

VARIABILITY OF THE VEKERZUG CULTURE BURIALS IN THE MIDDLE DANUBE REGION

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ZETOCHOVÁ, Zuzana. Variabilita pohrebov vekerzugskej kultúry v strednom Podunajsku. Príspevok je zameraný na detailnú analýzu pohrebov vekerzugskej kultúry v strednom Podunajsku. Predmetom analýzy sú kostrové a žiarové hroby z pohrebísk vekerzugskej kultúry z územia juhozápadného Slovenska a stredného Maďarska. Pôvodná databáza je založená na informáciách získaných z archeologických zdrojov, prevažne ide o informácie o hrobových jamách, zložení inventára a o spôsobe uloženia jednotlivých predmetov. Hlavný záujem sa sústreďí na rozpoznanie variability pohrebných zvykov v hroboch skupiny Chotín-Preseľany nad Ipľom a jej konfrontáciu s už existujúcou koncepciou regionálneho členenia vekerzugskej kultúry a určenie prvkov pohrebného ritu, ktoré môžeme teoreticky spájať s vplyvom cudzích komunit.

Kľúčové slová: vekerzugská kultúra, Stredné Podunajsko, pohreby, kostrový rítus, kremácia;

Keywords: Vekerzug Culture, Middle Danube region, burials, inhumation, cremation;

Early Iron Age represents a very dynamic period in the Middle Danube region, characterized by multitude changes in the structure and organization of society. Middle Danube region represents the north-eastern Hallstatt area and geographically covers the territory of south-western Slovakia, Hungarian Transdanubia, Burgenland, Lower Austria and the most southern part of Moravia (surroundings of Mikulov). In our analysis we focus on the area of south-western Slovakia and central Hungary, where during Ha D phase the Vekerzug Culture appears. Its origin is traditionally connected to changes, invoked by the movement of east European riding warrior groups (Chochorowski 1985, 159-162). The Vekerzug Culture is characterized by diverse cultural background, consisting of autochthonous and foreign elements (Chochorowski 1998, 473). Archaeological remains connected to this culture were identified on a large area in south-western Slovakia, with the main concentration in the Great Danubian Basin to north-western Romania (Figure 1). J. Chochorowski divided the Vekerzug Culture into three regional groups, based on the differences in burial customs (Chochorowski 1985). In the analysed area of south-western Slovakia and central Hungary so called Chotín-Preseľany nad Ipľom group was spread (Chochorowski 1984, 103; Kozubová 2008, 45). Latest great evaluation of the burial rite of the Vekerzug Culture was published by A. Kozubová in a monograph about cemeteries in Chotín (Kozubová 2013a; 2013b). This study is based on the same sources, therefore many results are similar to findings of A. Kozubová.

Burial customs of the Vekerzug Culture were bi-ritual, and mutual ratio of skeletal and cremation graves on single cemeteries was variable. Presented analysis covers seven sites, of which 343 inhumation and 386 cremation graves were studied in detail (table 1). This represents almost 71% of originally excavated graves from all observed cemeteries. Graves without the information about the position of human remains (burnt/unburnt), or without the information about the position of artefacts in the grave were excluded from the detail analysis of burial rite.

