

WEAPONRY AND WEAPON BURIAL PRACTICE IN CENTRAL GERMANY IN THE LATE ROMAN IRON AGE AND THE MIGRATION PERIOD*

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Abstract

Neither the sword burials of the Late Roman Iron Age, nor the combination of an axe and arrows in graves indicate the presence of Burgundians in any particular region. A comparison of weapon burial practice associated with inhumation and cremation burial practice demonstrates beyond doubt that those differences which were identified in older publications reflect only overall changes in weapon burial practice over time. Some lance-heads and in particular the few spear-heads known show a close similarity to Scandinavian weapon types and indicate that weapon types became less specific for regions.

Key words: Roman Iron Age, Migration Period, weapon graves, burial rite, ethnic interpretation.

Introduction

The custom of depositing weapons in graves and the weaponry of the Late Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period in central Germany and in neighbouring regions have been used to postulate two ideas. Differences in weapon burial practice have been used by some researchers to identify certain ethnic groups within the archaeological record (Schulze 1982; Schulze-Dörlamm 1985; Leube 1983, p.371, Abb. 90; 1995, p.28ff.; Schach-Dörge 1997, p.94, Abb. 78; critical Schuster 2001). Firstly, graves containing a sword or the combination of an axe and arrowheads are usually associated with Burgundians. Secondly, inhumations of the Late Roman Iron Age are considered not to contain weapons (Schulz 1933, p.28; Mildenerger 1939, p.178ff.; Schultze 1989, p.22; compare Schlüter 1970, Tabelle 1, with Bemmman 2000, p.67), the only known exceptions being silver or bronze arrowheads. These will be discussed in the following, and also the question to what extent weapon burial practice and weapon types can demonstrate interregional contacts.

The classification of weapons requires some fundamental remarks. The differentiation between lance and spear-heads is based on the existence of barbs (Jahn 1916, p.49 ref. 1.). Because of a sometimes similar form and size, the differentiation of lance- and arrowheads is often uncertain (Schach-Dörge 1969, p.51; Mildenerger 1970, p.49). Significant differences exist in the diameter of the socket. Shafts of arrows are seldom thicker than one centimetre, the arrowheads

show a comparable maximum socket diameter (Raddatz 1963; Paulsen 1998). The function of a lance as a throwing or thrusting weapon requires the use of a thicker shaft. Therefore, the maximum diameter of the socket of lance-heads always extends 1.5 centimetres. Furthermore, the lance-head sockets are more solid than the sockets of arrowheads. The sockets of lance-heads have no slit, in contrast to most of the sockets of arrowheads in the Late Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period.

Weapon burial practice as an indicator of ethnic identity and as a means to define Elbe-Germanic settlement

The furnishing of graves with weapons, with double-edged swords or with the combination of an axe and arrowheads was used to outline the settlement area of the Burgundians between the Elbe and Oder rivers and in the Rhine-Main region in the forefront of the Roman Limes and to culturally connect these two areas. In 1982, M. Schulze published a distribution map of "Germanic warrior graves of the third and fourth centuries AD furnished with a weapon combination of axe and arrows" (Fig. 1, 1). In her opinion, this weapon combination was a characteristic feature of Germanic warriors of the Lausitz region buried in the third and fourth centuries AD. In these centuries the Lausitz region is considered as the settlement area of the Burgundians, so Schulze connected the similar equipped graves of the Rhine-Main area with the Burgundians. The earliest grave finds mapped date to the end of Period C₁ (Záryb and Libochovice), the latest (Scheßlitz, Kleinlangheim and Stockstadt) to Period C₃. The published map has to be supplemented and shows that her statement originally connected with the distribution

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II

BARBARIAN
WARRIORS
FROM THE
BALTIC TO
THE DANUBE

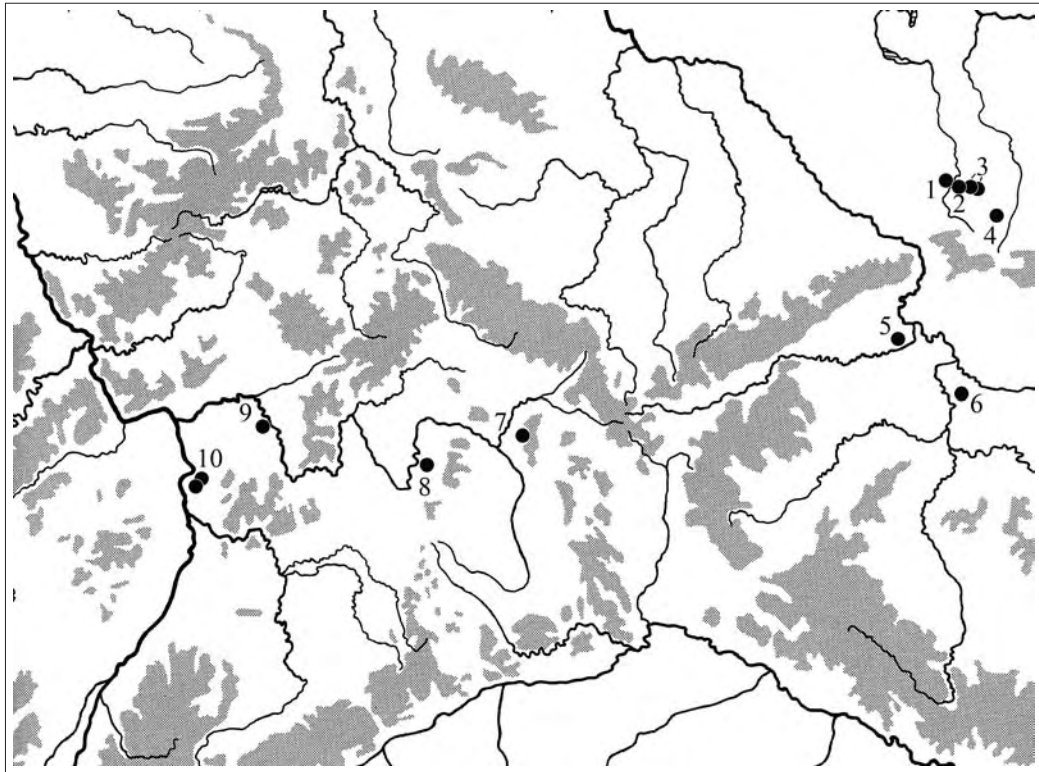
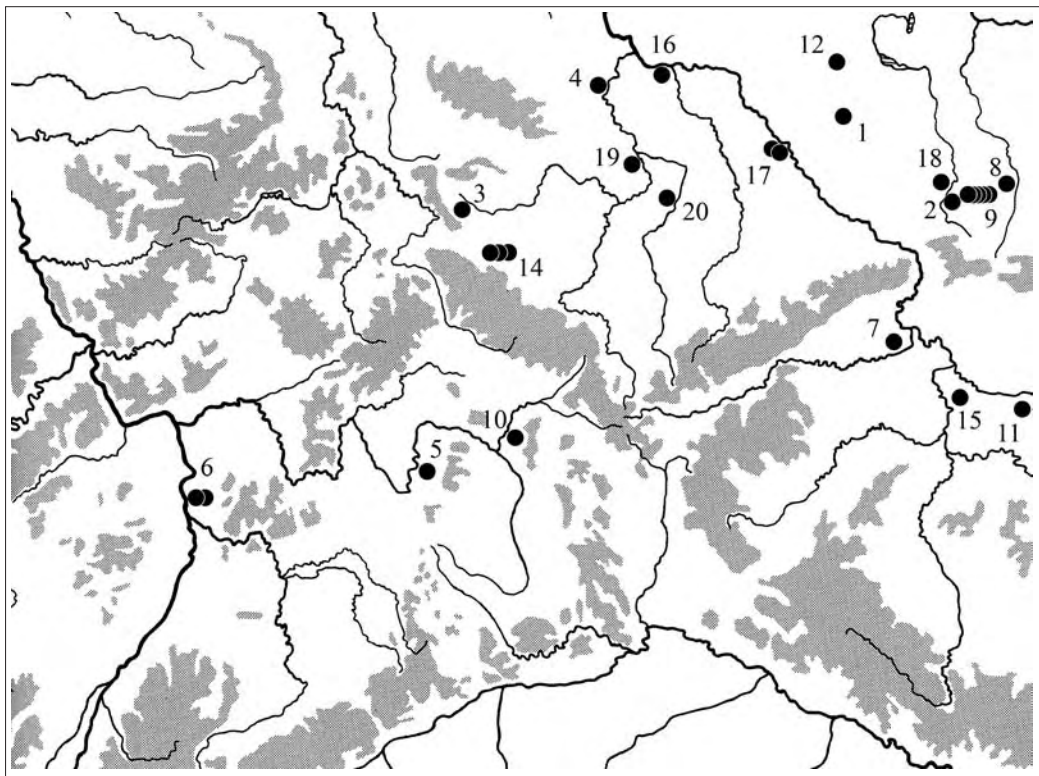


Fig. 1.
1 The distribution of graves with an axe and arrows from the Late Roman Iron Age (after Schulze 1982);
2 the distribution map updated (by J. Bemmam).

