

TUMULUS GRAVE FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE EBA IN EASTERN HUNGARY

Dani JÀNOS

The Őrhalom is located on the border of Szerep (situated in Hajdú-Bihar county in Eastern Hungary), next to the Körtvélyes brook. M. Nepper Ibolya (archaeologist of the Museum Déri) made rescue excavations on the kurgan between 1986 and 1998.

Beside the graves from the Age of the Hungarian Conquest, which were secondarily dug into the tumulus, she had found six skeletal graves (the 4th, 7th-7th a, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th graves) from the beginning of the Early Bronze Age (EBA) and one skeletal grave (the 12th grave) from the end of the Late Copper Age (LCA).

The kurgan has two periods: the first, which contained the 12th grave, was erected by the People of the Pit-grave kurgans, in the end of LCA. This grave was without any grave goods, the deceased lay in a shallow grave pit in contracted position.

In the time of EBA six graves were dug into the kurgan and they were covered with a second tumulus. These were: the 4th, 7th-7th a, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th graves. Two of them (the 4th, 7th-7th a) were very rich graves, contained a pair of gold and silver earrings, vessels, copper pickaxe and dagger and a piece of worked ochre. There were only vessels in the 9th and 11th graves; on the other hand there was only a piece of grinding stone in the 10th grave. The central grave was the 8th, unfortunately it was totally robbed; the archaeologist found just pieces of the matting blanket. The other five graves were buried round the 8th grave.

The analysis of the grave furniture and the stratigraphy of the kurgan shows that the second period of the tumulus - with the six graves - was made in the beginning of the EBA. The vessels show close connections

mostly with the Makó culture, the Livezile group. The metals have analogies from the Late Pit-grave kurgans and Catacombs graves, at the same time similar pieces are known from the EBA of Southeast Europe.

We can evaluate these graves as the first EBA burials - probably partly contemporaneous with the Makó and the Livezile - in the Great Hungarian Plain with certain Late Pit-grave reminiscences. This site - beside other evidences - indicates the role of the Late Pit-grave culture in the formation of the EBA in the Eastern part of the Carpathian basin.