# CHILD AND CHILDHOOD IN THE LIGHT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

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Paulina Romanowicz

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Cover designed by
Katarzyna Orzyłowska, Bartosz Karolak

Photo on the cover by
Aleksandra Makowska

English editing
Leszek Gardeła

Typesetting
Adam Kolenda

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# Preface

It is undeniable that children were present in practically all past societies. Moreover, they constituted an important part of every society, as those which constantly, in every generation, made a decision about what of the legacy of its ancestors is worth continuing, what requires creative transformation and what is only suitable for rejection.

Nevertheless, for many years the notion of children in the past has remained on the fringes of major archaeological debates. On the one hand, it is due to the difficulty in capturing their presence in the material record and on the other hand – it is down to a mere lack of interest in this subject. All this changed along with the creation of a new sub-discipline within archaeology itself – the archaeology of childhood.

It is the children, childhood and the archaeology of childhood that are the main themes explored in this book. In November 2012, the author of these words organized a Workshop of the Archaeology of Childhood in Małkocin (Western Pomerania, Poland) within the framework of a research project funded by the National Science Centre (DEC-2011/01/N/HS3/06086), *Homo ludens in a medieval town – archaeological traces of play*. During the two-day workshop sessions, the participants presented the results of their research on children in various past societies from different chronological periods and areas of Europe. The meeting was accompanied by a lively discussion on the possibilities of cognitive archaeological research on the life of children in the past. The results of lectures presented and discussions held are presented in papers included in this volume. At this point I would like to warmly thank all the par-

ticipants for attending the workshop and for preparing their articles for publication at such a rapid pace.

We have a saying in Polish that ‘children and fish are speechless’, which corresponds to the English saying ‘children should be seen and not heard’. It seems, however, that so far it was the fish who received more attention in archaeological research. By presenting this modest volume to the general public, we hope to retrieve the previously unheard voices of children and give them back their fully deserved right to speak.

*Paulina Romanowicz*

Participants of the Workshop of the Archaeology of Childhood in Małkocin: prof. Dorota Żołądź-Strzelczyk, Paulina Romanowicz, Katarzyna Orzyłowska, Marta Chmiel, Povilas Blaževičius, Izabela Gomułka, Jan Turek, Katarina Hladíková, Aija Vilka, Michał Pawleta (photo by B. Karolak).

MICHAŁ PAWLETA

# An archaeology of childhood – a new subfield of study[1]

Children have been notably absent from archaeological narratives. While archaeology is unique in having access to children who lived in the past through the study of their corporeal and material remains (Sofaer Derevenski, 2000b, p. 12), aspects of children and childhood have been largely overlooked in archaeological research so far. Only relatively recently archaeologists have begun to appreciate the importance of incorporating children into their narratives of the past. The last decade has brought about a widespread and increasing interest in the archaeology of childhood along with a broader understanding of the concept of childhood. In this paper I present aspects of childhood studies in archaeology, analyzing them in comparison to archaeological research on gender. Although these two research fields focus on different problems, I regard their essence as similar. I also argue that their trajectories and causes of their long absence and secondary importance in archaeological discourse seem parallel. First, I outline the reasons for the marginalization of the topic of childhood and children in archaeological discourse. Second, I present the development of archaeology of children, emphasize their specificity and indicate key issues it addresses.

## THE CHILD IN HISTORY

Trying to determine the categories of children and childhood in archaeology, I shall begin with a short history of these concepts. According to

[1] This text is based on my previously published articles concerning the archaeology of childhood (see Pawleta 2004; 2006a; 2006b; 2009).

the French historian P. Ariés (1995) in the modern Western society childhood as a category was invented only recently as in the 17th century. In his famous book about the history of childhood, Ariés writes: "in medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist; this is not to suggest that children were neglected, forsaken or despised. The idea of childhood is not to be confused with affection for children: it corresponds to an awareness of the particular nature of childhood, that particular nature which distinguishes the child from the adult, even the young adult. In medieval society this awareness was lacking. That is why, as soon as the child could live without the constant solicitude of his mother, his nanny or his cradle-rocker, he belonged to adult society" (Ariés, 1995, p. 130). Ariés presented the birth of a particular image and understanding of childhood that emerged as a consequence of changes that took place in a society of 17th century France. Although his work has been criticized for many reasons, it emphasized a crucial thing: childhood is a social construction and not merely a biological category and as such has its own history. Another publication which has had a profound impact on the perception of childhood was Lloyd DeMause's "The History of Childhood" (1974) in which he states that the further we go back in time, the worse the situation of children appears: "history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken. The further back in history one goes, the lower the level of child care, and the more likely children are to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized and sexually abused" (DeMause, 1974, p. 1). DeMause argued for the evolutionary history of childhood, however it was not a strictly linear process. The stages in this process begin with the routine infanticide of antiquity and end with the partially realized 'Helping Mode' of the late twentieth century, showing how practices in relation to children have become less abusive as the years went by.

It is also possible to perceive Ariés' work as the study of the emergence of various discourses relating to childhood (Cox, 1996, p. 6). The sense of the specificity of childhood, absent in the Middle Ages, emerged in the 17th century; subsequently, childhood has been viewed as a distinct period of life, with its own peculiarities and needs. In the course of the history of Western society we can observe the emergence of particular discourses: medical, paediatric, educational, psychological or psychoanalytical among many others, that produced a particular set of images of childhood. The discourses constituted childhood in different ways, not only as academic knowledge, but also as social practice. As a result, its shape has gradually become similar to the form we are familiar with today.

First and foremost, childhood has been perceived as a passage to adulthood (Prout and James, 1990, p. 10; Jenks, 1996). All models of children's development assume that it is maturity that constitutes its goal; accordingly, all educational and socializing efforts aim at that direction, which has been given a scientific basis by indicating the physical, psychosexual (Z. Freud), cognitive (J. Piaget) or even moral aspects of human growth (L. Kolberg). Moreover, childhood and the state of being a child tend to be contrasted with adulthood (Prout and James, 1990, p. 13; Hockey and James, 1993, pp. 60–66; Prout, 2005, p. 10), with corresponding material culture (Fig. 1), and they are located in a grid of opposites attributed to children and adults, respectively: nature: culture; private: public; passivity: activity; play: work; dependence: independence; irrationality: rationality. These contradictory images attached to children vary through time and among societies, and can be manipulated in different ways to reflect cultural beliefs, to affect existing ideological schemes or to articulate social and political concerns or tensions (Scott, 1999, p. 4).

In the 20th century, the category of childhood gradually deteriorated, and it may now be lost completely. Neil Postman in "The Disappearance of Childhood" (1994) proclaimed the death of childhood, arguing that all significant features that used to distinguish the child from the adult had disappeared. "There is, for example, the evidence displayed by the media themselves, for they not only promote

Fig. 1. Modern material culture of childhood (photo by M. Pawleta).

the unseating of childhood through their form and context but reflect its decline in their content. There is evidence to be seen in the merging of the taste and style of children and adults, as well as in the changing perspectives of relevant social institutions such as the law, the schools, and sports. And there is evidence of the 'hard' variety – figures about alcoholism, drug use, sexual activity, crime etc., that imply a fading distinction between childhood and adulthood" (Postman, 1994, p. 120). At the beginning of the 21st century, some scholars propose a new category, namely that of "post-childhood" (Jenks, 1996).

Although one may regard this survey of the category of childhood as oversimplified, there is no doubt that childhood is primarily a historical concept. It is not merely a biological necessity, but a social construct. As such, it has no universal or ahistorical meaning, since various notions of the child have been constructed throughout history and in different cultural contexts. We should, however, consider social and cultural criteria defining childhood, without limiting them to biological immaturity. Before the 17th century, the state we nowadays define as childhood certainly existed, but it did not exist in the form familiar to us today. This assumption seems to me to be a crucial starting point for archaeologists who try to analyze the position and role of children in the prehistory. The unearthing of the ahistorical or universal essence of the child and/or childhood is neither possible nor aimed at here. Quite the opposite, more important is the need of comprehending childhood and its aspects in the ways they were constituted in a particular society, in a specific place or time. Of equal importance are discourses, which determine our knowledge about children and childhood past and present. The notion of childhood is thus a discursive formation within which different types of childhood and children have been constituted (Prout and James, 1990, p. 25).

## THE NEGATION OF CHILDREN/CHILDHOOD IN ARCHAEOLOGY

The archaeology of childhood, or archaeology of children, began only in the last decade of the 20th century. Its trajectory, namely the emergence, development and marginalization by archaeologists, seems to parallel the course of gender archaeology (see e.g. Conkey and Spector, 1984; Gero and Conkey 1991; Walde and Willows 1991; Moore and Scott; 1997; Nelson 1997; Sørensen, 2000; Nelson and Rosen-Ayalon, 2002).

Let me start with marginalization of children/childhood in archaeological discourse by posing a question: why has this subject been appreciated in archaeology only recently? A number of reasons have contributed to this relatively late interest of archaeologists in the subject of children/childhood. Generally, we should mention: (1) limited material evidence, and (2) negation at the epistemological level.

*(1) Negation due to limited material evidence.* Generally speaking, identification of traces of children in the past relies on two main types of sources: children's skeletons (bone or skeletal remains) and artifacts recovered from children's burials. Among important limitations in material evidence that have hampered the archaeological study of childhood, we should mention the poor state of preservation of children's skeletons, due to unfavourable soil conditions. Bones of children are smaller than bones of adults and often more fragmented, and even when they are preserved, they may be overlooked by researchers. Moreover, as children's graves tend to be shallow, they could be easily destroyed in the course of post-depositional processes. Additional factors have been the lack of professional anthropological exploration of the graves (especially in older research) and the application of the same procedures to children's and adult burials. Detailed exploration has also been complicated by difficulties in anthropological assessment of the age of the skeletons, often due to poor preservation of the bone remains, but also to the fact that such issues have been of no interest to archaeologists. Fortunately, anthropological evaluation of the sex and the age of human skeletons has recently become a standard procedure (e.g. Mays, 2002). Finally, poor inventory of children's graves and the uselessness of their bone remains in typological analyses have made children's burials a less valued source of information (Scott, 1999, p. 109; Lillehammer, 2000; Kozłowski, 2004, p. 79).

The above mentioned factors, however, cannot fully explain the lack of interest in the subject of children/childhood by archaeologists. I am of the opinion that reasons for this marginalization are far more complex and relate largely to the epistemological horizon. In this respect, a number of parallels between archaeology of childhood and gender archaeology may be indicated.

*(2) Negation at the epistemological level.* In gender archaeology it has been pointed out that gender is not a material correlate; in archaeology of children, researchers have noted no direct correlation between a person's age and material culture. For a long time, archaeologists could not

agree on which artifacts, apart from alleged toys or miniature items, should be attributed to prehistoric children. After they accepted that both age and gender are important factors in structuring social relations, and that age and gender may define social, personal and group identities, categories and roles, studies in those fields could begin. This assumption was also an impulse for the emergence of archaeology of children (Sofaer Derevenski, 1994; 1997a; 1997b; Gilchrist, 1999, p. 89).

The study of gender in prehistoric times has been shaped for a long time by the perception of certain social categories (man, woman, child) as derivatives of biological differences between people. Accordingly, the category of gender was reduced to biological sex and determined solely on its basis. Similarly, research on childhood in archaeology was limited to the biologically (anthropologically) defined age, and a person's age was regarded as a biological rather than social category. Social roles and their significance were assessed on the basis of biological phenomena, which led e.g. to restricting women and children to the domestic sphere (Moore, 1997, p. 252). Archaeologists thus used to portray children as a unified phenomenon based mainly on their biological immaturity. The concept of a child was not further developed since it appeared to be a natural and timeless one. The biological fact of immaturity was directly translated into the social dependency of children. For that reason children were generally portrayed as dependent, innocent and passive creatures, who played no role in the social or economic lives of past societies. As a result, the categories of the child and the woman obtained a universal meaning grounded in undeniable biological facts and strengthened by common-sense knowledge about stereotypical roles in the past (Sofaer Derevenski, 1994, p. 9; Gilchrist, 2003, p. 151). This naturalization of social categories recognized as undifferentiated proved to be a serious obstacle to archaeological research on childhood in prehistory.

Another important factor has been the lack of precise definitions and coherent criteria with which to examine childhood archaeologically. Childhood is usually treated as an undifferentiated phase in a person's life, without distinguishing its various stages, as proven by the use of such general terms as "non-adult", "young individual" or "child". Often children of whatever age were lumped together in the broad category of "child" and presented in contrast to adults. Consequently, age categories such as newborn, infant, child or adolescent that are only indicators of a level of biological maturity and body development, were uncritically

attributed social meaning without taking into consideration their varied cultural definitions. This has resulted partly from difficulties in precise archaeological assessment of age, and partly from ignoring the need for more detailed age divisions. Moreover, existing classifications are sometimes applied by researchers in quite an arbitrary way, which hampers comparative study. There is no agreement on when childhood ends and how to determine its duration (Ingvarsson-Sundström, 2003; Lewis, 2006, p. 2; Halcrow and Tayles, 2008, pp. 192–193). Thus, though it is now generally accepted that childhood is a social construct, archaeologists still define it with biological criteria provided by physical anthropologists (e.g. *neonate*, *infans I*, *infans II*).

Another reason for ignoring the subject of children/childhood in archaeology is the view about both childhood and femininity as irrelevant to the aims and priorities of archaeological research. It is maintained that the child, as lacking in epistemological or ontological significance, has no proper place in archaeology (Scott, 1999, p. 11; Lillehammer, 2000, p. 19). This opinion results from a number of factors. First, there is little interest in "the human being" in archaeology, as the discipline focuses on studying artifacts and abstract socio-cultural processes (e.g. Hodder, 2000). Second, due to scientific androcentrism and sexism in interpretations (Engelstad, 1991), researchers tend to concentrate almost exclusively on men and on adults. A rigid sexual division of labour between adult men and women was generally assumed by archaeologists and as a consequence of such a stance the only productive people in the past could have been (male) adults. This approach has gained strength from the widespread assumption in archaeology (and derived from F. Engels and L. Morgan) that patriarchal systems dominated in the past, and from the restriction of women and children to the private/domestic sphere, considered traditionally as less important than the public (male) one. Women, whose main role in the past appears to be giving birth and caring for children, were restricted to the domestic sphere and are thus absent in interpretations. Children, who were mainly, a 'woman's burden and task' were also neglected. Within the abstract concept of masculinity that constitutes a reference point of archaeological research, there is no place for women and children, so they are excluded from the discourse (Scott, 1997, pp. 2–3; Baker, 1997).

The last, but probably the most important reason for the marginalization of the category of childhood in archaeological research is the projection

of modern concepts of childhood onto the past (Scott, 1992; 1999; Pawleta, 2004; 2006a). One of the most important principles hampering issues of children and childhood in archaeology are our own notions of what constitute children/childhood and what it means to be a child. These notions are deeply rooted in modern, Western discourses (Jenks, 1996; James, Jenks and Prout, 1998). As a rule, the very way in which we understand these notions has been shaped by developmental psychology and socialization theories (Prout and James, 1990, p. 10; Jenks, 1996, p. 13). They have structured our common-sense knowledge about childhood and produced a particular set of images of a child. The contemporary and typically Western notion of childhood, based often on stereotypical and/or mythical knowledge about childhood and the state of being a child, has been shaped in modernity. Very specific conceptions of children and childhood are so established and incorporated into the common-sense knowledge about children that it is difficult to think outside them. Treated as a universal rule (Jenks, 1996; James, Jenks and Prout, 1998), the notion has obscured an active role of children in prehistory and resulted in the stereotypical images of children dominant in archaeological interpretations. I argue that they also affect the way in which children are portrayed in archaeology and are responsible for the dominant explanatory frameworks. As a result of such approaches children in prehistory have only been presented as passive and muted bystanders or as a collective subject deprived of any social rights and importance. What is assumed here is that children are a homogeneous group rather than individuals with different abilities. Meaningfully, such an approach, predestines them for being excluded from archaeological narratives of the past and being portrayed in an unified manner regardless of their historical and cultural contexts.

## THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD

Most scholars would probably agree that children have become part of the archaeological agenda due to the influence of feminism and gender studies (Lillehammer, 2000, p. 17). From the very beginnings of its development, as R. Gilchrist (2003, p. 150) notices, gender archaeology showed an interest in developing a subdiscipline around the archaeology of children. However, as E. Scott (1997, p. 7) emphasizes: "even within feminist research children retain a residual status, a form of social baggage, confirming the woman's domestic identity through the duties and emotional

ties of motherhood". Gender researchers have mainly concentrated on the relationship between sex and gender as the primary focus of interest in understanding social relations, while ignoring the crucial effects that age has throughout a person's life course. Slowly, by examining issues concerning women in the past, archaeologists have come to realize that age is crucial to understand gender (Joyce and Claassen, 1997, p. 4).

Archaeological research on childhood has emerged within the framework of gender archaeology and it is usually linked with it (Sofaer Derevenski, 1994; 1997a; Lillehammer, 2000; Gilchrist, 2003). Most representatives of gender archaeology agree that their research has been stimulated by emancipative tendencies of the second wave feminism (Gilchrist, 1999, p. 2; Sørensen, 2000, p. 16). In the archaeological study of childhood, its origins and development have been conditioned by three other perspectives: (1) social history of childhood, which has helped to show the diversity of childhood throughout centuries, undermining its universal and ahistorical meaning (e.g. Ariés, 1995; DeMause, 1974; Stone, 1977; Pollock, 1983; Buliński 2002); (2) cross-cultural observations concerning cultural diversity and various forms of being a child (e.g. Mead, 1986; Panter-Brick, 1998; Lancy, 2008); and (3) new sociology of childhood, partly based on these two perspectives, but with its own methodology and theory of childhood. Childhood is understood here as a social practice, as actively negotiated set of relationships with negotiation between the material (physiological) as well as the discursive components (Prout, 2000b). A. Prout and A. James (1990, p. 8) point out some fundamental assumptions, which they see as the key features of a new paradigm. First, childhood is a social construction. Childhood, as something different from biological immaturity, is not a universal or natural feature of all human societies, but its cultural and structural component. Second, the relationship between childhood in biological terms and its social construction is complex. In this complexity different and often contradictory images of childhood are placed. Consequently, meaning attached to childhood can vary according to different spatial, temporal, cultural or economical contexts. Third, childhood cannot be understood as separated from other structuring principles such as gender, age, class or ethnicity. For that reason childhood cannot be comprehended as a universal phenomenon, but must be seen through the difference. And last but not least, children are and should be perceived as active agents in creating their own and/or social world in which they live. Children are not passive

subjects of social structures or processes but actively participate in their construction and (re) negotiation. Consequently, children should be seen as a group with its specific rules and values (see also James and Prout, 1990; Jenks, 1996; James, Jenks and Prout, 1998; Corsaro, 2005; Prout, 2000a; 2005; Kehily 2008).

The first studies investigating the subject of children in archaeology strove for underscoring their visibility in archaeological contexts and attempted to draw cross-cultural generalizations concerning children's engagement with material culture (Lillehammer, 1989; Gilchrist, 2003, p. 151). Previous archaeological narratives had neglected children entirely or presented them as a fixed and unified category that was opposed to adults. Until recently archaeological research in children has gone little further than noting high mortality rates among them in the past and their under-representation at prehistoric cemeteries. Furthermore, children were not recognized as significant actors in past societies. However, as it is argued (Jenks, 1996; Gilchrist, 2003, p. 151), this is a specifically modern Western point of view, which tends to regard children as socially passive, economically non-productive and culturally marginal, and for this very reason children were disregarded from archaeological interpretations. "It was assumed that people in the past shared our own society's attitudes toward children and childhood, until the feminist critique drew attention to this blatantly 'presentist' bias" (Gilchrist, 2003, p. 151). Benefiting from the above mentioned developments in social history and in the sociology of childhood, archaeologists have begun to consider childhood as social construction that is culturally and historically specific (Kamp, 2001, p. 3). The emphasis here is on children as active creators of social life rather than powerless products of society, and on childhood itself as something full of reversals, transformations and inversions, rather than being only a progression towards adulthood (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998). Consequently, archaeologists have argued that the modern idea of the passive and dependent childhood may be inadequate to past contexts, and have begun to examine the cultural specificity of infancy and childhood, child labour, child's play, ideas about childbirth, parenting, mothering, *et cetera* (e.g. Finlay 1997; Crawford 1999; Crown 1999; Högberg, 1999; Scott 1999; 2001; Sofaer Derevenski, 2000a; Beausang, 2003; Hart and Oakley, 2003; Baxter, 2005a; 2005b; 2008; Wileman, 2005; Lally and Moore, 2011).

I have already mentioned that the first step of the archaeological study of gender was the rejection of biological determinism by emphasizing cultural determinants of gender (Gilchrist, 1991, p. 495). Similarly, archae-

ology of childhood has focused on the cultural significance of social age (Sofaer Derevenski, 1994, pp. 10–11). There are three interconnected meanings of age: chronological, physiological and social. Chronological (calendar) age is a person's age in calendar years; physiological (biological) age concerns the biological process of maturation and development of the organism, while social age is related to socially established age norms and socially approved normative attitudes and behaviours for particular age groups (Ginn and Arber, 1995, pp. 5–10). A person's age thus cannot be given a universal meaning since it is culturally constructed. Moreover, it cannot be determined simply on the basis of biological immaturity or reduced to it. Human age, therefore, is a social construct related to biological age but not identical with it, just like gender is not the same as biological sex (Sofaer Derevenski, 1994, p. 10; Kamp, 2001, p. 4). Within gender archaeology, emphasis has been placed on identifying gender and the ways of its materialization; in the study of childhood, archaeologists try to determine the cultural significance and the diversity of age, age categories and rites of passage.

Researchers have distinguished three main phases in the course of gender archaeology: (1) initial critique of androcentrism and gender bias; (2) efforts at correction of gender bias by pointing to the presence and active role of women in prehistory, and adding them to the overall picture of the past (the so-called "add women and stir" approach, focused exclusively on women), and (3) reconceptualization of gender and presenting it as a difference – i.e. as a category that differs according to someone's age, social class, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. (Wylie, 1991, p. 21; Gilchrist, 1994, p. 3). These changes have largely been triggered by the third-wave feminism, by J. Butler especially (1990; 1993), who has shown that gender is not merely a category constructed performatively, and that biological sex, shaped by (cultural) gender, is a social construct. In a similar vein, three main phases of archaeology of childhood may be distinguished: (1) acknowledgement of the marginal role of childhood studies in archaeological narratives and searching for its causes; (2) adding children to the picture of the past and thus complementing archaeological interpretations (the so-called "add kids and stir" approach, focused exclusively on children); (3) recognition that a person's age is an important structuring factor, though dependent on other categories, such as gender, ethnicity, sexuality and/or social status (Sofaer Derevenski, 1994, p. 10). However, it was not until the emergence of the third-wave feminism that the impor-

tance of the category of age was emphasized as one of the factors that define and differentiate people, their relationships and social structures. Within gender studies, it has led to a gradual shift from the perception of women as a monolithic unified category towards exposing differences between them and seeing gender as a difference. The emphasis placed on the significance of age has also aroused interest in childhood in archaeology (Lillehammer, 2000, p. 18; Gilchrist, 2003, p. 151).

In the initial stages of gender archaeology, gender was primarily defined on the basis of biological sex (e.g. Gibbs, 1987), with the assumption, however, that it is culture that gives biological sex its significance. The dichotomy of biological sex projected onto binary genders (femininity, masculinity) was often questioned, as researchers indicated the existence of so-called third sex/gender (e.g. Herdt, 1994; Hollimon, 1997). Within childhood studies, the main archaeological data have been anthropological determinations of age carried out on preserved skeletons or skeletal remains of children. On that basis, researchers have tried to identify the cultural significance of age categories and differences between various stages of childhood, which is possible due to fairly precise methods of determining the children's age. Recent studies on childhood have focused on a life course perspective (see papers in Gilchrist 2000). Archaeologists have analyzed the ways in which material culture was used to distinguish specific age threshold and transition from childhood to adulthood, as evidenced by grave goods. It has been argued that distinctive forms of artifacts can be actively employed in the creation and experience of age grades, for instance through specific costumes, bodily ornamentation or practices of body modification (Gilchrist, 2003, p. 151). The most sophisticated readings of childhood have been developed from multiple lines of evidence, combining the use of cultural and biological factors. Since age and gender can be seen as making reference to bodily difference, of significant importance here is the body, as a key to investigation of age (Sofaer Derevenski, 2004, p. 165). Moreover, the body is modified and manipulated physically by various cultural practices and produced through various body techniques, often with accompanying material culture (Sofaer Derevenski, 2004, p. 171).

Finally, there are several similarities between gender archaeology and archaeology of childhood as regards their research subjects, the key categories of gender and age (see Sofaer Derevenski, 1997a). In both disciplines, the recognition of the cultural significance of these categories has

contributed to their detailed study. It has been emphasized that age and gender should not be treated as discrete variables, but rather as interrelated issues. Age and gender are interconnected at many levels and show numerous parallels. They both are crucial factors in shaping the identity of individuals and social groups; both constitute an important part of structures/ideologies regulating social relations and everyday life. Both are social constructs, related to, but not entirely determined by, biological facts. As cultural variables, they cannot be given unified or ahistorical meanings. Both may be used for social control over certain norms and behaviours ("act your age", "act as a lady/man"). Moreover, since their significance varies during the life course of an individual, they should be seen as processes, not as static categories. Instead of approaching gender and age as merely static categories of analysis it has been stressed that they are in a constant process of chance and must be investigated as such (Scott, 1997, p. 6). Their *locum* is the human body and they both are materialized through the human body. Finally, both are linked closely to material culture, which has far-reaching consequences for archaeology. Material culture plays an important role in forming certain social categories that are materialized through it; and this relationship is dialectical (Sofaer Derevenski, 2000a; 2000b; 2004; Sofaer, 2006; 2007). Therefore, it is important to link data concerning biological aspects of childhood, obtained from physical anthropology (breast feeding, reproductive patterns, trauma, paleopathologies, causes of death, etc.), with strictly archaeological exploration (e.g. Ingvarsson-Sundström, 2003; Lewis, 2006; Sofaer, 2006; Halcrow and Tyles, 2008). The question of materialization of childhood seems particularly promising here. Acknowledgement of a dialectical relation between children and material culture, namely that the child determines and is determined by material culture, helps to appreciate the importance of material culture in shaping human identity.

## FINAL REMARKS

In conclusion, research on childhood and children in archaeology should be seen as a welcome broadening of the discussion of gender, not merely by adding a new component of analysis, namely age. However, archaeologists must resist the temptation of separating out specialty topics like that of "archaeology of children" since such a strategy unavoidably leads to falling into the trap of prior gender archaeology, that is ghettoization

of these research areas: the creation of a topic of special interests to some people but not of general significance (Meskell, 2002, p. 283). This strategy may also strengthen the modern assumption that childhood is a separate stage in human life (Buliński, 2003). In my opinion, the danger can be reduced by analyzing childhood within the framework of the life cycle (Gilchrist, 2000; 2003; Hockey and James, 2003). Crucially, attention should be paid not only to a person's age but also to other structuring constituents of social difference, such as gender, social status and/or ethnicity. Rather, research on childhood as a topic, demands consideration as part of a process within the frameworks of the life course perspective and should be integrated into social archaeology (Gilchrist, 2000).

Attempts aiming at the reconstruction of childhood in archaeology result not merely from emancipating strategies of modernity (Lillehammer, 2000, p. 18), but chiefly from the realization that attempts to understand any society now and in the past and the rules that govern it is impossible without understanding the attitudes of its members to children. For that reason, childhood should become an integral part of social archaeology. A search for "the world of children" (Lillehammer, 2000, p. 20) by archaeologists is thus not only a matter of appropriate and/or representative evidence, but also of adequate questions concerned with this stage of life as well as the discourses which shape our knowledge about children. We should keep in mind numerous myths and anachronisms about childhood as well as recognize its historicity and contingency. Childhood cannot be described in universal terms; its prehistoric meaning could have been quite different from the modern concept of that period of human life. Thus, by assuming that childhood is a historical category that varies across time and space, we acknowledge conventional, changeable and contradictory values given to it both at present and in the past.

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KATARZYNA ORZYŁOWSKA, BARTOSZ KAROLAK

# Paleolithic children knapping. The identification of children's flint knapping product – experimental case study

## INTRODUCTION

For many years archaeologists have been seeking the answer to the question: where have all the children gone? How to look for and finally find children in the archaeological record? (e.g. Lillehammer, 1989; Lillie, 1997; Kamp, 1998, 2001; Shea, 2006). Current research shows that the archaeological materials provide opportunities for the exploration of numerous aspects of childhood and archaeologists are encouraged to respond to the challenge (Kamp, 2001, p. 1).

The identification of children has become also a current theme in recent studies of Paleolithic and Mesolithic societies. Still in the archaeological models of Paleolithic stone tool variability and assemblage formation processes, children might as well be invisible. There have been some efforts to identify byproducts of children's activities, but their possible role in the broader patterns of Paleolithic industrial variability remains largely unexplored (Shea, 2006, p. 212). This paper discusses the results of recent lithic experimentation with children aimed at the identification of a set of criteria that can be related to children's flint knapping products.

## THE RESEARCH QUESTION

In the Paleolithic assemblages there are frequent instances of simple and *ad hoc* tools or those that bear strange traces, which do not match the *chaîne opératoire* (Leroi-Gourhan, 1964). There are some views that such low-investment stone tools were predominantly used by women. While such gender categorizations are over-simplistic at best, they also raise important questions: where do children fit into all this? (Sørensen, Sternke and Eingeland, 2002, p. 720). Could these tools be a product of children's learning?

The solution to this problem can be reached through a method known as 'reffiting'. Refitting analyses have been very successful in revealing learning processes in flintknapping. Such studies have made it possible to observe (and almost to re-experience) Stone Age children's efforts in learning to knap flint. This has been achieved especially for sites dating from the Upper Palaeolithic – the Magdalenian sites at Pincevent and Etiolles in France are famous examples (Stapert, 2007, p. 17). While such general traits are helpful in distinguishing assemblages produced by apprentices from those made by experts, descriptions of specific technological and/or morphological attributes associated with the potential knapping products of beginners and novices of any given archaeological period or techno-complex are currently missing (Sørensen, Sternke and Eingeland, 2002, p. 721).

Moreover, not all assemblages contain materials that provide an opportunity for refit. There are compelling reasons to expect that significant portions of the lithic record from Pleistocene Age sites reflect children's activities. If this argument is correct, then Paleolithic archaeologists need to develop methods by which to differentiate the byproducts of children from those of the adults. As this review of the criteria archaeologists have proposed for recognizing children's activities has shown, this will not be an easy task, but it is one that has the potential to shed light on important evolutionary questions (Shea, 2006, p. 215).

Knapping experiments with modern children and analyzing products of this experimental work could be a method to answer the following questions: what did the traces of beginners knapping look like and is it possible to identify a set of criteria which can be related to children's flint knapping products in Paleolithic assemblages?

This paper presents the results of a project specifically designed to address these questions.

## METHODS

Several ethnographic studies of hunter-gatherer and preindustrial agrarian societies report children beginning to imitate adult subsistence and technological activities, including active participation in food collection, at 7 to 11 years of age (e.g. Bird and Bliege Bird, 2000; Blurton-Jones and Marlowe, 2002).

The few papers which have discussed Paleolithic children have generally followed one or several of the following three maxims in their interpretations:

– children may have left behind especially small things, for example miniature versions of everyday tools;
– they may also have left behind toys, made either by themselves or by their parents;
– they may have left traces of the learning processes that they went through. Of course, several combinations of these categories are also possible (Stapert, 2007, p. 17).

Therefore the experiment, in which five children and two adults participated was thoroughly recorded and all flint knapping products and debris were collected. These 'assemblages' were catalogued and underwent a technological and morphological analysis, while the flintknappers' performance, technological behaviour and gestures were assessed through the viewing of video footage. Children learned flintknapping and played alone with flints, whose size ranged from 3 cm to 12 cm (Fig. 1, 2).

However, it has to be noted in this context, that an individual's mental abilities are closely related to his/her social and natural environment. Speculation about the nature of the social environment of prehistoric children is tentative at best, which means that prehistoric learning situations cannot be adequately reconstructed. While we realize that this view might be overly pessimistic, we also must remind ourselves that the nature of childhood as a concept in prehistory is unknown, and therefore the association of beginners' knapping products with children is made cautiously, based on the belief that beginner-knappers and apprentices would be children or adolescents (Sørensen, Sternke and Eingeland, 2002, p. 721).

The experiment was carried out in the summer of 2012. Children learned to produce the most typical Middle Paleolithic products including simple flakes and afterwards simple scrapers using hard and soft hammers. The children did not have any prior knowledge of flint knapping and they were instructed verbally and visually on how to manufacture

Fig. 1. Flintknapping theory – the first phase of the experiment (photo by G. Szalast).

Fig. 2. First steps in knapping – phase 2 of the experiment (photo by G. Szalast).

a certain tool type. Each participant spent 1,5 hour knapping and made one core and one scraper. The whole experiment had four phases and the final phase involved playing with the prepared tools.

## APPLICATIONS

Children which participated in the experiment represented different degrees of coordination and skill. The majority of flakes had hinged terminations, which were recognized as typical attributes for beginners. Not all participants were able to produce a simple flake. The biggest problem was choosing the right place to hit and striking with adequate force. The experiment confirmed that children learning to knap have certain characteristics: they learn by observing and imitating, they use a lot of flint material and create highly varied products (see Shea, 2006, p. 213). It has also demonstrated that we can identify some characteristic features of beginners' flint knapping.

