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The Medieval Christian Necropolis in the Kopachyntsi hillfort (Ukraine). Unpublished Research Materials

Abstract

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The article deals with unpublished research materials from the medieval Christian cemetery located on the territory of the hillfort in the village of Kopachyntsi in Sub-Carpathian region (Ukraine) which were conducted in 1953. Excavations were verified, objects and artefacts were analysed, and an attempt to attribute and date them was made. The site is represented by inhumations in pits, as well as burials under stone slabs. The so-called “under the slab burials” are a separate category of monuments of funeral culture, which is characterized by its diffusion only on the territory of Halician-Volhynian state, but not the whole of Kyiv Rus'. At the same time, such monuments are known in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Germany, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia and Poland. Data on most of the under the slab monuments discovered on the territory of Ukraine are often uninformative, and therefore the publication of the results of stationary archaeological excavations is extremely important for understanding this cultural and religious phenomenon. Special attention is paid to a rare stone cross that was found by the deceased. The search for analogies allows us to conclude that it may be a pilgrimage relic.

Keywords: Sub-Carpathian region, burial, funeral culture, under the slab burial, pilgrimage relics.

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History of the research

In 1949, the Upper Dniester (Verkhnyodnistrianska) expedition of the Lviv Department of the Institute of Archaeology of Academy of Sciences of USSR (now the Department of Archaeology of I. Krypiakievych Institute of Ukrainian Studies of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine) led by Oleksiy Ratych carried out archaeological surveys on the right and left banks of Dniester River on the territory of Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk regions. As a result of these studies, a number of archaeological sites of different periods were discovered (Ratič 1949; 1955b, 158–164). Among them, in particular, hillfort mentioned by Bogdan Janusz in 1918 (Janusz 1918, 124) but not explored, located in Horodyshche Place (also known as Perekopy Place) north of the village of Kopachyntsi, Horodenka district, Ivano-Frankivsk region (then

Chernelytsia district, Stanislaviv region) was examined (Fig. 1; Ratič 1955b, 163).

The hillfort, with an area of about one hectare, is located on the high right bank of the Dniester River, at an altitude of 300 meters above sea level (48°50'49"N 25°23'20"E). Its central part is surrounded by circular rampart. From the north, the hillfort is limited by precipitous bank of the river, from the southeast by a deep ravine and steep slopes. From the west the hillfort turns into a plateau. From this field side it is protected by three ramparts and ditches. At the same time rampart № 2 and ditches № 1 and № 2 extend up to the slope of the bank of the Dniester River. Another rampart (№ 4) located between the first and second lines of defence (Fig. 2; Ratič 1949, 12–13, 30–33; 1955b, 163) limits the middle part of the hillfort from the north. The length of the sides of the hillfort is about 150 × 150 × 176 m, while the height of the ramparts

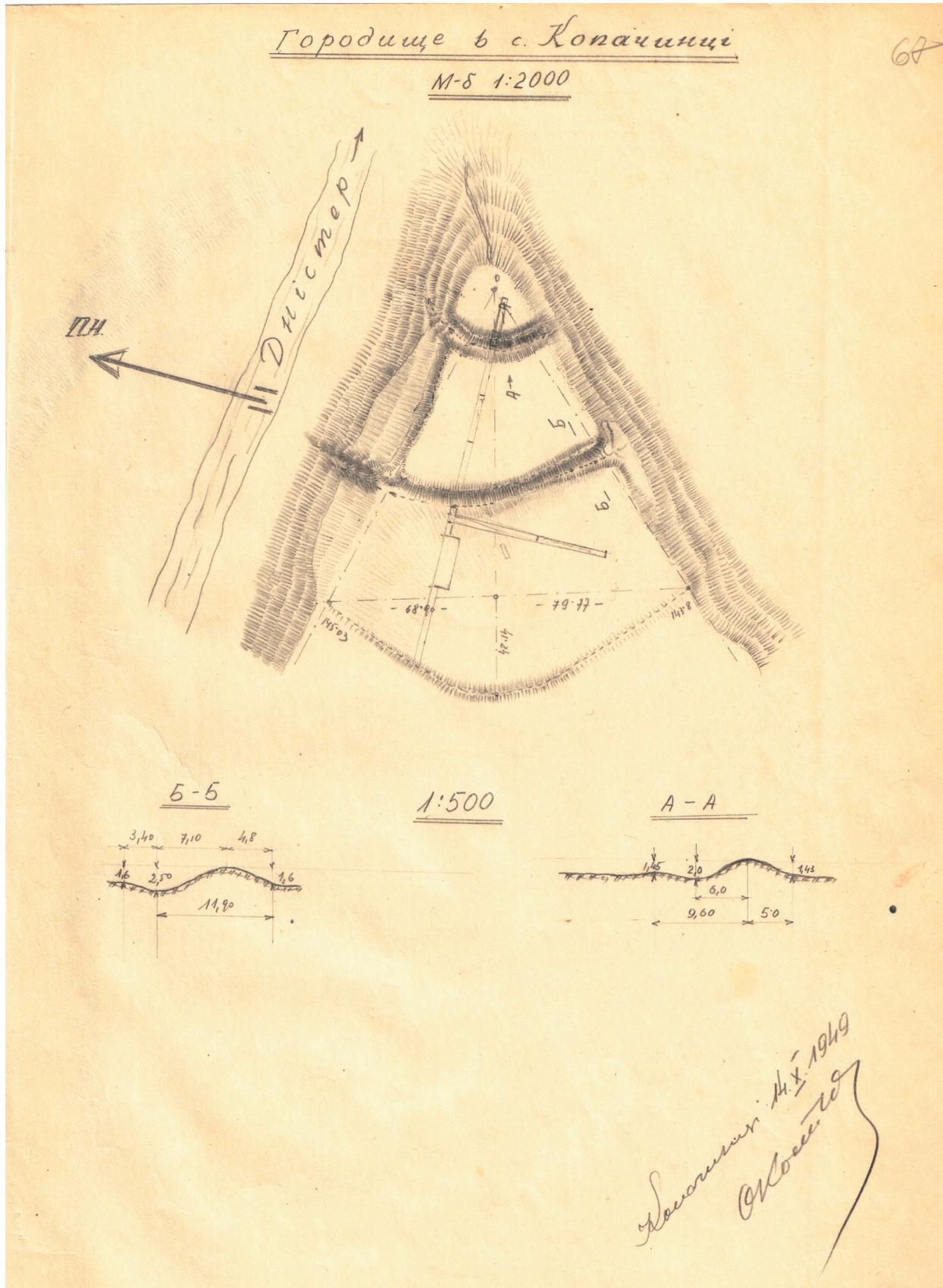


Fig. 1. Plan of the hillfort in Kopachyntsi (drawn by O. Kostyuk, 1949; after Ratič 1949).

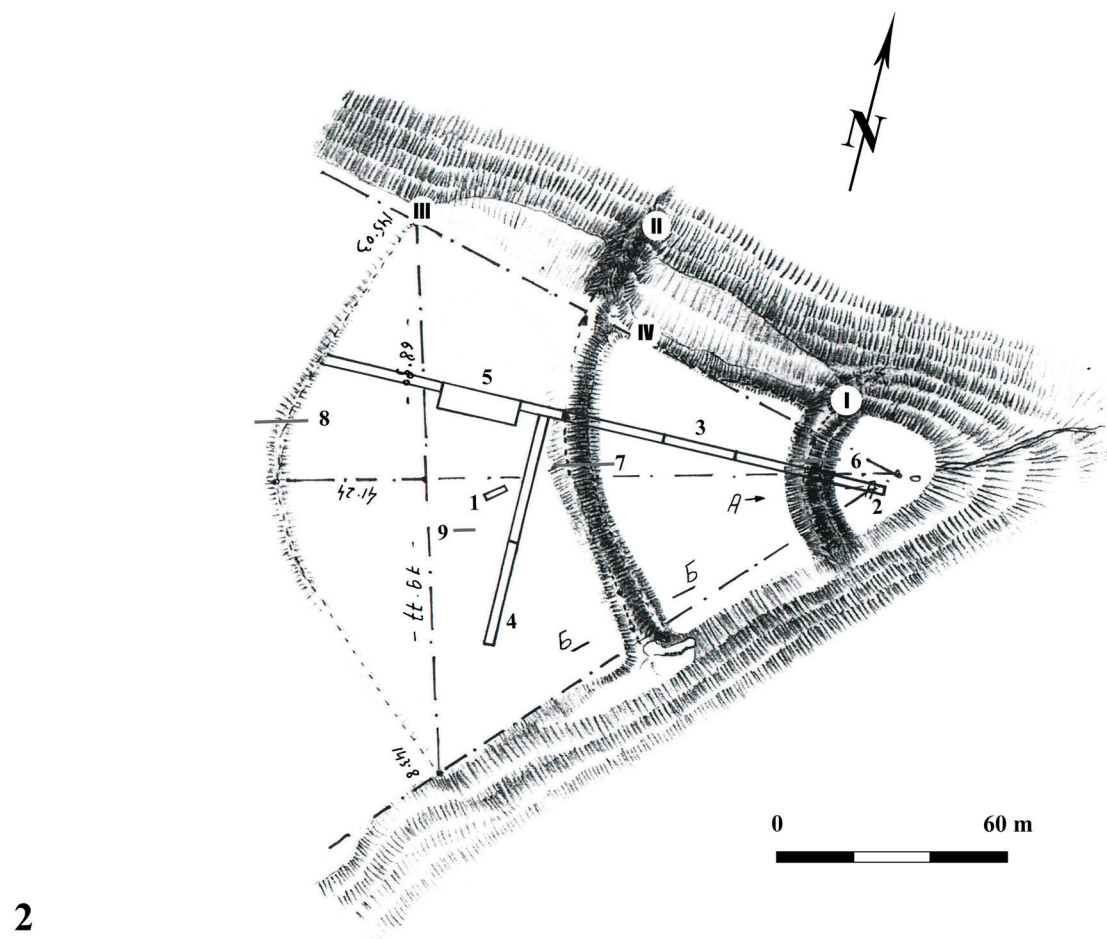


Fig. 2. Kopachyntsi hillfort: 1 – view of the hillfort from the south; 2 – plan of the site (according to O. Kostyuk, 1949, with clarifications of the author of the article): 1 – trench of 1949 (?); 2 – trench A of 1953 (?); 3 – trench B of 1953 (?); 4 – trench of 1953 (?); 5 – excavation area № 1 of 1953; 6 – trench № 1 of 1988; 7 – trench № 2 of 1988; 8 – trench № 3 of 1988; 9 – trench № 4 of 1988 (after Ratič 1949, 31, plan; 1953, 2–3, 5, 8; Tomenčuk 1988, plan).

reaches 2.5 m, depth of the ditches up to 1 m.¹ At the time of surveying, the hillfort was used as pasture and arable field (Ratič 1949, 30–31).

