

## HUMAN BONE REMAINS IN THE BRONZE AGE TELL SETTLEMENTS OF THE CARPATHIAN BASIN

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**Abstract:** Around 2500 BCE, a new life style emerged in the Carpathian Basin, lasting nearly 1000 years. The Bronze Age tell settlements imply an intensive and dynamic long-term habitation of the same place, frequently enclosed and surrounded by open satellite settlements. One aspect of this new way of life can be inferred from the funerary practices employed by the communities which created the tell settlements. In addition to formal funerary spaces (i.e. cemeteries), the deceased were also buried in informal places, such as the habitation area of the tell.

Based on the cases documented within the inhabited areas of the tell settlements, there are four main types of intentional depositions of human remains. Regular burials are consistent with the formal way of funerary depositions and include both the inhumation and the cremation rites. These burials contain traces of the funerary ritual, similar to graves commonly found in the formal funerary spaces. The second type of funerary depositions is represented by irregular burials, which deviate from the usual customs, but still retain a funerary attribute. The third type is represented by unusual depositions. These imply the deposition of human remains (sometimes incomplete or dismembered bodies), involving a non-funerary ritual. The last type involves the discard of human remains in a profane manner. In these latter cases, the human remains were acknowledged and treated as regular waste. The boundary between irregular burials, unusual depositions and profane discharging is sometimes unclear, as the traces of an atypical funerary practice can be invisible or misinterpreted.

In our opinion, a presentation of all the different forms in which human bodies/remains were deposited inside tell settlements from the Bronze Age Carpathian Basin offers us insights into the attitude of the living towards their deceased, both at a social and a spiritual level. We made these observations on the basis of a catalogue that includes all the discoveries published until today.

**Rezumat:** În jurul anului 2500 BC, pentru o perioadă de aproximativ 1000 de ani, în Bazinul Carpatic apare un mod diferit de viață, care poate fi descris în primul rând prin prezența așezărilor de tip tell. Acestea implică locuirea succesivă pentru o lungă perioadă de timp în același spațiu, de obicei fortificat, înconjurat de alte așezări deschise care au o relație de inter-dependență. Alături de înmormântările în cimitire, depunerea de oase umane în așezare este una dintre practicile pe care le întâlnim la aceste comunități.

Pentru a avea o analiză cât mai completă asupra acestui fenomen, am pornit de la întocmirea unui catalog al descoperirilor de oase umane în tell-urile epocii bronzului. Am observat faptul că din punct de vedere al contextului arheologic există patru interpretări posibile: 1) înmormântări propriu-zise, care sunt analoge cu mormintele din cimitirele care aparțin acestor comunități, 2) înmormântări irregulare, acestea fiind depuneri funerare, dar diferite de normă, 3) depuneri atipice, care sugerează un caracter ritual non-funerar și 4) oasele umane aruncate într-o manieră similară cu resturile menajere obișnuite. Delimitările între înmormântările irregulare, depunerile atipice și oasele umane aruncate într-o manieră similară cu resturile menajere sunt uneori greu de făcut, deoarece urmele unei practici funerare atipice pot fi invizibile sau interpretate greșit.

După părerea noastră, o prezentare a tuturor formelor în care corpurile/rămășițele umane au fost dispuse în interiorul tell-urilor epocii bronzului din Bazinul Carpatic ne oferă o perspectivă asupra atitudinii celor vii

*față de cei decedați, atât la nivel spiritual cât și social. Am făcut aceste observații pe baza unui catalog care include toate descoperirile publicate până astăzi.*

**Keywords:** Bronze Age, Carpathian Basin, tell settlements, regular/irregular burial, unusual depositions, disposal, ritual.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Epoca Bronzului, Bazinul Carpatic, tell-uri, înmormântări propriu-zise/ înmormântări irregulare, depuneri atipice, oase umane ca resturi menajere, ritual.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a situation that has been widely discussed lately in the archaeological record: the presence of human bone remains inside settlements. It is worth mentioning that this practice is encountered all over the world and in all time-periods, from the Palaeolithic until today. Research on this subject has gone through various changes. In the beginning, ethnographic observations were called upon to offer a picture on funerary practices employed in various circumstances<sup>1</sup>. However, in recent years these were replaced by the anthropological analysis of the skeletal remains, which, combined with a contextual analysis, gave birth to a new research branch: bioarchaeology<sup>2</sup>.

The Bronze Age tell-settlements in the Carpathian Basin became the object of intense archaeological research during the last 150 years, attracting numerous researchers through their monumentality, stratigraphic complexity and richness of the archaeological material, which enabled the analysis of inter-cultural relationships with other geographical areas<sup>3</sup>. In the beginning (after the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) the tells were sources for spectacular artefacts, meant to fill the newly founded museums. Later, they became the basis for establishing the chronological evolution of the Early and Middle Bronze Ages in this area<sup>4</sup>.

Today, research of the tell-settlements offers an ever-increasing amount of information and provides new scientific perspectives by means of multidisciplinary analyses: the reconstruction of landscape and habitat, the absolute dating with the help of <sup>14</sup>C dates, detailed examinations concerning economic activities, establishing territorial limits and the role they played among the surrounding settlements<sup>5</sup>. All of these aspects remain open, just

<sup>1</sup> Hertz 1906; Ucko 1969; Saxe 1970, 226-234; Binford 1971; Shay 1985; van Gennep 1996; etc.

<sup>2</sup> There have been used more definitions in order to explain the branch of bioarchaeology, but the most accurate one is considered to be the use of a range of biological techniques on archaeological material in order to learn more about past populations (Buikstra, Beck 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Kovács 1988, 17-18; Gogâltan 2002, 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> Bóna 1992. Gogâltan 2015 with the old literature.

<sup>5</sup> Among the project at Feudvar which opened the modern ways of researching the Bronze Age tell-settlements in the Carpathian Basin (Hänsel, Medović 1991, 45-204; Hänsel, Medović 1998; Falkenstein 1998; Kroll, Reed 2016), we added the new initiatives that imply tell-settlements investigations at Százhalombatta-Földvár (Poroszlai, Vicze 2000; Poroszlai, Vicze 2005; Earle, Kristiansen 2010), Polgár-Kenderföld (Dani et al. 2003), Pecica-Șanțul Mare (O'Shea et al. 2005; O'Shea et al. 2006; O'Shea et al. 2011; Nicodemus, O'Shea 2015; Nicodemus et al. 2015), Vráble-Fidvár (Bátora et al. 2008; Falkenstein et al. 2008; Bátora et al. 2011; Bátora et al. 2012), Carei-Bobald (Németi, Molnár 2012; Molnár, Németi 2014), Emőd-Nagyhalom and Tard-Tatárdomb (Fischl, Kienlin 2013; Fischl et al. 2014), Kakus-Bella-Domb (Jaeger, Kulcsár 2013). A new study regarding the Bronze Age tell settlements is available at Kienlin 2015.

as a series of other discussions concerning terminology, the economic and political importance or the factors which lead to the end of habitation in these settlements remain open<sup>6</sup>.

This article aims to improve our understanding in regards to the deposition of human remains inside tell settlements. First, we will give a short presentation of the subject. One of the authors of the present article has been studying tell settlements for a considerable amount of time and has published several papers regarding their characteristics and chronological framing<sup>7</sup>. According to his observations, tell settlements are multi-layered habitations which have over 1 m of stratigraphy and at least three habitation phases, all specific to a single archaeological culture. This proves an intensive habitation of that particular area. This area is usually marked by fortification/enclosing elements, both natural and artificial. The tells contain surface houses made of wood and clay, built according to an internal plan. They present certain differences from the satellite settlements around them, the most obvious one being that they stand out in the landscape. One cause of this dominant position is the fortification system. The fortification system could have served a double purpose: protecting the surrounding habitation area and, at the same time, controlling the production of implements<sup>8</sup>. According to the relative chronology of the Western Romanian Plain<sup>9</sup>, they began developing at the end of Early Bronze Age and lasted until the beginning of Late Bronze Age. This means that the tell phenomenon manifested for more than 500 years, from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC to the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC<sup>10</sup>. We have extended the research into the Carpathian Basin, since it is a larger geographical unit which provides us with a wider scope of the deposition of human bone remains inside tell settlements of all types.

The formal disposal area for human remains in the Bronze Age Carpathian Basin is referred to as 'cemetery' in the literature<sup>11</sup>. The term 'cemetery' is used to denote a space which is used primarily or perhaps only for the disposal of the dead<sup>12</sup>. Otherwise, the dead are disposed in isolated places or inside the settlements. The same can be applied to the Bronze Age tell settlements from the Carpathian Basin. In this case, intentional depositions of human bones occur in the formal funerary space, inside the settlement and in isolated graves, the latter being completely unrelated to either a settlement or a cemetery. Inside the settlement, human remains can be found in apparently peculiar places: in ditches, under the floors of dwellings, underneath hearths, in pits around the houses, in disused storage pits and in refuse pits.

The Bronze Age tell settlements cannot be considered formal funerary spaces, therefore the burials which occurred inside the settlements cannot be regarded as standard. These

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<sup>6</sup> See Gogâltan 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Gogâltan 2002; Gogâltan 2005; Gogâltan 2006; Gogâltan 2010; Gogâltan 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Gogâltan 2008, 53; Gogâltan 2010, 33-40; Némethi, Molnár 2012, 41-72; Molnár, Nagy 2013, 5-85; Gogâltan 2014a, 13.

<sup>9</sup> Gogâltan 2015, Fig. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Gogâltan 2014a, Fig. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Saxe 1970, 119.

<sup>12</sup> O'Shea 1996, 56.

atypical burials gave rise to many theoretical interpretations<sup>13</sup>. In many cases, it is almost impossible to accurately determine whether they were deposited with a funerary intention, as a result of other ritual activities or simply as garbage<sup>14</sup>. Bearing in mind the fact that many rituals or funerary practices leave little to no trace in the archaeological records, or that some might be simply unrecognized as such, it is virtually impossible to accurately determine in some cases which of the above mentioned scenarios is valid.

A few concepts relating to funerary archaeology are frequently used in this article. Therefore, some general definitions and clarifications are required. Since the article is focused on human remains discovered inside tell settlements, the following concepts are defined here only in relation to the subject (i.e. human remains) although in other situations they may have a broader meaning. Consequently, in the present situation, the concept of *intentional depositions* refers to all human remains found inside tell settlements which can be related to human activities. Intentional depositions can be further classified into *ritual depositions* and *non-ritual depositions*. By ritual deposition we understand the process in which human remains (one or more dead bodies, incomplete bodies, bones, bone fragments, etc) are ritually placed in a specific location, which may or may not have been built specifically for this purpose. Accordingly, *burials* are a specific form of ritual depositions. They involve the deliberate and careful deposition of human remains inside a funerary structure built or dug especially for this purpose, according to certain funerary rituals which are considered a norm by the community which carries out the mortuary practice. The actual treatment applied to dead bodies during funerary practices is conventionally defined as *rite* by archaeologists (most common options are inhumation, cremation, exposure, embalming, excarnation/defleshing, evisceration, submersion, etc.). *Non-ritual depositions* refer to human remains which were disposed without any attached ritual meaning. The human remains were simply considered and manipulated as waste<sup>15</sup>.

