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ex Instituto Archaeologico Universitatis de Rolando Eötvös nominatae

ΜΩΜΟΣ IX.

A RITUÁLÉ RÉGÉSZETE

Őskoros Kutatók IX. Összejövetelének konferenciakötete

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF RITUAL

Proceedings of the IXth conference of researchers of prehistory

Supplementum 3. | 2020

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A rituálé régészete

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Miskolc, 2015. október 14–16.

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2015. október 14–16. között a miskolci Herman Ottó Múzeum rendezte meg a IX. ΜΩΜΟΣ konferenciát, vagyis az Őskoros Kutatók IX. Összejövetelét. E konferenciasorozat 1997-ben indult útjára, és hagyományosan kétévente, mindig egy meghatározott témakörben ad lehetőséget az ősrégészet kutatóinak újabb eredményeik bemutatására. Debrecen, Szombathely, Kőszeg és Százhalombatta után Miskolc városa először adott otthont a programnak.

A konferencia témája ezúttal *„A rituálé régészete"* volt, a tematika kidolgozását az ELTE BTK Régészettudományi Intézetének kutatói segítették. A felvezető és összefoglaló előadásokon túl a *Strukturált depozitumok; Rituális cselekvésmódok és rituális specialisták; Rituális tér (rituális építmények, rituális táj, rituális térhasználat);* valamint a *Temetkezések mint rituális cselekvésformák* altémák köré rendeződött a program. A konferencia fő célja az volt, hogy közösen számba vegyük azokat a jelenségeket, melyek ebben a körben értelmezhetőek, ütköztessük az eltérő megközelítéseket, interpretációkat, és közös fogalmi keretet alakítsunk ki – hiszen a kutatás így tud megújulni, fejlődni.

Ezeknek a céloknak csak részben tudtunk megfelelni, a konferenciát mégis eredményesen zártuk. A három nap alatt 31 előadás hangzott el, mellettük 12 poszter is bemutatásra került. A résztvevő 120 kutatót és érdeklődőt rendhagyó módon fogadó „Pannon-tenger Múzeum" hangulatos helyszínnek bizonyult, és sokat jelentett, hogy a szervezésben a Múzeum munkatársai és a közel 40 fős Régészeti Tár egy emberként vett részt.

Az esemény óta eltelt négy évben több kutató munkája is megjelent, így ebben a kötetben tizennégy tanulmány kapott helyet. A közlések a konferencia altémáit felbontva, immár időrendi sorrendben, a kőkorszaktól a vaskor végéig foglalkoznak a „rituálé régészetével", eredményeiket egy kulturális antropológiai tanulmány egészíti ki. A kötet kiadása egy sikertelen pályázatot követően a Herman Ottó Múzeumban anyagi nehézségekbe ütközött, emiatt a Szervezők nevében szeretnénk megköszönni az ELTE BTK Régészettudományi Intézetének a lehetőséget, és különösen Váczi Gábor áldozatos munkáját, amelynek révén a *Dissertationes Archaeologicae* sorozat *Supplementum* köteteként végül mégis hozzáférhetővé válhat a kutatás és az érdeklődők számára.

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The Ritual Role of Wells beyond their Everyday Water-providing Function

A Late Bronze Age well from Pusztataskony-Ledence

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Abstract

In 2011, in the Late Bronze Age settlement of Pusztataskony-Ledence, situated next to the Tisza River, a timber lined well (Kastenbrunnen, rováskút) *with a preserved wooden structure and a large number of finds came to light. Based on the position, composition, and quality of the abundant finds found in the well infill, it is possible to reconstruct the manipulation and special treatment of household waste and its structured deposit at the well bottom. Throughout history, a series of diverse and complex rituals connected directly or indirectly to wells can be observed. This role derives from the close connection of man to water and the well. This function may appear earlier in the Life stage of the well's life cycle, however, it culminates in the phase of Afterlife. By studying the Afterlife of the Pusztataskony well and other prehistoric examples, we attempt to outline and understand this special relationship. At the same time, we aim to define the archaeological characteristics and criteria to identify these ritual functions and meanings.*

1. The relationship of man and well

Water is an essential element of life, which keeps humans alive directly and also in an indirect way, through the environment.[1] This inseparable connection of man and water fundamentally determined the survival strategies, everyday life and thinking of prehistoric communities, and these were pervaded by various rituals associated with the supernatural attributes of water.[2]

By making wells, man's vulnerability to the environment has lessened,[3] on the other hand, the ritual significance of water has appeared in a new context and different sense (see below). This ritual relationship can already be observed in the earliest water wells. In six of the seven wells discovered in the settlement of Kissonerga-Mylouthkia (Cyprus), dating back to the period 8400–6800 BC, archaeologists unearthed varying staged and structured deposits of selected and fragmented objects.[4]

In order to recognize and understand the new context and meanings, it is crucial not to consider wells a simple water providing instrument, but one with an active, integral role in the community, even affecting its very existence. Beyond its inert water-providing function, the well may

1 The manuscript was closed in January 2017.
2 Maringer 1973; Oestigaard 2011.
3 Weiner 2012; Brozio et al. 2014.
4 Peltenburg 2012, 71–76; Koutrafouri 2013, 89–95.

have been associated with social and ritual properties.[5] Thus, even after losing its primary, water-providing function because of either some forced or deliberate reasons (*Death stage*), it can still play an important role in the community's life, remaining actively alive in the communal memory. This transformation, which may happen for a number of reasons, and at different times, signifies the beginning of the well's *Afterlife*. In this stage of the life cycle, the well assumes new functions, through which new or expanded, transformed meanings are attached. According to these newly assumed functions, the characteristics of the relationship between the community and the well have changed. It might have become, for example a waste pit, or it may have been transformed into a ritual site. Finally, the functional and symbolic termination of the well means the termination of the well's communal memory (phase of *Termination*) *(Fig. 1)*.[6]

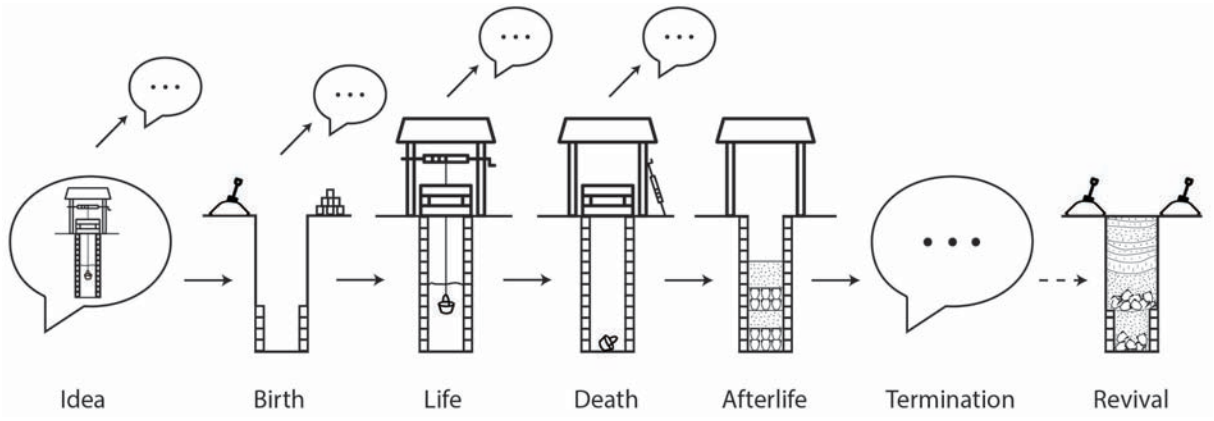

Fig. 1. The life stages of a well.

The first three stages of the wells' biography, namely the phase of *Idea*, *Birth* and *Life*, have already been presented through the example of the Late Bronze Age timber lined well excavated in Pusztataskony-Ledence.[7] This article provides an insight into the subsequent secondary use of the well, namely into the phase of *Death* and *Afterlife,* in order to draw attention to the ritual relationship between man and well, which often remains invisible to us.

2. Well number 2 of Pusztataskony-Ledence

2.1 The excavation

In 2009–2011, the Institute of Archaeological Sciences of Eötvös Loránd University performed a rescue excavation at sites 1 and 2 of Pusztataskony-Ledence, at the location of the flood reservoir of Nagykunság. At the high coast oriented southwest to northeast, located directly by a former branch of the Tisza River, inhabited by several Prehistoric and Migration Period communities, a smaller settlement of the Tumulus culture was discovered (Reinecke BB2–BC, approx. 1500/1450–1300 BC) *(Fig. 2)*. The settlement was comprised of a multi-period ditch, 38 pits, two postholes, and two wells. The timber lined well (feature 637), which was preserved with its lining and examined in detail in this article, was discovered in August of 2011, during the expansion of the trench's western edge located nearer to the Tisza River, directly by a larger pit (feature 633).

