

Selected children's burials from the Wielbark culture cemetery at Weklice, Site 7, Elbląg commune, warmińsko-mazurskie voivodeship

Magdalena Natuniewicz-Sekuła,^a Kalina Skóra^b

*All the time has his way for his own...*¹

The paper discusses children's burials from the Wielbark culture cemetery at Weklice, Site 7, excavated in 1984–2013. The results of the anthropological analysis and observations on the characteristics of the burial rites for *infans* I and II are presented against the background of other finds from the Wielbark culture territory. The issue of the lack of children's burials at the cemeteries of the Wielbark culture is dealt with; furthermore, opportunities of identification of such burials with archaeological methods are discussed. The child's position in the social structure of the discussed cultural unit is analysed.

KEY-WORDS: The Wielbark culture, children's burials, archaeology of childhood, anthropology, demography, social position

IN LIEU OF AN INTRODUCTION

The cemetery at Weklice has been often discussed in the literature (cf. Natuniewicz-Sekuła and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011, with further literature). It has become one of the canonical sites in the archaeology of the Roman Period, especially owing to the variety of the materials discovered there. However, it is a rich source of not only archaeological finds but also of anthropological data. So far, apart from a few synthetic

^a Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw-Szczecin, Solidarności Ave. 105, 01-140 Warsaw, Poland; m_natuniewicz@yahoo.com

^b Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, 1 Tylna St., 90-364 Łódź, Poland; kalina.skora@tlen.pl

¹ Woody Harrleson as Martin Hart in serial *True Detective*, episode 7 'After You've Gone', directed by Cary Fukunage, written by Nic Pizzolatto.

works (cf. Teul 2011), anthropological sources were considered as marginal and sometimes they were dealt with in an incorrect way (cf. Piasecki 2011).² In this paper we would like to present some of the issues related to the complex assemblage of Wekllice, namely, those related to the burials of children. This is done against the background of the other discoveries made at the territory of the Wielbark culture.

The problem of children's burials in the Wielbark culture has been rarely discussed in the literature and with a varying degree of precision. An article about children's graves from the cemetery at Odry was published by E. Grzelakowska (1991). The issue of children and childhood in the communities of the discussed culture was also dealt with by M. Chmiel (2013), who chose the necropolis at Kowalewko as a case study. K. Skóra (2012) elaborated a tentative description of children's burials on the basis of the Wielbark culture burial rites. A few remarks on children's attire and its elements (e.g. enamel brooches) were made by M. Tempelmann-Maczyńska (1985a: 59–60; 1989: 72) and M. Tuszyńska (2006).

CHILDREN'S BURIALS FROM WEKLICE

The excavations in the cemetery at Wekllice are still continued. Up to 2013, 591 features were discovered (including about 550 inhumation and cremation graves of the Wielbark culture). The first part of the site monograph (excavations from 1984–2004) included a complete anthropological analysis (Teul 2011: 151–172). The statistics presented in that work concern only the analysed individuals. This is due the fact that in the case of some dozen or so graves the bone material was either lost or did not survive.

The human bone material from the assemblage

Within the group of individuals analysed until 2013, it was possible to isolate 17 children³: *infans* I (5 individuals), and *infans* II (12 individuals). Except for the cremation urn grave (No 437, *infans* II), the remaining ones are inhumation burials (Tab. 1). One grave (No 84) contained the remains of a woman and the bones of a foetus, which were not included in the tables.

² Despite the fact that the author of the cited work received from the authors of research bone materials and a set of drawings together with the inventory (primarily concerned with grave 218) clearly indicated that analysed burials were almost devoid of equipment; personal communication of the co-author of the excavations at Wekllice (cf. Piasecki 2011: 5, footnote 1).

³ The analysis, which included also the human bone material from the unpublished excavations of 2005–2013, was carried out by PhD Habil. Iwona Teul (Pomeranian Medical University) from Szczecin, under grant No. 2013/11/D/HS3/02473 of the National Science Centre. We would like to express our gratitude to her for granting us access to the results.

Within the entire assemblage children of both age groups represent a small percentage – *c.* 6% (Tab. 3). The small number of children's graves can be explained by the soil conditions⁴ which were unfavourable for the preservation of skeletons of individuals in this ontogenetic age. The conclusion is that the proportion of well-preserved children's graves at the cemetery at Weklice might have been higher in more favourable soil conditions. These data should also be completed by a group of burials determined as children's graves but not because of the small size of the pit (this issue is discussed below). In this case the basic criterion of identification is the arrangement of grave goods which were deposited in a small cluster, usually in the centre of the pit. Such an arrangement is analogous to the anthropologically defined children's graves. It also indicates that the buried individual was rather of a small body height (a child?) (cf. Tab. 2).

The burial rite

Most of the anthropologically identified children from Weklice were buried in inhumation graves with large pits adapted in size to an adult individual; the only exception is Grave 220 where the pit length was slightly more than 1 m. Their dimensions⁵ are within the range from *c.* 2 to a little over 3 m in length and from 0.5 to 1 m in width. The largest parameters concern children burials in multiple burial graves (cf. Tab. 1, 2). The orientation of children's burial pits does not differ from other

⁴ The esker hill on which the cemetery lies is built of heterogeneous glacial drift from the Baltic glaciations. The esker is mostly built of layers and lenses of different grades of sand and gravel, but also clays. This lack of uniformity of the underlying layer deposit is responsible for the great differences in legibility of the archaeological features, and the survival of the bones of inhumation burials and grave goods. In the inhumation graves deposited in friable, fine-grained, highly permeable, and well aerated sand, the skeletal remains differ widely in their preservation. Complete skeletons are practically not in evidence and their remains have the form of heavily decomposed osseous particles. That is why the position of the skeleton and its size could be in many cases reconstructed only while still *in situ* from the traces of decomposed bones and the arrangement of the grave goods. The preservation of the bones may have also been affected by the burial practices, no longer materially tangible but nevertheless indicated by observation in the field (discolouration of the grave pit fill) and interpreted, e.g., as the use of wooden coffins or other wooden structures, wrapping in cloth, covering with organic matter, etc., or by later destruction caused by ancient plundering, cut in post-medieval and modern features or animal burrows, causing post-depositional dislocation of bones and grave goods within the grave pit. Exceptions include teeth, fragments of flat bones and bones resting next to metal objects which survived thanks to the preservative properties of the metal compounds (mostly copper and silver). Almost complete skeletons were found exceptionally and only in the cases when the graves were dug into a layer of hard and compacted clay and gravel which helped to keep out air and water. The clay is not a geologically homogeneous deposit and occurs in different locations in the cemetery in the form of a few metre long lenses (cf. Natuniewicz-Sekuła and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 13–15).

⁵ We do not analyse the graves destroyed or disturbed, where only fragments of pits survived.

Table 1. List of children graves of *infans* I and II discovered at Weklice (excavations 1984–2013). Compiled by M. Natuniewicz-Sekula

No.	Infans I (Grave No.)	Infans II (Grave No.)	Chronological stadia acc. to Natuniewicz- Sekula, Okulicz- Kozaryn 2011	Form of grave	Dimensions and orientation of the grave pit	Number of individuals	Inventory: yes/no	Pathology /notes	Literature
1	46		IIA/IIIB (on the base of inventory)	Modern cut feature intruding on a inhumation grave		1	Yes	—	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 36, pl. XIX
2	220		V	Inhumation	1.1x0.4 m N-S	1	Yes	—	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 69, pl. XCII
3	260		Later than stadium IVA	Inhumation, robbed	1.9x1 m NNW-SSE	1	No	—	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 77, pl. CIX
4	345		?	Inhumation, disturbed	2.3x0.75 m N-S	2 (within <i>adultus</i>)	No	—	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 94, pl. CLII
5	524		IIIA/IIIB	Inhumation, robbed	2.7x1 m NW-SE	2 (within female <i>adultus</i> ?)	Yes	—	Fig. 2-3
6		66	IB	Inhumation in log coffin, disturbed	1.9x0.8 m NW-SE	1	Yes	—	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 39, pl. XXVI
7		164A	Later than stadium IVA	Inhumation, disturbed	2x0.9 m N-S	2 (within, female, <i>adultus</i>)	No	<i>Osa intersuturatum</i> <i>suturae lambdoideae</i>	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 58, pl. LXXVII
8		191	IIIA	Inhumation, robbed	2x0.5 m N-S	1	Yes	—	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 63, pl. LXXIX
9		254	IIA/IIIB	Inhumation in log coffin	1.9x0.6 m N-S	1	Yes	—	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 75, pl. CVI
10		376	IIA	Inhumation, destroyed	Surviving dimensions 1.1x0.6 m NW-SE	1	Yes	—	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 98–99, pl. CLXVI

11	389	IVB	Inhumation	1.8x0.6 m NNE-SSW	1	Yes	—	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 101-102, pl. CLXXIII
12	398	IIIB/IIIC	Inhumation in log coffin, destroyed	Surviving dimensions 1.4x0.6 m N-S	1	Yes	—	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 103-104, pl. CLXXVII
13	437	IVA	Urn cremation, disturbed	Outline of the pit not captured, urn was inserted in the pure sand	1	No	Slight evidence of wear on teeth	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 110, pl. CLXXXII
14	521	IIIB	Inhumation, robbed	2.1x0.8 m NNW-SSE	2 (within, male <i>adultus</i>)	Yes		Konny and Natuniewicz-Sekula 2010: 341-342, fig. 1
15	533	?	Inhumation, destroyed	2.35x0.9 m N-S	2 (within, <i>maturus</i>)	No		Fig. 3
16	545	IIIB/IIIC	Inhumation, destroyed	3.30x1.12 m NE-SW	4 (within, female? <i>iuuenis</i> , female <i>adultus</i> , male <i>maturus</i>)	Yes	Female, <i>adultus</i> – dental caries on molars; male, <i>maturus</i> – curvature of the nasal bones, incisor teeth on the right and on the left fang upper jaw asymmetrically worn. These are overflow degeneration – strong pressure associated with the work performed	Fig. 3-7
17	584	from IIC to IIIA/IIIB	Modern cut feature destroying at least few inhumation graves	see description of the feature in catalogue	3 (within, female, <i>adultus</i> , male, <i>maturus</i>)	Yes	To the equipment of the child probably belonged silver capsule pendant found in concentration of child bones	Fig. 8

Table 2. List of children graves identified on the basis of archaeological criteria (excavations 1984–2013). Compiled by M. Natuniewicz-Sekula

