



# Archaeology of Death

## 11:1 Death and monuments in the landscape

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# Symbolism of the Neolithic Longhouses and Genesis of Long Barrows in Europe

**1<sup>st</sup> Conference on the  
EARLY NEOLITHIC of EUROPE**

**ENE —2019  
Conference**

6-8 November, Barcelona



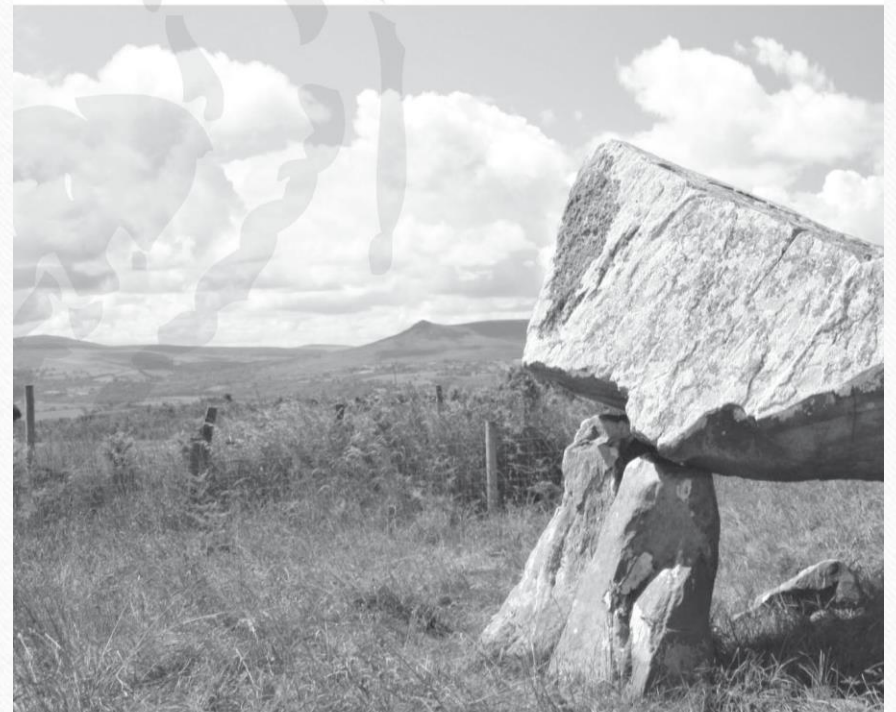
Fonctions, utilisations et représentations  
de l'espace dans les sépultures  
monumentales du Néolithique européen

*Functions, uses and representations of space in the monumental  
graves of Neolithic Europe*

sous la direction de

Guillaume Robin, André D'Anna, Aurore Schmitt & Maxence Bailly

**2016**



**ISBN 9791032000489**

PRÉHISTOIRES DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE





Houses of living and houses of dead  
in the Neolithic and Copper Age of Central Europe  
*Maisons des vivants et maisons des morts  
au Néolithique et âge du Cuivre en Europe centrale*

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pp. 245 – 267



**Abstract** - One of symbolic roles of Neolithic long houses in central Europe might have been burial of ancestors. There is no solid evidence for the funerary function of long houses, however, it is commonly assumed (Bradley 2001). Already during their dwelling function some houses were possibly used for primary deposition of remains of ancestors. The burials were later in the time of abandonment of the house removed elsewhere or remained resting inside the building. This is the process of transformation from the house of living to the house of dead. The main purpose of the second part of the paper is to discuss the question on missing evidence of barrows of the late Eneolithic Corded Ware and Bell Beaker period in Central Europe. Variety of problems of demographic representation of cemeteries, burial customs and spatial structure of funerary areas are connected to the missing barrows. I emphasise the variability of late Eneolithic funerary monuments, including the discussion on burial chambers and circular ditches, yet another type of funerary construction without an earthed mound that may be described as houses of dead.

**Résumé** - Un des rôles symboliques des maisons allongées néolithiques d'Europe centrale a pu être celui de tombe des ancêtres. Il n'existe pas de preuve formelle de la fonction funéraire des maisons danubiennes, toutefois, celle-ci est fréquemment considérée comme possible (Bradley 2001). Durant leur phase d'utilisation comme habitat, certaines maisons ont sans doute été utilisées comme lieu d'inhumation des restes des ancêtres. Lors de l'abandon de ces habitats, les sépultures ont été soit déplacées soit laissées à l'intérieur des constructions. Ceci est le processus de transformation des maisons des vivants en maison des morts. L'objectif de la seconde partie de cet article est de discuter de la question de l'absence de tertres funéraires en Europe centrale lors du Néolithique cordé et du Campaniforme. Différents problèmes, tels que la représentation démographique des nécropoles, les pratiques funéraires et la structure spatiale des espaces funéraires, sont liés à la question des tertres absents. Je me concentre ici sur la variabilité des monuments funéraires de la fin du Néolithique, en incluant une discussion sur les chambres funéraires et enceintes, un autre type de construction funéraire dépourvu de tertre et qui peut être décrit comme maison des morts.



# Death in the domestic space

## Genealogy & Ancestral Worship

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After Insoll 2011

In lesson 9 we have discussed the evidence of extraction of ancestor's skulls from settlement graves, modelling their faces (e.i. Jericho, Palestine; Çatal Hüyük, Anatolia). People kept cleaned dried or mummified heads of their ancestors inside their houses in some kind of ancestral shrine corners. It is well possible that the similar pattern appeared to some extent also in the initial phases of the central European Neolithic and became one of many varieties of yet heterogeneous funerary customs. The evidence for Neolithic settlement burials and isolated human bones scattered within the habitation areas was analysed by Jan Rulf (Študijné zvesti 1996). The scatters of human remains surviving in the sunken features along the Neolithic longhouses are particularly the possible clue to the explanation of missing burials in some regions of Central Europe.

The re-examination of Linear Pottery Culture and Stroke Pottery Culture human burials found in burial contexts in Bohemia (Zápotocká 1998) is clear that the majority of population was buried in a different fashion that is leaving no traces that could be identified by current archaeological methods. One of such funerary practices may be burials on or above ground of the settlement or even in the interiors of Neolithic longhouses. There is also more frequent occurrence of child burials in the close proximity of some longhouses.



Richard Bradley (Bradley 1998; and in *Antiquity* 2000) argues that certain part of Neolithic longhouses could possibly serve as a morgue or lets say a tomb compartment of the living house. This could be one of the explanations why the Neolithic houses are so long, even though they probably accommodated just one family. Unfortunately there is no clear evidence for such funerary practices. However, some indirect clues offer a base for such assumptions.

An important discussion, concerning the symbolic function of Neolithic long houses, was introduced by Evžen Neustupný (*Journal of European Archaeology* 1995, 208), who re-examined the interpretation of so-called construction pits along the long walls of houses. He is sceptical about the traditional interpretation of these features as pits for exploitation of clay for plastering of longhouse walls. Neustupný offered a wide range of arguments against the interpretation of such features as exploitation pits. Perhaps the most obvious argument is that these long pits were sunken both in loess as well as in sand and gravel subsoil. Loess is probably suitable material for plastering of walls, but considering the current knowledge on the Neolithic house for the same purpose could hardly be used gravel or sand.

Neustupný reached the conclusion that the ditches of irregular shape were of symbolically protective function and supposed protected a house against negative supernatural powers.





MARIE ZÁPOTOCKÁ

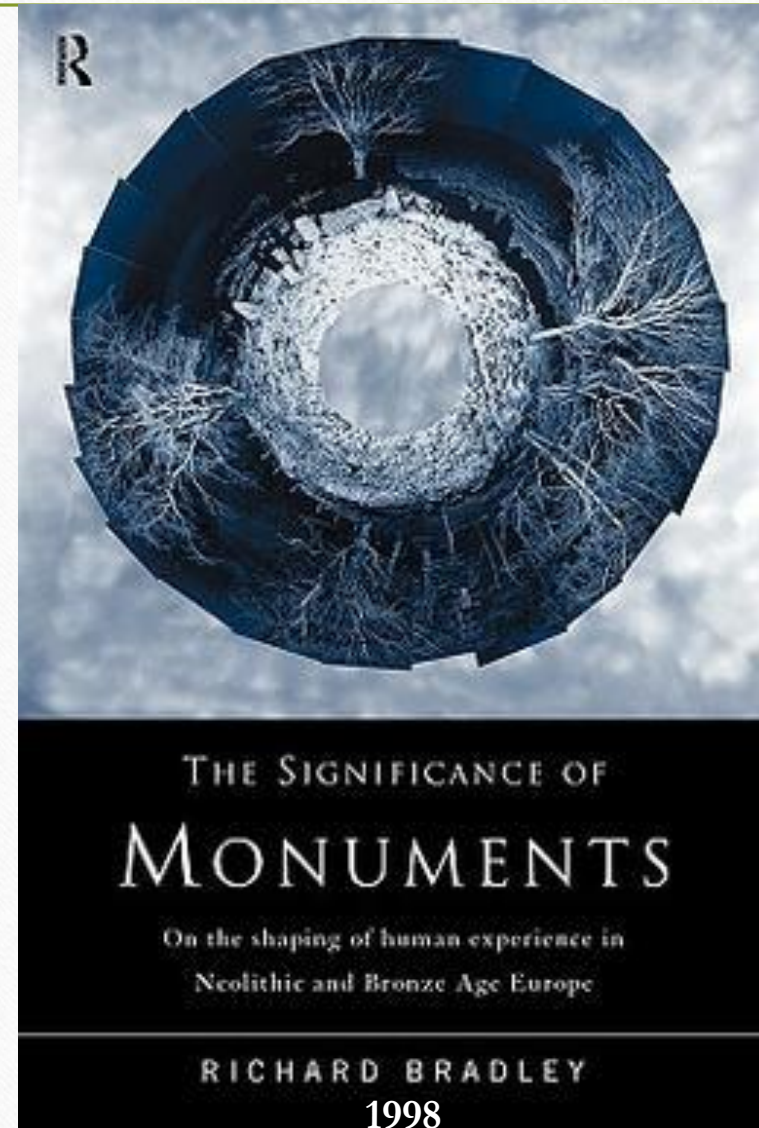
# BESTATTUNGSRITUS DES BOHMISCHEN NEOLITHIKUMS

(5500-4200 B.C.)

PRAGA 1998

1998

ISBN 13: 9788086124131



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# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MONUMENTS

On the shaping of human experience in  
Neolithic and Bronze Age Europe

RICHARD BRADLEY

1998

ISBN-13: 978-0203159507



# Origin of Long Barrows in Central Europe (6–5 Millennium BC)

Focusing on abandoned Neolithic longhouses

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(Excavation at Brandýs n./Labem 2008)



# The Neolithic longhouses

One of symbolic roles of Neolithic longhouses in Central Europe might have been burial of ancestors (cf. Bradley 2000; Turek 2005). Already during their dwelling function some houses were possibly used for primary deposition of human remains. Some burials later in the time of abandonment of the house remained resting inside the building. This can be described as the process of transformation from the house of living to the house of dead.



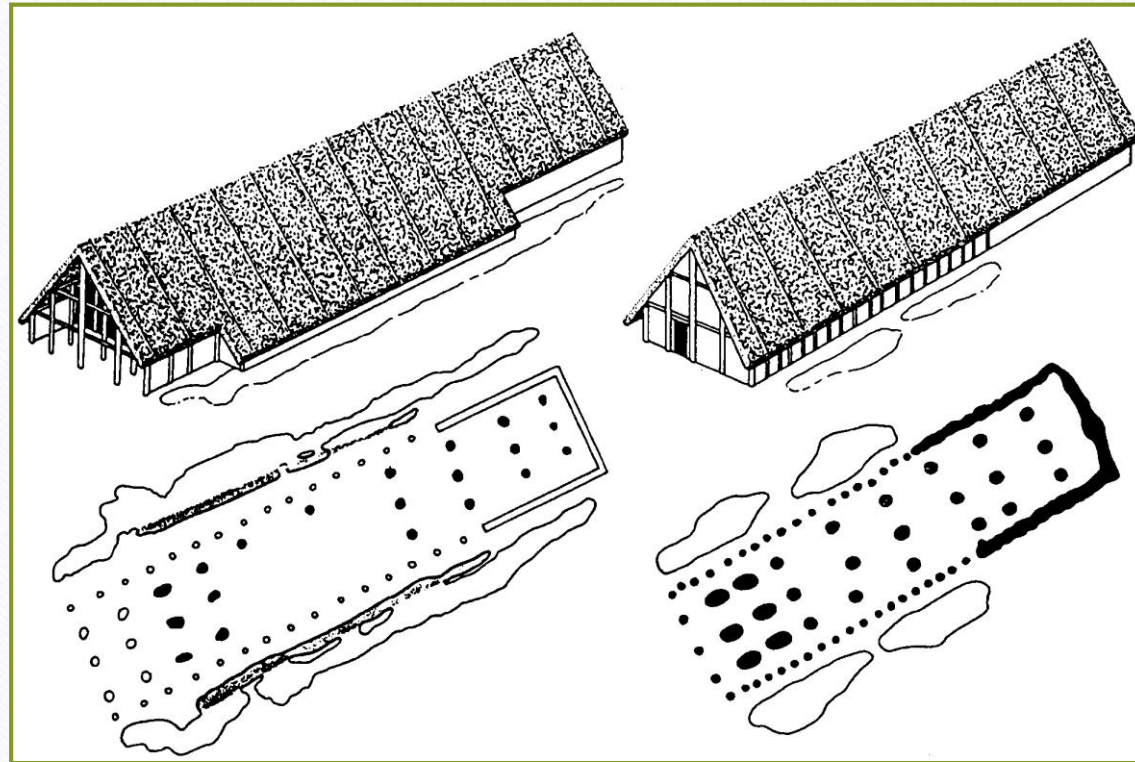
# Some LBK longhouses are accompanied by child burials





Some Neolithic longhouses are partly enclosed by long irregular ditches that were traditionally considered to be exploitation pits for construction clay.

