

An unknown grave complex – Warengen 2. The earliest finds of cross-shaped pins

Katarzyna Szatkowska

The story of the Prussia Museum Collection is very well known. Huge amounts of artefacts, believed to have been gone from the sight of modern archaeology, have unexpectedly come into our view. However, this material is both enormously rich and bearing new concepts and ideas, and sometimes very difficult to analyze and discuss.

It is my intention to enlighten the ‘second discovery’ of grave nr 2 from Warengen, Kreis Fischhausen, on Sambia.

An archaeological site in Warengen was first encountered in 1879, by an amateur van Henning (Nowakowski, 1996, 38). During next thirty years, the site had been dug also by Heydeck and Peiser. None of those excavation results had been sufficiently published. In the beginning of twentieth century Heydeck (1909, p. 221–224) and later Peiser (1919, p. 319–327) published brief notes regarding the site and lists of excavated grave goods. The scholars gave neither drawings, nor satisfying findings descriptions. Short articles let us establish the site chronology for the phases from B2b to D, but give us few details on the cemetery. Another trace of artefacts from Warengen comes from the ninety twentieth, when the files of Feliks Jakobson (Jacobson, Archives), now in Riga, were made.

In those archives, among many others, Jakobson gives a scheme drawings and a brief description of a second grave complex. Unfortunately, neither in Heydeck’s nor Peiser’s articles can we find a list of objects that would correspond with Jakobson’s file. It is therefore possible, that the artefacts registered by Jakobson come from un-professional excavations carried out before Heydeck’s ones.

The artefacts of interest fortunately survived the chaos of war and can still be found in Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Berlin (Kat. Nr. III, 211, 1082, 2). Because of the lack of original working drawings and plans, the basis for considering them as belonging to one consistent grave complex is quite fragile. However, for the same reasons, we cannot reject this possibility. The constitu-

tion of the complex is outstanding and unique, so that a close look at the findings and deep analysis is more than needed.

The artefacts that comfort the researchers with the best established chronology are the fragments of two bronze crossbow fibulas A.167 type (fig. 2:1–4; fig. 3:1, 2). So called “Fibula mit umgeschlagenen Fuß”, widely spread upon the territory of both Wielbark culture and Baltic cultures circle, are narrowly dated for early stages of Late Roman Period. The most intriguing is the silver-plated one (fig. 3:1, 2). Its filigree wire is spirally bent, what presents an outstanding decorative ornament. The only close analogy comes from the same archaeological site (Nowakowski, 1996, Taf. 69). It unfortunately is a stray find, therefore brings no chronological specification. However, it stylistically resembles our fibula so much, that they had probably been made by the hand of the same craftsman.

Another very interesting object is miniature scissors (fig. 1:3), made of bronze and ornamented. The habit of equipping the dead with this type of artefacts comes from the late phases of Early Roman Period (Gaul, 1983, p. 351) and was first carried out by the Germanic tribes in Jutland, Holstein and Mecklenburg (Beilke-Voigt, 1994, p. 101). In the Late Roman Period the scissors become smaller in size, are often made of silver and are carefully decorated. In the Migration Period, scissors once again become larger and still are meticulously adorned. In his “Zur Geschichte der Schere” Adalbert Bezenberger (1924, p. 114–148) writes about miniature scissors from Warengen, dated on phase C2. Unfortunately he gives neither details on the grave complex they come from, nor even it’s number, nor the drawing of the scissors themselves. It is however possible, that the artefact he mentions, and the scissors from the second grave complex from Warengen are actually one and the same object. This case would confirm the artifact’s chronology as the Late Roman Period.

