

Double Inhumation Burials from the Romanian Bronze Age.

Two Emotive cases and their Brief Anthropological Approach

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Key words: double emotive burials¹, Bronze Age, death symbolism, Romania.

Abstract: the paper discusses about double burials and very few cases of emotive burials from the Romanian Bronze Age which, by their appearance, indicate not only a strong bond existing between the deceased persons and their family or group, but also some other aspects, that could be partly explained by emotional involvement of the living ones.

Cuvinte cheie: morminte duble, Epoca Bronzului, moarte, simbolism, emoții, România.

Rezumat: lucrarea discută cazuri de morminte duble din Epoca Bronzului din România și foarte puține cazuri selectate (așa-numitele "morminte emoționante"² care, prin aspectul lor, indică nu numai o puternică legătură existentă între cel decedat și familia, sau grupul căruia îi aparține, ci și alte aspecte care pot fi parțial explicate prin implicarea emoțională a celor vii.

Death and its importance for the society

The end of life is an important moment, but also an universal phenomenon, which affects all beings on the Earth. This is why, for the humans, it had and still has a great significance, in time being created a lot of spiritual aspects related to it. This was the reason why, this was also a subject of many studies referring to the past, or recent societies, from various perspectives. No matter where people died, some preparations took place in order to make their funerals. If this happened in their community and they suffered for some time, things were arranged before that moment, right after it, or within a shorter, or longer time afterwards, which means days, weeks, months, years. Even beginning with the preceding time to the moment of death, an entire social mechanism was triggered, in order to do everything that was necessary, in order to prepare the deceased for his "departure", in the proper manner. This involved many compounds, some of them being psychological ones, like emotional and cognitive acts, behaviors, interpersonal, or larger social connections etc. But, as each community has its own system of perceptions and representations of the beliefs and customs related to death, the past societies reflected all these in the rite and rituals used for the preparation of the dead for being buried, but also for the effective „journey” in which

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¹ Emotive burials are interments which involve a strong emotional and psychological involvement, determined by the funeral of one, two, three, or several persons, in some specific situations, thus producing not only a better cohesion and communion of the family, or society, but also a preservation of that event in the collective memory, as an unusual fact, as this was connected with a special moment, or period from the life of the deceased persons and had an impact upon the community..

² Of course, all burials contain an emotional compound, but those to which we are referring to had a special impact upon the family and community of the deceased but, in the Romanian language, such interment are not defined by a distinct term, compared to the usual one).

he was about to go towards the after world. Such aspects, were very important for the soul of the dead, in order to help him reach there in good conditions. They were also benefic for the community, because they assured that the respective soul did not remained captured between worlds, in order to hamper, or take revenge upon the living. When we think about the rites and mostly about the rituals, we have to keep in mind that they were specific either to an entire society, or to a grup inside of it, they had a spiritual meaning and their practical outcome reflected a specific intention. The funerary rituals were standardized and repeated but, at times, they tempted to reflect a stronger emotional state of the respective family, or community, in the case of some unusual good, or bad events. This might have been possible in connection with some moments from the life of the deceased, which had a stronger emotional impact, thus getting out of the usual norm. We are sure that, in the past, the same like today, besides the mourning rules, a repartition of the specific tasks existed in the community and they must have been assumed just by very few persons, as these activities were supposed to be carried out before, during, or even some time after the funeral. These persons had to have some specific qualities, like being related to the dead, being pure, being individuals with whom the deprsrted was in a close relationship during his life etc. But, in fact, this was a collective intricate behaviour, which consisted in shared trust, care, exchange of duty and responsibility, all of these being very important for the past communities, as they maintained the group cohesion.

Single, double, multiple burials

Burials could be single, double or multiple, but here, we will strictly refer to the double and of them to few emotive ones, therefore to a restrained category. The usual individual burials contained just one skeleton, of a person who could have died from various reasons and this was usually the norm for the funerary finds from the Bronze Age of Romania. Yet, not all of them comprised an intense expression of emotions, but sometimes, due to the care provided to the details, to the expressive and sometimes impressive position of the dead person, to the existing grave goods and to other characteristics of the burial, we could infer that the respective interment belonged to an individual to whom a special attention and care was provided. The double burials are more complicated in their interpretation, the same like the multiple ones and we refer here to those containing bodies placed there together soon after their death, or within a very short interval from it. As a general aspect related to these two latter categories, we could say that the „combination” of the people interred in them must have obeyed some specific rules and this custom was determined by certain criteria known and imposed by the respective community. These exceed the explanation that the individuals were put together just in order to save the energy and labor of the society, because they also englobe social bonds, as well as emotions, or feelings, like anxiety, fear, concern, love, empathy, compassion etc. Of course, the first stage of a study about such individuals should establish the exact situation, namely if the interred people were put there at the same time (synchronic), or one after another (dyachronic), within some certain time intervals. For such an information, we must rely upon the archaeological information. The latter case, of a delayed burial, might have been partly determined by inter-personal relationships, but also by other factors, of which we could mention:

- the moment of death for those two persons did not occurred at the same time, but within a shorter, or longer term;
- the dead people came from unrelated, or allied communities and thus, their funerals did not comply to all the rules of the society which bury them;

-the death of those two persons occurred at the same time, but the second corpse was kept some longer time, by the family, or community, in order to perform some special rituals, or for being manipulated in various purposes, or activities, especially if it had a higher social position, or merits for the respective society. Anyway, those individuals, when being buried together, were considered as being "united in death", because they followed the same path towards the after world.