Another observation concerning the human bones discovered inside settlements is the fact that they have been connected to the theories of deviant or irregular burials<sup>16</sup>. If

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<sup>13</sup> R. Meyer-Orlac discusses about both negative and positive implications that could determine the community to behave differently towards the corpse of certain of its members (Meyer-Orlac 1997, 1-11).

<sup>14</sup> Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, 60: considers that if the human remains in a certain context are the result of another ritual and the body of the deceased is not treated according to a funerary treatment that has as the main focus the corpse, then we are not dealing with a funerary deposition.

<sup>15</sup> These aspects have been discussed in several writings, according to the subject they are treating: V. Sirbu (Sirbu 1993) creates a terminological glossary in order to be able to interpret the Dacian human bones discoveries; J. D. Hill (Hill 1995) talking about discard sees the body as rubbish from the waste pits excavated in the Iron Age Britain; A. Stapel (Stapel 1999) presents the theoretical aspects and terms used for the interpretation of human remains discovered in Bronze Age settlements; T.-T. Daroczi (Daroczi 2014) discusses about these theoretical aspects in order to determine the place of the deceased in the Neolithic and Bronze Age landscapes; B. Boulestin, L. Baray discuss all the meanings given to the terms through the light of the Neolithic and La Tene discoveries, that pose a series of problems due to the high variability of mortuary practices that can be archaeologically encountered during these times (Boulestin, Barray 2010).

<sup>16</sup> Aspöck 2008, 18: "deviant burials are those inhumations that differ from the normal funerary rite from a certain period, region or cemetery. Deviant burials are generally associated with bizarre burials such as decapitations or the deposition of the body in strange or unusual positions, the differences can be spotted in the position of the body or the treatment upon it, the location or the

we are to accept that the distinction between normal and deviant depositions can also be expressed spatially<sup>17</sup>, all human remains found inside tell settlements should be considered as irregular/deviant. Nevertheless, there are certain human depositions inside settlements that, from the point of view of the archaeological analysis, respect the rite patterns: especially singular ones, whether they are inhumations or incinerations. Another opinion states that the human depositions inside settlements are made according to specific norms, which differ from the ones employed in the funerary space. This variability in the funerary behaviour may have been due to an array of factors: religious beliefs, social status, age and gender of the deceased, cause of death, time of death, etc. With the intention to determine the reasons that lead to a different type of funeral treatment, more trials were conducted, resulting in the distinction of two categories: positive and negative motivations for deviant burials. The positive ones refer to the important social status of the deceased within the community, while negative reasons are connected to diseases. We can imply the fact that some of the buried bodies belonged to foreign persons or personalities of high social status<sup>18</sup>. As well, one can imagine that persons which were considered dangerous in life or after death would have had a different funeral treatment. At the same time, it is possible that certain social categories considered to be marginal were given another treatment<sup>19</sup>.

The funeral rite is determined by the beliefs and customs of a society. It is a performance which is defined by its own conventions, just as R. Bradley characterized the ritual. Once it is accepted that the ritual is a kind of practice, it becomes easier to understand how it can occur in so many settings and why it may be attached to so many different concerns<sup>20</sup>. The premeditated placement of the dead, the way the body is treated and arranged, and the presence of the grave goods are all integral parts of the rite<sup>21</sup>.

The most common interpretations made based on funerary practices are related to social identity and social status. At the same time, an aspect that can be found almost in any study on funerary space is the inference of a social distribution and a hierarchical organization of the community based on age, gender, position of the body, grave goods, and the place of deposition<sup>22</sup>. These observations have been used to establish patterns inside the funerary area meant to determine the social organization, supposing that the identity of the people as they are seen by the other members of the community is reflected in the grave structure along with the grave goods placed near the deceased<sup>23</sup>.

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construction of the grave or the type of the used grave goods". Lately, there have been trials to use another terminology: regular/irregular burials, due to the fact that the term deviant has a negative connotation and not all the unusual deposition refers to it (Veit, 2013). There are more conference volumes on the subject of deviant and settlement burials (Rittershofer 1997; Murphy 2008; Beilke-Voigt, Biermann 2009; Tichý 2010) or on regular/irregular burials (Müller-Scheeßel 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Parker Pearson 1999, 15.

<sup>18</sup> Wilke 1933.

<sup>19</sup> Meyer-Orleac 1999, 11.

<sup>20</sup> Bradley 2003, 12.

<sup>21</sup> Vicze 2011, 49.

<sup>22</sup> Saxe 1970.

<sup>23</sup> Parker-Pearson 1999.

In order to distinguish between a customary burial, found in the special designated area (i.e. cemetery) and an atypical burial, it is necessary to establish and recognize the norm. A general pattern of funerary practices has been acknowledged by the scientific community so far. In this pattern, there are three main options for the deposition of human bodies during the Bronze Age: cremation, inhumation in flat cemeteries, and inhumation in specially constructed mounds (tumuli). These rites had also been used by the bearers of the Nagyrév, Sanislău Mureş/Maros, Wietenberg, Otomani-Füzesabony, Vátya, and Mad'arovce ceramic styles, which occurred within the Bronze Age tells of the Carpathian Basin.

Cremation and urn-burial were the standard practices for the Nagyrév communities (Tószeg, Kulcs, Dunaújváros, Szentes, Szanda etc.). In the area of the Tisa and Mureş junction (Rákóczipfalva, Hódmezővásárhely, Nagyrév), several inhumations in a crouched position are also attested<sup>24</sup>. It is worth mentioning that the formal funerary areas of the Nagyrév communities are close to the settlements<sup>25</sup>.

Perhaps with the exception of the tell-like settlement from Andrid<sup>26</sup>, no other multilayer settlements assigned to the Sanislău group are known. The early habitation stage in several tells (Săcuieni, Otomani–*Cetățuie*=*Várhegy*, Sălacea, Carei) is marked by a Sanislău layer, recently placed from a chronological perspective in the late Early Bronze Age<sup>27</sup>. Initially, these discoveries were related to the first Otomani phase. For this reason, we decided to take them into account.

The norm in the Mureş/Maros funerary rite was a single, primary inhumation within a clearly defined funerary area, and the body was arranged in a flexed posture on its side (Ószentiván, Battonya, Deszk A, Deszk F, Szöreg, Mokrin, Pitvaros, Beba-Veche)<sup>28</sup>. At Battonya, both inhumation and incineration were used, which is an exception for the Mureş/Maros culture<sup>29</sup>.

The main funerary rite for the communities using the Wietenberg ceramic style is incineration (Sebeş, Turia, Dumbrăvița, Bistrița, Bratei, Deva, Aiton, Ocna Sibiului, Florești, Oiejde, Sighișoara, Luduş, Iernut etc.). The only inhumation burials in formal funerary spaces were researched at Sibişeni<sup>30</sup>.

The funerary rites of the Otomani-Füzesabony communities are well-known thanks to the publishing of the results obtained in large cemeteries, such as Gelej, Pusztaszikszó, Streda nad Bodrogom, Hernadkak, Nyžna Myšl'a<sup>31</sup>. In most cases, the predominant rite is represented by inhumation. The rite of cremation became more popular only towards the final stages of this culture<sup>32</sup>.

The Vátya funerary practice is characterized by cremation burials. The urns were placed in round pits, at depths between 0.6 and 1.2 m: Kulcs, Dunaújváros, Szigetszentmiklós,

<sup>24</sup> Csányi 1983; Kalicz-Schreiber 1984, 148.

<sup>25</sup> Vicze 2011, 31

<sup>26</sup> Marta 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Némethi, Roman 1995.

<sup>28</sup> Girić 1984, 35-45; O'Shea 1996, 140-141; Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, 330-369.

<sup>29</sup> Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, 348-349.

<sup>30</sup> General information and older literature can be found at Boroffka 1994, 109-109; Andrişoiu 1994; Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, 526-546; Bălan 2014a, 21-36; Berecki 2016, 44-67.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas 2008 with the old literature; Olexa, Nováček 2013.

<sup>32</sup> Stig Sørensen, Rebay-Salisbury 2008, 60-61; Thomas 2008, 353-354.



Százhalombatta etc.<sup>33</sup> Near the end of this culture's manifestation, inhumations also appeared<sup>34</sup>. The majority of burials are represented by cinerary urns. However, some urns contain complete skeletons in a crouched position<sup>35</sup>.

For the Mad'arovce communities, the usual burial rite is the inhumation of complete bodies (Abrahám, Branč, Gajary, Jelšovce, Sládkovičovo)<sup>36</sup>. Nevertheless, near the end of their manifestation, cremation and burials in grave mounds also appeared: Majcichov, Jelšovce, Jablonec, Sv. Peter. The deceased were buried according to gender: women placed on their left side and men on their right<sup>37</sup>.

Because the previous studies focused on small areas or dealt with discoveries associated with certain ceramic styles, we gathered information concerning all human remains discovered in the Bronze Age tell settlements from the Carpathian Basin which have been published to date, in order to create the basis for an overall view of this phenomenon.

