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INHUMATION VERSUS CREMATION IN TRANSYLVANIAN NEOLITHIC AND ENEOLITHIC*

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Abstract. *The current paper aims to present and discuss a series of funerary discoveries which indicate specific mortuary practices by the communities of the Transylvanian Neolithic and Eneolithic, both older and more recent. A special attention was given to the cremation rite, still considered an unusual practice for the period and area under research. We believe that these new funerary discoveries confirm the practice of cremation of the N-W Romanian Neolithic communities.*

Rezumat. *Arheologia funerară preistorică cunoaște o perioadă de dezvoltare și de acumulări în plan calitativ și metodologic. Lucrarea de față își propune să prezinte de o manieră sintetică cele mai relevante manifestări privind practicile funerare specifice neoliticului și eneoliticului transilvănean, cu accent pe descoperirile recente. Am acordat atenție tratării cu predilecție a practicilor mortuare considerate neobișnuite, între care includem complexul funerar aparținând grupului Foeni din situl de la Alba Iulia-Lumea Nouă și dovezile privind ritul incinerației la comunitățile de tip Suplac din N-V României.*

Introduction

Compared to the number of settlements taken into consideration, the funerary discoveries from the Transylvanian[3] Neolithic and Eneolithic are less in number. The people researching this period have searched for

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[3] By 'Transylvania' we have taken into account, as a geographical-political aspect, the meaning that refers to the central part of Romania and, by extension, also to Maramureș, Crișana and Sătmar (area also known as Partium).

explanations for this situation. In a synthetic manner, we can discuss the current stage of knowledge, the research methodology used in approaching the archaeological sites, as well as a particular funerary behaviour of the human communities from this geographical area.

Any steps taken into studying, classifying and interpreting burials—starting from the funerary rite and ritual—are subject to the researcher's subjectivism[4]. Archaeological research has shown that inhumation was the dominant rite in Neolithic and Eneolithic communities' mortuary practices. The inhumation rite has been associated with the fertility and fecundity cult, which is specific to the agricultural societies of that time. Thus, inhumation is considered the usual funerary practice of the period, with the body either in a crouched position or lying on its back, in a necropolis or part of a settlement.

By usual we mean the normal practice, the most widespread one and the most evidenced by archaeological research. By unusual we refer to all the funerary discoveries which do not represent the standard mortuary practices for the period, all the exceptions (collective burials, multiple burials, deviant burials, secondary burials, ossuary etc.). In our case, due to the limited number of known findings, cremation can be included in this category for the Romanian Neolithic and Eneolithic ages.

Below we will try to illustrate the current state of research by presenting a number of relevant funerary discoveries, without intending to make an exhaustive study.

Necropoleis

A brief inventory of the Neolithic and Eneolithic inhumation necropoleis known so far in Transylvania allows us to identify four such appropriate places for burials: Iclod[5] (Cluj County) with its two cemeteries

[4] MASSET 1993, 99–130; JEUNESSE 1996, 268–282; 1997, 29–100; BLAIZOT *et al.* 2001, Tabl. III; GATTO 2007, fig. 12–13; LAZĂR 2006-2007, 26–52; 2009, 181–190; 2012, 7–17, 19–40, 49–60, 67–97, 109–163; 2012a, 406–424; CHAPMAN 2010, 32–44 ; REBAY-SALISBURY 2010, 15–16, 24–25; LAZĂR, BĂCUEŢ CRIŞAN 2011, 5–48; LAZĂR *et al.* 2012, 107–115; KOGĂLNICEANU 2012, 2–39; BISTÁKOVÁ, PAŽINOVÁ 2010, 147–157; BORIĆ 2014.

[5] LAZAROVICI 1983, 50–60; 1991, 8–16; LAZAROVICI, KALMAR 1986, 31–39; 1987, 11, Fig. 2; LAZAROVICI, MAXIM 1990-1993, 24; LAZAROVICI *et al.* 1995, 508; MAXIM 1999, 88–89; GEORGESCU, GEORGESCU 1999, 357–363; MAXIM *et al.* 2003, 146–147; 2006, 177–

(A and B) belonging to the eponymous group from the Late Neolithic, Decea Mureșului[6] (Alba County) belonging to the eponymous group from the Middle Eneolithic, Cămin–*Podul Crasnei*[7] (Satu Mare County) and Urziceni–*Vamă*[8] (Satu Mare County) belonging to the Late Eneolithic Bodrogkeresztúr culture.

The main characteristic of these necropoleis is that the dead have been buried in the vicinity of the settlement, close to but outside the inhabited area. For each of them there have been identified specific rituals, together with typical funerary inventories.

Graves inside the settlement

Archaeological research has also provided evidence for funerary practices involving burials inside the settlements. The deposition of the deceased nearby the living area or even under the floor of the dwelling has also been documented. The position of the deceased is almost exclusively crouched, on the left or on the right, while the funerary inventories consist mostly of pottery, lithic tools and bone, horn or shell artefacts.

In the settlement of Gura Baciului (com. Baciu, Cluj County) dated in the early Neolithic, eight graves have been identified belonging to the Starčevo-Criș culture[9]. Another 5 inhumation graves have been excavated inside the settlement of Tășnad–*Sere* (Satu Mare County); they also belong to the Starčevo-Criș culture, phases IIIB–IVA[10].

In Tărtăria (Alba County) human remains from a woman's skeleton, deposited in a ritual pit, have been found, close to a fragmented *Spondylus* bracelet; this discovery is dated to phase A_2–A_3 of the Vinča

178; DUMITRU-KOGĂLNICEANU 2009, 14–18, 94–97, 110–111, 116–117, 138, 142, 153, 158–159, 209, 251–255 ; DIACONESCU *et al.* 2013, 48–53, Img. 1–6.

[6] KOVÁCS 1928-1932, 90–100; OPRIȚESCU 1978, 91; GOVEDARICA 2004, 62–76, Abb. 5–8, Taf. 1–5, IV/2, V/6, V/1–2, 4, 6–7, VII/3, 6, VIII/2, 4, 7–8; LUCA 1994, 10–15; 1999, 39; ENEA 2009, 92–93, Annex 6.

