

# ANTHROPOLOGICAL DATA REGARDING THE SKELETONS IN THE COLLECTIVE BURIAL FROM COPĂCENI (CLUJ COUNTY), OF THE EARLY BRONZE AGE (COPĂCENI GROUP)

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**Key-words:** collective burial, unusual ritual, Early Bronze Age.

**Abstract:** The present paper refers to the anthropological study of a collective burial that comprised the skeleton of a woman in a gynaecological position and of four little children. The woman had the age of 25-26 years. Two of the children were sucklings, with the age of 0-6 months (one of them of male sex), the third one, a *foetus*, had 36-38 gestational weeks (8-9 months) being considered as a prematurely born, or even an aborted child. The last child (the fourth one) had the male sex and the age of 0-1 month. Together with the first individual it was also found a tibia belonging to another individual of 0-6 months. The dimensions of the respective bone had shown that it didn't belong to any of the studied children.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** mormânt colectiv, ritual neobișnuit, Bronz Timpuriu.

**Rezumat:** Lucrarea de față se referă la studiul antropologic al unui mormânt colectiv, care cuprindea scheletul unei femei aflate în poziție ginecologică și a patru copii foarte mici. Femeia avea vârsta de 25-26 ani. Doi dintre copii erau sugari, cu vârsta de 0-6 luni (unul fiind de sex masculin), al treilea, un *foetus* de 36-38 săptămâni gestaționale (8-9 luni) fiind considerat fie născut prematur, fie avortat. Ultimul copil (al patrulea) avea sexul masculin și vârsta de 0-1 lună. Împreună cu oasele primului copil s-a găsit și o tibie, aparținând unui copil de 0-6 luni. Dimensiunile acestui os indicau faptul că el nu aparținea niciunui dintre copiii studiați.

## I. Introduction

In 1990, in the Copăceni village (Cluj County), on the „La Moară” spot (Fig. 1), the archaeologist Gheorghe Lazarovici identified the presence of a platform which was assigned to the Early Bronze Age<sup>1</sup>. About 40 cm east from it, several human bones were found during the sectioning of an earthen wall, which was performed for making a road. In 1991, excavations had been undertaken on that spot, thus, two cassettes (C. I and C. II) being created<sup>2</sup>. In the first of them it was discovered a collective burial, containing the skeleton of a woman, as well as others, of three sucklings and a *foetus* (Fig. 2-3)<sup>3</sup>. The adult skel-

eton had a N-S orientation and was incomplete, missing its skull and partly the right arm and the left leg<sup>4</sup>. Upon its coxal bones were deliberately placed three limestone boulders. The skeleton had been arranged in a gynaecological position, with spread legs and heels underneath the pelvis and with the children skeletons around it. The possible interpretations of this situation, as provided by Mihai Rotea and Mihai Wittenberger, the archaeolo-

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rately packed and noted by different persons, in various ways, thus bearing distinct notations, some of the packages with Copăceni-La Rusu (Roșu?), others with Tureni-La Moară. The number of packages was larger than that of the individuals mentioned by the archaeologists. In order to prepare this paper for publication, the authors of the archaeological study had provided me further information about the exact location of the find, as well as those about the initial marks which had been used, thus being clarified all the aspects about the skeletons notation.

<sup>4</sup> As we will see further, during the anthropological study, some other missing bones of this skeleton could be observed.

<sup>1</sup> Rotea, Wittenberger 1998, 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, 17-18, pl. II.

<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of the anthropological study, the initial number of skeletons had been considered to be much bigger, due to the fact that the human bones had been sepa-