Hoisești – *La Curmătură 1*, Neamț county. An archaeological survey in Eastern Romania

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Abstract:

Field survey activities in the Verdele brook basin, South of Hoisești village, Neamț County, have led to the identification and integration of new sites in the national archaeological database. At first, we made a visual analysis of the Verdele brook basin (left tributary of the Bistrița River), a stage followed by the identification of the places that presented specific parameters of areas with archaeological traces. In this context, South of the Hoisești village, on the left high terrace of the Verdele brook, on a flattened hillock delimited by two fossil riverbeds, we identified many archaeological traces. The fieldwalking activity continued during four agricultural seasons in which we took in consideration the distribution of the artefacts, the degree of damage inflicted to the area and the way the use of agricultural machinery was affecting an archaeological site. In order to confirm the presence of the archeological content, the artefact distribution and the need to recover and protect the heritage, non-invasive investigations were performed, which proved the existence of a Eneolithic stronghold with three linear arranged 19 housing structures. As a result of this evaluation, it was proposed to carry out an archaeological survey in which the main objective was the research of a rectangular house. After removing the topsoil containing archaeological remains, was reached the archaeological level represented by the remnants of a burnt housing structure. The archaeological investigation started at the Hoisești-*La Curmătura 1* led to the identification of some specific characteristics of the Eneolithic settlements with an area of less than one hectare located on minor watercourses and in the vicinity of some sources of liquid salt. In the same context, by recovering a batch of pottery fragments from the Middle Bronze Age, additions will be made regarding the occupation space and the connectivity in the central area of the Cracău-Bistrita Depression.

Rezumat: Hoisești – *La Curmătură 1*, județul Neamț. Un sondaj arheologic în Estul României.

Cercetările de suprafață în bazinul pârâului Verdele, la sud de satul Hoisești, județul Neamț, au condus la identificarea și integrarea de noi situri în baza națională de date arheologice. Într-o primă etapă am realizat o evaluare vizuală a bazinului părăului Verdele (afluent pe stânga al râului Bistrița), etapă urmată de verificarea locurilor care prezentau parametri specifici unor zone cu potențial arheologic. În acest context, la sud de satul Hoisești, pe terasa înaltă de pe stânga pârăului Verdele, loc din care se desprinde o suprafață delimitată de două albii fosile, provenind de la două izvoare, am identificat la suprafața solului numeroase resturi arheologice. Activitatea de cercetare de suprafață a continuat pe parcursul a patru sezoane agricole, timp în care am urmărit gradul de afectare a materialului arheologic de suprafață precum și ritmul expunerii prin arătură a resturilor arheologice acoperite. Pentru confirmarea prezenței conținutului arheologic, a distribuției artefactelor și din necesitatea recuperării și protejării patrimoniului au fost realizate investigații non-invazive, care au certificat existența unei așezări fortificate eneolitice în interiorul căreia erau dispuse, liniar, structuri de locuire. Ca urmare a acestei evaluări a fost propusă efectuarea unui diagnostic arheologic în cadrul căruia s-a cercetat o locuințe cu amprentă la sol rectangulară. După decopertarea stratului de pământ arabil care conținea resturi arheologice, a fost atins un nivel arheologic reprezentat de resturile unor pereți din lut. Investigația arheologică începută în punctul Hoisești-*La Curmătură 1* a dus la identificarea unor caracteristici specifice așezărilor eneolitice cu suprafață de sub un hectar, amplasate pe cursuri de apă minore și în proximitatea unor surse de slatină. În același context, prin recuperarea unui lot de fragmente de olărie din perioada Bronzului Mijlociu vor fi aduse completări privind ocuparea spațiului și circulația în zona centrală a depresiunii Cracău-Bistrița.

Key Words: archaeological survey, settlement, Eneolithic, Middle Bronze Age, materiality

Cuvinte-cheie: diagnostic arheologic, așezare, Eneolitic, Bronz Mijlociu, materialitate

Introduction

In 2016, on the territory of Hoiseşti village, Mărgineni commune, Neamț County (Pl. I/1), as a result of recording the archaeological sites initiated by the Directorate for Culture in Neamț County, we identified, delimited and made observations regarding an archaeological site, which, by its characteristics, was attributed to the prehistoric period. In this context, the site was visible through the specific details of a prehistoric fortified settlement with fragments of burnt adobe, pottery fragments and stone objects (Pl. II). All these findings were used for including the discovered site in the Eneolithic period, Cucuteni culture, unspecified phase. On the occasion of a field survey (conducted on May 5, 2021) we found that the surface of the site showed major traces of farm machinery interventions made for seasonal agricultural works. On the other hand, some Middle Bronze Age sherds of Costișa pottery type were randomly distributed, representing a new context that boosted the importance of the site from Hoiseşti-*La Curmătură 1*. It is worth mentioning that a pile of fragmentary artefacts was scattered in the southern and eastern proximity of the site, beyond the gullies, case in which two more sites were reported (Hoiseşti-*La Curmătură 2*[1]; Hoiseşti-*La Curmătură 3*[2]).

All these conditions imposed the initiation of an archaeological diagnosis in order to identify the distribution of the artefacts in the area, to evaluate the conservation status of the archaeological content and to determine if other investigation methods were needed to capitalize the archaeological heritage.

The area that was subjected to the intrusive archaeological survey[3] is located outside the Hoiseşti village (Mărgineni commune, Neamț County), 992.56 m South-West of the DJ 157 crossroad with DJ157J, 918 m East of DJ157J, following Părăului Street which is extended to a communal road leading to the identified and listed site Hoiseşti-*La Curmătură 1*[4] (Pl. I/2). The land lot with an area of approximately 0.51 ha is delimited to the North-West, South-West, East and North-East by steep slopes and by the fossil riverbeds of two brooks (Pl. III/1-3).

Area of study

The Hoiseşti village is located in the Subcarpathian unit called the Cracău-Bistrița Depression, which is individualized as a hilly plain along the main river valleys (Pl. IV). The Crăcău-Bistrița Depression, part of the Moldavian Subcarpathians, has a general NW-SE orientation, with well-marked edges to the West and East, which has a drainage provided by the main Bistrița and Cracău rivers with their tributaries that shape the relief. In its southern part, the depression expands and acquires a hilly aspect with interfluves that starts from under Mărgineni (490 m) and Hoiseşti (400.7 m) hills ending toward the Bistrița terrace.

Thus, on the interfluvial ridge located to the East of the Verdele brook valley (located in the western vicinity of the site) Plopişte Hill (379 m) stands out, on which the Hoiseşti-*La Curmătură 1* site is located.

The geomorphology of the area consists of the "Bessarabian that appears in the localities of Mărgineni-Hoiseşti"[5]. The lithostratigraphy of the area is represented by Badenian deposits, remarkable by the lenses of rock salt and salt clays "to which are connected a series of salt springs, present on the left slope of the Verdele brook"[6]. The current geomorphology is closely related to the variety of geomorphological conditions. Among them, the areolar erosion and the landslides strongly influence the left slope of the Verdele brook. Geologically, the site is found in an area with Neogene (Bessarabian) deposits represented by sands, gravels, marls, marly clays and oolitic limestones (Pl. V/1).

For the Boreal and Atlantic periods, it is documented the advance of the steppe to the East of Piatra Neamț, where it covered areas located between Piatra Neamț-Girov-Dochia-Buhuși. The phenomenon was followed by a period

[1] Aşezarea Cucuteni de la Hoiseşti-*La Curmătură 2*: http://ran.cimec.ro/sel.asp?descript=hoisesti-margineni-neamt-asezarea-cucuteni-de-la-hoisesti-la-curmatura-2-cod-sit-ran-123200.02

[2] Aşezarea Cucuteni de la Hoiseşti-*La Curmătură 3*: http://ran.cimec.ro/sel.asp?descript=hoisesti-margineni-neamt-asezarea-cucuteni-de-la-hoisesti-la-curmatura-3-cod-sit-ran-123200.03

[3] The archaeological survey was conducted with the financial and logistical support of the following public institutions and private persons: Directorate for Culture Neamț County, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, Mitrea Robert-Gabriel (Mărgineni-Neamț), The Mayor (Rotariu Vasile) and Mayor`s assistant (Drăgan Ion) of the Mărgineni Commune (Neamț County), Elisabeta Căpățână Groșanu and Răzvan Căpățână, Robert Țuțuianu, Ciprian Ursache (Piatra Neamț), Cristina Safta and Cristian Crudu (Iași). Part of the archaeological team were also the students of the Faculty of History of the „Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași: Bogdan-Ștefan Novac, Gabriela Voicu, Cristina Safta, Talida Radu, Pal Remus Octavian, Laurențiu Andrei, Emanuel Azoiței, Serina Bobe, Viorel Cioată.

[4] Aşezarea Cucuteni de la Hoiseşti-*La Curmătură 1*: http://ran.cimec.ro/sel.asp?descript=hoisesti-margineni-neamt-asezarea-cucuteni-de-la-hoisesti-la-curmatura-1-cod-sit-ran-123200.01

[5] Lupaşcu 1996, 19.

[6] Lupaşcu 1996, 20-21.

of deforestation by vegetation fires to gain useful land for community occupations[7]. These interventions, estimated for the East of the depression, favoured the formation of soft soils. For the workspace under analysis here the typical soil is the argiloiluvial chernozem, as well as the typical gleic soil along the Verdele brook valley. The site is located on grey soils that have high fertility, these being formed under deciduous forests[8]. Also, in the vicinity of the settlement there are found brown-luvic soils (luvosols) specific to the Subcarpathian area, which have moderate up to low fertility[9] (Pl. V/2).

Methodology

The general task of the research was to protect the archaeological heritage. As a consequence, were drawn the following issues: identifying the presence of archaeological vestiges, recording the artefacts' distribution, the need to recover, capitalize and integrate heritage in a narrative about settling and land-using in prehistoric times.

Several types of investigations have been planned and used to carry out the intrusive archaeological diagnosis, starting with the fieldwalk research. The results, carried out during several seasons, were integrated in the research project and scientific contributions[10]. In this context, were made the first observations regarding the environment, the typology and the artefactual distribution as well as the cultural framing.

Subsequently, aerial surveys (UAV)[11] were carried out and, by gradually refining the data, new information was extracted regarding the site and its connection with the environment (Pl. VI).

The non-invasive surveys undertaken in the summer of 2020 in the Hoiești-*La Curmătură 1* site were performed by magnetometric measurements for which a five sensor fluxgate magnetometer was used (placed on a mobile frame at an interval of 0.5 m) and the instrument (Sensys) was permanently connected to a GNSS receiver[12]. This method offers the best results in the case of prehistoric settlements in general, but for the Cucuteni ones in particular, due to a large number of structures subjected to strong fires that characterize the structures of this culture.

As a result of the fieldwalk research, a small site was identified and delimited, visible as a bulk of material within the limits of the high promontory. During these surveys, there were also carried out investigations in the areas located to the South, East and North-East of the site. The research in the outer area of the site were done in order to verify a possible extension of the inhabited area beyond the limits of the site, as it seems recently to outline a model of internal organization of Cucuteni settlements[13]. The vast majority of identified anomalies were concentrated on an area of less than half a hectare (0.43 ha) three rows of houses oriented NNV-SSE are clearly observable (Pl. VII; Pl. XV). These anomalies consist of burned houses, and, in their vicinity or between the rows, there are visible several pits. The outlined linear anomaly on the eastern side can be attributed to a segmented ditch, which could be an access road or a gate to the inhabited area of the settlement.

The planimetry of the site, as shown by the magnetometry, does not seem to be extremely complex. No interventions made after Cucuteni's habitation are observable. Measurements to the East do not appear to confirm, at least up to now, any extension of the settlement.

Results and discussion

To a large extent, the results of the intrusive archaeological survey correspond to the aims stated during the field research and magnetometric investigation. According to the data obtained, the existence of housing structures was postulated as distributed on an area of approximately 0.5 ha (Pl. VII). The working hypothesis was confirmed by magnetometric research that led to the identification of three parallel rows of rectangular structures. To confirm

[7] Feurdean 2010, 45-48; Feurdean *et al*. 2013, 869-881.

[8] Ianoș 2004, 244.

[9] Ianoș 2004, 251.

[10] Bolohan, N., Drob, A. and Asăndulesei A., *Primele rezultate ale diagnosticului arheologic din așezarea fortificată eneolitică de la Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1*, comuna Mărgineni, județul Neamț,* Sesiunea Națională de Rapoarte Arheologice ediția a LV-a, 29-31 october 2021; Drob, A., Bolohan, N. and Vasilache, V., *Pictură și pigmenți în Eneoliticul din estul României. Studiu de caz: ceramica culturii Cucuteni*, Zilele Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iași, Simpozion Naţional, ediţia a XV-a, 29-30 october 2021.

[11] The investigations were initiated by Dr. Horațiu Cociș from the County Museum of History and Art in Zalău and continued by Dr. Andrei Asăndulesei from the Arheoinvest Center within the Interdisciplinary Research Institute of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași.

[12] The geophysical research was carried out by Dr. Andrei Asăndulesei from the Arheoinvest Center within the Interdisciplinary Research Institute of the „Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi.

[13] Asăndulesei 2018.

the initial data, an area with a strong geophysical signal was chosen, outlined in the form of a large rectangular footprint and a small circular footprint located toward the South-West corner (Pl. XV).

The pre-excavation stage led to the identification, extraction and registration of archaeological materials (pottery fragments, adobe fragments, stone fragments and flint objects) distributed over an area of approximately 0.40 ha. All these findings were assigned to the Eneolithic Cucuteni culture - unspecified phase. By resuming the field research in October 2020, one can identify pottery fragments belonging to the Middle Bronze Age Costișa culture. The eastern extremity of the site (approximately 0.10 ha) is individualized at the current level by a yellowish sandy soil, which shows no evidence of habitation or archaeological items (Pl. VII/1). From this stage we noticed the concentration of artefacts in areas with many traces of burned adobe. At the same time, we noticed the gradual destruction of the archaeological remains from the topsoil or the appearance, as a result of the development of agricultural works, of new groups of archaeological materials (Pl. II/1-4).

The intrusive archaeological survey was made manually, with specific tools, on an initial rectangular surface of 7.50×6.00 m (Square A/Cas.A), corresponding to the magnetic signal. Thus, the excavation unit was designed as a result of the geophysical measurements. At this stage we proceeded to document and extract the archaeological material from the delimited surface (Pl. VIII/1-4). Following this step, we delimited a 8.00×7.00 m surface, divided into four unequal rectangular grids, marked from 1-4.

The archaeological excavation began with the removal of the topsoil, a compact dark brown soil, with high humidity, small burnt clay fragments and pigments. After removing the topsoil, in the central area of Cas.A/grids 1, 2, 4 a clay platform of a rectangular house appeared. It was noted L1. At the end of the archaeological excavation, depending on the archaeological discoveries and the distribution of heritage assets, the researched unit surface had the dimensions of 8.00×7.40 m (Pl. IX).

During the excavation, in the central area of Cas.A, we reached the burnt clay platform, which corresponded to the magnetic signal. Gradually, the excavation was extended to the entire surface in order to identify the full dimensions of a house (L1). Initially, this footprint was 4.70 m long and was represented by fragments of wall adobe, sometimes with twig prints, floor fragments and pottery fragments (Pl. X). A grindstone was found in the area of grids 2-3 (Pl. XI/1; Pl. XXII/1), and in grid 2, near the eastern profile, a zoomorphic miniature representing a *Bovid* was discovered (Pl. XIII/2).

After this stage, there were made the first observations regarding vertical stratigraphy. Thus, a single layer of loose brown vegetal soil was recorded as starting from the ground level; it contained artefacts fragments, pigments and crushed sandstones, having a thickness between 0.30-0.40 m (Pl. XI/2).

The platform of the L1 house was crushed, but from these remains there were recovered pottery fragments that came from *in situ* broken vessel. This pot, found in the central area of grid 4 was considered as a singular context and was noted Cx. 4 (Pl. XII/1). The construction layers were observed in the northern extremity of L1 (grid 1), in the area of a floor fragment with three restoration stages (Pl. XII/2-3) and wall fragments with traces of twigs (diameter of 2.5 cm) and planks (Pl. XIX-XX). As the excavation continued, in the area between grids 1-2 and 3-4, a "gutter" of burnt clay was identified, which seems to represent the base of an interior partition wall (Pl. XIII/1). To the West of this "gutter" there was the *in situ* vessel near which was discovered a flint arrowhead (Pl. XXVII/1). Towards the eastern extremity, there was documented a second burnt clay "gutter", located at 2.00 m East of the first (Pl. XIII/2). In the space between the two "gutters" there was discovered the second grindstone (Pl. XI/1-Grindstone 2; Pl. XXII/2). The final dimensions of L1, were 7.10×4.50 m (Pl. XV). A concentration of adobe fragments and very few fragments of typical Cucuteni pottery come out in the South-West corner of the L1. This last investigated context would correspond to the magnetic signal recorded "outside" the L1 surface, which could suggest the existence of a household annex (Pl. XIV).

