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JOHANNES KRUMPEL

## FOUR GRAVES OF THE BADEN CULTURE FROM RATZERSDORF AN DER TRAISEN, LOWER AUSTRIA

During large-scale excavations in Ratzersdorf an der Traisen (part of the town of St. Pölten, Lower Austria) conducted by the Bundesdenkmalamt Wien, four graves from a contemporaneous settlement of the classical Baden Culture were examined. These finds and already known graves constitute the basis of the presented study, which attempts to define the current state of research into Baden Culture burial rite in eastern Austria. According to new results, it appears that the age of the dead, rather than the sex, had an influence on burial customs. Children (infans I–II) were noticeably placed more often on the left side and were deposited as secondary burials in the graves. The double-, triple- and multiple-burials often describe polarities, as men and women, and adults and children were buried together.

Eastern Austria – Baden Culture – burial rite – multiple burial

**Čtyři hroby badenské kultury v Ratzersdorf an der Traisen, Dolní Rakousko.** Během rozsáhlých odkryvů, které provedl Spolkový památkový úřad (Bundesdenkmalamt Wien) v Ratzersdorf an der Traisen (městská část St. Pölten), byly prozkoumány v rámci soudobé osady čtyři hroby klasické badenské kultury. Tento materiál představuje východisko předkládané studie, která se snaží zhodnotit současný stav bádání o pohřebním ritu badenské kultury ve východním Rakousku. Pohřební ritus nebyl ovlivněn ani tak pohlavím zemřelých, jako spíše jejich věkem. Děti (infans I–II) ležely mnohem častěji v poloze na levém boku a byly v hrobech ukládány jako sekundární pohřby. Pomocí dvojhrobů, trojhrobů apod. vícečetných pohřbů se vyjadřovaly protiklady: společně byli pohřbíváni muži a ženy, dospělí a nedospělí.

východní Rakousko – badenská kultura – pohřební ritus – vícečetný pohřeb

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### 1. Location

From 1998 to 2004 extensive excavations took place in Ratzersdorf an der Traisen<sup>1</sup>, a small village nowadays part of the town of St. Pölten, Lower Austria (fig. 1). During this time an area amounting to 130.560 m<sup>2</sup> was surveyed by the

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<sup>1</sup> This article was written 2009, based on a lecture held 2008 in Vranov. New literature and new evidences concerning burials of the Baden Culture are not included.

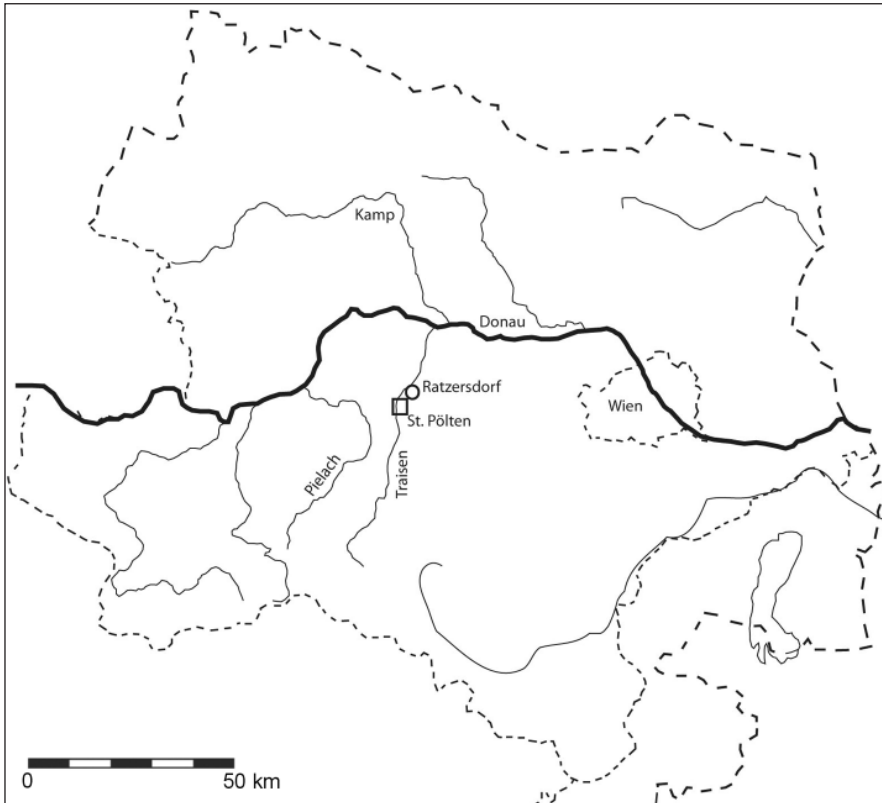


Fig. 1. Location of Ratzersdorf an der Traisen in Lower Austria. Drawing J. Krumpel.

Bundesdenkmalamt Wien (*Blesl 2001, 199–200; 2002; Preinfalk 2001; Blesl – Krumpel 2003; 2004*). The discussed four graves were found in the course of these rescue excavations in 2002 and 2004.

The site is located on the holocene floodplain of the nearby River Traisen. The deposited alpine brash builds a broad, mostly flat plain with some gently heightened ridges, which offered protection against floods. These were used for settlements from the time of the Linear Pottery Culture (LBK). The approximately six-meter high lower terrace, which is overlain by loessial loam, constitutes the western limit of the site.

The excavations could demonstrate the first settlement and a small graveyard of the LBK on brash soil. A settlement of the early Epilengyel-complex, early Bronze Age and grave-mounds of the middle Bronze Age were also documented. Adjacent to the lower terrace is a settlement of the Baden Culture covering an area of 75,000 m<sup>2</sup>. These settlement features have not yet been published. However, a general conspectus over the uncleaned pottery proves their existence during the phases Ossarn I and II.

In 2002, the double burial obj. 2928 was unearthed in the middle of the contemporaneous settlement (*Blesl 2002*). In 2004, we found three more graves: a multiple burial obj. 3399, a triple burial obj. 3442 and a single burial obj. 3473 (*Blesl – Krumpel 2004*) at the northern limits of the settlement. Since the last campaign in 2004, only the southern limit of the Baden Culture settlement remains undocumented.

## 2. The graves

### Obj. 2928 (fig. 2)

In this grave, two individuals were buried in a rectangular burial pit at a depth of 28 cm. No traces of a wooden chamber were left on the bottom of the grave. However, the dark square humous layer recorded on planum 1 documents its existence.

