

# HORSE BURIALS IN ROMAN PERIOD CEMETERIES OF THE BOGACZEWO CULTURE

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## Abstract

During the Roman period the Bogaczewo Culture cemeteries in Masuria included horse graves. The features often contained bits, whereas other parts of horse tack were found rarely. The horse graves discussed in the paper cannot be unequivocally linked to human burials - possibly horsemen's graves, as the latter had been situated shallowly under the surface, which led to their damage.

Key words: Horses burials, Bogaczewo Culture, Roman Period, Masuria.

Horse graves<sup>1</sup> found in the area adjacent to the stretch of the eastern Baltic coastline, in the Balt lands (Bitter-Wróblewska 2002, fig. 1; 2006, fig. 1), have always been of much interest to archaeologists (Hensche 1862; Alseikaitė-Gimbutienė 1946, pp.55-57 and 13-138; Kulikauskienė 1953; Jaskanis 1966; 1968; 1974, pp.97-98, 169-171 and 196-199; Piątkowska-Małecka 2001; Gręzak 2007; Bliujenė, Butkus 2007). Some of the earliest finds of this kind include horse teeth from early Iron Age barrows in Kurmaičiai, on the coast of western Lithuania (Kulikauskienė 1953, p.212; Jaskanis 1968, p.82ff, Kulikauskas 1968, p.27). Interestingly, on the Samland Peninsula the earliest graves containing horse bone occurred in the late phase of the Early Roman Period. A number of these finds are just horse teeth, like in Kurmaičiai, often of unspecified date (Bujack 1891, p.14; Jankuhn 1939, p.246ff). However, there are also archaeological features with complete horse skeletons accompanied by rich grave goods enabling one to establish a precise chronology (La Baume 1944, p.2 figs. 5-6).

Horse burials were far more numerous in the Balt lands in the Late Roman Period (Jaskanis 1966, p.44ff; 1968, p.82ff; Kulikauskienė 1953, p.212ff) – at that time the area where such burials were common extended south-

wards embracing the Sudovian Culture territory on the upper Czarna Hańcza River (Jaskanis 1961, p.172, Antoniewicz 1963, p.168, Kaczyński 1976, on the Sudovian Culture).

Research into horse graves of Roman date occurring in the southern regions of the Balt lands (Fig. 1) – in the Bogaczewo Culture territory in Masuria (Nowakowski 2007) – has been hindered by cultural aspects of this area. Nearly all cemeteries of this archaeological culture were in fact used by the Olsztyn Group people also later in the Migration Period (Nowakowski 2000). In such circumstances the features of ambiguous date cannot be unequivocally associated with the Bogaczewo Culture, still less due to the fact that horse burials were also characteristic of the Olsztyn Group burial rites (Baranowski 1996). Indeed it is difficult to establish a precise date of the majority of horse graves uncovered in Masuria, mainly due to the poor state of source materials, resulting from the Second World War and its aftermath (Hoffmann, Sobieraj 1999; Kolendo, Nowakowski 2000; Nowakowski, Lemke 2003), which has limited the possibility of using reports of excavations carried out before 1945. Later research, conducted according to contemporary exploration methods, revealed no more than twenty features (Gręzak 2007, p.366ff table 1), and it must be noted that their generally bad physical state and poor equipment, or in some cases the lack of it at all, do not allow precise establishing of chronology. Furthermore, only the features recovered after the Second World War could undergo archaeozoological analysis.

The existence of the two so different categories of sources makes it necessary to apply a similar division within available research results on Roman Period horse graves recorded at the sites of the Bogaczewo Culture. The first part of this study is a short review of the scarce in number but well documented features

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discovered after 1945 and already presented in research papers over a few recent years (Gręzak 1998; 2007; Piątkowska-Matecka 2001; Szymański 1998; 2005, pp.96-99 and 126-127 with plates XXVIII and XXXVIII). The second part of the study is concerned with a far more numerous, but often uncertain, group of horse graves uncovered during excavations carried out before the Second World War, and which have become known only due to old publications and archive records.

### Features revealed after 1945

The biggest series of graves discovered after 1945 comes from the Bogaczewo Culture cemetery in Paprotki Kolonia, Giżycko county, site 1 (Karczewska 1998; Karczewski 1999; 2002; Karczewska, Karczewski 2007), none of the eight features though (Nos. 175, 215, 221, 251, 254, 290, 320, 356) contained any equipment (Gręzak 2007, p.366ff table 1). Therefore dating was based on stratigraphic sequences, which led to determine the burial time in grave 251 as phase B<sub>2</sub> of the early Roman Period, surely at its earliest time, whereas the date of grave 175 was estimated as the B<sub>2</sub>/C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>1a</sub> phases. The arrangement of three other features (graves nos. 215, 221 and 254) in alignment with grave no. 175 suggests that all of them are likely to be of approximately the same date (Gręzak 2007, p.359). It must be noted though that these features were located in the severely damaged part of the site (Karczewska, Karczewski 2007, p.197), and consequently all the conclusions need to be looked at carefully before being accepted. Summing up, one of the eight graves from the Paprotki Kolonia cemetery can be dated to the Early Roman Period (grave 251), and one (grave 175) to the Late Roman Period. Dating another three graves (nos. 215, 221 and 254) to the Late Roman Period remains only a hypothesis. In the case of the rest of the graves (graves nos. 290, 320 and 356) it is necessary to apply a chronology embracing the whole period during which the cemetery had been used, which indicates that they could be even of the Late Migration Period date. Therefore, the possibility that a certain number of horse graves in the Paprotki Kolonia cemetery are linked to the Olsztyn Group cannot be ruled out (Gręzak 2007, pp.354 and 359)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Such correspondence cannot be found though in the case of the latest discoveries done in 2008 at the cemetery in Robawy, county Reszel. Out of five horse graves unearthed there (nos. 3, 4, 12, 20 and 31) three did not contain any equipment, whereas the other two (nos. 12 and 31) included artefacts of the Migration period. Consequently it appears reasonable to accept such dating for all five features from Robawy – this data comes from unpublished research

A number of horse graves were also recovered in the 1980s and 1990s at the Bogaczewo Culture sites located around Lake Sałęt (Szymański 2005). The earliest one is thought to be the feature from site II in Wyszembork, Mrągowo county, the settlement which had been inhabited since the early Iron Age (Waluś, Manasterski 1998; Gładki 2002; 2007; Szymański 2005, p.126ff). On the edge of the settlement a steep-sided pit with a circular outline was revealed (feature 120). Its upper part was filled with more than a dozen stones, including pieces of quern-stones, and below them there was an incomplete horse skeleton lacking most limb bones and lying on its side. The bones were accompanied by pieces of a vessel of a typical early Bogaczewo Culture form, most likely of the beginning of Early Roman Period or even the end of Late Pre-Roman date (Szymański 2005, pp.126-127 plate XXXVIII.2-3; Gręzak 2007, p.361), which corresponds to dating of the latest finds in this settlement (Gładki 2002, p.194 plate VII.9; 2007, p.28ff plate III). The location of the feature outside the cemetery as well as the circular shape of the pit in which the horse was tightly put in differ significantly from the rites observed in the Late Roman Period. It is possible then that these variations resulted from experimentation with the rites which had not yet been firmly established. However, the pit may have also been a landfill site, which the carcass of the horse was thrown into (Szymański 2005, p.126ff).

Doubts such as these do not affect horse graves in the nearby Bogaczewo Culture cemetery in Wyszembork, site IVa (Szymański 2005, pp.17-106). Six features were uncovered there, three of which (graves nos. 166, 220 and 298) can be of Late Roman date (Szymański 1998; 2005, p.96ff). In all three cases the horse had been laid in an elongated pit and covered with a number of loose field stones. Above graves nos. 166 and 220 the bottom parts of human cremation graves were revealed, but they were damaged to such an extent that it was impossible to confirm their definite relationship with the horse burials (Szymański 2005, p.98ff plate XXVIII.1). In both features the horse skeletons were accompanied by single-jointed bits with large rings, and two pairs of buckles, a bigger and a smaller one, with a rectangular, axised frame whose corners were slightly rounded. The buckles resemble items of types AD29-30 or AE12-14 (Madyda-Legutko 1987, pp.32-35 and 40-41 with plates 10.29-30 and 11.12-14). Similar specimens were found at Balt cemeteries in complexes of Late Roman date, including horse graves (Szymański 2005, pp.72-73). In grave 298 apart from a horse's skeleton, pieces of a late Roman vessel were found over the animal's head (Szymański 2005, p.96).

