GEPIDIC FINDS FROM CĂPUŞU MARE (CLUJ COUNTY)[1]

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Keywords: *Gepidic artefacts, cemetery, Gepidic community*

Căpuşu Mare (H: Magyarkapus, Nagykapus, Cluj county) is situated circa 25 km west from Cluj-Napoca, in the valley of the Căpuş river. From the territory of this village several finds are known which can be dated in the Gepidic period.

I. The cemetery from Cânepişte (H: Kenderáj)

The first part of the group consists of two stray finds, a blackish grey jar and a three-edged arrowhead discovered by Gy. László in a grave. In the summer of 1951 the first systematical archaeological excavations began. The archaeologists identified a number of 15 graves, to them it adds a number of four graves destroyed by the clay extraction works (Fig. 1). The results of the research from the summer of 1951 were published in 1952 in the form of a draft report[2], and an anthropological analysis appeared four years later[3]. Unfortunately the cemetery was never completely published.

In 2007 we managed to identify in the National History Museum of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca (NHMT) a part of the artefacts found in this cemetery, but surely an important number of them disappeared. The re-identified artefacts are in a poor state of preservation due to the fact that they have never been restored[4]. On the basis of the first publication from 1952 and the objects identified in 2007 the following finds belonged to the cemetery from Căpuşu Mare – Cânepişte:

1. Bronze brooch of Latène C scheme with enameled footplate (Rustoiu 5a type). The end of the foot is broken. L: 3.8 cm, $W_{footplate}$: 1.9 cm. Inv. nr. V 1324 (IN 10430). Fig. 2/1.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/7; Zirra 1971, Abb. 16/3 (with wrong drawing); Beldimann 1990–1993, 183, Fig. 2/3; Rustoiu 1997, Fig. 25/14.

2. Beads of different types. The objects could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/8.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/8.

3. Oval buckle. The object could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/7.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/10.

4. Iron oval buckle. Its belonging to the cemetery is uncertain. L: 2.4 cm, L_{needle}: 3.1 cm, W: 2.9 cm, Th: 0.5 cm. Inv. nr. V 34451. Fig. 2/2.
Unpublished.

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[1] I would like to express my recognition to dr. Ioan Stanciu (Cluj-Napoca), dr. Tivadar Vida and Gergely Csiky (Budapest) for their help.

[2] AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952.

[3] RUSSU/ROTH 1956.

[4] The finds which could not be identified are published after the drawings from their first publication: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1.

5. Double-sided three-layer bone comb with three rivets (their original number was probably four). It is decorated with rhombic motives composed of two parallel rows of dots. The object could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/10.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/16.

6. Fragment of a double-sided bone comb with an iron rivet. Undecorated. L: 4.3 cm, W: 4.4 cm, Th: 0.5 cm. Inv. nr. V 1346 (IN 10410). Fig. 2/6.
Unpublished.

7. Fragment of a double-sided bone comb with an iron rivet and an orifice for another one. Undecorated. L: 4 cm, W: 4.4 cm, Th: 0.6 cm. Inv. nr. V 1346 (IN 10410). Fig. 2/4.
Unpublished.

8. Fragment of a double-sided bone comb with an iron rivet. Undecorated. L: 1.9 cm, W: 4.55 cm, Th: 0.15 cm. Inv. nr. V 1346 (IN 10410). Fig. 2/3.
Unpublished.

9. Fragment of a double-sided bone comb with an orifice for a rivet. Undecorated. Possible part of the same comb as the precedent one. L: 1.8 cm, W: 4.6 cm, Th: 0.15 cm. Inv. nr. V 1346 (IN 10410). Fig. 2/5.
Unpublished.

10. Ceramic spindle-whorl. Undecorated. D: . Inv. nr. V 1325 (IN 10402). Fig. 2/7.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/11.

11. Spindle-whorl (?).The object could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/9.
Bibliography: Aşezări slave 1952, Fig. 1/12.

12. Iron ring with circular section. D: 1.4 cm, Th: 0.35 cm. Inv. nr. V 1331 (IN 10401). Fig. 2/9.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/9.

13. Head of a circular bronze rivet. D: 2.5 cm, L: 0.6 cm, Th: 0.1 cm. Inv. nr. V 1348 (IN 10397). Fig. 2/8.
Unpublished.

14. Seax (?) composed of the following parts (Fig. 5): a. Flexed iron blade. It is in a fragmentary state, its hilt and point are missing. Originally it had a hilt with two perforations. Actual dimensions: L: 11.6 cm, W: 3.1 cm, Th: 0.4 cm. Inv. nr. V 1349. Fig. 6/1. b. Round iron pommel with two iron rivets. D: 3.5 × 3 cm, Th: 0.35 cm, H: 1.6 cm. Inv. nr. V 1328. Fig. 6/2. c. Cylindrical iron plate, part of the hilt. D: 3.2 × 2.6 cm, Th. 0.2 cm, H: 3.6 cm. Inv. nr. V 1347. Fig. 6/4. d. Similar plate to the former one. The second plate could not be identified in the NHMT.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/15.

15. Iron fragment (possible part of the blade from nr. 14.a.) L: 4.4 cm, W: 2.4 cm, Th: 0.3 cm. Nr. inv. V 1342 (IN 10422). Fig. 6/3.
Unpublished.

16. Rhombic arrowhead with socket and loop. L: approx. 12 cm. The object could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/1.
Bibliography: Aşezări slave 1952, Fig. 1/1.

17. Leaf-shaped arrowhead. The object could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/2.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/2.

18. Leaf-shaped arrowhead. The object could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/3.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/3.

19. Three-edged arrowhead. The object could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/4.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/4.

20. Three-edged arrowhead. The object could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/5.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/5.

21. Three-edged arrowhead The object could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/6.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/6.

22. Three-edged iron arrowhead. L: 3.2 cm, W: 1.4 cm. Nr. inv. V 1336 (IN 10414). Fig. 3/1.
Unpublished.

23. Three-edged iron arrowhead. L: 2.6 cm, W: 1.35 cm. Nr. inv. V 1335 (IN 10416). Fig. 3/2.
Unpublished.

24. Iron arrowhead with rhombic section. L: 2.85 cm, W: 0,4 cm. Nr. inv. V 1340 (IN 10413). Fig. 3/3.
Unpublished

25. Iron arrowhead. L: 3 cm, W: 0.6 cm. Nr. inv. V 1334 (IN 10421). Fig. 3/4.
Unpublished.

26. Iron arrowhead with rhombic section. L: 3.2 cm, W: 0.9 cm. Nr. inv. V 1333 (IN 10415). Fig. 3/5.
Unpublished.

27. Iron knife. The object could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/12.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/13.

28. Iron knife. The object could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/13.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/14.

29. Blackish grey wheel-made jar with everted rim, bellied body and flat base. The object could not be identified in the NHMT. Fig. 4/11.
Bibliography: AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/17.

30. Iron fragment with circular section (part of an arrowhead?). L: 2.4 cm, W: 0.7 cm. Nr. inv. V 1338 (IN 10417). Fig. 3/8.
Unpublished.

31. Iron fragment with circular section (part of an arrowhead?). L: 2.4 cm, W: 0,6 cm. Nr. inv. V 1333 (IN 10415). Fig. 3/6.
Unpublished.

32. Iron fragment with circular section (part of an arrowhead?). L: 2.3 cm, W: 0,5 cm. Nr. inv. V 1337 (IN 10420). Fig. 3/7.
Unpublished.

33. Iron fragment with oval section. L: 4.7 cm, W: 0,4 cm. Nr. inv. V 1339 (IN 10418). Fig. 3/10.
Unpublished.

34. Fragment of a bronze wire with circular section. L: 3.2 cm, W: 0,2 cm. Nr. inv. V 1345 (IN 10396). Fig. 3/9.
Unpublished.

35. 13 small iron and three small bone fragments (the latter part of combs). Nr. inv. IN 10413, IN 10417, IN 10423.
Unpublished.

Burial customs

Due to the lack of any documentation, it is difficult to reconstruct the burial customs of the community from Căpuşu Mare. It seems that the graves were arranged more or less in regular rows, being orientated W–E with slight deviations[5] (Fig. 1). Their depth varied between 0.35–1.60 m[6].

In the case of two[7] or three[8] graves under the skeleton wooden traces were observed which indicate the presence of a coffin formed of hollow tree trunks[9]. Coffins appear relatively

[5] AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, 314, Pl. I.
[6] AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, 314.
[7] AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, 314.
[8] Graves 7, 9 and 15: RUSSU/ROTH 1956, 31–32.
[9] AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, 314.

often in the Gepidic cemeteries, but their frequency cannot be exactly determined due to the high number of old excavations without an accurate documentation. In any case, it seems that the number of graves which contained a coffin is much higher than it had been considered before[10]. Among the coffins a frequently used type is the one formed of a hollow tree trunk. In the cemetery from Hódmezővásárhely-Kishomok (Hungary) M. Nagy reconstructed a few variants of it[11], but due to the lack of the information, it cannot be determined to which of these variants the coffins from Căpuşu Mare correspond.

According to J. Cseh, one of the skeletons had an artificially deformed skull[12]. This phenomenon – adopted from the Huns – is a general element of the Gepidic communities (in certain regions it appears in the Avar Age cemeteries as well)[13].

