

Tradition established: Kantharoi in funerary rituals at La Tène necropolis Belgrade-Karaburma

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Abstract: During the 4th century BC, contacts between the Mediterranean world and communities in the Carpathian Basin and Central Balkan region intensified, which resulted in the appearance of larger numbers of Greek imports in these areas. Their presence inspired the production of imitations of Hellenistic vessels, such as kantharoi, which became a recognizable feature of the Late Iron Age material culture. In the Carpathian basin they were in use only for a short period of time, during the phases LT B2 – LT C1. However, on the territory of the Scordisci, kantharoi were continuously used for over three centuries. Their number increased during the Late La Tène period, and they were found in both cemeteries and settlements.

The present paper aims to analyze the tradition of using kantharoi in funerary rituals at the Scordiscan cemetery Karaburma in Belgrade, along with the neighboring site of Rospi Ćuprija. The two sites represent the same necropolis, where more than 100 graves, both cremation and inhumation burials, were excavated. The earliest graves with kantharoi are dated to the Middle La Tène period. The tradition of placing kantharoi in graves continued through the Late La Tène, as well as during the first decades of the new era. The finds from Karaburma and Rospi Ćuprija allow us to observe the changes of the form of kantharoi through various phases of the La Tène period. The practice of placing kantharoi in burials at the necropolis persisted for a long period of time, which indicates the significance of these vessels among La Tène populations that lived at the confluence of the Danube and Sava rivers, considering that kantharoi could be found in graves even after material of Roman provenance began to appear in larger numbers.

Keywords: kantharoi, La Tène period, Scordisci, Karaburma necropolis, funerary rituals

Some aspects regarding the host-pathogenic agent relation in the Romanian Neo-Eneolithic and Bronze Age

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Abstract: The paper is meant to emphasize some interrelations existing between the pathogenic agent and its host, the human body, during the Neo-Eneolithic and Bronze Age of Romania. This is a modest attempt to exploit the existing information from archaeology, bioarchaeology, and paleopathology in Romania, in fact, a starting point for other future studies. It refers, as an example, to specific infections, like tuberculosis, and to non-specific infections, like periostitis, osteitis, and osteomyelitis, but also to other illnesses.

Keywords: paleopathology, tuberculosis, bacterial infections, Romania.

Commingled and Connected. An Eneolithic Mass Grave from Alba Iulia-Lumea Nouă

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Abstract: The Eneolithic mass graves discovered at Alba Iulia-Lumea Nouă (Romania) are important for exploring violent conflict in prehistoric communities. To date, over 100 individuals have been unearthed, many of whom exhibit perimortem blunt force injuries to the skull and postcranial skeleton, providing compelling evidence of episodes of aggression.

This paper presents the results of a subsequent funerary discovery (Cx01/Trench II/2019), a mass grave containing the skeletal remains of 11 individuals, nine adults (six males, three females) and two non-adults, of which six display perimortem trauma to the cranial region. The archaeological context of the grave is of particular interest, as the individuals were interred in two distinct depositional layers, within a singular event, the first layer being heavily affected by commingling, and a second one, with the individuals in anatomical connection, placed on the margin of the pit. Noteworthy is the presence of grave goods—manifestations of ritual practices, an uncommon find amongst the funerary discoveries from the site.

Keywords: Eneolithic, prehistoric violence, mass grave, blunt force trauma, Alba Iulia-Lumea Nouă, Romania

Mortuary practice between the 11th and 8th centuries BC in Western Serbia – a case study of the Mojsinje necropolis

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Abstract: The paper discusses mortuary practices in Western Serbia in the period between the 11th and the early 8th centuries BC. Recent AMS C14 dates provide a basis for its chronological grounding. The necropolises from Mojsinje (horizon II) and a number of graves from Stapari and Kriva Reka are the only representatives for now. They are considered a separate cultural phenomenon named after these localities. Connections with the Kalakača phase of the Bosut culture are reflected in the imitation of ceramic styles, while the burial characteristics represent an autochthonous development. During the younger phase of this horizon, iron objects appeared, which are among the earliest examples in the interior of the Balkans.

