

RECTANGULAR DITCH FEATURES FROM CENTRAL EUROPE: A CASE STUDY OF DOMASŁAW, SITE 10/11/12 (POW. WROCŁAWSKI / PL)

In the years 2006-2008, the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences conducted excavations on the multicultural site of Domasław 10/11/12/Chrzanów 4 (pow. wrocławski/PL)¹. In total, 157,100m² were excavated, on which 15,294 archaeological features were documented, constituting the remains of camps, settlements and burial grounds dated from the younger Stone Age to the Roman period (Anioła/Zarzycka-Anioła 2009; Gediga 2012, 411-415). The research area is located about 20km south-southwest of Wrocław. The site occupies the summit area and the slopes of an elevation surrounded from the south and north by the valleys of two nameless watercourses (fig. 1).

In an area of about 3ha, more than 2500 features were found related to the use of the site as a huge necropolis of the Urnfield population, dating from the middle Bronze Age to the early Iron Age. The burial ground, founded on one of the hillocks, occupied the north-western and southern parts of the site. The vast majority of the area occupied by the necropolis was investigated (fig. 2). Only its northern borders were not studied (Gediga/Józefowska 2019, 18). Associated with the Urnfield complex were more than 2000 graves, numerous pottery deposits, which, in large part, could also have been damaged burials, as well as ditches, postholes and pits.

The local community buried their deceased in the cemetery in Domasław from the turn of phases C/D of the Bronze Age to the Ha D3 period. Throughout the use of the cemetery, its territorial development to the

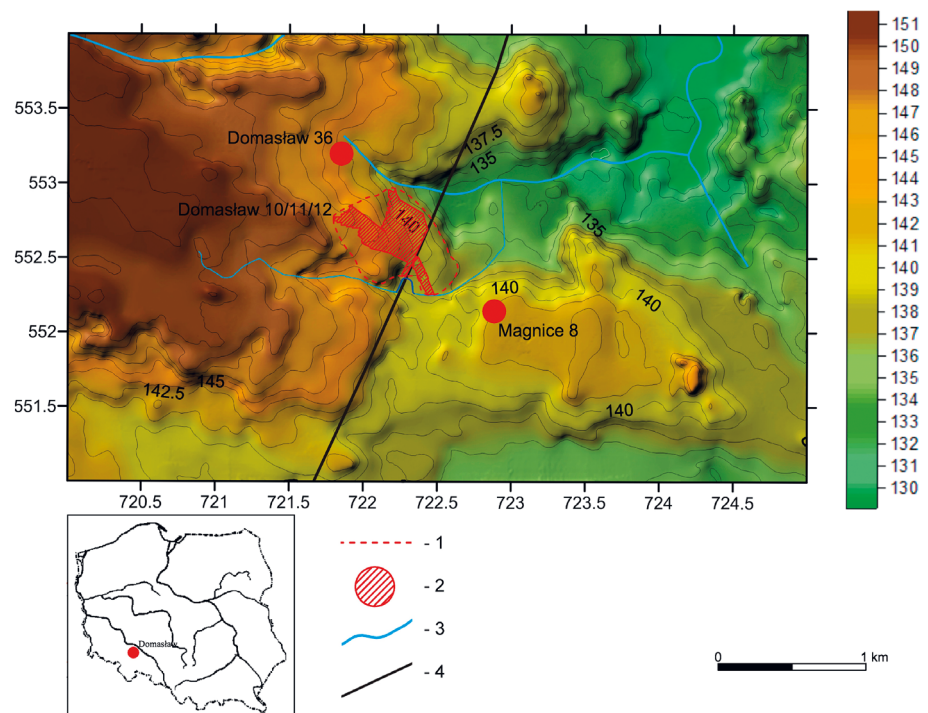


Fig. 1 Location of Domasław (pow. wrocławski/PL), site 10/11/12, and the neighbouring sites with rectangular ditches. – **1** site; **2** extent of the excavation; **3** rivers and watercourses; **4** railway line. – (Map K. Sadowski / L. Żygadło).

east is evident. Most of the graves from the oldest phase (BC/BD-Ha A1/A2) were discovered in the south-western part of the site (fig. 2). In the subsequent phases, Ha B1-Ha B3, burials were located mainly north and east of the zone where the cemetery was founded. The late Bronze Age is the period of the most intensive use of the north-eastern periphery of the necropolis. In the Hallstatt period, further spatial development of the cemetery in the east and south-east direction was evident. Features dated to the early Iron Age were discovered almost exclusively in this part (fig. 2). About 1000 of them were associated with the Hallstatt period, including over 800 burials, and amongst them at least 291 richly furnished chamber burials. Graves of this phase occurred in high density, especially in the north-western part of the necropolis, where next to each other both smaller burial pits without internal constructions, and chamber graves, including ones surrounded by ditches, occurred (fig. 2). The burial space was used with varying intensity until the end of the Ha C period. Subsequently, there is a break in its use as burial ground and the continuity of burial practices in the examined part of the necropolis is interrupted until the Ha D3 period when a few cremation graves and a pottery deposit again appeared (Gediga/Józefowska 2019, 18-25). Individual burials from the Ha D3 period occurred in central parts of the cemetery, between the graves dated to the Ha C period, and one grave was even partially dug into the top part of a burial pit from that period. Assemblages from the end of the early Iron Age mark the conclusion of the use of the cemetery by the Urnfield population and their direct successors. However, we are not dealing with the total abandonment of burial practices within the Domasław necropolis. Grave architecture unknown from other burial sites of Lower Silesia was found at the cemetery. They are rectangular ditch features, which, according to many indications, are a local specificity.

IRON AGE BURIALS WITH CIRCULAR DITCHES FROM DOMASŁAW, SITE 10/11/12

The idea of burials surrounded by ditches appears much earlier in the Domasław cemetery. The oldest complex with a ditch surrounding a pit grave was dated to the late Bronze Age. This custom reaches its apogee in the early Iron Age alongside the influence of the Hallstatt culture. A total of 26 circular ditch features surrounding chamber graves dated to the Ha C period, as well as another ditch without a burial, probably also from this period, were discovered in the cemetery (fig. 2). Their average dimensions were 4.5 m in diameter, up to 80 cm in width and up to 45 cm in depth. The largest ditch no. 3408 had a diameter of 8.8 m. The cross sections of the ditches were regular, they had straight walls and usually flat bottoms, and some were shallow and poorly perceptible (Gediga/Józefowska 2019, 173).

The ditches could have had a practical function, e.g. they might have formed a foundation for a fence made of boards, and pegging would prevent an earthen embankment from slipping. However, in the top layer of one of the ditches, a contemporary burial (no. 4409) was unearthed, in which vessels were deposited on small stones. Its ritual character may be suggested by the deposition of an urn and other vessels in ditch no. 6020, as well as numerous burials and pottery deposits within ditch no. 714.

Arrangements of postholes found in the vicinity of the ditches suggest that, at least in some cases, they were graves with various types of internal divisions or structures. For example, in burial no. 4395, in the northern corners trough-shaped in section features were unearthed, while at the southern side of the chamber there was a trace of a larger post of 70 cm in diameter, which could have been the focal point of this structure. Two more ones were unearthed located symmetrically east and west of the grave – in line with those found at the chamber's corners, and a single one within the ditch. The grave's shallowness may suggest that the chamber was not sunken, but e.g. covered with a mound. Within the inner space of ditch no. 5976 no grave was found, but the presence of six posts recorded immediately in its surroundings may indicate the existence of a structure associated with this feature.

