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Armament and Society in the Mirror of the Avar Archaeology The Transdanubia-Phenomenon Revisited

CSIKY Gergely*

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Abstract

One of the most significant problems of the Avar archaeology is the question of Germanic (mainly Gepidic) continuity in Transdanubia. In my paper I would like to make some comments on the so-called Transdanubia-phenomenon of the Early Avar Carpathian Basin based on the analysis of weapon-combinations found in six cemeteries of Eastern Transdanubia. I intend to answer the following questions: 1. How far the weapon-combinations of the East-Transdanubian cemeteries of the early Avar Period (568-650) are identical or similar to the general picture of Avar armament drawn by contemporary cemeteries? 2. Are the weapon-combinations or armament of these cemeteries similar to that of the earlier Gepidic and Langobardic sites from the early 6th centuries or to the contemporary Germanic (Alemannic, Frank or Bavarian) cemeteries of the present-day Germany?

As a result, the early Avar cemeteries of Transdanubia are characterized by the relatively high number of close-combat weapons compared to other sites of the Avar Khaganate. However, comparing to Merovingian sites the burials containing only close-combat weapons are very low and in most of the cases the weapon-combinations characteristic to this culture is missing.

1. *Introduction – the idea of Transdanubian Germanic continuity in the Avar Archaeology.*

One of the most significant problems of the Avar archaeology is the question of Germanic (mainly Gepidic) continuity in Transdanubia. According to some theories Transdanubia (the former Pannonia province) was populated by Germanic¹ and/or

*Archaeological Institute of HAS Budapest 1014 Úri utca 49
(csikyg@archo.mta.hu).

¹ For the Gepidic continuity of Transsylvania: (Kovács 1913; Kovács 1915.); their interpretation: (Bóna 1978, pp. 123–170.; Bóna 1986, pp. 162–164.; Horedt 1985, pp. 164–168.; HARHOIU 2001, pp. 110–120.; Bârzu – Harhoiu 2008, pp. 513–578.), for Transdanubia: Kiss 1979b, pp. 185–191, Kiss 1987b, pp. 203–278.; Kiss 1992, pp. 35–134.; Kiss 1999/2000, pp. 359–365, Kiss 1996, and Kiss 2001, for its critique Bálint 1995, pp. 309–310.; for the Germanic elements of pottery: Vida 1999a.), reconstructions of garment, such as belt-pendant (Vida 1996, pp. 107–112.; Vida 1999/2000, pp. 367–377.), for amulet capsulae (Vida 1995, pp. 221–295.) and for the hairpins of Merovingian origin (Vida 1999b, pp. 563–574.)

Romanized² populations. This assumption was based on the archaeological finds from various burials, but mainly on the spatial distribution of some artifacts.³

The question first arose in connection with the interpretation of the Környecemetery, where the so-called garrison-theory was developed by István Erdélyi and Ágnes Salamon. According to this, the cemetery is dated to the first half of the 6th century, which means before the Avar immigration, and it was used by the garrison of the nearby Late Antique fortification composed of mixed (Byzantine, Germanic and Nomadic) population.⁴ Now it is already clear that this site was misdated and it was established only in the late 6th and early 7th centuries (Early phase of the Avar Period).⁵

Attila Kiss started to study the Avar Period from the point-of-view of the Germanic archaeology, moreover he was first employed in the Janus Pannonius Museum in Pécs, where he had lots of opportunities to study objects of Merovingian origin from burials of the Avar Period.⁶ The excavation of the Kölked cemetery between 1970 and 1993 turned his interest to the investigation of the Germanic population of the Avar Khaganate, since he interpreted the site even in his first excavation reports as a Germanic one.⁷

Later on Attila Kiss phrased a theory according to which these Transdanubian cemeteries from the Early Avar period are the traces of the Gepidic population who lived in the Great Hungarian Plain in the 5th and early 6th centuries and who were resettled in Transdanubia by the Avar policy after 568.⁸ For his ethnic interpretation Kiss used among others the spatial distribution of some weapon-types known from Germanic cemeteries of the Merovingian period⁹: the *spathae* (double-edged Germanic sword),¹⁰ shield boss (*umbo*),¹¹ bearded axes¹² and socketed leaf-shaped

² The investigation of the Romanized population of Transdanubia is firmly connected to the so-called Keszthely-culture: Kovrig 1958, Kovrig 1960, Kiss 1965, Kiss 1966, Kiss 1968, Bálint 1995, Bierbrauer 2005, pp. 67-82. to the traces of the Christian religion found in graves (Vida 2002, pp. 179-209.; Vida 2004, pp. 435-442.) and some elements of the costume (Vida 2009, pp. 233-259.)

³ About the method of chorology see Eggert 2005, 270.

⁴ Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, pp. 70-71.

⁵ For the historiographical summary of the so-called Környe-debate see Tomka 1973, pp. 227-231. Its first critique (Bóna 1971b, p. 300.; Bott 1976, pp. 201-280.; Ambroz 1973, pp. 289-294.; Martin 1973, pp. 110-112.) emphasized the chronological arguments contradicting the early 6th century dating.

⁶ See his monograph on the Avar finds of Baranya county: Kiss 1977.

⁷ Kiss 1979b, pp. 185-191.

⁸ The studies of Attila Kiss on the Gepidic continuity of Transdanubia: (Kiss 1987b, pp. 203-278.; Kiss 1992, pp. 35-134.; Kiss 1999/2000, pp. 359-365, he emphasized his opinion on the continuity in the publication of the cemeteries Kölked-Feketekapu A. (Kiss 1996), and B. (Kiss 2001).

⁹ Attila Kiss started to investigate weapons with his MA thesis (Kiss 1962), for the weapons used as evidence of Germanic population see his find-lists Kiss 1992, pp. 51-52, 65-67.; Kiss 1996, pp. 228-239, 317-318, Liste 33-36, a similar method of mapping object types was used by Kiss in his studies on the Hungarian Conquest Period (Kiss 1985, pp. 218-379.)

¹⁰ Kiss 1992, pp. 51, 65. Liste 1.; Kiss 1996, p. 317. Liste 33.

¹¹ Kiss 1992, pp. 51-52, 66. Liste 3.; Kiss 1996, p. 318, Liste 36.

¹² Kiss 1996, p. 318. Liste 35.

arrowheads.¹³ However, he only used separated artifacts without considering their context and combinations.¹⁴

Complexes investigations advanced lately, which emphasized the way of wearing and depositing of the objects.¹⁵ The best example for this method is the study of spatha-belts.¹⁶ The results of such investigations are much firmer than the study of single object-types.

In my paper I would like to make some comments on the so-called Transdanubia-phenomenon of the Early Avar Carpathian Basin based on the analysis of weapon-combinations found in six cemeteries of Eastern Transdanubia (in Komárom-Esztergom, Fejér, Tolna and Baranya counties) such as Budakalász-Dunapart,¹⁷ Csákkberény-Orondpuszta,¹⁸ Kölked-Feketekapu A and B,¹⁹ Környe²⁰ and Szekszárd-Bogyiszlói út.²¹ (fig. 1.) Only four of these cemeteries are entirely published, but I could study their material personally. Although the lack of the anthropological investigations, the weapon-combinations of all of these sites can be studied, since they contain lots of graves, almost entirely excavated, their burial rite is standardized and the chronology of all these sites are limited to the same shorter period.

2. The methods – weapon-combination and society in the research of early medieval burial archaeology

First and foremost I have to make some notes of the method itself, since the reliability of the results is based on that methodology. The preconception of all study concerning the weapon-combinations is that the number and/or combination of the elements of armament bear a special meaning and reflect the original armament and/or social status of the deceased. Such investigations are carried by burial archaeology, thus they cannot be made without the common burial rite, the study and comparison of closed entities and the knowledge of the whole site.

¹³ Kiss 1992, pp. 52, 67. Liste 5.; Kiss 1996, p. 317, Liste 34.

¹⁴ For the critique of his theories on the Gepidic population during the Early Avar Period see Bálint 1995, pp. 309–310.

¹⁵ See: Vida 1999a, Vida 1996, pp. 107–112.; Vida 1999/2000, pp. 367–377.; Vida 1995, pp. 221–295.; Vida 1999b, pp. 563–574.

¹⁶ Vida 2000, pp. 161–175.

¹⁷ Unpublished cemetery excavated by István Erdélyi (1951-1973), then by Adrienn Pásztor and Tivadar Vida (1987-1992). Hereby I would like to express my gratitude to both of them for getting the possibility to study the weapons found in the site.

¹⁸ Unpublished cemetery excavated by Arnold Marosi and Gyula László between 1936 and 1939. I am deeply indebted to József Szentpéteri for the opportunity of participating in the publishing of the site and the study of its material – especially weapons.

¹⁹ Kölked-Feketekapu A and B cemeteries are excavated by Attila Kiss between 1970 and 1993 and published by him Kiss 1996 and Kiss 2001. I feel gratitude to Éva Garam and Zsuzsanna Hajnal who made it possible to study the material of it and both that of the Környe cemetery in the Hungarian National Museum.

