HOUSES AND BURIALS AT LEPENSKI VIR

Ivana Radovanović
Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade/Department of Archaeology, University of Durham

Abstract: Houses and burials recorded in the settlements of Lepenski Vir I and II and burials previously ascribed to Lepenski Vir III are here discussed in view of the recent analyses of archaeological material and re-analyses of the field burial record from this site. Evidence of pottery *in situ* in houses of Lepenski Vir I, together with the evidence for important dietary change in the Lepenski Vir community in the course of the second half of the seventh millennium cal BC, reinforces the assumption, made by a number of scholars over several previous decades, of intensive contacts between early Neolithic groups and local hunter-gatherers. Burial practice throughout the seventh and sixth millennia cal BC at Lepenski Vir is thus reanalyzed in this new light. Apart from burials unrelated to architectural remains, five 'types' of burial deposition are noted in relation to houses of Lepenski Vir I–II, all but one having a distinct chronological and spatial patterning. The inhabitants' choice of mode of deposition of the deceased is always associated with a certain location in the settlement, sometimes used over several centuries. In the course of their history, these locations were often used for building a particular house or group of houses. The content of such houses is also discussed wherever it was possible. Duality in settlement organization could also be recognized in the burial practices related to settlement architecture. The attribution of the majority of burial remains to early Neolithic Lepenski Vir III is here also questioned in the light of new data and reinterpreted settlement sequences.

Keywords: complex hunter-gatherers, early Neolithic, Iron Gates Mesolithic, Lepenski Vir, mortuary practices, Starčevo

INTRODUCTION

The Iron Gates region of the river Danube was intensively investigated in the 1960s and 1970s as the result of the construction of a hydroelectric dam (Djerdap I). Site reconnaissance yielded a large number of sites, including perhaps the most famous prehistoric site of the region – Lepenski Vir. Excavation in advance of flooding at Lepenski Vir, Padina, Vlasac and other sites enabled the recovery of a striking set of architecture and material culture dated to the Mesolithic. The Iron Gates Mesolithic (henceforth 'IGM') became the best-known Mesolithic group of sites in south-east Europe. The publication of Vlasac was an early and excellent example of the use of scientific methods in archaeological analyses (Srejović and Letica 1978).

However, the publication of a fully contextual picture of the history of the Lepenski Vir site is still awaited several decades after Srejović's (1969) first book

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about this site.[1] A summary of this site's history, with as much contextual data as could be included at the time, was published in 1996 (Radovanović 1996a). More recently, however, new forms of contextual information about Lepenski Vir have become available, enabling a more precise picture of the associations between houses, burials and objects. The original phasing of Lepenski Vir settlements into Proto-Lepenski Vir, Lepenski Vir I, II and IIIa–b – sometimes referred to as LVI, LVII and LVIII – (Srejović 1969, 1972) has been questioned in a recent paper in which the correlations of pottery found *in situ* within the houses of Lepenski Vir I, with pottery found in the other Iron Gates Mesolithic sites (Padina B), pottery of the Neolithic Lepenski Vir III, the early Neolithic Carpatho-Danubian complex (i.e. the Starčevo group) and the Balkan-Anatolian complex of the early Neolithic are discussed (Garašanin and Radovanović in press).[2] These observations led to an assumption that the pits and dugouts of Lepenski Vir III contain mixed material (belonging to Lepenski Vir I and II). This assumption is strongly reinforced by AMS (accelerator mass spectrometer) dates and palaeodietary data for human bones (Bonsall et al. 1997), which show an age earlier than that of the pits and dugouts that contained them.[3] In addition, and in view of these facts, an attempt is made in this paper to identify the vertical and horizontal location of a high percentage of the burials claimed to have been dated to the early Neolithic Starčevo occupation at Lepenski Vir (III).[4] Their close association with houses of the Lepenski Vir hunter-gatherer occupations (I and II) provides a quite new perspective on mortuary deposition.

This is the first part of the breakthrough. The second concerns the application of a wider range of scientific techniques to the problems of the IGM in the last decade (e.g. Bonsall et al. 1997). In particular, the emphasis in dating has switched from establishing the limits of phases of occupation to the dating of individual skeletons or skeletal parts and individual organic objects. The combination of dating skeletons with the use of δ13C and δ15N dietary analyses produces a powerful tool for the understanding of burial, deposition and habitat (Radovanović 1998). It is now becoming possible to propose hypotheses relating dietary changes to developments in mortuary practice, the deposition of pottery in Lepenski I–II houses, new forms of architecture and the changing use of the famous monumental sculptures. In this article, I wish to focus on the specific types of mortuary deposition and explore the implications for the occupation of Lepenski Vir.

CULTURAL SEQUENCE

The Iron Gates Mesolithic communities came into contact with regional early Neolithic groups sometime during the last few centuries of the seventh millennium cal BC. A restriction of the size of territory settled by IGM foragers in this period was caused either by the withdrawal of the IGM foragers from the left bank and areas in the lower gorges and further downstream, or their cultural transformation (Radovanović 1996b). A new type of settlement was established in the lower gorges and downstream in the second part of the seventh millennium cal BC. The layout of these settlements and their architectural structures differ from those

known in the traditional IGM, i.e. irregular dugout dwellings and/or above-ground huts with rectangular ground plan furnished with circular hearth constructions, such as Răzvrată II, Ostrovul Mare km 873, Hajdučka Vodenica II, Donje Butorke and many others (Radovanović 1996c:43–44). On the other hand, the sites of Padina and Lepenski Vir in the upper gorges (and perhaps Stubica) continued to be settled by Mesolithic foragers well into the sixth millenium cal BC, maintaining a traditional form of settlement organization, structures, architectural elements and burial practice. The upper gorge community lived encapsulated within a mosaic of regional early Neolithic groups and was engaged in a variety of contacts with them. Among the main elements indicating direct contact with the early Neolithic groups are certain raw materials and technologies, as well as the presence of pottery within the IGM settlement contexts (Radovanović 1996a; Garašanin and Radovanović in press).

Another fact I explored earlier in rather general terms concerns changes in the faunal record. Having noticed that the majority of faunal remains in the IGM sites after the mid-seventh millennium cal BC consists of the bones belonging to large herbivores (and the bulk of these bones in the upper gorges belong to red deer), and that fish bones were extremely abundant in the eighth and the first half of the seventh millennia cal BC, I assumed that this kind of record might imply a certain change in subsistence practices. I argued that fish actually became a less important food resource but that it nevertheless remained very important ideologically (Radovanović 1996a:37, 55ff. and 314, 1997). It remained to be seen whether contact with local Neolithic groups only coincided with the assumed change in subsistence or represented a decisive factor in its occurrence.

