

THE ANNULAR RING FORMS IN FEMALE FASHION IN THE EAST CELTIC REGION AND ITS IMPACT IN THE WEST CELTIC AND CISALPINE AREAS

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Riassunto. *Lo studio degli insiemi di parure annulare (così dette Ringgarnituren) sulle necropoli piatte celtiche può far risalire tratti particolari o specifici delle società del passato la cui esegesi univoca è al di là delle nostre capacità interpretative. È questo il caso del "costume" costituito da soli anelli da cavaglia.*

Il centro di ripartizione di questo costume particolare sembra trovarsi nella zone mediodanubiana dove compare già a LT B1 e perdura sino al momento in cui si smette di seppellire nelle necropoli celtiche piatte. La presenza di questo costume anche nella zona occidentale del mondo celtico fece sorgere una teoria secondo la quale i celti fossero all'inizio di LT C1 parzialmente tornati lungo il Danubio dall'oriente in occidente.

Interessante in questo riguardo la Transpadana, territorio degli Insubri. Cinque defunti sepolti nella necropoli di Domeletto sono stati, in fatti, sepoliti proprio con questo costume della parure annulare non caratteristico di questa regione. La parure stessa – di produzione locale pur di lontana discendenza transalpina – non suffraga però le teorie d'influenza diretta dell'ambiente celtico orientale lungo il corso di Danubio dimostrato invece nelle necropoli della keltiké occidentale.

I contatti tra il territorio storico degli Insubri ed il territorio a nord delle Alpi – e in maniera indiretta anche con la regione mediodanubiana – sembrano quindi nel LT C1 documentati anche grazie alla parure annulare costituita esclusivamente da anelli da cavaglia.

Résumé. *L'étude des objets de parure annulaires des sépultures celtiques en tombes plates met en lumière des particularités et spécificités sociales qui échappent à une interprétation claire. C'est le cas des parures constituées uniquement d'anneaux de cheville. Il semble que le foyer d'origine de cette parure particulière se situe dans la zone du moyen Danube, où elle apparaît dès la phase LT B1 et subsiste jusqu'à la fin du mode d'inhumation en tombe plate. Sa présence dans les environs du Danube occidental vient confirmer l'hypothèse ancienne d'une incursion des Celtes le long du Danube, en direction de l'est, au début de la phase LT C1.*

La région de Transpadane est intéressante à cet égard car, d'après les sources historiques, elle est identifiée comme le territoire de la tribu des Insubres. C'est dans ce contexte que s'inscrit la nécropole de Dormelleto, dont cinq sépultures renferment des individus porteurs d'une parure annulaire inhabituelle pour cette région : ces objets, probablement issus d'une production locale, elle-même peut-être basée sur des traditions transalpines plus anciennes, ne confirment pas pour autant que l'on a affaire là à un témoignage direct de l'influence des Celtes de l'Est sur les sépultures des Celtes de l'Ouest.

Il apparaît du moins que des contacts entre le territoire historique des Insubres et les territoires localisés au nord des Alpes et, peut-être plus indirectement, avec la région du Danube central, sont attestés par le biais des parures annulaires de cheville de LT C1.

Ring ornaments formed the prominent part of Celtic female adornment. According to the combination of different forms, materials of which they were made from and the manner in which they were worn we can distinguish various annular ring forms. Several investigators have dedicated their time to research into burial customs in the context of the analysis of so-called "Ringgarnituren" (Martin-Kilcher, 1973; Lorenz, 1978; Waldhauser, 1987; Sankot, 1980; Kruta, 1985; Charpy, 1991; Kaenel, 1990;

Müller, 1991; Heynowski, 1992; Ramsel, 2002; Baray, 2003; Bujna, 2005; Furman, 2012; Millet, 2012). The results of the analysis demonstrate regional differences in the wearing of metal accoutrements, mainly in the wearing of decorated rings which allow the identification of different social groups. According to some writers, the composition of the functional parts of the costume also reflects the age and sex of the owner.

