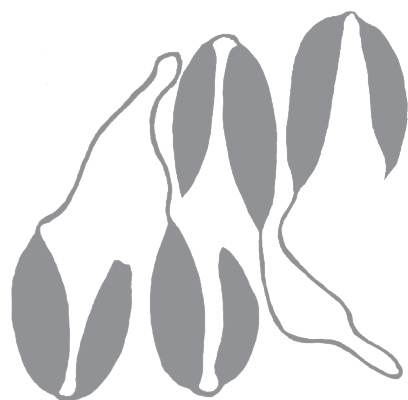


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Contents

Petru Ciocani	
Early Neolithic inter-settlement pattern in the northwestern corner of the Banat.....	7
Astrid Vicas	
Seeking Opportunity: Mobility and Transmission of Innovation in the Chalcolithic.....	23
Alin Frînculeasa	
The Yamnaya mounds and the local cultural traditions of the first half of the 3rd millennium in Muntenia. The archaeological excavations of Moara Vlăsiei (Ilfov County).....	49
Mihai Remus Feraru	
The cult of goddess Hekate in Miletus and the Milesian colonies	107
Ioan Stanciu	
Archaeological evidence on land farming in the Someş river Plain – north-western Romania (1 st century BC?).....	127
Georgeta El Susi	
Animal management in the Latène settlement (2 nd century BC – 1 st century AD) at Săvârşin, Arad County.....	139
Sorin Cociş	
A new stamped <i>mortarium</i> from Napoca.....	153
Andrei-Cătălin Discă	
Roman Sites and Discoveries Around Potaissa (V). New Data and Clarifications Regarding the Cheia Settlement and the Stone Quarries of Roman Dacia	159
Vitalie Bârcă	
Roman bronze casseroles in the Sarmatae graves from the area between the Don and the Lower Danube..	179
Dorel Micle, Remus Dincă, Octavian Cristian Rogozea, Sergiu Gabriel Enache	
Preliminary report on the rescue archaeological excavations in Dudeştii Vechi – 54.....	225
Florin Mărginean, Erwin Gáll	
Traces of an Early Avar Period Settlement. The Archaeological Findings from Pecica – Rovine / Căprăvanul Mic (Arad County).....	263
Luminiţa Andreica-Szilagy	
Anthropological analysis of the skeletons discovered at Pecica “Rovine” (Arad County). Identification of certain occupational stress markers specific to horseback riding practice.....	273
Dan Băcuet-Crişan	
On the early medieval fast wheel-thrown pottery (of late ancient tradition) (<i>Lazuri-Nuşfalău type finds</i>) from north-western Romania. Relative and absolute chronological landmarks.....	283
Andrea Demjén	
Archaeological research of the Roman-Catholic church from Joseni (Harghita County).....	299
Dan Băcuet-Crişan, Horea Pop, Timea Keresztes	
The Kaolin Clay Medieval Pottery of <i>Măgura Hill</i> Moigrad (Sălaj County). A Few Notes on Finds of the Type from Transylvania and the Banat.....	321

Zoltán Rózsa, Viktória P. Horváth, György Kerekes, Rajmund Péter Zsikai	
At the Intersection of Border Areas. Traces of an Inn of the 17 th and 18 th centuries on the Border of Today's Kaszaper and Végegyháza (Békés County, Hungary).....	335
Bogdan Ciupercă, Andrei-Cătălin Dîscă, Tudor Hila, Andrei Măgureanu	
The manufacture of lime on the Budureasca Valley (Prahova County) by late medieval and early modern period.....	357
Cristian Floca, Florin Gogăltan, Alexandru Hegyi, Patrick Chiroiu, Sorin Forțiu	
Using the water power in preindustrial Banat. A historical archaeology study on the Lower Timiș River..	371

REVIEWS

Florin Drașovean, Wolfram Schier (editors), in collaboration with Alex Bayliss, helmut Becker, Barbara Dammers, Bisserka Gaydarska, Christoph Menzler, Silviene Scharl, Stefan Suhrbier, Petru Urdea, Alasdait Whittle, Uivar "Gomilă". <i>A Prehistoric Settlement in the Romanian Banat Vol. I. Site, Architecture, Stratigraphy and Dating. Prähistorische Archäologie in Südosteuropa 32.</i> Verlag Marie Leidorf GmbH, Rahden/Westf. Leidorf 2020, (ISBN 978-3-8646-687-7), 585 pages (Victor Sava).....	419
Valeriu Sîrbu, Aurora Pețan (editors), <i>Temples and Cult Places from the Second Iron Age in Europe</i> (Proceedings of the 2nd International Colloquium "Iron Age Sanctuaries and Cult Places at the Thracians and their Neighbours", Alun, Romania, 7th–9th May 2019, Dacica press, Alun 2020 (ISBN 978-606-8538-02-0), 352 pages (Ioan Cristian Cireap).....	421
Radu Harhoiu, Nikolaus Boroffka, Rodica Boroffka, Erwin Gáll, Adrian Ioniță, Daniel Spânu, <i>Schäßburg – Weinberg (Sighișoara – Dealul Viilor) II Archäologische Grabungen bei der Fundstelle „Gräberfeld / Necropolă</i> , Cetatea de Scaun verlag, Târgoviște 2020 (ISBN 978-606-537-465-2), 577 Seiten, 75 Tafeln (Bianca Profiran).....	423
Abbreviations.....	425

Archaeological research of the Roman-Catholic church from Joseni (Harghita County)*

Andrea Demjén

Abstract: Since 2009, interdisciplinary investigations (wall facing research, geo-radar measurements) have been carried out at the Roman-Catholic church in Joseni, followed by archaeological excavations in order to clarify the building phases of the monument. The archaeological research was performed in two stages (2010 and 2015). The 2010 archaeological excavations evidenced that the framework located within the eastern wall of the tower lay in secondary location. Research in 2015 revealed the nave of the previous (medieval) church and 26 burials from the cemetery in the church vicinity. The burials discovered underneath the foundation of the AMS dated nave place its construction in the second half of the 15th century (possibly the following), while those lying below the tower foundation show that the tower was likely built by late 15th century – early 16th century.

Keywords: medieval church; Gothic; cemetery; burials; Joseni; Harghita county.

Introduction and historical background

Joseni commune is located in the Giurgeu Basin¹, at about 6 km westward of Gheorgheni Municipality (Fig. 1). It is crossed by the Belchiei stream, which flows into the Mureş River by its boundary. The church, dedicated to apostles St. Simeon, St. Judas Tadeus, Virgin Mary and the Holy Martyr Margaret, is central to the village.

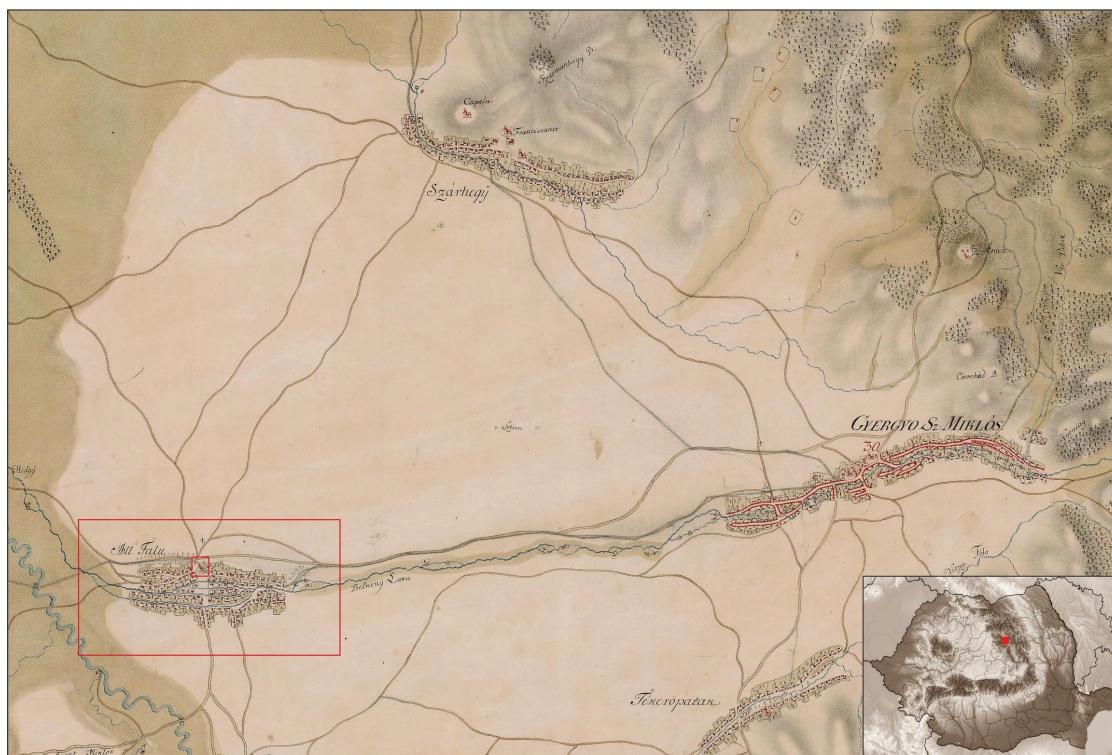


Fig. 1. Joseni commune on the first Austrian military map of 1763–1773

(<https://mapire.eu/hu/synchron/firstsurveytransylvania/?bbox=2830587.3479488078%2C5888058.965002931%2C2856270.189452627%2C5903346.370659965&maplist=1&layers=osm%2C142&right-layers=osm> accessed on: 10.08.2021).

* English translation: Gabriela Safta.

¹ Giurgeu Basin is located in the north-eastern Transylvania, delimited by the Eastern Carpathians and the upper course of the Mureş, between the Gurghiu and Giurgeu Mountains.

Medieval sources on the Gheorgheni Seat are scarce. First mentions on the medieval ecclesiastical administration appear in the 1332–1336 papal decimals. Villages are not clearly recorded there, while the mention of priest *Nycolaus* includes also the name *Gyargio*, *Gorgio*². In 1333–1334, two other priests are mentioned beside priest *Nicolae*: *Stephanus* and *Thomas*³. In the scientific literature it was theorized that the two prelates *Stephanus* and *Thomas*, together with *Nycolaus*, served in the churches of the three neighbouring places: Gheorgheni, Joseni and Lázarea⁴.

