

DISCUSSIONS AND POLEMICS

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NEIGHBOURS. THE TANATHOLOGY OF THE MIDDLE NEOLITHIC SOCIETIES IN KUYAVIA (CA 4400–3650 BC)

ABSTRACT

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The ways of dealing with the dead and the relationship the living had with death are one of the key elements constituting every culture. The present article is inspired by the terror management theory and it attempts to adapt it to the conditions of the Middle Neolithic Kuyavia. The area was inhabited by societies which fundamentally followed different sepulchral patterns. The author of the paper aims to outline the position of funerary behaviours in the rhythm of cultural transformations of that time.

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Multiculturalism or mosaicism — using a term suggested by Lech Czerniak (1994, 136; 2012) — these forms of existence of agricultural societies in Kuyavia in the Middle Neolithic appears today as an extraordinarily stable element of the cultural landscape of the region. The reasons for such a state may be discerned in both a technological sphere (e.g. ecological specialisation: Koško 1981; Czerniak 1988) and ideological conditions (e.g. political or religious ones: Czerniak 1994; Rzepecki 2004, 2011). This dilemma should be considered basically unsolvable; it calls to mind the paradox of the egg and the chicken — depending on the theoretical orientation both spheres (i.e. technology and ideology) may be assigned a role of “the first cause” of the cultural divergence state. However, the crux of the problem

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is not the mentioned alternative. In fact, it concerns a sphere of identity as well as the well-known conflict in sociology or social psychology the “We” – “They” dichotomy (e.g. Turner 2002; Bokszański 2006). Its instruments are, among others, intragroup conformism and outward stigmatization or even xenophobia (Musiał and Wolniewicz 2010). In the optics of archaeology, behaviours of this type are reconstructed through features of, among others, occupation, pottery or flint production. In the present paper the main centre of gravity of the analyses will rest on observations concerning the sphere of thanatology (range of the term: Thomas 2010) of populations that are main (local) partners of cultural processes, i.e. the Brześć Kujawski culture (further: BKC), the Trichterbecherkultur (further: TRB), and the Globular Amphorae culture (further: GAC). Such a selection of field analyses is obviously not a coincidence and is inspired by beliefs that require brief characteristics at least.

1. EXISTENTIAL FEAR

There is probably no need to convince anybody that the fear of death is a motive deeply rooted in culture, art and philosophy. Its sources should be searched for in universal traits of the human psyche shaped in a process of individual maturation. Suffice to say that as early as the age of 9–10 the awareness of mortality – finiteness of one’s self – is well fixed in a child’s psyche (Mesjasz 2010, 114).

The immanent anchoring of the existential fear in human selfhood, can result in the death of those close to us or people of high rank or status being an exceptionally traumatic moment. This phenomenon is accompanied by emotional or even somatic suffering, a feeling of guilt and a wish for expiation. At the same time, obvious otherness of the dead requires its ritualized exclusion from the society of the living. These activities, in the form of rites of passage recognised by Arnold van Gennep (1909) aim at the symbolic transformation of the dead into the ancestor (Di Nola 1995). Ostentation of funeral practices together with the accompanying lamentation and mourning are not only instruments arranging the chaos caused by death and restituting the appropriate functioning of social structures. This mechanism also enables the neutralization of the feeling of guilt – which is of a special importance for archaic societies – not knowing a term of natural death and often seeking its reasons in operation of external factors (i.a. other people; Lévy-Bruhl 1918; Eliade 1957; Di Nola 1995). It is also worth adding that these were representatives of these groups who were especially intensively open to the exposition of their own self impermanence. This obviously results from the prevailing high mortality rate among them (e.g. Galor and Moav 2007; data for BKC: Lorkiewicz 2012). Figuratively speaking – societies described in this study experienced not only the permanent presence of death, but they also could not correctly identify its reasons. It is not difficult to imagine that this generated a high level of stress and even “tangibility” of the existential fear.

The fear of death was and still is explored by successive generations of psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, and philosophers. In the submitted work the author would like

to draw attention to two, quite convergent viewpoints which originated from slightly different sources of inspiration.

Even due to the chronology, it is worth starting with a paper by Zygmunt Bauman (1992) *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies*. Following the path set by the works of Sigmund Freud, the cited author identifies the fear of death with the essence of humanity; we are humans because we are aware of evanescence of our existence. Unfortunately, nature has not provided us with the mechanisms to protect ourselves against the traumatic perception of this observation which makes grounds for an action of culture. It seems that Schopenhauer's, double-quoted, declaration that cultures (religious and philosophical systems) are first of all "antidotes to certainty of death" is especially close to Bauman's views (Bauman 1992, 21). Culture — as Bauman claims — not only protects against the existential fear but also provides a promise of immortality. It allows extension — actualization of the present into the future, even thorough the symbolic solidification of our own existence. The effect of culture is so strong that it brings not only the justification of annihilation of "the unfamiliar" but also, by the extremely altruistic behaviours (self-sacrifice), overcoming an instinct of the maintenance of one's own self-Ego.

The other concept discussed here has its origin in research of American social psychologists. In the 1990s Jeff Greenberg, Tom Pyszczynski and Sheldon Solomon published a number of works, in which they presented the so-called *terror* management theory (e.g. Pyszczynski *et al.* 1997; good reviews: Łukaszewski and Boguszewska 2008; Łukaszewski 2010). Likewise in Bauman's work, its essential element is the conviction that the state of fear caused by the confrontation with death (or its symbolic representation) requires the alleviation offered by culture. The latter appears as a buffering mechanism consisting of the philosophy of life and self-esteem. From a perspective of anthropological interests what stands out as especially inspiring is the characteristics attributable to the worldview buffer. As it determines a complex of behaviours and is a tool for description, explanation and the valuation of reality.

What is interesting is the results of the conducted experiments. They reveal that in situations of awaking the existential fear, people tend to eagerly affirm their own cultural norms, that is their conformist reactions with the simultaneous exposition of disapproval of "the strangers". It allows, among others, to meaningful mitigate their own fear. What is important, is this mechanism seems to operate inversely, undermining the components of one's own worldview arousing the fear of death (Łukaszewski 2010).

The above views locate human relations towards death in the area of the very core of culture and the identity of the human and the community. What is more, this relationship becomes the specific — only significant — axis of history (Bauman 1992). It was well conveyed by Michel Vovelle (1983) and introduced to his monumental and fascinating work *La Mort et l'Occident de 1300 à nos jours*; he tells the reader to look them self in the mirror and search for prognostication of their end. At the same time, however, he suggests "to reverse the situation and read this exchange of glances backwards; starting from death

and mankind`s attitude towards death recover the human, catch his reaction to this transition” (Vovelle 1983: 25). This interpretation also well illustrates the bases of archaeological investigations on thanatology of ancient cultures (Minta-Tworzowska 2009; Józefów-Czerwińska 2012).

2. ON DEATH — KUYAVIA IN THE MIDDLE NEOLITHIC

It is worth beginning with a certain stipulation. The purpose of this article is not to reconstruct the theology or eschatology of the Neolithic societies system but to attempt a hermeneutic comprehension of the behaviours that are hidden behind the funeral *praxis*. As I have proved above it cumulates the values of the world of the living.

