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Radosław Janiak[1], Alicja Drozd-Lipińska[2]

OLD AND NEW AT DĄBROWA. RICHLY FURNISHED EARLY IRON AGE GRAVES AT A LUSATIAN CULTURE CEMETERY IN WIELUŃ DISTRICT, CENTRAL POLAND

ABSTRACT

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The Lusatian culture burial ground at Dąbrowa, Wieluń district, lies in the upper Warta River basin. Due to its location in the south-western part of central Poland, it accumulated imports from the Halstatt zone (bronze serpentine clasp, iron and bronze spearheads). This was evident in the inventories of two early Iron Age graves. Local artefacts were also discovered in the cemetery, which were imitations of imports (bronze clasps). This was demonstrated by the results of surveys conducted in 1927 and 1928. This makes it possible to identify representatives of the local elite among the buried. Research undertaken on the same cemetery in 2021 confirmed the presence of burials from the Halstadt period. However, their equipment was not as prestigious (swan-necked pins, iron sickles). It is worth noting that this cemetery was already established earlier, during the Younger Bronze Age.

Keywords: Central Poland, Lusatian Culture, Hallstatt period, cemetery, elite
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1 Institute of Archaeology, University of Łódź, Narutowicza 65, 90-131 Łódź, Poland; radoslaw.janiak@uni.lodz.pl; ORCID: 0000-0001-8867-7435
2 Department of Archaeology, Museum of Kujawy and Dobrzyń Lands, Słowackiego 1A, 87-800 Włocławek, Poland; a.drozd-lipinska@muzeum.wloclawek.pl; ORCID: 0000-0002-1562-8090

INTRODUCTION

The Lusatian culture cemetery at Site 2 in Dąbrowa, Wieluń District, has been known for almost a century. It is located south of the currently small River Pyszna, which is part of the upper Warta watershed (Figs 1 and 2). It is also notable that the cemetery is situated almost equidistant from the upper reaches of two rivers: the Prosna and the Warta. They played important roles during prehistory as contact routes, as well as in long-distance

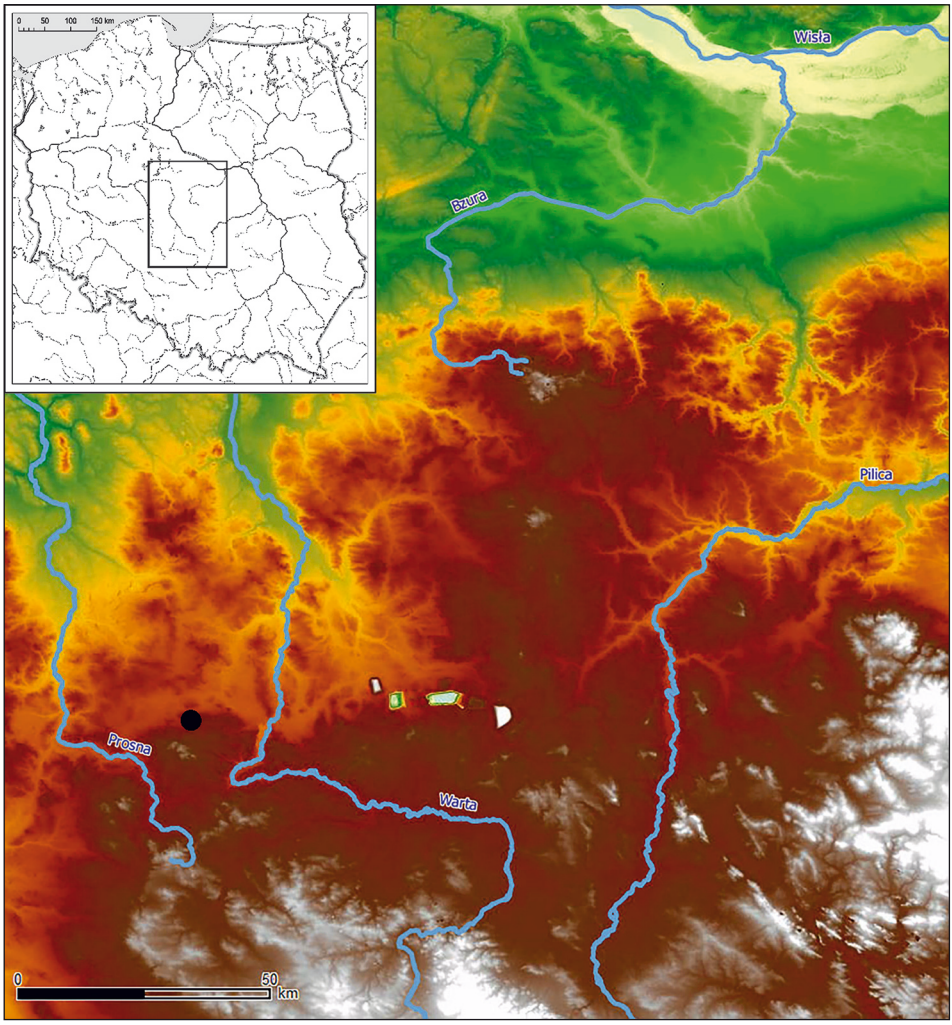

Fig. 1. Location of Dąbrowa, Wieluń District in central Poland marked with a black dot (drawing by R. Janiak)

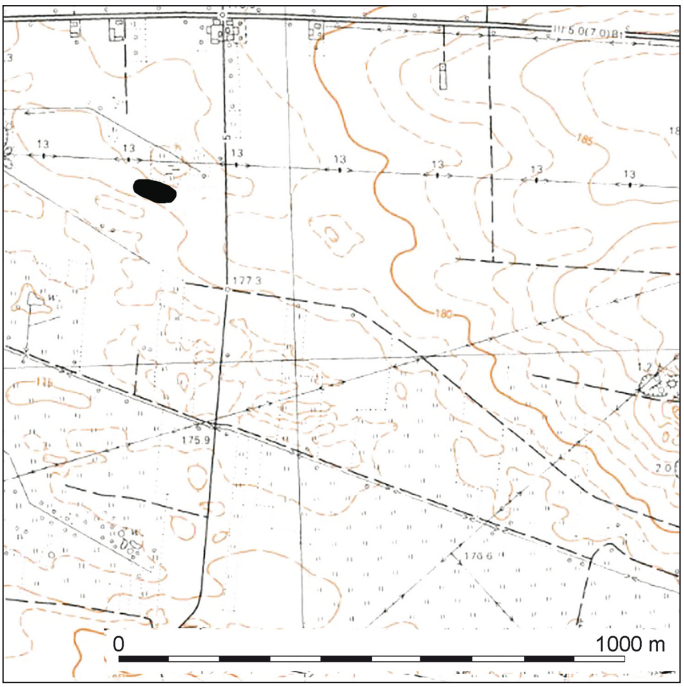

Fig. 2. Location of the Lusatian culture cemetery in Dąbrowa, Wieluń District, site 2 marked with a black oval (drawing by R. Janiak)

trade. Due to its location, this cemetery has frequently been included in discussions of the Early Iron Age in central Poland.

