Lords and ladies of the rings
Saddle-shaped finger-rings from the Carpathian Basin

Páni a paní prstenů
Sedlovité prsteny z Karpatské kotliny

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Saddle-shaped finger-rings are among the most widespread types of Late Iron Age jewellery. Such ornaments are encountered throughout the entire period in question, from south-western Germany, western Switzerland and northern Italy to Transylvania and Banat in Romania, sporadically also reaching the Lower Danube region. This article analyses the evolution of this type of finger-rings and their use within the Late Iron Age communities of the Carpathian Basin. The analysis offers important information regarding the nature of social and cultural connections established within each community and also between different communities from this geographic area during the Late Iron Age.

saddle-shaped finger-rings – Late Iron Age – Carpathian Basin – jewellery – bodily ornaments

Sedlovité prsteny patří mezi nejrozšířenější typy šperků pozdní doby železné. Tyto ozdoby se vyskytují v průběhu celého zmíněného období od jihozápadního Německa, západního Švýcarska a severní Itálie po Transylvánii a Banát v Rumunsku, ojediněle zasahují také do dolního Podunají. Článek analyzuje vývoj tohoto typu prstenů a jejich užívání komunitami pozdní doby železné v Karpatské kotlině. Tato analýza nabízí důležité informace o společenských a kulturních vztazích jak v rámci jednotlivých komunit, tak mezi různými komunitami této oblasti v pozdní době železné.

sedlovité prsteny – doba laténská – Karpatská kotlina – šperky – ozdoby

Introduction

Throughout history, the Carpathian Basin was a melting pot of various cultural traits which had led to the appearance of specific practices, concepts and identities. The communities who inhabited this large geographic space created their own ways of expressing individual and collective identities. At the same time, the existence of various forms of social interaction at both the individual and the group level contributed to the circulation of many "visible" and "invisible" cultural goods (for terminology, see *Venclová 2002a*) across wider areas in the Carpathian Basin. All these aspects can be identified archaeologically through the analysis of certain categories of artefacts which are either specific to some areas or are more widely distributed. Among the strategies used to express the identity of a community or group in relation to others is the bodily ornamentation in which both the actual costume and different accessories play an important role.

From this point of view, one relevant category of ornaments consists of the so-called saddle-shaped finger-rings. This type of finger-ring has never been analysed comprehensively in spite of its widespread and long-lasting distribution. Such ornaments are encountered

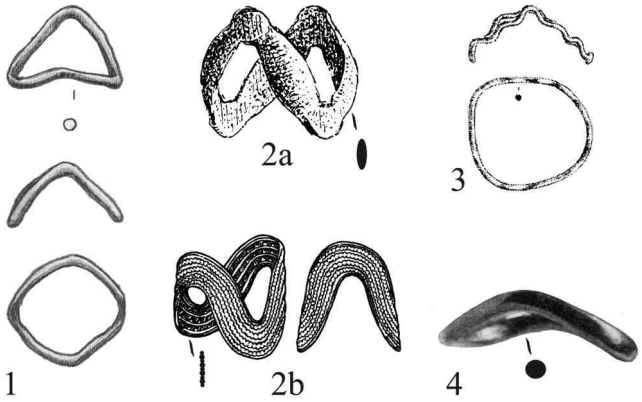


Fig. 1. Typology of the saddle-shaped fingerings from the Carpathian Basin (variants 1–4). 1 Aradu Nou, 2a Kamenin, 2b Orešac-Židovar, 3 Mannersdorf, 4 Absberg (for the source of illustrations, see *Tab. 1* and *2*).
Obr. 1. Typologie sedlovitých prstenů z Karpatské kotliny (varianty 1–4). 1 Aradu Nou, 2a Kamenin, 2b Orešac-Židovar, 3 Mannersdorf, 4 Absberg (pro odkazy k ilustracím viz *tab. 1* a *2*).

throughout the entire Late Iron Age from south-western Germany, western Switzerland and northern Italy to Transylvania and Banat in Romania, sporadically also reaching the Lower Danube region (see the silver finger-ring found in a Getic settlement on the left bank of the Danube at Chirnogi in Romania: *Trohani 1975*, 134–135, fig. 8: 2). However, *Waldhauser*'s (*1998*) study regarding the gold rings from Münsingen in the wider context of the finds encountered between Switzerland and the Carpathian Basin, and that by *Bujna* (*2005*) dealing with the ring-shaped ornaments from the Late Iron Age cemeteries in Slovakia may be considered important references for this topic.

Thus the aim of this article is to discuss the ways in which the saddle-shaped finger-rings were incorporated into various practices related to bodily ornamentation and the expression of social status, rank or function by the Late Iron Age communities from the Carpathian Basin. The contexts in which such artefacts were found could also offer important information regarding the social and cultural interactions established between different groups of consumers.

Morphology, typology, techniques of manufacturing

Morphologically, the finger-rings in question (known in German as either *Sattelfingerringe* or *Schaukelfingerringe*) are more or less bent along their diameter, resembling the basic shape of a saddle or a curved swing. In spite of their apparently similar shape, a series of variants can be identified on the basis of certain morphological details and manufacturing techniques (*Fig. 1*; *Tab. 1* and *2*).

Variant 1 includes rings made of metal wire having a round or oval cross-section, corresponding to variants 510–520 in the typology proposed by J. Waldhauser, and to variants J1–J5 in the typology of J. Bujna.

Variant 2 includes rings made of flattened metal wire. Two sub-variants can be established on the basis of manufacturing details: 2a – rings made of a simple metal band; 2b – rings with a similar general shape but made of silver using the filigree technique. Sub-variant 2a corresponds to Waldhauser's variant 530 and Bujna's variant J2. Sub-variant 2b was not included in any of the mentioned typologies.

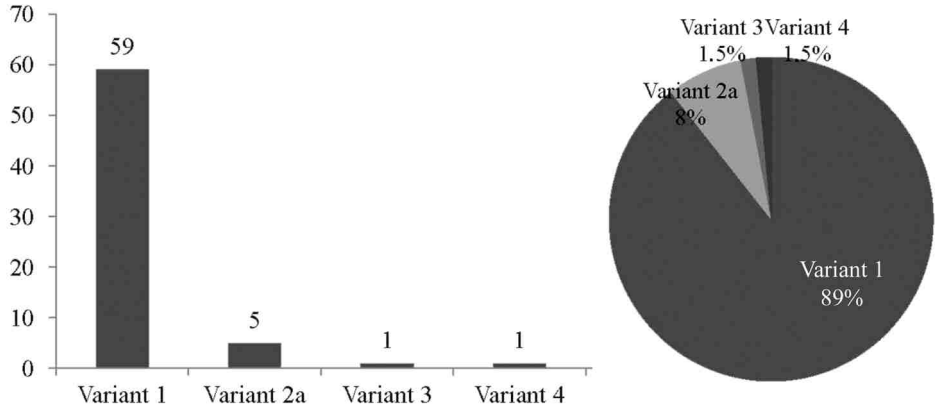


Fig. 2. Statistics of the saddle-shaped fingerings based on the identified variants (according to the total number of finds/variant – left; percentages – right).
Obr. 2. Statistické vyhodnocení sedlovitých prstenů na základě zjištěných variant (podle celkového počtu nálezů/variant – vlevo, podle procentuálního podílu – vpravo).

Variant 3 includes rings made of undulated or meandering metal wire. It corresponds to the Waldhauser 540 variant which is missing from Slovakia, so it was not included in Bujna's typology.

Variant 4 includes rings made of wire which were only slightly bent along the diameter, so Waldhauser had called them *Pseudoschaukelfingerringe* belonging to his variant no. 550.

Statistically (*Fig. 2*), the large majority of the saddle-shaped finger-rings which have been found in funerary contexts from the Carpathian Basin belong to the first variant. This group consists of 59 examples representing 89% of the total number of finds. Quantitatively, they are followed by the finds included in sub-variant 2a consisting of 5 examples representing 8% of the total number. Lastly, variants 3 and 4 are each represented by one finger-ring. Unlike in the Carpathian Basin, the finger-rings belonging to variant 2a were more popular in cemeteries from Switzerland (*Hodson 1968*, pl. 51: 336, 59: 315, 60: 361, 63: 294–295, 64: 385–388, 69: 98–102, 79: 154–155, 86: 177; *Waldhauser 1998*, fig. 2: 22, 40; *Kaenel 1990*, 243, 249, pl. 17: 7, 65: 24–25, 66: 11–12, 69: 7; *Bauer 1996*, 81–83, fig: 2: 17, 4: 9). Sub-variant 2b includes only seven finger-rings which have been found in contexts related to the Scordisci upstream from the Danube's Iron Gates.

The diameter of the finger-rings in question differs according to the anatomical characteristics of the owners (*Fig. 3*). Thus the number of finds having a diameter of 10–15 mm is reduced (8 examples representing 11% of the total number). Two finger-rings having a diameter of 11 mm were found on the right hand of a child's skeleton from the Palárikovo cemetery, in Slovakia. It can be therefore presumed that the finger-rings with smaller diameters were usually worn by children or youngsters. The large majority of these finds (51% of the total number) have a diameter of 16–22 mm, many of them measuring around 20 mm. Finger-rings with larger diameters are rarely found. The largest one, having a diameter of 32 mm, was found on the left hand of a skeleton accompanied by a female inventory from the Pişcolt cemetery, in Romania. At the same time, it has to be noted that in the case of 25% of the analysed finger-rings (a total of 20 examples) the diameter was not

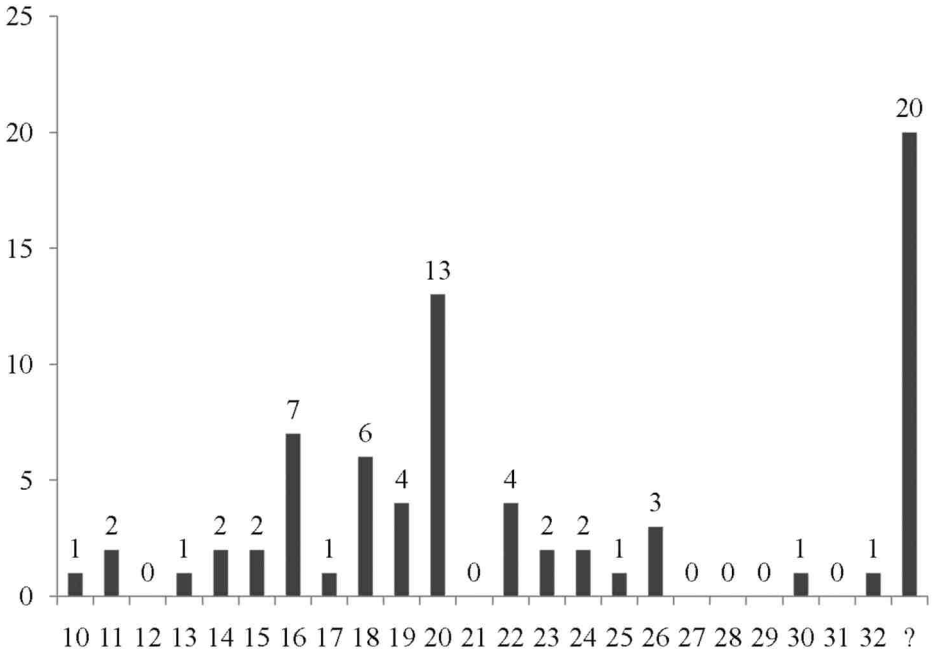


Fig. 3. Statistics of the saddle-shaped fingerings based on their diameter (mm).
Obr. 3. Statistické vyhodnocení sedlovitých prstenů na základě jejich průměru (mm).

recorded in the original publication. However, the quantified data seem to offer a reliable image of the patterns specific to the Carpathian Basin. Moreover, these dimensions correspond to those identified in the case of gold rings from temperate Europe (*Waldhauser 1998*, 90, tab. 2).