Funeral rites of the BKC population in the first centuries of the Middle Neolithic (ca 4400–4000 BC) were characterized in a number of works of analytic and synthetic character (e.g. Jażdżewski 1938; Gabałówna 1966; Czerniak 1980; Grygiel 1986, 2008). Due to their scale, terrain and analytical researches concentrated in the area of Brześć Kujawski and Osłonki conducted by Konrad Jażdżewski, Lidia Gabałówna and Ryszard Grygiel are of special importance. The investigations constitute the grounds for the presented analyses below.

It should be started with the observation that grave features that appear in the archaeological optics and narration are only an inconsiderable part of past funeral behaviours. To say nothing of the meaning of “cultural sieve” (connected e.g. with rites not resulting in the recording in the form of the archaeological source) what is of primary importance is the post-depositional processes — irreversibly deforming the original structure of graves and cemeteries (cf. Schiffer 1987; Sommer 1991). This of course also applies to the cited sites from the area of Brześć Kujawski and Osłonki. What needs to be emphasised is the significance of Grygiel`s observations (2008: 310) about the contemporarily very shallow occurrence of graves — only those that had originally deep cuts were recognized. Significant distortions have their sources also in the multiplicity of the BKC sites occupation. The subsequent phases of development destroyed and blurred the connections between the graves and the houses, and economic features. All this led to the many diagnoses formulated by Grygiel (2008), which concern the structure, arrangement and relationships between the cemeteries and other groups of features being of intuitive character, and they were also burdened with clearly visible “Pompeii premise”. A key importance should be ascribed to the observations made by the cited author in the zones that were relatively simple as regards to the stratigraphy — houses 56 and 56a in Brześć Kujawski 4, houses 41 and 42 in Brześć Kujawski 3 and Konary 1a (Grygiel 1986, 2008).

In the light of the cited studies the space of the BKC settlements had a honeycomb structure, cells of which were occupied by multigenerational families. The central and dominating element in the inner picture of individual complexes space were long houses,

whereas yards — areas of economic activities — also marked the limits of the cemeteries. At the same time, however, the relationship between both spheres, i.e. the world of the living (houses, economic features) and the world of the dead (graves) was strikingly non-equivalent. The supremacy of the houses manifests itself the fullest thorough the systematic destruction of older generations of graves by buildings. It is not excluded that part of the dead were deposited along the course line of the house walls (Brześć Kujawski 4, house 44 and grave LVI or house 2 and grave XIII; Gabałówna 1966: 67; Grygiel 2008, 314); even in the literal sense some graves were therefore located in the shade of existing buildings (e.g. a group of graves to the east of house 6 in Brześć Kujawski 4).

The dominant position of the houses resulted not only from their utilitarian functions. Symbolism, and actually monumentalism of long houses is a problem that has long been present in literature (cf. Hodder 1984; 1990; 1999; Sherratt 1990; Czerniak 1994). In this interpretation they manifested the strength and stability of the Neolithic groups. However, their role was not limited to the impact of “strangers”. There were also means for negotiations and establishing and legitimizing the status of particular family groups within the village society. A role of similar means of expression was played by grave features. The social sense of funeral ceremonies therefore showed contents bearing a group, i.e. family, self-affirmation. In this context, even the burying of the dead in the yards was an exclusive act — allowing the univocal “appropriation” of the memory of the dead by their family.

An obvious culminating point of funeral rites was the deposition of the dead accompanied by the presentation of some possible equipment. Seemingly, these acts were dominated by rigorism of a tradition of sexual differentiation in the body arrangement and equipment (Jażdżewski 1938; Gabałówna 1966; Czerniak 1980; Grygiel 1986; 2008). According to the norms (Fig. 1.1), men were laid on the right side, and their graves contain ornaments and objects to which a role of tools or weapons are ascribed (stone or antler axes in the shape of the letter T, bone “stiletto” blades). On the margins, it needs to be added that the furnishing of weapons is treated as a determinant associated with warriors (Grygiel 2008). However, in the case of the BKC societies it is just families that were the main point of reference for the identification of positioning the dead and they finally decided to bury the dead within their own yards.

On the other hand, women (Fig. 1.2) were laid on the left side, and part of them were wearing ceremonial dresses that contained diadems, arm ornaments (armlets), necklaces and hip belts (cf. Jażdżewski 1938; Gabałówna 1966; Czerniak 1980; Grygiel 1986; 2008).

The above mentioned rigorism, at the same time, did not exclude manipulation of the deceased or elements of their equipment. Their aim was to expose the objects of prestige so that they were well visible for the observers gathered above the grave pit. This concerns male, as well as female and child graves. Let us comment on this using a few examples.

Probably the richest male burial from the site of Brześć Kujawski 4 was grave XXXIV (fig. 2.1; Jażdżewski 1938: 27–28; Grygiel 2008: 113). The buried individual was laid on his back, with contracted legs. The aim of this procedure was the appropriate exposition of

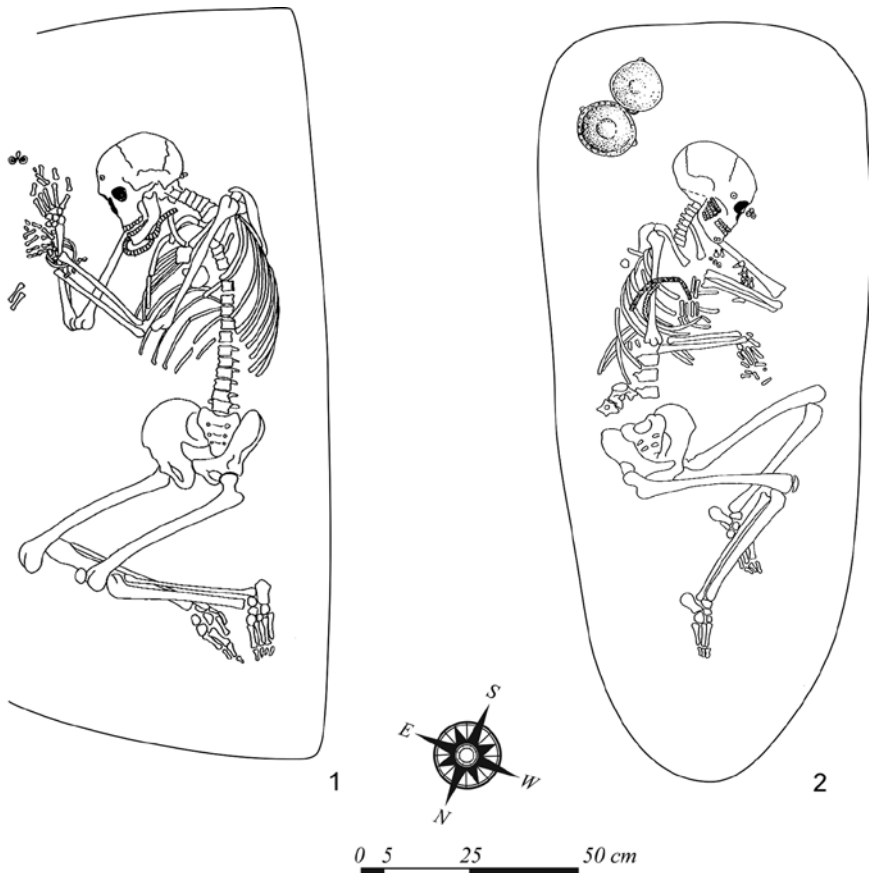


Fig. 1. Graves of the Brześć Kujawski culture. Key: 1 — Brześć Kujawski 4, grave XXI (male); 2 — Brześć Kujawski 4, grave XXV (female). According to Grygiel 2008

a necklace, the main element of which was a shield of the Stollhoff type. What is more, the dead “in a heroic pose” was holding the helve of a T-shaped axe with both hands. A similar observation may be formulated with reference to grave LXXXIV from Osłonki 1 (Grygiel 2008: 985); also in this case the location of the dead on his back was to accentuate a position connected with holding the weapon (Fig. 2: 2). The will to present the equipment also decided on the location of its particular elements which were placed around the body; at the same time, there is no connection with the original dress arrangement or the way the object was used. This is visible in the deposition of copper objects (a binoculars-shaped pendant — Brześć Kujawski, grave XXI), blades (antler — Brześć Kujawski, grave XVII), axes (made of antler, T-shaped: Brześć Kujawski, grave XXXIII, grave XXXIX; stone axe: Osłonki 1, grave LXXV or axes (Osłonki 1, grave LXXXIV).