Coincidental discoveries made by local farmers prompted fieldwork. Thanks to their alert, Konrad Jażdżewski, then a prehistory student (and later in the mid-1940s the founder of the Archaeological Centre in Łódź), conducted the first excavations in 1927. He uncovered two burials, one of which dates back to the Early Iron Age and warrants special attention (Janiak 2010). This grave was labelled II/1927 (Jażdżewski 1929; Durczewski 1948, 218), and is distinguished by its size and rich pottery assemblage, as well as numerous iron and bronze objects. Jażdżewski continued fieldwork at this site the following year. At that time, 13 additional graves and a stone pavement were uncovered (Durczewski 1948, 218-226). Among the burials of 1928 is one labelled 10/1928. It differs from II/1927 in both form and its metal furnishings. This numerically more modest metal assemblage indicates a date in the Hallstatt Period. Excavations did not resume until the 1960s, when an additional 31 graves were discovered. Those finds are kept in the Wieluń District Museum in Wieluń and have not been published to date. They were ascribed a preliminary date in Hallstatt C. However, this now seems doubtful. More likely, they date from the Late or Final Bronze Age. No metalwork was found in them.

The third fieldwork campaign at Dąbrowa commenced in 2021, during which twelve features were investigated. Among them were four graves: one dating from the later phase of the Bronze Age (Ha A2), another (labelled 2/2021) from the Late Hallstatt Period. Two further features, being small clusters of burnt human bones, appear to be the remains of destroyed burials. The remaining features were not identifiable as burials. Due to the small scale of the fieldwork, it has not been possible to determine whether the non-funerary features were integral parts of the cemetery space or remains of settlement.

In the summer of 2022, a new trench was opened about 80 metres to the east of the burials discovered in 2021. The finds made at that time cannot be ascribed to any known funeral rituals of the Lusatian culture. They reflect a different type of activity. However, in view of how close they were to the cluster of graves, it would not be easy to see them as settlement remains.

GRAVE II/1927

Today's significantly expanded set of comparative material encourages a reassessment of the discoveries made in the 1920s at Dąbrowa. Grave II/1927 is exceptional in many respects (Durczewski 1948, 218, pl. 95: 9-12; 96). Firstly, it was big: 3.5 m by 2.5 m (Fig. 3).

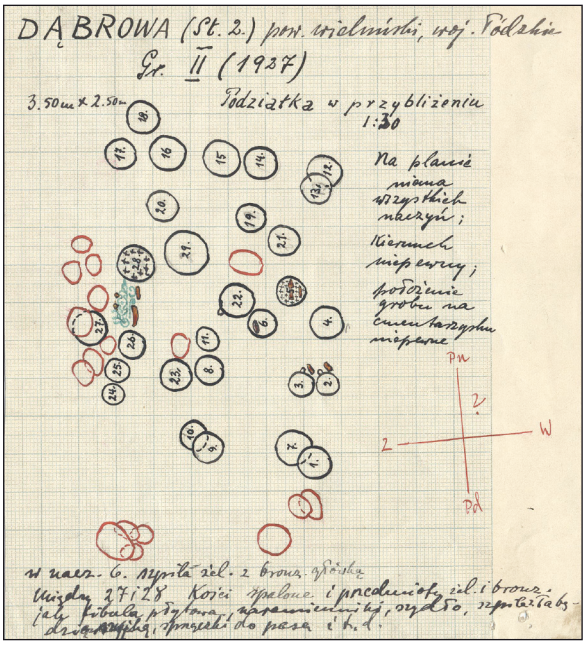

Fig. 3. Dąbrowa, Wieluń District, site 2. Grave plan II/1927: vessels – black, bronze – green, iron – light brown, red – stones (based on the Archive of the Archaeological Museum in Poznań – made by R. Janiak)

Secondly, it had a stone cist. The pottery represented about 40 vessels, eight of which contained burnt human bones. The preserved archival plan, however, does not include all the vessels found in the grave. A cluster of burnt human bones, marked on the plan, raises doubts, among which were metal objects (Janiak 2010, 196, 197, fig. 1). Equally unusual are the furnishings, consisting of several dozen bronze and iron objects. Vessel #6 contained an iron pin with a bronze head. In vessel #5 were an iron spearhead and some unspecified bronze objects, along with burnt bones. Between vessels #27 and #28 was a concentration of burnt human bones without any trace of a container. Among the bone fragments were a bronze fibula with a richly decorated bow, known since that time as the Dąbrowa type, bracelets/armlets, an awl, a swan-neck pin, and iron belt hooks (Fig. 4).

Locating Grave II/1927 on the site is challenging. It is marked on a plan of uncovered features drawn only in 1928. As a result, its exact spatial relationship to the other graves is

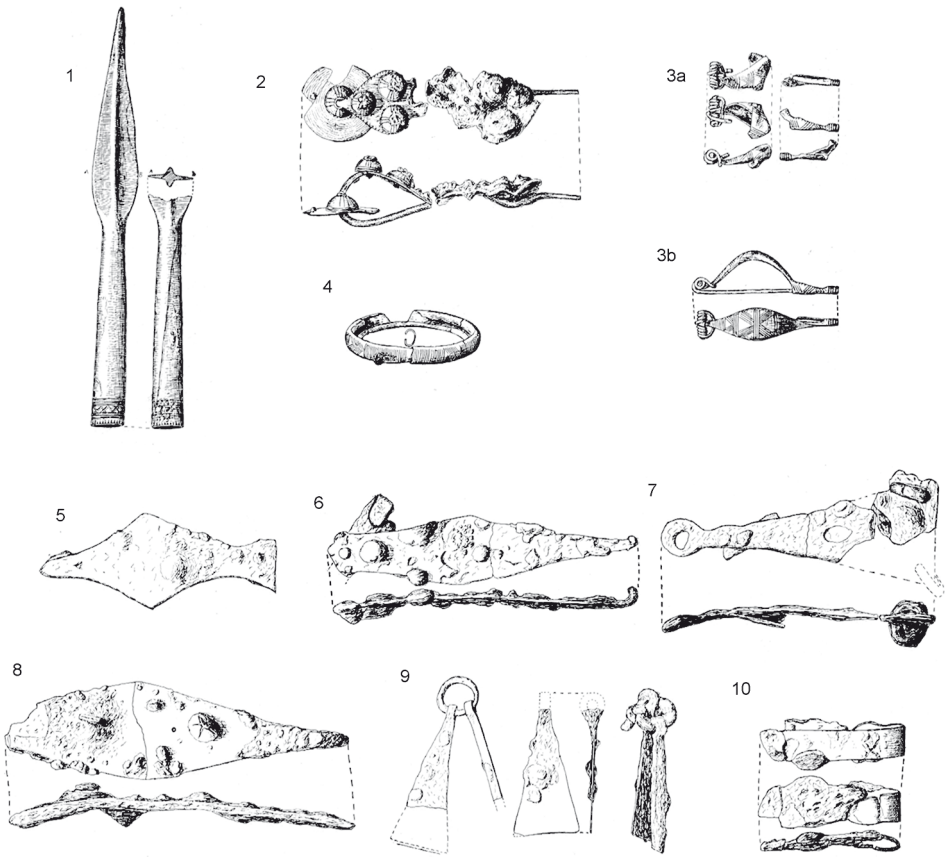

Fig. 4. Dąbrowa, Wieluń District, site 2. Selected artefacts from grave II/1927:
2, 3a, 3b, 4 – bronze; 1, 5-10 – iron (no scale, after Durczewski 1948 – made by R. Janiak)

unknown. Another important aspect to note is related to Grave II/1927's stone enclosure, which is discussed in more detail below. In the same cemetery in 1928, four more graves with similar stone surrounds were discovered. However, these were smaller structures. They were also not equipped with metal items. It is worth noting that similar stone grave structures were also discovered in the cemetery in Łubnice, located on the upper Prosna River. Seven such burials were discovered here (Kaszewski 1986, 136).