The archaeological survey has led to the identification of traces of habitation represented by fragments of burnt clay with imprints of twigs, result of the walls demolition over the house floor. The existence of the domestic space is supported by its planimetry, which suggests the existence of internal partitioned spaces/corridors/rooms, assertion supported by the presence of the two "gutters" (interior wall foundation) and of the two grindstones (Pl. XI/1).

A similar situation was reported as a result of archaeological excavations in the L4 house at Fetești-*La Schit*, Adâncata commune, Suceava county, as well as in the L2 house in Malnaș-Băi, Covasna County (Pl. XVI), both contexts being attributed to the Cucuteni A phase[14]. To this first evidence is added the scattered archaeological material or the one researched *in situ*. On the account of these data, at the moment, the site was included in the Cucuteni A phase specific to the Eneolithic in the Eastern Carpathians.

[14] Fetești | Comuna: Adâncata | Județ: Suceava | Punct: La Schit | Anul: 2006 (http://cronica.cimec.ro/detaliu.asp?k=3656&d=Fetesti-Adancata-Suceava-La-Schit-2006); László and Cotiugă 2005, 174-170.

This first stage of the archaeological survey ended without investigating the entire area of the inhabited space[15]. The researched surface was protected with geotextile material and covered back with the previously excavated soil (Pl. XVII), in order to resume research in the summer of 2022.

Artefactual materiality

The archaeological material recovered from the investigated unit (Cas.A) is diverse and abundant. In order to set up an appropriate history of the artefacts, a database has been created. It includes several categories of information, such as the research unit and the archaeological context, essential data for the final narrative. Pottery, both Eneolithic and Middle Bronze, has been divided into subcategories, typical and atypical, which allows highlighting the number of fragments that can be used to achieve a repertoire of shapes and sizes. For the next stage, the Cucuteni pottery and adobe were weighted, the results of this process providing information on the quantity of clay needed to make both the vessels and the houses; to get more and accurate data about the fragmentation degree of the artefacts and the distribution on each research unit. Ultimately, we want to build a database to use in the final analysis of the Eneolithic dwelling structures with similar characteristics from the Cracău-Bistrița Depression. The stone used for household needs was brought from outside the living area and was divided into two groups, processed and natural. The first group includes artefacts with use-wear traces.

Therefore, 413 fragments of Eneolithic pottery weighing 1.77 kg and 11 shards from the Middle Bronze Age were collected during the field survey in Cas.A unit. Also, 20 stones were discovered, as well as a quantity of 1.45 kg of adobe.

During the next stage (from the topsoil up to -0.35m) there was collected a number of 29 Middle Bronze Age pottery sherds and 3.098 Eneolithic ceramic fragments, weighing 24.38 kg and a heap of 34.26 kg of adobe. In addition to these, 118 stones were recovered, seven of them with use traces, as well as 40 osteological fragments, three of which were burned to the calcination point.

During the excavation of the L1 dwelling (between -0.35-0.50 m), there were recorded 1.742 Cucuteni and 31 Costișa ceramic fragments, the Eneolithic pottery weighing 20.54 kg. At this stage, there were also discovered several fragments of *in situ* broken Cucuteni vessels, which were considered distinct contexts, marked as Cx.1-4 and Cx.7. To this quantity of clay should be added that of 22.29 kg of adobe, as well, as nine pieces of adobe with traces of straws, twigs, poles and planks from the wooden structure of the house (Pl. XIX-XX). Although at this depth there was recorded an archaeological context specific to the Eneolithic period, the number of Costișa sherds is more consistent than in the previous stages, an explanation in this respect could be given by the later anthropic interventions. The list of artefacts is completed by 76 stones six of which bear traces of use[16]. At this stage, 82 small osteological fragments were also collected, two of which were calcinated while other two bone fragments (Cx. 8, Cx. 10) were recovered for radiocarbon dating.

Various archaeological materials were recovered from the entire site surface (*passim*), consisting of 1.036 Cucuteni ceramic fragments (10.79 kg) and 44 Costișa pottery sherds, 71 stones, 13 osteological fragments and 6.71 kg of adobe.

The quantitative analysis of the archaeological material in the research subunits (grids) illustrates an approximately equal distribution, except for grid 3, from which fewer artefacts were recovered (Pl. XVIII/1-2). However, the largest amount of adobe was found on the mentioned surface, which can be explained by the greater accumulation of debris scattered here.

The archaeological material from Hoisești-*La Curmătură 1* consisted of stone, flint and clay objects. The stone artefacts were represented by five whole and fragmentary axes (Pl. XXI/1-5), one whetstone (Pl. XXI/6) and two grindstones (Pl. XXII). The flint pieces contain flakes, processing residues and eight fragmentary blades (Pl. XXVI), some of them calcinated and other made from black and yellowish-brown raw material (Pl. XXIII-XXV). Other flint objects were illustrated by five whole and fragmented arrowheads (Pl. XXVII), one of them, recovered during the fieldwalk research, was specific to the Middle Bronze Age (Pl. XXVII/4).

Cucuteni pottery is characterized also by disparate fragments and *in situ* broken pots, making up a complex functional package. The vessels are small, medium and large (Pl. XXVIII), made of different fabric categories: a fine fabric without temper, a fine fabric in which medium-sized grog had been added and one with large grog, the latter being used only in the case of medium and large size containers.

[15] The beginning of the archeological survey from Hoisești-*La Curmătură 1* was delayed by five days due to the severe weather. Under these conditions, not all the proposed objectives have been met.

[16] In this last batch, two grindstones, Cx. 5 and Cx. 6, were also included.

Some of the vessels were decorated by painting, using colours such as black, red and white (Pl. XXVIII; Pl. XXIX/1, 3, 5, 7, 9; Pl. XXX/1-3); incised fragments specific to phase A of the Cucuteni culture were discovered as well (Pl. XXIX/2, 4, 6, 8, 10); the red painting in combination with the incision also being identified (Pl. XXVIII/4).

Most of the ceramic fragments that still keep traces of painting are specific to phase A (Pl. XXIX/1, 3, 5, 7, 9; Pl.XXX/1, 2), in this regard, analogies are found at Tîrpești-*Râpa lui Bodai* (Neamț)[17], Izvoare-*Izvoare* (Neamț)[18], Poduri-*Dealul Ghindaru* (Bacău)[19], Cucuteni-*Cetățuie* (Iași)[20], Hăbășești-*Holm* (Iași)[21], Scânteia-*Dealul Bodești* (Iași)[22] and Trușești-*Țuguieta* (Botoșani)[23]. The vessels that were decorated by both incision and red painting (Pl. XXVIII/4; Pl. XXIX/10) presents similarities with phase A pottery from Cucuteni-*Cetățuia*[24] and Hăbășești-*Holm*[25]. The decoration with incised dots (Pl. XXIX/4, 6, 8) is similar with one of a *pyhtos* like vessel from Scânteia-*Dealul Bodești* (Iași)[26], being also found on household pottery from other settlements like Trușești-*Țuiguieta*[27] and Hăbășești-*Holm*[28]. Furthermore, from the western part of the settlement, during the field survey, was recovered a painted fragment that could be included in the A-B phase of this culture, similarities being found at Cucuteni-*Cetățuia*[29] and Traian-*Dealul Fântânilor*[30]. However, the archaeological material recovered from Cas.A is specific mainly to phase A of the Cucuteni culture.

Also, a vessel with a horizontal handle attached to the rim (Pl. XXXIII/7) and a fragment of a miniature vessel (Pl. XXXIII/5) were identified. To these, we could add several fragments of dippers (Pl. XXXII/1-2), spoons (Pl. XXXII/3; XXXIII/3) and lids (Pl. XXXIII/8) which complete the well-known functional package of Cucuteni pottery.

As concerns the clay objects category, the presence of three fragmentary female anthropomorphic statuettes can be noticed. One of them, in the sitting position, has the body decorated with incisions (Pl. XXXI/1), specific to phase A[31], while the other two have no decoration (Pl. XXXIII/4, 6). Also, in the eastern proximity of the excavated area there was uncovered a zoomorphic statuette, representing a *Bovid* (Pl. XXXI/2). Other ornaments found were a tubular clay bead (Pl. XXXII/4) and a perforated ovoid piece (Pl. XXXIII/2), which could have some similarities, in terms of shape and size, with the miniature/votive pintaderas[32]. However, the piece is undecorated, a specific characteristic for classification as pintadera, and it looks more like a pendant, but no similar items have been reported[33].

Costișa pottery is represented by several sherds decorated with incised triangles filled with hatches or dots[34] (Pl. XXXIV/1-4; Pl. XXXV/2-4), as well as by some atypical ceramic fragments, which by colour, paste and temper[35], can be assigned to the Middle Bronze Age period (Pl. XXXIV/5; Pl. XXXV/6-9). Also, a handle with two perforations (Pl. XXXV/1) was discovered, which, although not known in the repertoire of Costișa shapes, could be attributed to this pottery group[36].

17 Marinescu-Bîlcu 1981, Fig. 172/1-2; Fig.177/4; Fig. 176.
18 Vulpe 1957, Fig. 150-153.
19 Monah *et al.* 2003, 170-No. 145; 175-No.161; 179-No.172-173.
20 Petrescu-Dîmbovița and Văleanu 2004, Fig. 96/3; Fig. 97/3, 5; Fig. 109/4, 5; Fig. 110/5; Fig. 111/2-3; Fig. 117/4, Fig. 199/3-4.
21 Dumitrescu *et al.* 1954, Pl. LXXV; Pl. LXXVI; Pl. LXXX/9-11; Pl. LXXXVIII/8, 11; Pl. LXXXVI/9; Pl. XCII/6.
22 Chirica *et al.* 1999, 39-57.
23 Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Florescu and Florescu 1962, 229/Fig. 3; Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Florescu and Florescu 1999, Fig. 205/8; Fig. 209-210; Fig. 219/3.
24 Petrescu-Dîmbovița and Văleanu 2004, Fig. 83/1-7.
25 Dumitrescu *et al.* 1954, Pl. LXXI.
26 Chirica *et al*. 1999, 51; Stratulat *et al*. 2009, 62.
27 Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Florescu and Florescu 1999, 419, Fig. 315/2; 430, Fig. 316/8.
28 Dumitrescu *et al.* 1954, Pl. LXVI; Pl. CXVIII.
29 Petrescu-Dîmbovița and Văleanu 2004, Fig. 148/1.
30 Bem 2007, Fig. 247.
31 Monah 1997, 80; Fig.-49-83.
32 Popovici 2006, 173-187; Buzea and Kovács, 2010, 129-140.
33 Moreover, although this piece could fit into the so-called category of cones, based on the shape and size, no similar piece has been identified in the literature, and thus, the functionality of this object remains a subject of debate; for clarification see Vulpe 1957, 237; Monah 1997, 275, Fig. 23/1,2,8; Petrescu-Dîmbovița and Văleanu 2004, 150, Fig. 224; Lazarovici and Lazarovici 2012, Pl. VIII.3/5-9, Pl. VIII.20/7-9, Pl. VIII.21/2, 4, 5, Pl. VIII.33/2-4.
34 Vulpe and Zămoșteanu 1962, 309-316; Cavruc and Dumitroaia 2000, 131-154; Bolohan 2003, 195-206; Bolohan and Crețu 2004, 55-76; Cavruc 2005, 81-123; Popescu 2005.
35 Bolohan 2013a, 199-239; Bolohan 2013b, 33-56; Drob *et al*. 2021; Drob, 2021.
36 At the time of the preparation of this contribution, the fragments of Costișa pottery were few, dispersed and decontextualized. In this circumstance, the authors waited to finish this first narrative regarding the site and the materiality.

Conclusions

Archaeological research in the Cracău-Bistrița Depression results in the identification of new sites, their protection according to specific legislation, their research and the completion or diversification of some narratives regarding ancient history. In this context, the permanent field survey has an essential role for the fulfillment of the purposes issued above. Where we have the opportunity and where we find that the archaeological heritage is constantly exposed to gradual destruction, it is also useful to try to carry out an archaeological diagnosis. In ideal conditions, for this approach, the use of non-invasive research means is required to bring additions regarding the archaeological content of the site. All these conditions, together with the development of a complex archaeological investigation methodology, will contribute to increasing the chance of integrating the data obtained in the development of the history of a place, a complex landscape and a period. Happily, our activity gained an extra freshness through the participation of a group of students who had the opportunity to acquire an archaeological methodological package and develop their personal skills.

As a result of the archaeological survey at the Hoiseși-*La Curmătură 1* settlement, there was investigated an area with intense traces of habitation. The site is located on the high terrace of the Verdele brook and was separated from the rest of the terrace by two ravines, at the base of which there are fresh water springs. About 900 m South-West is Slatina Mică[37] and 2.8 km South is Slatina Mare[38], two sources that are still in use today for animal feed or food preservation. The area is characterized by a high density of contemporary settlements located to the North (*Iugani*-Mărgineni) to the South (*Movila Flocoasă*-Negrițești, *Dealul Siliștei*-Siliștea) and West (*Valea Vătafului*-Mărgineni)[39] which meet identical features regarding the location: dominant places, inter-, visibility, proximity to freshwater and salt sources. All these observations are valid for the contemporary settlements in the Cracău-Bistrița Depression but also for many of the contemporary sites East of the Carpathians.

Magnetometric research has led to the identification of a visible dwelling core in the form of three rows of houses arranged approximately on the North-South axis. Within the area there were counted 19 possible housing structures, one of them, located in the central area, being partially investigated through excavation.

The artefacts, whether whole or fragmented, correspond to the package of characteristics (shapes, decoration, elemental composition) specific to the Cucuteni culture. The distribution and poor state of preservation of the artefacts have made it difficult to draw conclusions about their absolute chronology. More clarification will be provided by the results of carbon 14 dating. The team considered that the statistical representation of all the material recovered will be a very useful tool for the acquisition of a methodology, for the creation of a database and to mitigate the subjectivity of the archaeologist when elaborating quantitative assessments.

We can only be delighted that a batch of artefacts specific to the Middle Bronze period was also discovered, a context that was glimpsed from the moment the site was discovered and certified as a result of successive field surveys.

The archaeological diagnosis from Hoiseşti-*La Curmătura 1* brought the first news regarding the life of a prehistoric community that lived in the Eneolithic period in the valley of the Verdele river. The same preference seems to have developed by a Middle Bronze Age community. The local archaeological landscape also provided housing opportunities for communities from the 2nd-4th centuries C.E. Dwelling continuities along a minor watercourse or near sources of salt water are often found in the area. However, we'll let you know about these and other intermingles after another Long Hot Summer!

[37] Alexianu *et al.* 2007, Tabel 1/17.
[38] Alexianu *et al.* 2007, Tabel 1/18.
[39] Field survey Neculai Bolohan, May 2020. Unpublished results.

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Ilustrații

Pl. I. *1. Amplasarea administrativ-teritorială a sitului de la Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1*, comuna Mărgineni, județul Neamț (Amplasarea sitului pe teritoriul a. Romaniei; b. județului Neamț; c. comunei Mărgineni; d. Detaliu – ArcGis 10.6.1 © Andrei Asăndulesei); 2. Amplasarea sitului conform descrierii arheologice (Google Earth Pro).*

Pl. II. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *1. Vedere dinspre est; 2-4. Detaliu asupra artefactelor arheologice identificate în timpul cercetărilor de suprafață.*

Pl. III. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *1. Vedere dinspre nord-est; 2. Vedere dinspre nord/ravenă; 3. Vedere dinspre est către pantă.*

Pl. IV. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *Amplasarea sitului în cadrul Despresiunii Cracău-Bistrița (ArcGis 10.6.1 © Casandra Brașoveanu).*

Pl. V. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *1. Geologia zonei sitului; 2. Pedologia zonei sitului (http://atlas.anpm.ro/atlas).*

Pl. VI. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *Fotografia aeriană georeferențiată și procesarea DEM (© Horațiu Cociș).*

Pl. VII. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *1-2. Rezultatele investigațiilor magnetometrice (ArcGis 10.6.1 © Andrei Asăndulesei).*

Pl. VIII. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *1. Recuperarea materialului arheologic; 2. Delimitarea suprafeței de cercetare; 3-4. Recuperarea materialului arheologic de pe unitatea de suprafață proiectată.*

Pl. IX. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *Planul casetei A/Cas.A (schiță grafică).*

Pl. X. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *1. Aspecte din timpul excavării locuinței L1 (vedere dinspre nord); 2. Detaliu.*

Pl. XI. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *1. Vedere asupra locuinței L1 dinspre vest cu cele două râșnițe; 2. Profilul stratigrafic estic al Cas.A. (a. ansamblu; b. detaliu).*

Pl. XII. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *1. Detaliu asupra vasului pictat Cucuteni spart pe loc (Cx. 4); 2. Planul fragmentului de podea cu cele trei etape de refacere; Profilul fragmentului de podea cu cele trei etape de refacere.*

Pl. XIII. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *1. „Jgheabul" din lut ars din carourile 1-4 (a. ansamblu; b. detaliu); 1. „Jgheabul" din lut ars din carourile 2-3 (a. ansamblu; b. detaliu);*

Pl. XIV. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *Posibila anexă gospodărească identificată în afara locuinței L1.*

Pl. XV. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *Fotogrametria suprafeței cercetate (ArcGis 10.6.1 © Andrei Asăndulesei).*

Pl. XVI. *Planul locuinței L1 de la Malnaș-Băi (redesenat după László și Cotiugă, 2005, 163-Fig.7).*

Pl. XVII. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *Protejarea suprafeței cercetate cu geotextil (a. ansamblu; b. detaliu).*

Pl. XVIII. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *1. Cantitatea de material recuperat de pe unitatea de cercetare; 2. Reprezentarea grafică a distribuției fragmentelor ceramice Cucuteni pe unitatea de cercetare Cas.A (ArcGis 10.6.1 © Andrei Asăndulesei).*

Pl. XIX. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *1. Fragmente de lipitură cu urme de paie; 2-5. Și nuiele din L1.*

Pl. XX. *Hoiești*-La Curmătură 1. *1, 2. Fragmente de lipitură cu urme de pari; 2-4. Și scânduri din L1.*

Pl. XXI. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *1-5. Topoare; 6. Cute.*

Pl. XXII. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *1, 2. Râșnițe.*

Pl. XXIII. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *1-7. Așchii de silex.*

Pl. XXIV. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *1-8. Așchii de silex.*

Pl. XXV. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *1-8. Așchii de silex.*

Pl. XXVI. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *1-8. Lame de silex*.

