

# **ACTA TERRAE SEPTEMCASTRENSIS XIV, 2015**



**LUCIAN BLAGA UNIVERSITY OF SIBIU  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF  
HISTORY, HERITAGE AND PROTESTANT TEOLOGY  
INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY AND VALORIFICATION OF THE  
TRANSYLVANIAN PATRIMONY IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT**

# **ACTA TERRAE SEPTEMCASTRENSIS**

## **XIV**

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## A LATE NEOLITHIC PIT FROM CAREI-BOBALD-TUMUL (BOBALD VII), SATU-MARE COUNTY, ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** *This paper presents the archaeological material from the Late Neolithic Age that was discovered in 2014 with the occasion of a tumulus digging at Carei-Bobald VII, nearby the road Satu Mare - Oradea (DN 19). Inside, an archaeological complex (household pit), relatively small, several pieces of ceramics have been discovered, grinder pieces wattle and doubt and animal bones. Having in sight the base of the ceramics and other similar discoveries from the Bobald area, the Neolithic pit Cx3, can be dated in the Late Neolithic Age, the Herpály Culture.*

**Keywords:** *pottery, Late Neolithic, Carei-Bobald, Herpály Culture, Carei-Kozárd*

Carei is a populated place situated in the western part of the Satu-Mare county, in the Câmpia Carei (Carei Plain), a region with heights of 120 m to 163 m, a monotonous landscape, in some places with level oscillations (Ciută, Molnár 2014, 88), (Pl. I/1-2). Northeast from the this place's border, until not a long time ago, the Ecedea Swamp existed, with a surface of 400 square kilometers (Ardelean, Karácsonyi 2003, 11, Map no. 1). The Bobald hill is situated in the town's area on the Merges (Mérgeș) creek's bank, on a higher mound from the floodable area (Németi, Molnár 2012, 14), (Pl. II/1-2), the distance from the town of Carei city limits being roughly 3 km. in the southwestern direction (Pl. III/1-2). The Bobald archaeological site contains both the tell and the surrounding areas situated between the National 19 Route (DN 19) Satu Mare - Oradea next to the border of Ghenci locality (Németi 1999, 64). This area received the denominations of Bobald I-XII (Pl. II/2).

The Carei Plain contains a low shaped type of landscape tempered by river erosion, while the main pedogenesis deposits are loess like types with a phreatic surface between 2 and 5 m. This plain is situated between the Ecedea Plain and the Nir Plain (Németi 1999, 11). The area is crossed by several smaller creeks (Sárosvölgy, Kis-Károly pataka, Papirgyár-pataka, Mérgeș, etc.), which were the water sources of the Ecedea Swamp, or which flowed towards the floodable plain of

the Crasna river (Németi 1999, 64; Karácsonyi 1995, 8). This area, especially the higher terraces of the creeks is extremely rich in what concerns the presence of the archaeological discoveries starting with the Neolithic Age and until the late Middle Age (Borovszky 1910, 409-10; Roman, Németi 1978,10,18; Németi 1981-82, 167-182; Iercoşan 1986-87, 63-70; Németi, Gindele 1997, 648; Németi 1999, 64-67; Németi, Dani 2001, 95-126; Hágó 2015, Németi, Molnár 2002, Németi Molnár 2007, Németi, Molnár 2012). Due to the archaeological research that was carried out here, over 100 points of interest with discoveries were located, discoveries dated from the late Neolithic Age until the late Middle Age.

Bobald locality (Bobad, Budad, Bubard, Borbáld) is the name of an extinct populated place that was mentioned in the Medieval documents for the 1st time in 1329 as a possession of the Károlyi family. It was one of the richest and thriving villages that was composed of serfs and cottars (Suciu 1968 II, 299, Maksai 1940, 117; Németi 1999, 64; Mérai 2007, 23-48; Mizsér, 2001, 250). This territory was abandoned, most probably, in the 1st half of the 18th century just after the Satmar Peace was signed (1711).

Around the *tell* like dwelling, we have Neolithic discoveries in the following points (Pl. IV/2):

**Bobald If.** – central part of the hill, in the antique soil fragments of ceramic were discovered, fragments dated in the Late Neolithic (Németi 1986-87, 21-22, Fig. 25/5-7; Hágó 2015).

**BobaldIVc.** – southwest from Bobald I, on the left bank of the Merges creek fragments of ceramic were discovered, fragments dated in the late Neolithic (Iercoşan 1986-87, 141, Fig. 9/1-6; Németi 1999, 65).

**Bobald Vb.** – Neolithic settlement from point BIVc is continued on this side as well. The settlement was localized through field research by J. Németi in 1982, 1997 (Németi 1999, 65).

**Bobald VIa** – contains the area from the left and right side of the Carei - Moftinu Mic road, in the first instance the high terrace of the Merges (Merges) creek. This area was disturbed through different agricultural works, road constructions, or by the emplacement of water and gas pipes. By this chance, archaeological materials were discovered, materials from several periods, including the late Neolithic (Németi 1999, 65).

**Bobald VIIa.** – The archaeological point is found on the both sides of the country road that descends towards the Merges (Merges) valley. The area is a peninsula that goes very deep into the swamp's river bed. Fragments of brick-red colored Neolithic ceramics were discovered. These fragments were decorated with painted motives (Németi 1999, 66).

**Bobald XIa.** – The settlement is situated on the right side of the 1F road (Carei-Tăşnad), on a low terrace of the Merges (Merges) creek. Through field research and through digging the trench for the telephone cable, several archaeological complexes



were disturbed. From this area we have several fragments of ceramic that were assigned to the late Neolithic (Németi 1999, 66).

**Bobald XIII.** – is situated on the left side of the Carei-Zalău railroad, nearby the bridge over the Merges (Mérgeş) creek. From this point we have several Neolithic fragments and a polished stone axe without perforation (Németi 1999, 67).

The Neolithic pit that is the subject of this paper was discovered while digging a Bronze Age tumulus nearby the road Satu Mare - Oradea (DN 19), (Pl. IV/1) by the researchers from the Satu-Mare County Museum<sup>1</sup>, and from the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca<sup>2</sup> and students and Phd. students from the same university.

The uncovering of the late Bronze Age tumulus was realized mechanically with the help of an excavator, by digging the tumulus in 4 equal parts. After the disposal of the vegetal strata at a depth of 0.40-0.70 m, the researchers found a black colored with red pigments land deposit, some brick red colored ceramic fragments, animal bones, silex and obsidian splinters, and some wattle and daub fragments. Judging after the composition of the superior strata of the tumulus, the land which is rich in limonite was most probably brought from the floodable area of the Merges (Mérgeş) creek.