²⁰ Excavated and published by Ágnes Salamon and István Erdélyi (1954-1955) (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971.)

²¹ Excavated and published by Gyula Rosner (1974-1984) (Rosner 1999)

The investigation of weapon-combinations was always in the focal point of the German archaeological research from the beginning of the Merovingian mortuary archaeology founded by Ludwig Lindenschmidt.²² From the early attempts up to now several studies aimed to provide a theoretical framework for the understanding of ancient societies by analyzing the place of weapon finds among funerary assemblages. According to the most wide-spread assumption the weapon-combinations were in connection with the legal status (free, half-free, slave) of their bearers.²³

The idea that the combination of weapons buried in graves directly reflects social hierarchy, armament or affiliation to an ethnic group remained intact till the studies of Heiko Steuer who firstly pointed to the non-social agents of the deposition rules.²⁴ By the way, Steuer still believed that the weapons deposited in the grave reflect the original armament of the warrior, and from that pre-assumption he drew a general history of weaponry and warfare of the Early Middle Ages using mostly the data of burial archaeology.²⁵

Significant changes happened with the scholarly activity of Heinrich Härke who combined the methods of the continental and Anglo-Saxon approach to gain a better understanding of the character of the early medieval Anglo-Saxon weapon-burials.²⁶ In his view the weapons buried in graves are of much more symbolic value²⁷ and the persons buried there cannot be deemed to be warriors only because of the weapons deposited. He stressed several factors playing a role in burying weapons such as age,²⁸ social role of the deceased, the symbolic value of the object and the warrior ideology of the society. It is essential to note that the grave-goods found in burials are result of a conscious choice rather than an accidental collection of objects,²⁹ but

²² For the origins of the Merovingian burial archaeology and the methods of Lindenschmidt methods see Effros 2003, pp. 56–60.

²³ The idea that weapons and weapon-combinations can be used for the identification of legal status came from the combined analysis of the burials and the Early Germanic laws. The general assumption was that the spatha is the sign of the free men, the seax or spear is the weapon of the half-free, while the men buried without weapons are slaves. (Veeck 1926 és Stoll 1939) Other studies stressed that there is no correlation between the ornamented belts and the weapon deposition (Werner 1953).

²⁴ He stressed that the finds excavated from burials can show the financial (material) position, indirectly his social position but hardly (almost never) his legal role in the society. (Steuer 1968, pp. 18–81) Several examples show that even the servants and esquire (Knecht) could bear weapons (Steuer 1968, p. 37.).

²⁵ Steuer 1970, pp. 348–383.

²⁶ Härke 1992.

²⁷ The author emphasized the symbolic value of the weapons deposited in graves using the propaganda of IRA as modern analogy (Härke 1997, pp. 119–127.)

²⁸ Härke (1992, pp. 192–195.) used 893 burials for his examination, and observed that the age capable for using the weapon didn't play any role in the deposition, while the number of weapons buried in a grave significantly rises with the age.

²⁹ The burial data can be seen therefore as intentional, since it reflects the intentions of the deceased, and the society or people who buried him. For the distinction between the functional and intentional data, see Härke 1993, pp. 141–146.

unfortunately many parts of the complex and multilayered meaning of these artifacts remain inaccessible.

A different approach aimed at the reconstruction of ancient armament and not the social hierarchy using the weapon-combinations known from male burials. Thus Frank Siegmund used weapon-combinations for distinguishing so-called 'functional combinations' that means assemblages of weapons for various types of fighting methods (close-combat, distant-combat, pedestrian or cavalry). His main point was to distinguish ethnic differences between the Franks and Alemanni using burial data of Merovingian cemeteries.³⁰

A similar study was written by Robert Reiß who studied the proportion of close and distant-combat weapons among Germanic cemeteries of the Merovingian period using the combination of various elements of armament distinguished according to their functions.³¹

The above theories and methods were hardly applied in the Avar archaeology partly because of its relative isolation from the archaeological theory because of political reasons and partly because some Hungarian scholars developed different theories for the investigation of social hierarchy (the ethnography oriented school of Gyula László).³² The few exceptions were the studies of József Szentpéteri who was the first to use the weapon-combinations together with the horse-burials and burials with belt-fittings based on his huge collection of data,³³ and Jozef Zábojník who used

³⁰ The main assumption of Siegmund was that the armament of the Franks and Alemanni can be distinguished with the help of the weapon-combinations observed in the burials. Furthermore he deal with the so-called functional combinations and directly deduced the combat-methods from them (Siegmund 2000, pp. 177-194).

³¹ Robert Reiß examined the proportions of close- and distant-combat weapon with the help of the statistical analysis of a huge sample from Merovingian cemeteries. He not only assembled the weapon-combinations of the burials, and classified them as close- or distant-combat weapons, but analysed them in a chronological context, too, which enabled him to examine this phenomenon not only synchronous but diachronically, too (Reiß 2007, pp. 211-244).

³² Gyula László became interested in social problems of the Avar Period at least from the late '30-ies of the 20th century, when he began to study the swords from Bócsa and Kecel decorated with gold foils (both of them were found in 1935) and with the help of them reconstructed the Kunágota sword (László 1938, pp. 55-86.). His reconstructions and social interpretations were only published after the 2nd World War (reconstruction of the sword from Kunágota (László 1950, 31-33.) and that of the sword of Bócsa (László 1955, p. 235.). The peak of his social theories was his French book written during the World War but only published in 1955, where he proposed the social significance of the number of arrowheads in burials (László 1955, pp. 231-232.) and identified the swords decorated with gold or silver with state-power of the Avar Khaganate (László 1955, p. 235).

³³ The methods for social interpretation of Gyula László were carried on by his student, József Szentpéteri, who studied social questions of the Avar Period from the beginning of his academic life. First he analyzed the Avar cemetery of Želovce socially using the methods of László (dissertation written in 1982 and published in 1985: Szentpéteri 1985, pp. 79-110; Szentpéteri 1986, pp. 147-184.), then he attempted to accomplish the social analysis of all the weapon-burials of the Avar Period Carpathian Basin with the help of a huge database he collected from various burial assemblages. Basically this analysis was a quantitative, statistical one using the theoretical premises of his professor, Gyula László (Szentpéteri 1993, pp. 165-246, Szentpéteri 1994, pp. 231-306.)

similar methods for the investigation of the weapon and horse burials of the Northern periphery of the Avar Khaganate.³⁴

There are two parallel branches in the investigation of weapon combinations: 1. studies of social hierarchy; and 2. studies of functional combinations. However we have to be aware of that the burial data available are not able to provide firm answers either of them. This root in several problems: first and foremost all burial finds were deposited consciously and reflects the intentions of the society, the family and the deceased himself – but not the reality. Everything happening during the funerary ceremony was culturally determined. That is why we cannot expect that the weapons buried in the grave would reflect either the original social hierarchy or the original armament of a warrior going to the battle.

3. General remarks on the weapon-deposition rules among the Avars

In the following I would like to answer the following questions: 1. How far the weapon-combinations of the East-Transdanubian cemeteries of the early Avar Period (568-650) are identical or similar to the general picture of Avar armament drawn by contemporary cemeteries? 2. Are the weapon-combinations or armament of these cemeteries similar to that of the earlier Gepidic and Langobardic sites from the early 6th centuries or to the contemporary Germanic (Alemannic, Frank or Bavarian) cemeteries of the present-day Germany?

It is essential to draw a general picture of the Avar weapon deposition rules before comparing the aforementioned cemeteries with other sites. Thus we will be able to compare our results with the general picture and discover the similarities and differences.

The present paper is a result of the investigation connected to my PhD thesis on the cutting and thrusting weapons (i.e. swords, sabres, saxes and spears) of the Avar Period. These two categories of weapons are relatively rare among the findings of the period. From the more than 60,000 graves of the Avar Period³⁵ the proportion of the cutting and thrusting weapons is less than 2 % (or about 5 % of the male graves).³⁶

³⁴ Similarly to Szentpéteri Jozef Zábójník studied questions of armament and social problems from the early years of his academic career, first he collected all weapons of western origin of the Avars (Zábójník 1978, pp. 193-214.), then with the help of his chronology based on his seriation of belt-garnitures (Zábójník 1991, pp. 219-321.) he attempted a social analysis of Avar Period burials from the Northern periphery of the Khaganate mainly dated to the Late Phase (8th century) using quantitative and statistical methods with the premise of social significance of weapons, horse burials and decorated belts (Zábójník 1995, pp. 205-336.).

³⁵ Up to 31st of december 1993 (the so-called ADAM (the collection of Avar Period sites registered the sites until that date) 2475 Avar period cemetery were known (see ADAM, p. 13.), this number raised significantly from that date on due to the rescue excavations connected to the big investments. There are several estimates on the number of Avar period burials, István Bóna estimated it to 35-40.000 (Bóna 1988, p. 437.), for the newest estimations see: (Vida 2003, p. 304, Langó 2007, p. 188, 84. footnote)

³⁶ Altogether 672 cutting weapons and 578 spears are known for me in the Avar Period Carpathian Basin.