Recent palaeodietary analyses, undertaken by Bonsall and his collaborators (1997), based upon the values of δ13C and δ15N in the collagen extracted from human bones from the IGM sites of Vlasac, Schela Cladovei and Lepenski Vir, clearly imply that the noted change actually did take place. It was explained as a shift from a considerable intake of aquatic resources to a broader-spectrum diet with emphasis on the terrestrial resources.[5] Radiocarbon measurements of these human bones dated this change to around 6500–6300 cal BC, i.e. coinciding with the beginning of the contact period. However, a number of new and intriguing questions was raised by these analyses. Before I focus on their implications on burial practice at Lepenski Vir, a few questions on the interpretation of the palaeodietary results themselves need to be addressed.

Schulting's (1998) plots of δ15N and δ13C values and his corresponding global model of the diet types indicates that high negative values of δ13C (-20‰ and over) are associated with a variety of diets ranging from those practiced by 'inland hunter-gatherers' to those of 'farmers'. Examples of Lepenski Vir and Vlasac samples both marked by higher values of δ15N and higher negative values of δ13C than those proposed in any of Schulting's dietary types (i.e. the Vlasac type of diet and examples from Lepenski Vir) could perhaps point to the intake of anadromous fish – a marine signature – in the IGM before the mid-seventh millennium cal BC. If that is so, the key change probably concerned the fish menu itself but with a greater emphasis on hunted game and plants, or, later, on domestic animals and plants. I doubt that, in the Iron Gates area, fish was ever abandoned as an important

food resource, even in later periods. I have assumed that there was a shift from fish, as a staple food resource in the early IGM (i.e. Vlasac, Schela I, Padina A etc.), to game in the later IGM (Lepenski Vir II, Padina B). Perhaps that change in fact concerned the anadromous fish which were apparently not eaten in the late IGM, to judge by the lack of a marine signature in the human skeletal material. The diet in the post mid-seventh millennium cal BC IGM is still predominantly aquatic (mixed with emphasis on freshwater fish), but the values for the period preceding it would undoubtedly be characterized by a marine aquatic signature.

It nevertheless should be pointed out that the models of both Bonsall et al. and Schulting imply that the change in diet took place in the IGM in the mid-seventh millennium cal BC. Further comparative palaeodietary analyses will certainly help to distinguish whether the change was from 'aquatic' to 'mixed terrestrial' or from 'marine aquatic' to 'mixed with emphasis on freshwater fish'. For convenience, the IGM palaeodietary signatures will be marked here as 'early' (before the mid-seventh millennium cal BC) and 'late' (after the mid-seventh millennium cal BC).

A problem arose in regard to Srejović's phasing of human burials in Lepenski Vir from which the bone samples for palaeodietary analysis and AMS dating were taken, as well as to my phasing of architectural structures associated with some of these burials (Chapman 2000; Radovanović in press). Here, I shall return to Srejović's field list of burials to find an explanation for certain discrepancies between new data and old interpretations. The explanations offered here, however, did not remain mere explanations. The re-analysis of the same field burial record enabled the definition of many details on burial practice much more clearly and accurately.

THE FIELD BURIAL RECORD

In this section, I shall present a summary of the five different kinds of mortuary deposition found at Lepenski Vir houses, or rather five types of histories of burial noted in such houses. The following description of five types of house burials are distinguished from the burials unrelated to houses or house locations which are discussed later in this text. The contextual and chronological evidence of these house burials provides a valuable picture of diachronic development.

Types of house burials in Lepenski Vir I–II

Type 1 burials A large number of burials (24), only under house floors, associated with houses in Lepenski Vir I have been recorded. They are often found below the rear (points C, D) corners of the house. (Fig. 1), i.e. its narrowest side dug into the slope. All of them were uncovered after the lifting of the Lepenski Vir settlement to its present location 30m above the flooded site. Almost without exception, they are all burials of newborn to five-month-old children. The burial pits are sometimes clearly outlined: of rectangular shape covered with a stone plaque (one case); oval in shape (three cases); irregular in shape (eight cases). Type 1 house burials are associated with 14 houses (13, 38, 29, 62, 63', 63, 37, 36, 4', 4, 68, 27, 47, 24). This type of

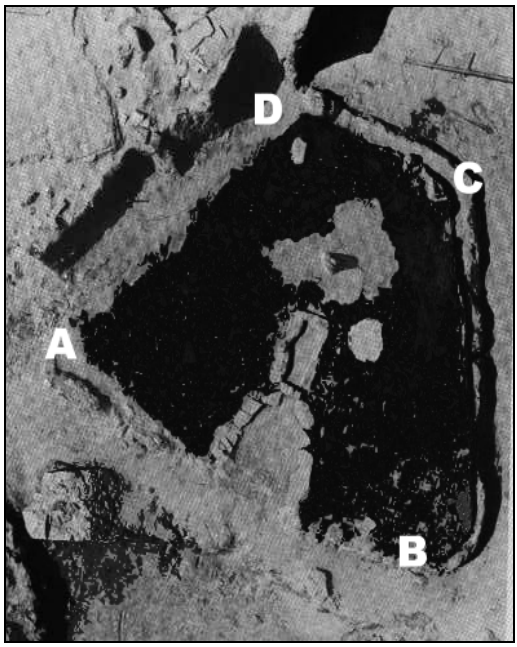

Figure 1. *House in Lepenski Vir I with points A–B (front of the house with entrance) and C–D (rear of the house dug into the slope).*

burial occurs almost exclusively in houses of phase 1 of LV I, but it appears also in houses of phases 2 and 3. The depth of these interments (ranging between 0.15 and 0.60m below house floor) implies that their disposal could take place only after the rear part of the future house had been dug into the slope, but before the placement of solid limestone mixture of the floor. As the stratigraphic section with the rear of houses 27 and 34 clearly shows (Srejović 1972:40–41), the depth of a dugout in the rear of a future a house could be between 1m and 1.5m. It is therefore very unlikely that child burials were placed either before the construction of a house started or after it was completely finished, especially after the solid limestone mixture was laid upon the floor.

Type 2 burials In six houses, small children 0–5 months in age (10 cases) were buried below the floor but other human skeletal remains were also placed in the same house – regularly associated with the hearth and/or rear of the house. These remains comprise human mandibles (2 cases); a skull (1 case); a skull and ribs (1 case); a clavicle, sternum and ribs (1 case); and a clavicle and scapula (1 case). A human femur was embedded in floors of houses 3 and 54 (Srejović 1972:118). Type 2 burials are associated with houses of phases 2 and 3 (Radovanović 1996a:181). This type of house burial should be distinguished from type 1 (houses marked exclusively by child burials below the floor) in that that it is still marked by child burials below the floor but with the addition of other human skeletal parts above the house floor. Cases where human skeletal parts are placed over, or in the rear of, the hearth (houses 47', 54, 43) could probably be related to house abandonment (Srejović 1972:119; Chapman 2000:201).[7] However, all the skeletal parts placed on the floors of these houses could be of a much earlier age than the houses themselves. Indeed, the human humerus (burial 23) in the rear of house 43 (phase 2) is marked by an 'early' diet characteristic of the early Mesolithic of Vlasac, Schela Cladovei and Lepenski Vir phase 1 (Bonsall et al. 1997; Radovanović, in press), i.e. characteristic of pre-6500–6300 cal BC. As concerns the children buried under the rear parts of houses, they were interred in the same way as those in type 1 house burials.