For the lack of written sources, archaeological excavations play a key role in the research of village histories, respectively of medieval churches. Over the course of several years of systematic field research in the Giurgeu Basin, we found that medieval settlements are located in the centre of nowadays villages, thus their investigation is limited. During the renovation of the current church, more complex investigations were possible (wall facing research, dendrochronological analyses, geo-radar measurements and AMS analyses), complemented by more modest archaeological research inside the monument, which revealed details related to a previous church. This study presents the archaeological and interdisciplinary research carried out in the Catholic Church of Joseni.

The church from Joseni in written sources

The place is recorded in sources starting with the second half of the 16th century. In 1567, on the occasion of the 25 dinars tax census, Joseni is mentioned with 44 gates⁵. On the list of Szekler nobles from around 1569, there are seven *primors* and *primipili*⁶, and in 1576, during the 50 dinars tax census, the village paid 20 florins to Ștefan Lázár⁷.

Practically, there are no written medieval sources on the church's history. First mentions appear once with the canonical visitations (*canonica visitatio*)⁸. In the case of the church from Joseni such a *visitatio* was preserved from 1731. According to the description, in the period the church was covered with tiles, surrounded by a stone fence, while the tower was provided with three bells. The visitation listed three altars, a tabernacle and an organ within the church⁹. In 1766, except for the tower and western wall of the nave, the medieval church was demolished and the construction of the current, baroque church began¹⁰. As the baroque church could no longer accommodate the parishioners, the community decided in 1930 to widen the place of worship, and a side nave was built on the northern side (Fig. 2/1)¹¹.

The church still presents a series of medieval elements: a semi-circular portal has survived by the western entrance of the nave, which according to specialists dates by late 13th century (Fig. 2/2)¹². The semi-circular portal and the 1213 inscription, located on the southern side of the tower, led to several speculations regarding the first church of the village.

Since 2009, interdisciplinary research has been carried out to clarify the building phases of the monument. Geo-radar investigations have been carried out, both outside and inside the church, which yielded significant results: in the northern part of the church, the radar detected the route of the previous enclosure wall. Inside the building, beneath the floor of the northern side nave, an existing vaulted crypt was confirmed, and on the eastern side of the southern portico the device indicated the

² *Nycolaus de Gyargio solvit IIII. banales/Nycolaus sacerdos de Gorgio solvit III. banales*. MonVat 1877, 112, 116, 132; EO 2004, 412.

³ *Stephanus sacerdos* (MonVat 1877, 116; EO 2004, 412.) *Thomas sacerdos solvit I. grossum*. MonVat 1877, 132; EO 2004, 412.

⁴ Vámszer 2000, 118–119, 125.

⁵ SzOkl II, 221.

⁶ SzOkl II, 269; SzOkl.n.e. VII, 66.

⁷ SzOkl.n.e. IV, 43.

⁸ Canonical visitations were a form of control of Catholic churches (this custom was also practiced by the Protestant church). These visitations were annual and conducted by the bishop or archpriest. During the visitation, key data were recorded about each church: the description of the buildings and religious inventory, parish and domains revenues, administrative issues, the parishioners, the church's patron saint, etc. (Timár 1983, 43–47).

⁹ ERKEJ 2002, 118.

¹⁰ Bernád 2009, 275.

¹¹ Lestyán 1996; <https://mek.oszk.hu/04600/04684/html/337.html>. Accessed on 1.09.2021; Bernád 2009, 75.

¹² Entz 1994, 64.



Fig. 2. 1. The church from Joseni after the completion of the restoration; 2. Semi-circular portal after restoration (Photo: H. Baróti).

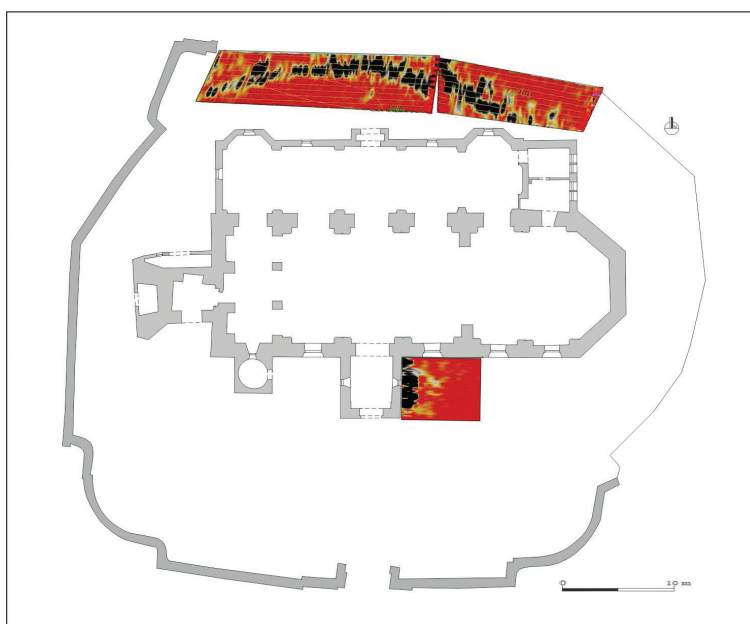


Fig. 3. Joseni. The results of the geo-radar investigations (according to Zsigmond *et al.* 2009).

presence of a wall, probably a previous southern entrance (Fig. 3)¹³. Dendrochronological analyses succeeded to date an oak beam to the summer of 1517¹⁴, which confirms the existence of the tower in the medieval period and coincides with the 1537 bell mention¹⁵. B. Kósa and A. Czibalmos conducted wall facing research between 2009 and 2011, which provided important data concerning the building phases of the tower. These evidenced at the fourth and fifth levels of the current tower, on the eastern side, two roof framework traces, which imply the existence of two naves, prior to that baroque¹⁶. R.

¹³ Zsigmond *et al.* 2009.

¹⁴ <https://dendrolab.ro/ro/page/Cercetari-18>. Accessed on 20.02.2020

¹⁵ According to reports, in 1537 the tower had a bell cast in Braşov with inscription: *O rex gloriae veni cum pace* 1537, destroyed during the First World War (Benkó 2002, 267).

¹⁶ Kósa *et al.* 2011, 325–328.

Bernád, in her *Repertory*, mentions that the roof framework of the church burned twice: in 1707, when the Austrian general Acton pillaged the village and in 1806, when another great fire burned both the village and the church¹⁷. It is very likely that the two frameworks discovered during the wall facing researches are closely related to these events, since the archaeological excavations did not evidence walls from two different building phases.

Archaeological research¹⁸

The archaeological research of the church was carried out in two phases: in the first stage (May 2010) the archaeological excavation was part of the restoration project of the door frame located on the eastern tower wall, by the entrance into the nave. According to the analysis of the specialists, the shape and composition of the frames is uncommon. The internal frame is composed of two cylindrical colonettes, while that external frame is made up of two quarters of baguettes separated by a scotia. The portal closes by an arch shaped like a circle framed by an edged torus¹⁹. Concurrently, it could be noted that the height and distribution of stones are unequal (Fig. 5), near junctions, in several places, break traces being found, indicative of the portal's secondary location.

The main purpose of the research was to unearth the doorsill and clarify the *in situ* or secondary position of the door frame. Thus a trench was excavated inside the tower (trench 1 = S1; sizes: 2.50 × 3.44 m; Fig. 4/1), in front of the frame.

After removing the stones from the surface, the doorsill composed of four stone blocks was identified and it was found that the torus started from the doorsill, without a base (pedestal). The internal doorsill was made of two andesite pieces (0.79 × 0.30 m and 0.60 × 0.30 m), in the south (0.24 m) and north (0.20 m) being carved in the stone about 5 cm for placing the cylindrical torus. The external doorsill was also made of two andesite pieces (0.76 × 0.30 × 0.28 m and 0.88 × 0.30 × 0.24 m), which reached only to the edge of the baguette torus (in-between two stones in the middle remained an empty space, which was filled with two small stones), the frame thus resting on the tower foundation (Fig. 4/2; Fig. 5). The lack of the pedestal, the threshold composed of several parts and the fact that the external frame stood on the tower foundation confirmed that the portal lay in secondary position.



Fig. 4. 1. Joseni. Final ground of S1; 2. Detail with the placement of the frame on the threshold and the tower foundation.

The archaeological research has also contributed to the completion of data on the tower foundation. It could be seen that the tower foundation was composed of andesite and river stones, bound

¹⁷ Bernád 2009, 274–275.

¹⁸ The archaeological excavations were conducted upon the request of the Roman-Catholic parish from Joseni, these being set up and performed by the Tarisznyás Márton Museum of Gheorgheni (authorization no.: 71/2010 and 29/2015). In the excavations were also involved F. Gogâltan (Institute of Archaeology and Art History Cluj-Napoca) and M. Savu (University of Kiel). The documentation is found in the archives of the Museum of Gheorgheni, as well as the archaeological material inventoried under the following nos.: 2513–2539, 3954–3987. The archaeological excavations have been published in the form of small reports: Gogâltan, Demjén 2010, 193–194; Kósa *et al.* 2011, 329–334; Gogâltan *et al.* 2016, 169, 527; Demjén 2020, 99–101.

¹⁹ Kósa *et al.* 2011, 325.

