

# ETERNITATEA ARHEOLOGIEI

STUDII ÎN ONOAREA  
PROFESORULUI DUMITRU BOGHIAN  
LA A 65-A ANIVERSARE



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**ARHEOLOGUL  
DUMITRU BOGHIAN**



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## ABREVIERI

**ActaMN** – Acta Musei Napocensis, Muzeul Național al Transilvaniei, Cluj-Napoca.

**ActaMP** – Acta Musei Porolissensis, Muzeul Județean de istorie și Artă, Zalău.

**ActaMT** – Acta Musei Tutovenss, Muzeul „Vasile Pârvan”, Bârlad.

**ActaTS** – Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis, Institutul pentru cercetarea Patrimoniului Cultural Transilvănean în context european, Universitatea „Lucian Blaga”, Sibiu.

**AnB** - Analele Banatului. Serie Nouă, Muzeul Național al Banatului, Timișoara.

**Anthropologie** - Anthropologie. International Journal of the Science of Man, Brno.

**Apulum** – Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis, Muzeul Național al Unirii, Alba Iulia.

**ArhMold** – Arheologia Moldovei, Institutul de Arheologie, Iași.

**ArheoVest** - ArheoVest. Interdisciplinaritate în Arheologie și Istorie. Universitatea de Vest Timișoara, JatePress Kiadó, Szeged.

**BAI** – Bibliotheca Archaeologica Iassiensis, Institutul de Arheologie, Iași.

**BAM** - Bibliotheca Archaeologica Moldaviae, Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași.

**BAR** – British Archaeological Reports, Oxford.

**BB** - Bibliotheca Brukenthal, Muzeul Național Brukenthal, Sibiu.

**BS** - Bibliotheca Septemcastrensis, Universitatea „Lucian Blaga”, Sibiu.

**BT** - Biblioteca Thracologica, Institutul de Tracologie, București.

**BMA** – Bibliotheca Memoriae Antiquitatis, Centrul Internațional de Cercetare a Culturii Cucuteni, Piatra Neamț

**BMAp** - Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis, Muzeul Național al Unirii, Alba Iulia.

**BMN** - Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis, Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, Cluj-Napoca.

**BerRGK** – Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Frankfurt am Main.

**BMJT** - Buletinul Muzeului Județean Teleorman, Muzeul Județean Teleorman, Alexandria.

**Bull. Soc. préhist. Fr.** - Bulletin de la société préhistorique française, Paris.

**Carpica** – Carpica, Complexul Muzeal „Iulian Antonescu”, Bacău.

**CCAR** – Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, Comisia Națională de Arheologie, București.

**CCDJ** – Cultură și Civilizație la Dunărea de Jos, Muzeul Dunării de Jos, Călărași.

**Cercetări Arheologice** – Cercetări Arheologice, Biblioteca Muzeologică, Muzeul Național de Istorie a României, București.

**Cercetări Istorice** – Cercetări Istorice, Muzeul de Istorie a Moldovei, Iași.

**CC** – Codrul Cosminului, Universitatea Cernăuți (1924-1939); Codrul Cosminului, Serie Nouă (din 1995), Analele Științifice, seria Istorie, Universitatea „Ștefan cel Mare”, Suceava.

**Dacia** – Dacia. Recherches et découvertes archéologiques en Roumanie. Nouvelle Série: Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne (din 1957), Institutul de Arheologie „Vasile Pârvan”, București.

**Danubius** – Danubius, Revista Muzeului de Istorie, Muzeul de Istorie „Paul Păltănea”, Galați.

**Documenta Praehistorica** – Documenta Praehistorica, University of Ljubljana.

**ERAUL** - Études et Recherches Archéologiques de l'Université de Liège, Liège

**Hierasus** – Hierasus. Anuarul Muzeului Județean, Muzeul Județean Botoșani, Botoșani.

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**JahrbRGZM** – Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz, Mainz.

**JBLM** – Jahrbuch des Bukowiner Landes-Museums, Czernowitz.

**MAF** - Münchner Archäologische Forschungen, München.

**Marisia** – Marisia. Studii și Materiale de Arheologie, Istorie și Etnografie, Muzeul Județean Mureș, Târgu Mureș.

**Marmatia** – Marmatia. Muzeul Județean Maramureș, Baia Mare.

**Materiale/MCA** – Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice, Institutul de Arheologie „Vasile Pârvan”, București.

**Materiały Archeologiczne** – Materiały Archeologiczne, Kraków.

**MemAntiq** – Memoria Antiquitatis. Acta Musei Petrodavensis, Complexul Muzeal Județean Neamț, Piatra Neamț.

**MAGW** – Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien, Wien.

**Muzeul Național** – Muzeul Național, Muzeul Național de Istorie a României, București.

**PBF** – Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Münster, Frankfurt am Main, München, Stuttgart.

**Pontica** – Pontica, Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie, Constanța.

**Préhistoire art et sociétés** - Préhistoire art et sociétés : bulletin de la Société préhistorique Ariège-Pyrénées, Toulouse.

**Prehist. Eur.** - Préhistoire Européenne, Liège.

**PrzArch** – Przegląd Archeologiczny, Poznań.

**Pyretus** – Buletinul Muzeului de Istorie și Etnografie Ungheni, Ungheni

**PUF** - Presses universitaires de France

**PZ/PrähistZeitschr** – Prähistorische Zeitschrift, Berlin.

**Revista Arheologică** – Revista Arheologică, S.N., Academia de Științe a Moldovei. Institutul Patrimoniului Cultural. Centrul de Arheologie, Chișinău.

