

Abstract of the doctoral dissertation

Decorating with beads dress in Wielbark culture. Studies on the feminine element of the outfit, taking into account the factors „time”, „space” and „owner status”.

The dissertation was created at the Department of Prehistory at the Institute of Archeology of the University of Lodz, under the supervision of prof. dr hab. Jan Schuster.

The main topic of this work was to characterize the decorations made with beads in the Wielbark culture. It has long been necessary to develop this type of ornaments. This results, for example, due to the very large increase in material in the form of compact well-documented necklace made of beads. It should be emphasized that the research so far focused solely on individual components of necklaces such as: beads, pendants, pendants. However, no detailed analysis of entire sets of these monuments has been made so far. The development of the necklace as a single monument was necessary due to the need to make possible the classification of these sets of monuments, which were subject to strong stylistic changes. In order to achieve the intended purpose, it was necessary to reach as many places as possible to obtain a large picture of the analyzed historical material.

Undertaking research on sets of beads discovered at the positions of Wielbark culture was dictated by other factors. The first of these is the biblical funeral ritual used in this culture. Burial burials discovered at the Wielbark Cemeteries provide a lot of valuable information about the outfit. This is particularly important in the case of studies on necklaces and other decorations made of beads. Exclusively in this type of graves, these monuments made mostly of glass or amber could survive to our times. It should be emphasized that at the same time the societies neighboring the Wielbark population consistently applied the crematory form of treating the bodies of their kin. As a result, almost all glass or amber beads melted or burned, which prevented extensive study of the composition and development of the necklace in these areas.

The topic of beads in the Roman period was taken up in literature many times. In most of them, the results of research on this issue were mainly related to the typological or technological analysis of beads. The authors of these studies very often attributed the function of beads as a decorative element, which is a necklace, and less frequently attempted to determine their different use.

So far, no detailed analysis of the bead arrangements documented in the burials of the Wielbark culture has been carried out. The studies on decorations made of beads in the aforementioned archaeological unit undertaken in this work were based on three main pillars. The first of these refers to the "time" of occurrence of distinguished decorations in individual chronological sections. In addition, this area of research was to check whether the bead strands can be a chronological indication. The next part of the analysis refers to the "space" understood in the context of capturing the differences of decorations of local and supra-regional character. In addition, the scope of these works also included verification of the bead strips, which could have been an attribute associated with a given cultural unit. The last of these pillars refers to the analysis of the co-occurrence of decorations made with beads in terms of age and sex of buried people. The aim of this area of research was to check in which social groups the most frequent occurrences of the discussed decorations, and at the same time determined the level of wealth of the buried persons in whom the bead strips were registered.

My research on decorations made of beads in Wielbark's culture took place in several stages. The first of these was the collection and cataloging of mortuary inventories from positions already developed and published.

After selecting the intact burials, the next stage was started, consisting in an autopsy reading of the material in museum units and other scientific units. It should be added that during the stays in these institutions I have also read the documentation and collection of monuments from cemeteries that have not yet been published.

Based on them, the process of piercing the necklace was started, is laying beads on the basis of drawing documentation. Materials for which we have accurate information on where in the burial cavity and in which system the beads have been discovered have become the main pillar to create a reconstruction for those finds that have not been so documented in a detailed manner. At this point, it should be emphasized that archival materials concerning excavations carried out in the first half of the 20th century very often contain only unit markings of the area in which the beads were discovered. So in these cases it was necessary to use reconstruction.

The material that has been analyzed comes from 49 cemeteries of the Wielbark Culture. I conducted research on decorations made of beads on the basis of inhumation burials, in which the layouts of monuments of interest to me were preserved intact. In some cases, inventories from graves with a partially damaged structure were included. This remark only applies to facilities where the affected area did not include the level of occurrence of the monuments of interest to me.