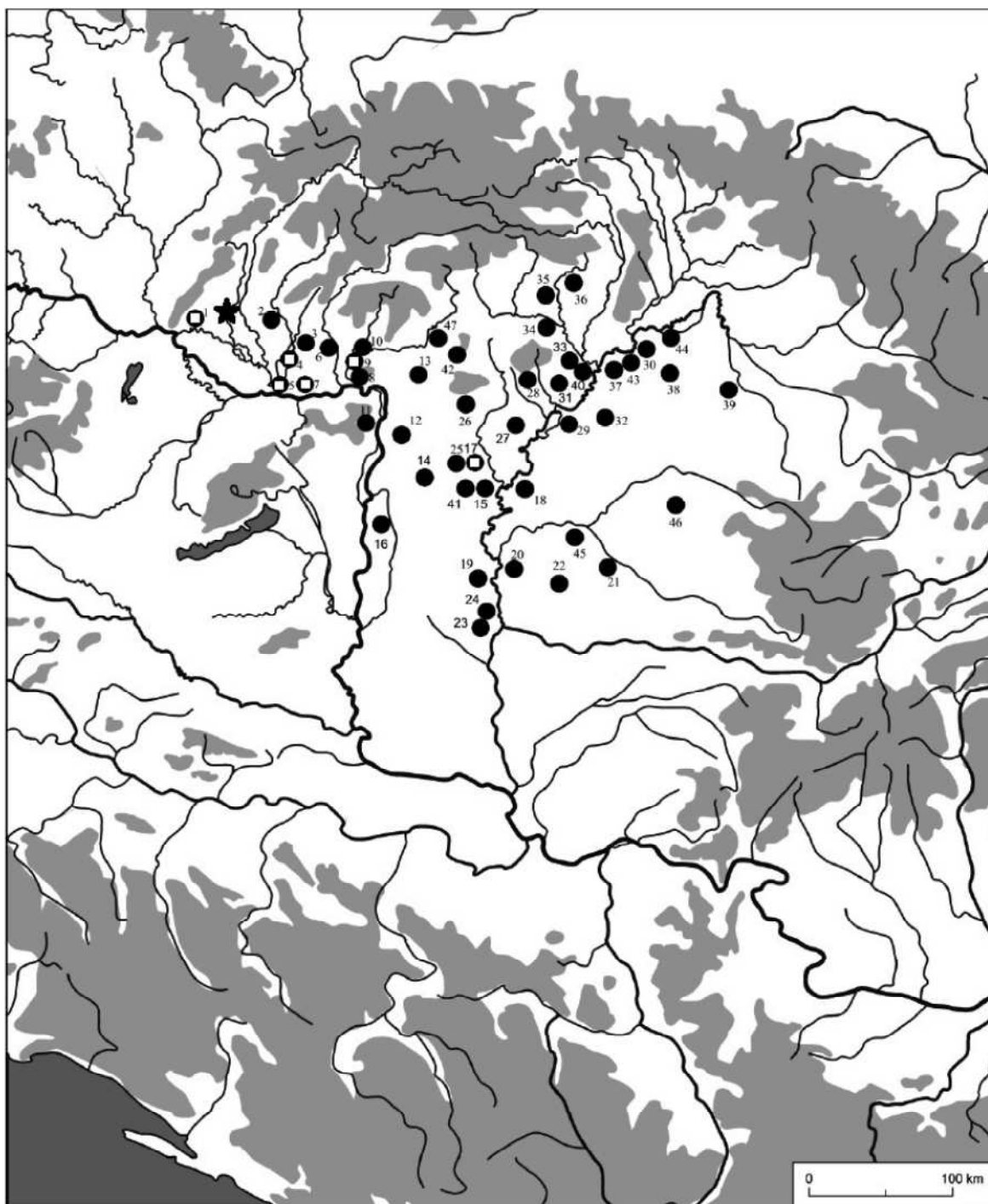


Figure 1. Map with important cemeteries of the Vekerzug Culture (analysed cemeteries marked with white rectangular). Black star – Bučany. 1 – Senec-Štrková kolónia; 2 – Nitra (Dolné Krškany a Mikov dvor); 3 – Maňa; 4 – Nové Zámky; 5 – Chotín IA a IB; 6 – Želiezovce; 7 – Modrany; 8 – Szob-Gregersen-kerti; 9 – Vámosmikola-Istoánmajor; 10 – Šahy-Preseľany nad Ipľom; 11 – Pomáz; 12 – Nagytarcsa; 13 – Nógrádkövesd; 14 – Nyáregyháza; 15 – Abony; 16 – Szabadszállás-Józan; 17 – Tápiószéle; 18 – Törökszentmiklós-Surján; 19 – Csanytelek-Újhalastó; 20 – Szentes-Vekerzug; 21 – Békéscsaba-Fényes; 22 – Orosháza-Gyopáros; 23 – Algyő; 24 – Sándorfalva-Eperjes; 25 – Tápió-Szentmárton; 26 – Gyöngyös; 27 – Heves; 28 – Eger-Nagyeged; 29 – Tiszafüred; 30 – Tiszalök-Börtön; 31 – Mezőkeresztes-Zöldhalompusztá; 32 – Hortobágy-Árkus; 33 – Muhi-Kocsmadomb; 34 – Sajószentpéter; 35 – Alsótelekes-Dolinka; 36 – Meszes; 37 – Tiszavasvári; 38 – Nyíregyháza; 39 – Sanislău; 40 – Kesznyéten-Szerűskert; 41 – Cegléd; 42 – Mátraszéle; 43 – Tiszaeszlár; 44 – Tiszabercel; 45 – Csárdaszállás; 46 – Ártánd; 47 – Piliny (after Kozubová 2013a, mapa 1, 206; adjusted by Z. Zetochová)

Table 1. Number of analysed inhumation and cremation graves from cemeteries of the Vekerzug Culture in the Middle Danube region

Cemetery	Inhumation graves	Cremation graves	Number of graves	Source
Bučany	0	3	2	<i>Bujna/Romsauer 1989</i>
Chotín	185	140	325	<i>Dušek 1966; Kozubová 2013a; 2013b</i>
Modrany	3	16	19	<i>Dušek 1976</i>
Nové Zámky	0	7	7	<i>Stegmann-Rajtár 2009; 2013</i>
Senec	7	4	11	<i>Chropovský 1962; Pichlerová 1962; Kozubová 2013b</i>
	195	170	365	
Tápiószele	142	198	340	<i>Párducz 1966</i>
Vámosmikola	6	18	24	<i>Laczus/Párducz 1969</i>
	148	216	364	
All	343	386	729	

From south-western Slovakia graves from the cemeteries in Bučany, Chotín, Modrany, Nové Zámky and Senec were analysed. The largest amount of graves (325 graves) comes from two cemeteries in Chotín. In Hungary graves from the cemeteries in Tápiószele and Vámosmikola were observed, from which 340 graves come from the Tápiószele cemetery (for references to literary sources, please see also table 1).

VARIABILITY OF INHUMATION BURIALS

Most common way of inhumation burial of the Vekerzug Culture in the Middle Danube region was the deposition of the body in contracted position on right side, head to the west (south-west), in an oval grave pit with jewellery and clothing fittings in their functional position, along with two vessels – high handled mug and bowl of various sizes. Of course, other kinds of inhumation burials appeared on cemeteries. Variability of burial rite was very high.

As it was already mentioned, the most common shape of a grave pit was oval (82% of analysed graves). At the cemetery in Senec were almost all grave pits rectangular, which was not very common, but not at all rare (14% of analysed graves; *Kozubová 2013b*). In fact, they formed almost 32% of analysed graves from the Chotín 1B cemetery (*Kozubová 2013b*). Round grave pits were quite rare. Most of these graves come from the cemetery in Chotín (graves 121A, 170A, 189A, 2B and 26B; *Kozubová 2013b*) and only one from cemetery in Vámosmikola (grave 16; *Laczus/Párducz 1969*).

Two grave pits from the Chotín cemetery (grave 12A and 48A) were of trapezoidal shape. Occasionally grave pits of irregular shape were identified – e.g. graves 12A, 36A and 48A in Chotín. A unique L-shaped grave pit was excavated in grave 36A from Chotín (*Kozubová 2013b*).

Special modification of the grave pit was quite rare in the studied area. Several graves with clay constructions of the grave interior were observed in Chotín (e.g. graves 170A and 210A; *Kozubová 2013b*). In Vámosmikola almost all graves were covered in stones (graves 10, 11, 16 and 43; *Laczus/Párducz 1969*). Other modifications were rare – e.g. wooden construction of walls (grave 46B in Chotín; *Dušek 1966*) and a circular trench around the grave pit (grave 72B in Chotín; *Kozubová 2013a, 243, 283, 284*). Presence of stones was identified in almost 10% of analysed graves. In most cases rectangular worked stone basins were in graves (e.g. grave 162A from Chotín; *Kozubová 2013b*). However also small worked or unworked stones were found, e.g. graves 418 from Tápiószele (*Párducz 1966*) and 111A from Chotín (*Kozubová 2013b*).

