

BEADS FOUND IN MEN'S GRAVES FROM THE 10TH AND 11TH CENTURIES IN THE CARPATHIAN BASIN. ANALYSIS AND OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER-RELATED OBJECT TYPES OF THE PERIOD

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Abstract: In early medieval societies, it is not only social differences that are expressed by the grave goods, but also genders. If we associate the 10th century finds with gender, the general picture is that women were buried with jewellery and men with weapons. Beads are also typically a type of artefact that is mainly associated with female artefacts, although the male burials currently under discussion reflect the fact that there was no regularity by which they could not have been included in male graves. Thus, in the first part of this study, we will seek to answer the question of whether it is indeed possible to classify finds according to their recovery from male or female graves, or the situation is much more complex. According to our current data, only a small number of beaded male graves dated to the 10th–11th centuries were found in the Carpathian Basin: 36 graves from a total of 28 burial sites. Based on the beads found, men's graves are not characterized by the wearing of long strings of beads. In male burials, there are usually 1–3 beads and very rarely 4–5. Examining the beaded male graves of the Carpathian Basin, two chronological groups emerge: 1. Includes weapons-horse burials with richer grave goods. These may have been buried mainly in the first half of the 10th century, but before the end of the 10th century at the latest. 2. A group of beaded men with more modest grave goods, dating as early as the mid- or rather mid-late 10th century. The S-ended ribbed lockring, found in Szegvár, suggests that the custom may have been practiced as late as the early 12th century. But by this time, beads might have been placed in burials with far fewer, or even in the absence of other grave goods. Two trends emerge in the types of beads. One is that only monochrome beads are placed in graves. The other is when they just put beads with eye ornamentation in these graves. In contrast to other ornamental beads, eye beads may have been used in men's burials because they had a protective function, protecting the wearer from the evil eye. Given the wide distribution of the eye beads and their long period of use, it seems that the superstition of the evil eye was known among the conquering Hungarians.

Cuvinte-cheie: secolele X–XI, Bazinul Carpatic, mărgelile și cerceii în morminte masculine, vârfuri de săgeți în morminte feminine, gender, superstiții, deochi
Rezumat: În societățile medievale timpurii nu doar diferențele sociale sunt reflectate în obiectele funerare, ci și cele de gen. Dacă asociem artefactele din secolul al X-lea cu genul, imaginea generală este că femeile au fost îngropate cu bijuterii, iar bărbații cu arme. De asemenea, mărgelile sunt, de obicei, un tip de artefact care este asociat în principal cu obiectele feminine, deși înmormântările masculine aflate în discuție în prezent reflectă faptul că nu exista o regulă prin care acestea să nu fi fost incluse în mormintele masculine. Astfel, în prima parte a studiului vom încerca să răspundem la întrebarea dacă este, într-adevăr, posibil să clasificăm obiectele în funcție de faptul că sunt găsite în morminte masculine sau feminine, sau dacă situația este mult mai complexă. Conform datelor noastre actuale, doar un număr mic de morminte bărbătești cu mărgelile au fost găsite în Bazinul Carpatic în secolele X–XI. Avem date despre 36 de morminte dintr-un total de 28 de situri funerare. Pe baza mărgelilor găsite, se poate spune că mormintele bărbaților nu se caracterizează prin purtarea unor șiruri lungi de mărgelile. În înmormântările masculine, există de obicei 1–3 mărgelile și foarte rar 4–5. Examinând mormintele bărbătești cu mărgelile din Bazinul Carpatic, se desprind două grupe cronologice: 1. înmormântări cu depuneri de cai, arme, piese de harnașament, cu artefacte mai bogate. Este posibil că acestea să se dateze în principal în prima jumătate a secolului al X-lea, și cel târziu până la sfârșitul secolului al X-lea. 2. Un grup de morminte de bărbați cu mărgelile, cu artefacte mai modeste, care pot fi încadrate la mijlocul sau sfârșitul secolului al X-lea. În cazul de tamplă cu terminație în -S, descoperit la Szegvár, sugerează că acest ritual ar fi putut fi practicat până mai târziu, chiar și la începutul secolului al XII-lea. Dar până la această dată, mărgelile puteau fi depuse în morminte cu mult mai puține artefacte sau chiar în absența altor obiecte de inventar funerare. Două tendințe apar în ceea ce privește tipurile de mărgelile. Una este aceea că în morminte sunt depuse doar mărgelile monocrome. Cealaltă este atunci când se pun doar mărgelile ornamente cu ochi. Spre deosebire de alte mărgelile ornamentale, este posibil ca mărgelile cu ochi să fi fost folosite la înmormântările bărbaților pentru că aveau o funcție protectoare, protejându-l pe purtător de deochi. Datorită răspândirii largi a mărgelilor ornamentate cu ochi și a perioadei lungi de utilizare a acestora, se pare că superstiția deochiului era cunoscută în rândul maghiarilor cuceritori.

INTRODUCTION

Jewellery was a defining element of 10th century material culture, but their number gradually decreased from the middle of the century until it almost entirely disappeared from funerary representation during the 11th century. Most of these objects were made of metal (bronze, silver, gold, very rarely iron), and included bracelets, lockrings, finger rings, discoidal braid ornaments, and many other objects worn primarily for decorative purposes. Additional to metal jewellery, glass beads

were also popular during this period, the value of which cannot be underestimated. After the collapse of the large glass-making centres in the 8th century, distance trade was no longer possible¹. Thus, obtaining glass must have been very difficult during this period, while the demand for beads remained constant, so the price of glassware must have been relatively high. From the 10th century onwards, the conquering Hungarians were able to obtain glass from

¹ On the sourcing of glass by distance trade and the collapse of glass production centres see Phelps et alii 2016.

workshops around Kyiv, which they could also process locally in small secondary workshops. From the end of the 10th century onwards, there are records of glass being produced primarily within the Carpathian Basin², but the quality of this glass was far below that obtained by trade. So, the process of sourcing and manufacturing glass was very complex in this period.

According to research, beads appeared in the 10th century primarily as accessories for women's and children's graves, which is partly true. However, they also occur in a small percentage of the male graves. Apparently, women preferred them for their decorative function since they were used mainly in strings of beads. In fact, it is unclear what function the beads found in the graves of men might have had, since very few of such beads were found.

The aim of this study is to examine in detail the male beaded graves and to answer the question of how and why men wore this type of jewellery. Also, I will examine whether there was a certain gendered nature to the artefacts in terms of what graves they tended to be found in, or the way in which they were worn made them gender specific. Therefore, the question arises, can graves be defined as male or female graves by the objects discovered in them, or is the phenomenon more nuanced?

CHARACTERISTICS OF BEADED MEN'S GRAVES

For presenting a different perspective on bead use in the period, it is necessary to examine in detail the context of the male graves in which the beads were found. We have collected data from 36 graves from 28 burial sites in the Carpathian Basin, which suggests that beads have been used in male graves (Fig. 1). In addition, in one case it is questionable whether the grave is male or female, as the nature of the burial does not exclude either possibility. Three other burials have been identified as male in the anthropological and archaeological descriptions, but the way in which the beads found in the burials were worn does not support this.

Before analysing the graves, it should be pointed out that not all the skeletons were examined anthropologically. Only 18 graves from 10 cemeteries were examined. For the other cemeteries, we can rely on other grave goods and on field observations by archaeologists. It is possible that future anthropological analyses may partially modify our present data, but the archaeological phenomenon observed here fits all these graves, and the cases that do 'stand out' are discussed in greater detail. In most cases, the age of the skeletons has not been examined, and where we do have data, it shows a very diverse picture: one case of juvenile, seven of adult, one adult-mature, one mature and two senile male graves contained beads. Only those of adult age in the anthropological sense could be included in the analysis, as child skeletons could not be separated

due to the lack of sex characteristics. As a result, it can be concluded that beads are found in male graves regardless of age. However, apart from the limitations of the analysis, we can assume that younger age groups may also have worn beads, a good example being grave 35 at Karos II. A bead was also found in the burial of an *Infans* II boy, not yet an adult in anthropological terms, but the mounted belt set found in the same grave certainly confirms that he was a young adult, as was the custom of the time.