A popular publication of the first fieldwork season's results at Dąbrowa (Jażdżewski 1929) presents a relatively small selection of metalwork from this grave. Perhaps only representative pieces of the assemblage were illustrated, to avoid duplicating similar artefacts. In any case, it did not accurately reflect the actual value of the metal furnishings in Grave II/1927. The fieldwork documentation is currently kept in the archives of the Archaeological Museum in Poznań. It confirms the quality, quantity and significance of the metalwork. It has been estimated that the grave contained 1.5 kilos of bronze and iron (Janiak 2010, 196). Some of these artefacts were damaged, and most, sadly, were lost during World War II.

GRAVE X/1928

Few details survive about the grave numbered X/1928. It was covered by a round stone pavement with a diameter of 1.5 m (Durczewski 1948, 222, pl. 63: 9-12; 95: 8; 99: 9, 12). We also encounter this outline on the 1928 cemetery plan. However, there is no plan drawing of the grave. None was probably made due to the fast pace of the fieldwork. Under the stone pavement was a pit with burnt human bones, sherds of four pots and some metal objects. The published description of the grave does not provide precise details. The burnt human bones that were collected were treated as a single find unit. The vessels were reassembled, completely or to a large extent. Without sufficient evidence to clearly determine the type of burial, we may consider the destruction of these vessels, for instance, during the laying of the pavement over the burial pit. We can only assume this was an urn burial.

It seems that the burial container was a large vase-shaped vessel with a cylindrical neck and a slightly roughened belly surface (Fig. 5: 1). This vessel is carefully made. It has a regular shape and a carefully controlled symmetry. Its upper part is carefully smoothed. The rusticated belly surface should be seen as equally intentional. Our suggestion that this was the cremation urn is supported by similar vessels found in Grave 2/2021. Here, vase-like vessels with a distinct, cylindrical neck and a bulbous, slightly rusticated belly served as burial urns.

Next to the vase-like vessel in Grave X/1928 was a large cup or vase (Fig. 5: 2). It had initially had a single ribbon-like handle that seems to have been intentionally broken off before burial, so 'cup' may be more apt. It is decorated on the upper part of the belly with vertical and diagonal bands of engraved lines, separated by groups of holes. This vessel is also very carefully made, as evidenced by the regularity of its shape, the meticulous

smoothing of its external surface, and the good firing. The two other vessels found in the fill of the grave pit are a small vase-shaped vessel with a cylindrical neck (Fig. 5: 3) and a bowl with conical rim (Fig. 5: 4). The metal inventory probably consisted of only three items: an iron spearhead (Fig. 5: 5; Durczewski 1948, 222, pl. 95: 8; Gedl 2009, 88, pl. 34: 434) and two bronze objects (Durczewski 1948, 222, pl. 99: 9, 12). One of the latter is a spiral-disc pin (Fig. 5: 7). The disc is made of a thin rod or thick wire with a quadrangular cross-section. The other bronze one should be reassessed (Fig. 5: 6, see below).

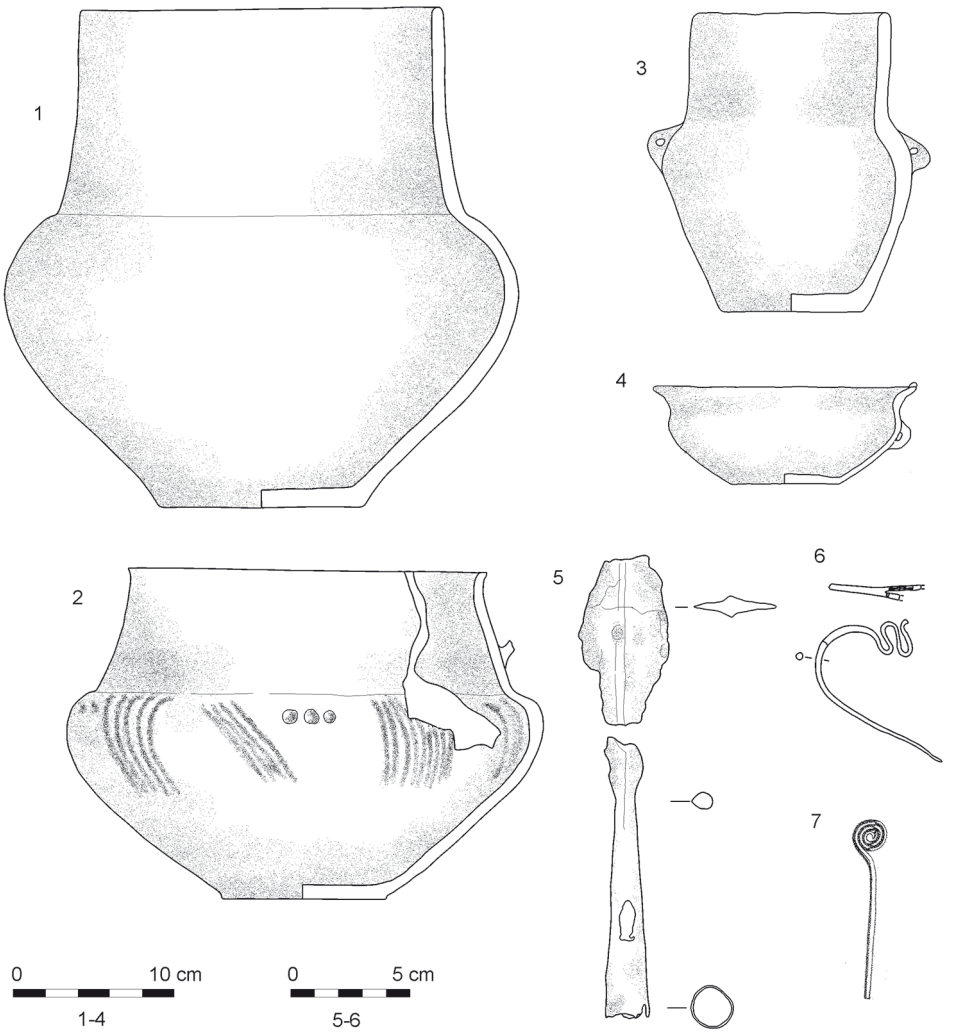

Fig. 5. Dąbrowa, Wieluń District, site 2. Inventory of grave X/1928:
1-6 – drawings based on originals from the collection of the Archaeological Museum in Poznań
(1-6 – drawing by R. Janiak; 7 – no scale, after Durczewski 1948)

GRAVE 2/2021

Grave 2/2021 was a multi-urn burial (Fig. 6). It did not yield as many prestigious objects as the graves discussed above. However, the size, set of vessels, and metal inventory also mark it as relatively wealthy. The oval burial pit measured c. 2.05 by 1.5 m. No traces of any stone enclosure were observed. In total, it has been possible to reconstruct 27 vessels from its pottery contents (Fig. 7). These vessels were placed on two or three levels, creating a compact layer. Only in the case of the lowest-deposited funerary vessels (Figs 6; 7: 1, 2) and the bowl covered with a disk (Figs 6; 7: 3, 4) was it possible to characterise them precisely. We cannot provide specific details about the location of the vast majority of the vessels, especially those situated slightly higher. This is because they had been largely crushed and displaced by later agricultural practices. Two burial urns were placed at the bottom of the burial pit. These are vase-shaped vessels with cylindrical necks. The lower parts of the bellies were slightly rusticated. On top of the layer of crushed pottery, a cluster of burnt bones was found, next to which there were fragments of two other vase-shaped vessels (Fig. 7: 5, 6). Their partial reconstruction shows that they also had a separate neck. In this way, they resemble the previously discussed urns, although they were slightly smaller in size. We assume that they also served as burial urns, originally placed on top, which were almost completely destroyed over time. One of them was decorated with a pseudo-cord ornament. Differences in deposition methods and levels above the bottom of the pit sug-