In connection with their morphology, it has to be also noted that the shape of certain finger-rings was sometimes replicated by some bracelets, especially when the former were very popular (see, for example, *Guiraud 1989*, 176). This phenomenon has also been encountered in the case of the saddle-shaped finger-rings. However, bracelets resembling the finger-rings included in variant 1 have rarely been found in the Carpathian Basin (see, for example, the piece from the Sv. Michal cemetery in Slovakia: *Bujna 2005*, 86, fig. 69: L2-C). These are more commonly encountered in other European areas, for example in northern Italy or Switzerland, where they were used during a longer period of time (*Pernet et al. 2006*, 118–119). The saddle-shaped bracelets and finger-rings made of silver or bronze sometimes formed sets of ornaments, for example at Bologna or Carzaghetto in northern Italy (*Ortalli 1990*, 27, fig. 13: 1–2; *Delnef 2003*, fig. 4–5). At the same time, the saddle shape is more commonly encountered in the case of other types of bracelets. Among them can be mentioned the bracelets with linked ends and the body decorated with knobs, some penannular bracelets or those having a plug fastener (Steckverschluss), made of bronze or iron (*Vadász 1987*, 238, pl. 9: 5; *Hellebrandt 1999*, 32, 203, 222–223, pl. 12: 2, 73: 2, 80: 7–9; *Neugebauer 1991*, 81, fig. 2: 2; *Bujna 2005*, 12–13, 20–21, 23–24, 101). In general, saddle-shaped bracelets are less common in the Carpathian Basin in

comparison with the similarly-shaped finger-rings and can only be dated to the LT B1-B2 period. For example, six finger-rings and a single bracelet having this shape have been found at Mannersdorf (*Ramsl 2011*, 113).

The saddle-shaped finger-rings were made of gold, silver and bronze. The metal wire used for manufacturing could be obtained through different techniques. For example, thin wires with a round or oval cross-section could be obtained by hammering the metal on a grooved anvil (*Schwartz – Varga 2010*, 210).

At the same time, wires made of precious metals (mostly of gold) could have also been produced through different twisting processes, especially when thin wires having a diameter of not more than 1–2 mm were needed (*Ogden 1991*; *1992*, 46–47, fig. 30).

Lastly, another method of obtaining wires was the drawing, which was done using drawing plaques (*Rustoiu 1996*, 75–76; *Pleiner 2006*, 101–105; *Schwartz – Varga 2010*, 210–211). The inventory of a hoard containing tools and half-finished as well as finished products which belonged to a jeweller, found in the north-western Balkans at Ošanići near Stolac (Bosnia–Herzegovina) and probably dated towards the end of the 3rd century or the beginning of the 2nd century BC, also contained plaques for drawing wire (*Marić 1978*, pl. 30: 122–124; *Gebhard 1991*, 7, fig. 7). Some silver brooches of the La Tène C type were also part of this deposit, suggesting that these artisans also produced jewellery specific to the Central European area (*Gebhard 1991*, 8–10, fig. 8). In temperate Europe, similar plaques for drawing wire were more common during the oppida period (*Jacobi 1979*; *Rustoiu 1996*, 76, fig. 24: 6–8; *2000*, 235, fig. 3/6–9; *Pleiner 2006*, 102, fig. 49: 1–3, 6), but the discovery from Ošanići indicates that they were already used at least a century earlier.

The metal wires were then shaped by hammering until the final form was obtained. The diameter was adjusted to fit the finger of the owner by hammering the ring probably on a conical anvil made of hard wood, as is still done by traditional jewellers. Sometimes the ring was made by rolling and hammering a band of precious metal along its length to produce a C-shaped cross-section. This is the case of a ring belonging to variant 1 which was found in grave 86 from Mannersdorf, in Austria. A similar technique was observed in the case of other types of simple rings (see for example the piece made of gold sheet from grave 19 at Dubnik: *Bujna 1989*, 268, no. 4, pl. 20/4).

In the case of the rings belonging to variant 2a, the metal wire was first hammered to obtain a band. For the rings belonging to variant 3, the metal wire was bent successively to obtain the undulating shape. The latter decorative pattern was very popular in temperate Europe and northern Italy mostly during the early phases of the Late Iron Age, being also used for bracelets or simple rings (*Delnef 2003*; *Rustoiu – Megaw 2011*, 227–228; *Rustoiu 2015*, fig. 5: 24 etc.).

Lastly, the filigree silver rings belonging to variant 2b are only encountered in the area of the Scordisci from north-eastern Serbia at Kovin and Orešac-Židovar. The respective inventories contain jewellery and costume accessories dated to the late La Tène period. In the southern Carpathian Basin, the use of filigree jewellery, made by craftsmen coming from the northern Balkans who were familiarised with the Mediterranean techniques, is part of an earlier tradition belonging to the end of the Early Iron Age which persisted during the following centuries after the arrival of Celtic communities in the region. The activity of these northern Balkans artisans working for the elites of Celtic communities led to the incorporation of Mediterranean techniques in the manufacturing of jewellery that was

SITE	GRAVE NO.	RITE (Inhum. x Cremation)	WEAPONS	METAL	DIAM.	TYPE	HAND	GENDER / AGE	CHRONOLOGY	OBSERVATIONS	REFERENCES
Austria (Lower Austria)											
Absberg	1	I	No	1 Au	22.5	4	R	F ?	B2a	„electron" ring	*Willvonseder 1932*, 274, fig. 2
Mannersdorf	10 b	I	No	1 Au	20	1	R	F/ 19–25	B1		*Ramsl 2011*, 39, 107, fig. 79, pl. 41, 45: 17
Mannersdorf	13	I	No	1 Au	16	3	R	F/ 19–25	B1	+ 1 Au ring	*Ramsl 2011*, 42, 107, fig. 79, pl. 49, 50: 20b
Mannersdorf	86	I	No	1 Au	20	1	R	F ?	B1	'C' profile	*Ramsl 2011*, 60, 107, fig. 79, pl. 97, 98: 2
Mannersdorf	96	I	No	1 Br	18.5	1	L	F/ 31–40	C1	+ 1 Br ring	*Ramsl 2011*, 64, 107, fig. 79, pl. 104: 6b
Mannersdorf	152	I	No	1 Ag	18	1	L	F/ 41–60	A2/B1		*Ramsl 2011*, 83, 107, fig. 79, pl. 159: 1
Mannersdorf	209	I	No	1 Ag	19	1	L	F/ 19–25	B2a		*Ramsl 2011*, 94, 107, fig. 79, pl. 196: 3a
Pottenbrunn	565	I	No	1 Ag	22	1	L	M/ 55–65	B1/B2	+ 1 Br ring	*Ramsl 2002*, 49, 145–146, fig. 55, pl. 67: 11a
Czech Republic (Moravia)											
Blučina	20	I	No	2 Br	20/23	1	L	F	B2a		*Ludikovský 1970*, 522, no. 8–9, fig. 5: 7–8, 8: 2–3
Bučovice	14	I	No	2 Br, 1 Ag	?	1	L	F/ young	B2a		*Procházka 1937*, 66–67, pl. 3: 6, 9, 11
Dobročkovice	2	I	No	1 Br	?	1	L	F	C1		*Procházka 1937*, 68, pl. 22: 9
Mistřín	14	I	No	1 Br	?	1	R	F ?	B2a		*Filip 1953*, 336, fig. 163: 4
Nechvalín	177	I	No	1 Br	15	1	L	F ?	B2a		*Bučíková 1985*, 153, no. 5, fig. 22: 8
Slovakia											
Bajč-Vlkanovo	1	I	No	1 Br	?	1	?	?	B2a	Double grave disturbed	*Benadik 1960*, 394, no. 12, pl. 1: 3
Chotin	5/71	I	No	1 Ag	?	1	L	F ?	C1		*Ratimorská 1981*, 24, no. 6, pl. 7: 10
Chotin	34/72	I	No	1 Au, 1 Ag	?	1	L	M ?	C1	+ tools	*Ratimorská 1981*, 64, no. 11–12, pl. 24: B6–7
Hurbanovo-Abadomb	3	I	No	4 Br	?	1	?	F ?	C1	Disturbed grave	*Benadik et al. 1957*, 46, no. 10, fig. 15: 1, pl. 15: 3
Hurbanovo-Bacherov Majer	11	I	No	1 Au	?	1	R	F	B2b		*Benadik et al. 1957*, 70, no. 4., pl. 25: 4
Kamenín	8	I	No	1 Br	?	2a	R	F	B2a		*Benadik et al. 1957*, 103, no. 8, fig. 31: 19, pl. 39: 7
Kamenín	12	I	No	2 Ag	?	1	L	F	B2a		*Benadik et al.* 1957, 108, no. 10, fig. 31: 16–17, pl. 40: 6, 11
Kamenín	19	I	No	2 Br	?	1	L	F	B2a		*Benadik et al.* 1957, 112, no. 4, pl. 41: 5, 10
Malé Kosihy	9	C	No	1 Ag	14	1	?	M ?/ 40–60	C1		*Bujna 1995*, 19, no. 3, pl. 3B: 3
Malé Kosihy	95	I	No	1 Br	18	1	L	Me/ 30–40	C1		*Bujna 1995*, 33, no. 1, pl. 13C: 1
Malé Kosihy	103	C ?	No	1 Br	15	1	?	?	?		*Bujna 1995*, 34, no. 1, pl. 13B: 1
Malé Kosihy	331	I	No	1 Br	18	1	L	F/ 50–60	B2a		*Bujna 1995*, 74, no. 9, pl. 36: 6
Maňa	13	I	No	1 Ag	?	1	R	F ?	B1/B2	+ 1 Br ring	*Benadik 1983*, 17, no. 18
Maňa	91	I	No	1 Ag	?	1	R	M/ 16–21	C1	+ 1 Br ring	*Benadik 1983*, 44, no. 6
Maňa	100	I	No	1 Br	?	1	R	F ?	B2a	+ 1 Br ring	*Benadik 1983*, 47, no. 10
Maňa	112	I	No	1 Br	?	1	L	F?/ 17–20	B2b	+ 1 lignite ring	*Benadik 1983*, 51, no. 4, pl. 40: 1
Maňa	127	I	No	1 Br	?	1	L	F	C1	+ 1 glass, 1 Br ring	*Benadik 1983*, 59, no. 11, pl. 50: 10
Maňa	137	C	No	1 Br	?	1	?	?	C1		*Benadik 1983*, 64, no. 4
Nové Zámky	9	I	No	1 Ag	16	1	L	F	B2a	+ 1 Ag ring	*Pieta 1992*, 54–55, fig. 3: 12