The diminution of the number of the weapons deposited in graves is a general phenomenon during the whole Avar Period, this is also true for the close-combat weapons. While 274 cutting weapons are known from the Early Avar period, the Middle Avar Period (650-700) is represented by only 128 pieces and to the 8th and the first half of the 9th century (Late Avar Period) only 184 sword and sabres are dated. A similar, but more dramatic picture can be drawn from the distribution of spears: 308 spears is known from the Early Avar Period, 39 pieces from the Middle Avar period³⁷ and 176 from the Late Avar period of the 8th century. (fig. 2.)

These two weapon-types are rarely found combined with each-other, only 53 known graves contained a sword and a spear. This feature is not characteristic for the whole period, it is more frequent in the Early Avar Transdanubia (20) and in the Late Avar Northern periphery (present-day Slovakia), and the former part is similar to the contemporary Germanic (Merovingian) weapon combinations,³⁸ while the latter is characteristic for burials of men with horses.

The deposition of thrusting weapons (spears) shows a significant correlation with the burials of men with horses (160 cases, 28 %) and with independent horse-burials³⁹ (126 cases, 22 %), that means that more than the half (60 %) of the known Avar spears are associated with horses. These two types of burials show a chronological difference too, since most (84,9 %) of the independent horse-burials with spears are dated to the Early Avar period (with the majority in Transdanubia),⁴⁰ while such graves dated to the Late phase are only known from the middle course of the river Tisza (mainly Tiszafüred).⁴¹ At the same time most of the burials of men with horses include a spear-find, and they date to the Late phase (96 cases, 60 %).

The cutting weapons (swords, sabres and seaxes) are much less connected with the deposition of horses. Only 16 % (98 cases) of the cutting weapons are found in burials of men with horses and only 3 swords came from independent horse-burials. This significant difference can be explained by the fact, that in cases of divided burials of man and horse the sword or sabre was always deposited with the man and

³⁷ Although in the case of the very low number of Middle Avar spears we can count on some distortional factors, since the dating of these finds are based on the chronology of the belt-fittings, and in the case of the deposition of a horse burial we cannot say for sure that it is coming from that particular period.

³⁸ The combination of spathae and spears are characteristic for the Merovingian cemeteries: Reiß 2007, p. 223.

³⁹ Of course these horse burials are not entirely independent since they belong to a human burial, the most important in this case is that they were buried in an independent burial pit. For the independent horse burials of the Early Avar Period see, Kiss 1962, 153-160; Rosner 1975-76, pp. 79-109, Némethi – Klíma 1992, pp. 176-177, 3. kép

⁴⁰ The question of the so-called sacrificial complexes is in connection with these horse burials since these complexes contain elements of horse-harnesses, mainly stirrups. The notion of the sacrificial finds first risen with the Csengele find (Csallány 1939, pp. 129-131.) and Bácsújfalú find (Csallány 1953, 133-141.). For the sacrificial complexes see: Kovrig 1955a, pp. 30-44; Tomka 1986, pp. 35-57; Némethi – Klíma 1992, Liska 1995, 91-98).

⁴¹ For the horse burials of Tiszafüred: Garam 1987, pp. 65-125, Garam 1995, pp. ??, Makoldi 2008, pp. 127-132. Similar horse burials were found in Sajópetri–Hosszúrét dűlő see Makoldi 2008, pp. 115-116, 123-124.

the spear mostly with the horse. Chronologically a considerable change can be noticed in the deposition-rules, since most swords or sabres from burials of men with horses are known from the late phase (57 cases, 60 %) while only one fourth of it (24 cases, 26 %) is from the early phase.

It is evident from the above-mentioned that the early Avar Transdanubia is characterized by the relatively high number of close-combat weapons, the combination of spear and sword (which is characteristic to the Merovingian cemeteries) in the region is the highest rate among the other Avar sites. The number of spears is relatively high but in most of the cases it is associated with independent horse-burials.

4. *Weapon-combinations and weapons in the Early Avar Transdanubia*

In the following I will examine closer the distribution and above-all combination of these objects and try to trace if the combination of weapons or the 'armament' is similar to the Merovingian cemeteries or not. For this analysis I use five cemeteries of Eastern Transdanubia: all of these cemeteries are dated mainly to the early phase of the Avar period and were identified as sites of the Transdanubian Germanic population under Avar rule. Unfortunately, except for the Környe site no anthropological examinations have taken place, therefore it is quite difficult to distinguish the male and female grave in the cemeteries only by using grave-goods.

Some primary definitions to the notions used: close-combat (sword, spear, axe), the distant-combat weapons are not represented exclusively by the elements of archery (bow, arrows and quiver), but some types of throwing weapons such as the javelin and *ango*⁴², and even in some cases throwing axes, like the so-called *franciska*.⁴³ The javelins are extremely rare in the find material of the Avar period, they are represented by small, oval shaped spears the socket of which is extremely narrow (its diameter is less than 2 cm).⁴⁴ This type of javelin is deposited in pair or three pieces in burials.⁴⁵

From the 683 burials of the Kölked–Feketekapu A temető cemetery in 65 (9,5 %) graves elements of armament were found, 4 of them were independent horse burials,⁴⁶ 2 female and one child's burial. Altogether 58 armed male burials were found in the

⁴² von Schnurbein 1974, pp. 411-434.

⁴³ Hübener 1980, p. 99.; Dahmlös – Hübener 1995, 470–476.

⁴⁴ Csiky 2007, p. 313, 316. 7. kép.

⁴⁵ In pair: Cikó, burial B (or 555.) (Kiss–Somogyi 1984, 41. tábla 21–22); Pécs-Köztemető, grave 30 (Kiss 1977, p. 96, XXXVIII. tábla); Várpalota-Unió homokbánya grave 210. (Erdélyi – Németh 1969, p. 190); Pókaszeptek grave 76. (Sós – Salamon 1995, Pl. IX. 5–6) and 360. (Sós – Salamon 1995, Pl. XXII.1). three pieces in a grave: Budakalász-Dunapart 1271. sír; Csákberény-Orondpuszta 44. sír (Székesfehérvár, IKM 10.217); Oroszlány-Borbálatelep (Sós – Salamon 1995, 71 említ, publikálatlan); Pókaszeptek, 88. sír (Sós – Salamon 1995, Pl. X.1–3).

⁴⁶ 4 of the 10 horse burials (grave A-22, 202, 405, 417, 421, 474, 480, 630, 657, C: Kiss 1996, p. 182.) contained weapons: grave A-22 (spear and bow: Kiss 1996, p. 26, Taf. 23.), grave 405 (spear: Kiss 1996, p. 113, Abb. 20, Taf. 78.), grave 474 (spear: Kiss 1996, p. 127, Abb. 20, Taf. 86.), grave 480 (spear: Kiss 1996, p. 129, Abb. 20, Taf. 87.)

cemetery, which is one third of the male graves.⁴⁷ (Fig. 3) In 23 graves (only elements of archery (mainly arrowheads) were found.⁴⁸ The most common type of arrowheads were three-winged arrowheads with spike (56 pieces, from 22 graves),⁴⁹ the socketed arrowheads with oval blade (28 pieces, from 17 graves)⁵⁰ or with barbed blade (17 pieces from 9 graves).⁵¹ It means that the arrowheads with spike outnumber the socketed arrowheads in the cemetery (56 to 45).

The most common close-combat weapon was the spear found in 27 graves⁵² of the cemetery among them 4 graves are horse burials.⁵³ Various types of spears are known from the Kölked cemetery, in the followings it will be examined if these spears are general to the Avar period cemeteries of the Carpathian Basin or can be considered to be import pieces. The most common type of the cemetery is the large oval bladed spears their blade is longer than the socket: 13 examples are known from the site.⁵⁴ Such spears are commonly known from Merovingian cemeteries of Germany and Western Europe, but also from Germanic burials in Central Europe.⁵⁵ Only one example of the so-called Dorfmerking-type (spear with oval blade and with rib on its blade) is found in the cemetery,⁵⁶ which is both characteristic to the Merovingian Western Europe and Lombard Italy.⁵⁷ The rest of the spears are composed of types commonly known from Avar Period burials of the Carpathian Basin such as spears with narrow, reed-leaf-shaped blade⁵⁸ and conical spears.⁵⁹

⁴⁷ The identification of the male burials in the cemetery is quite a difficult task due to the lack of anthropological investigations, and the author, Attila Kiss didn't attempted the identification of gender in the burials.

⁴⁸ Arrowheads were found in 30 graves of the cemetery (A-5, 39, 75, 107, 127, 133, 140, 161, 197, 223, 226, 259, 260, 289, 295, 296, 297, 312, 327, 328, 361, 377, 391, 396, 471, 505, 528, 546, A, F: Kiss 1996, p. 235.)