No. <i>Infans I</i> or II (Grave No.)	Chronological stadia acc. to Natuniewicz-Sekula, Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011	Form of grave	Dimensions and orientation of the grave pit	Number of individuals on the base of inventory	Inventory: yes / no	Pathology/notes	Literature
1	IVA/IVB	Inhumation-cremation?, disturbed	2.1×0.85 m NNW-SSE	1	Yes	Bones missing	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 48, pl. XLVIII
2	IVA	Inhumation, disturb	1.85×0.7 m N-S	1	Yes	Bones missing	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 49, pl. XLIX
3	V	Inhumation in log coffin, disturbed	Surviving dimensions 1.1×0.8 m	1	Yes	Bones did not survive	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 50, pl. LI
4	V	Inhumation in coffin?	2.3×0.95 m NNW-SSE	1	Yes	Bones missing	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 83, pl. CXXVIII
5	IVB	Inhumation, disturbed	2×1 m NNW-SSE	1	Yes	Level of preservation of bones precluded diagnosis	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 87, pl. CXXXVI-CXXXVII
6	IVA/IVB	Inhumation	1.8×0.6 m	1	Yes	Bones missing	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 89–90, pl. CXL-CXLI
7	V	Inhumation, in a pit shored up with pegs	1.4×0.55 m N-S	1	Yes	Bones did not survive	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 91, pl. CXLIV
8	II B/II C	Inhumation	2.3×0.8 m NNE-SSW	1	Yes	Bones missing	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 106–107, pl. CLXXXVI
9	IVA/IVB	Inhumation in log coffin, disturbed	2.1×0.9 m N-S	1	Yes	Bones missing	Natuniewicz-Sekula and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 107, pl. CLXXXIV
10	II C	Inhumation	2.9×0.7 m NNW-SSE	1	Yes	Bones did not survive	Not published

Table 3. Weklice. The mortality of the population in subsequent anthropological age categories (excavations 1984–2004). Compiled by K. Skóra according to I. Teul 2011: table 5 and 7

	<i>Infans I</i>	<i>Infans II</i>	<i>Juvenis</i>	<i>Adultus</i>	<i>Ad/Mat</i>	<i>Maturus</i>	<i>Mat/Sen</i>	<i>Senilis</i>	Σ
N	4	8	22	70	5	100	1	4	214
%	1.9	3.7	10.3	32.7	2.3	46.7	0.5	1.9	100

inhumation graves at the cemetery. These pits are aligned mostly on the N-S axis, with variations to W, sporadically to E.

Unfortunately, in most cases the state of preservation of the bones and the subsequent destructive processes do not allow to specify the position of the bodies in these burials. Basing on the well-preserved skeleton arrangements (in both age categories *infans* I and II) and the analysis of the arrangement of the grave goods, it can be said that the prevalent alignment was on the right side with slightly flexed legs (Graves 66, 220, 164A, 389, 398) and the supine position was less popular (Graves 254, 376, 545). An exception is the plundered double burial from Grave 521 where an adult man was deposited into the grave most likely in a sitting position with his back and his head resting on the N edge of the pit. The child was placed on him in an undefined arrangement. From the child's skeleton only a fibula survived. It was found between the chest and the fragments of the skull bones of the man (cf. Kontny and Natuniewicz-Sekuła 2010).

The presented arrangement of children's skeletons basically does not deviate from those recorded for the other burial rites at the cemetery at Weklice. In all the phases related to the Early Roman Period (Phases I-II, with stadia), the supine arrangement of the bodies dominated, with some exceptions, in the inhumation graves. On the other hand, starting from the Younger Roman Period (Phases III-V with stadia), the most common position was that on the right side with slightly bent legs.

In most cases which were defined anthropologically (except for the cremation urn grave No 437), the children were buried in the inhumation rite, mostly in ordinary pits. It was not possible to identify any organic residues of protection of the bodies. In three cases (Graves 66, 254, 398) children were additionally buried in log coffins (cf. Tab. 1 and 4)⁶.

Horizontal stratigraphy (layout) and chronology

The children's inhumation graves (with children in multiple burials) are not concentrated in any specific area of the cemetery and their distribution is quite arbitrary. It should be noted, however, that they can be found throughout the entire width of the southern slope but are absent at the top of the cemetery hill.

The chronological distribution of children's graves is very uniform. The analysis of the burials well-dated by their grave goods and stratigraphy reveals that they occur (apart from Phase VI) in all the phases at the cemetery, and the largest share falls within the Early Roman Period (Phase II). This is consistent with the chronology of the other inhumation graves discovered at the site; in Phase II their share is the largest (cf. Natuniewicz-Sekuła and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 126, tab. 1).

⁶ A darker area with particles of mouldered wood more distinct especially along E edge of the pit (possibly a children's burial – cf. Tab. 2) was found in Grave 288. These could be traces of a coffin or planks lining the grave bottom (Natuniewicz-Sekuła and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 83, pl. CXXVIII).

Table 4. Weklice. Differentiation of inventory and burial rites in children's graves (excavations 1984–2013). Compiled by K. Skóra

	Inventory													Burial rite		
	None	Brooch	Silver brooch	Buckle	Beads	Pendants	Bracelets	Spindle-whorl	Needle	Pottery vessel	S-clasp	Hooked pin	Spur	Inhumation	Urn cremation	Log coffin
Single graves																
<i>infans</i> I N=3	1	1	–	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–	–	–	3	–	–
<i>infans</i> II N=7	1	6	1	1	1	–	3	1	1	1	–	–	–	6	1	3
Multiple-burial graves (only children equipment)																
<i>infans</i> I N=2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	2	–	–
<i>infans</i> II N=5	3	2	–	–	–	2	1	–	–	–	1	–	1	5	–	–
Possible children's graves																
N=9	–	9	2	–	8	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	–	9	–	4

Anthropological and demographic remarks

Some comments should be made on the demographic situation at the cemetery at Weklice, with special reference to the observed absence of burials of children at the age of *infans* I and II. In the assemblage of graves discovered until 2004 the presence of children (*infans* I and II) was confirmed anthropologically only for 12 burials from the group of 214 individuals⁷ with an identified age at death (cf. Tab. 3). Thus, the children's graves make up only *c.* 6% of this part of the population.

The indicated percentage of the people up to 15 years of age is far from the 40–50% assumed for a cemetery (Rożnowski and Gładkowska-Rzeczycka 1981: 53; Poliński 1993: 5). The mortality rate in the Weklice population differs from the standards adopted for prehistoric cemeteries, including these from the Roman Period in the Polish lands (Wiercińska 1975: 19–23, 208; Kozak-Zychmann 1989: 11–15; Poliński 1993: 8).

First of all, it is surprising that at Weklice there is a small number of children aged up to 7 years – *infans* I. It is burials of this age group, mainly of the newborns and infants that should constitute the highest percentage at the cemetery. The state of preservation of children's skeletons from Weklice did not allow for a more accurate assessment of their age at death. Probably for this reason it was not possible to identify the newborns and infants in the osteological material. However, it must be stressed

⁷ At Weklice anthropological evaluation for 227 skeletons was carried out, which represents approximately 50% of the total number of burials recorded on the cemetery – 451, including 288 inhumations and 163 cremations (Natuniewicz-Sekuła and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 23).

that the greatest probability of death in the group *infans* I concerns children under 3 years of age. That is because they do not have a fully formed immune system⁸. It is also assumed that in this age group children during the first month after birth, or between 1 and 12 months of age are also most exposed to death. Afterwards, this danger gradually subsides.

The main causes of high mortality of children in the category *infans* I are infectious diseases and inadequate medical or parental care (Delimata 2004: 53; Jerszyńska 2004: 13, 25). Besides poor sanitation and low level of medical knowledge, M. Delimata mentions also the sudden infant death syndrome (the SIDS, also known as cot death or crib death), which still does not have a clearly established aetiology (Delimata 2004: 53). The high mortality can be also influenced by genetic abnormalities, developmental defects, childbirth injuries and the mother's health, as well as such factors as: food, intestinal, respiratory or digestive system infections (Jerszyńska 2004: 26 – with further literature).

For the main categories of age, the order of mortality in the population of Weklice is generally as follows: *maturus*, *adultus*, *iuvenis*, *infans* II and *infans* I, and *senilis*. This situation is partly incompatible with the general trends noticeable in the prehistoric populations. According to these trends, the intensification of mortality occurred in: *infans* I and *adultus*, *infans* I, *adultus* and *maturus*, *infans* I and *matures*⁹. While applying this pattern to other cemeteries of the Wielbark culture, it should be noted that a negligible percentage of children's burials is observed first of all at the sites which were disturbed or the ones with a small number of excavated graves. More reliable statistically are multi-phase necropolises with several hundreds of burials.

In general, at the cemeteries similar in size to Weklice, the share of graves with persons deceased before the age of 15 exceeds a dozen or so percent. In some cases this share is consistent with the demographic expectations, reaching the level of 40–50% of the total number of the buried persons (e.g., Cecele, Kowalewko, Niedanowo, Site 2). The low share of children's graves at Weklice, which amounts to 6%, is therefore quite surprising. Similarly to Weklice, a small number of individuals at the age of *infans* I was noted, i.a., at Ulkowy. A reservation must be made here that this is due to the generally unfavourable deposition conditions which adversely affected the possibility of an anthropological evaluation of the total population (cf. Rożnowski 2005: 94; Tuszyńska 2005).

⁸ According to the estimates developed for the Middle Ages, 35% of children died during the first year of life, 55% up to 5 years of age, and 35% survived till the reproductive age (Jerszyńska 2004: 109; Żołędź-Strzelczyk 2006: 25). The decrease in the number of newborns' and infants' deaths began in modern times, starting from the 18th century (Henneberg 1975: 198).

⁹ The change in the structure of mortality was brought about in the 19th and 20th centuries, at that time the greatest probability of deaths with the categories *infans* I and *senilis* and *maturus* and *senilis* were associated (Kapica and Łuczak 1974: 100).

It is also interesting that despite the unfavourable soil conditions, the remains of a foetus were discovered in one grave from Weklice (Grave 84), in which a woman (*adultus*) was buried in a log coffin. It was not possible to make a closer evaluation of the stage of development of the foetus. The deceased woman was equipped with iron artefacts: a buckle and a strap end, a necklace from amber and glass beads, a clay spindle-whorl and a wooden casket (Natuniewicz-Sekuła and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 42–43, pl. XXXVII).

Burials of foetuses are either rarely recorded or rarely distinguished at cemeteries of the Wielbark culture. In some cases, the results of an anthropological evaluation are inconclusive (either a foetus or an early newborn). A greater chance for the preservation of delicate bones is offered by inhumation, but only in suitable soil conditions. Analogously to Weklice, examples of common burials of foetuses¹⁰ with presumed mothers were provided by necropolises at Kowalewko, Grave 165 (Skorupka 2001: 51–52), Cecele, Grave 313 (foetus or newborn – Jaskanis 1996: 46) and Pruszcz Gdański, Site 7 (Gładkowska-Rzeczycka and Pudło 2003: 320)¹¹.

