

This monograph presents the final report on Pilismarót-Basaharc, one of the most remarkable cemeteries of the Late Copper Age in the Carpathian Basin. The 110 cremated burials of the cemetery were excavated by István Torma.

The interpretation of cemeteries as ritual spaces only gained ground in Hungarian research during the past few years. Cemeteries can be assigned to the cognitive sphere in this sense, and some scholars believe that this sphere cannot be decoded using conventional archaeological approaches and methods because its symbolism will always elude scholarship. However, this is not the case. While cemeteries are certainly not the direct continuation of one-time life, they are ritual, mystical spaces that have preserved various imprints of former beliefs, ceremonies and rites.

THE LATE COPPER AGE CEMETERY AT
Pilismarót-Basaharc

ISTVÁN TORMA'S EXCAVATIONS (1967, 1969–1972)

*
by MÁRIA BONDÁR

This book presents a description of the burials, a typological analysis of the grave goods and a meticulous examination of the burial rites practiced by the community using the cemetery. The process of miniaturisation is reflected by several items in the grave inventories (miniature vessels, various small finds, animal figurines and a wagon model). In the literate civilisations of Antiquity, miniature objects have a clear association with funerary rites, with the perhaps best-documented evidence coming from ancient Egypt, where miniature objects and models had a ritual meaning and were believed to link the present with eternity.

The archaeological chapters are supplemented with the physical anthropological analysis of the human cremated remains and with the radiocarbon dates made on calcined bones as well as with studies on the lithic material and the animal bone sample.



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Mária Bondár

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ISTVÁN TORMA'S EXCAVATIONS (1967, 1969–1972)

with contributions by

Katalin T. Biró, Erika Gál, Derek Hamilton,
Kitti Köhler and István Torma

Institute of Archaeology, Research Centre for the Humanities,
Hungarian Academy of Sciences

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View of the excavation (photo by Miklós Hannos 1972)

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