[7] IERCOȘAN 1992-1993, 77–78, NÉMETI, 1999, 75.

[8] VIRAG 2004, 42–45; VIRAG *et al.* 2006, 383–386; ENEA 2009, Annex 5.

[9] LAZAROVICI, MAXIM 1995, 37–39.

[10] ASTALOȘ, VIRAG 2006-2007, 78–81, Pl. II/1–4.

culture[11], and is considered a proof of a secondary mortuary practice[12]. In Limba–*Vărăria* (Alba County) two graves from the B phase of Vinča culture have been studied, containing skeletons in a crouched position, each close to remains of a dwelling[13]: (M1) belongs to a 7–8 year-old child (*infans* I-II), without being able to specify its gender; (M2) contains the skeleton of a male pre-adult (*juvenilis*), aged 18–20[14].

In Zau de Câmpie (Mureș County), seven inhumation graves have been discovered in the Middle Neolithic layer, out of which three are certainly children (aged between 1 and 3.5 years). The graves were found on the dwelling floor, in the hearth area or within the general area of the dwelling[15].

In Săcueni–*Horo* (Bihor County), Pișcolt group, Middle Neolithic, an inhumation grave has been discovered. The child skeleton was laid on the right side in a crouched position on top of a layer of ceramic shards belonging to large-sized pots. The funerary inventory consists of a painted bowl[16].

The M1 grave from Urziceni–*Vamă* (Satu Mare County) contains disarticulated human remains: their deposition inside the filling of a ditch within the settlement was dated to the Pișcolt group[17] of the Middle Neolithic.

In Turdaș–*Luncă* (Hunedoara county), a child grave of the eponymous culture has been found. The skeleton was laid on the floor of a dwelling, in a crouched position, oriented N-S and facing westwards[18]. Another inhumation tomb found here contains an adult woman skeleton[19].

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[11] LAZAROVICI, MERLINI 2005, 207–214, Fig. 17a; MERLINI, LAZAROVICI 2008, 143–144, 155–156, 160–175, Image 20–21, 32–33; LAZAROVICI *et al.* 2011, 210–211.
[12] LAZAROVICI *et al.* 2011, 213–218.
[13] PAUL *et al.* 2002, 517–518.
[14] ROȘU, GLIGOR 2011, 346–348.
[15] BODEA 1997, 737–739, Fig. 1–2.
[16] COMȘA, NANASI 1971, 633–635.
[17] ASTALOȘ, VIRAG 2006-2007, 80, 82, Pl. III/3.
[18] LUCA 1997, note 110.
[19] MAXIM-KALMAR 1991, 4–5.

An important funerary discovery was made at Orăștie–*Dealul Pemilor* (Hunedoara County). The author of the discoveries, S. A. Luca, considers the graves to be part of a necropolis[20] belonging to Turdaș culture. Archaeological research revealed five graves very close to the margin of the fortified settlement. Due to the occupation dynamics[21] we are not able to tell whether these graves were placed inside or outside the settlement[22].

Grave M1 had the skeleton in a crouched position, on the right side, with the hands on the pelvis and with the skull orientated towards the east. On the knee and skull area traces of red ochre were noticed[23]. Grave M2 was found 3 m away from M1. It contained an adult in a moderate crouched position, with the skull oriented towards East. The entire skeleton presented traces of red ochre, and in the head area there was a pot[24]. Grave M3 belongs to an adult male, crouched on the right side and which was found oriented E-W close to the remains of a river rock dwelling platform. The grave goods consist of two ceramic bowls and two stone axes. The entire grave presents traces of red ochre, and some bones and pottery fragments have obvious traces of fire[25]. Graves M4 and M5 are considered to be cenotaphs[26]. We also note the two pieces of human calotte found in the B2/1994 hut pit, which have been interpreted either as containers for libation[27], or as proof of cannibalism[28].

In Peștiș (Bihor County), in the "Piatra Jurcoaiei" cave, a grave containing an 8–9 years old child, dated in the Herpály group, has been discovered. The skeleton, partially destroyed, was in a crouched position,

[20] LUCA 1997, 34–35; LUCA 2000, 59–66; 2006, 13–20.
[21] LUCA 1997, 35.
[22] DUMITRU-KOGĂLNICEANU 2009, 224.
[23] LUCA 1997, 34; 2006, 15, Fig. 1/6.
[24] LUCA 1997, 35; 2006, 15, Fig. 1/3.
[25] LUCA 2006, 15, Fig. 3.
[26] LUCA 2006, 16–17.
[27] LUCA 2003, 217–218.
[28] LUCA 2006, 18.

on the right side, and oriented East-West. The grave goods comprise 5 small bone beads[29].

In 2006, two Late Neolithic archaeological complexes were discovered in the Halmeu–*Vamă* settlement (Satu Mare County). The authors have interpreted them as symbolic graves, possibly cenotaphs, with a rich collection of artefacts belonging to the first phase of the Iclod group[30].

In Gligorești–*Holoame* (Cluj county), from the Late Neolithic layer, most probably of the Suplac group, human remains of an infant (*infans I)* have been recovered: they were deposited in a bowl decorated with bitumen ornamental motives[31]. It is a very unusual inhumation burial, in having the bones placed in a ceramic container for unknown reasons[32]. It might have been a secondary burial[33] and the painted bowl can be interpreted as a burial pot.

In Alba Iulia–*Lumea Nouă* (Alba County) in ditch no. 2/S I (Trench VI/2005), part of the Foeni enclosure, a human skeleton (M1) without grave goods has been found. It was oriented SW–NE, laying on the right side, the left foot displaced from the pelvic area. The position of the skeleton leaves the impression that the deceased was more likely thrown in the open ditch[34]. It belongs to a 1.56-1.57–m tall woman aged 25–30 (*adultus*) at the time of death[35]. The radiocarbon data (Poz–58209) indicates the intervals 4694–4591 calBC (1σ) and 4716–4546 calBC (2σ)[36].