Generally, all that can be said in these cases is a general indication of the circumstances leading to the common burial: the death of both the mother and the child during birth or the death of the mother during pregnancy. The age of women from identified burials, was defined as *adultus* (Kowalewko and Cecele), which is similar to Weklice. In the group of women from the Wielbark culture cemeteries, the highest share is of the *adultus* group (Skóra 2015: 47, fig. 2). The death of women in this age group, could be related to, among other things, to successive pregnancies causing exhaustion and fatigue of the organism.

Few are we ...

The reasons for the small percentage of the foetuses, newborns and infants at cemeteries are especially the factors causing the decomposition of the bones in the soil, especially with the unfavourable PH (Jerszyńska 2004: 10). Peculiar geological conditions of the soil (cf. footnote 6) at Weklice certainly can be made responsible for the lack of skeletons of the youngest representatives of the Weklice community.

Children's remains usually preserve worse than adult bones; they have low density associated with a lower content of mineral components in relation to a higher content

¹⁰ However from a socio-cultural perspective mainly the single burials of persons in prenatal age are interesting. For the Wielbark culture such inhumation burials were noted in: Cecele, graves 14a (late foetus or newborn), 89b (early *infans* I or foetus), 128 (newborn or late foetus), 179 (newborn or late foetus) (Jaskanis 1996: 14, 22, 26, 32) or Kowalewko, grave 342 (?) (Skorupka 2001: 91, 428), and pit cremation burials in: Cecele, grave 303 (newborn or late foetus) (Jaskanis 1996: 45) and Nadkole, site 1, grave 35 (late foetus or newborn – Andrzejowski and Żórawska 2002: 38).

¹¹ The remains of newborns buried together with women were found at Kościelna Jania, grave 26 (Pietrzak 2002: 380) and Niedanowo, site 2, grave 511 (Ziemlińska-Odojowa 1999: 89).

of organic components. For this reason it should be expected that at Wekllice there would be at least a higher share of graves of older children (*infans* II), particularly from the end of this age group, that is, about the age of 14–15. Such graves are admittedly more numerous than those of *infans* I children but it is still not a significant proportion.

Another reason of the deficit of children at the cemeteries may be the non-preservation of remains possibly caused by the fact that the pits of inhumation burials were shallower, especially those of small children. In the case of the Wielbark culture necropolises, this factor may actually be at play to some extent. The graves of *infans* I are usually quite shallow as compared with the graves of persons of the other age categories (Skóra 2015: 107–108). The small thickness of the pit exposes the grave to the risk of destruction during agricultural works and fosters the decomposition of weakly mineralised bones which are deposited closer to the surface.

While discussing the deficit of the remains of small children at the cemeteries, some attention should be paid to the cultural factors that affected the image recorded by the present-day archaeology. One of them is the practice of abandoning children due to the economic difficulties of the family, which was one of the methods of birth control. Such behaviours are attested, i.a., in the communities of the Roman Empire. In the pre-Christian times, and in fact until the introduction of a legal condemnation in 374 (Valentinian's *Infanticide* and *Expositio*), such practices must have played a certain role in the fertility control. However it is emphasized that such steps were undertaken against children born out of wedlock or born with physical disabilities. The sex of the child could also predestine to abandonment, according to the written sources, girls were generally unwanted (Suder 2003: 210–211). This practice was stigmatised by Tacitus in Germania. As a moral counterweight to the corrupt morals of Rome, the above-mentioned author presented the Germanic tribes as: *numerum liberorum finire aut quemquam ex agnatis necare flagitium habentur* (Germ. 19). However, this opinion may raise some doubts. Certainly it cannot be seen as a common norm which was in force in the discussed community. The abandonment of children to death in northern Europe during pre-Christian times is confirmed in the Icelandic sagas (e.g. *The Story of Burnt Njal*, Icelandic, *Brennu-Njáls Saga* 105; on this issue cf. Skóra 2012: 141). However it was impossible to abandon a newborn if it was breastfed or sprinkled with water (Kapitan 2012: 124).

The non-representativeness of the number of a selected age or sex group is often explained by the fact that a given community used a burial rite which evaded archaeological recording. The ethnographic analogies suggest abandoning bodies outside cemeteries or human habitats, or within settlements (Madyda-Legutko *et al.* 2004: 212). The latter possibility may be tentatively rejected on the basis of existing state of research on the Wielbark culture settlements. However, we must remember that the state of examination of such settlements is unsatisfactory, which is happily changing now. In the Przeworsk culture, where the research of this kind is much more advanced,

remains of children are recorded within settlements (Makiewicz 1988); however, such cases constitute but a tiny minority.

Similarly, in the other parts of central European Barbaricum children's remains are not commonly found within settlements (Kvetánová 2008: 26–27). Some of the 'deposits' of children's remains may have been foundation sacrifices (cf. e.g. Beilke-Voigt 2007). The contexts of discovery of the human bones in the settlements do not always allow to classify the findings accurately as an actual grave, a foundation sacrifice, or a case of discarding the body into a rubbish pit.

The deficit of burials of small children at cemeteries is a multidimensional phenomenon. The demographic image of the analysed population was shaped by many factors. Apart from the social and ceremonial ones, it was significantly affected by a variety of natural factors, which destructively influenced the osteological and organic material.

Possibly, the discussed situation will change after the examination of the site in its entirety. The main condition is a discovery of a separate quarter of children's graves. This, however, is rather unlikely, since such a spatial organisation at cemeteries of the Wielbark culture occurs very rarely (an exception is, e.g. Cecele – Jaskanis 1996).

The biological condition of the children

The biological condition of the population from Weklice has been evaluated by I. Teul. It should be noted that the osteological analysis of the pathological changes could be carried out only for this part of the population which used inhumation. The bones from the cremation graves could not be analysed in such a way (cf. Teul 2011). The detailed results of the analysis are presented in the quoted work hence we confine ourselves to quoting the main conclusions concerning children. First of all, dental enamel hypoplasia which was found in the bone material (in 1/3 of the population with preserved teeth) permits us to conclude that children from Weklice may have been somewhat affected by undernourishment or diseases¹², but 'it was not a dramatic level' (Teul 2011: 163)¹³.

¹² Dental enamel hypoplasia, or incomplete education enamel layer can be caused by diseases or nutritional disorders, to which the organism is exposed before 6 years of age, during the formation of the enamel on the deciduous and partially permanent dentition, but most often between the ages of 2 to 4–5 when the child moves from breast milk to regular food (weaning phase), and so during the loss of immune protection (cf. Krenz-Niedbała 2004). The main causes of disorders in the enamel formation also include nutritional deficiencies, lack of magnesium, phosphorus, fluorine, protein, and the vitamins from the A, C and D groups. Not without significance for the development of hypoplasia are also the determinants of disease of the digestive, respiratory or endocrine systems (Kwiatkowska 2005: 65). Hypoplasia of the teeth is manifested by horizontal lines and grooves, mostly in the central part of the upper or lower arch (Dąbrowski and Gronkiewicz 1996: 63).

¹³ The moment significant for the future life of the child is the cessation of breastfeeding and starting to supplement the diet with other foods (the weaning phase). This is a particularly dangerous stage in

Interesting conclusions were provided by the analysis of the presence of Zn and the level of Zn/Ca and Sr/Zn in the bone material. A comparison of the results for different age groups led to the conclusion that in the examined assemblage the best nourished persons were adults, then *juvenis*, *infans* and *senilis*. For children, low levels of zinc and a low Zn/Ca ratio has been observed, suggesting that they could have had a limited access to animal proteins (Teul 2011: 164–165).

Similar studies of diet diversity, carried out for the population of the Wielbark and the Przeworsk cultures are relatively rare. Nevertheless, they are a very important source of information about the social stratification in the past. Similar studies of paleodiet were carried out for the Wielbark culture population from Pruszcz Gdański, site 7, and Rogowo (Gładkowska-Rzeczycka *et al.* 1997; Reitsema and Kozłowski 2013). In the case of the Przeworsk culture noteworthy analyses were undertaken for the community from the cemetery at Opatów¹⁴.

Inhumation graves of the children from Wekllice: the archaeological possibilities of their identification

When the skeletal remains are not preserved in an inhumation grave, a metrical criterion can be helpful in identifying a child's burial. In the hitherto attempts of this kind at the Wielbark culture cemeteries, it was assumed that a child's inhumation burial pit should not exceed 150 cm at the bottom. This factor should also be verified by the arrangement of the elements of clothing (the distance between the finds), and, if possible, by their dimensions (e.g., the diameter of bracelets – cf., i.a., Grzelakowska 1991: 74, 76–77). It is also helpful to assess the size of coffins or log coffins. Due to the presence of unusual funeral procedures (e.g., partial burials, inhumation-cremation¹⁵) the above premises can be helpful in the burial rite of the Wielbark culture. However, they do not allow for an unequivocal classification of a given grave as a child's grave. The metric criterion is useful only partially: in short burial pits we also find remains of adults arranged in a shrunken position on the side or supine with the head or legs

which the child has to deal with the pathogens contained in food, especially those responsible for digestive and respiratory disorders (Jerszyńska 2004: 95–96). In the contemporary developing countries, women have an adequate amount of food only for about 6 months after birth, then too, or slightly earlier the children's diet should be supplemented, which is not always the case and becomes the cause of malnutrition, impaired growth process and the lack of resistance to infection (Jerszyńska 2004: 100).

¹⁴ For the cemetery of Przeworsk culture at Opatów an attempt was made to capture the relationship of diet diversity, age, sex and quality of the equipment of the dead, based on the presence of strontium and barium and indicators of Sr/Ca and Ba/Ca in teeth (38 individuals). The study indicates that, i.a., women and men probably had an equal access to the main components of the diet and the group had an overall poor economic (Madyda-Legutko *et al.* 2010; Madyda-Legutko *et al.* 2011: 39; cf. also Rodzińska-Nowak 2012: 140–142).

¹⁵ On the subject of biritual graves and so called partial burials in Wielbark culture cf., i.a., Tempelmann-Mączyńska 1992: 194–195; Andrzejowski *et al.* 2002: 259–260; Natuniewicz-Sekuła 2007.

leaning against a wall of the grave (e.g. Brulino-Koski, Grave 21 – Kempisty 1968: 420, fig. 34).

In the group of inhumation graves from Weklice we can only point to a few which could be classified as children's graves due to the length of the pit at the bottom and the arrangement of the finds. The adoption of the criterion of the maximum pit length of 150 cm also means that this assemblage would only encompass a group of the youngest or poorly equipped children. At the cemeteries of the Wielbark culture there are inhumation burials of *infans* I and *infans* II with pits being close in size to the adults' graves. Also at Weklice, in the group of burials defined anthropologically as children's burials, only one inhumation grave was actually recorded. The length of its pit at the bottom was less than 150 cm (Grave 220 – *infans* I; cf. Tab. 1 and 2).