By all means, these interments were based on kinship, or other relations, but they were also projections of the organizing mode and spiritual life of the respective community. Sometimes, they were just the expression of a close relationship.

Clinical death

In past communities, people died in various circumstances, due to disease, conflicts, accidents, or other causes, instantly, or within a shorter, or longer time. In those remote times it was known nothing about the clinical death, about which, in present days, it was established that it represents the condition when a body loses its functions but it can be resuscitated within a short time.

Biological death

Biological death occurs later, after the clinical one, and this is a time when the body cannot be brought to life anymore.

These types of death were subject to many interesting scientific discussions and debates but, we would only like to point out the fact that both of them could have had an important meaning for the past communities. In the first case, it happened sometimes that the so-called dead person (in fact being in a clinical death) came back to life and this created not only fear, anxiety, panic, repulsion and other feelings, but, when this happened after it was buried, it resulted in the change of the position of the skeleton discovered by archaeologists, as the respective person moved her body, while she struggled for her life, before getting suffocated. In the biological death, especially after the corpse was exposed for some time, and the community was sure that nothing was to be done in order to bring that person back to life, the emotional compound was less complicated and family, or dear ones were more easily adapted to that situation. Thus, the preparations for the funerals could be done in a more "quiet" manner.

Social death

When people passed away, besides their biological death, they also undergone a social death and the funerary ritual was meant to "reconstruct" the qualities and merits of the dead, so that in the after life the deceased would obtain the same social rank and appreciation he had during his real life. Even more, the family and society had to pass through some stages of gradual "recovery" from all points of view, because the loss of an individual had always affected the social order. In the case of the individual burials, the treatment of the corpse reflected the consideration, respect, or even veneration from the community to whom the individual had belonged. In fact, this showed the place, position and role that he had in the society. Consequently, there were gradual procedures, which depended upon the merits

of that person, or aspects related to her personhood and which were also associated with specific feelings. All these were rendered in the fittings of the burials, in the funeral ceremonies, in the number of participants/attendants to them, in the value and quantity of the grave goods, but also in the care given to the preparation of the dead. Sometimes, the deceased was even submitted to other "treatments", within a shorter, or longer time after the burial, but they could be hardly reconstructed just by the study of some pieces of evidence which are preserved up to our times. Of course, the reverse situation had also existed, when the corpse was disregarded and undergone a bad treatment, a fact which would have been reflected by the elements of the burial which did not fit into the general rule of the ritual specific to that material culture. Still, even if sometimes there are hard to be distinguished one from another, it doesn't mean that all the deviant burials could belong to mistreated individuals.

Psychological effects

The present medical and psychological studies have established that one of the most significant situations of stress in the human life is the moment of losing someone dear. We can imagine that this situation was similar in the past communities and the response of the people was different, the same like today, considering the mentality, personality type of the mourners, customs and social norms from those times, the last ones also exerting a pressure upon feeling and emotions³. The latter ones are responses to the inside, or outside stimuli, which trigger physiological processes, in connection with the cognitive (thinking) function of the brain. They are involved in the adjustment of the adaptive role of an individual to the collective social and cultural living. If we refer to the emotional reactions of the people, they might be very different. They might vary a lot, from the expression of a dramatical grief, to a very cold and reluctant attitude. Sometimes, a certain emotion was enacted, even if the respective subject did not feel it, or it was not expressed only because this was important and suitable for the community rules. We should also point out that emotions are also connected with the ability of perceiving death and process of dyeing, which is different, as it depends not only upon the social context, but also upon the physiological pattern and age of that individual. Therefore, related to the last mentioned characteristic, a child, a young person, an adult, or an old person, would have another "image" about it. A baby, for instance, would feel death more like a perception of absence about that person, with effects mostly restricted to the subcionscious areas of the brain and less to the conscious ones, while an elder would feel it in all its complexity, due to to his life experience. Emotions, manifest both individually, but also collectively, within a smaller group, or at the level of the entire community⁴. Therefore, in the case of the dead people, the members of the society had always tried to reflect their relationship with the deceased, in specific manners.

Basic emotions

These are innate "tools" of social communication, are universally valid and they facilitate the adjustment of the human being to its belonging community. As a matter of fact, they are complex conscious feeling states, which are hard to be exahustively defined, because they still have many unknown aspects, despite the fact that they were studied for a long time and by many disciplines, like medicine, physiology,

³ Whissell 2023, 15-16.

⁴ Mitrović 2024, 726.

psychology, anthropology, philosophy, history, art etc. each of them from its own perspective. M. Eysenck considered that the cognitive system was a gateway to the physiological compounds⁵, and therefore, they are strongly interconnected. Anyway, emotions are processes determined by the physiological activity of the brain, as reactions to present, past, or imagined events, expressing themselves in a set of facial expressions, which are easily recognisable, all around the world⁶. They render both bodily reactions and cultural signals, in fact non-verbal means of communication, which could be socially and culturally learned, modelled and interpreted, depending on each specific society. Most frequently, they were considered as initially having an adaptation function and they rely upon three components: a psycho-physiological one, a cognitive and a social one⁷. The number of basic emotions, which are known since the dawn of humanity are still under debate, but at least some of them seem to have been present along the history of humanity, like empathy, fear, anger, disgust, content, joy, guilt, shame⁸. Yet, pairs, or groups of them could get mixed with each other, thus resulting other more complex emotions⁹. The emergence of language had contributed to the distinct encoding of perception, understanding and evaluating the emotional experiences¹⁰. Still, the expression of emotions and their variability is culturally established. In the past few decades, due to the attention provided to the presence of some special burials, the so-called emotive ones, there is a tendency of including archaeology amongst the sciences which study emotions, as much as they could be reconstructed, based upon the funerary discoveries. Still, such a discourse is very difficult, because each of the previously mentioned disciplines had used a different language and definition of the term "emotion" and "feeling" and, therefore, sometimes it is hard for the archaeologists to cross the line and be fully understood by someone who works in another field, when discussing about these facts¹¹.