Type 3 burials Type 3 deposits consist of burials interred through a house floor in the rear of the hearth, such as in houses 21, 25, 28, 40 and 34, or in the frontal house corner (point A) of house 26. House 25 is constructed in phase 1, house 40 at the end of phase 1, and houses 21, 28 and 34 in phase 2 of LV I, and the burials could thus be of the same age or even considerably later. The diet of the woman in house 25 is 'early' and would correspond to the age of the house. However, the record of the exact position of that burial in the house is not clear, except that a sculpture was placed above its head (Srejović and Babović 1983:135). A burial of a nine-year-old child in the rear of house 40 is also marked by a sculpture (Srejović 1972:154–155, Figs. 57, 59). An adult female's mandible in the hearth construction of the same house 40 (assumed to be the prototype of triangular stone plaques encircling the hearths in the later phases of the Lepenski Vir culture) represents a separate category but it by no means dispels the connections between hearths and burials or deposition of ancestral bones (Srejović 1972:121, 157, Fig. 64). A small child (two years old) was buried in the rear of house 28, in a pit covered by a stone plaque and then flanked by two sculptures (Srejović and Babović 1983:107, 122). Another burial of a 14–year-old boy is recorded below the hearth of this house. The house was closed after placing a human skull and ribs on the floor behind the hearth.

Palaeodietary analysis of burial 26 in house 34 shows that this individual's diet was 'late', corresponding to phase 2 of Lepenski Vir I, but could also belong to later periods. The mandible of a herbivore was placed next to a man buried in house 34 (Radovanović 1996a:182); similarly, a female skull along with a bovine skull with horns and an antler was placed next to the man in house 21 (1996a:180). The female skull 7b could therefore be earlier than both the house 21 and the burial 7a it accompanies. It is noteworthy that burial 7a was also marked by a sculpture above its head (Srejović and Babović 1983:136).

Burial 63 (a two-month-old child) was interred through the corner A of house 26 and may be an exception to the rule – but in fact it is not: house 26 is oriented differently from the rest of the houses, so that its corners A and D are facing the rear of site and its side B–C is facing the river. Child 63 is thus buried in the rear of that house's location (Boric 1999:60, Fig. 19), notwithstanding the different orientation of the standard house ground plan.

Type 4 burials Type 4 deposits relate to placement of human skeletal parts in two houses and in association with hearths. They should be distinguished from type 2 burials in that these two houses did not contain child burials below the floor. In house 61, two human skulls and ribs along with a pelvis and femur were placed in the hearth, and a deer skull and antlers placed on the house floor (Srejović and Babović 1983:151, Srejović 1972:157, Fig. 62). In house 35, human ribs and ulnae were placed in the rear of the hearth together with a dog's mandible. A human femur was, on the other hand, placed under the stone 'table' in the rear of the hearth (Srejović 1972:118). Both houses were used in phase 2, but the bones could be either the same or of a much earlier age. Palaeodietary analysis for burial

45b in house 61 indeed implies that these skeletal parts are older, for they are marked by the 'early' diet.

Type 5 burials A number of burials were placed within the stone constructions of Lepenski Vir phase II, sometimes erected directly above a LV I house (e.g. construction XXXVI above house 65 with graves 54a–e)[8] (Radovanović 1996a:188; Srejović 1972:154, Fig. 58). They are all placed in a supine position, oriented parallel to the course of the Danube and marked by the 'late' type of diet. Burial 54e was placed on the stone plaques of house 65 (LV I phase 2) with a human skull and long bones (54d) and an antler. Also, a necklace of belemnite beads and skeletal remains of a dog (in anatomical position) are mentioned in association with this burial (Srejović 1972:120). In the field notes, it is reported that grave 54e is later and that it had cut through, and dislocated, the earlier grave 54d. A photo of this situation (Srejović 1972:154, Fig. 58) may suggest that perhaps 54d consists only of skeletal parts (skull, long bones) brought from the area of its initial burial. Dietary analysis of the bones 54d shows an 'early' signature, so that these remains could be considerably older than grave 54e (marked by a 'late' diet).

Burials outside houses of Lepenski Vir I–II

Other burials in the Lepenski Vir phases 1 and 2 are placed outside the houses (Fig. 2). However, it seems that some of them are perhaps closely associated with the locations of LV I houses. This includes the group of burials 13–17 next to house 28 and construction XXVII (sq. AB/VIII–IX) far on the upstream side of the settlement. All but one are buried in a supine position and oriented parallel to the

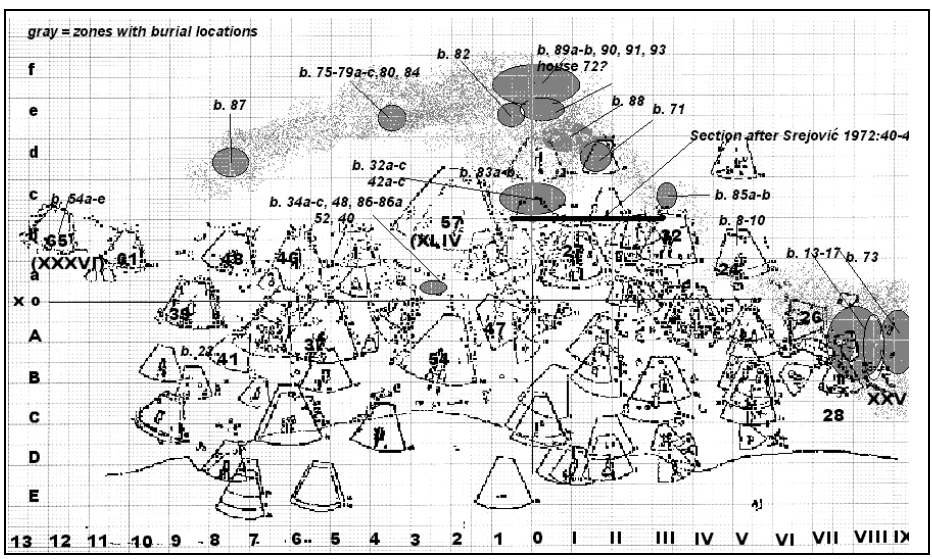

Figure 2. *Reconstruction of the excavation grid, and position of houses and burials.*

course of the river; I have previously ascribed them to Lepenski Vir II (Radovanović 1996a:186). However, one of them (14) is marked by the 'early' type of diet, so the exact chronology of this group of graves remains to be sorted out.

Another group of burials – 89, 89a, 90, 91 and 93 – is recorded as related to house 72 (sq. f/I–II) to the rear of the settlement, all in supine position and oriented parallel to the river course. Palaeodietary analyses of three of these burials shows that they are all marked by an 'early' diet, so there is a high probability that they could be ascribed to phase 1 of LV I.