5 Vaday 2003, 25; Koutrafouri 2008, 223–224; Elburg 2011, 35.
6 Fülöp 2017, 312–313.
7 Fülöp 2017.

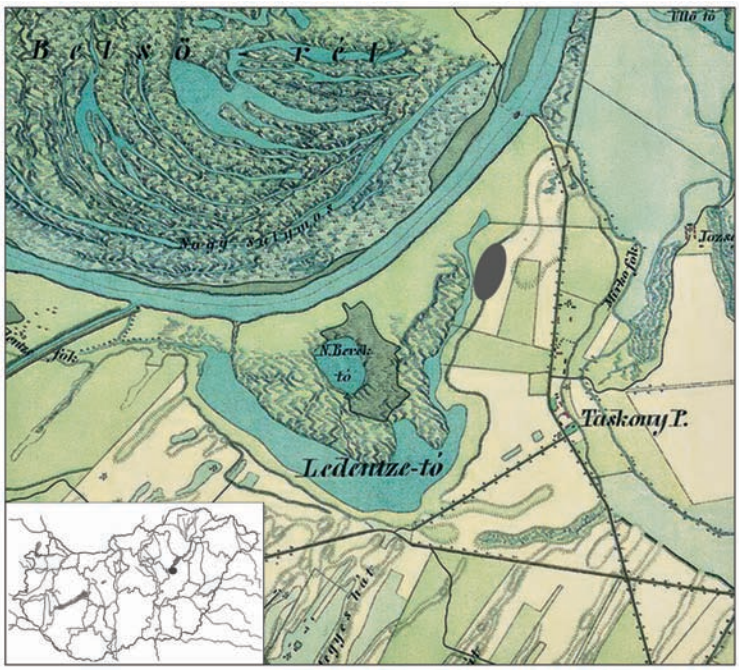

Fig. 2. Pusztataskony-Ledence. The location of the Tumulus culture settlement on the 2nd Military Survey (1806–1869).

The 2 by 2.2-meter well mouth opened from the west side of a 4.8 by 6.5-meter oval, shallow, troughlike depression with grey infill *(Fig. 3.1)*. On the western and southern walls of the slightly shrinking shaft, at the depth of 1.5 meters, a pronounced ledge unfolded *(Fig 3.2)*. This ledge was probably supposed to reinforce the shaft wall, which was becoming more instable with the increasing depth.[8] At this level, the greyish infill constituting the former humus-subhumus transition was replaced with solid, dark brown soil, slightly mixed with flecks of yellow clay and daub. Due to the spouting groundwater at the depth of 2.7 meters the well shaft was widened and further deepened with an excavator *(Fig. 3.3)*. At this depth, the only findings were a few animal bones and wooden fragments.

The first preserved row of boards appeared at a depth of 3.5 meters, with a large, intact, tilted amphora *(Fig. 3.4)*. Subsequently, we excavated another four rows of timber lining of approximately 102 by 115 cm coffers made of diagonally stacked split ash and oak boards, until we reached the bottom of the well *(Fig. 3.6)*.

Within the wooden lining from the level of the first row of boards until the bottom of the well, large amounts of ceramics and a few remains of grinding stone, animal bone, and antler tools, small daub and wooden fragments, and also a small piece of rope were discovered from the fillings. However, due to the heavily muddy and clayey infill caused by the constantly spouting groundwater, we couldn't unearth and document in situ the abundant but heavily fragmented materials *(Fig. 3.5)*. These were nevertheless documented and collected according to their positions in five stratigraphic units (snr 870–874) linked to the rows of boards *(Fig. 4)*.

The bottom of the well, with four vessels preserved mostly intact, in situ, was located at a depth of approximately 4.5–4.6 meters, right below the final row of boards, in the form of a coarser, larger grain sand layer *(Fig. 3.6)*.

8 Fülöp 2017, 316–317.

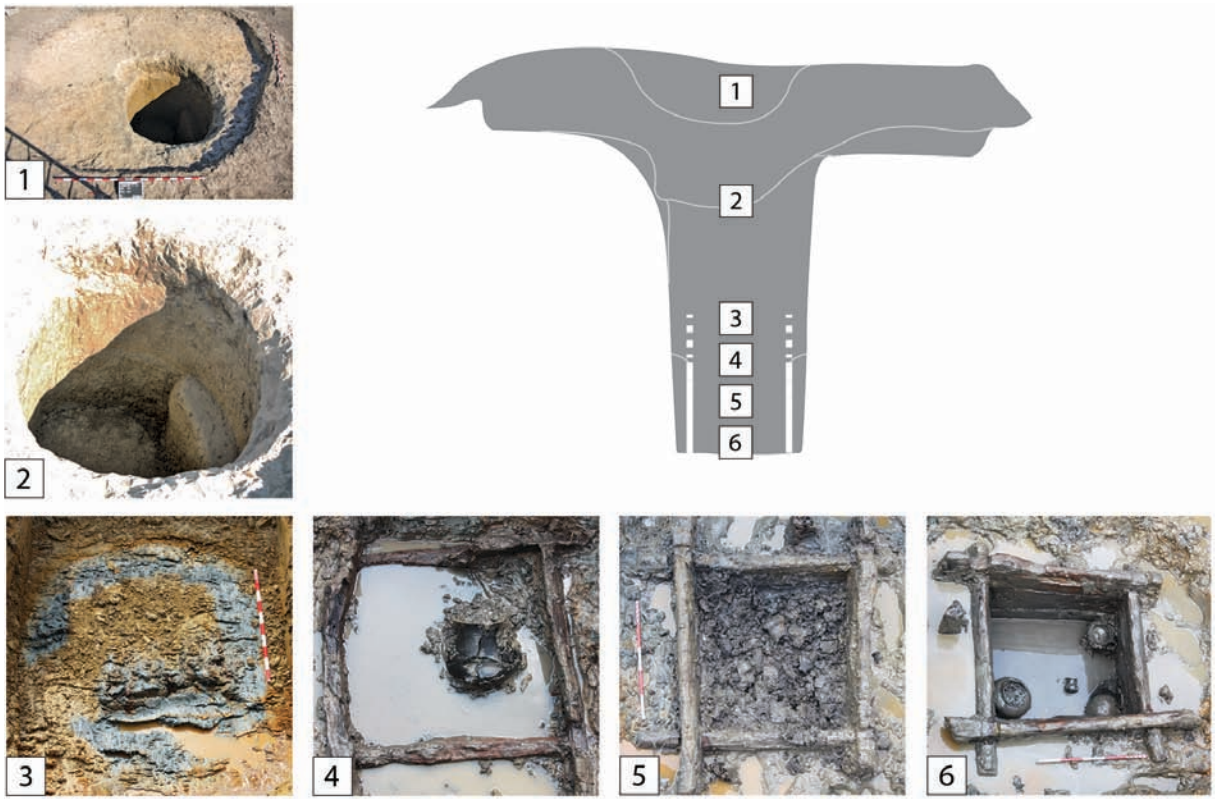

Fig. 3. The stages and main elements of the excavation of the Pusztataskony well (feature 637). 1 – The well mouth opening from the troughlike depression, 2 – The ledge on the side of the well shaft, 3 – The round and dark infill of the well's shaft after deepened by the excavator, 4 – The first row of boards, with an intact amphora type vessel in the middle, 5 – The large amount of the heavily fragmented materials (mainly potsherds) at the well's bottom, 6 – The final three rows of boards, with in situ vessels at the bottom of the well and with a support stake observable at the outer side.

2.2 The second stage of the well's life cycle: The phase of Death and Afterlife

The primary function of the Pusztataskony well was to provide a permanent, high quality, and large amount of water. This function is also confirmed by the fragment of a rope found at the bottom of the well and used for water lifting. This alternative solution for access to water in the Tisza floodplain, which is rich in surface waters, but often contaminated by floods and other natural causes (e.g. carcasses, stagnation, animal feces), is a response to a demand not only for human consumption and use, but also for the needs of the similarly quality-sensitive and high consuming livestock.[9]

2.2.1 The phase of Death

Over time, the Pusztataskony well has lost its primary water-providing function for several reasons. Based on archaeological, ethnographical, and experimental archaeological examples, a number of reasons, beside the mere abandonment of settlements, may have arisen. The earliest wooden structure of the Middle Neolithic well of Erkelenz-Kückhoven became unusable after about 30 years of use due to inappropriate static design.[10] Despite the annual spring maintenance and cleaning, the Hortobágy field wells often dried out in summer.[11] Due to the

9 Fülöp 2017, 315–316.
10 Weiner 2012, 84.
11 Papp 2008, 198.

high groundwater level at the time of construction, it might also have happened, that wells were not dug deeply enough, therefore they ran out of water as the groundwater level fell.[12] The quality of water deteriorates easily in lack of regular use, maintenance, and cleaning of the well. On the one hand, this deterioration makes water undrinkable, on the other hand, it helps the timber and the other organic materials (moss and peat serving as insulation) to rot over time.[13] However, this decline can be avoided with precautions and constant monitoring or repaired with the right knowledge.[14]

The loss of water providing function is not the only prerequisite for wells to assume a secondary function. Several prehistoric and ethnographic examples clearly indicate that this secondary role may appear earlier in the active, water providing life of wells thanks to the supernatural relationship between well and water (see below). This additional use might have been present in parallel with the primary water supply function (e.g. folk customs associated with wells),[15] or it could have temporarily (e.g. during the ritual) or even permanently lost its original water-providing function, or at least its role in human water consumption (e.g. Lindängelund[16]).

