

## A biritual cemetery of the Gáva culture in the Middle Tisza Region and some further notes on the burial customs of the LBA-EIA in Eastern Hungary

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Although the research on the settlements and metalworking of the Gáva culture is greatly evolved for these days, we are still in short of the most fundamental data about the burial customs of the greatest LBA/EIA cultural complex in the Eastern Carpathian Basin. This means that in spite of being well up in typological and chronological considerations, we know almost nothing about the people who created the material culture. Not only information about the funerary practices – and thus about the anthropological characteristics – of the ruling elite is absent, but data on the lower social strata is hardly represented. Regarding all regional groups, we can establish that the number of known burial sites looks extremely low compared to the quantity of the settlements.

During the last decades, scholars showed low-intensity interest in this „funeral deficiency”, only some small-scale studies made attempt to evaluate the phenomenon. These explained the lack of graves by special cultural traditions or insufficient research, but any of the appeared ideas had been verified. Meanwhile working on my thesis dealing with this problem, there came to light a small biritual cemetery of the complex in 2010 at the preliminary excavation of the Nagykunság Water Reservoir (Great Hungarian Plain) as an unexpected luck. Despite of its mere extension, this funerary site has a great significance in the research of the burial customs of the Late Bronze Age Eastern Hungary. In the following chapters find material and burial customs observed in the Tiszabura cemetery is discussed and further notes are made on the entire issue of “missing burials” of the Gáva culture.

### 1. Tiszabura – Nagy-ganajos-hát, site Nr. 6

#### *Natural environment*

Tiszabura is located at the eastern boundary of Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county, Hungary, directly south of the artificial Lake Tisza (**P1/A-B**). Lying on the left bank of the River Tisza, its north-eastern surroundings are dominated by several pinched-off dead channels of the stream, covered by alluvial meadow roll. South of this marshy bordering lays the elevated riverbank with several NE-SW aligned long hills, where the sandy subsoil is interfered with clay patches and covered with solonetz. Site Nr. 6 is situated east of the village Tiszabura, south to the road connecting it with Abádszalók, on a south-eastern slope near to the foot of a sand hill called *Nagy-ganajos-hát* (**P1/C, P2**).

#### *Archaeological survey*

Large-scale excavations preceding the building of the Nagykunság Emergency Flood Reservoir were carried out between 2009 and 2011. The archaeological survey at the planned embankment and branch canal was lead in cooperation by the Authority of Museums of Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county and the Institute of Archaeological Sciences of Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest<sup>1</sup>.

From the LBA at site Nr. 6 an enormous, fortified settlement of the Reinecke BD-HA1 (or so-called pre-Gáva) period was excavated that extended northwards, through the Tiszabura-Abádszalók road, to site Nr. 5 (Vácz 2010, 366). The NW-SE lying group of Gáva graves was discovered in the westernmost part of the investigated area (**P2**). The first pottery sherds and calcined human bone fragments turned up in the course of mechanic soil removal, approximately at the depth of 25 cm (**P3/A**). From

<sup>1</sup> Site Nr. 6 was excavated by Marietta Csányi and Judit Tárnoki of János Damjanich Museum Szolnok to who I am greatly beholden for letting me study in situ, evaluate and publish the find material of the Gáva graves. Tiszabura – Bónis-hát, site Nr. 5 was investigated under the direction of Gábor Vácz (ELTE Budapest).

that point, the complexes were excavated manually, and finally a group of 8 urn-graves and a crouched skeleton of a child was unearthed (**P3/B**)<sup>2</sup>.

*Description of the graves*<sup>3</sup>

**Grave 1** – Ft. 73/Str. 159 (**P4. 1**)

Inhumation burial of an 11-14-year-old child<sup>4</sup>, the corpse was placed directly on the subsoil, at a depth of 40 cm. Flexed to the right side, oriented along the SW-NE axis, with the head pointing to the SW, face turned to the S. Hands crossed in the lap, legs tightly bent under the pelvis, standing apeak, slightly tilted to the right. Most parts of the skull and the lower limbs were destroyed by the front shovel excavator. Apart from three ribs and a single cervical vertebra, the bones of the torso were completely missing, hands and feet also turned up quite deficiently. A larger cup (**P7. 1**) lay on the left side of the deceased's chest, above the left arm and a smaller one (**P7. 2**) was placed to the left of his pelvis, onto the ground. Further sherds of Gáva type pottery were found above the pelvic girdle, but they could not be certainly related to the grave. The left side of the skull showed a relatively large stain of bronze patina, but the adjacent object was missing from the grave.

1. Cup (**P7. 1**)<sup>5</sup>

- a. Large cup with rounded, uneven rim, curved conical body with thin wall, omphalos base and a strap handle starting under the rim.
- b. Handmade of fine paste without tempering material added.
- c. Oxidized, light brown-dark grey patchy on both faces of the wall.
- d. R: 13 – 14 cm; F: 5 cm; H: 9 cm; W: 0,3 – 0,6 cm.
- e. DJM 2011.3.1.1.
- f. Widespread prehistoric vessel form, relatively common in the Gáva culture. Similar, but with a peak on the rim, above the handle are known from the cemetery of Taktabáj (Graves 5, 8, 9, 10 and 16: Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CLVIII. 18; Taf. CLIX. 11, 15; Taf. CLX. 5.; Taf. CLXI. 8); from Vencsellő–Kastélykert (DANI 1999, IV. tábla 1a-b), Debrecen–Nyulas (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXV. 6); Szeged–Öthalom (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXV. 7.); Szabolcs (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXXI. 22); Tiszatardos (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXXIV. 16) and Prügy (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CLV. 7). Also known from the eastern territory of the Gáva complex, eg. in Chişinău (Corlăteni – Chişinău Group; Leviţki 1994, Fig. 10, 9) and from other Late Bronze Age cultures of the Alföld, even in the REI BD-HA1 cemetery of Csorva (Trogmayer 1963, Taf. XIV. 10). Piliny culture: Patvarc (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. XI. 21); Szécsény (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. XIII. 14, 24); Bodrogheresztúr (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. XXXIII. 12). Kyjatice culture: the cemetery of Szajla (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. LXXIII. 5; Taf. LXXV. 12, 18, 22; Taf. LXXVII. 25; Taf. LXXVIII. 9, 16; Taf. LXXXIII. 2, 24; Taf. LXXXV. 6, 11, 23; Taf. LXXXVI. 20; Taf. LXXXVII. 15) and Ózd–Kőalja (KEMENCZEI 1984, Taf. XC. 13). The form is also common in the Lausitz culture and in the whole Urnfield region.

<sup>2</sup> During the preliminary field survey in 2006, greater amount of prehistoric sherds and broken human bones were found on the sand-hill (reported by Judit Tárnoki; KÖH 600/272/2007.). As by the excavation in 2009 two early medieval inhumation burials were brought to light close to the Gáva graves, we cannot certainly assert to which cemetery the bones has originally belonged.

<sup>3</sup> Stratigraphical numbers (in brackets) of the complexes were replaced with serial numbers from Grave 1 to 9 according to their geographical position (N-S; W-E).

<sup>4</sup> The anthropological determination was carried out by Zsuzsanna Zoffmann. See the detailed report in this volume.

<sup>5</sup> Legend:

1. Name (Pl.)
  - a. Formal description
  - b. Technological description (material, shaping, surface treatment)
  - c. Firing, colour
  - d. Proportions (R: rim diameter, S: shoulder diameter, B: belly diameter, F: foot diameter, H: height, h: measurable height, W: wall thickness)
  - e. Inventory Nr. Main analogies

**2. Cup (P7. 2)**

- a. Small cup with rounded, uneven rim, curved conical body, straight base and a loop handle starting under the rim.
- b. Handmade of fine paste without tempering material added.
- c. Oxidized, light brown- red patchy on both faces of the wall.
- d. R: 7,5 – 8 cm; F: 2,5 cm; H: 6cm; W: 0,2 – 0,5 cm.
- e. DJM 2011.3.1.2.
- f. As a smaller version of the cup described above, their distribution areas are similar. Some examples from the Gáva culture: Taktabáj (Grave 16: Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CLXI. 11); Gávavencsellő-Őrhegy (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXIX. 4); Tiszaeszlár (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXXI. 25). This smaller type of handled cup appears in the cemetery of Csorva (Trogmayer 1963, Taf. XIV. 5), furthermore known from the Piliny culture at Szurdokpüspöki (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. XIII. 21) and from the Kyjatice culture at the cemetery of Szajla (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. LXXXVI. 9, 10; Taf. LXXXVII. 6).

**Grave 2 – Ft. 84/Str. 174 (P4. 2)**

The assemblage found at a depth of 25-30 cm has seriously been disturbed by ploughing, only a few pottery sherds deriving from two vessels (P7. 3-4) and some calcined bone fragments could be observed. Therefore neither sex nor age of the deceased could be defined.

**1. Fragments of a jar (?) foot and wall (P7. 3)**

- a. Fragments of a coarse jar with straight base and conical body.
- b. Handmade of semi-coarse paste without tempering material added.
- c. Reduced, black on the outer, oxidized, yellow on the inner face of the wall.
- d. W: 1,7 – 2,48 cm; further proportions are immeasurable.
- e. DJM 2011.3.8.1.
- f. As the whole shape is unknown, proper analogies of the vessel cannot be listed.

**2. Fragments of a biconical vessel foot and shoulder (P7. 4)**

- a. Fragments of a thin walled vessel with curved biconical body.
- b. Handmade of fine paste without tempering material added.
- c. Reduced, dark grey on both faces of the wall.
- d. W: 0,57 – 1,2 cm; further proportions are immeasurable.
- e. DJM 2011.3.8.2.
- f. As the whole shape is unknown, proper analogies of the vessel cannot be listed.

**Grave 3 – Ft. 75/Str. 161 (P4. 3)**

Cremation grave of an individual of indeterminate sex and age found at a depth of 20-25 cm. The ashes were buried in a bowl with wrapped turban rim (P7. 5), covered with a similar dish decorated with concentric channelling at the bottom (P7. 6). Further pottery sherds were found in the immediate vicinity of the grave, of which a smaller cup with wrapped turban rim and channelled decoration on the inside (P7. 7) may be related to the grave.

