

Viktória Kiss

BRONZE AGE LIFE STORIES FROM HUNGARY

(3RD–2ND MILLENNIA BC)

HEREDITAS ARCHAEOLOGICA HUNGARIAE



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“Ötzi comes to my mind, and the museum in Bolzano, where I did not want to go in first because what’s the point in going to see a man who died long ago; and then, the moment when I got lost in the frays of the deerskin leg warmer and I felt that we are in the same moment, and not a minute or just a minute has passed because looking down the mountain, every millennium is just a moment and existence is almost tritely timeless.”

György Dragomán: Lana

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Back and front of a Middle Bronze Age pottery figurine from the Lower Danube region.

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During the first century and a half of its history, archaeology had to rely on surviving objects – for example, jewellery items, weapons, and other tools – in drawing conclusions on the life of prehistoric people, since no written sources are known from this historical period. Therefore, expanding and enhancing knowledge of one-time people and events by utilising state-of-the-art methods of contemporary sciences represents an exceptional opportunity for archaeology today. New branches emerged from the close collaboration of diverse disciplines. One of them is bioarchaeology, a science similar to forensics (more precisely, crime scene investigation) in many respects, and sharing its main data source: human remains. When completed with behavioural scientific, environmental, and social aspects, this study allows for the biosocial evaluation of archaeological remains, thanks to which one-time people, and not only their bare skeletons, can be the subject of research.

This complex approach is adopted in this book: We look at history through a magnifying glass to bring the reader closer to the first half of the two thousand-year-long Bronze Age (2500–800 BC) in the Carpathian Basin. Who they were and how they lived emerges from reconstructed micro-histories of individuals dwelling in the territory of modern-day Hungary sometime during the thousand years after the 26th century BC and before the time of the Trojan War, when the pharaohs of the Great Pyramids ruled in Egypt, and kings resided in the palaces of Minoan Crete.

