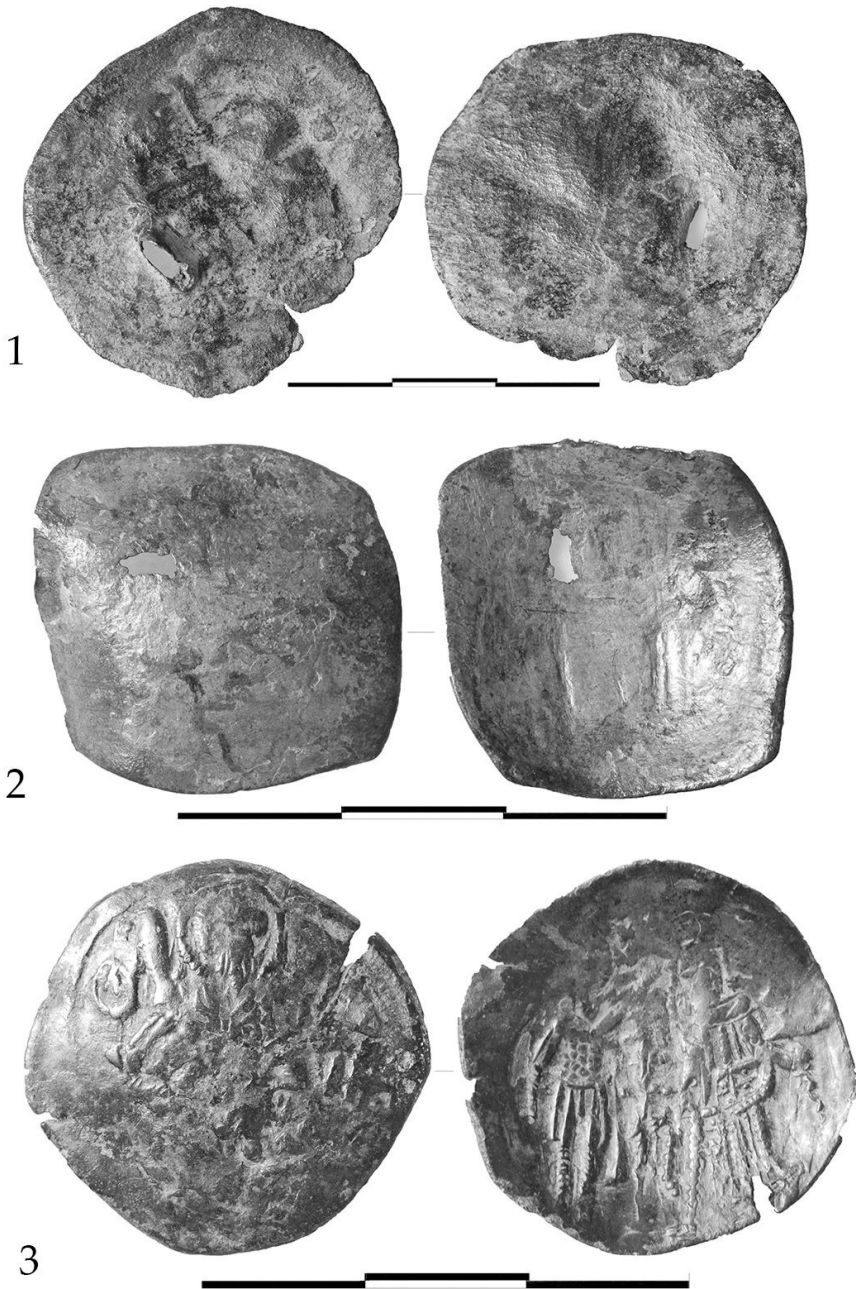


Fig. 4. Coins from 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

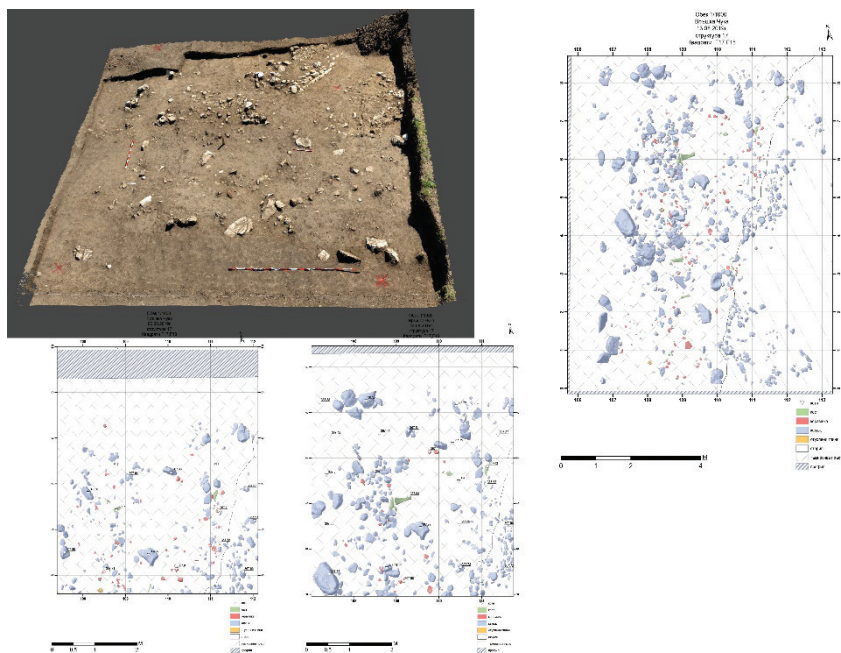


Fig. 5. Structure no. 17/Dwelling no. 2-15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century.

