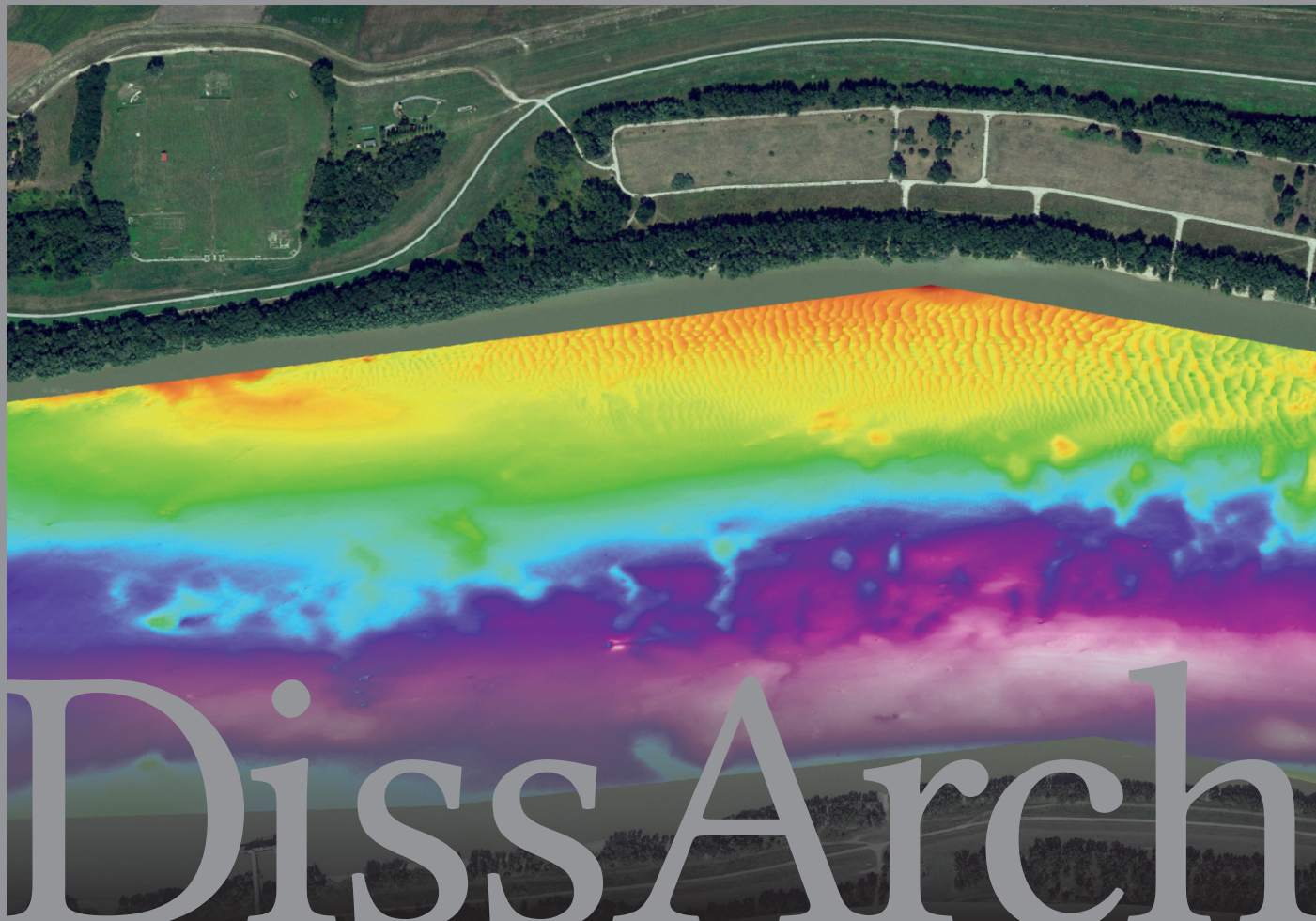


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CONTENTS

WATER DIVIDES – WATER CONNECTS: ROMAN MILITARY, COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE MIDDLE DANUBE REGION AND THE BLACK SEA

Lajos JUHÁSZ 7

Water Divides – Water Connects: Roman military, commercial and cultural contacts between the Middle Danube Region and the Black Sea

Chiara CENATI 9

Aequora Danubii cunctis transnare sub armis: A new interpretation of the poem CLE 427

Nikola RUSEV 25

Trimammium: The Roman limes fortress and the necropolis

Miroslava DAŇOVA – Klaudia DAŇOVA – Ján RAJTÁR 51

The Danube riverbed near the Roman fort at Iža-Leányvár: Results of investigations, 2019–2022

Varbin VARBANOV 63

Evidence of fishing from the excavations of the Roman fortress of Sexaginta Prista (Ruse, Bulgaria)

Svetlana VELIKOVA 75

Medieval life along the Roman limes at the Danube, Ruse Region

1ST NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ARCHAEOLOGY STUDENTS

Dániel HÜMPFNER – Bence PÁRKÁNYI – Rita Helga OLASZ 87

Introduction

Rita SULIMAN 89

Egyptian influence on Late Bronze Age (1600–1200 BC) ivory artefacts from the kingdoms of Ugarit and Qatna

Mirtill ÁRVAI	105
Some Thoughts on five Mycenaean Terracotta Figurines from the Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest	
Bence PÁRKÁNYI	119
Not all Gorgons are Greek: A red-figure kylix fragment in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest	
Virág Veronika SZÁNTÓ	131
Representation and object: <i>Pyxis</i> on the sarcophagus of Titus Aelius	
Dániel HÜMPFNER	147
New data on the settlement history of the so-called <i>villa</i> , a Roman period building, at Testvérhegy	
Rita Helga OLASZ	167
Child graves from Brigetio	
Márton SZABÓ	189
Imported ceramics from the Roman camp at Almásfüzitő	
Ferenc BARNA	211
Gestempelte Ziegel aus den Ausgrabungen von Komárom/Szőny-MOL-Kiskertek (Brigetio) im Jahr 2015	
Regina Viktória CSORDÁS	257
From the table to the grave? The question of animal sacrifices in Avar cemeteries on the Little Hungarian Plain	
Kata SZATHMÁRI	279
Possible ways of use of medieval and early modern bone tools based on results of use-wear analysis, experimental archaeology, and ethnographic parallels	

