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A RICH GRAVE WITH AN AS-COPPER PECTORAL FROM THE LATE BADEN CULTURE IN BOHEMIA

Abstract. – The a little more than 100 years anniversary of the original publication of the grave at Velvary,¹ where a crescent-shaped metal necklace was mentioned for the first time provokes to summarize both the older and esp. the more recent knowledge concerning this As-copper pectoral (Figs. 2:26; 3 a, b), which – contrary to the opinion of J. Taylor² – seems to represent the up-to-now oldest specimen of its kind in the crescent (metal, amber) collar fashion, flourishing in the N and W Europe later, during the Beaker-period and in the Early Bronze Age.

THE GRAVE FROM VELVARY: ITS INVENTORY

On the decline of the 19th century (4. IX. 1889), an unusually rich grave was uncovered at Velvary (district of Kladno, cad. no. 568) in Central Bohemia; the grave and its inventory were immediately published by J. Smolík.³

The large cist grave (3, 13/3,22 x 2,2 m), constructed of five heavy sandstone blocks (outside rough, inside artificially flat) and only shallow (0,6 m) sunken, was oriented in the SWNE direction, with a free entrance (0,5 m) in the E corner. One coarse stone, in the shape approximately corresponding with this entrance, lay isolated inside but near the closed S-corner. (Fig. 1.)

The grave-goods, which are kept in the National Museum, Prague, contain: 4 vessels (Fig. 2:22–25), 2 broken ansa lunata handles (Fig. 2:13), 1 stone celt (serpentine ? – Fig. 2:14), 355 pearls and tubes made of white or reddish limestone and bone (Fig. 2:28, 29), 7 pendants of *Cardium tuberculatum* Linné

¹ Smolík, 1890

² Taylor, 1980, 39

³ Smolík, 1890

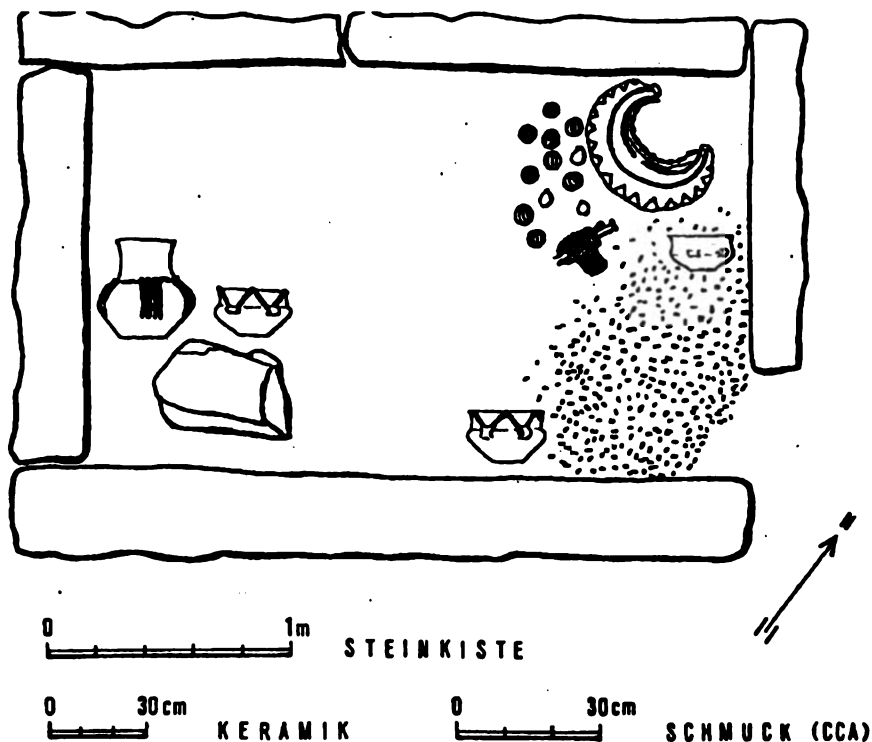


Fig. 1 Velvary (Bohemia). A stone cist grave, the Proto-Rivnáč/Late Baden phase (ca 3.000 B. C.): an ideal reconstruction.