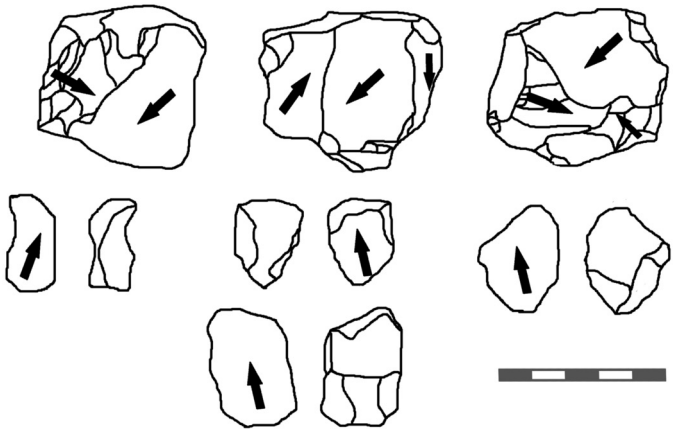

Fig. 3. Products of children learning session with features typical for beginners (drawing by K. Orzyłowska).

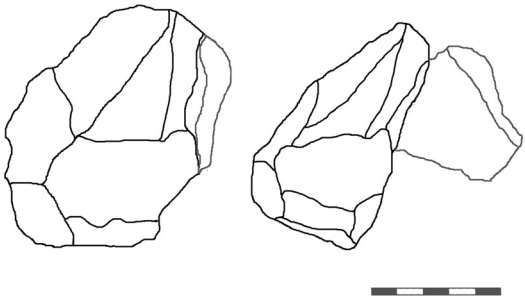

Fig. 4. Broken core – one of the beginners products (drawing by K. Orzyłowska).

This set of technological and morphological criteria may be a potential key to find children's traces in archaeological material.

The most frequent marks included: two-dimensional knapping on cores and on most of the used pieces of flint, hinged flake terminations, a tendency to make frequent conceptual errors, a lack of core maintenance, absence of standardized products and the reorientation of tools (Fig. 3, 4).

The second part of the experiment involved playing with the prepared tools – Middle Paleolithic scrapers and knives. 30 children participated in this part of the project, also those from the flintknapping class. Children frequently chose the largest tools. Interestingly, most of the children did not experience any difficulties in using the tools chosen for their intended purpose (Fig. 6, 7).

## CONFRONTATION WITH ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL

The discovered features can be checked by attempting to find them in the archaeological material. Naturally, this method poses some difficulties, because we can never be sure that our assemblage comprises items made by children or beginners. However, 'amateur' tools are easy to identify within the assemblages, due to their atypical appearance. Among such tools, for example, is a knife S1349 from the Stajnia Cave (Fig. 5).

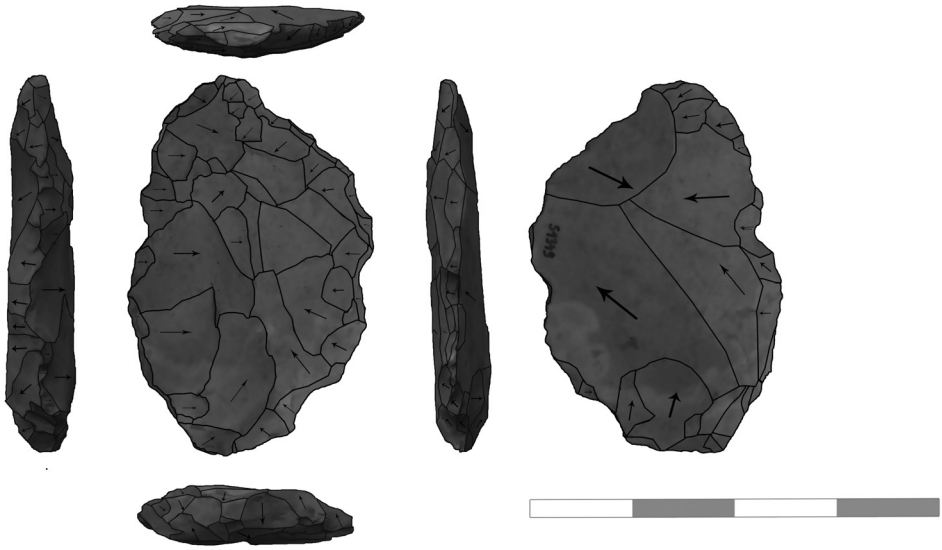

Fig. 5. S 1349 (drawing by K. Orzyłowska).

Fig. 6. Choosing tools to play – fourth phase of the experiment (photo by G. Szalast).

Fig. 7. Playing with flint tools – fifth phase of the experiment (photo by G. Szalast).

The Stajnia Cave is located in the picturesque ridge of limestone monadnocks of Mirów, Poland. The excavations inside the cave revealed extraordinary traces of Neanderthal habitation. Various types of archaeological evidence were discovered in the thick layers of soil left after the Neanderthal habitation. An outstanding quantity of lithic tools were found, with a predominating number of the so-called asymmetric knives, which are characteristic for the Neanderthal lithic industry of Central Europe during the last glacial period. The piles of stored flint raw material that were discovered indicate that Stajnia was not just a temporarily used shelter. Tens of thousands of animal bone parts were embedded among the lithics, revealing the history of hunting, butchering and eating habits of the individuals once living in the cave. Amid all those findings the most valuable artefacts were discovered in 2007 – three teeth from three *Homo s. neanderthalensis* individuals, which are the first findings of Neanderthal remains north of the Carpathian mountains. Most significant for this paper is that recent research has shown that two of these individuals were adults (approximately 20 years old) and one was a teenager. Perhaps the analyzed tools were produced by him (Urbanowski et al., 2010)?

Knife S1349 was very different from other tools found in the assemblage. The scheme (Fig. 8) by which it was produced is not very logical and difficult to understand. It seems that this specimen was produced by an inexperienced and incompetent manufacturer. Apart from the general 'chaotic'

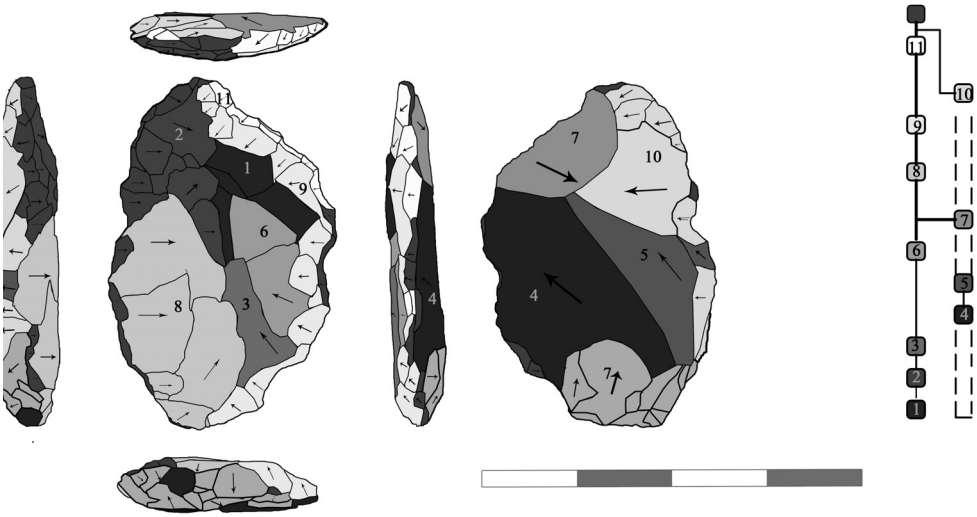


Fig. 8. S 1349 technological history (drawing by K. Orzyłowska).

appearance of the specimen the orientation of its cutting-edge is also rather surprising. Massive, bulb area, which probably was intended to become a base of the tool is not located close to its back side, but by its cutting-edge. One may wonder if in this case the part defined as the cutting-edge is an error in the interpretation? Definitely not. The back side of this tool bears undeniable traces of blunting retouch while the cutting edge has traces of sharp retouch from the top and blunting retouch on the bottom. Therefore, we can draw the assumption that on the knife S1349 the location of these two parts can be a result of chance. Most likely, in the production process the manufacturer changed his mind with regard to how the tool should look like or perhaps he was just forced to accept whatever he was able to create. Therefore, due to the various errors that he made during the production process, he decided to reorient the knife.

The examined tool, despite its amorphous characteristics had the basic parameters of an asymmetric knife and traces of actually being used. The knife S1349 may indeed be evidence of flintknapping learning. This is suggested by hinged flake terminations, a tendency for making frequent conceptual errors, or the reorientation of the tool. The example of the Stajnia Cave demonstrates that traces of begginners' knapping can be found in the archaeological materials. Thanks to a thorough analysis and interpretation the 'strange' objects the products of beginners' knapping become much easier to understand (see Orzyłowska, 2009).

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

There are compelling reasons to expect that significant portions of the lithic record from Pleistocene Age sites reflect children's activities. If this argument is correct, then Paleolithic archaeologists need to develop methods by which to differentiate the byproducts of children from those of adults. As this review of the criteria that archaeologists have proposed for recognizing children's activities has shown, this will not be an easy task, but it is one that has the potential to shed new light on important evolutionary questions. Because stone tools are the most durable residues of hominin behaviour, archaeological lithic analysis is uniquely situated to shed light on change and variation in the social transmission of technical knowledge (Shea, 2006, p. 215).

We should remember that quite a lot of flint artifacts must have been left behind by children in the context of learning and/or playing. Learning

to flintknap takes years, and we should note that among hunter-gatherers, children younger than 15 years make up more than 40% of the population (Roveland, 2000). The realization that children must be responsible for quite a few flint artifacts may help to understand not only some typological aberrations, but also the reason why some sites make a 'primitive' impression. Taking into account the activities of children will make our reconstructions of the past not only more plausible and complete, but also more lively and interesting (Stapert, 2007, p. 35).

Stone tools made and used by children probably cut across the typological divisions of the lithic record. Few of the major Early or Middle Paleolithic stone tool typologies take size into account (see Bordes, 1961; Debenath and Dibble, 1994). Early and Middle Paleolithic assemblages commonly contain small cores, cores on-flakes, notches, denticulates, and truncations, the size and simplicity of which suggest that they could have been made by children, in addition to the purposes for which adults made them. However, there is no reason to suppose that children restricted themselves to using retouched tools any more than adults did. Therefore, small unretouched flakes may also contain byproducts of children's activities. It gives one pause to realize that such small flakes comprise the majority of nearly every Paleolithic assemblage recovered by modern excavation techniques (Shea, 2006, p. 214).

The experiment described in this article shows that combination of experimental replication could be useful for lithic analysis. The identification of possible children's produce in archaeology, and more specifically in lithic production, is possible. Further development of this method should be an important part of research, especially in the context of the 'invisibility' of children in Low- and Middle Paleolithic assemblages.

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KATARÍNA HLADÍKOVÁ

# Perception of children in Villanovan period in southern Etruria

## INTRODUCTION

The archaeological resources provide us only with limited information on children in the past and therefore it is difficult for archaeologists to (re) construct the child's role and place in prehistoric societies. Academic works on this topic are very rare or totally absent, also in Italy (Modica, 1993; 2007; Bartoloni, 2003; Muggia, 2004; Nizzo, 2011). This lack of academic interest may be related to the marginalisation of children not only in archaeological literature (see Lillehammer, 1989; Sofaer Derevenski, 2000; Pawleta in this monograph). G. Lillehammer literally states that "the child's world has been left out of archaeological research" (Lillehammer, 1989, p. 89). This problem is associated with frequent absence or with a shortage of children's graves in cemeteries what sharply contradicts the fact that we often expect a high child morbidity and mortality within these communities (Neustupný, 1983, p. 24). However, there are many possible explanations for this absence, such as low survival rate of children's bones or selective treatment of children in the burial rite (see Hladíková, 2013).

### *Aim and Method*

The aim of this paper is to summarise the research on the burial rite and material culture in selected cemeteries, with respect to children's burials, and to try to interpret the role of children in the society or their perception by the society.

For children's burials, it is essential to analyse them in the context of adult (other) graves. Therefore, the first step in our analysis was to recognise the main characteristics of the burial rite in general. For this purpose, the factor analysis has been used to find out the principal components of the burial rite in necropolises of Veii-Quattro Fontanili and Sorbo[1] (see Hladíková, 2013). The next step was the identification of the children's graves within the necropolises, followed by the analysis of the burial rite and grave goods of these graves. In addition, the typological analysis and the analysis of the quality and quantity of the grave goods was an important part of the project. In this paper, selected results of this research are presented.

### *Chronological and Geographical Framework*

In this paper we analyse cemeteries of Veii, Cerveteri and Tarquinia (Fig. 1) situated in the Southern Etruria. They were dated, in the sense of relative chronology, to the 1st[2] and 2nd[3] phase of Early Iron Age. Sorbo cemetery (Cerveteri) however was in use mainly in the earlier phase, whereas Quattro Fontanili cemetery (Veii) mostly in the later phase of this period. The cemeteries in Tarquinia were in use in both of these phases (see Toms, 1986; 1992–1993; Guidi; 1993; Iaia, 1999a; Pacciarelli, 2001; Trucco, 2006a; 2006b etc.).

### *The Evidence*

Our project on perception of children in Villanovan period focuses mainly on archaeological resources and our main source of information are children's graves, both cremation and inhumation. However the current state of research (especially in regard to the (un) realised analyses) is the reason for several restrictions. The quality and significance of these sources were considerably affected by the character of excavations undertaken in the past. Most of the sources come from sites excavated in the 19th and 20th centuries. Excavations undertaken in the 20th century are either unpublished or published only partially (e.g. see Bartoloni and Delpino, 1979; Iaia, 1999a; Pacciareli, 2001; Leigthon, 2004 etc.). Therefore it is rather problematic to obtain the relevant amount of significant data. Considering the issue of children's graves specifically, the most restricting

[1] Tarquinia – non-compact data.
[2] Conventional date: 10th–9th c. BC
[3] Conventional date: 9th–8th c. BC

circumstance is the lack of anthropological analyses in the large amount of the graves, especially in cremation graves. The inhumation graves on the other hand are more suitable for obtaining the required information, even if the anthropological analyses might be absent.

Nevertheless, the sites of Quattro Fontanili at Veii and Sorbo at Cerveteri offer data which were more suitable for deeper analyses. Also the fragmentary data from cemeteries in Tarquinia were used to complete the picture.

Children's graves found in the settlement areas represent a specific category. The settlement excavations in Italy have produced the evidence for the existence of children's graves or rather deliberate deposi-

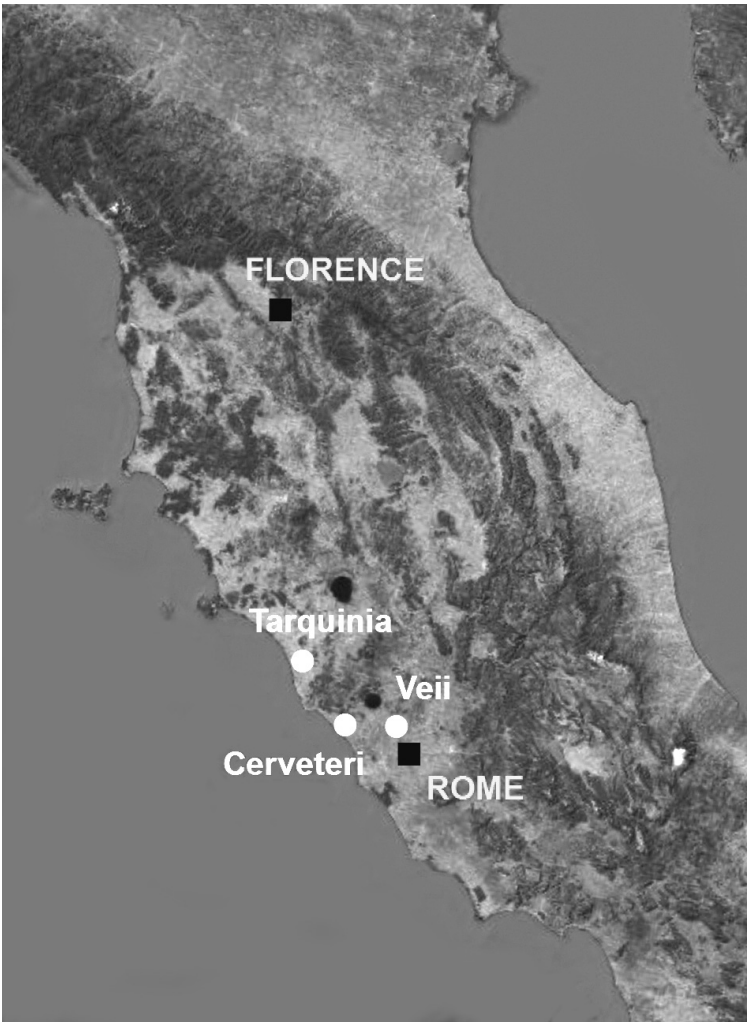


Fig. 1. Situation map – Italy – Tarquinia, Cerveteri and Veii (drawing by K. Hladíková).

tions even in these contexts. However in Southern Etruria they represent only a small amount of the excavated archaeological contexts since the archaeological research in the past was aimed especially at the excavation of cemeteries.

### *The Burial Rite*

The Villanovan Period in central Italy was characterised mostly at the beginning by the cremation burial rite, similarly to many other regions of Europe. The domination of the cremation rite was most likely associated with changes in the understanding of the afterlife, which were observed also in the wider area of Central Europe (Urnfield cultural complex). In the later part of Early Iron Age 1st phase also the inhumation burial rite came into use. The coexistence of the cremation and inhumation burial rite is well documented at several cemeteries. However some local differences can be observed in the studied area of the Southern Etruria. In the Villanovan period more complex social stratification was observed, especially during the second phase that was reflected, among other things, by the increased amount and type of grave goods (e.g. Bartoloni, 1992, pp. 30–31; Cataldi, 1993, pp. 20–23; Iaia, 1999a, pp. 141–145; Amann, 2000, p. 35; Pacciarelli, 2001; Leigthon, 2004, p. 48 etc.).

Considering the cremation burial rite the *pozzo* type graves with smaller *pozzeto* were quite wide-spread. These graves were composed of a cylindrical or ovoid shaft-like pit with a smaller shaft. An urn with cremated remains of the deceased and the grave goods were placed in their interior. The urn was usually covered with a bowl turned bottom up.[4] The pit with the urn was often filled with the remains of a funeral pyre (see e.g Bartoloni, 1992, pp. 30–31; Cataldi, 1993, pp. 20–23; Bartoloni et al., 1994, p. 7; Mancinelli, Trucco and Vargiu, 2011, p. 723; Leighton, 2004, p. 48; Trucco, 2006a, p. 99; 2006b, p. 188). Considering the grave forms they varied significantly.[5]

Inhumation graves had mainly forms of simple pits, so called *fosse*. The deceased was placed in the pit mostly in extended position, straight on the bottom of the pit or in a wooden coffin or in the stone sarcophagi (see Veio NSc 1963; 1965; 1967; 1970; 1972; 1975; Hencken, 1968; Iaia, 1999a; 1999b; Bartoloni, 2003 etc.).

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[4] Some of the urns were covered by the helmet typical for male graves. Furthermore, some of the urns represented a model of a house – the so-called house urns (Iaia, 1999a, pp. 22, 99).

[5] Namely *pozzo* with *loculus* (niche), or *pozzo a risega* (with recess). Urns were eventually placed in a stone case/*cassa* (tuff, *nenfro*) (Iaia, 1999a, pp. 17–24).

The cemeteries were used by communities from several settlements, on a long-term basis. As a result, these common burial grounds were rather large necropolises with several hundreds of graves (e.g. Veii-Quattro Fontanili, Veii-Casale del Fosso: Bartoloni et al., 1994, p. 7; Bartoloni et al., 1997, pp. 89–100). The composition of the grave goods depended to a large extent on the gender of the deceased. Male graves were usually equipped with components of dress, jewellery (less frequent), pottery and other artefacts. The serpentine fibula was among the typical grave goods of male graves.[6] The weapons and armament typical for male graves were sporadic, and in the graves of the Early Iron Age 1st phase they were nearly absent. Female graves contained also components of dress, jewellery (e.g. necklaces from glass beads, or pendants) which were more frequent than in male graves, artefacts associated with textile production (spindle whorls, distaffs, "spools"), and pottery. Among fibulas, the bow fibulas (*fibula ad arco*) seem to represent the typical female article of dress. Also the fibulas of sanguisuga type (*fibula a sanguisuga*) and bow fibulas with amber discs seem to be rather typical for females (see e.g. Toms, 1986, p. 47; 1998, pp. 165–167; Guidi, 1993, p. 104; Bartoloni et al. 1994, p. 8; Amann, 2000, pp. 27–35; Brøns, 2012, p. 46). Pottery vessels do not seem to be related to any sex or age.

## IDENTIFICATION OF CHILD GRAVES

### *Anthropological Analyses*

*Veii – Quattro Fontanili*

At Quattro Fontanili cemetery in Veii approximately 2000 graves were identified (Bartoloni et al., 1994, p. 7; Bartoloni et al., 1997, p. 89) and 651 of them were excavated (32,55%). Human remains from 86 graves (13,21% of the excavated graves) were anthropologically analysed.[7] Deceased of age groups from categories *infans I* to *senilis* were recognised.

[6] However, this fibula type was sporadically found also in female graves (Koch, 2011, pp.139–140; Brøns, 2012, pp. 46; Bartoloni et al., 1994, p. 18).

[7] The analysed sample comes from the excavation seasons that were published by P. Passarello and G. Alciati in Notizie degli Scavi in 1963 (pp. 273–279), by P. Passarello in 1965 (pp. 232–236) and in 1967 (pp. 281–286). Since skeletal remains were not preserved in a good condition, P. Passarello had mostly analysed the preserved sets of teeth of selected individuals and, based on these analyses, he determined the age of death.

Considering this group of anthropologically determined individuals, 47 children (*infans I* and *infans II*) were buried in 41 inhumation graves. These children were buried separately or with other individuals of similar or different age. Separately buried children were identified most likely in 36 graves[8]; however, the contexts of a few graves are problematic. In these cases (Graves EEFF4, FFGG7-8, FFGG9, HHII9?), possible burials of a child with other individual can be considered. The age was determined for 44 children buried in 41 inhumation and 2 cremation graves. Eleven child individuals could be assigned only to the interval of the age-category *infans I* (4) and *infans II* (1), and 6 individuals generally to the age-category *infans*. Considering the whole determined sample from Veii – Quattro Fontanili cemetery, individuals of the age-category *infans I* (28) were the most numerous, followed by the individuals of the age-category *infans II* (19). Interestingly infants to 1 year of age were completely absent. The sex was determined archaeologically.

*Villa Bruschi Falgari*

In the Villa Bruschi Falgari cemetery at Tarquinia, 246 graves out of the total number of 252 excavated graves (from 320 to 350 graves identified on the site) were dated to the 1st phase of the Early Iron Age. Based on the anthropological analysis of 207 graves, 114 adult individuals and 63 sub-adult individuals were determined and individuals of the age categories from 0–6 to 50–x years were recognised. The results of these analyses were published only partially (Mancinelli, Trucco and Vargiu, 2011, pp. 1–3).

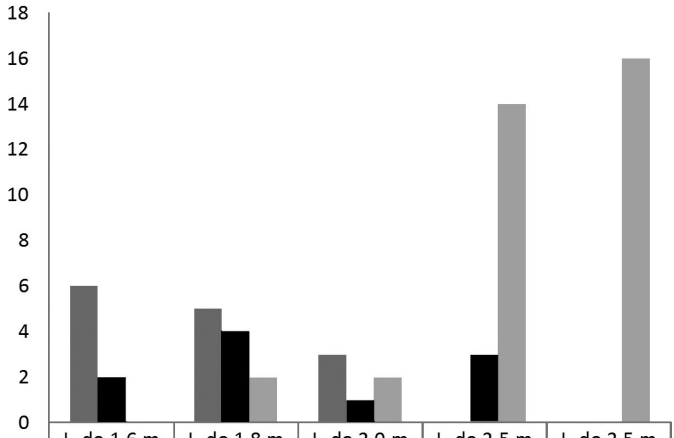
***Archaeological Analysis***

Thus the anthropological analysis has revealed only a limited number of the children's graves at the necropolis Quattro Fontanili. Hence the first step in our research, following the factor analysis, was to identify children's graves archaeologically. We also used this method in the analyses of cemeteries in Tarquinia and Sorbo.

*Graves with Length up to 1.6 m*

As the main indicator of children's graves, the grave parameters have been chosen, mostly the length. First, we defined the maximal length of the grave in which a child was most probably present. The upper

[8] This number includes also an individual from the Grave BB7A, on the basis of the presence of 18 child teeth.




| | L. do 1,6 m | L. do 1,8 m | L. do 2,0 m | L. do 2,5 m | L. do 2,5 m |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| infans I | 6 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| infans II | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| older individuals | 0 | 2 | 2 | 14 | 16 |

Fig. 2. Ratio of anthropologically analysed graves and length categories (to category of "Length to 2 m" we count also the grave EE7-8B 2.02 m long) (drawing by K. Hladíková).

boundary of the grave length was estimated to 1.6 m, based partly on the results of the anthropological analysis of Quattro Fontanili (Fig. 2) and on the expected anthropometric data of children (see Hladíková, 2013). However this applies only up to a certain age – when physical differences between bodily constitutions of individuals may be observed.[9]

*Wooden Coffin/Biers – Length*

In addition to the length of the graves children on Quattro Fontanili cemetery can be identified on the basis of the dimensions of wooden coffin/bier fragments present in inhumation graves (this assumption is partially attested by the anthropological analysis). The length of wooden remains can indicate the approximate length of original coffins/biers which was limited by the anthropometric data of the buried persons.

*Sarcophagus/Cassa Length*

The only specific element characteristic most likely for children was the occurrence of their remains in sarcophagi (but only in a small number)

[9] The bodily constitution of juveniles does not fit in this scheme. It is a question, whether juvenile individuals were considered as children. It seems likely that they were not, judging according to any substantial difference among the graves with length over 1.8–2 m.

at Quattro Fontanili. These sarcophagi were made of local volcanic stone (tuff, *nenfro, pozzolana*). At Veii – Quattro Fontanili, 8 individuals were buried in sarcophagi (Graves S1a, BBCC3-4, Y1-2a, EE5A, EE5B (inf. I, 6), B14-15, D8?, FF19A?)[10] (Veio NSc 1963, p. 185; 1967, p. 233; 1970, p. 282; 1970, p. 253; 1972, p. 342; 1975, p. 170; 1975, p. 126). Only remains from the Grave EE5 (EE5A, EE5B) were anthropologically analysed, determining the 6 years old child buried in the sarcophagus (Passarello, 1967, p. 282). In the excavation reports however, there are comments on tiny skeletal remains present in the other sarcophagi that indicate their identification as children. At Casale del Fosso cemetery the finds of sarcophagi were also associated with children (Buranelli, 1981, p. 39; Buranelli, Drago and Paolini, 1997, p. 64). On the other hand the finds of sarcophagi with larger dimensions from Tarquinia (Impiccato, Arcatelle) (Hencken, 1968, pp. 152–160, 196, 255–269, 317; Iaia, 1999a, pp. 70–74; 1999b, pp. 17–20) refer to their connection with the burials of older individuals as well.[11]

*The Location of Human Remains inside the Graves*

Some specific locations of human remains in graves on Quattro Fontanili can be also used for the identification of children's presence, e.g. in the case of an inhumation grave where the adult was buried in the main pit and the infant was placed in a recess – so called *loculo*.

*Other Indicators of Child's Presence*

Other indicators that were, however, used in correlation with the above mentioned indicators were the following: a small amount of grave goods, graves without any grave goods, and a specific kind of grave goods.

Using these criteria a total number 64 of expected children's graves was gained at the cemetery of Quattro Fontanili. Including the anthropologically identified individuals the total number is 95. Nevertheless, the possibility that older individuals were buried in these graves cannot be excluded. More-

[10] The bodily constitution of juveniles does not fit in this scheme. It is a question, whether juvenile individuals were considered as children. It seems likely that they were not, judging according to any substantial difference among the graves with length over 1.8–2 m.

[11] Furthermore, the context of sarcophagus from the Grave 834 with cremation remains of a child from Casale del Fosso indicates that sarcophagi of smaller dimensions were not intended exclusively for an inhumation burial (Bartoloni, 2003, p. 104). Also the context of sarcophagus from the Grave OP5 indicates that sarcophagi were used for placing of cremation remains, although it was a unique case within the Quattro Fontanili cemetery. The sarcophagus placed in the pozzo (Veio NSc 1972, pp. 299–302) contained cremation remains together with miniaturised artefacts which are considered to be of a male individual – guerriero (Bartoloni et al., 1997, pp. 92, 96).

over, children were sometimes buried in larger graves and these graves are difficult to distinguish from the graves of the adults (Fig. 3).

In the case of necropolises at Sorbo at Cerveteri (Fig. 4) and Tarquinia the same method has been used.

## CHILDREN´S GRAVES IN CEMETERIES

Children's graves in the cemeteries were documented for the Early Iron Age phases 1 and 2. Cremation as well as inhumation burials were present.

### *Inhumation Burial Rite*

In the Quattro Fontanili (Veii) children were buried in grave pits of rectangular shape (*fossa*), similarly to the older individuals. Children's graves did not show many differences compared to graves of older individuals. As mentioned above, the dimensions of the grave pits were crucial for the differentiation of children's graves. Grave-pit dimensions were partially adapted to the anthropometric parameters of buried individuals. This standard however, does not apply to the "richly" equipped children's graves with dimensions not related to the presumed anthropometric parameters of children of the determined age. Speaking of depths of children's graves they were similar to grave depths of other individuals.

Children's graves contained the so-called votive *loculi* only sporadically, in comparison to the longer graves, where they occurred frequently. Child remains were usually placed on the bottom of the grave-pit. Less commonly they were placed in the wooden coffin or on the wooden bier located at the bottom of the grave-pit or they were placed in the stone sarcophagi. Also the placement of child remains in so-called *loculo sepolcrale*, either in wooden coffin or without it seems to be typical for child's burials.

The assumed children's graves from the Sorbo cemetery (Cerveteri) did not show many differences in the grave form, except for smaller dimensions of the pit and smaller grave depth in comparison to the graves of older individuals. In the cemeteries of Tarquinia the children's burials assumed on the basis of our analysis[12] were located in stone sarcophagi. However this phenomenon was probably associated also with burials of older individuals according to larger dimensions of some sarcophagi.

[12] The metric dimensions are given only for stone sarcophagi, there are no dimensions of grave-pits without sarcophagi in the publications (Hencken, 1968; Buranelli, 1983). Therefore it was not possible to identify child's burials in standard grave-pits.

Fig. 3. Distribution of children's graves on Quattro Fontanili – Veii (plan digitalized after Veio NSc 1963–1975); light grey – assumed children's graves, dark grey – anthrop. identified children's graves (drawing by K. Hladíková).

Fig. 4. Distribution of children's graves on Sorbo – Cerveteri (plan digitalized after Vighi 1955); assumed children's graves (drawing by K. Hladíková).

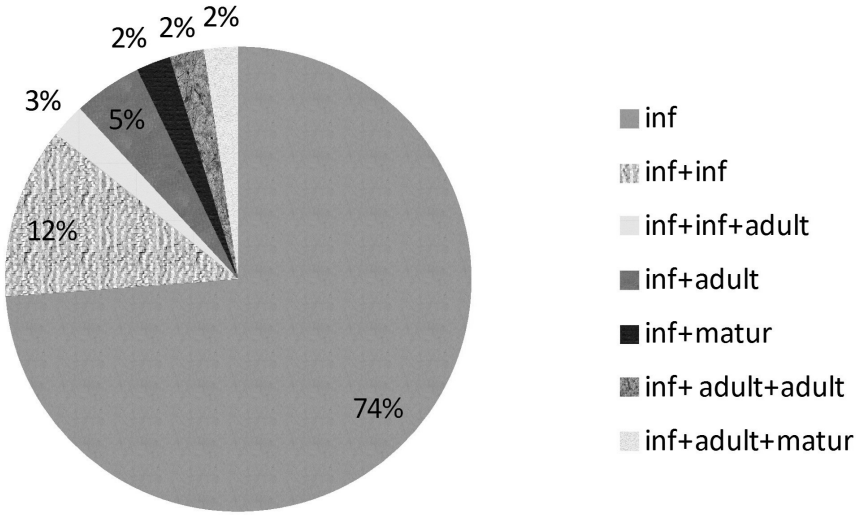



Fig. 5. Variability of combination of anthropologically analysed individuals in the graves (drawing by K. Hladíková).

Based on the sporadic anthropological analyses, namely on the partial analysis of the Quattro Fontanili burial place (Veii), inhumation graves contained a burial of a single child or two children together or a burial of a child with older individuals of age-categories *adultus* or *maturus* (Passarelo and Alciati, 1963; Passarelo, 1965; 1967) (Fig. 5). Based on the analysis of the grave lengths individuals of the age-category *infans I* were most frequently placed in the graves of length up to 1.6 m respectively 1.8 m, following the graves of length up to 2 m. They were absent in graves of length over 2 m (Fig. 2). Children of the age-category *infans II* were most frequently placed in the graves of length up to 1.8 m, but they occurred also in the graves with length up to 2.5 m. Older individuals were more often buried in graves of length from 2 m.

In Quattro Fontanili necropolis both *infans* age-categories (*infans I*: 0–6/7 years, and *infans II*: 6/7–12/13 years) were present. Children were buried there from the age of 3 years on a regular basis. Only two graves of younger children were recorded there. In Grave II18-19 (Veio NSc 1963, pp. 205–208) from this cemetery a single child aged 1–2 years was buried. On the contrary a child aged 2–3 years placed in the Grave DD8-9 (Veio NSc 1967, p. 117) was buried along with two other individuals of *adultus* and *maturus* age-categories. Single burials of younger children and infants were not recorded in the studied burial places. The absence of young children in cemeteries could have been caused by several factors

(for more details see Hladíková, 2013). However, children under certain age were probably not able to fulfill standards for being buried in a cemetery for other members of the community. The sex ratio of children buried in Quattro Fontanili cemetery was quite proportional.