The search for the children's burials in the group of graves without the anthropological analysis, but solely with the aid of the above-mentioned metric criterion does not give satisfactory results. We can only point to two burial pits (312 and 331) with the length of 150 cm and 140 cm, respectively (Natuniewicz-Sekuła and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 88, 91, pls. CXXXV, CXLV).

The analysis of the arrangement of finds located in the centre of the pit enables us to assume that remains of children could have been deposited in a few more graves (118, 124, 131, 288, 308, 324, 331, 413 and 416). In terms of their quality or assortment, their grave goods do not differ significantly from what is observed in the group of graves defined anthropologically as children's. The range of lengths of these pits at the bottom is between 180 and 230 cm (Graves 118, 124, 228, 308, 324, 413 and 416).

The remains of attire from the selected graves consisted of 2–3 brooches (including silver ones). There were no buckles or other elements of the belt. Necklaces of glass and amber beads were numerous. In two graves spindle-whorls and needles were recorded, and in one there was a hooked pin. Only one person in this group was equipped with bracelets. However their dimension corresponds to the bracelets of adults (the diameter of both finds is 6.3 cm). Chronologically, the discussed burials come from the final phases of use of the cemetery.

Evaluation of *infans* I and *infans* II grave goods at Weklice

Funerary equipment of *infans* I and II children from the cemetery at Weklice is characterised by small differences in categories of finds (cf. Tab. 4). It actually reflects the generally applicable standards in the burial rite of the Wielbark culture, but does not differ from the principles of equipping children postmortem (Skóra 2012: 146). As it is already known, the rules of the burial rite in Wielbark culture excluded deposition of weapons and iron artefacts into graves¹⁶ (Wołągiewicz 1981: 151–152).

¹⁶ In the cemetery at Weklice the relatively high proportion of iron objects (especially dress elements and ornaments) seems to contradict this rule exceptionally (cf. Natuniewicz-Sekuła 2013).

New archaeological research at the settlements of this cultural unit will enable us to verify how far the image of the material culture this community is formed by discoveries from cemeteries.

At Wekllice, in the case of children who died before the age of seven, it is difficult to make general conclusions due to the fact that only three single graves and two inhumation burials in a double grave were discovered.

In this small group there are two burials without equipment (Graves 260, 345), and one with the equipment in the form of a small piece of a rod bracelet (Grave 46). Against this background, the last of the burials (Grave 220) stands out with regard to the number and type of the elements making up the habitus. These were 3 brooches, a buckle, and a bead necklace. Also, a spindle-whorl and a needle were discovered. Such artefact was also found in the plundered inhumation Grave 524 (Fig. 2–3).

In contrast, a total of seven single graves of individuals who died between the age of 7 and 15 were discovered at the cemetery at Wekllice. Besides that, remains of five *infans* II individuals were revealed in inhumation multiple-burial graves. This allowed in some cases to assign items of equipment. In total, no items were found in four burials (1 single and 3 multiple-burial ones). In single graves, the outfit of this age group consists of brooches (1 to 3). A buckle and a belt end fitting were found only with one child – in Grave 254, analogously to a necklace of glass and amber beads (Grave 389). Therefore, there were three graves in which bracelets (single or in a set) were found. One had a trace of repair. Bracelets are the part of attire which is rarely found in graves of the children who died before the age of seven. At Wekllice, the state of preservation of the bracelet from Feature 46 does not allow for an identification of its diameter.

For older children – *infans* II – we have data for a few such ornaments. What is interesting is that their dimensions do not show differences in comparison with the finds from the graves of women (aged between *iuvenis* and *maturus*) – cf. Fig. 1. This may indicate that the bracelets were not adapted in size to the wrists of children and could be put into graves as a gift from adults. It should also be remembered that in the anthropological category of *infans* II there are also teenage persons (up to 15 years of age), and for them the size of these ornaments needs not to significantly differ from the bracelets of adults. The impossibility of accurate assessment of the age at death of children from Wekllice in the category of *infans* II does not help clarify the issue. An exception is a small find from Grave 398. It is a plain copper alloy bracelet, with a diameter of 4.7 cm (Type Natuniewicz 3) (Natuniewicz-Sekuła and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 103–104, pl. CLXXVII: Grave 398: 4). In this case it can be assumed that the ornament was an actual property of the child and was also used during the life.

The wrist ornaments are found quite rarely in the Wielbark culture children's graves. Bracelets are rather reserved for the adult world. Until now, they have been discovered only in a few burials of children whose age was anthropologically identified as *infans* I,

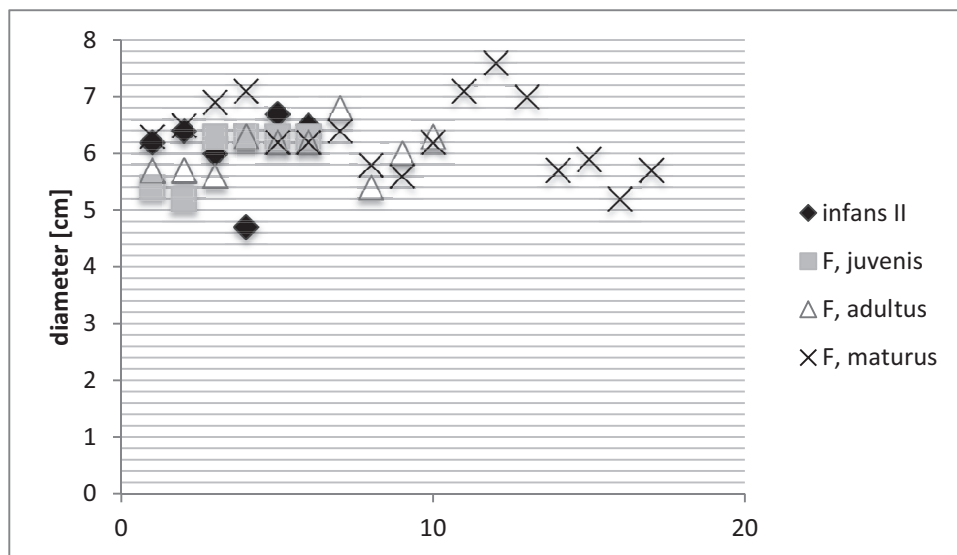


Fig. 1. Weklice. Diameters of bracelets in children's graves (*infans* II) and females (from *iuvenis* to *maturus*). Compiled by K. Skóra

in Nowy Targ, Graves 410 and 419 (Fudzińska and Fudziński eds. 2013: 111, pl. LXII:3; 113–114, pl. LXVII:3), Kowalewko, graves 256 and 449 (Skorupka 2001: 73, pl. 79, 117, 139), Odry, Grave 543 (Grzelakowska 1991: 82, fig. 12), Pruszcz Gdański, Site 10, Grave 398 (Pietrzak 1997: 59, pl. CXIII). On the other hand, within the group of *infans* II one can point out discoveries from Kowalewko, Grave 129 (Skorupka 2001: 44, pl. 39), Pruszcz Gdański, Site 7, Grave 125 (Tuszyńska 2006: 52–53, fig. 2: 4–5), Nowy Targ, Grave 584 (Fudzińska and Fudziński eds 2013: 148, pl. XCIX).

The grave goods of the *infans* II burials, similarly to those of *infans* I children, contained few items with the function of tools: a spindle-whorl in Grave 191 and a needle in the double-burial Grave 524 (Fig. 2–3). At Weklice the absence of items decorated with precious metals or made of them is visible in graves of younger children (*infans* I). In the group of *infans* II there was a silver brooch (Grave 389), an iron brooch decorated with impressed silver foil (Grave 545 – Fig. 4: 1) and two silver capsule pendants (Graves 545 – Fig. 5: 11–12 and 584). This is consistent with the observations made for the all the children's graves; the children who died before the age of seven are the poorest equipped with silver items (Skóra 2015: 71).

A juxtaposition of this data to our overall knowledge on the principles of equipping children's graves in the Wielbark culture allows to note that in the case of Weklice we have only a fraction of the population from the cemetery. In general terms, apart from the elements of attire or small ornaments made of silver, no prestigious items such as

glass vessels, gaming stones or coins, as well as wooden caskets have been observed in the children's burials¹⁷. The presence of wooden caskets is sometimes confirmed in children's graves at other cemeteries of the Wielbark culture. The lack of weaponry and tools is, as we know, the result of the general principles applied in the burial rite.

In addition to that, the poor state of preservation of the bones has made it impossible to determine the age of children at death more accurately. This is usually done basing on the degree of formation of the deciduous and permanent teeth¹⁸, the size of bones or the level of ossification of certain parts of the skeleton (Piontek 1999: 143). Without the knowledge of the exact age of the children we can not trace the changes in the rhythm of changes in equipping, related to the socialisation of children. Such conclusions must be deferred until the completion of the research at the cemetery when it will be possible to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the differentiation of elements of the burial rite according to sex and age.

Spurs and children

In the double inhumation Grave 521, in which two different spurs were discovered, the human remains were classified as belonging to a man (*adultus*) and child (*infans* II) (Kontny and Natuniewicz-Sekuła 2010: 341–342). The arrangement of the man's bones demonstrates that he was buried in a sitting position. The child was probably deposited in the burial pit on the corpse of the man. The equipment of the adult included a brass spur discovered next to the calcaneus and a bronze pin with a hemispherical head on the chest. The second brass spur was discovered on the child's (*infans* II) fibula (Kontny and Natuniewicz-Sekuła 2010: 341, fig. 1: grave 521).

Apart from that one can point to two other examples of double graves with spurs from the territory of the Wielbark culture. The skeletal remains in these graves were defined as belonging to a man and a child. These are cremation Grave 130 from Odry (male, 20–25 years old and the child, 1–2 years old – Mazurowska 1968: 101) and Grave 2 under Barrow 63 at Nowy Łowicz (male, *maturus* and a child of unspecified age at death – Hahuła 1992: 57–59, 61, footnote 4). Unfortunately, the cremation burial rite prevents a direct assignment of equipment to the dead. Up to now, spurs have not been discovered in a single child's grave in the Wielbark culture. In the light of the

¹⁷ At Weklice remains of a wooden casket were found in double-burial Grave 524 (female and *infans* I) (cf. catalogue); the wooden casket from grave 84 (female and foetus) should be also mentioned here – Natuniewicz-Sekuła and Okulicz-Kozaryn 2011: 42–43.

¹⁸ Determining children's age on the basis of the sequence of teeth eruption may lead to errors due to the fact that there are differences in that sequence, even within one population. Also, it is quite probable that the pre-historic sequence was different from that observed in modern times, which is particularly evident for the first permanent teeth as their growth may be delayed by, e.g., malnutrition. The analysis of calcification is considered to be more reliable because this process has a lower variability than the sequence of teeth eruption (Jerszyńska 2004: 12, 28).

anthropological analysis this element of horse riding equipment is clearly connected with the group of adult men (mostly *adultus* and *maturus* – cf. Skóra 2015: 161). Assuming that in Grave 521 from Weklice the presence of the spur by the bones of a child was not a matter of incident, this would be the first anthropologically confirmed example of this accessory in the grave of an immature person (both *infans* I and II category) in the Wielbark culture. Unfortunately, due to the lack of developed methods of anthropological evaluation of the sex of children, we cannot state whether the children buried in the above-mentioned men's graves were boys.