In the Petrești Eneolithic culture the funerary discoveries are also not many. Until now, no information about graves belonging to a necropolis from this culture has been published[37].

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[29] IGNAT 1977, 17.

[30] ASTALOȘ, VIRAG 2006-2007, 75–78, 83–84, Pl. IV–VII.

[31] GOGÂLTAN *et al.* 2004, 70–71, Fig. 3; POPA, ALDEA 2014, 64–65, Fig. 2.

[32] GOGÂLTAN *et al.* 2004, note 25.

[33] POPA, ALDEA 2014, 62–63.

[34] GLIGOR 2009, 40, Pl. VII/1, XIV/2, CXCVI/2.

[35] ROȘU, GLIGOR 2011, 350.

[36] GLIGOR 2014, 92, Tab. 1.

[37] From the research of M. Rusu in the '60s close to the Petrești settlement from Noșlac–*Pe șes* (Alba County), the excavation reports (unpublished) mention six inhumation graves

Inside the Daia Română–*Părăuț* (Alba County) settlement there has been discovered a skeleton in a crouched position, laid on the right side, with the face oriented towards the SE. Close to the skeleton was a jaw of an ox, and the bottom of the pit was partially covered with sandstone pieces[38]. In the Ocna Sibiului–*Fața Vacilor* (Sibiu County) settlement a SE–NW orientated skeleton was found in a crouched position laying on the left side. In the area of the nape and of the shoulders was a piece of sandstone[39].

On the hearth of a dwelling in Tărtăria–*Gura Luncii* human remains belonging to a child have been found[40]. The grave is considered a ritualistic inhumation as part of the A-B phase of the Petrești culture[41].

Two inhumation graves belonging to the Petrești culture were recently discovered within the Petrești–*Groapa Galbenă* settlement (Alba County).

The first human remains were identified in square D (Trench I/2011), at a depth of approximately -0.50m. Grave M1 was arranged as a rectangular cist, by reusing adobe pieces from dismantling the remains of the L1 surface dwelling[42]. The skeleton was found in a crouched position, lying on the left side, with a NNV–SSE orientation[43]. The anatomically connected skeleton was incomplete, but not disturbed by subsequent anthropic activities. The presence of animal bones inside the cist, as well as in the feet area, could indicate that they were offerings. As funerary inventory, we include a fragment of unpainted fragment of pedestal vessel, found next to the hip. The skeleton belongs to an *Infans II* (4–6 years) of undetermined sex[44].

belonging to Petrești culture. According to I. Paul, four inhumation tombs were found in a crouched position (PAUL 1992, 115, 159, note 42).

[38] PAUL 1992, 116, Pl. LIV/1–1.

[39] PAUL 1992, 115–116, Pl. LIV/2–2.

[40] HOREDT 1949, 51, Fig. 7.

[41] PAUL 1992, 115, 159, note 41.

[42] GLIGOR *et al.* 2013, Pl. VII/1, VIII/1.

[43] GLIGOR *et al.* 2013, Pl. VII/2–3.

[44] GLIGOR *et al.* 2013, 68–69, Pl. VII/1–3.

The grave M2 was identified in square C, at a depth of approximately -0.60m, obviously anthropically disturbed, probably in this area being placed one of the poles of the L1 dwelling from the upper layer. This grave was also arranged as a cist from adobe pieces. From the skull position, the individual was placed oriented SSV–NNE. No artefacts that can be associated with the inhumation could be identified. The skeleton belongs to an adolescent/*Juvenilis* (16–18 years) of unknown sex[45]. The radiocarbon data (Poz–58216) indicates the intervals 4448–4369 calBC (1σ) and 4486–4348 calBC (2σ)[46].

Petrești painted pottery at 'Groapa Galbenă' is typically for the A-B phase[47]. The main shapes comprised carinated bowls, bowls with rounded rims, pedestal vessel; the geometric motifs are painted dark-brown and brownish, with the typical patterns: thin lines, curvilinear motifs and network patterns[48].

Human remains from Alba Iulia–*Lumea Nouă* (Alba County)

The Lumea Nouă settlement is part of a 'chain' of Neolithic and Eneolithic sites on the middle Mureș valley, one of the most important sites from Transylvania. Research from past years has shown that the most intense habitation belongs to Foeni group[49], to whom we attribute a distinct funerary complex that has been the focus of recent excavations.

Archaeological diggings from 2003 (Trench II) revealed a pit in square C (G1/2003) 1.50–1.70 m in diameter, marked by stones placed around its exterior. Inside were found a large number of human skulls, together with of bone remains, randomly distributed in the upper levels (Pl. I/1), with many long bones found in a slanting position[50].

The MNI (Minimum Number of Individuals) was calculated by counting the number of repeated skeletal elements within the sample, with the most recurrent bone in the assemblage equalling the absolute

[45] GLIGOR *et al.* 2013, 69, Pl. X/1–2, XI/1.
[46] GLIGOR 2014, 93, Tab. 1.
[47] PAUL 1992, 76–90, Pl. XXIX, XXXIV–XLI; GLIGOR 2004, Pl. I; 2009, Pl. CXLII–CXLIII.
[48] GLIGOR *et al.* 2013, 68, Pl. II–V.
[49] GLIGOR 2009, 25–58, 71–86.
[50] GLIGOR 2009, 31–32, Pl. X/2, CCII–CCIV.

MNI. The most recurrent bone among the adult disarticulated material was the left mandible, and it gave an MNI of 13 adults. The left mandible was also the most recurrent bone among the sub-adult material and gave an MNI of 4 sub-adults. Therefore, the total MNI for the whole assemblage is 17[51].

Two years later, in Trench III/2005 (square B), an agglomeration of disarticulated human bones (Pl. I/2) was found[52], some of which have traces of burning[53]. The skulls were positioned mainly inside the pit, while the long bones were found towards the upper part of the pit and at ground level. Similar to the G1/2003 discovery, most of the bones were found in a slanting position, indicating that they were most probably thrown into the pit without much care. Evidence for an intense fire takes the form of a thick layer of ashes and brick-red coloured traces of fire over the sides and down to the bottom of the pit[54].