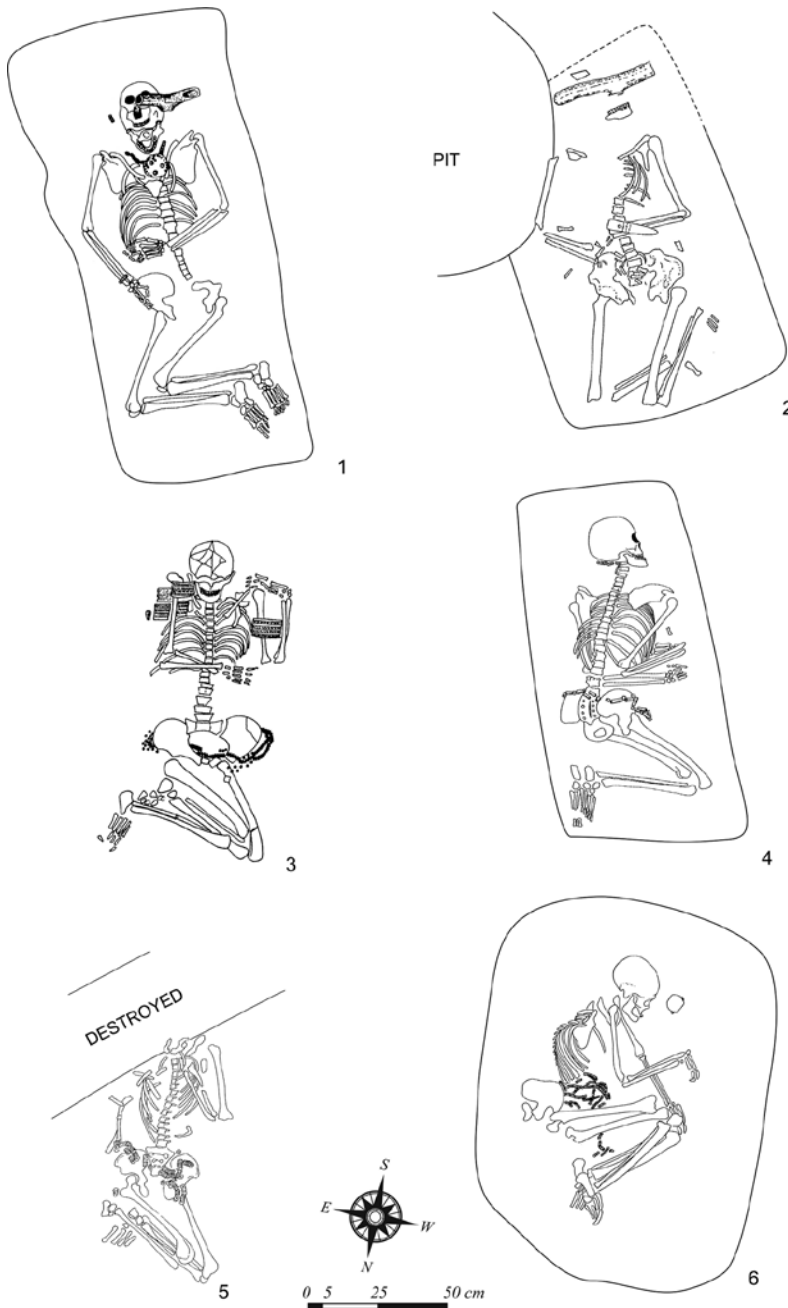


Fig. 2. Graves of the Brześć Kujawski culture. Key: 1 — Brześć Kujawski 4, grave XXXIV (male); 2 — Ośłonki 1, grave LXXXIV (male); 3 — Ośłonki 1, grave XV (female); 4 — Brześć Kujawski 4, grave LXXIII (female). According to Grygiel 1986, 2008

Similar conclusions can be formulated in reference to female burials. If it served an exposition of the equipment, the dead were laid on their backs (e.g. Brześć Kujawski, grave LXXIX; Fig. 2:3) or on their abdomens (e.g. Brześć Kujawski 4, grave XXII; Fig. 2:4). Sometimes slight manipulations with a position of the pelvis or the equipment itself were made. An example of the former situation is known from grave XV in Osłonki (Fig. 2:5), where it enabled the presentation of a hip belt made of shell beads. Whereas, in grave XVII at this site the hip belt was so manipulated to be covered with the body as little as possible (Fig. 2: 6). At times, specially impressive objects were also deposited around the body. In such a position a rich necklace of copper plates in the shape of a trapeze and fragments of a diadem were discovered in, among others, grave LIV from Osłonki 1 (Grygiel 2008).

As far as child burials are concerned, what is specially interesting is a fact of their equipping, while the rules known from burials of adult individuals seem to be maintained. Thus, in boys' graves elements of armament are sometimes found (daggers: Osłonki 1, grave XI), whereas in girls' graves hip belts occur (Osłonki 1, grave LXV). This clearly indicates that the way of equipping a child's bodies was a derivative of the family status. For obvious reasons it could not depend on personal prestige associated with age, character traits and skills. The same observations can be applied to exceptionally well-equipped burials of individuals at *juvenis* age (e.g. female burials from Osłonki 1, graves XIII and LXX; Grygiel 2008, 528).

To end this part of the argument, it is worth formulating a certain diagnosis. In the BKC (in a period *ca* 4400–4000 BC) sepulchral standards were subordinated to intra-village "game", in which prestige of particular family groups was put up to auction. In such a perspective, the deposition of the body and the filling of the grave were not only climactic but were rather a limitative point of the funeral ceremony. The evident interest in the dead did not transpose into the presence of behaviours indicating a will to maintain the memory of them. It is a period when the relation towards the dead lost its ambivalence and ceased to be a source of anxiety for the living, and the dead themselves enriched the world of the ancestors. What is more, in the BKC "too much importance was not attached to the preservation of the skeleton" (Gabalówna 1966, 68), a visible sign of the, mentioned above, ruthless destruction of graves by successive generations of houses or economic features. Let us add that the data recording different patterns of behaviour are exceptions (c.f. Grygiel 2008, 1015). Neither cemeteries nor graves were autonomous zones of *sacrum*. Their uniqueness ended when the household (house) was abandoned.

