

Children's graves at the Middle La Tène cemetery of Zvonimirovo (Croatia)

Otroški grobovi na srednjelatenskem grobišču v Zvonimirovem (Hrvaška)

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Izvleček

Grobišče latenske kulture v Zvonimirovem na severu Hrvaške je trenutno edino sistematično raziskano, ki ga je mogoče datirati v srednji laten (LT C2). Dosedanje raziskave so se osredotočale na grobove bojevnikov z orožjem ter grobove žensk z deli noše in nakitom. Rezultati antropološke analize kažejo, da so na grobišču pokopavali tudi otroke, mlajše od 14 let. Pokopani so bili tako kot odrasli člani skupnosti, največkrat samostojno, v nekaj grobovih pa skupaj z odraslim. V otroških grobovih je bilo v večini primerov manj najdb kot v grobovih odraslih, vendar so bili odkriti tudi bogatejši otroški grobovi. V njih so poleg keramičnih posod še deli noše in nakit, le izjemoma se pojavlja orožje. Podobne značilnosti otroških grobov so bile opažene tudi pri analizah latenskih grobišč v Karpatski kotlini, kar kaže na položaj otrok v mlajšeželeznodobnih skupnostih.

Ključne besede: grobišče; Zvonimirovo; otroci; starost; latenska kultura; način pokopa; identiteta

Abstract

The cemetery of Zvonimirovo is currently the only systematically researched cemetery of the La Tène culture in northern Croatia that can be dated to the Middle La Tène period (LT C2). Previous research studies were focused on richly equipped graves of warriors with weapons and of women with costume and jewellery items. The results of the anthropological analysis indicate that children under 14 years of age were also buried at the cemetery and received the same mortuary treatment as the adult members of the community. Children were most often buried alone, as the only deceased in the grave, but a smaller number of graves contains a child with an adult. The study of mortuary profiles of children's graves indicates that the majority of them contained fewer finds than the graves of adults, but some of them were richly equipped. Aside from pottery, children's graves contained costume and jewellery items, with weaponry appearing exceptionally. Similar mortuary profiles of children's graves have been documented in the analyses of La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, indicating their position in the Late Iron Age communities.

Keywords: cemetery; Zvonimirovo; children; age; La Tène culture; mortuary treatment and profiles; identity

The Zvonimirovo cemetery in central Drava valley is currently the only systematically researched cemetery of the La Tène culture in northern Croatia.¹ Excavations undertaken intermittently from 1993

to 2019, spanning an area of 3,968 m², uncovered 130 cremation graves. All the graves except one are dated to the Middle La Tène (LT C2) period, ranging from the turn of the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC to the beginning of the second half of the 2nd century BC. Previous research primarily focused on male graves with weapons and female graves with various costume and jewellery items (Majnarić-

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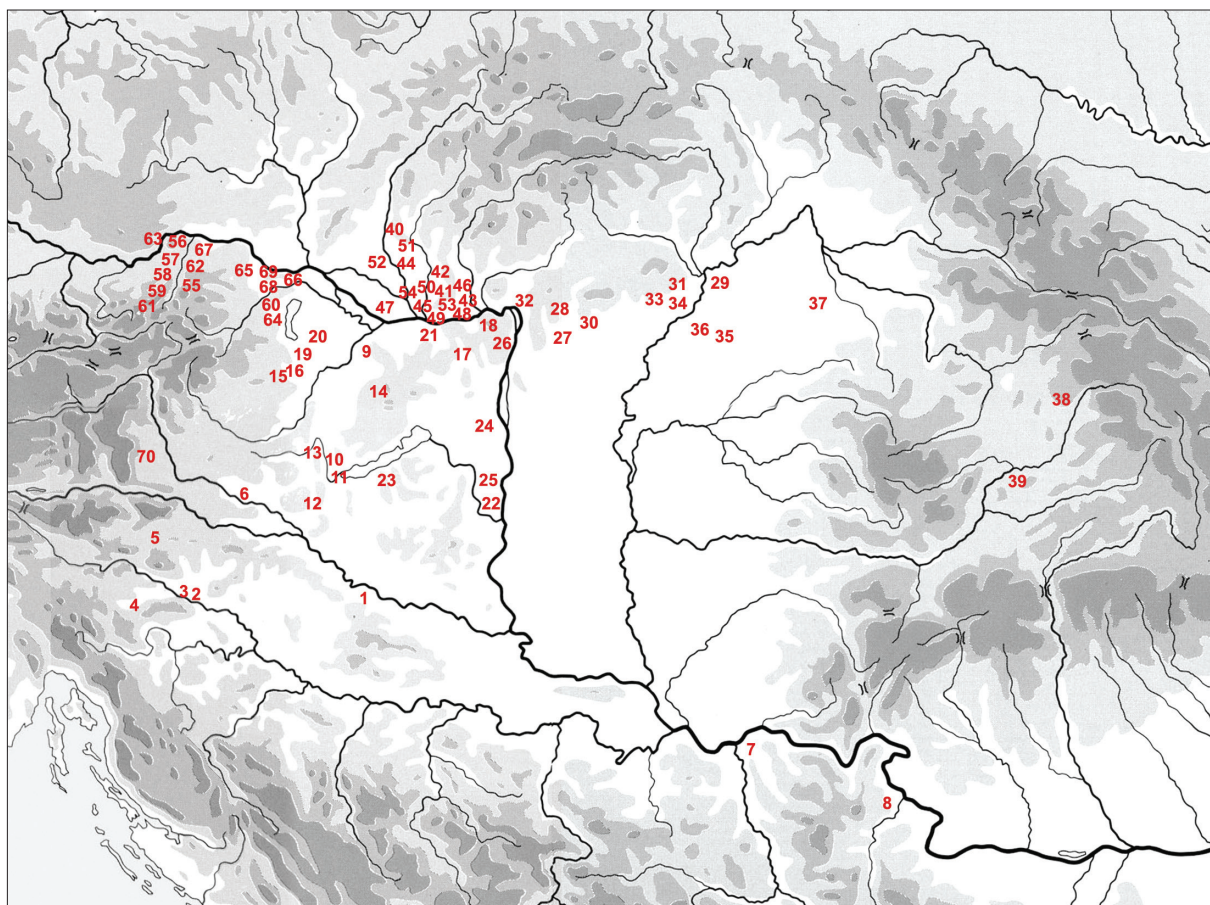


Fig. 1: Distribution of La Tène cemeteries with children's graves in the Carpathian Basin.

Sl. 1: Grobišča latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini z otroškimi grobovi.

1 – Zvonimirovo; 2 – Brežice; 3 – Dobova; 4 – Novo Mesto; 5 – Slatina; 6 – Nova Tabla; 7 – Pečine; 8 – Mokranjske stene; 9 – Ménfőcsanak; 10 – Hévíz; 11 – Keszthely; 12 – Magyarszerdahely; 13 – Rezi; 14 – Borsosgyőrből; 15 – Bucsú; 16 – Gencsapáti; 17 – Tatabánya; 18 – Dunaalmás; 19 – Hegyfalú; 20 – Kóny; 21 – Ács; 22 – Tolna-Mözs; 23 – Ordacsehi; 24 – Zichyújfaluról; 25 – Kölesd; 26 – Budapest / Budimpešta; 27 – Jászberény; 28 – Mátraszőlös; 29 – Tiszavasvári; 30 – Ludas; 31 – Sajópetri; 32 – Vác; 33 – Mui; 34 – Hejőkeresztúr; 35 – Ebes; 36 – Hajdúszoboszló; 37 – Ciumești; 38 – Fântânele; 39 – Sâncrai; 40 – Bučany; 41 – Dubník; 42 – Maňa; 43 – Malé Kosihi; 44 – Horný Jatov; 45 – Hurbanovo; 46 – Dvory Nad Žitavou II; 47 – Holiare; 48 – Kamenín; 49 – Chotín I; 50 – Bajč; 51 – Nyitra; 52 – Nebojsa; 53 – Svätý Peter; 54 – Palárikovo I; 55 – Pottenbrun; 56 – Franzhausen; 57 – Inzersdorf; 58 – Oberndorf; 59 – Walpersdorf; 60 – Pötsching; 61 – Herzogenburg; 62 – Ossarn; 63 – Kuffern; 64 – Au; 65 – Guntramsdorf; 66 – Petronell; 67 – Rassing; 68 – Mannersdorf; 69 – Göttlesbrunn; 70 – Lang.

Pandžić 2001; Dizdar 2013; 2016; 2020a; Dizdar et al. 2014; Dizdar, Ljuština 2019). Although only a small number of graves have been published so far, the results of the anthropological analysis indicate that the cemetery includes all age groups, including children. In this instance, the bioarchaeological analysis encompassed the mortuary profiles of graves containing the cremated remains of children up to the age of 14 at the moment of death, for which a range of contextual datasets was collected – child data and data child (Sofaer Dervenski 2000). Additionally, the bioarchaeological analysis included adolescents aged 15 to 20 in order to discern differences in the identity and

status of youth in the community, as suggested by previous analyses of the Zvonimirovo cemetery (Dizdar 2013, 40–42; 2020a).

Considering that results of the anthropological analysis are often lacking for the investigated cemeteries of the La Tène culture in the neighbouring areas (the southeastern Carpathian Basin inhabited by the Scordisci² and the southeastern

² For the largest Scordiscan cemeteries, such as Karaburma (Todorović 1972) or Osijek (Spajić 1954; 1956; 1962), no anthropological analyses have been conducted, while the data for the Pečine cemetery is only available for inhumation graves (Jovanović 2018). At the Late La

Alpine region and southwestern Pannonia inhabited by the Taurisci³), the children's graves from the Zvonimirovo cemetery are associated with the results of bioarchaeological analyses conducted at La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin (*Fig. 1*). These cemeteries include inhumation and cremation graves of children as a recognizable social group; the data has been collected from all available documented mortuary profiles. Again, it can be seen that the children's graves at the cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin were rarely the subject of specific research, often involving datasets about mortuary treatment and profiles (Ramsl 2010, Tab. 1; Rustoiu 2016a; Bujna 2019; Ramsl, Nowotny 2020). The only recent study of children's graves in the area of the Eastern Alps stands out (Mauthner 2023). A similar situation is observed in other areas of the La Tène culture in central Europe and other regions during the Late Iron Age (e.g. Endlich 1998; Kraus 2002; 2006; Tibbetts 2008). Detailed analyses have been made only for children's graves from particular cemeteries in Switzerland, notably for the burials of children in the Basel – Gasfabrik settlement and its two associated cemeteries (Rissanen, Alder 2011; Pichler et al. 2012; Rissanen et al. 2013; Pichler et al. 2013; 2015; 2017; Brönnimann et al. 2022). Other extensively analysed children's graves include those from the cemeteries of Bern – Reichenbachstrasse (Jud, Ulrich-Bochsler 2014) and Ipsach (Zweifel 2015).

The children's graves from the Zvonimirovo cemetery will be compared with the results of published bioarchaeological analyses of the La Tène culture cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin,

where graves of children of all age groups have also been identified. However, despite the large number of investigated cemeteries, most of them have a small number of graves, while only a few are larger and have well-documented bioarchaeological datasets. In these cemeteries, both inhumation and cremation graves have been documented, which subsequently influenced the implementation of anthropological analyses, which were much more common for inhumation graves, especially at the cemeteries investigated from the 1950s to the 1970s (*Fig. 1*). Also, a comprehensive bioarchaeological analysis of children's graves from cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin requires not only anthropological data, but also contextual data and mortuary profiles with datasets, which is often not the case for various reasons. Some cemeteries investigated in Hungary have anthropological data, but no archaeological context – for example, a part of the Ménfőcsanak cemetery, and the cemeteries of Kölesd, Ordacsehi, Hegyfalú, Ács, Tolna-Mözs, Ebes, Hajdúszoboszló, and others (Kiszelyné, Kiszely 1967; Zoffmann 2010; 2012; Tóth 2015; Balázs et al. 2015; Hornok, Tóth 2016, etc.). Similarly, there are cemeteries in Austria where children's graves have been discovered, but not all contextual data and mortuary profiles are known: e.g. the cemeteries of Franzhausen, Walpersdorf, Oberndorf, Pötsching, Herzogenburg, Ossarn, Petronell, Rassing, Göttlesbrunn, Inzersdorf (Ramsl 2010, Tab. 1; 2016; 2018; Karwowski, Czubak 2019; Morschhauser, Pollak-Schmuck 2021). One Romanian example is the bi-ritual cemetery of Fântânele – Dealul Iușului/La Gâta, with a published detailed anthropological analysis, but no finds as of yet (Berecki et al. 2022). There are other known cemeteries in southwestern Romania for which only anthropological data is available (Gál et al. 2021, 142, Tab. 13; 18; 23–24). On the other hand, the large cemetery of Mannersdorf includes nine graves that have no remains of the dead but are assumed to be children's graves based on the finds and the size of the grave pits (Ramsl 2011, graves 91, 94, 95, 97, 98, 146, 213, 216, 232). Bioarchaeological data from certain cemeteries in southwestern Slovakia should also be approached cautiously, since a significant number of graves have been defined as children's graves only in a general anthropological way, often without a precise determination of the child's age. Examples include the cemeteries of Maňa (Benadík 1983) and Chotín I (Ratimorská 1981), as well as cemeteries that were investigated at the

Tène cremation cemetery of Vajuga – Pesak in Iron Gates (Đerdap), 13 graves were discovered, with two of them recorded as containing children of the Infans I group. A small pot and a bowl covered by a large footed bowl served as urns (Popović 1991, Fig. 6: 3). Additionally, the site of Mokranjske Stene near Negotin in northeastern Serbia included the inhumation grave of a child aged around 1.5 years. This grave contained six vessels, with metal objects placed on top. The grave is dated to the Late La Tène, with parallels in southwestern Romania and northeastern Bulgaria (Popović, Kapuran 2011; Kapuran 2016, 203–204, Fig. 9–10; 2018, 86, Fig. 10).

³ For the largest cemeteries of the Taurisci, especially the one at Kapiteljska Njiva in Novo Mesto with more than 750 discovered graves (Križ 2005), anthropological data is also lacking. They are partially known for the cemeteries in Dobova and Brežice, but the majority of children's graves do not have complete data on the finds (Guštin 1984; Jovanović 2007; Hincak, Guštin 2011).

beginning of the second half of the 20th century, e.g. Horný Jatov, Hurbanovo, Dvory nad Žitavou II, Holiare, Kamenín, Bajč, Nebojsa, Svätý Peter (Benadík et al. 1957; Benadík 1960; Chropovský 1958; Dušek 1960; Rejholcová 1977). There is a similar situation with some previously investigated cemeteries in Austria, e.g. the cemeteries of Ossarn (Engelhardt 1969; Ramsel 2010, 92) or Au (Nebehay 1971).

For this reason, the comparisons of mortuary profiles of children's graves from the Zvonimirovo cemetery take into account only the Carpathian Basin cemeteries with a published complete bioarchaeological analysis. Although there is a noticeable chronological difference between Zvonimirovo and these cemeteries – where burials began at the beginning of the La Tène culture and lasted until the end of LT C1 at the end of the 3rd century BC – these are certainly important discoveries that open up numerous research questions. It can, perhaps, offer answers, at least partially, with an integrated approach to interdisciplinary studies of human remains, providing insights into the lives of past individuals, including children. In fact, by analysing the children's graves from Zvonimirovo and comparing them to the children's graves from the La Tène culture cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, we intend to investigate the position and role of children in the community/ies. How did the community treat children in funerary rites, and did they undergo the same mortuary treatment as adults? Were all children even buried in cemetery/ies? Are there variations in treatment based on a child's age? What items are present in children's graves and how numerous are they? Can we distinguish age-specific or gender-specific items when comparing them with adult graves? Based on the finds in children's graves, can we identify possible changes in how children were perceived throughout their life courses and how their social status might have changed in relation to material culture? Also, the results of anthropological analyses provide insights into possible pathological changes indicating the health of children and the potential causes of their premature deaths, while other analyses may shed light on the nutrition of children and their possible mobility. These are just some of the research questions that will be addressed in the analysis of children's graves from the Zvonimirovo cemetery and from other La Tène culture cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin (Fig. 1), utilizing available mortuary and contextual datasets.

CHILDREN'S GRAVES AT THE ZVONIMIROVO CEMETERY

Out of the 130 investigated cremation graves in Zvonimirovo, the anthropological analysis so far has been conducted for the cremated remains of the deceased from 81 graves, and a portion of the results has been published (Šlaus, Novak 2013),⁴ providing insights into the biological identity of the dead. It indicates that individuals of all age groups were buried at the cemetery, reflecting the population profile of the community (e.g. Eggli 2009; Burmeister, Gebühr 2018). So far, 12 graves with burials of children under the age of 14 have been identified across the entire area of the cemetery (Fig. 2), while one grave contained a male adolescent (Suppl. Table 1).⁵ Children in these graves were most commonly buried alone, as the only deceased in the grave (Suppl. Table 1) – graves LT 22, LT 27, LT 30, LT 34, LT 84, LT 108, LT 110, LT 111, LT 117.⁶ Their cremated remains were in a pile at the bottom of the grave pit (Fig. 3; 5–6). Only in grave LT 84, the cremated remains of a child, along with costume and jewellery items, were placed in a pot serving as an urn (Fig. 4).⁷ In two graves, the remains of a child were placed together with the cremated remains of an adult woman: grave LT 5 contained a woman aged 20–35 years and a child aged 5–8 years (Dizdar 2013, 399–400, Fig. 151, Pl. 11–12), and the damaged grave LT 52 contained a woman aged 25–45 years and a child less than 1 year old. In both graves, the cremated remains of

⁴ The anthropological analysis of graves investigated until 2006 was conducted by Academician Mario Šlaus and Dr. Mario Novak from the Department of Anthropology at the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Since 2007, it has been conducted by Dr. Mario Novak from the Institute for Anthropological Research.

⁵ Some of the graves (i.e. graves LT 22, LT 27, LT 52, LT 108, LT 117) were damaged by deep plowing, and the burial pits and finds are poorly preserved. Tables with data are available at the following link http://iza.zrc-sazu.si/pdf/razno/Dizdar_Suppl_Tables_AV_76_2025.pdf

⁶ In the first publication of grave LT 11, it is stated that the anthropological analysis showed that the remains of a man over 40 years old and a child aged 8 to 14 were buried in the grave (Dizdar 2004, 47), while in the publication in 2013 it is stated that a 20–to 25-year-old woman was buried in the grave (Dizdar 2013, 406–409; Šlaus, Novak 2013, 517). For this reason, this grave is not included in the group of graves with the burial of a child.

⁷ The only other grave at the Zvonimirovo cemetery where the cremated remains of a woman were placed in a bowl with costume and jewellery items is grave LT 86 (Dizdar 2016, 298).

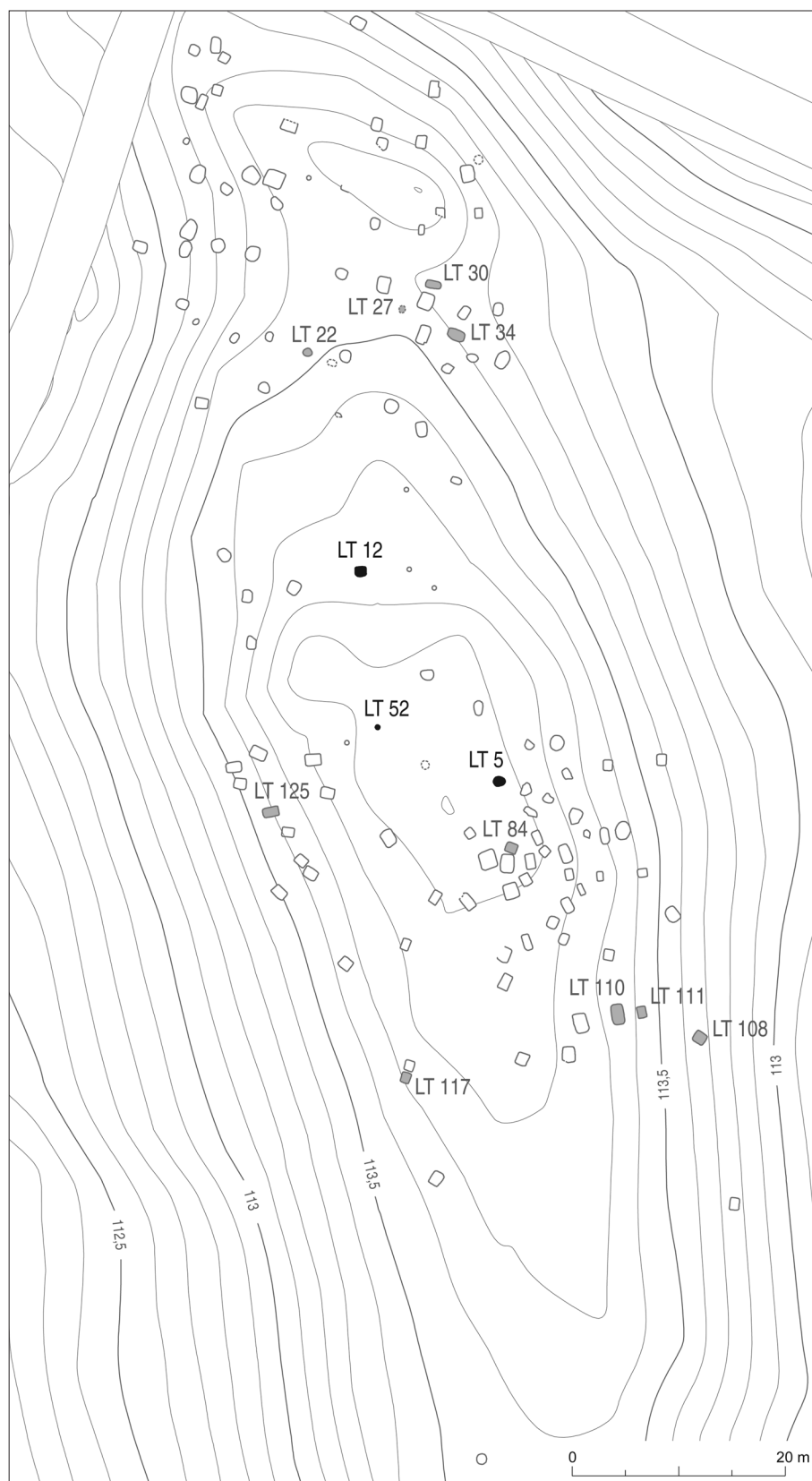


Fig. 2: Position of children's graves at the Zvonimirovo cemetery. Grey – grave with a single burial of a child; black – a grave with the burial of a child and an adult.

Sl. 2: Lega otroških grobov na grobišču Zvonimirovo. Sivo – grob s samostojnim pokopom otroka; črno – grob s pokopom otroka in odraslega pokojnika.

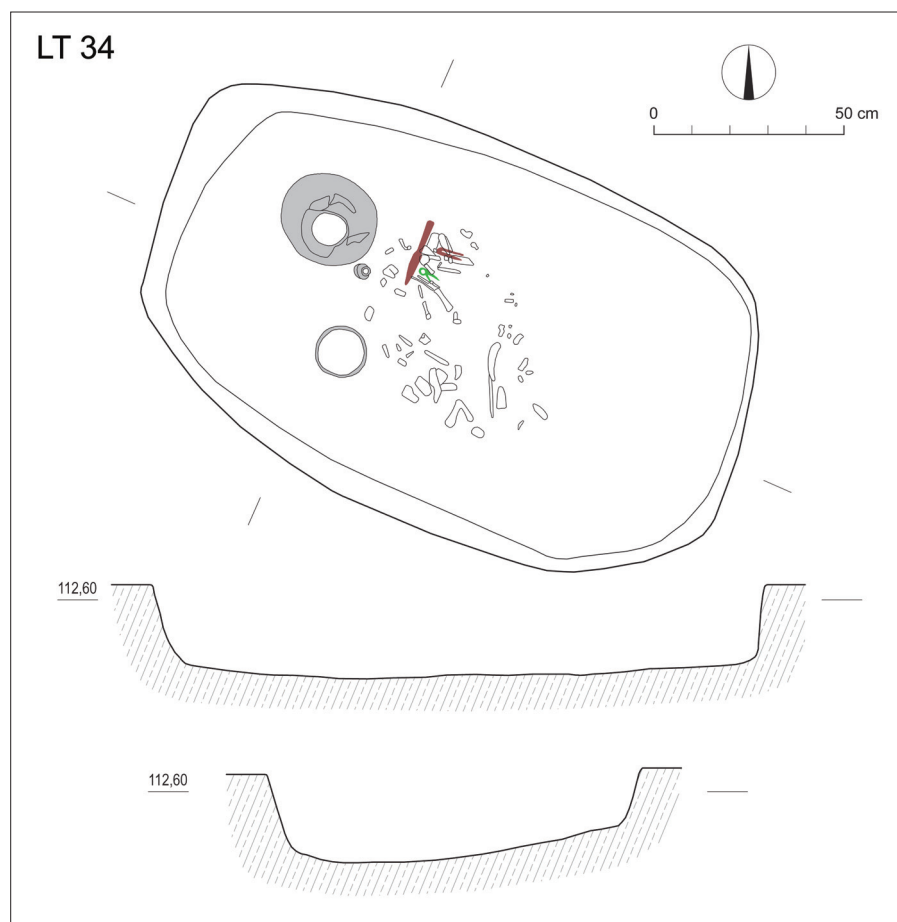


Fig. 3: Zvonimirovo cemetery. Ground plan of grave LT 34. Brown – iron object; green – bronze object; grey – pottery.
Sl. 3: Grobišče Zvonimirovo. Tloris groba LT 34. Rjavo – železni predmet; zeleno – bronasti predmet; sivo – keramika.

the child were in the same heap as the cremated remains of the woman, suggesting they were likely burned on a common pyre (Dizdar 2013, 38–39; 2016, 305). Grave LT 12 (Majnarić-Pandžić 2001) is a unique case, containing three deceased persons – a man aged 35–40 years with weaponry, a child aged 10–14 years, and a child aged under 1 year. The cremated bones were located in the eastern part of the grave, with two noticeable larger concentrations: the remains of the man were in the northeastern part, and those of the children were in the southeastern part (Dizdar 2013, 409–417, Fig. 157, Pl. 20–30; 2016, 305).