The burial rite

The children's graves uncovered at Weklice follow the general standards of the Wielbark culture burial rites. It should be noted, however, that the number of children's burials excavated so far is very small so the subsequent discoveries at the cemetery may change the general conclusions. In the analysed assemblage the inhumation and the northern orientation of burial pits were predominant. It is difficult to make any comments on the position of the children's bodies because of the residual state of preservation of the skeletons. This is caused by decomposition or destruction of the burial pits (ancient cuts or modern damage). Attention should be paid to the children's skeletons lying on the side. However, this position is not exclusive to this age group as we also find it in the graves of adults.

In the inhumation graves of *infans* I no remains of wooden structures have been discovered, while in the *infans* II group of burials log coffins are mainly observed. Their recorded length was 125, 140 and 160 cm (Graves 398, 66, and 254, respectively), and the width does not exceed 40 cm. The lack of 'containers' for bodies in the graves of the youngest children is in accordance with the observations made for a larger group of the Wielbark culture children's burials. It is *infans* I that is the age category in the Wielbark culture which is most rarely equipped with such 'containers' (Skóra 2015: 105).

An interesting aspect of the Wielbark culture burial rites are the multiple burial inhumation graves. A hitherto examination of this issue enables us to locate Weklice in the group of necropolises where this custom is most often observed (one should also mention Pruszcz Gdański, Sites 5, 7 and 10 – cf. Skóra 2010: 804–810). Also in this case a preponderance of *infans* II over *infans* I seems to be significant (*infans* I in 2 graves, *infans* II in 5 graves).

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

The child becomes a member of the community and a person as a result of the interaction with the social environment. In primitive societies, as T. Buliński sees it,

the child is not 'a being which is valuable in itself.' Unlike today, the life of the community in the past was not subordinated to the child, but rather, even though the child was part of the society, it remained in a way in its periphery (Buliński 2002: 35, 59–60). The child changed into a socially relevant being as it became more and more useful for meeting the needs of the group, primarily the economic ones. The child also became visible for the communities when it received the external attributes of the status, such as ornaments or appropriate attire.

Along with its biological and psychological development, the child was gradually included in the sphere of mature activities. The child was apprenticed to simple actions, including those traditionally assigned to a given sex. As a testimony of such 'education' one may consider small finds in the grave inventories which had the function of tools, such as spindle-whorls, needles, or whetstones. However, we cannot be sure of the real intentions behind the deposition of a given item into the grave of the child. Their apotropaic meaning is often emphasised (Czarnecka 1990: 67; Madyda-Legutko *et al.* 2004: 205; Schultze 2005). Moreover we must reckon with a variety of things from organic materials (e.g., items imitating those belonging to the adult world), which became decomposed.

The rites of passage construct the person. From Tacitus' *Germania* we know that they were meant for boys and served as a transformation into a man and a warrior. This new social role was emphasized by awarding a spear (*framea*) and a shield (*Germ.* 13). The beginning of maturity falls probably at the end of the category *infans* II, which allowed to obtain the status of a warrior. The fact of belonging to the tribe and not the family was symbolically marked by weaponry. According to Tacitus and Paul Deacon, the initiation of young men was achieved by defeating the enemy in battle and taking his weaponry (*Germ.* 13 and 31; *Hist. Long.* I, 23).

The inclusion into the group of adults or marriage, associated with the change of one's social position, required the adoption of new standards of behaviour and roles, responsibilities, and 'insignia' (Derks 1997: 533–534). Socially respected divisions are not always reflected in the archaeological material. In the case of burial customs we can manage to capture primarily some differences in the treatment of children and adults (in the number and quality of the grave goods and organisation of the burial). These differences, however, are not necessarily sharply marked out between the successive age classes. Some observations concerning burial rites in communities of the *Barbaricum* can be read as demonstrating an inheritance of status, passing through the subsequent stages of socialization or *rites de passage* of children (cf., i.a., Czarnecka 1980: 188; Schuster 2003: 259; Skóra and Troszczyńska-Antosik 2012: 154).

Basing on the archaeological discoveries supported by anthropological studies, it can be assumed that in the Wielbark culture communities the age appropriate to highlight the social position of the child in the burial rite (silver: ornaments and dress elements or other items – prestige indicators) was 3–4 years old (Skóra and Troszczyńska-Antosik 2012: 154). This is the time of departure from infancy, change from breast

milk to permanent food, achieving greater agility and the progressive development of language functions.

However, at the current stage of research on childhood all the above claims are merely hypotheses which may be verified in the future.

THE CATALOGUE¹⁹:

Grave 524 (Inhumation, double, robbed) (Fig. 2–3)

The burial pit, shaped as a rectangle with rounded corners, was discovered between c. 0.85 m (N part) and 1.1 m (S part) below the ground level. It is N-S aligned and its dimensions are 2.7 × 1 m. The N edge was difficult to distinguish as its outline was distorted, perhaps with a plunderer's pit (?). The filling of the feature consisted of contained light yellow loose sand with grey insertions of firm structure. At the bottom of the burial pit there were scattered human bones in non-anatomical arrangement (with a maximum difference in the depth of deposition of individual fragments of up to 20 cm). In the S part of the pit a skull of an *adultus* individual was found; and just above it there was a clear outline of a wooden casket in the form of decomposed wood. The needle (6), the spindle-whorl (9), the hooked pin with a twisted shaft (8), as well as a fragment of the lower part of a vessel (10) were found inside the casket. There was also a casket mound with preserved wood and a fragment of an iron lock spring (11–12). In the vicinity of the skull there were a S-clasp (2), 2 glass beads and 1 amber bead (3–5). Other bones of this individual were scattered on the E side of the S part of pit. In the central part of the grave fragments of long bones (belonging to the child) were discovered, and next to them there was the second needle (7) – probably the only surviving element of the funerary equipment of the child. The disturbed arrangement of finds and bones indicates that the grave was robbed, probably in the Antiquity. The outline of the plunderer's pit was not captured, yet it is possible that the disturbances in the N part of pit are the remains of it. Moreover the robbery could be testified by few remains of the rich equipment, particularly the clasp, which was richly decorated with filigree and granulation. This find may have been omitted during the robbery. In the grave there were remains of two individuals (the *adultus* (?) woman and the *infans* I child); however, the original arrangement of the bodies could not be identified

¹⁹ The catalogue includes only unpublished graves and features from the excavation seasons of 2005–2013. The numbers of finds in the catalogue correspond to the numbers in the figures. If not stated otherwise the following classification typologies were used: brooches – O. Almgren 1923; bracelets – T. Wójcik 1982; buckles – R. Madyda-Legutko 1987; strap ends – K. Raddatz 1957; S-claps – A. von Müller 1957; glass and amber beads – M. Tempelmann-Maczyńska 1985b. The descriptions of the find dimensions were provided with the following abbreviations: W. – width; Bdm. – bottom diameter (of vessels); Dm. – diameter; H. – height; L. – length.

due to the aforementioned disturbances. The bottom of the grave was located about 0.7–0.8 m below the its top part.

Inventory:

1. Cooper alloy belt buckle with a rectangular frame. Type ML G8. L. 2.3 cm, W. 2.8 cm.
2. Silver S-shaped clasp. The shaft is made of four soldered wires. The central one is incised, while the three other ones which are soldered lengthwise are smooth. Throughout the entire length of the smooth wires there remained soldered balls of granulation (a few did not survive). A disc made from spirally twisted and incised wire is fastened with a hook to the central part of the clasp. In the central part of the disc there is a large granule surrounded by a ring of smaller ones. The whole disc is surrounded by a soldered flat strip, ornamented with soldered granulation balls. The end bases of the S-clasp are surrounded with smooth and incised wire, on which clusters of granulation (5 large balls) are located. On these clusters there are soldered compositions consisting of four smaller balls. Type v. Müller B. Max. L. 3.1 cm. Disc dm. 0.6 cm.
3. Glass barrel bead, opaque red. In some places there are spots of eroded eyes. Type T-M 223. Dm. 1 cm, H. 0.9 cm
4. Glass barrel bead, opaque red, decorated with black eyes with a white border. Type T-M 223a. Dm. 1 cm, H. 0.9 cm.
5. Amber biconical bead. Type TM 391. Dm. 1.6 cm, max. H. 0.9 cm.
6. Cooper alloy needle. L. 8 cm.
7. Cooper alloy needle. L. 7.8 cm.
8. Cooper alloy hooked pin with a twisted shaft. L. 5.6 cm.
9. Clay spindle-whorl, cylindrical. H. 2 cm, Dm. 2.4 cm.
10. Reconstructed bottom part of a pottery vessel, dark brown, the outer surface roughly smoothed. Bdm. 5 cm.
11. Iron, rectangular, damaged casket mount with a single rivet and residually preserved wood – part of a plank – (*Betula* – birch²⁰). Surviving L. 3.5 cm, W. 2.1 cm.
12. Iron fragment of the casket lock spring? Surviving L. 1.3 cm.

Anthropological description:

The general condition of the bones of two individuals is poor (bones crushing and delaminating).

Infans I

²⁰ Determination according to Maria Michniewicz from the Laboratory of Bio- and Archaeometry IAE PAN.

