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# Babies Reborn: Infant/Child Burials in Pre- and Protohistory

Edited by

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# A LONG WAY TO THE WEST: EARLIEST JAR BURIALS IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE AND THE NEAR EAST

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**Abstract:** *Appearing in the early – although probably not the earliest – phases of southeast European neolithization, jar burial developed in several territorially and chronologically restricted “waves”: Neolithic core area in the Struma and Vardar river valleys and the west Rhodope Mountains in the beginning of the 6th millennium BC, and later, late/final Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and/or early Bronze Age – depending on local terminology – examples scattered from Argolis in Greece to the Great Hungarian Plain and dating from the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>th</sup> millennium BC, with huge chronological gaps within. However, their central Anatolian and Levantine parallels give a solid base for the expanding of our understanding of this obviously cross-cultural phenomenon.*

**Key words:** *Southeast Europe, Anatolia, Levant, jar burial, neolithization*

**Résumé:** *Les sépultures en vases apparaissent pendant les phases si non les plus anciens, au moins anciens de la néolithisation de l'Europe du sud-est. Elles se développent en certaines ‘vagues’ qui sont territorialement et chronologiquement restreintes: le noyau néolithique comprend les vallées des rivières Struma et Vardar et les parties ouest des Rhodopes. Sa position chronologique date au début de VI millénaire BC. Plus tard, pendant le Néolithique récent/finale et/ou Chalcolithique et Bronze Ancien (selon la terminologie locale), les exemples de ces sépultures se dispersent de l'Argolide en Grèce jusqu'à la grande plaine hongroise. Les termes chronologiques de ce processus sont: de la deuxième moitié du VI millénaire BC au III millénaire BC avec un grand intervalle intermédiaire. Ces sépultures trouvent des parallèles en Anatolie centrale et au Levant, ce qui donne une base assez solide pour étendre notre compréhension sur ce phénomène intra culturelle.*

**Mots-clés:** *l'Europe du sud-est, Anatolie, Levant, sépultures en jarre, néolithisation*

## INTRODUCTION

Southeast European later prehistory yielded a relatively scanty mortuary record but one that demonstrates the relevance of certain phenomena to the general understanding of prehistoric development. Appearing in the early phases of southeast European neolithization, although certainly not the earliest ones, jar burial developed in several territorially and chronologically restricted “waves”: a Neolithic core area in the Struma and Vardar river valleys and the west Rhodope Mountains in the early sixth millennium BC, and later, late/final Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and/or early Bronze Age – depending on local terminology – developments scattered from Argolis in Greece to Transdanubia in Hungary and dating from the late sixth to the third millennium BC, with huge chronological gaps within. Their Anatolian and Levantine parallels give a solid ground to the expanding of our understanding of this obviously cross-cultural phenomenon.

This paper considers the appearance of early jar burial tradition on the background of southeast European neolithization, and traces it back to the primary distribution zones, following the directions of its early developments, in a chronological framework spanning the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and the early Bronze Age, in terms of southeast Balkan chronology, i.e., the time from the early sixth to the mid-third millennium BC. For the purposes of this paper, the term “jar burial” is defined as primary burial in a ceramic vessel, not to be mistaken with the contemporaneous secondary and cremation burials that can also use ceramic containers.

## SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN JAR BURIAL RECORD

The earliest jar burials thus far found in southeast Europe – and throughout Europe, for that matter – come from early Neolithic sites in the Struma and Vardar valleys as well as the West Rhodope Mountains, which seems to be the area of neolithization of the southeastern Balkans (Nikolov 2007).

**Kovačevo** (see Fig. 7.1 for all sites mentioned in the text)

This stratified site in the Struma River Valley covers an area of ca. 7 hectares. It has been excavated since 1980s by a joint Bulgarian-French team (Lichardus-Itten *et al.* 2002). The cultural deposits extend to a depth of ca. 2.00 meters. The partially destroyed upper layers – Kovačevo III and II – contain late Neolithic and early Bronze Age material. The lower four layers – Kovačevo Ia-Id – belong to the early Neolithic and represent a southwestern variant of the Karanovo I culture. Later periods – Iron Age, Roman, Middle Ages etc. – are sporadically present. Different periods could be distinguished within Kovačevo II and III, based on typological observation, since there was no stratigraphic evidence to separate them on the site. The four early Neolithic periods are established on the grounds of stratigraphic evidence. Several <sup>14</sup>C dates are available from the early Neolithic layers, the earliest being 6075-6005 cal BC for Kovačevo Ia, and the latest being 5800-5630 cal BC for Kovačevo Id (Reingruber & Thissen 2005).