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This suggests that grave 298 could be of the same date, though the possibility that the potsherds had come from an earlier grave, destroyed while excavating the grave pit, cannot be ruled out.

Thus the graves discovered after 1945 at the Bogaczewo Culture cemeteries did not provide evidence to accurately determine when this custom had emerged in Masuria, or whether there had been a closer link between the features and the burials of the horsemen. However, they did enable an archaeozoological analysis of the gathered remains to be carried out. The results show that all the horses were rather small and tarpan-like. Among the horses whose gender could be discerned there were no mares, though it was impossible to determine whether they were stallions or geldings. The majority of the specimens were mature, between 5 to 9 years old, though younger and much older ones could also be found (Gręzak 2007, p.359ff fig.7; Piątkowska-Małecka 2000, p.189ff figs. 2-3). These results seem to confirm the hypothesis that the horses buried at the Bogaczewo Culture cemeteries had been saddle horses. The lack of mares, which suggests that the majority of the horses or in fact all of them may well have been stallions, lets us assume that they had been combat steeds. Due to the lack of unequivocal archaeozoological evidence though, this claim must remain a hypothesis.

The above results concur with observations referring to horse graves revealed after 1945 in other parts of the Balt lands, first and foremost in the Sudovian Culture territory (Piątkowska-Małecka 2001, p.192ff; Krysiak 1958; Krysiak, Serwatka 1970), and at the cemetery in Netta, Augustów county (Serwatka 1970; 2007), which is unique on its own within the southern part of the Balt territory (Bitner-Wróblewska 2007, p.115ff).

### Features discovered before 1945

The digging methods used in the late 1800s and early 1900s to uncover dozens of cemeteries did not guarantee that no other graves had been left unnoticed and undiscovered in the said to have been excavated sites. Indeed, even at sites where excavations had been carried out new features were still being unearthed many years later (Bitner-Wróblewska 1995), among them 'newly' identified horse graves (Baranowski 1996). Moreover, the damage done during the Second World War greatly limited the possibility of using the results of studies carried out before 1945. It must be emphasized here that only a small number of the then discovered features were presented in a published form. Information on the others comes from the archives of the former *Prussia-Museum* in Königsberg (Junker,

Wieder 2003), which became available only in the 1990s, and from study records of archaeologists researching archaeological evidence before World War II (Juga-Szymańska 2007).

The first publication on horse graves discovered at a Bogaczewo Culture cemetery was a monograph on the site in Mojtyny, county Mrągowo (former Moythienen, Kreis Sensburg – Fig. 1 cf. Hollack, Peiser 1904; Jaskanis 1977, p.302ff). Three features with horse skeletons (graves 92-94) had been uncovered there. One of them, grave 92, did not contain any equipment, whereas the other two produced single-jointed bits with large rings (Hollack, Peiser 1904, p.57 plate VIII.93-94). An interesting find was a big, cylinder-shaped bronze bell (grave no. 94) originating in *Imperium Romanum*, as similar specimens had been used by Romans as a decoration of horse tack (Nowakowski 1988, pp.75-76 and 82-83 with figs. 2-3). The presence of the bell in a horse grave in Masuria indicates that not only did the Bogaczewo Culture accept the item itself, but its use in the Roman world had been acknowledged and accepted as well. Unfortunately, the type of the bell unearthed in Mojtyny can be found in a wide range of date, so it can only be assumed to have arrived in Masuria with the biggest wave of Roman imports at the beginning of the Late Roman Period. A publicized plan of the Mojtyny cemetery does not provide grounds to believe that there is a connection between features containing horses' skeletons and human graves, but it suggests that horse graves had been located on the edge of the cemetery (Hollack, Peiser 1904, plate XIII) – or at least on the edge of the area under excavations.

Several years after the monograph on the Mojtyny cemetery, a short article on the site in Ogonki, county Węgorzewo, was published (former Ogonken, Kreis Angerburg – cf. Jaskanis 1977, p.307). By a mere coincidence, more than a dozen unurned cremation graves had been uncovered there, together with a number of unidentified equine bones („*Pferdeknochen*” – Grigat 1927, p.82; Gręzak 2007, p.359), which may well have come from destroyed horse graves. The gathered finds indicate that at least a number of features should be dated to the Late Roman Period, whereas the presence of cross-bow fibulas with long, plain catch-plates of Dollkeim/Kovrovo type (Jakobson, Archive; cf. Bitner-Wróblewska 2001, pp.43-47 and 50-52 with fig. 7) indicates that the cemetery had been used even in the Early Migration Period. Therefore, the hypothetical horse graves in the Ogonki cemetery may well be dated to this period<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> An example of this kind is the situation at the Roman Period Bogaczewo Culture cemetery in Sypitki, county Elk (former Sypittken, Kreis Lyck), the only horse grave was

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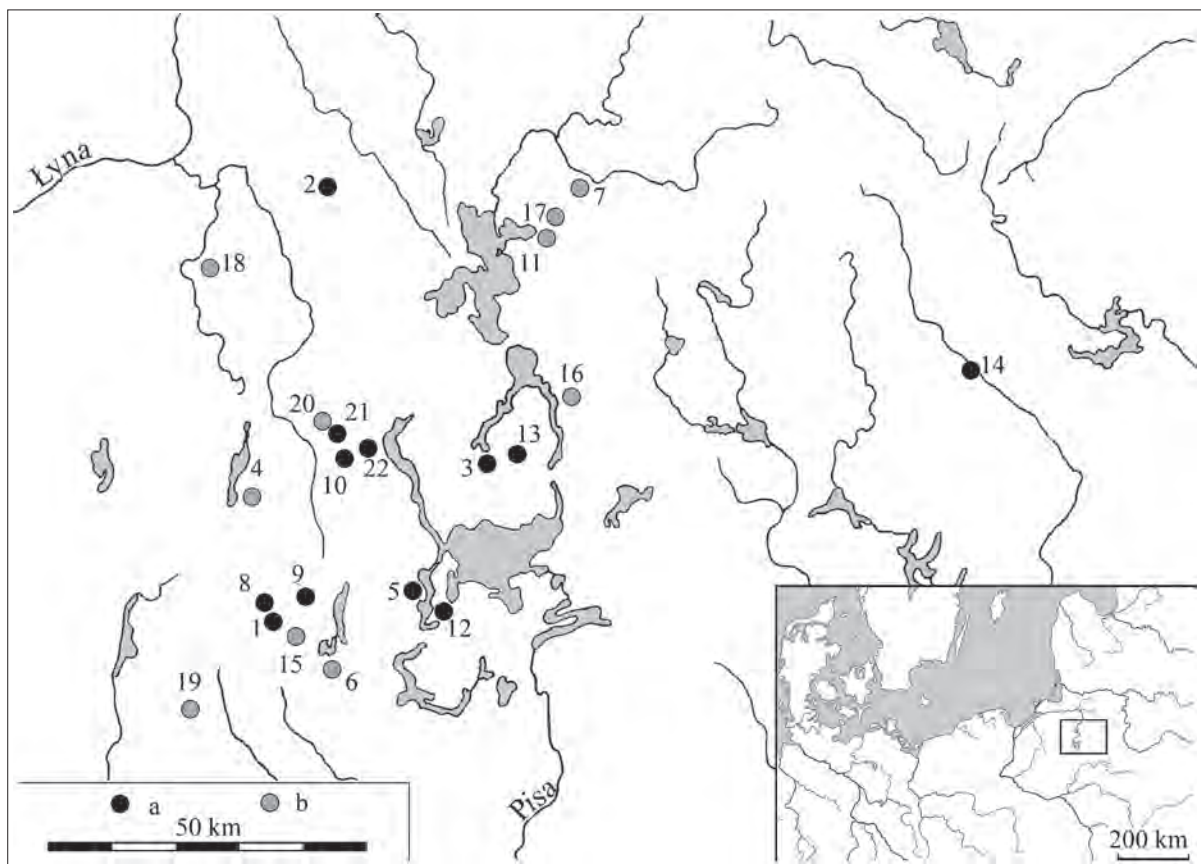


Fig. 1. Map of the Bogaczewo Culture sites containing horse graves: a features of Roman date; b features likely to be of Roman date. 1 Babięta, site I; 2 Gęsiki; 3 Górkło, site III; 4 Janowo; 5 Kamień; 6 Koczek, site II; 7 Lisy; 8 Machary, site I; 9 Mojtyny; 10 Muntowo; 11 Ogonki; 12 Onufryjewo; 13 Paprotki Kolonia, site 1; 14 Raczki; 15 Stare Kielbonki; 16 Staświny; 17 Stręgiel, site I; 18 Suśnik; 19 Wawrochy; 20 Wyszembork, site II; 21 Wyszembork, site IVa; 22 Zalec.