2.2.2 The phase of Afterlife

Although the time and reason of the Death of the Pusztataskony well is unknown, it can be asserted that the loss of its water-providing function did not involve its termination. Assuming a new role and meaning, it continued to be a central part of the settlement, and became a place for the deposition of artefacts varying in type and quality. A detailed examination of the well infill allows us to reconstruct the process of this deposition at the well bottom, and also to try to understand the transformed, new role and meaning of the well.

2.2.2.1 The infill of the well

Concerning the position of the findings inside the wooden lining, an unusually large quantity appears in an unusually small place. 5574 vessel fragments, comprising of 820 characteristic and 3605 uncharacteristic items after restoration,[17] and 44 pieces of other tools, animal bones, and daub fragments, came to light from the 80 cm deep bottommost section, between 3.7 and 4.5 meters *(Fig. 4)*.[18]

Prior to the deposition of the objects, the well was not cleaned up, which is shown by the piece of rope indicating everyday use, and also by various wooden pieces and branches found at the bottom of the well.

The compactness of the finds and the lack of infill layers between them refer to the fact that the objects were deposited into the well at the same time. In each case, the matching vessel fragments came from one single stratigraphic unit. Therefore, we can exclude the possibility

12 Szabó 1965, 90.
13 Lindemann 2006, 113–115.
14 Szabó 1965, 90.
15 Fehér 1938, 184; Cs. Pócs 1964, 151, 182.
16 Carlie et al. 2014.
17 The 3605 pieces of sherds were uncharacteristic, undecorated, and often heavily eroded side fragments, and they were not available for a detailed analysis.
18 Seven additional sherds were found outside of the wooden lining (snr 872). These might have got into the soil during construction work when the well shaft was backfilled (Fülöp 2017, 323).

that they were mixed prior to being thrown into the well. The intact or almost completely restored vessels, which are present in each stratigraphic unit despite the circumstances of the excavation, confirm the assumption that some form of deliberate placement of the artefacts, rather than the being simply thrown into the well, can be reconstructed *(Fig. 3.6; Fig. 6; Fig. 7)*. Particularly interesting is the presence of the intact amphora on top of the infill. It is placed as a sealing or closure of the deposit (so called *Abschlussfund*)[19] *(Fig. 3.4; Fig. 6.1)*.

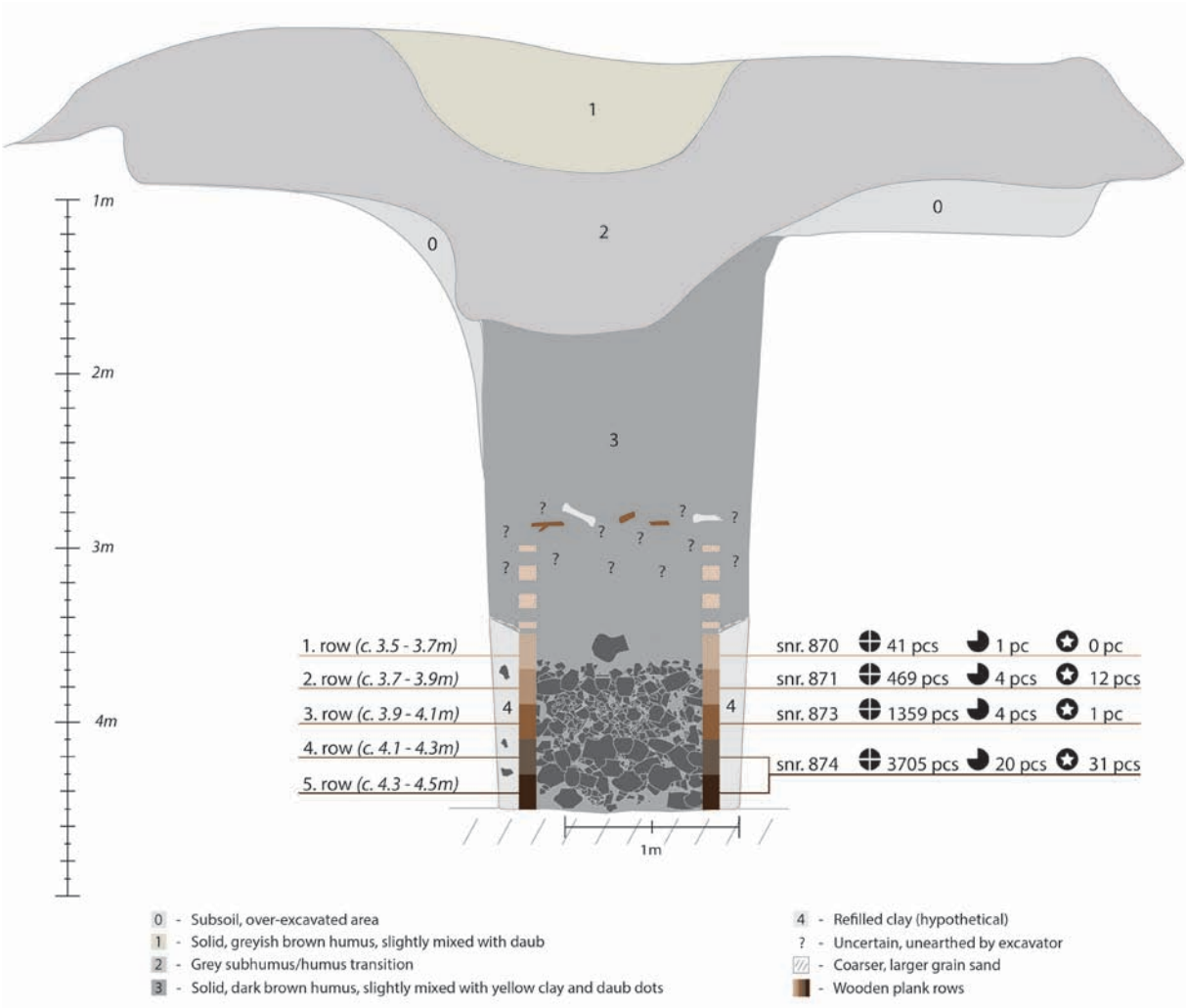

Fig. 4. The cross-section of the Pusztataskony well (feature 637) with the layers, plank rows, stratigraphic units (snr), and distribution of the finds. (⊕ – number of the ceramic fragments; ◕ – the number of the almost completely (>75%) restored vessels; ✪ – the number of other artefacts).

From a stratigraphic point of view, the infill section between 2.7–3.3 m, which is located directly above the deposit, cannot be investigated in detail due to the circumstances of the excavation. However, only a few wooden pieces and animal bones came to light from this approx. 50 cm thick section at a depth of 2.9 m *(Fig. 4)*. Based on the lack of long-term and natural infill layers and other archaeological materials, we can presume that the well shaft was deliberately backfilled, at least in a certain section of the well, with a solid, dark brown soil, slightly mixed with flecks of yellow clay and daub. Probably the 2.8×2.9 m in diameter and 1.3 m deep pit

19 Elburg 2011, 34.

(feature 633) with an irregular shape and uneven bottom, and which is situated right next to the well and almost completely free of any finds,[20] was dug for this purpose.

2.2.2.2 The assemblage[21]

In addition to the 3605 non-specific side fragments, 44% (360 pieces) of the 820 inventoried ceramics[22] cannot be defined more precisely than rim, side, bottom, and handle fragments. However, the remaining 460 pieces of definable ceramic fragments, intact or almost completely restored vessels allow us to make several statements.

Considering the shape and size of vessels, a wide and complete range of household utensils for cooking, baking, serving, storing, and transporting can be found in which cooking and storage vessels are predominant *(Fig. 9.2)*. A great variety of form and decoration can also be observed within each vessel category. Furthermore, the varying size of each type of vessels and the different quality of their design, suggests a wider range of possible functions *(Fig. 5)*.

Typically for the vessels of the classical Tumulus culture in the Northern Great Hungarian Plain, decorations are rare and simple, such as knobs, incisions, finger impressions, and ribs. Richly decorated vessels do not occur, except for an amphora and a jar, as well as a few small fragments, however, many of them are thoroughly burnished *(Fig. 5)*. The quality of the objects reflects a high variety. Beside fine and well-designed potteries, there are several vessels with technological errors or negligent manufacture, such as strong asymmetry, instability, unequal wall thickness, poorly elaborated decoration, and some type of damage.

In 74 cases (9%), partial or complete secondary burning could be observed *(Fig. 9.3)*. In case of pots, this phenomenon can be mostly related to cooking *(e.g. Fig. 6.4; Fig. 7.9, 13)*, however, more than the half of the burnt vessels (38 pieces) are biconical, amphora-like, storage vessels. This occurrence of secondary burning, on one hand, might be explained by a special use of these potteries or a particular treatment of household waste, but on the other hand, it could also be connected to the process of deposition into the well. Five of the eight intact or almost completely restored amphora vessels show the traces of this secondary burning *(Fig. 7.15–17, 19–20; Fig. 8.3, 11)*. All of them were found at the lowest part of the well (snr 874), and apart from some minor damage, which derives most probably from everyday use, they were in a good and usable condition at the moment of the burning. However, most of them became unusable after it.