The man and the child<sup>2</sup> were placed in the middle of this chamber at the same time. A flint blade was in the man's hands. A small carbonatic flake was unearthed

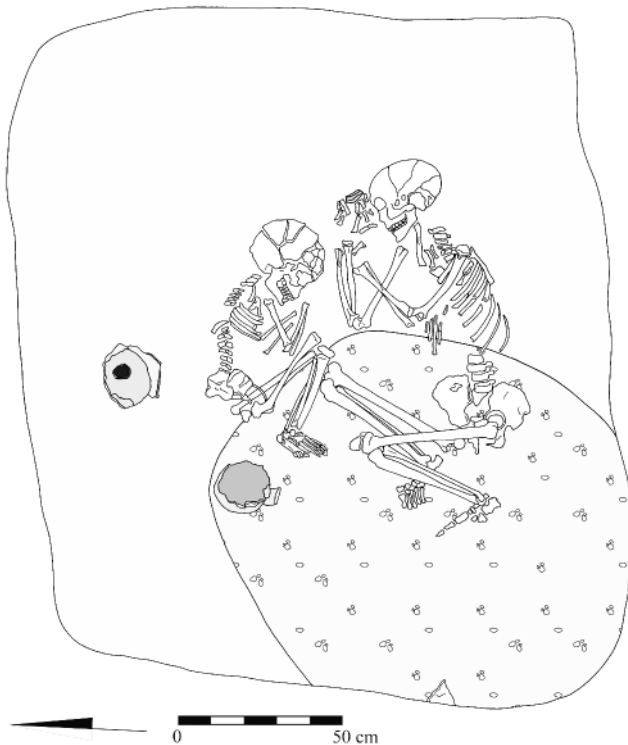


Fig. 2. Ratzersdorf, obj. 2928. Drawing M. Imam.

<sup>2</sup> For the anthropological data see *Wilschke-Schrotta – Cemper-Kiesslich – Höger 2008*.

underneath the child's pelvis. In addition, a large cup was placed on the grave's bottom (fig. 7). A second cup (find no. 7; fig. 8), with a small jug placed in it, and a small arrowhead were placed in the grave during the backfilling, as they were recorded 15 cm above the bottom. The round layer in the southern corner is a posthole of an overlain LBK longhouse.

Obj. 3399 (fig. 3, 4)

These six individuals were buried at the same time inside a wooden chamber 56 cm underneath planum 1. The feature and the bodies themselves were not disturbed. According to archaeological records and anthropological research it was found that individuals 1 and 2 were secondary burials. The skull and only parts of the postcranial skeleton – femora, humeri, some cervical vertebrae, ribs and a clavicle – were deposited. The bones show neither traces of violence nor of separation. In fact, they were collected after their decay and were put in the wooden chamber skeletonized. It seems likely that both secondary burials were wrapped in an organic fabric that left no recordable traces in the feature. One separated adult phalange, which does not belong to the aged man, was documented near ind. 1.

During the anthropological analysis of ind. 2, two beads made of dentalium were found. Both the beads and the single phalange were placed accidentally in

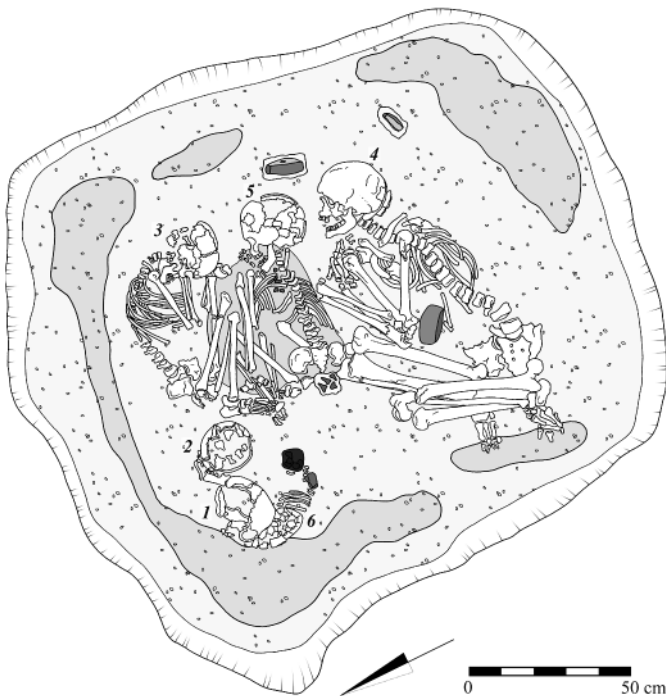


Fig. 3. Ratzersdorf, obj. 3399. Drawing M. Imam.



Fig. 4. Ratzersdorf. Reconstruction of obj. 3399. J. Krumpel, photo C. Ansorge.

this grave. Most probably they were gathered during the collection of individuals 1 and 2 from their primary burial.

The aged man (ind. 4) and the child (ind. 5) were deposited first in the chamber. The right patella of ind. 4 lies on the right os coxae of the child. This is because of taphonomical processes and does not prove the earlier deposition of the child.

Two axes and a hatchet were given to the man. The child had a set of four arrows (and very likely also a bow) as grave goods. Around the neck, it wore a necklace of dentalium beads. As the documented greyish layer in the area of his body shows, ind. 5 was enveloped in organic fabric or leather.

The child to the left (ind. 3) was deposited shortly after ind. 4, maybe at the same time as the newborn baby (ind. 6), whose pelvis was coloured with red ochre. On its chest, a silex knife was recorded. Around its chest and neck we could unearth several dentalium beads, one very poorly conserved copper bead, and 77 very small red siltstone beads. These tiny beads were sewn in the clothes. Ind. 3 wore a necklace of dentalium beads. Both secondary burials (ind. 1 and 2) were deposited last. To make enough space for them, ind. 3 was pressed against the wooden chamber. This explains the straight lumbar and thoracic spine and the 90 degree angle between the thoracic and cervical spine.

At the moment of the deposition of the secondary burials, ind. 3 must have been fully articulated, otherwise the skeleton would not have been lying in an anatomically correct position.

## Obj. 3442 (fig. 5)

Three individuals were discovered in this only 20 cm deep grave. It was disturbed, as the discarded bones in the upper part of the woman's body show. A bear tooth pendant, which was also discarded, may have been placed on a cord around her neck.