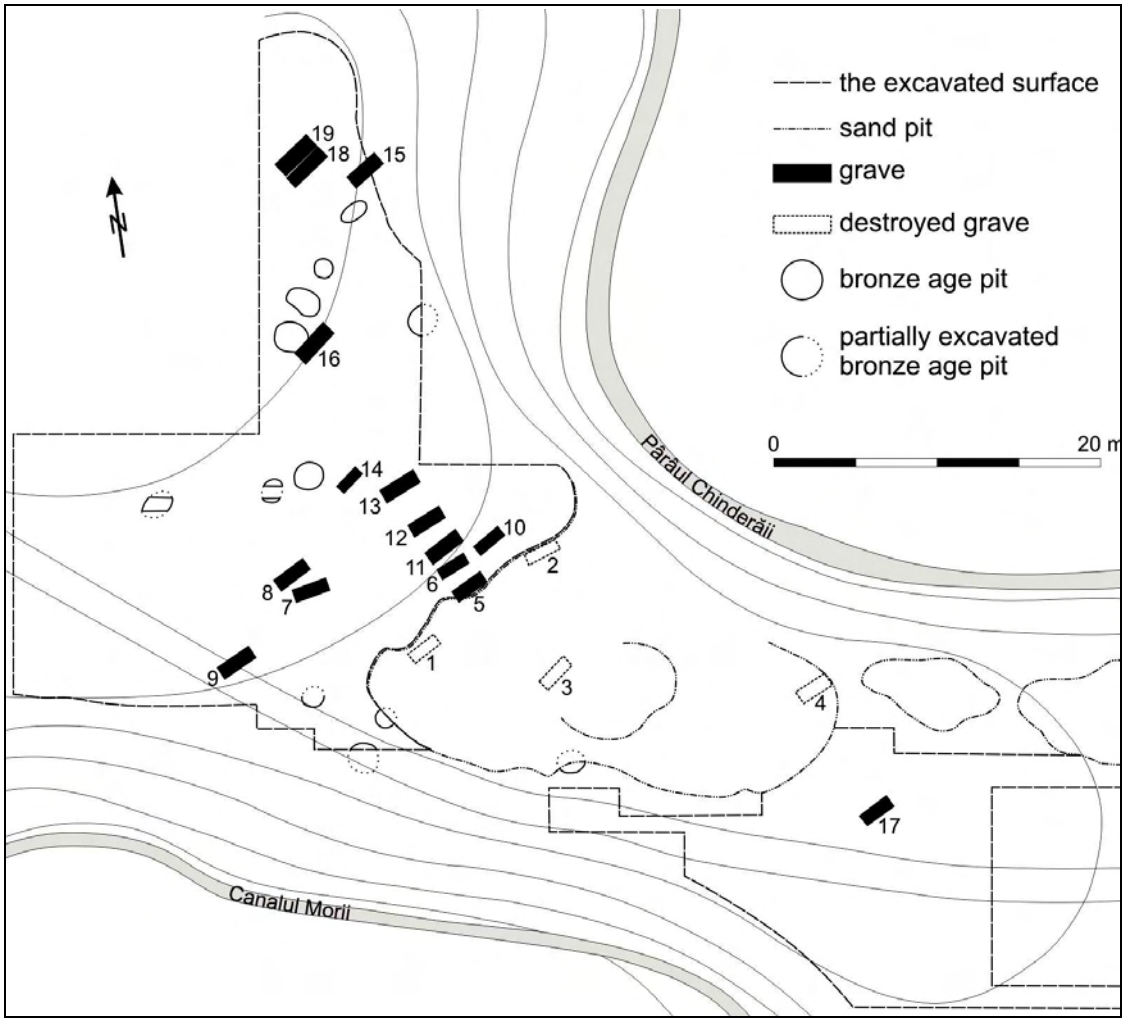

Fig. 1 Plan of the cemetery from Căpuşu Mare – Cânepişte (after AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952).

A constant phenomenon of the graves is that the human bones do not appear in their anatomical position, but they are mixed up. The publishers of the cemetery tried to identify regularity on the basis of the position of the bones (in the majority of the cases the legs were

[10] BÓNA/NAGY 2002, 83, see also Tab. 11.
[11] BÓNA/NAGY 2002, 85–86, Abb. 39.
[12] CSEH 1993, 89.
[13] BÓNA/NAGY 2002, 146–148, Abb. 74.

discovered in the eastern part and the rest of the bones were mixed up and positioned in the western end of the grave). On these grounds they tried to identify a ritual phenomenon. In their opinion in the course of this process the bones had been disarticulated before the burial took place and put in the grave deliberately in the position in which they were discovered by the archaeologists[14].

A similar phenomenon can be observed in the majority of the Gepidic cemeteries. The same situation was noticed in the case of a few recently excavated, well documented cemeteries, too. As the robber pits show, all these graves were unearthed and plundered after the defunct had been buried[15]. In most of the cases the robbers were interested in the objects situated in the area of the head, chest and basin, so they focused on these parts of the body, leaving the legs in their original position[16]. In these cemeteries all the phenomena brought forward as arguments by the two anthropologists who analyzed the cemetery from Căpuşu Mare can be identified, therefore it exists no evidence of such kind of ritual processes as they supposed.

On the territory of the cemetery, in five different places, horse teeth were found, without being in connection with any grave[17]. Therefore is no reason to reconstruct horse burials.

Analysis of grave-goods

Unfortunately the single brooch discovered in the cemetery cannot offer any help regarding to the chronological interpretation, because it can be dated in the Iron Age. Initially it was considered a Roman brooch[18], its correct typological identification was made later. It belongs to the group of Latène C scheme brooches with enameled footplate (Rustoiu 5a type)[19]. The type is generally dated in the 1st century BC[20].

It is evident that the brooch from Căpuşu Mare – Cânepişte was put in the grave after a secondary usage. Similar situations can be found in a few cemeteries of the Migration Period and of the Early Middle Ages. In Transylvania in the necropolis from Band seven Roman brooches were found; another case is known from Noşlac and two iron brooch fragments were discovered in Moreşti[21]. These pieces were not used as brooches (this possibility is excluded in many cases by the broken pin), we can suppose that they were collected as "antique objects" and possibly worn as talismans or amulets with a kind of magical power[22].

The other few objects related to the wear (iron buckles, double-sided bone combs and beads) are common pieces of the Gepidic cemeteries of the Carpathian Basin, so they cannot offer any information regarding the dating of the cemetery.

An interesting piece which was published as a dagger[23] can be found among the weapons from Căpuşu Mare. Unfortunately today the blade is in a fragmentary state and parts of the hilt are missing. On the basis of the actual dimensions of the fragments identified in the

[14] AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, 314–317; RUSSU/ROTH 1956, 27–34.

[15] For example Vlaha-Pad: STANCIU ET ALII 2007, 394; on Langobard territory Brunn am Gebirge (Austria), graves 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 15, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 46: ASPÖCK/STADLER 2003, 178–195, Taf. 1, 3, 4, 6, 11, 20, 21, 23, 24, 28; About the possible interpretations of this phenomenon see ASPÖCK 2003.

[16] For the possibilities of reconstruction of the process see ASPÖCK 2003, 243–245.

[17] AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, 314.

[18] AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, 317.

[19] BELDIMANN 1990–1993, 183 (the cemetery appears as an Avar one); RUSTOIU 1997, 38–39; HICA 2004, 195–196.

[20] RUSTOIU 1997, 39.

[21] Band, graves 33 (two pieces), 65, 73, 103 and two isolated finds from the territory of the cemetery: KOVÁCS 1913, Fig. 34/8–8a, 34/7–7a, 48/8–8a, 53/3–3a, 60/2–2a, 85/1,1a-b, 85/2–2a; Noşlac, grave 6: RUSU 1962, Fig. 2/23; Moreşti, grave 17: POPESCU 1974, Taf. 5/8–9, HOREDT 1979, Abb. 76/9–10. They appear even more frequent in the Avar Age cemeteries, see GARAM 2003, 96–101, 118–119, List 1–5.

[22] GARAM 2003, 116.

[23] AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, 317, Fig. 1/15.