Five burials were found in the Kovačevo I layer, generally belonging to the southwestern variant of the Karanovo I

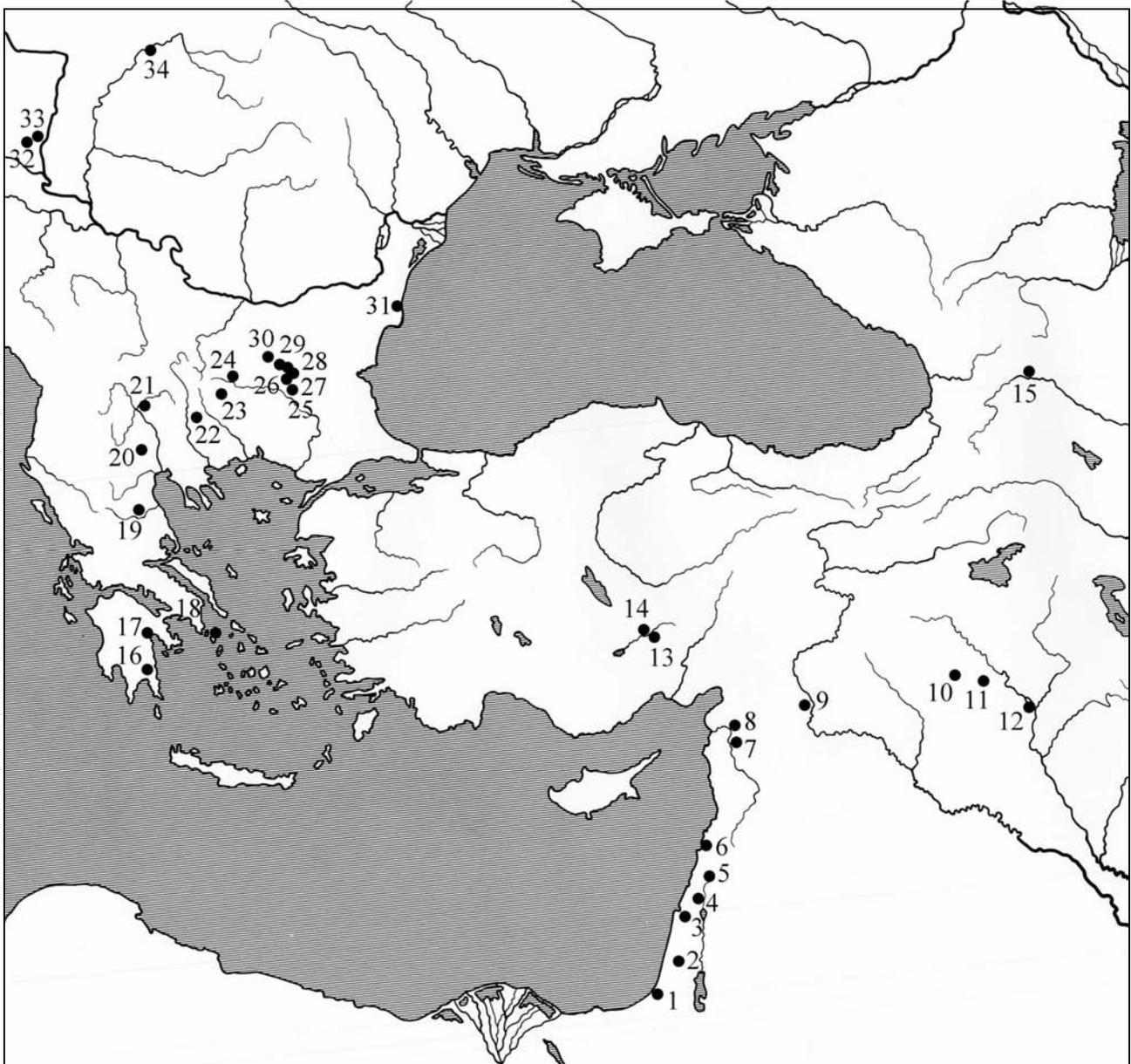


Fig. 7.1. Map showing the location of the sites mentioned in the text: 1 Tel Qatif; 2 Teluliot Batashi; 3 Nahal Zehora II; 4 Tel Te'ò; 5 Tel Dan; 6 Byblos; 7 Tell el-Kerkh; 8 Tell Kurdu; 9 Tell Halula; 10 Tell Hazna II; 11 Tell Sotto; 12 Tell Hassuna; 13 Kösk Höyük; 14 Pınarbaşı-Bor; 15 Berikldeebi; 16 Alepochori; 17 Lerna; 18 Kephala; 19 Rachmani; 20 Mandalo; 21 Anzabegovo; 22 Kovačevo; 23 Rakitovo; 24 Yunatsite; 25 Nova Zagora; 26 Galabovo; 27 Dyadovo; 28 Ezero; 29 Karanovo; 30 Kran; 31 Durankulak; 32 Mórágy-Tüzködomb; 33 Alsónyék-Kanizsa-Flur; 34 Polgár 7

culture; two more came from the layer, which the excavators define as middle Neolithic. The burials belong to just born or even stillborn infants and children up to 6.5 years. They had been interred between houses in a flexed or crouched position on the side or in a semi-seated position, and were aligned with their heads to the east, west or north. In three of the burials, it is assumed that children had been wrapped up in a thick fabric, most probably a leather bag or a mat. Various contexts in the site yielded separate fragments of human bones.