As a result of research in 1949, surface surveys of the hillfort and the area west of it were conducted. A 5 × 1 m trench was laid down between the ramparts № 2 and № 3 (Ratič 1949, 31–33). A more detailed study of the site was continued in 1953 as a part of the activity of the Slavic detachment of Podillya archaeological expedition of the same Institute. On this occasion, three trenches were laid down² in the eastern (a – 20 × 1 m), central (б – 10 × 1 m), southern (в – 30 × 1 m) and one survey pit in western (г – 2 × 1 m) part of the hillfort, as well as one excavation area (20 × 6 m) in the northwestern part of the site (Ratič 1953, 2–8).

As a result, materials from Palaeolithic, Neolithic, Eneolithic, Bronze Age, Early Iron Age, the first centuries AD, 7–9th centuries and 10–12th centuries were collected (Ratič 1949; 1953). O. Ratych noted that *Excavations carried out in 1949 and 1953 in the eastern and middle parts of the hillfort did not provide continuous cultural layer of ancient Rus', but found only mixed archaeological material belonging to different cultures* (Ratič 1957, 477). Instead, an inhumation burial was discovered within excavation area № 1 in north-western part of the hillfort located between second and third defensive ramparts. According to the researcher's conclusions, the necropolis was planned on the place of a settlement, existing on this territory. Based on the grave goods found in the burials, the scientist dated the necropolis to the 11–12th centuries (Ratič 1953, 26).

In 1988, Bohdan Tomenchuk carried out small-scale surveys of the site. The archaeologist cut the ramparts № 1–3 and carried down a trench (№ 4) in the southern part of the third platform. The researcher noted that the cultural layer on the hillfort is only 0.1–0.2 m, and it was not possible to record it at all on the fortified platform № 1 (Tomenčuk 2006, 95). In the southern part of the hillfort, between ramparts № 2 and № 3, in the trench № 4, the archaeologist pointed to minor remains of stone foundations of wooden building, in his opinion, presumably for church purposes and a pit, covered with large stone slabs (Tomenčuk 1988, 21–22; 2006, 95; 2008, fig. 308). However, it should be noted that no detailed research was carried out in this area and that there is also no comprehen-

sive documentation. Regarding the chronology of the site, Tomenchuk dates the Kopachyntsi hillfort to 12–13th centuries, and the burial complex discovered in 1953 – to second half of the 12th century. At the same time, based on the cross section of earthen fortifications, B. Tomenchuk concludes that rampart № 3 was constructed in the beginning of the 13th century, and as a result – burial complex was separated from the suburb and thus the third platform of the hillfort was formed (Tomenčuk 1988, 21–22; 2006, 94–95).

As a result of the examination of the surrounding area, Tomenchuk recorded that a large (2 ha) synchronous settlement had been situated nearby the hillfort. Two other settlements are located on its outskirts in Monastyrok Place and Selyshche Place (Tomenčuk 2006, 95).

In general, the results of these studies have only been published briefly in scientific literature (Ratič 1955a; 1957, 47–48; 1976, 175–176; Tomenčuk 2006, 94–95; 2008, fig. 308, 308.1, 308.2), and therefore require careful review and analysis. This primarily applies to studied necropolis that was studied on a larger area.

Analysis of ceramic material

Ceramic ware belongs to the mass of archaeological material discovered during 1949 and 1953 on the territory of the Kopachyntsi hillfort and a significant part of it was collected during research within excavation area № 1. In order to verify its chronology, and hence to date the hillfort and burial complex discovered on its territory, it became necessary to analyse this group of finds.³

With minor differences, the discovered ceramics generally have the same features. Pots were made of well cleaned clay with admixtures of mainly fine-grained sand. Their surface is regular and rough. The firing is mostly uniform (sometimes with grey and white spots) from brick and beige to dark grey colour. The firing is mostly three-layered (brick and beige colours of outer and inner surfaces and grey at the break), less single-layered (grey). The texture is dense, with a wall thickness within 3–8 mm. The number of ornamented ceramic ware is significant in the analysed collection. The in-depth decor, which usually covered shoulders of the pots, often to their full height, is represented by straight-line motifs made

¹ According to B. Tomenchuk their height is: rampart № 1 – 1.7 m; № 2 – 0.8 m; № 3 – 1 m.

² In the reporting documentation all of the trenches are called survey pits.

³ I express my sincere gratitude to Vira Hupalo, Senior Researcher of the Department of Archaeology of the I. Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine for the help in its processing.

by a multi-toothed stamp. At the same time, it is worth noting that wave motifs and notches also appeared in the ornament.

The shape of the rims of the ceramic ware is represented by four models: 1 – cylinder-faceted (81.8%) (Fig. 3–6), cylinder-cuff (9.1%), faceted (6.8%) (Fig. 7), tab (2.3%). Quantitatively, cylinder-faceted shape of the rims is dominant. Within the latter type, ornamented rims of one of the pots stand out. The central part of the rims of single-layer grey pots, cut obliquely to the outside, are decorated with vertical dimples, slightly tilted to the right (Fig. 3: 3). Cylinder-faceted shape of the rims began to appear only at the end of 11th century and became widespread during the first half of 12th century, or precisely during the main phase of the hillfort, at least within the examined area.

The ceramic material discovered during archaeological excavations carried out by B. Tomenchuk in 1988 on the territory of the hillfort and its outskirts does not contradict these conclusions (Fig. 8; Tomenchuk 2008, fig. 308.2).⁴

Cemetery

This was discovered within the excavation area № 1 (20 × 6 m, dug to a depth of 1 m). According to Ratych, the cemetery appeared on the site of a previously existing settlement; at the same time *density of burials completely destroyed cultural layer and did not allow to establish archaeological stratigraphy* (Ratič 1953, 22, 26). The cemetery is represented by 33 inhumation burials, several of which were covered with stone slabs (Fig. 9). Descriptions of each of them are represented below.

Burial № 1 – square 1 B, depth 0.19/0.32 m – head, 0.27 m – legs from the level of modern surface. Skeleton of a woman in supine position. Orientation southwest, facing south. Right hand on the chest, left one on the pelvis. Four small stones lay around the deceased. Skeleton not fully discovered, its lower part was in the wall of excavation. Length of discovered skeleton is 1.35 m. Grave goods are absent. Data on age and sex are provided by Ratych. There was no special anthropological study.

Burial № 2 – square 1 B, depth 0.36/0.44 m – head. Skeleton of a child. Other bones decayed. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 3 – square 1 B, depth 0.32/0.44 m – head, 0.39 m – legs. Skeleton of a man, in supine position, length 1.8 m. Orientation southwest. Arms fold-

ed on the chest. Stone lies near the feet. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 4 – square 1 B, depth 0.36/0.48 m – head, 0.5 m – legs. Skeleton of a woman, in supine position, length 1.75 m. Orientation southwest, facing south. Right hand on the belly, left on the pelvis. A ring was found on the finger of her right hand (Fig. 10: 3).

Burial № 5 – square 1 B/2 B, depth 0.25/0.37 m – head, 0.44 m – legs. Skeleton of a child, length 1 m in supine position. Orientation southwest. Arms extended along the body. Small stone placed under the head. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 6 – square 1 B, depth 0.31/0.45 m – head, 0.36 m – legs. Skeleton of a woman, in supine position, length 1.76 m. Orientation southwest, facing north. Right hand on the belly; left one extended along the body. Small stone located behind the skull. Small bronze body cross with eyelet was found near neck on a depth of 0.52 m (Ratič 1953, 10, photo № 14).

Burial № 7 – square 1 A/6 and 2 B, depth 0.2/0.31 m – head, 0.38 m – legs. Skeleton of a woman (possibly), in supine position, length 1.7 m. Orientation southwest. Arms extended along the body. Skull is broken, bones partially shifted from their original places. Small stone cross was found near the neck on a depth of 0.51 m (Fig. 10: 1).

Burial № 8 – square 1 A/2 A, depth 0.4/0.5 m – head, 0.55 m – legs. Skeleton of a man, in supine position, length 1.78 m. Orientation west, facing north. Arms extended along the body. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 9 – square 3 B, depth 0.32/0.41 m – head, 0.48 m – legs. Skeleton of a woman, in supine position, length 1.77 m. Orientation west, facing north. Arms extended along the body. Four stones located near legs. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 10 – square 3 B, depth 0.31/0.41 m – head. Skeleton situated not in anatomical order. Skull located on the place of pelvic bones. In general bones were found on an area of 1.3–1.4 × 0.3–0.4 m. Destroyed by burial № 11. Stone is located south of burial № 10. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 11 – square 3 A/3 B and 4 B, depth 0.38/0.47 m – head, 0.39 m – legs. Skeleton of a man, in supine position, length 1.7 m. Orientation southwest. Right hand on the belly left on the pelvis. Small pile of stones located from the north. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 12 – square 2 A/3 A, depth 0.43/0.53 m – head, 0.5 m – legs. Skeleton discovered partially. Orientation southwest. Two rings made of silver wire were found near fingers on a depth of 0.5 m (Fig. 10: 2–2.1).

⁴ Information about results of this research very limited.