**Revista Bistriței** – Revista Bistriței, Muzeul Județean Bistrița-Năsăud, Bistrița.

**SA** - Slovenská archeológia, Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied Bratislava.

**SAA** – Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica, Universitatea „Al. I. Cuza”, Iași.

**SAHD** – Scripta Archaeologica et Historica Dacoromaniae, Iași.

**Sargetia** – Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis, Muzeul Civilizației Dacice și Romane, Deva.

**SBA** - Saarbrücher Beiträge zur Altertumskunden, Bonn.

**SCIV/SCIVA** – Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche (și Arheologie), Institutul de Arheologie „Vasile Pârvan”, București.

**Stratum Plus** – Stratum Plus, Sankt Petersburg-Chișinău-Odesa-București.

**Studii de Preistorie** – Studii de Preistorie, Asociația Română de Arheologie, București.

**Suceava/Studii și materiale. Istorie** – Anuarul Muzeului Județean/ Anuarul Complexului Muzeal Județean/ Anuarul Muzeului Bucovinei, Muzeul Național al Bucovinei, Suceava.

**Terra Sebus** – Terra Sebus, м Acta Musei Sabesiensis, Muzeul Municipal „Ioan Raica”, Sebeș.

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**Археология/Arheologija** – Археология, Кijв.

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**КСИА АН УССР/КСИА АН УРСР** - Краткие Сообщения Института Археологии АН УССР, Москва.

**КСИМК** – Краткие Сообщения Института истории материальной культуры, Москва.

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# MEGA-STRUCTURE FROM NEBELIVKA – THE LARGEST TEMPLE OF TRYPILLIA CULTURE

MYKHAILO VIDEIKO  
NATALIIA BURDO

**Key words:** Cucuteni-Trypillia, Nebelivka, megastructură, templu.

**Abstract:** În ultimul deceniu prospecțiunile magnetice au condus la descoperirea unor structuri mari, probabil clădiri destinate adunărilor comunității. Unele dintre ele au atins dimensiuni nemaivăzute în epocile anterioare, de la câteva sute până la câteva mii de metri pătrați. Dar numai câteva au fost investigate. Cea mai mare dintre ele provine din așezarea Nebelivka din Ucraina. Dimensiunea sa este de aproximativ 20 x 60 m. O parte a complexului este reprezentată de o clădire cu două niveluri. La primul nivel se găseau platforme altar, cea mai mare dintre ele având un diametru de peste patru metri. Între descoperirile neobișnuite se înscriu un pandantiv de aur și mai multe zeci de jetoane de lut. Probabil această clădire era cel mai mare templu al așezării. Putea să adăpostească de la câteva sute la câteva mii de vizitatori în același timp.

Nebelivka mega-structure was discovered by magnetic prospection in 2009 and excavated in 2012<sup>1</sup>. Interpretations of this object now have impressive bibliography, rapidly increased last years, including 3 (or more?) possible reconstructions and much more interpretations<sup>2</sup>. Last 8 years much more mega-structures were discovered at Cucuteni-Trypillia sites<sup>3</sup>, but investigated in Nebelivka still is the largest.

Excavations, carried out at 2012 confirmed the size and configuration of the remains of mega-structure, or “dwelling B5” (**Fig. 11: 1**). It consisted of burnt daub with imprints of wood, which usually recognized as remains of burnt houses. Remains of some elements, as clay platforms, started at 0,2 – 0,4 m from surface. Traces of plowing were cleaned by British team at W part of trench at depth of 0,4 – 0,5 m from modern surface at the second

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<sup>1</sup> Чапмен та ін. 2010; Видейко и др. 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Videiko 2016; Відейко, Бурдо, 2015a; Chapman *et alii* 2014b; Gaydarska 2015; Корвин-Пиотровский 2015, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Hofmann *et alii* 2019.

week of excavations (**Fig. 1/1**). The same traces were visible at E side of trench. It means that a lot of objects were destroyed or removed (for example, pieces from binocular vessel which was on altar elevation – **Fig. 4/1-2**) by plowing, which partly changed the picture of mega-structure destruction, which we documented at 2012 (**Fig. 1/3, 4**). It means that we can speak about finds and features *in situ* starting from depth more than 0,5 m from contemporary surface.

From usual houses dwelling B5 diverged mainly by size and also by some elements of design. The first circumstance gives us possibility to work with this remains according to the conventional procedure of investigations, documenting and interpretation of dwellings remains from Trypillia sites<sup>4</sup>.

Remains of dwelling B5 were oriented by long side nearly West-East. They consisted of two parts: accumulation of burnt daubs (Western part, near 20-24 x 38-40m) and area partly surrounded by narrow (1-1,5m) lines of burnt daubs (Eastern part, near 20 x 20m) (**Fig. 2/1**). At the Western part were investigated two layers of burnt daubs, associated with plastering of wooden constructions, which belonged to overlapping structures of loft (upper layer) and level ceiling (lower layer). Both layers of daub had imprints of different wooden constructions. Fixing of all imprints gave the evidences for reconstruction of the wooden skeleton of structure (**Fig. 2/2-6**).

On the upper layer were found only imprints of planks. The direction of most imprints was S-N, it means crosswise the long side of structure, as it usually we see exploring Trypillia culture dwellings. This imprints associated with the 3,5 – 4 m planks up to 10 cm thick. It was enough to hold 5-7 cm plastering from clay mixed with reduced straw. Construction of loft ceiling may be was supported by the same system on frame construction as the level ceiling (see below).

The lower layer demonstrated not only imprints of planks, but of the numerous round beams which belonged to sophisticated frame construction (**Fig. 2/2; fig. 8/1**). In many cases places of beams were well visible after the cleaning up upper layer. It was possible because plaster was broken exactly on line of beams (**Fig. 2/3-4**). Fixing of this lines gave us the picture of horizontal frame construction. All imprints which were fixed here belonged to round beams 20-25 cm in diameter. On few daubs also imprints of ropes were visible, by which this beams were fastened to other parts of the frame, probably to poles (**Fig. 2/6**).