Palárikovo	20	I	No	2 Br	20	1	?	?	?		*Bujna 2005*, 73
Palárikovo	35	I	No	1 Br	16	1	L	F ?	B2b		AU SAV Nitra, AR 6968/74; inf. M. Furman
Palárikovo	69A	I	No	1 Ag/Au?	20	1	L	F ?	B2b	+ 1 Br ring	AU SAV Nitra, AR 7379/75; inf. M. Furman
Palárikovo	74A	I	No	2 Br	20/24	1	R	F ?	C1		AU SAV Nitra, AR 7379/75; inf. M. Furman
Palárikovo	75	I	No	1 Au, 1 Ag	11/11	1	R	Child	?	+ 1 Br ring	*Benadik 1975*, 98, fig. 7–8; *Bujna 2005*, 73
Sv. Michal	1	I	No	1 Br	20	1	?	F ?	B2a		*Benadik 1962*, 362, fig. 8: 8**;** *Bujna 2005*, 73
Sv. Michal	1a	I	No	1 Br	?	1	?	F ?	B2a ?		*Bujna 2005*, 73
Hungary											
Békéssámson-Erdőháti halom	57	I	No	1 Br ?	?	1	?	F ?	C1		*Maráz 1977*, 57, fig. 7
Jutas	?	?	?	1 Br	10	1	?	?	C1 (?)		*Hunyady 1957*, 36, no. 20
Kósd	?	?	?	3 Br	3x 20	1	?	?	B2-C1		*Hunyady 1957*, 167, no. 4
Ludas	686	C	Yes	1 Au	16	1	?	M/ infans 1	B2b	Double grave	*Szabó ed. 2012*, 30, no. 8
Mátraszőlős-Királydomb	31	C	No	1 Br	20	1	?	F ?	B2b		*Almássy 2012*, 103, no. 5, pl. 40: 8
Mátraszőlős-Királydomb	59	C	No	1 Br	26	1	?	?	C1		*Almássy 2012*, 133, no. 7, pl. 70: 2
Pécs-Köztemető	?	?	?	1 Br?	18	1	?	?	?		*Hunyady 1942*, pl. 33: 5
Szomód-Kenderhegy	4	I	No	1 Ag	19.5	1	R	F ?	B2a		*Vadász 1987*, 232, no. 12, pl. 3: 8
Tatabánya	?	?	?	1 Br	23	1	?	?	B1 (?)		*Hunyady 1957*, 59, no. 5
Vác-Gravel pit	43	I	Yes	1 Br	26	1	L	M ?	B/C		*Hellebrandt 1999*, 79, no. 3, pl. 40: 9
Zalaegerszeg-Andráshida	?	?	?	1 Br	19	1	?	?	B	Disturbed cemetery	*Horváth 1987*, 129, no. 12, pl. 38: 2
Romania (Transylvania and Banat)											
Aradu Nou	Cx 42	I	No	1 Ag	16	1	L	F	B2a		*Rustoiu – Ursuţiu 2013*, 325, fig. 9A R; *in press*
Curtuiuşeni	2	I	No	1 Ag	30	1	L	F ?	B2/C1		*Teleagă 2008*, 130, no. 2.5, pl. 2: 2.5
Fântânele-Dâmbu Popii	5	I	No	2 Ag	16/17	1	L	F	C1		Unpublished
Pişcolt	14	I	No	1 Ag	32	1	L	F ?	B2b	+ 1 Br ring	*Németi 1992*, 62, no. 6, fig. 2: 6
Pişcolt	45	C	No	1 Ag	24	1	?	F ?	B2b		*Németi 1992*, 65, no. 8, fig. 4: 8
Pişcolt	117	I	No	1 Au	16	1	L	F ?	B2b		*Németi 1992*, 87, no. 6, fig. 21: 6
Pişcolt	181	I	No	1 Ag	20	1	R	F ?	B2a		*Németi 1989*, 95, no. 6, fig. 18: 6
Remetea Mare	1	C	Yes	2 Ag	14/13	1	?	F + M	B2a	Double grave	*Medeleț s. d.*; *Rustoiu 2008*, 111–115, fig. 55, 57: 2
Serbia											
Feudvar-Surduk	?	I	No	1 Br	26	2a	?	F ?	B2a	Disturbed grave	*Kull 1991*, 153, pl. 57: 1
Stari Kostolac-Rudine	7	I	No	1 Ag	18.5	1	L	F	B2a		*Tapavički-Ilić 2007*, 246–247, fig. 2: 2
Slovenia											
Novo Mesto	16	C	No	1 Au	22	1	?	F ?	B2/C1		*Križ 2001*, 80, no. 46
Novo Mesto	23	C	No	1 Au	?	2a	?	F ?	C1	Fragment	*Križ 2001*, 81, no. 49
Novo Mesto	436	C	No	1 Ag	20	1	?	F ?	C1		*Križ 2001*, 119, no. 279
Novo Mesto	538	C	No	1 Ag	19	2a	?	F ?	B2/C1		*Križ 2001*, 134, no. 357
Novo Mesto	623	C	No	1 Ag	25	2a	?	F ?	B2/C1		*Križ 2001*, 142, no. 406
Novo Mesto	656	C	No	1 Br	22	1	?	F	B2/C1		*Križ 2001*, 151, no. 454

Tab. 1. Saddle-shaped fingerings discovered in graves from the Carpathian Basin. I – inhumation, C – cremation, F – female, M – male.
Tab. 1. Sedlovité prsteny objevené v hrobech z Karpatské kotliny. I – inhumace, C – kremace, F – žena, M – muž.

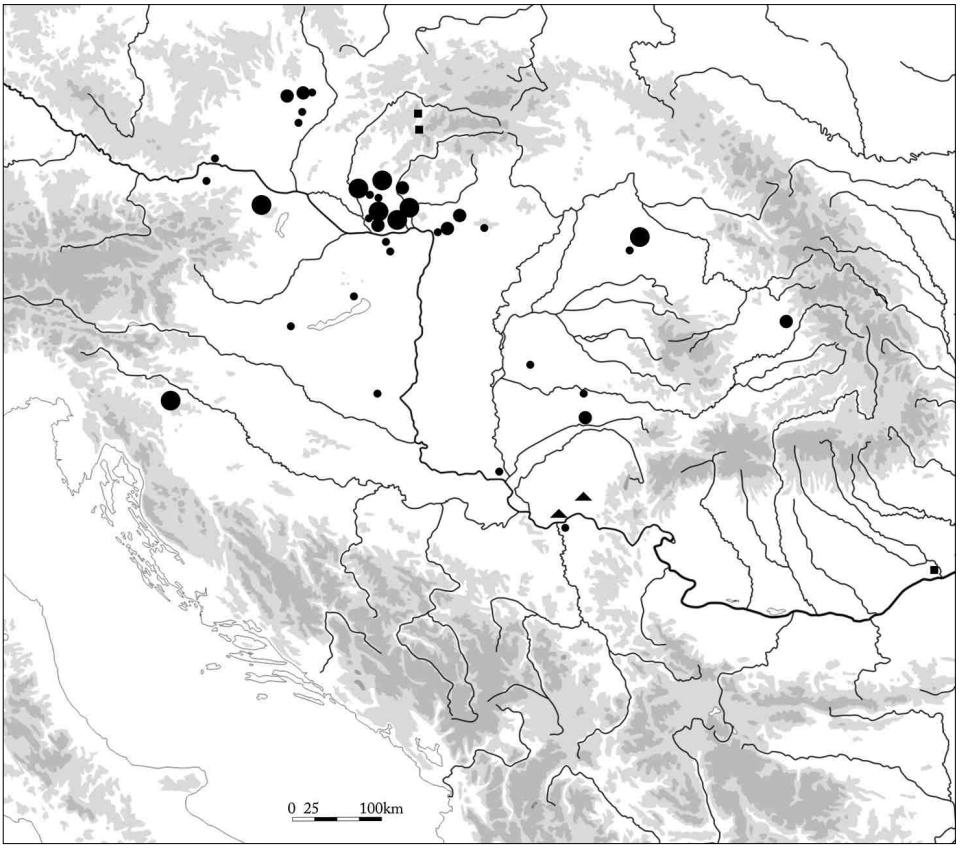


Fig. 4. Distribution map of the saddle-shaped fingerings in the Carpathian Basin. Black dots – finds from graves (small dots: 1 example; medium dots: 2–3 examples; large dots: 4 or more examples); black squares – finds from settlements; black triangles – finds from silver hoards (see *Tab. 1* and *2*).
Obr. 4. Mapa rozšíření sedlovitých prstenů v Karpatské kotlině. Černé tečky – hrobové nálezy (malé tečky: 1 exemplář; střední tečky: 2–3 exempláře; velké tečky: 4 a více exemplářů); černé čtverečky – nálezy ze sídlišť; černé trojúhelníky – nálezy ze stříbrných depotů (viz *tab. 1* a *2*).

specific to the La Tène cultural environment of temperate Europe. This is the case of the saddle-shaped finger-rings made in the filigree technique or of other jewelleries of La Tène origin, for example those from the gold hoard discovered at Szárazd-Regöly, in Hungary (*Szabó 1975*, 152–155; *2006*, 114–115; *Rustoiu – Berecki 2014*, 257). Such gold or silver jewellery made in the filigree or granulation technique had an important role in the spreading of this decorative style in the Carpathian Basin (*Szabó 1975*; *Rustoiu – Berecki 2014*, 256–258; for the influence of Thracian jewellery on Celtic metalwork, see *Tonkova 2006*). However, the artisans from the Celtic environment adapted this decorative style to their own technique of bronze casting, inventing the pseudo-filigree or pseudo-granulation form, so only the visual element was transferred, but not the related technology (for the influence of Celtic technological knowledge on the design of certain artefacts, see *Jope 1996*, 399–401).

SITE	CONTEXT	METAL	DIAMETER (mm)	TYPE	CHRONOLOGY	OBSERVATIONS	BIBLIOGRAPHY
Folkušová	Settlement	1 Br	?	2a	LT C1		*Pieta 2010*, 60, fig. 26, 18
Trebostovo	Settlement	1 Br	?	1	LT C1		*Pieta 2010*, 36–37, fig. 11, 3
Kovin	Hoard	3 Ag	3x20	2b	LT D1	Together with a set of silver jewellery belonging to one individual	*Rašajski 1961*, pl. 1, 2; *Tasić ed. 1992*, pl. 42
Orešac-Židovar	Hoard	4 Ag	16 17 2x20	2b	LT D1	Together with two sets of silver jewellery, each belonging to one individual	*Jevtić – Lazić – Sladić 2006*, 55, fig. 48–49; *Jevtić 2007*, 26, 43–44, no. 14, 36–37

Tab. 2. Saddle-shaped fingerings discovered in settlements and hoards of silver jewellery from the Carpathian Basin.
Tab. 2. Sedlovité prsteny objevené na sídlištích a v depotech stříbrných šperků z Karpatské kotliny.

Returning to saddle-shaped filigree finger-rings, the finds from the Orešac-Židovar hoard have also been analysed using an XRF scanner. The results indicate that the finger-rings, as well as a few other jewellery and costume accessories (such as different types of pendants and some small round jewellery boxes) from this hoard were made of high quality silver (containing less than 5% copper and less than 1% lead, whereas tin was absent). This composition is specific to other artefacts coming from the eastern Mediterranean. Accordingly, the metal of the "Hellenistic" jewellery from the Orešac-Židovar hoard could have been obtained either by melting down Mediterranean coins or from the Balkans mines which were exploited in the first century BC and provided raw materials for the Greek workshops in a period in which production of the Laurion mines diminished (*Živković et al. 2014*).

