

The Periphery of the Centre? The Late Avar Cemetery Part at Nădlac (Germ.: Nadlak; Hung.: Nagylak; Slov.: Nadlak)¹

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Abstract: In the frame of the Nădlac-Arad Motorway project 12 graves were excavated from the Late Avar period near Nădlac. According to the analysis of the burial customs, various object categories of the material culture (lock rings, earring, beads, components of belts with mounts, knives, potteries) can be dated to the end of the late Avar era, which corresponds to the late 8th or early 9th century. It can firmly be stated that some of the finds were the products of the latest metallurgical horizon (e.g. the punched belt-hole guard mount and the belt mounts with pendants) so some of the types found here can be connected to the last horizon, which is very important concerning their dating. The identity of the micro-community in Nădlac and their self-identification with a political community were influenced by the fact that they were a **primary group**. For them their micro- and macro-community traditions and their values and traditions at a micro-community level coming from their way of life might have been much more important than their ethnic identity. According to the clusters of late Avar sites and the supposed location of the hypothetical ‘**workshop circles**’ in the Carpathian Basin, it is clear that the cemetery researched by us and its micro-region is situated outside the central territories. It seems to be supported by the heterogeneity of the belt sets, which shows that the members of this community had more difficulty obtaining the various decorations. The anthropological deformations indicating hard physical work also seem to underpin this ‘**peripheral**’ status. Its location seems to show clearly that this micro-region, and within this the cemetery of this animal breeding and agricultural pagan population, is on the periphery of the power centre(s) of the Great Plain. They were the common people of the late Avar Khaganate in the eastern region of the Great Plain. We can talk about the cemetery of a settlement from the late Avar period, which was on the periphery, under the Khagan or some other Avar chief or big man (*tudun, iugurus*).

Key words: Nădlac, Avar period, burial customs, material culture, 8-9th centuries, periphery.

ON THE EXCAVATION

The Nădlac-Arad Motorway project was started in 2011, and at that time the sites of the main section were researched. After the end of the project and of the expropriations, an archaeological diagnostic survey was carried out in the fall of 2012 on the road, which would link the town of Nădlac to the aforementioned motorway. Site 7M, which was unknown until that time, was identified during the survey in October 2012 and the first exploratory trenches were dug by the Institutul de Arheologie și Istoria Artei, Cluj. The eight trenches were at a distance of ~50 m from one another, and their purpose was to limit the extent of the site in the section affected by the road works. The first four archaeological finds were unearthed at this time, as was the first Avar find, too (# 1). After the mechanical unearthing of the site, the finds were identified and researched in about two weeks (26.04.2014 – 07.05.2014)².

Just as in the case of other sites in the Nădlac/Nagylak-Pecica/Pécska section of the motorway, the upper level was made up of loose

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soil of greyish colour. Although these areas presently function as pastures, their previous employment in an intensive agriculture destroyed the archaeological levels of the habitations and in some cases even damaged the funerary finds. The brownish-black tillable level was 0.6-0.7 m thick and was followed by a level of yellowish clay with sandy inclusions, which was archaeologically sterile.

Site 7M is located on a slightly raised elevation that is bordered on all sides, except the eastern one, by wetlands even in present-day. Due to the rainy weather at the time of the excavations, the water table rose even to the level of recognition of the finds, which made field research difficult and explains the poor state in which the finds have been preserved, especially the iron ones.

During the above noted archaeological research, 32 finds were discovered: three dwellings (# 8-10) dated to the 5-4th centuries BC; six incineration burials (# 12, 14, 27, 28, 31, 34) dated to La Tène C; eleven inhumation burials (# 1, 3, 4, 15, 16A-B, 17, 19-21, 36, 37) from the Late Avar period; the complete skeleton of a horse, also from the Late Avar period (# 25); three, probably Sarmatian burials (# 26, 29, 30) (Kulcsár 1998); four inhumation burials (# 18, 22, 24, 32), most likely dated to the 10-11th centuries AD; four modern finds (# 11, 13, 23, 35); four animal burrows (# 2, 5, 6, 7 – cancelled find numbers).

A. TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF THE EXCAVATED SITE

Geographical Characteristics of the Surroundings of Nădlac (pl. 1-2)

The geographical and natural features (the relief, the soil, the hydrology, the climate, the flora and the fauna) as local and positional energy resources played an important role in the formation of the settlement system in the southern Great Plain in the Avar era and these natural characteristics were complemented by the landscape in forming human activities. During the Holocene, the area of Nădlac and Cenad together with the foothills of the Apuseni Mountains were raised and the surface heavily eroded in this area (Andó 1993, 96). In the Holocene period the River Mureş/Maros still flowed towards the Aranca/Aranka Stream, and when the river was regulated, it was still considered one of the side branches of the Mureş/Maros (Andó 1993, 96; Kókai 2000, 303-320; Mike 1991). The swampy flood areas along the River Mureş/Maros with the forests in them provided excellent conditions for fishing, hunting and fowling, whereas the drier higher areas covered in loess provided excellent conditions for the cultivation of the land and keeping animals. In the areas periodically covered by water mainly meadow soils, in those places where the underground water level is changeable salty meadow soils, saline soils and steppe-like solonchic soils were formed (Stefanovits 1963). The territory of Nădlac was joined to the river branches of the ancient Mureş/Maros, it was the River Mureş/Maros that defined the characteristics of its micro-region, the geographical features of the region were characterised by lakes and ponds of different sizes, swamps, streams and loess covered alluvia. On the map drawn by Stephan Waltner in 1699 in a scale of 1:256 000 showing the section of the Mureş/Maros as far as Nădlac, the River Mureş/Maros is depicted with several branches and islands built among them above Cenad (Oroszi 2009, 40). In that area the Mureş/Maros built many islands and even nowadays it often

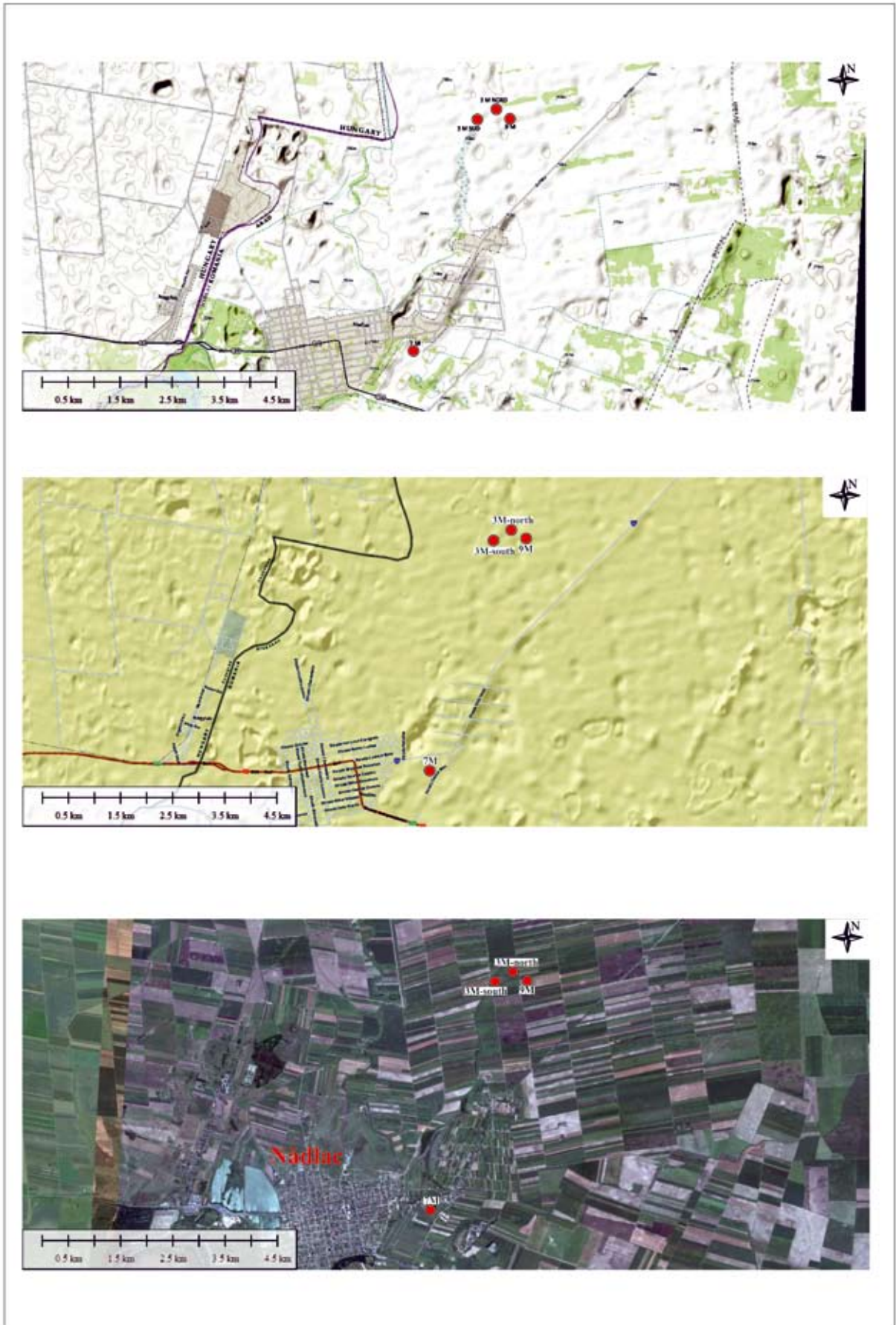


Plate 1. Nádlač sites 3M-N, 3M-S, 7M, 9M



Plate 2. a Nădlac sites 3M-N, 3M-S, 7M, 9M on the Map of the 1st Military Survey (1783), now in *Staatsarchiv Kriegsarchiv*, Vienna, Austria; their copies are available in the *Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum Térképtára*, Budapest, Republic of Hungary (Map reproduced from *Első Katonai Felmérés: Magyar Királyság–Georeferált változat. DVD-ROM. HM Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum, Arcanum Adatbázis Kft. Budapest 2004*, Map Tile XV); **b** Nădlac site 7M on the map of the 2nd Military Survey (1865), now in *Staatsarchiv Kriegsarchiv*, Vienna, Austria; their copies are available in the *Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum Térképtára*, Budapest (Map reproduced from Timár et al. 2006)

changes its course, the winding section shown on military maps # I and II can be found much further to the south today. The area north of the river was criss-crossed by *small streams*, forming a varied hydrological picture with patches of swamps and marshlands covered periodically or permanently by water. The areas crossed by small streams can clearly be seen on the maps of Military Survey I³ and II⁴. These mainly covered the western and north-western parts of the early modern age settlement, whereas in the north-eastern and eastern parts of the settlement, almost at right angles to the Mureş/Maros, at the times of floods in the dry riverbeds and streams vast tracts of water appeared, the streams called '*Csid-ere*' and '*Blezanyica*' (these names can be found in the second military survey), which converge not far from the River Mureş/Maros. East and north of them, the unflooded areas rich in micro-formations, the dry and loess covered area of the alluvium gave rise to a rich prairieland, making it possible to exploit its geographic features in terms of land cultivation and animal breeding (Andó 1969). As is reflected by Military Surveys # II and III (1882)⁵, Cemetery Section 7M, which is the western edge of a much bigger cemetery, was excavated next to the marshland formed by the above mentioned two small streams, to the west it was bordered on the area probably covered by water seasonally. West of this swamp-land covered by water periodically, in the place where the medieval settlement was built, the dry, loess covered upland must have provided an important land to settle down as early as the Avar era (up to this day, there have been no excavations in the area of the town!). To the west and north of this area before the draining works were begun, in the 18th – early 19th centuries the swamp-like lakes called '*Balatonya*' and '*Kis-Balatonya*' (Small Balatonya), which communicated, and a small stream touching the settlement called '*Büdös-ér*' were situated, although they cannot be observed in the first military survey, which may be explained by the assumption that they could have covered the swampland periodically.

B. DESCRIPTIONS OF THE GRAVES

(The objects can be found in the County Museum of Arad, but are unregistered)

GRAVE 1 (PL. 3)

Inhumation grave, with a rectangular pit and with rounded corners (length = 1.80; width = 0.90), contoured at 0.60 m depth, orientation NW-SE. The tomb contained the skeleton of an adult female, lying on her back with the bones in anatomical position, hands flat against the body and the head turned to the right, with her chin on her shoulder. The bones have been preserved relatively well.

Sex: female.

Inventory:

1. Earrings

Cast bronze earrings with a pendant forming a bunch of grapes were found left of the skull. Height: 3.2 cm; 2 rings diam.: 1.9 cm; Bunch of grapes height: 1.5 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (pl. 3/1).

GRAVE 3 (PL. 4-7, 19-20)

At the identification the grave had an oval shape, which tapered gradually, the shape of the rectangular grave could be found approximately 1 meter deep. The parameters of the oval grave: 1. Length: 3.06 m; width: 1.99 m.

At the bottom of the grave 6 rectangular and 4 oval holes (possible coffin legs) may indicate a coffin burial. Skeleton burial, the skeleton of a 30-35 year-old man.

³ <<http://mapire.eu/hu/map/collection/firstsurvey/?zoom=14&lat=46.15066&lon=20.76521>>. See also: Eperjessy 1971, 6, 9-10, 12-13, 8. kép.

⁴ <<http://mapire.eu/hu/map/collection/secondsurvey/?zoom=13&lat=46.17941&lon=20.72962>>. Timár et al. 2006.

⁵ <http://mapire.eu/hu/map/hkf_75e/?zoom=13&lat=46.15437&lon=20.72383>. Biszak et al. 2007, Map Tile XXV.

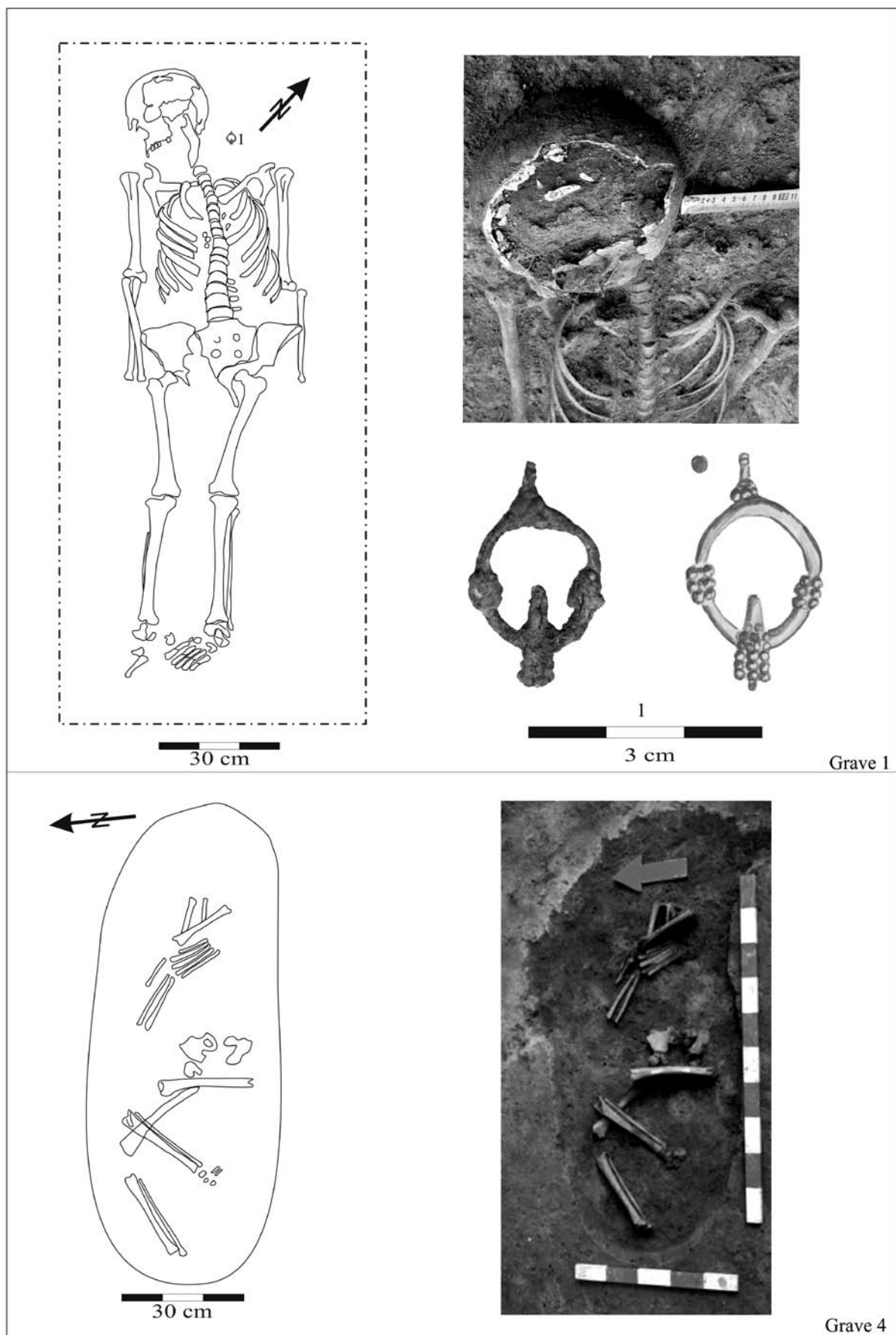


Plate 3. Nădlac 7M Grave 1: 1; Grave 4

Orientation: N-S. The arms of the skeleton, which is in an outstretched position, are lying alongside the body. The lower jaw bone fell on the vertebrae and the skull rolled back. The long bones have remained in fairly good fettle, but the chest bones and the pelvis almost completely perished. Grave length: 2.2 m; width: 0.95 m. Depth of the grave: 1.5 m.

Sex: male. Age: 30-50 years.

Sacrifice/food offering

1.1. Next to the left femur and between the two tibiae: mandible and spoke-bone of a sheep/goat, mandible and feet of a *juvenilis* sheep.

North of the skull there are two horse bones.

2. Clay pottery right behind the skull, to the north.

Inventories:

1. Belt mounts

1.1-5. Bronze, open-work, lily-shaped, shield-shaped belt mounts. Their frames are raised from the plane of the object. There is a rivet on each end of them, which were used to fasten them to the belt. On the inner side of the artifacts originally there were 6 open-works in different shapes lending dynamism to the tendrils growing in an omega shape (pl. 6/4-6, 18; pl. 7/21; pl. 19/4-6, 18, 21).

1.1. The fragments of the belt mount were registered at the upper part of the femur, lying at a right angle to it. Length: 2.0 cm; widest part: 1.5 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (pl. 6/4; pl. 19/4).

1.2. The belt mount was situated lying at right angles to the femur. At the end of the artifact, at the upper part of the pattern, there is a quite long and thick rivet with a wide head. Originally, there was a rivet at the end of the little strap too, but it fell off, the round open-work indicates this. Length: 2.0 cm; widest part: 1.5 cm; length of the rivet: 0.7 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (pl. 6/5; pl. 19/5).

1.3. The belt mount is tilted at 45°, with its tip at right angles to the pelvis. At the end of the object, at the upper part of the pattern, the rivet fell off. At the top of the object, there is a quite long and thick rivet with a wide head. Length: 2.0 cm; widest part: 1.5 cm; length of the rivet: 0.6 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (pl. 6/6; pl. 19/6).

1.4. Two fragments of a belt mount. The upper part lies parallel to the right femur, whereas the other part was found under the propeller shaped mount, almost in the same place. There is a rivet on each end of the shield-shaped object, which is broken in half. Length: 1.2+0.8 cm; widest part: 1.4 cm; length of the rivet: 0.6 cm. Weight: 1.5+1.0 grams (pl. 6/18; pl. 19/18).

1.5. Shield-shaped belt mount with its tip at right angles to the left femur. There is a rivet on each end of the shield-shaped object. Length: 2.0 cm; widest part: 1.5 cm; length of the rivet: 0.6 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (pl. 7/21; pl. 19/21).

2. Propeller shaped mount

Bronze cast propeller shaped mount right next to the right femur, parallel to it. Towards the ends, the rounded object becomes wider in both directions. In the centre of the object there is an open-work used to fasten it to the belt. Length: 6.5 cm; widest part: 1.3 cm; width at the centre of the object: 1.1 cm. Weight: 7.0 grams (pl. 7/12a; pl. 19/12a).

3. Belt-hole guards (Variant 1)

3.1-3. Heart shaped cast belt-hole guards with open-works and palmette patterns in the middle. The rims of the objects are decorated with pseudo-beads, in the middle of their upper parts and at the end of the palmette decoration there is a rivet (pl. 6/1-2, 11; pl. 19/1-2, 11).

3.1. The belt-hole guard was found next to the left femur in a position that corresponded with its function. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.6 cm. Weight: 1.5 grams (pl. 6/1; pl. 19/1).

3.2. The belt-hole guard was found next to the right femur in a position that corresponded with its function. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.6 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (pl. 6/2; pl. 19/2).

3.3. The belt-hole guard was found between the two femurs, lower than the previous two. Its position in the grave: its tip was pointing towards the left femur. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.6 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (pl. 6/11; pl. 19/11).

4. Buckle

4.1. Two fragments of a square shaped bronze buckle at the upper part of the pelvis, next to the right arm bone. Only the fragmentary end of the pin of the square shaped buckle with round shaped cross-section has been preserved. Diameter: 2.4 cm. Weight: 2.0+1.5+1.0 grams (pl. 6/3; pl. 19/3).

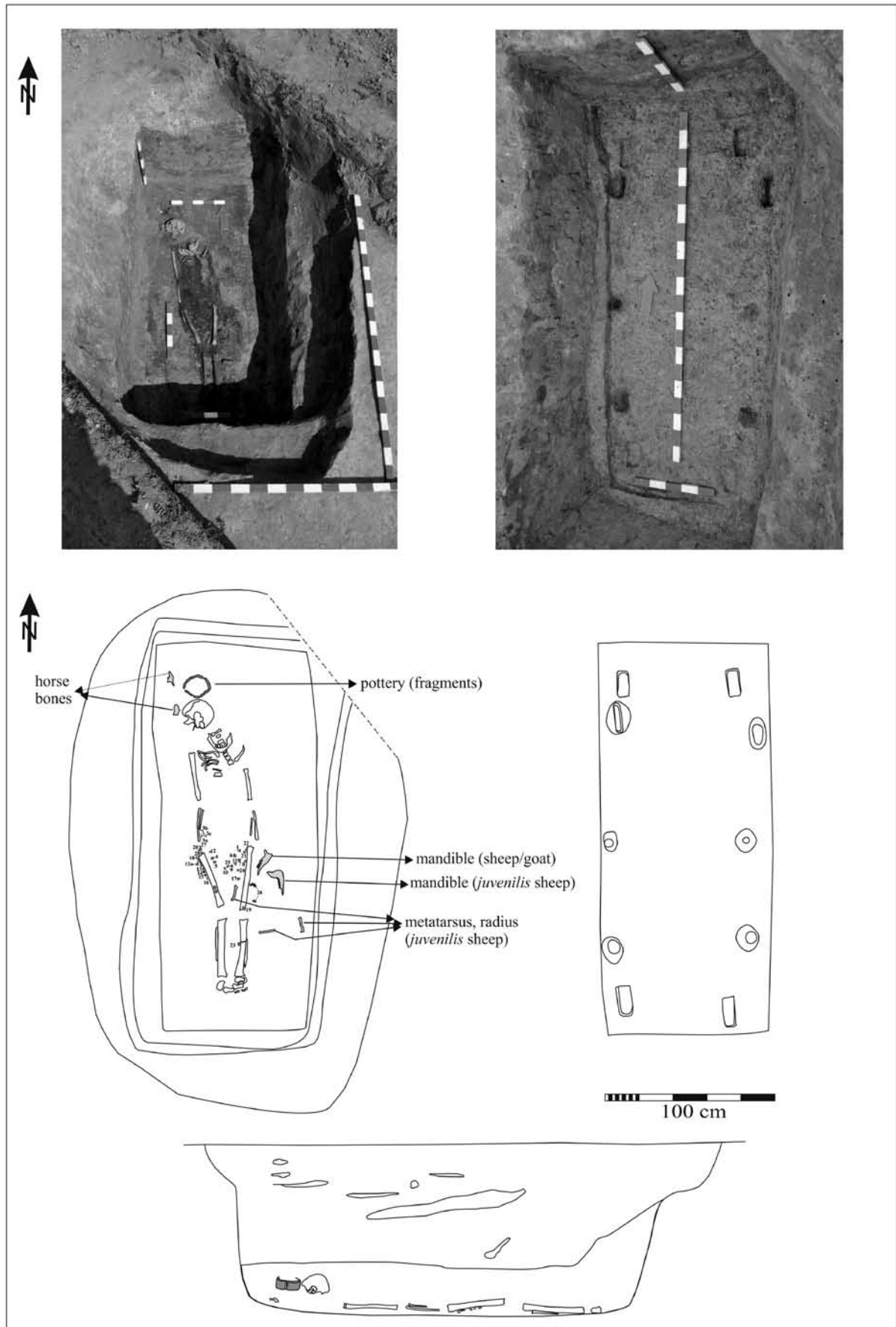


Plate 4. Nădlac 7M Grave 3



Plate 5. Nädlac 7M Grave 3

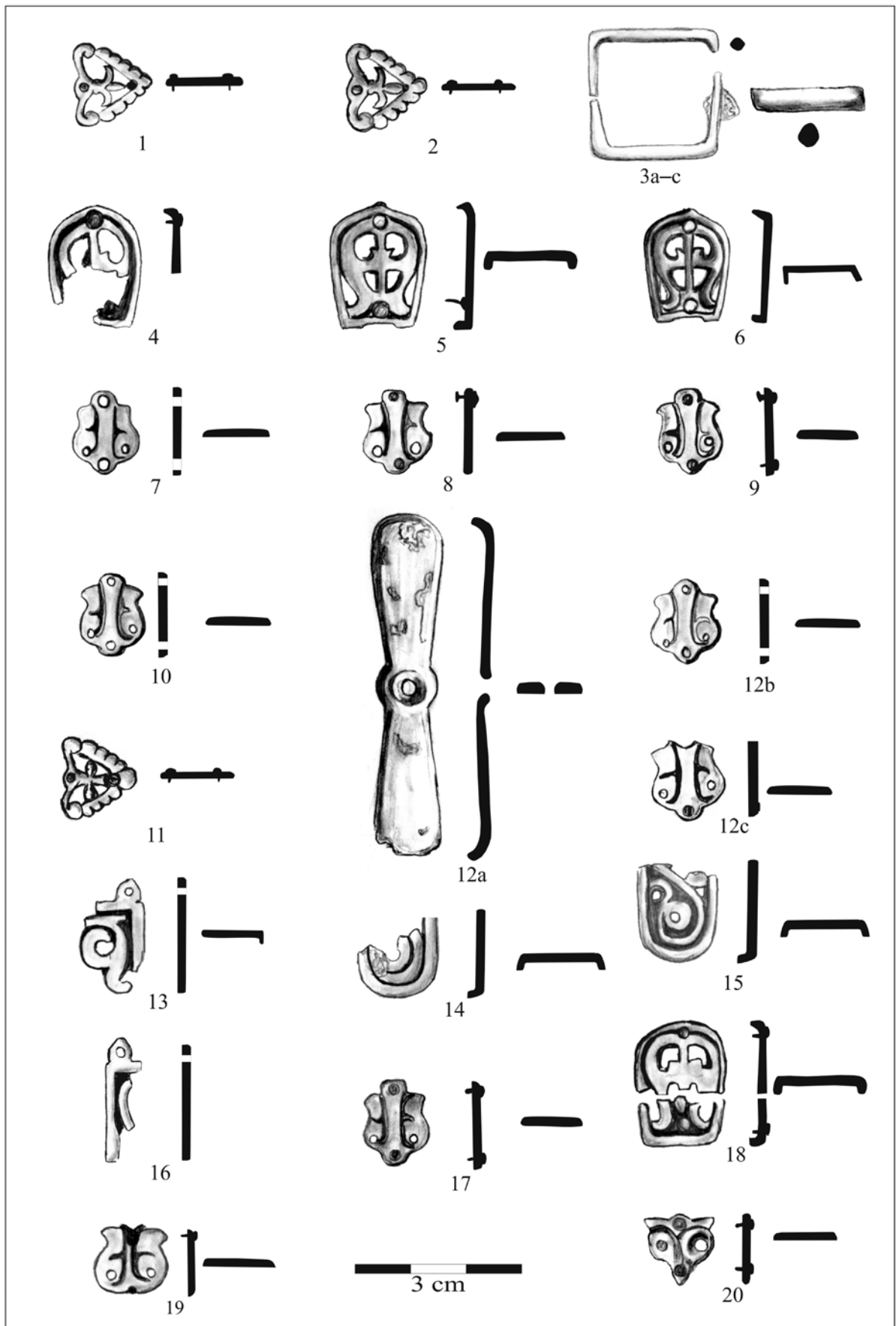


Plate 6. Nădlac 7M Grave 3: 1-20

5. Big strap end

Bronze cast object with open-work under the left femoral neck. The object had two plates soldered together, but they have fallen apart. The strap of the belt is between the two cast parts. On the frame of the object, there is a deep groove, there is an open-work in the middle of the artifact. On the object there is a dynamic S-shaped leaf pattern with two shoots, a big and a small, at its end. Length: 8.1 cm; width: 2.1 cm. Weight: 25 grams (pl. 7/22; pl. 20/22).

6.1. Side strap mounts (Variant 1)

6.1.1-9. Cast, lily shaped, elongated side strap mounts. Their mould could have been rough as the open-works in the lower parts of the object are not positioned symmetrically, the incisions indicating the stem of the lily are arbitrary and asymmetric on the object. Originally, there was a rivet on the upper and on the lower part of the central axis of the object with stabilizing square shaped plates. In several cases they have fallen off (pl. 6/7-10, 12b-c, 17; pl. 7/24-25, 28; pl. 19/7-10, 12b-c, 17; pl. 20/24-25, 28).

6.1.1. The mount was lying at right angles to the upper part of the left femur. The rivet that was used to fasten it to the side strap has fallen out of the hole in the upper part of the object. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.2 cm. Weight: 1.5 grams (pl. 6/7; pl. 19/7).

6.1.2. The mount was lying with its tip pointing at right angles to the upper part of the left femur. On the upper part of the object there is a wide-headed rivet with a square shaped stabilizing plate at its end whereas on its lower part it is difficult to notice the remains of the rivet. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.2 cm. Weight: 1.5 grams (pl. 6/8; pl. 19/8).

6.1.3. The mount was lying with its tip pointing to the pelvis of the skeleton, approximately in the middle, between the left and the right femur. There is a square shaped stabilizing plate at the end of the lower rivet. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.2 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (pl. 6/9; pl. 19/9).

6.1.4. The mount was lying with its tip pointing to the pelvis of the skeleton at almost right angles, between the two femurs. On the upper and lower parts of the object there was a wide-headed rivet respectively. There is a square shaped stabilizing plate at the end of the upper rivet. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.2 cm. Weight: 1.5 grams (pl. 6/10; pl. 19/10).

6.1.5. Right outside the right femur, under the propeller shaped mount. On the upper and lower parts of the object there was a wide-headed rivet respectively. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.2 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (pl. 6/12b; pl. 19/12b).