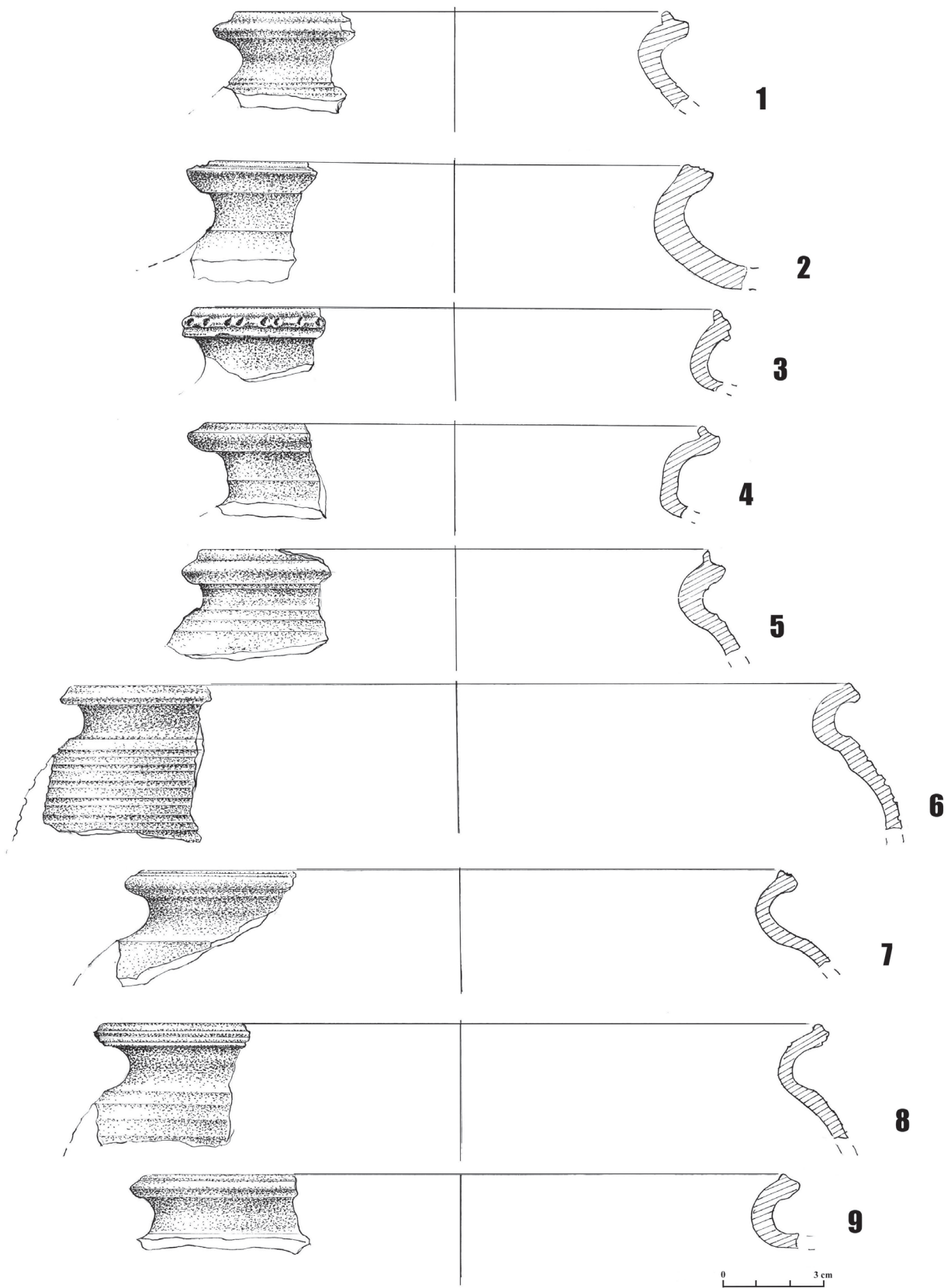


Fig. 3. Selection of ceramic shards. Excavation area № 1 (drawn by I. Prynada, 2021).

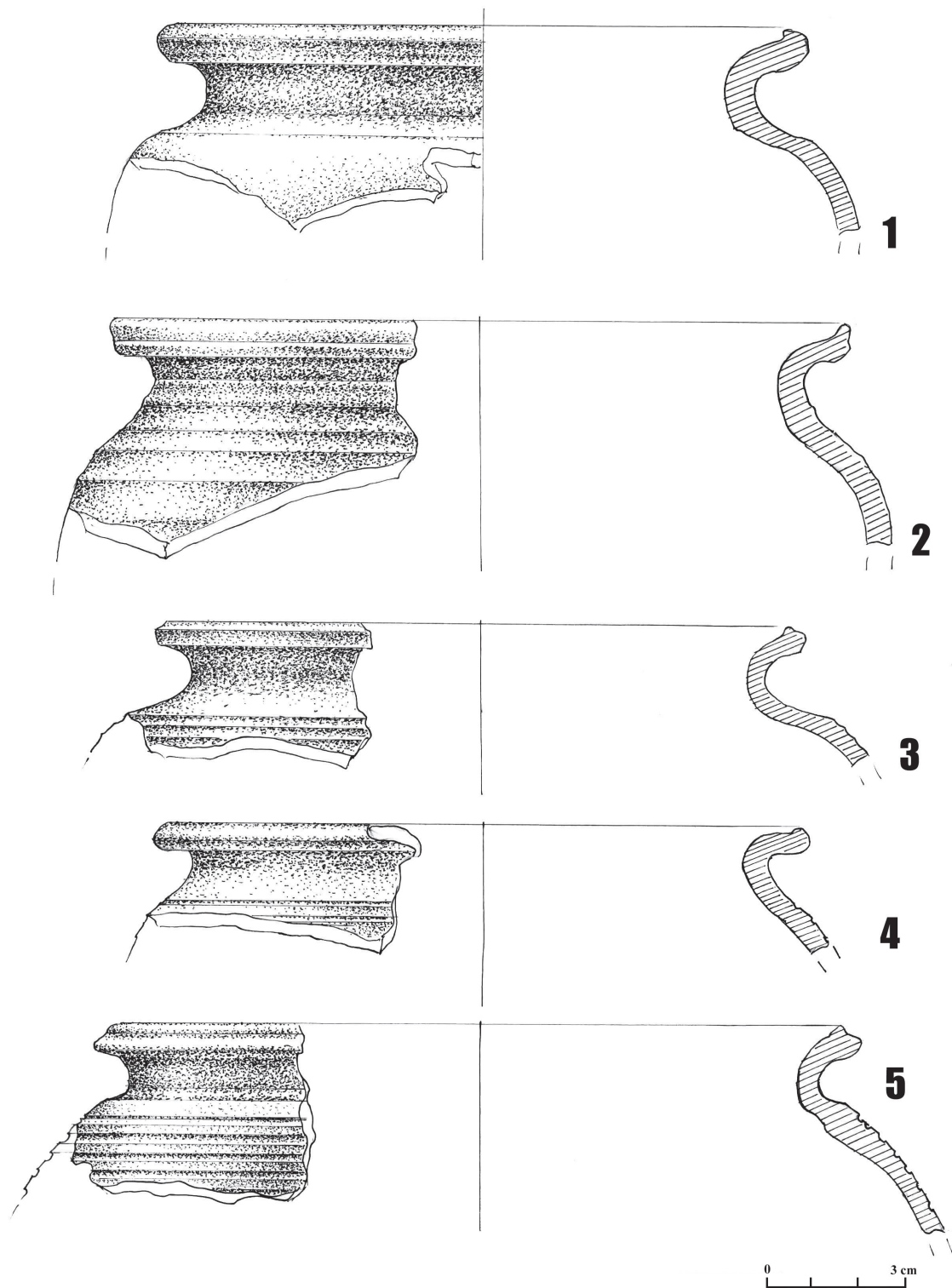


Fig. 4. Selection of ceramic shards. Excavation area № 1 (drawn by I. Prynada, 2021).

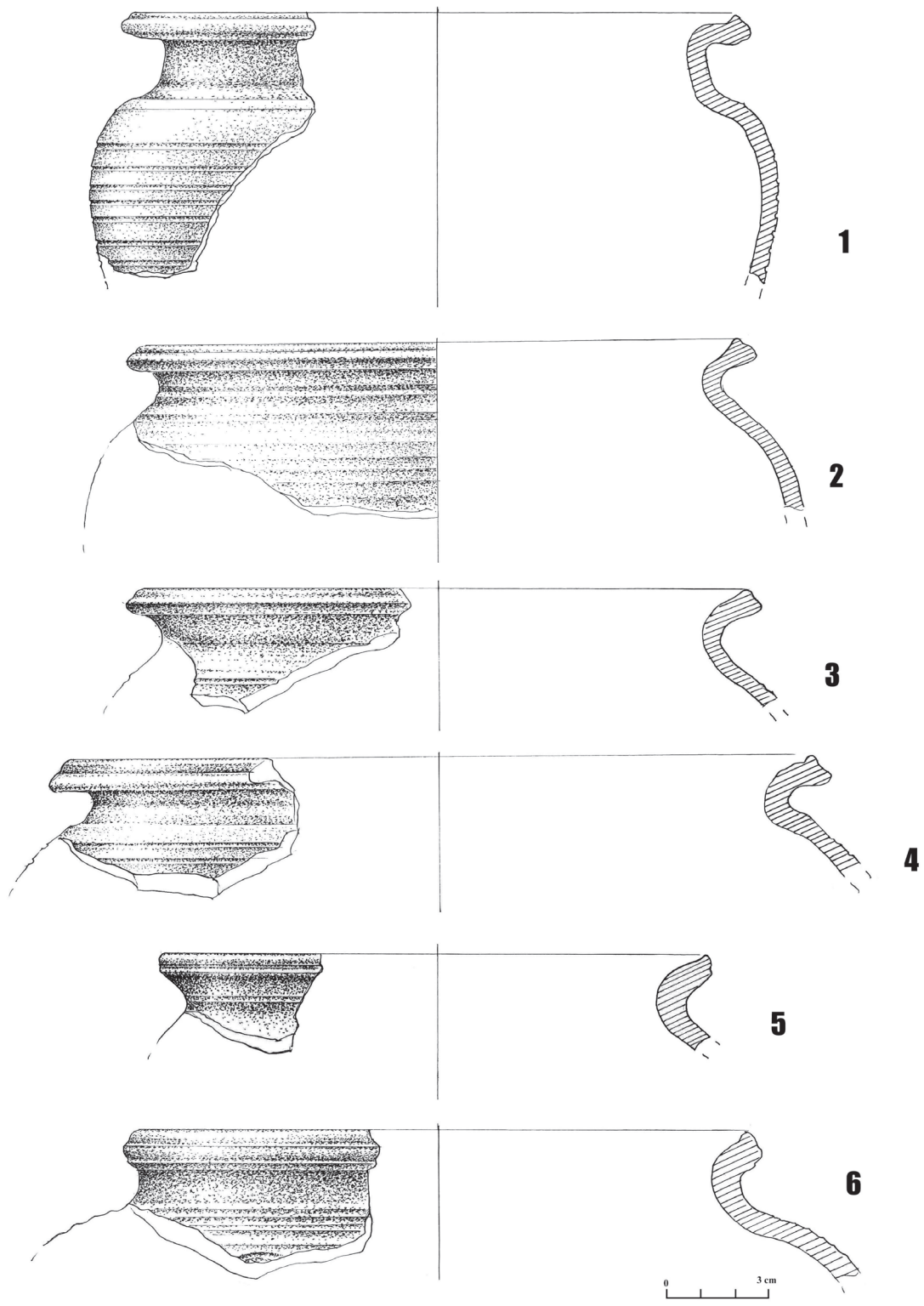


Fig. 5. Selection of ceramic shards. Excavation area № 1 (drawn by I. Prynada, 2021).