Pl. XXVII. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *1-5. Vârfuri de săgeată din silex.*

Pl. XXVIII. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *Olărie Cucuteni. 1-5. Cu decor pictat; 4. Cu decor incizat și pictat.*

Pl. XXIX. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *Olărie Cucuteni. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9. Cu decor pictat; 2, 4, 6, 8, 10. Cu decor incizat.*

Pl. XXX. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *Olărie Cucuteni. 1-3. Olărie pictată; 4. Fragment picior de cupă.*

Pl. XXXI. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *Obiecte ceramice Cucuteni. 1. Statuetă antropomorfă; 2. Statuetă zoomorfă.*

Pl. XXXII. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *Obiecte ceramice Cucuteni. 1-2. Polonice; 3. Lingură; 4. Mărgică tubulară.*

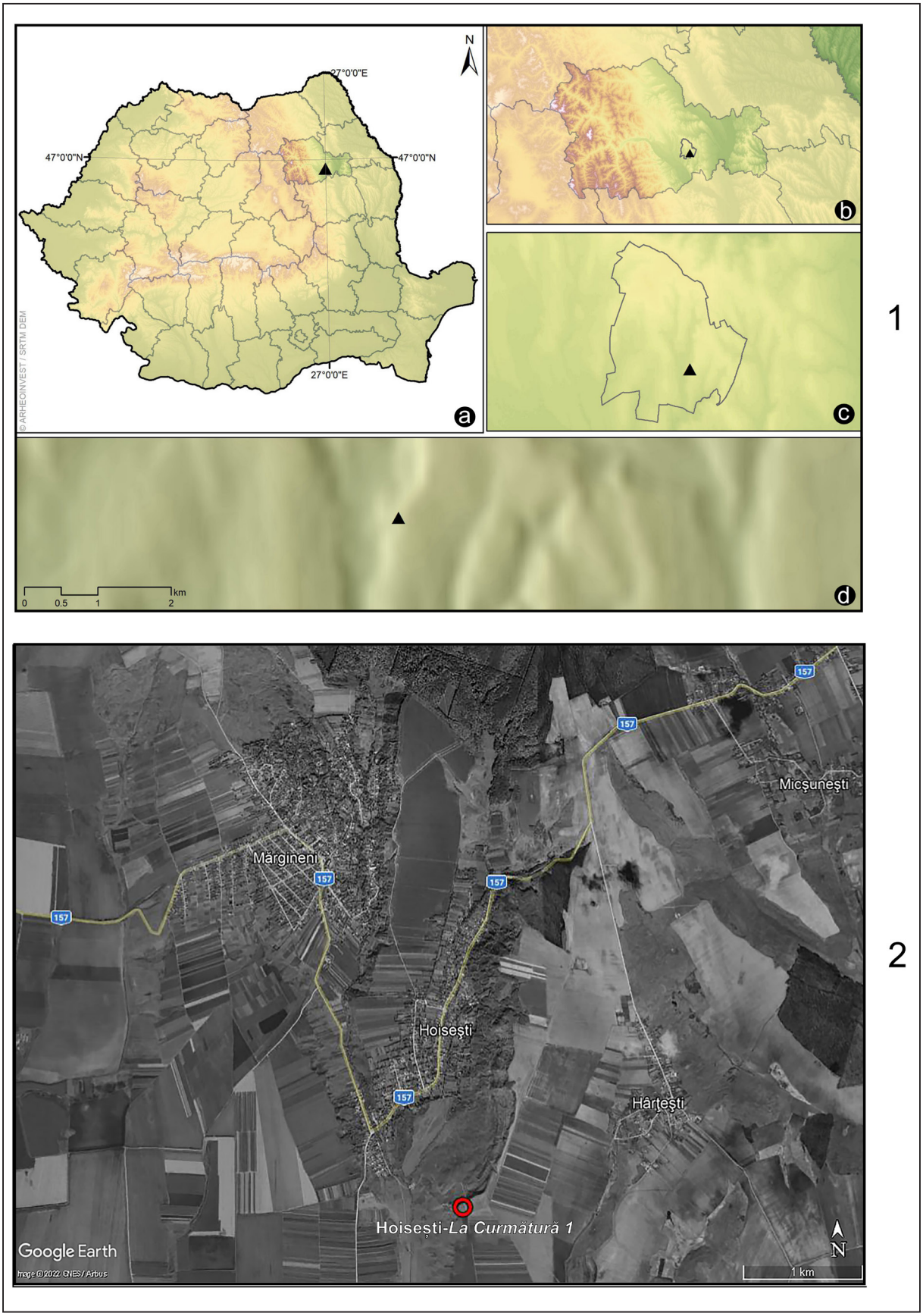
Pl. XXXIII. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *Obiecte ceramice Cucuteni. 1. Fragment de apucătoare; 2. Pandantiv/ pintaderă; 3. Fragment de lingură; 4. Fragment de statuetă feminină (fesă); 5. Fragment de vas miniatural; 6. Fragment de statuetă feminină (picior); 7. Fragment vas cu apucătoare verticală; 8. Fragment de capac.*

Pl. XXXIV. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *Olărie Costișa. 1-4. Fragmente ceramice tipice; 5. Fragmente ceramice atipice.*

Pl. XXXV. *Hoiseşti*-La Curmătură 1. *Olărie Costișa. 1-5. Fragmente ceramice tipice; 6-9. Fragmente ceramice atipice.*

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Pl. I. 1. The administrative-territorial location of the Hoiseşti-La Curmătură 1 site, Mărgineni commune, Neamț County (Site location on the territory of a. Romania; b. Neamț County; c. Mărgineni Commune; d. Detail –ArcGis 10.6.1 © Andrei Asăndulesei); 2. Location of the site according to the archaeological description (Google Earth Pro).



1



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3



4

Pl. II. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1. View from the East;
2-4. Detail of the archaeological artefacts identified during the field investigations.



1

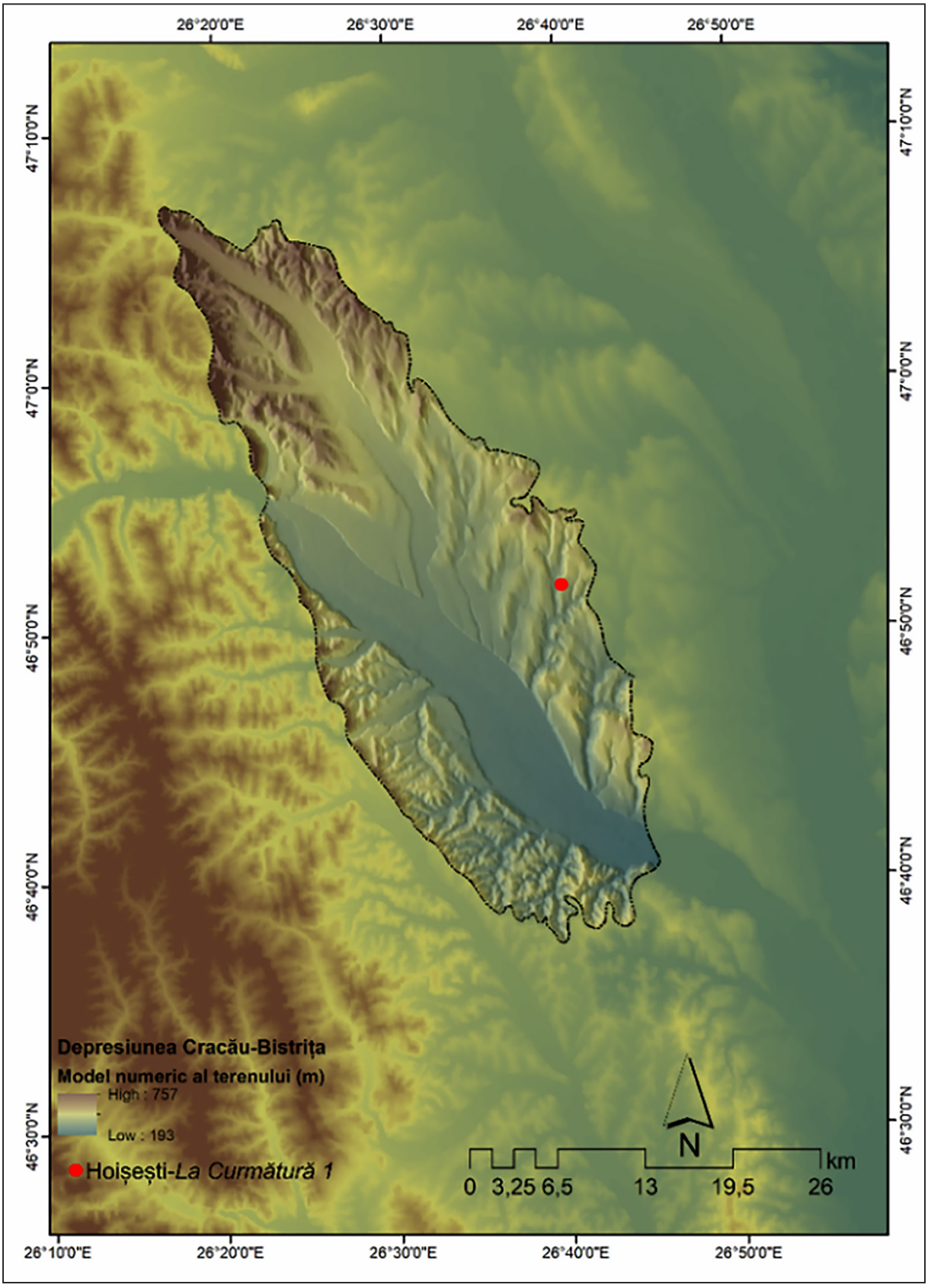


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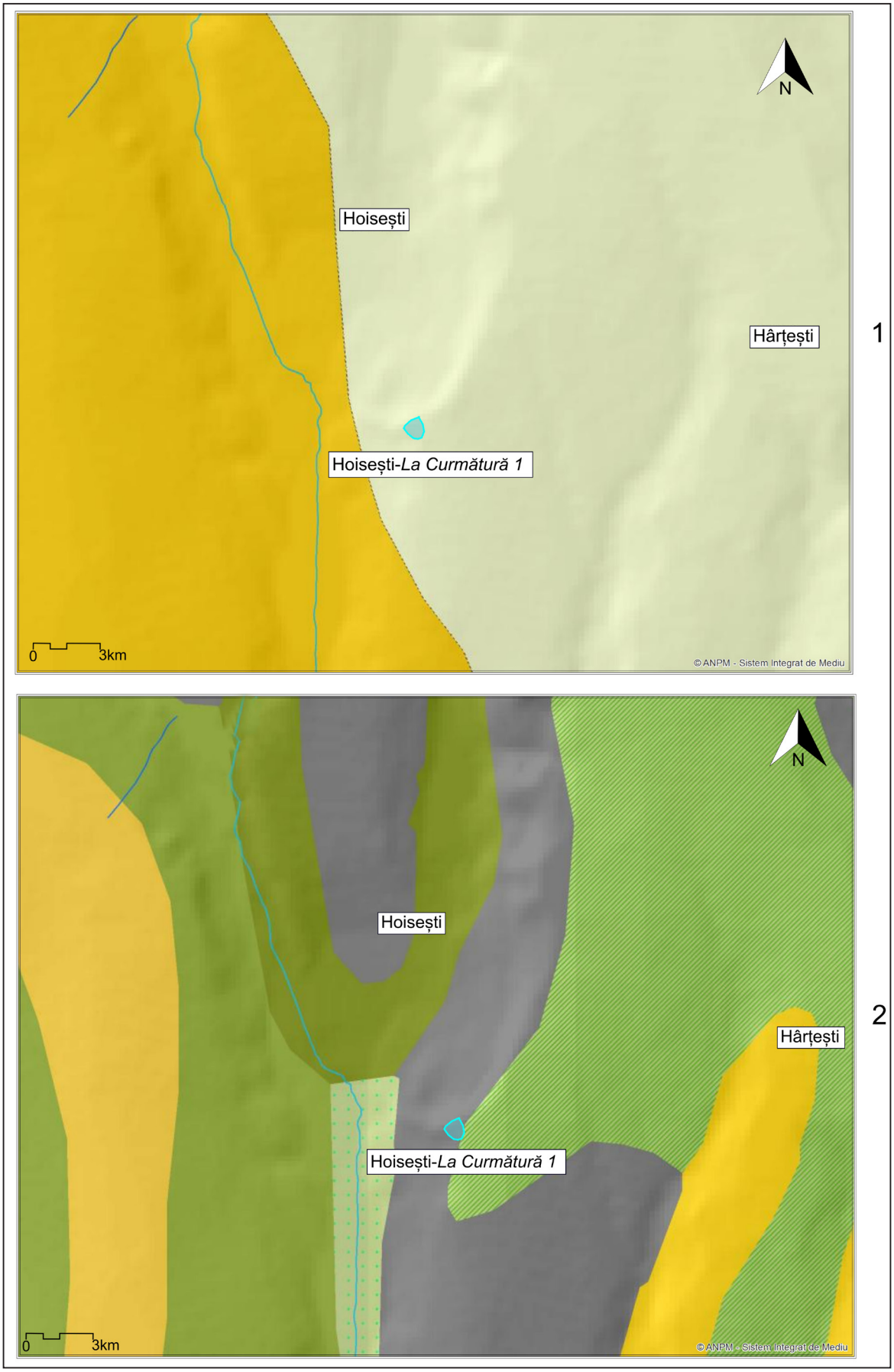


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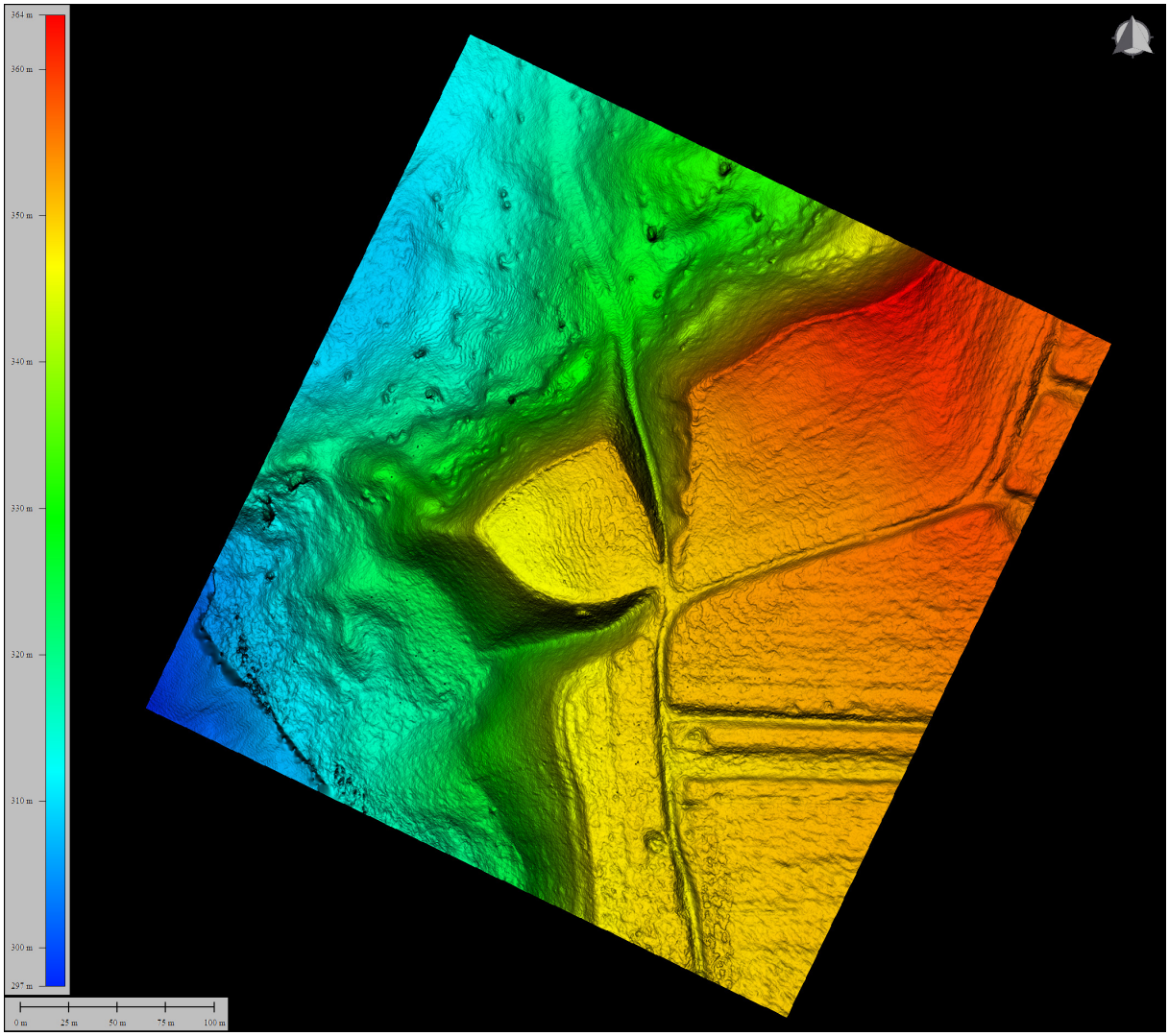
Pl. III. Hoiseşti-La Curmătură 1. 1. View from the North-East; 2. View from the North/gully; 3. View from the East toward a landslide.