Altogether 29 vessels were intact or could be almost completely restored.[23] 20 of them came from the bottom half of the well (snr 874), while 8 pieces lay in the upper half (snr 873, 871), and one amphora vessel, placed in the middle, sealed the assemblage (snr 870) *(Fig. 4; Fig. 6;*

20 Only ten sherds were discovered (nine side fragments and one rim fragment).

21 Unfortunately, I did not have the chance for a detailed examination of the 3605 (44.8 kg) non-specific side fragments. Thus, they could not have been part of the following statistical evaluations. However, the 1976 examined fragments, thanks to their characters, nicely represents the tendencies and characteristics of the assemblage.

22 Two items with the following inventory number were missing during my investigation: Damjanich János Museum, Szolnok, inv. no. 2010.02.637.838.871, 2010.02.637.846.871. This small deficit did not affect the presented tendencies.

23 The category of almost completely restored vessels includes all vessels that could be restored over 75%. The creation of this category and its discussion with the group of intact vessels aimed to counterweigh the circumstances of the excavation (fragmentation, loss).

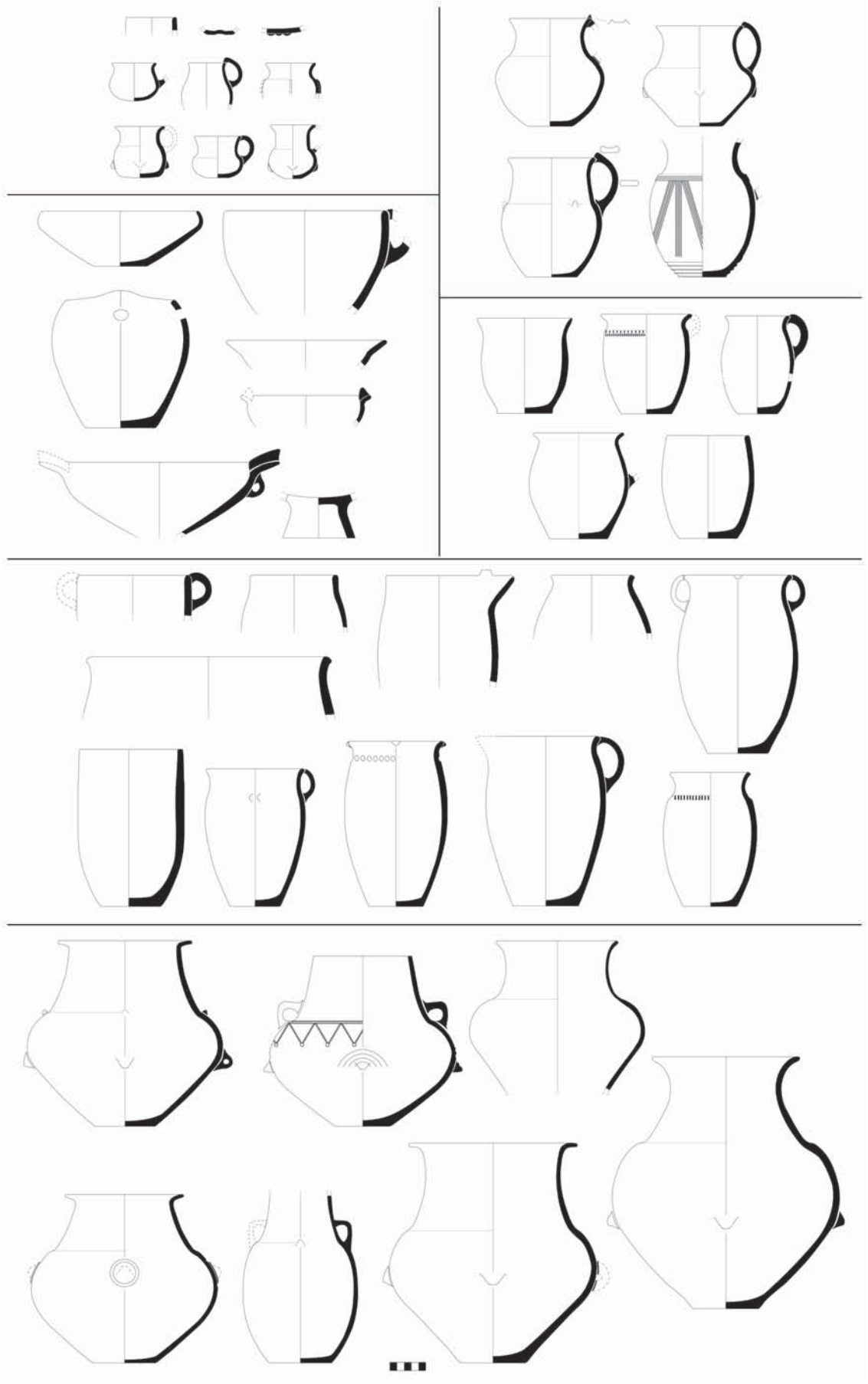

Fig. 5. The type of vessels found in the Pusztataskony well (feature 637).

Fig. 7). In the case of intact vessels, it is clear that they were deposited in one piece *(Fig. 6.1; Fig. 7.3, 14, 17)*, while in the case of fragmented vessels it is only probable *(Fig. 7.1, 7, 9, 13)*. At the same time, based on the traces of deliberate fragmentation we can be certain that several vessels were placed into the well in pieces *(Fig. 6.5, 9; Fig. 8.7, 10)*. With other vessels, this cannot be conclusively proven, although based on the various consequences of secondary burning (cracks, splits, and spallings), it is strongly suspected that this was also the case with these *(Fig. 6.6; Fig. 7.16; Fig. 8.9)*. In most cases, however, this question cannot be answered *(Fig. 6.2–4, 7–8; Fig. 7.2–6, 8, 10–12, 15, 18–20)*. Various traces of use could be observed in several vessels, such as chips *(Fig. 6; Fig. 7.2, 8, 20; Fig. 8.11)* and broken down knobs *(Fig. 6.1; Fig. 7.15, 19; Fig. 8.3)*. In many cases, the character[24] or the extent[25] of the damage, which could have happened during usage or intentionally, indicate that several vessels were in an unusable condition at the moment of their deposition, regardless of whether they were whole or not. This unusable condition can also be observed in the three intact vessels, found at the bottom of the well *(Fig. 7.3, 14, 17)*. This intensive use or damage can also be detected on small fragments and partially restored vessels in the form of abrasions, chips, and breakages *(Fig. 8.8)*.

A surprisingly small amount of other waste material was found among the abundant ceramic vessels and sherds *(Fig. 4)*. A few matching fragments of a portable stove, the fragment of a spindle whorl, a small, decorated clay artefact with unknown function, a bone skate made from a cattle radius, one polished stone tool, one antler hoe, the fragments of three grinding stones, one sheep and four pieces of animal bone, and 29 daub fragments came to light *(Fig. 6.10–18)*. The tools, without exception, show intense use and most of them were deposited in an unusable condition *(Fig. 6.10–11, 13–17; Fig. 8.4–5)*. The animal bones as food waste are indicated by the cut marks observed on one cattle radius *(Fig. 8.2)*.

2.2.2.3. Well number 1 of Pusztataskony-Ledence (feature 523)

Another well of the Tumulus settlement, lined most likely with wattle, was found in the summer of 2011 and is situated 240 meters southwest from well no. 2. The finds from the 1×1.3 m wide and 5 m deep well were scattered in varying concentration almost all over the infill, which also consisted of several layers with no archaeological materials.[26] The 753 pieces of vessel fragments (458 items after the restoration) and 11 daub fragments differ significantly from the amount of finds found in the second Pusztataskony well, indicating the different scales of the two phenomena *(Fig. 9.1)*. The number of intact or almost completely restored vessels is only eight. One amphora of these complete vessels was probably used for water drawing, while a jar with a rope around its neck is certain to have fallen into the shaft during water extraction. The proportion of identifiable vessel types is similar for the two wells, predominantly cooking and storage vessels *(Fig. 9.2)*.

2.2.2.4 The people depositing the assemblage

The number of intact and almost completely restored vessels, and the number of identifiable fragments of individual vessels (min. 460), even without taking into account the 3605 non-specific side fragments, is far beyond the scale of a Bronze Age household. The use of

24 For example broken handle *(Fig. 6.6; Fig. 7.3; Fig. 8.1, 9)* and broken spout *(Fig. 7.14; Fig. 8.6)*.

25 For example secondary burning *(Fig. 6.6; Fig. 7.15–16, 19–20; Fig. 8.3, 9, 11)* and heavy chip in the rim *(Fig. 7.3, 17; Fig. 8.1)*.

