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THE PROBLEM OF THE PRIMARY ACCULTURATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MIGRATION PERIOD*

The objective of the paper is to discuss and develop themes concerning aspects of the mutual cultural interaction between migrating human populations in the specific context of the barbarian movement westward which began sometimes in the terminal stage of the 4th century. These discussions we made possible by the wealth of the new data that is currently becoming available and which will, it is hoped, shed new light onto the subject. There is insufficient space here to enter into detailed analysis of all the aspects concerning this complex period, so I content myself with only two points. Firstly attention will be focused on the long-standing problem of how these diverse groups of people are reflected in the archaeological record, and secondly to investigate and discuss the general characteristic of the material culture connected with the peoples of the Middle Danube who were intimately associated with the migratory movement.

Some years ago there was very little archaeological evidence which could be brought to bear upon the initial stage of this Migration. Now, however, there are significant advances in our understanding on many of these aspects, not only the dating, cultural and ethnical interactions, but also in the transformation of our knowledge in the development of the settlement landscape of the period. According to recent results, the Migration Period on the Danube can be broadly divided into several successive phases, each partially overlapping, and each of which shows evidence of changing cultural and socio-political relations. The most notable achievement in this context was the recognition of the earliest, transitional stage of the Migration, preceding the so-called Untersiebenbrunn horizon. This chronological phase corresponding with horizon D₁ or Villafontana (BIERBRAUER 1980; 1992, 264; GODLOWSKI 1992, 50; HARHOIU 1990; KAZANSKI/LEGOUX,

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1988; PIETA 1987, 385-391; 1991; TEJRAL 1986; 1987; 1988, 223-237; 1990, 9-28; 1992) is at the same time the final stage of the great Central European cultures, such as the Przeworsk culture or the Suebian culture north of the Middle Danube. On the other hand, it coincides with the terminal stage of the Chernyakhovo-Sintana de Mureş culture in the Ukraine and Roumania and its aftermath, connected by the occurrence of some unusual extraneous forms within the Central European cultural context. Considering that a greater part of these have analogies in the latest stage of the disintegrating Chernyakhovo culture, the phase under review can also be called the late or post-Chernyakhovo horizon. If we wish to understand the development within this phase in Central Europe we must look at many other things, above all at the archaeological record of several regional groupings outside of the former core of the Chernyakhovo-culture, which persisted for a short time after its decline, and were loosely linked together into a wider culturally differentiated configuration by ties of some of its heritage.

The most relevant problem in our studies is, however, the recognition of new cultural groups which made their appearance in the area west and south of the Carpathian Mountains and in the Middle Danube region. Firstly, we should turn our attention to the well defined cultural Group situated in north-western Transylvania, geographically and probably even chronologically partly overlapping with the late stage of the local variant of the Sîntana de Mureş-Chernyakhovo culture. It is represented by small inhumation cemeteries or single graves, e.g. Fîntînele „Rît” (16 graves), Archiud (18 graves), Budeşti, Ocniţa „Pe Dric” (3 graves), Ciumbrud and other, which mostly may be attributed to the transitional phase D₁ (HOREDT 1982, 119-126, 147-151; TEJRAL 1987, 20; HARHOIU 1988, 84; 1990, 180-181; MARINESCU/GAIU 1989). Burials provide a large number of finds, which indicate a close association with the Chernyakhovo-culture on the one hand, and with other phenomena characteristic for the transitional period on the other (Fig. 1). Besides some Chernyakhovo-style pottery, belt-buckles and small bronze brooches with semicircular heads, they yielded tongue-shaped strap-ends, high-domed shield bosses, late tendril brooches and some other pieces diagnostic for the period discussed.

In addition, we can state some specific features in the burial contexts and burial customs, rather different from the usual archaeological record of the local Sîntana de Mureş culture. Most of the graves were oriented S-N (Fîntînele „Rît”) and some of them possess an irregular position of skeletons (Archiud, Fîntînele „Rît”). There was also a certain number of male inhumation burials accompanied by iron weapons, besides swords and high domed faceted shield bosses, and even by iron axes.

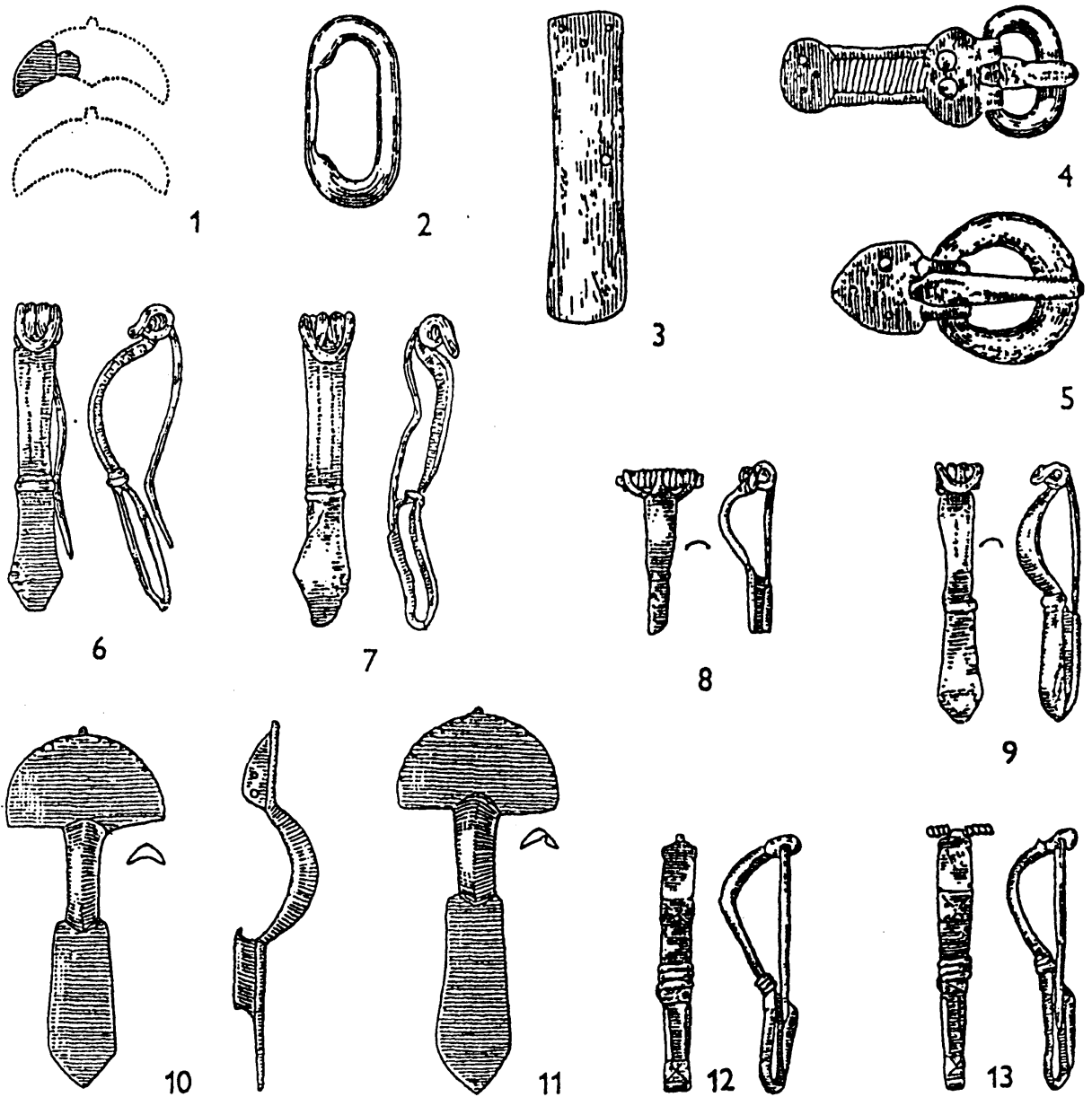


Fig. 1. 1-15 - Fintinele-Rit, inhumation burials; 1-2, 6-7 - grave No 2; 3-4, 8-9 - grave No 3; 5 - grave No 7; 10-11 - grave No 13; 12-13 - grave No 16

Some of the graves contained iron mountings of wooden buckets. The closest analogies for the axe or bucket grave furniture, mentioned above, are known, above all, from the late Roman stage of Oder-Germanic and of the Przeworsk-culture, where they could be recorded not only from the cremation graves (GODLOWSKI 1970, 24, 30; MEYER 1976, 192; SZYDLOWSKI 1986), but also from the inhumation burials, found on the territory of Silesia, which might be broadly contemporary with the Transylvanian cemeteries (JAHN 1926, 86-99). Also within the small finds, some types of brooches and belt buckles show in several details certain similarity to the

material from Silesia; a conspicuous number of analogies (Fig. 1, 5-9.12-13) have been recovered from relatively late burial contexts, in the inhumation cemetery at Żerniki Wielkie (Zotz 1935) (Fig. 2). There in addition, the irregular positions of skeletons (Fig. 10, 3) and the occasionally S-N orientation of graves (most of them were, however, oriented N-S and E-W), frequently occurring in the region southwards of the Carpathian Mountains, indicate the bilateral communication that can hardly be interpreted as merely an accidental parallelism of the development.

