

GRAVES BELONGING TO THE FIRST HORIZON FROM ALBA IULIA-STAȚIA DE SALVARE

Discoveries Made during the Archaeological Research from 1980 and 1981

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The present paper discusses the analysis of the 18 graves discovered during the research carried out between 1980 and 1981 at Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. The following data is designed to provide additional information on the Transylvanian funerary landscape at the dawn of the Middle Ages. The research carried out at the site mentioned above has revealed some truly remarkable information about an archaeological find that is only partially understood. In terms of the grave orientation, a wide range can be observed so that one cannot highlight a predominant. All 18 uncovered graves present a diverse and numerous funerary inventory: weapons (battle axes, arrowheads, daggers), utensils (flint, knife, blades, steel, skins, burnt spindle whorls), adornments and clothing accessories (buttons, Kecel type buckles, beads, earrings, rings, bracelets, torques, pendants, appliques, coins) and pottery. In addition to these elements, remains of animal offerings deposited at the time of the deceased's burial were discovered in the sepulchral pits. At the current research stage, it is appropriate to add the graves that are the subject of this article to the 87 found between 1981 and 1985 in the same area. Taking into account elements of rite and ritual, funerary inventory, and other conclusive aspects, one can place the graves within the first funerary horizon dated to the 9th–10th c., when existed Bulgarian enclave in Transylvania. All these burial finds can be added to those made at Blandiana A and Sebeș (Alba County, Romania) and facilitate the idea that a Bulgarian enclave existed in the Transylvanian area in the 9th–10th c.

Keywords: Transylvania, Early Middle Ages, Funeral Rite, Bulgarians.

GENERAL REMARKS

The significance of the Alba Iulia area in the medieval period is widely acknowledged (Fig. 1). Therefore, it is unsurprising to uncover various sepulchral pits that prove that specific communities of people lived in the area. The story of the discoveries on which we have focused our attention begins in the autumn of 1979, when the first fortuitous discoveries were made. The municipal works of extending the 'Platoul Romanilor' neighbourhood in the north-western part of the city of Alba Iulia required extensive archaeological research within the existing burial area. The latter area was delimited by Victoriei Boulevard, Calea Moșilor and Stația de Salvare (Ambulance Station). A number of 738 graves were revealed in this context: 186 graves belonging to the cemetery from the 2nd–3rd c., four incineration graves (8th c.), 362 graves attributed to the Early Medieval necropolis, and 186 graves belonging to Str. Vânătorilor necropolis (second half of the 11th c.). The Roman cemetery was represented by burial graves with wooden coffins, stone and brick sarcophagi (with or without cover), and incineration graves. The cremated remains were deposited either inside an urn or directly in the sepulchral pit (circular

or oval-shaped). The bottom of the pit could have been purified by burning or not scorched at all.

It is a unique case (grave 585) in which the deceased's cremated remains were deposited in a parallel pipe-shaped brick box. The inventory of these graves was quite diverse: pottery (lamps, jars, mugs, plates), glass vessels, bronze coins, adornment, and clothing accessories (buckles, appliques, earrings, rings, beads). The Roman cemetery overlapped with another Early Medieval necropolis from the 9th–11th c. This last one has quite a diverse inventory consisting of weapons (daggers, battle axe, arrowheads), pottery, clothing accessories, adornments (beads, buttons, appliques, Kecel type buckles, bracelets, torques, earrings, rings, pendants, coins), and different utensils (knife, flint, blades, steel, burnt spindle, whorls).

Alongside the above-mentioned expansive inventory, animal offerings represented by remains of sacrificed animals (bovine, ovicaprine, equine/horse) and bird eggs deposited during the burial ceremony were also identified in some of the graves. There was a diversity in the orientation of the deceased (W – E, E – W, SE – NW, NW – SE). Put in accordance with the pagan and Christian custom, the orientation of the dead is sometimes correlated with the possible traditions in use among the



Fig. 1. Alba Iulia area. The layout of the Early Middle Age cemeteries. 1 (grey raster) – Stația de Salvare (Ambulance Station); 2 – Vinătorilor St.; 3 – Orange Transmission Station; 4 – King's Spring; 5 – Catholic Cathedral; 6 – Roman Bath/Governors Palace; 7 – Brîndușei St.; 8 – The Ravelin of St. Francisc de Paola; 9 – Former Military Hospital-Museikon. a – Canton C.F.R.; b – Veterinary Hospital; c – OMV; d – Profi.

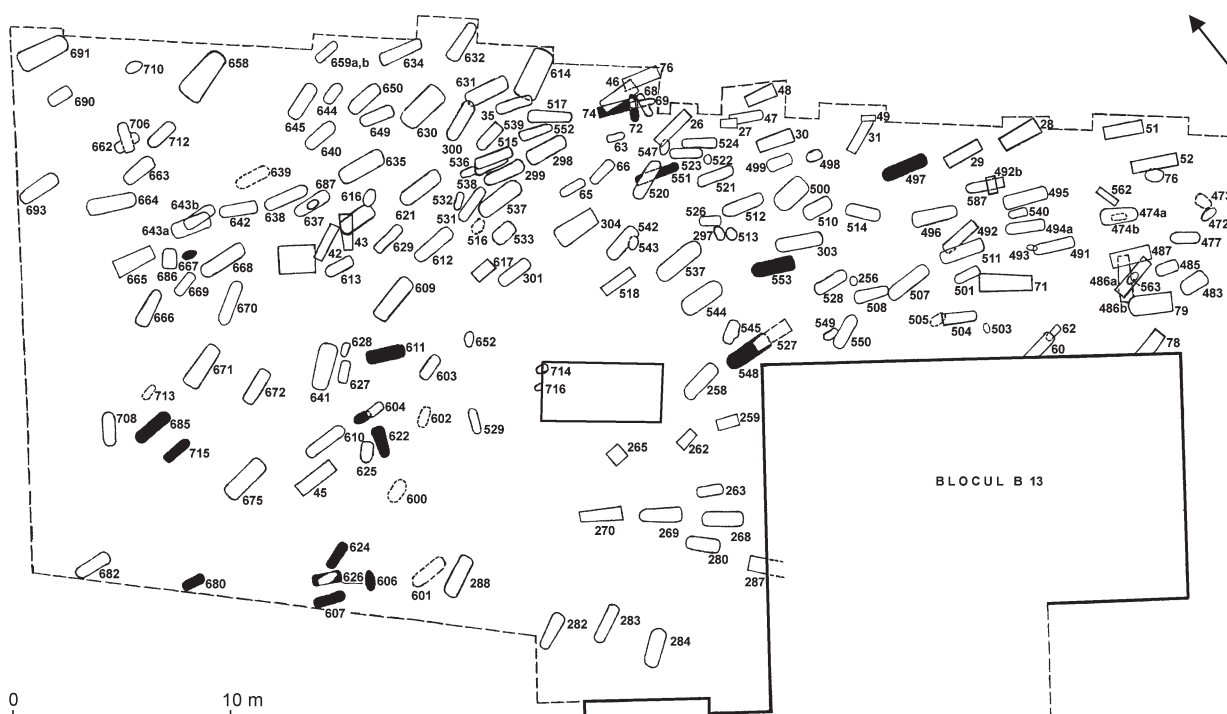


Fig. 2. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. The plan of the necropolis (1980–1981) with the graves belonging to the 1st horizon marked in black (graphic by M. Blăjan, A. Dragotă).

community. It may also be the orientation fits the slope of the terrain, to which the longitudinal axes of the sepulchral pits were adapted (Hanuliak 2004, 246). In this framework, the possibility of identifying two ethnically different groups, one Christian and one in the process of Christianization that used the same necropolis, was not excluded. A stone workshop, a burnt lime kiln, two fountains, three huts, and the stone foundations of 15 facilities with the wooden structure were investigated in addition to the funerary complexes (Blăjan 2004, 50; Blăjan/Popa 1983).

Based on the comprehensive archive kept by Romanian archaeologist Mihai Blăjan, the informational horizon of the Magyar warrior graves revealed at Stația de Salvare (Ambulance Station) during the research of 1980–1981 could be easily reconstructed (Dragotă 2019a). There can be identified 18 funerary complexes (Fig. 2) among the other Early Medieval graves, which can be attributed (based on the elements of funeral rite and ritual) to the 1st horizon of the mentioned necropolis.

As stated before, the description of the graves and the funeral inventory was made following the records in the archive of fellow archaeologist Mihai Blăjan. We aim to present, as follows, a piece of yet partly understood archaeological discovery. In the light of existing data, the graves can be placed without problems within the 1st horizon, dated in the 9th–10th c. They can also be added to the 87 graves revealed between 1981 and 1985. We also include the complexes discovered at Blandiana A and Sebeș in this chronological horizon. The graves from 1981–1985 are to be analysed and subsequently published. The estimates made by Horia Ciugudean and Gheorghe Anghel and the relatively short use of the cemetery justify us rather supporting the idea of a Bulgarian enclave in Transylvania. This small community, whose customs have interfered with the Romanic element existing in Transylvania, makes us use the term cultural group Blandiana A or Alba Iulia-Blandiana.

From another perspective, we are dealing with a proto-Bulgarian enclave that reached the north of the Danube due to the French embassy from 892 mentioned in *Annales Fuldenses*. One can accept southern Slavic elements, Saltovo, possibly hybrids, but also characteristics of the Romanesque population within the discoveries of phase I from Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. It is hard to believe and to prove that incised coarse pottery can only represent a prerogative of the Slav population! From this point of view, it would not be excluded that the graves

with two incised coarse jars belong to the native population (*sic!*). With one exception (the W – E orientation), all the elements of funerary rite and ritual (the presence of the animal offering at the feet of the deceased, the coal, the symbolically deposited knife on animal remains) indicate us a pagan population.

The so-called 'Belgrade voivodeship' founded by Bulgarians and natives, whose autonomy lasted until the end of the 10th c. when it was 'conquered' by Gyula, has no scientific coverage. The existence of Christianity within this community lies under the same lack of scientific arguments. This political configuration gained shape only in the 10th c., concurrently with the Christian action. This is why we support the term 'Gyula voivodeship'. It is not reasonable to speak of a *sensu stricto* control of the Bulgarians, but rather of power upon salt transport. The latter surely came from the salt mines of Transylvania.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GRAVES¹

Grave 72

(adult male with destroyed skeleton)

A bovine skull placed on its right side with the jaw bones orientated west was placed on the north-west end of the pit. It partially overlapped the bones of the anterior limbs parallel to the end of the pit. After a thorough analysis, the conclusion was the animal remains of the skull, and the lower limbs belonged to a female specimen. Portions of the lower limbs of the bovine, together with the skull and limbs of an ovine, were deposited at the opposite end of the sepulchral pit, about 40 cm toward the south-east. The study of the bone remains (fragments of a skull, coxal vertebrae, tarsus, and metatarsus) identified a female ovine aged four to five years old. The two incomplete bovine and ovine skeletons represent the animals sacrificed during the funerary feast. Their extremities (carpus and limbs) were thrown symbolically into the sepulchral pit, representing the remains of the animal offering (Fig. 3; Pl. II: 72).

Grave 74

(adult female)

The skeleton was deposited in dorsal decubitus with the head to the west (slightly deviated to the north-west) and the legs to the east (east-south). The head with a broken braincase was leaning to the left.

¹ **Abbreviations:** MNUAI – National Museum of the Union, Alba Iulia; d. = Diameter; d.r. = Rim Diameter; d.m. = Maximal Diameter; d.b. = Bottom Diameter; h/H. = Height; thk. = Thickness; L. = Length; W. = Width.

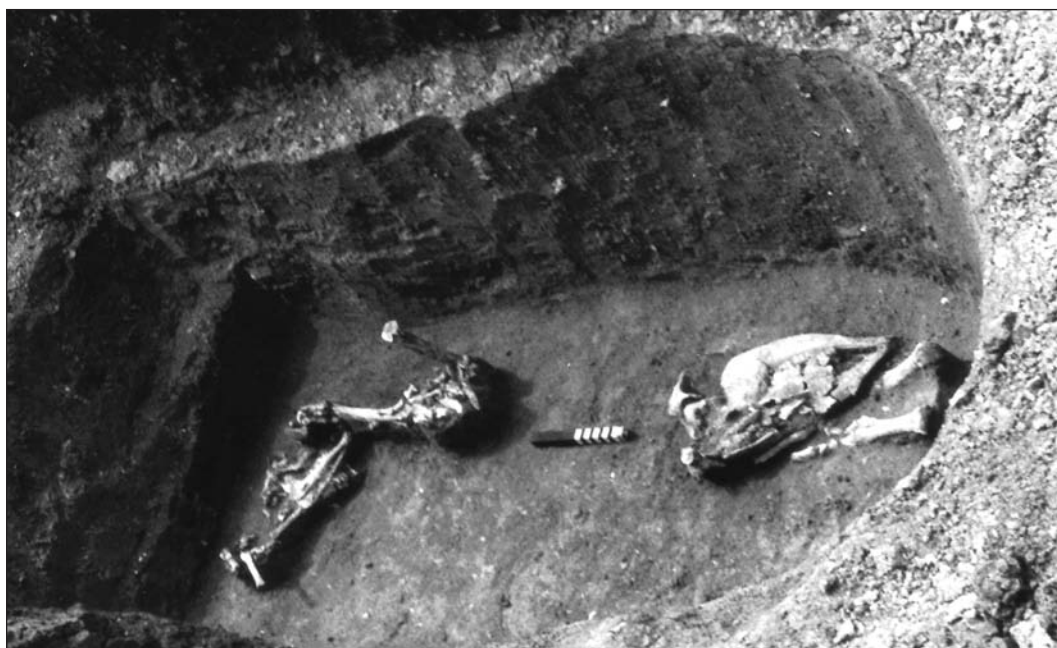


Fig. 3. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Remains of animal offering from grave 72 (photo by M. Blăjan).



Fig. 4. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. General view of grave 74 (photo by M. Blăjan).

Both hands lay parallel to the body, having the palms facing the ground. The right humerus was pushed outward, with its superior end placed under the chin. The spine was arched to the right. The lumbar vertebrae were placed on the left pelvis bone, and the sacrum was vertically elevated (Fig. 4; Pl. I: 74).

The skull and limbs remaining from a bovine were found on the knees of the deceased. In addition to that, an ovine skull was spotted near her right knee, at the end of the pit. Both of the skulls presented with incipient horns on the frontal bone and had the muzzle orientated to the west or the south. Two bone fragments belonging to a swine and a fish were found 15 cm west of the female's skull, near the pottery vessels that had the rim inclined to the south. The study of the bone remains identified traces of bovine, ovine, piglet, and fish. The bovine bones (represented by the maxilla, mandible with teeth, carpus, tarsus, and phalanges) belong to a female specimen aged approximately 18 months. The ovine bones (represented by the maxilla, mandible with teeth, atlas, a fragmented femur, and a calcaneus) belong to a slightly horned female specimen aged between four to five years. The swine remains (represented by a piece of the scapula and a humerus fragment) belong to a piglet. As regards the fish remains, the traces recovered belonged to a big specimen (40–50 cm) whose species could not be identified.

Two vessels were deposited 15 cm west of the skull: one of a greyish colour (the NW corner) and the other degreased with pebble (Pl. I: 74: 1, 2). The latter had a rough look. The vessels had soil inside and presented some bones belonging to a leg of a lamb placed at their base.

1. Jar, wheel thrown, fine kaolin clay paste with a brownish core. The vessel is covered with a black polished thick slip. The pot has a flat bottom, the body is relative of short stature, having a short neck, and an oblique rim with a rounded edge. The vessel's body is decorated with oblique polished strips with a width of 0.25 cm. The strips cover almost all the surface, from the neck to the bottom, in an intersected web-like manner. The neck is decorated with horizontal polished strips (h. 14.4 cm, d.b. 9.6 cm, d.m. 15.5 cm, d.r. 11.7 cm; MNUAI F. 6567; Pl. I: 74: 1).
2. Jar made of a clayish sandy paste of slightly dark brown colour associated with large sparse pebble and presenting brown-yellowish spots on its inferior part and inside. The concave bottom has a marginal ring. The body of the vessel is strongly curved, and the short neck has its edged arched outward and obliquely cut on the top. The decoration covers the body, starting from the bottom and working through the neck area. One can observe three-four spaced grooves wide of 0.3 cm and arrange in a spiral shaped-manner on its base. They are followed on the maximal area of the pot by horizontal stripes composed of two, then three grooves climbing spirally to the area above the shoulder. Here, the whole decoration is overlapped by a strip formed of three uniform

wavy lines pointed to the left and by angular loops that surround only once the vessel (h. 142.5 cm, d.b. 6.9 cm; d.m. 14.4 cm; d.r. 1.2 cm, thk. 0.5 cm; MNUAI F. 6565; Pl. I: 74: 2). Brown slip was applied to the exterior walls.

3. String made of 13 beads (Pl. I: 74: 3–15), found under the chin of the skeleton and strung till the half of the left humerus. Only two beads are in a fragmentary state (MNUAI F. 7874):
 - a) Cassiterite (?) bead shaped like a prism with a pentagonal section, brown-greyish colour, irregular facets, and a blunt cylindrical orifice (h. 0.48 cm, W. 0.47 cm, thk. 0.45 cm, d. orifice 0.17 cm).
 - b) Truncated cone-shaped yellow glass bead with sulfur (h. 0.29 cm, d. base 0.41 cm, d. orifice 0.17 cm).
 - c) d. Two disk-shaped yellow glass beads with sulfur (h. 0.34 cm, d. 0.5 cm, d. orifice 0.09 cm; h. 0.31 cm, d. 0.56 cm, d. orifice 0.14 cm).
 - e) Pentagon-shaped blue glass bead with four spiral grooves and red traces incrustated in the paste.
 - f) Cylindrical-shaped bead decorated with seven spiral grooves initially filled with a line of yellow paste. Black glass, black enamel (h. 1.36 cm, d. 0.47 cm, d. orifice 0.12 cm).
 - g) Black glass bead with five spiral grooves initially filled with a line of yellow paste from which only isolated spots are preserved now. It presents a broken area at one end (h. 1.13 cm, d. 0.47 cm, d. orifice 0.19 cm).
 - h) Bead formed by three elements shaped like a truncated cone and made of light green glass with dark green enamel (h. 0.7 cm, d. 0.6 cm, d. orifice 0.23 cm).
 - i) Bead made of dark green spongy glass (h. 1.35 cm, d. 0.53 cm, d. orifice 0.13 cm).
 - j) Bead formed by four elements shaped like a truncated cone and made of light green glass with dark green enamel (h. 1.36 cm, d. 0.6 cm, d. orifice 0.21 cm).
 - k) Bead made of green-brownish spongy glass (h. 1.53 cm, d. 0.55 cm, d. orifice 0.18 cm).
 - l) Cylindrical black glass bead decorated with vertical grooves arranged in a spiral manner. It also presents traces of yellow paste disposed in the grooves (h. 1.62 cm, d. 0.59 cm, d. orifice 0.27 cm).
 - m) Truncated cone-shaped glass bead with dark green enamel (h. 0.39 cm, d. 0.61 cm, d. orifice 0.27 cm).
4. Fragmentary bronze piece (Pl. I: 74: 16). Two fragments from a bead-shaped made from a bronze sheet having a spherical-shaped body. The ends are blunt and the sheet is 0.04 cm thick (MNUAI F. 7860).