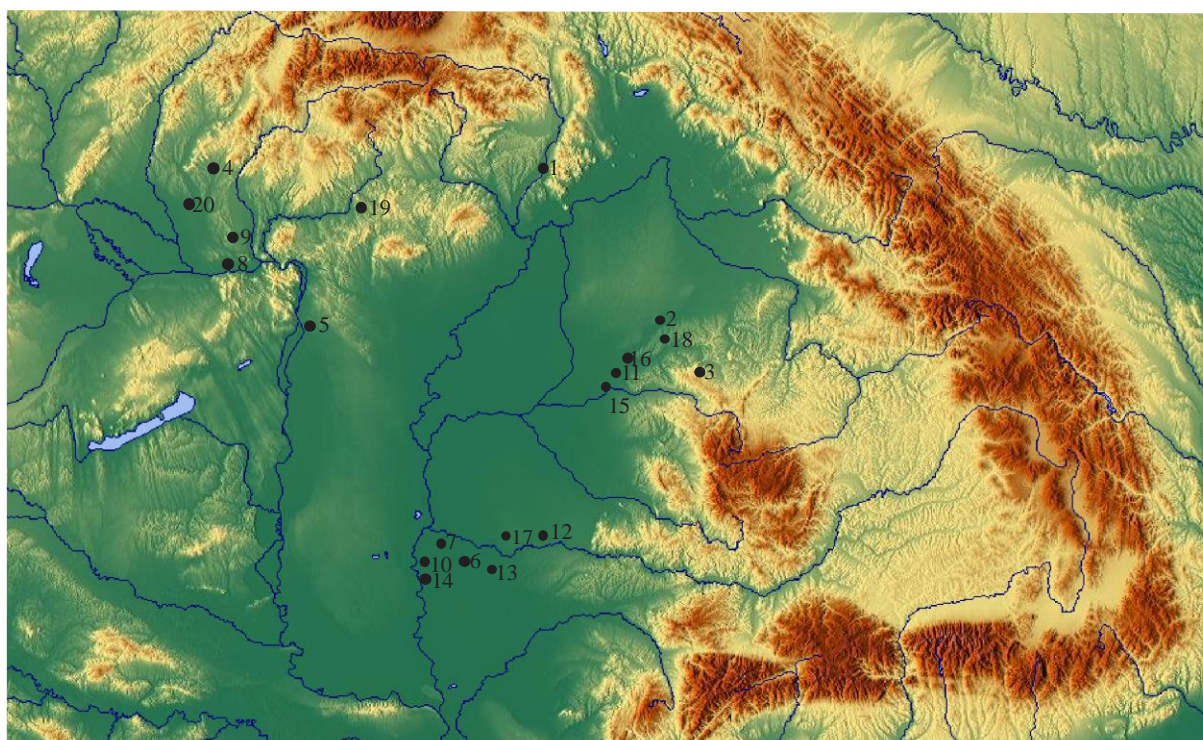


Fig. 1. Map of human bones discoveries in the Bronze Age tell settlements of the Carpathian Basin. 1. Barca; 2. Carei; 3. Derşida; 4. Ivanovce; 5. Kakucs; 6. Kiszombor; 7. Klárafalva; 8. Malé Kosihy; 9. Nitriansky Hrádok; 10. Ószentiván; 11. Otomani; 12. Pecica; 13. Periam; 14. Rabe; 15. Săcueni; 16. Sălacea; 17. Semeľ; 18. Tiream; 19. Včelince; 20. Veselé.

<sup>33</sup> Stig Sørensen, Rebay-Salisbury 2008, 59; Vicze 2011, 38

<sup>34</sup> Kovács 1984, 220.

<sup>35</sup> Vicze 2011, 54.

<sup>36</sup> Točík 1979; Furmánek et al. 1999, 49.

<sup>37</sup> Furmánek et al. 1999, 49; Jelínek, Vavák 2013, 256.

CATALOGUE OF HUMAN BONES DISCOVERIES<sup>38</sup>:1. **Barca** = Košice–*Barca I=Nad Begányiho mlynom*, Slovakia. Tell settlement.

- a) The settlement is located at the northern limit of the present day Barca locality, at its border with the Košice town. The settlement is situated on a hill and it covers a surface of 1.5 ha. The fortified area covers a surface of 45 × 50 m. There is also a satellite settlement of about 100 × 100 m. The site was discovered in the 1930' by Major J. Telpý. Major Telpý first excavated here in 1936. Other investigations were carried out in 1941 by F. Tompa. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, investigations were continued by J. Pástor and later, between 1951 and 1954, by a team composed of L. Hájek, J. Kabát and Fr. Prošek. The ceramic belongs to the Otomani-Füzesabony style (Točík 1994, with the old literature).
- b) The discovery of human bone remains both in pits and cultural deposits of the settlement is mentioned. These findings were not published though. Instead, the author had obtained the information from A. Točík (Furmánek, Jakab 1997, 19).
- c) Furmánek, Jakab 1997, 19.

2. **Carei–Bobald=Bobald I=Bobad=Budad=Bubard=Livada**“ [hung. Nagykároly „Bobádi“], Satu Mare County, Romania. Tell settlement.

- a) The Carei tell-settlement is situated on a high terrace of the Merges Stream and is surrounded from three sides by water. A. Vende researched this tell at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first systematic excavations were initiated in 1966 by J. Némethi, and were continued between 1986 and 2002. Currently, the systematic excavations are conducted by Z. Molnár. The level corresponding to the Bronze Age settlement is consistent with the Otomani-Füzesabony ceramic style (Molnár, Némethi 2014 with the old literature).
- b) The first human bone discovered here was a mandible. It was mentioned in 1966 and uncovered in the section B of that year's excavation, inside a waste pit attributed to the Otomani culture (Némethi 1996, 29; Némethi, Molnár 2012, 25). A human skull missing the mandible was mentioned in 1989. It was found in section V of that year's excavation, in pit number 3. It belonged to a juvenile (Némethi 1996, 29). During the 1994 excavation, part of a disarticulated human skeleton was found in section VII, at 1.10 m depth, in the upper Otomani level. Only the pelvis, the 2 femurs, 5 vertebrae, a few ribs and the phalanges from one hand and one leg were preserved (Pl. I/4). According to the author's description, it seems that a human body was chopped off and part of it was thrown inside a pit (Némethi 1995, 125; Némethi 1996, 29, Fig. 12/3; Némethi, Molnár 2012, 25). The 1997 excavation revealed a cinerary urn, M1, in section XI, screen 2, in the northern part of the tell, at a depth of 1.52 m. The cinerary urn was in a vertical position, inside a pit larger than the maximum diameter of the vessel. The diameter of the pit reached 25-30 cm. The urn was fragmentary and the superior part (rim and neck), together with the fragment of another vessel were used as a lid (Pl. I/1-3). Burned bones filled half of the urn. The anthropological analysis revealed that the deceased was a male between 30 and 55 years old. Before cremation, he was laid on its right side. This cremation burial was assigned to the Sanislău group and dated in the late Early Bronze Age (Némethi, Molnár 2012, 25, 27). Because the teeth were missing, one can assume that the bone fragments which were deposited inside the urn must have been gathered selectively. In the 2001 campaign, the complete skeleton of a child was discovered, placed in a pit (Roman, Némethi 2002, 88; Némethi, Molnár 2012, Fig. 18-19) (Pl. I/5).
- c) Némethi 1995, 123, 125; Némethi 1996, 29-30, Fig. 12/3; Némethi 1999, 64; Roman, Némethi 2002, 88; Némethi 2004; Némethi, Molnár 2012, 25, 27; Molnár, Némethi 2014, 45.

<sup>38</sup> The catalogue was structured on the basis of the following aspects: the name of the locality, toponym, the old name of the locality and the toponym, the county, the country, the type of settlement; a) general information about the site and the ceramic style; b) human bones discoveries and the description of the contexts; c) bibliography, where are mentioned only the titles in which there appear mentioned the discoveries of human bone remains.



### 3. **Derșida**–*Dealul lui Balotă*, Sălaj county, Romania. Tell settlement.

- a) The settlement at „*Dealul lui Balotă*” is the only tell settlement where the predominant pottery is specific to the Wietenberg style. It is situated on a 325 m high hill, near the confluence of Stream Secășeni with River Crasna. The site was identified at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the first systematic excavations were conducted between 1963-1965 and 1969, by N. Chidioșan, who identified five levels. The chronology he made for the Wietenberg style was based on this excavation (Ignat 2014, with the old literature).
- b) Seven features with human remains were discovered<sup>39</sup>. The first one was discovered in an excavation from 1964 in the section SIV at 1.50 m depth, inside an oval elongated pit, in which an adult in a crouched position was laid on its right side and oriented SE-NW. The skeleton was poorly preserved, with the right hand slightly bent from the elbow and placed on the pelvis. The left hand was bent from the elbow and placed on the chest. The lower limbs are strongly flexed. Near the skull, an oval quarry stone was found. There were no other grave goods (Chidioșan 1980, 23) (Pl. II/1). The cinerary urn named *Burial no. 3* was discovered at 1.10 m depth inside a round pit with a flat base. The urn was discovered on the bottom of the pit, slightly tilted and surrounded by 8 stones with burning traces. A small amount of burnt bones and ashes were placed inside the pot. The vessel was partially covered by 3 potsherds from a big vessel made from coarse paste. Near the rim of the urn a curved stone knife, four beads and a loom weight were found (Chidioșan 1980, 23) (Pl. II/2-3). The human remains from *Burial no. 4* were found at 1.16 m depth, in a large circular pit of 43 cm in diameter, which had been dug in the third habitation level. On the base of the pit, in the centre, there was an urn protected in its lower part by 3 small sandstones and covered by an irregular, flat mica schist stone. The vessel was filled with a large amount of small cremated bones, resulted from a strong fire (Chidioșan 1980, 23) (Pl. II/8). *Burial no. 5* was also discovered at the third level, at 1.08 m depth from the ground level. At the base of the pit, near a stone, a fragmentary vessel was placed. A few burnt bones were found inside the vessel, as well as on the base of the pit, together with a large amount of ashes and small charcoal fragments. Among them, 9 beads and 2 pendants were discovered (Chidioșan 1980, 24) (Pl. II/9). *Burial no. 6* was discovered in a pit partially disturbed by a subsequent structure. It corresponds to level 2. Half of an urn was preserved in the pit, laid on its side. Few cremation remains were on the base (Chidioșan 1980, 24) (Pl. II/7). *Burial no. 7* had been made in a pit at a depth of 0.44 m. It started from the 4<sup>th</sup> level. The urn was placed on the wide base of the pit which measured 55 cm in diameter. The urn was slightly tilted and surrounded in the inferior part by stones and pebbles. The rim of the vessel was covered with a pot (Chidioșan 1980, 24) (Pl. II/4-6). A very well preserved human skull was discovered in 1969, in the S9 trench. The skull had been deposited at 1.90 m of depth, in a very narrow, cylindrically shaped pit which measured 28 cm in diameter. The pit had been dug from level 1 and perforated a hearth. No other goods were found (Chidioșan 1980, 23).
- c) Chidioșan 1980, 23-24; Ciugudean 1989, 72-73; Ignat 2014, 83-84.