The right maxilla was the most recurrent bone among the adult disarticulated material and gave an MNI of 33 adults. The right mandible was the most recurrent bone among the sub-adult material and gave an MNI of 17 sub-adults. Thus, the total MNI for the whole assemblage is 50[55].

The most prominent discovery from the 2011 excavation is the complex from Trench I/2011, square D, from a depth between -0.20 and -0.40m. Several human crania, mandibles and maxillae, long bones and vertebrae were found in an area of about 2×2m[56]. The human remains represent a population with an MNI of 9 adults and 9 children[57].

Ceramic fragments from large vessels mark the outer limits of the funerary complex. Disturbance of the general deposition of the remains by later anthropic activity has yet to be identified. Long bones were lying on the ground (not slanted) in rectangular arrangements enclosing skulls,

[51] GLIGOR, MCLEOD 2014.
[52] GLIGOR 2009, 36–37, Pl. X/1, CCVIII–CCIX.
[53] GLIGOR 2009, Pl. CCXI/1–2.
[54] GLIGOR 2009, Pl. CCXII/3.
[55] GLIGOR, MCLEOD 2014.
[56] GLIGOR 2012, 284–285.
[57] GLIGOR, MCLEOD 2014.

suggesting an intentional disposition (Pl. II/a–d). Bones of various fauna were also identified along with the human remains. This funerary complex is part of the Foeni layer, which overlaps the pit of a large Vinča B hut[58].

The skeletal remains have not been discovered in anatomical connection. Furthermore, no entire skeleton was identified. Compared to the previous funerary discoveries from 2003 and 2005, the complex researched in 2011 presents some particularities as well. We observe that there are no bones in oblique position, no adobe is present among the skeletal remains, and there is no trace of fire on the human bones. At the same time, the archaeological context allowed us to discover the disposal of the long bones in rectangular-shaped structures, and that the area inside them was used to deposit the skulls[59].

The 2011 funerary discoveries reveal a large quantity of defleshed bones. Ethno-archaeological analogies indicate defleshing and placement of human remains in mass graves[60].

Some of the skulls discovered during the 2003, 2005 and 2011 excavations present several particular features. We refer to the oval-shaped depression fractures and abrasion areas[61]. Due to the lack of bone remodelling, these injuries probably occurred around the time of death and it is possible that they were made by an experienced individual with a dedicated tool, as part of a ritual. The fact that the skull caps and mandibles are intentionally detached is one aspect of the unusual mortuary practices of this site. It cannot be ruled out that there has been a selective process of particular skeletal elements collected purposely for burial[62].

Osteological analyses have determined the presence of children, male, and female adults[63]. It is suggested that the human remains were

[58] GLIGOR 2012, foto 1; 2013, 204, Fig. 6–7.
[59] GLIGOR 2012, 284–285.
[60] GLIGOR 2013, 209.
[61] GLIGOR 2009, Pl. XII; 2013, 206–207, Fig. 8–9.
[62] GLIGOR 2013, 207–209.
[63] GLIGOR *et al.* 2012, 58–64, Tab. 1, 3.

not interred during an epidemic; moreover, collective death as a result of violence is unlikely since there are no traces of interpersonal violence such as wounds inflicted by arrows or lithic weapons. In addition, no arrow tips or axes have been found in connection with human bone material. Post mortem manipulation has been noticed not only on the skulls, but also on the postcranial skeleton.

The processing of the archaeological material associated with the funerary discovery allowed for a cultural classification under the Foeni group[64]. The chronological timeframe given by the AMS dating of the bone material taken from skeletal remains[65] spans between 4600 and 4450 calBC[66]. Using Bayesian approach we have obtained a model (Pl. III) that evidences the very short time interval (less than 50 years) which includes all data from the three funerary complexes[67]: start 4587–4492 BC (95.4%), *mean* 4534 BC; end 4535–4448 BC (95.4%), *mean* 4493 BC.

Cremation

In the past decades, excavations in Europe have provided irrefutable evidence of cremation rite practices, even from the Mesolithic. Cremation may have been chosen because it was a hygienic method of taking care of the dead, or maybe because the urns could have been placed within more convenient perimeters, or even to handle space issues[68], or cremation-used for allogeneous population**,** they or their families have chosen to be treated differently, to distinguish them from the rest of the community[69], age or sex, social statuses[70].

Gil-Droz examines the history of the problem and indicates the main ideas: fire as a force which cleanses and liberates the soul from the body; a result of fear of the deceased who might have come back from the grave; as an expression of agrarian beliefs of Neolithic agricultural

[64] GLIGOR 2009, 38, 213, Pl. CIII/1–2, CIV/2, CXIV/4–5, CXV/3, CXVI/1, 4, 7, CXVIII/2–4, CXXXI/1a–1b, CLII/11a–11c, 12a–12c, CLIX/1, CLX/1a–1b, CCXI/4.
[65] GLIGOR 2014, Tab. 1.
[66] GLIGOR 2010, Fig. 8; 2012, Fig. 3.
[67] GLIGOR 2014, Fig. 6a–6b.
[68] BISTÁKOVÁ, PAŽINOVÁ 2010, 148.
[69] TRAUTMANN 2006, 177–179.
[70] PESCHEL 1992, 199.

communities, cremation as a result of 'drying the body', cremation as a result of coincidence[71].

As K. Rebay-Salisbury suggests, cremation—a deliberate transformation, fragmentation and destruction of the body—appears to be a very drastic way to handle the body after death; at the same time, it is just one of the many ways of addressing burials[72].

In any case, the use of fire as a purifying element is a pattern that often comes across in mortuary practices.

Mesolithic cremations from Iron Gates Vlasac (Serbia) are an important part of secondary mortuary rites[73].