Distribution and chronology

Saddle-shaped finger-rings were found throughout most of Europe, from the Rhine region, the western Swiss plateau and northern Italy (*Krämer 1964*, 19, pl. 15: 12–13; *Waldhauser 1998*, fig. 1–2; *Pernet et al. 2006*, 114; *Ortalli 1990*, 27, fig. 13: 2 etc.) to Bohemia (*Waldhauser 1998*, fig. 9) and the Carpathian Basin (*Fig. 4*). In the latter region, saddle-shaped finger-rings were quite widespread, though their frequency differs from one area to another (*Fig. 5*; *Tab. 1* and *2*). Thus the largest number of finger-rings, representing 41% of the total number, comes from south-western Slovakia. The number of finds from each of the remaining areas of the Carpathian Basin is relatively similar, with the percentages varying between 6% and 14%. On the other hand, in Lower Austria, Moravia, Hungary and Romania the finger-rings in question are quite evenly spread, while in the south-eastern Alpine area these are concentrated in only one cemetery at Novo Mesto. At the same time, similar finger-rings are scarcely found in the southern Carpathian Basin. A few examples are known from the Scordiscian area in modern Serbia, nearly all of them coming from the two hoards of silver jewelleries from Kovin and Orešac-Židovar. This situation could be related to the actual stage of research. On the other hand, it could also reflect the limited degree of interest for

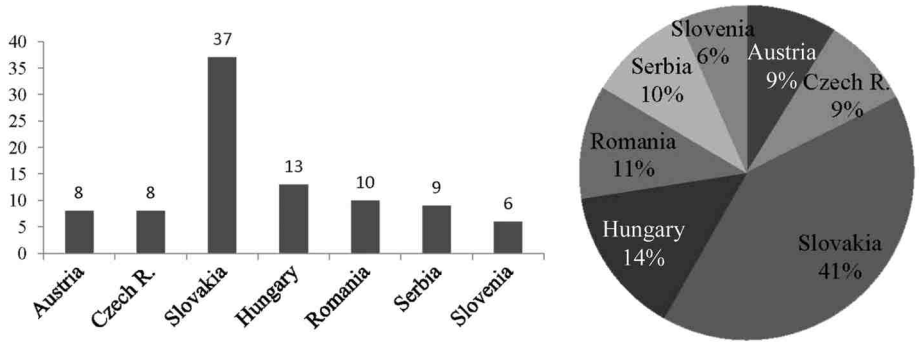


Fig. 5. Statistics of the saddle-shaped fingerings by region of provenance (according to the total number of finds/country – left; percentages – right).
Obr. 5. Statistické vyhodnocení sedlovitých prstenů na základě oblasti původu (podle celkového počtu nálezů/variant – vlevo, podle procentuálního podílu – vpravo).

such ornaments in this region. Similarly, saddle-shaped finger-rings are missing from the cemetery at Zvonimirovo (Croatia) in spite of the large number of graves which have been examined, while other types of finger-rings are present, albeit in reduced numbers (*Dizdar 2013*, 260–261).

As concerns chronology, Waldhauser has noted that the saddle-shaped finger-rings already appeared in LT B1 in south-western Germany and Bohemia and slightly later on the Swiss plateau, thus presuming that the respective fashion trend moved from the west to the east (*Waldhauser 1998*, 98–100, tab. 3 and 10). The contexts of discovery from the Carpathian Basin indicate that saddle-shaped finger-rings were already used at the end of LT A2 and the beginning of LT B1, and remained in use throughout the entire Late Iron Age (*Fig. 6*).

The earliest example comes from a grave from the Mannersdorf cemetery which has been dated to the LT A2/B1. Other finger-rings were found in LT B1 graves from the same

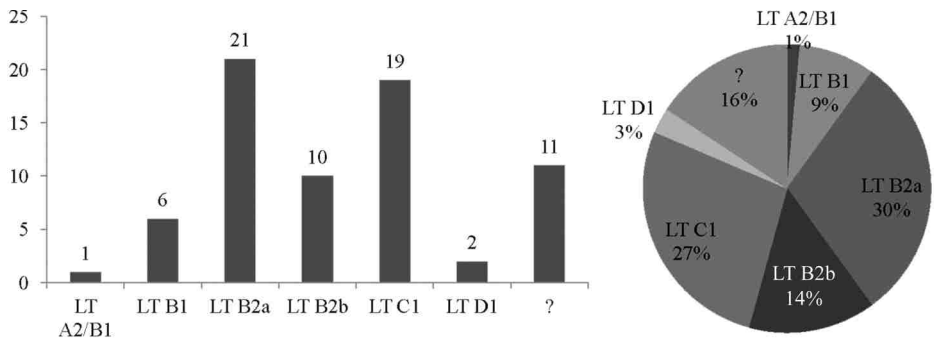


Fig. 6. Statistics of the saddle-shaped fingerings by chronological phase (according to the total number of finds/chronological phase – left; percentages – right).
Obr. 6. Statistické vyhodnocení sedlovitých prstenů na základě chronologické fáze (podle celkového počtu nálezů/variant – vlevo, podle procentuálního podílu – vpravo).

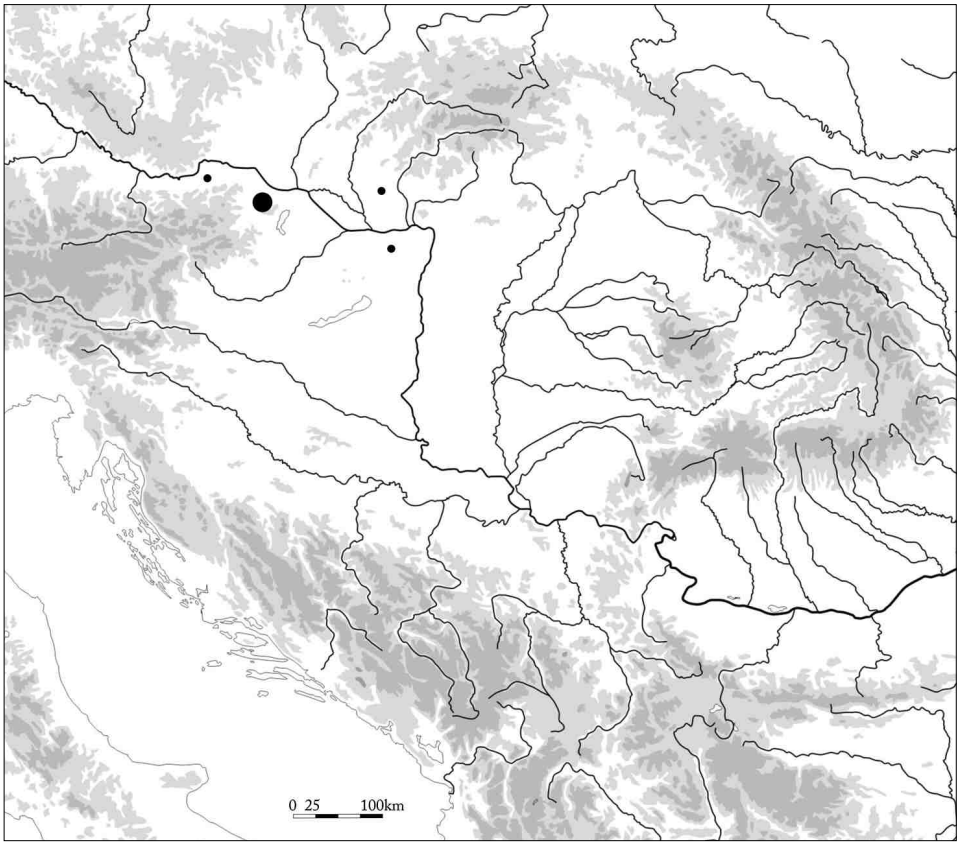


Fig. 7. Distribution map of the saddle-shaped fingerings in the LT A2-B1.
Obr. 7. Mapa rozšíření sedlovitých prstenů v LT A2-B1.

cemetery and sporadically also in other cemeteries from Lower Austria, Hungary and south-western Slovakia (*Fig. 7*). The burials belonging to this chronological phase represent 9% of the total number of contexts (*Fig. 6*).

During the following sub-phase, LT B2a, saddle-shaped finger-rings became widespread, being encountered in cemeteries from Moravia, south-western Slovakia and the nearby regions, as well as in the eastern Carpathian Basin, in western Romania and eastern Serbia (*Fig. 8*). The majority of the funerary contexts containing such finger-rings – 21 graves representing 30% of the total number – belong to this sub-phase (*Fig. 6*). This period is characterised by a significant degree of individual and group mobility which is attested, among other things, by the spread from the west to the east of some new cemeteries and settlements containing inventories specific to the La Tène cultural area from Central and Western Europe. Thus the eastward distribution of the saddle-shaped finger-rings could be connected to this mobility since these appear in cemeteries located along the routes followed by these colonizing groups (see *Rustoiu 2014* with further bibliography). These population movements contributed to the circulation of various objects but also of ideas, customs,

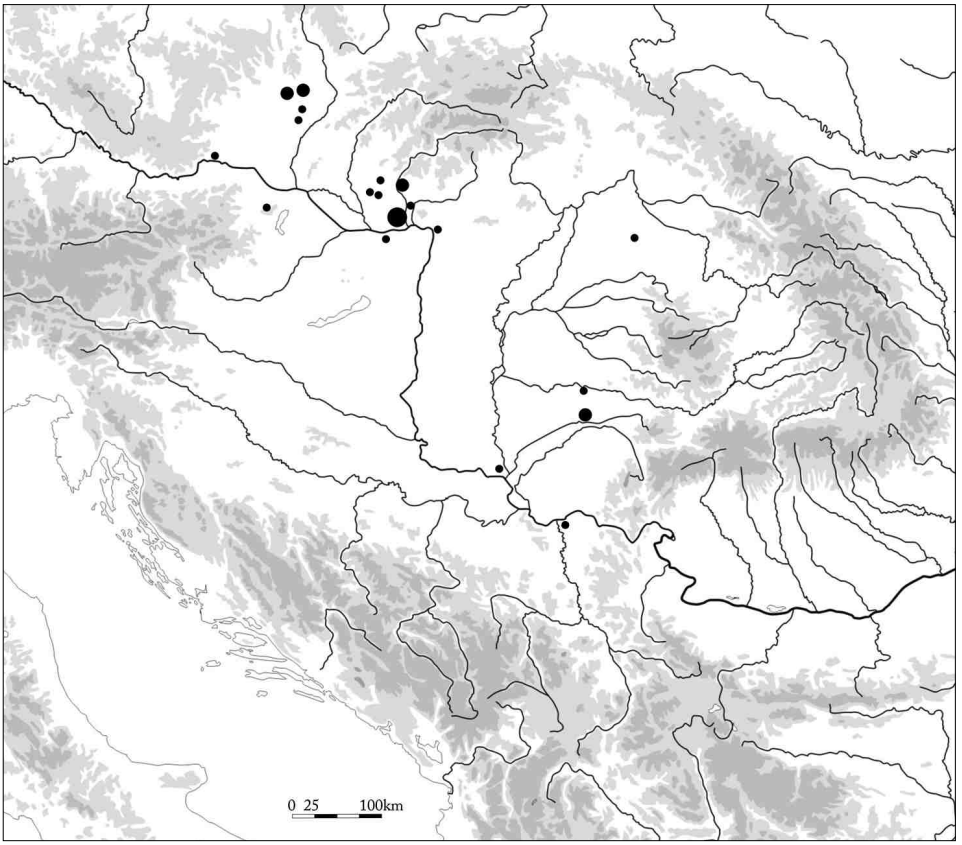


Fig. 8. Distribution map of the saddle-shaped fingerings in the LT B2a.
Obr. 8. Mapa rozšíření sedlovitých prstenů v LT B2a.

fashions or styles of bodily ornamentation etc. Accordingly, these could have also played a role in the widespread preference for saddle-shaped finger-rings.