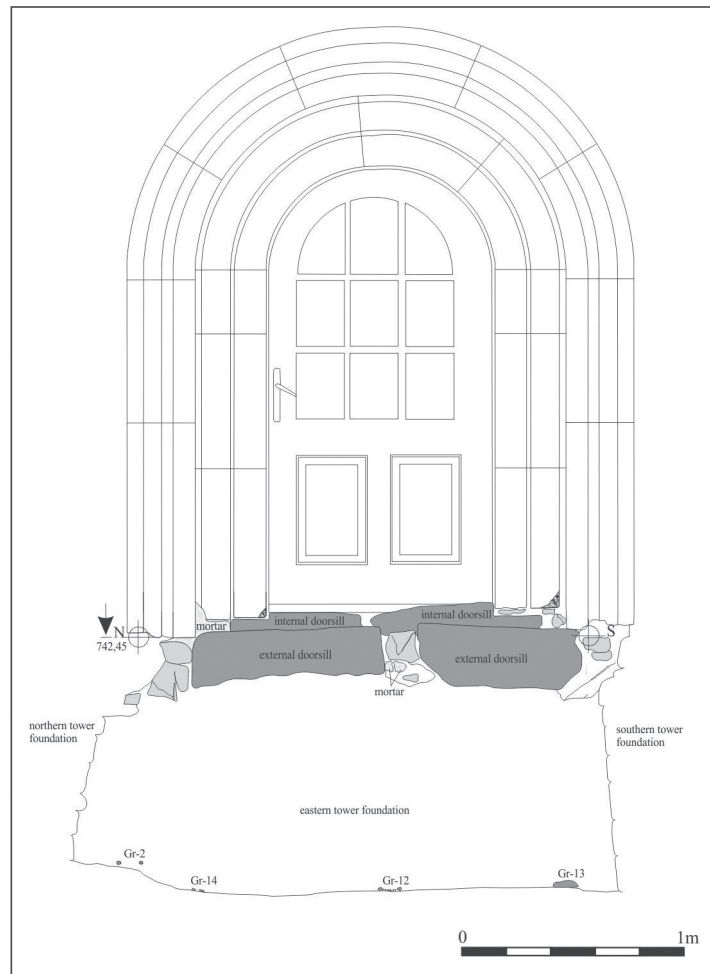


Fig. 5. Joseni. The frame with threshold and graves cut by the eastern tower wall.

with grey mortar mixed with gravel, pigmented with brick and lime pieces. The southern and northern foundations differ from a formal and structural point of view: the southern foundation is by 0.14–0.22 m wider than the elevation wall; and that northern, under the foundation shoulder, narrows in a V-shape (Pl. 1/2). The base of the tower foundation reaches a relative depth of 1.10 m from the medieval surface level. On the shoulder of the tower's northern foundation, by foundation's junction with the elevation wall, three pieces of plaster with traces of red paint were found, which likely come from a previously collapsed ceiling onto a walking surface.

In the second stage (February – March 2015) the research focused on identifying the route of the previous church wall and attempted to investigate the western wall of the current church, whether it retained medieval elements or not. Since the church was then used by the parishioners for liturgy, the space for indoor research was relatively small due to the existing furnishing. Thus, under the western tribune of the nave, in the south-western corner (trench 2 = S2) and in that north-western (trench 3 = S3) two trenches were excavated. In these two emerged the nave foundation and elevation walls of the previous



Fig. 6. Joseni. The southern wall of the previous (medieval) church nave located near the baroque foundation of the current church.

church. After removing the stones from the surface, the nave walls of the previous church with a thickness between 0.80–0.92 m were uncovered in both trenches (Fig. 6). The southern wall of the medieval church was built near the southern foundation of today's church, in-between the two walls remaining a gap of 0.04–0.06 m. The walls of the medieval church are made of medium and small andesite and river stones bound with a relatively compact greyish-white mortar mixed with pebbles and brick pigments. The base of the medieval church foundation was identified at a depth of 1.66 m from the current stepping level (at 0.76–0.80 m deep from the medieval surface level).

From the western elevation of the medieval church wall, an approx. 0.50 m stretch (measured from the foundation line, in S 2) survived, the rest being demolished and rebuilt in the baroque period (Fig. 7). Instead, the northwest corner of the medieval church was completely demolished (Fig. 8/2). In the northern part of the northern wall of the medieval nave, a buttress was found, with a thickness of 0.76 m. It was built together with the northern wall of the church, and no gap could be noted in-between the two (Fig. 8/1–2). On both the southern and northern elevations, the interior plaster of the medieval church survived almost intact up to approx. 0.60–0.80 m high from the foundation line, with two plaster layers (Fig. 8/3–4). The plaster on the western elevation survived rather fragmentary (Fig. 7). Plaster could also be recorded on the northern exterior elevation of the medieval church, preserved fragmentarily as well.

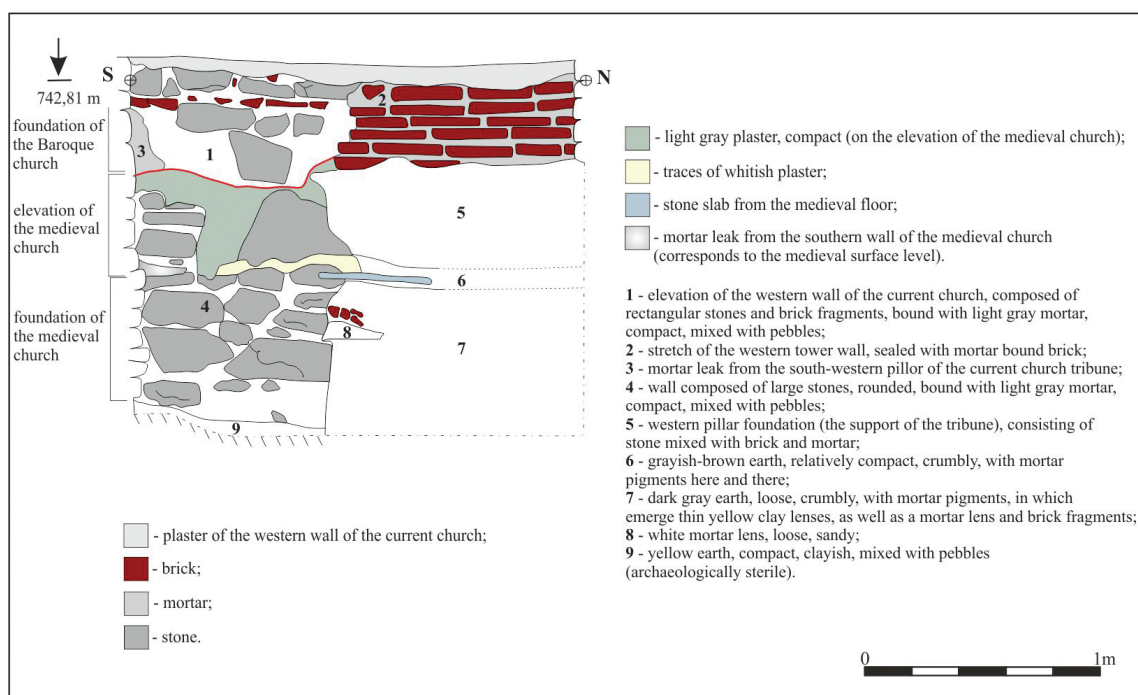


Fig. 7. Joseni. The western foundation of the medieval church, superimposed by that of the baroque church.

Over the course of the research, in both trenches, several andesite stone slabs were found *in situ*, which were part of the last walking surface during the function of the medieval church, before its demolition in 1766 (the sizes of the four stone slabs ranged between 0.40 × 0.80 m and 0.03–0.05 m thick; Fig. 9). The medieval surface level was by 0.91 m deeper than the topsoil and by approx. 0.45 m from the medieval tower surface level. This means that the stepping level inside the church was lower than in the tower and likely, by the entrance into the church some stairs/steps were set up. Also, it could be evidenced that the medieval (Gothic) church nave of Joseni had an internal width of 7 m. Regarding the existence of a church prior than that by late 15th century, there is no certain information.

Beneath the last stepping level of the medieval church, on the entire area, the filling of the medieval and modern graves was outlined. In the three trenches, a total of 26 graves with 27 deceased were unearthed (in Gr3 two deceased were buried; Pl. 4/1). Based on their orientation, depth, the presence or absence of the coffin, skeleton positions, overlaps and inventory, three burial phases could be distinguished.

The graves that belong to the first burial phase (Gr1, Gr2, Gr3a, b, Gr4, Gr6, Gr7, Gr8, Gr12, Gr13,

Gr14, Gr18, Gr20, Gr22 and Gr23; Pl. 1-1, 2/1-2; 4/1, 4-7) had a 272° – 274° orientation. In only a few cases it was possible to establish the position of the arms, which usually lay at the sides, with the hands placed next to the pelvis. Most of the deceased in this phase were buried in wooden coffins without nails, except for graves Gr5, Gr8 and Gr23. The graves' depth was different within the nave, compared to those that lay outside. On the exterior, the depth was comprised between 0.95–1.13 m, while on the inside it was much smaller: 0.54–0.60 m, compared to the medieval surface level. The relative chronology of the graves was determined on the basis of overlaps/superposition: Gr20, Gr22 and Gr23 are cut by the nave foundation (Pl. 4/5–7); the southern foundation was built over Gr1 and Gr4, and Gr2, Gr5, Gr12, Gr13 and Gr14 disturb the eastern tower wall. The dating of the graves, aided by the funerary inventory as well, places Gr3a, b and Gr6 in the second half of the 15th century (Fig. 11/1–2). In addition to these classical dating methods based on stratigraphic criteria and the analysis of the funerary inventory, we also benefited from three AMS data (from graves Gr2, Gr20 and Gr23), which place the discovered graves in the 15th century and early 16th century (Fig. 10).

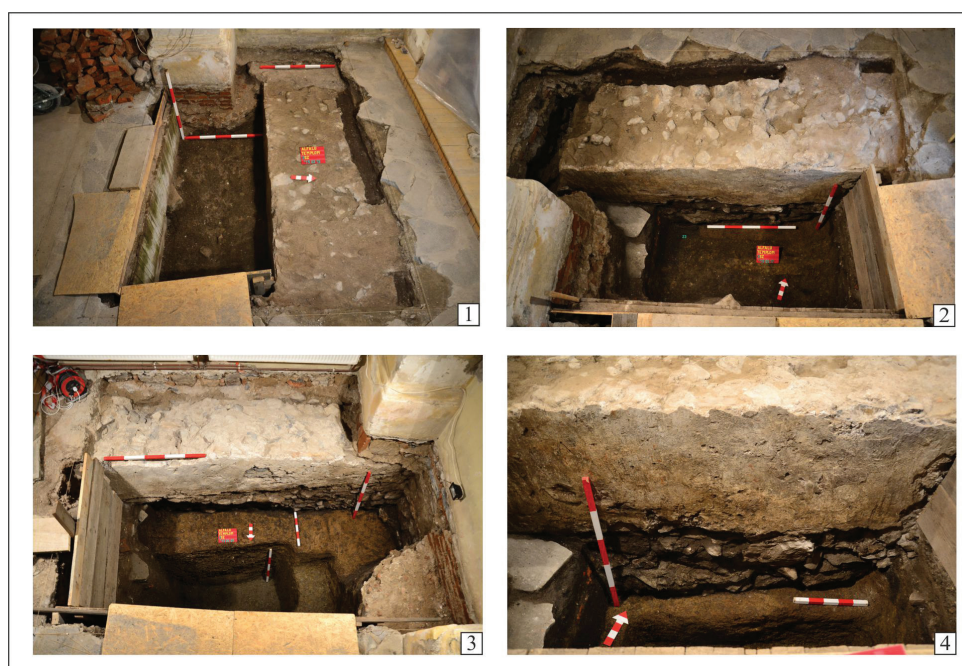


Fig. 8. 1–2. Joseni. The northern wall of the nave with the buttress (S3); 3–4. The southern and northern wall of the medieval church with interior plaster.



