

Placing Dead

From living to dead

- First burials (since Middle Paleolithic)
- In caves, open-air sites (in living areas)
- The concept of cemetery or place for dead (since Copper Age)
- Organization of cemeteries (landscape and social significance)
- Absence and presence of exterior monumental aspects

Burial, politics and identity

- Political aspects of burial supported by processual archaeologists
- Burial directly reflects the structure of the society (power inequalities and social hierarchy) L. Binford (1971)
- Cemeteries are established by corporate groups to legitimise their power (Saxe, 1970)
- Concept of energy (Tainter, 1978)
- Viability of mortuary data as an indicator of vertical (hierarchy-driven) and horizontal (descent-driven) social distinctions (O'Shea, 1981)

'Big Man' society

- Italian Copper Age (Gazella 1992, 1998, 2003)
- Rich burials = emergence of structural inequalities
- Men competed for power by accumulation of prestige-giving goods
- Burying them led to the opening of a new power contest

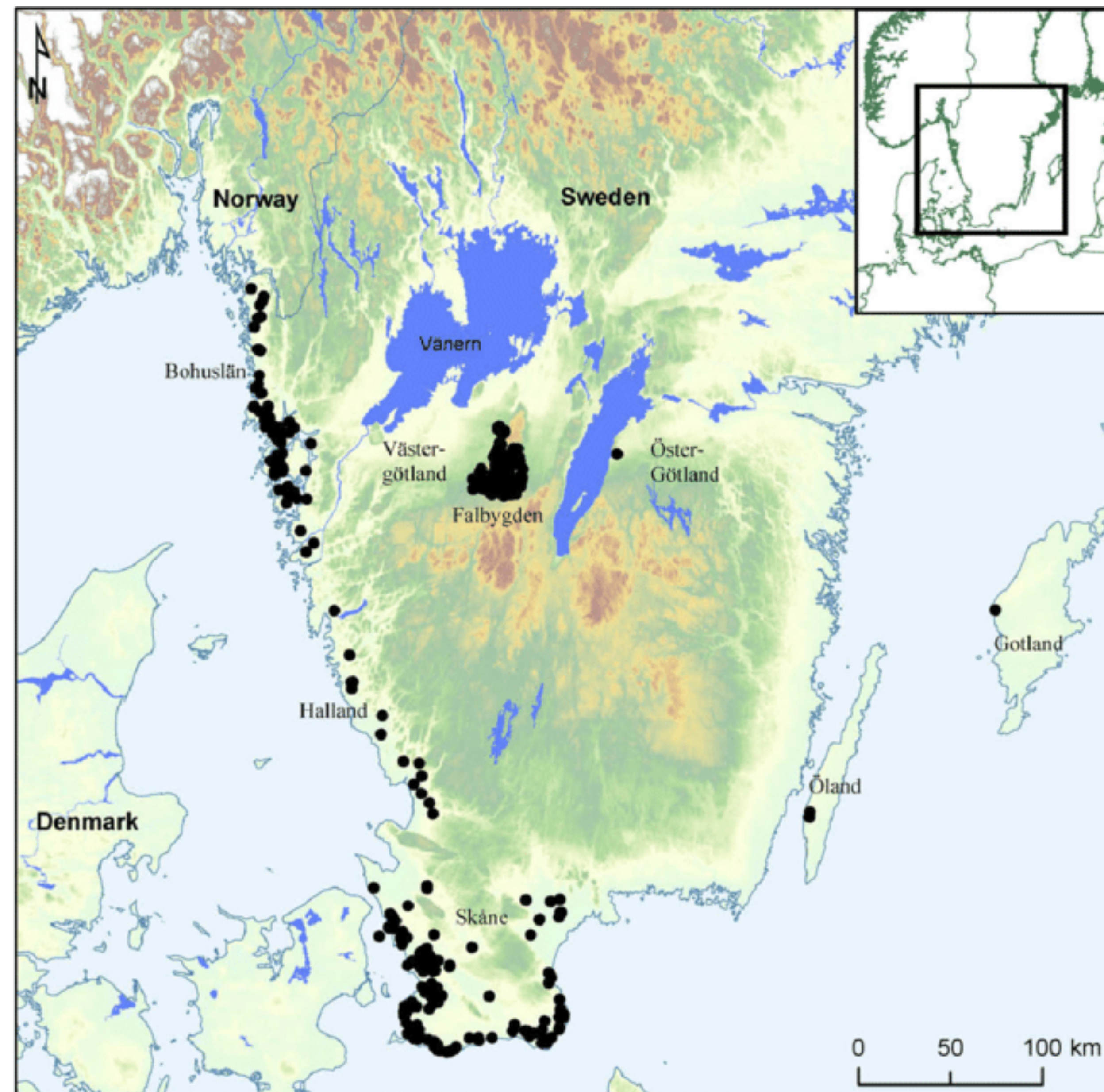
Social Theory

- Reflects not only politics, but created and changed through social practice (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984)
- Not only power and status contest over restricted resources, but social communication (cosmological and religious beliefs, well-being or crisis of social group, ideas concerning the body and personhood, etc.)

Placing the dead

- Proximity hypothesis
- Visibility and secrecy of burials
- Reuse for secondary burials to relate past and present
- Burials and landscape (hills, terraces, water, etc.)

- Map of megalithic tombs in Sweden



By Criado and Villoch

- In the Sierra de Barbanza (north-western Iberia) all Neolithic barrows in the area share three central features: 1. a circular vista, visually enclosed, close to watercourses, 2. a border of a panorama of natural features, visible from the horizon, and 3. a well-defined, centre point.
- These defined panoramas are circularly organised as two opposing halves: one open for domestication, the other hidden and enclosed.