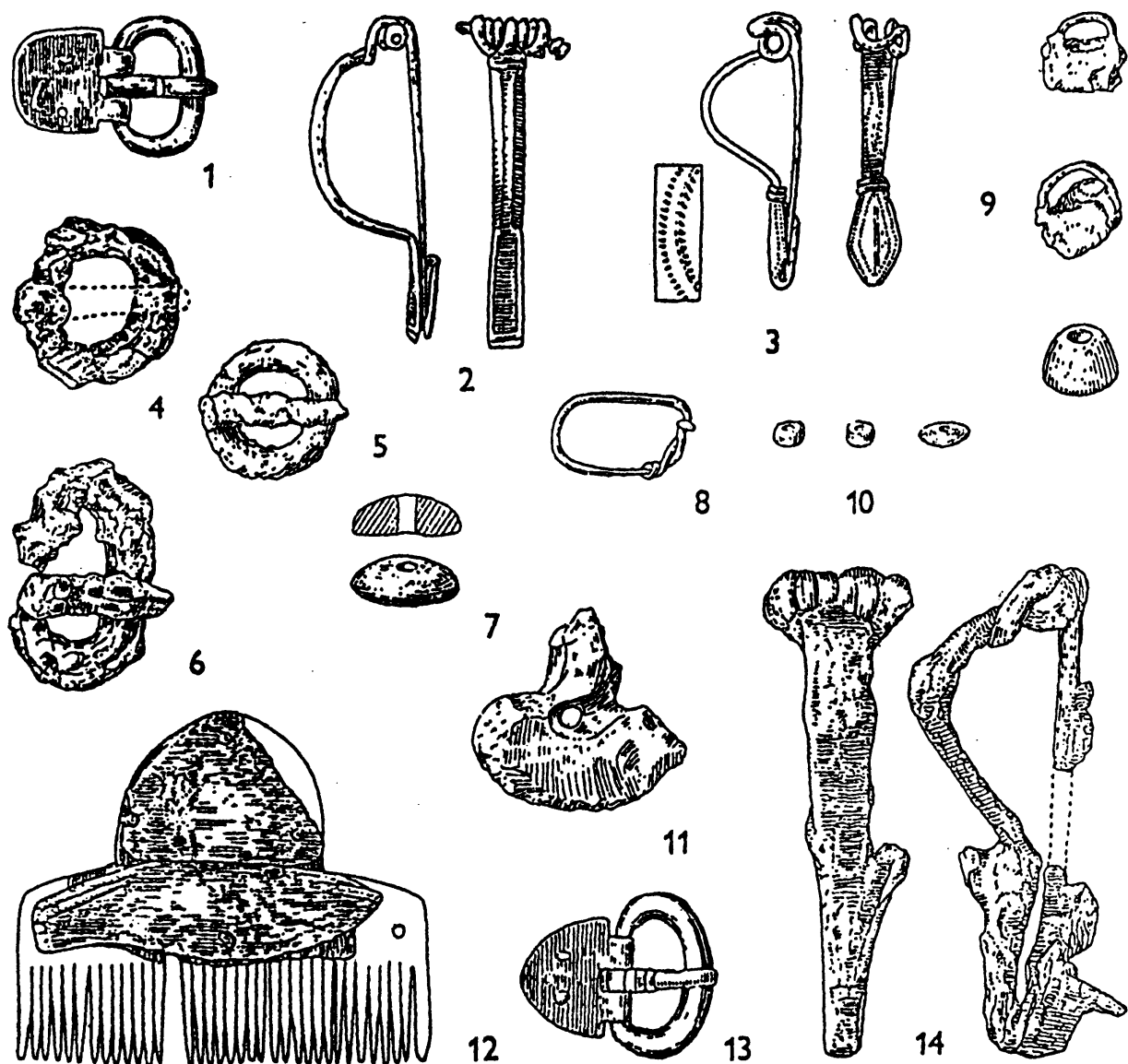


Fig. 2. Żerniki Wielkie (Groß-Sürding), inhumation cemetery: 1, 4 - grave No 14; 2-3, 5; 7-11 - grave No 7; 6 - grave No 48; 12 - grave No 17; 13-14 - grave No 40

There is another group of inhumation burials and cemeteries dated to the transitional stage, worth mentioning in this context, from the Upper Tisza region, such as Tizakarád-Inasa, Tizadob-Sziget or Tizavalk in northern Hungary (LOVÁSZ 1986; GARAM/VADAY 1990; ISTVÁNOVITS 1992; 1993) or Čaňa in east Slovakia (PIETA 1987, 391, 413, t. 62), in which some elements of burial customs and grave furniture present a clear indication of eastern influence. Some contemporaneous settlements in east Slovakia (POLLA 1969) were documented as well. The widespread penetration of comparable graves and finds can be traced further southward to the Middle Tisza and other scattered sites in the Great Hungarian Plain. The characteristic finds come mostly from small cemeteries or single graves again as at Tape Malajdok, Újhartyán, Zágyvarékas (PÁRDUCZ/KOREK 1946/48; BÓNA 1961; VADAY 1974/75; VÖRÖS 1987, 136). From Fabiánsebestyén and Šurjan are documented finds of small brooches with semicircular heads and rhomboid feet (VÖRÖS 1987, 151, Fig. II, 43; DIMITRIJEVIČ/KOVACEVIČ/VINSKI 1962, 29, t. II, 1).

The grave furniture of inhumation graves from eastern Hungary (Fig. 3) is partly related to representative forms of the group in northern Transylvania and yielded typical late-Chernyakhovo artifacts, e.g. small or medium-sized brooches with semicircular heads and rhomboid feet, bone combs with semicircular handles (Fig. 3, 1. 3-5), characteristic belt-buckles with thickened frame bows, tongue-shaped strap-ends and so on. Predominant in the Upper Tisza environs, a great concentration of high-domed shield bosses, faceted or fluted (Fig. 3, 2. 7) (ISTVÁNOVITS/KULCSÁR 1992, 72-80, Fig. 17), in grave furniture can be cited. One piece was also found in a horseman's grave from Újhartyán (BÓNA 1961).

Even if the affinities of finds from Transylvania and Hungary with the Chernyakhovo-culture may imply the arrival of the people from the east, above all of Gothic elements, the ethnical situation there seems to be more intricate. Clear-cut differences, related to burial customs and the presence of weapons as burial gifts, between the Chernyakhovo-Sîntana de Mureş cemeteries and inhumations discussed here can be distinguished.

While within Chernyakhovo graves there occur weapons in only very small numbers, in the inhumations from Transylvania and Hungary military equipment, such as high-domed shield-bosses, swords and lances, is one of the most significant features of local burial rite.

Although the mutual similarities between particular cemeteries south of the Carpathians are most striking, comparison between them „en masse” shows evident specifics. The most noticeable close connections between some forms of burial rites, brooches and other artifacts in several inhumations from Transylvania with the finds of the Przeworsk-culture, above all with the inventory of the cemetery at Żerniki Wielkie (ZOTH 1935), make possible the contemporary coexistence of other East Germanic groups such

