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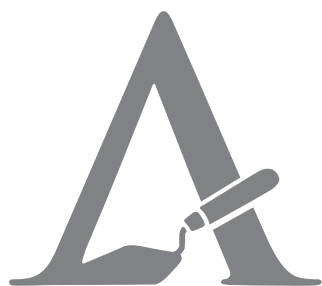
ARCHAEOLOGICA RESSOVIENSIA

VOLUME **20** RZESZÓW 2025



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VOLUME 20 RZESZÓW 2025



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Wydział Humanistyczny
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Święte, Site 11: Monumental (?) FBC Cemetery in the Subcarpathian Loess Region

Abstract

Król D., Olszewski A., Dobrakowska T., Dobrakowski M., Orczyk K., Szpila M. 2025. Święte, Site 11: Monumental (?) FBC Cemetery in the Subcarpathian Loess Region. *Analecta Archaeologica Ressoiviensia* 20, 79–97

The article presents an analysis of the Funnel Beaker Culture cemetery at Święte, site 11 (Subcarpathian Loess Region, southeastern Poland), identified during rescue excavations carried out prior the construction of the A4 highway. A total of 49 graves were recorded and excavated, forming a well-organized burial ground with poorly preserved human remains and modest grave goods. Although no direct traces of monumental long-barrow constructions were recorded during excavation, GIS-based spatial analyses and the placement of Corded Ware Culture graves along the margins suggest that such structures may once have existed within the FBC cemetery but did not survive. The cemetery should therefore be cautiously interpreted not as a flat burial ground, but as a more complex, potentially monumental sepulchral space.

Keywords: Funnel Beaker Culture, Corded Ware Culture, long barrows, graves, Eneolithic

Received: 08.09.2025; **Revised:** 02.10.2025; **Accepted:** 02.10.2025

1. Introduction

During rescue excavations prior to the construction of the A4 highway, more than a dozen distinct Funnel Beaker Culture (FBC) sites dating to the 4th millennium BC were discovered and investigated in the Subcarpathian Loess Region of southeastern Poland (e.g., Mazurek *et al.* 2013; Król *et al.* 2014a; 2014b; Pelisiak and Czubak 2014; Rybicka *et al.* 2014; Dębiec *et al.* 2015; Sznajdrowska 2016). Among these, three sites were identified as funerary in nature: Skołoszów, site 7 (Król *et al.* 2012; 2014a; Cwaliński *et al.* 2017),

Szczytna, site 6 (Król *et al.* 2014b), and Święte, site 11 (Olszewski 2011; Olszewski and Włodarczak 2018).

At the first two FBC cemeteries, numerous burial pits were documented, along with clear or partially preserved traces of timber long barrows, evidenced by features such as foundation ditches and other structural components (Król *et al.* 2012; 2014a; 2014b; Olszewski and Włodarczak 2018; Król and Sznajdrowska-Pondel 2022). In contrast, no recognizable remains of such monumental structures were recorded at Święte, site 11 (Olszewski 2011; Olszewski and Włodarczak 2018). Although no direct traces of long barrows were

identified there, the indirect evidence presented by A. Olszewski and P. Włodarczak (2018, 54) in the context of Corded Ware Culture (CWC) graves deserves closer attention. It is possible that such monuments once existed at this burial ground; however, owing to their predominantly timber construction and the impact of subsequent destructive processes, no direct traces have survived. The absence of clear archaeological evidence may therefore not indicate their non-existence but may rather be seen as a reflection of the fragility of these prehistoric structures (cf. Król and Sznajdrowska-Pondel 2022).

The FBC cemetery at Święte, site 11 was discovered and excavated in 2010 and 2012–2013 during large-scale archaeological investigations carried out by a consortium of companies comprising Narnia, Arche, and Archgeo. The fieldwork was directed by A. Łukaszewska in 2010 and 2012, and by T. Dobrakowska in 2013. In addition to the remains of FBC and CWC burial practices, the site also yielded traces of Bronze Age settlement, features from the Roman period, as well as evidence related to World War I activity (Olszewski 2011; Bohr *et al.* 2011; Dobrakowska and Dobrakowski 2014). Nevertheless, despite its importance, this FBC burial ground has not yet been comprehensively analyzed and contextualized within the broader framework of Eneolithic funerary practices in Central Europe in the 4th millennium BC. This study, therefore, aims to present this intriguing cemetery in greater detail and to explore whether it should be interpreted as a purely flat burial ground, or whether there are grounds for assuming the existence of “hidden” monumental structures within it (cf. Olszewski and Włodarczak 2018; Król and Sznajdrowska-Pondel 2022).

2. Location of the site

Święte, site 11 is situated on the eastern edge of the Subcarpathian Loess Region, within the Lower San Valley, part of the Sandomierz Basin (Solon *et al.* 2018), approximately 4 km southeast of Radymno (Fig. 1). It lies on the western Pleistocene terrace of the San River at an elevation of about 202 meters above sea level and roughly 900 meters from the present-day riverbed.

The elevation difference between the surface of the Święte 11 site and the Holocene valley floor is nearly 12 meters, with a significant slope of 17° (approximately 30.6%). The surface is characterized by a gently undulating microrelief with drainless hollows – morphological depressions where water tended to stagnate (Reder and Stępniewski 2011).

All FBC burial features were recorded in the western part of the site, within an area of approximately 100 m² (Fig. 2).

3. Overview of graves

Feature 755. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 218 × 108 cm, with a depth of 21 cm. The pit had a rectangular shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 756. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 230 × 142 cm, with a depth of 48 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. The grave pit was disturbed on the western side by a 20th-century intrusion and on the eastern side by a niche grave associated with the CWC. Small, non-diagnostic fragments of human bone were found within the fill. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 757. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards NE-SW and measured 268 × 94 cm, with a depth of 21 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. A flint flake was discovered in the grave.

Feature 758. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards SE-NW and measured 234 × 104 cm, with a depth of 37 cm (Fig. 3: 1–2). The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with slightly rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment (Fig. 3: 1). The fill consisted of two layers: the lower part was composed of dark gray humic soil, while the remaining part of the fill consisted of light gray humic soil mixed with loess (Fig. 3: 2). No human remains were preserved. Two artefacts were recorded: a collared flask and a retouched flake fragment (Fig. 3: 1, 3–4).

Feature 759. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 234 × 80 cm, with a depth of 34 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of two layers: the lower layer was composed of dark grey humic soil mixed with loess, while the remaining part of the fill

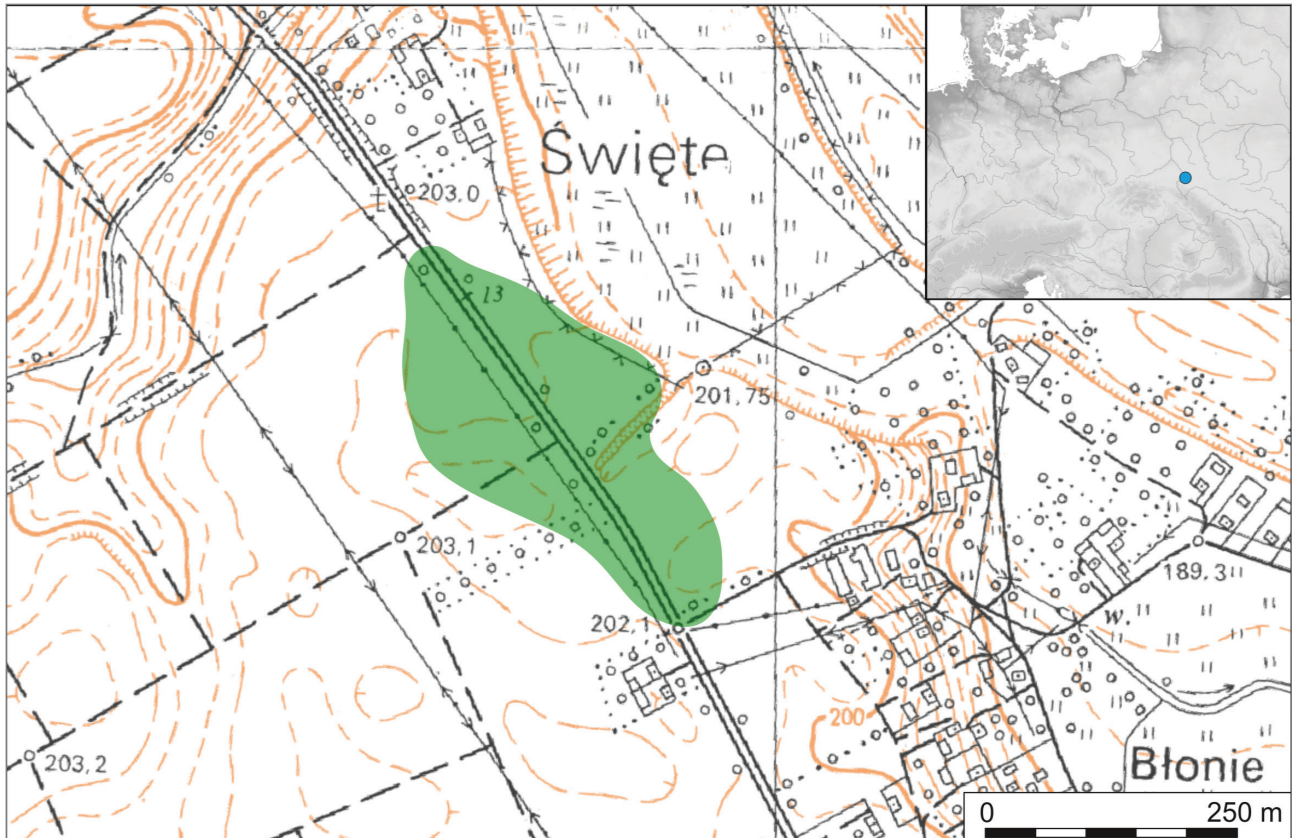


Fig. 1. Święte, site 11. Location of the site (edited by D. Król).

consisted of uniform dark grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. A flint flake was discovered in the grave.