The Neolithic complex (Cx3) became shaped like a black colored stain having an oval shape with a diameter of 1.20 x 0.90 m, in the tumulus mantle, at a depth of 1,07 m from the actual soil, at a distance of 2,93 m from the nordic profile of the section and at a distance of 2,5 m southeast of the grave (Pl. V/1-3; VI/1; VII/1-2). The upper part of the pit was disturbed by the bulldozer, in this strata we found ceramic fragments and some different sized grinders stone (Pl. V/1-2). The stuffing of the pit contained some grayish black soil with pigments (reddish and yellow spots). The archaeological material that was discovered here contained ceramic fragments, animal bones, whattle and daub, lithic tools: grinders, silex and obsidian splinters (Pl. VI/1).

The ceramic material discovered in this complex can be divided in the following categories:

- a. Common use ceramic (course).
- b. Semi fine ceramic.
- c. Fine ceramic

The nature of the common use ceramic is very often encountered in the settlements of the late Neolithic of the Carei nearby areas, worked rather carelessly, having the exterior surface of a medium to harsh smoothing and very rough at touching presenting a soapy surface. The fiering of the ceramic material is of poor quality, is oxidant and reductant fiering, and because of this, the ceramic is porous.

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<sup>1</sup>Liviu Marta, Attila Nándor Hágó

<sup>2</sup>Molnár-Kovács Zsolt

The most common colors found at this type of ceramic are: brick red, reddish brown, light brown, dark brown, the material used as a degreaser is sand, chaff and sand, sand and mud, pebbles and mud, crushed crocks. At this category of ceramics, there were no fragments with ornaments, but there are, however, some simple knobs with different shapes. On some fragments there was some sprinkled and organized barbotine.

The semi fine archaeological material is present in a smaller proportion in comparison with the courser one. The ceramic paste is of good quality, well kneaded, smoothed, the material used as degreaser is fine sand, crushed crocks, and sand with minced chaff. The colors of this type of ceramic vary from reddish brown to other shades of brown, we also have the slip, but in the majority of the cases this is fallen down. In what concerns the ornaments of the ceramic material, it is present on several fragments (the incised ornament), or some marks of black or red painting.

Besides these types of ornaments there are also present the plastics ornaments, simple and circular knobs, elongated of small and medium dimensions, and on some fragments we have thrusts and piercings on the rim of the vessels or incision under the rim of the vessel.

The fine ceramic is also present in this complex, but only a few fragments were discovered. They were made of good quality clay, polished, mixed with fine sand, or fine sand with well minced chaff. The ceramic has a good oxidant burning, red color or yellow-gray, without any ornaments. On a single fragment we have a small knob under the rim of the vessel.

The status of the ceramic material discovered in this complex is fragmentized, thus it did not allow the existence a more complex repertoire, but still, on the basis of the discovered fragments, we can make some typological specifications.

#### ***The analysis of the ceramic material***

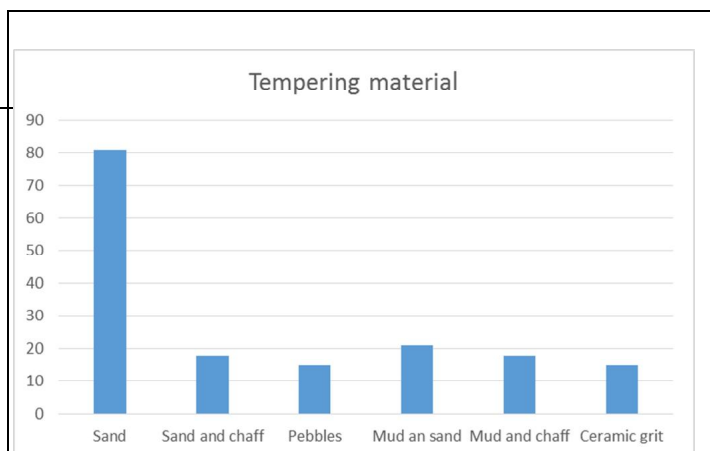
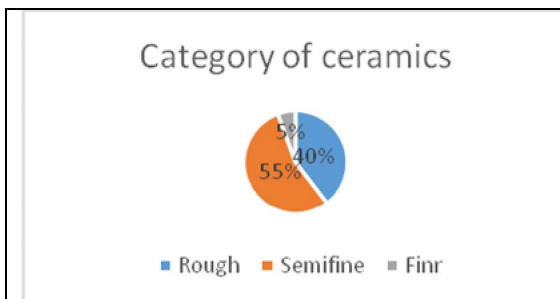
The most often encountered vessels discovered in this complex are of common use, of middle and large dimensions with right lip or rounded, with short neck, straight or gibbous, with flat bottom. Thus we have deep bowl of different sizes (Pl. VIII/4-5, 8-9), bowl (Pl. VIII/6-7; IX/2-3), pot (Pl. VIII/1, 3; IX/1, 6; X/1), storage vessel (Pl. IX/4-5, 7-8; X/2,3), tray (Pl. VIII/2), miniatural vessels (VIII/10, IX/2,3).

The ceramic material discovered was introduced in the data base, afterwards, the information was extracted, information about the nature, burning, smoothing, degreasing material, vessel shapes, ornamentation technique, the interior and exterior color.

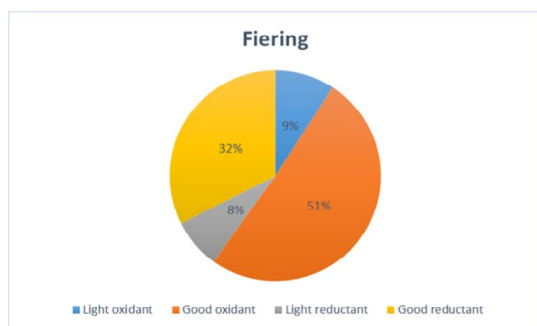
The nature of the ceramic material can be seen in following chart:

According to the statistics, the most present type was the semi fine ceramic, it is afterwards followed by the rough one, the least present is the fine ceramic. So 55% is semi fine ceramic, course type ceramic we have 40% while the fine ceramic is only 5%.

The ceramic burning in this archaeological complex



is represented by 4 types of burning: light oxidant, good oxidant, light reductant and good reductant. Their variety can be seen in the picture above. The majority of the fragments 51% had a good oxidant burning, closely followed by there reductant burning 32%, while the other categories, namely the light oxidant burning 9% is very close to the light reductant category which is only 8%.