1



2

of grave finds is no longer valid (Fig. 1, 2) (Schuster 2001). The area between the Rivers Werra and Elbe shows now an even distribution of warrior graves furnished with axe and bow.

Since J. Schuster's article in 2001, the interpretation of the weapon combination of axe and arrows as an ethnic feature of the Burgundians is no longer valid. On the contrary, M. Schulze-Dörrlamm's (1985) ethnic

interpretation of the graves containing a double-edged sword is widely accepted up to this day (Ament 1995, p.84; Martin 1997, p.163ff.; Neubauer 2005, p.56). On the basis of this apparently proven fact, H. Schach-Döriges developed a simple formula, published in the catalogue of an exhibition on Alamans in Stuttgart 1997: "Sword-graves in the Rhine-Main-area are a sign of the settlement of east German Burgundians in the fourth century AD" (Schach-Döriges 1997, p.94,

Abb. 78). When reading Schulze-Dörrlamm's article and looking at her maps, three aspects come to mind which question the "Burgundian Thesis". Left out of consideration are the following points: first, the unusual selection of the mapped finds when comparing it with older maps (Schach-Döriges 1969, Taf. 58, Karte 4)¹; second, the dating of most of them; and third, the change in burial practice from cremation to inhumation.

A supplemented map of the area between the Rhine and the Oder and the source of the Elbe shows a concentration between central Elbe and Schwarze Elster with few find-spots reaching lower Spree and the area around lower Saale (Fig. 2). Between the Harz Mountains and Thüringer Forest, at the beginning of the Late Roman Iron Age, part of the Rhine-Weser Germanic cultural area, no such grave finds are known up to this day. In this concentration of find-spots, the double-edged swords were found in cremation graves similar to the situation in Bohemia. Swords in cremation graves are a special feature of Elbe-Germanic areas west of the central River Elbe, Bohemia, the Altmark and Berlin. In Bohemia, two weapon deposits, dated to Period C₁, are known, the one from Březeneč was found at an old way through the Erzgebirge Mountains. A second concentration of swords are findings in rivers and areas of humid soil conditions in Vorpommern; a third find concentration is marked by four inhumation graves from the Rhine-Main-area. Up to now it was not possible to fit the three swords from the Altmark into any typological framework (personal communication with Rosemarie Leineweber and Erdmute Schultze).

The idea to deposit swords in graves, and in this respect we follow the arguments of Schulze-Dörrlamm, was brought into the region between Elbe and Spree from Silesia, the distribution area of Przeworsk Culture (Schultze 1989, p.22). The transfer of this idea has to be seen in connection with the settlement of eastern Brandenburg and the lower Lausitz at the turn of the Early Roman Iron Age to the Late Roman Iron Age in which groups connected with Przeworsk Culture took part (Schuster 2005). The dating of the sword graves, the ensemble of grave goods and the distribution of several types of artefacts support this hypothesis. The earliest grave is grave 33 from Wilhelmsaue (Schach-Döriges 1969, p.128ff., Taf. 16, 11-13; 17-19). The rectangular iron buckle with double thorn, type G 37 according to Madyda-Legutko (1986, p.53, Taf. 16; Karte 39), as well as spurs type F3b according to

Ginalski (1991, p. 66f.), the band-shaped strap suspender and the iron fittings of a wooden bucket (Leube 1995, p. 30ff., Karte 3; Szydłowski 1985) show strong links with Przeworsk Culture and support, together with a lance-head with cylindrical socket and a shield boss with an extended apex, a date to Period B2/C1a. Comparable remains of buckets are known from the sword graves of Jessern (Leube 1975, p.123, Nr. 251, Taf. 28), Marxdorf (Schulz 1931, p.69f., Taf. 14; 15, 1; Leube 1975, Taf. 32, 2.6-17) and Horno feature 4c (Schwarzländer, forthcoming). The deposition of axes is unknown in Przeworsk Culture, and with the exception of Jessern, no axes have been found in sword graves between the Elbe and the Oder. The combination of a sickle-shaped knife and a straight one as in Wilhelmsaue grave 33 is a characteristic and almost exclusive grave good combination in weapon graves of Przeworsk Culture (Godłowski 1977, Taf. 25; 49; Godłowski, Wichman 1998, Taf. 27; 42; 67).

A still unpublished cremation grave from Glebitzsch, Landkreis Bitterfeld, (Fig. 3) is of particular interest in this context. During construction work a double-edged sword, a spear- and a lance-head, an axe, a spur and two knives were discovered 0.5 metres below the surface. The sword, similar to those of the Røllang type and the spear-head of the Simris type, date the burial to Period C₁. The lance-head can be compared with one found in a cremation grave of Period C₁ from Löbnitz, Landkreis Delitzsch (Meyer 1971, p.265ff., Abb. 151). Knives with a very long tang, most recently mentioned by J. Schuster (2001, p.74ff.), were not found in central Germany after the end of Period C1. The spur with three-point mounting of U. Giesler's Scandinavian variant A (Giesler 1978, p.10) has no parallels in central Germany. According to Giesler (1978, p.21ff.), spurs of this type are restricted to the first half of the third century AD. This supports the dating of the complex based on the weapons found in it.

The custom of depositing double-edged swords in graves ends in central Germany and Bohemia in Period C₂. One exception is cremation burial 2 of Dresden-Dobritz (Meyer 1971, p.52f., Abb. 25), which is dated to Period C₃ at the earliest; a date in the Migration Period is also possible.

Of the four known inhumation graves containing swords from the Rhine-Main area, grave 1 from Stockstadt (Pescheck 1978, p.278f., Taf. 136) is dated to the final stage of Period C₂ because of the disproportionately propeller-shaped belt-fitting and the vessel found in the grave. All other graves belong to Period C₃.

The sword graves of the Rhine-Main area are geographically isolated and there is only a slight overlap with the date ranges of sword-graves in the other re-

¹ M. Schulze-Dörrlamm adds the double-edged sword from a grave at Jessern dated to Period C₁a to the list of sword-graves of the late 3rd and 4th century. For consistency, all other graves with double-edged swords of the Late Roman Iron Age need to be added to the list, which will be done.