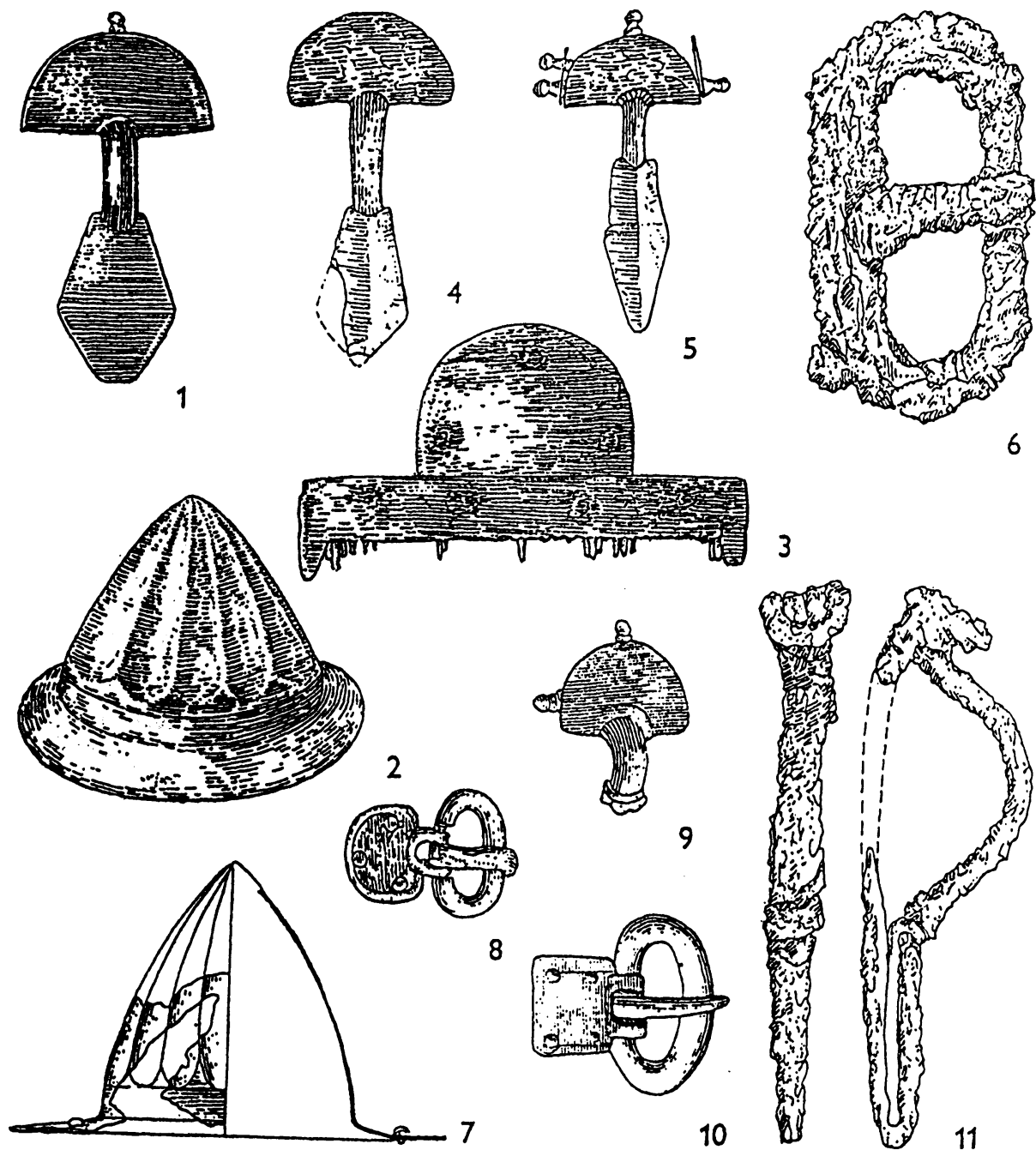


Fig. 3. 1-3 - Tiszakarád-Inasa, inhumation cemetery; Tiszadob, inhumation cemetery: 4 - grave No 2; 5 - grave Noll; 6 - from graves; 7 - Tizsavalk, grave No 6; 8 - grave No 19; 9-10 - Tapé Malajdok; 11 - grave No 5

as Vandals (probably Hasdings), on these sites. The syncretism of the development there is best expressed in the N-S oriented burial No 8 from Fântînele „Rît" whose assemblage contained, in addition to an iron axe (of Oder-Germanic or Przeworsk-culture derivation), a comb with semicircular handle (probably of Chernyakhovo-culture derivation) and other items, e.g. a crescent-shaped bronze earring of eastern origin (MARINESCU/GAIU 1981, 131, Fig. 5, 8; HARHOIU 1990, 181). Special features in burial rites in the graves from Upper Tisza region, above all from Tiszavalk (GARAM/VADAY 1990), some types of small finds as beads, pottery, several brooches diagnostic of the local Sarmatian population in the Carpathian basin and some burial rites proved the strong presence of native elements. Also the Alano-Sarmatian participation discussed in context with these cemeteries is not totally out of the question (HARHOIU 1988). Consequently, it should be stressed that the population which used these cemeteries was of an extremely mixed composition.

The same or very similar processes seem to have taken place also in the other later Roman cultural areas, particularly within the final stage of the Vandalic Przeworsk-culture and of Suebian culture north of the middle Danube.

At the same time, as the eclectic and heterogeneous cultural group south of the Carpathians discussed above was formed, close cultural connections between a south-Polish group of the Przeworsk-culture and the region on the Upper Tisza and in north-western Transylvania began to take place. A natural communication route between both regions using the high Carpathian ridges in northern Slovakia, allowed a long-distance cultural connection. The specific „North Carpathian Group" appeared in a brief span of time round 400 on both sides of the Carpathian Passes. A large part of the material culture shows relationships with the final stage of the Przeworsk-culture, and some of it to the cultural environment south of the Carpathians on the Upper Tisza and Transylvania. According to K. PIETA (1987, 386 f; 1991) the colonisation of sparsely-settled Carpathian foothills in north Slovakia is connected with the migration of the Przeworsk-culture people from the west, however, no graves have been found so far. The occupation of the strategically situated hilltops with associated evidence of industrial activities, give an impression that this region plays an important role in the connections between the Vandalic tribes settled in south Poland and Silesia and their tribesmen in the Carpathian basin.

Strong expressions of the cultural influence of the late Roman phenomena from eastern Europe can be seen in the final stage of the Przeworsk-culture in southern Poland. The epicentre of that culture seems to have shifted southward into Silesia and Little Poland at that time (GODLOWSKI 1970, 26; 1977, 219-223; 1985, 112-125). Important changes in burial customs

took place, where the urn graves disappeared and a new burial rite of scattered cremation with grave goods was introduced. The so-called „Dobrodzien-Guttentager" cemeteries may be dated to between the end of the 4th and beginning of the 5th centuries. In the cremation deposits, consisting of intermingled remains of many burials, not only artifacts of indigenous Przeworsk-culture traditions were found, but also examples of exotic finds connected with the Carpathian basin and post-Chernyakhovo cultures. The occurrence of distinctive forms of belt-buckles, high-domed shield-bosses with large number of rivets or faceted, numerous tongue-shaped strap-ends, some large iron crossbow tendril brooches and other diagnostic types provide clear evidence to the certain degree of eastern cultural contribution (GODLOWSKI 1970, 26; 1977, 219-223; 1985, 119-121; SZYDLOWSKI 1974; 1977a; 1977b).

Some comments must be made concerning the inhumation graves in Middle Silesia such as Żerniki Wielkie (ZOTZ 1935), a rich horseman's grave from Lugi (PETERSEN 1932) and other burials, with the grave-goods relating to the post-Chernyakhovo circle (JAHN 1926, 86-99; GESCHWENDT 1936). The striking associations between the Żerniki cemetery and that from Fîntînele „Rît" in Transylvania, mentioned above, attests to very strong long-distance contacts. The horseman's grave from Lugi shows close affinities with that from Újhartyán (BÓNA 1961) in Hungary. Whether these connections are evidence only of a cultural impact or of a movement of some external groups from the south-east to the new area can only be guessed at. A result of return migration of the indigenous back to the place of origin should also be considered.

On the Middle Danube, the stage D₁ may also be seen as one of the most important turning points in local development. The end of the 4th century reveals an entirely different picture of the Roman frontier. The successive waves of immigrants, according to written sources mostly from the east, dominated and settled the former Roman province Pannonia (about 380). These events are reflected in the archaeological evidence by an outpouring of new exotic forms in the later provincial cemeteries and on the sites along the Danubian frontier. Without denying the resulting advances in our knowledge, the literature is still conceived largely in the context of a long-standing debate concerning the degree of extraneous, barbarian influence (SALAMON-BARKÓCZI 1971; 1978/79; VÁGÓ/BÓNA 1976, 196-206; KELLER 1979, 60; LÁNYI 1978). However, the enormous increase in finds of eastern origin identical or similar to those already discussed above, is suggestive of the arrival of barbarian newcomers from beyond the Roman border.

In the transitional period D₁ some new features also occurred in the area north of the Roman frontier, occupied by Suebian tribes. The general situation on the Middle Danube from the late 4th century onwards necessarily

affected their cultural milieu as well. These years brought as yet little changes to the settlement landscape, demonstrated only by shifting of several sites to the periphery of the previously most important settlement cells, to the foothills of mountain belts. The penetration of extraneous elements can be observed explicitly in other basic remains of the material culture.

The occurrence of some exotic objects of eastern origin like belt-buckles, combs with semicircular handle (Fig. 4, 6-7) and others can be cited from a large number of late Suebian settlements (settlements of the so-called Zlechov type) as well as in south-western Slovakia and Lower Austria. Although the local variants of one-piece brooches with inverted, rectangular or widened foot of the usual late Roman shape were henceforth used (Fig. 6, 3, 7), the appearance of a group of conspicuously large one- or two-piece iron fibulae with a lower spring and often a wide bow, also characteristic of the stage D_1 in other regions as well, should be mentioned here as a most striking innovation (Fig. 4, 2). Particular attention should be paid to the silver and bronze one-piece brooches with rectangular foot and faceted bow, such as from the settlement assemblage No 9/68 at Zlechov or from inhumation graves at Iža, Sládkovičovo and grave No. 13 from Pohořelice - Nová Ves in Moravia (Fig. 4, 3; 7, 1-2. 8-9; 8, 5-6). These fibulae of local manufacture underwent certain changes" in the formation of their bow which is often concave, and marks the subsequent development leading to the group of large silver brooches with a wide hollow bow typical of the early Migration Period (D_2).

The majority of ceramics are of an indigenous Suebian tradition, however these are very coarsely manufactured and lack particular characteristics. Domestic wheel made pottery, late provincial glazed ware and some unusual forms with eastern affinities, have also been found (TEJRAL 1988, 228-232; 1990, 12-28; 1992, 241).

