

POST-FUNERAL PRACTICES IN MOESIA INFERIOR. ARCHAEOLOGICAL INFORMATION

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Key words: post-funeral practices, Roman tombs from the 1st-3rd centuries A.D., Moesia Inferior.

Abstract: The paper synthesizes all archaeologically visible manifestations that might be connected to the post-funeral practices. Given the novelty of this enterprise and the massive amount of archaeological material on Roman tombs from the 1st-3rd centuries A.D., it was taken into consideration only one province of the Roman Empire, namely Moesia Inferior. Most of the documentation is from published discoveries. In the category of post-funeral practices are included all the manifestations connected to the tomb, after the complex was closed.

Cuvinte cheie: Practici post-funerare, Moesia Inferior, morminte romane din perioada secolelor I-III p. Chr.

Rezumat: Articolul sintetizează resturile arheologice care pot fi considerate practici post-funerare pentru mormintele romane din perioada secolelor I-III p. Chr. Întrucât este vorba de un material arheologic uriaș analiza se axează pe provincia Moesia Inferior. O mare parte a documentației provine din descoperiri publicate. În categoria practicilor post-funerare sunt incluse manifestările legate de mormânt, după închiderea acestuia.

Written sources attest quite well the rituals connected to the regular remembrance of the dead¹.

The chapters on the periodical remembrance of the dead from the Roman synthesis works on religion or funerary rituals are based on data from ancient sources as well, with additions from data supplied by epigraphic or iconographic sources². There was a recent synthesis of the post-funeral practices attested in Dacia³, but its sources are mostly epigraphic and iconographic, as for the already mentioned works.

From the archaeological point of view, however, the phenomenon I am talking about has not received a great deal of attention. There is a reason for that: most of the archaeological evidence of post-funeral practices is difficult to observe because it is from things that have happened outside the sepulchral pit and was therefore more exposed to destructive factors. For the same reason, even when there were references to post-funeral practices, they were very short and marginal in the works about Roman tombs or cemeteries.

I tried to synthesize all archaeologically visible manifestations that might be connected to the post-funeral practices. Given the novelty of this enterprise and the massive amount of archaeological material on Roman tombs from the 1st-3rd centuries A.D., I chose only one province of the Roman Empire, namely Moesia Inferior, as the area of study for this synthesis, and most of the documentation is from published discoveries, except for a number of funerary complexes from Histria⁴.

¹ Ovidius, *Fast.*, II, 533-555; Vergilius, *Aen.*, V, 75-103 and V, 419-444; with a satirical note, Lucian of Samosata, dialogue *Charon*, 22. A review of the ancient literature on the sensibility maintained by the spirits after death is found in Verdière 1991, p. 56-59.

² As absolutely essential references, I would like to list Bömer 1943, p. 29-42; Cumont 1949, p. 29-51 and 397; Bayet 1969, p. 70-76; Toynbee 1971, p. 50-51 and 61-64; DA, s.v. *funus*.

³ Bărbulescu 2003, p. 32-43 and 83-91.

⁴ The unpublished material in Histria (grave plans and descriptions) belongs to Ph. Dr. Catrinel Domăneanțu, and I would like to thank her again for allowing me to use them.

One last note on the term “post-funeral practices”. This expression was used by J.M.C. Toynbee⁵ and I am using it in this form because I find it more suitable than other terms, especially in the case of a paper based on archaeological information. I preferred the name of “funeral practices” to that of funerary rituals because of the larger scope of the term “practices”. They do not necessarily imply organized manifestations, at the level of family or community, which have well-known dates in the Roman religious calendar (*Parentalia* – 13-21 February; *Lemuria* – 9, 11, 13 May; the days of *mundus patens* – 24 August, 5 October and 8 November). In parallel with these celebrations, the “private cult of the dead” (Bömer) included placing lamps at the tombs, crowning the tombs, particularly on the birthdays of the dead or on the days they died, feasts next to the tombs⁶ and placing offerings - mostly food, drink, flowers – at the tomb⁷. I have avoided the term of “cult of the dead” used by F. Bömer and J.M.C. Toynbee, as well as that of “periodical rituals” used by M. Bărbulescu, in favor of the term of “funeral practices”, which is more neutral, since some of the complexes about to be discussed here raise some questions. Other authors have used the term of “funerary practices” to mean the rituals or archaeologically visible events that took place after the tomb was closed, such as C. Buzdugan⁸ and even M. Bărbulescu⁹.

I have included all of the manifestations connected to the tomb, after the complex was closed, in the category of post-funeral practices partly because there was practically no research on this issue up until now. There is no exact meaning of the term “post-funeral”, which is why I decided to use such a neutral term that has a wide scope. Not many from the unfolding of the funerary ritual are visible to archaeological research, and it is my belief that any suppositions on the time interval between the closing of the funerary complex and the various post-funeral practices are precarious. This is most true for situations interpreted as remains of funerary feasts. At this stage of the research, one cannot know if such feasts took place shortly after the burial (*silicernium*), sometime in the nine days after it (*cena novemdialis*) and are therefore still part of the *funus*¹⁰, or they happened after the nine days and are therefore post-funeral practices *per se*.

Therefore, I tried to put the post-funeral practices in several categories, based on archaeological evidence, as well as on the texts that mention the cult of the dead. I would like to emphasize the fact that these categories are but an instrument and reflect a certain stage in the work, meaning they are open to improvements.

The manner of introducing the classes of post-funeral practices could generate criticisms. For several reasons, I have decided to enumerate the complexes that I categorized as post-funeral practices, together with a brief description of them.

The first reason for doing so is the novelty of this enterprise. There are several cases where not even those that published the complexes in question have approached them from the perspective I am attempting. This is my way of trying to bring together data that were sometimes spread throughout the entire tomb description in the initial publishing.

The second reason consists of the relatively poor quality of the documentation (incomplete descriptions, missing illustrations), which is the reason for the reservations behind classifying some of the complexes in question as post-funeral practices. I preferred to include in the review the unclear or insufficiently documented cases as well, in order to better emphasize (if it was still necessary, given the already existing calls to attention to this issue¹¹) the need for comprehensive field research and publishing of early Roman tombs – in this case, from the territory of Moesia Inferior. Comprehensive field research and publishing (R. Reece uses the term “perfect”¹²) includes observing and writing down details that seem minor at first, but turn out to be important for studying a particular aspect of the funerary rite and ritual. Here are just two examples: 1. The total amount of cremated bones found in a tomb and the fact that

⁵ Toynbee 1971, p. 50.

⁶ Bömer 1943, p. 31-32.

⁷ Bayet 1969, p. 72; Toynbee 1971, p. 63.

⁸ Buzdugan *et al.* 1998-2000, p. 437.

⁹ Bărbulescu 2003, p. 83.

¹⁰ DA, 1386.

¹¹ Février 1987, p. 9; Júdice Gamito 2001, p. 212; Reece 2000, p. 270-271.

¹² Reece 1995, p. 414-417.

complete skeletal remains of the cremated individual were found or not is decisive when it comes to classifying the funerary complex in question: *bustum* or tomb where the remains from the pyre cremation were deposited in a burnt pit.¹³ 2. Carefully checking the area surrounding the tomb (an area that, at first look, seems unrelated to the complex because it is *outside* it) can illuminate moments of the funerary rituals that may be as important as the actual depositing in the tomb. “Nous, archéologues”, emphasizes P.A. Février, “quand nous fouillons une tombe, nous n'avons que le résultat. Or auparavant, il a pu y avoir tout un cérémonial extrêmement important qui a complètement disparu pour nous. Une tombe qui ne contient rien nous apparaît très pauvre mais elle peut très bien avoir fait l'objet d'un rituel ostentatoire ou religieux considérable, beaucoup plus important pour les gens”.¹⁴ M. Parker-Pearson¹⁵ begins his book with a detailed description of the funeral of an important Scandinavian merchant. The description belongs to Ibn Fadlan, member of the embassy of the Caliph of Baghdad to the middle Volga, in 921 or 922. The funeral took 10 days of preparations, ceremonies and orgies. “This burial has never been found, but, if it had been, very little would have been left to tell the archaeologist anything of this ceremony and its rituals”.¹⁶

The third reason is based on the very end purpose of my endeavor. Perhaps paradoxically, even if the number of early Roman tombs from Moesia Inferior that have been published so far is relatively large (around 1600), there still are very few research works – general¹⁷ or specialized – and they have been written some time ago (tomb typology¹⁸; cemeteries typology¹⁹; the cremation/inhumation ratio²⁰; tumular tombs²¹). For a research still in its infancy, such as I deem to be the research of tombs from the Moesia Inferior in the 1st-3rd centuries A.D., it is premature to give definitive answers. I believe it is more useful to formulate questions that lead to new research directions. Simple statistics research can sometimes answer fundamental questions, and M.I. Finley gives an example to that end. Nothing sensational, he writes, in the table by A. Snodgrass on the materials used to make cutting tools and weapons in the continental Greece from 1050 to 900 B.C. However, the table answers a question based on the Homeric poems, where until then had been only speculations and vague assumptions – namely, how fast was the transition from bronze to iron in the case of the most important weapons and tools²². If the following paragraphs generate a discussion of post-funeral practices, this article will have reached its purpose, even if that discussion leads to rejecting my hypothesis and to generating a new typology.

I. *Ceramic deposits and foodstuff remains*

The most manifestations are archaeologically visible in *ceramic deposits, sometimes accompanied by foodstuff remains*. In turn, this category breaks down into:

I. a. *Remains from funerary feasts*

What I believed to be remains from the funerary feasts consist of the complexes that include several clay vessels, associated or not with foodstuff remains. One should also mention that the foodstuff remains may have been much more present in reality, but, in most cases, the studies regarding the plant remains or the osteological remains were lacking. It is no accident that the presence of foodstuff remains was well documented in the case of the cemetery in Carsium, where the archaeologists cooperated with specialists in paleo-botanical and paleo-zoological studies. I included in this category both complexes interpreted as such by the author of the discovery, but described only briefly (Ljublen) and complexes whose

¹³ McKinley 2000, p. 39-42.

¹⁴ Février 1987, p. 81.

¹⁵ *Apud* Júdice Gamito 2001.

¹⁶ Júdice Gamito 2001, p. 211.

¹⁷ The unpublished Ph.D. dissertations of L. Getov and L. Oța.

¹⁸ Alexandrescu 1966, for tumular necropolis in Histria, Barbu 1971a for Tomis, Getov 1970 for Bulgaria.

¹⁹ Barbu 1977 for Tomis, Oța 2000 for Moesia Inferior.

²⁰ Barbu 1968, Barbu 1971b.

²¹ Vulčeva 1997.

²² Finley 2002, p. 132-133.

description included details that seemed to me to support the hypothesis of funerary feasts. The absence from publications of detailed contextual descriptions and of photographs of the discoveries around the tombs means that the arguments supporting the hypothesis of funerary feast remains are largely related to the shape of the vessels – and their relatively high number – that were found near the tombs. These arguments on the number and shape of pottery items can seem odd at first, but it is possible that a comparative study of pottery found in a settlement and its necropolis would shed light on certain distinctions. A study on pottery assemblages in Gallo-Roman cemeteries has revealed that, for various reasons, the pottery found in a necropolis is not representative of the pottery for daily use. This is because they preferred to deposit vessels of particular shapes in cemeteries, mostly vessels for holding liquids (flasks, jugs), beakers or flat platters. Certain pottery shapes found in tombs are nearly absent from the settlements²³.

The following complexes fall into the category of remains of funerary feasts:

Carsium tumulus 3²⁴ – several complexes (Pl. I/1) were observed close to the two tombs, both of them *busta*, in the western side of the tumulus (I count five on the layout of tumulus, but the mug next to M. 2²⁵ has to be excluded, because it falls into another category of post-funeral practices). The complexes included fragments of amphorae and small clay vessels, made of a fine brick-red fabric. Some of the vessels still showed foodstuff remains and bones of birds or small animals. Thus, near the M. 1 pit, on its south-south-west side, a little under the plough soil, was found a complex of broken vessels, made of fine brick-red fabric. In terms of shape, the pottery falls into three categories: cups, bowls and dishes²⁶ (= cups²⁷). I do not think the category of post-funeral practices includes the *Zwiebelknopffibel*, an item probably lost, as the authors themselves believe²⁸.

Carsium tumulus 4²⁹ – unless they were somehow shifted when the tumulus was built with soil from the neighboring community, which was on the “La Moară” site – whose northwestern limit sometimes vanishes in the perimeter of the tumular necropolis³⁰ – then the small bowl, the pottery made from a coarse fabric with thin walls and red slip on the inside or outside, impossible to complete and classified among the bowls, dishes and cups by those that did the excavations, and the many small amphorae fragments, might also be traces of a funerary feast. It is true that the impossibility to recreate any of the vessels, as well as the presence of many fragments of *tegulae*, rather support the hypothesis that they were shifted together with the soil brought over for building the tumulus, but I still believe that we cannot discount the funerary feast entirely, since the ceramic fragments are mostly from vessels used to serve and transport food or liquids. Given the lack of a more detailed description of the context or an adequate photo, the tile fragments are difficult to interpret, but they may be from the destruction of the second tomb or could represent even remains from protection boxes, similar to the discoveries in Histria. Many fragments of small vessels made from a fine fabric, in a category similar to the tableware, were also discovered as a result of the destruction of the second tomb from tumulus 4 in Carsium and it might be no accident that the tableware was found in the tumular tombs in Carsium not so much as funerary inventory, but as a part of the ceramic complexes next to the tombs. It is therefore quite possible that the traces of the funerary feast were destroyed in the case of the second tomb as well.