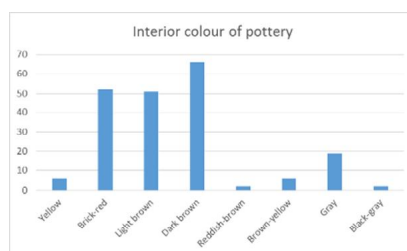
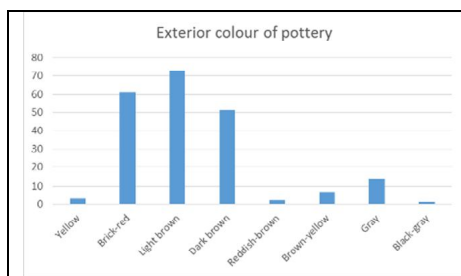
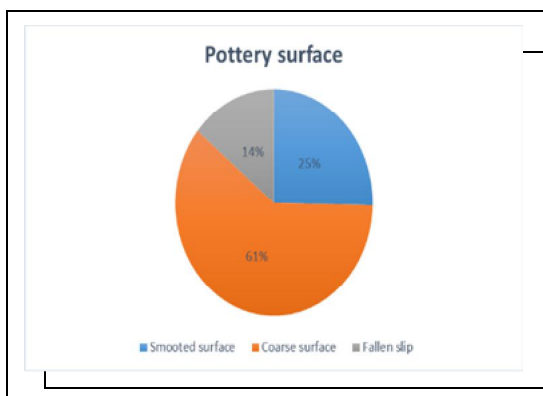
The material used as a degreaser, a special element in what concerns the manufacturing process of the ceramics is present through several types of organic and non organic materials

The most used material as a degreaser of the clay was sand (40 %), followed by mud and sand (12%), sand and chaff (11%), and sand (11%) at almost equal percentages, while the rest of the materials were the crushed crocks (9%), pebbles (9%), being present in a smaller proportion

The smoothing of the ceramic material is present in the diagram below.

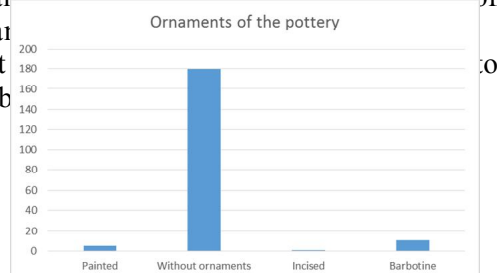
The chart is dominated by 61% coarse surfaced fragments, followed by the smoothed surface pieces which are 25% and only 14% some fragments which most probably were ornamentated with painted motives.

The color of the ceramics is as we mentioned earlier, present in a large variety of the brown color shades: brown, reddish brown, brick red, while in a smaller amount, the following colors are present: gray and yellow. The diagrams have been made for both: the exterior colors and interior colors, as follows:



The ornaments of the ceramic material are rather needful. The most majority of the fragments have not been decorated by any ornaments.

The shape of the ceramic, even if it is fragmented, is presented by the following diagram:



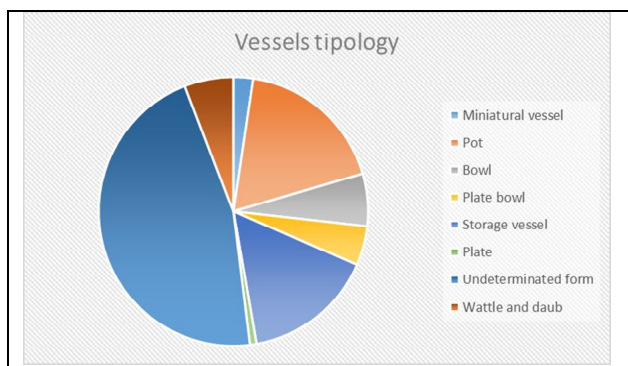
Thus, the shape of the majority of the vessels could not be determined (46%). The pots were identified in a percentage of 18%, while the storage vessels were 16%. The rest of the shapes were bowls, tureens with 5% and 6%, and the miniatural vessels and the plate were only 1%.

### *The analysis of the lithic material*

In a rather large amount, lithic Materials have been discovered: grinders, flints of obsidian and silex.<sup>3</sup>

The description of the pieces:

1. Silex from Prut fragment, gray color, the lateral sides have been reworked. Dimensions: 10,6 x 2,4 cm (Pl. X/4).
2. Flint splinter fragment, black-gray color. Dimensions: 3 x 0,8 cm (Pl. X/5).
3. Flint fragment, white color, the lateral sides have been reworked. Dimensions: 4,5 x 1,2 cm (Pl. X/6).
4. Obsidian fragment, black color. Dimensions: 3 x 2 cm (Pl. X/7).
5. Obsidian splinter fragment, lateral sides have been reworked, grayish black, semitransparent color. Dimensions: 5 x 2,6 cm (Pl. X/8).
6. Grinder fragment (porphyry) of oval shape with marks of usage, with rounded corners Dimensions: 6,7 x 5,8 cm (Pl. X/9).



7. Grinder fragment (andesite) of oval shape, flat. It was kept in a fragmentary condition Dimensions: 12 x 7x 2,4 cm (Pl. X/10).

8. Grinder fragment of oval shape, fragmented. Dimensions: 10 x 5,2x

4,3 cm (Pl. XI/1).

9. Grinder fragment (anfibilolit) of oval shape, fragmented. Dimensions: 9,5x6.5x3 cm (Pl. XI/2).

10. Grinder fragment (schist) of oval shape, flat, with rounded corners. Dimensions: 20x14,5x2,5 cm (Pl. XI/3).

<sup>3</sup>The lithic tools were analyzed by Ciprian Astaloş and István Nagy-Kóródi.

11. Grinder fragment, trapeze like shape, kept in a fragmented condition. Dimensions: 9,5 x 7 x 3,2 cm (Pl. XI/4).
12. Grinder fragment (schist), trapeze like shape, flat, kept in a fragmented condition. Dimensions: 20 x 6-12,5 x 1,3 cm (Pl. XI/5).
13. Grinder fragment of oval shape, flat, kept in a fragmented condition. Dimensions: 6,5 x 5 x 2 (Pl. XI/6).

Besides the ceramic and lithic material, bone animals and pieces of adobe of different sizes have been discovered. The paleozoological analysis carried out on the bone material proved that they come from *Bos taurus*<sup>4</sup>. Identical species have also been discovered in the G2 pit from Carei-Kozárd (El Susi 1997, 59-62).

