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**„Funerary rites of the societies of the central and eastern group
of the Globular Amphora Culture”**

Dissertation summary

Dissertation is a systematic study of funerary finds of the Globular Amphora Culture (abb. GAC) in Central and Eastern Europe, in the area between the Oder river in the west, the middle Nemunas, Pripyat, Dnieper and Southern Bug rivers in the east, and the arc of the Sudetes and Carpathian Mountains in the south. Scholars have distinguished two large GAC provinces on this vast territory – central group in today’s Poland and Belarus, and eastern group in the western Ukraine and eastern Romania. Concerning funerary rituals, typical grave construction of the both analysed parts of the GAC *milieu* is a stone cist, usually containing multiple burials. In contrast, in the western group of the GAC, covering the area of eastern and central Germany and north-western Czech Republic, single graves or secondary burials within older megalithic structures constitute a clear majority of the funerary finds. It is generally accepted that the GAC functioned in the period of the Late Neolithic, sometime between the IV and III millennium BC. However, we must keep in mind that the exact timeframe of each regional cluster of the GAC should be determined separately. Presented dissertation consists of three main parts – thesis text (volume I), catalogue (volume II), as well as plates and tables (volume III).

Chapter II of the dissertation contains a short review of current state of research on main issues concerning the mortuary practices of the the central and eastern group of the GAC. It is divided into four main sections – theories of the first GAC scholars from the XIX and the beginning of the XX century, concepts presented by Stefan Nosek, Tadeusz Wiślański and other Polish archaeologists of the 1960s and 1970s, “eastern” hypothesis by Marija Gimbutas, and finally the most recent approach developed by the so-called Poznań archaeological school, with special regards to the works of Marzena Szmyt.

The next section of the thesis (chapter III) presents basic classification schemes of the source materials, including new typology of human graves and ritual features with animal burials or deposits. These categorizations were put into practice in the subsequent four chapters (IV-VII)

of the dissertation, containing an examination of funerary finds of the GAC from the analysed areas. Chapter IV gives a detailed description of types of grave constructions and different classes of ritual places in regional clusters of the eastern and central group of the GAC. General observations concerning forms of graves and funerary sites were given in the section V, serving as a summary of the previous chapter. According to the proposed typological scheme, graves of the GAC between the Oder and Dnieper rivers should be divided into five main groups – monumental stone cists erected on the surface and covered with mounds (subgroup I), buried grave cists (subgroup II) built from stone blocks or large slabs (class II A), as well as rubble or small slabs (class II B), and finally pit graves with (subgroup III) or without (subgroup IV) various stone arrangements. It was revealed that some types of grave construction, especially stone cists, seem to be strongly associated with specific parts of the GAC territory, sometimes even single regions. This observation could reflect both different funerary customs of GAC people inhabiting certain areas, as well as distribution of outcrops of rocks typically used in constructing different types of graves. It is worth noticing that no such tendencies were detected in the case of pit graves, which could be found in most of the territories penetrated by the GAC people.

Chapter VI of the thesis discusses types of human burials, layouts of human remains in graves, as well as grave goods in funerary features of the central and eastern group of the GAC. Due to infrequent anthropological research of human remains from the analysed GAC cemeteries, it was not possible to detect any substantial discrepancies between the average number of individuals interred in graves in different regions. However, there is a strong evidence suggesting that stone grave structures were built mainly in order to use them multiple times, in contrast to pit graves, typically containing remains of just one or two individuals. It seems that the communities of both central and eastern group of the GAC followed very similar general rules while selecting grave offerings. The dead were usually equipped in a few ceramic vessels and flint tools: axes, chisels or others, often accompanied by stone or bone artefacts, wild boar tusks, as well as animal remains. On the other hand, types of personal ornaments from grave inventories seem to have rather regional character. Bone or antler T-shaped plaques and amber beads are typical for the GAC graves from the territory of Poland. It is worth noticing that both of those categories of finds usually match the determined biological sex of the deceased – while the former usually were being identified alongside male skeletons, amber necklaces seem to be strongly associated with female individuals. In the same time, characteristic bone ornaments of the eastern group of the GAC

are belt buckles, most commonly found in the GAC graves from Podolia and the Moldavian Uplands. In contrast to personal ornaments of the central group of the GAC, the occurrence of artefacts belonging to this group show no significant differences between deceased individuals assigned to one of the sexes.

Chapter VII contains analysis of features with animal burials or deposits from GAC cemeteries between the Oder and Dnieper rivers. While in the area of the central group of GAC such finds are quite common, so far only a few complexes with animal deposits of the eastern group of GAC have been excavated. Features belonging to the discussed group could be divided into five main classes. To start with, animal graves, usually containing remains of cattle or, rarely, individuals belonging to other species, occurred in many regions of Polish GAC. In the same time, ritual deposits of cattle remains have been identified in Kuyavia and Greater Poland only, while so-called 'sacrificial pits' with mass animal deposits form a small cluster in the Sandomierz Upland. For the GAC cemeteries from the Nałęczów Plateau unique are grave cists built from limestone boulders consisting of two chambers – one containing human remains, and other – cattle burials. Finally, in Kuyavia various animal burials and deposits often occur within monumental funerary structures or megalithic tombs of the GAC.

Chapter VIII of the dissertation presents the results of stylistic analyses of ceramic vessels from grave inventories of the central and eastern groups of the GAC. It was revealed that both decoration and morphology of ceramics seem to have rather regional character and do not directly reflect changes of the GAC burial rite. The next section of the thesis (chapter IX) contains an attempt to summarize results of the study in chronological perspective. Based on available data, analysed funerary features were dated to the period between 3 200 and 2 500/2 400 BC, which differs significantly from the much longer time span of the GAC accepted traditionally by many scholars. So far, the earliest well-documented GAC graves and ritual features were discovered only in Kuyavia. We must keep in mind, however, that features containing analogous vessels have been identified in the north-western part of the central group of the GAC. Oftentimes, grave constructions most likely belonging to the older GAC horizon bear many resemblances to features of the 'northern' megalithic circle. What is more, influences of the various cultural phenomena of the Late Neolithic of central and northern Germany could be traced in the pottery style of the discussed features. For that reason, we can suspect that the formation of the 'polish' GAC group may be associated with adaptation of the so-called 'western' impulses sometime in the 2nd half of the IV millennium BC (chapter X). Starting from the beginning of the III millennium BC, GAC people had been

rapidly migrating to the south and east. As soon as about 2 900/2 800 BC in the areas between the Bug and Dnieper rivers new GAC province – the eastern group – came into being. While the tradition of building collective graves still prevail in later stages of the GAC in analysed areas, we could observe growing number of single graves, echoing funerary rituals of the Final Neolithic Corded Ware Culture. We could suspect that acculturation of new norms brought by Late Neolithic societies could have played a key role in the disintegration of the central and eastern group of the GAC in the 2nd half of the III millennium BC.