Orientation of buried individuals was identified in almost 90% of all analysed graves. In Chotín, Senec, Modrany and Vámosmikola orientation of the buried with a head to the

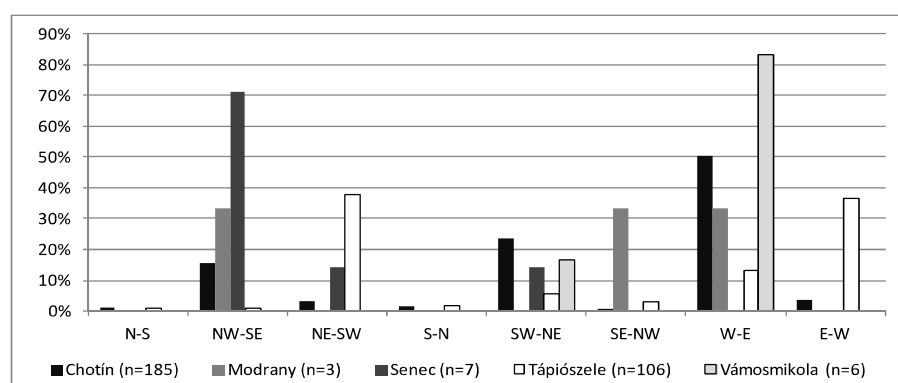


Figure 2. Orientation of the buried in analysed inhumation graves of the Vekerzug Culture at the cemeteries in the Middle Danube region (number of graves = 307). Author: Z. Zetochová

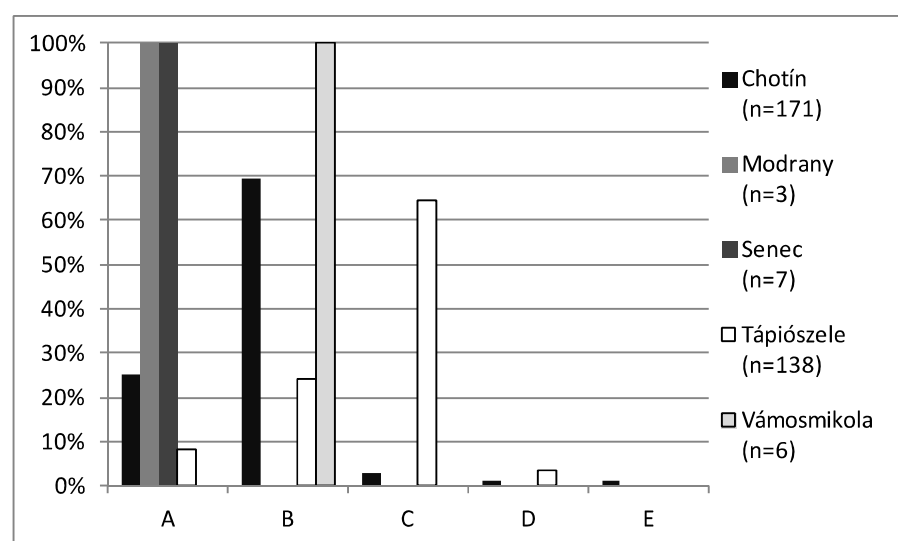


Figure 3. Body deposition in analysed inhumation graves of the Vekerzug Culture in the Middle Danube region. A – lying on the back; B – lying on the right side; C – lying on the left side; D – lying in the prone position; E – sitting position (number of graves = 325). Author: Z. Zetochová

west dominated (Figure 2). Although it has to be stressed that small number of excavated graves from Vámosmikola, Senec and Modrány could be misleading.

Manner of body deposition was a key condition for including the grave in the analysis. In Chotín and Vámosmikola most of the buried individuals were lying on their right side. Different was situation in graves excavated in Modrány and Senec, where the buried were lying only on their backs (Figure 3).

Prone and sitting positions on cemeteries of the Vekerzug Culture were quite rare (less than 3% of graves). The buried in prone position were put in the graves with a face down and extended limbs, e.g. grave 182A in Chotín (Kozubová 2013b) and graves 172 and 192 in Tápiószele (Párducz 1966), or with a face down but with crouched limbs, e.g. graves 195 in Chotín

(Kozubová 2013b) and graves 313 and 403 in Tápiószele (Párducz 1966).

The cemetery in Tápiószele is in a few aspects different from other cemeteries of the Chotín-Preseľany group. The most striking difference can be observed in the way of body deposition and orientation of the body (Figure 2 and 3). Similar preference of the left side was noticed at the Alsótelekes-Dolinka cemetery, which belongs to the north-east group of the Vekerzug Culture (Patay/Kiss 2001-2002). Orientation to the east was not observed at any other cemetery of the Vekerzug Culture.

An especially interesting phenomenon observed only at the cemetery in Tápiószele was intentional body mutilation. In several graves the parts of skeletons were missing – mostly parts of upper or lower limbs. A woman buried in grave 324 had a stab wound between her scapulas. Her head was cut off before the burial and lower limbs were forced under the torso during the burial (Párducz 1966, 64). In grave 325 a young individual was buried decapitated, a head lying on his/hers chest and lower limbs in so called frog position (Párducz 1966, 83, 84). Body mutilation are known also from other cemeteries (e. g. Szentes-Vekerzug; Párducz 1952; 1954; 1955).