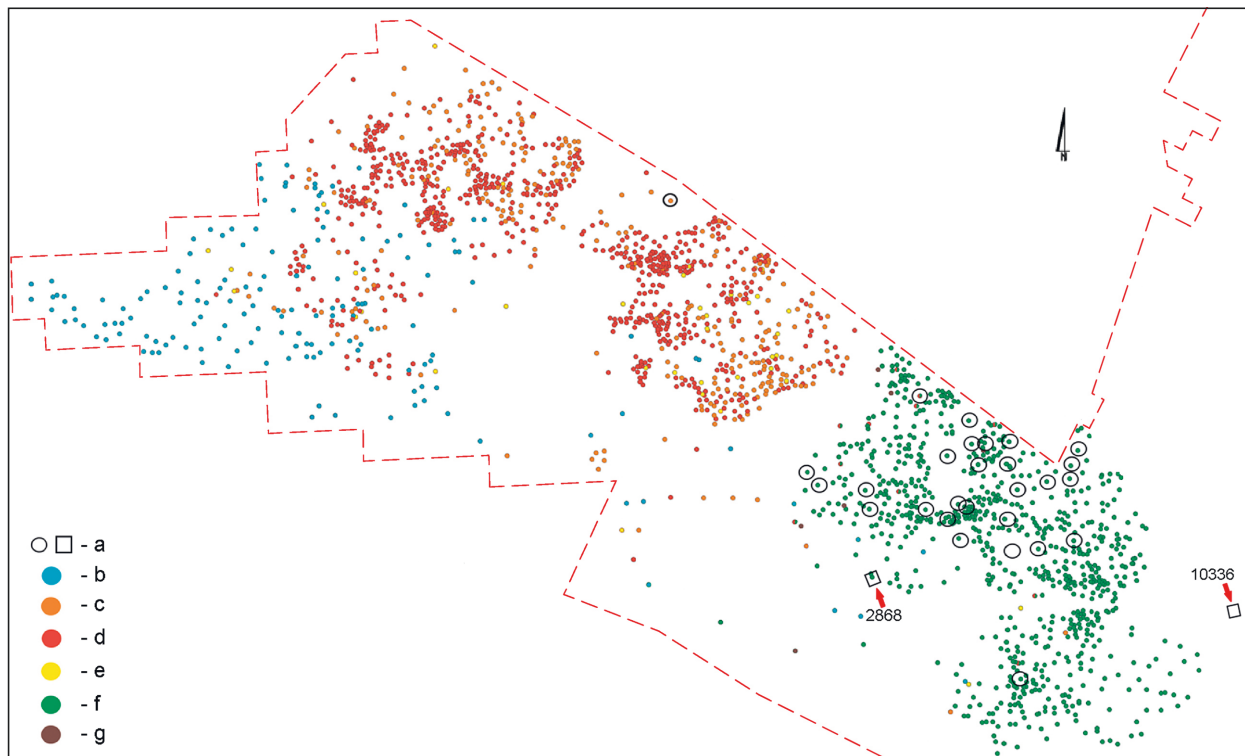


Fig. 2 Domasław (pow. wrocławski/PL), site 10/11/12. Plan of the cemetery and distribution of the burials recorded at the site with quadrangular and circular ditches. – **a** ditches; **b** graves of the BD-Ha A1/Ha A2 period; **c** graves of the Ha A2-Ha B1 period; **d** graves of the Ha B2-Ha B3 period; **e** graves of the BD-Ha B3 period; **f** graves of the Ha C period; **g** graves of the Ha D3 period. – (Illustration A. Józefowska). – Not to scale.

The influence on the funeral rite, and thus on the forms of construction of chamber graves and their furnishing, is attributed quite commonly to the widespread influence of the Mediterranean circle via Italy (Frey 1980, 97; Reitinger 1981, 13-14; Kossack 1999, 128-129). The inflow of new ideas changed the consciousness of local societies, instigated changes in the social structure and the formation, as in the Hallstatt culture, of a type of elite class. The evidence obtained in the cemetery in Domasław shed completely new light on the material culture and the changes in the social structure. They led some researchers to formulate a concept which treated the area of Silesia, part of Greater Poland and, perhaps, Kuyavia as a local north-eastern province of the Hallstatt culture (Gediga 2007a, 4; 2007b, 124; 2008, 170; 2010). The appearance of circular ditches within this province might be also treated as an element of southern (Hallstatt) impact. These types of grave architecture are typical of Western, Central-Western and South-Central Europe. The Domasław burials with surrounding ditches have no analogies in the nearest areas. The number of enclosures discovered on this site should also be emphasised. In the cemetery in Kietrz (pow. głubczycki/PL), a ditch surrounded one of the graves with a post structure, but numerous stakes were driven into its bottom (Gedl 1973, 22). Analogous ditches with diameters between 2 and 4.6 m surrounded eight chamber graves in the Moravičany (okr. Šumperk/CZ) burial ground in Moravia (Nekvasil 1982; 1993, 356; Makarová 2013, 100 fig. 2.2). Also, similar features were discovered in the burial ground of Kostelec nad Orlicí (okr. Rychnov nad Kněžnou/CZ) and a single one in Orlovice (okr. Pardubice/CZ) (Vokolek 1999; Mikulková 2010).

FEATURES NOS 2868 AND 10336: DESCRIPTION OF THE BURIALS AND THE GRAVE GOODS

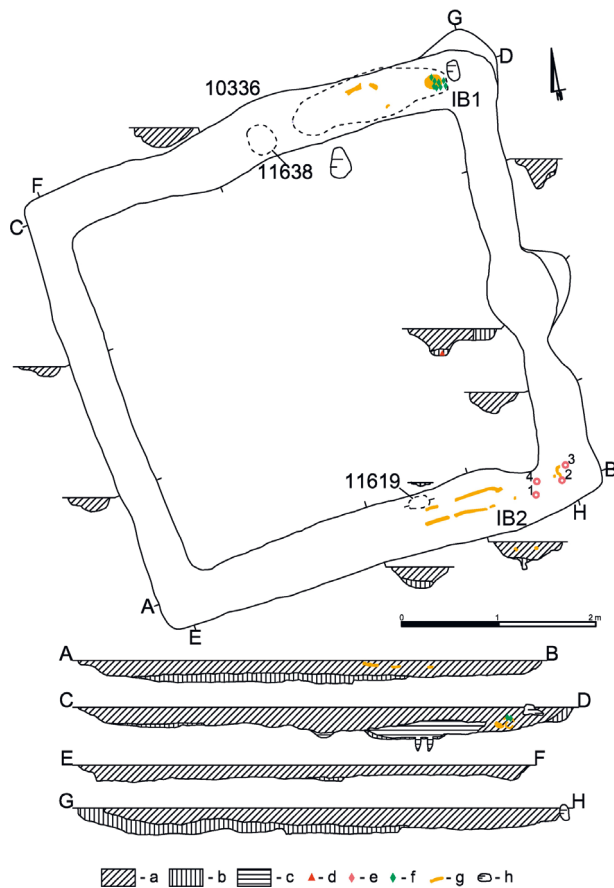


Fig. 3 Domasław (pow. wrocławski/PL), site 10/11/12. Plan of feature no. 10336. – **a** dark brown humus; **b** light brown humus; **c** light grey humus; **d** pottery; **e** iron; **f** bronze; **g** human bones; **h** stone. – (Illustration T. Murzyński / L. Żygadło).

At the end of the Hallstatt period, burial practices within the Domasław necropolis did not cease completely. Based on the analysis of the burial rites, the artefacts, the horizontal stratigraphy, as well as ¹⁴C radiocarbon dating, we can distinguish interments at the cemetery that were related to new arrivals, who can be identified with the La Tène culture population (Żygadło et al. 2012). Unquestionably, one such burial is grave no. 6011. The category of sepulchral features with a younger chronology should also include the rectangular, nearly quadrangular enclosures nos 10336 and 2869². In the case of the former, the radiocarbon dates indicate a relationship with the La Tène period. The latter instead can be described as later than the »Bronze Age-Hallstatt« phase of use of the Domasław necropolis.

Both ditch features were located outside or on the peripheral zone of the necropolis that was in use from the Bronze Age to the Hallstatt period. Feature no. 10336 and the cemetery are separated by a zone 15-30m wide that is completely devoid of

burials. Furthermore, ditch no. 2868 is located on the periphery of a compact range of cremation graves from the Ha C period, in a wetland zone in which features of sepulchral nature were located occasionally in all phases of the necropolis' use (fig. 2).

