

# The social meaning of multiple burials in the Corded Ware culture

Společenský význam vícečetných pohřbů v kultuře se šňůrovou keramikou

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## KEYWORDS

Neolithic – Corded Ware culture – Bohemia – collective burials – gender status – familial relationships

## ABSTRACT

Although multiple burial contexts are uncommon, they are a typical feature of Corded Ware funerary behaviour. This paper focuses on various aspects of Corded Ware multiple burials in Bohemia and the adjacent regions of Central Europe. Particular attention is given to the occurrence of burials in the antipode position and the age, gender and possible familial relationship of the individuals in such graves. A unique example of multiple burials is the bi-ritual Grave 1/95 in Slaný (Kladno District) in Bohemia, which contained a minimum of seven individuals (men, women and children), four of which were cremated. Despite the exceptional use of the cremation method of burial, the Slaný grave fits the well-defined collective type of Corded Ware burials usually known from Bohemia, such as in Třebusice (Kladno District); Bylany (Kolín District); Chrástany (Prague-west District). Similar, but not identical collective burials are known from Obrnice (Most District) and Určice (Prostějov District) in Moravia and Święte, site 20 (Grave 43) in Little Poland. Similar examples are also known from Saxony-Anhalt in the case of the Eulau collective burial. It appears these communal burials represent a particular variety of funerary practices (ritual) rather than evidence of a specific event. New archaeogenetic data may shed more light on the questions of whether these burials represent a nuclear family, what can we learn about the familial ties and the meaning of a collective funerary event. Some cases (Eulau) presume the multiple burials as a result of a violent occurrence (conflict or sacrifice) while others may be the result of disease or the special status of particular members of the community.

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## 1. Introduction

Funerary practices and burial rites can provide an important insight into the social and familial structure of prehistoric communities. The 3rd millennium BC Beaker Cultures provide an excellent opportunity to analyse the gender-structured funerary data. Archaeogenetic data offers a completely new insight into the family relations and gender categories. The recent studies reconstructing gender identity and the social structure of the Neolithic/Eneolithic communities bring a variety of approaches and interpretations (such as Civis 2008; Bickle 2019; Kolář 2016; 2018).

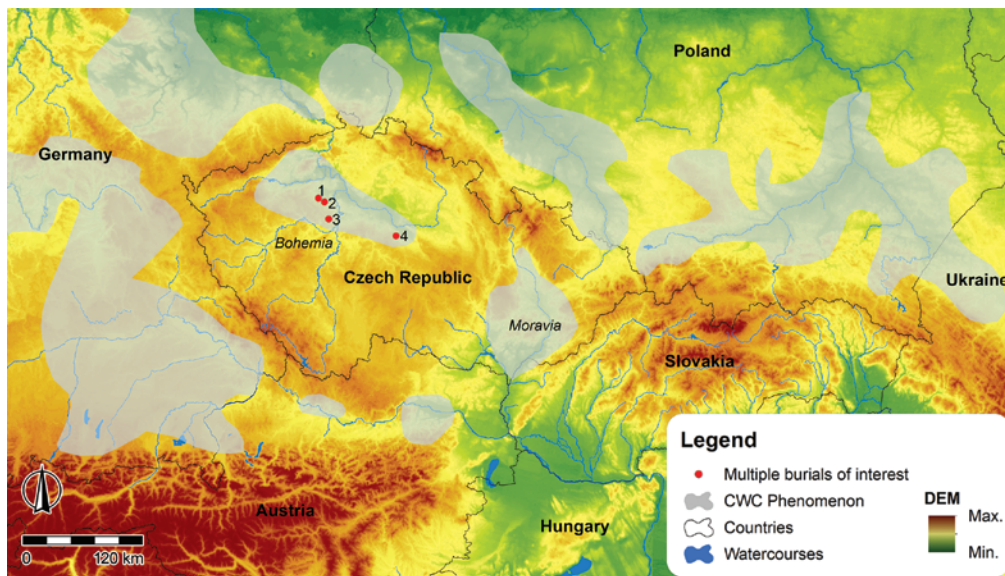
The archaeogenetic data, such as that from the Corded Ware funerary site at Eulau (Meyer et al. 2009; Haak et al. 2008) and the Globular Amphora communal grave at Koszyce (Schroeder et al. 2019) provide complex genetic evidence of family and community kinship and biological relations. However, a revision of some of the earlier discoveries of Corded Ware collective burials may also provide important data for the discussion (Fig. 1).