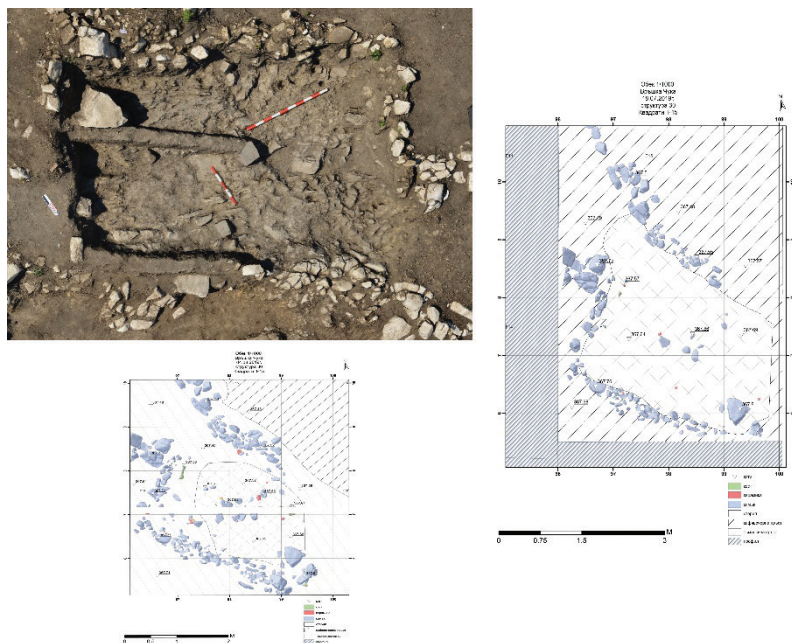


Fig. 6. Structure no. 30/Dwelling no. 1-15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

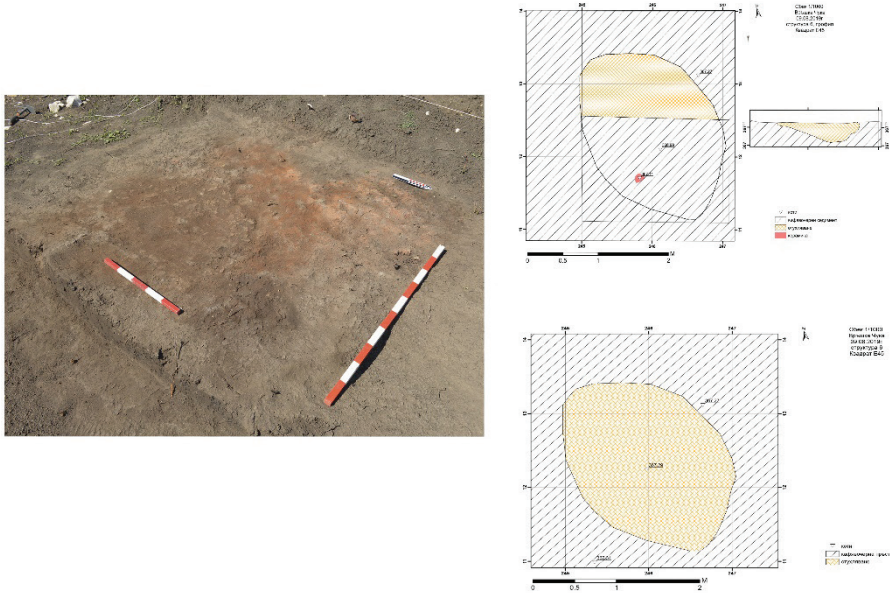


Fig. 7. Structure no. 6 metallurgical furnace.