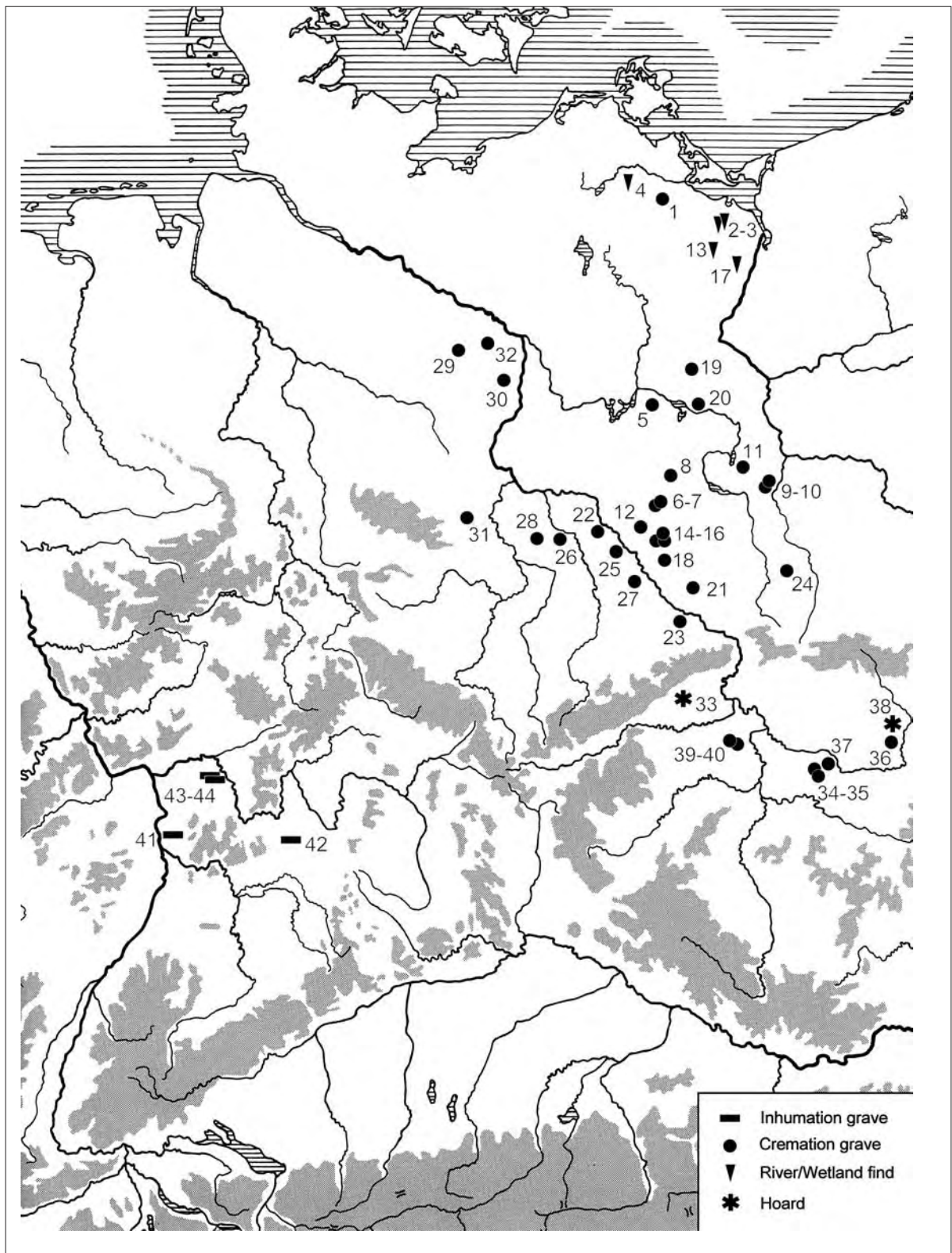


Fig. 2. The distribution of double-edged long-swords from the Late Roman Iron Age between the Rhine and the Oder and the upper reaches of the River Elbe.

gions mentioned; the burial practice is different, and clear differences in the combination of grave-goods found in the graves are obvious. Neckrings, like in Lampertheim grave 3, are not found in Oder-Germanic regions, but are common findings in the area of Elbe-Germanic settlements. The same counts for the

bearded axe from Stockstadt grave 1; this axe type is common in central Germany, in contrast to areas east of the Elbe (Bemmman 2003, p.61f., 73; 104 Abb. 19). The crossbow-shaped brooch from Stockstadt grave 2 is also typical of Elbe-Germanic Culture (Böhner 1963, p.141ff.). Arrowheads, which can be found in

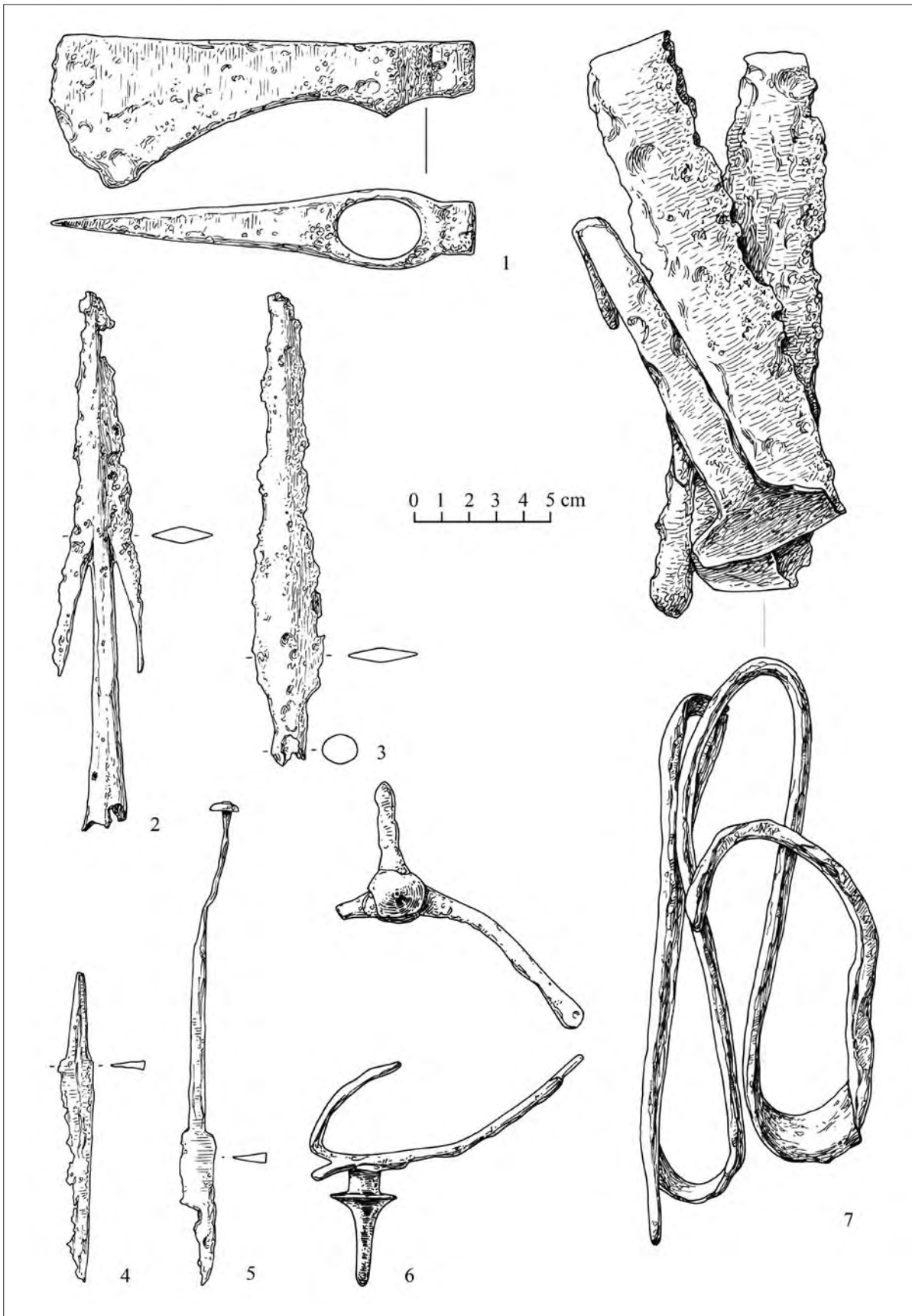


Fig. 3. Glebitzsch, Landkreis Bitterfeld, cremation grave (drawn by S. Mager).