In Kuyavia, simultaneously with the BKC societies the TRB occupation also functioned (e.g. Czerniak and Koško 1993; Czerniak 1994; Rzepecki 2004; cf. Nowak 2009). Leaving the traits of funeral ritual aside, both populations differed in almost every aspect of behaviour: the location rules for settlements and exploited areas (BKC: mollic gleysols; TRB: podzols), forms of houses (BKC: long houses; TRB: smaller houses with a sub-rectangular plan), differences in pottery, ornaments and weapon making traditions (cf. Rzepecki 2004). This motivates the construction of models, in which the BKC and TRB societies

almost led mutually isolated existences (Czerniak 1994). However, it cannot be forgotten that ultimately it was the TRB that proved to be the more durable element of the multicultural mosaic of Kuyavia. It was just a reaction to the TRB “offer”, which is going to be exposed further, structuring the picture of the epoch. The reasons for this state of durability can be seen in the “invention” of podzolic soil agriculture (Czerniak 1988) — which is much more flexible and better adapted to the ecological conditions of the Lowlands. It seems, however, that in this case issues connected with megalithism, which manifested themselves in funeral ceremonial standards were of crucial importance (Rzepecki 2011).

A keyword in the comparative analyses of funeral norms of the BKC and TRB societies is inversion. Funeral traditions of both populations can be presented as a series of dichotomies (differently: Kukawka 1997, 137). As far as the TRB societies are concerned, it was implied by both genetic factors, i.e. adaptation of western European norms connected with megalithism, and local needs to build and emphasize their own individuality in relation to the BKC groups (Rzepecki 2004; 2006; 2011). These differences, which for a moment I will try to expose, apply to nearly every aspect of funeral behaviours.

An essential element of the TRB rituals is a rigorous isolation of settlements and cemeteries. Although the latter were sometimes located on earlier occupied areas (e.g. Sarnowo 1, Łącko 6, Inowrocław 95; e.g.: Chmielewski 1952; Wiklak 1990; Czerniak and Koško 1993; Domańska and Rzepecki 2004; Domańska 2006), the aim of such practices was to accentuate connections with the past. Traces of activities of the ancestors sacralised the space and determined a domain of autonomic spheres, in which cemeteries became manifestations of archetypic villages, in a sense, the ones from the nether world.

Traits that need to be emphasized are also: a lack of differentiation in body position (both women and men were laid on their backs), a scantiness of equipment and a relatively frequent use of raw stone material in constructing grave pits (Fig. 3). What gives the impression of a deliberate deindividuation of the burials is the scarcity of grave goods as well as the homogeneity of the positioning of the dead. The only regular evidence that contradicts this conclusion is the existence of monumental tombs (Fig. 4). The characteristic of the latter is the fact that they form vast necropoles of very complicated inner structures where Niedźwiedź (further: NTT), Sarnowo and Łącko type tombs co-exist with flat graves and structures known as cult graves. I omit the detailed characteristics of these structures, which were exposed in literature for many times (e.g.: Chmielewski 1952; Midgley 1985; Jankowska 1999; 2009/2010; Rzepecki 2004, 124–131; 2011). However, a few questions of essential character need to be emphasised.

In construction to the model describing the development of the tomb building tradition among the TRB societies (Rzepecki 2011, 218) the essential role was played by an opinion according to which the oldest type of megalithic tombs was represented by the NTT. This form is recognized as an important component of the western European cultural inspiration package intensively adapted at the beginning of the TRB. In its deepest — original — semantic layer, the NTT in a mimetic way transformed the idea of the house,

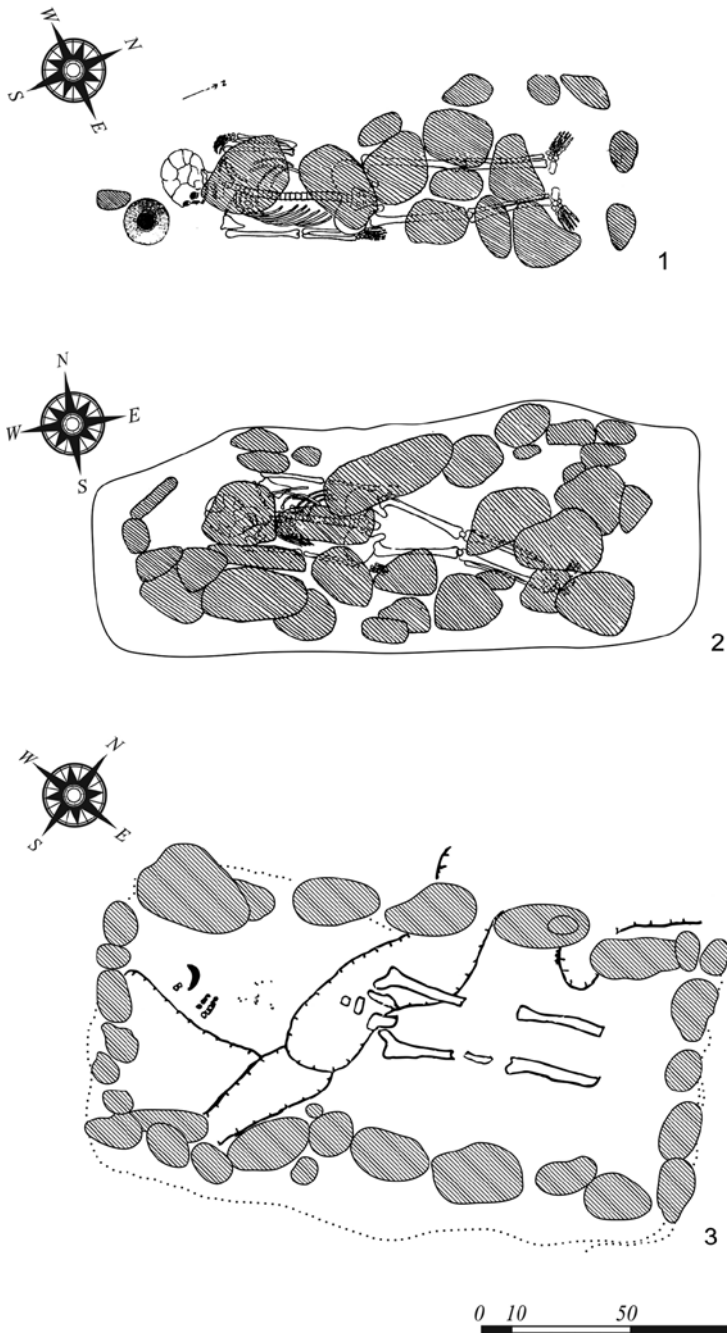


Fig. 3. Graves of the TRB culture. Key: 1 — Stary Brześć Kolonia 1, grave I; 2 — Stary Brześć Kolonia, grave IV; Sarnowo 1, tomb 3, grave 1. According to Jajdzewski 1936; Chmielewski 1952