6.1.6. Right outside the right femur, under the propeller shaped mount. On the upper part of the object there is a wide-headed rivet. The upper part of the object has broken off. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.2 cm. Weight: 1.0 grams (pl. 6/12c; pl. 19/12c).

6.1.7. The mount was lying with its lower part pointing towards the upper part of the left femur at right angles. On the upper and lower parts of the object there was a rivet respectively. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.2 cm. Weight: 1.5 grams (pl. 6/17; pl. 19/17).

6.1.8. Next to the left femur at right angles. On the upper and lower parts of the object there was a wide-headed rivet respectively. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.2 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (pl. 7/24; pl. 20/24).

6.1.9. Right in the middle between the two femurs with its tip pointing towards the right femur. On the upper and lower parts of the object there was a wide-headed rivet respectively. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.2 cm. Weight: 1.5 grams (pl. 7/25; pl. 20/25).

6.1.10. Fragmentary side strap mount, parallel, at the end of the right femur with its tip pointing to the pelvis. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.2 cm. Weight: 1.0 grams (pl. 7/28; pl. 20/28).

6.2. Side strap mount (Variant 2)

6.2.1. At the end of the left femur there is a lily shaped belt mount of a wider variety. Its mould could have been rough as on the lower part of the object only incised dots can be seen instead of open-works. There is a wide-headed rivet at the upper part of the object, the lower part of the object has broken off. Length: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.2 cm. Weight: 1.0 grams (pl. 6/19; pl. 19/19).

6.3. Side strap mount (Variant 3)

6.3.1. Small sized, pentagonal, chill-cast belt mount with its tip pointing towards the femur at right angles, forming an abstract animal head with two open-worked

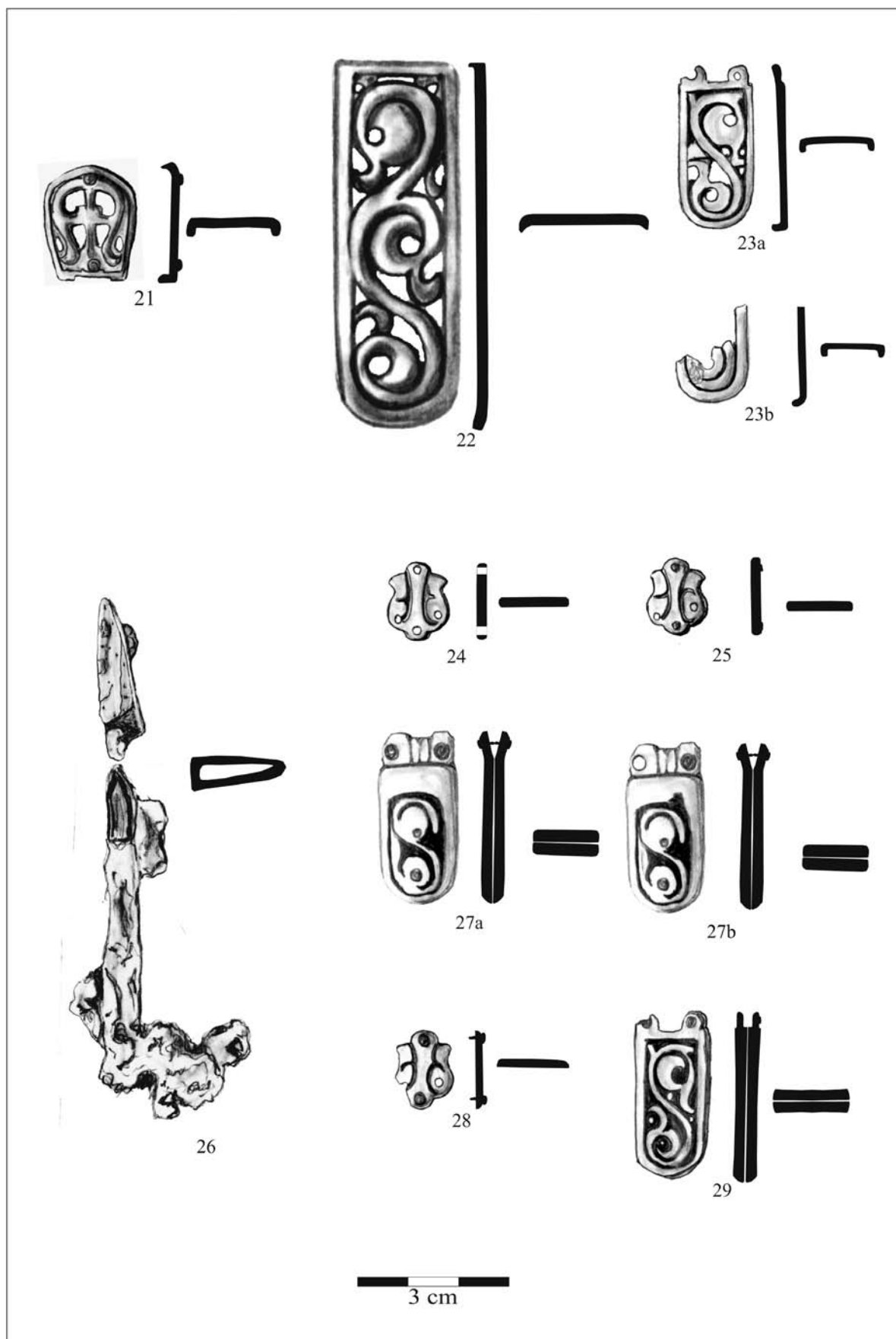


Plate 7. Nădlac 7M Grave 3: 21-29

eyes and the nose at the tip of the object. One part of the object is separated from the other by a frame, whose arched shape was intended to indicate the ears of the animal. In the centre of the upper part of the object and on the lower part of it there is a wide-headed rivet respectively. Height: 1.3 cm; widest part: 1.15 cm; lengths of the rivets: 0.4-0.3 cm. Weight: 1.5 grams (**pl. 6/20; pl. 19/20**).

7. Small-strap end

7.1.1. Next to the right femur there is a two-plated small-strap end fallen apart. Due to the pressure of the soil they have been registered next to each other even in the grave. On each part of the object there is a tapering, grooved S shaped tendril ornament with open-work at its end. Length: 1.8 cm; width: 1.5 cm. Weight: 2.0+2.0 grams (**pl. 6/14-15; pl. 19/14-15**).

7.1.2. The fragmentary small-strap end was found next to the femur, on the right side. Part of the ear and a round open-work on the upper part on the right side have been preserved. Height: 2.0 cm. Weight: 1.0 gram (**pl. 6/13; pl. 19/13**).

7.2. Two-plated small-strap end between the two tibia, closer to the left one, pointing to the right femur at right angles. However, when the object was collected, one of the plates mostly fell apart. The ornament of the object is closed in a frame. The ornament is a tapering, grooved S-shaped ornament with open-worked ends in each case. The object was fastened to the strap with a rivet on the projections at both ends of the object. One of the rivets has been preserved with a round stabilizing plate at its end. Length: 3.2 cm; width: 1.4 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (**pl. 7/23a-b; pl. 20/23a-b**).

7.3. Two-plated small-strap end pointing to the right femur at right angles. The decoration of the object is in a frame. The ornament is a tapering, grooved S-shaped ornament with open-worked ends in each case. The object was fastened with a rivet on the projections at both ends of the object, after the strap was placed between them. One of the rivets has been preserved with a round stabilizing plate at its end. Length: 3.2 cm; width: 1.4 cm. Weight: 6.0 grams (**pl. 7/27a-b; pl. 20/27a-b**).

7.4. At right angles to the lower part of the right femur there is a two-plated cast small-strap end with its tip pointing towards the pelvis. The object was fastened with a rivet on the projections at both ends of the object, after the strap was placed between them. The decoration of the object is in frames. The ornament is a tapering, grooved S-shaped ornament with open-worked ends in each case. Length: 3.2 cm; width: 1.4 cm. Weight: 5.0 grams (**pl. 7/29; pl. 20/29**).

8. Bronze fragment

Fragment of an unknown bronze object, probably the edge of the strap-end next to the right femur. The front plate of the object is slightly convex; the back plate is almost flat. There is a rivet at its end indicating that it was also fastened. Length: 2.4 cm; length of the rivet: 0.4 cm. Weight: 1.0 gram (**pl. 6/16; pl. 19/16**).

9. Fragment of an iron clasp

Fragment of a coffin iron clasp, west of the left femur. Length: 7.0 cm; width: 1.9 cm (**pl. 7/26; pl. 20/26**).

GRAVE 4 (PL. 3)

Inhumation grave oriented E-W, destroyed, with dimensions of 1.40 × 0.60 m. The filling of the hole consists of light brown soil with clay pigment, loose. The skeleton is in a crouched position facing north. From the skeleton the right arm, which was found under the ribs (arm and forearm), the left arm, the thighs and legs were preserved. The left leg overlaps the right one.

Without inventory.

GRAVE 15 (PL. 8-9, 21-22)

Destroyed grave. Bronze accessories were recovered from the grave.

Inventories:

1. Bronze buckles

1.1. Pentagonal bronze buckle with a pin, broken in half. The buckle ring is vertically oval shaped with a bump in the middle of the pin, the cross-section of the ring forms a semi-circle. The cast iron body of the buckle, which has been broken off the buckle ring, joined to the ring by lugs and its frame is embossed jutting out of the field. Within the frame of the arched item there is an animal looking back with an open mouth. The only visible ear of the animal head looking back was made parallel with the head, the hinder part of the animal is depicted higher than the head of the animal and its tail is bent back above its head. There is a rivet in each corner of the body of the buckle, with which an object was fixed to the buckle. Height of the buckle ring: 4.2 cm;

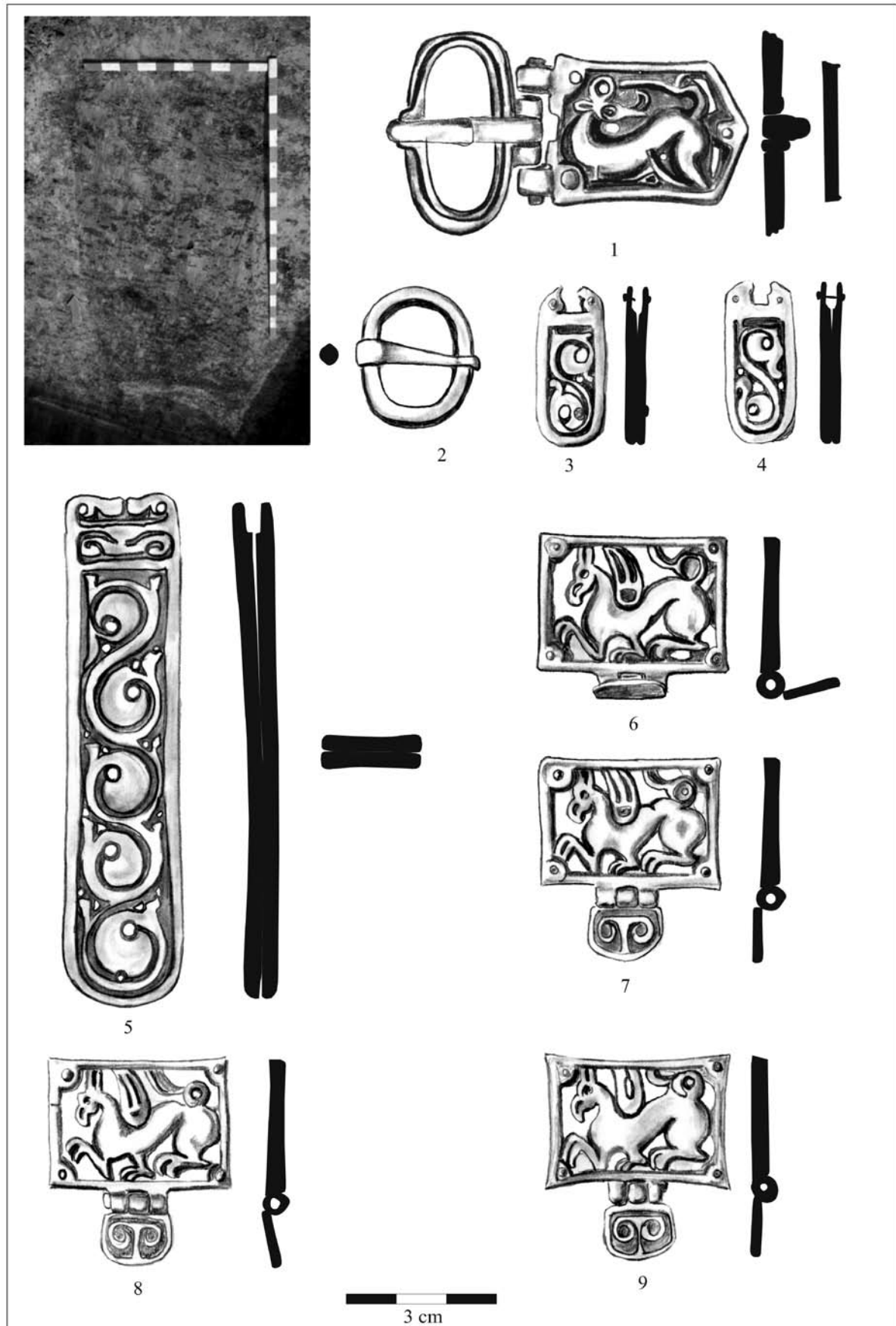


Plate 8. Nădlac 7M Grave 15: 1-9

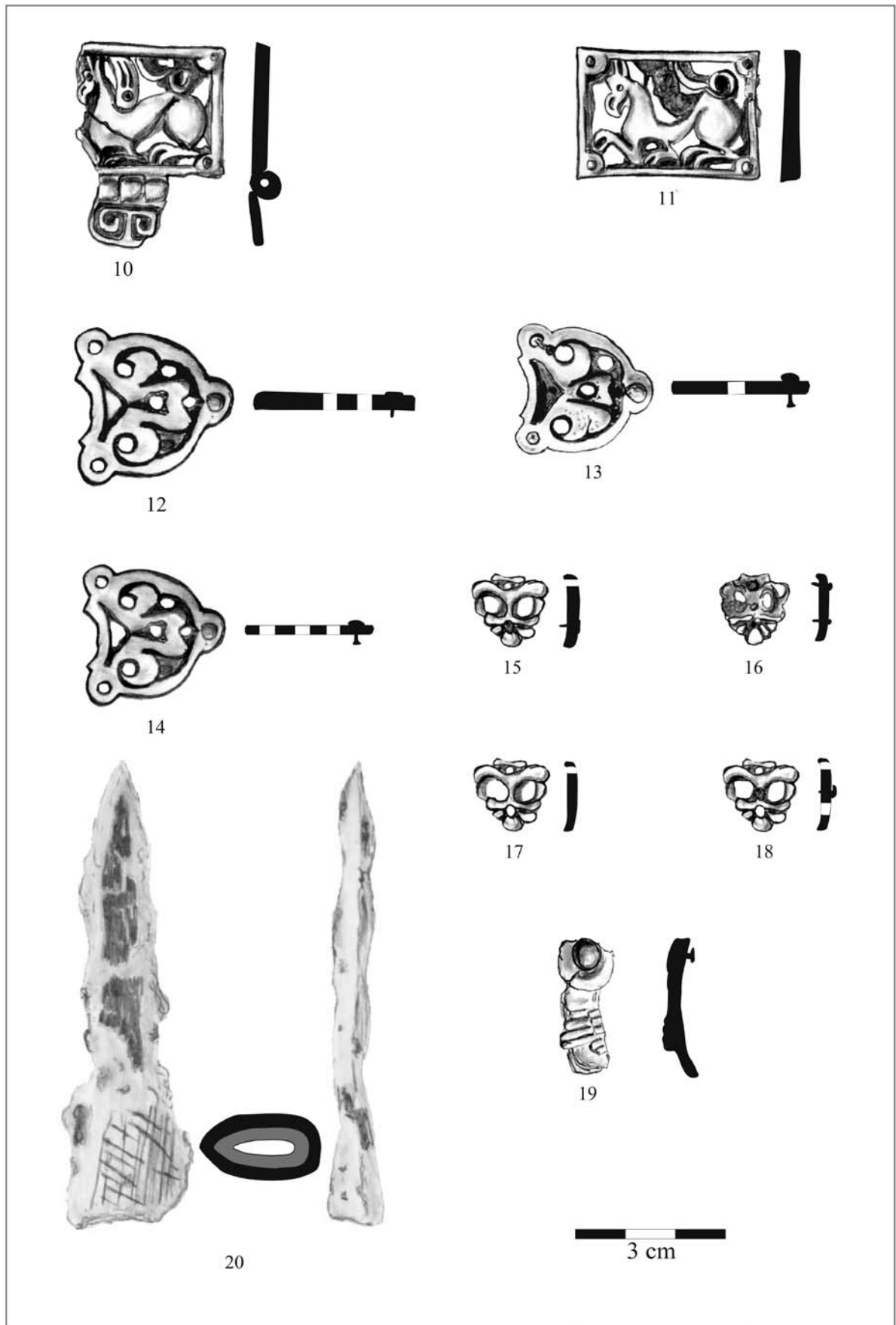


Plate 9. Nădlac 7M Grave 15: 10-20

width of buckle ring: 2.5 cm; length of buckle pin: 3.1 cm; cross section of the body of the buckle: 3.7 × 2.6 cm. Weight: 12.0+11.0 grams (**pl. 8/1; pl. 21/1**).

1.2. Bronze buckle with a pin. The body of the buckle is vertically rounded square shaped. The cross section of the ring is round shaped. Height of the buckle: 2.9 cm; width of buckle: 2.2 cm; length of buckle pin: 2.5 cm. Weight: 5.0 grams (**pl. 8/2; pl. 21/2**).

2. Belt mounts with pendants in Animal style

2.1-4. Open-worked, cast belt mounts with pendants. There is a rivet in the four corners of the ornament which was used to fasten the object to the belt. In the frame of the object there is an animal: a griffin shape with bill and emphasized muscles, with crescent shaped, fluttering wings and pointed ears and talons with sharp nails pulled under the body. Its tail is visibly bent backwards towards its head. The cast pendant is joined to the ornament with a lug, through an iron rivet, it has a semi-circle shape and within the frame, in the middle of the object there is a spiral decoration (**pl. 8/6-9; pl. 9/10; pl. 21/6; pl. 22/9, 12-14**).

2.1. Cross section of the mount: 3.5 × 2.5 cm; height of pendant: (with lugs): 1.5 cm; width of pendant: 1.4 cm. Weight: 12.0 grams (**pl. 8/6; pl. 21/6**).

2.2. Cross section of the mount: 3.6 × 2.5 cm; height of pendant: (with lugs): 1.5 cm; width of pendant: 1.4 cm. Weight: 12.0 grams (**pl. 8/7; pl. 22/9**).

2.3. Cross section of the mount: 3.6 × 2.5 cm; height of pendant (with lugs) (fragmentary): 1.1 cm; width of pendant: 1.5 cm. Weight: 13.0 grams (**pl. 8/8; pl. 22/12**).

2.4. Cross section of the mount: 3.7 × 2.6 cm; height of pendant: (with lugs): 1.6 cm; width of pendant: 1.4 cm. Weight: 13.0 grams (**pl. 8/9; pl. 22/13**).

2.5. Open-work cast belt mount with pendant

Its frame is embossed, raised from the background of the field, in the middle a griffin is depicted. Only fragments of the object have been preserved. Diameter of the ornament: 3.6 × 2.5 cm; height of pendant (with lugs) (fragmentary): 1.1 cm; width of pendant: 1.5 cm. Weight: 10.0 grams (**pl. 9/10; pl. 22/14**).

3. Open-work belt mount with an animal figure

It is a composition similar to the previous buckle ornaments with pendants: the figure of a griffin with emphasized muscles, with crescent shaped, fluttering wings and pointed ears and talons with sharp nails pulled under the body. There is a rivet in each of the four corners of the ornament which was used to fasten the object to the belt. Diameter of the ornament: 3.6 × 2.5 cm. Weight: 11.0 grams (**pl. 9/11; pl. 22/11**).

4.1-3. Belt-hole guard

4.1. Triangular belt-hole guard with 1 rivet on each of its three rounded sides and with a frame. In the middle of the technically primitive object there is a decoration that may have a flat tendril palmette shape with four open-works on its brink and in the middle trying to depict an animal head (eyes, nose and head). On the right side of the lower part of the object there is a round open-work, as a result of which the disposition of the piercings is asymmetric on the object. Height: 2.7 cm; widest part: 2.5 cm; length of rivets: 0.5 cm. Weight: 5.0 grams (**pl. 9/12; pl. 21/7**).

4.2. Triangular belt-hole guard with one rivet on each of its three rounded sides and with a frame raised from the plane of the object. In the middle of the object there is a decoration possibly forming a flat palmette with 4 (oval and round) open-works trying to depict an abstract animal head (eyes, nose and head). On the right side of the lower part of the object there is a round open-work in this case too. Above the rivet in the middle of the lower part of the object the beginning of another open-work can be observed, in which some material flowed in forming a thin sheet, after casting. On the right side of the object the *palmette* pattern cannot be seen due to a flaw of the press mold, a secondary incision can be observed, which tries to depict a lily in a primitive way. Our observations show that the master wanted to decorate the left side of the lower part of the object with open-works making the disposition of the open-works symmetric, however, he could not achieve this goal as the press mold was faulty. After studying the object one can draw the conclusion that the asymmetry of the patterns and the round shaped piercings of different sizes integrated in the system of patterns is due to the faulty manufacturing of the press mold so there was no place for all the circle shaped piercings on the right side of the artifact. He wanted to correct it on the back side of the object, but he did not finish the work he began. Height: 2.4 cm; widest part: 2.3 cm; length of rivets: 0.5 cm. Weight: 5.0 grams (**pl. 9/13; pl. 22/16**).

4.3. Triangular belt-hole guard, with one rivet on each of its three rounded sides and with a frame raised from the plane of the object, in the middle, in the field divided by the open-works, there is a *palmette* decoration with flat tendrils. As opposed to the

other item mentioned above, there are not 5 but 6 piercings on the artifact, however, their disposition is asymmetric and they are of visibly different sizes. The piercings form the countersunk parts of the artifact. Height: 2.7 cm; widest part: 2.2 cm; length of rivets: 0.5 cm. Weight: 5.0 grams (**pl. 9/14; pl. 22/17**).

5. Side strap mounts

5.1-3. Cast, triangular, with open-works in two places and abstract animal patterned-geometric style decorations, the rims of the artifacts are divided into fields. In both the upper and the lower part of the middle of the plane of the artifact there is one open-work for the rivets that were used to hang it on the side strap (**pl. 9/15-18; pl. 21/8; pl. 22/15, 18-19**).

5.1. Neither rivet in the middle of the upper and the lower part of the artifact has been preserved. Height: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.5 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (**pl. 9/15; pl. 21/8**).

5.2. Two wide round headed rivets in the middle of the object both in the upper and in the lower part. Height: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.5 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (**pl. 9/16; pl. 22/15**).

5.3. Very corroded side strap ornament, but it can be classified into the category of the above mentioned ones. Height: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.5 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (**pl. 9/17; pl. 22/18**).

5.4. Neither rivet in the middle of the upper and the lower part of the artifact has been preserved. Height: 1.5 cm; widest part: 1.4 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (**pl. 9/18; pl. 22/19**).

6. Large strap end

Large strap end with two plates were joined at the rim of its two ends by a rivet which fell off. Between the two plates, some remnants of the strap have been preserved, small open-works on the rim of the frame of the artifact. In the middle of the framed big strap end there is a five-fold S-shaped tapering imprinted tendrils motif whose end was open-worked in each case. The tendril ornamentation is followed by a square-shaped frame at the end of the object and there are two spiral decorations in it. Length: 10.8 cm; width: 2.4 cm. Weight: 71.0 grams (**pl. 8/5; pl. 21/3**).

7.1-2. Small strap ends

7.1. One wide cast bronze small strap end with rounded ends and two plates joined by round headed rivets. The strap of the belt was between the two cast parts. In each case, there was an open-work at the end of the two-fold, S-shaped, tapering imprinted tendril motif. Towards the end of the artifact there are two spiral ornamentations in a square shaped frame. Part of the end of the object is broken off. Length: 3.1 cm; width: 1.4 cm. Weight: 8.0 grams (**pl. 8/3; pl. 21/4**).

7.2. One wide cast bronze small strap end with rounded ends and two plates joined by round headed rivets with an arched frame raised from the plane of the object. The strap of the belt was between the two cast parts. In each case, there was an open-work at the end of the two-fold, S-shaped, tapering imprinted tendril motif. Towards the end of the artifact there are two spiral ornamentations in a square shaped frame. Length: 3.2 cm; width: 1.4 cm. Weight: 8.0 grams (**pl. 8/4; pl. 21/5**).

8. Unknown, fragmentary object with a flat front plate. A little more than half of the round part of the object has been preserved with the rivet in the middle. There is a widening rhomboid projection jutting out of the round part. It is a question whether there is a similar projection on the other side of the rounded part. On the back side of the projection there is a braided wire. Length: 2.7 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (**pl. 9/19; pl. 22/10**).

9. Fragmentary iron knife with the remains of a wooden sheath. Length: 10.2 cm; width of the blade: 1.7 cm (**pl. 9/20**).

GRAVE 16A-B (PL. 10-11)

Double grave: the grave with N-S orientation, a mature skeleton and an infant skeleton oriented S-N, exactly opposite of the mature skeleton. The mature skeleton is in anatomical position, his head fell to the left, and his jaw fell forwards. The arms are placed along the body and the legs are stretched very close to each other near the knees. The arms of the infant skeleton have not been preserved, and the skeleton appears a bit crouched in order to be placed as near as possible to the right leg of the mature skeleton. Skeleton B, whose skull was attached to the wall of the grave pit, is next to the left leg of Skeleton A.

Sex: male. Age: adult, 35-45 years old. Child, 2.5-3 years old (*infans* I). The height of the male skeleton is 178 cm.

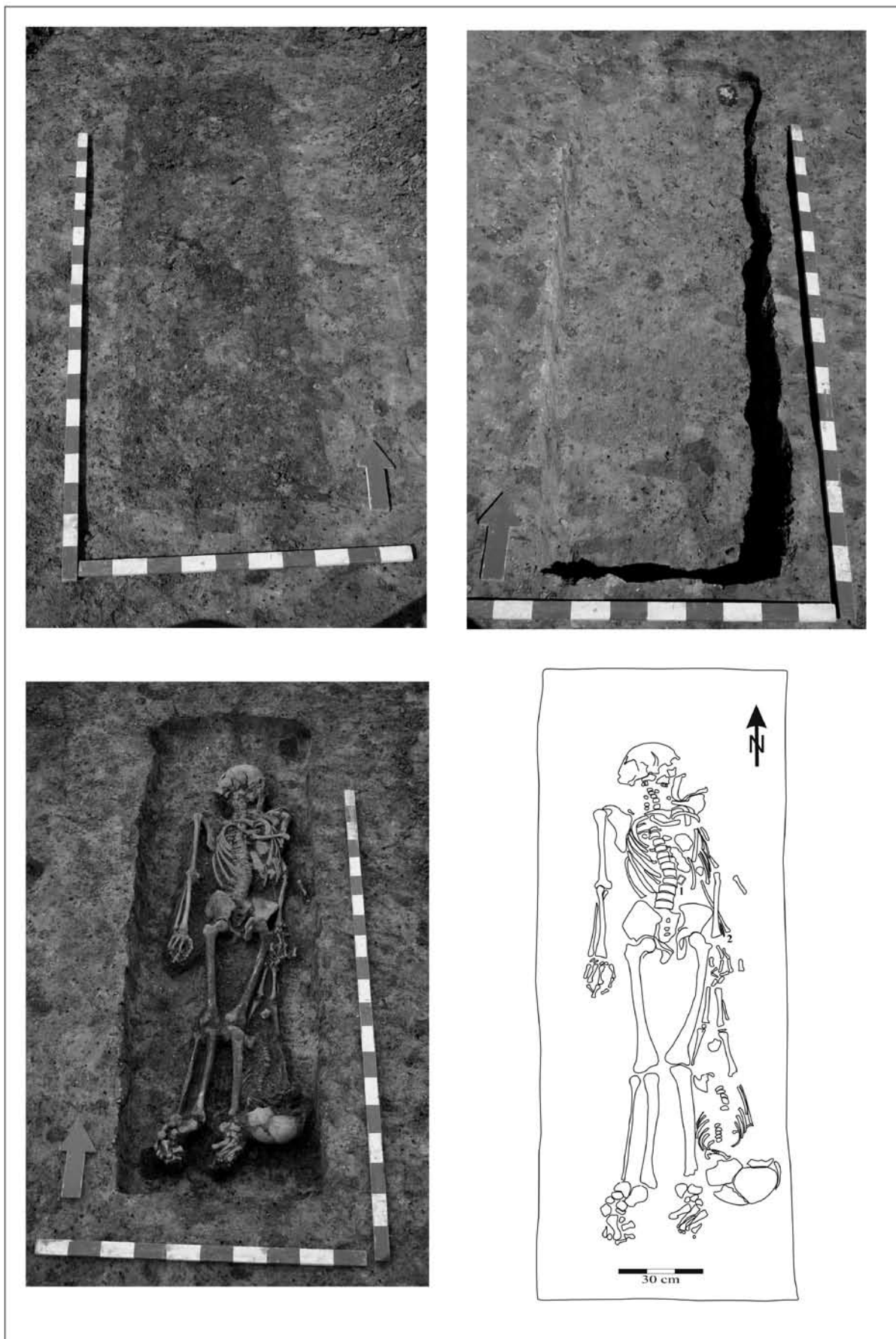


Plate 10. Nădlac 7M Grave 16A-B

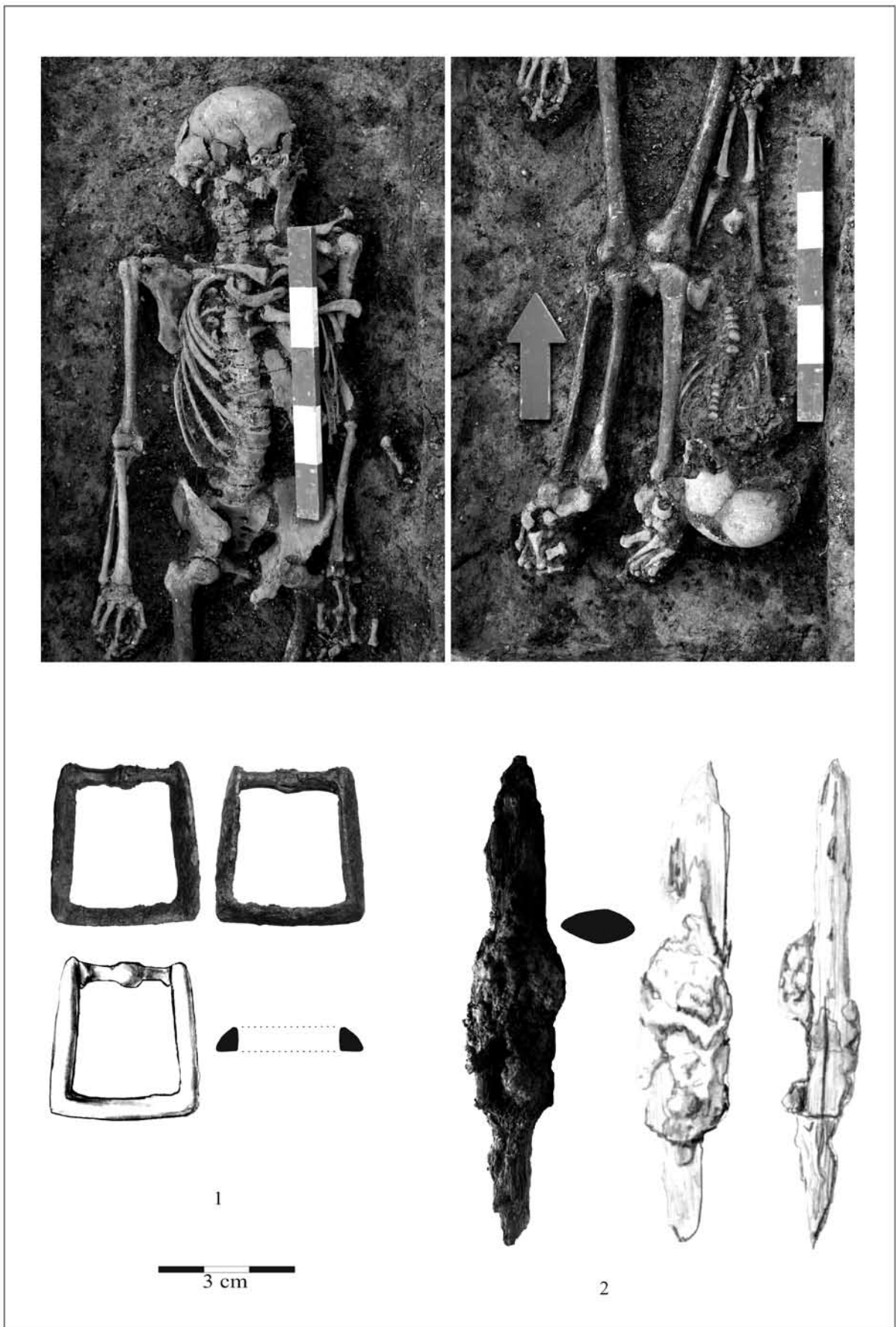


Plate 11. Nädlac 7M Grave 16A-B: 1-2

Inventory:

1. Trapezoid buckle made of bronze without a pin at the location of the ribs, at the left side. Its position shows us that it is not the original position. The buckle widens. Length: 3.2 cm; width at the base of the buckle: 2.5 cm; width at end: 2.9 cm. Weight: 7.0 grams (**pl. 11/1**).