Grave 497 (elderly male, aged 65 to 70 years)

The relatively well-preserved skeleton was deposited in dorsal decubitus. The calotte of the skull was broken and leaned toward the left. The spine was curved toward the right side. The hands lay parallel to the body, with their palms placed on the upper third part of the femurs. The femurs were arranged in a triangle-shaped manner, having the calf extended in a parallel manner and the bone of the foot falling in their continuation. The skeleton had a length of 155 cm and long gracile bones. An arched

iron nail and boiled animal bone fragments from the filling ground were found under the left shoulder.

One jar and one amphora-shaped pitcher with two handles were deposited side by side at 20 cm west of the skull (Pl. II: 497: 1). Part of the spine, some ribs, and a shoulder (?) of ovicaprine was thrown toward the end of the pit. The skull of a sheep (lamb) with the jaws to the right (south) and the back of the neck to the north was placed at the opposite end of the pit, above the calves. The extremities of the limbs belonging to the animal sacrificed during the funerary ceremony were thrown above the feet of the deceased. The blade of an iron knife set with the tip to the east, as well as scraps of rotten wood coming from some sort of sheath, was found between the left hip and forearm. Fragments of boiled (cooked) animal bones (?) placed in a secondary position were collected from the filling ground. The study of bone remains identified portions of the skull, maxilla, and mandible with teeth, dorsal and lumbar vertebrae, and a fragment of the sacrum, as well as limbs (carpus, tarsus, and phalanges). These segments belonged to a female from the *Ovis* group aged 12 to 13 months.

1. Amphora-shaped pitcher, wheel thrown, a fine paste made of kaolin and clay, non-oxidant fired pottery, black colour covered on both inside and outside with slip, mechanically polished on the outside. The pitcher has a concave bottom, an ovoid-shaped slender body, high truncated neck with a flared funnel-shaped edge slightly arched out. Two attached handles having the form of a thick band with an oval cross-section are placed at the middle of the neck. They are making a common body with the wall at the top end and the bottom end embossed, presenting a thinned extremity. The handles are placed symmetrically and broadened in the middle, having the central part thicker. The ornamentation consists of narrow strips mechanically polished with metallic reflections, executed vertically on the neck and body of the amphora. A circular arc is engraved above the shoulder, on one side of the vessel, having the following measurements: 0.04 cm wide, with an opening of 5.56 cm, 3.8 cm high with a raised end [(h. 27.4 cm, d.b. 8.94 cm, d.m. 14.5 cm, d. base of the neck 4.94 cm, d.r. 7.58 cm, thk. of the margin (end) 0.67 cm, W. of the handle 1.8 cm (bottom)–2.3 cm (middle) and 2 cm (top), at the place where it welds with the neck)]. Portions of the rim are broken and filled with gypsum (MNUAI F. 6593; Pl. II: 497: 1).
2. Jar, slow speed wheel, made of fine sandy-clayish paste, blackish colour with brown spots on the lower half and yellow spots on the inferior side of the bottom. The bottom is concave, without a support ring. The body of the pot is truncated, the shoulder is raised towards the rim, and the neck is short. The ornament under the shoulder consists of a band of five horizontal lines overlapped in the area where the shoulder arches with two more bands of three-four wavy lines (Pl. II: 497: 2). Their small loops are distanced one from another and arched at a sharp angle. At the base of the neck, a band formed by two horizontal grooves concludes the ornamental register

of the ceramic pot. Wide spiral grooves can also be distinguished on the inner facet of the rim (h. 12.5 cm, d.b. 7.8 cm, d.m. 1.28 cm, d.r. 11.1 cm, thk. 0.56 cm; MNUAI F. 6585).

3. Fragment belonging to a strongly curved steel found near the left ear (Pl. II: 497: 3). It is made of an iron bar stricken on its four edges, having a pointed tip (h. 2.84 cm; MNUAI F. 7640).
4. Four-sided nail with a wide head (3.2 × 2.8 cm) and made of a four-sided bar (0.4 × 0.3 cm).

Grave 548 (mature adult, aged 40 to 45)

The depth 150 cm, orientation NW – SE. Trapezoidal pit (235 × 80 cm) with rounded corners. The skeleton was deposited in dorsal decubitus on the diagonal line of the pit. It had a poor state of preservation. The skull with the broken cap was tilted to the left, and the hands were extended along the body. Having a length of 160 cm, the skeleton belongs to a mature male. Grave 548 was overlapped on the south-east half by grave 527. A part of the spine with the ribs articulated in a normal anatomical position was placed in the northern corner of the pit. Some remains consisting of a skull with the calotte facing up and extremities of legs were also found in the eastern corner of the sepulchral pit. All bone segments were placed 15 cm above the human skeleton. The study of the remaining offering led to the identification of two individuals from the Ovicaprine group. The first subject was a sheep (*Ovis*), four to five years old, represented by remains of the long-horned skull, maxilla, and mandible with teeth, dorsal and lumbar vertebrae, and limb bones (carpus, tarsus and phalanges). The other few bone fragments, some of which come from the mandible, belonged to a lamb under three months old (Fig. 5; Pl. I: 548). Two ceramic vessels placed near the skull: one amphora-shaped pitcher (Pl. I: 548: 2) and one jar placed at the cranium (Pl. I: 548: 1).

1. Jar, slow speed wheel, made of a sandy-clayish paste of brown-blackish colour with brown-reddish spots on the outside and brown-yellow spots on the inside. The concave bottom presents marginally a 0.28 cm wide ring. The body of the jar has a curved shoulder, short neck, and bandy rim, arched horizontally and blunted inside. Its margin is obliquely flattened out and is provided with a circular groove. The decoration starts from the bottom and continues up to the base of the neck. It consists of strips of two 0.2 cm horizontal grooves surrounding the ceramic pot in a spiral-like manner approximately 18 times. This jar is placed on the right side of the skull (h. 16 cm, d.b. 8.7 cm, d.m. 15.6 cm, d.m. 12.14 cm, thk. 0.6 cm; Pl. I: 548: 1).
2. Amphora-shaped pitcher, wheel thrown, made of fine clay paste, oxidant firing category, red-brownish walls covered on both sides with a mechanically polished



Fig. 5. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. General view of grave 548 (photo by M. Blăjan).

brown slip. Narrow vertical strips cover the base of the neck and descend toward the bottom. The bottom is concave, without a marginal ring, ornamented with an embossed arc with a diameter of 2.9 cm. Two diameters cut by another two diameters are inscribed in the circle. One of the diameters forms a swastika, which extremities are bent in the opposite direction and doubled by two bars which form with the circle an isosceles trapezoid. Fingerprints imprinted in the soft clay can be observed on the bottom of this amphora-shaped pitcher. The upper part of the rim is broken from the level where the handles are added. The handles form a wide band that makes a common body with the neck of the amphora in its upper part, and it is embossed on the shoulder of the vessel. The body is decorated with a blackish slip or, at times, with a polished strip. This amphora-shaped pitcher is placed near the skull (h. 23.8 + 2.9, approx. 26.7 cm, d.b. 9.2 cm, d.m. 15.4 cm, d. at the base of the neck 4.3 cm, thk. of the handles and rim 0.8 cm, W. at the base of the handles 0.24 cm, and at the middle 2.47 cm, thk. of the handles 1.1 cm; Pl. I: 548: 2).

3. Fragmented bronze button composed of a spheroidal globe constructed of two hemispheres that are glued together (Pl. I: 548: 3). Thick walls measure 0.06 cm. The broken handle consists of a bronze wire (0.14 cm) curved in a circle-shaped manner, fastened to the upper hole by a looped rod. The loop of the rod was strengthened with a ring made of wire that braced the edges of the upper hole. About 1 / 3 of the sphere and the fragmented handle are still kept (MNIAIF. 7771).

Grave 551

(mature woman) found below grave 520

The skeleton was placed on dorsal decubitus, and both hands were extended parallel to the body. Some glass beads were found near the abdomen area of the body. On the left side of the head, the following was observed: a blade of an iron knife, placed with its tip to the west-northwest, two fragments of a rusty iron bark, and a diaphysis of an animal. A vessel orientated with the rim up was placed above the skull, and an amphora-shaped pitcher of reddish-orange colour orientated with the rim toward the legs was deposited on the right side of the skull. The 151 cm skeleton belongs to a mature woman that appears to have been constitutionally robust. Grave 551 is overlaid by grave 520 (adult-mature woman) that dates back from the 10th c., as the relevant inventory indicates (Pl. IV: 551). Three iron shackles with wooden remains were found to the left of the skull. This fact indicates that the shackles belonged to a corner of the coffin. A lamb skull with the back of the head orientated towards east-southeast and the muzzle orientating west-northwest was placed in the left corner of the sepulchral pit, at the end of the left heel of the deceased. This was the exact same place where the four legs of the sacrificed animal were deposited in piles, one next to each other. The offering included remains of the skull, jaw, and mandible with teeth, the atlas, and the extreme parts of the legs (carp, tarsus, and phalanges). The female belonged to the Ovis group and was approximately 20 months old.

1. Amphora-shaped pitcher, wheel thrown, made of fine clayish paste, oxidant incomplete firing category. The walls have a grey core and reddish-yellow facets (Pl. IV: 551: 15). The vessel has a concave bottom, an ovoid-shaped body with a spheroidal-shaped middle, and a truncated cone-shaped neck. The upper part is broken, and the lower part is exfoliated. The handles are made of a thick band that presents an oval cross-section, fastened with one end on the middle part of the neck and the other pasted above the middle of the ceramic pot. It has a thinned and conical extremity, arched toward the outside. One of the handles is broken. The amphora-shaped pitcher is covered with polished reddish-orange slip and black spots of burnt organic matter (h. 18.9 cm, d.b. 7.68 cm, d.m. 13.3 cm, d.r. 4.3 cm, W. handle 2.15 cm,

thk. handle 1.74 cm, thk. of the wall 0.65 cm). It is placed on the right side of the skull.

2. Jar, placed above the head. Ceramic pot made of clayish-sandy paste, non-oxidant firing, black colour with brown spots on the body. The concave bottom of the jar has a wide marginal ring of 0.41 cm. The decoration occupies the body of the jar from its bottom to the base of the neck and consists of 18 spiral grooves placed at different distances one from another at a width of 0.27 cm (Pl. IV: 551: 16). All of them were most likely executed using the pointed tip of a stick (h. 18 cm, d.b. 8.25 cm, d.m. 14 cm, d.r. 11.2 cm, thk. 0.54 cm).
3. Knife blade with a broken end of the thorn, widened at its base and presenting deterioration to the edge (Pl. IV: 551: 1). The blade is thickened and it was placed on the right side of the body (h. 8.1 cm, W. 1.5 cm; MNUAI F. 7530).
4. Three iron shackles are made out of a crossbar with a quadrilateral section, and the thinned ends are sharpened and bent in the same direction forming a right or obtuse angle (Pl. IV: 551: 12–14). Their length is 3.9–4.2 cm. Placed on the right side of the body. The shackles are heavily rusty (MNUAI F. 7531).
5. String made of ten beads of different shapes and ornamentation (Pl. IV: 551: 2–11). It was placed on the chest of the skeleton:
 - a–f) Six black enamelled glass beads decorated with a thread of yellow paste that is wrapped around the cylindrical or truncated cone-shaped body five times (four specimens) and six times (two specimens). Three pieces have a fragmented end, one broken into two pieces (a – h. 1.26 cm, d. extremities 0.51–0.56 cm, d. orifice 0.17 cm; b – h. 1.32 cm, d. 0.52 cm, d. orifice 0.14 cm; c – h. 1.4 cm, d. 0.57 cm, d. orifice 0.16 cm; d – h. 1.24 cm, d. 0.46–0.52 cm, d. orifice 0.15 cm; e – h. 1.03 cm, d. 0.53–0.45 cm, d. orifice 0.17 cm; f – h. 1.11 cm, d. 0.61 cm, d. orifice 0.15 cm).
 - g) One tri-geminated green glass bead (h. 0.67 cm, d. 0.5 cm, d. orifice 0.2 cm).
 - h–j) Three cylindrical-shaped blue glass beads cut from a pipe/cylindrical cross bar (h – h. 0.31 cm, d. 1.15 cm, d. orifice 0.12 cm; i – h. 0.53 cm, d. 0.51 cm, d. orifice 0.09 cm; j – h. 0.4 cm, d. 0.63 cm, d. orifice 0.11 cm).

Grave 553

(mature male, aged 45 to 50)

The skeleton was lying on its back with its hands extended along the body and had a relatively good state of preservation. The skull had a crushed calotte that fell to the right, and the mandible was disjointed and placed on the left shoulder. Parts of a lamb mandible, the skull with the broken calotte, and the legs of the sacrificed animal were placed above the right knee, at a length of 20–30 cm away from it. Three legs and the skull of a young bovine were deposited in the eastern corner of the pit, at 35–45 cm above the feet of the deceased. All these animal bone remains belonged to an individual sacrificed during the funeral ceremony and later thrown into the grave. The 148 cm long human skeleton belongs to a mature adult, probably a male. Two ceramic

pots and the blade of an oblique knife were placed at his head (Fig. 6). The knife blade was pointed to the north and was deposited above a femur of a pig, located in the western corner of the pit. The analysis of the offerings identified bone remains belonging to bovine, ovicaprine, swine, and equine specimens. The bovines were attested by the crushed remains of the skull, the upper maxilla, the mandible, the atlas, and the limb bones (carpus, tarsus, phalanges, and metapodials). The bone segments belonged to a young female about two years old. Ovicaprine was represented by a lamb of one to two months old, and the remains included two humeri, a femur, and a tibia. From this group also pertains an old Ovis female, aged over seven years, whose teeth were eroded. Fragments of the skull, maxilla, and mandible with teeth, caudal vertebrae, and bones of the extremities (carpus and tarsus) were preserved from his skeleton. The swine group integrated a whole femur from a mature specimen. The equine presence was attested by a crushed skull of a castrated horse about 14 years old. Two jars placed near the head and slightly inclined to the southeast (Pl. II: 553: 1, 2), one knife with the blade pointing north and placed in an oblique manner above a femur of a pig in the western corner of the pit.

1. Jar, slow speed wheel, made of fine sandy-clayish paste, non-oxidant firing category, blackish colour with sparse brown spots and slip on both surfaces. There are leftovers and large patches of charred crust on some portions of its shoulder and the inside of the vessel. Those findings are scraps from the food prepared in the kitchen ceramic pot. The decoration covers the entire body of the jar, divided into two registers: a register (W. 6.1 cm) of horizontal incised lines (W. 0.13 cm) disposed of in the lower region of the ceramic pot, starting from the bottom and working up to the shoulder. It is overlapped by another register composed of four bands of six–seven wavy lines that intersect, forming the ‘eyes’ motif. This important piece of ornamentation is frequently incised, having wide waves and arched loops. The wavy strips can be observed starting on the shoulder of the jar and ending at the base of its neck (h. 16.07 cm, d.b. 7.85 cm, d.m. 13 cm, d.r. 11.56 cm, thk. edges 0.72 cm; MNUAI F. 6587; Pl. II: 553: 2).
2. Jar, wheel thrown, made of fine sandy-clayish paste, blackish colour with brown spots on both its surfaces. A bovine head could be observed near the head. The concave bottom has a 0.35 cm wide marginal ring. The jar has an ovoid-shaped body without a neck, and a short rim blew back outwards and hinged on the inside. From the bottom to the shoulder, the body is decorated with strips of four horizontal lines wide of 0.1 cm. Those from the upper part of the jar are incised deeper, while the others are superficial and interrupted, the latter being rendered spirally and distanced. A strip of wavy lines with high, angular, thick loops marked abruptly to the left (the rest of them are to the right) can be observed at the base of the neck. Only 1/4 of this strip remains on the perimeter of the jar, on the rest of it being observed only one wavy line with angular upper loops, the ones at the bottom

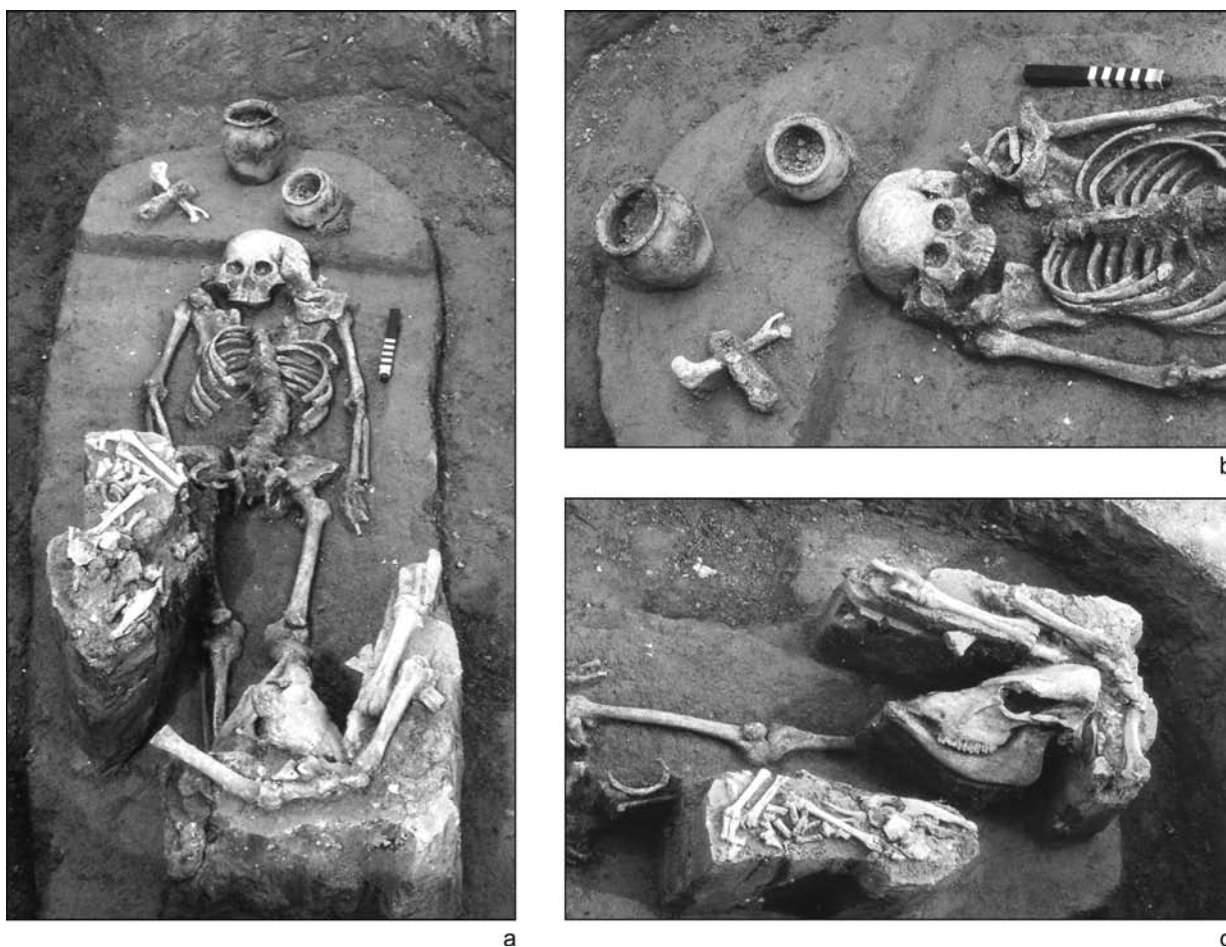


Fig. 6. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Grave 553. a – general view; b – pottery offering; c – remains of animal offering (photo by M. Blăjan).

being arched (h. 12.65 cm, d.b. 6.86 cm, d.m. 11.1 cm, d.r. 9.67 cm, thk. rim 0.43 cm; MNUAI F. 6562; Pl. II: 553: 1).