26 Fülöp 2015, 15–17, 21.

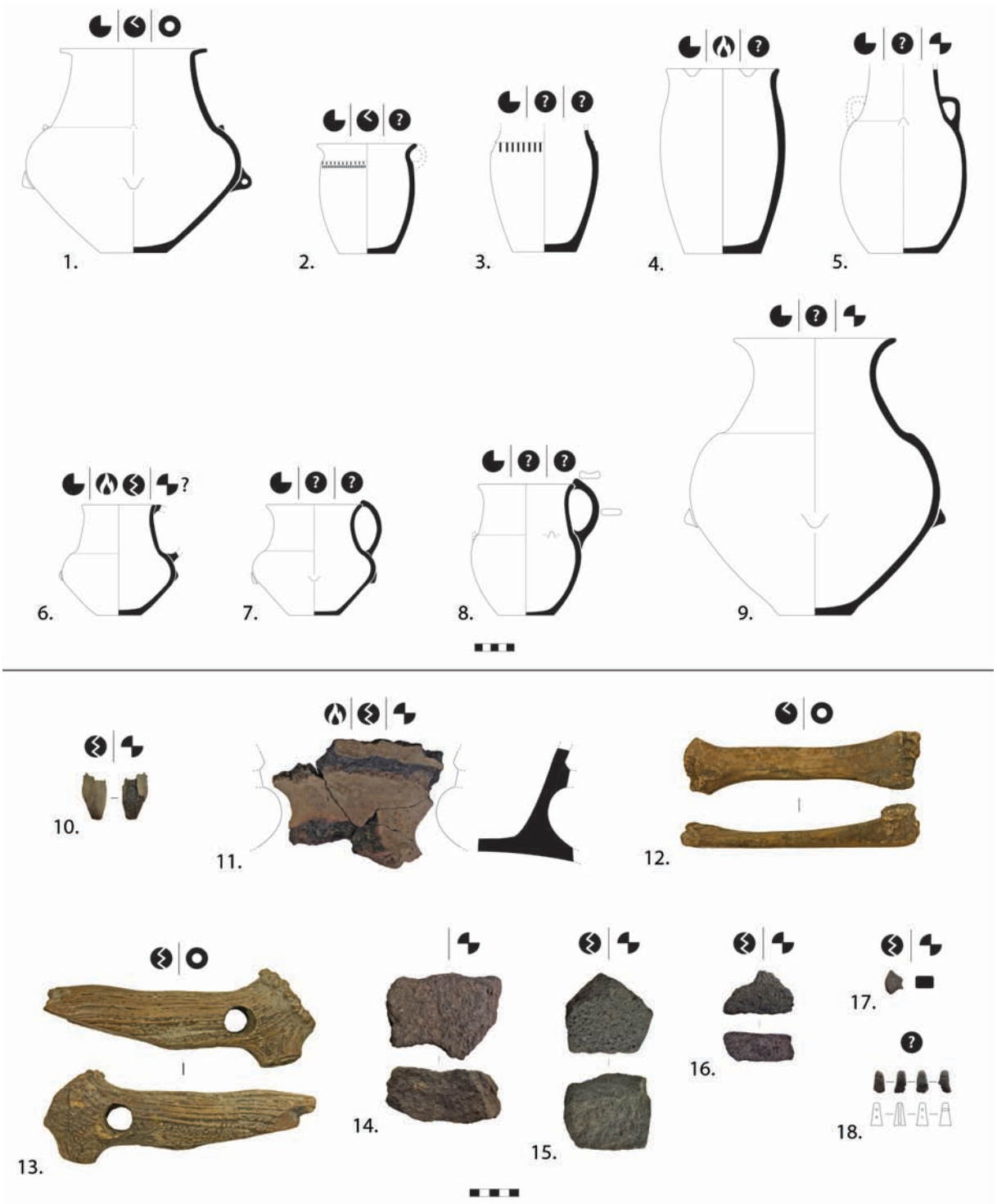

Fig. 6. The almost vessels, the almost completely (>75%) restored vessels, other artefacts, and their characteristics (1 – snr 870, 2–5 – snr 871, 6–9 – snr 873, 10–12 – snr 871, 13 – snr 873, 14–18 – snr 874). (– almost completely restored, – damaged, – secondary burnt, – unusable, – deposited in one piece, – deposited in pieces, – uncertain or cannot be investigated).

the well by several households or even the whole settlement is also indicated by the required knowledge, time and energy investment to construct and maintain a well, as is shown by the detailed examination of the preserved boards and construction process of the Pusztataskony

well.[27] Based on all of the data and observations, the deposition of this huge amount of artefacts can be considered as the result of a series of (ritual) events occurring at a level higher than a single household.

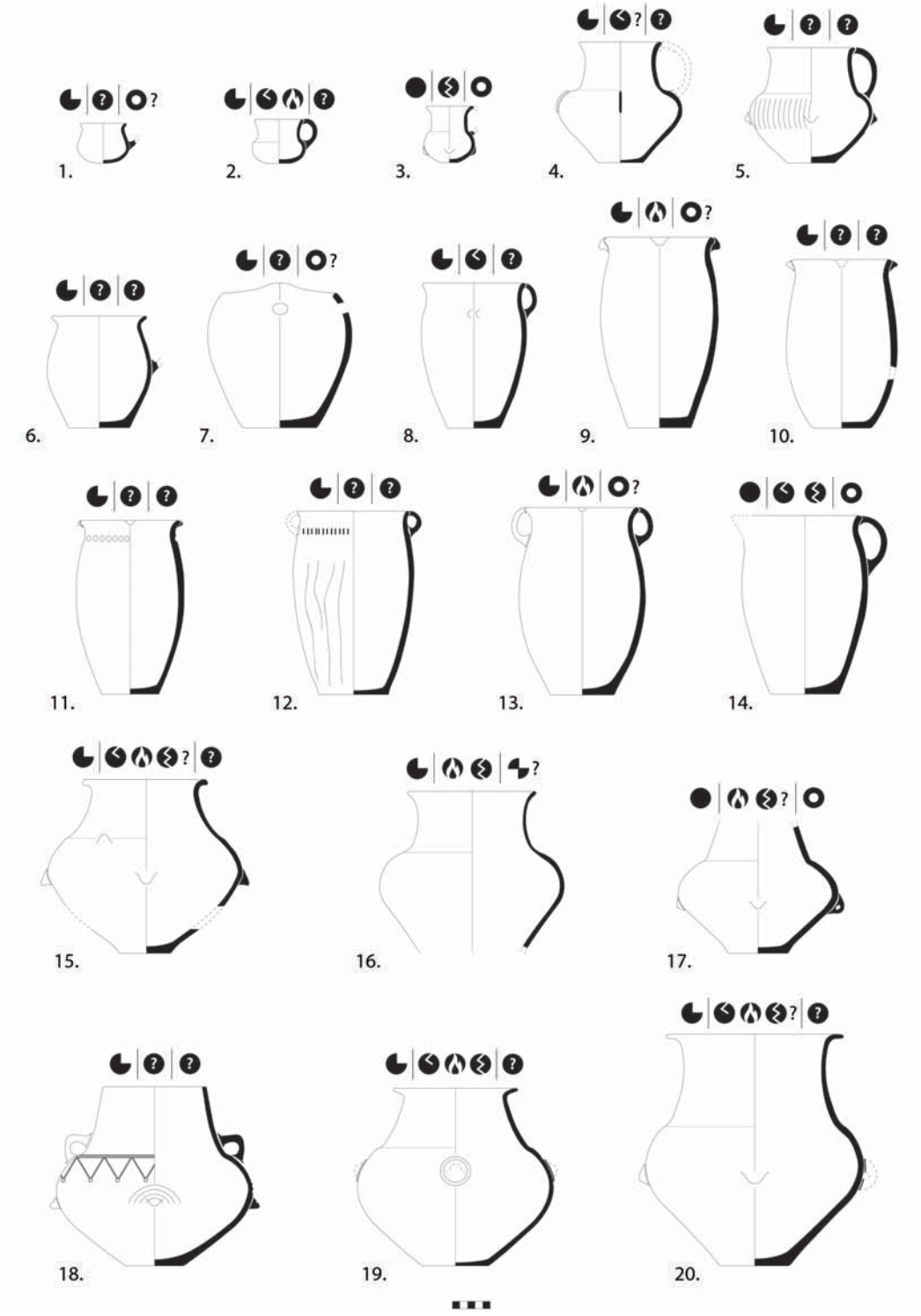

Fig. 7. The intact vessels, the almost completely (>75%) restored vessels, and their characteristics (1–20 – snr 874). (● – intact, ◕ – almost completely restored, ◔ – damaged, ◍ – secondary burnt, ◓ – unusable, ○ – deposited in one piece, ◔ – deposited in pieces, ? – uncertain or cannot be investigated).

27 Fülöp 2017, 324–325.

2.2.2.5 Reconstruction

Based on the above, the household waste, which consisted of a few tools and a large amount of everyday vessels with varied composition, condition and quality, was deposited at the bottom of the well by several household or the whole community at same time, according to a definite concept. And at the top of it, a large amphora was placed to seal the deposition, and then the well shaft was filled with earth to at least a certain depth.

Without knowing the exact reason of the deposition, it can be asserted that the reaction to this cause manifests in a series of definite and specific actions. In this process, an intentional selection takes place at the level of several households in the form of various manipulation (e.g. deliberate fragmentation, relationship with fire) and almost complete separation of ceramic vessels from other types of household waste. In addition, however, no other selection based on the shape, decoration or quality of vessels can be observed. Instead, what is important is that, amongst this extraordinary quantity of ceramic finds, the full spectrum of vessel types can be observed and a full range of functions and levels of quality are present. Its structure is formed by the different condition of the objects (usable vs. unusable, in one vs. in pieces, complete vs. incomplete) and the manner in which they were deposited (intact and almost completely restored vessels, concentration at the bottom of the well, the amphora sealing the deposit).