Fig. 9. Joseni. Stone slabs from the last surface level of the medieval church (S2).

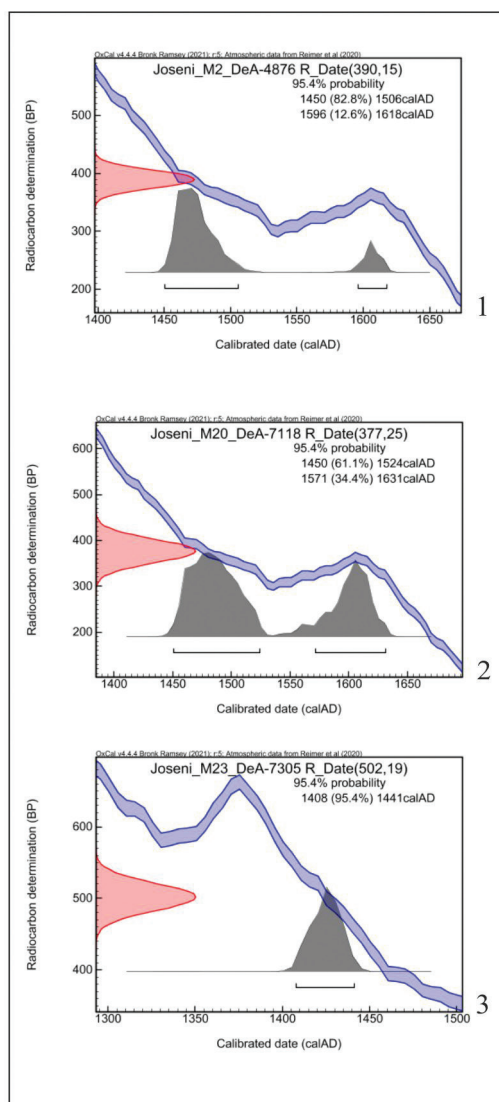


Fig. 10. Joseni. AMS dating: 1. Gr2; 2. Gr20; 3. Gr23.

while in the case of pre-modern/modern graves (Gr11 and Gr16) their depth reached 2.01–2.17 m (Pl. 4/3– 4).

It was found during the research that two graves had funerary inventory (Gr3a, b and Gr6). Upon the removal of the bones, in the upper part of the right arm (between Gr3a and Gr3b) were found two rather fragmentary rectangular appliques (Fig. 11). Given their position, discovered between the two skeletons, it was impossible to decide exactly to which skeleton they belonged. Another similar applique was found in Gr6 instead of the missing skull (Pl. 4/2). The position suggests it likely comes from a diadem. The discovered appliques were made by pressing in the *au repoussé* technique of red copper, rectangular in shape, with schematic decoration. They have small perforations in the middle and at corners. In none of the cases could be noted remains of the leather or fabric support or of the attachment rivets. Likely, these appliques were sewn onto fabric and used as head ornaments. In the Szeklerland, in recent years have emerged several graves with appliques at the Roman Catholic Church from Lázarea²⁰ or in Gr52 from the Franciscan monastery of Târgu-Mureș²¹, in both cases these emerging on the skull of the deceased. There are many works published on this type of pieces

The second burial phase is represented by four graves (Gr9, Gr10, Gr25 and Gr26). In the graves discovered on the western, exterior part of the nave (Gr9 and Gr10; Pl. 4/3), the deceased were buried in the same grave pit (depth of 1.63–1.67 m) and had the same orientation (268°). The grave pits within the nave (Gr25 and Gr26; Pl. 4/8) were rectangular with rounded corners, traces of the wooden coffin and iron nails surviving only in the case of Gr26. Orientation could be established only in the case of Gr25 (270°), since from Gr26 only the skull was partially preserved. These date to the 16th – 17th century.

Gr11 and Gr16 belong to the third phase of burial, these being the deepest graves. The grave pit was dug 1.00 m in the sterile, while groundwater surfaced at the bottom of Gr 11 (Pl. 4/3). The deceased were buried in large rectangular gravepits with rounded corners, in wooden coffins, with forged nails at the corners. Because of the large gravepit, the stepping level sank several times, both within and outside the nave (see the western profile of S1 and the eastern profile of S2; Pl. 1/2; 3). Thus, the gravepit of Gr11 was filled and levelled with debris on several occasions. In the filling, a number of appliques were found which come from medieval graves disturbed when the pit was excavated. The two graves are likely part of the last burials of the 18th century, as the grave pit starts directly from beneath the stone slabs, which represent the last surface level of the medieval church before its demolition in 1766.

Grave depths were quite relevant for cemetery analysis, given that those medieval were buried at a depth between 0.54–1.13 m compared to the contemporary stepping level. The deceased from the second phase, of the late Middle Ages, were buried at a greater depth of 1.09–1.67 m (Gr9, Gr10, Gr25 and Gr26),

²⁰ In Gr22 from Lázarea, a total of six appliques were discovered: three in the shape of a rosette, cast from tin, a copper applique and two circular in iron. Unpublished research by L. Darvas and T. Emődi. Thank you very much for the provided information!

²¹ Soós, Gál 2010, 187–203.

both in Romania²² and Hungary²³, however we found only one parallel for the pieces of Joseni. Prior the construction of the M6 motorway in Hungary, the cemetery around the Paks – Cseresznyéskert (Tolna county) church was fully researched. There, in two infant graves (1129 and 3424) were discovered appliques similar to those of Joseni, dated to the 15th century²⁴. Another identical applique is in the permanent exhibition of the Szécsény city (Nógrád County, Hungary), which according to information, comes from a diadem discovered during the archaeological excavations conducted at Hollókő (not yet published)²⁵. Their late dating is also confirmed by the absolutely dated graves overlapping (Gr3a, b cut Gr2), which places them in the second half of the 15th century. For the other two appliques with vegetal motifs, we could not identify any parallels.



Fig. 12. Joseni. Fragment of a fresco discovered in secondary location.

Among the finds we may also mention a fresco piece, obviously in secondary position, discovered in the southern foundation of the baroque church. Three colour combinations could be distinguished on it: white, black and red, with five hues (Fig. 12). On the nave elevation or in the filling of the trenches excavated in the 2015 campaign, we could not find painting traces or fragments of painted plaster, hence it is impossible to say where it originally lay in the medieval church.

Conclusions

The archaeological research conducted in the church of Joseni has clarified the accurate location of the medieval church and confirmed it lay on the tower axis. It provided new information on nave sizes, which had an inside width of 7 m. However, we could not determine what its length was. The excavations also confirmed that the western elevation of the current church retains medieval elements only at foundation level. Both in the nave and within the tower, the medieval surface level could be identified, which was by 0.91 m deeper than the topsoil.

Over the course of the research, 26 graves with 27 deceased were discovered. The dating of the exposed walls was possible with the aid of the superimposed/overlapping graves. The three graves (S20 and S22–23; Pl. 4/5–7) discovered under the nave foundations predate the church investigated by us.

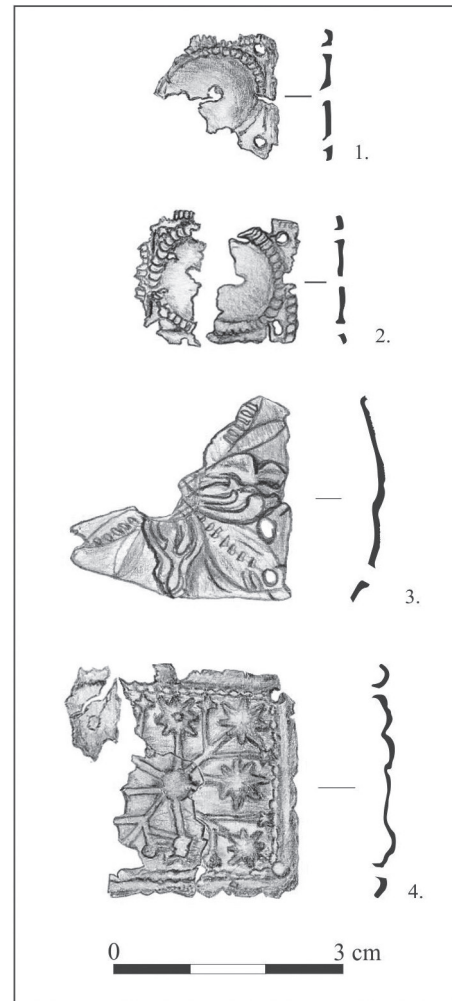


Fig. 11. Joseni. Copper appliques: 1. Gr6; 2. Gr3a; 3. From the filling of Gr11; 4. From the filling of Gr10.

²² Oța 2007, 117–156; Oța 2012, 123–142; Reabțeva 2012, 933–104.

²³ Szabó 1938, 42–43, 50–52, 59–60; Széll 1940, 162, XXVII. Tábla; Gerevich 1943, 123–127, 132, 152–160; Hatházi 2004, 80–85, 194–200; Gallina, Varga 2009, 36–37, 45, 3. Kép.

²⁴ Mesterházy-Ács 2015, 193, 201, 1. Ábra.

²⁵ We thank Sz. Guba for the information!

Samples for AMS dating were taken from two graves²⁶: Gr20 cut by the western wall, dated between 1450–1524 (Fig. 10/2). Gr3, located below the northern foundation, is dated between 1408–1441 (Fig. 10/3). AMS dating places the construction of the discovered nave to the second half of the 15th century and early the following century. The graves discovered under the tower foundation (Gr1 – Gr2, Gr4 – Gr5, Gr7, Gr12 and Gr13) and within the tower suggest it was likely built by late 15th century – early following century. Such dating was also confirmed by a sample collected from Gr2 (Pl. 4/1). Calibrated, it gave a date between 1450–1506 (Fig. 10/1).