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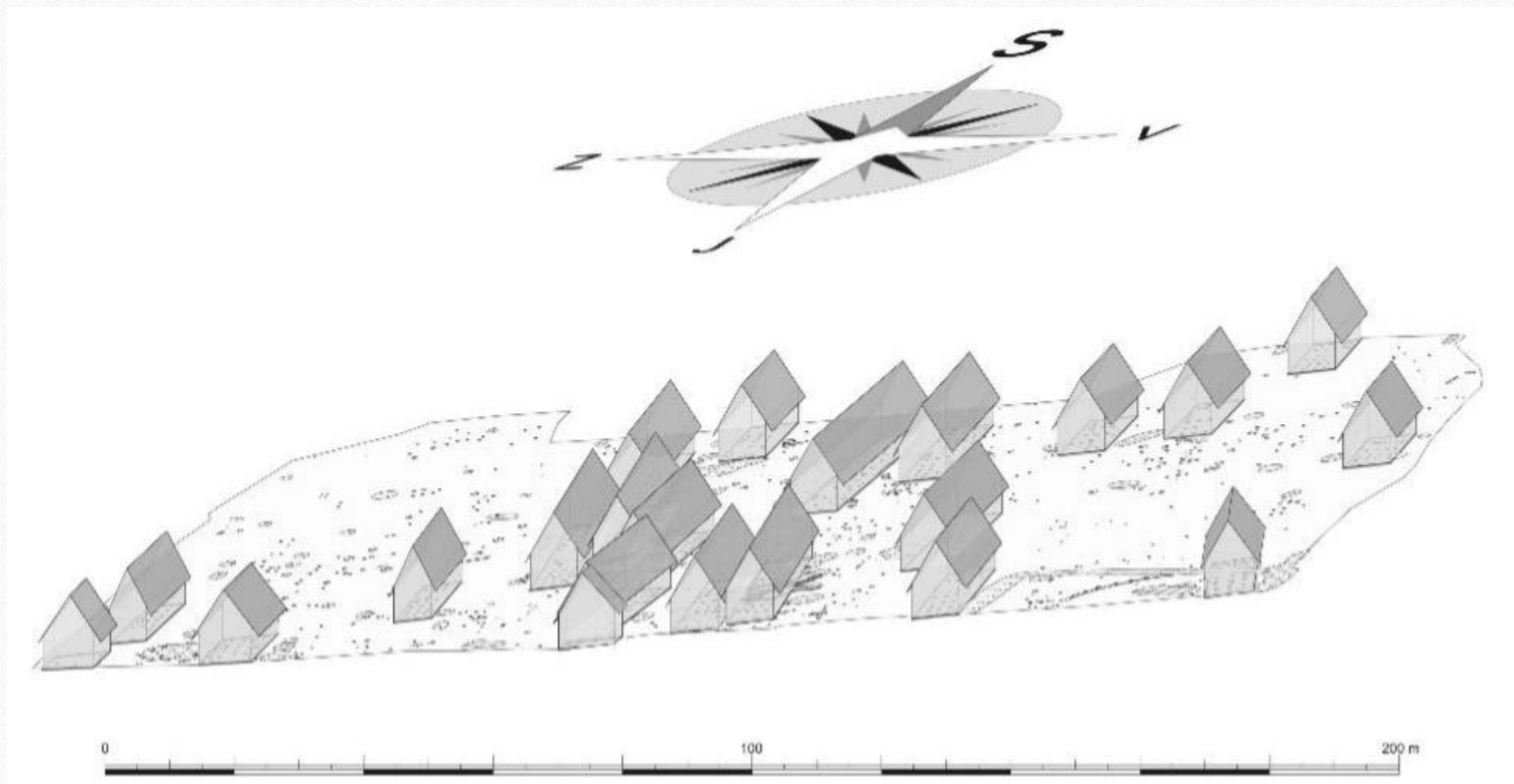


Evžen Neustupný (1995) “construction” ditches appear not only in the loess and clay substrata but also in sand and gravel, non-plastic materials that could not have been used for the construction of walls.



(Excavation at Brandýs n./Labem 2008)

Turek, J. 2008: The first preliminary site report on the results of the excavation of a Neolithic habitation area at Brandýs nad Labem. *Archeologie ve středních Čechách* 12, Praha, pp. 45-50.



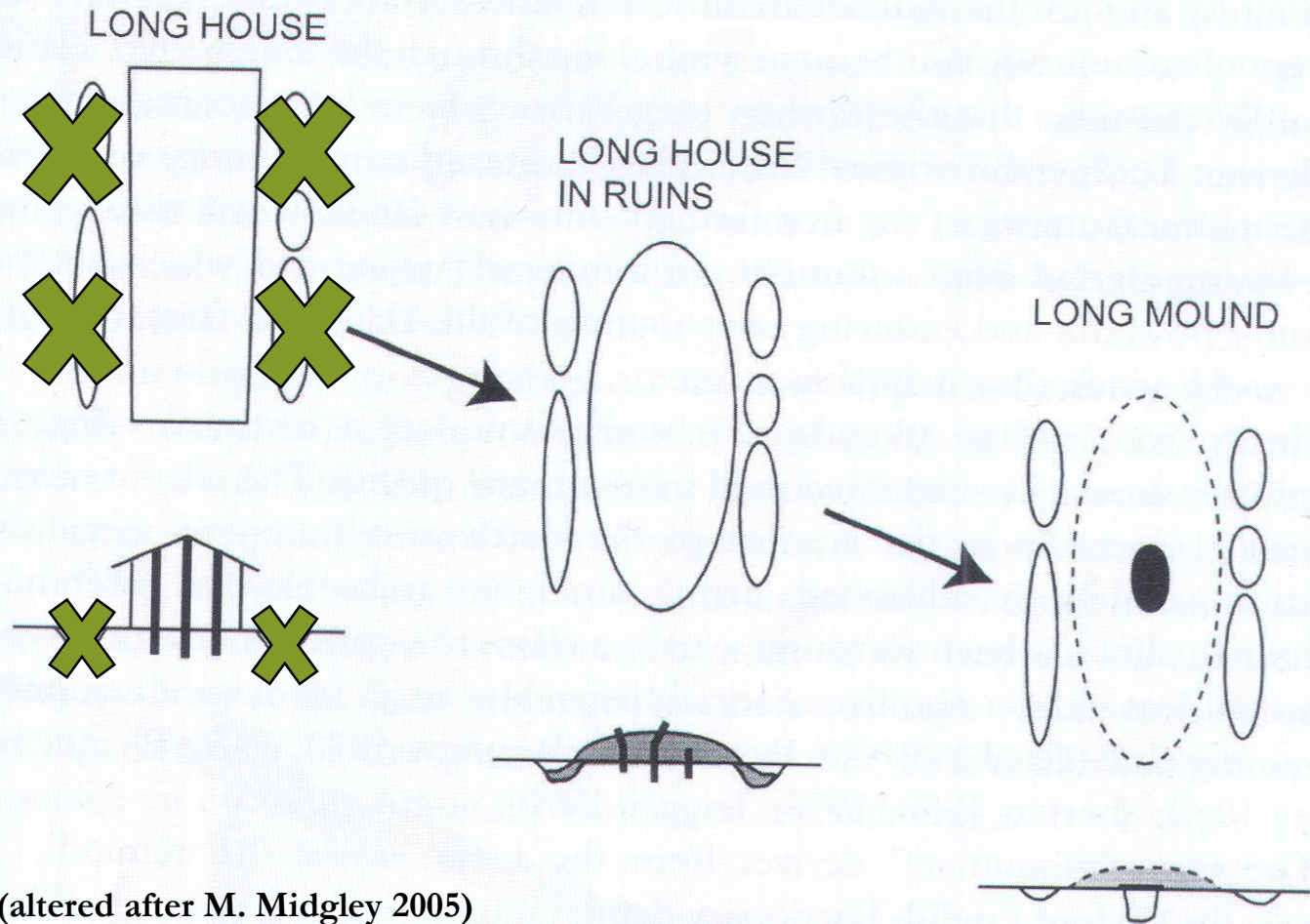


## The houses of dead

Both interpretations presume that these ditches were created during the construction and/or during the use of the house.

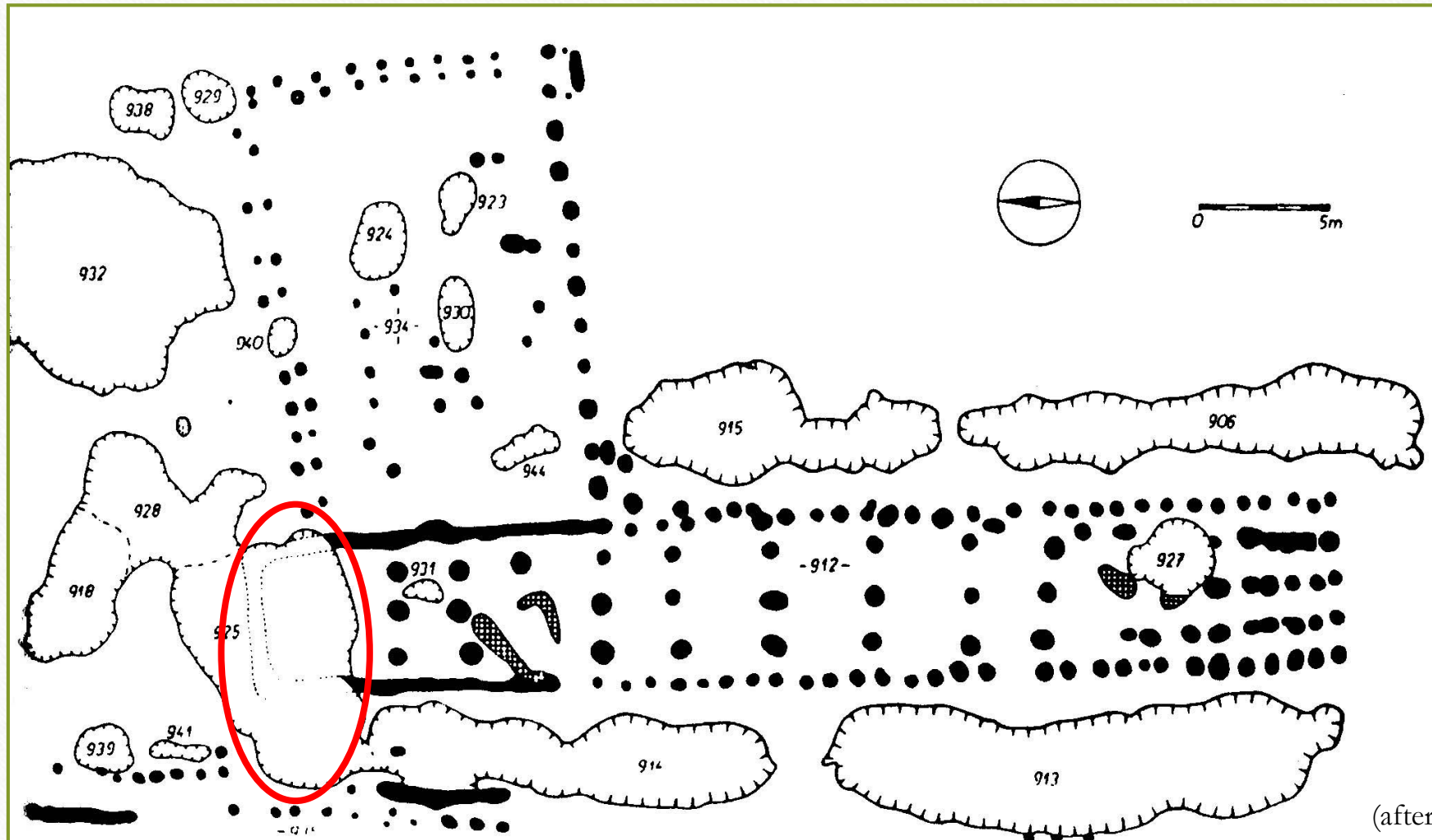
I argue that the ditches might have well been hollowed along the house even after its abandonment, turning it into the house of dead. In this case the symbolically protective function of ditches may be connected to the protection of the outer surroundings of the house/barrow against the dead buried inside. Furthermore the soil dug out of the ditches might have been the base of a long mound piled up on top of the former house debris. Such process could be the origin of the idea to create burial mounds above funerary monuments.

# The Genesis of the Houses of dead





# LBK longhouse at Bylany (Central Bohemia)

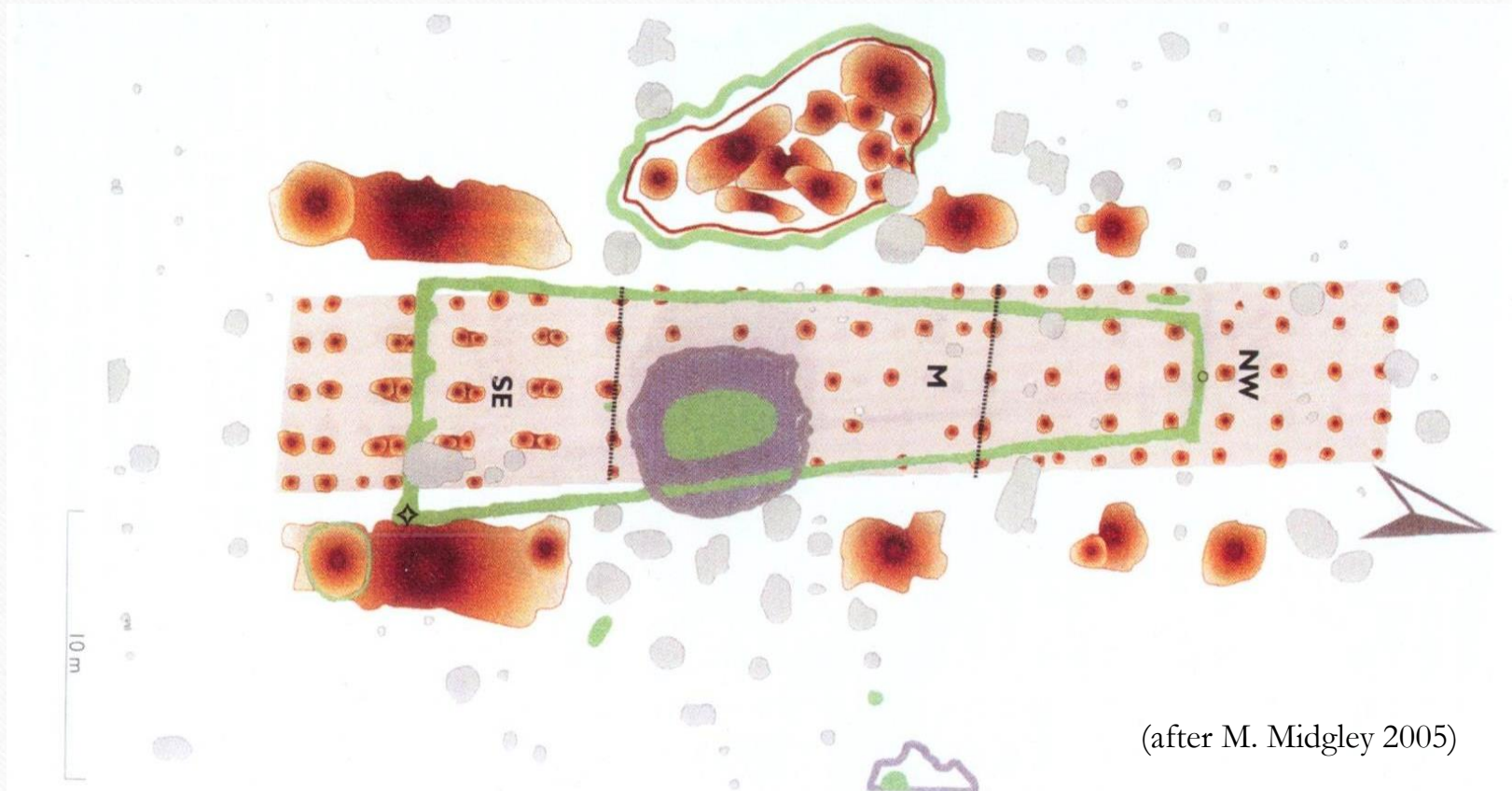


(after Soudský 1966)