In LT B2b-C1, the use of these finger-rings is better documented both quantitatively and spatially, as they are encountered in almost all areas of the Carpathian Basin (*Fig. 9*). In the LT B2b sub-phase, the number of contexts containing saddle-shaped finger-rings slightly decreased (10 identified graves), but the total number increased during the following sub-phase (19 contexts, of which 17 are graves and 2 are settlements). Around 41% of the total numbers of analysed archaeological contexts belong to these two sub-phases (*Fig. 6*). However, during the same period the number of saddle-shaped finger-rings decreased in some of the regions in which they were previously popular, for example in Lower Austria and Moravia.

Lastly, in LT D1 saddle-shaped finger-rings fell out of fashion. The single region in which they are sporadically encountered, with significant morphological and technological changes, is in the Scordiscian area, where such rings worn in pairs or as a triad are associated with rich sets of silver jewellery, some of local La Tène and others of Mediterranean origin.

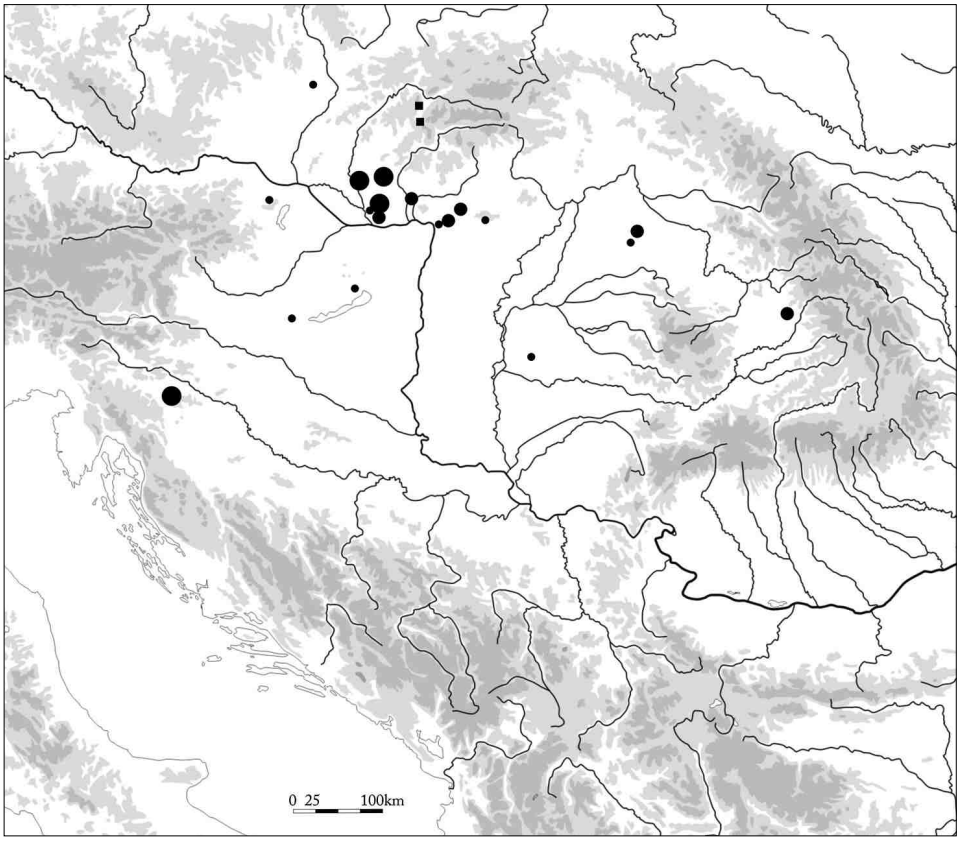


Fig. 9. Distribution map of the saddle-shaped fingerings in the LT B2b-C1.
Obr. 9. Mapa rozšíření sedlovitých prstenů v LT B2b-C1.

Contexts of discovery, wearing styles, social and spiritual meanings

From the perspective of funerary ritual, the large majority of saddle-shaped finger-rings come from inhumation graves (71%). Due to this, the manner in which they were worn – on which fingers, how they were associated with other rings or body ornaments and so forth – can be more easily identified. At the same time the patterns encountered in inhumation graves can be better compared with those resulting from the analysis of jewellery and costume assemblages coming from cremation graves, which represent 21% of the total number of funerary contexts (*Fig. 10*).

About 88% of the graves containing such finger-rings have no weapons in their inventories. The absence of weaponry could suggest that these are female graves. However, in some cemeteries in which anthropological analyses were performed it was noted that some of the graves without weapons belonged to men. This is the case of grave 565 from Pottenbrunn, grave 91 from Maňa and graves 95 and perhaps 9 from Malé Kosihy. In gen-

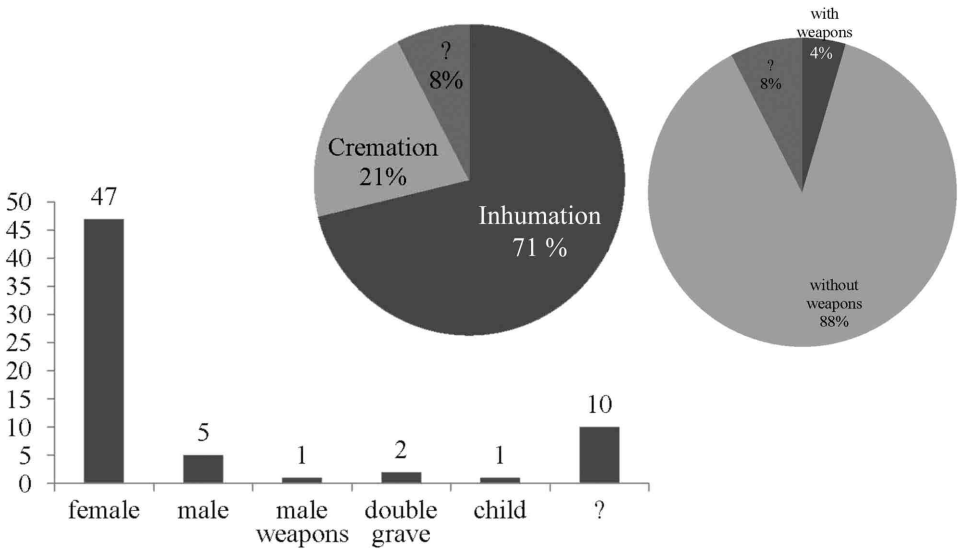


Fig. 10. Statistics of the graves containing saddle-shaped fingerings by funerary rite (percentages – above left), presence/absence of weaponry (percentages – above right) and gender (according to the number of individuals – below).
Obr. 10. Statistické vyhodnocení hrobů obsahujících sedlovité prsteny na základě pohřebního ritu (podle procentuálního podílu: nahoře vlevo), přítomnosti/absence zbraní (podle procentuálního podílu: nahoře vpravo) a pohlaví (podle počtu jedinců: dole).

eral, the costume assemblages of the dead are similar to those encountered in graves with weapons from other regions, for example from Bohemia (*Waldhauser 1987*, 39–40, fig. 5). Lastly, child burials containing such finger-rings are scarce (see, for example, grave 75 from Palárikovo), this pattern matching the similarly scarce general presence of finger-rings with small diameters, which could have belonged to children.

Saddle-shaped finger-rings rarely appear in graves containing weapons, only three cases being documented at Vác and Ludas in north-eastern Hungary and at Remetea Mare in the Romanian Banat, the last two being double cremation graves. One adult and one child were interred at Ludas, while at Remetea Mare the inventory consisting of weaponry, jewellery and costume accessories suggest that one man and one woman were interred together. Accordingly, the two silver saddle-shaped finger-rings from the grave at Remetea Mare could have belonged to female costume assemblages.

The manner in which these finger-rings were worn is relevant for the interpretation of their social and cultural significance (*Fig. 11*). The large majority of the finds taken into consideration (41%) were discovered on fingers of the left hand, while only 18% were worn on the right hand. Still, it has to be noted that in the case of 41% of the rings their position is not known, either because they come from cremation graves or because the exact position was not recorded. The wearing of rings on one hand or another could have been part of a style or practice that had different meanings from one community to another. The cemetery from Mannersdorf offers relevant examples: from the 18 graves with finger-rings of different types, eleven had them on the right hand and seven on the left hand

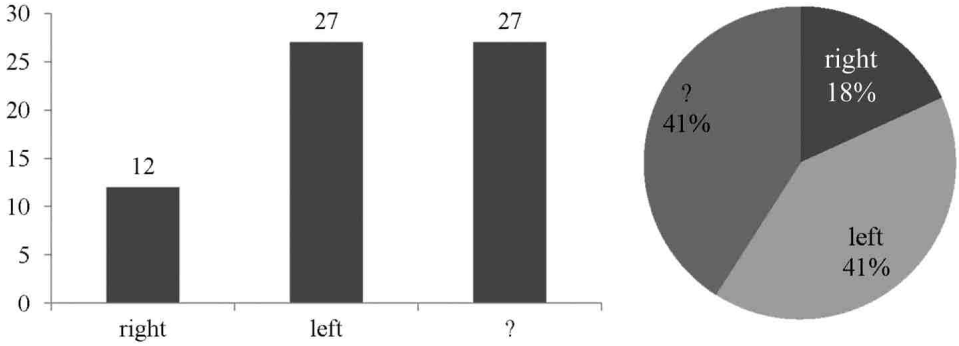


Fig. 11. Statistics of the saddle-shaped fingerings by the hand (left or right) on which they were worn (according to the number of individuals – left; percentages – right).
Obr. 11. Statistické vyhodnocení sedlovitých prstenů podle ruky (levé nebo pravé), na které byly nošeny (podle celkového počtu jedinců: vlevo, podle procentuálního podílu – vpravo).

(*Ramsl 2011*, 107–108, fig. 77). If one considers only the saddle-shaped finger-rings, there are equal numbers, three wearing them on the right hand and another three on the left hand. Thus the fashions identified at Mannersdorf are different from those identified in the entire Carpathian Basin, which may suggest the existence of a local style which was determined by particular rules, specific to this community. In the case of the gold finger-rings from some cemeteries in Western Europe, for example at Münsingen or Dürrnberg, a higher preference for wearing them on the right hand was also noted (*Waldhauser 1998*, 108–109, tab. 14), again indicating the existence of different styles and customs from one community or zone to another.