Four graves from four sites need to be discussed in more detail. At Rusvoce – *Wiesenacker dűlő* the skeleton from grave 28 was identified as male. A bronze locking fragment, a vessel and 46 beads were found in the burial. As pottery and lockrings can be found in graves regardless of sex and age, only the beads can provide information about the gender of the skeleton. In our case, the 46 beads do not fit the phenomenon that we have experienced in other graves. Therefore, we consider it likely that an incorrect sex determination was made for this grave³. In grave E of Rakamaz – *Strázsadomb* a bead, a stirrup, a girth buckle and a bit were found. It is not clear from the finds whether the burial is male or female⁴. However, the presence of a bead does not exclude the possibility of a male grave, as it fits in well with the burials under discussion. In the case of Tiszabездé – *Haranglábűlő* grave 2, the gender was determined on the basis of the items found in the burial. Graves with horse equipment and weapons were mostly associated with males⁵. However, this had already been questioned by Istvánovits, who considered that the seven beads and the small silver mounts suggested a female grave, while the quiver fragments and arrowheads indicated a male grave⁶. The situation is similar at grave 63 of Sárrétudvari – *Hízófold*, where lockrings, ball buttons, quivers, arrowheads, antler stiffening plaques and 14 beads were found, which were worn as a string of beads. An anthropological description of the burial was also made, which identified it as a male of mature age. Thus, the number and mode of wearing of the beads in the graves at Rusvoce, Tiszabездé and Sárrétudvari suggested that they might be female graves. It is not typical for men to wear longer strings of beads, as the other graves under discussion confirm. The regularity is that mostly 1–3 beads could be placed in the men's graves, or very rarely 4–5 pieces could be found. In the case of the graves in Tiszabездé and Sárrétudvari, the weapons were the primary reason for concluding that they were male graves, and the anthropological evidence for the latter burials confirmed this. In the most recent anthropological analysis of the cemetery at Sárrétudvar, the morphological analysis could not be repeated due to the fragmentary bone material of grave 63, but the archaeogenetic-based

³ The erroneous sex determination of the individual in the grave was already pointed out by Ciprián Horváth, who analysed the cemetery in detail, also based on the string of beads, see Horváth 2014a, p. 142.

⁴ Fodor 1996, p. 110–112.

⁵ Istvánovits 2003, p. 209.

⁶ Istvánovits 2003, p. 440.

² See Szilágyi 2000.

Map no.	Funerary site and grave number	Age	Position of the beads in the grave	Number of the beads and the types	Anthropological and archaeological analysis of the graves
1.	Bátorove-Kosihy, gr. 5	unknown	unknown	1 bead: type 1 1 bead: type 2 1 bead unknown type	Točík 1968, p. 58–62, pl. 52; Nevizánszky, Prohászka 2020, p. 28.
2.	Debrecen – Józsa, Clara Zetkin utca, gr. 15	unknown	next to the right knee	1 bead: type 3	M. Nepper 2002, vol. I: p. 29–36; vol. II: pl. 8.
3.	Eger – Szépasszonyvölgy, gr. 1969/3	unknown	unknown	quantity and type are unknown	Révész 2008, p. 109–123.
4.	Eperjeske, gr. 2	unknown	around the neck	2 beads: type 4	Kiss 1920–1922, p. 43–45, fig. 5.
5.	Hajdúszoboszló – Árkoshalom, gr. 248	adultus-maturus	around the skull	1 bead: type 4	M. Nepper 2002, vol. I: p. 58–121; vol. II: pl. 102; Hüse, Szathmáry 2002.
6.	Salka	unknown	unknown	quantity and type are unknown	Točík 1968, p. 40.
7.	Jászapáti	unknown	unknown	unknown	Fodor 1996, p. 236.
8.	Karcsa – Kormoska, gr. 39	unknown	around the skull	3 beads: type 5	Horváth 2020, p. 95–110, pl. 56, 62.
9.	Karcsa – Kormoska, gr. 78	unknown	around the neck	5 beads: type 5	Kustár et alii 2005, p. 145–146.
10.	Karos – Eperjesszög II, gr. 29	adultus	around the neck	1 bead: type 6	
11.	Karos – Eperjesszög II, gr. 35	infans II	around the neck	3 beads: type 4.1	Révész 1996; Kustár 1996.
12.	Karos – Eperjesszög II, gr. 61	senilis	around the neck	1 bead: type 4	
13.	Kenézlő – Fazekaszug, gr. 10	unknown	around the radius	1 bead: type 4.2	
14.	Kenézlő – Fazekaszug, gr. 16	unknown	unknown	4 beads: type 4.1	Fettich 1931, p. 48–112.
15.	Kenézlő – Fazekaszug, gr. 45	juvenis-adultus?	unknown	2 beads: type 4.1.	Horváth 2019, p. 55–83. Horváth 2020, p. 116–188.
16.	Kenézlő – Fazekaszug, gr. 46	unknown	around the skull	1 bead: type 3	
17.	Cluj-Napoca – Zápolya Street, gr. 6	unknown	around the neck	1 bead: type 4.2	Gáll 2013, p. 268–292, pl. 123. Gáll et alii 2020.
18.	Kunadacs – Köztemető	unknown	unknown	1 unknown type	Fodor 1996, p. 333–336.
19.	Nagyhalász – Kiszombor, gr. 15	matures-senilis?	unknown	2 beads: type 4	Istvánovits 2003, p. 146–149, pl. 135.
20.	Comloşu Mare	unknown	unknown	3 unknown types	Gáll 2013, p. 348–349.
21.	Tomnatic – Kleine Hügel, gr. 2	unknown	unknown	1 bead: type 4	Gáll 2013, p. 366–368.
22.	Rusovce – Wieseacker dűlő, gr. 206	adultus	around the neck	1 bead: type 1.1 1 bead: type 7 1 unknown type	Horváth 2014a, p. 138–181, pl. 83.
23.	Piliny – Leshegy, gr. 2	unknown	around the skull	1 bead: type 4.1	Horváth 2019 p. 57–65, pl. 16.
24.	Püspökladány – Eperjesvölgy, gr. 59	adultus	around the neck	1 bead: type 4.3	M. Nepper 2002, vol I: p. 128–295; vol II: pl. 151, 214; Hüse, Szathmáry 2002.
25.	Püspökladány – Eperjesvölgy, gr. 529	maturus	unknown	1 bead: type 4.4	
26.	Rakamaz – Strázsadomb, gr. E	unknown	unknown	1 unknown type	Fodor 1996, p. 110–119.
27.	Rétközberencs – Paromdomb, gr. 2	unknown	unknown	1 bead: type 1	Istvánovits 2003, p. 176–179, pl. 167.
28.	Sárrétudvari – Hízófield, gr. 34	adultus	around the neck	1 bead: type 3	M. Nepper 2002, p. 296–388; Oláh 1990; Tihanyi 2020.
29.	Sárrétudvari – Hízófield, gr. 120	adultus	unknown	1 bead: type 6	
30.	Şicliău – Gropoiaie, gr. 2	unknown	around the neck	1 bead: type 4 1 bead: type 4.3	Gáll 2013, p. 444–457, pl. 235.
31.	Szegvár – Oromdűlő, gr. 207	juvenis	around the neck	1 bead: type 8	Bende, Lőrinczy 1997; Marcsik 1997.
32.	Szered II, gr. 4/55	unknown	unknown	1 bead: type 4	Točík 1968, p. 49–56, pl. 47,
33.	Tiszabercel – Újsor, gr. 2	unknown	unknown	4 beads: type 5?	Istvánovits 2003, p. 199–203.
34.	Tiszaszederkény – Vegyi kombinát, gr. 3	unknown	unknown	2 beads: type 1	Horváth 2020, p. 321–326, pl. 222.
35.	Törökszentmiklós – Szenttamáspuszta	unknown	on a lockring	1 bead: type 3	Petkes 2011, fig. 14.
36.	Újtikos – Demeteri gödrök, gr. 15	adultus?	around the neck	1 bead: type 6	Tóth 2014, p. 165–169, pl. 116,

Figure 1. Details of beads found in men's graves.