The appearance of the inhumation graves of the D_1 is one of the most exciting features appearing in the late Suebian cultural context, where previously cremations were predominant. Such female burials as those from Horní Heršpice (STANA 1961), Sládkovičovo (KOLNÍK 1980, 163-164), Nitra (PIETA 1993, 82, Fig. 4) and Iža (Fig. 5; 7) provide evidence for the mixture of native and alien elements (the author is obliged to Mr. Rajtár for allowing to access Iža material). Their furniture consisting of bronze or iron brooches and belt buckles characteristic of the stage D_1 , some necklaces of beads and some other artifacts are linked to the transitional phase as well. In a grave from Nitra, a variation of a belt-buckle with animal heads has been found. The small inhumation-cemetery of Abrahám (KOLNÍK 1973) in south-western Slovakia yielded, besides beads, iron brooches with a large or wide bow and other artifacts (Fig. 6), and above all, skeletons in irregular position (Fig. 10, 4. 6), demonstrating a strengthening of contacts

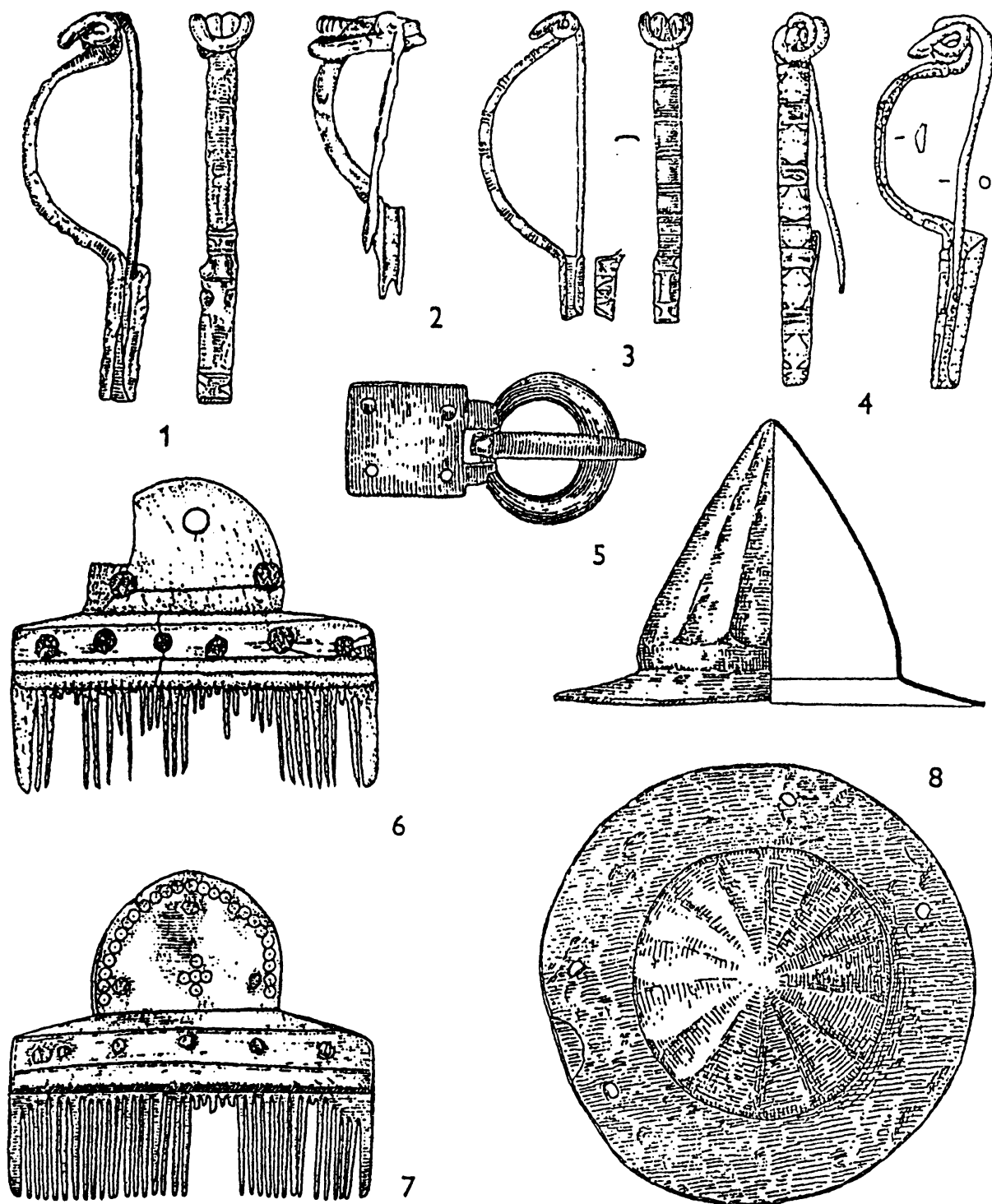


Fig. 4. 1 - Mikulčice, settlement; 2-3, 5 - Zlechov, settlement (No 5 from silver); 4 - Sta.-Vitoria do Ameixial (Portugal, after M. Kazanski); 6 - Michelsstetten (Lower Austria), settlement; 7 - Drslavice, settlement; 8 - Mušov, settlement

with eastern cultures, probably of a Sarmatian or Chernyakhovo milieu. Most of the inhumation graves in the region north of the Danube are, however, oriented W-E. The evidence from the group of inhumation burials in the Suebian area *is* now being added by the discovery of a little cemetery at Pohořelice - Nová Ves in south Moravia (ČIŽMÁŘ 1997). The eighteen inhumation graves were placed within an earlier Roman period cremation grave-field. An interesting aspect of the inhumations was the relatively greater variety of grave-goods which suggests the crossing of influences from different culture spheres.

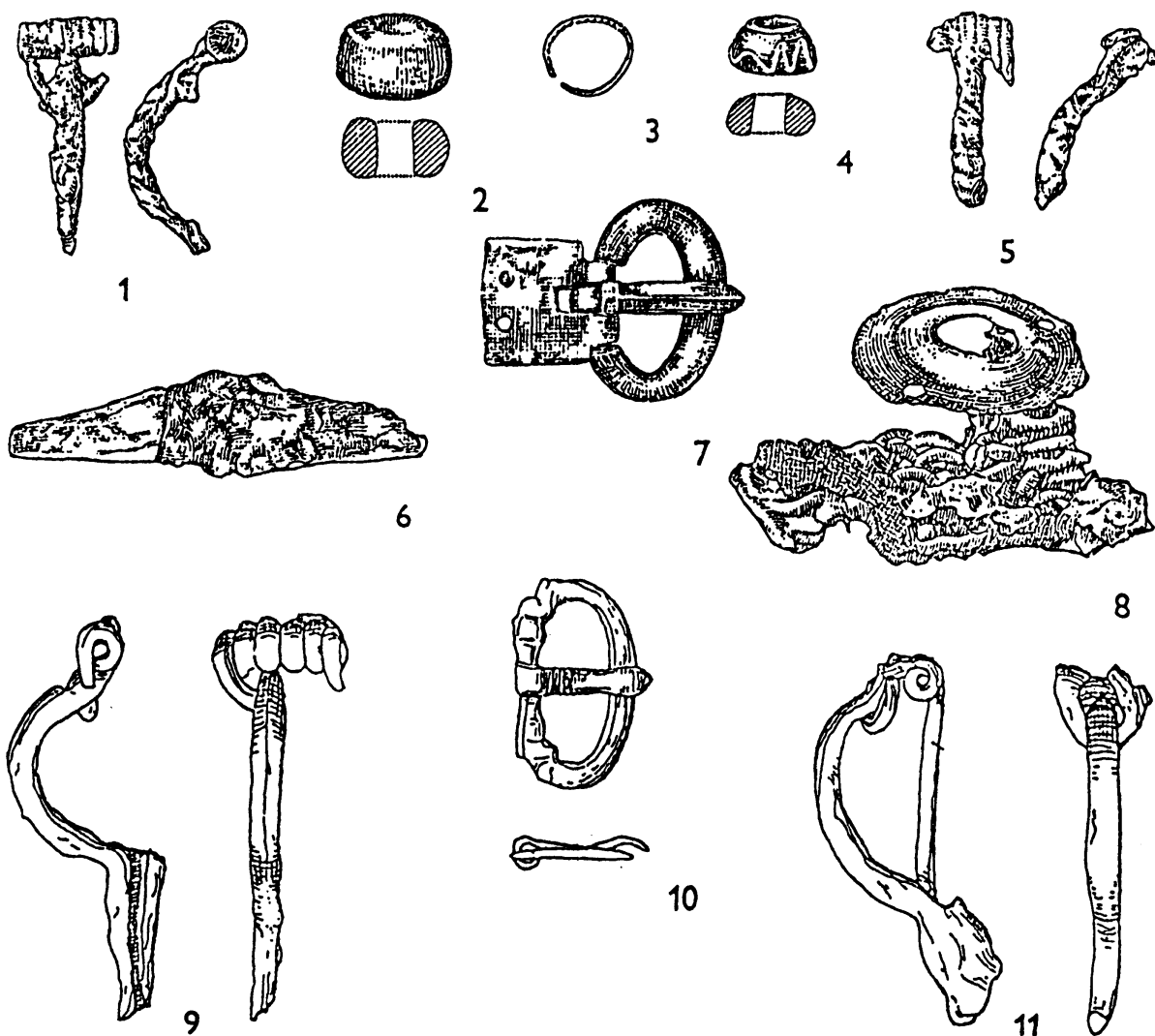


Fig. 5. 1-8 - Brno-Horní Heršpice, inhumation burial; 9-11 - Nitra, inhumation burial (after K. PIETA 1993)

Predominant objects of indigenous origin, were represented by locally produced hand made pottery (Fig. 9, 6. 8) (prevailing tops and bowls of so called type of Zlechov). The local wheel made production occurs in typical varieties, known from numerous cremation burials and settlements of the late 4th century. Artefacts of a more exclusive character' were in grave No 13 namely, a silver one piece brooch with rectangular foot (Fig. 8, 5-6), which has its closest parallels with the silver brooch from the settlement assemblage No 9/68 at Zlechov and in bronze-specimens from inhumations in Sládkovičovo and Iža, which were mentioned above. Characteristic for this period are iron brooches of the same type (Fig. 8, 3-4. 7-8).