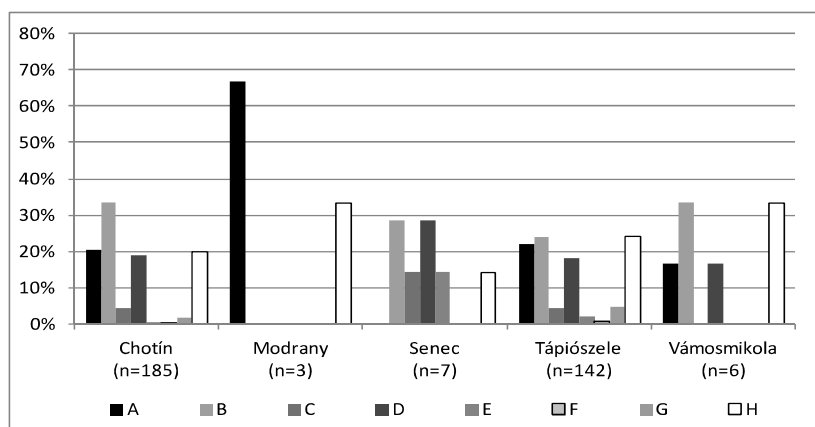


Figure 4. Percentage of graves containing various kinds of inventory. A – graves containing jewellery and clothing fittings/weapons; B – graves containing jewellery and clothing fittings/weapons and pottery; C – graves containing jewellery and clothing fittings/weapons, pottery and animal remains; D – graves containing pottery; E – graves containing pottery and animal remains; F – graves containing animal remains; G – graves containing only small objects and tools; H – graves without any grave goods (number of graves = 343).

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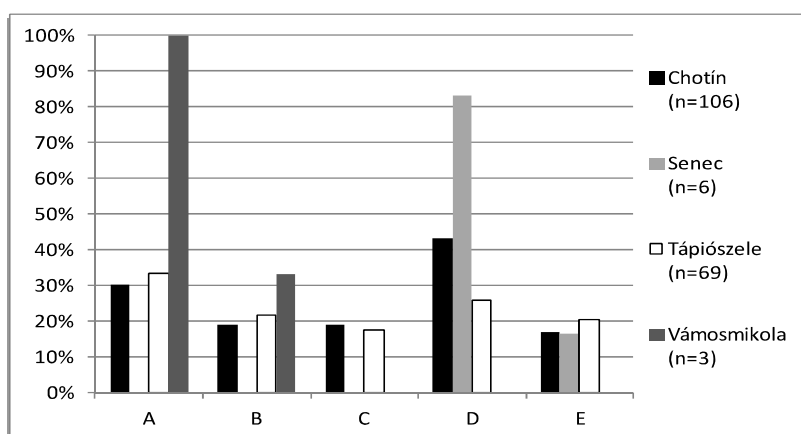
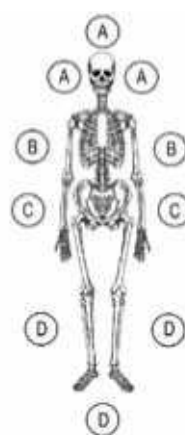


Figure 5. Percentage of various kinds of vessels deposition in analysed inhumation graves of the Vekerzug Culture in the Middle Danube region (number of graves = 184). Author: Z. Zetochová



Composition of grave goods is quite similar at all cemeteries (Figure 4). Situation in Modrany is complicated by a very small number of excavated graves. Ratio of graves containing pottery and jewellery or clothing fittings in Chotín was slightly higher than in Tápiószéle. Graves without any grave goods represent almost similar ratio at both biggest analysed cemeteries. According to findings of A. Kozubová, graves without inventory from Chotín are not showing any connection with sex or age of buried individuals (Kozubová 2013a, 259).

The position of vessels in analysed inhumation graves of the Vekerzug Culture was very variable (Figure 5). According to results two biggest cemeteries in the studied area are showing similar tendencies in their pottery deposition. Other cemeteries can not be considered because of small number of graves.

Only a small number of inhumation graves contained animal

remains (6% of analysed graves). In Chotín rib parts of animals were found mostly deposited in bowls. Except of meaty parts also animal teeth were found in graves – teeth of horses (graves 445, 450 and 461 in Tápiószéle; Párducz 1966), boar tusk (grave 1A in Chotín; Kozubová 2013b) and wolf teeth (grave 251 in Chotín; Kozubová 2013b). Archaeozoological analyses are in most of cases missing.

VARIABILITY OF CREMATION BURIALS

Typical cremation burial of the Vekerzug Culture in the Middle Danube region was scattered cremation in circular grave pit with grave goods in the concentration of cremated human remains with two or three vessels. Not in all cases was possible to identify the original shape of the grave pit. It was especially problematic to identify the shape of grave pit in case of Hungarian cemeteries, where the ratio of graves without the information about the grave pit represents almost 87% (Tápiószéle – 89% graves, Vámosmikola – 61% graves). Rectangular

shape of grave pit was observed only in 2% of graves and dominated in Bučany. Only two such graves come from the Chotín 1B cemetery (graves 29 and 60; *Kozubová 2013b*).

Manner of cremated human remains disposal was variable. Several variables of cremation graves (according to the manner of cremated human remains deposition) of the Vekerzug Culture can be singled out:

Variable 1 – cremated human remains deposited on the pile (sub variables: a – deposition in the central part of grave pit; b – deposition in other than the central part of grave pit; c – deposition on the pile in other than the central part of grave pit, covered by the vessel);

Variable 2 – cremated human remains scattered in grave pit (sub variables: a – remains scattered on the bottom of grave pit; b – remains scattered in the grave filling; c – combination of both previous sub variables);

Variable 3 – cremated human remains deposited in the small depression dug into the bottom of grave pit;

Variable 4 – cremated human remains deposited in the vessel – urn burial (sub variables: a – simple urn burial in one urn; b – burial with the urn covered by the vessel; c – urn burial where cremated human remains were deposited in various vessels; d – urn burial where part of cremated human remains was deposited in the vessel and part of them were scattered around it or on the bottom of grave pit);

Variable 5 – cremated human remains deposited in various concentrations on the bottom or in the filling of the grave pit). In case of cremation burials where CHR were deposited in various concentrations we must consider a possibility of multiple burial. However to prove this, a detailed analysis of cremated human remains is needed. This kind of burials represents only 3% of analysed graves from the Middle Danube region.

The most common way of cremated human remains disposal was scattering them on the bottom of the grave pit. This was identified in more than 50% of analysed graves from the Middle Danube region. Urn burials and deposition of remains on the pile both represent approximately 20% of analysed graves. Other ways of deposition represent only a small ratio of graves included in the analysis (Figure 6).