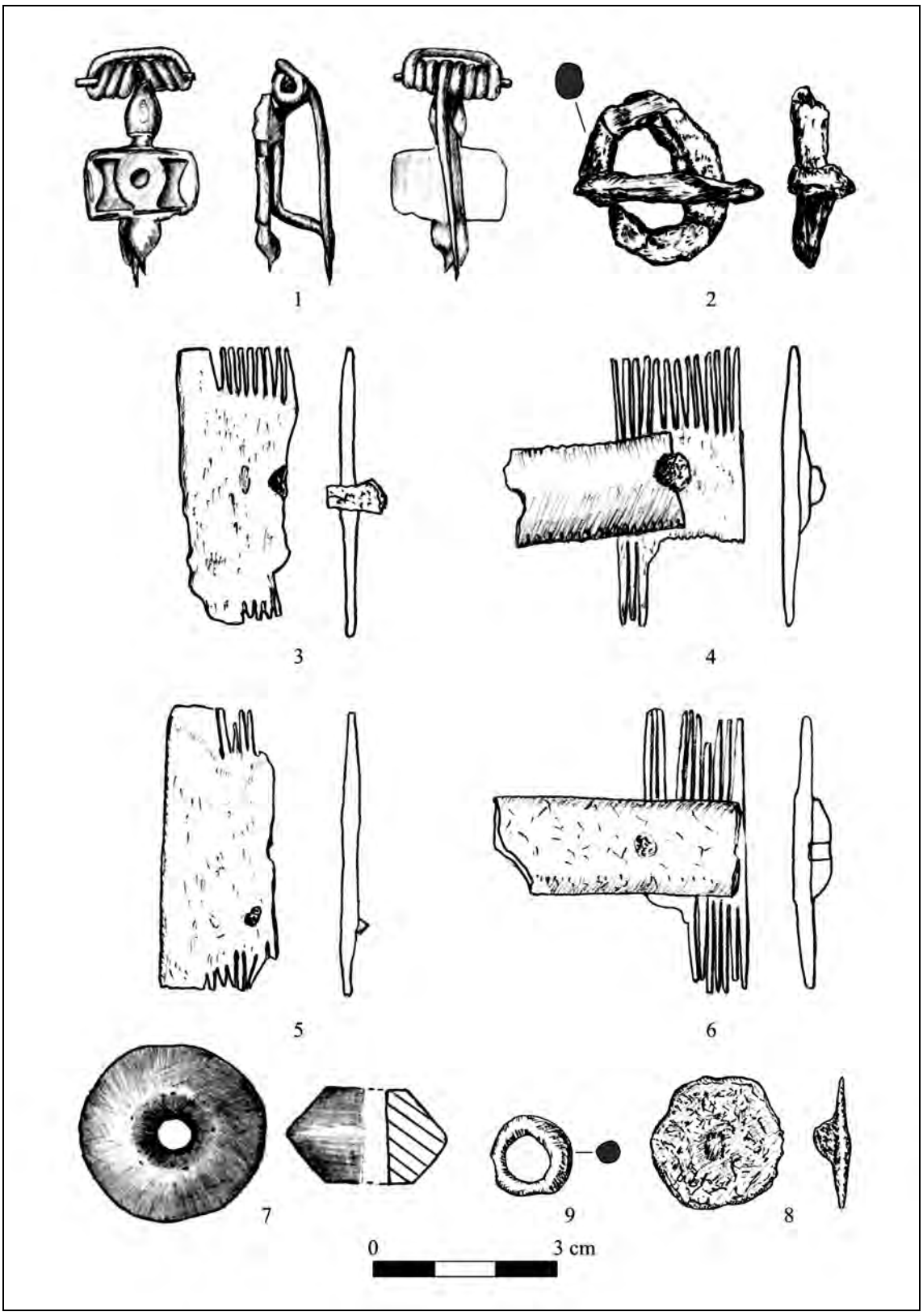

Fig. 2 Finds from the cemetery from Căpuşu Mare – Cânepişte identified in the National History Museum of Transylvania. 1:1

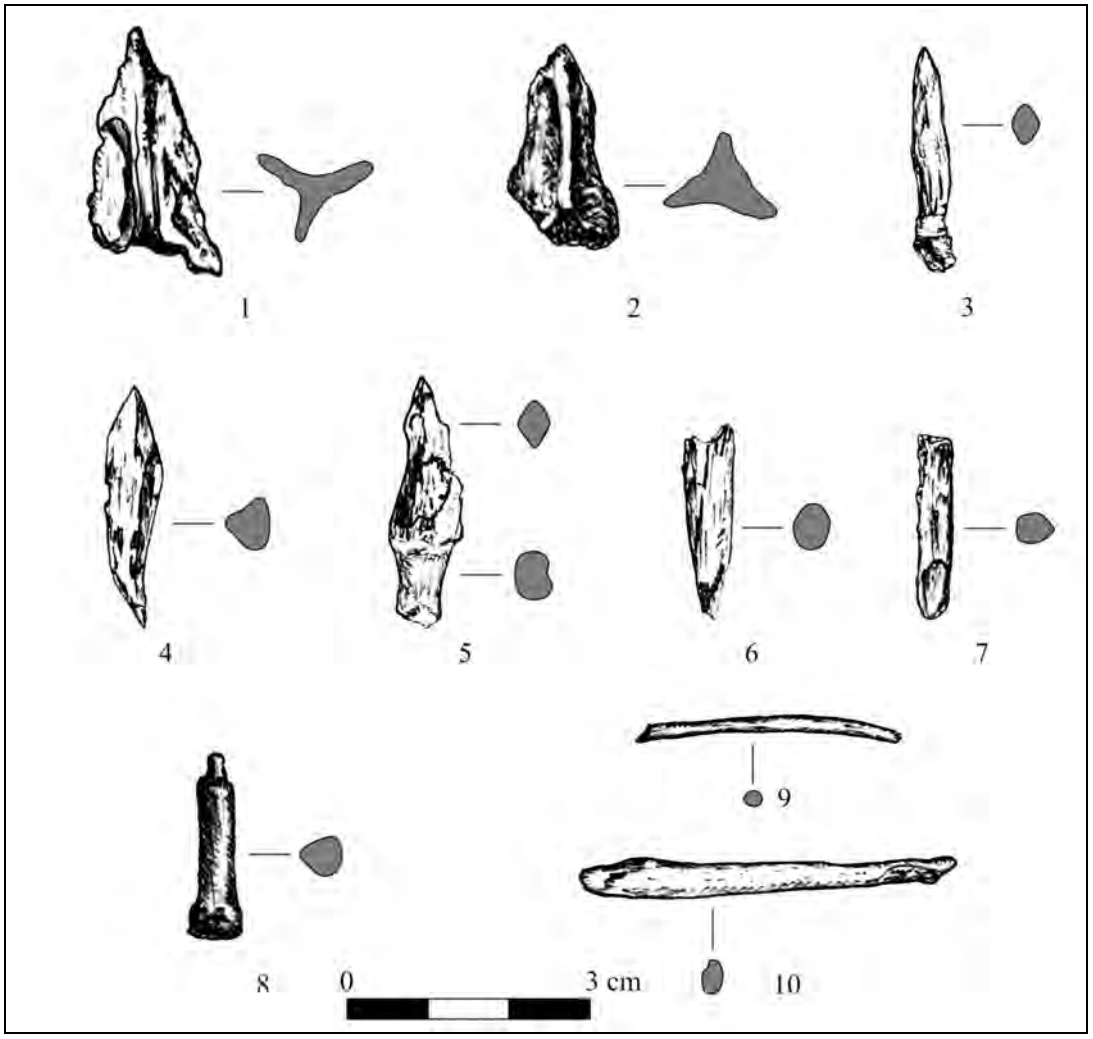

Fig. 3 Finds from the cemetery from Căpuşu Mare – Cânepişte identified in the National History Museum of Transylvania. 1:1

National History Museum of Transylvania and of the drawing from the initial publication, a flexed, single-edged blade can be reconstructed, which together with the hilt measures approximately 31–34 cm (Fig. 5). On the grounds of its dimensions and form of the blade, this object probably can be identified as a seax[24] and can be related to the group of seaxes with narrow blade (*Schmalsax*). In most of the cases the pieces belonging to this category have a longer blade than the one from Căpuşu Mare[25], but there are known a few shorter seaxes as well, with a length varying between 30–40 cm[26]. It is generally accepted that this type of weapon has eastern origins and appeared in Central Europe in the Migration Period. Its first representatives are known from graves of eastern nomadic character and later it was adopted by the Germanic communities[27].

[24] For this observation I am thankful for Gergely Csiky.

[25] FRIESINGER/SZAMEIT 1984, 150–151; ANKE 1998, Teil I, 93 (the group of the so-called "schmale Langsaxe").

[26] For example Wien-Leopoldau, grave 3 (38 cm) and hoard 2 (35.4 cm): FRIESINGER/SZAMEIT 1984, 130, Abb. 12/6, 13/4; Velatice, grave 9/37 (30.5 cm): TEJRAL 1982, Obr. 55/3; these were included in the category of the *Kampfmesser* by D. Quast, see QUAST 1999, 118.

[27] FRIESINGER/SZAMEIT 1984, 150–151; ANKE 1998, Teil I, 93–99; TEJRAL 2005, 130.