ARTICLES

Attila PÉNTEK – Ferenc CSERPÁK – Krisztián ZANDLER – Szilvia GUBA	297
First Open-Air Mousterian Site in the Mátra Mountains (North Hungary): Preliminary Results from Szurdokpüspöki-Lapos-tanya	

Kristóf István SZEGEDI – Annamária BÁRÁNY – Julia BLUMENRÖTHER – Endre DOBOS – Tibor MARTON – Gergely PÁLL-BARNA – György LENGYEL	321
Szekszárd-Palánk and the postglacial recolonization of the Pannonian Basin	
Eszter SOLNAY – Zita HRABÁK – Péter HORNOK – Péter KISS – Zsuzsanna M. VIRÁG – Zsuzsanna SIKLÓSI	353
Pottery technological analysis of the Copper Age Transdanubia (Western Hungary)	
Gábor SÁNTA	381
Ceramic Depositions, Ritual Features, and Irregular Burials of the Tumulus Culture in Hungary	
Ákos MENGYÁN – Ferenc KRISTÁLY	413
Pots for a purpose? Interdisciplinary analysis of small amphorae from the Late Bronze Age cemeteries of Maklár (Northeast Hungary)	
Attila MRENKA	447
A peculiar Late Bronze Age find from Sopron-Warischberg	
János Gábor TARBAY	459
Late Bronze Age Arrowheads from Transdanubia and Beyond: Distribution, Chronology, Bronze Technology, and Use-Wear	
Ábel GARCZIK	543
New data on base marks of Late La Tène <i>situlae</i>	
Máté Róbert MERKL – Gábor CSÜLLÖG – Gabriella DARABOS – Ilona PÁL – Maria HAJNALOVA – Enikő Katalin MAGYARI	563
The vegetation of the Roman province of Pannonia based on wood charcoal, pollen, anthracological and carpological studies (1st–5th century AD)	
Dávid BARTUS	611
Roman Bronze Figurines Depicting Iuppiter from Brigetio	
Radu PETCU – Ingrid PETCU-LEVEI	633
A bronze statuette of the Héros Horseman (Thracian Rider) discovered near Tomis (Palazu Mare), Moesia Inferior	
Kata DÉVAI – István FÓRIZS	645
On the functionality of <i>vasa diatreta</i> : The case of the cage cup fragments from Gorsium	

Linda DOBOSI	663
Pieces of gaming equipment from Roman Pannonia: The Collection of the Kuny Domokos Museum in Tata (Hungary)	
Bence GULYÁS – Tamás CZUPPON	699
A stirrup type with Byzantine provenience in Central and Eastern Europe	
Alin FRÎNCULEASA – Daniel GARVĂN – George TROHANI – Elena RENȚA – Mirela MIHON – Cristian MANAILESCU – Oana GAZA – Doru PACESILA – Alexandru PETRE – Erwin GÁLL	713
Absolute dating of the Early/Pre-state Medieval date burial features in Muntenia (the 7th–14th century AD)	
Attila TÜRK – Flórián HARANGI	743
A 13th-century headwear fragment with metal threads from southeastern Hungary and the Bulgarian connections of Árpád Age headdresses	

FIELD REPORTS

Dávid BARTUS – Melinda SZABÓ – Rita Helga OLASZ – Ákos MÜLLER – Bence SIMON – Szilvia JOHÁCZI – Lajos JUHÁSZ – Tibor NÉGYÖKRŰ – Kitti IVANCSICS – László BORHY – Emese SZÁMADÓ	763
Excavations in the legionary fortress of Brigetio in 2025	
Bence SIMON – Szilvia JOHÁCZI – Ákos MÜLLER – Bence PÁRKÁNYI – Lőrinc TIMÁR	781
Pilisszentiván-Hárs-erdő 2025: New buildings and finds from a Roman village in the northwestern hinterland of Aquincum	
Attila Botond SZILASI – Attila TURI – Rita RAKONCZAY	791
2000 years of settlement horizons in the area of the second inner courtyard of the <i>Neue Residenz</i> in Salzburg	

THESIS REVIEW ARTICLES

Nóra SZABÓ	827
Change and transformation during the transition from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age along the capital region of the Danube: Settlement structure analyses based on particular sites from the Vátya III – Koszider Period and the Early Tumulus Culture	

A 13th-century headwear fragment with metal threads from southeastern Hungary and the Bulgarian connections of Árpád Age headdresses

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Abstract: The study presents a 13th-century textile fragment interwoven with metal threads, found in 2000 in Grave 33 of Szentes-Kaján-Temetőhalom, a churchyard site in the South Great Plain. The site is situated in the northern part of Csongrád County, on the outskirts of Szentes, 13 km north of the town centre, in the area known as Kaján. It was discovered in a fairly rich churchyard that started in the early 11th century; the respective grave dates to the second half of the 13th century. Besides reporting on the technical analysis of the object, the authors are the first to argue for a Balkan origin of Árpád Age metal-threaded women's headwear, while emphasising that such textiles—which were presumably imports in the early Kingdom of Hungary—reached the country from several directions and sources. Some pieces of gilded-silver-threaded headwear may have Western European origins, but the example from Szentes-Kaján attests to a connection with the Balkans and Bulgaria.

Keywords: Metal-threaded textiles, headwear, 13th century, Bulgarian–Hungarian connections, medieval fashion

Introduction

The study presents a 13th-century metal-threaded textile fragment from Grave 33 of the rich churchyard site excavated at Szentes-Kaján-Temetőhalom in the Southern Hungarian Plain.¹ The cemetery started in the first half of the 11th century. Besides reporting on the technical analysis of the object, the authors are the first to argue for a Balkan origin of Árpád Age metal-threaded women's headwear, while emphasising that such textiles—which were certainly imports in the early Kingdom of Hungary—reached the country from several directions and sources. In addition to an analysis of contemporary European fashion and wearing styles, the paper includes a socio-cultural evaluation of the artefact.