Dating by the ¹⁴C method enabled the classification of the ditch no. 10336 (figs 3-4) with the La Tène phase. The enclosure with a trapezoidal plan was marked by a ditch, oriented almost along with the cardinal directions, with sides measuring 5.08 m (northern), 4.76 m (southern), 4.94 m (eastern) and 4.66 m (western) respectively, and which was between 42 and 90 cm wide and usually had an irregular shape in section with a maximum depth of 32 cm.

During the exploration of the fill, fragments of pottery dated generally to the Neolithic and the Hallstatt period were found. In the northern ditch, small pieces of charcoal were recovered, as well as very small fragments of burnt bones (not anthropologically identified).

In the northern ditch, near the north-eastern corner, an inhumation burial (IB1) was found. The remains of the skull were unearthed about 10 cm below the top of the ditch. Slightly deeper, at a level of 20 cm below the feature's top, further parts of the skeleton were found, i.e. the long bones of the upper and lower limbs (fig. 3). The state of preservation of the bones can generally be described as poor. The skeleton was incomplete. Fragments of the neurocranium, mandible, permanent teeth, long bones with the shafts and heads as well as fragments of the vertebrae were unearthed in the pit. The advanced age of the individual (*adultus/maturus*) is confirmed by diagnostic traces of abrasion on the crowns of the teeth. The lack of

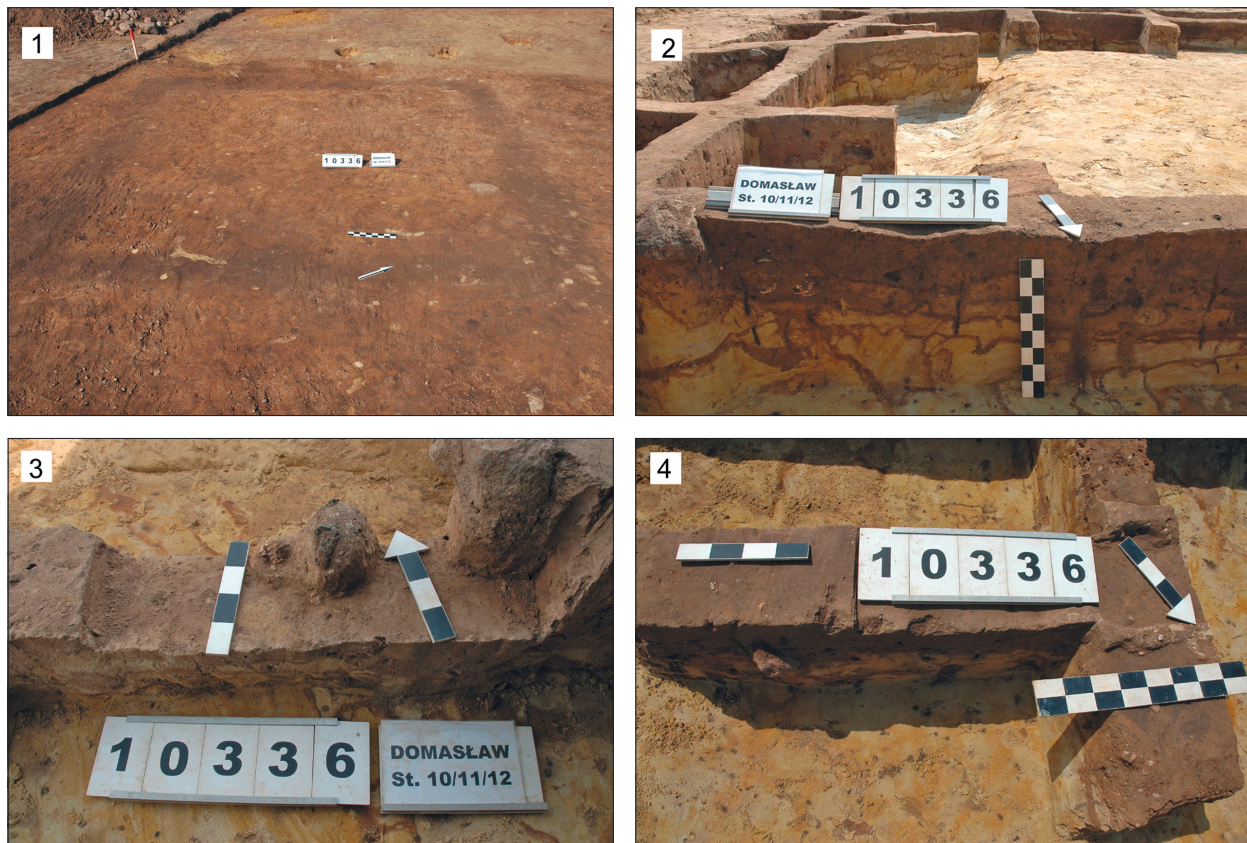


Fig. 4 Domasław (pow. wrocławski/PL), site 10/11/12. Feature no. 10336: **1** overall view of the feature. – **2-3** inhumation grave no. 1 (IB1) during the excavations. – **4** inhumation grave no. 2 (IB2) during the excavations. – (Photos L. Nowaczyk).

morphological markers in the largely fragmented bone material did not allow the determination of the sex of the buried person. Judging by the arrangement of the remains *in situ*, it can be concluded that the deceased was placed in an extended posture, lying supine, with the head facing east. 38 bronze fittings were discovered on and near the calvaria (cf. **fig. 7, 1-5**).

The remains of a second, largely damaged and incomplete skeleton (IB2), of which only a fragment of the mandible, one molar and long bones of the lower limbs survived, were found at the south-eastern corner of the southern ditch (**fig. 3**). Near the place where the skull and upper torso should be four iron rings were excavated (cf. **fig. 7, 6-9**). Judging by the arrangement of the long bones of the limbs, the deceased was also placed in an extended posture the head facing east.

Around the middle of the southern and northern sides, two postholes occurred (nos 11619 and 11638), the outlines of which were visible only at the bottom of the ditch. The documented stratigraphical evidence opens up various interpretative possibilities. These features may be bottom parts of damaged pits from the older phase of the site, the remains of which were recorded below the bottom of the ditch. It is tempting to associate the separated structures with burials, which would be indirectly indicated by the location in their immediate vicinity. The setting of both posts as grave markers would have been possible at the time of the backfilling of the ditch, because of the shallowness they could not have stood in open ditches, and due to the similar fills their separation was only possible on the level of the natural ground.

The feature's fill consisted of three main layers: dark brown humus which filled most of the ditch, light grey humus at the level of the IB1 discovery and light brown humus in the bottom part (**fig. 3**). The last layer is related to the phase of natural accumulation of deposits after digging the ditch, whereas the first and second layers represent the stage of the backfilling of the ditch with humus material, which was probably, consider-

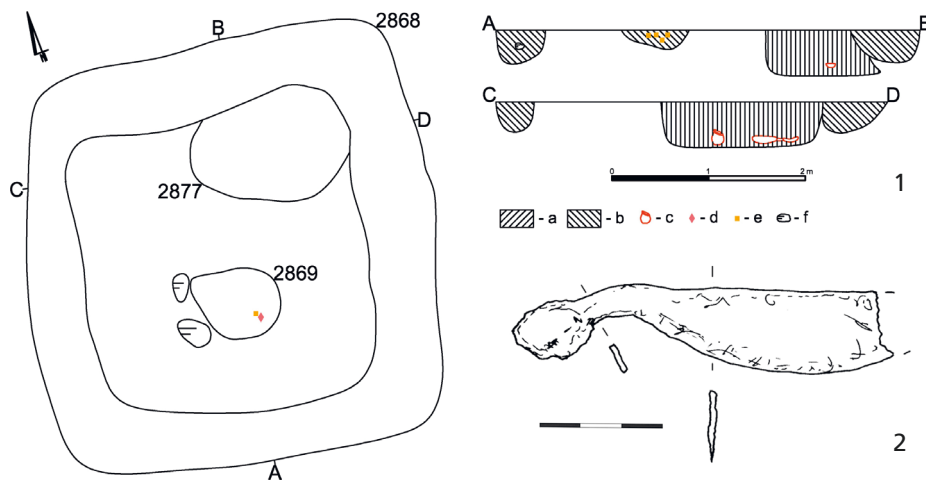


Fig. 5 Domasław (pow. wrocławski/PL), site 10/11/12: **1** plan of features nos 2868, 2869 and 2877: **a** dark brown humus; **b** greyish-brown humus; **c** pottery; **d** iron; **e** human bones; **f** stone. – **2** feature no. 2869: grave furnishing. – (Illustration P. Paruzel / L. Żygadło / K. Gorek).