**1. Bowl with wrapped turban rim (P7. 5)**

- a. Bowl with wide wrapped turban rim, conical body and small, ring-shaped base.
- b. Handmade of fine paste without tempering material added.
- c. Oxidized, yellow-grey patchy on the outer, reduced, black on the inner face of the wall.
- Rd. : 22 – 24 cm; F: 10,5 – 11 cm; H: 8 cm; W: 0,78 – 1,28 cm.
- e. DJM 2011.3.2.1.
- f. Widespread LBA vessel form. Similar bowls with wide wrapped turban rims of the Gáva

culture are known from the settlements of Debrecen–Nyulas (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXVI. 8.); Poroszló–Aponhát (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. 7); Nyíregyháza–Bujtos (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXX. 19); Köröm (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXL. 3); Prügy (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CLI. 1; Taf. CLIII. 8, 12; Taf. CLIV. 2; Taf. CLVI. 14, 15; ); Baks–Temetőpart (V. Szabó 1996, 14. kép, 1, 6, 9, 14); Hódmezővásárhely–Gorzsa (V. Szabó 1996, 23. kép, 13); Hódmezővásárhely–Szakálhát (V. Szabó 1996, 34. kép, 4); Hódmezővásárhely–Solt–Palé (V. Szabó 1996, 39. kép, 10; 40. kép, 3, 4; 41. kép, 9); Mediaş (Pankau 2004, Taf. 8. 1, 2, 3, 7, 8; Taf. 25. 4; Taf. 40. 11); Ciceu –Corabia (Vasiliev 1995, 115. Fig. 8. 5); Teleac (Vasiliev/ Aldea/ Ciugudean 1991, Fig. 34. 12; Fig. 35. 8. and further pieces with omphalos base). In the territory of the Corlăteni – Chişinău Group from eg. Bălăbăneşti (Leviţki 1994, Fig. 20. 6) and Măndreşti (Leviţki 1994, Fig. 24. 20). Bowls with wrapped turban rim and with obliquely cut rim (as a simpler version) also appear sporadically in the material of the Piliny culture, eg. at Ónod (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. XXXIX. 9), but they are known in very large numbers in the territory of the Kyjatice culture, eg. Szihalom (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. LXIX. 15), Szajla (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. LXXXIII. 17), and the Urnfield and Babadag cultures. The technique of forming the rims (size and shape) in the latter areas is slightly different from that used in the Gáva culture.

2. *Bowl with wrapped turban rim and concentrically channelled base (P7. 6.)*

- a. Bowl with wrapped turban rim, conical body, slight omphalos base that is concentrically channelled inside.
- b. Handmade of fine paste with some crushed ceramic added.
- c. Oxidized, yellow-black patchy on the outer, reduced, black on the inner face of the wall.
- d. R: 25 cm; F: 10,5 – 11 cm; M: 8,7 cm; W: 0,62 – 0,98 cm.
- e. DJM 2011.3.2.2.
- f. Regarding the wrapped turban rim, this type is characterized by a distribution similar to the previous bowl. Analogies of the slight omphalos base with concentric channeling are known from Berettyóújfalu–Nagybócs-dűlő (Király 2009, 5. melléklet); Köröm (KEMENCZEI 1984, Taf. CXXXVII. 21; Taf. CXXXVIII. 17; Taf. CXLIV. 9; Taf. CXLVII. 18); Mediaş (without omphalos: Pankau 2004, Taf. 34. 22) and Teleac (Vasiliev/ Aldea/ Ciugudean 1991, Fig. 30. 8).

3. *Fragments of a vessel (bowl?) with wrapped turban rim (P7. 7.)*

- a. Fragments of a vessel with wrapped turban rim, conical body and a horizontally channelled decoration on the interior.
- b. Handmade of fine paste with very few crushed ceramic added.
- c. Reduced, dark grey on the outer, black on the inner face of the wall.
- d. R: 15 cm; W: 0,3 – 0,46 cm; further proportions are immeasurable.
- e. DJM 2011.3.2.3.
- f. Horizontal channeling on the interior of the bowl rims is one of the most general decoration traditions in the Gáva culture. Similar fragments were found at Berettyóújfalu–Nagybócs-dűlő (Király 2009, 6. melléklet) and Mediaş (Pankau 2004, Taf. 9. 14). Analogies of channeling without wrapped turban rim are known from Somatorska Hora (Demeterová 1986, Tab. IV. 7); Mediaş (Pankau 2004, Taf. 9. 11; Taf. 29. 14) and from the surrounding area of Chişinău, Corlăteni – Chişinău Group (Leviţki 1994, Fig. 12. 2, 4, 5.) is.

**Grave 4 – Ft. 76/Str. 162 (P5. 4.)**

Cremation burial of a 1-14-year-old child found at a depth of 20-25 cm. The urn (**P7. 8.**) containing the ashes leaned to one side, the upper part was destroyed by the mechanic removal of the humus layer. Further insignificant pottery fragments (**P7. 9-10.**) lay next to the urn, but it is not certain whether they were also part of this grave assemblage.

**1. Biconical vessel (P7. 8)**

- a. The lower part of a vessel with bellied, curved biconical shape and straight base.
- b. Handmade of semi-coarse paste with crushed ceramic added, smoothed with a pebble on both faces of the wall.
- c. Reduced, black on the outer, oxidized, red on the inner face of the wall.
- d. R: immeasurable; B: 28 cm; F: 9cm; h: 8,7 cm; W: 0,6 – 0,98 cm.
- e. DJM 2011.3.3.1.
- f. As the whole shape is unknown, proper analogies of the vessel cannot be listed.

**2. Fragment of a vessel (bowl) foot (P7. 9)**

- a. Fragments of a vessel with highly flattened conical body and straight base. Decorated with incised, quadruple group of lines occurring as zig-zags on the outside.
- b. Handmade of fine paste without tempering material added.
- c. Oxidized, bright red with some blackish patches on both faces of the wall.
- d. W: 0,66 – 1,1 cm; further proportions are immeasurable.
- e. DJM 2011.3.3.2.
- f. As the whole shape is unknown, proper analogies of the vessel cannot be listed

**3. Fragment of a vessel shoulder (P7. 10)**

- a. Fragments of a vessel with steep conical neck and rounded shoulder. Decorated with incision of two or three grouped lines occurring as zig-zags on the outside.
- b. Handmade of fine paste without tempering material added.
- c. Oxidized, red-grey patchy on the outer, yellow on the inner face of the wall.
- d. W: 0,65 – 0,76 cm, further proportions are immeasurable.
- e. As the whole shape is unknown, proper analogies of the vessel cannot be listed.

**Grave 5 – Ft. 97/Str. 201, 269, 270 (P5. 5)**

The most problematic find complex of the cemetery consisted of three small groups of sherds found at a depth of 18-28 cm. The highly fragmented vessels had been visibly undrawn by the plough, but after restoration, we can safely assume that all of them belonged to one and the same grave. In the northernmost feature (Str. 270) only a few fragments of the cup functioning as urn (P8. 2) were found, surrounded by calcined bone fragments. Str. 269 in the middle contained further calcined human remains in the other half of above cup. The urn was covered with a bowl with horizontally faceted rim (P8. 1). South from it, in Str. 201 a wavy rim bowl with incised pattern on the outside (P8. 3) and another bowl with everted rim and incised pattern at its bottom (P8. 4) was found. Some fragments of a vessel with faceted rim and a pot were found among the sherds, but they could not be certainly associated with the grave. Jointly assessing all data available, we can reconstruct the original state of finds as follows. The initial core of the grave was the deepest lying group of sherds, Str. 270 at the N. Here the ashes of an individual of indeterminate sex and age were buried in one or two smaller vessels covered by bowls. Lately the whole assemblage was drawn out by the ploughshare from the N to the S (Str. 269 and 201).

**1. Fragments of a bowl with faceted rim (P8. 1)**

- a. Fragments of a small bowl with slightly outcurving, faceted rim and hemispherical body.
- b. Handmade of fine paste with some crushed ceramic added.
- c. Reduced, grey-brown patchy on the outer, black on the inner face of the wall.
- d. R: 13cm; W: 0,56 – 0,75 cm; further proportions are immeasurable.
- e. DJM 2011.3.9.2.
- f. The faceted decoration of the rim occur often rather on cups with over raised handles of the Gáva culture (see details: V. Szabó 2002, XIX. A. 1. típus). However, similar bowls are known



from e. g. Grănicești (László 1994, Fig. 21. 6, 7, 9, 10; Fig. 23. 3, 5), and from the surrounding area of Trinca, in the territory of the Corlăteni – Chișinău Group (Levițki 1994, Fig. 11, 12).

2. *Mug (P8. 2)*

- a. Almost complete profile of a mug (rim is missing) with slightly outcurving neck, pronounced shoulder, vertically channelled, bulgy belly with definite carination, conical lower body, straight base and a small loop handle starting in the middle of the neck and getting to the shoulder.
- b. Handmade of fine paste with very few crushed ceramic added.
- c. Reduced, black on the outer, oxidized, yellow on the inner face of the wall.
- d. R: immeasurable; B: 12 cm; F: 4 – 5 cm; H: 0,3 – 0,94 cm.
- e. DJM 2011.3.9.1.
- f. Unfamiliar form to the Gáva culture, pieces bearing similar attributes rather occur double-handled or with one handle starting right under the rim (see details: V. Szabó 2002, XXII. type A). However, an almost identical mug – only its conical neck differs – was found in Grave 58. of the Csorva cemetery (Trogmayer 1963, Taf. XIV. 11). Mugs with channelled belly but with double or over raised handles are relatively common in the Lausitz culture (Veliačik 1983). With different proportions, this vessel type is also general in the Urnfield complex.

3. *Bowl with wavy rim (P8. 3)*

- a. A small, profiled bowl with wavy rim, outcurving conical neck, pronounced shoulder, bulgy belly, highly flattened conical lower body, small ring-shaped foot and omphalos base. Decorated with flat knobs on the shoulder and incised, triple grouped lines occurring as dense zig-zags on the outside of the lower part of the body.
- b. Handmade of fine paste without tempering material added.
- c. Secondary burned to an intensive white-red-purple colour on both faces of the wall.
- d. R: approx. 11,5 cm; B: 14 cm; F: 6 cm; H: 7,1 cm; W: 0,35 – 1,2 cm.
- e. DJM 2011.3.9.6.
- f. Decoration and the form of the rim are very common in the ceramic production of the Gáva culture, separately they occur at almost every sites of the complex. Typology of wavy rim vessels was established by Gábor V. Szabó for the Tisza Region (V. Szabó 2002, 30. ábra XV.C), and by Attila László for the territory of the Grănicești Group (László 1994, Fig 32-33; Plan. III). Elements of the decoration together, however, occur only on a few vessels. A fragment of a bowl belly with identical profile and decoration is known from Vencsellő–Kastélykert (Dani 1999, I. tábla 2a-b), where also several different type of pots with wavy rim occur (DANI 1999, VII. tábla, IX. tábla 1a-b). Also can be linked to this type the bowl from Teleac, but it forms a different subcategory with its tunnel tabs (Vasilev/ Aldea/ Ciugudean 1991, Fig. 30. 13). The best analogy for this vessel was found at Somotorska Hora, Southeastern Slovakia (Demeterová 1986, Tab. VI. 19).