1 The first version of the study is also available in Hungarian (TÜRK – HARANGI 2025).

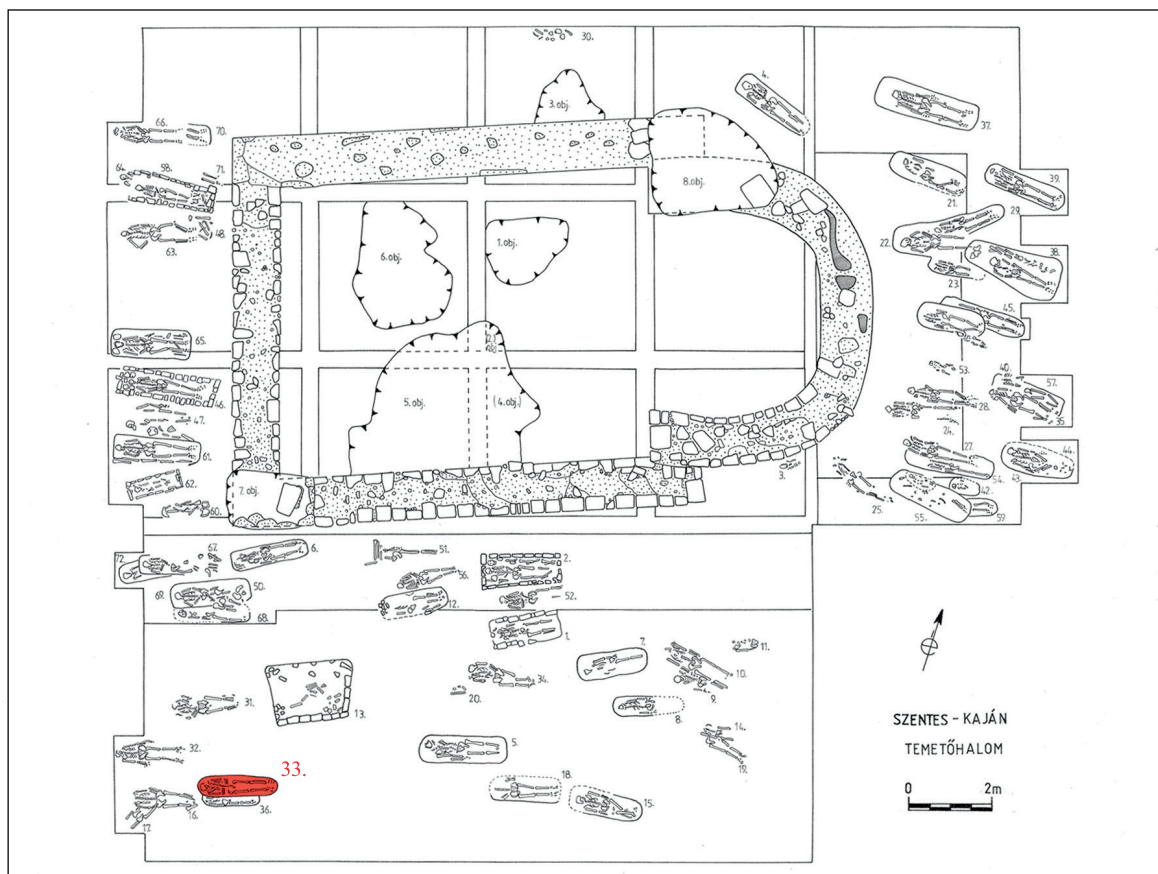
Geographical setting and research history of the site

The site of Szentes-Kaján-Temetőhalom is located in the northeastern part of Csongrád County, in the administrative area of Szentes, 13 km north of the town, near the settlement of Kajánújfalu, on the fringes of Kaján, 450 m northwest of the road to Szarvas, on the east side of the earth road marking the administrative border between Nagytőke and Szentes. A triangulation point at its southern end marks the highest part of the 600 m long, northwest–southeast directed dune called Temető-halom (or Köves-halom) that rises 5–8 m above the plainland and counts as the highest elevation in the landscape. The mound was erected on top of an alluvial cone deposited by the Veker River; as its name suggests, it includes the remains of a church² (Figs 1–2).



Fig. 1. The site of Szentes-Kaján-Temetőhalom. 1 – on a topographic map, 2 – on the map of the first Habsburg military survey.

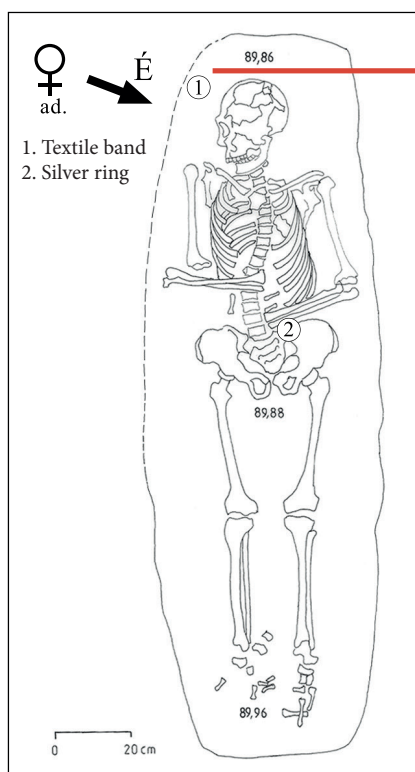
- 2 [BEDE 2008](#), 29. In the Great Hungarian Plain, the name Köves-halom [pile of stones] often refers to churches built on a kurgan, a plateau, or a natural outcrop, most of which were destroyed already in the Árpád Age. Several Árpád Age church sites with the name 'Köves-halom' are known, for example, from the outskirts of Debrecen and Balmazújváros.



1



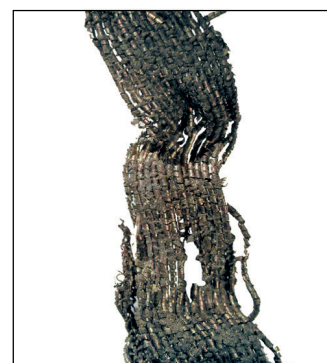
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4a

Fig. 2. Árpád Age church at Szentes-Kaján-Temetőhalom. 1 – site map, 2–3 – survey of Grave 33, 4 – metal-threaded textile remnants from Grave 33, 4a – the metal-threaded textile remains after conservation.