²³ Tuffreau-Libre 2000, p. 53-54.

²⁴ Buzdugan *et al.* 1998-2000, p. 431-432, 446-447.

²⁵ The abbreviations I am using are: T. for “tumulus” and M. for “tomb”. I chose M. as abbreviation for “tomb” because the majority of the complexes about to be discussed were published in Romanian language, with the abbreviation M.

²⁶ A typology of all the clay vessels discovered in the Roman tombs in Moesia Inferior (1st-3rd centuries A.D.) is still lacking. Each author has his own terms, even for the same vessel – see, for example, the pottery found in tumuli in Histria, published by P. Alexandrescu (1966) and Al. Suceveanu (2000). For easier verification, I have kept up the terms as appear in the initial publishing. In order to ensure a unitary description of the complexes discussed in this paper, these terms were filled in (if the pottery drawings are published), taking into consideration the pottery types proposed by Al. Suceveanu and, in some cases, by A. Opaț.

²⁷ Suceveanu 2000 types XVII A and XVIII B.

²⁸ Buzdugan *et al.* 1998-2000, p. 446.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 432-433, 438, 440, 444.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 428.

Durostorum³¹ – the fortuitous nature of the discovery and the partial destruction of the top of the tomb may have affected the situation on site, next to the tomb. The fragmentary vessels found west of the funerary chamber (the author does not describe the archaeological context, but the published text shows that the said pottery was found outside the tomb anyway, at the level of the vault's top) may also be from a funerary feast, all the more so as bovid bones, which the author considers to be possible remains from a sacrificed animal, were found next to the tomb's entry (located to the west), but closer to the surface³².

Histria tumulus XXIV³³ – the remains from the cremation of the dead and a few inventory items, all of them burnt were drawn together next to the pyre, to the east (Pl. II/1). Small burnt patches of ground were found around the tomb covered by the tumulus, at the edge of the mound or even outside it (as they were drawn on paper), covered with lumps of charcoal, some of them with vessel fragments, most of them made of clay³⁴, associated with a small bronze amphora (no.18 on the plan), a *strigilis* and glass vessels. These patches were in a semi-circle at the southern edge of the tumulus and the author interpreted them as “funerary fireplaces” (Pl. II/2). The high amount of tableware is again an argument in favor of interpreting the said complexes as remains of a feast (or even several feasts) honoring the dead. The only argument against this explanation is the presence of the metal amphora and the *strigilis*. However, according to the tomb's layout, they were discovered separately from the ceramic remains, inside the mound. Thus, the said bronze vessel and personal-hygiene item might not be related to the funerary feasts, but instead be from the tomb inventory (the funerary inventory was deposited next to the tomb in the case of the tumulus XXX as well).

Histria tumulus XXVII³⁵ – according to the author, a fireplace was found south of the *bustum* burial, where seven plates (= cups³⁶), covered with slip, were found (nos. 12-18 on the plan – Pl. III/2). A box made out of three tiles covered the surface where the vessels were broken, probably also a remainder of the funerary feast. One should also mention that the vessels are not burnt, which further supports the interpretation that they were tableware, and not containers for burning substances meant to purify. One found many vessels in the rest of the tumulus surface, on the funerary platform or various layers in the mound, vessels that fall into the category of amphorae³⁷ and jugs³⁸, made of clay, and in the category of ointment vessels (*unguentaria*) made of glass. Given the final use of the said vessels and their grouping around some of the secondary tombs or around the main tomb, but isolated from the feast surface, it might be that both the ointment vessels and the clay amphorae and jugs (nos. 7-11, 19-21 on the plan) were traces of post-funeral practices and can likely be included in the category of pottery deposits, evidence of libations or of pouring substances meant to purify, connected to the cult of the dead.

Histria tumulus XXXVI³⁹ – the plate fragments (= cups⁴⁰) at the southeastern edge of the tumulus (Pl. III/1) may also represent evidence of a funerary feast that took place before the whole mound was erected.

Noviodunum tumulus XXIX-A⁴¹ – the tumulus was erected by merging two mounds that included three and two tombs, respectively, grouped by funerary rite (cremation and inhumation). A burnt patch of ground on the ancient level, with “many lumps of charcoal and vessels broken ritually”, was found

³¹ Chera-Mărgineanu 1978, p. 137-141.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 138.

³³ Alexandrescu 1966, p. 206-209.

³⁴ single-handle little mugs no.7, 10-11 on the plan = handled pots Suceveanu 2000, p. 104, no.31, type XXXII B and Suceveanu 2000, p. 107, no.58, type XXXII C; mug no.6 = jug Suceveanu 2000, p. 160, no.10, type L; jug; *kantharos* no.13 = handled cup Suceveanu 2000, p. 88, no.20, type XXIII B; bowls no.8, 14-16 = cups Suceveanu 2000, p. 89, no.1, type XXIV; Suceveanu 2000, p. 29, no.6, type VI A; Suceveanu 2000, p. 49, no.9, type XII B.

³⁵ Alexandrescu 1966, p. 210-213.

³⁶ Suceveanu 2000, p. 78, nos.1-2, type XIX A.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 161, no.1, type LII and p. 174, no.1, type LXI.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 145-146, no.10, type XLV B and p. 152, no.9, type XLVI B, but P. Alexandrescu uses the term *unguentaria*.

³⁹ Alexandrescu 1966, p. 201-202.

⁴⁰ Suceveanu 2000, p. 63, no.1, type XVII A.

⁴¹ Simion 1984, p. 78.

towards the center of the eastern mound, the one with two inhumation tombs. One cannot rule out classifying them in the I. b category, of pottery deposits (see *infra*), results of burning some sort of substance, but this might be similar to the tumuli in Histria, a situation interpreted rather as a funerary feast. Unfortunately, there are no detailed descriptions or plans.

Noviodunum tumulus XXXI, M. 10⁴² – on the ancient level, on a surface of 1 sqm, in a layer of ash, were found several small vessels made of red fabric, including, according to the authors, single-handle small mugs, dishes and plates. The observations from M. 1, tumulus XXIX-A stand (including the absence of grave plans and descriptions), plus the added argument of the broken vessels' belonging to the category of tableware.

Noviodunum tumulus II-C M. 1⁴³ – close to the center of the tumulus, next to the main tomb, was found a strongly burnt surface, also on the ancient walking level, with several ceramic fragments from “dishes, jugs and small vessels” on it. I believe we are again dealing with a funerary feast, taking into account the similarities with the situation in Histria and the author's classification, which show that the items are most likely tableware.

Ljublen M. 1 and M. 2⁴⁴ – within post-funeral practices that are complexes and unique in Moesia Inferior, one also documented the fact that “the raising of the tumulus that covered the two tombs was accompanied by a funerary feast whose traces (clay vessel fragments, animal bones) are found in the filling of the tumulus”. The clay vessels are mostly amphorae, bowls, mugs and jugs.

The pottery fragments around the outside edge of two tombs from Noviodunum (tumulus V-B M. 1 and tumulus II-C M. 1) might also be remains from funerary feasts. The lack of illustrations, the short description and the lack of details on the typology of clay vessels and the association with tile and brick fragments in one case, makes me put them, at this stage of the research, in the category of pavements and platforms (see *infra*, in category VII).

Traces of funerary feasts are attested in other provinces of the Roman Empire as well, but there are differences from Moesia Inferior. The current stage of the research on the post-funeral practices in Moesia Inferior requires one to make an observation. The lack of illustrations and more detailed descriptions in many of the cases previously mentioned prevents one from trying to pin down the time the feast took place – right after the burial (*silicernium*), after nine days (*cena novemdialis*) or later. The possibility that the feast remains in tumuli XXIV and XXVII in Histria are from *silicernium* or *cena novemdialis* is higher, because the tumulus was erected over a single tomb. In the case of the other tumuli, which included several tombs, things are more complicated because of the difficulty in establishing the timeline between the burials, on the one hand, and the closing of the funerary complexes and the raising of the mound, on the other. Another observation concerns the relation between the fitting out of the tomb and the funerary feast. Up until now, at least, the traces of funerary feasts are associated, save for only one case, with tumular tombs, which can be considered signs of an elite. Even the aforementioned exception, in Durostorum, seems to suggest a wealthy family (even though it may not be a family with a high social status), given the facts that they arranged a family vault, and this sort of tomb is rather rare against the number of funerary complexes found in Moesia Inferior⁴⁵. The association between the funerary feast and the special social status was also stressed in the case of the elites in Gallia⁴⁶ or in the Thracian and Dacian society⁴⁷. Based on the discoveries from Gallia, A. Ferdière⁴⁸ even assumed a cultural opposition in terms of the manner of expressing the elites' place in the Gallic society. The aforementioned author draws a line between, on the one hand, a local tradition that pre-dates the Roman conquest and survived throughout the 1st century A.D., a tradition where the emphasis was on the lavishness of the ceremonies related to the funerals (including the funerary feast) and of the tomb inventory and, on the other hand, an exogenous tradition originating from the Hellenistic and Roman world, where the emphasis was on preserving the memory of the dead by way of funerary monuments.

⁴² Bujor, Simion 1961, p. 393 and 395.

⁴³ Simion 1984, p. 81.

⁴⁴ Ovčarov 1979, p. 33-35.

⁴⁵ Oța 2003, p. 128-129.

⁴⁶ Castella *et al.* 2002, p. 43.

⁴⁷ Florea 2004, p. 517 and 521.

⁴⁸ Ferdière 2004, p. 35-57.

However, this is where the similarities between the evidence assumed to belong to the funerary feasts in Moesia Inferior and the feasts in other regions of the Empire, including Dacia, stop. With the clear exception of tumulus XXVII in Histria, the evidence of funerary feasts in Moesia Inferior do not receive special treatment, the way other discoveries do, the kind of treatment that includes gathering them up in a pit or even on the surface of the tomb, burning them and then sealing the complex⁴⁹. One last observation on the funerary banquets from the cemeteries in Moesia Inferior is that, in every single case, the vessels were broken, probably on purpose. At least as far as the current research goes, none of the cemeteries from Moesia inferior show a rift in the society based on the traditions related to the handling of the vessel used at the funerary feasts. This sort of division is visible in the necropolis in Verulamium, where some of those buried were accompanied by all the furniture of the funerary feast, while in other cases, the vessel was broken on purpose⁵⁰.

I. b. *Pottery deposits*

Pottery deposits make up their own category since only a few vessels (one or two items), that are not remains of funerary feasts, were found next to a number of complexes. The authors of the excavations do not publish photographs or grave plans save for a very few exceptions, nor do they attempt to explain the presence of clay vessels outside the tombs. Except for tumulus XVI in Histria, none of the complexes described below is free of reservations concerning the classification in the category in question. The description of each complex includes my suppositions on the interpretation of vessels found outside the tombs. Of course, it can seem precarious to propose a category in its own right (in this case, that of pottery deposits) based on hypotheses. However, I considered it useful to review the uncertain complexes as well because, upon further analysis, these discoveries are showing a number of common features: they were found outside the tomb or the funerary chamber where the dead were deposited; most of them were covered by tumuli or small heaps of rocks, similar to the tombs next to which they were found; they consist of clay vessels that, typologically speaking, fall in the category of vessels for holding liquids: mugs, jugs and amphorae; save for three exceptions (Noviodunum T. XXX sarcophagus, Noviodunum T. "Bădila" sarcophagus, Beroe A 334 bis), they are not associated with other items that would support the idea that they came from destroyed tombs. I believe these common features justify the hypothesis the vessels were deposited on purpose after the burial.

The I. b category includes the following complexes:

Histria tumulus XVI⁵¹ – the tomb was considered to be a cenotaph (Pl. I/2). An oval pit, 0.60 m deep, was in the center of the tumulus, containing many lumps of burnt soil, and the interpretation was that they were from a funerary fireplace. Merging several small heaps raised the tumulus's mound and piling on top of them a thick layer of soil mixed with lumps of clay. On top of the small heaps, but under the thick layer of soil and lumps of clay 24 amphorae⁵² were found, in horizontal positions, most of them with the mouth towards the center of the tumulus. Petrified organic traces could be observed on the bottom of some of them. The lack of analogies for this discovery among the funerary complexes from the Roman period makes it impossible to conjecture anything with certainty about the funerary rite and the meaning of the amphorae. A cenotaph might have been covered by the tumulus, represented by the pit with burnt soil, as the author believes, but the position of the amphorae suggests that they were not grave-goods, but rather ulterior deposits, made while the tumulus was being raised. The tumulus under consideration in Histria is another piece of evidence setting Moesia Inferior apart from the neighboring province of Thracia, but makes it part of a phenomenon observed in many areas of the Roman Empire, namely the reappearance, after a hiatus before and after they were turned into provinces, of funerary practices that preceded the Roman conquest⁵³. In the case at hand, the complex in Histria is in line with a funerary fashion used by the elites of several Greek colonies in the Black Sea region⁵⁴. This fashion consisted of closing the funerary space with a circle of amphorae, and this seems to characterize just the

⁴⁹ Castella et al. 2002, p. 47; Egri 2004, p. 502; Niblett 2000, p. 98.