# Lengyel barrow overlaps earlier LBK house

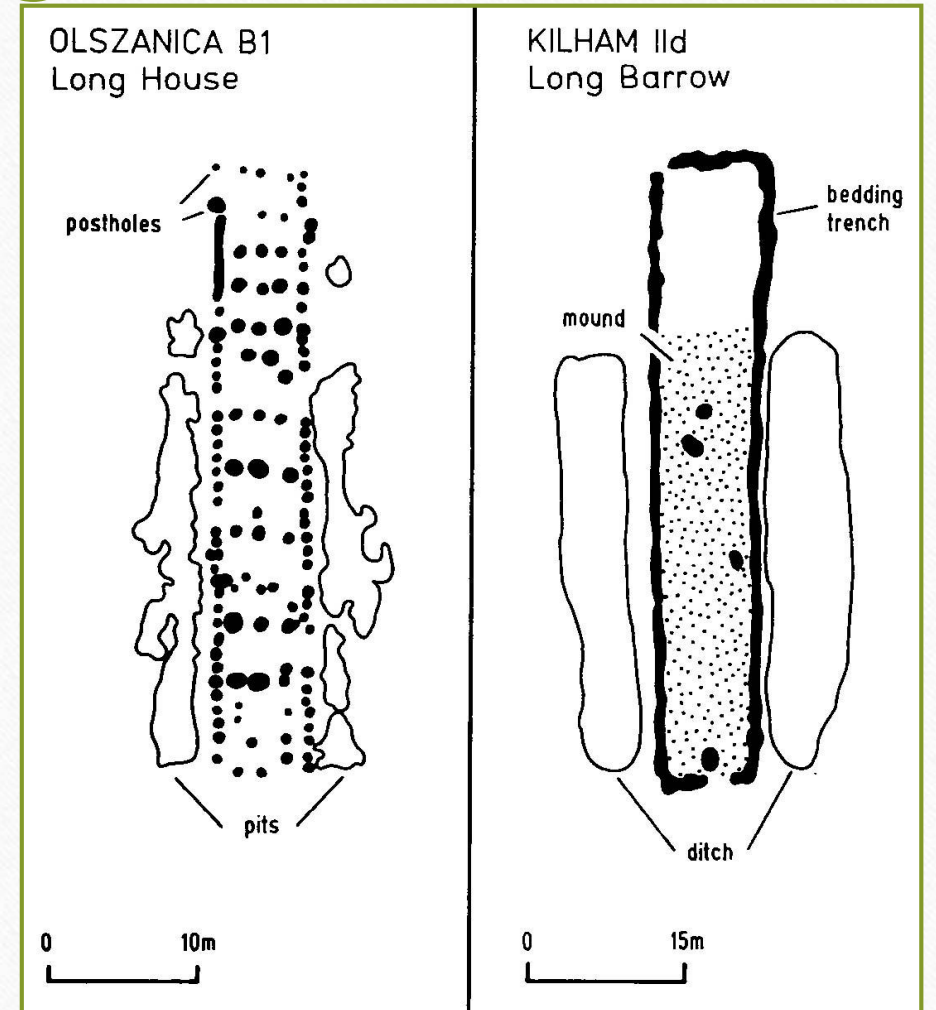
(Bożejowice, Poland)





# The Genesis of long barrows

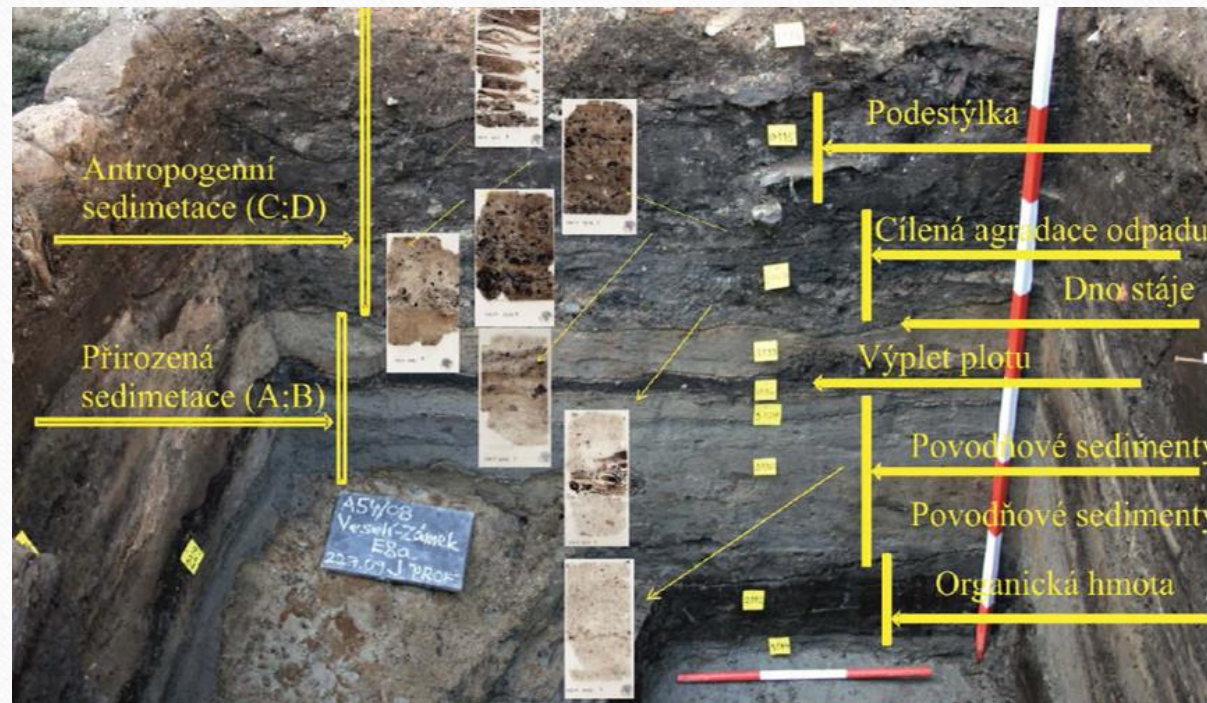
Already Vere Gordon CHILDE (1949) observed the link between the shape of the Neolithic houses in the Danubian region and the form Proto- and Early Eneolithic barrows. It is possible that the habit to built barrow funerary monuments of the Lengyel period has its roots in the form of LBK longhouses. Was there some kind of transition form of funerary monuments?



(after Bradley 1998)



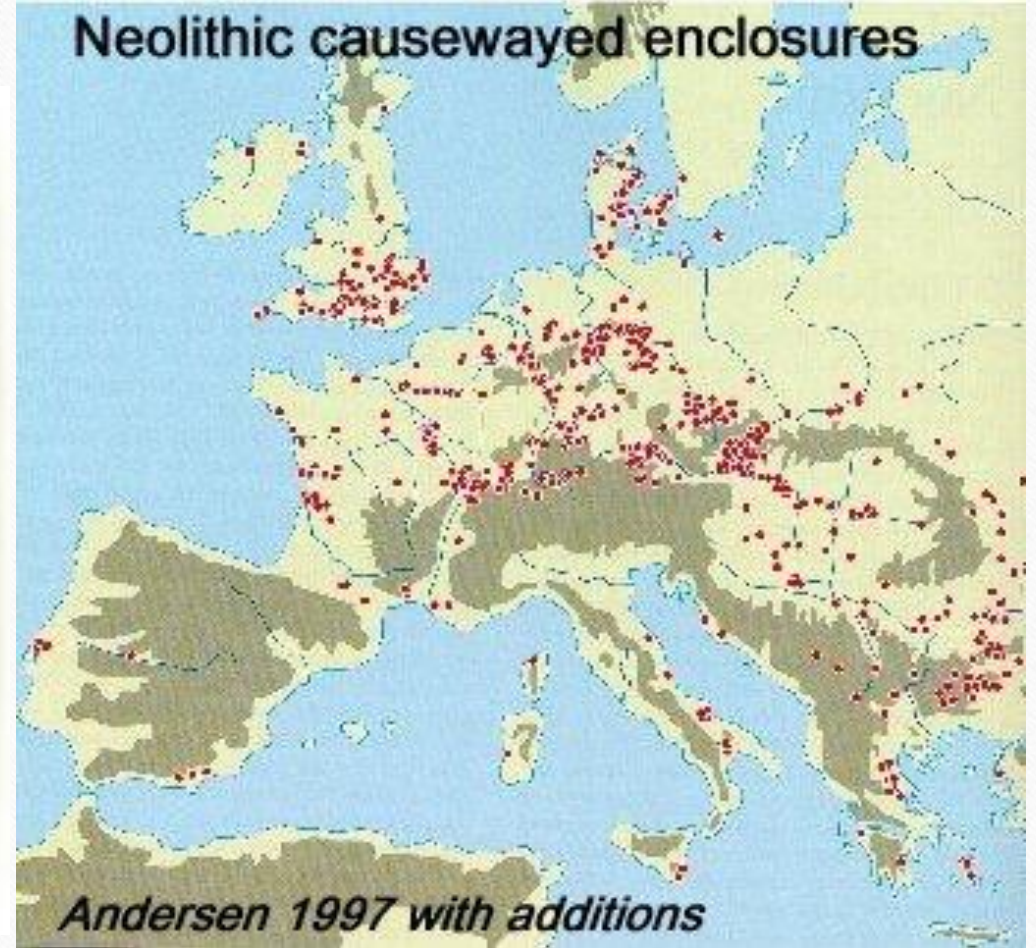
To shed light on this problem we set up a specialized geoarchaeology team developing targeted systematic research of stratigraphy and pedology (chemical analysis, soil micromorphology) including postdepositional processes within selected Neolithic longhouses and other pits in their proximity.





# Proto-Eneolithic enclosures in Europe

4,500 – 3,000 BC

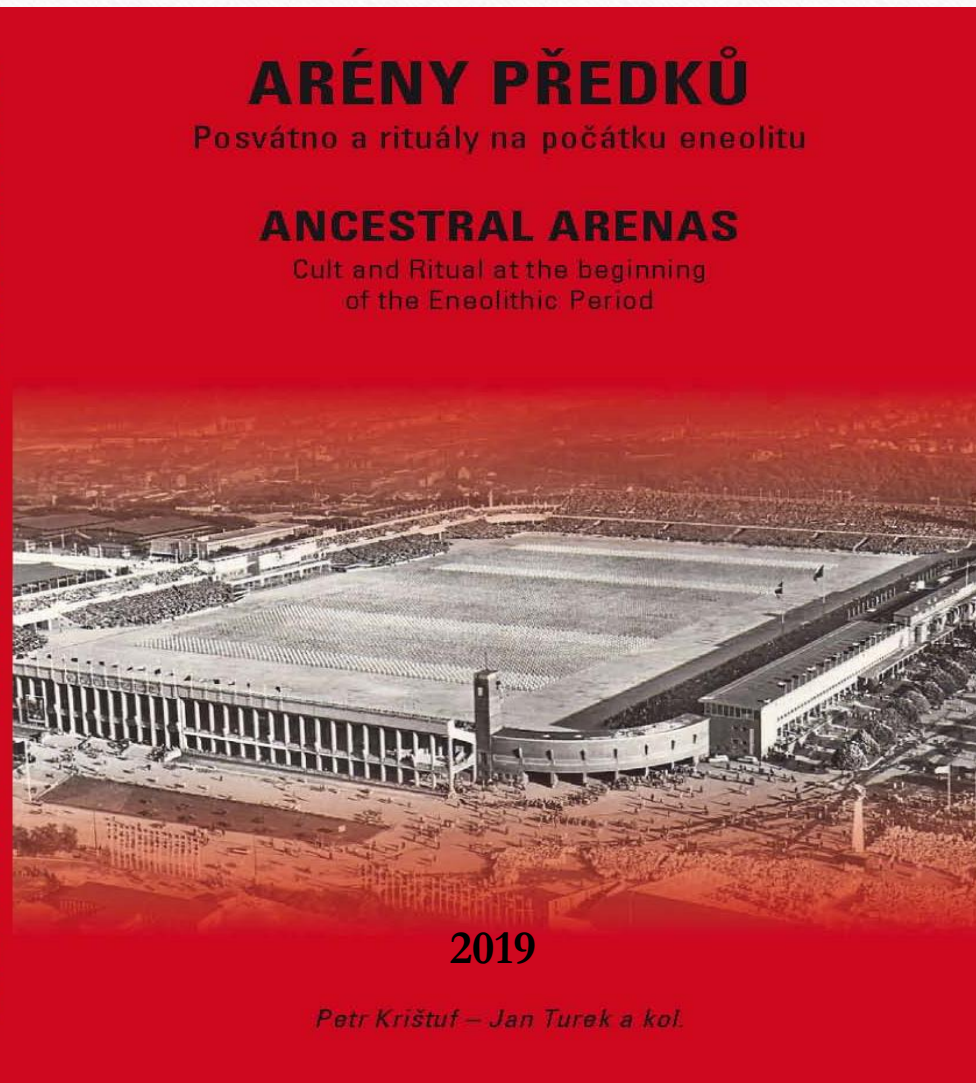






ARÉNY PŘEDKŮ: POSVÁTNO A RITUÁLY NA POČÁTKU ENEOLITU

Petr Křišťuf – Jan Turek a kol.