There have also been interesting insights into children's graves in other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin with known total numbers of found and anthropologically analysed graves. At the cemeteries of Ludas, Sajópetri, Dubník, and Pottenbrun, the graves with lone child burials are as numerous as those where the child is buried with an adult, usually a woman (*Suppl. Table 2*). In the Tiszavasvári and Palárikovo I cemeteries,

only burials of children, as the only deceased in the grave, were recorded, while in the Maňa, Malé Kosihy and Mannersdorf cemeteries these burials predominate. Only in the Mátraszőlős cemetery is the number of children burials with a woman or another adult greater. This confirms the observation that the most common form of double burials is the burial of an adult woman and a child (Berecki, Vaida 2017, 28–29). It can also be seen that children in the Zvonimirovo cemetery were not buried in a specific section of the cemetery (*Fig. 2*), which is the pattern observed in most other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin. So far, perhaps only the cemeteries of Dobova (Guštin 1984, 319, Fig. 8), Palárikovo I (Gardelková-Vrtelová, Benadík 2021, Map 9) and Inzersdorf (Morschhauser, Pollak-Schmuck 2021, 63–64, Fig. 1) have a larger number of children's graves in a specific part of the cemetery. Cemeteries in Switzerland have children's graves next to the graves of adults, forming family groups (Zweifel 2015, 123, Fig. 22–25). On the other hand, a higher number of

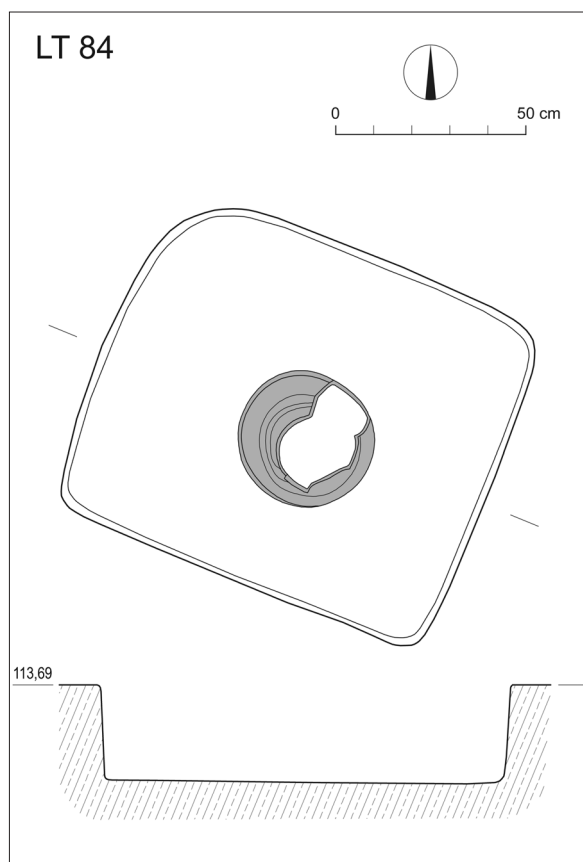


Fig. 4: Zvonimirovo cemetery. Ground plan of grave LT 84. Grey – pottery.

Sl. 4: Grobišče Zvonimirovo. Tloris groba LT 84. Sivo – keramika.

children's graves in comparison to the total number of graves have been recorded at the cemeteries of Basel – Gasfabrik⁸ (Rissanen, Alder 2011; Pichler et al. 2012; Rissanen et al. 2013; Pichler et al. 2013; 2015; 2017; Brönnimann et al. 2022) and Bern – Reichenbachstrasse⁹ (Jud, Ulrich-Bochsler 2014).

In the Zvonimirovo cemetery, the number of children's graves accounts for approximately 15%

⁸ At the cemeteries of Basel – Gasfabrik A and B, the share of children's graves is up to 65%, with children under the age of 6 making up 56% (Rissanen et al. 2013, 139; Pichler et al. 2013, 475, Tab. 1; 2015, 260–261, Fig. 4; 2017, 13–15).

⁹ At the Bern – Reichenbachstrasse cemetery, with 36 investigated graves, more than half belong to children (60%). Since no graves of men were found in the investigated part of the cemetery, it is assumed that this proportion would likely be around 30%. Almost three-quarters of the children (out of a total of 18) died before the age of 5, most of them between 3 and 5 years old, while there are no graves of newborns or children who died shortly after birth, as well as adolescents (Ulrich-Bochsler, Rüttimann 2014, 71–73, Fig. 70; Jud 2014, 100–101, Fig. 89).

of the sample analysed so far, which aligns with the observations that this proportion ranges from 10% to 25% in other cemeteries (*Suppl. Table 2*). J. Bujna notes that the proportion of children's graves in cemeteries with a large number of investigated graves is between 6% and 13% (Bujna 2019, 62). A similar proportion to Zvonimirovo has been recorded for the cemeteries of Ludas and Sajópetri in northeastern Hungary, Maňa in southwestern Slovakia, and Pottenbrunn in Lower Austria. These percentages are somewhat higher at the cemeteries of Tiszavasvári, Dubník, Palárikovo I, and Mannersdorf, and somewhat lower at the cemeteries of Mátraszőlös and Malé Kosihy (*Suppl. Table 2*). We can add the data for the Dürrenberg – Eilsfeld cemetery, where the proportion of children's graves is 10.8% (Wendling 2020, 66). These numbers suggest that children were a recognizable social group during the Late Iron Age, considering the assumptions that activities of children are not invisible at archaeological sites, but that material traces associated with children are hard to identify (e.g. Sofaer Dervenski 1994; 1997; Kamp 2001; Lillehammer 2000; 2002; 2010; Baxter 2005; 2008; Wileman 2005; Pawleta 2009; 2013; Coşkun 2015; Kamp 2015, etc.).

THE MORTUARY TREATMENT OF CHILDREN

All the graves in Zvonimirovo, including those of children, are cremation graves. The cremated remains of children, just like those of adults, are buried as a heap at the bottom of the grave pit, sometimes probably wrapped in fabric (*Fig. 3; 5–6*). Among the cremated bones, there are no traces of pyre residues, which seems to indicate that the bones were washed after collection. Costume and jewellery items are inside the heap, while ceramic vessels lie beside the cremated remains (Dizdar 2013, 32–33; 2016, 297–298; Dizdar, Ljuština 2019, 50). So far, only two graves at the cemetery contain cremated bones inside a ceramic vessel serving as an urn. In grave LT 86, the cremated remains of a woman with items of costume and jewellery were found in a bowl (Dizdar 2016, 298); in grave LT 84, the cremated remains of a child with items of costume and jewellery were found in a pot (*Fig. 4*). This indicates that children in the Zvonimirovo cemetery received the same mortuary treatment as adults (Dizdar 2013, 40–42; 2020a).

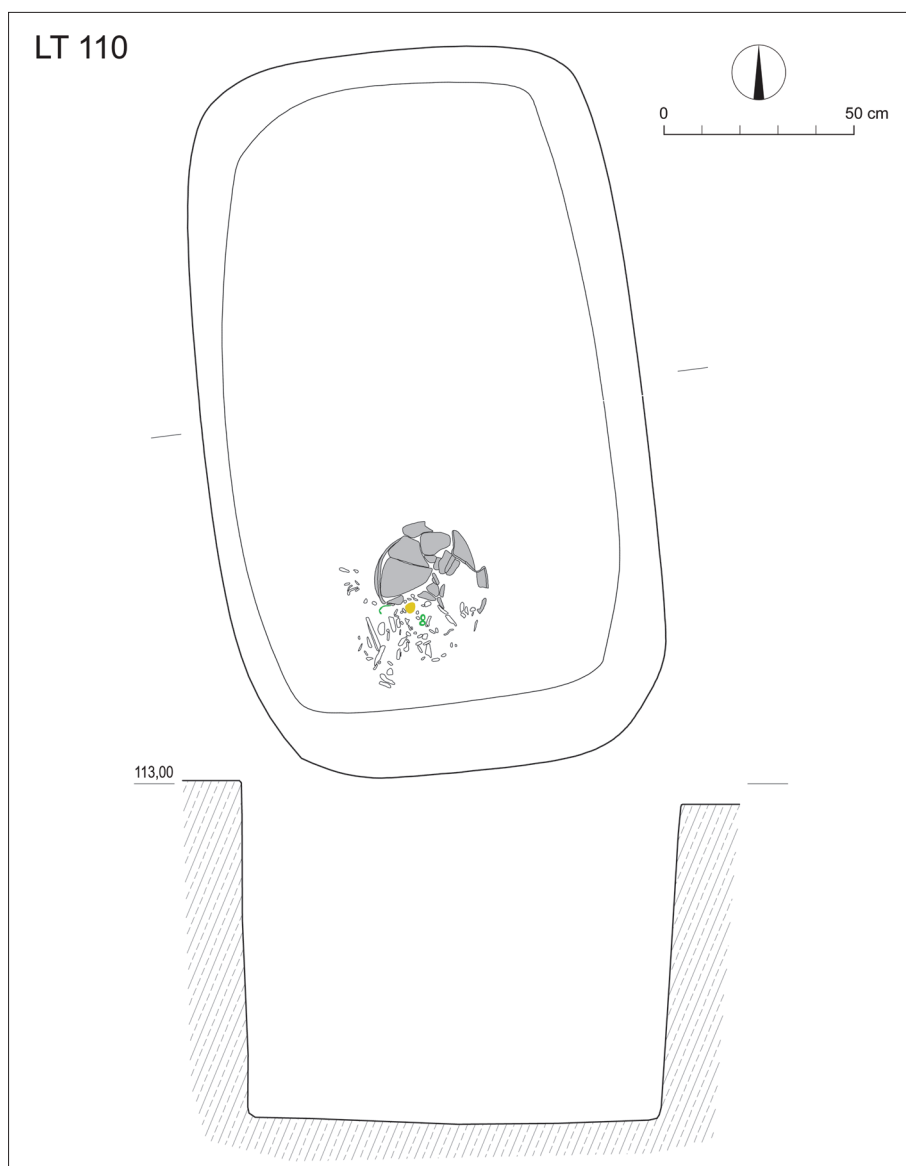


Fig. 5: Zvonimirovo cemetery. Ground plan of grave LT 110. Green – bronze object; yellow – glass object; grey – pottery.
 Sl. 5: Grobišče Zvonimirovo. Tloris groba LT 110. Zeleno – bronasti predmet; rumeno – stekleni predmet; sivo – keramika.

The grave pits containing the cremated remains of children had the same shapes and dimensions as those of adults. There are noticeable differences in depth among children's graves, ranging from shallow graves that were later damaged by cultivating the land to those up to 1.50 metres deep, such as grave LT 110 (Fig. 5). This grave stands out in terms of dimensions considering the number of finds discovered inside (Suppl. Table 1). Something similar has been noted for other cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, especially for cremation graves. In the case of children's inhumation graves, it can be observed that the grave pits could also be smaller to accommodate smaller bodies. However, there were also children's inhumation graves with

adult-sized grave pits, as documented in the Basel – Gasfabrik cemetery (Rissanen et al. 2013, 132; Pichler et al. 2013, 476; 2015, 261–262). There were interesting remains of a wooden coffin/casket in grave LT 30, where a child was buried. Remains of wooden burial architecture have been recorded in a few other graves of adults (Dizdar 2016, 303–304, Fig. 7; 12) and in other cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin. For instance, remains of a wooden coffin have been preserved in the Ludas cemetery, in double cremation grave 1139 with the burial of a newborn and a child aged 1–7 years (Szabó, Tankó 2012, 73, Fig. 115–116, Pl. XLVI: 5–6) and in grave 1157 with the burial of a child aged 1–7 years (Szabó, Tankó 2012, 76–77, Fig.

122–124, Pl. XLVIII: 4–12). In the Malé Kosihiy cemetery, in cremation grave 28 with the burial of a child aged 9–12 years, remains of wood, likely from a coffin, were discovered along the edges of the grave pit (Bujna 1995, 22–23, Fig. 10, Pl. 5: 1–11).

The laying of cremated child remains in a ceramic vessel serving as an urn has been documented in the Carpathian Basin in only a few children's graves or graves with an adult and a child. Otherwise, the deposition of cremated remains in an urn, not only for children but also for adults, has been recorded in a small number of graves in La Tène cemeteries. These graves are more numerous only in the eastern Carpathian Basin and in Moravia. Vessels of various shapes and often of larger dimensions were used as urns; these vessels also appear as grave goods (Dizdar 2016, 298–299; Repka 2020, 157). This is also evident from examples from cemeteries in northeastern Hungary. In the Tiszavasvári cemetery, in grave 23, the cremated remains of a child aged 0–2 years were found in a small pot together with the cremated bone of a sheep's leg (Almássy 1998, 61–62, Pl. XVI: 4). In the Ludas cemetery, in grave 686, the cremated remains of an adult man with weaponry were in the southern part of the grave, while the cremated bones of a newborn were partly placed in a ceramic vessel and partly with the remains of the man (Szabó, Tankó 2012, 28–30, Fig. 33–38). In the Sajópetri cemetery, in grave 3/3, the cremated remains of a child aged around 14 years were partly in the northern part of the grave and partly in a bowl (Szabó, Tankó 2018, 24–25, Fig. 13; Bózsing 2018, 249). In grave 20/75, containing an adult woman and a child aged 0–7 years, the cremated bones were in the middle of the grave and in a pot (Szabó, Tankó 2018, 45–47, Fig. 29; Bózsing 2018, 251–252). In the richly equipped grave 27/89, containing an adult woman and a child aged 1–7 years, the cremated bones were in two pots and around them, while costume and jewellery items were together with the cremated bones in both pots (Szabó, Tankó 2018, 52–56, Fig. 36, Pl. XVI: 13–14; Bózsing 2018, 252–253). This seems to indicate that the remains of the woman and the child were mixed in both pots: they were probably cremated together, and then their remains were placed in the pots together with the items. In a cremation grave from the Budapest – Rákospalota site, the cremated remains of a woman younger than 18 years were found in a pot covered with a bowl. The urn also contained a smaller pot with

a jug inside it, while a small bowl was next to an urn with fragments of metal objects (Nagy 1959, 336–338, Fig. 2–8). At the Malé Kosihiy cemetery, in grave 28, the cremated remains of a child aged 9–12 years were placed in the corner of the grave, with another small amount in a pot (Bujna 1995, 22–23, Fig. 10, Pl. 5: 11). In cremation grave 1/55 at the cemetery of Dvory nad Žitavou II, the cremated remains of what was probably a child according to the researcher (no anthropological analysis was conducted) were placed in a pot with leg bones at the bottom, then the torso, and finally the head bones on top. Costume and jewellery items were found in the grave together with the cremated bones; only the remains of a belt were around the neck of the pot (Benadík et al. 1957, 82–83, Pl. XXIX: 1–7, 11, 17). Also, grave 1 of tumulus 9 at the Lang – Schirka cemetery in Styria contained the cremated remains of a child aged 0–6 years placed in an urn together with a small axe (Mauthner 2021, 24, Fig. 3: 1–2; 2023, 66–67, Fig. 2–3).

What distinguishes children's graves from adult graves in the Zvonimirovo cemetery is the smaller quantity of cremated bones found in children's graves (*Suppl. Table 1*). This was partly influenced by the state of preservation of the graves, as several children's graves were damaged by cultivating the land. The anthropological analysis shows the presence of all body parts. The cremated bones of children, just like those of adults, are highly fragmented and dark grey but mostly white, indicating a high temperature of the pyre ranging from 400 to 650 °C (Šlaus, Novak 2013, 518). On the other hand, bronze and glass objects damaged by cremation seem to indicate higher burning temperatures (Dizdar 2013, 34–36, Fig. 8–9; 2016: 296–297, Fig. 1–2; 4), as documented at the Ludas cemetery (Tankó, Tankó 2012, 251, App. 1). The weight of cremated remains of children usually ranges up to 100 g, although it could be higher in some graves (e.g. the older child from grave LT 12) (*Suppl. Table 1*).¹⁰ It can be seen that the cremated remains of older children have greater weight, and we should certainly take into account the possibility that not all cremated remains were collected from the pyre. The recorded values correspond to the experimental results indicating that

¹⁰ In some graves, the weight of the cremated bones is greater (*Suppl. Table 1*), but the fragmentation in these graves made it impossible to distinguish the cremated children's bones from the cremated bones of animals (pigs).

the average weight of cremated children would be around 54 g for those aged 0–6 months and around 185 g for those aged 6–36 months. On the other hand, this shows that the bones of newborns and infants could also withstand exposure to high temperatures during cremation (Mays 1998; Jæger, Johansen 2014). Similar data on the weight of children's cremated remains have been documented at the cemeteries of Ludas and Sajópetri (Tankó, Tankó 2012; Tankó 2012; Bózsing 2018), as well as Hegyfalú (Balázs et al. 2015), again noting that probably not all cremated bones were collected from the pyre after cremation (Tankó, Tankó 2012, 251; Berecki et al. 2022, 54, 56). At the Ludas cemetery, it was observed that some children's graves lack skull bones (Tankó 2012, 213).

The cremated remains of children in most graves at the Zvonimirovo cemetery were accompanied by the cremated bones of young pigs or other unidentified animals, again probably pigs (*Suppl. Table 1*). The cremated animal bones have different weights and usually consist of parts of the head and front or hind legs (Radović 2013, 541–543; Dizdar 2016, 302–303). A similar funerary practice has been documented at the cemeteries of Ludas (Tankó, Tankó 2012, 254–255) and Sajópetri (Szabó, Tankó 2018; Bózsing 2018).

Double and multiple burials with the burial of a child

In the Zvonimirovo cemetery, the anthropological analysis has identified 12 graves with the burials of children under 14 years of age. Children were buried alone in nine graves and with adults in three graves (*Suppl. Table 1*). In two graves, the child was buried with an adult woman (graves LT 5 and LT 52), with the cremated remains of the child in the same heap as the cremated remains of the woman, suggesting a shared pyre (Dizdar 2013, 38–39; 2016, 305). Similar funerary practices have been documented in the Ludas cemetery, in graves 699, 725, and 1267, with burials of an adult woman and a child of the Infans I group (Tankó, Tankó 2012, 252, App. 1). On the other hand, cremation grave 62 at the Mátraszőlős cemetery contained an approximately 15-year-old male with weaponry and a child around 1 year old; their cremated remains were buried as two separate heaps (Almássy 2012, 134–136, Fig. 14, Pl. LXXII–LXXIV). The double graves at Zvonimirovo contained two adults, almost always a male and a female, the heaps of cremated

bones were always separate, each with its identifiable items of weaponry, costume, and jewellery. This suggests that the deceased were cremated on separate pyres and then buried together in the same grave (Dizdar 2013, 38–41; 2016, 304–306, Fig. 13–14). LT 12 is the only grave with the remains of three individuals: an adult male aged 35–40, a child aged 10–14, and an infant aged under 1 year. All their cremated bones were in the eastern part of the grave, with two major concentrations: the male's remains in the northeastern part and the children's remains in the southeastern part (Majnarić-Pandžić 2001; Dizdar 2013, 409–417, Fig. 157, Pl. 20–30; 2016, 305).

Similar discoveries about double or multiple burials (e.g. Boulestin, Duday 2006: 160–164; Boulestin 2022; Boulestin, Courtaud 2022, etc.) have been documented at other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, where bioarchaeological analysis results are known. Double burials during the Late Iron Age in the Carpathian Basin represent unique contexts (Berecki, Vaida 2017; Berecki et al. 2022, 54). Aside from the Zvonimirovo cemetery, individual burials of children aged around 1 year or younger have been recorded at only three cemeteries (*Suppl. Table 3*), as children of this age group were more commonly buried with adults, usually adult women (*Suppl. Table 4*). It is noteworthy that the development of the La Tène culture is marked by numerous burials of children younger than 1 year in settlement contexts, which will be specially considered. This is also noted by P. C. Ramsel, who emphasizes that children are buried in cemeteries only if older than 12 months and typically have their own burials if older than 4–5 years (Ramsel 2010, 88; 2018, 205).

Burials of children with adult women in two graves in Zvonimirovo have numerous parallels with other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin. Most often, these graves contain an adult woman and a child under the age of 7, and only rarely an adult man (*Suppl. Table 4*; 6). Burials of women and children in a shared grave are associated with motherhood, which played an important role in the course of life of every woman, but the relationship between mother and child during life is still poorly understood (Mays et al. 2017, 5; Rebay-Salisbury 2018a; 2018b, 40, 46; Gowland 2018). One possible testimony to this relationship is inhumation grave 9 from the Nyitra – Mlynárce cemetery, containing a woman aged 35–40 years in a crouched position with a 7–8-month-old child in her arms (Bujna 2019, 57–58, 60, Fig. 2–4, Pl. I–III). Three recently

found inhumation graves with a similar position of a woman and a child are also known. In grave 34 at the Walpersdorf cemetery, a woman about 25 years old held a newborn child in her right hand, whose head was resting on the woman's right shoulder (Morschhauser, Pollak-Schmuck 2021, 61). Two graves were found at the Inzersdorf cemetery. In grave 43, a 35–45-year-old woman hugged a few-month-old child with her right hand, and a similar position of the deceased is reported for grave 45 (Morschhauser, Pollak-Schmuck 2021, 64, Fig. 7 left).

In general, the double burial of a woman and a newborn is often linked to complications during childbirth or the health of the mother after childbirth both for the child and the mother, as it is assumed that as many as 15% of women could have died during pregnancy or childbirth (Rebay-Salisbury 2017a, 66; 2017b, 184). However, caution is needed when interpreting double burials of adult women and children as graves of mother and child; such graves do not necessarily indicate family ties, as other social relationships are also possible. Family ties in such cases may be confirmed through future analyses.

While graves with a woman and a child in La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin are more numerous, we will also mention the much rarer burials of an adult man with a child, the double burials of two children, and triple burials such as grave LT 12 in Zvonimirovo (*Suppl. Table 4*; 6; 8). Burials of an adult man with a child have been documented in several La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin (Ramsl 2010, 96; Berecki, Vaida 2017, 29); most often, they are burials of adult men with weaponry. At the Ludas cemetery, there are two such graves (686 and 725); one with an adult man and a newborn and the other with an adult man and a child of around 6 months (Szabó, Tankó 2012, 28–30, 37–38, Fig. 33–38; 51–51; Tankó 2012, 203; Tankó, Tankó 2012, 252–253, 257). A child of a similar age has been documented in the double grave 9/55 in the Sajópetri cemetery (Szabó, Tankó 2018, 31–32, Fig. 19; Bózsing 2018, 250). Double burials of a man and a child, usually aged 1 to 7 years, have also been recorded at the cemeteries of Kóny (Tóth 2015, 4), Jászberény (Kaposvári 1969, 178, Fig. 1: 1–3; 7: 2; 10: 1; 13: 2), Mátraszőlős (Almássy 2012, 134–136, Fig. 14, Pl. LXXII–LXXIV), possibly Bajč (Benadik 1960, 398, Pl. V: 8, 14, 17, 19), but also Pottenbrun, where the child in grave 5 was around 10 years old (Ramsl 2002, 27–28, 138, Fig. 14–15, Pl. 2; 29) and Mannersdorf, where the child burial in grave 60 is considered a secondary burial (Ramsl

2011, 54–55, 202, Pl. 80–83; 2010, 91, Fig. 8). One certain secondary burial was that of a child aged 5–10 years in grave 520 in the Pottenbrun cemetery, above the burial of a warrior with weaponry (Ramsl 2002, 43–45, 141, Fig. 36–39, Pl. 12; 58–61; 2010, 89, Fig. 5). It should also be noted that there is a large number of graves in the La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin where a child was buried alone but its age was not precisely determined (*Suppl. Table 9*). There is a significantly smaller number of graves where a child of indeterminate age was buried together with an adult (*Suppl. Table 10*). These are cemeteries investigated from the 1950s to the 1980s, when researchers often determined the age for inhumation burials.

During the development of the La Tène culture in the Carpathian Basin, another kind of rare burials were the double burials of two children, usually of different ages (*Suppl. Table 11*). In the Ludas cemetery, cremation grave 1139 contained a heap with the remains of a newborn and fragments of the skull of a child aged 1–7 years, while the other bones of the older child were missing, which makes it harder to interpret this grave as a double burial (Szabó, Tankó 2012, 73, Fig. 115–116, Pl. XLVI: 5–6; Tankó 2012, 208; Tankó, Tankó 2012, 252–253, 257). Inhumation grave 1380 at the Ménfőcsanak cemetery is an exceptional find: it contained two children lying on their side, one aged 1–2 years and the other aged 6–9 years (Tóth 2015, 6, 15, Fig. 4). A burial of two children, one aged 2–4 years and the other of undetermined age, is known from the Hejőkeresztúr cemetery (Hellebrandt 2006, 204, 206, Fig. 4: 1–5, 7–8; 7: 1–4); at the Gencsapáti cemetery, inhumation grave 912 contained a man aged 16–18 years and a woman/girl aged 10–14/16 years without any items (Ilon, Nagy 2010, 87, 89, Fig. 29). In fact, the latter case seems to be a burial of two adolescents. A double child grave has also been recorded at the Franzhausen cemetery. Inhumation grave 814 contained a child aged 9–11 years and one aged 4–5 years, both richly equipped with costume and jewellery items and two ceramic vessels (Ramsl, Nowotny 2020, 170–174, Fig. 2–7; 9, Pl. 1–3). At the Inzersdorf cemetery, in inhumation grave 90, the remains of two children, aged about 2 and 5 years, were also found, with ceramic vessels and animal bones that were located in the eastern part of the grave pit (Morschhauser, Pollak-Schmuck 2021, 64, Fig. 7 right). Finally, an inhumation grave in the Rassing cemetery contained two children (Preinfalk 2005, 94).

Regarding grave LT 12, there are a few other cases of triple or multiple burials in the La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin. These burials typically involve two adults and a child. The closest parallel is cremation grave 10a at the Dobova cemetery, from LT C1, containing the remains of a man and a woman and a bowl covering the remains of a child aged around 2 years. The grave contained weaponry and toiletries that seem to belong to the man and items of costume and jewellery belonging to the woman (Guštin 1981, 225, 229, Fig. 1: 2, Pl. 45–48; 1984, 315, 317, Fig. 4; 7–8; Hincak, Guštin 2011, 242). The damaged grave 65/140 in the Sajópetri cemetery contained the remains of an adult, an adult woman, and a child aged 2–4 years (Szabó, Tankó 2018, 98, Fig. 71, Pl. XLI: 1–4; Bózsing 2018, 257). Inhumation grave 20 in the Pötsching cemetery contained the remains of a woman and two children (Ramsl 2011, 25); a robbed inhumation grave in the Göttesbrunn cemetery contained the remains of a man, a woman, and a child (Karwowski, Czubak 2019, 72, Fig. 4). Grave 184-6 in the Ossarn cemetery contained an interesting discovery: the inhumation burial of a 25–30-year-old woman and, beside her head, a pot serving as an urn with the cremated remains of a woman and a child (Ramsl 2018, 206). The remains of four deceased persons – a woman, a child about 12 years old, a child about 5 years old, and a man – were discovered in a grave at the Kuffern cemetery, investigated in 1897 (Nebehay 1993, 20–21, Pl. 12). We should also mention grave 760 from the Ménfőcsanak cemetery, where two adult men with weaponry were buried one above the other, and two milk teeth attributed to a child were found at the western edge of the grave (Vaday, Tankó 2020, 490–492, Fig. 22).

Graves with two or more deceased persons, where at least one was a child, in the Zvonimirovo cemetery and in other cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, can be explained in different ways (e.g. Boulestin, Duday 2006, 160–164; Boulestin 2022; Boulestin, Courtaud 2022, 62–63). It is likely that they died at the same time or within a short time frame, but the cause remains unknown, especially when considering the poorly and partially preserved remains of the cremated dead, as is the case in Zvonimirovo. It can be assumed that graves with two or more deceased persons, including children, reflect social relations of various kinds between the buried individuals – probably family ties or connections during their lifetime, which made the community choose such an unusual mortu-

ary treatment. Indeed, the community burying them considered social ties important, which is reflected in shared burials and most clearly in the graves with a woman/mother and a child, indicating strong emotional ties (Rebay-Salisbury 2018b, 37–46). There is also the interesting hypothesis of sacrificing orphan children in case of no living adult family members and no one in the community taking responsibility for the child (Berecki, Vaida 2017, 34). On the other hand, graves containing two children might suggest siblings, especially if they were of different ages (Rebay-Salisbury 2018b, 40). Also, there is the interesting difference between double inhumation and cremation graves with the burial of a child and an adult. While inhumation graves have a clear distinction between the burial of a child and that of an adult, cremation graves have a more complex situation. As shown by examples from Zvonimirovo and other cemeteries, children were probably cremated on the same pyre as the adult, which is indicated by the fact that the cremated remains of both were found together on the same heap. It is improbable that they were cremated on separate pyres and then mixed during their deposition in the grave. One such case could be grave 686 from the Ludas cemetery, where the cremated remains of an adult male were found in the southern part of the grave, while the cremated bones of a newborn were partly placed in a ceramic vessel and partly mixed with the cremated bones of the man (Szabó, Tankó 2012, 28–30, Fig. 33–38). Another intriguing arrangement can be seen in grave 27/89 in the Sajópetri cemetery: the cremated remains of an adult woman and a child aged 1–7 years were placed in two pots serving as urns and around them (Szabó, Tankó 2018, 52–56, Fig. 36, Pl. XVI: 13–14; Bózsing 2018, 252–253). This seems to suggest that the woman and child were cremated together; otherwise, each urn would contain the remains of one individual along with their own items of costume and jewellery.