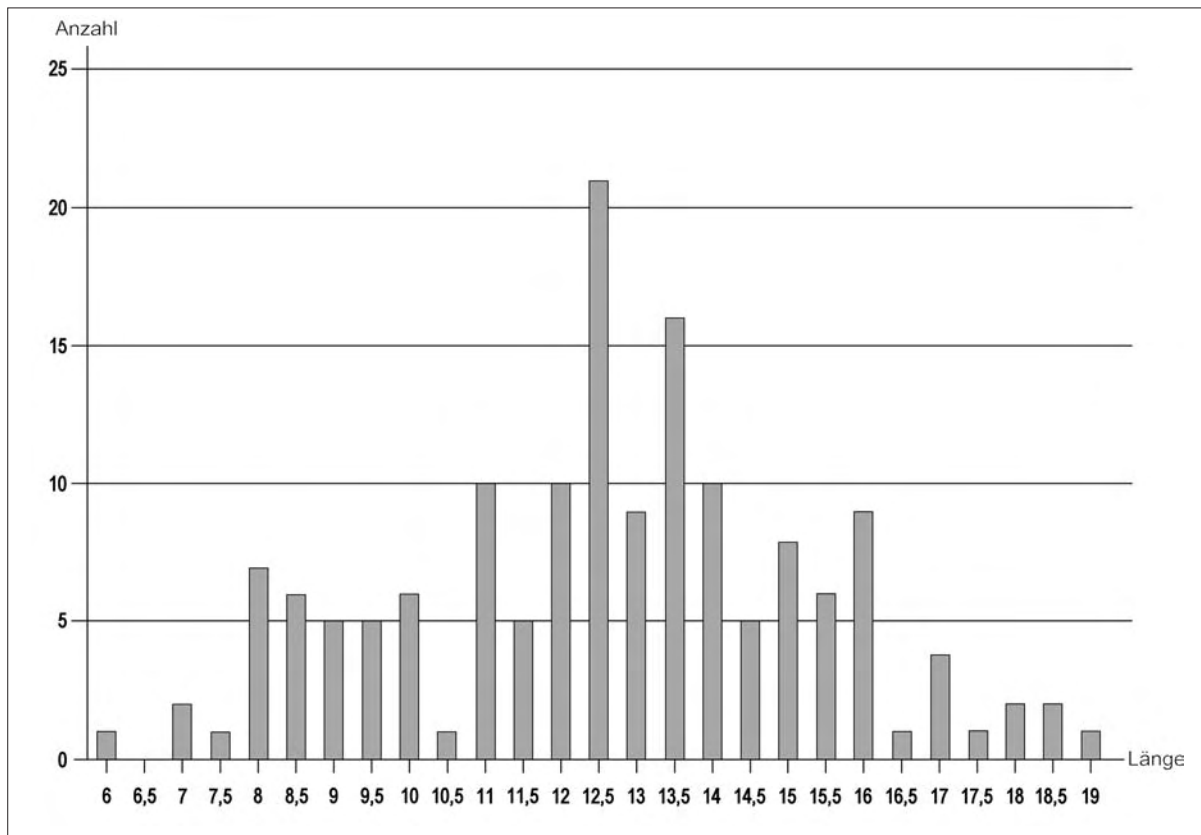


Fig. 4. Axes from central Germany and the Lausitzes according to their lengths.

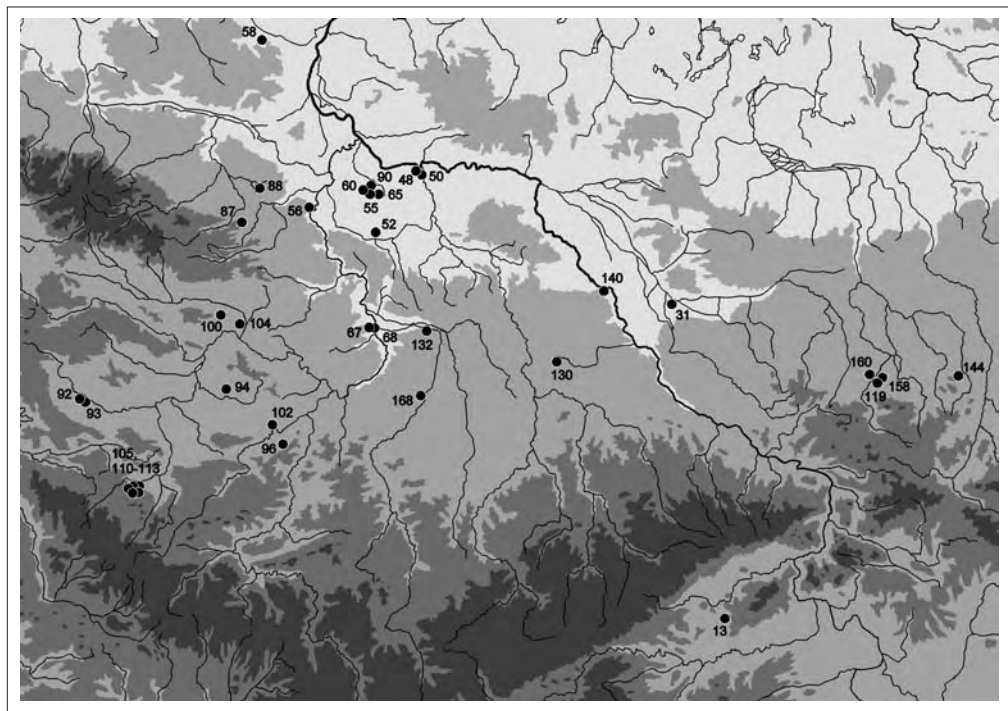


Fig. 5. The distribution of miniature axes.

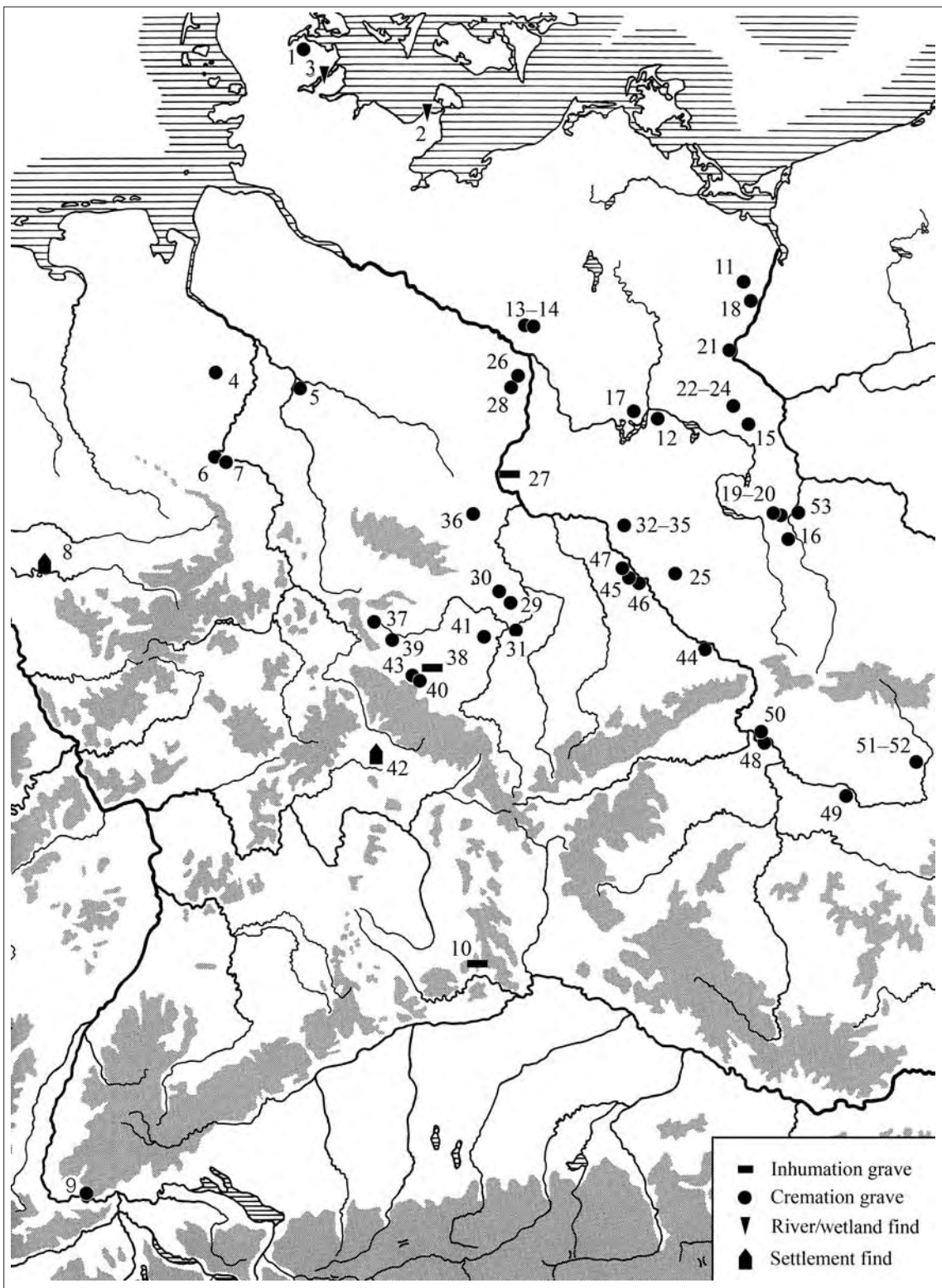


Fig. 6. The distribution of shield bosses without an extended apex from the Late Roman Iron Age between the Rhine and the Oder and the upper reaches of the River Elbe.

three out of the four known western sword-graves, are totally absent in sword-graves of central Germany and Brandenburg. On the other hand, in the Rhine-Main area there are no parallels with wooden buckets with iron fittings, shears, spurs and shield bosses.