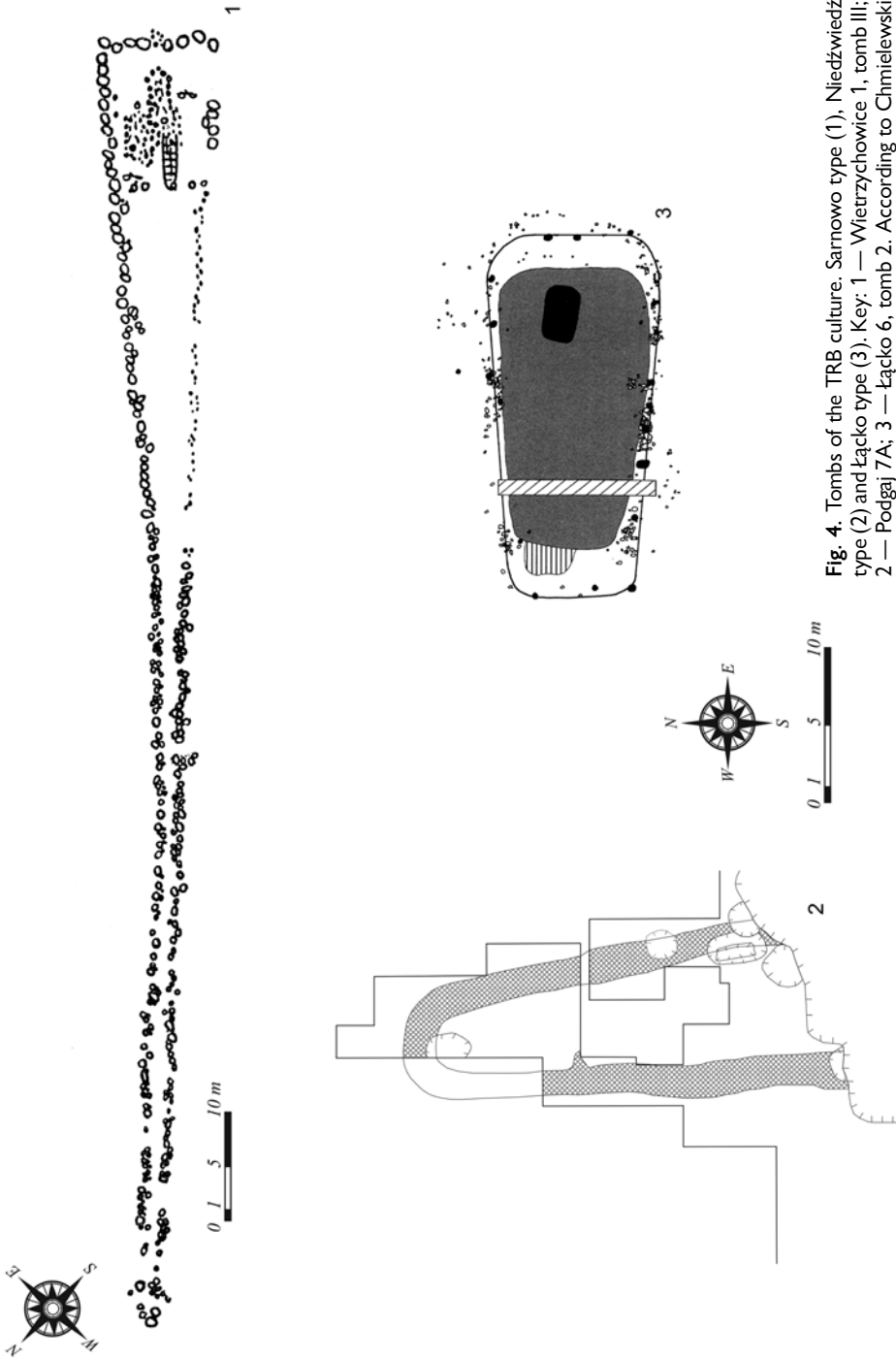


Fig. 4. Tombs of the TRB culture. Sarmowo type (1), Niedźwiedź type (2) and Łącko type (3). Key: 1 — Wietrzychowice 1, tomb III; 2 — Podgaj 7A; 3 — Łącko 6, tomb 2. According to Chmielewski 1952; Czerniak, Koško 1993; Domańska 2006

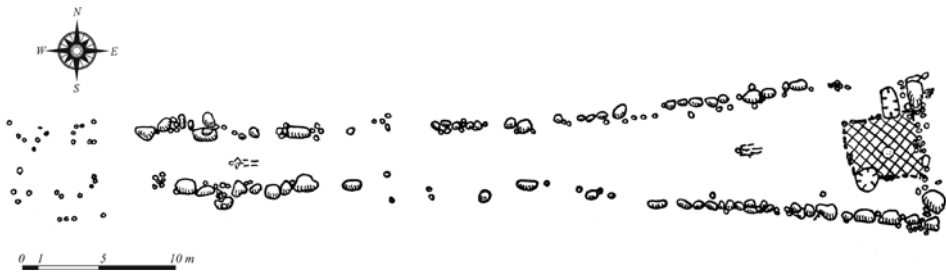


Fig. 5. Tomb and structure of the TRB culture. Gaj 1, tomb 1. According to Chmielewski 1952

precisely its ruins, into a funeral ceremonial sphere (Bradley 1998; Midgley 2005; Rzepecki 2011). In the case of Kuyavia these contents were actualized and went well down the path of the local cultural situation; on the one hand they considered the exceptional status of the BKC houses, whereas on the other hand they gave eschatological contents to their designates and emphatically accentuated the diversity of the TRB. In a slightly later period (since ca 4200 BC) this idea became autonomized. In a formal aspect this is testified by the use of stones and earthen mounds (tombs of Sarnowo and Łącko types). A good example of such a situation is for instance tomb 8 from Sarnowo (Wiklak 1980) which in its oldest phase was of a NTT form (Rzepecki 2014a), and only later was re-arranged. The stones from the embankment provided the form for the monumental tomb “for eternal time” (cf. Veit 1999; Woźny 2014).

An absolutely essential characteristic of the sepulchral *praxis* of the TRB societies was stretching this sphere of behaviour over time — the funeral lost its limitative character. Many a time, these activities required arranging the area of the former settlement (e.g. Łącko 6, tomb 2), construction of a “sanctuary” over the grave (Łącko 6, tomb 2; Sarnowo 1, tomb 9; Wiklak 1975; 1990; Domańska and Rzepecki 2004; Domańska 2006), its destruction (burning) and building a mound or erecting a palisade. In the meantime also ritual feasts were organized, traces of which remained in the form of hearths (e.g. Leśniczówka 1; Jażdżewski 1936, 172–182; Chmielewski 1952, 73–80). What is important, even erecting a mound did not end the ritual activities. Part of the “sanctuaries” were located at the foundation of the tomb (Fig. 5) and this enabled contact with its interior, probably in order to deposit offerings (e.g. Gaj 1; Chmielewski 1952, 86–92). This provides clear evidence for the existence of rituals, the contents of which was to establish contact with the ancestors.

Attention should also be paid to the fact that both erecting the tombs and their conservation as well as the functioning of the necropolis itself needed a collective effort — exceeding the capabilities of individual families. Family organisms that integrated particular family groups, were grounded on a strong position of patriarchs who occupied the central positions among the TRB megalithic burials. The exceptions include an observation concerning a female burial in tomb 9 in Sarnowo 1 (Wiklak 1975; Rzepecki 2004, 139–140).

Data from Wilkostowo 23/24 also indicate that family leaders controlled the flow of food (grain) and imported objects (flint products or raw materials; Rzepecki 2014, 517). Perhaps the leaders were also responsible for co-ordinating the functioning of the necropolis. In this context, what needs to be emphasised is the limitations imposed by the space of some structures. A small number of people could enter at both the cult structures and, at least, part of the NTT at a time. This clearly indicates an intention to limit the access to them, and, thus – the exceptional status of individuals who secured the “direct” contact with the world of the ancestors and the mysterious course of rituals. According to these hypothetical relationships, patriarchs of particular families were not only the main media of transcendent relations but also depositaries of the collective memory. This position required – using the term of Bauman – individual immortalisation in the form of tombs acted as “vehicles” of the social stratification.

Before taking up the next subject it is worth concluding with a few words. The period *ca* 4400–4000 BC was connected with scrupulous, inversive differentiation of funeral standards among the neighbourly agricultural populations, i.e. BKC and TRB. The ceremonies of the BKC societies included rituals which suggested a sphere of family rivalry where graves were located within their yards and the way of equipping the dead was subordinated. However, these activities were relatively short-lived, and an interest in the graves inevitably ended with the final stage of building individual households.