⁵⁰ Niblett 2000, p. 104.

⁵¹ Alexandrescu 1966, p. 204-206.

⁵² Suceveanu 2000, p. 163-164, no.1, type LIV; Opaiț 1980 type VI A.

⁵³ Sirbu, Oța 2004, p. 409-411.

⁵⁴ Damyanov 2005, p. 214-223.

handful of colonies, located in a large region but bordering the Black Sea – Apollonia Pontica, Orgame, Olbia, Panticapaeum, Nymphaeum. Even in the case of these colonies, this funerary fashion is used with great chronological gaps, namely in two distinct periods: 5th century B.C. (Olbia, Panticapaeum, Nymphaeum) and the second quarter of the 4th century B.C. (Apollonia and Orgame). As for the role played by the amphorae in the funerary rituals, opinions are divided between using the wine in those recipients for putting out the pyre (most of the tombs are of the on-site cremation type) or for libations⁵⁵. The lack of any certainties on the funerary rite for the complex covered by tumulus XVI in Histria, on whether it is a cenotaph or remains of the cremation brought over from the pyre and laid down in a pit (a possibility supported by the presence of lumps of burnt soil but invalidated by the absence of cremated bones), also affects the attempt to decipher the role of the amphorae. While aware of the uncertainties, one can also conceive that this was funerary feast (something that is, however, contradicted by the lack of tableware) or, more likely, that this was a large ceremony honoring an important character, and that the amphorae were used to transport drinks, which were probably used for libations, given the lack of evidence of on-site burning. Although using such large amounts of drinks for libations might seem surprising at first, the situation is similar to other tombs dated to the 5th century B.C., from Apollonia Pontica, with a different rite than on-site cremation, but a higher number of amphorae (27 items) placed around them⁵⁶.

Carsium tumulus 3 M. 2⁵⁷ – outside the tomb's pit, on the western side, one found a fragmentary mug made of a fine brick-red fabric.

Histria tumulus XXVII – see *supra*, in category I. a. Remains of funerary feasts.

Noviodunum tumulus “Bădila”⁵⁸ – two jugs and a two-handle little mug (= cup⁵⁹) were found “somewhat grouped” in the mound of the tumulus, between the in-sarcophagus inhumation tomb and a *bustum*.

Noviodunum tumulus “Bădila”, sarcophagus⁶⁰ – outside the sarcophagus were found three jugs⁶¹, in the north-eastern corner, and five glas vessels, on the southern side.

Noviodunum tumulus XXX⁶² – since there are no drawings of the pottery and plans of their exact location in the site, the two “platforms” (probably remains from broken vessels, although the terms used suggest some sort of intention) with pottery fragments in the western side of the tumulus rather fall into the category of pottery deposits, although one cannot discard the possibility that they might belong to category I. a (see *supra*). The platforms were 1x1 m and consisted of hand-made recipients and “Roman period” vessels.

Noviodunum tumulus XXX, sarcophagus⁶³ – a one-handle small mug (= handled pot⁶⁴) and a lamp (on this aspect, see *infra*, category IV. a) were found outside the sarcophagus.

Brestnica⁶⁵ – see *infra* category III. a. Burning substances outside the tomb.

Velikovo T. I⁶⁶ – big rocks were piled up around the southern entrance to the stone box with four skeletons. Among the rocks, was found a broken, hand-made vessel, with a lace ornament under the mouth. The presence of a hand-made vessel as evidence of post-funeral practices is no surprise, for many hand-made vessels were found as part of the inventory of the four tombs in Velikovo. One could also mention the fact that the T. I inventory included a hand-made lamp.

Kragulevo M. 2⁶⁷ – the in-pit inhumation tomb was covered with a small heap of rocks and clay vessel fragments were found among the rocks.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 220-221.

⁵⁶ Damyanov 2005, p. 214-216.

⁵⁷ Buzdugan *et al.* 1998-2000, p. 432, 440, 442, 445, 449.

⁵⁸ Simion 1977, p. 123-124.

⁵⁹ Suceveanu 2000 type XXIII.

⁶⁰ Simion 1977, p. 125-132.

⁶¹ Suceveanu 2000 type XLVII.

⁶² Simion 1994-1995, p. 121-122.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 122-124, 130-132.

⁶⁴ Suceveanu 2000 type XXXII B.

⁶⁵ Agre, Dičev 2000, p. 35-48.

⁶⁶ Vasilčin 1990, p. 33-39.

⁶⁷ Vasilčin 1996-1997, p. 46.

Kragulevo M. 4⁶⁸ – the in-pit inhumation tomb was covered with a small heap of rocks and clay vessel fragments were found among the rocks.

Kragulevo M. 31⁶⁹ – the tomb of the same type as the two mentioned above was covered with a small heap of rocks; one found fragments from vessels broken *in situ*.

Kragulevo M. 38⁷⁰ – one found around the pit of the complex fragments from three clay vessels among and underneath the rocks that made up a small heap deposited on top of the cremation tomb.

Kragulevo M. 47⁷¹ – the in-pit inhumation tomb was covered with a small heap of rocks; one found among them fragments from vessels broken *in situ*, as well as animal bones.

Kragulevo M. 49⁷² – the in-pit inhumation tomb was covered with a small heap of rocks; among the rocks there were fragments from brick-red clay vessels broken *in situ*.

Kragulevo M. 59⁷³ – the *bustum* burial was covered with a small heap of rocks; among and underneath them one found fragments from three vessels.

There are some doubts connected to placing the following complexes in the category of pottery deposits resulted from post-funeral practices. The doubts refer either to tomb destructions or to the possibility the complexes fall in the category of cenotaph-tombs.

Tomis M. 4⁷⁴ – a jug⁷⁵ was found in the corridor of the inhumation tomb with funerary chamber. One cannot be sure at all of the classification in the category of pottery deposits, although the said vessel may be an indication of a post-funeral practice whereby drinks were brought to the tomb. The jug may also have belonged to the tomb's inventory, although the rest of the items were found in the funerary chamber, at the feet of the two skeletons.

Marcianopolis M. 30⁷⁶ – a beaker (= handled pot⁷⁷) was found outside the pit, next to the tiles covering an in-pit inhumation tomb. It might have gotten on the necropolis accidentally, but it is more likely an evidence of depositing drinks next to the tomb.

Beroe E 158⁷⁸ – a handled pot⁷⁹ was found about 0.20 m above the skull of a skeleton in an in-pit inhumation tomb (Pl. VII/2). There are two explanations for it, besides an accidental presence, unrelated to the tomb: either it is part of the tomb's inventory and the position is caused by the uneven depth at which the pit was dug, or it is evidence of depositing drinks next to the tomb.

Beroe A 334 bis⁸⁰ – was interpreted as a cenotaph. A handled pot⁸¹ and a lamp, both of them in one piece, showed up between two tombs (late ones, true), but not bone remains. It is possible this was a cenotaph, but one need to mention that a small mug and lamp were also found at Noviodunum, outside the sarcophagus in tumulus XXX.

Beroe D 42⁸² – the cenotaph (as believed by the author)/pottery deposit alternative applies here as well to the pottery found (jug⁸³; pot⁸⁴; hand-made vessel and *unguentarium*), possibly placed in a wooden box, as suggested by the pieces of un-burnt wood and the three iron-nail fragments appearing among the vessels (Pl. IV/1).

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 47.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 51-52.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 66.

⁷¹ Vasilčin 1996-1997, p. 53.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 53.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 67.

⁷⁴ Chera, Lungu 1984, p. 109-110, 111-113, 116, 119, 129.

⁷⁵ Suceveanu 2000 type XLVI.

⁷⁶ Minčev, Georgiev 1979, p. 108.

⁷⁷ Suceveanu type XXXII B.

⁷⁸ Petre 1987, p. 14.

⁷⁹ Suceveanu 2000 type XXXII C.

⁸⁰ Petre 1987, p. 15.

⁸¹ Suceveanu 2000 type XXXIII C.

⁸² Petre 1987, p. 15-16.

⁸³ Suceveanu 2000 type XLVI B.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, type XXXIII B.

Barboși M.⁸⁵ – the red clay recipient (which the author recreates in a fictitious manner) was interpreted as probably coming from a tomb. One can neither discount entirely the hypothesis of a pottery deposit connected to funerary complex destroyed by the excavations, more so as there was no salvage digging. However, if this was a tomb, there should have also been either bones or other inventory items.

After death, the souls become the prisoners of an anonymous collectivity – *Di Manes*⁸⁶. They need something to eat and to drink brought to them periodically in order to keep the “living” shape⁸⁷. This explains the food offerings brought to the tombs on a regular basis, which were often eaten by the poor⁸⁸.

There are very few similar discoveries from the Roman Empire. Deposits of vessels and animal bones, very fragmentary but clustered (similar to the cases from Moesia Inferior previously listed), found on top of cremation tombs from the Gallo-Roman cemetery from Saint-Paul-Trois-Chateaux were also interpreted as evidence of a funerary cult⁸⁹.

Unlike the funerary feasts that, at least according to the archaeological situation, took place prior to the raising of the tumulus, one can only guess the time the pottery was deposited. This could have taken place before the raising of the tumulus, such as in Carsium, Histria or Noviodunum tumulus XXX and tumulus “Bădila”, or could have taken place before the mound was raised (probably Noviodunum, the vessels found in the mound of tumulus “Bădila”). As for the rest of the complexes, at this stage of the research, one can only put forward precarious hypotheses as to the exact time of the post-funeral practices.

II. *Foodstuff remains*

Foodstuff remains (not with accompanying pottery) can be interpreted both as proof of a funerary feast and as deposits for feeding the spirits of the dead. However, it is unclear what their connection to the post-funeral practices is, even more as there is no pottery (tableware) that would support the hypothesis of a funerary feast and because there are very few of them. The review of the following tombs is also meant to signal once again a gap in the research of cemeteries from the Roman period (the absence of studies on plant and osteological remains).

Tomis M. 35⁹⁰ – about 0.35 m above the skeleton was found a four-sided stone slab with several large bovine bones on top of it.

Durostorum⁹¹ – bovid bones were found next to the tomb entrance, but closer to the surface, and the author does not discount the possibility that an animal was sacrificed on the occasion of the burial⁹². There is no mention of a connection between the bones and the fragmentary pottery found west of the vault (see *supra*, category I. a).

Histria M. 32⁹³ – several stones and a small pit with burnt walls and containing burnt wheat were observed on the right side of an in-pit inhumation tomb, delimited by an oblique tile, placed on its head.

It is possible that the *rectangular openings*, usually located at the short sides of the boxes containing the remains from the cremation or the skeletons, also served a purpose connected to post-funeral practices. This assumption relies on their small size (between 0.35 and 0.69 m), which makes it difficult to interpret them as openings for introducing other dead later on. In every case, the openings of the boxes found on the territory of Moesia Inferior were covered with stone slabs, one of which also had a grab link (Tomis). Just one cremation tomb with the remains placed in the box had such a distinctive feature in the construction, Kardam⁹⁴ (Pl. VII/1). The other 12 complexes fall into the category of inhumation tombs

⁸⁵ Brudiu 1992, p. 8-9.

⁸⁶ Bayet 1969, p. 74.

⁸⁷ Cumont 1949, p. 29; Toynbee 1971, p. 37.

⁸⁸ Toynbee 1971, p. 50.

⁸⁹ Bel 1987, p. 36.

⁹⁰ Bucovală, Pașca 1991, p. 199, 201, 234, 235.

⁹¹ Chera-Mărgineanu 1978, p. 137-141.

⁹² *Ibidem*, p. 138.

⁹³ Unpublished, data provided by Catrinel Domăneanțu.

⁹⁴ Vasilčin 1983, p. 88-89.

with the dead placed in the box: Mamaia⁹⁵, Tomis M. without number⁹⁶, M. 50⁹⁷, M. without number⁹⁸, M. without number⁹⁹, Marcianopolis two tombs¹⁰⁰, Plenimir¹⁰¹, Pietreni¹⁰², Goričane¹⁰³, Gorun¹⁰⁴, Velikovo T. I¹⁰⁵, Noviodunum tumulus XXXI-A, M. 2¹⁰⁶. A potential argument in favor of a connection between the rectangular openings and the post-funeral practices is the tomb in Velikovo, where a fragmentary, hand-made vessel was found next to it (see *supra*, in category I. b).

III. *Traces of burning*

Although the lack of paleo-botanical, paleo-zoological or anthropological analyses questions the classification of most of the complexes listed under post-funeral practices, the following lines are meant to draw attention to certain aspects in the burial ritual that are well attested¹⁰⁷, but have generally been ignored by archaeologists because of the difficulties associated with the on-site observations and with the interpretation.