## 2. Corded Ware multiple burials

The burial rites of Corded Ware culture are generally focused on the symbolism of individual burials. The overall structure of the entire Corded Ware funerary ritual is also derived from the manifestation of personal identity and gendered social categories. The basic rules for the deposition of the dead and burial assemblages (i.e. Buchvaldek 1967; Turek 1987; Šebela 1993) were apparently also applied to multiple burials. Graves in which the remains of more than one individual were buried account for less than 10% of all burial units in the context of the Czech Corded Ware culture group (Turek 1987, 17; 1990). In the Moravian group, it is less than 2% according to J. Peška's (2013, 122) estimate and 3–5% as presented by J. Kolář (2018, 70). It is evident that the habit of creating multiple burial contexts was variable in frequency across regional groups of Central European Corded Ware culture, and particular sites may also be specific in this respect. Examples include the numerous multiple burials at the Żerniki Górne site (Cracow District) in Lesser Poland (Włodarczak 2006, Table 18), burial sites at Taubertahl in southwestern Germany (Dresely 2004), and burials with signs of violent death from Eulau in Central Germany (Haak et al. 2008; Meyer et al. 2009).

Multiple burials can be categorised as double burials containing two inhumations. These can be further divided according to the form of the body deposition into two basic categories, A – burials with bodies laid side by side and B – antipode burials.

A – Side-by-side burials most often take the form of two subadult individuals or an adult person and a child. Examples include the burial of an adult individual in the specifically female position with a child (infans II) in Grave 21/1965 in Vikletice (Buchvaldek, Koutecký 1970, Abb. 127). Furthermore, there



**Fig. 1.** The distribution of the Corded Ware phenomenon in Central Europe and the sites presented in this study. 1 – Slaný, 2 – Třebusice, 3 – Chrástany, 4 – Bylany. Graphic by J. Bartík, J. Turek.

**Obr. 1.** Mapa rozšíření fenoménu kultury se šňůrovou keramikou ve střední Evropě a lokality zmíněné v této studii. 1 – Slaný, 2 – Třebusice, 3 – Chrástany, 4 – Bylany. Grafické zpracování J. Bartík, J. Turek.

was a burial in the female position with a new-born in a grave in Blšany (Hnízdová, Šimůnek 1955). A similar example can be found in Grave 18 at Tauberbischofsheim-Dittigheim in Baden-Württemberg, where the remains of a young and an older child were buried together with a woman about thirty years old in a side-by-side position (Dresely 1992, 159, Abb. 1). Side by side burials of children also occur, either lying face to face on the left and right sides, as at Żerniki Górne 1 (Cracow District) in Lesser Poland, Grave 64 (Włodarczak 2006, Plate LXXXVIII). A similar situation was recorded in Grave 6-0090 and in the western half of Grave 6-0093 (here parallel, but with the heads oriented in opposite directions) in Eulau (Haak et al. 2008, Fig. 1).

B – Antipode burials are known from several sites in Bohemia, central Germany and Lesser Poland. In Moravia, they are still unknown (Peška 2013, 122). In the following table (Tab. 1), I compare the age and gender information on the burial contexts containing two individuals buried in a very specific antipode position.

### 3. Regional-specific multiple burials in the Kladno–Slaný territory

As previously mentioned, the antipode arrangement is characteristic of the multiple burials of the Czech group of Corded Ware Culture. In addition to antipode burials of two individuals, multiple antipode burials have been repeatedly recorded. The first discovered burial of this type was a burial pit with three inhumations (Fig. 2) from Bylany near Český Brod (Pič 1899). According to the gender characteristics of the placement of the remains in the grave, this collective burial can probably be interpreted as the burial of two men and a woman or three men.

Two individuals were buried on the right side with their heads to the west, one of them possibly a subadult. The third skeleton was placed antipodal to them and has a gender-ambiguous position, as the male is placed on the right side, but due to the antipode placement, his head is oriented towards the east. The funerary equipment of this individual, however, is more female-gendered: an ovoid jug and an ornamental set of perforated animal teeth.

The torso of the grave with three skeletons on the right side, head to the west, was discovered in 1957 in Obrnice (Most District, Koutecký, Muška 1979, Fig. 10). According to the position of the deceased, they should be male individuals. It should be noted that one of the buried had his face turned to the north, i.e. in the opposite view to the other two buried individuals. A similar communal burial with four inhumations (one of which was later inserted into the original grave pit) has been discovered in Moravia, at Určice in the district of Prostějov (Čižmář, Šmíd 1996, Grave No. 12).