4. *Fragments of a bowl with incised bottom (P8. 4)*

- a. Almost complete profile of a bowl with outcurving rim, pronounced shoulder and hemispherical body. Decorated on the inside of the bottom with incised lines ( $2 \times 9 + 1$ ) forming a shape of pine branches. As the base and greater part of the rim is missing, the whole pattern cannot be reconstructed, and it may also had handles.
- b. Handmade of fine paste without tempering material added.
- c. Secondary burned to an intensive white-red-purple colour on both faces of the wall.
- d. R: 13 cm; B: 12cm; h: 4,25 cm; W: 0,38 – 0,84 cm, further proportions are immeasurable.
- e. DJM 2011.3.9.5.
- f. As the vessel is so fragmentary, it cannot be excluded with absolute certainty that it was originally not a cup with over raised handle (to see how common type it is, look for vessel 3. at Grave

9.). Specialty of this piece is the unique incised decoration of the bottom that may be similar with the vessel found at Siret (László 1994, 272. Fig. 51. 7, 8; Fig. 52. 7), or to those known from the Baradla (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CIV. 11) and Szeleta caves (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CIX. 16) in the territory of the Kyjatice culture.

**Grave 6 – Ft. 78/Str. 164 (P5. 6)**

Cremation grave of a 1-6-year-old child found at the depth of 20-25 cm. Among the fragments of the neck of an incised urn (P8. 5) and sherds of a fine, black-and-yellow bowl (see on P5. 6) were observed in situ. Unfortunately, during the primary evaluation process the fragments of the bowl disappeared and some further sherds of an unknown, red colored vessel was associated with the original finds.

*1. Lower part of a flattened spherical pot (P8. 5)*

- a. Fragments of the lower part of a pot with flattened spherical body and small ring-shaped base. Decorated on the belly with incised triangles open at the bottom, filled with diagonal lines.
- b. Handmade of semi-coarse paste without tempering material added.
- c. Oxidized, yellow-grey patchy on the outer, yellow on the inner face of the wall.
- d. R: immeasurable; B: 18 cm; F: 8 cm; H: 8,75 cm; W: 0,8 – 1,5 cm.
- e. DJM 2011.3.5.1.
- f. As it is so fragmentary, the whole shape of the vessel cannot be reconstructed, however, some attributes of it should be examined. The rounded belly of the pot is very similar to the so-called bag-like vessels of the Gáva culture that occur with horizontal channeling on the neck in the graves of the Taktabáj cemetery (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CLVIII. 8, 11, 17; Taf. CLIX. 1, 6, 8, 18), among the vessels of the depot found at Gyoma site 133. (Kemenczei/ Genito 1990, Fig. 5. 5). Decorating these type of vessels with zig-zag motifs on the belly is also a general character of the Gáva pottery, similar pieces are known from e.g. Köröm (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXXIX. 3), Prügy (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CLII. 15) or Mediaș (Pankau 2004, Taf. 29. 1).

*2. Fragments of a dual-colour vessel – lost (P5. 6.2)*

- a. ?
- b. Handmade.
- c. Reduced, black on one, oxidized, yellow on the other face of the wall.
- d. ?
- e. –
- f. ?

**Grave 7 – Ft. 77/Str. 163 (P6. 7)**

Fragments of a relatively large, pot-like vessel (P8. 6) was found at the depth of 20-25 cm. Human remains were missing, but the sherds of the urn indicated a grave destroyed by ploughing.

*1. Fragments of a pot shoulder and belly (P8. 6)*

- a. Fragments of a pot-like vessel with indefinite carination and curving body.
- b. Handmade of coarse paste with crunched ceramic added, smoothed with a pebble on both faces of the wall.
- c. Reduced, black on the outer, oxidized, red on the inner face of the wall.
- d. W: 0,52 – 0,7 cm; further proportions are immeasurable.
- e. DJM 2011.3.4.1.
- f. As the whole shape is unknown, proper analogies of the vessel cannot be listed.

**Grave 8 – Ft. 79/Str. 166 (P6. 8)**

Cremation grave of a juvenile-adult, 16-25-year-old female lay at a depth of 25-28 cm. The urn (P8. 7) containing the large fragments of calcined bones had been previously cut in half by the plough-share.

*1. Lower part of a biconical pot (P8. 7)*

- a. Fragments of the lower part of a pot with rounded biconical body, small ring-shaped foot and a slight omphalos base.
- b. Handmade of semi-coarse paste with crunched ceramic added.
- c. Reduced, black on the outer, oxidized, yellow on the inner face of the wall.
- d. R, S: immeasurable; B: 25 cm; F: 9,5 cm; H: 11 cm; W: 0,75 – 1,7 cm.
- e. DJM 2011.3.6.1.
- f. Apart from the decoration, the form is very similar to the pot of Grave 6.

**Grave 9 – Ft. 80/Str. 167 (P6. 9)**

Cremation grave containing ashes from a 23-39-year-old man found at the depth of 20-25 cm. Although the neck of the pot-like urn (P9/A 1) was destroyed by the front shovel excavator, it contained significant amount of calcined bone fragments. Besides some parts of the disturbed neck of the pot, sherds of a bowl with wrapped turban rim (P9/A 2) and a cup with highly raised handle (P9/A 3) were found in the removed soil. The bowl had probably been used for covering the ashes in the urn, but the initial position of the cup cannot be ascertained. Perhaps as food for the afterlife, a part of a femur (proximal epiphysis) of a large domesticated animal, probably a cattle was placed northwest from the urn.

*1. Biconical pot (P9/A 1)*

- a. Almost complete profile of a biconical pot with outcurving rim, cylindrical neck, profiled shoulder, rounded biconical body and straight base. Profile of the rim is missing.
- b. Handmade of fine paste without tempering material added, smoothed with a pebble on both faces of the wall.
- c. Reduced, black on the outer, oxidized, aurora on the inner face of the wall
- d. R: immeasurable; S: 20 cm; B: 27 cm; F: 9 cm; M: 20 cm; W: 0,54 – 1 cm.
- e. DJM 2011.3.7.1.
- f. A very simple vessel type, one of the most typical forms of the Gáva pottery. An almost identical piece served as an urn at Taktabáj, *Grave 3* (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CLVIII. 9), but similar vessels are also known from Teleac (Vasiliev/ Aldea/ Ciugudean 1991, Fig. 32. 3) and the BD-HA1 cemetery of Csorva (Trogmayer 1963, Taf. VIII. 8; Taf. XIII. 9).

*2. Fragments of a bowl with wrapped turban rim (P9/A 2)*

- a. Fragments of a bowl with wide wrapped turban rim, conical body and slight omphalos base.
- b. Handmade of fine paste with some sand added.
- c. Oxidized, light brown on the outer, reduced, black on the inner face of the wall.
- d. R: 20 cm; F: 6,5 cm; H: 5 cm; W: 0,6 – 0,8 cm.
- e. DJM 2011.3.7.2.
- f. The most complete sets of the flattened and omphalos based versions of bowls with wrapped turban rim (previously described in detail) are known from Teleac (Vasiliev/ Aldea/ Ciugudean 1991, Fig. 34-35) and Grănicești (László 1994, Fig. 23).

*3. Cup with over raised handle and incised bottom (P9/A 3)*

- a. Cup with outcurving rim, profiled shoulder, hemispherical body, omphalos base and an over raised handle. Decorated inside with incised, quadruple group of lines: concentric rings below the carination and around the omphalos and a five-lobed, star-like pattern between them.



- b. Handmade of fine paste without tempering material added.
- c. Reduced, brown-grey patchy on the outer, black patchy on the inner face of the wall.
- d. R: 12 cm; S: 10,2 cm; F: 2 cm, H (without the handle): 5,2 cm; W: 0,46 – 1,4 cm.
- e. DJM 2011.3.7.3.
- f. Decoration inside the cups with over raised handles occur in high variability within the Gáva ceramic production. It cannot be considered as a specialty for this group in fact, as very similar pieces are known from almost its whole neighboring area. Analogies are found at Berettyóújfalu–Nagybócs-dűlő (Király 2009, 6. melléklet), Debrecen–Nyulas (KEMENCZEI 1984, Taf. CXXV. 9, 10), Debrecen–Haláppusztá (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXV. 12, 14); Muhiról (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXXIII. 17), Tiszakeszi–Tatárdomb (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXXIV. 7, 11), Köröm (Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CXXXVI. 9) and Mediaș (Pankau 2004, Taf. 28. 5, 6, 7, 8; Taf. 29, 9). Decoration style is familiar with the Piliny (e. g., at Ónod, on a bowl with incurving, wrapped turban rim, Kemenczei 1984, Taf. XXXIX. 7), and with the Kyjatice culture (cemetery of Szajla, with four lobes and stamped dots or faceted rim, Kemenczei 1984, Taf. LXXIX. 4; LXXXI. 18; Ózd–Kőalja, with four lobes, faceted rim and kidney-shape, Kemenczei 1984, Taf. LXXXIX. 17; Taf. XCI. 19, 22.; Szirmabesenyő, with cross-like lobes, Kemenczei 1984, Taf. XCIII. 22; Aggtelek–Baradla cave, with four lobes and faceted rim, Kemenczei 1984, Taf. CIV. 6). Both form and decoration is well represented in the Lausitz culture, but these cups are also frequently stamped or tabbed on the outside. Their distribution in the neighboring territories of the Gáva culture: Luborča (with four lobes and stamped decoration on the outside, Veliačik 1983, Taf. X. 8), Bešeňová (with eight lobes and tabs, Veliačik 1983, Taf. XIV. 7.), Partizánske, Grave 9. (with six lobes and elongated form, Veliačik 1983, Taf. XXI. 14.), Kšinná „Novina” (with five lobes, Veliačik 1983, Taf. XXIV. 7), the cemetery of Diviaky nad Nitricou (with four or five lobes and stamped circles or without handles, Veliačik 1983, Taf. XXVIII. 16; Taf. XXIX. 5; 8); Ilava (with five lobes, stamped circles and decorations on the outside, Veliačik 1983, Taf. XXX. 2).

## **2. Analysis of the Tiszabura cemetery**

### *Surface layout of the cemetery and position of the graves*

The graves of the Tiszabura cemetery covered together an area of 20 m<sup>2</sup> and were situated at a distance of 0,7 - 1,4 m from each other. All the graves lay in an extremely shallow depth, only the inhumation burial reached the level of the subsoil. For this reason their outlines were completely invisible and almost all of the urns had been seriously damaged by former ploughing. It is also worth considering that some graves of the cemetery could have been completely destroyed before the excavation. Concerning the orientation of the group of graves, we can easily notice a definite NW-SE extension of the cemetery. Similar situation can be observed also at Taktabáj and Sanislău–Livadă (for the maps see Kemenczei 1984, 164. Abb. 24. and Némethi 1984, 54. Pl. XVII/1), but as the later site was investigated by trenches, this data is less reliable. More interesting is that the only inhumation grave in the Tiszabura cemetery with a perpendicular axis seems to fit this outline as well.

### *The find material*

The archaeological material found in the graves of the Tiszabura cemetery consists of pottery and animal bone (only a single piece in Grave 9), presence of a bronze object was only indicated by the discoloration of the skull in Grave 1.