The analogy of the ceramic shapes reconstituted from the Neolithic complex at Carei-Bobald-Tumul (Bobald VII) can be found in the settlements of the late Neolithic from the Carei Plain (Németi 1999, 96), nearby the city of Carei (Hágó 2009, 15-49) from Carei-Kozárd (Iercoşan 1997, 23-58; Virag 2012, 179-190, Hágó 2011a, 5-10), at Carei-Bobald (Hágó 2015), Dumbrava-La Cosma (Iercoşan 1992-1993, 77-90; Hágó 2011b, 1-32), as well as in other places from the northwestern part of Romania at Oradea-Salca (Luca 2001, 43), Săcueni-Horo (Luca, Iercoşan 1997, 11-22), or at the Medieşul Aurit-Togul lui Sweitzer (Virag, Kádas 2008, 5-26). In the area of the Sălaj County, this chronological level is present through the discoveries from Zăuan-Dâmbul Spânzuraţilor, Suplac-Corău, Oradea-Salca, Giurtelecu-Şimleului (Băcuet 2001, 52).

Similar shapes can be found in Hungary, more exactly in the *Alföld Depression*, at Berettyóújfalu-Herpály (Kalicz, Raczky, 1986, 63-128; 1987, 11-30), Polgár-Csőszhalom (Raczky *et al.* 1994, 34-41; Raczky, Anders 2009, 73-92; Sebők *et al.* 2013, 29-79).

Taking into account the systematically researched settlements or the settlements researched by salvage digging from nearby Bobald, at the Carei-Kozárd settlement (Iercoşan 1997, 23-58; Virag 2008, 179-190; Hágó 2011a, 5-10), and the gathered material through field research from the Bobald area (Iercoşan 1986-1987, 139-158; Németi 1981-1982, 167-182; Hágó 2015), the discoveries from the Carei-Bobald-Tumul (Bobald VII) can be placed in the late Neolithic, in the Herpály culture, which is spread between Crişul Repede and Someş, in the northern part of the Bihor county, in the surrounding areas and in Hungary, towards west, northeast and east. This civilization was defined in the Romanian territory as Tisa II-Herpály (Lazarovici, Lakó 1981, 34).

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<sup>4</sup> The paleozoological analyzes was made by Xenia Pop.

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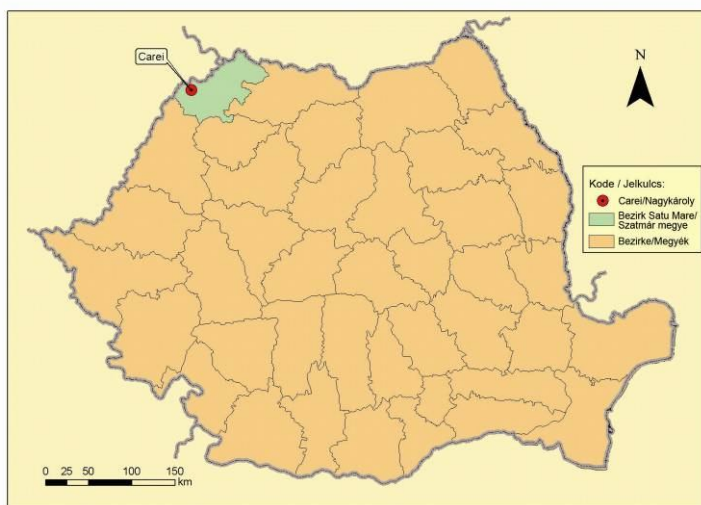
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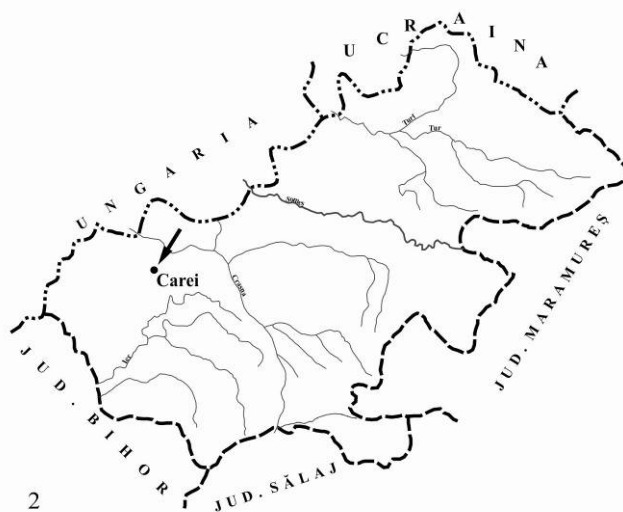
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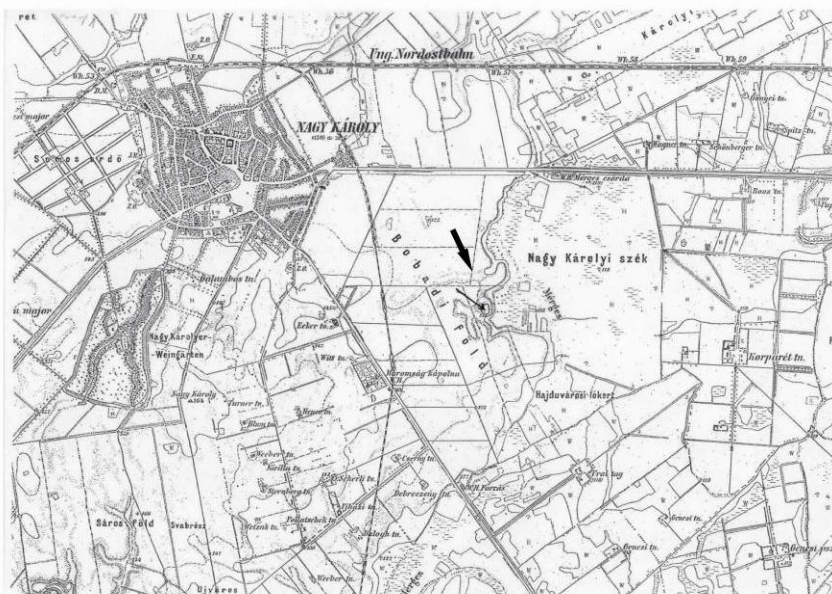


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**Plate. I. 1-2.** Geographical localization of the Satu-Mare county and the city of Carei (after Némethi, Molnár 2012, Abb. 1).