Secondary burials with the burial of a child

In La Tène cemeteries, there are a few examples of graves with an adult and a child where one of them was buried later (Ramsl 2010, 96), with the child usually being the one buried later. This is evidenced by the secondary burial of a child aged 5–10 years without any items, placed above a richly

equipped 45–55-year-old male with weaponry in grave 520 at the Pottenbrunn cemetery (Ramsl 2002, 43–45, 141, Fig. 36–39, Pl. 12; 58–61; 2010, 89, Fig. 5). Another such example of secondary burial is grave 60 at the Mannersdorf cemetery, where a child aged 4–5 years was buried next to an adult male with weaponry. The child was oriented in the opposite direction and richly equipped with costume and jewellery items (Ramsl 2011, 54–55, 202, Pl. 80–83; 2010, 91, Fig. 8). Secondary burials of children above men seem to be documented in the Jászberény cemetery as well (Kaposvári 1969, 178; Berecki, Vaida 2017, 29), while an example of a child without finds buried above a man and a woman has been recorded in grave 28 at the Maňa cemetery (Benadik 1983, 25). In the same cemetery, in grave 129, a child under 5 years of age was placed over the left side of the chest of a woman aged 17–22 years, possibly indicating another secondary burial (Benadik 1983, 60, Fig. 14, Pl. LII: 1–11). On the other hand, grave 20 in the Dubník cemetery contained a woman aged 50–60 years and a child aged 3–4 years, with the richly equipped woman placed above the child (Bujna 1989, 269–270, Fig. 25, Pl. XXIIA: 13–15; XXIII: 1–12). Secondary burials are particularly numerous at the Late Hallstatt and Early La Tène cemetery of Dürrenberg – Eisfeld, some spanning multiple generations (Wendling 2020, 64–65). The examples of these burials and discovery contexts suggest that the secondary burial was made with the knowledge of the position of the older burial that had to be reopened, indicating a social tie between the deceased (Boulestin, Courtaud 2022, 63–67) or a personal and emotional tie between the deceased and the mourners (Ramsl 2018, 209; Wendling 2020, 64–65). This tie was probably familial, although the time and cause of death may not have been the same (Rebay-Salisbury 2018b, 38). However, there are other possible explanations, such as opening the grave for object handling or for religious reasons (Ramsl 2018, 209).

Children's burials at La Tène settlements

As already mentioned, the development of the La Tène culture is marked by numerous examples of child burials in settlement contexts, typically involving newborns up to 3 months old or children up to 1 year old and rarely including finds. These burials are interpreted in different

ways, but they undoubtedly represent a common burial practice for this age group (Endlich 1998, 380; Wiltshcke-Schrotta 1999; Krausse 1998; 2002; Beilke-Voigt 2008; 2010; 2013; 2018; Ramsl 2010; 2018; Trebsche 2012; 2013; 2020, 424; Kamp 2015, etc.). The commonness of this burial practice during the development of the La Tène culture might be indicated by the small number of graves of children of this age group in Zvonimirovo and other cemeteries (*Suppl. Table 3–4*).

Currently, the only known example of a child burial in a settlement in the area inhabited by the Scordisci comes from Gomolava: a child aged 3–4 years was buried at the bottom of a Late La Tène pit with a man aged 25–35 years and a woman aged 44–48 years. They were covered with fragments of millstones and oats, and the child was placed next to the woman. The man's head was partly burnt, as well as the head and thigh of the woman. At the bottom of the pit, there were potsherds and one intact kantharos placed next to the woman's left forearm. A luxurious bronze fibula of the Gomolava type was also found near the woman's left forearm (Jovanović, Jovanović 1988, 53–58, 173–177, App. 7, Fig. 14–17, Pl. XLIII: 1–5; XLIV: 1–5; XLV: 1–4). Numerous examples of child burials within settlements are known from the area of the 'Daco-Getic' culture in the eastern Carpathian Basin and the Lower Danube. They are dated throughout the Late Iron Age, from the 4th century BC to the Roman conquest at the beginning of the 2nd century AD. At the Ostrovul Șimian site in the Iron Gates region, there were documented inhumation remains of two children within the settlement (Popilian 1999, 63, Fig. 11). This practice of burying children within settlements is considered a tradition dating back to the beginning of the Iron Age in this region. In terms of burials within settlements, there are adult burials too, but in over 60% of the cases they are burials of children, typically under the age of 7. In pits, children might be buried alone, but sometimes they were buried with an adult, and sometimes several people were placed in the same pit. There are often just a few body parts, suggesting their exposure after death or the manipulation of their remains. Possible reasons for such burials are higher child mortality or maybe even child sacrifice, but it is certain that children underwent special mortuary treatment. There are few finds, mostly costume and jewellery items, while the fills of such pits contain mostly potsherds. The majority of these burials are dated to the 1st century BC and the 1st

century AD (Sîrbu 1993, 31–36; 1997, 196–197, Fig. 1; 2008, 72–77, Fig. 5.1; Sîrbu et al. 2006, 192–193, Fig. 9–11; Sîrbu, Dăvîncă 2013, 194–198, Tab. 2; 2014, 366–371; 2016, 322–324, 328–331; Dăvîncă 2013). It is important to note that the cemeteries in this region include both inhumation and cremation graves of children, which rarely contain finds (Sîrbu, Dăvîncă 2013, 192–194, Tab. 1). One particularly interesting case is the Grădina – Castelului Plateau in Hunedoara, the site of a 'sacred necropolis', an unusual cemetery. It contained 53 individuals, with as many as 39 children's inhumation burials: 38 of the Infans I age group and only one of the Infans II age group. Most children were buried alone, but there were also graves with several children or with an adult (sometimes cremated), but some cases included only fragments of children's bodies. The finds are few and include costume and jewellery items, rarely a spear, and no ceramic vessels. This burial treatment is believed to represent sacrificial or ritual burials of children during the period before the Roman conquest in the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century AD (Sîrbu et al. 2006, 188–194, Fig. 1; Sîrbu 2008, 71–83, Fig. 5.4; Kelemen et al. 2012, 412–413; Sîrbu, Dăvîncă 2013, 200–203).¹¹

The remains of children are found in large numbers inside and around the houses of the Ramsautal settlement in Dürrnberg, dated from LT A to LT C. It is believed that the children were buried within the settlement because they were not full members of the community yet (Wiltschke-Schrotta 1999; Karl, Löcker 2011, 37–43). Examples of burials of both children and adults are also known from the Late La Tène settlement of Basel – Gasfabrik. They include completely preserved bodies of children and adults (a total of 28 individuals), but more commonly just their parts, dominated by long bones and skull fragments. Human bones are found in various contexts, with pits containing from 1 to 9 individuals. The anthropological analysis indicates that only one-third of the dead were under the age of 20, and their remains are found in contexts with some of the adults.¹² On the other hand, the proportion of children's graves

in cemeteries is much higher, indicating culturally determined selectivity in the burial of children. Some remains displayed traces of violence, cutting, and dog bites. The human remains from the settlement were certainly subjected to various kinds of peri-mortem and post-mortem manipulations (Rissanen et al. 2013, 129, 131, 136–137, Fig. 8; Pichler et al. 2013, 474, 478–481, Tab. 2, Fig. 1; 4; 2015, 259, 266–268, Fig. 8; 2017, 13–15; Brönnimann et al. 2022, 130–138, Fig. 18; 22; 24–25).

The insights into the burial practices of newborns in La Tène settlements raise numerous questions, such as: Why were some children buried in settlements and others in cemeteries? Were all children buried? What happened to the bodies of other fetuses and newborns? Documented findings on the burial of children in La Tène settlements suggest – considering the number of children's graves in cemeteries, especially the youngest ones (*Suppl. Table 3–4*) – that burial practices were selective during the La Tène culture. This also shows that, apparently, there were at least two phases in childhood. It seems that the youngest children (up to 1 year) were most often considered too young to be buried in the cemetery of the community to which they belonged; they were buried with adults in the cemetery only if older than one year (Ramsel 2010, 88; Zweifel 2015, 125). Newborns who died during childbirth or shortly thereafter were perhaps not considered members of the community, which probably had its own norms regarding who could be considered part of it and thus eligible for burial in the cemetery (Mays 2000; 2014, 101). Maybe the deceased newborn was important only to the family and not to the community; by being buried close to the house, it continued to live with them (Murphy, Le Roy 2017). If a newborn survived the critical moments after birth and the community accepted it, perhaps this influenced its right to be buried in the cemetery. This might be reflected by the graves of children under 1 year of age, which were buried more often with an adult, however.

CHILDREN'S AGE GROUPS

The analysis of children's graves in the Zvonimirovo cemetery shows that all age groups are represented (*Suppl. Table 1*). The same has been recorded in other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin where anthropological analysis results are available (*Suppl. Table 2–8*); additional information may come from cemeteries where the age of children

¹¹ A. Rustoiu doubts the contexts and interpretation of this site (Rustoiu 2016b, 321, n. 15; 2019, 224–225, n. 651).

¹² If we include in the analysis not only the dead from the settlement, but also the data from cemeteries A and B, we get the remains of 31 children: 11 premature fetuses or stillborn infants, 4 newborns, 15 children of the Infans I age group, and only 1 child from the Infans II age group.

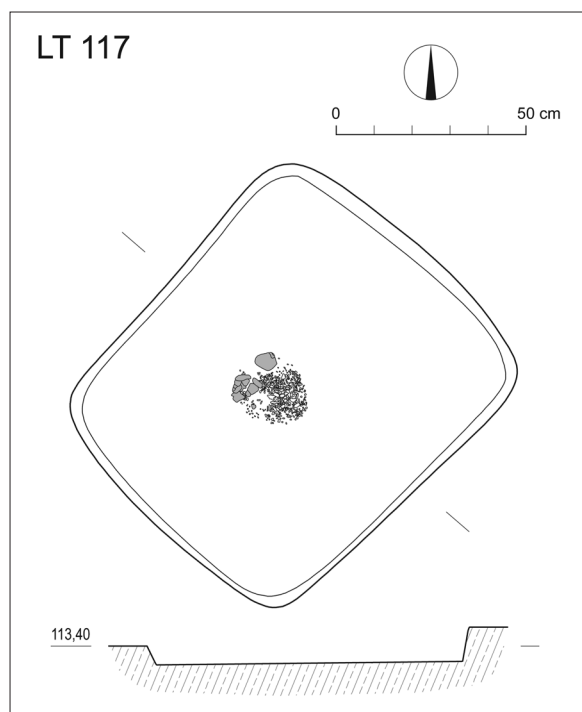


Fig. 6: Zvonimirovo cemetery. Ground plan of grave LT 117. Grey – pottery.

Sl. 6: Grobišće Zvonimirovo. Tloris groba LT 117. Sivo – keramika.

has not been precisely determined (*Suppl. Table 9–10*). Children in the Zvonimirovo cemetery are divided into three age groups: children under 1 year, children aged 1 to 7 years, and children aged 8 to 14 years. These age groups – Infans I (0–7) and II (8–14) – are recognized in anthropological analyses for the cemeteries of Ludas (Tankó 2012, 212) and Sajópetri (Bózsing 2018, 248), which served as examples for studying children's graves from Zvonimirovo. With some minor differences, a similar age determination is used in anthropological analyses in central Europe.¹³ This allows for the study of how a specific age is related to funerary practice and material legacy (Rebay-Salisbury, Pany-Kucera 2020, 3) and the identification of biological and cultural determinants for each life phase of children (Thompson et al. 2014, 2).

At the Zvonimirovo cemetery, children under the age of 1 were buried alone in graves LT 108 and LT 117 (Fig. 6); a child of this age was buried

with an adult woman in grave LT 52 and with an adult man, and a child aged 10–14 years in grave LT 12. Children who passed away between the ages of 1 and 7 were buried in graves LT 30 (5–7 years), LT 84 (4–6 years) (Fig. 4), LT 110 (0–5 years) (Fig. 5), LT 111 (0–5 years), and the double grave LT 5 (5–8 years). Children who died between the ages of 8 and 14 were buried in graves LT 22 (12–15 years), LT 27 (12–15 years), LT 34 (5–12 years) (Fig. 3), and in the triple grave LT 12 (10–14 years).

In the Zvonimirovo cemetery, but also in other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, a distinct group consists of graves in which children up to 1 year of age were buried. This age group has already been discussed when examining child burials in different contexts within the La Tène settlements (Ramsl 2010, 88; Zweifel 2015, 125; Trebsche 2020, 424). In the Zvonimirovo cemetery, two graves contain a single burial of a child in this age group, and two others contain a child buried alongside an adult (*Suppl. Table 1*). Single burials of children under 1 year of age in La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin are also rare (*Suppl. Table 3*).¹⁴ These graves demonstrate that even the youngest children were buried with respect, and therefore probably accepted as members of the community. This was perhaps influenced by their belonging to a family that stood out in the community or by some other culturally determined reason which is unknown to us. On the other hand, burials of children in this age group alongside adults have been recorded in significantly greater numbers, most often with an adult woman (*Suppl. Table 4*). There is an interesting result of the $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$ strontium isotope analysis in the case of the richly equipped woman aged 50–60 years from grave 21 in the Dubník cemetery, who was buried with a newborn without any artefacts (Bujna 1989, 270–271, Fig. 26, Pl. XXIV: 1–12; XXVA: 13–20). This indicates that the overall number of graves of children under 1 year old in cemeteries is small, especially considering their mortality rate. This may suggest that the absence of this age group in cemeteries was selective, as seemingly evidenced by numerous burials of children of this age in settlements (Ramsl 2010, 88; Beilke-Voigt 2018,

¹³ After the German anthropological convention, which uses the following age categories: Fetus/Neonatus (newborn: up to three months), Infans I (early childhood, 0–6 years), Infans II (late childhood, 8–14 years), Juvenis (adolescence, 15–20). See somewhat different data in: Buckberry 2018, 56–64, Tab. 3.1; also: Halcrow, Ward 2018.

¹⁴ At the Ludas cemetery, cremation grave 1051 contained the remains of a child around 1 year old and the cremated bones of an adult's head, possibly as the remainder from a collective pyre (Szabó, Tankó 2012, 65–67, Fig. 102–104, Pl. XXXVIII; XXXIX: 1–4; Tankó 2012, 208; Tankó, Tankó 2012, 252–253, 257).

82–83; Trebsche 2020, 424). It is assumed that the expected mortality rate for children, as the most vulnerable group, was around 50% during prehistory, with infant or child mortality during the first year ranging from 20% to 30%. Children had a higher risk of mortality, especially in the early stages of life, due to various diseases, infections, nutrition, etc. The most critical times are considered to be the pregnancy, childbirth, and the first seven days after birth (e.g. Goodman, Armelagos 1989; Scott 1999; Chamberlain 2006; Lewis 2007; 2011; 2016; Redfern 2007; Bacvarov 2008; Fahlander 2011; Finlay 2013; Gilmore, Halcrow 2014; Kamp 2015; Murphy, Le Roy 2017; Halcrow et al. 2017, etc.). The causes are found in weaker immunity and stressful changes to which children were exposed (Rebay-Salisbury 2017a, 67; 2017b, 175; 2018a, 94, 99; Wendling 2020, 66; Avery et al. 2022, 4). Also, it can be seen that a larger number of women usually die around the age of 20, which is associated with pregnancy and postpartum issues. The fact that women often died young, around the age of 20, has been shown by analyses of investigated cemeteries in Brežice (Hincak, Guštin 2011, 244–245), Malé Kosihiy (Bujna 2019, 62), and Dürrnberg (Wendling 2020, 67–68).

In the Zvonimirovo cemetery (*Suppl. Table 1*) and in cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, there is a significantly larger number of graves of children of the next age group (1–7 years), which can be explained by the integration of children of this age into the community. It can be seen that this age group has a larger number of graves in which the child is alone (*Suppl. Table 5*) compared to the graves where children of this age were buried with an adult,¹⁵ usually a woman (*Suppl. Table 6*) (Ramsl 2010, 96). In rare cases, a grave contained three individuals including a child of this

age group. There are notable differences between specific cemeteries when comparing the number of single burials of children and the number of burials together with adults (*Suppl. Table 2*). In all cemeteries except for Malé Kosihiy, the graves of children of this age group are more numerous than those of the older age group (*Suppl. Table 2*). The largest number of graves of children of this age group is known from the Palárikovo I cemetery, where each child was buried alone, and from the Mannersdorf cemetery. Interestingly, the bi-ritual grave 345/B in the Ménfőcsanak cemetery was above a bi-ritual double grave, 345/A. It is the inhumation burial of an adult woman, with the cremated remains of a child aged 0.5–5.5 years placed next to the woman's head (Vaday, Tankó 2020, 458–461).

When analysing the graves of children aged 8–14 years, differences are again noticeable. There are four such graves at the Zvonimirovo cemetery (*Suppl. Table 1*), with the triple grave LT 12 probably including a girl aged 10–14 years. Graves of children of this age group are known in large numbers from other cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin (*Suppl. Table 2*). Children of this age group were most often alone in the grave (*Suppl. Table 7*), as shown by some graves from the Ménfőcsanak cemetery (Tóth 2015, 15–16). The graves where children aged 8 to 14 years were buried with an adult, again most often with a woman, are significantly fewer than the previous age group (*Suppl. Table 8*).

The results of the analysis show that, after higher mortality up to 1 year of age, children continued to represent a vulnerable group in the community, susceptible to various diseases leading to increased mortality. One probable reason is the part of the course of life when children ceased to be breastfed and began a normal diet, which happened between 1.5 and 4 years of age (Knipper et al. 2017; Mays et al. 2017, 6–8)¹⁶ and probably affected their immunity (Ulrich-Bochsler, Rüttimann 2014, 73; Halcrow, Ward 2018). Also, the investigation of the Late La Tène settlement of Basel – Gasfabrik and two nearby cemeteries has shown that the majority of children died before the age of 4 (Rissanen et al. 2013, 136–137, 139–140; Pichler et al. 2015, 261; 2017, 13). A higher number of child deaths is also noticeable in an older age group – between 8 and

¹⁵ Double burials of a child aged 1–7 years with some of the adults are also known from the Franzhausen cemetery, graves 53 and 330, containing the remains of a woman and a child (Ramsl 2011, 25), but without specifying the age of the deceased or documenting archaeological finds; at the Au cemetery, there are graves 3 and 10 with a woman and a child (Nebehay 1971, 141–142, 147–148, Fig. 5, Pl. I: 8; II: 2–11; V: 8–9; VI: 2–4), but without specifying the age of the children. Similarly, at the Göttlesbrunn cemetery, the looted inhumation grave 11 is described as a burial of a woman and a child of an undetermined age (Karwowski, Czubak 2019, 72, Fig. 4). Double burials of a woman and a child are also known from the Walpersdorf and Inzersdorf cemeteries (Morschhauser, Pollak-Schmuck 2021, 61, 64, Fig. 7).

¹⁶ For information on different diets in childhood and adulthood, see e.g. the results of analyses for the Seminario Vescoville cemetery in northeastern Italy, dating from the 3rd to the 1st century BC: Laffranchi et al. 2022, 522.

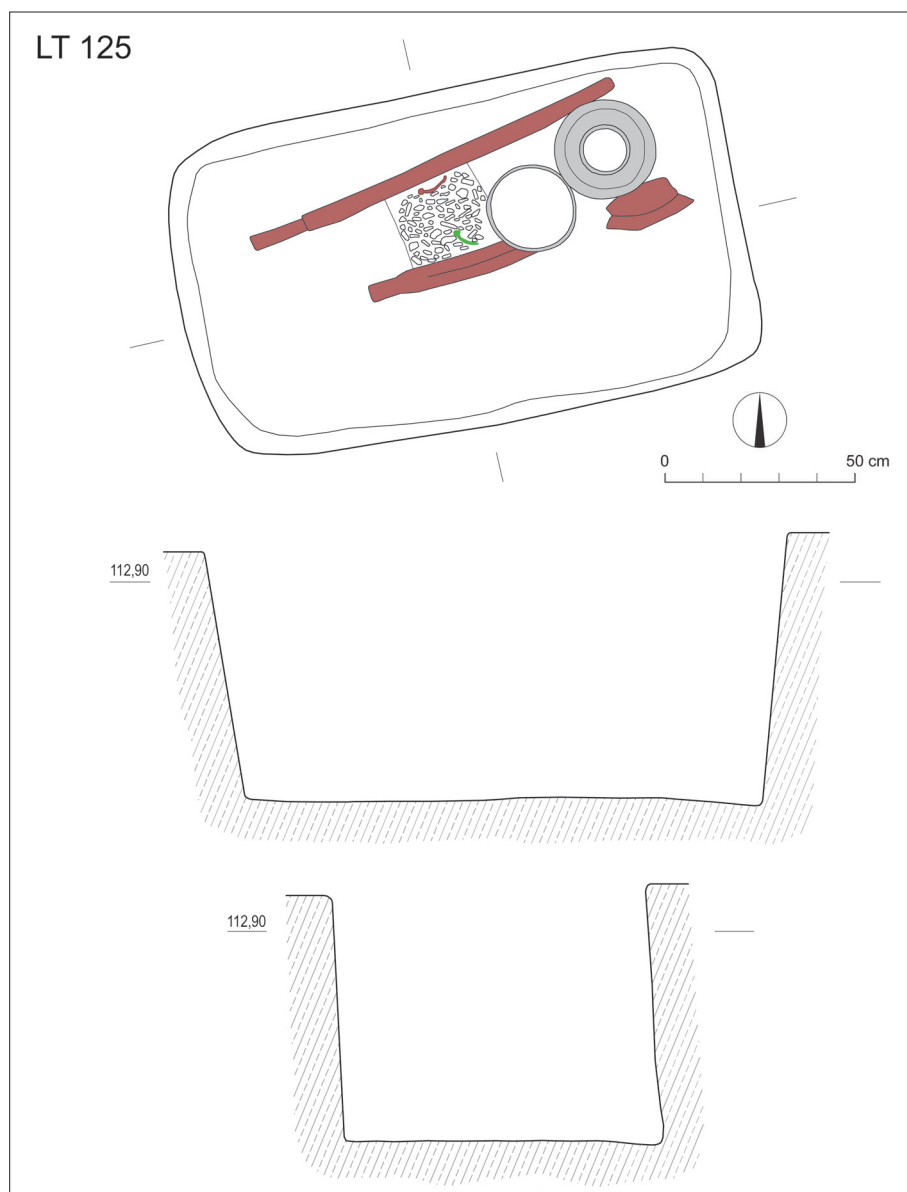


Fig. 7: Zvonimirovo cemetery. Ground plan of grave LT 125. Brown – iron object; green – bronze object; grey – pottery.
 Sl. 7: Grobišče Zvonimirovo. Tloris groba LT 125. Rjavo – železni predmet; zeleno – bronasti predmet; sivo – keramika.

11 years – which is associated with entering puberty and the increase in work activities performed by children of that age. A decrease in mortality occurs towards the end of childhood and in adolescence (Ulrich-Bochsler, Rüttimann 2014, 71–73; Jud 2014, 100–101), as evidenced by the number of graves of this age group at Zvonimirovo and other cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin (*Suppl. Table 2*).

Graves of adolescents at La Tène cemeteries

In addition to the children's graves in Zvonimirovo, graves of adolescents aged 15 to 20 are

particularly interesting. According to some earlier remarks, these adolescents were already considered adult members of the community (Dizdar 2013, 40–41; 2020a, 133), with their social age showing significant differences compared to younger deceased persons. For now, only one such grave has been identified at the Zvonimirovo cemetery (*Suppl. Table 1*) – LT 125, where a 14–18-year-old male was buried (Fig. 7). The grave included weapons (sword, spear, shield boss), costume items, and ceramic vessels. Thus, the mortuary profile of this individual significantly differs from the graves of children, and its items resemble those in the graves of adult males in the cemetery.

Graves of this age group (juveniles, 15–18/20 years) have been recorded in all cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, where they are notably fewer compared to children's graves. They are slightly more numerous at the cemeteries of Sajópetri, Dubník, Maňa, Malé Kosihy, and Fântânele – Dealul Iușului//La Gâța, and less numerous at the cemeteries of Ludas and Palárikovo I (*Suppl. Table 2*). Also, double graves with an adult and an adolescent or two adolescents are rare.¹⁷ The reason might be the fact that adolescents are the healthiest part of the community, which could explain their underrepresentation in cemeteries (Avery et al. 2022, 3–4).¹⁸

Similar to grave LT 125, it can be observed that males of this age group often have weapons placed in their graves (*Suppl. Table 12*). Grave 16 in the Dobova cemetery probably contained a male under 20 years of age, buried with a spear, a spear butt, two fibulae, and vessels (Guštin 1984, 330; Hincak, Guštin 2011, 249). Also, grave 39 in the Pećine cemetery near Kostolac contained an individual aged 16–17 with two bracelets on the left forearm and an iron spear and a knife next to the head (Jovanović 2018, 94–95, Pl. 49). Males of this age group in cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin are often equipped with a sword in scabbards, a spear, and a shield, which never appear in such combinations in the graves of children, who only rarely had a spear placed in their graves. There is the interesting idea that these young warriors were organized into warrior groups, which are a cross-cultural phenomenon, potentially representing the military force of the community (Wendling 2013). The graves contain numerous costume items and ceramic vessels, and exceptionally other types of items, as seen in grave 904 in the Ludas cemetery, containing a male, aged around 20, who was also involved in craftsmanship (Szabó, Tankó 2012, 46–47, Fig. 67–68, Pl. XXIV–XXVI). Few graves of men of this age have no finds (e.g. Bujna 1989,

252–253, Fig. 7). Similarly to the graves of adolescent males, the graves of women (or girls) of this age group often have more costume and jewellery items than children's graves (*Suppl. Table 12*). This would already designate them as adult community members, with some being richly equipped, and only rarely without any items (e.g. Gardelková-Vrtelová, Benadík 2021, 215, Pl. XVIII: 2). Along with grave LT 22 (Dizdar 2020a), another interesting example is the triple grave LT 12 with a girl aged 10–14 who was equipped with costume items like an adult woman and buried together with a child under 1 year of age. Perhaps this girl had already given birth, leading to her death and the death of the child.