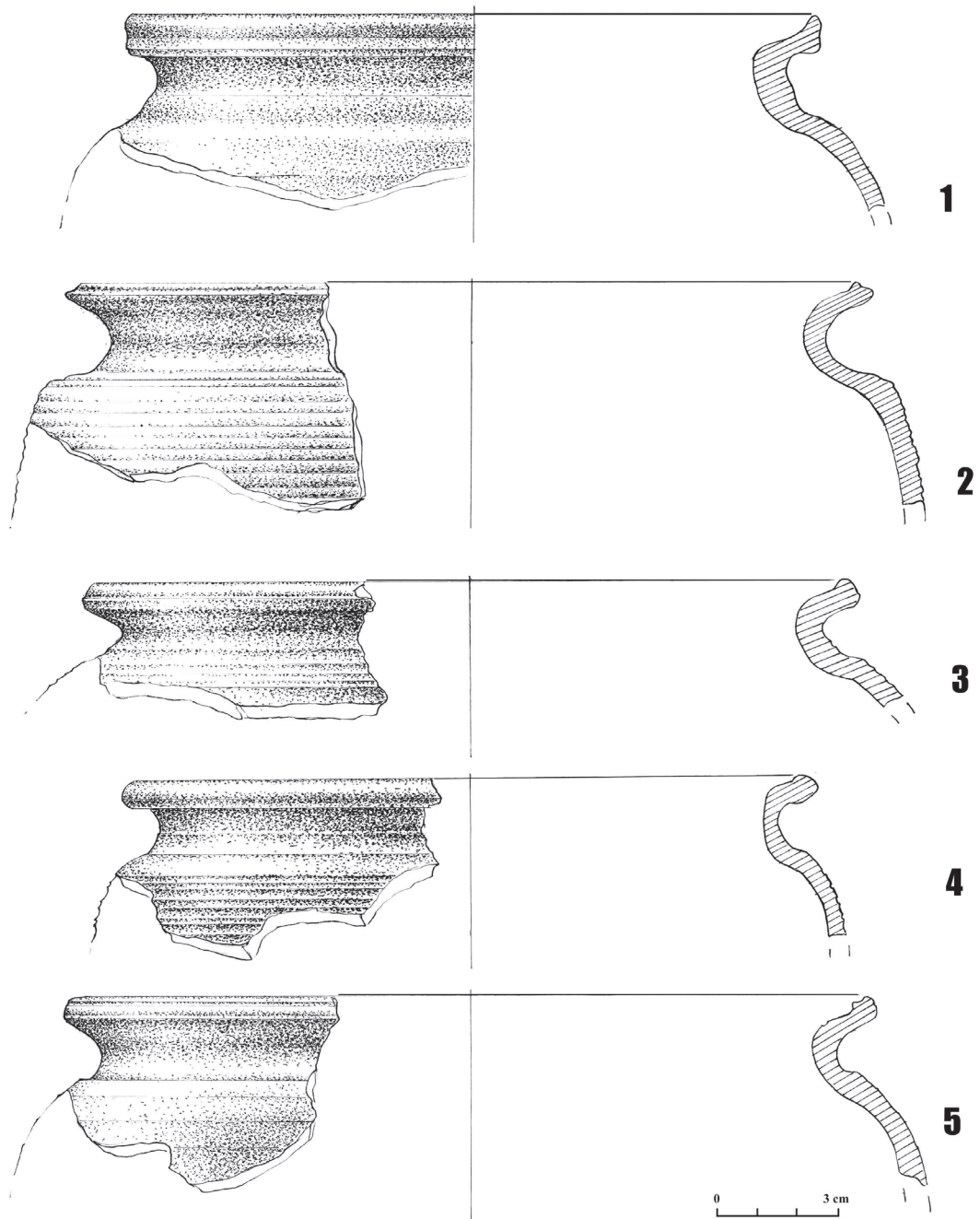


Fig. 6. Selection of ceramic shards. Excavation area № 1 (drawn by I. Prynada, 2021).

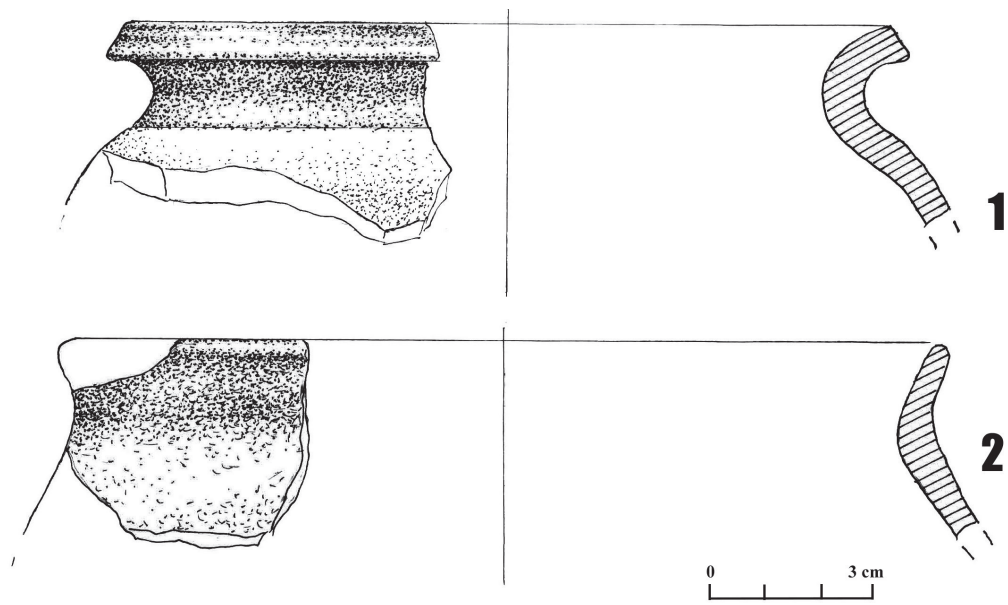


Fig. 7. Selection of ceramic shards. Excavation area № 1 (drawn by I. Prynada, 2021).

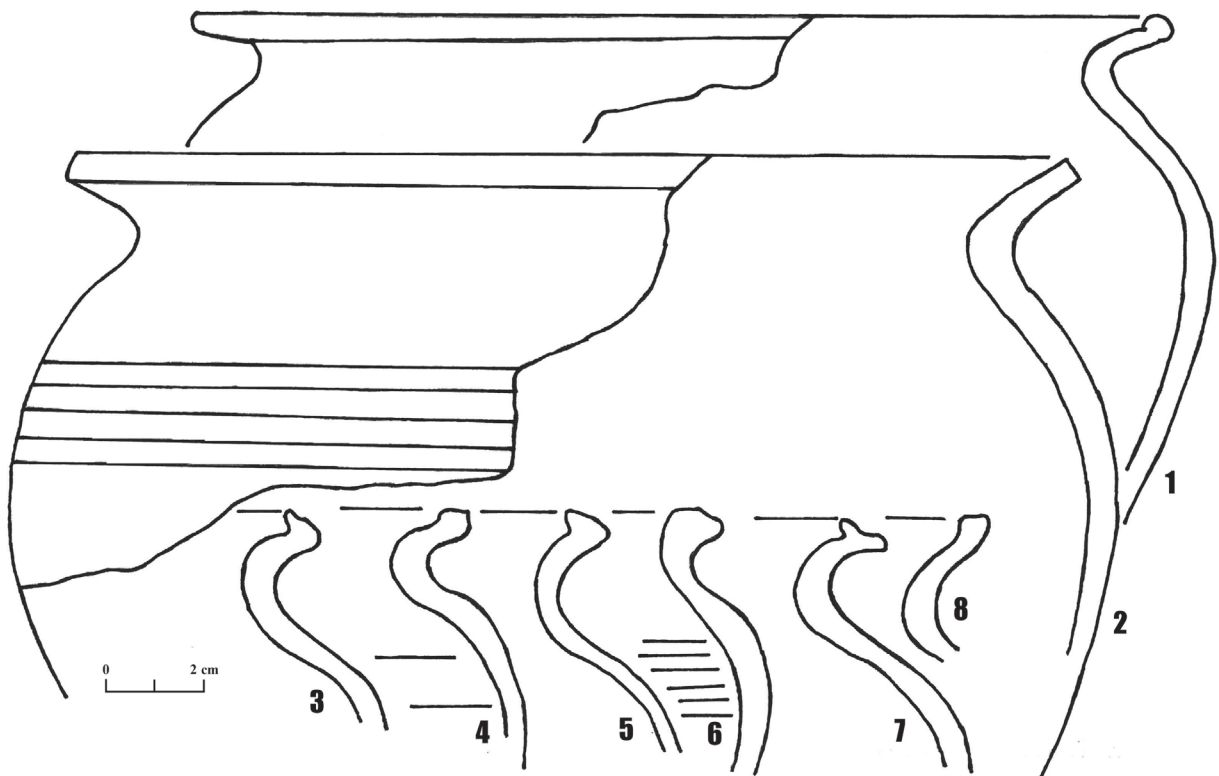


Fig. 8. Ceramic shards from the excavations of B. Tomenchuk at the Kopachyntsi hillfort in 1988 (after Tomenchuk 2008, 452).