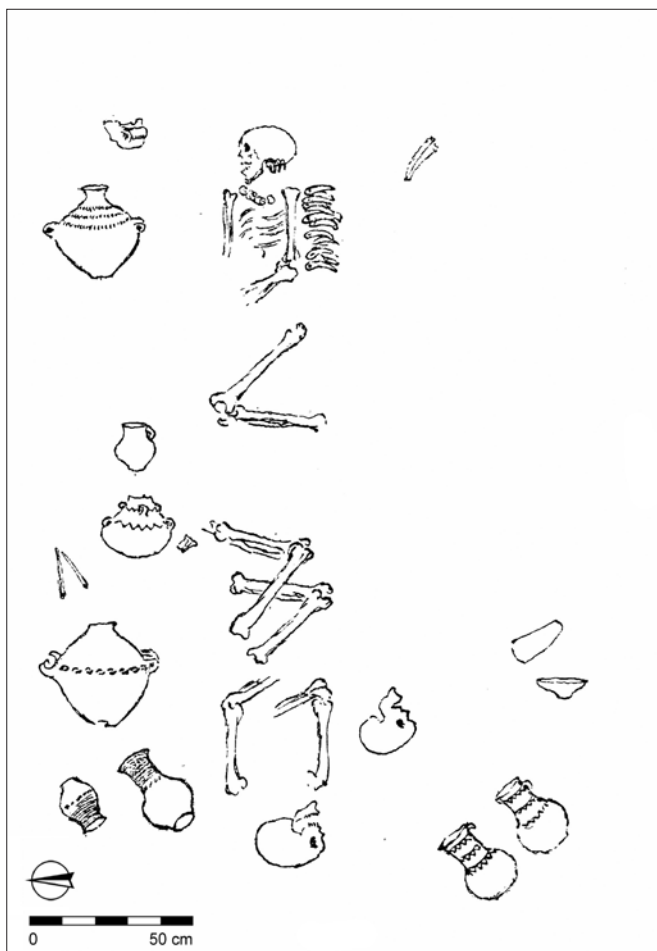
#### 3.1 Slaný biritual multiple burial

A remarkable phenomenon is Grave 1/95 at Slaný (Fig. 3–5), which was discovered by the author during the rescue excavation of the motorway bypass at Slaný (Turek 2001). The bottom of the burial pit had been sunk only about 25 cm into the clay subsoil and covered by 30–40 cm of plough zone. The burial chamber was rectangularly shaped, 3.4 m long and 1.6 m wide. The space inside the grave was divided into two halves; the western half with two inhumation burials and the eastern half containing the collective cremation burial. In between, a child’s inhumation burial was placed next to the wall of the grave pit. Twenty-four pots were found in the grave, most of them accumulated along

Site	Grave No.	Individual I (approximate age in brackets)	Individual II (approximate age in brackets)
Eulau	99 –north	man (40–60) right side	woman (35–50) left side
Eulau	99 –south	child (4–5) right side	child (8–9) left side
Vikletice	2/1964	juvenile man? right side	adult woman? left side
Vikletice	47/1964	child (4–6) right side	woman? (30–40) left side
Vikletice	56/1964	man? (40–50) right side	woman? (30–40) left side
Vikletice	110/1963	man? (20–30) right side	child female? (4–5) left side
Vikletice	111/1963	man? (30–40) position?	child (4–5) position?
Vikletice	143/1963	child (2–3) right side	child (2–3) position?
Vikletice	155/1963	man? (16) right side	woman? (14–15) left side
Żerniki Górne	78	woman? adult right side	woman juvenile left side
Żerniki Górne	130	woman young adult left side	child (infans II) right side

**Tab. 1.** The age/gender category (based on the: body position and burial assemblage, notwithstanding the absence of anthropological assessment) of the deceased individuals in the double graves with antipode-arranged burials from the aforementioned areas.

**Tab. 1.** Věková/genderová kategorie (na základě: polohy těla a pohřební výbavy, bez ohledu na absenci antropologického posouzení) zemřelých jedinců ve dvojhrubech s antipodicky uspořádanými pohřby z výše uvedených oblastí.



