

# From the Mediterranean to the Baltic Sea

## How the dressing of urns interlinks Europe in the Late Bronze / Early Iron Age

### So far

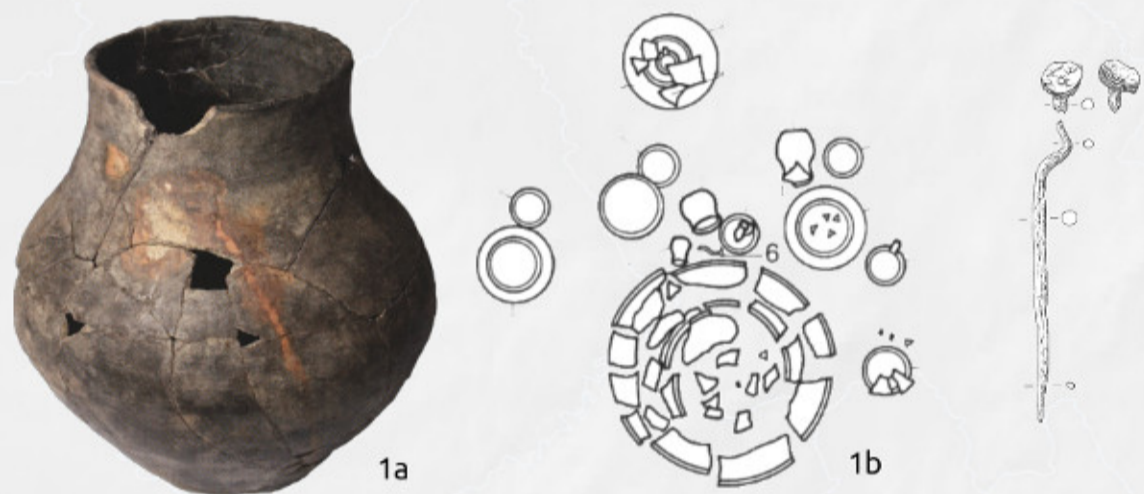
In my PhD thesis I study the anthropomorphisation in LBA / IEA burial contexts. In it the dressing of urns plays an important role, because it is rarely investigated outside of Italy.

My analysis is based on the assumption, that the dressing of urns may be inferred from jewellery and clothing accessories, with a direct reference to the urn, i.e. which are found on or close to the urn.

#### The dressing of urns...

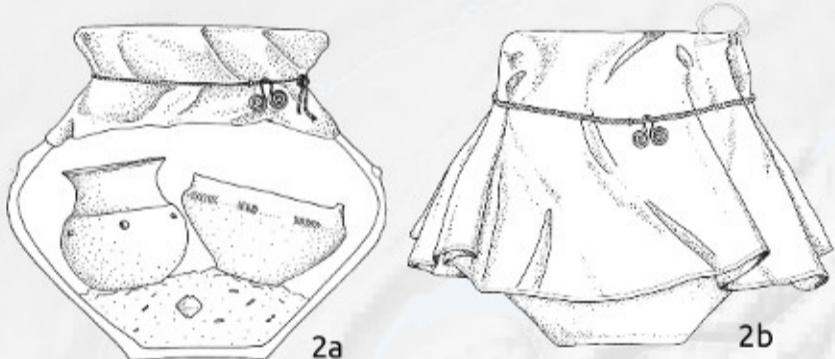
- is widely spread throughout Europe and interlinks the Mediterranean with the Baltic Sea.
- is documented from 12th - 3th cent. B.C. with a peak in 9th - 5th cent. B.C. burials.
- is sometimes combined with other characteristics of the anthropomorphisation of urns, e.g. face illustrations.

Dressed urns are common in Iron Age burials from the Lausitian culture (750 - 450 B.C.). In Zentendorf, grave 21 textile remnants were discovered in a patch of rust on the urn neck as well as on one of three iron pins, which lay directly by the urn. In Niederkaina a pin on or by the urn was documented in 98 out of 1800 Iron Age burials.



1) Niederkaina, grave J/32: the rust on the urn (left) shows the original position of the pin (nr. 6), which lay by the urn (right).

Fibulas and pendants lay on the necks and shoulders of c. 4 urns in graves from Ljubjana SAZU (c. 300 graves in total; 1050 - 650 B.C.). The features were reconstructed as part of a cover (left). Why don't interpret them as indications of the anthropomorphisation of urns (right)?