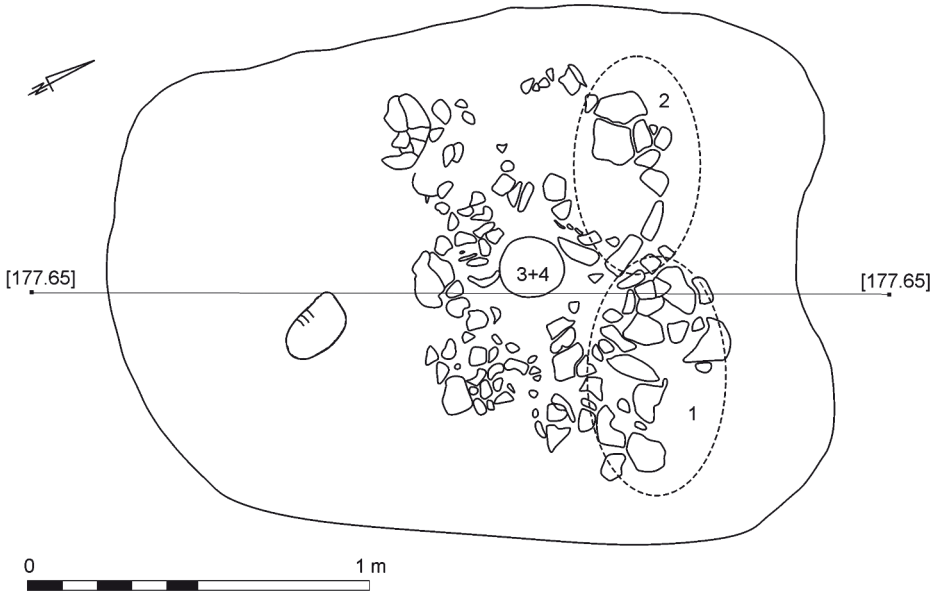

Fig. 6. Dąbrowa, Wieluń District, site 2. Grave plan 2/2021: 1-4 – location of identified vessels (drawing by R. Janiak)

gest that the burnt bones and vase-shaped vessels on top may have been deposited in two separate events.

Other vessels found in the grave are two small vase-shaped vessels, one larger one, a bowl originally covered with a plate, five egg-shaped pots, another fragmentarily preserved plate, seven ladles with ears, and five bowls of various sizes.

Among the burnt human bones in burial urn #1 at the bottom of the pit were several iron and bronze objects. The iron sickle (Fig. 8: 1) had been damaged on the pyre. It is curved and has a bent tang, which was probably intended to attach it to a wooden or bone handle. The tang is bent in a way that suggests a right-handed person used the sickle. On the edge of the blade, near the base, are some oblique cuts, which were probably intended to increase its effectiveness in use. The sickle is about 16.5 cm long. The tang is 1.7 cm long. The blade is no thicker than 4 mm. Weight 34.3 g.

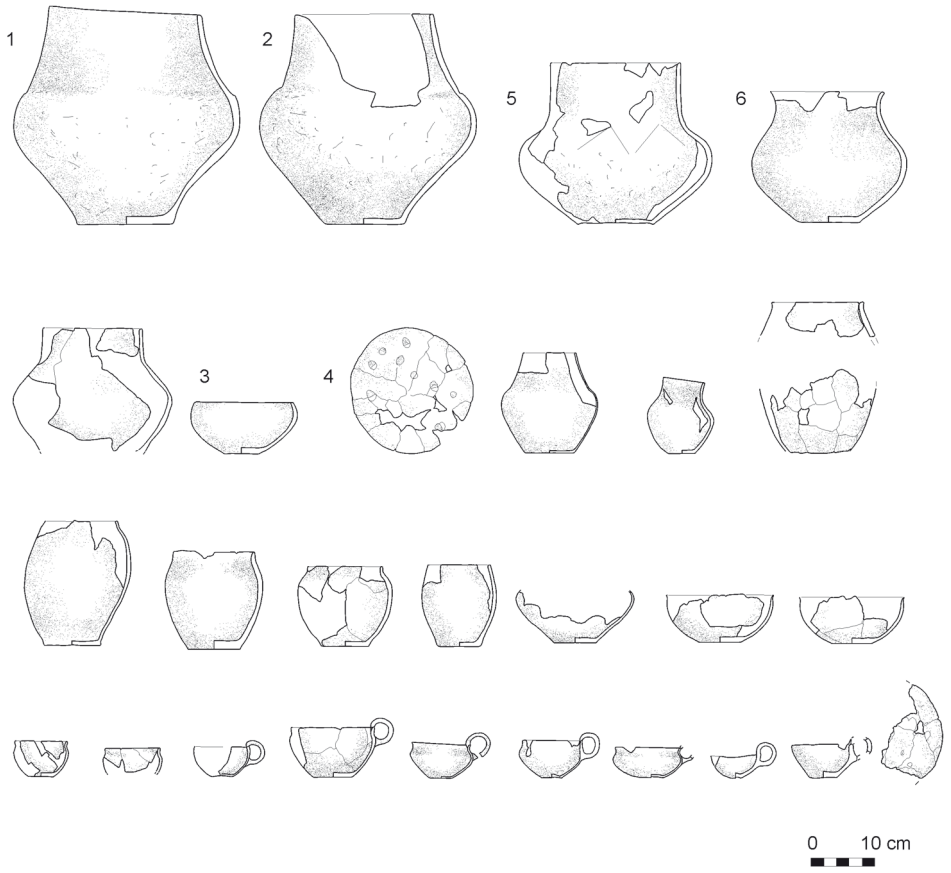

Fig. 7. Dąbrowa, Wieluń District, site 2. Vessels from grave 2/2021. Vessels of certain (1-4) or presumed (5-6) location within the grave (drawing by R. Janiak)