Two jar burials were found in the early Neolithic Kovačevo Id layer. The first burial belongs to a stillborn

infant, probably a boy, buried in a pot (ca. 30 cm high) covered with a clay lid. The skeleton was complete; the boy has been buried in a highly flexed position on the right side, with the head aligned to the north.

The second child burial still has to be published. It probably belongs to a very young infant, also buried in a clay pot.

**Rakitovo**

This stratified site in the west Rhodope Mountains was completely excavated in 1974-1975. It covered an area of

ca. 3300 square meters. The destroyed upper layers belonged to the late Neolithic Karanovo III-IV period and probably to the early Neolithic Karanovo I culture. Both lower layers have been preserved, extending to 0.54 m and 0.80 m depth, respectively. Both of them belonged to the Karanovo I culture (Raduncheva *et al.* 2002).

The only jar burial was found in Layer II, under the floor of house # 16, by the western wall. It belonged to a neonate, buried in a fine-ware necked jar. The soil matrix in the jar yielded grave goods, which is very rare for an early Neolithic infant burial: lumps of red ochre and a flint blade.

### **Anzabegovo**

This stratified site in the Vardar River Valley was excavated by Milutin Garašanin and Marija Gimbutas in 1969-1970 (see Gimbutas 1976; Garašanin 1998, among others). Three early Neolithic layers (Anza III-I) were revealed yielding painted pottery. Anza IV layer is generally simultaneous to Vinča A. The <sup>14</sup>C dates from Anza III-I outline a time framework between 6110 and 5460 cal BC, the relevant dates for Anza Ic showing a development right after 5900 cal BC (Reingruber & Thissen 2005).

The three early Neolithic layers and the Vinča A layer yielded skeletal remains of at least thirty four individuals – in most cases, separate bones – belonging to seventeen new-born babes and children, five juveniles, and twelve adults. Five inhumations in crouched position were excavated under house floors in M. Garašanin's trench. Infant bones were found in a pit from the Anza Ic layer; the same layer yielded a grave of two young females buried in crouched position one on the other.

A jar burial was found in the Anza Ic layer. It belonged to a neonate buried in a necked jar, whose four handles have been broken together with the bottom, most probably intentionally.

These four early Neolithic jar burials have been followed, after a chronological gap of several hundred years, by certain southeast European later Neolithic developments.

### **Ezero**

This prehistoric tell has been excavated since 1952, most recently by a joint Bulgarian-Russian project in the 1960s and early 1970s (Georgiev *et al.* 1979). Featuring a base of 200 X 145 meters and 10 meters high, it was occupied in the late Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age. Layers IV and III belong to the late Neolithic Karanovo II-III, Karanovo III, Karanovo III-IV and Karanovo IV periods. Two <sup>14</sup>C dates are available from the relevant Karanovo III layer, 5280-5070 and 5430-5280 cal BC respectively (Görsdorf & Bojadžiev 1996, 137ff).

A jar burial was found in the Southwestern trench, layer IV, horizon V (Karanovo III period), in a shallow pit under a house floor. The skeletal remains belonged to a neonate, covered by a deep dark-burnished bowl with channeling. This burial yielded a shell and a retouched flint blade.

More jar burials have been found in the Early Bronze Age layer; they will be considered separately.

### **Durankulak**

The prehistoric cemetery at Durankulak yielded more than 1200 burials. It was excavated by Henrieta Todorova in the 1980s and 1990s and belongs to Hamangia I-II, III and IV, Varna I and II-III cultures (Todorova 2002).

Two jar burials were found there belonging to the Hamangia III phase (4950/4900-4650/4600 cal BC), which has been defined as early Chalcolithic and thus contemporaneous with Maritsa I-III, Dikilitash II, Sitagroi III, classical Dimini, Boian-Vidra etc.

The first burial belonged to an infant put in two necked jars lying horizontally, with the mouths pushed close to each other. Six clay vessels have been deposited upon the burial with their bottoms up. More sherds covered the surface under the burial.

The second infant has been buried in a conical bowl, put in a larger bowl and covered with a clay lid. A cattle skull was accompanying this burial.

### **Mórágý-Túzkódomb**

This prehistoric cemetery in southern Transdanubia was excavated by István Zalai-Gaál in the 1980s and belongs to the Lengyel culture (Zalai-Gaál 2002).