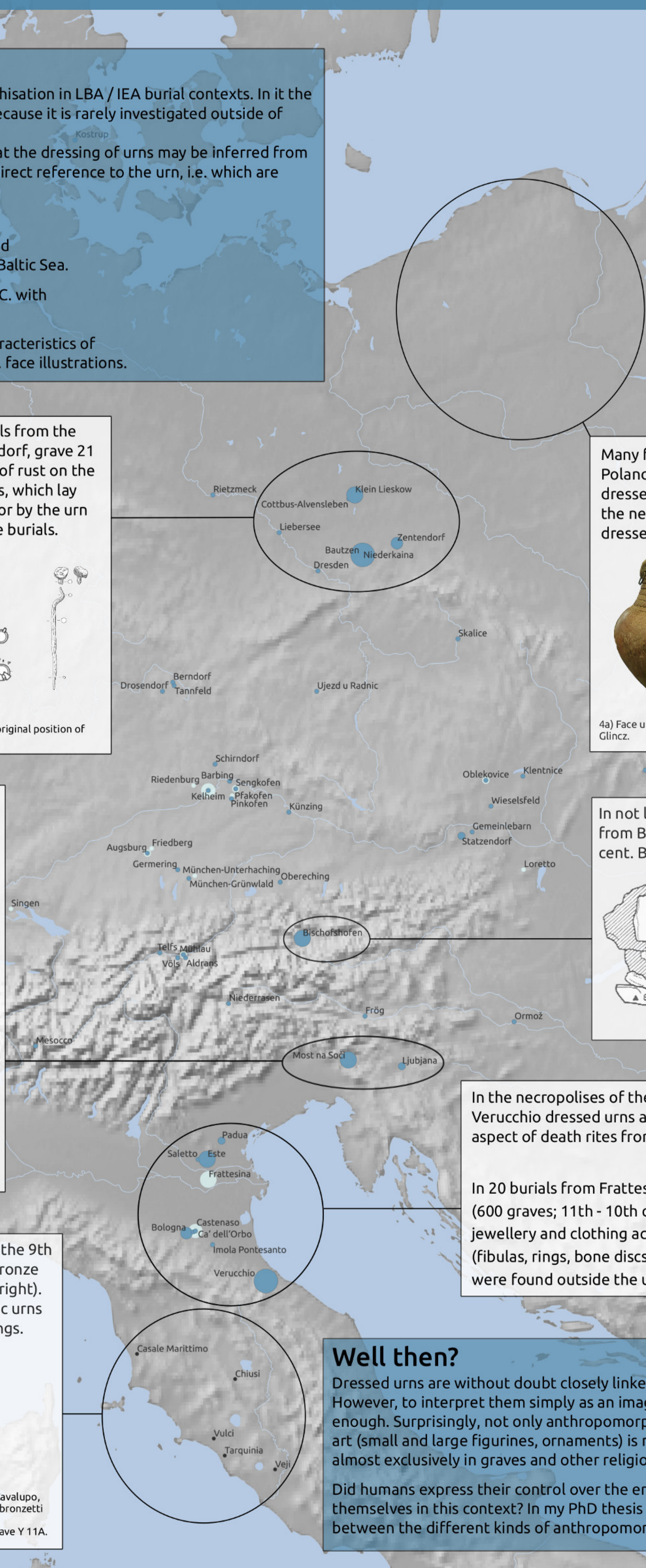
2a-b) Reconstructions of Ljubjana SAZU, grave 144.

Burials from Most na Soči in which fibulas, belts and a few textiles were found on or nearby the urns indicate that dressed urns were known in this region at least in the 6th - 4th cent. B.C.

In Etruria the dressing of urns dates back to the 9th cent. B.C. (left). Typical for the region are bronze and ceramic helmets as covers of the urns (right). Similar to the Polish face urns, many canopic urns from Chiusi (7th - 6th cent. B.C.) wear earrings.



3a) Vulci, Cavalupo, tomba dei bronzetti sardi.  
3b) Veji, grave Y 11A.

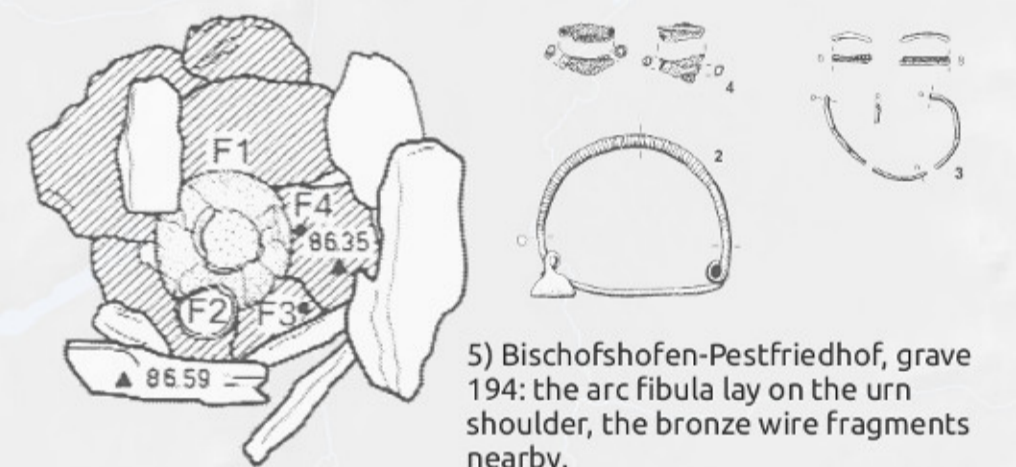


Many face urns of the 7th - 6th cent. B.C. from Poland wear earrings or were symbolically dressed with a painted-on necklace or pin on the neck and shoulder (left). Faceless urns were dressed with jewellery, too (right).