Personhood of the corpse

The corpse changes the image of a living, vivid person into a „representation of death" in close connection with its decomposition stage. This provides it with a liminal state and situates it between a human being and an object, without being neither one. Before being buried, the treatment applied to the deceased person displays the cultural and social implications of the end of life of that person for the family and community. But, dying and funeral were not final stages, as in many material cultures there were rituals which may involve the reopening of the burials, for reasons like commemoration of the dead, interring of another body, removing parts of the corpse, or skeleton etc. some of the elements belonging to the social interventions from the past being preserved up to the present day. When the skeleton was complete, the personhood of that individual was unaffected and this was connected to the image of the once living person, to her social position and importance

⁵ Strongman 2003, 203.

⁶ There are many studies related to these facial expression of the feelings, one of the most important scientists who studied it being Charles Darwin, in his well known book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (see, for instance, the version published in New York, by D. Appleton and Company, 1897) in which the effect of grief on the face is being detailed (p. 176-195). Others, more recent ones, are also to be mentioned, like: Izard 1971; Ekman, P. 1980, 73–110.

⁷ Tarlow 2000, p. 715.

⁸ *Izard 1977, p. 64.*

⁹ Leff 1977, p. 318.

¹⁰ Tarlow 2000, p. 716.

¹¹ Tarlow 2000, p. 714.

for the community. But, when some parts of the skeleton were removed, the respective personhood was divided and re-embodied in those pieces. Such bones could have been circulated amongst the members of the respective society, with various meanings and powers. Besides that, the position of the dead was not only a narrative about his life, but also a message addressed to the members of the community. In some cases, the respective story deserved to be encoded and passed further, to the descending communities, or ever further, up to the recent times.

Data provided by archaeology

When we discuss about the emotive double burials, the known funerary archaeological complexes can provide us with some interesting data. Of course, each burial had an emotional component but, some of them had a more significant impact and they must have represented important moments in the life of their community. When we refer to this kind of interments, we should consider their social and archaeological meaning, as we will see further:

Socially speaking, such buried persons were in one of the following situations:

- They had strong family bonds and they died together, either by hazard, due to certain circumstances, or sometimes at will, in the case of one of the two persons. The death at will is usually associated with the emotional, or social bonds/requirements existing between the dead person and the one who wants to die with/for her. This is connected with the expression of faithfulness, love, gratitude, veneration, respect, or other warm feelings, but also to a submissive attitude. The aspects related to the death of honour, which might also appear, should be the own decision of the victim. Also, in some situations, this might be an act established by the family, or community, who were involved in the case of such a death or sacrifice, which is socially too intricate, in order to be fully detected and explained in our times.

If we refer to the family bonds, we can describe them as being very complex as well, because we have some specific categories which should be taken into consideration, like:

- A special relationship existing between those two deceased persons. But, when we think about that, we have to see the more complete picture, of biological, psychological, and social compounds. We should bear in mind that, in the past societies, the same like in some present ones, there were real kinships, but also fictive ones, like what we call adoption in recent times for the case of the children¹², the surorities, the "milk brothers/sisters"¹³, the „brothers-in-arms"¹⁴ and other such other optional relationships for the young individuals, as an expression of strong

¹² We could consider those persons as being substitute parents.

¹³ Milk-brothers, or sisters were individuals who, from various reasons, during their early childhood, despite their different parentage, were nursed by a wet nurse, who came, either from the same community, or from another, neighboring one. Thus, from that moment, the respective woman became a kind of „social mother” for her non-biological child (or children). This opened new opportunities for creating "milk kinships", or just alliances based on specific criteria, with the family, or community of the fostered baby.

¹⁴ Brothers-in-arms were men who served together in a violent intra- or intercommunitary conflict, or battle.

connectiveness, which could never be archaeologically documented. These "commitments" were either the result of the own decision of the members, the one of their families, or that of the groups themselves. Of course, all mentioned elements were just a small piece from the social system in which such types of relationships were established and known by everybody. These were also "stored" in the collective memory, because everybody obeyed them. Sometimes, they were considered of great importance and significance and this was the reason why they were also rendered, or reflected in the funerary rituals, when the posture and "gestures" of the deceased had obviously revealed some emotions, as revived moments from the real life of those dead persons. This is how the emotive burials had appeared and they were more important than the usual ones, due to their connection to some feelings, either of the family, of the group, or of the community who lost those individuals. They need a special attention, from archaeological, anthropological and psychological point of view.

Age categories and their distinction

In the entire Bronze Age from Romania, if we refer to the age categories, we could observe the existence of few categories of double interments, which are the following ones:

- Baby and an adult, female, or male;
- Child and an adult, female, or male;
- Two children;
- One child and a *juvenis* individual;
- Two adults both females, both males, or one female and one male;
- One adult and a mature both females, both males, or one female and one male;
- Two matures both females, both males, or one female and one male;
- One adult and an older individual, both females, both males, or one female and one male;
- A mature and an aged person both females, both males, or one female and one male.