### 4. **Ivanovce**–*Bašta=Skala*, Trenčín county, Slovakia. Tell settlement.

- a) The settlement from north-western Slovakia was identified in 1933 by J. Eisner. The first researches date from 1934 and were made by A. Gierach and K. Streitová. The excavations were continued in 1949 by A. Točík and between 1966-1967 by L. Veliačík and V. Němejcová-Pavúková. The settlement had been fortified with two ditches. The pottery discovered there belongs to the Mad'arovce style (Veliačík, Němejcová-Pavúková 1987, with the old literature).
- b) In 1997, V. Furmánek and J. Jakab mentioned the incomplete skull of a woman, found in a pit. The discovery was not published before, but he had doubts about the dating of the skull (Furmánek, Jakab 1997, 19) (Pl. III/1). According to P. Jelínek and J. Vavák, 2 skeletons were found in the

<sup>39</sup> We took in account the description made by the author of the monograph, but we do not consider all these cases as burials, *Burial no. 2* being in our opinion a special deposition of a human skull.

settlement at Ivanovce. No other details concerning the context of the discoveries or the skeletons were mentioned (Jelínek, Vavák 2013, 272)

- c) Furmánek, Jakab 1997, 19, Fig. 1/1; Jelínek, Vavák 2013, 272.

**5. Kakucs–Balla domb**, Pest county, Hungary. Tell settlement.

- a) The settlement extends across two large hills rising above the former Tó-környék marshland at the south-western outskirts of Kakucs. It was researched between 1992-1993 by G. Kulcsár and starting with 2010 by M. Jaeger and G. Kulcsár. The ceramics correspond to the late Nagyrév and Vátya I-III styles (Jaeger, Kulcsár 2013, with the old literature).
- b) During the excavation, scattered human bones and several burials were found inside the settlement (Jaeger, Kulcsár 2013, 295). One of the burials was found in Pit 'a', one of the largest pits, and belonged to an 18-22 years old male in a crouched position. The body was oriented SE-NW and there were no grave goods. The pit had been dug into the habitation level and the filling also contained debris (Jaeger, Kulcsár 2013, 298) (Pl. III/3-4).
- c) Jaeger, Kulcsár 2013, 295, 298.

**6. Kiszombor–Juhos Miklós tanyá=Új Élet Tsz.**, Csongrád county, Hungary. Tell settlement.

- a) The settlement is situated on a naturally elevated area near the Porgany Creek Canal. The first information about the settlement is from 1928 and other brief descriptions were published by I. Foltiny in 1942. L. A. Horváth coordinated the research in 1981. Between 1987 and 1989, archaeological investigations were carried out by J. O'Shea. The settlement was associated with the Mureş/Maros ceramic style (Michelaki 2006, with the old literature).
- b) Discoveries of complete skeletons and disarticulated human bones, belonging both to adults and children are mentioned, but the contexts of discovery were not published. I. Bóna mentions the discovery of an inhumation from 1872, having as inventory a bronze arm ring, two rings and a gorget. Around the neck, shells, animal teeth and faience beads were found (Bóna 1975, 85). Additionally, the remains of a young child between 1-3 years old were discovered in secondary position, in the fill of the enclosure ditch (O'Shea 1996, 143). An intact infant burial was also found. The infant was less than 1 year old at the time of death and was arranged in a flexed posture, oriented southward. The head pointed to the west. A ceramic cup had been placed on top of the infant's skeleton. The grave itself was located in the midst of the main settlement area and appears to have been placed within a disused storage pit, which was then carefully filled in with soil (O'Shea 1996, 143).
- c) Bóna 1975, 85; O'Shea, 1996, 143.

**7. Klárafalva–Hajdova**, Csongrád county, Hungary. Tell settlement.

- a) The settlement is situated the left bank of the Mureş/Maros river. The first excavations were made in 1931 by F. Móra. Other trial trenches were made in 1958 and in 1969. O. Trogmayer started the systematic excavations, which were continued in 1987 by J. O'Shea. The information resulted from the excavations conducted in 1931 and 1969 were published by K. P. Fischl (Fischl 1998) and those of the American team by K. Michelaki (Michelaki 2006). The archaeological material is specific to the Mureş/Maros ceramic style.
- b) The skeleton of a child was found in a campaign from 1969, in the dwelling marked with "E", under a hearth, being interpreted by the author as a building sacrifice (Horváth 1985, 65, Fig. 3). In this settlement, disarticulated human bones are also mentioned (O'Shea, 1996, 80).
- c) Horváth 1985, 65; O'Shea, 1996, 80.

**8. Malé Kosihy–Törökdomb**, Štúrovo County, Slovakia. Tell settlement.

- a) The fortified settlement is situated on the high terrace of River Eipel. The site had been known of since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the first excavations were made by A. Točík in 1956 and 1968-

1969. The site it is associated with Makó-Kosihy-Čaka and Maďarovce ceramic styles (Točík 1981b, with the old literature).

- b) In the article of V. Furmánek and J. Jakab the presence of human bones is mentioned in one of the systematic trenches (Furmánek, Jakab 1997, 19). The burials of two individuals were also discovered in features 37 and 57. They were situated to the South and were accompanied by grave goods.
- c) Furmánek, Jakab 1997, 19; Jelínek, Vavák 2013, 272.

**9. Nitriansky Hrádok-Zámeček=Šurany, Nové Zámky county, Slovakia, tell.**

- a) The tell is located on the left side of the river Čítienka and looks like an elevated terrain surrounded by a marshy area. The tell was researched in 1923, 1948-1952 and 1957-1960. The ceramic belongs to the Maďarovce ceramic style. A monographic study of the site was published in 1981 by A. Točík.
- b) The first two cases of human bone findings were published by Eisner in 1933: 2 skeletons and another skull were discovered in the same feature and a child's skeleton was found in another feature. Both of the features had objects placed around the skeletons. (Eisner 1933, 57-58, Tab. XXIV; Jelínek, Vavák 2013, 272). The other situations discovered at this site were published by A. Točík. He mentions the discovery of human bones in 25 features which belonged to the Bronze Age level from the settlement area (Točík 1981a, Vol. 1, 89). In sector B/16, in the circular pit 296, which had the diameter of 125 cm, a skeleton placed in a sitting-like pose was discovered, being covered by a level of sherds and daub. The skeleton was oriented E-W. A child was placed between the chest and the right arm, under which an animal bone was found. The author also mentions the fact that he did not observe an intentional deposition of the objects found in the pit (Točík 1981a, Vol. 1, 117). Another human skeleton was discovered in pit 237 from sector F/21. It was buried in a crouched position at 2 m depth, oriented N-S, without any grave goods (Točík 1981a, Vol. 1, 279). In pit 242 from G/21 sector, the skeleton of a child was discovered, badly preserved, which was deposited on a sandy level, together with 3 jars placed upside down (Točík 1981a, Vol. 1, 89; Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 33, Jelínek, Vavák 2013, 272) (Pl. IV/4). In pit 120 from J/10 there was a skeleton which, according to the author, was probably ritually deposited (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 126) (Pl. IV/3). The same situation occurred in J/20, pit 228 (Točík, 1981a, Vol. 2, 139) (Pl. IV/4). In pit 230 from K/20 a skeleton in a crouched position had been placed and oriented to the N-E, together with two jugs (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 165) (Pl. IV/1). In this settlement another type of depositions was observed: children in vessels. One of these discoveries is from sector G/18, near pit 170 (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 26); another one is from H/22 (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 74), while the third one was found in N/22 sector (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 186). Isolated human bones were found in several pits of the settlement: in pit 297, from sector B/16 a human skull was discovered (Točík 1981a, Vol. 1, 118); in 1948-1949 campaign, in pit 3 from sector C/3, 3 skulls together with part of a jaw and a bone from the lower extremity (it is not specified whether is the lower extremity of the body or of the skull) were discovered (Točík 1981a, Vol. 1, 89, 128; Jelínek, Vavák 2013, 272); near the wall of the dwelling in pit 298 from C/15 there was a skull fragment (Točík 1981a, Vol. 1, 145); other human bones were found in pit 28 from E/6 (Točík 1981a, Vol. 1, 212), in pit 134 from F/15 (Točík 1981a, Vol. 1, 264), in pit 216 from F/20 (Točík 1981a, Vol. 1, 277), a leg bone was found in pit 243 of G/21 sector, (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 34), a human bone in pit 268 from G/22 (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 39), a fragment from a child's skull in pit 220 from H/20 (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 70), a human bone in pit 116 from CH/10 (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 95), a human skull together with other bones and materials were discovered in pit 325 from sector CH/12 (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 98), a human bone in pit 105 in J/9 (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 125), a human skull in pit 252 from J/21 (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 142), and also a human bone in pit 254 from J/21 (Točík 1981a, Vol. 2, 143).
- c) Eisner 1933, 57-58, Tab. XXIV; Točík 1981a; Furmánek, Jakab 1997, 19; Jelínek, Vavák 2013, 272.

**10. Ószentiván=Tiszasziget-Nagyhalom**, Csongrad county, Hungary. Tell settlement.

- a) The settlement is on a high, oval shaped area, surrounded by marshy land. J. Banner researched this area in 1926 and 1927. The site is specific to Mureş/Maros ceramic style (Banner 1928).
- b) The discovery of scattered human bones in the early excavations is mentioned (O'Shea 1996, 80).
- c) O'Shea 1996, 80.

**11. Otomani–Cetatea de pământ** [hung. Ottomány „Földvár“], Bihor county, Romania. Tell settlement.

- a) The tell settlement is located on an island formed through the meandering flow of the Ier River. The first excavations were made by M. Roska in 1925. However, large scale excavations were conducted here only in 1958 by K. Horedt, M. Rusu and I. Ordentlich and were continued until 1962. The site is associated with the Otomani-Füzesabony ceramic style (Ordentlich et al. 2014a, with the old literature).
- b) The burials discovered in the settlement at Otomani–Cetatea de pământ were made in the south-eastern corner of house B, under the floor. One of the skeletons was placed in a flexed position, on the left side, and was well preserved (Pl. V/1). The second one had probably been placed in the same manner, but was later disturbed. Both of them were oriented E-W and can be attributed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the Otomani-Füzesabony culture. The shape and dimensions of the pit could not be established due to the fact that they were placed immediately under the floor. On the entire perimeter of the settlement, other 24 human bone remains from at least 5 individuals were found: two children, one female and two men (Ordentlich 1963, 132).
- c) Ordentlich 1963, 90, 91, 132.

**12. Pecica–Șanțul Mare** [hung. Pécska „Nagysánc“], Arad county, Romania. Tell settlement.

- a) The settlement is located on a high bank along the Mureş/Maros River. The first excavations in the tell from Pecica were made by L. Dömötör in 1898. The first stratigraphic excavations were conducted by M. Roska in 1910-1911 and 1923-1924 and then by D. Popescu in 1943. Systematic excavations of the site were undertaken again in 1960-1962 and 1964 by I. H. Crişan and starting with 2005 by J. O'Shea and his team. The ceramics belongs to the Mureş/Maros ceramic style (Găvan, Ignat 2014, with the old literature).
- b) Human skull fragments were discovered on a level found at 2.95-3 m depth (Roska 1912, 70).
- c) Roska 1912, 70. O'Shea, 1996, 80.