During the excavation we could identify only two individuals: a woman (ind. 1) and left of the woman's pelvis, a child's skull (ind. 2). North of ind. 2 we discovered a battered tibia fragment and parts of a skull, which we misinterpreted at first as displaced parts of ind. 2. Anthropological research later identified these bones as coming from a younger, third individual (ind. 3).

Ind. 2 could be identified as a secondary burial. However, the archaeological record was too weak to make a similar identification with respect to the newborn baby (ind. 3). This was because of the heavy disturbance in this area, the presence of a battered tibia fragment, and the bad skeletal condition.

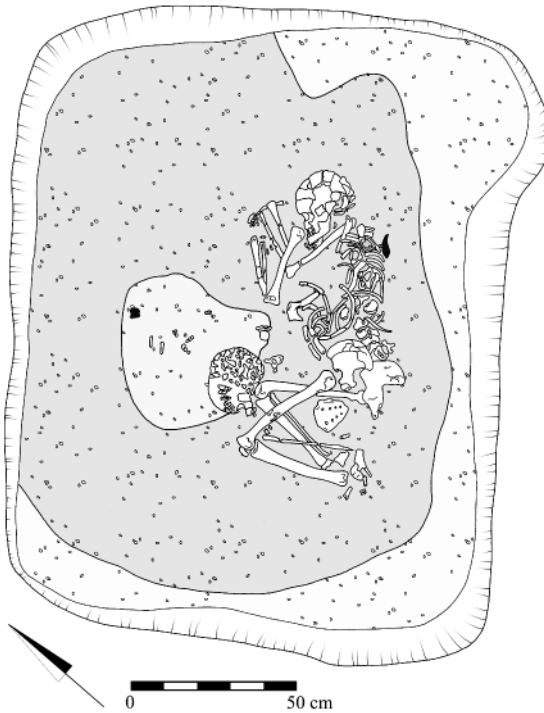


Fig. 5. Ratzersdorf, obj. 3442. Drawing M. Imam.

## Obj. 3473 (fig. 6)

This is the only single burial at Ratzersdorf. This disturbed grave was 22 cm deep and held no grave goods. Similarly to the other graves, the pit was rectangular. The body was placed in a left crouched position and orientated NE-SW.

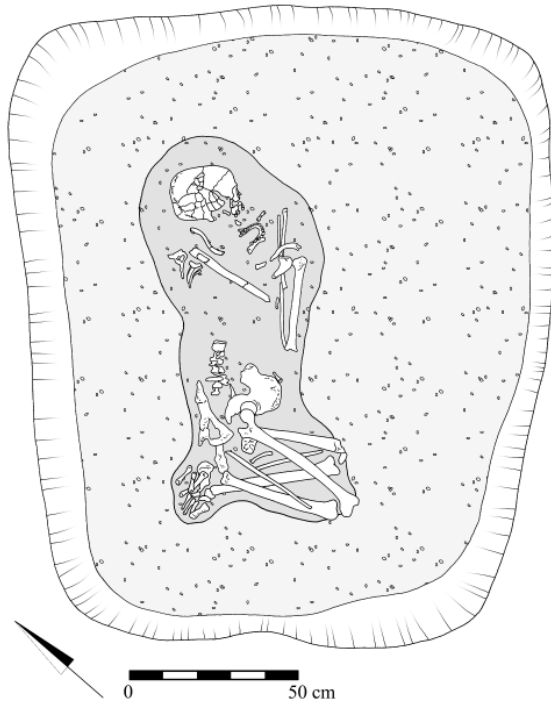


Fig. 6. Ratzersdorf, obj. 3473. Drawing M. Imam.

Single burials are very rare in Austria; other single burials have been uncovered in Reichersdorf (Mayer 1991, 35) and in Ahrenberg.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. The grave goods

#### 3.1. Pottery

The bipartite cup and the small jug from grave 2928 are well-known forms in the Baden Culture. Their cannellure and profiling puts them into the Ossarn I phase (fig. 7). The bipartite cup with two handles is a unique form in Austria (fig. 8). The second, smaller handle is a so called “falsche subkutane Bohrung”. Cups with one handle and mostly three small bails are well known in the Boleráz-group. Elisabeth Ruttkey (2001, 518) identifies them as a guide fossil for the Boleráz-group. On this cup, elements from the Ossarn I phase are combined with passed-on forms from the Boleráz-group.

<sup>3</sup> Information kindly provided by the excavator Alois Gattringer.





Fig. 7. Ratzersdorf. Grave goods from obj. 2928. Photo A. Schuhmacher.

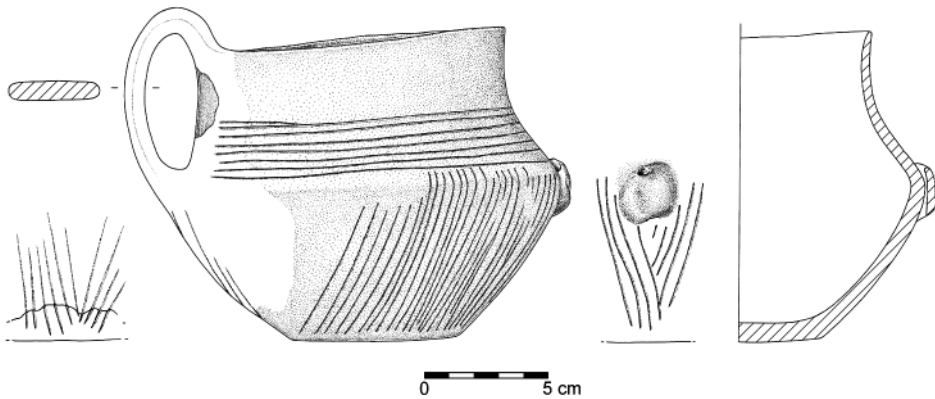


Fig. 8. Ratzersdorf. Cup from obj. 2928. Drawing M. Imam.

Similar forms were found in Beladice (*Němejcová-Pavúková 1974*, Abb. 72: 2), Tekovský Hrádok (*Němejcová-Pavúková 1974*, Abb. 60: 9) and Fonyód (*Banner 1956*, Taf. XI: 18). This Boleráz-group element dates this form to the beginning of the Ossarn I phase. The division of this phase into subphases should be possible, but remains unverified (*Mayer 1995*, 165).