⁴⁹ Graves 5, 39, 75, 107, 127, 133, 161, 197, 226, 259, 260, 297, 312, 361, 377, 391, 471, 505, 528, 546, A, F, Kiss 1996, p. 235. Tabelle 10.

⁵⁰ Graves 133, 140, 223, 226, 289, 295, 296, 297, 312, 327, 328, 361, 377, 396, 471, 528, A (Kiss 1996, p. 235, Tabelle 10.

⁵¹ Graves 133, 226, 295, 296, 361, 377, 396, 546, F (Kiss 1996, p. 235, Tabelle 10.)

⁵² Graves A-22, 39, 65, 107, 142, 211, 250, 253, 257, 259, 260, 275, 289, 319, 324, 375, 386, 392, 394, 405, 406, 422, 471, 474, 480, 681, F. (Kiss 1996, p. 233.)

⁵³ See the note Nr. 44.

⁵⁴ The type is known as L.III.A./I.e in my system (Csiky 2009) Grave A-65 (Kiss 1996, p. 33, Taf. 29/4.), 142 (Kiss 1996, pp. 51–52, Taf. 41/12.), 250 (Kiss 1996, 73, 233, 234, 418, Taf. 4/3, 469, Taf. 55/17.), 257 (Kiss 1996, p. 75, Taf. 56/13.), 259 (Kiss 1996, pp. 75–76, Taf. 57/19.), 260 (Kiss 1996, p. 76, Taf. 57/20.), 275 (Kiss 1996, p. 80, Taf. 60/10.), 289 (Kiss 1996, p. 84, Taf. 63/6.), 386 (Kiss 1996, p. 106, Taf. 75/10.), 405 (Kiss 1996, p. 113, Taf. 78/6.), 406 (Kiss 1996, p. 114, Taf. 78/8.), 471 (Kiss 1996, 127, Taf. 83/48.), 474 (Kiss 1996, pp. 127–128, Taf. 86/3.)

⁵⁵ lándzsás cikkem, doktori

⁵⁶ Grave A-250 (Kiss 1996, pp. 73, 233, 234, 418, Taf. 4/3, 469, Taf. 55/17.)

⁵⁷ For the spears of Dorfmerking-type see: Hübener 1972, pp. 193–211. and Losert – Pleterski 2003, Liste A54I.

⁵⁸ 6 examples are known from the cemetery. Grave A 39 (Kiss 1996, pp. 29, 228, Taf. 26/19.), 324 (Kiss 1996, pp. 91–92, Taf. 68/11.), 375 (Kiss 1996, pp. 103–104.; Taf. 73/9.), 394 (Kiss 1996, p. 110, Taf. 76/3.), 480 (Kiss 1996, p. 129, Taf. 87/3.), F (Kiss 1996, p. 174, Taf. 105/10.)

The swords are frequent finds as well, in 13 burials cutting weapons were deposited,⁶⁰ most of them are *spathae*,⁶¹ i.e. broad, double-edged swords with fuller on the blade characteristic to the Merovingian cemeteries of the Germanic population of the Early Medieval Europe.⁶² The short *seaxes* (*Kurz sax*) can be treated as secondary weapons besides the *spathae*, and often deposited in adolescent male burials,⁶³ but the so-called 'Breitsax', the sax with wide blade is already a primary cutting weapon.⁶⁴ These aforementioned cutting weapons are of western, Merovingian origin, but there is a double-edged sword of Byzantine origin⁶⁵ and two single-edged swords⁶⁶ too in the cemetery. In 23 graves of the cemetery only distant combat weapons, 16 graves contained only close-combat weapons, and in 19 burials both can be found. (fig. 4.)

The Kőlked-Feketekapu B cemetery contained only 30 male burials from the early Avar phase,⁶⁷ 7 of them (23 %) were equipped with weapons. (fig. 5.) From the 18 horse burials only two were equipped with weapons: in grave No. 135 arrowheads and a spear⁶⁸ and in grave No. 209 a quiver and bow with fitting bone plates⁶⁹ were found. From the male burials with weapons 4 was buried with *spathae* (double-edged swords),⁷⁰ 3 with arrowheads⁷¹ and 3 with spears.⁷² A significant difference from the Kőlked A cemetery is that all of the weapon-burials from the early phase contained close-combat weapons (spear, sword or shield).

⁵⁹ Only two pieces are known from the site. Grave A 253 (Kiss 1996, p. 74, Taf. 55/2.), 422 (Kiss 1996, 116, Taf. 79/7.)

⁶⁰ Grave Nr. A-29, 31, 39, 107, 142, 211, 227, 253, 257, 259, 260, 264, 268, 324. (Kiss 1996, pp. 228-233.)

⁶¹ 8 examples are known from the site, Grave Nr. A 39 (Kiss 1996, pp. 29, 228, Taf. 26/19.), 142 (Kiss 1996, pp. 53, 228, Taf. 455/12.), 211 (Kiss 1996, pp. 64-65, Taf. 49/18.), 253 (Kiss 1996, 74, Taf. 55/1.), 257 (Kiss 1996, p. 75, Taf. 56/1.), 260 (Kiss 1996, p. 76, Taf. 57/1.), 264 (Kiss 1996, pp. 77-78; Taf. 59/12.), 268 (Kiss 1996, pp. 78-79, Taf. 59/10.).

⁶² For the *spathae* see Menghin 1983, for its presence in Avar burials: Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, pp. 70-71, Kiss 1992, pp. 51, 65, Liste 1.; Kiss 1996, pp. 228-230.; Garam 1995, pp. 342-345.; Kiss 1999/2000, pp. 359-365, Vida 2000, pp. 161-175.

⁶³ Grave A29 (Kiss 1996, p. 27, Taf. 24/1.), 31 (Kiss 1996, 27, Taf. 24.), 39 (Kiss 1996, 29, 228, Taf. 26/19.).

⁶⁴ Grave A 324 (Kiss 1996, 91-92, Taf. 68/12.).

⁶⁵ Grave A 259. (Kiss 1987, p. 203. and Kiss 1996, pp. 75-76., Taf. 57)

⁶⁶ Grave A 107 (Kiss 1996, 41, 232, Taf. 34/1.), 227 (Kiss 1996, 69, Taf. 52/8.)

⁶⁷ The Early Avar Period is represented in the Kőlked B cemetery by the grave-group V, VII., IX and XIIb (Kiss 2001, p. 393).

⁶⁸ Kiss 2001, pp. 67-68, Taf. 40-42,

⁶⁹ Kiss 2001, pp. 93-94, Taf. 61-63. This burial belongs to the Middle Avar Period.

⁷⁰ Grave B 82 (Kiss 2001, pp. 27-28, II. Taf. 28.), 132 (Kiss 2001, pp. 65-66, Taf. 41.), 336 (Kiss 2001, pp. 115-117, Taf. 75.), 470 (Kiss 2001, pp. 152-153, Taf. 86.)

⁷¹ Grave B 80 (Kiss 2001, pp. 25-26, Taf. 26.), 336 (Kiss 2001, pp. 115-117, Taf. 75.), 470 (Kiss 2001, pp. 152-153, Taf. 86.).

⁷² Grave B 80 (Kiss 2001, pp. 25-26, Taf. 24-27, spear: Taf. 26/2.), 82 (Kiss 2001, p. 28, II. 42, Taf. 28/9.) 443 (Kiss 2001, pp. 141-142, Taf. 82, spear: Taf. 82/4.)

In the Környe cemetery 35 of the 50 male burials were equipped with weapons, 5 horse-burials contained weapons (only spears)⁷³ and there was a female grave. That means that two third of the male burials were equipped with elements of armament. (fig. 6.) The mentioned female grave contained fragments of chain-mail and lamellar armor although their character is more amuletic.⁷⁴ The most frequent weapons were arrowheads in graves or other elements of archery. Altogether 21 burials (65,6 %) contained elements of archery,⁷⁵ 12 of them (37,5%) were not equipped with close combat weapons.⁷⁶ 13 swords have been excavated from burials in the cemetery, most of them are *spatha*⁷⁷ the rest of them are double-⁷⁸ or single-edged swords with suspension loops.⁷⁹ All of the 4 graves with shield boss (*umbo*) are associated with swords,⁸⁰ but 3 of them were together with archery equipment. This seems to be a so-called 'Überbewaffnung' (over-armament) because the usage of the shield hinders the archery.⁸¹ The axes are relatively rare weapons in the cemetery. Only two pieces are known from the site.⁸² (fig. 7.)

⁷³ Grave 43 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, pp.17–18, Taf. 5.); 90 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 22, Taf. 15.), 104 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 24, Taf. 18), 124 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 26, Taf. 124.), 129 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, 27, 56, 100: Taf. 22/1, 135, Taf. XVIII/5.)

⁷⁴ In the cemetery the following graves had weapons with amuletic character: grave 41. (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 17, Taf. 5.), 91. (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 23, Taf. 14.), 106. (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 24, Taf. 19.), 114. (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 25, Taf. 19.)