Gábor Csallány conducted the first excavations in an early Árpád Age cemetery on the site in 1935 and 1937. He mentions the site as “Szentes-Kaján, land of János Bartha and Antal Szilágyi Dallos.”³ Elemér Zalotay carried out a surface find collecting survey there in 1932, and József Csalog led another in 1959, both concluding that it includes a buried church building and its graveyard.⁴ The site was rediscovered in 1997 during archaeological topographical works in the area of Szentes, when large quantities of chaff-tempered bricks and carved limestone fragments from the Árpád Age were found on the surface, along with substantial amounts of human bone material scattered around the remains of the former church. The bones came from hundreds of graves that regular agricultural activity in the area, dating back to the late 1950s, had disturbed and destroyed. The ploughed field west of the site yielded vast amounts of primarily Árpád Age pottery, mostly pottery cauldron fragments, the scatter of which clearly outlined the boundaries of the former village site. The remains of the church building’s foundations were unearthed in two consecutive campaigns in 2000 and 2001, revealing its original stone foundations on all sides except the northern one; such structures are rare in the Great Plain. While the foundations of the northern side had been completely exploited, the foundation trench could still be followed, allowing the floor plan of the church to be reconstructed precisely. A total of 72 graves of the churchyard have also been unearthed during the two excavation seasons. Based on the S-terminal temple rings and some coins found beside the stretched skeletons, laid with their heads towards the east in the east-west-oriented grave pits, the cemetery is believed to have started in the early Árpád Age.⁵ No graves were found under the church, confirming the contemporaneity of the church and churchyard (Fig. 2.1), a conclusion corroborated by the radiocarbon dates of charcoal samples taken from the foundation of the building, which span the first half to mid-11th century. Based on radiocarbon dates obtained from the timber used in the church and the lack of intersection between that and the graves, the 24 burials previously excavated by Gábor Csallány—one containing a coin of Andrew I—likely belonged to an early graveyard starting in the first half of the 11th century. In summary, this churchyard is likely unlike the two-period cemetery unearthed at Gellénháza, which was established by a pagan community and subsequently consecrated, remaining in use after pagan times. According to the testimony of written sources, such cemeteries existed in the domain of Ajtony, the last regional lord to be subjected to King Stephen I, in the Southern Hungarian Plain.⁶ A brief summary of the cemetery and the site was published in the 2005 issue of *Opuscula Hungarica*, a compilation volume focusing on research on churchyards.⁷

The finds of the churchyard and Grave 33

Primarily 11th–12th-century finds—mostly jewellery and coins—were retrieved from the graves and the area of the churchyard;⁸ only a small part of the find material from the site could be dated to the 13th century. Of particular importance are a mount that once covered the lower arm of a *corpus* from Limoges⁹ and three carved, high-quality marble fragments from the interior of the church.¹⁰ These finds attest to the considerable wealth of the related community, as do the gold wire S-terminal temple

3 Szentes-Kaján, KJM (Kosztá József Museum, Szentes) Archaeological Data Archive: 311-85, 312-85; BÁLINT 1991, 253, No. 267 and 268; CSALLÁNY 1937, 4; CSALLÁNY 1940, 23; FEHÉR *et al.* 1962, 73, No. 1009; KOVALOVSKI 1957, 65.