Pottery types are hard to classify for two reasons. On one hand, the fragmentary state of most vessels does not allow the reconstruction of the original forms and on the other hand, we can hardly find two dishes of the same type for the small number of finds. Based on the material and forming, coarse and fine ceramics are both present, of which the latter clearly dominates. Paste is mainly fine (occurs in each graves except from Grave 6, 7 and 8), but semi-course (Grave 2: 1; Grave 4: 1; Grave 6: 1; the vessel of Grave 8) and course pastes (only in the case of the vessel in Grave 7) also occur. Crushed ceramic as tempering material was added in 7 cases (Grave 3: 2, 3; Grave 4: 1; Grave 5: 1, 2; vessels of Grave 7 and

Grave 8); sand added to the paste could be only be observed at vessel 2 of Grave 9. Great majority of the vessels are double coloured: reduced on one side and oxidized on the other (Grave 2: 1; Grave 3: 1, 2; Grave 4: 1; Grave 5: 2; Grave 6: 2; vessels of Grave 7, Grave 8 and Grave 9: 1, 2). However, pottery oxidized (Grave 1: 1, 2; Grave 4: 2, 3) or reduced (Grave 2: 2; Grave 3: 3; Grave 4: 1; Grave 5: 1 and Grave 9: 3) also occur. Secondary burning was only observed in the case of the two southernmost vessels of Grave 5 (3, 4). Regarding the shape, the repertory consists of pots/amphorae mainly with spherical or biconical body and outcurving rim, bowls with wrapped turban rim, wavy rim or incised cup-like bowls and mugs. Decoration of the vessels is dominated by smoothed, channelled and faceted surfaces, but incised zig-zag motives or triangles open at the bottom, filled with diagonal lines are also common. Besides the whole area of the Gáva culture, the find material of the site can basically be linked to northern and western territories (strong relations to the late Piliny – Kyjatice, Lausitz and urnfield regions), and also can be traced back to a strong local basis (so-called pre-Gáva period, former Csorva Group).

#### *Anthropological characteristics of the deceased*

Human remains in four of the nine graves were so poorly conserved that from them no information could be obtained. Age could be determined in five cases (Grave 1: 11-14 yrs; Grave 4: 1-14 yrs; Grave 6: 1-6 yrs; Grave 8: 16-25 yrs; Grave 9: 23-39 yrs) while gender in only two (Grave 8: female and Grave 9: male). As one would ascertain, most graves belonged to children or young adults, but distortion has to be reckoned as the proportion of the indeterminable remains is really high (44,4%).

#### *Funerary customs within the cremation burials*

In the cremation graves, ashes were placed in a biconical pot (Grave 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9), in a cup (Grave 3) or in a bowl (Grave 5). Vessels serving as urns seem to be often covered with a bowl. Either the cremation graves or the single inhumation burial were also equipped by small vessels (cups, mugs or bowls), but their content could not be investigated. The only probable indication for food addition is the femur of a cattle (?) found in Grave 9. Ornaments or tools were completely missing from the cremation graves, however, a reference of a bronze jewel was found in the outstanding inhumation burial (patina on the temple).

#### *The problem of the inhumation grave*

The single inhumation burial (Grave 1) of the Tiszabura cemetery raises several questions. First of all, if we examine all data available, it turns out that no further biritual cemeteries are known in the territory of the Gáva culture. Two isolated inhumations of stretched, S-N aligned skeletons accompanied by Gáva style pottery were published from both Szentés–Szentlászló (V. Szabó 1996, 23) and Mediaş (Pankau 2004, 24). From this latter site cremation burials are also known, but for lack of proper investigation, we cannot state that all graves belonged to the same cemetery (Pankau 2004, 24-25). Attila László also mentioned seven inhumations from Simeria without any further description (cited by Vulpe 2008, 270), but the cultural classification of these graves is absolutely uncertain. The main problem about these inhumations is that the stretched position and S-N alignment is a typical attribute for the funerary practices of the following, so-called pre-Scythian period in the eastern part of the Carpathian Basin. In fact, the definition of this group is based on this strictly implemented burial rite, even if the deceased are found frequently accompanied by „archaic”, Gáva-style vessels. As the problem is much broader then the situation analyzed here, we can only establish that Grave 1 with the crouched, SW-NE aligned skeleton of the Tiszabura cemetery is absolutely unique at the moment.

#### *Dating the cemetery*

Based on the pottery, dating the graves to as early as the HA2 period could be presumed. Radio-carbon analysis carried out in 2011 by the Poznań Radiocarbon Laboratory confirmed this suggestion, as samples from two of the graves resulted in calibrated dates around the turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Detailed results will be published by Gábor V. Szabó and Gábor Váczi, to who I owe gratitude for letting me communicate this

### **3. Further data on the funerary customs of the Gáva culture**

#### *Previous study on the burials of the Gáva culture*

For long time, Hungarian archaeology had been under the delusion that almost all of the typical Gáva vessels – so-called „urns” – are to be related to cremation graves. This kind of misunderstanding roots in interpreting literally the nomenclature established by Amália Mozsolics (Mozsolics 1957, 121) that culminated in the statement of István Bóna that the vast majority of the Gáva sites has funerary domain (Bóna 1993, 85). In fact, until the last two decades, only one cemetery had been known from the Great Hungarian Plain (Taktabáj–*Erdőalja*<sup>7</sup>, see Kemenczei 1971, 37; Kemenczei 1984, 164-166), while other „urn-like” vessels derived evidently from settlements.

Based on the pottery finds, Gábor V. Szabó conditionally linked two inhumation graves from Szentes–*Szentlászló* to the Gáva culture in 1996 (V. Szabó 1996, 42). Thereafter, comparing with contemporary documents János Dani has suggested that some vessels from Vencsellő–*Kastélykert*<sup>8</sup> should derive from a cemetery of the complex (Dani 1999, 109-117).

Concerning Western Romania and Transylvania, Adriana G. Ardeu was able to collect 15 – mostly unpublished – funerary sites or finds in the middle of the 1990's (ARDEU 1995-1996, 191). Among these only the cemeteries of Ocna Sibiului (Soroceanu 1981) and Sanislău–*Livadă* (Bader 1971, 78; Némethi 1984, 51-54), a cremation grave from Luduş (ARDEU 1995-1996, 191), and „settlement burials” from *Baciu* (Kalmar 1987), Teleac (Vasilev/ Aldea/ Ciugudean 1991, 42-43) and Reci (Székely 1966, 8-9) are sufficiently documented in the literature.

Later, Claudia Pankau published some graves and human remains of uncertain origin from the surrounding area of Mediaş (Pankau 2004, 23-24). In her thesis, she synthesized the data available on the burials of the Gáva culture, but she lasted in no definite conclusion. Without specifying the particular sites, Pankau counted on „relatively large number of cemeteries” in the territory of Northeastern Hungary, Eastern Slovakia, Northeastern Romania and Ukraine (Pankau 2004, 32). It should be noted, that in fact we can list only seven funerary sites from the aforementioned regions: Taktabáj–*Erdőalja*, Hungary (Kemenczei 1984, 164-166); Vojnatina, Slovakia (Budinský/ Krička 1976, 147); Sopit/Sopot, Ukraine (Krušelnicka 1979); Kolodribka, Ukraine (Budinský/ Krička 1976, 139, note 34; Pankau 2004, 23); Velykyj Berezhnyj, Ukraine (Budinský/ Krička 1963, 28, note 14); Cucorăni, Romania (László 1994, 58) and Volovăț, Romania (László 1994, 58-62)<sup>9</sup>.

Apart from these short reviews, no attempt was made for a comprehensive study on the funerary customs of the Gáva complex. Therefore, within the framework of my MA thesis in 2011, I tried to collect all data available in publications in order to create a reliable database of funerary related finds. The work resulted in a catalogue of less than 20 secure and approximately 30 uncertain burial sites: cremation cemeteries and single urn graves, burial mounds and inhumations from the entire territory of the Gáva culture (Király 2011, 24-71)<sup>10</sup>.

#### *Sites with funerary domain*

There is no possibility to discuss all aspects of the research in detail here, but a brief summary may help shading a light on what we currently know about the cemeteries in the territory of the Gáva culture (**P9/B 1**). The majority of the known burials proved to be cremation graves in plain cemeteries or, in certain areas, under tumuli. Ashes were put into urns, often covered with other vessels.

The best well-known plain cemeteries of the culture are Taktabáj–*Erdőalja* with 17 graves (Kemenczei 1971, 37; Kemenczei 1984, 164-166) and the recently discovered one at Tiszabura–*Nagy-gana-*

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information.

<sup>7</sup> As the cemetery has never been published sufficiently and its material seems to be very similar to finds of the Kyjatice culture, the revaluation of the material is inevitable. The proper documentation of grave goods had already begun, the results will be published soon.

<sup>8</sup> The finds were discovered by workmen in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see reference literature).

<sup>9</sup> Cemeteries from Transylvania are excluded from this list as the statement of Pankau concerns only Northeastern Romania.

<sup>10</sup> Inaccurate numbers are given as almost all sites need further revision. See details in following chapter.

*jos-hát* with 9 graves in Hungary (this article); Sanislău – *Livadă* with 8 graves (BADER 1971, 78; NÉMETI 1984, 51-54) in Romania; Vojnatina with 50 graves (Budinský/ Krička 1976, 147) in Slovakia and Sopit/Sopot with 80 graves (Krušelnicka 1979) in Ukraine. Less documented or sufficiently published are the assumable burials from Vencsellő–*Kastélykert* in Hungary (Dani 1999, 109-117); Bocșa Română–*Dealul Mare* in the Romanian Banat (Gumă 1995, 112); Ocna Sibiului (Soroceanu 1981) and Mediaș (Pankau 2004, 23-24) in Transylvania; Cucorăni (László 1994, 58), Cotu Morii (Levițki 1994, 68) and Kolodribka (Budinský/ Krička 1976, 139, note 34; Pankau 2004, 23) in Northeastern Romania. There are also some single urn graves mentioned in the literature from several sites, but as most of them were found occasionally, we lack the most crucial information on them (see details: KIRÁLY 2011, 68). While the cemeteries of Taktabáj, Tiszabura<sup>11</sup> and Sanislău could serve as a burial site of a household or a family, those at Vojnatina and Sopit/Sopot were used by a larger community or for long time. The place of cremation within the cemetery was found only at Sopit/Sopot (Krušelnicka 1979, 315). At this latest site, urns were found arranged in groups, so it cannot be excluded completely that smaller cemeteries (each of them having been excavated only in small-scale) are fractions of a larger one.

Burial mounds are known only from the territory of the Gáva-Holihrad Group. A barrow field consisting of 20 tumuli is known from Volovăț, Northeastern Romania (László 1994, 58-62). A single burial mound is published from Somotorska Hora, Southeastern Slovakia (Pleinerová/ Olmerová 1958, 109-110) and it is supposed that the four graves of Velykyj Bereznij, Ukraine were also covered by mounds (Budinský/ Krička 1963, 28, note 14)<sup>12</sup>.

