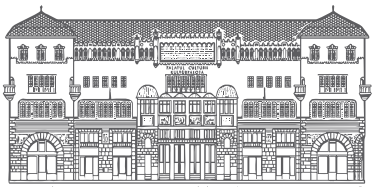
MARISIA

ARCHAEOLOGIA
HISTORIA
PATRIMONIUM

5

Târgu Mureş
2023



CORRESPONDENCE

Muzeul Judeţean Mureş / Mureş County Museum
CP 85, str. Mărăşti nr. 8A, 540328 Târgu Mureş, România
e-mail: marisiaedit@gmail.com

Cover: István KARÁCSONY

ISSN 2668–7232

editura MEGA
Editura Mega | www.edituramega.ro
e-mail: mega@edituramega.ro

CONTENTS

THE COPPER AGE SETTLEMENT FROM TÂRGU MUREŞ–SHOPPING CITY

Sándor BERECKI[*] – Sándor József SZTÁNCSUJ[**]

During the construction of the Shopping City Mall in Târgu Mureș in 2018, traces of a prehistoric settlement were found. The Mureș County Museum carried out a rescue excavation in the area. Based on the observations made during the research and the material collected, the settlement can be attributed to the Ariușd cultural group of the Early Copper Age. In the excavated area, traces of at least four surface dwellings and several pits belonging to the settlement were discovered. The vast majority of the collected material is made up of ceramics, wattle and daub fragments of houses, a few burnt clay and stone objects, and a relatively small amount of animal bones. Based on the characteristics of the archaeological material and the radiocarbon data, the settlement can be attributed to the early phase of the Ariușd group, roughly in the second third of the 5th millennium BC. In addition to the Copper Age material, some fragments of vessels attributed to the Middle Bronze Age Wietenberg culture were also discovered.

Keywords: Copper Age, Ariușd group, settlement, pottery, radiocarbon dating
Cuvinte-cheie: Eneolitic, grupul Ariușd, așezare, ceramică, datare cu radiocarbon

THE SITE AND THE EXCAVATIONS

The site is located on the south-eastern edge of Târgu Mureș municipality, in the direction of Corunca village, on the second high terrace south of the meadow where the confluence of Corunca Stream (Vaţman Stream) and Sásvári Stream forms the Pocloș Stream, northeast of the Csere-erdő forest, south of the E60 European road, about 350 m south of the roundabout situated at the intersection of Sighișoarei Road and 1 Decembrie 1918 Road, on the former orchard's lot and current location of the Shopping City Târgu Mureș shopping centre. The 2018 development works, undertaken on the terrace where the shopping centre was built, critically affected the plateau on which the prehistoric settlement had stood (Pl. I). Its identification occurred with the removal of the vegetal layer, in the bank created by the levelling works, after a large part of the territory had been excavated to depths sometimes exceeding 15 m. Archaeological investigations could only be carried out in the protection area of the two gas pipelines, but the delay in their removal and decommissioning held up the excavation of the entire hill (Pl. II).[1]

The area where archaeological investigations were possible to undertake concealed the eastern edge of a Copper Age settlement on a high terrace (Fig. 1). The area which shows traces of dense population is bordered by a steep slope to the east and a gentle slope to the south. While the north-eastern and eastern area towards

[*] Sándor Berecki, Mureș County Museum, Târgu Mureș, RO, sberecki@yahoo.com
[**] Sándor József Sztáncsuj, Székely National Museum, Sfântu Gheorghe, RO, sztancsuj@gmail.com
[1] We would like to thank our colleagues involved in the archaeological research: Daniel M. Cioată, Szilárd-Sándor Gál, Zalán Győrfi, Keve László, Botond Rezi and Oana Toda.

the steep slope completely lacks archaeological finds, a group of small holes towards the south-east, at some distance from the archaeological contexts on the upper plateau, attest the existence of an inhabited area also in this part of the gentle slope. Following the mechanical excavation, it was possible to ascertain the south-eastern and north-western limits of this distinct sector, thanks to the layout of the deepened features observed at the level of the sterile clay. Both the excavated earth and the profiles resulting from the mechanical excavation indicated the continuation of the Copper Age settlement, however, its extension to the east and west was impossible to identify, since these areas had been affected before the start of the archaeological research. In this part of the hill, occasional ceramic fragments from the Middle Bronze Age Wietenberg culture showed up in the plough layer and on the surface, with no identified archaeological features from this period. The amount of archaeological material related to the Copper Age settlement level indicates that the settlement in this sector was less intensely inhabited than that on the upper plateau.

From a stratigraphic viewpoint, the entire terrace's 0.30–0.50 m thick ploughed and levelled upper layer was followed by a dark brown layer of culture about 0.20 m thick, with archaeological material (ceramic and wattle and daub fragments), burnt clay pigments, animal bones and gravel. Below it, at a depth of 0.50/0.70 m to 1.20/1.50 m, there was a yellowish-brown compact layer with a few burnt clay patches, under which the sterile stratum was situated, consisting of a yellow clay, typical of the main and secondary valleys of the Mureș River in this sector.

The 13 pits researched in the south-eastern sector were somewhat clustered. They were round or oval in shape, their maximum diameter ranging from 0.36 to 1.10 m, most of them measuring between 0.60 and 0.80 m. Some were only slightly dug into the clay (0.12–0.25 m), others were of medium depth (0.30–0.70 m). The fill of these holes is compact and consists of yellowish-brown or blackish-brown earth, sometimes including clay lentils, mixed with small-sized daub and ceramic fragments (Pl. III).

Discovered somewhat isolated, between the south-eastern sector and the upper plateau, Cx.14–16 are pits similar to those described above, 0.22–0.68 m deep, measuring 0.44–100 × 0.32–0.84 m. Their fill consists of brownish-black clay, compact, pigmented soil and smaller or larger fragments of daub (Pl. III).

The upper plateau of the hill seems to have been the most intensely inhabited. Previous levelling and landscaping works have considerably disturbed the layer related to the Copper Age habitation, and a large amount of ceramic material was recovered from the surface. The remaining layer's consecutive stripping down to the clay level revealed several archaeological features, most of them deepened in the ground (Fig. 1). In terms of their diameter at clay level, the pits on the upper plateau are of two types: small and aligned, forming certain contexts with superstructures elevated on supporting posts, and large pits, arranged among and near the constructions on post.

The post holes are similar both in shape and filling to those in the south-eastern part of the plateau: their diameter at the level of outlining (of the sterile clay) varies between 0.35 and 1 m, and their depth between 0.11 and 1.10 m. They deepen with more or less articulately oblique walls, some having the shape of a funnel with a wide upper level opening either on both sides or only on one (Pl. III). The fill of the holes consisted of compact brownish-black earth containing fragments or daub pigments and, less frequently, pottery or river stones.

By their arrangement in two parallel rows and sometimes a further post hole on a third side arranged towards the inside of the area delimited by the other posts, enclosing a roughly rectangular area, one can assume that Cx.20–26, 34–37 with 40–41, as well as Cx.47–54, and most probably also Cx.27–31 served as post holes of constructions (Fig. 2; Pl. II).

The holes of Cx.20–26 are simple, with slightly oblique walls. They are shallowly deepened (0.11–0.20 m), measure between 0.38 and 0.64 m in diameter, their fill consisting of black-brown, loamy, compact soil, without archaeological material. Their size makes them the site's smallest constructions of this type.

Fig. 1. Târgu Mureș–*Shopping City*. Aerial view of the archaeological site from the north-west (upper picture) and from the south-west (lower picture).

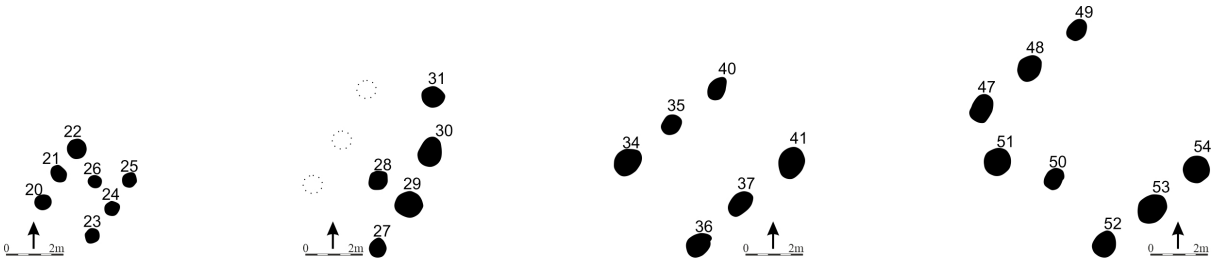


Fig. 2. Buildings presumed based on the location of post holes.

Cx.27–31 seem to have formed another structure. Cx.29–31 are aligned on a north–south axis, Cx.28 being the hole within, while Cx.31 is outside the perimeter enclosed by the six posts, of which the row of three western post holes could not be identified as they were outside the area that was safe to investigate archaeologically. The diameter of the holes ranged between 0.50 and 1.04 m, they sank 0.30–0.80 m deep into the sterile clay. The fill of the holes consists of brownish-black, loamy, compact earth, pigmented with fragments of burnt wattle and daub, charcoal and ceramic.

Cx.32–33 (Pl. III/32; IV/33) were located at approximately equal distance from the construction circumscribed by Cx.27–31, Cx.34–37 and Cx.40–41, probably being the annex of one of these, or, if the constructions were contemporary, even of both large structures. Both pits were oval in shape, Cx.32 was 0.56 × 0.89 m in diameter and 0.73 m deep. Pit Cx.33 was 1.06 × 2.05 m, with vertical walls and unevenly deepened bottom, ranging from 0.40 to 0.89 m. On the western side, a posthole with a diameter of 0.40 m and oblique walls deepening to 1.40 m was discovered. The fill of both holes consisted of black-brownish earth, pigmented with shredded daub and charcoal that hid animal bones, ceramic fragments and wattle and daub. The presence of animal remains in these archaeological features and their absence from the fill of the post holes of the other structures indicate a possible use of the construction for domestic food-related occupations.

The two rows of three holes each in Cx.34–35 and Cx.40–41 indicate another construction on a post structure (Fig. 2; Pl. II). This construction was missing the post hole on the third side. The holes on the north-western side are all deeper (0.72–0.97 m), with funnel-shaped or stepped openings. On the south-eastern side the holes are 0.50, 0.60 and 0.98 m deep. Their diameter was between 0.55 and 1.05 m. The fill of the post holes consisted of black-brown, loamy, compact earth pigmented with fragments of potshards, wattle, daub and charcoal.

Another construction, the largest of those built on a two-rowed post structure, is indicated by holes 47–54 (Fig. 2; Pl. II). Their diameter was between 0.65 and 0.96 m, their depth between 0.50 and 1.12 m. The fill of the holes consists of brownish-black, loamy, compact, pigmented earth with ceramic fragments and wattle and daub.

In the case of these types of constructions, the presence of pigments and daub fragments in the fill of the holes suggests that their elevation was made of clay. One can notice that all four roughly quadrangular structures are aligned on a north-east–south-west axis, two of them with a slight deviation to north/north-east-south/south-west.

Other pits, different both in shape and in the type of sample found in their fill, were observed around these constructions. Near the construction marked by holes 20–26, in Cx.17, which was 1.70 m in diameter and 0.22 m deep (Pl. III/17), daub and ceramic fragments, animal bones and lithic material were found.

Cx.44 was located to the SW of the same construction. The pit was 2.65 × 2.30 m in diameter, sunk with vertical walls and irregular edges. The centre of the pit was about 0.30 m deeper than the level of the large pit. In the fill of the context, especially from the southern side, fragments of several vessels, small traces of charcoal and animal bones were found (Pl. IV/44).

Cx.39 was located north-west of the

construction marked by Cx.34–37, Cx.40–41, and due to disturbance caused by construction works, it was only partially excavated (3.00 × 1.70 m), with the north-eastern part of the pit being uncovered. Its walls were oblique, the uneven bottom was between 0.36 and 0.68 m deep, deepening towards the edges (Pl. IV/39; V/2). From the fill of the pit, especially from the bottom, came ceramic fragments and a whole vessel, stones, animal bones, daub and charcoal. On the south-western side, a hole with a diameter of 0.60 m was dug 0.20 m below the level of the context's bottom.