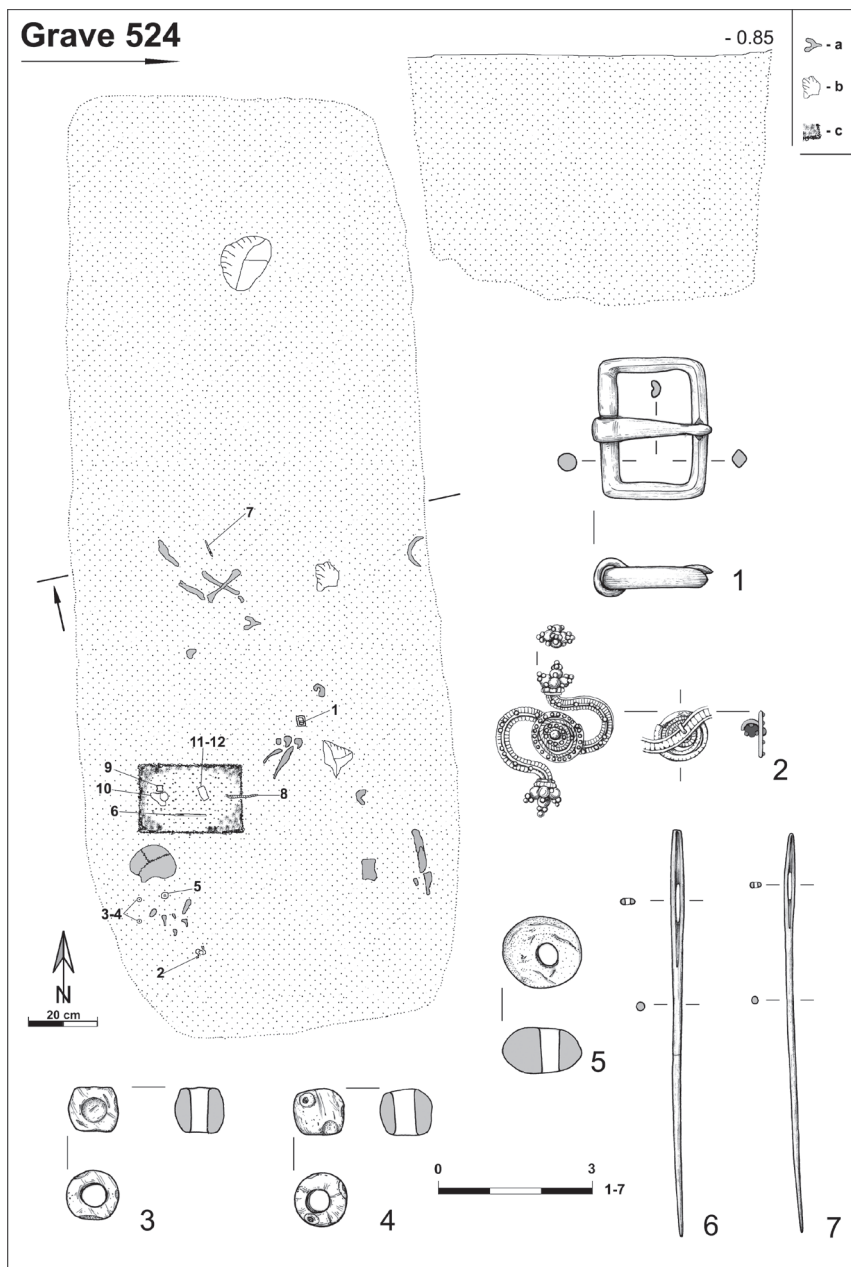


Fig. 2. Weklice. Plan and profile of Grave 524: a – inhumation human bones; b – stones; c – decomposed wood. Inventory of grave 524: 1, 6–7 – copper alloy; 2 – silver; 3–4 – glass; 5 – amber. Drawing by M. Natuniewicz-Sekuła and E. Pazyna

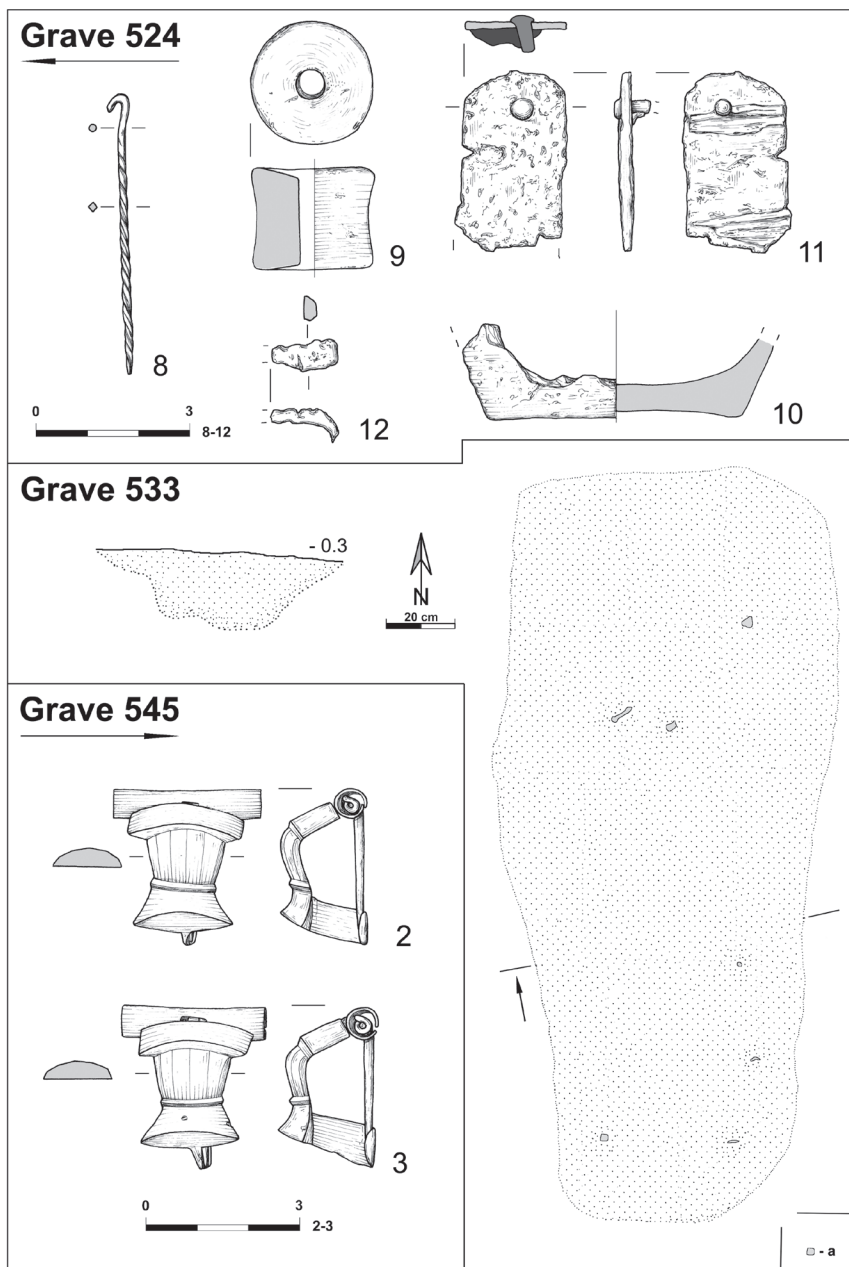


Fig. 3. Wekllice. Inventory of Grave 524: 8 – copper alloy; 9–10 – clay; 11 – iron and wood; 12 – iron. Plan and profile of Grave 533; a – inhumation human bones. Inventory of Grave 545: 2–3 – cooper alloy and silver. Drawing by M. Natuniewicz-Sekuła and E. Pazyna

The diagnostic bones included: the femur, ribs, the shaft and bow thoracic vertebrae and part of the first cervical vertebra.

Female *adultus*?

The diagnostic bones included: skull – a fragment of the left frontal bone with the edge orbital, the left parietal bone and the left temporal bone, the left jaw fragment with teeth P₁, P₂ (premolars), M₁, M₂, M₃ (molars), the right maxillary M₁ and M₂ (large degree of tooth wear 4–5). The female sex was determined based on the growth arch of forehead tumors and mastoiditis. The thin, margin is rounded, the forehead tumors are protuberant, and the small appendix is pointed.

Chronology: IIIA/IIIB

Grave 533 (Inhumation, double?, destroyed) (Fig. 3)

The burial pit was uncovered at *c.* 0.3 m below the ground level, directly under the arable layer. It is N–S aligned, oval in its S part, and its outline is almost rectangular with a rounded corner in the N part. The size is *c.* 2.2 × max. 1 m. In its top part only the S edge of the pit was clearly recorded. The N edge was captured correctly during further exploration, approximately 0.1 m below the top part. Additionally, the pit was located at the edge of an extensive Modern Period trench. It was probably a sand mine, backfilled and ploughed after World War II. The mine was originally used in the early twentieth century (see the description of Feature 584). For these reasons, the pit was completely destroyed in the upper part. The filling contained a layer of reddish brown, clayey and firm sand, strongly hardpanned and mixed with a great amount of firm and fine gravel. This layer was difficult to explore. At the bottom there were tiny fragments of crushed human bones, lying in a non-anatomical arrangement (a *maturus* and an *infans* II). No other finds. The maximum depth of the pit was about 0.25 m.

Inventory: none

Anthropological description:

The general condition of the bones of two individuals is poor (bones crushing and delaminating).

Infans II?

The diagnostic bones included: a fragment of a rib. Moreover, tiny fragments a long bone and spongiosa survived.

Maturus

The diagnostic bones included: a metacarpal bone, a fragment a of shaft bone, the core of a cervical vertebra.

Chronology: Roman Period

Grave 545 (Inhumation with four individuals?, destroyed) (Fig. 3–6)

The burial pit was discovered at *c.* 0.5 m below the ground level. It was NNE–SSW oriented, its shape was close to rectangular with the measurements of 3.3 × 1.2 m. The maximum depth of the pit was about 0.55 m. The upper part of the pit was destroyed by Modern Period ploughing. In this layer, just above the N part of the grave, there were some finds which probably belonged to the original equipment of the grave: a brooch (1), a strap end (7), a belt tag with an attached ring (8), and a casket lock spring (15). The remaining part of the grave was disturbed by a layer of reddish brown, very firm, medium and coarse sand. It was a part of a large trench (probably a residue of backfilled and ploughed sand mine – see the description of Grave 533 and Feature 584). In addition, the W part from the top level was truncated by an animal burrow, the remains of which were visible throughout the grave filling. The filling consisted of dark red, dense, highly hard panned, coarse, and gravelly sand, mixed with lenses of light yellow loose sand. These lenses formed a remnant of the animal burrow – visible at the W edge. In the layers there were numerous clusters and lenses of clay and gravel. The geological nature rendered the exploration of the grave difficult, because the layer was hard and. In the grave bones of 4 individuals were distinguished (the *infans* II the *iuvenis* female, the *adultus* female, the *maturus* man). They lay in a relocated arrangement as a result of the described damage. The burial where the bones arrangement was most close to the anatomical one was located in the NW part of the pit and belonged to the *infans* II individual. Next to his bones the following grave goods were found: brooches (2–3), bracelets (4–5), S-clasps (10) and a fragment of a band from a capsule pendant (12). Moreover, the green discolouration of copper oxides was recorded on the jaw of the *iuvenis*. The jaw was located directly to the E from *infans* II. This discolouration indicated that a copper alloy artefact was deposited there. The skull of the *maturus* man lay face down in the SW part of the pit, within the animal burrow. Bones of the remaining individuals were scattered throughout the pit. The other grave goods which could not be attributed to a particular burial were also scattered throughout the burial pit. In the NE part of the pit a S-clasp was discovered (9), and slightly below there was a fragment of a rivet from the casket mount (16). In the middle of the pit in its E part a destroyed capsule pendant was found (11). In the W part there was a piece of Modern Period glass (18). In the S part there was a non-characteristic pottery sherd (17), while in E part of the S edge of the pit there was a buckle (6). As the grave was located in the cluster of similarly damaged features (with bones of several individuals), it should not be excluded that part of the bones which were discovered in it found their way into the pit as a secondary deposit. The bones may have been shifted from their original position as a result of the above-mentioned devastation.