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<sup>4</sup> Chapman *et alii* 2014b: table 1; table 4.

Horizontal frame construction consisted of 3,5 x 4 – 4 x 4 (4,5) m sections (**Fig. 2/2**). Such size is comparable with the width of usual Cucuteni-Trypillia dwellings (4 – 5,5 m). So it was possible to cover each frame by 3,5 – 4 – 4,5 planks. It was nice solution how to create impressive structure 20 m wide and 38 m long. For long side were created from 11 to such 12 sections, for short side up to 6. It means that this construction also included up to 91 (7 x 13) poles, which also supported the frames of the loft construction.

Such strong frame construction created a good foundation for the first floor rooms. Plan of this part of dwelling B5 (**Fig. 5**) is based on the finds of the remains of thresholds and location of such details of interior, as a long elevation – podium (near 18 x 0,4 m) (**Fig. 2/4**) and round elevation (up to 2 m in diameter). Such elements of interior are usual and well known for smaller Cucuteni-Trypillia dwellings, only the size in case of Nebelivka structure was different. All mentioned above objects associated with the lower layer of burnt daubs.

From the Eastern side 1,7 m wide threshold located exactly at the middle of dwelling B5 (**Fig. 3/7**). It was based on beam from the front frame of construction. To the left and to the right were visible postholes from vertical poles. The Eastern entrance located also at the middle frame. Remains of the next two thresholds located on both sides of the next (the second) frame to the West (**Fig. 3/6**). It means that here were entrances to two large rooms, located around 4 m wide and up to 12 m corridor, at the end of which the fourth, 2,2 m width threshold was found. Here was entrance to the largest room with the long podium under the Southern wall. It was stucked to wall, which was well seen in few places. All rooms, specially the largest, were divided by rows of frame construction poles.

The last threshold located at the middle of the Western side, in 4 m from its beginning, also based on the beam of frame construction. Here was a Western wall of the central hall of the structure. At this part of structure, but before this wall located also round elevation, associated with fireplace, usual for Cucuteni-Trypillia houses construction and size. It means that here was a room, suitable for whole-year live, only one at this structure.

At the corridor between two rooms was found one golden pendant and two bone (**Fig. 6/1-2**). Study of the golden pendant made it possible to raise the question of a likely source of metal related to the territory of the North-Western Anatolia, where the oldest electrum pieces dated up to 4800-4600 years ago. This is one of the few testimonies of the very distant

connections of the Cucuteni-Trypillia cultural complex in the southern direction<sup>5</sup>.

From three sides the first floor was surrounded by an open gallery, associated with daub horizon of the level ceiling extended on 1,5 m from the line of the walls. This gallery was constructively continued at the Eastern part of mega-structure, where its remains were represented by 1 – 1,5 m lines of burnt daubs with imprints of wood on bottom (**Fig. 1/1**).

The ground floor level marked by remains of seven fired clay platforms of different size, but the same construction. One of them, cross-like (4,3 x 4,3 m) located on axis of symmetry close to Western side of structure. Other six situated close to Eastern side in two equal groups (3 in each), to the left and to the right to axis of symmetry (**Fig. 5/2**). Under the Northern wall remains of two bins with stones inside were discovered. Placement of all features were coordinated with location of poles, which divided the space of the ground floor. Level of the floor was leveled and it was covered by brown (up to 6 cm thickness) clay plaster, which was not burnt.

Yard which located from the Eastern side of dwelling B5, near 20 x 20 m size was surrounded by gallery, may be with external wall. Any traces of entrance were found, put it possible that it was opposite to the entrance to the first floor. At space of yard (near 400 sq. m) only near 100 fragments of pottery and animal bones were found. It demonstrated a big difference with cultural layer around other three sides structure, where above 1500 such finds happened. It is visible on kite images, that color of this place was black, as top-filling of the pit (**Fig. 1/2**). Unfortunately, we failed to examine only part of this place.

Also is interesting 0,4 m difference with the levels of yard and the ground floor, which means that this part of mega-structure possibly stayed on elevation. May be this feature appeared because here is small slope, which was necessary to improve in process of erection of mega-structure. This feature possibly also had some symbolical significance.

We have any direct evidences about the construction of the roof. It is possible to suppose that it looks as on pottery models of houses, which were found on sites of Nebelivka group: arched (probably from rush mates) with conventionalized bull horns over pediment.

Platforms 1-7 possibly to recognize as altars. Cross-like altars with painted surface and incised decoration well known from excavations at Volodymyrivka, Maydanetske and other BII-CI sites at this region, also from

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<sup>5</sup> Відейко, Гошко 2018.

the pottery models of dwellings, found at this region. Altars/platforms 1 and 2 stand out by their size, which is two-three times more, than usually). Surface of altar 2 was decorated by incised lines (**Fig. 4/3**). Altar/platform 5 after restoration, which first time was done for this kind of objects, demonstrated a nice sample of decoration by paint and incised lines (**Fig. 2/1-2**). System of ornament is similar to decoration of the large storage vessels.

Altars were repaired several times: 1<sup>st</sup> – up to 7-8, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3-4, other – 2-3 times. Each layer was burnt at process of using (**Fig. 11/3**). Near the 2<sup>nd</sup> altar fragments of binocular vessels were found, on 1<sup>st</sup> – large broken pot and two bowls. Platform 8 from the 1<sup>st</sup> floor recognized as remains of fireplace, partly destroyed at central part. Near this fireplace two broken pots were found. Clay dolly tub located close to platform 2 (**Fig. 2/5**). Bottom was partly burnt. On it remained some clay construction (at central part) and large granite milling stone, broken pot at corner. Corners of the bin probably were decorated by some modeled features., which not preserved. From the second bin, located near the 1<sup>st</sup> to the West, preserved only piece of its corner and few pieces of the walls. At its area also pieces of the large milling stones were found. Such bins known from excavations of Cucuteni-Trypillia sites, but usually the largest never had such size. Ritual milling and production of bread was usual thing for sanctuaries.