III. a. *Traces of burning outside the tomb*

The burning of substances outside the tomb is documented in the case of only three tombs. In all the cases, the burning of substances is associated with pottery or other inventory items.

Vardim second sarcophagus (M. 2)¹⁰⁸ – a clay vessel (= bowl¹⁰⁹) was present over a heap of charcoal and ash found about 0.10-0.15 m outside of the northern side of the sarcophagus. The depositing of other inventory items associated with the burning of substances referred exclusively to this tomb, since a clay toy representing a small horse was present next to the said vessel. Judging by the other two toys found in the tomb, the corpse was a girl (the earrings, bracelets and hairpins reveal the sex). The toy deposited after the burial most likely suggests the parent's wish to provide even in the afterworld the specific items used by children to pass the time.

Vardim cremation tomb (M. 3)¹¹⁰ – a heap of ash and charcoal covered by a clay *turibulum* was found 0.10-0.15 m of the southwestern corner of an on-site cremation tomb, covered with a tile lid (Pl. IV/3).

Brestnica¹¹¹ – the shape of an elliptic fireplace (0.60x0.40 m big, burn depth 0.03-0.04 m), surrounded by stones, was observed on the ancient level, next to the southwestern side of the heap of rocks covering a *bustum* (Pl. IV/2). A fragment from the upper part of a large vessel and fragments from another recipient, with thin walls and covered with slip, were found next to the fireplace, on the outside. The fireplace and the heap were covered by a tell, wrote the two authors, but this term (tell) makes me believe that, at least in ancient times, only the pile of stones was covering the tomb. The small number of vessels found next to the fireplace and its placing outside the heap of rocks covering the tomb are evidence rather in favor of the burning of substances next to the tomb than of remains from a feast.

⁹⁵ Davidescu 1965, p. 88-89.

⁹⁶ Bucovală 1991, p. 189-199.

⁹⁷ Bucovală, Pașca 1988-1989, p. 123, 129.

⁹⁸ Panaitescu 1977, p. 339-343.

⁹⁹ Rădulescu, Davidescu 1959, p. 753-754.

¹⁰⁰ Angelov 1985, p. 55-59.

¹⁰¹ Tončeva 1951, p. 121-123.

¹⁰² Papasima 1987, p. 345-352.

¹⁰³ Mirčev 1953, p. 115-116.

¹⁰⁴ Vasilčin 1978, p. 111-116.

¹⁰⁵ Vasilčin 1990, p. 33-39.

¹⁰⁶ Simion 1984, p. 79.

¹⁰⁷ Cumont 1949, p. 46-48; Toynbee 1971, p. 61.

¹⁰⁸ Vălov 1965, p. 31-32.

¹⁰⁹ Suceveanu 2000 type VIII.

¹¹⁰ Vălov 1965, p. 32-33.

¹¹¹ Agre, Dičev 2000, p. 35-48.

Another two vessels were placed over the pile of stones, a bowl¹¹² broken on site, upside down, and fragments from the bottom of another vessel, with thin walls covered with slip. It is already risky to try to link the time the vessels were deposited with the time the substances were burned – they could have taken place simultaneously or at different moments.

III. b. *Traces of burning found in tumuli*

Some of the traces of burning found in two tumuli in Histria and Galați could also be evidence of the burning of substances.

Histria tumulus XXX¹¹³ – the pit where the corpse was burnt is shaped in a way that is still unique in Moesia Inferior. The pyre consists of two long, in-cross ditches (Pl. V/1-2). The lack of analogies and an anthropological analysis prevents us from inferring exactly what role was played by the four small, circular and irregular pits placed in a symmetric fashion at the ends of the larger ditch. Besides a few cremated bones, these smaller pits contained a little ash and a small lump of charcoal, nails and a red-purplish substance. The author of the excavations considers the four pits to be an integral part of the cremation surface. It could be that these small pits were used for stabilizing the pyre¹¹⁴. The tomb's inventory was deposited not inside, but outside the complex, at some distance from it. In the same area, one found a small circular burnt surface, without any lumps or charcoal or inventory. I interpreted this burnt surface as evidence of ritual burning before the tumulus was raised.

Galați “Combinat”¹¹⁵ – I assumed the same role in the case of the burnt clay at the bottom of the tumulus, on the western side. The burnt clay was found outside the tomb's pit (disturbed in ancient times), which included bones from the skeletons of an adult and a newborn. Also at the base of the tumulus, but in the earth shifted by the bulldozer, were found two amphorae that had traces of burnt oil on the inside. It is possible that these fragments played a part in the burning of substances previous to the raising of the tumulus, although neither the amphorae fragments, nor the burnt clay are present on the illustration of the mound.

A burnt surface was found in the western half of the tumulus III in Velikovo¹¹⁶ but I do not think it played any role outside the pyre (as interpreted by the author as well) and therefore does not seem to fall in the category of post-funeral practices.

However, the situation found while excavating tumulus II in the same necropolis¹¹⁷ raises some questions. The patch of cremated bones, lumps of charcoal and ash, with a diameter of 0.90 m, also placed in the western side of the tumulus (Pl. VI/2), was interpreted as *ustrina* as well. Indeed, the presence of cremated bones and the placing on the same side of the mound as the T. III case support this interpretation, although other observations overthrow it (the small diameter of the burning and the fact that the author says nothing about the burnt soil, such as in the T. III case). One should also mention that the association between the mugs, on the one hand, (despite the fact they were wheel-, and not hand-made, such as in the case of the tomb in question, but the inventory of the necropolis in Velikovo is characterized by the presence of hand-made pottery and lamps) and the lamps, on the other, is an association also encountered in other cases, which were interpreted as post-funeral practices (see *infra*, in category IV. a). In the absence of more details, and in particular of anthropological analyses, I believe that the discoveries in this tumulus cannot receive a sure interpretation either way.

Similar to the pottery deposits (see *supra*, category I. b), the *traces of burning* could be evidence from two moments of the burial ritual: one prior to the raising of the tumulus, and, in the case of flat tombs, one after the complex was closed.

Although they are not actual post-funeral practices, probably because they took place before the complex was closed, one should mention the archaeological evidence of *burning inside the tomb*, which can be interpreted as the ritual burning of solid or liquid substances, as part of the burial ritual. This

¹¹² Suceveanu 2000 type XIV A.

¹¹³ Alexandrescu 1966, p. 197-201.

¹¹⁴ Polfer 2000, p. 30.

¹¹⁵ Brudiu 1979, p. 328-330.

¹¹⁶ Vasilčin 1990, p. 43-45.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 39-42.

observation is only meant to show the complexity of the burial ceremonial, which has been much too often overlooked so far, but which is worth analyzing in specialty studies that complement the archaeological enterprise.

Enisala M. 35¹¹⁸ – although the aforementioned author believes the ash and traces of burning at the bottom of the jug used as an urn stand proof of use prior to the burial, I believe we cannot exclude any explanations connected to a possible burning of substances with ritual or purifying roles next to the urn.

Histria M. 31¹¹⁹ – three amphorae fragments were found on the top of the upper part of the chest and on top of the head of the skeleton laid down in an in-pit inhumation tomb. A black, dusty substance, probably the carbonized remains of some oil, was found under one of these fragments, but mostly above the sand covering the skeleton, and even under the bones.

Oescus M. 10¹²⁰ – a patch of burnt ground, 0.80 m in diameter and 0.04 m thick, filled with a layer of charcoal and shapeless iron items, was found on the northern side of the brick box of a cremation tomb. In this case, given the depth of the burning, one cannot claim the cremated remains brought over from the pyre were deposited there. It is more likely that there was some kind of controlled burning during the burial ritual, after the *ustrina* cremation of the corpse.

Callatis M. 9¹²¹ – one noticed traces of burning in the pit of an inhumation tomb as well, a tomb covered with tiles.

Callatis M. 10¹²² – it was again in the pit of an inhumation tomb covered with tiles that one found traces of burning and ash, more consistent around the leg area, where the inventory was placed. The author suggests these traces of burning were there before the body is being deposited. The fact that none of the inventory items (amphora = “table” amphora¹²³; jug¹²⁴; lamp and glass *unguentarium*) bore any traces of secondary burning seems to support the author’s observations and conclusion that substances were burned during the burial ritual.

Galati, “Dunărea” neighborhood¹²⁵ – the northwestern corner of the smaller room on the northern side of the vault yielded a circular surface with ash and lumps of charcoal, 0.40 m in diameter (Pl. VI/1). The idea that substances were burned during the burial ritual is supported by the fact that this surface was placed opposite of the entrance and the presence on it of fragments from a vessel that the author interpret as a rush-light with a high handle, although the profile that was published raises some questions due to the large size of the angle between the vessel’s walls. One should also mention, however, that the tomb was robbed in ancient times.

IV. *Lamps deposits*

The lamps deposits outside the tomb are either accompanied by other sorts of clay or glass vessels, or not associated with other items.

IV. a. *Lamps deposits accompanied by pottery*

Lamps deposits accompanied by pottery were listed and described in category I. b. Pottery deposits (Noviodunum T XXX, sarcophagus, and, with some reserves, Beroe A 334 bis) or in category III. b. Traces of burning found in tumuli (Velikovo T. II).

IV. b. *Lamps deposits accompanied by glass vessels*

They were recorded in just one case.

Odessos M.?¹²⁶ – the inventory found in a chance discovery (fragments from two glass vessels and two lamps, one of which decorated with an erotic scene) was assumed to belong to a tomb. However, the

¹¹⁸ Babeş 1971, p. 24, 25, 26.

¹¹⁹ Unpublished, records of C. Domăneanţu.

¹²⁰ Kovačeva 1984, p. 78.

¹²¹ Cheluţă-Georgescu 1974, p. 181-182.

¹²² *Ibidem*, p. 183-184.

¹²³ Opaţ 2003 type I.

¹²⁴ Suceveanu type XLVI B.

¹²⁵ Brudiu 1976, p. 85-94.

¹²⁶ Tončeva 1964, p. 55-56.

failure to find any bones, as well as the items' being close to an in-box inhumation tomb means one cannot discard the possibility it was connected to post-funeral practices. The type of the decoration on the lamp should not come as a surprise, because items decorated with scenes from the same repertoire were also making up the inventory of other four tombs in Moesia Inferior¹²⁷.

IV. c. *Lamps deposits*

Lamps deposits have been found in just three cases so far.

Carsium tumulus 4¹²⁸ – an undecorated lamp made of a fine yellowish fabric, without traces of burning, was deposited in the small mound of yellow soil covering the main tomb of the tumulus, of the on-site cremation type. One can assume that the deposit was stressing the symbol of the lamp, of light source¹²⁹, all the more so as it is quite usual to find unused *lucernae* in the inventories of some tombs.

Carsium tumulus 6 M. 1¹³⁰ – a lamp was found on the edge of the pit from the *bustum* burial. Unfortunately, this was not rendered on the drawing of the tomb. However, I noticed myself a lamp clearly found outside the outline of a cremation tomb with the remains placed in the pit, in Alburnus Maior “Tăul Cornii”¹³¹.

Histria M. 4¹³² – a lamp was found very close to the in-pit inhumation tomb.

V. *Pits found next to the tombs*

They were recorded in just one case.

Histria tumulus VIII¹³³ – besides the in-pit inhumation tomb on the southern edge, the tumulus also included an oval pit dug in the center of the mound. For the time being, I see no other purpose for it besides remembrance of the deceased, since the pit included quite a few traces of burnt wood, probably from a funerary fireplace, and one found on one edge of the pit a clay bowl (= cup¹³⁴) and a glass mug that may have contained liquid substances.

Although the arguments in favor of cataloguing them as post-funeral practices are utterly lacking, paradoxically, several pits without inventory were connected by the excavation authors to the cult of the dead.

Noviodunum tumulus “Bădila”¹³⁵ – a three meter-deep shaft was dug in the center of the mound, all the way down to the ancient walking level, with nothing in it (Pl. VIII/1).

Noviodunum tumulus XXX¹³⁶ – the center of the mound was also the location of a pit whose bottom was covered by a thin layer of charcoal.

Histria tumulus XXIV¹³⁷ – one found close to the northern edge of the tumulus a pit, without any material in it, that crossed the first layer of the tumulus's mound and reached the small heap of ground that covered the tomb with the remains from the cremation laid down in the pit (Pl. II/1).

One cannot posit any hypothesis as to the purpose and dating of the tumuli in Noviodunum, although the author of the excavations believes they were offering pits connected to the ancient tombs. It cannot be disregarded the possibility that this assumption could be true, but an ulterior dig by robbers is also a possibility, even more so as there was no inventory. As for the pit in the tumulus in Histria, the author of the excavations believes that it is connected to “a cult of the tomb, manifested by offerings brought after

¹²⁷ Oța 2003, p. 157.

¹²⁸ Buzdugan *et al.* 1998-2000, p. 432-433, 438, 440, 444.

¹²⁹ Cumont 1949, p. 48-51.

¹³⁰ Buzdugan *et al.* 1998-2000, p. 435, 449.

¹³¹ Excavations made in 2002.

¹³² Condurachi *et al.* 1957, p. 28, 29.