⁷⁵ Arrowheads: grave Nr. 7, 17, 39, 71, 99, 103, 128; bone plate of the bow: grave Nr. 3, 54; combined: grave Nr. 10, 18, 23, 24, 60, 66, 75, 78, 82, 100, 109, 147, 149. (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 51.)

⁷⁶ The following burials contained only elements of archery: grave Nr. 7 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 14, Taf. 1), 10 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 15, Taf. 1.), 17 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 15, Taf. 2.), 18 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 15, Taf. 2.), 23 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 16, Taf. 3.), 24 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 16, Taf. 3.), 39 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 17, Taf. 5.), 54 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, pp. 18–19, Taf. 7.), 60 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 19, Taf. 7), 71 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 20, Taf. 10.), 82 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 21–22, Taf. 13.), 103 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 24, Taf. 18.)

⁷⁷ *Spathae* from Környe: grave 8 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, 14–15, Taf. 1. sword: Taf. 32/6.), 16 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, 15, Taf. 2. sword: Taf. 32/5.), 44 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, 18, Taf. 7, kard: Taf. 32/7.), 50 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 18, Taf. 6, sword: Taf. 33/1.), 66 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 20, Taf. 9. *Spatha*: Taf. 33/4.), 97 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, 23, Taf. 15, *spatha*: Taf. 33/5, suspension of the *spatha*: Taf. 15/31–32.), 100 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, 23–24, Taf. 17; *spatha*: Taf. 33/2.) and six stray finds (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 30, Taf. 33/3, 34/1–2, 34/6–8.)

⁷⁸ Double-edged swords: grave 75 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 20, Taf. 10, sword: Taf. 32/1, Abb. 4/1.), 109 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 24, Taf. 19, sword: Taf. 32/4.), and two stray finds: (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 30, Taf. 34/4–5.)

⁷⁹ Single-edged swords, 8 examples: grave 35 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 17, Taf. 5. sword: Taf. 33/6, Taf. XXX/6.), 78 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 21, Taf. 12, sword: Taf. 33/9, 12/51.), 99 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 23. Taf. 16, sword: Taf. 32/2, Abb. 4/3.), 130 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 27, Taf. 23, sword: Taf. 33/8.), 135 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 27, Taf. 24, sword: Taf. 33/7.), 149 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 29, Taf. 26, sword: Taf. 32/3, Abb. 4/2.) and two stray finds (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 30, Taf. 34/3, 34/9)

⁸⁰ Grave 44 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 18, Taf. 7.), 66 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 20, Taf. 9.), 78 (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 21, Taf. 12.)

⁸¹ For this term 'Überbewaffnung' see Steuer 1970, p. 352. where he suggests that a mounted warrior with a spear fighting in formation cannot use his sword.

⁸² Grave Nr. 125, 147. (Salamon – Erdélyi 1971, p. 57.)

Only 43 graves were equipped with weapons⁸³ from the 786 burials of Szekszárd-Bogyiszlói út cemetery, 4 of them were horse burials⁸⁴ and 2 female graves.⁸⁵ The rest is 34 male burials with weapons, this is probably one third of the male burials of the period. (fig. 8.) The most frequent weapons are the arrowheads, altogether 27 burials contained them,⁸⁶ 20 of them were equipped only with elements of archery.⁸⁷ The rest are mixed: 5 of the 9 graves with close-combat weapons contained arrowheads as well. Only 12 graves (among them 4 horse burials) were equipped only with close-combat weapons.⁸⁸ The most popular close-combat weapons were the spears (from 10 male graves and 4 horse-burials).⁸⁹ The second one is the spatha (Merovingian double-edged sword) from 5 male burials.⁹⁰ Two seaxes are found in the cemetery, too.⁹¹ One burial contained only one umbo without any other elements of armament.⁹² (fig. 9.)

In the Csákberény-Orondpuszta cemetery 66 weapon graves were excavated, which is one third of the male burials. (fig. 10.) The most frequent weapons were the arrowheads, they were found in 35 graves,⁹³ however, bone fittings of composite bows were found only in 6 burials.⁹⁴ Only 3 swords are known from the cemetery,⁹⁵

⁸³ Rosner 1999, pp. 123-132.

⁸⁴ Rosner 1999, p. 129. Spearheads were found in horse burials Nr. 126. (Rosner 1999, p. 25. Abb. 5, Taf. 10.), 598. (Rosner 1999, p. 76, Abb. 8. Taf. 39), 698. (Rosner 1999, pp. 87-88, Taf. 46.), 754. (Rosner 1999, pp. 95-96, Abb. 11. Taf. 50.)

⁸⁵ Both female burial contained pieces of lamellar armour: grave 306. (Rosner 1999, p. 43, Taf. 21.), 644. (Rosner 1999, p. 82, Taf. 43.) and the arrowhead of grave 67 (Rosner 1999, p. 18, Taf. 5.)

⁸⁶ Arrowheads were found in the following burials: 67, 82, 97, 111, 155, 191, 216, 225, 297, 335, 350, 354, 357, 360, 368, 471, 478, 605, 618, 620, 621, 622, 636/a, 730, 766, 777, 781 (Rosner 1999, p. 130.)

⁸⁷ The following burials contained only elements of archery 67. (Rosner 1999, p. 18, Taf. 5.), 82 (Rosner 1999, p. 19, Taf. 6.), 97 (Rosner 1999, p. 21, Taf. 7.), 155 (Rosner 1999, p. 28, Taf. 12.), 191 (Rosner 1999, p. 32, Taf. 53.), 225 (Rosner 1999, p. 35, Taf. 16.), 297 (Rosner 1999, p. 42, Taf. 20.), 357 (Rosner 1999, p. 51, Taf. 25.), 360 (Rosner 1999, p. 51, Taf. 26.), 368 (Rosner 1999, p. 52, Taf. 26.), 471 (Rosner 1999, p. 64, Taf. 33.), 605 (Rosner 1999, p. 77, Taf. 39.), 618 (Rosner 1999, p. 79, Taf. 40.), 620 (Rosner 1999, p. 79, Taf. 40.), 621 (Rosner 1999, p. 79, Taf. 40.), 622 (Rosner 1999, p. 79, Taf. 41.), 636/A (Rosner 1999, p. 81, Taf. 42.), 766 (Rosner 1999, p. 97, Taf. 50.), 777 (Rosner 1999, p. 98, Taf. 52.), 781 (Rosner 1999, p. 98, Taf. 52.)

⁸⁸ 16, 44, 58, 126 (ló), 356, 390, 551, 556, 598 (ló), 677, 698 (ló), 754 (ló),

⁸⁹ Grave Nr. 58. (Rosner 1999, p. 17, Taf. 4/1.), 111 (Rosner 1999, p. 23, Taf. 9/1.), 126 (Rosner 1999, p. 25, Taf. 10/2.), 246 (Rosner 1999, p. 37, Taf. 17/1.), 350 (Rosner 1999, p. 48, Taf. 24/15.), 354 (Rosner 1999, p. 49, Taf. 25/14.), 356 (Rosner 1999, p. 51, Taf. 26/9.), 478 (Rosner 1999, p. 65, Taf. 33/5.), 551 (Rosner 1999, p. 72, Taf. 37/1.), 556 (Rosner 1999, p. 73, Taf. 37/5.), 598 (Rosner 1999, p. 76, Taf. 39/2.), 677 (Rosner 1999, p. 85, Taf. 45/5.), 698 (Rosner 1999, p. 87-88, Taf. 46/3.), 754 (Rosner 1999, p. 96, Taf. 50/3.)

⁹⁰ Grave Nr. 16 (Rosner 1999, p. 13, Taf. 2/15.), 216 (Rosner 1999, p. 34, Taf. 16/11.), 356 (Rosner 1999, p. 51.), 390 (Rosner 1999, p. 54, Taf. 28/1.)

⁹¹ Grave Nr. 44 (Rosner 1999, p. 16, Taf. 4/3.): a so-called 'Kurzsaax', and grave Nr. 350 (Rosner 1999, p. 49, Taf. 24/14.) a 'Breitsaax.

⁹² Grave Nr. 760 (Rosner 1999, p. 96., Taf. 50.)

⁹³ Grave Nr. 4, 10, 14, 71, 78, 89, 95, 100, 111, 150, 155, 174, 210, 211, 222, 226, 236, 245, 256, 262, 278, 280, 289, 337, 344, 365, 369, 370, 376, 377, 380, 395, 397, 398, 451

⁹⁴ Grave Nr. 111, 272, 289, 323, 344, 365.

⁹⁵ Grave Nr. 10, 86, 150, 210

the most important close-combat weapons were the spears with 19 examples from 15 graves.⁹⁶ The spears are mainly excavated in horse-burials (8 graves)⁹⁷ and were found only in 6 male graves.⁹⁸ The axes are relatively rare finds, only 6 pieces are known.⁹⁹ In the Csákberény cemetery the close-combat weapons don't combine with each other. Most of the weapon graves (32 graves, 48,5 %) contained only elements of archery.¹⁰⁰ In 6 burials (9 %) only elements of close combat weapons were found.¹⁰¹ (fig. 11.)

