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**LIVING WITH THE DEAD.
BURIALS IN EARLY IRON AGE SETTLEMENT
AT ENISALA-PALANCA,
TULCEA COUNTY (SOUTH-EASTERN ROMANIA)**

ABSTRACT

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Preventive archaeological excavations in 2003–2013 at Enisala-Palanca, Sarichioi, Tulcea County (south-eastern Romania) brought to light an EIA settlement ascribed to Babadag culture (10th–8th c. BC). The 15 archaeological structures (pits and dwellings) containing human skeletons in various stages of representation hold an important place in the overall finds. The human bones belong to 26 individuals of both sexes and of various age categories. The anthropological analyses of the human remains from Enisala-Palanca site provide an opportunity to discuss matters concerning taphonomy, demography, pathology *etc.* The identification of human remains exhibiting signs of violent death opened way to the study of frequency, characteristics and significance of these injuries.

Key words: Romania, Early Iron Age, Babadag culture, settlement burials, violence and warfare

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INTRODUCTION

Data on Early Iron Age (hence EIA) at Lower Danube have substantially grown richer following the numerous researches in Babadag culture sites, especially after the '90s (Morintz 1964; Morintz 1987; Ailincăi 2013a). Identified in Dobruđja, eastern Walachia and south-eastern Moldavia, Babadag culture has so far been ascribed over 100 settlements (Fig. 1) that probably functioned from the end of 11th c. to the first part of 8th c. BC (Morintz 1987; Ailincăi 2010; Ailincăi 2013a; Ailincăi 2013b).

One of the problems raised since the beginning of investigations at Babadag was the lack of information regarding the existence of necropolises (Morintz 1987). From the '90s (Irimia, Conovici 1993; Sîrbu 1994; Sîrbu 1997; Jugănaru, Topoleanu 1994; Topoleanu, Jugănaru 1995), but especially in the past decade (Ailincăi 2008a), data regarding the treatment of the dead was completed with several outstanding finds, results of complicated deposition/decomposition and manipulation of human bodies in settlements. Thus numerous habitat structures (pits, huts, ditches) containing human bones were found in settlements such as Babadag (Ailincăi *et al.* 2007), Niculiţel (Ailincăi 2008b), Suceveni (Ailincăi *et al.* 2014), Garvăn (Jugănaru 1997; Jugănaru 2005; Comşa 2013), Jurilovca — *Orgame* (Ailincăi *et al.* 2003; Ailincăi 2006) or Bucu (Ailincăi *et al.* 2015). Though several synthetic studies (Sîrbu 1997; Ailincăi 2008a) have already been published concerning these finds that many researchers consider atypical, unusual, bizarre or macabre burials, the recent discoveries continue to bring to light new pieces of information confirming the complexity of this special funerary conduct.

Such is the case of the settlement at Enisala — *Palanca*. Located on the shore of Razim Lake, which used to be a gulf of the Black Sea in ancient times, this site was first researched in 1969, and numerous times since: 1979, 1986, 2003–2006, but especially in 2010 and 2013. In over 6,000 sq. m, the researchers identified traces of Eneolithic habitat (Gumelniţa culture), a cemetery, a medieval settlement (14th–15th c.), along with numerous Early Iron Age habitat structures (9th c. BC) (Morintz, Anghelescu 1969; Lăzurcă, Mănucu-Adameşteanu 1980; Ailincăi *et al.* 2011; Ailincăi *et al.* 2013; Micu *et al.* 2014; Mihail *et al.* 2012).

METHODOLOGY OF HUMAN REMAINS ANALYSIS

The preservation of the bone surface was estimated according to Connell and Rauxloh (2003, 2) and Connell (2008, 9). Bones from different skeletons found in the same archaeological complex were assigned to each individual using their color, dimensions and siding. For sex determination, we used cranial (Buikstra, Ubelaker 1994, 19–21) and post-cranial (Steckel *et al.* 2006, 19–24) features, as well as signs of parturition (Steckel *et al.* 2006, 25, fig. 23). For age estimation of subadults, we relied on dental eruption (Steckel *et al.* 2006, 17, fig. 11–13) and extent of epiphyseal synostosis (Powers 2008, 13–14, table 3;

Buikstra, Ubelaker 1994, 41–44, fig. 20). For estimation of the age of the adult skeletons, we used dental wear (Steckel *et al.* 2006, 18, fig. 14), extent of cranial suture synostosis (White *et al.* 2012, 389–391, fig. 18.7–8), evolution of sternal rib ends (Loth, İşcan 1989, 106–118), evolution of pubic symphysis (White *et al.* 2012, 394–397, fig. 18.12), as well as evolution of auricular surfaces (White *et al.* 2012, 400–404, fig. 18.15). If none of the above-mentioned indicators was present, age was estimated based on general features (degenerative transformations of the preserved skeleton segments), occurrence of osteoarthritis on the margins of the vertebrae and on joints, after Ubelaker (1980, 60–62, fig. 77, 81), and resorption of spongy tissue of proximal epiphyses of the humerus and femur, after (Acsádi, Nemeskéri 1970, 122–135, fig. 20, 22).

Stature of the adults was calculated after Pearson (Rösing 1988), and of subadults after Visser (1998). The identification and description of pathological conditions of the skeletons relied mainly on Ortner's volume (2003). Skeletal lesions were designated as ante- or perimortem depending on the presence or absence of healing signs on the affected edges. Postmortem transformation of the bones was identified by the lighter color of fracture surfaces compared to adjacent bone surface and differences in fracture types (Byers 2005).

COMPLEXES WITH HUMAN BONES. CATALOGUE OF THE FINDS

Among the remains ascribed to EIA in the settlement at Enisala, we catalogued 16 structures containing isolated, complete or just segments of human remains, researched during the campaigns of 2003 (Ailincăi, Constantinescu 2008), 2010 (Ailincăi *et al.* 2013) and 2013, as follows:

1. Enisala — Palanca 2003, S II-8 (Fig. 2:1–2) — oval-shaped pit (1.90 x 1.25 m), walls dug almost straight down to 0.70 m deep. The filling contained EIA pottery fragments from coarse kitchenware and bowls (Fig. 2: 3–6), animal and human bones (*individuals 3 and 4*). At 0.60 m deep, several human bones from other two individuals (*individuals 1 and 2*) were found.

Individual 1 — in the SW quarters of the complex several bones in partial anatomical position, aligned S-N, were found buried. The bones were well preserved, except for the postcranial skeleton and the calvaria that we were able to partially restore. The individual was male, aged 18–22.

Individual 2 is represented by the diaphysis of a right fibula found isolated, north of the first skeleton. The metaphyses and epiphyses were torn shortly after the individual died. In the distal portion, the bone surface is chipped, probably as a result of a blow (*sic!*). Sex is undeterminable and age can only be broadly estimated at 20–50 years old.

Among the animal bones found in the filling, three children bones were also identified. The left femur with crushed distal metaphysis and eroded proximal metaphysis indicates

an *infans I*, 1–3 years old, (*individual 3*). Another left femur whose distal third was broken during excavation and another broken distal third of the right tibia indicate a slightly older individual, 4–7 years old (Fig. 5: 4).

2. Enisala — Palanca 2010, S 1-4 — discovered in the northern part of S1 and S2, partially investigated. It was probably an oval-shaped pit (1.00 x 1.30 m), walls slanting outwards down to 0.85 m. Inside, several Early Iron Age pottery fragments (Fig. 3:1–7), two polished stone tools (Fig. 3: 8–9), one bone item (Fig. 3: 10) and one isolated human bone from an individual aged 5 to 10 (*individual 5*) were found.

3. Enisala — Palanca 2010, S 2-7 — round-shaped, 1.50 m in diameter, partially overlapping pit no. 5. The walls were dug obliquely outwards down to approx. 1 m, and the few pottery fragments in the filling date it to Early Iron Age (Fig. 3: 11–16).

Some human bone fragments from two individuals were also found there. *Individual 6* is represented by the first and seventh vertebrae, right humerus, first left metacarpal, left coxal, and sacrum. It was a male, aged 32 to 34. The pathology showed slight signs of osteoarthritis on the proximal and distal humerus, acetabula and vertebrae, and enthesophytes on the superior medial border of the ilia. *Individual 7* is represented by one right femoral head, partially torn. It's possible (considering the colour of the bones and the thin lime coating) that the two vertebrae described at *individual 6* might belong to *individual 7*, though their massiveness suggests the former. The sex is difficult to determine, though the very small size of the femoral head seems to indicate a female of adult age (20–40 years old).

4. Enisala — Palanca 2010, S 6-7 — fully researched in c. 2-3 N, was round-shaped (1.30 m diameter), walls dug vertically down to 0.90 m. This complex contained the bones in anatomical position of two individuals deposited in an unnatural position (Fig. 4:1), as well as a series of archaeological materials dating the complex to the EIA (Fig. 4: 2–8).

Individual 8 — the first, in order of deposition, well preserved, was “thrown” face down (aligned NE-SW) into the pit. It was a 40–45 year old male.

Seven sharp force traumas were identified on the skull, probably from a sword, considering the size and depth of the blows. All blows were extremely violent and forceful, causing numerous radiating fractures and the breaking of big chunks of the skull. The purpose of the blows — clearly signs of military violence — was to quickly incapacitate the victim. Though most breaks and fragments are of modern occurrence, some long bones were broken in ancient times. These are the cases of one approximately circular fracture on the anterior side of the left ilium, one fracture on the medial epiphysis of the right tibia, as well as of the fracture of the distal epiphysis of the left tibia.

Individual 9 is also well preserved. It was a 19–20 years old male. He was thrown in the pit, over the other individual, face down, aligned SE-NW. The skull, femur and right tibia exhibit several fractures and signs of perimortem trauma.

5. Enisala — Palanca 2010, S 8-6 — was partially researched. Irregular walls were dug down to 1.50 m. The cross section shows the western wall is slightly obliquely inwards, while the eastern wall forms a step. In the filling, at 0.30 m deep, several scattered human