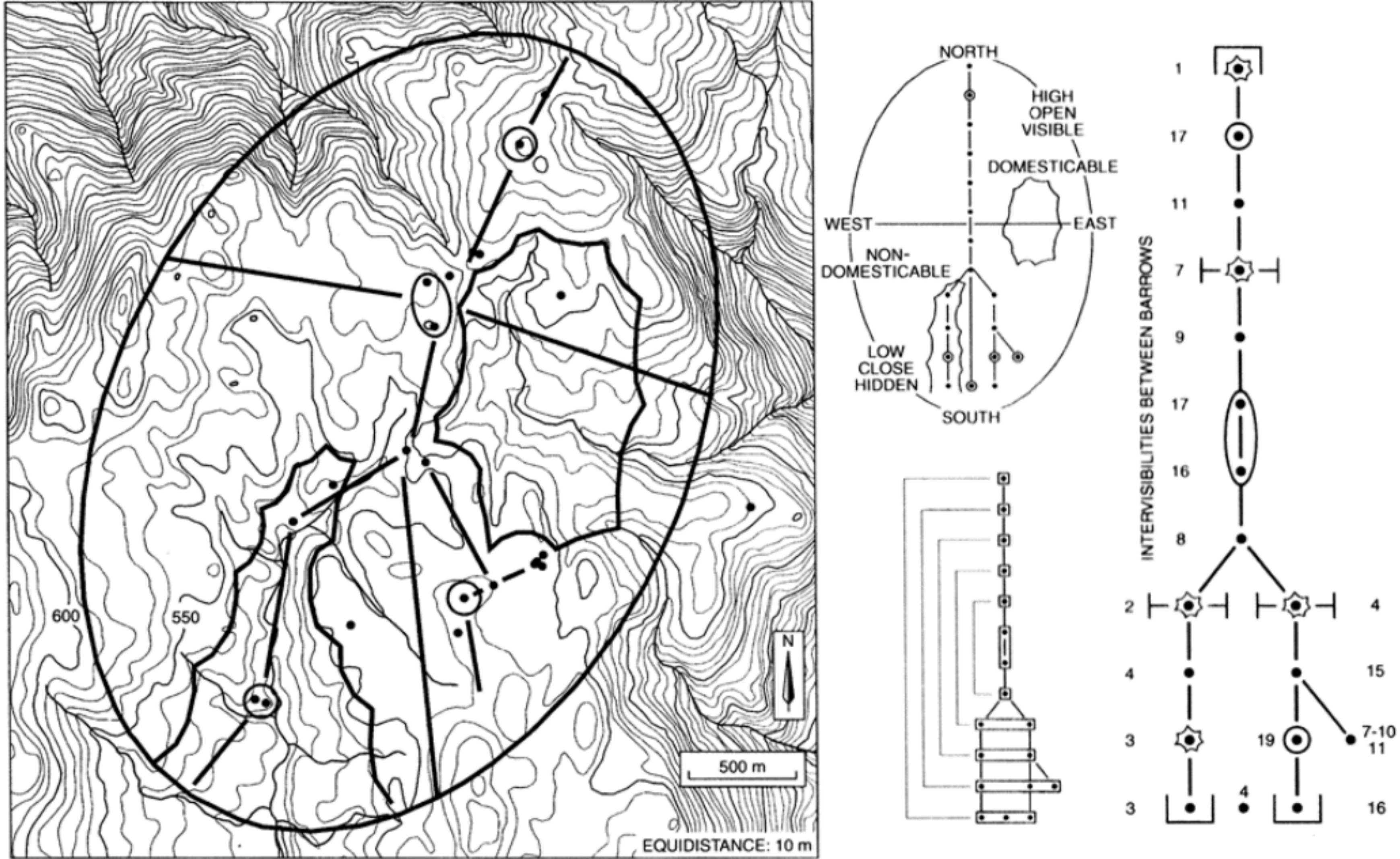


Fig 1. Formalised outlines of the Sierra de Barbanza area: diagrammatic scheme of the landscape (top centre), translation of this into physical space (left), and representation of the symmetrical correspondences of the barrow system (bottom centre and right, Criado & Villoch 2000:207).

Italian Neolithic

- The age of the village (ditched villages)
- Primary inhumation of crouched individuals in earthen pits, stone-lined trenches or slab-built cysts without durable goods
- Followed by intentional or unintentional disturbance of the grave and dispersal of remains
- Secondary treatments of bodies vary from reburial of selected bones to cremation