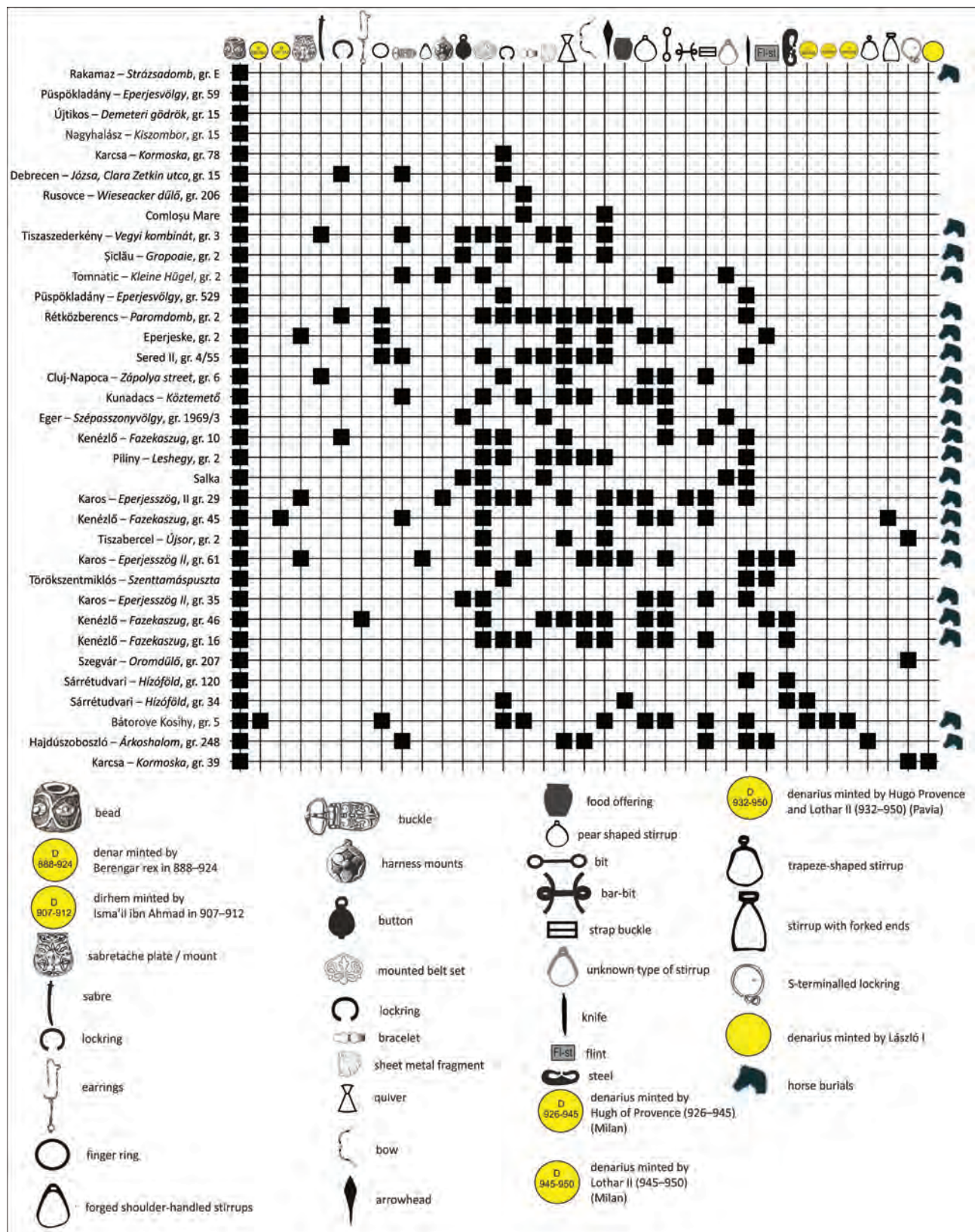


Figure 2. The seriation and systematisation table of the beaded male graves in the Carpathian Basin.

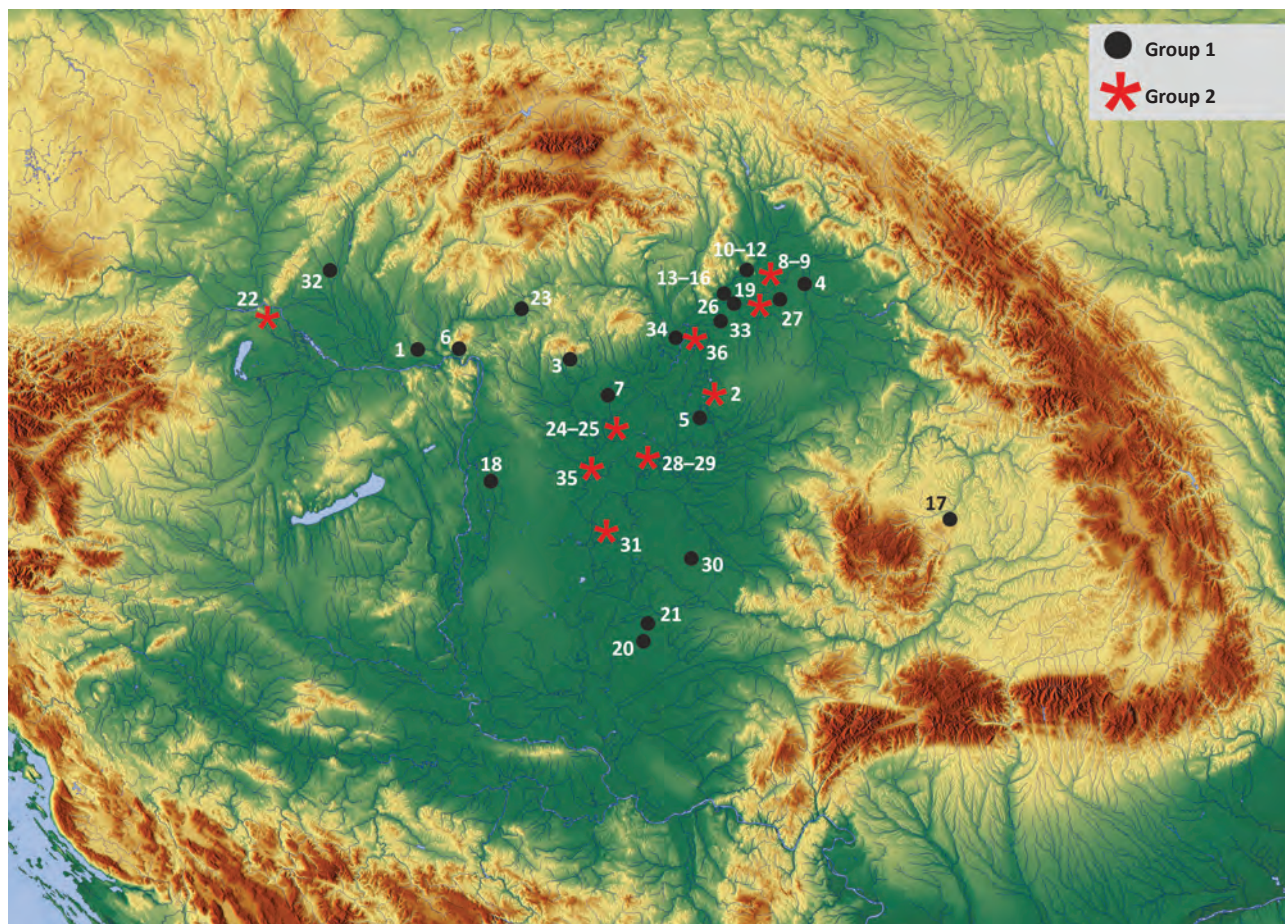


Figure 3. Geographical distribution of beaded male graves within the Carpathian Basin: 1. Bátorove Kosihy; 2. Debrecen – Józsa, Clara Zetkin utca, gr. 15; 3. Eger – Szépasszonyvölgy, gr. 1969/3; 4. Eperjeske, gr. 2; 5. Hajdúszoboszló – Árkoshalom, gr. 248; 6. Salka; 7. Jászapáti; 8–9. Karcsa – Kormoska, gr. 39, 78; 10–12. Karos – Eperjesszög II, gr. 29, 35, 61; 13–16. Kenézlő – Fazekaszug, gr. 10, 16, 45, 46; 17. Cluj-Napoca – Zápolya Street, gr. 6; 18. Kunadacs – Köztemető; 19. Nagyhalász – Kiszombor, gr. 15; 20. Comloșu Mare; 21. Tomnatic – Kleine Hügel, gr. 2; 22. Rusovce – Wieseacker dűlő, gr. 206; 23. Piliny – Leshegy, gr. 2; 24–25. Püspökladány – Eperjesvölgy, gr. 59, 529; 26. Rakamaz – Strázsadomb, gr. E; 27. Rétközberencs – Paromdomb, gr. 2; 28–29. Sárrétudvari – Hízóföld, gr. 34, 120; 30. Șiclău – Gropoiaie, gr. 2; 31. Szegvár – Oromdűlő, gr. 207; 32. Sered II, gr. 4/55; 33. Tiszabercel – Újsor, gr. 2; 34. Tiszaszederkény – Vegyi kombinát, gr. 3; 35. Törökszentmiklós – Szenttamáspusztá; 36. Újtikos – Demeteri gödrök, gr. 15.

sex determination of the sample from the skull suggested that it was in fact a female. According to current data, this is the first known female burial site with archery equipment (not just with arrowheads) from the 10th century Carpathian Basin⁷. The grave at Tiszabezdéd cannot be analysed further due to the lack of bone material, but the evidence from the grave at Sárrétudvar suggests that it is also likely to be a female grave. Although these graves show the drawbacks of determining the gender of the deceased on the basis of archaeological finds, our analysis shows that if we do not try to determine the gender of the deceased only on the basis of the artefacts in the grave, but also taking into account the way and context in which the objects were worn, the finds can also provide information about the gender.