All other features related to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of dwelling B5 (**Fig. 5/3**). Clay thresholds situated at two entrances from East and West. The Eastern threshold (1,7 m wide) two times larger, than usual threshold known from excavations of Trypillia dwellings. Close to it part of clay arch, which probably decorated this doors frame was found. The middle threshold to the largest room was 2,2 m wide. Such doors are comparable with the width of entrances to temples from Mesopotamia. Near the one threshold remains of clay decoration of the doors frame were found (**Fig. 2/6**).

Podium with three large storage vessels located under the Southern wall at the largest room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Here were also several usual painted vessels and bowls. Podium surface was painted in white, while storage vessels – in red. Bulk of each vessel was around 50 liters and they probably were used for storage of grain. On surface of podium also were found numerous burnt bones of lamb, associated with sacrifice. Floors and walls of all rooms at the 1<sup>st</sup> floor were decorated by red paint, which created ceremonial atmosphere.

The characterization of the finds indicates both the similarity and difference of their recruitment in the mega-structure – dwelling B5 and

conventional dwelling. The amount of fragmented figurines, discovered here – only 9 items (**Fig. 7**), including one 2biried' inside the plaster of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor (**Fig. 7/4-4a**) is close to number of finds at small houses. But, for other hand, the total amount of pottery at mega-structure was lower, than at usual living house at the same site. Of the rare finds, apart from the gold pendant, more than twenty clay tokens should be mentioned (**Fig. 6**).

At the ground floor of dwelling B5 concentrated all altars and bins, which were used for rituals and sacrifices. Its square without platforms and bins was around 600 square meters, which enough for 600-800 people. Open yard before the building had around 300 square meters and was available for 200-300 peoples at one moment. Division of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor on rooms decreased the number of visitors. Probably, two rooms around corridor were used for storage. At Southern were found large pot, two bowls and 22 small pots around them (**Fig. 5/3-4**). Small room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor with fireplace was only one at dwelling, suitable for living whole year and/or cooking. So, at one moment area of mega-structure was available for near 1000 persons. The area around could fit probably the entire population of this mega-site.

The area of Nebelivka mega- structure (**Fig. 8**) included elements, usual for ancient temples: sacred places for sacrifice (altars-platforms), closed from all sides open-air yard before the entrance from the East, rooms for storage and ceremonies for some persons on 1<sup>st</sup> floor, small living room for personnel. Some elements of interior, such as altars 1 and 2, clay bins, podium, thresholds at main entrances were created similar to the usual houses, only 2-3 times enlarged (**Fig. 8/2-4**).

Nebelivka mega-structure located at the internal row of houses, but it probably was built before it, since orientation of the nearest dwellings were changed to include dwelling B5 to whole-site system of planning. At Nebelivka was discovered only one construction of such size. Its construction, planning, details of interior and also size, location on the settlement (one of the highest points) distinguished it from other dwellings at this site. We have all motives and enough evidences to determine it was a central temple of the whole village community.