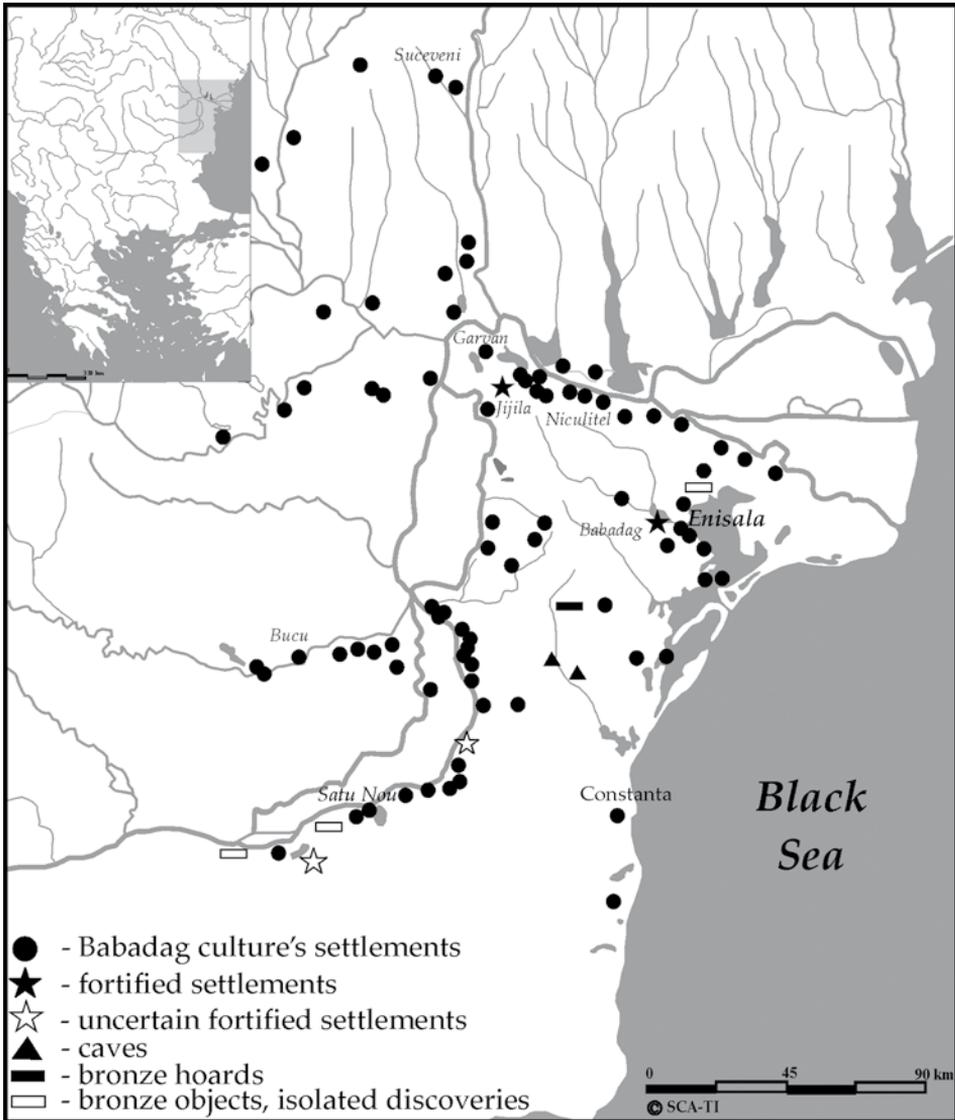


Fig. 1. Babadag culture sites

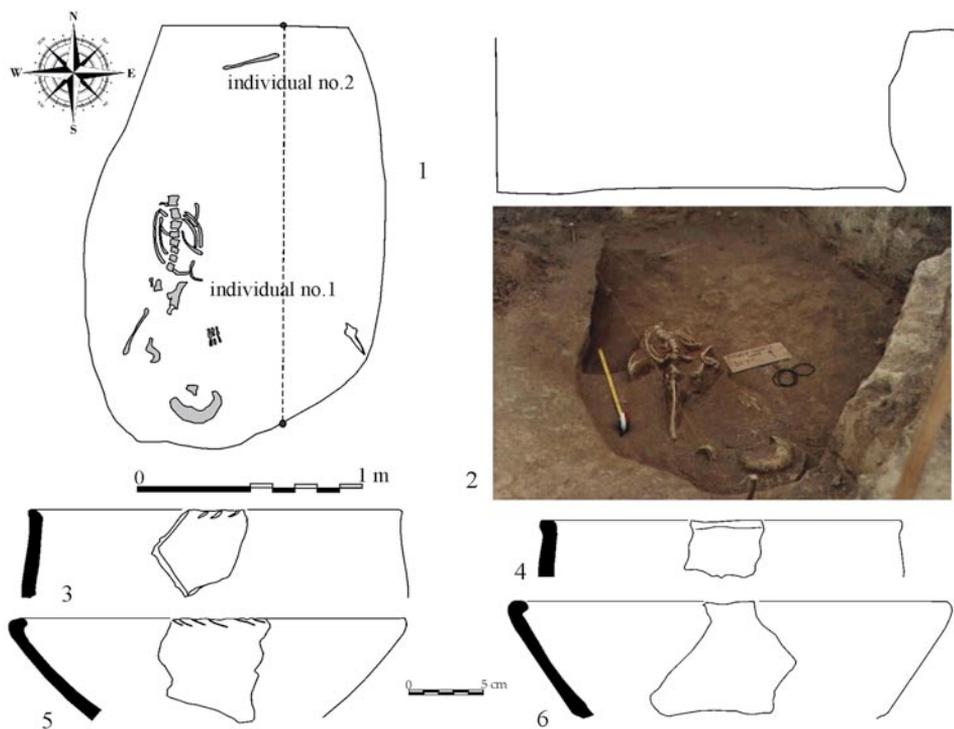


Fig. 2. Enisala — *Palanca* 2003, S II-8 (Ailincăi, Constantinescu 2008)

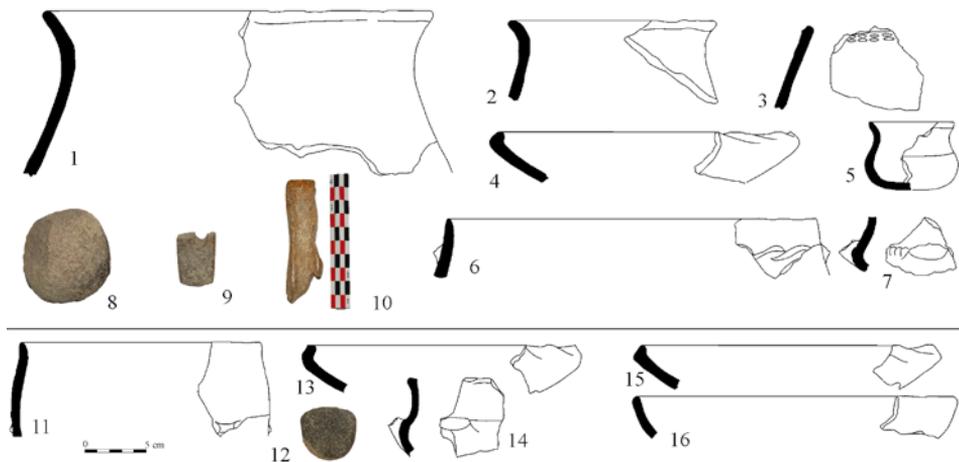


Fig. 3. Enisala — *Palanca* 2010. Archaeological material found in: 1-10. S 1-4; 11-16. S 2-7 (Ailincăi, Mihail, Constantinescu 2013)

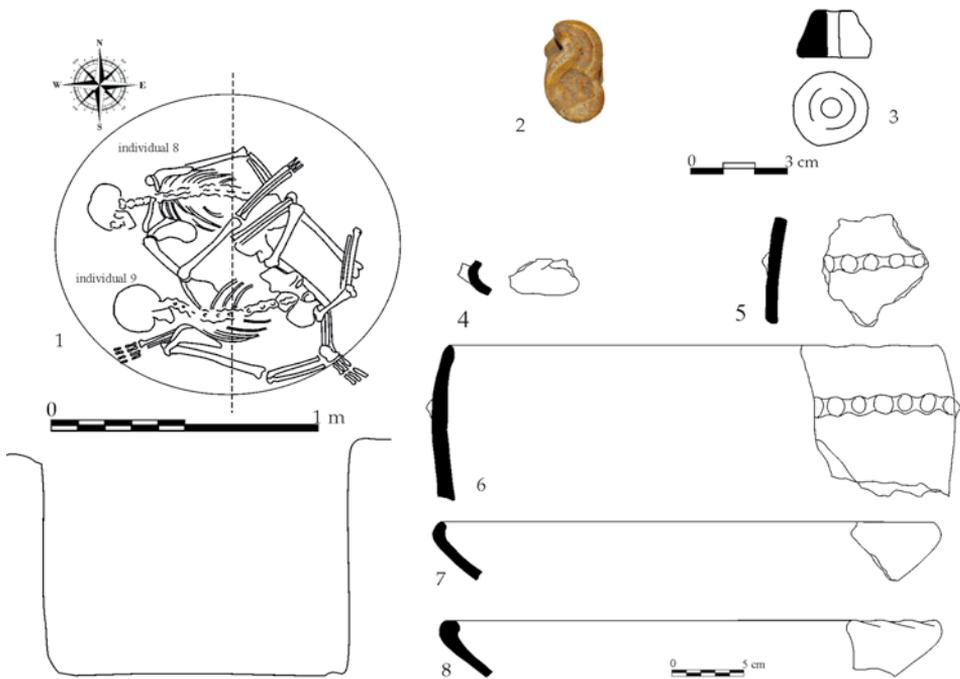


Fig. 4. Enisala — Palanca 2010, S 6-7 (Ailincăi, Mihail, Constantinescu 2013)



Fig. 5. Enisala — *Palanca* 2010, S 6-7. Sharp force traumas: 1-2 — on the frontal and left parietal bone of the individual no. 8; 3-4 — on the frontal bone of the individual no. 9; 5 — on the left zygomatic bone of the individual no. 9; 6 — on the femur of the of the individual no. 9 (photo: M. Constantinescu)

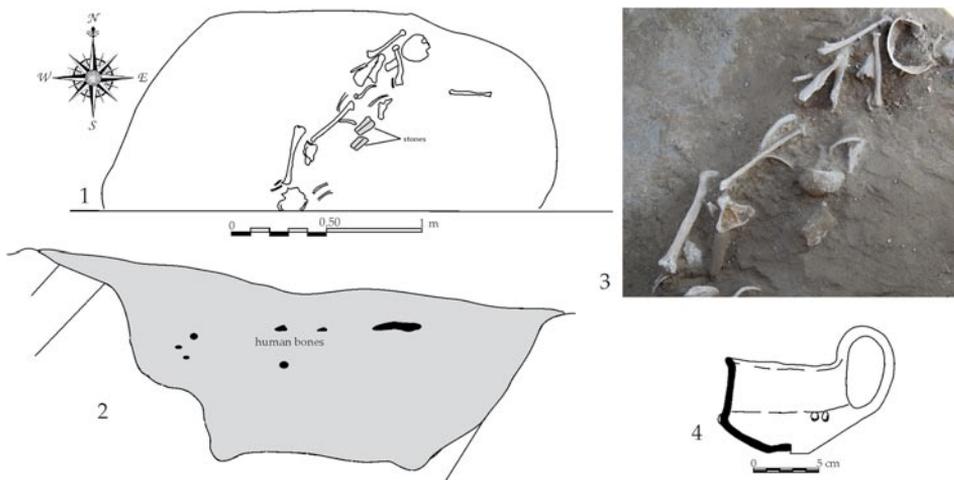


Fig. 6. Enisala — Palanca 2010, S 8-6 (Ailincăi, Mihail, Constatinescu 2013)



Fig. 7. Enisala — Palanca 2010, S 8, gr. 6: 1–2 — Unhealed blunt force trauma on the left mandibular ramus; 3–4 — Unhealed fracture of the right femur and tibia, probably the result of a fall from a medium height; 5–6 — Healed fracture of right side rib (photo: M. Constatinescu)

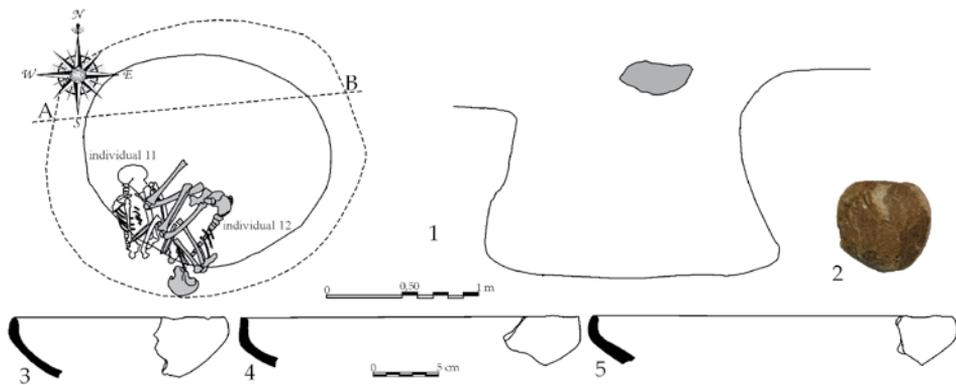


Fig. 8. Enisala — Palanca 2010, S 13-7 (Ailincăi, Mihail, Constatinescu 2013)

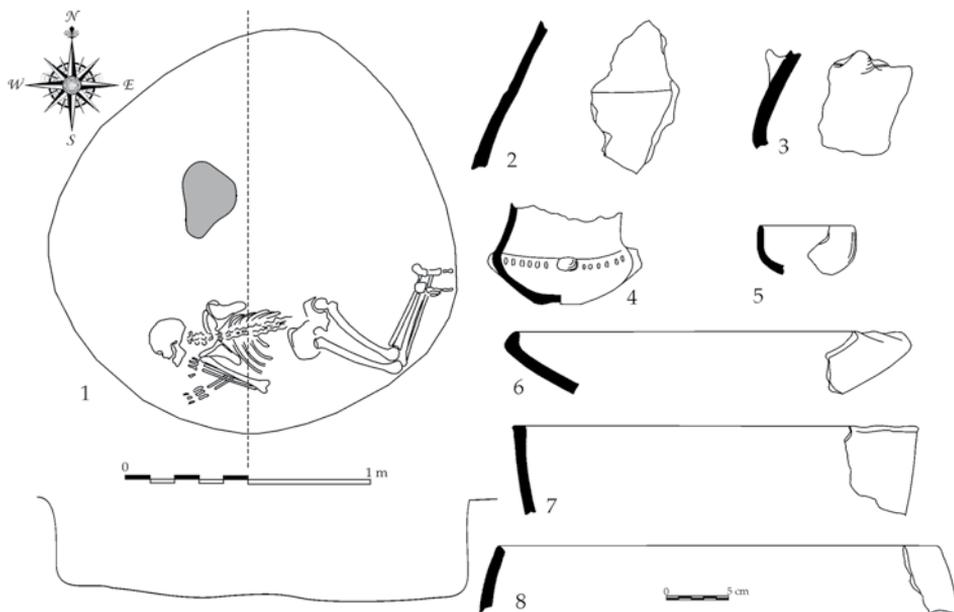


Fig. 9. Enisala — Palanca 2010, S 13-13 (Ailincăi, Mihail, Constatinescu 2013)