Considering the spatial distribution of children's graves these were located mostly in the vicinity of graves of older individuals or graves with larger lengths, which were assumed to be of older individuals. Generally it is assumed that the grave groups represented family nuclei or larger units – clans (see e.g. Buranelli, Drago and Paolini, 1997, pp. 72–73; Bartoloni, 2003, p. 89). In the cemeteries at Quattro Fontanili and Sorbo children's graves were frequently connected to other graves by thin earth walls or half-walls. Separated children's grave groups or placement of these graves in a marginal zone were not observed, except for a small group of the wealthy children's graves from the second phase of Early Iron Age that was identified in the south-eastern[13] part of the Quattro Fontanili necropolis and also a group of children's graves in the south-western part.[14] It is also very interesting to note the concentration of children's burials placed in sarcophagi among well-equipped men's graves in the Arcatelle cemetery that was mentioned by C. Iaia (1999a, p. 70).

### *Cremation Burial Rite*

The cremation burials of children can be studied only to a limited extent, due to the absence of the anthropological analyses or their unpublished results. Cremation graves of a single child are recorded in Casale del Fosso (Bartoloni 2003, p. 104; Buranelli, 1981) and Grotta Gramiccia cemeteries (Berardinetti and Drago, 1997, p. 40).[15] Usually several individuals were buried in a single urn. The children's cremation graves were documented also in the Villa Bruschi Falgari cemetery in Tarquinia (Mancinelli, Trucco and Vargiu, 2011, p. 3). In the Villa Bruschi Falgari cemetery remains of 63 children were determined and the majority of them

[13] HHII7-8 (Veio NSc 1965, p. 198), HH6-7 (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 252–258), GG5-6 (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 241–244), GG6-7 (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 244–250), GGHH5 (Veio NSc 1967, p. 250).

[14] LL19 (Veio NSc), MMNN19 (Veio NSc 1963, pp. 261), MMNN17-18(Veio NSc 1963, p. 254), MM16 (Veio NSc 1963, p. 258).

[15] These cemeteries are published only incompletely. Therefore it was impossible to analyse their graves in detail. In Grotta Gramiccia cemetery, the urns of small dimensions which were found in two cremation graves (published) contained cremated remains of young children (0–3 y in a single urn; 2–4 y and less than 1 y in another urn – Grave 332: Berardinetti and Drago, 1997, pp. 40, footnote 15).

were buried in cremation graves. Cremation graves in general consisted of a simple cylindrical shaft – so-called *pozzo* – of an oval or circular shape but also of rectangular or square shape. Type *pozzo* was usually narrowing at the bottom and continued as a smaller shaft – so-called *pozzetto*. In these *pozzo* or *pozzetto* an urn and grave goods were located. The structure of children's cremation graves was similar to the structure of graves of other individuals. The detailed excavation of the Villa Bruschi Falgari burial place is currently published only partially (Trucco, 2002; 2006a; 2006b; Trucco, Vargiu and Mancinelli, 2002; Mancinelli, Trucco and Vargiu 2011). The partial results refer to a certain particularity in the burial rite of cremated children. While the majority of the bowls covering the urns were placed bottom up, several bowls were covering the urns with their base fitting into the mouth. This position correlates mostly with the age-categories *infans I*, *infans II* and *iuvenis* (Trucco, Vargiu and Mancinelli, 2002, p. 724; Mancinelli, Trucco and Vargiu, 2011, pp. 4–5). Moreover, remains of a girl aged 4–8 years from Grave 64 were located directly in a bowl like these (De Angelis, 2001, pp. 89–91). The interpretation of this custom is rather problematic (Mancinelli, Trucco and Vargiu, 2011, pp. 4–5). Speaking of the age of the buried persons the authors of the excavation reports stated that bowls covering the urns in children's graves were smaller than bowls in adults' graves (Trucco, Vargiu and Mancinelli, 2002, p. 724). Furthermore in Grotta Gramiccia cemetery sporadic finds of smaller urns occurring in children's graves were documented (Berardinetti and Drago, 1997, p. 40).

On the Sorbo cemetery the detailed analysis of the contexts and bowl position in relation to the urns enabled us to identify 6 children's graves with the bowls placed with the base fitting into the mouth of the urn (see Vighi, 1955; Pohl, 1972).[16] On the contrary the published information on Quattro Fontanili cemetery (Veio NSc 1963, 1965, 1967, 1970, 1972, 1975, 1976) as well as on cemeteries published by H. Hencken (1968) did not specify the exact position of bowls covering the urns. Only limited information is available with regard to the cremation burial rite of children on Quattro Fontanili cemetery since only a small sample of cremated remains found in 5 graves was anthropologically analysed (Passarello,

[16] Graves 83 (Vighi, 1955, pp. 57–58; Pohl, 1972, pp. 20–22), 97 (Vighi, 1955, pp. 63–64; Pohl, 1972, p. 24), 127 (Vighi, 1955, pp. 69–70; Pohl, 1972, p. 134), 163 (Vighi, 1955, pp. 75–76; Pohl, 1972, pp. 34–35), 197 (Vighi, 1955, pp. 79–80; Pohl, 1972, pp. 45–47), 281 (Vighi 1955, pp. 101–102; Pohl, 1972, pp. 74–76).

1963, p. 277). In these analysed graves children were buried together with other two or three individuals of various ages. A similar habit can be assumed also for the cemeteries in Tarquinia.

In comparison with the Southern Etruria the situation in neighbouring *Latium Vetus* seems to be slightly different. The excavations of local burial grounds, e.g. the cemetery in Osteria dell´Osa, also provided infant burials. Four out of eight age-groups published by M. Bietti Sestieri (1992, p. 99) were children's (0–1 y, 1–5 y, 5–10 y, and 10–15 y). Yet a remarkable shortage of children's graves still contradicts the expected child mortality. Children in this burial place were exclusively inhumed and buried in small pits (*fosse*). These graves were either dispersed among the adult graves or were associated with grave groups and located in their periphery. Children's remains were sporadically placed in a larger vessel – *dolio* (so-called *enchytrismos*) placed in the grave. Burials in a *dolio* were exclusively of male children with sumptuous grave goods who, according to M. Bietti Sestieri (1992, pp. 109–110) may have been the first-born sons. Regarding the composition of the grave goods serpentine fibulas in boy's graves were totally absent in the first age-group (0–1 y) and they were present only in three graves of the second age-group (1–5 y). On the other hand bow fibulas occurred in as much as 80% of girls graves, sometimes also with bow fibulas with amber discs, and faience and glass beads. A common spindle-whorl was found in 9% of girls graves and a so-called *weaver set*[17] was found in 21.2% of girls graves. Generally children's graves in this cemetery were characterised by a smaller number of pottery vessels and by their smaller dimensions than in graves of older individuals. From the first age-group onwards an increased number of grave goods can be observed (Bietti Sestieri 1992, pp. 110, 120, 130).

A shortage of children's graves in cemeteries was compensated neither by rather numerous burials and depositions in settlements. In the settlements children's burials were in clear majority even though sporadic findings of remains of adult individuals are known (Modica, 1993, p. 7; Bartoloni, 2006, p. 19; Vanzetti, 2007–2008, p. 760). Child remains in settlements were found in graves (as regular burials) but also in the form of depositions which are interpreted as sacrifices (building sacrifices etc.; see e.g. Modica, 2007).

[17] A *weaver set* was composed of a biconical spindle-whorl, a biconical jar, and personal jewellery (Bietti Sestieri, 1992, p. 130).

In the later phases of the Etruscan culture, a case from Tarquinia can be mentioned here for a comparison. The burials in Cazzanelo near Tarquinia from the 7th and 6th centuries BC refer to a selective approach to burying children (Becker 2005, 255–265). Twelve children were found there, namely eleven perinatal individuals and a child aged 2–3 years which were placed in pottery vessels. Moreover, the results of the anthropological analyses of the human remains from various chamber tombs in Tarquinia dated to the era from the Archaic to the Hellenistic Period suggest the burying of children as old as 5,5 years of age (Becker, 2007, p. 286; 2012, pp. 69, 74). According to Becker (2007; 2012) it could signify that in the later periods of the Etruscan culture children were buried in cemeteries from the older age than in Villanovan Period. This finding however, most likely cannot be applied to a wider area, since e.g. in chamber graves in Riserva del Ferrone cemetery (Southern Etruria) young children aged 0–4 years were buried along with adult individuals (for more see Brocato, 2000, pp. 177–178, 356–357, 392–393, 397–499, 501–502).

## GENDER ROLES AND REFLECTION OF AGE IN CHILDREN'S GRAVES

### *The Case Study of Quattro Fontanili*

Different gender roles of buried children are indicated by the artefacts specific for males and females. Especially serpentine fibulas and bow fibulas (also fibulas of *sanguisuga* type and fibulas with amber discs) were quite frequent. Other artefacts associated with females were related to textile production (see Toms, 1998; Brøns, 2012), nevertheless these were very scarce in the children's graves. Weapons and armament as well as razors were the indicators of male individuals in graves. These artefacts, namely arms and razors, however occurred only sporadically in children's graves, while the armament was totally absent.

The serpentine fibulas were present in children's graves from the Phase Veii IIA continuously to the Phase Veii IIC. These fibulas were in the earlier period (Veii IIA) most likely bound to individuals of a certain age (from the age-category *infans II*), as is evidenced by the anthropologically analysed graves as well as by the minimal presence of these fibulas in graves with length up to 1.6 m (Hladíková, in press). It seems that the perception of young children – with respect to the grave goods – changed in the later

periods (Veii IIB – IIC) since the serpentine fibulas started to occur also in the graves of individuals of this age-category. On the other hand the bow fibulas as the most typical article of female clothing were present in children's graves mainly in the Phase Veii IIA and less frequently in later periods. Most likely they were not restricted to individuals from a certain age, even though in the Phase Veii IIA as regards the anthropologically analysed graves they were present only in graves of children of the age-category *infans II*. This assumption is based on the analyses of the grave lengths, since these fibulas were found also in graves with the length up to 1.6 m in which the presence of children of the age-category *infans I* cannot be excluded (Hladíková, in press). In Phase Veii IIB fibulas of *sanguisuga* type were more numerous than bow fibulas and were most likely associated with females, at least in Quattro Fontanili cemetery that is based on the results of the analysis of main components (for more see Hladíková 2013). Fibulas of *sanguisuga* type as well as bow fibulas with amber discs were present in the graves of children from the Phase Veii IIA and were not restricted to individuals of any certain age.

The artefacts related to textile production were found in three graves of children.[18] In correlation with the results of the grave lengths analyses it allows us to suggest that the spindle whorls were associated with individuals of a certain age as far as children are concerned, most likely from the age-category *infans II* (Hladíková, in press). On the other hand "spools" were totally absent. The presence of a distaff in the grave of a child in regard to a sporadic occurrence of this kind of an artefact in wealthy graves in the cemetery indicates the higher social rank of this child (girl). Considering the bracelets, spiral bracelets were associated with females and this association can be observed also in the case of children's graves. Bracelets with overlapping ends were however found in male as well as female graves.

The arms were typical for graves of men and boys. Nevertheless only a limited number of determined graves of boys contained the arms (3 graves). Spears were present in all of these graves, two of which contained the anthropologically determined remains of children of the age-category *infans II.*[19] The third grave is assumed to be of a child on

[18] GG6-7 (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 244–250), M7b (Veio NSc 1972, pp. 278–280), MMNN19 (Veio NSc 1963, p. 261).

[19] Graves GG13-14 (6–7 y) (Veio NSc 1965, pp. 112–115), HH6-7 (5 y, 9–11 y) (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 252–258). Following the grave context, a spear found in the Grave HH6-7 was given to an older child.

the basis of the grave length. The knives were present only in three graves of boys in age-categories *infans I* and *infans II* (3, 8 and from one grave: 10–11, 11–12 years).[20]

Hence, the sporadically occurring arms and tools were present mainly in the graves of older children, namely of the age-category *infans II* (anthropologically determined individuals). Their presence in the children's graves was, among others, associated with a higher social status.

The analysis of the pottery showed no striking relations to any certain age or sex. Generally, only the increase of the number of pottery vessels in relation to the age can be observed. Moreover, the vessels of the type *olla* were lacking in the children's graves, except for one anthropologically determined child grave (MMNN17–18, 7–8 y). Remaining *ollas* were found mainly in the longer graves. Additionally the presence of some pottery artefacts was associated with the higher social rank (Hladíková, in press).

Based on these conclusions we can assume that a certain change in the social status of the children was taking place sometimes within a child's age roughly falling within the age-category *infans II* or later through a certain rite of passage. Therefore all of these artefacts could be considered as a proof of accomplishing the rite of passage. However this hypothesis may be confirmed only by the comprehensive anthropological analyses (for more see Hladíková, in press).

## SOCIAL STATUS OF CHILDREN

The "sumptuous" children's graves first emerged in the second Phase of Early Iron Age, when a more distinct social differentiation was observed. The beginnings of social differentiation however can be traced back to the preceding periods. This phenomenon is well documented by the increased amount of grave goods and their variability, which indicates the emergence of new complex social structures (see e.g. Guidi, 1993, p. 120; Pacciarelli, 2001, p. 261; Bartoloni, 2003, pp. 30–31). The fast growth of wealth as well as the changes in the political organisation and social structure are assumed to be caused, among other factors, by prosperous trade and exchange (Pacciarelli, 2001, p. 283; Gleba, 2008, p. 71). The "wealthy" children's graves were documented above all in Veii-Quattro Fontanili cemetery and in cemeteries in Tarquinia.

[20] Graves II13–14B (Veio NSc 1965, pp. 147–148), GG5-6 (12 y; 10–11 y) (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 241–244).

Based on the amount and character of the grave goods children's graves can be divided into three main categories: wealthy graves, poor graves and graves without any grave goods.

Wealthy children's graves in the Quattro Fontanili cemetery were identified only on the basis of anthropological analysis[21] since the greater lengths of the children's graves with wealthier grave goods do not correlate with expected anthropometric parameters. In the cemeteries in Tarquinia[22] the wealthier grave goods were documented also in assumed children's graves with sarcophagi. Other assumed children's graves from these necropolises cannot be identified due to the absence of the metric data (see Hencken, 1968). The occurrence of artefacts associated with higher social status in children's graves reflected primarily the social status of the child's family. A higher social status was reflected by the type of the artefact (luxurious artefacts, a limited number of certain artefacts at the cemetery) and also through a higher number of grave goods (see Guidi, 1993; Iaia, 1999a; Pacciarelli, 2001; Koch, 2011). In the case of luxurious artefacts in the children's graves the inheritance of status is assumed (Pacciarelli, 2001, p. 283; Seubers, 2008, p. 7). Burials with these artefacts indicate the process of change in the social structure and the formation of the hereditary status phenomenon in the second Period of Early Iron Age (Iaia, 1999a; Pacciareli, 2001). In connection with a possible reflection of status inheritance the main artefacts in question are the following: metal vessels, bridles, axes, distaffs, certain types of fibulas, belt buckles, certain types of pendants, certain types of pottery vessels. However, the question whether a specific age of a child could play a role in the inheritance of status still remains open (Hladíková, in press).

When analysing the social status of children's graves, we encounter children's graves without grave goods in addition to poorer graves. In the case of the Quattro Fontanili cemetery, the analysis of the ratio of graves with no grave goods and individual categories of grave-pit lengths shows considerable prevalence of these graves up to 1.6 m long, in which we assume children (especially *infans I*), indicating their lower social status.

[21] Graves EE7–8B (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 129–134), EE12 (Veio NSc 1965, pp. 96–98), GG6–7 (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 244–250), HH6–7 (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 252–258) and GG5–6 (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 241–244). The presence of more children's graves of this type can be assumed, but cannot be identified without conducting an anthropological analysis.

[22] No "wealthy" children's graves were identified in the cemetery in Cerveteri-Sorbo, most likely because of the rather early dating of this cemetery.

## SETTLEMENT BURIALS

A deficit of children's graves in cemeteries of Villanovan Period was most likely related to some specific circumstances (for more details see Hladíková, 2013) such as the phenomenon of children's burials/depositions in the settlement contexts.[23] In Southern Etruria this phenomenon is known only to a limited extent since until recently the research of the cemeteries was much more preferred. Deliberate depositions of children are known and published only from the proto-urban centre in Tarquinia-Pian di Civita. Human activities are recorded in the area of the so-called *Area Sacra* continuously from the middle of the 10th century BC (conventional dating) to the Hellenistic Period. In the middle of this area a natural cavity was located that was surrounded by the so-called monumental complex built over the centuries. It was used for ritual activities as suggested by several votive pits, remains of animals, fire remains and following gradual building of a "monumental complex" (Bonghi Jovino – Chiaramonte-Treré, 1997, p. 158; Leighton, 2004, p. 40; Bonghi Jovino, 2010, pp. 161–180).

In this area five children's skeletons were found, conventionally dated to the 9th–8th centuries BC. Four of them were remains of young children whereas one represented a child aged 7–8 years. Inhumation "burial" of the oldest child, a 7–8 year old boy (Grave 293), was located in the vicinity of the so-called *Area alpha*. It was conventionally dated to the end of the 9th century BC or to the turn between the 9th and 8th centuries BC. Neither grave-pit nor the grave construction was documented. Actually the deceased boy was placed on the original ground surface. He was found in the layer containing Protovillanovan and Villanovan pottery. A bronze pin (?) was lying on his chest and a bronze pendant was located next to his skull (Bonghi Jovino – Chiaramonte-Treré, 1997, p. 41; Bonghi Jovino 2010, p. 163). Based on the anthropological analysis the child was

[23] The question of what was the reason for burying/depositing the children in settlements remains open (in case it really was a burial). The interpretations of the meaning of this custom are still under discussion. They are frequently based on ethnological parallels. The archaeological sources suggest the association of the location of a child burial with the age of the child, and also the existence of a different burial rite for the youngest children/infants (see e.g. Beilke-Voigt 2004; 2007). For studying the remains of children in settlements it is important to analyse the location and position of a child, the state of osteological material, the potential grave goods and the relation to other graves as well as to the contemporary architecture. It is also necessary to differentiate between the regular burial and the "non-formal burial" of a child in the settlement context with a possible different meaning (a building sacrifice, other kind of sacrifice, e.g. for propitiation of deities etc. see Beilke-Voigt, 2007).

an albino with encephalopathy and most likely also with epilepsy. The epilepsy could have been the result of aneurysm that was caused by pathological changes identified on the skull (Fornaciari, 1986, pp. 63–70; Fornaciari and Mallegni, 1987, pp. 95–98). The interpretation by M. Bonghi Jovino (2010, p. 165) suggested that: "*...the child's epilepsy was understood by the community as a prodigium given the strong connection between the ancient cult expressions and the sociopolitical aspects of the settlement, and was symbolically connected to the legend of Tages*". A similar interpretation of the finding, regarded to be a certain "prophecy", was presented also by N. de Grummond (2006, p. 28).

Directly within the so called *Area alpha* three foetuses/newborns were discovered, conventionally dated to the end of the 8th century BC. As it seems neither of them was buried in a grave-pit as well, since no traces of grave construction were found (Fornaciari and Mallegni, 1987, p. 95; Chiaramonte-Treré, 1993, p. 244; Bonghi Jovino, 2010, p. 166). The fourth infant was found under the northern wall of the building of the so-called *Edificio beta* (Bonghi Jovino and Chiaramonte-Treré, 1997, p. 159; Bonghi Jovino, 2010, p. 166). Moreover, burial of another 8-year old child, even decapitated, was discovered under the perimeter wall of *Area sacra*. The authors of the excavation report C. Chiaramonte-Treré and M. Bonghi Jovino interpreted these findings of children's skeletons as the „*consacrazioni propiziatorie*", i.e. as the propitiatory sacrifices for deity, or as violent sacrifices – *sacrifici cruenti* (Chiaramonte-Treré, 1987, p. 83; Bonghi Jovino, 2010, p. 166).[24]

Deliberate depositions of children from the site Pian di Civita were most likely associated with ritual activities taking place in this area. The presence of the remains of the newborns and the "epileptic" child could suggest a different perception of these children by the society. In the case of a child with epilepsy the symptoms of its disease/disability and at the same time its albinism might have been the reasons for its "otherness" or marginalisation. Infants that were sacrificed, most likely for the propitiation of deities, were seen – like other infants or very young children in general – as considerably different from the other members of the community. This was implied by their unbalanced body proportions as well as by their need for care – as is suggested by some ancient writ-

[24] The excavations in the Area sacra provided also few other human burials without any traces of grave-pits and without any grave goods. The burial of a man interpreted as an "Euboean sailor" was contemporary to the above mentioned children's burials (Bonghi-Jovino, 2001, pp. 24–26).

ten sources.[25] This "otherness" was probably one of the reasons for them not to be fully accepted as the members of the society and also for their "special" treatment. This "otherness" might have been related also to older individuals such as to "Euboean sailor", the man who was perhaps killed as a captive foreigner (Bonghi Jovino, 2010, p. 166). The buried infants were most likely considered as building sacrifices – as suggested by the findings from Latium as well as from other regions.

On the other hand this phenomenon is better known in the area of *Latium Vetus*, although primarily from later centuries. The issue of children's depositions in settlements in this area was studied by several authors. Even though burials/depositions of adult individuals are recorded, a dominant proportion of depositions were those of children (for more see Marella Vianello, 1950; Jarva, 1981; Modica, 1993; 2007; De Santis, 2001; Bartoloni, 2006; Vanzetti, 2007–2008; Cifani, 2009).

## THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

High mortality and morbidity of children were probably the main reasons for equipping them with amulets and other protective artefacts. Thus beside obvious decorative function of these objects, pendants and bead necklaces also had an apotropaic function (see e.g. Perego, 2010, p. 75; Nizzo, 2011, p. 52, footnote 2). In the graves from the Villanovan Period there are many examples of the findings of pendants and beads with a possible apotropaic function. These artefacts were discovered mainly in children's and women's graves, although sporadically also in men's graves what underlines their apotropaic function on behalf of the weaker members of the society.

These amulets included the so-called *bullae* (Fig. 6.1).[26] Yet based on the anthropological analyses and their presence in graves with the larger dimensions of the grave-pits, their use cannot be connected exclusively with

[25] See Dasen, 2008; Muggia, 2004.

[26] *Bullae* are known also from the Roman written sources. In Rome, the *bullae* were worn by children from their birth until the time of wearing a toga (Rawson 2003, pp. 110–111). In Quattro Fontanili, only 4 *bullae* were found in three graves, and only one of them can be ascribed to a child burial. This burial was of a girl aged 8–9 years (Grave MMNN19, inf. II, 8–9 y - Veio NSc 1963, p. 261). Another specimen was found in the grave of a 25-year-old woman (Grave KK10–11 - Veio NSc 1965, pp. 210–225). In Tarquinia, two specimens were found in supposed child graves (Cassa with a child's burial, *Cassetta* with a knobbed jar: Hencken 1968, pp. 260–262). A *bulla* was also found in the pit with the remains of approximately 8 year-old child (boy) with epilepsy, located in the settlement area of Pian di Civita (Tarquinia).

children. Later Etruscan depictions ("sculptures" and other types of art) show that the *bullae* were worn by infants and young children (swaddled babies – votives, young children) as well as adults and animals (Tarquinia – Ara della Regina – terracotta horses). In the children's graves also other types of pendants were present, perhaps also with a possible apotropaic function, e.g. the flat circular pendants[27] which were found also in women's burials (Fig. 6.2–4). The circular form and various decorations of these pendants could have also had a symbolic meaning (Zifferero, 2004, pp. 330–331). Their reminiscences can also be found in later Etruscan art, although in the form of more elaborate types (on depictions of females).

In addition a few artefacts of Egyptian provenance which functioned as amulets[28] were found in children's graves from Quattro Fontanili.[29] They were in the form of Egyptian deities and scarabs. The pendants in the shape of Egyptian deities were found mostly in women's burials and sporadically also in the burials of children's (Fig. 6.5). On the other hand, the scarabs were found not only in the graves of women and children but also in the graves of men.[30] The Egyptian symbolism of these pendants has been probably also known by the inhabitants of the Southern Etruria in the Villanovan Period because of their presence in graves of children and women who both where threatened by death, associated with pregnancy and childbirth and children particularly by a premature death. The scarabs may have also functioned as an amulet serving for the protection of the soul since in ancient Egypt they symbolized regeneration or rebirth (for more see Hölbl, 1979; Schweizer, 2006).

Furthermore the glass and amber beads could have also had a protective function against the evil eye. Both of them were found in the graves of "poor" as well as "wealthy" children and women. Among the glass

[27] Graves EE7-8B (inf. I – 3–4 y) (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 129–134), and GG6-7 (inf. I – 3 y) (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 244–250).

[28] The amulets of Egyptian provenance were found not only in Quattro Fontanili cemetery, but also at other sites (Vaccareccia, Grotta Gramiccia, Tarquinia - Palm 1952; Hölbl 1979; Schweizer 2006; Hencken 1968).

[29] Graves EE7-8B (Veio NSc 1967, pp. 129–134), EE3-4 (Veio NSc 1970, p. 231), JJ18-19B (Veio NSc 1963, pp. 222–223), and KK15 (Veio NSc 1963, pp. 229–230). In two children's graves EE7–8B and EE3–4, small pendants of deities Mut and cat (Bastet/Bes?) were found (the latter was identified by the authors of the excavation report as a rabbit). Moreover, pendants of Sekhmet and Ptah-Paitakos made of Egyptian blue faience occurred in the other graves. These Egyptian deities were mostly associated with fertility and protection of children and mothers during and after giving birth, e.g. Patakoi had to be worn on the breast and had a function of the helpers with the birth (Causey, 2011, p. 135).

[30] Graves JJ18–19B (Veio NSc 1963, pp. 222–223), and KK15 (Veio NSc 1963, pp. 229–230).

beads, the eye beads were the most frequent. These beads most likely served not only for decorative purposes but also as amulets against the evil eye. The amber beads and pendants were less frequent, but still they were characteristic for children's and women's burials. The presence of a single amber bead or more beads being parts of a necklace could have symbolized the permanent tears in mourning ritual (Causey, 2011, p. 141).

Other artefacts with a possible apotropaic function which were found not only in children's graves, especially in the Quattro Fontanili necropolis, were flints.[31] The flints were (traditionally) dated to the Palaeolithic and Aeneolithic period. How can these finds be interpreted? The flints were most likely used as the amulets for the deceased. In many ancient cultures (for the area of Veneto see Perego, 2010) as well as in the historical period (Early Middle Ages – Plávka, 2005) a similar use of antique artefacts was documented – as protective amulets. The symbolic protection could be indicated also by the sharpness of the flints.

Yet there are no analogical finds of the flints from the other studied cemeteries in Tarquinia and Cerveteri-Sorbo. However, groups of pebbles were found in some graves which could be ascribed to children.[32] The significance of the pebbles placed in the assumed children's graves could be interpreted as amulets, toys, or both.

## DISCUSSION

Childhood is culturally determined; therefore it is not possible to find any general definition. Based on the ancient written sources and ethnological parallels it is clear that the passage between individual phases of childhood involved certain transition rites that could have left various traces in the archaeological record.

The archaeological sources analysed above allow us to assign three basic transition phases in child's life in the Villanovan society which are

[31] Two flints were found in 2 graves with the anthropologically determined children's remains (Graves II18–19 (1–2 y): Veio NSc, 1963, pp. 205–208; DD8–9 – 2–3 y, *maturus*, *adultus*: Veio NSc 1967, p. 117). The children from these graves were actually the two youngest individuals in the necropolis. Since the Grave DD8-9 contained the remains of adult individuals as well, we can only assume that the flint was given to the child.

[32] In the inhumation Grave 319 and in the cremation Grave 83 probably with remains of a child from Sorbo (Cerveteri) a small groups of pebbles (from 4 to 7 pieces) was found (Pohl, 1972, pp. 20–22, 175–176; Vighi, 1955, pp. 57–58, 177–178). The same situation can also be observed in a grave from Tarquinia (Impiccato, Grave no. 73, inhumation? - Hencken, 1968, p. 329).

reflected by this evidence. These phases were largely dependent on social norms considering a child as a full member of the society from a certain age. The rites of passage were linked with a daily life and already in the ancient written sources there are records on different reflections of these rites related to a child's age.

***Child's Perception and Phases of Transition***

We could assume that the ***first phase*** of the child's status change seems to take place around the second or third year of a child's life.[33] The absence of graves of children up to this age in Veii-Quattro Fontanili cemetery and near absence of graves of small dimensions in other cemeteries such as Sorbo in Cerveteri and Tarquinia, could indicate that children were accepted as full members of the society as late as a certain age namely as late as approximately 2 years of age. For now only a few "burials" of infants were detected in the sacred area of Pian di Civita. The presence of the youngest children only in the sacred area/settlement area indicates their different perception by the society. It could refer to their otherness or their lower significance. Their otherness was most likely underlined by the presence of the later deposition of the 8-year-old child with supposed diagnosis of epilepsy. This sickness was the reason for which the child was treated in a different way than the other children of its age who were buried in regular cemeteries. The youngest children as well as the sick children were probably perceived as oddities, as can be read in the ancient sources.

Furthermore burying the youngest children along with adults is suggested by cremation graves (2 graves of adults with a newborn), however in a limited number (see Villa Bruschi Falgari). There is also evidence for burying two children in a grave without the presence of older individuals (Grotta Gramiccia – 1 example). It seems that several ritual practices could have existed in case of burying the youngest children. At the same time these burial rites could have varied locally.

***The second phase*** was reflected in the emergence of single children's graves in the Quattro Fontanili cemetery and probably also in cemeteries in Tarquinia and Cerveteri. Therefore it seems likely that children from the age of approximately 3 years were probably accepted as the members of the society, even though not to a full extent, and therefore they have

[33] Unfortunately there is not enough evidence from children's cremation graves to make definitive conclusions.

deserved a burial in a common cemetery. Regarding the psychomotor development of children, a child of this age becomes considerably independent (with a considerable speech and thinking development) which might have been one of the reasons for the change of children's perception in the society. From this age onwards also children were subject to the social diversification, since the occurrence of "poor" contra "wealthy" children's graves reflects a supposed belonging to certain social classes. Moreover, regarding the "wealthy" child graves the inheritance of social status can be assumed, and this phenomenon became evident in the second phase of the perception of children.

The supposed ***third phase*** was most likely associated with the transition age (reaching the „social maturity") or with some kind of rite of passage to „adulthood". According to the results of the material analysis we suppose that the transition age was probably taking place sometime within the age category *infans II* or older. This transition linked to the third phase is well documented at least in Quattro Fontanili cemetery where certain categories of artefacts (spindle-whorls, knives, razors) in the graves of children of the age-category *infans II* were recorded as well as in longer graves of anthropologically undetermined individuals in which the presence of older individuals is assumed. The achievement of the so-called "social maturity" may have been related, for example, to the period of the completion of a preparation for a certain gender-specific activity (teaching and learning the gender roles), or to the achievement of a required age from which this activity could have been performed, and also to the social status, or other factors (Hladíková, in press).

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JAN TUREK

# Children in the burial rites of complex societies. Reading gender identities

## INVISIBLE CHILDREN

Children seem to be highly invisible in the prehistoric material culture, despite the fact that they represented over 50% of living prehistoric communities (Neustupný, 1983). Archaeology was traditionally concerned with the reconstruction of society and the social relations of adults who possess political and social control over the production of material culture and social ideologies. Therefore the life and activities of children seemed to be unimportant to the functioning of adult society. It is mainly due to their exclusion from the social power and ideology. The funerary assemblages were composed in order to represent certain ideological values and cultural norms. Artefacts with high degree of social symbolic significance were representing the social status of buried individuals. In case of children we can simply see replication of values and symbols represented within graves of adults. The demonstration of ideology and social categories using artefacts like stone weapons certainly did not reflect the reality of young children's life (Fig. 1). In this paper I am going to focus on the social role of children in prehistoric complex societies and discuss the perception of their gender identities.

Besides the primary need of children for natural reproduction and demographic continuity there is also social and economic significance of children. It is the direct economic effect of using children as working power. The economic significance of children was indirectly realized in the maintenance of marital links, bride wealth and territorial expansion,

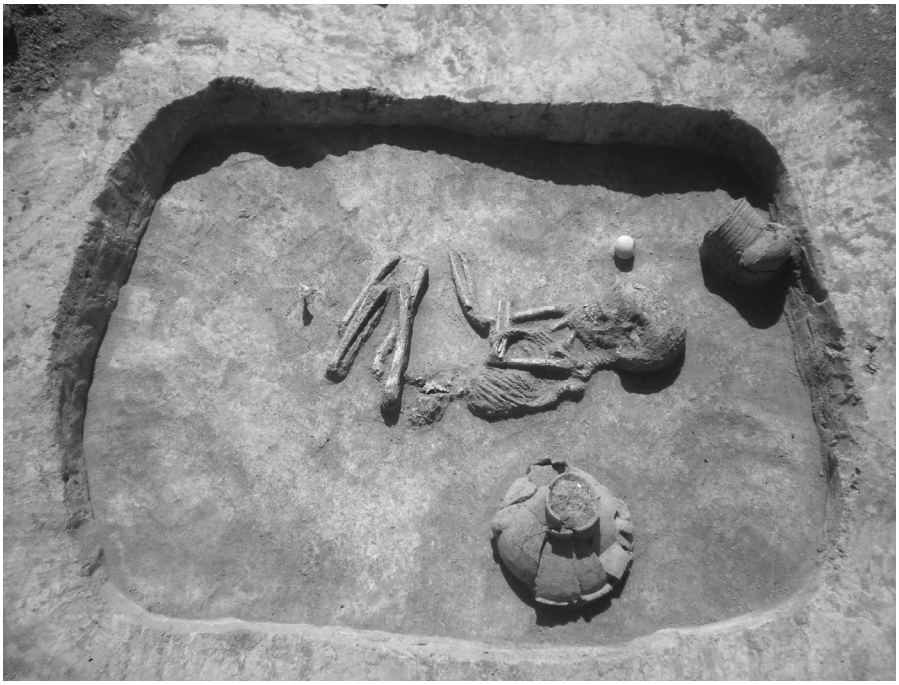

Fig. 1. Líbeznice (Central Bohemia) – Corded Ware 7-year-old child burial in male position, with a siltstone mace head (photo by J. Turek).

as well as, in the continuity of care for the elderly members of community. The need of children is sometimes reflected in adoptions and finding protégés. Children were, however, treated in much different manners than it is in the modern Western society.