### 3.2. Polished stone tools

Both axes from grave 3399 are polished from serpentinite, which could be found at the narrow Dunkelsteinerwald, and neither are very significant in their typology. The bigger axe (fig. 9) is common to the R-axes (*Zápotocký 1992*, 188,

Abb. 51: 2). The smaller axe is polished from a piece of stone, which shows traces of fire. The surface is cracked and coloured red and brown. It is possible that it was made from a discarded axe. It seems that, in this case, the form follows the material.



Fig. 9. Ratzersdorf. Grave goods from obj. 3399. Photo A. Schuhmacher.

In Austria, only a few axes are known and the complete ones are grave goods (Lichtenwörth – Äußerer Hutbühel, Franzhausen I obj. 206: *Mayer 1991*, Taf. 9: 1, 2; Taf. 2: 4; and Wolfersdorf: *Ruttkay – Teschler-Nicola 1984*, Abb. 2: 2). Axes of the Baden Culture show little diversity in their form. According to the axe from grave 206, Franzhausen I, the discussed piece belongs to the Baden Culture.

The hatchet found in grave 3399 is, in comparison to those from the Ratzersdorf settlement pits, much bigger and heavier, and not made of serpentinite or amphibolite, but of quartzite. The hatchet does not yield further information for a more detailed dating. Use-wear analysis of the polished stone tools shows that the hatchet was used for cutting wood. In contrast, neither axe carries traces of use.

Hatchets, of course, are quite common, but are very rarely found in graves. Only one other, but unfortunately lost, is known from the Leobersdorf – Schießstatt 2 grave (*Mayer 1991*, 34). A set of grave goods containing two axes and one hatchet is very rare in records of Baden Culture burials. Two hatchets were placed in

grave 91 at Budakalász (*Banner 1956*, Taf. 102: 1, 2) and two axes in the unpublished grave 164 at Budakalász (*Nevizánsky 1985*, 255).<sup>4</sup>

### 3.3. Chipped stone tools

The blade made of flint (fig. 7), with a transverse burin on the distal end and bilateral steep retouches, was used as a scraper. The burin edge shows use-wear traces (*Derndarsky 2008*, 134–137). All chipped stone tools from the Ratzersdorf graves are secondary products and implements, like knives and arrow heads, and were hafted. Only the scraper was made from a blade; all others tools were made from flakes.

The knife (obj. 3399, fig. 9), made of alpine chert, has a very good, nearly exact analogy found in obj. 55, Franzhausen II (*Mayer 1991*, 51, Taf. 4: 2). The triangular arrowheads with bifacial retouches are known from the Leobersdorf – Schießstatt 1 graves (*Mayer 1991*, Taf. 7: 11) and Wagram obj. 5 (*Ruttkey – Teschler-Nicola 1984*, Abb. 3: 1–3). Triangular arrowheads are common from the LBK up to the early Bronze Age; only those with a bifacial retouch become more common during the Copper Age (*Hoffstadt 2005*, 111).

### 3.4. Beads and pendant

In grave 3399 beads made of dentalium, silt-stone and even copper could be found. For the first time, necklaces with dentalium beads (fig. 9) could be documented for the Baden Culture in Austria. In the Budakalász (*Banner 1956*, Taf. LXXXVIII/4, Taf. XCI/9) and Alsónémedi burial grounds (*Csepreghy Meznerics 1951*, 79) they have been found more frequently.

The small, badly preserved copper bead is the first to be documented in Austria. Copper necklaces are known from the Lichtenwörth – Äußerer Hutbühel and Leobersdorf – Schießstatt 1 graves.

Silt-stone beads 3 mm in diameter are seldom collected. However, they seem to be more common in the Late Neolithic, as actual findings suggest. In Ansfelden – Burgwiese (Upper Austria), the sediments were sieved and small beads were discovered (*Trebsche 2008*, 65, Abb. 4: 11). The silt-stone is an ideal raw material for such small beads, because it is ductile and embedded in thin layers between a clayey matrix. Therefore, the

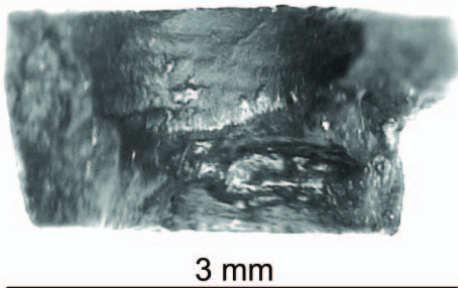


Fig. 10. Ratzersdorf, obj. 3399. Broken siltstone bead. Picture shows drilling from both sides. Photo J. Krumpel.

<sup>4</sup> Information kindly provided by Peter Stadler, who allowed me to have a look at the unpublished plates from Budakalász (*Bondár – Raczky 2009*).

height of the beads is naturally. They were drilled from both sides (fig. 10). At Budakalász, stone and marble beads are reported, these were used as braids on clothes or belts (*Banner 1956, 197*).

A second known bear tooth pendant belonging to the Baden Culture is reported from the Leobersdorf – Schießstatt 1 graves (*Willvonseder 1937, 17, Abb. 3: 9*).

#### 4. Radiocarbon dates

Only obj. 2928 yields detailed chronological evidence to place it in the earlier Ossarn I. The other three graves can only roughly be dated to the Baden Culture.

The  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis confirms that all graves are dated to the Baden Culture, with graves 3442 and 3473 having a tendency towards the Ossarn II phase. Due to the wiggly calibration curve, the dates show a quite wide range. According to a sum calibration (fig. 11), the graves could almost have been dug at the same time. Because of the presence of chronologically insignificant grave goods – except for obj. 2928 – it is impossible to delimit the computed timespan to less than 300 years – 3320BC (68%) 3020BC (*Krumpel 2008, 120–121*).