Even during World War II reports about new discoveries were published. In 1940 excavations at the Bogaczewo Culture cemetery in Górkło, county Mrągowo (former Gurkeln, Kreis Sensburg), site I, were carried out (La Baume 1941, p.88; Jaskanis 1977, p.272). In the spring of 1941 yet another cemetery was discovered in this village – site III, where along fifty cremation graves from the Roman Period a horse grave was also unearthed (grave no. 1). This discovery was reported only in everyday papers (KAZ 1941; PZ 1941). Likewise the case of the features from Ogonki, information about the horse grave from Górkło can be completed with archival data, which provides evidence to establish that the feature had been discovered by a mere coincidence and explored by unprofessional researchers before regular archaeological investigation was undertaken. The excavations revealed only the horse's skeleton, laid on the right side (Fig. 2). Accidental discoverers' accounts led to reconstructing a circular outline of burnt soil with charcoal pieces, located on the edge of the pit, partly over the horse's head. Arguably, it was a cremation grave equipped with two vessels

and unspecified 'iron fittings' („*eiserne Beschläge*”), which could have been parts of the bridle. One of the fittings along with a bronze ring were found during the excavations (Fundarchiv, 1549, Bd. 2/13, 32). It seems relatively unquestionable to link the feature with the Bogaczewo Culture, whereas viewing it as a burial of a horseman buried with his horse seems rather dubious due to the poor quality of the research done by accidental discoverers and further reconstruction of the grave based on unprofessional accounts.

The last horse grave reported before 1945 is feature 9 from the cemetery in Raczki, county Augustów (La Baume, Gronau 1941; Jaskanis 1977, p.317ff). The site, located just by the former border of East Prussia, was investigated in 1941. A short publication of the research results contained information on twenty cremation graves unearthed at that time, one of which (grave no. 9) although partly destroyed, was said to have held a poorly preserved horse's skeleton. Reportedly, over the horse burial, there was an unurned cremation grave, the equipment of which contained only one spear of type E5, dated to the end of the Early Roman and the beginning of the Late Roman Period (La Baume, Gronau 1941, p.61 fig.1.t; Ginalski 1991, p.62ff fig.11.14-

at the same time the oldest feature dated to the Late Migration Period (Kotzan 1935, p.13; La Baume 1944, p.13).

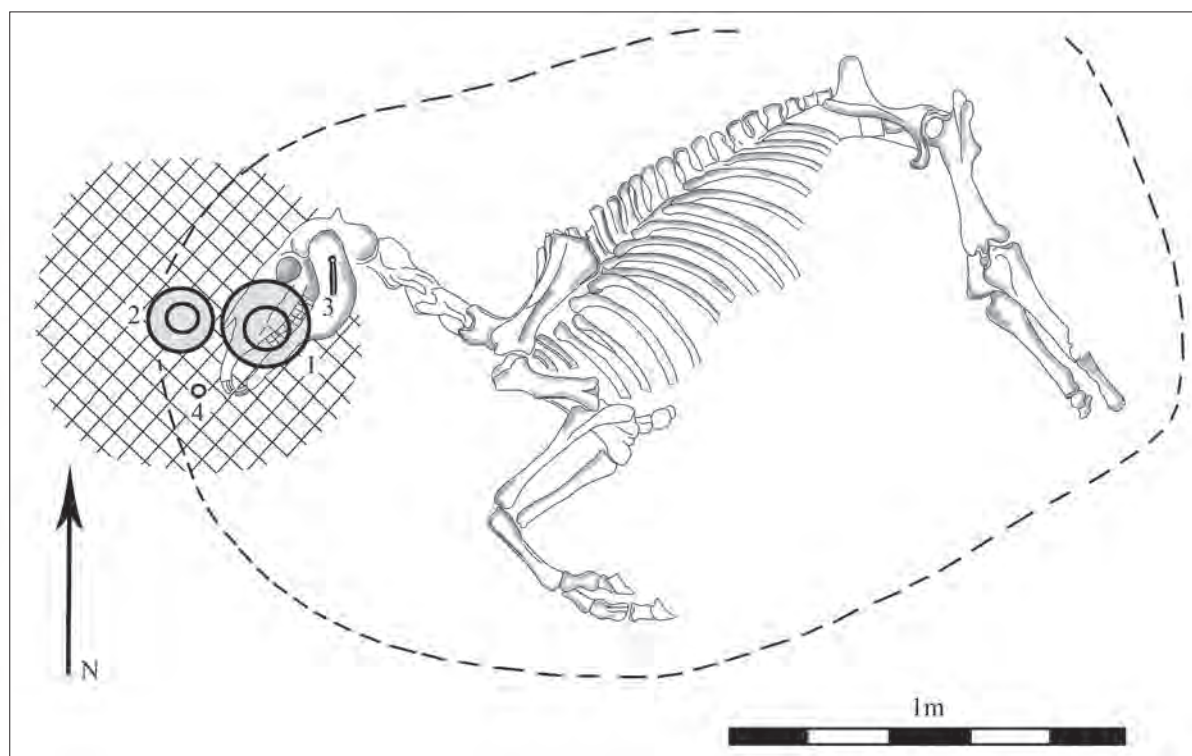


Fig. 2. Górkło, site III, horse grave 1 (after Fundarchiv).

19). Therefore feature 9 from Raczki appears to have been a horseman's grave buried together with his saddle horse (cf. „*Reitergrab mit Pferdebestattung*” – La Baume, Gronau 1941, p.61) – unfortunately, also in this case the partial damage of the feature along with the lack of complete excavation records make such interpretations dubious.

Other horse graves in the Bogaczewo Culture cemeteries have never been mentioned in publications and have only been known through the archive materials. In some cases information comes in the form of a short note, without a description of the feature or the artefacts accompanying it, which could give grounds to determine the chronology of the feature. For example it is the case of grave 45 from site I in Stręgiel, county Węgorzewo (former Groß Strengeln, Kreis Angerburg – cf. Jaskanis 1977, p.326), which had been marked on the cemetery plan as a horse grave (Fundarchiv, 1510, Bd. 1/5, Bd. 2/18; cf. Gręzak 2007, pp.357 and 367). All the graves uncovered in this cemetery can be dated to the Early Roman Period, so presumably the discussed grave might be of the same date. However, a later date of the feature cannot be ruled out<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> The plan of site I in Stręgiel shows a mysterious feature No. 44, an inhumation grave, located next to horse grave 45. Both features may well be linked to each other and both might come from the Middle Ages or even the modern era. Due to the lack of grave goods in both burials and the poor state of documentation covering the excavations carried out in the late 1800s it is not possible to arrive at a

Similar concerns refer to graves 209 and 454 from the cemetery in Janowo, county Mrągowo (former Heinrichsdorf, Kreis Sensburg – cf. Jaskanis 1977, pp.281-282, as ‘Jędrychowo’), both of which were supposed to contain ‘horse burials’ (“*Pferdebestattung*”), and yet there is no data on other finds (Schmiedehelm, Archive 7.12/111). Due to the long period of time within which the cemetery in Janowo had been used, lasting through the Roman and Migration periods, both graves may well be linked even to the Olsztyn Group of the late Migration Period. Such reservations are also shared with reference to other horse graves in Bogaczewo Culture burial grounds, which either did not contain any equipment, or the equipment was not well documented. Namely these are the features from Koczek, county Mrągowo (former Koczek, Kreis Johannisburg – cf. Jaskanis 1977, p.285), site II, grave 117 (Schmiedehelm, Archive, 7.13/63), Stare Kielbonki, county Mrągowo (former Alt-Kelbonken, Kreis Sensburg – cf. Jaskanis 1977, p.326), graves nos. 21 and 23 (Fundarchiv, 1848/Kossewen, Bd. 1/40), Suśnik, county Kętrzyn (former Sussnick, Kreis Rastenburg), grave 62 (Schmiedehelm, Archive, 7.13/30), and Wawrochy, county Szczytno (former Wawrochen, Kreis Ortelburg), grave 107 (Fundarchiv, 603, Bd. 1/24).