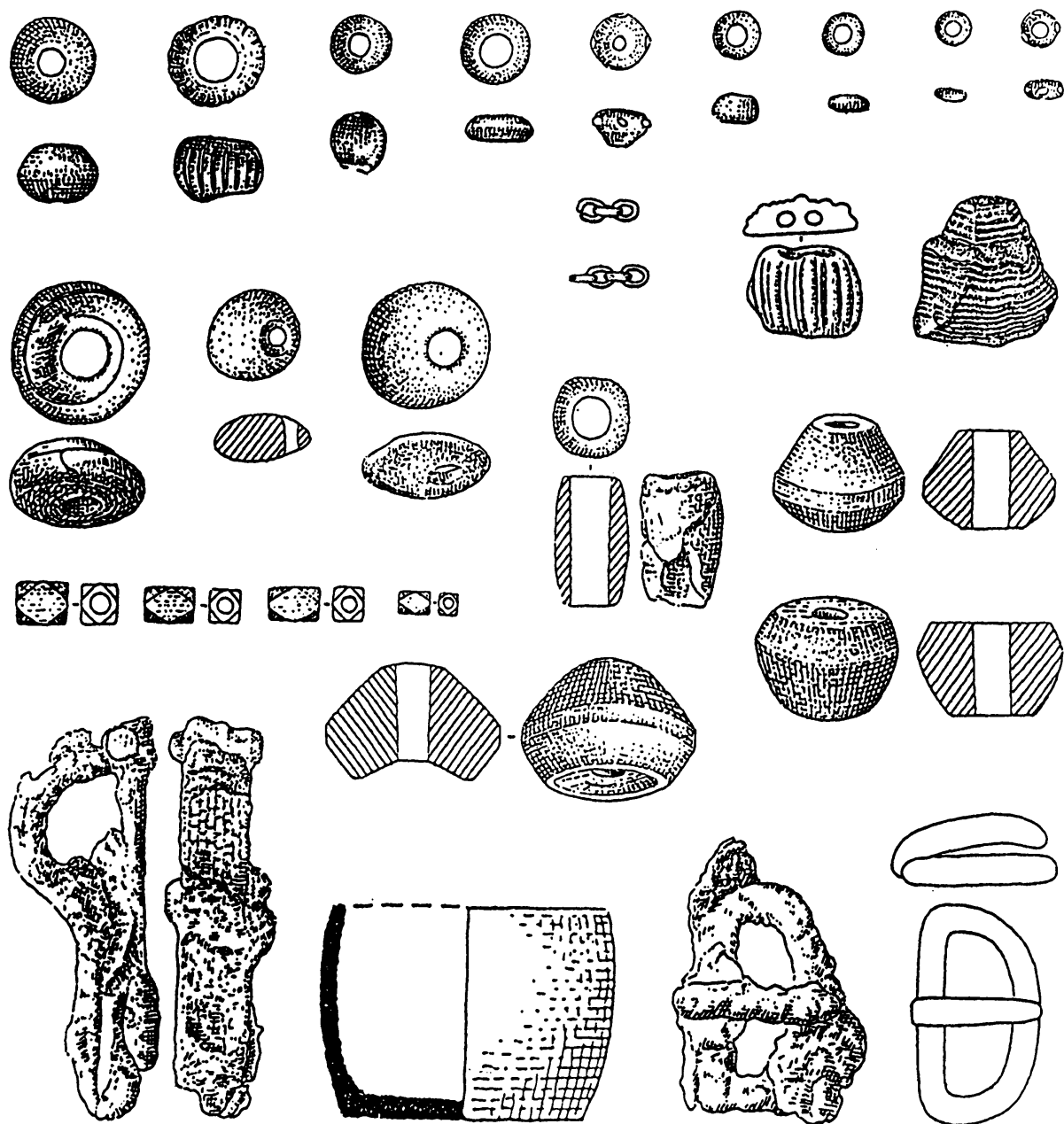


Fig. 6. Abrahám inhumation burial No 4 (after T. KOLNÍK 1973)

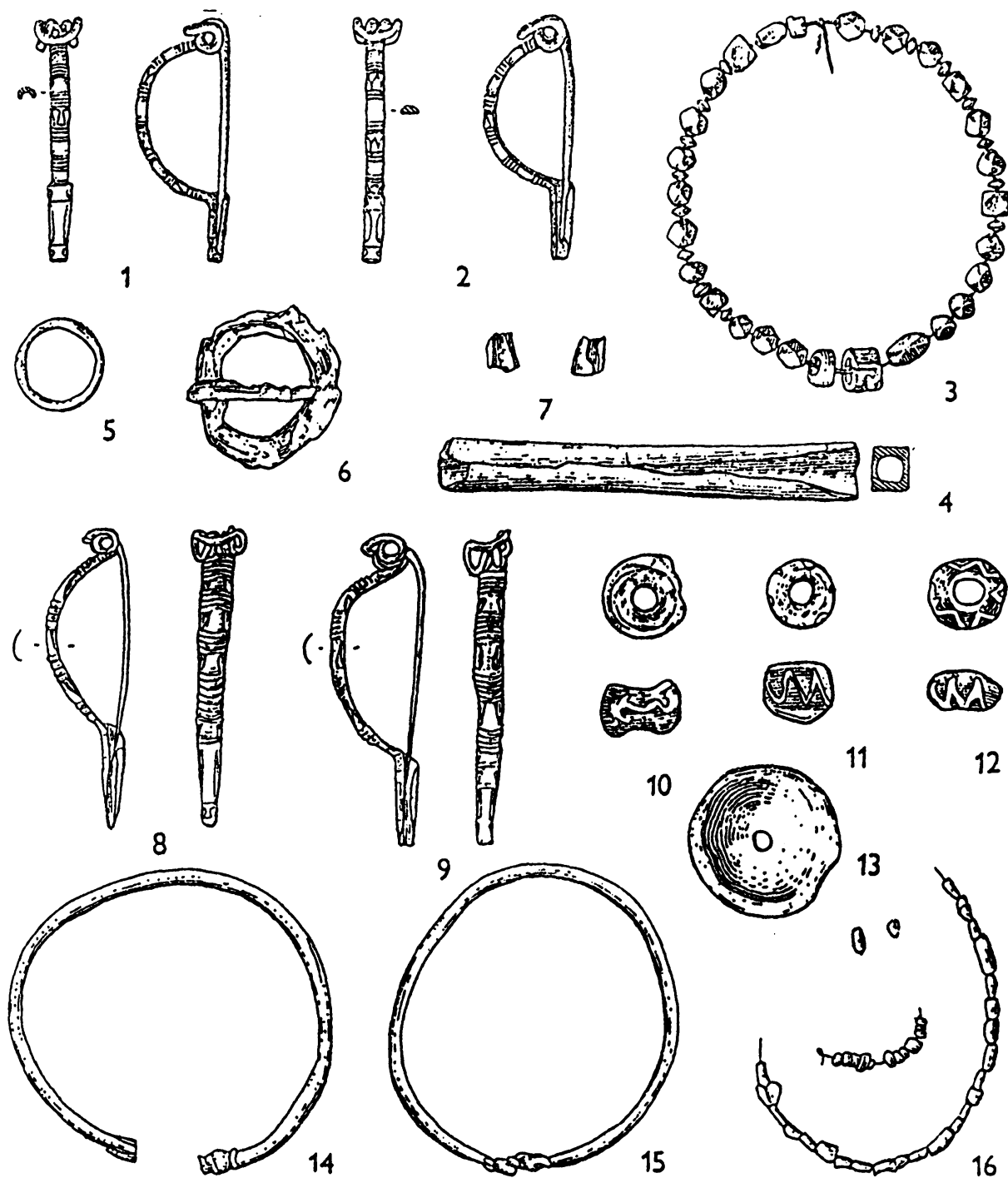


Fig. 7. 1-7 - Sládkovičovo, inhumation burial (after T. KOLNÍK 1980); 8-16 - Iža-Leányvár, inhumation burial (after J. RAJTÁR)