¹³³ Alexandrescu 1966, p. 210.

¹³⁴ Suceveanu 2000, p. 73, no.24, type XVIII B.

¹³⁵ Simion 1977, p. 123-124.

¹³⁶ Simion 1994-1995, p. 121-122, 127, 129-130.

¹³⁷ Alexandrescu 1966, p. 206-207 and 272.

the tumulus was raised". These offerings or libations might have been "perishable and did not leave any traces in the earth"¹³⁸.

I believe that, at this stage of the research, it is more prudent to exclude inventory-free pits from the category of post-funeral practices. This decision is based foremost on the absence of the inventory.

There are quite a few cases of ritual pits in certain parts of Gallia, starting with the La Tène period and still going on in the Roman period. However, the differences from the inventory-free pits listed above are striking, which seems to negate the ritual character of the latter. Sometimes, the ritual pits in the Celtic region included large amounts of ash and charcoal, animal bones and, in some cases, human bones, as well as pottery, various items (coins, adornments, statuettes), vegetal remains. In addition, the stratigraphy (layers of deposits sealed in by layers of sterile soil) revealed they had been filled over time. In certain areas, such as Armorique or Vendée, the pits had more elaborated structures, with masonry in the upper part. Often, these ritual pits are associated with cremation or inhumation tombs, but also with sanctuaries¹³⁹.

Pits without inventory were found in other two tumuli in Callatis¹⁴⁰. The tumuli were not researched in their entirety. The authors do not draw any conclusions about the pit perforating tumulus 1, but they believe the pit in the center of tumulus 2 is either a robbery or an unrecorded case of archaeological research from the interwar period.

VI. *Cult site*

The situation with the tumulus found in Ljublen¹⁴¹ is much more complex. A genuine cult site was arranged there by placing the tumulus in the center of a polygonal surface delimited by a wall (Pl. VII/3). The entrance was on the eastern side. Besides the tumulus that contained two tombs, both of them on-site cremation, inside of the enclosure was found a stone structure, with a single square room – 5×5 m. The remains of a broken limestone capital decorated with acanthus leaves and human representations were found in front of the square room. A chance discovery that had happened in the same place a few years earlier revealed another capital, identical in terms of size and decoration with the one described by the author. The discovery of the two capitals was interpreted as evidence that the façade of the said structure was decorated with columns¹⁴². A marble male head and a few pottery fragments were found inside the room. The author's hypothesis¹⁴³ was that the entire complex was meant to celebrate one of the two dead, who might have been a physician, based on the medical instruments deposited as inventory. The odd thing, however, is the second tomb. The author's assumption is that the second tomb belongs to the physician's wife, but, besides items specific to a woman, such as golden earrings with pendants¹⁴⁴ were found the remains of a bridle bit and an iron chisel. Regardless of the sex of the person buried in M. 2, what is for sure is the strong connection between the two dead, probably relatives, given their being buried together in a place with a special destination.

Rectangular enclosures delimiting tombs were found in other provinces of the Roman Empire as well. Tumuli delimited by rectangular enclosures were found mostly in Western Europe (Germany and Belgium) - Löslich, Oberlöstern, Nennig, Newel, Siesbach, Consdorf, Antoing-Guéronde – but there aren't many of them, probably because of the current stage of the research¹⁴⁵. Three such rectangular enclosures were found in Eastern Europe (Romania and Slovenia), in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa¹⁴⁶, Cinciș¹⁴⁷ and in Ribnica¹⁴⁸. However, none of the aforementioned discoveries is a perfect analogy. A

¹³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 272.

¹³⁹ Galliou 1989, p. 60-63.

¹⁴⁰ CCA, campania 2004, p. 217-218.

¹⁴¹ Ovčarov 1979, p. 33, 37.

¹⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 44.

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 45.

¹⁴⁴ Berg 2002, p. 28.

¹⁴⁵ Wigg 1993, p. 34-36.

¹⁴⁶ Daicovicu *et al.* 1974-1975, p. 229-231.

¹⁴⁷ Floca, Valea 1965, p. 171-173.

¹⁴⁸ Wigg 1993, p. 36.

number of differences set them apart from the Ljublen complex. First of all, the enclosure delimiting the tumuli is rectangular – with the sole exception of Ljublen. The second difference consists of the large number of tombs found in some of enclosures (Newel, Cinciș) as compared to the utter absence of tombs (Siesbach) or the existence of a central tomb (Löslich). As for the enclosure at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, it does not have any tumuli.

Other cult ensembles, but in the shape of temples, were built on the site of another two *busta*, in Verulamium-Folly Lane¹⁴⁹ and Avenches-En Chaplix¹⁵⁰. The site in Ljublen seems to me to be more likely comparable to these last two cult sites, although it has not been fitted out in such an elaborate manner and is dated to a much later time – 3rd century A.D. Nevertheless, the three discoveries are evidence of the same phenomena – the organization of a full-fledged, large cult, in honor of a dead person.

VII. Pavements

Pavements were found in some of the tumuli in Noviodunum. The lack of any illustrations is an impediment to trying to find an explanation for these complexes. However, it is possible they are remains of funerary feasts or pottery deposits, but the lack of plans and photographs means that, for now, they need to fall in a separate category.

Noviodunum tumulus V-B M. 1¹⁵¹ – the outside edge of the pit of the *bustum* burial was paved 0.30-0.65 m wide with brick, tile and amphorae fragments, out of which one item was successfully reconstituted. It is possible this pavement was a remain from a funerary feast, though the absence of tableware runs counter to this idea, or a pottery deposit.

Noviodunum tumulus II-C M. 1¹⁵² – the outside edge of the pit of the *bustum* burial was paved with ceramic fragments from large vessels, perhaps remains from a feast as well.

VIII. Dog skull

It is very difficult to explain the presence of a dog skull on the same layer as, and close to, the tomb of the character that was the target of veneration in Ljublen (see *supra*, category VI). The author¹⁵³ believes that the dog skull might play a magic role. The comparisons that come to mind immediately are with situations in the Thracian or Geto-Dacian world of the 4th-3rd centuries B.C.¹⁵⁴, but I should stress these are not perfect analogies, because dog skulls, such as the one in Ljublen, were found in only two cases out of 43¹⁵⁵. The explanation attempted by V. Sîrbu is connected either to some psychopomp's attributes, or to the master's attachment to the dog, for dogs never appear as meat offerings, or in the pits with human skeletons in the settlements, or in the cult complexes¹⁵⁶. For Romans, the ceremonies that required dog sacrifices were linked to rich harvests (*Robigalia*) or female fertility (*Genita Mana*). However, dog sacrifices are rare, including in Rome¹⁵⁷. I have created a separate category for post-funeral practices for several reasons. The first concerns the discovery of the dog skull outside the tomb. D. Ovčarov makes no mention of the depositing of the dog skull in a pit. Therefore, it could be that the said skull was deposited next to the tomb, on the ancient level, although the absence of a detailed plan makes it considerably more difficult to attach meaning to the situation. The second reason is the fact that the rest of the animal's skeleton was not found. The lack of a full skeleton, as well as the possibility that the dog skull was deposited on the ancient level, could suggest that this was no ordinary animal burial, but a ritual deposit made at some point during the time it took to raise the tumulus.

¹⁴⁹ Niblett 2000, p. 98.

¹⁵⁰ Castella *et al.* 2002, p. 38.

¹⁵¹ Simion 1984, p. 80.

¹⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 81.

¹⁵³ Ovčarov 1979, p. 45.

¹⁵⁴ Sîrbu 1993, p. 54.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 48.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 54.

¹⁵⁷ Blaive 1995, p. 279-289.

Several discoveries of animal remains in other parts of the Roman Empire have been interpreted in the same way, namely that they are ritual deposits. The inside court of a *villa* found 1.5 km west of vicus Salodurum (Solothurn) revealed a funerary enclosure. Outside this funerary enclosure, a cattle skull was buried in a small pit¹⁵⁸. C. Schucany hypothesizes that the cattle skull could represent an apotropaic sign, originally placed above the entrance of the funerary enclosure or on one of its walls. It is possible the cattle skull was buried outside the funerary enclosure later on, when the enclosure tomb was de-sanctified as a result of the *villa* changing hands or of intensive reconstruction works¹⁵⁹. On the floor of the grave 400 in Lankhills was discovered an empty coffin, interpreted as a cenotaph. Immediately above the “head” end of the coffin was the complete and articulated skeleton of a dog. Near the “foot” end, in the fill of the grave, were the dismembered remains of a dog¹⁶⁰. At Barton Court Farm, three infant burials had animal skulls (two dogs and a sheep) placed with them¹⁶¹.

There are inscriptions attesting to animal burials, such as little birds, in cemeteries found in Roman provinces, but an explanation of the phenomenon is difficult to come about for now, believes Ph. Leveau¹⁶². Animal cemeteries were found in the area of the Gallo-Roman culture¹⁶³. Burials of animals, such as horses or dogs, were also found in a few cemeteries in Britannia. S. Esmonde Cleary emphasizes that “the presence of animal remains in funerary contexts is perhaps more common than is often realised, and not just as grave-goods”¹⁶⁴. Both the burials of whole animals and the discoveries of animal skull next to tombs are interpreted by the aforementioned author as ritual deposits, with two possible explanations. One of them concerns the qualities that people associate with certain animals, an idea identical to the one put forward by K. Bradley in connection to the animal representations in the funerary Roman art¹⁶⁵. The other explanation is based on the association between animals and deities which leads to the site being associated with that deity¹⁶⁶.

The following complexes *cannot be considered post-funeral practices*. I am taking them into consideration either because the author of the excavations presumed some of them to have played cult-related roles (the so-called altars), or because they were found near tombs.

1. *Set-ups that the author calls altars* were found in only three tumuli in Noviodunum:

Noviodunum tumulus “Bădila”¹⁶⁷ – a brick “altar” 0.28 m tall and 0.73×0.50 m big was found close to the western edge of the tumulus (Pl. VIII/2). This tumulus contained nine tombs and the altar was probably built and used at the same time as the in-sarcophagus inhumation tomb that was put together before the tumulus was raised (Pl. VIII/1). At the same time the mound was raised, the altar was merged with it, believes the referenced author.

Noviodunum tumulus XXVIII-A¹⁶⁸ – a brick “altar” also placed towards the bottom of the tumulus, towards the southern edge, 0.35/0.30×0.40 m big. It is also worth mentioning that the southern edge of this tumulus is also the place where a *bustum* was found.

Noviodunum tumulus XXXI-A¹⁶⁹ – a small cubic “altar”, 0.30/0.30×0.35 m big, made of tiles placed vertically, was found three meters to the south-east from the main tomb.

Unfortunately, the almost total lack of illustrations prevents us from coming up with a sure conclusion in this case. However, I believe the idea that these were altars should be abandoned in favor of

¹⁵⁸ Schucany 2000, p. 118.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 123.

¹⁶⁰ Esmonde Cleary 2000, p. 138.

¹⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 139.

¹⁶² Leveau 1987, p. 38.

¹⁶³ Deonna 1955, p. 246.

¹⁶⁴ Esmonde Cleary 2000, p. 138.

¹⁶⁵ Bradley 1998, p. 529.

¹⁶⁶ Esmonde Cleary 2000, p. 139.

¹⁶⁷ Simion 1977, p. 123, 124.

¹⁶⁸ Simion 1984, p. 78.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 78-79.

another explanation, namely that they were bases for grave markers. There are several arguments to support this: the small size (in particular in terms of height) of these set-ups, which would make burning or depositing substance uneasy, the fact that they were built with bricks or tiles and not stone, the way the altars were, and the absence of inscriptions. Furthermore, these structures were covered with soil - even though after being used for a while, something that is difficult to accept it could happen in the case of altars, which by their very nature are supposed to be visible and play their part in the periodical ceremonies connected to the tomb¹⁷⁰. The idea that these were altars raises another question when comparing them to tumular tombs in other provinces of the Empire. It is usual to find altar bases in instances of tumular tombs surrounded with walls or of funerary enclosures. However, there are major differences compared to the situations in Noviodunum: those bases are large, made out of stone and, at least in the case of tumuli surrounded with walls, built inside of them¹⁷¹. The small size of the set-up in Noviodunum validates the assumption that they served as bases for grave markers, smaller than altars or statues, and made of lighter materials.

2. *The platform and the pavement* found in two tumuli in Noviodunum could served as bases for grave markers, too.

Noviodunum tumulus XXXIII-A¹⁷² – in the southern half of the mound, which covered a *bustum* burial, one found a rhomb-like platform, made of stone, tile and brick fragments, and pottery fragments.

Noviodunum tumulus XXXI-A¹⁷³ – a stone pavement 2×1 m in size was found 3.5 m southwest of the main tomb. At a similar distance, but to the southeast, one found the tile set-up (see *supra*, no. 1).

3. The next complex represents a *funerary monument* rather than a tomb.

Noviodunum tumulus II-C M. 5¹⁷⁴ – was considered a cenotaph, but the author's descriptions suggests more of a sudden desertion of the works on raising a funerary monument “consisting of a large stone slab shaped like a funerary *stela* that someone started imprinting a model on but then abandoned it. Together with other materials it made up a tomb-like platform”. The monument was placed between two *busta*.