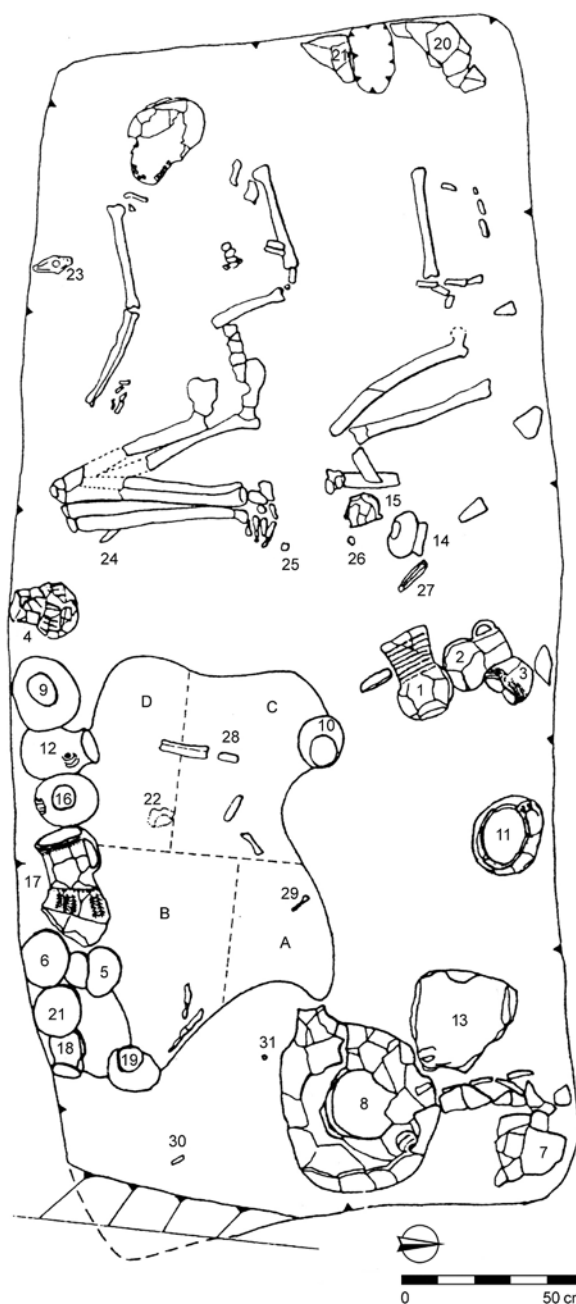
**Fig. 2.** Bylany, Kolín District. Corded Ware multiple burial. After Píč 1899.  
**Obr. 2.** Bylany, okr. Kolín. Vícenásobný pohřeb z období kultury se šňůrovou keramikou. Podle Píč 1899.

the eastern part of the southern wall, adjacent to the pile of cremated human remains.

The majority of the pottery finds, as well as the human remains, appeared to be found in situ, and were remarkably intact. The only parts of the grave pit that were disturbed were those on the northwest and southeast corners; the latter was slightly damaged by a water-pipe trench, but the human remains and the grave were not disturbed. The area of the northwest corner was probably disturbed by earlier ploughing, which destroyed the skull and left arm of one of the skeletons. Another possible disturbance might have been rodent activity, suggested by dislocated fragments of pottery scattered along the western wall. According to anthropological examination, the person buried next to the southern wall of the grave pit was probably a man aged 30–40 (Černý 1995). The position of this individual, lying on the right side of the body with the head orientated to the west, may in gender terms also support the interpretation of the anthropological estimation of the sex. The body was buried without any pottery and the only artefacts that could be associated with this individual are a faceted battle-axe placed in front of its chest, a flint knife found under the right shin just below the knee and a small flint scraper behind its feet. This burial thus belongs to the ‘aceramic’ group of burials in the male position that are usually accompanied by a battle-axe, axe or a flint implement. The body was buried in a contracted position, on the right side with the arms almost in position A (right arm stretched along the body; left arm bent at the elbow and crossing the body).

In the case of the second inhumation, it was only possible to infer the gender category of the individual from the burial position and assemblage of the artefacts; burial on the right side with the head orientated to the west, as well as the massive flint knife found next to the knees, suggests the skeleton was a second male. This body also appears to have been buried in a contracted position but because of plough damage to the skull and the left arm, it is difficult to reconstruct the original position of the arms; positions A, B and C are all possible. Fragments of a damaged pottery bowl were also found in this area, next to the western wall of the grave.

Two miniature cups were found next to the legs of the northern inhumation. It is difficult to determine whether these two cups belong to this adult inhumation, or if they were connected with the neighbouring context of the child burial. It is also



**Fig. 3.** Slaný, Kladno District. Corded Ware bi-ritual multiple burial. After Turek 2001.  
**Obr. 3.** Slaný, okr. Kladno. Birituální vícenásobný pohřeb z období kultury se šňůrovou keramikou. Podle Turek 2001.