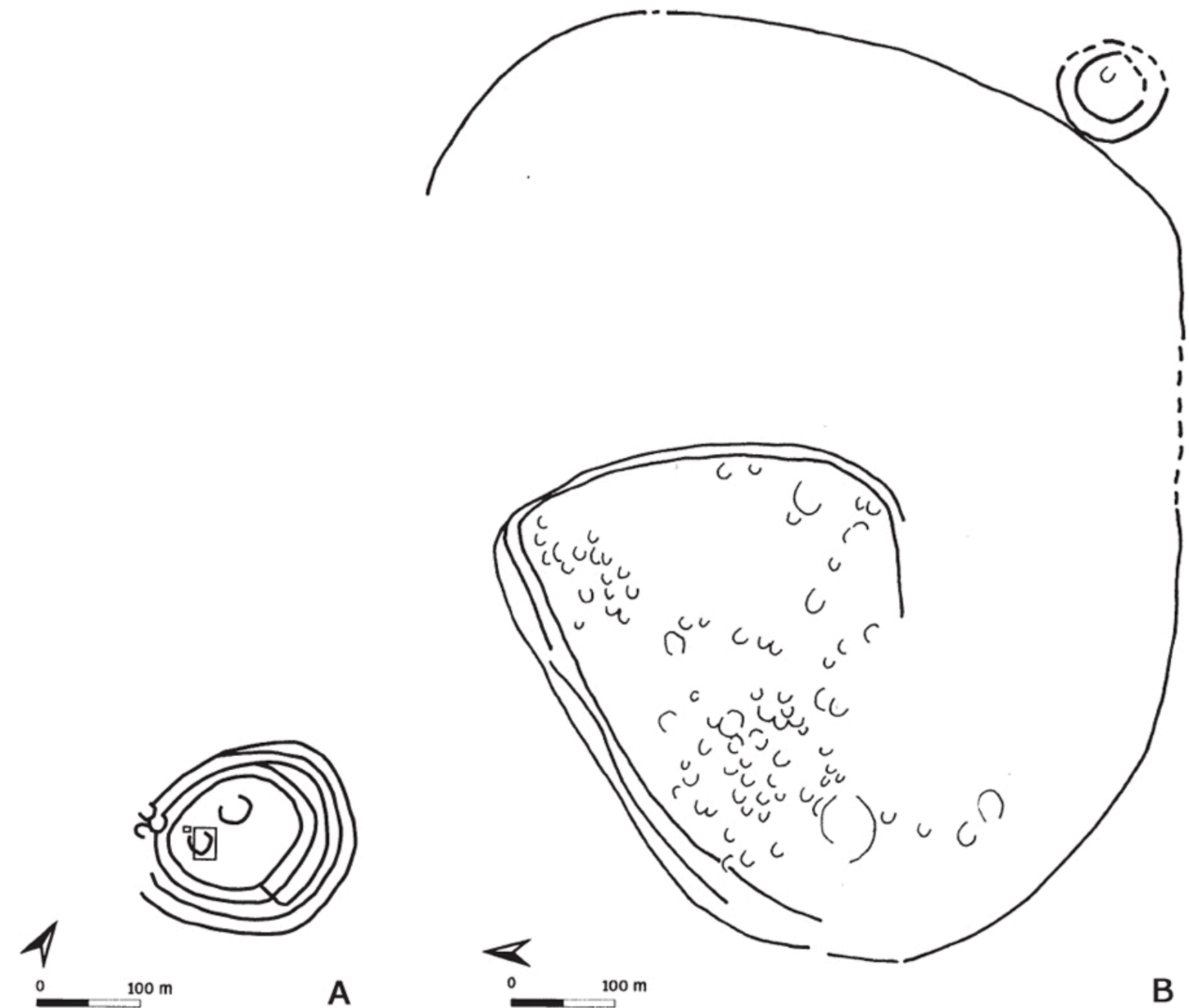


Fig. 2.2. Neolithic ditched enclosures from the Apulian Tavoliere. A: Lagnano da Piede; B: Passo di Corvo (Pessina & Tiné 2008, modified).

- Removal of the skull or undisturbed individual grave as act of ancestor commemoration
- Males buried on their right-hand side, females on left-hand side
- More adults than children
- Adults more disturbed
- Primary and secondary burials as a part of day-to-day accomplishments