On the other hand, the high degree of rituals and dramaturgy of ceremonial behaviours connected with death was characteristic of the TRB. They comprised “bringing the dead body out” of the settlement area, entombment, and sometimes also feasts at the cemeteries and the deposition of offerings on the area of “sanctuaries”. Although the ancestors and their mythical villages were irrevocably excluded from the world of the living, however, at the same time there was an opportunity and necessity to maintain a contact with them. What is important, is that the TRB funeral ceremony integrated with particular family groups, and the dead were grouped together in cemeteries. The deindividualisation of flat graves – identified with the burial place of the majority of TRB society members – indicates a low level of particular families competitiveness. Even the building of spectacular tombs may be understood as an integration act that imposed an intragroup (ancestral) cooperation. Its sense was consolidation and maintaining the memory of notable ancestors. A position of the patriarchs predestined them not only to leadership in the world of the living but it also included mediation with the ancestors’ world, whereas their *post-mortem* position was legitimized by the “control” over the tombs.

Treating rituals as a kind of “dramatic presentation” (Huizinga 1939), it is worth noticing the differences in the applied means of expression and their expressive values. The BKC societies were interested, first of all, in the field of requisites (grave equipment). However, their influence was ephemeral; together with burying the bodies they disappeared from the area of personal experience of the observers. On the other hand, the activeness of the TRB populations was directed towards building monumental scenography

(tombs). Its durability not only materialised the notions of ancestors but probably also facilitated their mythologisation.

For the period 4400–4000 BC there are no symptoms of flow and adaptation of norms and behaviours between the BKC and TRB societies. Both populations separated the norms of landscape valorisation, and, in economic senses were uncompetitive to each other. It may be thought that in mutual attitudes xenophobia and stigmatisation of “strangers” dominated.

In the following centuries of the Middle Neolithic (*ca* 4000–3650 BC) the BKC societies continued older traditions of region occupation. This was manifested even in black soil exploitation or sustaining building norms and yard organisation. This apparent conservatism is however disturbed by a significant share of changes in the practice of depositing the dead.

Part of these traits directly refer to the TRB, whereas the other forecast the GAC norms. What is symptomatic is a fact that in the BKC environments the rebuilding of eschatological ideas outpaced, and probably also accelerated the reception of other elements of the symbolic sphere and practice of everyday life of the TRB. This perspective locates the basic field of confrontation (clash of civilizations; Huntington 1996; cf. Rzepecki 2011) not in economic strategies but in substantially different visions of death, posthumous lot and relations to the ancestors.

As early as while studying the cemetery at Brześć Kujawski 4, Gabałówna (1966, 76–79) recognized the fundamental traits of the “late” ritual. They include: laying the dead in a straight position on their back (e.g. Brześć Kujawski, grave XXXV) or in a extremely contracted position (e.g. Brześć Kujawski, grave LII), the use of stones to build grave pits (e.g. Brześć Kujawski, grave XI), placing the burials in refuse and clay pits and a general lack of grave equipment (Fig. 6). Similar conclusions were formulated in the works by Czerniak (1980) and Grygiel (2008), Who also advocates a list should be completed, recording the occurrence of graves where the dead where laid with their face to the ground (Brześć Kujawski 4, grave LX, LXXI), or where there is a changed orientation of the head (e.g. Brześć Kujawski 4, grave LXXI). This is accompanied by abandoning traditions of family cemeteries adjacent to the house and the appearance of sepulchral features or their groups ignoring the building elements (e.g. Osłonki 1, graves situated outside the moat); Grygiel 2008).

There arises another problem, whether and how much a custom of depositing the dead within houses was connected with the TRB influences (cf. Rzepecki 2011; 2009). In Osłonki 1 observations of this sort were made for instance in respect of grave LX; a male buried in it was deposited within a cellar of house 13 (Grygiel 2008, 546; cf. Gabałówna 1966, 67). If a thesis that this custom was inspired by the TRB influence would be accepted, its genesis should be connected with the rhetoric values of the NTT. Their domogenic mimetism in such an interpretation would also be important for the BKC societies. The NTT would be a responsible model for start-up associations (house — tomb) resulting in the “megalithisation” of these societies.

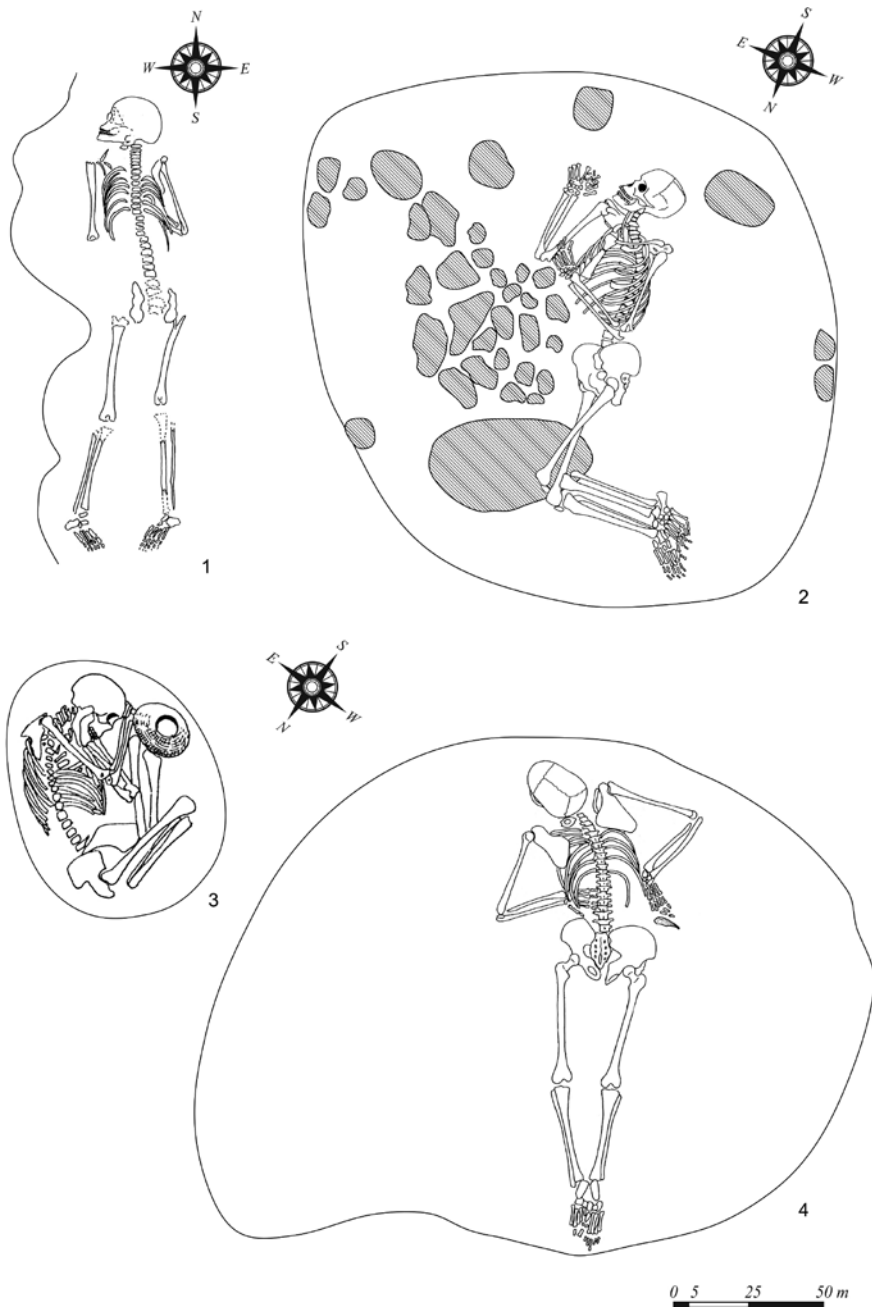


Fig. 6. Graves of the Brześć Kujawski culture. Key: 1 — Brześć Kujawski 3, grave LXIV; 2 — Brześć Kujawski 4, grave XXXVI; 3 — Brześć Kujawski 4, grave LII; 4 — Brześć Kujawski 4, grave XVI. According to Jążdżewski 1938; Gabałówna 1966; Grygiel 2008