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According to Waldhauser (1987, p. 38) specific types of the grave objects more or less correspond with sex, age and social status of the individuals. Pavel Sankot (1980, p. 39) has the same opinion in his study. According to Martin-Kilcher (1973, p. 36) the sign of so-called "Trachtstufen" is not the identification of a new form of ornament, but it is the spatial distribution and combinations of the inventory of the grave unit. Herbert Lorenz (1978, p. 219) expresses a similar opinion; he defines characteristic grave objects in specific regions of Europe, so-called "Ringgarnituren" of Celtic women, which during time were subject to change. According to Kruta (1985, p. 29) the study of annular rings helps us identify not only the social structure of society, but also helps us to distinguish ethnic groups, identify their spatial delimitation and mutual relationships. Felix Müller (1991, p. 123), analyzing women's graves from different regions of Switzerland, made the inference that combinations of decorative rings were subject to regional habits.

However, there are graves or groups of graves in every region in the territory of flat Celtic cemeteries that exhibit exceptions, peculiarities and present the possibility of various interpretations.

One of these groups is a specific heterogeneous set of graves with the annular ring form consisting only of a single pair of anklets, often associated with brooches or pottery (Furman, 2012, p. 254, fig. 2). The aim of this paper is to analyze this specific model of ring ornament which appears in different parts of the Celtic world during the period of flat cemeteries.



Fig. 1. Reconstruction of female costume from Dubnik grave 9B.

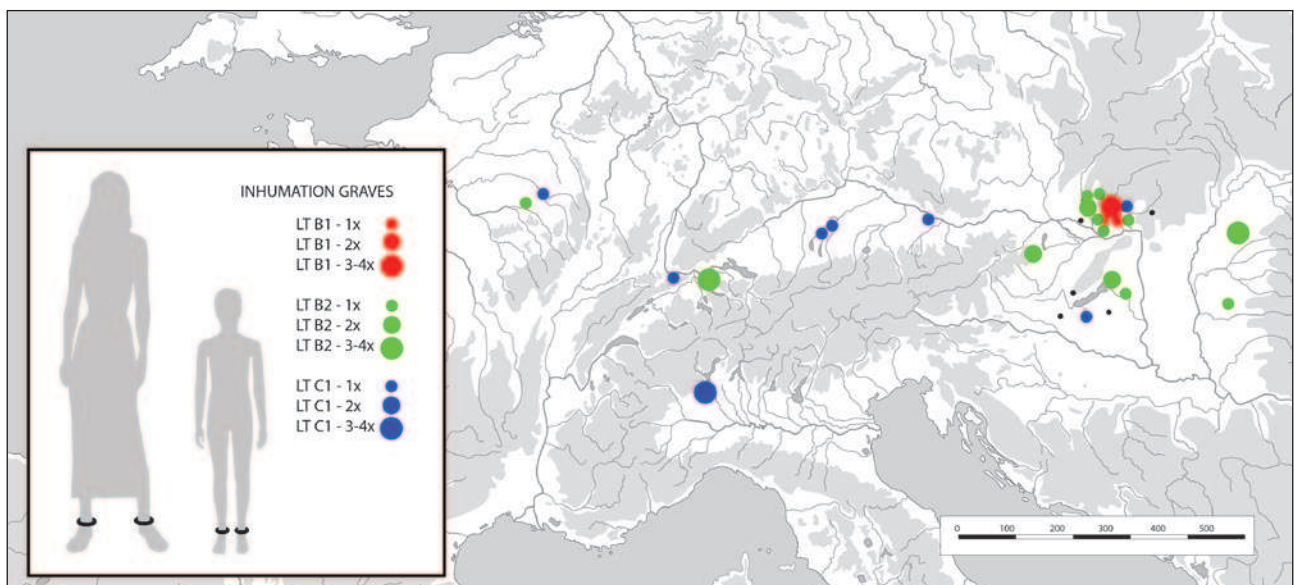


Fig. 2. Distribution of type 2 anklets.