The results of the analysis of mortuary profiles of adolescents in cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, especially when compared to those recorded in children's graves, raise an interesting question of the relationship and connection between the biological and the sociological age of the deceased (Halcrow, Tayles 2008; 2011). Can those aged 14 to 15 in the Zvonimirovo cemetery be considered, given their status in the community, as already adult individuals who could enter into marital unions (Dizdar 2013, 40–41; 2020a, 133)?¹⁹ This is probably connected to puberty, which girls typically undergo between the ages of 10 and 13, and boys between the ages of 12 and 16 (Rebay-Salisbury, Pany-Kucera 2020, 3), and the onset of fertility, around the age of 14 for girls (Hofmann 2014, 31–36; Rebay-Salisbury 2017a, 63; 2017b, 184). This transition from childhood to adolescence in the course of a life, recognizing both biological and social changes, may have represented the crucial phase in the life cycle, initiating a new social role of each individual within the family and the community (e.g. Sofaer Derveniski 1994; 2000; Sofaer 2004; 2011; Gowland 2006; Thompson et al. 2014, etc.) and bringing certain privileges and responsibilities (Appleby 2011, 233; Avery et al. 2022). The change in social age, which was undoubtedly a significant step in everyone's life, was probably emphasised through specific rites of passage accompanying the changes occurring in the life of each individual

¹⁷ Grave 912 in the Gencsapáti cemetery contained a 16–18-year-old male and a 10–14/16-year-old girl without any items (Ilon, Nagy 2010, 87, 89, Fig. 29); at the Inzersdorf cemetery, grave 282 contained a 31–40-year-old man and a younger individual aged 13–18 years, with few items (Neugebauer 1996, 121–122, Pl. 5; 11; 20; 33; 37: 1, 3); the burial of two underage females in grave 18 at the Oberndorf cemetery (Ramsl 2018, 205).

¹⁸ The larger number of graves listed in *Suppl. Table 12* is partly based on the fact that the results of the anthropological analysis for certain cemeteries just indicated a younger person.

¹⁹ Regarding a similar age when it was allowed to enter into marriage, which was legally set at 12 years old, or when certain ceremonies (rites of passage) marked the transition to becoming an adult member of the Roman society, see: Treggiari 1991; Evans Grubbs 2002; Revell 2005; Sinobad 2005; Hopkins 2011; Larsson Lovén 2020, etc.

(Gilchrist 2004; Gowland 2006; Garwood 2007; 2011; Wendling 2013, 11–12; Grove, Lancy 2015; 2018; Nizzo 2018), since mortuary profiles show a clear difference between the graves of children and adolescents, while there are no significant differences between the graves of children of different ages. These unknown rites of passage, often probably symbolically marked, thus connected two different biological and social ages in a life course as social and cultural constructs (Gowland 2006; Baxter 2008, 163; Thompson et al. 2014, 2; Grove, Lancy 2015; 2018; Murphy, Le Roy 2017, 5; Ramsel 2018, 201, 209; 2020, 159).

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Even though the cremated remains of children at the Zvonimirovo cemetery are poorly preserved, the anthropological analysis of specific remains identified certain pathological changes indicating the biological profile of the child (Halcrow, Ward 2018). In the case of the older child from grave LT 12, a mild and healed *cribra orbitalia* was observed in the right orbit (Šlaus, Novak 2013, 517). The child buried in grave LT 30 exhibited severe active periostitis on the medial diaphyses of the long bones (most likely the femur). Hypoplasia of dental enamel on the maxillary canine was also observed. The presence of these defects is associated with severe vitamin deficiencies, neonatal jaundice, anaemia, infectious diseases, or chronic malnutrition (Šlaus, Novak 2013, 519). Also, the child from grave LT 52 had severe active periostitis on the distal third of the femoral diaphysis according to the analysis by M. Novak.

With regard to the so far known data, examples of observed pathological changes on the children's remains from the La Tène culture cemeteries are given. A Late La Tène grave at the site of Mokranjske Stene contained the inhumation remains of a child around 1.5 years old where changes were observed on the thigh bones, indicating malnutrition that could have led to death (Popović, Kapuran 2011, 299). The double grave 699 in the Ludas cemetery contained the cremated remains of a child around 1 year old where hyperostosis was noticed on the femur (Tankó 2012, 203, 215–216). On the other hand, pathological changes are more easily identified in children's inhumation graves, such as the double child grave 814 from the Franzhausen cemetery. The anthropological analysis revealed several pathological changes indicative of a lack

of vitamin C and iron, contributing to scurvy and facilitating infectious diseases. There were also perimortal traumas on the skulls, probably caused by violence (Ramsel, Nowotny 2020, 176–181). The inhumation remains of children from the cemetery of Palárikovo I are described as poorly preserved with poorly developed muscle attachments (Jakab 2016). The remains of the child around 9–10 years old from grave 22 displayed *ossa suturae lambdoidea*, *os suturae sagittalis*, *sutura metopica* at the root of the nose, a noticeably large neurocranium (hydrocephalus?), *foramen arcuale lat. dx.* and a cleft in the posterior arch C I, along with some other observations on the leg bones (Jakab 2016, 103, Pl. XII: 3). The bones of the child around 7 years old from grave 60 displayed *sutura metopica*, *os Incae bipartitum*, *cribra orbitalia lat. dx.* (Jakab 2016, 111); the child aged 3–5 years from grave 72 had a cavity in the second molar of the right half of the upper jaw and both second molars of the mandible (Jakab 2016, 114). The remains of the child around 3 years old from grave 79 displayed a metopic suture (Jakab 2016, 115), and the remains of a child aged 12–14 years from grave 95 displayed *ossa suturae lambdoidea* (Jakab 2016, 118). An exceptional discovery is the evidence of trepanation on the skull of the 12–15-year-old child from grave 29 in the Guntramsdorf cemetery, which had few finds (Urban 1985, 49–50, Fig. 40). At the cemetery of Fântânele – Dealul Iușului/La Gâța, the 6–7-year-old child buried in grave 22 showed an epigenetic feature on the distal epiphysis of the left humerus (STF) (Berecki et al. 2022, 41, Fig. 3: 2).

The most extensive data on pathological changes displayed by the remains of children are documented at sites in Switzerland. A higher number of pathological changes was recorded for the remains of children (29 out of 45) from the Basel – Gasfabrik settlement and the two associated cemeteries. *Cribra orbitalia* and, most commonly, hypoplasia on dental enamel were recognized, with the latter observed only for the remains of children from the cemetery. These changes are considered indicators of physical stress, with potential causes being diseases and nutritional deficiencies that adversely affect a child's immunity and organism. It was noted that there was no difference in health and nutrition between children buried in the settlement and those in the cemetery, and that the children mostly succumbed to infections (Rissanen et al. 2013, 138–139, Fig. 10; Pichler et al. 2015, 268–270, Fig. 10–11; 2017,

13; Brönnimann et al. 2022, 130–138, Fig. 18). One example is the richly equipped Late La Tène grave 15 at the cemetery of Basel – Gasfabrik A with the remains of a child aged 4–5, its bones displaying traces of a polio infection that the child survived for a short period (Rissanen, Alder 2011; Rissanen et al. 2013, 132–134, Fig. 4–5; Pichler et al. 2013, 476; 2015, 264–266, Fig. 7; 2017, 14, Fig. 4–5; Brönnimann et al. 2022, 130). Interesting indicators of stress were observed on the bones of an 11-year-old child found in well 114 of the Basel – Gasfabrik settlement. These suggest significant physical stress at around 4 years of age, possibly caused by malnutrition or illness. There is a healed fracture at the base of the skull, resulting in a slight misalignment of the cervical spine. The injury may have occurred due to a severe blow to the head from an accident or possible violence, and the child required prolonged care afterwards. Finally, the left temporal bone displays marks of force – a hole that probably resulted from an arrow shot, which caused the violent death (Brönnimann et al. 2022, 135, 138, Fig. 25). The Bern – Reichenbachstrasse cemetery includes similar pathological changes, especially Cribra orbitalia, highlighted as a consequence of inflammatory processes and various other influences. The finds also include hypoplasia of dental enamel as a consequence of disturbances in nutrition and a range of other factors (vitamin D deficiency, calcium deficiency, etc.), pointing to the harsh living conditions of the children (Ulrich-Bochsler, Rüttimann 2014, 80–82, 89). The remains of the 2.5–3.5-year-old child in grave 4 at the Ipsach cemetery display porosity on the right tibia and mildly porous lesions on both forearms, caused by vitamin deficiency (Zweifel 2015, 114–115).

Although only a small number of pathological changes has been observed in the cremated remains of children at the Zvonimirovo cemetery and other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, we should emphasize that these often involve poorly preserved inhumation remains or small quantities of tiny cremated bones as opposed to buried adults (Kraus 2006, 8). Child mortality was high in many prehistoric communities (Kamp 2015, 177), with recorded pathological changes (most commonly Cribra orbitalia and porotic hyperostosis) serving as evidence of diseases and stress caused by various factors, such as inadequate nutrition, poor hygiene, infections, etc.; it is rarely possible to determine the exact cause of death (Vargová,

Horáčková 2010; Kamp 2015, 177–179; Mays et al. 2017, 8–13). In general, anthropological analyses of child remains show that children were generally less prone to illness than adults (Lewis 2011). But they were still susceptible to infectious diseases, which were among the more common causes of death for children under the age of five and are hard to detect through anthropological analysis as they do not always leave traces (Ulrich-Bochsler, Rüttimann 2014, 73). Also, the remains of children often do not exhibit signs of physical stress, as children could engage in certain household activities that do not leave physical traces, such as taking care of younger siblings (Kamp 2015, 173–174, 180–181). Some child remains also show healed traumas (e.g. Lewis 2014; Halcrow, Robbins Schug 2023), which sometimes indicate care and nurturing of children (e.g. Halcrow et al. 2020), although such finds are rare (Mays 2014, 105).

For a more comprehensive understanding of the health of children, including those buried at the Zvonimirovo cemetery, it is also important to consider the living and climatic conditions of the community they belonged to, the level of healthcare, how the rearing and the course of life of children were organized, their work activities, etc. (Vargová, Horáčková 2010).

CHILDREN'S MOBILITY

The analyses of certain costume and jewellery items from the graves of adult women in Zvonimirovo, especially bronze belts, indicate that these items could have arrived through cultural transfer to the middle Drava valley, but it is not excluded that they might have come together with women as part of their costume from neighbouring or distant areas (Dizdar 2020c, 211–212). One such 'foreign' item from children's graves is a bronze fibula with figure-of-eight loops on the bow that comes from grave LT 22, where a child aged 12–15 years was buried (Dizdar 2020a, 138–139). Since interdisciplinary analyses that would confirm such possibilities in Zvonimirovo are still ongoing, some answers may be sought in other areas of the La Tène culture, where attempts have been made to reconstruct human mobility.

Interesting insights come from the Early La Tène cemetery of Dubník, where the $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$ strontium isotope analysis was conducted on inhumation remains from eight graves (Bujna et al. 2020). According to the results, the majority of

women and children were of local origin. Grave 32 contained a richly equipped child aged 3–4 years with a spear (Bujna 1989, 281–283, Fig. 40, Pl. XXXV: 1–15) that is of local origin – it is probably a boy with locally sourced artefacts (Bujna et al. 2020, 232, 237–239, Tab. 1). The contents of grave 20 are also of local origin: a richly equipped woman aged 50–60 and a child aged 3–4 years with two iron fibulae (Bujna 1989, 269–270, Fig. 25, Pl. XXIIA: 13–15; XXIII: 1–12); the woman was laid above the child (Bujna et al. 2020, 232, 237–239, Tab. 1). On the other hand, grave 29 contained a child aged 9–10 years with a fibula, a spindle-whorl, and three vessels (Bujna 1989, 279, Fig. 37, Pl. XXXVIA: 1–5), apparently of foreign origin, with measured values characteristic of areas around the upper reaches of the Rhine and Danube down to Budapest and the Tisza and Körös valleys (Bujna et al. 2020, 233, 235–239, Tab. 1). Particularly interesting results have been obtained for grave 21, containing a woman aged 50–60 years and a newborn, with the woman being richly equipped with costume and jewellery items, while the child had no items (Bujna 1989, 270–271, Fig. 26, Pl. XXIV: 1–12; XXVA: 13–20). The woman was of foreign origin, from the southeastern Carpathian Basin, as indicated by the items in the grave, such as coral and glass beads and small ceramic spoon-shaped vessels (Bujna et al. 2020, 233, 235–239, Tab. 1). The results of the strontium and oxygen isotope analysis of the 11-year-old child and the woman around 60 found in well 114 at the Basel – Gasfabrik settlement indicate that the woman spent her early childhood in the immediate vicinity of the settlement and her adolescence in another location, probably in the broader region. For the child, who has a hole in the skull caused by a deadly arrow shot, the measured values suggest that its birthplace was far from Basel, possibly near the coast and/or in a warmer region, which is a rarity for children at this site (Brönnimann et al. 2022, 135–138, Fig. 24–25).

The results of stable strontium isotope analyses on Iron Age individuals in central Europe suggest a mobility of children older than 6 years that had various reasons, but particularly the strengthening of social relations between different communities (Müller-Scheeßel et al. 2015, 19–21). On some Late Iron Age cemeteries, such as those from the Early La Tène period like Nebringen and Monte Bibele (Scheeres et al. 2013; Hauschild et al. 2013) and Monterenzio Vecchio (Sorrentino et al. 2018),

it has been observed that men were more mobile during childhood than women (Müller-Scheeßel et al. 2015, 15–18, Tab. 1). This can perhaps be explained by the idea that boys could acquire certain knowledge and skills outside their family and community; that is why, around the age of 7, they were sent to skilful people such as craftsmen, thereby creating new social connections (Karl 2005; 2010; Parkes 2006). The results of the analysis of strontium and oxygen isotopes on the teeth of individuals (58) of all ages buried in the Basel – Gasfabrik cemeteries and settlement also indicate childhood mobility at the regional level, but also between distant areas. The women show greater mobility, while it is concluded that the children, with rare exceptions, were born in the immediate vicinity or not far from the settlement. However, the final conclusion is that there are no clear differences in terms of gender regarding mobility and mortuary treatment (Knipper et al. 2018; Brönnimann et al. 2022). On the other hand, the results of multi-isotopic analyses (oxygen ($\delta^{18}\text{O}$) and carbon ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$)) conducted for the Seminario Vescovile cemetery in northeastern Italy, which can be dated to the 3rd–1st century BC, demonstrate somewhat different results. Isotopic ratios were analysed for 49 individuals (23 males, 17 females, and 9 children) to explore possible intraindividual lifetime changes. The results suggest local origin for most of the individuals, with a few exceptions pointing to Alpine origin. The small number of non-locals suggests reduced mobility of this population, where men show slightly higher mobility, while short-distance movements were difficult to detect (Laffranchi et al. 2022). The analysis of the remains of an infant aged 3–6 months, who was breastfed at the time of death, suggests that it may have been born locally to a mother who migrated or that both the mother and the child migrated to the area of northeastern Italy (Laffranchi et al. 2022, 521).

MORTUARY PROFILES OF CHILDREN'S GRAVES – ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

Research has shown that the community burying its dead at the Zvonimirovo cemetery shared many common cultural and ritual norms with other Late Iron Age communities in the Carpathian Basin. Nevertheless, some cultural particularities are recognized based on the analysis of mate-

rial culture, as well as items indicating cultural connectivity with neighbouring communities or even mobility between them (Dizdar 2013; 2020a; Dizdar, Ljuština 2019). The number and types of items in children's graves in Zvonimirovo show differences, partly influenced by the state of preservation of the graves.²⁰ Most of the graves containing only children have fewer items than the graves of adults (*Suppl. Table 1*), but it can be noticed that these often include items found in the graves of adults. Similar observations have been made in cemeteries, such as Dobova, Brežice, and Nova Tabla (Guštin 1984; Guštin et al. 2017), but also in other cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin. On the other hand, when it comes to graves in Zvonimirovo where a child was buried with an adult, it is hard to definitively determine which items belonged to the child. This type of analysis is much simpler for double inhumation graves from other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, where children's inhumation graves allow for the study of the functional position of items, which is impossible for the cremation graves in Zvonimirovo. Also, previous analyses of adult graves allow for the recognition of gender-specific items that also appear in children's graves, as well as the possible identification of age-specific items that only appear in children's graves.

Children's graves in Zvonimirovo most commonly contained costume and jewellery items (e.g. fibulae, bracelets, beads, etc.). There were few items of everyday use (e.g. knives, spindle-whorls, sewing needles), while weaponry appeared only exceptionally (*Suppl. Table 1*). Grave goods include the finds of ceramic vessels and offerings of food with preserved animal bones, most commonly pig bones. Grave goods appear in varying numbers in the graves of children of all age groups, just like in the graves of adults. In Zvonimirovo, no graves of children without items have been identified so far, but there are a few of them in other La Tène cemeteries (Ramsel 2010, 95). Costume and jewellery items from children's graves, as well as those from adult graves, often show traces of burning, indicating that the children were cremated on the pyre with them – they were probably costume and jewellery items they wore. However, found items include those that were not burned, but probably placed

in the grave during the burial ceremony (Dizdar 2013, 34–37; 2016, 296–297). These items can be interpreted differently, perhaps as offerings from grieving family members and relatives (Cannon, Cook 2015). In fact, it is highly unlikely that the child's own actions led to the social status in the community reflected in the quantity and variety of grave goods, especially when considering richly equipped graves. Therefore, the choice of items placed in a child's grave was likely an expression of the status of family and relatives (Rissanen, Alder 2011, 156; Zweifel 2015, 124).

Based on the types and quantity of finds, richer children's graves in Zvonimirovo (*Suppl. Table 1*) are graves LT 34 (*Fig. 3*) and LT 84 (*Fig. 4*). Grave LT 34 contained a child aged 5–12 years. This is the only child grave that includes weaponry: an iron spear. Costume items include five iron and one bronze fibula; the jewellery consists of an iron bracelet. In the grave, there were also three iron clasps, three ceramic vessels, and pig bones. In grave LT 84, the cremated remains of a child aged 4–6 years were placed in a decorated pot serving as an urn. The urn contained an iron and bronze chain, three iron fibulae, a bronze fibula, fragments of a burned glass bracelet, and three glass beads. This group of richer graves could probably include the burial of a child aged 10–14 years from the triple grave LT 12, with numerous costume and jewellery items found alongside the cremated remains (Dizdar 2013, 409–415, Pl. 25: 1–3; 26: 3–5; 27). When comparing these finds with those from the graves of adults in Zvonimirovo, it may perhaps be assumed that a boy was buried in grave LT 34, while girls were buried in graves LT 12 and LT 84.

J. Bujna (1982) was among the first who have discussed the social status of children based on the finds from La Tène cemeteries. Group I includes the graves of richly equipped men and women; the only child grave in this group is grave 29 from the Jászberény cemetery, containing a child (girl?) with costume and jewellery items. Group II is associated with the few children's graves where spears were found; the costume items are two bronze or iron fibulae, the jewellery is two bronze or iron bracelets, and the grave goods are usually two ceramic vessels. Group III comprises the largest number of children's graves with the finds: a single fibula and a bracelet, and usually a single vessel. Group IV is characterized by graves containing only a single vessel, rarely two or three, and usually no metal finds. Group V includes graves without finds

²⁰ Due to the scope of the paper, this is not the occasion for a detailed typo-chronological analysis of the finds from children's graves at the Zvonimirovo cemetery. They mostly contained finds like those from the graves of adults.

(Bujna 1982, 362–364). A similar classification of children's graves into three groups was proposed for cemeteries in Switzerland, with the observation that children's graves have fewer finds than those of adults and they lack weaponry (Sankot 1980, 59).

Richly equipped graves of children of various ages (*Suppl. Table 3–8*) have also been found in other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin (Ramsl 2010, 94–96); along with ceramic vessels, they usually contain a large number of costume and jewellery items, and only rarely objects of everyday use (e.g. knives, spindle-whorls) or weapons (spears). However, the question remains as to how much the finds from children's graves actually testify to their social status (Rissanen et al. 2013, 135–136), since each child grave is seen as unique, and the type, number, and composition of grave finds are individual or personal (Pichler et al. 2017, 14).

It was only exceptionally that graves of children under 1 year of age were richly equipped. An example is the cremation grave 1051 from the Ludas cemetery, containing numerous items of costume and jewellery, as well as vessels (Szabó, Tankó 2012, 65–67, Fig. 102–104, Pl. XXXVIII; XXXIX: 1–4).²¹ The Palárikovo I cemetery includes two richly equipped children's graves. Grave 64 contained a child around 5 years old with costume and jewellery items, a knife, a spindle-whorl, four pots, a coin, and a peach pit (Gardelková-Vrtelová, Benadík 2021, 212–213, Pl. XVII: 2; LXVIII: 1–3; LXIX: 1–26). Grave 75, surrounded by a ditch, contained a child aged 3–4 years with costume and jewellery items, including three finger-rings, one of gold and silver, and five vessels, one of them shoe-shaped (Gardelková-Vrtelová, Benadík 2021, 218–219, Pl. XX: 2–3; LXXIX–LXXX). We should also mention grave 4 from the Mannersdorf cemetery with stone grave architecture, where a child aged 4–5 years was buried with costume and jewellery items and vessels (Ramsl 2011, 34–36, 198, Fig. 18–19, Pl. 31–36; 2010, 89, 91, Fig. 6; 14–15), and grave 116 with the burial of a child aged 6–8 years with a stone stela, grave architecture, costume and jewellery items, a knife, and three vessels (Ramsl 2011, 72–74, Fig. 54–56, Pl. 129–134).

The analysis of more richly equipped graves of children at the Zvonimirovo cemetery, as well as those with fewer finds, shows they most often contain ceramic vessels, but also gender-specific

costume and jewellery items of the kind found in graves of adult women at Zvonimirovo and in other La Tène cemeteries (Dizdar 2013, 211–213). Does this mean that these are graves of girls? For confirmation, additional genetic analyses should be conducted (Endlich 1998, 380; Rissanen et al. 2013, 136; Pichler et al. 2015, 264; Ramsl, Nowotny 2020, 174–176; Wendling 2020, 67). What about boys, and how can they be identified based on the material remains? Does this suggest that there was a culturally conditioned procedure in the mortuary profile with respect to the gender of the child at the Zvonimirovo cemetery and other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin? However, it is emphasized that the gender of children cannot be determined on the basis of the finds until a certain age (Burmeister, Müller-Scheeßel 2005).

Children's graves with weaponry

The graves of boys might be indicated by the few children's graves with weapons, most commonly a single spear, such as the one found in grave LT 34. Finds of shorter iron spears have been recorded in some other children's graves. The nearest one to Zvonimirovo being the Dobova cemetery, where grave 20 contained a child with a small spear and an axe (Guštin 1984, 315, 317, 330, Fig. 4; 8; 17; Mauthner 2023, 70, Fig. 5: 2–3), and the Slatina cemetery, where grave 14 contained a small spear and a small axe. Therefore, this grave is considered to be the burial of a child, although no anthropological analysis has been conducted (Pirkmajer 1991, 29, Fig. 48, Pl. 14: 95–97; Mauthner 2023, 71, Fig. 6: 1–2). The damaged grave 121 at the Nova Tabla cemetery contained a child aged 0–7 years with a small spear, its tip driven into the bottom of the grave, along with fragments of two vessels and a bronze panel (Guštin et al. 2017, 160, 676–677; Mauthner 2023, 71). A small axe was found with the cremated remains of a child aged 0–6 years in a pot serving as an urn in grave 1 of tumulus 9 at the Lang – Schirka cemetery (Mauthner 2021, 24, Fig. 3: 1; 2023, 67, Fig. 3: 2). A small spear and a pot were found in grave 882 at the Ludas cemetery, where a child aged 7–9 years was buried (Szabó, Tankó 2012, 45, Fig. 65–66, Pl. XXIII: 5). A particularly notable grave is the richly equipped child grave 28/90 at the Sajópetri cemetery, containing the remains of a child aged 1–7 years with a spear, iron bits, and other finds (Szabó, Tankó 2018, 56–58, Pl. XVIII: 5–6). At the

²¹ The grave also contained the burnt remains of an adult's skull.

Dubník cemetery, grave 32 contained a child aged 3–4 years, likely with a spear, of which only the socket was preserved, along with five iron fibulae, two rings, and seven vessels (Bujna 1989, 281–283, Fig. 40, Pl. XXXV: 1–15; LII: 4; Jakab, Vondráková 1989, 361). Based on the $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$ strontium isotope analysis, the child was of local origin and probably a boy (Bujna et al. 2020, 232, 237–239, Tab. 1). The plundered grave 60 at the Bajč cemetery contained the remains of a juvenile with the spear butt, parts of a shield, and whetstone fragments (Benadík 1960, 405, Fig. 4, Pl. XIII: 4, 7). Unlike these graves, grave 170 from the Bucsu cemetery contained a child aged 7–15 years, anthropologically identified as a male, together with a spear, two fibulae, and also fragments of bent sword scabbards (Ilon, Nagy 2010, 79–80, Fig. 13–15). Despite being younger than 15, he was already buried with warrior equipment similar to that found in the graves of adult males.

Considering the scarcity of analogies, it can be seen that weapons were rarely placed in La Tène children's graves. When weapons were present, they were usually short and light spears (Rustoiu, Berecki 2015a, 131–132; Rustoiu 2016a, 55; Mauthner 2023, 72–75). They may have been used for practice and preparation of the child (likely a boy) for its future role, as childhood is considered a time of learning for adulthood (Baxter 2008, 161, 167; Gaskins, Paradise 2010; Sofaer 2015, 82–83; Sánchez Romero 2017, 23–30; Langley, Litster 2018; Röder 2022). Education of children is viewed as a crucial aspect of ensuring the survival and future of the community to which they belonged (Murphy 2017, 1). Boys could learn through hunting when acquiring skills with smaller weapons, even though these would not affect their adult skills (Kamp, Whittaker 2020, 15–21). Also, a spear could have been placed in a child's grave as a gift (Glansdorp 2018, 52). Considering the comparisons with the graves of adults in Zvonimirovo where spears were found (Dizdar 2013, 142–143), as well as in other cemeteries, it can be assumed that grave LT 34 contained a boy who, had he lived, might have become a warrior equipped with a complete set of weapons consisting of a sword, a spear, and a shield. Since other items were found in the grave, it could have been the burial of a member of a prominent family within the community. Also, it is possible that the children's graves lacking gender-specific items are actually graves of boys (Ramsl 2020, 159) who seemingly acquired weapons only at a certain age, when their social identity changed.

Children's graves with costume items

Children's graves in Zvonimirovo have a significantly higher number of gender-specific items characteristic of the graves of adult women. These include costume and jewellery items, as well as spindle-whorls that show individuality in their combinations. Similar observations were made in other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin (*Suppl. Table 3–8*). In children's graves in Zvonimirovo, iron and bronze fibulae are the most common costume items, while belts or their parts appear less frequently (*Suppl. Table 1*). In general, bronze and iron fibulae are characteristic of women's graves in Zvonimirovo, while iron fibulae are characteristic of men (Dizdar 2013, 188, 231). On the other hand, iron belts, along with bronze belts and iron buckles of the Brežice type, are a distinctive part of adult women's costume and represent a recognizable element of their visual identity (Dizdar 2013, 213–221; Dizdar, Ljuština 2019, 52–54). Completely preserved iron belts composed of doubly twisted segments were found in two child graves – in grave LT 111 and the triple grave LT 12 (Dizdar 2013, 214–215, Pl. 25: 1), while only a smaller part of a belt was found in damaged graves LT 22 (Dizdar 2020a, 133–134, Pl. 1: 1) and LT 108. Therefore, it is uncertain if these graves contained complete belts that have been mostly destroyed or if they contained only symbolic parts of belts.