In the complex we can also find an openwork bronze pendant (fig. 1:2). This kind of adornments is typical for

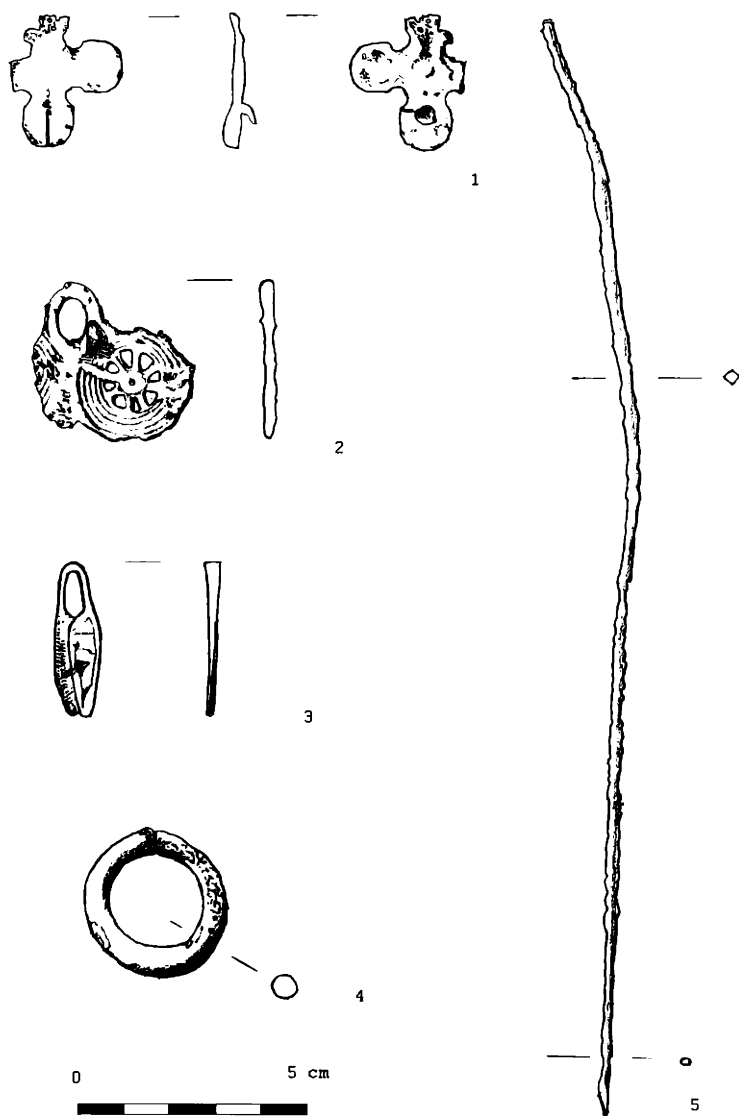


Fig. 1. Warengen, Kr. Fischhausen, grave 2. 1–5 – bronze.
1 pav. Warengen, Kr. Fischhausen. Kapas Nr. 2. 1–5 – žalvaris