(Fig. 2:15–21). Especially remarkable are numerous metal objects: 8 barrel-shaped beads (Fig. 2:27) with bone-inlays and with relicts of a rough fibre,⁴ 2 small narrow spirals, 3 narrow tubes, 14 shell-shaped pendants (9 twice perforated and decorated by beaten ornaments, 2 once bored and undecorated, 3 with tunnelshaped ends: Fig. 2:3–12), 2 high spiral bracelets (Fig. 2:1,2) and a crescent-shaped necklace, decorated with ribs and beaten ornaments (Figs. 2:26; 3 a, b). The grave and its inventory were republished by J. Schráníl,⁵ recently by V. Moucha⁶ and by R. W. Ehrich - E. Plesová-Štiková.⁷

⁴ now lost: hemp ? ; Smolík, 1890, 214

⁵ Schráníl, 1924; 1928

⁶ Moucha, 1960

⁷ Ehrich - Plesová-Štiková, 1968, 146 ff., 152, 157, 174, 176, 178 ff., 187

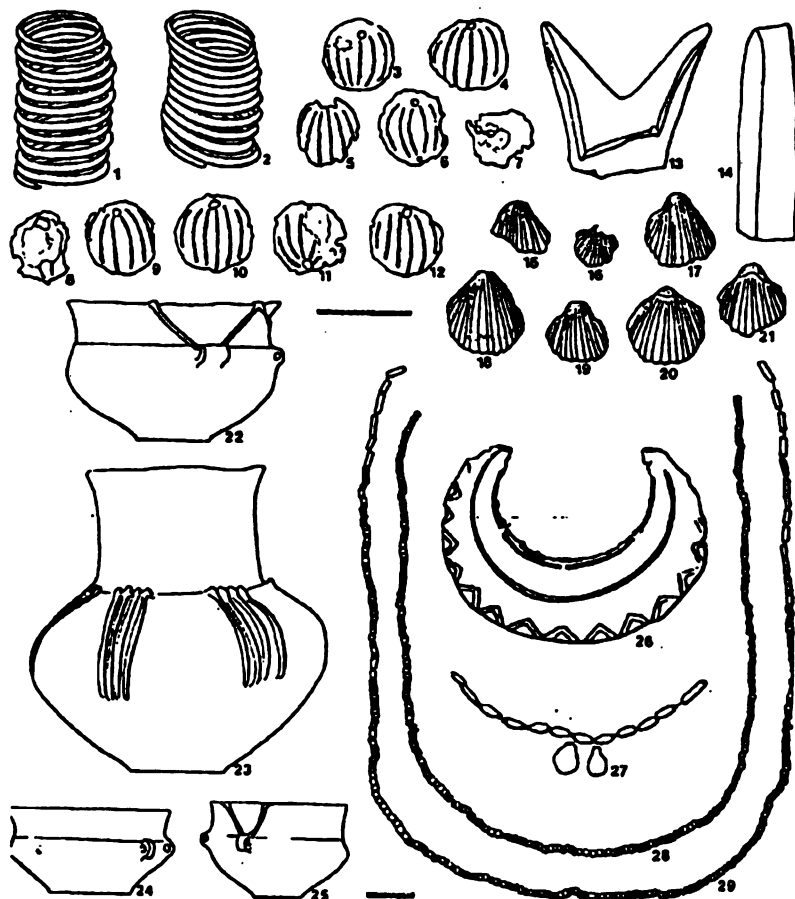


Fig. 2 Velvary (Bohemia). Pottery (13, 22–25), copper (1–12, 26, 27) and non-copper (shells, 15–21; pearls and tubes of limestone and bone, dispersed at the E corner, comp. Fig. 1, 28–29) ornaments, stone celt (14) from the grave.

THE DECEASED AND THE ARRANGEMENT OF MORTUARY GIFTS

The original sketch of the position of the grave-goods inside the cist-grave is lost: our ideal reconstruction follows the verbal description published by J. Smolík⁸ and J. Schráníl⁹ to whom this sketch was still known at that time. There were two distinct accumulations in the grave (Fig. 1):