Keywords: Mojsinje – Stapari horizon, mortuary practice, earliest iron items

Cremated Bodies and Memory of Quondam Bodies: Late Bronze Age Funerary Practices of Southwestern Serbia

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Abstract: The southwestern part of Serbia—namely the Pešter plateau and neighbouring regions—are characterised by tumular necropolises, which started to be erected in the Bronze Age. The burial horizon initially connected with the final phase of the Middle Bronze Age and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age is represented by some graves with inhumed deceased in mounds at the sites of Gračanska Polja in Gračane and Latinsko Groblje in Glogovik. A different approach to these skeletal graves connects them to the necropolises of the Late Bronze Age Brnjica culture and recognises their restriction to the westernmost zone of the spread of the culture. The bearers of the Brnjica group, who settled the studied region of southwestern Serbia in the last centuries of the 2nd millennium BC, practiced cremation of the deceased. Their standard funerary practice included placing bodily remains in urns covered with large bowls, well protected by stone constructions inside smaller *tumuli* with peripheral stone enclosures. Potentially bi-ritual necropolises in Delimeđe, Glogovik, and Gračane, where some deceased were inhumed side by side with the majority of incinerated graves, can testify to a regional characteristic in the development of the Brnjica communities. This westernmost territory, separated from its original zone in the South Morava Basin and the main Central Balkan communication routes, was under strong influence from the neighbouring regions and different funerary traditions.

Keywords: Late Bronze Age, Southwestern Serbia, Pešter plateau, necropolises, inhumation, cremation, *tumuli*.

“Back in the day”: A simple procedure for recording the basic features of burial mounds

ALEXANDRU MORINTZ

Abstract: In fact, this paper isn't about burial mounds. It is more of an essay on the challenges of the increasing use of computers in archaeology, especially in archaeological surveying and mapping. Even though some positive effects are undeniable, it can also be noted that the pursuit of ever-greater accuracy tends to distract from the real needs of archaeology: getting the appropriate accuracy data for each archaeological context. My plea is for turning back to the basic instruments and methods of surveying. In many cases, it is all that is needed. Also, allow archaeologists full control of data, from collecting to using it. In this paper I will present a very simple procedure for recording the basic features of burial mounds. This procedure can also be used for other archaeological field tasks.

Key-words: compass, clinometer, basic features of a burial mound.

Dacians from the Lower Danube and the Carpathians: elites and warriors (2nd c. BC - 1st c. AD)

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Abstract. The area between the Balkan Mountains and the Carpathians, particularly near the Lower Danube, has yielded a plethora of vestiges from the 2nd to the 1st century BC, classified as part of the Padea - Panaghiurski Kolonii horizon. Their characteristics, particularly their ethnic attribution, have been the subject of much debate and contradictory opinions for almost a century. However, with the advent of more detailed analysis and better documentation, we can now clean a deeper understanding of these intriguing artifacts.

South of the Danube, in the north-western Balkans, the tombs are typically flat and infrequently tumular, with the majority containing cremation remains and only rarely inhumation burials. North of the Danube, only flat tombs of the cremation type are found, with incinerated bones directly deposited in pits, seldom in urns. In Transylvania or in the Upper Tisza Basin, such discoveries are, also, in the vicinity of Dacian forts or settlements.

The funerary objects discovered consist of various armaments, including spearheads, javelins, swords, daggers, shields, and spears, as well as an assortment of ornaments, clothing accessories, and, on occasion, ceramic vessels; the ceramic vessels, for the most part, are Dacian. Based on the inventory, most of the tombs are attributed to warriors, the majority of whom were cavalry. Rarely can they be ascribed to women and children. They date from 180/160-30/20 BC. Also from the same area, a series of discoveries are known with similar inventories (weapons, ornaments, and clothing accessories), but in which no human bones were found; are these cenotaphs or votive deposits?

North of the Danube, from the same period and area, there are also groups of tumular tombs, all of them with cremation remains, discovered near Dacian residential centres; the predominant inventory consists of defence and attack equipment and weaponry, harness items, and also Dacian ceramic vessels or Hellenistic imports. Based on the characteristics of the arrangements and inventory, it can be estimated that these are tombs of Dacian aristocrats, predominantly cavalry.

While it may be challenging to determine the ethnic origin of certain archaeological finds, a careful analysis of the artifacts and relevant historical documents suggests that these tumuli, flat tombs, and votive offerings were most likely associated with the Dacian aristocracy and warrior classes.

Key-words: Dacians; 2nd c. BC - 1st c. AD; Padea - Panaghiurski Kolonii - Mala Kopanya horizon; Lower Danube; Carpathians.

The Bronze Age population from Southern Romania (Oltenia) between two worlds: the one of the Living and the one of the Dead

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Abstract: Our contribution is an attempt in order to bring forward some aspects of the relations existing between the World of the Living and that of the Dead, during the Bronze Age from Oltenia (Romania). There are analysed some cultural manifestations, their inner evolution and dissemination, relations with the neighbours, as well as the archaeological evidences which served for the documentation of the relations between the settlements and necropolises/burials. Some notable differences amongst manifestations could be observed, in some cases, their presence being documented just by settlements, some others just by necropolises/burials, while the third one by both settlements and funerary monuments.

Keywords: Oltenia, Bronze Age, relations between settlements and funerary monuments.