Feature 760. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 182×74 cm, with a depth of 34 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and a slightly concave northern side, and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. A flint flake was discovered in the grave.

Feature 761. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 216×108 cm, with a depth of 40 cm (Fig. 4: 1–2). The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with slightly rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment (Fig. 4: 1). The fill consisted of three layers: in the lower part of the grave, on the western side, a dark grey humic soil layer approximately 2 cm thick was visible; the middle layer was composed of fairly uniform loess about 6 cm thick; the remaining part of the fill consisted of dark grey humic soil mixed with loess (Fig. 4: 2). Small, non-diagnostic fragments of human bone were found

within the fill. Two artefacts were recorded: a collared flask located in the western part of the grave, and a flint blade made of Volhynian raw material found in the central part (Fig. 4: 1, 3–4).

Feature 762. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 224×80 cm, with a depth of 24 cm (Fig. 5: 1–2). The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment (Fig. 5: 1). The fill consisted of two layers: the lower layer, up to 10 cm thick, comprised dark grey humic soil, while the upper layer consisted of grey humic soil mixed with loess (Fig. 5: 2). The central section of the feature was disturbed by a modern intrusion. In the western part of the grave, human teeth were discovered, belonging to an individual of at least Infans II age category (Fig. 5: 1). A collared flask was also found in the western part of the grave (Fig. 5: 1, 3).

Feature 766. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards SE-NW and measured 260×110 cm, with a depth of 18 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with slightly rounded corners and a slightly concave northern side, and was clearly dis-

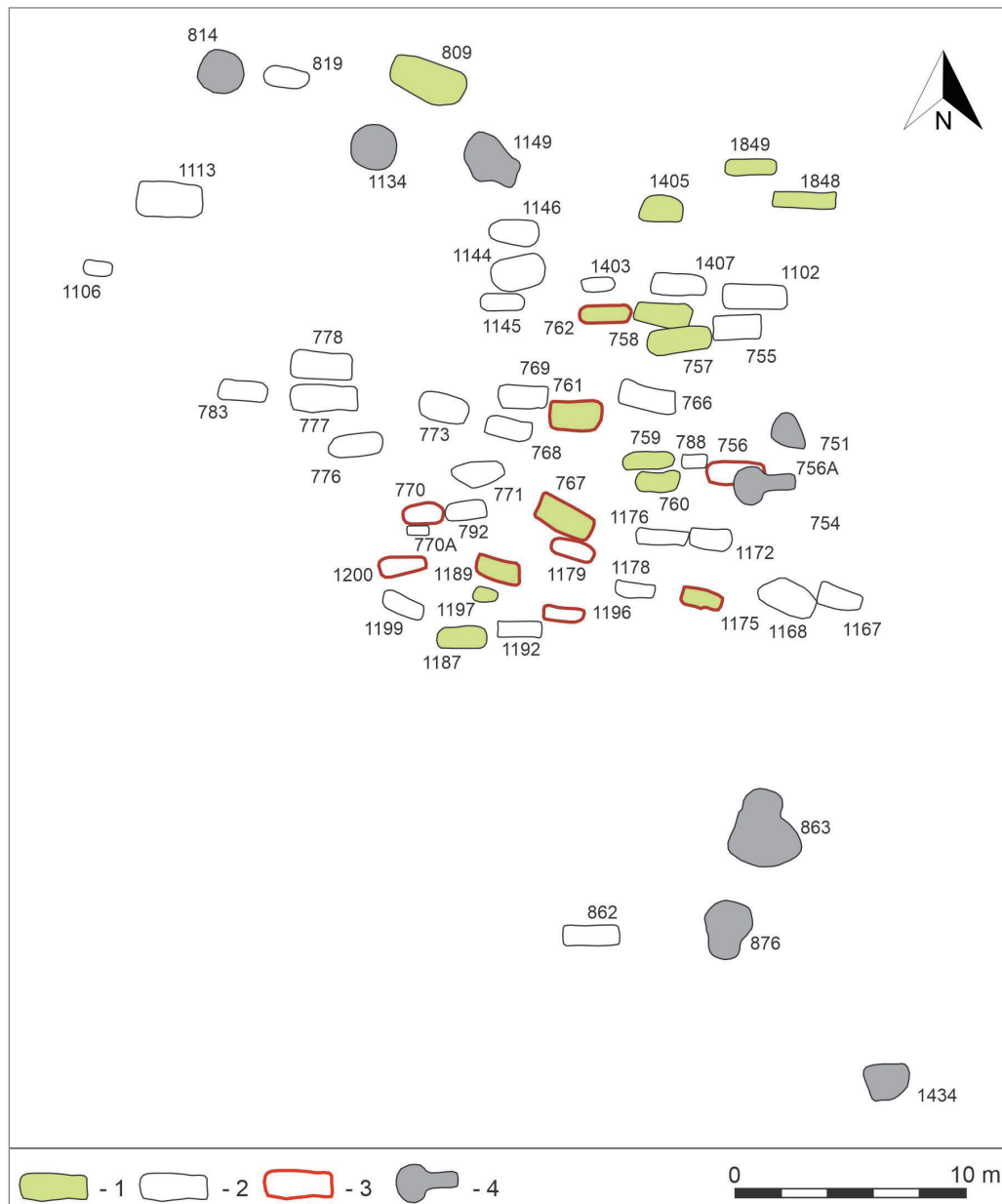


Fig. 2. Święte, site 11. Plan of the FBC cemetery with CWC graves.
1 – FBC graves with inventory; 2 – FBC graves without inventory; 3 – FBC graves with human remains;
4 – CWC graves (edited by D. Król).

tinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 767. The grave was oriented SE-NW and measured 250×114 cm, with a depth of 58 cm (Fig. 6: 1–2). The pit had a roughly rectangular shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment (Fig. 6: 1). The fill consisted of three layers: the bottom layer, approximately 10 cm thick, was composed of dark grey humic soil; the middle layer, also about 10 cm thick, consisted of light grey humic

soil mixed with loess; the uppermost layer was made up of uniform dark grey humic soil (Fig. 6: 2). No human remains were preserved. Two artefacts were recorded: a collared flask located in the eastern part of the grave, and a flint arrowhead found in the western part (Fig. 6: 1, 3–4).

Feature 768. The grave was oriented E–W with a slight deviation towards SE–NW and measured approximately 200×94 cm, with a depth of 20 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with slightly rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable

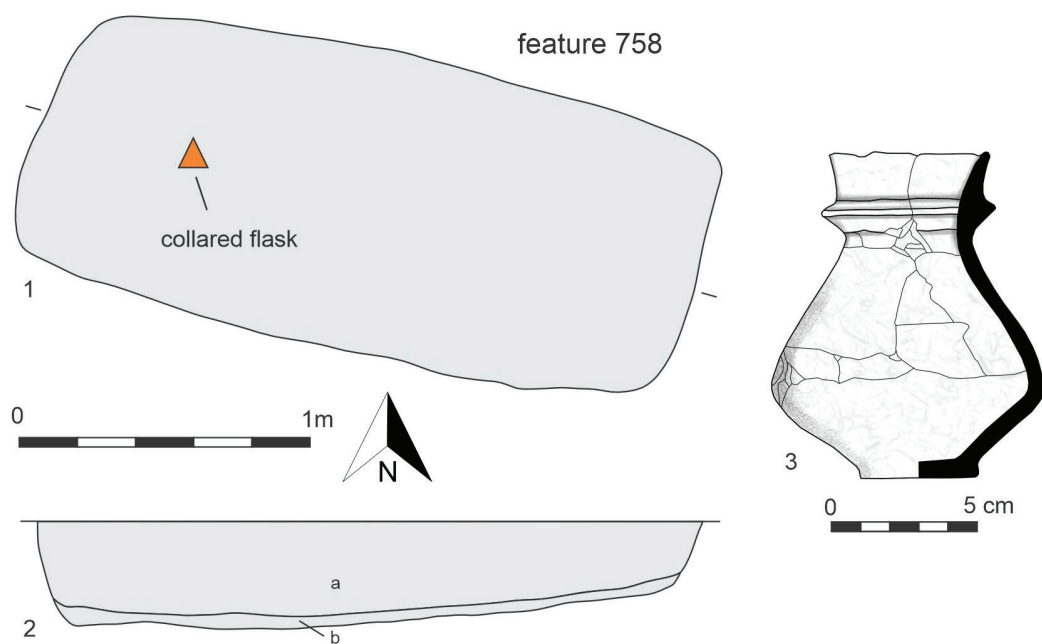


Fig. 3. Święte, site 11. Feature no. 758 and inventory.