# ARÉNY PŘEDKŮ

Posvátno a rituály na počátku eneolitu

## ANCESTRAL ARENAS

Cult and Ritual at the beginning  
of the Eneolithic Period



2019

Petr Křišťuf – Jan Turek a kol.

[https://www.academia.edu/40915263/AR%C3%89NY\\_P%C5%98EDK%C5%AE\\_Posv%C3%A1tno\\_a\\_ritu%C3%A1ly\\_na\\_po%C4%8D%C3%A1tku\\_eneolitu\\_-\\_ANCESTRAL\\_ARENAS\\_Cult\\_and\\_Ritual\\_at\\_the\\_beginning\\_of\\_the\\_Eneolithic\\_Period](https://www.academia.edu/40915263/AR%C3%89NY_P%C5%98EDK%C5%AE_Posv%C3%A1tno_a_ritu%C3%A1ly_na_po%C4%8D%C3%A1tku_eneolitu_-_ANCESTRAL_ARENAS_Cult_and_Ritual_at_the_beginning_of_the_Eneolithic_Period)

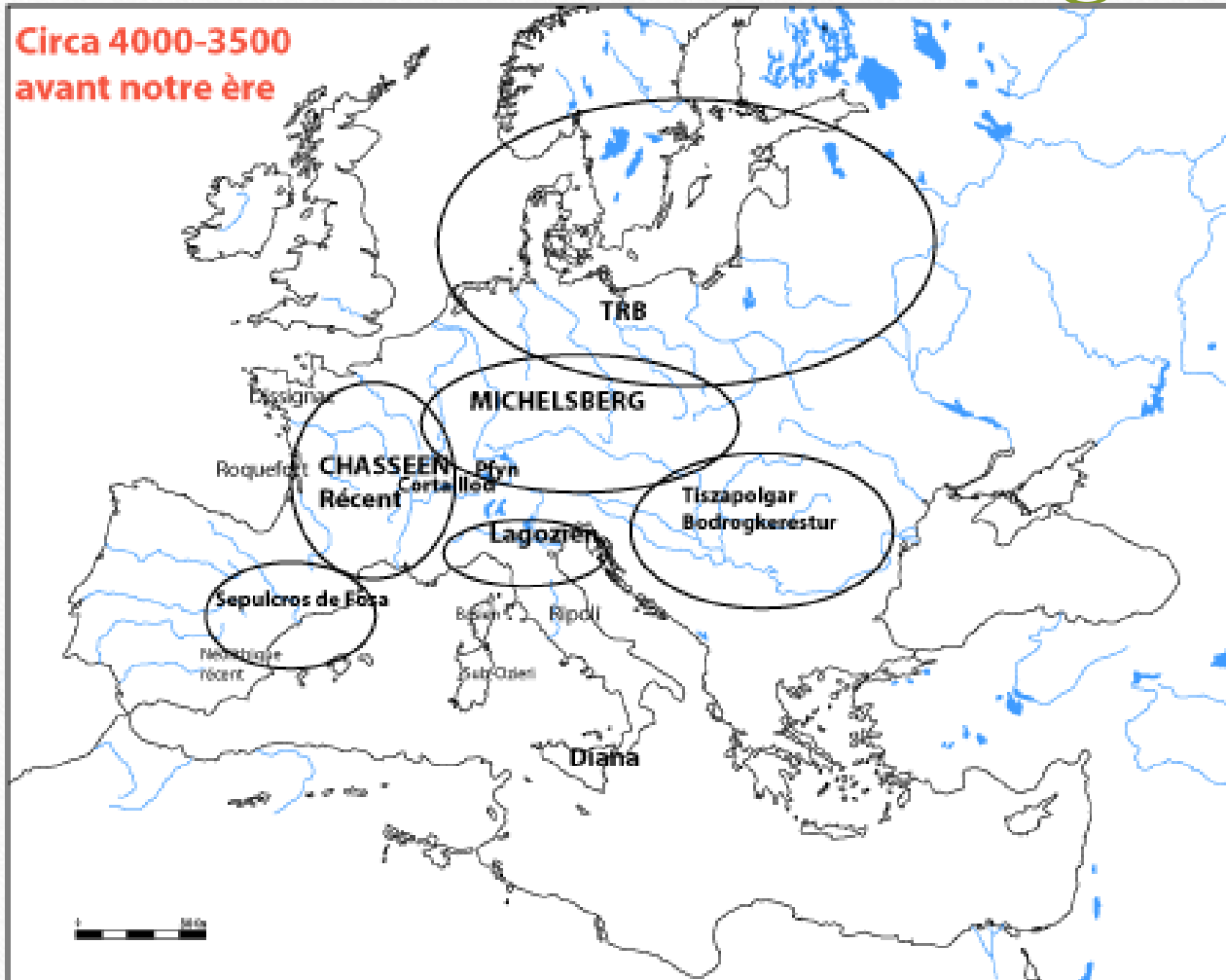


# Monuments enclosing vast areas of landscape





# Michelsberg Culture



Michelsberg region

## Michelsberg vessels

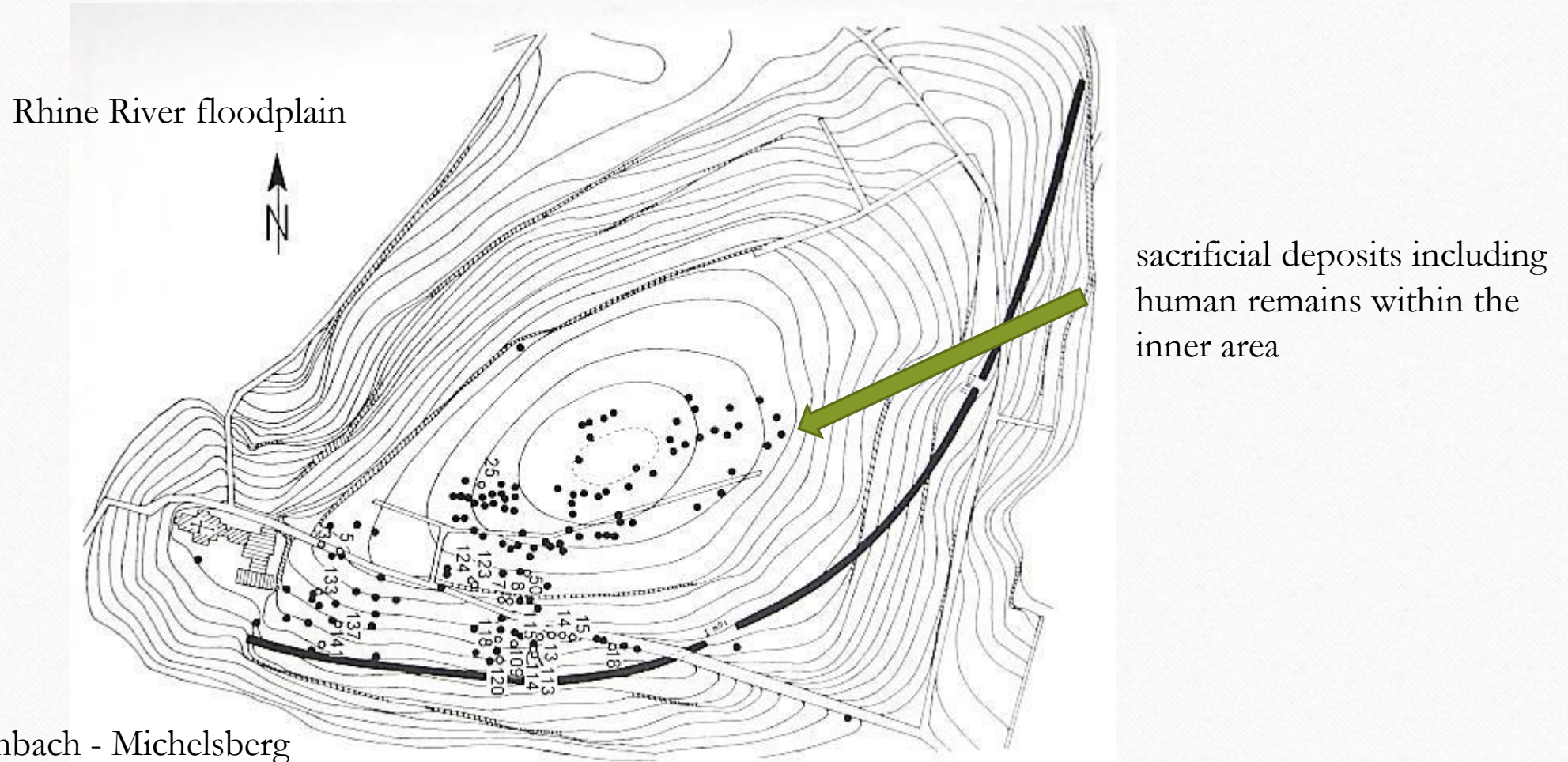


## Archaeological Evidence of the Michelsberg Culture

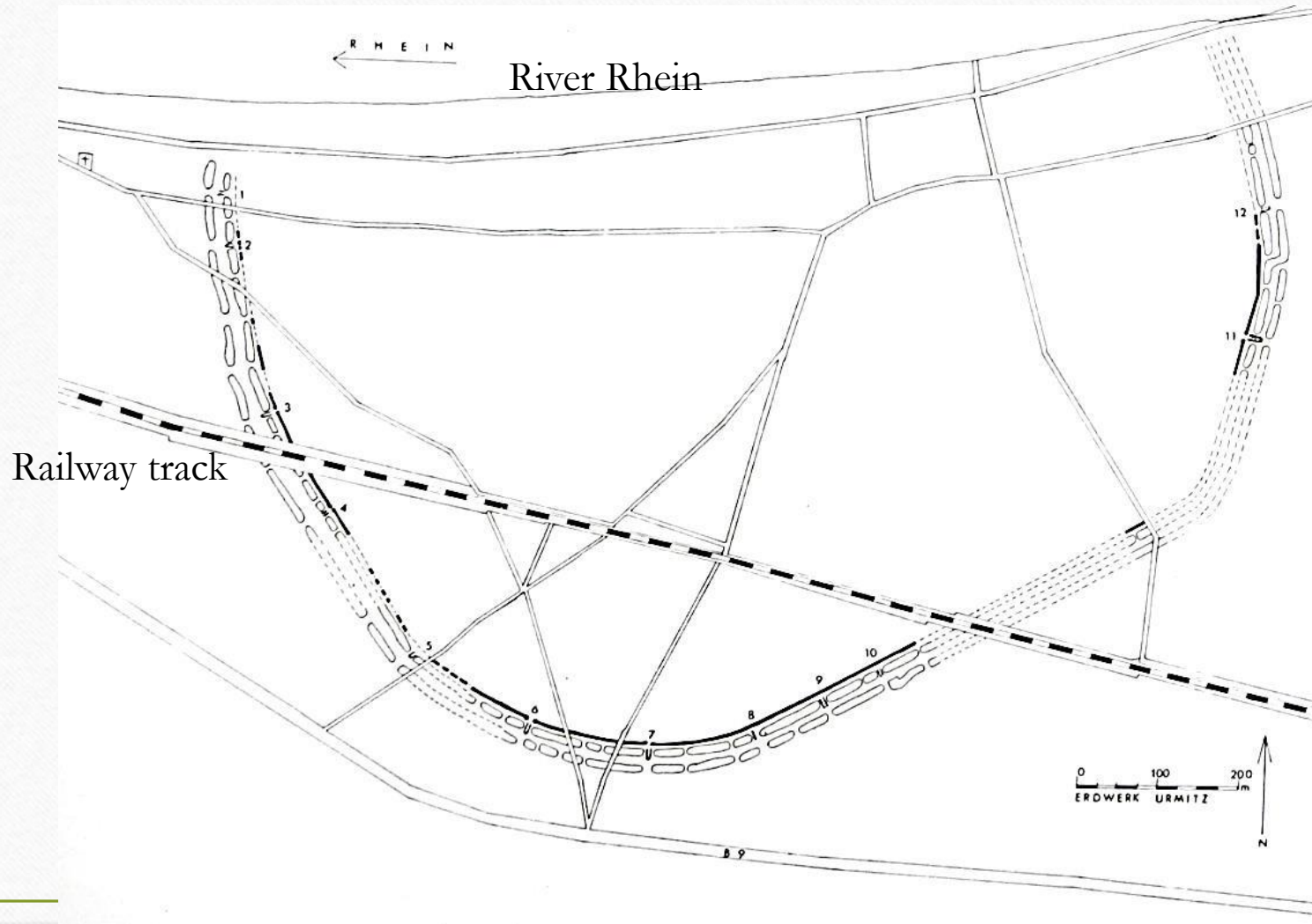
enclosures  
absence of communal cemeteries  
dwellings?