To the north-east of the same building were two large pits. Cx.42 was oval in shape with dimensions of 1.90 × 2. 50 m, with the long axis oriented north–south. The walls were slightly oblique with irregular edges. The bottom had an oval cavity in the middle, which was 0.41 m deeper than the level of the pit's bottom (Pl. IV/42; V/3). The fill of the pit consisted of brownish-black, loamy, compact earth containing ceramic fragments and charcoal. Cx.43 lies to the south-east of Cx.42. The oval pit was 2.85 × 3.30 m in diameter, with the long axis also oriented north–south. The walls were slightly oblique with irregular edges and a straight bottom (Pl. IV/43; V/4). The fill of the pit was similar to the neighbouring one.

In addition to the above-mentioned constructions and their annexes, somewhat peripheral to them, an elongated oval-shaped platform measuring 9 × 2.5 m (Cx.55) was also identified, consisting of earthen floor, bordered by numerous ceramic fragments, daubs and animal bones (Pl. V/1). The presence of the daub fragments indicates clay superstructures, but considering the lack of post holes and the extension of the platform, this construction seems to have had lighter structural elements, or may even have been a simple wattle-and-daub enclosure, without a roof.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE COPPER AGE SETTLEMENT

On the basis of the archaeological features discovered, as well as the relative and absolute chronological data, the settlement discovered at Târgu Mureş–*Shopping City* can be attributed to the Ariuşd group of the Copper Age. This cultural group, part of the great Eastern European Ariuşd–Cucuteni–Trypillia cultural context, spread during the 5th–4th millennia in the eastern and south-eastern parts of Transylvania.[2] The distribution area of the group generally included the territory of the intra-montane depressions of the Eastern Carpathians.[3] In this way the upper course of the Mureş on the Transylvanian Plateau represented a somewhat peripheral area of this group. Despite this fact, several settlements have been discovered in this area in recent decades. From the wider area of the city of Târgu Mureş we can thus mention the resorts of Târgu Mureş–*Tornakert*,[4] located on the lower terraces of the Mureş River, in the centre of the current city, Sângeorgiu de Mureş–*Buna-hegy*,[5] positioned on a relatively high hilltop, and Sângeorgiu de Mureş–*Gyéra-alja*,[6] also located on the terrace of the Mureş. Considering the size of the area researched, the settlement at *Shopping City* is currently the largest and best researched of these, allowing observations to be made also on the internal organisation of the prehistoric settlement. Although the settlement has only been partially researched (the rest has been destroyed or lies outside the area affected by the constructions), its features suggest that a relatively large settlement, with an area of over one hectare, can be outlined. At the same time, due to the method of excavation and the damage caused by the mechanical work carried out

[2] For an overwiew of the Ariuşd group and its relations with the Cucuteni culture see László 1911; Niţu 1973; Székely 1987; László 1993a; László 2006; László 2009; László–Sztáncsuj 2013; Sztáncsuj 2015.
[3] Sztáncsuj 2015, 108–110 and 355, map 2.
[4] Kovács 1915, 226–315; Berecki–Sztáncsuj 2011.
[5] Lazăr–Opriş 1989, 92–97.
[6] Lazăr 1995, 212.

prior to the research, some observations regarding the stratigraphy (especially the existence of possible successive habitation levels) can no longer be made.

As we have detailed in the lines above, most of the discovered contexts represent post holes, observed on the surface of the geological soil. Their layout indicates the existence of at least four rectangular surface dwellings, located mainly in the north-western area of the site. Dwellings 1 and 2, parallel to each other, and 7–8 m apart, are outlined by Cx.34–37, Cx.40–41 (H[ouse]–1), and Cx.47–54 (H–2). Approximately 8 m west of H–1, another row of post holes (Cx.27–31) seems to indicate the layout of H–3, located partially outside the excavated surface. Houses 1 and 2, surveyed in their entirety, had an area of 25 to 40 square meters, both being oriented in the north-east–south-west direction. A smaller rectangular building, of approx. 6–7 square metres, marked by Cx.20–26, was outlined 12 m southwest of H–3. Considering its relatively small size, it can be interpreted as a household context. This structure, together with H–3, had a slightly different orientation from H–1 and H–2, their long axis being oriented more to the north.

Cx.1–Cx.13 were discovered at a considerable distance of 45 m south-east of the group of buildings presented above. Their interpretation is made difficult by the fact that only a narrower strip has been investigated in this area. In this case only the alignment of Cx.7–13 seems to indicate the existence of a dwelling (H–4) similar in shape and size to H–1 and H–2. In the absence of precise chronological data, we cannot establish the connection between the two groups of buildings. They may have functioned simultaneously or at different times during the existence of the Copper Age settlement. A series of pits of various sizes, probably used in household activities (like extracting soil or clay) and later filled with household waste, were also observed near the houses. Together with the houses, they represent common elements of any prehistoric settlement.

The dwellings discovered at Târgu Mureş show a number of similarities with the constructions investigated in other settlements in south-eastern Transylvania, such as those at Ariuşd–*Tyiszk-hegy*, Bixad–*Vápa-vára*, Malnaş Băi–*Füvenyestető* or Păuleni–*Várdomb*.[7] These were usually rectangular constructions, built on a structure made up of wooden posts sunk into the ground, with the walls made of a skeleton of pears, stakes and/or boards covered with clay. Their traces are usually preserved not only by the post-holes but also by the wattle and daub agglomerations formed as a result of the (accidental or deliberate) destruction of the house. Although in smaller numbers, the wattle and daub fragments discovered in various contexts or in the culture layer, often bearing the imprints of stakes or boards on the surface, may indicate similar structures in the settlement at Târgu Mureş.

Inside the Copper Age houses, traces of plastered clay or stomped floors and ovens, as well as pottery and other household items can often be unearthed. The rescue nature of the excavations and the research methods applied at Târgu Mureş did not allow such details to be established regarding the structure of the discovered dwellings. No remains of any interior floor or household contexts could be observed and the objects discovered inside, that are directly related to the use of the houses, are generally few. It can be generally stated that the dwellings within the settlement were probably organised in several groups. Their spatial arrangement and orientation indicate the foundation of the entire settlement according to an organised, preconceived plan.

We can also add the fact that most of the settlements located on terraces or hilltops show traces of some kind of fortification. Such defensive arrangements can consist of a simple ditch, intended to protect the entire settlement or a portion of it (e.g. Olteni–*Vârmege* or Sfântu

[7] For an overview of the architecture of the Transylvanian Ariuşd group, see the following works: László 1914; László 1988; László 2000; László–Cotiugă 2005; Sztáncsuj 2015, 118–127; László–Sztáncsuj 2020, 12–19. In relation to similar constructions in the East-European Cucuteni–Tripyllia area see Lazarovici–Lazarovici 2007, 158–245.

Gheorghe–*Gémvára*), but also of a more elaborate fortification system, made up of a ditch (or ditches) reinforced with palisades and fences (Ariușd, Malnaș Băi).[8] During the investigations at Târgu Mureș, no such defensive elements were observed, but taking into account observations from other sites, the existence of a fortification should not be excluded.

THE EVALUATION OF THE FIND MATERIAL

Comparing the amount of material discovered with the size of the area surveyed, the whole assemblage seems rather modest.

The entire material collected during the excavations consists of a number of 1508 artefacts. Most of the objects come from the researched archaeological features (1116 pcs., representing 75%), and the rest from the culture layer (392 pcs., 26%). From a chronological point of view, the overwhelming majority dates back to the Copper Age (1477, representing 98%) while the discoveries attributed to the Middle Bronze Age Wietenberg culture are relatively few in number (31 pcs., 2%). The latter were discovered mainly in the culture layer released during the works, and during the field surveys carried out in the perimeter of the site. In the following we will only present the Eneolithic material. Regarding the conditions of discovery, the proportion of Eneolithic objects is similar to that of the total material, namely 75% (1103 pcs.) from contexts and 25% (374 pcs.) from the culture layer. Of the 56 archaeological features 50 contained archaeological material. Unsurprisingly, most of the finds came from refuse pits found around the houses. Of all the contexts, pits 16, 17, 33, 39, 43 and 44 are particularly noteworthy, containing approx. 70% of the entire material. Especially Cx.39 and Cx.44 were rich in archaeological material (Pl. V/2, 4), consisting not only of sherds but also of some restorable vessels.

Ceramics represent the most numerous category (1250 pcs., 85%), while the rest of the find material consists of wattle and daub fragments (146 pcs., 10%), animal bones (67 pcs., 4%) and a few small finds, namely an anthropomorphic figurine, a clay loom weight and a few stone objects. The relative rarity of small finds compared to the ceramic material again confirms our observations regarding the particularly affected extent of the site.

Copper Age pottery is almost exclusively associated with the Ariușd group, but there are also a number of vessel fragments attributable to the Foeni group (Pl. X/10; XI/3). Potsherds belonging to the latter came to light from Cx.44, together with Ariușd-related material, only their percentage does not reach 1% of the entire assemblage. In general, the pottery is heavily fragmented. Of all the ceramic material collected, there is only one whole vessel and a few more that can be restored. Body sherds constitute approx. 80% of all ceramic material, providing little information on vessel shapes and their chronological assignment. Another conspicuous characteristic of the ceramic material is the extremely low amount of decorative elements, especially the total absence of painted pottery, which is another unusual feature within the Ariușd group.

The technical quality of the ceramics is generally good. The hand-moulded vessels were made of well-kneaded clay containing few impurities. The paste was degreased with sand and fine gravel and the burn was of good quality. Most of the vessels were fired to a brick, yellowish-brown, brown, or rarely uniformly black colour. Discoloration caused by secondary combustion during use is often observed on the surface of the sherds. In terms of modelling, paste and firing, ceramics are divided into three distinct categories. Fine ceramics, which make up about 12% of the total, consist of vessels moulded from a paste degreased with very fine sand and fired to uniform colours, usually light red or yellowish. Approx. 15% is coarse, roughly modelled pottery. The clay used for

[8] László 1911, 177–183; László 1993b; Sztáncsuj 2015, 114–118; László–Sztáncsuj 2020, 9–12.

modelling contains more impurities and has usually been degreased with gravel. In rare cases, we also find chaff as a degreasing material in this category. The sherds from this category belong to vessels with thicker walls and the firing is often uneven. Between these two categories there is an intermediate one, present in an overwhelming amount of 70% (approx. 73%). All three categories are characterised by the lack of surface treatment such as smoothing and polishing or coating with slip, and most vessel fragments have a porous surface. As mentioned above, decoration is extremely poor, consisting of a few fingernail impressions (Pl. IX/10; X/7), wave-like impressions under the rim (Pl. X/4) or splattered and organised barbotine (Pl. VI/11). In the case of a fragment from the bottom of a vessel, the imprints of a mat can be observed (Pl. XI/5), which is an indication of the manufacturing technique rather than an ornamental element. Vessel accessories also present a modest inventory, consisting of simple (Pl. VI/12; VII/1, 3, 5–7; X/9, 11) or in some cases perforated (Pl. VI/9; IX/12) buttons and handles (Pl. VI/3; VII/8–10; IX/14; XI/1, 3, 4). These details, as well as the lack of painted decoration, constitute the distinctive features of the material from Târgu Mureş.

As we have already shown, the shape of the vessels can only be established to a rather limited extent due to fragmentation. Based on the rim and base fragments, some accessories (handles, buttons) and decorative elements, there are still some identified vessel forms, which are the only clues for the chronological classification of the discovered material.

