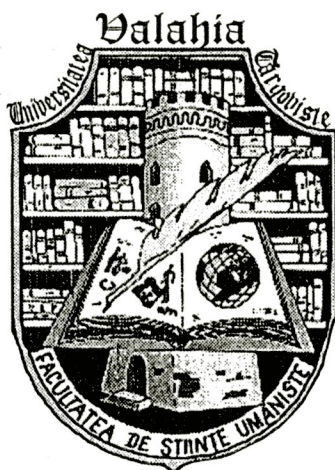


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## THE RELATION BETWEEN POPULATION GROUPS IN THE BRONZE AGE OR HALLSTATT AND PRECEDING OR CONTEMPORARY ONES, WITH CONSEQUENCES UPON THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OR CEPHALIC INDEX OF THE COMMUNITIES ON THE TERRITORY OF ROMANIA

*Alexandra Comşa\**

Anthropologically speaking, Bronze Age is one of the well known time sequences of the Romanian prehistory. Still, in comparison with the Neolithic, when cremation was seldom employed (Crişan 1960, 170; Ursulescu 1994, 141-146), during the mentioned period that funerary rite has enhanced its weight in the necropolises. This significant modification was determined by a deep change in the religious conceptions of the communities, which has gradually spread and became almost generalized in Hallstatt. Such a shift has exerted a certain influence upon the information quantity that could be obtained by anthropologists when they studied cremation cemeteries. Thus, the possibility of obtaining a certain typology of the buried individuals was excluded. In such a situation, specialists have restricted their work at the sex and age estimation, which, by all means, provide de opportunity of inferring some conclusions regarding some social and demographic aspects of the analysed tribes.

In the following lines, we will study some anthropological features and interrelations that exerted a certain influence upon the populations on the territory of Romania.

As it is well known, the Neolithic communities were characterized by the prevalence of the mediterranoïd type, followed by the protoeuropoid one. The dinaroid and alpine elements were less represented, the last one being attested by the find in burial no. 2 at Gura Baciului, belonging to the Criş Culture (Necrasov et al. 1990, 177, 179).

In the Early Bronze Age, a continuation of the anthropological structure existing in the Neolithic was observed. During the transitional period to this epoch, the existence of some dinaroid forms was detected at the bearers of the tumular ochre burials (the necropolis at Holboca). They also appeared in the Cucuteni Culture, in the site at Traian (Necrasov, Cristescu 1957, 112sq., 116-138; Mantu et al. 1994, 226) They had close analogies in Anatolia, clearly indicating the direction of penetration for these forms in Romania. Their disappearance in the populations of the Bronze Age points to the assimilation of this kind of dinaroids by the local populations.

Also connected to the bearers of the tumular ochre burials is the substantial decrease of the cephalic index in the communities located in the extra-Carpathian area where the nomadic communities have penetrated. An explanation of this phenomenon resides in the massif presence of the individuals with narrow or very narrow skull in the first mentioned populations. their influence has also induced a numerical growth of the nordic elements in the tribes that assimilated them. Even if their penetration on the

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territory of Romania took place gradually, the number of individuals must have been sufficiently high in order to exert an influence upon the cephalic index of the locals.

The bearers of the Globular Amphorae Culture, who came from Voliny and Podoly were dated in the transitional period to the Bronze Age too. They were predominantly brachycranians, namely they had a rounded skull. On the territory of Romania they are distributed in two distinct areas, an eastern and a western one. Each one of them has a different average of the cephalic index. Interesting is the fact that the rounding of the skull appeared in the western group more by a shortening of the skull than by its enlargement, while in the eastern group its length remains the same, while the skull gets larger (O. Necrasov et al. 1990, 198). Due to the insufficient anthropological data regarding the tribes who inhabited Moldova during the Early Bronze Age, we cannot certainly detect the effect of the brachycranian individuals of the Globular Amphorae Culture upon the communities they have mixed with.

In the Middle Bronze Age, some other allogenic elements appeared, exerting some regional influences, of lesser or higher amplitude.