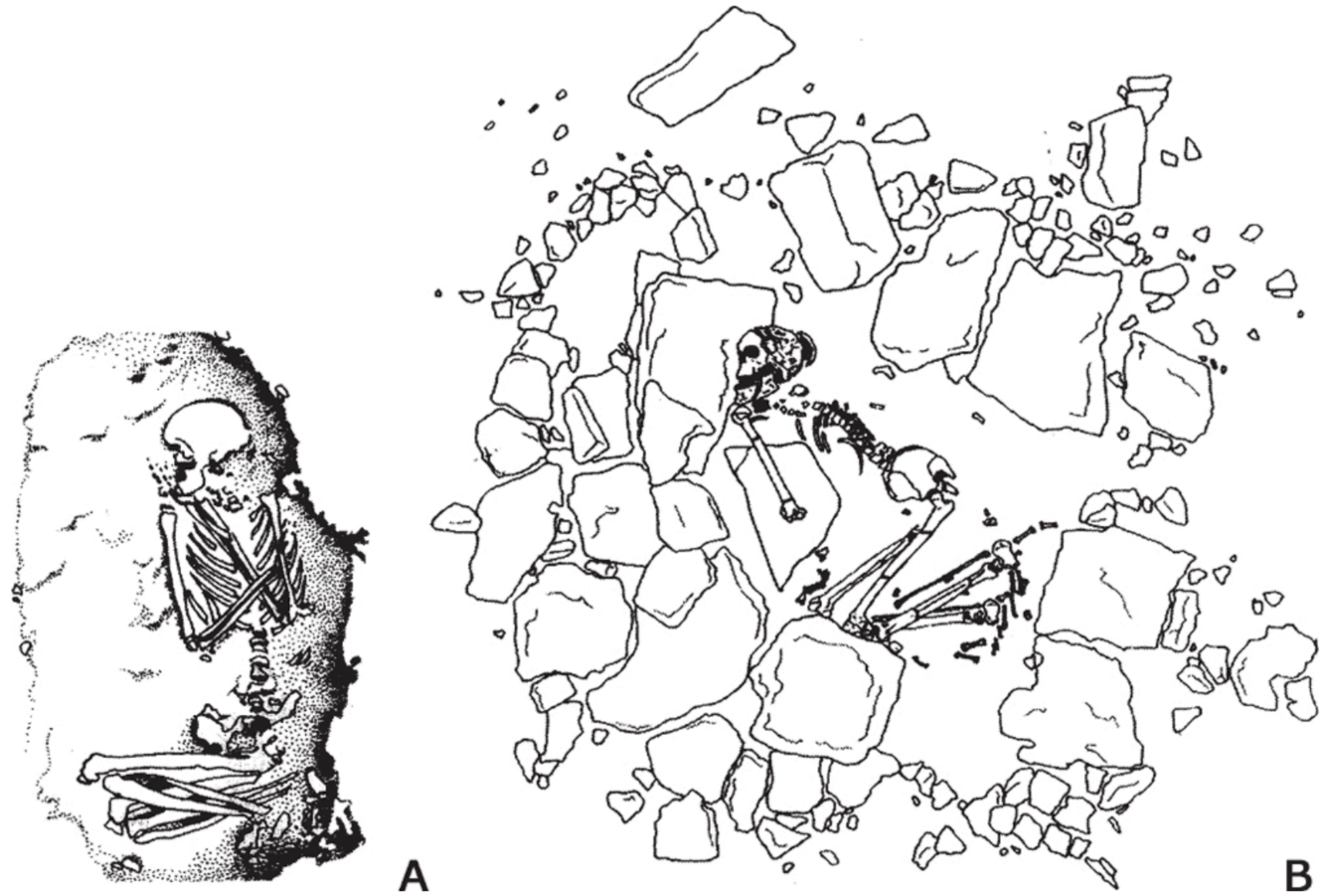


Fig. 2.3. Neolithic primary burials in earthen pits and stone-lined trenches. A: Passo di Corvo; B: Balsignano, tomb 2 (Pessina & Tiné 2008, modified).

From village to cemetery

- 5-4 millenium BC as a transition
- Burials moved out of domestic area
- In cave cavities, small rock-cut chamber tombs closed by plates or trench graves