3. Ritual activities related to wells

In order to understand the new and special role of the Pusztataskony well, we must go beyond the spatial and temporal limits of the site. Throughout prehistory, there are many forms of well deposits that show intentional structure, definite manipulation, and special meanings. These deposits outline a supernatural relationship to wells and natural spring waters[28] up to the present day.[29]

3.1 The form of ritual in connection to wells

Based on the composition and characteristics of the filling of the wells, seven main groups of this ritual relationship can be distinguished in prehistory.

The first category consists of smaller or larger *sets of vessels* with specific quality and/or function, deposited in one or more phase. 24 intact vessels were placed in several phases in the Middle Neolithic timber lined well of Altscherbitz. More than half of these were repaired, while some pieces, which had been originally decorated with incisions, were completely transformed with birch tar and birch bark.[30] In the Late Neolithic settlement of Polgár-Csőszhalom, a set of 126–133 vessels with a precisely selected, narrow spectrum of form and size were deposited together at the bottom of the previously cleaned well (feature 272). In addition to the special decoration of the vessels, they also show the traces of deliberate fragmentation.[31] In the Early Bronze Age well (feature 685) of Polgár-Kengyel-köz, each individual deposition was distinctly separated. The space between the deposits, which mostly comprised of liquid storage vessels, was filled with 30–40 cm thick, sterile clay.[32]

28 E.g. Broadward: Bradley et al. 2015; Röekillorna: Stjernquist 1997.
29 Cs. Pócs 1964; Baráz 2013.
30 Elburg – Herold 2010, 25; Elburg 2011, 34.
31 Sebők et al. 2013.
32 Dani 1999, 56–57.

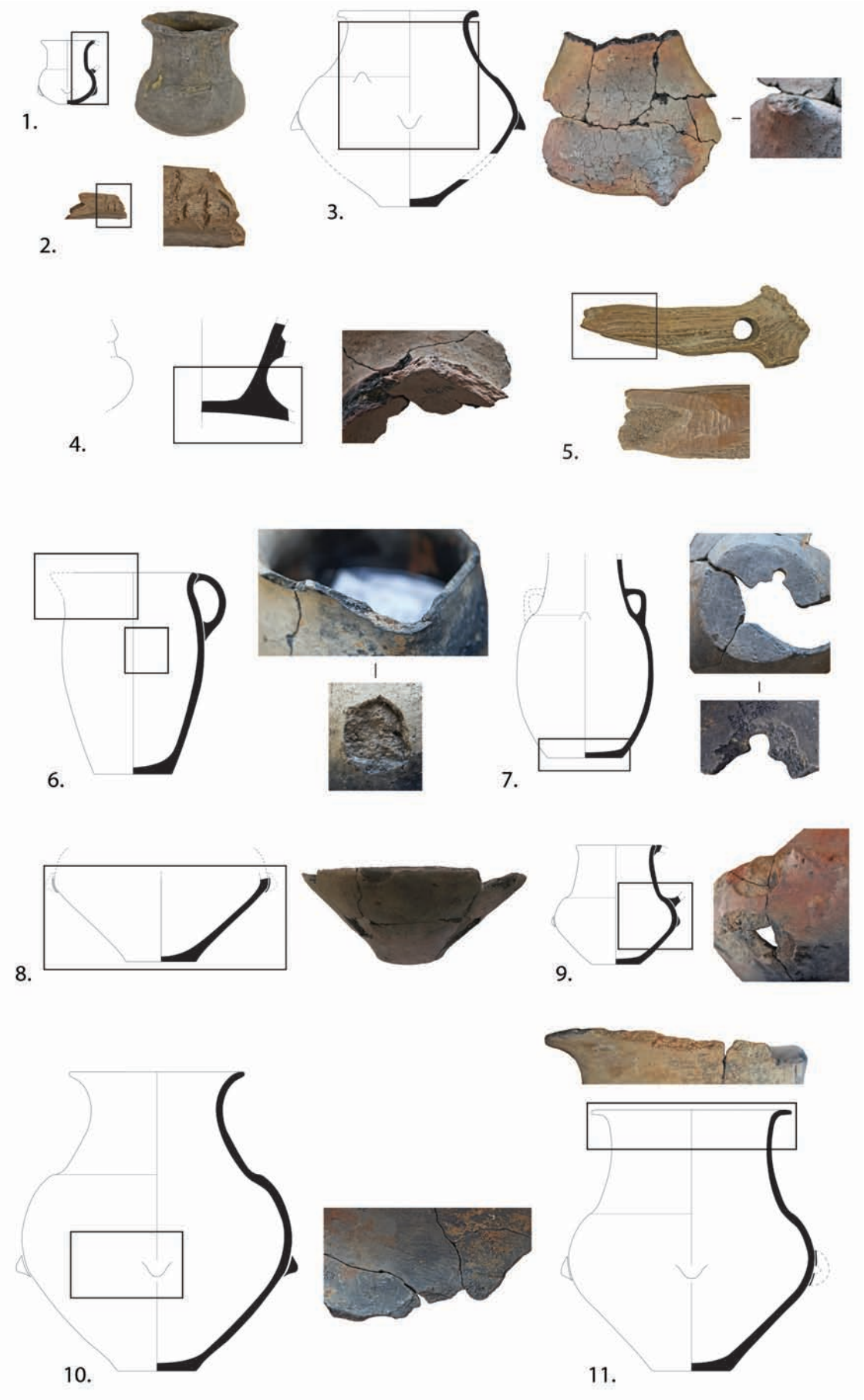

Fig. 8. Traces of use and damage observed in vessels and other tools.

The second group is the *assemblage of metal artefacts*. These deposits are made up of a few pieces of new or used metal objects with various types and sometimes with high value. They are placed in one heap or in several layers of the infill. In St. Moritz at a different depth of the tube-like well 'A', which was constructed at the site of a thermal spring in the 15th century B.C, two heavily used solid-hilted bronze swords with a tip pointed to the bottom, one bent bronze needle, and the fragments of a bronze dagger and sword came to light.[33] A Late Bronze Age hoard, which consisted of two bronze vessels, three bronze spiral bracelets, and one bronze belt, was deposited at the bottom of the Budsene well, which was filled with animal bones at the same time.[34] In the southwest corner of Schönebeck's timber lined well, an assemblage of mostly heavily used and damaged jewels was placed as a foundation deposit during the construction of the well.[35]

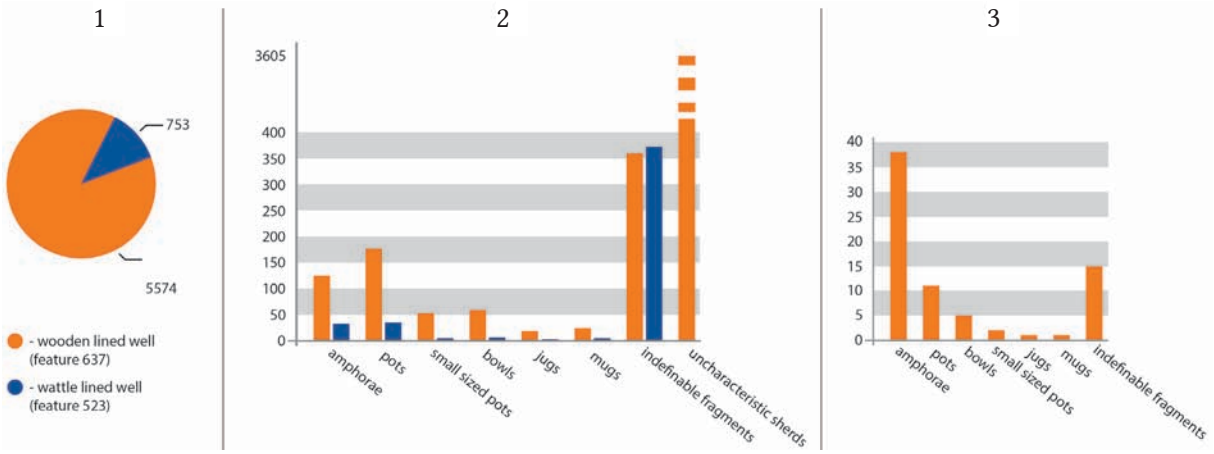

Fig. 9. 1 – The proportion of vessel fragments of the wooden lined well (feature 637) and the wattle lined well (feature 523), 2 – The proportion of vessel types of the wooden lined well (feature 637) and the wattle lined well (feature 523), 3 – The proportion of secondary burnt vessels of the wooden lined well (feature 637).