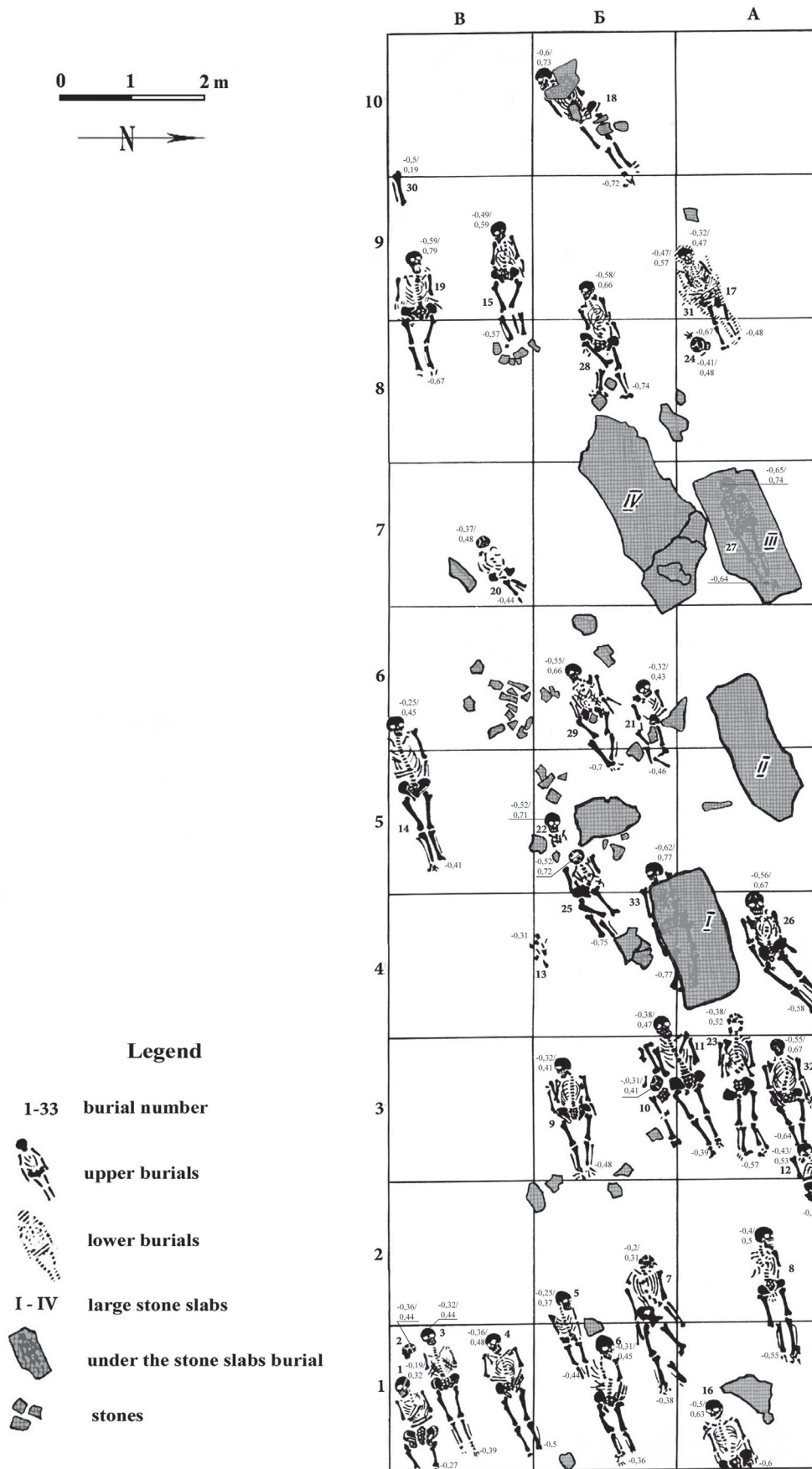


Fig. 9. Excavation area № 1. The cemetery (according to Ratič 1953 with clarifications of the author of the article).

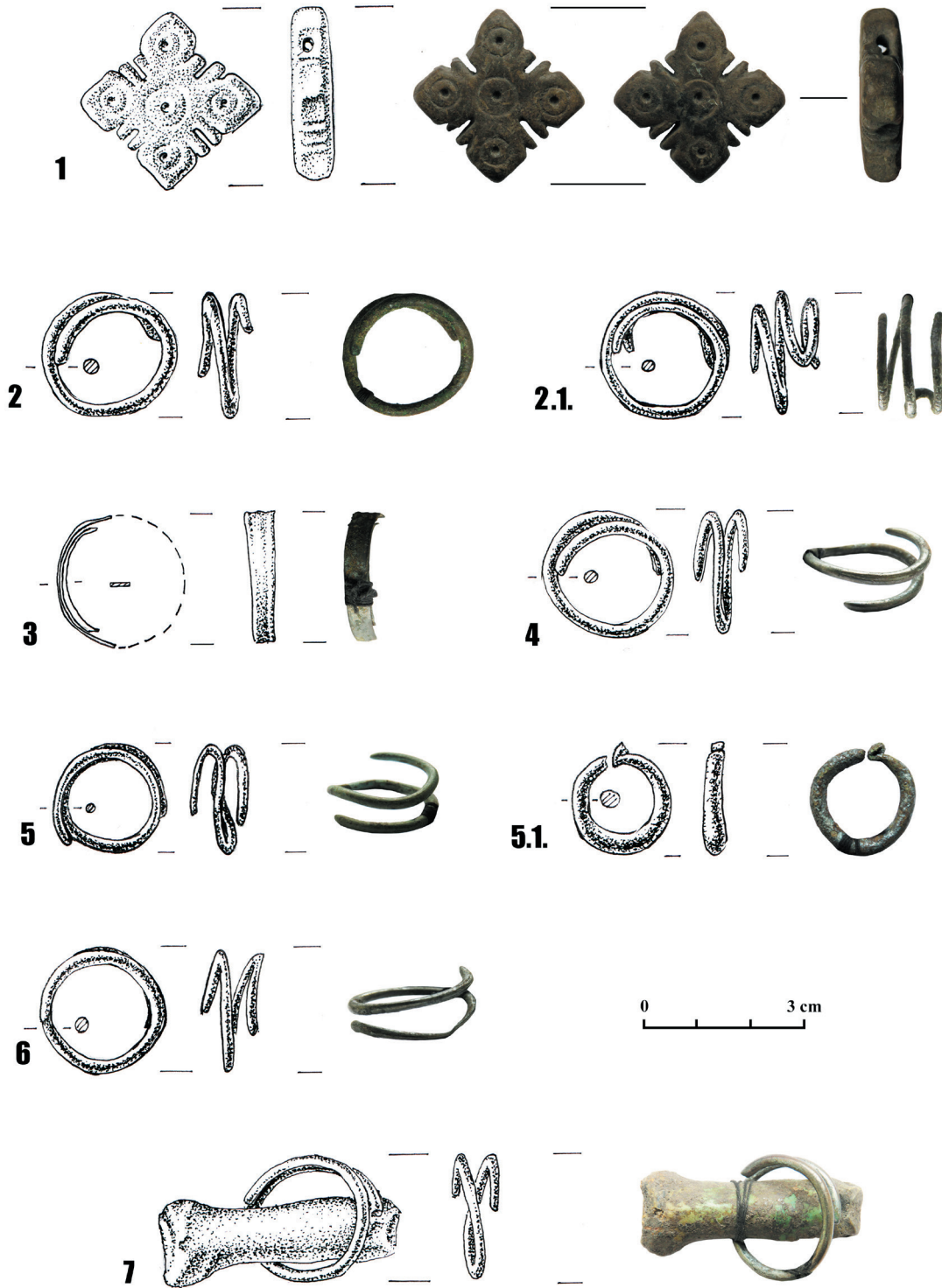


Fig. 10. Grave goods: 1 – cross from the burial № 7; 2–2.1 – rings from the burial № 12; 3 – ring from the burial № 4; 4 – ring from the burial № 17; 5 – ring from the burial № 20; 5.1. – s-shaped temple ring from the burial № 20; 6 – ring from the burial № 23; 7 – ring from the burial № 31.

Burial № 13 – square 4 6/4 B, depth 0.31 m. Skeleton of a child preserved as small pieces of bones. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 14 – square 5 B/6 B, depth 0.25/0.45 m – head, 0.41 m – legs. Skeleton of a man, in supine position, length 1.85 m. Orientation southwest. Right hand on the belly, left on the pelvis. Stone located west of the head. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 15 – square 8 B/9 B, depth 0.49/0.59 m – head, 0.57 m – legs. Skeleton of a woman (probably), in supine position, length 1.71 m. Orientation southwest, facing south. Right hand on pelvis, left extended along the body. Bones are partially displaced from their original places. Pile of small stones located near the legs on a depth from 0.42 to 0.57 m. Grave goods are absent (Ratič 1953, 12, photo № 13).

Burial № 16 – square 1 a, depth 0.5/0.63 m – head, 0.6 m – central part of a skeleton. Skeleton discovered complete. Skeleton of a woman in supine position. Orientation southwest. Arms extended along the body, partially under the pelvic bones. West of the burial, on a depth from 0.13 to 0.33 m flat triangular stone located. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 17 – square 8 a/9 a, depth 0.32/0.47 m – head, 0.48 m – legs. Skeleton of a woman, in supine position, length 1.52 m. Orientation southwest. Hands are on the pelvis. Between legs near pelvic bones on a depth of 0.47 m, a ring was found (Fig. 10: 4).

Burial № 18 – square 10 B, depth 0.6/0.73 m – head, 0.72 m – legs. Skeleton of a man in supine position, length 1.85 m. Orientation southwest, facing south. Hands on the pelvis. From above skeleton covered by pieces of cracked stone slab, which is located on a depth from 0.14 to 0.4 m from the modern surface. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 19 – square 8 B/9 B, depth 0.59/0.79 m – head, 0.67 m – legs. Skeleton of a woman, in supine position, length 1.65 m. Orientation southwest. Arms extended along the body.

Burial № 20 – square 7 B, depth 0.37/0.48 m – head, 0.44 m – legs. Skeleton of a child in supine position, length 1 m. Orientation southwest. Preservation of skeleton is poor. Position of hands is unknown. Bones are partially removed from their original positions. Silver s-shaped temple ring was found near the neck on a depth of 0.5 m. Near the fingers of the right hand, on a depth of 0.61 m, a ring was found (Fig. 10: 5–5.1). Also, presence of iron artefact, probably a nail, as suggested by O. Ratyč. This item was not found in museum collection. About 0.23 m south from burial on a depth from 0.3 to 0.35 m flat rectangular 0.5 × 0.25 m stone located, and north from burial on dis-

tance of 1.5 m large white flat slab of 2.76 × 0.96–1.18 × 0.04–0.07 m was recorded.

Burial № 21 – square 5 6/6 6, depth 0.32/0.43 m – head, 0.46 m – legs. Skeleton in supine position. Bones are partially removed from their original positions. Orientation west. Hands are on the pelvis. Grave goods are absent. Over the skeleton in the central part three stone slabs located in the direction from southeast to northwest. First from the south was at a depth of 0.1/0.17 m, medium one – of 0.27/0.3 m and west one – of 0.23 m. On both sides of the head small pieces of rotten wood, apparently remains of a coffin, were found (Ratič 1953, 13–14).