THE PERIOD OF OCCURRENCE, SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION AND TYPOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTIC OF ANKLETS

In the study area¹, the territory of south-western Slovakia from LT B1 period seems to be a primary zone in which this type of ornament can be observed. Grave 6 from the Dubník cemetery (Bujna, 1989, p. 253-254, Abb. 9, Taf. 4) is one of the oldest of the group. Besides iron and bronze brooches and an iron belt-plaque the inventory of the grave was consisted of two plain solid anklets with fine vertical ribbing, one of them with a more massive rib at four points around the ring (fig. 3 : 1). There were also three pots as well as animal bones in the grave. The inventory indicates a date for the grave in LT B1b-c. A typical Central European annular ring, maybe the product of a workshop on south-western Slovakia, a bronze tubular sheet ring with vertical ribbing, decorated with triple protuberances, represents chronologically the second type of anklets which confirms the continuity of the model of ring ornaments formed exclusively by anklets in south-western Slovakia. Jozef Bujna (2005, p. 30, Fig. 16) distinguishes in the cemeteries of south-western Slovakia its early form - represented by anklets - with triple simple protuberances (Bujna group BR-C1, fig. 1, 3: 2) and its late form with triple profiled protuberances (BR-C4). To date we know nine graves from south-western Slovakia and two graves from Mannersdorf a. d. Leitha with this kind of anklet which belongs to this form (table 1). While simpler variants of anklets with triple protuberances begin to appear already early in the LT B1 period, the late group continues onto the transitional LT B2/C1 period. From the beginning of LT B2 a similar form of bronze tubular sheet anklets with transverse ribs appears (see Bujna, 2005, p. 31-32, fig. 18, 19: groups BR-C2 and BR-C3; fig. 3 : 3, 4). Their appearance is concentrated in Hungary and Romania, but they appear also in south-western Slovakia. The graves with knobbed rings belong to the latest inhumation graves with ring forms represented only by anklets (table 1, fig. 3 : 6). However, it is probable that the actual number of the graves with the same annular ring form is higher, though the dominance of the cremated burials, typical for the late period of flat Celtic cemeteries in the Middle Danube Area, does not allow assigning them to our groups with any certainty (Furman, 2009, p. 40, tab. 12).

The annular ring form, exclusively anklets, so markedly concentrated in the Middle Danube area, appears in LT B2 and LT C1 period also in the west Celtic area and in the Transpadana region of northern Italy (fig. 2).

The fashion of wearing a pair of anklets in combination with torcs and bracelets is characteristic for Switzerland, especially its northern part. Graves 12, 23 and 25 of the Andelfingen cemetery contain annular ring

forms which consist of only two sheet tubular ribbed anklets (Bujna group BR-C2/BR-C3; fig. 3 : 4) and clearly represent a local feature. This kind of anklet belongs to a later phase of LT B2 period.

From the north-eastern France we know two graves from our sample, which both from their inventory and the disposition of the body fit the Central European pattern. Grave 6 from Pogny contained besides several brooches, metallic belt and ceramic anklets from the group of knobbed rings (Bujna, 2005, p. 47: type BR-F). Venceslas Kruta (1985, p. 31) sees in the inventory of the graves from Pogny influence from the Danube area. The presence of ornaments, exclusively anklets confirms this opinion. The Pogny grave is dated to the mid-third century BC or the beginning of LT C1. The grave 10 from Pleurs belongs to the same period and its inventory is formed solely by bronze ribbed anklets with buffers (Kruta, 1985, p. 39).