According to our present knowledge, at these sites remains of less than 300 individuals are buried. Compared to the appraised order of magnitude of the settlements, sites with funerary domain are truly underrepresented. Having seen this proportion, the further aim of my research was to „find the deceased” by looking for human remains in non-funerary context<sup>13</sup> as well, and to investigate all possible explanations of the „funeral deficiency” of the Gáva culture.

#### *Human remains found in non-funerary context*

As a result of large-scale excavations carried out in the last two decades, more and more human remains (articulated skeletons, fragmented/decomposed parts of skeletons, single bones and ashes) are known from non-funerary, mainly settlement context (storage pits, waste-pits, wells or even ditches).<sup>14</sup> In the territory of the Gáva culture, it was possible to collect 37 features containing human remains from 18 different sites from the Reinecke BD-HB period up to now<sup>15</sup>. As publishing a detailed study is planned, in the followings I try to present a basic catalogue of the finds (**P9/B 2**). I am not dealing here with the description of either the sites or the find circumstances, but listing the features by marking their main attributes and references.

#### Hungary:

1. Balmazújváros – *Tömöri Tanya, site II*: a shallow, round pit with a throw-in, complete skeleton of a child (inf. II) inside an open settlement (Szolnoki 2007; Király 2011, 91).
2. Berettyóújfalu – *Nagybócs-dűlő*: a round pit with a burial-like, complete skeleton of a female

<sup>11</sup> As the vicinity of the cemetery was scarcely investigated, we do not know its adjoining settlement. During the preliminary field surveys in 2006, a small Gáva settlement has been localized 3 kilometres southwards from the graves (Tiszabura – Nyakas-ér, reported by Judit Tárnoki; KÖH 600/272/2007.), but this data is suitable only to presume a network of LBA/EIA farmsteads along the sand-hills.

<sup>12</sup> Burial mounds are also mentioned from Braniște and Frunzeni in Northeastern Romania (Levițki 1994, 70), but for uncertain cultural classification and unsatisfying documentation they cannot be evaluated here.

<sup>13</sup> According to our 21st century European conceptions. Term originally used by Valeriu Sirbu (Sirbu 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Discussion of the phenomenon concerning the Gáva culture has recently begun in the literature, see Urák – Marta 2011.

<sup>15</sup> It must be pointed out that this database also contains some finds of which the exact cultural chronological classification (whether they belong to the population of the so-called pre-Gáva, the Gáva or to the pre-Scythian period) could not be established yet. Similar phenomena of other cultural complexes of the area (e. g. the ones certainly belonging to the pre-Gáva/pre-Scythian period or to the Suciu de Sus, Kyjatice, Lausitz and Balkanian Channeled Ware complexes) are administrated separately.



(ad.-mat.) on the periphery of an open settlement (Dani et al. 2006; Dani/ Szilágyi 2006; Zoffmann 2007, 46; Király 2009, 19-20; Király 2011, 92).

3. Biharkeresztes–Láncos-major: a shallow, round pit with a threw-in, complete skeleton of indeterminate sex and age inside an open settlement (KIRÁLY 2011, 93).

4. Debrecen–Józsa, Alsójózsai Lakópark: a well with burial-like, complete skeletons of children and young females, two pits with separate bones of a child (inf. II) and a female (juv.-ad.) inside an open settlement (V. Szabó 2007; Király 2011, 93-95).

5. Hajdúdorog–Szállásföld közép (M3-51/A): a slightly bell-shaped pit with a burial-like, complete skeleton of a female (juv.-ad.) on the periphery of an open settlement (Kolozsi 2007, 208; Király 2011, 95).

6. Nyíregyháza–Oros, Mega Üzleti Park: 5 pits with threw-in, complete and disarticulated skeletons of males, females and children inside an open settlement (Urák/ Marta 2011, 157-160; Király 2011, 96-97).

7. Nyíregyháza–Rozsrétszőlő: a round pit with threw-in deficient skeletons of two females (mat., sen). (Almássy/ Gindele 2005, 291; Urák/ Marta 2011, 156; Király 2011, 97).

8. Nyírmada–Vályogvető: a round pit with fragmentary bones of a male (mat.) inside an open settlement (Tóth/ Marta 2005, 107; Urák/ Marta 2011, 157)<sup>16</sup>.

9. Pusztataskony–Ledence, site 1: 5 features (pits and ditches) with threw-in, disarticulated skeletons and separate bones of males, females and children inside a partly entrenched settlement (Király 2011, 85, note 296)<sup>17</sup>.

10. Rákóczi-falva–Bagi-föld, site 8/A: a rectangular pit with separate bones of an individual of indeterminate sex and age inside an open settlement (Kovács et al. 2006; Király 2011, 97).

11. Tiszabő–Galamb-dűlő<sup>18</sup>: 6 round, often slightly bell-shaped pits with burial-like and threw-in, complete and disarticulated skeletons of children and adults inside an open settlement (Oravecz 2007, 297; Király 2011, 97-99).

#### Transylvania, Reci-Mediaş Group:

1. Alba Iulia: an oval, daubed pit with a burial-like, complete skeleton of indeterminate sex and age and separate skull of another individual inside an open settlement (Lascu 2010, 43-44; Király 2011, 101).

2. Baciú–Str. Nouă: one bell-shaped pit with burial-like, complete skeletons of children (inf. I-II.) inside a hilltop settlement (Kalmar 1987, 166-173; Király 2011, 99-100).

3. Lazuri–Lubi tag: fragmentary bone (skull cap) in the cultural layer of an open settlement (Németi 1997, 79-80; Urák/ Marta 2011, 156).

4. Reci: cremation burials (one urn grave and another individual of indeterminate sex and age cremated inside a pit) on the southern terrace of a hilltop settlement. The original function of the terrace is questionable for it also can be a separate funerary site (Székely 1966, 8-9).

5. Teleac: 4 features (pits and ditches) with burial-like and threw-in, complete and disarticulated skeletons of children inside a reinforced settlement (Vasiliev/ Aldea/ Ciugudean 1991, 42-43; Király 2011, 100-101; Ciugudean in this volume).

<sup>16</sup> The find material of the site is extremely heterogenic as Suci de Sus, late Tumulus culture and early Gáva components could also be observed (Urák/ Marta 2011, 157).

<sup>17</sup> At the same site we found three collective depositions of human remains („mass graves”) from the Early Iron Age (Reinecke HB3/C period) that will be published later this year (Király/ Sebők/ Zoffmann forthcoming). The evaluation and chronological classification of the Late Bronze Age settlement surrounding it is in process.

<sup>18</sup> „Mass graves” similar to the ones at Pusztataskony were found here, but their exact chronological classification within the Reinecke BD-HB periods is unknown. The excavator, Hargita Oravecz kindly let me have a look at and take notes on the original documentations for my thesis, but the find material is still unevaluated.



Southeastern Slovakia, Gáva-Holíhrady Group:

7. Medzany: a pit with a burial-like, complete skeleton of a child inside an open settlement (Lamiová-Schmiedlová/ Tomášová 1991; Furmánek/ Jakab 1997, 19; Király 2011, 101).

8. Somotorska hora, Grave C: a pit with an urn grave (ashes in a pot covered with a flat stone) inside an open settlement (Pleinerová/ Olmerová 1958, 110; Furmánek/ Jakab 1997, 20; Király 2011, 101).

According to the state of preservation, human remains found in settlement context can be classified in five categories: (1) complete, articulated skeletons; (2) deficient or decomposed skeletons; (3) separate or fragmentary bones, mainly crania and limbs; (4) cremated remains; (5) a combination of 1-4. Complete skeletons clearly dominate (almost 40% of the phenomena) and their position often shows signs of intentionality (Király 2011, 115). In the 36 cases where anthropological investigations were carried out, results showed that adults (55,5%) are slightly more often represented than children (44,5%). Half of the adults proved to be females, 30% males and the sex of the remaining skeletons (20%) could not be defined. By and large, the current demographic profile roughly represents a natural population (Király 2011, 116-117). None of the examined human bones deriving from settlement complexes showed either traces of violent actions or taphonomic lesions (Király 2011, 118) that means these people most likely suffered a natural death and their bodies were immediately buried or kept safe away from weathering and carrion eaters. Within the settlements of the Gáva culture, position of complexes with human remains is non-uniform: almost the same proportion is located within the inhabited area and on the periphery (Király 2011, 115). Differences in frequency of the phenomenon between the regional groups may be due to either different state of research or to different cultural traditions. However, the amount of human remains in settlement context suggests that such complexes do not occur randomly (Király 2011, 114-115).

*Interpreting human remains in settlement context and the definition of „burial”*

As it was already pointed out, prehistoric archaeology classifies its find material by deriving from settlements, burials and depositions<sup>19</sup>, but in fact, these main scenes of human life cannot be completely separated (Veit 1996, 25-26; Urák/ Marta 2011, 156). Human remains found in settlement context – or the so-called „settlement burials” – are one of the best examples of blurring boundaries, but scholars of the European Bronze Age started to investigate them only from the 1980s<sup>20</sup>. Through a broadening theoretical debate several criteria were made up for the interpretation of the phenomenon by identifying violence, cannibalism, sacrifice and further ritual attitudes, however, basic problems of the nomenclature – i. e., whether these assemblages could even be called „burials” – are still unelucidated<sup>21</sup>.

Burial – as a term generally used but often misconceived – is hard to define. Most of the languages faces the problem, that funeral practice is basically described by a word in connection with putting something – the corpse – into the ground (Eng. *burial*; Germ. *Bestattung*; Fr. *enterrement*; Hun. *temetés*). Actually, burying is only one alternative of clearing away the corpse, but the notion is obviously burdened by our own modern concepts, making it even harder to understand the mortuary behaviours of past people. In order to avoid further misinterpretations and to understand „normal” and „deviant” attitude, we need to clearly settle a terminology relevant for the given time period and geographical region<sup>22</sup>. If the data in our hands does not allow drawing certain conclusions – just as in the case of the Gáva culture – we have to settle for observing general tendencies.

At the moment, we can only establish that at the turn of the LBA and EIA in the Eastern Carpathian Basin, funerary practices of the previous eras (biritual cemeteries dominated by urn graves in the Eastern Carpathian Basin and tumuli on the peripheries) seem to change radically. In some regions

<sup>19</sup> German Siedlungsfunde, Grabfunde, Depotfunde (Veit 1996, 25-26).

<sup>20</sup> For the details of the research history see Aspöck 2008; Urák/ Marta 2011 and Király 2011, 71-84.

<sup>21</sup> On the definition of burial and the classification of manipulating with the corpse see Sirbu 2003; Weiss/ Krejci 2011, 71-76.; Király 2011, 17-21.