3. Iron knife blade with a thorn broken close to the base. The blade is broadened at the base (1.8 cm) and has a damaged and concave thickened edge line (0.45 cm) narrowed to the tip by arching the blade (L. 12.4 cm). It is highly oxidized and was found near the skull, placed over a femur of a pig (Pl. II: 553: 3).

Grave 558

It was located in the east wall and was partially destroyed by the water pipe ditch. The depth 160 cm, orientation WSW – ENE. The sepulchral pit was trapezoidal in shape (200 × 70 cm/W – 50 cm/E). The skeleton, deposited in dorsal decubitus, had a good state of preservation. Its skull looked up, the right hand lay along the body, and the bones of the trunk remained *in situ* with only the exception of the bones of the left hand, the collarbone, the shoulder blade and some of the ribs, and the left coxal (along with the left foot, the latter were snatched away

by the ditch of the pipe). The 172 cm long skeleton belonged to a mature male. The case of grave 558 is unique since it is missing from the general plan of the cemetery. The pit of this grave was not identified on the plan in the archaeologist M. Blăjan's archive, so it is not reasonable to modify the plan by its ulterior addition. Two vessels placed near the head: a grey one located on the left of the skull and a sandy one on its right (Pl. III: 558: 1, 2). Fragment of a knife blade whose position was not stated.

1. Jar made of sandy-clayish fine paste, wheel thrown, non-oxidant firing category, blackish colour with brown-reddish spots on the outside and on the inside, covered with slip on both facets. The body has an oval shape, arched walls, short neck, short rim blown back on the outside, blunted toward the inside and ornamented on edge with a finely incised circular line. The decoration can be observed on the entire body of the vessel: the middle of it is ornamented with a strip of four thinly incised horizontal lines with a width of 0.08 cm. The lower region is decorated with three strips of five wavy lines that are spaced apart and sometimes intersect, forming the 'eyes' motif. The shoulder of the jar is decorated with

two other strips composed of five wavy lines (h. 18 cm, d.b. 8.7 cm, d.m. 17.2 cm, d.r. 12.9 cm, thk. edge 0.72 cm, thk. walls 0.6 cm; MNUAI F. 6568?). Some portions of the body of the jar bear traces and spots of charred organic crust as a result of using it for the purpose of preparing food next to open fire. It was placed on the right side of the skull (Pl. III: 558: 1).

2. Jar made of fine clayish paste, wheel thrown, non-oxidant firing category, greyish uniform colour with slip on both facets. The bottom is not stamped. The jar is shaped in a spherical-globular manner, and it can be observed that the neck lacks. The grey slip jar is decorated with narrow vertical polished stripes from the shoulder to the bottom of the vessel (h. 15.1 cm, d.m. 13.7 cm, d.r. 12 cm, d.b. 6.5 cm, thk. edges 0.6 cm; MNUAI F. 6594). It was placed on the left side of the head (Pl. III: 558: 2).

Grave 606

Grave was at a depth of 30 cm. The contour of the sepulchral pit was unspecified and oriented with the long axis in the NW – SE direction, with dimensions of around 100 × 65 cm. The grave contained the skeleton of a fully macerated infant. Only a milk tooth (around four to seven years) from the entire skeleton remained intact and was found at the southwest end of the pit, indicating the skeleton's exhumation. Two vessels, one is a reddish amphora-shaped pitcher with two handles (Pl. V: 606: 2) placed at the southeast corner of the pit, and the other is a greyish-black jar decorated with wavy lines on its body (Pl. V: 606: 1). Both of them are leaning toward southeast.

1. Broken and restored jar, wheel thrown, sandy paste, blackish colour on the outside (secondary burning), and reddish-brown colour on the inside. The jar has a concave bottom with a 0.3 cm wide support ring, a strongly curved, truncated short cone-shaped body, a short neck, a short rim, obliquely blown back and cut sideways. The body of the vessels is decorated with four strips of four wavy lines. They are irregularly drawn and sometimes intersect and form the 'eyes' motif – Dridu culture (h. 11.1 cm, d.b. 5.7 cm, d.m. 11.6 cm, d.r. 10 cm; MNUAI F. 6580; Pl. V: 606: 1).
2. Amphora-shaped pitcher, sandy paste, wheel thrown, reddish colour, non-oxidant firing category. Its concave bottom presents the negative of a cross-shaped stamp printed in a soft paste. Two handles with a triangular cross-section are symmetrically hooked to the base of the neck, leaning to the shoulder of the vessel (h. 20.4 cm, d.b. 7.8 cm, d.r. 5.3 cm, thk. 0.6 cm; Pl. V: 606: 2).

Grave 607

The grave was at a depth of 146–180 cm, with orientation WNW – ESE. The sepulchral pit had a trapezoidal shape (115 × 60 cm/WWN–50 cm/ESE) and rounded corners. The skeleton belonged to a child and was partially destroyed. Only the

crushed skull with a damaged calotte leaning to the left was preserved (Pl. III: 607). The bone remains pertain to a girl aged below five to six years. Pieces of charcoal could be observed in the filling ground at different depths. This phenomenon was observed in the majority of the graves. A string of beads was found around the neck of the deceased. Two vessels and an animal offering consisting of ovine remains of legs and two skulls were placed near the head. A femur of a pig was placed in the space between the two vessels. The legs and the two skulls of an ovine were placed in a row on the east-southeast half of the pit, on its north-east edge at a depth of 135–146 cm. The analysis of the animal bone remains identified a minor horned specimen aged between eight to nine months and a five-year-old female specimen.

1. Amphora-shaped pitcher, wheel thrown, clayish-sandy fine paste, grey core, and blackish colour on the outside with reddish spots on the shoulder and the bottom (Pl. III: 607: 2). The vessel is covered with a mechanically polished black slip. The bottom is concave and presents an embossed cross executed toward one surface edge by crossing two diameters. Two handles have an oval cross-section and are symmetrically attached to the body, with one end on the middle part of the neck and the other resting on the shoulder of the pot. Narrow vertically polished strips can be distinguished on the neck and on the body of the jar (h. 9.93 cm, d.b. 4.6 cm, d.m. 4.85 cm, d. neck 3.8 cm, d.r. 4.3 cm, thk. 0.59 cm, W. handles 0.8 cm; MNUAI F. 6576; Blăjan 2006, 27, fig. 7; Cosma 2011, 147, pl. 17: 73).
2. Jar, slow speed wheel, paste degreased with sand and pebbles, reddish on its inferior half, brownish-black on its superior area where one can observe, both on the inside and the outside, traces and pieces of rinds coming from the charred organic crust (Pl. III: 607: 1). This presence indicates that food was prepared in the vessel. The jar has a slightly concave bottom, in which a lot of sand and pebbles have been transferred from the wheel. It has an ovoid-shaped body, a pronounced neck, and a high edge arched outwardly with a rounded part provided inside with an S-shaped incision and traces of carbonized food. The decoration covers the body of the vessel from the bottom to the base of the neck and consists of five strips of incised lines in the lower half, horizontally (two), and wavy (three) in the upper half. The waves are short and 0.16 cm wide, with the strip width of 0.9 cm (h. 1.46 cm, d.b. 8 cm, d.m. 1.34 cm, d.r. 11.33 cm, thk. 0.74 cm; MNUAI F. 6588).
3. String composed of nine beads (MNUAI F. 6631; Pl. III: 607: 3):
 - a) One disk-shaped yellow glass (h. 0.46 cm, d. 0.67 cm, d. orifice 0.23 cm).
 - b) Eight black glass beads composed of four elements grouped two by two, and one formed by five elements separated by four longitudinally perforated necks (h. 0.29–0.6 cm; double 0.61 cm; 1.29 cm; d. 0.51 cm; 0.62 cm; 0.55 cm; 0.5 cm (the big one); d. hole 0.17 cm; 0.24 cm; 0.23 cm; 0.24 cm (the big one). One of the simple black beads is decorated with three grooves that form three eighths by crossing each other and is probably filled with coloured paint (paste).

Grave 608

The skeleton was lying on dorsal decubitus, and its bones were poorly preserved. The skull had a crushed calotte, the chin falling to the left, and fragments of the right humerus and collarbone could also be observed. The other bones were destroyed. Two vessels with their rim facing up were obliquely placed to the left of the skull (Pl. V: 608: 1, 2). The child was about three to four years old, and the legs were cut off by the western end of the grave 604 sepulchral pit. Fragmented remains of maxillary teeth and bones of the limbs of an old ovicaprine were deposited on the left side of the skeleton. The animal was about seven to eight years old.

1. Jar, wheel thrown, fine sandy paste, greyish-brownish colour on the inferior side and blackish colour on the superior area. The outside walls and the edge are blackened by fire, and scraps of charred organic crust can be observed on its inside facet. The vessel has a concave bottom with a slightly protruding support ring with a width of 0.75 cm, having alveoli that were imprinted by sand granules scattered on the concave disc of the wheel. The body is medium in size, has a truncated cone shape, its neck is short, and the margin is obliquely blown back with a rounded edge, grooved on the inside. The incised decoration in the lower half consists of two strips of six horizontal incisions, overlapped by three strips of wavy incisions located in the middle area and on the shoulder of the jar (h. 14.4 cm, d.b. 7.9 cm, d.m. 13.1 cm, d.r. 11.1 cm; MNUAI F. 6556; Pl. V: 608: 2).
2. Jar, wheel thrown, fine sandy paste, grey-reddish colour with black spots on the body caused by the exposure to smoke. It is covered with a slip. The lower part of the jar is decorated with strips of fine lines that are overlapped on the shoulder by a register of wavy strips intertwined between them. They are forming the 'eyes' motif. The edge presents an alveolus fingerprinted in the soft paste (h. 10.6 cm, d.b. 6.6 cm, d.m. 12.4 cm, d.r. 9.7 cm; MNUAI F. 6579; Pl. V: 608: 1).
3. Knife blade with a broken tip and thorn (L. 0.93 cm), heavily oxidized, having the edge thick of 0.36 cm.

Grave 611

The grave was at a depth of 90 cm, with orientation NW – SE. Rectangular pit (180 × 60 cm) with rounded corners. The skeleton was lying on dorsal decubitus and had a poor conservation status. The hands were bent from the elbows and had the palms placed on the coxal bones and the sinusoidal spine. The excavation work resulted in cutting the tarsus bones. The skeleton presented a length of 132 cm and probably belonged to a male adolescent. Two vessels (Pl. V: 611: 1, 2) with the rim facing up are placed on the left side of the skull. The pots are both next to each other and are slightly inclined to the south-east.

1. Jar, slow speed wheel, brownish-blackish paste. It is decorated with frequent linear incisions overlapped on the superior area by two wavy strips forming the 'eyes' motif (h. 18.6 cm, d.b. 8 cm, d.m. 17 cm, d.r. 12.4 cm; Pl. V: 611: 2).
2. Jar, slow speed wheel, fine sandy paste with a brownish core and grey-blackish spots on its body (d.b. 11 cm, d.r. 14.5 cm; Pl. V: 611: 1). Strips composed of wavy lines were drawn on the inferior half of the pot, forming the 'eyes' motif, while four strips composed of wavy lines that were slightly curled can be distinguished on the superior area.

Grave 622

The skeleton was placed on the back and had poorly preserved bones. The head leaned to the WNW and the legs to the ESE. The skull with the broken calotte was dropped to the left. The right hand was deposited along the body and slightly curved from the elbow. The left hand was extended along the body. The spine was slightly curved to the right. Having a length of 107 cm, the skeleton belonged to a girl under ten years old. Two vessels (one greyish and the other having a grey-blackish colour and sandy paste) placed near the head of the deceased and a string of beads located on the inside area of the left elbow (Pl. VI: 622).

1. Fragmentary ceramic pot made of sandy grey-reddish paste, having blackish spots on its shoulder and bottom. The spots were a result of the exposure of the pot to fire. The jar has a concave bottom and presents decoration in the form of horizontal incised lines (h. 12 cm, d.b. 8 cm, d.m. 13.8 cm, thk. 0.55 cm; MNUAI F. 6615; Pl. VI: 622: 2).
2. Ceramic pot made of clayish fine paste, brownish core, dark grey facets, having mechanically black polished slip on it (h. 10.15 cm, d.b. 9 cm, d.m. 14.6 cm, d.r. 11.9 cm; Pl. VI: 622: 3).
3. String of 52 beads placed near the right shoulder of the skeleton (Pl. VI: 622: 1):
 - a) Disk-shaped ceramic bead with red-brown enamel (h. 0.32 cm, d. 0.56 cm, d. orifice 0.07 cm).
 - b) Eight glass beads with green enamel: disk-like truncated cone-shaped (six), geminate (one), or with geminate segments (one). All simple specimens came from the multi-geminated beads (h. 0.26 cm, d. 0.48 cm, d. orifice 0.26 cm/single; h. 1.22 cm, d. 0.54 cm, d. orifice 0.18 cm) light green glass.
 - c) Twenty-nine blue-inked glass beads and five disk-shaped cobalt beads were cut obliquely. Those beads were cut obliquely or perpendicularly from a slightly curved cylindrical pipe (h. 0.19–0.44 cm, d. 0.41–0.61 cm, d. orifice 0.13 cm).
 - d) A tri-geminated bead with a curved profile and obliquely cut extremities. Blue-inked colour with ribs cut longitudinally and parallel to the body (h. 1.43 cm, d. 0.65 cm, d. orifice 0.17 cm) blue-green glass with copper.
 - e) Four beads of yellow glass with sulphur: 3 disk-shaped beads and a tri-geminated one (seven)

with different dimensions [h. 0.14–0.29–0.34 cm, d. 0.5–0.57 cm, d. orifice 0.12 cm; h. 0.72 cm, d. 0.46 cm, d. orifice 0.19 cm (tri-geminated truncated cone-shaped piece)].

- f) Five truncated cone-shaped black enamelled glass beads decorated with cut grooves in four and three eight-shaped forms. Alveoli that were once filled with the yellowish-white paste can be observed in the central field (h. 0.37 cm, d. 0.5 cm, d. orifice 0.23 cm/with magnetite inclusions; h. 0.4 cm, d. 0.51 cm, d. orifice 0.23 cm).
- g) A geminated bead that presents vegetable support and is covered with yellow-green enamel that coats the successive layers of glass (h. 0.73 cm, d. 0.63 cm, d. orifice 0.12 cm).
- h) A geminated enamelled brownish glass bead (h. 0.58 cm, d. 0.45 cm, d. orifice 0.2 cm).
- i) A green beryl bead in the form of a hex-lateral prism. The thread of the string eroded the bead at one extremity (h. 2.21 cm, L. 0.6 cm, d. orifice 0.15 cm).
- j) One 'incisor' type bead made of opaque glass with inclusions of fine-granular black-brown chromite. The bead is spongy and presents black enamel. It is flattened in an ovoid-shape manner, broadened at one end and narrowed at the other (h. 1.7 cm, d. 0.84 cm, d. orifice 0.17 cm, thk. 0.48 cm).

Grave 624 (child aged six to seven years)

The skeleton was placed supine position and was in a poor state of preservation. The skull with the crushed calotte was lying to the left. The right hand was bent from the elbow and raised with the palm to the chest. The left hand was extended along the body. Having a length of 82 cm, the skeleton belongs to a child under ten years of age (six to seven years old). It is probably male. The western end of grave 624 cut a corner of grave 623 (Roman cremation grave). The bones of the limbs and the skull of a lamb (deposited with the calotte up and the jaw to the south) were thrown at the feet of the deceased. So far, it is the only grave with two ceramic pots in which egg remains appear. Some elements determine us to place it in the chronological space of interference between the two funeral horizons, or, more precisely, at the beginning of the 10th c. Two vessels placed with the rim up near the head of the deceased. One of the two has an impressed decoration, and the other one, a red amphora-shaped pitcher, is located on the WNW corner. Remains of bird egg shells were found between the two ceramic pots. Large chops of coal were observed between the femora and near the left knee. In fact, the coal remains

were present in the entire sepulchral pit. Shells of one or two eggs were placed under the amphora-shaped pitcher, and an iron knife blade could be seen between the two vessels.

1. Amphora-shaped pitcher that was broken and fully restored, fast speed wheel, fine clayish paste, red-yellowish colour with slip on its outside. Two handles are placed symmetrically, starting from below the rim, resting with the opposite end on the shoulder of the pot, this one ending in an embossed manner. The cross-section of the handles is quadrilateral and has rounded edges/corners. The body of the amphora is covered with wide grooves, and, in parts, short oblique incisions printed in soft paste can be observed. An inscription engraved in soft paste with Greek letters can be observed on one of the facets of the ceramic pot (Heitel 1994–1995, note 46).² It is engraved on the shoulder. The inscription was written slightly oblique to the left and consisted of five letters of different heights (Fig. 7).

The first letter is Π, having the bars of the legs oblique and inclined to the right (h. 0.65 cm). Its upper side is also oblique (L. 0.55 cm), and the left corner reaches an oblique bar to the right, whose length is almost 1.2 cm (Dragotă/Popescu 2021, 240, 241). Α, which is the second letter, consists of three oblique bars. The bar on the right is inclined to the left and is 0.73 cm high, the one on the base measures 0.56 cm, and the third (0.69 cm) closes the triangle. The third letter is a Π, having the parallel bars of the legs inclined to the right and the connecting top bar being oblique (h. 0.47 cm, L. of the connecting bar 0.44 cm). Due to a crack in the wall of the vessel, which has affected the rest of it, the following letter keeps the angle to the left. The reconstructed letter is identical to the one previously reported, Α. The last letter that was kept relatively well is Γ or G (?). This one consists of a long bar (0.52 cm), obliquely inclined to the right, with the lower end on the crack line. At the top end, a short oblique bar (0.25 cm) intersects at an obtuse angle from which a non-parallel short segment (0.3 cm) starts down. The letters incisively italicized with the sharp tip of a needle or knife have a width of 0.05 cm and superficially, but clearly, penetrate into the soft clay on which the slip was placed before the firing. The width of the inscription measures 3.3 cm. The letters Π Α in the front are larger, and the others are smaller and raised upwards. The text is reconstructed: Π Α Π Α Γ (Papag?) and written from left to right on the shoulder of the amphora-shaped pitcher. The inferior part of the opposite facet of the vessel is covered with a layer of red-cherry paint from the shoulder to the bottom. It is sometimes faded and forms an ornament difficult to reconstruct due to cracks and fillings with gypsum (stains), as well as due to the discoloration of the edges covered with paint (h. 23.5 cm, d.b. 8.6 cm, d.m. 13.8 cm, d.r. 4 cm; MNUAI F.).³

The inscription Π Α Π Α Γ (most likely Π Α Π Α Π Α C) should be considered a reminiscence of the name of Saint Methodius, Archbishop of Sirmium and Moravia. The presence of his name on an amphora discovered in

² This ceramic pot presenting an inscription is mentioned, but R. R. Heitel does not exclude the possibility of the inscription to be Cyrillic.