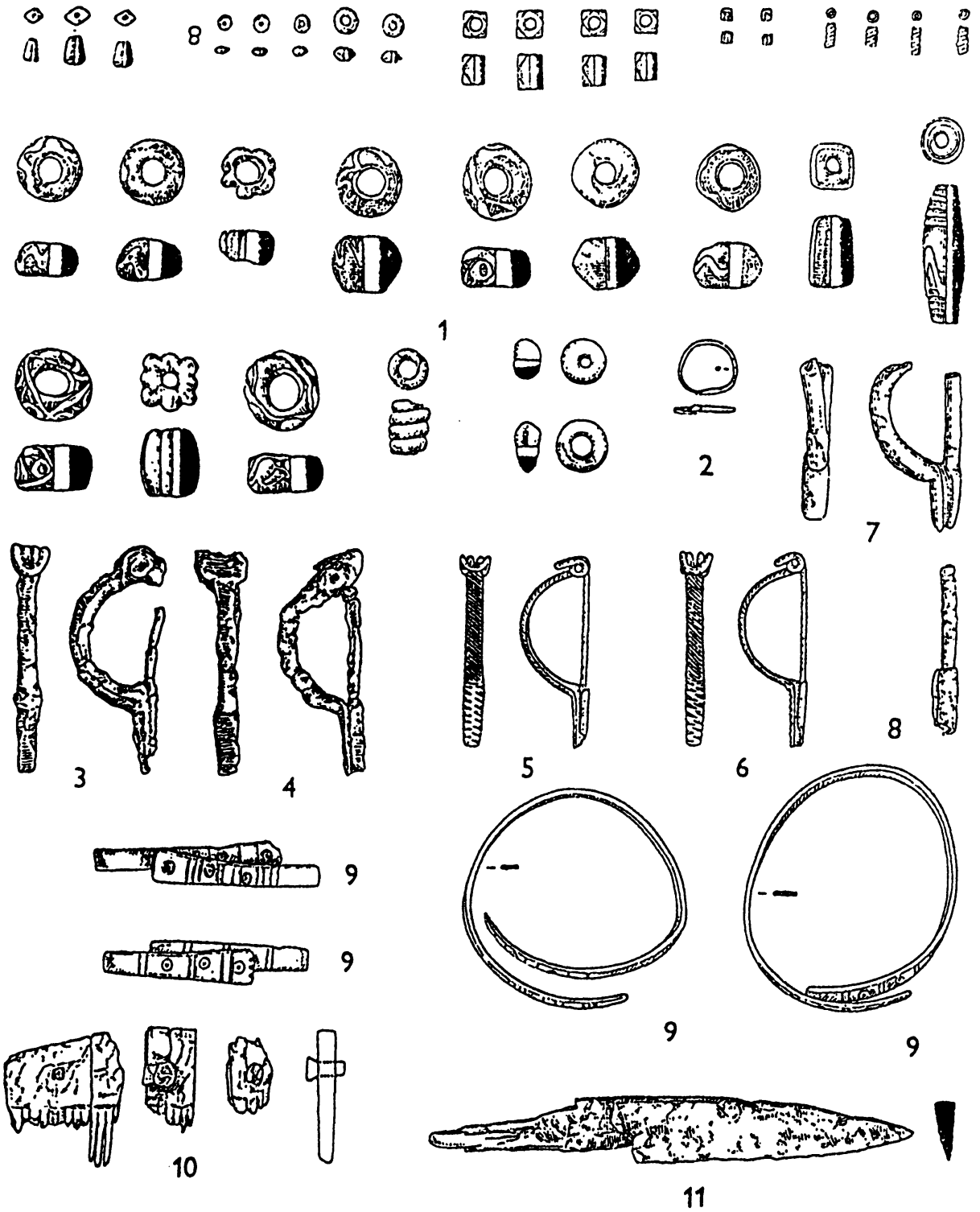


Fig. 8. Pohorelice-Nová Ves, inhumation burial No 13 (5-6 silver) (after M. ČIŽMÁŘ 1997)

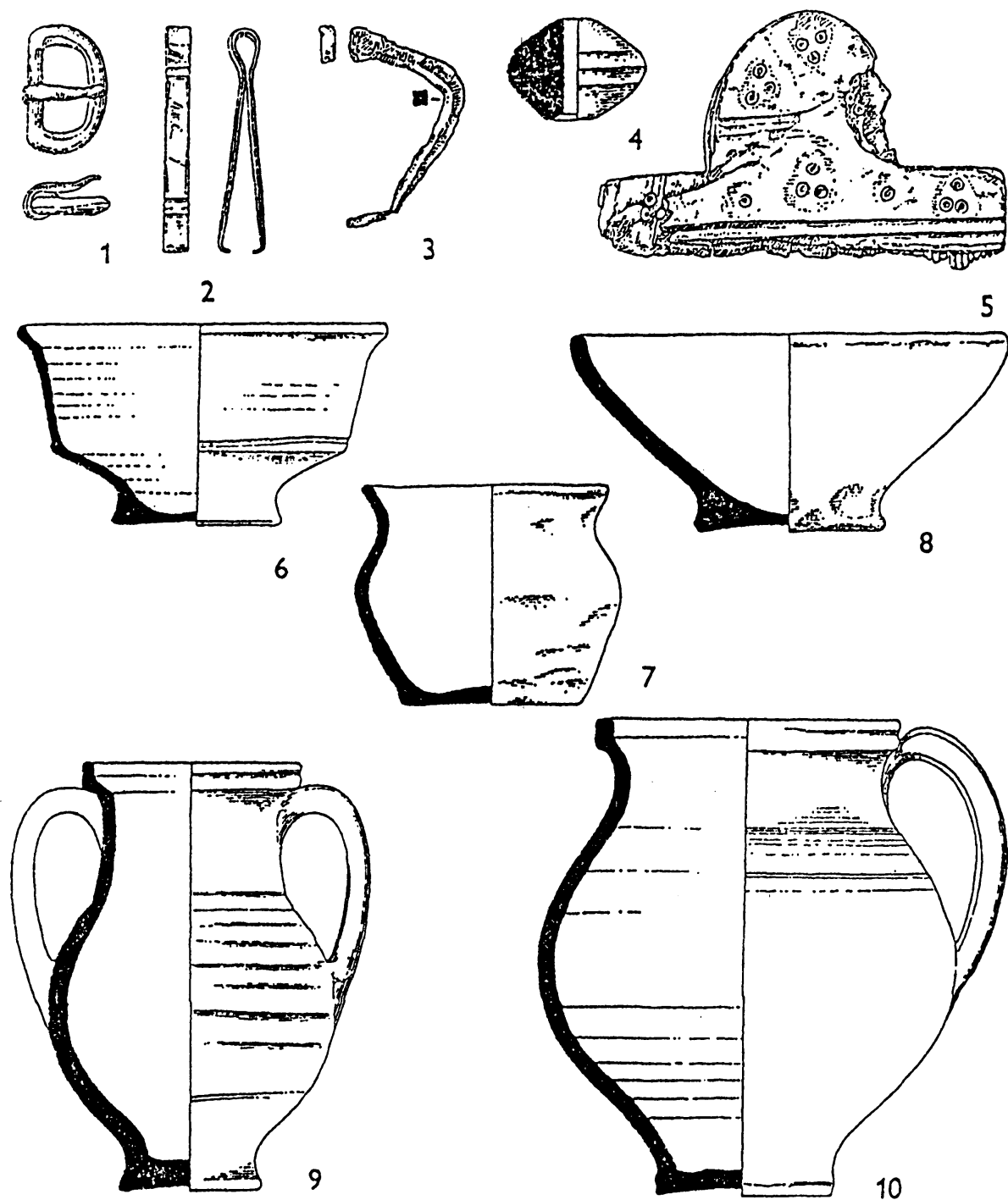


Fig. 9. Pohořelice-Nová Ves, inhumation cemetery: 1, 3 - grave No 6; 2 - grave No 5; 4-5 - grave No 17; 6-10 - grave No 13. (after M. ČIŽMÁŘ 1997)