Fig. 4. Slaný, Kladno District. Grave 1/95. Corded Ware bi-ritual multiple burial, view from the East. Photo by J. Turek.

Obr. 4. Slaný, okr. Kladno. Hrob 1/95. Birituální vícenásobný pohřeb z období kultury se šňůrovou keramikou, pohled od východu. Foto J. Turek.



Fig. 5. Slaný, Kladno District. Grave 1/95. Cremation deposit, view from the North. Photo by J. Turek.

Obr. 5. Slaný, okr. Kladno. Hrob 1/95. Birituální vícenásobný pohřeb z období kultury se šňůrovou keramikou, pohled od severu. Foto J. Turek.

debatable whether or not the massive flint knife and another tiny flint flake belonged to the inhumation of the adult person, or to the sub-adult burial (the confusion may arise from the secondary reopening of the grave).

From the child inhumation, only fragments of one long bone found next to a cluster of three pots were found; a beaker with the decoration of a cord impression on the neck, a jug, and a small amphora vessel with two handles and corded decoration were also found. This burial may provide evidence of the reopening and secondary use of this burial chamber; the missing feet of the neighbouring inhumation may also have resulted from such a reopening.

In the northeast corner of the grave were four vessels: two jugs (see Fig. 3: 11, 13), a large amphora (Fig. 3: 8) and a fragment of another amphora (Fig. 3: 7). It is probable that these vessels were an assemblage accompanying the cremation

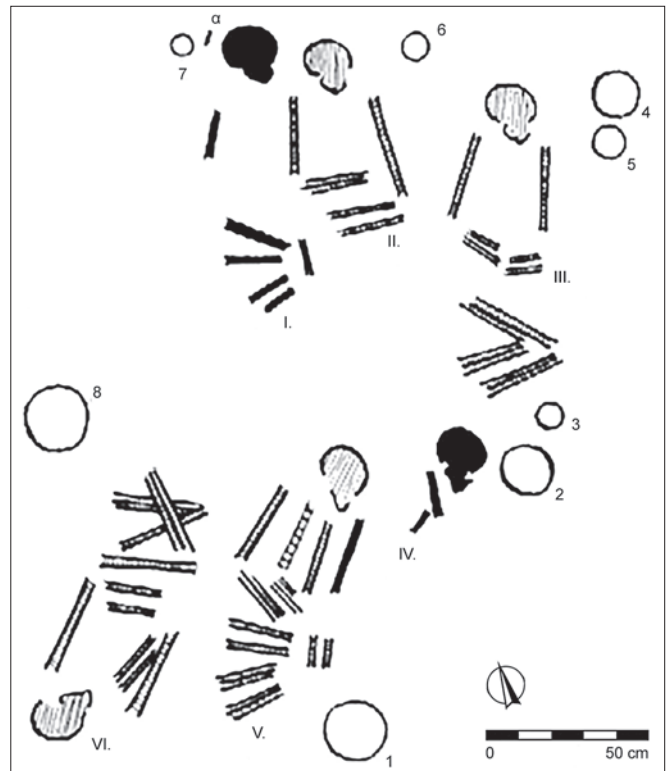


Fig. 6. Třebusice, Kladno District. Corded Ware multiple burial. After Knor 1938.

Obr. 6. Třebusice, okr. Kladno. Vícenásobný pohřeb z období kultury se šňůrovou keramikou. Podle Knor 1938.

burial in the southeast quadrant of the grave. The cremation burial was spread over an area of 1.0 × 0.9 m. The layer of cremated human remains was up to 15 cm thick. The cremation likely took place in situ, on the bottom of the burial pit. There are no visible traces of burning in the natural subsoil, but the taphonomy of remains, including some large fragments of insufficiently burned long bones, strongly support such an interpretation. The remains were not placed in any vessel and the pottery vessels located in a line along the southern wall of the grave were probably placed in the grave just after the cremation was completed. The appearance of some female gender-specific artefacts, such as two ovoid pots (Fig. 3: 6, 21) or shell disc (Fig. 3: 31) suggests the presence of women in the cremation burial. According to anthropological analysis (Bekvalac, Leach 1995), it is possible to establish a minimum number of people buried within this multiple cremation. A minimum number of four individuals were evident in the bone assemblage. The presence of both adult and sub-adult bones was noted, as were cremated bones of sheep or goats. The total 8.245 g weight of bone fragments recovered over 1 mm in size could suggest an even larger number of individuals were cremated. The morphology of the fragments suggests that the bodies were not defleshed before cremation. Within the area of the deposit, some spatial clustering, according to skeletal parts, was indicated. The location of cranial bones in the eastern part of the deposit and lower limbs in the western part suggest the position of the bodies on the cremation pyre. It is presumed that all the human bodies were cremated together on the same funerary pyre. Within the cremation deposit, a non-diagnostic flint flake (see Fig. 3: 29) and possibly a fragment of a small cup (Fig. 3: 22) were found. The cup's colouration and changed material structure suggests that they might have been inside the funeral pyre during the cremation, as part of the 'rite of passage'.