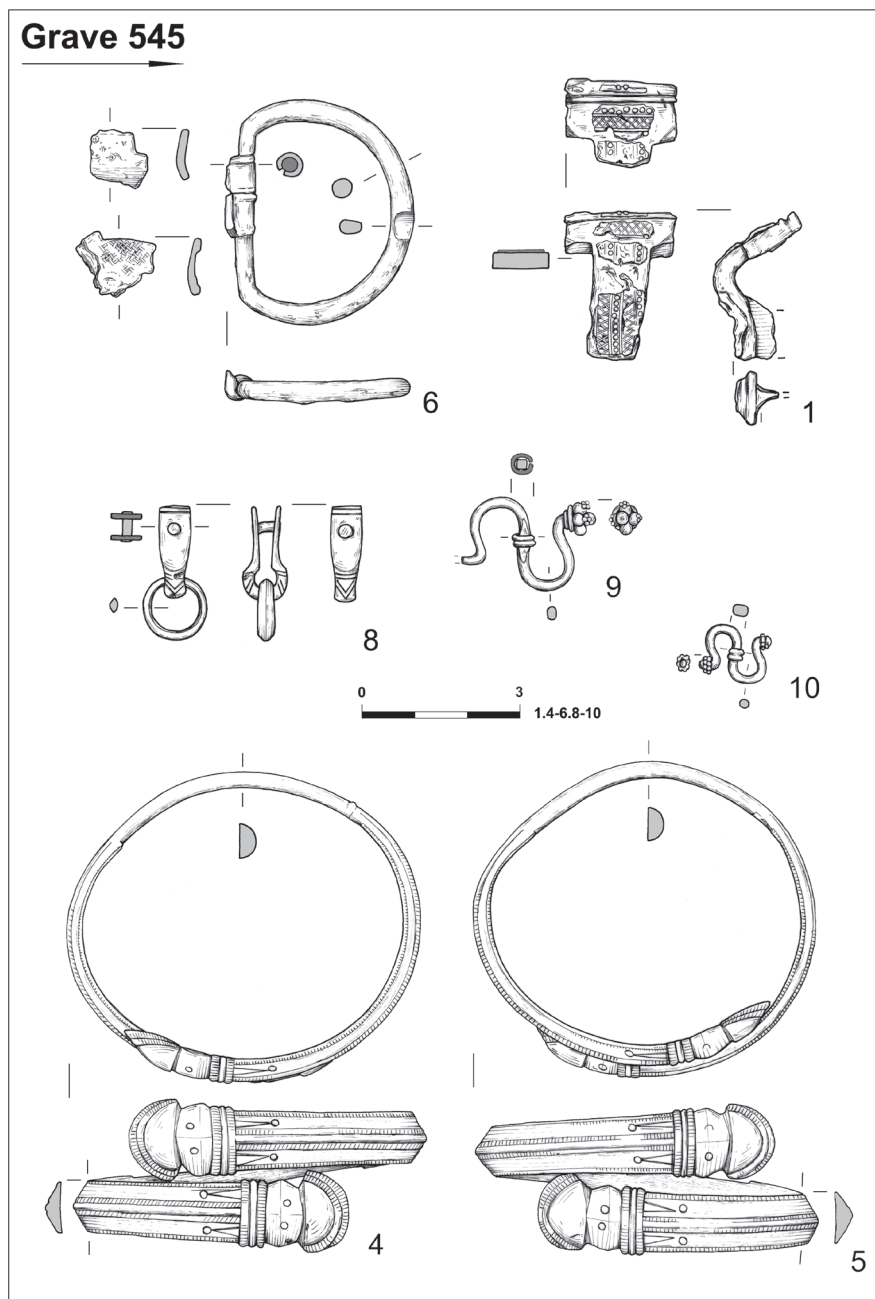


Fig. 4. Inventory of Grave 545: 1 – iron and silver foil; 4–5,8,10 – cooper alloy; 6 – iron; 9 – silver. Drawing by E. Pazyna

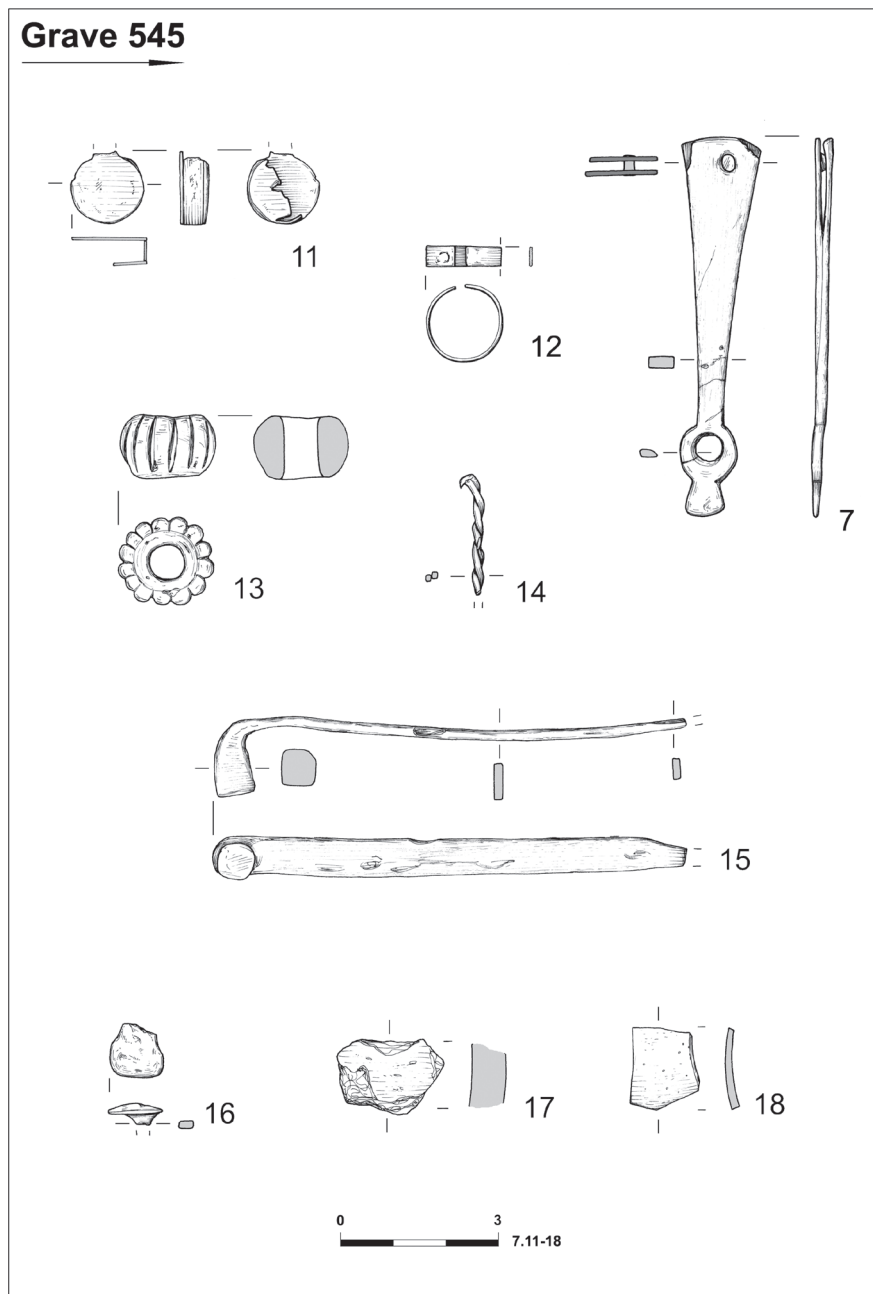


Fig. 5. Inventory of Grave 545: 7,11 – cooper alloy; 12 – silver; 13,18 – glass; 14–16 – iron; 17 – clay.
Drawing by E. Pazyna



Fig. 6. Plan and profile of Grave 545; a – sherd; b – inhumation human bones; c – stones. Drawing by M. Natuniewicz-Sekuła

Inventory:

1. Iron brooch with a broad and flat bow, and an expanded rectangular head. Engraved groove on the head for supporting the upper chord. Decorated on the surface with impressed silver foil with geometric patterns in the form of rows of wheels and oblique grids. Type A. V, series II, type Leonów acc. to Jamka. L. 2.8 cm, W. 2.1 cm.
- 2–3. 2 identical cooper alloy crest-headed brooches with a cylinder cover of the spring. On the cylinders there are remains of silver impressed foil. Type A. V. 130. L. 3 cm; 3.1 cm. W. 2.9 cm; 2.8 cm.
- 4–5. 2 identical cooper alloy so-called *Schlangenkopf* bracelets. Middle parts of the bow are plano-convex in cross-section, at the base triangular. Type Wójcik IIB. Dm. 6.7 cm; 6.5 cm. Max. bases W. c. 1.5 cm both.
6. Iron buckle with the remains of the frame (two fragments survived separately, fabric imprint is visible on one). No spike. Type ML D7?. L. 4.2 cm. W. 3.6 cm.
7. Cooper alloy strap end with one rivet on the attachment. The cross-section of the shaft is rectangular and the tip of the ring-shaped terminal widens slightly in a trapezoid way. Type close to R J.II.4. L. 7.2 cm.
8. Cooper alloy belt tag, wedge-shaped. Its lower and upper borders are engraved with geometric lines and ended with a rivet. A solid ring is suspended from the tag. L. of tag 1.8 cm. Dm. of ring 1.2 cm.
9. Silver S-clasp, formed of a single smooth wire. It is oval in cross-section, its middle part is close to a square and it is wrapped with a double coil of smooth wire. One end of the shaft is damaged. At the base of the other end two rings of smooth wire are soldered. On these rings there are soldered clusters of granulations (5 balls); originally on these clusters there were soldered other clusters of 4 granulation balls (only 3 clusters survived). Type v. Müller B. Surviving L. 2.6 cm.
10. Cooper alloy S-clasp. In the middle part of the shaft there is a thickening, which imitates overlaid wire rings. The ends of the shaft are decorated with double rings of incised wire. Type v. Müller C. Max. L. 1.4 cm.
11. Damaged cooper alloy capsule pendant. On the frontal disc there are traces of tin-lead solder from silver?, gilded silver? or gold? foil. Surviving H. 1,4, Dm. 1.3 cm.
12. Silver band from a capsule pendant – a fragment. Surviving Dm. 1.5 cm.
13. Glass melon bead, dark blue, semi-transparent. Type TM 163. Dm. 1.8 cm, H. 1.2 cm.
14. Iron hooked pin with a twisted shaft – a fragment. Surviving L. 2.3 cm.
15. Iron casket lock spring with a broken end, a square-sectioned bit, and a flat rectangular shaft. Surviving L. 9 cm.
16. Iron fragment – element of casket rivet mount? Surviving H. 1 cm.
17. Sherd, dark brown, roughly smoothed. Surviving H. 1.2 cm.
18. Fragment of modern glass, dark green. Surviving H. 1.6 cm.