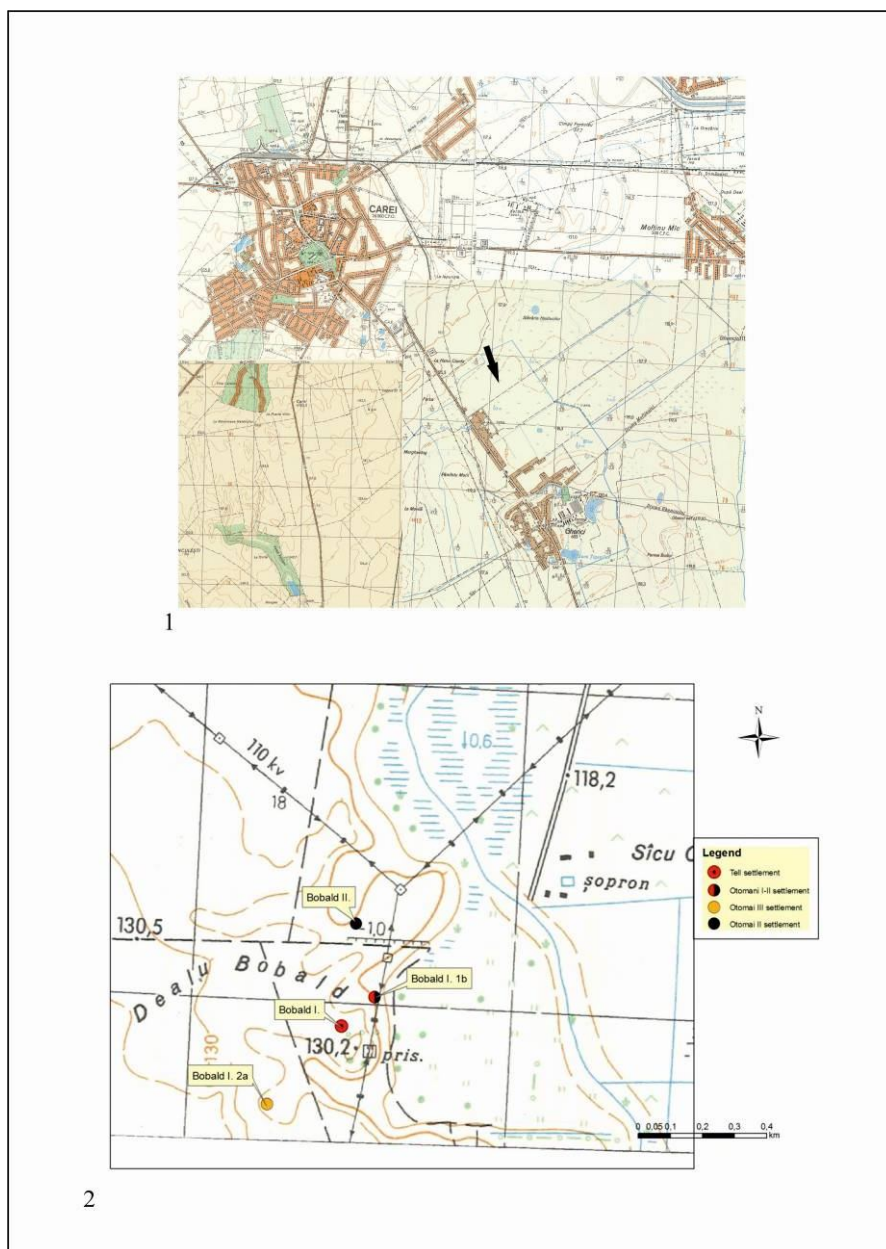
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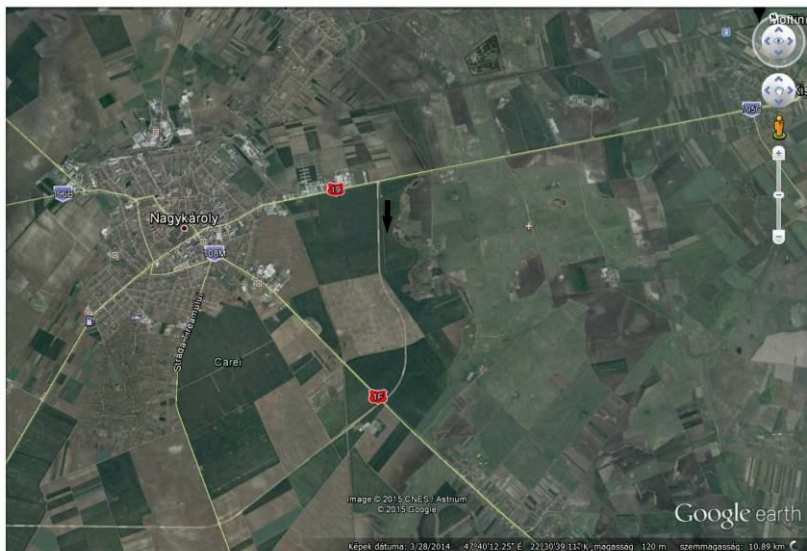
**Plate. II. 1.** Geographical localization of the site on the 1st Military Map.

**2.** Localization of the site on the 1910s topographical map.

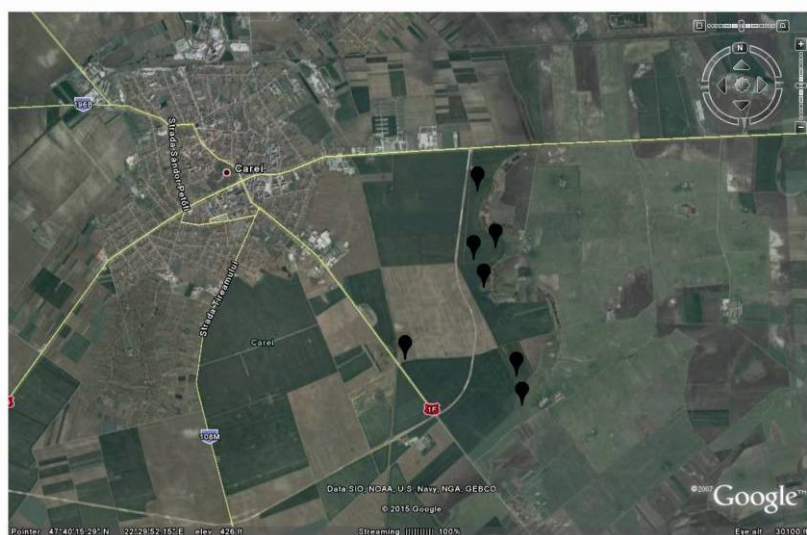


**Plate III. 1-2.** Localization of the site on the modern topographical map  
(after Némethi, Molnár 2012 Abb. 84).





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**Plate IV. 1.** Localization of the site on the. **2.** Late neolithic settlements on the Bobald area.