A spatial distribution of the annular ring form includes the territory of the northern Italy. Dormelletto is a very interesting burial ground in the territory of the historically documented tribe of the Insubres. The uniqueness of the locality consists not only in that it marks the oldest evidence of inhumation graves in this community, but also in an unusual annular ring form of burial. Graves 11 and 72 contain the combination of anklets and bracelet on the left arm, according to Kruta (2000, p. 687, fig. 103) a typical costume for the Insubres, and five graves (24, 41, 80, 89 and 130) contained only anklets of annular ring form. According to Spagnolo Garzoli (2009, p. 25, fig. 8) all these graves belong to the LT C1 period. The typological range of anklets in the cemetery is represented by four groups of rings, two of them – type 1 and 4 belong to the Transalpine form (Fábry, 2008, p. 129, fig. 2). Type 1 – a ribbon anklet beaded with markedly moulded terminals, represented in grave 24 (fig. 3 : 5) — probably has its origin in the old tradition of western Celtic plain solid rings of rounded section with buffers, beaded or ribbed, or with V-shaped decoration (see for example Millet, 2012, p. 431, fig. 6). However, the anklets from the grave 24 represent a different typological group of rings – a ribbon one which in LT C1 period has analogies neither in western Celtic nor in eastern Celtic area. The ribbon rings with buffers are known also from south-western Slovakia. It relates to an earlier type of bracelet dated to the early LT B1 period (Bujna, 2005, p. 78, tab. 42, Obr. 62). The anklets from grave 24 therefore probably can be regarded as local products. The similar technological process of production of extended oval beads and buffers can be compared to all four types of anklets found in the burial ground of Dormelletto, types 2 and 3 in graves 41, 80, 89 and 130 belong, according to Fábry (2008, p. 129, fig. 2), to North Alpine forms of rings. This evidence leads us to conclude that all four groups of anklets belong to local forms, inspired maybe by older Transalpine traditions.