However, the phenomenon is not era- and area-specific, as we also have data from periods before the 10th century and from other regions. From the Avar

period, Ilona Kovrig⁸ and István Bóna⁹ have studied the phenomenon, both pointing out that beads are typically found in low numbers in male graves. Looking beyond the Carpathian Basin to other areas, we can observe that this burial custom was widespread. O'Sullivan, in her collection of Viking beaded male graves, pointed out that similar burials are known outside Scandinavia, in present-day Russia, Iceland, England and the Baltic regions. Her observations also suggest that these graves may contain mainly one to three beads¹⁰. This male bead-wearing custom was therefore not only characteristic of the conquering Hungarians, but we can rather talk about a more widespread custom in time and space.

It is significant to look at how men's bead wear differs from what was commonly found in women's graves. Or can we talk about two different ways of bead wear? Kovrig

⁸ Kovrig 1957, p. 9.

⁹ Bóna 1979, p. 26–27.

¹⁰ O'Sullivan 2015, p. 75.

⁷ Tihanyi 2020, p. 67–68.

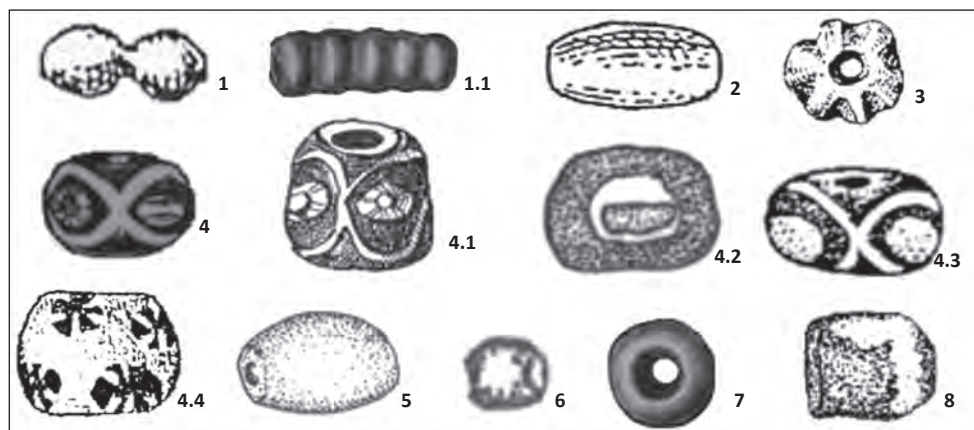


Figure 4. Types of beads in the male graves.

observed that the beads were also found around the neck in the men's graves, although she still did not believe they could have been worn as necklace. In her opinion, they could have been used as a button or perform an apotropaic role¹¹. Bóna, on the other hand, thought that warrior men could have hardly worn necklaces made of beads, that they were presumably placed on the deceased at the funeral, supported by the fact that their position within the grave is often obscure, at times found around the neck and at times around the body¹². Among the graves analysed, it was not possible to determine the position of the beads in 16 graves while, in 12 graves the beads were found around the neck, in two graves on the right side of the skeleton between the radius and the right knee, in four graves around the skull and in one grave on a bronze locking. Thus, in most of the known cases, the beads were probably worn around the neck, as in the case of women. For the pieces found around the head, it cannot be excluded that they may have been used as ornaments at some kind of headgear; when found on the right side of the skeleton between the forearm and the knee, they were probably carried in their leather sabretaches. A bead was found on a locking at Törökszentmiklós – *Szenttamáspuszta*. A similar case can be observed in grave 14 at Gâmbaş, but the sex of the skeleton is not known. As it can be seen, there is not much difference in the way the beads in the male graves are worn compared to those in the female graves¹³. Instead, it is noticeable that a few pieces are typical of these burials. There is nothing to suggest that they were not worn in daily life; if they were gifts at the time of the burial, we would have found them in the same form as in the women's graves. In addition, the fact that they are found in variable positions within the grave does not prove that they were not worn, because the beads found in women's graves were not only found around the neck. Thus, presumably men did wear these

beads, probably because of their apotropaic role, which is supported by the types and colours of the beads.

We have no data from four graves and only partial data on the beads from two graves. Apart from these, two trends emerge. One is that only monochrome beads are found in the graves. These are completely devoid of any decoration, and it is likely that the decorated pieces were worn only by women. However, these types of monochrome beads are very diverse: segmented beads, cylindrical foil beads, ribbed spherical beads, etc. In addition to glass, the presence of fluorite beads in men's graves is also common. The variation in shape suggests that it was not the shape of the beads the most important factor, but rather the colour. The other bead-trend are the instances when only beads with eyes are included in men's burials¹⁴. There are two major groups of such beads: one when the eyes are placed in fields formed by two intersecting wavy lines (Szilágyi type 58), but less commonly the eyes can occur without wavy lines. The second group of beads with eyes are those pieces where eyes with eyelashes are placed in fields formed by two intersecting wavy lines on a differently coloured background (Szilágyi type 60)¹⁵, here also the wavy lines are sometimes omitted and only eyelashed eyes are placed in the beads. The ornamentation of the latter is very similar to the former, the only difference being in the eyes, as a different colour is added to the base and short little rays/eyelashes surround the eye. Beads with eyes and eyelashes usually have a black base and are mostly spherical or cylindrical in shape. The eyes may have been decorated with a variety of colours. The wavy lines are usually of simple white, while the eyes are usually dominated by white, red, blue and green. Unlike other ornamental beads, eye beads may have been placed in graves because of a superstition. It is noteworthy that monochrome and eye

¹¹ Kovrig 1957, p. 123.

¹² Bóna 1979, p. 27.

¹³ On the bead-wearing patterns observed in women's graves see Fülöp 2020, p. 153–156.

¹⁴ In the areas studied by O'Sullivan, the same regularity emerges, that male graves may contain one to three beads, and that these beads can only be undecorated or eye beads, without exception, so that she observed the same burial custom that also appears in the Carpathian Basin (see O'Sullivan 2015, p. 78).

¹⁵ Szilágyi 1987, p. 140.

beads were not found together in any of the male graves, always separate only. The wearing of beads with eyes can be explained through their protective function based on the fear of evil eye. This, however, does not explain the function of monochrome beads. It is likely that these beads may also have had an apotropaic role, only perhaps the colour of the beads was of significance here. We can hardly examine the symbolism of colour in today's perspective, if only because the superstitions associated with colour presumably changed constantly from the early Middle Ages onwards, and Christian art may have fundamentally changed attitudes to different colours. However, we can still distinguish trends. Common colours included blue, green, yellow/gold, white/silver and purple (Fig. 4).

In most graves, only one bead was placed, and there were few cases where more than one was placed in burials. The only thing Kovrig observed at the graves was that there were typically few beads in male graves. Bóna and O'Sullivan record between one and three beads found in male graves. In the discussed graves, the average number of beads worn by a man is one, with a smaller proportion of cases of two or three beads; some unusual cases in our region are those when four beads (two cases) and five beads (one case) were found in male graves. Even though the latter cases do not fit tightly into the phenomenon observed by several researchers, we assume that the number of beads in these graves does not exclude the possibility that they are male graves. In all three outstanding cases, the bead types within the grave are the same: they contain eyes or monochrome beads. In addition, the mounted belt sets found in graves at Tiszabercel (grave 16) and Kenézlő also clearly indicate male sex. Although the tendency of the time was indeed for men to wear a small number of beads, it was not necessarily the number of beads that mattered, but rather the types and colours. We would like to add to the comments that other researchers have made on the subject by saying that a string of one to three beads is typical of men's graves, but rarely four or even five beads can be found in male burials.

In conclusion, we can make a few observations about the beaded man burials. Men's bead-wear is distinct from women's in that men do not use longer strings of beads, and only have monochrome or eye beads, they do not wear other decorated beads, and they wore beads in their daily lives. Their mode of wear may have been similar to that observed at women's graves. Since it was easier to wear them as necklaces, and since the apotropaic function was their primary function, there was likely no restriction on the manner of wear, which explains why they were not only found at the neck. As these pieces of jewellery were not worn for their decorative purpose, but for their apotropaic function, the most important information can be found in the types and colours of the beads.