Children's graves with iron belts or their parts are also a rare occurrence in other cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin. Other finds from these graves suggest that they could be the graves of girls (*Suppl. Table 3–8*). For instance, at the Rezi cemetery, grave 22 contained an iron belt of the Karaburma 111 type around the child's waist (Horváth 1987, 106–108, Fig. 40–41, Pl. XXI: 8), while grave 31 contained fragments of a belt composed of small-diameter strap rings (Horváth 1987, 111–112, Fig. 44, Pl. XXII: 9).²² Grave 58/129 in the Sajópetri cemetery, which was the burial of a child aged 1–7 years, contained parts of a belt and a buckle (Szabó, Tankó 2018, 89–91, Fig. 64, 108, Pl. XXXVII: 5–8). An iron belt composed of doubly twisted segments was discovered in grave 35 at the Mátraszőlős cemetery, with the burial of a child aged 1–3 years (Almássy 2012, 105–106, Pl. XLIV: 6). Fragments of an iron belt with figure-of-

²² The mentioned graves lack the results of the anthropological analysis. They were identified as children's graves based on the size of the grave and the deceased.

eight segments and a bronze clasp in the middle were found at the Maňa cemetery, in inhumation grave 42 containing a child (Benadík 1983, 30, Pl. XIX: 1). At the Malé Kosihy cemetery, fragments of an iron belt composed of doubly twisted segments were found in children's graves 222 and 228 (Bujna 1995, 55, 57, Fig. 45; 47, Pl. 27A: 2; 28A: 6). Moreover, the richly equipped grave 64 in the Palárikovo I cemetery contained an iron belt made of small rings, which the child wore around the waist (Gardelková-Vrtelová, Benadík 2021, 212–213, Pl. LXIX: 17, 24). These examples demonstrate that some children in richly equipped graves were already equipped like adult women, and that the belt, based on the finds from inhumation graves, was already in its functional position. Cremation graves sometimes contained only fragments of belts, raising the question of whether the child already possessed a belt that was damaged during the cremation process or if only a symbolic part of the belt was placed in the grave. However, it is noticeable that children's graves in Zvonimirovo and in other cemeteries have significantly fewer belts than the graves of adult women.

The costume items from children's graves in Zvonimirovo include the mentioned finds of bronze and iron fibulae (*Suppl. Table 1*), which is in line with the observations made for other cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin. Most fibulae were found in the richly equipped graves LT 34 (five iron and one bronze fibula) and LT 84 (three iron and one bronze fibula). Graves LT 30 and LT 108 contained one bronze and one iron fibula each; in grave LT 110, there was a single bronze fibula; in grave LT 111, there were two bronze fibulae; remnants of an iron fibula were found in the damaged grave LT 27. A uniquely shaped bronze fibula, with figure-of-eight loops on the bow, was discovered in grave LT 22 (Dizdar 2020a, 133, Pl. 1: 3). It is uncertain whether the fibulae from the double graves LT 5 and LT 52 and the triple grave LT 12 belonged to children. Perhaps the two small bronze fibulae from grave LT 5 could belong to a child's costume, but such fibulae have also been found in the graves of adult women (e.g. in grave LT 90: Dizdar, Ljuština 2019, 57, Pl. 1: 2–3). The six bronze and two bimetal fibulae from grave LT 12, and maybe some smaller iron fibulae, probably belonged to a child's costume (Dizdar 2013, 413–415, Pl. 26: 3–5, 27). Different numbers of fibulae have also been recorded in children's graves in the Carpathian Basin (*Suppl. Table 3–8*), while interesting insights come from children's graves in Switzerland. In the

cemeteries of Basel – Gasfabrik A and B, fibulae are a frequent find in children's graves, where they sometimes appear in greater numbers than in the graves of adults, similar to other costume and jewellery items. Fibulae are often found on the pelvis or feet of children, suggesting their use in wrapping the body in fabric (Rissanen et al. 2013, 135, Fig. 7; Pichler et al. 2013, 476; 2015, 263–264; Brönnimann et al. 2022, 130). On the other hand, in the Bern – Reichenbachstrasse cemetery, there were fewer fibulae in children's graves than in adult graves (Jud 2014, 102–103, Fig. 96).

A particular phenomenon at the Zvonimirovo cemetery is the placement of belts or their parts in the graves of newborns and young children, as seen in graves LT 108 and LT 111, or glass bracelets in grave LT 110, which, judging by their dimensions, were probably not worn by children. The practice of placing items belonging to adult women or items showing signs of wear in the graves of children has already been documented at cemeteries during the Late Iron Age (Kraus 2002, 110; Gustavs 2004; Lettman 2018). Perhaps these items indicate what was expected for the child to wear had it lived to adulthood – maybe they represent the unrealized life span of an adult woman. Some children's graves from Swiss cemeteries might testify to this. In the Late La Tène grave 15 at the cemetery of Basel – Gasfabrik A, a richly equipped child aged 4–5 years was buried in fine woollen fabric; its remains show traces of polio infection. Only a small lignite ring was found on the child's hand, while other jewellery and costume items were placed in the abdominal area and seem to belong to an adult woman judging by their size. These items are assumed to have been inherited and placed in the child's grave to represent the role this child would have had in adulthood had it lived (Rissanen, Alder 2011; Rissanen et al. 2013, 132–134, Fig. 4–5; Pichler et al. 2013, 476; 2015, 264–266, Fig. 7; 2017, 14, Fig. 4–5; Brönnimann et al. 2022, 130). Similarly, the richly equipped grave 4 at the Ipsach cemetery contained a child aged 2.5–3.5 years, equipped with numerous costume items like an adult woman (Zweifel 2015, 118–119, Fig. 12–16, Pl. 3: 7–10; 4; 5: 1–14).

Children's graves with jewellery items

Regarding jewellery, children's graves LT 84, LT 110, and LT 111 in the Zvonimirovo cemetery included burned fragments of glass bracelets (*Suppl.*

Table 1), which are commonly found in the graves of adult women (Dizdar 2013, 252–255; Dizdar, Ljuština 2019, 57). Also, grave LT 34 included an iron bracelet of the kind known from the graves of men (Dizdar 2013, 203–207); along with the spear, this seems to indicate that this grave is the burial of a boy. Since these are mostly burned fragments of glass bracelets, it is usually impossible to determine their dimensions to verify if they were made for children.

What sets apart the children's graves in Zvonimirovo are the finds of glass beads, which rarely appear in the graves of adult women (Dizdar 2013, 262–263, Fig. 91). There were three unburned glass beads in grave LT 84, four burned beads in grave LT 108, and two burned glass beads together with the cremated remains of children in the triple grave LT 12 (Dizdar 2013, 263, Fig. 91: 2–3, Pl. 25: 4–5). Since the glass bracelets and beads were burned on the pyre, it is likely that the children wore them or they were laid on a pyre. The way they were worn is indicated by the finds from inhumation graves, showing that beads were worn around the neck, although there are examples of them being found near the hand. In general, the number of glass beads in graves significantly decreased in the Middle La Tène as opposed to the earlier development phases of the La Tène culture, when inhumation graves of women and children contained whole necklaces made of glass beads or a combination of glass and amber beads (Dizdar 2013, 265), as evidenced by some graves (e.g. Bučany, grave 27 from LT A: Bujna, Romsauer 1983, 288–289, Pl. X: 11–14; Mannersdorf, grave 4 from LT B1: Ramsel 2011, 34–36, 198, Pl. 33: 5–6, 8–9). Although less numerous in each grave than in earlier periods, glass beads are often found in Middle La Tène children's graves in the Carpathian Basin (*Suppl. Table 3–8*) (Zepezauer 1993, 112), rarely in combination with a bronze pendant (e.g. Jászberény grave 56: Kaposvári 1969, 193). An interesting find comes from the Basel – Gasfabrik A cemetery, where grave 2 contained the remains of a 9-month-old child and 120 beads, some still showing traces of production, indicating that they were made specifically for burial (Rissanen et al. 2013, 134–135, Fig. 6; Pichler et al. 2015, 264, Fig. 6; 2017, 13–14, Fig. 2; Brönnimann et al. 2022, 132, Fig. 19). In fact, glass and amber beads and various pendants, likely serving as amulets, are characteristic finds in Early La Tène children's graves (Ramsel 2010, 95; 2020, 159; Ramsel, Nowotny 2020, 173), which also served as bodily ornaments (Rustoiu 2019,

147–157). Evidence of this can be found at the Dürrenberg – Eilsfeld cemetery, where the finds in children's graves display notable variability, particularly in the use of different amulets and amber and glass beads, probably having ritual and symbolic significance and an apotropaic function, perhaps as material evidence of rites of passage (Wendling 2020, 66–68).

CHILDREN'S GRAVES WITH SPINDLE-WHORLS

Another gender-identifiable item in grave LT 108 in Zvonimirovo is represented by three ceramic spindle-whorls (*Suppl. Table 1*), which appear in this grave alongside a small iron knife and possibly an iron sewing needle. Spindle-whorls are also found in the graves of adult women, always one per grave (Dizdar 2013, 303; Dizdar, Ljuština 2019, 63–64; Dizdar 2020b), as well as in other cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin (Dizdar 2020b), while they are rarely recorded in children's graves (*Suppl. Table 3–8*). A notable find is the decorated spindle-whorl from the rich grave 1051 at the Ludas cemetery (Szabó, Tankó 2012, 65–67, Fig. 102–104, Pl. XXXVIII: 19), as well as the decorated vessel-shaped spindle-whorl in grave 64 at the cemetery of Palárikovo I (Gardelková-Vrtelová, Benadík 2021, 212–213, Pl. LXIX: 22). Another interesting find is the spindle-whorl as the single item next to the pelvis of the child from grave 65 at the Maňa cemetery (Benadík 1983, 38). The discovery of three spindle-whorls in grave LT 108, as well as in some other children's graves, might indicate that these were the graves of girls; the child younger than 1 year from grave LT 108 could not use them, just like the child from grave 1051 at the Ludas cemetery. These items were probably gifts from grieving family members – perhaps the mother, grandmother, sister – who offered spindle-whorls to emphasize that the child had lost the opportunity to become an adult woman skilled in spinning (Dizdar, Ljuština 2019, 68; Dizdar 2020b). Somewhat older children with a spindle-whorl in their grave might have already known how to spin, and the inclusion of the spindle whorl could signify a period of learning and preparation for adulthood; it is known that children began learning various skills between the ages of 2 and 5 (Sofaer Dervenski 2000; Kamp 2001, 13; Baxter 2008, 167–169; Gaskins, Paradise 2010, 91; Kamp 2015, 173–174). In this way, spindle-whorls in La Tène

children's graves, similar to spears in the graves of boys, can be considered at a symbolic level as defining their future roles in the community; the child, who passed away prematurely, is portrayed in its future role. After its death, it assumed its intended status had it reached adulthood (Zweifel 2015, 124–126). The probable learning of spinning techniques during childhood also indicates the economic importance of children in communities and their contribution to their own households, where the time spent learning skills and acquiring knowledge is also seen as a period of socialization in which children actively participated (Redfern 2007, 174; Baxter 2008, 165, 168; Sánchez Romero 2008; Lancy, Grove 2010; Thompson et al. 2014, 3; Kamp 2015, 180–182; Röder 2015; 2018, 130–141; Little, Lancy 2016; Mays et al. 2017, 13; Murphy 2017, 1; Lancy 2018; Langley, Litster 2018).

CHILDREN'S GRAVES WITH CERAMIC VESSELS

Ceramic vessels are one of the most numerous finds in the children's graves in Zvonimirovo, as well as in other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin. Grave goods include pig parts, documented in graves LT 30 and LT 34, which are also found in the graves of adults (Radović 2013). The number of vessels in the graves ranges from one to three (*Suppl. Table 1*); they are pots, bowls, and kantharoi, with pots being the most common. Vessels of these shapes, sizes, and techniques of production and decoration are also found in the graves of adults (Dizdar 2013, 268–273). Smaller-sized vessels are recorded only in some children's graves. There was a smaller pot in grave LT 111; grave LT 5 (Dizdar 2013, 400, Pl. 12: 1) also contained a smaller pot, but since it is a grave of a woman and a child, the vessel cannot be definitively associated with the burial of the child. Triple grave LT 12 included a small decorated pot, which, considering its position next to the cremated bones of two children, might be associated with their burial (Dizdar 2013, 416, Fig. 157, Pl. 29: 1). We should also mention the small handmade kantharos from grave LT 27, but this form is characterized by small dimensions since it is a drinking vessel. Kantharoi of the same size also appear in the graves of adults (Dizdar 2013, 339–346, Fig. 136). Vessels of small dimensions are not unique to children's graves, as testified by grave LT 11 which included smaller vessels – a bowl

and a cup (Dizdar 2013, 409, Pl. 19: 1–2) – and especially by the discovery of a miniature cup in the richly equipped warrior's grave LT 45 (Dizdar et al. 2014, 84, Fig. 10: 3). These vessels could have been used for serving food and drinks, and even for medicinal or pharmaceutical purposes. Among these vessels, the miniature pot-shaped vessel from grave LT 34 stands out in terms of dimensions, as its shape corresponds to pots of much larger dimensions, which are found in large numbers inside the graves of adults. This grave also included a bowl that is smaller than those appearing in the graves of adults.

Children's graves at the cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin also contain a varying number of ceramic vessels, which are sometimes the only find in the grave. One grave usually contains one to three vessels, combining pots and bowls, but there are also instances of graves containing five to seven vessels, regardless of the child's age (*Suppl. Table 3–8*). These vessels are typically wheel-thrown, just like those found in the graves of adults. Occasionally, children's graves include miniature vessels like the one from grave LT 34, which could be handmade. For example, grave 89/169 in the Sajópetri cemetery, containing a child aged 4–6 years, included two bowls and two large pots, but also two handmade miniature pots, documented as being in the grave fill (Szabó, Tankó 2018, 129, Pl. LX: 1–2). A similar handmade miniature pot was found in grave 13/59, containing a man aged 15–20 years (Szabó, Tankó 2018, 36, Pl. IX: 8), indicating that such vessels can also be found in the graves of somewhat older individuals. The only find in grave 354 on the Horný Jatov cemetery, where a child was buried, was a handmade miniature pot with four protrusions (Benadík et al. 1957, 27, Pl. VI: 8). At the Mannersdorf cemetery, interesting handmade miniature vessels have been found in several graves that contained no remains of children, but can probably be considered children's graves because of the dimensions of the burial pits and the finds. Grave 95 included a spindle-whorl and three miniature vessels – two pots and a bowl (Ramsl 2011, 63, 204, Pl. 103: 2–3); grave 146 included a knife and two small pots and a small bowl (Ramsl 2011, 82, 207, Pl. 157: 2, 4), while grave 223, with stone architecture, contained a child aged 6–9 years with a miniature graphite-coated pot next to its head (Ramsl 2011, 100, 210, Pl. 216: 2; 2010, 92, Fig. 12). These are coarsely crafted vessels; considering their dimensions, they could have been possessions of the child, buried

alongside it, and it is not excluded that the children themselves made them.

The dimensions of the smaller pot from grave LT 111 or the one from grave LT 12 differ from the usual proportions of such vessels, so it is not excluded that they were used by the children whose graves they were later placed in. These smaller vessels in graves often appear in combinations with vessels of usual dimensions; it is very rare for smaller vessels to be placed in the grave of a child without at least one larger vessel (e.g. grave 475 from the Malé Kosihy cemetery: Bujna 1995, 96, Fig. 87, Pl. 40B: 1–4). Small vessels have been documented in a large number of children's graves. The closest parallels are represented by the finds of two smaller bowls and a cup in the child's grave 20 in Dobova with two more larger pots (Mauthner 2023, 70, Fig. 5: 4–6) or by a small pot and a bowl found in child's grave 21 as the only items in the grave (Guštin 1984, 315, 317, 330, Fig. 4: 8; 17). A small bowl was found in grave 114 at Nova Tabla (Guštin et al. 2017, 159, 668–669). A large number of small pots, mostly those of situla shape, and a smaller number of bowls, have been found in cemeteries in northeastern Hungary – in children's graves or in graves where children were buried with an adult: Jászberény (Kaposvári 1969, 193, Fig. 8: 8; 10: 3), Mátraszőlős (Almássy 2012, Pl. XLIV: 2, 5; LXVII: 6–7; LXX: 5), Tiszavasvári (Almássy 1998, Pl. VII: 2–3; XVI: 4; XXV: 5), Ludas (Szabó, Tankó 2012, Pl. XV: 2; XXXVIII: 22–23; XXXIX: 1, 3; XLVI: 6; XLVIII: 11), and Sajópetri (Szabó, Tankó 2018, Pl. IV: 2–3; XIII: 3; XXIV: 4; XXXVI: 17). Moreover, both children's graves and adult graves in these cemeteries include smaller jugs with a single handle, which are a characteristic form of the northeastern Carpathian Basin (Teleagă 2008, 120–122, Fig. 18), and it is impossible to distinguish smaller vessels among this type (Repka 2017, 213). Smaller vessels, mostly pots, have also been found in children's graves in cemeteries in Slovakia. Also, vessels of small dimensions, made on a potter's wheel or by hand, are known from children's graves at the Pottenbrunn cemetery (Ramsl 2002, Pl. 23: 55.238, 55.240; 29: 4–5; 30: 3; 32: 2; 33: 9); pots and bowls of miniature dimensions, made on a potter's wheel or by hand, are particularly numerous in children's graves and double graves at the Mannersdorf cemetery (Ramsl 2011, Pl. 33: 17–18; 60: 1; 71: 1; 101; 103: 3; 107: 2, 4; 107: 1; 126: 7; 149: 1; 177: 3; 206: 2; 209: 1–2; 234). At the Bern – Reichenbachstrasse cemetery, it has been noted that the vessels found in adult

graves are larger and differently shaped than those in children's graves. Another difference is that the vessels from adult graves were more often decorated, especially by painting (Jud, Ulrich-Bochsler 2014, 47, Fig. 44–45; Jud 2014, 102–103, Fig. 96).

As shown by numerous examples, children's graves of the La Tène culture contain miniature ceramic vessels (Ramsl 2010, 93, Fig. 14), most commonly those made on a potter's wheel, but also those handmade, possibly by the children themselves (Repka 2017, 215–216, 218). Compared with vessels typically found in adult graves or in settlements, they do not have a different shape, but different dimensions. D. Repka (2017) conducted a detailed analysis of this type of the La Tène finds. The main challenge lies in defining the size that distinguishes miniature-sized vessels from those considered to be of standard dimensions, with the difference being also linked to their function (e.g. Jones 2013). The results of the conducted analysis show that smaller-sized vessels are most often found in the graves of women, although they are also present in children's graves, emphasizing that the cause may lie in the smaller number of investigated children's graves (Repka 2017, 207–218; 2020, 61, Fig. 66; 79). The hypotheses for miniature-sized vessels are not only that they could have been used by children, but also that they could have contained important liquids, might have been used in a ritual context, or could have served as drinking vessels (Ramsl 2011, 181; Rustoiu 2016a, 49; Repka 2017, 215–218), exactly like the small handmade kantharoi from Zvonimirovo. Regarding miniature vessels from children's graves, a possible explanation is that children needed smaller receptacles for food and drink than adults (Repka 2017, 215), meaning that the vessels were probably associated with children precisely because of their dimensions (Kamp 2015, 182).

The analysis of ceramic vessels from children's graves identifies two interesting finds of shoe-shaped vessels in two rich graves. At the Palárikovo I cemetery, grave 75 from LT B2 contained a child with a decorated shoe-shaped vessel with a bowl-shaped receptacle (Gardelková-Vrtelová, Benadík 2021, 218–219, Pl. LXXX: 1). At the Mannersdorf cemetery, grave 4 with funerary stone architecture from LT B1 contained a child aged 4–5 years and a decorated handmade shoe-shaped vessel, while the size of the shoe itself corresponded to a child around 3 years old (Ramsl 2010, 93, Fig. 15; 2011, 34–36, 198, Pl. 36: 21). Based on this find, P. C. Ramsl analysed these distinctive vessels and stated

that they represented a special type assumed to have cultic or symbolic significance and most commonly appearing in the Carpathian Basin. The tradition of crafting these vessels was known since the Late Bronze Age, and they appeared at the beginning of the La Tène culture (Kohle 2015). They have been documented in the cemeteries of Dürrenberg, Gáva, Kosd from LT B–C, with the youngest find dating back to the Late La Tène period. Shoe-shaped vessels from La Tène sites can be divided into three groups based on shape. The most numerous being those like the one found in grave 75 at the Palárikovo I cemetery with a receptacle. The vessel from Mannersdorf would belong to the second group (Ramsl 2011, 182–183; Bagley 2009, 227–228, Fig. 5). D. Repka reached a similar conclusion (Repka 2020, 66, Fig. 67; 87; Gardelková-Vrtelová, Benadík 2021, 55, Fig. 12: 4).

Children's graves with some age specific items

Aside from miniature vessels and the more frequent occurrence of glass beads compared to graves of adult women, so far there are almost no objects in child graves in Zvonimirovo that are not present in adult graves; in other words, many items typically associated with the age of the child are absent. A similar situation can be seen in other cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin. One of the items considered characteristic for children is the ceramic rattle, which is a rare find at La Tène sites, probably because their composition was mostly organic. The ceramic rattle is an archaeologically recognizable object (Crawford 2009, 59); its presence has been noted in graves dating as far back as the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age (Rebay-Salisbury 2017b, 183). Rattles are also known from the Late Iron Age, especially in Late La Tène graves in the Middle Rhine region (Mandera 1969; Polenz 1975, 257, Fig. 17; Heun 1999, 67; Rustoiu, Berecki 2015b, 263–265, Fig. 5: 1, List no. 1; Rustoiu 2019, 165–166, Fig. 33: 3). It is emphasized that rattles, like amulets, appear most often in the graves of children and young women as more vulnerable groups in the community (Pauli 1975, 186; Maier 2004, 141–142; Rustoiu, Berecki 2015b, 265; Rustoiu, Gál 2018, 133–134; Rustoiu 2019, 162–171). Rattles could probably have various functions, regardless of the material from which they were made – they could have served as musical instruments, magical or religious instruments, or

children's toys (Horváth 2010, 184–186; Rustoiu, Berecki 2015b, 265; Rustoiu, Gál 2018, 133–134; Rustoiu 2019, 170–171). Morphologically, six variants can be identified, and it is considered that they most likely had an apotropaic function, serving as objects that protected against all kinds of dangers or ensured the transition of the deceased to the afterlife (Rustoiu, Berecki 2015b, 262–271, Fig. 4–5; Rustoiu, Gál 2018, 133–134; Rustoiu 2019, 170–171). At the same time, in the area east of the Carpathians, such rattles were part of special tools used in magical practices. In addition to rattles, these tools included anthropomorphic figurines, miniature vessels, etc., and have been found in the graves of both children and adults (Rustoiu, Berecki 2015b, 265, Fig. 5: 2; 7: 1–3; Rustoiu, Gál 2018, 132–133, Fig. 5; Rustoiu 2019, 166–170, Fig. 34; Georgescu 2022, 47–48, Fig. 1). Ancient written sources mention rattles as an important means of soothing, comforting, and putting infants to sleep, with their depictions also found on tombstones. It is pointed out that there is a distinction between rattles for children and those for adults, which were used as musical instruments, but it is not always easy to differentiate them. Children's rattles are smaller and most often made of ceramic materials, only exceptionally crafted from metal, and can come in various shapes (Pfäffli, Fernández 2014, 146–154).

A sphere-shaped ceramic rattle was found in grave 595 at Kapiteljska Njiva in Novo Mesto (Križ 2001, 65, 139, cat. no. 390; 2005, 17). However, as there has been no anthropological analysis of the cremated remains from this grave, it is unknown whether this is a child's grave. A similar rattle interpreted as a toy, actually a hollow ceramic ball without beads, decorated with grooved circles, was discovered in the richly equipped Early La Tène child grave 23 at the Münsingen cemetery, positioned between the wrist and the pelvis (Hodson 1968, 44, Pl. 12: 646). A ceramic rattle was found in grave 5 in the tumulus at the Pratteln – Neuschlag site, where a young girl was buried. The grave is dated to LT A and contained costume and jewellery items. The rattle was located next to the head, possibly in an organic material bag, and decorated with circular punctures (Lüscher 1985, 33, 37, 43–44, 57, Fig. 11, Pl. 5: 6; Pfäffli, Fernández 2014, 149–150, Fig. 7–8). As mentioned earlier, ceramic rattles are most commonly found in Late La Tène graves in the Middle Rhine region, but most often without any data on the age of the deceased. However, at the Dietzenbach cemetery, a zoomorphic ceramic

rattle was found in grave 6, which contained a woman aged 20–22 and an infant of the Infans I group. In the same cemetery, grave 7 included the same zoomorphic rattle with the burial of a pig and a chicken (Polenz 1971, 10–11, Fig. 44: 1; 45: 1; Heun 1999, 67, 76, 86, 191–192). An interesting find was documented at the Middle La Tène settlement of Nagyrécse – Bakónaki-patak. A semi-sunken house included a spindle-shaped ceramic rattle with seven ceramic beads. The rattle is decorated with incised lines featuring a phallus motif in the central part. Since the rattle was discovered in a settlement, its interpretation is challenging, especially because of its unique motif associated with sexuality and fertility. This suggests that it may not be a children's toy, and various uses are not excluded (Horváth 2010, 180–182, Fig. 2; Rustoiu, Berecki 2015b, 265, Fig. 4: 4; 6: 3).

On the other hand, ceramic rattles can also be found in the graves of adults. A star-shaped clay rattle was found at the Bucsú – Rétmelléki-dűlő cemetery, in grave 126, which is the cremation grave of a young adult, probably a woman, dated to LT C1; it was accompanied by a two-part iron chain belt, two iron fibulae, and a bronze ring. All six pointed protrusions are decorated with transverse grooves, and there are three ceramic beads inside. Since the rattle was found in the grave of an adult, it might have hung from a belt. The rattle could have produced sound in a ritual; because of its pointed shape, it is believed not to be a children's toy (Ilon 2008, 289–290, Fig. 4: 1; 5; Ilon, Nagy 2010, 77–78, Fig. 10: 1; Rustoiu, Berecki 2015b, 265, Fig. 6: 2). A few star-shaped ceramic rattles are also known from antiquity; in their case, the protrusions are thought to imitate nipples and serve for sucking and biting when teething (Pfäffli, Fernández 2014, 150–152, Fig. 4: 10–13). A ceramic rattle was found in cremation grave 1 at the cemetery of Fântânele – Dâmbu Popii, dated to LT B2. The grave included ceramic vessels, three iron fibulae, and two knives. The anthropological analysis indicates that the grave was the burial of a woman older than 20 years, so the rattle cannot be considered a toy. The rattle is egg-shaped, with a perforated upper part for inserting 24 grain-shaped clay beads. The perforation was closed with a small clay plug. The outside of the rattle is decorated with longitudinal fields bounded by incised lines, alternating between undecorated fields and fields filled with tiny punctures (Rustoiu, Berecki 2015b, 261, Fig. 1–3; Rustoiu, Gál 2018, 130, Fig. 1–3; Rustoiu 2019, 164–165, Fig. 33: 1). At the Perl-

Oberleuken cemetery, ceramic rattles have been found in three graves, but according to the results of the anthropological analysis, these were adult graves (Glansdorp 2011, 59–60, 101, Fig. 55), so it is assumed that these objects were a gift from a grieving child who placed their favourite toy in the grave (Glansdorp 2011, 60; 2018, 51–52). These finds demonstrate that without knowledge of contextual data, rattles cannot be confidently considered items characteristic only for children. This might also be indicated by the burnt bronze jingles found in two warrior graves in Zvonimirovo – LT 4 and LT 12 – which were probably attached to clothing or to a belt and also produced sound (Dizdar 2013, 207–208, Fig. 11, Pl. 9: 6; 23: 4).