4a) Face urn from the Archaeological Museum in Danzig; 4b) Urn from Glinicz.

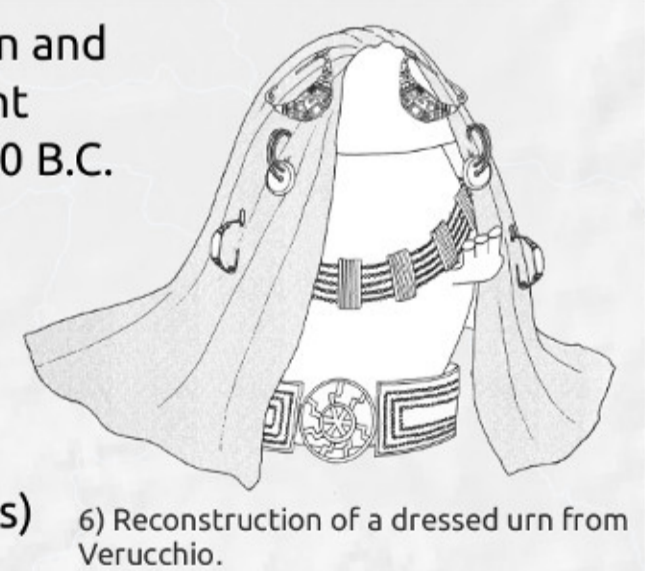
In not less than 16 graves (10th - 7th cent. B.C.) from Bischofshofen (c. 550 graves; 11th - 6th cent. B.C.) the dressing of urns is very likely.



5) Bischofshofen-Pestfriedhof, grave 194: the arc fibula lay on the urn shoulder, the bronze wire fragments nearby.

In the necropolises of the Padan Plain and Verucchio dressed urns are a frequent aspect of death rites from c. 900 - 250 B.C.

In 20 burials from Frattesina Narde I (600 graves; 11th - 10th cent. B.C.) jewellery and clothing accessories (fibulas, rings, bone discs, glass beads) were found outside the urns.



6) Reconstruction of a dressed urn from Verucchio.

### Well then?

Dressed urns are without doubt closely linked to funerary practices and death rituals. However, to interpret them simply as an image of the deceased is possibly not enough. Surprisingly, not only anthropomorphic urns, but also other anthropomorphic art (small and large figurines, ornaments) is not common until the LBA and found almost exclusively in graves and other religious contexts.

Did humans express their control over the environment by representing an image of themselves in this context? In my PhD thesis I will explore if there is a relation between the different kinds of anthropomorphisation and how it has to be judged.

Figures:  
1a) Th. PUTTKAMMER/F. KOCH, Bronzezeit - Die Lausitz vor 3000 Jahren (Kamenz 2007) p. 77; 1b) J. KAISER, Das prähistorische Gräberfeld von Niederkaina bei Bautzen. Band 7 (Dresden 2003) p. 244.  
2a) B. ŠKVR JERNEJČIĆ/M. VINAZZA, Burial practices and burial rites between the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in Slovenia. A comparative analysis of Ljubjana and Tolmin cemeteries. In: T. Cividini/G. Tasca, Il funerario in Friuli e nelle regioni contermini tra l'età del ferro e l'età tardoantica (Oxford 2016) p. 48, fig. 5; 2b) © DANIELA HELLER.  
3a) M. L. ARANCIO, Principi immortali: Fasti dell'aristocrazia etrusca a Vulci (Rom 2014), p. 24, fig. 4; 3b) L. C. KOCH, Menschengestaltig - menschenähnlich? Die Anthropomorphisierung von Leichenbrandbehältern während des 8. und 7. Jhs. v. Chr. in Etrurien. In: C. Kümmel et al., Körperinszenierung - Objektsammlung - Monumentalisierung. Totenritual und Grabkult in frühen Gesellschaften (Münster et al. 2008) p. 507, Fig. 7.  
4a-b) © MARIA KOHLE.  
5) A. LIPPERT/P. STADLER, Das spätbronze- und früheisenzeitliche Gräberfeld von Bischofshofen-Pestfriedhof (Bonn 2009) Tab. 50.  
6) L. BENTINI/A. BOIRADI, Le ore della Bellezza. Mundus Muliebris: Abito, costume funerario, rituale della personificazione, oggetti da toilette. In: P. von Eles, Le ore e i giorni delle donne (Verucchio 2007) p. 127-138, fig. 1.

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L. SALZANI, La Fragilità dell'Urna. I recenti scavi a Narde, Necropoli di Frattesina (Rovigo 2010).  
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