<sup>22</sup> For a summary of the problem in the international archaeological literature, see Aspöck 2008.

and for some time these former customs may still survive sporadically, but the main characteristics of mortuary rites apparently alter to a funerary sequence that leaves no – or almost any – traces in the archaeological record. Parallel to this decline in the „normative”/traditional burials from the Reinecke BD period, the number of settlement complexes with human remains definitely increases. The only question is: are these phenomena really related to each other?

Exactly the same situation has been drawn up for the Balkanian EIA by Sorin-Cristian Ailincăi and others (summed up in Ailincăi et al. 2005-2006, Ailincăi 2008). Considering their results, we can agree that just like in the territory of the Babadag culture, people of the Gáva culture disposed their dead in a way that they got into settlement complexes at some stage. Actually we do not have enough data to determine whether this was a multi-stage funerary cycle or a determined resting place for some special members of the communities (e.g. under-age children, women died at childbirth, criminals, ‘slaves’, etc.), but the phenomenon should not be disregarded when investigating the corpse-treating methods of the LBA of the Eastern Carpathian Basin.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Contrary to the predominantly pessimistic conception of the last decades, it turned out that we do find cemeteries in the entire territory of the Gáva culture. Although burial sites are still clearly underrepresented in the LBA/EIA Eastern Carpathian Basin, more and more data is available on them than even a few years ago. Furthermore, we can observe serious differences in the burial customs within regional groups that may be explained by different cultural traditions deriving from the previous phases of the LBA.

Evaluating the Tiszabura cemetery and its closest analogies, it is conspicuous that all graves lay in a very little depth. Whether this phenomenon is due to environmental (e.g. increased groundwater) or cultural causes remains unclear, but the position of the graves could explain why we know so little of them presently (i.e. many graves destroyed by ploughing).

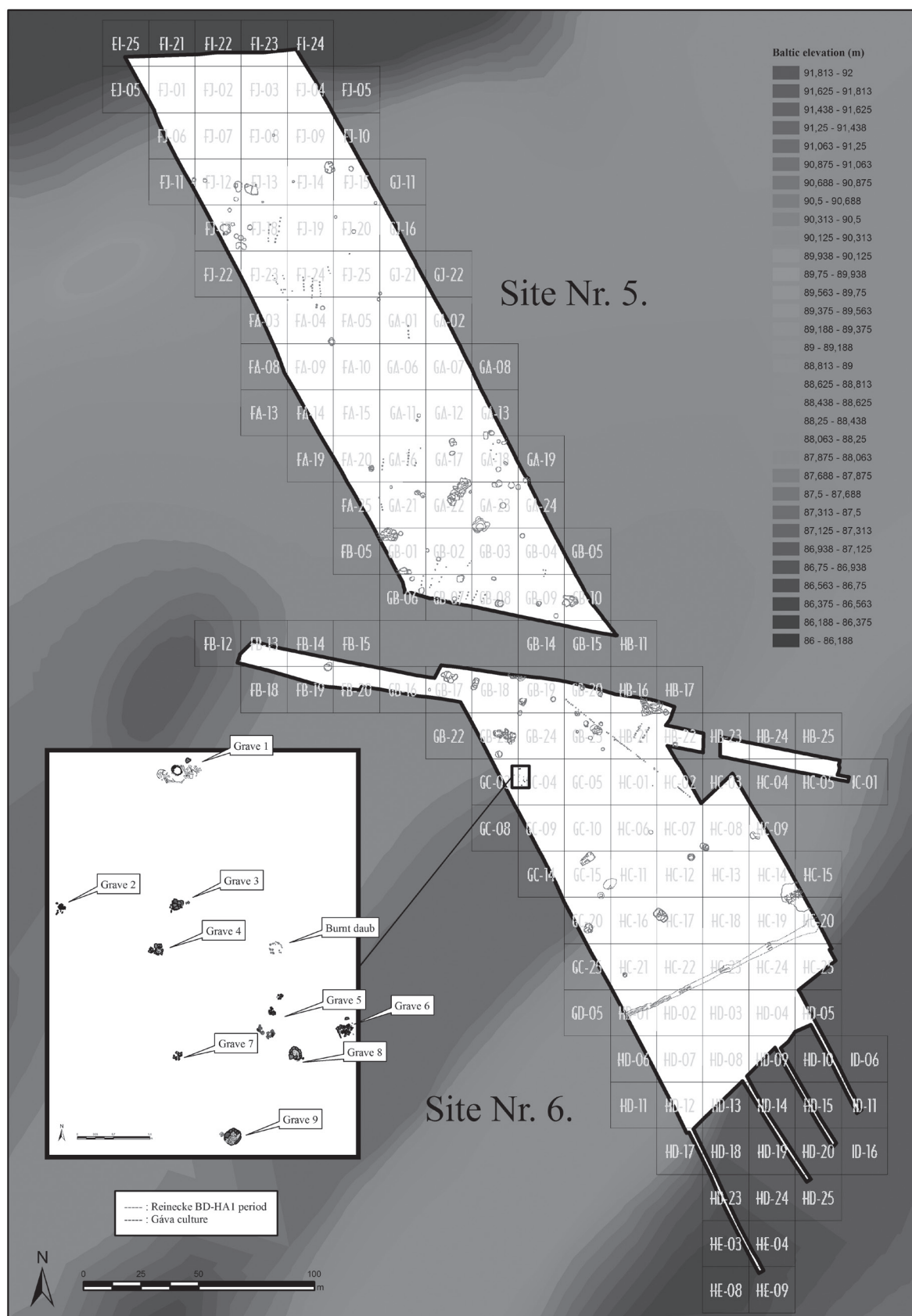
In connection with the complexes with human remains within settlements, we could ascertain that at least two different attitudes occurred towards the treatment of the dead in the LBA/EIA Eastern Carpathian Basin. That means we should extend our investigations to the probable relationship between them and the so called ‘normative’ burials in order to clarify the original role of both phenomena in the funerary practice of the Gáva culture. It should be taken in consideration that these groups may have practiced a kind of decomposition of the dead bodies in settlement pits in order to e.g. make it easier to cremate or bundle the bones for the final deposition, or certain members of the communities/foreigners were treated differently from others. Although data currently available represents only a small segment of what is required for taking a position, it is very interesting that the number of the ‘settlement burials’ increase in such a period of the LBA/EIA when formerly common graves seem to disappear. Anyway, the only thing we can do now is to continue and broaden our studies and to build thorough databases for future research.

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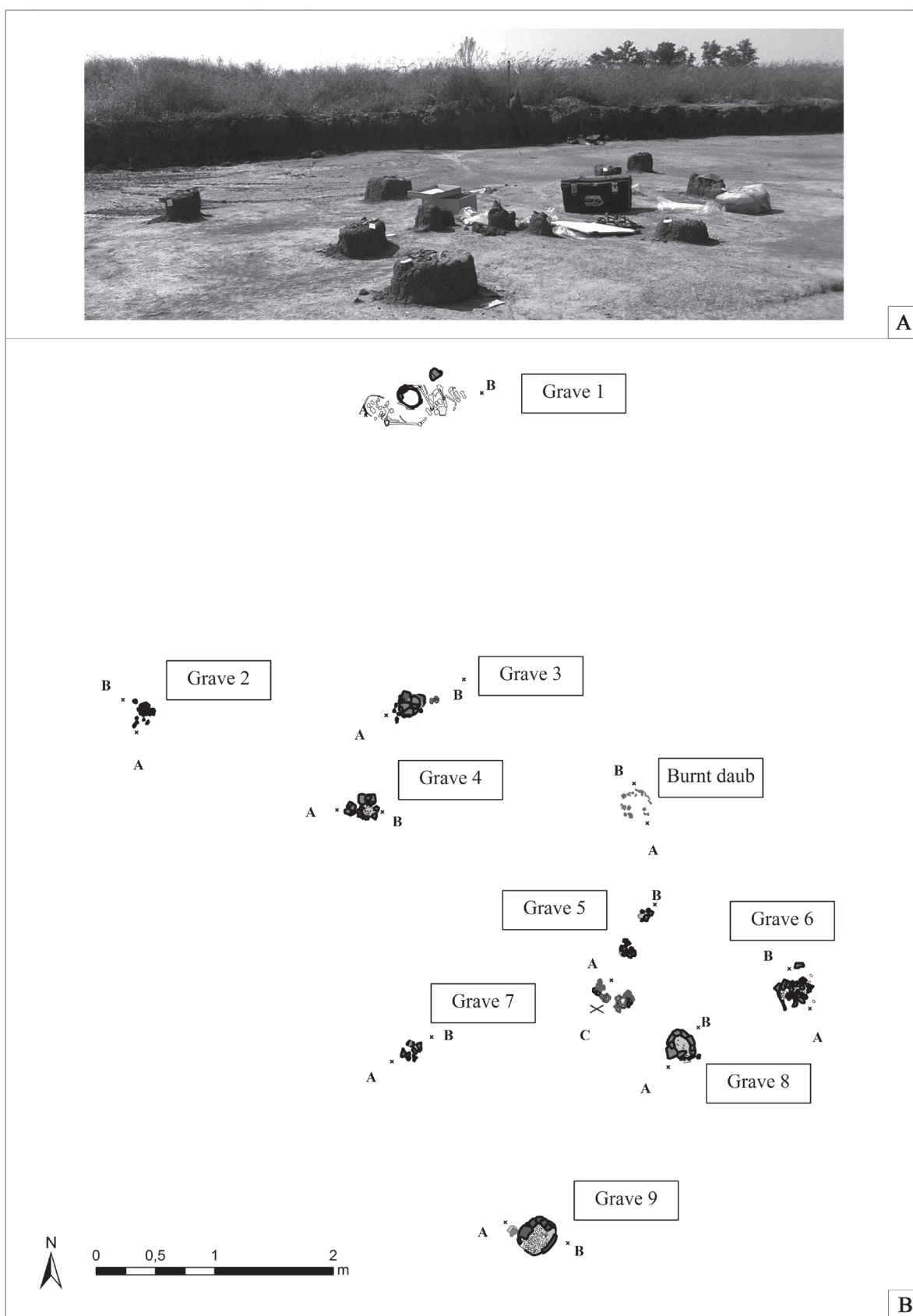


P1 – Location of Tiszabura–Nagy-ganajos-hát, site Nr. 6; A, B: Elevation map; C: Second Military Survey map.