1. West Celtic, east Celtic and Cisalpine areas.

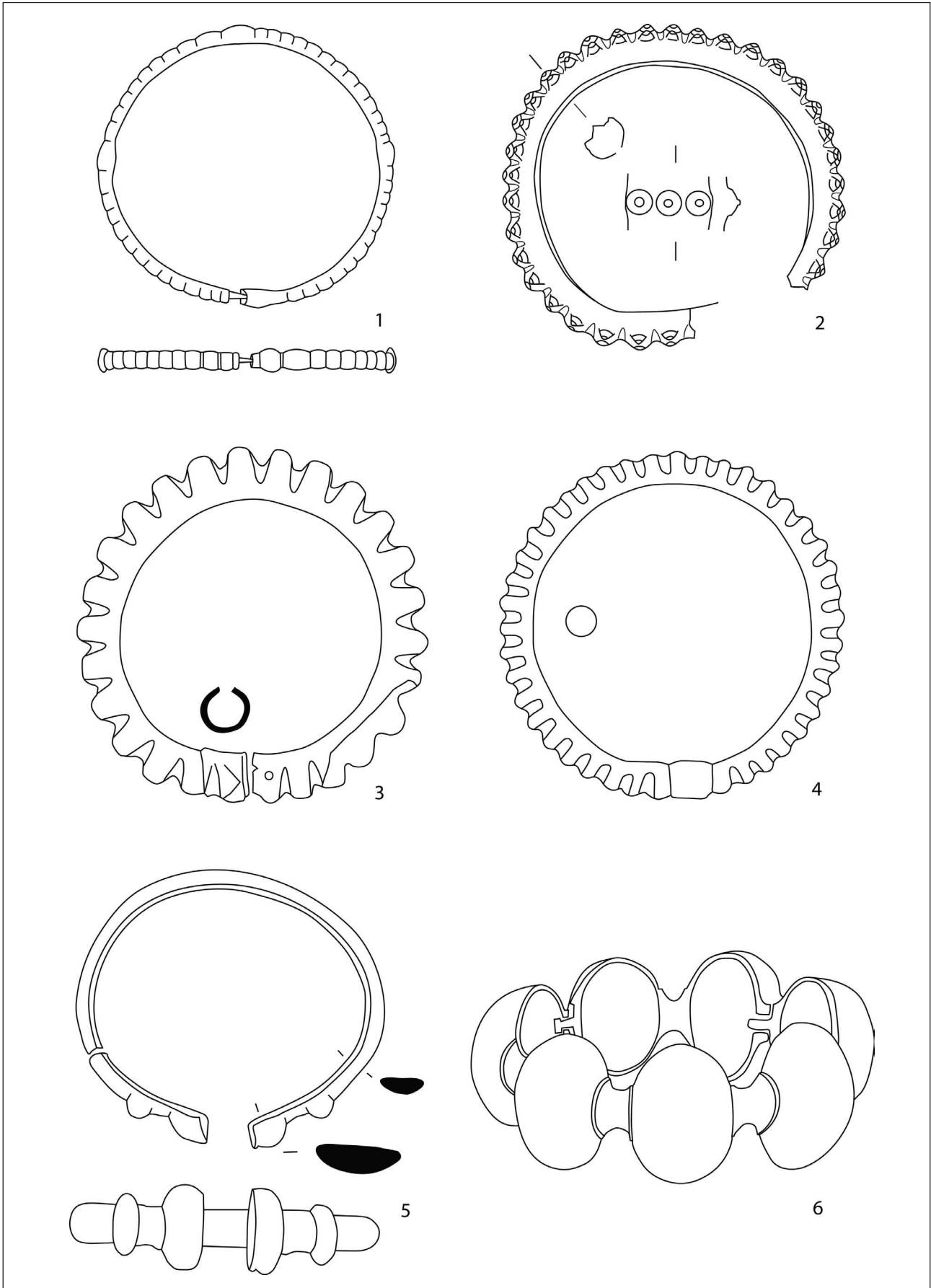


Fig. 3. Anklets. 1. Dubník 6; 2. Dubník 9; 3. Malé Kosihy 11; 4. Andelfingen 12; 5. Dormelletto 24; 6. Kaposvár-Toponár 1.

With regard to the origin of those buried in the Dormelletto cemetery Vitali (2008, p. 921) has advanced an interesting opinion — that they belong to the anonymous group of Celts from the Transalpine region who settled in this territory under the hegemony of Insubres. Polybius in his "Histories" (II, 19, 21, 34) also mentions the movement of Celts from their Transalpine area to the region of the Po Valley during the second half of the third century BC. The evidence of the annular ring form, which is exceptional for the Cisalpine area, leads us to the belief that contacts between the territory of Insubres and the Transalpine area were more than probable. It is possible to state that the typological range of rings in the Dormelletto cemetery seems to be local and probably was inspired in a Transalpine context.

THE SEX AND AGE OF WEARER OF THE RINGS AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GRAVES

An interesting result stems from studying the sex and age of wearers of the anklet ring forms. As mentioned at the outset of this paper, various authors have assigned a concrete type of ring form to a specific age and sex. However, it is impossible to rely on these conclusions. The anthropological analysis of various graves shows a range of categories of wearers – from small children to women older than 60 years (table 1). In the burial ground of Andelfingen the ring form was found even in the graves of young men – as for example in grave 12 (Tanner, 1979, p. 27).

The heterogeneity of the analyzed group of graves related by the same type of ring form is also matched by the plans of the grave pits of different sizes and types. We can see narrow grave pits, often stone-lined around the perimeter (Mannersdorf, Dormelletto), but also atypically a large grave pit for two bodies (Maňa 84, Dubník 6, Pleur 10). In grave 2 a young 12-13 year-old individual (possibly female) was buried together with a 40-50 year-old man. In the grave 9 two women – 20-30 year-old and 30-40 year-old were buried. The graves with niches in the cemetery of Balatonfőkajár are an interesting type unique in La Tène burial customs. In our group we can find also special positions of buried bodies in the graves. For example the body in grave 2 at Tótkomlós was situated on the stomach, the legs were crossed, with the right arm under the stomach and the left above the back. The similar prone position was found in grave 41 at Chotín.

CONCLUSIONS

The study of ring forms at Celtic flat cemeteries reveal peculiarities of contemporary society which defy certain interpretation. One of these ring forms is the anklet of annular ring form. Reflecting the age, regional or social peculiarities of specific regions, defined on the basis of different types of ring forms, we can say that in the specific case of annular anklets the differences of region and age are not decisive. While one may debate the evidence of social status represented by the graves, this must remain a topic for the future.