Following the River. First Iron Age Funerary Practices in Eastern and Southern Serbia

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Abstract. Among the very few Iron Age sites in Eastern and Southern Serbia, there are three partially excavated necropolises whose research results indicate regularities in burial practice. According to Central European chronology, these necropolises are dated to the Ha B3–Ha C period. The burial inventory in these necropolises is typical for the Early Iron Age in this territory and indicates that the local communities were integrated into supra-regional networks of interactions. The present study, with emphasis on the grave position and orientation, is aimed at a better comprehension of the spatial organisation of the necropolises and the importance of rivers in this part of Europe.

Keywords: First Iron Age, necropoleis, Eastern and Southern Serbia, Grave orientation, Rivers

Archaeometric Steps to Decipher the Immortalization of the Getae: The Investigations of the Hellenistic Necropolises of the Getic “*Dausdava*” in the Sboryanovo National Reserve

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Abstract: The archaeometric investigations of the tumular necropolises of the spiritual and political centre of the Getae Dausdava- Helis (the Sboryanovo National Reserve) aimed to decipher Herodotus's statement that the Getae practiced immortality. A new approach, combining geophysical methods with new approach in the excavation of burial mounds, has answered the crucial question about the Thracian tombs- looted or connected with specific burial practices states? Key aspects of the rites of immortalization were deciphered. Investigations on the astronomically predetermined organization of the necropolises and orientation of the tombs, provenance analyses on the building materials, anthropological studies and chemical analyses for reconstruction of the diet of the buried individuals, paleozoological studies, etc. revealed the complexity and the essence of the practices of immortalization in which deep knowledges in mathematics, astronomy, architecture, etc. were involved by the vegetarian Getae – followers of the teaching of Zalmoxis and Orpheus in astral immortality in order to help the soul to merge with the universe.

Key words: archaeometry, Zalmoxis, Getae, astral immortality, diet

Mortuary Expressions of Gender, Age, Status, and Eschatology Reflected in Anthropological Data and in the Visual Language of Some Red-figure Shapes from the Necropolis of Apollonia Pontica

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Abstract: The text explores the relationship between artifacts from the necropolis of Apollonia Pontica and the social norms of ancient Greek societies, particularly in terms of gender roles, age, and social status. It highlights the growing interest in understanding how Greek cemeteries reflect contemporary societal structures, moving away from the idea that they were uniformly modest.

Key findings and extensive archaeological research have revealed significant insights into the demographic evolution and cultural practices of Apollonia Pontica. In this context, two notable categories of artifacts are discussed: red-figure *lekythoi*, which often depict themes related to femininity and the female sphere, and *oinochoai* featuring images of children, reflecting societal values surrounding age and family roles.

These artifacts serve as indicators of the deceased's gender, age, and social status, revealing the evolving social values and norms of the period. By examining them, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between burial customs and the social dynamics of ancient Apollonia Pontica and to deepen the understanding of its demographic evolution and cultural identity through the lens of funerary practices.

Keyword: Apollonia Pontica necropolis; Greek societies; gender; age; social status; red-figure *lekythoi*; *oinochoai*.

Human Sacrifices or Deviant Burials? A Bioarchaeological Investigation of a Sample of Late La Tène Pit Burials from Romania

COSTIN ȘENDROIU

Abstract: Starting with the 2nd century BC until the 1st century AD there is a marked change in the funerary habits exhibited north of the Danube. The funerary practices exhibited in the previous period were centred around large cemeteries, cremation being used in most circumstances especially in case of adult individuals. Starting with the 2nd century BC we see a radical decrease in the number of burials, under 400 funerary contexts being known to exist. There is evidence of the use of both cremation and inhumation, sometimes the two rites coexisting in the same settlement. While the cremation graves are generally characterised by the presence of a small human bone quantity and of martial inventory, the inhumation burials are mostly waste pit depositions. These contexts show either singular or multiple burials, with a low level of bone representation and a lack of clear funerary inventory. The individual depositions are always subadult individuals while the mixed ones show both subadult individuals and male and female adult individuals. Most archaeological publications centred on these finds imply that they are the result of human sacrifices in accordance with the contemporary literary sources available about this geographical area. In most cases this conclusion was presented without an anthropological examination of the materials, most of the burials discovered in this timeframe not being subjected to an analysis until recently. The aim of this paper is to present through a bioarchaeological approach a conclusion on the nature of these depositions. Looking for signs of *perimortem* trauma and linking the pathological and anthropological information of these individuals in the larger context of their burial is the main goal of this inquiry.

Keywords: Human Sacrifices or Deviant Burials?; Bioarchaeological Investigation; 2nd century BC - 1st century AD; Dacians and Getae.