⁸ Smolík, 1890

⁹ Schráníl, 1924

1. In the S part a bowl and an amphora were deposited, the latter of which contained half-burnt bones, which are lost.

2. The other and richest objects were found in the NE part of the grave. These mortuary gifts included 2 bowls, further both metal and non-metal ornaments, the necklace having been situated close to the N corner, a large amount of limestone and bone pearls and tubes were dispersed in the SEE part (near the entrance and eastwards from the »main« burial);¹⁰ their distribution indicated a decorated, possibly shirt-like robe, – this was also the opinion expressed by J. Smolík. According to the original description, there ought to be only some rotten bones seemingly belonging to two individuals on the bottom of the NE part. They were scattered without any possibility of recognizing the anatomic order properly. Nevertheless, two metal bracelets crossing each other, one of them still containing ulna and radius,¹¹ point to the »D- or E-keeping« of arms, and the arrangement of the grave-gifts indicates an approximately N-S/NW-SE orientation of the deceased, with the head to the N/NW. Presently, only 2 radii and an ulna are kept in the National Museum (2 vertebrae, mentioned by J. Schráníl, are missing),¹² which according to a personal communication kindly given by J. Stloukal (National Museum, Prague) belong to a very gracile human individual, most probably to a woman. Almost without any doubt, it was this lady, who was luxuriously dressed in the decorated robe and equipped with metal ornaments – bracelets, a necklace and others.

HISTORY OF CULTURAL EVALUATION AND PRESENT CORRECT CULTURAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL DATA: PROTO-RIVNÁČ (LATE BADEN) GROUP, ± 3.000 B. C.

In this publication, J. Smolík¹³ classified the grave from Velvary as belonging to the Hallstatt period. Soon after that, K. Buchtela¹⁴ was approximately correct in his dating the grave to the "Übergangsperiode", what presently coincides with the Eneolithic (Chalcolithic, Copper Age) period between the Neolithic and the Early Bronze Ages. Possibly, under the influence of J. Schráníl¹⁵ the tradition of dating the grave to the earlier phase of the Únetice culture (Early Bronze Age) had been started: this opinion was modified by the unusually rich metal objects, though the pottery was mostly classified as having earlier ("Nordic", "Nosswitz", "Endneolithic" = Eneolithic) features.¹⁶ At that time, the most complex characteristic was already given by

¹⁰ Schráníl, 1924

¹¹ Smolík, 1890, P1. XI: 8

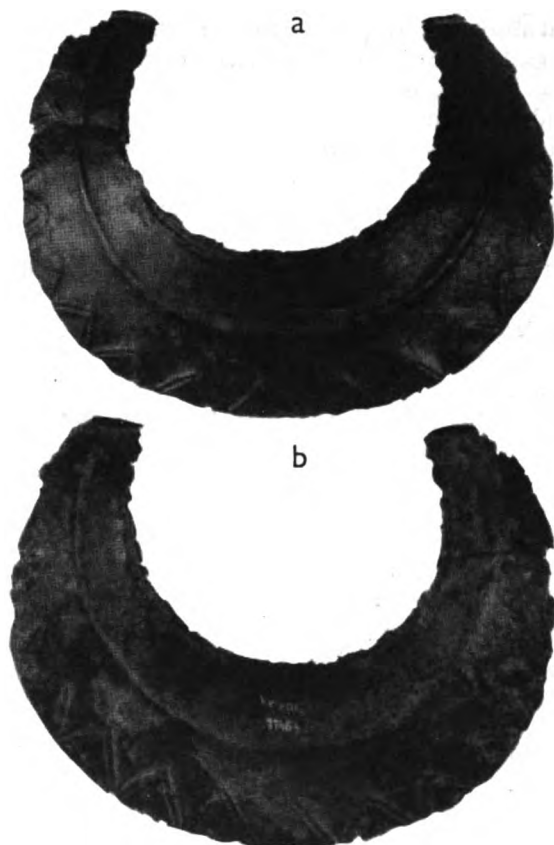
¹² Schráníl 1924, 43

¹³ Smolík, 1890

¹⁴ Buchtela, 1899, s. also Schráníl 1924

¹⁵ Schráníl, 1928, 60, 65, f., 93, 95

¹⁶ Stocky, 1928, 8 F.; Sprockhoff, 1939, 4; Kleemann, 1953, 139 f.; Mandera 1953, 192 f.



*Fig. 3 Velvary (Bohemia). The As-copper pectoral from the grave (a, upper side; b, back side).
Maximum length 27 cm.*

J. E. Forssander.¹⁷ According to him the pottery from the grave belongs to the young "Nosswitz" culture, the metal objects show Hungarian features ("Buckeltechnik"), and the necklace resembles the silver specimen from Remedellian Villafranca; also the general relative chronology given by J. E. Forssander is almost precise (middle of the Passage graves/period of the Corded Ware culture expansion). The correct dating and the proper socio-cultural significance of the grave from Velvary was published in Czech by J. Böhm¹⁸ who stressed the exceptional status of this unique case of the deceased.

¹⁷ Forssander, 1936, 48 f.