The difficulties in dating horse graves also apply to sites at which whole series of similar features were

final interpretation yet – cf. Fundarchiv, 1510, Bd. 1/5, Bd. 2/18.

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revealed, for example at the cemetery in Lisy, county Węgorzewo (former Lissen or Lyssen, Kreis Angerburg – cf. Jaskanis 1977, p.296ff; Iwanicki 2007, p.153), seven horse graves had been uncovered („*Pferdebestattung*”, graves: nos. 63, 64, 80, 86, 97, 99 and 100 – Fundarchiv, 1464, Bd. 1/7-11; Schmiedehelm, Archive 7.18/4-5; cf. Gręzak 2007, p.354). In 1927 one of the features (grave no. 63), which also contained a bit and two iron buckles, was dated by the researcher of the site, W. Gaerte, to ‘5./6. *Jahrh*’ that is to the Migration Period (Fundarchiv, 1464, Bd. 1/7). Due to the lack of narrower data referring to the finds from grave 63, the date suggested by W. Gaerte cannot be confirmed today. Furthermore, there are no grounds to establish the date of the other horse graves containing only bits and buckles. The exception to this was grave 80, where four fittings of the bridle straps, described as ‘cross-like’, had lain around the horse’s head (*‘kreuzförmiger Riemenbeschlag’* – Fundarchiv, 1464, Bd. 1/9) – unfortunately, in the case of these finds both the Roman Period (Grunert 1939, fig. 13 plate VII; Bitner-Wróblewska *et al.* 2001, p.75 fig.10.10-12), as well as the Migration period date (La Baume 1944, figs.16-17) are equally likely. Summing up, taking into consideration the long functioning of the cemetery in Lisy, founded in the Early Roman Period, it can be suggested that a number of graves discovered at this site can be linked to the Bogaczewo Culture. Presumably, revealing further archival data or finds at the cemetery in Lisy will enable researchers to solve the problem.

Occasionally it is as difficult to establish the function of a feature as it is to date it. In the late 1920s cinerary urns were uncovered in close proximity to the hill fort in ‘Święta Góra’ in Staświny, county Giżycko (former “Swienta Gora” in Stasswinnen, Kreis Lötzen), and in the mid 1930s more pieces of cinerary urns with dark, carbon-like soil and charcoal were reported (*‘Urnenscherben und dunkle kohleartige Erde mit Holzkohleresten’*). Along with these finds an equine skull was unearthed (Fundarchiv, 761, Bd. 1/8). Presumably, it might have been a cemetery with cremation graves and at least one horse grave. The site should most likely be linked to the Roman Period Bogaczewo Culture, or alternatively to the Olsztyn Group of the Migration Period. Though the features may well have been a wrongly interpreted settlement of the early Middle Ages. This is a good example of the problems encountered in Masuria while investigating Roman Period horse graves unearthed before 1945.

Fortunately a significant number of horse graves discovered before World War II have been documented in a much better way. These include two features from the cemetery in Muntowo, county Mrągowo, uncovered

during F.E. Peiser’s excavations in 1909. In feature 45 there was a horse lying on the stomach in a long narrow pit, with its neck stretched upwards. Next to the head there was an iron bit consisting of two twisted-metal bars and two side rings. Next to the torso three iron buckles had been found, next to the ribs – a specimen with a circular, single-parted frame of type AD1, under the stomach – a buckle of type AC5 with a pin elongated into a belt plate, and to the east of the backbone – an item of type AA14 with an eight-like frame (Nowakowski 2004, p.199 plate XII.1-4).

The early 1900s documentation of the excavations in Muntowo is not enough to establish precise stratigraphic sequences. However, on the basis of the sketch illustrating the location of the features at the cemetery in Muntowo, it can be assumed that over horse grave 45 as many as seven different objects had been found (nos. 6, 30, 41, 44, 48, 51 and 52 – Fig. 3)<sup>5</sup>. A brief account makes it clear that one of them was a big single stone, c. 0.4–0.45 m in diameter (no. 6), three others were vessels with stones (nos. 30, 41 and 48), and yet another was a layer of a cremation pyre remains (no. 51). No human bone was found in any of them (nos. 6, 41, 48 and 51) or even the lack of bone was emphasised (no. 30) (cf. Nowakowski 2004, p.222ff). Reportedly, human remains had only been present in two features, whose stratigraphic link to horse grave 45 was emphasized in the account. Over the northern part of feature 45 there was an urned cremation grave (no. 44), and under the cinerary urn, in the remains of the cremation pyre layer reaching 1 meter downwards from the ground surface, the following equipment was found: a hooked belt-clasp of type 2/a, a spearhead of type X and a shield grip of type Jahn 5 (Nowakowski 2004, p.199 plate XI). The depth of the pit in which the burnt layer was situated over the horse’s skeleton suggests a link between the two features (graves nos. 44 and 45). Such relationship is also indicated by their identical date to phase B<sub>1</sub> of the Early Roman Period, most probably its later segment (Nowakowski 2004, p.208ff). The second urned grave (no. 52), situated over the southern edge of the pit of feature 45, contained a fibula of Almgren 60 type from phase B<sub>2</sub>, thus it was of markedly later date. (Nowakowski 2004, pp.199 and 205 with plate XIV.1). Summing up, it could be suggested that features nos. 44 and 45 are graves of a rider and his saddle horse, whereas the objects: nos. 30, 41, 48 and 51 might have belonged to the varied filling of feature no. 45. Originally, feature 6, that is ‘a

<sup>5</sup> The sketch by the author of the research – F.E. Peiser – Fundarchiv, 50, Bd. 1/1c. Location of the features in this figure differs from the earlier arrangement drawn on the basis of the coordinates given in the excavations report – cf. Nowakowski 2004, p.221ff with plate III.

