

# Status and Magic. Ornaments Used by the Bodzia Elites

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Costume and ornaments have always played an important role in human communities.<sup>1</sup> Their main function, besides the aesthetic one, was to convey religious and social messages as well as information about the ethnic affiliation of the owner. The latter function is of particular importance in the discussion about the origins of a given population. This is also the case of the cemetery at Bodzia at which women were buried with typically Slavic ornaments. In various cultures, ornaments changed their forms and motifs in time but the basic set of types was retained. These types represented the ideological elements considered necessary for a given community to function, or if magical properties were attached to them, necessary for survival. The value of such ornaments was higher if they were made of precious metals such as gold or silver, metals which, besides the economic value, had a meaning of their own.<sup>2</sup> The ornamental finds from the cemetery of Bodzia may be counted in this group.

## Ornaments

Ornaments, especially those used by women, are the most numerous artifacts found in the burials at Bodzia. Besides the glass beads which were unusually numerous for Polish lands,<sup>3</sup> ornaments made of silver, bronze and silvered copper are predominant and represent the repertoire of West Slavic silversmiths. The women at Bodzia had pendants with glass and silver beads as well as chains of silver wire from which silver *kaptorgi*, containers for amulets, were suspended. On their heads they wore bands with open metal rings called temple rings. The hands of the deceased of both sexes were decorated with rings.

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<sup>1</sup> Ogden 1982.

<sup>2</sup> Dzieduszycki 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Chapter 11.



FIGURE 10.1 *Rings, beads, temple rings, and kaptorga from Bodzia* (PHOTO: M. OSIADACZ).

The most common metal elements of necklaces from Bodzia are 30 examples of metal sheet beads and three *kaptorgi*. There were also 19 finger rings and 14 head ornaments (temple rings).

#### *Rings* (Fig. 10.1, top)

At Bodzia 19 ornaments for the hand in the form of rings were found in the burials of both women and men—as it is usual in inhumation burials in Poland in the beginnings of the 11th century, for example on the cemetery at Lutomiersk.<sup>4</sup> The examples from Bodzia represent several types of rings known in various cultural circles: western, eastern, and even northern ones. The last mentioned are rings of twisted silver wire,<sup>5</sup> of thick wire and of twisted wires, which have been discovered often among the finds from the 11th century in Pomerania but also in Rus, e.g., in Novgorod.<sup>6</sup> The same concerns rings made of a metal band, the least numerous at Bodzia, which were commonly used all over Europe.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Abramowicz 1959, 78–81.

<sup>5</sup> Thunmark-Nylén 1998, Taf. 143; 2006, 156–159.

<sup>6</sup> Knorr 1936, 193ff, Fig. 50–54, 56, 57; Duczko 1983b, Fig. 16; Sedova 1981, ris. 45.

<sup>7</sup> Kočka-Krenz 1993, 118ff; Kordala 2006, 165ff.