As part of the material analysis, cremation burials were not included due to the lack of interpretative possibilities of the layouts of monuments of interest to me. In addition, the cremation of the corpses caused the burning or mostly melting of beads. Due to these difficulties, it was impossible to indicate a clear decorative function in these cases.

The chronological horizon of research on decorations made of beads covers the time of functioning of the Wielbark Culture. Starting from the moment of crystallization of this unit in the older Roman period in the areas over the lower Vistula to its end, which was determined on the basis of materials dated to the early phase of the migration period of peoples. As a consequence, the time frame of this work covers the period from the turn of the century until the middle of the fourth century.

The territorial scope covers the area of the Wielbark Culture settlement occupying in various time intervals the lands of central and southern Pomerania, northern Great Poland, right-bank Mazovia, Podlasie, Polesie, the western part of Wołyń and Podola, and significant parts of the Lublin region.

The whole work has been divided into eleven chapters. The first chapter covers preliminary issues. In the second chapter, I described the current state of research referring to research on decorations made of beads in Wielbark culture. Due to the fact that most of the concentration of beads found in the graves of this unit were characterized as necklaces, the presented literature mainly refers to this type of ornaments. In addition, in this chapter I presented typological works of these monuments, which were included in the necklace. Probably the presented bibliographic items do not completely cover the problem related to necklaces and other decorations made of beads. However, it was not possible to describe all classification work based on material from the Central European Barbaricum. I mainly wanted to present these works which have connections with material originating from the area of Wielbark Culture.

Chapter III, from which a detailed analysis of the material I am interested in begins, refers to the detailed results of the research on the necklaces. In this part, I divided the necklace in terms of their occurrence. Then I characterized them and distinguished them among five decorations. In the following, I described the compositions and sequences of the findings.

Chapter IV provides a chronological analysis of the necklace. This treatment was aimed at capturing the occurrence of given beaded systems phase by phase.

Chapter V refers to the chronological and spatial analysis in the perspective of zones of settlement of the Wielbark Culture and referring to the whole area of functioning of the said unit. This part of the research was provided with maps that illustrate the spread of the necklace in the given chronological sections.

Then, in Chapter VI, an analysis of the coexistence of graves equipped with necks in terms of age and sex of the buried persons was included. In the first place, I examined the burials with the age records in which the necklaces were documented. Then I analyzed the occurrence of these ornaments in terms of the sex of the dead. In addition, I analyzed the particular categories of monuments that coexisted with necklaces in graves.

Subsequently, the notes regarding the composition and sequences recorded during the analysis of the necklace layouts, which I placed in Chapter VII, were described.

Chapter VIII refers to the issue of considering a necklace as an integral part of an outfit that could be an attribute of belonging to a given cultural group of a buried person.

In Chapter IX, I presented the analysis of the remaining beaded decorations. At the beginning were described applications made with beads, which could be sewn to a specific part of the outfit or fabric, which was covered with the body. Then I described the beads at the waist level of the deceased. Among the analyzed material, beads connected with the head decoration were also distinguished. Next, I presented vertical compositions of beads registered in graves as well as decorative stapling of sachets or bags. At this point, attention was also paid to the very non-characteristic connections of beads with other monuments.

In chapter X, the topic of the occurrence of beads as burial gifts has been presented. I narrowed the analysis of this area of research to illustrate the area in which this type of monuments are discovered in burial pits.

The whole work is based on a catalog of finds, in which there is an extensive description of each bead band. In this database there are 612 burials in which single as well as whole concentrations of beads have been documented. Bead descriptions were ordered on the basis of the raw material (glass, amber, clay, stone, mountain crystal, bone and brown) in accordance with the preserved typological sequence. For each item there is information relating to the location of the beads in the burial cavern.

In the illustration part, 94 boards are presented, on which individual decoration categories were presented. Most of the presented layouts were based on original photos. In rare cases, photographs or drawings included in the publications were used. They tried to present the monuments in the best graphic quality so that they would reflect their color, design and shape.

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