Children are often associated with the finds of small anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines throughout all periods, but they are rarely found in graves. One such simple cylindrical ceramic figurine with circular indentations on the head and body was found in grave 10 at the Tiszavasvári cemetery, where a 1–2-year-old child was buried. The grave included a pot, a fragment of a millstone, and a bronze bracelet of a size not matching a child but an adult (Almássy 1998, 59–60, Pl. IX: 2; Rustoiu 2019, 220–224, 252, Fig. 51: 2). Also, at the Pottenbrun cemetery, a small ceramic idol of unclear symbolism was discovered in the fill of grave 10, containing the burial of a richly equipped child aged around 1.5 years (Ramsl 2002, 29, 139, Pl. 33: 2; 2010, 93–94, Fig. 16).

Although toys are not especially visible in the archaeological record, they are most commonly associated with children and are considered important in childhood (Brookshaw 2009, 368, 381; Crawford 2009, 56–62; Thibault 2022, 242). They could have been used for the transmission of knowledge and skills through play and observations of the surroundings (Kamp 2015, 180), playing an important role in the socialization of children (Sánchez Romero 2008; Kamp 2015, 181–182). During the Late Iron Age, toys are recognized as small-sized objects modelled upon objects of standard dimensions; they are assumed to have been used not only as toys but also as ritual or functional items (Kamp 2015, 182). Most often, they are miniature vessels that are most commonly known from settlements, but they have also been found in graves, making the context of discovery important for their interpretation (Rustoiu 2016a). It is assumed that children observed adults and the world around them, and independently attempted to create something for themselves, perhaps a ceramic ves-

sel. It is not excluded that they could have learned certain skills from more skilled peers (Kamp 2015, 173–174, 180). The figurines from the mentioned two graves might be considered toys that belonged to the children buried in them, precisely due to the context of their discovery (Kamp 2015, 182), testifying to the individualization of both the burial and the items inside it (Kraus 2002, 107–108, Tab. 1; Baxter 2005, 63; 2008, 162; Röder 2010; 2022; Dasen 2012; Sofaer 2015, 74; Rustoiu 2016a; Riede et al. 2018; 2021; Langley, Litster 2018, etc.). On the other hand, it is possible that the idol from the Tiszavasvári cemetery is a depiction of the girl rather than a toy; along with the found millstone fragment, this indicates a magical ritual (Rustoiu 2019, 222, 224, 250). Anthropomorphic figurines are numerous in the northern Balkans and south and east of the Carpathians, while they are rare at La Tène sites (only a few in the eastern Carpathian Basin). Their creation does not require special craft skills, and they are considered as evidence of particular rituals involving magical ceramic dolls brought from other territories (Rustoiu 2019, 250–257, Fig. 59–61; Georgescu 2022, 50–51, Fig. 1). Actually, each object has its own biography and can be used as a toy – not only the objects made for the purpose, but also other objects made for a different reason if they are used for play at some point, acquiring a new layer of meaning (Crawford 2009; Hirsch 2019; Thibault 2022, 241–245, 247; Röder 2022). Since they are hard to recognize from the archaeological standpoint, it is believed that research should be directed towards the activity of playing and how objects are used (Thibault 2022, 242–243). Toys were most often originally made by adults, probably parents, perhaps specifically for children, reflecting the adults' perception of what children actually want and transmitting their ideas, especially if the objects are of small dimensions and complex craftsmanship (Brookshaw 2009, 379–381; Kamp 2015, 181–182; Röder 2022, 252). However, sometimes there might be an alternative explanation, as evidenced by a find from the Late La Tène cemetery of Perl-Oberleuken. In cremation grave 74, on top of the cremated remains of an adult, which were inside a pot serving as an urn, there was a ceramic figurine of a dog (Glansdorp 2010; 2011, 59–60, 101–102, Pl. 67; 2015, 135, Fig. 3: 1; 7: 1; 9; 2018, 49–52, Fig. 3; 4: 2). Similarly to the finds of rattles from the same cemetery, this could also be a gift from a grieving child. Such finds are common in this area (Polenz 1975, 272–276, Fig. 17); a particularly interesting find is the ceramic

figurine of a dog in grave 1 at the Bischofsheim cemetery, accompanied by a ceramic rattle (Polenz 1975, 256, Fig. 2: 6).

CONCLUSION

Research has shown that the Zvonimirovo cemetery, along with other cemeteries of the La Tène culture in the Carpathian Basin, reveals complex communities with well-defined representations of individual identity through mortuary treatment and profiles which include the funerary rite, grave structure, and multiple combinations of grave assemblages. These communities were aware of the mortality of children and had culturally regulated procedures and contents for mortuary treatment similar to that of adults. This is testified by the results of the investigation of the Middle La Tène cemetery in Zvonimirovo, which uncovered 130 graves and did the anthropological analysis for 81 of them. The results of the analysis show that individuals from all age groups, including children, were buried in the cemetery. Twelve children's graves were identified so far across the entire area of the cemetery, providing important contextual information (Fig. 2). Children were typically buried alone, or occasionally with an adult, most commonly a woman. The same conclusions have been reached in other cemeteries of the La Tène culture in the Carpathian Basin and East Alpine area, where children's graves have rarely been the focus of specific research (Ramsl 2010; Rustoiu 2016a; Bujna 2019; Ramsl, Nowotny 2020; Mauthner 2023), but also in other regions associated with the La Tène culture (Endlich 1998; Kraus 2002; 2006; Tibbetts 2008). For now, best known insights into children's graves and burials in settlements are based on research in Switzerland (Rissanen, Alder 2011; Pichler et al. 2012; 2013; 2015; 2017; Rissanen et al. 2013; Jud, Ulrich-Bochsler 2014; Zweifel 2015; Brönnimann et al. 2022).

The results of the integrated bioarchaeological analysis of mortuary profiles of children's graves from the Zvonimirovo cemetery and the analysis of available contextual data for children's graves from other cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin open up possibilities for studying children and childhood, taking into account the contributions of children to the environment they belonged to (Lillehammer 1989, 102–103; 2000; 2010, 22–24). Therefore, an attempt has been made to understand the relationships that children had with the natural

and cultural world around them, with their surroundings, encompassing their family members, their peers, and the entire community to which they belonged (Thompson et al. 2014, 2–6). However, children's graves, or the recognition of everything that shaped their lives, cannot be viewed only as a reflection of life. Without knowledge of the graves of adults, it is impossible to create a more complete picture of a past community.

The results of the bioarchaeological analysis of children's graves have raised many questions about the lives of children during the Late Iron Age and about their childhood (Scott 1999; Kraus 2002, 116–117). Children are considered to be poorly recognizable in the archaeological sense because associations are made between the bodies of a certain biological age and items of material culture (Sofaer 2015, 76–77). Children's graves are viewed as a cross-section of biological and cultural identity (Sofaer Dervenski 2000; Halcrow, Ward 2018), defining the biological and social age of each individual, including children (Rebay-Salisbury, Pany-Kucera 2020). This allows for the exploration of childhood as an important part of each individual's life (Perry 2006; Baxter 2008; Muller et al. 2019, etc.) and of the social role of children in communities, where they represented a significant portion (Chamberlain 1997; Baxter 2005, 2008, 159–160). As they grew, children underwent visible biological changes with their own material culture (Sofaer Dervenski 2000). The duration of childhood as a cultural phenomenon (Baxter 2008, 159–163; Kamp 2015, 173–175; Murphy 2017; Murphy, Le Roy 2017, 5) depended on various factors, such as the period, location, social and gender affiliation (Brookshaw 2009, 366–367).

Communities, including the one from Zvonimirovo, used mortuary treatments and profiles to demonstrate the affiliation of children to certain social, gender, and age categories. However, it is essential always to consider that mortuary profiles can (but do not have to) depict the gender identity, age identity, or social identity of the child; they may reflect both societal and personal choices (Kamp 2015, 179). Age is often not the sole element of social organization identifiable in burials, and other social roles or identities can manifest in death. Also, children's mortuary records may convey contrasting or multiple messages (Thompson et al. 2014, 5–6; Murphy 2017, 1; Murphy, Le Roy 2017, 8–9). The death of children was probably considered an abnormal phenomenon that abruptly interrupted their course of life. However,

the community was probably prepared for such deaths, and there existed a culturally regulated sequence of funerary rites. The death of a child in the early stages of life likely had a profound emotional impact on parents and other members of the family and the broader community, since their death was a loss at both an individual and a societal level; the death of a child influenced the future of the family and the community, which sought to preserve the memory of the children because they had participated in many aspects of their lives (Kraus 2002, 106; Murphy 2011; Kamp 2015, 180; Zweifel 2015, 125).

The decisions on a child's mortuary treatment and profiles were likely made by the closest grieving relatives (Taylor 2014, 180), which is why children received the same mortuary treatment as adults in La Tène cemeteries, including Zvonimirovo. Other children might have also played a role in funerary rites associated with their deceased siblings or friends (Murphy 2011, 68–69). Although many children's graves have been identified in La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, their number remains small, especially when compared with expected child mortality rates (e.g. Goodman, Armelagos 1989; Scott 1999; Chamberlain 2006; Lewis 2007, 2011, 2016; Redfern 2007; Bacvarov 2008; Fahlander 2011; Finlay 2013; Gilmore, Halcrow 2014; Kamp 2015; Murphy, Le Roy 2017; Halcrow et al. 2017, etc.). This would imply that not all children were buried in cemeteries, indicating that burial practices were selective and culturally influenced. This is shown by the finds of children's burials in La Tène settlements, especially those of the youngest age group. However, the number of graves in cemeteries and burials in settlements still does not seem to explain the insufficient representation of the youngest children, which opens up the possibility to consider other, archaeologically invisible funerary practices. In any case, mortuary treatment indicates that funerary practices for children were as complex as those for adults. When analysing children's graves in cemeteries, there are some differences compared to adults – differences in mortuary profiles, in terms of the items placed in the graves, where it is hard to understand the norms and rules that governed the selection of these items. It is impossible to conclude with certainty whether the finds in the grave reflect the daily life of the child that owned or wore them, and the question will always arise as to whether the items correspond to the child's

everyday attire or indicate its status (Kraus 2002, 108; Kamp 2015, 179). Sometimes it is observed that items placed in children's graves do not match their dimensions or had already been in use (Kraus 2002, 110; Gustavs 2004; Lettman 2018), which may suggest that the prematurely deceased child in the grave is depicted in a future role. Symbolically, such items might represent a missed social age and an unrealized role in the community. On the other hand, some children were buried in a manner characteristic of children (Zweifel 2015, 124–126). Also, richly equipped graves of children, which do not differ in the quality and quantity of finds from adult graves, probably indicate that not all items of costume, jewellery, and the ceramic set of vessels were in the child's possession. It is unlikely that the child's own actions in the community led to the social status reflected in the quantity and variety of grave goods, so such graves actually reflect the status of family and relatives (Rissanen, Alder 2011, 156; Zweifel 2015, 124). This would mean that the depicted status was not dependent on age. The majority of finds indicate that they were not intended solely for placement in children's graves, just as there are no visible differences in find assemblages in children's graves based on age. However, certain items in children's graves, such as

amulet pendants, which are particularly common in Early La Tène graves, might be evidence of an emotional connection between the burial and the child (Röder 2010, 8). Amulets could have been specially crafted for the child to protect it from premature death or accident, and were placed in the grave to provide protection even after death, as they could not do so themselves (Pauli 1975, 161; Sankot 1980, 50; Ramsel 2010, 95). The differences in mortuary profiles at the Zvonimirovo cemetery, and at other cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, can be seen when comparing the graves of children and adolescents, and it is probably evidence of the biological change that also manifested as a change in social identity. Children probably underwent certain rites of passage as they transitioned from childhood, possibly often marked by events that posed significant challenges before them. Subsequently, they faced new times and challenges in which they were certainly helped by everything they had learned by playing and observing their parents and older community members. This study stressed the mortuary treatment and profiles of children buried at the Zvonimirovo cemetery who died prematurely probably due to some biological deficiencies that interrupted their childhood.

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Otroški grobovi na srednjelatenskem grobišču v Zvonimirovem (Hrvaška)

Povzetek

Grobišče Zvonimirovo je trenutno edino sistematično raziskano grobišče latenske kulture na severu Hrvaške. V raziskavah med letoma 1993 in 2019 je bilo na površini 3.968 m² izkopanih 130 žarnih grobov. Vsi grobovi, razen enega, so iz srednjega latena (LT C2), torej časa od prehoda 3. v 2. st. pr. n. št. do začetka druge polovice 2. st. pr. n. št. Pri dosedanjih analizah je bila pozornost namenjena grobovom moških, opremljenih z orožjem, ter grobovom žensk z različnimi deli noše in nakitom (Majnarić-Pandžić 2001; Dizdar 2013; 2016; 2020a; Dizdar et al. 2014; Dizdar, Ljuština 2019). Rezultati antropološke analize kažejo, da so na grobišču pokopavali pokojnike vseh starostnih skupin, tudi otroke. Ob tej priložnosti je bioarheološka analiza zajela vse grobove s kremiranimi ostanki otrok, ki so bili ob smrti stari do 14 let (Sofaer Dervenski 2000). V analizo so bili vključeni tudi grobovi mladostnikov, starih od 15 do 20 let, da bi ugotovili razlike v identiteti in statusu v skupnosti, ki so jih nakazovale prejšnje analize (Dizdar 2013, 40–42; 2020a).

Ker rezultatov antropoloških analiz za raziskana grobišča latenske kulture na sosednjih območjih (v jugovzhodnem delu Karpatske kotline, kjer so živeli Skordiski, ter jugovzhodnem delu Alp in jugozahodni Panoniji, kjer so živeli Tavriski) najpogosteje ni, smo otroške grobove z grobišča v Zvonimirovem primerjali z rezultati bioarheoloških analiz, opravljenih na grobiščih latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini (*sl. 1*). Na teh grobiščih so bili odkriti skeletni in žgani grobovi otrok, pri analizi smo upoštevali vse razpoložljive podatke. Omeniti velja, da so bili otroški grobovi z grobišč v Karpatski kotlini le redko predmet posebnih raziskav (Ramsl 2010, tab. 1; Rustoiu 2016a; Bujna 2019; Ramsl, Nowotny 2020). Izstopa edina novejša študija otroških grobov na območju vzhodnih Alp (Mauthner 2023). Podobno velja tudi za druga območja latenske kulture (npr. Endlich 1998; Kraus 2002; 2006; Tibbetts 2008). Podrobno analizirani so bili samo otroški grobovi z nekaterih grobišč v Švici, denimo Basel-Gasfabrik (Rissanen, Alder 2011; Pichler et al. 2012; Rissanen et al. 2013; Pichler

et al. 2013; 2015; 2017; Brönnimann et al. 2022), Bern-Reichenbachstrasse (Jud, Ulrich-Bochsler 2014) in Ipsach (Zweifel 2015).

Otroške grobove z grobišča v Zvonimirovem bomo primerjali z rezultati bioarheoloških analiz, opravljenih za grobišča latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini, od koder so znani grobovi otrok vseh starostnih skupin. Raziskanih grobišč je veliko, večjih z znanimi bioarheološkimi podatki pa malo. Evidentirani so skeletni in žgani grobovi, antropološke analize so bile pogosteje opravljene pri skeletnih grobovih (*sl. 1*). Za popolno bioarheološko analizo otroških grobov v Karpatski kotlini je poleg antropoloških podatkov pomembno tudi poznavanje kontekstualnih podatkov in grobnih sestojev,¹ kar pa ni pogosto. Tako so za nekatera grobišča, raziskana na Madžarskem, znani antropološki podatki, vendar brez arheološkega konteksta (Kiszelyné, Kiszely 1967; Zoffmann 2010; 2012; Tóth 2015; Balázs et al. 2015; Hornok, Tóth 2016 itd.). Enako velja za nekatera grobišča v Avstriji (Engelhardt 1969; Nebelhay 1971; Ramsel 2010, tab. 1; 2016; 2018; Karwowski, Czubak 2019; Morschhauser, Pollak-Schmuck 2021), na Slovaškem (Benadík et al. 1957; Benadík 1960; Chropovský 1958; Dušek 1960; Rejholcová 1977; Benadík 1983; Ratimorská 1981) in Romuniji (Berecki et al. 2022; Gál et al. 2021, 142, tab. 13; 18; 23–24).

Za primerjave grobnih sestojev otrok, najdenih na grobišču Zvonimirovo, so upoštevana le tista grobišča iz Karpatske kotline, za katera je bila objavljena popolna bioarheološka analiza. Čeprav je zaznati kronološko razliko med temi grobišči in tistim v Zvonimirovem – pokopi na njih se začnejo na začetku latenske kulture in trajajo do konca LT C1 ob koncu 3. st. pr. n. št. – gre za spoznanja, ki odpirajo marsikatero raziskovalno vprašanje. Odgovore lahko vsaj delno ponudi celostni pristop k interdisciplinarnemu raziskovanju. Z analizo otroških grobov v Zvonimirovem smo želeli raziskati položaj in vlogo otrok v skupnosti. Kako je skupnost pri pogrebnem obredu² obravnavala otroke? So bili ti pri obravnavani enako kot odrasli? So bili vsi otroci pokopani na grobišču?

¹ Izraz grobni sestoj pomeni organizacijo vsebine groba (posmrtnih ostankov, pridatkov, arhitekture groba) in povezave oz. odnose med posameznimi predmeti ali strukturami.

² Izraz pogrebni obred oz. ritual pomeni vsa dejanja, običaje in prakse, povezane s pogrebom – od priprave telesa, izbire kraja pokopa, uporabe obrednih predmetov do simbolike. Zajema celoten kontekst kulturnih in duhovnih dimenzij.

Ali se kažejo razlike pri obravnavi otrok glede na njihovo starost? Katere najdbe se pojavljajo v otroških grobovih in v kolikšnem številu oz. ali je mogoče prepoznati starostno in spolno določljive predmete v primerjavi z grobovi odraslih? Ali lahko po najdbah v otroških grobovih prepoznamo morebitne spremembe v tem, kako so bili otroci za življenje obravnavani in kako se je njihov družbeni status glede na materialno kulturo lahko spremenil? Rezultati antropoloških analiz pričajo o morebitnih patoloških spremembah, ki kažejo na zdravstveno stanje otrok in možne vzroke njihove prezgodnje smrti, druge analize pa lahko kažejo tako na prehrano otrok kot tudi na njihovo morebitno mobilnost. To je le nekaj raziskovalnih vprašanj, na katera bomo z uporabo razpoložljivih podatkov odgovorili pri analizi otroških grobov z grobišča Zvonimirovo, pa tudi z drugih latenskih grobišč v Karpatski kotlini (*sl. 1*).

OTROŠKI GROBOVI NA GROBIŠČU V ZVONIMIROVEM

Od 130 raziskanih žganih grobov je bila antropološka analiza doslej opravljena na posmrtnih ostankih iz 81 grobov. Del rezultatov je bil objavljen (Šlaus, Novak 2013) in pričajo o biološki identiteti pokojnikov. Iz izsledkov je razvidno, da so na grobišču posmrtni ostanki ljudi vseh starosti, kar kaže na populacijski profil skupnosti. Doslej je bilo ugotovljenih 12 grobov s pokopi otrok, mlajših od 14 let. Raztreseni so bili po celotnem grobišču (*sl. 2*), v enem grobu je bil pokop moške osebe v puberteti (*tab. 1*³). Otroci so bili največkrat pokopani sami, torej kot edini pokojnik v grobu (*tab. 1*). Njihove sežgane ostanke so našli kot kupček na dnu grobne jame (*sl. 3; 5–6*). Samo v grobu LT 84 so bili kremirani ostanki otroka z deli noše in nakitom položeni v lonec, ki je služil kot žara (*sl. 4*). V dveh grobovih so bili posmrtni ostanki otroka skupaj s posmrtnimi ostanki odrasle ženske (LT 5 in LT 52). V obeh grobovih so bili upepeljeni ostanki otroka na istem kupčku kot upepeljeni posmrtni ostanki ženske, kar nakazuje, da sta bila sežgana na isti grmadi. Edinstven je grob LT 12 (Majnarić-Pandžić 2001) s tremi pokojniki. Sežgane kosti so bile najdene v vzhodnem delu groba, pri čemer sta opazni dve večji koncentraciji – v severovzhodnem delu so bili najdeni ostanki

³ Tabele s podatki so na voljo na povezavi http://iza.zrc-sazu.si/pdf/razno/Dizdar_Suppl_Tables_AV_76_2025.pdf

moškega, v jugovzhodnem delu pa otrok (Dizdar 2013, 409–417, sl. 157, t. 20–30; 2016, 305).

Zanimiv je vpogled v analize otroških grobov z drugih grobišč latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini. Na grobiščih Ludas, Sajópetri, Dubník in Pottenbrun je število grobov, v katerih je otrok edini pokojnik, enako številu tistih, v katerih je bil otrok pokopan z enim od odraslih pokojnikov, največkrat žensko (*tab. 2*). Na grobiščih Tiszavasvári in Palárikovo I so samo samostojni pokopi otrok, na grobiščih Maňa, Malé Kosihy in Mannersdorf pa ti pokopi prevladujejo. Le na grobišču Mátraszőlős je število grobov, ko je otrok pokopan z žensko ali kakšnim drugim odraslim, večje. To potrjuje ugotovitev, da je bila najpogostejša oblika dvojnega pokopa skupni pokop odrasle ženske in otroka (Berecki, Vaida 2017, 28–29). Po drugi strani se na grobišču v Zvonimirovem število otroških grobov giblje okoli 15 % celotnega doslej analiziranega vzorca, kar ustreza deležu med 10 in 25 % na preostalih grobiščih (*tab. 2*). Sicer pa se delež otroških grobov na grobiščih z večjim številom izkopanih grobov giblje od 6 do 13 % (Bujna 2019, 62). Podoben delež je tudi na grobiščih Ludas in Sajópetri na severovzhodu Madžarske, Maňa na jugozahodu Slovaške in Pottenbrun v Spodnji Avstriji. Delež otroških grobov je nekoliko višji na grobiščih Tiszavasvári, Dubník, Palárikovo I in Mannersdorf, nekoliko manjši pa na grobiščih Mátraszőlős in Malé Kosihy (*tab. 2*). Te številke kažejo, da so bili otroci v mlajši železni dobi prepoznavna družbena skupina, je pa materialne sledi, povezane z otroki, težko prepoznati (npr. Sofaer Dervenski 1994; 1997; Kamp 2001; Lillehammer 2000; 2002; 2010; Baxter 2005; 2008; Wileman 2005; Pawleta 2013; Kamp 2015 itd.).

POGREBNI RITUAL PRI OTROCIH

Vsi grobovi v Zvonimirovem, tudi otroški, so žgani. Kremirani ostanki otrok in prav tako odraslih pokojnikov so bili položeni na kupček na dno groba, včasih verjetno zaviti v tkanino (*sl. 3; 5; 6*). Med sežganimi kostmi ni ostankov grmade, kar pomeni, da so bile kosti po pobiranju verjetno oprane. V kupčku so deli noše in nakit, keramične posode so postavljene zraven sežganih ostankov (Dizdar 2013, 32–33; 2016, 297–298; Dizdar, Ljuština 2019, 50). Na grobišču sta bila doslej najdena le dva grobova, v katerih so bile sežgane kosti položene v keramično posodo, uporabljeno za žaro – otroški

LT 84 (*sl. 4*) in ženski LT 86 (Dizdar 2016, 298). To kaže, da so bili otroci pri pogrebnem obredu obravnavani podobno kot odrasli (Dizdar 2013, 40–42; 2020a).

Grobovi, v katere so bili položeni sežgani ostanki otrok, so bili enakih oblik in dimenzij kot grobovi odraslih (*tab. 1*). Podobna spoznanja veljajo tudi za druga grobišča v Karpatski kotlini. Pri skeletnih grobovih otrok so bile grobne jame manjših dimenzij, saj so vanje položili manjše truplo. Zanimivi so ostanki lesene skrinje oz. krste v grobu LT 30, v kateri je bil pokopan otrok. Ostanki lesene grobne arhitekture so bili odkriti pri še nekaterih grobovih odraslih pokojnikov (Dizdar 2016, 303–304, sl. 7; 12). Polaganje kremiranih posmrtnih ostankov otroka v keramično posodo, ki so jo uporabili kot žaro, je v Karpatski kotlini ugotovljeno pri le redkih otroških grobovih oz. grobovih z odraslim in otrokom. Ti grobovi se v nekoliko večjem številu pojavljajo le v vzhodnem delu Karpatske kotline in na Moravskem. Za žare so bile uporabljene posode različnih oblik, največkrat nekoliko večje, ki se v grobovih pojavljajo tudi kot pridatek (Dizdar 2016, 298–299; Repka 2020, 157). To kažejo tudi primeri z grobišč na severovzhodu Madžarske (Almássy 1998, 61–62, t. 16: 4; Szabó, Tankó 2012, 28–30, sl. 33–38; 2018, 24–25, sl. 13; Bózsing 2018, 249 itd.) in na Slovaškem (npr. Bujna 1995, 22–23, sl. 10, t. 5: 11). V grobu 1 gomile 9 na grobišču Lang-Schirka na Štajerskem so bili sežgani ostanki otroka, starega do največ šest let, položeni v žaro skupaj z majhno sekiro (Mauthner 2021, 24, sl. 3: 1–2; 2023, 66–67, sl. 2–3).

Na grobišču Zvonimirovo se otroški grobovi od grobov odraslih razlikujejo po tem, da je v prvih manjša količina sežganih kosti (*tab. 1*). Po antropološki analizi so prisotni vsi deli telesa. Sežgane kosti otrok, pa tudi odraslih pokojnikov, so izrazito fragmentirane, temno sive, največkrat pa bele barve, kar kaže na visoko temperaturo grmade, ki je znašala od 400 do 650 °C (Šlaus, Novak 2013, 518). Pri gorenju poškodovani bronasti in stekleni predmeti kažejo na še višjo temperaturo (Dizdar 2013, 34–36, sl. 8–9; 2016: 296–297, sl. 1–2; 4). Teža sežganih posmrtnih ostankov otrok najpogosteje znaša 100 g, v nekaterih grobovih (npr. starejši otrok iz groba LT 12) lahko tudi več (*tab. 1*). Opaženo je, da so v večji teži ohranjeni sežgani ostanki nekoliko starejših otrok, vendar je treba upoštevati tudi verjetnost, da vsi sežgani ostanki niso bili pobrani iz ostankov grmade. Podobni podatki o težah ostankov kremiranih otrok so bili ugotovljeni na grobiščih Ludas in Sajópetri

(Tankó, Tankó 2012; Tankó 2012; Bózsing 2018) ter Hegyfalú (Balázs et al. 2015). Poleg ostankov otrok so v večini grobov v Zvonimirovem našli tudi sežgane kosti mladega prašiča ali kakšne druge živali, ki je ni bilo mogoče identificirati, a so verjetno ostanki prašiča (*tab. 1*). Teže sežganih živalskih kosti so različne, največkrat pa gre za dele glave in sprednjih ali zadnjih nog (Radović 2013, 541–543; Dizdar 2016, 302–303). Podoben pogrebni ritual so odkrili na grobiščih Ludas (Tankó, Tankó 2012, 254–255) in Sajópetri (Szabó, Tankó 2018; Bózsing 2018).