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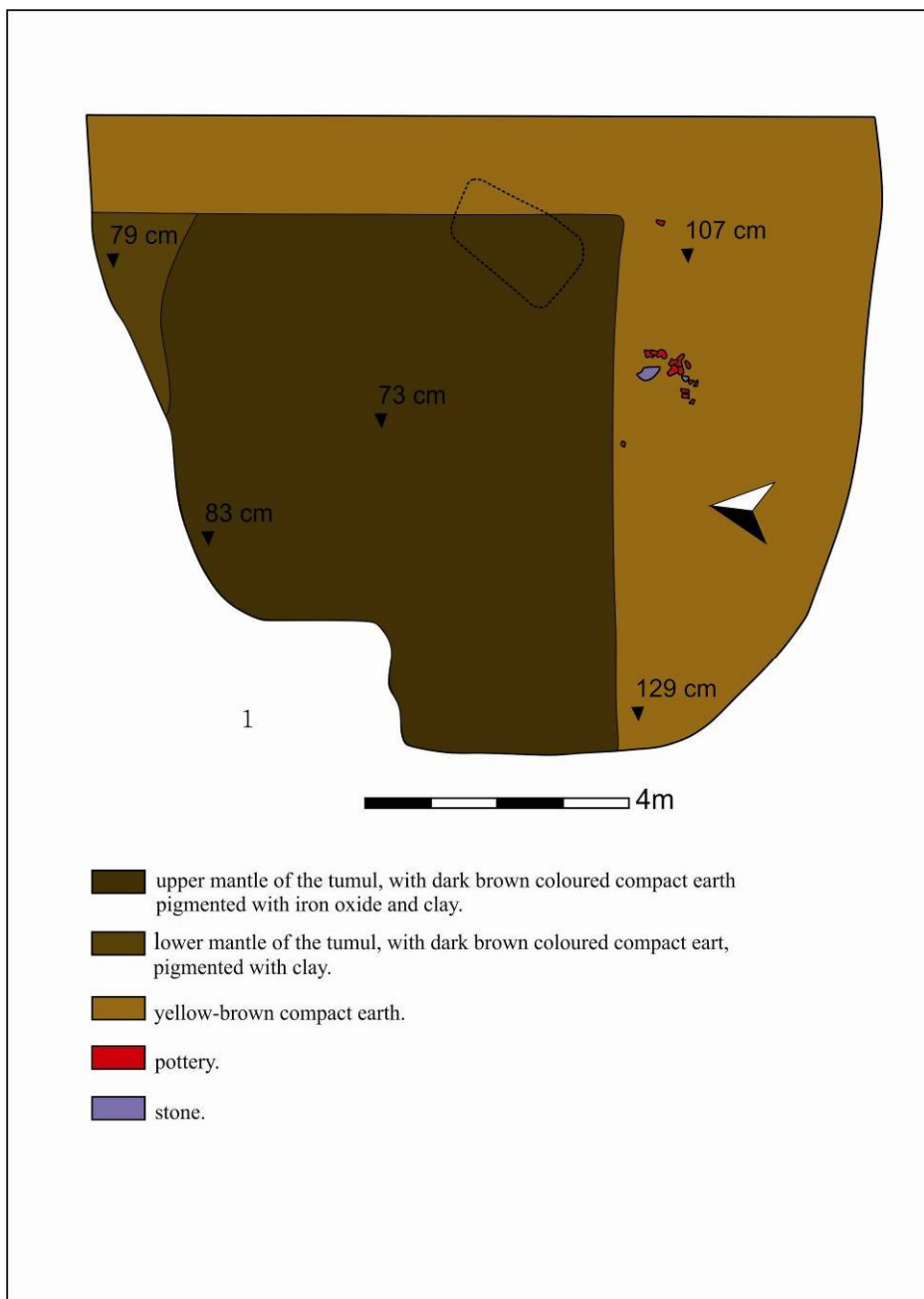


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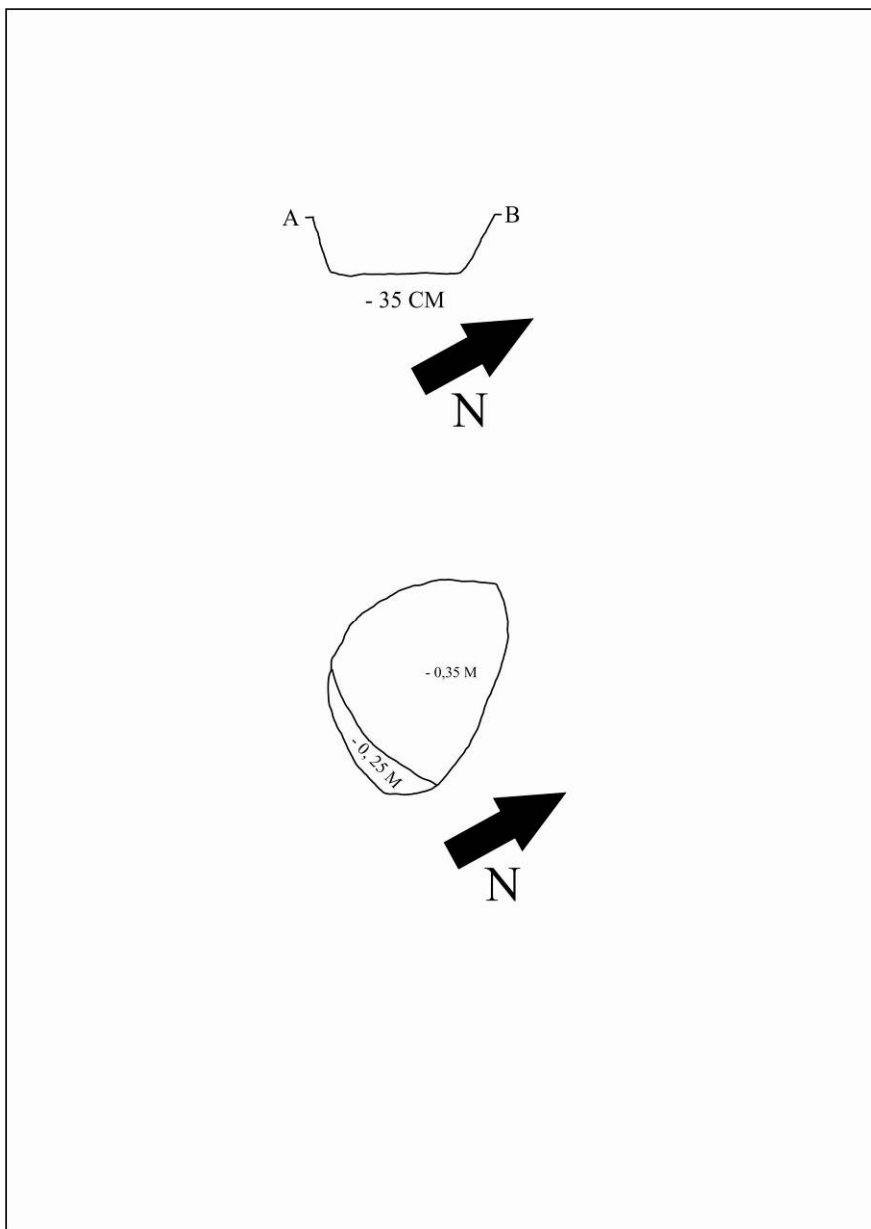