Many discoveries about cremation practices have been found in the territory of present-day France. The oldest incineration traces found have been dated to the Mesolithic, at Chaussée-Tirancourt[74]. Another discovery, in the Early-Neolithic Neuvy-en-Dunois[75] (Eure-et-Loir) site, presents a collective burial, with the calcined human bone remains of 22–24 individuals, out of which 15 were adults. Other cremated collective burials from the Late Neolithic are known at Reichstett-Mundolsheim[76], Vaise[77], Gardon[78], and Peyrolebade[79].

In Italy, the Early Neolithic (Impresso culture) has indications of cremation at Grotta Continenza[80], while for the SMP culture (Square Mouthed Pottery) there is a cremation burial of a woman in Ponte Ghiara[81].

The oldest cremation evidence in Slovakia is traced to graves of Lužianky group[82].

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[71] GIL-DROZ 2011, 32–44.
[72] REBAY-SALISBURY 2010, 24.
[73] BORIĆ *et al.* 2009, 251–274, Fig. 3–31.
[74] MASSET 1993, 102.
[75] MASSET 1968, 205–218, Fig. 1–8.
[76] BLAIZOT 2005, 4–21, Fig. 4–8; BLAIZOT *et al.* 2001, 196–200, Fig. 9.
[77] JALLET *et al.* 2005, 284–295.
[78] GATTO, BUQUET 2000, 305–330; GATTO 2007, 199–202.
[79] GATTO 2007, 202–208, Fig. 7.
[80] MALONE 2003, 297.
[81] BERNABÒ BREA *et al.* 2010, 131.
[82] BISTÁKOVÁ, PAŽINOVÁ 2010, 149.

In Hungary, at Aszód (Lengyel culture) mostly inhumation graves were investigated, but also cremation graves[83]. Two other finds are from Öcsöd-Kovácshalom[84] (Tisza culture). Of the 436 graves, 72 burials (16.5% of them) from the Copper-Age cemetery at Budakalász were cremation burials[85] (scattered cremation and in-urn graves).

An Early Neolithic incineration necropolis has been researched at Soufli Magoula[86], in Greece. An adult and an adolescent grave were found covered by a layer of ash in a burial mound in the Middle Neolithic site of Chaeroneia[87]. The evidence indicates that the area was used as a crematorium. For the Late Neolithic, we know of the discoveries in Platia Magoula Zarkou[88] (where urn graves have been found), in the Alepotrypa-Diros[89] cave, the site of Avgi[90].

Having an overall image of the Neolithic discoveries we can state that most of cremations graves belong to LBK communities (500 graves of 2500),[91] burials discovered in settlements or which are part of the bi-ritual necropolises like the one in the Czech Republic at Kralice na Hané where from 78 graves, 69 were cremation graves[92] and the cremations cemetery from Modlniczka near Cracow, with 38 tombs[93].

The existence of Neolithic incineration practices in the present-day territory of Romania was viewed with reluctance by some Romanian archaeologists, supported by a lack of anthropological analyses for some of the discoveries.

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[83] KALICZ 1972, 67–68.
[84] RACZKY 1987, 80.
[85] BONDÁR, RACZKY 2009, 232–243, Fig. 15–16.
[86] GALLIS 1996, 172, Fig. 306; KARALI, GKIONI 2006, 71.
[87] KARALI, GKIONI 2006, 71.
[88] GALLIS 1996, 172–173, Fig. 307–310; KARALI, GKIONI 2006, 72.
[89] GALLIS 1996, 173; PAPATHANASSOPOULOS 1996, 175–177, Fig. 49.
[90] STRATOULI *et al.* 2010, 96–99.
[91] TRAUTMANN 2006, 93.
[92] ŠMÍD 2008, 241.
[93] CZEKAJ-ZASTAWNY *et al.* 2009, 179–180; CZEKAJ-ZASTAWNY, PRZYBYŁA 2012, 11–110, 275–280.

The oldest incineration grave is M7 from Gura Baciului[94] (Starčevo-Criș culture). Until now, it is the only certain discovery for the Carpathian-Danubian Early and Middle Neolithic.

The Late Neolithic of the Romanian north-western area also presents some discoveries that show cremation practices. In the past decades, cremation graves were found at Tășad[95], Suplacu de Barcău–*Corău I*[96] (Bihor County), Zalău–*Uroikert*[97], Zalău–*Dealul Lupului*[98] and Porț–C*orău*[99] (Sălaj County). We note that Suplacu de Barcău and Porț are parts of the same archaeological site, separated by administrative reasons[100].

Late Neolithic funerary discoveries from Porț–*Corău* (Pl. IV/1) stand above the others in terms of numbers and diversity of the ritual. The research carried out in different areas of the site, even if they are not completed, provided important information on various funerary behaviours: on one hand we have a peripheral location with multiple cremation burials placed on two lines[101], identified during the research from 2003 and on the other hand, we have a number of graves spread around the site[102].

Both cremation and inhumation[103] were identified as funerary practices in the Suplac communities from Porț. The location of the inhumation graves does not follow any clear rule, the tombs being discovered inside the inhabited areas and in a concentration within the southern area, where four of them were examined. Three of those were placed on one line (M1–M2, M7/2010) and the other one (M3/2010) on another parallel line (Pl. IV/2, V/3–4).

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[94] LAZAROVICI, MAXIM 1995, 189–190.
[95] IGNAT 1998, 57.
[96] IGNAT 1998, 57–58.
[97] BEJINARIU 1996-1997, 9–12, Pl. I–II.
[98] BĂCUEȚ CRIȘAN *et al.* 2006, 400–401.
[99] BĂCUEȚ CRIȘAN 2008, 25–26, 65, Pl. 78–79; LAZĂR, BĂCUEȚ CRIȘAN 2011, 7–8.
[100] LAZĂR, BĂCUEȚ CRIȘAN 2011, 7, note 50.
[101] BĂCUEȚ CRIȘAN 2008, 25–26, Pl. 78.
[102] BĂCUEȚ CRIȘAN *et al.* 2011, 222.
[103] RADU *et al.* 2013, 74–76.

The most recent (2010–2012) research from the Porț site—presented below—adds new information about the cremation rites.