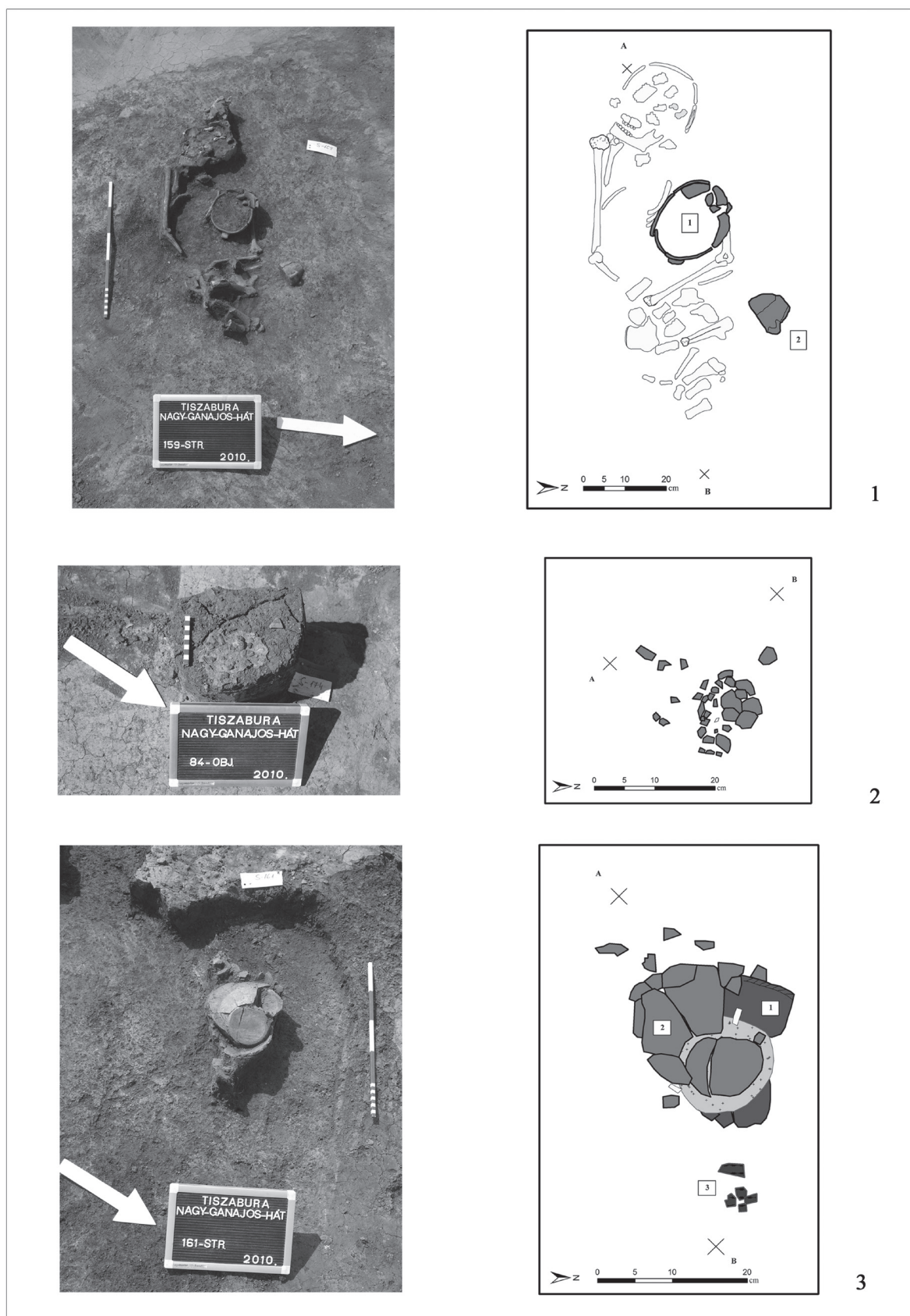
P2 – Site Nr. 5 (Tiszabura–Bónis-hát) and Site Nr. 6 (Tiszabura–Nagy-ganajos-hát); Position of the Late Bronze Age features and the Gáva cemetery.



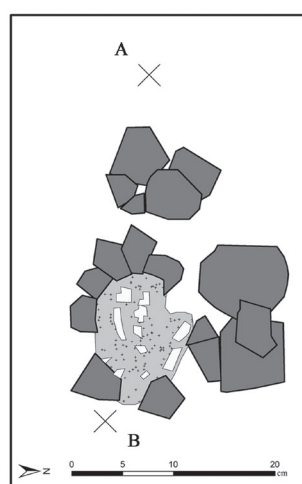


P3 – Tiszabura–Nagy-ganajos-hát, site Nr. 6; A: Positon of graves in the humus; B: Map of the cemetery.

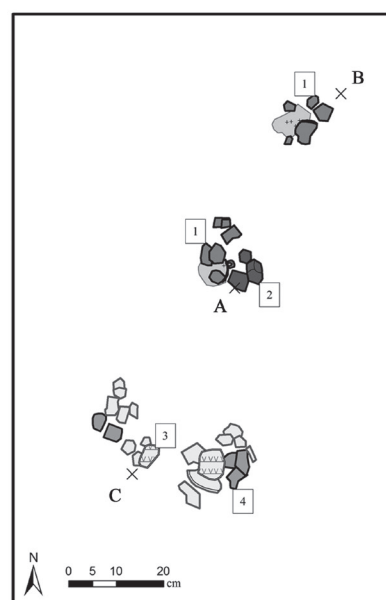
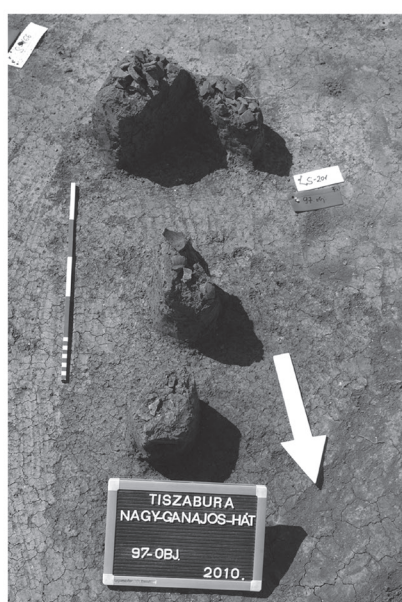




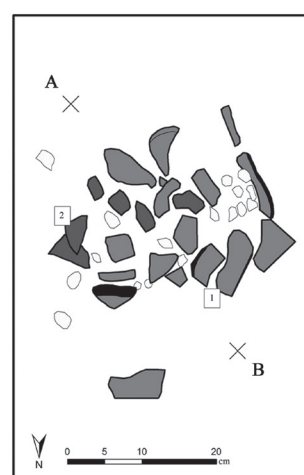
P4 – Graves 1-3.



4



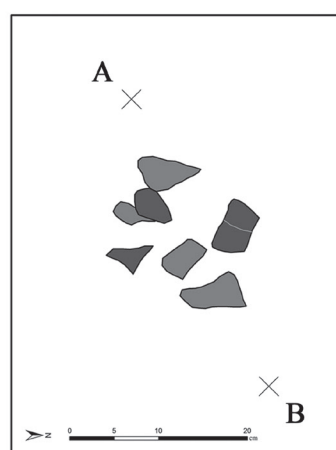
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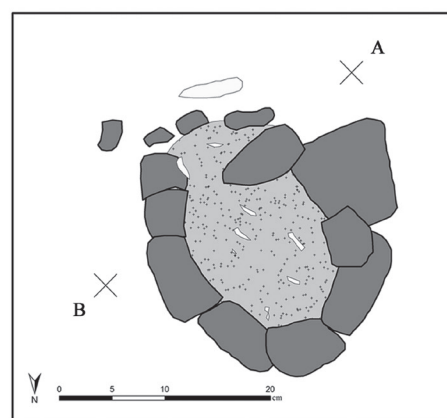
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P5 – Graves 4-6.

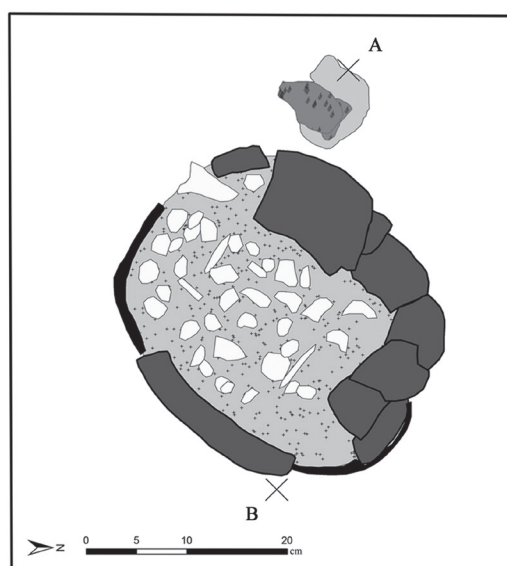




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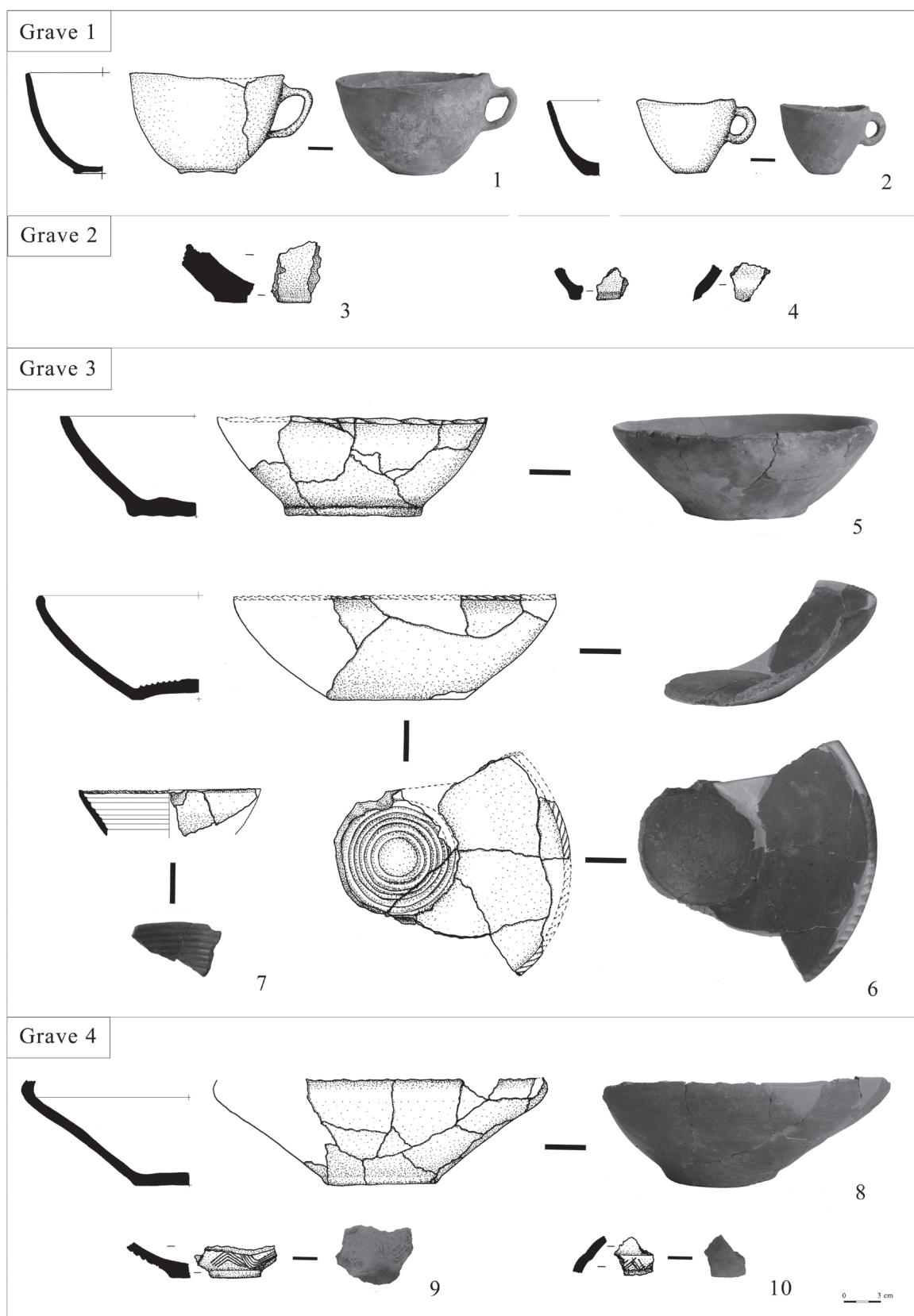