The Budakalász-Dunapart cemetery is one of the greatest burial sites of the early avar period. Only 172 of its 1566 graves contained elements of armament,¹⁰² 151 of them is male,¹⁰³ the rest are horse burials.¹⁰⁴ The proportion of male weapon graves is around 10 % of all burials and one third of the male graves. (fig. 12.) The most frequent weapon finds were the arrowheads in the cemetery, they were represented in 105 graves¹⁰⁵ (69,5 %) and in 11 burials were associated with bone-plates of bows.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁶ Grave Nr. 78, 84, 89, 108, 119, 141, 147, 169, 245, 247, 255, 294, 327, 396.

⁹⁷ Grave Nr. 89B, 108B, 119, 245B, 247, 327 and 396

⁹⁸ Grave Nr. 44, 78, 84, 147, 169, 255.

⁹⁹ Grave Nr. 71, 87, 172, 262, 278, 313

¹⁰⁰ Grave Nr. 4, 14, 71, 95, 100, 111, 155, 174, 211, 222, 226, 236, 256, 262, 278, 280, 289, 337, 344, 365, 369, 370, 376, 377, 380, 395, 397, 398, 451

¹⁰¹ Grave Nr. 84, 86, 108, 119, 141, 147, 169, 247, 255, 294, 327, 396

¹⁰² Grave Nr. 1, 17, 17A, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 38, 45, 47, 55, 68, 73, 85, 93, 141, 153, 172, 179, 180, 200, 205, 218, 219, 223, 245, 254, 260, 271, 281, 291, 299, 300, 313, 314, 316, 326, 331, 334, 341, 342, 378, 384, 389, 424, 432, 437, 440, 447, 451, 452, 453, 464, 468, 479, 480, 490, 495, 496, 497, 510, 522, 529, 540, 545, 551, 560, 575, 577, 580, 588, 598, 600, 607, 615, 621, 622, 626, 628, 660, 662, 665, 666, 670, 673, 680, 688, 689, 696, 698, 705, 710, 715, 719, 728, 751, 756, 762, 773, 778, 794, 800, 808, 820, 831, 832, 851, 882, 887, 892, 893, 896, 917, 930, 939, 942, 953, 972, 993, 1000, 1003, 1024, 1030, 1047, 1056, 1060, 1066, 1077, 1080, 1096, 1124, 1129, 1149, 1156, 1158, 1160, 1162, 1177, 1189, 1212, 1192, 1225, 1235, 1248, 1253, 1271, 1279, 1284, 1295, 1296, 1300, 1302, 1305, 1317, 1330, 1338, 1343, 1359, 1363, 1380, 1384, 1385, 1399, 1400, 1437.

¹⁰³ Grave Nr. 1, 17, 17A, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 38, 45, 47, 55, 68, 73, 93, 141, 153, 172, 179, 180, 200, 205, 218, 219, 223, 245, 254, 260, 271, 281, 291, 299, 300, 313, 314, 316, 326, 331, 334, 342, 378, 384, 389, 424, 432, 437, 447, 451, 452, 453, 464, 479, 480, 490, 495, 496, 497, 510, 522, 529, 540, 545, 551, 560, 575, 580, 588, 598, 600, 607, 615, 621, 622, 626, 660, 662, 665, 666, 670, 673, 680, 688, 696, 698, 705, 715, 719, 728, 751, 756, 762, 773, 778, 794, 800, 808, 820, 831, 832, 851, 882, 887, 892, 893, 896, 917, 930, 939, 942, 953, 993, 1000, 1003, 1024, 1030, 1056, 1060, 1066, 1077, 1080, 1096, 1124, 1129, 1149, 1158, 1160, 1177, 1189, 1212, 1192, 1225, 1248, 1253, 1271, 1279, 1284, 1295, 1296, 1302, 1305, 1317, 1330, 1338, 1343, 1359, 1363, 1384, 1385, 1399, 1400, 1437.

¹⁰⁴ Grave Nr. 85, 341, 440, 468, 577, 628, 689, 710, 972, 1047, 1156, 1162, 1235, 1300, 1380.

¹⁰⁵ Grave Nr. 17, 17A, 20, 21, 38, 45, 47, 55, 73, 93, 141, 172, 179, 180, 218, 219, 223, 271, 281, 289, 291, 299, 300, 313, 314, 316, 326, 331, 334, 342, 384, 424, 440, 447, 451, 452, 453, 464, 479, 490, 495, 496, 497, 510, 545, 560, 575, 580, 588, 598, 600, 607, 615, 621, 622, 626, 660, 662, 665, 673, 698, 751, 756, 762, 794, 800, 808, 820, 831, 887, 892, 893, 896, 917, 939, 942, 953, 972, 1003, 1030, 1056, 1060, 1066, 1077, 1080, 1124, 1129, 1149, 1160, 1177, 1189, 1192, 1225, 1248, 1253, 1279, 1284, 1295, 1296, 1305, 1317, 1343, 1363, 1384, 1385, 1400, 1437.

¹⁰⁶ Grave Nr. 17, 55, 432, 497, 522, 688, 831, 1284, 1295, 1317, 1363.

In 93 burials (61,5 %) of the site the only weapon finds were the elements of archery.¹⁰⁷

The most important close-combat weapon was the spear which was found in 54 graves,¹⁰⁸ 12 of them were horse-burial,¹⁰⁹ and 8 burials of men with horses,¹¹⁰ 34 of them were male graves.¹¹¹ Only 7 graves contained an axe.¹¹² The swords can be regarded as rare weapons, being represented only in 4 graves.¹¹³ In 48 burials (27,9 %) of the cemetery only close-combat weapons were found.¹¹⁴ Defensive weapons lamellar armor, chain-mail and umbos were found at the site, 9 graves contained elements of armor,¹¹⁵ but 5 of them are surely amuletic, since no other element of armament was found there. 5 burials contained umbos¹¹⁶ and two of them even contained hilts of shields,¹¹⁷ in three cases only arrowheads were found with the shield,¹¹⁸ but none of them was in combination with any close-combat weapons. (fig. 13.)

5. Concluding remarks

Summarizing the above facts the proportion of the weapon burials among the male graves is unequal. The highest rate was shown by the Környe cemetery, while in other cases only one third of the male population was buried with weapons. Similar but somewhat higher rates can be observed in the case of the Gepidic cemeteries of the Hungarian Plain in the 6th century: the weapon graves normally represented there the 50-60 % of the adult male burials.¹¹⁹ (Fig. 14)

¹⁰⁷ Grave Nr. 17, 21, 38, 45, 47, 141, 172, 179, 180, 218, 219, 271, 289, 291, 313, 314, 316, 326, 331, 334, 342, 384, 389, 424, 440, 447, 451, 453, 463, 479, 490, 495, 496, 497, 510, 522, 545, 560, 575, 580, 598, 600, 615, 621, 626, 660, 662, 665, 673, 688, 698, 751, 762, 794, 800, 808, 820, 831, 887, 892, 893, 896, 917, 939, 942, 953, 972, 1000, 1056, 1060, 1066, 1080, 1124, 1129, 1149, 1160, 1189, 1192, 1248, 1253, 1279, 1284, 1295, 1296, 1305, 1317, 1343, 1363, 1384, 1385, 1400, 1437.

¹⁰⁸ Grave Nr. 1, 19, 22, 55, 68, 73, 85, 93, 200, 223, 245, 260, 281, 299, 341, 432, 437, 452, 468, 480, 529, 540, 551, 577, 666, 670, 680, 689, 696, 705, 710, 715, 719, 728, 778, 832, 851, 930, 993, 1003, 1024, 1047, 1077, 1096, 1156, 1158, 1162, 1177, 1225, 1235, 1271, 1300, 1330, 1338, 1380,

¹⁰⁹ 22,22% of the burials with spear. Grave Nr. 85, 341, 468, 577, 689, 710, 1047, 1156, 1162, 1235, 1300, 1380.

¹¹⁰ 14,8 % of the burials with spear. Grave Nr. 93, 200, 223, 245, 260, 480, 529, 832.

¹¹¹ 62,96% of the burials with spear. Grave Nr. 1, 19, 22, 55, 68, 73, 281, 299, 432, 437, 452, 540, 551, 666, 670, 680, 696, 705, 715, 719, 728, 778, 851, 930, 993, 1003, 1024, 1077, 1096, 1158, 1177, 1225, 1271, 1330, 1338.

¹¹² Grave Nr. 205, 223, 254, 588, 710, 715, 756.

¹¹³ Grave Nr. 1, 18, 20, 153.

¹¹⁴ Grave Nr. 1, 18, 19, 22, 68, 85, 153, 200, 205, 245, 254, 260, 299, 341, 437, 468, 480, 529, 540, 551, 577, 666, 670, 680, 689, 696, 705, 710, 715, 719, 728, 778, 832, 851, 930, 993, 1024, 1047, 1096, 1156, 1158, 1162, 1235, 1271, 1300, 1330, 1338, 1380,

¹¹⁵ Grave Nr. 55, 281, 378, 437, 628, 773, 882, 1302.