**13. Periam–Movila Șanțului** [hung. Perjámos „Sánczhalom“], Timiş county, Romania. Tell settlement.

- a) The settlement is located on the left side of an old watercourse of Aranca. The first artefacts were discovered in 1878, but the first actual archaeological investigations were conducted by M. Roska in 1909. Further fieldworks were carried out by the same researcher in 1910, 1911, 1913 and 1923. The ceramic is characteristic to the Mureş/Maros ceramic style (Gogâltan, Ignat 2014, with the old literature).
- b) In 1878 the remains of an inhumation burial, together with a bronze dagger and fragments from a deer's antler were discovered (Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, 135).
- c) Milleker 1906, 117; O'Shea 1996, 80; Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, 135.

**14. Rabe–Anka-sziget=Ostrvo Anka**, Novi Kneževac county, Serbia. Tell settlement.

- a) The settlement is placed in the south-western part of the locality. It is oval-shaped and measures 130 × 70 m, with a height of 4 m. Research was initiated by J. Reizner in 1891 and other excavations were conducted in 1902 and in 1950. The archaeological material belongs to the Mureş/Maros ceramic style.
- b) The discovery of human remains in the early excavations of the settlement is mentioned (O'Shea 1996, 80).
- c) O'Shea 1996, 80.

**15. Săcueni–Cetatea Boului** [hung. Székelyhid „Ökörvár=Ökördomb“], Bihor county, Romania. Tell settlement.

- a) The settlement is situated on a former island which rises about 2.5–3 m above the Ier River. Here, excavations have been made between 1971 and 1973 by I. Ordentlich, T. Bader and Z. Nanási. The ceramic style is specific to the Sanislău and Otomani-Füzesabony type (Gogâltan 2014b, with the old literature).
- b) According to T. Bader, in 1971, during systematic excavations, a cinerary urn was found in the lowest level (Pl. IV/5), assigned at the time to phase I of the Otomani-Füzesabony culture (Bader 1978, 39; Bader 1998, 80). Subsequently, the burial was correctly assigned to the late Early Bronze Age group Sanislău (Németi 1996, 36; Dani 1997, 57; Thomas 2008, 321–322).
- c) Bader 1978, 39; Németi 1996, 33, 36; Dani 1997, 57; Bader 1998, 80; Thomas 2008, 321–322.

**16. Sălacea–Dealul Vida=Burga** [hung. Szalacs „Vida-hegy“], Bihor county, Romania. Tell settlement.

- a) The fortified tell is located on top of a steep-sloped promontory, which is situated at the eastern border of the village Sălacea. The site was first excavated by E. Andrásy and M. Roska in 1934. Systematic investigations led by I. Ordentlich began in 1964, and were carried out until 1969. The archaeological material is specific to the Sanislău and Otomani-Füzesabony ceramic style (Ordentlich et al. 2014, with the old literature).
- b) In the settlement at Sălacea three graves were discovered, all of them in different situations. The first one is an inhumation burial near the sanctuary, where a few bones belonging to a child were found, together with fragments from a vessel and a cylinder which resembles the 9 cylinders discovered inside the temple (Ordentlich 1972, 72; Chidioșan, Ordentlich 1975, 19; Ordentlich et al 2014b, 210). The second is a cremation grave (Pl. V/2). The burnt bones were deposited in a bowl with no other grave goods (Ordentlich 1972, 79; Bader 1978, 39; Németi 1996, 33; Ordentlich et al 2014, 210). This cremation burial was subsequently reassigned to the Sanislău group (Németi 1996, 36; Dani 1997, 57; Thomas 2008, 322). The last is a collective grave containing four skeletons: two adults, one juvenile and one child. Apart from the child, all the other three were arranged in a strongly crouched position. Skeleton A: according to the length of the bones, the skull and pelvis have male traits. The man had a height of 170 cm, and must have been around 40–50 years old at the time of death. He was found in a supine (lying down) position, with the inferior limbs crouched towards the right side and also facing right. His bent knees were under skeleton C, while his left shank was covered by skeleton B. His left hand bent from the elbow was horizontally placed on the pelvis and was grasping the right heel of skeleton B, while his right hand was stretched under the left foot of skeleton C. Skeleton B was approximately of 160 cm height and old of 40–50 years at the time of death. According to the sizes of the bones and the skull it was a woman. She was placed in a prone position on skeleton A. Her left hand was strongly bent from the elbow and placed on the chest, while her right hand half stretched hugged skeleton C. The head was facing left and the legs were bent, touching the tibias of the C skeleton, which, according to the characteristics of the bones seems to be of a juvenile, female, of 14–15 years or 13–14 years of age at the time of death. She was positioned on the right side in a semi-crouched position, with her skull near skeleton B, having been grasped between the man's knees, with her face turned towards the man's face. The head is placed on the right arm and the palm on the right shank of skeleton B. Her left arm was stretched with the palm placed on the pelvic zone of skeleton B. Her legs were bent, with the knees touching the arms of skeleton A. Skeleton D is a toddler of approximately 40 cm high. Its body is positioned in an extended position. The grave did not contain any funeral goods (Ordentlich 1972, 79; Németi 1996, 33; Ordentlich et al 2014b, 210) (Pl. V/4).
- c) Ordentlich, Kacsó 1970, 50; Ordentlich 1972, 79; Chidioșan, Ordentlich 1975, 19; Bader 1978, 39; Németi 1996, 33, 36; Dani 1997, 57; Thomas 2008, 322; Ordentlich et al. 2014b, 210.

**17. Semlac**–*Livada lui Onea*, Arad county, Romania. Tell settlement.

- a) The tell settlement is located 2.85 km northeast of the centre of Semlac village, between the road towards Pecica and the high terrace of the Mureş/Maros River. It is naturally fortified on two sides and the rest is probably separated by a ditch. D. Popescu made the first research endeavours in 1943. Another excavation was made in 1994 by Fl. Gogâltan. The ceramic belongs to the Mureş/Maros style (Gogâltan 2014c, with the old literature).
- b) During the 1994 excavation, one skull without the jaw, and two other cranial fragments from different individuals were found (Pl. III/5-6). Those were placed under the floor in the south-western corner of house no. 5 (Gogâltan 2014c, 243).
- c) Gogâltan, 2014c, 243.

**18. Tiream**–*Movila cânepii* [ung. Mezőterem „Kendereshalom“], Satu Mare county, Romania. Tell settlement.

- a) The site is located on a sandy hill emerging from the floodplain of the Ier River, in the immediate vicinity of the modern settlement. In 1960 S. Kovács made a small trial trench and later in 1966 J. Némethi made other investigations. The ceramic belongs to the Otomani-Füzesabony style (Némethi, Molnár 2014 with the old literature).
- b) At Tiream three cases of human bone deposition were discovered, on the occasion of a rescue excavation. At a depth of 1.10 m, the skull of an individual was found, with no other human bone remains or grave goods (Némethi 1969, 64; Bader 1978, 40; Némethi 1996, 33). The second situation, named Grave 2 followed the inhumation rite. This grave contained the bodies of two individuals which were arranged in crouched position. The pit has an oval shape and descends from the upper level. Its bottom reached the first (lower) habitation level (1.90 m depth). The first skeleton's head was oriented towards the NNW and the legs towards the SSE. The second skeleton was in a crouched position as well and had the same orientation as the first one. It lacked its skull, but the cervical vertebrae were still present, which suggests the fact that the skull was removed after decomposition. Among the grave goods were ten vessels (Némethi 1969, 64-65; Bader 1978, 40; Némethi 1996, 33) (Pl. V/3). Another inhumation was discovered at 0.45 m of depth and had been disturbed. The skeleton was initially in a crouched position. Only the inferior part and fragments of the pelvis were preserved. Potsherds decorated with grooves were found in the pit. Near the right femur a small gray bowl had been placed, ornate with spirals ending with four prominences (Némethi 1969, 65; Bader 1978, 40; Némethi 1996, 33-34).
- c) Némethi 1969, 64; Bader 1978, 40; Némethi 1996, 33-34.

**19. Včelince**–*Lászlófala*, okr. Rimavská Sobota, Slovakia. Tell settlement.

- a) The settlement is situated on the left part of River Slaná, in southern Slovakia. Its existence was known since the beginning of the last century. G. Balaša made the first trial trenches in 1959 and continued the excavation in 1983. From 1985 to 1992, V. Furmánek and K. Marková conducted the systematic excavations. The ceramic belongs to the Hatvan and Otomani-Füzesabony style.
- b) In the settlement, the skeletons of two newborns and were discovered, along with bone fragments of from other 8-9 individuals (Furmánek, Jakab 1997, 20; Jelínek, Vavák 2013, 272).
- c) Jakab 1988, 109-119, 234-235; Furmánek, Jakab, 1997, 20; Jelínek, Vavák 2013, 272.

**20. Veselé**–*Hradisko-Podzámske* [ung. Vigvár], okr. Piešťany, Slovakia. Tell settlement.

- a) The fortified settlement is situated in south-western Slovakia, on a high terrain in the marshy area of Váh and Dudvah rivers. The first researches were made between 1931 and 1933 by J. Neustupný. They were continued in 1944, 1949, and 1950 by A. Točík, and in 1999 by D. Staššíková-Štukovská. The ceramic belongs to the Mad'arovce style (Točík 1964; Staššíková-Štukovská 2000 with the old literature).
- b) In this settlement, three features with human bone depositions were identified. The first feature contained the remains of a man. The second one contained the lower part of a skeleton, together



with the left femur of a woman, while the third contained a mask made from the skull of a woman (Furmánek, Jakab 1997, 20; Jelínek, Vavák 2013, 272) (Pl. III/2).

c) Furmánek, Jakab 1997, 20; Jelínek, Vavák 2013, 272.

## INTERPRETATION

A first observation according to this catalogue is the number of features that contained human bone remains: 85 identified in 20 tell settlements (Fig. 1). These 85 cases describe different situations: burials which followed the funerary norm that can be archaeologically encountered in the formal funerary area as well (regular burials), burials which followed an atypical funerary ritual (irregular burials); unusual depositions characterized by placing the dead bodies or body parts in uncommon locations (such as household structures) that are not usually compatible with a funerary deposition, and discarded human bones.

In regards to the context of their discovery, the biggest percentage is represented by inhumations (41 cases), while cremation urns were encountered in only 8 situations (Carei, Derşida, Săcueni and Sălacea). Isolated human bones were discovered in 29 cases (Derşida, Ivanovce, Nitriansky Hrádok, Semlac, Tiream and Veselé). In 7 situations, which we labelled as undetermined, the precise context is not described, only the discovery of human bones or burials inside the settlement being briefly mentioned (Fig. 2).