1 – plan of the grave; 2 – cross-section of the grave; 3 – collared flask; a – light gray humic soil mixed with loess; b – dark gray humic soil (drawn by Ł. Grusiecka and A. Olszewski; redrawn by K. Orczyk).

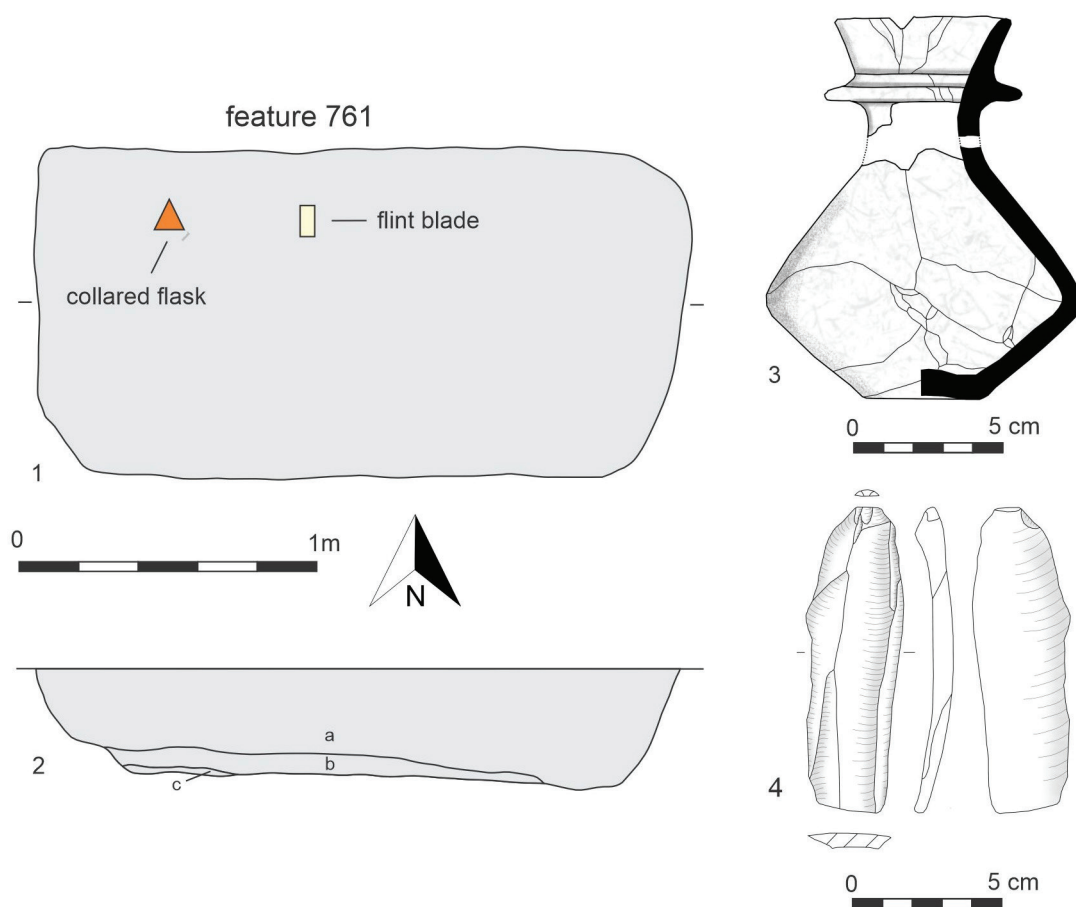


Fig. 4. Święte, site 11. Feature no. 761 and inventory.

1 – plan of the grave; 2 – cross-section of the grave; 3 – collared flask; 4 – flint blade; a – dark grey humic soil mixed with loess; b – fairly uniform loess; c – dark grey humic soil layer (drawn by Ł. Grusiecka and A. Olszewski; redrawn by K. Orczyk).

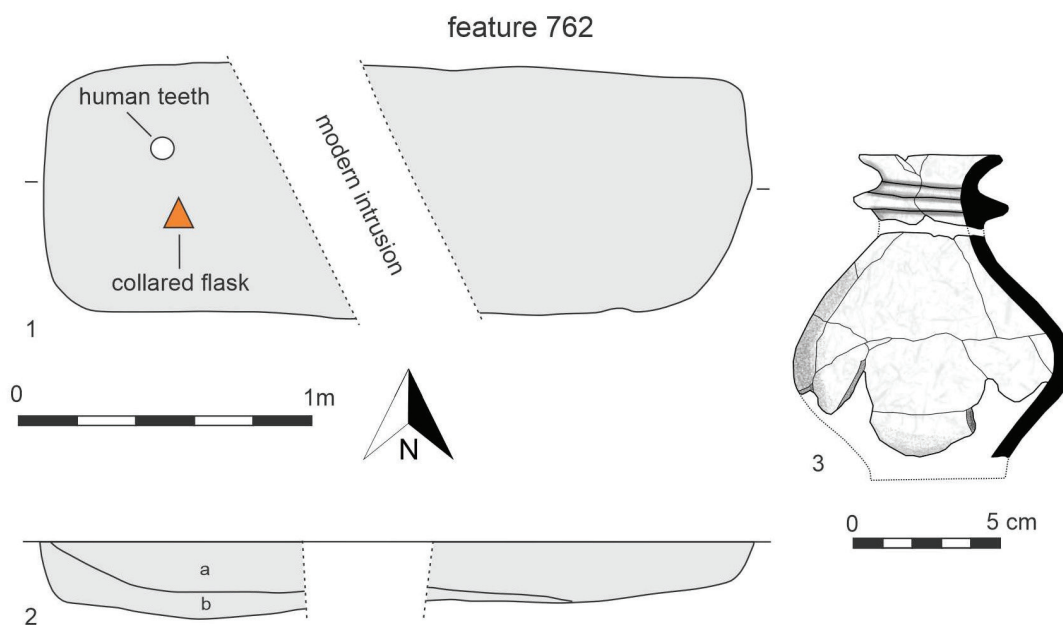


Fig. 5. Święte, site 11. Feature no. 762 and inventory.

1 – plan of the grave; 2 – cross-section of the grave; 3 – collared flask; a – grey humic soil mixed with loess; b – dark grey humic soil (drawn by Ł. Grusiecka and A. Olszewski; redrawn by K. Orczyk).

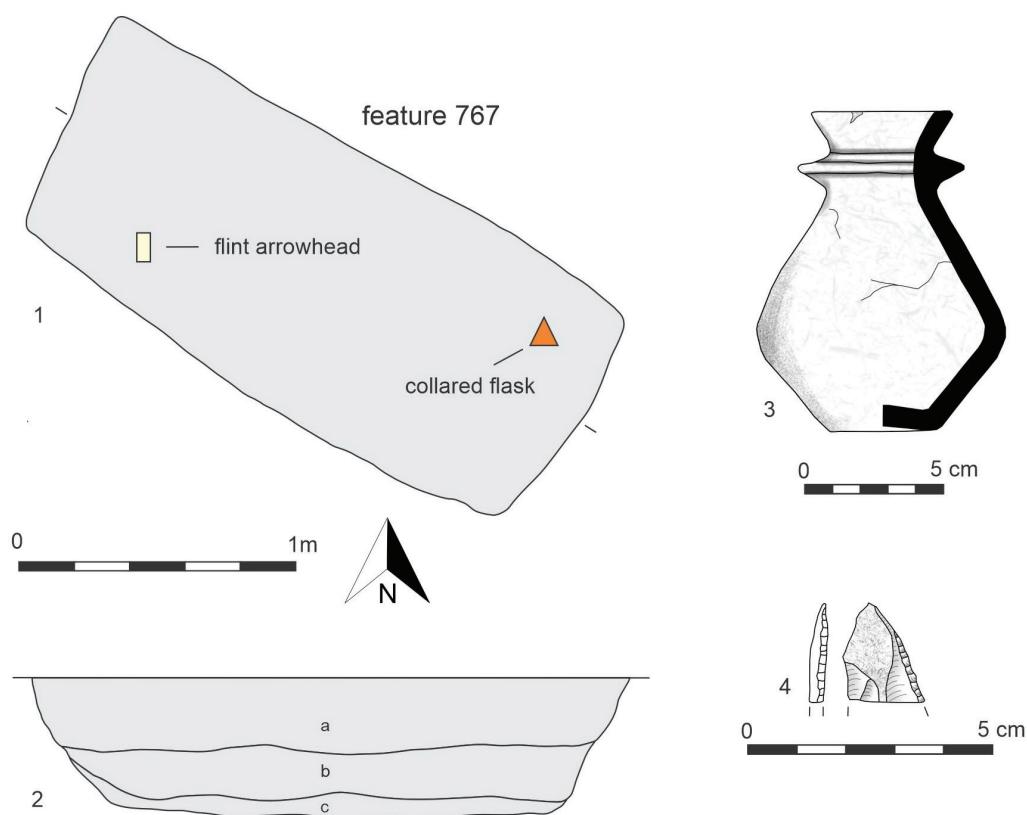


Fig. 6. Święte, site 11. Feature no. 767 and inventory.