³ The location of the vessel is unknown.



Fig. 7. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. The inscription of the pot from grave 624 (photo by M. Blăjan).

this well-discussed Transylvanian area can only be the prerogative of that special importance that Christian symbolism has had on the intra-Carpathian area in particular and the European area in general (*Dragotă/Popescu 2021, 244*).

2. The vessel identified on the left of the skull was broken and reconstructed to the neck level. It has a broken edge. Wheel thrown, made of fine sandy paste, incomplete oxidant firing, a reddish colour with brown or blackish spots on the maximum diameter area. The bottom is concave, with a wide support ring of 0.35 cm. The space between the bottom and the neck of the vessel is decorated with strips of four oblique incisions made with a toothed wheel, alternatively arranged to the right or the left (h. 12.7 cm, d.b. 7.5 cm, d.m. 12.1 cm, d.r. 9.5 cm; MNUAI F. 6575; Pl. VI: 624: 1).
3. Bronze cast pear-shaped bell flattened laterally. The lower half is cut in a crossed manner, gaining the shape of four lobes, one of them having a broken tip. The handle makes a common body with the bell, being flattened laterally and perforated transversely, with an embossed ring at the base. The green patina is present and has fallen in some portions of the upper part of the specimen. It was found on the right side of the body, near the right coxal (h. 1.37 cm, L. body of the bell 2.62 cm, L. 1.6 cm, L. wall 0.1 cm, L. handle 1.76 cm, thk. 0.48 cm, d. orifice 0.3 cm; MNUAI F. 7770; Pl. VI: 624: 2).
4. Rusty iron knife fragmented into two pieces. Its length is 6.7 cm, the width is 1.2 cm, and the thickness of the edge is 0.35 cm. This blade has a convex curved edge and a concave spine edge. It was found by the head (MNUAI F. 7500; Pl. VI: 624: 3; *Blăjan 2004, 56, fig. 160*).

Grave 667

The orientation of the grave was W – E. The macerated remains of a child's skeleton were the only preserved. The deceased was aged between five months to one year. The skeleton was represented by skull fragments and a piece from the diaphysis of a femur. The funerary inventory consisted of two vessels⁴ and several beads.

1. String of beads placed at the neck of the deceased (Pl. IV: 667: 2–9):
 - a) Three disk-shaped yellow glass beads (h. 0.34 cm, d. 0.57 cm, d. orifice 0.16 cm; h. 0.3 cm, d. 0.58 cm, d. orifice 0.14 cm; h. 0.35 cm, d. 0.54 cm, d. orifice 0.12 cm).
 - b) Three disk-shaped blue glass beads (h. 0.35 cm, d. 0.56 cm, d. orifice 0.12 cm; h. 0.33 cm, d. 0.56 cm, d. orifice 0.09 cm; h. 0.27 cm, d. 0.56 cm, d. orifice 0.15 cm).
 - c) One disk-shaped black glass bead. It is decorated with two grooved lines that intersect each other and form the 'eyes' motif three times. This bead is decorated in the central area with a little embossed yellowish paste (h. 0.38 cm, d. 0.59 cm, d. orifice 0.22 cm).
 - d) The extremity of a barrel-shaped bead (1/3) made of blackish glass. It is decorated with a wavy line composed of embossed yellow paste (h. 0.54 cm, d. 0.67 cm, d. orifice 0.29 cm).
2. Jar made of blackish paste with brown spots on the inside. The decoration consists of two wavy lines that are framed by strips of horizontal lines. The interior edge of the rim is decorated with a wavy strip (h. 11.1 cm, d.b. 5.6 cm, d.m. 11.8 cm, d.r. 10 cm; Pl. IV: 667: 1).

⁴ The location of the vessel is unknown.

Grave 677
(girl, aged between three to five years)

Orientation of the grave was WNW – ESE. The sepulchral pit had a rectangular shape and slightly rounded corners. The skull with the broken calotte is fallen to the left. The right hand had a forearm that was bent from the elbow and placed with the palm of the hand on the chest (Pl. VII: 677). The humerus was the only bone left in the left hand. Ribs, some vertebrae, and damaged fragments from the right shoulder blade are left from the deceased's trunk. The legs and the skull of a lamb sacrificed at the funeral ceremony were placed 6 cm above the skeleton, at the ESE corner of the pit. Two vessels were deposited near the head, at the opposite end of the pit. One of the vessels has two handles. Its rim is obliquely inclined to the east, and the other is broken, made of grey-blackish paste, with the rim facing up. A fragmentary femur and one meta-carpus of an ovine were found inside the second ceramic pot. Lamb bones (skull and legs) were placed above the girl's calves. A layer of coal was observed under these animal bones, and the indication is that it was placed there before the deposition of the bones of the lamb. The analysis of the animal offering identified two specimens pertaining to the *Ovis* group. The first ovine was a young adult and represented by teeth fragments and other extremities (carpus and tarsus). The second specimen was seven to eight years old and was represented by three superior molars, a piece of the femur, and one meta-carpus.

1. Two disk-shaped blue-cobalt beads placed by the neck (h. 0.44 cm, d. 0.64 cm, d. orifice 0.14 cm; h. 0.23 cm, d. 0.58 cm, d. orifice 0.17 cm; MNUAI F. 6626; Pl. VII: 677: 3, 4).
2. Jar, wheel thrown, with two handles, fine paste of orange colour. The bottom is slightly concave, the body short, spherically flattened, without a neck with a short and slightly arched rim having a rounded edge. The upper part of the vessel presents two symmetrical handles made from a wide strip, and the passage from the shoulder to the neck is made through a threshold. The body of the vessel is decorated with two polished oblique lines that intersect in rhombuses (h. 12.5 cm, d.m. 12.1 cm, d.r. 8.5 cm, d.b. 7.1 cm; MNUAI F. 6595?; Pl. VII: 677: 1).
3. Jar with an osteological fragment, thrown on the slow wheel and made of sandy paste with pebbles. It is friable and has a black core and yellow-brown facets with blackish spots on the inside (Pl. VII: 677: 2).

Grave 680

Skeleton of a child in a poor state of preservation. It was lying on his back with his head towards WSW and his legs at ENE. The skull was broken and fallen to the left, and the hands were extended along the body. Only the diaphysis of the long bones of the

hands, the ribs, and the left coxal was preserved from the bones of the trunk. Two vessels were placed side by side, with the rim up by the head of the deceased. A piece of coal was placed in the abdomen area (Pl. III: 680). The skeleton belonged to an infant of one to two years and had a length of 60 cm. Several pieces of coal, sometimes placed layered, were located under the bones of the lamb and the child's skeleton. The remains of a skull and the legs attested by a femur and the bones of the extremities (carpus and tarsus) of a non-adult lamb about 20 months old were observed at 10 cm above the legs of the child's feet.

1. Bent iron nail with a bevelled head (h. 9.3 cm; Pl. III: 680: 3).
2. Bent iron nail without a bevelled head (h. 7 cm; Pl. III: 680: 4).
3. Iron nail with a broken tip and oval-polygonal head (Pl. III: 680: 5).
4. Broken jar found by the head. Its lower part was reconstructed, and 47 small shreds were recovered from the walls of the body and shoulder. The vessel is thrown at the slow wheel and has sandy paste associated with larger grains of sand. The firing is incomplete and oxidant. The core is black, and the facets are brownish-blackish, with brownish-yellow spots on the bottom, as can be seen in the crack. The medium-sized jar has a concave bottom, a bi-coned shaped body decorated on the bottom with strips of wavy lines that sometimes intersect and form the 'eyes' motif (h. 6.9 cm, d.b. 9.1 cm, thk. 1 cm; Pl. III: 680: 1).
5. Fragmentary jar from which only the lower part is preserved. The is made of sandy paste and pebbles, having a brownish-black colour. Three overlapped wavy strips forming the 'eyes' motif are the only elements of decoration kept on the remaining body of the vessel (h. 6.2 cm, d.b. 9.2 cm; Pl. III: 680: 2).

Grave 685

The grave's orientation was W – E. It cut half of the sepulchral pit of an incineration grave from the Roman era (grave 684). Then a trapezoidal (220 × 100 cm/W–70 cm/E) niche was made in the south wall, where the skeleton and the inventory were introduced. The skeleton belongs to a mature man, is lying on his back, and has well-preserved bones. The skull, whose calotte was broken during digging work, looks up. The hands are extended along the body, with the left hand that has the palm on the hip. Two vessels, rim orientating up, were broken during digging work but were observed placed by the head (Fig. 8). Vertebrae and femur of a pig (?) that was most likely sacrificed during the funeral ceremony were located on the north of the larger vessel. The vessels contained boiled meat coming from the stew deposited in the pot. Near them, in the north corner of the pit, was the blade of an iron knife used for animal slaughter. They are deposited near the skull, in the niche. At the east end of the main pit,



Fig. 8. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Grave 685 with niche (photo by M. Blăjan).

a lamb skull and its feet were thrown into the pit. The mouth of the pit was covered at – 40 cm with a dense layer of fragmented Roman bricks, placed side by side on a surface of 170 × 50 cm. Osteological remains belonging to the animal offering were placed near the ceramic vessels. The limbs and the skull of a lamb/ovicaprines were placed at the eastern end of the tomb, at the bottom of it.

1. Ovoid-shaped ceramic vessel, wheel thrown, made of sandy paste, decorated on the body with thick horizontal stripes (h. 17.3 cm, d.b. 6.7 cm, d.r. 11.5 cm; MNUAI F. 6755; Pl. VII: 685: 1).
2. Broken cup, slow speed wheel, made of fine sandy paste. It has a black core and brown facets, with black spots and scabs and remains of organic crust on the body and rim. The vessel has a concave bottom, an ovoid-shaped body with a bulging maximal area, a short neck, a short rim, obliquely arched with a flattened edge. It is decorated inside with two concentric grooves. The handle with the oval section is hooked to the rim and rests on

the shoulder of the cup. The broken handle socket and the bulging part of the rim are preserved. The body of the vessel is decorated with three strips of wavy lines at the top and a simple wavy line towards the bottom. The strips have high waves, spaced apart, with arched strips drawn irregularly (h. 13.4 cm, d.b. 6.3 cm, d.m. 13.6 cm, d.r. 10.8 cm; Pl. VII: 685: 2).

3. Iron knife (L. 9.7/1.5 cm; MNUAI F. 7788; Pl. VII: 685: 3).

Grave 715 (child, three to four years old)

The grave was at a depth of 150 cm with orientation W – E. Rectangular pit (145 × 55 cm) with rounded corners. The skeleton was lying on its back, and the state of preservation of the bones was rather precarious. The skull was fallen to the left, and the calotte was broken. Only the humerus was preserved from the left hand, and the right one was bent from the elbow and placed with the palm on the right coxal. Only a few ribs and the right coxal remained from the bones of the trunk (Pl. VIII). The legs, placed parallel, are represented by the diaphysis of the long bones. A lamb/ovicaprines skull (six to seven months), with the jaws orientating west, the neck east, and the bones of the limbs (carpus, tarsus, and femur) were placed above the left calf, at 20–30 cm away from it. Two vessels were placed by the head: one with two handles with the rim orientated up and the other with a thick paste, inclined towards the skull and containing the end of a femur of a boiled pig. This pertained to the stew placed in the vessel. The skeleton belonged to a child aged three to five years and was 78 cm long. The sepulchral pit of grave 715 is 100 cm south of grave 685, being parallel with it.

1. Ceramic vessel with two handles, wheel thrown, made of fine clayish paste with a polished black exterior. Stamp: eight-spoke wheel (h. 14.4 cm, d.b. 8.34 cm, d.m. 15.2 cm, d.r. 10.6 cm; MNUAI F. 6735; Pl. VIII: 1).
2. Jar, fast speed wheel, made of sandy paste, a reddish colour with black spots. The vessel has a concave bottom, a bi-coned shaped body, a short neck, and an edge arched outside, with the oblique and grooved margin. The incised decoration from the lower third to the base of the neck contains a register of continuous grooves arranged in a spiral (h. 13.5 cm, d.b. 7.4 cm, d.m. 13.6 cm, d.r. 11.7 cm; MNUAI F. 6592; Pl. VIII: 2).
3. Bronze earrings (d. 2 × 2.1 cm; MNUAI F. 7731–7732). Round-oval earring (2.2 × 2.25 cm) made of bronze, with a 0.12 cm thick wire and disjointed ends. The upper half of the earring is composed of a single wire, and the lower half has a loop formed around a wire, 0.3 cm wide, with a diameter of 0.28 cm. Another loop is arranged symmetrically and diametrically opposite to the first, marking the place of the union of the two semicircles. Each loop consists of three–four spirals of tight wire around the handle (Pl. VIII: 6). The lower part of the earring is decorated with a motif consisting of three spherical grains arranged on the wire, one on its

inside, one placed sideways, and one in the lower part. A dark-green patina can be observed.

4. Oval bronze earring (2.2 × 1.9 cm), a 0.15 cm thick wire, and disjointed ends. At the bottom, the wire of the handle penetrates through the upper part of a bi-truncated cone-shaped ellipsoid with the spheroidal body (0.74 cm) finished in the form of a spiral (spiral ellipsoid). This ornament, fragmented and deformed, was made of a bronze sheet by casting it (Pl. VIII: 7).
5. String of beads (Pl. VIII: 3–5):
 - a) Three black glass beads, longitudinally perforated (Pl. VIII: 3, 4).
 - b) Cylindrical bead composed of four elements separated by three necks (h. 1.2 cm, d. 0.55 cm, d. orifice 0.24 cm; MNUAI F. 6673; Pl. VIII: 5). A bead identical in shape with the previous one, but fragmented into two parts composed of two elements (h. 1.06 cm, d. 0.59 cm, d. orifice 0.27 cm).

ELEMENTS OF THE RITE AND FUNERARY RITUAL

The orientation of the dead and the sepulchral pit was different:

- W – E: graves 74, 497, 608, 624, 667, 685, 715.
- WSW – ENE: graves 558, 680.
- WNW – ESE: graves 551, 607, 622, 677.
- NW – SE: graves 72, 548, 553, 611.

Leaving aside the fact that the W – E orientation could suggest a Christian approach, it must be kept in mind that from seven graves, six had animal offerings deposited in the pit (graves 74, 497, 608, 624, 685, 715). The case of grave 667 could be considered atypical due to the lack of offerings. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the decoration and the dimensions of the amphora-shaped pitcher present quite close analogies with the ones chronologically pertaining to the 10th c.

The W – E orientation prevails in the graves pertaining to the 1st horizon (25 cases). The NW – SE orientation follows in the statistics (13 cases; *Ciugudean* 2011, 120).

The position of the arms presents different variations:

- Both arms along the body (graves 74, 497, 548, 551, 553, 622, 680), with the left palm placed on the hip (grave 685).
- Palms of the hands on the hips (grave 611).
- Right hand raised with the palm of the hand facing the chest and the left hand along the body (grave 624).
- Right hand along the body and unknown position of the left hand (grave 558).
- Right hand with the palm rested on the chest and unknown position of the left hand (grave 677).

- Right hand with the palm rested on the hip and unknown position of the left hand (grave 715).
- Unknown position of the arms (graves 72, 606, 607, 608, 667).

Animal offerings were identified in almost all graves, except for five sepulchral pits (graves 558, 606, 611, 622, 667; Tab. 1). The offerings consisted of:

- Eggs in a child's grave (grave 624; *Dragotă* 2019b, 88).
- One skull and remains of ovicaprine in men's graves (graves 497, 685), in women's grave (grave 551), and lastly, in children's graves (graves 608, 624, 677, 680, 715).
- Two skulls and remains of ovicaprine (grave 74) in a grave belonging to a mature woman (grave 548) and in a grave belonging to a girl (grave 607).
- Two skulls, one of an ovicaprine and one of a bovine, along with other osteological remains only in mature men's graves (graves 72, 553) and in one grave belonging to a mature woman (grave 74).

The deposition of the combined ovicaprine and bovine offerings (grave 72) was located in the NW (bovine) side and the SE (ovicaprine) corner of the pit. Remains belonging to a bovine were deposited on the deceased's feet within grave 553. The same grave contained lamb remains deposited above the right knee of the skeleton.

The two skulls and other ovine remains were deposited by the feet (graves 74, 607) and near the deceased's left heel (grave 548). The association between egg offering and ovicaprine remains was only seen within grave 624, one of the necropolis's most interesting graves. It could be dated, with the best certainty, at the end of the 1st horizon, or it could most likely transition to the 2nd horizon (alongside graves 607, 715). We will not focus on the offerings of eggs and chicken as we have recently made a deepened analysis in a related paper (*Dragotă* 2019b).

Remains of the funeral ceremony and of animal offerings were identified in graves at Blandiana A. Grave 4 contained an ovicaprine mandible deposited by the feet, and grave 5 presented a skull of an ovicaprine also placed by the deceased's feet. Skull and osteological remains of an ovicaprine were deposited above the feet of the skeleton in the filling ground of the sepulchral pit (*Anghel/Ciugudean* 1987, 187, 188). A special case was that of grave 2, in which a skeleton of a horse, a second equine skull, and skeletal remains of an ovicaprine and a bovine were placed in the sepulchral pit (*Anghel/Ciugudean* 1987, 179, fig. 4: 1). Another interesting example regarding this subject is offered by the cemetery from Sultana, dated in the second half of the 9th c. and the first half of the 10th c. Within this sepulchral area, chicken and

Tab. 1. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Graves belonging to phase I. Discoveries made between 1980 and 1981.