4 For the relevant data archive IDs, see BEDE 2008, 29.

5 TÜRK 2005.

6 BÍRÓ – BALÁZS 2018.

7 TÜRK 2005. For a report on the Limoges artefact recovered from the site, see TÜRK 2003a.

8 TÜRK 2005.

9 TÜRK 2003a.

10 TÜRK 2003b, 220.

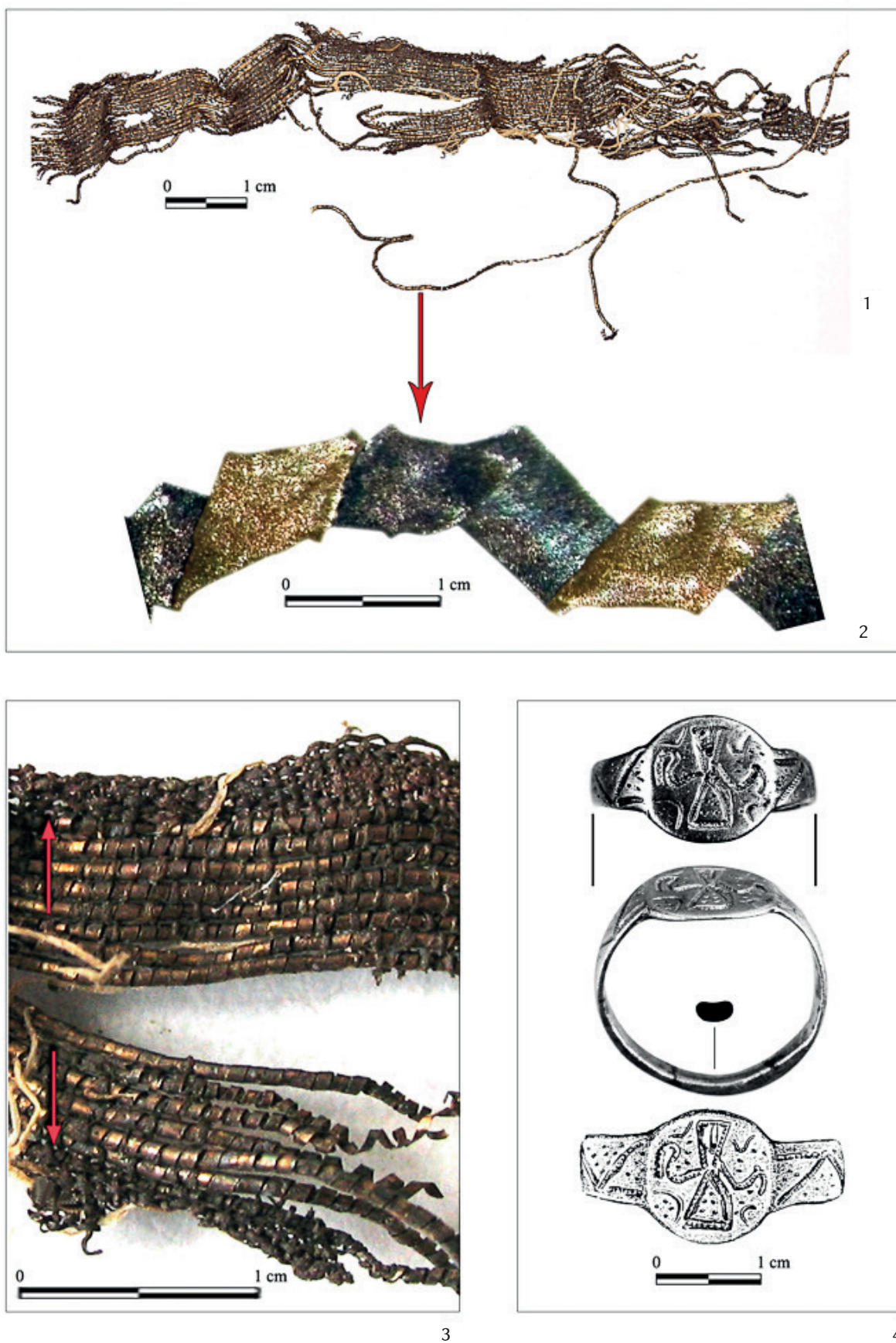


Fig. 3. Finds from Grave 33 of Szentes-Kaján-Temetőhalom. 1–3 – metal-threaded textile remains, 4 – silver ring with a punched human figurine.

rings,¹¹ which, according to Károly Mesterházy and several researchers, mark graves of the early Árpád Age Christian leading stratum.¹² Grave 33, the final resting place of an *adultus* woman (Figs 2–3), was unearthed in 2000 in the highest and latest 13th-century part of the cemetery. The metal-threaded textile remains (Figs 4–5), the subject of this paper, were found in this burial.¹³

Grave 33

Orientation: N 106°, relative depth of grave pit: 62 cm at the skull, 64 cm at the pelvis, 56 cm at the feet; grave pit: 194 × 41–58 cm; skeleton length in the grave: 176 cm (Fig. 2.2–3).

No soil stain marked the feature on the ploughed surface. The grave pit could be discerned at a depth of 40–45 cm, directly below the ploughed layer, around the skeletal bones. The rounded rectangular pit narrowed towards the skull and feet; its southern end was uncertain due to overlapping with another feature (it cut Grave 36, a feature of similar depth, partially disturbing the bones of the left side of the skeleton). Grave 33 was the final resting place of an adult female lying extended on her back. Her skull was tilted to the right side; thus, the left side and the top of the skull were damaged, probably by ploughing. Both of her hands were resting on her abdomen, above the pelvis, the right hand under the left, pointing towards her feet. The feet were also disturbed (Fig. 2.2–3).

Grave finds

1. Narrow textile band with hemmed edges woven of threads covered with coils of gilded silver sheets (Fig. 2.4–5, Fig. 3.1–3) found 12 cm away from the skull on its right side, in line with the skullcap, on the bottom of the grave pit. Both ends of the textile band are slightly wavy.¹⁴ The almost intact part is ca. 7 cm long, 5 mm wide, and 1 mm thick, with loosened and split textile fibres at the ends (KJM Inv. no. 2000.7.17).

2. A silver band ring with a wide bezel from the grave soil under the pelvis (i.e. not in a wearing position). The object is slightly asymmetrical and worn; its sides have a flat profile, while the part opposite to the bezel is semicircular in cross-section. The soldered joint has not been finished off properly. The band flattens and widens towards the bezel; its outer side features an engraved decoration comprised of triangles with small dots between them. The pattern on the stamp face probably depicts a stylised human figure with hands raised. The opposite semicircular lines on the edges frame small dots (Fig. 3.4). Diameter: 2.2 cm; width of band: 0.3–0.7 cm; bezel diameter: 1.1 cm (KJM Inv. no. 2000.7.16).

11 TÜRK 2003c, 210.

12 MESTERHÁZY 1983, 143–151.

13 Róbert Scholtz excavated the grave, and conservator László Vigh helped with the *en bloc* removal of the headwear remains and their conservation. János ‘Lupo’ Gábor and Zsuzsa Czabarka drew the grave survey map, László Czifrák drew the finds, and Zoltán Pápai took object and detail photographs. Erzsébet Mihalik (Department of Botany and Botanical Garden, Faculty of Science and Informatics, Szeged University) took electron microscope images of the threads, Aranka Csősz evaluated the anthropological remains from the grave, and Zsuzsa Szántó was responsible for the radiocarbon analysis. Márta Járó from the Hungarian National Museum conducted material analysis of the metal coils. We are grateful to all of them for their contribution.

14 Due to its highly vulnerable condition, the find was not unearthed on site (see Fig. 2.4–5), but was removed *en bloc* with the skull and subsequently explored in the conservation workshop of the Koszta József Museum in Szentes by conservator László Vigh. This method—removing skeleton parts and objects in contact with textile remains *en bloc* and cleaning them in a laboratory by conservators—has become part of the excavation protocol by today, as it is indispensable for the preservation and precise documentation of organic remains.