1 – plan of the grave; 2 – cross-section of the grave; 3 – collared flask; 4 – flint arrowhead; a – dark grey humic soil; b – light grey humic soil mixed with loess; c – dark grey humic soil (drawn by Ł. Grusiecka and A. Olszewski; redrawn by K. Orczyk).

from the surrounding sediment. The western part of the grave was disturbed by a later intrusion. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 769. The grave was oriented E-W and measured approximately 200×103 cm, with a depth of 12 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with slightly rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The western part of the grave was disturbed by a later intrusion. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 770. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 170×78 cm, with a depth of 30 cm. The pit had a roughly oval shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. In the western part of the grave, human teeth were discovered, belonging to an individual of at least Infans II age category. A small flint blade made of Volhynian raw material was also found in the western part of the grave.

Feature 770A. The grave was oriented E-W and measured approximately 98×48 cm, with a depth of 24 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 771. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards NE-SW and measured approximately 254×130 cm, with a depth of 16 cm. The pit had an irregular oval shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 773. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards SE-NW and measured 222×127 cm, with a depth of 16 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 776. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards NE-SW and measured 248×104 cm, with a depth of 24 cm. The pit had a slightly oval shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey

humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 777. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 292×124 cm, with a depth of 30 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with slightly rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. In the western part of the grave, human teeth were discovered. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 778. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 268×128 cm, with a depth of 22 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with slightly rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 783. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 220×91 cm, with a depth of 19 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 788. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 140×62 cm, with a depth of 12 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with slightly rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil with inclusions of yellow loess. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 792. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards NE-SW and measured 200×88 cm, with a depth of 26 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil mixed with loess. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 809. The grave was oriented SE-NW and measured 353×191 cm, with a depth of 49 cm (Fig. 7: 1–2). The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment (Fig. 7: 1). The fill consisted of three layers: the lower layer was composed of dark grey humus, while the upper layer was dark brown in color (Fig. 7: 2). No human remains were preserved. The central section of the feature was disturbed by a modern intrusion (Fig. 7: 1–2). A flint retouched

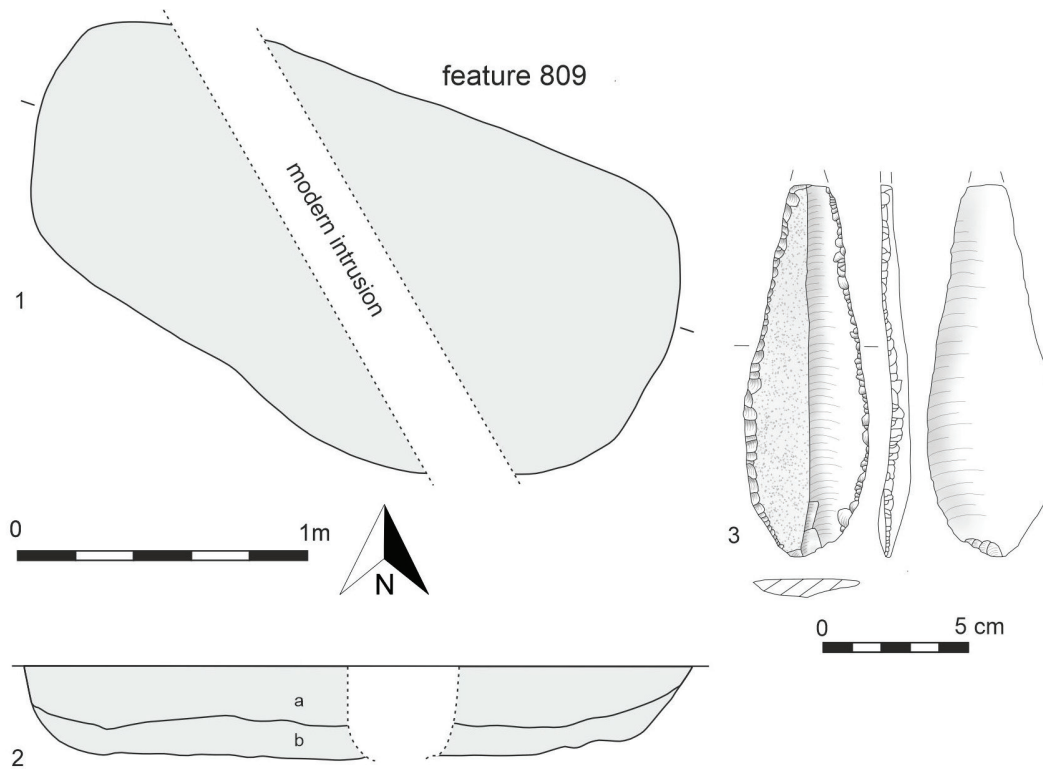


Fig. 7. Święte, site 11. Feature no. 809 and inventory.

1 – plan of the grave (unknown exact location of the inventory); 2 – cross-section of the grave; 3 – retouched flint blade; a – dark brown soil; b – dark grey humic soil (drawn by Ł. Grusiecka and A. Olszewski; redrawn by K. Orczyk).

blade made of Volhynian raw material was found in the central part of the grave (Fig. 7: 3).

Feature 819. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards SE-NW and measured 201 × 95 cm, with a depth of 18 cm. The pit had a slightly oval shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 862. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 258 × 94 cm, with a depth of 42 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1102. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 207 × 118 cm, with a depth of 21 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil mixed with loess inclusions. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1106. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards SE-NW and measured 136 × 72 cm, with a depth of 12 cm. The pit had a roughly oval shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1113. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 302 × 153 cm, with a depth of 40 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1144. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards NE-SW and measured 242 × 160 cm, with a depth of 20 cm. The pit had a roughly oval shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1145. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 190 × 88 cm, with a depth of 36 cm. The pit

had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1146. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards SE-NW and measured 238 × 110 cm, with a depth of 16 cm. The pit had a roughly oval shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1167. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards SE-NW and measured 205 × 102 cm, with a depth of 42 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1172. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 205 × 102 cm, with a depth of 42 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1175. The grave was oriented SE-NW and measured 180 × 86 cm, with a depth of 32 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of light grey humic soil, with darker grey humic soil present at the bottom. The grave pit was disturbed on the southern side by younger feature. In the north-western part of the grave, human teeth were discovered, belonging to an individual of at least Infans II age category. A small flint flake made of Volhynian raw material was also found in the central part of the grave.

Feature 1176. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 240 × 72 cm, with a depth of 26 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1178. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards SE-NW and measured 180 × 90 cm, with a depth of 12 cm. The pit had a roughly

rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1179. The grave was oriented SE-NW and measured 198 × 80 cm, with a depth of 40 cm. The pit had a roughly oval shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of light grey humic soil. In the north-western part of the grave, human teeth were discovered, belonging to an individual older than the Juvenis age category. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1187. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 218 × 98 cm, with a depth of 50 cm (Fig. 8: 1–2). The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. (Fig. 8: 1). The fill consisted of four layers: At the bottom of the feature, a layer of light grey humic soil was recorded, located in the corners of the pit. Above it, there was a layer of black humic soil, approximately 10 cm thick. The next level consisted of black humic soil mixed with loess, with a thickness of about 20 cm. The uppermost layer was composed of light grey humic soil (Fig. 8: 2). No human remains were preserved. A collared flask was found in the western part of the grave (Fig. 8: 3).