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**Plate V. 1-2.** The Late Neolithic feature Cx. 3 (photo by Attila Nándor Hágó, Norbert Kapesos).

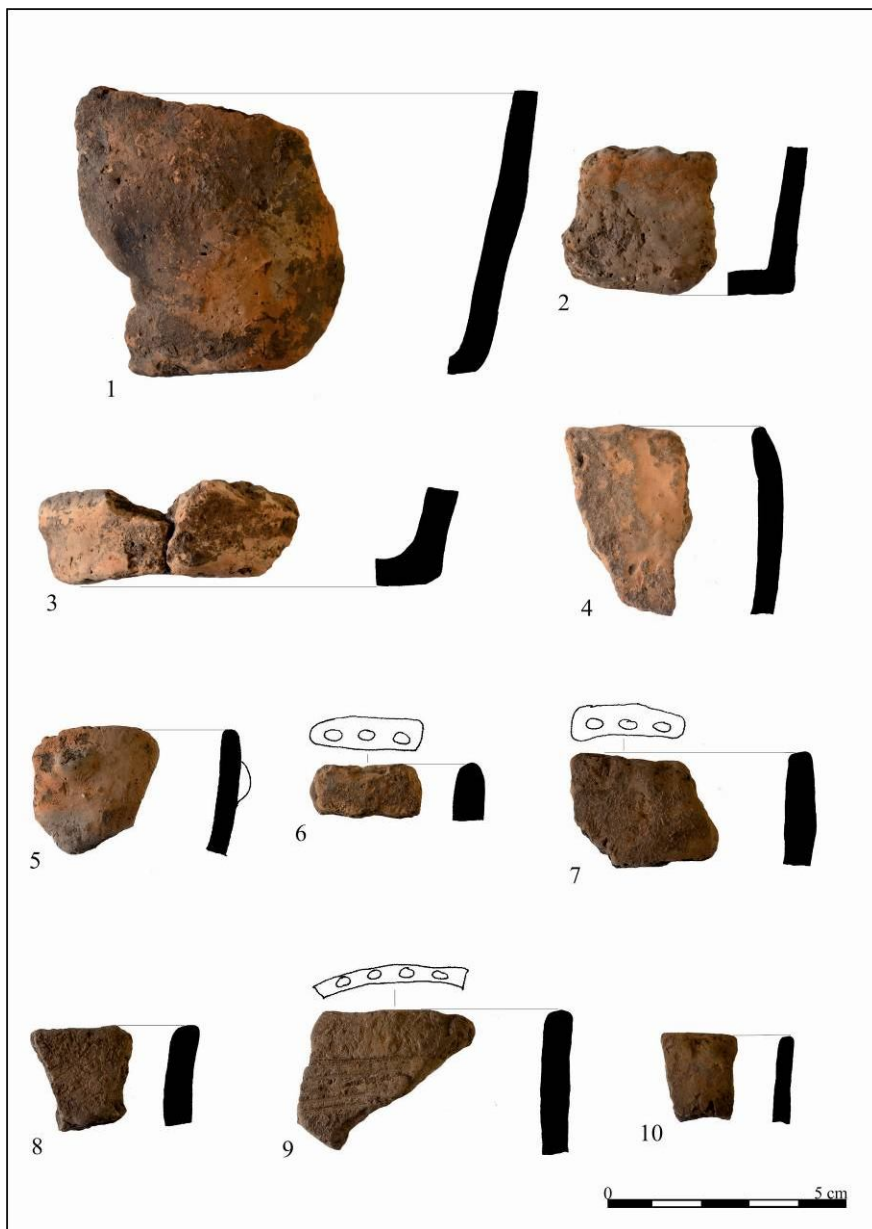


**Plate VI.** Drawing of contour mantle tumular tomb (drawed by Norbert Kapcsos).

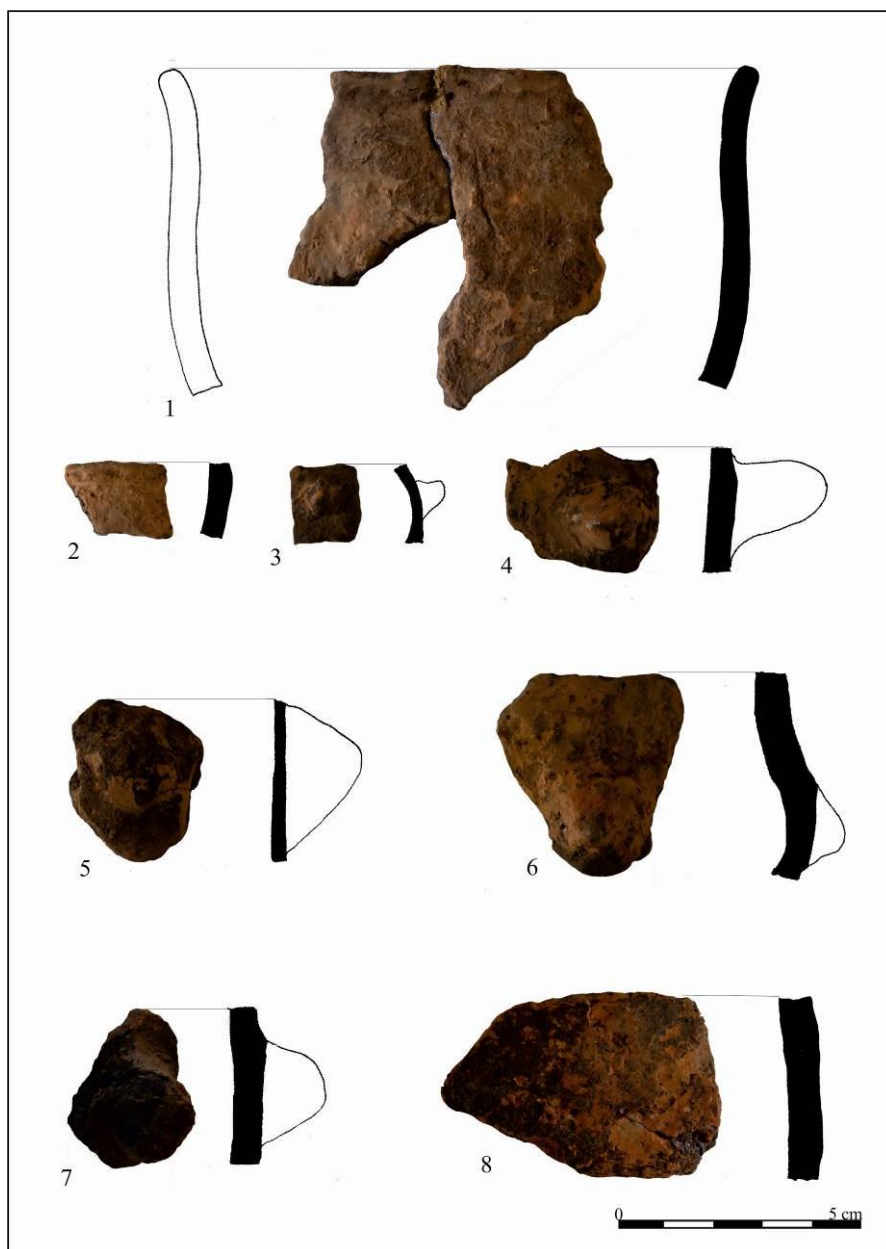