Grave	Animal offering	Pottery	Knife	Beads	Rings	Shackles	Nails	Bell	Steel	Bottom
72	bovine, ovine	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
74	ovine	2	–	13	–	–	–	–	–	–
497	ovine	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
548	ovine	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
551	lamb	2	1	10	–	3	–	–	–	–
553	bovine, ovine	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
558	–	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
606	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
607	ovine	2	–	9	–	–	–	–	–	–
608	ovine	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
611	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
622	–	2	–	52	–	–	–	–	–	–
624	eggs	2	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
667	–	2	–	8	–	–	–	–	–	–
677	lamb	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
680	lamb	2	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	–
685	lamb	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
715	lamb	2	–	3	2	–	–	–	–	–

egg remains placed near the ceramic pot were discovered in grave 3 and grave 6 (Mitrea 1961a, 534). The excavations in 1959 at Sultana brought to light inhumation graves that contained remains of eggs, birds, and ovine skeletons. These offerings were deposited on the feet, the knees, and the skull area. In addition, remains of coal were identified under the deceased's skull and on the bottom of the sepulchral pit and were linked to the ritual in which the deceased was purified (Mitrea 1962, 668). The sheep and ovicaprine offerings are represented by different osteological remains (skull, shoulder blade, metapodials, meta-tarsus) and are present in adults' and a child's grave (graves 98, 83, 71; Mitrea 1988, 123). Suppose the two groups (the North-Danubian and the South-Danubian) had some common characteristics (bi-ritualism, ovine offerings). In that case, the remains of chicken (bird) and eggs are particular to the North-Danubian one (Mitrea 1988, 107). Egg offering was identified in urns with cinerary remains at Satu Nou (Mitrea 1961a, 537), and at Obârșia-Olt, bird, and eggs remains were also present (Toropu/Stoica 1972, 165, 166).

The skull and remains of an ovicaprine were deposited on the calves and by the feet (graves 497, 624, 677, 680, 715), on the left of the skeleton (grave 608), near the left heel (grave 511), at the end of the pit, and in the area of the feet (grave 685).

The animal offerings (ovicaprines, bovine, horse) were placed by the head and/or by the feet within the graves excavated during 1981–1985, sometimes after the partial filling of the sepulchral pit (Ciugudean 2011, 122). Remains of sheep offering deposited on the left side of the feet are mentioned in the double grave (adult and child) from the Sebeș area. It was discovered in 1865 by Fr. Schuster, and his funerary inventory consisted of an iron knife (placed by the right arm) and two vessels deposited by the deceased's head. One of these pots was grey and the other brownish. A second iron knife appeared in the same context, but information about his provenance is lacking (Horedt 1951, 202, 203; Chișvași-Comșa 1960, 69, 70; Simina 2002).

Eighteen graves that can be attributed to the 1st horizon were discovered during the excavations that took place between 1980 and 1981 (Fig. 2; Tab. 1). The most numerous graves are those belonging to children (graves 606, 607, 608, 624, 667, 677, 680, 715) and young adults (grave 611, 622?).

Graves belonging to men follow in the statistics (graves 72, 497, 553, 558, 685), and the last place goes to women's graves (graves 74, 548, 551). All sepulchral pits (with only one exception, grave 72 that was destroyed) contain two vessels that were always deposited by the skull but in different positions:

- Both on the calvarium area, placed one next to each other (graves 74, 497, 553, 622, 677, 685).
- Both are placed on the left of the skull (graves 608, 611).
- Both are placed on the right of the skull (grave 551).
- One placed on the left and the other on the right of the skull (graves 548, 558, 607, 624, 715).
 - Unclear placement (grave 606).

The following ceramic categories could be observed from the perspective of pottery characteristics (firing, paste, decoration):

- Incised pottery (incisions/horizontal strips, wavy lines) made from coarse paste, oxidant firing.
- Pottery made of fine paste and sometimes polished:
 - Fine grey pottery, non-oxidant firing with/without polished decoration.
 - Fine yellow-reddish pottery, oxidant firing.

The already mentioned categories of pottery were placed within the sepulchral pits in the subsequent combinations:

- Amphora-shaped pitcher with a decorated jar made of reddish paste (graves 497, 548, 606, 607, 624).
- Both jars are decorated and made of reddish paste (graves 553, 608, 611, 680, 685).
- Grey jar with/without decoration and handles with a reddish specimen (graves 74, 558, 622, 677, 715).

The association between the vessels from grave 667 is not accurately known because the second ceramic pot is fragmented. Stamps appear on the amphora-shaped pitchers (grave 548, 606, 607) and on one grey jar with two handles. This potter's stamps are represented by the cruciform motif (type 4.A; *Cosma 2011*, tab. 55), the circle with eight spokes (type 1.G; *Cosma 2011*; tab. 55), and some other kinds of complex decoration. The circle with eight spokes placed on the central area of the bottom of the vessel- appears within the same horizon in XV/ grave 44 at Alba Iulia-Stăția de Salvare.

The orientation of the deceased on the W – E axis and placement of the arms along the body (with one exception grave 4) are two characteristics encountered at the synchronous necropolis from Blandiana A. In addition, a series of observations made at Blandiana A is certified by the graves belonging to the 1st horizon from Stăția de Salvare. Thus, except grave 8, at Blandiana A, the vessels were deposited by the head. Two reddish jars were identified in grave 7. In contrast, in all the other graves, the following association was identified: one incised jar with a vessel made of grey or fine yellowish paste. Therefore, vessels made of fine paste do not appear to be associated in the same funerary complex (*Anghel/Ciugudean 1987, 190; Ciugudean/Anghel 1993*).

Amphora-shaped pitchers are provided with two handles and occasionally present some signs that are incised (graves 497, 548, 551) or stamped (graves 548, 606, 607). Almost all specimens are simple, without decorative elements on the body. The exception makes grave 497, in which a polished amphora-shaped pitcher is deposited. The incisions appear on the shoulder of the vessels in graves 497, 548 and 551. The incision sign from grave 497 is partially similar to one observed on the vessel within grave 30/XXXV from Alba Iulia, the only difference being that the first one is represented upside down (*Ciugudean 2007, 246*, pl. IV: 4). Another characteristic is represented by the mass of clay that appears at the base of the handles (graves 606, 607). It is shaped like a flattened pill (graves 497, 548) or like a conical bulge (grave 551). The same conical mass is encountered at Sultana (*Fiedler 1992, 449*, pl. 40: 1, 2), Blandiana A (*Anghel/Ciugudean 1987, 189*, no. 3, fig. 3: 2 a, b; *Ciugudean/Anghel 1993, 361*, fig. 2: 4; *Cosma 2011, 162*, pl. 162: a, b; *Horedt 1958, 116, 117*, fig. 34: 6, 6a; 1966, 267, no. 14, fig. 6: 4, 4a) and also at Pliska. The vessels from Pliska are dated at the end of the 8th c. and the beginning of the 9th c. (*Henning 2007, 682*, fig. 118; 119). The sign mentioned above appears in grave 5 at Sultana, where it is associated with a coarse jar decorated with wavy lines that overlay horizontal incisions (*Mitrea 1961a, 534*, fig. 3: 2, 3). The combination of a coarse jar with the same decoration and an amphora is also seen at Sultana, in grave 45 (*Mitrea 1962*, fig. 2: 2, 2a; 3: 2, 2a).

The grey jars without handles and also the globular and spheroidal grey jars are undecorated (grave 622) or have network polishing decoration that forms rhombuses (grave 74) or narrow vertical strips, polished from the shoulder to the bottom (grave 558). Specimens without decoration and decorated in a network-like manner were discovered in other graves from Alba Iulia-Stăția de Salvare on the occasion of the research carried out during 1981–1985 (*Ciugudean 2007, 247*, pl. III: 1, 2). The grey jar and the polished 'network' decorative element from grave 74 have their analogies at Alba Iulia (*Ciugudean 2007, 246*, pl. III: 1; *Cosma 2011, 150*, pl. 27: 112) but also in grave 44 from Sultana, being placed at this chronological horizon (*Fiedler 1992, 448*, pl. 39; *Mitrea 1962, 670*, fig. 2: 3). From a typological point of view, M. Comșa places this type of vessel decorated in the manner mentioned above within phase II of the Balkan-Danube culture, dated between the end of the 9th c. and the beginning of the 10th c. The discoveries from Blandiana A are integrated into this phase (*Comșa 1963, 110*, pl. II). Shape, close dimensions, and the polished 'network' decoration forming rhombuses found on a specimen identified at Blandiana A in 1955 (*Cosma 2011, 152*, pl.

31: 130; *Horedt* 1958, 116, no. 3, fig. 34: 5; 1966, 267, no. 15, fig. 6: 6). This decorative element covered only the upper part of the body of the vessels and was also identified on a pot discovered in 1943 (*Cosma* 2011, 151, pl. 28: 11; *Horedt* 1951, 192, 193, no. 1, pl. IX: 11; 1958, fig. 32: 10; 1966, 266, no. 3, fig. 5: 3). Shreds of grey paste with polished network decoration appear in the settlement of Garvăn (Dinogetia), where they are dated at a 10th c. horizon (*Ștefan/Barneal/Mitrea* 1957, 205, fig. 10: 1). The polished 'network' ornament forming rhombuses was also inscribed on amphora-shaped pitchers, as the specimens from Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare 1st horizon (*Ciugudean* 2007, pl. IV: 1; *Cosma* 2011, 148, pl. 18: 80) and Blandiana A (*Anghel/Ciugudean* 1987, 187, 188, fig. 3: 4; *Cosma* 2011, 154, pl. 36: 155).

The mug from grave 622 has similarities in shape and dimensions with another specimen from Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare/phase I (grave 44; *Ciugudean* 2007, pl. VIII: 1; *Cosma* 2011, 148, pl. 20: 86).

A version with wide striped handles made of fine reddish paste (grave 677) has a similar network decoration, which forms rhombuses. This ceramic species is complemented by the simple two-handled pot (grave 715), provided with an 8-spice stamp framed in a circle, and by the specimen in grave 622. The vessels of this kind have a height between 10.15–14.4 cm. The reddish-blackish paste vessels with which they are associated have as decoration: horizontal incisions overlaid by a wavy strip on the shoulder (graves 74, 677), strips of wavy lines that form the 'eyes' motif, and frame strips of linear incisions (grave 558), horizontal incised strips or thick horizontal incisions (graves 622, 715).

The only ceramic species that appear in the form of two specimens in the graves is the coarse one. Its colour is reddish-blackish. The decoration made of more or less frequent horizontal incisions (graves 551, 622, 680, 715) also appears on other vessels from the graves pertaining to phase I (grave 30; *Ciugudean* 2007, pl. VII: 2; grave 44; *Ciugudean* 2007, pl. VIII: 2) that was researched during 1981–1985. It is also identified at Sultana (*Mitrea* 1961a, 532, fig. 3: 1) and Blandiana A (*Aldea/Ciugudean* 1981, 148, fig. 2: 9; 3: 9). In two cases, these reddish paste vessels are associated with amphora-shaped pitchers. The other two cases are combined with grey paste vessels. The decorative elements found on vessels are the following:

- Wavy strips that form the 'eyes' motif (graves 606, 611, 680, 685).
- One wavy strip placed on the shoulder of the ceramic pot, overlapping frequent horizontal incisions (graves 75, 553).
- One-way strip placed on the shoulder of the ceramic pot, drawn over frequent horizontal incisions (graves 607, 680).

- Two wavy strips forming the 'eyes' motif placed on the shoulder of the ceramic pot, overlapping frequent incisions (grave 611).
- Wavy strips that cover the upper half of the pot and overlap strips of horizontal incisions (graves 553, 608).
- Strips of horizontal incisions framed by wavy strips (grave 667).
- Two wavy strips are framed by incised strips (grave 497).

The 'eyes' motif is observed on other vessels belonging to the 1st horizon from Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare (*Cosma* 2011, 148, 151, pl. 19: 84; 27: 114b) and Blandiana A/M.7 (*Anghel/Ciugudean* 1987, 188, fig. 2: 7; *Ciugudean/Anghel* 1993, 361, fig. 2: 1; *Cosma* 2011, 154, pl. 37: 157).

There are cases in which the pottery was deposited on the left side of the skull (graves 608, 611).

This particular custom can be seen at Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare (1981–1985) and Blandiana A. The decoration of these vessels is represented by wavy bands, more or less sharp, forming the 'eyes' motif and overlapping horizontal incisions that are sometimes drawn more profoundly. In the case of grave 685, one of the two vessels presents a fragment of a handle. The only vessel that has the inner rim decorated with a wavy incised strip is the specimen from grave 66. It is also decorated on the body with wavy strips that each overlap another strip of horizontal lines. The ornamentation of the inner edge with a wavy strip also appears at Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare in grave 20 (*Cosma* 2011, 149, pl. 24: 101) and grave 10 (*Ciugudean* 2007, pl. VIII: 4; *Cosma* 2011, 149, pl. 22: 92), where both vessels are coarse and decorated. The ornamentation represented by wavy strips on the inner rim has analogies to the beginning of the 9th c. in mainland Croatia at Brodski Drenovac in grave 20 on a decorated jar with three strips of wavy lines (h. 11.5 cm, d.b. 6.8 cm, d.b. 5.2 cm). This pot was discovered on the right of the skull (*Tomičić* 2002, 136, fig. 40). Another jar with the rim decorated in the same manner was discovered in M. 1. Its surface presented three wavy strips and its dimensions are the following: h. 12.5 cm, Dg. 8.2 cm, d.b. 6.6 cm (*Tomičić* 2002, 136, fig. 27). The wavy band and the one made of horizontal rows that decorate the inner rim of the pot are also found on the pottery in the settlement of Garvăn (Dinogetia) in hovel 19a (*Ștefan/Barneal/Mitrea* 1957, 198, fig. 3: 2), at Bucov-Tioca (*Comșa* 1978, fig. 62: 4, 8, 9) and within the necropolises of Blandiana A in destroyed grave (*Anghel/Ciugudean* 1987, fig. 6: 1, 2; *Cosma* 2011, 154, 155, pl. 39: 165), grave 3 (*Anghel/Ciugudean* 1987, 187, fig. 6: 2; *Cosma* 2011, 153, pl. 35: 149) and grave 7 (*Anghel/Ciugudean* 1987, 188, fig. 2: 7; *Ciugudean/Anghel* 1993, 361, fig.

2: 1), at Nitra-Lupka (*Vlkolinská* 2007, pl. VI: 2) and Istria/M. 44 (*Fiedler* 1992, pl. 13: 1, 1a), M. 117 (*Fiedler* 1992, pl. 19: 11, 11a) and M. 233 (*Fiedler* 1992, pl. 31: 5, 5a). These decorative elements that sometimes ornament the trim of the vessels were dated between 850 and 930 (*Cosma* 2011, 67, tab. 42.I./3–5).

The older dating of grave 551 is additionally ensured by the fact that the sepulchral pit of grave 520 overlaps it. This grave can be safely dated to the 10th c., given the position of the ceramic pot (near the right calf), the dimensions, and its decoration. As for the jar with a broken handle from M. 685, it is possible to mention an analogous specimen with only one handle in hovel no. 6 from Bucov-Tioca (phase II). It is dated to the middle of the 9th c. (*Comşa* 1978, fig. 55: 3).

The knives appear in graves with remains from an ovine (graves 497, 551, 685; Tab. 1) and from a bovine and an ovine (grave 553). In one case, the knife appears in a child's grave but is associated with an egg offering (grave 624) and can be dated to the beginning of the 10th c. The knife appears in 20 graves in the research carried out between 1981 and 1985. The positions of their identification are various: near the shoulder, near the hip, feet, or next to the head. Knives appeared in correlation with an animal offering (*Ciugudean* 2011, 123).

The bell found in grave 624 (*Dragotă* 2014, 86) is pear-shaped and undecorated. It can be placed between the characteristic specimens of the beginning of the 10th c., dating also assured by the jar decorated using a wheel. This undecorated pear-shaped variant of the bell is present in the archaeological discoveries, especially in the 10th–11th c., as evidenced by the specimens from Bijelo Brdo, graves 188, 192 (*Jovanović* 1995–1996, 89, 105, pl. II: 11a, 12), Mahovljani, grave 76 (*Jovanović* 1995–1996, 91, 105, pl. IV: 4), Voiteg, grave 7 (*Mendelet/Tănase/Gáll* 2001, 100, fig. 8) and Alba Iulia-Str. Brindusei, grave 213 (*Dragotă* 2014, 86, fig. 46: 1). As for the bronze plate pearl discovered in grave 74, its fragmentary state does not allow us any further observations. However, it should be remembered that, at this chronological horizon, silver or bronze tri-lobbed pearls are present in the cemeteries from Obîrşia-Olt (*Toropu/Stoica* 1972, 166, fig. 5: 37), Sultana, grave 7 (*Mitrea* 1988, 111, pl. 2: 4) and Satu Nou (*Mitrea* 1961b, 555). The button found on the right of the skull in grave 548 has analogies at Alba Iulia-Staţia de Salvare, 1st horizon (graves 22 and 30), Ciurbrud (*Dankanits/Ferenczi* 1959, fig. 3: 2), Istria, grave 13 (*Fiedler* 1992, 435, pl. 21: 10), Devnja, grave 119 (*Fiedler* 1992, 505, 506, pl. 104: 18), Obîrşia-Olt (*Toropu/Stoica* 1972, 171, fig. 5: 33) and Sultana, grave 131 (*Mitrea* 1988, 119, pl. 15: 4).

The shackles from grave 551 can be connected with the wooden coffin of the deceased, a fact that

is also explained by the position in which they were identified inside the grave. The use of iron shackles for the wooden coffin is attested at a chronological level close to that of grave 1/2001 (child) from Zalău-Valea Răchişorii/Palvár. Four of the specimens were found in the area of the skull and the other four in the region of the feet (*Băcuet-Crişan* 2015, 37, 48, 49, cat. 9–16, fig. 10). The iron nails from grave 680 are similar to those found in the incineration cemeteries at Razdelna, grave 208 (*Fiedler* 1992, 483, pl. 89: 5) and Devnja, grave 34 (*Fiedler* 1992, 492, pl. 96: 13). The probability of them having a certain 'symbolic role' is quite debatable and does not currently have scientific coverage. The only fragmented steel comes from grave 497. Close specimens – dated in the 9th–10th c. – were also found in the settlements from Bucov (*Comşa* 1978, 116, fig. 92: 22–24). Beads were found in graves 74, 551, 607, 622, 667, 677, and 715. Glass pieces with enamel (the most numerous) and beads made of clay or beryllium can be distinguished from the point of view of their material. The colour range is quite varied, being able to observe blue-inked, dark green, black/brown, and yellow specimens. Regarding the shape of the beads, the following variants can be distinguished:

- Disk-shaped bead made of clay with reddish-brown enamel (grave 622).
- Disk-shaped blue glass beads with cobalt (graves 551, 667, 677).
- Disk-shaped yellow glass beads with sulphur (graves 74, 622, 607, 667).
- Blunted ovoid-shaped bead made of opaque glass (grave 622).
- Disk-shaped beads made of brown/black paste and decorated with a wavy white-yellowish line (graves 622, 667).
- Disk-shaped glass beads with black enamel. Their body is cylindrical or truncated-cone shaped, and the decoration consists of a spirally-wrapped yellow line (graves 74, 511).
- Tri-geminated and penta-geminated green glass beads (graves 551, 74). The penta-geminated ones are made of blue glass with red ribs (grave 74) and black glass (grave 607).
- Bead made of green beryllium. It is shaped like a hex-lateral prism (grave 622).