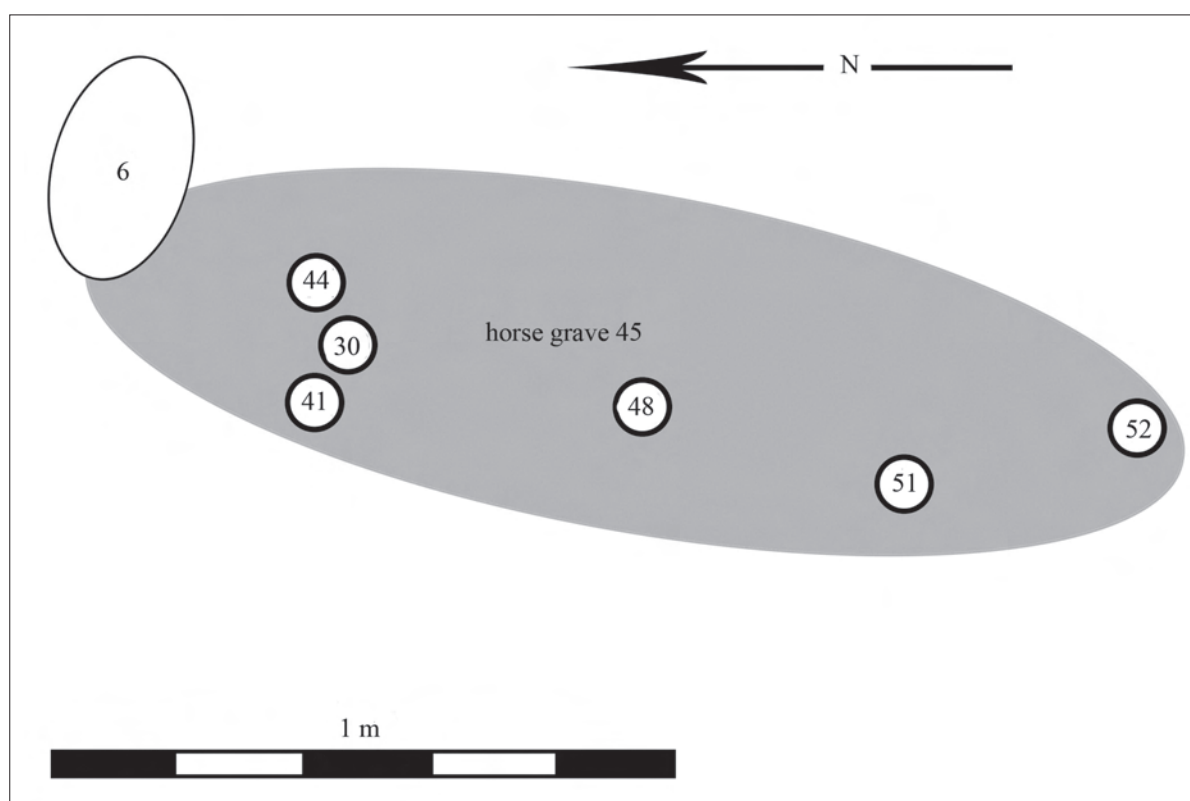


Fig. 3. Muntowo, horse grave 45 and features located over its outline. Reconstruction based on the sketch in excavation records (after Fundarchiv).

big stone', may well have been a grave on the surface. Poor state of the excavation records makes this interpretation remain a hypothesis.

The second horse grave (grave no. 40) revealed at the cemetery in Muntowo was markedly later. It was covered with stones. The horse lay with its head turned southwards, the torso was on the right side and it was bent eastwards. In the mouth there was a single-jointed bit with rings at both ends, and an iron buckle of type AG10 lay next to the left side. The deposit under the horse contained incineration remains. In the grave pit next to the horse's torso and over it there were pottery shreds, including a fragment of a multi-hole handle of, most likely, type ID (Nowakowski 2004, p.25 plate X.11). These finds suggest a Late Roman date of grave 40, most likely phase C<sub>1</sub> (Szymański 2000, p.117ff plates VIII.2, IX.1 and XI; Madyda-Legutko 1987, pp.47-48 and 56 with plate 13).

Two other horse graves were unearthed at the cemetery in Zalec, county Mrągowo (former Salza, Kreis Sensburg – cf. Szymański 2004). In grave 40 a horse's skeleton was found along with a bit and a buckle with a tetragonal frame on an axis (Szymański 2004, pp.162 and 169; 2005, p.115; cf. Gręzak 2007, p.367). The buckle's shape corresponds to a simple type AG16, occurring in great numbers within the whole area of the Central-European *barbaricum* from phase B<sub>2</sub> un-

til phase C<sub>1</sub>, or even longer (Madyda-Legutko 1987, p.48ff plate 14.6 and map 34). Unfortunately, the other horse grave at this cemetery (no. 21) had been devastated by accidental discoverers (Szymański 2004, p.161; 2005, p.115).

A horse grave (no. 27) was uncovered also at the cemetery in Gęsiki, county Kętrzyn (former Meistersfelde, Kreis Rastenburg – cf. Jaskanis 1977, p.270). On the basis of its photograph (Fig. 4.a – cf. Fundarchiv, 1383, Bd. 1/4) it can be asserted that the horse had had a bit with two big rings in its mouth. Supposedly the equipment of the grave included also a big iron buckle with a tetragonal frame with rounded corners (Fig. 4.b – Prussia-Sammlung VII-74-9263b), similar to the corresponding finds from horse graves 166 and 220 in Wyszembork (cf. Szymański 2005, plates XXVII.1-2 and XXVIII.3-4), discussed above. It is justifiable then to date horse grave 27 in Gęsiki in the same way as the horse graves in Wyszembork, which contained similar buckles, that is to the Late Roman Period.

Also grave 23 from Kamień, county Mrągowo (former Kamien, Kreis Sensburg – cf. Jaskanis 1977, p.283), can be of Roman date, more likely of a later phase. It contained a horse's skeleton with a bit with two rings, resembling the items from graves in Wyszembork – repeatedly mentioned herein, along with three rectangular fittings, possibly belonging to the straps of the bridle

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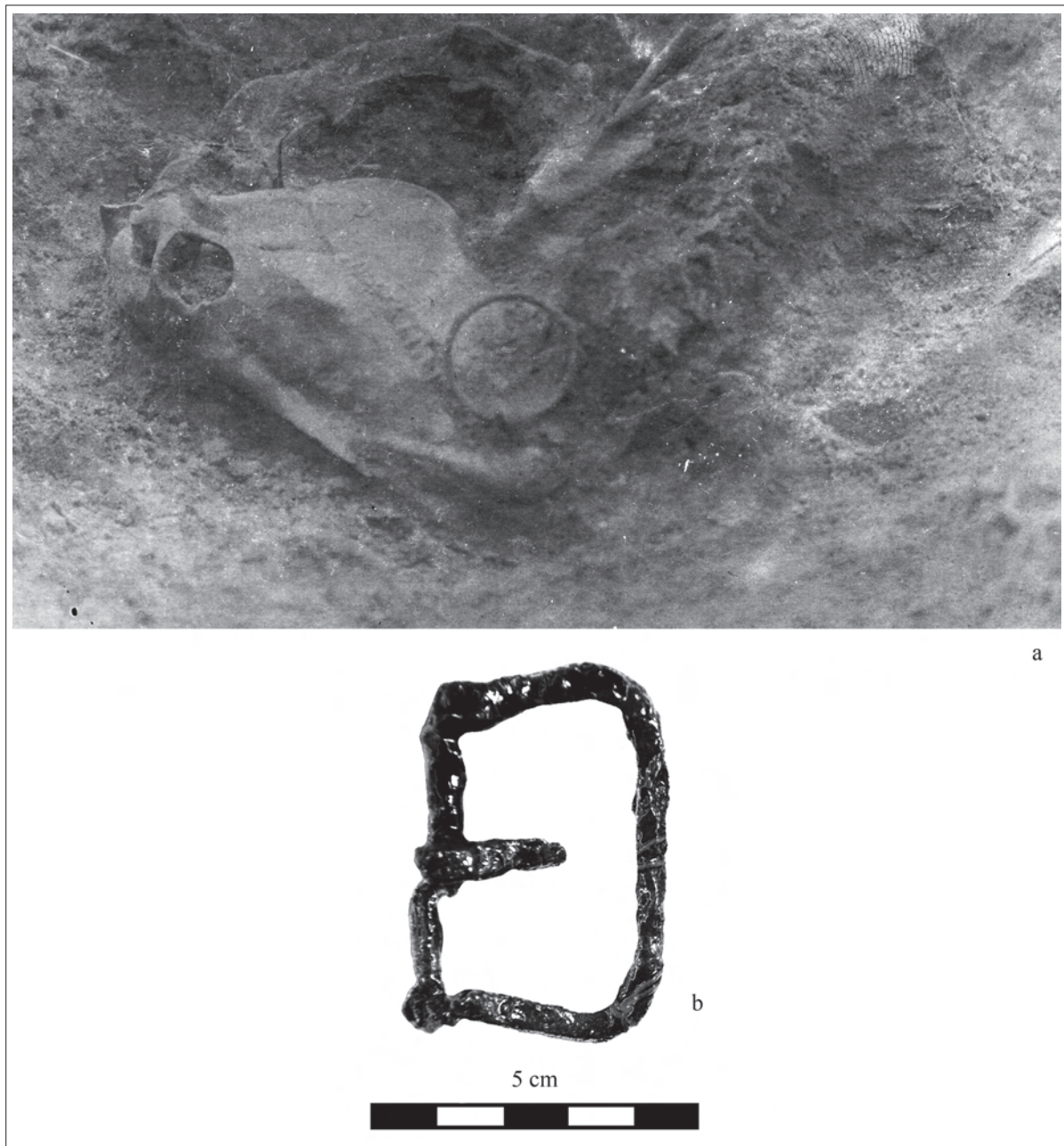


Fig. 4. Gęsiki, horse grave 27: a horse head with iron bit with rings (after Fundarchiv); b iron buckle (Prussia-Sammlung).