¹⁸ Böhm, 1941, 207 f.

Since the late 50s, a better knowledge of the cultural characteristics and of the relative and absolute chronology of the Eneolithic period in Bohemia and in Central Europe has been acquired. M. Zápotocky¹⁹ quoted the metal objects from the grave at Velvary as belonging to the Younger Eneolithic period, E. F. Neustupny²⁰ and in details V. Moucha²¹ were the first who stated the proper dating of the grave from Velvary to the oldest formation of the Rivnáč culture of the Younger Eneolithic. V. Moucha characterized the close cultural connections esp. of the amphora and of a part of the small copper and non-copper ornaments with the Baden culture, except the bracelets, the shell-like pendants and the unique necklace, the beaten decoration of the two latter being also commonly typical for the SE-oriented Baden culture. Later,²² the grave from Velvary and its inventory were classified as one of the classical localities of the Proto-Rivnáč phase in Bohemia, this being based on local modification of the Baden-Úny SE component, and as the necklace proper is concerned, the opinions published by R. Hachmann²³ he rejected connections of the necklace from Velvary with those of Bodenwerder type, as well as with the type of Oegeln of the Early Bronze Age (s. also Bohm and J. E. Forssander who wrote about the typological relationship of the Bohemian pectoral with the silver necklace from the grave at Villafranca near Verona and, eventually, with the golden necklace from the hoard at Cabeceiras do Basto, Portugal).²⁴ More recently, H. Müller-Karpe²⁵ included the necklace from Velvary in the Baden culture.

Presently, the dating of the Proto-Rivnáč phase with the unique grave from Velvary ranges c. from 2.500 to 2.400 b.c.²⁶ which in the Pearsons et al. calibration curve²⁷ represents period of 3.100/2.950–3.000/2.900 B.C. The Proto-Rivnáč phase is contemporary with the early features of the related SE-oriented horizon of Bošáca-Jeřišovice-Cham-Bernburg in Central Europe; in N-European development it corresponds with the period of MN III.

The grave from Velvary: its metal (As-copper) objects

The metal objects from the grave at Velvary have obviously never been analyzed properly, though A. Stocky²⁸ wrote: "... the cist grave from Velvary ... with rich bronze (not copper) inventory...", and J. E. Forssander²⁹ spoke about "zinnarmer Bronze".

¹⁹ Zápotocky, 1958

²⁰ Neustupny, 1959, 274, notes 80, 81

²¹ Moucha, 1960

²² Ehrich - Pleslová-Štiková, 1968, 146 f., 149 ff., 152, 157, 174, 176, 178 ff., 187

²³ Hachmann, 1954;

²⁴ Bohm 1935, 26, Pl. 7:13, 19; Forssander, 1936, 4 f.

²⁵ Müller-Karpe, 1974, Pl. 474:A, 207

²⁶ Buchvaldek - Pleslová-Štiková, 1988, 114 f., Fig. 2:c; 512

²⁷ Breung, 1987, 148 f.

²⁸ Stocky, 1928, 8

²⁹ Forssander, 1936, 48

Presently, thanks to the courtesy of Dr. J. Frána and Ing. A. Maštalka (Institute of Nuclear Physics, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Rež at Prague), a part of metal objects from the grave at Velvary were analysed by means of the roentgenfluorescent method (1. necklace, NM inv. no. 11.464) and by the neutron activation analysis (2. bracelet, inv. no. 11.466; shell-pendant, inv. no. 11.469; 4.–6. small objects, inv. no. 11.486: č. small spiral, 5. barrel-shaped bead, 6. tube).

Result of analysis:

	As	Pb	Ni	Ag	Sn	Sb	Fe	Cu			
1.	3.0	0.4	<0.2	<0.02	<0.1	<0.03	<0.2	base			
	As	Ag	Au	Br	Co	Mg	Na	Sb	Se	Te	Cu
2.	0.29	0.01	•	0.02		•	0.12	0.05	•		base
3.	1.0	0.01	•	0.01	•	•	0.61	0.03	•		base
4.	0.42	0.02	•	0.02			0.13	0.03	•		base
5.	0.34	0.02	•	0.07			0.18	0.02	•		base
6.	0.45	0.01	•	0.04	•	•	0.2	0.04	0.01	0.02	base

(values in %; • = ppm-traces)

Both methods stated a close similarity of copper, containing some impurities of Ag (0.01–0.02%), Sb (0.02–0.05%) and esp. of As (0.29–1.00%, necklace 3.00%); according to the NAA, ppm-traces of Se and Au are present. In the same NAA-laboratory, a.o. objects mostly dated in the TRB (unpublished), a crucible and an implement found in the TRB settlement at Makotrasý (Bohemia) were analysed by the above mentioned NAA-method, and checked also by the spectral quantitative analysis by Je. N. Černých in Moscow³⁰ the values obtained here are very close to the As-copper from Velvary, except the presence of Sn, Pb, Ni-traces being present in the copper objects from the grave at Velvary.