Cups and mugs with bitronconic (Pl. IX/7; X/1, 5) or slightly arched body (Pl. VI/8; VII/3–7; IX/7) are present in a relatively large amount. Among them we find the only vessel preserved in its entirety (Pl. VII/2). This small cup is typical of settlements belonging especially to the early phase of the Ariuşd group, but it also occurs in the later, „classical" period.[9] The most numerous in the studied material are the forms with an arched body and a slightly inverted rim, provided with buttons applied to the body (Pl. VII/3–7). Analogues of this type are known especially from the classical and late phases (although they are not absent from the early phase either) but, unlike the specimens from Târgu Mureş, most of them are decorated with incised or impressed motifs.[10] Numerous sherds belong to the so-called "amphorae" with a bulging shoulder, provided with large handles (Pl. VII/10; VIII/1; IX/14; XI/1, 2, 4); relatively large jars and storage vessels with rounded shoulders and narrow rims (Pl. VI/10, 11, 13; XI/9), provided with buttons and handles on the body (Pl. VI/12; VII/8), sometimes decorated with splattered barbotine (Pl. VI/11); simple pots with curved profile and slightly inverted rims (Pl. VI/1; IX/9; X/3, 4); as well as two bowls with large, inverted (Pl. VII/1) or slightly everted rim (Pl. X/8; XI/8). Also typical of the studied cultural group are the high pedestals with cylindrical bodies, provided with large ventilation holes under their rim (Pl. IX/1–4). A single fragment comes from a lid with a cylindrical button-handle on the top (Pl. VI/5), while several handle fragments belong to clay spoons (Pl. VI/6; VIII/6, 7). Most of the above-mentioned forms are common elements of the ceramic inventory of the Ariuşd group, especially in its early and classical phase.[11]

Less common forms with analogues in some of the contemporary settlements also occur. The fragment of a vessel with a cylindrical bottom (Pl. VIII/3) has a rare analogy in the material from the eponymous settlement of Ariuşd–*Tyiszk-hegy*[12]. The absence of so-called leading forms should be also notes, such as vessels with a globular body and short neck, bitronconical pots with a shoulder decorated with channel

[9] Sztáncsuj 2015, pl. LVII/11; LXVII/1, XCVII/4 (Ariuşd); CXII/6 (Bod–*Priesterhügel*); CXXXIX/2 (Leţ–*Várhegy*); CLIII/1, 2 (Odorheiu Secuiesc–*Budvár*); CLXII/1, 5, 7, 12, 13; Olteni–*Vármege*); CLXXV/5, 7 (Petriceni–*Polyvár*); CCXII/1 (Turia–Karatna–*Templomláb*).

[10] Sztáncsuj 2015, pl. CI/1, 6 (Ariuşd–*Tyiszk-hegy*); CXLVII/7–9 (Mugeni–*Pagyvan-tető*); CLVI/1, 2 (Moacşa–*Maksahát*).

[11] For analogies to these types see László 1927, 5–20, pl. I–X (types A–J); Sztáncsuj 2015, 156–179, fig. 67–70, 72, 73 (types A–G).

[12] László 1927, pl. II/9.

motifs, high pedestaled bowls or bell-shaped lids. Generally speaking, the inventory of forms is much poorer compared to other contemporary settlements in south-eastern Transylvania.

As regards the sherds attributed to the Foeni group, these are fragments of vessels made of very good quality paste, degreased with fine sand and fired to a brick colour with black spots. They belong to a few bitronconical bowls (Pl. X/10), and to a vessel with a rounded belly, and a horizontal handle (Pl. XI/3). Similar forms can be found in the settlements of the Foeni group in south-western Transylvania.[13]

Small finds are also extremely rare. In this category we include the fragment of the lower part of a (probably) anthropomorphic figurine discovered in Cx.39 (Pl. VIII/5). It is a cylindrical piece with a disc-shaped base, rather superficially modelled. Similar objects, interpreted as idols, anthropomorphic figurines can be found for example at Ariușd–*Tyiszk-hegy* or Olteni–*Vármege*[14]. Like the specimen from Târgu Mureș, these were usually found within the settlement, from a profane (houses, refuse pits) rather than a ritual context. A miniature vessel came to light from Cx.44 (Pl. IX/1), whose form is very common in many settlements in south-eastern Transylvania.[15] From the material discovered in the culture layer comes an ellipsoidal burnt clay weight, provided with a hole for suspension (Pl. VI/7).

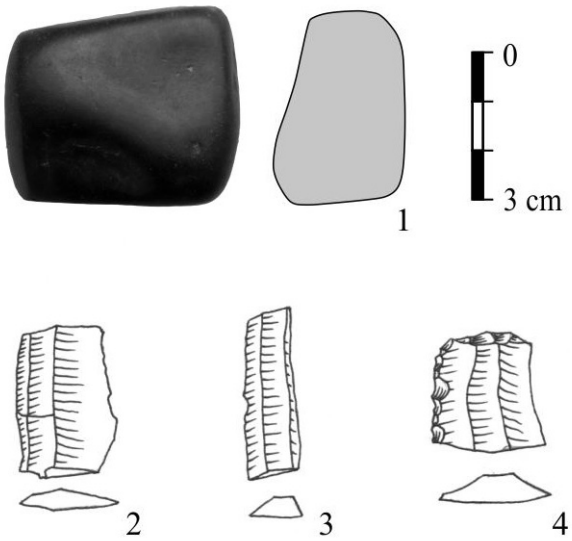


Fig. 3. Stone artefacts form the Copper Age settlement.

The few stone objects from Târgu Mureș–*Shopping City* come almost exclusively from the culture layer, thus not from a clear context. Most of them are sandstones with traces of processing, as they were probably used in household activities. More important to mention is a cubic shaped, polished stone grinder with rounded edges, made of black rock, probably of volcanic origin (Fig. 3/1). Last but not least, there are three chipped and retouched blades made of grey basalt and reddish-brown flint (Fig. 3/2–4).

CHRONOLOGY

The chronology of the Cucuteni culture is based on Hubert Schmidt's tripartite periodization, which was later supplemented by Romanian archaeology during the last century.[16] The chronological position of the three main phases (A, A-B and B, with several sub-phases), established on the basis of stylistic and stratigraphic observations, was later refined using a series of radiocarbon data. Based on the available absolute chronological data, the Cucuteni A phase is dated mainly between the 46–42th centuries cal BC (4600–4100 cal BC), the A-B phase to the interval between 4100–3900 cal BC, while the late Cucuteni B period in the 36–37th centuries cal BC (4700–4500 cal BC).[17]

The chronological position and internal

[13] See Gligor 2008, pl. 1–4 (Petrești–*Groapa Galbenă*); Gligor 2009, pl. LXXXVIII/4, 5; LXXXIX/1, 2, 4; CXXV/1–7 (Alba Iulia–*Lumea Nouă*).

[14] See Sztáncsuj 2015, pl. CCXX/6 and CCXXIII/9.

[15] Sztáncsuj 2015, pl. CXIII/5, 6 (Bod–*Priesterhügel*); CCXV/6 (Olteni–*Vármegye*).

[16] See mainly Schmidt 1932; Vulpe 1957; Dumitrescu 1963a; Dumitrescu 1963b; Niţu 1984.

[17] Monah 1987; Mantu 1995; Monah–Monah 1997, 45–47; Mantu 1998, 93–133; László 2006; László 2009; Popovici–Draşovean 2020.

Nr.	Lab no.	Context	Age ^{14}C (BP)	Standard deviance (±)	1 σ calibration (cal BC)	2 σ calibration (cal BC)
1	ROAMS 2371.10	Cx.42	5735	35	4657–4506	4687–4462
2	ROAMS 2372.10	Cx.43	5793	30	4703–4609	4716–4549

Table 1. Radiocarbon data from the Copper Age settlement.

periodization of the Ariuşd group from Transylvania is mainly based on the analysis of ceramics, and on the presence of various types of painted decoration in relation to their stratigraphic position and the comparison of these data with the relative and absolute chronology established for the Cucuteni culture.[18] According to current knowledge, the evolution of the group can be broadly divided into three phases, of which the early (Ariuşd I) corresponds to the A1 stage of the Cucuteni culture, the second/classical (Ariuşd II) to the Cucuteni stages A2–4 and A–B, and the late (Ariuşd III) to the end of phase A-B and (possibly) the beginning of phase B.[19] Painted decoration is present in all three periods, but to a lesser extent in the first period and to a very small extent during the late phase. As showed in the previous chapter, the analysis of the pottery forms from Târgu Mureş does not allow a very precise chronological framing of the settlement. In general, the ceramic forms are mostly found in the early and classical phases of the Ariuşd group. However, the absolute chronology data seem to support an early dating of all the material.

Two animal bone samples were sent for radiocarbon dating to the Horia Hulubei National Institute for R&D in Physics and Nuclear Engineering in Măgurele, Ilfov.[20] The calibration of the radiocarbon data was made with the online version of OxCal v.4.4.4. The measurement results are presented in table 1 and fig. 4, respectively. The first sample was collected from Cx.42, an oval-shaped pit in the north-eastern area of the excavated zone, in the vicinity of H–1. The ^{14}C-AMS measurement for this provided the 5735±35 BP data, while the calibrated data gave a 68.3 % probability (1-σ) for a dating between 4657 and 4506 cal BC, which corresponds to a 95.4 % probability (2-σ) for a dating between 4687 and 4462 cal BC. The second sample was chosen from the faunal material discovered in Cx.43, a large circular pit located just south of Cx.42. The sample yielded a radiocarbon measurement of 5793±30 BP, calibrated to the span of 4703 and 4609 cal BC for 1-σ, or 4716 and 4549 cal BC for 2-σ.

Although the two radiocarbon dates do not allow us to draw very precise chronological conclusions, given the size of the settlement and the large number of archaeological features, we can note that these data seem to indicate a fairly long timespan between the 47th–46th centuries cal BC for the existence of the settlement. If we compare this to the few known from other settlements of the Ariuşd group, the two dates from Târgu Mureş seem to be the earliest in the entire studied area.

Unlike the Cucuteni culture, the absolute chronology of the Ariuşd group is so far based only on a small number of radiocarbon dates obtained for the settlements of Malnaş Băi–*Füvenyestető* and Păuleni–*Várdomb*.[21] These data refer mainly to the classical phase of the group and generally place it in the second half of the 5th millennium BC.[22] At Malnaş Băi, for example, the most precise dating refers to the second habitation level, classified in the Ariuşd II phase, and places it in the period between 4460–4244 cal BC. The radiocarbon data of the earlier settlement level (I) at Malnaş Băi cannot be considered relevant, but on the basis of the

[18] László 1927; Székely 1965; Niţu 1973; Székely 1973; Székely 1987; László–Sztáncsuj 2013.

[19] See Sztáncsuj 2015, 255–282, Tab. 6 and 8.

[20] The authors would like to thank Dr. Corina Anca Simion for her help in the PAC application and the logistics of the measurements.

[21] László 2006; László 2009 (Malnaş Băi); Whitlow et al. 2013 (Păuleni).

[22] For a re-evaluation of radiocarbon dating of the Ariuşd sites from south-eastern Transylvania see: Popovici–Draşovean 2020, 345–347, 350.