ing the placement of the corpse, an intentional process. It is impossible to determine the time sequence of burial practices that took place within the ditch – whether both burials were contemporary or not. The second rectangular enclosure no. 2868, oriented almost along with the cardinal directions (with a deviation of about 15°), had the maximum dimensions of 4.3 m × 4.35 m (figs 5, 1; 6, 1-2. 4). The ditch, more or less semi-circular in section, reached a width of between 40 and 80 cm and a depth of 28-36 cm. Its fill consisted of brownish grey humus. The north-western corner of the ditch was partially truncated by a large chamber grave (no. 2877) from the early Iron Age. In the central-southern part of the space surrounded by the ditch there was a small pit burial (no. 2869) furnished with an iron razor (figs 5, 1-2; 6, 3). During the exploration of the ditch, a few fragments of burnt bones and pottery dated generally to the time of the Lusatian culture were found, which probably originate from the truncated grave no. 2877 (or other graves completely destroyed by the digging of the later feature).

FEATURES NOS 2868 AND 10336: ANALYSIS OF THE GRAVES' FURNISHING

Burials in ditch no. 10336 were accompanied by metal artefacts located around the head (fig. 7). In the case of the skeleton in the northern ditch (IB1), these were triple fittings made of bronze 1.5-1.6 cm long, which consisted of hemispherical elements with a diameter of 0.5 cm (fig. 7, 4-5). The artefacts have single or double ears. The objects adhered tightly to each other creating a band with a width equal to the length of the fitting. The arrangement found *in situ* indicates that the fittings were originally sewn in one row to fabric or leather (fig. 7, 1. 3). The whole formed a kind of a headband or was a decoration of a headdress (fig. 7, 2). The metal elements were completely covered with organic matter. Perhaps these are traces of an additional headdress, e. g. a cap, a bandana, or more likely a shroud wrapped around the corpse, or just around the head.

Bronze fittings, which usually have the shape of single knobs, appear as early as in the Bronze Age (Mozsolics 1985, 71). Decorating headdresses with them is typical of cultures from the early Iron Age (Słomska/Antosik 2018, 58-59). Sewing knobs/buttons on other pieces of clothing was also practiced (Grömer 2017, 228). One of the more spectacular examples of such a decoration is a find from grave 27 in burial mound 48 in Stična (obč. Ivančna Gorica/SLO). The funeral attire (outwear and headdress) was covered with knobs forming various motifs, amongst others polygonal, including triangular and linear (Hellmuth 2010, 68 fig. 5). The presence of fabric with attached circular bronze fittings was also found in chamber grave no. 4269 in Domasław (Gediga/Józefowska 2018, 120). Attaching knobs to elements of horse harnesses was also

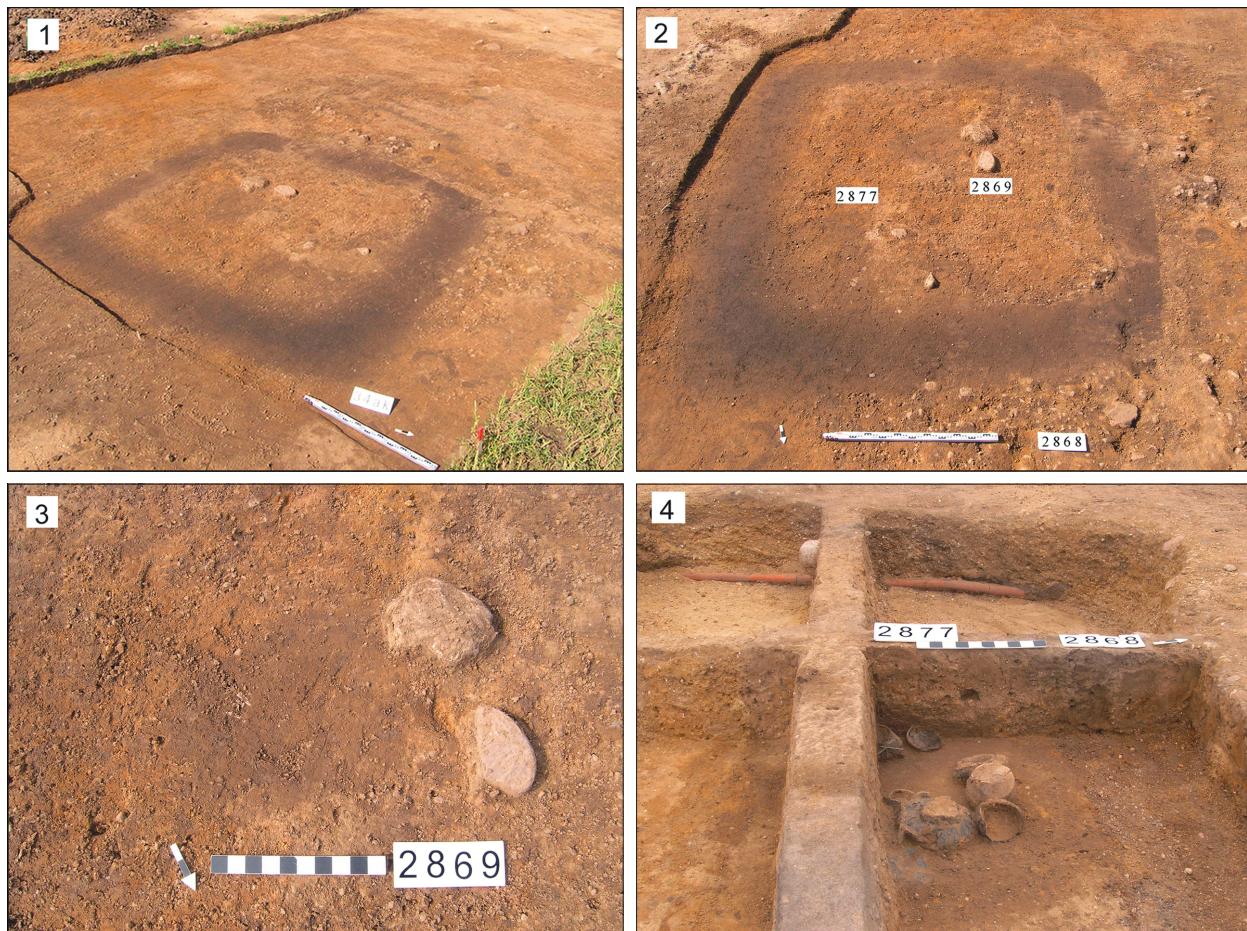


Fig. 6 Domasław (pow. wrocławski/PL), site 10/11/12. Features nos 2868, 2869 and 2877: **1-3** overall views of the features. – **4** features during the excavations. – (Photos G. Daszkiewicz).

common (Chytráček et al. 2019, 78 fig. 8; Schäfer 2017, 288 fig. 7; Schumann 2015, 224 fig. 6.11, 26; Mírová/Golec 2018, 42 pl. 19). Convex 8-shaped knobs discovered in burial mound 2 in Gilgenberg (Bez. Braunau am Inn/A; Stöllner 1994) also played a similar role. Circular knobs appear much less frequently also in the late La Tène period and the Roman period (Dizdar 2016, 40 fig. 13, 1-3; Pieta 2019, 246 fig. 6, 10-24. 29a-p; 252 fig. 10, 17-21; 266 fig. 23, 7-28; 278 fig. 30, 3a-e). Geographically, the closest analogies to the Domasław fittings are artefacts discovered in grave 669 in the burial ground of the Pomeranian culture's population in Żmigródek (pow. trzebnicki/PL; Józefowska 2016, pl. 18, 2-4). In morphometric terms, the objects are almost identical. The manner of attachment is different, as the find from Żmigródek represents the drawing pin fitting type equipped with hooks on both sides.