Two jar burials were found in the so-called Gräbergruppe-B<sub>1</sub>. Both belong to boys (0-5 months) buried in high-pedestalled bowls, crouched on the right side, with their heads aligned to the west or southwest and facing to the south or northeast respectively. One more high-pedestalled bowl contained the skull of a girl (0-5 months).

### **Alsónyék-Kanizsa-Flur**

This Lengyel culture cemetery in southeastern Transdanubia is still being excavated by István Zalai-Gaál, in the framework of M6 motorway salvage project. One jar burial has been found thus far containing the remains of an infant, unfortunately destroyed almost completely by a bulldozer (Zalai-Gaál, pers. comm.).

### **Polgár 7 (Polgár-Kengyel-köz)**

This stratified site in the Great Hungarian Plain was excavated by Pál Raczky in 1994, in the framework of

M3 motorway salvage project. The remains belong to the Alföld Linear Pottery Culture.

A jar burial was found in one end of a big – and perhaps ritual – ditch near a long house of the AVK. The skeletal remains belonged to an infant, buried in a ca. one meter high necked knobbed jar (Raczky, pers. comm.).

### **Mandalo**

The tell site of Mandalo, Central Macedonia, is situated about twenty kilometers NW of the ancient Pella, in the foothills of Mount Paikon; it was excavated between 1981 and 1988 by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Ephoreia of Classical and Prehistoric Antiquities of Edessa on a large area covering more than 50% of the site. It was occupied in the final Neolithic and early Bronze Age (Papanthimou & Papasteriou 1993; Papefthymiou-Papanthimou & Pilali-Papasteriou 1997). Two burials were found in the final Neolithic layers (<sup>14</sup>C dated to 4600-4000 cal BC: Kotsakis *et al.* 1989), a formal inhumation under a house floor and a child burial in an open bowl covered with another bowl (both undecorated).

### **Rachmani**

This Thessalian tell was excavated by Wace and Thompson in 1910. The cultural deposits extend to a depth of more than 8 meters and yielded four layers, belonging to the Final Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (Wace & Thompson 1912). Two infant jar burials were found there, in layers II and IV respectively.

### **Lerna**

This low tell in the foothills of Mount Pontikos, near the Lerna Lake, on the western coast of Argolis, was excavated by John L. Caskey in the 1950s and yielded layers from the early, late, and final Neolithic as well as the early and middle Bronze Age (Caskey 1957).

Five burials came from the early Neolithic layer, all of them representing formal inhumations in pits and containing articulated skeletons in crouched position on their sides. A black burnished clay vessel was found near the head of a five year old child.

The final Neolithic of Lerna II yielded a neonate burial in a patterned beaker found in a layer consisting of successive floors of Neolithic houses.

### **Alepochori**

The Kouveleiki cave is located some 5 km to the south of Alepochori village in Laconia. Deep archaeological deposits were accumulated in the both chambers of the cave: the dates of 4947-3362 BC for the inner chamber, and 4922-4360 BC for the outer chamber generally refer them to the final Neolithic (Kontaxi *et al.* 2001).

The only jar burial belonged to an infant in a carinated pot with two vertical lugs inserted in an open-mouth jar tapering down to its bottom, with four horizontal lugs on the belly. The bottom has been pierced after firing, most probably in relation to its funerary use.

### **Kephala**

The site and cemetery of Kephala are located on a headland on the northwest coast of the Cycladic island of Keos; they represent the best evidence for initial settlement of the island during the second major colonization of the Aegean in the Final Neolithic (3300-3200 BC). They were excavated in the 1960s by a team from the University of Cincinnati and by John Coleman in the 1970s (Coleman 1977).

Four infant jar burials were found in the cemetery, all of them disturbed by later interments. One of these burials belonged to two infants put together in a large jar. Two female figurines were discovered as grave goods in another jar burial.

The latest chronological “wave” in the jar burial development refers to the Early Bronze Age and was restricted to a relatively small area in Upper Thrace, with only one example found in the neighboring region of Thessaly. However, these were the most numerous cases of jar burials in the later prehistory of southeast Europe.

### **Yunatsite**

This prehistoric tell has been excavated by several teams since 1939, including two joint projects, Bulgarian-Russian and Bulgarian-Greek, the latter still carrying out active research there. With a base covering 120 x 115 meters and a relative height of 12 meters, the tell yielded material dating back to the Middle Ages, the late Thracian period, the late and early Iron Age, the middle and early Bronze Age, and the late Chalcolithic (Katincharov *et al.* 1995). <sup>14</sup>C dates between 3010 and 2350 cal BC came from the relevant EBA horizons XVII-X (Görsdorf & Bojadžiev 1996, 158ff).