Why the people in the Rhine-Main area, in spite of a change of the burial custom and of the combination of grave goods, should belong to the same ethnic group as the people living between the central Elbe and Oder, needs a more careful explanation than the one given

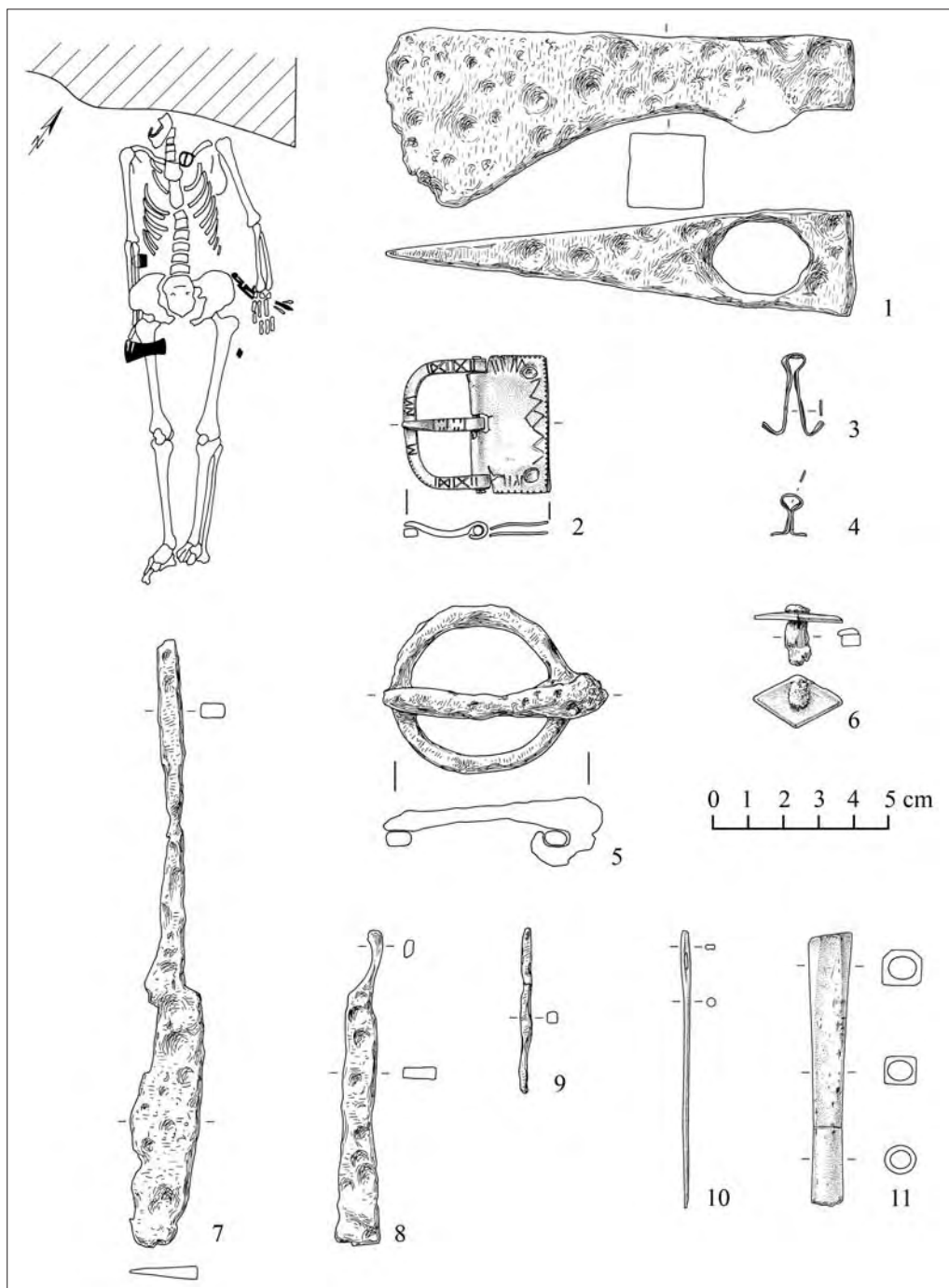


Fig. 7. Herbsleben, Unstrut-Hainich-Kreis, inhumation grave (drawings by S. Mager).

up to now. Against this background, Böhner's (1963, p.144) idea of an independent development of the custom of sword deposition in the area in front of the Roman Limes has to be preferred.

The deposition of axes in graves is typical of the Oder-Germanic cultural area (Leube 1975, p.34; Meyer 1976, p.187ff.; Schach-Döriges 1969, p.49f.). The Elbe-Germanic cultural area is characterised by depositions of miniature axes in children's graves (Mildenberger 1970, p.50). The size of an axe counted as a miniature type is disputed. Figure 4 shows all the axes found in central Germany, Lausitz and southern Brandenburg according to their length. A gap in the range of lengths

of the axes can be seen at 11 centimetres. Furthermore, all axes from osteologically identified children's and adult graves were recorded. It can be seen that the axes in graves of adults are always longer than 11.9 centimetres. Most of the axes from children's graves are shorter than ten centimetres. As another possibility to separate miniature axes from normal-sized axes, the axes of the Late Roman Iron Age votive deposit from Nydam (G. Bemmam and J. Bemmam 1998, p.185ff., Kat. Nr. 1853–1866, Taf. 185–187), which were obviously used as weapons, were analysed. The shortest object has a length of 11 centimetres, the longest of 19.4 centimetres. The average length is 14.5 centimetres. By adding up all arguments, it seems reasonable

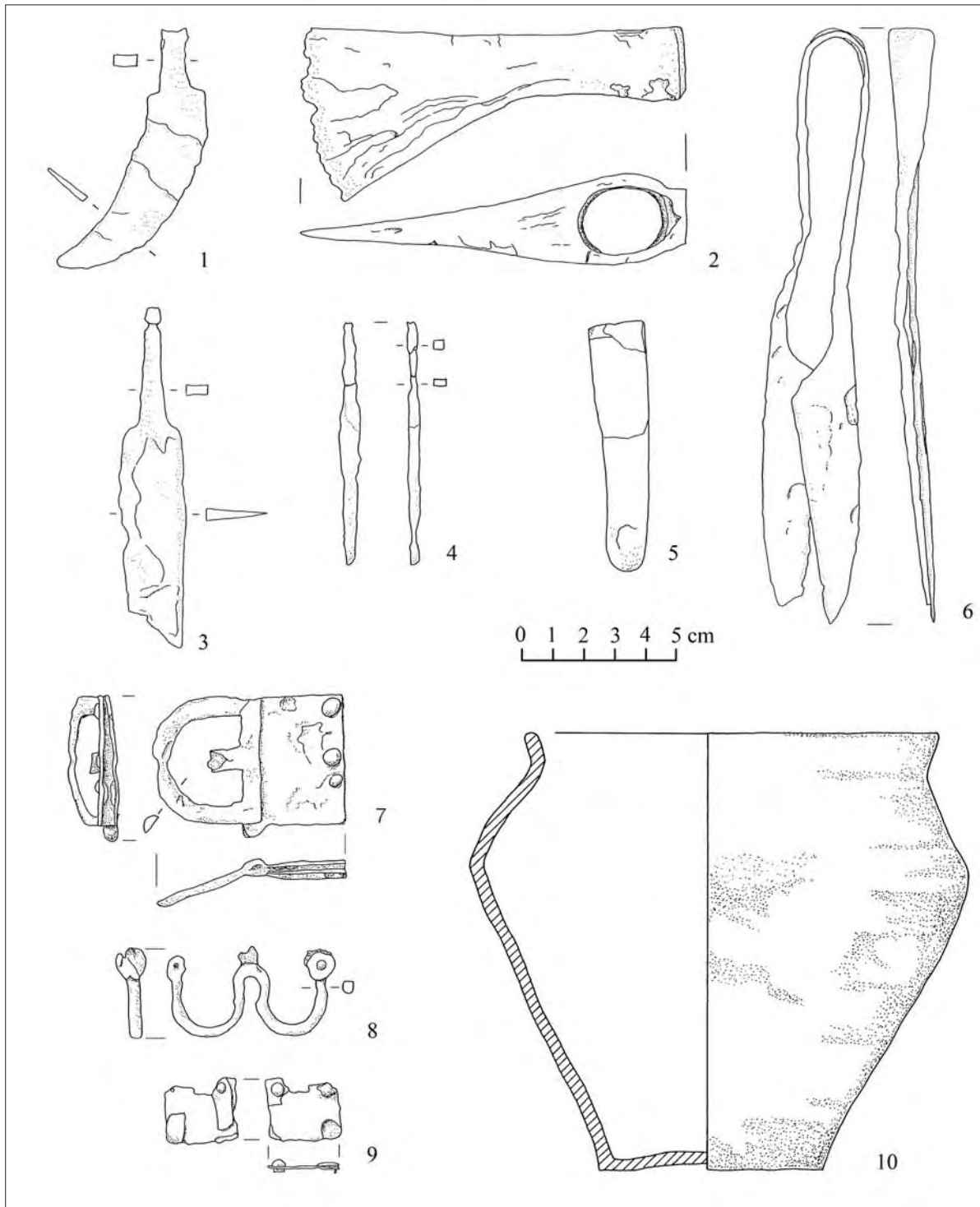


Fig. 8. Mattstedt, Landkreis Weimarer-Land, cremation grave 10 (drawings by J. Weidig).

to draw the line between miniature and ordinary axes at 11 centimetres.