Regardless of the higher presence of As in the necklace-copper, (which is also significant for the crucible from makotrasý), the composition of copper both from Velvary and from Makotrasý is very similar to the groups 1.5 and 2, event. 10, stated by B. S. Ottaway,³¹ which according to her are typical for the Monsee-Altheim-Pfyn-Cortailod horizon, this but being – similarly as the TRB site at Makotrasý in Bohemia³² – ± 500 (B. C.) years older than the data-determination for the grave from Velvary. In the Circumalpine area, the above mentioned Ottaway's groups are, though quite rarely, present also later, in the Baden, Lüscherz and Corded Ware contexts³³ and this result corresponds with some un-

³⁰ Maštalka - Frána, 1985, 175 ff.

³¹ Ottaway, 1982, 118 f., 122.

³² Pleslová-Štiková, 1985, 120 ff.

³³ Ottaway, 1982, 122, Map 11

published NAA-analysis³⁴ carried out for some copper objects from the Moravian Bošáca group (locality Bánov).

Therefore, the kind of As-copper used for the necklace and for the other metal objects from the grave at Velvary is of the Central European, most probably of East Alpine origin, the tradition of which has been started as early as during the Early Eneolithic.³⁵

THE CRESCENT AS-COPPER NECKLACE FROM VELVARY: ITS CULTURAL CONNECTIONS AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Description of the necklace from Velvary: maxim. length 27 cm, ends wound into tubes, outer rim decorated with a double zigzag line consisting of beaten indentations, in the middle one longitudinal rib, at the inner rim two narrow and 3 x interrupted ribs with relicts of beaten dots at the outer side (Figs. 2:26; 3a, b).

The composition of copper used for the pectoral from Velvary corresponds to a local Central European product, and the same is valid for the beaten decoration;³⁶ the crescent-shaped necklace itself and its ribs were, however, unknown both here and in the Carpathian basin before.

Considering the general relationship of the grave from Velvary with the Late Baden culture, there exists possibly some similarity of the tube-ends and of the rib-ornament, represented on the copper necklace, with copper torques, found in Baden-Königshöhle, Loebersdorf and Lichtenwörth.³⁷ This might testify to a local transformation of these also socially very significant torques with a new pectoral idea coming into Central Europe (directly to Bohemia ?) from abroad. Various authors³⁸ expressed the opinion of lunula-shaped pectoral-fashion impulses originating in the Near East (Egypt, Mesopotamia), the idea of which might have spread westwards through the Mediterranean, stimulating thus the use of metal and amber crescent necklaces as the images on anthropomorphic stelae with engraved lunular pectoralia. In Egypt, the pectoralia – as attributes of such personalities as gods and kings, occur since the beginning of the Old Kingdom, esp. since the second half of the 3rd millennium B. C.³⁹

According to the present knowledge, it seems most probable that the expression of a high dignity, hidden in pectoralia and represented also in the necklace from Velvary, reached Central Europe via the Alps⁴⁰ from S/SW, and not by the intermediation of the Baden culture via the Carpathian basin, where the

³⁴ Frána-Maštálka, 1985.

³⁵ Pleslová-Štiková, 1977, 56 ff.

³⁶ Pleslová-Štiková, 1977, 56 ff.