One of them comes from the Catacombs (Catacombnaia) Culture, whose bearers had mostly a rounded head. Some brachycranian individuals have been found at Smeeni (Buzău County). Yet, in our opinion, they must have also existed in the Monteoru necropolis at Căndești where, the ritual of the so-called "nook" pits by their funerary ritual, point to the presence of such burials. Besides, as noticed by the archaeologist who made the excavations there "*those inhumed in "nook pits" were massif individuals of very high stature which were in contrast with the others, of gracile mediterranean type, uncovered in most of the burials at Căndești*" (Florescu 1978, 112sq.). Of course, such a hypothesis should be confirmed by the anthropological study of that cemetery, which was not yet completed, provided that a large number of individuals have to be examined. An isolated burial that was also assigned to the mentioned culture was uncovered at Vânători (Galați County). The individual found there was an adolescent of 17-18 years, with a massif skeleton and outlined muscle insertions. Its cephalic index was of dolicrocranian type (71,87) (Brudiu 1985, 240; Perianu 1988, 132-133 and table 1).

Out of the Gârla Mare Culture just two out of more than 50 known cemeteries have been investigated by now. As the cremation funerary rite was exclusively employed, just information regarding the age and sex of the individuals could be obtained. Alike other analysed necropolises of the Bronze Age a high infant mortality could be observed, that declined while those individuals advanced in age. The Gârla Mare Culture is part of a complex and vast European phenomenon, which is called the Urnfield Culture and crosses the continent from Northwest to Southeast. This is why the better knowledge about the anthropological structure of those tribes and their influence upon the local population would have been highly interesting, but it cannot be obtained, due to destruction of the corpses by burning.

Another interesting aspect regarding the mixture between the local and allogenic populations was found at Smeeni in burials belonging to the Tei Culture. Two individuals (no. 7 and 25) found there were anthropologically analysed. Their features and general aspect of the skeleton had indicated that those skeletons belonged to the female sex, were of mature age and gracile as appearance. The typology was determined as a mixture of mediterranean and protoeuropoid characters, the former being predominant (Necrasov 1964, 24-26).

These burials were under a hot and long lasting debate, with regard to their cultural assigning. Most of the archaeologists considered them as belonging to the Tei Culture, others to the bearers of the tumular ochre burials, existing also a supposition that they could be assigned to the Monteoru Culture. The archaeologist Valeriu Leahu has considered that, due to their different features in comparison with other finds of the Tei Culture, those two skeletons might belong to local women who were captives in the mass of the eastern communities (Leahu 1987, 50). Of course, this is just a hypothesis, which might be, or not anthropologically sustained. The future studies undertaken in this field will provide further information about this kind of situation.

One of the most important civilizations of the Late Bronze Age is the Noua Culture. We have studied the evolution of the cephalic index on the range of this civilisation, which covered Republic of Moldova, Romania and the Ukraine. We could notice that the mentioned index has varied from one region to another, increasing from east to west, namely from Republic of Moldova to Transylvania (Romania). Besides, the protoeuropoid type that often appeared north of the Black Sea, was less and less represented westwards. It seems that on the territory of Republic of Moldova the local population, belonging to the Cucuteni-Tripolie Culture was either displaced or assimilated by the bearers of the tumular ochre burials, because none of its specific anthropological traits were found there, in the necropolis at Bedragii Vechi. As in the mentioned cemetery the protoeuropoids were exclusively represented, a population movement coming from west was excluded, because a strong core of this anthropological type existed right on the territories north of the Black Sea. Yet, it seems that the bearers of the tumular ochre burials who came on the territory of Romania have determined a kind of counter flow, that would explain the existence of the narrow face individuals in the Belozerka Culture, in the necropolis at Sirokoe (Republic of Moldova).