## CHILDREN IN EARLY COMPLEX SOCIETES OF CENTRAL EUROPE

In the following paragraphs I am going to summarize how people in the 3rd Millenium BC Central Europe treated their dead children, which is a phenomenon repeatedly analysed in different regions (Häusler, 1966; Siemen, 1989; 1992, p. 231; Wiermann, 1998; Turek, 2000; 2011a; 2011b; Kern and Lobisser, 2010). The Corded Ware and Bell Beaker cemeteries in Central Europe comprise mainly single inhumation burials in a crouched position. Multiple burials are rare. Corded Ware female burials were usually placed on their left side, head orientated to the east. Male individuals were typically buried with their head orientated to the west

and with the crouched body turned to the right side. As a result of this practice all burials of both sexes face to the south. During the subsequent Bell Beaker period the burial rites are similar but with certain changes within the same symbolic system. Men are buried on the left side, head to north while women are buried on the right side head to south. Again all buried individuals are facing east. This may have a certain symbolic significance relating also to the location of some cemeteries within the landscape (Turek, 1996) and represent some ritual commitment to the direction of sunrise and solar cult (Turek, 2005). Possible evidence for such a solar cult might also be seen in the Corded Ware shell disc amulets with the motif of double crosses or concentric circles, which may be interpreted as symbols of the solar wheel. The same motif also appears on some of the V-perforated buttons and on the bases of some beakers and cups of the subsequent Bell Beaker period.

Male and female burials appear to be accompanied by different gendered artefacts. Corded Ware female burials were assembled with necklaces and other accessories made of perforated animal teeth. Necklaces were also made from small perforated circular discs of fresh water shell. Another artefact appearing in female graves are the shell "solar disc" symbols. The funerary assemblage of female pottery in both periods consists of ovoid pots and in the Bell Beaker period also tall ovoid jugs. Male burial assemblages may well reflect the social power symbolically represented by weapons such as battle-axes, mace heads or axes, these were in the symbolism of Bell Beaker funerary practices replaced with copper daggers and archery equipment (Turek and Černý, 2001; Turek, 2002).

The Third Millenium BC funerary practices seem to be more likely a symbolic reflection of the division of labour within the family and a reflection of the different social status of men, women and children. The individuality expressed within the context of a single burial is indicative of an individual's association with a particular social category rather than a celebration of someone's special skills or status achieved during their lifetime. The composition of the Corded Ware funerary assemblages seems to be quite uniform, and also the number of items within the assemblage only rarely exceeds a certain amount (average number of artefacts in graves of adult males is 3.7, in the graves of adult females it is 3.4 and in children's graves 2.7).

The symbolic expression of gender categories in burial rites probably reflects their different social roles within society. The evidence for

the Corded Ware and Bell Beaker burial rite may also be considered as a reflection of social diversification between members of the society, including children (Turek, 2000).

## GENDER CONTEXT OF CHILD BURIALS

Corded Ware and Bell Beakers represent widely distributed phenomena of cultural uniformity connecting vast areas of Europe with different cultural traditions. Besides some universal elements of material culture, such as the 'Beaker package' there was the ideology shared by regions with different traditions. Burial rites were amongst those symbolic elements unifying distant and different regions (Turek, 2012).

Part of the European Beaker unity was perhaps also the shared ideological social structure. Within the Corded Ware and Bell Beaker communities we can clearly see the emphasis on symbolic expression of social and gender categories. The male – female, warfare – peace and wild – domestic dialectics seems to be the main axis of "Beaker social order". It seems that the importance of gender identities was so highly emphasized due to the reinforcement of the system of social differentiation, possession of crucial means of production, power and wealth (Turek, 2011b). We have to bear in mind that the social superiority of men (Neustupný, 1967) was also shared by some women, but mainly using the male symbols of power (archery equipment, copper daggers). As we can further observe, the switching of gender might have been common part of the gender identities strategy targeting not only practical needs of subsistence but also a range of symbolic and social reasons such as lineage and succession (Turek, 2005; Turek, 2011b). The gender symbolism adopted by the opposite sex is mostly visible in the funerary record. Furthermore, I am going to observe how the switching and changing/sharing of gender roles is reflected in the Bell Beaker funerary rituals.

The mixed gender assemblages seem to be characteristic of the rich Bell Beaker female burials with decorated beakers and burial chambers surrounded by a circular ditch. I presume that the relationship between decorated beakers, internal construction of the grave and package of prestigious goods is more likely to be a reflection of a social distinction than a chronological difference. In addition, the blending of male and female gendered assemblages in the rich graves (sometimes accompanied by gold objects) seems to reflect this social differentiation. We should

bear in mind that not every item in the burial assemblage must indicate the social status of the deceased. Instead, such gendered artefacts could be a symbolic demonstration of the relations between the deceased and other members of the community. In this context, it is important to note that one of the wristguards in grave 77/99 at Tišice (Turek, 2002, here Fig. 2) was detached from the body, being located near the western wall of the burial chamber behind the body (such as the second wristguard

Fig. 2. Bell Beaker "Amazon" burial from Tišice (Central Bohemia) (photo by J. Turek).

in the contemporary Amesbury archer's grave, see Fitzpatrick, 2011) and the other one laid on the left forearm upside down. Such placement could reflect the actions of other community members during the funerary ritual intended to emphasise the social status of the deceased and to reinforce communal identity. Under these circumstances, the male gendered artefacts might have been delegated to women (rarely the other way around) to reinforce social norms, social relations and rules of social differentiation. As such, the female burials with archery equipment may represent members of a social elite, possibly female warriors – the "Bell Beaker Amazons" (Fig. 3).

However, the order of gender identities was perhaps even more complex. The DNA analysis of 53 child burials from the largest Bell Beaker cemetery in Moravia – Hoštice-I produced some amazing data (Vaňharová, 2011, pp. 104–120, 195–196). The cemetery comprises 155 graves which are exceptionally large in the context of Moravia and Bohemia (Matějíčková and Dvořák, 2012) and can be compared only to even larger Bell Beaker-Csepel Group cemeteries of Budakalász and Szigetszentmiklós in the area of present day Budapest (Turek, 2006). Finally there were 21 successfully DNA sexed individuals. Out of 14 burials with male gender attributes were 12 biologically male individuals and two deter-

Fig. 3. Reconstruction of the Beaker "Amazon" burial from Tišice (photo by P. Berounský, Archaeologica).

mined as biological women (Vaňharová, 2011, p. 116, Tab. 17). This may be perhaps evidence of two girls that were supposed to be brought up as boys (see graph Fig. 4). This is an already known structure in the 3rd Millennium BC burial customs (Turek, 2011b), but the DNA analysis results for the female gender are very surprising. Out of seven children buried in the female position (see graph Fig. 5) only 1 was actually biological female (however, juvenile – aged 15–20) and 6 were in fact male (two of which were also juvenile aged 15–19/20 years). So, this means that four boys (aged 3–4, 7, 8–12 and 15) were in fact buried as women. It is

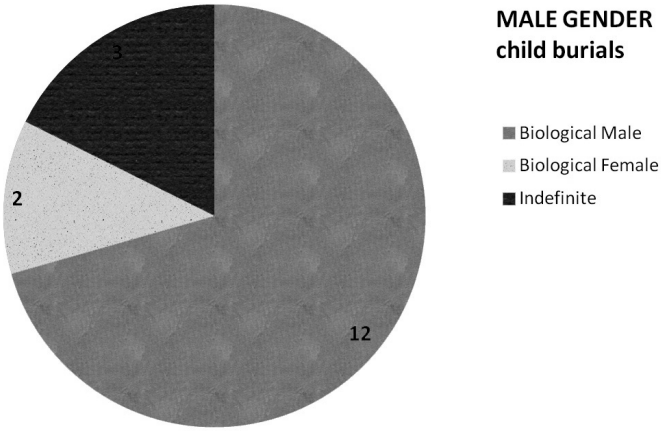


Fig. 4. Bell Beaker cemetery at Hoštice I (Central Moravia). Comparison of child burials with DNA sex analysis and their gender interpretation – burials in male gendered position after Vaňharová 2011 (drawing J. Turek).

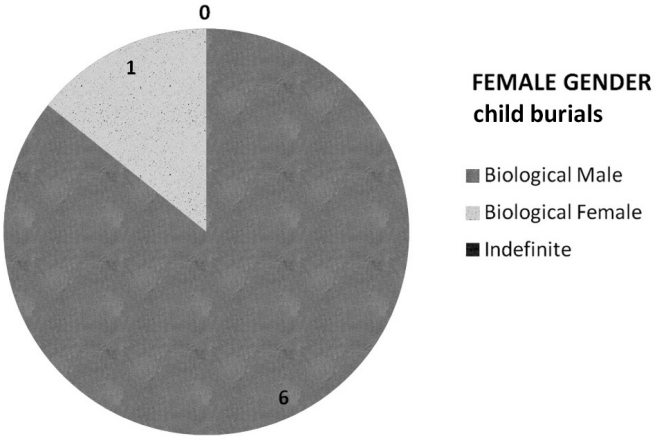


Fig. 5. Bell Beaker cemetery at Hoštice I (Central Moravia). Comparison of child burials with DNA sex analysis and their gender interpretation – burials in female gendered position data after Vaňharová 2011 (drawing J. Turek).

important to observe, that there are not only gender clues in the positioning and orientation of bodies in those graves, but also the presence of gendered artefacts, such as V-perforated bone buttons (at least one exemplar) together with burials in the female gender position). This result, although surprising, is perhaps in line with some earlier observations on the demographic unbalance caused by missing female burials in the Bohemian and Central German Bell Beaker group (Turek, 2002). This would mean that most of the young girls were not buried at the communal cemetery (at Hoštice – I there is not a single DNA sexed case of sub-juvenile female) and that a considerable number of boys (one third of the total amount of successfully DNA sexed individuals) were buried in a female fashion. This is a rather high number of cases when the masculine attributes were downplayed in the burial customs and it is currently hard to distinguish whether these individuals were supposed to be brought up as women or they had yet no right to act as men, unlike some other male sub-adult boys, perhaps members of families with ascribed hereditary warrior status. It almost seems as if some young boys were socially considered to be girls, perhaps until the ceremonial rite of passage, social initiation of some kind.

Such observation should not be that surprising if we think of the position of very young boys in some traditional societies. Before the rite of passage ritual boys of certain age were treated as genderless child individuals or as girls. It is interesting to look at some early 20$^{th}$ century family photos where boy toddlers are dressed in girls' dresses which was in fact unisex clothing for children of that age (see Fig. 6 for photo of the future British King Edward VIII as a toddler). Only later on boys started wearing male gendered clothes and were treated by their family accordingly.

## AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF GENDER IDENTITIES IN PREHISTORIC SOCIETY

Most of the archaeological discussions on gender traditionally deal with the concept based on biological sex. This is, however, in many respects a misleading approach. Amongst some native communities in Siberia and North America, there are more than just two gender categories, with most groups recognizing three or four genders such as man, woman-man, woman, man-woman (Lang, 1996, pp. 183–196). The Chukchi in Siberia recognize as many as seven gender categories apart from man and wom-

an. Such categories are not evidence of institutionalized homosexuality. That is, the gender-switch is usually not a result of sexual orientation but rather of occupational preferences and personality traits. Among the Ojibwa, for example, one daughter may be raised as a boy, a practice also common among the Kaska People of Alaska and Inuit or Eskimo in Canada.

Fig. 6. The future British King Edward VIII as a toddler (after Turek 1986).

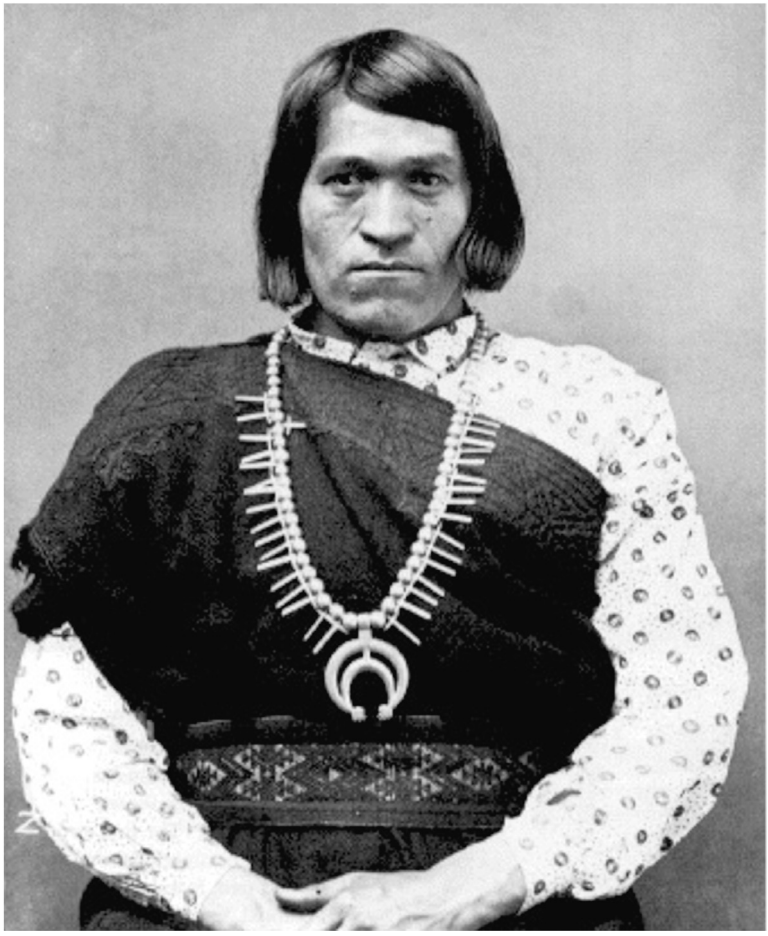

Fig. 7. *Alyha*, the Mohave woman-man (after Turek 2011b).

Such practices usually occur in regions where subsistence activities are centred on hunting, a typically male activity in the normal division of labour. Among the Mohave, the woman-man is called *Alyha* (see. Fig. 7) and the man-woman is referred to as *Hwame*. The men who changed their identity usually dressed as women and changed their hairstyle and tattooing pattern. They also acted as women, adopting their manners and gestures, even adjusting their voices accordingly. Furthermore, they took up women's jobs such as spinning and weaving blankets and raising children in extended families. Some even pretended to have menstrual cycles together with other women. Men-women, on the other hand, deny female physiological functions. They never menstruate, hide their breasts and

may marry a woman or remain single. They also use weapons and take up men's tasks including fighting. In certain cultures, people can even mix the culturally defined roles. The perception of gender in archaeological interpretations commonly reflects our current social reality. In our Christian Western worldview, the traditional gender categories of men and women are based on biology and presume the primacy of reproduction in human societies. Alternative social roles were judged as deviations by the biased majority. The extremely difficult position of homosexuals in twentieth century Western society was caused mainly by the lack of an appropriate and commonly recognised gender category. Not surprisingly, the concept of transsexualism developed in cultures that only recognized and valued two gender categories based on biological sex while the tribes in North America and Siberia had gender categories ready for such cases. In Western society, Christian norms instigated a social neglect of homosexuals mainly due to the absence of appropriate gender categories. As archaeologists, we should modify our approach to the interpretation of past societies because our gender categories do not always correspond to those of a former reality.

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MARTA CHMIEL

# Children in the Wielbark culture societies

## INTRODUCTION

Modern social archaeology emphasizes understanding how social phenomena can be manifested in the material culture (Błaszczyk, 2010, p. 7). This position implies a different approach to the social categories not only from a biological perspective but mostly from a cultural one. Age and sex, in addition to their biological dimension, have symbolic and ideological meanings different at various stages of the human life. Therefore the rules by which society creates separate cultural categories should be considered (see Czarnecka, 1990; Sofaer Derevenski, 1997; Kamp, 2001; Pawleta, 2005; Błaszczyk, 2010). Society perceives these various categories in their own individual way and defines them differently. Every culture will define what it means to be a child, an adult or an old man and how child or an adult should look like or behave. A similar situation takes place in relation to gender (Baxter, 2000, pp. 78–80; Kamp, 2001, pp. 2–5). Thus, age will have an impact on the formation of differences in the society (Finlay, 2000, p. 407).

We must remember that while studying the past societies there is a significant risk of actualisation, resulting in automatic transmission of the modern patterns to prehistoric communities. Therefore, research on the archaeology of childhood can be a serious problem and in that regard it is necessary to go beyond the modern understanding of age and gender categories (Lillehammer, 2000; Baxter, 2005; Pawleta, 2009). At this point I have to agree with Kamp (2001) that childhood – like other periods of human life – is not a universal experience, because many fac-

tors may determine its perception – from the social system within which one functions, through the economic aspects of a particular society, and lastly its religious sphere. Childhood is also not a uniform period. It is divided into stages during which the child changes physically, mentally and socially. In the course of these stages the changes occur not only with regard to involvement in relationships with adults but also in the relationship between the children themselves (Fahlander, 2011, p. 20). A significant problem is the relationship between the natural concepts of biological facts and social constructs. The concept of a child is defined in opposition to the parent. In terms of time, the child will be seen as a young person – immature, as opposed to adult-mature. In order to solve the problem of childhood it is necessary to identify how a particular community defines various age categories and what relationships exist between these categories (Sofaer Derevenski, 1994, p. 9).

## RESEARCH ON SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND CHILDREN IN THE WIELBARK CULTURE

It is obvious to say that in the archaeological research it is often the man who is seen as a central figure in the creation of culture and interactions with the environment. However, the particular nature of archaeological databases as well as a theoretical approach to the archaeological sources (Mamzer, 2004) often makes an impression that the man – the object of our study, disappears under the stack of objects, sorted in typological sequences, which he himself created. That kind of risk occurs especially in the case of the Wielbark culture. There is no doubt that it is one of the most interesting archaeological cultures from the area of Poland (Chmiel, 2011, pp. 13–14). Not without significance is also the possibility of combining the information contained in the archaeological and historical sources (Kolendo, 1998; 2007). Artifacts collected over the years have great cognitive potential which remains largely unexplored since the majority of studies on the Wielbark culture mainly concentrate on aspects of funerary practices (Wołągiewicz, 1986, pp. 299–317; Machajewski, 1996, pp. 49–60). Paradoxically, the reasons for such a situation can be the rich furnishings of burials, which mainly attracted the attention of researchers. The numerous artifacts acquired as a result of archaeological excavations were studied with the application of typological methods while the osteological materials were subjected to anthropological analy-

ses. Such studies have fundamental significance for determining the chronology and origin of particular artifacts as well as the sex and biological age of the deceased individuals. Nevertheless, similar approaches often lead to the marginalization of other issues such as social relations and the roles of children in the past. All this does not mean, however, that in the research on the Wielbark culture the notion of social relations was completely disregarded. This topic was studied extensively in a range of publications that appeared in the 1960s and 1970s. Sadly, their authors almost completely refrained from discussing the roles of children in the Wielbark societies. In this context it is worth mentioning the works of K. Godłowski (1960), A. Kietlińska (1963; 1970) and J. Wielowiejski (1960; 1976; 1986). A turning point in the interpretation of social relations in the Roman Period were the articles published in the conference series *Funeralia Lednickie*, which include a separate volume all devoted to the archaeology of childhood, entitled "Dusza maluczka, a strata ogromna" (Dzieduszycki and Wrzesiński, 2004). The important work of K. Czarnecka (1990) on the social structures in the Przeworsk culture should also be mentioned here. Although Czarnecka's work focused on a different archaeological culture, its observations may also be of value to the studies on Wielbark societies from the same chronological period. Czarnecka analysed the Przeworsk materials in the spirit of social archaeology and offered a very modern interpretation of artifacts with some valuable considerations on life cycles. Another work directly dedicated to the notion of children in the Wielbark culture, was an article by E. Grzelachowska (1991) "Pochówki dziecięce z cmentarzyska kultury wielbarskiej w Odrach". This work, however, lacks a broader overview of the different characteristics of the burials and their equipment as well as a thorough interpretation of their cultural background.

The difficulties posed by the study of children and childhood in prehistoric communities are undeniable. The case of the Wielbark culture is also very special in that regard, because the considerations on children and childhood have to be based predominantly on archaeological data acquired from cemeteries. Hence, the researcher encounters a certain paradox, because through the analysis of mortuary remains an attempt is made to study not the death of these individuals, but actually their lives.

While investigating cemeteries and graves we often encounter traces of various rituals and processes. They are encoded in the form of burial and its furnishings (grave goods etc.) – all of which are difficult to understand and

interpret today (Parker Pearson, 1999, pp. 3–12). Further obstacles in studying children from the Wielbark culture result from its cultural specificity. At the cemeteries of the Middle Pomerania we often encounter traces of earlier use of these sites by the Oksywska culture – a good example is the cemetery in Pruszcz Gdański (Pietrzak, 1997). Consequently, it is often the case that we cannot be sure whether a certain grave belongs to an individual from the Oksywska culture or the Wielbark culture. This is particularly problematic in the case of graves which do not contain any grave goods or other chronological indicators. The lack of tools, weapons and other representative equipment also makes it difficult to interpret the gender or status of the deceased and to recognise the transition from childhood to adulthood (Wołągiewicz, 1986, p. 143; 1995, p. 128).

Difficulties with the interpretation of materials from cemeteries are caused by, among others, a poor recognition of settlements (Michałowski, 2007). A detailed overview of the results acquired from the studies of settlements and cemeteries, focusing on social aspects, may potentially give a more complete picture of social relations. Further problems are also caused by the frequent grave robberies that took place in antiquity and it is often impossible to determine the chronology of robbed burials. In addition, the post-depositional processes which affected the human bones often prevent us from determining the age and sex of the deceased. Moreover, they lead to distortions in our perception of the "typical" equipment for each age and gender category.

It seems, however, that despite the presented obstacles a thorough analysis of funerary evidence may allow to us draw some conclusions about children in the Wielbark culture. Assuming that in prehistoric societies death was not perceived as the ultimate end of human existence, but rather as a moment of transition from this world to the next, we may argue that the past communities would celebrate this moment in a particular way.

It seems that everything that happened at the cemeteries and during the performance of funerals was premeditated and never left to chance. This concerns the very locations of these sites, the spatial distribution of particular graves, but also other more subtle aspects. The cemeteries can be perceived as places created as a result of activities specific for a particular culture and its individuals in close relationship with the cultural meaning of the landscape. Thus the various activities, whose manifestations may be seen at the cemeteries and in association with burials or directly with the deceased, may allow for reconstructing different

aspects of life and the behaviour of living people. Death can be seen as a kind of a challenge which sometimes involves action of the whole community (Pawlik, 2002, pp. 29–37). In this context also the transient nature of death should be remembered. Death did not mark the end of a person's life, but rather moved him to the next stage in which he would certainly have specific roles to play (Woźny, 2004, p. 49). The act of burial itself, its nature, items of equipment and the artifacts found in the grave were certainly not accidental. They were imbued with meanings and may have reflected the status of the deceased as well as eschatological beliefs of a given community responsible for the burial.

## CHILDREN FROM KOWALEWKO

For my analysis of the notion of children in the Wielbark culture I have chosen a cemetery located in the village of Kowalewko (Oborniki district, Greater Poland voivodeship). The site was specifically selected due to very comprehensive and modern methodologies that were employed during its excavation. The cemetery in Kowalewko (site 12) was found as a result of rescue excavations associated with a large pipeline project which began in 1994 and whose aim was to construct a transit pipeline from the Yamal peninsula in Siberia to the Western Europe – its part in the territory of Poland spanned the distance of more than 1300 km.

The cemetery in Kowalewko was a bi-ritual cemetery (with cremation and inhumation graves) and it was in use between the mid- 1st century and the 3rd century AD. The site was located on the southern and western edge of the Kowalewko village and it was well preserved due to favourable soil conditions and the fact that no excavation work was previously carried out (Skorupka, 2001).

## THE FEATURES OF CHILDREN'S BURIALS IN KOWALEWKO

Altogether 496 burials were registered at the cemetery in Kowalewko, among which we can distinguish three basic forms: inhumation, pit cremation and urn cremation. It is also possible that some graves included organic containers in which cremated bones were placed (Skorupka, 2001). The ratios between the different categories of graves are not uniform and the majority of graves are inhumations. From among 496 graves in 316 cases

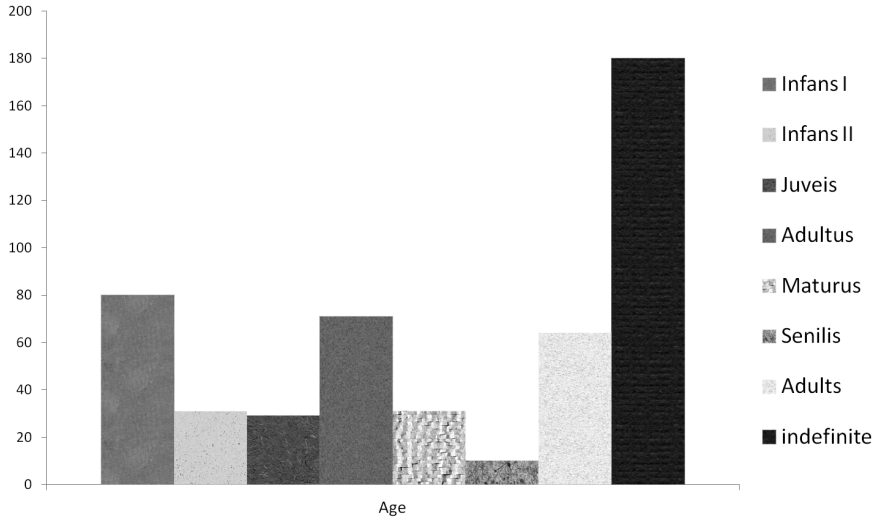


Fig. 1. Individuals with a specific age in Kowalewko (drawing by M. Chmiel).

it was possible to determine the age of the deceased (Fig. 1). Among them, 111 cases are child burials. For the *infans* age-category it was impossible to determine the gender of the deceased. Children are represented by 22.4% of all anthropologically determined specimens. Most of the children's graves belong to the *infans I* category. Practically the site had no burials of children of *perinatal* age although this category should be represented as particularly numerous. It is estimated that at the cemeteries from the Roman period the number of burials of individuals from this age group should constitute about 40–50% of all graves. It seems that this is related to the different treatment of newborn babies (see Czarnecka, 1990, p. 89; Parker Pearson, 1999, p. 103).

Children's graves occurred throughout the entire period of the cemetery's use. Most of them, however, are dated to the B2/C1 phase. They represent all forms of burials that occur in the cemetery (Fig. 2–4), with the vast majority of inhumations. However this is typical for all age categories.

I have conducted only metric analyses of burial pits for inhumations. The determination of features such as the depth of the grave-pits for pit cremations seems meaningless. In the case of inhumation it is possible to observe the changes resulting from age or sex of the deceased (see Błaszczyk, 2010, pp. 106–110). Length, width and depth of the pits for all age categories were summarized and then visualized with histograms.

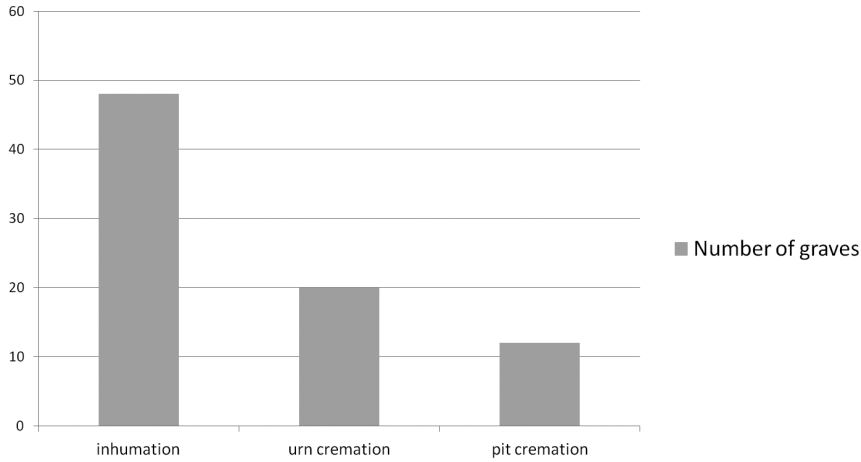


Fig. 2. Variants of *infans I* burials (drawing by M. Chmiel).

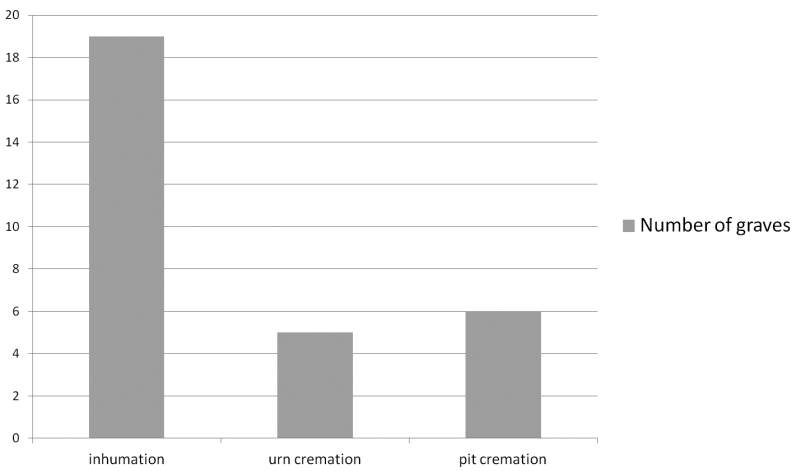


Fig. 3. Variants of *infans II* burials (drawing by M. Chmiel).

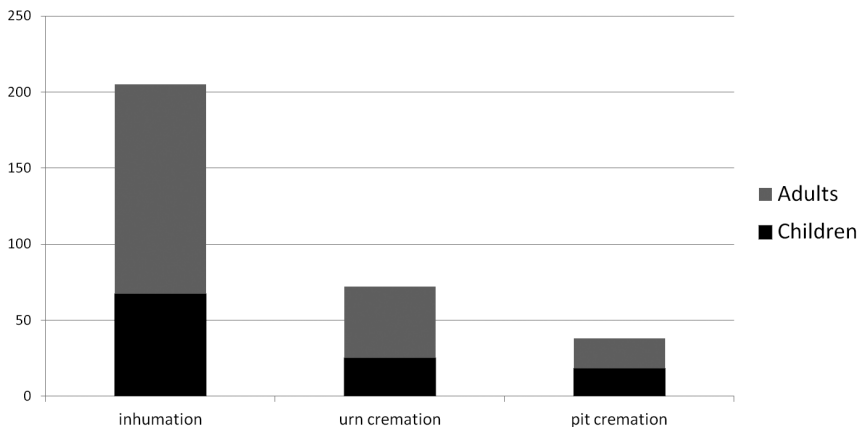


Fig. 4. The relationship between the type of burial and age (drawing by M. Chmiel).

Additionally the average and standard deviations were calculated. This procedure allowed for observing possible relationships between the burials' metric characteristics and the age of the deceased.

A histogram visualizing the distribution of the length (Fig. 5) and width (Fig. 6) of the pits clearly indicates that children's burials were smaller than those of the adults. Probably this was due to the height of the buried person. There is also a difference between the lengths of children's buri-

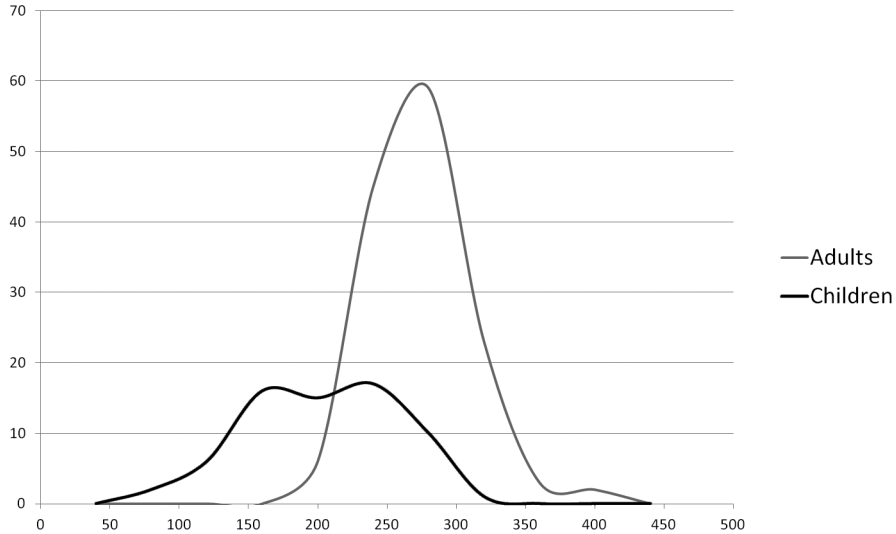


Fig. 5. Histogram of the length of burial (drawing by M. Chmiel).