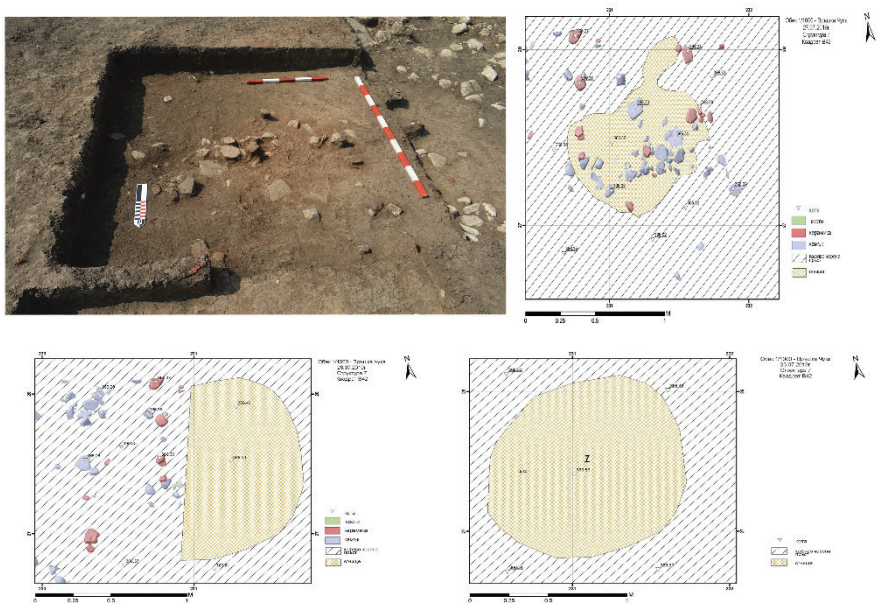


Fig. 7a. Structure no. 7 metallurgical furnace.