Each of these categories had its own meaning and socially it had always told a "narrative" which could hardly be decoded in our days. Such "combined" interments would provide us more information regarding the social status of those individuals. Anyway, we should point out that, until now, no double burial containing the skeletons of two old individuals could be documented during the study-period. It is also important to note that, in the case of the double male and female burials, we could usually infer the equal position of that woman, with that of the man. But, in such situations, the marital status could be also discussed! For instance, when those two individuals were almost of the same age, we could believe that they were sister/brother, but we could not rule out the existence of a marital bond, because in prehistory the marriage was initiated at very young ages. When the age difference would have been more significant, we could imagine that those individuals were

daughter/father, or son/mother but also, the marital condition could not be excluded, as such marriages could have been established for alliances between tribes, in order to assure their better protection, or access to some important resources, if we could only give some relevant motivations. Unfortunately, we have no genetic studies, which could confirm even the assumptions regarding the kinship of those people. Maybe this was not a rule for all Bronze Age societies from Romania but, considering some single woman burials to whom a special care was given¹⁵, we could consider that this could be some kind of a matriarchal reminiscence, which was preserved even further, during the emergence and consolidation of the patriarchal society of the Bronze Age, as these female individuals still maintained their social prestige and were subject to the veneration, or appreciation of the society's members. Their social position was rendered by some funerary elements, like their location in the cemetery, some specific characteristics of the burial, or some distinct grave goods. For the last category, some examples could be Burial no. 85 from Trușești-Țuguieta, which contained the individual skeleton of a woman, in a strongly crouched position, with an inventory consisting of a bowl with four handles, which was unique in that necropolis, as well as Burial no. 95, also belonging to a woman, with another single case of a sack-shaped vessel deposition¹⁶. If we refer to some of the double burials, sometimes we could also observe at least some of the emotional bonds existing between the individuals buried inside them, but we could not establish their kinship! Such interments could provide us with a lot of meanings, based upon the anthropological data, if they were studied from this point of view. What we could surely point out is the prevalence of the double burials of the mother-child type, which are mostly present in the Romanian Bronze Age. Still, even these are disputable in the absence of the DNA studies, because we cannot rule out the situation when the child was taken from another woman and sacrificed to the dead woman from various reasons, or even that the woman could have been killed and buried together with a child of a higher social rank. Of course, another situation could be the combination of a mother with her "adopted" child.

If we think about the multiple burials, they were even more complex and have more complicated interpretations, compared with the double ones. They are usually considered as being the result of catastrophes, epidemics, conflicts and so on. Still, we will not discuss about them here, as they are not part of the topic of the present paper.

¹⁵ Comșa 1998, p. 49.

¹⁶ Crețu, p. 73-74.

Positions of the skeletons in the double burials

There is a large variety of positions in which the skeletons could be documented. In the Monteoru Culture, for instance, when examining the double burials from it, Ion Motzoi-Chicideanu had established few main categories of corpse positions, which are to be found more frequently in this culture (Fig. 1) But, these are to be found in most cultures of the Romanian Bronze Age and these are the following ones:

- **"Aligned"**, with individuals placed one behind the other, on the right, or left side like in Burial no. 10 from Brăești¹⁷, Noua Culture – Fig. 2, or Burial no. 38 from Trușești, also from the Noua Culture – Fig. 3);
- **Opposite one another**, meaning that one individual had his head at the legs of the other (e.g. Burial no. 21 from Balintești-Cioinagi¹⁸ – Fig. 4);
- **Face to face**, one of the individuals being placed on the right side and the other one on its left side, in front of the first. Socially, but also psychologically, this position means a direct contact, sometimes a trusting, or supportive one, but also an expression of emotional connection existing between those two individuals. (Burial no. 9 and 35 in the 4th necropolis from Sărata Monteoru, Monteoru Culture – Fig. 5, 6, Ariceștii-Rahtivani, mound IV, pit 2, a pre-Yamnaya burial¹⁹,). This might be the explanation for the frequent interment in such a position of some individuals which express special bonds, like those of adult-child type;
- **Back to back**, one individual being placed on its right side, while the other one is on its left side, behind the first one. Normally, this is a rejection, or an ignoring position. As an example, we could find this position in Burial no. 31 from Trușești-Țuguieța, Noua Culture (Fig. 7). When we refer to this position, we could imagine that something went wrong between those individuals during their life, or even that the community wanted to be so and, despite the fact that they were connected by specific bonds, these became very fragile, almost broken, when they were buried, thus resulting in the detachment of the individuals from each other.

At times, one of the skeletons, or even both, have their chest rotated and placed down, on the ground.

As already mentioned, we should not ignore an important aspect, which should point out the fact that the position the skeletons in the case of the emotive burials was established by the community in connection with a specific moment from the life of those individuals and which affected either a restrained group of people, or the entire community.

Of course, there are also other atypical, or deviant variants of burials, which should always be considered as being an expression of their social meaning. One

¹⁷ Dascălu 2007, p. 348.

¹⁸ As we will see further, the cultural assignment of this necropolis is still disputed.