At Tell Yunatsite, a total of twenty-eight infant burials were found in the Early Bronze Age horizons, which refer to EBA I and II, twenty-two of them being jar burials, all related to houses (see Mishina, this volume). Nineteen jar burials represented single burials of infants, while three burials contained the bones of two babies each. Various vessel types were used as burial containers: jugs, bowls, pots with or without lugs, or even bottom parts of broken vessels. Among these, jugs clearly dominated; pots were used more rarely. Single infants were buried in amphoras and bowls. All these types are represented in the household ceramic assemblage of Tell Yunatsite. Some burial vessels were closed with lids.

### **Kran**

This small tell site in Upper Thrace, with a base of 80 x 70 meters and 5 meters high, is still being excavated

yielding material from the late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (Karastoyanova 2004). Five jar burials of babies/fetuses have been found under house floors in the EBA III layers (Nikolov *et al.* 2005, 36f; Nikolov, pers. comm.). Jugs ca. 45 centimeters high as well pots as have been used as burial containers; a flint artifact was found in the filling of one burial pit.

### Karanovo

This is one of the biggest southeast European tells, with a preserved base measuring 250 x 180 meters and cultural deposits extending to a height of 12.40 meters. It has been excavated since 1936, more recently in the framework of a Bulgarian-Austrian joint project. Cultural deposits from the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and Early Bronze Age have been revealed. The latter yielded six jar burials of newborn babies and fetuses, all of them under house floors referring to the EBA III period (Hiller & Nikolov 2002, 11, Abb. 17; Hiller *et al.* 2005, 13, Abb. 10-11). One of the burials contained a small flint artifact; in the same burial, the mouth of the ceramic vessel was sealed with a conical bowl and the pit was topped by seven stones, arranged with their flat sides up, after which its opening has been plastered.

### Dyadovo

The tell site of Dyadovo has been excavated since 1977 by two joint teams, Bulgarian-Dutch-Japanese and Bulgarian-Japanese, the latter still continuing the excavations. With a base of 220 x 150 meters, the tell is 18 meters high, yielding material from the Middle Ages, Roman period, Iron Age, Bronze Age, and Copper Age (Leshtakov 1994). The Early Bronze Age layer contains ten horizons belonging to the EBA III Ezero phase. The results of these recent campaigns have not yet been published but the preliminary reports mention several jar burials of infants in the EBA settlement area (e.g. Katincharov *et al.* 1986, 42).

### Ezero

Since this tell site has already been considered in my paper, I will detail here only the evidence from the Ezero phase of the EBA III period. During the first excavations at Tell Ezero in the early 1950s, at least four infant burials have been found, at least two of them being jar burials; the uncertainty coming from the unrecorded and unpublished excavation project. Big pots have been used as burial containers – 36 and 37 centimeters high respectively – one of which featuring an intentionally pierced bottom, most probably related to the ritual meaning of its secondary function.

The excavations of the joint Bulgarian-Russian team revealed ten infant burials in the EBA horizons, at least three of them being jar burials of infants disposed of in contracted positions (Katincharov 1979, 491, obr. 210). Big ceramic pots have been used as burial containers,

with diameters exceeding 30 centimeters, lying on their sides – and sometimes supported with stones – in pits made under house floors and sometimes even under heating installations. The pits' filling included ashes as well as coals and burnt animal bones. At least in one case, the pot has been sealed with a badly fired clay plate.

### Nova Zagora

This is the only EBA stratified site that yielded jar burials. The excavations in the late 1980s and early 1990s covered an area of 1,625 square meters in the NE part of the site. The partially destroyed cultural deposits extend to a depth of ca. 1 meter and included four building horizons dating back to the EBA III period (mid-3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C).

Six jar burials of babies have been found under house floors or between houses belonging to all four horizons (Kancheva-Russeva 2000). Although five of the ceramic vessels were too fragile to be preserved, it is clear that big pots ca. 30 centimeters high had been used as burial containers.

At one more tell site in Upper Thrace, *Tell Galabovo*, featuring late Chalcolithic, Early, and Middle Bronze Age layers, a jar burial of a baby was found in the late 1980s, interred under an EBA III house floor, near an oven (Panayotov 1991, 34f).

Concluding this general consideration, I should remind of the jar burial from the Thessalian tell of *Rachmani*, coming from the EBA horizon IV.