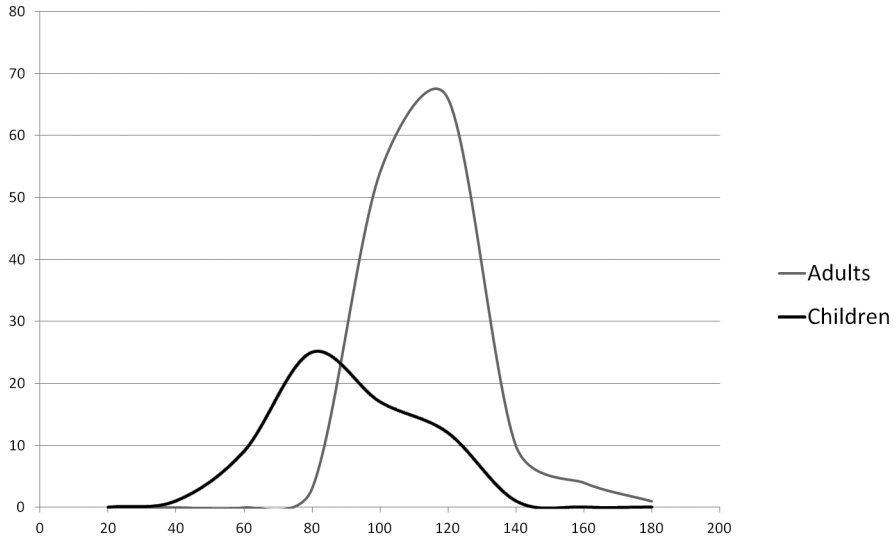


Fig. 6. Histogram for the width of burial (drawing by M. Chmiel).

als. For younger children the average length of the pit was about 169 cm, in the case of older children already about 200 cm. The analysis of the graves from Kowalewko indicates that the previously proposed thesis according to which the length of children's pit cremations did not exceed 160 cm finds no support, at least in the case of this particular cemetery (see Rożnowski, 2005). At this site also very large pits were registered – and these were rather common for adults (see Grzelachowska, 1991, p. 79). Interesting is also the fact that there exist only small differences between *infans I* and *infans II* age categories – in some cases the deceased child was buried in a coffin or a wooden log. The size of pits for children's burials does not appear to be in any way dependent on the amount of equipment placed in their graves.

The depth of burial pits, however, does seem to be in some way dependent on the age of the deceased (Fig. 7). The average depth of an adult burial was about 65 cm and in the case of a child it was about 40 cm. However, there are no differences between *infans I* and *infans II* categories.

In the cemetery in Kowalewko, as in other similar sites, traces of stone and wooden structures the were observed in the graves. Similar structures are known from Scandinavian areas, for example around the Mälaren lake (see Wołągiewicz, 1996, p. 140). In the case of child burials, in three cases there were external stone structures, and in fourteen cases stones were inside the grave-pit. In the first case we can talk about stone stele whose aim was to mark the location of the grave on the surface. Altogether, in Kowalewko 24

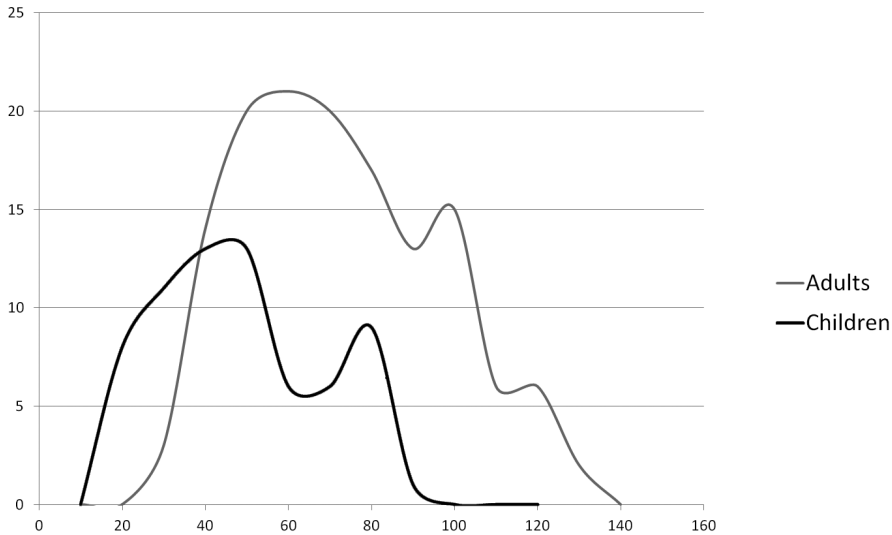


Fig. 7. Histogram for the depth of burial (drawing by M. Chmiel).

cases of stone stele which formed the external structures of the graves were identified (Skorupka, 2001, pp. 222–224). Their relatively small number draws attention and perhaps results from the removal of such stones for various purposes in later times. It is also likely that some graves were also marked with wooden pillars instead of stones. Standing stones were identified as a determinant of the status of the deceased, mainly due to the amount of work that had to be invested in the setting of such a construction. On the other hand they could have also had a kind of protective function, similarly to the stones contained in the grave. Perhaps, by being guarded by the stone or stele the deceased was unable to leave his grave (see Chyżewska-Sułowska, 1971, pp. 127–128)? 'Stone guard' can be also seen as a symbol of durability of the grave (Pawlik, 2002, p. 35). In the children's burials in which stone structures were recorded, rich equipment has also been noted.

In nineteen cases it was possible to identify traces of coffins in the burial-pits. Only in three cases these coffin-burials belonged to children while the others belonged to adults (fourteen) or it was impossible to determine the age of the buried person (two). It is worth noting that one of the children's burials had traces of wood which were interpreted as remains of branches that originally covered the grave-pit. An interesting phenomenon in Kowalewko are traces of fires observed within the pits of inhumation graves. Wood that was used to light the fire was mostly pine and it is interpreted as having the capacity to protect the body of the deceased against corruption and strengthen the soul (Skorupka, 2001, pp. 223–224). The presence of charcoal was noted in only three burials of children: two belonging to the age-category *infans I* and one to the age-category *infans II*.

In the inhumation graves of the Wielbark culture the bodies of the deceased are usually laid supine with arms extended along the sides. Sometimes differences in the positioning of the bodies may be noted and these are interpreted as signs of some social 'otherness' of the deceased (see Parker Pearson, 1999, p. 6). Among the atypical burials from Kowalewko are also four burials of children. In three cases the children from the *infans* age-group were buried with a bent arm, and in one grave a child was buried with its legs flexed. Similar funerary behaviour was also observed, for example at the cemetery in Pruszcz Gdański – where some deviations from the normative funerary practices for the *infans* age-group have been noted (see Pietrzak 1997; p. 119, Taf. XXI).

In the cemetery in Kowalewko several multiple graves were also recorded and some of them contained burials of children. Such multiple

graves are not uncommon for the Wielbark culture and they have been noted in most of its cemeteries, for example in Cecele (Jaskanis, 1996). However, the reasons for burying multiple individuals in one grave are not clear. In most cases, the representatives of the Wielbark culture tend to respect the space occupied by older burials. It does not seem therefore, that the existing graves were deliberately destroyed by subsequent burials. Children's burials occurred in two variants. In the first instance the urn with cremated remains was deposited in the inhumation grave – such graves have been interpreted as family graves. The other variant of multiple graves includes those which were 'composed' by robbers, during the process of exhuming human bones. In one of the child graves dating to the B2/C1 phase an urn with cremated remains from the same period was found (see Skorupka, 2001, pp. 224–225). It is possible that the burial could also be that of a family. In this case, however, it was not possible to determine the sex and age of the deceased.

## THE FURNISHINGS OF CHILDREN'S BURIALS

The equipment of the deceased may significantly help in our attempts at determining social differentiation. The sets and the quality of artifacts which were deposited in the graves may depend on the status which the deceased persons had had during their lives (see Rutka 2005, p. 71). In order to identify any differences in the equipment and to capture the different features of children's burial equipment I will examine the various sets of artifacts occurring in the Kowalewko cemetery (Fig. 8). They can

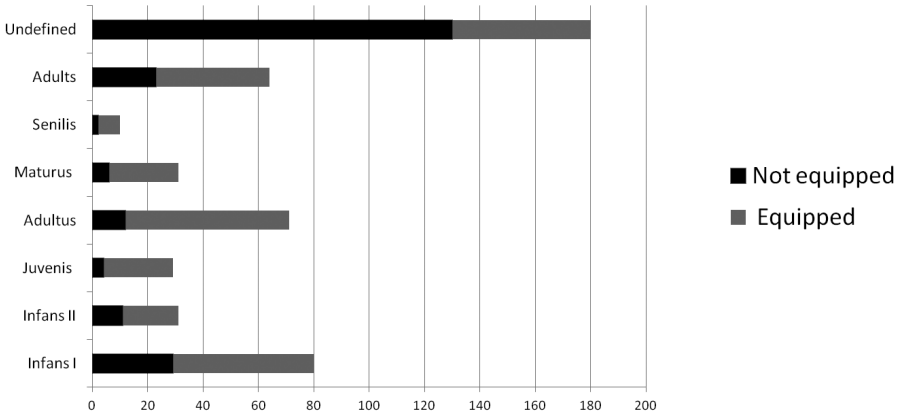


Fig. 8. Proportion between the equipped and not equipped burials (drawing by M. Chmiel).

be divided broadly into two groups: the first group comprises artifacts directly related to the deceased (e.g. clothing) while the other group comprises elements placed in the grave-pit during the funeral, i.e. the grave gifts (Kozak, 2005, p. 63).

The most common element of the furnishings of Wielbark culture burials are fibulae used for fastening clothes. The fibulae occurred in 43 burials of children aged *infans I*, which accounts for over 50% of the total number of burials. In the category *infans II*, fibulae were recorded in 15 burials, which is exactly 50% of the burials in this age category. In 21 cases more than one fibula was found in the graves. Additionally, in the case of age-group *infans I*, in 6 cases the fibulae were made of silver or covered with silver plates. Two burials contained imported enamelled disc-shaped brooches. For the age category *infans II*, more than one fibula was recognized in 5 graves, and in 4 cases in the graves contained silver plated fibulae. The number of fibulae on the one hand probably depends on the design of clothing, but on the other hand it was strongly dependent on gender and chronology. It is believed that a woman's outfit included 2, 3 or more fibulae and male outfit just one. The largest number of fibulae comes from graves dated to phase B2/C1–C1a, which is the period when the clothing was most elaborate (see Mączyńska, 1981, p. 237). Thus, a question arises whether in the case of children's burials furnished with fibulae it is possible to attempt at determining the sex of the deceased? This seems rather risky and problematic, but we cannot exclude the possibility that children's clothing roughly corresponded with that of the adults, and hence the use of the appropriate amount of fibulae. One should also ask about the imported fibulae and whether their presence in the graves indicates a high social status of families whose children were buried there?

Bracelets occurred in only two burials of children (*infans I, infans II*). Bracelets are ornaments that occur predominantly in the graves of adult females, though never from the *senilis* age-group. Also at the other cemeteries of Wielbark culture bracelets are recorded in the children graves. However, as in Kowalewko it is a very rare element of children's grave goods.

A pendant was recognized in only one child burial (*infans II*). It was a part of a necklace, preserved *in situ*. This object was made from a reused belt-end fitting. It is possible that in addition to its primary decorative function the reused belt-fitting also functioned as an amulet. This, however, it is a very debatable matter because of the difficulty in identifying

the type of items that were supposed to protect the deceased or the living against an unspecified danger (see Czarnecka, 1990, p. 67).

Glass beads, amber or metal are also present in the burials of children. They were recognized in 11 cases of burials at the age of *infans I* and in 3 cases belonging to the *infans II* age group. Only in 3 burials of younger children and in 2 burials of older children, necklaces were registered. In the other cases, there were small amounts of beads or just a single bead. It is plausible that in addition to beads, which have been preserved, organic beads were also placed in the graves, but they have not survived to the present day. In the grave of an individual who died at the age of *infans II/juvenis* a very rich necklace was discovered – it consisted of 247 elements, of which in addition to beads of glass, amber and silver there was also one bead made from seed.

The so-called S-shaped buckles were an important and very characteristic feature of the necklaces used by the representatives of the Wielbark culture. Only 3 such buckles were registered, and all came from the burials of children aged *infans I* – 2 of them were bronze and 1 gold. The gold buckle was part of a rich necklace, while in other cases the buckles occurred separately. Single buckles could be parts of necklaces consisting of organic beads. It is also possible that they were a separate element worn as a pendant. The S-shaped buckles usually do not occur in the burials of children at the site in Wielbark (see Pruszcz Gdański, Odry, Cecele).

Belt components were found only in 4 *infans I* burials, and in 2 *infans II* burials. It seems that this category of equipment could be rather typical for the adult burials. This is indicated by archaeological materials from other cemeteries of the Wielbark culture, for example Leśno or Odry (Grzelachowska, 1991; Walenta, 2009). All belt buckles recognized in children's burials had a semi-circular frame. In three cases they occurred in connection with a belt-end fitting, but only in the age category *infans I*. One burial of a child aged *infans II* draws attention, because in addition to a buckle it also contained an elaborate belt fitting. Perhaps, the belt also represented a special status of the deceased? It does not seem, however, that it was related to the issue of obtaining a certain stage of maturity, as indicated by the presence of this type of artifacts in the graves of children aged *infans I*.

In the cemetery in Kowalewko were also ornaments whose presence has not been recorded in children's burials. This category includes mostly

necklaces and rings. It seems that these ornaments were reserved only for those who have reached a certain level of cultural age.

Spindle whorls are also found in graves. In Kowalewko, six artefacts of this kind were discovered in the graves of children (5 *infans I*, 1 *infans II*), which is a small number in comparison to the total known number of spindle whorls from the site (50). Their presence in graves is often connected with the feminine sphere of textile production (Godłowski, 1974, p. 65). It is conceivable that the spindle whorls were given to little girls, as a symbol of their future work. On the other hand, in Kowalewko spindle whorls also occurred in two male burials.

Other artifacts, which occur in graves are pins. In general pins constitute a fairly large category of artifacts. They were also found in the burials of children, 7 of which should be assigned to the age category of *infans I*, and 4 to *infans II*. However, their use may be significantly dependent on their location in the pit (Skorupka, 2001, p. 231). For example, they could fasten the shroud with which the deceased was covered with or serve as a kind of gift, or a part of the costume (see Mączyńska, 1988, p. 206). Among artefacts, which must also be considered in the context of the grave goods are bone combs. They occurred in 48 graves, and 3 of them were found in the burials of children aged *infans I* and 2 in the burials of children aged *infans II*. Another type of artefacts, which was placed alongside the deceased were clay pots. This custom of burying pots is encountered in Kowalewko especially in the case of inhumation graves (Skorupka, 2001, p. 228). In the case of children's graves, 10 pots were registered in association with burials of children whose age was determined as *infans I* and 4 in a burial of a child aged *infans II*.

Pottery was found throughout the whole period of the cemetery's use and in association with each age category and gender. There are no legible differences between the vessels in the burials of adults and children. It seems that the presence or absence of ceramic vessels in the graves should be associated with different variants of funerary rites. The absence of pottery in the graves may signal a discontinuation of practices. This may be due to the social status of the deceased, or the nature of their death (see Czarnecka, 1990, p. 66). We should bear in mind, however, that at least part of the burials may have been deposited in vessels made from organic materials.

The last category interpreted in the context of grave goods is caskets. Remains of caskets were discovered in two graves of children aged

*infans I*. This kind of artefacts is commonly regarded simply as an attribute of particularly rich female burials (see Czarnecka, 1990, p. 63). It is possible that caskets were placed in the graves of girls who for some reason could receive an artefact typically associated with adult women, but on the other hand caskets were also found in two graves of men.

None of the burials of children contained spurs, which are usually treated as a signal of cultural age and social status. Spurs are also a common indicator of adult male burials, probably horsemen or warriors (see Wielowiejski, 1986, p. 412–413).

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of social structures based on the remains of material culture is not an easy task. Divisions arbitrarily and mindlessly created on the basis of the amount and quality of equipment deposited in graves are far too simplistic (see Czarnecka, 1990, p. 97). Moreover, in addition to chronological or psychological age we must also recognize the cultural age. It is related to the standards that society creates for different age groups. Equally important in this case is the transition and method of the transition between successive age groups by adjusting the ways of behavior or even thinking. In this case, the age is "created" by others (Sofaer Deverenski, 1997, p. 486).

The analysis of children's burials from the cemetery in Kowalewko allowed to draw some interesting conclusions on children in the Wielbark culture. The first notion that attracts attention is the complete absence of burials of children in prenatal age. This may be a direct consequence of the allegedly different way of burying children who died at such an early stage of life.

It can therefore be assumed that the end of the prenatal age marked the beginning of a new phase of life in which various social rights began to be granted to the individual – including the right to be buried in the cemetery. Perhaps this stage of transition was marked by the moment when the mother started breastfeeding her child (Czarnecka, 1990, p. 100). In *Germania*, the famous work of Tacitus, there is a section dedicated to breastfeeding by Germanic woman "Every child is breast-fed by its mother and it is never given to slaves or foster mothers" (Tacyt, 20). It is necessary to bear in mind, however, that this textual account was deliberately composed in a manner that was intended to contrast Roman and barbarian ways of life (Kolendo, 2008, p. 131).

Similar cases of absence of children in the prenatal age in cemeteries are known, for example from the area of Przeworsk culture. In the cemetery in Opatów, there were practically no recorded burials of children who died at this age (Madyda-Legutko, Rodzińska-Nowak and Zagórska-Telega, 2004, p. 200). A similar situation may also be observed in the Roman-British cemetery in Lankhills in Hampshire. Children who died at the prenatal age were kept outside of the main cemetery (Lewis, 2007, p. 8). A different way of burying newborns could be due to the fact that they did not die what could be regarded as a "good death", according to in the ideology of the given community. Thus, they did not deserve to be (or could not be) buried in a traditional way. The prospect of a 'bad death' also forces us to reflect on whether and how many of the older children were buried outside the cemetery.

The next period in a child's life, which can be distinguished on the basis of research in Kowalewko is the moment in which the burials of children begin to occur within its area. From the perspective of biology, it is a period of childhood, lasting until the replacement of deciduous teeth by permanent teeth. This period lasted until the age of around 7 or 8. Children up to the end of this stage of life were to remain under the protection of their mother. Afterwards, they joined various groups which were based on the division of gender and in which they learned specific functions for their own gender. Often at this age the boy passed from the care of the mother, under the care of his father, who taught him the male functions. Such practices may have involved various initiation rites (see Czarnecka, 1990, pp. 101–103; Błaszczyk, 2010, pp. 86–87). In biological terms, the term 'children' refers to the age between the replacement of deciduous teeth and puberty.

Inhumation is a funeral rite, which dominates in each age category, even with regard to children. Therefore it does not seem, that the ritual was dependent on the age of the deceased.

The length of the grave-pits in the case of both age categories seems to be dependent on the height of the deceased. What draws attention however, is that some of the pits are rather shallow. Perhaps this is due only to the various practical issues occurring during the process of digging the pit. But we cannot rule out the possibility that it is related to burial traditions or concepts which are illegible for us today (see Parker Pearson, 1999, p. 5). The equipment in the burials of children of *infans I* age is a bit richer than that of *infans II*. However, the differences are not very dra-

matic. It seems that, at least in the case of people buried in Kowalewko, the transition between the two age categories is difficult to read from the archaeological material.

Of course these two age categories have a biological dimension. However, it can be observed that children in *infans I* age were equipped with more artifacts. Particularly noteworthy is a very rich burial of a child aged 3–4 which included 2 silver brooches, a bronze brooch, an enameled fibulae, a shaped disc fibulae, a necklace and a gold S-shaped buckle as well as a comb, pins and 3 clay pots. Generally, in the case of this age group, a much greater amount of silver or silver-plated artifacts (mostly fibulas) appears in the graves. Among the burials of children in the *infans II* age there is a considerably smaller amount of burials which can be described as rich and they are equipped at the average level. The variation in the wealth of equipment may in some way explain the theory of the ancestral nature of the very small child's soul. In this case, the soul is regarded as belonging not to a child, but actually to a grown person and therefore it must be equipped accordingly. Another explanation may be the high status of the family whose child was buried (Czarnecka, 1990, p. 88). This interpretation, on the one hand may be a simplification, but on the other hand it would explain the presence of stone constructions within the internal and external structure of the graves, as well as placing the deceased in a coffin. In this context, it is difficult to agree with the description of Tacitus, that the children of Germanic tribes are hard to separate from slaves, because they grow up together and look similar. But Tacitus also wrote that only age and bravery separated the warriors from the slaves (Tacyt, 20). Perhaps in the case of a community which buried their dead in the cemetery in Kowalewko, this border is clearly legible in the equipment occurring in the graves of individuals who passed away after the age of *juvenis* – when the child reached biological maturity and gained a different status in the society.

In my discussion above I tried to explore the notion of children in the Wielbark culture on the basis of the archaeological materials from Kowalewko. I paid particular attention to the absence of burials of children who died in prenatal age, which may result from employing completely different funerary practices that do not leave traces that are possible to identify today. Another issue worth highlighting is the depth of burial pits for inhumation burials, which seems to depend on the age of the deceased. It appears that this is an issue that would require examination in a much

broader context of other sites of the Wielbark culture. A similar situation occurs in the case of differences in the equipment of children buried at the age of *infans I* and *infans II*. Perhaps a larger body of comparative data could allow for explaining why burials of older children are relatively poorly furbished and why burials of younger children are 'rich' in terms of the objects deposited with the deceased. Examining and comparing the evidence from other cemeteries, would also help to study the changes in time and space, both in the archaeological material, as well as in the metric characteristics of particular burials.

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AIJA VILKA

# Some aspects of child burials in the Middle and Late Iron Age ($5^{th}$–$12^{th}$ c.) in the territory of Latvia

## INTRODUCTION

Although in the recent years Latvian archaeology is demonstrating increased interest in prehistorical and historical societies, the notion of archaeology of children and childhood is still in its initial period. To date only a few research papers have been written which among other social aspects refer to children's life and status in past societies (see Radiņš, 1999; Šnē, 2002; Bandare, 2002; 2007 or directly Vilka, 2012; 2013). Despite the fact that burials of children are discovered at practically every cemetery and their grave goods or orientation are described in archaeological reports as well as in numerous research papers and monographs, it seems that archaeologists often forget to include children in their discussions on the past societies and only concentrate on emphasising the roles of the adults.

This paper explores some aspects of children and childhood in the Middle and Late Iron Age ($5^{th}$–$12^{th}$ c.) Latvia based on archaeological evidence from child burials. This includes: the discussion of their spatial distribution and grave goods, as well as questions on children's gender and status in society. The studied period offers great opportunities for detailed investigations of this kind, because it is one of the best researched periods in the archaeology of Latvia. Archaeological sites in central and eastern Latvia (which in the Middle and Late Iron Age

was inhabited by the Latgallians, Selonians, Livs and Semigallians) have been excavated on a much larger scale than in other regions. Since there are no written sources available from this period, the archaeological material is the only evidence that could give us an idea about children and childhood in prehistory. However, if we remember the very simple truth that the dead do not bury themselves, but are treated and disposed by the living society (Parker Pearson, 2008), then burials can be comprehended and analysed as a source reflecting the society's attitude towards the dead. Consequently, through our analyses of graves we are also able to say something about the social status of the deceased (and those who buried them). Moreover, burials can be used also as a source for examining the notions of children and childhood during the Middle and Late Iron Age in the territory of Latvia.

To investigate child burials as a source of children's status, the correlation of archaeological and anthropological data as well as social and biological age is required. Therefore this paper is basically based on the analysis of three large cemeteries with a broad range of archaeological and anthropological material, namely Aizkraukles Lejasbitēni (3rd–10th c.), Salaspils Laukskola (10th–13th c.) and Bauskas Čunkāni – Dreņģeri (8th–11th c.), but evidence from other burials dated to this period also are used to provide a wider context. Each cemetery represents a different local tribe (Latgallians, Livs and Semigallians) therefore some differences in aspects regarding children status can be observed.

The Aizkraukles Lejasbitēni cemetery was excavated by the archaeologist Hugo Riekstiņš in 1931 and Vladislavs Urtāns in 1961–1964. Urtāns's studies showed that the six oldest barrows were created in the first phase of cemetery's use (3rd–5th c.) and could be associated with Semigallians' ancestry, later flat burials were located around barrows and from the 7th century the burial ground expanded in all directions and was used as Latgallians' cemetery (Urtāns, 1961; 1962; 1963; 1964). Since barrows were very poorly preserved and no child burials were discovered, only flat burials from the 5th century are analysed in this paper. From the total number of 459 excavated burials 85 (18,5%) were interpreted as belonging to subadults (Urtāns 1961; 1962; 1963; 1964), but unfortunately the anthropological material was preserved only in more than half of the burials.

The Salaspils Laukskolas cemetery was excavated by Voldemārs Ģinters in 1937 and Anna Zariņa in 1967–1975. During the excavations 610 flat burials of the Livs were discovered. 178 (29,1%) burials were

of non-adults (Zariņa, 2006) and similarly to the Lejasbitēni cemetery – only half of the burials contained well preserved osteological material.

The Čunkāni – Dreņģeri cemetery was explored by numerous researchers: Eduards Vāle (in 1924), Voldemārs Ģinters (1928), Pēteris Stepiņš (1936), Eduards Šturms (1937), Ādolfs Stubavs (1957), Viktorija Bebre (1982–1984), Māris Atgāzis (1984–1994) and Mārtiņš Lūsēns (2009 – 2010). During the excavations 743 flat burials of Semigallians were excavated and 110 of them were associated with non-adults (Bebre, 1982; 1983; Atgāzis and Bebre, 1984; Atgāzis, 1985; 1986; 1987; 1988; 1989; 1990; 1991; 1994; Lūsēns, 2009; 2010) and approximetely two thirds of them contained quite well preserved osteological material.

## THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD BURIALS

The expected juvenile mortality for nonindustrial populations is about 40–50% (see Crawford, 1993; Buckberry, 2000), but the analyses of different European cemeteries showed that children (especially infants, up to about one year old) are underrepresented in the cemeteries' population (for example, only 10–15% of children are represented in Anglo Saxon inhumation graves (Crawford, 2011)). Children represent 20–30% of the 5th–12th century cemeteries' population in the territory of Latvia and just a few of them are infant burials. Some Livs' cemeteries, however, demonstrate the expected quantity: at Vampenieši I 41% were child burials (and yet none of them was interpreted as infant) (Šnore, 1966; 1967; 1972; 1974) or at Koknese 40,7% were child burials (and again – no infants) (Gerhards, 2002, p. 43). It is noteworthy that anthropological material from these cemeteries was very poorly preserved, therefore anthropological data cannot be compared with archaeological evidence (child burials were interpreted based on grave-pit measurements, the type and size of grave goods (size of rings, bracelets and neck rings), but sometimes using only archaeological parameters without correlating them with anthropological data can create inaccurate results (see: Vilka, 2012).

If we look at the previously mentioned three large cemeteries that are analysed in this paper, we can see similar situations with the quantity of the child burials: Lejasbitēni – 18,7% (Urtāns 1961; 1962; 1963; 1964) (no children under the age of three), Laukskola – 29% (Zariņa, 2006) (one infant burial (Vilka, 2012, p. 14)) and Čunkāni – Dreņģeri – 15% (Bebre, 1982; 1983; Atgāzis and Bebre, 1984; Atgāzis, 1985; 1986; 1987; 1988;

1989; 1990; 1991; 1994) (it must be noted that burials in this cemetery were very disturbed or robbed, which sometimes leads to problems in identifying them).

Problems with child burials have been discussed in numerous papers (Baxter, 2005; Wileman, 2005; Turek, 2000, Lewis, 2007 etc.), therefore this article will not focus on the notion of lack of children's burials. And yet, it is important to outline one aspect – one of the given explanations why child burials are underrepresented in the cemeteries is that children could have been buried in a different area (mostly in settlement sites) or buried in a way which leaves no archaeologically identifiable traces within cemeteries. But if we look at the Latvia's archaeological material, no burials can be found in settlements (there is evidence only from the Stone Age where adult burials were located in settlement sites) and child burials are found only in cemeteries. Of course the burials' shallowness, the fragility of bones and other aspects (e.g. unfavourable soil conditions, agriculture etc.) can affect preservation and therefore quantity of child burials, but we also cannot forget the possibility that the dead small children were buried in a distinctive form that did not leave any traces possible to identify today. Therefore, if child burials can also be identified within cemeteries, we can attempt at examining their spatial distribution and relation to adult burials. By doing so it may be possible to learn more about the particular society's attitude towards children.

Archaeologists have been interested in the cemetery organisation since the early days of this discipline, because horizontal stratigraphy may help with relative dating of graves and the grave goods within them. In social archaeology cemeteries organization and the location of burials is analysed also as a social phenomenon associated with social, age and gender differences (Parker Pearson, 2008). Across the world and through different times evidence for specific organization of cemeteries is based on age categories, like children's cemeteries, specific children's areas in burial grounds etc. For example in Italy in the Neolithic period children were sometimes buried in caves (Wileman, 2005, p. 79). At the Mesolithic cemetery in Skateholm (Sweden) child burials were located at the borders of the burial ground (it is interesting that dogs were also buried the same area as children, and that burials of children and dogs were the wealthiest ones. In fact the wealthiest and richest burial was actually one of the dogs) (Bäcklund-Blank and Fahlander, 2006). A children's cemetery was discovered in Kent (England), where children were buried from the Neo-

lithic to the Bronze Age (Wileman, 2005, p. 75) and children cemeteries (*cilliní)* are discovered in Ireland where unbaptized children were buried. The *cilliní* were sometimes used even until the 19th century (Murphy, 2011). Similar examples could be found all across Europe, suggesting that the status of children, especially infants and small children in past societies obviously differed from that of the adults.

In the 5th–12th century in the territory of Latvia the deceased were mostly buried in flat inhumation graves or cremation graves, although in some areas previous burial traditions still remained – for example barrow burials. Burials were located all over the burial ground and they were usually linear or segmented. Although no specific order in some burial grounds can be determined, it is likely that the organization of space in all cemeteries was governed by some rules (probably different parts of the territory of the burial ground belonged to different families or kin groups).

After this overview of the different Middle and Late Iron Age burials we can notice that in the majority of cases child burials are distributed all over the cemetery, and that generally there were no clearly demarcated areas reserved only for child burials (like in Laukskola, where child burials were disposed all over the cemetery, without any specific children's area – Fig. 1). However, in some cemeteries some more or less specific locations of child burials can be observed. 20 child burials were located in the southwestern part of the Livs' burial ground Vampenieši I. The archaeologist Elvīra Šnore in the 1970s excavated this cemetery and argued that that this could be a children's part of the cemetery (Šnore, 1966; 1967; 1972; 1974). Unfortunately the anthropological material was very poorly preserved, so this interpretation cannot be confirmed with certainty. It is interesting that wealthy child burials were located side by side with the poorly furbished child burials. This evidence implies that this part of the cemetery was not reserved only for the social elites but on contrary for children from all social classes. On the other hand in the Vampenieši I cemetery the concentration of child burials is quite high – (they constitute 41% of all burials), which could mean that this part of the burial ground was not reserved specifically for children, but maybe it was established due to some increased children's mortality in a short period of time, and hence all of the deceased were buried in one area.