Urn burials show the highest variability among all cremation graves. An interesting urn burial was uncovered in grave 3 from Vámosmikola. CHR were deposited in small vessel, which was found inside bigger one (*Laczus/Párducz 1969, 217*). Burials where urn with CHR

was covered by the vessel (mostly an inverted bowl) were excavated e.g. in graves 147, 165 and 209 from Tápiósztele (*Párducz 1966*) and graves 43A and 70A from Chotín (*Kozubová 2013b*).

Among single cemeteries we can observe differences in the manner of human cremated remains deposition. In Chotín was the ratio of

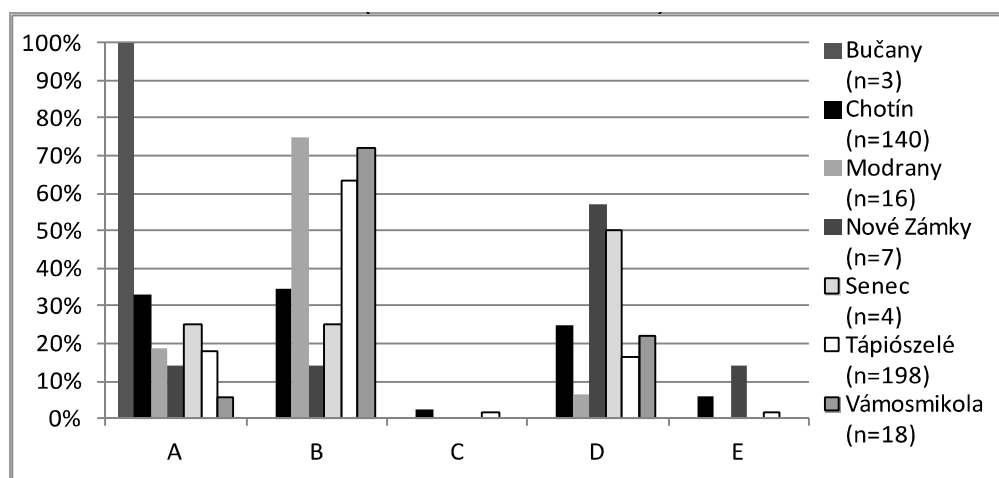


Figure 6. Cremated human remains deposition in analysed cremation graves of the Vekerzug Culture in the Middle Danube region. A – on the pile; B – scattered in the grave pit; C – in the depression (hole); D – in the vessel (urn burial); E – various concentrations (number of graves = 386).

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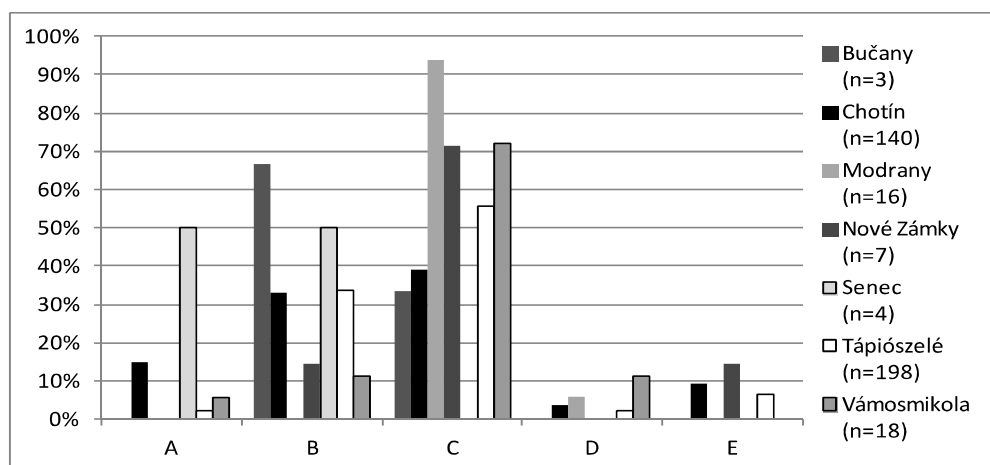


Figure 7. Percentage of graves containing various kinds of inventory. A – graves containing jewellery and clothing fittings/weapons; B – graves containing jewellery and clothing fittings/weapons, pottery and animal remains; C – graves containing pottery and animal remains; D – graves containing only small objects and tools; E – graves without any grave goods (number of graves = 386). Author: Z. Zetochová

scattered remains and remains deposited on the pile almost equal. Urn burials were observed in 25% of graves. In Modrany, Tápiószelé and Vámosmikola the graves with scattered remains prevailed (more than 60% of graves). In Bučany were remains deposited on the small pile and in Senec and Nové Zámky the urn burials dominated (more than 50% of graves).

Especially interesting is a cremation grave 462 from Tápiószelé, where cremated human remains were deposited in three concentrations. They were however not deposited directly on the bottom of the grave pit. Firstly, part of grave goods were put in grave. After that, they were covered by black earth on which cremated human remains were subsequently laid down. In one pile a bronze ring and fire-damaged bronze mirror fragments were found together with an iron knife and a spindle whorl. The pile number two contained no grave goods. In the third pile an electron pendant and a spindle whorl were found together with fragments of the same mirror as in the pile number one (Párducz 1966, 79, 80).

Cremation graves contained mostly pottery (Figure 7). Jewellery and clothing fittings or weapons were in 38% of graves. Mostly they were deposited in the concentration of cremated remains, which in most cases was caused by the manner of their deposition (CHR were scattered on the bottom of grave pit in 52% of graves). In Bučany, Senec, Nové Zámky and Vámosmikola this was the only observed manner of jewellery/clothing fittings deposition. Grave goods deposited out of the concentration of CHR were observed only in 16% of analysed graves. They all come from cemeteries in Chotín and Tápiószelé.

Only a small amount of graves contained animal remains. A different situation was observed at the cemetery in Tápiószelé, where the ratio of graves with animal remains reached more than 22%. In graves mostly unburnt animal remains were found. However, in the grave 26 in Nové Zámky burnt animal remains were identified next to the urn with cremated human remains (Stegmann-Rajtár 2009, 71). The fact, that burnt animal remains were not found on other cemeteries is probably caused by missing analyses of cremated remains. Animal kind was identified in more than half of cases. Domestic pig, sheep/goat were most common (33% of graves). Remains of horses were identified in 29% of graves and cattle only in 17% of graves. Besides the meaty animal parts, teeth were found, too. For example a boar tusk and a bear tooth were found in the grave 96 at the Chotín A cemetery. They both had a small hole for hanging, probably worn as amulets (Kozubová 2013a, 38, tab. XXX: 5, 8).