Burial № 22 – square 5 6, depth 0.52/0.71 m. Skeleton of a child. Orientation west. Preservation of bones is poor, they are almost decomposed. Around and above the burial six fragments of small stone slabs on a depth from 0.45 to 0.7 m were found. North of the burial rectangular slab of 0.9 × 0.6 m on a depth of 0.14/0.27 m located. Skeleton is destroyed by burial № 25. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 23 – square 3 a/4 a, depth 0.38/0.52 m – head, 0.57 m – legs. Skeleton of a man in supine position, length 1.78 m. Orientation west. Hands folded on the chest. On a finger of right hand, on a depth of 0.58 m, a ring was found (Fig. 10: 6).

Burial № 24 – square 8 a, at the feet of burial № 17. Only the skull has been preserved at a depth of 0.41/0.48 m and several bones near it. Orientation west. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 25 – square 4 6/5 6, depth 0.52/0.72 m – head, 0.75 m – legs. Skeleton in supine position. Orientation southwest. Bones are partially removed from their original positions. In the middle part of the pit, on a depth of 0.72 m, a ring was found. On the right, over the head, stone slab near burial № 22, mentioned above, was found. Over the legs on a depth from 0.24 to 0.29 m three little stones were placed one on the other.

Burial № 26 – square 4 a, depth 0.56/0.67 m – head, 0.58 m – legs. Skeleton of a man in supine position, legs partially shifted to the right, length 1.7 m. Orientation southwest. Arms extended along the body. Three small stones located near the legs on a depth of 0.4 m. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 27 – square 7 a, under large pink stone slab of 1.97 × 1 × 0.12 m; were found on a depth of 0.65/0.74 m – head, 0.64 m – legs. Skeleton of a man in supine position, length 1.62 m. Skeleton is crushed. Orientation southwest. Right arm extended along the body, left on the pelvis. Stone slab lies obliquely, its north part – on a depth of 0.37/0.57 m, north one – on

a depth of 0.04/0.14 m from modern surface. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 28 – square 8 6/9 6, depth 0.58/0.66 m – head, 0.74 m – legs. Skeleton of a woman in supine position, length 1.6 m. Orientation southwest, facing south. Arms extended along the body. Bones are partially displaced from their original position. Several stones were found near the legs. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 29 – square 5 6/6 6, depth 0.55/0.66 m – head, 0.7 m – legs. Skeleton of a man in supine position, length 1.64 m. Orientation southwest, facing south. Arms extended along the body. Bones are partially displaced from their original position. Around the head and above it two big stones were found and a pile of stones located north of it, all on a depth of 0.19–0.5 m. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 30 – discovered in the south wall of excavation trench in squares 9 B/10 B on a depth of 0.5 m (probably it referring to a burial pit). Only a bone of left leg on a depth of 0.19 m was found on the discovered area.

Burial № 31 – square 8 a/9 a, depth 0.47/0.57 m – head, 0.67 m – legs, under burial № 17. Skeleton of a woman in supine position, length 1.64 m. Orientation southwest, facing south. Right arm extended along the body, right hand on the pelvis. On the pelvic bones, on a depth of 0.73 m, a ring was found (Fig. 10: 7).

Burial № 32 – square 3 a, depth 0.55/0.67 m – head, 0.64 m – legs. Skeleton of a man in supine position, length 0.75 m. Orientation southwest, facing east. Right hand on the pelvis, left arm extended along the body. Grave goods are absent.

Burial № 33 – square 4 a/4 6/5 6, under large – 1.9 × 0.8 × 0.15 m – stone slab on a depth of 0.62/0.77 m – head, 0.77 m – legs. Skeleton of a woman in supine position, length 1.7 m. Orientation southwest, facing south. Left hand on the belly, right one on the pelvis. Grave goods are absent (Ratič 1953, 8–17).

Analysis of discovered objects

The graves are located in six distinct rows, at a distance of about 1 m from each other. In one case, this distance is 0.3 m. Distance between the graves in a row varies and ranges from 0.15 to 1.3 m. All burials are made in rectangular pits (Ratič 1953, 17) at a depth from 0.27 to 0.79 m from the level of modern surface. Some burials were covered with stone slabs (burials № 18, 27, 33). However, the location of the slabs at different depths (burial № 18: 0.14–0.4 m or burial № 27: north part of the slab 0.37/0.57 m, and

south one – 0.04/0.14 m) indicate that they were partially shifted from their original places. Another two slabs (№ 4 and № 2) were moved from the burials and located near them, and some of the others preserved only as separate fragments of stone, probably the result of ploughing (Fig. 9).

Burials № 20 and № 21 were most likely made in coffins, with a fragment of a nail (?)⁵ and the remains of wood, respectively, having been preserved. Several fragments of this wood were sent for analysis to determine the species to which it belongs. Analysis was conducted by Maryna Serhieieva,⁶ and as a result, five wood samples were taken. They all represent trunk wood and tree species was defined according to the features of microstructure by three sections, followed by a comparison of the results with data of the definitions of wood. The detected remains are defined as coniferous wood, probably pine (*Pinus* sp.).

According to Serhieieva the wood belongs to a species characteristic for local flora. Due to its very small size and conditions of preservation, definition of this wood as a pine can be accepted with some caution, but such an identification does not contradict its traditional use as a raw material for burial constructions from Middle Ages to Modern period (Sergêeva 2021).

Most of the deceased were found in a supine position and oriented mainly southwest and west. The bones of some of the deceased were recorded as not being in their correct anatomical position. A stone “pillow” was recorded under the head in burials № 5, № 6 and near the legs in burials № 3 and № 15. The presence of such objects in burials is often associated with the piety of the deceased or even with monastic dignity (Makarov 1981).⁷ Instead, stones noted in the description of burials № 16 and № 22, and possibly № 29, according to stratigraphic observations, were a filler of the burial pit.

Eight variations of hand position were defined. Most often (9) both arms are straightened along the

⁵ It was not found in museum collection.

⁶ I express my sincere gratitude to M. Serhieieva, Senior Researcher of the Department of Archaeology of Kyiv, Institute of Archaeology of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and specialist in the definition of species of archaeological wood, for the analysis conducted.

⁷ Burials with stone and ceramic tile are often recorded in monastic cemeteries of the medieval and early modern periods. In Rus', they are known at least from the 11th century (Makarov 1981; Pivovarov 2006, 168). A detailed analysis of such burials in the territory of the Halician-Volhynian state shows that the deceased were of different sexes and ages, even children, so symbolized the piety of the deceased. Which is reflected in a number of written sources. More about this will be in my next article.

body (Tab. 1). Necropolis is represented by burials of deceased of different sexes and ages. However, it should be noted that no anthropologist was among the staff of the expedition.

Table 1. Position of the hands of the deceased from the Kopachyntsi cemetery.

№	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Position of hands									
Woman	4	2	1		1		1	1	
Woman (?)	1					1			
Man	3	2	1	2	1	1			
Child	1								
?			1						
Total number of burials	9	4	3	2	2	2	1	1	

Grave goods were recorded within the examined burials but artefacts were only found in 9 of them (Fig. 10) (Ratič 1953). Unfortunately, not all of the material has been preserved in museum collections (burials № 6, № 20, № 25). They are mostly represented by rings made of silver (3) and bronze wire (3), twisted in one and a half turns, as well as lamellar silver ring (1), a braided silver ring (1), an s-shaped silver temple ring (1), crosses: bronze (1) and stone (1). A characteristic feature of Christian funerary sites on the territory of Rus' is the presence of grave goods mainly in women's (6) and not men's (1) burials. In two cases, the sex of the deceased was not established.

The ring from burial № 4 represents the lamellar type. It is made of silver, broken and preserved as two fragments. Plate width 4–5 mm. Thickness 1 mm (Fig. 10: 3).

All other finger decorations were represented by rings made of wire twisted into one and a half turns:

- burial № 12 – two silver rings, one of which has reverse loop. Diameter of the first one 23 mm, the second – 21 mm. Their thickness – 2 mm (Fig. 10: 2–2.1);
- burial № 17 – bronze ring. Diameter 23 mm, thickness 2 mm (Fig. 10: 4);
- burial № 20 – bronze ring. Diameter 19 mm, thickness 2 mm (Fig. 10: 5);
- burial № 23 – bronze ring. Diameter 23 mm, thickness 2 mm (Fig. 10: 6);
- burial № 31 – silver ring. Diameter 24 mm, thickness 2 mm (Fig. 10: 7).

Head decorations are represented by one s-shaped temple ring. Its diameter was 18 mm, and it had a thickness of 3 mm (Fig. 10: 5.1).

However, not all of the grave goods were found in museum collections. In particular, this is true of the cross from burial № 6 and the ring from burial № 25. Therefore, we present their descriptions according to Ratič. A two-armed cross with a square shield in the middle was found and, in the corners of the shield between the shoulders there are “point notches”, and notches were made on the shoulders of the cross that do not reach the edges of the shoulders. The top of the cross has a round eyelet. Its dimensions are: height with an eyelet – 27 mm, width – 18 mm. The ring in question was braided from four silver wires and had riveted open ends. In its middle part the ring is thicker than at the edges, and it has a smooth surface. The diameter of the item – 24 mm (Ratič 1953, 19–21).

Most of the jewellery found belongs to the kind typical for the territory of Rus' and in general are widely dated back to the 11–13th centuries. However, the cross carved from grey stone which was discovered in burial № 7 stands out among them.

The cross is two-armed, made of grey, smooth stone. Its arms are straight with obliquely cut edges; the sides of each of them are cut to the centre. The middle part of the cross and arms on both sides of the product are decorated with a circular ornament. On both sides of each arm, ray-shape protrusions draw the eye. At the same time, these “rays” resemble the shape of a diagonal (saltire) cross. At the top of one of the arms there is a through hole – an eyelet for hanging the cross. The dimensions are the following: height of the cross – 33 mm, width – 32 mm, thickness – 7 mm (Fig. 10: 1).

According to preliminary conclusions,⁸ the cross is made of steatite, deposits of which are known in northern Syria. Production and distribution of Christian relics made of this stone throughout the territory of Byzantium can be dated back to the 11–13th centuries (Musin and Petrov 2006, 12–13), Bulgaria – 12–13th centuries (Totev 1990). The appearance of steatite products on the territory of Rus' is associated with pilgrimages to the Holy Land (Musin and Petrov 2006; Musin 2010, 222–225; Gotun 2017, 112–126; Gupalo 2020, 488–490).