The spatial distribution of the annular anklet ring form clearly shows the centre of its development in the Middle Danube area where it appears already in the LT B1 period and endures till the end of the rite of inhumation in the flat Celtic cemeteries (fig. 2). The presence of this type of ornament in the west-Celtic area only confirms the older theories of a reflux Celt penetration along the Danube from east to west on the beginning of LT C1 period or continuity of contact. The evidence of this special annular ring form in the region of Transpadana is interesting. It is evident that five of those put to rest in the burial ground of Dormelletto were placed in the grave with an annular ring form atypical for this region. However, the annular ring, probably of local production, inspired by the older Transalpine tradition, does not confirm the direct influence from the eastern Celtic area seen in LT C1 period along the Danube to the western Celtic burial grounds. The interesting phenomenon is also the fact that all analyzed graves from Dormelletto belong to the oldest group of the inhabitants who established this burial ground. It cannot be excluded therefore that the wearers of this atypical form of ornament are newcomers from the Transalpine area in which region they could have acquired the anklet form. Such a conclusion would confirm the opinion of Vitali (2008, 921) concerning the anonymous group of Celts from the Transalpine region who had settled in the new territory. Anthropological analyses would certainly have been invaluable but unfortunately no skeletal remains have survived. Nevertheless we can conclude, on the basis of the distribution of anklets of annular ring form, that contacts between the historical territory of the Insubres and the territory to the north of Alps, and if not directly also with the Middle Danube area were present in the LT C1 period.