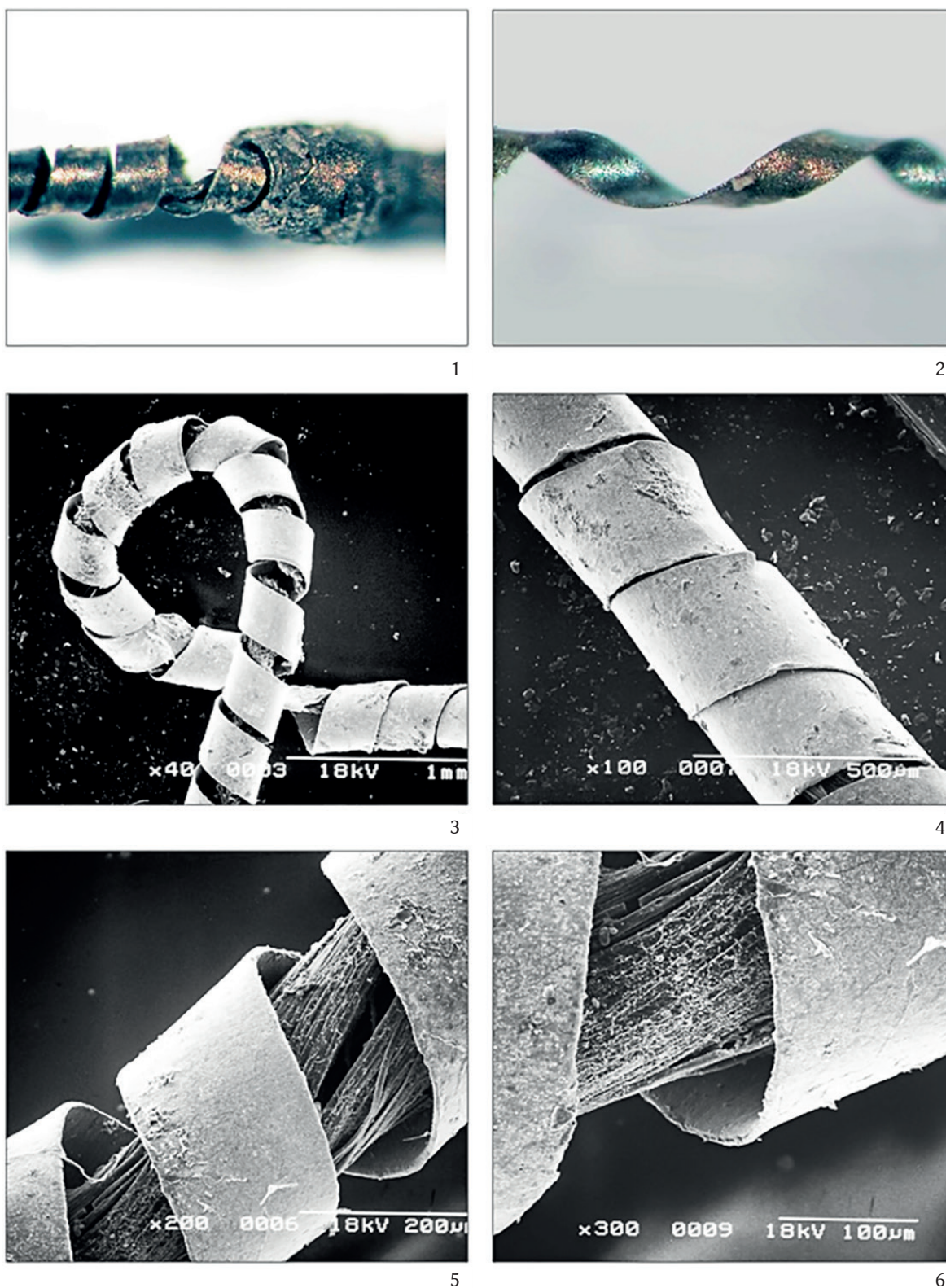


Fig. 4. Microscope images of the metal threads from Grave 33 of Szentcs-Kaján-Temetőhalom. 1–2 – Optical microscope images, 3–6 – Scanning electron microscope (SEM) images.

A sample of the skeleton was radiocarbon-dated at the MTA ATOMKI laboratory in Debrecen. Based on the results, the grave could be dated with high certainty to 1260–1270s (Figs 6–7). The Mongol invasion had a significant impact on life in the microregion; based on the data obtained

from the site so far, neither the cemetery nor the surrounding settlement continued to exist in the second half of the 13th century.¹⁵ However, Grave 33 suggests that the cemetery was still in use after the Mongol invasion, in the mid-to-late 13th century.

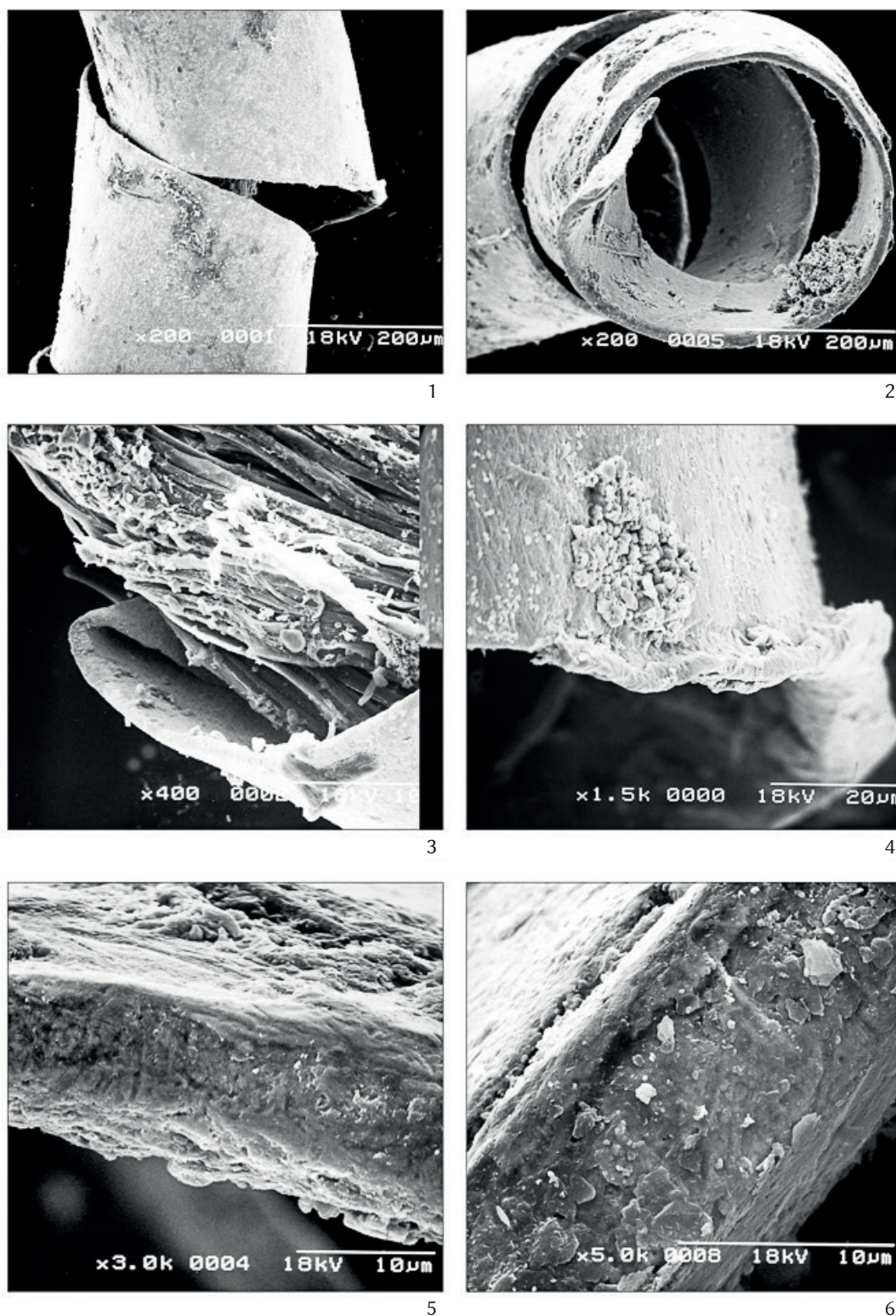


Fig. 5. Scanning electron microscope (SEM) images of the metal threads found in Grave 33 of Szentes-Kaján-Temetőhalom.