¹⁹ Preda-Bălănică 2024, p. 52.

such example could be the double interment from Căndești, with two individuals placed crouched and facing down (Fig. 8). Upon them a large quantity of boulders was placed, afterwards conglomerate sledges were put and above all of them a huge hearth was raised²⁰. This was considered as being a sacrifice which could possibly been applied to individuals who disobeyed the rules of the community, or to prisoners which were killed in order to celebrate the victory after an inter-tribal conflict. By all means, as sacrifices were not frequent in the Monteoru Culture, Marilena Florescu explained that this happened in "very unusual conditions" for the respective community²¹, but Ion Motzoi-Chicideanu had considered this statement as being "completely inappropriate", given the lack of further details²². Other positions, for instance those with embraced individuals, were not found for the moment in the Romanian Bronze Age.

As we could observe, such positions repeated sometimes constantly over larger periods of time, like Neolithic and Bronze Age from Romania, having no relation with the material culture to which the interments had belonged. This means that, even these "usual" double burials were encoded with symbolism and messages which had a strong impact, were largely distributed and were surely known and maintained by the communities, due to their importance and significance. Consequently, this was the reason for their long persistence.

Double burials from inhumation necropolises of the Romanian Bronze Age

It is hard to find all the double inhumation burials discovered in Romania and dated in the Bronze Age, as some of them are not being published yet and this is why in most of the material cultures they were not counted. For instance, an important cemetery of the Early Bronze Age, from Zimnicea I, remained unpublished, concerning its detailed anthropological data, just some of its demographic and less anthropological aspects being mentioned in the specialized literature²³.

Yet, for some material cultures we have information and, therefore, we could mention the following data.

Tumular ochre burials (Pre-Yamnaya, Yamnaya, Katakombnaya, Mnogovalikovaya Cultures)

In the burials assigned to the pre-Yamnaya Culture they had a weight of 21%²⁴, in the Yamnaya Culture they reached 6%²⁵, in the Katakombnaya Culture such a double burial was found just at Sudiți, in Burial no. 6²⁶, in Mnogovalikovaya

²⁰ Unfortunately, the drawing of the "scene" is misleading and seems to depict two individuals facing each other (Florescu 1979, p.126, fig. 31).

²¹ Florescu 1979, p. 125-126.

²² Chicideanu 2011, p. 397.

²³ See, for instance, Cristescu 1997, p. 488; Miu 1996, p. 10-12, 13.

²⁴ Preda-Bălănică 2024, p. 54.

²⁵ Preda-Bălănică 2024, p. 74.

²⁶ Frînculeasa et al. 2017, p. 46 and pl. 74/2; Preda-Bălănică 2024, p. 69.

Culture from Romania there were no double interments²⁷. We should point out that, in many cases, not much could be inferred from the skeletons discovered in these cultures, sometimes due to their poor preservation state, some other times from different other reasons.

Monteoru Culture

There are some necropolises with no double burials, like we find at Pietroasa Mică (Buzău County)²⁸, but of importance for our topic are the two burials from the cemetery no. 4 from Sărata Monteoru, which are emotive burials (no. 9 and no. 35).

Tei Culture

Besides the very small number of discovered burials, there is no double one.

Wietenberg Culture

The cremation funerary rite was predominant. To our knowledge, no double inhumation burials are mentioned in the literature.

Suciu de Sus Culture

The funerary rite of this material culture was cremation, in flat burials²⁹.

Otomani Culture

The cremation funerary rite was mostly present. In this culture there is some information regarding the presence of some double inhumation burials, as we find, from instance, in the necropolis from Pir (Szilagypér), with 31 inhumation burials and one of cremation. Of these, nos. 2-3 and 19-20 are were double ones³⁰.

Another such funerary find was from Tiream-Cânepiște, with two crouched skeletons! To one of them the skull was missing, but there were no details about the position in which they were laid in the pit³¹.

Noua Culture

We could find a rather large number of funerary discoveries, but the double burials, even if rare are more frequently present compared to other material cultures of the Bronze Age. Thus, we could find 2 such interments (Burials no. 31 and 38) at Trușești-Țuguieta from Romania³². If we take into consideration the arrangement of

²⁷ Preda-Bălănică 2024, p. 92. In fact, some double interments were still discussed in 2007 and they were briefly presented by Lidia Dascălu in her volume (2007, p. 31-35).

²⁸ Oancea 1981, p. 186-191.

²⁹ Bader 1972, p. 522. 509-535.

³⁰ Némethi, 1996, p. 31.

³¹ Némethi 1996, p. 33.

³² These two double interments were described accompanied by drawings (p. 566 with text and p. 567 with fig. 389/5 for Burial no. 31 and p. 569 with text and 568 with fig. 390/2) by archaeologist Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița, who discovered the mentioned cemetery.

the skeletons in the pit, we could observe, for instance, that those in Burial no. 31 were in a back to back position, while those in Burial no. 38 were both crouched on their left side, with their chest down³³. The anthropological study had mentioned that 10 double burials were present there, 7 of them containing the skeleton of an adult, or mature female/male individual together with that of a child, while the other 3 were combinations of two children, one adolescent with unknown sex and an adult male, but also a burial with an adult and an old individual, both of them being of male sex³⁴. Some other such burials (Badragii Vechi – 2, Ostrivec - 4, Şeptebani - 1) could be also documented in the range of the mentioned material culture from the Republic of Moldova³⁵. The restrained presence of these cases shows us their importance for the community, but also the possibility of simultaneous occurrence of death for those individuals.

The necropolis from Crasnaleuca (Botoşani County), belonging to the Noua Culture, comprised 42 inhumation burials, with no double ones³⁶.