Feature 1189. The grave was oriented SE-NW and measured 206 × 98 cm, with a depth of 30 cm (Fig. 9: 1–2). The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment (Fig. 9: 1). The fill consisted of light grey humic soil (Fig. 9: 2). In the northwestern part of the grave, human teeth were discovered, belonging to an individual of at least Infans II age category (Fig. 9: 1). Two artefacts were recorded: a collared flask located in the south-eastern part of the grave, and a flint flake made of Volhynian raw material found in the same part (Fig. 9: 1, 3–4).

Feature 1192. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 200 × 172 cm, with a depth of 18 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1196. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 180 × 62 cm, with a depth of 40 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding

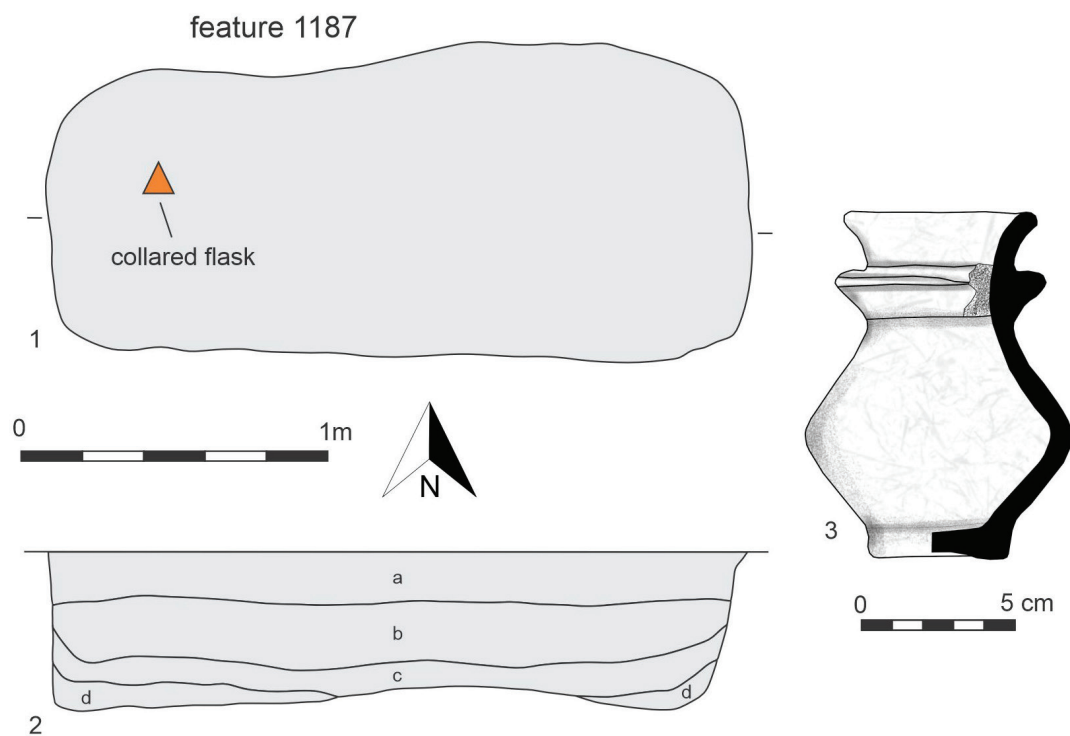


Fig. 8. Święte, site 11. Feature no. 1187 and inventory.

1 – plan of the grave; 2 – cross-section of the grave; 3 – collared flask; a – light grey humic soil; b – black humic soil mixed with loess; c – black humic soil; d – light grey humic soil (drawn by Ł. Grusiecka and A. Olszewski; redrawn by K. Orczyk).

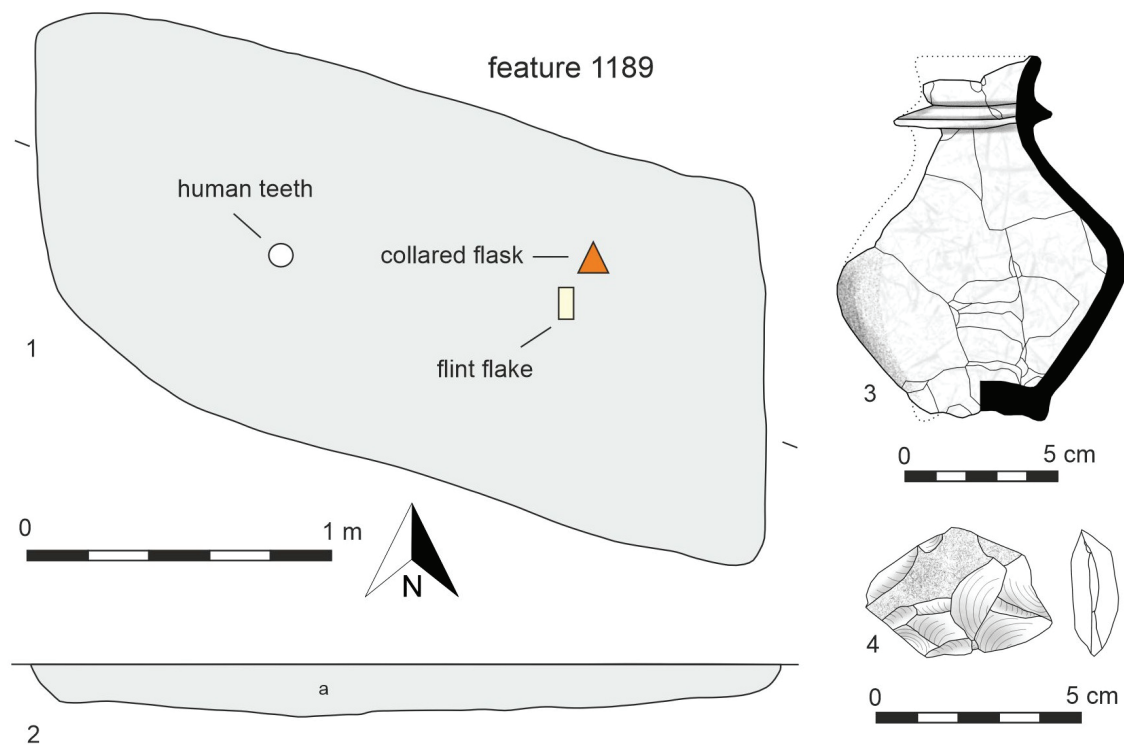


Fig. 9. Święte, site 11. Feature no. 1189 and inventory.

1 – plan of the grave; 2 – cross-section of the grave; 3 – collared flask; 4 – flint flake; a – light grey humic soil (drawn by Ł. Grusiecka and A. Olszewski; redrawn by K. Orczyk).

sediment. The fill consisted of light grey humic soil. In the western part of the grave, human teeth were discovered. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1197. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 100 × 72 cm, with a depth of 20 cm. The pit had a roughly oval shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. In the western part of the grave, human teeth were discovered. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1199. The grave was oriented SE-NW and measured 188 × 90 cm, with a depth of 16 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1200. The grave was oriented E-W with a slight deviation towards NE-SW and measured 212 × 84 cm, with a depth of 28 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with slightly rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. In the grave, human teeth were discovered, belonging to an individual of at least Infans II age category. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1403. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 154 × 72 cm, with a depth of 19 cm. The pit had a roughly oval shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark grey humic soil. The grave pit was disturbed on the western side by a 20th-century intrusion. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1405. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 203 × 124 cm, with a depth of 8 cm (Fig. 10: 1–2). The pit had an oval shape and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. (Fig. 10: 1). The fill consisted of brown humic soil (Fig. 10: 2). No human remains were preserved. A collared flask was found in the western part of the grave (Fig. 10: 1, 3).

Feature 1407. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 254 × 103 cm, with a depth of 31 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with slightly rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of grey humic soil. No human remains were preserved. No grave goods were recorded.

Feature 1848. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 260 × 61 cm, with a depth of 10 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with slightly rounded corners and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark brown soil

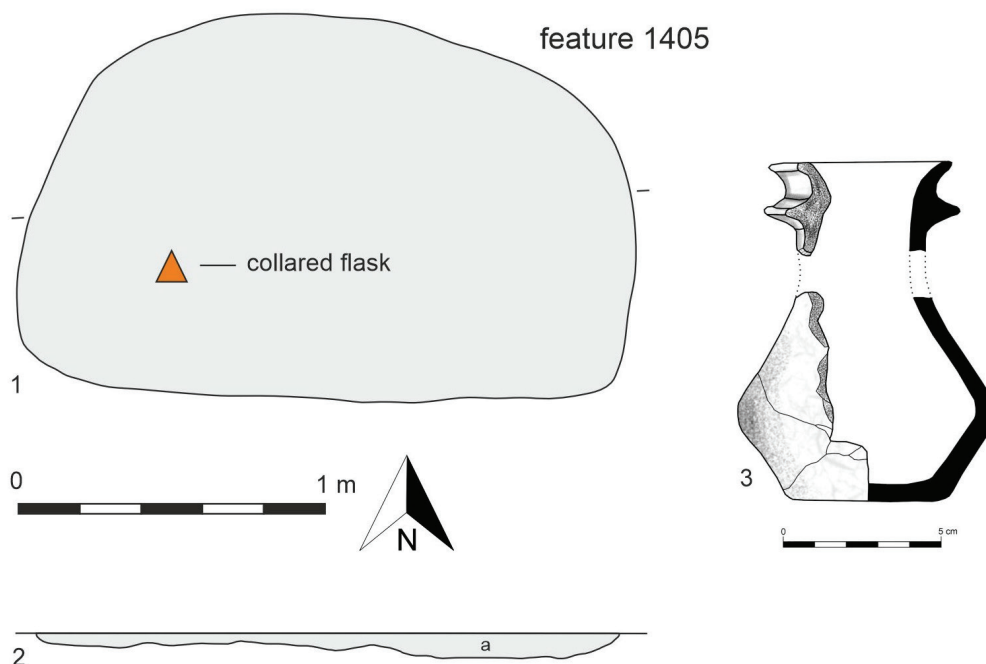


Fig. 10. Święte, site 11. Feature no. 1405 and inventory.