It should be clearly emphasised that the inclusion of the TRB sepulchral norms must have been linked – which I argued in the first part of the paper – with radical rebuilds of the hitherto cultural buffer of the Danubian groups. On behavioural grounds this led to transgressive attitudes being accepted for – going beyond the norms of the previous customs (Kozielecki 2002). As a result, the hitherto identity barriers were negated as well as the intercultural distance was weakened, and the “strangers” (here: TRB) became carriers of an attractive cultural content. The response to this phenomenon determined different trajectories of acculturation strategies.

The first of them consisted in complete rejection of traditional values and behaviours, and the “melting” of this part of the BKC groups among the TRB population was the end of this process. For obvious reasons such a model is difficult to be archaeologically identified. It however, seems that an indicator of “beakerisation” of certain BKC environments is for instance a selective adaptation of pottery making norms among the TRB societies (engraved and engraved-impressed ornamentation on bellies) and a continuation of maintaining ties (“Silesian” orientation) This diagnosis concerns first of all the TRB-s3 assemblages (e.g. Czerniak 1994; Rzepecki 2004). At the same time, norms of topophilia and topophobia of the landscape were corrected (cf. Domańska *et al.* 2013; Rzepecki 2013), and the TRB societies presence became to be visible within hitherto unexcavated black soils of the Kuyavian Plain (e.g. Łojewo 35; Szmyt 1992).

As far as funeral behaviours are regarded, the final acculturation processes can probably be identified in reference to grave no. 3 from Pikutkowo 6 (Grygiel 1986, 318). Its cultural status is clearly ambivalent. It was in fact discovered on a well-known site of the TRB culture (Niesiołowska 1967), and the skeleton was laid in a supine position (Fig. 7), but at the same time, at a BKC settlement, located in the immediate vicinity (Pikutkowo 6a; Grygiel 2008, 335), the equipment of a dead female included undoubtedly Danubian strings of shell beads. Moreover, the date from this grave (GnN-13354: 4950±60 BP, calibrated: 3950–3630 BC with probability 95.4%) can be potentially ascribed to both the BKC and the TRB. It should be clearly emphasised that if the described burial had been discovered at the

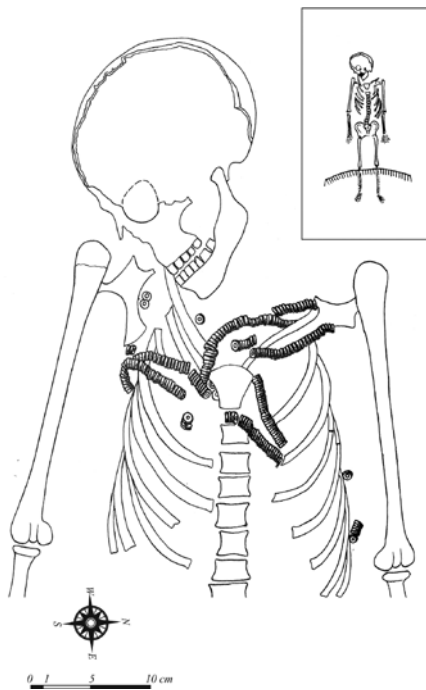


Fig. 7. Grave of the TRB culture (?) from Pikutkowo 6. According to Grygiel 1986

site of Brześć Kujawski 4 it would have been considered a late BKC burial. This example clearly shows the typical straight arrangement of the TRB body, and how information of the universal traits were gained at that time.

Another strategy of reaction to the increasing adaptation of the TRB traits was the revitalisation of the BKC cultural norms. The aim of the process was to create a “more satisfactory culture” (Nowicka 1972, 23), and its instruments were, among others, nativistic attitudes (aiming for renewal and preservation of traditional values), as well as vitalistic ones (aimed at adaptation of especially desired TRB traits). These processes ended in the GAC culture genesis.

The sources for the recognition of the earliest stage of this culture are not very numerous (Czerniak 1990; Szmyt 1996). As it is however known, that assemblages of the GAC phase I show a considerable share of both BKC (forms and technology of vessel production, norms of black soils exploitation, a form of houses) and TRB culture traditions. In the latter case, what should be especially emphasised is a fact that the “beaker” patterns were assimilated on the level of everyday symbolic behaviours — connected with manners of vessel ornamentation. Their significance is best testified by a fact that they entered the repertoire of the GAC culture pottery making (a motif of pillars underlined by a zigzag).

In the funeral ceremonial sphere a forecast of the GAC culture genesis can be noticed as early as in the BKC sources. What should be mentioned in this context is animal burials (including those of cows — Osłonki 1, clay-pit 6; Grygiel 2008, 539) and the evidence of behaviours indicating the dismembering of the dead body (Brześć Kujawski 4, grave L, Osłonki 1, grave XXX; Gabałówna 1966, 76; Grygiel 2008, 758). In the latter case the dead had his head and feet together with their shins cut off, and deposited next to the body (Fig. 8). The skull was also intentionally destroyed, and, what should be specially emphasised is the presence of incisions near the crown and occiput. The complexity of the interventions “made an impression of difficult to explain ceremonial practices at this burial” (Grygiel

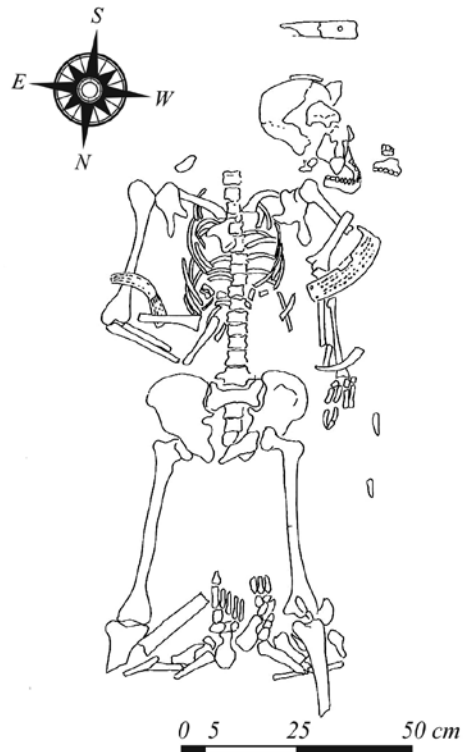


Fig. 8. Grave of the Brześć Kujawski culture. Osłonki 1, grave XXX. According to Grygiel 2008

2008, 758). What seems a probable supposition is that the mentioned cuts on the skull occurred during the scalping of the corpse's head. Hair removal — in many cultures was considered the heart of vital strength (cf. Samson's locks or the course of Patroclus' funeral ritual; Rohde 1890) — and the cutting off of the feet, was symbolic, rendering the dead immobile, therefore protecting the world of the living from the “interference” of the dead. This “invasion” of ideas and relations connected with the after-life will become characteristic for the whole GAC.