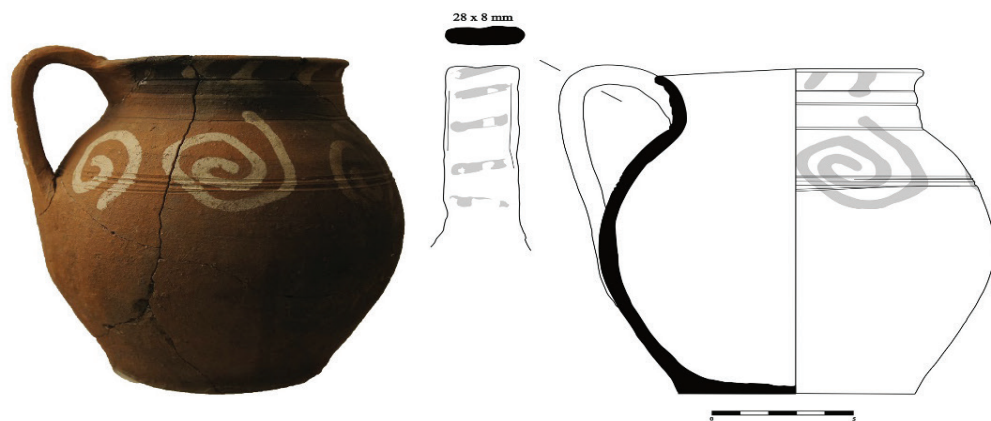


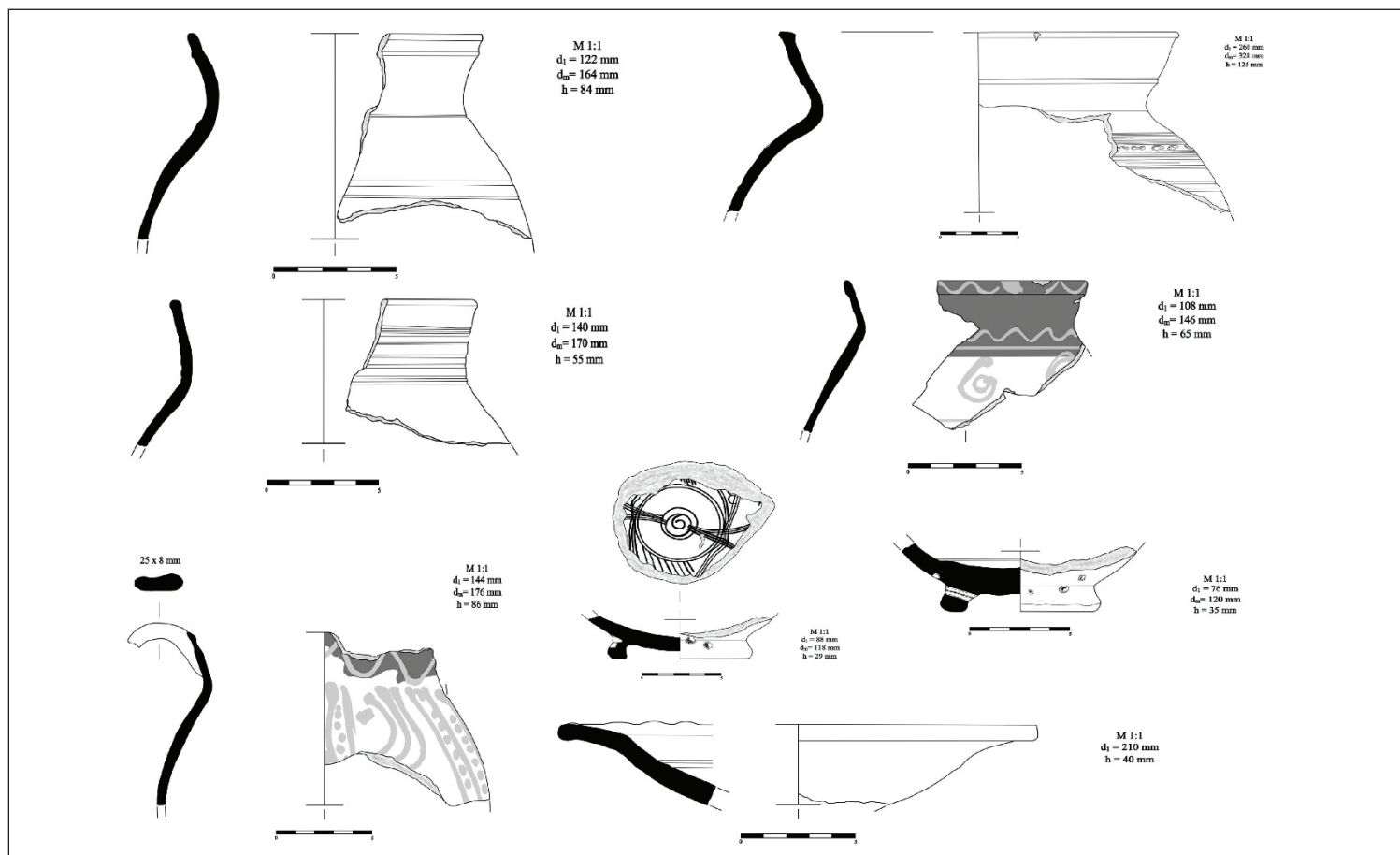
Fig. 8. Structure no. 18 A fireplace–15<sup>th</sup> century.