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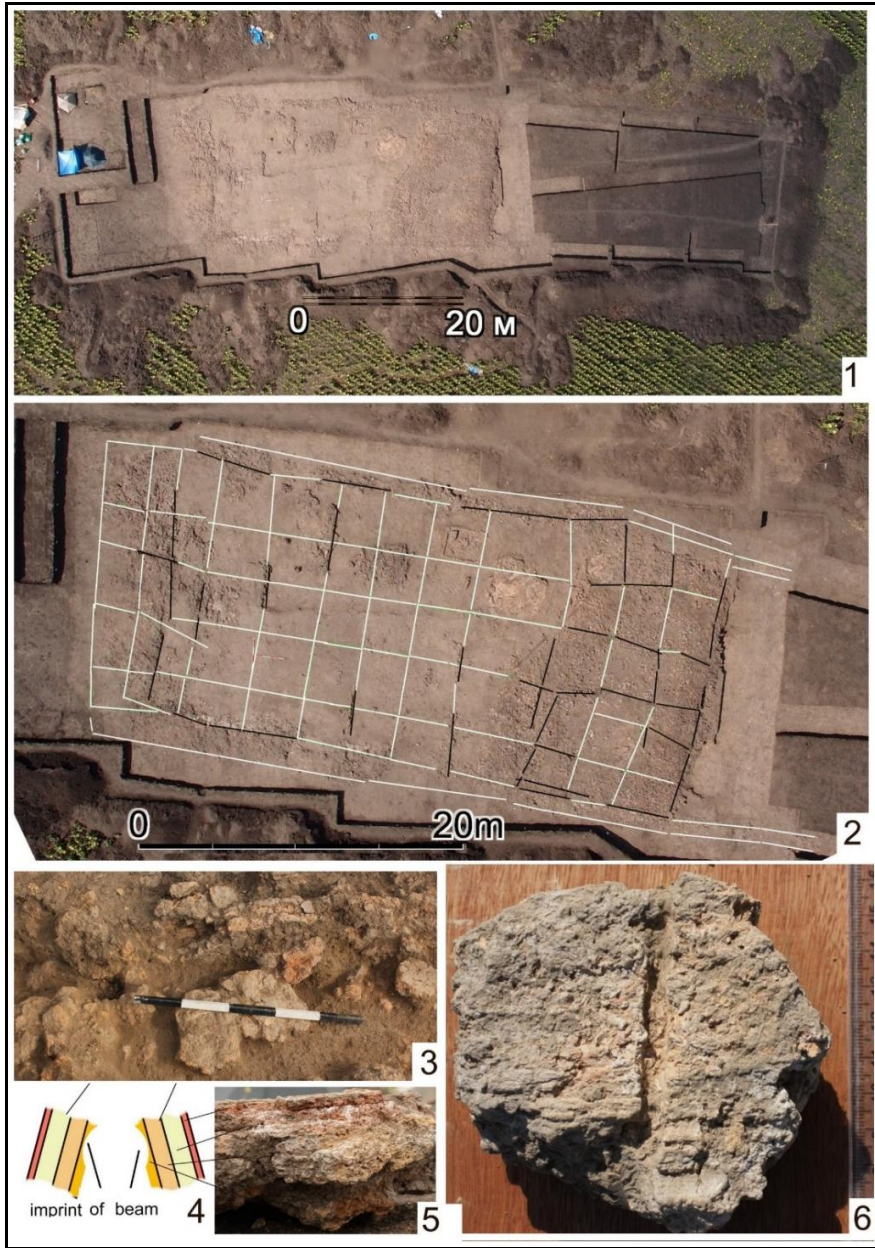
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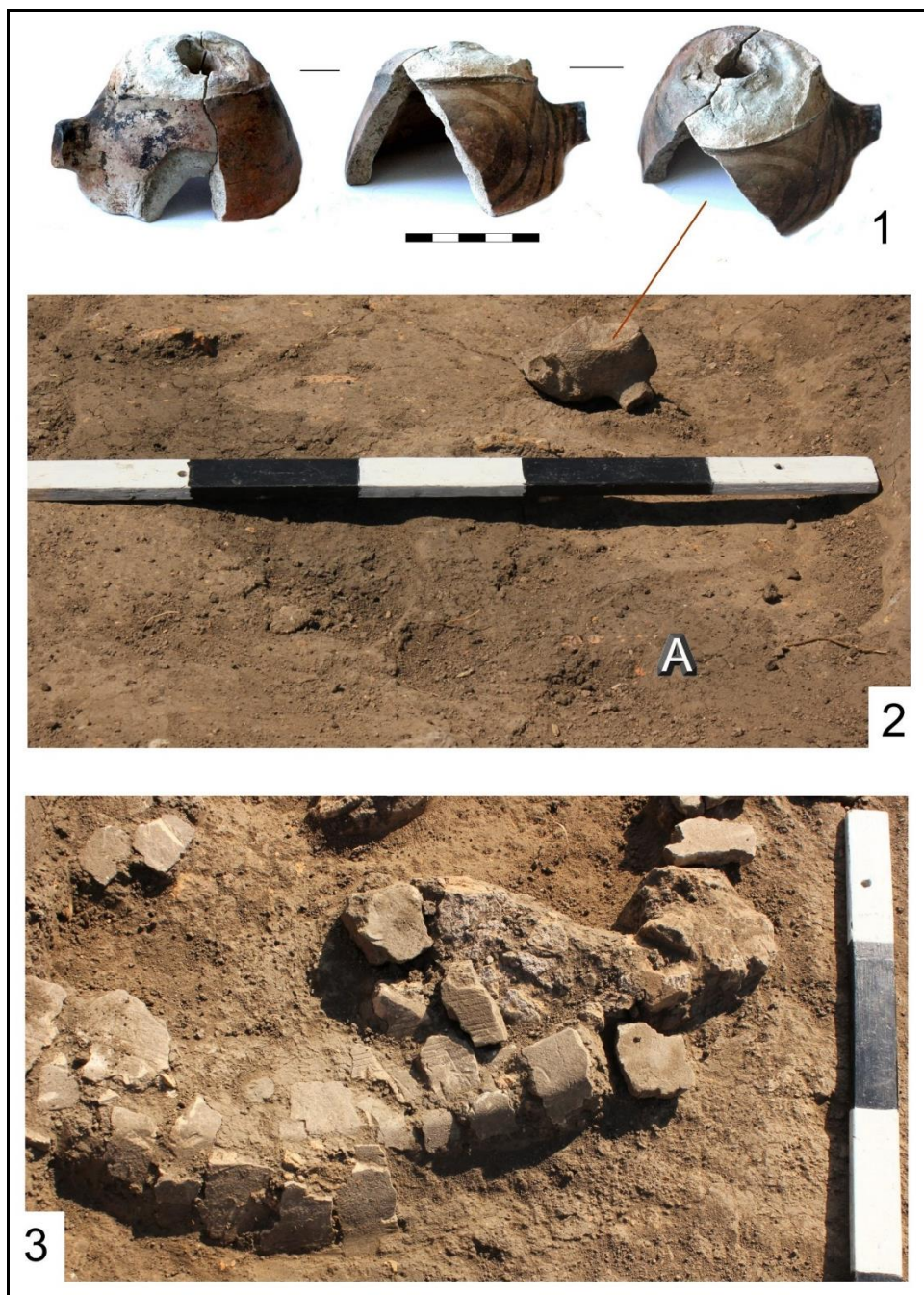
**Fig. 1.** Nebelivka, 2012, excavations of dwelling B5 – “mega-structure”: 1 – W part of trench with traces of plowing (A), direction identical to the crops in the field; 2 – W part of trench with clear visible black filling of top part of the pit near dw.B5 (1-2 photo by Mark Household); 3 – profile with remains of dw.B5 and visible plowing layer; 4 – remains of altar 2 in profile.