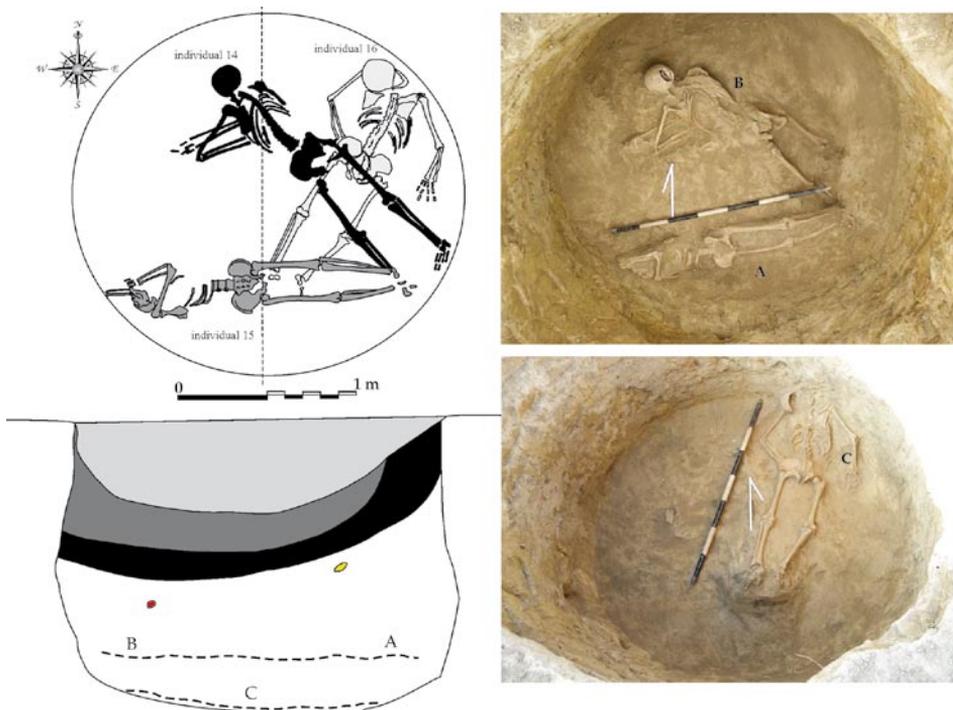


Fig. 10. Enisala — *Palanca* 2013, A 3-1 (drawings: S. Ailincăi; photo: A. Stănică)

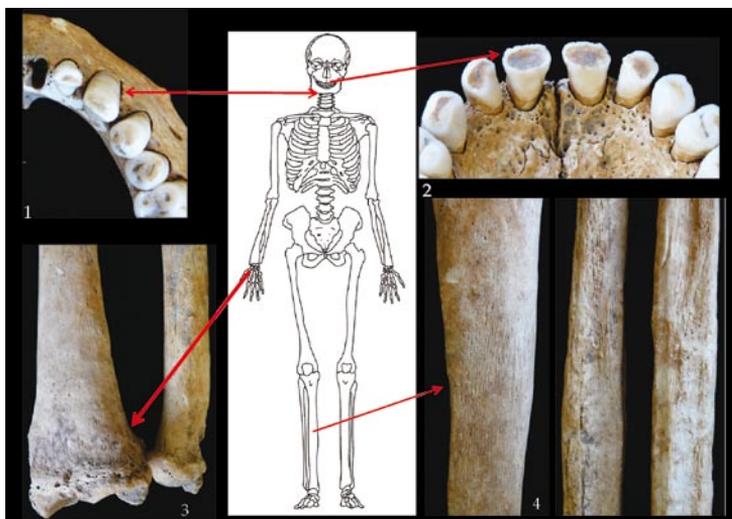


Fig. 11. Enisala — *Palanca* 2013, A3-1, individual 14: 1-2 — healed trauma on the right mandible; 3. Healed fracture of the distal radius and ulna; 4 — infection on the diaphysis of the tibial and fibula (photo: M. Constantinescu)

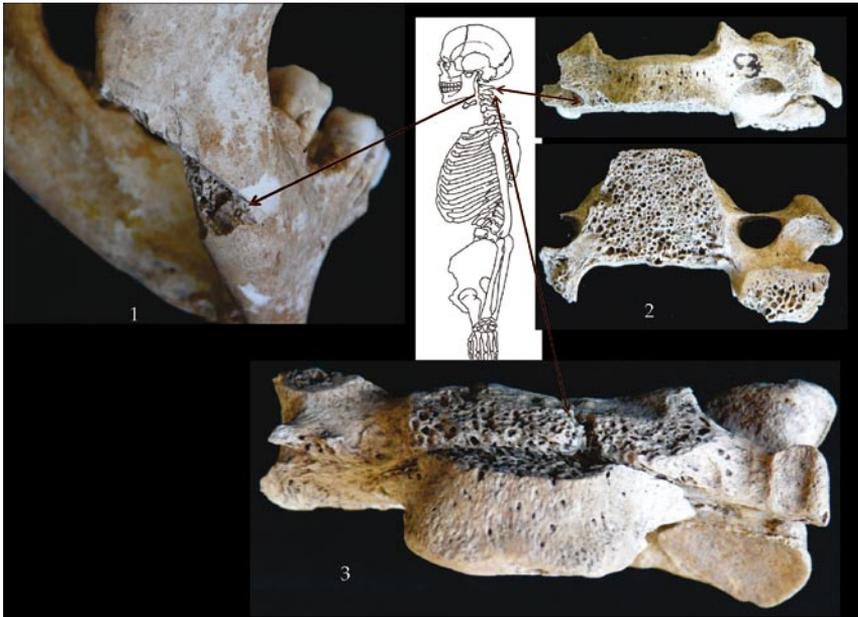


Fig. 12. Enisala — *Palanca* 2013, A3-1, individual 15: 1 — cut mark on the right mandibular ramus; 2 — cut mark on C4; 3 — cut mark on C5 (photo: M. Constantinescu)

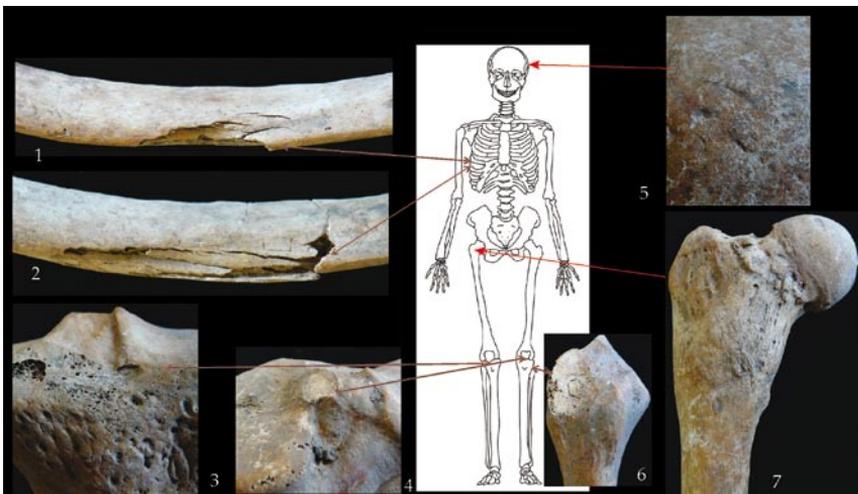


Fig. 13. Enisala — *Palanca* 2013, A3-1, individual 16: 1-2. Blunt force traumas on the 6th and 7th right ribs; 3-4, 6. Depressed fractures on the proximal tibias and fibulas, probably the result of a fall from a medium height; 5. Healed depressed fractures on the left parietal; 7. Healed fracture of the right femoral neck (photo: M. Constantinescu)

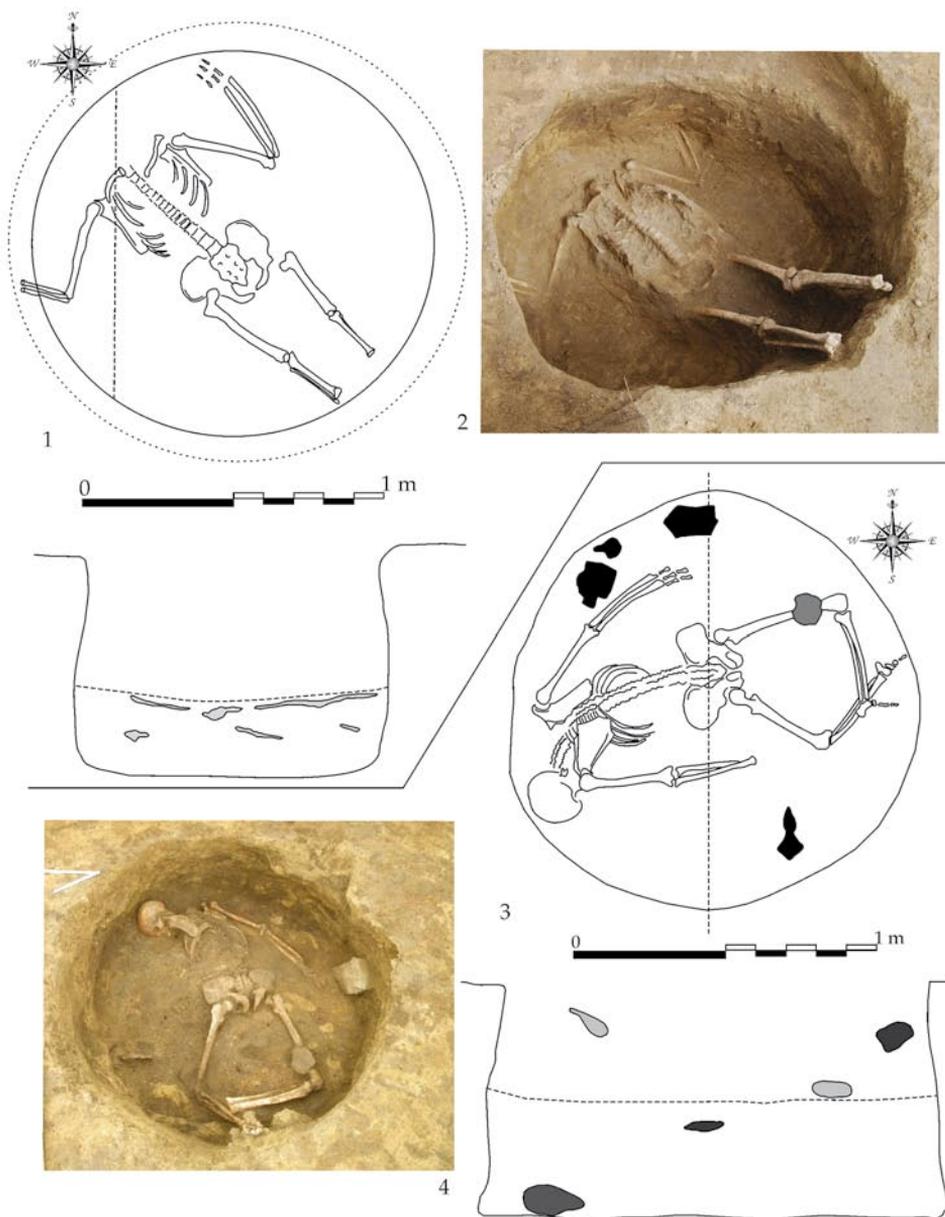


Fig. 14. Enisala — Palanca 2013: 1-2 — A11-3; 3-4 — A11-4 (drawings: S. Ailincăi; photo: A. Stănică)

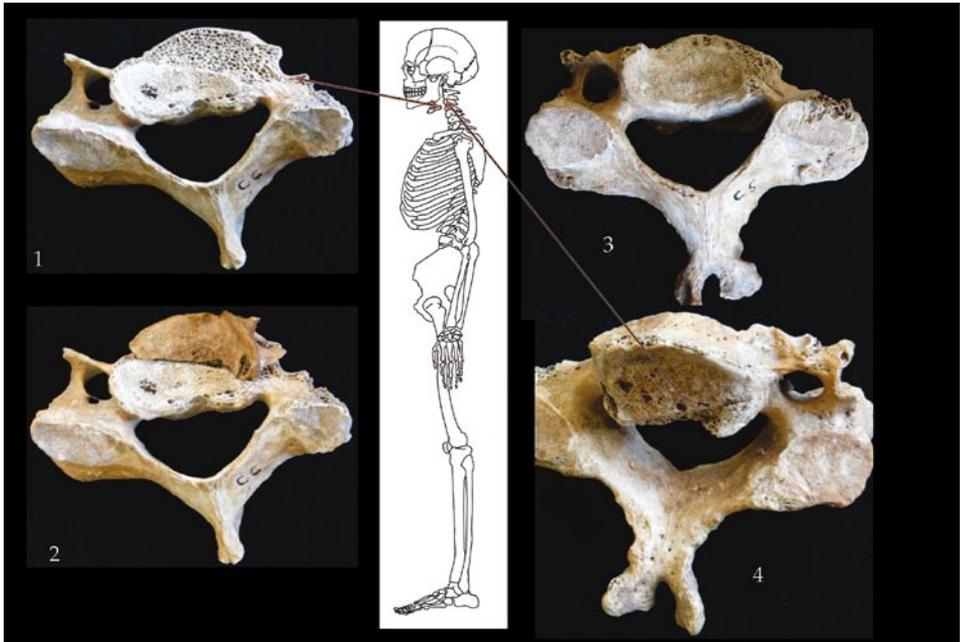


Fig. 15. Enisala — Palanca 2013, A11-3: 1-4 — cut marks on C 5-6 due to attempts of beheading (photo: M. Constantinescu)