The M4/2010 (C.163) cremation grave was found in S 4/2010[104]. The pit has an approximate rectangular shape outlined at -1m. Three pots, two cups without feet and in between a quadrilateral bowl with straight rim painted in black both in the interior and on the exterior (Pl. IV/5) were found towards the Eastern margin. In front of the vessels at -1.10m a group of burnt bones covered with a red dye were found (Pl. V/1).

The M3/2011 (C.180) cremation grave was found in S 13/2011[105], within a rectangular pit, extremely difficult to detect, at a depth of 1m. In the S-W corner of the pit at -1.10m were deposited two cups without feet and a group of bones. All bones are coloured with a red dye (Pl. V/2).

A similar grave M4/2011 (C.256) has been investigated in S 15/2011, but in this case the cremation remains, highly coloured in red, were accompanied by only a ceramic fragment. Regarding the graves M5 (C.273) and M7 (C.277) from S 17/2011, the cremation remains were deposited in the vessel. For M6 (C.276) from S 17/2011 we do not have enough information, only one small vessel being recovered, because of disturbance by later features.

Of the three tombs investigated in S 17, only in the case of M7/2011 was noticed the red colouring of the cinerary remains. The most interesting aspect is the location of the three tombs S 17/2011 identified on the same line, at a distance of approximately 10 m apart. The remains from M5/2011 were deposited in a bowl. M7/2011, the last grave excavated in the 2011 campaign, consisted of a bowl for depositing the cinerary remains, the vessel being afterward covered with another bowl. In these two cases of bowl-deposited remains no sepulchral pits were noticed.

A notable exception is M5/2010 (C.68/1) without grave goods, where the cremation remains were deposited on the bottom of a ditch identified as a property boundary (?). On the contrary, the richest grave

[104] BĂCUEȚ CRIȘAN *et al.* 2011, 222.
[105] BĂCUEȚ CRIȘAN *et al.* 2012, 246

was discovered in 2012 (M5/2012); ten pots and two chisels were deposited in the grave[106].

Discussion and Conclusions

Inhumation inside the settlement is therefore a quite frequent practice in the Transylvanian Neolithic and Eneolithic. We note the situations in which the deceased are children or youngsters, close to the dwellings or even inside them, which give an unusual character to the discoveries, without considering them as particular funerary practices[107].

The data provided by the archaeological and anthropological research allows us to claim that the Lumea Nouă funerary discovery has traits that set it apart both from multiple burials[108] and from cannibalism[109]. Analysed samples of the Lumea Nouă human skeletal remains demonstrate some particular aspects, which are broadly covered by the archaeological literature. For the present-day territory of Romania, there are no known analogies for the Neolithic and the Eneolithic period[110]. For the moment, all the archaeological and osteological evidence strengthens the idea that Lumea Nouă was a ceremonial centre where burial rituals were organized, including special treatment of human cranial remains.

These funerary discoveries from the past few years indicate with certainty the practice of cremation in the N-W Romanian Neolithic communities.

The synthetic presentation of the funerary discoveries of Porț–*Corău* made so far allows us to discuss 13 inhumation graves (M1/2002; M1–M3, M9/2010; M1–M2, M8/2011, M2–M4, M6–M7/2012) and 17 incineration graves (M3–M4/2002; M6–M9, M11–M12/2003; M4–M5/2010; M4–M7/2011, M1–M5/2012). 3 of the tombs are not certain (M6–M8/2010),

[106] BĂCUEȚ CRIȘAN *et al.* 2013, 173–174
[107] KOGĂLNICEANU 2006, 192–198, Fig. 2–12.
[108] GLIGOR 2009, 124–126, 129–130.
[109] GLIGOR 2009, 126; 2010, 239–240.
[110] LICHTER 2001; SCHUSTER *et al.* 2008; DEBOIS 2008; KOGĂLNICEANU 2012; LAZĂR 2012; BORIĆ 2014.

only vessels have been found, most probably the bone remains have not survived because of the acidic soil.

The cremated remains were deposited in urns at Zalău–*Dealul Lupului*[111], in M1/1984[112] at Suplacu de Barcău, and in M5/2011 and M7/2011 and M1/2012 at Porț. For most of the discoveries, the cremated remains were deposited directly in the pit. The archaeological context indicates that the incineration did not take place inside the pit, most probably somewhere nearby.

The graves were either placed within the perimeter of the settlements (Suplacu de Barcău, Tășad, Zalău–*Uroikert*), at their peripheral margin (Porț–*Corău*), or in distinct funerary spaces — necropolis (Zalău–*Dealul Lupului*).

The incinerated animal bones discovered in the cremation graves indicate that they were burnt at the same time as the deceased[113] and are being interpreted either as the remains of "funerary feasts" or as coming from the animals sacrificed during the funerary ceremonies[114]. The anthropological analyses made until now have indicated that there are also cremation graves that belong to children[115].

Using a red-coloured organic substance for treating the human cremated remains is remarked as a novelty in practicing the funerary ritual. Given the recent nature of these discoveries, the red substance that colours the bones has not been analysed chemically. In some cases the substance has been observed also on the ground in the vicinity of the bones (M2/2010), giving the impression that it has been poured after depositing the remains. We can assume that it is red ochre, a substance that has been noticed sometimes on the surface of the bones recovered from the inhumation graves. Ochre marks on bones, especially on long bones, have been reported in several cases in Starčevo-Criș culture at

[111] BĂCUEȚ CRIȘAN *et al.* 2006, 400–401.
[112] IGNAT 1998, fig. 48/1.
[113] BEJINARIU 1996-1997, 10.
[114] LAZĂR, BĂCUEȚ CRIȘAN 2011, 39–47.
[115] BĂCUEȚ CRIȘAN 2008, 63.

Beșenova[116] or Szarvas Szappanos[117]. Among the vessels that were recovered from M1/2002, there were two cups in which lumps of red ochre had been deposited. Perhaps the positioning of the two vessels may have meaning: one being near the pelvis and one in the chest area, parts of the human body that are highly vascularised. At least three inhumation graves discovered at Port had pots full of ochre. Even without a ritual context, we must note the occasional discoveries of pots containing ochre identified in households or dwellings. Nevertheless, a more credible hypothesis will only be issued after chemical analysis.