There is no certain information regarding an existing church prior the late 15th – early next century church. The 2010 research has evidenced that the frame located in the eastern tower wall and dated by specialists to the 13th century lay in secondary position. After the archaeological excavations of 2015, no further opportunity emerged to continue investigations with this monument, so that confirming the existence of an older church than the late Gothic we identified remains a challenge for the future.

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²⁶ AMS analyses were performed in the ATOMKI laboratory in Debrecen, Hungary. The Gr2 dating was financed by the Harghita County Council through the Archaeological Research program in Harghita County (2014), and Gr20 and Gr23 by the Roman Catholic Parish of Joseni.

Appendix

1. Description of the graves

When describing the graves, we took into consideration the grave location (trench – S), absolute depth and depth from the medieval date surface level (Ad), orientation (O), age of the deceased (V), the preservation state of the bones and skeleton position (the position of the skull, arms and hands, etc.). Overlaps, the presence or absence of wood traces from the coffin or coffin nails, grave fillings, grave goods, inventory number (Inv. No.) or other important observations related to the grave (eg. AMS dating) were recorded separately. The anthropological analysis of the skeletons has not been performed so far, therefore their description is based only on field observations.

Gr 1: S 1; Ad: –741.36 m (1.09 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 272°; V: adultus, condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, with arms stretched, from the skeleton only the left pelvis with the femur, right leg, a few fingers and a rib survived; traces of wooden coffin, without nails, were found in the pelvis area; relative chronology: the skull was disturbed by the excavation of Gr4, the grave was partially cut by the southern foundation of the tower; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with a few pieces of yellow clay; observation: predates the tower construction; Inv. No.: 2527.

Gr 2: S 1; Ad: –741.45 m (1.00 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 274°; V: infans II; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, with left arm stretched at the side of the body, hands near the pelvis, skull, right hand and right side of the chest are missing; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with mortar, charcoal, a few pieces of yellow clay; relative chronology: the skull was probably disturbed by the excavation of Gr3a, b, the grave was partially cut by the tower eastern wall foundation; observation: prior to the construction of the tower; AMS dating: DeA–4876: 1450–1506 (Fig. 10/1; Pl. 4/1); Inv. No.: 2528.

Gr 3a: S 1; Ad: –741.48 m (0.97 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 272°; V: infans II; condition of the bones: medium; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, the skull was straight, the mandible and upper part of the right arm are missing, the right forearm was stretched at the body side, hands were near the pelvis, the left arm stretched at the side of the body with the hand on the right hand of the child from Gr3b; shows traces of trapezoid wooden coffin next to and on the skeleton; relative chronology: buried together with Gr3b; the right arm was disturbed by Gr9 and overlaps Gr2; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with pieces of brick, mortar and a few pieces of yellow clay; grave goods: see description of Gr3b; observation: double burial, buried together with Gr3b, before the construction of the tower (Pl. 4/1); Inv. No.: 2529.

Gr 3b: S 1; Ad: –741.48 m (0.97 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 272°; V: infans I; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, skull slightly tilted to the right, the left arm was extended near the body, hands were placed near the pelvis, the right arm stretched at the side of the body, the hand was placed on the left hand of the child in Gr3a; shows traces of the trapezoid wooden coffin next to and on the skeleton; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with pieces of brick, mortar and a few pieces of yellow clay; grave goods: during the removal of the bones, in the upper part of the right arm (between Gr3a and Gr3b) was found an applique composed of two fragments, rectangular in shape (Fig. 11/2; Pl. 4/1). Given the position of the piece, discovered between Gr3a and Gr3b, it was impossible to decide exactly to which skeleton it belonged; relative chronology: buried together with Gr3a; overlaps Gr2; observation: double burial, buried together with Gr3a, before the construction of the tower; Inv. No.: 2530.

Gr 4: S 1; Ad: –741.37 m (1.08 m from the medieval stepping level); O: -; V: infans; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, only the tibias and ankles were examined in the trench, the rest of the body enters the western profile of the trench; shows traces of a wooden coffin; relative chronology: the coffin of the deceased was disturbed by the construction of the southern foundation of the tower and cuts Gr1; grave filling: loose black earth mixed with a few pieces of yellow clay; observation: before the construction of the tower; Inv. No.: it was not removed because the skeleton lay below the western profile.

Gr 5: S 1; Ad: –741.50 m (0.95 m from the medieval stepping level); O: approx. 272°; V: adultus, condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, only the left femur with the pelvis and a few fingers were preserved from the skeleton; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with pieces of brick, mortar and a few pieces of yellow clay; relative chronology: it is overlapped by the grave pit of Gr11, being partially cut by the eastern foundation of the tower; observation: prior to the construction of the tower; Inv. No.: 2531.

Gr 6: S 1; Ad: -741.35 m (1.10 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 272°; V: infans I; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, right arm outstretched near the body, hand was near the pelvis, left arm, chest and skull were disturbed when excavating the grave pits for Gr9 and Gr11; traces of the wooden coffin without nails were found; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with mortar and a few pieces of yellow clay; grave goods: instead of the missing skull a square-shaped applique was found preserved *in situ* (Pl. 4/2); relative chronology: the skull and the right side were disturbed by the excavation of Gr9 and Gr11, overlapping Gr7, observation: before the tower construction; Inv. No.: 2532.

Gr 7: S 1; Ad: -741.34 m (1.11 m from the medieval stepping level); O: -; V: infans I, condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, right arm slightly bent, left forearm, several ribs and vertebrae kept in anatomical position; the upper part of the left arm and skull were disturbed by Gr3a, b, and the chest area by Gr6; traces of the wooden coffin were found; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with a few pieces of yellow clay; relative chronology: it was disturbed by Gr3a, b and Gr6; Inv. No.: 2533.

Gr 8: S 1; Ad: -741.34 m (1.11 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 270°; V: infans I; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, only the right femur and tibiae were preserved from the skeleton, the rest of the grave was disturbed by the grave pits of Gr9, Gr10 and Gr11; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with mortar and a few pieces of yellow clay; relative chronology: previous to Gr9, Gr10 and Gr11; Inv. No.: 2534.

Gr 9: S 1; Ad: -740.82 m (1.63 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 268°; V: adultus; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, only the femur was partially preserved from the skeleton, the tibia with the fibula and foot of the left leg from femur upwards enters the western profile of the trench, the right side of the body was cut by Gr11; next to the skeleton, on the northern and eastern side, traces of the wooden coffin could be seen, at the corner with a forged nail; grave filling: dark brown earth, loose, mixed with mortar, gravel and lumps of yellow clay; relative chronology: previous to Gr11 (Pl. 4/3); Inv. No.: 2535.

Gr 10: S 1; Ad: -740.78 m (1.67 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 268°; V: adultus; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, only the femur was partially preserved from the skeleton, the tibia with the fibula and foot of the left leg, from the femur upwards enters the western profile of the trench, the right side of the body was cut by Gr11; next to the skeleton, on the southern side, traces of the wooden coffin could be seen, at the corner with a forged nail; grave filling: dark brown earth, loose, mixed with mortar, gravel and lumps of yellow clay; from the grave filling three fragments of appliques emerged (Fig 11/4; Pl. 4/3); relative chronology: previous to Gr11; Inv. No.: 2536.

Gr 11: S 1; Ad: -740.28 m (2.17 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 270°; V: adultus; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, both femurs, fibula tibiae and foot were partially preserved from the skeleton; the grave filling: dark brown earth, loose, mixed with yellow clay and stones, in grave filling being found a copper applique; the deceased was buried in a large trapezoid gravepit with rounded corners; next to the skeleton on the northern side, traces of the wooden coffin could be seen; relative chronology: cuts Gr5, Gr6, Gr8, Gr9 and Gr10, observation: likely buried after the tower construction. The grave was quite unusual, because there was a fairly long distance between the long bones (0.45 m), the bones did not lie in the usual position (femur, tibia and fibula seemed turned around: on the right side of the skeleton lay the long bones from the left side and the reverse), everything seemed to come from two different skeletons (it is possible that the right side of Gr9 and the left side of Gr10 had slid into another gravepit). Since the gravepit was excavated at a depth of 2.40 m from the topsoil, because of the groundwater that emerged in the pit we had to abandon the research of the skeleton (Pl. 4/3); Inv. No.: 2537.

Gr 12: S 1; Ad: -741.32 m (1.13 m from the medieval stepping level); O: -; V: infans I; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, the skull is missing, only the upper part of the chest is preserved from the skeleton (shoulder and some ribs), the grave was cut by the eastern foundation of the tower; traces of the wooden coffin were found on the ribs; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with a few pieces of yellow clay; relative chronology: before the construction of the tower; Inv. No.: 2538.

Gr 13: S 1; Ad: -741.34 m (1.11 m from the medieval stepping level); O: -; V: infans I; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, the skull is missing, only the skull is preserved from the skeleton, the grave was cut by the eastern foundation of the tower; traces of the wooden coffin were found on the

skull; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with a few pieces of yellow clay; relative chronology: before the construction of the tower; Inv. No.: 2539.

Gr 14: S 1; Ad: -741.32 m (1.12 m from the medieval stepping level); O: -; V: infans I; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, from the skeleton only the tibiae and the right femur survived *in situ*, slightly displaced; the grave was disturbed by Gr 6 and cut by the eastern foundation of the tower; traces of the wooden coffin were found on the bones; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with a few pieces of yellow clay; relative chronology: previous to Gr6 and the tower construction.

Gr 15: S2; Ad: -741.58 m (0.40 m from the medieval stepping level); O: -; V: -; condition of the bones: -; position of the skeleton: -; no bones were found in the rectangularly shaped gravepit, with traces of the wooden coffin; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with a few pieces of yellow clay; relative chronology: previous to Gr16.

Gr 16: S 2; Ad: -739.97 m (2.01 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 270°; V: adultus; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: the skull was dislocated, arms bent, hands placed on the sacrum and pelvis, partially examined because part of the skeleton entered the eastern profile of the trench; gravepit: the deceased was placed in a rectangular gravepit, slightly rounded at the corners; next to the skeleton were identified traces of the wooden coffin, with iron nails at the corners; grave filling: dark gray earth, loose, mixed with pieces of yellow clay, with small stones, sporadically pigmented with mortar, brick and osteological fragments; relative chronology: cuts Gr15, Gr17 and Gr18; observations: this grave is one of the last burials of the 18th century, as its pit starts directly from under the stone slabs that represent the last stepping level of the church before its demolition in 1766 (Pl. 4/4); Inv. No.: 3980.