**Plate VII.** Drawing of the Late Neolithic feature (drawed by Zsolt Molnár, Attila Nándor Hágó).





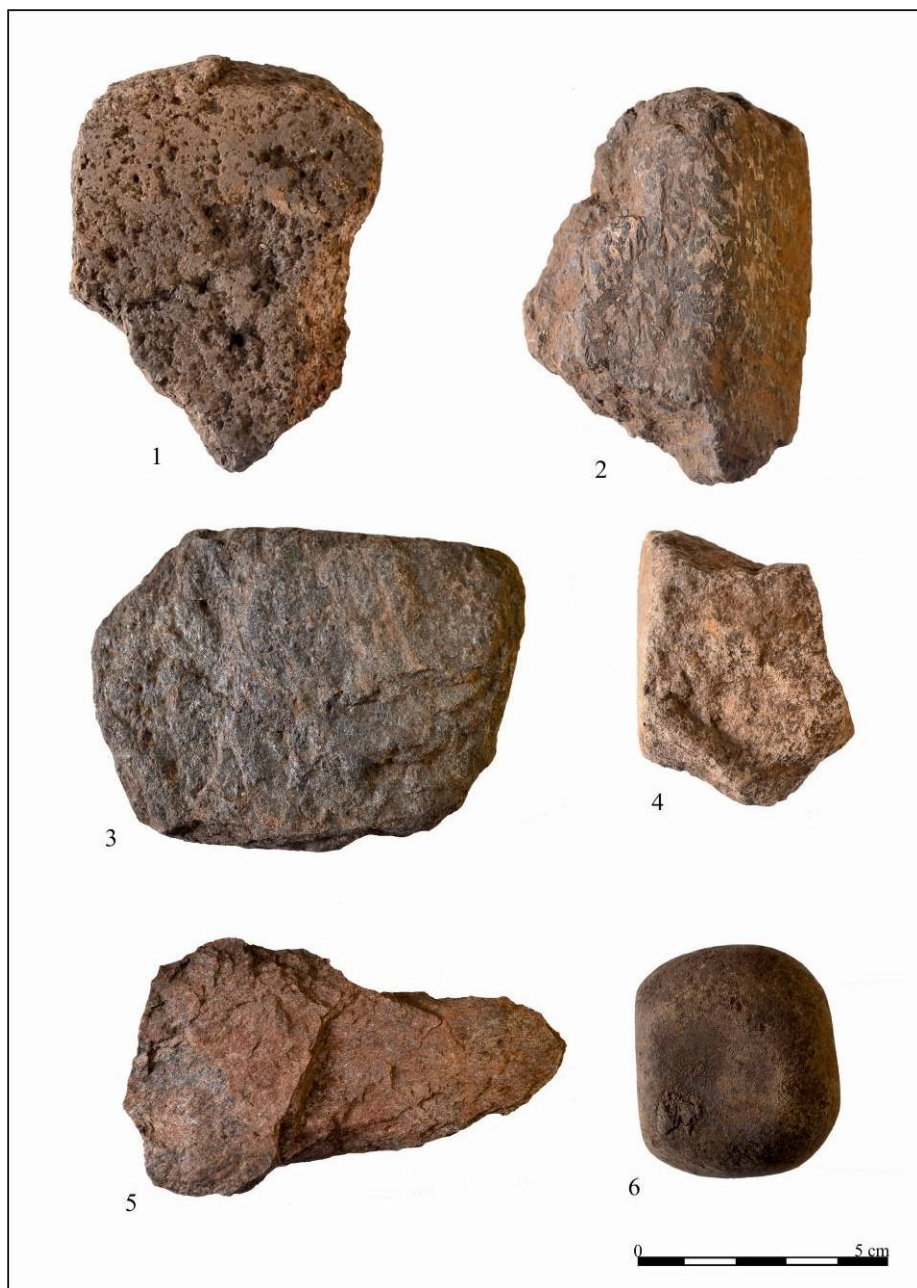
**Plate VIII. 1-9.** Late Neolithic pottery from Cx 3 feature.



**Plate IX. 1-8.** Late Neolithic pottery from Cx 3 feature.



**Plate X.** 1-3. Late Neolithic pottery. 4-9. Lithic tools. 10-11. Grind stones.



**Plate XI.** 1-6. Grind stones.