A particular phenomenon emerges from the other grave goods of the beaded male burials. Insignias of rank were found in half of the graves examined: in grave 2 at Eperjeske and grave 29 at Karos sabretaches plates, in grave 61 at Karos a mount ornamented sabretache,

in Cluj-Napoca – *Zápolya Street* and at Tiszaszederkény a sabre, while 14 mounted belt sets were also found in the graves. The majority of the burials contained horse equipment and also weapons, in most cases arrowheads and quivers. Additionally, horse burials were noted in 22 graves, with 13 partial and nine symbolic horse burials. The concentration of weapons in these graves is also high, with 19 cases of artefacts indicating weapons: antler stiffening plaques, quivers, arrowheads, and sabres. The proportion of graves with relatively poor grave goods is low. Two graves had no finds other than beads: grave 15 at Nagyhalász – *Kisszombor* and grave 529 at Püspökladány – *Eperjesvölgy*. The poorer burials with no horse equipment or weapons contained various types of lockrings, iron knives and pottery. On this basis, we can conclude that beads are most frequently found in the graves of armed men, often with a rank insignia, and less frequently in graves with poorer grave goods. There is also a chronological difference between graves with poorer and richer grave goods. While most of the rich graves date from the first two thirds of the 10th century, all the poorer graves date from the late 10th and the 11th centuries. As the number of grave goods decreased from the second half of the 10th century on, it became typical for the entire Carpathian Basin. It should be noted that the term "rich and poorer graves" – which appears several times in the study – is not meant in any social sense. The fact that in the 11th century there are fewer grave goods in the burials indicates a change in representation, for which there are many reasons, and not that the communities were poorer than in the 10th century. Very significant observations have been made to prove this¹⁶. Richer grave terminology in our case is merely archaeological, meaning that more objects are buried in the graves. The presence of beads is characteristic of the rich male graves of the periods. The wearing of apotropaic items is usually associated with children and women, but the fact that they are present in the graves of extremely wealthy men, perhaps indicates that a group of wealthy men also felt the need to wear protective items. The fact that beads appear in the graves of what is considered to be the wealthiest social group also confirms the apotropaic role of beads. Wealthy men, presumably because of their wealth, may have felt the need to wear items to protect themselves from the evil eye. What was considered protective for them, was an everyday accessory for women and children (Fig. 2).

As to the geographical distribution of the graves, the following can be observed: the proportion of beaded male graves in the cemeteries of the Upper Tisza region is definitely outstanding compared to other regions. In Transylvanian Basin there is only one site in the region. They are sporadic in the Great Plain, as well as in northern part of Carpathian Basin, but no such burials have been recorded in the Transdanubian region. Two chronological

¹⁶ Révész 2001, p. 38–40.

groups emerge among the beaded male graves of the Carpathian Basin:

1. Graves with equestrian equipment and weapons, often with insignia ranks. These burials took place in the first two thirds of the 10th century, but at the latest by the end of the century. In the Upper Tisza region, this burial custom is quite frequent in the graves of armed horsemen.

2. A group of beaded men are characterised by modest grave goods, dated as early as the mid- or rather late 10th century. The ribbed S-ended lockring found in the grave at Szegvár and the context of the cemetery suggests that this custom may have been practised as late as the early 12th century. However, they may have been buried with far fewer or even no other finds (Fig. 3).

Burials of the first group were found mainly in the so-called classical conquest Hungarian cemeteries with small number of graves. The only exception in this case is the grave from the cemetery of Hajdúszoboszló, which was in use from the mid-10th century until the end of the 11th century. However, the male beaded burial here is located in the earliest used part of the cemetery, so that even if the cemetery does not fit completely into the defined group structurally, it does chronologically. The majority of the known graves can also be included in this group. The graves of the second group are known from cemeteries with a larger number of graves, and there are far fewer burials in which the practice of the custom is present, while the relative richness of the finds is no longer characteristic. Nor can we rule out the possibility that the practice may have been abandoned because of its “pagan” character, which is why it appeared only sporadically in the region after the turn of the 10th century.

SUPERSTITION OF THE EVIL EYE

The use of beads with eyes has been linked to the superstition of the evil eye¹⁷. Where did this superstition come from? Many studies have addressed the question of the origin of the evil eye, but it is very difficult to say where it may have originated from. There are several ‘theories of origin’, the most common being that it comes from the Greeks or Romans¹⁸, but this seems to be more of a historical *topos* than an actual possibility, as there is data on the existence of the superstition from much earlier times. The use of beads with eyes had already appeared in the Carpathian Basin in the Early Iron Age. Thus, there is no definitive answer to this question, but it is important to note that it is one of the most widespread superstitions, known throughout the world and still an integral part of many cultures today. It was such a widespread superstition that it was even incorporated into and persisted in some religions, such as Islam and Judaism¹⁹.

¹⁷ Szilágyi 1987, p. 140–143.

¹⁸ Tuncer Manzakoglu, Türkmenoğlu Berkan 2016, p. 194.

¹⁹ Abbasi 2017, p. 138–140.

The evil eye is a curse that can be cast by a malevolent glance of a person who is not aware of it. Thus, various protective amulets and items were used. The ethnographic approach suggests that those with blue eyes possessed the greatest power of the evil eye. That is why the blue coloured beads were considered to be the best protective items against the curse. At the same time, the colour red was often associated with good luck, so it was also effective as protection²⁰. In contrast to monochrome beads, these colours appear in the decoration of the eyes of the eye beads, because the background colour of the bead body is usually black.

This superstition presumably spread widely in communities where wealth differentiation may have already had occurred. This may have led to destructive behaviour caused by envy, and hence the spread of the belief in the protective power of beads/amulets as a cultural defence mechanism²¹. Despite the simplistic explanation for the superstition’s widespread popularity, the differentiation of wealth among the social groups may have been a significant factor, and it is no coincidence that the wearing of apotropaic beads is characteristic of the wealthiest male graves. Colour might have been important for such glass bead amulets, but colours may have had different meanings in different cultural contexts. The belief that the beads could protect the wearer from curses probably stems from the perception that the object type could absorb this harmful energy²². The existence of the belief in the protective powers of the beads with eyes is supported by its widespread presence over time and space. This may have been the specific purpose for the production of the eye beads. The motif of the eye symbolises protective power. The colours blue and green, which are most reminiscent of real eye colours, may therefore have been particularly important²³.

From a chronological point of view, the beads with eyes were in use over a long period of time, from the 10th century to the 11th century, which is explained by the function of the amulet. Pauli defined the Early Middle Ages as a period of ideological uncertainty, based on the occurrence of deviant burials and the large number of amulets²⁴, which in our case is supported by the evil eye superstition and the amulet beads.

A BRIEF LOOK ON TWO OTHERS GENDER-LINKED OBJECTS FROM THE PERIOD (Fig. 5)

In addition to beads, there are other types of objects from the period, which are usually considered by researchers as grave goods indicative of a particular sex, but in a small number of cases they also appear in graves

²⁰ Abbasi 2017, p. 140–141.

²¹ Koc, Temür 2014, p. 31–34.

²² Abbasi 2017, p. 141.

²³ Mannion 2013, p. 187–189.

²⁴ Pauli 1975, p. 212.

of the opposite sex. This phenomenon includes arrowheads in female graves and earrings in male graves.

Data from 12 graves originating from 12 burial sites indicate arrowheads can also be found in female graves, so it is a relatively rare burial practice (Fig. 6). Several of the skeletons have been examined anthropologically, and they have been found in graves of all ages, from juvenile to senile women. In all the graves, finds other than arrowheads were found, mainly jewellery (torques, finger rings, and lockrings) and cloth mounts. Only the graves at Koroncó, Tiszalök and Tiszabездéd are rich in finds, while the other graves contain fewer and simpler jewellery.

On average, one arrowhead was found in such graves, two in the Magyarhomorog grave and four in the burial at Blandiana. Their location in the graves shows a very diverse picture, they have been found on the pelvis, near the arm, near the leg and at one end of the grave. As for the types of arrowheads, rhombus and armour-piercing arrowheads are known from female graves. According to the chronology of the cemeteries, there is no single grave that can be dated with certainty to the early 10th century; the practice of the custom seems to appear from the second third/mid-10th century and may have been relatively short-lived, as the grave at Koppányszántó is the only one where the S-ended lockring dates certainly to the 11th century, and all the other burials were dated to the late 10th/early 11th century at the latest. There are no distinctive regions of use, but they occur sporadically throughout the Carpathian Basin, and in most cases no two female graves with arrowheads occur in the same micro-regional group²⁵.