Many observed cremation graves contained grave goods which had traces of fire on them. The phenomenon of the intentional grave goods destruction was not characteristic only for the Early Iron Age. It was identified already at the cemeteries of Urnfield Cultures and it continues also in following periods. This custom was in the Vekerzug Culture identified

only in cremation graves (less than 20% of graves). Besides fire damage also intentionally deformed or fragmented objects were identified. This was however possible only in graves from Tápiószéle. Fire damage occurred not only on jewellery and clothing fittings or weapons, but also on vessels and spindle whorls. The most commonly damaged type of jewellery in Chotín were beads made of various materials (most often glass). Beads were strongly burned and damaged, often fully melted. Less often were found damaged bronze bracelets, which were strongly fragmentary in many cases. In Tápiószéle bronze bracelets dominated among fire damaged objects. Also beads and spindle whorls were quite often fire damaged. Fragmentarization of objects is, however, in question, because it is almost impossible to find out whether it was done intentionally, accidentally during the transport from the burnt pyre into the grave, caused by the taphonomic processes or during the excavation. Weapons were not damaged very often. In Chotín and Tápiószéle, a few graves contained arrowheads with traces of fire on them. In grave 74 from Tápiószéle a spear-head with markedly bent tip was found (*Párducz 1966, 42*). Another quite rare type of objects damaged by the fire were mirrors. A bimetallic mirror with a heavily damaged handle comes from the cremation at the grave 8 at the Chotín 1B cemetery (*Kozubová 2013b*). A bronze mirror destroyed by fire was found also in the grave 462 at the Tápiószéle cemetery (*Párducz 1966*).

In many cremation graves from Chotín cemetery fragments of various vessels (or fragments of one vessel) were observed. They were concentrated in the filling of the graves or on the bottom of the grave pit. This could be possibly connected to the custom of feasting during the burial ceremony. Fragmented vessels were found almost exclusively in graves of adult individuals. A. Kozubová focused also on this phenomenon in her monograph (*Kozubová 2013a, 284*).

BI-RITUAL GRAVES

Phenomenon of bi-ritual graves was quite rare in the Vekerzug Culture. These were observed in Chotín only in two cases – graves 248a, b/54 in Chotín 1A and 16a, b/61 in Chotín 1B. In the grave 248a, b/54 the inhumation burial of a child was excavated together with a cremation burial deposited in the depression dug into the bottom of the grave pit. The inventory of cremation grave leads to an assumption that it belonged to an adult man. An adult woman was buried in the grave 16a and in the small depression behind her lower limbs a cremation burial of another woman was placed (*Kozubová 2013a, obr. 127, 264, 265*). Only one biritual grave was excavated in Tápiószéle. The grave 350a,b was most probably a burial of a mother and a child. Skull fragments of a small child were deposited on the pile of burnt remains of an adult woman (*Párducz 1966, 69, tab. LII: 17-19*). Bi-ritual graves are known also from other cemeteries of the Vekerzug Culture – e.g. grave 85 a, b from Orosháza-Gyopáros (*Juhász 1976, 245, obr. 12: 3*); more than 1,3% of graves in Csanytelek-Újhalastó (*Galántha 1986, 69, 70*); almost 3,7% in Heves (*Szabó 1969, 63, 64*) and graves 162 and 178 in Alsótelekes-Dolinka (*Patay/Kiss 2001-2002, 94, 98*).

Grave 44 in Vámosmikola is specific and it is unclear whether it is really a biritual grave. In western half of the rectangular grave pit with stone covering unburnt human remains were deposited. In eastern half burnt human remains were found (*Laczus/Párducz 1969, 223*). Similar situation is known from the grave 352 in Tápiószéle where a skull was found in northern half and in southern half were cremated human remains uncovered. Cremated remains were not found in such amount as in other cremation graves, so it is possible that the skull and cremated remains belonged to one individual (*Párducz 1966, 69*). Partially burnt human remains were found also in the grave 15 in Csanytelek-Újhalastó (*Galántha 1986, 70*).

CONCLUSION

Variability of the Vekerzug Culture burials in the Middle Danube region was very high, which was caused by various factors. Not only we can observe differences among studied

cemeteries, but single sites are showing high variability of burial features. This may have been caused by contacts with the original Hallstatt inhabitants after people of the Vekerzug Culture arrived. Relationship of the Vekerzug Culture with the original Hallstatt population and upper horizon of its existence remains opened (Romsauer 1993, 21; 1996). S. Stegmann-Rajtár supposes that Hallstatt Cultures did not end suddenly, but they were gradually overlaid by the Vekerzug Culture – based on results of excavation at the Nové Zámky cemetery (Stegmann-Rajtár 2009, 87). This assumption is supported by results of a detailed analysis of cremation rite. In Nové Zámky, graves of the Vekerzug Culture bear similar characteristics as graves of the Hallstatt population – a circular shape of grave pit and a high average number of vessels compared with other graves of the Vekerzug Culture.

Some graves included in the first phase at the Chotín cemetery contained items of Hallstatt origin – e.g. certain shapes of vessels, whorls and razors (Kozubová 2013b, 142-158, 408-411). Results of the burial rite analysis show that in this phase urn burials predominated. Quite often urn was covered with an inverted bowl. This type of urn burial is known also from the Statzendorf cemetery where it was quite popular (Rebay 2006a; 2006b). However the lack of excavated graves of the Hallstatt Culture in direct proximity of Chotín cemetery does not allow to conclude that this type of burial could be a direct influence of the Hallstatt population. Inhumation graves with items of the Kalenderberg origin belonged to women and children buried on right side. Gender of buried individuals and presence of the artefacts typical for the territory of Kalenderberg Culture leads to the assumption that social relations between migrants and local population were created.