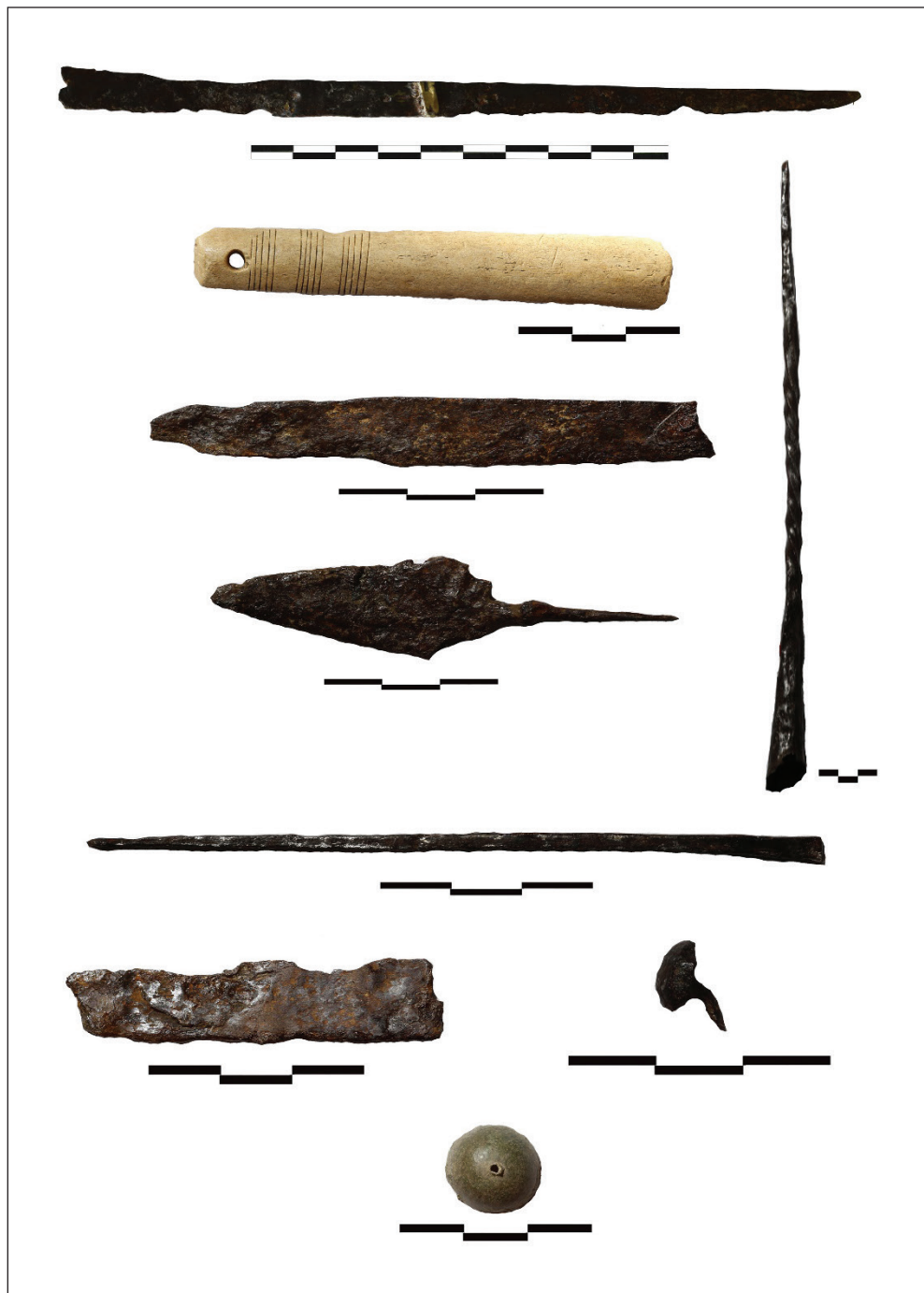
Fig. 9. A pit with materials from the 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries.



Pl. 1.



Pl. 2.



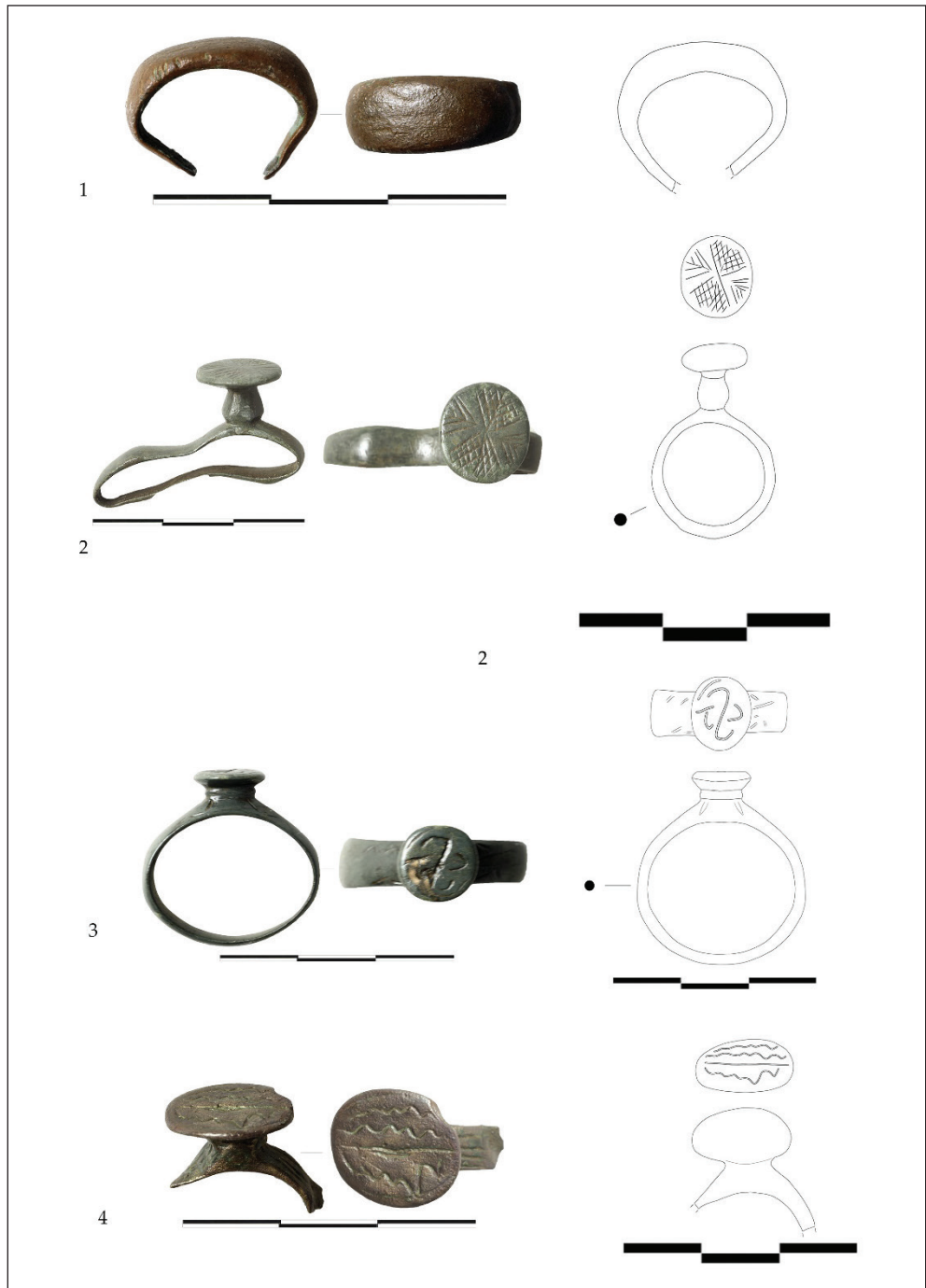
Pl. 2a.