# Michelsberg enclosures in SW Germany



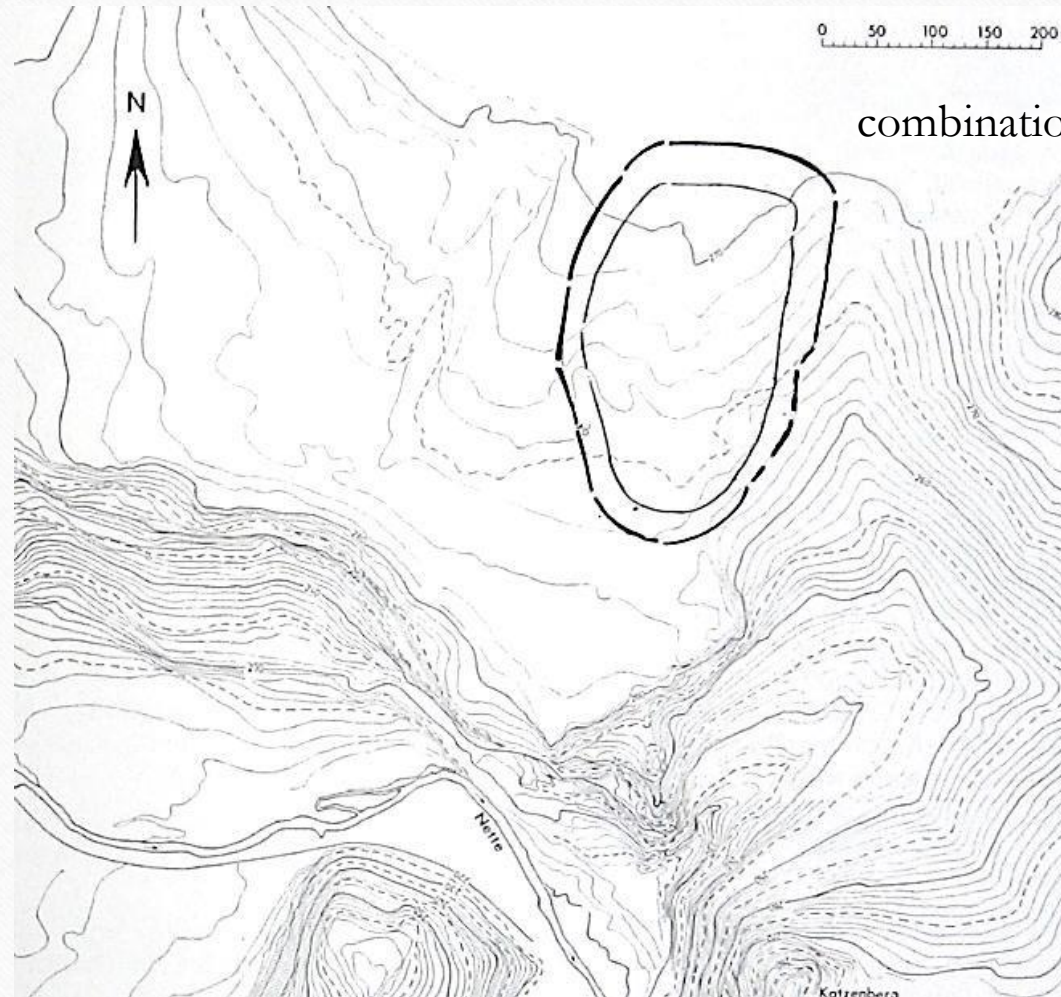
# Michelsberg enclosures in SW Germany



2 km perimeter  
2 ditches with 1 palisade  
inner ditch = 25 entrances  
outer ditch = 34 entrances  
constructed in 2 phases –  
perhaps renewal of  
the original structure



# Michelsberg enclosures in SW Germany



combination of ditch and palisade

Mayen



# Michelsberg enclosures in Bohemia

Easternmost evidence of the Michelsberg Culture in Europe



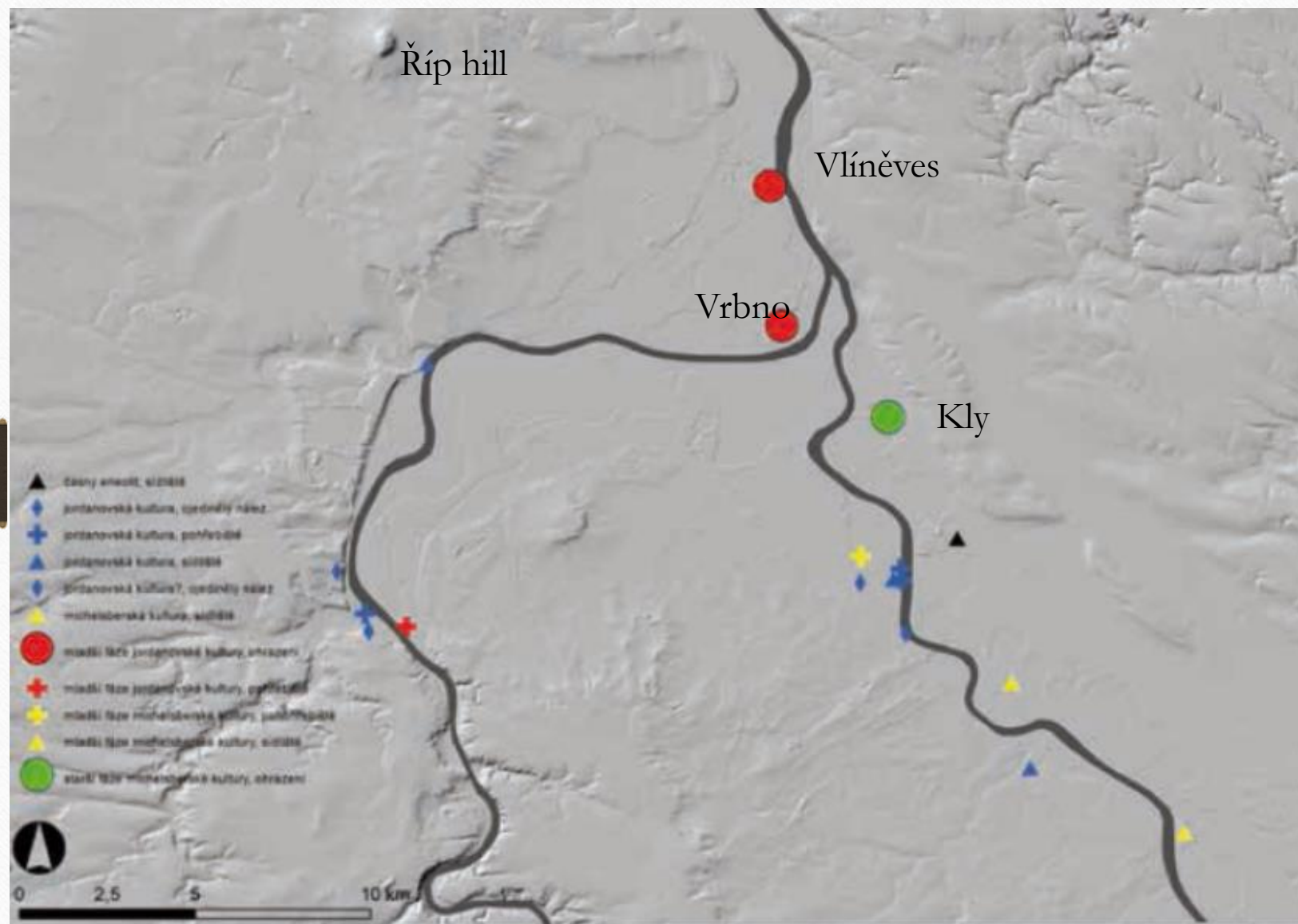
Kly, Mělník District



## Ritual Landscape? Causewayed Enclosures in the Říp hill region

In Bohemia, the causewayed enclosures appear in the context of the later phase of the Jordanów culture. The ceramics found in some causewayed enclosures also feature elements of the Schussenried culture, as well as the oldest phase of the Michelsberg culture. This development is indicative of the continuity of this type of enclosures regardless of the formal changes in the style of ceramic production. The latest of the Proto-Eneolithic causewayed enclosures in Bohemia is one in Kly (Mělník District). This site has been connected purely with the ceramics of the II. phase of Michelsberg culture. If we evaluate the geographic position of the Proto-Eneolithic causewayed enclosures in Bohemia, most of them are located on the level of river terraces. The similar situation was observed in Germany, where most of them are located in the locations with broad access and enclosed by ditches of oval shape, sometimes several hundred meters long. In most cases, the geomorphological setting is enclosing the site only partially or not at all. An important phenomenon in the Czech Republic is the preference of these flat positions near the main watercourses, even in cases where there are significant geomorphological formations nearby (such as hill-top sites used in later periods to build fortifications and fortified settlements). This is the case of the trio of enclosure Vliněves - Kly - Vrbno at the confluence of the Vltava and the Elbe River, which is close to the dominant ridge stretching between Všetaty and Mělník with an important fortified early medieval site on its northern edge. Despite these landscape dispositions, the locations at the level of the first terrace of the Vltava and the Elbe River were preferred for all three Proto-Eneolithic causewayed enclosures. All three of them are located just a few meters above the inundation area. Although these locations provided long-term protection against the flooding, they are undoubtedly not the most strategically advantageous locations with fortification potential within the surrounding landscape.





- Proto-Ene. settlement
- Jordanów C. isol. find
- Jordanów C. cemetery
- Jordanów C. settlement
- Jordanów C.? isol. find
- Michelsberg C. settlement
- Late Jordanów Enclosure
- Late Jordanów cemetery
- Late Michelsberg cemet.
- Late Michelsberg settlem.
- Early Michelsberg Enclosurecemet.



The location of the trio of Proto-Eneolithic enclosures at the confluence of largest Czech rivers is located on the divide of the open flat agricultural landscape of Podřipsko (Říp mount area) with the natural dominating feature of Říp in the west and the vastly rugged landscape of the Kokořín region in the northeast forming a wild hilly counterpart of the Říp surrounding plain. Říp Mountain was in direct sight of all three enclosures, and it is likely that this circumstance played a significant role in their spiritual exploitation.

The significant concentration of three Proto-Eneolithic sites in the relatively small confluence area of the Labe and Vltava rivers leads us to re-consider the contemporaneity present and thus the density of these sites in the landscape. Given the size of the causewayed enclosure, it can be assumed that the enclosures exceeded needs of one community area and they probably served the activities of several communities within a wider region. The enclosures might have even maintain the inter-regional social interaction. The fact that this enclosure concentration is located at the confluence of large rivers is certainly indispensable. Labe and Vltava River represented important landscape boundaries, but they also served as important communication corridors. At this point we have to discuss why three Proto-Eneolithic enclosures were created in such limited space? The answer can be perhaps found in the chronological consecutive sequence of sites. The relatively short usage time, which is documented in Vrbno and Kly can be assumed even in the case of Vliněves, suggests that these constructions might have been built with the purpose of serving a particular ritual or series of rituals, not with the intention of stable long-term use. Such interpretation suggesting successive development of these sites seems to be logical. Especially the enclosure at Kly seems to be chronologically later and this is reflected also in different style of material culture.



Transferred into the terms of living culture, one can suppose that after some time of up keeping by one community came time when the similar enclosure was built within another settlement area within this distinctive communication region and thus a chronological sequence of inter-communal gathering monuments was established.

Especially if we consider the funerary significance of the enclosure, it is also necessary to consider the spiritual significance of the place where the waters run from different parts of the country and where the people perhaps from distant regions gathered for funerary ceremonies. Local communities from the mythical confluence landscape (ritual landscape) would thus be a sort of steward of a far-reaching, sacred district. In this respect, it would be interesting to observe the location of the aforementioned areas with the context of the current settlement. Unfortunately, the evidence of the settlement of Mělník vicinity in the early Eneolithic period is rather scarce. In addition to the 3 enclosures, only 15 sites have been documented and most of them belong to the early Jordanów culture and 3 to the later phase of Michelsberg culture. From the period when we presume the use of the enclosure comes only 1 late Jordanów burial uncovered in Kralupy nad Vltavou. Proto-Eneolithic settlement in the area of Mělník is clearly linked to both large watercourses (Elbe and Vltava River) and concentrates in Kralupy nad Vltavou and Neratovice. However, this picture may be only due to the state of research and the concentration of current construction activity. Nevertheless while the evidence of the Proto-Eneolithic settlement was recorded mainly in the vicinity of the Elbe and Vltava rivers, in the immediate vicinity of their confluence only the three enclosures are known.



Although there are formal differences between the sites we studied, they can be considered as one category of constructions covering a similar area. When we talk about enclosures as monuments, one should bear in mind that, especially in the flat landscape, the banks of no more than 1.5 meters in height were not creating any monumental impression. Seen in the terrain they optically rather merged with the surroundings. The palisade was not a monumental structure either and the columns erected at the entrance interruptions were probably part of a light construction rather than a massive structure in form of fortification gates. However, the monumentality of the causewayed enclosures is undoubtedly based in the length of their perimeter and the extent of the area covered. Thus, the monumental was mainly the impression of a large interior area intended for the gathering of a large number of people and perhaps even animals at a time of repetitive (?) ceremonies.

So what kind of activities took place in these enclosures? As we have already indicated above due to the nature of archaeological and pedological evidence, the method of construction of enclosures, their location in the terrain and the character of Eneolithic warfare, we do not assume their residential and defensive functions.

In line with a number of publications evaluating purpose of the Proto-Eneolithic enclosures, we are considering a relatively wide range of ceremonial activities associated with the use of these monuments. Most of these considerations are based on a rational core, and it is well possible that these sites actually served as a space for variety of ceremonial activities, ranging from drinking festivals, ceremonial exchange of goods and livestock, astronomical observations linked to the cult and the agricultural cycle to funerary ceremonies and cult of ancestors.

Drinking festivals as formalized rituals played an important social role within European agricultural communities at least from the beginning of the Eneolithic Period. Also, some finds of drinking vessels inside the enclosure ditches suggest the possible connection of the drinking ceremonies with these super-community areas. Feasts and drinking rituals, as well as, the ceremonial exchange, played an important social role in social communication within and between communities. Such ceremonies helped to reinforce the communal identity as well as establish communication and external relations with neighbouring communities. We consider the link between drinking ceremonies and enclosed areas as highly probable.