Dvojni in večkratni grobovi s pokopom otroka

Na grobišču v Zvonimirovem so z antropološko analizo doslej odkrili 12 grobov, v katerih so pokopani otroci, mlajši od 14 let. V treh grobovih so bili pokopani skupaj z odraslimi (*tab. 1*). V dveh grobovih so bili posmrtni ostanki otroka skupaj z odraslo žensko (grobova LT 5 in LT 52), pri čemer so bili upepeljeni ostanki otroka najdeni na istem kupčku kot ostanki ženske, kar namiguje na sežiganje na skupni grmadi. Podoben pogrebni ritual je znan tudi z grobišča Ludas (Tankó, Tankó 2012, 252, App. 1). V dvojnih grobovih odraslih na Zvonimirovem sta bila kupčka sežganih kosti vedno ločena, vsak s svojimi prepoznavnimi predmeti. To pomeni, da sta bila pokojnika sežgana na ločenih grmadah in nato skupaj pokopana v isti grob (Dizdar 2013, 38–41; 2016, 304–306, sl. 13; 14). V grobu LT 12 s tremi pokojniki so bile sežgane kosti v vzhodnem delu groba, opazni pa sta bili dve večji koncentraciji – v severovzhodnem delu so bili ostanki moškega, v jugovzhodnem pa ostanki otrok (Majnarić-Pandžić 2001; Dizdar 2013, 409–417, sl. 157, t. 20–30; 2016, 305). Podobne ugotovitve pri dvojnih ali večkratnih pokopih so dokumentirane tudi na drugih grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini, za katera so znani rezultati bioarheoloških analiz. Dvojni pokopi v mlajši železni dobi v Karpatski kotlini predstavljajo izjemne kontekste (Berecki, Vaida 2017; Berecki et al. 2022, 54). Poleg grobišča Zvonimirovo so samostojni pokopi otrok, starih do največ enega leta, evidentirani le na treh grobiščih (*tab. 3*), medtem ko so bili otroci te starosti pogostejše pokopani z enim od odraslih pokojnikov, največkrat z žensko (*tab. 4*).

Pokopi otrok z odraslo žensko imajo številne vzporednice na drugih latenskih grobiščih v Kar-

patski kotlini. Običajno gre za grobove, v katerih sta pokopana odrasla ženska in otrok v starosti do sedem let, le redko je otrok pokopan z odraslim moškim (*tab. 4; 6*). Pokop ženske in otroka v skupni grob je povezan z materinstvom, ki je imelo pomembno vlogo v življenju vsake ženske, čeprav je odnos med materjo in otrokom skozi vse življenje še vedno slabo poznan (Mays et al. 2017, 5; Rebay-Salisbury 2018a; 2018b, 40, 46; Gowland 2018). Skupni pokop ženske in novorojenčka je običajno povezan s težavami med porodom ali zdravjem matere po porodu, saj se domneva, da je med nosečnostjo in porodom lahko umrlo kar 15 % žensk (Rebay-Salisbury 2017a, 66; 2017b, 184). Pri razlagi dvojnih grobov odrasle ženske in otroka kot grobov matere in otroka pa je potrebna previdnost, saj ti grobovi ne kažejo nujno sorodstvenega razmerja pokojnikov, temveč so mogoče tudi druge družbene povezave.

Znani so tudi maloštevilni pokopi odraslega moškega in otroka, skupni pokop dveh otrok in trojni grobovi (*tab. 4; 6; 8*). Pokope odraslega moškega in otroka so odkrili na več grobiščih latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini (Ramsl 2010, 96; Berecki, Vaida 2017, 29). V večini primerov gre za pokope moških z orožjem. Redki so tudi grobovi z dvema otrokoma navadno različne starosti (*tab. 11*) in tudi primeri trojnih ali večkratnih pokopov. Najpogostejše gre za pokop dveh odraslih in otroka. Najbližja primerjava je žgani grob 10a z grobišča Dobova iz LT C1, v katerem so bili najdeni posmrtni ostanki moškega in ženske, pod skledo pa ostanki otroka, starega približno dve leti. V grobu sta bila najdena orožje in toaletni pribor, ki naj bi pripadal moškemu, deli nože in nakit pa ženski (Guštin 1981, 225, 229, sl. 1: 2, t. 45–48; 1984, 315, 317, sl. 4; 7–8; Hincak, Guštin 2011, 242).

Grobove z dvema ali več pokojniki na grobišču Zvonimirovo, pa tudi na drugih grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini, od katerih je bil vsaj eden otrok, je mogoče razložiti na več načinov (npr. Boulestin, Duday 2006, 160–164; Boulestin 2022; Boulestin, Courtaud 2022, 62–63). Mogoče je, da sta/so pokojnika/-i najverjetneje umrla/-i sočasno ali v kratkem časovnem razmiku, razlogi pa ostajajo neznani, zlasti če upoštevamo, da so ostanki upepeljenih slabo in delno ohranjeni. Domnevamo lahko, da grobovi z dvema ali več pokojniki, vključno z otroki, odražajo različne družbene odnose med pokopanimi posamezniki – verjetno sorodstvene vezi, zaradi česar se je skupnost odločila za tako nenavadno posmrtno obravnavo (Rebay-Salisbury 2018b, 37–46). Za grobove, v katerih sta pokopana

dva otroka, lahko domnevamo, da gre za grobove bratov in sester, zlasti če so pokojniki različnih starosti (Rebay-Salisbury 2018b, 40).

Grobovi z naknadnim pokopom otroka

Z grobišč latenske kulture je znano tudi manjše število grobov z naknadnim pokopom, pri katerih je eden od pokojnikov otrok – najpogosteje je bil prav ta pokopan naknadno (Ramsl 2010, 96). Ti grobovi kažejo na nekakšno socialno povezanost med pokojniki ali pa osebno in čustveno povezanost med pokojniki in žalujočimi (Ramsl 2018, 209; Wendling 2020, 64–65). Verjetno je šlo za družinsko povezanost, čeprav čas in vzrok smrti verjetno nista bila enaka (Rebay-Salisbury 2018b, 38). Mogoče so tudi druge razlage, denimo, da je bil grob odprt zaradi manipulacije s predmeti ali zaradi verskih razlogov (Ramsl 2018, 209).

Otroški grobovi v naseljih latenske kulture

Kot že omenjeno, razvoj latenske kulture zaznamujejo številni primeri pokopov otrok v naselbinskem kontekstu. Gre za pokope novorojenčkov do tretjega mesec ali otrok do enega leta starosti, v katerih so dodatki le izjema. Te pokope razlagajo različno, nedvomno pa predstavljajo običajno pogrebno prakso za to starostno skupino (Endlich 1998, 380; Wiltshcke-Schrotta 1999; Krausse 1998; 2002; Beilke-Voigt 2008; 2010; 2013; 2018; Ramsl 2010; 2018; Trebsche 2012; 2013; 2020, 424; Kamp 2015 et al.). Za to priča med drugim majhno število grobov otrok te starostne skupine v Zvonimirovem in tudi na drugih grobiščih (*tab. 3–4*).

Na območju Skordiskov je primer otroškega pokopa znan iz naselja na Gomolavi. Na dnu poznolatske jame je bil pokopan otrok, star 3–4 leta, skupaj z moškim, starim 25–35 let, in žensko, staro 44–48 let (Jovanović, Jovanović 1988, 53–58, 173–177, pr. 7, sl. 14–17, t. 43: 1–5; 44: 1–5; 45: 1–4). Številni primeri otroških grobov znotraj naselij so znani z območja t. i. dakijsko-getske kulture v vzhodnem delu Karpatske kotline in spodnjega Podonavja. Datirani so v celotno mlajšo železno dobo od 4. st. pr. n. št. do rimskega osvajanja na začetku 2. st. pr. n. št. (Sirbu 1993, 31–36; 1997, 196–197, sl. 1; 2008, 72–77, sl. 5.1; Sirbu et al. 2006, 192–193, sl. 9–11 itd.).

Pridobljena spoznanja o pokopih novorojenih otrok v naselbinah latenske kulture odpirajo tudi vprašanje, zakaj so bili nekateri otroci pokopani v naselju, drugi pa na grobišču. Ali so bili vsi otroci pokopani? Kaj se je zgodilo s fetusi in novorojenčki? Poznavanje pokopa otrok v naseljih kaže, da je bil pogrebni obred v času latenske kulture glede na število odkritih grobov otrok na grobiščih, predvsem tistih najmlajše starosti, selektiven (*tab. 3–4*). Očitno sta v otroštvu obstajali vsaj dve stopnji. Najmlajši otroci (do enega leta) so bili premladi za pokopavanje na grobišču skupnosti, ki so ji pripadali. Ko so dopolnili eno leto, so jih začeli pokopavati skupaj z odraslimi na grobišču (Ramsl 2010, 88; Zweifel 2015, 125). Morda novorojenčke, ki so umrli med porodom ali kmalu po njem, niti niso šteli za člane skupnosti (Mays 2000; 2014, 101). Morda je bil preminuli novorojenček pomemben le za družino in je s pokopom ob hiši še naprej živel z njo (Murphy, Le Roy 2017). Če je novorojenček preživel trenutke po rojstvu in ga je skupnost sprejela, je bil zaradi tega morda lahko pokopan na grobišču. O tem bi lahko pričali grobovi otrok, mlajših od enega leta, ki so bili pokopani z odraslim.

STAROSTNE SKUPINE OTROK

Iz analize otroških grobov na grobišču v Zvonimirovem izhaja, da so zastopane vse starostne skupine (*tab. 1*). Enako je tudi na drugih grobiščih latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini, za katera so na voljo rezultati antropoloških analiz (*tab. 2–8*). Dodatne podatke bi lahko dobili na grobiščih, kjer starostne skupine otrok niso natančneje določene (*tab. 9; 10*). Otroci so na Zvonimirovem razdeljeni v tri starostne skupine: otroci, stari do enega leta, otroci, stari od enega leta do sedem let, in otroci, stari od osem do 14 let. Starostni skupini – *infans I* (0–7 let) in *II* (8–14 let) – sta prepoznani v antropoloških analizah grobišč Ludas (Tankó 2012, 212) in Sajópetri (Bózsing 2018, 248). Z nekaterimi manjšimi odstopanji se podobna razdelitev po starosti uporablja tudi pri antropoloških analizah v srednji Evropi. Ta razdelitev omogoča preučevanje povezanosti določene starostne skupine s pogrebno prakso in materialno zapuščino (Rebay-Salisbury, Pany-Kucera 2020, 3) oziroma prepoznavanje bioloških in kulturnih lastnosti za vsako obdobje otrokovega življenja (Thompson et al. 2014, 2).

Na grobišču v Zvonimirovem in tudi na drugih grobiščih latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini so

bili kot posebna skupina opredeljeni grobovi z otroki, starimi do enega leta. V Zvonimirovem sta dva groba, v katerih so bili otroci te starosti pokopani samostojno, in še dva groba, v katerih so bili pokopani z odraslim (*tab. 1*). Tudi v Karpatski kotlini so samostojni pokopi otrok, mlajših od enega leta, na grobiščih latenske kulture redki (*tab. 3*). Ti grobovi kažejo, da so bili tudi najmlajši otroci pokopani s spoštovanjem in so zato bili verjetno sprejeti kot člani skupnosti. Morda je na to vplivala pripadnost družini, ki je v skupnosti po nečem izstopala, ali pa je šlo za kakšne druge nam neznane kulturne razloge. Po drugi strani so v večjem številu zastopani pokopi otrok te starosti z odraslim, najpogosteje žensko (*tab. 4*). Analiza kaže, da je skupno število grobov otrok, mlajših od enega leta, na grobiščih majhno, zlasti ob upoštevanju njihove umrljivosti. To lahko nakazuje, da je odsotnost te starostne skupine na grobiščih selektivna, o čemer pričajo številni pokopi otrok te starosti v naseljih (Ramsel 2010, 88; Beilke-Voigt 2018, 82–83; Trebsche 2020, 424). Domneva se, da je bila pričakovana umrljivost otrok kot najranljivejše skupine v prazgodovini okoli 50 %, umrljivost novorojenčkov oziroma otrok v prvem letu življenja pa okoli 20–30 %. Tveganje za smrt otroka je bilo največje na začetku življenja, zaradi različnih bolezni, okužb, prehrane itd., najbolj kritični trenutki pa so bili nosečnost, porod in prvih sedem dni po rojstvu (npr. Goodman, Armelagos 1989; Scott 1999; Chamberlain 2006; Lewis 2007; 2011; 2016; Redfern 2007; Bacvarov 2008; Fahlander 2011; Finlay 2013; Gilmore, Halcrow 2014; Kamp 2015; Murphy, Le Roy 2017; Halcrow et al. 2017 itd.). Vzroke najdemo tako v oslABLjeni imunosti kot tudi v stresnih spremembah, ki so jim bili otroci izpostavljeni (Rebay-Salisbury 2017a, 67; 2017b, 175; 2018a, 94, 99; Wendling 2020, 66; Avery et al. 2022, 4).

V Zvonimirovem (*tab. 1*) in tudi na grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini je precej večje število grobov otrok naslednje starostne skupine (1–7 let), kar je mogoče pojasniti z integracijo teh otrok v skupnost. Opazno je, da je v tej starostni skupini število grobov, v katerih je otrok edini pokojnik (*tab. 5*), večje v primerjavi z grobovi, v katerih so otroci te starosti pokopani z enim od odraslih, največkrat žensko (*tab. 6*). Razlike med posameznimi grobišči so opazne tudi pri številu samostojnih pokopov otrok v primerjavi s pokopi z odraslimi (*tab. 2*). Tudi pri analizi grobov otrok, starih 8–14 let, so opazne razlike. Na grobišču v Zvonimirovem so

štirje takšni grobovi (*tab. 1*), pri čemer je eden od pokojnikov v trojnem grobu LT 12 verjetno deklica, stara 10–14 let. Grobovi otrok te starostne skupine so znani v velikem številu z drugih grobišč v Karpatski kotlini (*tab. 2*). Otroci te starosti so bili največkrat edini pokojnik v grobu (*tab. 7*). V bistveno manjšem številu v primerjavi s prejšnjo starostno skupino so bili ugotovljeni grobovi, v katerih so bili otroci, stari 8–14 let, pokopani z enim od odraslih, običajno znova z žensko (*tab. 8*).

Rezultati analize kažejo, da so otroci po visoki umrljivosti do prvega leta starosti tudi pozneje predstavljali ranljivo skupino, dovzetno za različne bolezni, ki so bile vzrok za višjo umrljivost. Enega od razlogov gre verjetno iskati v prenehanju dojenja in navajanju na normalno prehrano, kar se je zgodilo pri starosti med letom in pol ter četrtem letom (Knipper et al. 2017; Mays et al. 2017, 6–8). To je verjetno vplivalo tudi na njihovo imunost (Ulrich-Bochsler, Rüttimann 2014, 73; Halcrow, Ward 2018).

Grobovi mladostnikov na grobiščih latenske kulture

Poleg otroških grobov so v Zvonimirovem zanimivi tudi grobovi mladostnikov, umrlih med 15. in 20. letom starosti. Ti so po dosedanjih ugotovitvah že veljali za polnoletne člane skupnosti (Dizdar 2013, 40–41; 2020a, 133). Njihova socialna starost se kaže v razlikah v primerjavi s pokojniki mlajših let. Doslej je bil odkrit le en tak grob (*tab. 1*) – LT 125, v njem je bil pokopan moški, star 14–18 let (*sl. 7*). V grobu so našli orožje (meč, sulica, ščit), dele noše in keramične posode. Grobni sestav tega pokojnika se torej precej razlikuje od otroških grobov in po najdbah ustreza grobovom odraslih moških z grobišča.

Grobovi te starostne skupine (*iuvenilis*, 15–18/20 let) so evidentirani na vseh grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini, v primerjavi z otroškimi grobovi jih je občutno manj (*tab. 2*). Omeniti velja tudi, da so dvojni grobovi, tj. grobovi odraslega in mladostnika ali dveh mladostnikov, redki. Morda je razlog v tem, da so bili mladostniki najbolj zdrav del skupnosti, zaradi česar so na grobiščih zastopani v manjšem številu (Avery et al. 2022, 3–4).

Podobno kot pri grobu LT 125 lahko opazimo, da imajo moški te starostne skupine v grobu pogosto priloženo orožje (*tab. 12*). Tako je bil v grobu 16 na grobišču v Dobovi verjetno pokopan moški, mlajši od 20 let, s sulico, suličnim kopitom, dvema

fibulama in keramičnimi posodami (Guštin 1984, 330; Hincak, Guštin 2011, 249). Moški te starostne skupine na grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini so pogosto opremljeni z mečem v nožnici, sulico in ščitom. Ti se v taki kombinaciji ne pojavljajo v otroških grobovih, ki so le izjemoma imeli v grobu priloženo sulico. Poleg tega so v grobovih številni deli noše in keramično posodje, izjemoma se pojavljajo še drugi predmeti. Grobovi moških te starosti brez najdb so redki. Podobno kot v grobovih mladostnikov je tudi pri ženskah te starostne skupine oziroma dekletih največkrat več delov noše in nakita kot pri otroških grobovih (tab. 12). To bi jih tudi že opredeljevalo kot polnoletne članice skupnosti, pri čemer so bile nekatere bogato opremljene, le redko so bile brez pridatkov (npr. Gardelková-Vrtelová, Benadík 2021, 215, t. 18: 2).

Rezultati analize grobnih sestojev mladostnikov na grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini, predvsem v primerjavi s tistimi, ugotovljenimi v otroških grobovih, odpirajo zanimivo vprašanje o odnosu in povezavi med biološko in socialno starostjo pokojnikov (Halcrow, Tayles 2008; 2011). Ali je mogoče pokojnike na grobišču Zvonimirovo, starejše od 14 do 15 let, glede na njihov položaj v skupnosti obravnavati kot odrasle osebe, ki bi lahko sklenile zakonsko zvezo (Dizdar 2013, 40–41; 2020a, 133)? To bi lahko povezali s puberteto, v katero deklice običajno vstopijo med 10. in 13. letom, dečki pa med 12. in 16. letom (Rebay-Salisbury, Pany-Kucera 2020, 3), ali s plodnostjo, ki se pri deklicah pojavi okoli 14. leta (Hofmann 2014, 31–36; Rebay-Salisbury 2017a, 63; 2017b, 184). Prehod iz otroštva v adolescenco, prepoznan z biološkimi in socialnimi spremembami, je morda pomenil najpomembnejšo obdobje v življenju, s katerim se je začela tudi nova družbena vloga posameznika tako v družini kot skupnosti (npr. Sofaer Dervenski 1994; 2000; Sofaer 2004; 2011; Gowland 2006; Thompson et al. 2014 itd.). To je prineslo ne le določene privilegije, temveč tudi obveznosti (Appleby 2011, 233; Avery et al. 2022). Sprememba družbene starosti je bila verjetno poudarjena z nekaterimi rituali – *rites of passage* –, ki spremljajo spremembe v življenju vsakega posameznika (Gilchirst 2004; Gowland 2006; Garwood 2007; 2011; Wendling 2013, 11–12; Grove, Lancy 2015; 2018; Nizzo 2018), saj je v grobnih sestojih jasno vidna razlika med grobovi otrok in mladostnikov, medtem ko med grobovi otrok različnih starosti ni večjih razlik. Danes neznani rituali prehoda so tako povezali dve različni biološki in družbeni starosti kot

družbeni in kulturni konstrukt (Gowland 2006; Baxter 2008, 163; Thompson et al. 2014, 2; Grove, Lancy 2015; 2018; Murphy, Le Roy 2017, 5; Ramsl 2018, 201, 209; Ramsl 2020, 159).

ZDRAVJE OTROK

Čeprav so na grobišču Zvonimirovo kremirani otroški ostanke slabo ohranjeni, je antropološka analiza na nekaterih razkrila patološke spremembe, ki govorijo o biološkem profilu otrok (Halcrow, Ward 2018). Pri starejšem otroku iz groba LT 12 je bila v desni orbiti opažena rahlo zaraščena *cribra orbitalia* (Šlaus, Novak 2013, 517). Otrok, pokopan v grobu LT 30, je imel močan aktivni periostitis na medialnih diafizah dolgih kosti (najverjetneje stegenic). Opazili so tudi hipoplazijo zobne sklenine na maksilarnem podočniku. Te anomalije se povezuje s hudim pomanjkanjem vitaminov, neonatalno zlatenico, anemijo, nalezljivimi boleznimi ali kronično podhranjenostjo (Šlaus, Novak 2013, 519). Drugi otrok iz groba LT 52 je imel hud aktivni periostitis na distalni tretjini femoralne diafize.

Tudi na drugih grobiščih latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini je bilo doslej opaženih malo patoloških sprememb, saj gre pogosto za slabo ohranjene skeletne ostanke ali pa je ohranjena količina drobnih sežganih kosti manjša kot pri odraslih pokojnikih (Kraus 2006, 8). Umrljivost otrok je bila v številnih prazgodovinskih skupnostih visoka (Kamp 2015, 177). Patološke spremembe (najpogostejše *cribra orbitalia* in *porotic hyperostosis*) so bile prepoznane kot dokaz bolezni in stresa zaradi različnih vzrokov, kot so neustrezna prehrana, slaba higiena in okužbe, medtem ko je vzrok smrti le redko mogoče ugotoviti (Vargová, Horácková 2010; Kamp 2015, 177–179; Mays et al. 2017, 8–13). Antropološke analize posmrtnih ostankov otrok kažejo, da so bili ti manj bolni kot odrasli (Lewis 2011), vendar so bili prav tako izpostavljeni nalezljivim boleznim, ki so eden pogostejših vzrokov smrti pri otrocih, mlajših od pet let. Te je z antropološko analizo težko odkriti, saj ne puščajo vedno sledi (Ulrich-Bochsler, Rüttimann 2014, 73). Prav tako posmrtni ostanke otrok ne kažejo vedno znakov fizičnega stresa, saj so otroci lahko opravljali določena gospodinjstva opravila, ki ne puščajo fizičnih sledi (Kamp 2015, 173–174, 180–181). Na nekaterih posmrtnih ostankih otrok so bile vidne zaceljene travme (npr. Lewis 2014; Halcrow, Robbins Schug 2023), ki kažejo na skrb in nego otrok (npr. Halcrow et al. 2020).

MOBILNOST OTROK

Analize posameznih delov noše in nakita iz grobov odraslih žensk v Zvonimirovem razkrivajo, da bi nekateri predmeti lahko prispeli s kulturnim prenosom, čeprav ni mogoče izključiti možnosti, da so prispeli kot del noše z ženskami iz sosednjih ali daljnih krajev (Dizdar 2020c, 211–212). Eden izmed takšnih »tujkov« iz otroških grobov je bronasta fibula z osmimi zankami na loku iz groba LT 22, s pokopom otroka, starega 12–15 let (Dizdar 2020a, 138–139). Nekatere odgovore lahko najdemo tudi na drugih območjih širjenja latenske kulture, kjer so poskušali rekonstruirati mobilnost ljudi. Tako so zanimive ugotovitve z zgodnjelatenskega grobišča v Dubniku, kjer so izvedli analizo izotopov stroncija $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$ na skeletnih ostankih iz osmih grobov (Bujna et al. 2020). Rezultati analiz stabilnih izotopov stroncija železnodobnih pokojnikov v srednji Evropi kažejo na mobilnost otrok, starejših od šest let, ki se je odvijala zaradi različnih razlogov, predvsem zaradi krepitve socialnih odnosov med različnimi skupnostmi (Müller-Scheeßel et al. 2015, 19–21). Na nekaterih grobiščih iz starejše železne dobe, npr. iz zgodnjega latena (Scheeres et al. 2013; Hauschild et al. 2013; Sorrentino et al. 2018), je bilo ugotovljeno, da so bili v otroštvu moški pogostejše bolj mobilni kot ženske (Müller-Scheeßel et al. 2015, 15–18, tab. 1). Morda se razlaga skriva v ideji, po kateri so lahko fantje določena znanja in spretnosti pridobili zunaj svoje družine in skupnosti, kar je ustvarilo nove družbene povezave (Karl 2005; 2010; Parkes 2006).

SESTOJI OTROŠKIH GROBOV – ARHEOLOŠKE NAJDBE

Skupnost, ki je svoje pokojnike pokopavala v Zvonimirovem, je imela z drugimi skupnostmi iz mlajše železne dobe v Karpatski kotlini veliko skupnih kulturnih in obrednih norm. Na podlagi analize materialne dediščine so prepoznane nekatere kulturne posebnosti in tudi predmeti, ki kažejo na povezave s sosednjimi skupnostmi ali morda celo na mobilnost med njimi (Dizdar 2013; 2020a; Dizdar, Ljuština 2019). Število in vrsta najdb v otroških grobovih v Zvonimirovem sta različna. V večini grobov, v katerih so bili pokopani samo otroci, je manj najdb kot v grobovih odraslih (tab. 1), lahko pa opazimo, da so v njih pogosto podobni predmeti, kot jih najdemo v grobovih odraslih.

Podobno je na grobiščih, kot so Dobova, Brežice in Nova tabla (Guštin 1984; Guštin et al. 2017), ter tudi na drugih grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini. Po drugi strani pa je v Zvonimirovem, ko gre za grobove, v katerih je bil otrok pokopan z enim od odraslih pokojnikov, težko zanesljivo ugotoviti, kateri predmeti so pripadali otroku. Tovrstna analiza je veliko enostavnejša pri dvojnih skeletnih grobovih z drugih grobišč latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini. Na podlagi otroških skeletnih grobov je mogoč tudi študij funkcionalne lege predmetov. Dosedanje analize grobov odraslih omogočajo prepoznavanje spolno značilnih predmetov, ki se pojavljajo tudi v otroških grobovih, ter morebitno identifikacijo za starost značilnih predmetov, ki se pojavljajo le v otroških grobovih.

V otroške grobove v Zvonimirovem so najpogostejše polagali dele noše in nakitne predmete (fibule, zapestnice, steklene jagode itd.). Predmeti vsakdanje rabe (npr. noži, vretenca, šivanke) so priloženi redko, orožje se pojavlja le izjemoma (tab. 1). K popotnici v onstranstvo sodijo keramične posode in pridana hrana, od katere so ohranjene živalske kosti, največkrat prašičje. Doslej še niso bili odkriti otroški grobovi brez pridatkov, ki so v manjšem številu znani z drugih grobišč latenske kulture (Ramsl 2010, 95). Na noši in nakitu iz otroških grobov, pa tudi iz grobov odraslih, so pogosto vidni sledovi sežiganja, kar pomeni, da so bili otroci sežgani na grmadi skupaj z njimi, torej gre za dele noše in nakita, ki so ju nosili. Najdeni pa so bili tudi predmeti, ki niso bili sežgani in so bili verjetno položeni v grob ob pokopu (Dizdar 2013, 34–37; 2016, 296–297). Razlagati jih je mogoče na različne načine, morda kot darila žalujočih družinskih članov in sorodnikov (Cannon, Cook 2015). Malo je namreč verjetno, da je otrok z lastnimi dejanji dosegel določen socialni položaj v skupnosti, ki se izraža v količini in pestrosti grobnih pridatkov, posebej ob upoštevanju bogato opremljenih grobov. Zato je bil izbor predmetov, položenih v otroški grob, verjetno odraz statusa družine in sorodnikov (Rissanen, Alder 2011, 156; Zweifel 2015, 124).