Child burials in the Lejasbitēnu cemetery were disposed all over the burial ground, but it is worth noting some of their particular aspects,

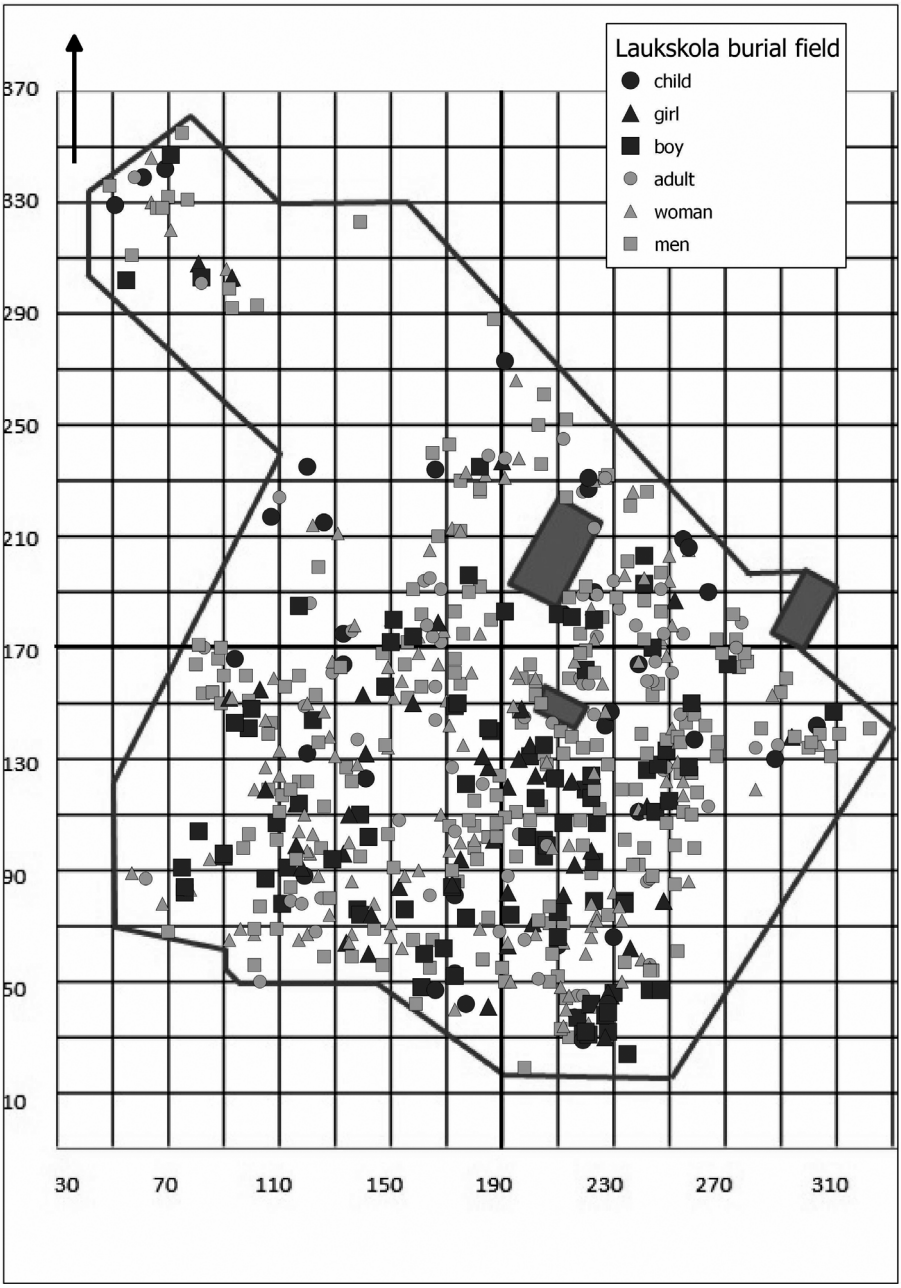


Fig. 1. Burials in Laukskola cemetery. After Zariņa 2006 (reproduced by A. Vilka).

like the cluster of child burials in its northeast part (Fig. 2). Very interesting is the row where six burials are located side by side – with individuals from 6 to 15 years old. All of these burials contained quite similar grave goods and no traces of social inequality can be observed. It is quite hard to explain this particular location of child burials and it is probable that this territory belonged to one kin and all their children were buried together. It is hard to believe that this part of the cemetery could be a specific area reserved only for children's burials, because of the adult burials located next to them, although children's cemeteries can sometimes be used for individual adult burials as well (Wileman, 2005, p. 75).

Another thing worth noting are three burials in the southwestern part of the cemetery. They are interesting not only because of their location away from other burials, but also because judging by their grave goods they seem to belong to another local tribe – the Livs. Also nearby these child burials three female cremation graves can be noticed and they are also of the Livs' origin. Probably these women are connected with children not only by their origin but also by kinship. Overall it seems that the different ethnic origin of the deceased determined the location of their

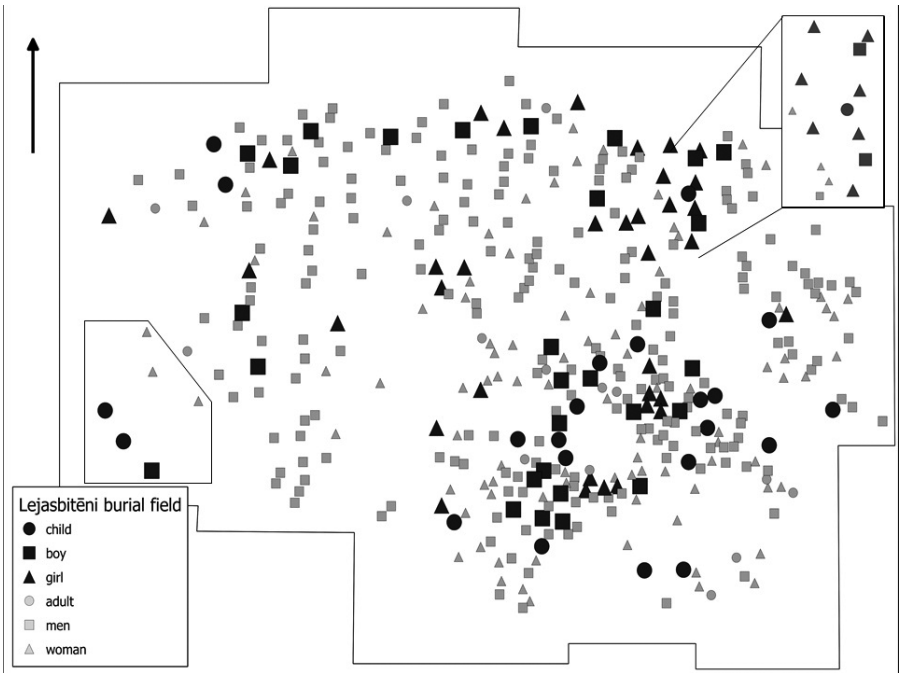


Fig. 2. Burials in Lejasbitēni cemetery. After Urtāns 1961–1964 (reproduced by A. Vilka).

burials, as if the deceased still were foreign and could not be placed with other members of society.

If we take a closer look at the gender division in Lejasbitēni cemetery it appears that mostly boys were placed together with men, but this could be a misleading conclusion, because Lejasbitēni shows typical Latgallians' burials gender proportion where the number of male burials is almost twice as that of the women: 52,3% man, 23,7% women (Gerhards, 2002, p. 43). So it seems that boys were buried together with men purposefully, though it is more likely that such a situation is generated because of lack of female burials. Gender proportions (not only in adult burials) in the Middle and Late Iron Age cemeteries in the territory of Latvia deserves a separate research paper, and therefore I will refrain from discussing this issue in more detail here.

A slightly different situation can be observed in the Semigallians' cemetery – Čunkāni – Dreņģeri, where burials were located in rows. As can be seen in the attached figure (Fig. 3), in this cemetery child burials are also located all over its area, although one interesting cluster of 10 child burials in the first row must be noted – eight of them were buried in the row, but two were disposed perpendicularly to them. Interestingly, these two burials were

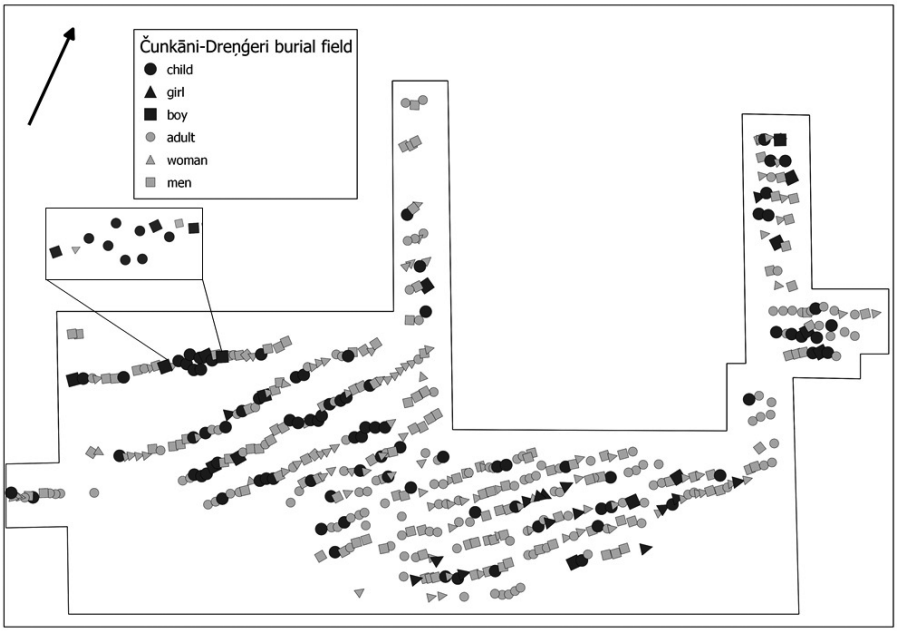


Fig. 3. Burials in Čunkāni-Dreņģeri cemetery. After Atgāzis 1984–1994, Lūsēns 2009–2010 (reproduced by A. Vilka).

different – one of them (a 3–5 year-old child) contained an iron crook-shaped pin, a so-called 'bush-knife' (something between a knife and a sickle), amber bead and awl, but the other 2–4-year-old child burial – did not contain any grave goods at all. The archaeologist M. Atgāzis who led the archaeological excavations suggested that these could be human sacrifices (Atgāzis, 1985) or that their peculiar disposition could be explained in a very simple way – as evidence for an economic use of space.

We can observe that children were mostly buried in clusters (especially in the 1st–4th rows), but unfortunately most of their burials were robbed and therefore it was difficult to determine the gender of deceased children and it is hard to say whether boys were separated from girls or buried together. However, in the cases when gender was determined probable gender separation can be observed (for example in the 10th row girls were buried together with women).

Overall it can be argued that we cannot determine the existence of some very specific areas reserved only for child burials in the Latvia's Middle and Late Iron Age, although we can see some clusters with children burials, probably associated with kin burials or the notion of high mortality of children in a short time period. The lack of infant burials could mean that segregation existed within age groups and maybe age in this situation defined status in a society which did not allow burying infants in common cemetery. Unfortunately due to the lack of evidence about distinctive forms of funerals of infants, this question remains open to discussion. Even if we assume that the funeral is a reflection socio-political decisions, and burials manifest both individual status of the dead and society interests, the burials and cemeteries cannot be perceived as a direct depiction of a living society, because they are a rite of passage to the world beyond and a different form of 'life' (Williams, 2006). So it could be argued that children (except infants) and adults during this period were equal in preparation for the afterlife, but the analysis of grave goods conducted in the subsequent parts of the present paper will demonstrate that age (biological and social) and of course social/material status played a significant role in the society.

## GRAVE GOODS AND AGE

Grave goods, as it is well known, open up great opportunities for social studies and interpretations. As it was said before, burials combine aspects of the deceased's identity and the ideology of their relatives and society.

Therefore, studies of grave goods can demonstrate both the deceased's material and social status, but also the society's attitude towards him/her as well as symbolic representations of social structures. But it becomes more difficult when analysing child burials: while adults may be given the opportunity to make decisions about their legacy as reflected in mortuary monuments, it is likely that these decisions were made for the children, probably by the adults. So in this case studies of mortuary behaviour may be considered as a reflection of adult remembrances of children and their conceptions of childhood. In the studies of mortuary practices the category "child" is defined in relationship to the category "adult", which results in comparing adults to children. Consequently, the reconstruction of social structure relies on the researcher's definitions of the social categories (Baxter, 2005, pp. 94–96). Adults are considered as the normative category, and therefore the distinctive child burials' properties are seen as deviations. Sofaer Derevenski (2000, p. 6) notes that when the same types of objects are found in child and adult burials, it is assumed that the mortuary treatment of the child symbolises its parents' power and not a power earned in its own right. Therefore, the child burial is interpreted as an indicator of inherited status and wealth. Even if children are buried with the same kinds of artefacts as the adults – such graves are interpreted in a different way. In attempting a critique of mortuary studies which perceive children as passive social actors and interpret their grave goods merely as indicators of their parents' status, one must also take into regard the age of the deceased – in a situation when a one-year-old child is accompanied by, for example, a double-edged sword we cannot assume that it adequately represents the nature of the deceased. Different interpretations, however, could be offered with regard to the treatment of older children upon death.

Let us now take a closer look at Latvia's archaeological material. In general, having analyses the Middle and Late Iron Age children's grave goods, it can be argued that they are more or less similar to the grave goods common in the graves of adults. Sometimes, however, they mayvary in size, or type and be deposited in the graves of deceased belonging to various age groups. As was mentioned before, during this period the territory of Latvia was inhabited by local tribes, therefore the character of grave goods is also determined by regional differences. For example, the Livs' children's burials often contained household objects (like keys, spindles, spindle whorls, etc.), but weapons were uncommon; tools were rare grave

goods in Latgallians' children's burials; but on the contrary in Semigallians' children's burials tools are found very often and they usually are very worn out. Since the mortuary practices during this period were very diverse, there is no space or actually no need to analyse all of them – more important is to show changes in mortuary treatment, how they correlated with the age of the deceased and how they could reflect different social roles. Despite regional differences, it was possible to observe three more or less similar age groups in all of these tribes with regard to changes in the deposition of grave goods in child burials.

*1–3/6 Years*

In this age group common female gender type grave goods can be observed, like – rings, bracelets, beads, pendants (very common in the Livs' children's burials). At the same time in the Semigallians' children's burials (1–6 years) along with the above mentioned objects also other types of artifacts can be found (e.g. neck rings, fibulas), even weapons, like battle knives, axes and tools, like sickles, hoes and awls. Knives are very common grave goods in the cemeteries belonging to all of the local tribes and they occur in connection with every age group. Basically the burials of children belonging to this age group are the wealthiest at the Semigallians' cemeteries. It is hard to say much about Latgallians' children from this age group, because there were no children younger than 3 years at the analysed Latgallians' cemetery Lejasbitēni.

*3/6–9/12 Years*

Common female gender type decorations, like rings, bracelets and fibulas were found in the Latgallians' girls' and boys' burials (3–9 years old), typical for the previous age group at Livs' and Semigallians' cemeteries. In Livs' cemeteries some changes of grave goods can be observed – along with common jewellery (which now is more gendered) weapons like axes, spears, horse gear, coins, weights and drinking horns can be found in the burials of boys, and the various household objects are found in girls' burials. In the Livs' cemetery the burials belonging to individuals from this age group are the wealthiest. In Semigallians' cemeteries an interesting situation can be observed – there are no weapons or tools and only few ornaments have been found in the burials of children aged 9–12 years old. Similar situation has been observed by the Lithuanian archaeologist Laurinas Kurila (2007) when he described the Eastern Lithuanian Iron Age

children's burials. He established that in the juvenile group (12–20 years) the furnishing of graves are poorer than in the smaller children's group and he assumed that juveniles started to become independent members of the society at this period of their life. Therefore, their grave goods were their own property which they obtained during their life and which represented power earned in their own right. In contrast to the children's grave goods they were their relatives' offerings and represented family power, and because it was only the beginning of their independent lives and they did not possess much at this stage. Probably a similar explanation can be offered also in case of Semigallians' children, especially because grave goods before and again after this period are wealthier.

***9/12 and older…***

As it can be seen, there are no strictly defined limits in this age group, because it was quite difficult to determine one clear cut point or one strict age at which children became social adults. If we look at the Semigallians' and Livs' cemeteries, we can see that no significant differences can be observed after the period of 9–12 years – the grave goods are more or less the same as in the adult graves, though varying with regard to gender as well as social and material status. Whereas a totally different situation can be observed in the case of the Latgallians' cemeteries because of the occurrence of weapons (single-edged swords, axes and spears) in boys' burials, and 'gendered' jewellery. Basically only after the age of 9–12 years Latgallians' children's burials stop being similar like one gender, one group, but are transformed similarly to the adult ones, whereas the same process in the Semigallians' and Livs' children's burials started in previous age stages.

As it was mentioned before it is hard to define the end of the childhood period, although sometimes in the Latvian archaeological literature age 14–15 comes up as the age when the child stopped being a social non-adult and became adult (Deņisova, Graudonis, Grāvere, 1985, p. 156; Šnore and Zeids, 1957, p. 41; Bandare, 2002; 2007). In the academic literature this age sometimes is linked with specific 'transition objects' for example the finds of head ornaments in Latgallians' female burials (Radiņš, 1999, p. 118) and chain ornaments in Livs' female burials (Zariņa, 2006, p. 258) which could mean that girl is already a woman; and two or more spear finds in Semigallians' male burials. Atgāzis (1985) proposed that one spear was given to boys and old males, two spears to young men, three and

more – to the grown up men who were warriors or occupied other high social status in the society. For now, however, due to insufficient amount of anthropological and archaeological material from the Semigallians' cemeteries this notion is still open to discussion.

Head and chain ornaments connection with social maturity is also under discussion – although head ornaments are actually found in almost every Latgallians' female burial it is noteworthy that they are also discovered in, for example, the burials of 8-year-old girls (of course, in this case we cannot exclude the possibility of early maturation). In the cases when no osteological material was preserved, but head ornaments were present, it seems that archaeologists automatically assumed that the burial belonged to a female. Such instances probably caused fallacious situations and led to the assumption that this type of artefact is only linked with female burials. It appears, therefore, that the head ornament's association with maturity must be reconsidered. As regards the chain ornament's association with social maturation (this ornament was worn with sleeveless wrap-around skirt fastened at the shoulders and it was supposed to be worn only by adult females) – one must bear in mind that chain ornament was very expensive, and therefore it can be linked also with high social status, not only with social age group.

Summarizing all of the notions discussed above, it can be concluded that the correlation between grave goods and the age group of the deceased varies in different cemeteries. One of the most important distinctions is gender-based grave goods division – for example, weapons in the Semigallians' cemeteries were already present in 1-year-old boys' burials, but in the Latgallians' cemeteries they occurred only in the burials of 9-year-old boys. After the age of 9–12 years child burials clearly started to become similar to the burials of adults, so it seems that after this age the process of becoming social adult started. It is clear that social maturation was dependent on different individual aspects such as biology, psychology as well as social and material status but also various cultural aspects, so maybe the age at which a child was regarded as a grown up may be vague.

## GENDERED CHILDREN

Sex and age have been and still are very important aspects which enable to determine peoples' occupation, behaviour and status in society, as well as their conception of their social identity. Moreover, they may

inform about their place in society, about their age and sex, relationships with the opposite sex, thinking and so on. If 'sex' refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women, then 'gender' is related to biological sex and age (but not always determined by them). It defines social categories such as men, women, boys, and girls. Cultural traditions about gender include significant expectations for the social roles and relationships that men, women and children should adopt at different stages of their lives. The person's gender identity can change during the course of his or her lifetime. Gender identity is cross-cut by other factors such as the person's physical growth development, and aging and also by progression through socially defined age classes (Eastman and Rodning, 2001, pp. 1–3).

Although, there are some speculations about sex determination, it still remains the 'holy grail' of non-adult osteology (Lewis, 2006, p. 48), therefore if other analyses to determine non-adults' sex (like DNA) are not used, we can talk only about non-adult gender based on mortuary studies. Over the years gender specific grave goods' categories and gendered body positions have developed in archaeology, which are used to determine sex/gender of the deceased. I we look closely at the material from Latvia then we will immediately notice a very traditional division of objects – like weapons given to men, tools being more frequent in female graves, but also 'gendered' ornaments, like different types of brooches, bracelets, etc. Also gender is frequently determined by referring to the compass orientation of the deceased, which usually is gendered, but it must be noted that child burials' orientation often deviates from the 'adult norms' (see Vilka, 2012, p. 16–18).

As it was said before the cemeteries represent different local tribes and different burial rites, and quite likely also different social organization. Therefore also the differences in gender division based on grave goods can be observed. If we look at the specifically masculine objects – weapons (axes, spears or one-sided swords) we can see, that in the Semigallians' cemeteries (like Čunkāni-Dreņģeri) axes and battle knives are found already in 1–2-year-old boys' burials. In Livs' non-adult burials the first spears and axes appear in burials of 3–4- year-old boys, whereas in the Latgallians' cemeteries – only at the age of 9. If we consider tools and household objects as feminine objects, then we would see that at the Semigallians' cemeteries sickles, hoes and awls can be found in 1–2-years-old girls' burials, but at Livs' cemeteries spindles, spindles

whorls and awls – at 3–5 years. They are not common in Livs' burials, but some similar tendencies can be seen.

If we look at the gender-based division in ornaments we can trace a slightly different situation. Beads were very common decorations for Livs' women and children and generally they have not been found in male burials: in the Laukskolas cemetery beads are found in almost every child burial, with the exception of boys' burials after circa 10–12 years age.

Spiral bracelets are also considered as a female decoration, although they are found also in the burials of small boys. In the Latgallians' cemetery spiral bracelets were found in the burials of boys who were younger than 10–12 years. The same situation can be seen at the Livs' cemetery – spiral bracelets were found also in boys' burials, younger than 10 years.

Warriors' bracelets are typical Latgallians male bracelets and in the Lejasbitēni cemetery they are found in the burials of boys, who were older than 12 years.

Livs' women and children used to wear ornamented clothes, especially typical ornament for children was a spiral tassel in the front or back of the tunic. These kinds of ornaments were found in both male and female burials, belonging to individuals being between 12–14 years old.

Summarizing all previously mentioned evidence we can observe that tools and weapons as indicators of gender appear earlier than various forms of jewellery. However, they do not occur in every child burial (so it is probable that they should be linked with higher social and material status). The most common objects in smaller children's burials were gender neutral ornaments, like rings and common bracelets and ornaments associated with the female gender, like spiral bracelets or beads. A similar situation has been described by Kurila (2007) who established that smaller children in Iron Age in Eastern Lithuanian belonged to what can be labelled 'third gender' which is closer to the female gender. The same could be said about Latvian Middle and Late Iron Age – based on ornaments, smaller children were not rigidly gendered, though they constituted a social group which was closer to the feminine gender (possibly because at the first stages of childhood women took care of children and spent time with them). The presence of weaponry and tools in some burials, however, suggests that probably in some cases children were gendered already during the period of early childhood (it could be associated with child's status within the vertical or horizontal hierarchy, family's higher social status or the role of firstborns).

An interesting situation can be observed in the Latgallians' Lejasbitēnu cemetery, where gendered objects appear only in the burials of individuals being 9–12 years old, while younger children were buried with similar ornaments associated with the female gender.

In some cases it can be assumed that the presence of weapons in graves of boys implies that they were learning how to use them at very early age, but this assumption would not make much sense when weapons are found in the graves of 1–2-year-old boys. So probably in such instances weapons and tools in child burials should be associated more closely with symbolic, gender meaning, and it is highly unlikely that these objects were used by the deceased. In all three cemeteries examined above children older than 12 years were buried with gendered objects which could mean that the process of becoming a social adult started at that age and that their social identity was already established.

## CONCLUSION

Children are an important part of every society because they are the foundation of next generations and condition for the prosperity of the society's future. The same provision was true for past societies and supposedly will be true for future societies as well. Therefore we cannot exclude children in our reconstructions of past societies and forget about them in our studies. There is certainly a great need to diligently examine their lives and status.

Child burials can be observed in every cemetery in Latvia's Middle and Late Iron Age, they are distributed side by side to the burials adults and are located in the central area of the cemetery. Their burials are based on the same principles as adult burials – children were prepared for the afterlife with the same respect as other members of society and therefore they were considered as society's members and ascribed particular roles.

The absence of infant burials suggests that age was an important condition for being considered a full member of the society. It seems that infants, until the age of approximately one year, were not regarded as fully-fledged members of the society and therefore they were laid to rest in different ways or in different places – all of which varied from the common manner of burial reserved for the members of the society. Unfortunately there is no evidence of rites of passage or initiation, but it could be assumed that sometime after the age of 1–2 years these rites were per-

formed and children were then considered as members of society – this also had an effect on the attitude towards their treatment in death.

It seems that the age was an important aspect in past societies – smaller children's burials usually were poorer than those of older children and adults. Mortuary treatment of the small children was frequently imperfect (ornaments, like bracelets and neck rings, were often made from reused and reshaped adults' ornaments). There are some exceptions, however, when a small child was buried in a wealthy manner with everything they could 'need in the afterlife', but mostly this could be linked with the high status of the child's family or the status of the very child within it (for example if this was a firstborn child).

After the age of 9–12 years the mortuary treatment of children became more similar to that of the adults, including conventional gendered grave goods – ornaments like bracelets, rings, neck rings, fibulas, etc., and weaponry/tools. It suggests that after this time the children reached social maturity and started to become grown-ups with all the ensuing consequences and commitments. For now it is still too early to strictly determine that a 12-years-old person in the Middle and Late Iron Age Latvia was considered an adult. This subject still requires further research, but it could be suggested that the age of 9–12 years marked the beginning of the transformation period. It is likely that social maturation was dependent on several conditions, like biological age, social age, gender, sex and material status and that it was a complicated social phenomenon.

It seems that not only age was an important condition in determining the person's status, but also gender played an important role in prehistorical societies. Even more – gender was sometimes more important than biological sex, and this notion is well evidenced in the case of children. As it was said before, biological sex cannot be determined with regard to non-adults by using anthropological methods and therefore only gender or archaeological sex can be determined according to grave inventory and body position. Whereas body position suggests that children were gendered (there is gender based compass orientation, which differs in local tribes, although often variations of children's body orientation can be observed in cemeteries, e.g. Vilka, 2012, pp. 16–17), grave goods in small children's burials are often gender neutral. It seems that smaller children were regarded as one group – children, without gender division and their gendering occurred when they become older. Unfortunately archaeological sex is often assumed on the basis of grave goods and only

DNA analysis could be able to clarify this question. I am quite sure that DNA analyses would show a different situation and that the archaeological sex would diverge from biological sex, as has been shown in the work of Czech scholars concerning the Bell – Beaker children in the Hoštice 1 za Hanou cemetery (Vaňharová and Drozdová, 2008).

Archaeology of children and childhood in Latvia is still in its initial stages and there are many questions to be answered about prehistoric children's life, status and roles in the society. In this paper I sought to outline just some selected aspects of these complicated notions and to present the current state of research into the notion of the archaeology of children and Middle and Iron Age children in Latvia. Further extensive studies in the field of archaeology of children and childhood in prehistory need to be continued and I hope that in the future they will become a regular feature of every research on prehistoric societies.

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POVILAS BLAŽEVIČIUS

# Toys as a reflection of player's social status

## INTRODUCTION

Research of historical toys and games looks playful and easy, but is in fact very important and meaningful. Entertainment heritage not only reflects daily life, but also serves as a source for discovering the cultural context of a specific country or nation. Research of the heritage of toys and games reveals one more unique feature: toys and games are a universal phenomenon which swiftly and easily overcomes national, linguistic, political and confessional barriers and spreads throughout the world thus creating general cultural features of the humankind. The evolution and development of toys and games helps researchers trace political and trade relationships among countries as well as changes in their geopolitical and even economic situation.

In Europe, most numerous game-related artefacts originate in the Late Middle Ages and Modern Times. This period also provides rather numerous written sources; unfortunately, a closer look at them is somewhat disappointing. Ancient chroniclers paid little attention to such a trivial and negligible phenomenon as games. Most probably, they thought that toys and games should not be mentioned alongside such important matters as royal stories, wars, politics, and court intrigues. Only the items which history spared by covering them with thick layers of soil have survived till our times. This way, at least in Northern and Eastern Europe, archaeology has become one of the most comprehensive sources for the research of entertainment of the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times.

Archaeological investigations have revealed that toys and games of the period discussed are about the same throughout Europe in terms

of their chronology and variety. Toys and games are a trans-cultural phenomenon by their very nature, as they tend to spread easily from the country of origin to other regions. This article seeks to discuss the significance of toys for determining the player's social status as well as to analyze artefact assessment criteria on the basis of Lithuanian archaeological material of the 14th–18th centuries as the key sample.

## LOCAL BUT ALSO UNIVERSAL

Toys and games of the period discussed are nearly identical throughout Europe in terms of their variety and chronology; the very nature of toys and games determines their trans-cultural character. Games tended to spread swiftly disregarding the type of political and economic relations between countries, but depending on the intensity of those. Research of the available Lithuanian archaeological artefacts reveals that some items were not of local origin, which witnesses the influence of foreign cultures in Lithuanian cities. This influence was noticeable since the 13th century, when economic, political and cultural relations with other countries intensified and cities began to develop. Nevertheless, even if their idea was foreign, the technological specificity of toy production, their materials and shapes point to the fact that toys were made locally. Thus, most of game-relevant artefacts found in Lithuania were produced by local craftsmen who were following prototypes or descriptions. Society tended to adapt and develop items following local habits, customs and production traditions.

Production of toys could hardly serves as the main source of income for Lithuanian craftsmen of the period discussed, so no craftsmen specialised exclusively in toy production. On the basis of fair and kermis traditions of the 19th–20th centuries, it can be assumed that in the 14th–18th centuries, production of toys was an auxiliary – seasonal or occasional – business. Yet, a lot of questions can be asked: who produced toys and for whom; what determined the value of toys; can the social status of a player be determined on the basis of toys; etc.

## VALUATION OF TOYS

We face a shortage of information regarding the monetary value of toys necessary for comparative analysis. Written sources provide just a few

hints on legal regulation of games or precious game sets kept at court treasuries. Unfortunately, their exact price is not specified. An exception is a contract signed in 1618 between Duke Christopher Radvila and Mauritius, an organ producer from Riga. Christopher Radvila ordered two small organs. The contract stated that the positive had to be of six voices with four benches, and a chess and draught games. It was agreed that for this positive the producer would receive 250 guilders. A portative organ of three voices was agreed to be produced for 80 guilders; among other elements, drawers with chess and draught games were mentioned (Paliušytė, 2003, pp. 44–48). We can try to assess the prices of these instruments on the basis of the purchasing power of guilders. Apparently, these were extremely expensive articles. In 1620, 1 guilder equalled to 120 silver Groschen, and for 250 guilders you could buy about 100 oxen, 1000 sheep, 600 pairs of boots of 2,000 pairs of shoes (Remecas, 2011, pp. 64–65). So, we know the exact value of the contract, but there is no possibility to estimate the price of the board-games, which were only supplements to these luxury musical instruments.

Even the more exhaustive sources of the 17th–18th centuries fail to provide sufficient data for establishing the monetary value for a broader array of toys. For this reason, when trying to estimate the price of the items we are interested in, we have to refer to the relative price of the material they were made from and rely on subjective criteria such as work time required to make a particular toy, the technological complexity of its production, etc.

For instance, prices of 17th century shoes can help us estimate the price of leather balls. Surviving fragments indicate that balls used to be 7 to 9 cm in diameter. Covert stiff seams (Puškorius, Kalėjienė, 2005, p. 65), technologically precise cut-outs and other skilful solutions imply that balls dating to the 14th–16th centuries were made by professional craftsmen, who also made footwear. Considering that making a ball requires several times less leather and two or three times less work than making one shoe , we can assume that a ball could cost about 1/6 of the price paid for a pair of shoes. In early 17th century, a pair of shoes cost 13–15 Groschen (Remecas, 2011, p. 65), so the price of a leather ball could have been up to 2 Groschen (Fig. 1). At that time, this was a price you would pay for a chicken, thus, not a high amount. In conclusion, leather balls, although professionally made, were a toy affordable to every bourgeois.

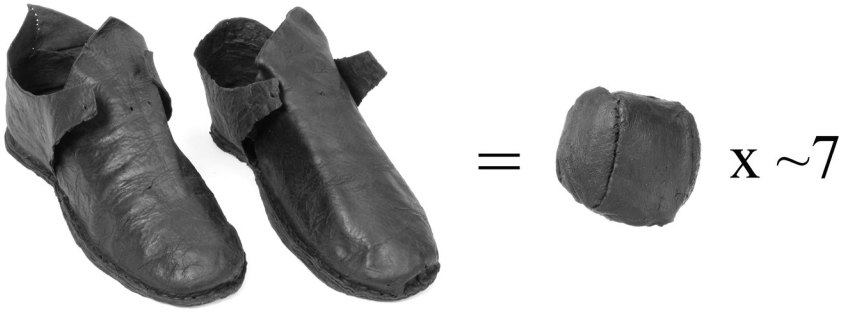


Fig. 1. If a pair of shoes cost 13-15 Groschen in the 1st quarter of the 17th c., then leather balls – 2 Groschen? (photo by V. Abramauskas).

## OVERVIEW OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

An overview of the total array of archaeological finds leads to the conclusion that differences are most easily spotted in closed clusters, when comparing items with the same sort or purpose. This also implies certain problems: if samples in a cluster are scarce, it is hard to detect distinguishing technological, material and other differences. Therefore, clusters with numerous finds are more suitable for analysis, whereas those which include only a few artefacts are much less so. In order to illustrate this and to review the total array of archaeological toys, we shall discuss them category by category. Eight major categories of toys can be distinguished: these are warfare toys, economic activity toys, toy household utensils, care toys, entertainment toys, music toys, sport toys and board games. It is noteworthy that 99% of the artefacts discussed were found in urban archaeological sites, thus, the survey will focus on the entertainment of urban and court dwellers, and will not cover that of the rural people.

We will provide a brief overview of the abovementioned categories as well as their assessment criteria and summarise the trends revealed by the results. The first three categories, covering warfare, economic activity and household utensil toys, are short of finds. Thus, their production differences are also hard to detect. Only one artefact stands out among other primitive wooden toy weapons – it is a crossbow dating to the late 14th–15th centuries, which represents a functional copy of a real fighting weapon (Fig. 2). This and other toys of similar complexity could have had a higher monetary value as well. We could also mention toy soldiers dated to the 17th–18th centuries, which most probably were mass-produced. Toy soldiers were made from imported materials such as kaolin

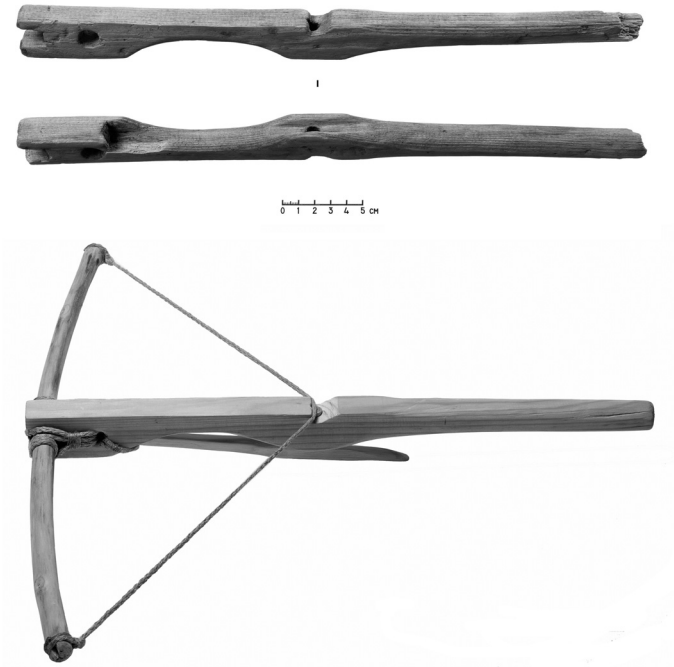


Fig. 2. Toy crossbow (late 14th–early 15th c.) and its reconstruction (Blaževičius, 2012, il. 4, 5).

or led and tin alloys; they were shaped or cast using double-sided matrices (Raškauskas, Stankevičius, 1988, p. 96; Ožalas, 2012). No doubt, such work required both specific skills and physical facilities: raw materials, casting pots, matrices, firing kilns etc. This increases production costs and implies a high price of the toy.