| No. | cemetery | G. | Sex/age | O. | T. | D. | literature | notes |
|-----|-------------------|-----|--------------------|---------|-------|----------|--|---|
| 1. | Bajč-Vlkanovo | 20 | ?/child | SE-NW | BR-B | LT B1-B2 | Benadik 1960, 399, Tab. 4: 1, 4 | |
| | Bajč-Vlkanovo | 45 | female/? | NW-SE | BR-C4 | LT B2 | Benadik 1960, 402, Tab. 10: 11, 19 | |
| 2. | Dubník | 2B | ?/12-13 yrs. | S-N | BR-C1 | LT B1-B2 | Bujna 1989, 251-252, Abb. 5, Taf. 2 | Double grave. Secondary burial : man, 40-50 yrs. |
| | Dubník | 6 | female/60 + yrs. | SSW-NNE | BR-B | LT B1 | Bujna 1989, 253-254, Abb. 9, Taf. 4 | Unusual large grave pit – Possibly for double grave |
| | Dubník | 9B | female/30-40 yrs. | SSW-NNE | BR-C1 | LT B1-B2 | Bujna 1989, 225-226, Abb.12, Taf. 8 | Double grave. Secondary burial : female, 20-30 yrs. |
| 3. | Chotín | 41 | female/? | N-S | BR-C4 | LT B2 | Ratimorská 1981, 72, Obr. 12, Tab. 25C | Atypical position of the skeleton : lying on stomach |
| 4. | Kamenín | 16 | ?/child | S-N | BR-C1 | LT B1-B2 | Benadik 1957, 110, Obr. 31 : 5, Tab. 41 : 1, 2, 12, 21 | |
| 5. | Malé Kosihy | 11A | male?/40-60 yrs. | S-N | BR-C2 | LT B2 | Bujna 1995, 20, Abb. 7, Taf. 4A | Double grave? with cremation burial? |
| 6. | Maňa | 84 | female/17-22 yrs. | SSE-NNW | BR-C4 | LT B2 | Benadik 1983, 42-43, Abb. 9, Taf. 31 : 6-9 | Unusual large grave pit – possibly for double grave |
| 7. | Palárikovo | 26 | ?/adult individual | - | BR-C4 | LT B2 | Unpublished documentation of research no. 6247/72 | |
| | Palárikovo | 38 | ?/adult individual | - | BR-C4 | LT B2 | Unpublished documentation of research no. 6247/72 | |
| 8. | Trnovec nad Váhom | 528 | female/20-40 yrs. | S-N | BR-C4 | LT B2 | Benadik 1957, 34, Tab. 12: 2 | |
| 9. | Levice | 94 | | S-N | BR-F5 | LT C1 | unpublished | My thanks are due RNDr. Marián Samuel for his information about this grave. |
| 10. | Kaposvár-Toponár | 1 | ? | ? | BR-F | LT C1 | Németh 1998, 72, T. 3: 1,2 | No known archaeological context |
| 11. | Sárbogárd | 8 | female?/ | SE-NW | BR-C2 | LT B2 | Bánki 1998, 65, 66, Abb. 3 | |
| 12. | Tótkomlós | 2 | ? | SSE-NNW | BR-C2 | LT B2 | Banner 1928, 304-305 | Atypical position of the skeleton : lying on the prone position, legs crossed, right hand under the stomach, left hand behind the back. Part of the inventory was a chain necklace |
| 13. | Balatonfőkajár | 5 | female/55 yrs. | SE-NW | BR-C2 | LT B2 | Horváth 1972, 98-99, Fig. 9 | Grave with niche. |
| | Balatonfőkajár | 10 | female/40 yrs. | SE-NW | BR-C3 | LT B2 | Horváth 1972, 98-99, Fig. 17 | Grave with niche. |
| 14. | Mannersdorf | 190 | female/61-80 yrs. | SSW-NNE | BR-C4 | LT B2 | Ramsl 2011, 93, Taf. 193 | |
| | Mannersdorf | 224 | female/25-35 yrs. | SSW-NNE | BR-C4 | LT B2 | Ramsl 2011, 100-101, Taf. 217, 218 | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|-----|-----------------------------|---------|-------|----------|---|---|
| 15. | Pișcolt | 3 | ?? | N-S | BR-C2 | LT B2 | Németi 1989, 75, Fig. 1 | |
| | Pișcolt | 30 | ?? | SW-NE | BR-C2 | LT B2 | Németi 1989, 79, 82, Fig. 4, 5 | |
| | Pișcolt | 159 | ?? | W-E | BR-C2 | LT B2 | Németi 1989, 91, Fig. 12 | |
| | Pișcolt | 167 | ?? | NNW-SSE | BR-C2 | LT B2 | Németi 1989, 91, Fig. 11 | |
| 16. | Dormelletto | 24 | ?? | NW-SE | ? | LT C1 | Spagnolo Garzoli 2009, 58, 59, Fig. 60, 61 | |
| | Dormelletto | 41 | ?? | NW-SE | BR-E | LT C1 | Spagnolo Garzoli 2009, 64, 65, Fig. 78, 80 | |
| | Dormelletto | 80 | ?? | NW-SE | BR-F | LT C1 | Spagnolo Garzoli 2009, 90, 91, Fig. 156, 157 | |
| | Dormelletto | 89 | ?? | NW-SE | BR-F | LT C1 | Spagnolo Garzoli 2009, 90, 91, Fig. 156, 157 | |
| | Dormelletto | 130 | ?? | NW-SE | BR-F | LT C1 | Spagnolo Garzoli 2009, 111-113, Fig. 223, 224 | |
| 17. | Andelfingen | 12 | man/ jung | S-N | BR-C3 | LT B2 | Tanner 1979, 27, 28, Taf. 21 | |
| | Andelfingen | 23 | child/"vor dem Zahnwechsel" | S-N | BR-C3 | LT B2 | Tanner 1979, 34, 35, Taf. 33 | |
| | Andelfingen | 25 | child/"vor dem Zahnwechsel" | S-N | BR-C3 | LT B2 | Tanner 1979, 36, Taf. 36 | |
| 18. | Pogny | 6 | female/? | ? | BR-F | LT C1 | Kruta 1985, 31, Fig. 1 | |
| 19. | Pleur | 10 | female/? | NE-SW | BR-E? | LT B2/C1 | Kruta 1985, 39, Fig. 5 | Unusual large grave pit – like for double grave |

Abbreviations: No. : number of site - G. : number of grave - O. : orientation of inhumation - T. : type of anklets according to Bujna, 2005 - D. : dating - yrs. : years.

Table 1. *List of analysed graves.*

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