2. Fragmentary iron knife with the remains of a wooden sheath. Length: 10.2 cm; width of the blade: 1.7 cm (**pl. 11/2**).

GRAVE 17 (PL. 12, 23)

Inhumation grave, with N-S orientation and dimensions of 2.43 × 1.15 m. The filling of the hole consists of light brown soil with clay pigment, loose, sandy. The skeleton is not in anatomical position, being robbed in ancient times as it was found in the robbed pit of the grave. Among the bones there were two bronze accessories, the rest (five pieces) of the finds come from under the bones.

Sex: male. Age: 33-42 year old.

Inventories:

1. Small size belt or side strap mounts

Cast bronze items depicting compound lilies.

1.1. Found among the bones. Length: 1.9 cm; widest part: 1.5 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (**pl. 12/2; pl. 23/2**).

1.2. Registered under the disturbed bones. Length: 1.8 cm; widest part: 1.4 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (**pl. 12/4; pl. 23/4**).

1.3. Registered under the disturbed bones. Length: 1.8 cm; widest part: 1.4 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (**pl. 12/5; pl. 23/5**).

1.4. Registered under the disturbed bones. Length: 1.8 cm; widest part: 1.4 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (**pl. 12/6; pl. 23/6**).

1.5. Registered under the disturbed bones. Length: 1.8 cm; widest part: 1.4 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (**pl. 12/7; pl. 23/7**).

2. Belt-hole guards

A palmette-shaped belt-hole guard with open-work and two projecting ear-shaped bumps on the upper part of the object. There are three open-works on the object, in its upper part there are two slightly slanted oval shaped open-works and in the lower part there is a rounded triangular-shaped one forming a palmette pattern. On the two brims of the frame of the object there are oval shaped open-works, which are likely to be the holes of the rivets. There is an incised decoration at the bottom of the brim of the object (**pl. 12/1, 3; pl. 23/1, 3**).

2.1. The object was found in the disturbed grave, among the bones. Height: 2.7 cm; widest part: 2.6 cm. Weight: 5.0 grams (**pl. 12/1; pl. 23/1**).

2.2. It was registered under the disturbed bones. Height: 2.7 cm; widest part: 2.6 cm. Weight: 5.0 grams (**pl. 12/3; pl. 23/3**).

3. Fragmentary iron knife with the remains of a wooden sheath. Length: 10.2 cm; width of the blade: 1.8 cm (**pl. 12/8**).

GRAVE 19 (PL. 13)

On the left side of the rectangular pit there is a berm. Inhumation grave, N-S oriented, with dimensions of 1.35 × 0.65 m. The filling of the hole consists of light brown loose, sandy soil with clay pigment. A child's skeleton in anatomical position, only its skull, the fragmentary shaft of the left shoulder, a few pieces of the left coast, the left femur and a fragment of the broken femoral shaft were preserved. At the pelvic and abdominal area there is the skull of a goat and also there are bone fragments of the same animal.

Child: 2-3 years old.

Inventories:

1.1-3. Three beads right next to the skull

1.1. A big sized, whitish-grey glass bead with yellowish stripes. Diameter: 1.6 cm; thickness: 0.9 cm (**pl. 13/1**).

1.2. A cylinder shaped, green-grey paste bead with yellow melted poured inlay. Length: 1.0 cm; diameter: 0.6 cm (**pl. 13/2**).

1.3. A cylinder shaped paste bead with yellow inlay. Length: 0.9 cm; diameter: 0.4-0.5 cm (**pl. 13/3**).

GRAVE 20 (PL. 14-16, 23)

A coffin burial, which is indicated by the coffin clamps and hinges found on the chest

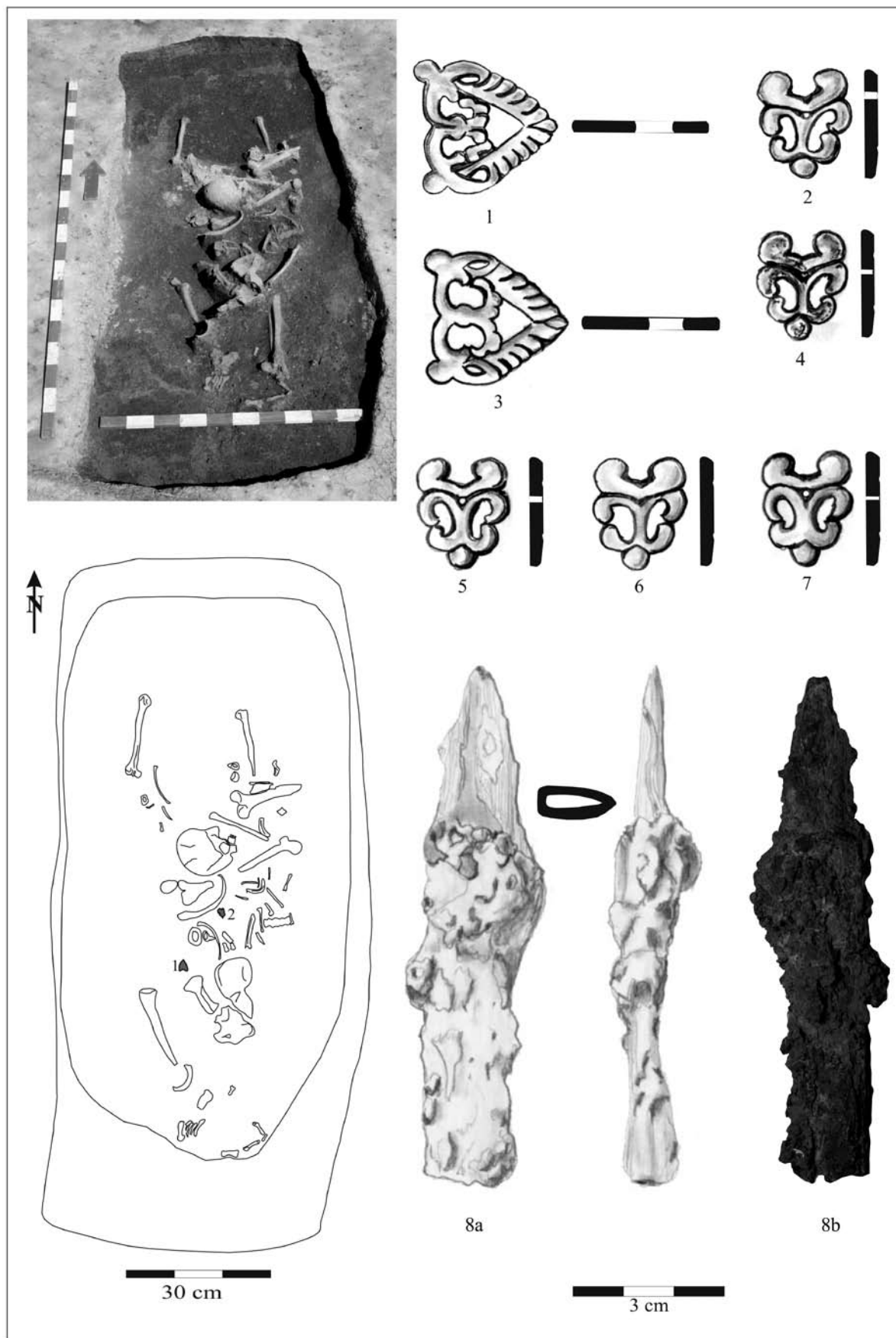


Plate 12. Nădlac 7M Grave 17: 1-8

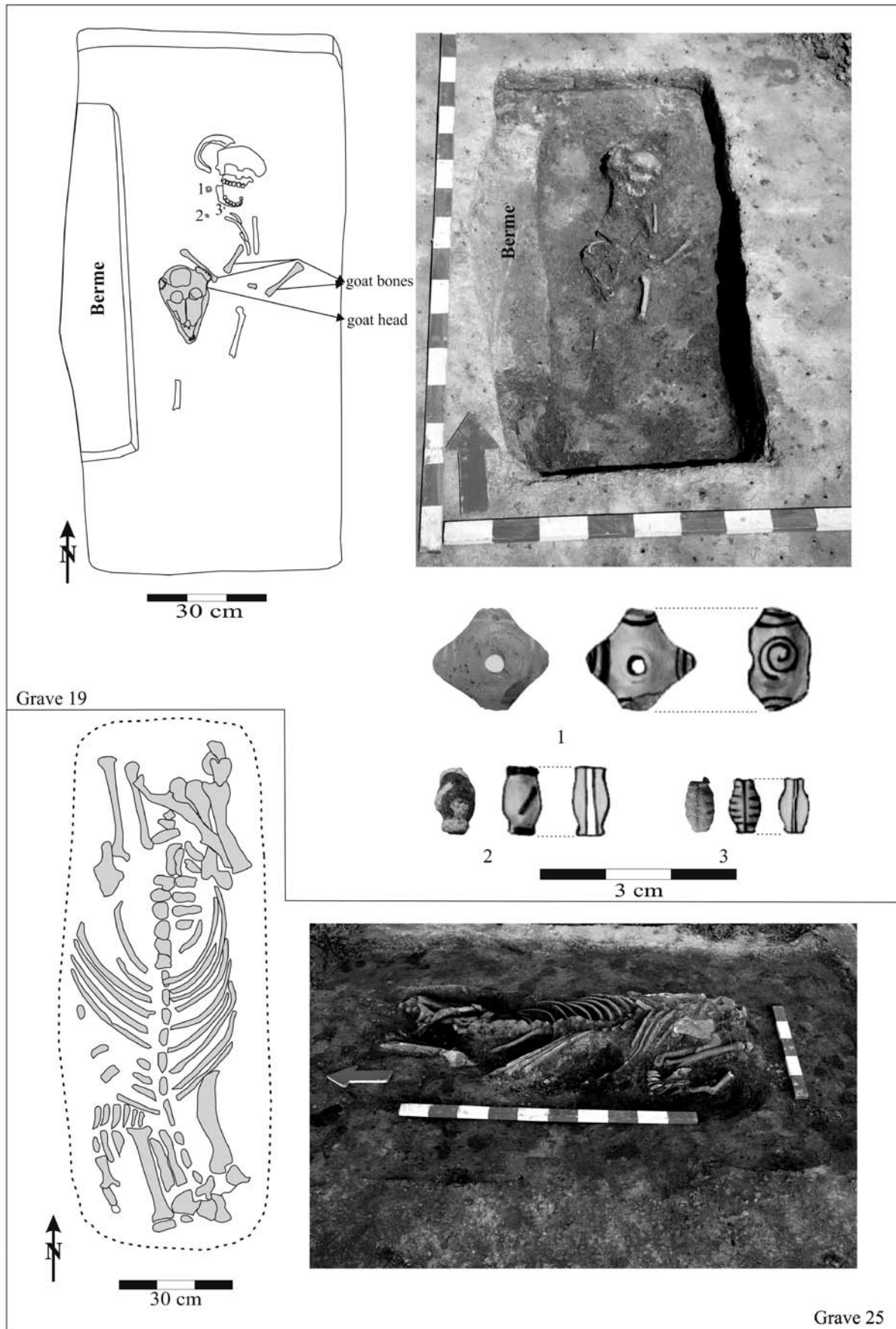


Plate 13. Nădlac 7M Grave 19: 1-3; Grave 25

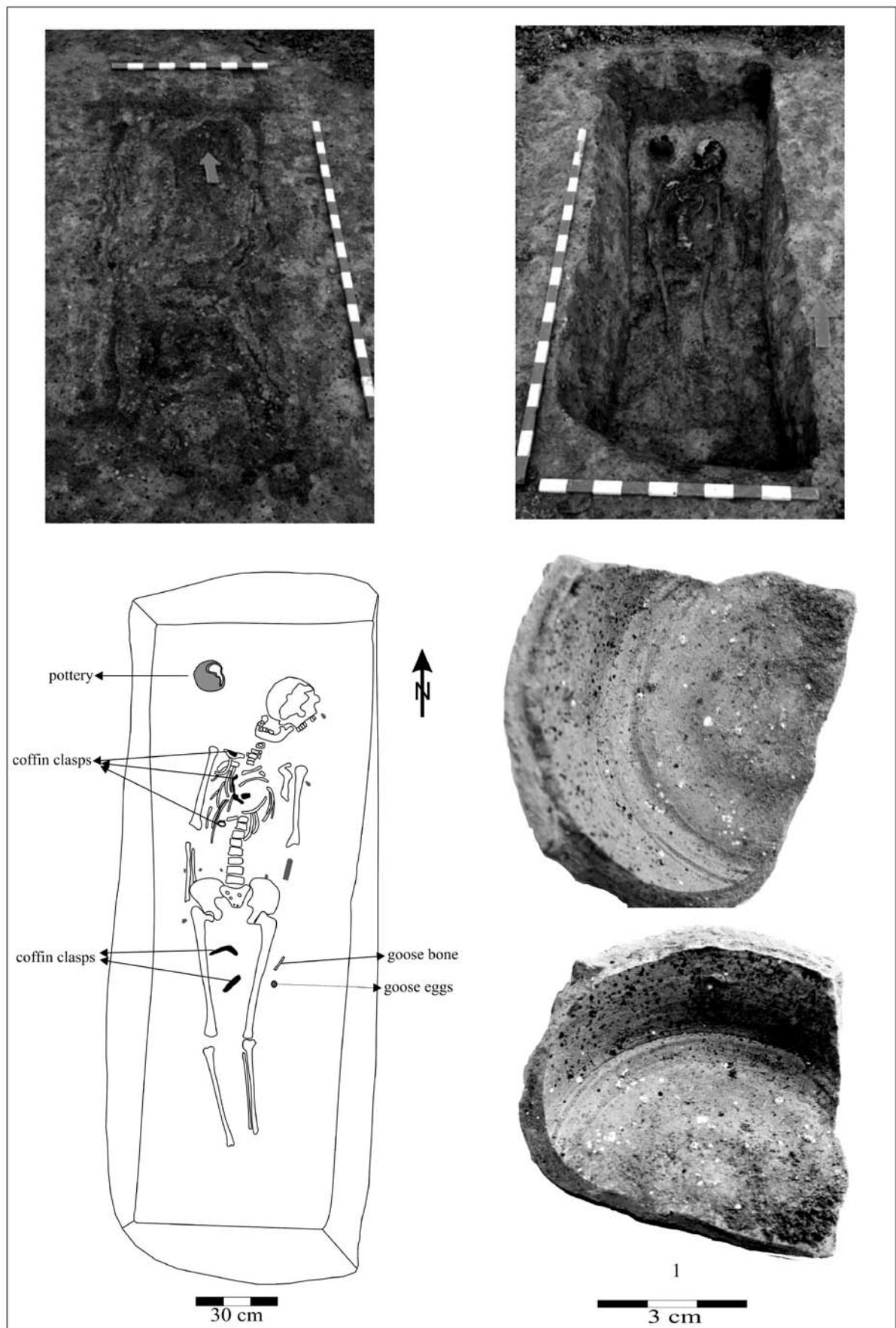


Plate 14. Nădlac 7M Grave 20: 1

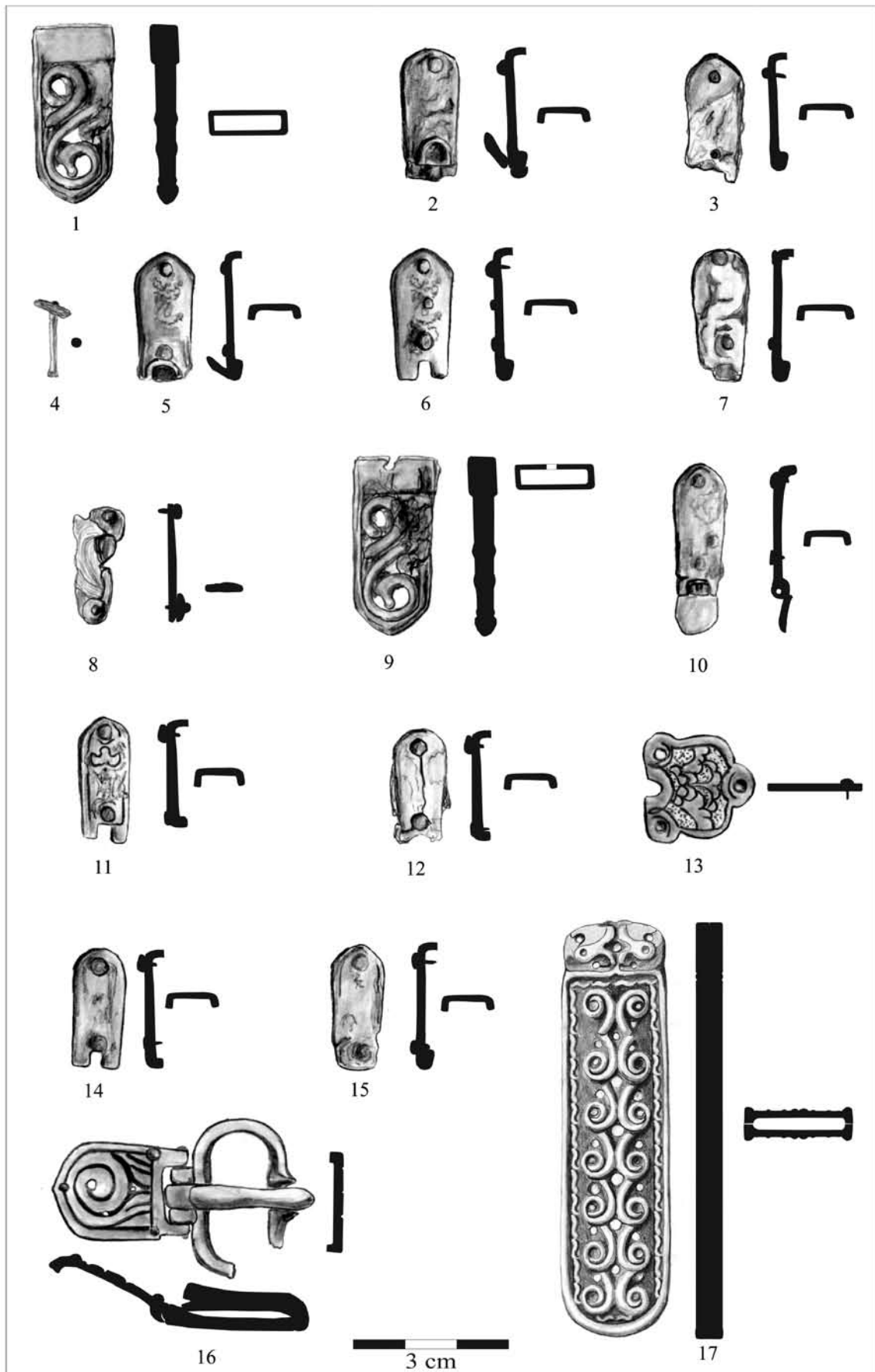


Plate 15. Nădlac 7M Grave 20: 1-17

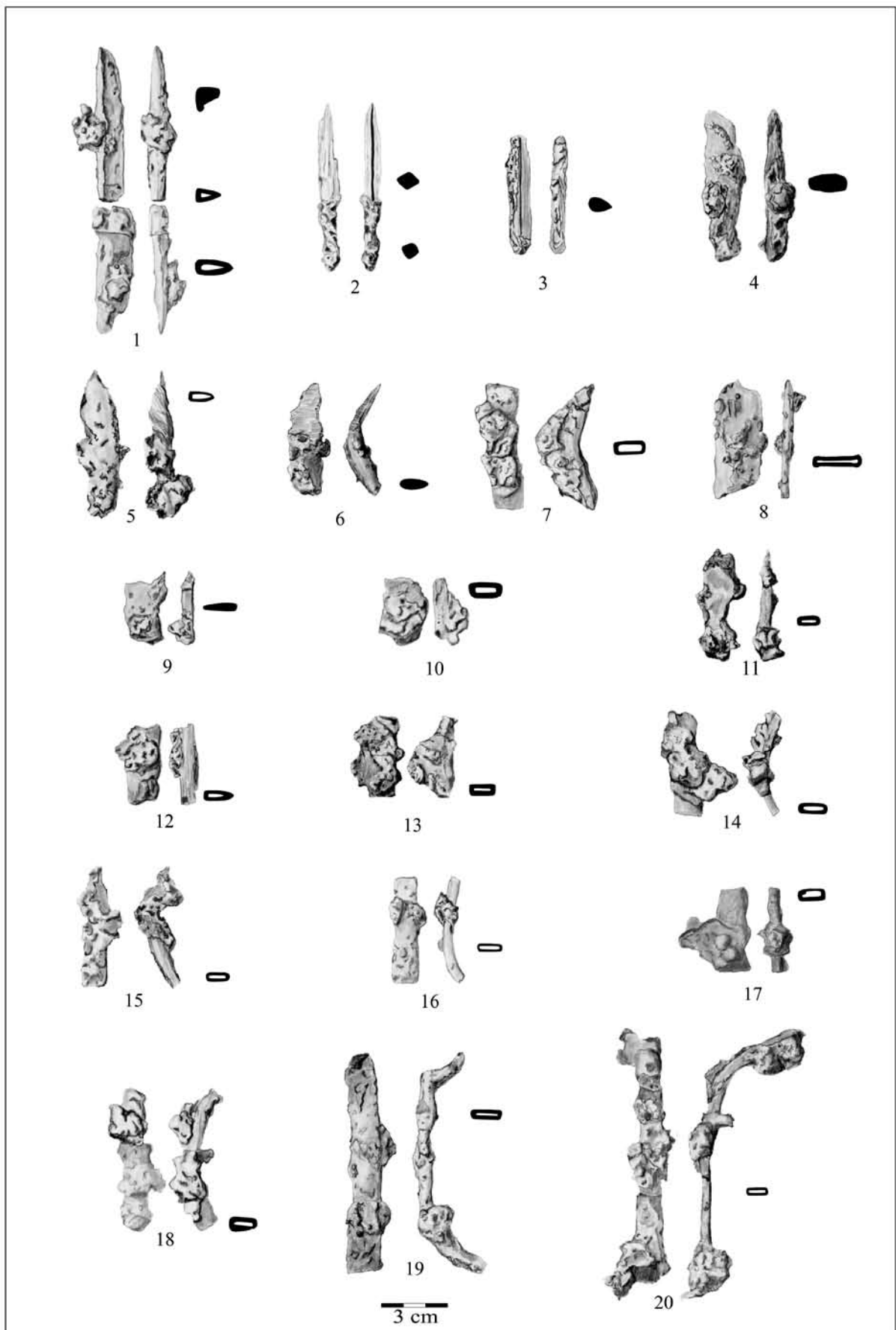


Plate 16. Nădlac 7M Grave 20: 1-20

and around the feet (**pl. 16/1-20**). The skeleton is oriented N-S with its head tilted towards east. The arms are stretched out alongside the body, however, its left forearm has moved towards east. The legs are stretched tightly next to each other, which is also the sign of a coffin burial.

Sex: male. Age: 45-55 years.

Food furnishing/offering:

1. Next to the skull, to the right there is a clay pot. It is brick red and wheel-thrown. Diameter of the bottom: 7 cm (**pl. 14/1**).

2. A wing bone from an unknown location in the grave.

3. Shreds of eggshells next to the left femur.

Inventories:

Due to the extremely unfavourable weather conditions, only some of the objects could have been registered in their exact positions.

1. Buckle

Buckle with a semicircle shaped body with an elongated oval buckle ring. The buckle pin is more massive than the ring with an oval cross-section. The pin has a square shaped cross-section with a deep incision on its lower side. The ring was fastened to the buckle with two clamps and the buckle was fastened to the leather strap with rivets that formed a triangle shape on its surface. The object has a frame, a spiral shaped ornamentation can be observed on the body of the buckle and at the end of the surface incision there is a round open-work. Length of the body of the buckle: 2.9 cm; diameter of the buckle ring: 3.0 × 1.1 cm; length of the buckle pin: 2.4 cm. Weight: 11 grams (**pl. 15/16; pl. 23/10**).

2. Large strap end

Two plated, cast, soldered large strap end with open-work. The strap of the belt was between the two cast elements. The object consists of two plates that were soldered together. After the high rimmed frame of the object, a deep groove can be seen. In the middle of the object, open-worked abstract geometric ornaments were formed. On the surface of the object facing the clothes, the remains of the textile can clearly be observed. Length: 8.1 cm; width: 2.1 cm. Weight: 39 grams (**pl. 15/17; pl. 23/11**).

3. Small sized belt mounts with and without pendants

Their position in the grave is unknown, but some of them lay in the pelvis, as can be seen in the drawing.

3.1-2. Small sized belt mounts with pendants. The pendant belonging to the object was fastened to the mount with two pierced projections. The pendants are semi circle shaped. The elongated rounded mounts were fastened to the strap with two rivets (**pl. 15/2, 5, 10; pl. 23/3, 4, 5**).

3.1. Length: 2.3 cm; width: 1.0 cm; length of projection: 0.9 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (**pl. 15/2; pl. 23/3**).

3.2. Length: 2.1 cm; width: 1.0 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (**pl. 15/5; pl. 23/4**).

3.3. Length: 2.3 cm; width: 1.0 cm; length of projection: 0.9 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (**pl. 15/10; pl. 23/5**).

3.4-12. In the case of belt mounts without pendants, it can be supposed that the pendants have not been preserved or the mounts were placed in the grave without pendants. The pendant belonging to the object was fastened to the mount with two pierced projections. In both cases, the objects were fastened to the strap by two rivets in the middle (**pl. 15/3, 6-8, 11-12, 14-15; pl. 23/6-8**).

3.4. Length: 2.1 cm; width: 0.9 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (**pl. 15/3**).

3.5. Length: 2.2 cm; width: 1.1 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (**pl. 15/6; pl. 23/6**).

3.6. Length: 2.3 cm; width: 1.0 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (**pl. 15/7; pl. 23/7**).

3.7. Length: 2.0 cm; width: 1.0 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (**pl. 15/8**).

3.8. Length: 2.1 cm; width: 1.1 cm. Weight: 1.5 grams (**pl. 15/11; pl. 23/8**).

3.9. Length: 2.4 cm; width: 1.0 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (**pl. 15/12**).

3.10. Remains of textile on the object. Length: 2.4 cm; width: 1.0 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (**pl. 15/14**).

3.11. Remains of textile on the object. Length: 2.5 cm; width: 1.0 cm. Weight: 3.0 grams (**pl. 15/15**).

3.12. Length: 2.4 cm; width: 1.0 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams.

4. Belt-hole mount

4.1. Silver pentagonal hole-guard mount with a primitive cast, punched engraved ornamentation on its surface. The belt-hole guard was fastened to the belt with three rivets on its rim. Height: 2.1 cm; widest part: 1.6 cm. Weight: 2.0 grams (**pl. 15/13; pl. 23/9**).

5.1-2. Small-strap ends

Found in unknown positions in the graves (pl. 15/1-2; pl. 23/1-2).

5.1. Two small-strap ends, one single cast item, its inside is hollow for the strap to be drawn through. The middle of the framed cast object is open-worked, an S-shaped ornamentation can be seen with flat tendrils. At the end of the object there is a round hole for the strap (pl. 15/1; pl. 23/1).

5.1. Length: 3.2 cm; width: 1.3 cm. Weight: 5.0 grams (pl. 15/1; pl. 23/1).

5.2. Length: 3.4 cm; width: 1.6 cm. Weight: 7.0 grams (pl. 15/9; pl. 23/2).

6. Rivet

It must have belonged to an object. Length: 1.5 cm. Weight: 0.4 grams (pl. 15/4).

GRAVE 21 (PL. 17)

A burial with an adult skeleton and a coffin in a rectangular grave pit with rounded corners. The imprint of the coffin can clearly be seen next to the skeleton, on the right side. There are six rectangular and four trapeze-shaped holes at the bottom of the grave pit, also indicating a coffin burial. The filling of the hole consists of light brown soil with pigmented clay. Orientation: N-S oriented, with the following dimensions of the pit: 2.00 × 0.70 m. The skeleton is in anatomical position, with his head turned to the south and the jaw on the chest. The hands are parallel to the body and the palms are in supination. The left hand is under the pelvis.

Sex: female. Age: +60 years old.

Sacrifice/symbolic role:

1. The skull, mandible and phalanges of a *senilis* sheep in the eastern part of the grave.

2. The skull and feet of a *senilis* goat in the central-western part of the grave.

3. A vertebra fragment of a sheep/goat in the south-eastern corner of the grave.

4. An isolated tooth of a sheep in the south-eastern corner of the grave.

5. Cattle vertebra in the south-eastern corner of the grave.

Without inventory.