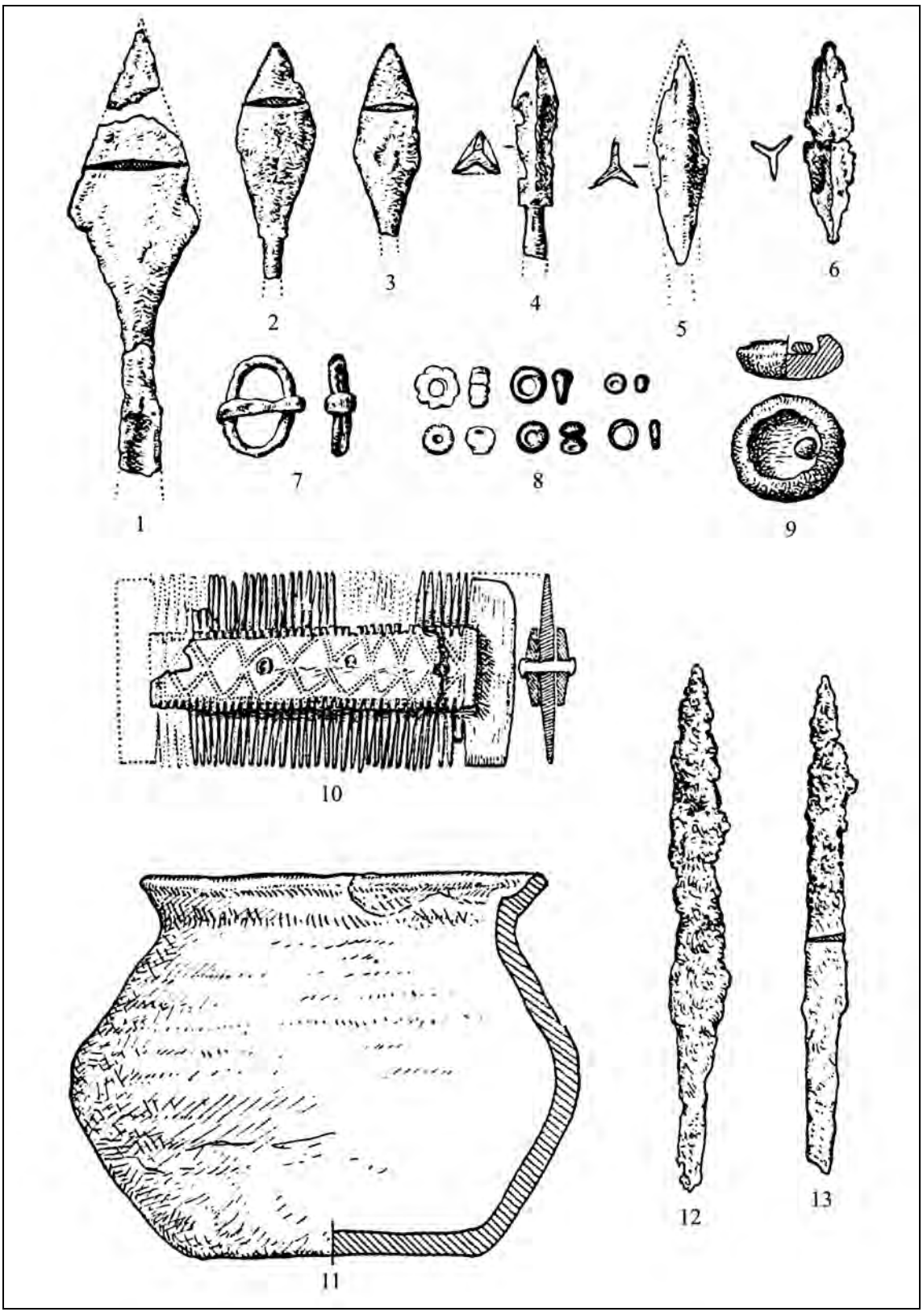

Fig. 4. Finds from the cemetery from Căpuşu Mare – Cânepişte which could not be identified in the National History Museum of Transylvania. Not to scale. (after AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952).

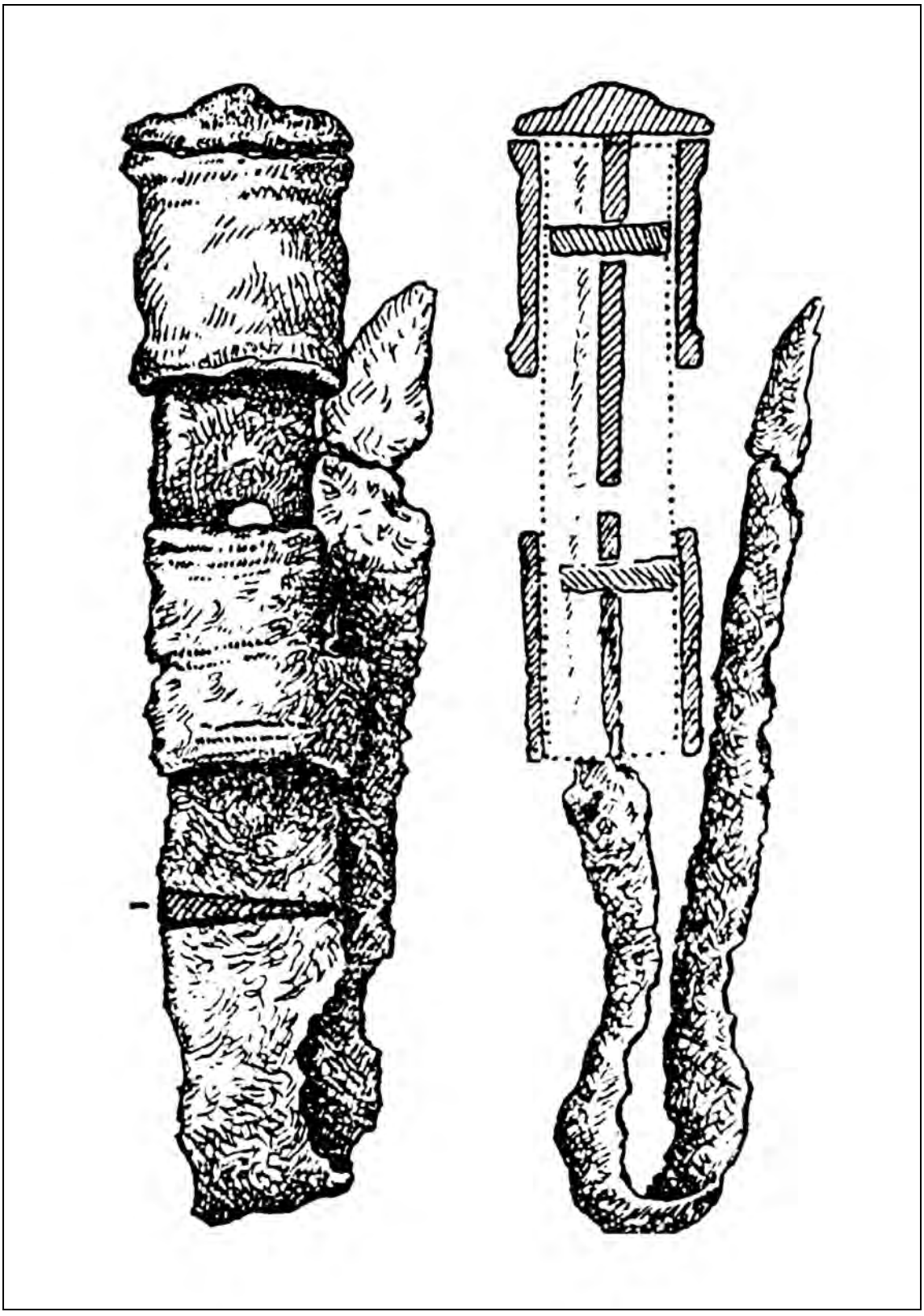

Fig. 5. The sax from Căpuşu Mare – Cânepişte (after AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/15) Cca 1:1.

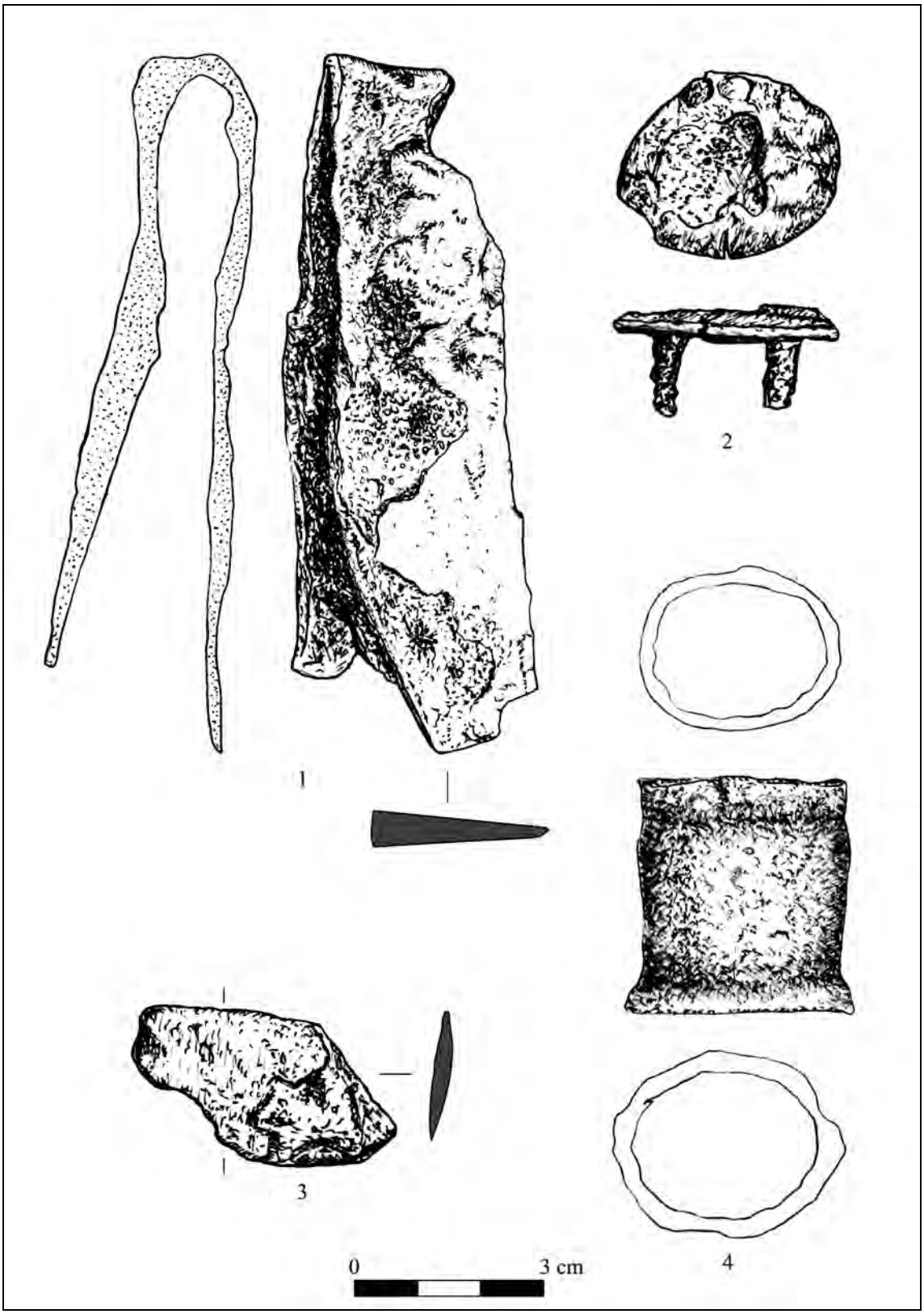

Fig. 6 The elements of the seax from Căpuşu Mare – Cânepişte identified in the National History Museum of Transylvania.