Lastly, the wearing of finger-rings on a particular hand could also be related to the practice of ascribing different meanings to the left and right side of the body, or to the magical, ritual or medical representation of the human body. Such concepts are attested, for example, among different Mediterranean populations. Aulus Gellius (Noctes Atticae X, 10), citing Appian, mentions that the custom of wearing the ring on "the finger of the left hand which is next to the little finger", encountered among both the Greeks and the Romans, originated from Egypt where it was believed that a fine nerve connects this finger with the heart. The Latin author concludes "that it therefore seemed quite reasonable that this finger in particular should be honoured with such an ornament, since it seems to be joined, and as it were united, with that supreme organ, the heart" (*Rolfe 1927*; *Ogden 1990*, 107). At the same time, the ritual opposition "left / right", the left side being associated with the "bad" and the right side with the "good", or the left is associated with the female principle and the right with the male one, is known among various populations from the Mediterranean area and elsewhere. The left is also associated with the chthonic domain and the right with the Olympian one; with the left hand were made libations for the dead and the chthonic deities, while the right hand was involved in the invocation of celestial divinities etc. More clearly defined by the Pythagoreans, the concept of "left / right" duality was already present in Homeric poems. At the same time, this duality was related to some rituals performed in Archaic sanctuaries dedicated to the divine siblings Apollo and Artemis, for example at Delos or at Dreros in Crete (*Deonna 1935*; *1940*; *Lêvêque – Vidal-Naquet 1960*). In temperate

Europe, the dual symbolism of certain anatomical parts is suggested, for example, by the different positioning of the hands of several stone statues, like those from Hirschlanden or Glauberg (*Armit – Grant 2008*; see the discussion below), or by objects (pendants, brooches, ceramic vessels) depicting human body parts (left or right hand or foot; *Feugére 1998*; *Schönfelder 1999*, 537–538, fig. 1; *Čižmář 2008*; *2012*, fig. 6–8; *Rudnicki 2014*, 43, pl. 6: 17 etc.).

The number of finger-rings worn by each individual is also relevant for a particular style or meaning (*Fig. 12*). Thus the large majority (65%) of the graves contain one finger-ring for each deceased.

In eight examples (12%) a pair of saddle-shaped finger-rings was worn by a single individual. In ten other cases (15%) one saddle-shaped finger-ring was associated on the same hand with a different one. For example, one gold saddle-shaped finger-ring was worn together with a gold band finger-ring in grave 13 from Mannersdorf; in graves 565 from Pottenbrunn and graves 13 and 91 from Maňa, one silver saddle-shaped finger-ring was associated with a bronze finger-ring of a different type; in grave 112 from Maňa, one bronze saddle-shaped finger-ring was associated with one made of lignite.

Three saddle-shaped finger-rings were worn by a single individual on the same hand in only two graves. In two other situations three different combinations of finger-rings were encountered – in grave 127 from Maňa one bronze saddle-shaped finger-ring was associated with two different types of rings, one made of glass and another of bronze, while in grave 75 from Palárikovo, belonging to a child, two saddle-shaped finger-rings, one made of gold and another of silver, were associated with a different one made of bronze. Since the deceased was a child, it may be presumed that the combination of finger-rings had a particular symbolic meaning in what concerns both the number of pieces and the metals from which they were made. Another interesting situation is encountered in grave 14 from Pişcolt. One silver saddle-shaped finger-ring was worn on the left hand together with a simple finger-ring made of bronze wire. Next to them was placed a fragment of another finger-ring made of undulating bronze wire (*Németi 1992*, 62, no. 8). Since other bronze objects from the grave (for example the brooches) were well preserved, it is less likely that the finger-ring was broken due to the soil chemistry. It can be therefore presumed that the finger-ring was purposefully cut and one half was laid next to the dead woman during the mortuary ceremony, while the other half was perhaps retained by a mourner having strong personal connections with her. The ritual must have had both symbolic and magic meanings in this particular context.

In a single case (grave 3 from Hurbanovo-Adadomb) four bronze saddle-shaped finger-rings were found, but the wearing style is not recorded, although in one grave from Münsingen two finger-rings were worn on each of the hands (*Hodson 1968*, 59, grave 149). The burial pit from Hurbanovo-Adadomb was found disturbed, so the existence of a double burial has been suggested on the basis of the recovered funerary inventory (for example the presence of two belts) (see *Bujna 2011*, 73–74, tab. 49: Hurbanovo-A, note 2). However, some LT C1 graves belonging to a single person but in which two costumes or metal elements of two sets of ornaments, including belts, were placed, have been identified in the Carpathian Basin (*Jovanović 2011*; *Rustoiu – Megaw 2011*; *Rustoiu 2013*). Accordingly, the aforementioned grave from Hurbanovo-Adadomb could have also belonged to a single individual who was buried with two sets of ornaments. Four finger-rings were also included

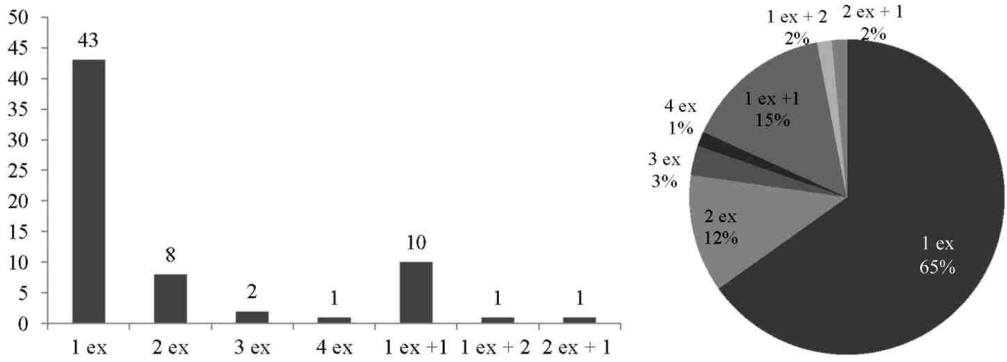


Fig. 12. Statistics of the saddle-shaped fingerings by the number of finds worn by an individual: ex – number of saddle-shaped fingerings; + – number fingerings of a different type (according to the number of individuals – left; percentages – right).
Obr. 12. Statistické vyhodnocení sedlovitých prstenů podle počtu nálezů nošených jednotlivcem: ex – počet sedlovitých prstenů; + – počet prstenů různých typů (podle celkového počtu jedinců: vlevo, podle procentuálního podílu: vpravo).

in the hoard of silver jewellery from Orešac-Židovar, but they probably belonged to two separate individuals, being perhaps worn in pairs, one for each set of ornaments. On the other hand, the hoard discovered at Kovin, in the same region, contains three filigree and one spiral silver finger-rings, which may suggest that the local people could have worn several pieces of the same type.

The wearing of two or more saddle-shaped finger-rings or combinations of different rings is documented in cemeteries from Lower Austria and Moravia (five examples) in LT B1-B2a sub-phases, but mostly in south-western Slovakia (14 examples) in LT B2a-C1 (see *Tab. 1*). From these regions the fashion spread to the east, to north-eastern Hungary and Romania, where graves containing these combinations are also dated to LT B2a-C1. The presence of two finger-rings in some graves from Transylvania and Banat, for example at Pişcolt, Fântânele or Remetea Mare, may be related either to the preservation of some traditions from the new settlers' homeland or to the mobility of certain individuals coming from the west after the colonization phase. Moreover, the recent analysis of the use of metal anklets in the Carpathian Basin points to some patterns specific to south-western Slovakia which are also encountered sporadically in western and north-western Romania (*Brezňanová 2012*; see also *Furman 2012*; *2014*). This distribution also suggests some connections established between these regions perhaps by mobile individuals (for example through exogamy).

In general, saddle-shaped finger-rings are associated with very different types of jewellery and costume accessories: brooches, neck ornaments (rigid necklaces, chains, bead rows), armlets and/or bracelets, metal or leather belts, and anklets. The manner in which these elements were combined contributed to the visual expression of a style of bodily ornamentation which was specific to the communities from a particular geographic and cultural area. For example, some saddle-shaped finger-rings were incorporated into costume assemblages specific to Bohemia and the northern Alpine region (*Waldhauser1987*, 39–41, fig. 5). Others were found in graves containing assemblages that are specific to the middle Danube region

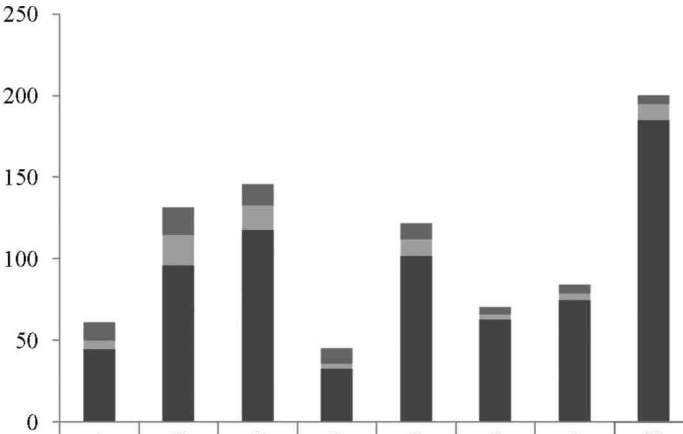
and south-western Slovakia (*Bujna 1982*, 371–377, fig. 18–20; *2005*, fig. 57–58, 61). There are situations in which the deceased's costume illustrates variations of the basic functional structure from the aforementioned regions. At the same time, some assemblages contain several richly decorated costume accessories and jewellery (for example grave 152 from Mannersdorf and grave 20 from Blučina), and the funerary inventories also include Mediterranean imports, for example Etruscan bronze vessels as with grave 13 from Mannersdorf. In other cases, the costume assemblages and the accompanying inventories are poorer. Taking into consideration the variety of combinations of saddle-shaped finger-rings with other costume accessories, it can be presumed that their use was not determined by rules governing the formal structure of these costumes. Rather, their significance may be better understood from the perspective of the role played by these finger-rings in the visual expression of a particular social message.

Anthropological and ethnographic studies have demonstrated that bodily ornamentation represent a means of social communication contributing to the visual expression of membership of a particular social group (see *Eicher 1995*; *Aldhouse-Green 2004a*, 40–53; *2004b*; *Arnold 2008*, 375–379; *Wells 2008*, 64–84; *Venclová 2002b* etc.). In this context, *Turner* (*2012*, 486) noted that "Man is born naked but is everywhere in clothes (or their symbolic equivalents) … The surface of the body, as the common frontier of society, the social self, and the psychobiological individual, becomes the symbolic stage upon which the drama of socialization is enacted, and bodily adornment (in all its culturally multifarious forms, from body-painting to clothing and from feather head-dresses to cosmetics) becomes the language through which it is expressed". *Wells* (*2008*, 42–63) also observed that among the strategies developed to construct the individual identity the upper half of the body (head, neck, chest and arms) is seen as more important since it's attracting the attention of the beholder, who is also the "other". Accordingly, these body parts are ornamented with a set of elements which is designed to convey the "right" and "comprehensive" message regarding the ethnic, social, religious, sexual, etc identity of the individual who is wearing them. The elements of bodily ornamentation may include hairstyles, facial and corporal modifications and additions, costumes and their accessories, jewellery and so forth. In general, their combination in a variety of manners contributes to the creation of a particular "image" that communicates a particular identity.