GRAVE 25 (IT MIGHT HAVE BELONGED TO THE PERSON IN GRAVE 3) (PL. 13)

Horse grave. Orientation: S-N. The grave contains the skeleton of an old horse (15 years old), probably belonging to Grave 3. The colour of the filling soil is light brown with pigmented clay, the soil is loose. The dimensions of the grave are: 1.50 × 0.50 m. The horse is in dorsal position with its legs tucked near him. The skull of the horse must have been smashed when it was killed.

The bones of the body, of the maxilla and six teeth of the mandible were found below the chest near the front legs, in the south-western part of the grave.

Age: *senilis*, 15 years.

Without inventory.

GRAVE 36 (PL. 18)

Inhumation grave, size: 1.30 × 0.45 m, N-S oriented. The dead person is in anatomical position only the forearms have been preserved. The legs are parallel to each other with some space between the knees and with the heels close to each other. The skull is twisted to the south, with the jaw looking towards the right shoulder.

Child. Age: about 5 years old (*infans* I).

Inventory:

1. Fragment of a round-wired, bronze lock ring**GRAVE 37 (PL. 18)**

Inhumation grave, oriented N-S, having dimensions of 1.20 × 0.40 m. Only the arms and the phalanges of the right hand of the skeleton were preserved in anatomical position. The tomb was robbed in the ancient times. The skull and the bones of the pelvis are missing, the feet are slightly drawn up.

Child. Age: 1.6 years old.

Sacrifice/symbolic role:

1. The skull and feet of a *juvenilis* goat. Its position in the grave is unknown.

Without inventory.

C. STRUCTURE OF THE CEMETERY PART (FIG. 1B; FIG. 7)

As it can be seen quite clearly in our cemetery map, a total of 11 human graves and one horse grave belong to the late Avar age cemetery

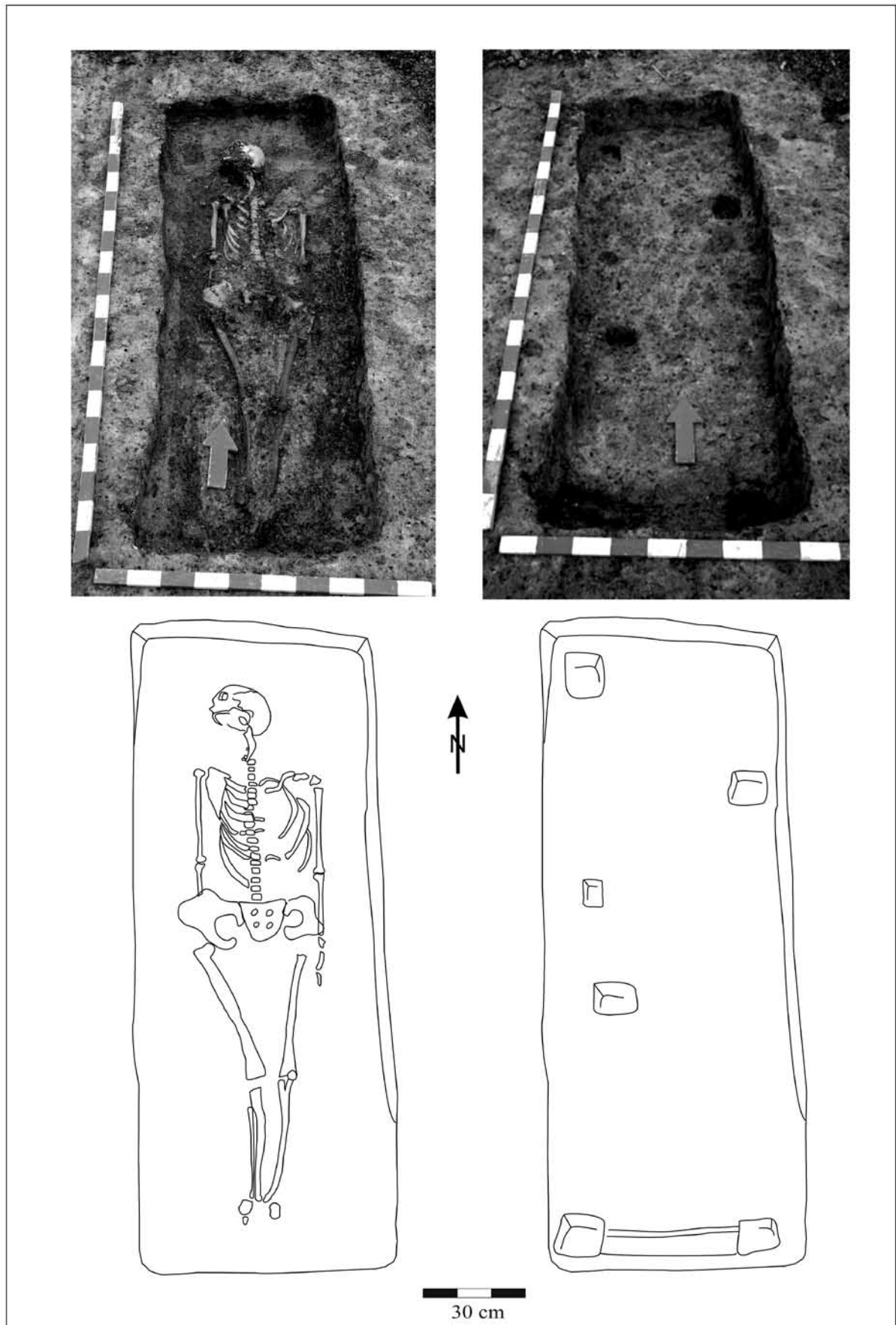


Plate 17. Nădlac 7M Grave 21

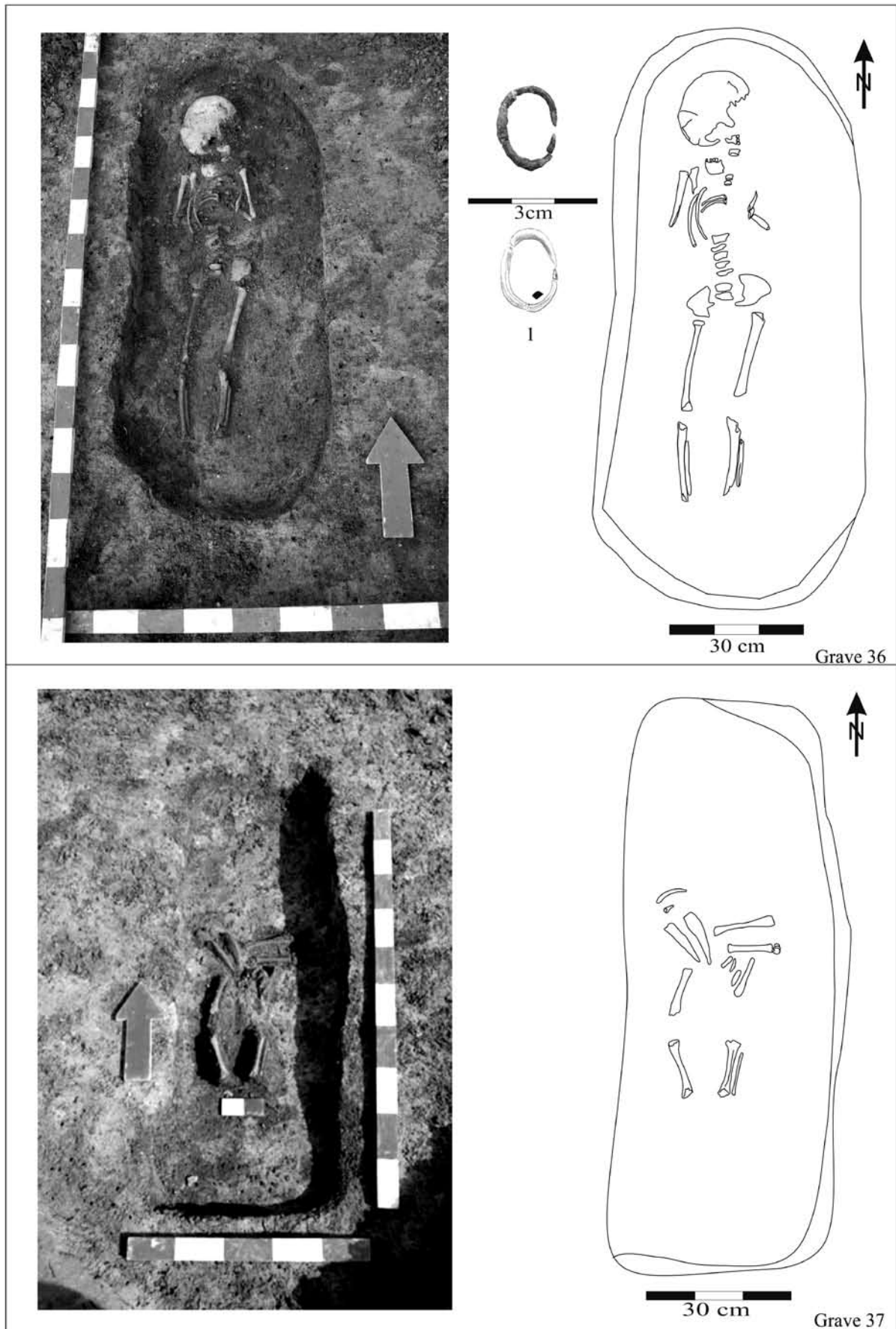


Plate 18. Nădlac 7M Grave 36: 1; Grave 37

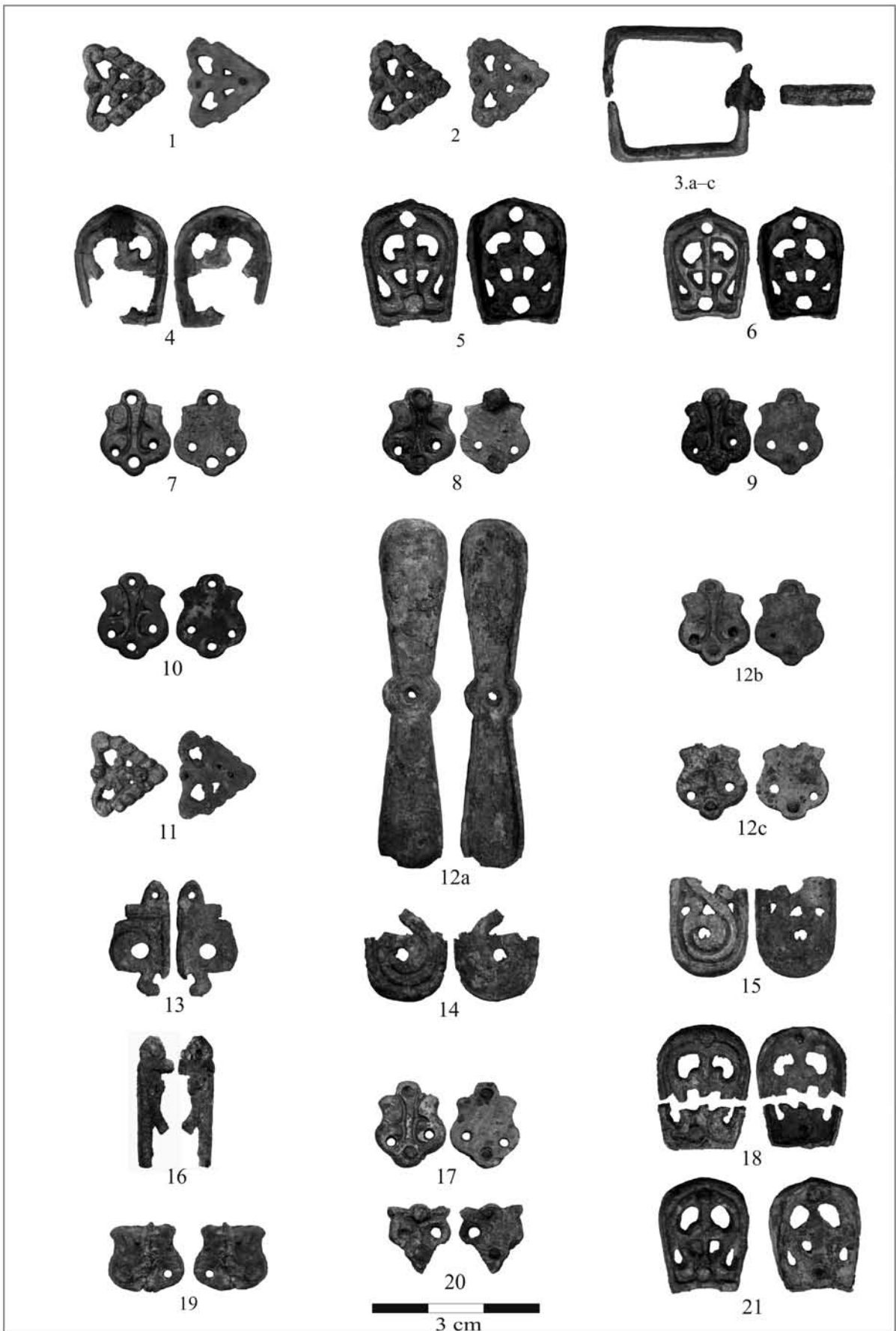


Plate 19. Nädlac 7M Grave 3: 1-21

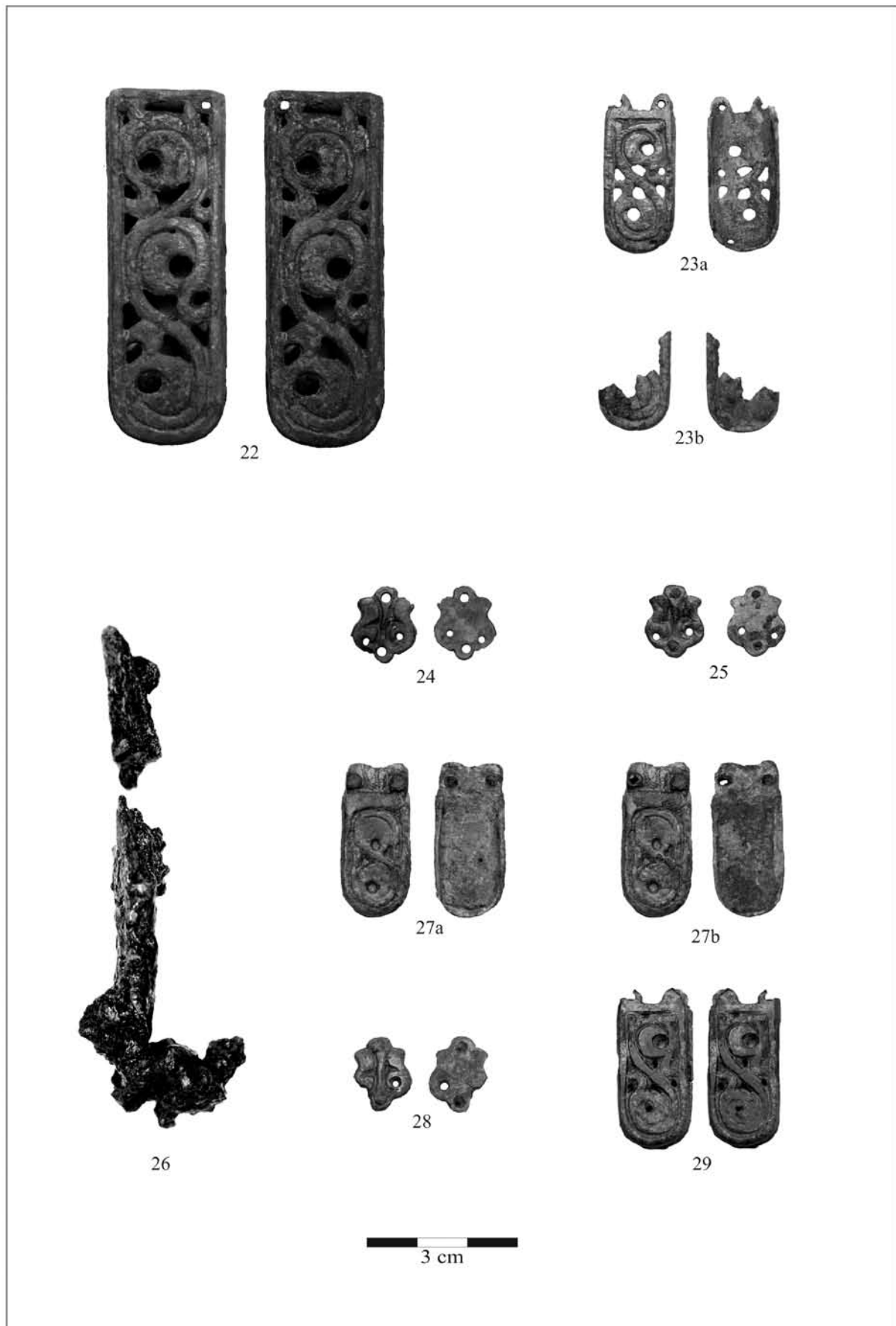


Plate 20. Nádlač 7M Grave 3: 22-29

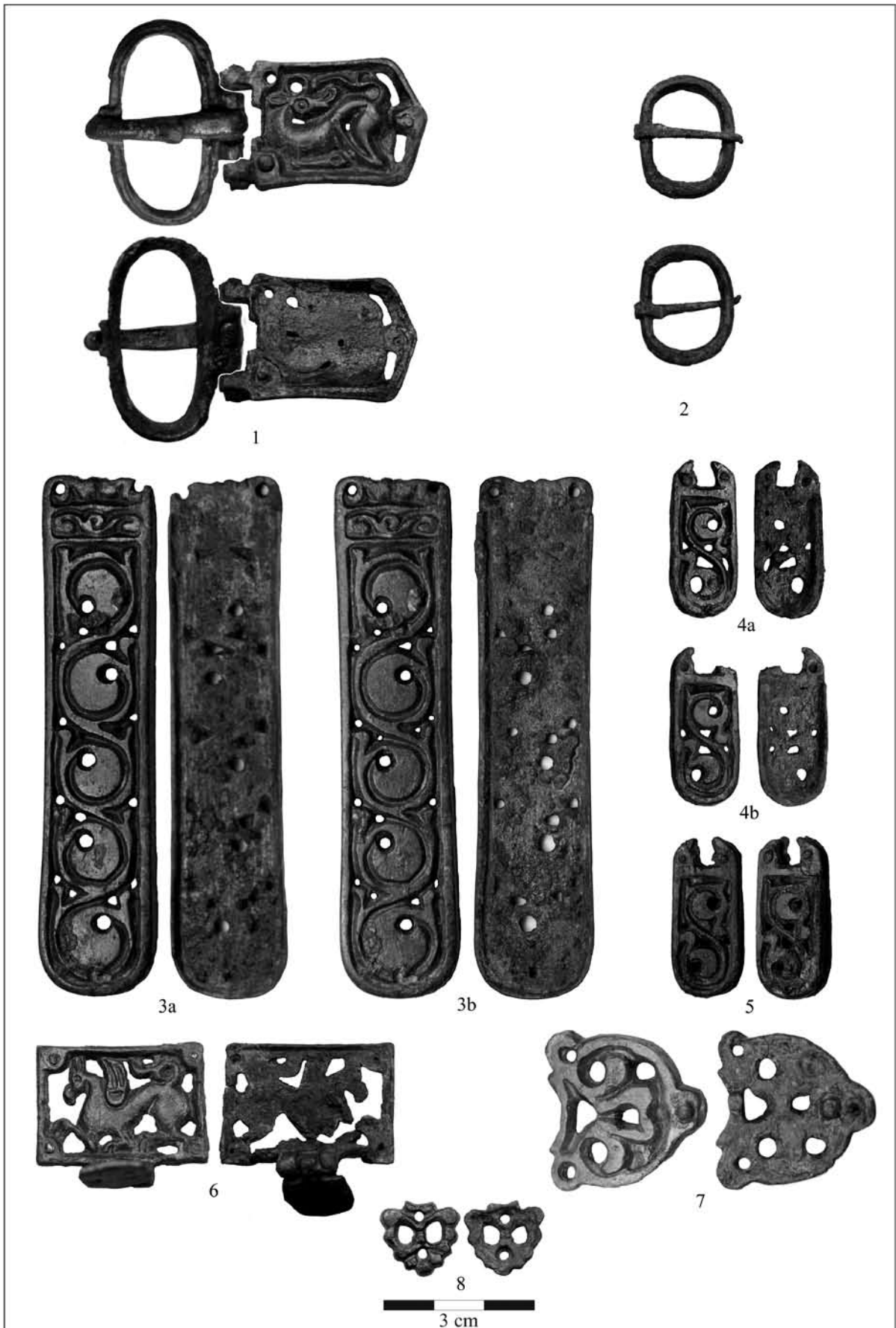


Plate 21. Nădlac 7M Grave 15: 1-8

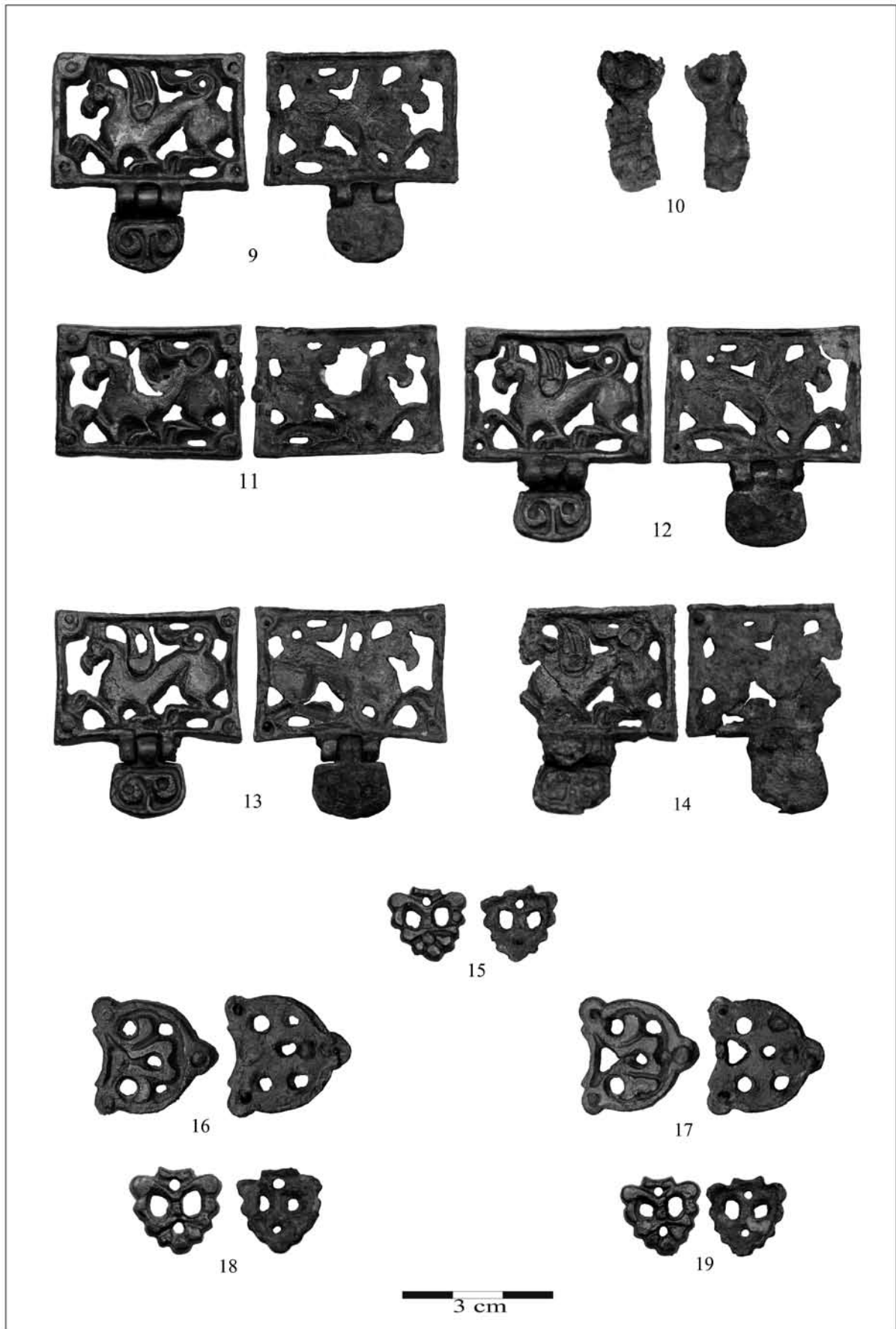


Plate 22. Nădlac 7M Grave 15: 9-19

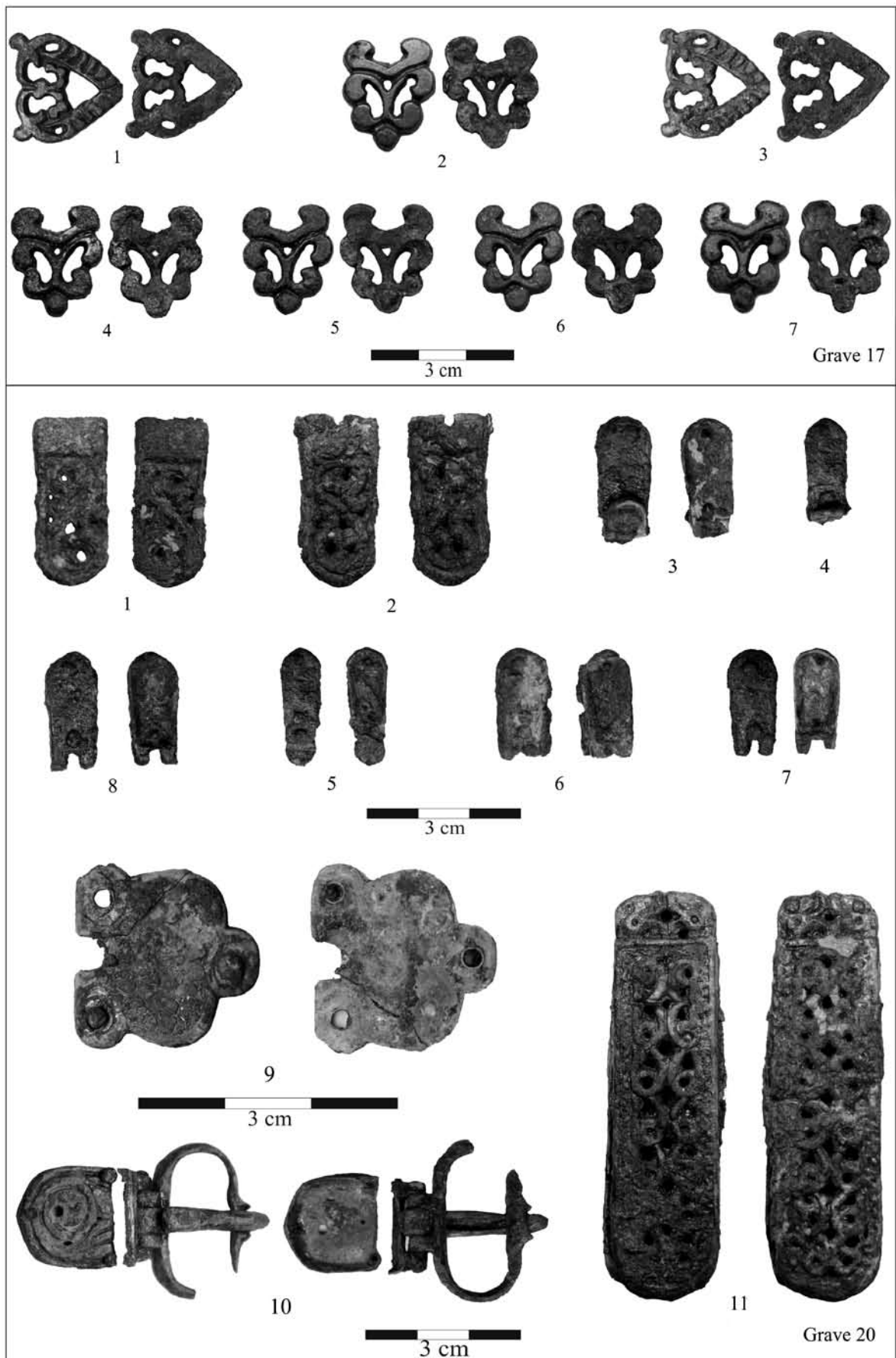


Plate 23. Nădlac 7M Grave 17: 1-7; Grave 20: 1-11

part. Analyzing the cemetery map it can be observed that Graves # 1, 3, 4, 15 and the horse grave 25 form one group, only Grave 1 can be regarded to be an exception due to its NW-SE orientation. However its annexes show – without any doubts – that this one also belonged to the late Avar age burials. Grave 17, which was robbed, together with Grave 19, which is a child grave and Grave 20, with a man with a belt mount set and a 60-year-old senile woman without furnishing form a perfectly compact, W-E oriented line.

The little children of Graves 36 and 37 were buried beside each other, Grave 16 is situated at the edge of the cemetery. As we can see the graves forming a semi-circle shape may form the western edge of the cemetery, however, these graves also mark the northern and southern borders of the cemetery. Based on these observations it can be said that we are facing a lot bigger, fan shaped late Avar age cemetery with lines and groups stretching eastwards for an unknown distance, so as a consequence, the number of the graves in the cemetery of Nădlac, and the extension and structure of the cemetery remains unknown until further excavations (?).

D. BURIAL CUSTOMS

D.1. Position of the dead

The dead were buried supine, in extended position, the arms and legs were arranged parallel to the torso. Among the excavated graves of the cemetery – according to the observations made at the time of the excavation – there is one grave that was certainly robbed (17 graves with belt mounts). The contracted burial registered in grave 4 is not unfamiliar in the late Avar age cemeteries, but the percent of its occurrence is insignificant for that era (Bende 2003a, 313).

D.2. Phenomena related to the grave pits, their shape and depth

Due to the small amount of graves they are practically not evaluable. Regarding the shape of the pits, it can be said that their depth ranged between 0.6 and 2.0 m. Looking at their form we can say that they were rectangular in each case, however, in a few cases they are gradually narrowing downwards. In the case of Grave 37 the pit narrowed towards the skull. Concerning their size, the biggest of them all is Grave 3. It is more than 3 meters long and almost 2 meters wide at the upper level of the grave, but it gradually narrowed and at the bottom of the pit it was 2.2 long and 0.95 m wide. The lengths of the pits were registered between 0.65 and 1.9 m.

D.3. Bermed grave (pl. 13)

Only in the case of 19 child graves we managed to observe the berm in the right hand side of the pit. In the case of the quite shallow grave probably the berm⁶ played a role in placing the animal offering in the grave, which are generally dated to the second part of the late Avar age.

D.4. Orientation (pl. 3, pl. 4, pl. 10-11, pl. 12, pl. 13, pl. 14, pl. 17, pl. 18)

Based on the location of the Avar Age graves it is almost certain that they were part of the edge of a late Avar Age cemetery, where in the majority of the cases the orientation of the pit was N-S. Of course this N-S orientation does not have the accuracy of a compass but its tendencies are clear enough. Grave 3 as well as the opposite orientated

⁶E.g. in Székkutas the bermed graves do not occur together with the niche graves, which means they have a chronological significance. Bende 2003a, 307, 313.

horse grave next to it (Grave 25), also Graves 15 and 16A-B respectively, Graves 36 and 37 almost have a N-S orientation as accurate as a compass. Graves 17, 19, 20 and 21 differ somewhat from the N-S orientation as they are slightly orientated East only with a few degrees from North. According to the analysis of the cemetery map, these differences are not accidental: the graves – mentioned above – that can be found more to the North from the rest constitute one group, while Graves 17, 19, 20, 21 and another grave almost form a straight line. However, based on the grave inventories they can be dated to the same era.