Gr 17: S 2; Ad: -740.99 m (0.99 m from the medieval stepping level); O: -; V: -; condition of the bones: -; position of the skeleton: no bones were found in the gravepit; gravepit: rectangular, slightly rounded at the corners; grave filling: yellowish-brown earth, loose, mixed with pieces of brick and mortar; relative chronology: the gravepit was cut by Gr16 and the grave cuts Gr15 and Gr18 (Pl. 4/4).

Gr 18: S 2; Ad: -741.44 m (0.54 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 272°; V: adultus; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, skull tilted to the left, with the right arm slightly bent and stretched at the side of the body, hands placed near the pelvis, only the skull and right side of the skeleton survived, the rest of the body was disturbed by Gr16 and Gr17; traces of the wooden coffin could be seen; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with small pieces of yellow clay and mortar; relative chronology: it is cut by Gr16 and Gr17; observations: previous to Gr16 and Gr17 (Pl. 4/4); Inv. No.: 3981.

Gr 19: S 2; Ad: -741.5 m (0.54 m from the medieval stepping level); O: -; V: -; condition of the bones: -; position of the skeleton: no bones were found, only traces of the wooden coffin; grave filling: loose black earth mixed with a few pieces of yellow clay.

Gr 20: S 2; Ad: -741.38 m (0.60 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 272°; V: infans II; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, only the tibia, fibula, tarsals, metatarsals and phalanges were preserved from the skeleton, from the knees upwards it was disturbed by the western wall of the church; fragments of the wooden coffin were found; grave filling: black earth, relatively compact, slightly clayish and pigmented with yellow clay pigments; relative chronology: prior to the construction of the medieval church; observations: the grave was found in the immediate vicinity of the southern and western walls of the Gothic church, being intersected by that western. AMS dating: DeA-7118: 1450-1524 (Fig. 10/2; Pl. 4/ 5, 6); Inv. No.: 3982.

Gr 21: S 2; Ad: -741.38 m (0.60 m from the medieval stepping level); O: -; V: infant I, condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: the bones were not in anatomical connection, but most likely belong to the same individual; fragments of the skull cap, the mandible, a pelvis, the phalanges coming from one of the hands, a humerus, two ribs, a femur, respectively the tibia were identified; traces of the wooden coffin were found; grave filling: black earth, relatively compact, slightly clayish and pigmented with yellow clay pigments; Inv. No.: 3983.

Gr 22: S 2; Ad: -741.31 m (0.88 m from the medieval stepping level); O: -; V: adultus; condition of the bones: poor; position of the skeleton: the osteological fragments coming from an upper limb, respectively a lower limb, did not lay in anatomical position; the gravepit: rectangular, with traces of the wooden coffin; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with a few pieces of yellow clay and pebbles, a nail and two pottery fragments were also

collected from the filling; relative chronology: prior to the construction of the medieval church; observations: the grave was outlined in the immediate vicinity of the southern foundation of the Gothic church, being intersected by it (Pl. 4/5); Inv. No.: 3984.

Gr 23: S 3; Ad: -741.44 m (0.54 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 272°; V: adultus; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, only the right side of the rib cage, respectively the right collarbone, survived from the skeleton; small fragments of wood and charcoal were also noted; grave filling: loose black earth, sporadically pigmented with yellow clay; relative chronology: prior to the construction of the Gothic church, it was also disturbed by Gr24; observations: the grave was found beneath the northern foundation of the medieval church; AMS dating: DeA-7305: 1408–1441 (Fig. 10/3; Pl. 4/7); Inv. No.: 3985.

Gr 24: S 3; Ad: -741 m (0.98 m from the medieval stepping level); O: -; V: adultus, condition of the bones: precarious; position of the skeleton: osteological fragments were not in anatomical position, the skull, a scapula, a clavicle, two vertebrae, a pelvis, an ulna and two rib fragments survived; the gravepit: rectangular with rounded corners, traces of a wooden coffin and an iron nail were found; grave filling: clayish yellow earth, mixed with brown earth, compact, mixed with stones, fragments of brick and painted plaster; relative chronology: it partially disturbed Gr23, it was also intersected by Gr25; observations: predates Gr25 and is later to Gr23 (Pl. 4/8); Inv. No.: 3986.

Gr 25: S 3; Ad: -740.89 m (1.09 m from the medieval stepping level); O: 270°; V: adultus; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, skull tilted to the left, upper left limb lying next to the body and placed under the pelvis, partially examined because the right side of the skeleton lies below the southern profile of the trench; gravepit: in the rectangular pit were found two wooden nails of the coffin; grave filling: loose black earth, mixed with yellow clay and stones; relative chronology: intersected Gr24, in turn disturbed by Gr26, which cut the legs; observations: later to Gr24 and previous to Gr26 (Pl. 4/8); Inv. No.: 3987.

Gr 26: S 3; Ad: -740.61 m (1.37 m from the medieval stepping level); O: -; V: adultus; condition of the bones: good; position of the skeleton: dorsal decubitus, only a portion of the deceased's skull was identified in the trench, the rest lies below the eastern and southern profile of the trench; gravepit: traces of wooden coffins and iron nails were found in a rectangular pit with rounded corners; grave filling: yellowish-brown, clayish earth, mixed with pieces of brick and stones; relative chronology: intersects Gr25 (Pl. 4/8).

2. Funerary inventory

Abbreviations:

Sizes (**S**): length (L:), width (l:), and thickness (gr);

L: findspot, trench and stratigraphic situation, depth (Ad.);

Inv. No.: inventory number (plate/fig).

1). Applique made by pressing in the *au repoussé* technique from a red copper plate, rectangular in shape, decorated with a simple circle in relief. Its edge has an all around embossed string decoration, repeated on the circle. At the corners and in the middle, the piece has small perforations, by which it was attached to a fabric. The piece is composed of two fragments in a rather poor preservation state. **S**: L: 1.9 cm; l: 1.6 cm; gr: 0.1 cm; **L**: S 1, from Gr3a,b, Ad.: 741.42 m; Dating: the 15th century; **Inv. No.:** 2516–2517 (Fig. 11/2).

2). Applique fragment made by pressing in the *au repoussé* technique from a red copper plate, rectangularly shaped, decorated with a simple circle in relief. The edge has an all around embossed string decoration, repeated on the circle as well. At the corners and in the middle the piece exhibits small perforations, by which it was attached to a fabric. The piece is in a relatively good preservation state. **S**: L: 1.6 cm; l: 1.6 cm; gr: 0.1 cm; **L**: S 1, from Gr6, Ad.: 741.37 m; Dating: the 15th century; **Inv. No.:** 2518 (Fig. 11/1).

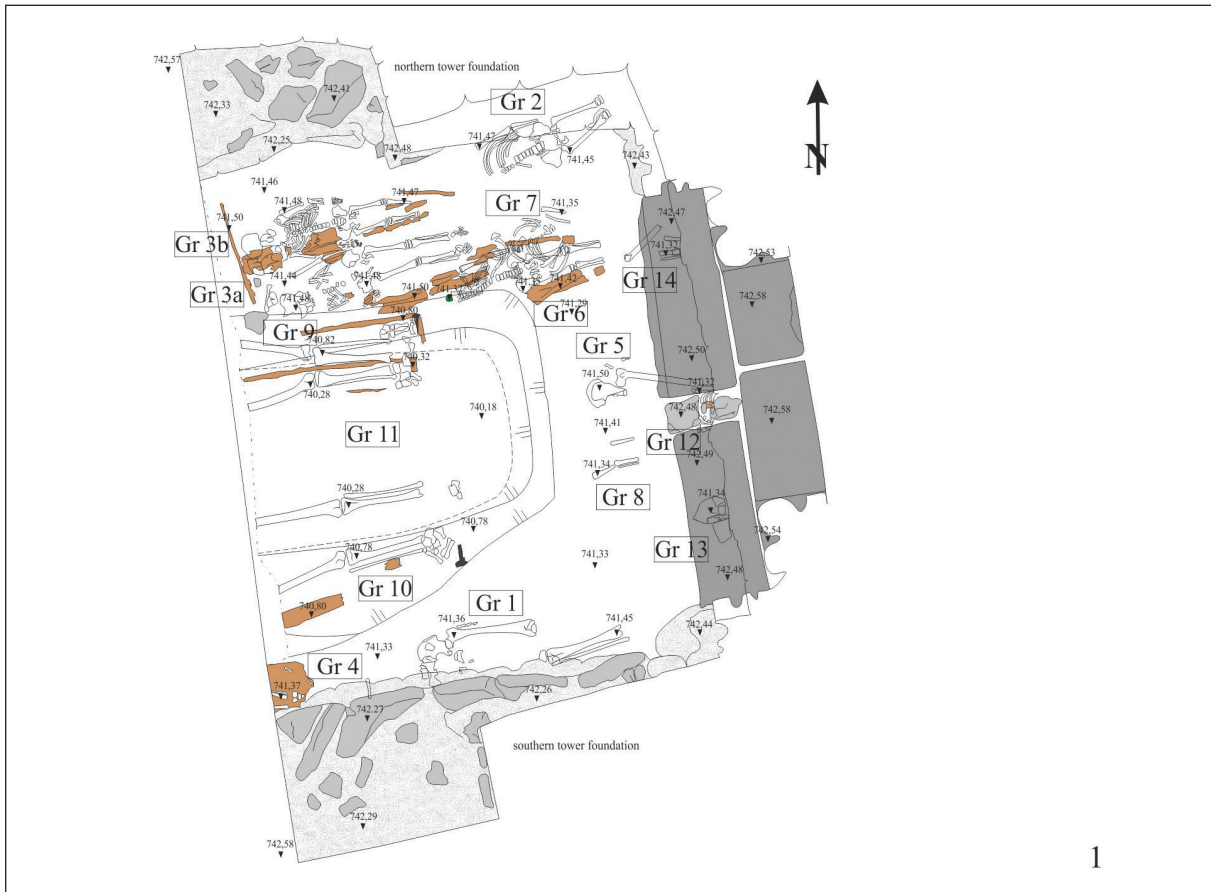
3). Fragment of an applique made by pressing in the *au repoussé* technique from a red copper plate, rectangular in shape. The piece has a simple embossed border, and the inner edge of the border has a slightly worn pearl decoration. The central part is more richly decorated: from a circular core grow tendrils with flowers and bulbs. At the corners there are small perforations, by which it was sown to a fabric. Three fragments of the same piece were discovered, which are in a relatively good state of preservation. **S**: L: 2.9 cm; l: 2.2 cm; gr: 0.1 cm; **L**: S 1, from the grave filling of Gr10; Ad.: 0.66–1.57 m compared to the topsoil; Dating: the 15th century; **Inv. No.:** 2520–2521 (Fig. 11/4).