Burial 28 is described in the field notes as placed on the floor of house XXXIII of LV II. It is marked by the 'early' diet. A closer look at the photo of that grave and the house (Srejović, 1972:156, Fig. 60) may suggest that this burial was perhaps already there before house XXXIII was constructed.

Burial 46 is found next to house 60 in the rear of the settlement. There are rich furnishings of animal bones, chipped stones and a necklace, although its chronology is presently unclear. However, it might belong to the location for early burials in the rear of the site (cf. burial 28, marked by 'early' diet, and located below the house XXXIII only a few metres away from house 60).

Burial 60 next to the corner A of house 40 could, however, be dated to phase 1 on the basis of an 'early' diet, as could the famous burial 69 in a sitting position (Srejović 1972:153, Fig. 56).

Graves 64, 68 and 74 are flexed. This body position is recorded in a small number of cases in the early Mesolithic of Vlasac, and is also very typical for the later, Neolithic Starčevo group and this question will be discussed further later. The man in grave 64 is marked, however, by an 'early' diet signature.

Rather different is the find of a human mandible encircled by three irregularly shaped stones, between a Proto-Lepenski Vir hearth and corner A of house 41. Data on other graves and their association with houses are presently not available to me, e.g. burials 3 (skull) and 67 (in supine position: sq. CIII).

Types of deposition in Lepenski Vir III

A small number of human skeletal remains analyzed by Bonsall et al. and ascribed by Srejović to Lepenski Vir III (i.e. Neolithic) were marked, quite surprisingly, by an 'early' diet. In my previous work (1996), I did not analyze burials recorded in the field notes as LV III or Starčevo. Instead, I focused on those labeled as belonging to LV I–II burials located inside or outside of the houses. However, further study of the field notes indicates that, out of 67 burials ascribed to LV III and/or Starčevo, only 17 are 'classic' flexed or contracted burials and as many as 50 of them in fact consist only of parts of human skeletons. The skeletal parts (many fragmented) in question consist of the following:

- In LV III pits (exact location presently unknown to me): skulls (1), skull with mandible (1), skull with long bones (1), skulls with mandible and femur (1), mandibles (3), clavicles with femora (several), unidentifiable bones (2).
- In the location of 'pottery kiln at various depths' in sq. a/3: skull and mandible (2), skull and clavicle (1), clavicles and femora (4).

- Circular stone construction in sq. e/4: skulls (8), skull, upper jaw and ribs (1).
- Sq. C/IV: unidentifiable bones.
- Stone construction (no number or other data): long bones.
- In the cultural layer a number of skull fragments, mandibles, one humerus, one scapula and clavicles were also recorded.

At present, there are two AMS dates and four results of palaeodietary analysis related to this group of burials: burial 31a (mandible) found in pit 2 is dated to the first half of the seventh millennium cal BC (7770 ± 90 BP) and marked by an 'early' diet. Burial 51 (unidentified bone) from another pit is also marked by an 'early' diet.

Another AMS date and palaeodietary results derive from the bones found in the cultural layer: all are marked by a 'late' diet, with a corresponding date in the first half of the sixth millennium cal BC. Although the interment of human skeletal parts is rarely found in the Neolithic sites of the region – often described in old reports as 'damaged' burials or 'scattered bones' – (e.g. Ajmana: Radosavljević-Krunić 1986), the number of such interments in Lepenski Vir III is quite astonishing. It means that the preferred burial deposition of partial bodies in phase 3 cannot be differentiated from that of phases 1–2. The fact that a number of these partial burials derive from LV III pits (8 cases) is also noteworthy, especially because of the early Mesolithic date and the 'early' diet of some of these individuals. Srejović notes (1972:140) that many LV III pits and dugouts went right down to the floors of LV I and LV II houses and may perhaps explain these discrepancies in the archaeological record as explained later in this article (for details, see Garašanin and Radovanović in press; Radovanović 2000).

The exact provenance for 11 of the 17 contracted and flexed skeletal remains already noted is known. Two women (9 and 8) are placed above the floor of LV I house 24 (Srejović 1972:157, Fig. 63), one of them (9) accompanied by a human skull (10). Both are marked by a 'late' diet. Similarly, a young boy (6) accompanied by an antler is buried above the floor of LV I house 26. They clearly belong to the type 5 of house burial, similar to the burials above the floor of house 65 in LV I (i.e., house XXXVI in LV II). The only difference is that these are flexed. The presence of contracted burials even in the earlier phase of IGM at Vlasac (Srejović and Letica 1978: Figs 91, 94 and 104) as well as in Lepenski Vir I (see earlier discussion of graves 64, 68 and 74) means that this position should not necessarily be ascribed to the Neolithic. However, a flexed position in Lepenski Vir might be a novelty introduced into this type of body positioning. Their late diet would imply that they belong to LV I/3 or LV II.

Three burials are recorded in sq. c/I–1: two women (32a and 32b) lying one above another on a stone block (Srejović 1972:158, Fig. 65) are accompanied by fragments of human bones (32c), and another woman (42b) is accompanied by a man's skull and the clavicles of a child. One of the burials marked as 32 is dated to the turn of the seventh to the sixth millennium cal BC (7270 ± 90 BP). It is marked by a 'late' diet, as is the woman in grave 42b. This date and type of diet imply that these individuals belong to phase 2 of LV I.

Burial 6 is found under a rectangular stone construction; for the remaining six burials, there are no further data on provenance yet available. However, two of these remaining burials (19 flexed and 66 contracted), both of them men, are marked by an 'early' type of diet. No. 19 is additionally marked by a special body treatment – his skull is detached from the postcranial bones and placed upon a stone. The same conclusion can be repeated for these two burials: the flexed or contracted body position is recorded in the early IGM Mesolithic. In this light, the 'early' diet of the men in burials 19 and 66 should not be surprising. Contracted burials found at Vlasac are also marked by an 'early' type of diet and were ascribed to Vlasac II (first half of the seventh millennium cal BC) (Bonsall et al. 1997:64, Table 3; Radovanović 1996a:353, 357).

SETTLEMENTS AND BURIALS

In this section, I shall attempt to relate the newly-discovered burial record to the stratigraphy and changing form of the houses at Lepenski Vir.

Lepenski Vir I and II

At least 11 horizons of the early settlements of Lepenski Vir I were ascribed to phases 1–3, according to the changes noted in the design of architectural elements within houses superimposed in various locations on the site (Radovanović 1996a). A small number of radiocarbon dates taken from charcoal collected in some of the houses enabled the placing of these phases into a broad, but by no means strict, chronological span (i.e. phase 1 of LV I corresponding to the first half of the seventh millennium cal BC, phase 2 to the second half, and phase 3 to the turn of the seventh to the sixth millenium cal BC). Apart from changes in architectural elements (i.e. hearth, ashplace and threshold constructions, position and design of altars and sculptures), a change in the spatial organization of settlements is also noted. Dual (upstream and downstream) grouping of houses is characteristic of phase 1. Occupation of the central part of the site marks phase 2, as well as the continuing presence of an upstream-downstream symmetrical grouping of houses. A trend towards packing the houses in the rear of the site, especially in the upstream zone, is noticeable in phase 3, together with a loss of the clear symmetry and duality of previous phases. However, this duality is preserved in the spatial distribution of burial types and their content.