Now, it should be emphasised that the knowledge on sepulchral norms of the discussed populations is connected with a later period (phases IIa-IIIa GAC, ca 3600–2300 BC; Szmyt 1996, 60; 2008, 2013, 71) than the one under consideration. However, certain traits referred to in the BKC were also present in phase I of the GAC culture assemblages.

The nativistic character of funeral customs of the GAC culture population is clear. It is shown even in the continuation of laying the dead in contracted positions (Fig. 9:1; Pikutkowo 5A; Jążdżewski 1936a; Wiślański 1966, 219–227), and probably also in the tendency to mechanically manipulate the dead bodies and the equipment of animal remains. Very important meanings should be ascribed to the situation of exarnation rites within the nativistic sphere of the GAC ceremony. It directly conveys that even in this field the interest in contact with the ancestors became an important element of the funeral ritual. The relics are given a spiritual meaning, where the body parts collected from graves are deposited in a manner that the ancestors are present among the living. An example of a fragmentary grave from Gąski 17 where fragments of a skeleton were deposited in the settlement area (Domańska and Kośko 1977) suggests that this relation was of very close — almost intimate — character.

At the same time, however, the GAC funeral practice is full of direct references to the TRB patterns what gives it a clear stigma of vitalism. In this “sphere” a presence of flat graves of the GAC in which the dead were deposited in straight positions should be noted. Although Tadeusz Wiślański (1966, 55) expressed some scepticism about this phenomenon, the reputation of the discoverer of such type of features (Jążdżewski 1936a) makes it absolutely necessary to accept this fact. In this context an example of a grave from Kolonia Dębice 1 can be quoted (Fig. 9: 2; Jążdżewski 1936a; Wiślański 1996, 215–217). Also the use of stones to build the graves refers to traits known from the “funnel beaker” societies. The will to incorporate TRB patterns also determined that cemeteries of this population became burial places for GAC representatives also. This applies to both flat cemeteries (e.g. Pikutkowo 5; Jążdżewski 1936a; Wiślański 1966, 229) and necropoles consisting of tombs (c.f. Szmyt 1996, 243; 2006, 2011). It can be illustrated for instance with discoveries from Świerczynek 1 (Kozłowski 1921, 3–10; Chmielewski 1952, 46–49). The dead of the GAC were in this case placed within passage graves dug into embankments of the TRB tombs. What is specially interesting is that the bodies were deposited in supine positions. This clearly indicates not only the acceptance of the TRB norms but also their high valorisation (Rzepecki 2014a).

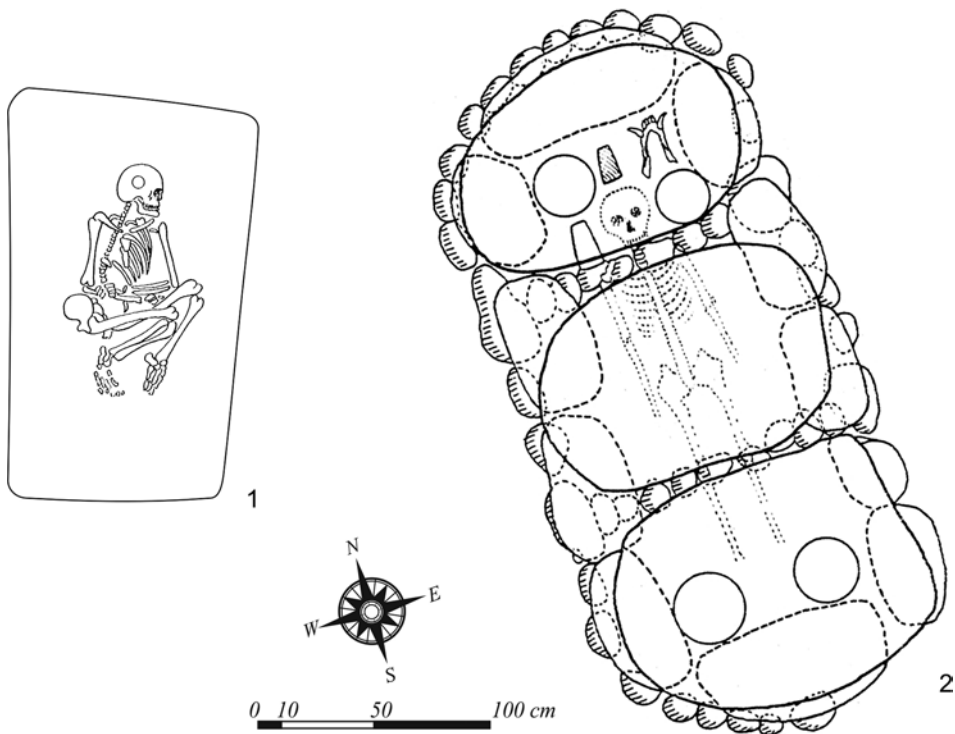


Fig. 9. Graves of the Globular Amphorae culture. Key: 1 — Pikutkowo 5A; 2 — Kolonia Dębice 1. According to Wiślański 1966

Although the problem exceeds the scope of the present text, it is however worth emphasising that the imitative (in relation to TRB) character of part of the funeral rites of the GAC clearly brought both societies closer to each other. A thesis can be formulated that until *ca* 2900 BC — another crisis for the local cultural situation — it got its projection in the sphere of local practice. It is testified by the example of Wilkostowo 23/24 where the inhabitants of a vast TRB settlement most probably collaborated with the GAC population (Rzepecki 2014). It was just such — symbiotic system of relations which also determined the regional GAC expansion, and the areas inhabited by the TRB became the preferred aims of the “amphorae” population infiltration. Let us remind ourselves that *ca* 50% of the GAC activities traces are registered in a context of the TRB settlements (Szymt 1996, 148). Moreover, a number of inspirations including architectonic norms, pottery making (Koško 1990; Szymt 1996, 241–244) or flint production (Domańska 2013) testify to the relatively weak cross-cultural distance (cf. different opinion: Czebreszuk and Szymt 2010) separating the TRB and GAC societies.

The ways of death conceptualisation and strategies of overcoming the existential fear may be situated in the very centre of each culture — in spheres of eschatological concepts and a practice of dealing with the dead. Their crucial location within the cultural buffer causes that they are good tools to measure the cross-cultural distance. In the presented text we were trying to justify a thesis that the period *ca* 4400–3650 BC, on the ground of funeral behaviours, was filled with differentiated forms of relations among the neighbouring societies of Kuyavia. They can be briefly described by a model referring to the Hegelian dialectic, in which relations between a thesis (BKC) and antithesis (TRB) resulted with a synthesis (GAC). An axis of these relations was the deep transformations of ritual life connected with the ways of dealing with the dead. Within the BKC societies the ancestors' world was a silent witness of economic activeness connected with the house and the yard. Whereas, the ideas of the TRB populations included the functioning of the isolated “worlds of the dead” (cemeteries), the sense of which was the immortalisation of the ancestors and maintaining ties with them. The GAC ritual shifted this relationship even further, and the needs for contact with the after-life, creating a tangible presence of the ancestors (relics — fragments of skeletons) in everyday life.

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