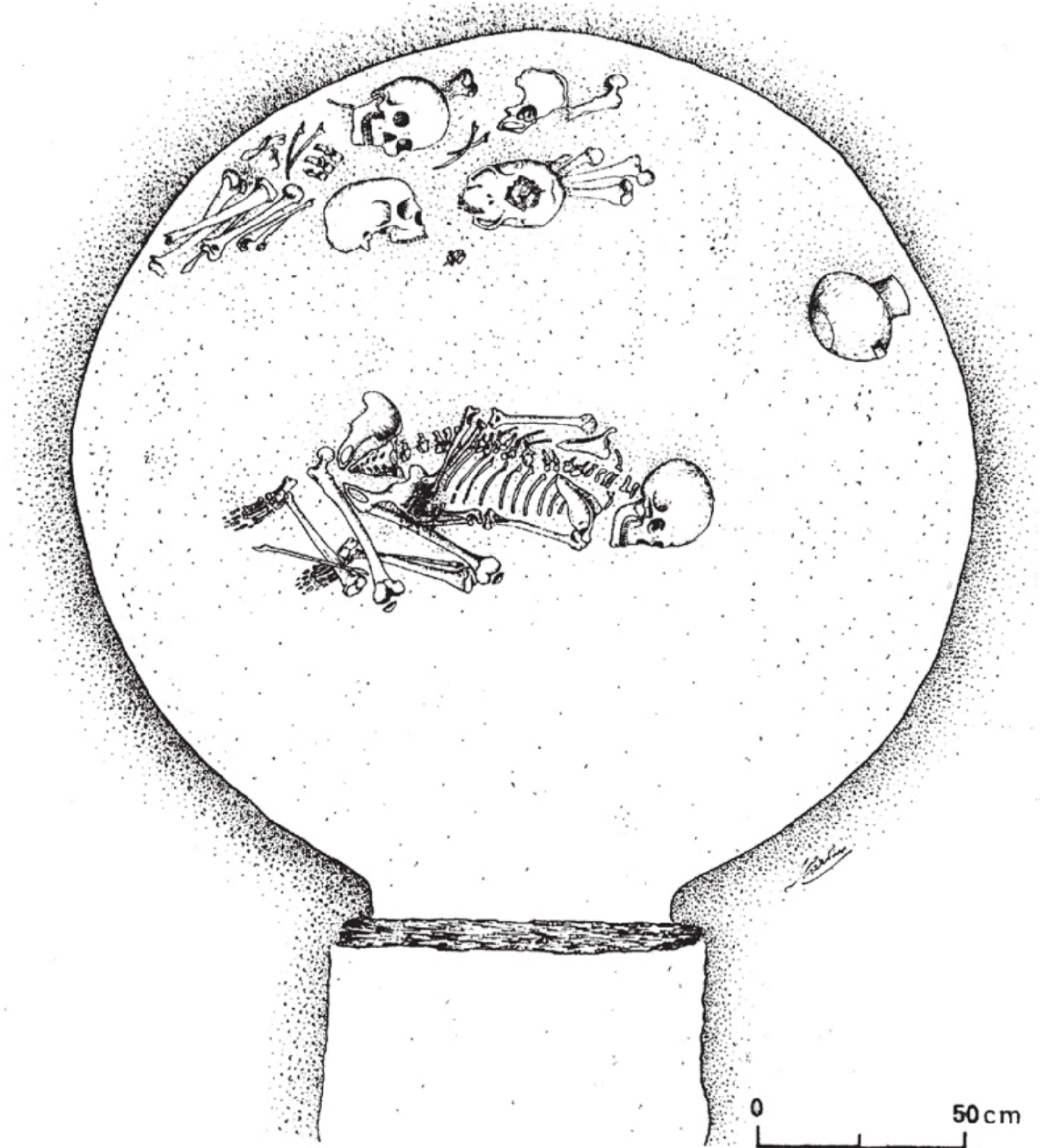
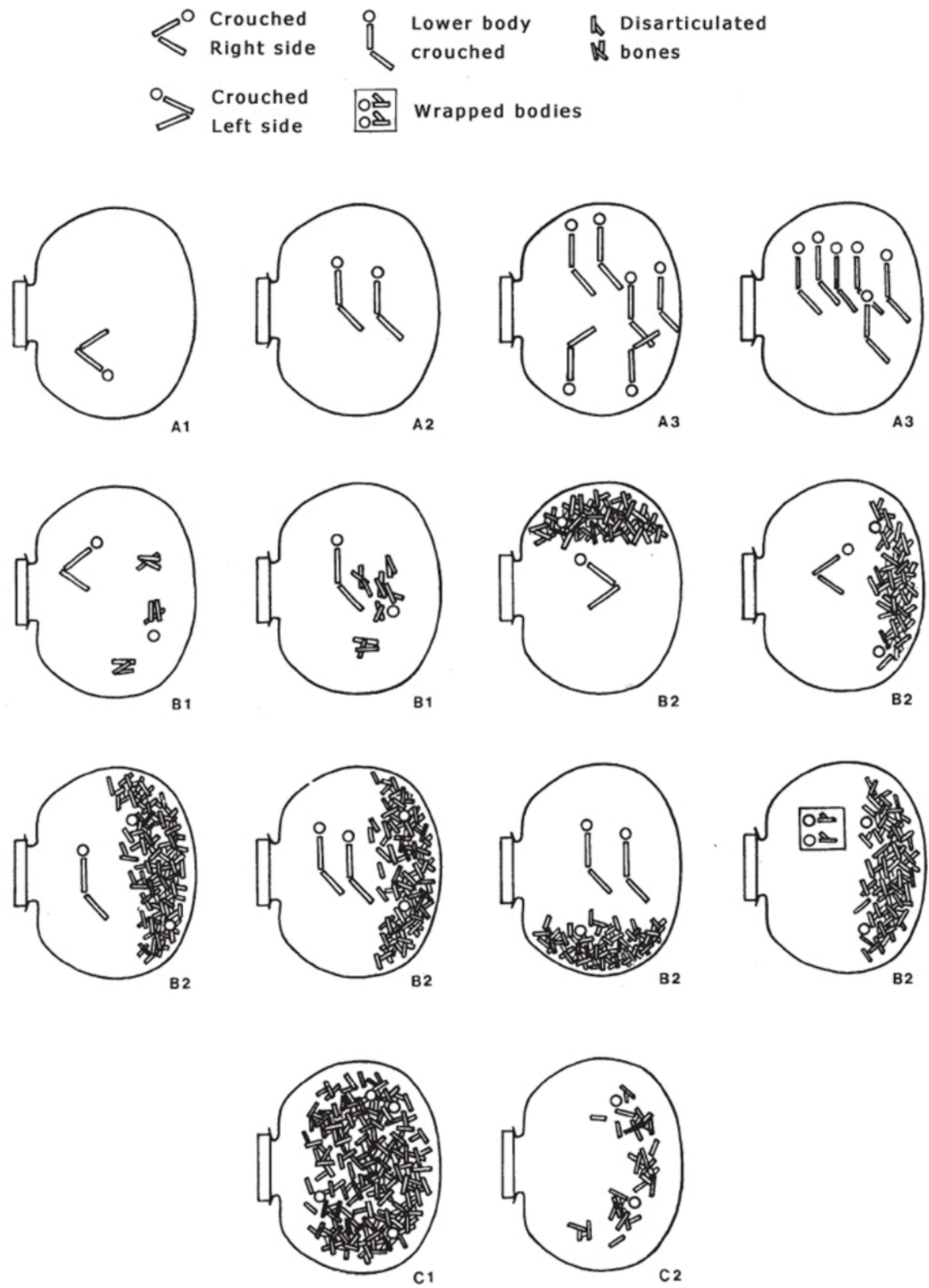




Fig. 2.5. Rinaldone-style chamber tomb from Ponte San Pietro, west-central Italy (Miari 1995).

	INTERMENT	MANIPULATION	REBURIAL
			
	Interment of an articulated body, crouched on their left-hand or right-hand side	Manipulation or removal of the skull	Reburial of the skull
	Interment of further articulated bodies	Manipulation or removal of the upper body; the lower limbs are left in situ	Reburial of the upper body, reorganised
		Manipulation or removal of skull and limbs; spine/ribs (and occasionally feet) are left in situ	Reburial of the entire body, reorganised
		Manipulation or removal of the entire body; tiny bone fragments are (unintentionally?) left in situ	Reburial of the entire body, which is reorganised and mixed with other bodies
			Reburial of long bones and skulls of several bodies, stacked together

Conclusive remarks

- Burials in Neolithic as daily social practice (coresidence in bounded village)
- In late Neolithic and Copper Age “the tie between coresidence and the common history of the group split apart”
- Invention of cemetery, primary and secondary burial practices became more complex, change of understanding the human body that became more “partible and transgressible entity ”