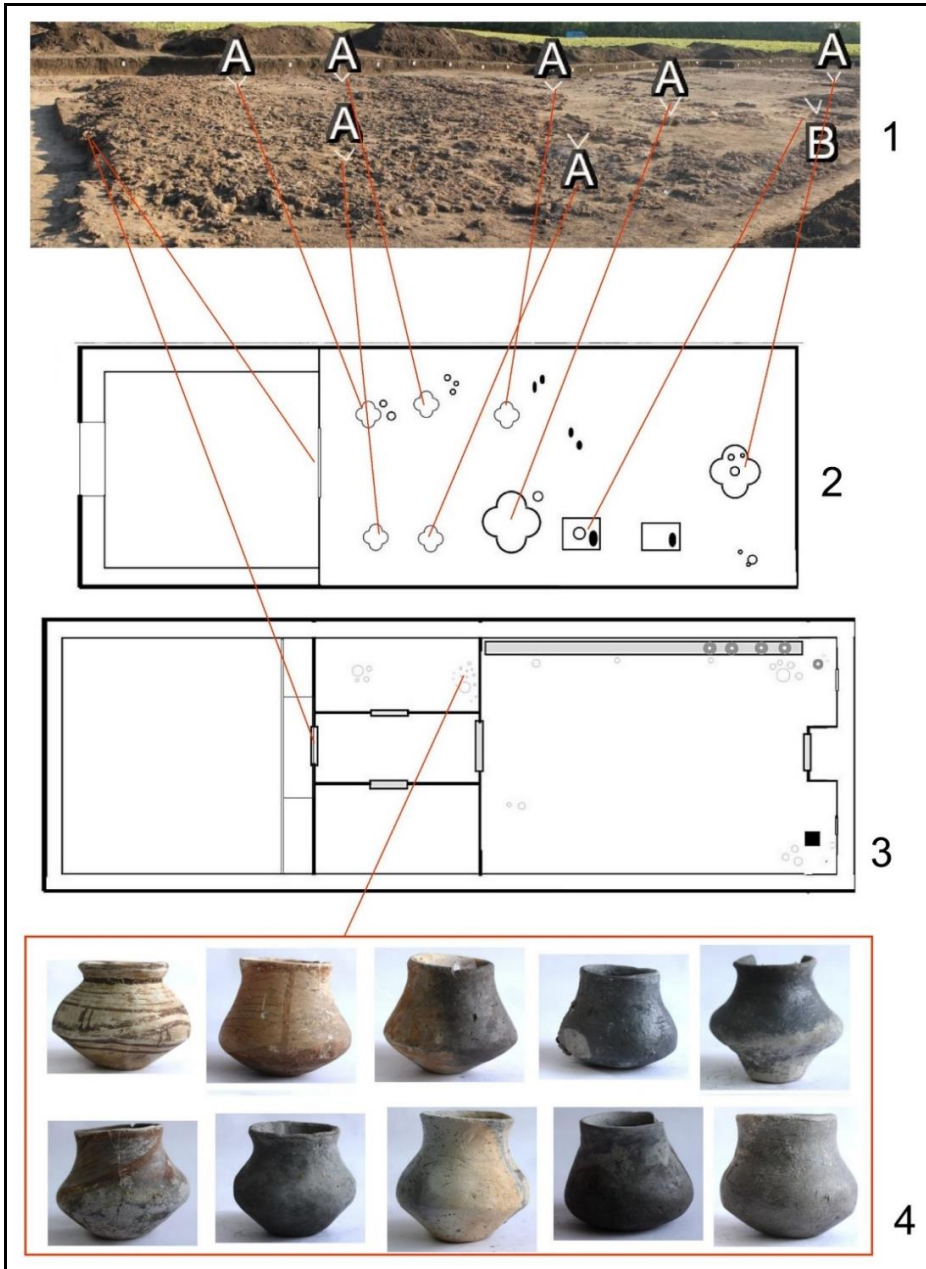
**Fig. 2.** Nebelivka, 2012, excavations of dwelling B5 – “mega-structure”:  
 1 – remains at the first stage of excavations; 2 – reconstruction of frame system by imprints (1-2 – photo by Mark Household); 3 – part of deposition with traces of timber construction; 4 – reconstruction of destruction process;  
 5 – sample of daub with visible layers; 6 – daub with imprints of round timber construction and cord connection.