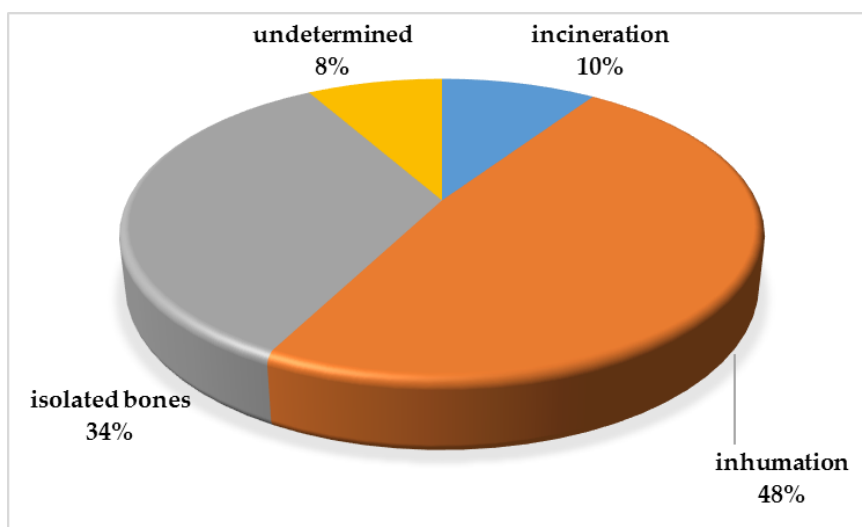


Fig. 2. Archaeological context of discovery for the human remains found inside Bronze Age tell settlements.

The first case brought into discussion is inhumation. We observed that the discovered bodies are represented by both articulated and disarticulated skeletons. From the 41 situations, 27 contain a single individual (Carei, Derşida, Kakucs, Kiszombor, Klárfalva, Malé Kosihy, Nitriansky Hrádok, Periam, Sălacea, Tiream and Veselé), 3 contain two individuals (Nitriansky Hrádok, Tiream and Veselé) and other 2 contain multiple individuals (Nitriansky Hrádok and Sălacea) (Fig. 3).

In the category of singular inhumations we identified different situations: inhumations which retained the same funerary aspect as those encountered in cemeteries (3), irregular burials (10), unusual depositions like children in vessels, double or collective depositions, or in places that are not common for a grave, as under the floor (14), skeletons that were discarded in rubbish pits (16), as well as other undetermined situations for which there is insufficient information in order to draw some relevant conclusions (18) (Fig. 4).

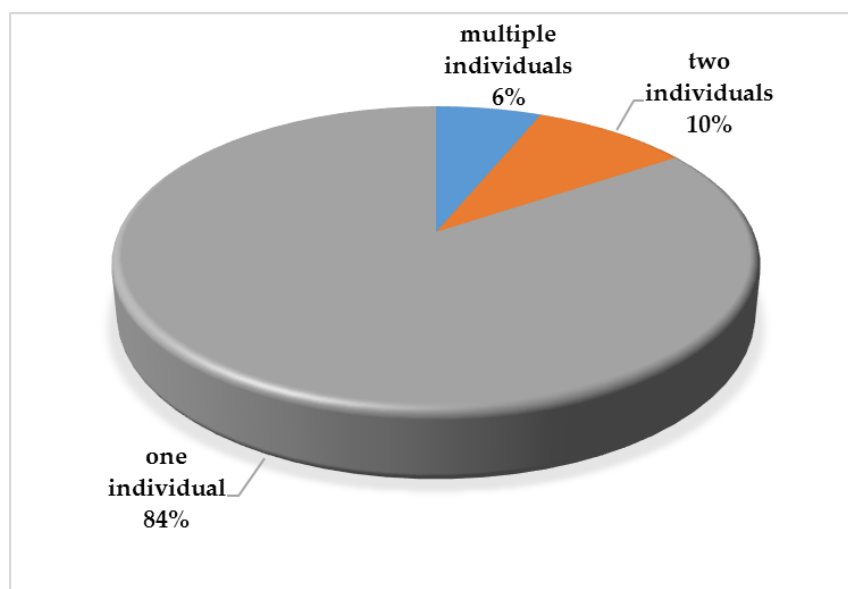


Fig. 3. Number of individuals in inhumation contexts.

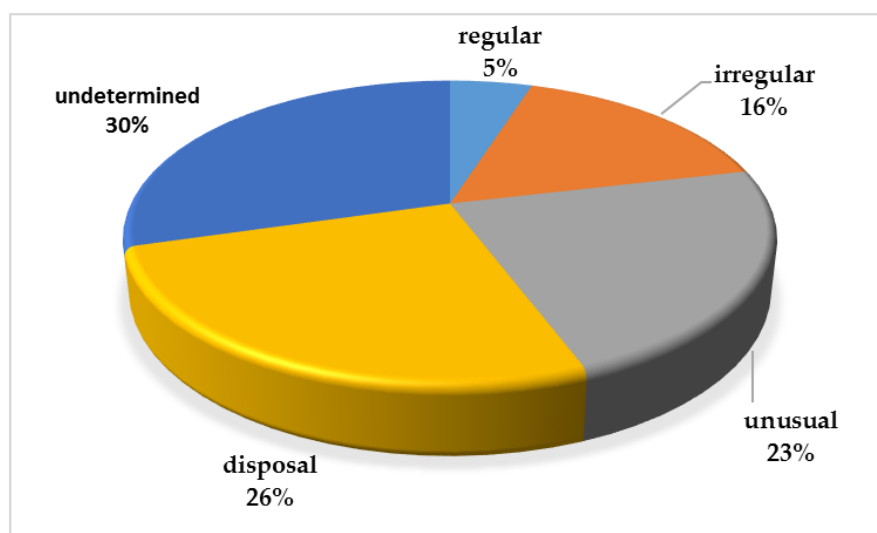


Fig. 4. Types of human bones depositions.

If we consider the intentionality of the gesture and the funerary rite parameters which indicate regular depositions, this means that the skeletons which were placed in structures constructed for this purpose and treated according to the rite used also for the deceased in funerary areas can be interpreted as regular burials. We can include in this category 3 cases

of inhumations. The first is represented by the discovery from 1872 at Kiszombor, which is only mentioned, but according to the objects which accompanied the human remains (a bronze arm ring, two rings, and a gorget, shells, animal teeth and faience beads around the neck) it appears to be a regular burial. A child deposition seems to be according to the rite identified in funerary areas, it was placed in crouched position, towards south. The head pointed to the west. A ceramic cup had been placed on top of the infant's skeleton. At Periam the human remains were found together with a bronze dagger and fragments of deer antler. This pattern, of burial in flexed position, was observed in the funerary area of the Mureş/Maros ceramic style at Mokrin, Beba Veche, Pitváros, Battonya, Deszk or Ószéntiván.

The 8 cremation burials discovered inside the settlements at Carei, Derşida, Săcueni and Sălacea are also included in the category of regular burials. According to the author's descriptions, all these situations seem to be in their original context. We consider that these depositions respect the patterns that can be observed in the graves found in the formal funerary spaces. However, we do not know the reasons for which people chose to place them inside the settlements. The urns have been discovered in pits especially constructed for the purpose of their deposition, a little larger than the maximum diameter of the vessels. No other objects, besides the ones that were inside the vessels and accompanied the deceased on the funerary pyre, were found in the pits. These cremation burials belong to the Sanislău and the Wietenberg ceramic styles, which are characterized by funerary spaces where the norm of deposition is incineration and depositions in urns.

If regular burials are somehow easier to recognize, the other depositions raise many interpretation issues. The available information is altered by several factors. First of all, some, if not many rituals, either funerary or non-funerary, leave no traces in archaeological contexts. Therefore, the boundaries between irregular burials, unusual depositions and discarded bones can no longer be perceived. Another source of interference is represented by taphonomic factors or other external disturbances, which in time may significantly change the aspect of a deposition. The last factors to impend a proper interpretation are represented by poor or inadequate excavation methods, insufficient data provided in the specialised literature, as well as the current state of knowledge.

The inhumation burial from Derşida can be perceived as an irregular burial, as the main funerary practice employed by Wietenberg communities is characterised predominantly by cremation burials. However, there are a few other cases of inhumation burials discovered in other Wietenberg settlements in Transylvania (Miceşti-Cigaş<sup>40</sup> and Voivodeni<sup>41</sup>). A similar case was identified at Kakucs, where a male was placed in crouched position and oriented SE-NW, without grave goods. The pit was dug into the occupation level and in the filling there was also debris. Other cases of irregular burials were identified at Nitriansky Hrádok (pit no. 237, 242, 230, 170, 22) and Tiream.

Skeletons that were discarded in rubbish pits were discovered in Carei (a mandible discovered in 1966 and a disarticulated skeleton found in 1994) and Nitriansky Hrádok (pit no. 297, 3/C3, 298, 28, 134, 216, 243, 268, 220, 116, 325, 105, 252, 254). Due to the lack of detailed information, 18 cases could not be included in any category. In the Otomani-Füzesabony ceramic style, we mention the situation at Tiream, where a disturbed skeleton was found in a crouched position inside the ditch. The other cases were found in contexts

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<sup>40</sup> Bălan 2014b.

<sup>41</sup> Németh 2015.

assigned to the Mad'arovce ceramic style. We list here the skeleton of a child found in Nitriansky Hrádok and the remains of a male found in Veselé.

Double burials were identified in 3 settlements: Nitriansky Hrádok within the Mad'arovce ceramic style, and Tiream and Včelince within the Otomani-Füzesabony ceramic style. In these instances, we can observe a type of deposition which was also encountered in cemeteries: the deposition of an adult female and a child, possibly interpreted as a mother and her child. This situation was observed as well in incineration cemeteries, where urns containing the remains of children were placed close to urns containing the remains of adult females. Other registered cases in incineration cemeteries can be perceived as double burials, as some funerary urns are placed next to each other, containing bones which were determined to have belonged to different persons. Therefore, double burials are not utterly uncommon in both inhumation and cremation cemeteries.

Multiple inhumations were identified only in two cases, both of them found in settlements assigned to the Mad'arovce and Otomani-Füzesabony ceramic styles: Nitriansky Hrádok and Sălacea. The common traits shared by both cases are the presence of individuals of all ages and genders and the noticeable arrangement of bodies inside the pits. These types of collective burials are not found in cemeteries, just in settlements. In terms of multiple depositions, it is interesting that all these cases were interpreted by the authors as ritual acts, due to their positioning inside the settlement. Certain factors that show the intentionality of placing them in those specific contexts have been observed. Nevertheless, in one of these cases the deceased present clear traces of violence, suggesting that they were killed and thrown in the pit. This situation could reflect a ritual performance, but a profane criminal act cannot be entirely excluded. No grave goods were discovered inside these multiple burials.