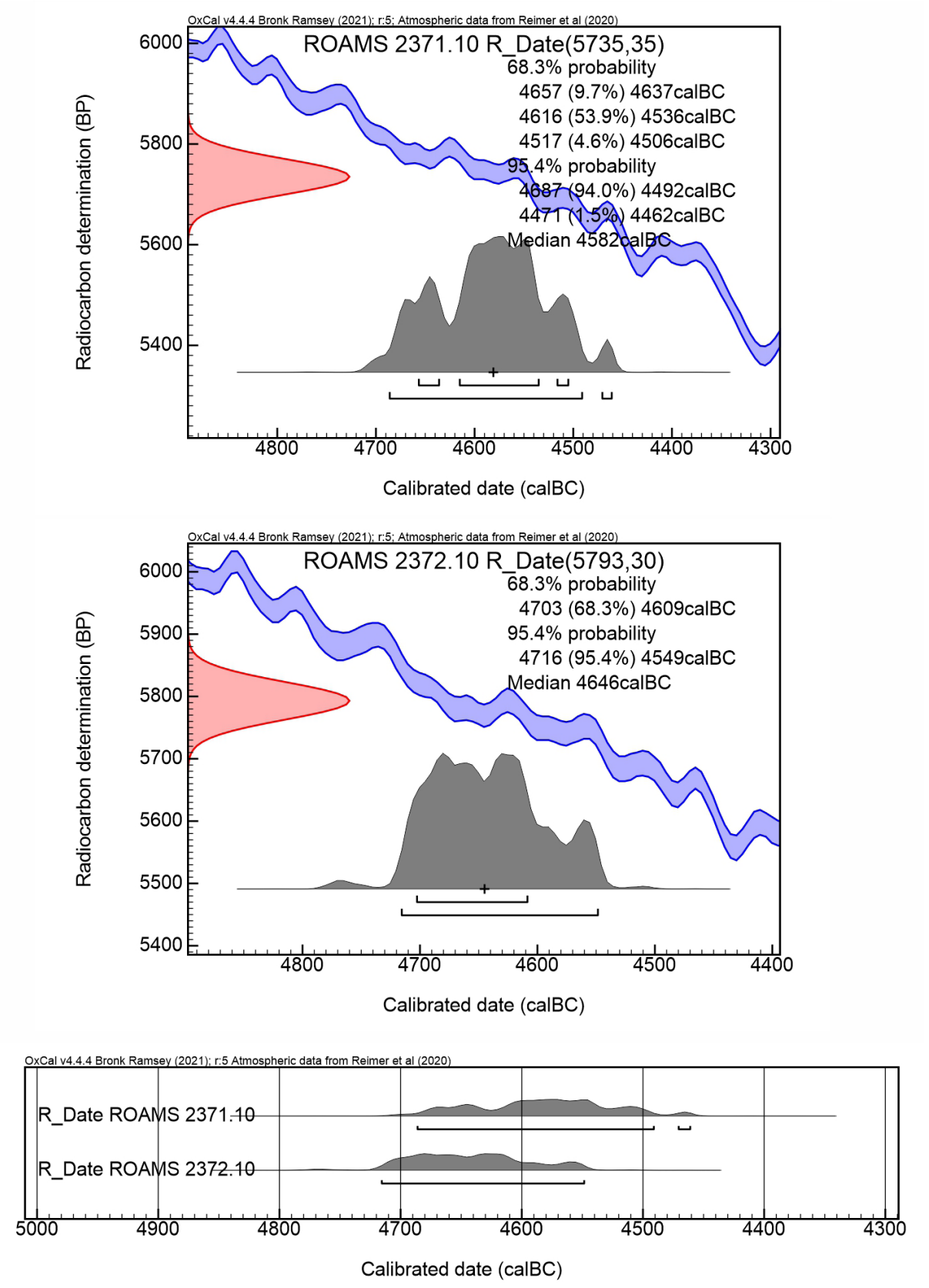


Fig. 4. Radiocarbon dates from the Copper Age settlement.

stratigraphic situation, it can be assumed that the settlement belonging to this level already existed before the middle of the 5th millennium cal BC. This assumed dating is partially consistent with the synchronisms demonstrated with the Precucuteni III-Cucuteni A1 period on the territory of Moldavia (Bonţeşti, Izvoare II1a–1b or Poduri–*Dealul Ghindaru*).[23] Based on radiocarbon data from Poduri, the settlements or habitation levels from this period are generally dated to the 46th–47th centuries BC. Assuming that the measurement data of the Târgu Mureş samples are relevant, the dating they propose does not deviate much in time from the dating of the Cucuteni A1 phase. Although they are too few to establish detailed cultural connections, the presence of Foeni imports within the settlement also seems to support an early dating. Without going into details, we note that the radiocarbon dating carried out for this group in western Transylvania and the Banat area indicates its existence in the timespan between 4750–4450 cal BC.[24]

Of course, we can also add that the absence of painted pottery is not necessarily of chronological significance. It may be due to some physical effects of the soil, but may also be explained as a regional feature within the studied cultural group. Recent research, supported by radiocarbon dating, also seems to indicate that the differences observed in terms of the decoration of the ceramics could be interpreted, at least partially, as regional stylistic aspects throughout the distribution area of the Ariuşd–Cucuteni–Trypillia cultural context.[25] Further research is definitely needed to clarify these problems. The research of the still untouched parts of the site may one day provide answers to the remaining questions.

CONCLUSIONS

The rescue archaeological excavations carried out by the Mureş County Museum in 2018 brought to light, on the south-eastern outskirts of the city, the remains of a settlement attributed to the Ariuşd cultural group of the Early Copper Age. The habitation traces, consisting mainly of the remains of at least four surface dwellings and refuse pits, belong to a large settlement of more than one hectare. A considerable amount of archaeological material, made up of ceramics, wattle and daub fragments, faunal remains and some small finds (clay artefacts and lithic implements), was recovered from within the total of 56 researched features. Unlike the pottery from other Ariuşd settlements, the analysed material is notable for the absence of decoration (especially painted), which makes its chronological classification difficult. However, based on the comparative analysis of the ceramic forms, the settlement can be classified in the initial phase (I) of the Ariuşd group. The radiocarbon analysis of the bones collected from two contexts (Cx.42 and Cx.43) seems to indicate a relatively large timespan for the existence of the settlement, in the second third of the 5th millennium BC (4687–4462 and 4716–4549 cal BC, 2 σ). We have shown that, although these dates may seem early at first glance, compared to the radiocarbon data available for the earliest, A1 phase of the Cucuteni culture, and taking into account the imports from the western Transylvanian Foeni group, it seems possible that they are also relevant for the initial phase of the Ariuşd group.

[23] Monah–Monah 1997, 46.
[24] Gligor 2009, 141–144.
[25] László 2006, 12–23.

REFERENCES

Berecki–Sztáncsuj 2011
S. Berecki – S. J. Sztáncsuj, The Copper Age settlement at Târgu Mureş and some problems of the chronology and relations of the Ariuşd Culture, *Marisia* XXXI, 2011, 49–72.

Dumitrescu 1963a
Vl. Dumitrescu, Originea şi evoluţia culturii Cucuteni – Tripolie I, *SCIV* 14, 1, 1963, 1–76.

Dumitrescu 1963b
Vl. Dumitrescu, Originea şi evoluţia culturii Cucuteni – Tripolie II, *SCIV,* 14, 2, 1963, 285–305.

Gligor 2008
M. Gligor, Cu privire la locuirea neolitică de la Petreşti-Groapa Galbenă, *Apulum* XLV, 2008, 293–314.

Gligor 2009
M. Gligor, *Aşezarea neolitică şi eneolitică de la Alba Iulia-Lumea Nouă în lumina noilor cercetări* (Cluj-Napoca 2009)

Kovács 1915
I. Kovács, A marosvásárhelyi őskori telep, skytha- és népvándorláskori temető – Station préhistorique de Marosvásárhely; cimitière de l'époque scythe et de la migration des peuples, *DolgKolozsvár* VI, 1915, 226–325.

László 1911
F. László, Háromszék vármegyei praemykenaei jellegű telepek – Stations de l'époque pré-mycénienne dans le comitat de Háromszék, *DolgKolozsvár* II, 1911, 175–259.

László 1914
F. László, Ásatások az erősdi őstelepen (1907–1913) – Fouilles á station primitive de Erősd (1907–1913), *DolgKolozsvár* V, 1914, 279–417.

László 1927
F. László, Les types de vases peints d'Ariuşd (Erősd), *Dacia* I, 1924 (1927), 1–27.

László 1988
A. László, Date noi privind technica de construcţie a locuinţelor neolitice, *ArhMold* XII, 1988, 23–31.

László 1993a
A. László, Le sud-est de la Transylvanie dans le neolitique tardif et le chalkolithique. Nouvelles données et considerations, in: P. Georgieva (ed.), *The Fourth Millenium B.C. Proceedings of the International Symposium Nessebur, 28–30 August 1992* (Sofia 1993) 62–76.

László 1993b
A. László, Aşezări întărite ale culturii Ariuşd-Cucuteni în sud-estul Transilvaniei. Fortificarea aşezării de la Malnaş Băi, *ArhMold* XVI, 1993, 33–50.

László 2000
A. László, Some data on the house-building techniques and foundation rites in the Ariuşd-Cucuteni culture, *StudiaAA* VII, 2000, 245–252.

László 2006
A. László, Az Erősd-Cucuteni kultúra időrendjéről, *DolgKolozsvár (Ú.S.)* I, 2006, 7–28.

László 2009
A. László, Radiocarbon dating of Malnaş Băi settlement and some problems of development and chronology of Ariuşd-Cucuteni culture, in: G. Bodi (ed.), *In medias res praehistoriae. Miscellanea in honorem annos LXV peragentis Professoris Dan Monah oblata* (Iaşi 2009) 205–222.

László 2013
A. László, Alapítástól pusztulásig. Építési rítusok nyomai az Erősd-kultúra málnásfürdői településén (From foundation to destruction. Traces of building rituals in the Malnaş Băi settlement of the Copper Age Ariuşd-Cucuteni Culture), in: *ΜΩΜΩΣ VII.* Őskoros Kutatók VII. Összejövetele, 2011. március 16–18., Százhalombatta, Matrica Múzeum, *Ősrégészeti Levelek* 13, 2013, 113–127.

László–Cotiugă 2005
A. László – V. Cotiugă, On the chalcolithic house-building. Archaeological observations and some experimental archaeological data, *StudiaAA* X–XI, 2004–2005 (2005), 147–170.

László–Sztáncsuj 2013
A. László – S. J. Sztáncsuj, Vessels with Handles with Discoid Attachments Discovered in the Ariuşd-Cucuteni Area and Some Problems in the Development and Chronology of the Ariuşd (Erősd) Culture in Southeastern Transylvania, in: A. Anders – G. Kulcsár – G. Kalla – V. Kiss – G. V. Szabó (eds.), *Moments in Time. Papers Presented to Pál Raczky on His 60th Birthday*, Ősrégészeti Tanulmányok/Prehistoric Studies I (Budapest 2013), 579–594.

László–Sztáncsuj 2020
A. László – S. J. Sztáncsuj, Őskori település a borvizek felett. Régészeti kutatások Málnásfürdő-Füvenyestetőn (1909–2019), *ArchÉrt* 145, 2020, 1–37.

Lazarovici–Lazarovici 2007
C.-M. Lazarovici – Gh. Lazarovici, *Arhitectura neoliticului şi epocii cuprului din România*, *Vol. II. Epoca cuprului*, BAM VIII (Iaşi 2007)

Lazăr 1995
V. Lazăr, *Repertoriul arheologic al judeţului Mureş* (Târgu Mureş 1995)

Lazăr–Opriş 1989
V. Lazăr – I. Opriş, Descoperiri arheologice la Sîngeorgiu de Mureş (jud. Mureş), *Apulum* XXVI, 1989, 91–98.

Mantu 1995
C.-M. Mantu, Câteva consideraţii privind cronologia absolută a neo-eneoliticului din România, *SCIVA* 46, 3–4, 1995, 213–235.

Mantu 1998
C.-M. Mantu, *Cultura Cucuteni. Evoluţie, cronologie, legături*, BAM V (Piatra Neamţ 1998).

Monah 1987
D. Monah, La datation par C14 du complexe culturel Cucuteni-Tripolie, in: M. Petrescu-Dîmboviţa – N. Ursulescu – D. Monah – V. Chirica (eds.), *La civilisation de Cucuteni en contexte Européen*, BAI I (Iaşi 1987), 67–80.

Monah–Cucoş 1985
D. Monah – Şt. Cucoş, *Aşezările culturii Cucuteni în România* (Iaşi, 1985)

Monah–Monah 1997
D. Monah – F. Monah, The last great chalcolithic civilization of Old Europe, in: C.-M. Mantu – Gh. Dumitroaia – A. Tsaravopoulos (eds.), *Cucuteni. The last great chalcolithic civilization of Old Europe* (Thessaloniki 1997), 17–95.

Nițu 1973
A. Nițu, Reconsiderarea Ariuşdului, *StComSfGheorghe,* 1973, 57–124.

Nițu 1984
A. Nițu, Formarea şi clasificarea grupelor de stil AB şi B ale ceramicii pictate Cucuteni-Tripolie, *AIIA* Supl. V (Iaşi, 1984)

Popovici–Draşovean 2020
D.-N. Popovici – Fl. Draşovean, Despre evoluţia culturilor Precucuteni şi Cucuteni. Analiza bayesiană a datelor 14C vs. crono-tipologie, *CA*, 2020, 331–386.