³⁷ Müller-Karpe, 1974, Pl. 477: A2, B1, 2, C2-5, 7-8

³⁸ Kleemann, 1953; Ehrich - Pleslová-Štiková, 1968, 180; Müller-Karpe, 1974, 182

³⁹ Müller-Karpe, 1974, 84, 89, 451

⁴⁰ Wyss, 1989

crescent-shaped necklaces (and also large cists) are missing. Drawing the attention to a close and up-to-now unique parallel between the necklace from Velvary and the silver specimen from the grave at Villafranca near Verona,⁴¹ in the case of the latter the tube-ends and the ribs are but absent, the precise chronological comparison of both necklaces remained open: the "Remedello culture" is considered as being chronologically and culturally problematic, existing approximately before the Bell Beaker culture c. 2.250 b. c. (2.900/2.700 B.C.), but with some at present not very definable, though for the possible connections with Central Europe promising features related with the N-Transalpine (Bavarian) development of the Altheim and Cham groups.⁴² The same difficulties to date properly the possible representatives prior to the crescent-shaped necklace idea reflected in the unusually rich grave from Bohemian Velvary, concern also the anthropomorphic stelae with variously engraved necklaces,⁴³ the accurate dating of which in Italy and in Switzerland is, of course, questionable. The stelae from Italy, where the menhir no. 30 at Aosta has an elaborate pectoral, the zigzag motif of which is very close to the beaten decoration used on the copper necklace from Velvary, is considered as an appearance existing during the time c. 2.700–2.500 b.c. /3.400–3.100/2.950 B.C.⁴⁴.

The above mentioned hypothesis of the E/W Mediterranean (N. Italian ?) focus for the intermediation of crescent necklaces as attributes of social dignity of some high-ranked personalities, represented in Central Europe as early as in the Proto-Rivnáč phase, seems to be very probable. There exists, of course, some slight possibility to count with an influence from W-Europe via Middle Germany, with its stelae at Schafstädt, which H. Behrens⁴⁵ classified as belonging probably to the – chronologically slightly later – Corded Ware culture.

ЈЕДАН БОГАТ ГРОБНИ НАЛАЗ СА БАКАРНИМ ПЕКТОРАЛОМ КАСНИ БАДЕН У ЧЕШКОЈ

Резиме

Крајем XIX века откривена је веома богата биритуална камена гробница у месту Velvary у средњој Чешкој (Smolík 1890). Према данашњој идеалној реконструкцији (сл. 1), заснованој на тадашњем вербалном опису (Smolík 1890, Schráníl 1924) највише украса, и металних и неметалних, нађено је у северонистичном делу гробнице. У богате металне украсе спадају: 8 ваљкастих перли са коштаном интарзијом, 2 кратке, узане спирале, 3 уске цевчице, 14 шкољкастих привезака, што украшених што

⁴¹ Forssander, 1936, 44 ff., Fig 10:1

⁴² Bagolini - Fasani, 1982; Barfield, 1988; Müller-Karpe, 1974, 182 f.

⁴³ Müller-Karpe, 1974, 555 ff.

⁴⁴ Burroni - Mezzena 1988, 422 ff., Fig. 7

⁴⁵ Behrens, 1973, 222, 246, Fig. 91: C; Günther, 1991, 50

неукрашених, 2 високе спиралне гривне (сл. 2, 1–12, 27) и једна полумесечаста огрлица украшена ребрима и искуданим орнаментима (сл.2: 26; 3 а, б).

Према данашњим сазнањима, гробница и њена садржина (сл. 1–3) припадају proto-Rivnáč фази млађег чешког неолита (± 3000 п.н.е.). Према резултатима неутронске активације и рентгенофлуоресцентне анализе, метални украси припадају посебној Ас-бакар групи и можда су производи источноалпског металуршког центра, будући да је металургија у овој области свој процват доживела неких 500 година раније, у време Mondsee (Altheim-Pfup-Cortaillod) групе у раном неолиту.

Иако керамика (сл. 2:13, 22–25) припада југоисточном кругу каснобаденске културе, бакарна огрлица (сл. 2:26; 3 а, б), чини се, део је медитеранске традиције блискоисточног порекла, где пекторални украси представљају атрибуте божанстава и краљева. Стога је у неуобичајено богатој гробници из чешког места Velvary вероватно сахрањена нека особа високог ранга, можда жена, која је била раскошно одевена у украшену одежду и окружена многим металним и неметалним прилозима, укључујући и јединствену огрлицу од Ас-бакра.

Овај бакарни пекторални украс вероватно представља најстарији познати примерак те врсте полумесечасте (металне, филибарске) огрлице у средњој, западној и северној Европи. Најближе паралеле овој чешкој бакарној огрлици не налазе се у културном контексту баденске културе у карпатском басену и на Балкану већ у оквиру културног развоја северне Италије; то су сребрни прсни украс из гроба у Villafraanca (Forssander 1936, сл. 10:1) и изрезбарене огрлице на антропоморфним стелама, нарочито у Аости (Burtoni-Mezzena 1988, сл.7), које се, наравно, не могу поуздано датирати.

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