Another important factor that caused the high variability of burial features was the composition of burying communities. The Vekerzug Culture itself is characterized by disunity of cultural substrate, therefore we can assume that communities burying on various cemeteries were composed of various ratio of people with their own traditions. A bigger group of people then may have set a trend of burials among community members. In other cases traditions were followed in many small groups of people in one community.

First wave of Celtic migrants into the territory of the Middle Danube during the second and third quarter of the 4th century BC was a very important milestone for the Vekerzug Culture development. However, there is still not enough evidence for understanding mutual relationship between the Vekerzug population and Celtic newcomers. An important source is therefore the cemetery in Bučany (Bujna/Romsauer 1989). Graves of the Vekerzug Culture at this site show the direct influence of the Celts on their burial rite – rectangular shape of grave pits and deposition of cremated human remains on the pile. Graves of women with Celtic items show some differences from graves of men (especially warriors). Women were buried with the head to the east and graves contained also remains of sheep/goat parts. These women supposedly belonged to people of the Vekerzug Culture.

The impossibility of more precise dating of single graves remains a rather big problem. Only a small number of graves contained items which would allow their chronological classification. Therefore, any kind of analysis of burial rite development remains impossible.

Territorial division of the Vekerzug Culture created by J. Chochorowski (1984; 1985; 1998) seems questionable in comparison with results of the burial rite analysis. Some elements of burial rite were evidently common at cemeteries in various groups of the Vekerzug Culture. However, cemeteries from one regional group show differences in some burial rite elements. Burial rite at the cemetery in Tápiószéle is different from other sites belonging to the Chotín-Preseľany group. It was probably caused by its geographical position on the periphery of the north-western and southern group of the Vekerzug Culture. Orientation and manner of deposition of buried individuals was different to what was most common at other cemeteries from the analysed area. High ratio of graves containing animal remains is something we do not know from any other site of the Vekerzug Culture. Mutilations observed on several bodies are also quite unique on other sites of the Chotín-Preseľany nad Ipľom group.

Results of the burial rite analysis show a need for complex re-evaluation of the Vekerzug Culture territorial division. Great variability and number of local manifestations observed at cemeteries from the Middle Danube region were connected with complicated social structure of burying communities. For better understanding of the situation after arrival of the Vekerzug Culture into the Middle Danube region more excavated cemeteries of the Hallstatt population from Ha D is needed. Analysis of cemeteries from the territory of north-eastern Hungary in confrontation with obtained results from the Middle Danube region could be helpful in solving the issue of contacts between the Vekerzug Culture and Celtic population.

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RESUMÉ

Variabilita pohrebov vekerzugskej kultúry v strednom Podunajsku

Staršia doba železná predstavuje v oblasti stredného Podunajsku veľmi dynamické obdobie, ktoré môžeme charakterizovať mnohými zmenami v rámci štruktúry a organizácie spoločnosti. V priebehu 2. polovice 7. storočia pred n. l. začali do stredodunajského priestoru postupne prenikať východné elementy, ktoré dnes spájame s vekerzugskou kultúrou. Vekerzugská kultúra je charakterizovaná veľmi rozmanitým kultúrnym podloží, na ktoré mali významný vplyv autochtónne ale aj cudzie prvky (*Chochorowski 1998*, 473). Príspevok je venovaný podrobnej analýze variability kostrových a žiarových pohrebov na pohrebiskách vekerzugskej kultúry v stredodunajskom priestore, ktorý zahŕňa juhozápadné Slovensko a stredné Maďarsko. Skúmaných bolo 343 kostrových a 386 žiarových hrobov patriacich k tzv. skupine Chotín-Preseľany nad Ipľom, čo predstavuje takmer 71 % preskúmaných hrobov na týchto lokalitách.

Typickým kostrovým pohrebom na sledovaných pohrebiskách bolo uloženie mŕtveho v skrčenej polohe na pravom boku s hlavou orientovanou smerom na západ v hrovej jame oválneho pôdorysu. V hroboch sa ako sprievodný inventár najčastejšie nachádzala keramika (uložená v oblasti dolných končatín). Pre žiarový rítus bolo najcharakteristickejšie rozptýlenie zvyškov kremácie po dne hrovej jamy prípadne v jej zásype (Chotín), alebo ich deponovanie v urne (Nové Zámky). Najpočetnejšiu skupinu nálezov aj tu tvorila keramika. Pohrebným zvykom objavujúcim sa na pohrebiskách vekerzugskej kultúry, ktorý by sme mohli spojiť s predchádzajúcim kultúrnym vývojom staršej doby železnej je deponovanie spálených ľudských ostatkov v urnách prekrytých misou spravidla otočenou hore dnom. Práve v týchto hroboch sa často stretávame s predmetmi, ktoré ukazujú na kontakty s kalenderberskou kultúrou (napr. určité tvary v ruke robenej keramiky, prasleny a britvy). Z hľadiska vnútornej chronológie chotínskych pohrebísk nie je nateraz možné vyjadriť sa k vývoju vzájomných kontaktov kalenderberskej a vekerzugskej kultúry na základe prejavov vyššie uvedených pohrebných zvykov, keďže takmer 75 % hrobov nie je možné presnejšie chronologicky zaradiť.

Ďalším významným medzníkom v rámci vývoja doby železnej bol príchod prvej vlny keltských migrantov do oblasti stredného Podunajska v priebehu druhej a tretej štvrtiny 4. storočia pred n. l. Dôležitým zdrojom informácií pre územie juhozápadného Slovenska je pohrebisko v Bučanoch, kde bolo doložené súčasné pochovávanie oboch skupín obyvateľstva. Hroby vekerzugskej kultúry v Bučanoch nie sú svojim pohrebným prejavom celkom typické, a tak naznačujú možnosť ovplyvnenia pohrebných zvykov keltským obyvateľstvom. Podobne je tomu tak aj v prípade keltských hrobov na pohrebisku v Bučanoch. Najmä v ženských hroboch je možné identifikovať pohrebné zvyky, ktoré by mohli súvisieť s príslušnosťou pochovaných k domácejmu obyvateľstvu. Medzi tieto prejavy patrí najmä orientácia pochovaných žien hlavou smerom na východ a prítomnosť častí ovce/kozy.