Grave 1 is almost the opposite of this orientating tendency as it wasn't directed to the East from the N-S orientation axe but it was directed to the west. According to the map of the cemetery, the grave with earrings as furnishings does not belong to any of these grave groups; unfortunately we cannot say more than that because of the size of the excavation.

So what we can state regarding the orientation of the graves at Site 7M in Nădlac is that we can observe three different orientation directions, however, the main tendency could be the N-S direction.

Based on its topographic situation Grave 4 probably also belongs to the late Avar Age cemetery, but this one wasn't orientated N-S but E-W. Related to this burial – not far away from Grave 3 with rich furnishings – it can be assumed to be in some sort of connection with the dead person of Grave 3 but we would need more accurate data, because the grave has been robbed. Taking in consideration its position and the way of its orientation, however, it cannot be excluded either that this grave could belong to the early Avar Age, because the main feature of the excavated burials was their E-W orientation (Lőrinczy 1987-1989, 165).

In contrast to the common NW-SE orientation of the late Avar Age, the orientation tendency of Site 7M in Nădlac was N-S. According to Péter Tomka's observations, in the case of SW-SE orientated cemeteries a slow, regular shift towards N can be observed during the late Avar Age, so that might indicate too that the part of the cemetery belongs to the last period of the late Avar Age (Tomka 1975, 55-56, 60-63).

Without any intention to generalize – since only the edge of the cemetery was excavated – all this may indicate that this community had a common coherent worldview and it parted with its members accordingly.

D.5. The question of coffin burials (pl. 4, pl. 7/26, pl. 14, pl. 16/1-20, pl. 17, pl. 20/26)

One of the most widely spread custom of the late Avar age is the use of a large variety of coffins⁷, which in the case of the cemetery in Nădlac was registered probably 3 times.

In the case of Grave 20 the clasps⁸ that can be linked to the coffin chest⁹ occurred above the skeleton's thigh. Based on their position we may think that there was some sort of chest that gained the coffin functionality afterwards. In our opinion, the curved iron that was found near the right hand of the dead also belongs to the coffin.

In the case of the coffins with legs they hardly used any carpenter clasps (Bende 2003a, 312), it is more than likely that we can associate the hollows associated with them with the legs of Graves 3 and 21.

⁷ About the use of coffins in the Avar age, see Tomka 1979, 77, 81-82; Wicker 1990, 49; Kiss 1990, 409; Garam 1995, 165; Bende 2003a, 310-313. The typology table of the positioning of coffin clasps in the graves made by Éva Garam is especially important (Garam 1995, 168, Abb. 78).

⁸ These chest coffins had various positions in the burials, see Garam 1995, Abb. 77.

⁹ The coffin chests made of slit-cut planks are considered to be timbered chests by Klára Királyiné Csilléry (Csilléry 1951, 231-284).



Fig. 1a. Nádlač (town) and the excavation site

Around the third grave near the skull there can be seen 4 rectangular shaped holes very close to one another, the two placed more to the north are barely dug down (15×6 cm, 17×8 cm), practically only their shape was left at the bottom of the pit, while the other two holes were approximately 5-7 cm deep (18×5 cm, 12×6 cm). Also hollows can be seen at both sides of the centre of the pit, but their shape is more oval-round (6×8 cm; 6×6 cm respectively at the lower part of the pit, where only one rectangular shaped hole can be seen. At the end of the pit there are a few rectangular shaped holes that are mostly the contours of the legs, traces in the ground ($20 \times 8/9$ cm; 18×7.5 cm). The two iron fragments found near the end of the left femur must have belonged to the coffin too.

The holes registered in Grave 21 look completely different both regarding their depth and shape. These are a lot bigger, their shapes are square and trapezoid (9×12 cm; 12×13 cm; $12 \times 10 \times 8$ cm), respectively, the two holes at the end of the pit are significantly deeper and bigger than those observed in grave 316 (12 cm; $16 \times 9 \times 10$ cm). On the other hand, these holes were observed mainly on the right side (4-2), which can only be explained by the fact that the left side of the coffin has sunk to ground level. In the case of this grave, however, the straight, black tracking line of the coffin on the right side of the skeleton can clearly be distinguished.

These holes were regarded as the proof (Tomka 1979, 53; Wicker 1990, 50) of the existence of coffins or were regarded (Tóth 1981, 157-175) as the remains of the couch of the dead, but it was considered a generalization by Lívía Bende (Bende 2003a, 311). Bende is right that we cannot consider them in every case automatically as proof for the



Fig. 1b. The objects in the excavation site

existence of a coffin, but she does not mention any other function of these holes.

In our opinion, in these three cases – as we do not have any other explanations – in the cemetery in Nădlac these holes prove the existence of coffins.

D.6. Double burials (pl. 10-11)

Among the various burials it is necessary – if it is possible at all – to distinguish the double burial graves (*Doppelgrab*), from the subse-

quent burials in the same grave (*Nachbestattung*) and its special form, when a separate pit was dug, but they tried to get near to the previous grave (*Neben- or Überbestattung*) (Tomka 2003, 14). However, the grave in Nádlač can be classified in the category of double burials, which were observed as a not too common custom in the cemeteries of the Avar Age. They are known from almost every major cemeteries. Their characteristic feature is that children and women lie together in one grave, but there were registered cases, where men were buried with children, or men buried with women or two men buried together too. As Péter Tomka and Csilla Balogh pointed out, the occurrence of double burial graves is typically 1-2% per cemetery (Tomka 2003, 14; Balogh 2006, 49).

In this case a 30-40-year-old man was placed in the grave at whose feet – in an opposing S-N direction – a 2.5-3-year-old child was buried. The question arises if we can assume simultaneous deaths or what is called '*Totenfolge*', that is when the dead person is followed by others voluntarily to the other world, as for example a ritual murder of a child or even the murder of a mother¹⁰. Based on the statistical analysis of the Avar Age burials, however, we can see that the phenomenon is much more prevalent at the end of the Avar Age than in the previous, early and latter Avar ages. The explanation of this custom, however, is quite obscure, as we see it, it is more likely that alternative interpretations are possible. In the case of double burials it was also observed that one of the dead people was more honoured than the other (e. g. the grown up related to a child, a man to a women) so the funerally 'secondary' actor was adjusted to the 'protagonist' of the funeral (Tomka 2003, 22). The more important burial was usually registered on the right hand side of the pit, this situation applies to Nádlač's 7M Grave 16, because the adult occupies the right side of the grave, while the 2.5-3-year-old child's skeleton was placed in an opposite orientation, close to the adult's legs, it seems to be the secondary burial as a result of a reversed world vision.

Thanks to Péter Tomka's and Csilla Balogh's material collection we know 8 more, similar Avar age parallels in the Carpathian Basin: Bačka Topola Grave 149/A-B, Halimba Graves 474-475, Jutas Grave 54 A-B, Nové Zámky Grave 192, Szébeny Grave 197, Vác-Kavicsbánya Grave 17-18, Vasasszonyfa Grave 185, Želovcé Grave 124 A-B (Balogh 2006, 58, 68-69, 8. ábra/6; Török 1998, 60-61, Taf. 46; Rhé / Fettich 1931, 18; Čilinská 1966, 40, Taf. XXXVIII/1; Garam 1975, 85, fig. 15, Grave 197; Tettamanti 2000, 11-12, Taf. 1, Grab 1; Kiss 2006, 221; Čilinská 1975a, 57, Abb. 13, Taf. XX). Looking at our cemetery map it is quite clear that also in the case of this cemetery we can register the double burials on its edge. Except for Graves Bačka Topola 149/A-B, Nové Zámky 192 and Želovcé 124, where in both cases the child was placed on the right hand side of the man's skeleton, in each case the child skeleton can be found beside the man's skeleton, on its left hand side. We could register only one more burial that has exactly the same N-S, and respectively S-N opposite orientation of the man's and the child's skeletons as the one found in Nádlač (Vasasszonyfa Grave 185). In the other adult individuals tend to be oriented rather W-E (Bačka Topola, Halimba, Jutas, Nové Zámky, Szébeny, Vác-Kavicsbánya, Želovcé), as a consequence, the child graves tend to be positioned E-W. Almost every burial provides a modest amount of furnishings, as the most important excep-

¹⁰ Within the framework of multiple burials, the research history on a wide chronological scale of the so called '*Totenfolge*' was also carried out by Péter Tomka (Tomka 2003, 15-18).

Archaeological site / grave	Anthropological data	Position of skeleton	Orientation / Coffin	Inventories	Position of grave in the cemetery
1. Bačka Topola/Topolya-Bankert Klanica/Bánkert Grave 149/A-B	man (45-50 years) + child, <i>infans</i> II (10-11 years)	The adult man in the grave is on the left side/ the child in opposing orientation at his feet on the right side	W-E/E-W	Grave A: iron knife, iron buckle, three-edged arrow tip; Grave B: iron knife, pottery, animal ribs, animal bone	-
2. Halimba Grave 474-475	adult + child (might be infant II based on height 81 cm)	The adult in the grave is on the right side/the child in opposing orientation at his feet on the left	NW-SE/SE-NW	Grave 474: a bronze hair ring, two fragmentary iron buckles, a needle holder?	Outskirts of the cemetery
3. Jutas Grave 54 A-B	man + little child	The adult in the grave is on the right side/the child in opposing orientation at his feet on the left	W-E/E-W	Grave A: iron buckle, three-edged arrow tip Grave B: 117 pieces of beadwork, iron tongs, brass handle, two brass buttons, two iron rings, one bronze ring	Outskirts of the cemetery
4. Nädlac 7M Grave 16 A-B	man (35-45 years) + little child (2.5-3 years)	The adult in the grave is on the right side/the child in opposing orientation at his feet on the left	N-S/S-N	Grave A: iron buckle	Outskirts of the cemetery
5. Nové Zámky/ Érsekújvár Grave 192 A-B	man + little child	The adult in the grave is on the left side/ the child in opposing orientation at his feet on the right	NW-SE/SE-NW	Grave A: iron buckle	Outskirts of the cemetery
6. Szébény Grave 197 A-B	man + little child (1 year)	no data	W-E/E-W	Grave A: cast, big belt end, brass fittings, iron buckle, iron knife, wheeled pottery	-
7. Vác-Kavicsbánya Grave 17-18	man (53 years) + child, <i>infans</i> II (8 years)	The adult in the grave is on the right side/the child in opposing orientation at his feet on the left	W-E/E-W	Grave 17: iron knife, rings, iron buckle, rock Grave 18: the iron filings on the jaw	Outskirts of the cemetery
8. Vasasszonyfa Grave 185 A-B	man + child, <i>infans</i> II	The adult in the grave is on the right side/the child in opposing orientation at his feet on the left	N-S/S-N coffin	Grave B: rectangular wrought iron buckle	-
9. Želovce/Zsély Grave 124 A-B	man + little child	The adult in the grave is on the left side/the child in opposing orientation at his feet on the right	SW-NE/NE-SW	Grave A: Belt suites (one large strap end, three small strap end, six belt mounting), 3 discs, grinding wheels, 1 iron knife, T-type iron sword Grave B: wheeled, dark gray vessel	-

Fig. 2. Adult male and infant burials with opposing orientation in the late Avar Age Carpathian Basin

tion we can mention Želovcé Grave 124, but in this case the child grave can be found to the left from the dead adult and not on his right hand side. Interestingly, with one exception, in all cases recorded there was one iron buckle registered in each burial, and we can speak of a rich burial only in one single case. It is also significant that in none of these cases has a horse grave been found near them, and accordingly, there was no horse burial registered in the graves. Based on the generally modest furnishings and on the fact that in all those cases when we have information about the positioning of these graves, these were dug on the outskirts of the cemeteries, we may rightly ask the question of who these people were: 1. individuals who were expelled by the community or 2. victims of epidemics? Or the situation of these individuals and their place in the cemetery can be interpreted as their initial situation (victims of epidemics) concluded their place in the cemetery (exclusion from the other world?). Also we consider it important to point out that the fact that these graves were dug on the outskirts of the cemetery does not mean by far that they are at the edge of the cemeteries, or represent the abandonment of the cemeteries, they might rather be considered as places selected for some reason (e.g., as in the case of Christian customs, the situation of the hangman!).

The inverted other world view so typically characterizing the Avar Age and present in a significant quantity in the era's burials is clearly conspicuous in the case of the entombed men and children who were buried in one tomb, but placed opposing to each other, with opposite orientation. We try to illustrate the characteristics of the opposite oriented burials of men and children in the following table.

Reviewing the geographic position of the sites containing the opposite oriented burials, it seems rather clear that in the vast majority of cases they are concentrated in the Little Hungarian Plain and south of the River Danube, in the area of present day Budapest (fig. 3). As can be seen in our distribution map in the middle region between the Danube and the Tisa/Tisza, 11 archaeological sites are known to have similar cases and there are two cemeteries in the region east of the Tisa/Tisza (Trans-Tisa/Tisza region) where we know about such customs (Dévaványa and Nádlač). It is completely missing in the Transylvanian Basin. The question arises as to how the regional nature of these phenomena can be evaluated: as a 'result of' a certain stage of research or there is a system of customs and traditions behind it? Or is it the result of a situation that some regions are more affected than other regions (e.g. epidemics)? Without starting an analysis of the issue – which might be the theme of a PhD work – the fact itself that the symbolization of the inverted world view can be traced through many aspects of the Avar Age burial customs (e.g. the graves of individuals and the opposite orientation of the horse graves in their environment) we believe this phenomenon is more likely to be interpreted as a consequence of a given – maybe medical – situation and we would not prefer the quantitative approach that is enjoying great success in archaeology (which usually gives rise to historical theories).

D.7. Animal bones in the graves. Animal burials

According to the 2012 database, we have data on 726 burials with animal bones dating from the Avar era in the area between the rivers Tisa/Tisza, Mureş/Maros and Criş/Körös (Bende 2012, 651), which consti-

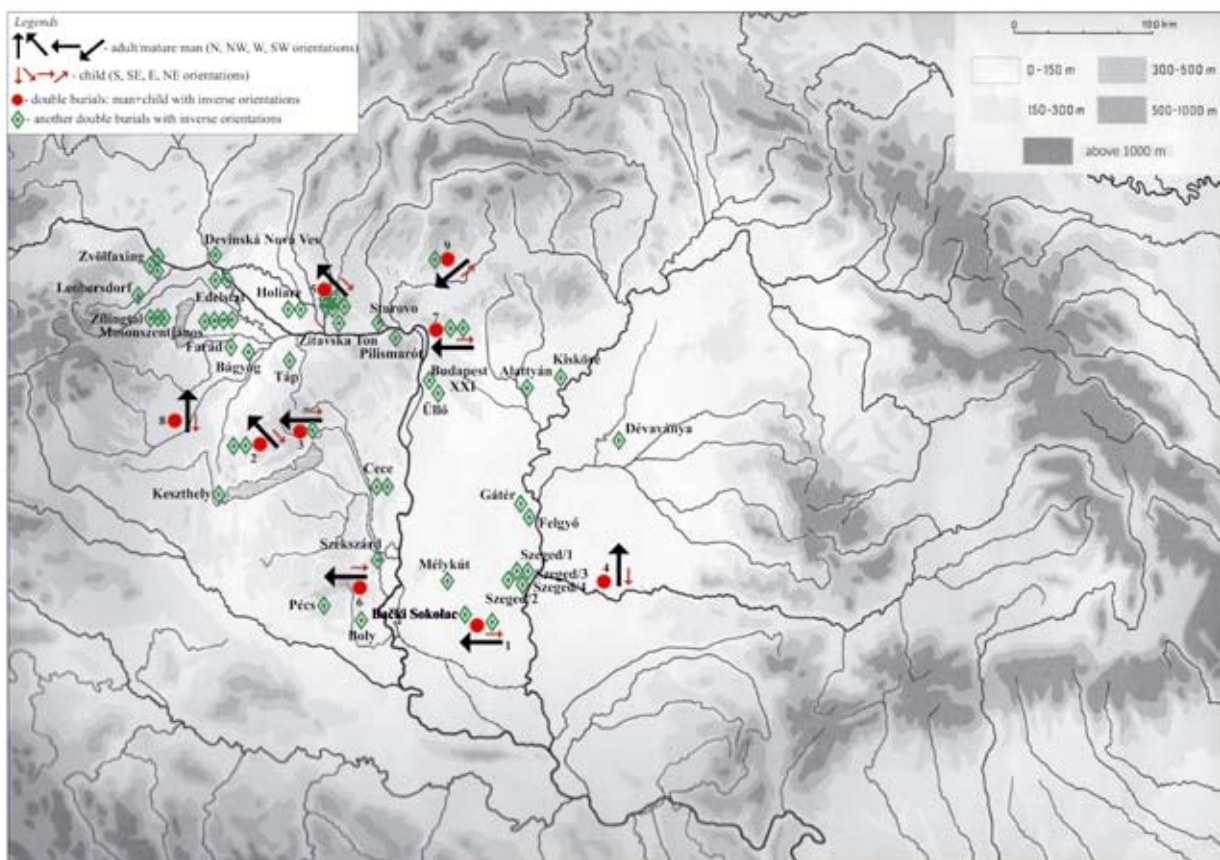


Fig. 3. Double burials with inverse orientation (man+child) in the Carpathian Basin (on the base of Tomka's, Balogh's and Kiss's data) (for the numbering of sites, see fig. 2)

tute 22% of all the burials. This database can be complemented with the animal bones found in the cemetery section excavated in Nädlač (for more details, see the archaeozoological analysis too).

D.8. Separate horse burial¹¹: is it a 'mortuary offering'/'company to the otherworld' or an animal sacrifice?¹² (pl. 13)

An almost complete skeleton of an old horse was excavated, although with reverse South-North orientation in Grave 25, which is in close connection with Grave 3. According to the archaeozoological analysis (see the paper of I. Kelemen), a complete horse skeleton was registered. Based upon the state of the upper and lower jaws, it is likely that the burial was disturbed or the machine could have destroyed the upper part of the horse skull, which lay in an upper layer. However, the horse's skull was supposedly smashed when it was killed as the lower jaw was under its chest with six teeth. It can also be stated that the grave of the horse was not in level with the skeleton lying in Grave 3, close to it, but it is characteristic of the late Avar era horse burials (Bede 2012, 210). Nevertheless, it can firmly be said that Horse Grave 25 is the 'counterpart' of Grave 3 (Garam 1995, 354-368, 390-423; Juhász 2000, 68-70; 2006a, 102, 3. kép; Makoldi 2008, 127-132; Bede 2012, 210-211; Bende 2012, 657).

Separate horse burials (Kiss Group VII¹³) are usually considered to be 'grave commodities' by archaeologists and not 'sacrifices' (Tóth 2012, 532). Owing to the collections of Irén Juhász and Livia Bende, we know of 15 horse graves altogether in the smaller region researched

¹¹ It was Miklós Béla Szőke, who concluded back in 1979 that most complete animal sacrifices were found in the southern region of the Great Plain, and the situation cannot have changed since then (Szőke 1979, 94).

¹² Heinrich Härke also refers to the complicated nature of this question (Härke 2014, 13).

¹³ Kiss 1962, 154. A good research history on the analyses of horse graves was written by Miklós Makoldi (Makoldi 2008, 116-119).

by us (the area bordered by the rivers Mureş/Maros, Tisa/Tisza and Criş/Körös)¹⁴, in most cases a human burial belongs to them¹⁵, so it is obvious that in this region horses were mainly buried together with humans. As has been mentioned, these horse burials were considered furnishings by the experts, so they deduced that they might have served (on) as riding horses in the other world. However, there is one major difference between the 15 cases registered by Lívia Bende and Grave 25 in Nädlac, and it is the lack of harness and although even its possibility was excluded by Lívia Bende, the find in Nädlac seems to refute her opinion, which is also refused by Ilona Bede (Bende 2003a, 321; Bede 2012, 195, note 35). According to Judith Oexle, horses served as riding horses in the Merovingian world so it was placed in the grave as a 'mortuary offering'/'company to the otherworld' but together with the harnesses (Oexle 1984, 145-148). The issue is further complicated or rather solved by the fact that in Grave 3, which probably belongs to Horse Grave 25, two horse bones and other animal bones were found. A similar horse skeleton without harnesses was found in Grave 705 in Tiszafüred-Majoros¹⁶, and the stirrup and the bits are missing from Grave 33 in Makó-Innenső Jángor 3 (only 6 harnesses were found here) (Hargitai 2009, 369, 10. kép/2-3), and in Szarvas-Rózsási halom Grave 56 (Juhász 2006b, 207). Likewise, the two horse skeletons found in Grave 66 in Orosháza-Bónum Téglagyár were not accompanied by any grave furnishing either (Kiss VIII type). Based upon all these data, the question arises: can we consider this horse grave as a horse 'sacrifice' because of the lack of harness?

According to the database published in 2012 (which was in fact made in 2005) there are 56 horse graves and graves with horses known from the late Avar age in the area surrounded by the rivers Mureş/Maros, Tisa/Tisza and Criş/Körös (Bende 2012, table 2). The horse graves of different characteristics and types in Bélmegyer-Csömöki Hill (Medgyesi 1984-1985, 241-256), Hódmezővásárhely-Koppáncs II. (Herendi 2012, 91-92; Herendi 2014), Hódmezővásárhely-Koppáncs III. Kishomok (Bácsmegi 2012, 92), Pecica/Pécska (information by K. Hógyes Mihály Huba), Makó-Innenső Jángor 3 (Hargitai-Sóskuti 2012, 93; Hargitai 2012, 363-388), Mártély-Csanyi-Hill (Szentpéteri 2002, 235) and Socodor/Székudvar¹⁷ should be added to this number (see **pl. 24**).

D.9. Partial animal sacrifice, symbolic role and/or food offering? (pl. 4, pl. 13, pl. 17, pl. 18)

Complete buried animals (except for horses [Tóth 2012, 532]) are usually considered animal sacrifices¹⁸ in literature, but in the case of partially buried animals, the situation is much more complicated. It also holds for the graves in the Nädlac cemetery. Here there were animal bones in about 5 graves out of 11 (the percentage is not so important in this case: 45.45%). Following the division made by Zoltán Tóth¹⁹, we tried to divide the animal remains found in the graves into three categories ('symbolic role', 'sacrifice', 'food furnishing'). Certainly, this kind of division can also be questioned in many aspects, but it seems to be the most logical so far. It can be assessed as a 'symbolic role' when only the different attributes of the animal are placed in the grave, it can be considered a 'sacrifice' if body parts of the animal are placed in the grave and those can be interpreted as 'food offerings' where there must have been meat on the bones²⁰. We tried to categorize the animal

¹⁴ See their list in Juhász 2000, 67-68; Bende 2012, table 2. This list can be complemented by the horse grave excavated in the cemetery in Pecica/Pécska. Special acknowledgement to Huba Mihály Hógyes for the precious data provided by him.

¹⁵ In the case of Grave 3 in Örménykút there is no known 'counterpart grave'. In Lenin Street-Pitvaros a horse grave was found when a ditch was being dug, therefore it cannot be taken into consideration (Bende 2005, 58, 61).

¹⁶ Garam 1995, 90, Abb. 36/705, Taf. 30. According to Miklós Makoldi, this object does not belong to the cemetery (Makoldi 2008, 131, note 70, 132).

¹⁷ According to the information available to us, the horse was buried together with its rider (Popescu 1956, 80, fig. 39-40).

¹⁸ Some exceptions dating from the Avar era are listed by Zoltán Tóth (Tóth 2012, 532).

¹⁹ Tóth 2012, 536-537, 1. kép. It has to be noted that it was István Vörös, who first observed that animal bones found in graves should be divided into the categories of sacrificial function or that of food offering (Vörös 1999, 43-58).

²⁰ It also has to be noted that some food offerings placed in the grave might not have left any trace, e.g. meat without bones.

parts and animal bones excavated in the graves in Nădlac based upon this classification:

In those cases when the animal parts (skulls and the ends of the legs) are found in a connected position like in grave 19, they were probably buried in their skin.

In connection with the animal bones and parts found in graves, two important observations must be made: 1. the great variety of the animal species placed in the graves (sheep, goat, cattle, poultry, horse) also refer to the farming of the micro-community in Nădlac; 2. the animals found in the graves were of various ages so there was no correspondence between the age of the deceased person and that of the animal sacrificed; 3. among the graves with belt ornaments it was only Grave 3 where a partial sheep burial was registered.

Hoping to get a more comprehensive picture we tried to review those cases of the approximately 4221 graves in the 86 cemeteries and funerary sites registered in the area of the Rivers Mureș/Maros, Criș/Körös and Tisa/Tisza where buried animal bones were registered (we know of animal bones in approximately 49 cemeteries) by using Zoltán Tóth's system (Tóth 2012, 536-537, fig. 1)²¹. Concerning our table, it must be noted that in the old excavation sites some small fragile and porous bones might not have been registered (for example: Mártély-Csanyi-halom, Mezőberény-Köröshíd, Óföldéak-Döböröcsök-halom, Szentes-Alsórét 256. sz. tanya, Szentes-Lapistó, Biró G. és Szekely M. földje, Szentes-Zalota, Vecseri M. földje) so the database available to us may not be complete²² (see **Annex 1**).

After reviewing the data of the micro-region, the following observations can be made:

1. Animal bones and parts of animals placed next to the skeleton have been registered in a great number of graves excavated in the region of the Mureș/Maros, Tisa/Tisza and Criș/Körös with different purposes. However, the fact that there are cemeteries where there are no animal bones or parts of animals in the graves (Hódmezővásárhely-Gorzsa, Kunszentmárton-Jaksor, Szarvas-Horváth puszta) seems to indicate that either there were different communities with different pictures of the other world living in this region or there were different burial customs existing at the same time in the late Avar era. Those cases where only a very small amount of bones was found in the graves (e. g. Bélmegyer-Telekmegyer, Csárdaszállás, Endrőd-Bacsa lapos, Endrőd-Kecskészug, Hódmezővásárhely-Gorzsa, Szegvár-Újtelep, Mártély, Mindszent-Bozó Ambrus Károly tanyája, Szarvas-Kákapusztá, Szarvas-Rózsási halom, Szegvár-Újtelep, Szentes-Nagyhegy) also raise questions. Is it a testimony to the economic power of these communities or can we talk about different systems of values within the community or different relationship of certain families?

2. Animal bones or parts of animals have been registered in a great percentage of the graves only in a given group of the 86 cemeteries and funerary sites. These excavation sites are concentrated in the southern part of this region near the Tisa/Tisza and the Mureș/Maros (Makó, Pitvaros, Székkutas-Kápolnadűlő), like Nădlac.

3. Like in the cemetery section in Nădlac, mostly sheep bones and parts of sheep were found in great numbers in these cemeteries (Makó, Pitvaros, Székkutas-Kápolnadűlő), so it can be stated that it is characteristic of the southern region of the area enclosed by the rivers Mureș/

²¹ We have data on different animal species buried partially in 49 sites. The sites of Bélmegyer-Csömöki domb and –Telekmegyer, Hódmezővásárhely-Koppáncs III, Hódmezővásárhely-Tarjánvég, Nădlac-3M-N, 3M-S, and Pecica/Pécska have been included in our database, but we do not know any exact data on them. In Hódmezővásárhely-Koppáncs partially buried sheep – goats reach a high percentage as is mentioned by Gábor Bácsmegi: Bácsmegi 2012, 92. Nevertheless, in those cases when only a few graves or only one grave was rescued, it cannot be excluded that the lack of animal bones or partial animal burials is due to the small scale excavations (Almáskamarás-Homokbánya, Békésszentandrás-Mogyorós halom, Csorvás-Kossuth Tsz., Endrőd-Doboskert, Endrőd-Páskum, Eperjes-Csabacsúd, Gyula-Lencsés út, Hódmezővásárhely-Sóshalom, Kardoskút-Aranyad-part, Kondoros-Gépállomás Street, Mindszent-Helffy Street, Pitvaros-Lenin Street, Socodor/Székudvar, Szarvas-Ponyiczky tanya, Szegvár-Körögy-torok, Szegvár-Körögy-szentgyörgy-Gorkij Tsz., Szentes-Belsőecser, Brebovszki V. telke, Szentes-Gógány, Epressor/part, Szentes-Kisjaksorpart, Szentes-Nagytóke, Jaksorpart, Szentes-Zalota, Vecseri M. földje).

²² The data provided in the literature, see: Bácsmegi 2012, 92; Bartosiewicz 2003, 209-210; Bende 2003b, 189-210; 2005, 12-13, 15-27, 28-35, 41-47, 48-116, 116-142, 143-146, 155-182, 183-187, 188-193, 193-213, 213-216, 216-226, 226-262, 263-264; Hargitai-Sóskuti 2012, 93; Hargitai 2012, 363-388; Herendi 2012, 91-92; 2014; Juhász 2000, 67-68; 2006a, 102; 2006b, 206-218; Kőrösi 2005, 229-276; Lőrinczy-Szalontai 1993, 287, pl. V/4-7, 10-11; 1996, 271-272, 1. kép, 7. kép, 8. kép 1-11, 10. kép 1-14; Medgyesi 1984-1985, 241-256; Nagy 2003, 16-73; Pópity 2012, 62; Szentpéteri 2002, vol. I, 55, 102-103, 128-129, 144-145, 162, 165, 185, 230, 235, 242, 253, 272-273, 344, 351, 352, 354, 355, 356, 359, 370.