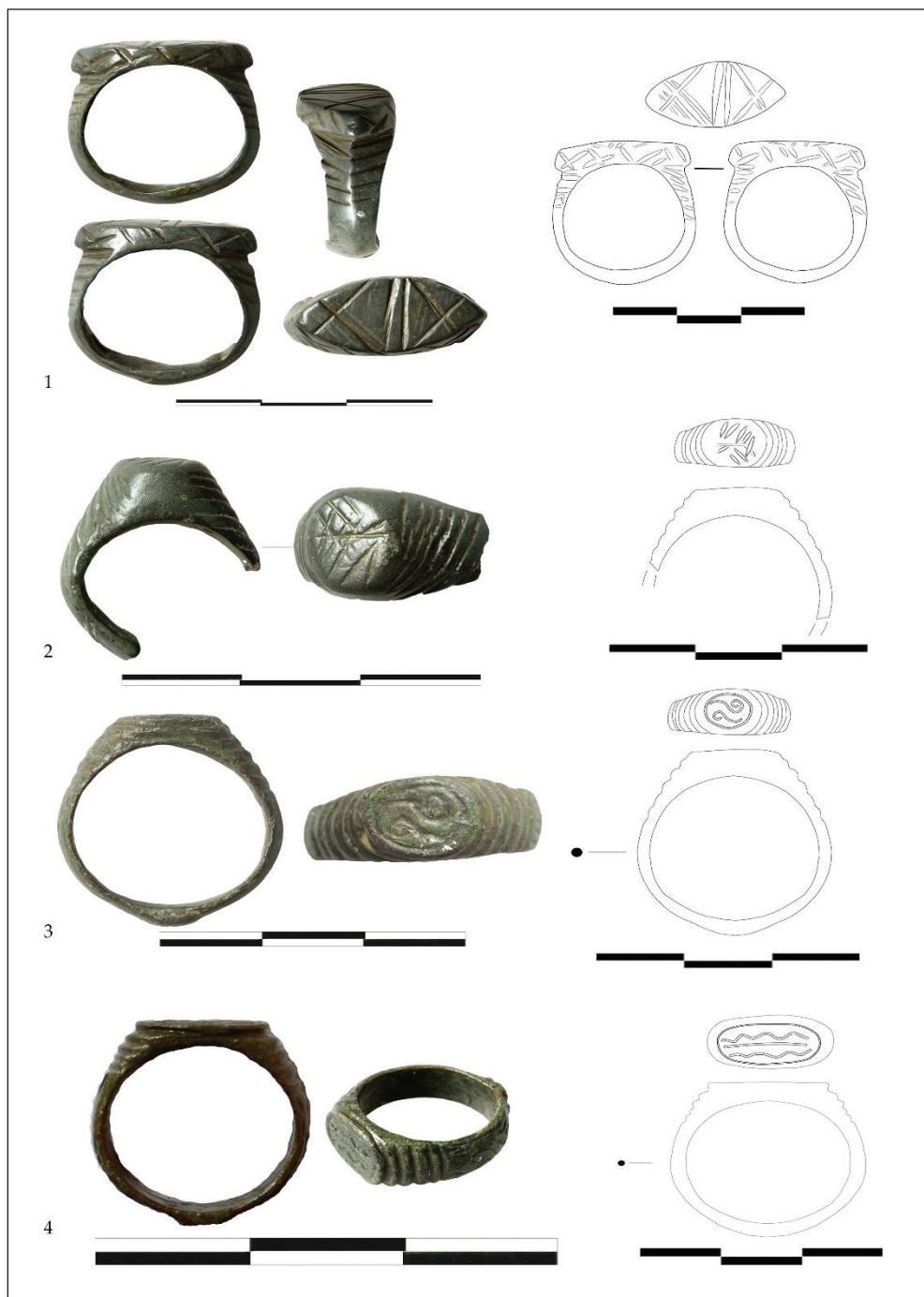
Pl. 3.