## DISCUSSION

As seems obvious from the evidence available, the early development of jar burial can be divided into three chronologically differentiated 'waves' alternating with periods when this specific ritual has not been practiced. The area of the Struma and Vardar river valleys, and the west Rhodope Mountains in the early 6<sup>th</sup> millennium BC – or the early Neolithic according to the southeast Balkan periodization – was the only place in Europe where jar burial was practiced, at three sites, which shared similar cultural developments and 'Neolithic packages', whatever the latter term could possibly mean. Moreover, one of the most authoritative neolithization models considers this very territory as the point of first Neolithic penetration as well as a contact zone between these early settlers and their new neighbors in the second phase of the local early Neolithic (Nikolov 2007). It is thus possible to relate the earliest jar burials in southeast Europe – whose appearance logically followed the phase of early experimentation with ceramic production and use – to these mutual exchange processes and to trace them back to their hypothetical point of origin. In Western Anatolia, however, which is considered as the home of early Neolithic painted pottery cultures in the central Balkans, no jar burials have been found, the closest parallels being the

central Anatolian tell sites of Kösk Höyük and Pınarbaşı-Bor, defined as late Neolithic and early Chalcolithic according to the Anatolian periodization (Silistreli 1989; Öztan 2003). Is this perhaps due to the excavation strategies leaving 'blind spots' in our knowledge of the Neolithic development or there is another reason associated with the directions and routes of the early neolithization? One can find certain hints in the Levantine influence on life and death at Kösk Höyük most clearly expressed in the local variant of the 'skull cult', which was observed at that Anatolian tell (Bonogofsky 2004).

To the southeast, another huge territorial gap in jar burial practice had been followed by three infant graves at Tell Kurdu in the Amuq valley, coming from the Halaf-related Amuq C phase and dating between 5900 and 5700 cal BC., i.e., more or less simultaneously with the southeast European and central Anatolian finds (Yener *et al.* 2000, 43; Özbal *et al.* 2004, 50, 70ff).

In the easternmost and southernmost parts of the study area respectively, two territories can be outlined. First, these are the sites – besides Tell Kurdu – at Tell el-Kerkh, Tell Halula, Tell Hazna II, Tell Sotto, and Tell Hassuna, in the northern Levant (Tsuneki *et al.* 1997, 9f, Pl. 2/1; Tsuneki *et al.* 1999, 18ff; Anfruns & Molist, 1998; Munchaev *et al.* 1993, 27f, ris. 2/2; 3; Bader 1989, 132ff; Lloyd & Safar 1945, 264, 267f), yielding jar burials related to certain cultural developments starting with the pre-Hassuna culture; the coarse ware thick-walled jar (with a rim diameter of more than 50 centimeters and same as high) of the burial from Tell Hazna II belongs to the most common ceramic ware for the earliest phases of Pottery Neolithic in Mesopotamia, which seems to suggest that this is one of the earliest examples of jar burial. The one year old child was buried in a highly contracted position on the right side, with the head aligned to the east. The skull was lying with the face down and according to the excavators had been detached from the body before the burial. This jar burial yielded grave goods: a small clay cup, a half of a polished stone vessel, and over two hundred beads of stone, copper and shells, most probably making up one complete necklace. The jar had been probably covered with a discoid lid of unbaked clay, fragments of which were found inside.

The second area of interest, generally covering the southern Levant, includes the somewhat later *Néolithique Ancien* layers at Byblos (Gopher & Orrelle 1995, 26; see also Orrelle, this volume) as well as the Pottery Neolithic and Wadi Raba layers at Tel Dan, Tel Te'o, Nahal Zehora II, Teluliot Batashi, and Qatif, that yielded jar burials of infants and fetuses (Gopher & Greenberg 1996, 68; Bargal & Smith 2001, 164ff; Gopher & Orrelle 1995, 27; Epstein 1984, 210f).

It is thus reasonable to assume that jar burial originated in the northern Levant, sometime in the pre-Hassuna period,

and for a relatively short time influenced culture developments as far as the central Balkans; the appearance of this mortuary practice in the southern Levant followed soon after. The absence of relevant remains in western and eastern Anatolia – bridged by the two central Anatolian sites of Kösk Höyük and Pınarbaşı-Bor – could also hint at southeast European autonomy; however, this can hardly be substantiated since the four burials in the Struma and Vardar river valleys, and the west Rhodope Mountains share common diagnostics with their Anatolian and Levantine parallels. What is more plausible is that the idea of burial of fetus/infant/child in a ceramic pot, as an element of the social reproduction and cohesion networks, was transferred along the neolithization routes and its expressions were triggered by certain stimuli, most probably natural events, as is demonstrated by the burials' contemporaneity as well as the sites' clustering both in southeast Europe and central Anatolia.

In the later Neolithic and Chalcolithic, jar burial has been further developed, reoccurring at various settlement sites as well as at cemeteries in southeast Europe, sending distinct echoes as far as southern Transdanubia (Fig. 7.2). Burial in a ceramic container was to gradually become a dominating burial practice in Anatolia and the Levant, elaborated in such forms as the pithos burial of adults, e.g., at Ilpınar in Anatolia, and at Byblos in the southern Levant. To the north, in the southern Caucasus, a baby jar burial was found at Berikldeebi, in the Kura River Valley, Kareli district, in a pre-Kura-Araxes culture context (Glonti & Dzhavahishvili 1987, 85).