Figures 3–5 illustrate the phase distributions of the Lepenski Vir I settlement, with marked houses containing burials of various specified types. The number of houses containing burials of any of the five types is considerably smaller than the total number of houses in each phase. So it is clear that not all of the houses had the same history in respect to mortuary practices and that burial in houses was not a general rule applied to all of them. It could also be noted that houses with burials followed the general trend of change in the settlement organization, in fact marking

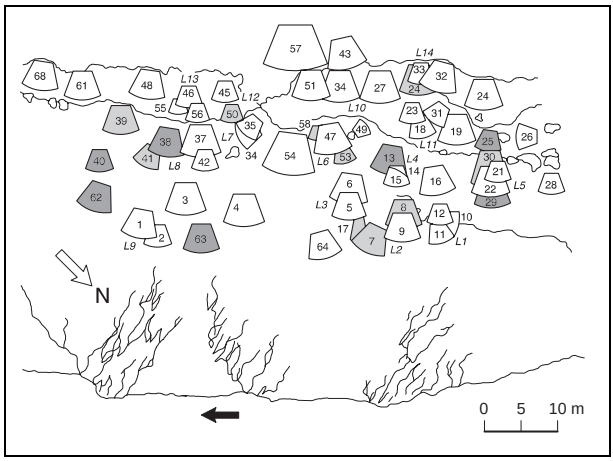

Figure 3. *Houses in Lepenski Vir I phase 1 (light grey: houses without burials; dark grey: houses with burials) first half of seventh millennium cal BC.*

it in an even more clear-cut way. Examples include the emphasis on duality in phase 1, centrality in phase 2 with symmetrical arrangement of houses 40 and 28, and retreat to the rear of site in phase 3.

As concerns the type of house burial practiced, a closer look at their time–space distribution indicates strong patterning (Fig. 6). It is apparent that type 1 house burial is practiced proportionally equally in all phases of LV I. Types 2 and 4 house burials are more common in, although not exclusive to, phases 2 and 3. Apart from chronological differences, an important spatial difference could also be noted in phase 2. Besides type 1, which is equally distributed all over the settlement, the downstream part of the site is marked by the exclusive practice of type 4 house burial. The central and rear upstream part are marked by type 2 house burial, while the far upstream part is marked by type 3 house burials (the exception is house 40 in the downstream part, also marked by type 3).

As concerns the age and gender categories of people buried in the houses, it seems that, in all phases, the youngest children (newborn to five months old) were buried below the floors of particular houses, before the laying of the solid limestone mixture upon the floor. Older children (2 months–14 years old) and adults were sometimes interred through the house floors. The majority of adults and old people were buried between houses or in the

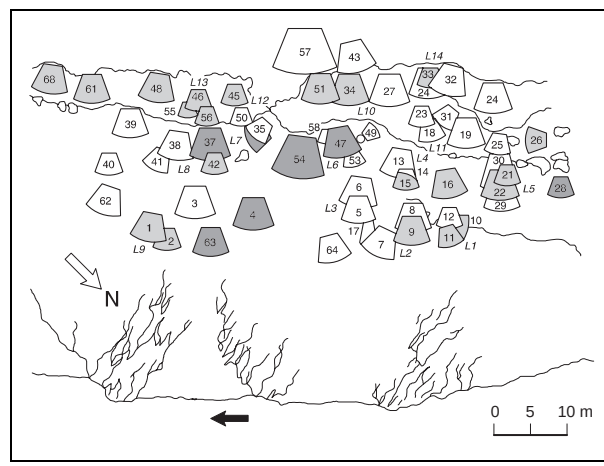

Figure 4. *Houses in Lepenski Vir I phase 2 (light grey: houses without burials; dark grey: houses with burials) second half of seventh millennium cal BC.*

areas in the rear of the settlement. It is probable that it was from these areas that the 'ancestral' bones were brought into the houses on particular occasions, such as for 'house closures' or abandonment, recorded here as type 2 and type 4 house burials. Parallel to the practice of placing human skeletal parts, it seems that 'house closure' could also be marked by placement of deer skulls and/or antlers (at least in houses 21, 28, 61, 65, although a larger number of antlers in houses is noted; Bökönyi 1972:189). The skeletal parts of dogs (Srejovic 1972:120; Radovanović 1999) and wild boar (Dimitrijević in press) were also deposited in the same way. In some cases, houses that were not associated with any kind of human burial or the deposition of human bones contained large red deer antlers (e.g. house 22: Srejović and Babović 1983:136; house 46: Radovanović 1996a:100; house XLIV: Srejović and Babović 1983:19). Type 3 house burials, cut through the floor, may in fact represent another way of marking house closure. It is noteworthy that burial pits (i.e. 7a in house 21, 26 in house 34, 61 in house 40, 92 in house 28) contained the same repertory of 'goods' otherwise placed on the house floors upon closure: animal skulls and bones, antler and human skeletal parts. Instead of being placed on the floor in direct association to the hearth, these items were confined to the burial pit – pits also related to the

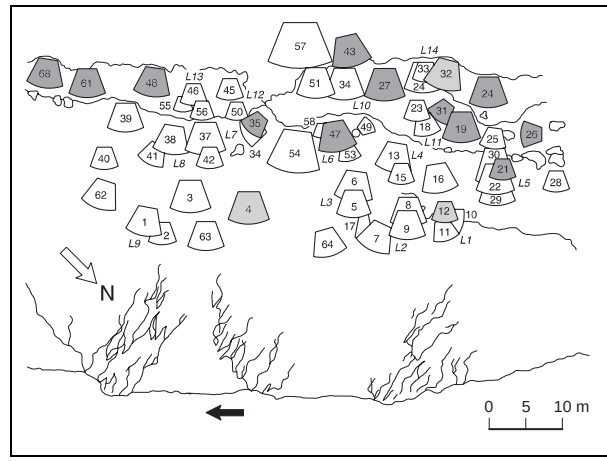

Figure 5. *Houses in Lepenski Vir I phase 3 (light grey: houses without burials; dark grey: houses with burials) turn of seventh to the sixth millennium cal BC.*