¹¹⁶ Grave Nr. 300, 607, 622, 1212, 1359

¹¹⁷ Grave Nr. 300, 1359

¹¹⁸ Grave Nr. 300, 607, 622

¹¹⁹ Szentes-Nagyhegy 61 %, Szentes-Berekhát 56 %, Kiszombor 31 %, Szentes-Kökényzug 24 %, Hódmezővásárhely-Kishomok 12 % (31 % of the male burials) (Nagy 1993, p. 65.), Szolnok-Szanda

It is interesting to observe that the rate of the burials furnished exclusively with elements of archery is relatively high, and in the case of Szekszárd-Bogyiszlói út and Budakalász-Dunapart the dominance of the distant-combat weapons is evident. The rate of burials with close-combat weapons is relatively high in Környe and Kölked, but still low comparatively to the Merovingian cemeteries of Germany where the burials with elements of close-combat weapons are dominating with 68,5 %.¹²⁰ (Fig. 15)

The most important close-combat weapon is the spear in these cemeteries, however most of these weapons were found in horse-burials and this kind of deposition is unknown from the Merovingian cemeteries, but known from Gepidic ones.¹²¹ The combinations with shields is very interesting in the early Avar cemeteries of Transdanubia, since in some cemeteries such as Szekszárd and Budakalász they were only found in combination with arrowheads or without any other weapon. This is not typical for the Germanic cemeteries of the period while in the cemeteries of Kölked and Környe the combinations are characteristic for their western equivalents.

The characteristic weapon-combinations for the Merovingian cemeteries can be found only in Kölked and in Környe, although in the latter one the deposition of spears is equivalent to the Early avar rite. The composition of weapons in Szekszárd, Budakalász and Csákberény is much more connected to the find-material of other areas of the Avar Khaganate.

To conclude, the abovementioned early Avar cemeteries of Transdanubia are characterized by the relatively high number of close-combat weapons compared to other sites of the Avar Khaganate. However, comparing to Merovingian sites the burials containing only close-combat weapons are very low and in most of the cases the weapon-combinations characteristic to this culture is missing. Transdanubia can be seen as a bridge between the Nomadic Avaria and the Germanic Merovingian world, characteristics of both can be observed, and however it belongs to neither of them. This region composes an interesting cultural mixture both using Western and Eastern elements and combining it in a unique manner even in the field of warfare.

48 % (of the male burials), Szőreg-Téglagyár 49 %. The average rate of the weapon-burials among the male burials is 44 % in Gepidic cemeteries.

¹²⁰ Reiß 2007, p. 223.

¹²¹ Törökszentmiklós–Batthyányi utca 54/A, Grave A (Cseh 2005, pp. 43–44.)

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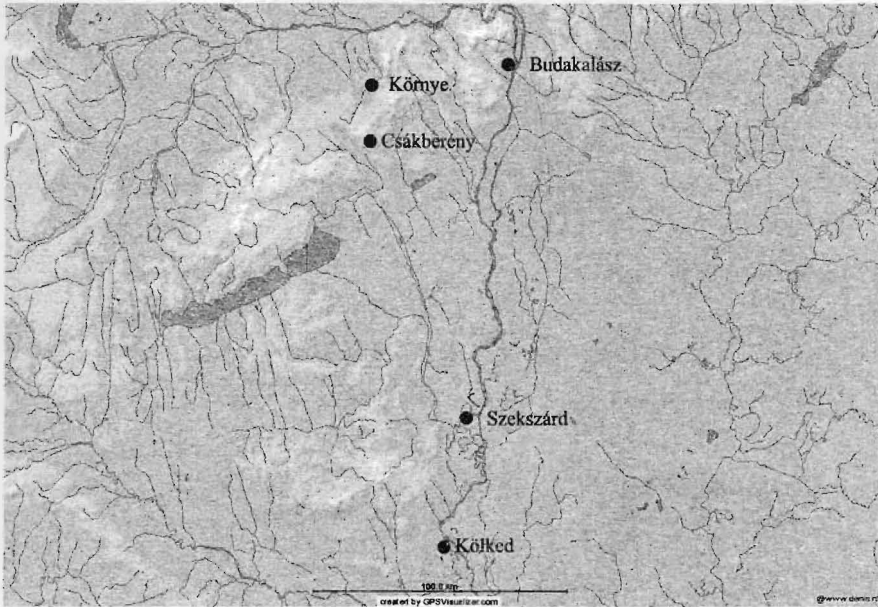


Fig. 1. The geographical distribution of the sites studied

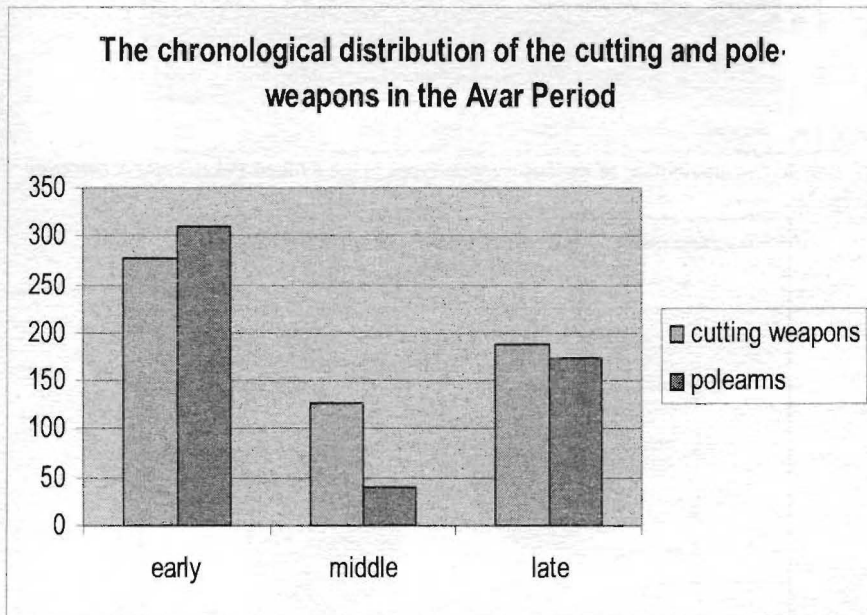


Fig. 2. The chronological distribution of cutting and pole weapons of the Avar Period

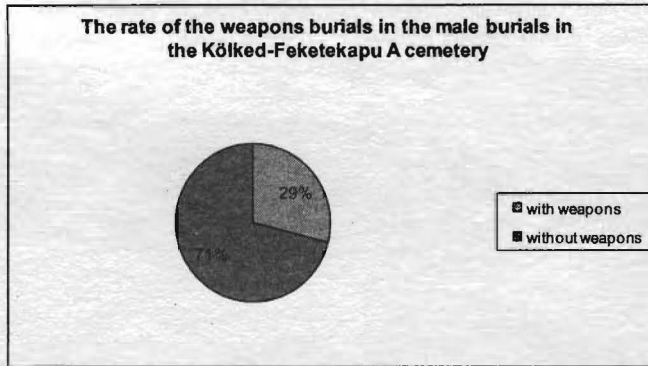


Fig. 3. The rate of weapon-burials among the male burials in the Kőlked-Feketekapu A cemetery

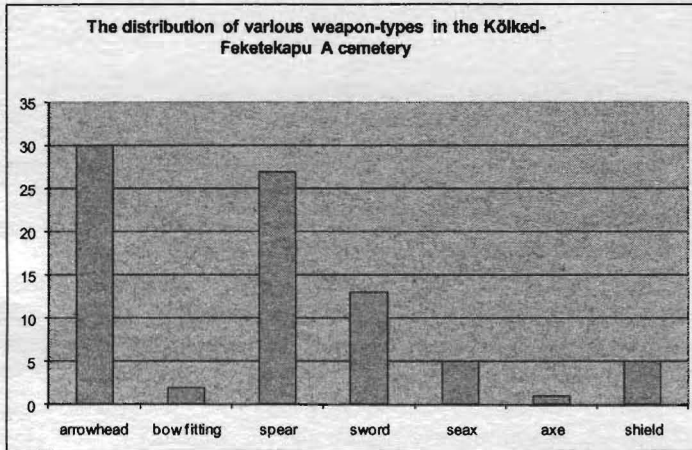


Fig. 4. The distribution of various weapon-types in the Kőlked-Feketekapu A cemetery

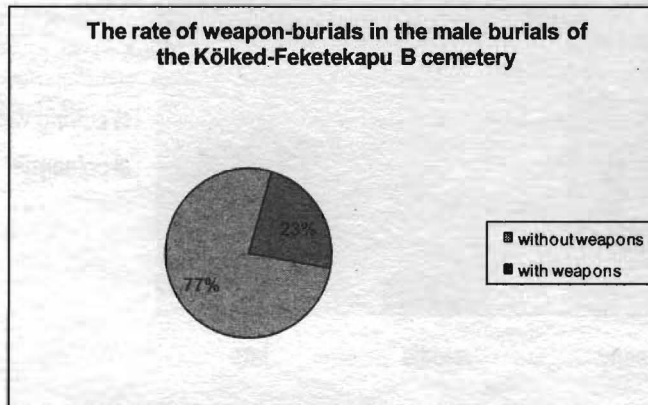


Fig. 5. The rate of weapon-burials among the male burials in the Kőlked-Feketekapu B cemetery