(Sztet 2009). A green coating on the horse's skull suggests that the head pieces of the bridle might have possessed certain bronze elements, fittings or rivets.

A series of horse graves was also discovered at the cemetery in Onufryjewo, county Pisz (former Onufri-  
owen, Kreis Sensburg – cf. Jaskanis 1977, p.311, as “Piaski-Onufryjewo”). At this large cemetery with over 400 cremation graves six features containing equine bones were also noted (graves nos. 22, 26, 26a, 150, 179 and 246 – Fundarchiv, 1162, Bd. 1/3, 11; Schmiedehelm, Archive 7.12/104). It is necessary to add to this also the damaged grave 25, in which a horse's bar had been found – it might have been a symbolic horse burial. Similarly to many aforementioned cases, hardly

any of these graves contained equipment, which makes it impossible to date them without a doubt to the Roman period. Two exceptions to this are grave no. 26, in which two amber beads had been found, unfortunately of little significance in terms of being chronology indicators, and the rich grave no. 22. Although the equipment of the latter had not been well documented, the assemblage of artefacts – an iron fibula, an iron buckle, a struck flint and three amber beads (Fundarchiv, 1162, Bd. 1/3) – suggests its link with the Bogaczewo Culture from the Roman Period. Although there is no information on the arrangement of the horse's bones, the presence of burnt human bone next to the horse's is also worth noting. It might have been then a collective grave of a rider and his horse, still this conclusion must



remain a supposition as in any other case discussed in this paper.

Yet another cemetery where numerous horse graves were unearthed is site I in Babięta, county Mragowo (former Babienten, Kreis Sensburg – cf. Jaskanis 1977, p.253ff). Also in this case dating some of the features to the Roman Period and linking them on this basis to the Bogaczewo Culture is either impossible or dubious. Grave no. 6<sup>6</sup> can serve an example here: it contained a horse's skeleton without head, and no equipment. Directly over it there was a partly destroyed unurned cremation grave 5 (a horseman's grave?), which produced only a piece of bronze wire (Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/10; cf. Schmiedehelm, Archive 7.12/86).

It is also difficult to determine the character of 'feature 86' in the same cemetery. This is the tag given to fragments of a horse's skull lying in close proximity to a small iron buckle and a piece of a vessel with a handle, both of which had been separated as 'feature 87' (Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/13). Although the vessel had been described as a big urn, there is no information on human bone. The features may well have been the remains of an almost completely destroyed cremation grave with an urn (no. 87) accompanied by a horse burial (no. 86), but the puzzling notes in the excavation records do not confirm this interpretation. Whereas the account of "the handle of a big urn" ("*Henkel einer großen Urne*") suggests that it might have been a vessel with a big, two-hole handle, typical of the Bogaczewo Culture in phases B<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>1</sub> of the Roman Period (Szymański 2000, pp.123 and 130-131). A similar assumption might be made with regard to 'a vessel's handle' from grave 478 containing a horse's skeleton and being severely damaged by roots of a tree (Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/33), and consequently this feature might also be linked to the Bogaczewo Culture.

In other horse graves in the cemetery in Babięta parts of horse tack have been found, the majority of which were bits and buckles clipping straps of the bridle or the girth. Such artefacts occurred in: grave no. 93 (a bronze buckle), no. 211 (a bit and two iron buckles), no. 228 (a bit and two iron buckles), no. 286 (a bit), no. 293 (a buckle), no. 316 (a bit and two iron buckles), no. 317 (a bit, two buckles, two metal fittings, and an iron

shield-formed fitting), though on the basis of the documentation available today (Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/13-14, 17-18, 20, 21; Schmiedehelm, Archive 7.12/81) no better analysis can be done to determine their precise date. It might be concluded then that a number of these graves might have come from the Migration Period, though it seems more reasonable to link the features containing iron buckles (graves nos. 211, 228 and 316) with the Bogaczewo Culture from the Roman Period.

The Roman Period might be also the date of grave no. 213, in which apart from a horse's skeleton covered with a few stones there were a bit, two buckles and a pin – a piece of jewellery typical for the Bogaczewo Culture, not occurring in features of the Olsztyn Group from the Migration Period. It needs to be noted though that the presence of the pin in this horse grave is rather surprising as a pin was supposed to be a decorative element of a woman's attire rather than man's; especially when the pin had reportedly been found on the ribs, next to the buckle which most probably clipped the girth (Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/17; Schmiedehelm, Archive 7.12/81).

There is no doubt though about dating horse grave 475 to the Roman Period (Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/33). Next to the horse's head there were two rectangular buckles and the bridle fittings, including rectangular plates with rivets and straps separators in the shape of square plates with cut in edges (Fig. 5). Another rectangular buckle lay on the left side of the horse's stomach. The bit had a U-arched port in the center and shanks made of iron bars (Grenz, Archive; cf. Raddatz 1993a, fig.9). Such specimens are thought to be characteristic of the Roman period (La Baume 1944, 2, fig. 1, 5:i, 7a; Baranowski 1973, figs. 1, 4.2, 7.4-5, 9.i, 15, 17, 21; Wilbers-Rost 1990, p.62; Raddatz 1993b), which makes it possible to date horse grave 475 from Babięta to this period. The presence of the buckles with rectangular frames on axis in this feature lets one narrow the chronology to phases B<sub>2</sub>-B<sub>2</sub>/C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>1</sub> (Madyda-Legutko 1987, p.48ff plates 14,15-18).

The retrieved inventory books of the Prussia-Museum in Königsberg make it possible to determine a relatively unequivocal chronology of horse graves in Babięta, site I (Bitner-Wróblewska 2008). On this basis it can be partially established that the horse burial in grave 208 was accompanied by equipment resembling the finds produced in the aforementioned grave 475. Namely it included a bit of identical construction and cross-like straps separators, whereas the iron buckle with a half-circular frame settled on an axis (Bitner-Wróblewska 2008, plates XC-XCI; cf. Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/17; Schmiedehelm, Archive 7.12/81) indicates a much later date of the feature, possibly phase C<sub>1</sub> of

<sup>6</sup> Numbering of graves complies with the inventory books of the Prussia-Museum listing finds produced during the research done by F.E. Peiser in 1913 – cf. Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/10-24. Horse grave 6 unearthed during Peiser's excavations in 1913 and mentioned here should not be mistaken for 'grave 6' from E. Hollack's research in 1899, which revealed a well-known enamelled pendant (cf. Hollack, Peiser 1904, colour figure), and which eventually was identified as 'Grave 498' – Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/6. cf. Bitner-Wróblewska *et al.* 2008, p.150ff fig.17.