The metallic part of the hilt is pierced in two places and has two cylindrical plates and an oval pommel. A wooden hilt can be reconstructed fixed on the iron part with two nails and ornamented with the two plates and the pommel fixed on the wooden part of the hilt with two rivets. Such kind of seaxes are unusual in the Gepidic cemeteries. Swords with similar structure are rare, a few pieces with silver or bronze plates are known from earlier graves.

A sword from the late Roman grave 2 from *Aquincum* (Budapest-Újlak, Bécsi út, 42, Hungary) has a hilt with pierced hilt and a kidney-shaped pommel composed of a bronze and a silver plate, fixed on the wooden hilt with three bronze rivets, and two cylindrical plates with oval section, composed of gilded silver bands (Fig. 7/1)[28]. M. Nagy considered that the hilt of the sword shows an oriental type, which was decorated with plates produced in late antique technique, and at the same time it represents an earlier variant for the Hunnic and Germanic elite swords. She dated the sword from *Aquincum* in the last third of the 4th century[29].

Another sword with two silver plates on the hilt and pierced hilt was found in the rich grave 43 of cemetery 1 from Cebelda (Georgia) (Fig. 7/2), dated to the end of the 4th – beginning of the 5th century[30].

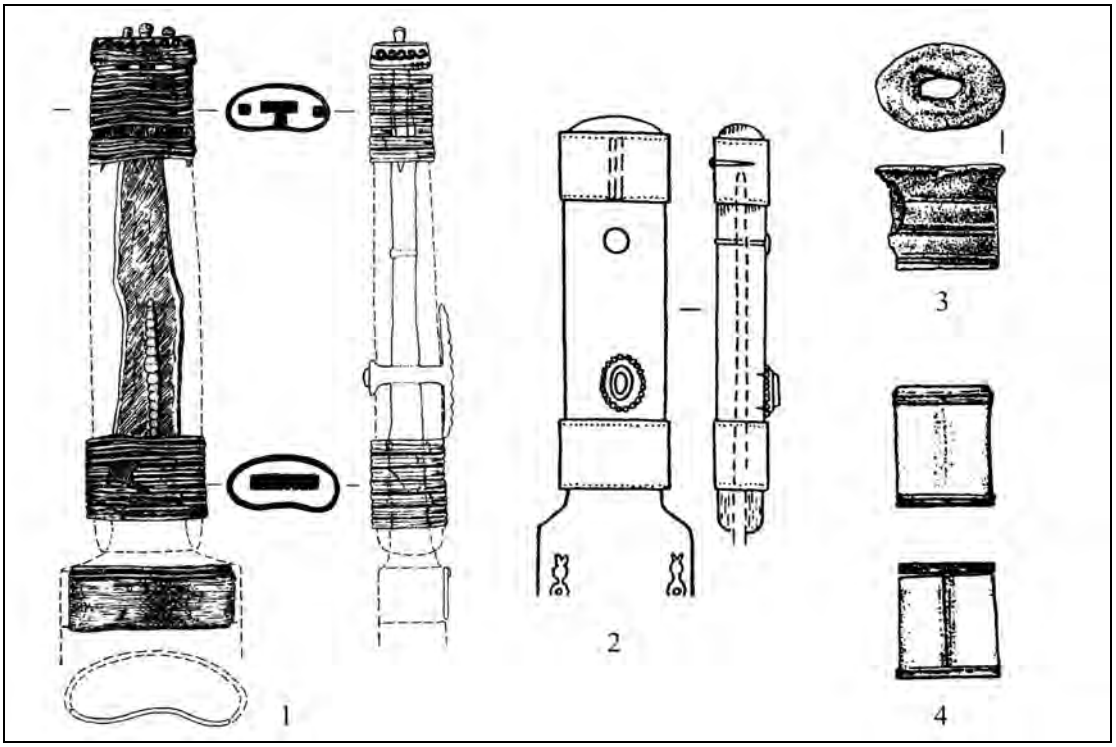

Fig. 7. Swords with similar hilt structure to the seax from Căpuşu Mare – Cânepişte: 1. *Aquincum* (Budapest-Újlak, Bécsi út, 42), grave 2. 2. Cebelda – cemetery 1, grave 43. 3. Iatrus (Krivina). 4. Wien-Leopoldau, hoard 2. Not to scale. (1. after NAGY 2005, 2. after KAZANSKI 1994, 3. after GOMOLKA-FUCHS 1999, 4. after FRIESINGER/SZAMEIT 1984)

A sword with two cylindrical silver plates on the hilt was discovered in the hoard 2 from Wien-Leopoldau (Austria) (Fig. 7/4)[31]. E. Szameit considered it a spatha of eastern origins typical for the Hun Age, dated in the first half of the 5th century[32].

[28] NAGY 2005a, Abb. 16, 20, 21.
[29] NAGY 2005a, 466.
[30] KAZANSKI 1994, 439, Fig. 21/15.
[31] FRIESINGER/SZAMEIT 1984, Abb. 13/5–8.
[32] FRIESINGER/SZAMEIT 1984, 149.

A cylindrical bronze pommel is known from the late antique fort from *Iatrus* (Krivina, Bulgaria) (Fig. 7/3), considered – on the basis of Hun Age analogies – an oriental element of the late 4th century – first half of the 5th century and connected together with the above mentioned sword from Wien-Leopoldau to the workshops from the Bosporus working in late antique techniques[33].

A relation between the above mentioned hilts and the scabbard chapes of the so-called Gundremmingen type from the Late Roman Age – Early Merovingian Period can be observed. These are composed of an oval metal plate fixed on the scabbard with rivets[34]. Some of them contain also a cylindrical plate with oval section. The owner of a double-edged sword with a scabbard chape of this type from Zalaszentgrót – Szabadság utca, 56. (Hungary) (Fig. 8/2) was considered an Eastern Germanic warrior from the end of the 4th – beginning of the 5th century[35]. The rich grave from Jakuszowice (Poland) with a Gundremmingen type scabbard chape fixed with two rivets (Fig. 8/1) can be dated to the beginning of the 5th century[36].

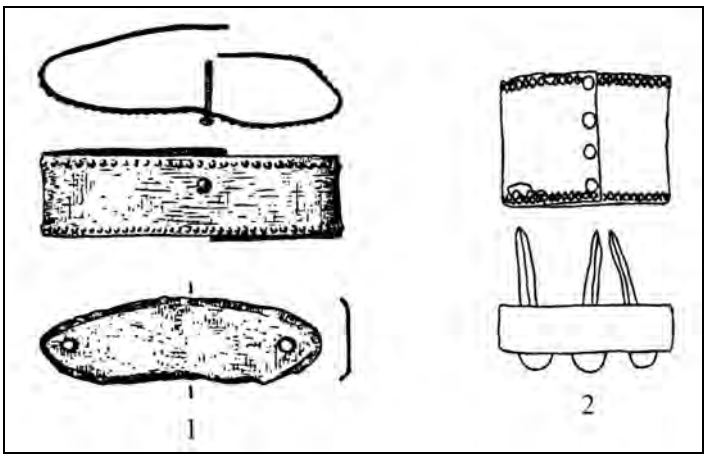

Fig. 8. Scabbard chapes of Gundremmingen type: 1. Jakuszowice. 2. Zalaszentgrót – Szabadság utca, 56. Not to scale. (1. after GODŁOWSKI 1995, 2. after MÜLLER 1976)

As we could see the seax from Căpuşu Mare shows relations with the above mentioned swords from the end of the 4th – first half of the 5th century. Most of these are made of silver or bronze and were found in rich graves[37], so they can be related to the elite warriors of the period. We cannot exclude the possibility that the hilt of the sax from Căpuşu Mare is a later imitation of them.

It is worth mentioning the fact that hilts with similar structure can be found on a few Avar Age swords, too. The best analogy is the sabre with silver plate and pommel fixed with three bronze rivets from Kecskemét-Ballószög (Hungary)[38]. A sword with a similar hilt is known from Budapest-Tihany tér, grave 6 (Hungary)[39]. The sabre from Kecskemét-Ballószög belongs to the type of swords with P-shaped suspension loop which represents the latest group of the early Avar swords and can be dated to the middle of the 7th century[40].