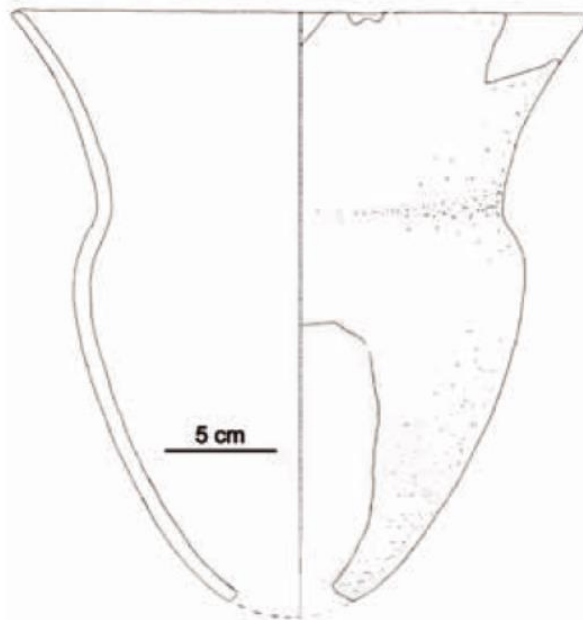
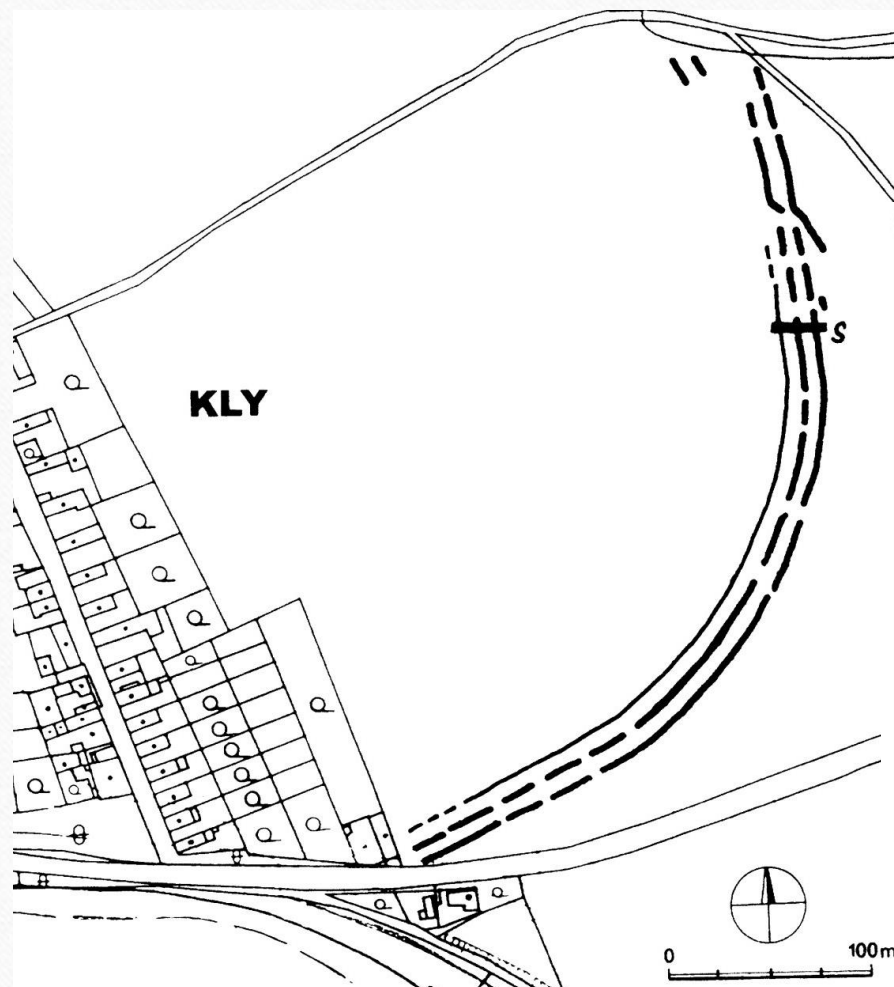


# Causewayed Enclosures and Ancestral Cult

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Eneolithic religion was the cult of ancestors, its possible traces can also be identified in the Proto-Eneolithic enclosures. It is clear that the treatment of the remains of the deceased was amongst the ceremonial activities that took place in the Proto-Eneolithic enclosures, both in Bohemia (Vliněves; Chleby) and in Germany (eg Untergrombach-Michelsberg, Bruchsal-Aue) or England (Pietrzak 2014). In many cases, not only the burial of the deceased was documented, but also the manipulation of human remains, often even long time after a person's death. These practices seem to illustrate the role of enclosures in practicing an ancestral cult that has been documented in the agricultural communities since the beginning of the Neolithic period. Undoubtedly, this is not the only burial practice in the Proto-Eneolithic period. At that time, the dead were also buried in long barrows, whose genesis may have its roots already in the early Neolithic period in Central Europe (Turek 2005). There seems to be two main ways of burial, a burial inside the house of the dead, that is, a long barrow, which is a symbolic reflection of a small, closed social group (household/family) particularly emphasizing the local ties and a second public way of burial within the super-communal ritual space emphasizing a broader shared cultural identity. In the present state of knowledge of the Proto-Eneolithic burial rites, we are not able to unambiguously identify the principles on the basis of which the individuals or communities differentiated in relation to the place and manner of their burial. The spectrum of human remains treatment in the Proto-Eneolithic reflects considerable variability. There are inhumations in crouched position, inhumations within settlement sites, skeletons or their parts in the enclosure ditches, as well as cremation burials. Despite this considerable variability, the archaeological record of Proto-Eneolithic burials is very scarce and it is obvious that the majority of the population was buried in an archaeologically invisible way. It is possible that some form of excarnation was a common method of burial, and it is also conceivable that such funerary ceremonies may have taken place in the central super-communal areas, perhaps within the causewayed enclosures presented in this study. If this assumption is correct, then the skeletons and their fragments found in the sunken parts of the enclosures are just a tip of the iceberg of a much more common funerary practice. Therefore, in the present state of knowledge, the interpretation of causewayed enclosures is most likely to be the super-community sanctuaries of death and ancestors.

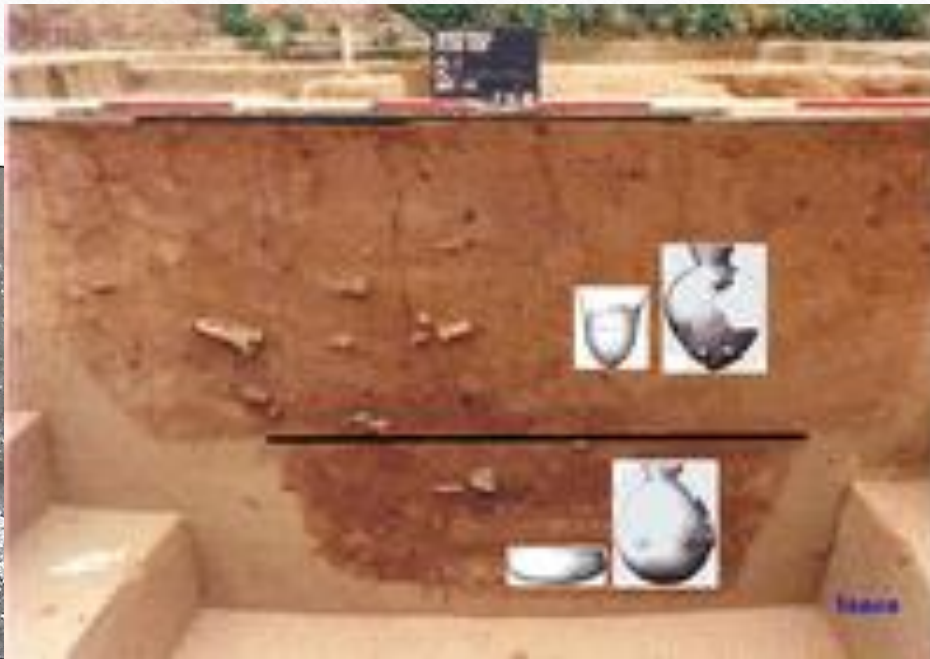
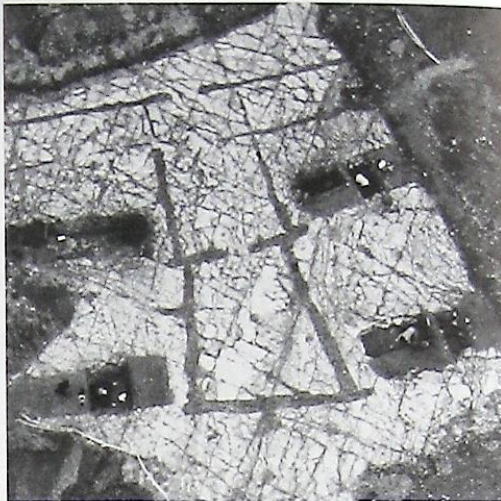
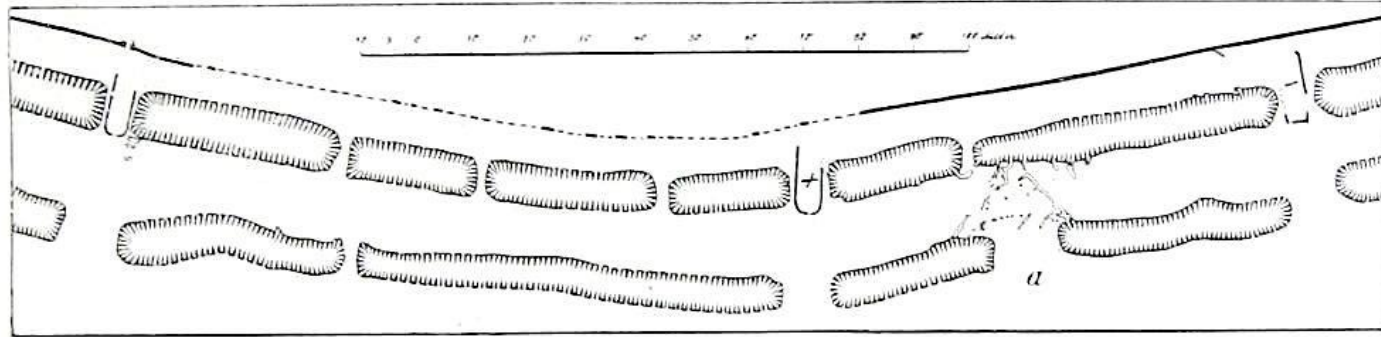


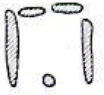

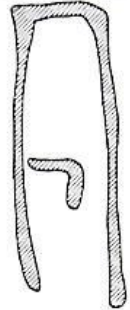
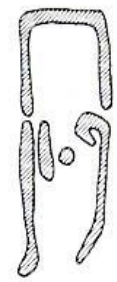
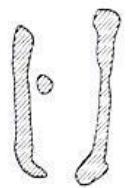
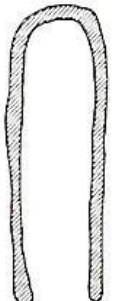
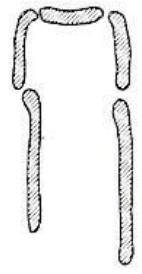
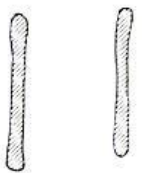
# Michelsberg enclosures in Bohemia





# Question of defensive function

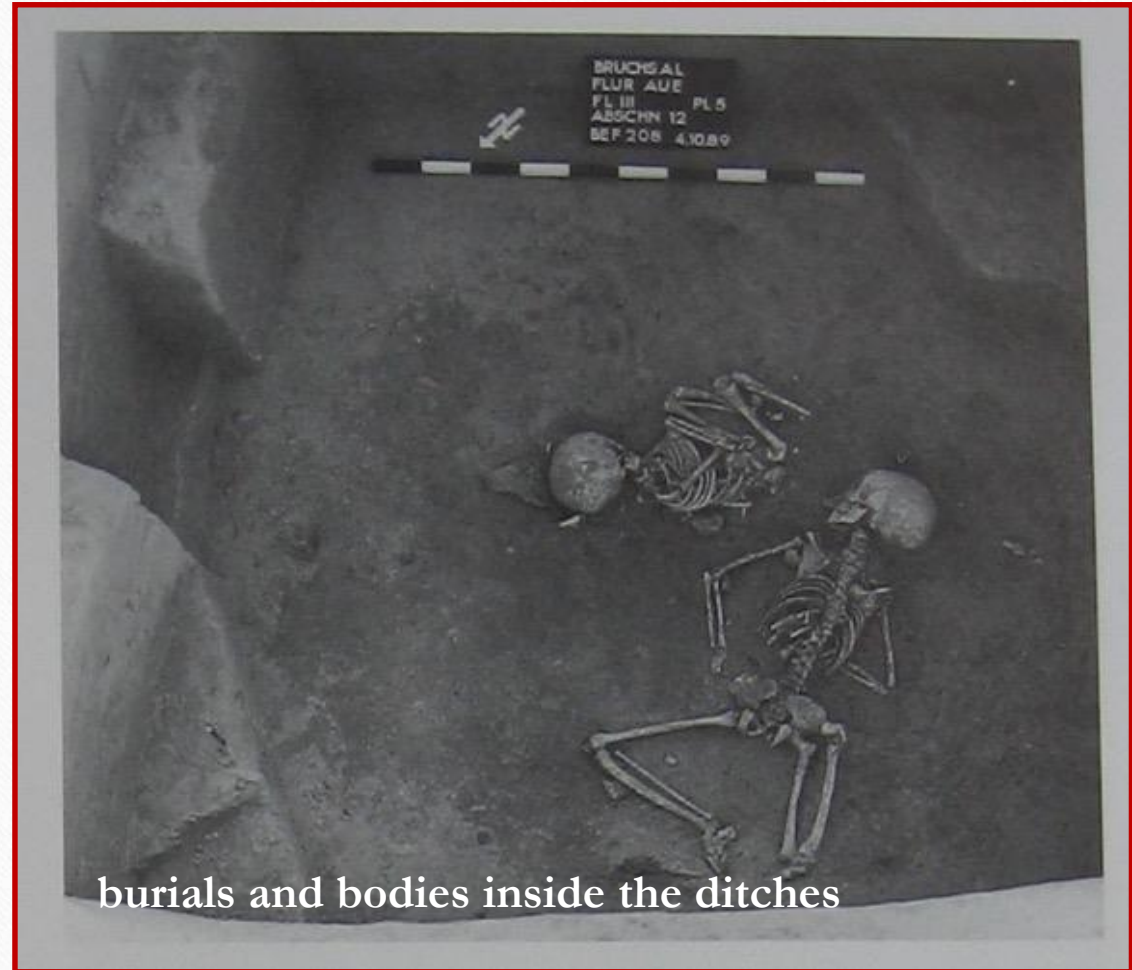
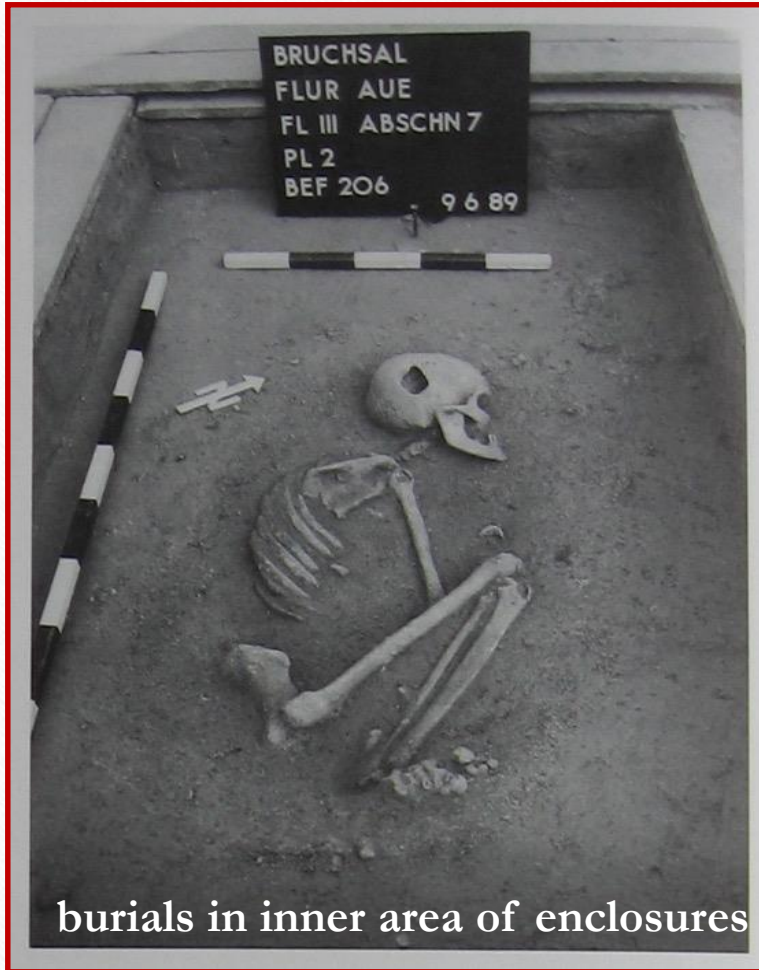