4. The *adornments and coins outside the tombs* do not fall into the category of post-funeral practices. More likely, they were lost (in the case of coins) or are traces of robberies. This is because all the said adornment items were made of precious metals: a gold earring next to M. 2 in Gorni Džbniki¹⁷⁵, one gold necklace next to M. 2 in Almus¹⁷⁶ and another next to the box in Pietreni¹⁷⁷. The brief descriptions and the lack of drawings or plans makes it almost impossible to come up with an explanation for the bronze bracelet found over a bone west of M. 3 in Gorni Dăbnik¹⁷⁸. However, the author does not say anything about the robbery of the brick box where the remains from the cremation were laid, which means this bracelet may have been lost there, similar to the coins. Both coins were found in Tomis, outside the limestone box of M. 12¹⁷⁹ and at the entrance to the funerary chamber of M. 44¹⁸⁰.

5. *The mug and the coin* outside the next tomb are not traces of post-funeral practices.

Oescus M. 7¹⁸¹ – the ground above the fragmentary box, which contained only a skull, yielded a small mug and a bronze coin. It is not impossible that the recipient was used after the burial and the coin was lost, although the fragmentary state of the box and skeleton rather support the idea that the said objects belonged to the tomb's inventory and that they were shifted later.

¹⁷⁰ Toynbee 1971, p. 254.

¹⁷¹ Wigg 1993, p. 41-42.

¹⁷² Simion 1984, p. 79.

¹⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 78-79.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

¹⁷⁵ Velkov 1940-1942, p. 214-215.

¹⁷⁶ Milčev, Filipov 1966, p. 17, with the note that the head of the skeleton was also found next to the tomb.

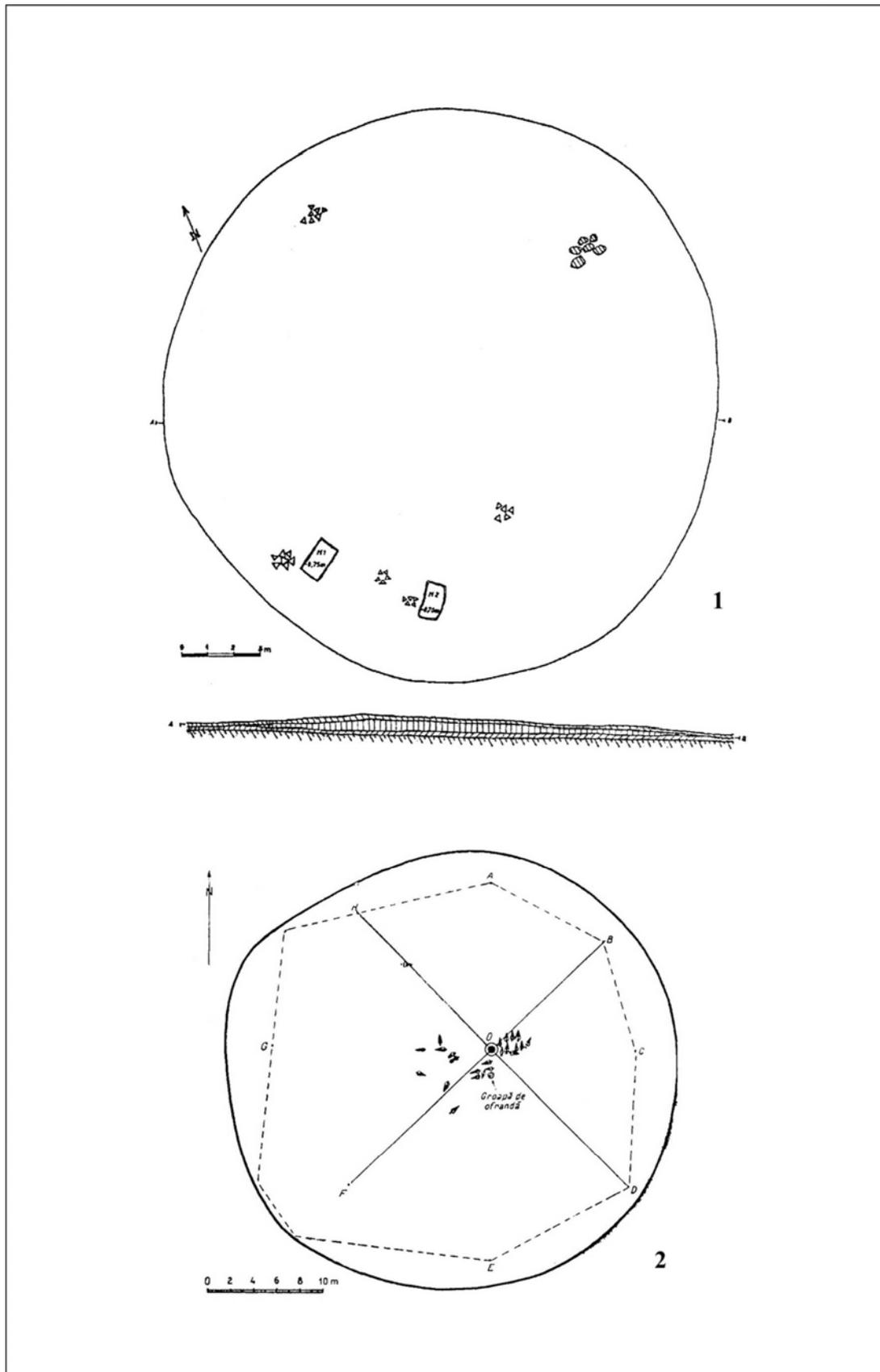
¹⁷⁷ Papasima 1987, p. 345-352.

¹⁷⁸ Velkov 1940-1942, p. 215.

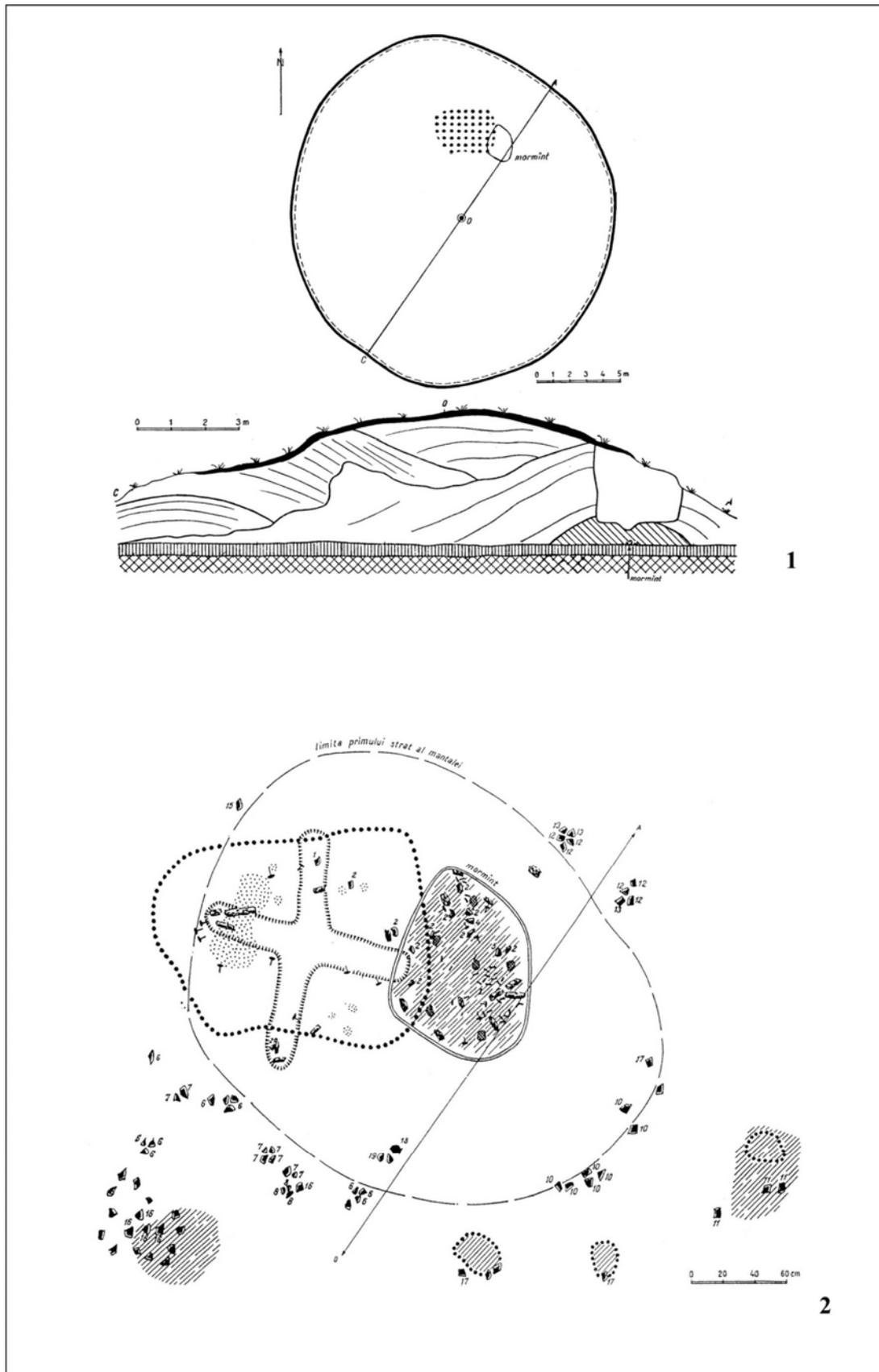
¹⁷⁹ Bucovală, Pașca 1991, p. 205, 235.

¹⁸⁰ Bucovală, Pașca 1992, p. 266-267.

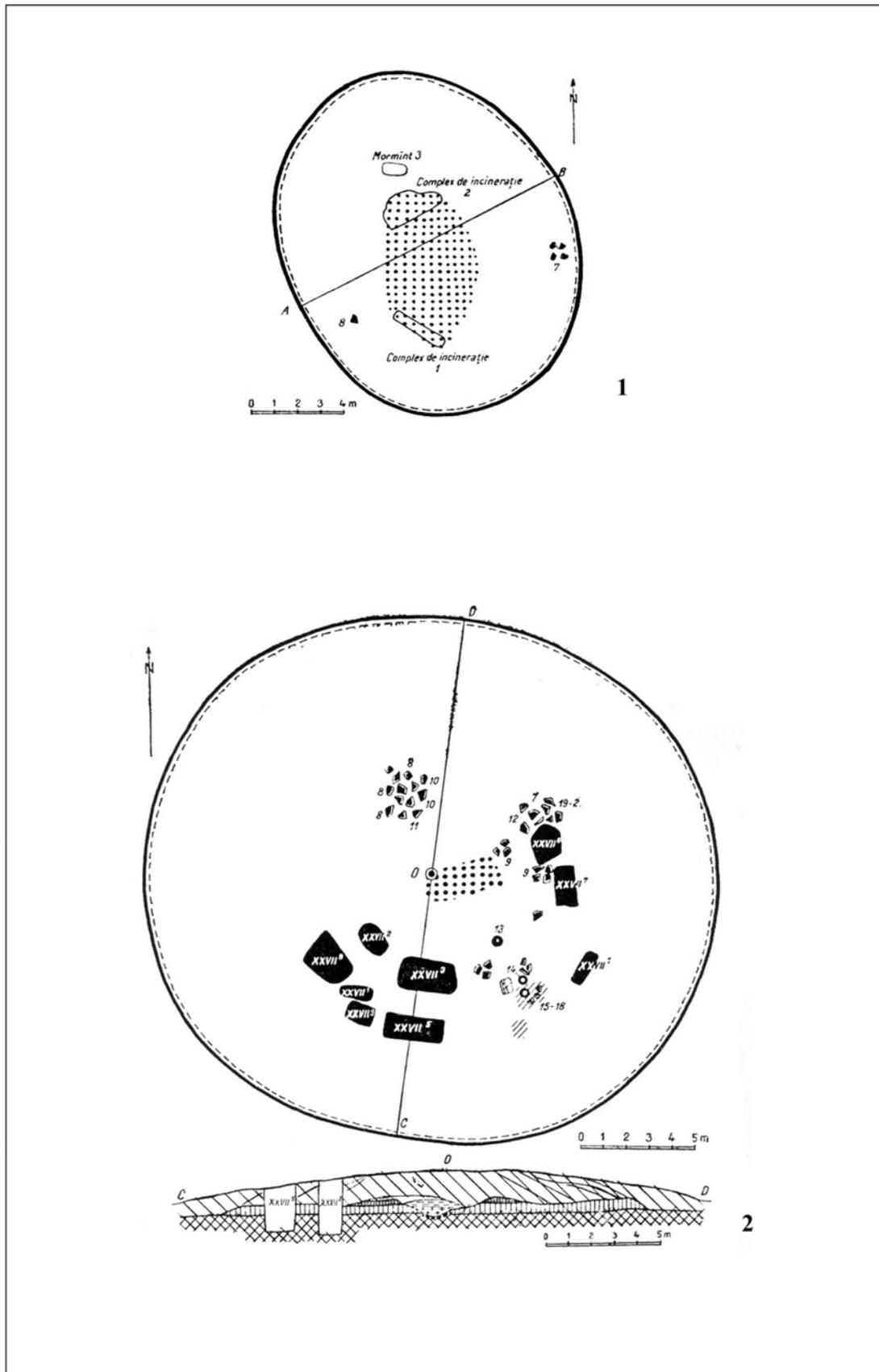
¹⁸¹ Kovačeva 1984, p. 70-71.