Blue glass beads, black glass beads decorated with yellow paste (grave 667), and green glass beads with yellow paste inlays have analogies in grave 30 from Alba Iulia-Staţia de Salvare, phase I (*Ciugudean* 1996, 12, fig. 12; 2006, 28, no. 24; 2011, 130) and Blandiana A, grave 8 (*Anghel/Ciugudean* 1987, 188, fig. 4: 4; *Ciugudean/Anghel* 1993, 361, fig. 3: 3). The disk-shaped pieces made of blue and yellow glass from graves 667 and 677 are also included at the same chrono-

logical horizon. They present similarities in grave 26 from Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare (Ciugudean 2011, 130, 131). As for the earrings in grave 715, their fragmentary state does not allow us further discussions or observations of a chronological nature.

Sixty-eight graves were discovered during the research carried out between 1981 and 1985. Usually, two ceramic vessels were deposited in the area of the skull and next to the feet. Rarely these graves contain one or three ceramic vessels (Ciugudean 2011, 122): grave 32/S. I (1 vessel, animal offering), 51/S. I (2 vessels, knife), 1/S. II (2 vessels), 22/S. II (2 vessels, knife), 23/S. II (2 vases), 28/S. III (2 vessels, beads), 6/S. V (2 vessels), 11/S. VII (2 vessels), 22/S. VII (1 vessel, animal offering, spearhead, ring; Ciugudean 2007, 257, annex 1), 2/S. XII (2 vessels), 12/S. XII (2 vessels), 24/S. XII (2 vessels), 40/S. XII (1 vessel), 10/S. XIII (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 31/S. XII (2 vessels), 5/S. XIV (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 11/S. XIV (1 vessel, animal offering, pendant), 16/S. XIV (2 vessels, animal offering, knife, arrowhead), 22/S. XIV (2 vessels, animal offering, knife, earrings, beads, pendant, buttons), 31/S. XIV (2 vessels, animal offering), 32/S. XIV (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 42/S. XV (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 43/S. XV (2 vessels, animal offering, knife, pendant, beads), 44/S. XV (2 vessels, animal offering), 11/S. XVII (2 vessels, animal offering), 41/S. XVII (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 11/S. XVIII (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 10/S. XXI (3 vessels, animal offering, pendant, beads; Ciugudean 2007, 258, annex 1), 5/S. XXII (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 16/S. XXII (1 vessel, knife), 5/S. XXXII (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 6/S. XXXII (1 vessel, animal offering, beads), 16/S. XXXII (1 vessel, animal offering, knife, beads), 18/S. XXXII (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 30/S. XXXII (2 vessels, animal offering, knife, buttons, beads), 8/S. XXXIII (3 vessels, animal offering, knife, stirrup, buckle, bit), 11/S. XXXIII (2 vessels, animal offering), 12/S. XXXIII (2 vessels), 15/S. XXXIII (2 vessels, animal offering, beads), 2/S. XXXIV (2 vessels, animal offering), 6/S. XXXV (1 vessel), 9/S. XXXV (2 vessels), 10/S. XXXV (1 vessel), 11/S. XXXV (2 vessels), 14/S. XXXV (2 vessels), 24/S. XXXV (2 vessels, animal offering), 25/S. XXXV (2 vessels, animal offering), 26/S. XXXV (2 vessels, animal offering, pendant, beads), 30/S. XXXV (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 34/S. XXXV (2 vessels), 11/S. XXXVI (2 vessels), 13/S. XXXVI (2 vessels, knife, beads), 15/S. XXXVI (2 vessels, knife), 18/S. XXXVI (1 vessel, animal offering), 20/S. XXXVI (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 24/S. XXXVI (3 vessels, animal offering, pendant), 25/S. XXXVI (2 vessels, animal offering, two knives), 26/S. XXXVI (2 vessels; Ciugudean 2007, 259, annex 1), 6/S. XXXVII (2 vessels), 10/S. XXXVII (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 15/S.

XXXVII (2 vessels, earring), 2/S. XXXVIII (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 5/S. XXXVIII (2 vessels), 12/S. XXXVIII (3 vessels, animal offering, knife), 13/S. XXXVIII (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), 10/S. XXXIX (2 vessels), 8/S. XL (2 vessels, animal offering, knife), and 15/S. XL (2 vessels, animal offering; Ciugudean 2007, 260, annex 1).

The episode from 892 inserted in the *Annals of Fulda* was mentioned by K. Horedt (1954, 493) and A. Grecu (1950, 229, 230): '... The German king, sending his messengers to the Bulgarians and their king Landomir for peace renewal... asked him not to allow the sale of salt in Moravia. The messengers, because of the extensive traps of the Duke Zventibold (Sviatopelk, Czech prince), did not dare to go ashore but passed in Bulgaria with the ships on the river Sava...' and can be correlated with this Bulgarian presence in Transylvania, even though the area is not implicitly nominated. The source mentions Arnulf de Carinthia (887–899), king of the eastern part of the Frankish state, who had a conflict with Svatopluk, the Moravian prince. In this context, a free embassy was sent to Bulgaria to see Tsar Vladimir (889–893), Boris's son, to request the renewal of peace from 862 and to stop the sale of salt to the Moravians.

'... Missos etiam suos inde ad Bulgaros et regem eorum Laodomir ad renovandam pristinam pacem cum muneribus mense Septembrio transmisit et, ne coemptio salis inde Maravansis daretur exposcit. Missi autem propter insidias Zwentibaldi ducis terrestre iter non valentes habere de regno Brazlavonis per fluvium Odagra (Odra) usque ad Gulpam (Kulpa) dein per fluentia Savi (Sava) fluminis navigio in Bulgaria perducti. Ibi a rege honorifice suscepti eadem via, qua venerant cum muneribus mense Maio reversi sunt...' (Pertz 1891, 120, 121).

In September, he sent his assignments, as messengers, to the Bulgarians and their king, Laodomir (Vladimir), to renew the previous peace. They urged that the possibility of buying the salt by those in Moravia ought not to be given at that time. Those sent, however, because of the conspiracy of the ruler Zwentiboldus (Svatopluk) and not having the means of a road on land, went with the ship in Bulgaria, from the kingdom of Braslav, on the river Odra (Oder), to Gulpa (Kulpa) and then along the river Sava. From there, being welcomed by the king, they returned with assignments on the same road used for their coming in May of 893.

M. Chisvași-Comșa admitted that Transylvania, along with Muntenia, Oltenia, Banat, and Dobrogea, belonged to the first Bulgarian rule, and this incorporation took place during several phases. Moreover, she considers that the funerary inventory from Blandiana and Sebeș advocates for a culture that includes southern Slavic elements and Saltovo

elements, but also hybrid elements resulting from them. These proto-Bulgars would have penetrated to the north of the Danube together with the Romanesque population, thus strengthening the latter element (Comşa 1959, 73, 74; Chişvaşi-Comşa 1960, 74, 75). R. R. Heitel talks about a Dridu-Alba Iulia culture, specific to the 9th–10th c., that ceases in the context of the disappearance of the polished pottery (Heitel 1986, 245, 246). While the 892-episode mentioned in the *Annales Fuldenses* does not strictly speaking refer to Transylvania or any other geographical region, Miklós Takács admits a Bulgarian presence in southern Transylvania and uses the term group Alba Iulia-Blandiana. On the other hand, the territorial extent or dominance of the first Bulgarian state in the Carpathian Basin in the 9th c. is analysed from the perspective of three theories (modest, optimistic and desired), which have gained ground, to a greater or lesser extent, in the literature (Takács 2016, fig. 1).

OBSERVATIONS

It can be observed that we have isolated/solitary graves (graves 667, 680, 548, 551, 553, 497, 611), graves that are one close to another (grave 72/male and 74/female; 608/child and 622/girl; 685/male and 715/child) and also a well-defined group graves (grave 606/child, 677/girl, 607/girl and 624/child). The exception is made by grave 558, which does not appear on the general plan of the necropolis. In the graves of this group of children, we observe a ceramic association represented by the coarse paste vessel along with the fine species (amphorae and globular jars with handles). The graves of the 1st horizon are spread between the Roman graves and those pertaining to the 10th–11th c., with partial overlaps (graves 520 with 551; 624 cut a corner of 623/Roman incineration grave; 548 was overlapped in the southeast half of 527) being found in some cases. Coal remains to appear in the filling soil of the sepulchral pit (grave 607), below the deceased (grave 680), in the area of the lower limbs (grave 624), and under the animal offering (graves 677, 680).

From a percentage point of view (Fig. 9), children represent 50% (nine) of the total number of subjects, followed by men (28%; five subjects), women (17%; three subjects), and one young adult (5%).

The question that naturally arises is why this orientation? The explanation could be that the Bulgarian enclave that arrived in the area had already come

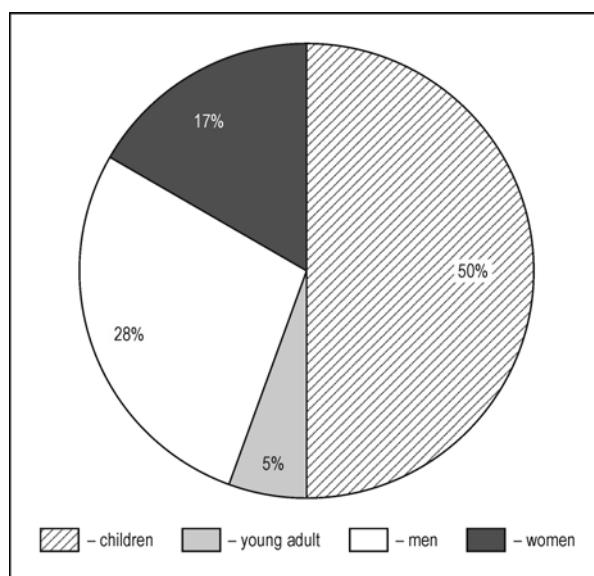


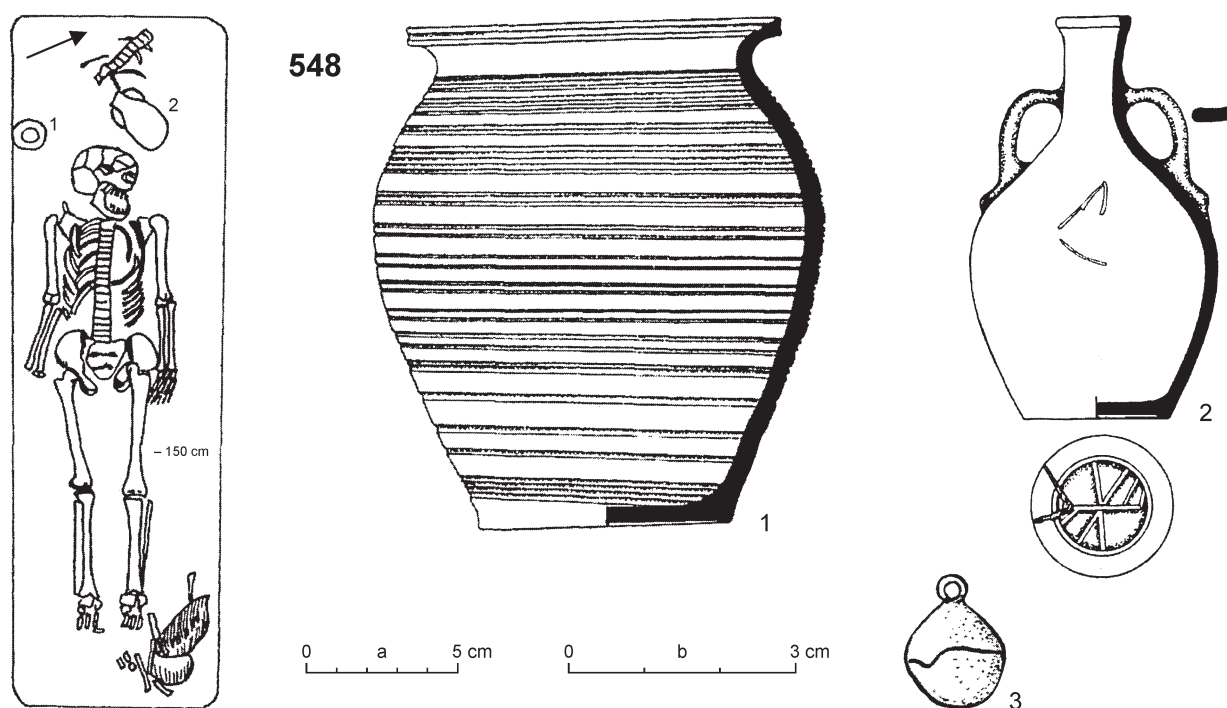
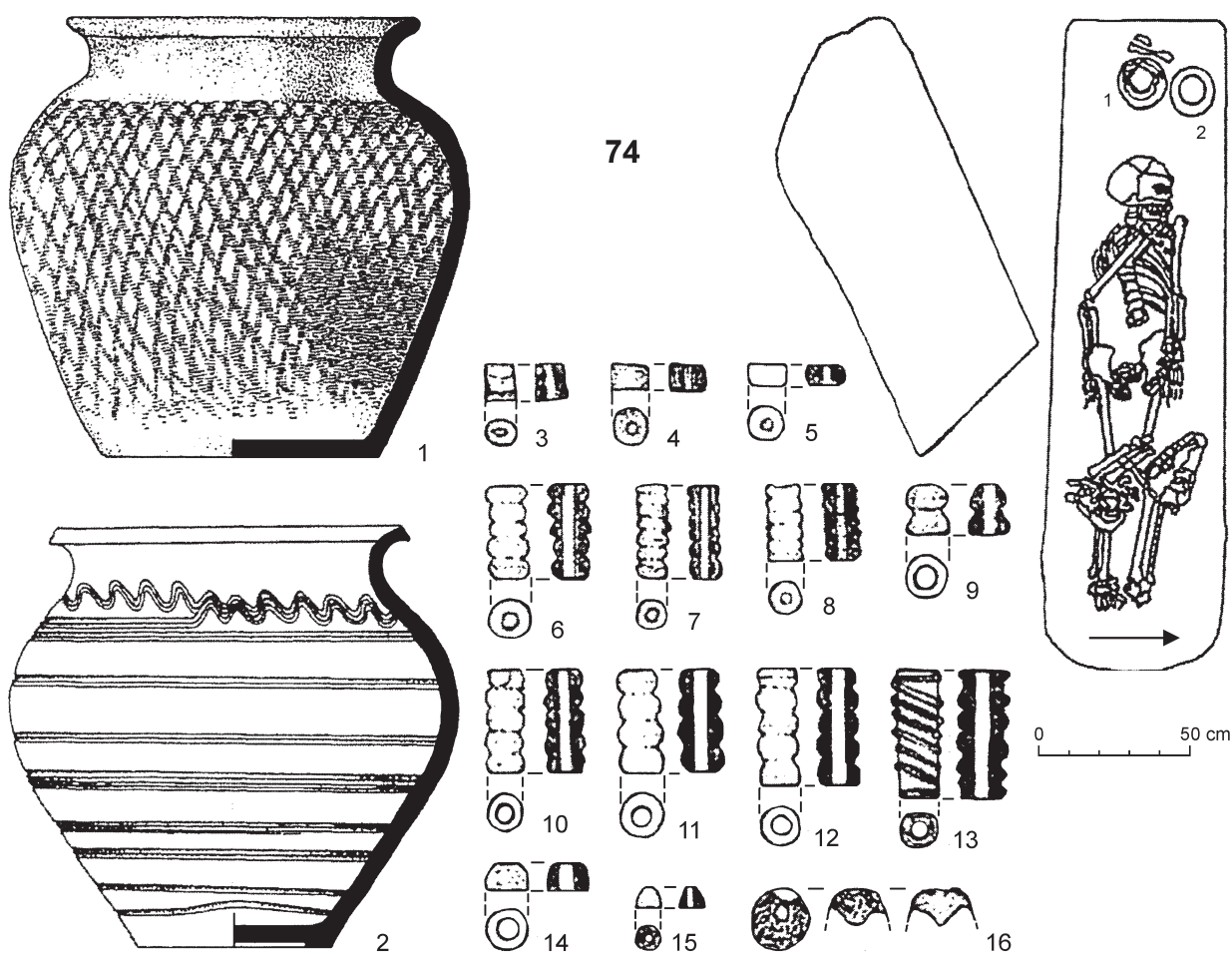
Fig. 9. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Gender status of discoveries.

into contact with Christianity. The latter was not yet fully implemented at the Community level. It shall not be forgotten that Vladimir-Rasate (889–893), the ruler during whose reign the actions from 892 took place, undermined the new faith and the position of the Church. As a result, his father Boris-Mihail returned from the monastery and punished his oldest by blinding him. Furthermore, the capital was moved from Pliska to Veliki Preslav the following year and Simeon was enthroned. Within this context, the absolute rupture with the paganism was decided during a national gathering. Boris-Mihail returned to the monastery after he solved this vital problem. He remained within the monastic complex till the end of his life (2 May 907; Marshall Lang 1976, 61; Pavlov/Ianev/Cain 2002, 30; Runciman 1930, 133, 134).

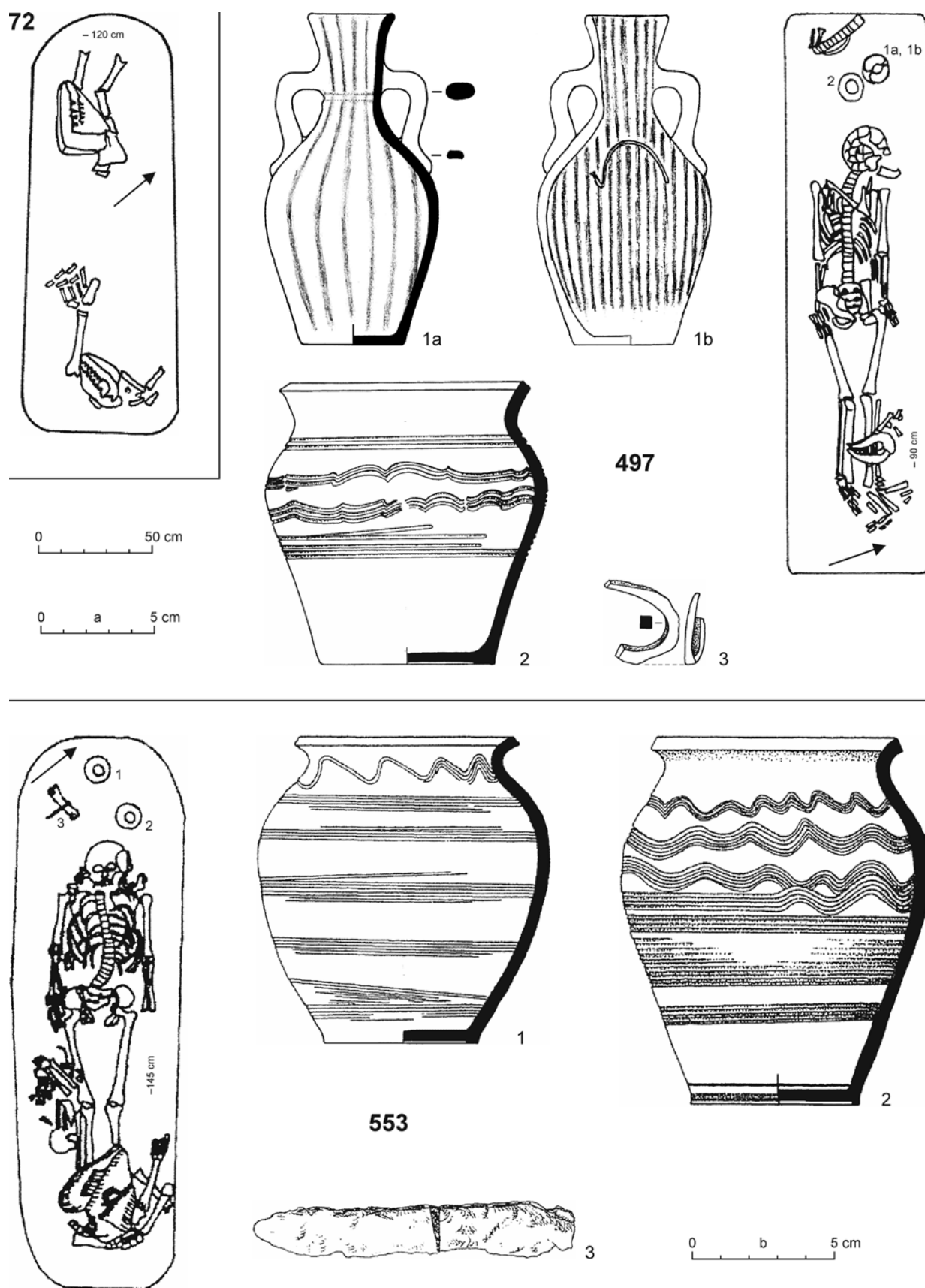
The community that left to the north of the Danube still practiced the old traditions, or maybe the traditional aspect was never abandoned. A series of events explain this: the two centuries that passed from the period when the Bulgarians officially adopted Christianity, the existing problems, and the resistance of those belonging to the upper layers of society. Moreover, this community left the control space area and probably did not exist a second wave of the population in Transylvania, as shown by their small number. From this point of view, we cannot accept the idea that Christianity imports such pagan.