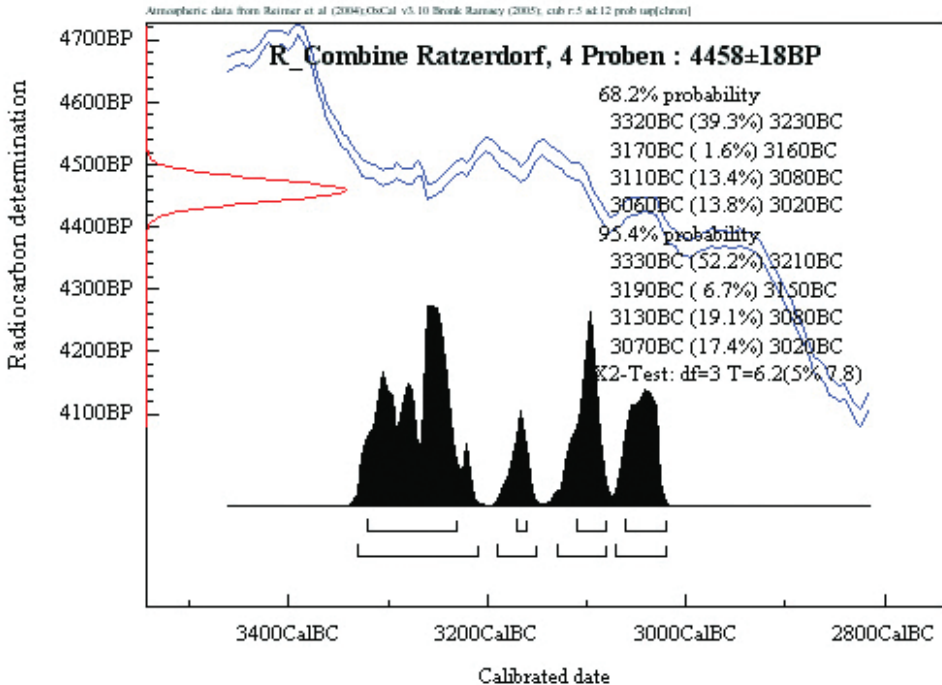


Fig. 11. Sum calibration for the graves from Ratzersdorf. J. Krumpel.

Sample no.	Object	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ [‰]	$^{14}\text{C}$ age [BP]	Calibrated age, 1 $\sigma$	Sample
VERA-4253	2928	-20,6 ± 0,4	4470 ± 40	3330BC (68,2%) 3030BC	Fn.1 (ind. 1), ulna
VERA-4254	3399	-23,3 ± 0,7	4525 ± 35	3360BC (68,2%) 3110BC	Fn.5 (ind. 3), left femur
VERA-4255	3442	-21,9 ± 0,3	4415 ± 35	3100BC (68,2%) 2930BC	Fn.1 (ind. 1), left femur
VERA-4256	3473	-23,0 ± 0,6	4425 ± 35	3270BC (68,2%) 2930BC	Fn.1 (ind. 1), left fibula

Tab. 1. Radiocarbon data from the Baden Culture graves at Ratzersdorf. Data calibrated with OxCal 3.10.

## 5. The analysis of burial customs

For the following study, only published and confirmed Baden Culture dated graves from Eastern Austria<sup>5</sup> were used. Therefore, the analysis includes data from 22 graves<sup>6</sup> with 53 individuals (see tab. 2).

Site	Ind.	Sex	Age class	Years	Type	Orient.	Gon	Side	Bibliography
Ahrenberg, obj. 8	1	–	–	–	B	NE	85°	–	Neugebauer et al. 1997
	2	–	–	–	B	NE	80°	–	
Ahrenberg, obj. 11	1	–	–	–	CB	–	–	–	Neugebauer et al. 1997
	2	–	–	–	B	NE	75°	–	
	3	–	–	–	B	NE	75°	–	
Ahrenberg, obj. 35	1	–	–	–	B	NE	60°	right	Neugebauer et al. 1997
	2	–	–	–	B	NE	65°	–	
Franzhau- sen, obj. 55	1	–	adult	20–24	IB	SE	135°	left	Mayer 1991
	2	–	infans I	5–6	IB	SE	135°	left	
Franzhau- sen, obj. 206	1	male	matur	50–55	IB	E	115°	left	Mayer 1991
	2	female	matur	45–50	IB	E	100°	right	
Franzhau- sen, obj. 253	1	–	infans I	2–3	IB	E	110°	left	Mayer 1991
	2	–	infans II	8–9	IB	E	100°	left	
Franzhau- sen, obj. 130	–	–	–	–	C	N/S	–	–	Mayer 1991
Franzhau- sen, obj. 1390	–	–	–	–	C	E/W	–	–	Mayer 1991
Grub a.d. March, gr. 1	1	–	–	–	CB	–	–	–	Hahnel 1992
Grub a.d. March, gr. 2	1	–	–	–	CB	–	–	–	Hahnel 1992
Leobersdorf – Schießstatt 1	1	–	grown-up	–	IB	W	300°	left	Mayer 1991

<sup>5</sup> State of research from the year 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Including three published graves from the Ahrenberg graveyard (Lower Austria) with 11 tombs (Neugebauer et al. 1997, 453).

Site	Ind.	Sex	Age class	Years	Type	Orient.	Gon	Side	Bibliography
	2	–	infans II	7–8	SB	–	–	–	
	3	–	infans II	8–9	SB	–	–	–	
	4	female	adult	–	SB	–	–	–	
	5	male	juvenil	16–18	SB	–	–	–	
	6	–	infans I	6–7	SB	–	–	–	
Leobersdorf – Schießstatt 2	1	–	juvenil (?)	–	IB	E	100°	–	Mayer 1991
	2	–	grown-up (?)	–	CB	–	–	–	
Lichten- wörth – Äußerer Hutbühel	1	–	infans I	3–4	IB	–	–	–	Mayer 1991
	2	–	infans I	4–5	IB	–	–	–	
	3		infans II	7–8	IB	–	–	–	
	4	female	adult	20–30	IB	–	–	–	
	5	female	adult	20–30	IB	–	–	–	
	6	male	adult	20–30	IB	–	–	–	
	7	male	adult	20–30	IB	–	–	–	
	8	–	grown-up	–	–	–	–	–	
Ratzersdorf, obj. 2928	1	male	adult	20–25	IB	E	90°	right	Krumpel 2008
	2	–	infans II	10–12	IB	E	110°	left	
Ratzersdorf, obj. 3399	1	–	infans I	3±12 mon.	SB	–	–	–	Krumpel 2008
	2	–	infans I/II	5±16 mon.	SB	–	–	–	
	3	–	infans II	10–11	IB	E	100°	left	
	4	male	senil	60–80	IB	E	100°	right	
	5	–	infans I/II	6–7	IB	E	100°		
	6	–	infans I	6–9 mon.	IB	NW			
Ratzersdorf, obj. 3442	1	female	adult	25–30	IB	NE	60°	right	Krumpel 2008
	2	–	infans I	2±8 mon.	SB	–	–	–	
	3	–	neonatus		IB(?)	–	–	–	
Ratzersdorf, obj. 3473	1	male	adult	25–35	IB	NE	50°	left	Krumpel 2008
Reichers- dorf, obj. 6	1	female	adult	–	CB	–	–	–	Mayer 1991
Sitzenberg	1	male	adult	30	B	E	100°	left (?)	Mayer 1991
	2	female	juvenil	18 (–20)	B	E	100°	left (?)	
Wagram, obj. 5	1	male	adult	20–25	IB	E	100°	right	Rutt kay – Te- schler–Nicola 1984
	2	–	infans I	–	SB	–	–	–	
Wangheim, obj. 196	1	female	grown-up	–	IB	SE	170°	left	Sauer et al. 2007
	2	–	infans	–	CB	–	–	–	
Wolfersdorf	1	male	adult	20–25	IB	E	100°	right	Mayer 1991
	2	male	juvenil	17–19	IB	–	–	–	
	3	–	grown-up	–	CB	–	–	–	