At the same time, these discoveries do not clarify whether or not the incineration can be considered a selective funerary rite which could have reflected differences of social status. An alternative approach to incineration in Neolithic could be the fact that it was a special funerary practice, regarding persons who were not yet members of the community (young people not old enough to be considered members of the community), strangers, or even pariah. These explanations can be appointed considering the ethnographic analogies regarding the funerary behaviour in special cases.

Initially considered exceptions, the number of cremation graves from Porț increased by each research campaign, eventually exceeding the number of inhumation graves. Up until now, 17 cremation graves and 13 inhumations have been discovered. Under these circumstances, we tend to believe that this funerary rite has become a common practice, occurring at a certain time, probably under external influences from LBK area or the Lengyel culture.

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[116] COMȘA 1960, 86.
[117] TROGMAYER 1969, 5.

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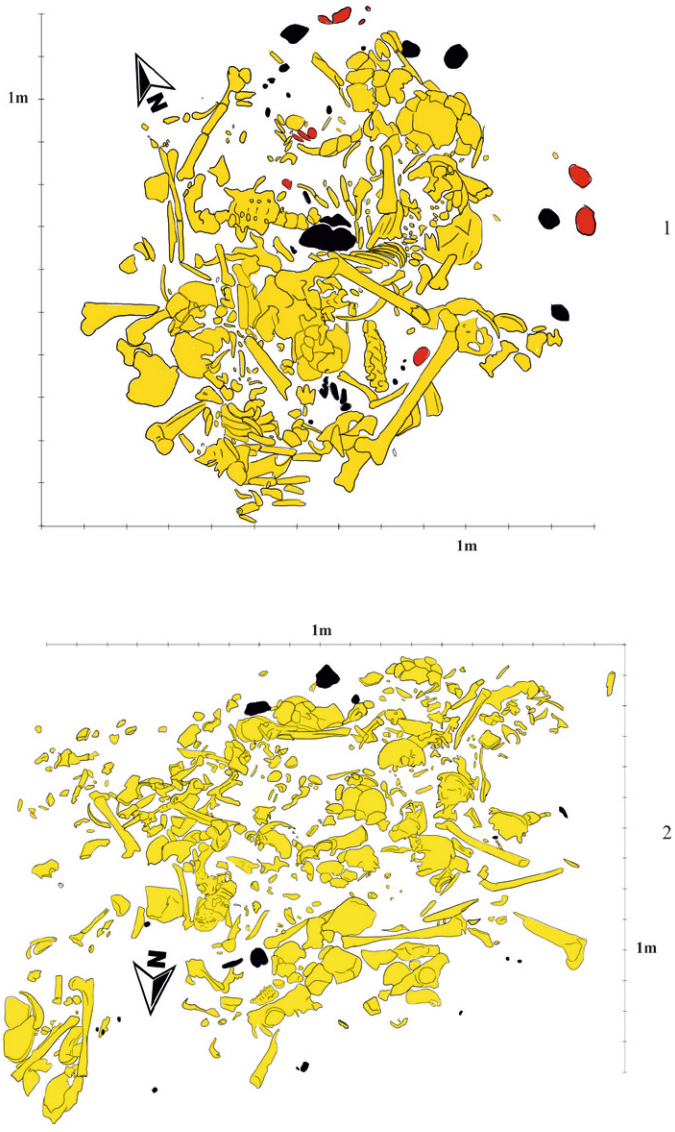


Plate I: Funerary discoveries from Alba Iulia–*Lumea Nouă*:
(1) Grundriss G1/2003; (2) Grundriss Trench III/2005, square B.

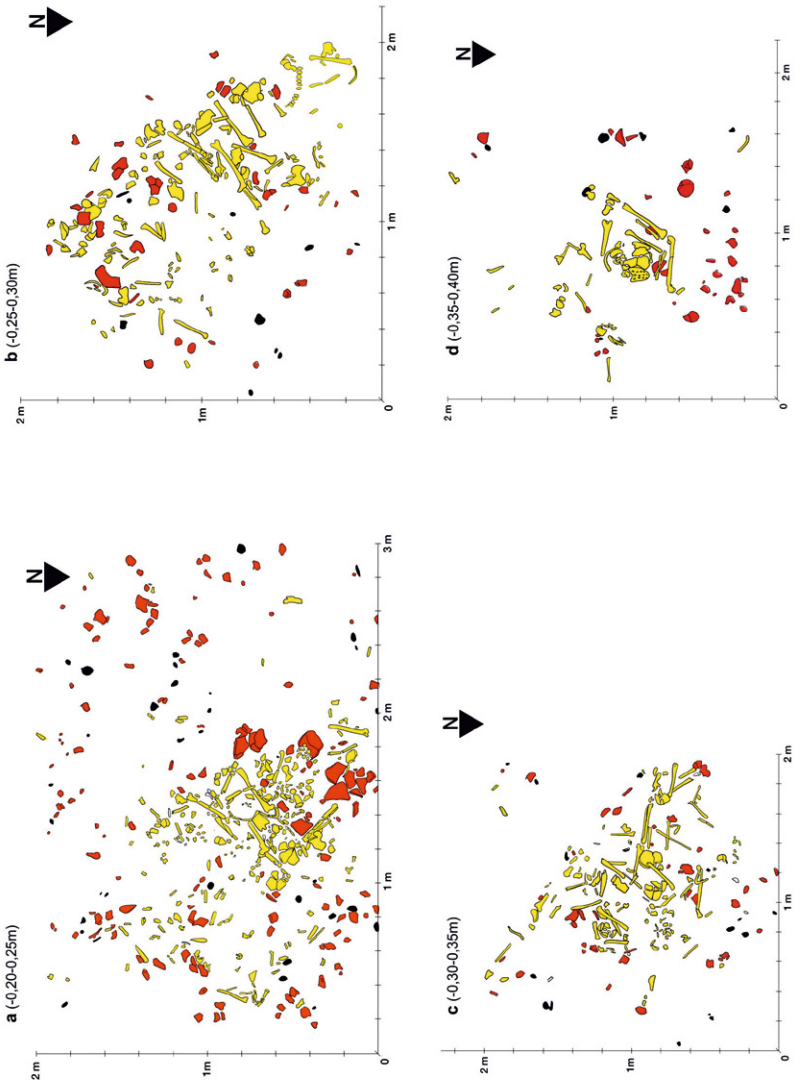


Plate II: Funerary discoveries from Alba Iulia–*Lumea Nouă*: Grundriss Trench I/2011, square D (a–d).