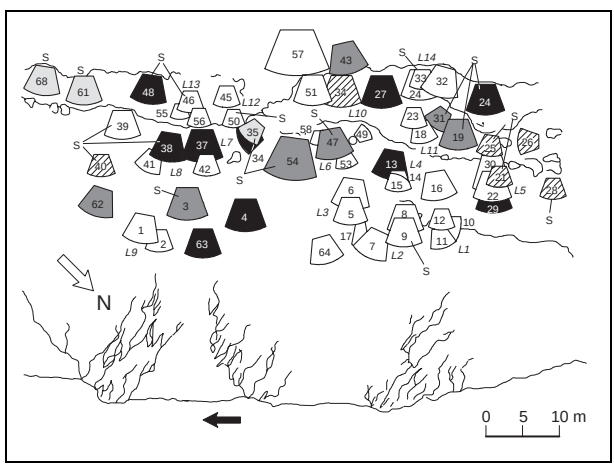

Figure 6. *Lepenski Vir I, spatial arrangement of burial types showing houses with sculptures marked (S). Burial type 1: dark solid; type 2: diagonal hatching; type 3: dark tinted shading; type 4: light tinted shading.*

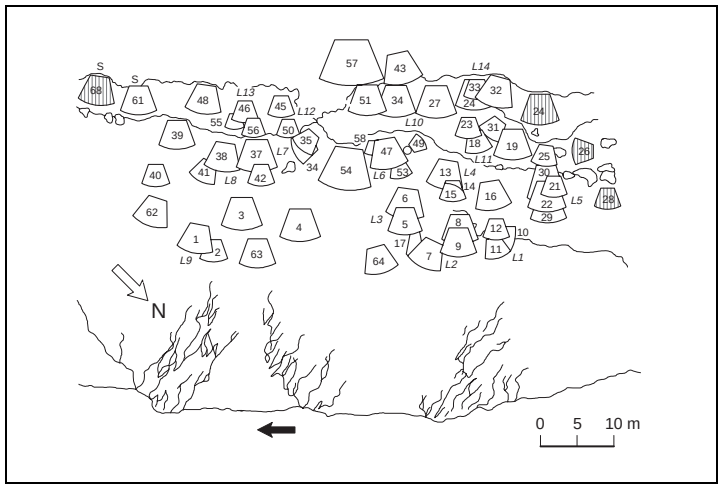

Figure 7. *Lepenski Vir II, spatial arrangement of burial type 5 showing locations of Lepenski Vir I houses (shaded).*

hearth and were dug at the rear of the hearth along its narrower side. In all but one case, these burials were commemorated by sculptures placed above the pits and also directly above the deceased's head. Other sculptures (recorded *in situ*; for details see Radovanović 1996a) associated with houses with burials are also regularly recorded in the upstream and central part of the site (apart from house 34). Downstream houses with burials are only occasionally marked by sculptures. By contrast, some of the downstream houses without burials contained sculptures (39, 46 with deposition of antlers, 50 with flutes and a sceptre). House locations 12 and 13, together with these and a number of other superimposed houses, imply a possible special purpose. Special-purpose houses with no burials but with sculptures are placed in the location 14 in the upstream part of the settlement, 'symmetrical' to the locations 12 and 13 downstream. Upstream–downstream duality is once more underlined by the practice of burial in flexed and contracted body position (along with the 'standard' supine) in the upstream part in all phases. On the other hand, the practice of embedding human femora in house floors (i.e. in the course of house construction) is exclusive for the downstream area.[9]

In Lepenski Vir II, the houses associated with burials seem to be restricted once more to the far downstream (house XXXVI above house 65) and far upstream (location above house 24), with sequential burials of adult humans in supine (upstream and downstream), flexed and contracted position (only upstream).[10] Two other locations with Type 5 burials (previously labeled as LV III) are now recognized in LV I houses 26 and 24. They are marked by flexed burials and, not surprisingly, are found in the upstream part of the site, where this type of body position in burial was recorded in early Mesolithic times also. The central house of LV II – house

LXIV with its famous monumental sculptures – did not, after all, contain burials but was 'closed' through the deposition of red deer antlers.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It seems that the houses of the settlements of Lepenski Vir I and II were constructed and used for very different purposes, although always following a traditional architectural standard. For example, houses associated with burials and/or sculptures were built alongside 'ordinary' houses and 'special purpose' houses. The spatial and temporal distribution of houses with burials and sculptures is summarized in Fig. 7. Five types of burial practice associated with houses are recognized along with burials which are, according to present evidence, unrelated to architectural remains. Of special importance is the evidence which implies that there is a considerably greater number of Lepenski Vir I and II burials than previously recorded. These burials relate to a (presently still not precise) number of partial interments and to inhumations labeled as dating to Lepenski Vir III. Some of these, however, are clearly associated with houses of Lepenski Vir I and II. Results of recent palaeodietary and dating analyses are crucial for a better understanding of the practice of deposition of human remains in the Lepenski Vir houses. In most cases, it is quite clear that the houses cannot be dated directly by the radiocarbon age of burials contained in them because of the prehistoric practice of deposition of older human skeletal parts, and because of the inhumation of later burials through house floors or the placing of single or sequential burials above them.

Summarizing all these facts, the following picture emerges of house–burial relationships in the settlements of Lepenski Vir:

Proto-Lepenski Vir

The settlement organization and practices related to the mortuary domain are still unclear. However, two cases are known, showing both burial of human skeletal parts (burial 22 with mandible encircled by three stones) and a human burial in sitting position (No. 69). Human burials in the far rear of the settlement, previously ascribed to Lepenski Vir III, could also belong to this phase. Available palaeodietary analyses for some of these burials indicate an 'early' type of diet.

Lepenski Vir I

Phase 1 (LV I/1 first half of the seventh millennium cal BC) Settlement organization implies a rather straightforward partition into two groups (upstream and downstream) with use of the same locations for the rebuilding of houses (Fig. 3; Radovanović 1996a). House burial type 1 is practiced (burials of newborns before the construction of house) but it is by no means found in all houses belonging to this phase. Distribution of house burials follows the general scheme of settlement partition into upstream and downstream groups. Again, groups of adult burials previously ascribed to Lepenski Vir III in the far rear of the settlement could belong to this phase, according to the results of palaeodietary analyses.

Phase 2 (LV I/2 second half of the seventh millennium cal BC) The upstream and downstream parts of the settlement are in this phase connected by constructions in the central part of the Lepenski Vir terrace (Fig. 4). Old house locations from phase 1 are still in use alongside newly established locations. The duality of settlement is blurred if only architectural remains are taken into account. However, house burial types are spatially distributed in a way which still underlines the existence of a dual organization. Again, only a small number of houses in this phase are actually related to mortuary practices. Those in the downstream and central part of the settlement are marked by type 2 house burial (newborns below floor, human skeletal parts associated to house hearth) and 'flanked' by type 3 house burials (interments through the floor) in the far upstream and downstream. The novelty is the introduction of human skeletal parts ('ancestral bones') in the house domain and probably upon the occasion of house closure.[11] Palaeodietary analyses of some of these skeletal parts implies an 'early' diet which is in contradiction to the supposed age of houses in this phase. This is already a time of diet change, coinciding with contact with Neolithic groups outside the gorge. All these data imply a change in mortuary practice triggered by changes in the belief system of the Lepenski Vir community or rather by the establishment of practices of materializing these beliefs which became archaeologically visible. The emphasis upon the ancestors and the values of the past (ancestral skeletal parts introduced in houses, the floruit of sculpture and other decorated objects found in the houses) and upon traditional values related to fishing-hunting practices (deposition of antlers and animal bones in houses along with human burials either in type 3 house burial or alone, etc.) resulted from contact with farming communities, leading to the awareness of another worldview. Many of these ancestral bones were probably brought from a special zone at the far rear of the settlement.