In this context, what is the role of finger-rings? They are not particularly visible unless the wearer is engaged in acts of communication (verbal or non-verbal). More often than not, these are accompanied by voluntary or involuntary hand gestures that are meant to accentuate the expressed ideas. In such moments the finger-rings become visible, attracting attention and "communicating" information regarding the identity, social status or function of the wearer. Some gestures alone are able to transmit important social messages, which may explain the attention paid to the particular positioning of the hands in figural representations or funerary rituals. For example, the manner in which the hands of the stone statues from Hirschlanden and Glauberg are positioned (*Megaw 1970*, 47–48, no. 12; *Megaw – Megaw 2001*, 257–258, fig. 427), one on the chest and another on the belly, open and with extended fingers, is encountered for a long period across wider geographic and cultural areas (*Rustoiu – Egri 2011*, 92–94, fig. 35: 5–9). More than that, the left hand placed on the chest can be associated with female characters, while the right hand in the same position may be related to male characters (*Armit – Grant 2008*, 415–420). This is the case of some

anthropomorphic bronze figurines belonging to late Hallstatt, early or middle La Tène, like the ones from Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, Prašnik in Slovakia, Sarkad in Hungary, or of the anthropomorphic handles of a Danubian kantharos discovered at Blandiana, in Transylvania (*Frey 2005*, 27, pl. 2; *Pieta 2008*, fig. 130: 3; *Čižmář 2012*, fig. 1: 5–6; *Rustoiu – Egri 2011*, fig. 20, 24: 4). This position of the hands in relation to the body also appears in funerary contexts, for example in some Early Iron Age graves from Buch am Erlbach-Niedererlbach in southern Germany and Hallstatt in Austria, or in some Late Iron Age ones, like grave 21 from Maňa (*Müller-Scheessel 2008*, 520–522, fig. 6–7; *Armit – Grant 2008*, 419–420, fig. 7; *Benadik 1983*, 22, fig. 5: 21). These examples illustrate the wide spatial and chronological distribution of these practices, underlining the importance of gestures in the transmission of important social messages.

Different functions and meanings determined the morphology of the finger-rings among various populations through time (*Saglio 1877*; *Humbert 1877*; *Kunz 1917*; *Waldhauser 1998*, 107–108 etc.). Some may have been used as marriage rings (see *Waldhauser 1998*, 108 and note 23). For example, Pliny the Elder (Naturalis Historia 33, 4) mentions the Roman custom of giving finger-rings to the betrothed girls, and these were frequently decorated with a pair of clasped hands (dextrarum iunctio). Other finger-rings indicated membership of a certain social group (for example Roman senatorial rings). Signet rings were used as early as the Mycenaean period in the Mediterranean area and also in the surrounding regions. These rings were copied, for example, by the aristocracy of the Thracian communities of the Balkans in the 5th – 3rd centuries BC. The bezel of these gold finger-rings was engraved with scenes specific to the iconographic and ideological repertoire of the respective aristocracy – riders being greeted or invested by female characters, hunting and so forth (*Tonkova 1997*, 19–22, fig. 6, 9; *Sîrbu 2006*, fig. 59: 1, 60: 1–4). Similar pieces coming either from the Balkans or the Mediterranean area could have been imitated in a local manner within some communities from the Carpathian Basin. Thus one finger-ring discovered in grave 15 from Maňa is a good example of the contacts established between the communities from the Carpathian Basin and those from the Balkans in the first half of the 3rd century BC (*Repka 2014*). Other Mediterranean prototypes probably inspired the appearance of some variants of the finger-rings with rosette details made by craftsmen from temperate Europe, which were included by Waldhauser in his Group 700 (*Waldhauser 1998*, fig. 3, 5). Numerous other finger-rings made of bronze or precious metals, coming from cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, are decorated with motifs specific to the repertoire of La Tène metal-working traditions – filigree or pseudo-filigree, vegetal and plastic ornaments (*Megaw – Megaw 2001*, 73, 117; *Waldhauser 1998*, fig. 1: 1, 24–25, 29 etc.). These ornaments are also encountered on other types of jewellery and costume accessories, indicating that the finger-rings were integrated, visually and symbolically, in coherent costume assemblages. Richly decorated finger-rings could have served as signs of rank or symbols of a certain social status, but they could have also had an apotropaic or magic role, as in the case of several ancient populations from the Mediterranean; similar traditions are still encountered among modern populations (*Saglio 1877*; *Paine 2004*, 60, 91, 153). The finger-rings worn on necklaces or bracelets probably had an apotropaic role. In this context, it is worth mentioning one finger-ring attached to a bronze brooch, which was found in a cremation grave from Brežice. Both objects were decorated in the same filigree style, being probably made by the same artisan, which indicate that they belong to a unitary assemblage. None of them accompanied



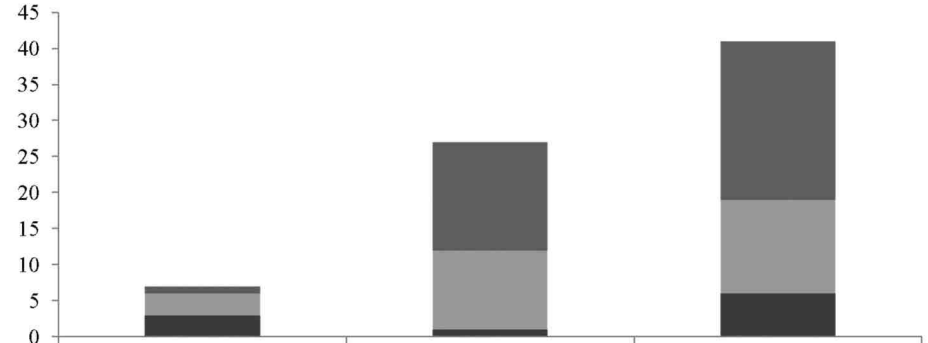
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
% graves with finger-rings	11.11	16.6	12.7	9.09	9.8	4.7	5.3	5.4
graves with finger-rings	5	19	15	3	10	3	4	10
total graves	45	96	118	33	102	63	75	185

Fig. 13. Statistics of the graves containing all types of fingerings in some representative cemeteries from the Carpathian Basin. A Pottenbrun, B Mannersdorf, C Maňa, D Dubnik, E Malé Kosihy, F Mátraszőlős, G Ludas, H Pişcolt.
Obr. 13. Statistické vyhodnocení hrobů obsahujících všechny typy prstenů na několika reprezentativních pohřebištích v Karpatské kotlině. A Pottenbrun, B Mannersdorf, C Maňa, D Dubnik, E Malé Kosihy, F Mátraszőlős, G Ludas, H Pişcolt.

the deceased on the pyre, being laid in the grave above the cremated remains together with a ceramic spindle whorl (*Jovanović 2011*, 53–55, fig. 3–4). This ritual seems to have had magical meanings that incorporate the symbolism of the pin (closed on the brooch), of the ring and of the yarn spun on the spindle.

However, the majority of the finger-rings are simple and undecorated, being made of metal wire or band. They could have had a more general function and significance, for example as a symbol of marriage. The presence of finger-rings and especially of the saddle-shaped ones mostly in female graves, as well as their nearly complete absence from child burials, could also be related to this function. Grave 75 from Palárikovo, in which a child had three finger-rings on the right hand, also contained a costume assemblage that was specific to a woman, consisting of pairs of anklets and bracelets. The child might have been betrothed at an early age in a matrimonial alliance between two influent families within the same community or between two different communities.

Still, the frequency of finger-rings of all kinds among the communities from the Carpathian Basin was far from high. One statistic which compares the number of finger-rings with the one of burials from a series of representative cemeteries from different areas of the Carpathian Basin is relevant (*Fig. 13*). Thus in cemeteries from Lower Austria and southwestern Slovakia, where most of the finger-rings were found, around 10% of the graves contain one or more finger-rings of different types, and only at Mannersdorf does the percentage of funerary contexts containing such objects reach over 16%. The latter cemetery



	LT A2-B1	LT B2a	LT B2b-C1
Bz	1	15	22
Ag	3	11	13
Au	3	1	6

Fig. 14. Statistics of the saddle-shaped fingerings made of gold (Au), silver (Ag) and bronze (Bz) in each chronological phase (according to the number of finger-rings).
Obr. 14. Statistické vyhodnocení sedlovitých prstenů vyrobených ze zlata (Au), stříbra (Ag) a bronzu (Bz) v jednotlivých chronologických fázích (podle počtu prstenů).

is the "richest" one from this region, its funerary inventories pointing to several distant connections and exchanges and perhaps to a wider mobility of some members of the community. In north-eastern Hungary and north-western Romania, the percentage of finger-rings in cemeteries is around 5%, half of the one identified in the aforementioned areas. In the southern Carpathian Basin, the number of finger-rings found in graves is even smaller, for example only three finds are known from Zvonimirovo (*Dizdar 2013*, 260–261) and one from Belgrade-Karaburma (*Todorović 1972*, pl. 21: 10). Accordingly, even if the simple or decorated finger-rings were used as symbols of marriage, the practice was not generalized at either the local or regional level.

The material from which the finger-rings were made is also relevant for the social significance of the saddle-shaped ones. The ratio between the finds made of gold and those made of silver and bronze varied in the Carpathian Basin throughout the Late Iron Age (*Fig. 14*). Thus in LT A2-B1 the majority of the saddle-shaped finger-rings were made of gold or silver in equal proportions (three pieces for each category, representing 43% of the total), while only one example was made of bronze. This situation changed significantly in LT B2a, when a single gold ring is attested (representing less than 4%), while the percentage of silver finds is 40.74% and of bronze finds is 55.5%. In LT B2b-C1, the number of gold finds slightly increased (6 examples representing 14.63%), while the number of finger-rings made of silver and bronze remained largely unchanged: 13 examples made of silver, representing 31.7% of the total, and 22 of bronze, representing 53.65 %. During this period the ratio between the gold, silver and bronze finger-rings is 1:2:4. The pattern is relevant for the manner in which these metals circulated among the communities from the Carpathian Basin. In order to understand the significance of this ratio, it is worth mentioning some examples with regards to the use and distribution of precious metals and bronze in other cultural and historical environments.

In some societies these metals circulated freely and were used according to the social and economic needs of the respective communities, and this is attested by the ratio of objects made of gold, silver and bronze. One example is provided by the numismatic finds from Tyras, a Greek city on the north-western shores of the Black Sea (*Mihăilescu-Bîrliba 1990*, 121). From the total number of coins recovered from the city, the gold ones represent 8%, the silver ones 34% and the bronze ones 58%, the resulting ratio being roughly 1:3:6. These percentages are quite similar to those identified in the case of saddle-shaped finger-rings belonging to LT B2b-C1. Another example is provided by certain categories of jewellery discovered in the Dacian settlements of dava type from the Siret valley, an area located to the east of the Carpathians in Romania; these settlements experienced a social and economic development based on close regional interactions during the 1st century BC – 1st century AD. The ratio between the silver jewellery and the bronze ones is around 1:4 while the gold jewellery is scarce and consists mainly of items coming from other areas like the Mediterranean or the northern Pontic region (*Rustoiu 2002*). In this case the ratio between the silver and the bronze jewellery illustrates the tendency to imitate the body ornaments of the elites by regular members of the communities in a society in which access to the metals from which these were made was not socially restricted.

