

SÁNDOR BERECKI

THE BRONZE AGE SITE FROM LUDUŞ

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THE BRONZE AGE SITE FROM LUDUŞ

with special reports by

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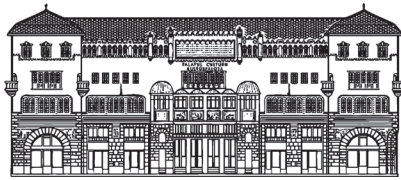
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For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? For who can tell a man what will be after him under the sun?

Ecclesiastes 6:11–12.

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Târgu Mureş
June 2016

FOREWORD

The news of the discovery of a previously unknown cemetery assigned to a Wietenberg community, revealed in Luduș in the summer of 2009, determined me to visit the site at once. Even as the first graves were investigated, the attitude showed by the beneficiary towards the archaeologists denoted only impatience and contempt. However, the enthusiasm and determination expressed by Sándor Berecki and Zalán Gyórfi were strong enough to overcome such petty obstacles. Vital information, which would have otherwise been lost forever due to the lack of interest showed by so many developers in regards to the past, was saved.

All the information recovered from the site, which was already affected by modern interventions by the time the investigations began, has been included between the covers of the present book. The chance to investigate a prehistoric community through both its settlement and its cemetery is, indeed, a rare one. Even if the settlement was a modest one and the cemetery had only around 30 graves, the importance of this discovery remains, nevertheless, major. Such sites are essential in deciphering and understanding the mysteries of the archaeological culture known in the specialized literature as Wietenberg, characterized especially by settlements as the one under debate here. The location of the habitation from Luduș *Fabrica de Cânepă* (Eng. *Hemp Factory*) along the middle Mureș Valley facilitated its connection with the western world, found between the Criș Rivers and along the Tisa River, reaching even areas as far as the Danube. Only in this way can we explain the presence of a bronze lunular pendant in one of the graves from Luduș. Subsequently, at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, the area underwent important transformations under the influence of settlers coming from over the Oriental Carpathians, setting the stage for a new cultural environment.

Closely examining the book, the interested reader will notice that this is not a simple site monograph, as the authors managed to offer a more complex synthesis on aspects concerning the cultural evolutions which flourished in Transylvania between 1800 and 1400 BC. Through the frequent analogies, one finds itself well connected to relevant contemporaneous social and cultural manifestations, including thus a larger area in the study. One of the main characteristics of the Bronze Age is, once again, highlighted: the constant dispersal of individuals and ideas, which made the development of a unitary ceramic style possible, spread over the whole intra-Carpathian area. The ritual dimension, including funerary practices, proves as well similar sensibilities.

The inspiration showed by Sándor Berecki in gathering around him a team of specialists is also noteworthy, fact which led to the publishing of the site from Luduș in an exemplary manner. Imola Kelemen analyzed the animal bone assemblages, while processed bones, such as tools and adornments, were studied by Corneliu Beldiman and Diana-Maria Sztancs. Without the rigorous anthropological analysis conducted by Szilárd Sándor Gál, the reconstruction of funerary rites and rituals would not have been possible. Furthermore, the mineralogical and petrographic characterizations of ceramics, as well as several remarkable conclusions, were offered by Carmen Stâncel. While denoting his typical professionalism, Rezi Botond discussed the few discovered metal artefacts and their chronological settings. The radiocarbon analysis completed in Romania at the *RoAMS laboratory at Tandem Accelerators Department of Horia Hulubei National Institute for R&D in Physics and Nuclear Engineering* from Măgurele is, indeed, a promising perspective. Even if the results are subject to a few corrections, a first step in developing a national project was already made through the contributions of Corina Simion and Tiberiu Sava.

The reading of this book proves to be delightful, as new archaeological data, well documented and carefully described, are abundant throughout its pages. My personal joy is even greater, considering my frequent collaborations started years ago with most of the authors, several initiated as young students.

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