Phase 3 (LV I/3 turn of the seventh to the sixth millennium cal BC) In this phase, the settlement 'retreats' to the rear parts of the site, mainly in the upstream zone (Fig. 5). However, old locations were still used or 'closed' by deposition of human skeletal remains (type 4 house burial), especially in the downstream part of the site. In the upstream part, type 3 house burial seems to be more regularly practiced. Again, the duality of settlement is blurred in terms of architectural remains clearly expressed through mortuary practices. House 'closures' in the downstream part are marked by human skeletal remains and the deposition of animal bones, while in the upstream part the houses are 'closed' by human interments in pits through house floors which all contain, apart from the individual buried, the repertoire of human and animal skeletal remains similar to those marking closures in the downstream type 4 house burial. The variability in mortuary practices associated with these houses could be explained not only by continuing, if not increasing, contacts with 'the other worldview' but also through maintenance of the traditional duality of settlement use. Palaeodietary analyses imply 'late' diets for complete body interments and 'early' diets for human skeletal parts.

Lepenski Vir II

Settlement and architectural remains belonging to Lepenski Vir II cannot presently be either analyzed or described in satisfactory detail. It seems that some of the locations of Lepenski Vir I houses were still in use, especially in the far downstream and far upstream part of the site where type 5 house burial is recognized (i.e. sequential burial of individuals in LV I house locations with or without accompanying human and animal skeletal remains). Settlement duality is still retained through mortuary practices such as flexed and contracted burials, which are related to the central and upstream zone exclusively, while the supine position is preferred downstream. Many of the human skeletal remains previously ascribed to Lepenski Vir III perhaps belong either to this phase or to previous phases.

Lepenski Vir III

Burials ascribed to Lepenski Vir III in most cases actually belong to Lepenski Vir I and II occupations. A number of them are marked by the 'early' palaeodietary signature and correspondingly early AMS dates. A large number of these burials (human skeletal parts) is recorded in either unclear or disturbed contexts of deposition (Starčevo pits and dugouts which went down to the floors of Lepenski Vir I and II houses). Together with early pottery found in unclear contexts in houses of Lepenski Vir I and II, these burials were also ascribed to the later (i.e. Starčevo IIb) settlement. Analysis of original field documentation may perhaps indicate which of these burials would eventually belong to the actual Starčevo settlement, characterized by rectangular above-ground huts and the absence of rectangular hearths and other house furnishings typical of earlier settlements.

Since the mid-seventh millennium cal BC, the Lepenski Vir communities that occupied settlements marked as phases I/2–3 and II went through considerable changes, triggered by the contacts they enjoyed with their Neolithic neighbors, with whom they shared a similar repertoire of pottery, stone and bone technologies to those of the nearby site of Padina. These changes continued at their own pace, as determined by the strength of traditional practices established in the distant early Mesolithic past. One of these enduring traditions was the practice of burials associated with fixed locations within the settlement. These locations were often marked by the construction of a house or were associated with already existing houses. However, these locations were remembered and continued to be used, even in phase II of Lepenski Vir.

The settlement of Lepenski Vir I–II was abandoned some time in the first centuries of the sixth millenium cal BC, when the site was resettled by a community which constructed dugouts, pits and above-ground huts of rectangular ground plan, some furnished with pottery kilns. These houses contained pottery of Starčevo IIb type and constitute the proper Lepenski Vir III settlement. This occupation also remains to be reanalyzed in view of recent stratigraphical observations.

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NOTES

1. The documentation and archaeological material is kept in the Institute of Archaeology and National Museum in Belgrade. Part of the documentation and material is, as it seems, kept also in the Archaeological Collection of the University of Belgrade. After Srejović's untimely death in 1996 the committee for the publication of the monograph on Lepenski Vir was formed in 2000. This committee (with representatives of the above noted institutions and the academician M. Garašanin) has now assigned a team of scholars to produce a full publication of this material.

2. These observations were cross-correlated with the existing radiocarbon dates coming from secure contexts, and, as concerns the Lepenski Vir itself, they consistently pointed to the contemporaneity of pottery found *in situ* in phases 2–3 of LV I houses with the pottery labeled as Lepenski Vir IIIa (lower levels of Lepenski Vir III pits and dugouts which went down to the floors of some of these houses). The pottery found on floors of the houses belonging to LV I not disturbed by the LV III pits and dugouts was assumed by Srejović to be an intrusion. It was therefore also labeled as Lepenski Vir IIIa and thus separated from its actual context.

3. With regard to the early Neolithic pottery from Lepenski Vir, and the proposed reinterpretation of the nature of deposition processes on this site along with re-examination of Srejović's published stratigraphical observations, it should be noted that special attention must be paid to all archaeological material ascribed to LV III and especially LV IIIa. We should not forget that the early Neolithic pottery finds from central and northern Serbia have been doggedly reclassified over the last several decades in order to support the supposedly 'certain' stratigraphy of the pits and dugouts in Lepenski Vir IIIa. The consequent chronological discrepancies have caused insurmountable problems for pottery analysts and all those engaged in the study of early Neolithic regional groups.

4. Identification of locations of these burials is based upon the reconstruction of the excavation grid (as the original field plan was not available to me at the time of preparation of this paper). The reconstruction was made after comparison of the following available data: 1. Burials listed in field burial notes with number of grave, its position in numbered house and position in numbered square of grid (i.e. graves 54a–e in house 65 superimposed by construction XXXVI in sq. b–c/12–13, grave 22 between the proto-Lepenski Vir hearth and corner of house 41 in sq. B/9, group of graves 13–17 in sq. A-B/VIII-IX near house 28 and construction XXVII). 2. The only existing published situation plans of the site with numbered houses of phases LV I and LV II (Srejović 1969) with preserved (but unlabeled) grid marks which enabled reconstruction of the orientation of the grid. 3. The only published section of the site (Srejović 1969:34–35, 1972:40) with position of houses 34, 43, 27, 20, 33 and 32 and grid marks. In this way, the original 4*x*4m grid system was reconstructed with accurate locations of houses, and, finally, all these were checked out by comparison with part of the grid with houses (unlabeled) published in R. Mužijević's section on the geophysical research of Lepenski Vir (Srejović 1969:194 which does not exist in the English version of the same book, i.e. Srejović 1972). In contrast to houses, positioning of individual burials within 4m squares in Fig. 2 is less precise, but for the time being it is helpful for it allows one to see their spatial arrangement at least (upstream, downstream or rear of settlement).

5. Bonsall and his collaborators argued that δ15N values greater than 13.5‰ can be taken as an empirical figure distinguishing the typical 'Mesolithic' diet with fish as a main source of protein. The δ15N values lower than the noted one were taken as a signature of terrestrial diet (1997:76, see also Fig. 8, p. 78).