The early development of burial in a ceramic vessel climaxed in the Early Bronze Age, almost completely covering Anatolia as well as the Levant, in both its forms, pithoi- and jar burials. To the north, in the southern Caucasus, a few burials in ceramic vessels appeared at sites belonging to the Kura-Araxes period in Georgia and Dagestan. In southeast Europe, however, the jar burial area drastically shrank down to a small region in Upper Thrace – with one Thessalian exception (Fig. 7.3) – although the number of graves at the various sites much exceeded the earlier cases, demonstrating once more close relations to Anatolia and the Levant, also evidenced by direct ceramic imports as well as local imitations (Leshtakov 2002).

The southeast European burial patterns, however, strictly stuck to the original idea of intramural inhumation of fetuses/babies only, and never adopted later elaborations as the Anatolian pithoi burials of adults or the Palestinian ceramic ossuaries; this fact seems to support the theory of the Neolithic origins of this burial practice – repeatedly stimulated by new eastern impulses – together with some more details such as the occasional flint artifacts found as grave goods, perhaps related to the ritual of cutting the baby's umbilical cord, or the intentional piercing of the burial vessel's bottom or damaging its mouth rim, both occurring since the first appearance of jar burial in southeast Europe as well as in the Levant.

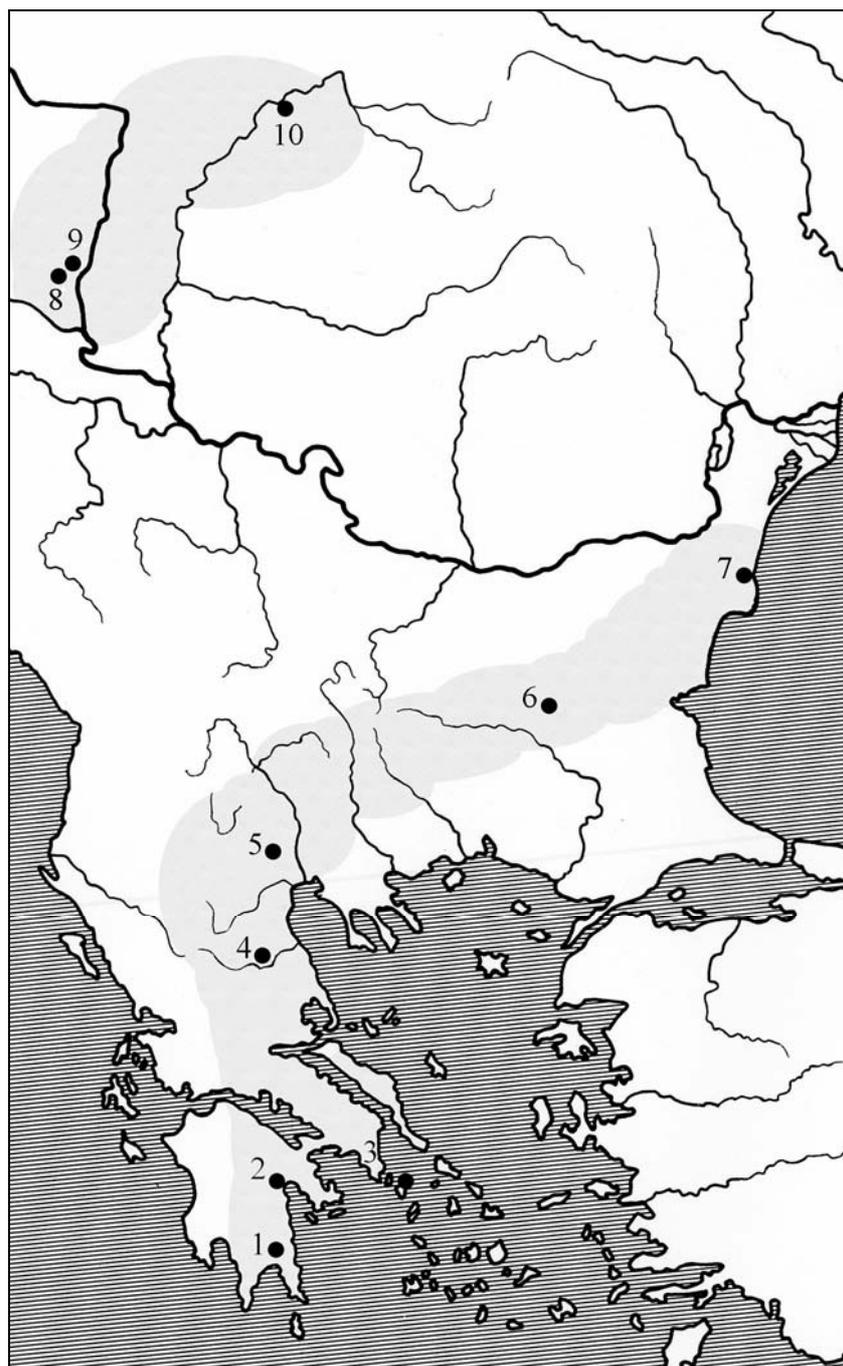


Fig. 7.2. Map showing the jar burial distribution area in the later Neolithic and Chalcolithic: 1 Alepochori; 2 Lerna; 3 Kephala; 4 Rachmani; 5 Mandalo; 6 Ezero; 7 Durankulak; 8 Mórágy-Tűzkődomb; 9 Alsónyék-Kanizsa-Flur; 10 Polgár 7

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fellowship at the University of Saarland that this paper has been completed.