15 TÜRK 2003a.

The metal-threaded textile remains and their parallels in the Árpád Age find material of the Kingdom of Hungary

According to the description of the grave in the field documentation, “[...] a narrow textile band with hemmed edges was found on the bottom of the grave pit in line with the top of the skull, about 12 cm southward from the right side of the skull. It was woven of textile threads covered with coils made of gilded silver sheets.”

However, the artefact seems to be not a band but a part of some larger clothing (Fig. 3.1–3) made on a loom or a rigid heddle instead of woven using weaving cards, and the metal threads made by covering a silk thread with a coil of silver sheets were part of its weft (Figs 4–5).

To interpret these textile remains, one must first understand the characteristics of Árpád Age fashion. The clothing of conquering Hungarians represented a novelty in Central Europe at the end of the 9th century; however, their style underwent rapid changes during the following century. Only a single uncertain find of metal-threaded textile, from a grave, is known from the 10th-century archaeological record. However, the technology of creating a strong visual effect by weaving metal threads into fabrics has been known throughout Europe since prehistoric times.¹⁶ Throughout the ages, these likely exceptionally conspicuous fabrics were an excellent medium of power signalling, indicating that—like their late medieval and modern counterparts—Árpád Age gilded silver-threaded headwear was also status symbols.¹⁷

Such textiles were likely spectacular and exclusive to the elite. Csanád Bálint observed “two silver wire threads lying parallel to the plate of the buckle” in Grave 8 of the Hungarian Conquest Period cemetery of Szabadkígyós-Pálligeti-tábla and interpreted the find as the remains of a textile belt.¹⁸ The technique of covering silk thread with coils of gilded silver sheets has been known in Europe since the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries.¹⁹ While the parallels to the Árpád Age textile finds in focus are scarce, previous analyses have revealed that the dominance of using pure gold threads in the 11th and 12th centuries was gradually replaced during the 12th century by a preference for gilded silver threads.²⁰ Most silver threads known from the period were found in Scandinavia.²¹

Árpád Age metal-threaded textile finds in the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary are scarce both in the archaeological record and ecclesiastical collections. These early gold-embroidered and metal-threaded artefacts can be linked to the cream of secular and ecclesiastical aristocracy. Such artefacts include the coronation mantle from Székesfehérvár, transformed from a gold-embroidered chasuble at the time of King (Saint) Stephen I’s reign, and the so-called ‘St. Ladislav’ mantle,²² a *casula* adorned with gold threads from the end of the 11th century, currently housed in Zagreb.²³ The grave of an archbishop of Kalocsa, unearthed by Ernő Foerk, which contained several fragments of fabric interwoven with gold threads, is one of the oldest burials representing the ecclesiastical aristocracy of the country. Based on its stratigraphic position, the feature could be linked to the 11th-century

16 GRÖMER 2016, 193; BRANDENBURGH 2016, 151–155.

17 For a general overview of signaling through fashion and more ethnographic evidence, see PENNICK MORGAN 2018, 9–11.

18 BÁLINT 1971, 65.

19 For the medieval technology of metal thread making, see E. NAGY *et al.* 1993, 9–14; GEIJER 1938, 68–75.

20 JÁRÓ 2002, 65–66.

21 See GEIJER 1938.

22 For an art historical evaluation of the coronation mantle and its analysis from the conservators’ perspective, see BARDOLY 2002. The latest monograph on the mantle is TÓTH 2023.