Isolated bones and bone fragments were identified in 29 cases, out of which 18 are represented by skulls or skull fragments. They were interpreted as traces of ritual activities, garbage or even accidental occurrences. Clear signs of ritual activities were observed in 4 cases involving the deposition of skull and skull fragments. Considering that the deposition of skulls is encountered in the formal funerary area as well, these depositions might be linked to special funerary practices. A few examples from the cemeteries at Battonya (Grave 21)<sup>42</sup>, Beba Veche (Grave 12)<sup>43</sup> and Mokrin (Grave 214)<sup>44</sup> can be mentioned. Particularly interesting are the skull mask from Veselé and the deposition of multiple skulls under a floor in Semlac. Based on the unusual location or manner in which they were discovered, some of these skull depositions were connected to rituals involving a possible ancestor's cult: under the floor, under the hearth, or used as a mask.

From the 85 cases of human bone depositions, 18 cases have been identified as remains of children. We can observe that they appear in all the situations: scattered bones, single burials, double burials, and multiple burials. If we try to classify them in the proposed model, we have cases corresponding to each category: regular burials, irregular burials, unusual depositions and discarded bones. A special dimension of funerary behaviour involving small children was observed, namely the deposition in vessels. Three cases were discovered at Nitriansky Hrádok. It is the only occurrence of this type within inhabited areas. In formal funerary area, there is the grave from Pir, where a child skeleton was

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<sup>42</sup> Szabó 1999, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Bóna 1965, 23.

<sup>44</sup> Girić 1971, 139.

discovered inside a pithos type vessel<sup>45</sup>. Disarticulated child bones were discovered in 5 cases: 2 in Nitriansky Hrádok, 2 in Kiszombor, and 1 in Otomani. In other 6 situations, child skeletons were identified in pits: Carei, Kiszombor, Klárafalva, Nitriansky Hrádok, Sălacea and Včelince.

## CONCLUSIONS

Intentional depositions of human remains were found within the inhabited areas of several Bronze Age tell settlements in the Carpathian Basin. Based on the cases documented, there are four main types of depositions of human remains. Regular burials are consistent with the formal way of funerary depositions and include both the inhumation and the cremation rites. These burials contain traces of the funeral ritual, similar to graves commonly found in the formal funeral spaces. The second type of funerary depositions is represented by irregular burials, which deviate from the usual customs, but still retain a funerary attribute. The third type is represented by unusual depositions. These imply the deposition of human remains (sometimes incomplete or dismembered bodies), involving a non-funerary ritual. The last type involves the discharge of human remains in a profane manner. In these latter cases, the human remains were acknowledged and treated as regular waste (Fig. 4).

The accurate interpretation of some of these finds is obstructed by the lack of available information, as well as by the difficulty to identify and recognize traces of ritual activities. Fortunately, some depositions do display clear pattern which can be related to funerary practices, allowing specialist to classify them as burials. Since all these burials are located in an area which is not a conventional funerary space, some specialists are inclined to label them as deviant/irregular burials. However, considering that some of them follow the normative aspects of funeral practices specific to the communities in which they occurred we chose to classify as irregular only those burials which deviate from the standard patterns (e.g. an inhumation burial in a society where cremation is predominant or exclusive, children deposited in vessels). The boundary between irregular burials, unusual depositions and profane discharging is sometimes unclear, as the traces of an atypical funerary practice can be invisible or misinterpreted.

Single burials are predominant, but graves containing two or more individuals are also encountered. The rite of inhumation is predominant, while cremation is represented in 8 cases. Taking into account the rather large number of scattered bones, rites such as exposure or defleshing cannot be entirely excluded, even if it is significantly harder to detect them in archaeological contexts, especially when they are not considered to begin with. As well, two-steps funerary practices, which involve a secondary manipulation of human remains (the remains are moved from the initial grave to the final grave; sometimes only several bones are selected) could be an explanation for the isolated bones and bone fragments discovered in various contexts.

Some depositions of human remain found in Bronze Age tell settlements suggest rituals related to aspects which are not necessarily connected to funerary practices, as it is the case of skulls deposited under house floors or skeletons placed beneath fire-hearths. Several depositions appear entirely non-ritual, suggesting that some human remains were

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<sup>45</sup> Székely 1966, 133.

considered and treated as ordinary garbage. However, these discoveries should be interpreted with caution, as previously undocumented atypical funerary or non-funerary rituals could be unrecognizable or untraceable in the archaeological record. It is also possible that some of the human bones discovered inside tell settlements ended up in the position in which they were found due to non-anthropogenic factors.

The reasons which determined the community to bury or discard of the human remains within the habitation is unclear, but the practice is far from being isolated to this area or this time frame. In fact, the presence of human remains inside settlements is attested in all time periods and geographic areas. This mortuary variability could have been determined by a multitude of factors, such as age, gender, social status, time and cause of death. In our opinion, a presentation of all the different forms in which human bodies/remains were disposed inside tell settlements from the Bronze Age Carpathian Basin offers us insights into the attitude of the living towards their deceased, both at a social and a spiritual level.

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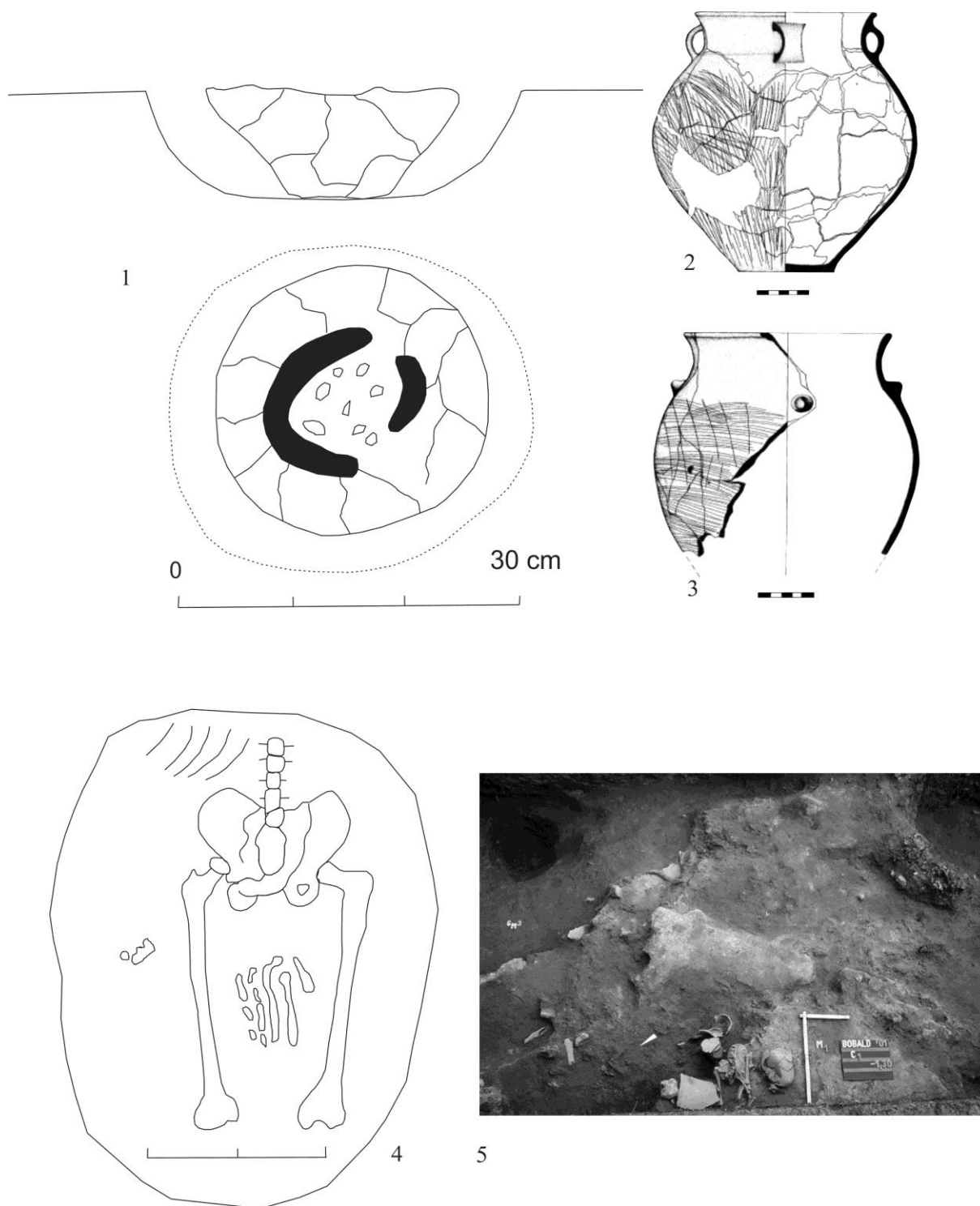
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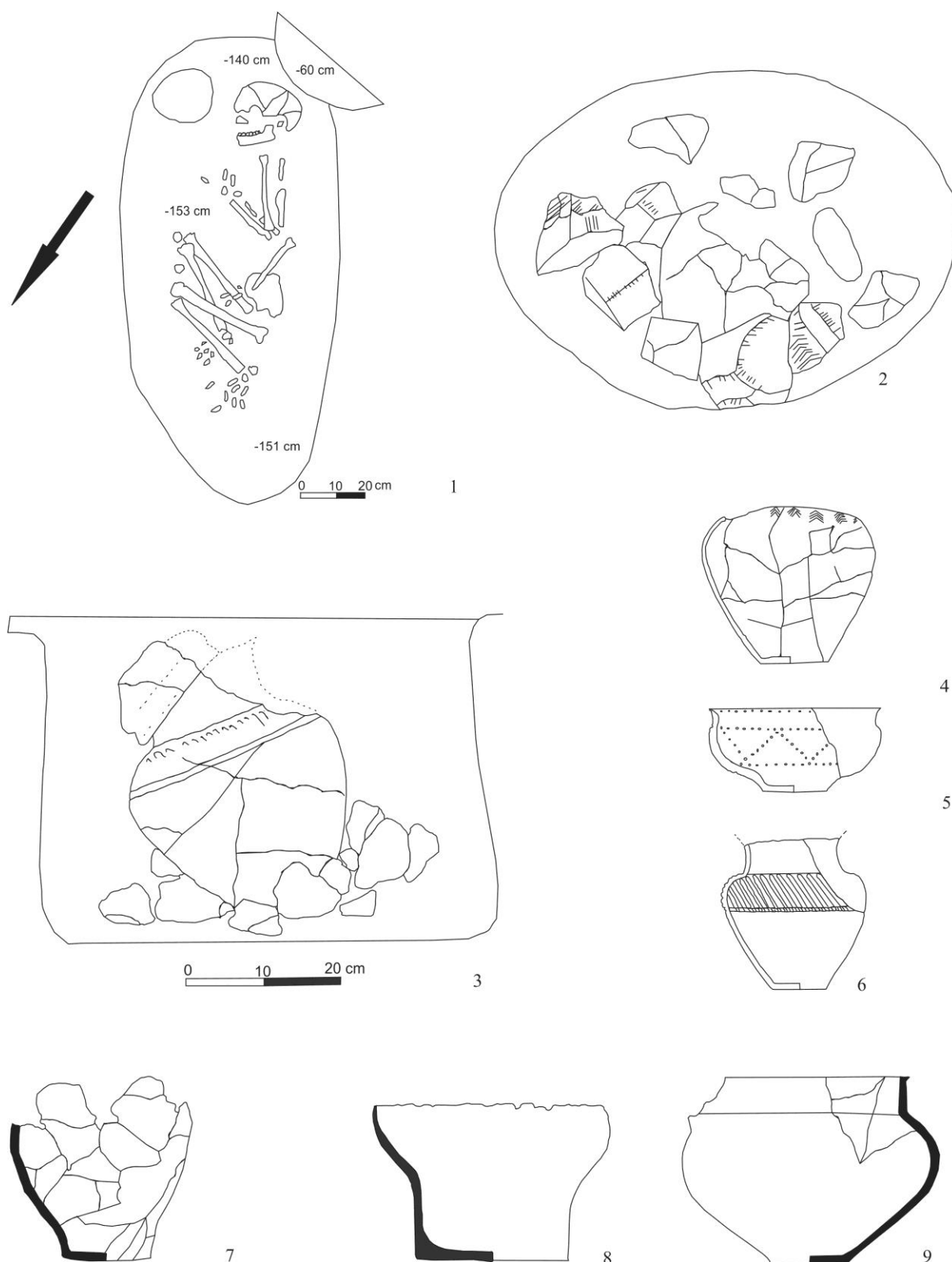
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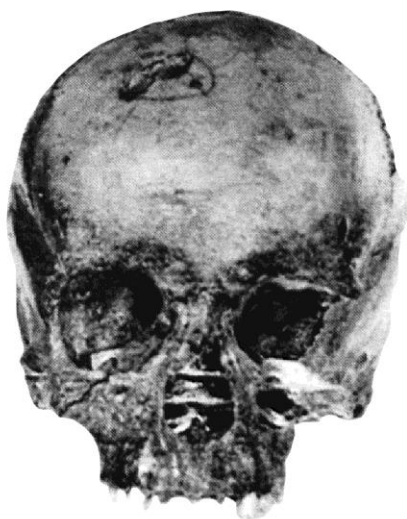
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Pl. I. 1. Carei. Burial M1 from 1997 (after Némethi, Dani 2001); 2. Carei. Urn of M1 from 1997 (after Némethi, Dani 2001); 3. Carei. Vessel used as lid of M1 from 1997 (Némethi, Dani 2001); 4. Carei. Deposition from 1994 (after Némethi 1996); 5. Carei. Deposition from 2001 (Némethi, Molnár 2012).