Site - number of graves	Symbolic role									Sacrifice									Food offering									?	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		10
	Orosháza-Bónum téglagyár (245)	2							1		1	2	1									1	3						
Órménykút (31)								1		1		1									1	3					4		
Pecica/Pécska (70)																												•	
Pitvaros (225)	18	1	1	1	1				27				1						18	2	27	14	3				1		
Szarvas-Grexa téglagyár (422)	3					1		1		4	6			1					12	5	2	7			1	1	4		
Szarvas-Káka (8)																											1		
Szarvas-Kákapuszta (49)																			1	1							1		
Szarvas-Rózsási halom (119)									2										1								1		
Szegvár-Szólókajja (91)	3	15			1				1		1								7	25	5	5					1		
Szegvár-Újtelep (16)																											1		
Szentes-Belsőecser (3)									1													1							
Szentes-Berekhát I (147)						1			2		1										1	2					13	1	
Szentes-Berekhát II (34)											6										3						9		
Szentes-Berekhát, Farkas tanya I (5)																			1										
Szentes-Berekhát, Farkas tanya II (26)																			1			1					1		
Szentes-Kaján (459)					1			2												1	3	6	1				17		
Szentes-Kistölke (85)												3															1		
Szentes-Nagyhegy (145)								1											1			1					2		
Székkutas-Kápolnadűlő (534)	29	2			1			1	45	1	2								41	7	54				1		24		
Székkutas-Új Élet Tsz (6)																											1		
Tápé-Lebő (16)																			2	2									
Total	65	0	23	1	0	6	3	0	12	98+	1	19	0	2	2	0	0	5+	101+	2	53	115	17	16	0	3	1	112+	25+

Annex 1. Animal bones, animal parts in the graves from the Late Avar Age in the region of Maros-Körös-Tisza and their functions

Symbolic role: 1 sheep; 2 goat; 3 cattle; 4 poultry/hen/chicken; 5 goose; 6 pig; 7 horse/colt; 8 bird; 9 animal bones of unknown origin

Sacrifice: 1 sheep; 2 goat; 3 cattle; 4 poultry/hen/chicken; 5 goose; 6 pig; 7 horse/colt; 8 bird; 9 animal bones of unknown origin

Food offering: 1 sheep; 2 goat; 3 cattle; 4 poultry/hen/chicken; 5 goose; 6 pig; 7 horse/colt; 8 bird; 9 animal bones of unknown origin

• - unknown quantity

Graves	Animals	Interpretations		
		Symbolic role	Sacrifice	Food offering
Grave 3/1	fragments of two horse femurs	•?	•?	•?
Grave 3/2	mandible and spoke-bone of a sheep/goat		•	
Grave 3/3	remains of a <i>juvenilis</i> sheep, maxilla and mandible; feet		•	
Grave 3/4	pottery			•
Grave 19	skull and feet bones of a <i>juvenilis</i> goat		•	
Grave 20/1	bone of a goose			•
Grave 20/2	pottery			•
Grave 20/3	goose and chicken eggs			• (see below)
Grave 21/1	vertebra of a cattle	•		
Grave 21/2	vertebra fragment of a sheep/goat	•		
Grave 21/3	skull, mandible and phalanges of a <i>senilis</i> sheep		•	
Grave 21/4	skull and feet of a <i>senilis</i> goat		•	
Grave 21/5	tooth of a sheep	•		
Grave 37	skull and feet of a <i>juvenilis</i> goat		•	

Fig. 4. Animal bones, animal parts in the graves of the cemetery section in Nădlac and their functions

Maros, Tisa/Tisza and Criş/Körös. As opposed to this, the attributes of cattle or food furnishing were placed in the graves in a considerable amount in the cemetery in Szegvár-Szólókalja.

4. According to the map of cemeteries in the region of the Mureş/Maros, Tisa/Tisza and Criş/Körös, it can be stated that as opposed to the sites listed by Zoltán Tóth (Tóth 2012, 533), where mainly certain parts of the animals were buried, in Nădlac and in other cemeteries of the region a wide variety of buried animals species can be observed, although sheep bones make up the majority (except for the cemetery in Szegvár-Szöllókalja, where cattle bones were placed in most graves).

Compared to other late Avar micro-regions in the Carpathian Basin, a varied picture can be seen. Vörös observed that in Šturovo/Párkány, Szob and Vác, on the left side of the Danube Bend domestic hens are the most common animals placed in the graves, which is followed by the cattle in Szob and Vác and by the sheep in Sturovo/Párkány (Vörös 2014, 415). This proportion is similar to that of the cemeteries in the region of the Mátra Ranges (Gyöngyöspata, Nagyréde), which were analysed by Győző János Szabó (Szabó 1981, 65-70). In some cases in the region of the Mureş/Maros, Tisa/Tisza and Criş/Körös, only much fewer animal bones were placed in the graves. Among the 83 graves in Vyškovce nad Iplom/Ipolyvisk there were only 4 where bones of animal parts were found: here the hen was characteristic too (in 4 graves), in one grave the bone of a sheep was found (Ambros 1991, 181-183).

In the right hand side region of the Danube Bend analysed by Vörös, cattle is more common in the graves than hen (Pilismarót-Basaharc, Pilismarót-Öregek dűlő), or sheep, which constitute an even smaller percentage (Vörös 2014, 415). South of this area, in the cemetery in Halimba cattle bones make up the majority with a smaller percentage of sheep bones (Vörös 1999, tables 1-5). In the cemetery in Bágyog-Gyüreg the majority was made up of poultry (Bökönyi 1974, 344), while in the cemetery in Komárom-Schiffswert (Hajógyár) cattle sacrifices and food offerings are more common than sheep and poultry bones (Ambros 1987, 365-372). In the late Avar

cemetery in Gyenesdiás, cattle and sheep bones are the most common and poultry bones can only be observed in few cases as food (Matolcsi 1967-1968, 86-92). In the cemeteries in Zwölfaxing and Mistelbach poultry was the most common, followed by the sheep and cattle came in the third place and the number of pig bones is also considerable (Lippert 1969, 121). As opposed to this, in the cemeteries in Leobersdorf and Sommerein, the biggest percentage of bones is made up of cattle (Daim 1987; Daim-Lippert 1984). Cattle bones are the most common in the graves in Szeged-Makkoserdő containing a small amount of animal bones (Szabó 1981, 69, note 37). The ritual importance of sheep was bigger than that of the cattle or at least equal to that in the cemeteries in Brodski Drenovac/Brodzski Drenovác and Vrbas/Verbász excavated in the southern region of the Great Plain (Vinski-Gasparini / Ercegovic 1958, 160; Nađ 1971, 268. Quoted by: Szabó 1981, 66, note 39).

All in all, based upon these examples it can be stated that 1. the local natural factors might have influenced the customs everywhere concerning the type and the number of animals killed before or during the funeral; 2. the farming structures are in close connection with that concerning the number of animals a community was able to keep; 3. István Vörös supposes that the deceased people might also have been attached to certain species of animals (Vörös 2014, 415); 4. We can agree with István Vörös that the Avars ‘... megtartották altáj-vidéki lélekhiedelmen alapuló hitüket, a temetkezési szertartásaikon ugyancsak lovat, szarvasmarhát és juhhot áldoztak...’ (“... retained their religion based upon a spiritual belief brought from the Altay region, they sacrificed horses, cattle and sheep at their funerals...”) (Vörös 2014, 415), but it is connected to a question to which the answer should be found concerning the explanation of the great amount of poultry in the late Avar graves. Did the farming factors influence the changes of this rite in the 8th century in the different micro-regions and/or was it a so called ‘imported’ custom loaned from other populations? At the moment we think that probably a two-directional answer can be given to this question: the emergence of an animal cult must have been in direct correlation with the animal’s growing role in everyday life.

D.10. Goose eggs (pl. 14)

In Grave 20 the eggshells were registered next to the left femur. This rarely occurs in male graves, but it is a well-known funerary custom in the late Avar age. As can be seen in the analysis of B. Tugya in this issue, it was even more surprising that the egg shells in the grave in Nädlac belonged to two species, they were chicken (*Gallus domesticus* L.) and goose (*Anser anser domestica* L.) eggs. Moreover, the microscopic examination of the egg remains has yielded new results: the finds from the grave in Nädlac are the remains of eggs which were hatched.

As for the role of the egg in connection with the *maturus-senilis* male in Grave 20, the following possibilities can be taken into account: 1. *as food offering* it was meant to serve practical purposes by the relatives of the deceased person (in the grave there was a wing bone too) (Bende 2012, 669); 2. protective role (Vörös 2008, 230); 3. besides being the symbol of embryonic existence it may have signified the state of being dead waiting to resurrect (László 1944, 87; Jankovics 1988, 221).

Taking into consideration that the eggs were hatched, in our opinion, these may have signified the state of being dead waiting to res-

urrect. After that, the question may arise whether the community in Nădlac believed in resurrection.

Among the 86 registered funerary sites in the Mureş/Maros, Tisa/Tisza and Criş/Körös, eggs are attested in 157 graves from 19 sites²³, but 120 of them belong to only 5 sites, and most graves with egg furnishing were found in Székkutas-Kápolnadúló (57) and Pitvaros (17) (B. Nagy 2003, 16-73; Bende 2005, 61-116; Kőrösi 2005, 229-276), which are situated 42 km and 16 km north and northeast of Nădlac respectively. Nonetheless, only 36 of the aforementioned 157 graves belonged to males²⁴, so they are mainly found in female and child graves. However, in Nădlac it was found in the grave of a male who rather falls in the category of *senilis* (45-55 years old), and such cases are very rare according to the analysis done by Lívía Bende (apart from this, only 9 other cases have been registered) (Bende 2005, 367; 2012, 669).

Also according to Bende's results, the zoological analysis showed that 85% of the graves with egg shells contained chicken eggs and only 15% – goose eggs (this can be complemented by the finds from Nădlac). In the micro-region researched by us, they are certainly known from Mindszent-Bozó Ambrus Károly tanya Graves II and VII (Bende 2005, 32-33), Pitvaros Graves 11 and 127 (Bende 2005, 63, 92), Szentes-Kaján Grave 40 (Bende 2005, 195) and Székkutas-Kápolnadúló Graves 2, 474 and 539 (Kőrösi 2005, 229, 240-241). The graves containing goose eggs are not uniform concerning either the age or the gender of those buried in them as there is an *infans II* among them (Székkutas-Kápolnadúló Grave 474), *maturus* females (Pitvaros Grave 127, Székkutas-Kápolnadúló Grave 2, Szentes-Kaján Grave 40), *maturus* males (Pitvaros Grave 11, Székkutas-Kápolnadúló Grave 539), and a 45-55-year-old or *maturus-senilis* male (Nădlac-7M Grave 20).

From a chronological point of view, the belt ornaments characteristic of the Middle Avar era, which were found in Grave 539 in Székkutas-Kápolnadúló (Nagy 2003, 190-191. kép; Szalontai 2003, 381, 400), the earring with cast pearl pendant found in Grave 127 in Pitvaros, and the Hohenberg type belt excavated in female Grave 2 in Székkutas-Kápolnadúló, which was dated to the last phase of the late Avar era (Nagy 2003, 2. kép; Szalontai 2003, 394-395), indicate that this custom must have been known in the Mureş/Maros, Tisa/Tisza and Criş/Körös region both in the middle and in the late Avar eras.

E. ANALYSIS OF THE MATERIAL CULTURE

Among the 12 burials dated to the Avar era (Graves 1, 3, 4, 15, 16A-B, 17, 19, 20 21, 25, 36, 37) there were 8 with some kind of inventory, mainly the objects characteristic of the late Avar era (72.72%). The most important ones are the belts with ornamentation (Graves 3, 15, 17, 20) or without ornamentation (Grave 16A), an earring (Grave 1), three knives (Graves 15, 16A and 17), 2 pots (Graves 3 and 20), and clamps belonging to two coffins (Graves 3 and 20), which are characteristic of the late Avar material culture.

E.1. Lock ring or earring? (pl. 18/1)

The only simple small sized bronze hair-ring or earring was found in Grave 36. These objects appeared in greater amount during the 8th century, however, they can be dated to the 9th century in graves with poor inventory as has been pointed out by Éva Garam (Garam 1995, 284). This type of object could have had several functions and they have

²³ The graves in 15 sites were processed by Lívía Bende (Bende 2012, 669). Makó-Innenső Jángor Grave 83, Maroslele-Featüre 29, Nădlac-3M-S Graves 176, 183 and 205, respectively Nădlac-7M Grave 20 belong here.

²⁴ Bende 2012, 669. Two other male graves can be added to Lívía Bende's collection (34 graves): Makó-Innenső Jángor 3 Grave 83 and Nădlac-7M Grave 20.

been interpreted in different ways by the researchers²⁵. The lock ring or earring found in the cemetery section in Nădlac can only be dated by the cemetery section, it has no dating value by itself.

E.2. Earrings with cast pearl pendants (pl. 3/1)

To the left of the skull of the skeleton in the Grave 1, a single bronze earring was registered under the skull. Judging by its form the earring with pearl pendant might be classified together with its bronze versions. We can classify the item from Nădlac into type X of Zlata Čilinská's typological system, which was dated to the 8th century, rather to the second half of the century by the Slovakian archaeologist²⁶. When publishing the cemetery of Felgyő-Ürmös, Balogh Csilla managed to date these types of earrings more accurately, to the end of the Avar era, especially to the second half of the 8th century (Balogh 2010, 246), and Falko Daim dated the same way the jewellery in grave 91 of the cemetery in Leobersdorf (Spa IIIa) (Daim 1987, Abb. 28). The earring can be classified into Type 11, according to Eric Breuer's typology, which was dated to a wide chronological range in his chronological system falling between SpaII-SpaIV (Breuer 2005, Abb. 3, 13, 22, 23).

A lot of varieties of this type of earring have been published which show some degree of variability concerning the design of the pendants and the strip. Because of the nature of our paper and the fragmentary earring found in Nădlac we cannot undertake to map and analyse the whole group of earrings similar to this one.

However, in our view, the chronological analysis of any item category should be conducted at a (micro)regional level as in different regions the period of time in which particular object categories may have spread might be different from case to case for a variety of reasons. Approximately the same thing can be said about the earrings with pearl pendants. It cannot be ruled out at all that in the Carpathian Basin of the Avar age this earring fashion caught on in different periods of time in each micro-region.

E.3. Beads (pl. 13/1-3)

Three beads were found in Grave 19, next to the skull of a little girl. The first one is big, white with four big eyes decorated with two yellow stripes. It lay the nearest to the skull, there is a high probability that it used to be in the middle of a string of beads²⁷. The other two are small and cylindrical, one of them ornamented with yellow molten studs. Their dating does not differ from that of the other graves in the cemetery section. In the cemetery in Székkutas-Kápolnadúló mostly black millet-sized opaque beads with striped ornamentations were found, which belong to Group 2, dating from a later period (Pásztor 2003, 354). The small amount of beads in the graves dating from the late Avar period is not surprising at all, as is attested by the infant burials excavated in Székkutas-Kápolnadúló (Pásztor 2003, table 6).

E.4. Belts with mounts (pl. 6/1-20, pl. 7/21-25, 27-29, pl. 8, pl. 9/10-19, pl. 12/1-7, pl. 19, pl. 20, pl. 21, pl. 22, pl. 23)

According to the scientific literature, the Avar belts were made of leather, and it was probably so in the case of the graves in Nădlac, although we have no information on this (Szalontai 2003, 371). In the late Avar belt sets the mounts of the waist belt must have been the most important, the other belt ornaments (belt-ends, propeller-shaped mounts, belt-hole guards etc) played a secondary, less significant role. Accord-

²⁵ An excellent research history is given in an earlier paper by Péter Tomka. Tomka 1969, notes 83-84, 54-55.

²⁶ ... *Der jüngste Horizont begann in der ersten Jahrzehnten des 8. Jhs. Es dominierte der Ohringtypus X...* (Čilinská 1975b, 80-81, Abb. 6).

²⁷ For a detailed description of the manufacturing techniques of early and late Avar glass beads, see Nagy et al. 2010, 27-50.

ing to Béla Miklós Szóke, it is obvious, based upon the sets found in the graves, that it was not an important goal to make sets that were identical in their decoration and design (Szóke 2001, 103-122), whereas Gergely Szenthe (apparently relying on J. Zábójník's findings) was of a different opinion (Szenthe 2013a, 303-320). We tried to analyse the belt sets and other finds that might be connected to belts found in the cemetery section in Nădlac starting off from these two conceptions.

E.4.1. Types of belts with mounts

Basically, three kinds of belt decorations can be distinguished in the cemetery in Nădlac, which will be analysed by the same methods later.

Only one grave is classified into Group 1, in which a buckle without pin was found, which directly indicates that the person in the grave must have worn a belt without ornamentation (Grave 16A).

Those wearing complete belts belong to the second group, which means that apart from the belts with mounts they had another belt, an undecorated one in the grave, so they had two belts altogether. The destroyed Grave 15 belonged to this category.

Those who wore complete belts and had only belts with mounts without an undecorated belt belonged to Group 3. They only had one belt (Graves 3 and 20).

The disturbed Grave 17, which only contains mounts, cannot be categorized as this grave was sacked. However, it is not certain if we can talk about a belt or the hole guards and the side strap mounts which were worn sewn on the garment served a different purpose²⁸.

We considered it useless to carry out a statistical analysis of the graves containing belts with mounts in such a small cemetery section. However, concerning the number of graves with decorated and undecorated belts, it can be stated that this cemetery gives us the same picture as other cemeteries from the late Avar period in the southern Great Plain, which contain a lot of graves and are well excavated²⁹.

As will be seen, the decorating elements only show superficial general similarities, there is no strictly uniform style concerning the types, shapes and decorations of the mounts. This also explains the great variety of shapes and styles being in fashion in the case of the Nădlac belts too.

E.4.2. An attempt to restore some belts with mounts

In this respect a question arises. How did the belts with mounts get into the grave? Was the deceased person buried with his belt or was the belt placed on the body?

In the case of Grave 3 the problem with the skeleton (pl. 4-5) is that the pelvis has not been preserved at all (!), which makes it impossible to decide this issue! Judging from the position of the mounts it seems likely that the person in Grave 20 was buried together with the belt. Unfortunately, in the other two cases either the grave was raided (Grave 17) or it was destroyed by the machine stripping the topsoil. In the much bigger cemetery in Székkutas, where belts were found in 221 cases, the belt was registered on the pelvis of the skeleton in each case, so the body of the deceased person was girded with it.

The belt mount set in Grave 3 was found below the pelvis of the skeleton, next to or between the femurs. Based upon their positions, it can be stated that the objects have been displaced from their original positions, therefore the reconstruction of the belt set is not only more difficult but it is also questionable. However, the problem with the

²⁸ A similar case, e.g., in Székkutas-Kápolnadülő Graves 8, 25, 392 and 398 (Szalontai 2003, 371).

²⁹ For instance, in the cemetery in Székkutas, belts or belt accessories were excavated in 221 graves out of 534, which means 41.38% of the excavated graves (Szalontai 2003, 371).

skeleton is that the pelvis has not been preserved at all (!) (pl. 4-5). The small strap end indicated with # 23 and the side strap mount indicated with # 29 were found at the end of the left femur, so in their cases it can firmly be stated that we can talk about a secondary location and their big displacement may have been caused by some rodent animal. Their positions make it highly likely that the other objects, contrary to the small strap end # 23 and the side strap mount # 29, were only slightly dislodged (from the area of the pelvis towards the mid-femur). We are going to try to reconstruct this belt in the following:

a. Mount 18 (in two pieces), 4 (fragmentary), 5, 6 and 21 (so 5 pieces altogether) were on the waist belt. Even if they have slightly been displaced, their almost horizontal position from the right femur all the way to the upper part of the left femur perfectly shows their original position.

b. The buckle has also been displaced, broke in half and it moved above the pelvis, to the right side (objects 3, 19 and 30).

c. The two-plated big strap end on the left side, partly under the left femur and the axis.

d. The propeller shaped belt mount was also on the right side. According to its place in the grave (it was next to the right femur, on the right side), it must have been on the waist belt.

e. Belt-hole guards 1, 2 and 11 also belonged to the waist belt. The position of object 13 is uncertain, it might fall in the category of belt-hole guards.

f.1. Based upon the fact that there are four small strap ends, we may probably suppose four side straps. The scattered positions of the small strap ends in the grave (# 14-15, 23 and 27, 31) (small strap end 14-15 was registered right next to the right femur, the small strap end # 23 was found next to the left femur, # 27 was found above the left femur and # 31 at the lower part of the left femur) do not allow us to deduce the number of mounts each of the 4 side straps might have contained originally. It also holds for # 23, whose position does not allow it to be connected to any of the side strap mounts.

f.2. According to their position, side strap mounts can be divided into three categories, and there is one, which differs from all the others. Side strap mounts # 20 and 28, which were found near small strap end # 27, constitute a separate group. Side strap mounts # 12b and 12c, which were found near the above mentioned objects and can be connected to small strap end no. 14 and 15, constitute another group. The function of a bigger group of mounts, containing 7 pieces, is still doubtful, which were found next to the left femur, between the left and the right femurs, in the middle: did they decorate one single side strap? The fact that richly decorated straps similar to this one are known from this region as the components of belts with mounts,³⁰ is not surprising at all. The question arises whether or not the side straps were decorated with the same number of mounts. In our opinion, the position of the side strap mounts in the grave suggests that the second assumption is probable, i. e. side straps were decorated with different numbers of mounts. If we accept this observation, then it can be stated that the two side straps on the right side of the belt were decorated with 2 mounts each, whereas the side straps on the left side seem to have been decorated with 7 and 1 mounts respectively.

³⁰ E. g.: Székkutas-Kápolnadűlő Graves 3, 54, 279, 382, 491 (Nagy 2003, 17, 23, 42, 54, 64-65, 4. kép, 5. kép 1-18, 26. kép, 97-98. kép, 133-134. kép, 174-175. kép); Klárafalva-Vasút Street Grave 11 (Lőrinczy / Szalontai 1996, 278-279, 6. kép, 15. kép).

A completely different belt set was found in Grave 15. As has been mentioned, double belts were often worn in the Avar period. A similar phenomenon is registered in Grave 15, which was unfortunately largely destroyed by the machine driver. However, concerning the components of the collected belt with mounts, it cannot be stated that these were the only components of the burial and no other item belonged to them. Nevertheless, based upon the available finds, it can be stated that two belts were found in this grave, since a small and a big buckle were registered. Therefore based upon the available finds, apart from the two types of belt mounts with animal figures belonging to the main belt (there are 5 pieces of one type and 1 piece of the other) and the shielded buckle with a big oval ring (depicting an animal with its mouth open within the frame) there are still three belt-hole guards known. The four side strap mounts and the two small strap ends are testimony to the belt with mounts having had at least two side straps. As can be seen, it differs from the belt set found in Grave 3 to a great extent.

The position of each piece of the belts with mounts in Grave 20, due to the good weather (like in the case of Grave 15), has been registered precisely. It can be said that the big strap end was found next to the left humerus (15), and three belt mounts without pendants were happened upon above the pelvis. A small strap end was next to the right arm and another belt mount was dislocated from its original position and it was registered near the right femur. Unfortunately, nothing is known about where the buckle, the other mounts and the small strap end were found, but it may be assumed that they were found under the skeleton. So the whole set consisted of small sized mounts with and without pendants, a buckle, a big strap end and two undecorated side straps with a small strap end at the end of each. Judging from the position of the mounts it seems likely that the person in Grave 20 was buried together with the belt³¹.

In Grave 16 an undecorated belt was found, indicated by a trapezoidal-shaped buckle without a pin (a similar one was excavated in Grave 371 in Székkutas-Kápolnadűlő: Nagy 2003, 126. kép 370/9). It is a general type without any chronological significance.

As Grave 17 was disturbed, only a few components of the belt have been preserved: the two belt mounts and the 5 side strap mounts, so as a result of the ransack, only fragments of the belt have been preserved.

E.4.3. Weight of the sets of belts with mounts

The average weight of the belt sets (buckles, mounts, belt-hole guards, small strap ends, side strap mounts, propeller shaped belt mounts) excavated in the three graves (Graves 3, 15 and 20) are almost the same in two cases (Graves 3 and 20), but the average weight in the case of Grave 15 is completely different. It is caused by the fact that among the pieces of the set, the buckle (24 grams), the belt mounts (71 grams) and the big strap end (71 grams) were much heavier than the same items in Graves 3 and 20:

If the three belt sets are compared in terms of the weight of their components, it can be seen that the belt found in Grave 3 contains the biggest number of components, although it is the one that was manufactured by using the smallest amount of bronze (88.5 grams). This is clearly shown by the size difference between the big strap ends: the big strap end in Grave 3 is 8.1 cm just like the big strap end in Grave 20, as

³¹ In the much bigger cemetery in Székkutas, where the existence of a belt was observed in 221 cases, the belt was registered on the pelvis of the skeleton in each case, so the body of the deceased person was girded with the belt (Szalontai 2003, 371).

opposed to them, the big strap end excavated in Grave 15 is much heavier and it is 10.8 cm long. In the case of belt mounts a similar observation can be made: it is not only their weight that shows a major difference, but their size also differs strikingly as the wide, massive mounts with animal figures are much bigger than the small size belt mounts in Grave 3 or the very narrow ones in Grave 20. As opposed to them, the small strap ends belonging to the three sets are almost the same size, but the ones found in Grave 15 are much more massive. It also indicates that in the cemetery in Nădlac one can talk about **three types of belt mounts**.

E.4.4. Sex and age of the users of belt mount sets. Chronological issues concerning the belt mount sets in Nădlac

In the case of four graves with belt sets in Nădlac there are three (Graves 3, 17 and 20) where the sex of the skeleton is known and in each case there is a *maturus* or *senilis* male (30-55 years of age), and it seems that the oldest male was the 45-55 years old male in Grave 20. Similarly, the skeleton of an *adultus* male was found in Grave 16A, where there was an undecorated belt (it is indicated by the existence of the buckle that has been preserved). All this means that if we accept that the Avar youths were girded approximately at the age of 14-16 (Medgyesi 1987-1989, 255) or 20 (Stadler 1985, 98, cited by Medgyesi 1987-1989, 255), then in the case of the people lying in the graves with belts in Nădlac it can be supposed that the men who died at a mature age wore the components of these belts for several decades unless some of them broke down and were replaced with new items in a different artistic style.

As has been mentioned, according to Béla Szőke's observations, the decorating elements of the belt sets can only be considered similar in the widest terms, there is no strictly uniform style in their shapes and decorations (Szőke 2001, 103-122).

In the chronological analysis of the objects we mainly made use of Jozef Zábajník's (Zábajník 1991, 219-321), Csaba Szalontai's (Szalontai 2003, 127-143), Eric Breuer's (Breuer 2005) seriation systems and Gergely Szenthe's analysis (Szenthe 2013a, 303-320)³².

The inventory of Grave 3 with the belt mount set of the 50-year-old man cannot be called uniform by far, so the question may arise as to whether some items were replaced during their lives. Comparing the mounts of the side strap it can clearly be seen that they belong to three different categories, but they have been found in various amounts: there are 10 known pieces of the lily-shaped series of mounts that cannot be classified according to Zábajník's system, there is only one piece of the wider one indicated by # 168 in Zábajník's system and one of the mounts cannot be categorized in this system, so it can be assumed that these two mounts were later attached to the side straps. As can be seen in **fig. 6**, according to Zábajník's system, the bigger portion of the finds in the grave can be dated to Period SSIII (Type 097 – small strap end, 168 – side strap mount, 211 – belt mount, 050 – big strap end), and the objects of types 156 and 171 are dated to the transitional period of SSIII-IV, i. e. mainly to the second half of the 8th century and the first half of the 9th century (Zábajník 1991, Abb. 1). The undecorated propeller shaped belt mounts³³ in the cemetery in Tiszafüred, classified to Type 156 by Zábajník, were dated to the second half of the 8th and the first half of the 9th century. An exact counterpart of the propeller shaped belt mount found in Grave 3 in Nădlac, which was excavated in Grave 513 on the edge of the cemetery, was

³² Unfortunately, Stadler 2005 was not available to us at the moment of writing this article.

³³ On the history of the research of propeller shaped belt mounts and a critical analysis of earlier reconstructions, see Szőke 2008, 197-201. New data in connection with the propeller shaped belt mounts: Balogh 2011, 262-263.

classified to Time Phase 6 of the site (Garam 1995, 412, Abb. 254, Taf. 99/6), similarly to Grave 1249, in which the counterpart of the open-worked belt-hole guard with palmette pattern of Type 171 was found (Garam 1995, 412, Abb. 254, Taf. 167/2-5). The undecorated propeller shaped belt mounts were dated by Erik Breuer to the latest phases of his relative chronology (Horizons 6 and 7)³⁴.

The lily-shaped side strap mount, the one resembling an animal head and a possible belt-hole guard without any parallel are missing from Zábójník's system. The exact counterparts of the side strap mount resembling an animal head are known from Grave 757 in Holiare, Grave 387 in Nové Zámky and Grave 27 in Vizsnek³⁵, and the closely resembling but not completely identical counterparts of the lily-shaped mounts have been documented in Graves 11 and 245 in Cemetery I in Szébény (Garam 1975, fig. 3, Grave 11: 10-14, fig. 19: Grave 245, 28-39, fig. 22, 316, 19-26), and its closer, almost identical counterparts are known from Grave 133 in Leobersdorf (Daim 1987, 265, Taf. 132/2/19-23, Taf. 187/19-23) and Grave 838 in Győr (Börzsönyi 1908, 223; Szőke 2001, 113, 11, kép 6). In each case, the counterparts can be dated to the second half of the 8th century. We could not find any close parallel to the belt-hole guards with ears. Therefore based upon the chronological systems of the important syntheses discussing the age and other parallels, the mount set found in Grave 3 can be dated to the end of the 8th and the early 9th centuries.

Unfortunately, as Grave 15 has been ransacked, the gender and the age of the skeleton lying in the grave is not known, but based upon the great number of parallels it can firmly be stated that it is the grave of a man. In contrast with the mount sets found in Graves 3 and 20, a part of the mounts in Grave 15 represents the so called 'Late Avar animal style' (e.g. Szenthe 2013a, 310). The one representing Zábójník's Type 205 with simple, rectangular belt mount with the griffon decoration of the Late Avar animal style can be dated to Period SSII (after Zábójník). However, it is important that there are some items that cannot be categorized according to Zábójník's system. Here the square-shaped mount with an animal figure decorated with a semi-circle shaped cast pendant must be mentioned, which is identical to the animal figure of the object of Type 205, which is classified to Chronological Group SSII. These were evaluated as the items of a 'Late Antique Horizon' by Gergely Szenthe, and he saw the change of late Avar animal style as its primary characteristic feature (Szenthe 2013a, 314). It is important to note that this pendant is an exact counterpart of those found in Graves D and 3 in Orosháza-Bónum Téglagyár and in Grave 119 in Székkutas-Kápolnadülő (Nagy 2003, 49. kép 8; Juhász 1995, 3, 35, Taf. I/4, XIV/4, XXIV/2, XXIX/3-4). The finds excavated in this grave belong to the 'Geometrical Circular Lobe Style' according to Szenthe's analysis (this corresponds to SSIII in Zábójník's seriation system) (Szenthe 2013a, 314-316, fig. 3; Zábójník 1991, Abb. 1).

The classification of the belt buckle with an animal figure has not been found by us in the chronological system of the Slovakian archaeologist. The buckles with animal figures of the late Avar period were collected by Gábor Kiss, who registered 42 pieces altogether (Kiss 2001, 221-245). In the Carpathian Basin there are hardly any parallels to the buckle of Mediterranean origin³⁶, with a pentagonal body and an oval ring depicting an animal with its head looking back with wide

³⁴ According to E. Breuer, three graves with undecorated propeller belt mount belong to Horizon 6: Üllő I Grave 168, Kisköre Grave 142, Jánoshida Grave 252. Nevertheless, we have to mention that the propeller belt mount in Jánoshida Grave 252 is not a simple propeller belt mount (Zábójník Type 156), but another type of the propeller belt mount (in Zábójník's seriation it is Type 160, which was dated earlier, in SSII-SSIII). However, a simple propeller belt mount which Breuer had omitted to include in the list (Zábójník Type 156) had been known in Grave 1 (Erdélyi 1958, 4, 42, I. táb. 5, XLI. táb. 1). Five graves with simple propeller belt mount belong to Horizon 7: Üllő I Grave 186, Jánoshida Grave 5, Kisköre Graves 66 and 143, Jánoshida Grave 30. Also, we have to mention that Breuer in his analysis (Breuer 2005, Abb. 19, Abb. 55) had omitted the simple propeller belt mount found in Grave 5 (Erdélyi 1958, 5, V. táb. 3).