Tab. 2. Confirmed Baden Culture burials in Eastern Austria. Explanation of the abbreviations in the column “Type” (of the burial): IB – inhumation burial; CB – cremation burial; SB – secondary burial; B – bustum; C – cenotaph.

### 5.1. *Place and location*

Most of the graves are placed singly in open, plain land. Only the graves in Wolfersdorf, Leobersdorf and Lichtenwörth were positioned on gentle hills. Recently revealed features show new location patterns.

In Ahrenberg and Ratzersdorf, graves were placed in the immediate vicinity of each other. This is also possible at the Wolfersdorf, Lichtenwörth and Leobersdorf sites, but not proven. In Ahrenberg, the first documented graveyard was recorded, while, in Ratzersdorf, a small collection of graves was found. The second new finding is that graves were placed in the middle or near the boundary of a contemporaneous settlement. This could be observed at Wangheim, Burgenland (*Sauer et al. 2007*, 17) and Ratzersdorf.

### 5.2. *Grave architecture*

Rectangular wooden chambers, as recorded in Ratzersdorf, are common (*Mayer 1991*, 48, Taf. 1: 1, 2). The rectangular burial pit obj. 196 in Wangheim indicates a wooden chamber (*Sauer et al. 2007*, 17). This shows that inhumations in rectangular pits with wooden implements were not limited to the Traisen valley, but extend further to the east.

Considering the new evidence, mounds were built only rarely. In the Traisen valley they are missing. Graves from Franzhausen I and Ahrenberg were disturbed by features of the early Bronze Age. By contrast, Corded Ware Culture burials on the same site were respected by later features (cf. ground plan Franzhausen II, see *Neugebauer 1993*, 124). Further arguments for the absence of burial mounds arise from the stratigraphy in Ratzersdorf: the vicinity of graves 3399 and 3473 exclude a mound; and grave 2928 was built in the middle of the contemporaneous settlement (ground plan Ratzersdorf, see *Krumpel 2008*). Mounds were possibly erected at Lichtenwörth – Äußerer Hutbühel and Leobersdorf – Schießstatt (*Mayer 1991*, 37) as a recorded package of stones indicates.

Up to today no graves that might be classified as cultural antecessors are evident in Austria. The few known Boleráz-group graves (*Ruttikay 1995*, 148) indicate different customs. Elisabeth Ruttikay (*2001*, 524–525) identified the Furchenstichkeramik, mährisch-österreichische Baalberger-group A, and Scheibenhenkel-Horizont culture groups as having the biggest impact on the formation of the Baden Culture. These culture groups cremated their dead.

Discoveries of human bones – complete skeletons are not known – in pits (so-called Siedlungsbestattung<sup>7</sup>) as found in Ossarn (Lower Austria), Kittsee (Burgenland) and Lichtenwörth – Oberes Kreuzfeld (Lower Austria) are very rare (*Mayer 1995*, 174).

<sup>7</sup> For the definitions of mentioned burial and grave types, see *Krumpel 2008*.

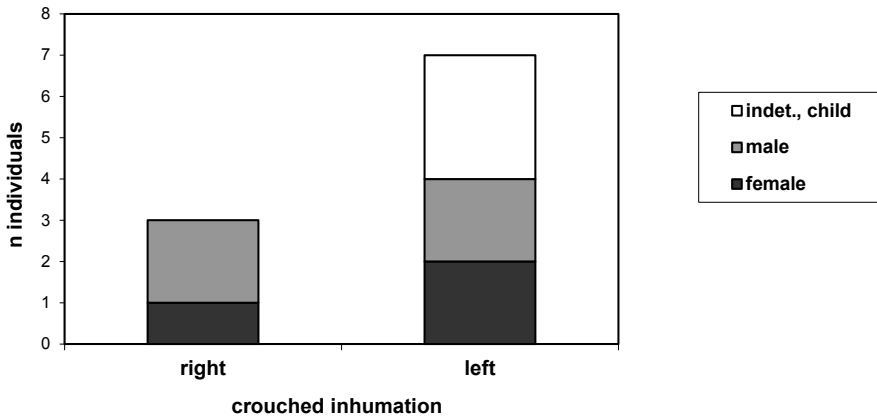


Fig. 12. Sex patterns of left- and right-sided crouched inhumations, Baden Culture, Austria.

### 5.3. *The body*

Inhumation, cremation and biritual burials, busti, and secondary burials are evident. The inhumation is the most frequent burial, but this situation could possibly change after work on the graveyard at Ahrenberg, where more busti have been unearthed.

As noted by Elisabeth Ruttkay (*Ruttkay – Teschler-Nicola 1984*, 81), Austrian graves are orientated to the east, except for the male individual from grave 1, Leobersdorf; ind. 6 from obj. 3399, Ratzersdorf; and the woman from obj. 196, Wangheim. Christian Mayer (*1991*, 43) sees certain religious ideas manifested through this custom.

According to the enlarged database, the sex of the bodies has no influence on deposition on the left or right side, but age does. Children mainly were placed in a sinistral crouched position (fig. 12). Individual 5, Ratzersdorf obj. 3399, is the only dexter grounded child in the Austrian record.

The corpses in the Lichtenwörth – Äußerer Hutbühel grave are the only individuals who are not placed in a crouched position (*Willvonseder 1937*, fig. 2). Their inordinate position is an exception in Baden Culture burial rites in Eastern Austria.