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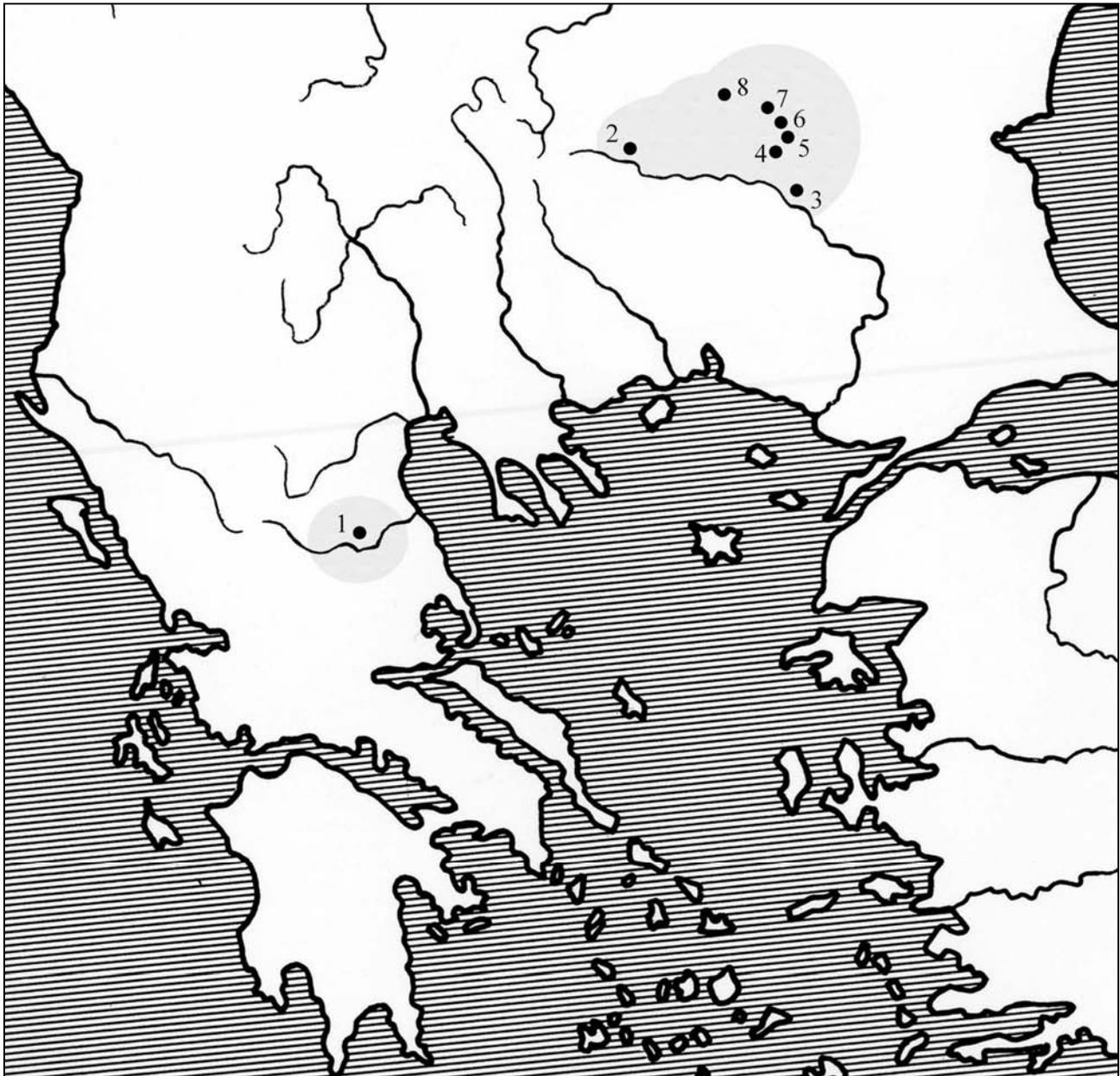


Fig. 7.3. Map showing the jar burial distribution area in the Early Bronze Age:  
1 Rachmani; 2 Yunatsite; 3 Galabovo; 4 Ezero; 5 Dyadovo; 6 Nova Zagora; 7 Karanovo; 8 Kran

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