³⁵ Holiare: Točík 1968a, 111, Table LXXXVI/10; Nové Zámky: Čilinská 1966, Table LIX. Grave 387: 9-13; Vizsnek: Török 1975, fig. 3, Grave 27, 13-16.

³⁶ On the Mediterranean origins of the animal figures in the Avar period, see: Werner 1977, 284-285; 1988, 305-306; Daim 1990, 281-286; Kiss 2001, 224-225; Szenthe 2013b, 195-225.

Graves	Buckle 1	Buckle 2	Belt-hole guards	Belt mounts	Side strap mount	Small strap end	Propeller shaped mount	Large strap end	Sum total
Grave 3	3.5 g	-	6.5 g (4)	12.5 g (5)	19 g (12)	15 g (4)	7 g	25 g	88.5 g (28)
Grave 15	23 g	5 g	15 g (3)	71 g (6)	8 g (4)	16 g (2)	-	71 g	209 g (18)
Grave 20	11 g	-	2 g (1)	26.5 g (12)	-	12 g (2)	-	39 g	90.5 g (17)

Fig. 5. The weight of belt mount sets broken down to the weights of its components

open mouth instead of a beak in its frame (Fancsalszky 2007, 5-54: basic type 3e, Map 9, pl. 13/4-6), some similar objects are known only from Grave/year 1910 in Dunapentele, Dunaujváros-Simonyi dűlő, Grave 32 in Kecel-Határdűlő, and Grave 181 in Edelstal/Nemesvölgy (Kiss 2001, pl. 1/11, 13, pl. 2/6). Among them the depictions of the pentagonal buckles found in Grave 1910 Dunapentele and Grave 32 in Kecel-Határdűlő are the closest to the depiction of the buckle found in Nädlač, which was classified by Gábor Kiss into SPAI³⁷, and it is equivalent to SSI according to Zábójník's system, meaning that it can be dated to a very early period, the first quarter of the 8th century. The chronology of this type of buckles may become interesting and questionable again due to the finds excavated in Nädlač as only few such buckles have been found and according to Kiss, they were not in the rage in the Carpathian Basin for so long³⁸. It belongs to the chronological group called 'Late Antique Horizon' by Szenthe but they also occur in later periods (e. g. together with belt mounts with pendants) like the small sized side strap mounts resembling animal heads in Grave 15 (4 pieces in the Nädlač grave) (Szenthe 2013a, fig. 3). An animal head looking back (a dog's head) on a buckle that is much more schematic than the animal figure found in Nädlač has been registered in Grave 119 in Székkutas-Kápolnadűlő, which was dated by Csaba Szalontai to the 4th chronological phase of the belts with mounts in the cemetery (it corresponds to the 'Geometrical Circular Lobe Style' in Szenthe's system or to Zábójník's SSI phase) (Szalontai 2003, 400, 4 táblázat).

According to Zábójník's system, some of the finds in the grave can be classified to Period SSI, as is indicated by the type of big strap end 057. Eric Breuer also has dated it as late: in the 6th and 7th Horizon of his chronological system³⁹. However, the rest of the finds in the grave can be sorted out to a much wider time period. The small strap end # 113 dates from the transitional Period SSI-IV (Zábójník 1991, Abb. 1). Also the analogies of the objects from Nädlač can be found in the last two horizons of Breuer's system⁴⁰.

The rough belt-hole guards requiring only superficial skills are also from a later period and can be classified into the category of 'Geometrical Circular Lobe Style' ('*Kreislappenrankenstil*') (see the description of the style, Szenthe 2013a, 314, 316). Concerning their designs, the three belt-hole guards can be categorized into two groups, as can be seen in our description, since the open-works are not symmetrical on the artefacts and the signs of a secondary work on one of the items testify that they tried to reconstruct/repair the failed drawing of the figure in a primitive style, the result of which is far from being amaz-

³⁷ 'Spätawarisch I' corresponds to SSI in Zábójník's system and Horizon 5 in Breuer's system (Daim 1987, Abb. 28; Breuer 2005, Abb. 19, Abb. 45).

³⁸ 'A griffes övcsatok használata azonban a jelek szerint nem tartott soká, hiszen kiszorították őket az indás övcsatok, a griffek ábrázolása pedig leginkább az öv veretekre szorult vissza' ('However, it seems that the buckles with griffins were not used for a long time, as they were superseded by the buckles with tendril ornamentation and the depiction of griffins was reduced to belt mounts') (Kiss 2001, 225).

³⁹ Horizon 6: Üllő I Grave 196; Horizon 7: Üllő Graves 187 and 186 (Breuer 2005, Abb. 51, Abb. 55).

⁴⁰ Horizon 6: Üllő I Graves 168, 186, 196, P?; Horizon 7: Üllő I Grave 186, Jánoshida Grave 3, Kisköre Grave 146 (Breuer 2005, Abb. 51, Abb. 55).

Graves	Material culture	Age
Grave 3		30-50 years
Grave 15		?
Grave 17		33-42 years
Grave 20		49-50 years

<i>Zábojník's seriation</i>
<i>Z. 211 – number of type</i>

Fig. 6. The dating of the components of the graves with belt sets in Nädlac according to J. Zábojník's frequency seriation

ing. Another observation is that the open-works on the back side of the object show that the imprinting pattern was faulty, meaning that it is a unique item. Therefore the other two items are likely to be of higher quality in terms of their technique, but it goes to show that in the case of the belt sets we cannot talk about masters with full skills of their trade. Compared to the other items of the belt set with animal figures, it can be stated that the owner of the belt must have acquired or inherited the particular items of the set at different time periods. Based upon the evaluation of the finds excavated in the grave and if one accepts the findings of the typo-chronological and art historical analyses, it can be stated that the finds excavated in the burial can be classified into three chronological and stylistic categories. Taking Zábojník's statistical analysis as our starting point, the buckle depicting an animal can be classified to SSII and SSIII, SSIII-IV, but also to SSI, but if we rely on Szenthe's art historical findings, it can be categorized to the groups of the 'Late Avar Anymal Style', 'Late Antique Horizon' and 'Geometrical Circular Lobe Style', which means that the belt mounts classified into these three different chronological and stylistic categories are mixed in Grave 15 in Nädlac.

The belt-hole guard mounts of a 33-42-year-old man in Grave 17, which have not been analysed so far, fall in the category of belt decorations with lilies⁴¹ and they date from the end of the late Avar period. Although it is not completely identical to Type SSIV 176 in Zábojník's

⁴¹ Although we cannot categorize it exactly, as Szalontai did not classify belt-hole guards, it seems to belong to ornamental type II/3 created by him (the lower one of the pair of lilies is drawn upwards) (Szalontai 1995, 128, table II. 3). According to Szalontai, one centre of their occurrence is around Szeged and Szentés, which is closely connected to the region bordered by the Mureş/Maros, Criş/Körös, Tisa/Tisza and the Carpathians (Szalontai 1995, 129).

system, it can be classified there (Zábojník 1991, 248, Abb. 1, # 176), which is not refuted by Szenthe's chronological scheme either ('Final Period of the late Avar Ornamental Art') (Szenthe 2013a, fig. 3). In our opinion, the (probably) narrow side strap mounts in this grave should be categorized into the class of lily-shaped belt decorations, which are not included in Zábojník's system. Perhaps, it is Type II6A1.1/26 in Szenthe's ornamentation typology that shows the closest resemblance to the ornamentation of the cast object (Szenthe 2012a, 8. kép /26) and it can be dated to the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century, which is not changed by the other find excavated in this grave, which can be dated with more certainty.

Among the graves containing belt mount sets, the 45-55-year-old man resting in Grave 20 is the oldest, and from a chronological point of view this grave contains a belt set similarly varied to the one in Grave 15. According to Zábojník's system, the ornamentations categorized to Periods SSII (Type 536 – one-plated small strap end), SSIII (Type 052 – big strap end), SSIII-IV (Type 132 – buckle, Type 234 – small sized belt mount with ornamented surface with pendant) and SSIV (Type 172 – belt-hole guard with ornamentation, punched background and engraved flower pattern) belong to this set. The belt-hole guard with punched background and engraved flower pattern is dated to the last phase of the late Avar period (for example Garam 1995, 412-420; Breuer 2005, Abb. 55, Horizon 7; Szenthe 2013a, fig. 3), which is supported by the frequency seriation of the findings (e. g. Székkutas-Kápolnadúló: Szalontai 2003, table 4, # 33: Graves 3, 54 and 416). This dating is supported by the small sized belt mounts with ornamented and unornamented surface and with pendants (and those without pendants), which are dated to the last period of late Avar goldsmithery both by the frequency seriation carried out by Szalontai in the cemetery in Székkutas-Kápolnadúló (Szalontai 2003, table 4, # 32, Graves 3, 54, 91 and 416), and by Breuer's and Szenthe's analyses (Breuer 2005, Abb. 55: Horizont 7; Szenthe 2013a, fig. 3). These objects dating from a later period also date Grave 20 to a later time, perhaps the first third of the 9th century.

If one accepts Zábojník's seriation system and Szenthe's chronology together with it, then in absolute chronology the objects from Nádlač were manufactured approximately between 720 and 825. From a chronological point of view it is important that the belt-hole guard with punched background dates the cemetery section in Nádlač to the latest phase of the late Avar period. We tried to illustrate this broken down to single graves at **fig. 6**.

So according to Zábojník's frequency seriation system (Szenthe's chronology is similar to this) in Graves 15 and 20 the finds dating from Periods SSIII and SSIV were excavated together with the objects bearing the signs of a Mediterranean cultural effect dating from Period SSI/SSII⁴². A number of doubts and questions arise in connection with this and some observations are to be made: 1. The use of jewellery and clothes are/were regulated by individual social-psychological attitudes, therefore only general clothing tendencies and fashions can be observed based upon the frequency seriation, which must not be generalized mechanically and it definitely holds for the finds excavated in the grave in the cemetery section in Nádlač too⁴³; 2. In the case of the pools of items with mixed statistical background, the question may

⁴² Various and closely related counterparts of the components of the belt mount sets are known from the different regions of the Balkans, which emphasizes the influence of this cultural circle on the culture of the late Avar era. On their evaluation, see: Daim 1990, 273-303; Rashev 2008, tab. LXV-LXXI; Szenthe 2013a, 303-320.

⁴³ From a different point of view, but a similar criticism of the chronological systems based upon frequency seriations was expressed by Miklós Béla Szőke (Szőke 2001, 105).

arise whether it is possible for the products of the goldsmith centres to spread slowly and to be used for a longer time in the peripheries of the late Avar settlement area?; 3. Can the chronological discrepancies between the belt mounts mean that the people resting in the graves could have replaced some of the decorations in their lives or with the change of fashion they might have had new ones attached to their belts? This, at the same time, would indicate their poor economic circumstances or lower social status.

To sum up the above mentioned issues: the statistically/chronologically mixed finds excavated in the Nădlac burials provide possibilities for several interpretations. As has already been indicated by many, statistical horizons have 'cores' (i. e. in the graves in a particular cemetery only the items of the same artistic circle appear), and they follow one another at intervals of 20-40 years, to put it simply, there were big changes in the fashion at those intervals. However, the opposite of this phenomenon can be observed in Nădlac, therefore we can count with three possible interpretations, which have the advantage that they do not exclude one another: 1. one assumption is that the Nădlac micro-region is outside the areas of goldsmithery supposed so far⁴⁴, so it must be considered peripheral territory⁴⁵, however, its geographical location seems to contradict this assumption since our excavation site is situated not far, approximately 2 km, from the River Mureş/Maros (which must have been an important trading route); 2. It was not the region that was peripheral, but the community whose remains have been excavated near Bypass 7M had a lower social status and the artistic and chronological heterogeneity of the sets can be explained by this; 3. as the cemetery section in Nădlac is part of a much bigger cemetery, as a working hypothesis we may ask the question whether wearing artistically and chronologically heterogeneous garment sets was a general tendency at the end of the late Avar period.

Nevertheless, our analysis has made it quite clear that the sets in these graves can be dated to the end of the late Avar period.

E.5. Knives (pl. 9/20, pl. 11/2, pl. 12/8a-b)

One of the most frequently found items in late Avar cemeteries which can be considered part of the garment is the small sized iron knife with narrow blade. In the 11 graves in the cemetery section in Nădlac, the fragments of approximately 10-cm-long iron knives with 1.7-1.8 wide blades have only been registered in three cases (Graves 15, 16A and 17).

Unfortunately nothing is known about their positions (see the descriptions), but all of them were found in male graves. According to Péter Tomka, who researched the occurrences of iron knives in the graves, these knives have mostly been found to the right of the male skeletons and are in close connection with the belts (Tomka 1972, 68), which was refined by Lívia Bende in the case of the male graves excavated in Székkutas-Kápolnadűlő (Bende 2003a, 315).

The amount of knives in the cemetery section in Nădlac shows considerable discrepancies with the percentages of the knives in the cemeteries in the Little Plain (the north-western part of present day Hungary and the south-eastern part of present day Slovakia) as it is around 30-50% in the well documented cemeteries. For instance in the late Avar cemetery in Székkutas-Kápolnadűlő, which is a site not far

⁴⁴ See for example the workshop circles of Gábor Fancsalszky and Peter Stadler (Fancsalszky 2007, 117-118, Map 30; Stadler 1990, 337, Map 4).

⁴⁵ It can be supposed both in terms of geography and society as the different fashion phenomena spread from the political centres towards the political and geographical peripheries. It was already Gabriel Tarde who observed that fashion always starts from the centre of a society moving towards its periphery (both socially and geographically) (Tarde 1902, 13-15).

from Nădlac, their percentage is only 26%⁴⁶. The percentage of graves with knives in Nădlac is closer to this latter one, although in the case of this cemetery section statistics is insignificant (3 out of 11, that is 27.27%).

E.6. Pottery (pl. 14/1)

In the cemetery section in Nădlac, there are two graves in which ceramics have been found, Grave 3 and Grave 20. From the aspect of burial customs it is important to note that the fragments of pottery were found behind the skull on the right side in both cases (only a fragment of the clay pot in Grave 3 has been preserved). It is also possible, and it is supported by the anthropological analyses, that there are *mature* males lying in these two graves with belt sets. Based upon the badly preserved fragments it can be stated that in Grave 3 the fragments of a handmade orange-red pot have been preserved in really bad quality. Only the shards of the rim of the pot have been preserved in the grave, therefore its form and function cannot be defined.

A more interesting and complicated question is raised by the brick red fragments found behind the skull in Grave 20, which was probably a bottle. Unfortunately, it cannot be classified typologically because mostly the lower part of the pot has been preserved, mainly its bottom, however it can be observed that the brick red item was wheel-thrown coarse pottery. The occurrence of the wheel-thrown coarse pottery cremated from brick colour paste is hardly documented from the late Avar era, however, they appear now and then until the mid-eighth century (from its first half). In the inventory drawn up by Tivadar Vida such pottery is only known from Graves 110 in Homokmégy-Halom, Grave 25 in Kecel, and Grave 23 in Kiskőrös-Pohibuj (Vida 1999, 86, table 30/3, table 31/2-3). Nădlac is 130 km away from these three sites, so we cannot talk about a great distance. As opposed to Vida's dating, the rest of the finds in the grave, mainly the belt mounts, make it probable that the possible clay bottle in Nădlac can be dated to the beginning of the ninth century. At the same time, it has to be noted that wheel-throwing was known in the 8th century (and probably in the second half of it) in the area of the Rivers Tisa/Tisza, Mureş/Maros and Criş/Körös, for instance a wheel-thrown coarse pot was found in Grave 3 in Hódmezővásárhely-Cinkus (Lőrinczy / Szalontai 1996, 274, 10., 11. kép). As has been proved by the analysis of the belts with mounts, the narrow chronological frames cannot always be applied and in our opinion the cemetery section in Nădlac is a good example of this.

F. CONCLUSIONS

F.1. Chronology of the cemetery section in Nădlac (fig. 7)

As has been mentioned, finds of various categories and types have been excavated in eight of the 11 graves (not including the horse burial). Among them the earring found in Grave 1 and the belts with mounts found in Graves 3, 15, 17 and 20 are significant concerning chronological dating⁴⁷. The ledge registered in Grave 19 became popular as a burial custom in the second half of the 8th century.

The earthenware found in Grave 20, which was dated to an earlier period in the scientific literature, can be dated to a later time according to the surrounding finds. The earring, based upon better contexts, can be dated to the second half of the 8th century and the hair-ring from

⁴⁶ Little Plain: Tomka 1972, 68; Székutas-Kápolnadúló: Bende 2003a, 315.

⁴⁷ Péter Medgyesi draws our attention to the problem of double dating (the manufacturing of the objects and their burial), but in this case we are interested in the date when these objects were buried (Medgyesi 1987-1989, 253-268).

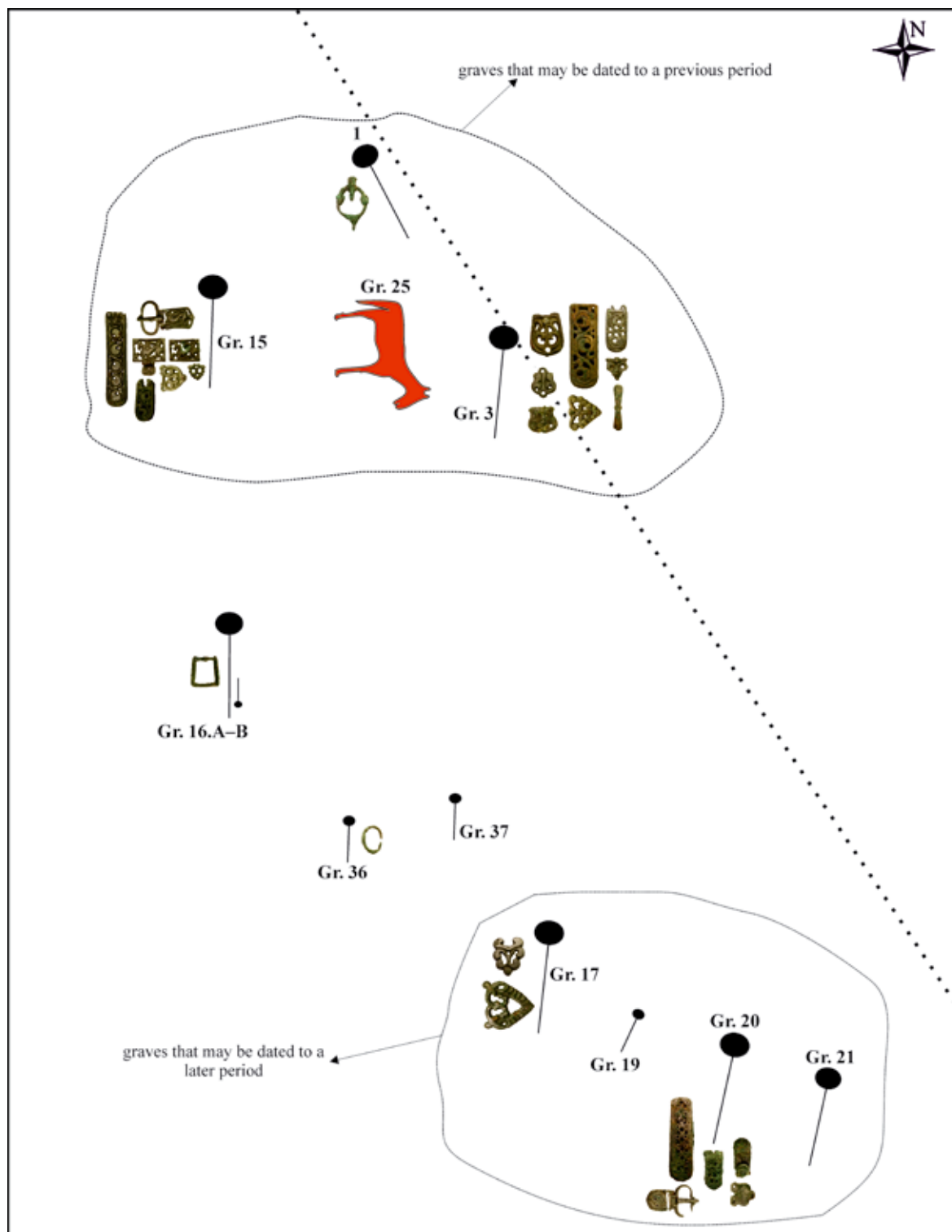


Fig. 7. The relative chronology of the graves in the cemetery section in Nădlac

Grave 36 can be dated to the 8th century or probably to the early 9th century. According to the analysis above, the components of the belts with mounts can be dated to the end of the late Avar era, which corresponds to the late 8th or early 9th century. The metallurgical techniques of punching and engraving became popular in the Carpathian Basin towards the end of the 8th century, therefore it is important evidence for dating Grave 20 to the first third of the 9th century. The classifica-

tion of the belt mount sets seems to show that Grave 15 might have been the earliest burial followed by Grave 3, on the other hand, Graves 17 and 20 date from a later period, i. e. the early 9th century.

From a topographic point of view it can be stated that the northern graves (Graves 3, 15 and 25) constitute the earlier part of the cemetery whereas those in the southern section (Graves 17, 19, 20 and 21) were the latest burials. Grave 20, which was excavated in the southern part of the cemetery, is of high importance in this aspect as it can be dated to the first third of the 9th century.

Based upon all these archaeological data and phenomena, in our opinion the bigger part of the graves in this cemetery section was dug at the turn of 8/9th century and Grave 20 was dug in the first third of the 9th century, as is indicated by the finds in it. It can firmly be stated that some of the finds were the products of the latest metallurgical horizon (e. g. the punched belt-hole guard mount and the belt mounts with pendants), so some of the types found here can be connected to the last horizon, which is very important concerning the dating. Maybe it is possible to date this cemetery section to the second third of the 9th century, but relying only on the data gleaned from this cemetery section such a big question cannot be answered by archaeological means. It may be interesting to remember József Szentpéteri's observation on why the number of sites decreased dramatically (from 1270 sites to 279 sites⁴⁸) at the end of the late Avar era in the whole Carpathian Basin?⁴⁹ Is it not possible that it is the dating (or rather the wrong dating) of the sites, the historical interpretation of the archaeological finds and the effect of mixed argumentation that contribute to this, instead of the catastrophic wars and pandemics? Or was there a 9th century migration mainly towards the southern (Bugarski et al. 2013, 300-301), western and northern parts of the Carpathian Basin, and can the concentration of sites on the map be interpreted historically and sociologically by this?⁵⁰ One thing can be stated for certain, the written records mention a considerable 'Avar' population in the 9th century (Olajos 2012a, 129-139; 2012b, 141-150; Szabados 2012, 219-235)⁵¹.

F.2. The Avar age necropolis and the populations in the area around the Rivers Mureș/Maros, Criș/Körös, Tisa/Tisza and the Nădlac cemetery section (pl. 24)

If the issue of 'ethnic' identity is called 'hot potato' by some sociologists (who can study the manifestations of this horizontal identity in real life) (Malešević 2004, 1), the judgement of this issue is obviously even more problematic in the case of archaeology. The possibilities to identify ethnic identities in the distant past are limited and what we are interested in, namely their connection with the archaeological sources and the possibility to detect them, are even more relative⁵². This problem is more characteristic of the archaeology of the late Avar era. As a result of the phenomena which could be called the Avar cultural 'melting pot' that took place first of all in the central area of the Avar Khaganate, it is an almost general stereotype to talk about the cultural homogeneity of the late Avar period in the Great Plains and the eastern part of the Transdanubian region. However, in the case of the peripheral areas of the Carpathian Basin the question of 'ethnicity' (Avars, Slavs) plays an important role in the scientific discussion (Čilinská 1966; Horedt 1986, 59-72; Harhoiu 2001, 139-163; Stanciu 2013, 323-370;

⁴⁸ This information is from 2002, and it has changed since then (Szentpéteri 2006, fig. 1-2; 2008, Abb. 1-2).

⁴⁹ 'Neither the archaeological finds, nor the written historical sources (the internal problems of the Avar state, temporary internal fights and its decline towards the end) justify the dramatic decline in the number of sites that took place from the beginning of the 7th century to the end of this century and after the turn of the 8th/9th century' (Szentpéteri 2006, 460, 1-2. kép; 2008, Abb. 1-2).

⁵⁰ Szentpéteri 2006. Such a conclusion can be drawn based upon his maps 9/1a-9/1b.

⁵¹ Peter Stadler worked out a chronological system connected to 38 samples of ¹⁴C analysis, doing the measurements himself (Stadler 2008, fig. 9-10, table 1). However, contrary to Stadler's chronological system, Péter Ricz and Csaba Szalontai dated the abandonment of some cemeteries (e. g. Stara Moravica/Moravica-Kopplaló, Horgoš/Horgos-Budzsák, Székkutas-Kápolnadűlő) to the middle of the 9th century (Ricz 1993, 176-177; Szalontai 2003, 399-400).

⁵² On the problem of 'ethnicity' in the Early Middle Ages, see for example: Geary 1983, 15-26; Brather 2002, 152-156; Curta 2006, 197-204; 2007, 159-185; Niculescu 2011, 16-18.

Točík 1968a; 1968b; Zábajník 2004). The investigation into the settlement area of the different ethnic groups or populations⁵³ so characteristic of the literature of the early and the late Avar age is completely unknown in the literature of the late Avar era, and probably it can be explained by the abovementioned stereotype of 'cultural homogeneity' concerning the late Avar era in the Great Plains and the eastern part of the Transdanubian region⁵⁴. In the area surrounded by the rivers Mureş/Maros, Tisa/Tisza and Criş/Körös, where Nădlac is situated, in the early Avar era a steppe people with eastern European origins⁵⁵ has been identified, whose burial customs mostly disappeared by the end of the 7th century (Bende 2005, 368-369).

According to several big, well-excavated cemeteries near the Mureş/Maros, Criş/Körös and Tisa/Tisza, the orientations of the graves show considerable discrepancies compared to the orientations in the early Avar period but other burial customs can be connected to the early Avar customs in the region east of the Tisa/Tisza (Bende 2005, 369). The question arises whether it can be generalized in the whole territory of the Khaganate (making it a macro-regional issue). However, it can be stated that the opening of new burial sites in the late Avar period contradicts the possibility of a continuing population. It begs the question why. In archaeology it is often explained, often mechanically, by the appearance of a new people. However, in our opinion, it is a generalisation and each case should be investigated separately. Lívia Bende arrived at the conclusion that besides the people of the earlier age, new people appeared in the north-western (cemeteries near Szentes) and western (Mártély) parts of the area in the late Avar period as a result of a migration coming from other parts of the Khaganate (Bende 2005, 370). According to Bende's interpretation, in the late Avar age there were two peoples with different origins settling down in the area between the Mureş/Maros, the Tisa/Tisza and the Criş/Körös (one is the people of the early Avar age and the other is the newcomers). All this is not impossible from a methodological point of view, as it has already been mentioned that some mobility of the people with different intensity can be observed in any historical period, but the question arises why there is no cemetery in the area investigated by us dating back to the early Avar era, but they were started to be used from the middle Avar era on. Some micro-regional migration may be a possible explanation, meaning that in the second half of the Avar period the regions farther from the big river valleys became populated to a greater extent and this holds for the area between the Mureş/Maros, the Tisa/Tisza and the Criş/Körös.

If one accepts Bende's classification, the cemetery section in Nădlac shows the closest resemblance to the customs of the peoples of the early Avar era. Moreover, we should bear in mind that their funerary customs connected to their community/family identity cannot and should not be interpreted in connection with 'political' identities.

Certainly, the lives, the identity and the self-identification with a political community of those who used to live in the area of present day Nădlac were influenced by these factors, the political participants through their technical possibilities, but for them their micro- and macro-community traditions and their values and traditions at a micro-community level coming from their way of life might have been much more important. The (micro-)community level identities of the

⁵³ On its criticism, see: Bálint 2013, 34-35. From a methodological point of view, with archaeological data: Gáll / Romát 2015, note 13.

⁵⁴ The funerary customs of the late and middle Avar eras in the micro-region of the Mureş/Maros, the Tisa/Tisza and the Criş/Körös have been analysed by Bende more or less from this point of view if not exactly: Bende 2005.

⁵⁵ E.g. 'the settlement area of the steppe people of Eastern-European origins east of the River Tisza' (Lőrinczy 1998, 343).

cemetery section in Nădlac should be interpreted along these lines.

F.3. Some thoughts concerning the way of life of the community in Nădlac

The micro-community in Nădlac as a **primary group** (Cooley 1909, 23) can be described by the direct relations and cooperation of its members. This is in close connection with the community's way of life and their organisation at a micro-community level. If we want to deal with a complicated issue based upon the data gained from a cemetery (as the settlement of the cemetery is unknown), i. e. to gain more information on the way of life of the people in the cemetery and if the majority of the methods of natural sciences is not at our disposal, we can turn to two sources of data:

- a. the anthropological analyses of the skeletons (their injuries and deformations etc.)
- b. the archaeozoological identification and analysis of the offerings and food furnishings placed in the grave as part of the burial customs.

Relying on the analyses of these two sources, it can be stated that in the case of the individuals in the cemetery section in Nădlac (Graves 16, 17 and 20) injuries of the connections of the ligaments and muscles can be observed, which were due to the demanding agricultural work done daily. The pathological deformations of the spine (osteoarthritis and Schmorl's node) can be observed in the case of Graves 3, 16, 17 and 20, which also testify the hard physical strain during their life. Similarly, the remains of illnesses caused by malnutrition can be observed on the skulls found in Graves 3 and 20. In the case of the adult males in Graves 16A and 20 the deformations caused by riding can be seen (for more details, see the anthropological analysis).

If all these are compared with the animal sacrifices and food offerings found in the graves, it comes to light that the community in Nădlac kept big and small livestock and grew corn (although this latter is not a hundred percent sure), which can be explained by the changed way of life in this period⁵⁶. The animal sacrifices and food offerings placed in the graves in Nădlac reveal a wide range of animals including horses, cattle, sheep, goats and geese, which shows that the people here bred animals on a big scale. These were the economic realities that governed their way of life and therefore their system of values and identification at a micro-community level.

F.4. The necropolis in Nădlac and data on the landscape of this microregion from the late Avar age (pl. 1-2)

Until 2013 two cemeteries from the late Avar period have been excavated near Nădlac, which is situated north of the lower reaches of the River Mureș/Maros, namely Magyarcsanád-Belezi dűlő (4 graves) and Apátfalva-Vámház (Customs Office) (8 graves) (Lőrinczy / Szalontai 1993, 287; 1996, 271-272, 1. kép, 7. kép, 8. kép 1-11; Bende 2005, 12-13, 31). It has to be emphasized that practically no excavations have been carried out on the Romanian side (we do not even know of field inspections) and this can explain the lack of finds. However, the rescue excavations in connection with the road works in 2013 shed light on a fact that must have become quite clear for those who knew the era well: in the neighbourhood of the present day town of Nădlac the cemeteries of the settlement system of the late Avar period were

⁵⁶ Szőke 2003, 308-312. In Hódmezővásárhely-Kopáncs II/11, which is a site not far from Nădlac, the analyses have shown that the people used their surrounding area in a complex way. The big number of weed species together with the corn proves that there was mixed agriculture besides animal breeding. The archaeological, paleovegetation and archaeobotanical data seem to show that the inhabitants of the settlement used the facilities provided by the mosaic-like area in a complex way (Pető et al. 2012, 181-194).

found in such a big number which the experts had not expected before. Two cemetery sections (3M-S, 3M-N) and probably a complete cemetery (9M) in the early Avar age were found north of the cemetery called 7M, which is east of the town, north of the end of the oxbow called Blezanyica. The excavations have revealed that in the case of 3M we can see the two parts of the same cemetery, and based upon the finds it can be dated from the middle Avar period, but as can be seen in the following picture, it also had a late Avar phase.