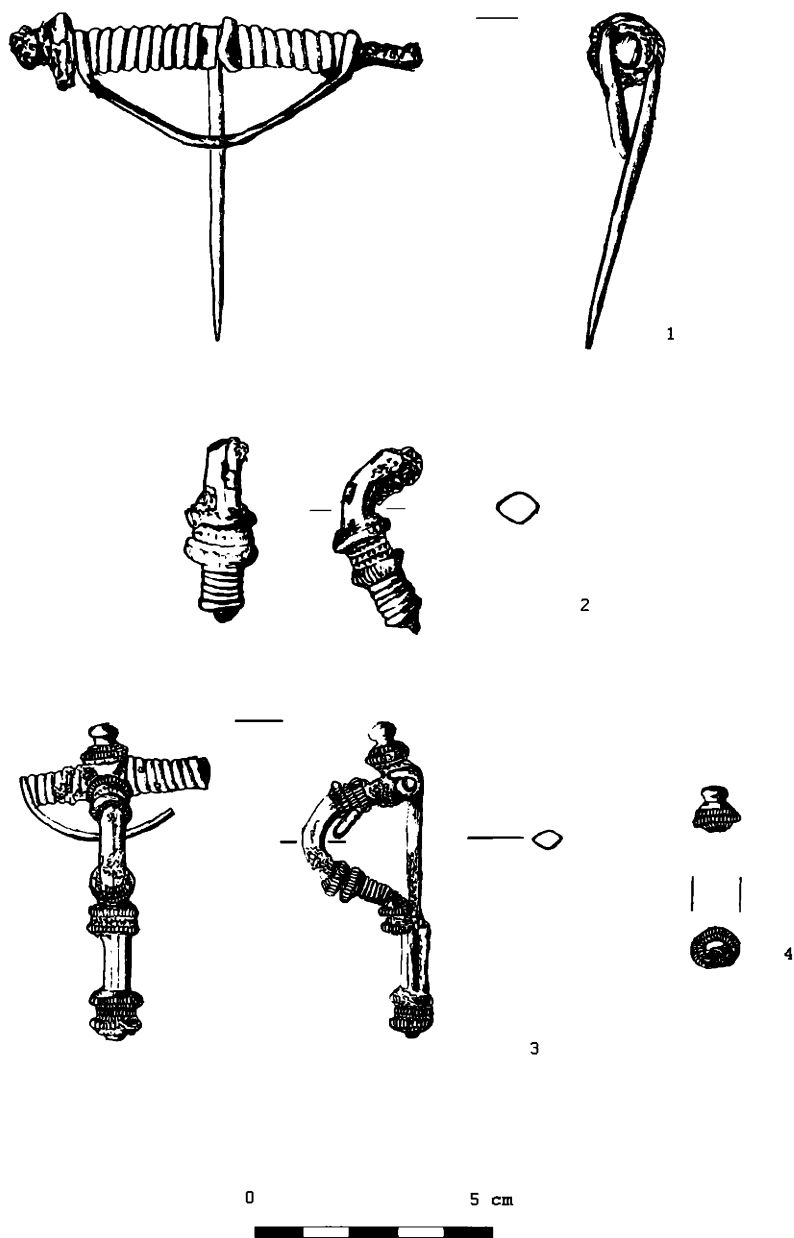


Fig. 2. Warengen, Kr. Fischhausen, grave 2. 1-4 – bronze.
2 pav. Warengen, Kr. Fischhausen. Kapas Nr. 2. 1-4 – žalvaris