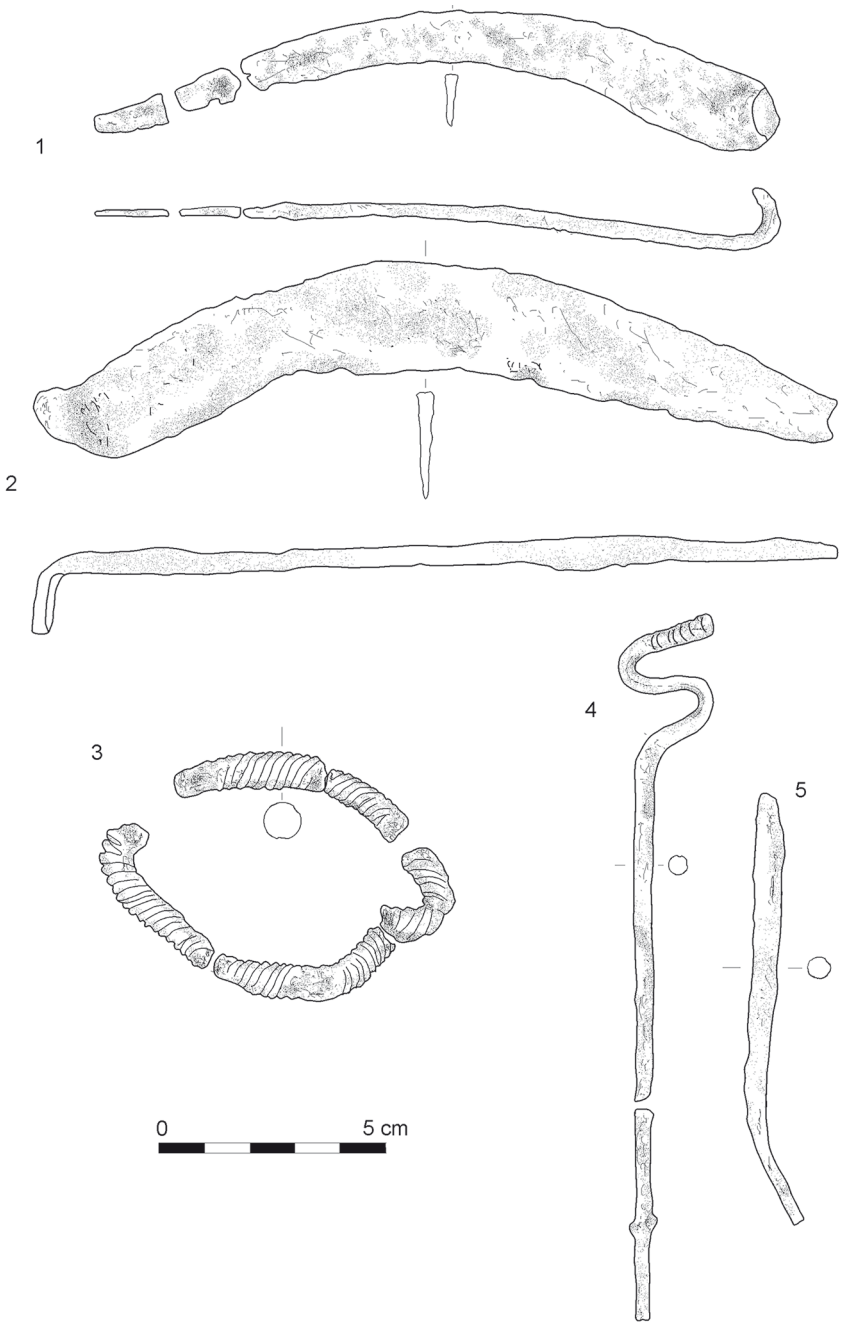

Fig. 8. Dąbrowa, Wieluń District, site 2. Metal inventory from grave 2/2021: 1, 3-5 – urn 1; 2 – urn 2 (3 – bronze; 1, 2, 4, 5 – iron) (drawing by R. Janiak)

The swan-neck iron pin with a corn cob-shaped head survives in three pieces (Fig. 8: 4). The neck's cross-section is quadrangular, while the pin shaft's is circular. The point is damaged. Total length 16.1 cm. Diameter of the head end: 0.5 cm. Diameter of the shaft at the bend: 0.45 cm. The width of the bent neck: 0.5 cm. Weight 8.1 g. This specimen was probably accompanied by a second pin (Fig. 8: 5), which has lost its head. The narrower end is slightly bent. Total length 10.1 cm. Diameter of the thicker end: c. 0.5 cm. Diameter of the narrower end: 0.3 cm. Weight: 5.1 g. Another object that survives in five fragments may have been a bracelet, probably made from a piece of a torc (Fig. 8: 3). The total weight of these fragments: 42.4 g. This piece of jewellery has carefully executed spiral-turning created by casting (*cf.,* Kłosińska *et al.* 2005, 226).

In the same cremation urn were also three bronze fragments, all likely from the same object that was cremated with the deceased. It may have been a toiletry accessory. Other small molten lumps may represent additional bronze objects. Iron staining on the burnt bones is further evidence for furnishings placed on the pyre. Traces of what seems to be molten glass on the bones suggest glass beads as well. On the other hand, in cremation urn #2, only an iron sickle (Fig. 8: 2) was found among the bones. This one survives in three pieces and also shows traces of having been on the pyre. This sickle is curved, too. The tip of the blade is slightly bent upwards. Here, the blade has oblique cuts. They are pretty deep, so the blade is almost serrated. This sickle appears to be intended for use with the left hand. Length: c. 15.2 cm. Tang length: 1.2 cm. Max blade thickness: 0.35 cm. Blade width: 1.9 cm. Weight: 9.5 g.

OSTEOLOGICAL REMAINS

The burnt bones from Grave X/1928, preserved at the Archaeological Museum in Poznań, have been analysed (Drozd-Lipińska 2023). They represent two human individuals. One is an adult, probably male, the other an infant who died during the age bracket late *infans* I or *infans* II. Note that the analysed bones include a few fragments of the two individuals' skulls.

Grave 2/2021 contained several separate sets of burnt human bones (Drozd-Lipińska 2022). Two such were deposited in vase-shaped vessels (urns #1 and #2) in the northern part of the burial pit. These urns were relatively easily distinguished in the lowest layer of crushed vessels. Urn #1, with the richer metal furnishings, yielded 691.5 grams of burnt human bones. Urn #2, with only a sickle, yielded 941.3 grams.

In the immediate vicinity of both urns, there were burnt human bones in the sand. The small quantities do not suggest that the remains of each pyre were divided, with some placed in an urn and some next to it. These bones must have spilt from the cremation urns when they were broken. If we add the weight of the bones found around the cremation urns to the above values, we obtain the following sums: 731.7 g and 968.7 g, respectively.

Both are less than the expected weight of a cremated adult. Therefore, one may conclude that only part of the cremated bones of a given individual were placed in each urn. The shafts of long bones predominate here. Thus, it seems that only selected parts of the skeleton were placed in the urns. As noted, skull fragments are not represented in large numbers. Only in the case of urn #1 is there a greater proportion. This selection of skeletal elements hampers sexing and ageing. In fact, we can say very little about these subjects at all. We can only assume, tentatively, that each urn represents one person.

The burnt human bones found lying on top of the layer of crushed pottery can be assessed similarly. They constitute a third separate set of bones weighing 754 g. These too are mainly from the shafts of long bones, along with a few fragments of flat skull bones, tooth roots, and the mandible. Neither sexing nor ageing of this individual, or individuals, has been possible. The two slightly smaller vases deposited here might suggest that two individuals were involved, but the issue is unclear.

The above indicates that at least three, possibly four, people were buried in Grave 2/2021. Two vessels identified as successive burial urns were found in the upper part of the grave. This may suggest that two individuals were buried this way. This interpretation is, however, not supported by the relatively small number of skull fragments retrieved. With a view to the stratigraphy of the vessels deposited in the grave, it does not seem to be a result of agricultural damage. It should therefore be the result of a procedure that excluded or limited the placement of skull bones in the grave. Such a procedure would not be unique to Grave 2/2021. The same has been seen with Grave 1/2021. In this grave from the later Bronze Age (Ha A2), in addition to burnt fragments of long bones from one individual (age and sex unknown), a small number of skull fragments were also found.

Numerous burnt fragments of human bones were also found separately from the artefacts, in layers of sand. These are generally well cremated, similarly to the fragments found in the graves. We wish to suggest that the vast majority of the bone material was intentionally scattered across the cemetery as part of the funeral rite. However, in this case too, skull fragments are relatively rare. This suggests that a special role was assigned to the head or skull, which excluded it from being incorporated into the graves themselves.