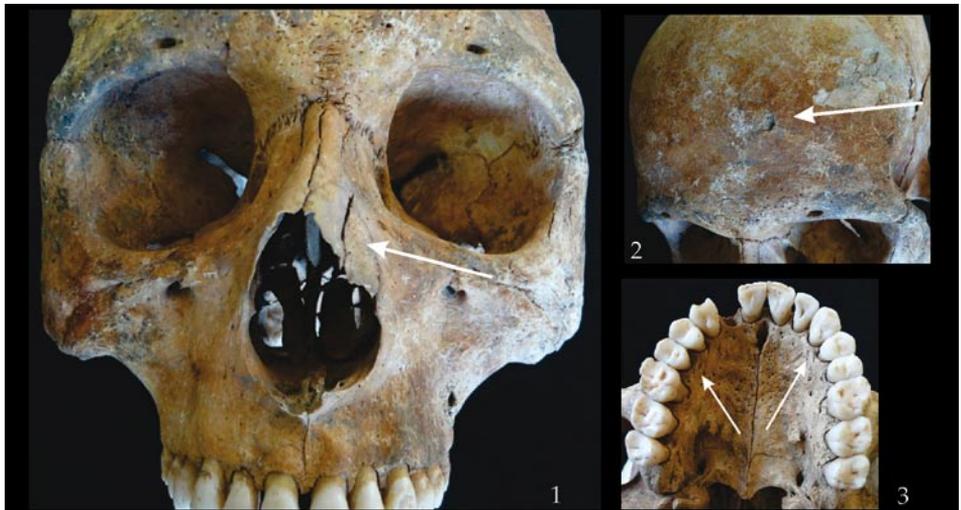


Fig. 16. Enisala — Palanca 2013, A 11-4: 1 — partially healed fracture of the nasal bone; 2 — blunt force traumas on the frontal bone (perimortem); 3 — chips of the dental enamel due to the force of the cranial trauma (perimortem) (photo: M. Constantinescu)

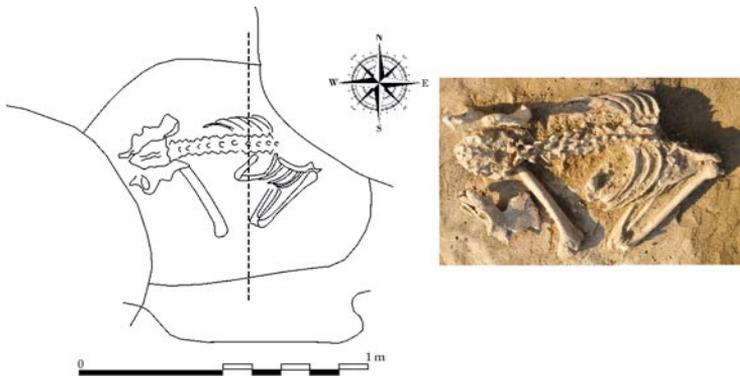


Fig. 17. Enisala — *Palanca* 2013, B10-11 (drawings: S. Ailincăi; photo: A. Stănică)

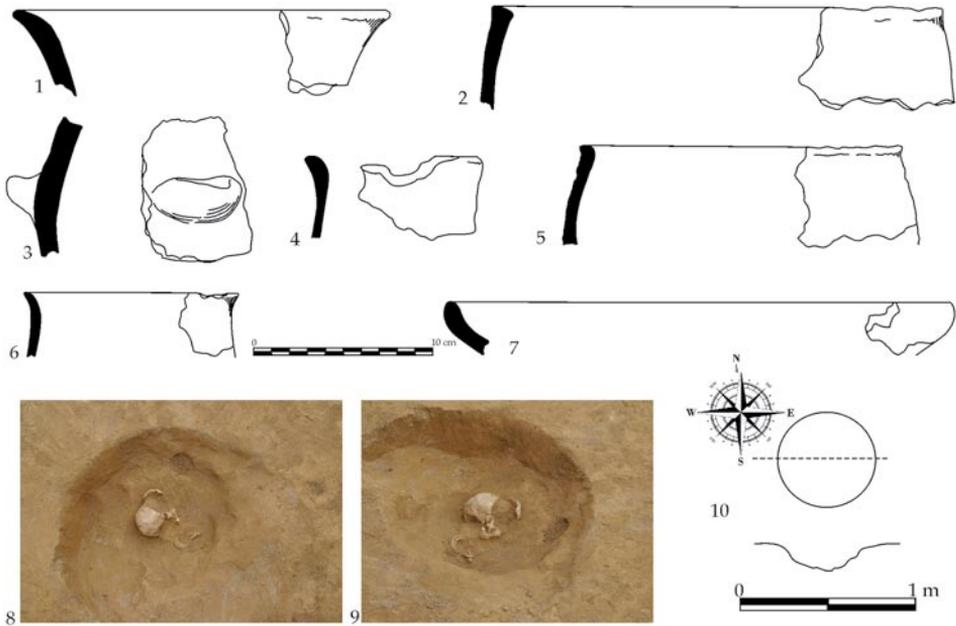


Fig. 18. Enisala — *Palanca* 2013, B12-2 (drawings: S. Ailincăi; photo: A. Stănică)

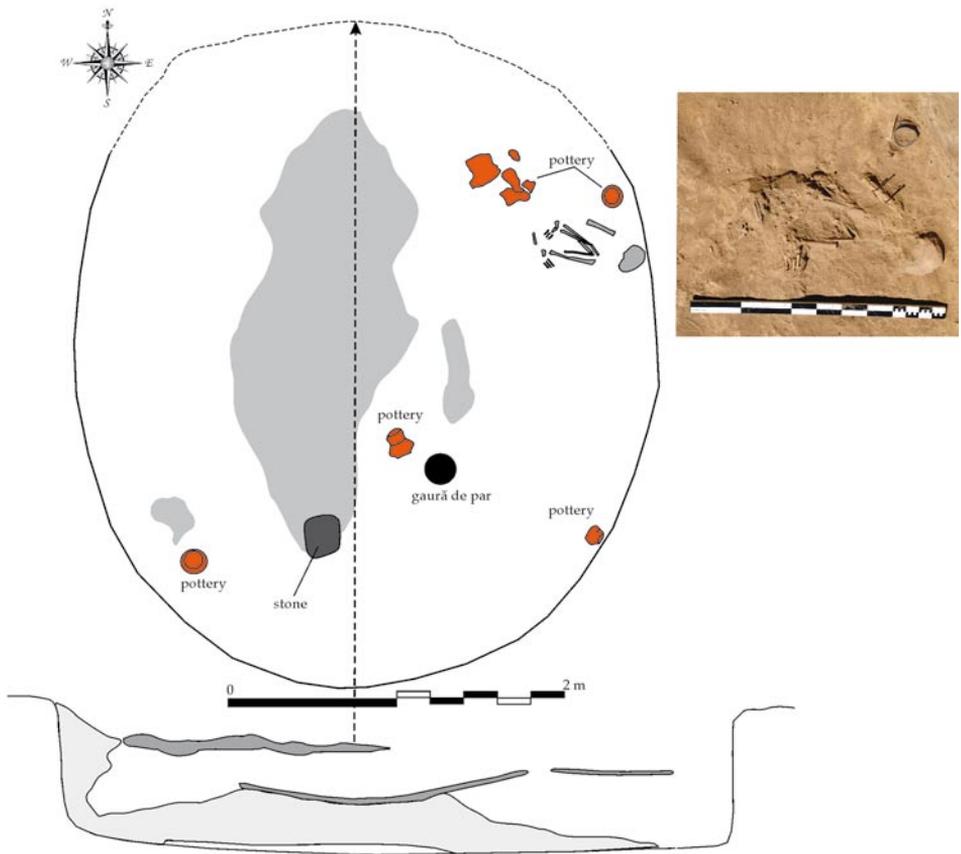


Fig. 19. Enisala — *Palanca* 2013, B14-11 (drawings: S. Ailincăi; photo: A. Stănică)

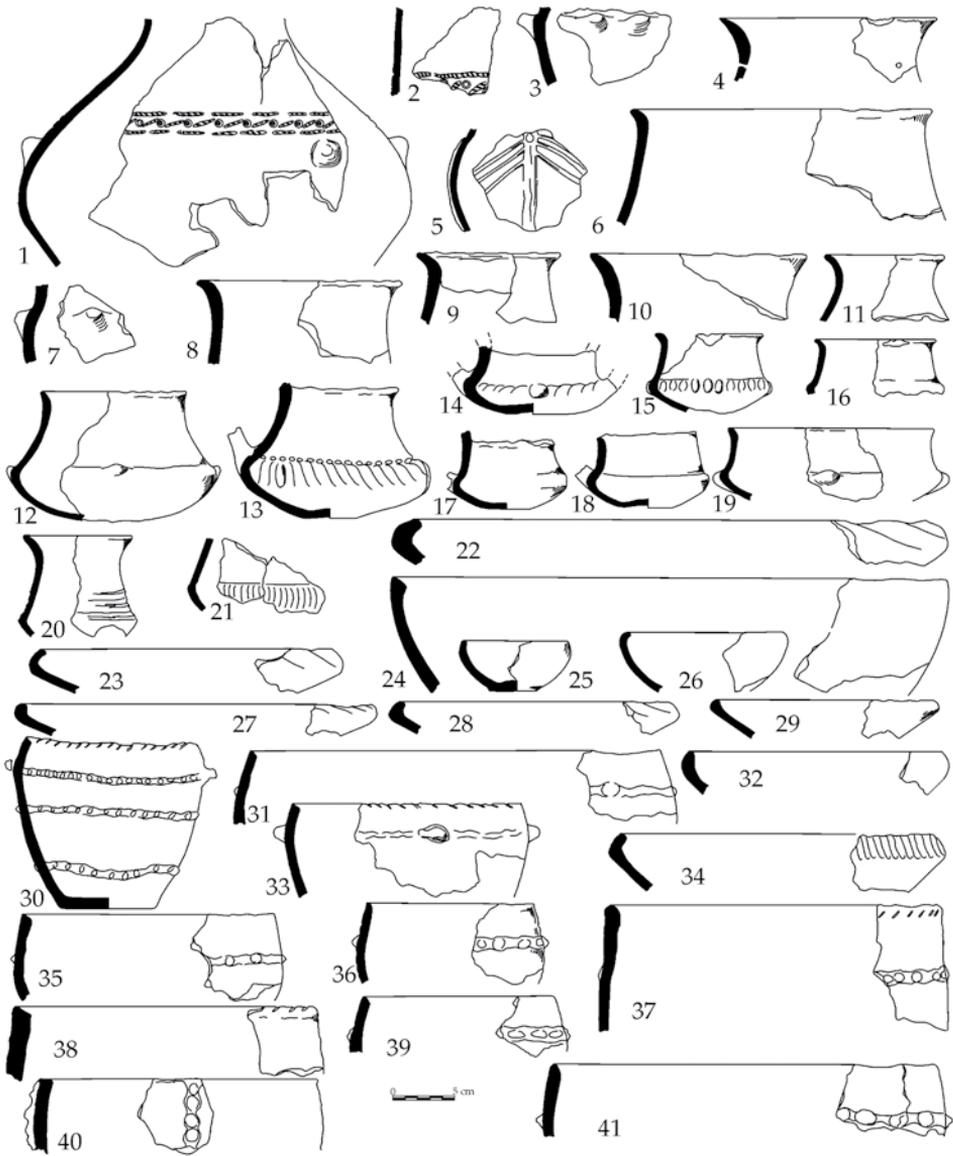


Fig. 20. Pottery found in dwelling B 14-11 (drawings: S. Ailincăi)