The burial from the southern ditch (IB2), very poorly preserved, was furnished with four iron rings, which were found in the area of the upper parts of the torso and around the head. The objects have only survived in fragments. Originally, they had a diameter of about 3-3.5 cm and were made of a rod circular in cross section (**fig. 7, 6-9**). These types of artefacts are common and only the raw material used is a chronological criterion. Moreover, in the case of this burial, the location of the items indicates their association with the elements of attire worn on the head. It also cannot be ruled out the deposition of any attire element in this part of the body, e.g. a belt (cf. Guštin 2005, 133 fig. 20A).

Ditch feature no. 2868 did not provide artefacts enabling a determination of its chronology. Pit burial no. 2869 located centrally within the rectangular ditch which could be associated with it, contained only a small (7.5 cm



Fig. 7 Domasław (pow. wrocławski/PL), site 10/11/12. Feature no. 10336: grave furnishing. – **1-5** inhumation grave no. 1 (IB1). – **6-9** inhumation grave no. 2 (IB2). – (Photos L. Nowaczyk / I. Dolata-Daszkwicz; drawings K. Gorek).

long) iron razor with no preserved blade point. The artefact has a relatively wide blade (2.2 cm), with a straight back and a slightly arched edge. Its bar-like hilt is bent downwards and ends in a disc (fig. 5, 2). Similar razors are known amongst the finds from the early Iron Age, the La Tène period and the Roman period.

DATING

The metal objects discovered with the IB1 and IB2 burials are not typologically sensitive artefacts and their usefulness for determining the chronology of ditch no. 10336 is limited. However, a large series of dates from the burial ground in Domasław using the ¹⁴C method was obtained (Goslar 2019, 32-34 tab. 1). In total, bone samples from 49 cremation graves and an inhumation burial IB1 were analysed (Goslar 2019, 36 fig. 2). No significant discrepancies were observed between the compatibility of artefactual dating and the age determined by the ¹⁴C method, and the dates obtained correctly model the successive phases of the burial ground's use (Gediga 2019, 53-54). Only in the case of individual burial complexes the obtained dates were clearly differed from the traditional dating based on archaeological finds.

The results obtained after calibration were in the ranges of 399-262 BC (68.2 %) and 405-213 BC (95.4 %). In the case of burial complexes, the Bayesian analysis was applied using additional chronological information from archaeological artefacts (Goslar 2019, 35). As a result, much shorter time frames were obtained, which enabled the dating of feature no. 10336 to 400-378 BC (68.2 %) and 405-362 BC (95.4 %), that places this ditch feature at the end of the sequence of determining ¹⁴C dates, already beyond the Hallstatt period. According to the periodisation systems of the La Tène period made for Central Europe, this would correspond to the end of the Lt A period and the first half of the Lt B period.

An important premise for determining the chronological position of rectangular enclosure no. 2868 is the truncation of the chamber grave (no. 2877) dated to the Ha C period by the ditch (Gediga/Józefowska 2018, 90). It is worth mentioning here that, despite the high density of features in the Hallstatt period burial ground, as in the area used in the Bronze Age, the graves were rarely truncated (Gediga/Józefowska 2019, 24). The stratigraphical situation observed in the example of ditch no. 2868 and tomb no. 2877 is therefore unusual, especially because burial no. 2877 is a large chamber grave. This fact can be considered as an accidental violation of the burial zone as a result of the re-initiation of burial practices at the cemetery. However, intentional action cannot be excluded. As an example of such a practice, the location of the aforementioned grave of the La Tène culture population (no. 6011) can be pointed out. The inhumation burial was dug precisely into the chamber of the cremation grave (no. 5990) dated to the Ha C period, partially damaging it. This is one of the largest burial complexes in the cemetery surrounded by a circular ditch (no. 5910), which was additionally accompanied by a post/pillar structure enclosing the space from the east, south and north (Gediga/Józefowska 2019, 150).

Such a location of the grave in the central part of an older feature, probably still visible on the surface as a mound with an additional ditch, has symbolic significance. The custom of secondary burial placement in the mounds of existing barrows, which became a specific *locus religiosus*, is widely practiced in prehistoric cultures amongst others (Skóra 2010, 27 – therein further references). In the case of Domasław, however, we are dealing not so much with the continuous use of the necropolis, the continuation of the tradition of a specific burial place by subsequent generations or the population of subsequent cultures, but with an intentional and deliberate truncation of the burial chamber in which the remains of the deceased and grave goods were deposited. Such a disintegration of the *sacrum* epiphany violated the social and cosmic order and was punishable (Mierzwiński 2013, 267). Thus, brutal interferences in older burials can be interpreted as a kind of manifestation of strength confirming the occupation of the area by new arrivals.

THE DOMASŁAW BURIALS WITH RECTANGULAR DITCHES IN THE CONTEXT OF SIMILAR FINDS

Ditch features constitute a very morphometrically diverse category. Oval or rectangular/quadrangular shaped structures dominate (cf. Vannier 2019, 371). Unquestionably, a burial character can be attributed to the ditches discovered in cemeteries that surrounded the burials or contained human remains. There are also enclosures devoid of graves in cemeteries (Gedl 1985, 182 fig. 33; Kalábek 2001, 257 fig. 2; Čižmářová 2005, 15-16; Ramsel 2017, 98 fig. 2; 99 fig. 4; Vannier 2019, 372). Their function is no longer so unambiguous, but they are most often associated with burial rites. Apart from the finds in the ditches, their dimensions also have significant meaning when determining the nature of these features. Ditches with side lengths up to 15/25 m (various values are adopted) or diameters up to 30 m are interpreted as burial complexes (Bourgeois/Nenquin 1996; Buchsenschutz 2000, 8-9). Structures comparable in terms of metric parameters but completely devoid of a funerary context also appear outside of the burial grounds (Beneš 2015, 251 fig. 8; Seguin/Zipper 2016). Similar features discovered within settlements are sometimes interpreted as shrines (cf. Holzer 2008; Trebsche/Fichte 2018, 77-78).

The idea of surrounding a burial place with a ditch has a tradition in Western Europe which dates back to the early Bronze Age (Gedl 1985, 171; Jockenhövel 1999, 329-330; Pare 2003, 77 fig. 1). Separating the burial space around the large burials with circular ditches became quite common at the end of the Bronze Age and in the Hallstatt period (Deicke 2011, 7).

Rectangular ditches surrounding graves were less common and occurred more frequently in the late Bronze Age, especially in areas (mainly north-western and south-western Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands) where circular ditches also appeared (Leman-Delerive 2000; Gerritsen 2003, 126-127; Deicke 2011, 7). In the early Iron Age, the oval plan still predominated. Similar structures accompanying large chamber graves were also documented in the Hallstatt period cemetery in Domasław (**fig. 2**). These types of burial ditches (*Grabgärten*) became a characteristic element of Celtic rituals (Stead 1961; Schwarz 1962, 50-51). In Western Europe, as early as the beginning of the La Tène period, the share in the cemeteries of features with surrounding ditches is significant and although it gradually decreased, they coexisted with rectangular enclosures until the end of the La Tène culture (Lanting/van der Plicht 2005/2006, 298; Vannier 2019, 371 fig. 92; 372 fig. 93). In the younger phases of the La Tène period, the situation changed and the clear dominance of the rectangular features is evident throughout the entire Celtic settlement area (cf. Gedl 1985, 171-172; Reichmann 1998, 332; Leman-Delerive 2000; Cordie 2006, 259; Lanting/van der Plicht 2005/2006, 298-299; Vannier 2019, 371 fig. 92).