In some cases, the deposition of *special objects*, which are part of one or several ritual events and are beyond the context of everyday activities, can be identified in wells. The infill of the well (feature 30) of the Opovo settlement belonging to the Vinča culture was sealed by two idols.[36] At the bottom of the Early Hallstatt well no. 1 found in Bratislava-Vajnory-Ivanka pri Dunaji, several clay weights with cross-shaped grooves, one zoomorphic stone sculpture, and five fragmented moon idols were deposited together with animal bones and vessel fragments. In the end, it was covered with a 50–60 cm thick, loose, reddish, burnt earth mixed with charcoal.[37]

Partial or complete filling of the well with *debris in the form of pure or mixed daubs* draws attention to the special connection between wells and built environment (e.g. buildings). In the infill of the Middle Neolithic well (feature 14) of Füzesabony-Gubakút, a dense layer of daub was observed between 1 and 2.5 meters.[38] As the final act of the ritual, the uppermost part of

33 Heierli 1907, Abb. 58; Seifert 2000, 71–73.
34 Nordman 1920.
35 Bogen 2012.
36 Tringham – Conkey 1998, 33.
37 Studeníková 2003, 16–17.
38 Domboróczki 2001, 205.

the well shaft of Polgár-Csőszhalom was sealed with a 1.1 m thick layer of burnt debris with a large amount of daub fragments.[39] The aforementioned well of the Opovo settlement was filled with debris of building no. 4.[40]

A diverse range of animal bones in varying quantities are a common element in the filling of wells. Sometimes, however, certain *animal body parts*, which are not considered to be waste from the consumption of meat (e.g. skulls, horns), or even *whole animal skeletons* were also deposited on different levels of the well shaft. On opposite sides of the Middle Neolithic timber lined well of Brodau, the carcass of a few month old piglet and the half body of another were placed outside of the wooden structure, during the construction.[41] At the bottom of the upper filling layer of the Early Bronze Age well (feature 455) of Berettyóújfalu-Nagy-Bócs-dűlő, the skeletons of several dogs lay, while below a deposit of auroch horns and broken vessels with an intact jug was found in the middle of the shaft.[42] On top of a few vessels and seven interlaced torques, two young piglets facing each other and covered with wood and earth were buried in the Late Bronze Age well of Großschkorlopp.[43]

Human body parts and *whole bodies* represent a separate category. The bodies appear in various positions, in various numbers and are often manipulated. The cause of their presence in wells, however, can often only be reconstructed with difficulty. The bodies of ten people were thrown into the Late Copper Age well (feature 1099) of Balatonőszöd-Temetői dűlő. Some of them showed signs of intentional breakage.[44] The death of a 5–6 year old child found in the well of Lindängelund, dated to the early 2nd millennium BC, was caused by drowning based on interdisciplinary investigations. Furthermore, the position and context of the body, as well as historical data suggest a murder.[45] In the Late Bronze Age – Early Iron Age fortified settlement of Lossow (Frankfurt/Odera), dozens of 5–8 m deep shafts were found, and some of them served as wells. In these shafts partial and complete human and animal bodies were found, showing an intentional structure in the form of arrangement and composition.[46]

The last category needs to be created by the example of the presented well no. 2 of Pusztataskony. A new type of ritual appears in connection with the wells in the form of *structured deposit of manipulated household waste*, which consists of large quantities of vessels with varying form, function, quality and condition and just a few other household objects and waste (e.g. tools, building elements, and animal bones). The special treatment of garbage beyond simple practicality[47] manifests itself simultaneously in the selection of the type of waste, in the structure and timing of the placement and characteristic of the objects,[48] and in its direct manipulation, as well as in its spatial context associated with the symbolic meanings of the well (see below). In my opinion, this rarely observed form of relationship between well and man can be 'hidden' behind wells, which are simply interpreted as secondary waste pits. Therefore, it is particularly

39 Sebők et al. 2013, 32.
40 Tringham – Conkey 1998, 33; Borojević 2006, 85–86.
41 Stäuble – Fröhlich 2006, 21.
42 Dani et al. 2006, 10.
43 Maraszek – Egold 2001.
44 Horváth – Köhler 2012, 455–456.
45 Carlie et al. 2014.
46 Bukowski 1996, 322–326.
47 For a summary see Kalla 2013, 19–20.
48 Garrow 2012.

important to examine in detail the composition, quality, condition, treatments, and arrangement of the material of wells, together with the exact context and timing of their deposition.

3.2 The possibilities and elements of recognizing rituality

The categories described above of course do not represent sharp boundaries. The elements and characteristics of each category, as shown in the examples, often appear in close connection with each other. This diversity, as well as the general difficulty of the excavation conditions and the difficulty of interpreting the archaeological material found in wells, often make the identification of well rituals uncertain and problematic. To help this, the criteria listed below present the possible archaeological traces of this ritual relationship between well and man based on known examples.[49]

- *The well shaft.* Special treatment (e.g. cleaning, repair, modification) before deposition indicating preparation or other ritual events. Deliberate refill after deposition, even in a special way (e.g. non-local material, sterile soil, daub).
- *The infill.* The extraordinary amount of material. Selected and narrow spectrum of type, size, form and / or special characteristic (e.g. high value, rarity, unusual nature) of the objects. The manipulation of the condition and quality of objects (new, used and unusable, special decoration, repair, transformation, fragmentation, incompleteness). The structured spatiality of the infill: the finds in one or more, and even separated layers; the arrangement of objects in connection to each other (e.g. based on type or condition); the so called *'Abschlussfund'* closing the deposition or the shaft's backfilling. The single or repetitive time of the deposition.
- *Spatiality.* The special connection of the well with the natural (e.g. St. Moritz) and the built environment (e.g. Opovo).

3.3 The source of rituality

Although the complete ritual events cannot be reconstructed, the aforementioned elements and characteristics of the well make it possible to outline certain phases and actions of various rituals directly or indirectly related to wells, such as feasts (e.g. Polgár-Csőszhalom), human sacrifice (e.g. Balatonőszöd-Temetői dűlő), house burnings (e.g. Opovo), foundation deposits (e.g. Brodau). Although the above presented examples are different in space and time, they are linked by a general and timeless human belief, which associates different kinds of supernatural powers and symbolic meanings with well and water, either by themselves or by their physical connection *(Fig. 10)*.

Based on their role in rituals, wells can be divided into two main groups. In the first case, the well only represents one of the locations or elements of the whole sequence of events as an opening, intermediate or final phase of the ritual (e.g. Polgár-Csőszhalom). The second group represents the 'well rituals',[50] when the well itself is the focus of the ritual. All elements and the purpose of the events are related to it either before or during the construction of the well, or even after it (e.g. Schönebeck).

49 Of course, the presence or absence of certain criteria does not exclude the presence or absence of ritual. However, the more 'conditions' are fulfilled, the more likely it is to assume a secondary (or even primary) ritual use of the well.

50 Koutrafouri 2013, 89–95.

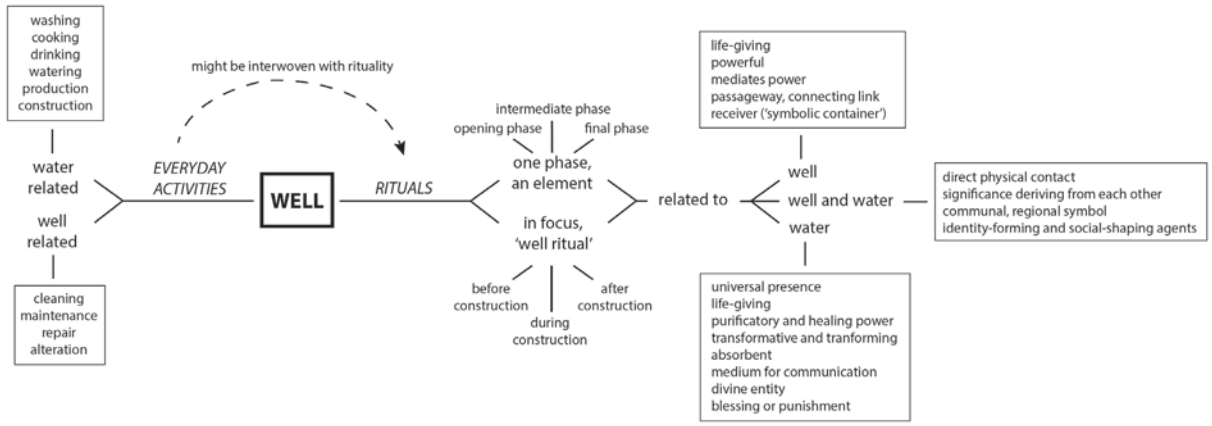

Fig. 10. Activities and meanings related to wells.

Thanks to its nature, the ritual may be carried out by an individual or small group (e.g. peoples looking into the Zagyvarékas well)[51], but the number and range of participants may extend to the whole community or beyond (e.g. the presented well no. 2 of Pusztataskony-Ledence, Mátraverebély-Szentkút).