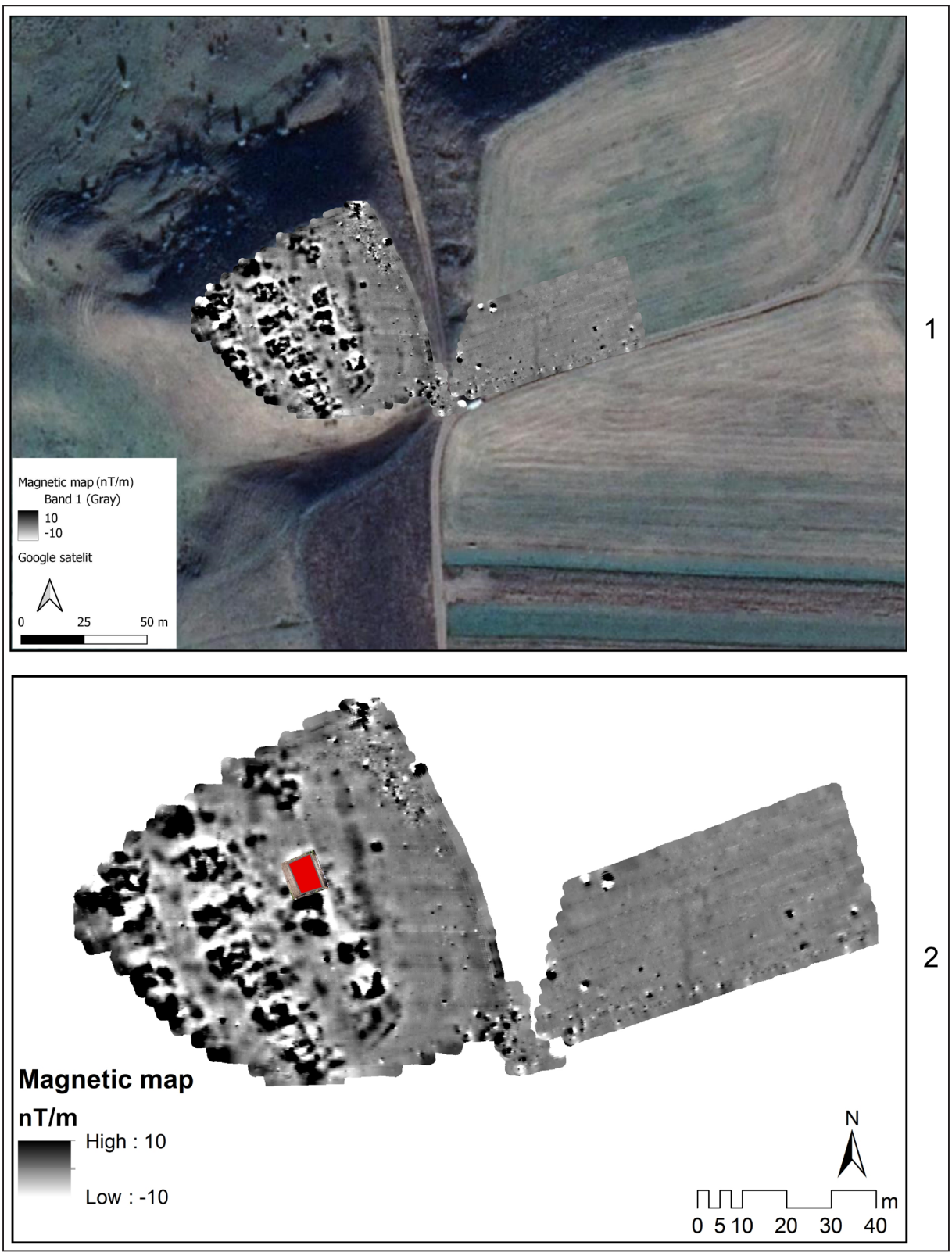
Pl. IV. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. Location of the site within the Cracău-Bistrița Depression (ArcGis 10.6.1 © Casandra Brașoveanu).



Pl. V. Hoisești-La Curmătură 1. 1.Geology of the site area; 2. Pedology of the site area (http://atlas.anpm.ro/atlas).



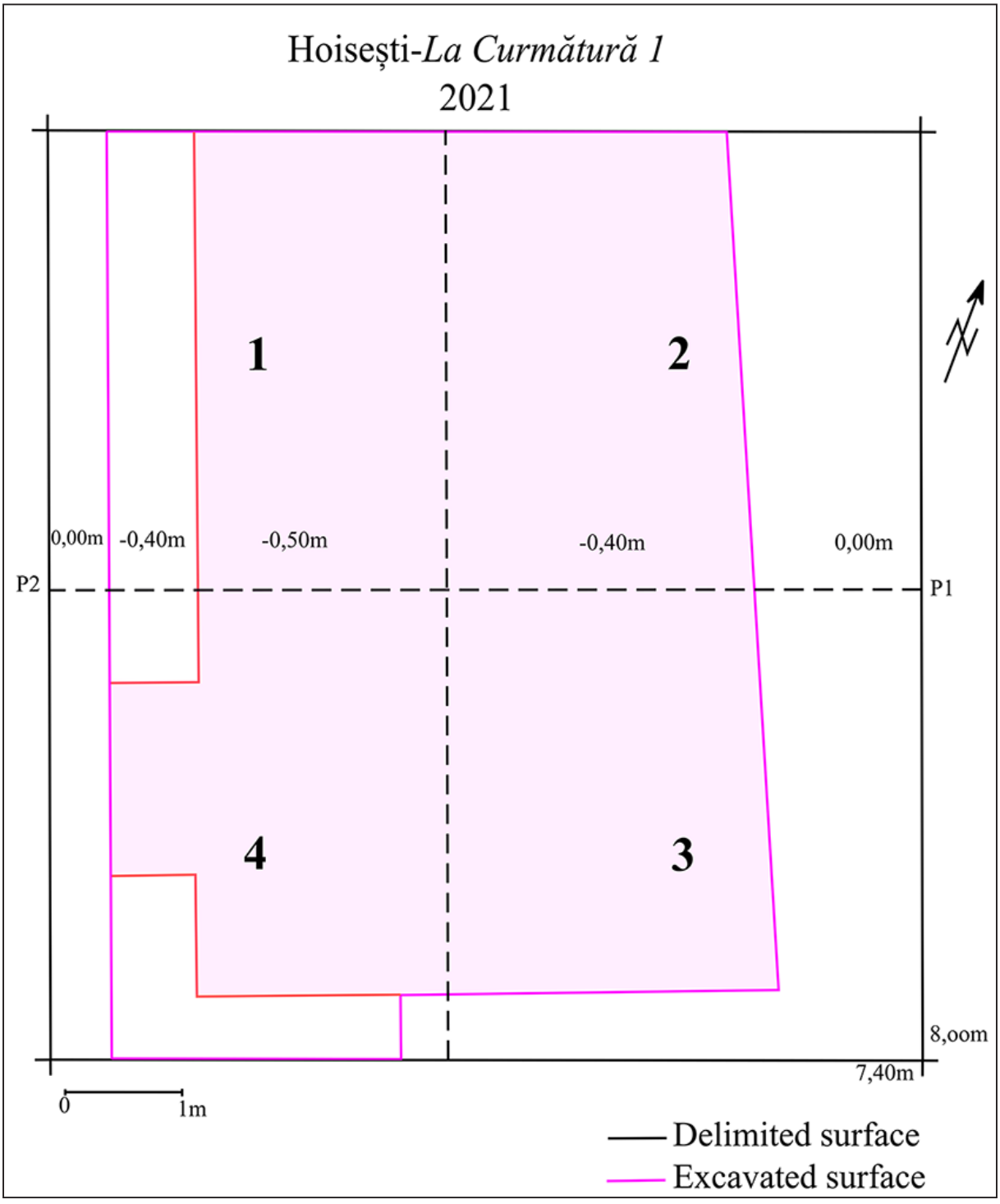
Pl. VI. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. Georeferenced aerial photography and DEM processing (© Horațiu Cociș).



Pl. VII. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1-2. Magnetometric investigation results (ArcGis 10.6.1 © Andrei Asăndulesei).



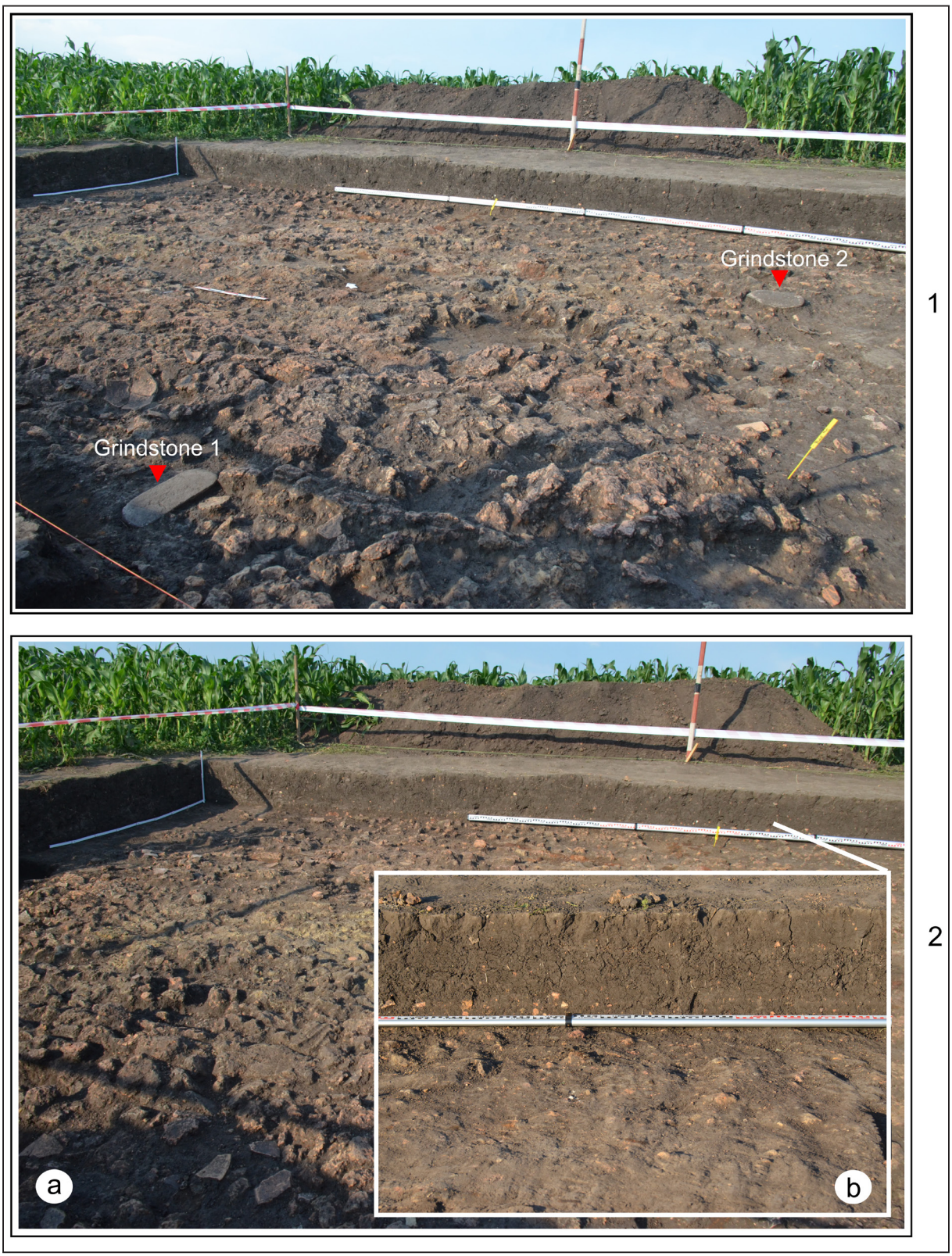
Pl. VIII. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1. Recovery of the archaeological material; 2. Delimitation of the research area; 3-4. Recovery of archaeological material from the designed research unit.



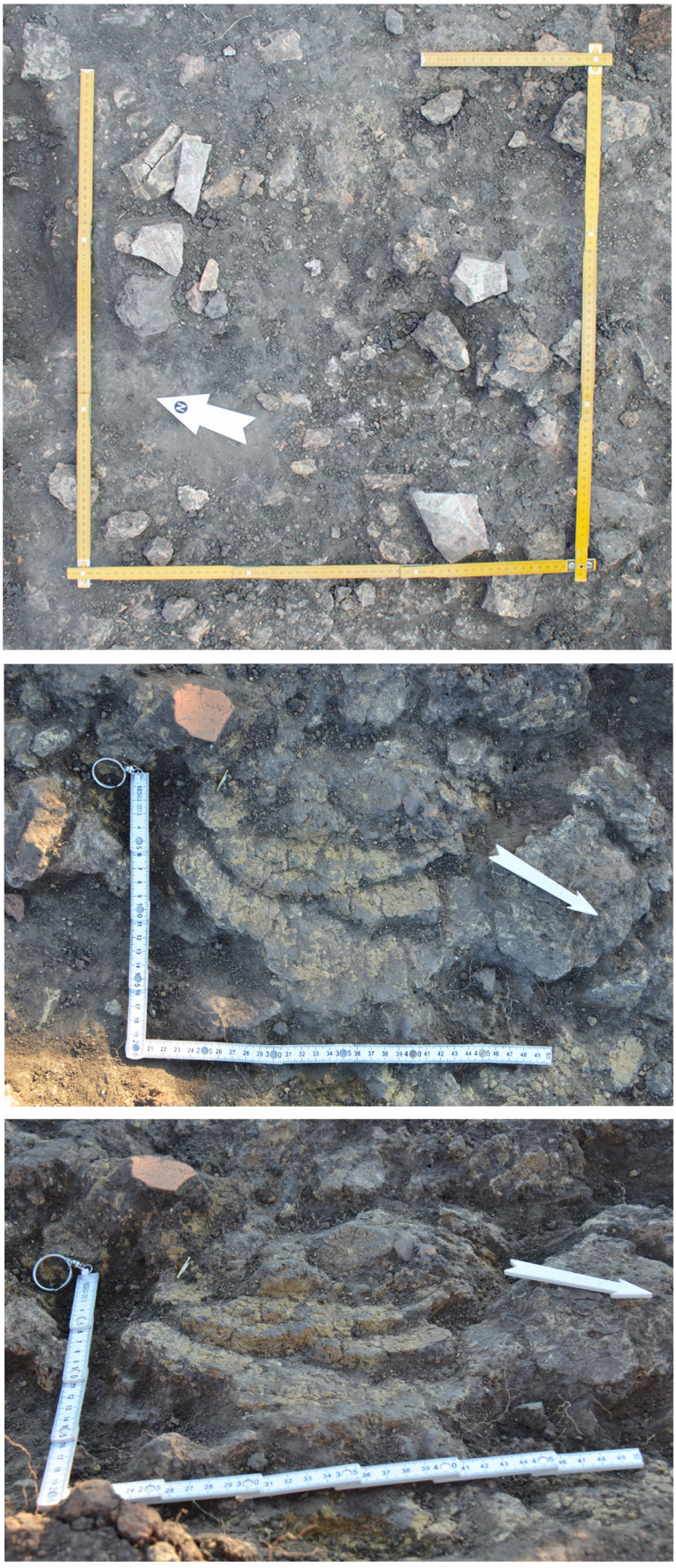
Pl. IX. Hoiseşti-La Curmătură 1. Square A/Cas.A plan (graphic sketch).