In this case, the inhumation method of burial was exclusively used in the Bohemian group of the Corded Ware culture. There was no evidence of cremations in the Bohemian group until this 1995 excavation at Slaný. Over 20 graves with evidence of cremation burial were recorded within the neighbouring Moravian group of Corded Ware Culture (Peška 2004, 191–205; 2013, 119–122; Kolář 2018, 70, Table 6).

We have only indirect indications for the gender interpretation of the individuals buried in the cremation deposit (see Bekvalac, Leach 1995) in the Slaný grave, although the combination of gender-significant artefacts and the orientation of the cremated remains suggest these individuals might have been women. Despite the unusual combination of inhumation and cremation burials in one funerary context, Grave 1/95 is similar to other multiple burials with an antipode arrangement in the region, such as at Třebusice.

### 3.2 Třebusice multiple burial

In 1921, Josef Antonín Jíra and Alois Ševčík (Knor 1938) excavated a small Corded Ware cemetery including a multiple burial at Třebusice in the district of Kladno (Stocký 1926, 175). The burial pit with an unknown shape contained five inhumations in the ‘female’ (burials I.–V.) position and one in the ‘male’ (burial VI.) position (Fig. 6). Based on unclear photographs, it appears that burials IV. and V. were added later, as they seem to be resting on the dark fill of the grave, slightly higher than the rest of the burials. In this case, we can assume that female and maybe child burials were accompanying the burial of a ‘big man’. Unfortunately, without genetic data, it is difficult to interpret this accumulation of burials and reconstruct their possible family relationship.

### 3.3 Chrášťany multiple burial

Another grave with one inhumation in the ‘male’ position and two inhumations (one adult and one sub-adult person) in ‘female’ positions was excavated at Chrášťany (Fig. 7) in the district of Prague-West (Vávra 1981, 73–79). In this case, the gendered position and burial assemblage again suggest there were two women (?), one of whom (burial 2) was an individual aged 14–16 years old and burial 1 was a young adult man (?) buried in

the grave. Burial 3 was buried in the female position although the age and sex were impossible to identify.

## 4. Age and gender composition of multiple burials, the question of family and kinship

It appears that the multiple burials described in the account above represent a particular variety of funerary practices (ritual) rather than evidence of a specific event (conflict, disease etc). We should also bear in mind that there was the possibility of socially induced sacrifice within family groups, similar to the ritual sacrifice of widows in India. The archaeological data, together with evidence of violent causes of death, such as those from the funerary site at Eulau (Haak et al. 2008; Meyer et al. 2009) may also contribute to the explanation of the meaning of Corded Ware multiple burials. Four closely grouped multiple burials excavated at Eulau (Saxony-Anhalt) are dated to the later phase of the Corded Ware culture (between 2675 and 2495 cal BC). Two of the graves contained four individuals, one grave held three bodies and the last contained the remains of two individuals (see the table above). The find circumstances along with no evidence of the secondary opening of graves suggest they were all buried during one funerary event. To prove genetic relationships for some of the individuals buried in the four multiple graves, an analysis of mitochondrial and nuclear DNA was carried out. The analysis contributed to the identification of a nuclear family and a likely pair of siblings (Haak et al. 2008). On the other hand, we should mention Grave 6-0098, where genetically examined subadult siblings were buried with a woman who was not biologically related to them. This suggests that the prehistoric families were structured not only by biological relations, but social relationships might have been similarly important. Combined with the archaeological and isotopic evidence, there is almost no doubt that these biologically and socially related people lived and died at the same time. A discussion has been developed about the circumstances of the violent deaths of some of the people buried here (Meyer et al. 2009). As they were all ritually buried and the family bonds were respected, it is likely that if there was an external aggression, such as an attack by an enemy community, some relatives/kin survived and organised the funeral. On the other hand, there could have also been a definite possibility of internal community violence and some of the buried people (children?) might have been sacrificed.