1 – plan of the grave; 2 – cross-section of the grave; 3 – collared flask; a – brown humic soil (drawn by Ł. Grusiecka and A. Olszewski; redrawn by K. Orczyk).

mixed with loess. No human remains were preserved. A whetstones made of sandstone was found in grave.

Feature 1849. The grave was oriented E-W and measured 230 x 72 cm, with a depth of 14 cm. The pit had a roughly rectangular shape with slightly rounded and was clearly distinguishable from the surrounding sediment. The fill consisted of dark brown soil mixed with loess. No human remains were preserved. A whetstones made of sandstone was found in grave.

4. Analysis of graves

4.1. Morphometric characteristics

At Świąte, site 11 a total of 49 burial features were identified. The vast majority of the graves (82%) were generally oriented along an east-west axis. Among them, 28 features (57.1%) were aligned precisely along this axis, while 15 exhibited varying degrees of deviation toward a southeast-northwest or northeast-southwest orientation (Fig. 2). The first group is represented, among others, by graves nos. 761 (Fig. 4: 1), 762 (Fig. 5: 1), 770, 1187 (Fig. 8: 1), 1196, 1405 (Fig. 10: 1), 1848, and 1849. Features exhibiting a deviated orientation include, for instance, nos. 758 and 1200 (Fig. 2, 3). Several graves were oriented directly along the southeast-northwest axis, such as nos. 767 and 1189 (Fig. 9), whereas none were aligned along the northeast-southwest axis (Fig. 2).

In terms of dimensions, the lengths of the burial pits ranged from 98 cm (no. 770A) to 353 cm (no. 809; Fig. 7: 1–2), with most features falling within 200–260 cm. Widths varied from 61 cm (no. 1848) to 191 cm (no. 809; Fig. 7: 1–2), with an average width of approximately 100–110 cm. Depths exhibited substantial variability: the shallowest pit measured 8 cm (no. 1405), while the deepest reached 58 cm (no. 767; Fig. 6: 1–2). The majority of the burial pits had depths within the 20–40 cm interval.

Morphologically, pit forms approximating rectangles with variably rounded corners predominated (85%). This configuration was recorded, among others, in graves nos. 755–757, 759, 761 (Fig. 4: 1), 762 (Fig. 5: 1), 766–770A, 773, 776–778, 783, 792, 809 (Fig. 7: 1), 819, 862, 1102, 1113, 1145, 1146, 1167, 1172, 1175, 1176, 1178, 1187 (Fig. 8: 1), 1189 (Fig. 9: 1), 1192, 1196, 1199, 1200, 1407, 1848, and 1849. Oval-shaped pits were identified in graves nos. 770, 771, 1106, 1144, 1179, 1403, and 1405 (Fig. 10: 1). Several features also exhibited minor concavities (e.g., no. 766, which presented an indentation of the northern

wall). In all instances, the grave cuts were clearly distinguishable from the surrounding loess background.

The characteristics of the grave fills exhibit a high degree of overall homogeneity, with localized microstratigraphic variability. Multilayered fills – comprising more than one sedimentary layer – were recorded in six graves, accounting for approximately 13% of all features. The most commonly encountered form was a dark grey, humus-rich soil with a uniform structure, which constituted the primary infill in over 80% of cases.

4.2. Anthropological remains

The preservation of human remains at the FBC cemetery is generally poor. Out of 49 documented graves, 11 contained preserved or identifiable anthropological material (Fig. 2), primarily in the form of isolated teeth or small, non-diagnostic bone fragments, e.g., graves nos. 756, 761, 762 (Fig. 5: 1), 770, 777, 1175, 1179, 1189 (Fig. 9: 1), 1196, 1197, and 1200. The remaining graves yielded no skeletal remains.

The preserved material allows for a limited assessment of age categories. Most identifiable individuals belong to the *Infans II* category (graves nos. 762, 770, 1175, 1189, 1200), and one individual is older than the *Juvenis* category (grave no. 1179). Some graves show evidence of modern disturbances, for instance nos. 756, 762 (Fig. 5: 1–2), and 809 (Fig. 7: 1–2).

4.3. Grave goods

Grave inventories at Świąte, site 11 were relatively modest. Ceramics were primarily represented by collared flasks, found in graves nos. 758 (Fig. 3: 3), 761 (Fig. 4: 3), 762 (Fig. 5: 3), 767 (Fig. 6: 3), 1187 (Fig. 8: 3), 1189 (Fig. 9: 3), and 1405 (Fig. 10: 3). These vessels differed slightly in their proportions. Their height ranged from 9.6 to 11.7 cm; rim diameter measured 5.1–5.8 cm, body diameter 8.9–10.3 cm, and base diameter 3.9–4.1 cm. Some vessels were strongly profiled, with a distinct inflection at the point of maximum body diameter, a feature particularly well visible in the specimen from grave no. 761 (Fig. 4: 3). In one case (grave no. 1189), the presence of characteristic small footmarks on the vessel base was observed (Fig. 9: 3). Collared flasks were typically located in the western part of the graves.

Lithic artefacts include flint flakes, blades and retouched blades made from Volhynian raw material were found in graves nos. 757, 759, 760, 761 (Fig. 4: 4), 770, 809 (Fig. 7: 3), 1175, and 1189 (Fig. 9: 4). One grave (no. 767) contained a flint arrowhead (Fig. 6: 4).

Sandstone whetstones were documented in graves nos. 1848 and 1849.

Most graves contained a single vessel or a single lithic artefact. Graves with multiple or more complex assemblages are rare, primarily represented by graves nos. 758, 761, 767, and 1189, which contained both a ceramic vessel (collared flask) and several lithic items – including blades, flakes, or an arrowhead – distinguishing them from the majority of graves that contained only a single artefact (Fig. 3: 3–4; 4: 3–4; 9: 3–4).

4.4. Spatial organization

The distribution of FBC graves at the Święte, site 11 cemetery reveals a complex pattern, clearly visible on the density map generated in a GIS environment using Kernel Density Estimation (KDE) and the Delaunay Triangulation functions (DT) (Fig. 11). The dominant feature of the site is a central concentration of burials extending along a southwest-northeast axis. Within this concentration, three compact clusters and one transitional zone can be distinguished (Fig. 11).