Among the quite primitive and scarce wooden economic activity toys only one carriage axle can be identified as a more complex and mechanically functional toy. The characteristics of the artefact suggest that not only the wheels of the carriage, but also the entire front axle were meant to rotate (Blaževičius, 2008, p. 83). Similarly as in the case of the crossbow, the complexity of this toy implies a higher price (Fig. 3).

A wooden key and several miniature pots are the only artefacts attributable to the category of toy household utensils. Whereas the wooden key and similar toy utensils could have been made by children themselves or by their parents, the wheel thrown, fired and often glazed tiny pots had to be made by experienced potters as this requires specific skills. Although household pottery was not expensive during the period discussed, we

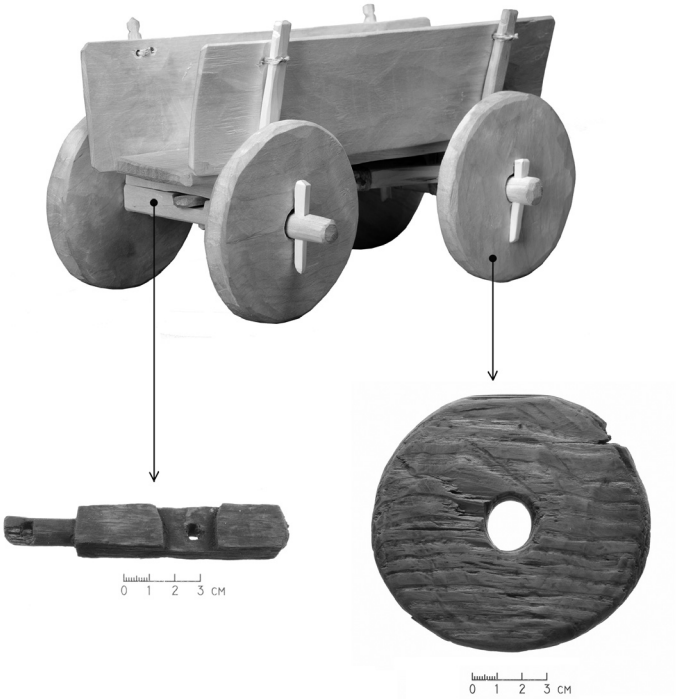


Fig. 3. Toy carriage reconstruction based on archaeological and iconographical material (by P. Blaževičius, Photo: V. Abramauskas). Wheel and front axle (14th–15th c.) (Blaževičius, 2012, il. 40, 42).

have no information on the prices of toys produced by professional potters. Nevertheless, it is obvious that high-quality toy pottery was bought, not home-made.

Artefacts attributable to the category of care toys also present only minor differences. Archaeological excavations of urban sites have produced a dozen of high-quality ceramic dolls. Their shapes are quite sophisticated; faces and clothing details are depicted very carefully. All the dolls dating before the 17th century are shaped manually and covered with monochromic glaze (Fig. 4). Approximately from the 17th–18th centuries, ceramic dolls were produced using casting matrices; and glazing became more polychromic and diverse. It can be said that just as ceramic toy pots, these dolls were produced and sold by skilled potters or their apprentices, later – by factories. There is no data on the prices of ceramic dolls during different periods; nevertheless, we can suppose that due to advancing production technologies, dolls of the 17th–18th centuries could have been somewhat more expensive.

Fig. 4. Anthropomorphic wax (17th c.) and clay figurines (17th–19th c.) (photo by V. Abramauskas).

One of the dolls found in Lithuania stands out both in terms of its material and its discovery circumstances. It was found in a grave of an approx. 2-year-old child and was made from wax (Zabiela, 2007, p. 262). An X-ray revealed that one leg of the doll had broken off and was later fixed with a metal nail. Considering its primitive shape and material (wax), we can assume that this was a rather cheap toy made by a non-professional. Nevertheless, the circumstances of its discovery indicate that the toy was one of the most beloved toys of the child.

Entertainment toys, such as whirligigs and peg-tops, are not numerous either. Although characterised by a complex operation principle, they are made from cheap pine wood (Blaževičius, 2011, p. 62–65). Simple production technology implies that these toys could have been made by children themselves, their parents or tutors. Toys falling into this category can be described as cheap and affordable to a wide public.

Finds of the musical toy category are much more numerous, thus, here we can distinguish certain quality differences. The most primitive ones are toggles made of pig phalanx or bird bones with a drilled or cut orifice (Blaževičius, 2011, p. 69–71; Fig. 5:2). When a toggle is spun with a rope led through the orifice, it produces a buzzing or burring sound. These toys are so simple that they could have been made by almost any child. Most probably, they were the cheapest musical toys. Toggles were found not only at urban sites or castles, but also in cultural layers of earlier hillfort settlements. Ethnographic information indicates that these simple musical toys were popular and loved by children till the mid-20th century.

Fig. 5. Primitive game inventory made from natural bones: 1 – skittles (cattle phalange bones); 2 – toggles (pig leg bones); 3 – astragals (goat or sheep leg bones); 4 – skate (horse carpus bone) (photo by V. Abramauskas).

The group of ceramic whistles is also numerous and diverse in terms of quality. Usually these artefacts are found in 17th–19th century layers. Whistles mostly represent animal figurines; anthropomorphic whistles are less common. Judging by the specificity of their production, glazing etc., we can assume that they were made by skilled potters. Nevertheless, we can distinguish certain differences which could have had an effect on their price. The first factor is the complexity and elaboration of the shape, the second one is the type and quality of glaze. 90% of ceramic whistles found depict animals and birds in great detail and, as a rule, are completely covered with glaze. Only about 10% of the whistles have an abstract shape and come unglazed. The production of the latter requires less work and materials (glaze), so it looks as if they had to be cheaper.

One more group of primitive musical instruments is represented by Jew's-harps. Some of them are made from copper alloy and some from iron. These artefacts feature substantial quality differences. Some of them are roughly cut; others, on the contrary, are well-elaborated. Two of them bear brand-marks: one – a hexagonal star „✱“ (Kuncevičius, Tautavičius and Urbanavičius, 1993, p. 77), another – a shape of an arrow „⋀“ (Striška, 2012). Brand-marks of craftsmen or their guilds are often found on knives, scissors, axes, and sometimes even on horseshoes and other metal articles. The abovementioned symbols served as a quality mark witnessing

not only high quality of the article, but also its value. It can be assumed that both Jew's-harps marked with the producer's symbols were made by skilful craftsmen, so they could have been more expensive.

Artefacts belonging to the category of sport toys are much more numerous: about 160 pieces of those have been found in Lithuania. These are leather balls, bone skittles, marbles, etc. Hypothetical prices of leather balls have already been discussed at the beginning of the article, so we will leave them aside. Primitive skittles made of proximal phalanges of oxen or smaller double-hoofed animals can definitely be identified as cheap. Usually these toys with a broad chronological proliferation are just slightly processed bones. For this reason, they are hard to identify in the cultural layers of urban archaeological monuments often carrying abundant food waste including osteological materials. Only skittle knockers are easy to identify for usually they come filled with led (Blaževičius, 2011, p. 83) (Fig. 5:1). Astragals also seem to have been a toy affordable to every child or teenager. Since the Antiquity these bones of cattle and smaller double-hoofed animals were used to play several games (Fig. 5:3). Their oblong rectangular form meant they could be used as a kind of dice also known as *talis ludere* (Jokantas, 1995, p. 988). Moreover, astragals were used to play several other children and adult games. One of the most popular games was *pentalitha* (lot.).

The comparison of marbles of the 15th–18th centuries reveals significant qualitative and, in turn, probable price differences. All of them are approximately 1–2 cm in diameter, but made from very different materials: clay, glass, bone or stone (Fig. 6). The game of marbles was similar to modern curling. As is true for many other games, the history of the game of marbles begins in Antiquity. It evolved from a game played with nuts and during the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times gained popularity among both children and adults. True, the latter usually played it for

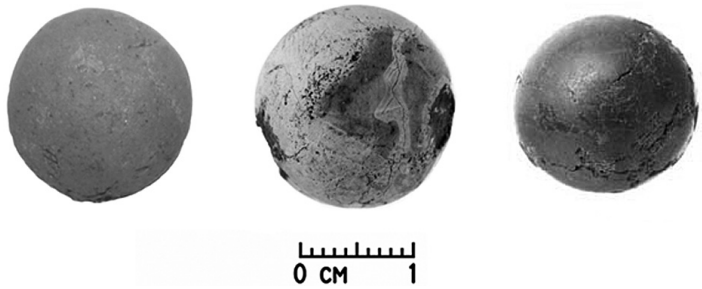


Fig. 6. Clay and glass marbles (15th–16th c.) (photo by G. Gendrėnas and V. Abramauskas).

money (Gläser, 2002, p. 122). When we try to determine the monetary value of marbles, material should be seen as the main criterion. Therefore, at least before the 16th century, the most expensive marbles were those made of glass, whereas bone or stone marbles should have been slightly cheaper. Clay marbles must have been the cheapest ones for they could easily have been made by any child.

Such sport inventory as skates should be also mentioned briefly. It is interesting that, although during the period discussed skates with metal runners were already known, archaeological excavations also produced skates made of horse carpus bone (Blaževičius, 2011, p. 93–94; Fig. 5:4). Usually they were fastened to the feet with leather laces, however, we know that bone skates were also used unfixed – a skater just stood on a slightly flattened bone and skated with the help of a stick. In Europe such skates were already known since the 5th–6th centuries and probably it was their cheapness and simplicity which meant they stayed popular till the very 19th–20th century (Luik, 2000, p. 150).

The largest number and the broadest variety of artefacts can be found in the category of board games. Game boards are the rarest finds.

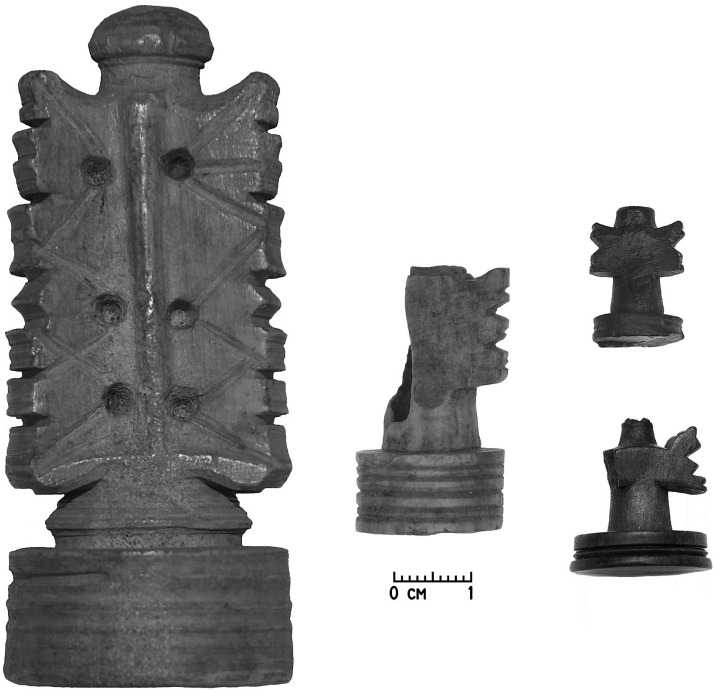


Fig. 7. Bone and horn chess rooks from late 14th–16th c. (Blaževičius, 2011, il. 132).

The ones discovered during archaeological excavations are in essence recycled floor tiles and barrel tops. Compared to boards described in written sources, which were covered with leather and decorated with ivory, silver and precious stones (Paliušytė, 1994, p. 131; Paliušytė, 1996, pp. 43, 54, 55, 57), these boards were much less valuable. The same is true of the discovered chess (Fig. 5:2), draught and gambling dice artefacts. If we consider the price and the amount of materials used for these board game pieces (bone, stone, wood, amber or chalk) as well as labour costs and skills required, we must conclude that about 10–15% of board-game items were very primitive and cheap. Approximately 85% were carefully turned or carved from bone or horn. Only several artefacts, which make up about 1% of board-game artefacts found, are of higher value (Fig. 8). These are a draught inlaid with mother-of-pearl and a few relatively large chess pieces. A large number of relatively high-quality artefacts implies that board game articles were primarily used by wealthy people.

## INTERPRETING THE DATA

Toys and game inventories discovered during archaeological excavations provide new additional information on the daily life of different social segments. Although there are no written sources on the prices of entertainment items, the assessment of the physical characteristics of the finds enables us to formulate some conclusions and determine certain trends.

When we assess toys with regard to their production specificity or complexity, we can see that most of the toys, and especially those meant for smaller children, were simple and could easily have been produced

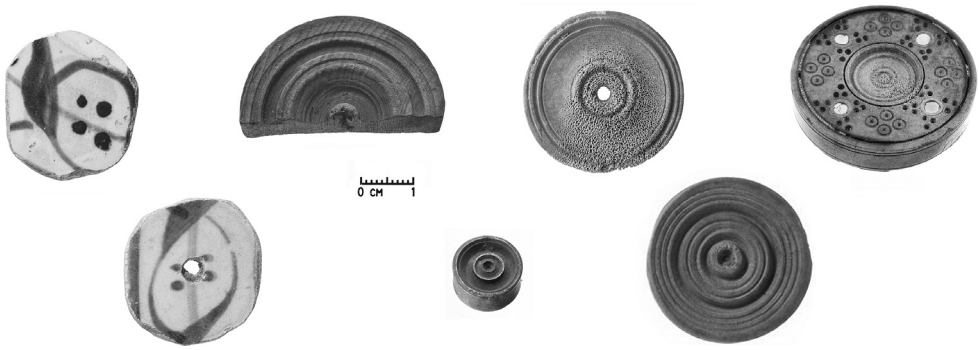


Fig. 8. Board game pieces (14th–19th c.). Pottery shard, wood and horn (photo by V. Abramauskas).

by the children themselves or by their parents. Examples of such toys are clay or wax dolls, wooden toys, bone skittles or simple toggles. Meanwhile, the production of some other toys required high skills, specific know-how or expensive materials. Undoubtedly, leather balls dating to the 14th–16th centuries were made by skilled craftsmen. Two of nine metal Jew's-harps of the 15th–17th centuries bear producer's brand-marks, which definitely served as a quality warrant suggesting a higher price of such articles. Ceramic whistles could have been made only by skilled and careful potters able to elaborate an attractive shape, an inner cavity and precise positioning of the orifices. Therefore, these at the first sight simple toy instruments of the 16th–18th centuries required the touch of a master. Professional bone-carvers made toys as well. Usually these were board-game pieces, which were carefully turned, sometimes hand-carved and often decorated with geometrical ornaments or inlayed. Board-game piece sets made of bone or horn must have been some of the most expensive toys of the 14th–18th centuries.

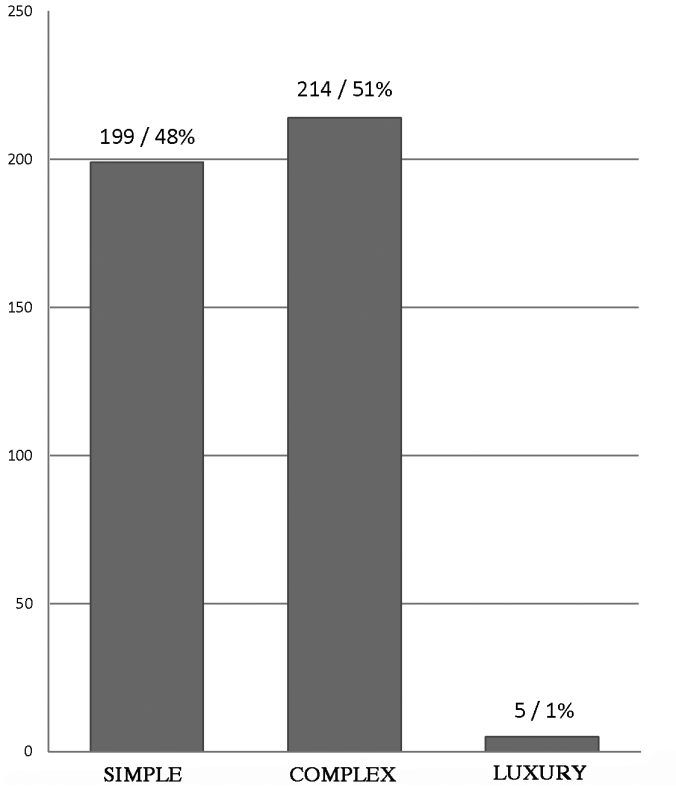


Fig. 9. Statistics on attribution of toys to different societal groups (drawing by P. Blaževičius).

Toy artefact discovery circumstances indicate that 99% of the toys discussed represent entertainment of urban and court dwellers. However, there are no sufficient data to determine prices of individual toys and attribute them to a certain social estate or segment. Based on the criteria of production complexity, work time and material consumption, it can be stated that approximately 48% of toy finds are simple toys, production of which required no specific know-how or skills. 51% of the finds can be identified as complex, requiring special production skills and raw materials (Fig. 9). Meanwhile only 1% of the toys found can be called luxury goods. In view of all abovementioned considerations and contemporary experience, it seems that individual ancient toys cannot be associated with one specific social group. Most probably, during the period discussed children and adults possessed entire sets of entertainment items the contents of which depended on the social status and resources of the family. Just as nowadays, such sets included both cheap and more expensive toys. Most probably, the 14$^{th}$–18$^{th}$ century archaeological toys presented in this article reflect the theoretical ratio of cheap and expensive toys possessed by an average urban family. Available written sources confirm the assumption that exclusive luxury toys were affordable only to the noble who had an elaborated aesthetical taste and adequate financial means.

Although the survey faced numerous uncertainties and many questions remained unanswered, hopefully these shortcomings will provoke a further discussion on the assessment criteria to be applied to toys found at archaeological monuments. Moreover, it should encourage research of archaeological toys from a wider range of perspectives.

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IZABELA GOMUŁKA

# Children's toys in mediaeval Silesia

## INTRODUCTION

The basic repertoire of toys, most of which remained unchanged, was shaped in medieval times. We currently have no knowledge of separate workshops producing toys in those times in Poland. The toys were made as a by-product of basic workshops, in a similar manner to their real, full-size counterparts. Because of this, the producers probably wanted to do it in the fastest and easiest way possible. For this purpose they also used the easiest and most readily available raw materials to be processed. Medieval toys were made by parents or children, and so they were rudimentary and not very varied in form and type. Additionally, the concept of a toy is very broad and incorporates a countless number of elements. This is due to the fact that the imagination of a child allows playing with everything in its environment. Children's games have for many centuries involved objects that adults used every day and they gave those objects new functions, which is confirmed by the medieval iconography (Fig. 1). Children can turn inanimate objects into interesting "toys", which can lead us to conclude that children are often toymakers themselves. It should be taken into account that some medieval toys could have a form so simple that they are left unnoticed in archaeological research. All these elements caused the simple, often schematic form of medieval toys. Therefore most types of medieval toys had similar forms.

Fig. 1. Book of Hours Ango family or children's book, Paris, National Library, 1500.

## TOYS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

In the past, playing was inextricably linked to all forms of culture. Childhood in the Middle Ages was a relatively short period and play was meant to teach the children skills they would need in their adult life as soon as possible. Therefore, a large number of toys are those that allowed children to imitate the daily activities of the adults. The toys known from the Middle Ages prove that they were made for a specific purpose and with an intended impact on child's development, so we can see at the same time that toys reflected the child's surroundings. The most popular medieval toys were miniature objects reflecting the everyday life of that time, like miniature vessels, craft elements and tools, weaponry, dolls, boats, animal figurines, skates or sleighs. We have also found toys associated with the development of children's motility and manual skills, like balls, dice, tops or some musical instruments. But only the first group of toys which clearly reflected the child's surroundings, allows us to observe regional differences. The majority children's toys found in Poland so far, lack clear regional diversity, except for those excavated in Silesia and Pomerania. We should also notice that the often poor state of the finds' preservation also influences our ability to compare them.

The most popular raw material for the manufacture of Polish toys was wood. Wood and bark were probably most commonly used due to the relative ease of their processing. They were created mostly with chipping or hollowing techniques. Sometimes toys were made from items previously used by adults for other purposes. One such example are miniature boats made of fishing corks, often found in Pomerania. But we should notice that wood decays quicker than other materials, so the quantity of preserved wooden toys is greatly influenced by local conditions. These conditions were optimal in case of Silesia and Pomerania. The second most popular raw material was clay. Clay was often used, due to its good plasticity. Probably adults burnt the toys in ovens while baking pottery, most likely by adding miniature objects if there was some space left for them in the oven. The most commonly used techniques were kneading, manual modelling and coating. Clay was used mostly for miniature cups, rattles, balls, rings and animal figurines.

## SILESIAN TOYS

The most common toys from Silesia do not vary from the ones from other regions of Poland, but some of them are different because they were clearly influenced by local culture. One of these types of toys are miniature boats (Gomułka 2010). Silesian toys differ from the ones found in coastal areas because of the importance of Silesian river ports of Wrocław and Opole. Due to the nature of these toys, they represent not only the shape of real boats, but also their detailed characteristics. For example when in the 10$^{th}$–13$^{th}$ century Oder began to be frequently used for transport, the boats were adapted to carry as much cargo as possible (Moździoch, 1993, p. 159). These changes have also been observed with regard to miniature boats. For example the previously round bottom was substituted by a flat bottom, allowing the transport of larger quantities of cargo. Miniature boats were also modelled on the fishing boats. Among the characteristic features of a fishing boat are: bulkheads, seats, and a storage cage for fish. The bulkheads divided such boats into different functional parts (Ossowski, 1999, p. 112). In the collection of boats from Opole about thirty examples had bulkheads and one of them had as many as three bulkheads (Fig. 2). Among other features of the miniature boats was also a gone up bow, which functioned as the breakwater.

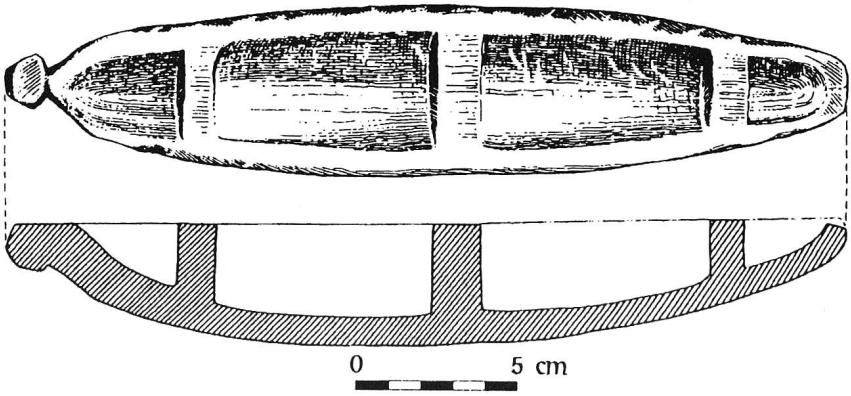


Fig. 2. Miniature boat from Opole, 12th c. (from the Arhives of IAE PAN Wrocław).

Besides imitating the construction elements of actual full-size boats, the toys also performed the same practical functions – perhaps to teach the child, what a particular boat-type was used for. Over 100 miniature boats from Opole and more than a dozen from Wrocław were found in Silesia. These boats have distinct features of river vessels. They imitate ships, used for travel between riverside cities, fishing boats and transport ships. The set of toys from Opole even shows the change in the form of the boats, corresponding to the way the river was used; they became more numerous and advanced because of the economic growth of the region. An example of this can be seen in adding cleats (Fig. 3) because of the appearance of river ports, where the boats were moored (Moździoch, 1993, pp. 152–154). The forms of boats varied due to local conditions – e.g. the width and depth of the riverbed, which influenced the shape of the hull. Because of this, Silesia's location in the upper part of Oder effected the shape of the boats and conversely, the miniature toys that imitated them.

Fig. 3. Miniature boat from Opole, 11th c. (from the Arhives of IAE PAN Wrocław).

The second class of Silesian toys that differed from similar artifacts found in other regions of Poland are horse figurines. They were a very popular toy at the time, reflecting the importance of knightly culture. The horse motif was present in figurines used by children to reenact jousting (Fig. 4). It also appeared in the form of a horse's head on a stick, where the child itself pretended to be a warrior. Horse figurines from the area of Poland were made with varying degrees of accuracy, but they all share the same form – a simplified horse shape, and material – wood. However, such toys made in Silesia differ greatly from those from other regions of Poland. Besides the fact that they were found there in great amounts, they are very varied in form and made of clay. This distinct difference stems from close relations with Germany. South and West Germany, the Rhine region and the Netherlands in 13th–16th centuries were home to workshops manufacturing clay horse figurines. These were exported to Silesia, Bohemia, Moravia and Austria (Schmidt, 1934, p. 283). These toys were handmade horses (some saddled) with riders. Since the beginning they were made armed – most often with a saddle, a shield and a helmet. Sometimes they were very detailed – including a harness, the rider's clothes, hair or even fingers. Another aspect, setting them

Fig. 4. "Trachtenbuch" Matthäus Schwarz from Augsburg, Landesbibliothek Hannover, 1520–1560.

apart from similar toys of that time is the labour-intensive manufacturing process. They were often glazed and some of them were ornamented (mostly with perforations) and painted. The Silesian finds contain not only horse figurines, but also saddled animals and horses with riders. Examining foreign finds suggests that some figurines had a separate rider figure. Perhaps a remnant of such a rider may be seen in the artifact from Wrocław's Więzienna Street (Fig. 5), where only legs were found (Borkowski, 1999, p. 192). More

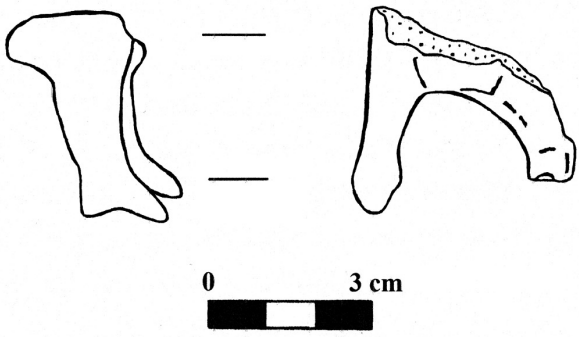


Fig. 5. Rider figurine from Wrocław (bottom fragment), 15th c. (Borkowski 1999, p. 192).

such figurines were discovered outside Silesia – mainly in Germany and Bohemia. They were adapted to being put on a horse because of the wide spread of their legs and the arms stretched out to hold the horse's neck. On the other hand, figurines of riders permanently fixed to a horse were most often made by forming two rolls of clay alongside the horse's torso. They were not explicitly visible and sometimes the rider was only made from the waist up. One example of such a figurine was found in Görlitz – its lower part bears visible signs of breaking off, which can lead us to conclude that it was originally mounted on a horse (Hoffmann, 1996, p. 176).

Since the mid-13th century horses were adorned using special moulds to shape the riders' faces. Based on archaeological findings, two methods of forming the figurine's head were used. The first was to model the head separately and attach it to the rest of the rider by hand. Another method entailed pressing the hand-made mould on the face. Sometimes the front of the face was moulded alongside the helmet – later the back part of the head and helmet were formed by hand. Such a figurine, with its face made in a mould, was also found in Silesia (Fig. 6). The face of the figurine from Racibórz is very detailed, which means it was not made with a stick. The shape of the eyes and

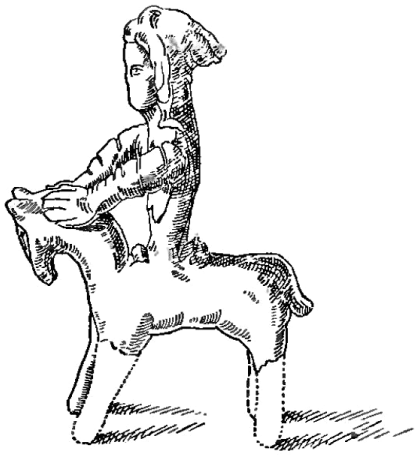

Fig. 6. Clay horse figurines from Racibórz, 14th c., (Schmidt 1934, p. 283).

corners of its mouth also confirm that it was made using a mould. This constitutes the earliest example of moulding in toy making in the Polish lands (Schmidt, 1934, p. 283). During the 14th century, moulds were being used increasingly often in making figurines; at the same time the motifs employed were becoming more varied. In the 15th and 16th centuries toymakers started to make two-piece rider figurines, mainly in Saxony (Hoffmann, 1996, pp. 177–179). Such an artifact was recovered in Silesia, in the Dominikański Square in Wrocław (Fig. 7). It is a figurine of an unarmed rider, originally

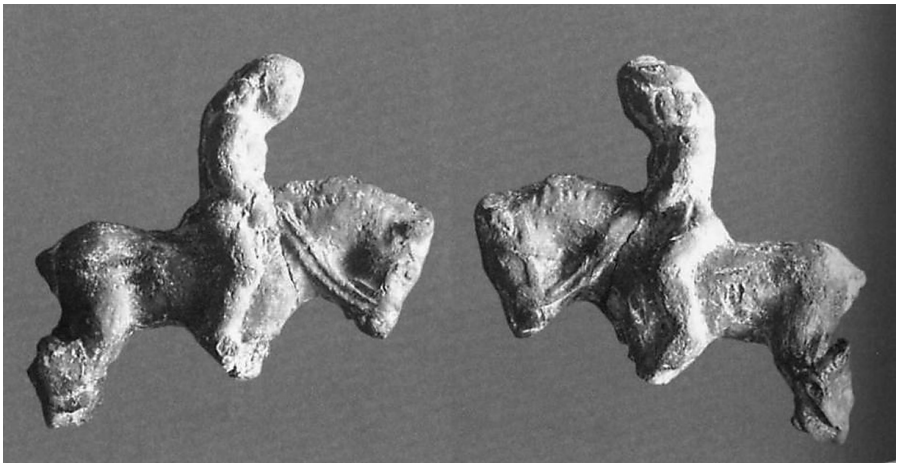

Fig. 7. Clay horse figurines from Wrocław, Dominikański Square, 15th c. (Borkowski 2004, p. 241).

glazed (Borkowski, 2004, p. 241). Additionally, such toys were improved by making cone-shaped holes in their torso. Most often, they were pierced in the front, on the bottom or on the sides. Making the hole in the bottom allowed the toy to be placed on a stick; an opening in the toy's side allowed it to be carried by a transversely positioned stick. An hole in the front was used to install a stick, imitating a lance (Fig. 8).

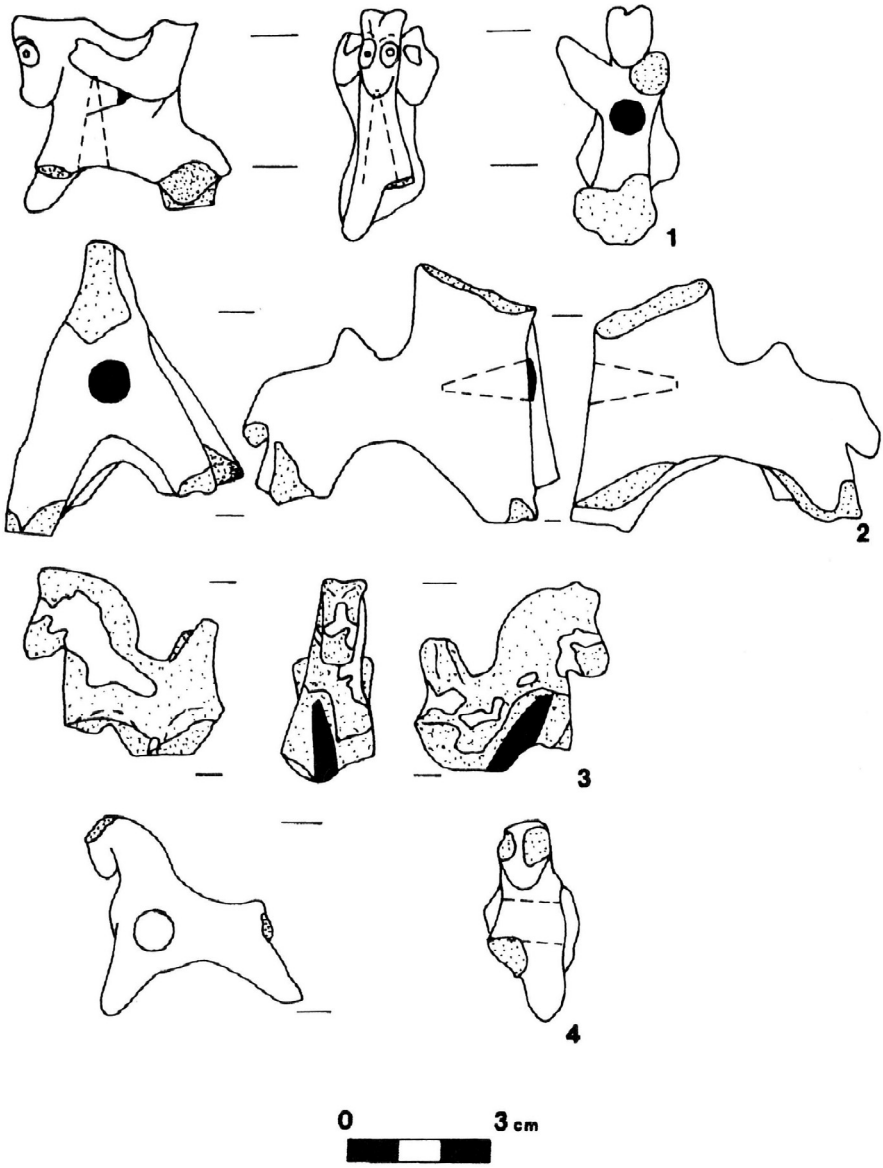


Fig. 8. Clay horse figurines from Wrocław, 13th–14th c. (Borkowski 1999, p. 190).