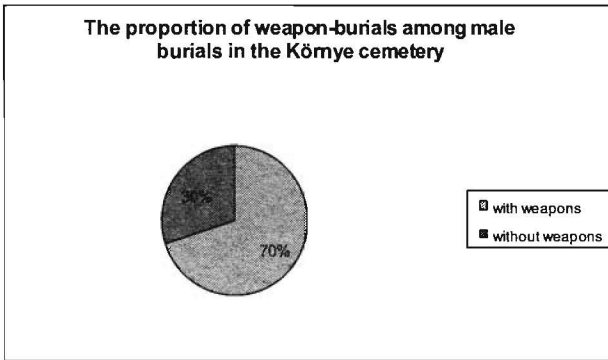


Fig. 6. The rate of weapon-burials among the male burials in the Környe cemetery

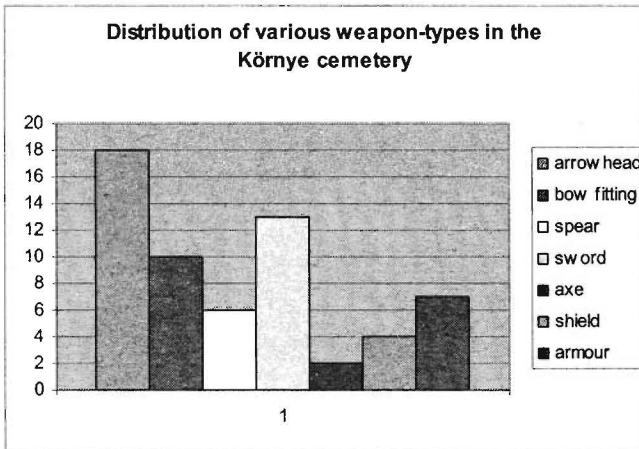


Fig. 7. The distribution of various weapon-types in the Környe cemetery

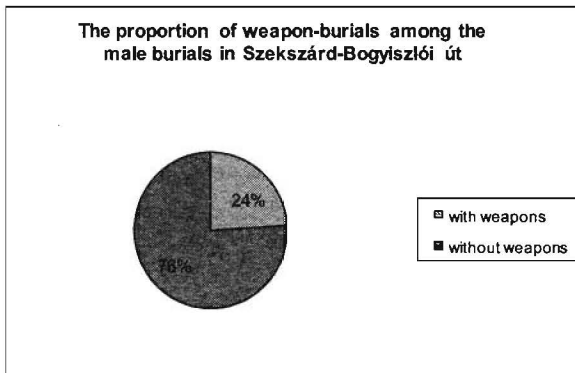


Fig. 8. The rate of weapon-burials among the male burials in the Szekszárd cemetery

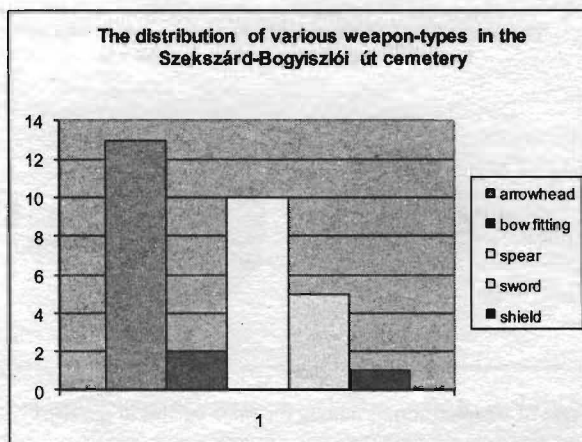


Fig. 9. The distribution of various weapon-types in the Szekszárd cemetery

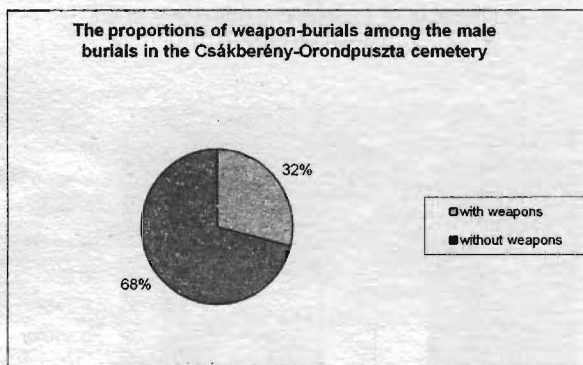


Fig. 10. The rate of weapon-burials among the male burials in the Csákberény cemetery

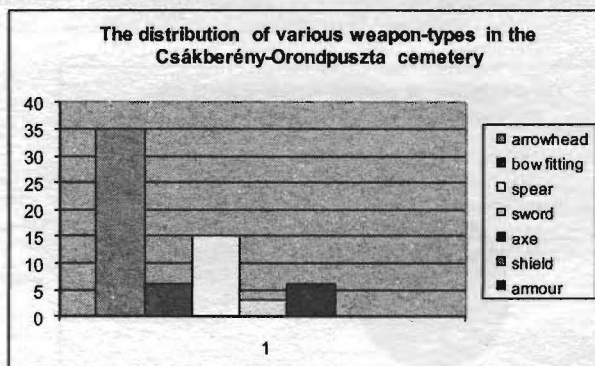


Fig. 11. The distribution of various weapon-types in the Csákberény cemetery

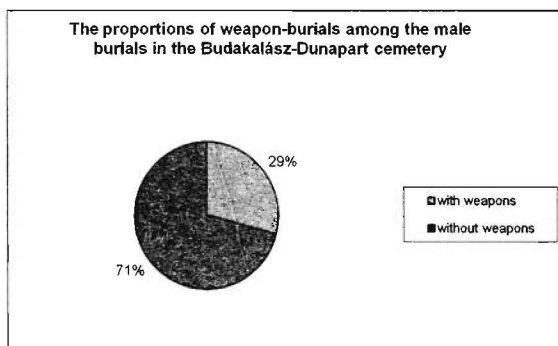


Fig. 12. The rate of weapon-burials among the male burials in the Budakalász cemetery

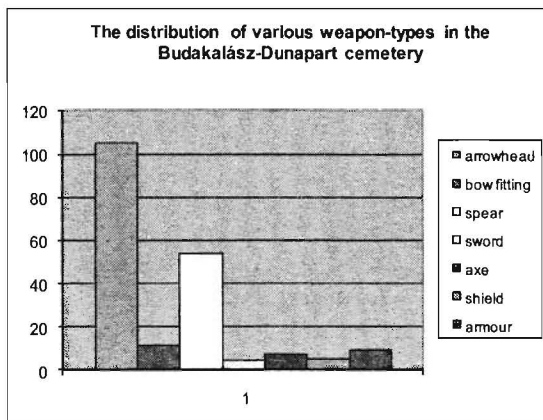


Fig. 13. The distribution of various weapon-types in the Budakalász cemetery

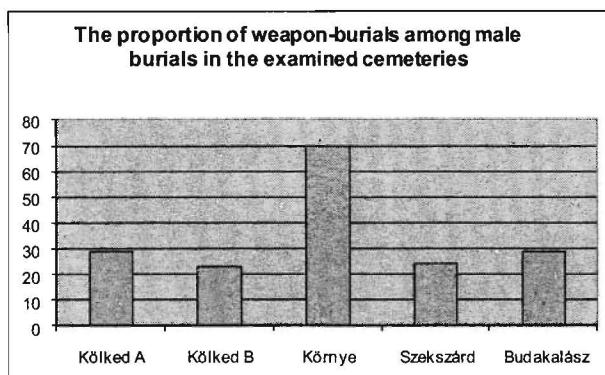


Fig. 14. The proportion of weapon-burials among the male burials in the examined cemeteries

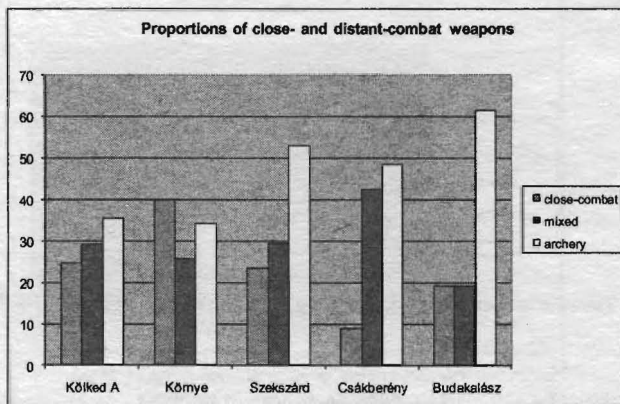


Fig. 15. The proportion of the close- and distant-combat weapons in the examined cemeteries