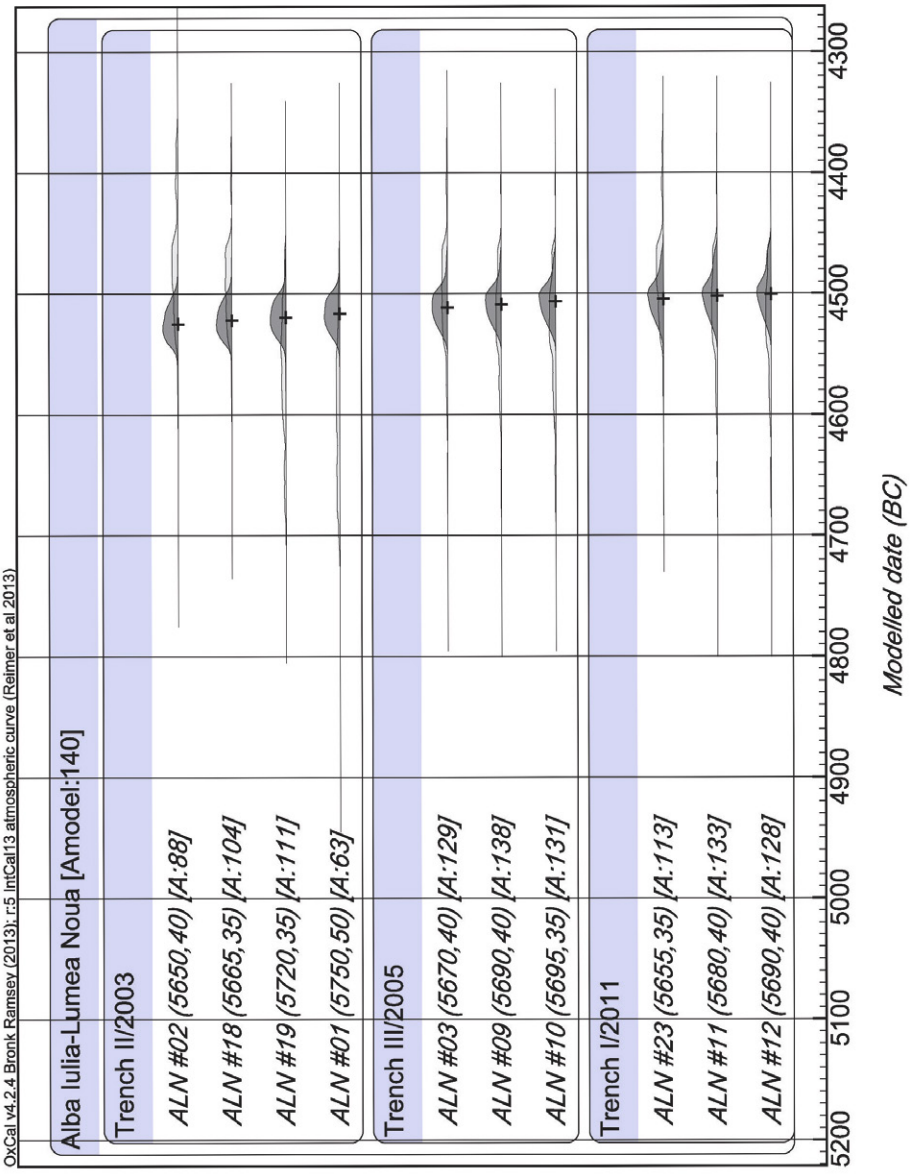
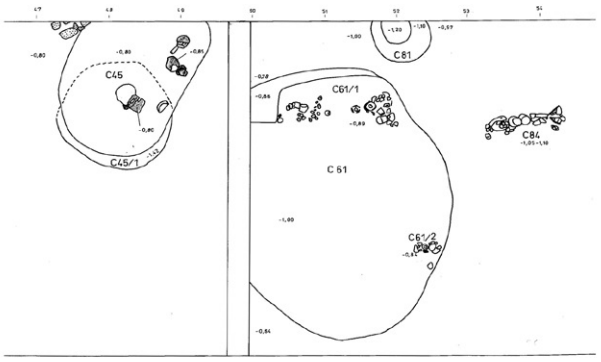


Plate III: Bayesian modelling to the 14C AMS data
from Alba Iulia–*Lumea Nouă* funerary complex.

1



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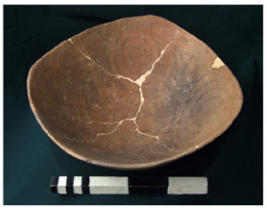

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4

Plate IV: (1) Aerial view with excavations at Porț–*Corău* site, image from Google Earth; (2) Grundriss with M1/2010 (C.45), M2/2010 (C.61–1), M3/2010 (C.61–2) and M7/2010 (C.84); (3–4) Amphorae from M1/2010 inhumation tomb; (5) Painted quadrilateral bowl (grave goods) from M4/2010 cremation tomb. Porț–*Corău* (Sălaj County).

1

2

3

4

Plate V: (1) M4/2010 (C.163) cremation grave; (2) M3/2010 (C. 180) cremation grave; (3) M2/2010 (C.61–1) inhumation tomb; (4) M7/2010 (C.84) inhumation tomb. Porț–*Corău* (Sălaj County).