At Balinteşti-Cioinagi, also a Noua cemetery³⁷, that comprised 38 burials of which 4 were cremations (nos. 35-38) and 34 were inhumation ones (1-34)³⁸, just a single double interment was to be found and labeled as 21a and b/1949. The first skeleton belonged to a little child, who was crouched on his left side and inclined on his back, touching the adult in the region of his knees. The adult was crouched on his right side³⁹.

In the necropolis from Brăeşti⁴⁰, also of the Noua Culture, with 16 burials, of which 14 were inhumations, 1 was a cremation and the last one was a cenotaph, it was also one double interment, Burial no. 10 (Fig. 3), containing the skeletons of an adult and that of an adolescent⁴¹.

The importance of being buried together

We have to bear in mind that, when two individuals were buried together, they must have had some biological, or fictive kinship, a special social connection existing while they lived, or one constructed by the community, after their death! If

³³ Corpus of the finds by Dascălu 2007, p. 92, 265, no. 110, p. 232, no. 364.

³⁴ Dascălu 2007, p. 92, note 167. This situation does not result from the description of burials published in the monograph of the site! We believe that the anthropological study had mentioned, in fact, some burials containing extra bones besides the skeleton.

³⁵ Dascălu 2007, p. 280.

³⁶ Corpus of the finds by Dascălu 2007, p. 252, no. 39, p. 179, no. 93.

³⁷ The mentioned necropolis was assigned by Eugenia Zaharia to the Monteoru Culture (Zaharia 1963), but Ion Motzoi-Chicideanu (2011) considered that this was highly improbable! Therefore, the attribution of this cemetery remains still under debate.

³⁸ Zaharia 1963, p. 139-176; Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, p. 574.

³⁹ Zaharia, 1963, p. 150.

⁴⁰ Corpus of the finds by Dascălu 2007, p. 171, no. 47.

⁴¹ Dascălu 2007, p. 91-92, note 166.

they were relatives and shared a common place, or spent a lot of time together, they might have faced similar events which could result in their death, like a contagious disease, inter- or intracommunity conflicts. This is the reason why, in some situations, it is more easy to determine their cause of death.

Emotive burials

These are a special category of interments which, besides the usual characteristics that they have, include also a great emotional impact, which was strongly exerted upon the respective community from remote times and which was preserved up to the present day. Such a topic, connected to the emotions provoked by dead people in the past was not being studied from a long time. Yet, some steps had been done, due to the emerging of archeology of emotions⁴² and that of cognition⁴³. Still, despite their evident distinction compared to the other burials from a necropolis, determined by their emotional load, we are unable to find and reconstruct the „narrative” behind such burials, because the initial elements that we need to use could not be present anymore in the archaeological record. Such burials, as normal, could be individual, double, or multiple ones.

Examples of double emotive burials and their meanings

Restraining ourselves just to the domains that we are interested in, meaning archaeology and anthropology, we should always keep in mind that specialists in these fields have distinct approaches about the funerary finds and, this is the reason why, sometimes, they reach different conclusions. In fact, this is good, because each of them brings new pieces of evidence and ideas regarding a certain community. For instance, the double interments are used by the archaeologists in order to establish the possible combinations of sex and age of the dead individuals, a fact which is very important in order to infer some social aspects (e.g. social status, hierarchy of the society), which are also connected with the orientation of the deceased, grave goods, complexity of the grave. In this sense, among others, Ion Motzoi-Chicideanu had analyzed the burials of the Monteoru Culture and thus he had concluded that the orientation of the deceased do not strictly reflect the family relations and this aspect might be documented by the double burials containing an adult and a child skeleton. In such interments, position of the individuals is obviously different "which means that distinctions were done by other criteria, less susceptible of being archaeologically documented⁴⁴". But, the archaeological data are also important for anthropologists, who could also establish some "demographic patterns", interconnections existing between the members of the community, or between them and people from outside of it, as well as other social aspects which connected individuals, like the practice of human sacrifices.

⁴² Izard 1977; Renfrew 1982; Tarlow 2000, p. 713-746; Masségliia 2012, p. 131-150.

⁴³ Wynn 2002, p. 389-402.

⁴⁴ Motzoi-Chicideanu 2911, p. 420.

If we refer to the inhumation cemeteries, we could observe that, beginning with the Eneolithic time, the funerals had generally shifted from those more private ones (specific to the family), made near, inside, or between dwellings (which were previously found, during the Early and Middle Neolithic), towards those grouped together, in necropolises. This means that the emotions related to funerals were also somehow different.

For the moment, some of the most interesting interments related to an emotional compound, therefore emotive burials, would be found just in the Monteoru Culture. These were in a very restrained number of cases, probably in connection with the impact that the death of those people had exerted upon the community. For instance, in the necropolis no. 4 in the eponymous site from Sărata Monteoru (Buzău County), there were some interesting burials, which show a strong bond existing between the two deceased found there. Most frequently and generally in the epoch, when double burials were present, they comprised the skeleton of an adult or mature individual and that of a child! It is interesting to note that Burial no. 9 contained the skeletons of an adult male, put in there together with that of a child⁴⁵, in a scenario of great tenderness (Fig. 4), but also Burial no. 35, with an adult and a child skeleton (Fig. 5) which, unfortunately, were not present in the published anthropological study⁴⁶. Under these circumstances, Nona Palincaş⁴⁷ had considered that the mentioned male had assumed the female role. We believe that, in fact, this burial was meant to express the deep connection existing between the male individual and the child and the strong emotional bond that was known by the society and was suggested even by their deposition mode, as this was considered of greatest importance for the collective memory. Anyway, this was an unusual case, as generally other double interments comprised the child and the woman, presumably being his mother, or other female person who was dear to that child⁴⁸. But, even more, it was emphasized the fact that "... In the late period of the Monteoru Culture both gender relationships and family ties underwent dramatic changes. One of the results of these transformations was the higher ranking of women compared to men. And it might have also resulted in situations when men took over women's roles and/or identity or created a third gender, closer to the female sphere, because women were more prestigious"⁴⁹. In our opinion, this might have been more like a continuation of the woman's prestige from the Neolithic time, which was "polished" and sometimes biased in the Bronze Age, thus being provided with a more complex function and appearance, according to the economic enhanced power and spirituality of the newly formed communities. We have to point out that the most frequent situation of child-adult individuals buried together was the one involving an adult or mature woman, even if it might have been also possible to find other situations, like