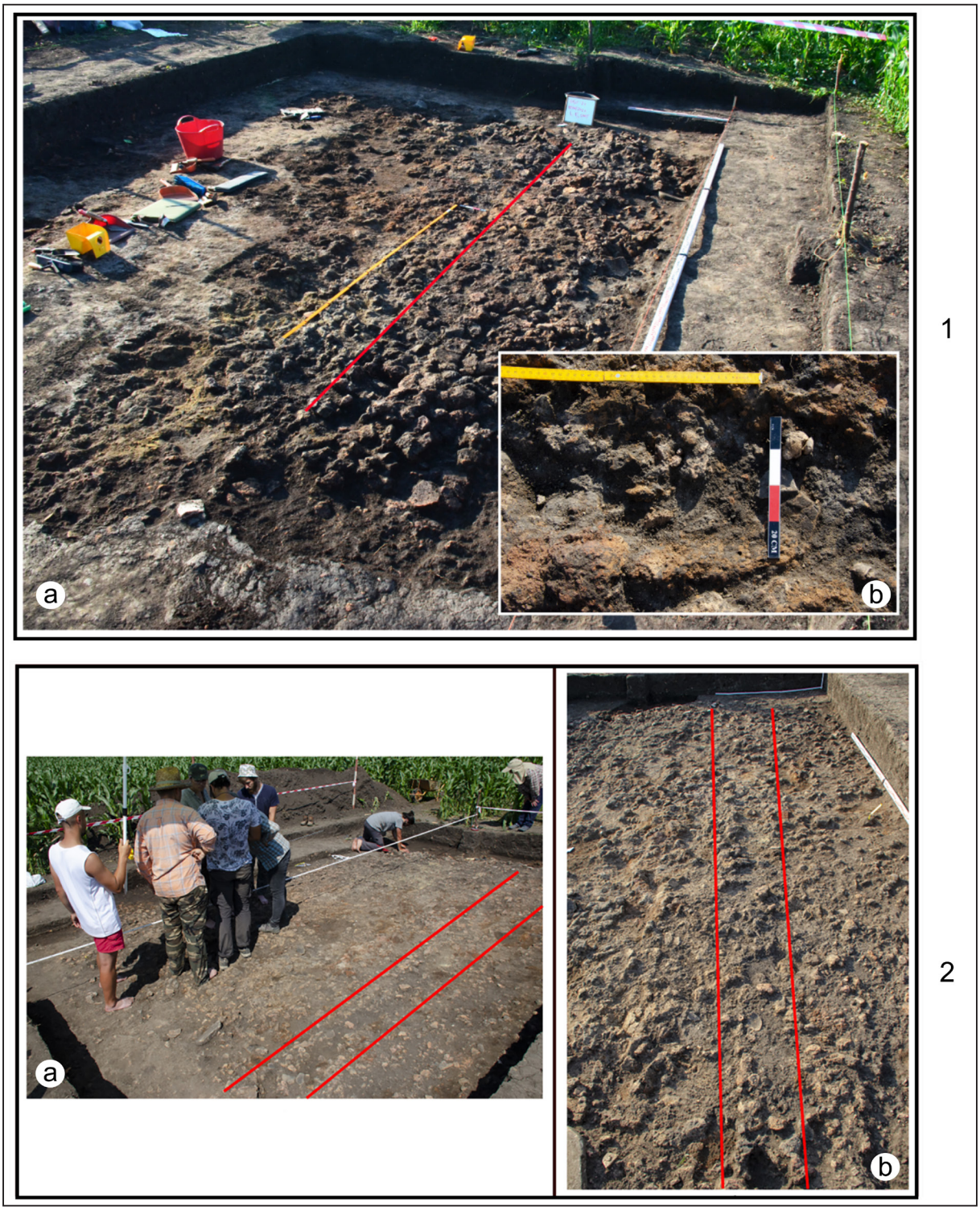
Pl. X. Hoiseşti-La Curmătură 1. 1. Aspects during the excavation of the L1 house (view from the North); 2. Detail.



Pl. XI. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1. View of the L1 house from the West with the two grindstones; 2. Eastern stratigraphic profile of the CasA. (a. overview; b. detail).



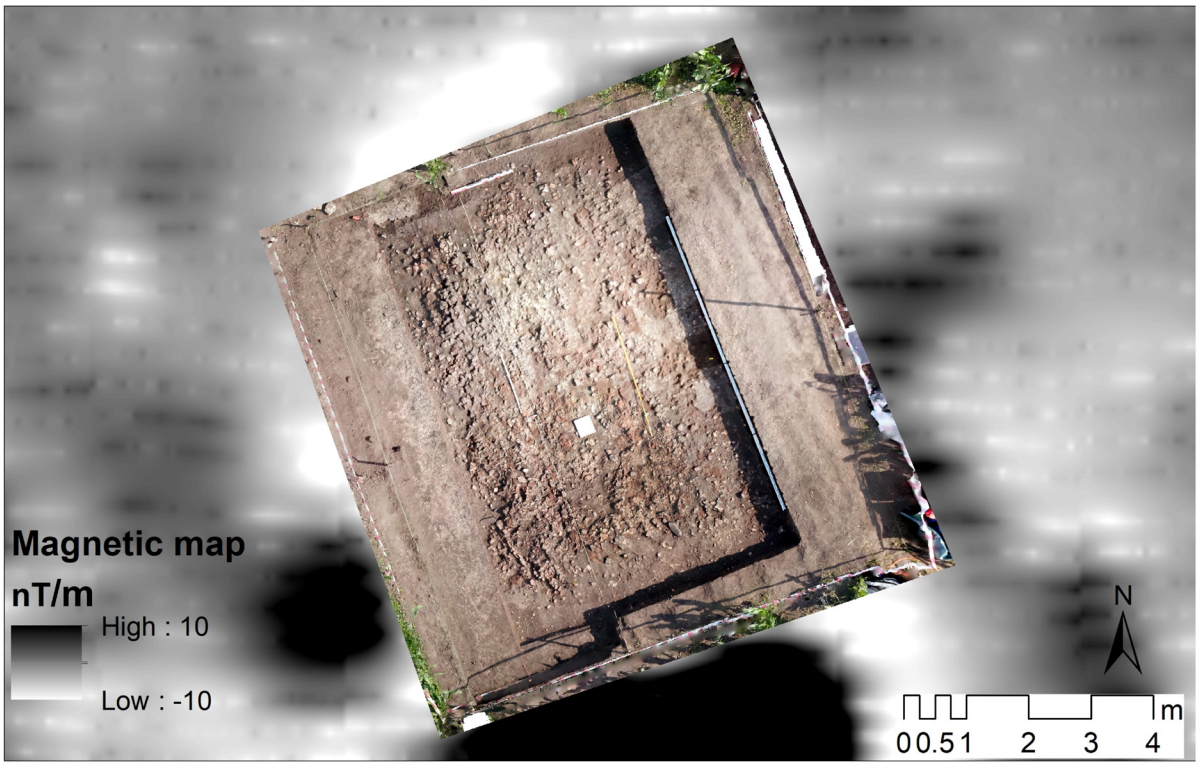
Pl. XII. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1. Detail on the Cucuteni in situ painted vessel (Cx. 4); 2. Plan of the floor fragment with three restoration stages; 3. Profile of the floor fragment with three restoration stages.



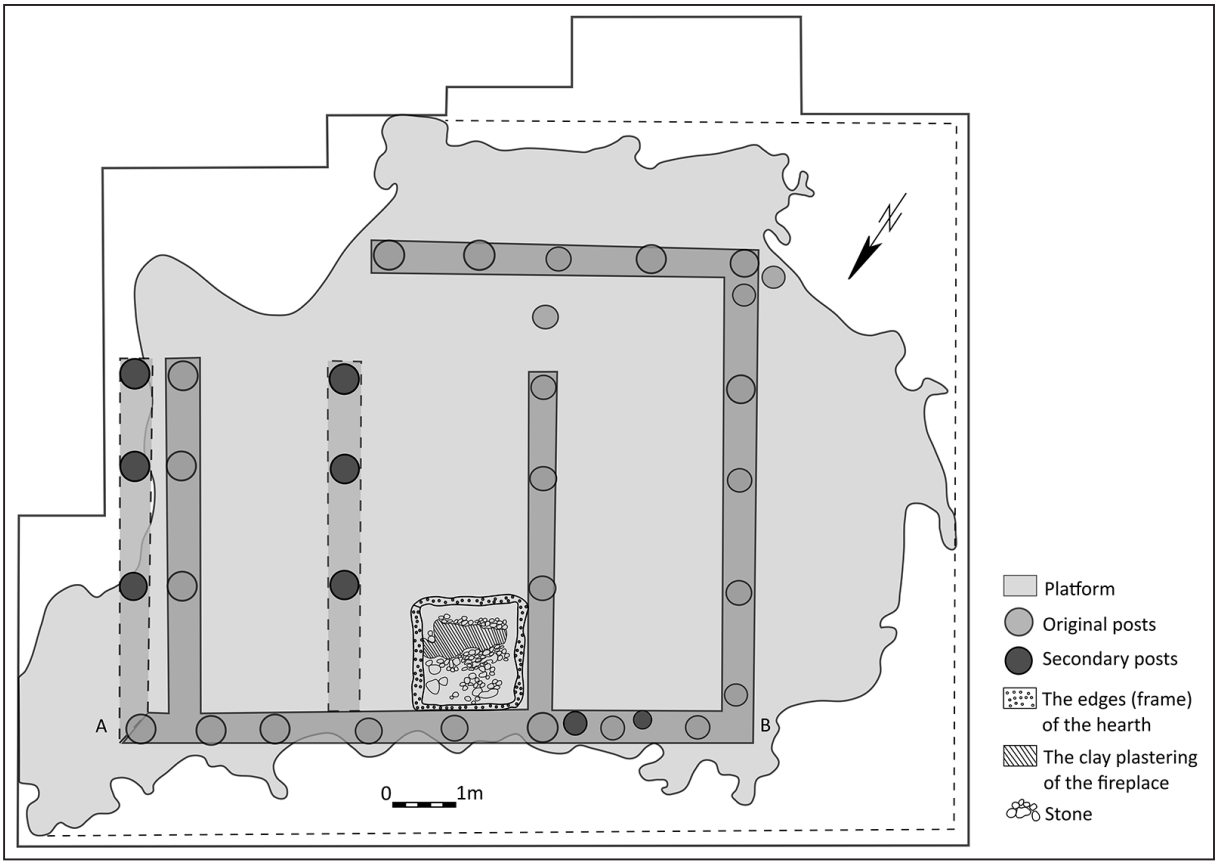
Pl. XIII. Hoiseşti-La Curmătură 1. 1. The burnt clay "gutter" found in squares 1-4 (a. overview; b. detail); 2. The burnt clay "gutter" found in squares 1-4 (a. overview; b. detail).



Pl. XIV. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. Possible household utility outside the L1 house.



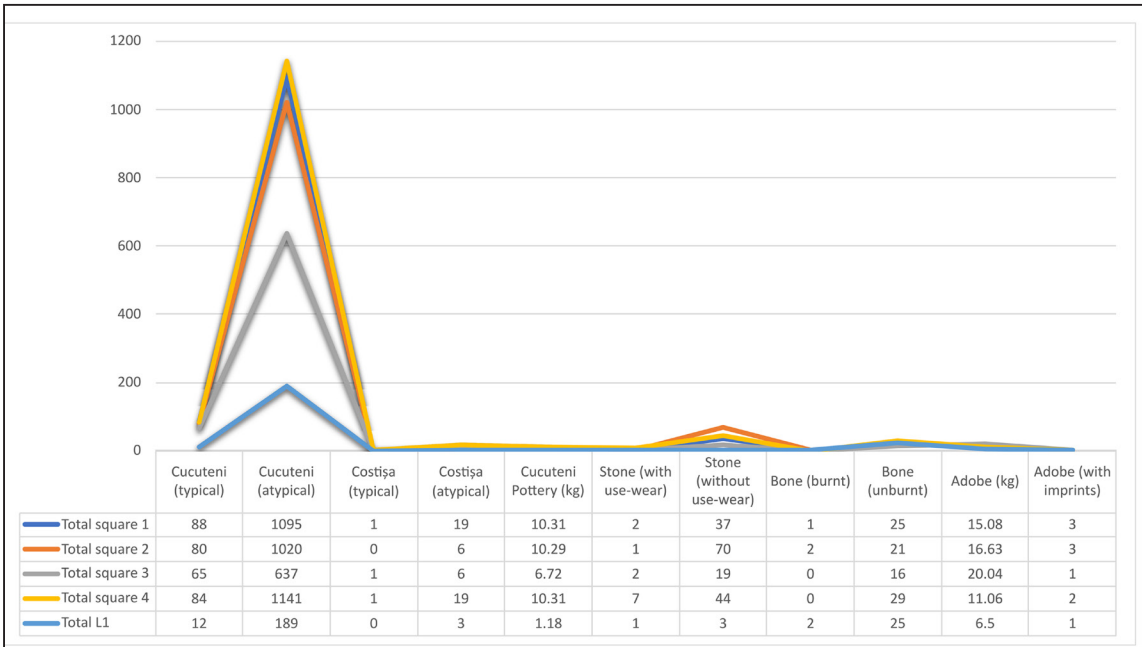
Pl. XV. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. Photogrammetry of the researched surface (ArcGis 10.6.1 © Andrei Asăndulesei).



Pl. XVI. The plan of the L2 house from Malnaș-Băi (redrawn after László and Cotiugă, 2005, 163-Fig.7).

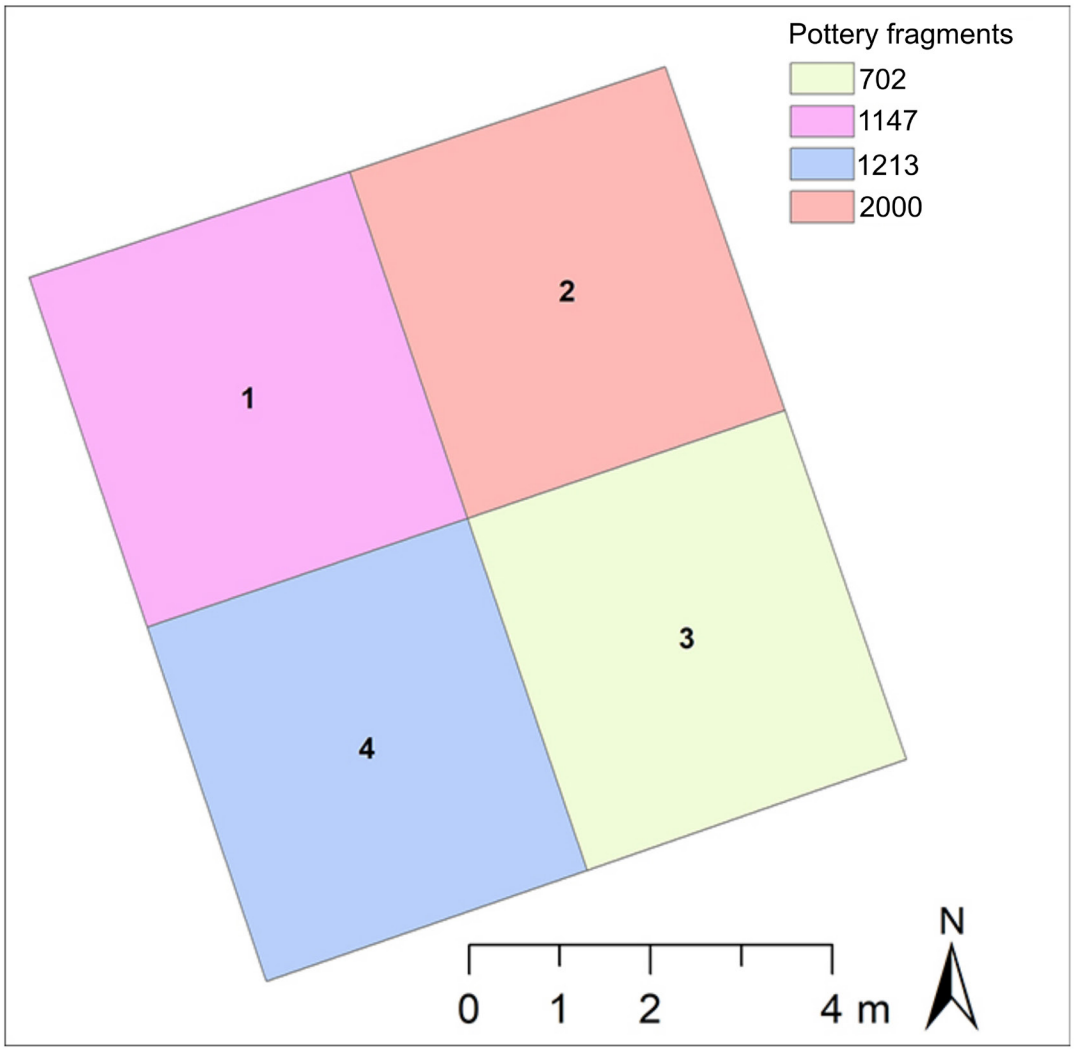


Pl. XVII. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. The protection of the excavated area with geotextile material (a. overview; b. detail).