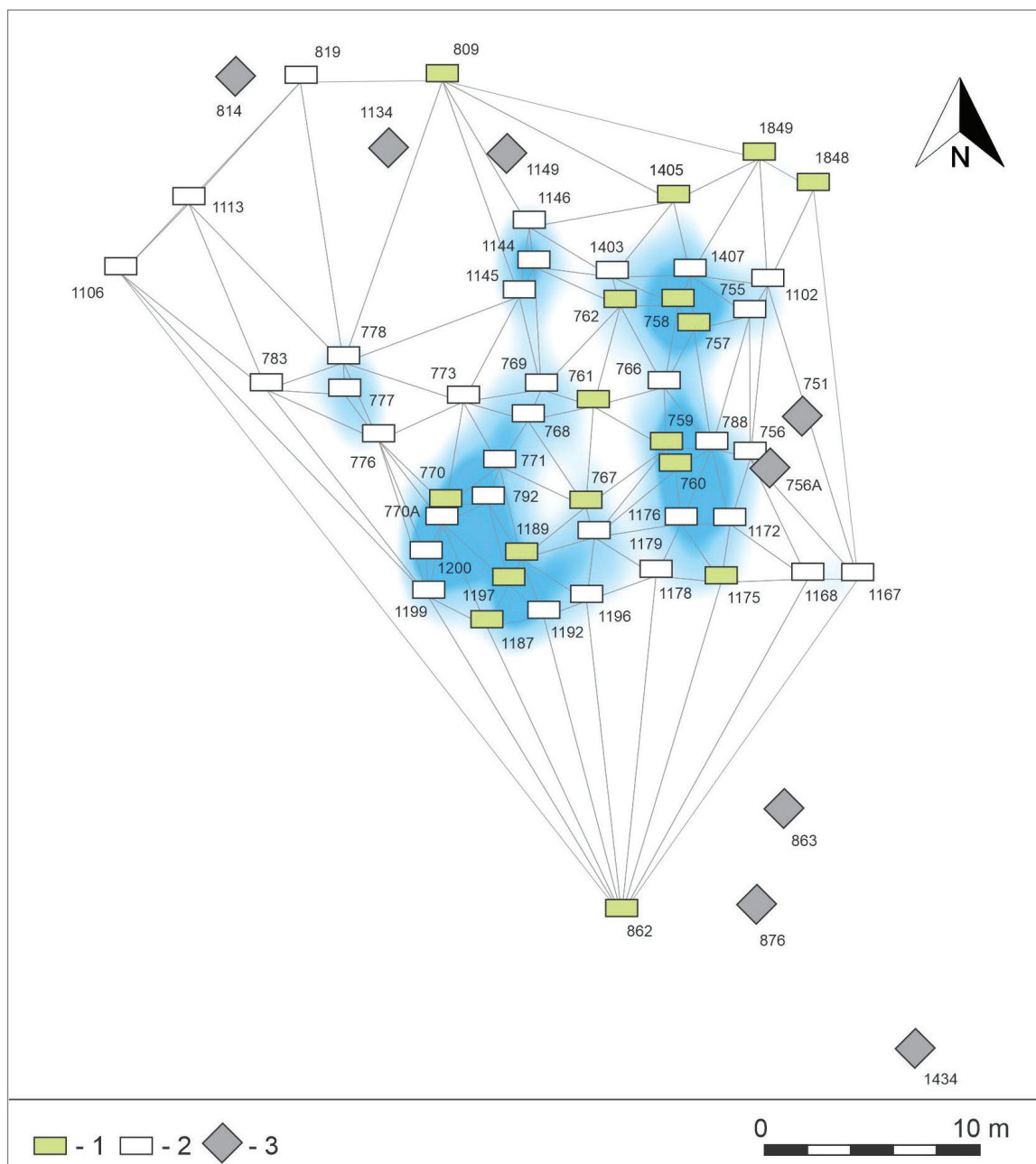


Fig. 11. Święte, site 11. KDE and TD analysis of the FBC graves distribution.
1 – FBC graves with inventory; 2 – FBC graves without inventory; 3 – FBC graves with human remains;
4 – CWC graves (edited by D. Król).

The first cluster, located in the southwestern part of the site, includes graves nos. 770, 770A, 792, 1189, 1196, 1197, 1192, and 1200. This cluster displays the highest density on the map and forms the core of the cemetery. To its northeast lies an elongated transitional zone centered around graves nos. 769, 771, 781, 761, 762, and 767. This zone links the southwestern cluster with the eastern part of the cemetery and is less compact than the other concentrations.

In the southeastern sector, a second distinct cluster is formed by graves nos. 755, 756, 758, 759, and 760 (Fig. 11). On the density map it appears as a separate maximum, clearly differentiated from the transitional zone. Another, smaller cluster is situated in the northeastern part of the site, comprising graves nos. 768, 1407, and 1102. Despite the smaller number of features, its isolated character is clearly marked on the heatmap (Fig. 11).

Beyond the central complex, peripheral burials occur in areas of low density (Fig. 11). In the northwestern part of the site these include graves 1106, 1113, 783, and 778. In the southeastern sector, graves nos. 1175, 1178, 1179, and 1167 are present, while in the southern zone a single, isolated burial (no. 862) was recorded. On the northeastern periphery two further graves (nos. 1848 and 1849) were documented.

Equipped graves occur both within the main clusters and on the margins of the cemetery (Fig. 2, 11). In the southwestern cluster, they include graves nos. 770, 1189, and 1200; in the transitional zone – nos. 761, 762, and 767; in the southeastern cluster – nos. 758, 759, and 760; and in the northeastern cluster – nos. 768 and 1405. On the periphery, equipped graves also appear in features nos. 1848, 1849, and 809.

The majority of the assemblage consists of unequipped burials (Fig. 2, 11), which fill the main clusters and form their background. In some areas they occur in short alignments, such as the sequence nos. 1144-1145-1146-1403 in the northeastern part of the site. On the periphery they appear singly or in small, dispersed groups.

In summary, the FBC cemetery at Święte, site 11 is characterized by a central complex composed of three compact clusters (southwestern, southeastern, and northeastern) and one transitional zone (around grave no. 769), complemented by looser peripheral burials (Fig. 11). No stratigraphic relationships between the FBC graves were observed, indicating that there was a clear awareness of the locations of earlier burials when constructing subsequent ones.

4.4.1. Relations between FBC and CWC graves

More than ten CWC graves were recorded at the site (Olszewski and Włodarczak 2018). With the exception of two clearly separated features, the majority were dug in direct association with the FBC cemetery (Fig. 2, 11; Olszewski and Włodarczak 2018). The CWC burial features were located in the northern (nos. 809, 914, and 819) and southern parts (nos. 862, 863, and 876) of the earlier Eneolithic burial ground, effectively on the margins of the dense central concentration of FBC graves (Fig. 11). The only stratigraphic overlap between the two cultural groups was observed in the case of feature no. 756 (Fig. 2). The eastern part of this FBC grave was cut by a niche grave (no. 756A) associated with the CWC (Olszewski and Włodarczak 2018, 13).

5. Discussion

Considering the number of graves, the FBC cemetery at Święte, site 11 belongs to the largest known in the eastern and southeastern zone of the FBC (Król 2021). As emphasized in the Introduction, no direct traces of monumental structures – such as foundation ditches or postholes that would clearly indicate long barrows – were recorded at this site (Fig. 2). At first glance, this might encourage its interpretation as a non-monumental funerary space. Indeed, varied spatial arrangements of FBC graves not accompanied by monumental features are frequently regarded as flat cemeteries, in contrast to monumental (“megalthic”) ones. Examples of such flat burial grounds, where no traces of long barrows – whether with stone kerbs or timber frames – have been identified, are numerous. In the Polish Lowlands (particularly Kujawy), these include Czamaninek, site 2A; Sarnowo, site 1A (cf. Kapica 1986); Stary Brześć, site 1 (Jażdżewski 1936; Grygiel 2016); Pikutkowo, site 5 (Grygiel 2016); and Popowice, site 3 (Cofta-Broniewska and Koško 1982). From southeastern Poland, Łubcze, site 25 (Bagińska 2006) and Wojciechowice, site 1 (Bąbel 2000) may be cited. The question therefore arises: does the absence of material remains of long barrows at Święte, site 11 truly constitute evidence of their original absence?

When examining the funerary landscape of the loess uplands and plateaus of southeastern Poland in the 4th millennium BC, one cannot fail to notice numerous “complete” FBC cemeteries. These were characterized by the presence of different types of long barrows – sometimes constructed with timber frames,

in other cases with stone settings – accompanied by burials placed both within these monuments and outside them. This is well illustrated, for instance, by the cemeteries at Karmanowice, site 35 (Nogaj-Chachaj 1987; 1989; 1990; 1996; 2001); Malice Kościelne, site 1 (Bargieł and Florek 2006a); Pawłów, site 3 (Bargieł and Florek 2006b); and Słonowice, site 5 (Tunia 2006; Przybyła and Tunia 2013), as well as by the geographically closest cemeteries at Skołoszów, site 7 (Król *et al.* 2012; 2014a; Cwaliński *et al.* 2017; cf. Król and Sznajdrowska-Pondel 2022) and Szczytina, site 6 (Król *et al.*

2014b; cf. Olszewski and Włodarczak 2018; Król and Sznajdrowska-Pondel 2022). Despite morphological differences in the construction of these long barrows, the overall spatial organization of the cemeteries tends to be broadly comparable (Król 2021).