Grabgärten also appeared in the eastern settlement zone of the Hallstatt culture. As early as in the early Iron Age, their basic types emerged in this area: both oval and rectangular ones. The oldest rectangular features associated with the Hallstatt-La Tène transition phase and the Lt A period occurred in large numbers in Austrian cemeteries (Neugebauer 1985; 1991; Urban/Teschler-Nicola/Schulz 1985; Megaw/Neugebauer 1997, 719; Ramsel 2012; 2017). A similar chronology has also been determined for analogous finds from Bohemian sites: a ditch burial from Černouček (okr. Litoměřice/CZ), as well as features dated to the Lt A period from Vlíněves (okr. Mělník/CZ) and Uhy (okr. Kladno/CZ) (Sofaer/Turek 2004, 289. 292; Brnič/Sankot 2005, 60; Limburský 2010, 24 figs 6. 11). In addition, probably associated with this horizon was a rectangular enclosure from Tišice (okr. Mělník/CZ), although it is not dated from finds, but it appeared on the outskirts of the cemetery used by the Bylany culture during the Hallstatt period and by the La Tène culture during the Lt A-Lt B1 period (Bílková 2014, 12. 51 fig. 5). All Bohemian sites occurred in a small area, near the Vltava-Elbe Rivers' confluence. A little bit later, in phases Lt B1 and Lt B2, rectangular ditch features appeared in the

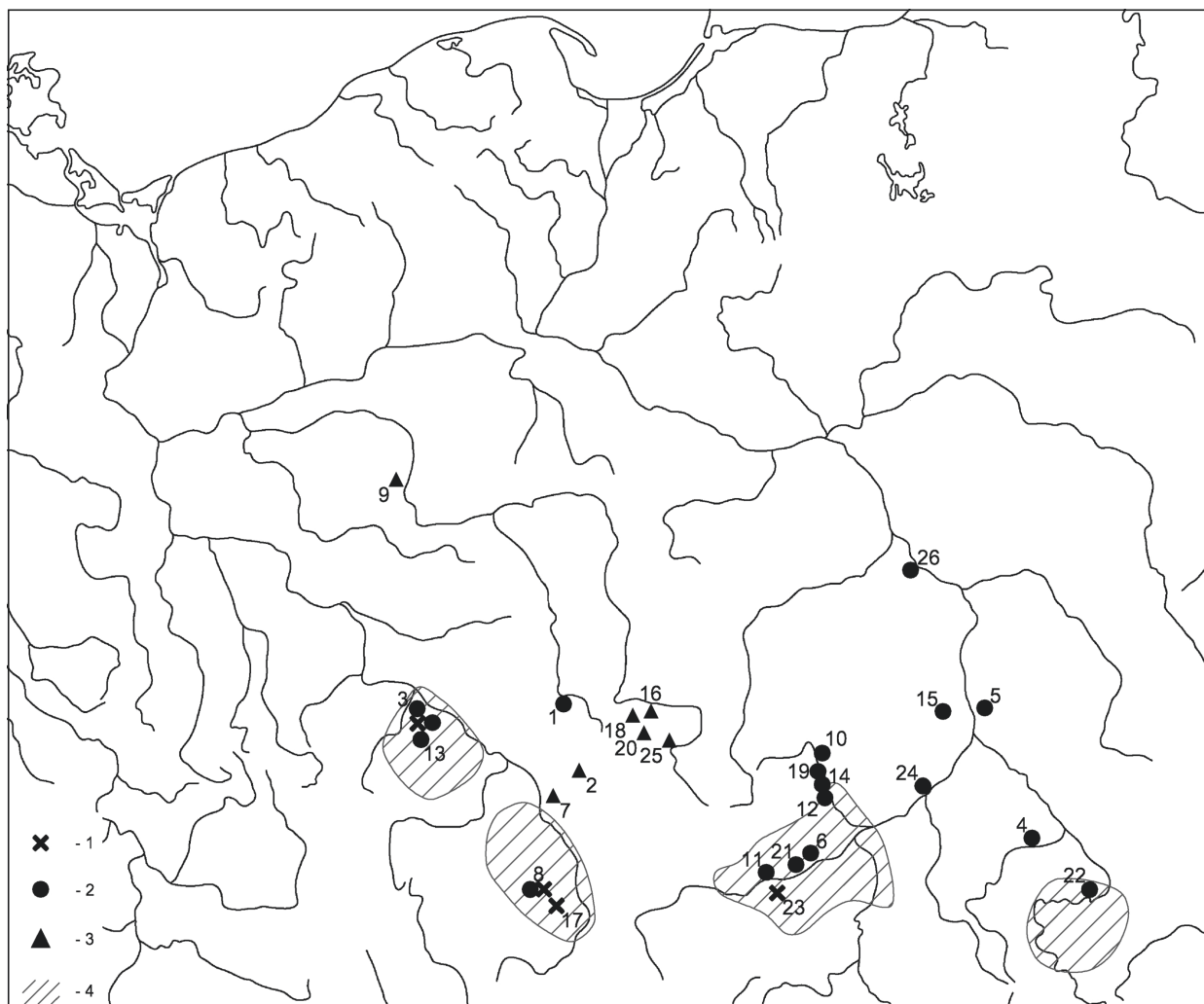


Fig. 8 Distribution map of the rectangular ditch features from the La Tène/pre-Roman period and the Roman period of sepulchral character from Poland: **1** Ciecierzyn (pow. kluczborski). – **2** Dobrodzień (pow. oleski). – **3** Domaśław (pow. wrocławski). – **4** Gać (pow. przeworski). – **5** Gościeradów (pow. kraśnicki). – **6** Górka Stogniewska (pow. proszowicki). – **7** Izbicko (pow. strzelecki). – **8** Kietrz (pow. głubczycki). – **9** Konarzewo (pow. poznański). – **10** Korytnica (pow. staszowski). – **11** Kryspinów (pow. krakowski). – **12** Kazimierza Mała (pow. kazimierski). – **13** Magnice (pow. wrocławski). – **14** Michałowice (pow. kazimierski). – **15** Mierzanowice (pow. opatowski). – **16** Mokra (pow. kłobucki). – **17** Nowa Cerekwia (pow. głubczycki). – **18** Opatów (pow. kłobucki). – **19** Pełczyska (pow. pińczowski). – **20** Rybno (pow. kłobucki). – **21** Sarbia (pow. proszowicki). – **22** Trójczyce (pow. przemyski). – **23** Zakrzowiec (pow. wielicki). – **24** Zawada (pow. staszowski). – **25** Żabieniec (pow. częstochowski). – **26** Żelazna Nowa (pow. kozienicki). – Legend: **1** La Tène culture; **2** Przeworsk culture; **3** Przeworsk culture/groove-type features of the Żabieniec type; **4** area settled by the La Tène culture populations. – (After Rudnicki 2012, 39 map 3; Makiewicz/Kaczor 2005, 257 fig. 6; Bochnak 2007, 34 fig. 1; Rodzińska-Nowak/Zagórska-Telega 2015, 237 fig. 2 with additions by authors). – Not to scale.

areas of north-western Hungary, south-eastern Slovakia and Moravia (Bujna 1989, 250 fig. 4; Kalábek 2001; Haruštiak 2009, 143-144. 148; Čižmářová 2011, 160-161 fig. 63; Molnár 2014; Hornok/Tóth 2011-2014; Tanko et al. 2016). In the central Danube River area, in the early and middle La Tène period, a fairly compact zone of enclosures associated with burials with a dominant rectangular form was recorded. Circular and oval structures were less common, although they were still present in La Tène cemeteries in Slovakia (Holiare [okr. Komarno/SLO] and Palárikovo [okr. Nove Zamky/SLO]), Moravia (Brno-Maloměřice and Vícemilice [okr. Vyskov/CZ]) and Hungary (Szomód-Kenderhegy [Kom. Komárom-Esztergom/H]) (Čižmář 1973, 622-623 – therein older literature; Čižmářová 2005, 15-16; Tankó 2012). They were more widely represented on sites from eastern Austria, including Franzhausen (Bez. St. Pölten/A), Mannersdorf (Bez. Bruck an der Leitha/A), and Rassing (Bez. St. Pölten/A) (Preinfalk 2005; Ramsel 2017). In the case of Lower Austrian burial

grounds, the formal-chronological analysis of individual burial complexes, especially from the necropolis in Franzhausen, where the »overrepresentation« of circular enclosures concerning other finds of the central Danube zone, is very important (Ramsl 2017, 102 fig. 8).