An other interesting characteristic of the seax from Căpuşu Mare is the flexed blade. The custom of putting flexed weapons in the grave shows Imperial Age Vandal traditions known from the cremation graves of the Przeworsk-culture[41]. Later, in the end of the 4th –

[33] GOMOLKA-FUCHS 1999, 515–516; GOMOLKA-FUCHS 2007, 213–214.

[34] WERNER 1966, 134–141, their reconstruction: Abb. 2.

[35] MÜLLER 1976, 62, 11/4–5, 12. kép; M. Nagy dated it later than the sword from Budapest-Újlak, Bécsi út, 42., see NAGY 2005a, 466.

[36] GODŁOWSKI 1995, 156–157 (with further bibliography).

[37] Among the scabbard chapes of Gundremmingen type are known iron pieces, too, for example from Liebenau: WERNER 1966, 134, Abb. 2/1.

[38] SZABÓ 1939, 185, I/1. tábla.

[39] GARAM 1991, 11. kép.

[40] GARAM 1990, 255–256; GARAM 1991, 145–148.

[41] The exact meaning of this ritual custom cannot be identified, see CZARNECKA 2004, 281–283.

beginning of the 5th century flexed weapons appear extremely rare[42] and after the Hun Age they disappear (we do not know any flexed weapon from the Gepidic territory).

It is remarkable the high number (11) of arrow-heads discovered in the cemetery. However, on the basis of the drawings[43], it seems that the arrow-heads published in 1952 are not the same with those identified by us in the deposit of the National History Museum of Transylvania, although we cannot exclude this possibility due to the poor state of preservation of the latter.

The majority of them belong to general used types of the period (leaf-shaped and three-edged forms) which cannot offer any data for a closer dating of the cemetery. It deserves attention the fact that the pieces published in 1952 (except the one found by Gy. László) were discovered in the same grave[44]. The association of different types of arrow-heads is not unusual in the Gepidic milieu[45]. Unfortunately we do not know any further association of these arrow-heads with other weapons or objects, but their high number suggests a grave of a relatively rich warrior.

The only ceramic vessel of the cemetery comes from the grave discovered by Gy. László. It can be included in the general category of the wheel-made pots of poor quality. On the basis of its form it belongs to the pots with everted rim and globular body with the maximal diameter on the middle third of the body. This type of vessel has a large distribution both in the Gepidic cemeteries and settlements[46]. The pot from Căpuşu Mare differs from the majority of the mentioned pieces from the point of view of its proportions. Unfortunately its exact dimensions are not known, but it is sure that its maximal diameter is bigger than its height.

The other finds (knives, spindle-whorls, bronze rivet, iron ring) of the cemetery – without knowing the context of their discovery – cannot offer further information for the interpretation of the cemetery.

Conclusions

In conclusion we can affirm that the cemetery from Căpuşu Mare – Cânepişte belongs to the group of the Gepidic *Reihengräberfelder* from Transylvania. Its dimensions and borders are not known, but in any case there is no reason to presume that the whole cemetery was excavated. It is important mentioning that the graves show a concentration in the south-eastern area of the surface I (Fig. 1). On the western part of the same surface no graves were found, so it can be supposed that the western border of the cemetery is there. Regarding to the northern and north-western edges of the necropolis we do not have any information. There is no data about the situation in the territory of the sand pits, at least four graves were situated in this area (graves 1–4), but we cannot exclude the possibility that more graves were destroyed by the clay exploitation works. It is sure that the surface II shows a much lower density than the other one, including just one grave. This shows possibly that this is the south-eastern border area of the cemetery.

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[42] A flexed short sword (Kurzschwert) was found at Csongrád-Kenderföldek (Hungary), grave 40: PÁRDUCZ 1959, Taf. I/8; Another flexed sword is known from Ártánd-Kisfarkasdomb (Hungary), grave 43: MESTERHÁZY 1989, 194–195; ISTVÁNOVITS/MESTERHÁZY/NEPPER 1996, 115–116, nr. 4.193.

[43] AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, Fig. 1/1–6.

[44] AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, 317.

[45] For example: Szentes-Kökényzug (Hungary), grave 23 and 57: CSALLÁNY 1961, 27, 33, Taf. VII/1–12, XII/7–9, 11–17; Szolnok-Szanda (Hungary), grave 191: BÓNA 2002, 228, Taf. 52/191.1, 107; Szőreg-Téglagyár (Hungary), grave 73: NAGY 2005b, 132, Taf. 60/73.6–10.

[46] The vessels belonging to this type have a lot of variants and in the opinion of M. Nagy they represent the Germanic utilitarian pottery of the 5th–6th century in the graves, see BÓNA/NAGY 2002, 133–134; On the settlements the majority of them have bigger dimensions, therefore it was suggested by Á. B. Tóth that the smaller variants (the so-called "Töpfchen") were not used only for cooking, but also for eating and drinking, that is why they can be found in the graves, too, see B. TÓTH 2006, 94.

The dating of the excavated portion of the cemetery is difficult due to the fact that there is no artefact which could be dated to a shorter period. All of them – except the seax – are general distributed types which were used in the whole period of the Gepidic *Reihengräberfelder*. On the basis of the relations of the seax with earlier Late Roman and Hun Age swords a dating in the second half of the 5th century can be supposed without excluding the possibility of a later period.

The fact that all the graves were unearthed shortly after the burial, as well as the relatively high number of the weapons indicate that the cemetery from Căpuşu Mare – Cânepişte did not belong to a poor community as its publishers presumed[47]. It was part of the Gepidic community from the area of the Someş valley from the 5th–6th centuries which becomes more and more distinct in the last years after the new excavations[48].

II. The isolated brooch from Căpuşu Mare

The collections of the National History Museum of Transylvania include a bronze bow brooch (Fig. 9, 10) which was discovered near Căpuşu Mare (Inv. nr. V 17677). The brooch has a semicircular headplate decorated in "*Kerbschnitt*" technique with a simple spiral motif. On the two edges and on the top three knobs can be observed which are ornamented with three parallel incised lines. The bow is wide, slightly arched and undecorated. The footplate is oval and is ornamented with incised concentric oval motifs. On the two edges can be identified two circular mounts for precious stones or glass plates which today are missing. The footplate presents traces of rust. The foot is longish and decorated with nine incised parallel lines. It ends in a swallow-tail-shaped foot. Dimensions: L: 5.2 cm, W: headplate: 2.3 cm, footplate: 2.1 cm, Th: 0.1 cm, M: 5 g.

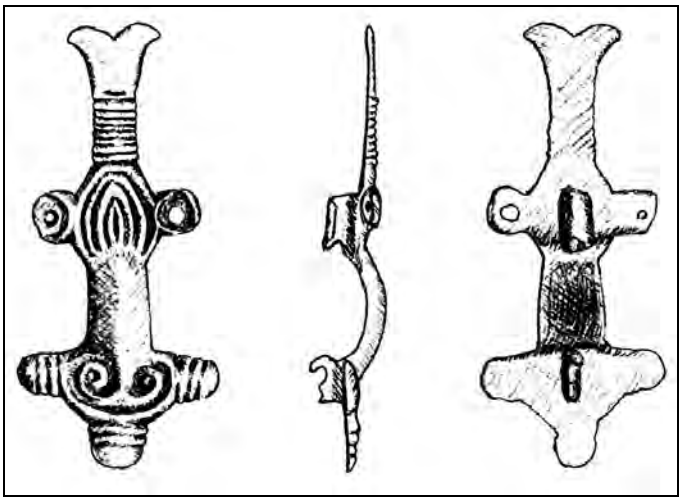

Fig. 9 The brooch from Căpuşu Mare (drawing)

Unfortunately the exact place where the brooch was discovered and the context of discovery are unknown. In the inventory book of the MNIT it is mentioned only that it was donated for the museum by Iancu Moţu in 1975. K. Horedt, the first publisher of the brooch, specified that the place where the brooch was found is situated east from the village and south from the road and it is not identical with the Căpuşu Mare – Cânepişte where the cemetery lied. According to him, it was found together with other brooches[49]. Later, on the base of Horedt's information, J. Cseh wrote that in the mentioned place more graves had been discovered[50]. However we do not have any certainty that the brooch

[47] AŞEZĂRI SLAVE 1952, 317.

[48] In addition to the already known discoveries in this area, recently two new important cemeteries were researched at Vlaha-Pad: STANCIU ET ALII 2007 and at Floreşti-Polus Center: POLUS 2008; OPREANU/ VOIŞIAN/BOTA 2007; a smaller cemetery was excavated at Cluj-Napoca – C. Coposu street: HICA 2004, 201–205.

[49] HOREDT 1977, 267–268, Fundliste 2, nr. 3.

[50] CSEH 1993, 89–90.

was found in a grave, although this presumption seems to be probable. It is supported also by the rust traces observed on the footplate of the brooch, which indicate that it had a contact with an iron object.

In most of the cases the typological interpretations were based on the swallow-tail-shaped ending of the brooch. K. Horedt considered that it shows Thuringian influences[51]. The same conclusion was drawn by J. Cseh, too[52].

In his study about the Early Migration Period in Romania, based on the head- and footplate, R. Harhoiu included the brooch from Căpuşu Mare in the group of the *Kerbschnitt* decorated brooches with three knobs on the headplate (*Kerbschnittverzierte Fibeln mit Dreiknopfplatte*). About the swallow-tail-shaped ending he mentioned that it does not appear so often[53].