Schmidt 1932
H. Schmidt, *Cucuteni in der Oberen Moldau, Rumänien. Die befestigte Siedlung mit bemalter Keramik von der Steinkupferzeit bis in die vollentwickelte Bronzezeit* (Berlin-Leipzig 1932)

Székely 1959
Z. Székely, Cercetări arheologice la Sf. Gheorghe, Gémvára-Avasalja (Cetatea Cocorului), *MCA* V, 1959, 710–722.

Székely 1965
Z. Székely, Contribution à l'étude du développement du Néolithique dans la Transylvanie sud-orientale, in: *Atti del VI Congresso Internazionale delle Scienze Preistoriche e Protoistoriche* Vol. II (Roma 1965), 270–274.

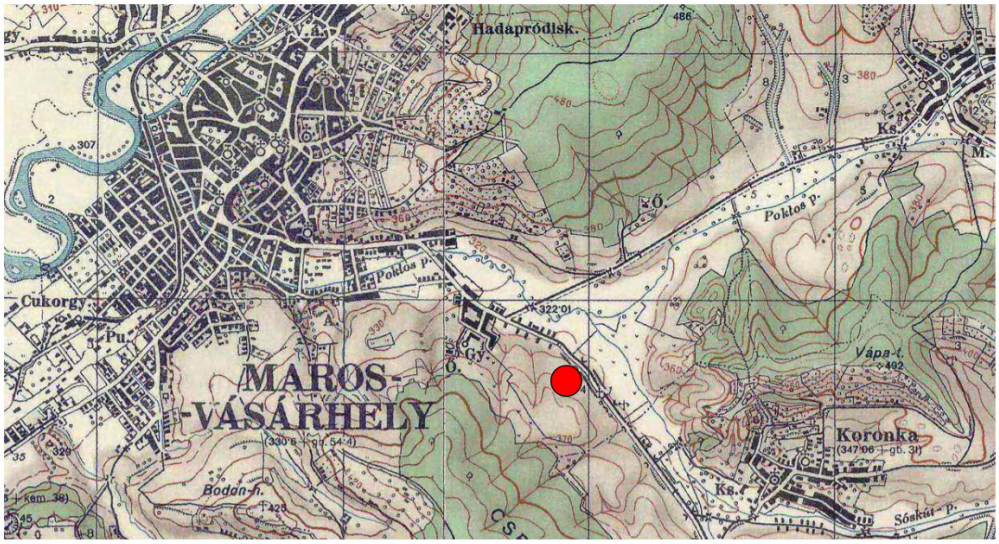
Székely 1973
Z. Székely, Import cucutenian în aria culturii Ariuşd, *StComSfGheorghe* 1973, 37–43.

Székely 1987
Z. Székely, La position d'Ariuşd dans le cadre de la civilisation Cucuteni, in: M. Petrescu-Dîmboviţa – N. Ursulescu – D. Monah – V. Chirica (eds.), *La civilisation de Cucuteni en contexte Européen*, BAI I (Iaşi 1987), 259–261.

Sztáncsuj 2015
S. J. Sztáncsuj, *Grupul cultural Ariuşd pe teritoriul Transilvaniei* (Cluj-Napoca 2015)

Vulpe 1957
R. Vulpe, *Izvoare. Săpăturile din 1936–1948* (Bucureşti 1957)

Whitlow et al. 2013
R. Whitlow – V. Kavruk – D.-L. Buzea – B. Briewig, Radiocarbon data from the Cucuteni-Ariuşd levels at Păuleni-Ciuc (Ciomortan) "Dâmbul Cetăţii", Harghita County, *ActaTS* 12, 2013, 37–64.



1

2

Plate I. Târgu Mureș–*Shopping City*. 1. Location of the site on the Military Survey of Hungary from 1941; 2. Ortophoto plan of the site before and during the construction work.

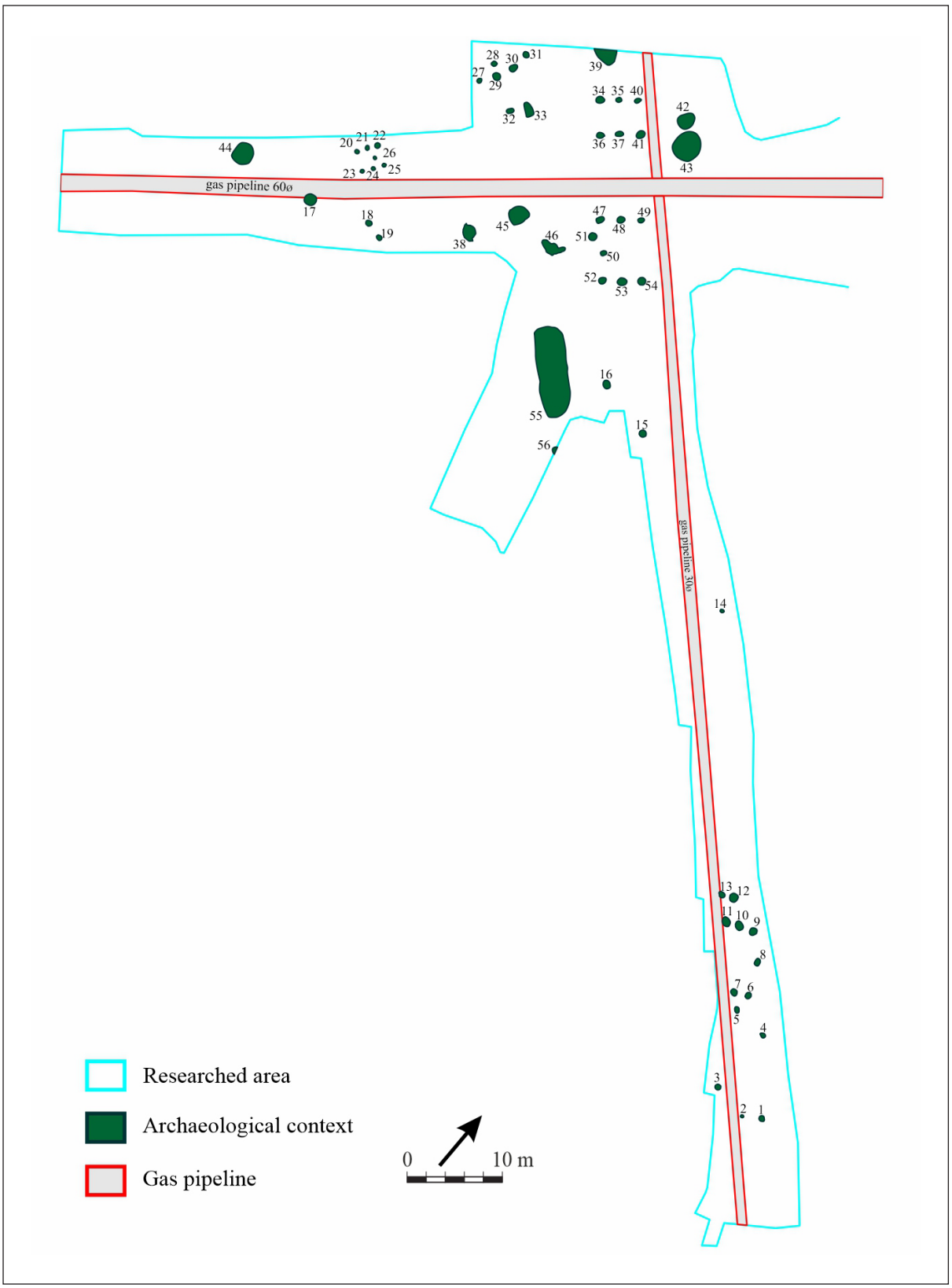


Plate II. Târgu Mureş–*Shopping City*. Plan of the researched area and the archaeological contexts.

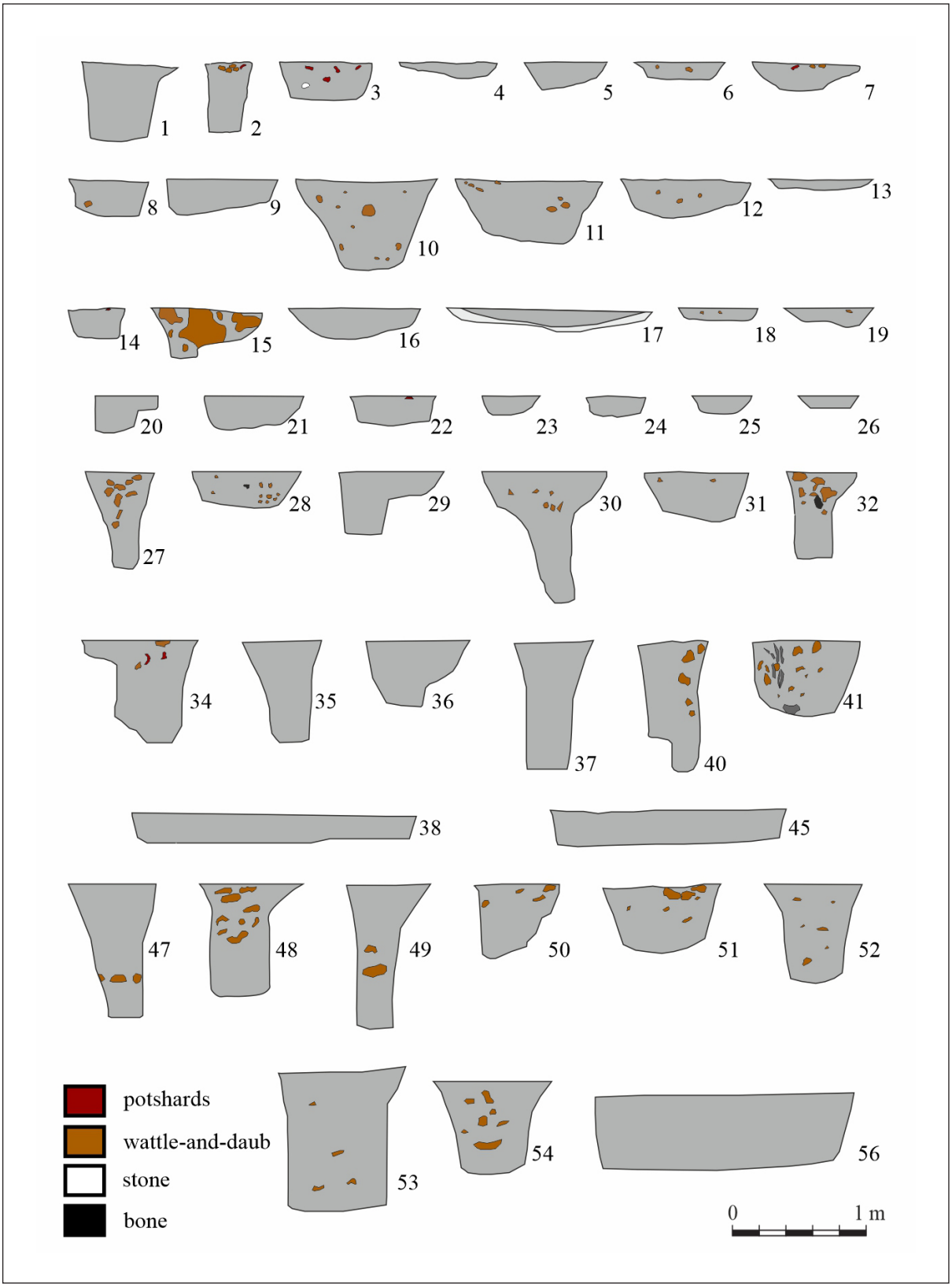


Plate III. Târgu Mureș–*Shopping City*. Cx.1–32, Cx.34–38, Cx.40–41, Cx.45, Cx.47–54 and Cx.56.