4). Applique fragment made by pressing using the *au repoussé* technique from a red copper plate, rectangular in shape, decorated with a rosette in relief. The central part of the flower is decorated with small rhombuses, while the eight petals are stylized. At the corners, the piece has small perforations, by which it was attached to a fabric. The piece is in relatively good condition. **S:** L: 3.3 cm; l: 2.2 cm; gr: 0.1 cm; **L:** S 1, from the grave filling of Gr11; **Inv. No.:** 2519 (Fig. 11/3).

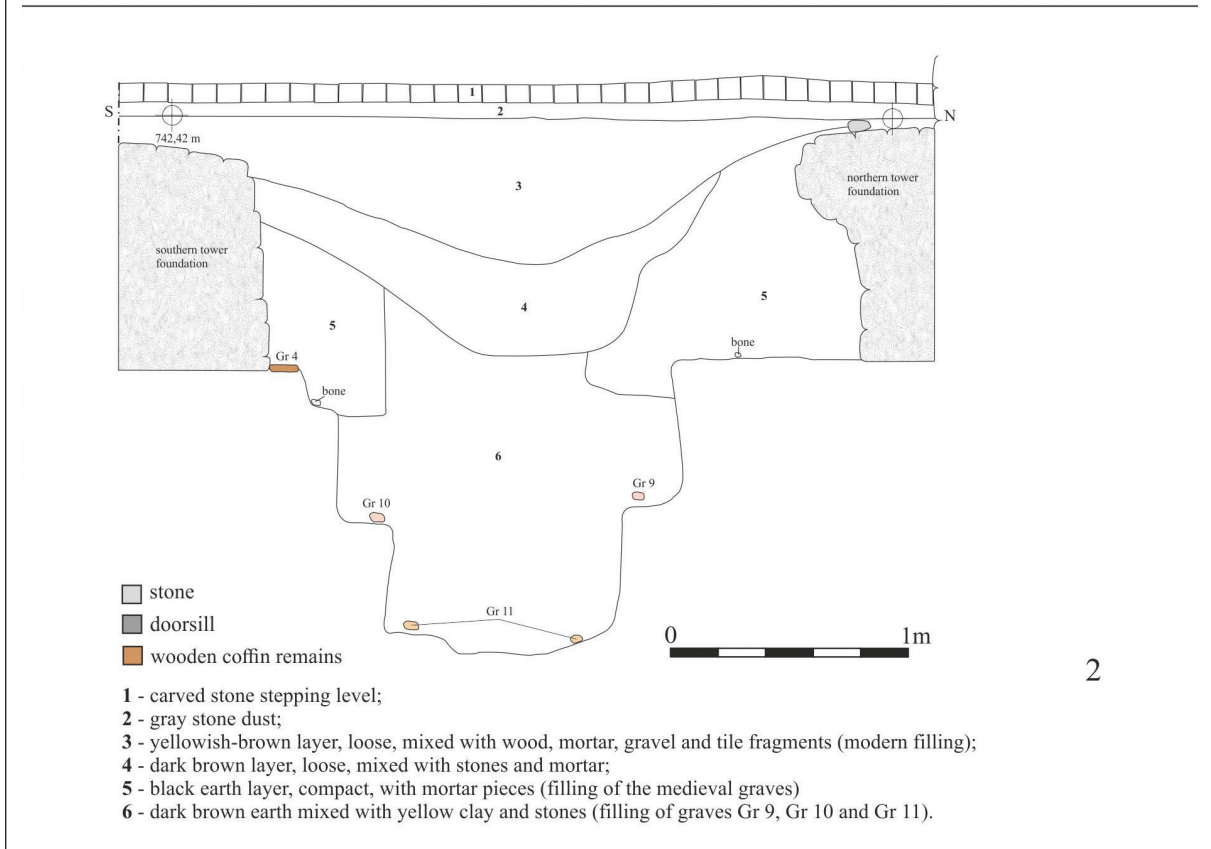
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1



2

Plate 1. Joseni. Roman Catholic Church. 1. The final plan of S1 with the discovered graves; 2. Western Profile of S1.

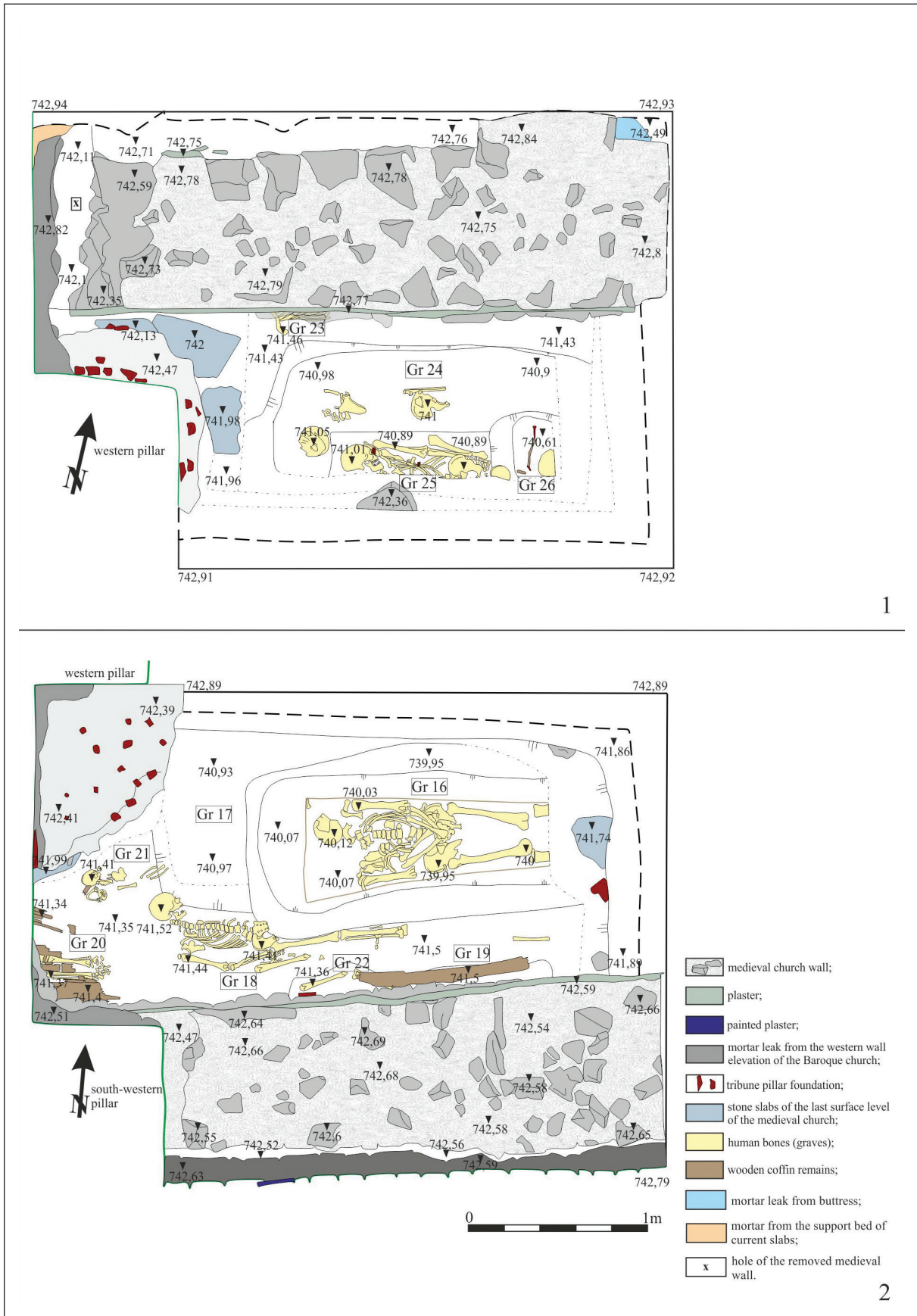


Plate 2. Joseni. Roman Catholic Church. 1. The final plan of S3 with the discovered graves; 2. The final plan of S2 with the discovered graves.