It is possible that we can determine a change in burial rites during the Ossarn I and II phases. Following the chronology by Evžen Neustupný, Christine Neugebauer-Maresch dated the bustum obj. 1, Sitzenberg, which should belong to the nearby graveyard from Ahrenberg, to the younger classical Baden Culture (*Neugebauer-Maresch – Teschler-Nicola 1984*, 132). Other cremation burials were documented at Ahrenberg, Wolfersdorf, Reichersdorf obj. 6 and Grub an der March grave 1. This change is not verified, because of the lack of graves dated to the Ossarn II phase, but it seems that fire gains greater significance in the burial rite during the younger classical Baden Culture.



### 5.4. Secondary burials

Nine secondary burials are known from four graves in Austria. They were recognized for the first time<sup>8</sup> in the Wagram obj. 5 (*Ruttkay – Teschler-Nicola 1984*) and Leobersdorf – Schießstatt 1 (*Teschler-Nicola – Schultz 1984*) graves. Secondary burials were observed in graves with other complete, at least one adult individual. The age pattern shows a large proportion of children amongst the secondary burials (fig. 13). Due to this age pattern this ritual cannot be linked to an ancestor cult. The basis of an ancestor cult is the worship of a person from whom one is descended. This excludes children by definition (cf. *Bonogofsky 2005*, 133–134). They are rather descendants, and more likely show a decline in social rank from elder (grown-up) towards younger (not grown-up) members of the community.

The morphological characteristics of the individuals in grave 2928 indicate the existence of family relationships. To investigate possible kinship between the individuals we tried A-DNA analysis, which unfortunately brought no result (*Wiltchke-Schrotta – Cemper-Kiesslich – Höger 2008*, 164).

The morphological and metric analogies between the secondary burials from the Leobersdorf – Schießstatt 1 grave could indicate kinship (*Teschler-Nicola – Schultz 1984*, 127). Unfortunately the interpretation of epigenetic characteristics remains problematic.

Considering their context, secondary burials are grave goods, representing kinship and social fabric. Since secondary burials are part of the burial ritual, we should re-interpret isolated bones in storage pits as evidence of a custom that integrated the selection, transport and maybe the storage of human bones. The deposit of these bones constitutes the last stage in a complex burial ritual.

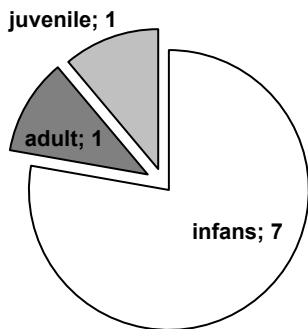


Fig. 13. Secondary burials age pattern, Baden Culture, Austria.

Also the obj. 130 and obj. 1390 Franzhausen II graves, interpreted as cenotaphs (*Mayer 1991*, 32), can be re-interpreted as emptied primary burials. Strikingly, both features are disturbed (*Mayer 1991*, Abb. 5: 1, 2; 6: 2), as they have been reopened.

Bedding the children in a left-sided crouched position and depositing them as secondary burials clearly differs from the rites used for adults. Indirectly we can recognize rites of passage which were not only linked to biological age, but also to cultural norms, as the child (ind. 5, obj. 3399 in Ratzersdorf) with four arrows in a right-crouched position shows.

<sup>8</sup> A pit with several skulls recorded on the Taborac near Draßburg (Burgenland) is not securely dated in Baden culture (*Ohrenberger 1949*).

### 5.5. *Grave goods*

New results for stone-tools were achieved by the adjusted data-collection. Silex tools are no longer related only to adults, but also to children, which is shown in the graves obj. 3399 and 2928 in Ratzersdorf. The 6–7-year-old had a set of arrows and even the 6–9-month-old had a silex knife for grave goods. A small silex flake was given to the 10–12-year-old in the double burial obj. 2928.

Even though small arrowheads and small bows for children are known from lake dwellings in Switzerland (*Lötscher 2005*, 112), the silex knife does not seem to have a practical use for an infant. For the lack of flint finds in graves, it is not possible to suggest an archaeological sex. Thus, we cannot define the sex of these children with stone tools as grave goods.

Axes and hatchets could be approved as being male grave goods. Although it is difficult to attach them to a single individual, since they were placed above the corpses heads in multiple burials, they were documented only in graves with an adult male individual.

Pottery plays a different role in the burial ritual. In inhumation burials it does not belong to a single individual – as far as archaeological methods can tell. Being deposited during refilling of the grave or outside the coffin (obj. 206 Franzhausen I in: *Mayer 1991*, fig. 1/2), they seem to have a significant role during the burial ritual. The forms, most often a cup and a jug, but always one vessel to contain a liquid (?) and one for drinking, do support this interpretation. In the cremation burial obj. 6, Reichersdorf, the pottery seems to be grave good. Generally, no system with respect to ceramic forms or age/sex categories can be detected.

Axes and probably hatchets indicate a higher status. The bow and arrow as a weapon for hunting and armed conflict (?) may also belong to active members (in our terms, to adult members in contrast to children) of the community (*Ruttikay – Teschler-Nicola 1984*, 80). However, as the child, ind. 5 from grave obj. 3399, shows, grave goods were used as symbols, and we should keep in mind that the dead need not have been the bearer of the weapons.

It is not possible to ascertain differences between women and men through the examination of grave-goods. Axes and hatchets seem to form the only category that is associated with men. Also grave-goods belonging to children do not differ noticeably from those given to adults. Further data is urgently needed to achieve meaningful results with respect to this complex issue.

### 5.6. *Multiple burials*

Looking at double, triple and multiple burials in Eastern Austria some rules appear peculiar. Most of the corpses are facing each other, except the two children in obj. 253, Franzhausen II and perhaps in the bustum from Sitzenberg. As they were grounded opposite to each other, the bodies themselves also describe polarities, as individuals of the opposite sex or adults and infants were buried together –

exceptions are obj. 253 in Franzhausen II and Wolfersdorf. The relation between women/men and adults/children is stressed through the burial rites.

Kinship between buried individuals is an often discussed issue, but arguments in support of it are weak. A-DNA analysis brought no results and epigenetic attributes, as recognized between the individuals from grave obj. 2928, only provide weak indications concerning kinship (*Wiltshke-Schrotta – Cemper- Kiesslich – Höger 2009*, 161–164).