6. The δ15N values ranging between 7.1–8.9‰ (farmers) and 7.9–11.4‰ (inland hunter-gatherers) combined with δ13C values between −20.3 and −21.0‰ (both groups) vary in respect of the emphasis on particular food resources (Schulting 1998:204ff., and tables 1 and 2, p. 206).

7. The human skeletal parts below the floors of houses 19 and 31 (which are next to each other) could belong to an earlier occupation level (for discussion see: Dimitrijević in press), but the fact is that children below these houses were buried in fixed locations (under house corners C and D like in

all other houses of that type) and are thus associated with the act of house construction and not with any earlier occupation of the layer below it.

8. In the field notes, the house with graves 54a–e is labeled 62 and the same label appears in my book (1996a). However, the number of this house is 65 (with corresponding construction XXXVI above it) according to the plan of Lepenski Vir I and photographs of that house in Srejović (1972) and Srejović and Babović (1983).

9. As concerns the pottery finds in houses of LV I phases 2 and 3, they are present both in the houses with burials and the ones without them (for a list of Lepenski Vir I houses with pottery, see Srejović 1972:134, also Garašanin and Radovanović in press). However, it is important to note that pottery was never placed as a grave good either in LV I and II or in those burials ascribed to LV III discussed in this article.

10. In view of the fact that the backs of Lepenski Vir houses were dug into the slope (similar to the nearby sites of Vlasac and Padina, according to Srejović and Letica and Jovanović, see: Radovanović 1996a:118, 120), many of the stone constructions labeled as Lepenski Vir II might in fact belong to the same houses the floors of which are labeled as Lepenski Vir I. This problem of house reconstruction is the topic of my present research, hopefully to be accomplished after the analysis of the original field documentation on the architectural remains. Only after the completion of these analyses would it be possible to establish the settlement organization of Lepenski Vir II with greater accuracy.

11. A predominance of type 1 house burial in phase 1 and more regular house closure practice in phases 2 and 3 (types 2 and 4 of house burial) made me attempt to explore whether the change in house burial types is in fact related to some regular sequence in house location histories. Repetition of type 1 house burial in some house locations, and the lack of type 1 or type 2 burial in other house locations containing other types of house burials (i.e. type 3, 4 and 5) presently does not encourage establishing any sort of sequence of different burial types in respect to the house locations. However, it seems that only type 2 house burials could represent the full cycle of single house use (from the moment before its immediate construction with child burials below floor, until the moment of closure with placing human skeletal remains upon it).

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Ivana Radovanović is a Reader in the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade, and currently holds a Leverhulme Fellowship at the University of Durham. She received her PhD in prehistoric archaeology at the Department of Archaeology, University of Belgrade in 1993. She has held research and teaching appointments at the Institute for History, University of Novi Sad and the Department of Archaeology, University of Belgrade. She is currently involved in the research of prehistoric hunter-gatherers' belief systems and problems of archaeological interpretation.

Address: Institute of Archaeology, Knez Mihajlova 35, 11000 Belgrade, FRY.
[email: I.Radovanovic@ai.sanu.ac.yu]

ABSTRACTS

Maisons et sépultures à Lepenski Vir

Ivana Radovanović

Les maisons et sépultures du site Lepenski Vir I et II et les sépultures précédemment attribuées à Lepenski Vir III sont examinées ici sous l'aspect des analyses récentes du matériel archéologique et de la ré-analyse du rapport de fouille. La céramique *in situ* dans les maisons de Lepenski Vir I, conjointement avec l'important changement diététique dans la communauté de Lepenski Vir au cours de la deuxième partie du septième millénaire (cal BC), renforce l'hypothèse, formulée par plusieurs chercheurs dans les dernières décennies, de contactes intensifs entre des groupes du commencement du Néolithique et les chasseurs régionaux. Les pratiques funéraires de Lepenski Vir du

septième et sixième millénaire (cal BC) à Lepenski Vir sont analysées sous cet aspect nouveau. À part des tombes sans rapport avec des vestiges architecturaux, cinq genres de déposition sont trouvés en relation avec les maisons de Lepenski Vir I à II. À une exception près tous ont une position chronologique et spatiale différente. Les coutumes funéraires pratiquées par les habitants sont toujours associées à un emplacement bien défini dans l'agglomération, qui quelquefois est utilisé pendant plusieurs siècles. Au cours de leur histoire, ces emplacements on souvent été utilisé pour construire une maison particulière ou un groupe de maisons. L'inventaire de ces maisons est – si possible examiné lui aussi. Une dualité dans l'organisation spatiale du site à pu être reconnu de même pour les sépultures reliées directement à des maisons. L'attribution de la majorité des tombes de Lepenski Vir III au début de Néolithique est elle-aussi discutée sous la lumière des nouvelles données et de la ré-interprétation phaséologique de l'agglomération.

Häuser und Bestattungen in Lepenski Vir

Ivana Radovanović

Häuser und Bestattungen der Siedlungen Lepenski Vir I und II, sowie ehemals Lepenski Vir III zugeschriebene, werden hier unter Berücksichtigung der neuen Analysen des archäologischen Materials und erneuten Analysen der Gräberfelder dieses Fundorts diskutiert. In situ gefundene Keramik aus Häusern von Lepenski Vir I, ebenso wie Hinweise auf wichtige Ernährungsänderungen in der Lepenski Vir Gemeinschaft während der zweiten Hälfte des siebenten Jahrtausends vor Christus, verstärken die Annahme, daß zwischen frühen neolithischen Gruppen und örtlichen Jägern und Sammlern intensive Kontakten bestanden haben. Die Bestattungssitten während des siebten und sechsten Jahrtausends vor Christus in Lepenski Vir werden folglich unter diesem neuen Aspekt erneut analysiert. Abgesehen von Bestattungen ohne Zusammenhang zu Gebäudespuren werden fünf Typen' von Bestattungen in Abhängigkeit zu Häusern von Lepenski Vir I-II bemerkt, die aber alle außer einem ein deutliches chronologisches und räumliches Muster aufweisen. Die Bestattungsweise, die von den Einwohnern gewählt wurde, ist immer mit einem bestimmten Ort in der Siedlung verbunden, manchmal über mehrere Jahrhunderte gebraucht. Im Verlauf ihrer Geschichte wurden auf diesen Orten häufig bestimmte Gebäude oder Häusergruppen errichtet. Der Inhalt eines solchen Hauses wird nach Möglichkeit auch diskutiert. Eine Dualität in der Organisation der Siedlung konnte ebenso anhand der Bestattungssitten, die auf die Architektur der Siedlung bezug nehmen, erkannt werden. Die Zugehörigkeit der Mehrzahl der Bestattungen zum frühneolithischen Lepenski Vir III wird durch die neuen Daten und die neue Interpretation der Siedlungsentwicklung ebenfalls in Frage gestellt.