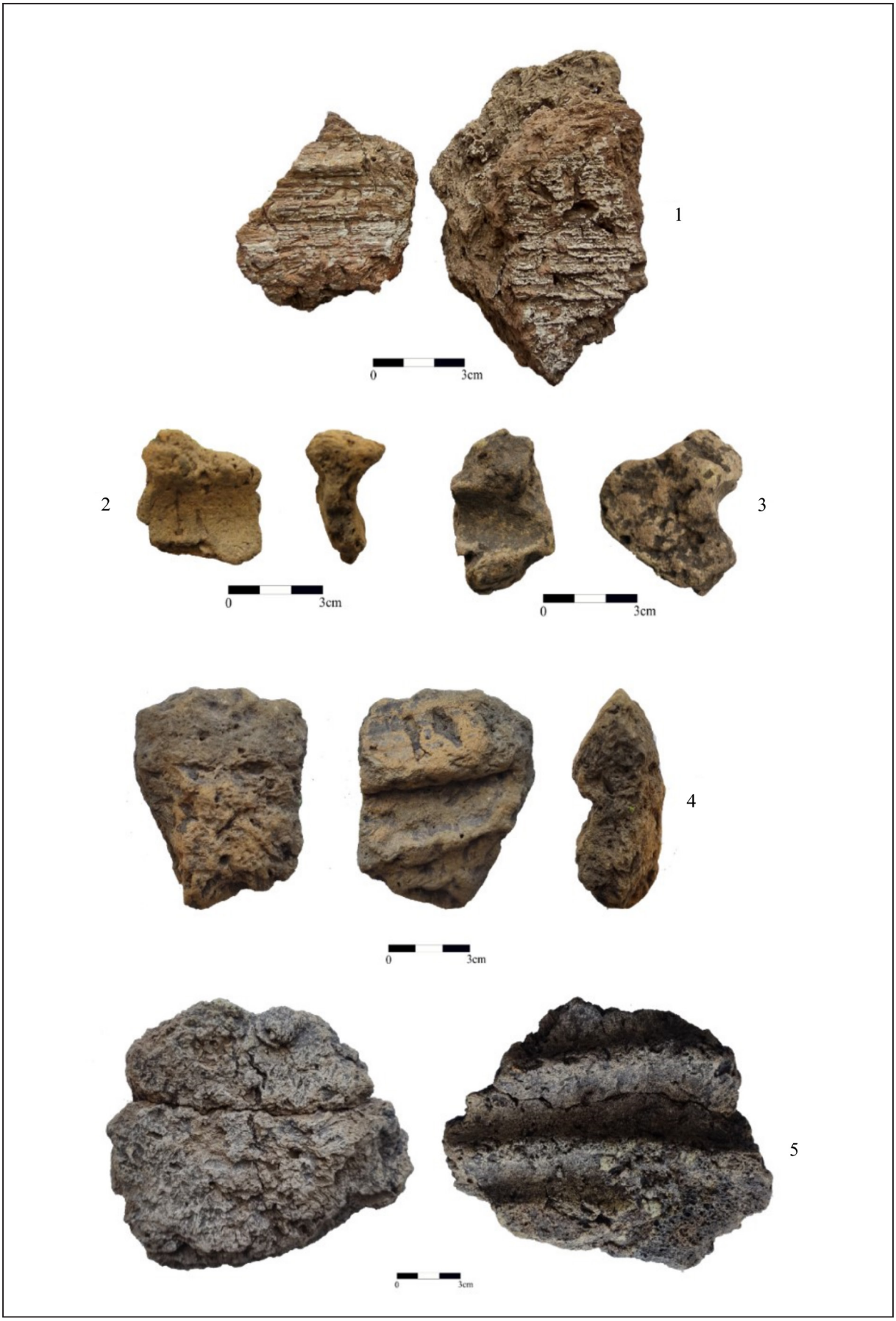
1

	Cucuteni (typical)	Cucuteni (atypical)	Costișa (typical)	Costișa (atypical)	Cucuteni Pottery (kg)	Stone (with use-wear)	Stone (without use-wear)	Bone (burnt)	Bone (unburnt)	Adobe (kg)	Adobe (with imprints)
Total square 1	88	1095	1	19	10.31	2	37	1	25	15.08	3
Total square 2	80	1020	0	6	10.29	1	70	2	21	16.63	3
Total square 3	65	637	1	6	6.72	2	19	0	16	20.04	1
Total square 4	84	1141	1	19	10.31	7	44	0	29	11.06	2
Total L1	12	189	0	3	1.18	1	3	2	25	6.5	1

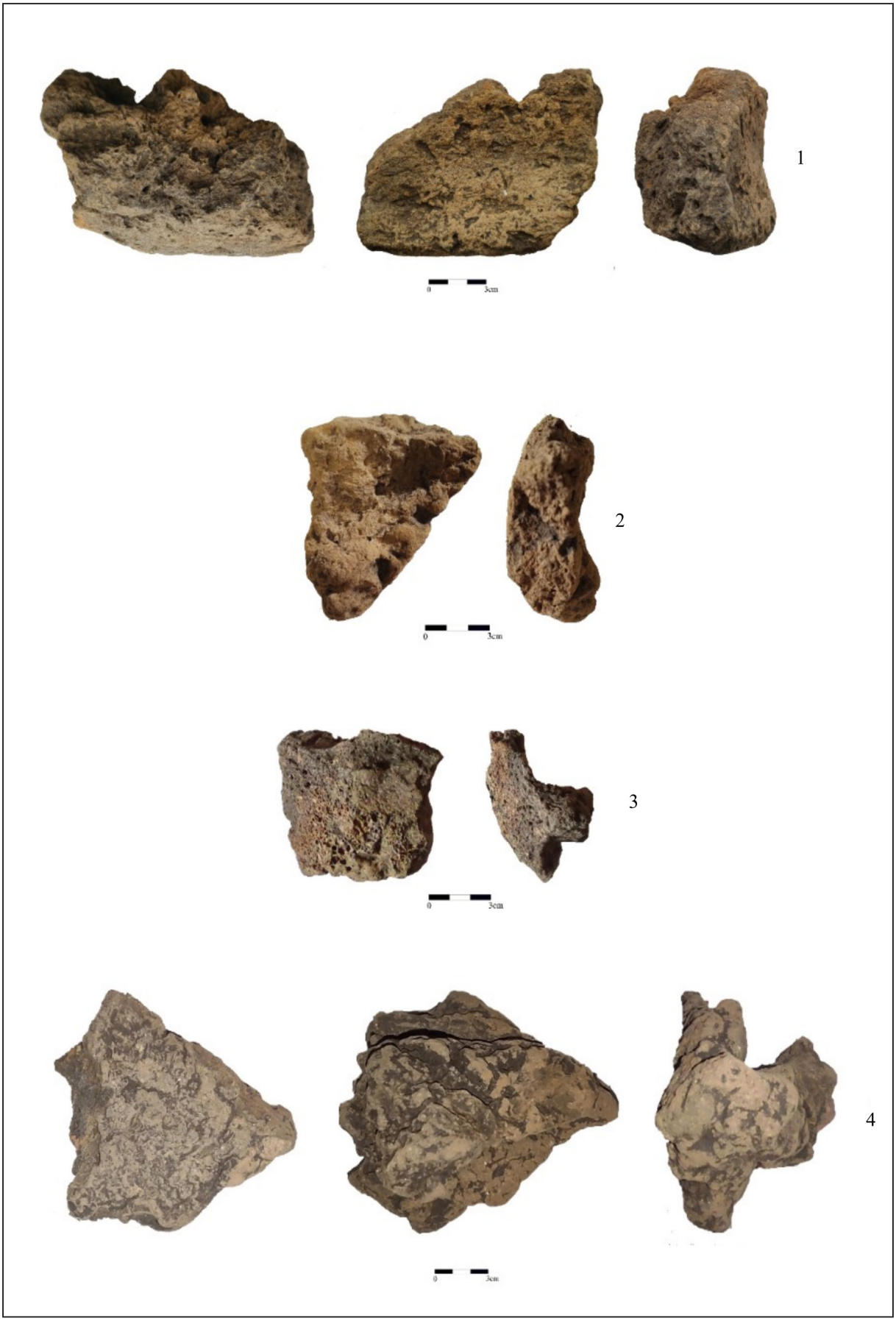


2

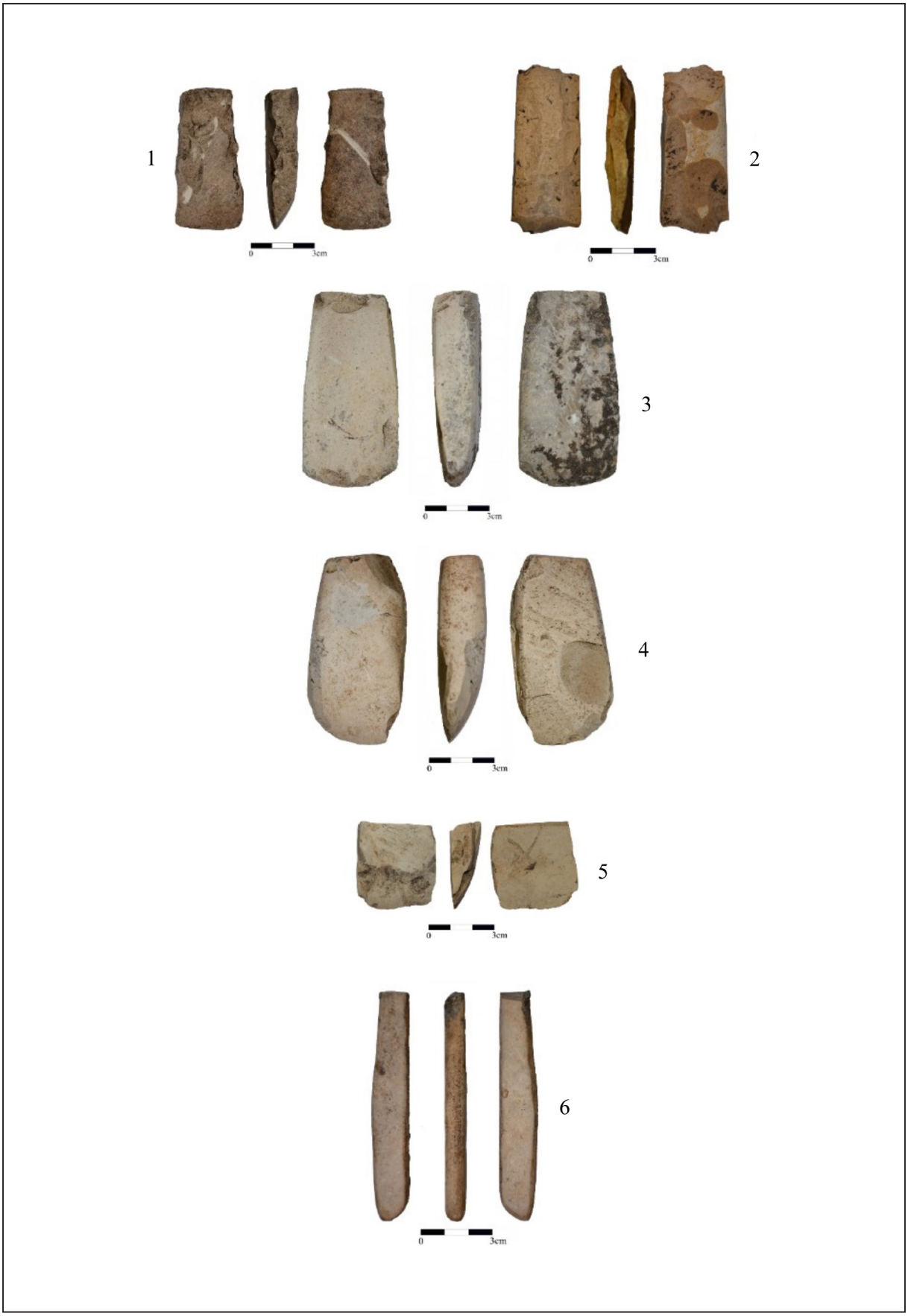
Pl. XVIII. Hoisești-La Curmătură 1. 1. The amount of material recovered from the research unit; 2. Graphic representation of the Cucuteni ceramic fragments distribution on the research unit Cas.A. (ArcGis 10.6.1 © Andrei Asăndulesei).



Pl. XIX. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1. Adobe with straw traces; 2-5. and twigs from the L1.



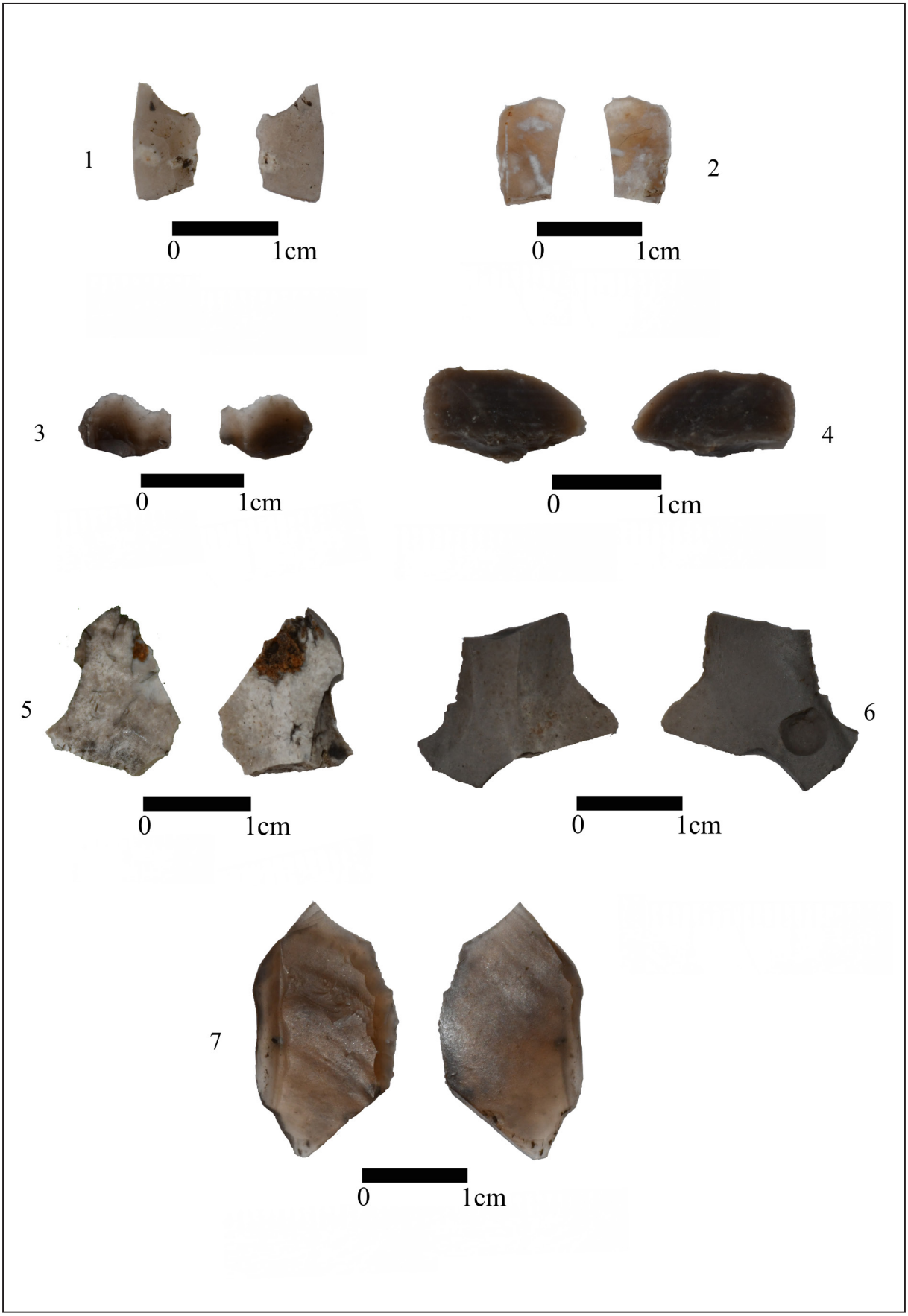
Pl. XX. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1, 2. Adobe with pole traces; 2-4. and planks from L1.