A further example of people who perhaps died in a raid was identified in the Globular Amphora Culture collective burial at Koszyce in Little Poland, which contained the skeletons of fifteen individuals. There were four nuclear families in the grave, which for the most part are represented by mothers and their children (Schroeder et al. 2019). Schroeder et al. summarised the results of the archaeogenetic analysis as follows: ‘*Closely related kin were buried next to each other: a mother was buried cradling her child, and siblings were placed side by side. Evidently, these individuals were buried by people who knew them well and who carefully placed them in the grave according to familial relationships. For example, individual 14, the oldest individual in the grave, was buried close to her two sons (individuals 5 and 15), whereas individual 8, a 30–35-y-old woman, was buried with her teenage daughter (individual 9) and 5-y-old son (individual 13). Using genome-wide patterns of IBS, we were also able to reconstruct more complex relationships: individuals 5, 10, 11, and 15 all appear to be brothers, and yet they do not have the same mother (individual 14 is the mother of individuals 5 and 15, but not 10 and 11), suggesting that they might be half-brothers. However, all four of them share the same mitochondrial DNA haplotype, suggesting that their mothers might also have been related. Interestingly, the older males/fathers*

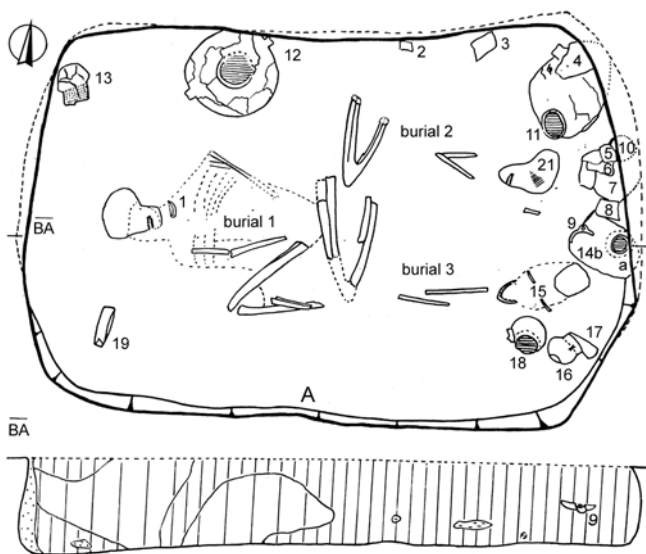


Fig. 7. Chrášťany, Prague-West District, Corded Ware multiple burial. After Vávra 1981.

Obr. 7. Chrášťany, okr. Praha-západ. Vícenásobný pohřeb z období kultury se šňůrovou keramikou. Podle Vávra 1981.

are mostly missing from the grave, suggesting that it might have been them who buried their kin. The only father present in the grave is individual 10, whose partner and son are placed together opposite him in the grave. In addition, there is a young boy (individual 7), aged 2–2.5 y, whose parents are not in the grave, but he is placed next to other individuals to whom he is closely related through various second degree relationships. Finally, there is individual 3, an adult female, who does not seem to be genetically related to anyone in the group. However, her position in the grave close to individual 4, a young man, suggests that she may have been as close to him in life as she was in death.' (Schroeder et al. 2019, 3).

As in the case of Eulau, we can see the relationship of individuals not related biologically but being buried in a close spatial 'intimate' position in the collective burial. The case of the Koszyce communal grave suggests that besides the nuclear family, the further level of kinship played an important role in the structuring of Eneolithic society.

Rather looser relationships in the formation of family and kinship ties are also suggested by the genetic analyses of 35 individuals buried about 3700 BC at Hazleton North (near Cheltenham, Cotswolds, England) also known as Hazleton long barrows (Fowler et al. 2021). Archaeogenetic analysis of the buried individuals suggests this chambered tomb contained the remains of people from five successive generations. The distribution of the remains into individual burial chambers was organised according to the biological relationship with the mothers. The 'stepsons' seem to have been 'adopted' into the family line by the men whose mother was buried in the tomb. However, their biological fathers were not buried there. The mother of such an adopted individual also had children with a man from a different family line. The other eight individuals buried there were not biologically part of the family at all, so the biological relationship was not the only criterion for burial in the common tomb. Three of these 'foreign' individuals were female, and possibly their male partner was buried in the tomb. However, either they had no children together or these women had daughters who reached adulthood and married outside their natal family so were buried elsewhere. It appears that although patrilocality is more likely to be assumed in the life of Neolithic communities, mothers played an important family-identifying role in the burial chambers of the Hazleton North monument.