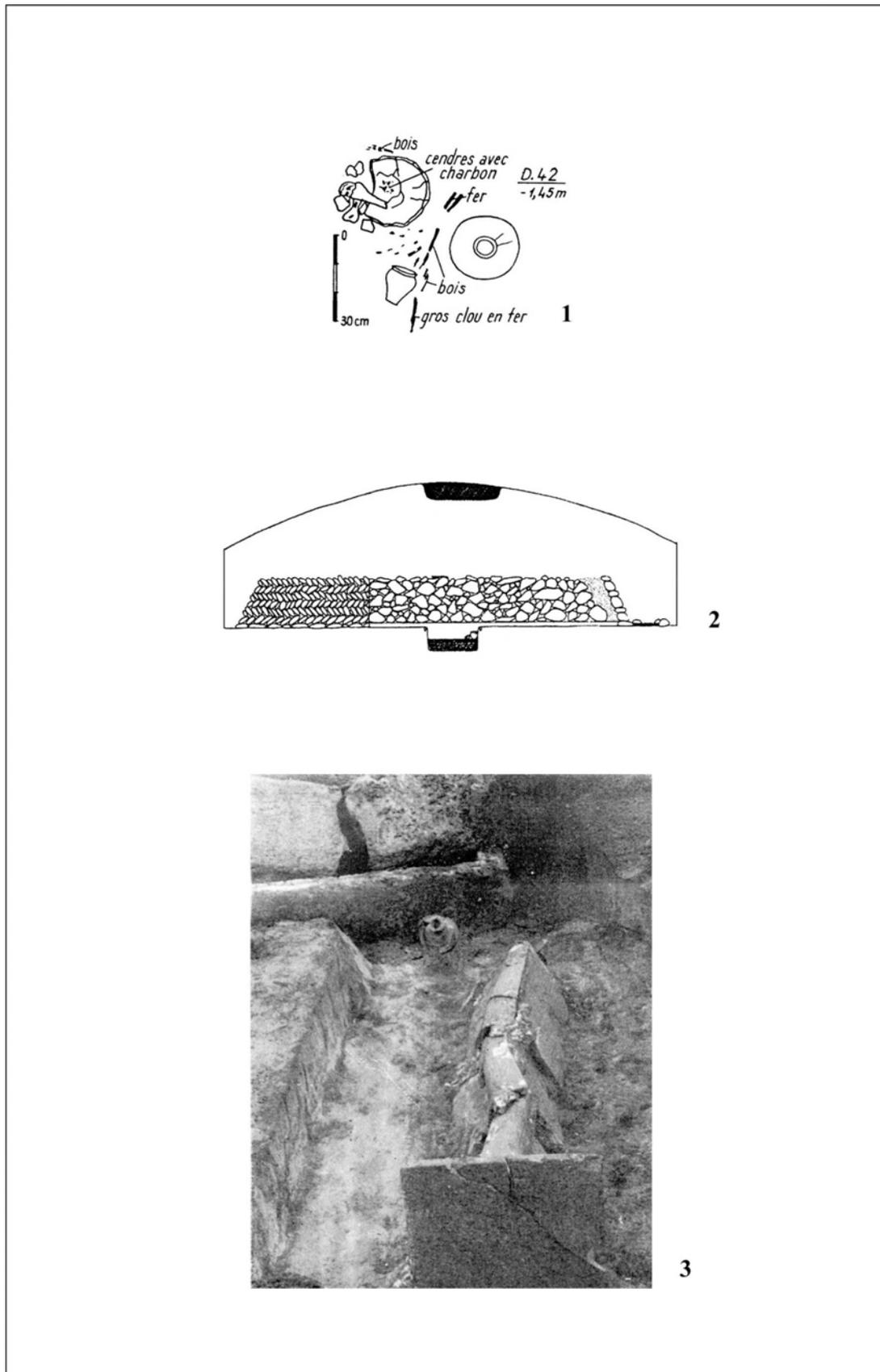
Pl. I. 1. Carsum T. 3 (after Buzdugan et al. 1998-2000, fig. 4/2),
2. Histria T. XVI (after Alexandrescu 1966, fig. 44)



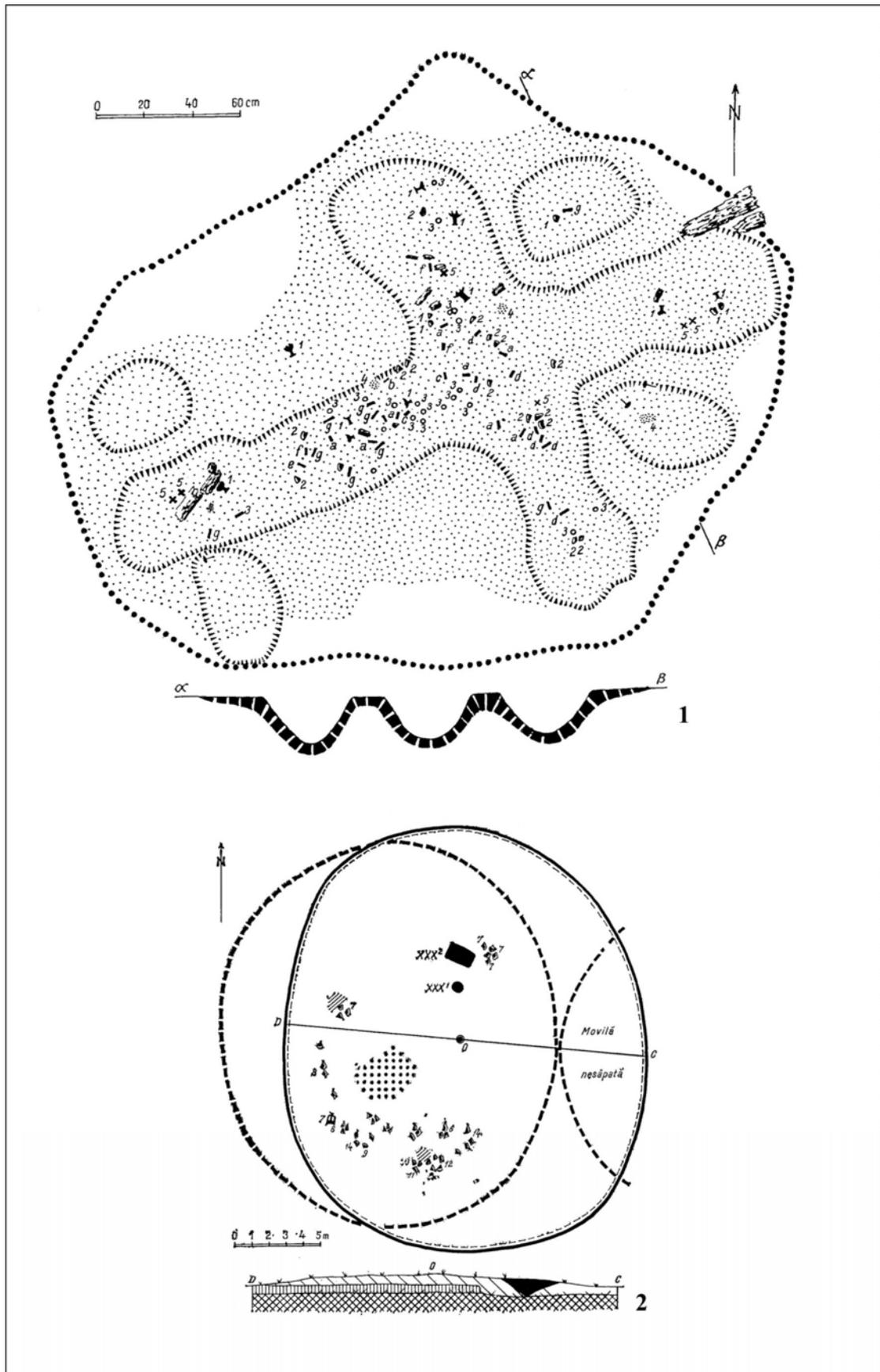
Pl. II. 1. Histria T. XXIV (after Alexandrescu 1966, fig. 46),
2. T. XXIV (after Alexandrescu 1966, fig. 47)



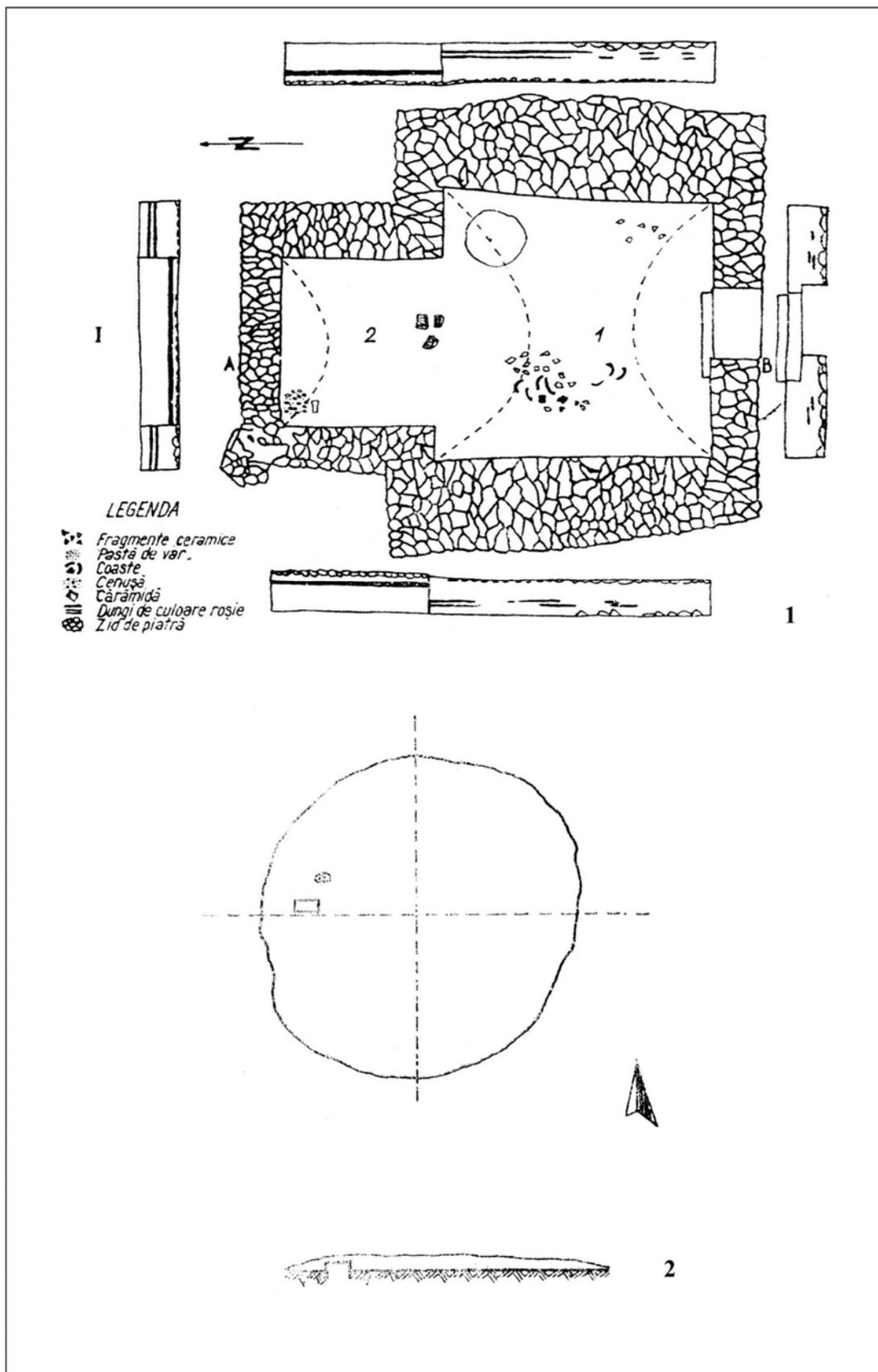
Pl. III. 1. Histria T. XXXVI (after Alexandrescu 1966, fig. 41),
2. T. XXVII (after Alexandrescu 1966, fig. 48)