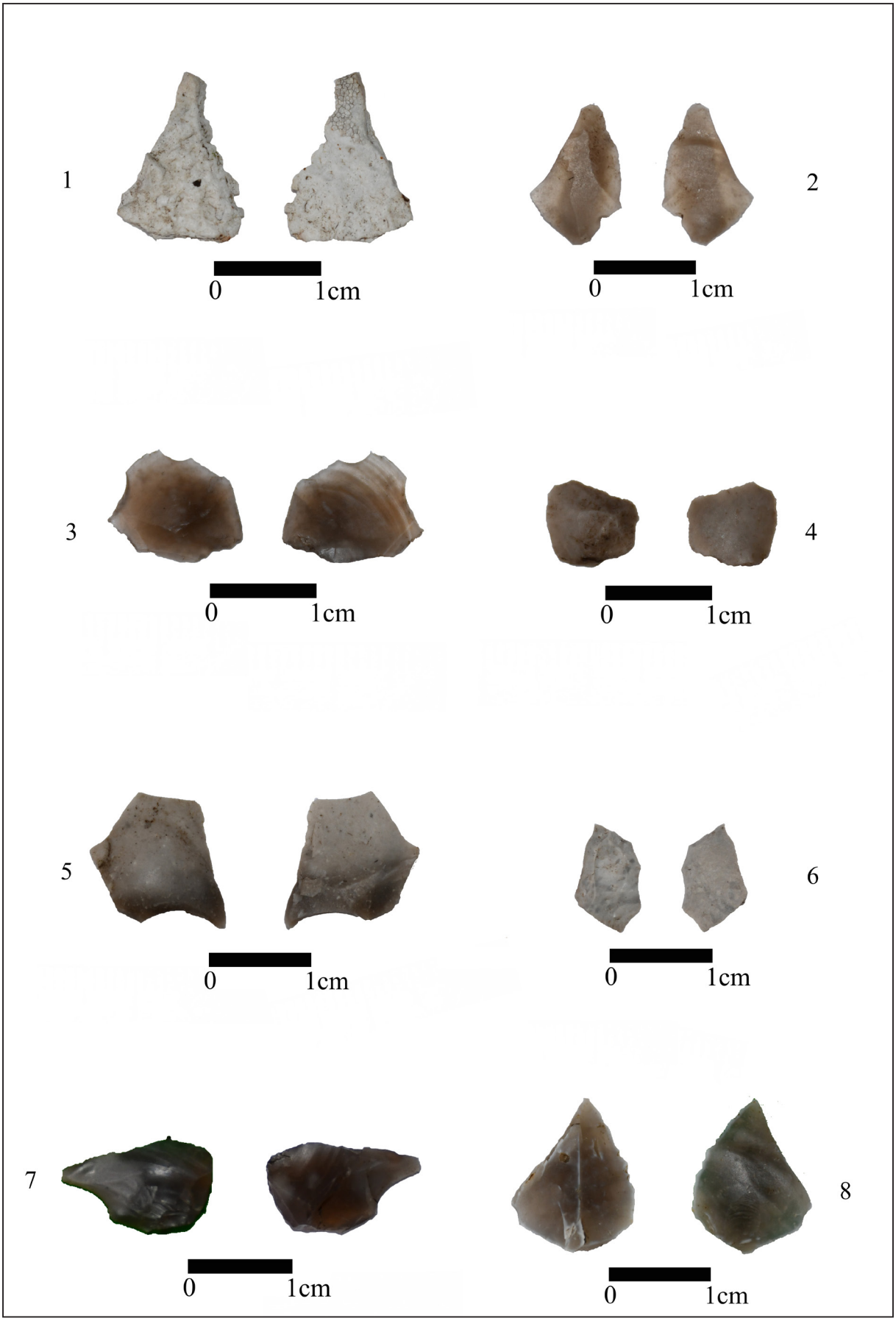
Pl. XXI. Hoiseşti-La Curmătură 1. 1-5. Axes; 6. Whetstone (1, 3, 4, 6. Passim from the settlement; 2. Square A/Grid 2; 5. Square A/Grid 1/L1)



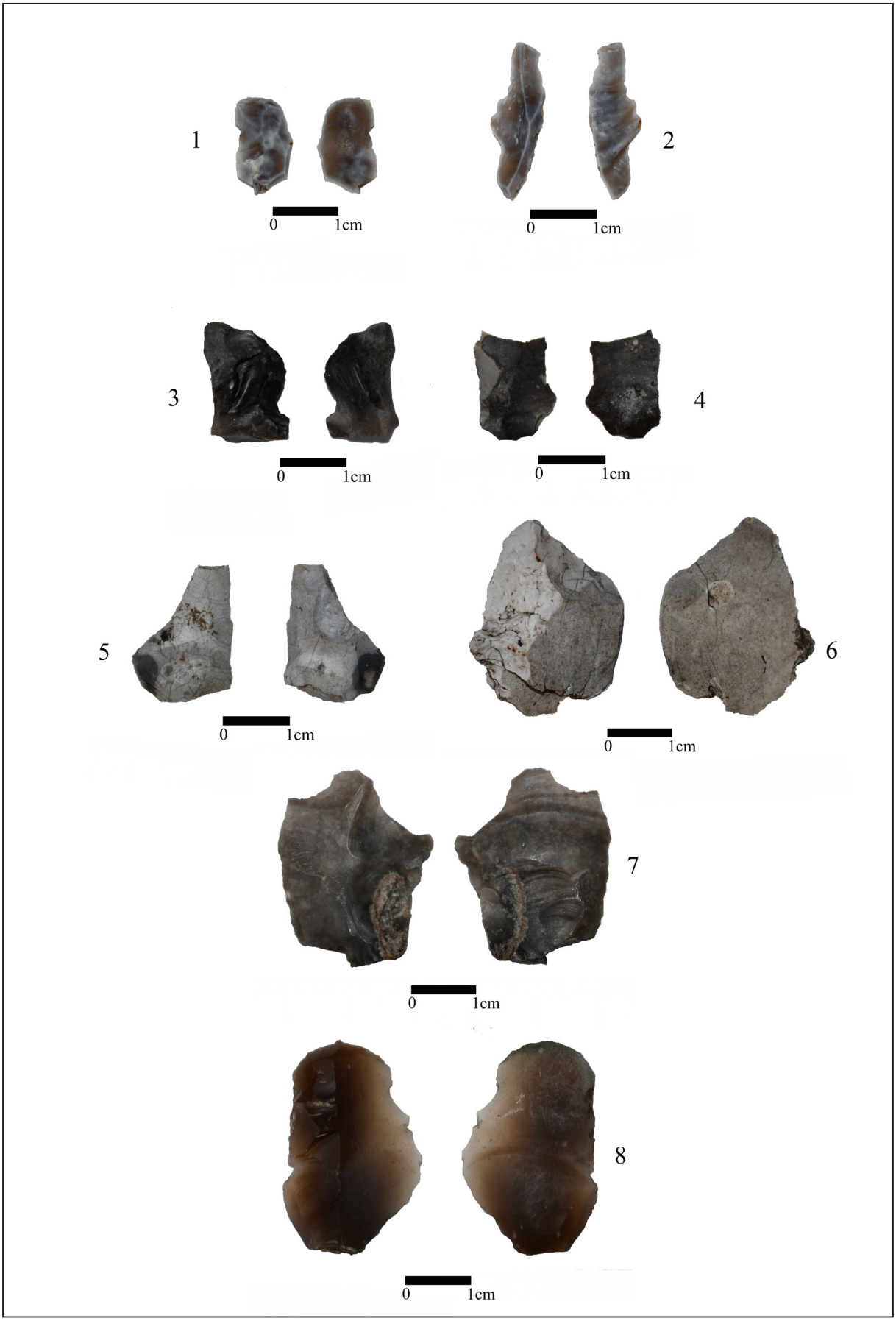
Pl. XXII. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1, 2. Grindstones (1. Square A/Grid 4/L1-Cx.5; 2. Square A/Grid 3/L1-Cx.6)



Pl. XXIII. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1-7. Flint flakes (1. Square A/Grid 4; 2. Square A/Grid 1; 3. Square A/Grid 2; 4. Square A/Grid 2/ -4,08m; 5. Square A/Grid 2; 6. Passim from the settlement; 7. Square A/Grid 1)



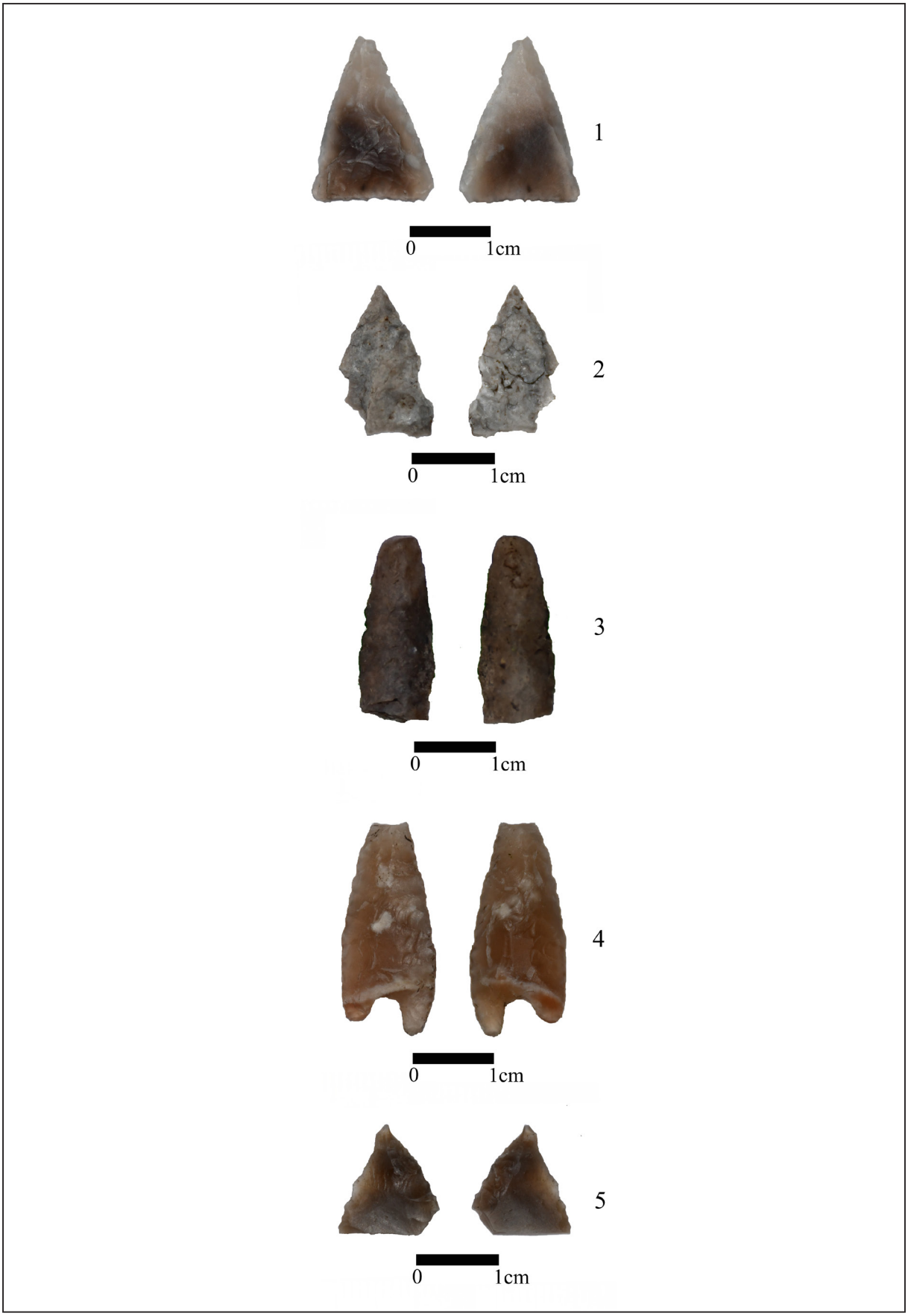
Pl. XXIV. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1-8. Flint flakes (a-h. Passim from the settlement)



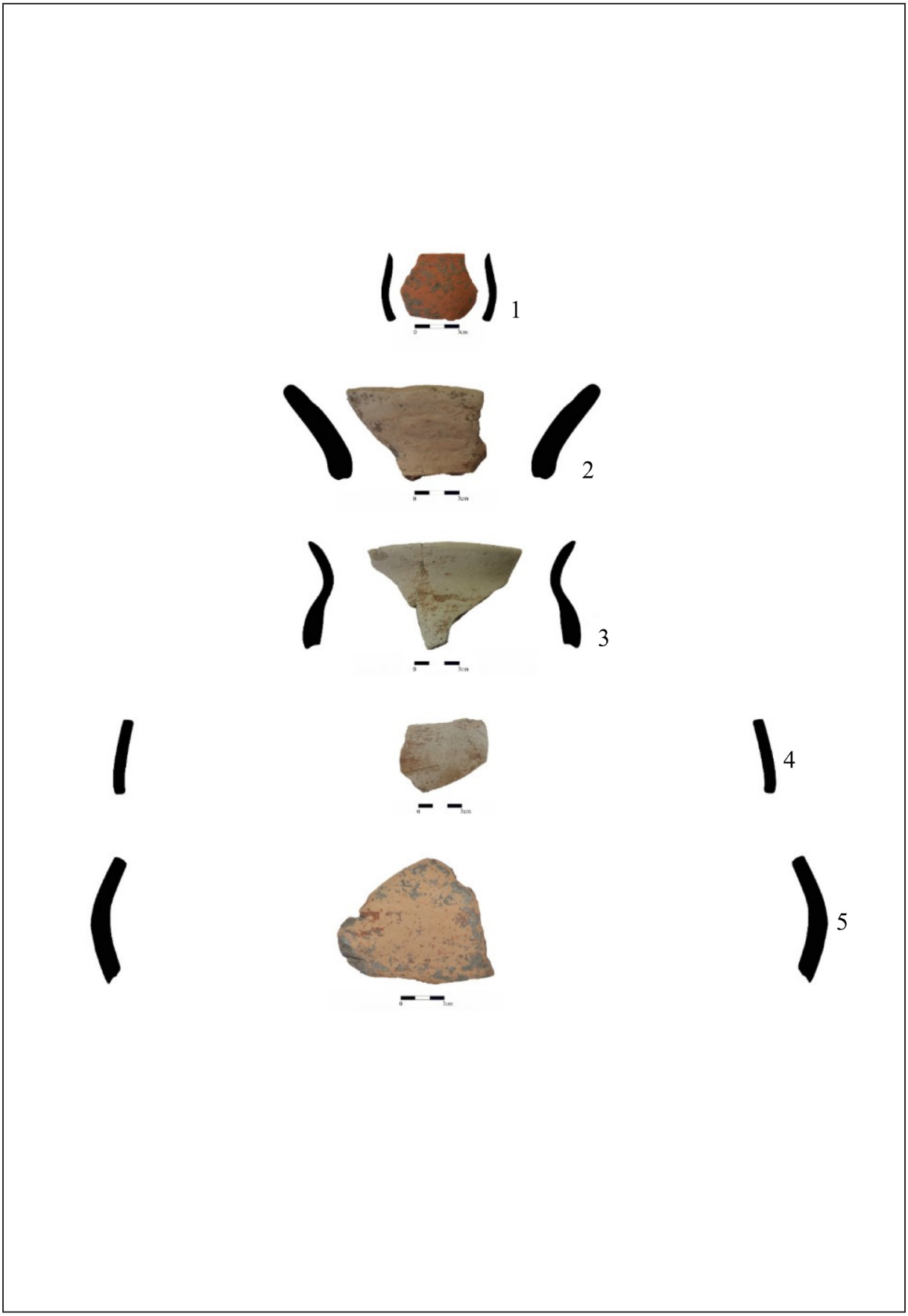
Pl. XXV. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1-8. Flint flakes (a-h. Passim from the settlement)