## CONCLUSION

Most of children's toys found in Silesia do not stand out among other medieval Polish toys. However, two types of toys: miniature boats and clay horse figurines are the most distinctive class of toys found in Poland. Their characteristic features, setting them apart from other toys, which were quickly and easily made as a by-product of other manufacturing processes, were the amount of labour put in their making, their level of detail and variety of forms. Strong foreign influences, trade and Silesia's geographic location as well as the importance of its river ports were such important factors, that they created a distinct style of children's toys. In other regions, these toys were most often very simple, and therefore unable to reflect differences in material culture and social processes. Because of this, Silesian toys are a source of much more information about medieval everyday life than more homogenous pieces, found in other regions of Poland.

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PAULINA ROMANOWICZ

# Archaeological finds of playthings in late medieval towns. Contribution to the study of the development of children in the past

## INTRODUCTION

Our knowledge about children in the Middle Ages is relatively limited. Philippe Ariés, a respected French historian, even formulated a thesis that in the Middle Ages there was no separate category of "childhood" (Ariés, 1995, pp. 11–14, 43–44). In his view it was a consequence of the specific social conditions of this era, which resulted in a lack of emotional bond between parents and children, failure to notice the differences between children and adults as well as no interest in children's fate.

"Childhood" is undoubtedly a cultural construct but "parents", "children" and the relationship between them is far from being purely cultural. People as a biological beings represent the species with a particularly developed need for caring for their offspring (Dawkins, 2012, pp. 201–203, 216–234). Children of our species, compared with the young of other mammals, are born too early to be able to function independently and survive outside their mother's body. It is an evolutionary price for our large brain (Blackmore, 2002, p. 119; LaFreniere, 2011, p. 473). Care for the newborn baby for the first few years is therefore a biological obligation essential for the survival of the species. It is hard to imagine that people of the Middle Ages were deprived of this biological need to maintain the continuity of our species, and furthermore, that this duty

has not developed an emotional bond between them and their offspring. The archaeological finds of toys for children, some of which may have been made by parents, seem to prove the existence of this relationship.

## PLAY IN CHILD'S LIFE

Play is an important human activity. It is present in our life from the earliest moments. Therefore, the essence of play, its function and meaning are frequently analyzed by the representatives of various fields of research. Most observations on this topic have been made with regard to children's play. As we know, play among children is considered as a normal activity just as work is for the adults. As a basic form of their everyday activities play develops their motor skills and social competence (Okoń, 1987, pp. 30–31). Play does not only involve pure fun, but it also stimulates learning and social activity. Since it appears naturally and spontaneously among children and young animals, then it is natural to assume that it must be of key importance for this period of their development.

Looking for that importance we may notice a range of functions that play fulfills in the lives of children. For most researchers they can be divided into two groups of functions – biological and adaptable. The control of the body movements and working on coordination, developing and strengthening the muscles and skeletal system as well as training the senses and developing instincts – all seem to be the most important in the group of bio-physiological functions (Huizinga, 1985, pp. 12–14; Okoń, 1987, pp. 45–46, 50–59; Grad, 1997, pp. 11–13; Burghardt, 2010, pp. 343–344; Pellis, Pellis and Bell, 2010, p. 280). Play is also seen through its adaptive function – as an activity enabling the adaptation to the environment and which instructs how to survive in adult life, how to control emotions and practice social skills. Furthermore, it develops the ability to adapt to the socio-cultural reality and to deal with unexpected situations (Okoń, 1987, pp. 45–46, 50–59, Grad, 1997, pp. 11–13; Pellis, Pellis and Bell, 2010, pp. 283–284, 286–287; LaFreniere, 2011, p. 468).

Moreover, play helps the child with exploring the world through four basic methods including experience, trying, imitation and construction. Consequently all forms of children's play may be divided into four basic categories: manipulative, imitative, constructive and physical play (Okoń, 1987, pp. 144–166). Each of them has a specific role in the child's development.

## MATERIAL SOURCES OF PLAY

Items surrounding people in their everyday life say a lot about them, their habits, social or material status. Hence, the archaeological findings may provide us with some information about people living in the past. Children's burials, elements of costume such as footwear or items employed in children's plays and games as well as footprints or fingerprints on objects made of clay are all material traces of the presence of children in different societies in the past (Sofaer Derevenski, 2000, pp. 6–7; Crown, 2010, p. 400).

Play accessories are a key element that arises during the process of playing. They may comprise items which are either specially prepared as toys or normally used for other purposes, but treated by the child as an object to play with (Wilkie, 2000, pp. 101–103). For the purposes of this essay I accept the definition of toy proposed by J. Bujak, "a material object made especially for play, whose meaning content is specific for its era or eras with regard to material, spiritual or social culture. This meaning content is communicated in a way which evokes ludic responses, and through them it shapes the physical, mental and emotional development" (Bujak, 1988, p. 24).

The identification of objects used for playing and games in the archaeological material evokes some problems since practically anything can become an object of play for the child. However, in an attempt to identify and interpret the archaeological material we use conventional categories for defining toys. The main criterion is their similarity to what we know of today's toys and secondly we also employ additional sources of evidence such as iconography and ethnography (Crawford, 2009, p. 59).

Unfortunately not all of the above mentioned forms of play are possible to describe on the basis of archaeological sources. Many forms of play are a spontaneous, disorganized and elusive form of activity which does not leave behind any material traces possible to identify today. For example, we do not know whether medieval children played hide and seek, what they built of sand and sticks or what they made out of snow. We can only assume that they also found pleasure in this carefree activity. It should therefore be kept in mind that not all games required an especially prepared toy (such as constructive plays) and that some of them were played with the use of objects not originally intended as toys.

To depict the issue outlined above I have chosen archaeological finds from the towns located along the southern Baltic coast, which date back to the late

Middle Ages. Linking some of them to the sphere of play is evident because of the similarity to the toys we know today. In the case of other finds, their interpretations as objects of play was determined based on the analogies from other sources. All items discussed below are presented by assigning them to three categories of children's play – manipulative, physical and imitative.

### *Manipulative Play*

Rattles found in the archaeological material are included in the category of toys for infants (Kunicka-Okuliczowa, 1959, p. 123). They are not very common, probably due to the material from which they were made (clay) and the nature of play in which they can be used. Mostly they come in the form of small clay domes with nodules formed on the surface and sometimes they are decorated with incisions. Such objects are usually filled with small pebbles, which worked similarly to modern rattles.

As we can imagine, they were the youngest children's toys for the earliest form of manipulative play, enabling for the development of their cognitive abilities. Pulling the hand in the direction of the desired object, grasping it, moving it from hand to hand, shaking – all this is an appropriate behaviour for children up to 1 year of age (Ilg, Ames and Baker, 2010, pp. 28–31). The manifestation of the regular development of the child at this stage is also focusing on the rattle, following it with its eyes, shaking it to see if it produces a sound, and so on.

### *Physical Play*

Another group of toys are items used in coordination games, suitable for children who have full control over their own body. These include all kinds of balls, pins and astragals, tops and the so-called buzzers.

Leather and wooden balls or clay marbles are quite frequent findings. The collection of this category of toys found in medieval towns is quite substantial (e.g. Gläser, 1988, p. 119; Buchholz, 1990, pp. 57–58; Mührenberg, 2008, pp. 329–330; Blaževičius, 2011, pp. 76–81, 84–88). They could be used for different types of physical games. Through play with balls children in the Middle Ages could develop their coordination, agility as well as orientation and concentration skills. All kinds of balls could also be used to practice the accuracy of the throw as well as many other varieties of games – children could roll them, throw to the target, hit them against the wall, toss and put into holes in the ground. The larger balls can be used for striking other objects placed in a row, such as bone pins.

The finds of cattle phallanges with drilled holes which are sometimes filled with a lead spike are interpreted as bowling pegs (Rębkowski, 1997, p. 239; 1998, p. 282; 1999, pp. 46, 110, 142; Samariter, 2000, p. 246; Ansorge and Wiethold, 2002, p. 168; Schäfer, 2005, p. 80; Samariter, 2007, pp. 163–164). The hypothesis about their roles as game accessories seems to find its confirmation in the iconographic sources, such as Peter Bruegel's "Children Games". Another type of toys made of bones are astragals (Blaževičius, 2011, pp. 88–91). Known since ancient times, this game certainly improved the dexterity and coordination skills of children. Accessories employed in that game were made from metatarsal bones of cattle.

Ethnographic sources support the hypothesis that metacarpal or metatarsal bones drilled in the middle of their length and found in towns were also objects of play (Enzerberger, 1997, p. 204; Samariter, 2001, p. 177; Ansorge, 2003, p. 197; Müller, 1996, p. 125). These were the so-called 'buzzers' and originally they also had strings passing through the drilled holes. The aim of the game played with their use was to keep them in motion for as long as possible (Blaževičius, 2008, p. 90). While playing such games children exercised their patience and consistency.

It seems that children trained similar abilities also by playing with tops (Rulewicz, 1958, p. 307; Buchholz, 1990, p. 58). Setting a wooden top into motion developed both the children's general abilities, as well as physical fitness and agility. There are a lot of finds of this kind in urban sites – all of them are similar in shape, and some are also decorated with simple incisions in the wood.

Balls, marbles, tops, "buzzers", bone pins or astragals discovered in the late medieval towns demonstrate knowledge of this type of play among their youngest inhabitants. With such amusements children learned and developed general skills (the skill of observation, imagination and thinking, memory and attention) and the ability to act in a reasonable way, so important especially for children aged 2–6 years (Okoń, 1987, p. 183). If all of these activities were performed in a separated playfield and had their pre-defined rules, children learned at the same time to comply with the rules of the game. Some of the aforementioned toys, such as wooden balls or bone pins probably could have been used for team play and activities that led to forming relationships between the players and which stimulated cooperation and competition (Okoń, 1987, pp. 186, 207–210).

### *Imitative Play*

Another category of children's toys in archaeological finds are all kinds of miniatures and models used in imitative play of children. Among the most commonly found are small weapons (mainly wooden swords but also bows, crossbows or slingshots – Rulewicz, 1958, p. 306; Kunicka-Okuliczowa, 1959, pp. 129–130; Gläser, 1992, pp. 80–81; Brather, 1996, p. 163; Ose, 2012, p. 402) and miniature vessels (Rulewicz, 1958, p. 306; Buchholz, 1990, p. 57; Rębkowski, 1997, p. 177; Nawrolska, 2008, p. 519; Paner, 2008, p. 531). Small vessels were mostly made of clay, less commonly from tin or silver. It has been argued that they were not made specifically as children's toys but rather that their primary purpose was to contain valuable items belonging to adults. But we cannot rule out the possibility that over time they have become an attractive object of imitative play, especially for girls.

Among other findings from the analyzed towns are models of boats (Rulewicz, 1958, p. 306; Kunicka-Okuliczowa, 1959, pp. 122–123; Buchholz, 1990, p. 60; Gläser, 1992, p. 80; Jagielska and Rodzik, 2004, p. 373), carved from wood or bark, as well as miniature versions of the tools used by adults – like, for example, a miniature plough from Wismar (Buchholz, 1990, pp. 58–60).

Another type of toys used for imitative play were figurines and dolls. In this group we have mostly clay figurines of horseback riders – there are quite a lot of them in different Medieval towns (Kunicka-Okuliczowa, 1958, p. 123; Gläser, 1988, p. 119; Rębkowski, 1998, p. 158; Nawrolscy, 1989, p. 287; Nawrolska, 2008, p. 519). It is said that they were a kind of side product of the work of potters who made them themselves or allowed their children to make such figurines. There are also figurines of animals, mainly clay birds (Gläser, 1988, p. 119). Among other interesting finds from the Middle Ages are also dolls made of organic materials such as wood (Gomułka, 2010, pp. 25–27; Mührenberg, 2012, pp. 219–220).

I would like to include in this group also finds of board games as well as items used in games of chance, such as dice, gaming pieces and gaming boards. Although at first glance it may seem that such objects were associated with the adults, it is plausible to assume that medieval children could have also used them on some occasions. Even if they did not understand the rules of particular board games they may have imitated their parents and 'played' them in their own childish way, with no specific attention to the results.

Dice are commonly found at Medieval sites (Rębkowski, 1989, p. 475; Falk and Gläser, 1988, p. 166; Nawrolscy, 1989, p. 287; Gläser, 1992, p. 77; Müller, 1996, p. 183; Rębkowski, 1996, p. 134; 1997, pp. 48, 122; Dwora-

czyk, Kowalska and Rulewicz 2003, p. 206, Blaževičius, 2011, pp. 140–145) and they were made from different materials including bone, horn, glass and amber. In the late Middle Ages, there were two main ways of marking dice: the 7-7-7 system and the system of 3-7-11, where the particular numbers refer to the sum of the numbers on opposite faces. Dice were also used to determine the number of moves on the chess board.

In the course of time older children and youngsters gain complete independence in the orchestration of games and a chance to practice their capacity to compete. The most popular board games played in late medieval towns were Nine Men's Morris and Trick Track – gaming boards for both of them have been found in several towns in the Baltic region (Caune, 1993, pp. 455–460; Kaute, 1998; Blaževičius, 2011, pp. 125–126; Möller, 2012, p. 208). Nine Men's Morris enjoyed the greatest popularity, because it was a fast game that did not require almost any special accessories – we often see the game boards incised on the reused wooden window frames or on stone floor tiles. There existed at least a couple of variants of this game in the late Middle Ages and each of them required a slightly different board. Almost anything could be used as gaming pieces – from small stones to drupes – but it is probable that there also existed gaming pieces especially made for this purpose. (Rulewicz, 1958, p. 307; Kunicka-Okuliczowa, 1959, p. 135; Falk, 1987, p. 70; Falk and Gläser, 1988, p. 165; Buchholz, 1990, p. 57; 1994, p. 74; Enzerberger, 1997, p. 204; Kościński, 1998, p. 110; Rębkowski, 1999, p. 276; Kasprzak, 2007, p. 19).

## AN EXPERIMENTAL CASE-STUDY

Ascribing the archaeological finds to specific advantages for the children's development is very hypothetical. The basis for such an attempt is the assumption that there are some social and biological stages of the child's development which the child can achieve through play no matter in what culture it grows up. The culture determines the forms of play which are more or less popular and more or less accepted by the adult members of the society.

Unfortunately, the long-term benefits of play for children's development are difficult to prove empirically even with regard to the children of today. To verify at least some of the hypotheses (proposed here and in other publications) regarding the ways of playing with different toys found during archaeological excavations, an experiment which involved

active participation of children was carried out.[1] To do this, we selected the „standard" set of medieval toys, which appears repeatedly in most of the towns in the late Middle Ages. The toy set comprised wooden dolls, clay figurines of horse riders and animals, miniature wooden boats, miniature vessels, miniature weapons, tops, rattles, bone pins, marbles, wooden and leather balls as well as board games for Nine Men's Morris with gaming pieces. The first task of the experiment was to make replicas of such finds and to buy their modern equivalents. We assumed that some of the kids would be playing with replicas of historical toys and that there would also be also control group playing with their modern counterparts.

The experiment was planned as follows:

1. A separated space was designated and divided into zones assigned to specific toys;
2. Children aged 2 to 12 years were invited to participate in the following stages of the experiment:

a. Absolutely free play – 10 min.
b. Talking with children about how they played with different toys 10–15 min.
c. The children return to play – 5–10 min.

The experiment was carried out in the summer of 2012, in three stages. The first stage took place in the Szczecin Culture Incubator (on 23rd July). Thanks to the kindness of the Stowarzyszenie Centrum Słowian i Wikingów „Wolin-Jomsborg-Vineta" (The Centre of Slavs and Vikings "Wolin-Jomsborg-Vineta") we could also carry out our experiment in their open-air museum during the Experimental Archaeology Workshop (on 28–29th July). The last time we invited kids to play with medieval toys was during the Augustinian Fair in Police-Jasienica (on 1st September).

Due to the nature of the project this experiment was carried out in field conditions, away from the laboratory, and therefore its results should be treated only as a suggestion. Among the problems that could affect the results presented below was certainly the completely different cultural background of the children who participated in the experiment compared to the cultural

[1] The experiment was carried out within the framework of the research project "*Homo Ludens*" *in a medieval town – archaeological traces of play* financed by the National Science Center awarded on the basis of a decision number DEC-2011/01/N/HS3/06086. I would like to thank the students of archeology from the University of Szczecin for their kind help: Ewa Górkiewicz, Adrian Ignaczewski, Dominika Kędzierska, Joanna Kuczkowska, Aleksandra Makowska, Magdalena Wujda and Karolina Zielińska.

background of children from the Middle Ages. Not without significance was also the presence of the children's parents and their caretakers or guardians. It is noteworthy that some of them actually influenced the ways in which children played with the toys. The experiment was also attended by several pairs of siblings, who very often played only with one another. Another factor that may have affected children's games and the use of toys was the fact that the children playing in one group could be observed by children waiting for their turn. Therefore, the statistics provided below should be approached with caution and treated as approximate.

In total as many as 103 children participated in the experiment – most of them came from northern Poland, but we also had children from Germany (Berlin, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Zittau, Sasnitz, Offenbach), Luxembourg and the United States (Chicago). The diagrams below shows the children's age (Fig. 1) and gender (Fig. 2) structure.

Everything that has happened during the experiment with children's play was photographed and filmed, and our observations were written down on pre-prepared forms. The interviews with children were recorded on tape.

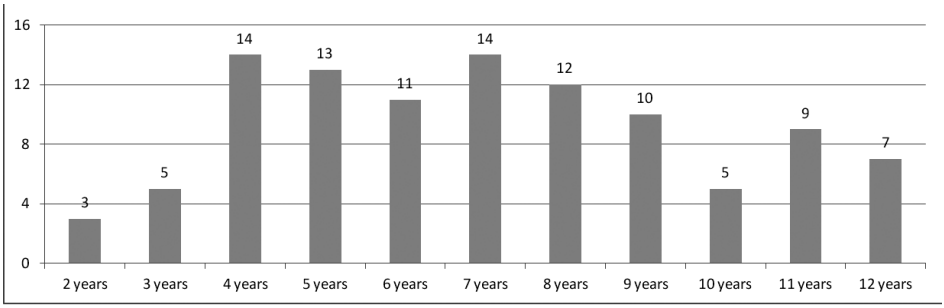


Fig. 1. Age diversity of children who took part in the experiment (drawing by P. Romanowicz).

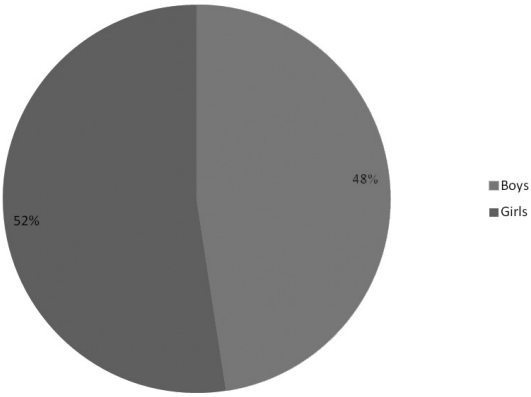


Fig. 2. Sex diversity of children who took part in the experiment (drawing by P. Romanowicz).

One of the main tasks of the experiment was to observe the games that children played with the use of specific toys. Although most of the replicas looked different than their contemporary counterparts, the children did not have any problems with determining the purpose of a specific toy. The method of trying and testing finally led them to understand how to play with various objects associated with specific games. There were some difficulties in the case of toys which required not only knowledge about how to play with them, but also some additional skills, such as the wooden tops for example. After the presentation of the correct method of play children tried it themselves and did it more properly. On the other hand – in the course of testing the opportunities for having fun with the objects they demonstrated originality and creativity typical for their age. In comparison with the responses to the question "How can you play with this toy? ", a set of activities that took place was much richer, as is shown in Table 1. This confirms the thesis about the inexhaustible number of forms of play that could have been invented by children in the past, even with the use of very unusual objects which we know from archaeological materials.

Table 1.

| Toy | How children played? | Question: What games can you play with this toy? |
|---|---|---|
| Miniature vessels | imitating transferring/pouring something from vessel to vessel;<br>imitating cooking;<br>adding 'spices' and 'flavours' to the vessels with the use of clay rattles (rattles as containers of spices);<br>imitating drinking;<br>filling vessels with little clay balls and pulling them out;<br>pouring marbles from one vessel to another;<br>watering clay figurines of animals;<br>placing vessels in different positions according to various criteria – for example in a line, semi-circle or circle or segregating them into two groups: red and grey ones;<br>building a tower from the vessels;<br>placing them on the head and pretending that it is a hat | "household";<br>„tea time";<br>„cooking";<br>„restaurant";<br>„kitchen";<br>„party";<br>„drinking";<br>„transfer water from one vessel to another"; |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Marbles | tossing;<br>rolling;<br>throwing to the container – testing the accuracy of throwing;<br>pushing with a finger snap;<br>putting inside the vessels;<br>using marbles as pieces on the board game; | "Balls! You can take it and toss it";<br>„you can roll them";<br>„throwing to the container from the distance";<br>„or to the target";<br>„you can shoot with them";<br>„we strike them down";<br>„billiards";<br>„collecting"; |
| Animal and horseback riders' figurines | the fight between the figures;<br>sliding them on the table or on a ground;<br>hitting against the ground – imitating fast gallop of the horses;<br>feeding and watering them from the vessels;<br>throwing into the water; | "war", "moving them and attacking";<br>„hunting";<br>„racing"<br>„some wood";<br>„a farm";<br>„a stable";<br>„cowboys";<br>„a village";<br>„imagining that they make voices"; |
| Rattles | shaking;<br>tossing;<br>shaking them above the miniature vessels (like sprinkling with spices); | "you can shake like this";<br>„it rattles";<br>„for tossing? "<br>„for little kids";<br>„it has to be a rattle"; |
| Nine Men's Morris board and pieces | dividing pieces in two equal groups;<br>placing the pieces on the board and moving them by well-known principles from other games (such as jumping like in checkers);<br>gaming with some of the principles told by guardian (pieces in the right places);<br>playing by completely invented rules;<br>building a tower from the pieces | "games, board games"; "some board game";<br>„for playing with gaming pieces";<br>„it can be checkers";<br>„chess and checkers";<br>„Mensch ärgere Dich nicht? ";<br>„It's Nine Men's Morris. My favorite game! "; |
| Dolls | setting them in position of holding hands or 'talking' two dolls to each other;<br>moving and imitating the walk of the dolls;<br>throwing into the water – taking a bath;<br>putting into the boat;<br>as shields while fighting with swords; | "dolls"; "we move them";<br>„moving them and playing theatre";<br>„this one is like a boy and this one is a girl";<br>„it is a puppet";<br>„household";<br>„kissing"; |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Miniature boats | letting on the water;<br>floating on the surface of the water;<br>fighting with boats;<br>sinking;<br>racing; | "let it float on the water";<br>„floating and attack";<br>„float and sink them";<br>„racing";<br>„shooting";<br>„fishing";<br>„pirates"; |
| Balls | tossing;<br>rolling on the ground;<br>throwing and catching;<br>juggling;<br>setting them in a line or group;<br>putting on the head and balancing to keep them there; | "ball";<br>„throwing";<br>„balls for juggling";<br>„football";<br>„it may be something like a thing used for squeezing and exercising your hand"; |
| Bone pins | striking pins standing in a way known from a modern game;<br>striking pins standing in a line but from one side;<br>striking pins with the ball pushed with a sword (like in billiard);<br>building a tower of bones; | "it it set up and you can throw it";<br>„by hitting and beating down";<br>„I bombarded it from above";<br>„bowling";<br>„dinosaurs bones"; |
| Tops | wrapping a string around the top;<br>trying to twist the top with its flank side or the flat part;<br>trying to spin them in a shown way;<br>playing with the string to spin the top, making pirouettes with it; | "something to twist";<br>„you whirl it in some way";<br>„it may be a top";<br>„strange yo-yo"; |
| Swords | fight between two children;<br>striking worms from a tree standing nearby;<br>hitting the fence;<br>driving into the ground;<br>waving in the air, fighting with two swords at once (two hands);<br>„sharpening" swords by rubbing them one against the other;<br>pushing a wooden ball to strike the pins (as in billiards); | "swords to fight";<br>„war";<br>„duel";<br>„hitting the tree to push the sword in it";<br>„to be a knight";<br>"swordplay"; |

In the literature about play and games' accessories found at archaeological sites a question of the attribution of specific sex is sometimes raised. As we know children begin to identify themselves with a particular gender roughly at 2–3 years of age (Konner, 2011, p. 261). That diversity appears even earlier in their preferences for toys and forms of play, and even before that age they are able to name specific objects as male or female (Konner, 2011, p. 507;

LaFreniere, 2011, pp. 474–475). There is no doubt that some of the differences between the male and female gender are culturally constructed and generated. However, there are also such differences in genders which are present in all cultures and which seem to be independed of these cultures (Konner, 2011, p. 262). In this context toys play a role in creating and reinforcing gender patterns in the process of socialization and they define social roles played by men and women. The best for such socialization are thematic and imitative plays, during which children instinctively, but according to certain rules encoded by their parents, choose toys appropriate for their gender.

Such differences in boys' and girls' games have become apparent in the course of the experiment. Moreover, they also appeared in the statements of children. One of the boys who said that dolls are used for playing 'household', was embarassed by the fact that he was the fastest with this answer and added: „This may seem odd, because I am a boy, and this is a girls' play"

Some differences emerged in the percentage of boys and girls playing with different toys (Table 2). It can be confirmed that there are specific gender characteristics in miniature vessels and swords. The former are played with mostly by girls, and the latter – by boys. In the case of miniature vessels very interesting is the complete lack of interest in them among boys from the 'control group', playing with their modern counterparts. It is presumed that their interest and play with replicas of miniature vessels was caused because of the difference of raw material from the toys that they know. Interestingly, those who played with them longer treated them primarily as elements of a bigger structure, e.g. they built towers from them. Very similar was the situation with dolls – the predominance of girls in the group playing with replicas turned to the their absolute dominance in the control group. And boys playing with dolls' replicas used them as shields while playing with swords. Thus, in both cases, boys playing with girls' toys found for them a different, more masculine usage.

The popularity of plays with dolls among girls and their clear assignment to the female role has its evolutionary reasons. As it is noted among the primates, the chances of survival of the monkey's firstborn is two to four times higher for mothers who had experience as juveniles in caring for infants of other monkeys in a kind of a play. The imitative play in which one pretends to be a parent contributes in this case to the biological success of the species (LaFreniere, 2011, p. 469).

Swords, in turn, proved to be the most masculine toys. This preference also can be explained in terms of evolutionary biology. Through these

toys the boys are allowed to manifest physical aggression. In most cultures, boys are rougher and less nurturing than girls, and it is visible from the age of 3. This physical aggression has nothing to do with the cultural past of the male part of our species, when they acted as hunters. Physical aggression plays a major role in the competition for resources, including mates (Konner, 2011, pp. 262–264).

Mostly boys played with swords, but the group of children which played with these typically masculine toys also included girls. Interestingly, both boys and girls used the swords in an identical way. This stands in contrast to the situation observable in case of the group that was playing with feminine toys.

Gender indifference in both groups was observed in the board game. In both groups the proportions were divided equally. There appeared small differences in the play with bone pins, tops and balls. The gendering of two toys which are usually ascribed to boys – namely the horseback riders' figures and wooden boats – is rather controversial however. In the light of the data in Table 2 it is difficult to unambiguously assign them to any of the sexes. Figures of the horseback riders were included in group alongside the figurines of animals and maybe this is the reason why there is a higher proportion of girls. However the one hundred percent advantage in the control group seems to tilt the balance in this side. In the case of boats, the situation is rather unclear, but based on subjective conclusions from the observation of the children's play I would be willing to recognize that this is not a toy which can be attributed to either sex.

Table 2.

| Toys | Toy replicas | | Modern toys | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| Miniature vessels | 24% | 76% | 0% | 100% |
| Marbles | 41% | 59% | 67% | 33% |
| Animal and horseback riders' figurines | 23% | 77% | 0% | 100% |
| Rattles | 33% | 67% | 0% | 0% |
| Nine Men's Morris | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% |
| Dolls | 39% | 61% | 0% | 100% |
| Miniature boats | 29% | 71% | 62% | 38% |
| Balls | 46% | 54% | 80% | 20% |
| Bone pins | 51% | 49% | 43% | 57% |
| Tops | 51% | 49% | 33% | 67% |
| Swords | 66% | 34% | 70% | 30% |

As we know toys could also function as tools in the hands of adults, who used them to strengthen the roles and social behaviour of children. This evidence confirms the existence of toys typical for girls (miniature vessels, dolls), as well as those typical for boys (miniature swords). It describes the sense of socialization and adaptation through the play. However, there is a whole set of toys which remain completely silent with regard to gender disposition. So we should be careful with these kinds of conclusions.

## THE ROLE OF PLAY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN THE MIDDLE AGES

In the light of everything that was said above it is clear that toys are not only objects to play with, but can also be an important element in the social dialogue. Play has an undoubted impact on the development of children and brings concrete benefits for their adult life. Playing during the period of youth prepares the motor system, especially the nervous and muscle system, to work efficiently in the adult life. It also affects the regular development of brain structures (Pellis, Pellis and Bell, 2010, p. 280). Furthermore, it is also an important element in the construction of social dynamics, as shown in experiments of evolutionary biologists. An individual deprived of the possibility of playing in youth shows significant

Fig. 3. Children playing with wooden tops. Jasienica (photo by A. Ignaczewski).

Fig. 4. Girl playing with wooden boats. Wolin (photo by A. Makowska).

Fig. 5. Children playing with rattle. Wolin (photo by J. Kuczkowska).

cognitive, behavioural, emotional and social deficits in adult life. They are more aggressive and socially incompetent, and have difficulty in coping with unexpected situations (Pellis, Pellis and Bell, 2010, pp. 283–284, 286–287; LaFreniere, 2011, p. 468).

During the play children learn to solve problems and acquire practical skills on both social and survival level, for example with regard to food preparation and child care (Singer, Singer, D'Agostino and DeLong, 2009, p. 286). Play teaches them emotional communication and emotional management. The ability to control emotions, in turn, is the basis for the acceptance and reconciliation with certain roles in a social group (LaFreniere, 2011, pp. 480–482).

All this determines that play in the period of childhood carries very important long-term benefits. The presence of toys in the archaeological material convinces us that it is a permanent feature of our nature and culture. Despite the fact that the forms of play leaving behind any material sources are just a part of this sphere of children's life, we still can come up with some conclusions.

Firstly – the dominance of objects used for imitative play and games with specific rules convinces us about paying great attention to the activities which adapted and prepared children to function in a socio-cultural environment in which they were be born. It surely was so in the medieval town on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea. Secondly – as shown above, some of the toys have its origin in evolutionary imposed gender roles and seem to maintain or even strengthen such roles in the play. The toys employed in physical games prove the presence of this kind activity, of which we know that it develops healthy bones, muscles as well as nervous and cardiovascular systems. These are the main implications for the development of children in the medieval towns which are visible on the basis of the discovered toys and accessories for playing.

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# Contributors

**Michał Pawleta**
Institute of Prehistory
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań
ul. Św. Marcin 78
61-809 Poznań
Poland

mpawleta@amu.edu.pl
phone: +48 618294797

**Katarzyna Orzyłowska**
Department of Archaeology
University of Szczecin
ul. Krakowska 71-79
71-017 Szczecin
Poland

katarzyna.orzylowska@wp.pl

**Bartosz Karolak**
Institute of History and International Relationships
University of Szczecin
ul. Krakowska 71-79
71-017 Szczecin
Poland

bartosz.karolak@gmail.com

**Katarína Hladíková**
Faculty of Philosophy, Comenius University
Gondova 2
Bratislava 81499
Slovac Republic

katarina.hladikova@gmail.com
phone: 00421904312898

**Jan Turek**
University of Hradec Králové
Department of Archaeology
Rokitanského 62
500 03 Hradec Králové
Czech Republic

turekjan@hotmail.com

**Marta Chmiel**
Department of Archaeology
University of Szczecin
ul. Krakowska 71-79
71-017 Szczecin
Poland

chmiel.marta86@gmail.com

**Aija Vilka**
University of Latvia,
Faculty of History and Philosophy
Maskavas iela 321-74
Riga, LV-1063
Latvia

vilka.aija@gmail.com
phone: +371 26367669

**Povilas Blaževičius**
National Museum Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania
Katedros a. 4
LT-01143 Vilnius
Lithuania

p.blazevicius@valdovurumai.lt

**Izabela Gomułka**
University of Wrocław
ul. Lipowa 6
09-410 Rogozino
Poland

iza.gomulka@poczta.onet.pl
phone: +48 693801600

**Paulina Romanowicz**
Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology
Polish Academy of Sciences
Ośrodek Archeologii Średniowiecza Krajów Nadbałtyckich
ul. Kuśnierska 12/12a
70-536 Szczecin
Poland

p.romanowicz@iaepan.szczecin.pl