In Romania, the persistence of the mediterranean stock of population has been expressed in various gradients, according to the region and to the distance existing between the respective community and the initial core of the Noua civilisation, located in the Republic of Moldova. Thus, in the Romanian Moldova, the cephalic index is dolicocephalic or mezocephalic and sometimes features belonging to the bearers of the tumular ochre burials or to the Srubno-Hvalinsk Culture are to be found. A relevant example is the cemetery at Truşeşti, where, due to the homogeneity of the series, in which protonordoids prevailed in mixture with protoeuropoid elements, while mediterraneans were scarce, the respective community was considered to have been an enclave of the steppe populations. As soon as we cross the Carpathians into Transylvania, in the same Noua Culture, we find brachycephalic individuals. As we don't know which was the typology of the Wietenberg Culture that was in contact with the Noua civilisation, due to the practise of cremation, we could presume that such an increase of the cephalic index was determined by the contacts with the bearers of the Otomani Culture, who had rounded skulls. So, as we can see, the range of the Noua Culture was a zone of permanent contacts and cultural syntheses, between two or several types of populations, fact which is clearly detectable in the anthropological features of its tribes (Comşa 1998, 57-61).

Returning to the allogenic Otomani Culture, we could emphasize its strong influence upon the local population because, both in the Late Bronze Age and in the subsequent periods the cephalic index of the populations in Transylvania was stressed brachycephalic, in comparison with other regions of Romania, where it was mezocranian or doliocranian.

During the Hallstatt period, due to the practise on large scale of cremation, the information regarding the anthropological structure and the cephalic index is scarce, being provided just by the necropolises in which the inhumation rite was maintained.

In Oltenia, for instance, two important cemeteries have been uncovered: one at Balta Verde (Dolj County) and the other one at Gogoşu (Dolj County). If the necropolis at Balta Verde belongs to warriors, the one at Gogoşu came from a peaceful community. Being studied both the anthropological features of the mentioned series and the funerary ritual, it could be drawn the conclusion that, as those two necropolises were in a region of interference with the Illyrian world, they have belonged to the respective communities. It seems that some Illyrian tribes have left the territory of today Slovenia, heading towards Romania, where they settled. Such a theory is also sustained by the elements of the funerary ritual and by the inventory in the burials of those two cemeteries (Harasim 1958, 47-71).

As regards the contact with the Scythian populations, a regional variability could be noticed on the territory of Romania. In the finds at Ciumbrud (Alba County) and Cozia (Iaşi County) were discovered individuals who came from a "scythized" population, who had similarities with the skeletons at Cavaclar (Tulcea County) in Dobrogea and those in the former Soviet Union. Those communities comprised a significant number of brachycranians. This fact was not consistent with the small cephalic index that usually appeared in the Scythian populations. On the other hand, this situation is perfectly explainable by the presence in large number of the brachycranians on the territory of Transylvania beginning with the Bronze Age.

At Cavaclar, in Dobrogea, those 4 anthropologically analysed skulls (2 males and 2 females) have provided a mezcocranian cephalic index. It is considered that, due to the existence of the mediterranean traits on the female skeletons they must have belonged to the autochthonous population, while the male individuals are Scythians, coming from a community that originated in the territories north of the Black Sea. (Maximilian 1959, 47-64). In fact, Dobrogea was always a zone of ethnic interferences between various allogenic or local populations. A relevant example in this sense is the necropolis at Histria-Bent where, the anthropological features of the series indicate the existence of a local Thracian-Getic population stock, without being excluded some morphologic elements that account for the contacts with a Greek community. The Scythian component was not significantly represented in that series (Miu et al. 1982, 9-14; Miu 1998, 7, 14-17).

As we could find from the lines above, Bronze Age and Hallstatt periods were characterised by population movements or at least contacts between local or allogenic communities, on the territory of Romania. Things are better understood when considering the neighbouring regions that were crossed by nomadic tribes or where settled communities were located and displaced from various reasons. Corroborating the information obtained in the future research by archaeologists and anthropologists, the picture of the tribes repartition in the Bronze Age and Hallstatt, together with their interrelations and anthropological composition will be partly or fully reconstructed.



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