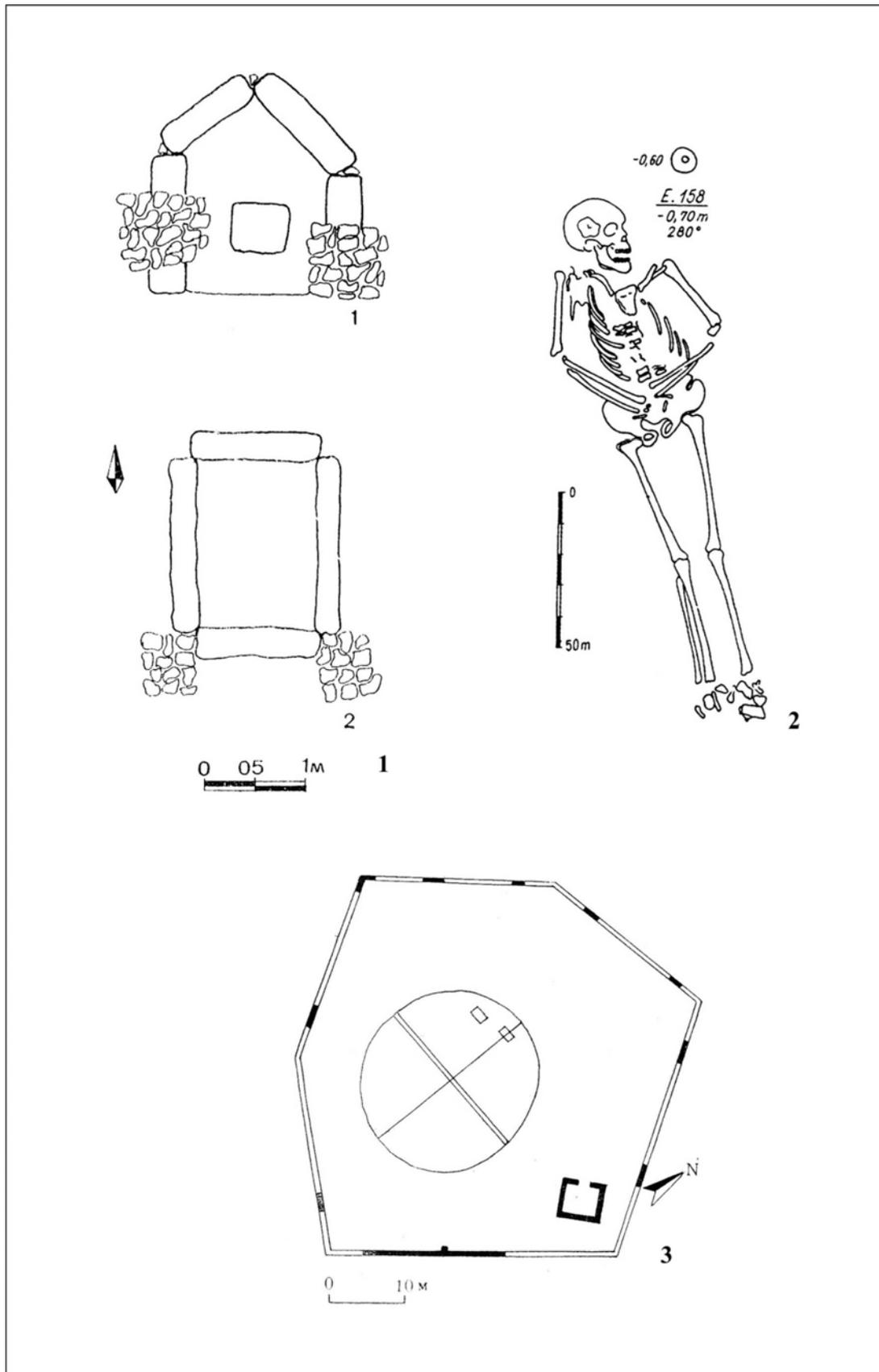
Pl. IV. 1. Beroe D 42 (after Petre 1987, pl. 29a), 2. Brestnica (after Agre, Dičev 2000, fig. 2), 3. Vardim M. 3 (after Válov 1965, fig. 13)



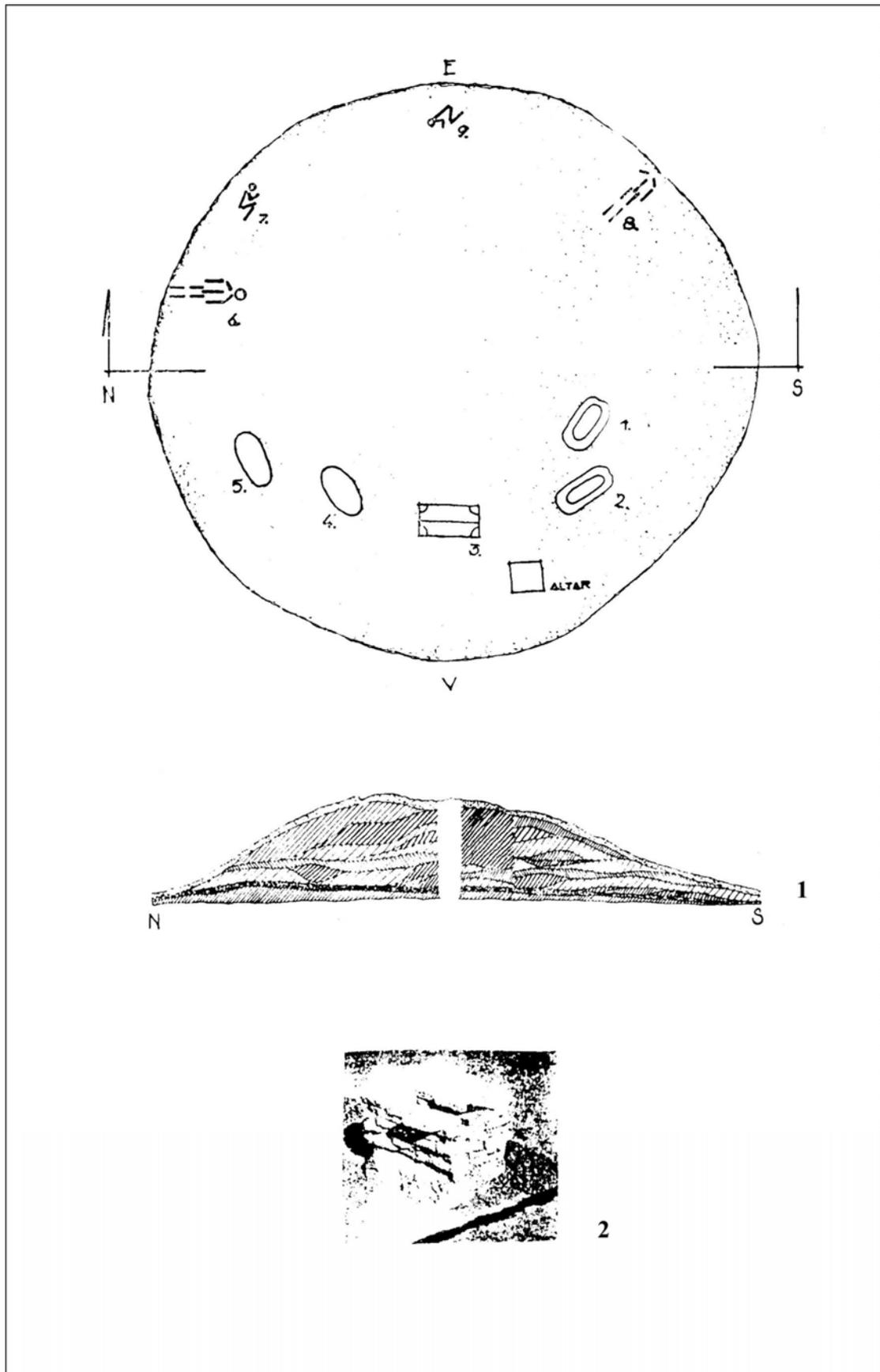
Pl. V. 1-2. Histria T. XXX (after Alexandrescu 1966, fig. 39-40)



PI. VI. 1. Galați "Dunărea" (after Brudiu 1976, fig. 3),
2. Velikovo T. II (after Vasilčin 1990, fig. 3)



Pl. VII. 1. Kardam M. 1 (after Vasilčin 1983, pl. II), 2. Beroe E 158 (after Petre 1987, pl. 24a), 3. Ljublen (after Ovčarov 1979, fig. 1)



Pl. VIII. 1-2. Noviodunum T. "Bădila" (after Simion 1977, pl. II and V/3).

Conclusions

John Pearce stresses that “the burial is a transformation rather than a direct reflexion of identity. This transformation depends on culturally specific attitudes towards death and the dead”¹⁸². In the review of the works by M. Parker-Pearson and S. Tarlow, T. Júdice Gamito calls attention to the fact that what is observed in a tomb “is not or was not, the way the deceased saw himself or might have wanted to show himself in death, but rather a re-interpretation of him by his fellow citizens or relatives”¹⁸³. The type of burial, the layout of the tomb and, most important, the funerary inventory are “intentional data” because they reflect the way of thinking of the community, namely its social ideology, but it is possible they do not reflect the real social position of the dead¹⁸⁴. However, an attempt at making connections between certain categories of post-funeral practices and the type of burial can reveal important data – if not on the social structure, then at least on the representations related to the society’s structure in the minds of the participants in the funerary ritual¹⁸⁵. The clearest case is that of funerary feasts (category I. a). Of the 10 complexes that, at the current stage of research, can fall in the aforementioned category, the large majority (nine) are covered with tumuli. As mentioned before (see *supra*, category I. a), tumular tombs can be considered signs of an elite. Displaying special status – if not of the dead, then of the family that the dead was from – translates into the following: raising tumuli, arranging individual pyres – seven of the nine tumuli are covering *busta*, which means more space and effort went into it¹⁸⁶ –, funerary feasts.

Unlike category I. a (funerary feasts) of post-funeral practices, category I. b (pottery deposits) is significantly less consistent in terms of types of tombs that it is associated with. Most of the complexes belong to the following types: inhumation tombs with the deceased deposited in a pit and *busta*, while the rest fall into the category of inhumation tombs with the deceased deposited in a sarcophagus; inhumation tombs with the deceased deposited in a box; inhumation tombs with the deceased deposited in a funerary chamber; cremation remains deposited in a pit; cenotaph-tomb. The same diversity of types of tombs can be found in other categories of post-funeral practices, such as II (foodstuff remains), III (traces of burning) or IV (lamps deposits). The wide range of types of tombs is accompanied by a wide range of the types of cemeteries in which they were discovered: cemeteries of Roman towns (Oescus, Novae, Durostorum and, mostly, Noviodunum); cemeteries of Roman forts and/or of the nearby settlements (Carsium, Beroe); cemeteries of Greek towns (Histria, Tomis and Odessos) or of towns built after the Greek model (Marcianopolis); rural cemeteries (Ljublen, Brestnica, Velikovo, Vardim, Kragulevo).

The spatial distribution of the categories of post-funeral practices in question (I. b, II, III, IV) points to two hypotheses. The first deals with the diffusion and timeline of the post-funeral practices in Moesia Inferior. Post-funeral practices in the aforementioned categories are characteristic of the Roman world. They are encountered in almost all the types of cemeteries from Moesia Inferior, while the timeline covers all of the three centuries A.D., with a large concentration after the middle of the second century A.D. This sizeable distribution in time and space could mean that the post-funeral practices characteristic of the Roman world were adopted on a relatively large scale in Moesia Inferior. Thus, the embracing of Roman post-funeral practices could be another argument in support of the conclusion that we are seeing a Roman sameness among the tombs in Moesia Inferior from the 1st-3rd centuries A.D., in addition to the argument of the Roman influence observed on the types of tombs and funerary inventories¹⁸⁷. The second hypothesis concerns the origin of the *busta* discovered in Moesia Inferior. The specialists are divided as to the origin of this funerary custom – Greek, Greek-Roman or Italic. When I posited that the *busta* dating from the 1st-3rd centuries A.D. discovered on the territory of Moesia Inferior pass through the Roman filter, I had two arguments in mind: the layout is different from the complexes of the same type from the Greek period, and the funerary inventory consists primarily of Roman items¹⁸⁸. In terms of numbers, most

¹⁸² Pearce 2000, p. 8.

¹⁸³ Júdice Gamito 2001, p. 212.

¹⁸⁴ Härke 1993, p. 142.

¹⁸⁵ E. R. Leach, *apud* Härke 1993, p. 141.

¹⁸⁶ Struck 2000, p. 86.

¹⁸⁷ Oța 2003, p. 304-305.

¹⁸⁸ Oța 2003, p. 25-29.

of the post-funeral practices specific to the Roman world are associated with *busta* – categories I.b, II, III and IV. In the Geto-Dacian space, one found relatively few tombs from the period before the Roman conquest that can be associated with funerary feasts, which requires caution in the discussing the origin of the this type of post-funeral practices, largely associated with *busta* in Moesia Inferior. Even if the funerary feasts are from a tradition that predates the Roman conquest, we cannot rule out a “contamination” of this practice with Roman elements, for often the values of a dominant civilization are integrated in the system of the dominated and play a role as new status symbols¹⁸⁹. The association of most post-funeral practices of Roman origin with the *busta* (regardless of whether we take into account category I. a or not) constitutes the third argument in favor of the diffusion of this type of cremation via the Roman world, in Moesia Inferior at least.

Translation: Livia Sîrbu

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¹⁸⁹ N. Wachtel, *apud* Schucany 2000, p. 123.

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