⁴⁵ During the '50s, just the skull was used for the sex assessment in skeletons.

⁴⁶ Maximilian et alii 1962, p. 12-31.

⁴⁷ Palincaş 2013, p. 50.

⁴⁸ We have to bear in mind that many interments could not, or were not anthropologically studied and, therefore, other similar cases to Burial no. 9 from Sărata Monteoru, might also occur.

⁴⁹ Palincaş 2013, p. 70.

the already mentioned Burial no. 9 from Sărata Monteoru, discovered in the necropolis no. 4.

Yet, the rather frequent presence of female individuals buried together with a child shows us also that motherhood was highly valued by the society and, for this reason, the mentioned double interment had a mnemonic function. Maybe, such interments could remind people about the fact that the respective woman was a good and caring mother, or that she lived special experiences with, or for her child, which deserve to be preserved in the collective memory. They could be also a kind of a memento about the most important role of the woman in the society, as there might have also existed cases, when the so-called mother and child burials were in fact a double interment bringing together a female individual and a little child having no connections with each other. But, as there are no genetic studies in this direction, we hope that future research will clear up such interesting aspects.

Some conclusions

The double burials, as exceptions to the norm of the individual interments of the Romanian Bronze Age, are an important source of information, regarding the social bonds existing in a society. They provide not only some data about the perception of the after life by a community, the real connections existing between people but, even more, in some specific cases, they also render the emotions, or feelings which were present during some events from the life of those people, which exerted an impact upon the community and thus, deserved to be rendered and retained in the social memory even long after their death.

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Anexe

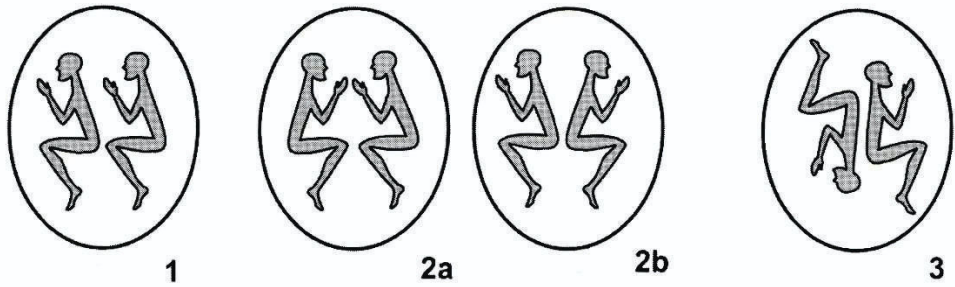


Fig. 1 - Positions of the corpse in the burials of the Monteoru Culture (after Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, vol. II, Pl. 218).

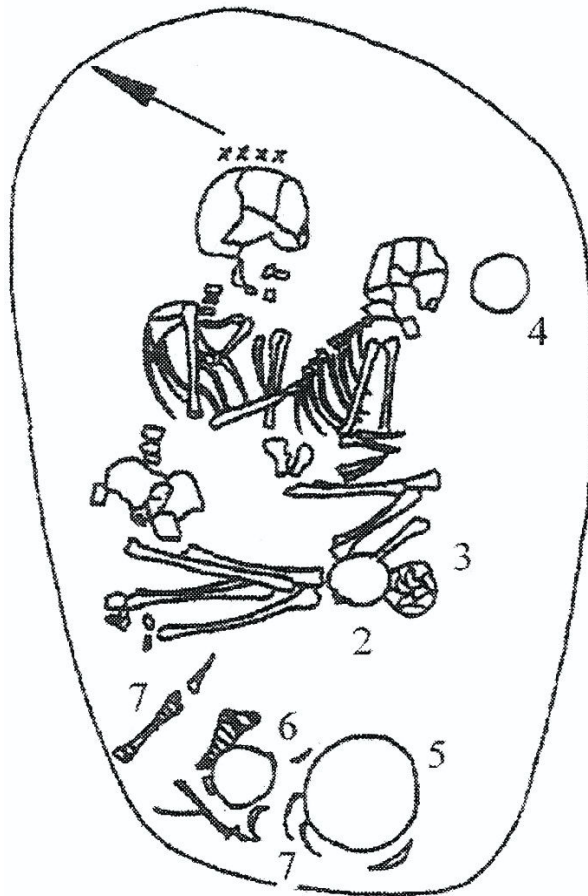


Fig. 2 - Burial no. 10 from Braești (after Dascălu 2007, Pl. 14, p. 348).