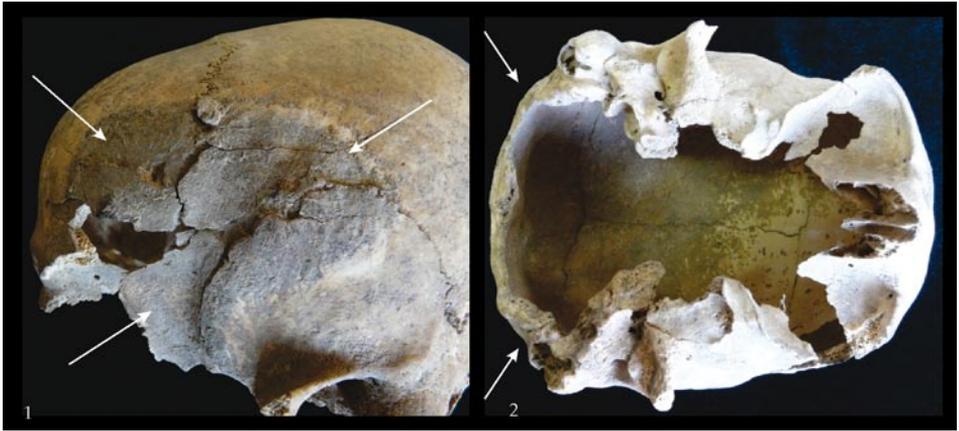


Fig. 21. Enisala — *Palanca* 2013, B 14-11: 1 — left side of the skull showing slight exposure to fire; 2 — base of the skull, opened post-mortem to access the brain (photo: M. Constantinescu)

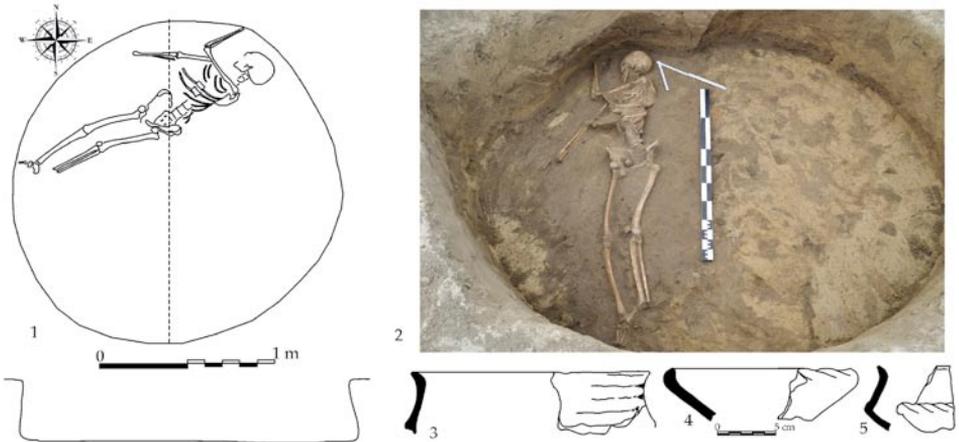


Fig. 22. Enisala — *Palanca* 2013, B 27-6 (drawings: S. Ailincăi; photo: A. Stănică)

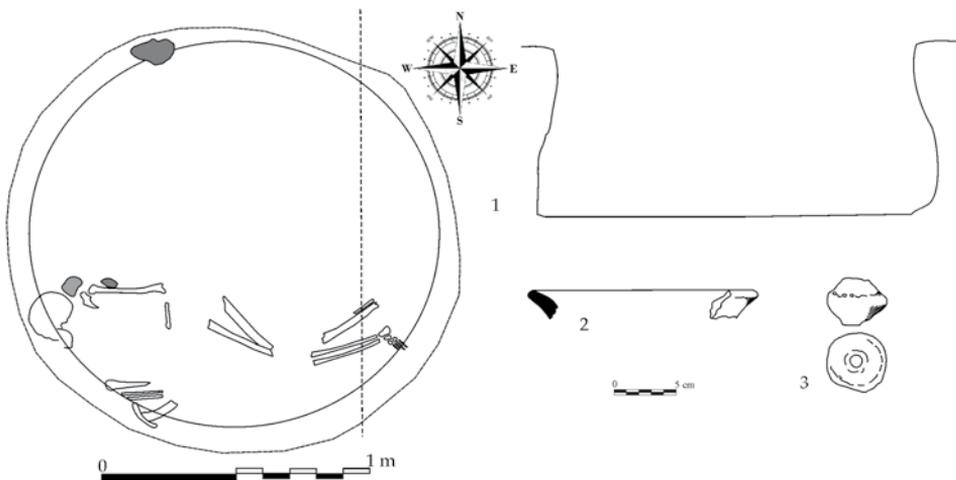


Fig. 23. Enisala — Palanca 2013, C 16-1 (drawings: S. Ailincăi)

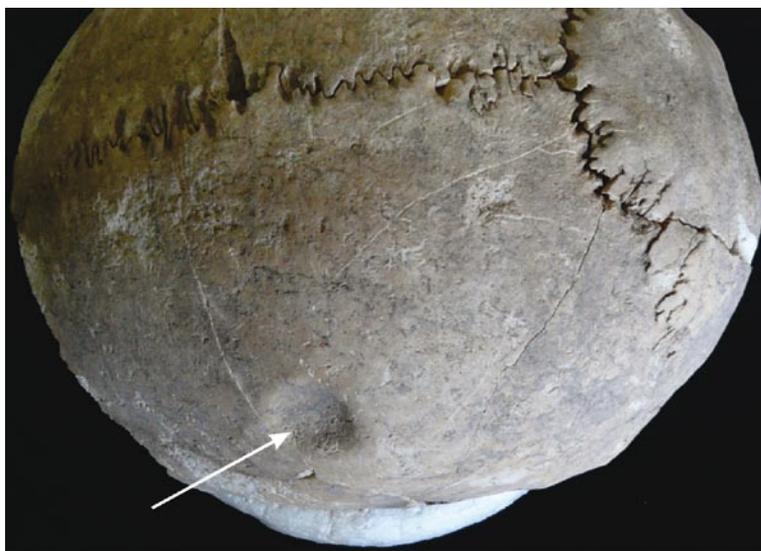


Fig. 24. Enisala — Palanca 2013, C 16-1, individual 24: Healed blunt force trauma on the right parietal bone (photo: M. Constantinescu)

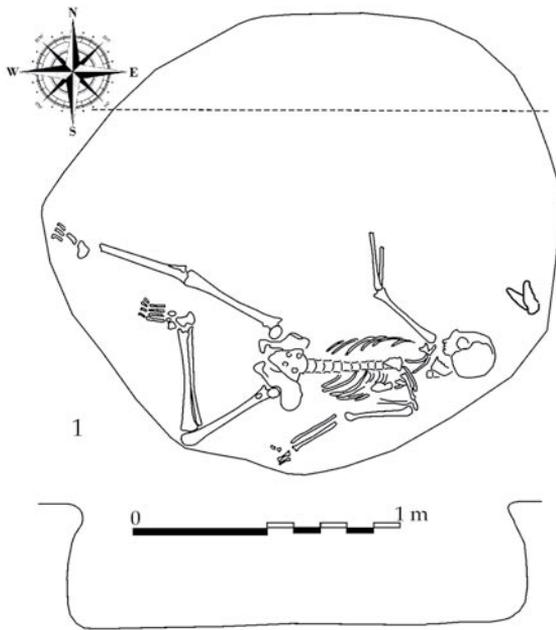


Fig. 25. Enisala — *Palanca* 2013, D 21-1 (drawings: S. Ailincăi; photo: A. Stănică)

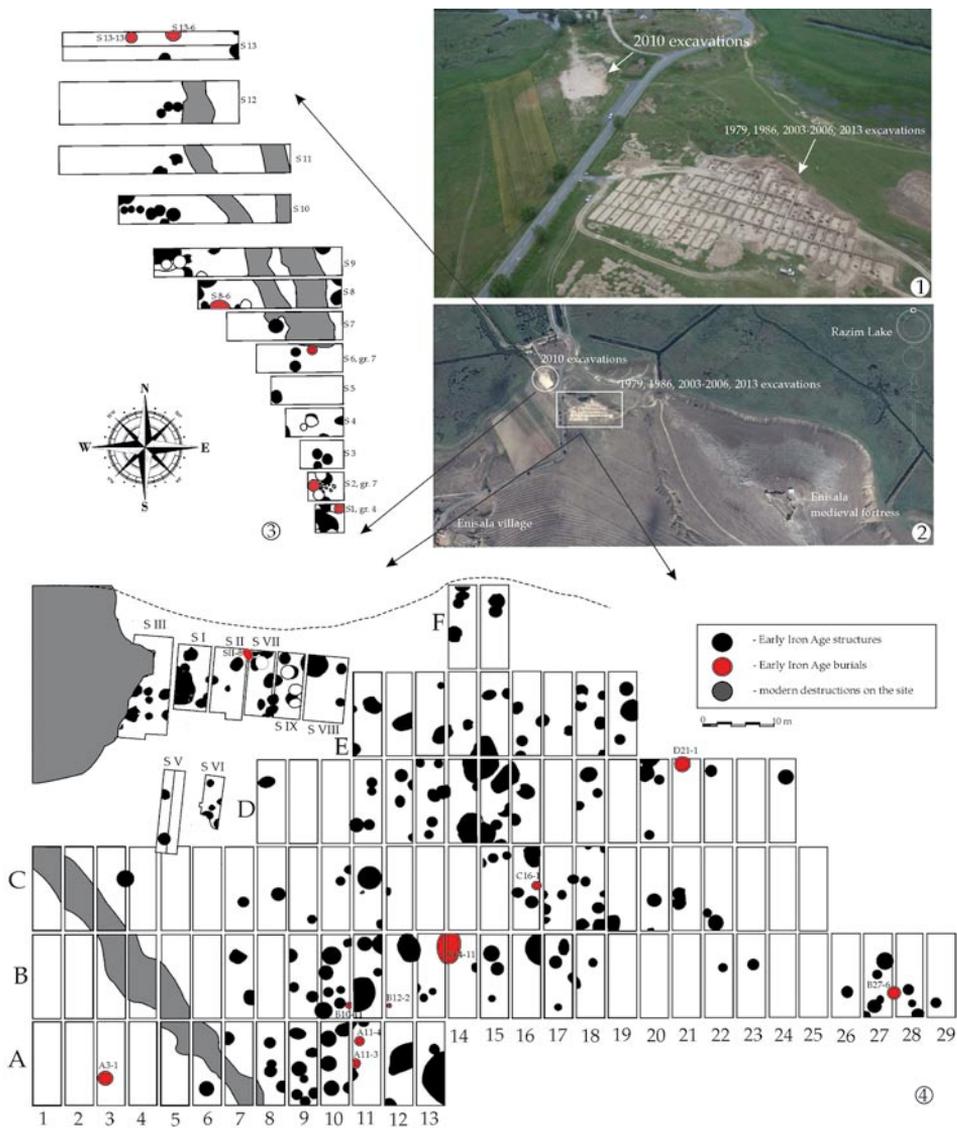


Fig. 26. Enisala — Palanca. 1–2 — aerial view on the site; 3 — the plan of 2010 archaeological excavations; 4 — the plan of 2003–2006, 2013 archaeological excavations (2 — photo by M. Stoian; 3–4 — drawings by S. Ailincăi)

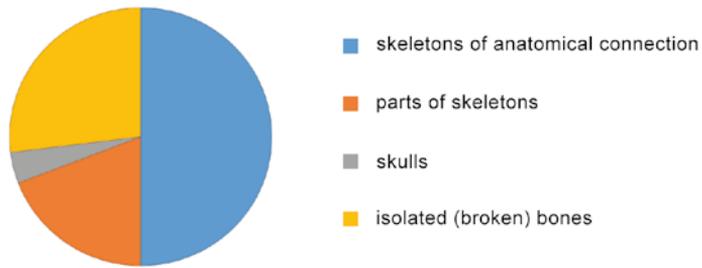


Fig. 27. State of representation of the bodies

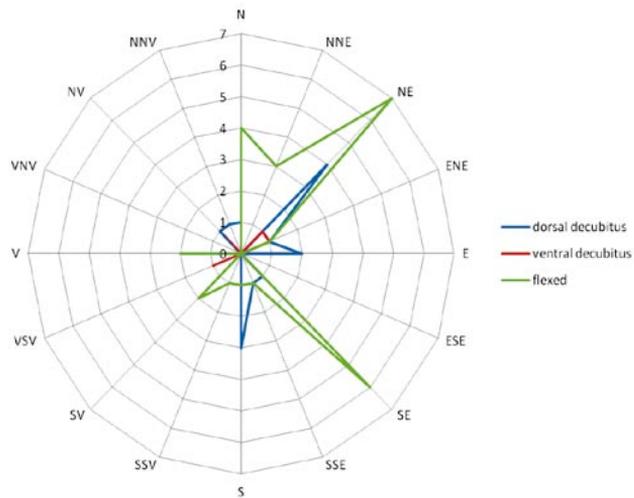


Fig. 28. Alignment of the bodies found in Early Iron Age settlements at the Lower Danube, by position

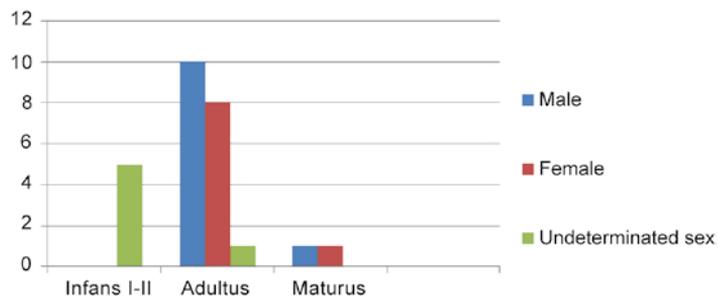


Fig. 29. Comparative data by age and sex categories

bones (skull, shoulder girdle, upper and lower limbs, hip bone, vertebrae, ribs) (Fig. 6: 1–3) were found together with a cup specific to Babadag culture (Fig. 6: 4).