The assumption of the nuclear family based on the Corded Ware example from Eulau is challenged by the genetic analysis of the members of the community represented at the Hazleton North monument. The case of one male individual who had children with four different women is very much against the idea of the nuclear family. This indicates that we are rather dealing with evidence of maternal sub-lineages within a patrilineal system.

## 5. Conclusion

As inspiring as the Hazleton North collective tomb example is, it is worth remembering the time gap of over a millennium compared to later examples from the Corded Ware culture on the continent. It may well be that by around the middle of the 3rd millennium BC, European society was already structured somewhat differently from the early farming communities of the British Isles. Based on the currently available genetic data, it is difficult to make any definite interpretations. The answers to these questions may be provided by the developing archaeogenetic research on burial sites, and it can be assumed that multiple burials will play a significant role in this analysis.

Observations of gender and age relationships in the multiple burials of the Corded Ware culture undoubtedly suggest kinship and family ties between partners as well as between parents and

children. Entirely new findings of aDNA analyses suggest that our considerations may be moving in the right direction, but kinship and family structures in European Neolithic and Eneolithic societies were probably considerably more complex and regionally diversified. Multiple burials are undoubtedly an essential source of knowledge for addressing such questions. Therefore, there is no alternative but to continue the studies we have begun.

## Acknowledgement

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## Resumé

Kolektivní vícenásobné pohřební kontexty jsou výjimečným, ale přesto typickým rysem pohřebního chování komunit se šňůrovou keramikou ve střední Evropě. V tomto příspěvku jsem se zaměřil na některé aspekty vícenásobných pohřbů z období šňůrové keramiky v Čechách a přilehlých oblastech střední Evropy. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována výskytu pohřbů v antipodické poloze, s důrazem na otázky věku, pohlaví a případných příbuzenských vztahů jedinců v těchto hrobech. Zcela výjimečným příkladem vícenásobného pohřbu je birituální hrob 1/95 ve Slaném (okr. Kladno) ve středních Čechách. Hrob obsahoval pohřby minimálně sedmi jedinců (muži, ženy a děti), z nichž čtyři byli zpopelněni. Přesto, že bylo použito výjimečného kremačního způsobu pohřbu, se zdá, že hrob ze Slaného zapadá do jasně definovaného typu šňůrových kolektivních pohřbů známých především z Čech, jako např. Třebusice (okr. Kladno), Bylany (okr. Kolín), Chráštan (okr. Praha–západ). Obdobné, ale ne stejné kolektivní pohřby jsou známy z Obrnic (okr. Most) nebo např. z Určic (okr. Prostějov) na Moravě či ze Svaté, lokalita 20 (hrob 43) v Malopolsku. Podobné příklady jsou známy také ze Saska-Anhaltska v případě kolektivního pohřbu v Eulau.

Zdá se, že tyto komunitní pohřby představují spíše specifický druh pohřebních praktik (rituálu), než výsledek nějaké konkrétní události (např. smrtící útok, smrtelná choroba). Nová archeogenetická data mohou vnést více světla do složité problematiky odrazu příbuzenských vztahů, např. nukleární rodiny, v pohřebním ritu, stejně jako objasnit význam kolektivní pohřební události v životě tehdejší společnosti. Některé případy (Eulau) naznačují, že by kolektivní vícenásobné pohřby mohly být důsledkem nějakého násilí (střetu nebo oběti), jiné mohly být způsobeny nemocí nebo zvláštním postavením konkrétního jedince nebo i více členů komunity.

Pozorování kontextuálních vztahů mezi genderovými a věkovými kategoriemi u vícečetných pohřbů z období kultury se šňůrovou keramikou nepochybně naznačuje příbuzenské a rodinné vazby mezi partnery, ale také mezi rodiči a dětmi. Zcela nové poznatky z archeogenetických analýz naznačují, že naše úvahy se možná ubírají správným směrem, ale příbuzenské a rodinné struktury v evropských neolitických a eneolitických společnostech byly pravděpodobně podstatně složitější a regionálně diverzifikovanější. Vícenásobné pohřby jsou pro řešení těchto otázek nepochybně velmi důležitým zdrojem poznatků. Nezbyvá tedy než pokračovat v započatých studiích.

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