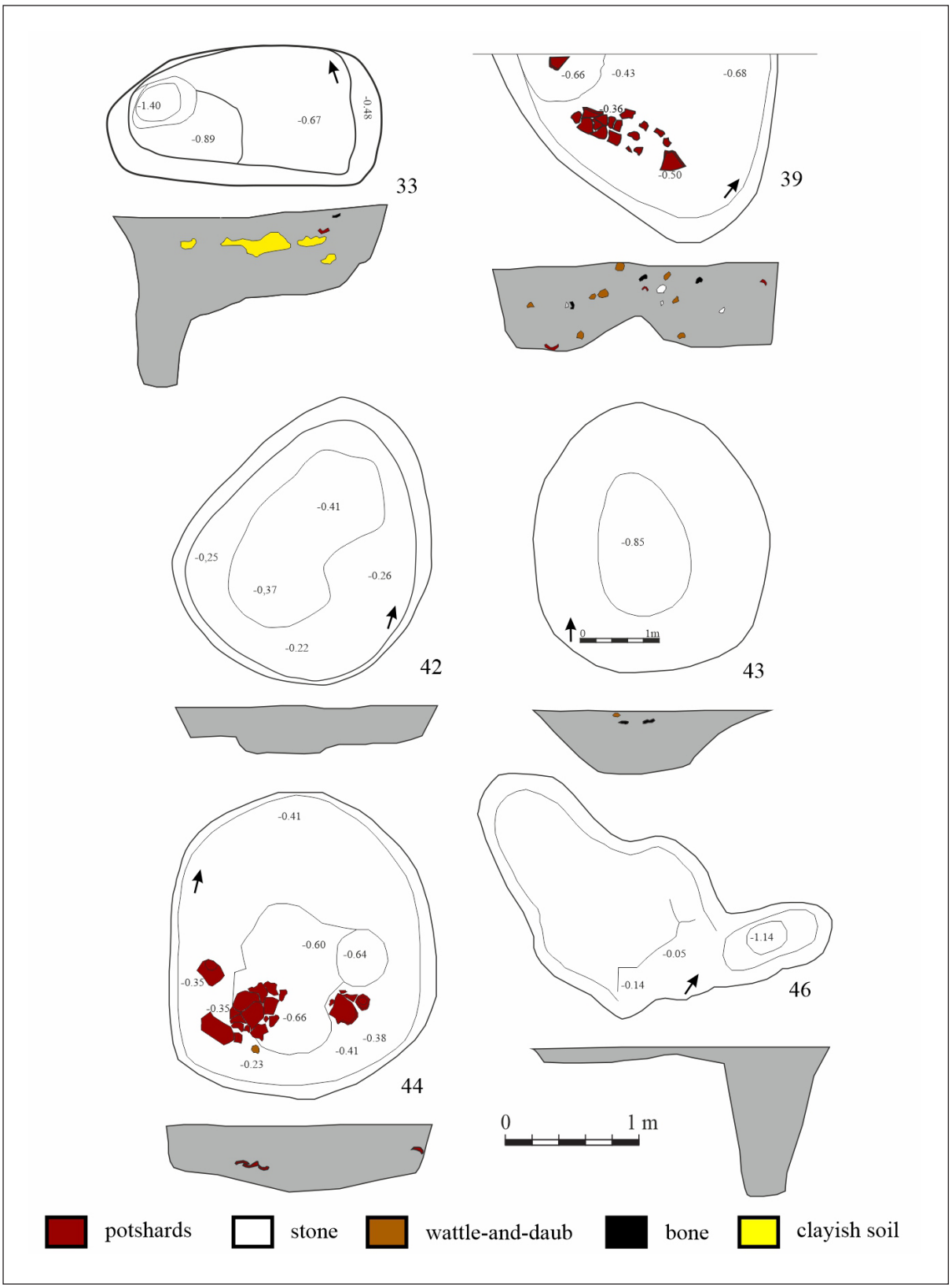


Plate IV. Târgu Mureş–*Shopping City*. Ground plan and profiles of Cx.33, Cx.39, Cx.42–44 and Cx.46.

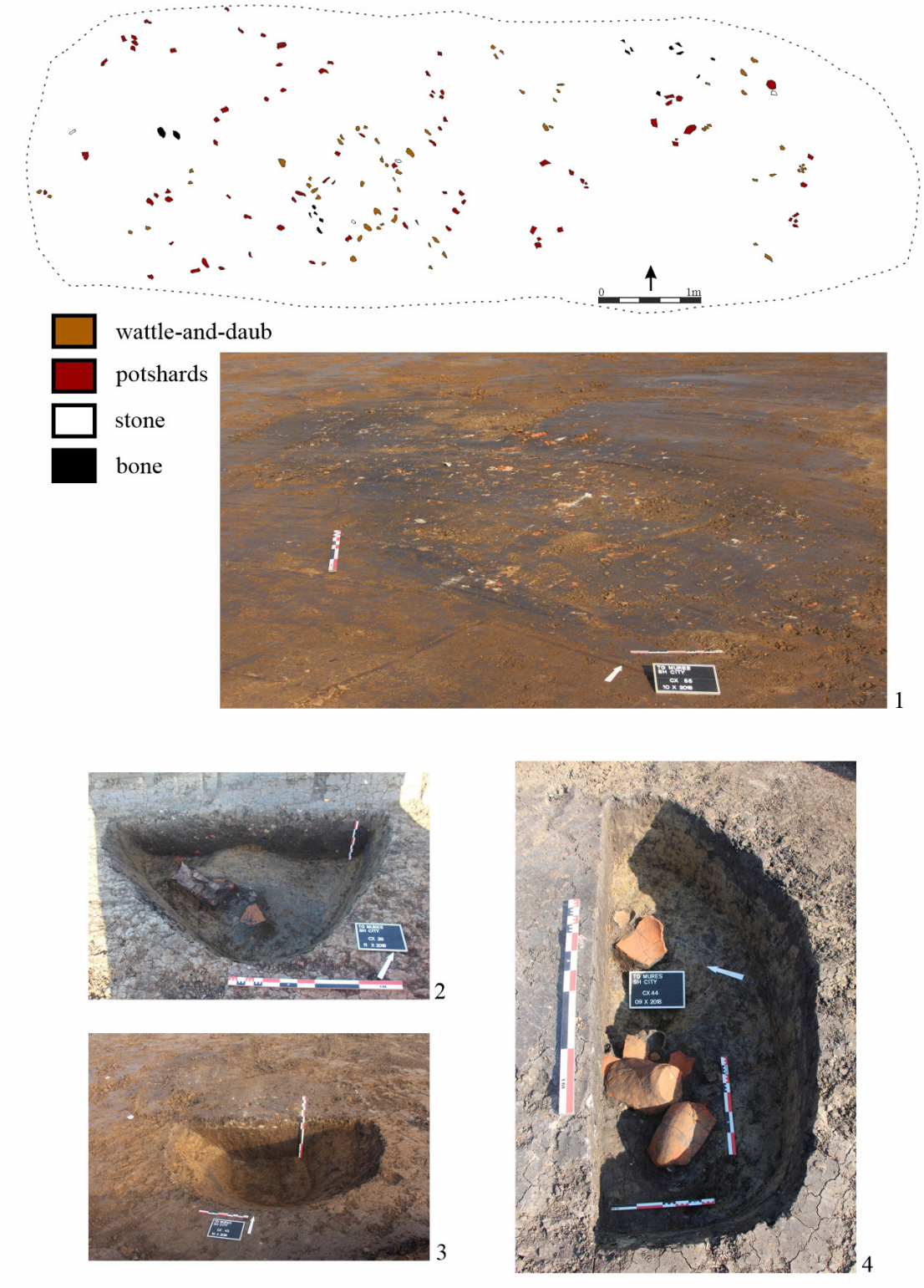


Plate V. Târgu Mureș–*Shopping City.* 1. Cx.55; 2. Cx.39; 3. Cx.43; 4. Cx.44.

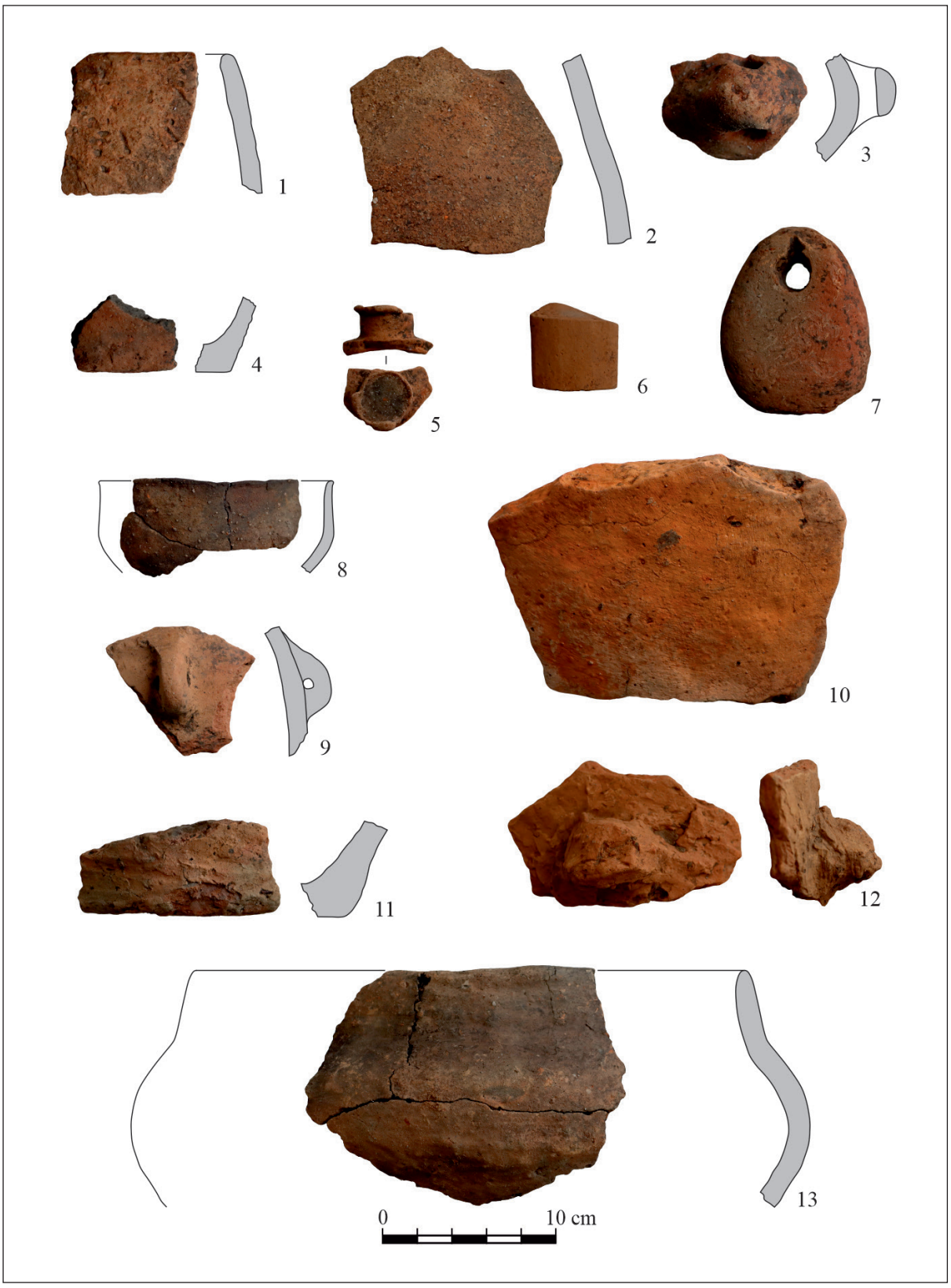


Plate VI. Târgu Mureș–*Shopping City*.
1–7. Copper Age finds from the culture layer; 8. Cx.7; 9. Cx.16; 10. Cx.28; 11–13. Cx.39.