Anthropological description: (Fig. 7).

The general condition of the bones is poor (bones crushing and delaminating).

Four individuals were distinguished: *infans II* (Fig. 7: 1), *iuvenis* female? (Fig. 7: 2), early *adultus* female (Fig. 7: 3), *maturus* man (Fig. 7: 4)

Chronology: IIB/IIC

Feature 584 (Modern Period trench – backfilled and ploughed sand mine)

The top of the feature in its discovered part was identified at the depth of *c.* 0.23 m in its N part and 0.41 in its S part, immediately below the arable layer. The feature was irregular in shape, somewhat similar to a rectangle with a maximum length of *c.* 7 m and a maximum width of *c.* 3.5 m. Its thickness was up to 1.5 m. Its S and E parts were outside the research trench. The feature was multilayered. The filling contained highly mixed brownish yellow powdery sand with a great amount of small stones, as well as dark brown-yellow, loose, fine sand with a great amount of gravel and fine charcoals. At different levels in the filling of the feature there were dozens of human bones and various items of equipment. These items differed with regard to their chronology. It should be added that in the arable layer just above the top level the feature there were numerous fragments of human bones and single finds of the Wielbark culture artefacts. Among the diagnostic bones from the filling of the feature at least three individuals were distinguished: (an *infans II*, an *adultus* female, and a *maturus* man). A capsule pendant (6) should probably be connected with the burial of the children, since it was discovered in one of the concentrations of children bones. The feature was part of an extensive sand mine, probably used before World War II and then backfilled and ploughed. It may be assumed that this was one of the sand mines located at the site by the German researchers (cf. Jacobson 1927). On the basis of the number of bones and pieces of equipment it can be concluded that the described feature destroyed at least a few graves.

Inventory²¹:

1. Cooper alloy crest-headed brooch, decorated on the crest and the end of the foot with two incised silver wires. Type close to A. V. 120. L. 4.3 cm, B. 3.8 cm.
2. Cooper alloy bipartite belt buckle with remains of buckle plate, in fragments. L. 2.7 cm, W. 2.7 cm.
3. Cooper alloy strap end. Type close to R O 16. L. 4.2 cm.
4. 4 cooper alloy half-rounded head of rivets – elements of belt mounts. Dm. 0.8 to 1 cm.

²¹ The feature was excavated in the 2013, and up to now finds of its equipment are in conservation and therefore are not illustrated.

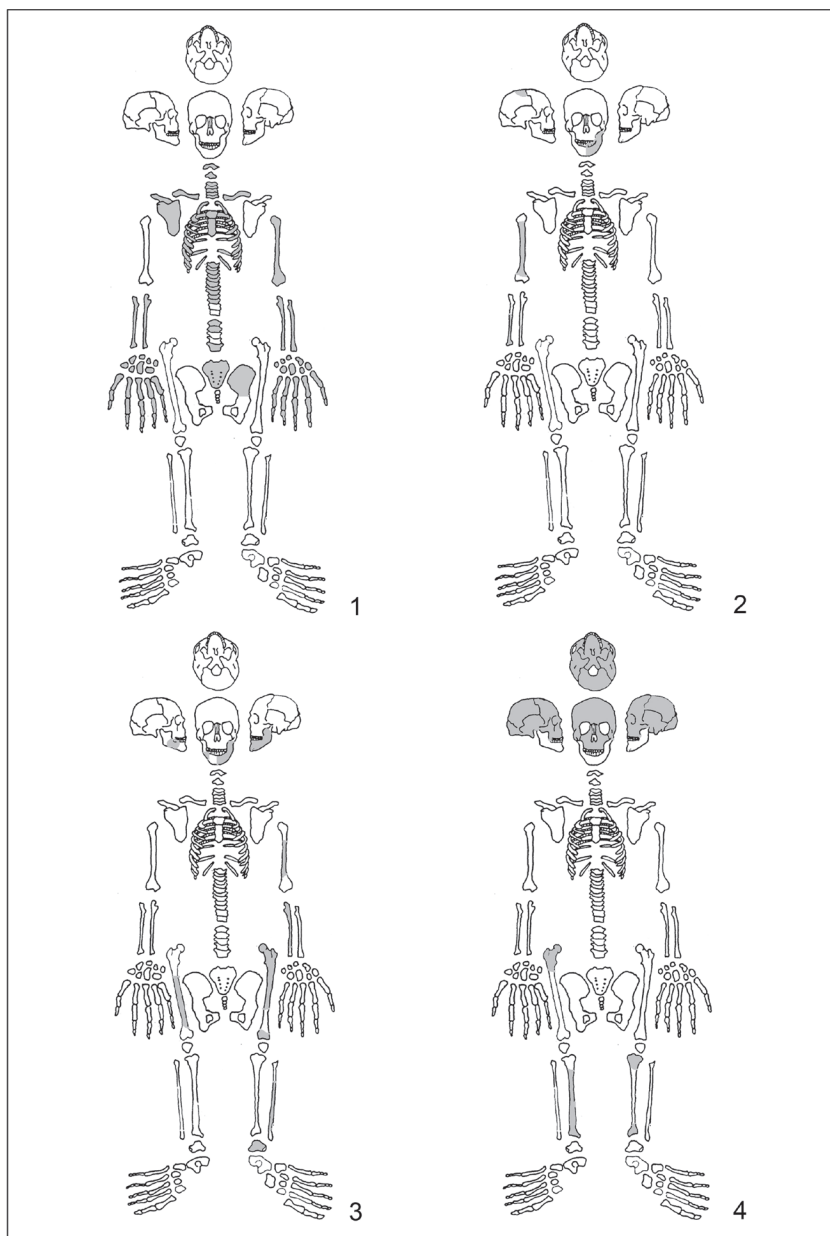


Fig. 7. Weklice. Grave 545. Preserved bones of individuals defined anthropologically: 1 – *infans* II; 2 – female? *iuvenis*; 3 – female early *adultus*, 4 – man *maturus*. Compiled by M. Natuniewicz-Sekuła and I. Teul

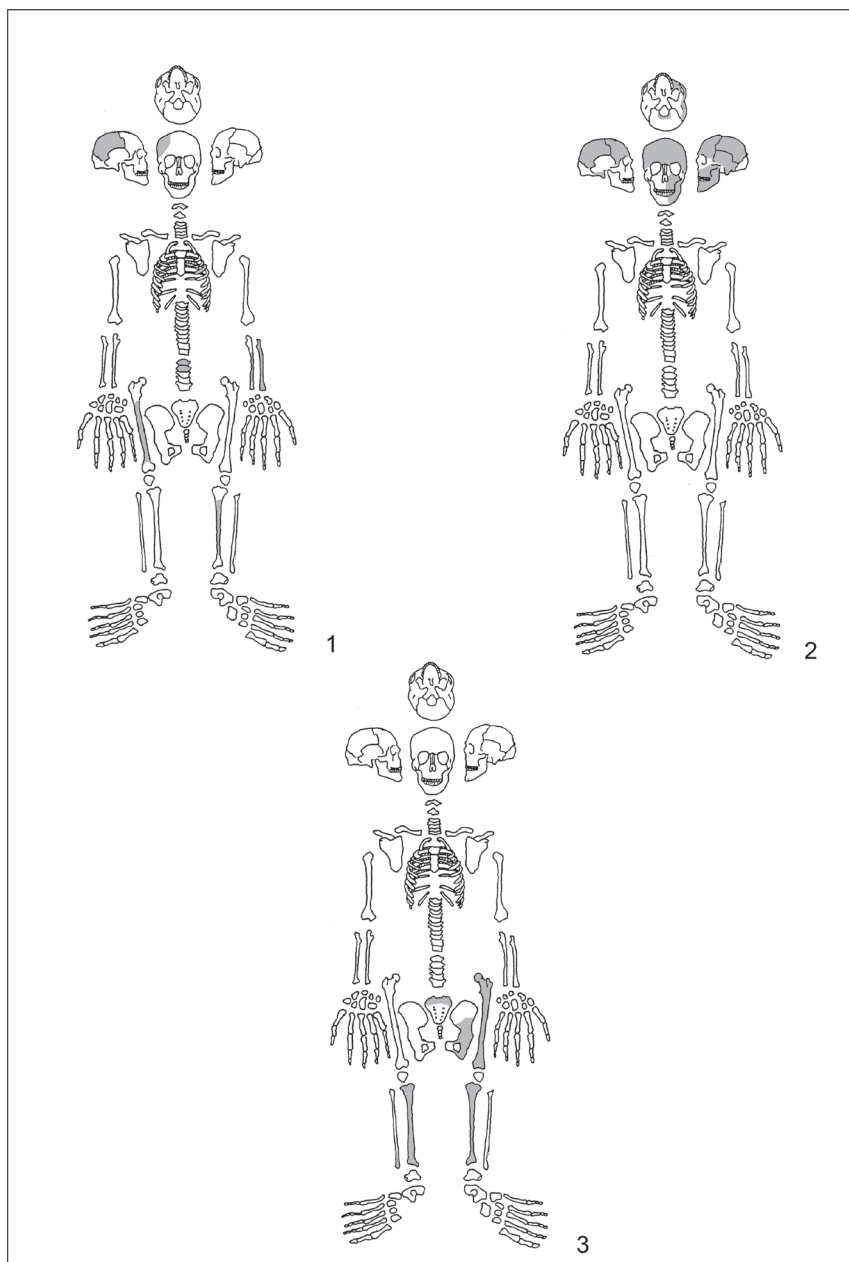


Fig. 8. Weklice. Feature 584. Preserved bones of individuals defined anthropologically: 1 – *infans* II; 2 – female *adultus*; 3 – man *maturus*. Compiled by M. Natuniewicz-Sekuła and E. Kotecka

5. Silver S-clasp decorated with granulation. Type von Müller W. L. 1.8 cm.
6. Silver capsule pendant. Dm. 1 cm.
7. Cooper alloy hooked pin with a twisted shaft. L. 4.7 cm.
8. Cooper alloy (?) rivet from a casket mount (?). L. 2.7 cm, Head Dm. 0.6 cm.
9. Fragment of iron nail, forged. L. 2.4 cm.

Chronology of the feature: Modern Period

Chronology of the inventory: from IIC to IIIA/IIIB

Anthropological description: (Fig. 8)

Three individuals were distinguished: *infans* II (Fig. 8: 1), *adultus* female (Fig. 8: 2), *maturus* man (Fig. 8: 3)

Translated by Magdalena Natuniewicz-Sekuła

Proofreading: Grzegorz Żabiński

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