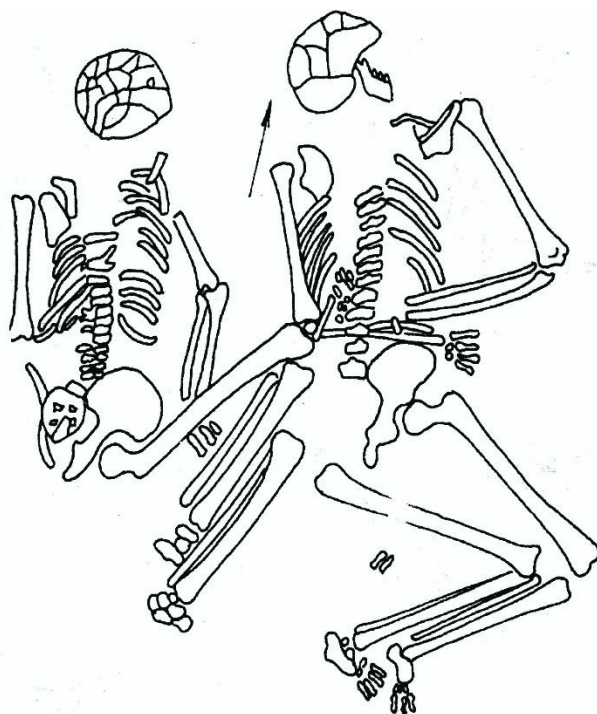


Fig. 3 - Burial no. 38 from Trușești (after Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1999, p. 567, Fig.390-2).

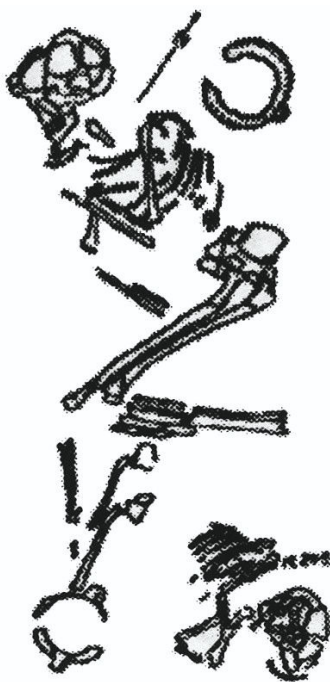


Fig. 4- Burial no. 21 from Balintești-Cioinagi (after Dascălu 2007, p. 136, fig. 8-4.).



Fig. 5- Burial no. 9 from Sărata Monteoru (after L. Bârzu, 1989, p. 55, fig. 6).



Fig. 6 - Burial no. 35 from Sărata Monteoru (after L. Bârzu, 1989, p. 62, fig. 11).

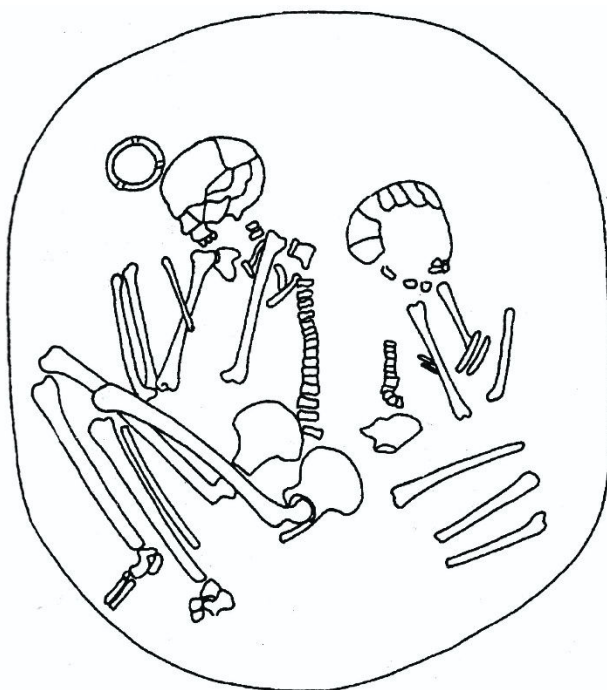


Fig. 7 - M 31 Trușești (after Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1999, p. 567, Fig, 389-5).

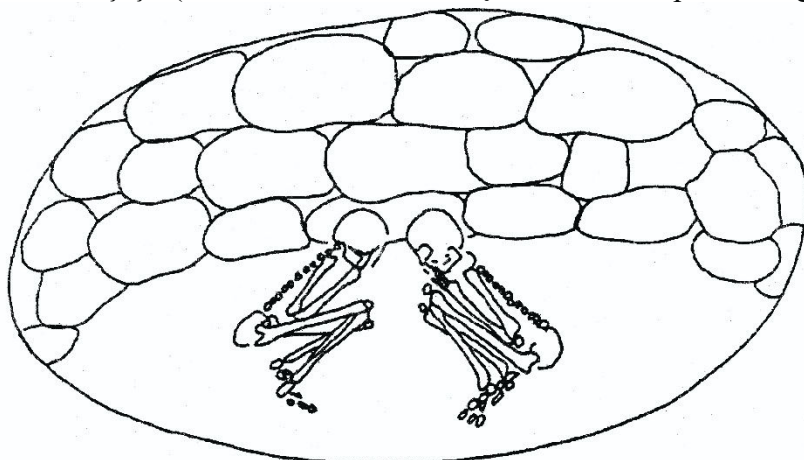


Fig. 8 - The sacrificed individuals from Căndești (after Florescu, 1978).