A different picture is provided by the hoards of silver jewellery coming from different areas of the Dacian kingdom (Transylvania and southern Romania), which are dated to the 1st century BC. These hoards contain sets of female ornaments, each belonging to a ceremonial costume. These sets usually include brooches, bracelets and neck ornaments (chains and solid necklaces of torc form). Sometimes these sets are also accompanied by hair ornaments. None of this jewellery was made of bronze or iron and they are very rarely found in settlements. It can be therefore presumed that they were not accessible to regular members of the community, being exclusively used by members of a small group having a different social status so their imitation outside this group was forbidden. As concerning the gold jewellery that is similar to those found in the silver hoards, such ornaments were recently discovered only in the area of the kingdom's capital, once again arguing for the existence of certain restrictive norms which governed the use of precious metals (*Medeleț 1993*; *1994*; *Egri – Rustoiu 2014*, 164–166, with further bibliography). The existence of religious restrictions or taboos regarding the use of precious metals is also attested among other populations. For example, Athenaeus (Deipn. VI, 25, 243 a–b) mentions that the Scordisci refused to bring gold in their lands because in the past this had led to many disasters due to their involvement in the sacking of Delphi, so they preferred silver for which they organized raids and committed terrible crimes. Along the same lines, Strabo (IV, 1, 13) mentions that the hoard of the Tectosages, consisting of silver and gold, was partially placed in sanctuaries and other sacred places, and the sanctuary at Tolosa was held in high regard by the neighbouring groups, so no one dared to claim the accumulated offerings. Aside from their moralising character, the two stories (borrowed by both authors from Poseidonius – see further *Moret 2012*) suggest the existence of various means through which in some communities restrictions regarding the use of gold or silver were enforced.

Thus, different populations had different attitudes towards precious metals. In some cases, the ratio between the gold, silver and bronze jewellery points to a "free" distribution of the raw materials which was only regulated by the social structures and relations and also by the differentiated purchasing power of various individuals and groups. At the same time,

the ratio between the objects made of precious metals and those made of common metals could also reflect local social competition, either among the elites or between them and the remaining members of the community.

In other cases, the manufacturing of certain ornaments almost exclusively of gold or silver (rarely imitated using common metals) indicates that the distribution of precious metals was controlled in one way or another by elites having a powerful social and economic authority. Among the means of control can be listed religious or social restrictions or taboos. The Dacian kingdom, having a strongly hierarchic society, provides an eloquent example of the controlled distribution of precious metals.

Returning to the Carpathian Basin, the discoveries belonging to the early La Tène period seem to illustrate a kind of controlled distribution, since the saddle-shaped finger-rings were almost exclusively made of gold and silver. The analysis of all finger-rings from the cemetery at Mannersdorf indicates that the percentages of those made of gold, silver and bronze are similar (*Ramsl 2011*, 107, fig. 77). Thus five examples belonging to each category were found in burials dated to the LT A2-B1. This pattern more likely indicates the general prosperity of the community from Mannersdorfdue to its location at a major crossroad in Central Europe.

During the following periods, in LT B2a and mostly in LT B2b-C1, the ratio between saddle-shaped finger-rings made of gold, silver and bronze more likely indicates a "free" distribution and circulation of the metals. The same ratio also illustrates a certain degree of hierarchization within the communities which was expressed through the wearing of jewellery made of a particular type of metal (for the distribution of jewellery made of precious metals in LT B1b-LT C in comparison with previous periods, see *Schönfelder 2009*). Elements of bodily ornamentation specific to the elites were also adopted by the regular members of the communities who used the variants made of bronze.

Conclusions

Summarising the arguments presented above, it can be noted that the saddle-shaped finger-rings belonged to a category of ornaments that was specific to temperate Europe during the Late Iron Age. They were popular among the communities in the Carpathian Basin, where mostly the simple rings made of metal wire (belonging to variant 1) were preferred. Pieces belonging to other variants (2a, 3 and 4) were also used sporadically, though these are more commonly encountered in Western Europe. Unlike the rest of Europe, silver finger-rings made in the filigree technique appeared in the south-western Carpathian Basin during the LT D1. The Mediterranean technique was already used in this part of the continent due to the influence of the workshops and craftsmen from the Balkans.

As concerns the distribution area of these finger-rings, they were mostly used in the northern Carpathian Basin with a concentration of finds in south-western Slovakia. In the southern Carpathian Basin, the wearing of finger-rings of any type was far less popular.

Analysis of the contexts of discovery indicates that the great majority of saddle-shaped finger-rings were worn by women. Occasionally, they also appear in male burials (sometimes with weapons, but mostly without) and very rarely in child burials. In most cases the finger-rings were worn on the left hand, a pattern that differs from the one encountered in other

European areas where the right hand was preferred. This variation was perhaps caused by the existence of different fashion norms from one community to another. On the other hand, different concepts regarding the perceived symbolism of the body parts, the hands or the left / right duality could also have played a significant role.

Although in many cases a single saddle-shaped finger-ring was worn, two or more were also worn, sometimes in combination with other types, in Lower Austria and mostly in south-western Slovakia. This fashion was also sporadically encountered eastward, in north-eastern Hungary and Transylvania, perhaps as a result of individual mobility. For example exogamy may have caused the spread of this practice.

Finger-rings, as well as other elements of bodily ornamentation, played an important role in the visual expression of the identity, rank or social function of the wearer. Accordingly, they fulfilled various practical and symbolic functions among different populations, signets, symbols of social status and function, signs of authority and so forth. However, the statistical analysis of all finger-rings recovered from a few representative cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin indicates that they were more commonly used in Lower Austria and south-western Slovakia (where around 10% of the total number of the deceased were buried with finger-rings), and far less in other areas (where around 5% of them have such ornaments). This pattern points to a significant regional variation in the popularity of finger-rings.

Lastly, the preference for one metal or another is also relevant in assessing the social significance of these ornaments. Thus it has been shown that, with the exception of LT A2-B1 sub-phases, the ratio between the finger-rings made of gold, silver and bronze was roughly 1:2:4 during LT B2a and mostly during LT B2b-C1. This ratio more likely indicates a "free" distribution and circulation of the precious metals that differed from the restrictive control of these materials imposed by the elites of other communities. At the same time, this ratio also reflects the degree of social hierarchization which was expressed through different styles of bodily ornamentation. The elites' style and modes of adornment which incorporated certain types of gold or silver ornaments were imitated by the lower orders of the communities using similar pieces made of bronze.

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English by *Mariana E. Egri*

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Páni a paní prstenů
Sedlovité prsteny z Karpatské kotliny

Mezi strategie používané k vyjádření společenské nebo skupinové identity patří zdobení těla, v němž hraje důležitou roli jak oblečení, tak různé doplňky. Z tohoto hlediska tvoří významnou kategorii ozdob tzv. sedlovité prsteny. Cílem tohoto článku je diskutovat způsoby, jakými se sedlovité prsteny uplatňovaly v různých praktikách zdobení těla spojených s vyjádřením společenského statusu, postavení nebo role ve společnostech pozdní doby železné v Karpatské kotlině.

Morfologie, typologie, výrobní techniky. Z morfologického hlediska jsou studované prsteny ohnuty víceméně v ose svého průměru, takže svým tvarem připomínají zjednodušené sedlo. Typologicky lze na základě určitých morfologických detailů a výrobních technik rozlišit čtyři varianty. Sedlovité prsteny byly zhotovovány ze zlata, stříbra a bronzu. Kovový drát užitý při výrobě byl získáván různými technikami: vytepáváním na kovadlině s drážkou, různými procesy kroucení (v případě vzácných kovů), tažením pomocí průvlakových tažnic. Dráty pak byly tvarovány tepáním až do dosažení finální podoby. Filigránové stříbrné prsteny náležející k variantě 2b se nacházejí pouze v oblasti Skordisků v severovýchodním Srbsku. Tato středomořská technika je součástí dřívější tradice ze sklonku časné doby železné, která přetrvala století následující po příchodu keltských komunit do oblasti.

Rozšíření a chronologie. Sedlovité prsteny byly v Karpatské kotlině poměrně rozšířené, ačkoliv četnost jejich výskytu se liší region od regionu. Největší počet prstenů, představujících 41 % celého souboru, pochází z jihozápadního Slovenska. Co se týče jejich chronologie, nálezové kontexty z Karpatské kotliny naznačují, že sedlovité prsteny se používaly již na konci LT A2 a počátku LT B1 a byly používány v průběhu celé pozdní doby železné.

Nálezové kontexty, způsoby nošení, společenské a duchovní významy. Z hlediska pohřebního ritu pochází většina sedlovitých prstenů z kostrových hrobů (71 %). Inventář přibližně 88 % hrobů obsahujících tyto prsteny nezahrnoval žádné zbraně. Absence zbraní by mohla naznačovat, že jde o ženské hroby. Na pohřebištích, kde byly provedeny antropologické analýzy, bylo nicméně zjištěno, že některé z hrobů beze zbraní náležely mužům. Způsob, jakým byly tyto prsteny nošeny, je podstatný pro interpretaci jejich společenského a kulturního významu. Velká většina prstenů byla nalezena na prstech levé ruky (41 %), zatímco jen 18 % bylo nošeno na pravé ruce. Nošení prstenů na jedné nebo druhé ruce mohlo být součástí stylu nebo zvyku, který nabýval v různých komunitách různé významy. Nošení prstenů na konkrétní ruce mohlo být například spojeno s připisováním různých významů levé a pravé straně těla nebo s magickou, rituální či medicínskou koncepcí lidského těla. Počet prstenů nošených každým jednotlivcem je také důležitý pro určitý styl nebo význam. Nošení dvou či více sedlovitých prstenů nebo kombinace různých prstenů je doložena z pohřebišť v dolním Rakousku a na Moravě, ale zejména na jihozápadním Slovensku. Z těchto oblastí se móda šířila na východ do severovýchodního Maďarska a Rumunska. Antropologické a etnografické studie ukázaly, že tělesné

zdobení představuje způsob společenské komunikace podílející se na vizuálním vyjádření členství v konkrétní společenské skupině. V tomto kontextu hrály prsteny důležitou roli ve vizuálním vyjádření identity, postavení nebo společenské role nositele. V souladu s tím prsteny plnily v různých populacích rozličné praktické a symbolické funkce jako pečetidla, symboly společenského statusu a role, znamení autority, atd. Statistická analýza všech prstenů získaných z několika reprezentativních pohřebišť v Karpatské kotlině ukazuje, že byly v daleko větší míře používány v Dolním Rakousku a na jihozápadním Slovensku než v jiných oblastech. To poukazuje na významný regionální rozdíl v oblibě prstenů. Upřednostnění jednoho z kovů je rovněž důležité pro společenský význam těchto ozdob. Bylo prokázáno, že s výjimkou subfází LT A2-B1 byl v průběhu LT B2 a po většinu LT B2b-C1 poměr mezi prsteny vyrobenými ze zlata, stříbra a bronzu zhruba 1 : 2 : 4. Tento poměr naznačuje spíše „volnou" distribuci a oběh drahých kovů, na rozdíl od restriktivní kontroly těchto materiálů elitami v jiných komunitách. Tento poměr zároveň odráží míru společenské hierarchizace, která byla vyjadřována prostřednictvím různých stylů zdobení těla. Styl elity a její výzdobné vzory, které zahrnovaly určité typy zlatých nebo stříbrných ozdob, byly imitovány řadovými členy společnosti užívajícími podobné kusy vyrobené z bronzu.

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