In the case of Grave II/1927, unfortunately, we do not know the age or sex of the buried individuals. The human remains have not been preserved, having probably been lost during World War II. There is only scant information that among the 40 vessels found, eight contained burnt human bones. In only two cases are we sure which ones served as burial urns. Looking at the preserved plan, we can also see an urnless cluster of burnt bones accompanied by metal objects. It is impossible to tell whether this was a destroyed urn burial or – perhaps more likely – an urnless cremation burial.

METALS

We can tell the social gender of the urnless bone cluster in Grave II/1927 in a general way, but not without reservations, based on the furnishings. The spearhead and belt hook indicate the male gender. The question is, however, whether each belt hook corresponds to a single individual. The presence of a hollow bracelet decorated with cross-hatching is suggestive in this context. It belongs to variant V5 as distinguished among finds from the Magdalenska gora cemetery in Slovenia (Tecco-Hvala 2012, 314, fig. 116: 5, 117). This bracelet variant has overwhelmingly been found in the graves of women and children, but also sporadically in men´s graves.

When judging how far into the Early Iron Age use of the Dąbrowa cemetery stretched, attention should be paid to a sabre-shaped bronze object (Durczewski 1939-1946, 92-93; 1948, 222, pl. 99: 9) found in Grave X/1928. This should be interpreted not as a dress pin, as previously thought, but as part of a serpentine fibula (Fig. 5: 6). Its preserved length is about 13 cm, while the diameter of the bronze pin is 1.5 mm. One of the ends of the pin, corresponding to the fibula bow, is flattened and then bent into an S-shape. From the second bend, the rod is cut lengthwise, creating two parallel arms. This object was destroyed prior to deposition and lost its supporting plate and pin catch.

On the exterior surface, the serpentine part is decorated with two parallel grooves. In the opinion of Durczewski (1939-1946, 93), this specimen would date to Hallstatt C. This find also appears in later literature. It was published by Gedl (1991, fig. 38: 4), who considered it a dress pin, although it was actually illustrated among brooches from the Hallstatt Period. At this point, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at serpentine fibulae of type IIb, which are known from present-day Slovenia.

One of the specimens so assigned comes from the inhumation burial 29 in Barrow VII at Magdalenska gora (Hencken 1978, 56, fig. 249; Tecco-Hvala 2014, 126, fig. 2: 3). In Grave 2340-1 at the cemetery of Most na Soči, serpentine fibulae of type IIb were also found together with a situla, which allows us to place the assemblage in the Sv. Lucija IIa phase, falling in Ha D1 (Teržan *et al.* 1984, fig. 247: B; 1985, 368; Tecco-Hvala 2014, 142, fig. 9: C, pl. 1: C). The characteristic feature of the fibulae from Grave 2340-1 is a fourfold bending of the bow, which is formed from a flattened rod (Diagram S4). This bend was probably intended to lend spring to the fibula. The bow is separated from the pin by a disc, the function of which was to protect or separate the bow and the pin, as well as to create resistance against the fastened garment. On this type of fibula, the foot or pin catch is cut straight and has no decoration. These comparisons allow us to recognise the find from Grave X/1928 as part of an imported serpentine fibula.

This reclassification of the artefact previously referred to as a dress pin is important for the assessment of the brooch (Fig. 4:2) from Grave II/1927 (Jażdżewski 1929, fig. 5; Gedl 2004, 91, Taf. 55: 262). The serpentine fibulae that have bows decorated in scheme S4 and

hat-like shields separating the bow from the pin, found in cemeteries at Este and Padua in Veneto, should be kept in mind. The shields are decorated with concentric circles. On the brooch from Padua, there are additionally small circles arranged in a circle. When viewed from above, the bow of these brooches takes the form of two lenses, one end of which narrows into a fourfold bend (Eles Masi 1986, 229, pl. 177: 2386, 2388). The brooch from Dąbrowa Grave II/1927 is one of three specimens of this type known from Polish territory. The other two are from cemeteries at Bogumiłów and Pyszków on the upper Warta (Gedl 2004, 91, pl. 55: 261, 263). All have a wide flat bow with profiled edges. The bow is additionally decorated with studs, probably riveted. The hat-shaped shield of the Dąbrowa brooch has no additional decoration. However, the shields of the two other specimens carry a motif of small ring and dots arranged in circles around the curvature. A further element is the presence of small holes at the edge of the brim.

At this point, it is worth mentioning the shape of a serpentine fibula, found in Grave 2/1939 at the eponymous cemetery of Hallstatt itself (Kromer 1959, 196, Taf. 209: 24). A characteristic element of this brooch is the cap-shaped shield. It has a motif of a ring and dots arranged in a circle. The same motif is found on the dome of the shield. The Dąbrowa type brooches discussed here constitute a small but distinct group that occurs in a reasonably small area concentrated on the upper Warta. Their characteristic trait is the cap-shaped shield. This, according to Gedl (2004, 91), suggests that the type is a local design inspired by imported serpentine fibulae. We endorse this interpretation. The bronze craftsman, likely responding to a regional order, creatively developed an imitation of the imported pieces, giving them a unique shape while maintaining the hat-shaped shield, which was important from a functional perspective.

Thus, two richly furnished graves at Dąbrowa have yielded stylistically related metals: an imported serpentine fibula in Grave X/1928 and its imitation in Grave II/1927. We believe that these graves are effectively coeval and date from Ha D1. Another fibula was also found in Grave II/1927 (Fig. 4: 3a, 3b). It was a two-part boat-like fibula with crossbow winding and carved decoration on the rhomboid bow (Jażdżewski 1929, fig. 7: 1, 2; Gedl 2004, 98, 99, Taf. 57: 283, 283a). This jewellery is considered a product of local workshops influenced by Italian prototypes. Boat-like fibulae, characterised by a single-part structure, are found in northern Italy from the 7th to the early 6th centuries BC. This two-part fibula type is known from Polish territory and Moravia. Their dating should be within the Ha D2 phase (Woźniak 2010, 42; Golec and Fojtik 2020, 106-109).

The second dress pin found in Grave X/1928 (Durczewski 1939-1946, 92; 1948, 222, pl. 99: 12) had a head in the form of a spiral disc made of rod or wire with a quadrangular cross-section (Fig. 5: 7). Unfortunately, it has not survived in a museum collection. Similar pins are also known, for example, from Grave 2051 at the cemetery of Kietrz (Gedl 1985, 30, pl. 5: 4, 5). This being the only non-ceramic furnishing of the grave, it received a general Hallstatt Period date in the publication. On the other hand, a study of documentation from the cemetery in Świbie (Michnik and Dzięgielewski 2022, 90) places

this type of dress pin in the early and middle phases of the cemetery's use, equivalent to phases Ha C1 and Ha C2.