The presence of arrowheads in women's graves has been noted by many researchers²⁶, but their possible function has been little discussed. The general tendency is to associate the appearance of arrowheads in women's graves with cold iron superstition²⁷. Erwin Gáll was the only one who did not approach the problem in a general way, and he suggested that these arrowheads could not only have had a protective role, but may have also represented another gender marker²⁸. Anikó Tóth, in her analysis of the cemetery in Tiszalök, expressed a negative opinion on the hypothesis put forward by Gáll. She emphasised that the question of gender identity cannot be investigated archaeologically, and therefore we cannot consider it our task. She did not consider it a possible option, and she did not even include the arrowhead from Tiszalök in her analysis as a weapon, as in her opinion it clearly could not have had a weapon function²⁹. However, it is also self-contradictory in this respect, because the detailed analysis of the types of objects in the cemetery, divides what is typical of women's graves and what is typical of

men's graves. If gender identity could not be analysed archaeologically, then object types could not be subdivided in this way, just as we cannot do it from the beginning of the 11th century onwards, as the use of gender-neutral objects becomes typical and slowly disappears. Although the presence of the arrowhead in the graves is not only an unusual gender representation, but presumably, like the beads, a more complex phenomenon, we cannot completely exclude Erwin Gáll's hypothesis.

The presence of male objects in female burials is also not a unique phenomenon, so there are several theories as to what their function might have been. It has been suggested that such objects were evidence of gifts³⁰, or even second-hand objects that had lost their primary function³¹. A major problem with both interpretations is that they do not seem plausible for types of weapons. Other possible interpretations include linking the arrowhead to warfare activity, and this is a possibility that arises mainly from the grave of Tiszabездéd and in the grave of Sárrétudvari, where quivers were found in the graves. If we assume that the presence of weapons in graves is not only related to warfare, but that they may also have had a social status function³², then the question arises whether it is not possible that arrowheads in women's graves also had a symbolic status function. This is perhaps supported by the fact that no two female graves with arrowheads occurred in the same cemetery, and even in different micro regional groups they just rarely occur together. The evidence from the armed male graves suggests that the representation of weapons must have been very strict in the period. It is thus interesting that they should appear at all in such a small number in the female graves. However, it should also be remembered that archery equipment could also be a tool of the everyday life, especially for hunting. The hypothesis of hunting may also be supported by the discovery of armour-piercing arrowheads in two burials, which are also referred to as hunting arrowheads, commonly associated with the hunting of fur-bearing animals³³. The interpretative options presented also show that it is not a unique phenomenon, but that the appearance of certain types of objects typical of men in women's graves is also a characteristic of other periods and other regions. However, we cannot give a clear answer to the question of their function, and one of the main reasons for this is that we know of almost no female graves from the period that were armed. But it is precisely the rarity of these graves that is important. If arrowheads were indeed found in graves because of the cold iron superstition or the hunting-related activities, then their occurrence rate would have been much higher, so the possibility of arrowheads as status indicators is certainly relevant, although the question must be left open for the time being.

²⁵ For micro regional groups see Révész 2020.

²⁶ The phenomenon has also been observed earlier, see Gáll 2013, p. 335; Tóth 2014, p. 225–227; Demo 2009, p. 428; Kovács 2019, p. 473.

²⁷ On the cold iron superstition see Horváth 2004b, p. 460; Solymossy 1933.

²⁸ Gáll 2007, p. 408–409.

²⁹ Tóth 2014, p. 225.

³⁰ Šnore 1996, p. 123, see also Langdon 2005, p. 11.

³¹ Härke 1990; Halsall 1996.

³² Härke 1990; Langdon 2005, p. 5.

³³ Horváth 2020, p. 441.

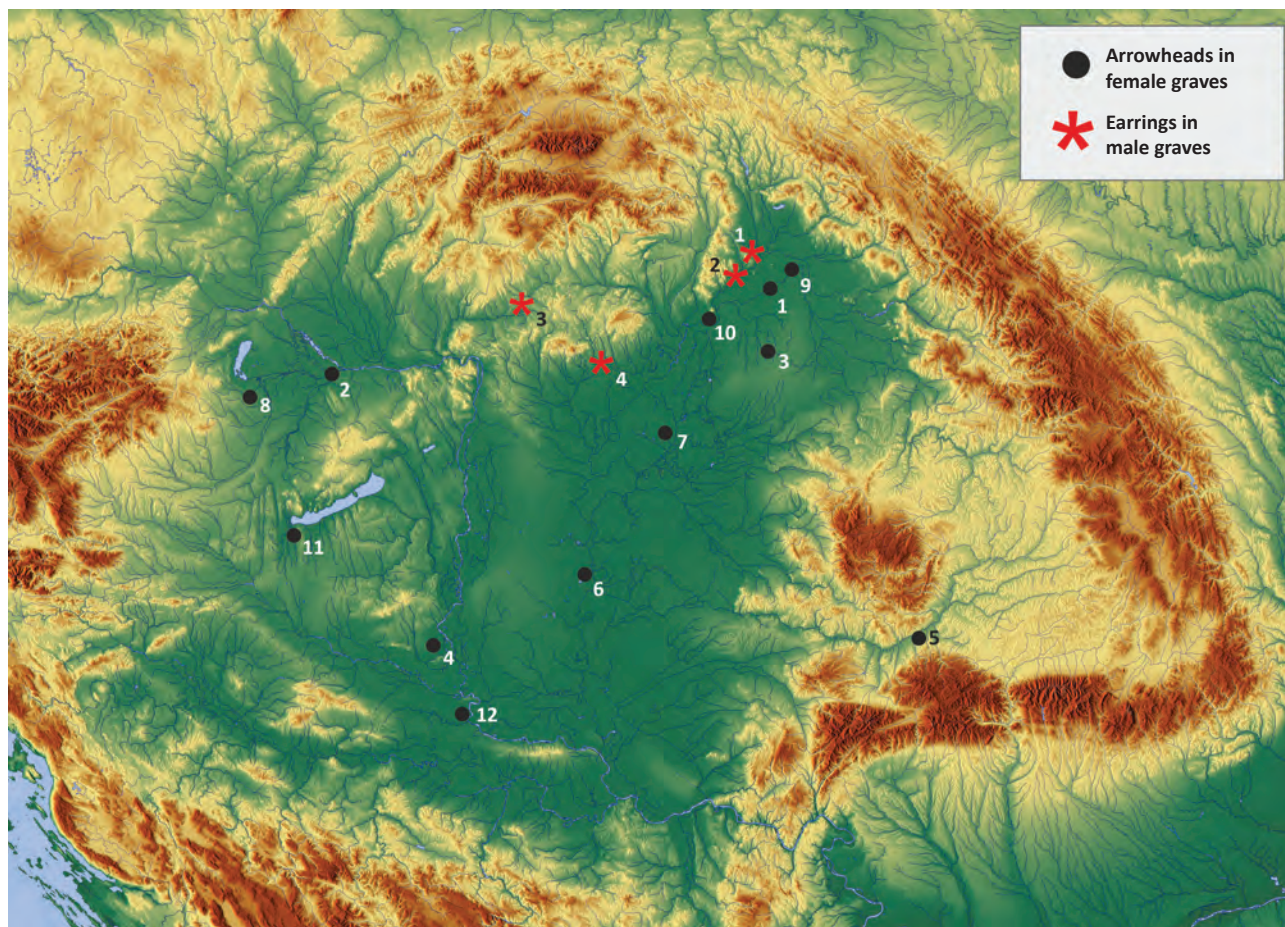


Figure 5. Geographical distribution of female graves with arrowheads and male graves with earrings in the Carpathian Basin: Arrowheads: 1. Ibrány – Esbó-halom, gr. 171; 2. Koroncó – Bábota, gr. 2; 3. Magyarhomorog – Kónyadomb, gr. 209; 4. Majs – Udvari rétek, gr. 602; 5. Blandiana – Cemetery B, gr. 4; 6. Sándorfalva – Eperjes, gr. 93; 7. Sárrétudvari – Hizófield, gr. 63; 8. Szakony – Tsz major; 9. Tiszabezdéd – Haranglábdűlő, gr. 2; 10. Tiszalök – Vajasdomb, gr. 29; 11. Vörs – Papkert, gr. 595; 12. Vuková, gr. 399. Earrings: 1. Karos – Eperjesszőg, gr. 14; 2. Kenézlő – Fazekaszug, gr. 42; 3. Prša – Bércz, gr. 103; 4. Kál – Legelő, gr. 42.