Miniature axes are concentrated in central Germany (Fig. 5), but are also found in Upper Lausitz and Northern Germany (Schach-Döriges 1969; Schultze 1989). Isolated finds come from the Lampertheim cemetery and Bohemia. Miniature axes are not found in the Lower Lausitz region and the Oder-Spree area. The distribution map of a larger area shows no clear area of concentration of axes longer than 11 centimetres.

G. Kieferling's mapping (1994, p.336, Abb. 1) shows that axes were most of all used as grave goods by Germans living in the catchment area of the Elbe, Spree and Havel. In southwest Germany, Moravia and Bohemia, only a few axes were deposited in graves.

It has to be stated clearly that in central Germany, weapon burial practice as such is not significant in terms of ethnic identity. Closer analysis shows common traits among groups defined by their material culture, and there are indications of the integration of new elements

in burial practice, such as the deposition of swords in the southern Elbe-Germanic region during a short period of time.

The custom of weapon deposition: a difference in burial practice between cremation and inhumation graves?

Up to the 1950s, researchers often put a particular emphasis on the difference between richly furnished inhumation graves and poorly furnished cremation graves. Thanks to extended research, especially of G. Mildenerger (1939; 1948; 1970) and M. Becker (1992; 1996), cremation graves nowadays get the same attention as inhumation graves. Different conditions for the preservation of grave goods made of different materials in both grave types are now widely considered (Becker *et al.* 2005). Only the different equipment of inhumations and cremations with weapons and spurs is still a feature separating these two types of graves. But of course there are inhumation graves with weapons. The grave of Bischleben (Bemmann 2003, p.91, Abb. 6, 1-6), with a bronze Roman shield boss, has been known since 1890 and was considered as an exception. The excavation of the richly furnished chieftain's burial near Gommern (Becker 1993), containing a complete wooden shield, painted, with all metal fittings, took the Bischleben burial out of its isolation. There are also a number of cremation burials which contained only a shield boss. The deposition of a shield seems to be a characteristic feature of the southern Elbe-Germanic settlement area, ie central Germany and Bohemia, as well as the region between the lower Spree and Oder in the Late Roman Iron Age (Fig. 6). No finds are reported from the Lausitz region; from northern Germany, only two bog deposits and one grave find are known. From graves of the Rhine-Weser-Germanic settlement area, which are poorly equipped in terms of grave goods, four graves can be mentioned here (Stein 2005).

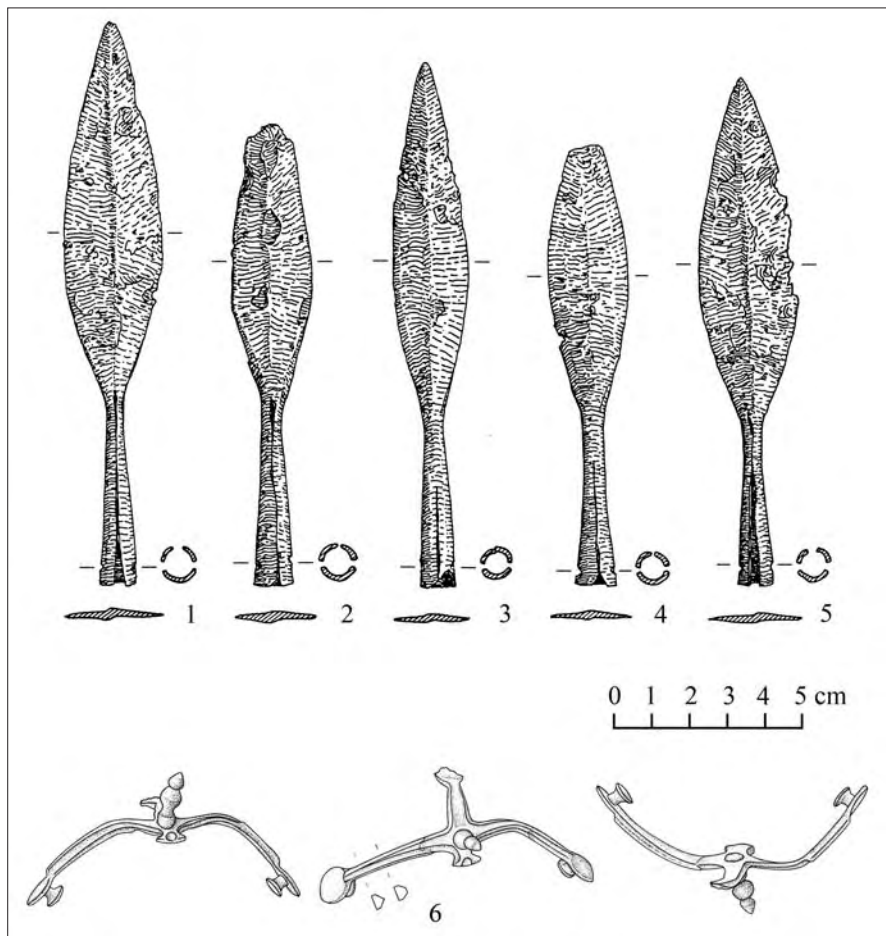


Fig. 9. Camburg, Saale-Holzland-Kreis, cremation grave (drawings by Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg).

A number of inhumation graves of the Late Roman Iron Age (Großörner, graves 10 and 12, Obertheutschenthal, Herbsleben, Gunsleben, Merseburg-South, grave 27) and the Migration Period (Stößen, graves 66, 67, 79, 92, Köthen-Geuz, grave 2, Wulfen, grave 6) contained axes. Merseburg-South, grave 27, and Wulfen, grave 6, contained, besides an axe, two arrowheads. The axe graves of the Late Roman Iron Age were up to now not widely known, because of incorrect dating or insufficient publication. On the basis of similar combinations of grave goods, these cremation graves are comparable to inhumation graves. The Obertheutschenthal combination of an axe, whetstone and razor (Bemmann 2003, p.98 Abb. 13, 1-3) is also known from Wechmar, Landkreis Gotha, grave 93, here combined with a pair of shears (Kaufmann 1984, Taf. 11, 1-5). The combination of grave goods from Herbsleben (Fig. 7), consisting of a belt, a knife and a fire steel, is found for example in cremation grave 10 of Mattstedt (Fig. 8).

It should be pointed out that the combination of arrowheads and spurs without further finds of a genuine military character, typical of the Leuna chieftain inhumation burials, is also found in cremation graves, such as Bennungen, Landkreis Sangerhausen, grave 14

(Schmidt 1987, p.195ff., Abb. 2, b-g, Taf. 32, a-f), and Camburg, Saale-Holzland-Kreis (Fig. 9).

In the Late Roman Iron Age the deposition of spear-heads, lance-heads and/or a double-edged sword is a burial practice with its main distribution beyond the area of inhumation graves. It is therefore not surprising that these weapon types were not deposited in inhumation graves almost exclusively found west of the Saale (Bemmann and Voß, forthcoming, Abb. 5). Spears, lances and swords are rare in contexts dated later than Period C₁, which indicates that large weapons are excluded from burial practice before inhumation burial practice became common. The lack of weapons finds an explanation in the late date range of inhumation graves and their distribution outside the regions in which weapon burial is common, but not in differences in burial practice. There is, however, a single inhumation grave of the Migration Period from Zwochau,

Landkreis Delitzsch (Meller 2000), with a double-edged sword, which is richly furnished in comparison with other inhumation graves of the region.