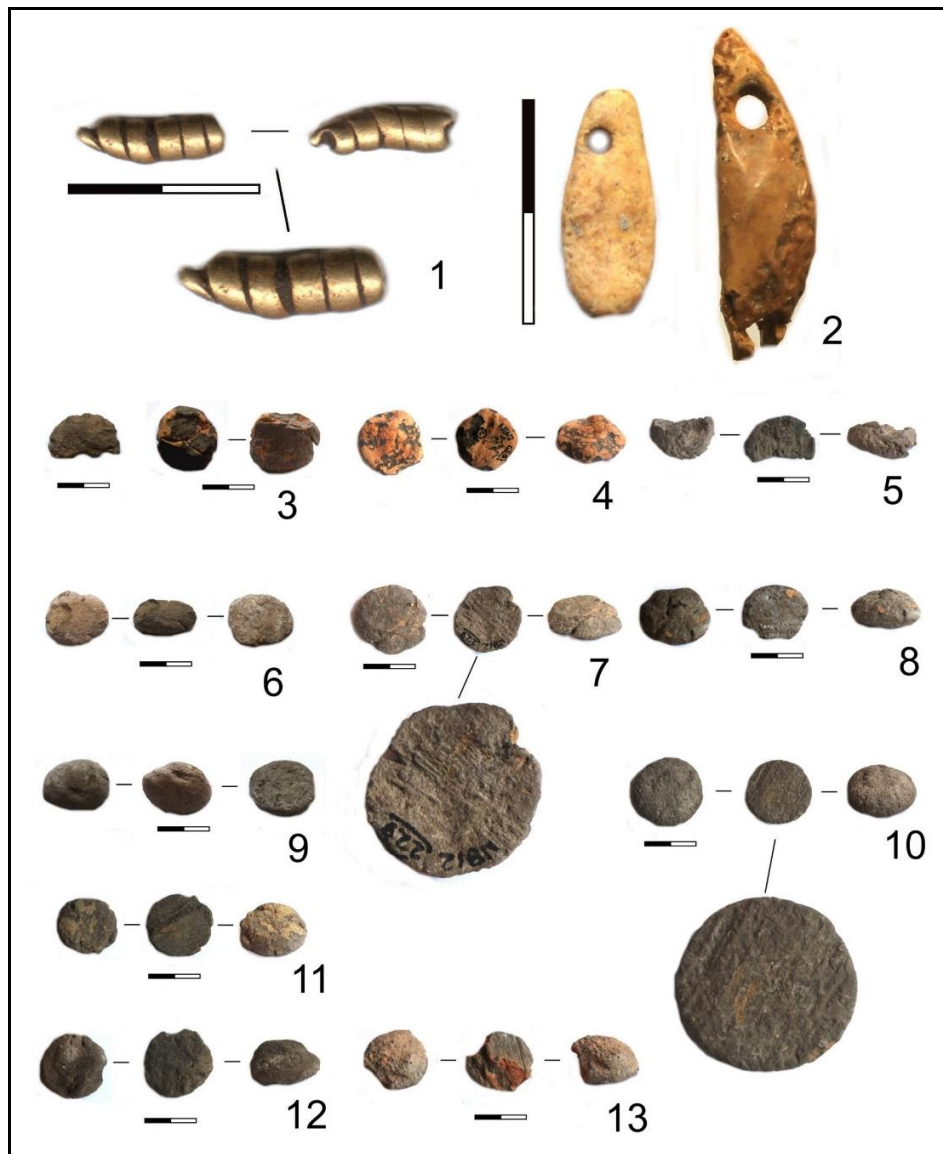
**Fig. 3.** Nebelivka, 2012, excavations of dwelling B5 – “mega-structure”: 1 – remains of cross-like altar; 2 – reconstructed decoration of altar (after S. Fedorov); 3 – profile of altar 1; 4 – podium on lower layer of daub, partly buried under upper layer of daub; 5 – clay dolly tub with mill stone; 6 – remains of threshold and decoration of doors frame; 7 – remains of 1,7 m threshold at eastern entrance.



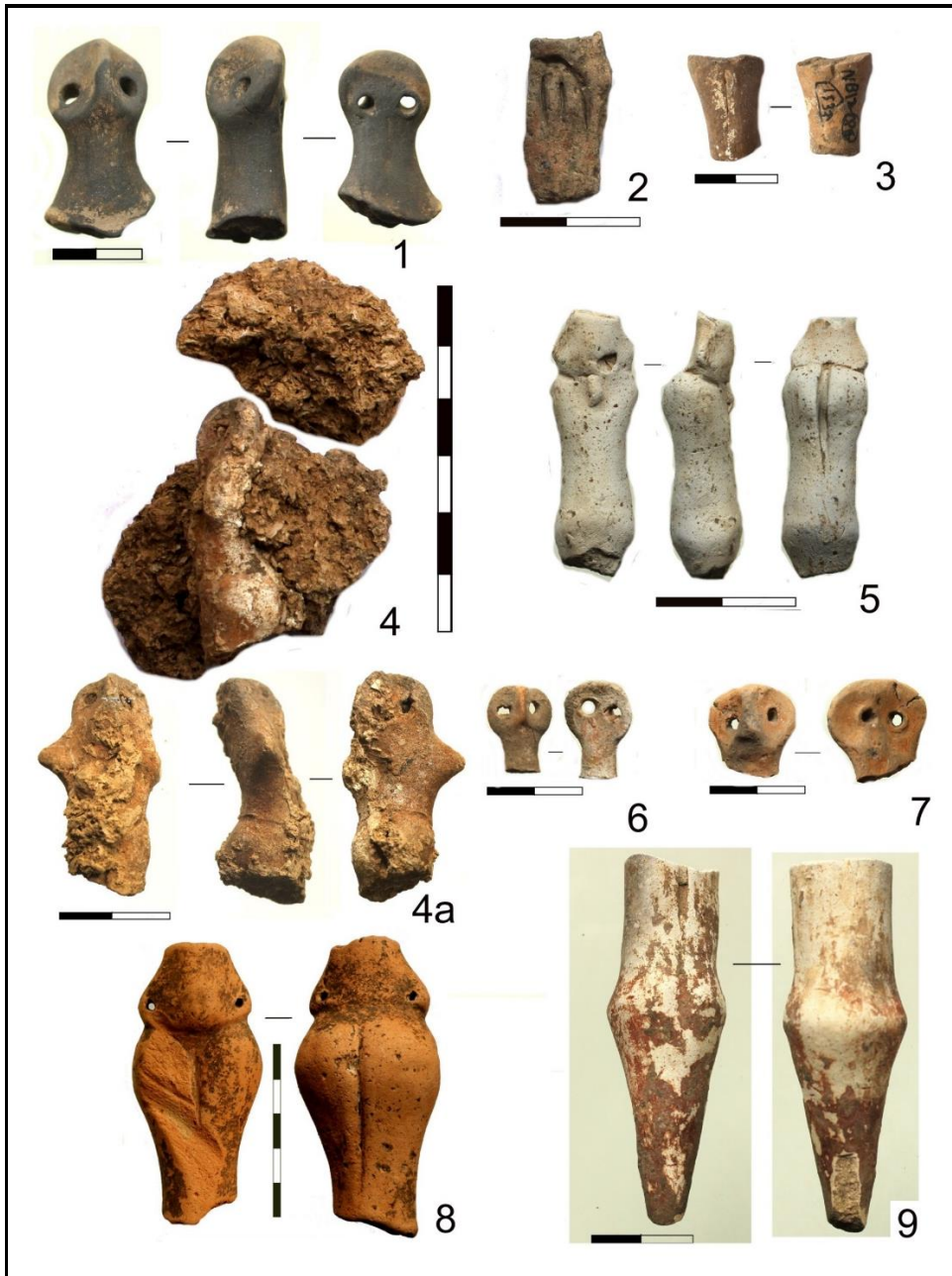
**Fig. 4.** Nebelivka, 2012, excavations of dwelling B5 – “mega-structure”:  
1 – fragments from binocular vessel; 2 – fragment of binocular vessel, A –  
traces of contemporary plowing; 3 – fragmented altar/platform 2.