Circular ornamentation as an element of the decoration of Christian antiquities from the Byzantine Empire is known since the 5th century. It is interpreted

⁸ There is no report from a geological expert at present.

as a symbol of the Divine Light of Jesus Christ (Fedorov 2017, 607–609).

Similar to Kopachyntsi are steatite crosses presented at the article written by Konstantin Totev. Studying these types of sites on the territory of medieval Bulgaria, the researcher in particular presented three crosses, even though their place of discovery has not been unambiguously determined. Similar features can also be traced on the cross from the 12–13th centuries found in Athens (Fig. 11: 2, 3; Totev 1990, 50, fig. 2: в, е, ж, з).

The closest analogies to the mentioned relic on the territory of Rus' are known from Old Ryazan and Novgorod. The first one is a bone cross (23.5 × 18 × 8 mm) from 11–14/16–17th centuries (according to the dating of the complex) (Fig. 11: 4). Alexander Ostapenko refers to it as lily-shaped (Ostapenko 2015, 160, fig. 80). A second slate cross (33 × 33 mm) from the 12th century was found in Novgorod (Fig. 11: 5; Kolčín *et al.* 1985, 140, fig. 264).

Mother-of-pearl pilgrimage crosses of the 12–13th centuries from Alahan Monastery in Isauria (Turkey), Atlit (Israel), Turaida (Latvia) and Great Tarnovo (Bulgaria) are vaguely similar (Musin 2010, 224–225; Gotun 2017, 124–126, fig. 2; 4: 14; 5: 7, 8; Spirgiš 2018). Sub-triangular points of the arms with the protrusions and circular ornament or image of diagonal cross on the middle part of the cross are characteristic of all of them (Fig. 11: 6–9).

All these circumstances allow suggesting that the cross found in the burial № 7 of Kopachyntsi cemetery is probably a pilgrimage relic and according to analogies can be dated to within the 12–13th centuries.

The relatively long functioning of the burial complex in Kopachyntsi is probably evidenced by cases of the cross-section of burials. In particular, there are burials 0.25/0.37–0.44 m) and № 6 (0.31/0.45–0.36 m); № 10 (0.31/0.41 m) and № 11 (depth 0.38/0.47–0.39 m); № 22 (0.52/0.71 m) and № 25 (0.52/0.72–0.75 m). One more evidence – inhumation of one deceased over another: burials № 17 (0.32/0.47–0.48 m) and 31 (0.47/0.57–0.67 m). Therefore, at the time of the burial of the later deceased, surface marks probably no longer existed. Does it mean that no stone slabs were placed under the graves? It is very likely and at least there are no solid reasons to think otherwise. However, it is obvious that in general the number of burials covered by slabs was greater.

In general, on the territory of the Halician-Volhynian state, 84 sites with under-slab burial complexes were found. Information about most of them is extremely limited, so the introduction of materials from

the cemetery in Kopachyntsi into scientific circulation is very important.

Under the stone slab burials are a separate group of sites of the funeral culture of the princely period. Largest number of them is concentrated in the territory among Dniester, Strypa, Zbruch rivers, as well as between the Dniester and Prut rivers. At least in Halych, Pitrych, Oleshkiv, Vasyliv, Sokilets, possibly in Plisnesk, and most likely in Peresopnytsia they were found in church cemeteries. In Vasyliv, Vikno, and Oleshkiv they were within the territory of sacral buildings.

These sites are characterized by a burial being made in a pit which was covered by a solid slab or several fragments of it, made of sandstone or limestone. Forms of the slabs are not always clearly visible; frequently they are not processed but close to rectangular, less often – oval. On this background, two anthropomorphic slabs from Vovkivtsi and Onut stand out. Slabs of an irregular shape were usually installed with their wider side to the shoulders, because of the physical characteristics of the person. In one case, carved cross-shaped signs, lines and notches were recorded on the surface of the slab from Borivtsi. The surface of the slab from Horodnytsia burial complex was decorated with a half-cylinder, carved in the middle. The dimensions of the slabs ranged within the following limits: length – 1–2.95 m, width – 0.5–1.6 m, thickness – 0.025–0.6 m, and did not always correspond to a height of deceased or at the size of burial pit. The level of the deceased in the grave is within 0.3–0.7 m from the level of the stone slab. In Mnishskyi Sad Place in Zalukva B. Tomenchuk discovered a burial under the wooden overlap (Lucik 2020a, 105–106; 2020b, 510, 525–534).

Small burial mounds have been recorded above the under the slab burials in Vovkivtsi, Ostap'ie, Velyka Plavucha, Saryi Zbarazh, and Velykyi Hlybochok. In Ostap'ie and Borivtsi, there was a circle around the burial, made of stones of different sizes. They are characterized by western, northwestern or southwestern orientation. Position of hands of the dead is represented by several variants, which corresponded to Christian ritual: both hands on the chest; right hand on the chest and left one extended along the body; right hand on the belly and left one extended along the body; right arm extended along the body and left one on the belly; right arm extended along the body and left one on the pelvis, as well as also in the position when both arms are extended along the body (Lucik 2020a, 106; 2020b, 516–523, 526).

A characteristic feature of under the slab burials is the location of individual graves in groups of two or

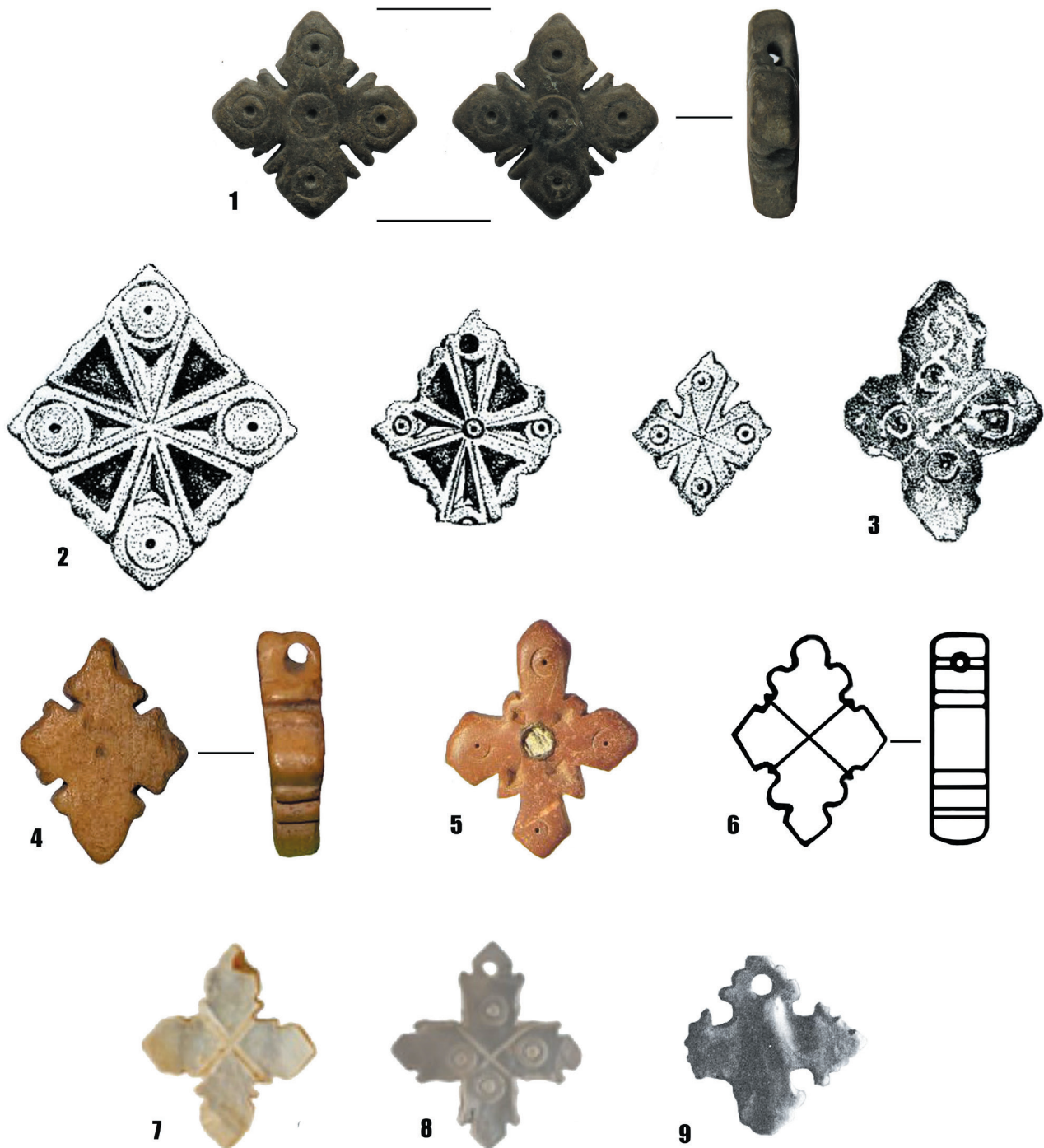


Fig. 11. Finds of similar crosses from other areas.

1 – Kopachyntsi's cross; 2 – crosses of unknown origin from the publication of K. Totev; 3 – Athens; 4 – Old Ryazan; 5 – Novgorod; 6 – Alahan Monastery in Isauria; 7 – Atlit; 8 – Turaida; 9 – Great Tarnovo.