The bones came from a male aged 35–40 (*individual 10* – Fig. 7). One of the left ribs (4 to 7) exhibits a healed fracture and signs of blunt force trauma are visible around the middle of the right mandibular ramus (14 mm deep into the bone), the shape of the trauma indicating that it was delivered with a sharp object. The blow came from the right lateral side and chipped the bone, breaking a significant portion in the medial part of the ramus.

The lateral condyle of the right femur and of the tibia shows several fracture lines and unhealed depression of the epiphyses, due to perimortem trauma, most likely from a high fall. The absence of signs of healing indicates that the two traumas described above were simultaneous, contributing to the individual's death. The distal third of the right ulna had been broken and lost; limestone formed on the tear, but it's difficult to say whether this occurred peri- or postmortem. The right os coxae has a circular, irregular perforation that could also be the result of perimortem trauma.

6. Enisala – Palanca 2010, S 13-7 – a circular pit (1.45 m diameter), oblique walls dug outwards down to 1.40 m. On the bottom, directly on the rock, the skeletons of two individuals were found (Fig. 8). One of them (*individual 11*) was placed flexed on the left side, aligned N-S, legs and arms strongly flexed, hands under the chin. The skeleton that remained almost completely preserved was of a child aged 12–13, of unindeterminable sex.

The other individual (*individual 12*), partially placed on *individual 11*, also flexed, on the left side, aligned SW-NE. The bones, mostly preserved in good state, were of a woman, aged 35–45. In the filling, pottery fragments and a hammerstone that can be ascribed to Babadag culture were found (Fig. 8: 2–5).

7. Enisala – Palanca 2010, S 13-13 – was identified on ca 7-8 N. It is of circular shape, 1.60 m in diameter. The complex stopped at rock level, 0.40 m deep. The pottery found together with the body indicates dating to EIA (Fig. 9: 2–8). In the southern part of the pit, placed on his right side, aligned W-E, a human skeleton (*individual 13*) was found almost complete and well preserved, legs and arms slightly flexed, hands at chin level (Fig. 9: 1). The individual was a female of 35 to 45 years old.

8. Enisala – Palanca 2013, A 3-1 (Fig. 10) – a large pit identified in the SW was investigated in 2013. The upper part is almost circular (2.15 x 2.05 m), walls slightly inclined outwards, down to 1.70 m. Several atypical Hallstattian pottery fragments were found here, along with stones and animal bones. In the filling, close to the base, three human skeletons in anatomical position, apparently “thrown”, were found as follows:

One of the skeletons was a man, 20 to 25 years old (*individual 14* – Fig. 11), deposited in ventral decubitus, aligned NW-SE, both arms flexed in different positions and lower limbs stretched. His well preserved bones show signs of violence. The right radius epiphysis exhibits deformed joint with macro-porosity and exostosis, resulting from a healed fracture of the articulation; the distal epiphysis of the right ulna is also deformed, the bone had reabsorbed and a small exostosis is visible on the distal third of the diaphysis; the same fracture

caused the deformity of the right lunate. Another sign of healing from violent trauma is visible on the right side of the mandible, while the lower part of the left mandible I1, central incisors, left maxillary I2 and canine are chipped, likely perimortem, since the tooth surface does not show signs of remodelling after the injury.

The second skeleton overlapped *individual 14* in the leg area, showing that he was later placed in the pit, in dorsal decubitus, aligned approximately W-E. Lower limbs are stretched, while upper limbs are flexed, palms towards the skull found in an unnatural position. The well preserved remains are of a male (*individual 15* — Fig. 12) aged 33 to 42, and 165.05 ± 4.8 cm tall.

Major injuries were visible in this case, too. One was delivered with a sharp item (probably a sword/saber), from the posterior right towards anterior, severing the right mandibular ramus over 32.32 mm and causing the exfoliation of the affected margins. The other three injuries on the spine are also the result of an attempted decapitation. The first blow came from the posterior-inferior right, severing C4 and, partially, the superior right articular facet. Later the blade stopped in the axis, penetrating it 1–5.5 mm deep. The width of the cut visible on the vertebra is 35.14 mm. The second blow from anterior-superior lateral right partially severed C3 vertebra. The tip of the blade cut approximately in half the lower left articular facet and partially severed the pedicle, stopping in the transverse process, under the superior articular facet. The third blow came from anterior-superior lateral right, crosscutting C4, stopping in the left pedicle.

The skeleton of the third individual on the bottom of the pit was the first deposited there. It was another male (*individual 16* — Fig. 13), 26–35 years old and 163.89 ± 4.8 cm tall. He was lying in ventral decubitus, aligned NNE-SSW, hands by the body, slightly flexed, and straight legs. He too shows signs of trauma. The ribs — probably right ribs 6 and 7 — have crush or depressed fractures in the medial third, probably the result of blunt objects penetrating the thorax. Both blows were delivered against the lower part of the ribs. The proximal articulation of the tibia and left fibula exhibit cutmarks on the superior fibular articular facet and on the styloid process. This trauma probably also caused a depression in the articular surface of the proximal fibula. Also, a large callus formed in the proximal third of the diaphysis as possible result of a healed fracture of the right femoral neck.

9. Enisala — Palanca 2013, A11-3 — circular pit (1.30 m in diameter), slanting walls down to 0.75 m. It contained Hallstattian pottery fragments, bones and adobe. In the filling, at 0.50 m deep, a human skeleton without skull was found (*individual 17*), aligned NE-SW, legs upwards, arms flexed and palms resting on the walls of the pit (Fig. 14: 1–2). The individual was a 33–45 years old male.

C5 and C6 vertebrae exhibited signs of three simultaneous traumas delivered with a sharp object. The first trauma severed the lower part of the vertebral body of C6. The second blow severed in half the vertebral body of C6 and the superior articular facet. The blade also partially cut the lower part of C5. The third trauma affected the right side margin of C5 body and half of its superior articular facet. These blows and possibly others that are

no longer visible due to the absence of the respective bones led to the beheading of the individual. The neck and head were probably thrown/deposited someplace else.

10. Enisala — Palanca 2013, A 11-4 — circular pit (1.30 m in diameter) with outwards slanting walls down to 0.80 m. In the filling, at -0.40 m, Hallstattian pottery fragments, stones and adobe were found, together with a skeleton in anatomical position (*individual 18* — Fig. 14: 3–4), in ventral decubitus, aligned WSW-ENE. The skeleton was well preserved and covered in some parts with stones and pottery fragments (Fig. 15). It was a male aged 23 to 32.

A small indentation on the left of the frontal resulted into three small radiating fractures. The right side of the frontal bone was also chipped closer to the coronal suture, and near the left pterion a small perforation in the skull is visible. All the injuries appear to have been the result of blunt force trauma, and were delivered perimortem, as no signs of healing are apparent.

The left nasal bone and the zygomatic process of the frontal bone show signs of fractures partially healed or about to heal, resulting from blunt force trauma that caused significant right side nasal deformity. On the maxilla (both M¹ and canines, central incisors, right lateral incisor) and mandible (lateral incisors and central left incisor), some of the frontal teeth are cracked and chipped antemortem, probably in relation with the trauma that affected the skull (Fig. 16).

11. Enisala — Palanca 2013, B 10-11 — an oval-shaped pit (1 x 0.60 m), 0.30 m deep, partially destroyed at the E and W ends by other Iron Age structures B 10-9 and B 11-11, which led to missing bones from the human skeleton found in anatomical position on the bottom of the pit (*individual 19* — Fig. 17), together with several atypical EIA pottery fragments. The individual was a female, 35–40 years of age, deposited in ventral decubitus, legs flexed from the basin, arms flexed from the elbow, aligned ENE-WSW.

The skeleton is missing several bones: the skull, the lateral third of the right clavicle, the left shoulder blade, the proximal half of the left humerus, the cervical vertebrae, and the first four thoracic vertebrae. The bones of the lower right limb are missing and from the lower left limb only the femur is present.

12. Enisala — Palanca 2013, B 12-2 — small pit (0.55 m diameter), 0.20 m deep. On its bottom, a fragmented skull, humeri, left ulna, three fragments of cervical vertebrae and most of the ribs were found (Fig. 18/8-10). The bones were not in anatomical position. The individual (*individual 20*) was a 5–6 years old child. Several Hallstattian pottery fragments were also found in the filling (Fig. 18: 1–7).

13. Enisala — Palanca 2013, B 14-11 — Fig. 19 — an oval-shaped pit (5 x 4 m), dug down to approx. 1 m deep. This is probably the base of a hut, as numerous clay bricks with twig traces (remains of the structure above ground) were found, together with a large quantity of pottery and bones.

Six whole or restorable vessels (Fig. 20) were found on the floor of the dwelling, together with an incomplete human skeleton whose position suggests it was deposited flexed

on the left side, aligned approximately SE-NW (*individual 21* — Fig. 19). Bone fragments — mostly from the skull, left upper limb, right lower limb and legs — were missing, mainly from ancient times. The individual was female, aged 35–45.

A skull and the right maxilla of another individual, a woman aged 30–32 (*individual 22* — Fig. 21) were also found in the filling. The skull is covered in a substantial layer of limestone. The inferior part is missing pieces and exhibits breakage. The anterior part of the frontal maxillary process was broken due to anthropic intervention, and the nasal is fragmented approx. 6 mm from the nasion.

Both sphenoids are broken approx. 15.5 mm left and 20.5 mm right from the infratemporal crest. The tips of the petrous pyramids and of the mastoids of the temporal bones are broken. The occipital is missing most of the base, almost up to the inferior nuchal line. The inferior fragmentation of the skull is approximately oval-shaped, suggesting an attempt to expose the brain. The margins of the break are irregular and the exfoliation marks point out the bone was *pulled out*. On the left supraorbital margin and around the pterion, the bone is pigmented black. It is visible in the fresh tear around the supraorbital margin that the pigment is the result of exposure to fire. Given the colour, it's very likely that it was brief and at low temperature (200–300°C). Right maxillary central incisors' crown is broken and the tear has a colour specific to exposure to fire. The lower half of right maxillary C crown was broken and the right maxillary PM¹ crown is chipped. Considering the fresh breakage signs occurred during the digging, we can say that the right maxilla was in anatomical position at the time the skull was detached. It's likely that the left maxilla was also preserved in anatomical position.

14. Enisala — Palanca 2013, B 27-6 — large circular pit (2 m diameter), walls slightly oblique outwards, 0.40 m down. The filling contained several pottery fragments (Fig. 22: 3–5), bones, stones and adobe. In the north of the complex, close to the bottom, a human skeleton was lying in dorsal decubitus, aligned ENE-WSW, lower members stretched, upper left arm flexed from the elbow and at skull level, while the right arm was stretched westward. The skull was placed looking NW (Fig. 22: 1–2). The skeleton is well preserved, belonged to a female aged 30–46 (*individual 23*).

On the right of the frontal, close to the coronal suture, a small osteoma (8 mm in diameter) of approximate circular shape and irregular margins is visible.

15. Enisala — Palanca 2013, C 16-1 — circular shape (1.55 m diameter), slanting walls outwards down to 0.67 m. The filling contained several pottery fragments, one spindle whorl (Fig. 23: 2–3), bones, stones and adobe. Human bones in partial anatomical position were found on the bottom, to the south of the pit.

Though partially preserved, the position of the bones suggests the initial existence of an entire body deposited on the right side, probably flexed, aligned W-E, from which some of the bones were later extracted. The individual was a 30 to 40 years old female (*individual 24*). An approximately circular depression, 17.5 mm in diameter, resulting from

blunt force trauma, is visible on the right parietal, near the eminence. Its margins are rounded, sign of complete healing (Fig. 24).

On the left of the occipital, on the lambdoid suture, 37.5 mm from lambda, another oval-shaped depression (13.08 mm long, 11.40 mm wide) with rounded margins was examined. This is another result of healed blunt force trauma.

Many bones are fragmented. An intervention with a sharp object is visible on the left femur, under the greater trochanter. The breakage probably occurred post-mortem, as a result of an anthropic intervention that disturbed the skeleton.