Earrings are typically found in women's graves, but they also appear in men's graves in four instances from four burial sites, also a rare phenomenon during the period. Although their occurrence can only be placed in a wider micro region, the low proportion of known graves means that we cannot draw any far-reaching conclusions on the basis of their geographical distribution (Fig. 7).

In terms of age groups, earrings are known in the graves of one juvenile and one *Infans II* boy. All the graves date back to the 10th century. We know of two earrings with bead-row pendants, one bronze earring with a four-spherical pendant, and one Byzantine earring with two-spherical pendants. Typically, one earring is found in these graves, and unfortunately only in one situation is the exact location known, in the case of grave 14 at Karos. The earring was found around the left forearm bone, presumably for secondary use as the male individual wore it pinned into the fabric of his caftan. We have no information about the location of the grave at Kenézlő and Kál, but in the case of the Prša grave we know that it was found at the south-eastern end of the burial. The Karos grave, and perhaps also the Prša grave, show that the earrings found there were not used in their original function by the

deceased. They were certainly not worn as earrings or for decorative purposes. As only four graves are known so far, we can speak of special cases. Bóna's suggestion about the beads is certainly thought-provoking³⁴, but it is irrelevant in that case, and for the earrings, even more. Presumably, these earrings were not worn by men in their everyday life but were rather gifts to be placed in the grave during the funeral. The earrings in the Karos grave may also have been placed on the caftan of the deceased as a gift, while the one found at the end of the Prša grave was probably thrown into the grave. The possibility of gift-giving is also known from the 10th century for the Zemplín grave, although the gift-giving also explains why so few male graves contain earrings.

Beads, arrowheads, and different types of earrings were currently presented. These three types of objects can be seen as signs that archaeology is very often stereotyping or historicising and reflects the present back to the past and gives objects a gendered character, when the situation is much more nuanced, as the cases under discussion shows. There is indeed a gender differentiation between grave

³⁴ Bóna 1979, p. 27.

Map no.	Funerary site and grave number	Age	Position of the arrowheads in the grave	Number of the arrowheads and the types	Anthropological and archaeological analysis about the graves
1.	Ibrány – <i>Esbó-halom</i> , gr. 171	adultus-maturus	right elbow	1 unknown type	Istvánovits 2003, p. 94, pl. 167; Szathmáry 2003.
2.	Koroncó – <i>Bábota</i> , gr. 2	unknown	cervical vertebra	1 unknown type	Horváth 2014a, p. 81–84.
3.	Magyarhomorg – <i>Kónyadomb</i> , gr. 209	adultus	left femur	2 rhombus shaped	Kovács 2019, p. 118; Marcsik <i>et alii</i> 2019.
4.	Majs – <i>Udvári rétek</i> , gr. 602	senilis	at the end of the grave	1 rhombus shaped	Kiss 1983, p. 73–208.
5.	Blandiana – <i>Cemetery B</i> , gr. 4	juvenilis	on the pelvis	4 rhombus shaped	Gáll 2013, p. 329–336, pl. 167
6.	Sándorfalva – <i>Eperjes</i> , gr. 93	unknow	on the costae	1 unknown type	Fodor 1996, p. 348–351.
7.	Sárrétudvari – <i>Hízó föld</i> , gr. 63	maturus	at the end of the grave	1 armour piercing arrowhead and quiver iron fragments	M. Nepper 2002, p. 296–388; Oláh 1990; Tihanyi 2020.
8.	Szakony – <i>Tsz major</i>	maturus	at the end of the grave	1 unknown type	Gömöri 1984. Pap 1984, p. 103.
9.	Tiszabездéd – <i>Haranglábdűlő</i> , gr. 2	unknow	right side of the pelvis	unknown type of arrowheads and quiver iron fragments	Istvánovits 2003, p. 209–215.
10.	Tiszalök – <i>Vajasdomb</i> , gr. 29	unknow	right humerus	1 armour piercing arrowhead	Tóth 2014, p. 124–133.
11.	Vörs – <i>Papkert</i> , gr. 595	unknow	unknow	1 rhombus shaped	Költő 1996, p. 187–188.
12.	Vukovár, gr. 399	unknow	left side of the pelvis	1 rhombus shaped	Demo 2009, p. 338.

Figure 6. Details of arrowheads found in female graves.

Map no.	Funerary site and grave number	Age	Position of the arrowheads in the grave	Types of earrings	Anthropological and archaeological analysis about the grave
1.	Karos – <i>Eperjesszőg</i> , gr. 14	juvenilis	around the left forearm	earring with two spherical pendants	Révész 1996; Kustár 1996.
2.	Kenézlő – <i>Fazekaszug</i> , gr. 42	unknown	unknown	earring with bead-row pendant	Fettich 1931; Horváth 2019, p. 55–83; Horváth 2020, p. 116–188.
3.	Prša – <i>Bércz</i> , gr. 103	unknown	unknown	earring with bead-row pendant	Horváth 2019, p. 138–152.
4.	Kál – <i>Legelő</i> , gr. 42	Infans II	unknown	earring with four-spherical pendants	Révész 2008, p. 190–240.

Figure 7. Details of earrings found in male graves.

goods, and this is most evident especially in the case of the artefact-rich graves, but it seems that the archaeological definition of gender is very dangerous, in the sense that we generalize certain groups of artefacts and associate them with gender. With cautious observations, archaeologists can also help to determine gender, but not only starting from the objects themselves. From this point of view, much more important is an examination of the way it is worn. The way they are worn tells us more about gender than the type of the object itself.

CLASSIFICATION OF FINDS BY GENDER

It is not only social differentiation that is expressed by the grave goods, but also gender. The representation of gender is only reflected in the finds of the graves, no burial customs are known so far that were used only for men or only for women³⁵.

³⁵ The gender representation of the conquering Hungarians can be seen only on the basis of the grave goods. However, for some cultural groups, such as the Alans, these were not only indicated by finds, but also by

If we associate the 10th century finds with gender, the general picture is that women were buried with jewellery and men with weapons. Within this line of research, a division of the finds has slowly emerged, into what is more typical of male and what is more typical of female graves. Beads are also typically a type of object that is mainly associated with women's finds, although the male burials currently under discussion reflect the fact that there was no regularity by which they could not have been included in men's graves. These beads do not have an exclusively interpretable gender character but are made unique in relation to gender by the way they are worn. Thus, we will take a brief look at the characteristic finds of the period considered specific to female or male burials, and those common to both genders.

burial customs. In the burial chambers, in addition to the finds, gender could also be distinguished by the place where the deceased was laid to rest. Men were buried in the southern part of the catacombs and women in the northern part. It is therefore not uncommon in some cultures to indicate the sex of the deceased through burial rites (see Härke 2003, p. 132).

There are quite a few types of objects that are strictly gender-specific. Such objects include insignia ranks: sabretaches plates, mount ornamented sabretaches, sabres, mounted belt sets, and mount ornamented bow cases. These are known only from male graves. It is also possible here to observe a pattern: in a small number of cases both sabres and belts are found in the same burial. The possibility has been raised that belt sets are meant to indicate inherited rank, while sabres are meant to indicate achieved rank³⁶. In this group of finds, it is much more possible to understand the structure of the society of the period. This society had strict rules regarding the representations that could appear in the graves.

As for women's graves, there are far fewer of these types of objects, which are only typically found in women's graves: such as rosette harness ornaments and braiding ornaments. The Zemplín princely grave is an exception, which is unique to the period not only because it yielded five braid ornaments, but also because it is the only male grave where this type of object is found³⁷. The braid ornaments may have been placed in the grave because of a different ideological background than that of female burials. We cannot exclude the possibility that they were gifts for the deceased. It may also be an indication that the deceased was definitely a prominent figure in the society of the time.

Other types of jewellery, such as bracelets, finger rings, earrings, torques, and ornaments worn on clothing, are found in the graves of both genders. Other than in female burials, the rich jewellery collection is particularly characteristic of the prestigious male graves. Presumably, for both genders, jewellery may have indicated wealth and therefore may have been popular and widespread, since perhaps jewellery did not fall under the same strict rules as other types of artefacts, where representations were very strict. Therefore, it was through jewellery that wealth and status competition could be most strongly represented. This may also explain why it was favoured in both male and female graves.