Grave goods can provide an indication of the relationship between buried corpses. In Ratzersdorf, grave goods from each grave are more equal in their value than those from different graves (*Krumpel 2008*, 132). For example, arrows, axes, a hatchet and a copper bead in grave 3399; two silices in grave 2928. Other Austrian examples: two copper necklaces (Ösenhalsreife) in the Leobersdorf – Schießstatt 1 grave; three copper necklaces (Ösenhalsreife) and two axes in the Lichtenwörth – Äußerer Hutbühel grave (*Mayer 1991*, Abb. 7: 13, 15; 8: 3–5).

## 6. Discussion

One problem is the lack of graves, and a further problem is the small dataset for research. Our questions concerning the factors affecting complex burial rituals and, therefore, the rituals themselves can only be answered with uncertainty.

The enormous disparity between recorded settlements and numbers of graves of the Baden Culture in Austria<sup>9</sup> inclines us to think about alternative explanations for the absence of graves. Certainly, after numerous excavations by the Bundesdenkmalamt in recent years, this absence can no longer be explained by the current state of research. For this reason, we should perhaps take into consideration surface collective burials or other customs that left no archaeologically recordable traces.

I would like to thank Christoph Blesl for leaving me the graves for analysis, Peter Stadler for helping me with <sup>14</sup>C-dating, Gerhard Trnka for kindly providing the financing for the radiocarbon measurements, and Dr. Karin Wiltshke-Schrotta (Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, Anthropologische Abteilung) for her anthropological analysis.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. the mapping of the Baden Culture in the Austrian northern Danube region (*Schmitsberger 2004*, Abb. 58).

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## **VIER GRÄBER DER BADENER KULTUR AUS RATZERSDORF AN DER TRAISEN, NIEDERÖSTERREICH**

In den Jahren 1998 bis 2004 wurde im Zuge großflächiger Rettungsgrabungen in Ratzersdorf an der Traisen (VB St. Pölten, Niederösterreich) eine ausgedehnte Siedlung der klassischen Badener Kultur seitens des Bundesdenkmalamtes dokumentiert. Innerhalb der Grenzen der Siedlung wurden vier Gräber (Bef. 2928, 3399, 3442 und 3473) mit insgesamt 12 beigesetzten Individuen angelegt.

Die Gräber wiesen den typischen rechteckigen Grundriss auf. Zwei hölzerne Einbauten, wohl Holzkisten, konnten in den Gräbern 2928 und 3399 nachgewiesen werden. Die Individuen wurden gleichzeitig beigesetzt. Als Beigaben sind ein Keramikset bestehend aus Krug und zwei Tassen sowie Schmuck und Steingeräte überliefert. Nur Grab 2928 lässt sich anhand der Keramikformen in die Stufe Ossarn I, bzw. an deren Beginn, stellen. Erstmals konnte Schmuck in Form von Dentalien- und Steinperlen nachgewiesen werden. Die archäologische Datierung wird durch die Ergebnisse der <sup>14</sup>C Datierung unterstützt. Eine Kombinationskalibration aller vier Gräber ergibt eine Zeitspanne von 3320BC (68,2%) 3020BC.

Der neue Forschungsstand bildet die Basis für eine Analyse der Bestattungen der Badener Kultur in Ostösterreich. In Ratzersdorf konnten erstmals Gräber dokumentiert werden, die innerhalb einer zeitgleichen Siedlung angelegt wurden. Auch die Anlage von Gräbergruppen ist in Ostösterreich bislang nur selten nachgewiesen. Die Analyse erbrachte deutliche Unterschiede in der Bestattungsweise zwischen Erwachsenen und Kindern. Kinder wurden messbar häufiger als linke Hocker niedergelegt und als Sekundärbestattungen in Gräbern deponiert. Gleichzeitig können jedoch keine Unterschiede in der Beigabensitte zwischen Erwachsenen und nicht-erwachsenen Individuen festgestellt werden. Nur Axt und (wahrscheinlich) Beil sind männlichen Individuen zuordenbar. Silexwerkzeuge und Pfeile wurden Kindern gleichermaßen beigegeben. Die Keramik, meist ein Set bestehend aus einem Behältnis und Trinkgefäßen, spielte eine wichtige Rolle in Ritualen, die während der Beerdigung abgehalten wurden. Männer und Frauen unterliegen den gleichen Bestattungsriten. In den Mehrfachbestattungen wurden höchstwahrscheinlich Personen bestattet, die in familiärem oder direktem gentilen Verhältnis zueinander standen.

Unter Berücksichtigung der kleinen Datenbasis scheint während der Phase Ossarn II die Brandbestattung häufiger zu werden.

- Abb. 1. Fundort Ratzersdorf an der Traisen, Niederösterreich. Zeichnung J. Krumpel.  
Abb. 2. Ratzersdorf, Befund 2928. Zeichnung M. Imam.  
Abb. 3. Ratzersdorf, Befund 3399. Zeichnung M. Imam.  
Abb. 4. Ratzersdorf, Rekonstruktion Befund 3399. Zeichnung J. Krumpel, Photo C. Ansorge.  
Abb. 5. Ratzersdorf, Befund 3442. Zeichnung M. Imam.  
Abb. 6. Ratzersdorf, Befund 3473. Zeichnung M. Imam.  
Abb. 7. Ratzersdorf, Grabbeigaben Befund 2928. Photo A. Schuhmacher.  
Abb. 8. Ratzersdorf, Befund 2928. Tasse mit gegenständiger falscher subkutaner Bohrung. Zeichnung M. Imam.  
Abb. 9. Ratzersdorf, Grabbeigaben Befund 3399. Photo A. Schumacher.  
Abb. 10. Ratzersdorf, Befund 3399. Zerbrochene Siltsteinperle mit Spuren einer beidseitigen Bohrung. Photo J. Krumpel.  
Abb. 11. Ratzersdorf, Kombinationskalibration der Gräber. J. Krumpel.  
Abb. 12. Verhältnis Hockerlage/Geschlecht in Gräbern der Badener Kultur, Österreich.  
Abb. 13. Altersklassen der Sekundärbestattungen der Badener Kultur, Österreich.  
Tab. 1. Ratzersdorf, <sup>14</sup>C-Daten der Gräber der Badener Kultur.  
Tab. 2. Liste der Badener Gräber aus Österreich.