Weapon types and cultural contacts

A broad-bladed iron lance-head, engraved on both sides along a leaf-shaped outline and with an approximate length of 25 centimetres (Fig. 10, 1), finds its best parallels in Scandinavia. It was found in 1951 in a partly excavated cremation cemetery (Behrens 1952, p.294; Schmidt-Thielbeer 1963, p.946, Taf. 2, b) and it is not possible to assign the lance-head to a certain grave. Because of modern disturbances of the terrain, it is not possible to answer the question whether the chieftain burial from Gommern, which also shows Scandinavian connections in the grave goods, was dug in the same cemetery. Because of its cross-section, proportions and

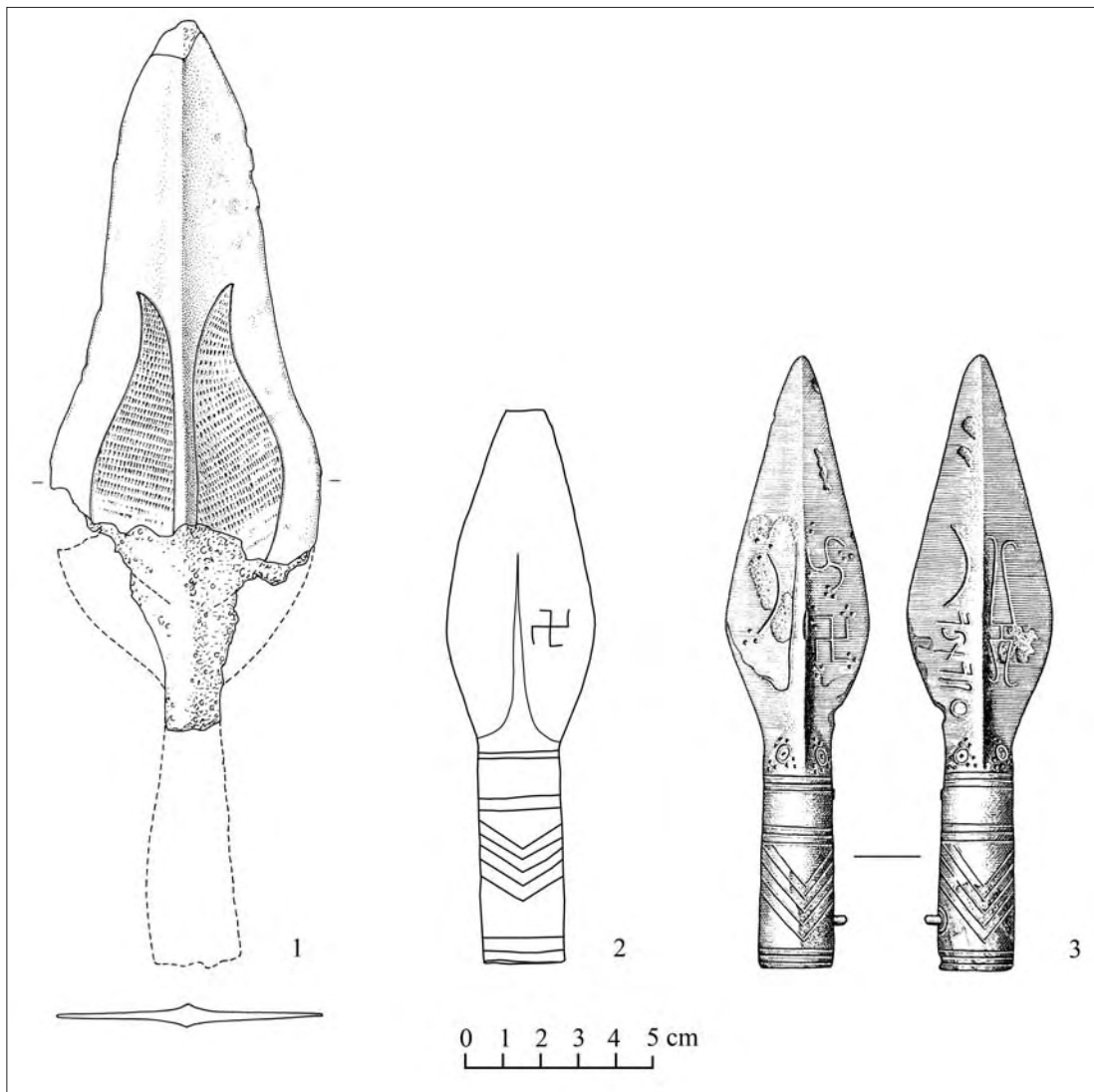


Fig. 10. Lance-heads: 1 Gommern, Landkreis Jerichower Land (drawing by S. Mager); 2 lance-head from Wegeleben, Landkreis Halberstadt (drawing by G. Höhn after a sketch by G. Mildenerger); 3 lance-head from Müncheberg-Dahmsdorf (after Leube 1975).

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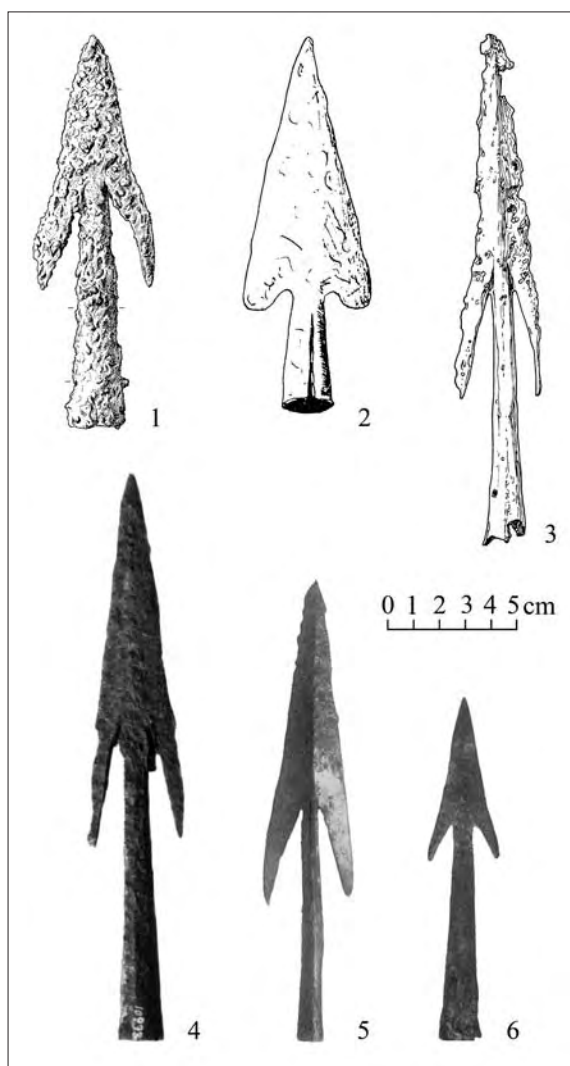


Fig. 11. Spear-heads from the Late Roman Iron Age: 1 Zauschwitz (after Meyer 1969); 2 Berkau (after Lies 1928); 3 Glebitzsch (drawing by S. Mager); 4 Stolzenhain (after Schulz 1931); 5 Lüdersdorf (after Leube 1975); 6 Tantow (after Leube 1975).

measurements, the lance-head can be best compared to lance-heads of the Vennolum type and dates to Period C₁b (Bemmann and Hahne 1994, p.419f.). Concerning the engravings, numerous parallels can be shown from Scandinavian grave-finds and votive deposits (Ilkjær 1990; G. Bemmann and J. Bemmann 1998).

A second interesting lance-head was found near Wegeleben, Landkreis Halberstadt, in 1949 (Fig. 10, 2). This object was found during gravel digging. Information concerning the context is not available. The lance-head shows linear decorations on the cylindrical socket; on one half of the blade a left-turning swastika is visible. The author has not been able to examine the original piece, so that the technique of decoration cannot be described here. Bearing in mind the similar socket decoration of the Müncheberg-Dahmsdorf lance-head (Fig. 10, 3) (Leube 1975, p. 88f., Abb. 7), the find from Wegeleben can be connected with the group of silver-

inlaid lance and spear-heads, mapped in the Mušov-publication (Peška and Tejral 2002, p.110, Abb. 8). The piece from Wegeleben is the most southwesterly find, the densest concentration of this type is found in the area of Przeworsk Culture.

The third specimen to be mentioned here is the lance-head from Berlin-Mariendorf, with its strong similarities to the Scandinavian-type Skiaker. The same applies for most Late Roman Iron Age spear-heads, which were, according to Meyer (1976, p.201f.), seldom found in Elbe-Germanic settlement areas, but in a broader view they are typical of the area between Oder and Saale. Compared to Scandinavia, there are only a few spear-heads known from the continent which can be dated to the Late Roman Iron Age. This is not a special feature of continental armament, but gets an explanation by the “filter function” of the burial custom. If we look not only at weapons from graves but also from other find contexts, the picture changes. As an example, the depot find excavated near Münchhof-Homberg at Lake Constance (Garscha 1970, p.224, Taf. 8, 9-12), and the weapons found at the Migration Period hilltop settlement on the Geißkopf near Freiburg in Baden-Württemberg are mentioned (Hoepfer 2003). The few spear-heads of the Late Roman Iron Age excavated in the area between Weser and Oder (Figs. 11-12) show certain similarities to Scandinavian types (Ilkjær 1990; Bemmann and Hahne 1994), although they are not exact parallels.