The burial of weapons seems to be much more complex than that of jewellery. In terms of gender, the group of finds is clearly associated with men. On the other hand, it should be noted that in the absence of anthropological studies, gender is very often determined on the basis of the weapons in the graves. Not only could it be associated with warfare activities, but it could also symbolize social status or even gender identity³⁸. In the case of male burials, it remains to be seen how to separate out what the weapons might symbolise. One possible suggestion is that when different types of weapons occur in relatively high proportions in one cemetery then the burials may indeed be associated with a warrior group, but when a particular category of weapon is known in small numbers

within the cemetery then they may indicate the status of free adult males³⁹.

Burials with horses and harnesses are somewhat similar to jewellery, but in this case, they are generally found in male graves, although they are also an essential part of rich female burials. However, two distinct groups of women's graves emerge here: one is represented by women buried in simpler clothing with richly decorated harnesses, while the other consist of women buried with richly mounted clothing but with simple horse equipment⁴⁰.

There is also a gender divide observable in the tools, although the boundaries are not nearly as clear for this group of artefacts. Knives, flint and steel artefacts are usually found with male graves, but less frequently they may also be associated to female grave goods. However, the adze is considered an accessory indicative of men's graves, while the stitching awl is the accessory for women's graves. It is questionable whether such items can be interpreted as a sign of the division of labour between the genders in everyday life. However, there are also groups of artefacts from the period that seem to have been found in graves regardless of gender, such as coins, eggs, animal bones and vessels. The present analysis tries to provide a general picture of the period under discussion, but it should be noted that micro regional differences between the different types of finds are also to be observed. One such micro regional peculiarity is the fact that horse harnesses with rosettes are completely unknown in Transylvania, and no burials with horse or horse harnesses are known from female graves even⁴¹.

Although it is clear from this brief overview how diverse the symbolism of the finds in the graves can be, perhaps we can attempt to group the types of artefacts according to the gender to which they are most characteristic:

Group 1 includes insignia of ranks and presumably objects expressing higher wealth or status, identity, which are gender specific: in addition to various weapons, sabres, belt sets, sabretaches, mounted bow cases, and this also includes horse harnesses with rosettes and braid ornaments.

Group 2 consists of finds that are mainly characteristic of the archaeological heritage of one gender, but can also be found in opposite gender burials: the weapons that belong to this group are arrowheads, as well as beads, ornate earrings and other everyday life items that are currently under discussion. For some of the object types in this group, we cannot exclude the possibility that the same artefacts with a different ideological background may be found in the graves of the opposite gender.

Group 3 consist of finds common to both sexes, but their proportion may vary regionally, including most of the jewellery (necklaces, bracelets, finger rings) and horse equipment.

³⁶ Gáll 1999, p. 196–197.

³⁷ Budinský-Krička, Fettich 1973.

³⁸ Hadley 2008, p. 273.

³⁹ Gáll 2013, p. 754.

⁴⁰ Szőke 1962.

⁴¹ Gáll 2013, p. 626.

These groups do give a simplistic picture of a diverse and complex past society, however they also emphasise that there may have been certain 'rules' on what could be represented at funerals, depending on gender and social position. It seems that there were strict rules during the period as to what grave goods could be placed with the deceased, and thus what representations of the dead could be displayed at funerals. From the end of the 10th century to the beginning of the 11th century, the most common types of finds in burials are those that are equally typical of graves of both genders: jewellery, coins, rings, knives, etc. However, some data suggest that the representation of the young girl was visible in the 11th century, making the expression of gender identity less significant. However, both the female concentrations of jewellery and the male concentrations of weapons disappear, so that gender-determined artefacts were slowly disappearing from burials in the 11th century⁴². From the 12th century onwards, with the wider spread of Christianity and the decreasing frequency of grave goods, no gender differences at all can be observed.

What might have been the reason for the prominent display of gender differences in funerary contexts in early medieval societies? In his study, Härke put forward three possible options: first, that funerary representations reflect life in the past and show the role of gender; second, that objects in graves can be interpreted as part of a status competition; and thirdly, the interpretation suggested by Härke, that the gender representation in graves was emphasised because of the migratory way of life⁴³. His reasoning was based on the specific nature of early medieval societies, characterised by individual and group mobility. And migration itself can lead to the blurring of many cultural, social and political boundaries, and this process can also affect the boundaries between traditional gender roles, with the emphasis on rituals serving to reinforce these blurred boundaries. After all, one of the functions of ritual is to represent and reinforce social structure. These boundaries are in reality much less marked than they were before the social order was disrupted and transformed by mobility, migration, conquest and settlement. Gender roles may also have been emphasised because in the real life they were less distinct⁴⁴. Sørensen has also argued that the circumstances of migration fundamentally changed the boundaries between the public and private spheres, that it was not possible to maintain rigid distinctions between the two, and that therefore changes in gender roles may have taken place, expressed through funerary rites⁴⁵.

If we look at the three interpretations from an analytical point of view, we can discover an "archaeological trend" behind each of them. Group 1 takes a historicist approach to the problem, the main drawback of which,

as Lucy has already pointed out, is that it takes modern ideas back into the past⁴⁶ while Group 2 takes a processual approach. Processual archaeologists believed that burial rituals reflect larger social structures, so that the status and identity of the deceased can be inferred from the graves⁴⁷. If a person belonged to the social elite, this identity is more pronounced in the burial ritual. The study of burial customs within a community thus allows for the reconstruction of that society⁴⁸. Option 3, proposed by Härke, is the post-processual way of interpreting the phenomenon. Post-processual archaeology was born in the 1980s out of a movement of rejection of the idea that identities and social structures could be read directly from the grave. Instead, the complexity and fluidity of social roles were recognised. While the mourners were active participants in the funeral ritual, the deceased had the opportunity to influence the rituals and representations that would be displayed during the funeral before their death. However, some aspects of the processual archaeology have been retained by this trend, including the assumption that certain finds in graves may still be related to the social status of the deceased⁴⁹.

All three interpretations point to the fact that a distinctive feature of the Early Middle Ages is the prominent gender representation in graves, but this was probably not the primary function of the finds in the graves, as the proportion of graves without grave goods and those containing neutral objects is not negligible⁵⁰. Härke's interpretation of the role of the migration and the constantly changing living conditions in gender representation is certainly thought-provoking. It was a period when movable items represented the values they could carry with them on their migration, so it is not surprising that they were more likely to express their status through their outward appearance, which was also represented by the finds they placed in graves. Migration impacts on societies and people in many ways: it changes family and household management, gender relations, and thus gender roles through the integration of new practices and beliefs⁵¹. Pooley and Turnbull looked at the effects of migration in more depth and found that migration has three main drivers: impacts on the individual and their family, impacts on the places that lose and gain migrants, and impacts on the wider social, economic and political structures. Migration thus affects not only the individuals and families who migrate, but also the communities in which they settle and those they leave. Their consequences can be positive or negative, but in most cases are mixed⁵². In our case, the effects of migration on the individual are informative.

⁴⁶ Lucy 1997.

⁴⁷ McGuire 2009, p. 70.

⁴⁸ Saxe 1970, p. 228–229.

⁴⁹ Hedeager 1992.

⁵⁰ Lucy 1997, p. 150–168.

⁵¹ McGuire 2009, p. 2.

⁵² Pooley, Turnbull 1998, p. 4.

⁴² Gáll 2013, p. 818.

⁴³ Härke 2003, p. 132–133.

⁴⁴ Härke 2003, p. 134.

⁴⁵ Sørensen 2009, p. 266.

No direct and in-depth studies on the social changes caused by migration were written during this period, although the burial customs of the conquerors and the composition of the material culture changed so significantly after the conquest of the Carpathian Basin that this is still a problem in the research of the “ancestral homeland”. In the case of the conquerors, it seems that after the power restructuralization in the second half of the 10th century, based on the abandonment of the cemeteries used in the first half of the 10th century, gender representation in the graves becomes less and less emphasized. After the turn of the millennium, we do not really observe such a proportionate difference between female and male graves. A question that remains to be answered is the degree in which the settled way of life and changed lifestyle played a role in this transformation.

CONCLUSION

One characteristic of the burial customs of the 10th and 11th centuries is the presence in the graves of types of objects that often indicate the gender of the deceased, but even in the early 10th century there is a high proportion of non-neutral graves, which gradually takes over until the 11th century. From the 11th century onwards, objects of both genders become general. Many theories have been put forward as to why gender identity is represented in a funerary context, and since we are dealing with a complex phenomenon, we cannot give a clear answer, but we can point out that social changes caused by migration may have played a major role. In studying gender identity in the period, the most important factor is not the artefacts associated with gender, but rather the mode of dress, as shown by the beads and earrings in male graves and the arrowheads in female graves.

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