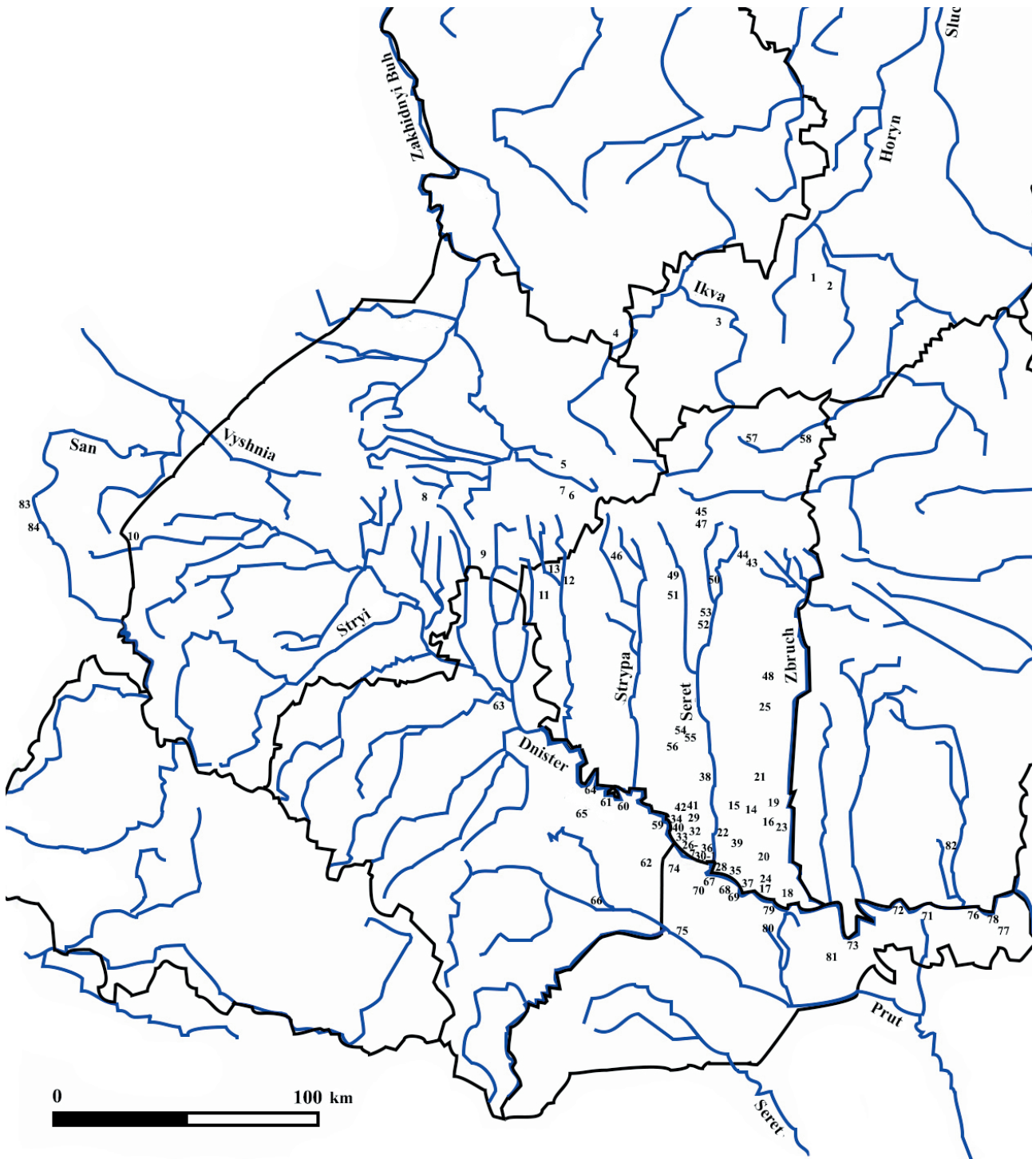


Fig. 12. Under the stone slab burials on the territory of Halician-Volhynian lands.

1 – Peresopnytsia; 2 – Rivne; 3 – Tarakaniv; 4 – Peremył; 5 – Plisnesk; 6 – Pidlyptsi; 7 – Luka; 8 – Zvenyhorod; 9 – Ostalovychi; 10 – Smilnytsia; 11 – Lapshyn; 12 – Urman; 13 – Plikhiv; 14 – Borshchiv; 15 – Verkhniakivtsi; 16 – Vovkivtsi; 17 – Horoshova; 18 – Dzvenyhorod; 19 – Ivankiv; 20 – Kryvche; 21 – Losiach; 22 – Monastyrok; 23 – Turylche; 24 – Ustia; 25 – Uvysla; 26–27 – Bedrykivtsi; 28 – Vynohradne; 29 – Blyshchanka; 30–31 – Horodok; 32 – Dzvyniach; 33 – Dobrivliany; 34 – Zelenyi Hai (Zhezhava); 35 – Zozulyntsi; 36 – Kasperivtsi; 37 – Kolodribka; 38 – Lysivtsi; 39 – Novosilka-Kostiukova; 40 – Pechorna; 41 – Stavky; 42 – Uhrynivtsi; 43 – Hrytsivtsi; 44 – Staryi Zbarazh; 45 – Khomy; 46 – Velyka Plavucha; 47 – Dobrovody; 48 – Ostap'ie; 49 – Velykyi Hlybochok; 50 – Lozova; 51 – Pchapyntsi; 52 – Skomorokhy; 53 – Tovstoluh; 54 – Kosiv (Khom'iakivka); 55 – Kalynivshchyna; 56 – Palashivka; 57 – Liudvyshche; 58 – Shumsk (Onyshkivtsi); 59 – Horodnytsia; 60 – Kopachyntsi; 61 – Korniv; 62 – Yaseniv Pilnyi; 63 – Halych; 64 – Deleva; 65 – Khotymyr; 66 – Oleshkiv; 67 – Vasyliv; 68 – Vikno; 69 – Onut; 70 – Chunkiv; 71 – Buzovytsia; 72 – Makarivka; 73 – Oselivka; 74 – Borivtsi; 75 – Dubivtsi; 76 – Kulishivka; 77 – Kobilchyn; 78 – Mykhalkove; 79 – Perebykivtsi; 80 – Sankivtsi; 81 – Yarivka; 82 – Sokilets; 83 – Trepcha; 84 – Sanok.

three burials, which most likely indicates the family ties of the deceased. In three burials, the bottom of the pit was covered with charcoal. In one case, a skeleton located on a rough layer of burnt clay, and charcoal was found on its sides. The remains of a wooden coffin were found in 16 cases and nails were discovered in only 3 cases. In 7 cases, the skeleton was enclosed by a layer of lime, in two of them with marks of wooden structures (Lucik 2020a, 106; 2020b, 526–528).

The position of the dead in the grave – in a supine position, mainly oriented to the west (96), less often to the northwest (47), southwest (16), north (2), east (1) and south (1). Burials represent different sexes and ages of deceased. There are more than 20 variants of position of hands. In most cases, hands are folded: on the belly (42), extended along the body (22), on the pelvis (19), etc. The average height of all those buried is 1.66 m (including those of undetermined sex), women – 1.58 m, men – 1.66 m. In at least seven burials, so-called “stone pillows” were placed under the head of the deceased, in five they are located under the heads and near the legs, and twice only near legs. In one case, a handful of coal was discovered under the skull (Lucik 2020a, 106; 2020b, 510, 528).

Most of discovered burials are distinguished by rich grave goods, which are represented by a large assortment of jewellery, including ones, made of precious metals. In at least 13 cases, fragments of gold-woven brocade were excavated in the burials. At the same time their important feature is availability of grave goods, mainly in the women’s burials. For example, on the cemetery in Sokilets I which has been studied in a comprehensive manner, among 40 discovered under the slab burials, grave goods were found in 12 cases in female burials and only in 3 – in male ones. At the same time, such pattern is noted not only in under the slab burials, but also in ordinary inhumations. Incidentally, in the same cemetery grave goods in general were found in 15 under the slab graves and 20 burials without any covering (Lucik 2020a, 106–107; 2020b, 528).

Besides the jewellery and elements of clothing, fragments of pottery or even in some cases whole vessels were found in the filler of burial pits. For example, in Plisnesk, small fragments of charcoal inside pots together with earth were found. Instead, pieces of coal found in small quantities in the burials most likely originated from thuribles used during the funeral ceremony (Lucik 2020a, 105–107; 2020b, 495–534).

As for the issue of the genesis of the practice of burial under stone slabs and why this rite was widespread mainly in the western part of Ukraine, with

the exception of the under the slab cemetery in Buky, Kyiv region, no clear answer exists. There are several main hypotheses among researchers. They were identified first as separate categories by S. Pyvovarov: 1. Social and material – O. Ratyck, J. Kalaga, M. Hanuliak (Ratič 1976, 176–177; Hanuliak 1979; Kalaga 2014, 136); 2. Ethnic, which suggests belonging of this type of burial to the tribes of Tyvertsi – B. Tymoshchuk, V. Siedov, V. Voinarovskiy (Timošuk 1969, 56; Sedov 1982, 128; Vojnarovs'kij 1992, 41–42), Croats – E. Timofieiev, V. Petehyrych, O. Motsia (Timofeev 1961, 69; Petegirič 1990, 73; Mocâ 1994, 31), Croats-Tivertsi – I. Voznyi (Voznij 2009, 365), late Croats-Halychans – B. Tomenchuk (Tomenčuk 2006, 110); 3. Pagan – V. Petehyrych and O. Motsia (Petegirič 1990, 73; Mocâ 1994, 31); 4. Evolution-functional – B. Tomenchuk (Tomenčuk 2006, 110); 5. Christianization – S. Pyvovarov, S. Mayarchak (Pivovarov 2006, 169–171; Maârčak 2018, 278–280).

As for the chronology, their distribution most likely took places at the end of the 11th – beginning of the 12th century and spread widely during the 12–13th centuries. Obviously, it coincides with the time of the active introduction of Christianity. It has not yet been established which directions had a decisive influence on its formation, but it is worth noting the presence of similar types of burial sites in Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia and Poland (Hanuliak 1979; Pivovarov 2006, 168; Marek 2013, 36; Kalaga 2014; Lucik 2020a, 105–107; 2020b, 495–534).

Brief conclusions

Returning to the Kopachyntsi burial ground and its chronology, we face a problem, because both the discovered grave goods and the time of distribution of under the slab burials can be dated quite widely. On the other hand, the analysis of ceramic material shows that the main phase of the hillfort (in examined area) was towards the end of the 11th – first half of the 12th century. In consideration of the fact that stratigraphy during the research could not be recorded, and there is no information about presence of ceramics in the infill of the burial pit in the field documentation, the evidence seems to agree with such a broad chronology of the 11th–12th centuries.

However, we can assume that the burial complex was established there probably in the middle of the 12th century. Considering the fact that some of the burials were cut by later ones, the cemetery functioned even later and, based on the research carried out by Tomen-

chuk, perhaps even until the 13th century (Tomenčuk 1988, 21–22; 2006, 95; 2008, fig. 308, 308.1, 308.2). Undoubtedly, such conclusions are only preliminary and, in general, represent an introduction to the research problem, and therefore require new studies. At the same time, this detailed examination of an archaeological source base that was already accumulated in the past, consisting of the revision of mainly unpublished research materials and their introduction into scientific circulation, creates a precedent for future research and discoveries.

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