Bastions			
	horseshoe bastions		bastions with parallel walls
	simple	complex	
special types (structures)		 7	 8
with inner construction	 4	 5	 6
without inner construction	 1	 2	 3



# Enclosures as funerary areas

Absence of any other funerary evidence in the Michelsberg region





# Evidence of secondary burials



Finds of partly decomposed corpses and isolated bones and abundant skulls in ditches

Vlíněves  
District Mělník



# Variability of Michelsberg burial rites



Primary burial - excarnation

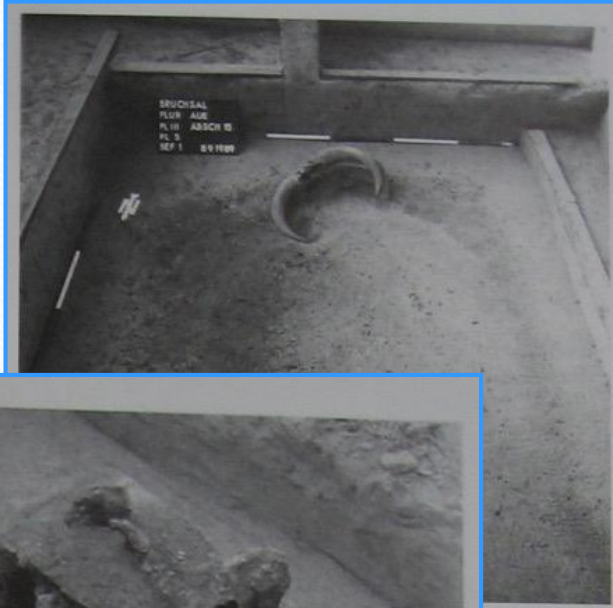
Secondary burial - deposition of defleshed remains





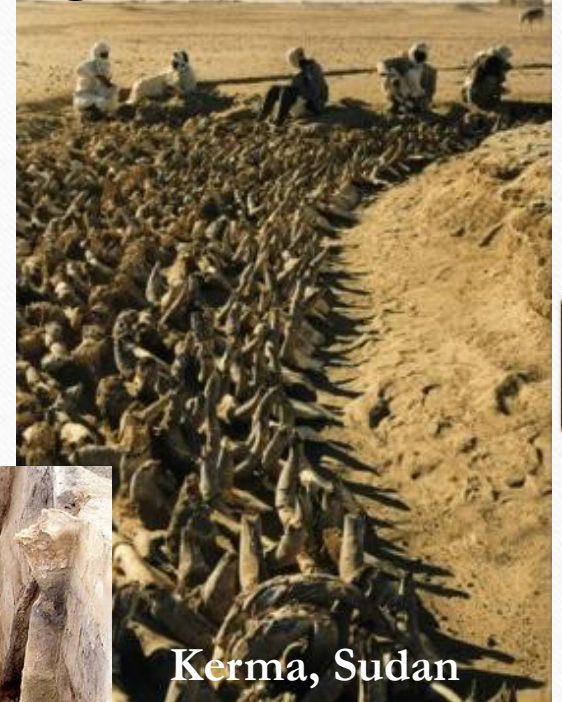
# *Bucrania* - Ritual/sacrificial function

Bruchsal-Aue  
entrance  
deposition



Chleby, Nymburk District

symbol of  
agricultural societies



Kerma, Sudan



Çatal Hüyük, Anatolia



# Drinking rituals at enclosures

finds of complete drinking vessels



Anthropology of drinking  
Feasts (see the lesson 9)





# Conclusion

## Enclosures as arenas of social interaction

Enclosures are creating a secure sacred space maintaining the social interaction:

### Amongst the living

- worshiping
- communication within and between
- communities
- ritual exchange
- bridewealth
- feasting events
- ritual consumption/disposal
- possible refugial function

### With the ancestors

- funerary rituals
- sacrifice to ancestors
- ancestral cult
- human sacrifices

All these statements are creating background for shared social and spiritual identity amongst farming communities



# Monuments and Death in the Landscape

## Stonehenge & Ritual Landscape



Credit: Adam Stanford/Aerial-cam Ltd





## Mike Parker Pearson (UCL) The Stonehenge Project

More than 50,000 cremated bone fragments, of 63 individuals buried at Stonehenge, have been excavated and studied for the first time by a team led by archaeologist Professor ***Mike Parker Pearson***. He now believes the earliest burials long predate the monument in its current form.

The first bluestones, the smaller standing stones, were brought from Wales and placed as grave markers around 3,000BC, and it remained a giant circular graveyard for at least 200 years, with sporadic burials after that.

It had been thought that almost all the Stonehenge burials, many originally excavated almost a century ago, but discarded as unimportant, were of adult men. However, new techniques have revealed for the first time that they include almost equal numbers of men and women, and children including a newborn baby.

A mace head, a high-status object comparable to a sceptre, and a little bowl burnt on one side, which may have held incense, suggest the dead could have been religious and political leaders and their immediate families.



Archaeologists have argued for centuries about what Stonehenge really meant to the people who gave hundreds of thousands of hours to constructing circles of bluestones shipped from Wales, and sarsens dragged across Salisbury plain. Druids and New Age followers still claim the site as their sacred place. Others have judged it a temple, an observatory, a solar calendar, a site for fairs or ritual feasting or – one of the most recent theories – a centre for healing, a sort of Stone Age Lourdes.

The latest theory is based on the first analysis of more than 50,000 fragments of cremated human remains from one of the “Aubrey holes”, a ring of pits from the earliest phase of the monument, which some have believed held wooden posts. Crushed chalk in the bottom of the pit was also revealed, suggesting it once supported the weight of one of the bluestones. Dating the bones has pushed back the date of earliest stone circle at the site from 2500 BC to 3000 BC.

Mike Parker Pearson suggests his earlier excavation at nearby Durrington Walls, – the largest Neolithic site in north-west Europe – is evidence of a seasonal work camp for the Stonehenge builders, who quarried, dragged and shaped more than 2,000 tons of stone to build the monument. Analysis of the animal bones shows some of them travelled huge distances – from as far as Scotland – and were slaughtered at Durrington in mid-summer and mid-winter.

Almost all the prehistoric human remains come from the eastern side of the circle, and many had been excavated by earlier archaeologists including William Hawley in the 1920s, who regarding them as unimportant compared with the giant stones, reburied them jumbled together using one of the “Aubrey holes” as a convenient pit.



# Ritual landscape

**Durrington Walls** (land of the living) and **Stonehenge** (resting place of the dead) were linked by the Avon River; other monuments, such as the **Greater Cursus**, were nearby.



Credit: © Peter Dunn/English Heritage



# Stonehenge & Durrington Walls

## Death, Winter Solstice & Ceremonial Feasting

*From all over Britain they came by the thousands, with their families, their pigs, and their cattle, to this huge complex of earthen and wooden monuments by the River Avon, known today as Durrington Walls. Inside a circular earthen bank and ditch, 500 meters in diameter, stood a smaller circle of dozens of stout, upstanding timbers. In the center, the body of a venerated chief lay in state. The pilgrims feasted to his triumphs and to his memory, roasted their cattle and their pigs, and then the procession began. Thousands marched down the short avenue to the river. The chief's body was loaded into a waiting boat, and a smaller contingent pushed off down this tortuous stretch of the Avon. A few hours later, the burial party alighted on the riverbank, joined by new throngs. Together they marched down another, longer avenue to the somber stone megalith now called Stonehenge. There, the body of the chief was placed atop a flaming pyre, and his spirit joined the ancestors.* This scenario is imaginary, but it's also completely consistent with new studies of the monuments and the animal teeth and bones buried among them. The findings are finally bringing Stonehenge, the most dramatic expression of the megalith movement that swept the British Isles 5000 years ago, out of the realm of mystery, and they are confirming new ideas about its ritual purpose. The new data support Parker Pearson's picture of Stonehenge as the place of the dead, and Durrington Walls as the place of the living. At Stonehenge, archaeologists have found more than 60 cremation burials, for example, but few animal bones or residences. At Durrington Walls, they have recovered more than 80,000 pig and cattle bones, but only three fragments of human remains. Stonehenge and Durrington Walls were exactly the opposite. The two monuments, 3 kilometers apart as the crow flies, were built about the same time, 4600 years ago, according to dates on a pig bone and antler pick, first reported in 2008. Researchers also discovered a short earthen roadway from Durrington Walls to the Avon, resembling Stonehenge's longer avenue to the river and showing that both monuments were connected to the river and so to each other. The rituals at the monuments were sometimes accompanied by great feasts, possibly around the winter solstices. (Stonehenge is aligned to the winter and summer solstices.) Zooarchaeologists can estimate when a pig was killed by the amount of wear on its teeth, and unpublished results show that most were killed in winter.

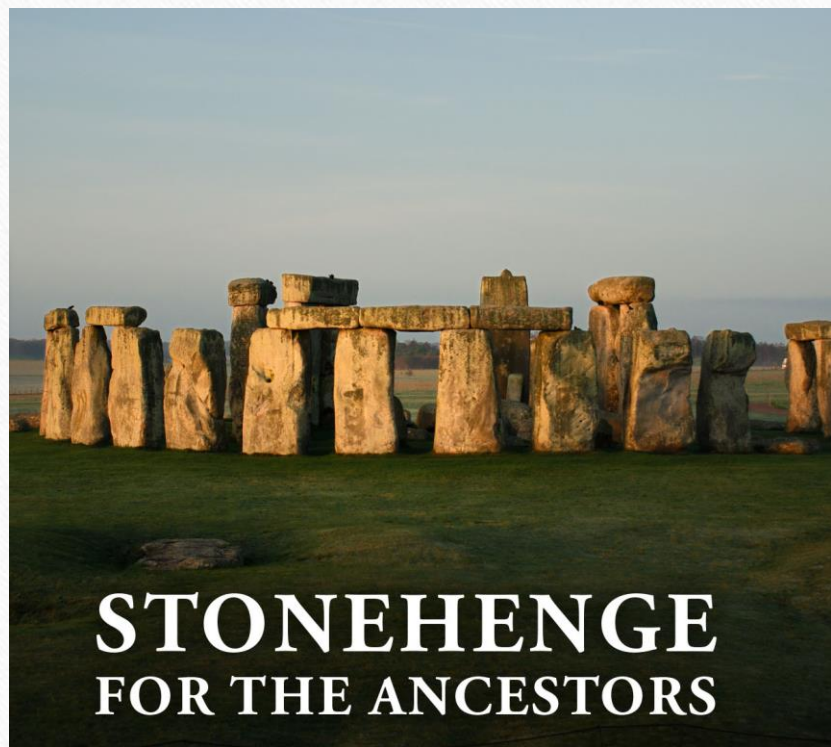


Right next to Durrington Walls, excavators have found a village with a population that might have been in the thousands. The people who lived there helped build the monuments, and the huge number of animal remains suggests that whoever was in charge of the vast project had to keep them well-fed. Other researchers have found that the Grooved Ware pottery from the village held rich traces of both dairy products and pig fat.

New evidence also supports the idea that Durrington Walls and Stonehenge served the ritual needs of a widespread population. Strontium isotope ratios in cattle teeth from the site, which vary in different geological landscapes help to indicate where animals were raised. Fewer than 20 of nearly 70 tested teeth came from the chalklands around Stonehenge; the rest came from elsewhere in England and Wales. A more precise analysis using ratios of oxygen isotopes, which can reveal the location of the water the cattle drank, suggested that many came from Wales and Scotland. There was a gathering of people coming from many different regions, thus supporting the view of the site as potentially ceremonial. The one human tooth found at Durrington Walls also originated far from the site, although the team can't pinpoint just where. These results have sparked hypotheses that far-flung hierarchies and social stratification might have been the driving forces behind the monuments. The burials at Stonehenge might reflect some kind of royal dynasty, and Stonehenge reflect some kind of political unification.

Stonehenge and Durrington Walls might have been a unifying center for all of prehistoric Britain, or at least its southern half. That might explain why Stonehenge's bluestones, so named because the dolerite and rhyolite blocks take on a slight blue sheen when wet—were either dragged, transported on boats, or both, all the way from the Preseli Hills in Wales.