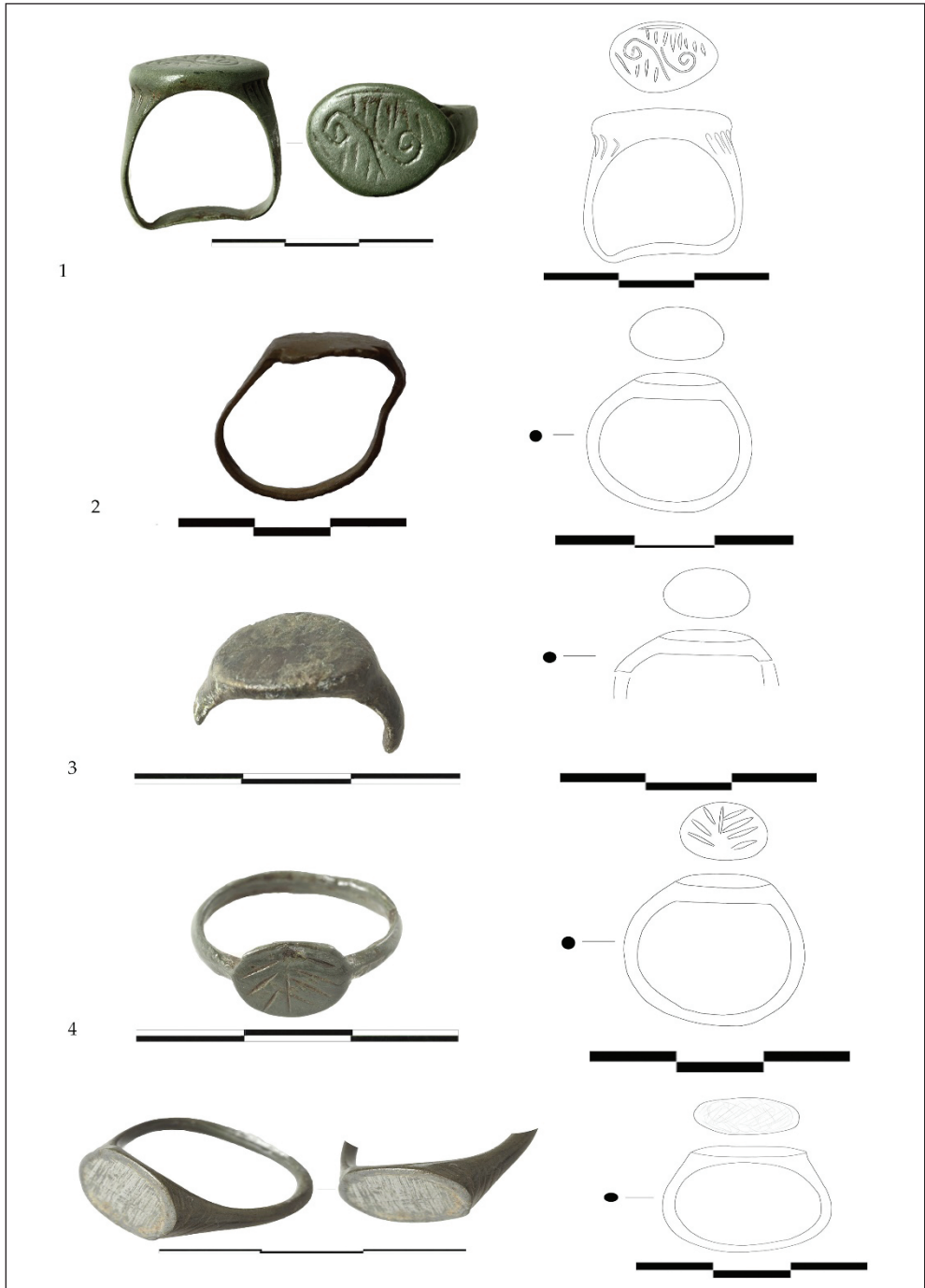
Pl. 4.