The proximal epiphysis of left hand metacarpal 1 is pronouncedly deformed, with eburnations and exostosis that, given the shape of the articular surface, seem to be the result of a fracture or dislocation. It looks like the bone no longer stayed in its normal anatomical position. The proximal and intermediary phalanges 2 and 3 of the left hand are also pronouncedly deformed.

Among other bones attributed to this individual, we identified: left kneecap that, considering the size and colour, belongs to another individual; the distal half of the left radius and a fragment of the proximal third and distal half of a left ulna. Though the size and colour indicate the same individual, they could not be restored. Teeth marks, probably from rodents, are visible on the diaphysis of the left ulna.

A fragment of an occipital and parietal was also found here. More of the left parietal is preserved, exhibiting a depression in the area of the left parietal eminence. Here the skull was thinned to 0.85 mm, compared to normal 5 mm thickness in the proximity of the depression. The rest of the skull is missing, most of the breaks being recent. This fragment belonged to a female, aged 43–58 (*individual 25*).

16. Enisala – Palanca 2013, D 21-1 – circular pit (2.25 m diameter), walls curved outwards down to 0.50 m. In the south of the pit, on the bottom, we identified a human skeleton in anatomical position, in dorsal decubitus, a 33–42 years old female (*individual 26* – Fig. 25).

The skull exhibits several perimortem blunt force traumas: *trauma 1* – in the central part of the frontal, slightly left from the midline, a circular perforation with irregular margins led to endocranial bone exfoliation, also causing several radiating fractures; *trauma 2* – delivered with a similar object on the anterior frontal, on the right temporal line. It caused similar cracks to trauma 1 and radiating fractures around it, extended on the frontal and right parietal. However, the blow did not penetrate the skull, only fragmented it. *Trauma 3* – occurred on the right parietal and occipital, above the lambdoid suture, approx. 46 mm from lambda, causing similar damages as to other traumas, including radiating fractures on the occipital and right parietal. Significant parts of the right parietal had come off and are missing. *Trauma 4* – was delivered on the left parietal, approx. 30 mm from lambda, above the lambdoid suture. It's almost circular, with irregular margins. The trauma penetrated the skull and caused radiating fractures. *Trauma 5* – is on the left temporal, above the external auditory meatus. It's also approximately circular,

with irregular margins, and penetrated the bone, causing radiating fractures and the break of the temporal squama and right mastoid surface. *Trauma 6* – was delivered perimortem to the left parietal, in the area of the parietal eminence, but is smaller than the rest, penetrating only the external table. It's also round-shaped and irregular and caused radiating fractures.

All traumas are lethal, show no signs of healing and were delivered with a blunt object. Their position indicates that the first two and the fifth are the result of a left front side blow from a right-hand attacker, while traumas 3, 4 and 6 were delivered from behind, probably after the individual had fallen down. Etiology seems to indicate a single attacker and a single type of weapon (bludgeon/mace/back of an axe?).

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDS

The settlement at Enisala – *Palanca* is now one of the best researched EIA sites at the Lower Danube, and consequently has the most numerous habitat structures with human bones. This confirms our theory that this type of burials is common in most Babadag culture settlements (Ailincăi 2008a). The rather vast investigated area and the high number and diversity of these “macabre finds” have let us make an ample analysis and draw some important new conclusions.

Place of deposition

According to the catalogue above, the human bone remains were found in 16 investigated structures in the settlement – 15 pits and one hut. The layout shows that the structures are not concentrated in a certain area, but spread rather evenly (Fig. 26). Complexes S13-6, S13-7 and A3-1 appear somewhat isolated in the investigated perimeter, but all the other structures containing human bones are located near similar structures intended for dwelling or storage of food or waste.

The relatively large size (4 x 5 m), the numerous proofs of existence of a structure above the ground (clay bricks with imprinted twigs or reed, the pole hole in the SE sector, a large quantity of pottery vessels, stones and animal bones) led us to believe that the complex we identified as B14-11 is similar to a hut-like dwelling. The deposition of human bodies in such structures is scarcer in EIA settlements in the northern Balkans and was considered a special place intended for the exposure/decomposition of the bodies (Ailincăi 2013a, 235 *et seq.*). To this effect we can mention the discovery in the pre-colonial layer at *Orgame* of a large complex, dug directly into the rock, containing remains from no less than 15 individuals (Ailincăi *et al.* 2003; Ailincăi *et al.* 2006), as well as a series of finds at Niculițel (Topoleanu, Jugănaru 1995; Ailincăi 2008b, fig. 7: 2; 9/3) or Bucu (Ailincăi *et al.* 2015, fig. 6).

The pits where human bones were found had various sizes, from over 2.00 m in diameter (cat. no. 8, 14, 16) to only 0.55 m (cat. no. 12), while depth ranged from 1.70 m (cat.

no. 8) to 0.20 m (cat. no. 12). However, it appears that most of the structures' diameter was 1.60 to 1.30 m, and depth was 0.90–0.40 m. Opening of the pits was often circular, (cat. no. 3–4, 6–10, 12, 14–16), and oval-shaped in only two cases (cat. no. 1, 11). More often than not the walls were inclined outwards (cat. no. 1–3, 6, 8–11, 14–16), characteristic to store-pits. Walls were dug inwards in two cases (cat. no. 5, 12) and vertically in other two instances (cat. no. 4, 7).

Complete and partial skeletons

In the current stage of the research at Enisala EIA site, we have collected data on 26 individuals. The data is rather heterogeneous, given the different state of preservation and representation of the individuals, from complete skeletons in anatomical position to partial skeletons or isolated bones, sometimes fragmented (Fig. 27).

In most cases, **the skeletons were complete or almost complete and in anatomical position** (*individuals no. 8-9, 11-19, 23 and 26*). We include in this category *individual 19*, who was probably partially destroyed by subsequent interventions due to construction of other complexes, as well as *individual 17*, who was decapitated and thrown headless into the pit.

In some instances, **parts of the skeleton, with bones in partial or no anatomical position** were found (*individuals 1, 10, 20-21 and 24*). Regarding *individual 1*, a group upper body bones were in partial anatomical position (Fig. 2), which underlies a possible secondary intervention on the body during the process of decomposition. In respect of the isolated bones of three other individuals in the filling of SII-8, we can assume they were moved from the initial place of deposition. We encounter a similar situation with *individual 10*, consisting of an agglomeration of bones in the filling of S8-6 (Fig. 6), as well as with *individual 20*, of which only the skull and a small part of the post-cranial skeleton was preserved in partial anatomical position on the bottom of a small alveolus (Fig. 18).

Unlike the two cases above, *individuals 21 and 24* were found on the bottom of complexes B14-11 (Fig. 19) and C16-1 (Fig. 23), which appear to have been the initial place of deposition of the dead. They have many missing parts and breakage, but the preserved bones are in anatomical position, indicating intervention on the bodies during the decomposition process.

As we pointed out on previous occasions, it's possible that the limbs and **skulls** received special treatment (Ailincăi 2008a; Ailincăi 2013a). To this effect we can draw attention on the skull with mandible found in hut-like dwelling B14-11 (*individual 22*), which was found in the filling of the hut's pit, together with the rest of the structure. While the signs of exposure to fire in the left supraorbital area could also be the result of dwelling abandonment, the visible breaks at the base of the skull appear to have been deliberate, possibly for the purpose of putting it on a stand, displaying the brain, etc.

The **isolated bones, most of them broken**, make up another category of finds. This is the case of *individuals 2-7* and *25*. The presence of these bones in various contexts in the settlements shows clear evidence of exposure, decomposition and manipulation of the human bodies in the living area.

Numbers

The number of individuals deposited in a complex is another variable. We have documented various situations in Babadag culture settlements. At Jurilovca — *Orgame*, bones from no less than 15 individuals (Ailincăi *et al.* 2003; Ailincăi *et al.* 2006), as well as pits with a single individual, body parts, isolated or fragmented bones (Ailincăi 2008a). The situation at Enisala tends to confirm the variety of the bodies' state of representation and of the number of individuals deposited in one complex. In most of the cases, the structures (pits or dwellings) contained bones from only one (cat. no. 2, 5, 7, 9-12, 13, 16) or two individuals (cat. no. 3-4, 6, 13, 15). Complex A3-1 has a distinct situation (cat. no. 8), as 3 persons were deposited there, while in pit SII-8 (cat. no. 1) bones from 4 individuals were identified in secondary context.

Deposited or thrown?

While we can assume a secondary position of the isolated bones, especially the fragments, the complete or almost complete skeletons were found in primary position. Most of the bodies or parts thereof were found on the bottom of the complexes (*individuals 8-9, 11-16, 29-21, 23-24, 26*), but some of the bodies were discovered in the filling (*individuals 1, 10, 17-18*).

It is very hard to estimate whether the structures containing human bones were especially intended for this purpose or their function was altered to deposit bodies. However, we noticed the existence or inexistence of possible concern regarding deposition of the bodies. Thus special attention was paid to *individuals 11* and *12*, placed flexed, on the bottom of pit S13-7 (Fig. 8). A similar situation we encountered in the case of *individuals 13* and *23*, deposited in pits S13-13 (Fig. 9) and C16-1 (Fig. 23), *individual 21*, found in dwelling B14-11 (Fig. 19) and probably *individual 19* (Fig. 17). In all cases the individuals were women or children.

At the same time, a series of skeletons were found in "unnatural" positions, suggesting they were rather "thrown" than deposited. These are the instances of *individuals 8* and *9* (male) found in pit S6-7 in ventral decubitus, their skulls on the bottom and legs towards the opening of the pit (Fig. 4). The same practice of body abandonment was observed in the case of other three males (*individuals 14-16*) found on the bottom of pit A3-1 (Fig. 10), or of other two (*individuals 17-18*) identified in the filling of complexes A11-3 (Fig. 14: 1-2) and A11-4 (Fig. 14: 3-4). Such observations can be extended to *individuals 23* and *26* (female) found in pits B27-6 (Fig. 22) and D21-1 (Fig. 25).

Given the wide range of practices of human body deposition, it's difficult to imagine the existence of any rules regarding the alignment of the dead (Table 1). However, not long ago, we noticed that NNW-SSE, NW-SE and E-W alignment is exclusive to skeletons found in dorsal decubitus, while NNE-SSW, SSW-NNE and SW-NE are specific only to flexed bodies. In the graphic below, including data on all known EIA burials at the Lower Danube, we notice that the most common alignment is to N-NE (Fig. 28) (Ailincăi 2013a – the graphic also includes the finds at Enisala).

Table 1. Alignment of bodies deposited in the settlement of Enisala – Palanca

	N	NNE	NE	ENE	E	SE	SW	WSW	W	NW
Flexed positions	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	0
Dorsal decubitus	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Ventral decubitus	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Total	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	3	1

The analysis of the alignment of the bodies at Enisala, but especially in overall Babadag culture, shows a tendency of flexed body deposition to N, NNE, NE and SE. The bodies in dorsal or, especially, ventral decubitus are aligned rather heterogeneously.

Funerary inventory is not a constant, either. Practically, besides dwelling B14-11 where a large quantity of pottery was found, including some whole vessels on the floor (Fig. 19–20), most pits contained scarce archaeological material. In some cases we found almost complete cups (Fig. 6: 4; 9: 4) or various clay (Fig. 4: 3; 23: 3), bone (Fig. 3: 10; 4: 2) and stone (Fig. 3: 8–9, 12; 8: 2) artefacts, but they were not directly connected to the bodies, being found in the filling.

Anthropological observations

Age and Sex

The rather large number of individuals found at Enisala gives room for considerations regarding the age and sex of the persons buried in the settlement. Table 2 and Fig. 29 indicate the existence of individuals from *Infans* I and II, *Adultus* to *Maturus*. Though most of them were adult subjects, we cannot ignore the rather elevated number of children (19.23%). Sex distribution is also balanced: 11 males and 9 females out of 20 individuals of determinable sex.

These observations, also valid for the overall known anthropological data of EIA individuals at the Lower Danube, confirm the absence of sex-related selection rules and the main ratio of adult and mature subjects (Ailincăi 2008a, 28–29).