Highlighting the considerable diversity of long barrows in the southeastern zone of the FBC is particularly important. Apart from those whose main structural component was a stone frame traces of many monuments originally built with biodegradable wooden elements have also survived into modern

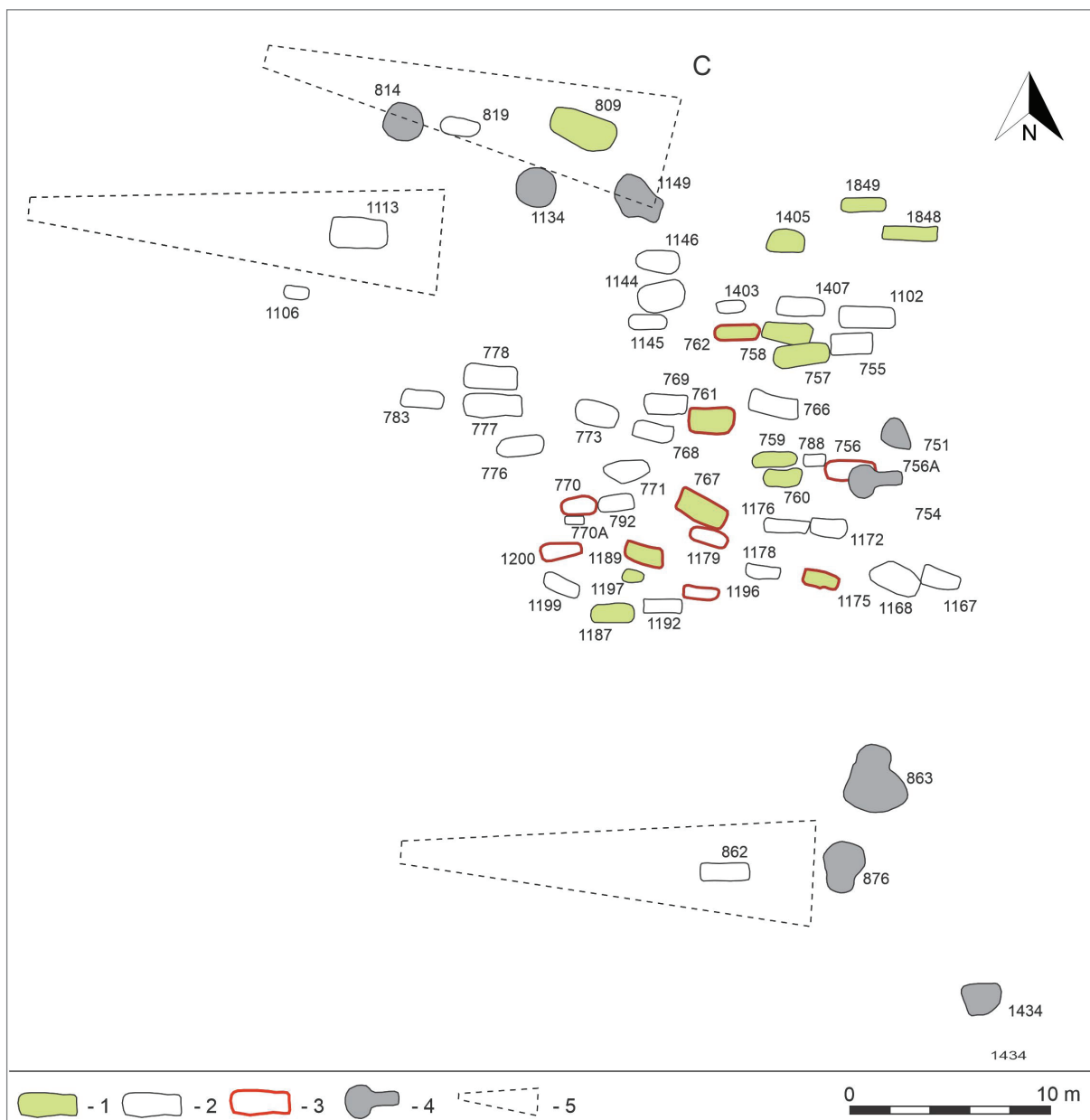


Fig. 12. Święte, site 11. Plan of the FBC cemetery with CWC graves.

1 – FBC graves with inventory; 2 – FBC graves without inventory; 3 – FBC graves with human remains; 4 – CWC graves; 5 – putative FBC long barrows (edited by D. Król).

times. As field studies have shown, these timber constructions were themselves highly diverse (Rzepecki 2011; Król 2011; 2021; Jarosz *et al.* 2020). The cemetery at Słonowice, site 5, provides an excellent example: alongside “classic” timber long barrows, some over 100 m long and attested by clear foundation ditches with postholes, researchers also uncovered less conspicuous, “reduced” forms (Przybyła and Tunia 2013). The most extreme examples of such reduction are long barrows nos. 9 and 10, where only rectangular features marking the line of their front sections survived (Przybyła and Tunia 2013). Similar “simplified” monuments have also been documented at Malżyce, sites 30 and 31 (Jarosz *et al.* 2013a; 2013b), Ostrów (Jarosz *et al.* 2020), Czaple Wielkie, site 14, and Giebułtów, site 15 (unpublished research by M. M. Przybyła). According to some scholars, such constructions (referred to as the Malżyce type) may represent a younger horizon of monuments within the southeastern FBC (Jarosz *et al.* 2020, 329).

How might these observations apply to the Święte, site 11 cemetery? In contrast to the reduced long barrows at Słonowice, site 5 (Przybyła and Tunia 2013), or the enigmatic structures at the nearby site of Szczytna, site 6 (Król and Sznajdrowska-Pondel 2022), no features have been identified at Święte that would even hint at the presence of frontal wall of long barrows (Fig. 2). Still, could indirect evidence suggest their former existence?

Numerous examples demonstrate that CWC graves were frequently established in the areas of earlier FBC long barrows (Włodarczak 2006, 48–50). Such practices are attested at several multicultural sites in the Kraków-Sandomierz loess region, including Malice Kościelne, site 1 (Bargieł and Florek 2006a), and Zagaje Stradowski, site “Mogiła Stradowska” (Burchard 1998; 2006). Comparable sequences have also been recorded in the Subcarpathian Loess Region, at Szczytna, site 6, and Skołoszów, site 7 (Król *et al.* 2012; 2014a; 2014b; cf. Olszewski and Włodarczak 2018; Król and Sznajdrowska-Pondel 2022). By analogy, this raises the possibility that FBC long barrows once existed at Święte, site 11 as well (cf. Olszewski and Włodarczak 2018; Król and Sznajdrowska-Pondel 2022).

Within the FBC cemetery at Święte, site 11, several CWC graves were documented, most of them situated on the northern and southern margins (Fig. 2). With the exception of two burial features (nos. 751 and 751A), their distribution corresponds spatially with the isolated FBC graves. This encourages the cautious

suggestion that hypothetical “hidden” monuments may have existed precisely in association with those burials lying apart from the compact central cluster (Fig. 12). Grave no. 862 provides a telling example: situated on the eastern margin of the cemetery, with three CWC burial features immediately to its east, it may once have lain beneath a long barrow (Fig. 12) that subsequently became a landmark for CWC activity (cf. Król and Sznajdrowska-Pondel 2022). A similarly tentative interpretation might be applied to FBC graves nos. 809 and 1113, which could represent central burials of larger monumental structures (Fig. 12). By contrast, the location of long barrows over the dense concentration of central FBC graves appears less likely.

To sum up, the absence of direct evidence for FBC long barrows at Święte, site 11 should not be regarded as proof of their original absence. On the contrary, the spatial pattern of the graves, their relationship with CWC burial features, and parallels from other FBC cemeteries in the region suggest that monumental constructions may originally have been present within this burial ground, although their material traces have not survived (Fig. 2). It also seems that CWC communities were aware of the older funerary landscape and deliberately referenced it, thereby perpetuating its symbolic significance.

6. Conclusion

Święte, site 11 is among the largest FBC cemeteries in the eastern and southeastern zones of the FBC. A total of 49 graves were recorded, most of them oriented along an east-west axis (Fig. 2). The burial pits were generally homogeneous in form and fill. Human remains were poorly preserved – only in some features was it possible to identify material (mainly teeth) suitable for anthropological assessment. Grave inventories were modest, usually limited to a single ceramic vessel (a collared flask) or a flint artefact; only in a few cases were richer assemblages recorded (Fig. 4: 3–4; 6: 3–4; 9: 3–4). Spatial analyses using KDE and DT revealed the presence of a central concentration of graves, divided into three compact clusters and a transitional zone, complemented by looser peripheral burials (Fig. 12). The avoidance of overlapping grave cuts seems to indicate a strong awareness of the locations of earlier burials and an orderly use of the cemetery.

Despite the lack of direct traces of long-barrow constructions, the spatial arrangement of graves and analogies to nearby cemeteries – such as Skołoszów, site 7, and Szczytna, site 6 – suggest that such struc-

tures may once have existed at Święte, site 11 (perhaps in a reduced, Malżyce-type form) but have not survived to the present (Fig. 12). The spatial relationships between CWC graves and FBC burial features further strengthen the hypothesis of the long-term symbolic significance of this place and of a conscious reference by later communities to the earlier funerary landscape.

The cemetery at Święte, site 11 should therefore not be regarded simply as a flat burial ground, but rather as a complex sepulchral space in which the material traces of monumental elements may have been completely erased. The analysis of this site is thus not only important for understanding the funerary rituals of FBC communities in the Subcarpathian Loess Region, but also has broader significance for studies of the formation and transformation of Eneolithic funerary landscapes in this part of Europe during the 4th and 3rd millennia BC.

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