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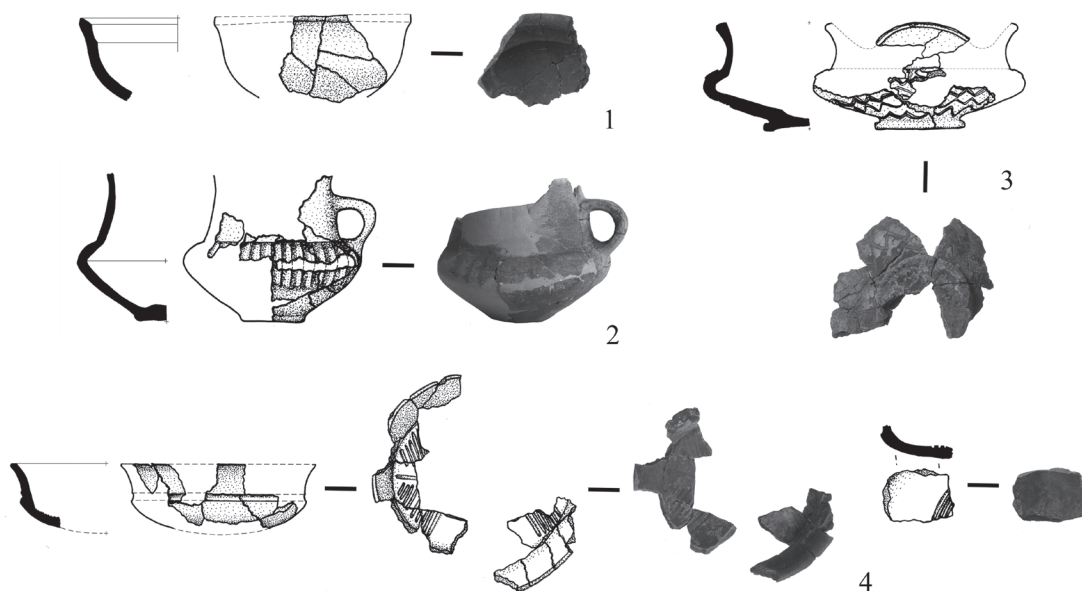
9

P6 – Graves 7-9.

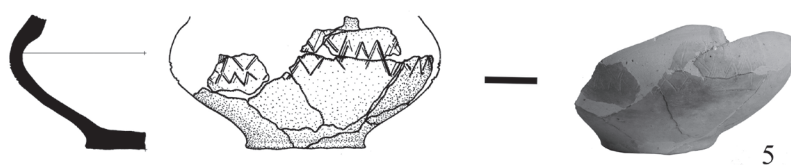


P7 – Find material of Graves 1-4.

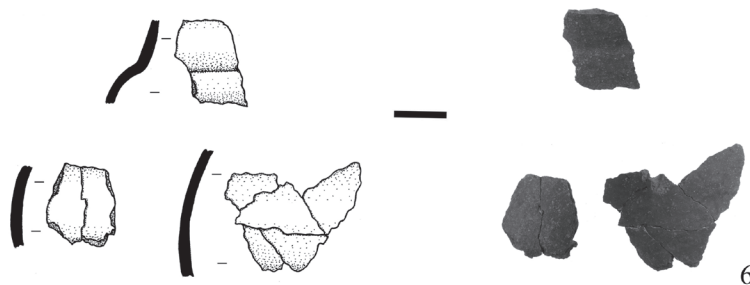
Grave 5



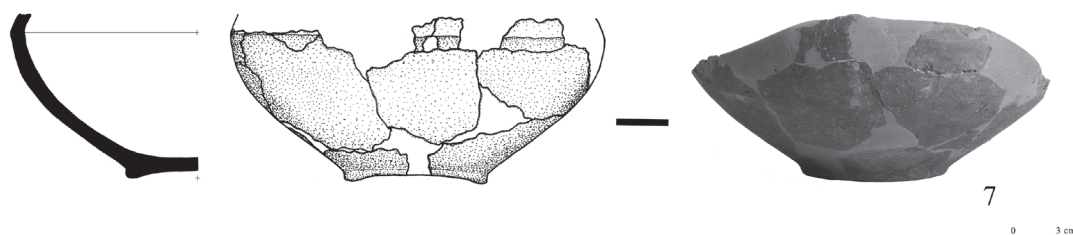
Grave 6



Grave 7

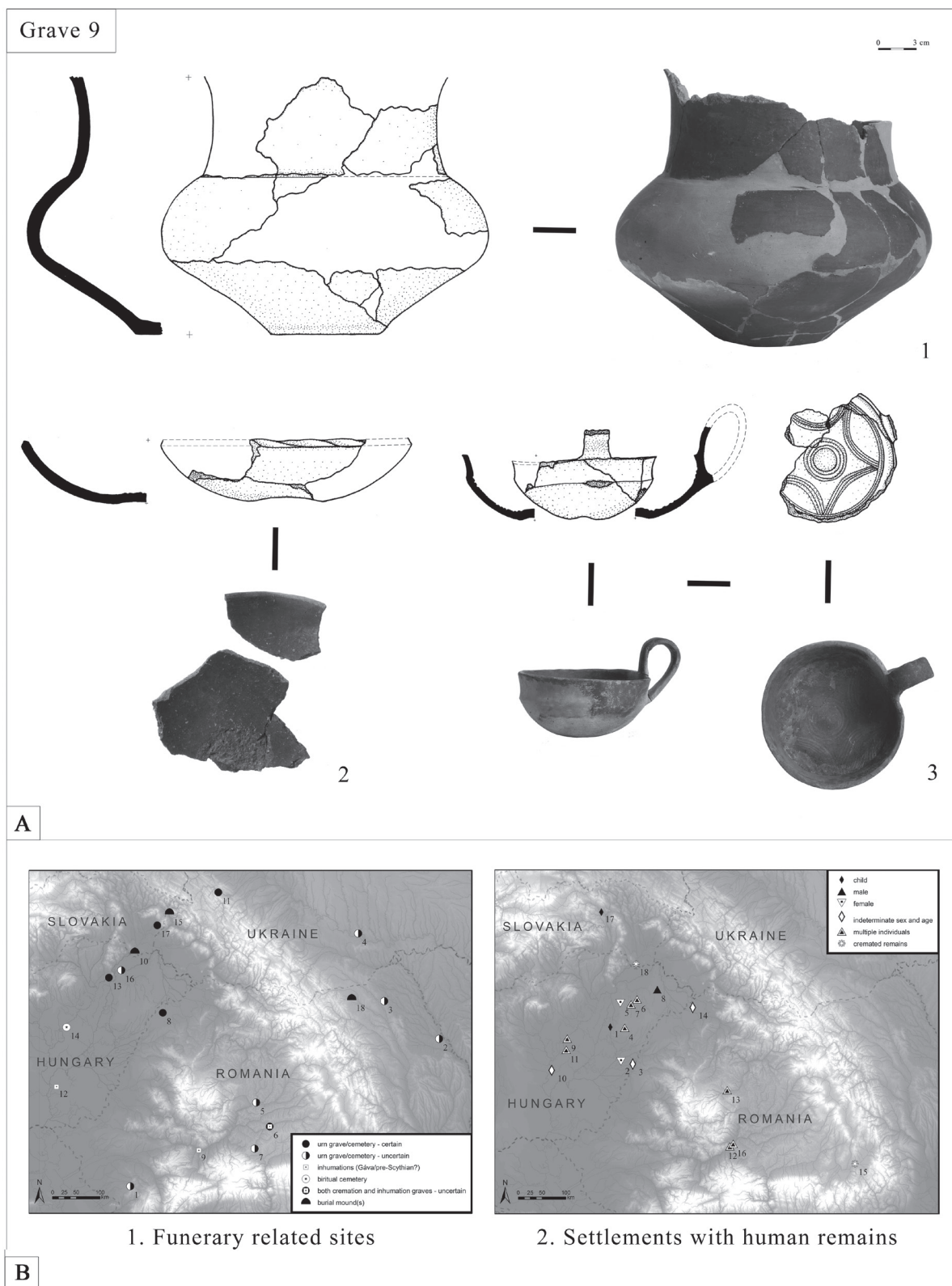


Grave 8



P8 – Find material of Graves 5-8.





P9 – **A:** Find material of Grave 9; **B:** Distribution of sites mentioned in the article. **B1:** 1. Bocşa Română – Dealul Mare, 2. Cotu Morii, 3. Cucorăni, 4. Kolodribka, 5. Luduş, 6. Medias, 7. Ocna Sibiului, 8. Sanislău – *Livadă*, 9. Simeria, 10. Somotorska Hora, 11. Sopit/Sopot, 12. Szentes – *Szentlászló*, 13. Taktabáj – *Erdőalja*, 14. Tiszabura – *Nagy-ganajos-hát*, 15. Velyky Bereznij, 16. Vencsellő – *Kastélykert*, 17. Vojnatina, 18. Volovăț. **B2:** 1. Balmazújváros – *Tömöri tanya, site II.*, 2. Berettyóújfalú – *Nagybócs-dűlő*, 3. Biharkeresztes – *Láncos-major*, 4. Debrecen, Józsa – *Alsójózsai Lakópark*, 5. Hajdúdorog – *Szállásföld közép*, 6. Nyíregyháza – *Oros, MŰP*, 7. Nyíregyháza – *Rozsrétszőlő*, 8. Nyírmada – *Vályogvető*, 9. Pusztataskony – *Ledence, site 1*, 10. Rákóczi falva – *Bagi-föld, site 8/A*, 11. Tiszabő – *Galamb-dűlő*, 12. Alba Iulia, 13. Baciú – *str. Nouă*, 14. Lazuri – *Lubi tag*, 15. Reci, 16. Teleac, 17. Medzany, 18. Somotorska Hora.