This diverse role derives from the three essential elements and characteristics of the well:

- *The well.* Through its physical and symbolic context, it is a particular place and medium with supernatural power (e.g. depositing an apple into the well to ensure health),[52] as well as an important healing site (e.g. walking around the well, looking into the well, throwing into the well).[53] Thanks to its position, it is a passageway connecting worlds (e.g. gate of the underworld),[54] as well as it is a symbolic recipient ('container')[55], which reaches into the depths of the Earth.
- *The water.* Through its universal presence in various forms and its life-giving character, water is an essential part of human life. Water is one of the important factors of human identity and social organization.[56] It is an important medium for communicating with supernatural powers, or it may even become a divine entity (e.g. the Ganges),[57] and it is always the fundament of creation stories. It can be a blessing or a punishment (e.g. rain vs. flood, or drought).[58] It is an important agent of purification (e.g. baptism), and at the same time it relieves pain and has a healing power (e.g. the magic cure of the rite of 'giving to water'[59]). It can transform and it also has a transformative power (e.g. impurity of water[60]).
- *The relationship of well and water.* A unique supernatural power arises from their physical relationship. Therefore, some wells may have been dug to obtain this power and to use the water for ritual purposes.[61] The significance and meaning of well and

51 Cs. Pócs 1964, 182.
52 Cs. Pócs 1964, 139, 151.
53 Cs. Pócs 1964, 182, 154; Fehér 1938, 184.
54 Revelation 9.2–3.
55 Koutrafouri 2013, 93.
56 Oestigaard 2009.
57 Oestigaard 2011, 39.
58 Oestigaard 2011, 42–43.
59 Hoppál 1990, 708, 713.
60 Fehér 1938, 184.
61 Koutrafouri 2008, 200–201; Elburg 2011, 34.

water are derived from each other, thus making the well a communal[62] or even regional symbol, a fundamental element of self-definition (e.g. pilgrimage sites).

Knowing these complex, and in many cases intertwined characteristics, we can understand the close relationship between man and well, and the way in which they influence and interact with each other. This relationship is sometimes intensely and sometimes less closely present from the very moment of the well's birth, until the well ceases to exist in the community's practice and memory. Through all this, the well has become, and continues to be, an identity-forming and supernatural agent beyond mere strategic and political issues.

4. Summary

With the appearance of wells, the relationship between man and water has been expanded with new context and meanings. The importance and diversity of this bond are emphasized by the fact that, after losing its water supply function, the well could remain a distinct location and could play a central role in the spatial and symbolic organization of the community, either as a central part, or as a necessary element and additional location of the ritual events.

Examining the treatment and the infill of prehistoric wells, we can distinguish at least seven types of this ritual relationship between man and well. These demonstrate the complexity and often ritualized nature of the Life and Afterlife stages of the well's life cycle. However, these categories may be intertwined in various ways and in several elements, for example in the treatment of well shafts, the type of finds, and the repetition of ritual. This close connection indicates a fundamental human belief, which associates wells with supernatural powers and symbolic meanings due to their characteristics and physical relationship with water.

The large quantity of household waste in the Pusztataskony well no. 2 was deposited at the well bottom and consisted almost exclusively of ceramic vessels. The material represented a varied composition, quality and state, and also in many cases it was intentionally fragmented and fire manipulated, as well as selected and structured. It expresses a special form and meaning of this relationship. The example of Pusztataskony also points to the possibility of ritual and complex transformation and function of abandoned wells, which are in general interpreted simply as secondary waste pits. At the same time, it draws attention to the special treatment of household waste, with which new intentions and meanings are associated due to the physical and symbolic context of the well.

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62 Vaday 2003, 25; Elburg 2011, 35.

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A kutak rituális szerepe a mindennapi vízadáson túl Egy késő bronzkori kút Pusztataskony-Ledencéről

A kutak kialakításával az ember környezeti kiszolgáltatottsága mérséklődött, és egyúttal a víz rituális jelentősége is újfajta kontextusban és sok szempontból új értelemben jelenhetett meg. Vízadó funkcióján túl, részben abból is fakadóan a kút – a közösség életét aktívan meghatározó – szociális és rituális tartalommal telítődhetett, ezért ha el is vesztette elsődleges, vízadó szerepét (ún. *halál* fázisa), az ún. *halál utáni élet fázisában* továbbra is fontos szerepet tölthetett be a közösség életében. Ennek során új használati és szimbolikus funkció(ka)t öltött magára, mely révén új vagy kibővült, átalakult jelentések társultak hozzá, és e felvett szerepeknek megfelelően megváltozott a közösség és a kút viszonyának jellege *(1. kép)*.[63]

2011-ben Pusztataskony-Ledencéről a késő bronzkori halomsíros kultúrának a Tisza magaspartján elterülő településéről egy kőris és tölgyfadeszkákból kialakított bélésű, ún. rovás-kút látott napvilágot *(2. kép)*.[64] A 4,5 m mély kút aljából, mintegy 80 cm-es vastagságban nagy mennyiségű leletanyag (5574 db edénytöredék, 44 db egyéb eszköz, állatcsont és paticstöredék) került elő *(3–4. kép)*.

A leletanyag részletes vizsgálata alapján megállapítható, hogy a nagy mennyiségű *(9. kép 1–2)*, változatos összetételű *(5. kép)*, minőségű és állapotú hétköznapi edényeket *(6–8. kép)*, valamint néhány egyéb használati tárgyat *(6. kép, 8. kép)* magába foglaló háztartási hulladékot több háztartás vagy akár az egész közösség egy meghatározott elgondolás szerint egyszerre a kút aljára deponálta *(3. kép 5–6; 4. kép)*. Tetejére lezárásképpen egy ép, nagyméretű amforát helyeztek *(3. kép 4; 6. kép 1)*, és ezt követően egy szakaszon vélhetően fel is töltötték a kútaknát. Ebben a tudatos cselekménysorban a szelekció a kerámiaedények más hulladékfajtáktól való szinte teljes elkülönítésével és különféle manipulálásával (pl. szándékos törés, tűzzel való kapcsolat), több háztartás szintjén zajlik *(8. kép; 9. kép 3)*. Ezenfelül azonban nem figyelhető meg egyéb, akár az edények formáján, díszítésén vagy minőségén alapuló szelektálás. Ehelyett ami fontos, az a hétköznapi edényspektrum funkcionális és minőségbeli teljessége, változatossága, valamint a kiemelkedő mennyiség, melynek strukturáltságát a tárgyak

63 Fülöp 2017, 312–313.
64 Fülöp 2017.

eltérő állapota (használható/használhatatlan, egyben/darabokban, teljesség/töredékesség) és az elhelyezés módja (ép és közel teljessé restaurálható edények kút alján való sűrűsödése, deponálást lezáró amfora) adja.

Szándékos strukturáltságot, határozott manipulációkat és jelentéseket mutató kút depozitumok számos formáját figyelhetjük meg az őskorban. A kutak betöltésének összetétele és jellege alapján e rituális kapcsolatnak hét nagy – számos elemében összefonódó – csoportját különíthetjük el.

- Egy vagy több fázisban elhelyezett, funkciójukban és/vagy minőségükben speciális, kisebb-nagyobb edénykészletek (pl. Polgár-Csőszhalom[65]).
- Változatos összetételű, új és használt, olykor nagy értéket képviselő, egy kupacban vagy több rétegben elhelyezett néhány darabos fémtárgy együttesek (pl. St. Moritz[66]).
- Ritka, a hétköznapi cselekvések kontextusán kívüli eszközök, rituális cselekmények speciális tárgyai (pl. Bratislava-Vajnory-Ivanka pri Dunaji[67]).
- A kútakna részleges vagy teljes, paticcsal történő, tiszta vagy kevert feltöltése (pl. Füzesabony-Gubakút[68]).
- A kisebb-nagyobb mennyiségben és változatosságban jelenlévő különféle állatcsontokon túl megjelenő különleges, a húsfogyasztás hulladékának nem tekinthető állatrészek vagy akár teljes állatvázak (pl. Brodau[69]).
- Változatos helyzetű és számú, gyakran manipulált emberi testrészek és teljes vázak (pl. Balatonőszöd-Temetői dűlő[70]).
- Nagy mennyiségű, változatos összetételű, funkciójú, minőségű és állapotú hétköznapi edényeket magába foglaló, manipulált háztartási hulladék egyszeri, strukturált depozituma (pl. Pusztataskony-Ledence).

Ha teljességükben nem is, de bizonyos elemek alapján rekonstruálhatjuk a kutakhoz közvetlen vagy közvetett módon kapcsolódó, különféle rituális cselekmények – például lakoma (pl. Polgár-Csőszhalom), emberáldozat (pl. Balatonőszöd-Temetői dűlő), épületégetés (pl. Füzesabony-Gubakút), építési áldozat (pl. Brodau) – bizonyos eseményeit, fázisait. Ezek során a betöltött szerepe alapján a kút jelentheti a rituálé nyitó, köztes vagy záró fázisaként a teljes eseménysor egy helyszínét, elemét, de életfázisától függetlenül állhat a rituálé középpontjában is. Ez a változatos szerep alapvetően a kút három, természetszerűleg jelen lévő eleméből és sajátosságából – a kút, víz, kút és víz kapcsolatából – fakad, melyek révén válhatott és válik mind a mai napig a kút egyszerű stratégiai kérdésen felüli, identitásformáló és természetfeletti szereplővé *(10. kép)*.

65 Sebők et al. 2013
66 Seifert 2000.
67 Studeníková 2003.
68 Domboróczki 2001.
69 Stäuble – Fröhlich 2006.
70 Horváth – Köhler 2012.