The iron spearhead from Grave II/1927 (Fig. 4: 1), approximately 22.5 cm long (Jażdżewski 1929, fig. 4; Durczewski 1939-1946, 121; 1948, pl. 95: 9) has a long socket and a long, narrow, almond-shaped blade (Gedl 2009, 90, pl. 35: 444). A characteristic feature is the engraved ornament at the socket's opening. The motif is intersecting diagonal lines framed from above and below by a double line, which probably goes all the way round. Of three assemblages of iron spearheads found in cemeteries at Magdalenska gora (Tecco-Hvala 2012, 123, fig. 48, 49), two include specimens with decorated sockets. These are spearheads with a) a short socket and a long blade, b) a long socket and a short blade. The spearhead from Dąbrowa is similar in shape to the finds in the first group of Slovenian finds mentioned above. A 27 cm long spearhead found in Grave X/1928 (Durczewski 1939-1946, 121; 1948, 222, pl. 95: 8; Gedl 2009, 88, pl. 34: 434) has been assigned to the type 'iron spearheads with a wide blade' (Fig. 5: 5). Note that in the light of Gedl's research (2009, 88), this type includes only six items. Among them, a specimen similar to the find from Dąbrowa was discovered in a stronghold of the Lusatian culture at Czarnowo (formerly Kamieniec; Zielonka 1955, 164, pl. 25: 11; Gedl 2009, 88, pl. 34: 436). During excavations here, layers associated with fire and destruction were found. The spearhead is 20 cm long, and the width of the blade is 4 cm. Unfortunately, we do not know the exact spot where it was found. In the past decade, an eastern origin has been suggested for this type of weaponry (Andrzejowska 2016, 301; Gackowski *et al.* 2018, 332). The presence of other militaria, such as arrowheads of eastern provenance, at the stronghold in Czarnowo suggests that it fell to a Scythian attack. However, the use of these weapons by the local community, or even their local production, is not out of the question (Zielonka 1955, 164, pl. 25: 1-6; Gackowski 2020, 47, 48; Gackowski *et al.* 2018, 333, 334).

Grave II/1927 also yielded iron belt hooks (Jażdżewski 1929, figs 8 and 9; Durczewski 1948, fig. 96: 1, 3, 6). Three of them have a characteristic rhombic and oval shape (Fig. 4: 5, 6, 8). They were accompanied by rings, probably also iron, that formed the other half of the belt closure. In the cemetery at Hallstatt, this type of belt hook is known from both male and female graves and belongs to phase Ha D1. On the other hand, in Slovenia, in the Doljenska group, among the assemblages from the cemetery at Magdalenska gora, the type occurs in phases distinguished by serpentine fibulae as well as in the Certosa phase, which can be attributed to the Ha D1 and Ha D2-D3, respectively (Tecco-Hvala 2012, 169). Artefacts similar in form to belt buckles are also known from the Moravian territory. They occurred there after the Ha D1b phase (Golec and Fojtik 2020, 132).

One of the belt hooks differs in its shape (Fig. 4: 7), being an isosceles triangle topped by a ring (Jażdżewski 1929, fig. 8 at the bottom; Durczewski 1948, fig. 96: 2). At the other end, at one side of the base, perpendicular to the fastening plate, is a separate ring. Since part of the base of the triangle is missing, we may assume that the original belt hook had two such rings. On the other hand, it might be appropriate to consider this artefact

as a pendant, similar to another specimen from this grave (Fig. 4: 9). In Moravia, pendants of a similar form were one of the elements of multi-part belts, which are attributed to people of higher social status (Golec and Fojtik 2020, 125, 129, 130, fig. 42: 1, 5).

The hollow bronze bracelet/armlet from Grave II/1927 (Fig. 4: 4; Jażdżewski 1929, fig. 3; Durczewski 1939-1946, 104; 1948, fig. 96: 4) has a fairly broad date. In burials from modern Slovenia, the type first appears in Ha C2 and persists into LT A, when it remains fairly common (Tecco-Hvala 2012, 320). In Ha D1, the phase of Grave II/1927, such bracelets/armlets are relatively rare.

The last item from Grave II/1927 – probably a folded iron strip (Fig. 4: 9) – is difficult to identify with certainty.

Another distinctive group of artefacts are the two iron sickles from Grave 2/2021. In the western zone of the Lusatian culture, two other graves with sickles are noteworthy here (Kołodziejski 1974, pl. 11: 3; Madera 2002, 167, fig. 11: c). Both are richly furnished barrow burials, each equipped with a bronze sword and iron axes (both flat axes with side protrusions and socketed axes). The first of them is from a barrow at Żukowice in Głogów district, dating from Hallstatt C. The location of this burial in the central part of the cemetery seems significant (Kołodziejski 1974, 85, pls 9-12; Gedl 1991, 26-28, Abb. 8). As Gedl (1991, 27, 28) emphasised, due to its rich furnishings and form, this grave represents a high-status individual. Moreover, in the Silesian group of the Lusatian culture, it would be an exceptional burial. The second sickle grave is number 4/95 at Łazy in Wołów District – a chamber grave. This find is also dated to the Hallstatt C (Madera 2002, 163-167, 170, figs 9-11). The presence of sickles in such richly furnished burials is suggestive. These sickles co-occur with weaponry, that is, male-gendered assemblages.

A monograph on the Lusatian culture cemetery at Świbie in Upper Silesia also provides information on iron sickles in burials. Although there are not many sickles from this cemetery, one was found in Grave 6, along with an iron flat axe with side protrusions and an iron knife (Michnik 2022, 14, 15, pl. 3: 8, 4: 1; Michnik and Dzięgielewski 2022, 107, 116). The combination of a tool and a weapon indicates a higher status. Other finds from Silesia also demonstrate the presence of big iron sickles in graves of the Lusatian culture during Ha C (*e.g.*, Cieszków in Milicz District; Domańska and Gołubkow 1976, 114, 116, fig. 26d; 1978, 77, 79, fig. 20: o). They are more common, though, in Ha D and the Early La Tène Period (Dzięgielewski *et al.* 2011, 329). Ten graves in the cemetery at Domasław yielded sickles (Gediga *et al.* 2020, 78). Here, however, the assemblages do not support any interpretation of a higher status. The status of the deceased buried with a sickle cannot be read from the presence of a wooden chamber either.

The latest literature on sickles draws attention to two metalwork assemblages from southern Bohemia. Here again, sickles are found along with iron flat axes with side protrusions at Třebanice and Vráž/Zlivice (Michálek 2017a, 506-5-7; 2017b, pl. 401; Michálek *et al.* 2015, 125, fig. 7: 4, 8: 4, Půlpán *et al.* 2022, 46). At Vráž, it is suggested that the metalwork was found in Barrow 1. Some finds from the fortified settlement at Smolenice-Molpír

are also illuminating. There are sickles in four out of six hoards (#1, 2, 3, 5) from the acropolis, the most important, upper part of the settlement (Čambal and Makarová 2020, 208, 218, fig. 2; 3: 11; 4: 1-6; 5: 1, 3, 8; 8: 1a, 1b) – all the hoards from Smolenice-Molpír date from Ha D1.

Sickles in themselves can hardly be considered high-status attributes. However, the above examples demonstrate that they were deposited in diverse contexts: in graves at Łazy, Żukowice, Świbie, Domasław and Vráž/Zlivice (?); in hoards at Smolenice-Molpír and Třebanice. They are associated with special places, such as the aristocratic precinct at Smolenice-Molpír, or are part of rich barrow inventories, co-occurring with tools or weaponry. As for Grave 2/2021 at Dąbrowa, sickles were included, although not many other metal objects were found. It is difficult, in comparison with the furnishings of Graves II/1927 and X/1928 with their weaponry and imports, to talk about the social status of the people buried in Grave 2/2021.

CONCLUSION

The site at Dąbrowa belongs to a small group of Lusatian culture cemeteries in the southern part of central Poland that have yielded prestigious grave furnishings, including imported fibulae or their local imitations (Fig. 9). An instructive example is the Dąbrowa fibula type (Fig. 4: 2) – Gedl 2004, 91, fig. 55: 262). Two other such fibulae have been found in the Lusatian cemeteries of Pyszków and Bogumiłów, both in Sieradz District on the upper Warta (Antoniewicz 1939–1945, 14, 34, fig. I: 13, II: 10; Łuka 1957-1959, 31, 32, fig. 18; Gedl 2004, 91, fig. 55: 261, 263). We believe that this fibula type is an imitation of imported serpentine fibulae that underwent additional redesign. These few finds of the type in a fairly small area suggest a local metalworking workshop (Gedl 1991, 66; 2004, 92). Furthermore, the boat-like fibula from Grave II/1927 recalls the two pairs of such fibulae (with a rhomboid bow and a narrow bow respectively) in Grave 15 in the Lusatian cemetery at Chojne in Sieradz District (Ząbkiewicz-Koszańska 1972, 182, 183, fig. 12: 1, 2, 6, 7; Gedl 2004, 94, 98, 148, fig. 56: 268, 269, fig. 57: 281, 282). All of these finds date back to Phase Ha D2 (Woźniak 2010, 42). Therefore, the chronology of Grave II/1927 should fall within the Ha D2 phase.