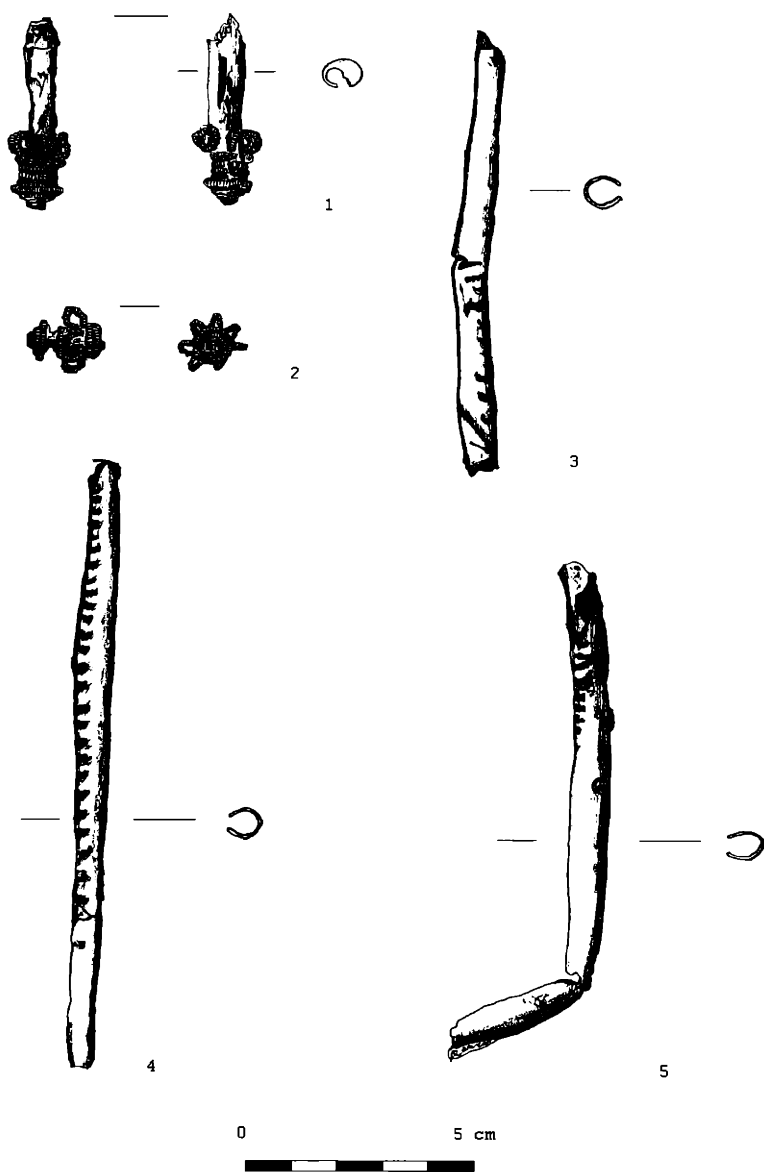


Fig. 3. Warengen, Kr. Fischhausen, grave 2. 1, 2 – bronze and silver, 3–5 – bronze.
3 pav. Warengen, Kr. Fischhausen. Kapas Nr. 2. 1, 2 – žalvaris ir sidabras, 3–5 – žalvaris

the whole Baltic territory and has a very wide chronology. However, this particular shape is quite original.

Other parts of the complex are bronze mountings (fig. 3:3, 4, 5), from a shield perhaps, a ring (fig. 1:4), round in cross-section, and a whole set of little round iron bells, amber and melted glass beads, remains of chain pendants and bronze plates¹. There also are two bronze coins, probably Trajan ones, totally plain.

Up to this point, the complex chronology seems to be unquestionable and noncontroversive, defined as the turn of early and middle phases of the Late Roman Period (C1b–C2). In this surrounding, it is quite unexpected to find a cross-shaped head (fig. 1:1). It is made of bronze, with its cross-section flat, the one (front?) side decorated with a simple plastic ornament, and remains of a hook on the other (back?). The plastic-adorned side is plain, thus the other bares some very vague round traces. As the artefact is damaged, lacking both two “arms” and all constructional indicators, the first question that had to be solved was whether it was actually a part of a pin, or perhaps a fibula. As no remains of a sheath can be found, and according to the construction of analogical artefacts, one can ascertain that it indeed originally was a head of a cross-shaped pin.

Besides, in the Jakobson file the original form of this artefact, which is a pin, is clearly stated. Moreover, Jakobson himself seemed to be most astonished by his discovery, as he put an exclamation mark next to a scheme drawing of a head. I can see no reason for distrusting this open-minded and thoroughly educated scholar. In this case, a bronze pin (fig. 1:5), rombic in cross-section, also found in the complex, could possibly be another part of the same artefact.

Nevertheless, such an object in that early dated complex, makes a great surprise. Bezenberger stated that tho-

¹ Those artefacts are very severely corroded.

Literature

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se pins can be dated on Late Roman Period² (Bezenberger, 1909, p. 130), however the chronology of the earliest finds of cross-shaped pins was defined by Adolfas Tautavičius (1996, p. 234) as IV–VII century. Besides their territorial range covers only central Lithuania (the basin of river Jūra). Moreover, those earliest cross-shaped pins differ both in construction form³ and style⁴ from the above-described artefact. This outstanding find from Warengen gives thus two essential pieces of information: being the earliest (or one of the earliest) cross-shaped pin, it questions the modern chronology of those objects, and being the furthest South-West find, it greatly supplements the archaeological map of West Baltic territory.