Table 2. Enisala. Sex, age and stature

Enisala – <i>Palanca</i>	Sex	Age (years)	Stature (cm)
Individual 1	M	18-22	-
Individual 2	Ind.	20-50	-
Individual 3	Ind.	5-6	-
Individual 4	Ind.	0.5-1.5	-
Individual 5	Ind.	5-10	-
Individual 6	M	32-34	161.01±3.3 cm (right hum.)
Individual 7	F	20-40	-
Individual 8	M	40-45	160.72±3.3 cm (right hum.)
Individual 9	M	19-20	168.17±3.3 cm (left fem.)
Individual 10	M	35-40	164.04±3.3 cm (left fem.)
Individual 11	Ind.	12-13	128.24±12.4 cm (left fem.)
Individual 12	F	35-40	152.72±3.3 cm (right fem.)
Individual 13	F	35-45	149.41±3.3 cm (right fem.)
Individual 14	M	20-25	164.79±3.3 cm (left fem.)
Individual 15	M	33-42	160.84±3.3 cm (left fem.)
Individual 16	M	26-35	159.52±3.3 cm (left fem.)
Individual 17	M	33-45	163.47±3.3 cm (left fem.)
Individual 18	M	23-32	168.17±3.3 cm (left fem.)
Individual 19	F	35-40	155.06±3.3 cm (left fem.)
Individual 20	Ind.	5-6	-
Individual 21	F	35-45	-
Individual 22	F	30-32	-
Individual 23	F	30-46	151.55±3.3 cm (left fem.)
Individual 24	F	30-40	-
Individual 25	F	43-58	146.09±3.3 cm (right fem.)
Individual 26	M	33-42	161.59±3.3 cm (right fem.)

Stature

The stature of the individuals found in the settlement at Enisala could be calculated in 16 cases: 15 were adults or matures (10 men and 5 women), and one subadult (Table 2). Average stature of the females is 150.97 cm, and 166.11 cm of the males.

Pathology

The anthropological analysis underlined the existence of certain diseases that left marks on the bones. Such diseases have been documented in several cases of anthropological analyses on EIA individuals at the Lower Danube (Ailincăi *et al.* 2003; Ailincăi *et al.* 2006; Ailincăi 2008a, 29; Mirițoiu, Constantinescu 2008; Stojanov 1997; Ailincăi *et al.* 2014, 278–280; Ailincăi *et al.* 2015). In several instances, individuals of both sexes show signs of healing of *Cibra cranii* (*individual 8-10, 14-16, 26*) (Steckel *et al.* 2006, 12–14, fig. 8–9). Except for the subadults and *individual 22*, the adults show slight signs of osteoarthritis on the long bones' epiphyses (Steckel *et al.* 2006, 31–33, fig. 27–29), while *individuals 10, 14, 16-17, 23-24* and *26* exhibit pronounced signs of osteoarthritis of the upper and lower limbs' articulations and on the spine.

The presence of *Schmorl's nodes* (Mann, Hunt 2005, 95–95, fig. 83–84) on the vertebrae of *individuals 14, 16* and *17* and the signs of healed osteoperiostitis on the lower limbs of *individuals 9, 12, 14-18, 24* are particularly interesting. In two instances, *individuals 14* and *16*, the infection was much more pronounced (spread over more than half of the diaphysis, causing cortical expansion and pronounced deformity of the bone surface) (Steckel *et al.* 2006, 30–31, fig. 26). *Individual 17* shows signs of healed infection including on the diaphyses of the humeri.

Signs of violence and violent death

What draws attention to the finds at Enisala is the high incidence of perimortem injuries. Signs of violence were found on 9 out of the 26 identified individuals: *individuals 8-10, 14-18, 26*.

The study of the traumas indicates two types of weapons. In most cases, the injury was inflicted with sharp bladed objects (swords/sabers ?) that left deep marks in the skulls and limbs of male *individuals 8, 9* and *10*. *Individuals 15* and *17* were victims of attempted beheading. Almost without exception, these blows were lethal and repeated. In other cases, the weapons are blunt objects that caused circular fractures, as seen at female *individuals 24* (Fig. 24) and *26*, or fractures of the ribs, skull and limbs (*individuals 10* and *16*).

The pathologies related to both intense physical activity during their lifetime (Schmorl's nodes, pronounced osteoarthritis) and infections (osteoperiostitis) were mainly found at male individuals, who also exhibited signs of violent traumas. Along with the presence of healed fractures (on the cranium and nasal bones, ribs and long bones), this can point to harsher life conditions for males, intense physical effort or even warrior activities that caused predisposition to infections and transformations of certain skeleton parts.

CONCLUSIONS

The diverse contexts of the human bone finds in the settlement at Enisala draws attention to the complexity of this funerary conduct. Following the archaeological research from 2003, 2010 and 2013, 16 complexes were excavated containing bones from 26 individuals of different ages and sexes. In this respect, the settlement at Enisala — *Palanca* has provided a great amount of data regarding burials in EIA settlements at the Lower Danube, comparable to the data from the settlements of Babadag (Ailincăi *et al.* 2005–2006) or Niculițel — *Cornet* (Ailincăi 2008b).

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Burials in settlements are a special funerary practice, documented worldwide, in various ages and contexts. A matter of intense debate concerns the status of the individuals deposited inside settlements. Leaving some exceptional finds aside — such as grave circles A and B in Mycenae, proving the particular social status of the buried, the bones found in domestic context were often considered human sacrifices or persons of lower social status, such as slaves, war prisoners, heretics, pariahs, convicts, *etc.* (Villes 1987; Boulestin, Baray 2010, 13–27; Pavel 2013; Aspöck 2013).

It is undoubtedly difficult, if not impossible, to identify a certain category of individuals that were especially selected for these depositions in Early Iron Age settlements at the Lower Danube in general, and at Enisala settlement in particular. As concluded from the above, deposition of men and women is rather balanced. It is a diverse group in terms of age; though adult individuals prevail, bones from children or elders were also identified.

We paid close attention to the numerous perimortem traumas encountered at Enisala, proving that many of these individuals suffered a violent death. This data completes the already known cases from Jurilovca (Ailincăi *et al.* 2003, 314–315), Babadag (Ailincăi *et al.* 2006), Niculițel (Ailincăi 2008b; Mirițoiu, Constantinescu 2008) or Bucu (Ailincăi *et al.* 2015). Furthermore, all male individuals exhibiting signs of violence have above average statures for individuals in EIA sites in south-eastern Romania (Ailincăi *et al.* 2003; Ailincăi *et al.* 2006; Ailincăi 2008a, 29; Mirițoiu, Constantinescu 2008; Stojanov 1997; Ailincăi *et al.* 2014, 278–280; Ailincăi *et al.* 2015). The signs of healed injury (mostly resulted from interpersonal violence), the higher stature, the signs of more intense physical effort and their violent death could constitute clues to their military profession. Even so, it is almost impossible to establish a certain link between violent death and burials in settlements.

Though the sharp and blunt force traumas mainly appear on male individuals, injuries identified on females (*individuals 23-25*) — healed parietal and occipital depressions — can generally be associated, by their shape and place on the skull, with various forms of domestic or interpersonal violence (Walker 1997).

*

The bodies were deposited in structures of various sizes, and bones were found on the bottom of the pits or in the filling. Like in other cases, the depositions are not concentrated in a certain living area, but appear spread randomly over the site. The dead were deposited with standard inventory, but no clear rule becomes apparent regarding their position or alignment.

Such *macabre* finds seem common in Babadag culture settlements. Their number and complexity increases in direct ratio with the investigated surface. The various states of preservation and representation and the existing proofs of violent death give us additional clues to re-enacting the ritual(s) of the direct burial or exposure/decomposition and manipulation of human remains in the settlements.

As underlined so far, most of the burials in Enisala settlement consisted of complete bodies (*individuals 8-9, 11-19, 23 and 26*) (Fig. 27), deposited either on the bottom or in the filling of the pits. The position and state of representation of these individuals indicate initial deposition, burial shortly after death, without any clues as to subsequent deliberate interventions on the body. For some of these individuals, the careful deposition of the body is obvious, while others seem to have been simply “thrown” into the pit. Though we cannot generalize it, it’s interesting that most individuals with perimortem traumas were found in anatomical position.

Another category of finds consisting of parts of skeletons, more or less in anatomical position, skulls or isolated bones (Fig. 27) was subject to a process of exposure-decomposition-manipulation of the bodies/skeletons. Given the position and state of representation of the remains, we can assume the existence of both initial and secondary (subsequent) body deposition places.

In this respect, not long ago, we noticed, following anthropological analyses, that individuals buried in settlements, were not dismembered with sharp objects and did not show signs of carnivorous animal attacks. Therefore we can assume that the presence of parts of bodies and isolated bones in some complexes is due to prolonged exposure of the bodies, leading to the decay of the soft parts, dryness and stiffness of ligaments, while subsequent manoeuvres caused skeleton fragmentation. The absence of signs of animal intervention shows that the bodies were sheltered or placed on platforms of difficult access, or inside living spaces (dwellings and especially dug pits) (Ailincăi 2013a).

In this respect, dwelling B14-11 and pit C16-1 can be considered initial places intended for deposition-decomposition of the bodies. In both cases, besides identifying remains from several individuals in these locations, we were struck by the fact that *individuals 21 and 24* (both females), despite correct anatomical position, were missing several bones due to brutal interventions (Fig. 19, 23). Direct access to bodies while sheltering them from predators could have been provided by erecting a structure above the ground, like in the case of B14-11 hut.

The hypothesis of exposure in open air in pit C16-1 instead of inhumation is supported by *individual 24*, showing teeth marks of rodents. In this case we need to assume the existence of restricted access to such pits, probably similar to EIA settlements at Middle Dnestr, Neporotiv II (Krušel`nicka 1998, fig. 14, 89; Kašuba 2008) or Saharna — *Dealul Mănăstirii* (Niculiță, Niciu 2013).

Undoubtedly, part of the isolated broken bones can be the result of unintended interventions, as noticed in the case of complex B12-11 (*individual 12*). However the existence of isolated bones and of body parts in anatomical position (*individuals 1, 20*) or skulls (*individual 22*) seems to be the result of deliberate interventions over the bodies during the decomposition process, by “extracting” certain body parts and depositing them in another context. Such manipulations probably also interfered with bones from other individuals, as seen in pit SII-8 (*cat. no. 1*).

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Such practices of exposure-decomposition-manipulation or inhumation-exhumation applied to the human body after death are often encountered in EIA in the Carpathians-Balkans areal (Șirbu 1994; Șirbu 1997; Ailincăi, Mirițoiu, Soficaru 2006; Ailincăi 2008a; Király 2012, 120 *et seq.*) and beyond (from recent papers, see: Baray, Boulestin 2010; Müller-Scheeßel 2013; Osterholtz *et al.* 2014).

Among the recent finds (Larina, Kašuba 2005; Larina 2005; Gogâltan *et al.* 2008; Urák, Marta 2011; Nagy, Gogâltan 2012; Niculiță, Niciu 2013), we’d draw attention to the exceptional finds from Pusztataskony-Ledence I (eastern Hungary), where three large pits, especially dug or prepared to shelter remains of several individuals in various states of decay. The observations and soil analyses determined the authors of the finds to consider these structures a secondary place of deposition (Király *et al.* 2013, 307–326).

Another complex situation was encountered in the “sanctuary” of Glinjeni, Republic of Moldova, where 36 pits with human skeletons and isolated bones were found, many of the skull fragments showing signs of “processing” (Kašuba 2008).

The same variety of states of representation of the body, due to complicated postmortem treatment, was recently pointed out in southern Balkans, at Svilengrad, where the researchers found 19 pits containing remains from 22 individuals (Nekhrizov, Tzvetkova 2012).

Evidence of this old “macabre” connection with the dead also came from the few necropolises identified in this area. Post-burial interventions on the dead, on the occasion of secondary burials or on other occasions were reported at the Lower Danube in Sboryanovo (NE Bulgaria) (Stojanov 1997), barrow 2 from Meri (Moscalu 1976, 77–86; Moscalu 1977–1979, 163–169) or the necropolis at Zimnicea (Wallachia region, Romania; Alexandrescu 1977, 115–124, fig. 2).

We encounter a similar situation in burial 7 at Prăjeni (Moldavia region, Romania), which contained a gravely disturbed human skeleton with inventory consisting of three pottery vessels and one bronze pin (Ursulescu, Șandurschi 2004, 45–56).

More similar cases were reported in most necropolises attributed to Saharna-Solonceni culture (Smirnov 1955; Lăpușnean *et al.* 1974; Kashuba 2000; Kashuba 2014) and even to Belozerka culture (Levițki 2003, 73–75).

A special, completely exceptional case was encountered in Foltești necropolis. Most individuals deposited there were not in anatomical position, due to prior manipulation of the bones. Thus, out of 9 researched graves, only grave no. 8 contained double burials, with one of the individuals deposited flexed on the right side, in anatomical position. In the rest of the cases, the bones were dislocated from their natural position (László 2006, 105). This situation can be seen as clear evidence of re-inhumation or final deposition of individuals that were first left to decompose someplace else..., such as inside settlements. Unfortunately, due to insufficient anthropological research we cannot use further data from Foltești necropolis.

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Though important due to their complexity, the finds at Enisala settlement still don't solve the mystery of the complicated treatment applied to the dead in EIA at the Lower Danube and in the entire Carpathian-Balkans region. The finds so far reveal an intense involvement of these communities in activities that resulted in direct contact with human bodies or bones, both in areas intended for the dead (necropolises), in sanctuaries, and — especially — in settlements.

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