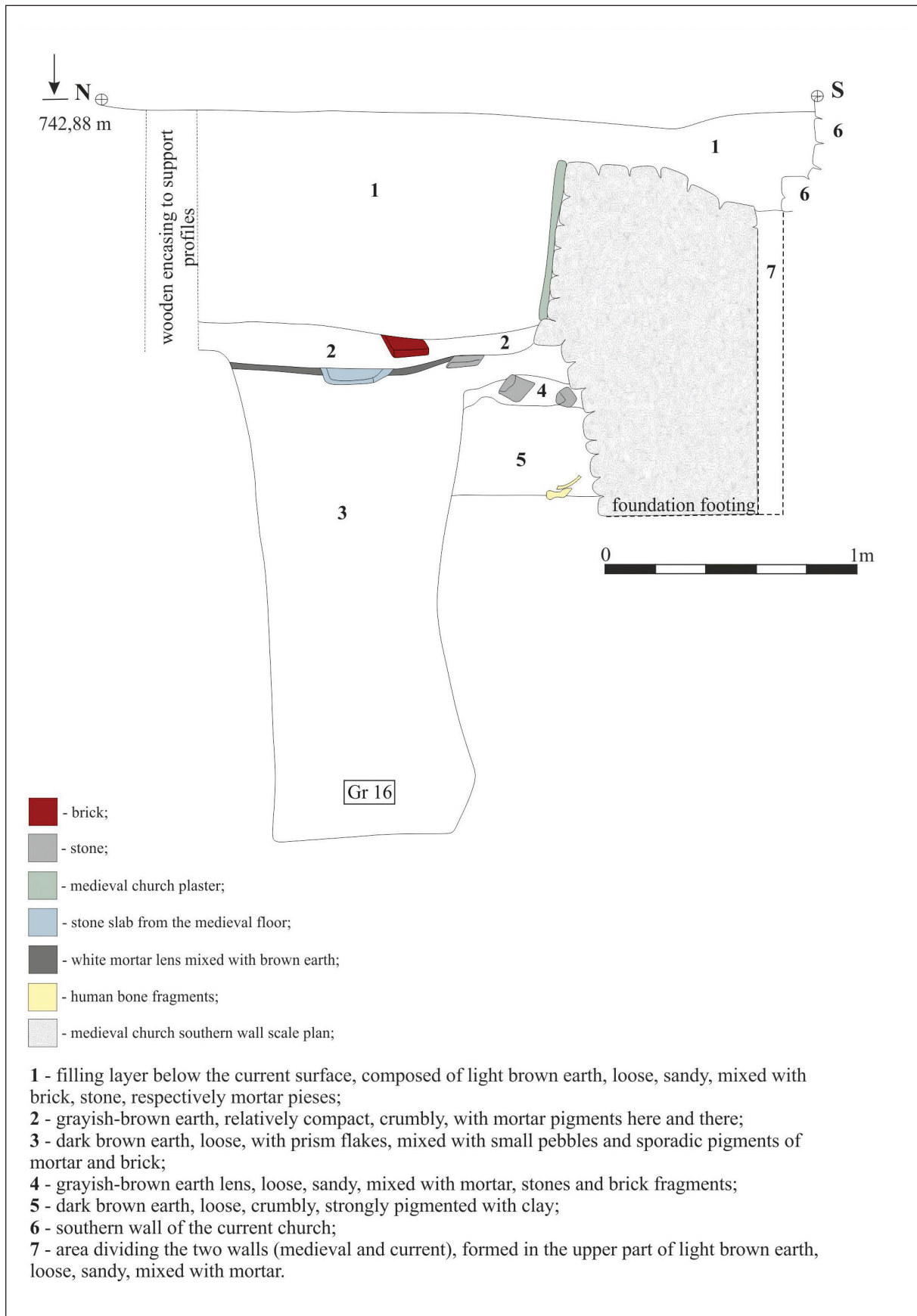


Plate 3. Joseni. Roman Catholic Church. Eastern Profile of S2.



Plate 4. Joseni. Roman Catholic Church. Medieval and pre-modern graves discovered during the excavations. 1. Gr3a, b and Gr 2; 2. Applique *in situ* from Gr6; 3. Gr9, Gr10 and Gr11; 4. Gr16 – Gr19; 5. Gr20 and Gr22; 6. Gr20; 7. Gr23; 8. Gr24 – Gr26.

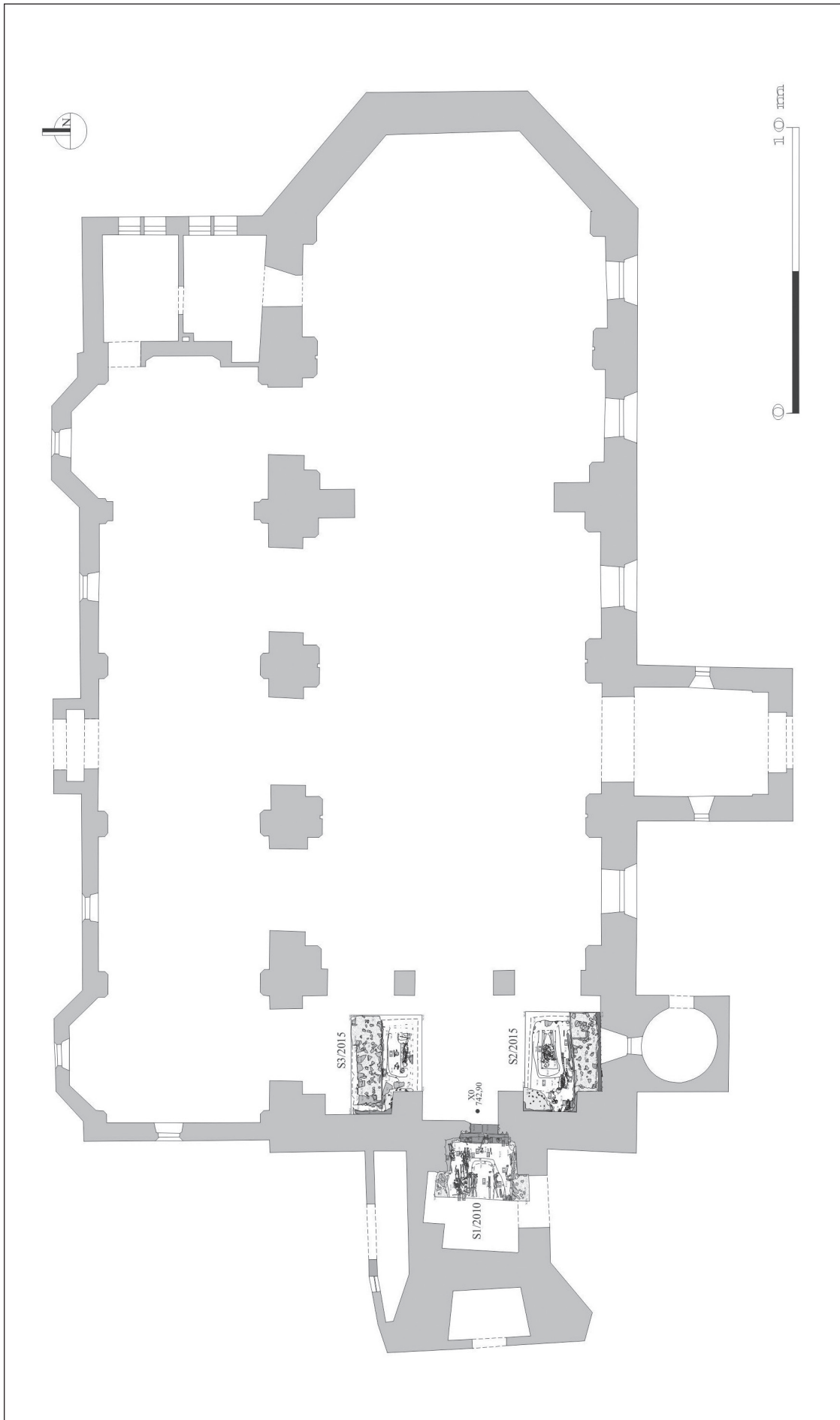


Plate 5. Joseni. Roman Catholic Church. General plan of the excavations.

Abbreviations

AEM	Archäologisch-epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Österreich-Ungarn, Vienna.
AM	Arheologia Moldovei, Iași.
AMN	Acta Musei Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
AMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis, Zalău.
AMV	Acta Musei Varnaensis, Varna.
Angustia	Angustia. Revista Muzeului Național al Carpaților Răsăriteni, Sf. Gheorghe.
Anuarul MJIAP (S.N.)	Anuarul Muzeului de Istorie și Arheologie Prahova, Serie Nouă, Ploiești.
Antiquity	Antiquity. A review of world archaeology, Durham.
Archaeological Journal	Archaeological Journal. New Series. Chișinău.
ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értesítő, Budapest.
ArchPol	Archaeologia Polona, Warsaw.
ArchRozhledy	Archeologické Rozhledy, Praha.
ASM	Archaeologica Slovaca Monographiae, Bratislava.
BAR (Int. S.)	British Archaeological Reports (International Series), Oxford.
Biharea	Biharea. Culegere de studii și materiale de etnografie și artă, Oradea.
BMG	Bibliotheca Musei Giurgiuvensis, Giurgiu.
BMJT	Buletinul Muzeului Județean Teleorman. Seria Arheologie, Alexandria.
BMM	Bibliotheca Musei Marisiensis, Târgu Mureș.
Budapest Régiségei	Budapest Régiségei Régészeti és Történeti Évkönyv. Budapest.
CA București	Cercetări arheologice în București, București.
CCA	Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice, București.
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.
CsSzME	A Csíki Székely Múzeum Évkönyve. Csíkszereda.
Dacia (N.S.)	Dacia. Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne. Nouvelle serie. București.
Dolgozatok	Dolgozatok a Magyar Királyi Ferencz József Tudományegyetem Archaeológiai Intézetéből. Szeged.
EphNap	Ephemeris Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
Erdély	Erdély. Turistai, fürdőügyi és néprajzi folyóirat, Cluj-Napoca.
FontArchPrag	Fontes Archaeologici Pragenses, Prague.
Földtközl.	Földtani közlöny, Budapest.
HOMÉ	A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve, Miskolc.
ILD	C. C. Petolescu, <i>Inscripții latine din Dacia</i> , Bucharest 2005.
JAHA	Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology, Cluj-Napoca.
Jahrb. RGZM	Jahrbuch des Römisch Germanischen Zentralmuseums zu Mainz, Mainz.
JAMÉ	Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve, Nyiregyháza.
Karpatika	Karpatika, Uzhorod.
LMI	List of Historic Monuments, updated 2015.
Marisia	Marisia. Studies and Materials. Archeology. Târgu-Mureș.
MCA (S.N.)	Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice Serie Nouă. București
MemAntiq	Memoria Antiquitatis, Piatra Neamț.
NNA	Nordisk Numismatisk Årsskrift, Stockholm.
PAS	Prähistorische Archäologie in Südosteuropa, Rahden/Westf.
PAT	Patrimonium Archaeologicum Transylvanicum, Cluj-Napoca.
Paléo	PALEO – Revue d'archéologie préhistorique, Les Eyzies-de-Tayac-Sireuil.
Pallas	Pallas. Revue d'études antiques, Toulouse.

PNAS	Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, Washington.
PZ	Prähistorische Zeitschrift. Berlin.
RAN	National Archaeological Repertory.
RM	Revista Muzeelor, București.
Sargetia	Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis, Deva.
SatuMareSC	Satu Mare Studii și Comunicări, Satu Mare.
SCIV(A)	Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche și Arheologie, București.
SCȘMI	Studii și Comunicări Științifice ale Muzeelor de Istorie, București.
SIB	Studii de Istorie a Banatului, Timișoara.
SlovArch	Slovenská archeológia, Nitra.
SP	Studii de Preistorie, București.
St.Cerc.Antropol.	Studii și Cercetări de Antropologie, București.
StudUBB-G	Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Seria Geologia, Cluj-Napoca.
ZborníkSlovNMA	Zborník Slovenského Národného Múzea. Archeológia, Bratislava.
ZSA	Ziridava. Studia Archaeologica, Arad.
ИАИ	Известия на Археологическия Институт при БАН, София.