**Fig. 5.** Nebelivka, 2012, excavations of dwelling B5 – “mega-structure”: 1 – location of altars-platforms (A) and bin (b) on the ground floor; 2 – plan-reconstruction of the ground floor; 3- plan of the first floor; 4 – small vessels from the first floor room. Location of items marked by arrows.

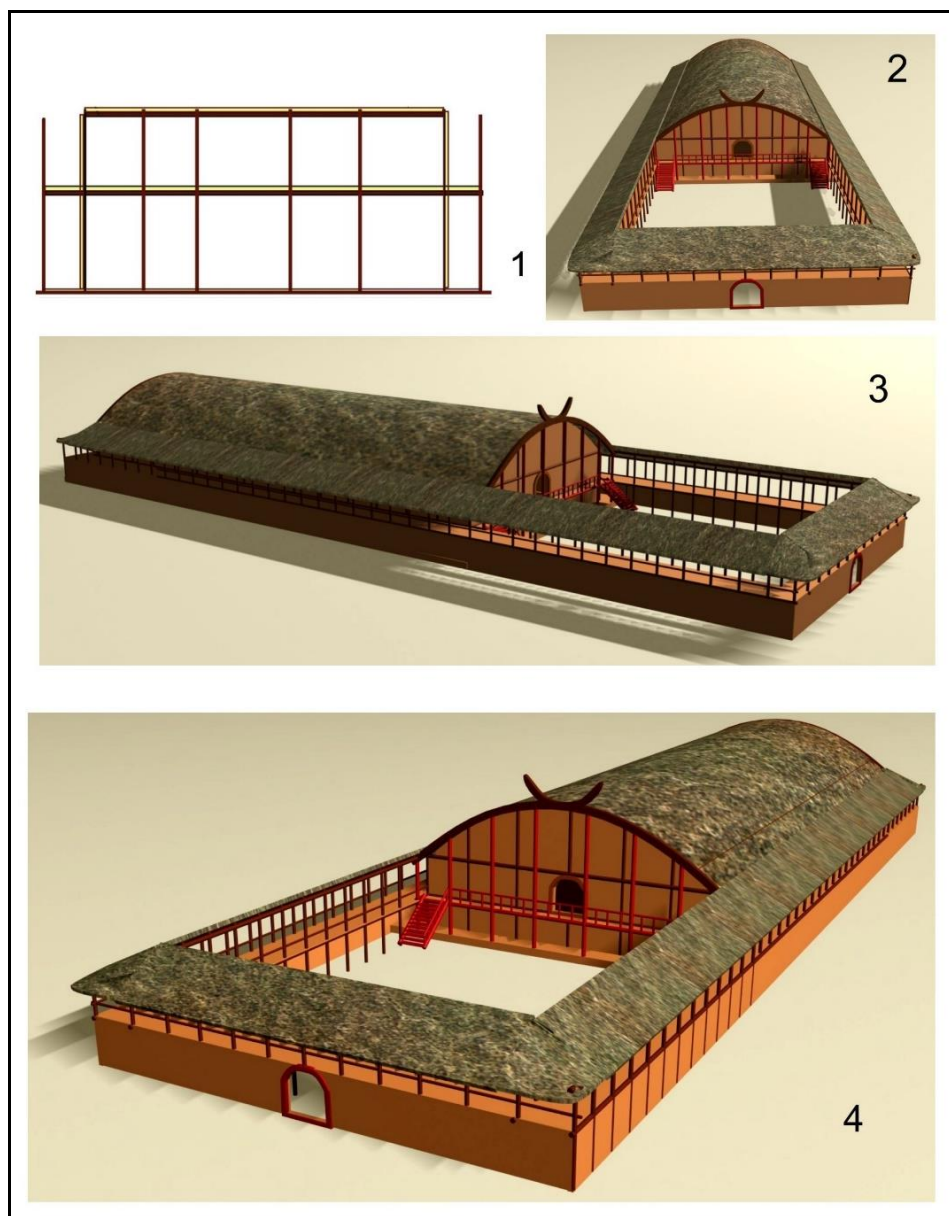


**Fig. 6.** Nebelivka, 2012, excavations of dwelling B5 – “mega-structure”:  
 1 – golden pendant; 2 – bone pendants; 3-13 – clay tokens.



**Fig. 7.** Nebelivka, 2012, excavations of dwelling B5 – “mega-structure”:  
1-9 – fragmented figurines. 4 – figurine, found inside clay plastering of the floor.





**Fig. 8.** Nebelivka, reconstruction of explored objects: 1 – frame construction of dw. B5; 2-4 – dwelling B5 – temple (3D by M. M. Videiko).