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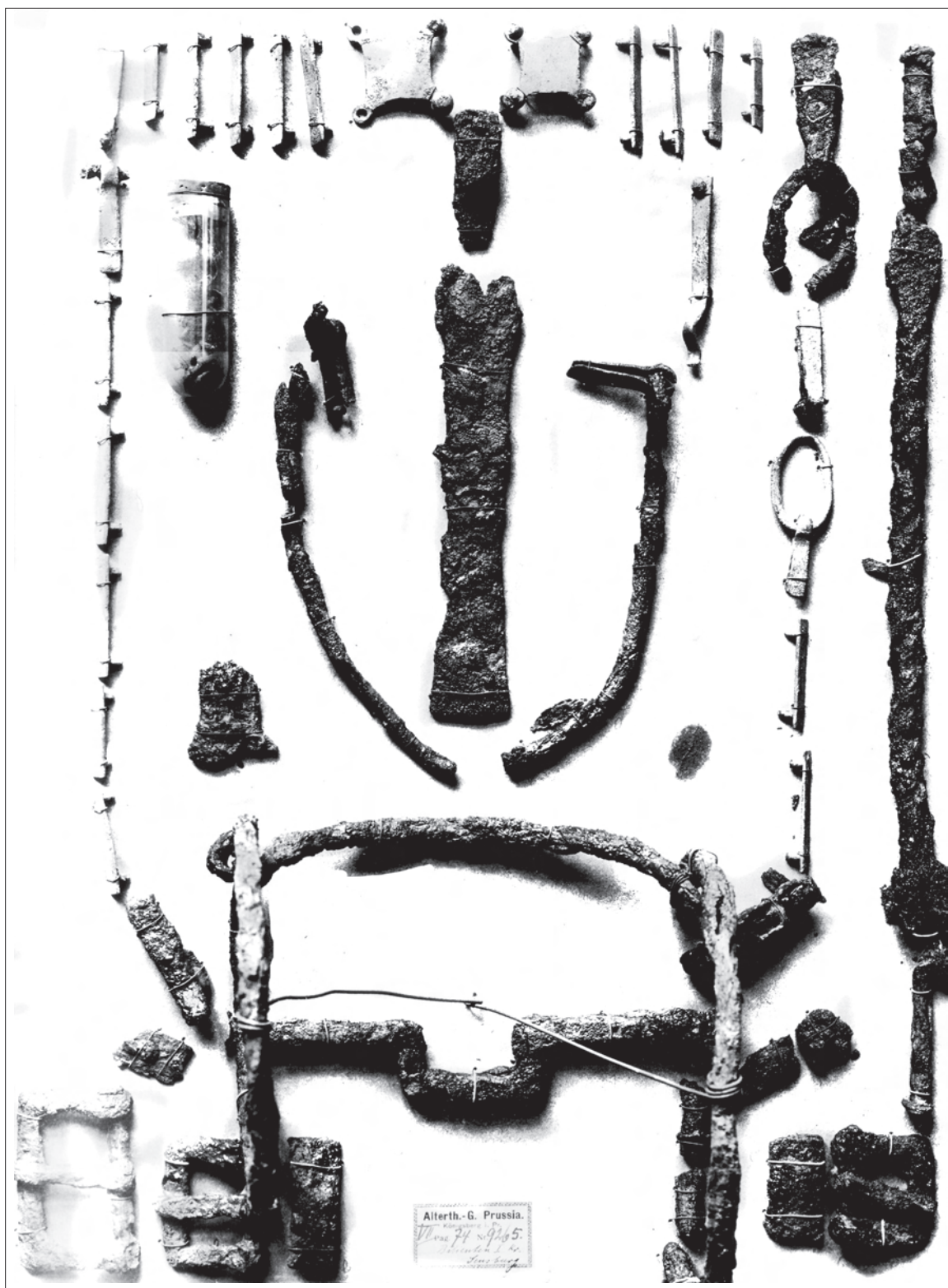


Fig. 5. Babięta, site I, horse grave 475 (after Grenz, Archive).

the late Roman Period (Madyda-Legutko 1987, p.29ff plate 9.17).

Also in the case of the artefacts in grave 195 drawings printed in the inventory books (Bitner-Wróblewska 2008, plate LXXXVIII) made it possible to recognize one of the buckles found in the feature as an iron specimen of a semi-circular single-parted frame, closely resembling items of type AD1 (Madyda-Legutko 1987, p.24ff plate 7). On the same basis it was possible to establish that amongst different fittings there were two bronze rings with fittings and a hook-like catch (Voigtmann, Archive), bearing some stylistic characteristics of Roman Period bridle elements (Baranowski 1973, figs. 6, 9 and 12; Wilbers-Rost 1990, plates 3-9; Raddatz 1993b; Bitner-Wróblewska *et al.* 2001, fig. 6). The description of grave 195 in the excavation report and the sketch showing how the artefacts had been arranged indicate that the horse's skeleton had lain in a pit with stones, next to its head there were a bit, buckles and fittings of the bridle straps, and one more buckle was situated by the front legs (Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/16; cf. Schmiedehelm, Archive 7.12/80).

Other two horse graves from Babięta, site I (graves 279 and 280) were located in a big, partially destroyed stone lining (Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/20). Both of them contained bits with rings on sides, and buckles with tetragonal frames on an axis (Bitner-Wróblewska 2008, plates XCV-XCVI). Interestingly, in grave 280 there were two rather small vessels, reported in the excavation records as 'side vessels' ("*Beigefäße*" – Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/20), therefore most probably they had not contained any burnt human bone remains. One of the vessels, preserved almost intact, can be classified as group IE of the Bogaczewo Culture pottery, dated to an early phase of the Late Roman Period (cf. Szymański 2000, p.118ff plate XII).

Two similar vessels, also referred to as 'side vessels' in the report, (Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/34) had been found in horse grave 477. Along them there were a bit with big rings and two buckles: a tetragonal one lying next to the right side of the horse and a semi-circular one with the frame on an axis lying under the stomach (Bitner-Wróblewska 2008, plates CXIII-CXIV; Fundarchiv, 96, Bd. 1/34). These finds date the whole feature to phase C<sub>1</sub> (Madyda-Legutko 1987, pp.29-30 plate 9.17; Szymański 2000, p.118ff plate XII).

The inventory books of the Prussia-Museum also possess records on the finds in feature 190 in the cemetery in Machary, county Mrągowo (former Macharren, Kreis Sensburg – Jaskanis 1977, 300ff). At the level of 1.5 m deep there were three horses: one (No. 190a) under a stone cover, and the other two (nos. 190b and 190c) outside the cover (Fundarchiv, 1431, Bd. 1/11). Each

horse burial was equipped with a bit with a single-jointed mouthpiece and side rings (Bitner-Wróblewska 2008, plate CCXXI), all of which resemble specimens of the Roman period and consequently provide grounds for linking this untypical feature with the Bogaczewo Culture.

### Conclusions

Despite the difficulties with dating horse graves, both those uncovered in Masuria before 1945 and known mainly from fragmentary accounts and features known from research carried out after the war, at least *c* 30 graves can be deemed to have links with the Bogaczewo Culture (Fig. 1 – Babięta, graves nos. 195, 208, 211, 213, 228, 279, 280, 316, 475, 477 and 478; Gęsiki, grave no. 27; Górkło, grave 1; Kamień, grave 23; Machary, graves 190a, 190b and 190c; Mojtyny, graves 92, 92 and 94; Muntowo, graves nos. 40 and 45; Onufryjewo, grave 22; Paprotki Kolonia, site I, graves 175 and 251, and perhaps graves nos. 215, 221 and 254; Raczki, grave 9; Wyszembork, site IVa, graves 166, 220, 298; Zalec, grave no. 40). Moreover, it can also be expected that this number will gradually grow once 'new' data on finds from before 1945, retrieved from archive records, has become available for academic research; such expectation is justified by the increase of Roman Period horse graves in Masuria in recent years (Gręzak 2007).

Possibly also feature 120 from site II in Wyszembork could have been included in the above list of the Bogaczewo Culture horse graves; however its peculiarities such as: location outside the cemetery, a circular shape of the pit, and the bent position of the horse skeleton allow of an interpretation that it could have been a refuse pit with the carcass of a horse.

The binding rule of the Bogaczewo Culture, rendered on the basis of available records, was to place the horse in a narrow, tight, and elongated pit. The arrangement of the skeleton indicates positioning the animal on the stomach or on the side. The neck stretched upwards, observed in some cases (e.g. Muntowo, grave no. 45; most probably also Babięta, grave no. 208), suggests that horses might have been buried while still alive, which was observed in the nearby Sudovian Culture cemeteries (Krysiak, Serwatka 1970, p.219ff). In the upper part of the pit filling there frequently appeared stones, although research has failed to establish whether they had been arranged in any regular patterns. Unfortunately, there are no trustworthy accounts on 'stone linings' or 'stone covers' mentioned in this paper several times ("*Steinpackung*" – e.g. Gęsiki, grave no. 27; Machary, grave no. 190a).

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The equipment of the Bogaczewo Culture horse graves appears to be quite homogeneous, in almost all cases it included a bit, often coupled with other parts of the horse tack – most frequently buckles and less often metal fittings. Other items, such as the spear in grave no. 9 in Raczki, occurred occasionally and supposedly they might have belonged to horsemen's burials. In certain cases, such as the pin in Babięta, grave 213, or the amber beads in Onufryjewo, graves nos. 22 and 26, the finds suggest that the graves might have belonged to women<sup>7</sup>. Though these graves may well be traces of male burials – burials of mounted warriors who had been buried with their belongings comprising the most precious and most prestigious possessions such as a horse and a woman.