Za bogatejšo opremljena otroška groba v Zvonimirovem (tab. 1) lahko po vrsti in številu najdb štejemo grobova LT 34 (sl. 3) in LT 84 (sl. 4). V to skupino bi lahko uvrstili še pokop otroka, starega 10–14 let, iz trojnega groba LT 12 (Dizdar 2013, 409–415, t. 25: 1–3; 26: 3–5; 27). Če te najdbe primerjamo s tistimi iz grobov odraslih pokojnikov v Zvonimirovem, lahko sklepamo, da je bil v grobu LT 34 pokopan deček, v grobovih LT 12 in LT

84 pa deklici. Bogato opremljeni otroški grobovi različnih starosti (*tab.* 3–8) so znani tudi z drugih grobišč latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini (Ramsl 2010, 94–96). V njih je poleg keramičnih posod najpogostejše veliko delov noše in nakita, le redko pa predmeti vsakdanje rabe in orožja. Vprašanje je, koliko najdbe iz otroških grobov dejansko pričajo o njihovem družbenem statusu (Rissanen et al. 2013, 135–136), saj je vsak otroški grob unikaten, vrsta, število in sestava grobnih najdb pa so individualni oz. osebni (Pichler et al. 2017, 14).

Le izjemoma so bili bogato opremljeni otroci do enega leta starosti (npr. Szabó, Tankó 2012, 65–67, sl. 102–104, t. 38; 39: 1–4; Gardelková-Vrtelová, Benadík 2021, 212–213, t. 17: 2; 68B: 1–3; 59: 1–26; Ramsl 2011, 34–36, 198, sl. 18; 19, 2010, 89, sl. 14; 15 itd.). Analiza otroških grobov kaže, da se v njih poleg keramičnih posod najpogostejše pojavljajo spolno značilni predmeti noše in nakita, kakršne najdemo v grobovih odraslih žensk (Dizdar 2013, 211–213). Ali to pomeni, da gre za grobove deklet? Kaj pa fantje in kako jih prepoznati po materialni zapuščini? Ali to pomeni, da na grobišču v Zvonimirovem, pa tudi na drugih grobiščih latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini, obstajajo določeni kulturno pogojeni grobni sestoji, glede na spol otroka? Čeprav je bilo poudarjeno, da po najdbah ni mogoče določiti spola otrok do določene starosti (Burmeister, Müller-Scheeßel 2005).

Otroški grobovi z orožjem

Na grobove dečkov morda kaže nekaj otroških grobov z orožjem, najpogostejše z eno sulico, na primer v grobu LT 34. Kratke železne sulice so bile najdene še v nekaterih drugih otroških grobovih, od katerih so Zvonimirovemu najbližje grobišča v Dobovi (Guštin 1984, 315, 317, 330, sl. 4; 8; 17; Mauthner 2023, 70, sl. 5: 2,3), Slatini (Pirkmajer 1991, 29, sl. 48, t. 14: 95–97; Mauthner 2023, 71, sl. 6: 1,2) in na Novi tabli (Guštin et al. 2017, 160, 676–677; Mauthner 2023, 71). V grobu 1 gomile 9 na grobišču Lang-Schirka je bila z upepeljenimi ostanki otroka, starega do največ šest let, v loncu, ki je služil kot žara, najdena sekira (Mauthner 2021, 24, sl. 3: 1; 2023, 67, sl. 3: 2). Maloštevilne so primerjave z grobišč v Karpatski kotlini (npr. Szabó, Tankó 2012, 45, sl. 65–66, t. 23: 5; 2018, 56–58, t. 18: 5–6; Bujna 1989, 281–283, sl. 40, t. 35: 1–15; 52: 4). Največkrat gre za krajše in lažje sulice (Rustoiu, Berecki 2015a, 131–132; Rustoiu 2016a, 55; Mauthner 2023, 72–75). Te bi se lahko

uporabljale za vajo in pripravo otroka na prihodnjo vlogo, glede na to, da otroštvo velja za čas učenja za odraslost (Baxter 2008, 161, 167; Gaskins, Paradise 2010; Sofaer 2015, 82–83; Sánchez Romero 2017, 23–30; Langley, Litster 2018; Röder 2022). Dečki so se lahko med lovom učili rokovati z orožjem manjših dimenzij, kar pa ni vplivalo na spretnost, ko so odrasli (Kamp, Whittaker 2020, 15–21). Sulico bi lahko položili v otroški grob tudi kot darilo (Glansdorp 2018, 52). Lahko domnevamo, da je bil v grobu LT 34 pokopan deček, ki bi, če bi živel, postal bojevnik s polno oborožitvijo. Ker so v grobu našli še druge predmete, bi lahko šlo za pokop člana ugledne družine. Morda gre pri otroških grobovih brez spolno značilnih predmetov za grobove dečkov (Ramsl 2020, 159), ki bi si orožje priskrbeli šele v določeni starosti.

Otroški grobovi z deli noše

V otroških grobovih v Zvonimirovem je precej več spolno značilnih predmetov, ki so običajni za grobove odraslih žensk. To so deli noše, nakit in vretenca, ki v kombinacijah kažejo individualnost. Podobno je bilo opaženo tudi na drugih latenskih grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini (*tab.* 3–8). Med deli noše, najdenimi v otroških grobovih v Zvonimirovem, so najpogostejši železne in bronaste fibule, v manjšem številu se pojavljajo pasovi ali njihovi deli (*tab.* 1). Polaganje železnih pasov oziroma njihovih delov v otroške grobove je na drugih grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini redek pojav, druge najdbe pa kažejo, da gre za dekliške grobove (*tab.* 3–8). V bogato opremljenih grobovih so nekateri otroci opremljeni kot odrasle ženske, pas pa je bil v skeletnih grobovih že na funkcionalnem mestu. V žganih grobovih so včasih le deli pasu, zato se postavlja vprašanje, ali je otrok že imel pas, ki se je ob žganju poškodoval, ali pa je bil del pasu le simbolično položen v grob. Deli noše iz otroških grobov v Zvonimirovem so bronaste in železne fibule (*tab.* 1), kar se ujema z najdbami z drugih grobišč v Karpatski kotlini (*tab.* 3–8). Poseben pojav na zvonimirovskem grobišču je polaganje pasov ali njihovih delov ali steklenih zapestnic, ki jih po dimenzijah sodeč otroci niso mogli nositi, v grobove novorojenčkov in majhnih otrok. Polaganje predmetov, ki bi pripadali odraslim ženskam, in predmetov z znaki nošenja je bilo dokumentirano v otroških grobovih na grobiščih mlajše železne dobe (Kraus 2002, 110; Gustavs 2004; Lettman 2018). Morda ti predmeti kažejo, kaj naj bi nosili kot odrasli.

Otroški grobovi z nakitom

Med nakitom so bili sežgani odlomki steklenih zapestnic (*tab. 1*), kakršne pogosto najdemo v grobovih odraslih žensk (Dizdar 2013, 252–255; Dizdar, Ljuština 2019, 57). V grobu LT 34 je bila še železna zapestnica, kakršne so znane iz moških grobov (Dizdar 2013, 203–207), kar bi skupaj s sulico kazalo na pokop dečka. V večini primerov po sežganih delih steklenih zapestnic ni mogoče določiti njihovih dimenzij in tako ugotoviti, ali so bile narejene za otroke. Otroški grobovi v Zvonimirovem izstopajo po najdbah steklenih jagod, ki se le redko pojavljajo v grobovih odraslih žensk (*tab. 1*) (Dizdar 2013, 262–263, sl. 91). Ker so bile steklene zapestnice in jagode sežgane na grmadi, so jih otroci verjetno nosili, morda pa so jih naložili na grmado. Dokaze o načinu nošenja najdemo v skeletnih grobovih, po katerih so se jagode nosile okoli vratu, najdene pa so tudi poleg roke. Steklene jagode so prav tako pogoste v otroških srednjelatskih grobovih v Karpatski kotlini, vendar v manjšem številu kot prej (*tab. 3–8*) (Zepezauer 1993, 112), redko pa v kombinaciji z bronastim obeskom.

Otroški grobovi z vretenci

Drug spolno značilen predmet v grobu LT 108 so tri keramična vretenca (*tab. 1*), ki se pojavljajo z majhnim železnim nožem in morda železno šivanko. Vretenca najdemo v grobovih odraslih žensk (Dizdar 2013, 303; Dizdar, Ljuština 2019, 63–64; Dizdar 2020b) in tudi na drugih grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini (Dizdar 2020b). Redkejša so v otroških grobovih (*tab. 3–8*). Verjetno so bila darilo žalujočih družinskih članov, ki so s prilaganjem vretenca želeli poudariti, da je otrok izgubil možnost postati odrasla ženska, večša predenja (Dizdar, Ljuština 2019, 68; Dizdar 2020b). Malo starejši otroci z vretenci, priloženimi v grob, so morda že znali presti ali pa vretenca kažejo na čas učenja in priprave na odraslost, saj je znano, da so se otroci začeli učiti različnih veščin med drugim in petim letom starosti (Sofaer Dervenski 2000; Kamp 2001, 13; Baxter 2008, 167–169; Gaskins, Paradise 2010, 91; Kamp 2015, 173–174). Na prilaganje vretenc v otroške grobove se na simbolni ravni gleda kot na določanje njihove prihodnje vloge v skupnosti, torej da je zgodaj umrl otrok prikazan v svoji prihodnji vlogi. Post mortem je prevzel položaj, ki mu je bil namenjen, če bi dočakal odraslost.

Otroški grobovi s keramičnimi posodami

Med najpogostejšimi najdbami v otroških grobovih v Zvonimirovem, tako kot na drugih grobiščih latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini, so keramične posode. K popotnici v onstranstvo sodijo tudi deli prašičev, odkriti v grobovih LT 30 in LT 34, podobni so najdeni v grobovih odraslih pokojnikov (Radović 2013). Število posod se giblje od ena do tri (*tab. 1*). Gre za lonce, sklede in kantare, najpogostejša najdba je lonec. To so posode, ki jih glede na obliko, velikost ter način izdelave in okraševanja najdemo tudi v grobovih odraslih (Dizdar 2013, 268–273). Majhne posode so bile odkrite le v nekaterih otroških grobovih. Da majhne posode niso značilne samo za otroške grobove, pričajo najdbe iz groba LT 11, v katerem so bile tudi majhne posode – skodelica in čaša (Dizdar 2013, 409, t. 19: 1–2), predvsem pa miniatura čaša iz bogatega bojevnškega groba LT 45 (Dizdar et al. 2014, 84, sl. 10: 3). Te posode so lahko uporabljali za strežbo, lahko pa so služile celo medicinskemu ali farmacevtskemu namenu. Od omenjenih posod po svojih dimenzijah izstopa miniaturna lonček iz groba LT 34, ki po obliki ustreza veliko večjim loncem, najdenim v grobovih odraslih. V tem grobu je bila tudi skodela, manjša od tistih v grobovih odraslih.

Na grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini je število keramičnih posod v otroških grobovih različno. Te so včasih tudi edine najdbe v grobu. Najpogosteje so v grobu od ena do tri posode, in sicer kombinacija lonca in sklede, poznamo pa tudi grobove s petimi do sedmimi posodami, ne glede na starost otroka (*tab. 3–8*). Včasih so v otroške grobove priložene miniaturne posode, ki so lahko ročno izdelane (npr. Szabó, Tankó 2018, 129, t. 60: 1,2). Majhne posode se v grobovih pogosto pojavljajo v kombinaciji s posodami normalnih dimenzij, le zelo redko pa so bile v otroški grob položene le majhne posode brez vsaj ene večje (npr. grob 475 z grobišča Malé Kosihy: Bujna 1995, 96, sl. 87, t. 40B: 1–4). Prilaganje majhnih posod je ugotovljeno pri številnih otroških grobovih. Najbližja primerjava sta skledici in čaša v otroškem grobu 20 v Dobovi skupaj z dvema večjima loncema (Mauthner 2023, 70, sl. 5: 4–6) ali lonček in skleda v otroškem grobu 21, v katerem sta bili edini najdbi (Guštin 1984, 315, 317, 330, sl. 4; 8; 17). V grobu 114 na Novi tabli je bila manjša skleda (Guštin et al. 2017, 159, 668–669). Kot kažejo številni primeri, najdemo v otroških grobovih latenske kulture keramične posode miniaturnih dimenzij (Ramsl

2010, 93, sl. 14), največkrat izdelane na lončarskem kolesu, pa tudi ročno izdelane, ki so jih morda izdelali otroci sami (Repka 2017, 215–216, 218). Po oblikah se ne razlikujejo od posod, najdenih v grobovih odraslih, razlikujejo se po dimenzijah. Rezultati analize kažejo, da so majhne posode najpogostejše v ženskih grobovih, najdemo pa jih tudi v otroških (Repka 2017, 207–218; 2020, 61, sl. 66; 79). Domneva se, da so miniaturne posode uporabljali otroci, poleg tega so lahko vsebovale pomembne tekočine, morda so jih uporabljali v obrednem kontekstu ali pa so bile namenjene pitju (Ramsl 2011, 181; Rustoiu 2016a, 49; Repka 2017, 215–218). Pri miniaturnih posodah v otroških grobovih je mogoča tudi razlaga, da so otroške posode za hrano in pijačo morale imeti manjše recipiente kot posode za odrasle (Repka 2017, 215) oz. da so zaradi svojih dimenzij povezane z otroki (Kamp 2015, 182).

Otroški grobovi s starostno značilnimi predmeti

Razen miniaturnih posod in steklenih jagod za zdaj v otroških grobovih v Zvonimirovem skoraj ni drugih predmetov, ki se ne bi pojavljali tudi v grobovih odraslih. Podobno je tudi na drugih grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini. Eden od predmetov, značilnih za otroke, so keramične ropotulje, ki so redka najdba na najdiščih latenske kulture, saj so bile verjetno povečini izdelane iz organskih materialov. Gre za arheološko prepoznaven objekt (Crawford 2009, 59). Ropotulje so znane iz mlajše železne dobe, zlasti iz poznolatskih grobov v srednjem Porenju (Mandera 1969; Polenz 1975, 257, sl. 17; Heun 1999, 67; Rustoiu, Berecki 2015b, 263–265, sl. 5: 1, list št. 1; Rustoiu 2019, 165–166, sl. 33: 3). Poudarjeno je, da se ropotuljice, tako kot amuleti, najpogostejše pojavljajo v grobovih otrok in deklet kot ranljivejših skupin v skupnosti (Pauli 1975, 186; Maier 2004, 141–142; Rustoiu, Berecki 2015b, 265; Rustoiu, Gál 2018, 133–134; Rustoiu 2019, 162–171). V grobu 595 na Kapiteljski njivi v Novem mestu je bila najdena kroglasta keramična ropotuljica (Križ 2001, 65, 139, kat. št. 390; 2005, 17). Ker pa antropološka analiza žganih ostankov ni bila opravljena, ni znano, ali gre za otroški grob. Po drugi strani najdemo keramične ropotuljice tudi v grobovih odraslih (npr. Ilon 2008, 289–290, sl. 4: 1; 5; Ilon, Nagy 2010, 77–78, sl. 10: 1; Rustoiu, Berecki 2015b, 265, sl. 6: 2). Najdbe kažejo, da brez poznavanja kontekstualnih podatkov ropotuljic ne

moremo zanesljivo šteti med predmete, značilne samo za otroke.

Majhne antropomorfne in zoomorfne figurice se pogosto povezujejo z otroki, redko pa jih najdemo v grobovih. Preprosto keramično figurico valjaste oblike s krožnimi vdolbinami na glavi in telesu so našli v grobu 10 na grobišču Tiszavasvári, v katerem je bil pokopan otrok, star 1–2 leti (Almássy 1995, 59–60, Pl. 9: 2; Rustoiu 2019, 220–224, 252, sl. 51: 2). Tudi na grobišču Pottenbrun je bil v zasutju groba 10, v katerem je bil pokopan razkošno opremljen otrok, star okoli 1,5 leta, najden majhen keramični idol nejasne oblike (Ramsl 2002, 29, 139, t. 33: 2; 2010, 93–94, sl. 16).

Čeprav igrače arheološko niso posebno vidne, so najpogostejše povezane z otroki in veljajo za pomembne v otroštvu (Brookshaw 2009, 368, 381; Crawford 2009, 56–62; Thibault 2022, 242). Služile so lahko prenosu znanja in veščin skozi igro ter opazovanju sveta okoli sebe (Kamp 2015, 180), bile so pomemben del socializacije otrok (Sánchez Romero 2008; Kamp 2015, 181–182). V mlajši železni dobi so kot igrače prepoznani majhni predmeti, ki posnemajo tiste standardnih dimenzij. Zanje se domneva, da se niso uporabljali le kot igrače, temveč tudi kot obredni ali funkcionalni predmeti (Kamp 2015, 182). Največkrat gre za miniaturne posode, najdene v grobovih, pri njihovi interpretaciji pa je pomemben kontekst odkritja (Rustoiu 2016a). Predvideva se, da so otroci opazovali odrasle in svet okoli sebe ter poskušali samostojno izdelati kaj zase, morda keramično posodo, čeprav ni izključeno, da so se določenih veščin naučili od spretnejših vrstnikov (Kamp 2015, 173–174, 180). Figurici iz omenjenih dveh grobov bi lahko prav zaradi konteksta odkritja (Kamp 2015, 182) štel za igrači, ki sta pripadali vanju pokopanima otrokoma, kar priča o individualizaciji tako groba kot predmetov v njem (Kraus 2002, 107–108, tab. 1; Baxter 2005, 63; 2008, 162; Röder 2010; 2022; Dasen 2012; Sofaer 2015, 74; Rustoiu 2016a; Riede et al. 2018; 2021; Langley, Litster 2018 itd.). Po drugi strani pa gre pri idolu z grobišča Tiszavasvári morda za upodobitev pokojne deklice, in ne za igračo, kar skupaj z najdbo odlomka žrmelj kaže na magični ritual (Rustoiu 2019, 222, 224, 250). Pravzaprav ima vsak predmet svojo lastno biografijo in ga je mogoče uporabiti kot igračo. Tudi predmeti, narejeni iz nekega drugega razloga, dobijo nov pomen, ko se enkrat uporabijo za igro (Crawford 2009; Hirsch 2019; Thibault 2022, 241–245, 247; Röder 2022). Ker jih je arheološko težko identificirati,

menimo, da bi morali pri raziskavah upoštevati tudi igro in to, kako se predmeti uporabljajo (Thibault 2022, 242–243). Igrače so najpogostejše izdelovali odrasli, predvsem starši, verjetno prav za otroke. So odraz doživetja odraslih o tem, kaj si otroci pravzaprav želijo, gre za prenos njihovih idej, še posebej, če so predmeti majhni in izdelani po zahtevnem postopku (Brookshow 2009, 379–381; Kamp 2015, 181–182; Röder 2022, 252).

ZAKLJUČEK

Raziskave so pokazale, da Zvonimirovo in tudi druga grobišča latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini razkrivajo kompleksne skupnosti z jasnim izražanjem posameznikove identitete prek pogrebne rituala, strukture groba in različnih kombinacij najdb. Te skupnosti so se zavedale umrljivosti otrok ter so imele tako kot pri odraslih kulturno določen postopek in vsebino pogrebne obravnave. Na srednjelatenskem grobišču v Zvonimirovem so odkrili 130 grobov, od tega je bilo 81 antropološko analiziranih. Po rezultatih analize so na grobišču pokopavali pokojnike vseh starostnih skupin, tudi otroke. Do zdaj je bilo identificiranih 12 otroških grobov, ki so bili odkriti na celotnem območju grobišča s pomembnimi kontekstualnimi podatki (sl. 2). Otroci so bili najpogostejše pokopani samostojno, včasih pa skupaj z odraslim, največkrat žensko. Enake ugotovitve veljajo tudi za druga grobišča latenske kulture v Karpatski kotlini in vzhodnih Alpah, kjer so bili otroški grobovi doslej redko predmet posebnih raziskav (Ramsl 2010; Rustoiu 2016a; Bujna 2019; Ramsl, Nowotny 2020; Mauthner 2023).

Rezultati bioarheološke analize grobnih sestojev otroških grobov iz Zvonimirovega in analize razpoložljivih podatkov za otroške grobove z drugih grobišč v Karpatski kotlini odpirajo možnosti za preučevanje otrok in otroštva, upoštevajoč prispevek otrok okolju, ki so mu pripadali (Lillehammer 1989, 102–103; 2000; 2010, 22–24). Zato smo skušali prodreti v odnose, ki so jih imeli otroci s svetom okoli sebe, tako naravnim kot kulturnim, oziroma z okoljem, ki jih je obdajalo, z njihovimi družinskimi člani, vrstniki in celotno skupnostjo (Thompson et al. 2014, 2–6). Vendar pa otroških grobov oziroma tistega, kar je krojilo njihova življenja, ne moremo jemati kot odraz življenja. Brez poznavanja grobov polnoletnih pokojnikov ni mogoče ustvariti celovite slike skupnosti v preteklosti.

Rezultati bioarheološke analize otroških grobov so odprli številna vprašanja o življenju otrok v mlajši železni dobi in njihovem otroštvu. Na otroške grobove gledamo kot na presek biološke in kulturne identitete (Sofaer Dervenski 2000; Halcrow, Ward 2018), ki opredeljuje biološko in socialno starost vsakega posameznika (Rebay-Salisbury, Pany-Kucera 2020). To omogoča raziskovanje otroštva kot pomembnega dela življenja vsakega posameznika (Perry 2006; Baxter 2008; Muller et al. 2019 itd.) ter družbenih vlog otrok v skupnostih, katerih pomemben del so bili (Chamberlein 1997; Baxter 2005; 2008, 159–160). Med odraščanjem so bili otroci podvrženi opaznim biološkim spremembam z lastno materialno kulturo (Sofaer Dervenski 2000). Dolžina otroštva kot kulturnega fenomena (Baxter 2008, 159–163; Kamp 2015, 173–175; Murphy 2017; Murphy, Le Roy 2017, 5) pa je bila odvisna od različnih dejavnikov, kot so čas, prostor, družbena in rodovna pripadnost (Brookshow 2009, 366–367).

S pogrebnimi rituali in grobnimi sestoji so skupnosti, tudi zvonimirovska, prikazovale pripadnost otrok določenim družbenim, spolnim in starostnim skupinam. Vedno pa je treba upoštevati, da grobni sestoji lahko ali pa tudi ne odražajo spol, starost ali socialno identiteto otroka, torej so lahko odraz družbene in tudi osebne izbire (Kamp 2015, 179). Starost pogosto ni edini element družbene organizacije, ki ga je mogoče prepoznati v pokopih, saj se lahko s smrtjo materializirajo tudi druge družbene vloge ali identitete. Iz pogrebnih kontekstov otrok je mogoče razbrati vzporedna oz. večkratna sporočila (Thompson et al. 2014, 5–6; Murphy 2017, 1; Murphy, Le Roy 2017, 8–9). Smrt otroka je verjetno veljala za nenavaden dogodek, ki je nenadoma končal njegovo življenje. Vendar pa je bila skupnost verjetno na to pripravljena in je imela kulturno določeno zaporedje pogrebnih obredov. Zgodnja smrt otroka je verjetno močno vplivala na starše ter druge člane družine in skupnosti, njegova smrt je bila izguba na individualni in družbeni ravni. Vplivala je na prihodnost družine in skupnosti, ki je skušala ohraniti spomin nanj, saj so tudi otroci sodelovali v številnih vidikih življenja (Kraus 2002, 106; Murphy 2011; Kamp 2015, 180; Zweifel 2015, 125).

O otrokovem pogrebnem ritualu in grobnem sestoji so verjetno odločali najbližji žalujoči (Taylor 2014, 180), zato so imeli otroci na grobiščih latenske kulture, tudi v Zvonimirovem, enako pogrebno obravnavo kot odrasli. Pri pogrebnih obredih, povezanih z njihovimi umrlimi brati in

sestrami ali prijatelji, so lahko imeli vlogo tudi drugi otroci (Murphy 2011, 68–69). Čeprav je bilo na latenskih grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini ugotovljeno veliko otroških grobov, je to še vedno majhno v primerjavi s pričakovano umrljivostjo otrok (npr. Goodman, Armelagos 1989; Scott 1999; Chamberlain 2006; Lewis 2007; 2011; 2016; Redfern 2007; Bacvarov 2008; Fahlander 2013; Gilmore, Halcrow 2015; Murphy, 2017 itd.). To bi lahko pomenilo, da niso bili vsi otroci pokopani na grobiščih oziroma da je bil pogrebni ritual delno selektiven in kulturno pogojen. Na to kažejo tudi pokopi, predvsem najmlajših otrok, v naseljih. Vendar se zdi, da znano število grobov na grobiščih in pokopov v naseljih še vedno ne more razložiti premajhne zastopanosti najmlajših otrok, kar vodi v razmišljanje o nekaterih drugih, arheološko nevidnih pogrebnih praksah. Vsekakor pa pogrebni rituali kažejo, da so bile pogrebne prakse pri otrocih enako zapletene kot pri odraslih. Pri analizi otroških grobov lahko razlike v primerjavi z odraslimi delno opazimo v sestojih grobov oziroma v delu, ki se nanaša na priložene predmete, pri čemer norm in pravil, ki veljajo za izbor predmetov, ni mogoče enostavno prepoznati. Ali najdbe v grobu odražajo življenjski slog otroka, ki jih je imel in nosil, ni mogoče z gotovostjo trditi, vedno se bo namreč postavilo vprašanje, ali predmeti ustrezajo vsakdanji opremi pokojnega otroka in ali odražajo njegov status ali ne (Kraus 2002, 108; Kamp 2015, 179). Včasih je opaziti, da so bili v otroške grobove položeni predmeti, ki jim po dimenzijah ne ustrezajo ali pa so bili že uporabljeni (Kraus 2002, 110; Gustavs 2004; Lettman 2018). To lahko nakazuje, da je zgodaj umrli otrok v grobu predstavljen v vlogi, ki bi jo imel pozneje. Takšni predmeti lahko na simbolni ravni pomenijo zamujeno socialno sta-

rost in neuresničeno vlogo v skupnosti. Po drugi strani pa so bili nekateri otroci pokopani na način, značilen za otroke (Zweifel 2015, 124–126). Bogati otroški grobovi, ki se po kakovosti in količini najdb ne razlikujejo od grobov odraslih, verjetno kažejo na to, da vsi deli noše in nakit ter komplet keramičnih posod niso bili otrokova last. Malo je verjetno, da je otrok z lastnimi dejanji v skupnosti dosegel določen družbeni položaj, kar se odraža v količini in raznolikosti grobnih pridakov, zato takšni grobovi pravzaprav odražajo status družine in sorodnikov (Rissanen, Alder 2011, 156; Zweifel 2015, 124). To bi pomenilo, da prikazani status ni bil odvisen od starosti. Večina najdb kaže, da niso bile namenjene le polaganju v otroške grobove, prav tako ni razlik v sestavi najdb glede na starost. Nekateri predmeti v otroških grobovih, kot so obeski v funkciji amuleta, ki so posebej pogosti v zgodnjelatenskih grobovih, bi lahko bili dokaz čustvene povezave med pokopom in otrokom (Röder 2010, 8). Amulete so lahko izdelali posebej za otroka, da bi ga zaščitili pred prezgodnjo smrtjo ali nesrečo, in jih položili v grob, da bi ga ščitili tudi po smrti, saj tega sami niso zmogli (Pauli 1975, 161; Sankot 1980, 50; Ramsel 2010, 95). Če primerjamo grobove otrok in mladostnikov, so opazne razlike v grobnih sestojih tako na grobišču Zvonimirovo kot na drugih grobiščih v Karpatski kotlini. Verjetno so dokaz biološke spremembe, ki se je odražala tudi v spremembi družbene identitete. Otroci so z določenimi obredi prehoda zapustili otroštvo, verjetno pogosto zaznamovano z dogodki, ki so jih postavili v velike preizkušnje. Sledili so novi časi in izzivi, pri katerih jim je bilo v pomoč vse, kar so se prek igre in opazovanja naučili od starejših.

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