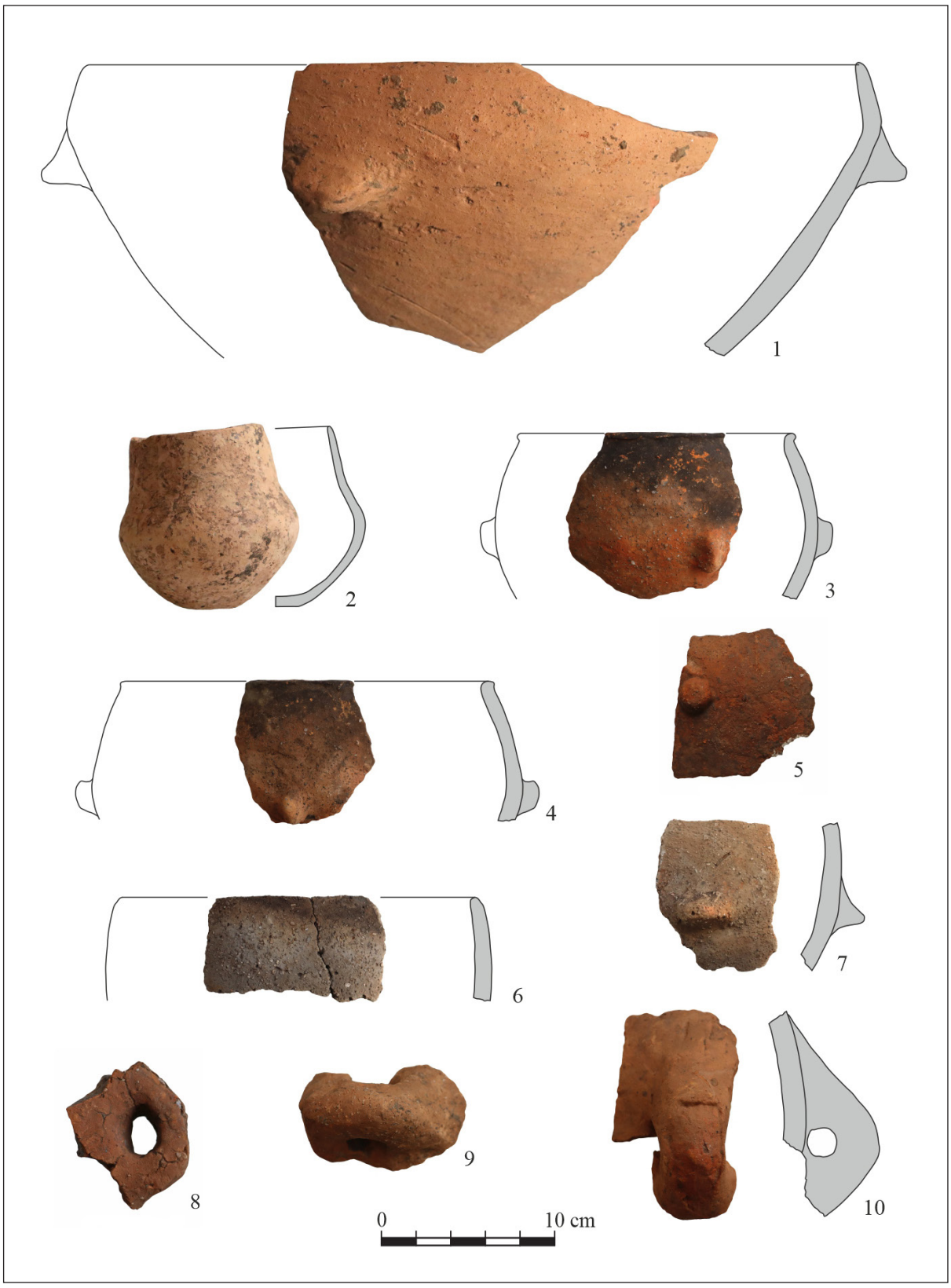


Plate VII. Târgu Mureş–*Shopping City*. Copper Age finds from Cx.39.

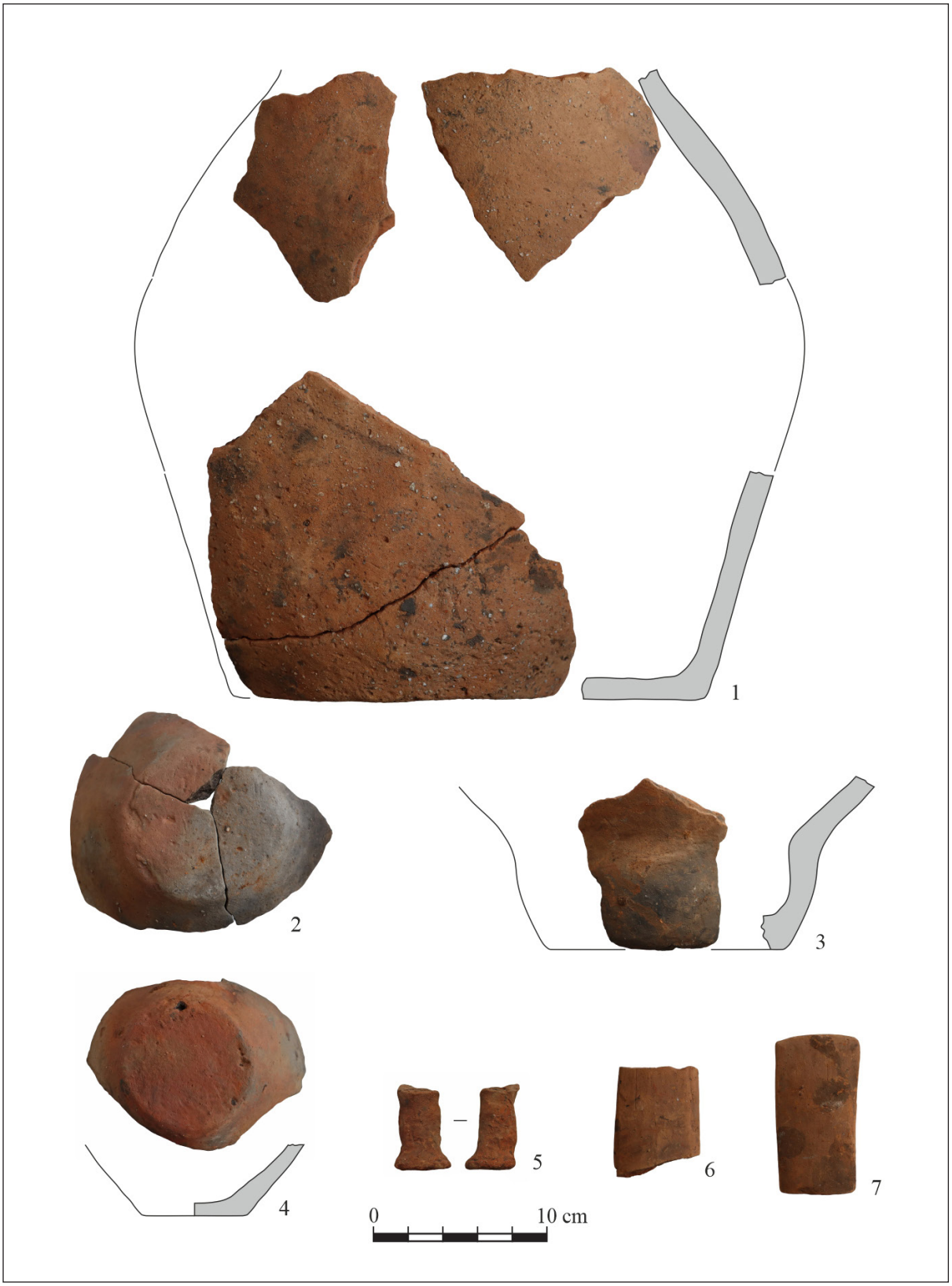


Plate VIII. Târgu Mureș–*Shopping City*. Copper Age finds from Cx.39.

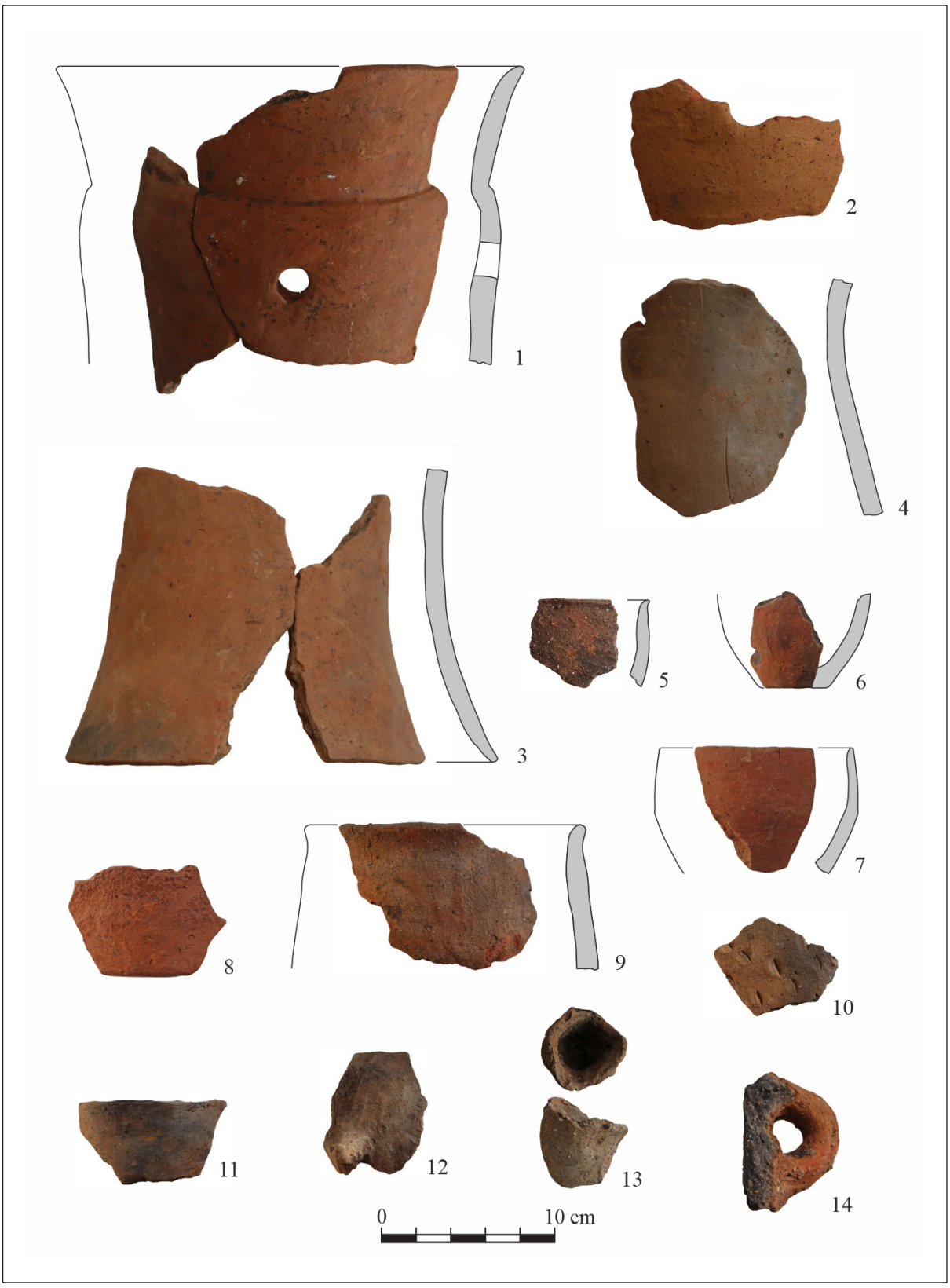


Plate IX. Târgu Mureș–*Shopping City*, Copper Age finds. 1–4. Cx.39;
5. Cx.41; 6–8. Cx.42; 9–12. Cx.43; 13–14. Cx.44.