Výsledky analýzy ukazujú, že teritoriálne členenie vekerzugskej kultúry navrhnuté J. Chochorowským (1984; 1985; 1998) je nedostatočné. Medzi analyzovanými pohrebiskami a údajmi získanými zo spracovania pohrebísk zo zvyšných území rozšírenia tejto kultúry sa objavili niektoré prejavy pohrebných zvykov naznačujúce spoločné prvky pohrebného rítu medzi jednotlivými regionálnymi skupinami a zároveň rozdielne prejavy, ktoré sa objavujú na pohrebiskách patriacich k tej istej regionálnej skupine. Najvýraznejšie sa v sledovanom súbore oddeľuje pohrebisko v Tápiószele, kde dominovalo uloženie mŕtvych na ľavom boku s hlavou orientovanou na východ. V hroboch bol zistený oveľa častejší výskyt zvyškov mäsitej stravy ako na ostatných pohrebiskách.

Pre podrobnejšie vyhodnotenie pohrebného rítu a následné vyčlenenie jednotlivých lokálnych skupín bude potrebné pôvodnú databázu rozšíriť aj o územia mimo regiónu stredného Podunajska. To by mohlo napomôcť nielen z hľadiska problematiky teritoriálneho členenia vekerzugskej kultúry, ale najmä pri riešení problematiky jej kontaktov s halštatským a keltským obyvateľstvom. Pre riešenie problematiky pohrebných zvykov a kontaktov kalenderberskej kultúry a kultúry stredného a severovýchodného Zadunajska a ich možného vplyvu na pohrebné zvyky bude však potrebné rozšíriť pramennú bázu a publikovať výsledky starších výskumov.

Zoznam príloh

Tabela 1. Počet analyzovaných kostrových a žiarových hrobov z pohrebísk vekerzugskej kultúry z oblasti stredného Podunajska. Autor: Z. Zetochová

Obr. 1. Mapa s dôležitými pohrebiskami vekerzugskej kultúry (analyzované pohrebiská sú označené bielym obdĺžnikom). Čierna hviezda – Bučany. 1 – Senec-Štrková kolónia; 2 – Nitra (Dolné Krškany a Mikov dvor); 3 – Maňa; 4 – Nové Zámky; 5 – Chotín IA a IB; 6 – Želiezovce; 7 – Modrany; 8 – Szob-Gregersen-kerti; 9 – Vámosmikola-Istvánmajor; 10 – Šahy-Preseľany nad Ipľom; 11 – Pomáz; 12 – Nagytarcsa; 13 – Nógrádkövesd; 14 – Nyáregyháza; 15 – Abony; 16 – Szabadszállás-Józan; 17 – Tápiószele; 18 – Törökszentmiklós-Surján; 19 – Csanytelek-Újhalastó; 20 – Szentes-Vekerzug; 21 – Békéscsaba-Fényes; 22 – Orosháza-Gyopáros; 23 – Algyő; 24 – Sándorfalva-Eperjes; 25 – Tápió-szentmárton; 26 – Gyöngyös; 27 – Heves; 28 – Eger-Nagyeged; 29 – Tiszafüred; 30 – Tiszalök-Börtön; 31 – Mezőkeresztés-Zöldhalompusztá; 32 – Hortobágy-Árkus; 33 – Muhi-Kocsmadomb; 34 – Sajószentpéter; 35 – Alsótelekes-Dolinka; 36 – Meszes; 37 – Tiszavasvári; 38 – Nyíregyháza; 39 – Sanislău; 40 – Kesznyéten-Szérúskert; 41 – Cegléd; 42 – Mátraszele; 43 – Tiszaeszlár; 44 – Tiszabercel; 45 – Csárdaszállás (podľa Kozubová 2013a, 206, mapa 1; doplnila Z. Zetochová)

Obr. 2. Orientácia pochovaných v analyzovaných kostrových hroboch vekerzugskej kultúry na pohrebiskách v oblasti stredného Podunajska (počet hrobov = 307). Autor: Z. Zetochová

Obr. 3. Uloženie tela v analyzovaných kostrových hroboch vekerzugskej kultúry v oblasti stredného Podunajska. A – uložený na chrbte; B – uložený na pravom boku; C – uložený na ľavom boku; D – uložený na bruchu; E – sediaca poloha (počet hrobov = 325). Autor: Z. Zetochová

Obr. 4. Percentuálne vyjadrenie počtu hrobov obsahujúcich rôzne druhy inventára. A – hroby obsahujúce šperky a súčasti odevu/zbrane; B – hroby obsahujúce šperky a súčasti odevu/zbrane a keramiku; C – hroby obsahujúce šperky a súčasti odevu/zbrane, keramiku a zvyšky zvierat; D – hroby obsahujúce keramiku; E – hroby obsahujúce keramiku a zvyšky zvierat; F – hroby obsahujúce zvyšky zvierat; G – hroby obsahujúce len drobné predmety a nástroje; H – hroby bez nálezov (počet hrobov = 343). Autor: Z. Zetochová

Obr. 5. Percentuálne vyjadrenie rôznych spôsobov uloženia nádob v analyzovaných kostrových hroboch vekerzugskej kultúry v oblasti stredného Podunajska (počet hrobov = 184). Autor: Z. Zetochová

Obr. 6. Spôsob uloženia spálených ľudských ostatkov v analyzovaných žiarových hroboch vekerzugskej kultúry v oblasti stredného Podunajska. A – na kôpke; B – rozptýlené v hrobovej jamke; C – v jamke; D – v nádobe (urnový pohreb); E – viacero koncentrácií (počet hrobov = 386). Autor: Z. Zetochová

Obr. 7. Percentuálne vyjadrenie počtu hrobov obsahujúcich rôzne druhy inventára. A – hroby obsahujúce šperky a súčasti odevu/zbrane; B – hroby obsahujúce šperky a súčasti odevu/zbrane, keramiku a zvyšky zvierat; C – hroby obsahujúce keramiku a zvyšky zvierat; D – hroby obsahujúce len drobné predmety a nástroje; E – hroby bez nálezov (počet hrobov = 386). Autor: Z. Zetochová

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