Pottery rarely occurred in horse graves, and it must be noted that in most cases there were only pottery sherds, which may well have come from damaged cinerary urns in horsemen's graves (e.g. Babięta, grave no. 478; Kamień, grave 23; Muntowo, grave no. 40). The exceptions to this are two graves from Babięta (nos. 280 and 477), both of which contained two vessels marked as side vessels, so there had been no traces of burnt-out human bone in them. Other two vessels were supposed to be found in the layer of dark soil over the horse's head in Górkło. Also the vessels recorded within or over the pit of grave no. 44 in Muntowo may have been 'side vessels'.

It may be concluded then that the custom of burying horses at the Bogaczewo Culture cemeteries did not differ from the rites observed in other parts of the Balt lands: horse graves occurred even in the Early Roman Period (Muntowo, grave no. 44), but supposedly the biggest number of such features might be dated to an early phase of the Late Roman Period. Also the custom of equipping horse burials did not differ from the one observed on the Samland Peninsula, or in the Sudovian Culture (cf. Jaskanis 1974, p.196ff). Moreover, the number of horse graves known from the Bogaczewo Culture cemeteries does not seem to be smaller than in other parts of the Balt lands (cf. the sound arguments in A. Gręzak 2007, p.353).

It is far more difficult though to find a link between 'horses graves' and 'horsemen's graves' within the Bogaczewo Culture (Gręzak 2007, p.357). Unquestionably, this is the result of the lack of barrows such as those which had covered horse and human graves in the

<sup>7</sup> Amber beads cannot be classified as elements of women's attire exclusively: at the Sudovian Culture barrow cemetery in Korkliny, county Suwałki, amber beads were found in the burial whose anthropological analysis revealed remains of a man (barrow II, grave no. 1). Under the same barrow a horse grave was unearthed – Jaskanis 1970, p.152ff figs. 4-7 and plates I.3-8, II.1-6.

Sudovian Culture cemeteries. Moreover, all the Bogaczewo Culture human graves, which could possibly be linked to horse graves had been severely damaged (e.g. Górkło, grave no. 1; Raczki, grave no. 9; Wyszembork, site IVa, grave no. 166). Therefore it can be suggested that those hypothetical horsemen's graves had been located shallowly, just under the surface of the ground, in the loose soil excavated in order to bury the horse.

Finally, one should believe that in the near future the increasing number of the Bogaczewo Culture horse graves, resulting from both new research and from 'discoveries' in the archive materials, will provide enough evidence to verify opinions which are only suppositions today.

Translated by Beata Furga

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## ŽIRGŲ KAPAI ROMĖNIŠKOJO LAIKOTARPIO BOGAČEVO KULTŪROS KAPINYNUOSE

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### Santrauka

Romėniškuoju laikotarpiu pietinėje baltų žemių dalyje gyvavo vadinamoji Bogačevo kultūra, besidriekianti dideliame Mozūrijos areale. Šios archeologinės kultūros kapinynai daugiausia buvo tirti prieš Antrąjį pasaulinį karą, juose gana dažnai buvo aptinkama žirgų kapų. Taip pat ir po 1945 metų buvo atidengta daugiau kaip tuzinas kapinynų su žirgų kapais.

Remiantis šiuo metu pasiekiamais radiniais ir kasinėjimų ataskaitomis, su Bogačevo kultūra galima sieti bent jau trisdešimt žirgų kapų dvylikoje kapinynų (1: a pav.), be to, daugiau nei tuzinas kitų kapų iš devynių kitų kapinynų greičiausiai taip pat priklauso šiai kultūrai (1: b pav.). Galima tikėtis, kad žirgų kapų skaičius išaugs, kuomet nauji duomenys apie radinius iki 1945 metų, aptikti archyvuose, taps prieinami tyrinėtojams – šią prielaidą pagrindžia ir pastaruoju metu išaukęs romėniškojo laikotarpio kapų skaičius Mozūrijoje.

Bogačevo kultūros srityje buvo būdinga žirgų laidoti siauroje, ankštoje ir pailgoje duobėje. Griaučių padėtis rodo, kad gyvulus buvo guldytas ant pilvo ar ant šono. Kai kuriais atvejais pastebėta, kad kaklas ištemptas viršun (pvz., Muntowo, kapas 45; taip pat greičiausiai Babięta, kapas 208; 3 pav.), o tai leidžia numanyti, kad žirgai buvo laidojami gyvi, kaip pastebima kaimyniniuose sūduvių kultūros kapinyuose. Viršutinėje duobės sampilo dalyje dažnai esama akmenų, nors tyrinėtojams sunku nustatyti, ar tai buvo tam tikra tvarka sudėliotos akmenų konstrukcijos. Deja, nesama patikimų nuorodų apie „akmenų apdėjimus“ ar „akmenų dangą“ („Steinpackung“, pvz., Gešiki, kapas 27; Machary, kapas 190a; 4 pav.).

Bogačevo kultūros žirgų kapų įkapės yra gana vienaitytės, daugeliu atvejų tarp jų būta žąslų, dažniausiai ir kitų žirgo kamanų dalių – sagčių, rečiau – metalinių apkalų. Kitų radinių, tokių kaip ietigalis Raczki kape 9, pasitaikė retai ir, matyt, priklausė raitelių kapams.

Keramikos žirgų kapuose randama retai, ir būtina pažymėti, kad daugeliu atvejų būta tik puodų šukių, ku-

rios galėjo rasti iš sudaužytų raitelių kapų urnų (pvz., Babięta, kapas 478; Kamień, kapas 23; Muntowo, kapas 40). Išimtis sudaro du kapai iš Babięta (280 ir 477), abiejuose kapuose buvo rasta po du indus. Nurodoma, kad indai buvo papildomos įkapės, nes jose nebuvo rasta sudegintų žmonių kaulų liekanų. Kiti du indai, spėjama, buvo rasti tamsios žemės sluoksnyje virš žirgo galvos Górklo kapinyne. Taip pat užfiksuoti indai Muntowo kapo 44 duobėje ar virš jos galėjo būti papildomos įkapės.

Galima daryti išvadą, kad žirgų laidojimo paprotys Bogačevo kultūros kapinyuose nesiskyrė nuo apeigų, pastebimų kitose baltų žemių dalyse: žirgų kapų pasitaikė jau ankstyvuojamajam romėniškuoju laikotarpiu (Muntowo, kapas 44), bet manoma, didesnis tokių darinių skaičius galėtų būti datuojamas ankstyvąja vėlyvojo romėniškojo laikotarpio faze. Taip pat žirgų įkapių paprotys nesiskiria nuo pastebėtų Sembos pusiasalyje ar sūduvių kultūroje. Juolab žirgų kapų skaičius, žinomas iš Bogačevo kultūros kapinynų, atrodo, nėra mažesnis nei kitose baltų žemių srityse.

Daug sunkiau Bogačevo kultūroje atrasti sąsają tarp „žirgų kapų“ ir „raitelių kapų“. Neabejotinai tai kyla iš to, kad nesama tokių pilkapių kaip sūduvių kultūroje, kurie dengė žirgų ir žmonių kapus. Dar daugiau, visi Bogačevo kultūros žmonių kapai, kurie galėtų būti siejami su žirgų kapais, buvo smarkiai apardyti (pvz., Górklo, kapas 1; Raczki, kapas 9; Wyszembork, paminklas IVa, kapas 166; 2, 5 pav.). Todėl galima daryti prielaidą, kad šie hipotetiniai raitelių kapai buvo įrengti negiliai, tuoj po žemės paviršiumi, laisvoje žemėse, kurios buvo iškastos laidojant žirgą.

Tikėtina, kad artimiausioje ateityje augantis Bogačevo kultūros žirgų kapų skaičius, besirandantis iš naujų archeologinių tyrinėjimų ir „atradimų“ archyvinėje medžiagoje, suteiks pakankamai duomenų esamoms nuomonėms, kurios šiuo metu yra tik prielaidos, patikrinti.

Vertė Rasa Banytė-Rowell

### III

HORSES,  
HORSEMEN,  
AND EQUESTRIAN  
EQUIPMENT:  
PREPARED  
FOR WAR,  
BURIALS, AND  
OFFERINGS