# STONEHENGE FOR THE ANCESTORS

*PART 1: LANDSCAPE AND MONUMENTS*

MIKE PARKER PEARSON,  
JOSHUA POLLARD, COLIN RICHARDS,  
JULIAN THOMAS, CHRIS TILLEY  
AND KATE WELHAM

## References:

# STONEHENGE FOR THE ANCESTORS: PART 1

## Landscape and Monuments

*Mike Parker Pearson, Joshua Pollard, Colin Richards, Julian Thomas,  
Chris Tilley & Kate Welham* |

ISBN: 9789088907029

Imprint: Sidestone Press | Format: 210x280mm | ca. 520 pp. | *The  
Stonehenge Riverside Project Volume 1* | Language: English | 202 illus. (bw) |  
190 illus. (fc) |

Keywords: Stonehenge, archaeology, prehistory, Neolithic, Britain, Megaliths,  
Stone circles, Standing Stones, Bluestone, Sarsen, Avenue, Landscape,  
excavation

Published: 30-03-2020

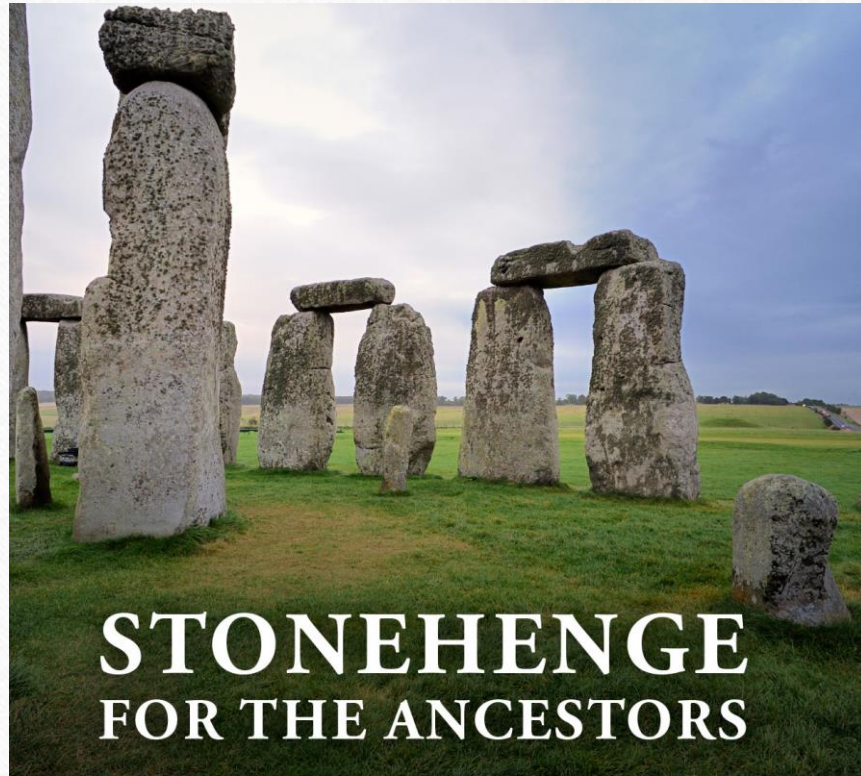


For many centuries, scholars and enthusiasts have been fascinated by Stonehenge, the world's most famous stone circle. In 2003 a team of archaeologists commenced a long-term fieldwork project for the first time in decades. The Stonehenge Riverside Project (2003-2009) aimed to investigate the purpose of this unique prehistoric monument by considering it within its wider archaeological context.

This is the first of four volumes which present the results of that campaign. It includes investigations of the monuments and landscape that pre-dated Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain as well as of excavation at Stonehenge itself. The main discovery at Stonehenge was of cremated human remains from many individuals, allowing their demography, health and dating to be established. With a revised radiocarbon-dated chronology for Stonehenge's five stages of construction, these burials can now be considered within the context of the monument's development. The different types of stone from which Stonehenge is formed – bluestones from Wales and sarsen silcretes from more local sources – are investigated both at Stonehenge and in its surroundings. These surrounding monuments include single standing stones, the Cuckoo Stone and the Tor Stone, as well as the newly discovered circle of Bluestonehenge at West Amesbury beside the River Avon. The ceremonial Stonehenge Avenue, linking Stonehenge to Bluestonehenge, is also included, based on a series of excavations along its length.

The working hypothesis behind the Stonehenge Riverside Project links Stonehenge with a complex of timber monuments upstream at the great henge of Durrington Walls and neighboring Woodhenge. While these other sites are covered in a later volume (Volume 3), this volume explores the role of the River Avon and its topographic and environmental evidence.





# STONEHENGE FOR THE ANCESTORS

*PART 2: SYNTHESIS*

MIKE PARKER PEARSON,  
JOSHUA POLLARD, COLIN RICHARDS,  
JULIAN THOMAS, CHRIS TILLEY  
AND KATE WELHAM

## Forthcoming: **STONEHENGE FOR THE ANCESTORS: PART 2** Synthesis

*Mike Parker Pearson, Joshua Pollard, Colin Richards, Julian Thomas, Chris Tilley & Kate Welham |*

**ISBN: 9789088907050**

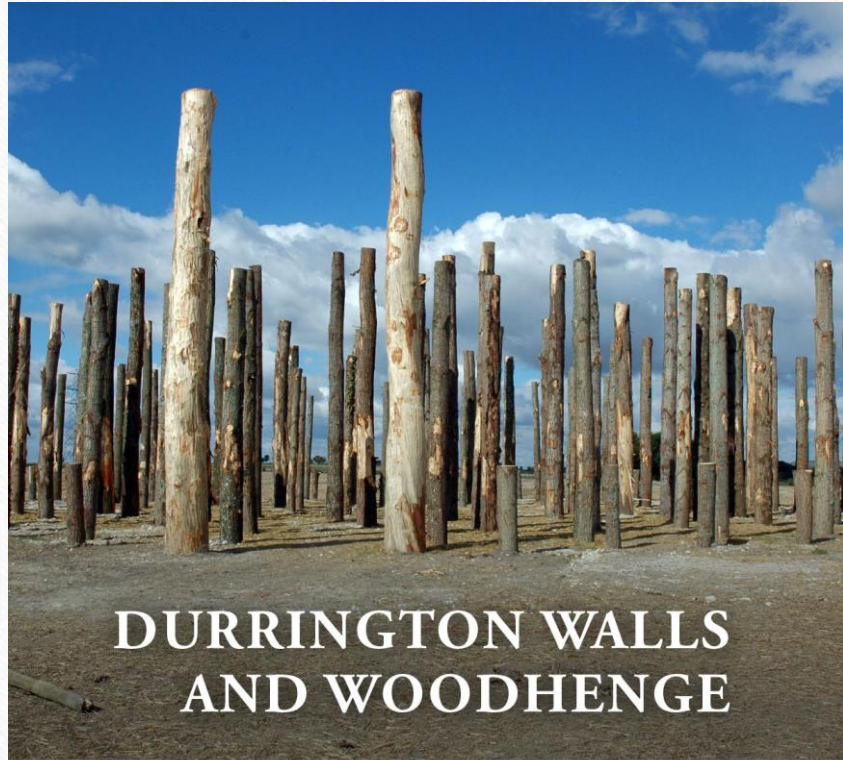
Imprint: Sidestone Press | Format: 210x280mm | ca.  
260 pp. | *The Stonehenge Riverside Project Volume 2* |

Language: English | 70 illus. (bw) | 70 illus. (fc) |

Keywords: Stonehenge, archaeology, prehistory, Neolithic, Britain, megaliths, stone circles, standing stones, Bluestone, Sarsen, avenue, landscape, lithics, petrography, molluscs

**Publication date: 2021**





*A PLACE FOR THE LIVING*

MIKE PARKER PEARSON,  
JOSHUA POLLARD, COLIN RICHARDS,  
JULIAN THOMAS, CHRIS TILLEY  
AND KATE WELHAM

# Forthcoming: **DURRINGTON WALLS AND WOODHENGE**

**A place for the living**

*Mike Parker Pearson, Joshua Pollard, Colin Richards, Julian Thomas, Chris Tilley & Kate Welham |*

**ISBN: 9789088907081**

Imprint: Sidestone Press | Format: 210x280mm | ca. 430 pp. | *The Stonehenge Riverside Project Volume 3* | Language: English |  
>100 illus. (bw) | >100 illus. (fc) |

Keywords: Stonehenge, archaeology, prehistory, Neolithic, Britain, megaliths, stone circles, standing stones, Bluestone, Sarsen, avenue, landscape, excavation, Durrington Walls, Woodhenge, settlement

**Publication date: 2022**





*LATER PREHISTORY AND THE HISTORICAL  
PERIOD IN THE STONEHENGE LANDSCAPE*

MIKE PARKER PEARSON,  
JOSHUA POLLARD, COLIN RICHARDS,  
JULIAN THOMAS, CHRIS TILLEY  
AND KATE WELHAM

**Forthcoming:**

## **AFTER STONEHENGE**

**Later prehistory and the historical period  
in the Stonehenge landscape**

*Mike Parker Pearson, Joshua Pollard, Colin Richards, Julian  
Thomas, Chris Tilley & Kate Welham*

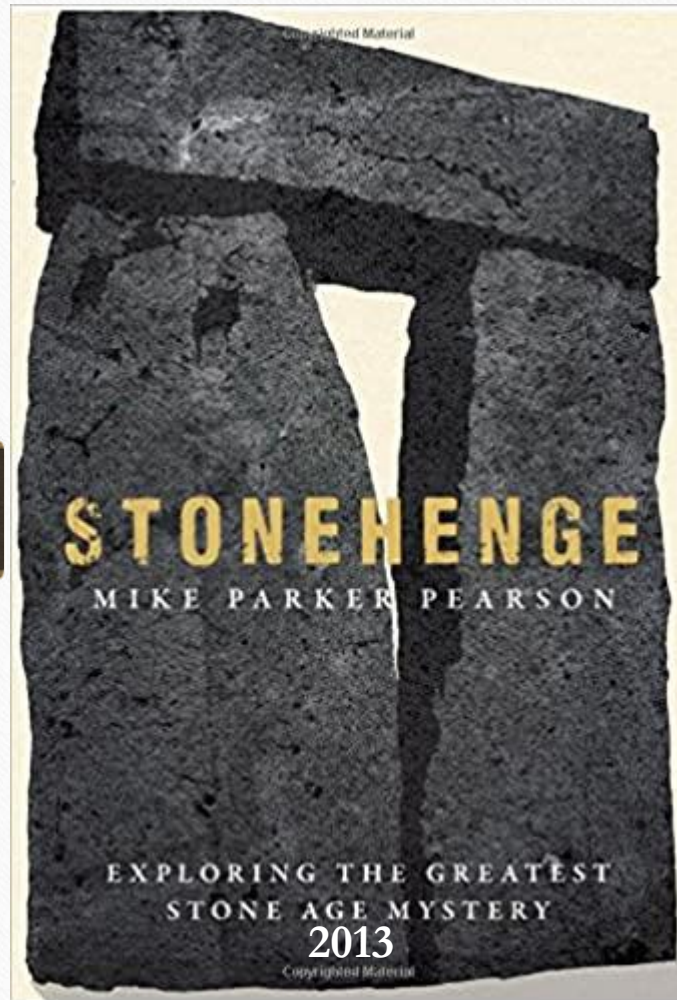
**ISBN: 9789088907111**

Imprint: Sidestone Press, Format: 210x280mm, ca. 275 pp. *The Stonehenge  
Riverside Project Volume 4*, Language: English >50 illus. (bw) >50 illus. (fc)

Keywords: Stonehenge, archaeology, prehistory, Neolithic, Britain,  
megaliths, stone circles, standing stones, Bluestone, Sarsen, avenue,  
landscape, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman period, Medieval period, Early  
Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age, Late Bronze Age

**Publication date: 2023**





ISBN-13: 978-0857207326

Review by Neil Wiseman:

As few others have done, Parker-Pearson and the Stonehenge Riverside Project takes the reader on a journey through the entire landscape of Stonehenge in order to make sense of this most enigmatic of Statement Monuments.

Beginning in the depths of the Mesolithic Era and working forward to the late Neolithic, he directs our attention to the numerous prequel-structures found within the Salisbury landscape. Through artifacts and finds in the immediate vicinity, we learn that this ever-morphing culture was constantly refining their conception of Sun, Life, Death, and how the myriad subsidiaries of these fit together into the long-lasting traditions that we now know must have been observed.

Though standing firmly on the shoulders of his predecessors, Parker-Pearson has nevertheless taken previously interpreted physical information and expanded it to include other themes within this 8,000 years-ago culture. With unprecedented permissions from the numerous authorities, in seven years over forty new digs were conducted at the Cursus, the Cuckoo Stone, Woodhenge and its environs, Durrington Walls, and many others - even within the Dyke of Stonehenge. Identifying and collating this new information is daunting, and proceeds up to the present day.



Stonehenge itself is not immune to serious editorial, and many things that were previously held as truth have now been relegated to the growing pile of discarded theories. The controversial periglacial striations, coincidentally aligning to the summer solstice sunrise, are now established as a rationale for placing the monument in its otherwise mundane location. The age and time frame of the Monument is firmly established by reviewing many of the artifacts found in the 20th century.

The order of postholes in the initial phase has been explained. The Aubrey Holes, though not defined explicitly in terms of purpose, are now known to have had uprights in them from an early time. The arrival of the Bluestones has been pushed back almost 200 years, and the Arcs, Ovals and Circles made with these are put in proper sequence, throwing the previously misunderstood timing of the Sarsen erection into welcome disarray. Additionally, the order of erection is definitively solved, that is: yes — the Trilithons went up first.

The Age of Metal is also pushed back to a time when it was previously thought not possible. As suspected, the Copper Age in the UK and Ireland was quite brief, possibly as little as 300 years, before Bronze came into wider use. But copper's use in both tool making and for ceremonial purposes is now thought to be a watershed in defining the transition from small stone-chopped trees, into the enormous shaped timbers used at Durrington's Southern Circle and elsewhere. Within that context lies a possible explanation why the Sarsens at Stonehenge were fashioned in imitation of wood. This alone is enough to place Stonehenge and Durrington in close association as two sides of the same coin.



Thank you  
for your attention!

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