If we observe the distribution of these sites on the map, then the careful conclusion can be drawn that the network of settlements near Nädlac in the late Avar era must have been denser along the hydrological system dominantly consisting of streams. However, this observation of ours should be supported or refuted by further excavations. On the other hand, it can be supposed that on the right side of the River Mureş/Maros, from Arad to Szeged, we can count with a dense late Avar settlement network (see pl. 24).

F.5. The periphery of the centre? The micro-region of Nädlac and the settlement network in the late Avar period

The Avar Khaganate, a 'non-European' power (Pohl 2003, 571), in the Carpathian Basin was established as a result of the conflicts in the early Middle Ages⁵⁷. The Avar power integrated the communities in the Carpathian Basin within a few decades and in a century they created a power that unified the various micro-regions of the Carpathian Basin into one power structure for the first time in history (Vida 2009, 118), and what was more important, they established a symbiosis of the Germanic, Slavonic and steppe people, or in the first phase that of their elites, through the Byzantine gold coming into the Khaganate. Therefore the early history of the Avar power (certainly from the conquerors' point of view) was a success story of conquest, structural integration, acculturation and assimilation processes⁵⁸ resulting in the establishment of the European Avar entity, 'Avaria'.

It can be stated that the macroregion of the Carpathian Basin can be considered to be under the control of the Avar Khaganate in the 7th and 8th centuries. Unfortunately, the research of the late Avar period is far from being able to reconstruct an even relative settlement system of the people of the late Khaganate or the location of the power centres in close connection with them, based upon the cemeteries. As has been mentioned, this situation can be the result of a given research concept, because it was focused on the great amount of mounted sets, their chronological analysis and the investigation of their cultural relationships. In our opinion, it would be important to start classifying the graves and in the next step the cemeteries of the late Avar era, ranging from the funerary customs to the finds in the near future, in every micro-region because in our view, the currently prevailing stereotype, i. e. in the late Avar era there was a cultural homogeneity, is not real. Perhaps, in the first step the cemeteries containing big and complex weapon sets should be mapped, which might help us locate the power centres of the late Avar period. In this respect an important step was taken by Peter Stadler and Gábor Fancsalszky who mapped the so-called 'workshop circles'⁵⁹ (Stadler 1990, 337, Map 4; Fancsalszky 2007, 117-118, Map 30), and whose works can serve as models for new researches in terms of their meth-

⁵⁷ Tivadar Vida's comment expresses this process appropriately: *'az avar elit a VII. században hatalmas integrációs erővel kovácsolta egybe a Kárpát-medence népeit és biztosította az avarság európai nagyhatalmi pozícióját'* (the Avar elite forged the populations of the Carpathian Basin into a unit with a huge integrating force in the 7th century, ensuring the position of the Avars as a leading power') (Vida 2009, 118).

⁵⁸ Daim 2003, 463-465, 473, 516-524. At the same time one can see completely different archaeological aspects of the various sociological processes in the early Avar age in each region ranging from the Transdanubian region to the Transylvanian Basin. For example: Kiss 1996; 2001; Vida 2011, 397-455 (Transdanubia); Bálint 1995; Balogh 2013 (the territory between the Danube and the Tisza/Tisa); Lőrinczy 1998, 343-372 (region of the Tisa); Gáll 2014, 295-324 (Transylvanian Basin). To sum it up: Bálint 2013.

⁵⁹ Gergely Szenthe has other opinion, accordingly the concept of 'workshops' have not spatial relevance (Szenthe 2012b, 57-75).

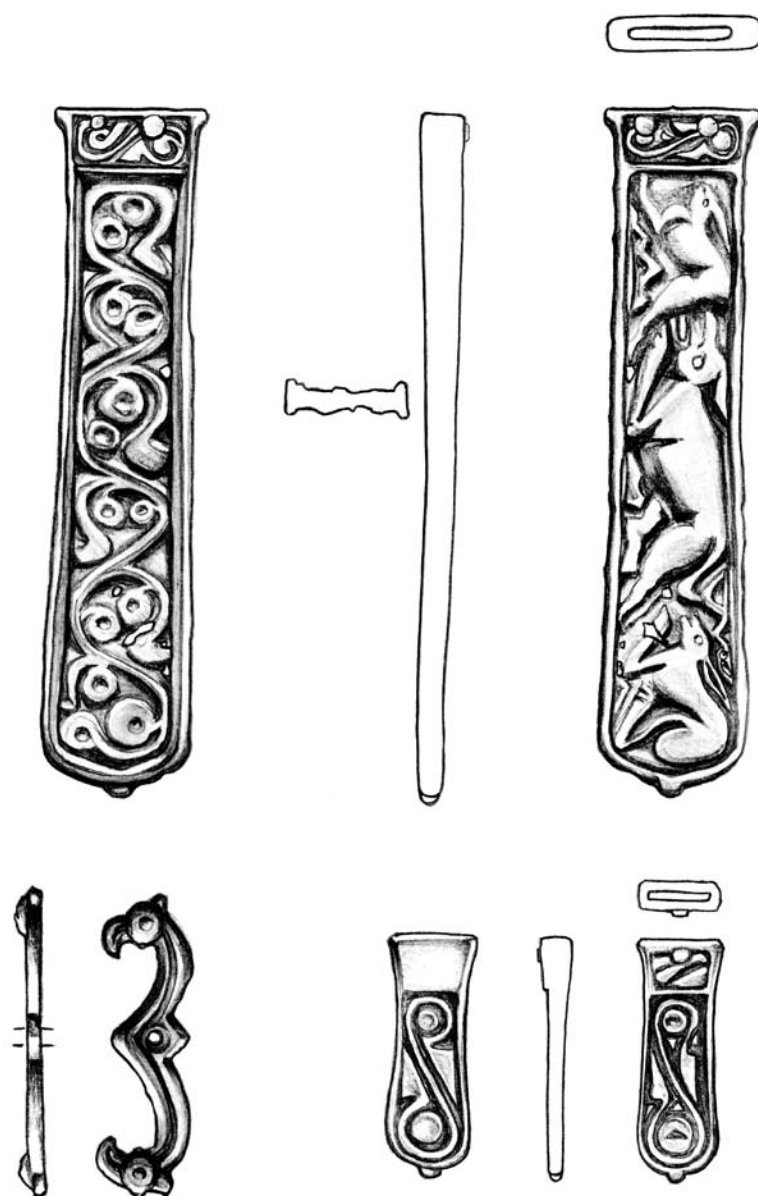


Fig. 8. The components of the belt mount sets found in Grave 165 in Nădlac 3M-S

odology. One thing is certain, namely that under no circumstances can the 'settlement area' be identified automatically with the concept of the 'regions controlled by the Avar power structure', therefore in connection with the excavation site in Nădlac we held it important to give an outline of the geographical, geopolitical, economic and cultural background, which characterized the Carpathian Basin in the second half of the 8th and the first third of the 9th centuries, together with a hypothetical location of the centres of the Khaganate and the workshop circles⁶⁰:

In the **fig. 9**, one can see that the location of the people in our site falls within the boundaries of the settlement area of the late Avar age, but it is outside the hypothetic workshop circles and far from the late Avar centre of the Khaganate, which must have been somewhere between the Danube and the Tisa/Tisza. It is beyond the scope of this study, but it should be highlighted by all means that in the future it is the central areas of the Avar political-military structure that should be researched and defined as the geographical localization of these hypothetical centers.

⁶⁰ Szentpéteri 1993, 1. térkép; 2013, 4. kép; Szőke 2014b, fig. 1; Szentpéteri 2015, fig. 4. In accordance with Szentpéteri, the latest syntheses place the centre of the Khaganate in the area between the Danube and the Tisa/Tisza (*Regia Avarorum Hring*): Bálint 1995, 312-315; Bóna 1988, 451-453; Kiss 1988, 85; Pohl 1988, 306-308; Szádeczky-Kardoss 1998, 286-297; Wolfram 1987, 258-259. According to Fancsalszky, who drew his conclusions based upon the 'workshop circles' identified by him, the centre of the Khaganate was where the River Criș/Körös emptied in the Tisa/Tisza, the centre of the *tudun* was near the northern reaches of the Danube and the third big man of the Avar khaganate, the *juggurus*, had his centre near the upper reaches of the River Tisa/Tisza (Fancsalszky 2007, 117).

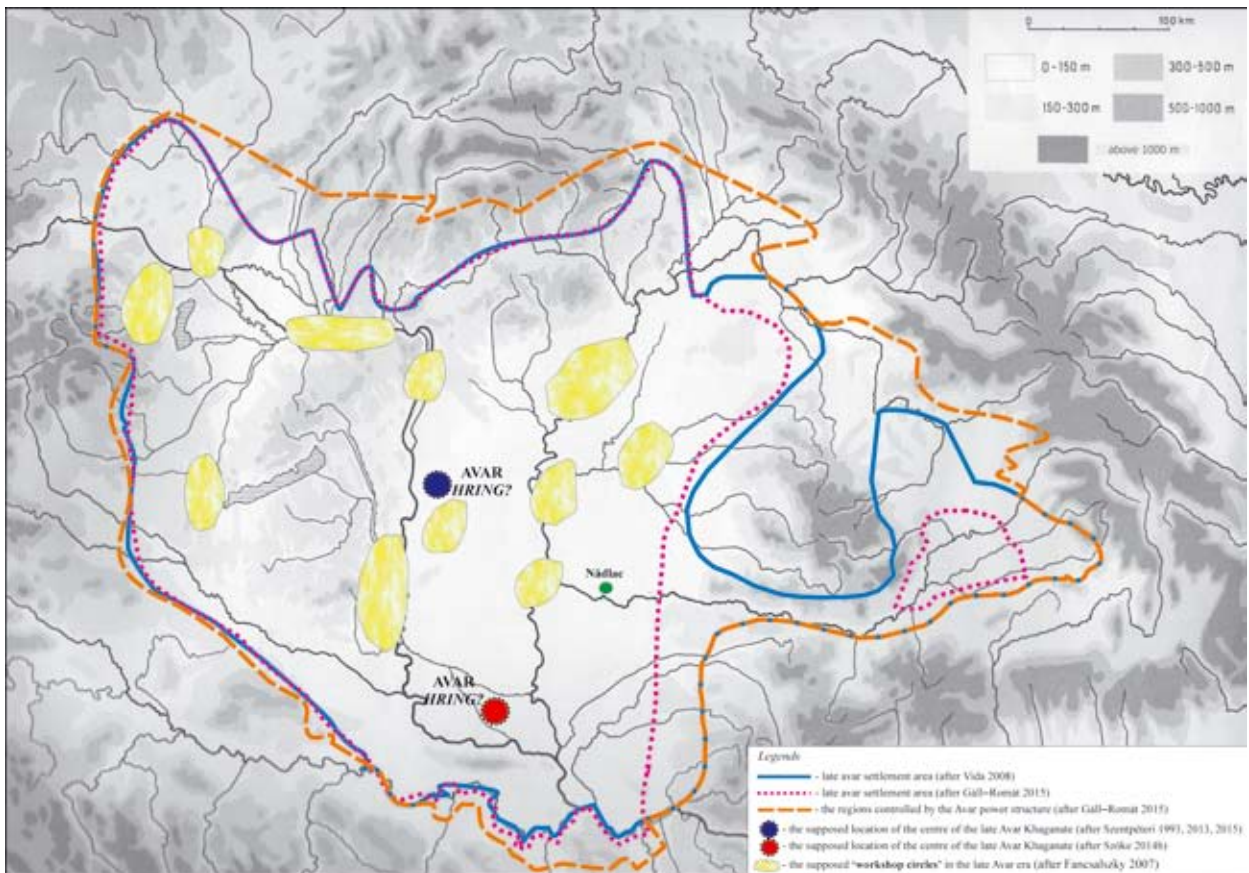


Fig. 9. The Carpathian Basin in the late Avar era: the 'Avar settlement area' and 'the areas under influence' controlled by the late Avar power structure

So it can be stated that in the case of Cemetery 7M (and the other two or three cemeteries) we cannot suppose the population of the core region in the late Avar era. According to the clusters of late Avar sites and the supposed location of the hypothetical 'workshop circles', it is clear that the cemetery researched by us and its micro-region is outside that territory. It seems to be supported by the heterogeneity of the belt sets, which show that the members of this community had more difficulty obtaining the various ornaments. The anthropological deformations indicating hard physical work (see the anthropological analysis later) also seem to underpin this 'peripheral' status. Its location seems to show clearly that this micro-region and within this the cemetery of this animal breeding and agricultural pagan people is on the periphery of the power centre(s) of the Great Plain. They were the common people of the late Avar Khaganate in the eastern region of the Great Plain. We can talk about the cemetery of a settlement from the late Avar period, which was on the periphery, under the Khagan or some other Avar chief or big men (*tudun, iugurus*⁶¹).

⁶¹ On the Avar dignity names, see Ligeti 1986, 145-149.

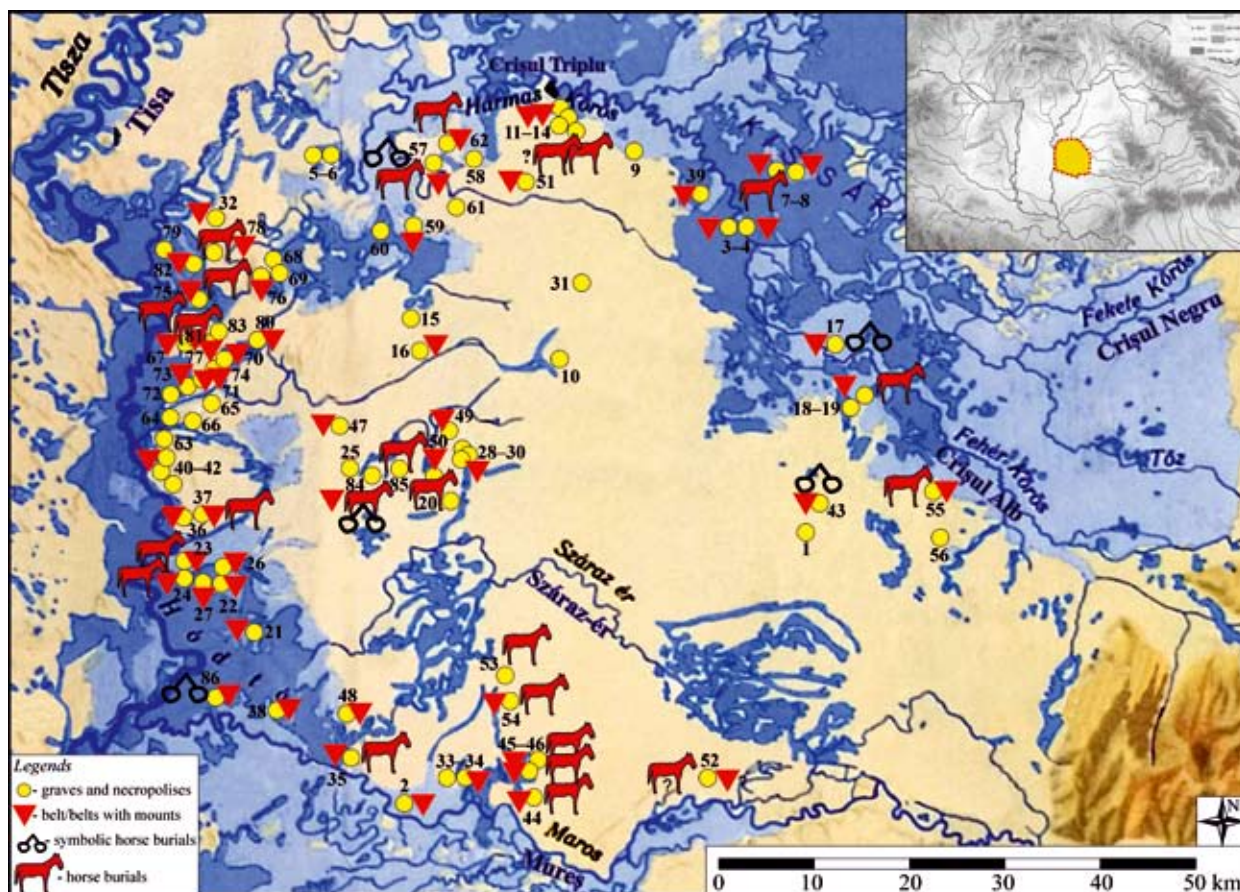


Plate 24. The list of the necropolises and the horse burials in the area between the rivers Tisa/Tisza, Mureş/Maros and Criş/Körös during the second part of the Avar age (with bibliography): 1 Almáskamarás-Homokbánya (Békés county, Hu) (1 grave): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 21; Bende 2005, 12; 2 Apátfalva-vámház (Csongrád county, Hu) (belt with mounts) (8 graves): Lőrinczy / Szalontai 1996, 271-272, fig. 1, 7, fig. 8. 1-11; Bende 2005, 12-13; 3 Békés-Ludad (Békés county, Hu) (belt with mounts): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 52; 4 Békés-Vizesbánom (Békés county, Hu) (belt with mounts): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 52-53; 5 Békésszentandrás-Kardoskút, Király J. 613.sz. tanyája (Békés county, Hu) (1 grave): <http://adamesarpad.e-mir.hu:8880/adam.php?id=2007>; 6 Békésszentandrás-Mogyorós halom (Békés county, Hu) (1 grave): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 55; Bende 2005, 13; 7 Bélmegyer-Csömöki domb (Békés county, Hu) (horse burials: Kiss type II) (belts with mounts) (243 graves): Medgyesi 1984-1985, 241-256; 8 Bélmegyer-Telekmegyer, Szalkai-tanya (Békés county, Hu) (belts with mounts) (30 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 55; 9 Csárdaszállás-Hanzély tanya (Békés county, Hu) (13 graves): Bende 2005, 13-14; 10 Csorvás-Kossuth Tsz. (Békés county, Hu) (8 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 102-103; Bende 2005, 15; 11 Endrőd-Bacsa-lapos, Szigetvári-tanya, MRT 8, 3/157. lh. (Gyomaendrőd, Békés county, Hu) (belts with mounts) (52 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 128; Bende 2005, 15-18; 12 Endrőd-Doboskert, MRT 8, 3/21. lh. (Gyomaendrőd, Békés county, Hu) (horse burial: unknown type) (1 grave): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 128-129; Bende 2005, 18, Table 11; 13 Endrőd-Kecskészug (Gyomaendrőd, Békés county, Hu) (horse burial: Kiss type IV) (belt with mounts) (15 graves): Juhász 2000, 68; Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 129; Bende 2005, 18-20, table 11; Juhász 2006a, 102, 3. kép.; 14 Endrőd-Páskum, Iványi köz, MRT 8, 3/119. lh. (Gyomaendrőd, Békés county, Hu) (8 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 129; Bende 2005, 20; 15 Eperjes-Csabacsüd (Csongrád county, Hu) (2 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 129; Bende 2005, 20-21; 16 Gádosos-November 7. Tsz. (Békés county, Hu) (belt with mounts) (2 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 129; Bende 2005, 21; 17 Gerla-Szakácsföld, MRT 10, 5/16. lh. (Békés county, Hu) (symbolic horse burials/Type X) (belt with mounts) (11 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 144-145; Bende 2005, 21-23; 18 Gyula-site 483 (site 5, Békés county, Hu) (belt with mounts) (45 graves): Bende 2005, 23-2; 19 Gyula-Lencsés út, Schiffert J. Tanya (Békés county, Hu) (horse burial: unknown type): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 153; 20 Hódmezővásárhely-Cinkus, Bulla-tanya (today: Orosháza's boundary, Békés county, Hu) (3 graves): Lőrinczy-Szalontai 1996, 271-272, fig. 10/1-14; Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 162; Bende 2005, 26-27; 21 Hódmezővásárhely-Gorzsa, Pócsy Mihály-tanya (Csongrád county, Hu) (belt with mounts) (7 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 163; Bende 2005, 27-28; 22 Hódmezővásárhely-Kishomok, 1-4. homokbánya (Csongrád county, Hu) (belt with mounts): Bende 2005, 28-30; 23 Hódmezővásárhely-Koppáncs II (Csongrád county, Hu) (horse burials: Kiss type VII) (belts with mounts) (18 graves): Herendi 2012, 91-92; Herendi 2014; 24 Hódmezővásárhely-Koppáncs III. Kishomok (Csongrád county, Hu) (horse burials: Kiss type VII) (belts with mounts) (185 graves): Bácsmegi 2012, 92; 25 Hódmezővásárhely-Sóshalom (Csongrád megye) (8 graves): Bende 2005, 30; 26 Hódmezővásárhely-stray find (Csongrád county, Hu) (belt with mounts): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 162; 27 Hódmezővásárhely-Tarjánvég (Csongrád county, Hu) (belts with mounts) (26 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 165; 28 Kardoskút-364. Tanya (Békés county, Hu) (1 grave): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 184-185; 29 Kardoskút-Aranyad-part, Dénes S. tanyája (Békés county, Hu) (belt with mounts) (3 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol.

I. 184-185; **30** Kardoskút-Király J. 613.sz. tanyája (Békés county, Hu) (1 grave): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 185; **31** Kondoros-Gépalomás utca, MRT 8, 6/9. lh. (Békés megye) (7 graves): Bende 2005, 30-31; **32** Kunszentmárton-Jaksor (érpart), Kettőshalom (Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county, Hu) (belts with mounts) (41 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 220; **33** Magyarcsanak-Belezi-dűlő (Csongrád county, Hu) (4 graves): Lőrinczy-Szalontai 1993, 287, Pl. V/4-7, 10-11; Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 230; Bende 2005, 31; **34** Magyarcsanak-Talagy-dűlő (Csongrád county, Hu) (belt with mounts): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 231; **35** Makó-Innenső Jángor 3 (Csongrád county, Hu) (horse burials: Kiss type VII) (belts with mounts) (30 graves): Hargitai-Sóskuti 2012, 93; Hargitai 2012, 363-388; **36** Mártély-AP üdülő (Csongrád county, Hu) (belt with mounts) (21 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 235; Bende 2005, 31-32; **37** Mártély-Csanyi-halom, Szegfű-kocsma (horse burial: unknown type) (belts with mounts) (39 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 235; **38** Maroslele-Gyűrűs II (Csongrád county, Hu) (belts with mounts) (3 graves): Pópitay 2012, 62; **39** Mezőberény-Köröshíd (Békés county, Hu) (belts with mounts): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 237; **40** Mindszent-Bozó Ambrus Károly tanyája (Csongrád megye) (belts with mounts) (11 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 242; Bende 2005, 32-33; **41** Mindszent-Helffy Street (Csongrád county, Hu) (81 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 242; Bende 2005, 33-34; **42** Mindszent-Vasútállomás (Csongrád county, Hu) (3 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 242; Bende 2005, 34; **43** Nagykamarás (Békés megye) (symbolic horse burials/Type X) (belt with mounts) (5 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 253; Bende 2005, 34-35; **44** Nädlac-7M (Arad county, Ro) (horse burial: Kiss type VII or sacrifice?) (belts with mounts) (12 graves); **45** Nädlac-3M-N (Arad county, Ro) (horse burial: unknown type) (belt with mounts) (24 graves). Unpublished; **46** Nädlac-3M-S (Arad county, Ro) (horse burial: unknown type) (belts with mounts) (74 graves). Unpublished; **47** Nagymágocs-Ótomp (Csongrád county, Hu) (belts with mounts) (131 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 253; Bende 2005, 36-41; **48** Óföldsék-Döbörccsök-halom (Csongrád county, Hu) (belts with mounts) (15 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 270; **49** Orosháza-Béke Tsz homokbánya (Békés county, Hu) (belts with mounts) (147 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 272; Bende 2005, 41-47; **50** Orosháza-Bónum téglagyár (Békés county, Hu) (horse burials: Kiss type I, II, VII, VIII) (belts with mounts) (245 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 272-273; Juhász 2000, 67-68; Bende 2005, 48-58, table 11; **51** Örménykút-hidroglobusz, MRT 8, 7/11. lh. (Békés county, Hu) (belts with mounts) (31 graves): Bende 2005, 58-61; **52** Pecica (hu.: Pécska) (Arad county) (horse burials (?): unknown types) (belts with mounts ?) (70 graves): M. H. K. Högyes' information. Unpublished; **53** Pitvaros-Lenin Street 9 (Csongrád county, Hu) (horse burial: Kiss type VII) (1 grave): Bende 2005, 61, table 11; **54** Pitvaros-Víztározó (Csongrád county, Hu) (horse burials: Kiss types V, VI, VII) (belts with mounts) (225 graves): Bende 2005, 61-116, table 11; **55** Socodor (hu.: Székudvar) (Arad county, Ro) (horse burial: unknown type) (belt with mounts) (1 grave): Popescu 1956, 80, fig. 39-40; **56** Šimand (hu.: Simánd) (Arad county, Ro): Bóna 1988, 175; **57** Szarvas-Grexa téglagyár, MRT 8, 8/68. lh. (Békés county, Hu) (horse burials: Kiss type VII, IX,⁶² symbolic horse burials/type X) (belts with mounts) (422 graves): Kiss 1992; Juhász 2000, 67-68, 75-76; Bende 2005, 116-142, table 11; **58** Szarvas-Horváth puszta (Békés county, Hu) (16 graves): Bende 2005, 142-143; **59** Szarvas-Káka, Kettőshalmi dűlő, MRT 8, 8/109. lh. (Békés county, Hu) (belts with mounts) (8 graves): Bende 2005, 143; **60** Szarvas-Kákapusztá, Kettőshalmi dűlő, MRT 8, 8/108. lh. (Békés county, Hu) (49 graves): Bende 2005, 143-146; **61** Szarvas-Ponyiczky tanya, MRT 8, 8/111. lh. (Békés county, Hu) (4 graves): Bende 2005, 146-147; **62** Szarvas-Rózsási halom, MRT 8, 8/75. lh. (Békés county, Hu) (horse burials: Kiss type I, VII) (belts with mounts) (119 graves): Bende 2005, 147-154, table 11; Juhász 2000, 68-71; Juhász 2006, 206-218; **63** Szegvár-Kórházy-szentgyörgy-Gorkij Tsz (Csongrád county, Hu) (3 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 344; Bende 2005, 154; **64** Szegvár-Kórógy-torok, Száraz Mátyás földje (Csongrád county, Hu) (1 grave): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 344; Bende 2005, 154-155; **65** Szegvár-Szőlőkajla (Csongrád county, Hu) (91 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 344; Bende 2005, 155-182; **66** Szegvár-Újtelep (Csongrád county, Hu) (16 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 344; Bende 2005, 155; **67** Szentes-Alsórét 256. sz. tanya (Csongrád county, Hu) (belt with mounts) (8 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 351; **68** Szentes-Belsőecser, Brebovszki V. telke (Csongrád county, Hu) (2 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 351; Bende 2005, 182; **69** Szentes-Belsőecser-Vekeri-mezsgyecsatorna (Csongrád county, Hu) (3 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 351; Bende 2005, 183; **70** Szentes-Berekhát, Buzi Farkas Imre földje (Csongrád county, Hu) (belt with mounts) (147 graves): Bende 2005, 183-187; **71** Szentes-Berekhát, Dr. Matolcsy Pálné földje (Csongrád county, Hu) (belt with mounts) (34 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 352; Bende 2005, 188-190; **72** Szentes-Berekhát, Farkas tanya I. (Csongrád county, Hu) (5 graves): Bende 2005, 190-191; **73** Szentes-Berekhát, Farkas tanya II. (Csongrád county, Hu) (belts with mounts) (26 graves): Bende 2005, 191-193; **74** Szentes-Gógány, Epressor/part (Csongrád county, Hu) (belt with mounts) (10 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 353-354; Bende 2005, 193; **75** Szentes-Hékéd, Felsőcsordajárás, Koba M. telke (Csongrád county, Hu) (horse burials: Kiss type I) (belts with mounts) (73 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 354; Bende 2005, table 11; **76** Szentes-Kaján (Csongrád county, Hu) (horse burials: Kiss type I, III, V) (belts with mounts) (459 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 354; Bende 2005, 193-213, table 11; **77** Szentes-Kisjaksorpart (Csongrád county, Hu) (belt with mounts) (1 grave): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 354-355; **78** Szentes-Kistőke (Csongrád county, Hu) (horse burial: Kiss type I) (belt with mounts) (85 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 355; Bende 2005, 213-216, table 11; **79** Szentes-Kökényzúg Jaksor I., Molnár I. földje (Acker) (Csongrád county, Hu): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 355; **80** Szentes-Lapistó, Biró G. és Szekely M. földje (Csongrád county, Hu) (belts with mounts) (172 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 356; **81** Szentes-Nagyhegy (Csongrád county, Hu) (horse burials: Kiss type I, IV) (belts with mounts) (145 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 356; Bende 2005, 216-226, table 11; **82** Szentes-Nagytőke, Jaksorpart (Csongrád county, Hu) (belt with mounts) (1 grave): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 356-357; **83** Szentes-Zalota, Vecseri M. földje (Csongrád county, Hu) (4 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 357-358; **84** Székkutas-Kápolnadűlő (Csongrád county, Hu) (horse burials: Kiss type V, VII) (belts with mounts) (534 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 359; Nagy 2003; Bende 2005, 226-262, table 11; **85** Székkutas-Új Élet Tsz (Csongrád county, Hu) (horse burial: Kiss type VII) (6 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 359; Bende 2005, 262, table 11; **86** Tápé-Lebő-Kishomokos (Csongrád county, Hu) (symbolic horse burials/Type X) (belts with mounts) (16 graves): Szentpéteri 2002, Vol. I. 370; Bende 2005, 263-264.

⁶² After Kiss 1992, as cited in Bende 2005, table 11.

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Периферията на центъра? Част от късноаварски некропол при Нъдлак (немски и словашки: Надлак, унгарски: Надълак)

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(резюме)

Дванадесет гроба от този некропол са проучени в рамките на спасителни разкопки заради изграждане на магистралата Нъдлак-Арад. Според погребалния обред те принадлежат на края на късноаварския период, тоест на периода късен VIII – ранен IX век. Някои от находките са свързани с последния металургичен хоризонт на аварската култура. Погребенията принадлежат на хора извън централните територии на аварската държава. Коланните гарнитури са твърде различни, което показва, че местната общност трудно си е набавяла декоративни части на костюма. Антропологичните изследвания установяват, че това население е работило тежка физическа работа, което също подсказва неговия „периферен“ статус. Местоположението на този езически некропол на скотовъдци и земеделци подчертава, че въпросният микрорегион бил разположен в края на властовия център, локализиран в Голямата равнина. Жителите му са обикновени поданици на аварския хаганат от нейния източен регион, пряко подчинени на хагана или на аварски големец (тудун, югурус).

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