Acknowledgment

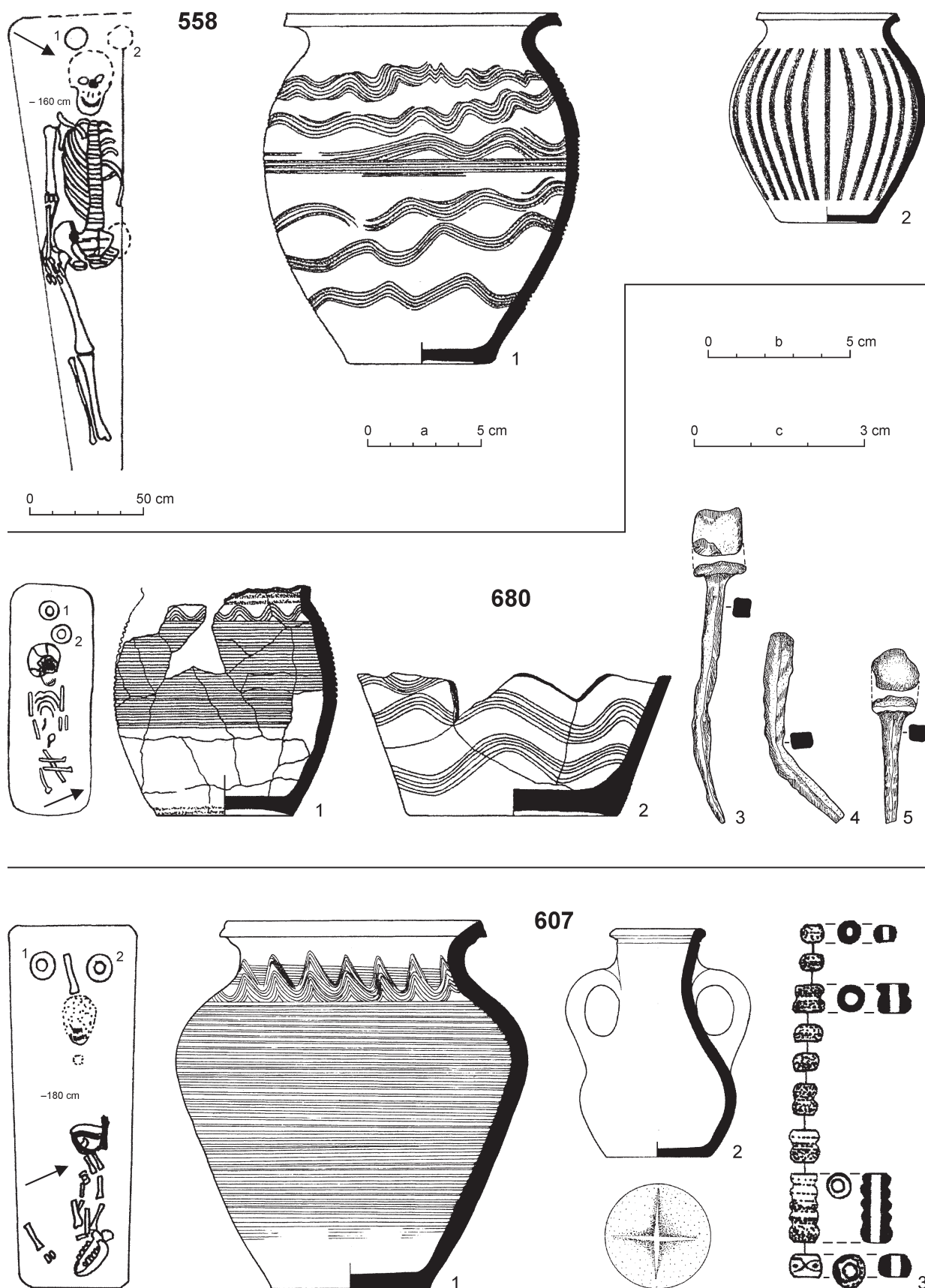
Kind regards to Conf. Univ. Dr. Dan Smarandache ('Lucian Blaga' University of Sibiu) for the accuracy of the translation of this passage/fragment into Romanian.



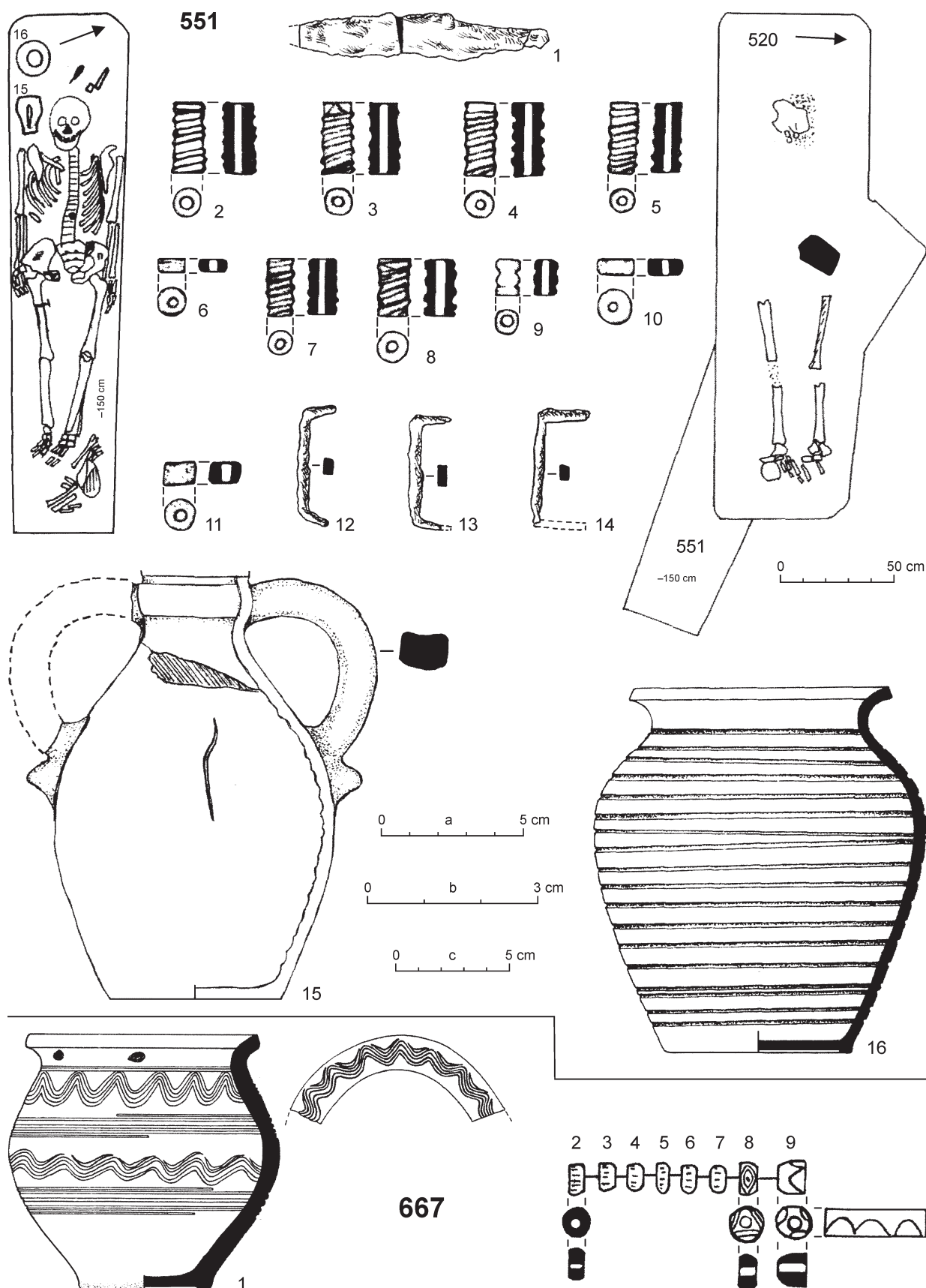
Pl. I. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Graves 74 and 548 with finds (graphic by M. Blăjan). Scale: a – pottery; b – beads and button.



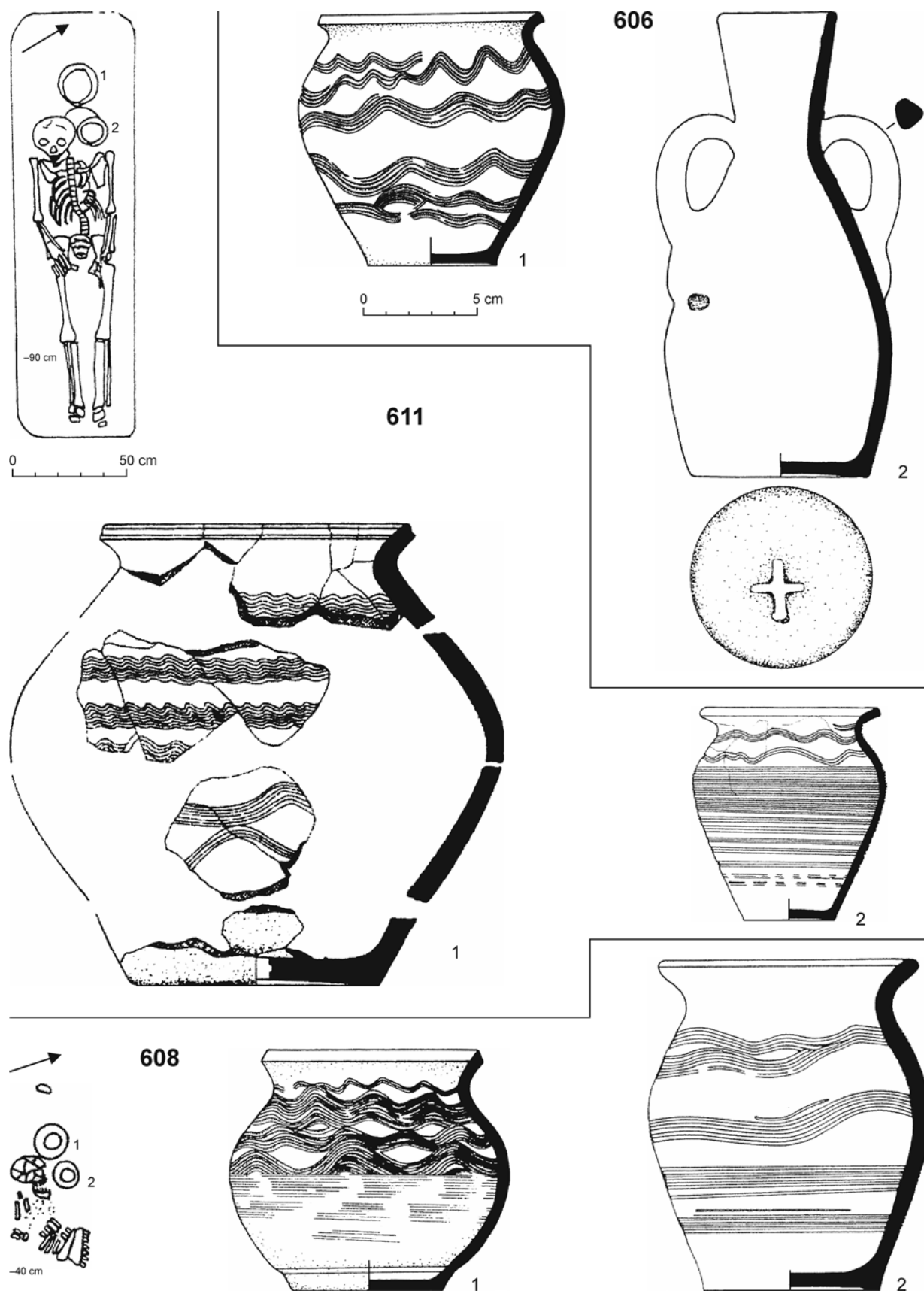
Pl. II. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Graves 72, 497 and 553 with finds (graphic by M. Blăjan). Scale: a – pottery; b – iron fragment and knife.



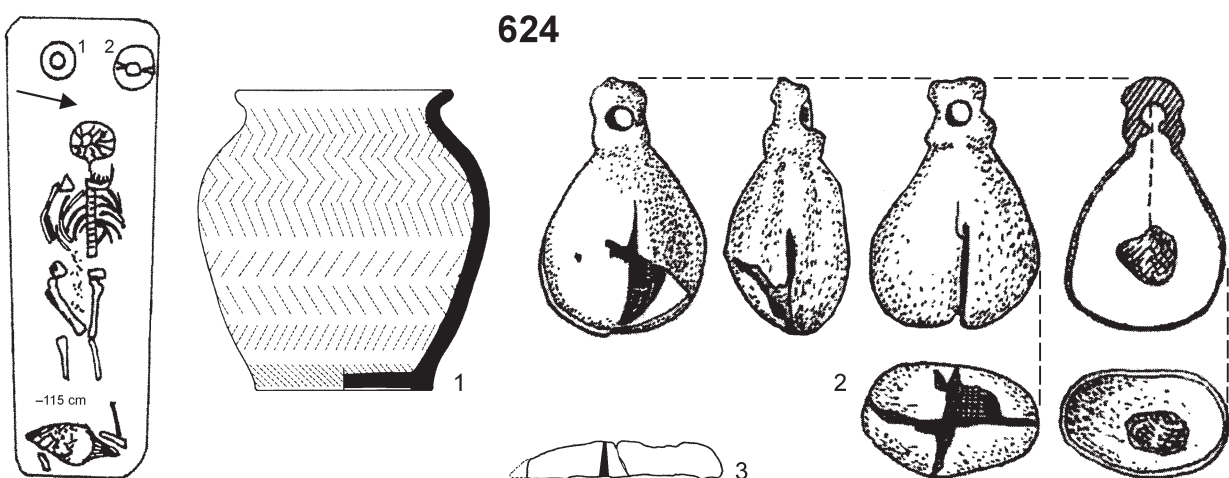
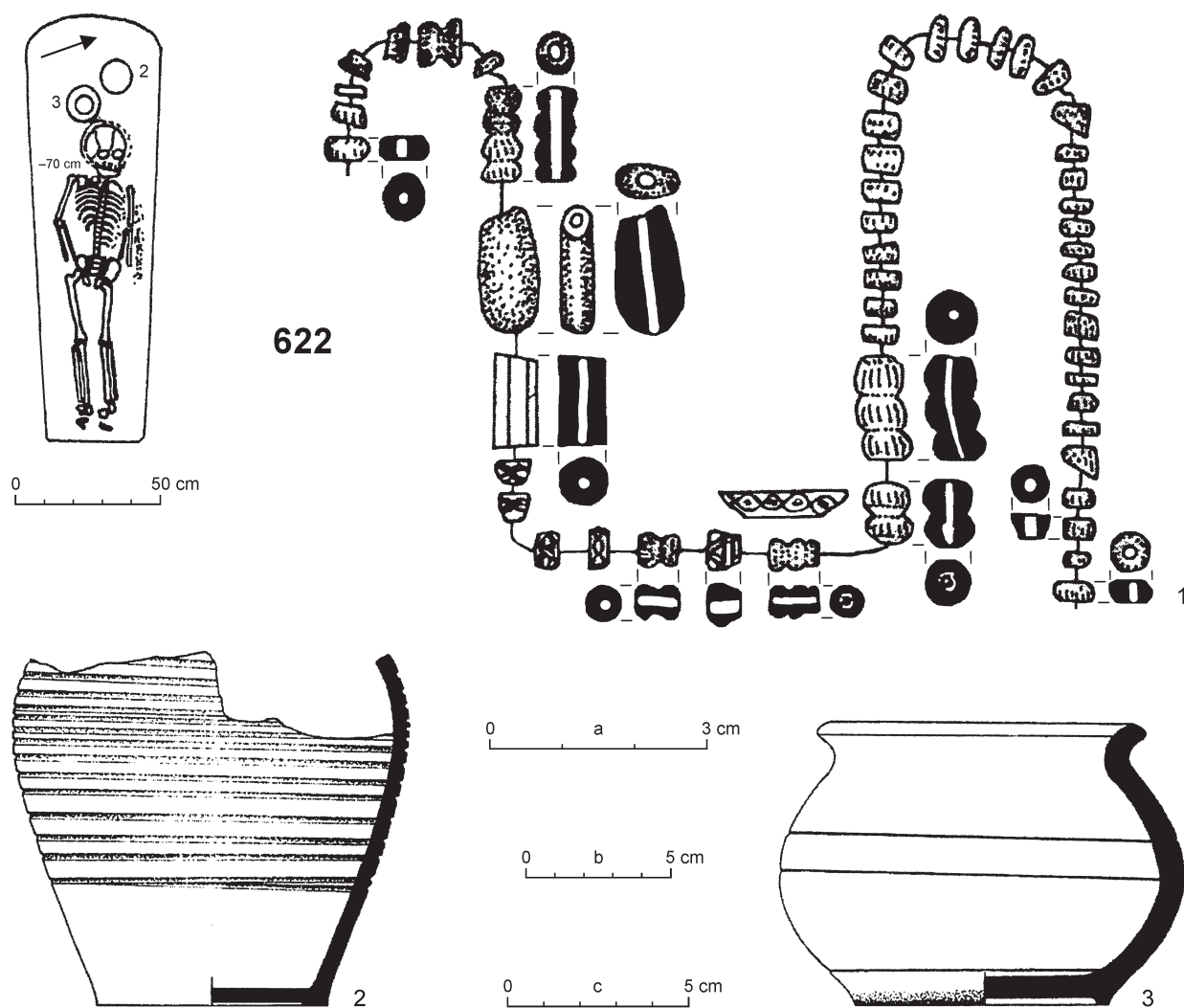
Pl. III. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Graves 558, 680 and 607 with finds (graphic by M. Blăjan). Scale: a – pottery; b – nails; c – beads.