The idea of digging ditch features also appeared in local groups of the La Tène culture in southern Poland (fig. 8)³. Apart from the find from Domasław, rectangular ditch structures are known from Kietrz and Nowa Cerekwia (both pow. głubczycki/PL; Bochnak 2007, 23-24). Another feature of this type without a central grave, but with clusters of pottery fragments and burnt bones within the ditch was discovered in Zakrzowiec (pow. wielicki/PL; Jarosz/Rodak 2006, 630. 763 figs 14-15). Apart from ditch no. 10336 from Domasław, other finds have a younger chronology and date to phases Lt B2-Lt C1 (Gedl 1984, 184; Bednarek 1994, 500-502; Jarosz/Rodak 2006, 630). The custom of graves surrounded by rectangular ditches recorded in enclaves of the La Tène culture in Poland is undoubtedly the effect of the inflow of Celtic people from the south to these areas. They brought with them the practiced burial model, the elements of which were also the features in question.

Funeral ditch features disappeared in the environment of the La Tène culture of Central Europe in phase Lt C2 along with the burial rite changes and the abandonment of previously existing cemeteries.

The practice of separating a burial space with a ditch continued, especially in the Danube and Rhine provinces of the Roman Empire (cf. Bogaers/Haalebos 1987, 40 fig. 1; Bridger 1998, appendix; Pirling/Siepen 2003, fig. 160; Hölbling 2008; Scholz 2011, 443-444; Doneus 2014, 14-45). The custom of establishing ditches in the Barbaricum also continued after the disappearance of the La Tène settlement. The presence of such features is confirmed by discoveries made in Bohemia (Třebusice and Stehelčevy [both okr. Kladno/CZ]) and Moravia (Pohořelice [okr. Břeclav/CZ]) (Motyková-Šneidrová 1977, 239-240; Motyková 1981, 340-341; Čižmář 1989, 168).

The idea of separating space with a rectangular trench enclosure was also present in the cemeteries of the Przeworsk culture (fig. 8). They are known from the younger pre-Roman period from the Lesser Poland cemeteries in Kryspinów (pow. krakowski/PL) and Pełczyska (pow. pińczowski/PL) (Godłowski 1977; Rudnicki 2005; 2012). In the early Roman period, such objects occur mainly in south-eastern Poland, primarily in Lesser Poland, and are referred to as »Kryspinów« type ditch features (Bochnak 2007, 34 fig. 1 – therein older literature; Cieślak-Kopyt 2010, 74-77; Lasota 2011, 158-159 fig. 2; Zagórska-Telega/Pikulski 2014, 71 fig. 2; Gralak/Kamyszek/Żygadło 2015). These assemblages are dated to phases B and B₂/C₁ of the Roman period. In Upper Silesia, they are known only from one cemetery, in Kietrz, where six similarly dated (phases B and B₂-C₁) enclosures occurred. The aforementioned burials related to the La Tène culture (Gedl 1984, 161. 166-171. 184-185 figs 4. 12. 14. 16. 18) were also discovered in this necropolis. The custom of separating burial space with ditches in Upper Silesia and Lesser Poland is interpreted as a manifestation of the survival of the burial rites of Celtic tradition (Godłowski 1977, 78; 1981, 62; Kaczanowski/Madyda-Legutko/Poleski 1984, 104; Gedl 1985, 183; Naglik 2002, 154-155; Bochnak 2007, 23-24)⁴.

The second horizon of the occurrence of this type of grave architecture in the cemeteries of the Przeworsk culture is dated to the late Roman period and the early phase of the Migration period (phases C₃-D). They are known from sites located on the border of the Silesian Upland and the Kraków-Częstochowa Upland (fig. 8). In literature, finds from this region are referred to as »Żabieniec« type ditch features (Rodzińska-Nowak/Zagórska-Telega 2015). An isolated burial of this type was also discovered in Greater Poland (Makiewicz/Kaczor 2005). It seems, at least in the case of ditches from the Liswarta River basin, that they are not burials *sensu stricto*, but cremation sites where some remains of the deceased and grave furnishing were left (Zagórska-Telega 2015, 234; Rodzińska-Nowak/Zagórska-Telega 2015, 241-242). Therefore, genetic relations between this youngest horizon of the occurrence of ditch features and finds from earlier phases of the development of the Przeworsk culture cannot be proved.

As late as the beginning of the 21st century, in studies devoted to rectangular/quadrangular ditch shaped structures, the zone of their occurrence was limited to south-eastern Poland. The most westerly features of this type were located in the Głubczyce Upland (Nowa Cerekwia and Kietrz; cf. Bochnak 2007, 34 fig. 1). The discoveries made on site 10/11/12 in Domasław moved this border much further west. The next objects of this type were found during excavations conducted in recent years near this locality (cf. **fig. 1**). The complete feature and two partially preserved ditches marking the beginning of similar structures were documented in the nearby cemetery on site 36 in Domasław, which was used between stage B_{2a}-phase C₁ of the Roman period (about 400m north-west of the boundaries of the Domasław 10/11/12 burial ground; Gralak/Kamyszek/Żygadło 2015). About 20 enclosures of a similar chronology were unearthed near the village of Magnice (pow. wrocławski/PL) (about 800m south-east of the boundaries of the Domasław 10/11/12 burial ground)⁵. The discoveries made over the past dozen years have significantly changed the state of our knowledge and ideas about the burial practices of prehistoric societies living in the region south of Wrocław. They confirmed the presence of a specific burial rite, to date limited in principle to the vicinity of Domasław, which was previously associated only with local groups of the La Tène culture in the Głubczyce Upland and Lesser Poland, the Tyniec group and the south-eastern zone of the Przeworsk culture (**fig. 8**). On the other hand, it is a kind of regularity that has been pointed out earlier. A significant part of the Przeworsk culture's cemeteries where ditch features were found is located in areas previously covered by Celtic settlement or strongly influenced by this culture – Lesser Poland and the Głubczyce Upland (Godłowski 1981, 62). Currently, we can separate another region where rectangular enclosures occurred in the area of earlier Celtic oecumene existing in the Bystrzyca and Oława River basins (Kosicki 1996; Duleba 2019, 371-372 fig. 2). In the light of the obtained radiocarbon dating, the rectangular ditch no. 10336 seems to be the oldest structure of this type discovered in Poland and one of the oldest in Central Europe (Gedl 1985, 181). It is also a very unusual feature with two inhumation burials deposited in a trench. In the La Tène culture, rectangular enclosures without any burials within the separated space sometimes occurred (e.g. Kalábek 2001, 256-258 fig. 2; Čižmářová 2005, 15-16). The deceased usually were not buried within the ditches themselves. A certain analogy may be feature no. 107 from Zakrzowiec, in which several clusters of pottery fragments and burnt bones were found in the fills of ditches (Jarosz/Rodak 2006, 630). Such practices, in turn, are quite common in the Przeworsk culture at the end of the pre-Roman period and during the Roman period. At that time, the remains of the deceased and grave goods were deposited within ditches. However, the manner of treating corpses that had previously been cremated is different (Kaczanowski/Madyda-Legutko/Poleski 1984, 91-93; Gedl 1985, 183; Naglik 2002, 155). Cremation was also practiced in burials placed within a space separated by ditches and inhumation burials are found only occasionally (Lasota 2011, 159). The closest analogies for enclosure no. 10336 originate from the cemetery in Vliněves (okr. Mělník/CZ). On this vast multicultural site, six ditches dated to the Lt A period with dimensions similar to the Domasław feature were identified (Limbursky 2010; Limbursky/Ginoux/Sankot 2013, 42 fig. 2)⁶. In the ditches of two of them (nos 2380 and 2396), human inhumation burials were found. As many as three individuals were deposited in trench no. 2380. On the skull of skeleton HS3, there was a 25 cm diameter band made of thin iron wire interpreted as an element of a headdress or a frame of a crown of leaves – a so-called *Blattkron*e (Limbursky/Ginoux/Sankot 2013, 43-44 fig. 3; Chytráček 2015, 275-276).