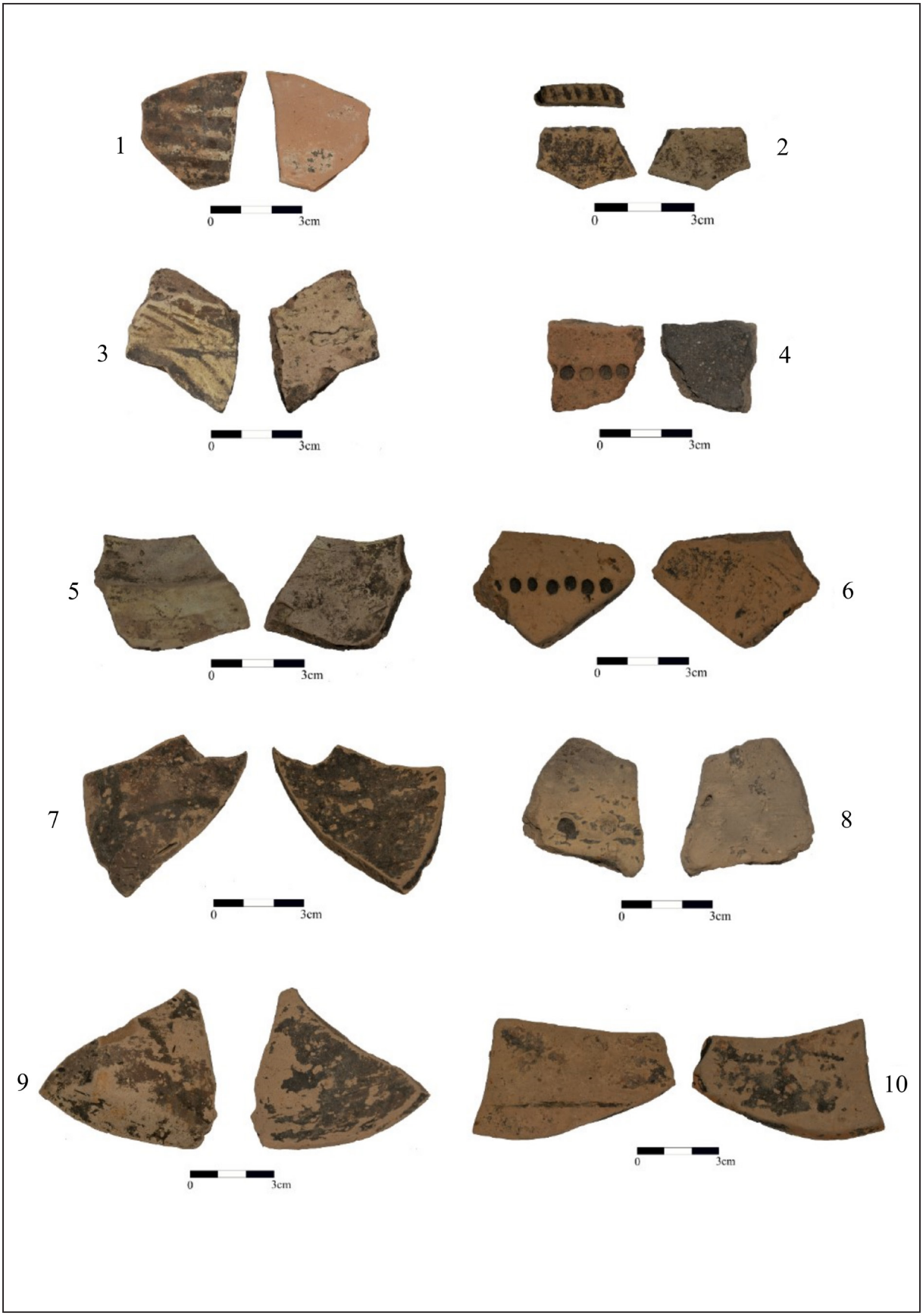
Pl. XXVI. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1-8. Flint blades (1-7. Passim from the settlement; 8. Square A/Grid 1/L1)



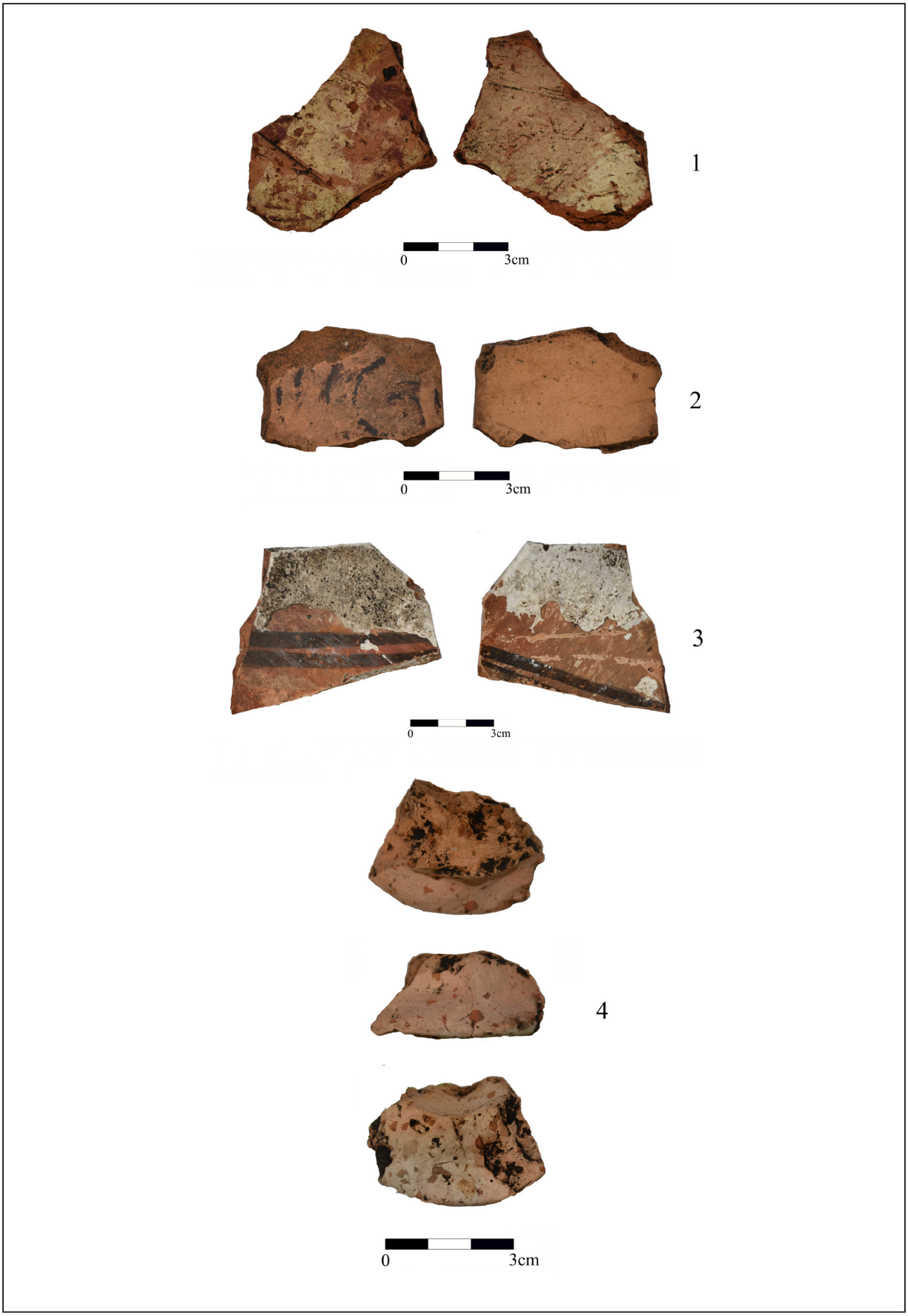
Pl. XXVII. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. 1-5. Flint arrowheads (1. Square A/Grid 2/ -4,31m; 2. Square A/Grid 4/ -5,05m; 3. Square A/Grid 1; 4, 5. Passim from the settlement)



Pl. XXVIII. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. Cucuteni pottery. 1-5. With painted decoration; 4. With incised and painted decoration (1-5. Passim from the settlement)



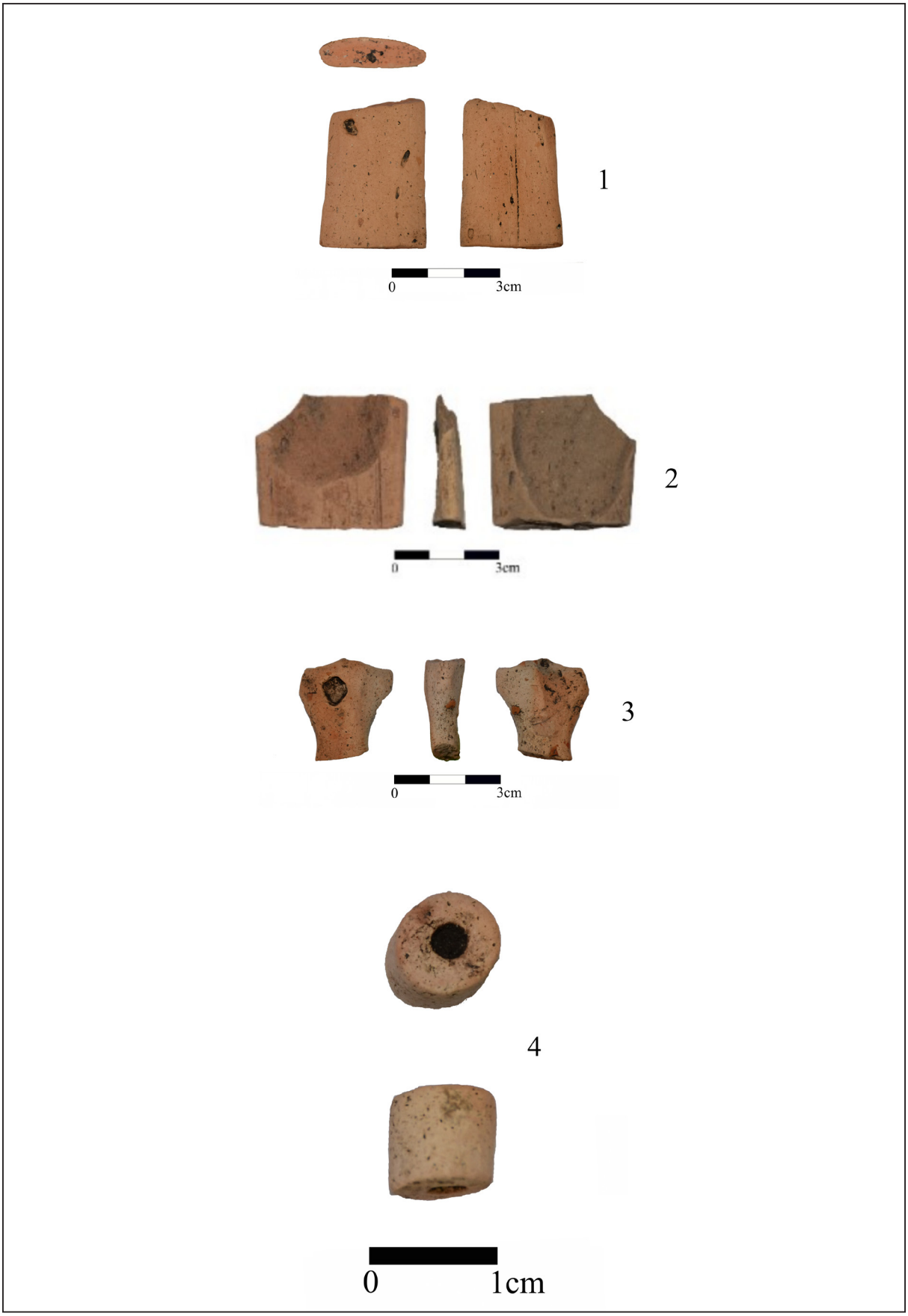
Pl. XXIX. Hoiseşti-La Curmătură 1. Cucuteni pottery. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9. With painted decoration; 2, 4, 6, 8, 10. With incised decoration (1. Square A/Grid 3-4/ -4,15-4,20m; 2. Square A/Grid 4/ -0,34m; 3. Passim from Square A; 5-7, 9-10. Square A/L1; 8. Square A/Grid 3)



Pl. XXX. Hoiseşti-La Curmătură 1. Cucuteni pottery. 1-3. Painted pottery; 4. Cup base fragment (1, 4. Square A/Grid 1; 3, 4. Passim from the settlement)



Pl. XXXI. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. Cucuteni ceramic objects. 1. Anthropomorphic statuette; 2. Zoomorphic statuette; (1. Passim from the settlement; 2. Square A/Grid 3/ -4,17m)



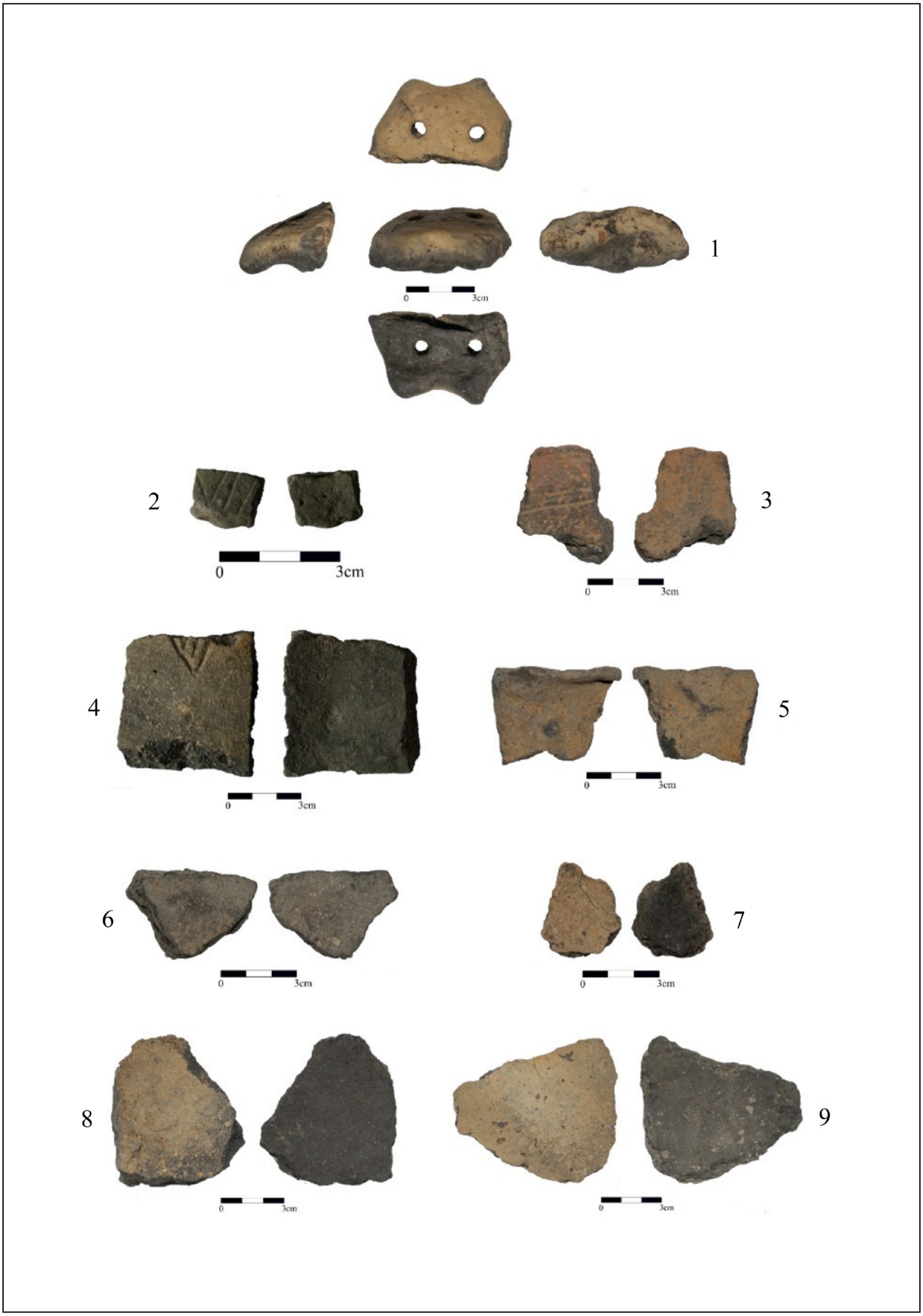
Pl. XXXII. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. Cucuteni ceramic objects. 1-2. Dippers; 3. Spoon; 4. Tubular bead (1-2, 4. Passim from the settlement; 3. Square A/Grid 3)



Pl. XXXIII. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. Cucuteni ceramic objects. 1. Handle fragment; 2. Pendant/pintadera; 3. Spoon fragment; 4. Female statuette fragment (buttock); 5. Miniature vessel fragment; 6. Female statuette fragment (leg); 7. Vessel fragment with a horizontal handle; 8. Lid fragment (1, 5, 6. Passim from Square A; 2, 3. Square A/Grid 3; 4. Passim from the settlement; 7. Square A/Grid 1; 8. Square A/Grid 4/L1)



Pl. XXXIV. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. Costișa pottery. 1-4. Typical ceramic fragments; 5. Atypical ceramic fragments (1-5. Passim from the settlement)



Pl. XXXV. Hoiești-La Curmătură 1. Costișa pottery. 1-5. Typical ceramic fragments; 6-9. Atypical ceramic fragments (1. Square A/Grid 2; 2. Square A/Grid 1; 3. Square A/Grid 3; 4. Square A/Grid 4/-0,34m; 5. Square A/Grid 2; 6-8. Square A/Grid 4/ -0,34m; 9. Square A/Grid 3/ -4,15-4,20m)