The spear-head from Tantow (Fig. 11, 6) is typologically positioned between the Hval and Simris types, those from Glebitzsch, Lüdersdorf, Stolzenhain and Zauschwitz (Fig. 11) are best compared with the Simris type, and those from Dresden-Blasewitz, Falkenberg, Mitteldeutschland, Prieschka and Verchen (Fig. 12) bear a resemblance to the Lundsken type (all types are discussed by Bemmann and Hahne 1994). Whether this has to be interpreted as Scandinavian influence or as an expression of widespread similarities in the armament remains currently unclear, due to the small number of spear-heads known.

Another point is the clearly visible strong Roman influence on Germanic armaments. Despite the only rudimentary developed custom of the deposition of weapons in graves in central Germany, this region has produced more shield bosses, sword chapes, balteus-clasps and axes of Roman provenance than any other region in Central Europe (in detail Bemmann 2003). Surprisingly numerous are also belt fittings of Roman provenance found in settlements in central Germany (compare CRFB D6; Klemet, forthcoming).

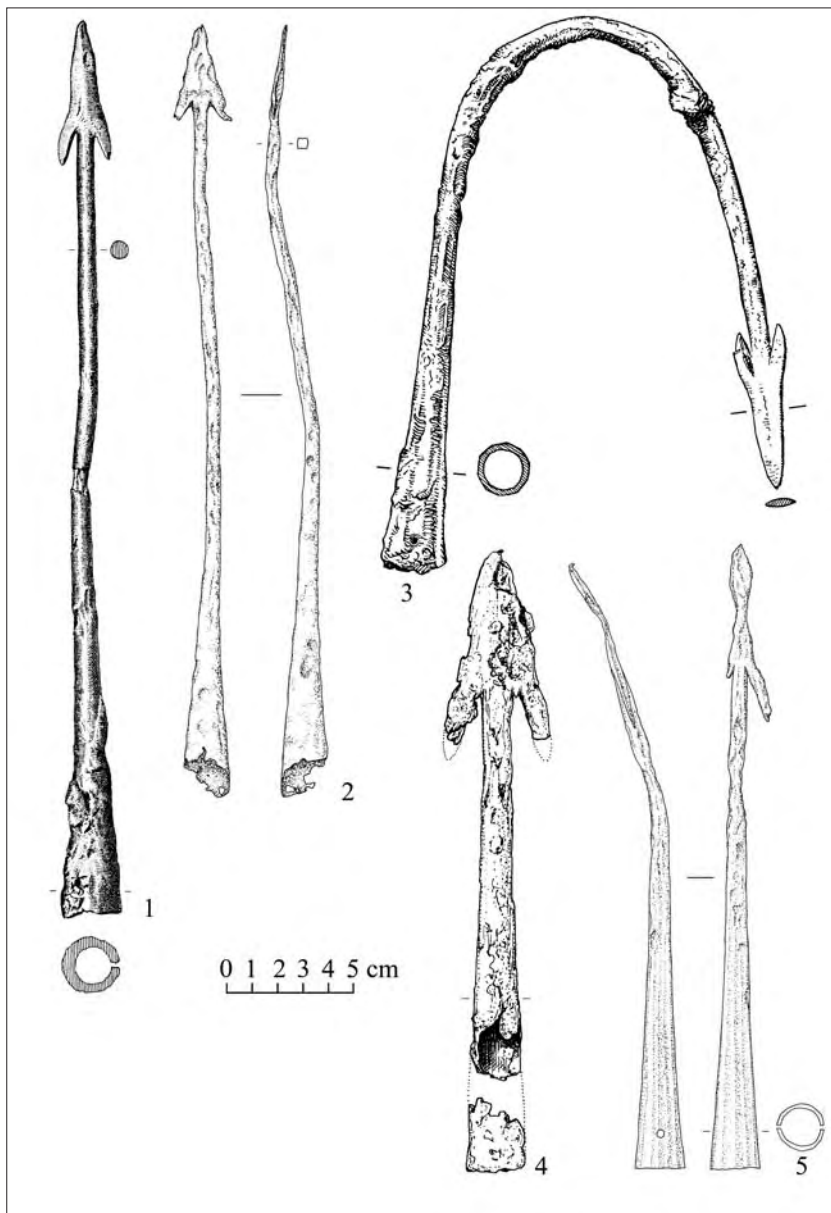


Fig. 12. Spear-heads from the Late Roman Iron Age: 1 Verchen (after Lampe *et al.* 1970); 2 “Central Germany” (drawing by J. Klemet); 3 Falkenberg (after Pescheck 1939); 4 Dresden-Blasewitz (after Meyer 1971); 5 Prieschka (drawing by J. Klemet).

particular the few spear-heads known, show a close similarity to Scandinavian weapon types and indicate that weapon types became less specific to regions. The surprisingly high number of weapons from the Roman provinces in central Germany has been pointed out before.

The deposition of individual components of weapons such as shield mounts, sword scabbard fittings and arrowheads representing only part of the contents of a quiver indicate that the weapon burial practice was symbolic. The combinations found in graves are not suitable for a reconstruction of functional weapon combinations. The weapon burial practice does not seem to have been influenced by periods of war or their intensity. There are no indications for burial practices specific to ethnic groups. There are, however, regional differences, and differences related to age groups. For these reasons, the weapon burial practice examined here is not suitable for a study of the “lebende Kultur” according to Eggers.

Translated by
Hendrik Kelzenberg

Conclusions

The burial practice of depositing double-edged swords in graves originated in Przeworsk Culture and spread at the beginning of the Late Roman Iron Age from southern Brandenburg to the Saale before it was abandoned in Period C₂. Neither these sword burials, nor the combination of axe and arrows in graves, nor a specific type of purse fastening indicate the presence of Burgundians in any of these regions. The comparison of weapon burial practice associated with inhumation and cremation burial practice demonstrates beyond any doubt that those differences which were identified in older publications reflect only overall changes in weapon burial practice over time. Some lance-heads, and in

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ROMĒNIŠKOJO LAIKOTARPIO
IR TAUTŲ KRAUSTYMOŠI
LAIKŲ GINKLUOTĒ IR GINKLAI
VIDURIO VOKIETIJOS
LAIDOJIMO PAPROČIUOSE

Jan Bemmam

Santrauka

Laidojimo paprotys mirusiesiems į kapus dėti dviašmenį kalaviją kilo Pševorsko kultūros aplinkoje ir vėlyvojo romėniškojo laikotarpio pradžioje iš pietinės Brandenburgo žemės plito į Zalės upės baseiną (1–2;

5; 6 pav.). Nei kapai su kalavijais, nei pastarųjų deriniai su kirviais ir strėlėmis kapuose, nei specifiniai metaliniai piniginių užsegimų tipai nerodo, kad burgundai gyventų minėtuose regionuose. Ginklų dėjimo į kapus paprotys siejamas su griautiniais ir degintiniais mirusiųjų laidojimo papročiais. Šie laidosenos skirtumai, žinomi iš ankstesnės literatūros, rodo tik apskritai per tam tikrą laiką besikeičiantį ginklų dėjimo į kapus paprotį (3; 7; 8; 9 pav.). Kai kurios lengvos svaidomosios ietys ir kelios tam tikrų tipų ietys rodo ryšius su skandinaviškaisiais šių ginklų tipais ir perša mintį, kad ginklų tipai laikui bėgant darėsi vis mažiau susieti su konkrečiais regionais. Pirmiausia reikia pažymėti stebėtinai didelį ginklų iš romėniškųjų provincijų ir Vidurio Vokietijos skaičių. Atskirų ginkluotės ar ginklų dalių, tokių kaip skydų apkalai, kalavijų makščių apkalai ir strėlių antgaliai, strėlinės, žyminčios tik visumos dalį, deponavimas rodo, kad laidojimo papročiai buvo simboliniai. Ginklų deriniai, randami kapuose, neleidžia sudaryti jų funkcinių derinių. Neatrodo, kad ginklų dėjimo į kapus paprotys, kaip laidosenos elementas, buvo stipriau veikiamas karų ar jų intensyvesnio vyksmo. Taip pat nėra požymių, apibrėžiančių laidoseną kaip būdingą tik konkrečiai etninei grupei. Tačiau yra regioninių skirtumų ir skirtumų, susijusių su palaidotųjų asmenų amžiumi (amžiaus grupės). Taigi, atrodo, kad straipsnyje nagrinėjami ginklų dėjimo į kapus papročiai nėra patikimi tyrinėjant „gyvąją kultūrą“ (*lebende Kultur*) pagal Maksą Eggersą.