Recently, on the base of two brooches from Ártánd-Nagyfarkasdomb (Hungary), grave 182, K. Mesterházy interpreted the brooch from Căpuşu Mare as a Thuringian import[54].

Fig. 10 The brooch from Căpuşu Mare (photo)

Indeed, brooches with swallow-tail-shaped ending are not known from the Gepidic territory. The only brooches with a similar ending are the already mentioned pieces from Ártánd-Nagyfarkasdomb, grave 182 (Fig. 11)[55]. These brooches can be included in the Wiesbaden type, their closest analogy being known from Wulfen (Germany), grave 2[56]. The most important characteristics of this type were defined by J. Werner: „Zweigliedrigkeit, d.h. Armbrustkonstruktion mit langer Spiralrolle, unterer Sehne und quer durchgesteckter eiserner oder bronzener Spiralachse, verbunden mit einem Fibelkörper aus Silber- oder Bronzeblech, bestehend aus einem breiten hohlen Bügel, der stets mit Querrippen bzw. Querwülsten und (oder) aufgelegten Perldrähten verziert ist, und einer Fußplatte, die rhombisch bis spitzdreieckig ist oder – seltener – herzförmig abschließt. Die Fibeln besitzen gelegentlich aufgeschobene Knöpfe an den Enden der Spiralachsen und einen an der Bügellasche eingezapften Knopf („Bügelknopf"). Halbrunde oder rechteckige Kopfplatten fehlen ebenso wie Kerbschnittdekor auf dem Fibelkörper. Die Fibeln sind also nicht gegossen, sondern aus starkem Metallblech gefertigt, gelegentlich gepunzt oder graviert bzw. nielliert und vergoldet (nur bei den silbernen Exemplaren)"[57].

As K. Mesterházy concluded, the brooches from Ártánd-Nagyfarkasdomb, grave 182 can be considered Thuringian import pieces, which appear in Gepidic milieu. On the basis of the western analogies and of the buckle found in the same grave, he dated the two brooches in the second half of the 5th century, considering that their owner was a Gepidic woman because they were found under the shoulders, so they were worn not in Thuringian, but in a characteristic Gepidic way[58]. In the case of the brooch from Căpuşu Mare we cannot affirm the same. As we could see in Werner's description, it has nothing common with the Wiesbaden type, so a direct relation between the brooches from Căpuşu Mare and Ártánd-Nagyfarkasdomb can be excluded.

[51] HOREDT 1977, 256.
[52] CSEH 1993, 90.
[53] HARHOIU 1998, 103.
[54] MESTERHÁZY 1999, 85.
[55] MESTERHÁZY 1984, Abb. 1/1–2.
[56] MESTERHÁZY 1984, 78–80.
[57] WERNER 1981, 227
[58] MESTERHÁZY 1984, 78–84; J. Werner dated the Wiesbaden type brooches mostly in the first half of the 5th century: WERNER 1981, 253; An earlier dating was proposed by M. Menke: MENKE 1986, 73–74.

Fig. 11 The finds from Ártánd-Nagyfarkasdomb, grave 182 (after MESTERHÁZY 1984).

A much closer relation can be observed between the brooch from Căpuşu Mare and the group of so-called "brooches with swallow-tail-shaped ending" (*Fibeln mit Schwalbenschwanzendigung*) (Fig. 12). H. Kühn considered that this type derived from the Thuringian brooches, although its distribution map does not show any concentration on the territories occupied by the Thuringians[59]. Later this affirmation was generally accepted[60]. Firstly Kühn dated this type in the 6th century, mostly in the first half of it[61], later he changed his opinion, dating it in the period between 450–525[62]. Recently a similar dating was proposed by A. Koch, too[63]. The distribution map of the type shows a concentration in the Rhine area[64].

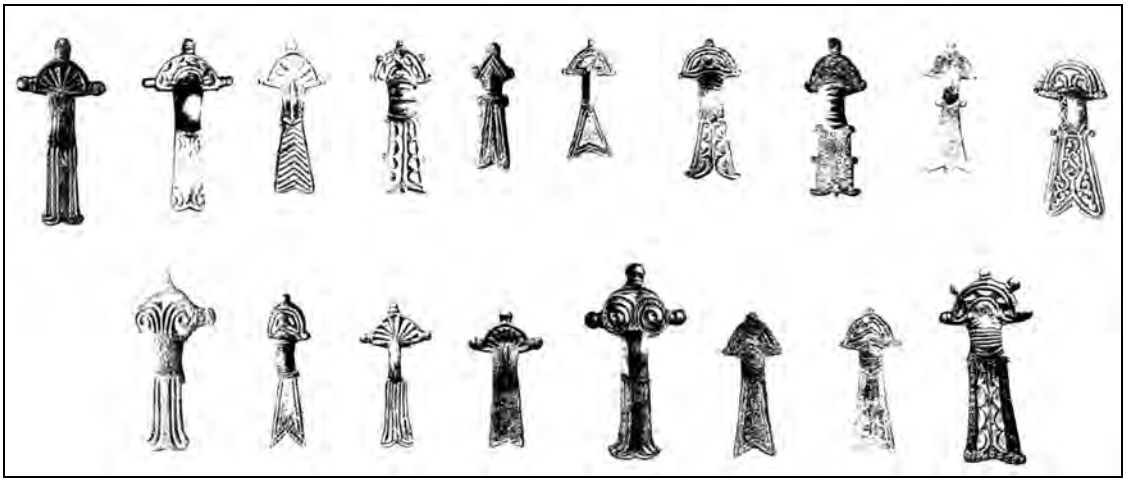

Fig. 12 Brooches with swallow-tail-shaped ending (after KÜHN 1974).

[59] KÜHN 1965, 194–196.

[60] J. Werner saw a relation between a few of these brooches and the Wiesbaden type: WERNER 1981, 239; see also KOCH 1998, 30; TEJRAL 2002, 318–319.

[61] KÜHN 1965, 199.

[62] KÜHN 1974, 610.

[63] KOCH 1998, 29–30.

[64] KÜHN 1965, 194–196, 199; KOCH 1998, 30.

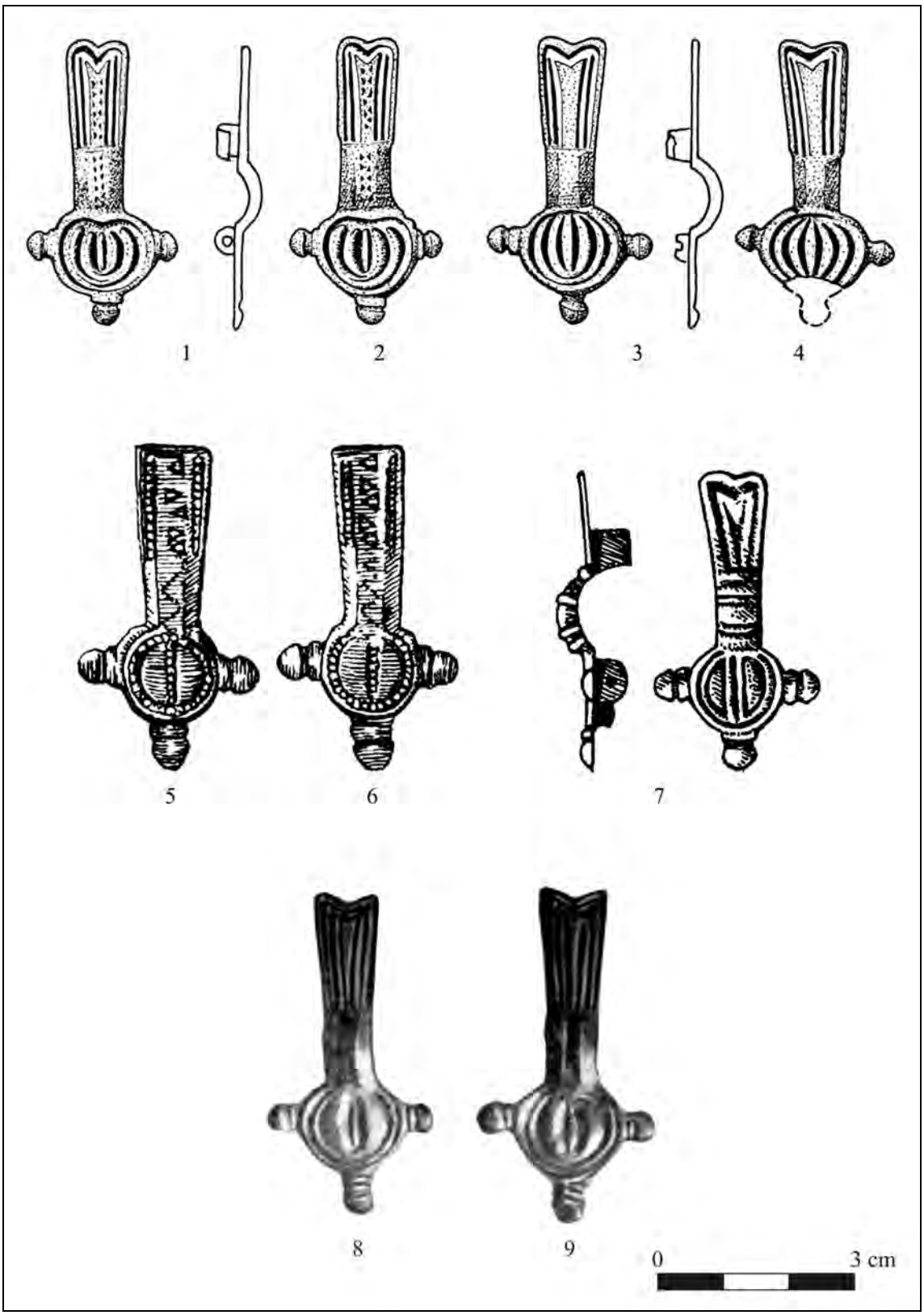

Fig. 13 Brooches of Béndekpuszta type: 1–2. Hács-Béndekpuszta, grave 19, 3–4. Hács-Béndekpuszta, grave 20, 5–6. Letkés, grave 1, 7–8. Keszthely-Fenékpuszta, grave 10, 9. Ringelsdorf-Kuse (see note 69).