Pl. II. 1. Derşida. Deposition from 1964; 2-3. Derşida. Burial no. 3; 4-6. Derşida. Burial no. 7; 7. Derşida. Urn vessel from burial no. 6; 8. Derşida. Urn vessel from burial no. 4; 9. Derşida. Urn vessel from burial no. 5 (Chidioşan 1980).



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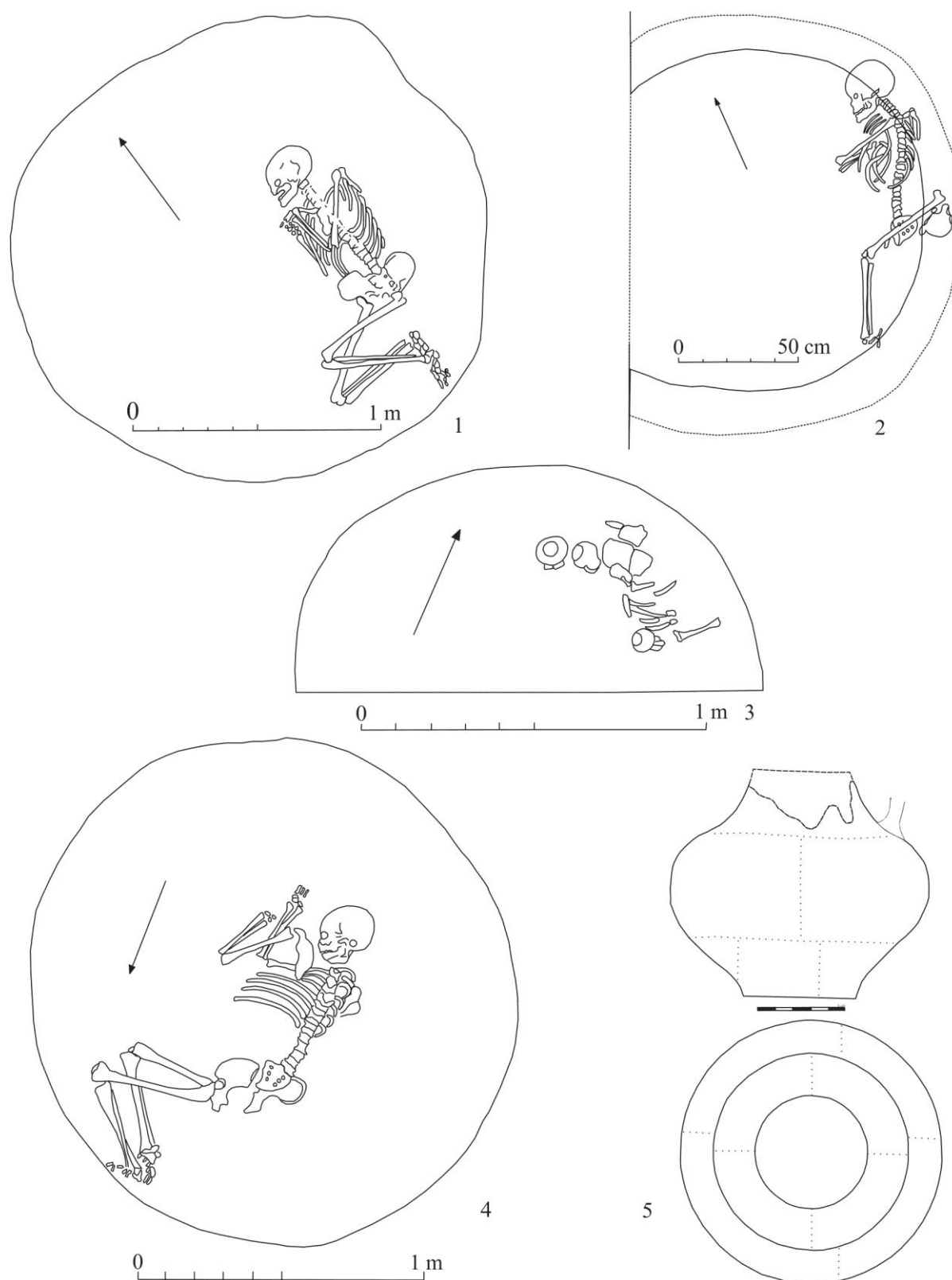
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Pl. III. 1. Ivanovce. Skull (after Furmánek, Jakab 1997); 2. (after Furmánek, Jakab 1997); 3-4. Kakus. Burial (Jaeger, Kulcsár 2013); 5-6. Semlac. Skull fragment.





Pl. IV. 1. Nitriansky Hrádok. Skeleton from pit 230 (after Točík 1981a); 2. Nitriansky Hrádok. Skeleton from pit 228 (after Točík 1981a); 3. Nitriansky Hrádok. Skeleton from pit 120 (after Točík 1981a); 4. Nitriansky Hrádok. Child bones from pit 242 (after Točík 1981a); 5. Săcueni. Urn vessel (Bader 1978).



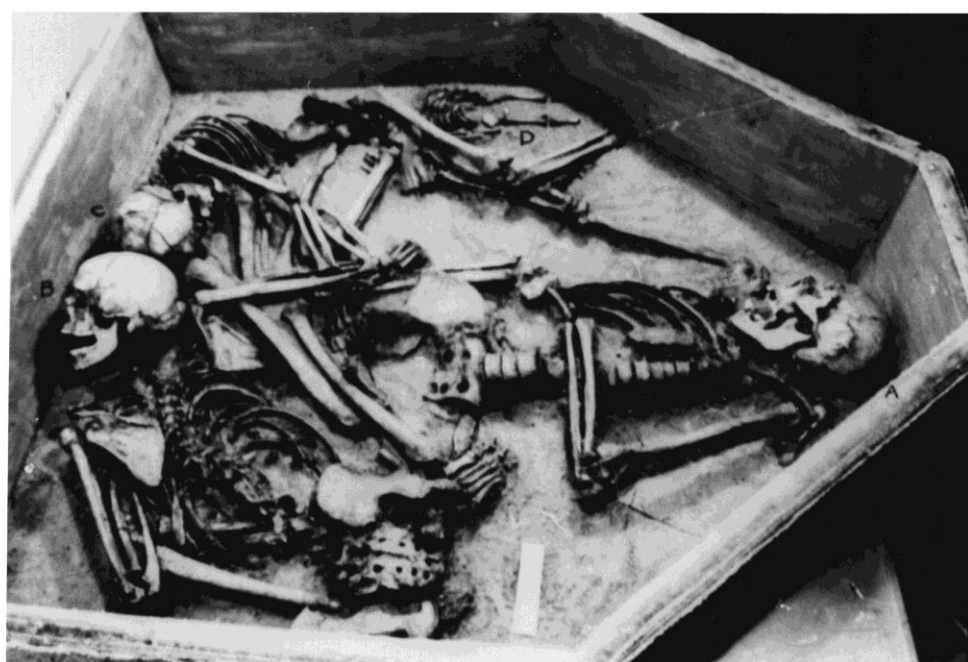
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Pl. V. 1. Otomani. Child burial under floor (after Ordentlich 1973); 2. Sălăcea. Urn vessel (after Ordentlich 1973); 3. Tiream. Burial no. II (after Némethi 1969); 4. Sălăcea. Collective deposition (Ordentlich 1973).