CONCLUSIONS

The concept of ditch features in the Domaśław burial ground dates back to the late Bronze Age and is manifested in the older section of the Hallstatt period (Ha C). This custom reappeared, in the form of rectangular enclosures, in the next phase of the burial ground's use. It should be noted, however, that ditches nos 2868 and 10336 cannot be associated with the Lusatian culture necropolis discovered on this site. Feature no. 10336 belongs to the early La Tène period and is dated to the late Lt A and the first half of the Lt B1 period. It should be mentioned here that a short distance away (approx. 10 km) from the site in Domaśław, the oldest traces of settlement of the La Tène culture in Lower Silesia were discovered. They are dated to the Lt B1a period – sites in Mokronos Dolny and Żerniki Wielkie (both pow. wrocławski/PL; cf. Dulęba 2019, 378).

Dating of burial no. 2868/2869 is more problematic (assuming the integrity of both features, not a random location). Numerous elements indicate its relationship with the settlement from the younger prehistoric periods. It has certain characteristics (elements of furnishing, the grave pit's shape) of burials of this type sometimes found in the La Tène culture, but above all in the Przeworsk culture (Gedl 1985, 183; Kamiński/Żygadło 2010). The lack of association with the Hallstatt phase of the burial ground, apart from the stratigraphic relation and different shape, is also indicated by the character of burial no. 2869, which differs from the large and richly furnished Hallstatt period chamber graves surrounded by ditches. Dating feature no. 2868/2869 to the La Tène period is not obvious, although most likely in the context of the obtained ¹⁴C date for enclosure no. 10336 and the lack of other burials of the Przeworsk culture in the cemetery. However, in the light of discoveries of similar burial complexes made on neighbouring sites (Domaśław 36, Magnice 8), it cannot be excluded that this feature was related to the Przeworsk culture, because the custom of establishing ditches on a rectangular plan reappeared in the Domaśław area in phases B₂-B₂/C₁ of the Roman period.

Notes

- 1) Sites designated as Domaśław 10/11/12 and Chrzanów 4 were excavated by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences centres from Wrocław and Kraków. During the excavations, it came to light that they formed one settlement complex.
- 2) The co-occurrence of circular and quadrangular ditch features has been confirmed in numerous burial grounds, especially in Western Europe. It seems that the morphological and chronological sequence observed in Domaśław consisting in the fact that circular features are older than quadrangular ones is quite common. This pattern is particularly well documented in the cemeteries of northern and central-western France (cf. Gransar/Malrain 2009, 147 fig. 7; 148 fig. 9; Seguin/Zipper 2016, 28).
- 3) The quadrangular ditch structure was partially excavated on another Lower Silesian site in Gębice (pow. strzeliński/PL). Based on the pottery material obtained from the backfills, the chronology of the find was determined as the Hallstatt period (Dulęba/Furmanek/Wronicki 2016, 12-13). However, it cannot be ruled out that the artefactual material may have reached the fills accidentally at the time when the ditch and centrally located pits were dug.
- 4) Similar conclusions are formulated in the case of analogous features from Bohemia and Moravia (Motyková-Šneiderová 1977, 239-240).
- 5) Personal communication: S. Zółkowski and W. Piszczalowski »ARCH-SIL«, Pracownia Archeologiczno-Konserwatorska.
- 6) In the village of Tišice (okr. Mělník/CZ), located not far from Vliněves, another quadrangular ditch feature was discovered. In its northern corner, lumps of scorched clay, teeth of at least two small ruminants, and several burnt human bones of at least two individuals were found (Bílková 2014, 36).

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**Rechteckige Grabenbefunde aus Mitteleuropa: eine Fallstudie zu Domasław, Fundstelle 10/11/12
(pow. wrocławski/PL)**

Auf der multikulturellen Fundstelle Domasław 10/11/12/Chrzanów 4 wurden über 2500 Befunde mit der Nutzung des Gräberfeldes durch die urnenfelderzeitliche Bevölkerung in Verbindung gebracht, welche die Phasen C/D der Bronzezeit bis zum Ende der Ha D3-Periode umfassen. Nach dieser Epoche traten dort Grabstrukturen auf, die auf anderen Gräberfeldern Niederschlesiens unbekannt sind. Es handelt sich dabei um rechteckige Grabenanlagen, die, wie viele Fundstellen zeigen, eine lokale Praxis waren. Der Brauch, einen quadratischen, schmalen Graben auszuheben, dauerte im Domasław-Gebiet bis in die B₂-C₂-Phasen der Römerzeit. Aufgrund der Analyse der Bestattungsriten, der Artefakte, der horizontalen Stratigraphie sowie der ¹⁴C-Radiokohlenstoffdatierung können wir den Horizont der Bestattungen der »Nach-Lausitzer Kultur« auf dem Gräberfeld bestimmen, die wahrscheinlich mit Neuankömmlingen verbunden waren. Vieles deutet darauf hin, dass es sich um Vertreter der La-Tène-Bevölkerung handelte.

**Rectangular Ditch Features from Central Europe: a Case Study of Domasław, Site 10/11/12
(pow. wrocławski/PL)**

On the multicultural site of Domasław 10/11/12/Chrzanów 4, over 2500 features were associated with the use of the burial ground by the Urnfield population spanning the Bronze Age phases C/D to the end of the Ha D3 period. After this era, grave structures unknown in other cemeteries of Lower Silesia appeared in the cemetery. They are rectangular ditch features which, as indicated by many premises, were a local practice. The custom of digging narrow ditches to form a square feature on the ground lasted in the Domasław area until the B₂-C₂ phases of the Roman period. Based on the analysis of the burial rites, artefacts, horizontal stratigraphy, as well as ¹⁴C radiocarbon dating, we can determine the horizon of »post-Lusatian culture« interments at the burial ground, probably related to new arrivals. There are many indications that they were members of the La Tène population.

**Structures rectangulaires en Europe centrale: une étude de cas à Domasław, site 10/11/12
(pow. wrocławski/PL)**

Le site multiculturel de Domasław 10/11/12/Chrzanów 4 a livré plus de 2500 structures associées à l'utilisation de la nécropole par une population présente du Bronze C à la fin du Hallstatt D3. Après cette période apparaissent dans ce lieu funéraire des structures inconnues dans d'autres nécropoles de basse Silésie. Il s'agit d'enclos délimités par quatre fossés qui, comme l'indiquent de nombreux endroits, suivaient une coutume locale consistant à creuser d'étroits fossés pour former une structure quadrangulaire. Dans la région de Domasław, cette coutume perdura jusqu'aux phases B₂-C₂ de la période romaine. L'analyse des rites funéraires, les artefacts, la stratigraphie horizontale, ainsi que la datation au radiocarbone permettent de déterminer l'horizon d'inhumations »postlusaciennes«, lié probablement à de nouveaux arrivants. Plusieurs éléments indiquent qu'ils appartenaient à la civilisation La Tène.

Traduction: Y. Gautier

Schlüsselwörter / Keywords / Mots clés

Polen / Niederschlesien / Eisenzeit / Bestattungsbräuche / rechteckige Grabenbefunde / überregionale Kontakte
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Pologne / basse Silésie / âge du fer / pratiques funéraires / structures rectangulaires / contacts interrégionaux

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