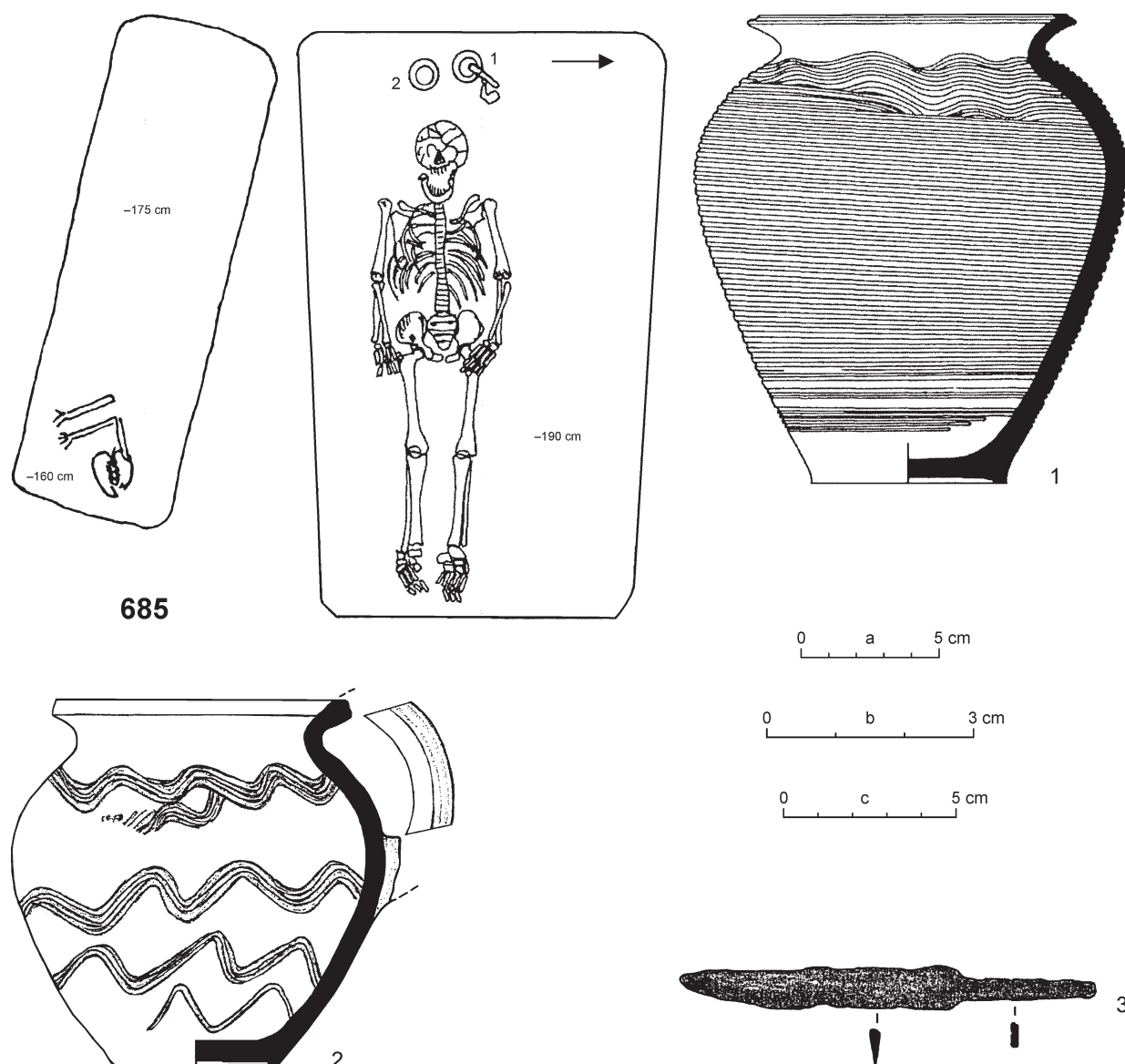
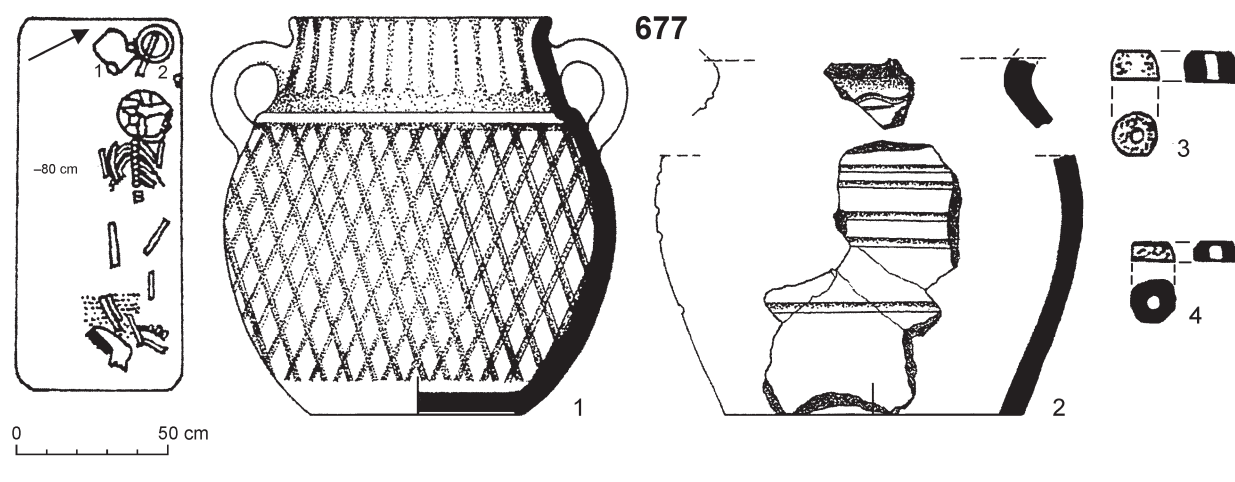
Pl. IV. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Graves 551 and 667 (graphic by M. Blăjan). Scale: a – knife and shackles; b – beads; c – pottery.



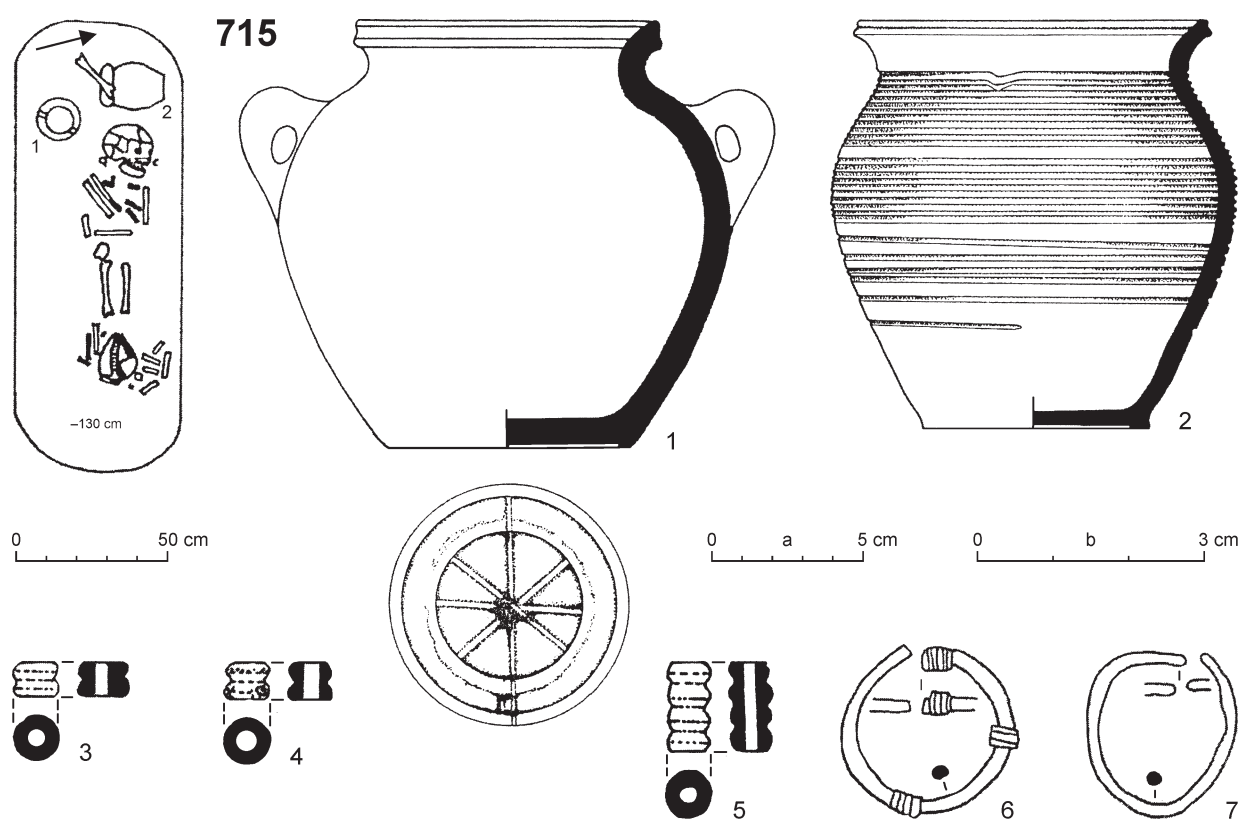
Pl. V. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Graves 606, 611 and 608 with finds (graphic by M. Blăjan).



Pl. VI. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Graves 622 and 624 with finds (graphic by M. Blăjan). Scale: a – beads and bell; b – pottery; c – knife.



Pl. VII. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Graves 677 and 685 with finds (graphic by M. Blăjan). Scale: a – pottery; b – beads; c – knife.



Pl. VIII. Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare. Graves 715 with finds (graphic by M. Blăjan). Scale: a – pottery; b – beads and bronze earrings.

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Hroby z prvého horizontu pochovávaní na lokalite Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare

Objavy počas archeologického výskumu v rokoch 1980 a 1981

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SÚHRN

Štúdia sa zameriava na 18 hrobových celkov preskúmaných v rokoch 1980–1981 na pohrebisku Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare (obr. 1: 1). Táto vnútrokarpatská oblasť nie je pre bádateľov neznáma a v odbornej literatúre má svoje nezastupiteľné miesto. Nemožno však konštatovať, že bol vytvorený kompletný a komplexný obraz o problematike stredovekých nálezov. Predložený príspevok má za cieľ priniesť nové informácie k danej téme, s dôrazom na spomínaný archeologický výskum.

Autori v príspevku opisujú jednotlivé hroby a ich inventár na základe poznámok zosnulého rumunského archeológa M. Blăjana. Tieto hroby možno zaradiť do 1. horizontu pochovávaní na pohrebisku, datovaného do 9.–10. stor., do ktorého patrí aj ďalších nepublikovaných 68 hrobov, preskúmaných v rokoch 1981–1985. Výsledky výskumov z týchto kampaní zatiaľ nie sú spracované, ale podľa predbežných záverov H. Ciugudeana a G. Anghela bola táto časť pohrebiska používaná krátko obdobie. Pohrebisko sa pripisuje bulharskej enkláve v Sedmohradsku, pre ktorú je zavedený názov kultúrna skupina Blandiana A alebo Alba Iulia-Blandiana. O tejto enkláve existuje zmienka z roku 892 vo Fuldských análoch.

Následne sa štúdia zaoberá priamo opisom technických a rituálnych aspektov hrobov, odkrytých v rokoch 1980–1981 (obr. 2). Zistilo sa, že väčšina hrobov patrí deťom (50 %) a následne mužom (28 %). Najmenej kostier je možné určiť ako ženské (17 %) a iba jedna kostra patrila nedospelému jedincovi (5% z celkového počtu). Priestorová orientácia hrobov bola pomerne variabilná: Z – V (7 hrobov), ZJZ – VSV (2 hroby), ZSZ – VJV (4 hroby) a SZ – JV (4 hroby). Najčastejšia orientácia Z – V by mohla naznačovať kresťanský vplyv, avšak v šiestich zo siedmich týchto hrobov sa objavili zvieracie obety. Poloha horných končatín pochovaných bola rôzna, výrazne prevládalo uloženie vystretých rúk pozdĺž tela (hroby 74, 497, 548, 551, 553, 622, 68), v jednom prípade bola ľavá dlaň na bedrách (hrob 685).

Výrazným prvkom, ktorý sa na pohrebisku vo zvýšenej miere vyskytoval, boli zvieracie obety v hroboch (tabula 1). Tie sa nachádzali v takmer každom hrobe, s výnimkou piatich (hroby 558, 606, 611, 622 a 667). Najčastejšie išlo o lebky a kosti ovce/kozy a hovädzieho dobytká. V jednom prípade sa v hrobe 624, ktorý patril dieťaťu, vyskytovalo vajce. Kostí zvierat boli v rámci hrobovej jamy rôzne umiestnené (spravidla v blízkosti hlavy alebo dolných končatín pochovaného). V niektorých prípadoch

sa v hrobe vyskytovali spoločne kosti hovädzieho dobytká s kosťami ovce/kozy (hroby 72, 74 a 553).

Dôležitým prvkom v hrobovej výbave bola keramika a jej uloženie v rámci hrobovej jamy. Vo všetkých skúmaných hroboch sa nachádzali minimálne dve nádoby, s výnimkou hrobu 72, ktorý bol zničený. Boli uložené vždy v blízkosti lebky, ale v rôznych polohách: obe nádoby uložené pri sebe v oblasti medzi lebkou a ukončením hrobovej jamy (hroby 74, 497, 553, 622, 677, 685), obe nádoby uložené naľavo od lebky (hroby 608, 611), obe nádoby uložené napravo od lebky (hrob 551), jedna z nádob uložená napravo a druhá naľavo od lebky (hroby 548, 558, 607, 624, 715), prípadne sa ich poloha nedala presne definovať (hrob 606).

Z hľadiska charakteristiky keramiky sa objavili dve hlavné skupiny. Prvou sú nádoby s rytým povrchom (horizontálne línie, vlnovky), vyrobené z hrubozrnného materiálu a oxidačne vypálené. Druhú skupinu tvorí keramika z jemne plavenej hliny, niekedy leštená. Tá sa objavovala ako sivá, s redukčným výpalom bez leštenia alebo žltá-červenkastá, s oxidačným výpalom. Kolky sa zistili na amforovitých džbánoch (hroby 548, 606, 607) a na jednej sivej nádobe s dvoma uškami. V hroboch sa tieto dve skupiny vyskytovali vo viacerých kombináciách: amforovitý džbán spoločne so zdobeným hrncom, vyrobeným z červenkastej hmoty (hroby 497, 548, 606, 607, 624), dva zdobené hrnce vyrobené z červenkastej hmoty (hroby 553, 608, 611, 680, 685), alebo sivá nádoba s výzdobou, či bez nej, spolu s červenkastou nádobou (hroby 74, 558, 622, 677, 715). Nádoby boli zdobené rôznymi motívmi vlnoviek a horizontálnych rýh. Zaujímavým prvkom sú vlnovky, ktoré vytvárali motív očí (hroby 606, 611, 680, 685). Tento výzdobný prvok bol pozorovaný aj v neskôr preskúmaných hroboch z 1. horizontu pochovávaní na lokalite (výskum 1981–1985), či na súvekom pohrebisku Blandiana A. Najzaujímavejší je nález z hrobu 624 – amforovitý džbán z jemnej hmoty, na pleciah zdobený písmenami gréckej abecedy (obr. 7). Čitateľná časť pozostáva z piatich písmen rôznej výšky. Nápis Π Α Π Α Γ (pravdepodobne Π Α Π Α Π Α C) môže byť považovaný za reminiscenciu na meno sv. Metoda, moravsko-panónskeho arcibiskupa. Prítomnosť jeho mena na nádobe nájdené v tejto oblasti môže byť symbolom toho, aký špeciálny význam mala kresťanská symbolika vo vnútrokarpatskom priestore a v európskom priestore všeobecne.

Nože sa objavujú v hroboch s pozostatkami ovce/kozy (hroby 497, 551, 685) a hovädzieho dobytká a ovce/kozy

(hrob 553), v jednom prípade aj v detskom hrobe 624. Zvonček hruškovitého tvaru z hrobu 624 možno zaradiť medzi charakteristické exempláre zo začiatku 10. stor. Koráliky sa našli v hroboch 74, 551, 607, 622, 667, 677 a 715. Z hľadiska materiálu sa dajú rozlíšiť sklenené exempláre, ktoré sú najpočetnejšie, a koráliky z hliny alebo berýlia. Farebná škála je relatívne pestrá, objavujú sa modré, tmavozelené, čiernohnedé a žlté koráliky. Skoby z hrobu 551 možno spájať s drevenou rakvou, ako nasvedčuje ich pozícia v rámci hrobovej jamy.

Na nálezoch z lokality Alba Iulia-Stația de Salvare je možné sledovať južnoslovanské prvky, prvky kultúry Saltovo, ale aj románskeho obyvateľstva. Je nepravdepodobné, že zdobená hrubostenná keramika patrila iba slovanskému obyvateľstvu a nemožno vylúčiť, že hroby s dvoma zdobenými hrubostennými nádobami patrili domácomu obyvateľstvu. Až na jednu výnimku naznačujú

všetky prvky hrobovej výbavy (prítomnosť zvieracích kostí pri nohách mŕtveho, uhliky, nôž symbolicky uložený na zvieracích kostiach) pohanské obyvateľstvo.

Štúdia sa dotýka otázky protobulharskej enklávy severne od Dunaja. Tvorila ju komunita, ktorá sa presídlila na sever od Dunaja a naďalej praktizovala staré tradície. Malý počet týchto hrobov naznačuje, že išlo iba o jednu vlnu príchodzích. Takzvané "Belehradské vojvodstvo", ktorého existencia nie je vedecky dokázaná, malo byť založené Bulharmi a pôvodným obyvateľstvom. Jeho autonómia mala trvať do konca 10. stor., kedy bolo ovládnuté Gyulom. Ani existencia kresťanstva v tejto oblasti nie je vedecky jednoznačne podložená. Zmiená politická konfigurácia sa formovala až v priebehu 10. stor., súbežne so šírením kresťanstva. Na základe toho sa autori štúdie prikláňajú k termínu "Gyulove vojvodstvo", kde sa nedá hovoriť *sensu stricto* o nadvláde Bulharov, ale skôr o kontrole prepravy soli z baní v Sedmohradsku.