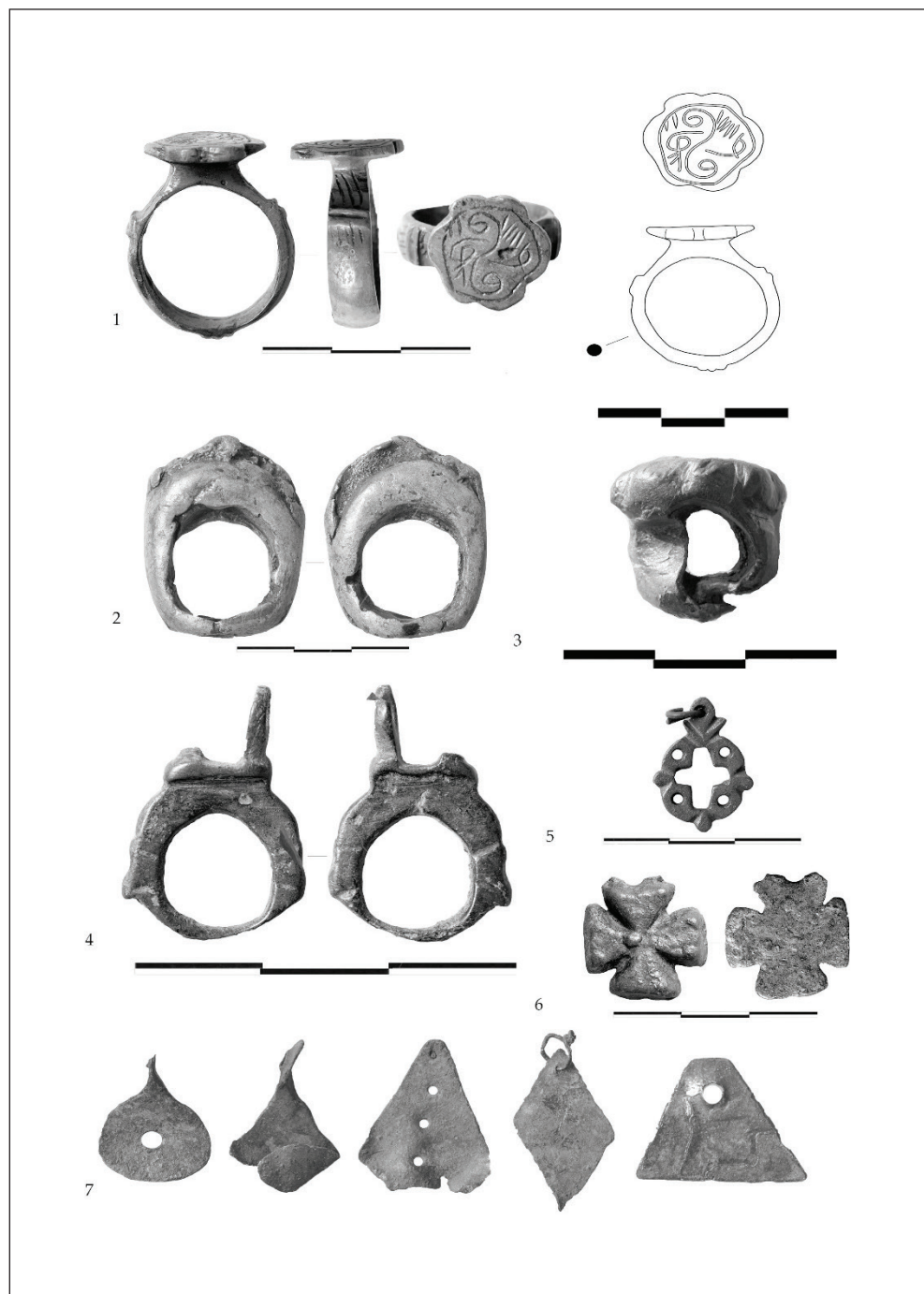
Pl. 5.



Pl. 6.



Pl. 7.



Pl. 8.