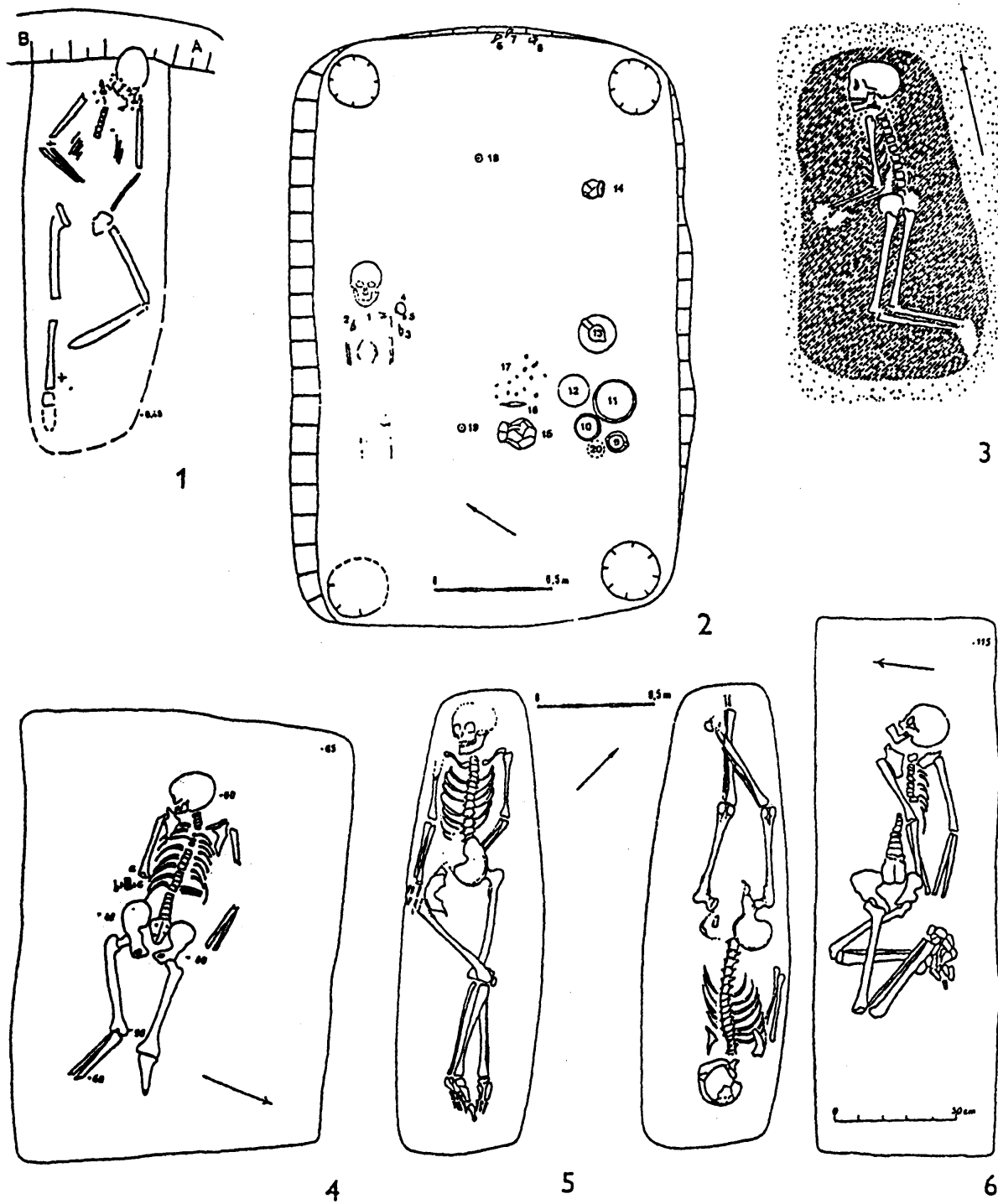


Fig. 10. 1 - Gießmannsdorf, Kr. Luckau (Germany); 2 - Pohořelice-Nová Ves, grave No 13; 3 - Żerniki Wielkie, grave No 25; 4 - Abrahám, grave No 19; 5 - Pohořelice, Bez. Břeclav, grave No 10; 6 - Abrahám, grave No 20

The most remarkable finds from individual graves are the artifacts of provincial origin, suggesting evidence for close contacts to the Roman sphere of influence on the Danube. The majority of provincial pottery, above all the glazed ware, reveal the same variety of types which is known from the numerous settlements of this period and could be dated in the late part of the 4th century (Fig. 9, 9-10). The strong provincial influence which has affected the cultural milieu of Suebian tribes at this time the provincial arm-rings from the grave No 13 which have appeared in modified form in the burial from Iža as well (Fig. 7, 14-15; 8, 9-10). Consequently, the fragments of Roman glass-balsamarium from the grave No 13, underlines the similarity with the Roman-provincial burial customs from the late 4th century AD. On the other hand the origin of the type of the comb with semicircular handle from grave No 17 may be looked for in eastern Europe.

The fact that the numerous finds and relatively expensive grave-goods, including the silver brooches, glass vessels and glazed pottery were found in the grave No 13, in which a young girl in capacious grave-mound with post-hole construction was buried, implies the establishment of new high-status social level.

In contrast to provincial late Roman or early merovingian burial rites, the irregular position of skeletons in the majority of the grave mounds, reveals the close affinities of this cemetery with the group of inhumation graves dispersed over the whole Central and East-Central Europe dating from the transitional stage between the Roman and Migration Periods.

At the end of the 4th century AD several innovations in burial customs and in material culture, affected by the cultural diffusion and migrations from the east, can be observed even in the further regions of the Elbe-Germanic cultural circle, as far west as on the Middle Elbe. If the so-called Niemberger group may be suggested as a product of these events (SCHMIDT 1964; 1982, 211-213; 1985) is, however, dubious. The most interesting observation in this context, is to be seen in the cemetery at Gießmannsdorf (WETZEL 1987) near Cottbus, with inhumation burials oriented along a N-S axis, geographically occupying the important position in conjunction between the Elbe region and other East-Central European areas where inhumation burials of the stage D₁ appear. The situation at Gießmannsdorf is fully comparable with that at Abrahám in Slovakia and Pohořelice - Nová Ves in Moravia where in the area of an earlier cremation burial ground, even a group of later dated inhumation graves, often with irregular positions of the majority of skeletons (Fig. 10, 1) and a typical D₁ assemblage within small finds was discovered. This would seem to imply that there must have been some kind of contact between the bearers of new innovations and the indigenous population.

Summing up this survey, we can say that the penetration from the east into the indigenous milieu on the Danube resulted in the subsequent creation

of a large cultural area with several regional groups and variants. Although each of these groups shares in its separate way its cultural identity, the main feature of their archaeological expression is the occurrence of some unusual extraneous forms and artifacts in the context of local material culture, by the appearance of new burial customs and sometimes also by changes in the settlement landscape. In spite of local differences in the extent of extraneous contribution, principal types and phenomena recur at the same time in all these areas. As an inheritance of Chernyak-hovo-culture may be seen the circular or semicircular belt - buckles with strong thickened bow frames, often with oval or circular shapes (Fig. 1, 5; 2, 1. 13; 3, 8. 10; 4, 5; 5, 7), small and medium size bronze and silver brooches with semi-circular heads and rhomboid feet (Fig. 1, 10-11; 3, 1. 4-5. 9), some types of two-piece tendril brooches, several types of necklaces of beads, bone combs with semicircular handles (Fig. 2, 12; 4, 6-7; 9, 5; 11, 12) and others. As an eastern, partially Sarmatian contribution, may be considered for example the tongue-shaped strap-ends, often decorated with stamping, some types of weapons, horse harnesses and other items. Probable of East Roman origin are the high domed shield-bosses, some of them faceted or fluted (Fig. 3, 2. 7; 4, 8), which are of great importance for absolute chronology (TEJRAL 1987, 20-24; 1992, 238; HARHOIU 1988, 85, note 20; 1990, 180; KIILERICH/TORP 1989; KAZANSKI 1991, 492-493; ŠČUKIN 1993, 327).

The question of whether the extraordinary outpouring of the new cultural forms was caused only by the diffusion of new styles or if it was the consequence of migration is not yet easy to establish. The answer does not have to be either- or, but both possibilities may be likely. Most of these objects were connected with traditional rites, costumes or dresses which are the signals used to express the ethnic identity (recently MORTENSEN 1992, 163). Although several finds in the region on the Danube provide the evidence that some artifacts of an eastern type (combs, brooches, buckles and other items) were made locally, the most important initial factor to be taken into account by this cultural innovation was the presence of persons carrying and distributing new types.

Conversely, we can observe that many indigenous forms were included here. Their appearance given by the preceding development is of outstanding importance for the understanding of the cultural relations in Central Europe. There, in addition to the majority of pottery types, some examples of iron, bronze and, exceptionally silver one-piece tendril brooches and one-piece brooches with rectangular or widened foot, often with wide flat bows are of local manufactures (Fig. 1, 6-7. 9; 2, 3; 3, 11; 4, 1. 3; 6, 21; 7, 1-2. 8-9; 8, 3-8). Large iron brooches with very short upper or lower springs are most distinctive for this period.

The comparison between all the above mentioned archaeological groups of the stage D₁ which emerged contemporaneously in several regions of within Central and East-Central Europe can provide a striking example of the reaction of distinct ethnical and cultural milieu to a similar set of circumstances.

The cultural integration of ethnically heterogeneous groups that took place in a short time in many areas of Central Europe might reflect a higher stage of development by barbarian populations on the Danube, connected with the building of great tribal alliances, recorded in written sources. The nature of the relationship between these culturally and ethnically different populations that were gathered on the Middle Danube is still not easy to access. Above all, we are confronted with the problem of the cultural interaction between the expanding extraneous elements and the native population and this is a field in which the archaeological evidence from the Middle Danube region could have a wider significance for the understanding of the intricate processes of the primary acculturation which the populations in this area underwent in the late 4th century AD and at the beginning of following century.

The stage D₁ in the Middle Danube region, characterised by the mixed archaeological milieu consisting of the East-Germanic, Alano-Sarmatians, Suebian, Vandalic and other components, came to an end suddenly, marked by the transformation of settlement structures, with visible signs of depopulation practically over the whole area of Central Europe. The great settlements patterns connected with the Suebian tribes north of the Middle Danube disappeared in the immediately following period during the first half of the 5th century. A marked population decrease is visible at the same time in two regions, in southern Poland and eastern Slovakia (GODLOWSKI 1985, 112-125; PIETA 1991, 385), while most of the cemeteries on the Upper Tisza and in Transylvania in these years were no longer used.

The extensive abandonment of original sites, dated at the latest, into the first decade after 400 AD, may be most likely connected with the events after that time. According to written sources, a major part of Suebian population, mixed with some other tribes, joined the Alans and Vandals in their quest westward, reaching Gallia in AD 406 and the Iberian Peninsula and the Atlantic coast about three years later. The broad outline of this story can be told from fragmentary accounts of the literary sources, first of all from the notes of Zosimos (VI, 3, 1), Orosius (VII, 38, 3), Sozomenos (IX, 12), Hieronymus (Ep. 123, 16) and others.