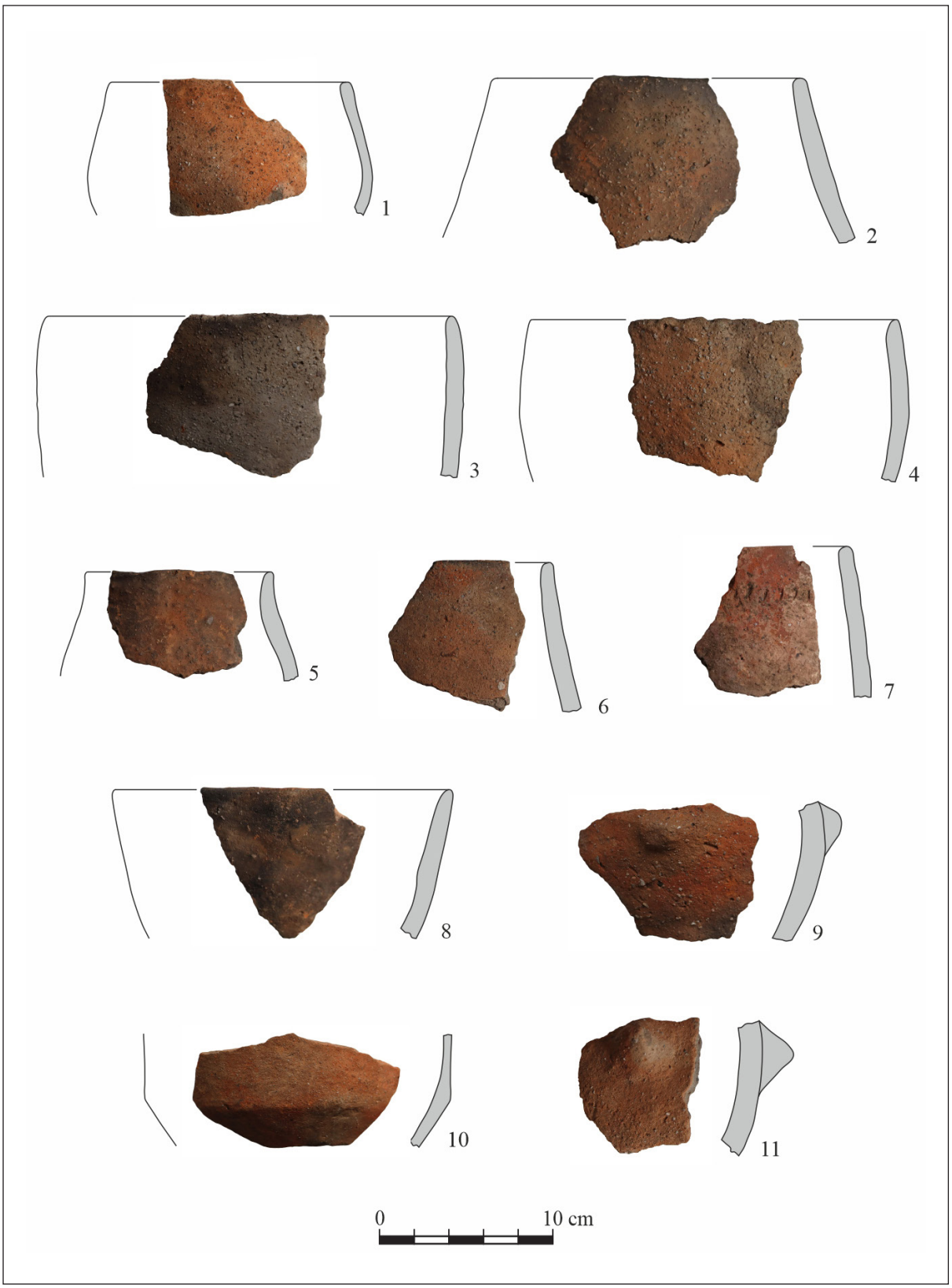


Plate X. Târgu Mureș–*Shopping City*. Copper Age finds from Cx.44.

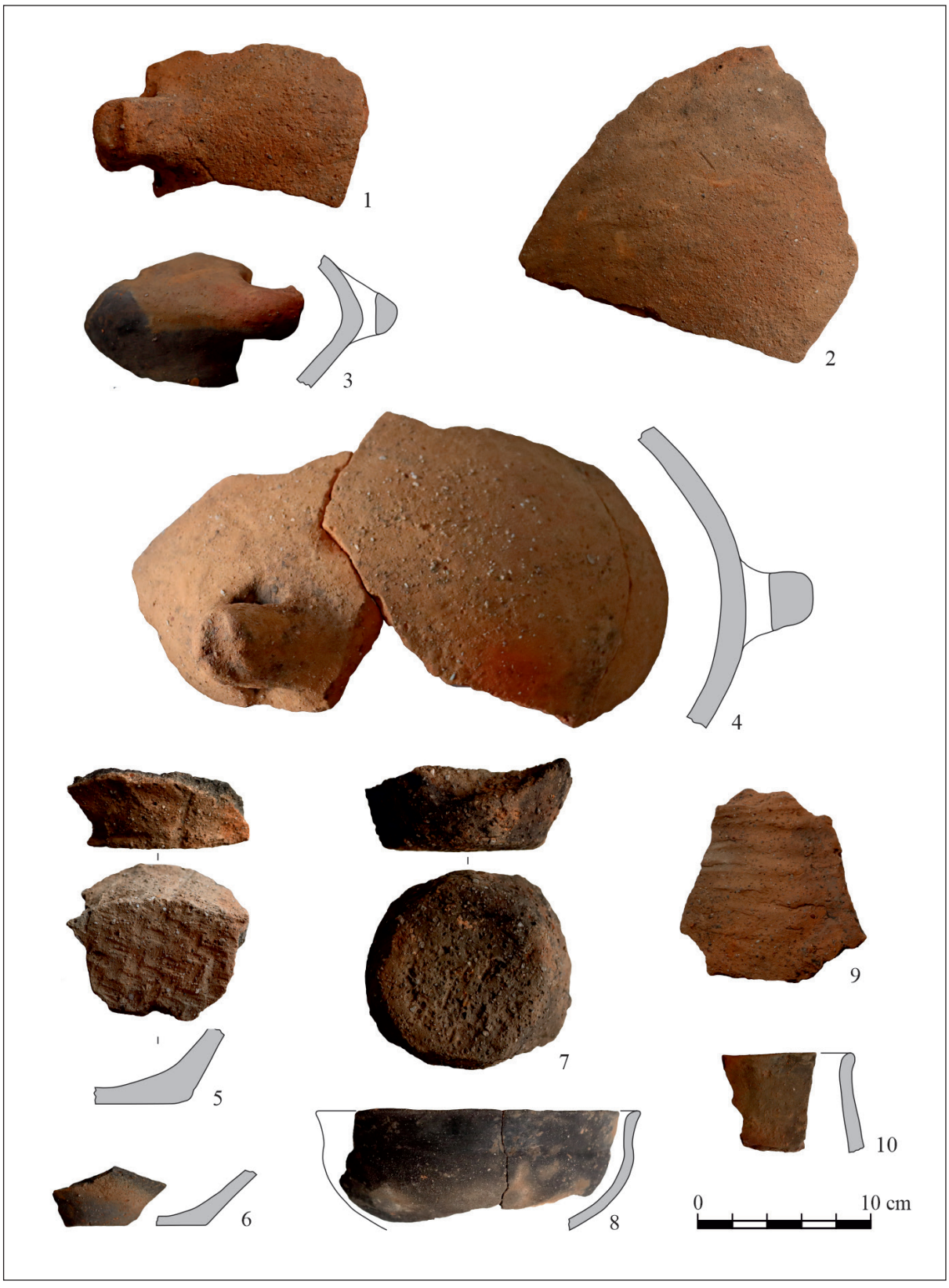


Plate XI. Târgu Mureş–*Shopping City*, Copper Age finds. 1–7. Cx.44; 8. Cx.45; 9. Cx.55; 10. Cx.56.

ABBREVIATIONS

ActaArchHung	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
ActaMN	Acta Musei Napocensis
Acta MP	Acta Musei Porolissensis
ActaTS	Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis
AIIA	Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol". Iași
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
Angustia	Angustia. Muzeul Carpaților Răsăriteni
Apulum	Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis
ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értesítő
ArchKorr	Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt
ArhMold	Arheologia Moldovei
Banatica	Banatica, Muzeul Banatului Montan
BAR (IS)	British Archaeological Reports (–International Series)
BHAUT	Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Universitatis Timisiensis
BJ	Bonner Jahrbücher
BAI	Bibliotheca Archaeologica Iassiensis
BAM	Bibliotheca Memoriae Antiquitatis
BMA	Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis
BMM	Bibliotheca Musei Marisiensis
BMN	Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis
BMP	Bibliotheca Musei Porolissensis
BudRég	Budapest Régiségei
CA	Cercetări Arheologice
CCAR	Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România
Dacia (N. S.)	Dacia. Recherches et décuvertes archéologiques en Roumanie, I–XII (1924–1948), Nouvelle série (N. S.): Dacia. Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire anciene
DolgKolozsvár (Ú.S.)	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából, (Új sorozat 2006–)
EMúz	Erdélyi Múzeum
EphemNap	Ephemeris Napocensis
FolArch	Folia Archaeologica
JAHA	Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology
JbRGZM	Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums
JRA	Journal of Roman Archaeology
KuBA	Kölner und Bonner Archaeologica
Lymbus	Lymbus. Magyarságtudományi Forrásközlemények
Marisia	Marisia (V–XXXV): Studii și Materiale
Marisia-AHP	Marisia: Archaeologia, Historia, Patrimonium
MCA	Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice
MFMÉ (–StudArch)	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve, (Studia Archaeologica 1995–)
ReiCretActa	Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautorum Acta

RevBis	Revista Bistriţei. Complexul Judeţean Muzeal Bistriţa-Năsăud
Sargetia (S.N.)	Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis
SCIV(A)	Studii şi Cercetări de Istorie Veche (şi Arheologie 1974–)
StComSfGheorghe	Studii şi comunicări. Sfântu Gheorghe
StudiaAA	Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica. Iaşi

MARISIA. ARCHAEOLOGIA, HISTORIA, PATRIMONIUM

With a publishing tradition since 1965, in 2019 the annual of the Mureş County Museum initiated a new series entitled: *Marisia. Archaeologia, Historia, Patrimonium*. The publication provides a panel for new research results in archeology, architecture and material heritage of the history of arts and culture. The studies mainly focus on the inner Transylvanian region that encompasses also Mureş County. Beyond local valuable contributions, the annual aims at a regional and global concern that is relevant for the whole of Transylvania. Among the annual's missions is to provide mutual interpretation of the research results produced by the Romanian and Hungarian scientific workshops. Therefore, the annual articles are mainly in English but based on the field of research and the approached topic studies in German, Romanian or Hungarian are also accepted.

Cu o tradiție din anul 1965, anuarul Muzeului Județean Mureș s-a relansat în 2019 sub titlul *Marisia. Archaeologia, Historia, Patrimonium*. Această publicație se descrie ca o platformă științifică care cuprinde rezultatele cercetărilor în domenii precum: arheologia, arhitectura și patrimoniul material din zona istoriei artelor și a culturii, studii localizate în regiunea centrală a Transilvaniei, din care face parte județul Mureș. In extenso, anuarul își propune să ofere un spațiu unitar contribuțiilor științifice valoroase, relevante din perspectiva geografică a ceea ce înseamnă întreaga regiune a Transilvaniei. Una dintre misiunile publicației este aceea de a oferi tuturor celor interesați spațiul de schimb pentru cele mai noi rezultate din atelierele științifice românești și maghiare. Articolele anuarului sunt scrise în general în limba engleză, existând totodată articole scrise în germană, română și maghiară, în funcție de specificul domeniului și a temei abordate.

A Maros Megyei Múzeum 1965 óta megjelenő évkönyvének 2019-ben útjára bocsátott új sorozata, a *Marisia. Archaeologia, Historia, Patrimonium* elsősorban a mai Maros megyét is magába foglaló belső-erdélyi régió régészeti, épített és tárgyi örökségére, nemkülönben az ezekhez kapcsolódó művészettörténeti, művelődéstörténeti kérdésekre vonatkozó újabb kutatások tudományos fóruma. A lokális perspektíván túl igyekszik kitekinteni a regionális és univerzális összefüggésekre, így a tágan értelmezett Erdély területére nézve is közöl kiemelkedő értékkel bíró tanulmányokat. Küldetésének tekinti a hazai román és magyar tudományos műhelyekben született eredmények kölcsönös tolmácsolását. A dolgozatok nyelve főként az angol, de szakterülettől és témától függően német, román vagy magyar nyelven is közöl írásokat.