The conclusion depends on two important questions. The first of them is based on all the uncertainty of the provenience and consistence of the Warengen grave 2 complex. The second – on the factual origin of the cross-shaped head. However, if our assumptions proved true, the described grave complex would occur as a deeply interesting and important discovery. One thing is above all doubt: the person that was buried there, must had been exceptional, open-minded, the one of a high social position, reaching most distant in those-days world realms with his or hers perspective. Let me finish my short announcement with a vision of such a person confirming (or even initiating) the fashion that would have been passionately followed for a few centuries later on. It obviously is just an imaginative idea, but isn't it tempting?

² In Lumpönen a cruciform pin was found with a fibula with a bent foot.

³ The important difference is an iron and bent pin fixed in the middle of the head. There is no opening in the middle of the Warengen artefact, which suggests that the whole pin was made as a one piece.

⁴ Even if the basis bronze plate was covered with silver knobs and wire rings, there is no evidence for that. There is however a slight round mark on the one side of the plate, which might indicate this kind of ornament

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NEŽINOMAS KAPO KOMPLEKSAS – WARENGEN, KAPAS NR. 2. ANKSTYVIAUSI KRYŽINIŲ SMEIGTUKŲ RADINIAI

Katarzyna Szatkowska

Santrauka

Tarp Berlyne esančių „Prussia“ muziejaus Karaliaučiuje surastų daiktų yra ir kapo Nr. 2 iš Warengeno (buv. Kr. Fischhausen), Sambija, radinių. Šie radiniai nebuvo pažymėti trumpuose paminklų tyrinėtojų Heydecko ir Peiserio straipsniuose, todėl gali kilti abejonių, ar tai vienas kompleksas. Tačiau Feliksas Jakobsonas, sudarydamas savo kartoteką XX a. trečiajame dešimtmetyje, į ją įdėjo informaciją, patvirtinančią daiktų kompleksą iš kapo Nr. 2. Jakobsono pažymėti daiktai šiuo metu yra Berlyno *Museum für Vor-und Frühgeschichte*.

Kompleksą sudaro dvi žalvarinės A167 tipo segės (2:1–4, 3:1, 2 pav.), puoštos žiedais iš temptos vielos. Vienos segės žiedai yra sidabriniai, susukti į įviją pagal savo ašį. Kiti komplekso daiktai – tai žalvarinės miniatiūrinės žirkulutės (1:3 pav.), ažuрино dvigubo kabučio dalis (1:2 pav.), skydo

apkaustai (?) (3:3–5 pav.), žalvarinė grandelė (1:4 pav.), silydę stiklo karoliai, gintaro karolis, dvi visiškai neįskaitomos monetos ir labai surūdiję geležiniai skambaliukai bei skardelės.

Daiktų chronologija – vėlyvojo romėniškojo laikotarpio ankstyvojo ir vidurinio periodų sandūra (C1b–C2). Tarp kapo daiktų taip pat yra kryžinė galvutė (1:1 pav.), tikriausiai smeigtuko. Tai būtų ankstyviausiai datuojamas kryžinis smeigtukas, chronologiškai vienalaikis Lumpėnų radiniui. Jis kalbėtų apie ankstesnį chronologinį laikotarpį negu paprastai datuojama (IV–VII a.), taip pat papildytų ankstyviausių kryžinių smeigtukų paplitimo žemėlapi. Šie smeigtukai iki šiol buvo laikomi būdingiausiais į šiaurę nuo Nemuno esančiai teritorijai, apimančiai Žemaitiją ir Aukštaitiją.

Iš lenkų kalbos vertė *M. Michelbertas*

Įteikta 2006 m. vasario mėn.