Although there is a little doubt about the location of the original homeland of Suebs, there has been much discussion about the homeland of Vandals and Alans at the end of the 4th century, and about the gathering ground of all three groups prior to their westward advance (VÁRADY 1969,

180-187). The Alans, a Sarmatic, nomadic population from the steppes of southern Russia were pushed towards the west by the Hunic invasion and some detachments of these were settled in Pannonia after 380. In general, the homeland of the Vandals is usually considered to be the southern zones of east Germanic Przeworsk-Culture, initially the region of Silesia. At the end of the 2nd and at the beginning of the 3rd Centuries AD, a part of this culture expanded eastwards, predominantly into the area south of the Carpathians (most recently, see GODLOWSKI 1984, 331-333; 1992, 66). This cultural penetration could be associated with the shifting of the Vandalic Hasdingi from modern Poland into the territories encompassed by present-day north-eastern Hungary, north-western Roumania and probably also eastern Slovakia. The name of Silingi mentioned in *Fasti Idatiani (Vandali congnomine Silingi Baeticam sortiantur)* attests to the participation of peoples originating from the south Polish region in the movement in AD 406 very explicitly. According to some historical literature, the Middle Danube region and the Great Hungarian Plain as a gathering ground and starting point of these migrating groups is totally not out of the question (most recently, see BACHRACH 1973, 51-59; WOLFRAM 1987, 39). As a route taken by the migrating tribes a well known communication line along the Upper Danube westwards and there after following the ancient Roman road along the limes to the NW and the river Main and to the Rhine river-crossing at Mainz, may be suggested.

The greatest problem in this context is the question, how the moving communities might be traced in archaeological evidence, for which there are still inevitable gaps in our knowledge. The possible results of the interactions with the indigenous milieu, leading up to the acculturation, are obscure. Above all in the Roman provinces, there must have been created a strong cultural impact on the migrants their individual cultural identity could subsequently disappear, when they were absorbed by the new, more developed cultural environment. Some of the barbarian warriors with their leaders, who were probably war chiefs and other elites, were even recruited into the imperial army (KAZANSKI 1993).

. Perhaps because of this we know of only a few graves and other finds which till now could be connected with the syncretistic cultural circle discussed above, that took its shape up the end of the 4th century in the south-eastern part of Central Europe. In spite of this, there are some finds further westward which may be connected with this milieu. Most of these derive from small cemeteries and single burials, demonstrating that the occupation of one definite place by the migrating community might have been of very short duration. The cultural and chronological context makes it possible to suppose for example that the inhumation female grave from Trebur (BEHN 1938) or Werbach (most recently PESCHECK 1978, 295, Fig. 17, t. 104) might be linked to the cultural group mentioned above.

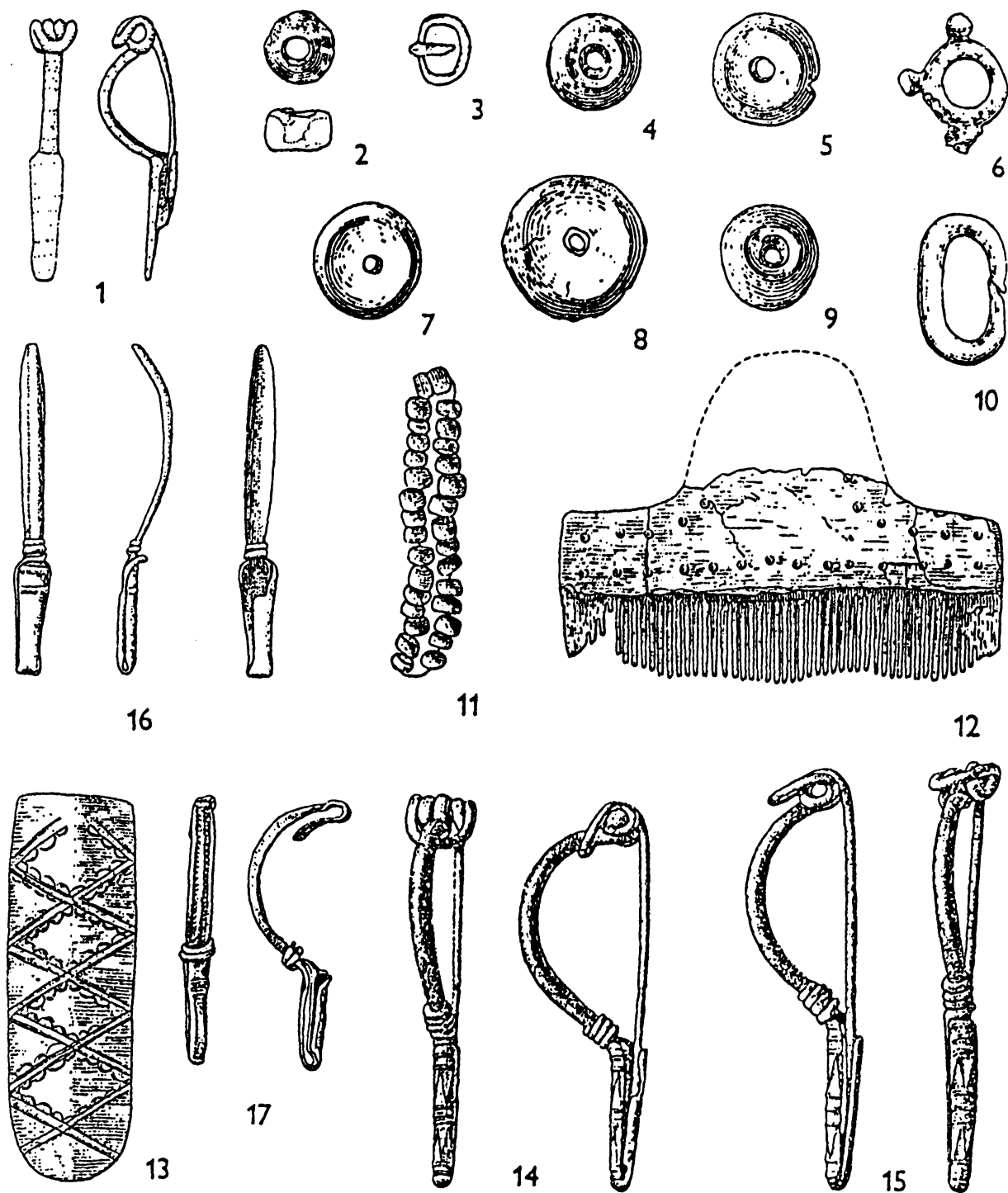


Fig. 11. 1 - Conimbriga (Portugal, after M. Kazanski); 2-15 Trebur (Germany); 16 - Werbach

of bead of glass and amber, oval belt-buckles, a tongue-shaped strap-end, a comb with tongue-shaped handle and others. The most important pieces is the pair of brooches with inverted foot, one with upper spring, the other with lower spring (Fig. 11, 14-15). These faceted ornamentations of the feet have close analogies on bows of relative numerous Danubian finds from the time about AD 400 (Zlechov, Sládkovičovo, Iža, Kostelec). The single bronze brooch from the double grave from Werbach (Fig. 11, 16) belongs to the same group of Danubian artifacts, as well as the other scarce finds of similar pieces in western Germany, such as that from Büraberg (Fig. 11, 17), Ketzendorf and other places (BÖHME 1974). There are other burials that could be related to the different migrations at the beginning of the 5th century, such as the Götting burial, accompanied by a medium size silver brooch with semicircular head and wheelturned clay vessel of a post-Chernyakhovo-tradition (KELLER 1971) that demonstrates the Gothic participation in the movement westwards, well known from the written sources. Numerous combs with semicircular or tongue-shaped handles, belt buckles with thickened bow frames and other items in many graves, settlement finds and hillforts may indicate the heritage of the eastern peoples as well (BÖHME 1974; KELLER 1979, 57-62; KAZANSKI 1993).

From the Iberian Peninsula there as the most striking archaeological evidence of the physical penetration of Suebian groups from the Middle Danube region the collection of brooches, found in several places of Portugal should be considered. Above all, consideration of the typical examples of large one-piece brooches with rectangular foot, short upper spring and faceted ornamentation of the bow from Sta Vitoria do Ameixial (Fig. 4, 4) and Conimbriga (Fig. 11, 1) or several brooches with inverted foot from other localities, regarding the closest affinities to the middle Danubian artifacts are worth mentioning (KAZANSKI 1997).

It is, however, difficult to determine the attitude of the domestic inhabitants to the newcomers. Many of the indigenous inhabitants may have been displaced from their original sites and reduced to a servile condition. From the beginning of the 5th century onwards, consequently, the important changes in the socio-political structure of the barbarian society elsewhere along the Roman frontier. As a consequence of further territorial conquest by the barbarians, a new social model of dependent relationships between the natives and the newcomers was introduced that brought a new fashion, illustrating a higher social status of the barbarian elites. A number of their members has been hired to protect the Roman frontier and important communications along the Roman frontier, as federates. It was, among other things, the cause of the considerable increase in interregional style manifested in rich grave furniture of the type Untersiebenbrunn-Airan-Beja or treasures of the type Coşoveni-Kačín within the entire area from the Black Sea westward to the Iberian-Peninsula.

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