In our opinion in the frame of the brooches with swallow-tail-shaped ending, called Wiesloch type by H. Kühn[65] or Jena-Lobeda type by A. Koch[66], can be distinguished more variants. Among these the brooch from Căpuşu Mare stays in the closest relation with the brooches from Elstertrebnitz (Germany), grave 9[67] and Praha-Libeň (Czech Republic)[68], which have a semicircular headplate, ornamented in *Kerbschnitt* technique with a spiral motif.

It is important mentioning that brooches with similar ending can be found in the Eastern Germanic cemeteries as well. First of all we have to mention the so-called Béndekpuszta type brooches (Fig. 13). On the base of their distribution area[69] they can be considered products of a Pannonian workshop dated in the so-called prelangobard period[70].

All the mentioned brooches with swallow-tail-shaped ending differ from the one from Căpuşu Mare from the point of view of their structure, because none of them has a rhombic footplate. There are two cases known to us when the swallow-tail-shaped ending is combined with a rhombic footplate. The first one is an isolated find from Bernhardsthal-Aulüssen (Austria) (Fig. 14)[71]. Similar to the brooch from Căpuşu Mare, it shows a *Kerbschnitt* decoration. Unfortunately the find-circumstances are unknown, so the cultural and chronological interpretation of this brooch cannot be easily determined. In J. Tejral's opinion, on the base of its structure and decoration, it is an Eastern Germanic brooch[72], which probably derived from the Béndekpuszta type and can be dated in the 2nd phase of the Middle Danubian chronology (Mitteldonauländische Phase 2), namely in the period between 450–470/80[73]. The second find similar to the one from Căpuşu Mare is a pair of brooches from grave 64 of the cemetery from Tolna-Mözs (Hungary) (Fig. 15)[74]. These were placed on the chest of the deceased, so they were worn in an Eastern Germanic (Ostrogothic) way[75]. The brooch is decorated in *Kerbschnitt* technique and it has good analogies among the Eastern Germanic brooches[76].

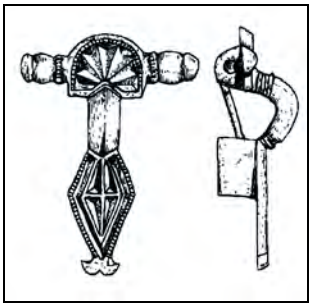

Fig. 14 The brooch from Bernhardsthal-Aulüssen. Without scale (after TEJRAL 2002).

Similar forms of swallow-tail-shaped ending as the brooch from Căpuşu Mare can be found on a few Germanic buckle plates, too. On Gepidic territory a buckle plate of this type was found in the grave 2 of the cemetery from Kormadin-Jakovo (Serbia)[77]. Its best analogy is known from the Langobard period cemetery from Hegykő (Hungary), grave 11[78]. On the basis of the buckles found in the same grave (the so-called *Schilddornschnallen*), the buckle plate from Kormadin-Jakovo can be dated in the 6th century. A similar dating was proposed for the piece

[65] KÜHN 1974, 605–610.
[66] KOCH 1998, 27–30.
[67] MILDENBERGER 1959, Abb. 20/3.
[68] SVOBODA 1965, Tab. XXXIII/2; TEJRAL 1982, Obr. 39/1.
[69] Hács-Béndekpuszta (Hungary), grave 19 and 20: KISS 1995, Abb. 13/19.1–2, 20.8–9; Letkés (Hungary), grave 1: PAPP/SALAMON 1978–1979, Taf. 54/1, 56/3; Keszthely-Fenékpuszta (Hungary), grave 10: ERDÉLYI 1982, Ris. 3/2–3; Ringelsdorf-Kuse (Austria): STUPPNER 1989, Abb. 1429; for their distribution map see TEJRAL 2008, Abb. 4.
[70] KISS 1995, 308; TEJRAL 2002, 320; TEJRAL 2008, 258.
[71] TEJRAL 2002, Abb. 6/9.
[72] TEJRAL 2002, 321.
[73] TEJRAL 2005, 121–122.
[74] STRAUB 2006, Abb. 2/2; TEJRAL 2008, Abb. 5/3.
[75] STRAUB 2006, 442–443.
[76] For example Ţaga: CHIRILĂ/CHIFOR 1977, Pl. I/1, II/2; Kyjov (Czech Republic): TEJRAL 1982, Obr. 37/3.
[77] DIMITRIJEVIĆ 1960, Tab. I/9, III/16.
[78] BÓNA 1961–1962, Taf. XXIII/15.

from Hegykő, too[79], so both of the buckle plates are later than the brooch from Căpuşu Mare. Two other *Kerbschnitt* ornamented buckles with swallow-tail-shaped ending on their plate were discovered in the grave from Taurapilis (Lithuania), which shows the strong relations existed between the Baltic and the Danubian region[80].

The other components of the brooch from Căpuşu Mare can be interpreted much easier. Both the simple spiral motif of the headplate and the oval or rhombic motif of the footplate are one of the most popular decorations of the Gepidic (and general of the Eastern Germanic) brooches. The combination of these two ornaments was very frequent used by the Gepidic craftsmen. It appears on the small bow brooches similar to the one from Căpuşu Mare[81] and, later, on the bigger bow brooches with five knobs, too[82], which probably can be considered a type derived from the former one. Both of the two mentioned elements appear often combined with other types of decorations as well. The decoration of the foot with incised parallel lines can also be found on a few Gepidic brooches[83]. The round mounts on the sides of the footplate is also a frequent element of the Eastern Germanic brooches[84]. This kind of brooches appears rarely in the territories occupied by the Franks and usually they are considered of Eastern Germanic/Ostrogothic origin[85].

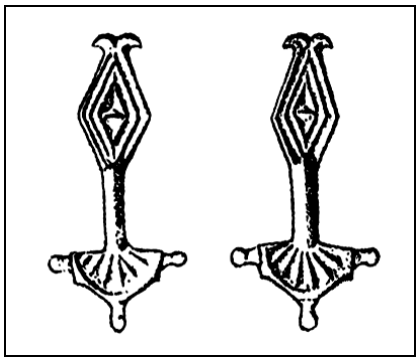

Fig. 15. The brooches from Tolna-Mözs, grave 64. Not to scale (after STRAUB 2006)

So, on the basis of the above mentioned characteristics we think that the brooch from Căpuşu Mare can be considered – except its swallow-tail-shaped ending – a typical Eastern Germanic/Gepidic piece. Therefore it cannot be interpreted as an import. It seems to be much more probable that it is a product of a local workshop from the second half of the 5th century, on which elements of local tradition were combined with a more unusual, foreign one. Which type of brooches (Jena-Lobeda, Béndekpuszta etc.) constituted the prototype for the latter, cannot be easily determined.

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[79] BÓNA 1961–1962, 60.

[80] WERNER 1977, 88–90, Abb. 4/1–2.

[81] Slimnic: GLODARIU 1974, Abb. 2/4–5; Sânnicolau Mare, CSALLÁNY 1961, Taf. CCXVI/7; Kiszombor (Hungary), grave 88: CSALLÁNY 1961, Taf. CXXXIV/2; Srpski Krstur (Serbia): MRKOBRAD 1980, Taf. XXXV/13 (the best analogy for the brooch from Căpuşu Mare).

[82] Szentes-Kökényzug, grave 49: CSALLÁNY 1961, Taf. VIII/10; Szentes-Nagyhegy, grave 22: CSALLÁNY 1961, Taf. XXVII/9; Szolnok-Zagyvapart (Hungary), grave 16: CSEH 2005, Taf. 37/16.1, 94/1; near *Sirmium* (Serbia): MRKOBRAD 1980, Taf. XXXVI/1; Subotica (Serbia): MRKOBRAD 1980, Taf. XXXVI/4; fragmentary brooches: Szentes-Berekhát, grave 27: CSALLÁNY 1961, LXXIX/17; Pecica: CSALLÁNY 1961, Taf. CCXIII/14.

[83] For example Slimnic: GLODARIU 1974, Abb. 2/4–5; Oradea: HARHOIU 1998, Taf. C/8–9; Cluj-Cordoş, grave 4: HICA/FERENCZI 2006, Fig. 1/6; Szentes-Berekhát, grave 249: CSALLÁNY 1961, Taf. LXXXV/1; Hódmezővásárhely-Kishomok (Hungary), grave 105: BÓNA/NAGY 2002, Taf. 25/105.2, 77/3; Szolnok-Szanda, grave 114: BÓNA 2002: Taf. 44/114.3, 102/1; Subotica: MRKOBRAD 1980, Taf. XXXVI/4.

[84] TEJRAL 2002, 323.

[85] KOCH 1998, 222–226.

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