The location of these cemeteries in the Prosna and Warta River basins is significant for the broader context. Dąbrowa is the westernmost of them, located almost halfway between the upper reaches of the Prosna and the Warta. Chojne, Pyszków, and Bogumiłów are located slightly to the northeast, above the southern course of the Warta. The prestigious objects found here reflect trade and other communication along these two major rivers (Janiak 2003, 81-83). This connected the Lusatian culture communities of north-east Silesia with groups controlling areas along the Warta, above the confluence with the Oleśnica River.

This route had been established earlier, as evidenced by a group of Lusatian culture strongholds that we refer to as the 'Silesian type'. They flourished already during Ha B3 (Janiak 2003, 69-72). The finds from Dąbrowa, Pyszków, Bogumiłów and Chojne show that Ha D1-Ha D2 saw a re-activation of this route. Prestigious objects reached the southern part of central Poland. They found recipients and imitators here. Not only elements of

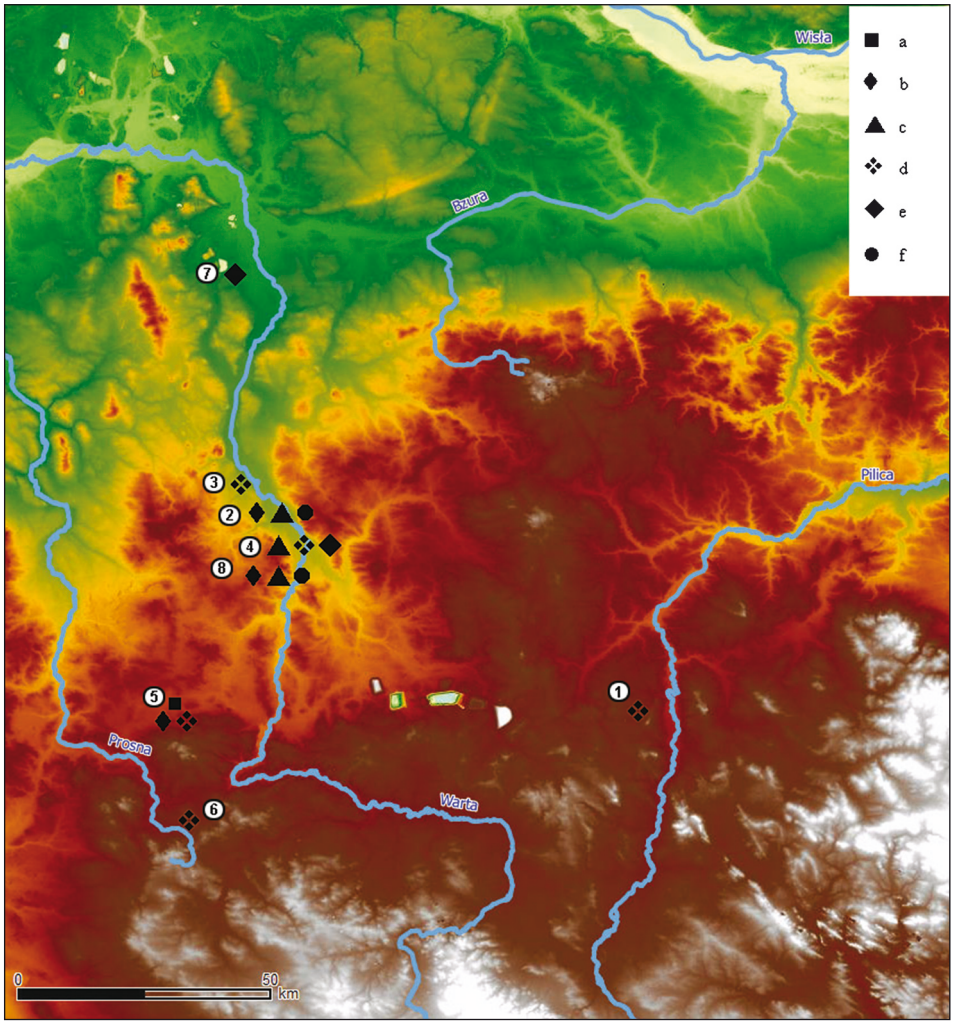

Fig. 9. Distribution of fibulae in the Upper Warta and Prosna Basin zone in the Halstatt D stage (after Gedl 2004, drawing by R. Janiak): a – serpentine fibula; b – Dąbrowa-type fibula; c – arched fibula of crossbow design with a long sheath; d – boat-like fibula with a rhomboidal bail; e – Wojszyce-type fibula; f – fibula with a decorative foot – Wicina variant; 1 – Bęczkowice, Piotrków County; 2 – Bogumiłów, Sieradz County; 3 – Charłupia Mała, Sieradz County; 4 – Chojne, Sieradz County; 5 – Dąbrowa, Wieluń County; 6 – Dzietrzkowice, Wieruszów County; 7 – Przykona, Turek County; 8 – Pyszków, Sieradz County

costume, but also weapons indicate the presence of persons of higher social status in the area (*cf.,* Schumann 2015, 25-27; Trefný 2017, 121, 123). These individuals likely exercised political control within their local settlement structure, while also engaging in long-distance trade and exchange. Their presence in the area stimulated such exchange as well as the activities of local metallurgical workshops.

Discovered in 2021, the multi-urn burial, dated 2/2021, was equipped with, among other things, iron sickles. It differs in character from the two burials equipped with weapons and imports or their local imitations. At the same time, it is an example of another burial from the early Iron Age discovered at the cemetery in Dąbrowa. The differences, apart from the type of metal objects, also lie in the different 'architecture' of the grave.

The verification of previous findings presented in this text concerns discoveries made at the necropolis in Dąbrowa almost 100 years ago. The authors intended to reinterpret the metal objects found in two graves. In addition, the results of anthropological research have been made available, which, albeit to a small extent, provide insight into the structure of the community that used the necropolis in question. These more precise data refer only to Grave X/1928. To a lesser extent, they refer to the people buried in Grave 2/2021. In the future, they may provide material for studying the age and gender structure of people buried in Lusatian culture cemeteries in central Poland. The results of archaeological research conducted at the cemetery in Dąbrowa in 2023 and 2024 may, to some extent, verify views on the social and economic roles of the cemetery's users.

Based on the discovery of graves from the Hallstatt period, the cemetery in Dąbrowa can be added to several other necropolises in the southern settlement area of the Lusatian culture in central Poland. In addition to the previously mentioned cemeteries in Bogumiłów, Pyszków, Łubnice, and Chojne, the necropolis in Charłupia Mała, Sieradz District, located on the Warta River (Kurowicz 2002), should also be mentioned here. The artefacts discovered here are still awaiting more comprehensive publication. All these cemeteries offer fascinating insights into the cultural changes that occurred in the early Iron Age in the aforementioned region.

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