23 SIPOS 1993.

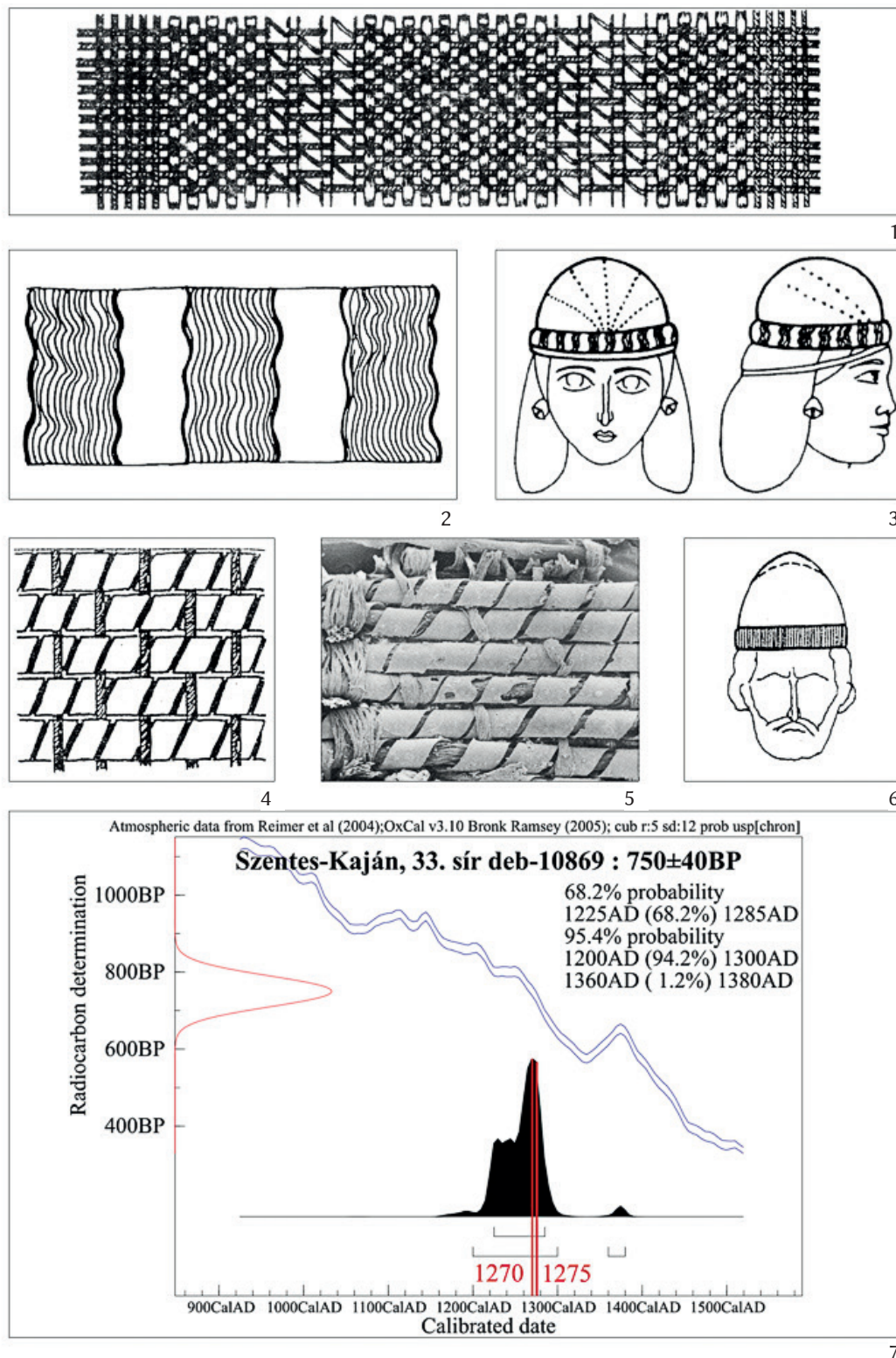


Fig. 6. Bulgarian parallels of the find and radiocarbon dating of Grave 33 of Szentes-Kaján-Temetőhalom. 1 – textile remains from Preslav (after CHOKOEV 2006, Obr. 51), 2–3 – reconstructed headwear interwoven with gilded threads from the Church of St. Forty Martyrs in Veliko Tarnovo (after CHOKOEV 2006, Obr. 59), 4 – reconstructed knitting pattern of a headwear interwoven with gilded threads from the Church of St. Forty Martyrs in Veliko Tarnovo (after CHOKOEV 2006, Obr. 59), 5 – Microscope image of a 10th–12th-century metal-braided headdress from the Church of Tithe in Kiev (Karger's excavation 1936–1939) (after KLOCHKO – BREDIS 2016, Il. 8), 6 – reconstructed medieval headdress interwoven with gilded threads from Bulgaria (after CHOKOEV 2006, Obr. 64), 7 – radiocarbon dating of Grave 33 of Szentes-Kaján-Temetőhalom.

building phase of the church; Gergely Buzás believes that the person laid to rest there was Archbishop Astrik.²⁴

The use of gilded silver threads gained popularity gradually from the 12th century. Fabrics interwoven with such threads appear in a wide variety of contexts in the 12th–13th-century archaeological record, including the grave of Queen Anne of Antioch (Agnes Chatillon) in Székesfehérvár, which was abundant with lace and textile fragments made of silver threads.²⁵

Besides royal graves, articles of clothing interwoven with gilded silver threads have been found in the archaeological record of central places of the era. Such finds include some silver-threaded ribbons in the cemetery of the nunnery on Esztergom-Prímás-sziget, dated to the 12th century by a Byzantine gold coin and a coin of Géza II,²⁶ and some textile remains with gilded silver threads, interpreted as collars and hems, from the graveyard cemetery of Esztergom-Zsidód, which was abandoned in the early 14th century at the latest.²⁷

The piece of fabric interwoven with gilded silver threads from the Abaújvár hoard is particularly easy to date, as it was hidden during the Mongol invasion along with numerous Friesach *denars*, Hungarian coins, and silver jewellery. Based on artistic and iconographic parallels, Mária Wolf identified the fragment as part of a bonnet. The archaeologists who excavated the find interpreted it as the remains of a ‘Western European-style’ bonnet (Fig. 7).²⁸

Kálmán Szabó already mentions metal-threaded textile remains found in rural contexts; according to his 1938 work, “the remains of bonnets woven of gold threads” had been found in 12th-century graves in Bócsa and Kerekegyháza.²⁹

He also unearthed the remains of a decorative belt interwoven with metal threads in the grave of a 14-year-old girl from the 12th to 13th century in Felsőmonostor.³⁰

Most metal-threaded headwear remains are discovered in the graves of adult women; therefore, they have been interpreted previously as married women’s (or, rarely, maidens’) headdresses. While most gilded silver-threaded pieces are known from burials of *adultus* or *maturus* women, the ethnographic concept married women’s headdresses as one “for married women, symbolizing their married status and usually covering the head”³¹—thus, it cannot be applied to directly these Árpád Age and other archaeological finds because we have no conclusive evidence of the marital status of the related women. Accordingly, these finds cannot be interpreted as maiden’s headdresses either because matching the ethnographic concept, “a band adorning the head of girls of a marriable age as a symbol of virginity”,³² would require further evidence, even if there is data on the signal function of maiden’s headdresses from the Early Modern Period.³³ However, there is no data on the possible symbolic meanings of 11th–13th-century headwear, and the evolution of maidens’ and married women’s headdresses cannot be traced back beyond the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries.³⁴

24 The grave was dated to the 11th–12th centuries already in previous works (e.g., NAGY 1968); recently, Gergely Buzás specified this dating (BUZÁS 2014).

25 SIPOS 1999.

26 LOVAG 2014, 79–80.

27 MOLNÁR 2005, 112.

28 BAKOS *et al.* 2020, 57–58.

29 SZABÓ 1938, 35.

30 SZABÓ 1938, 35–36.

31 FLÓRIÁN 1979, 211.

32 FLÓRIÁN – GÁBORJÁN 1981, 198. Early Modern written sources corroborate the connection between married adult women and headwear; see ZAY 2015, 211.

33 ZAY 2015, 207–208.

34 SELMECZI 2006, 17–33.

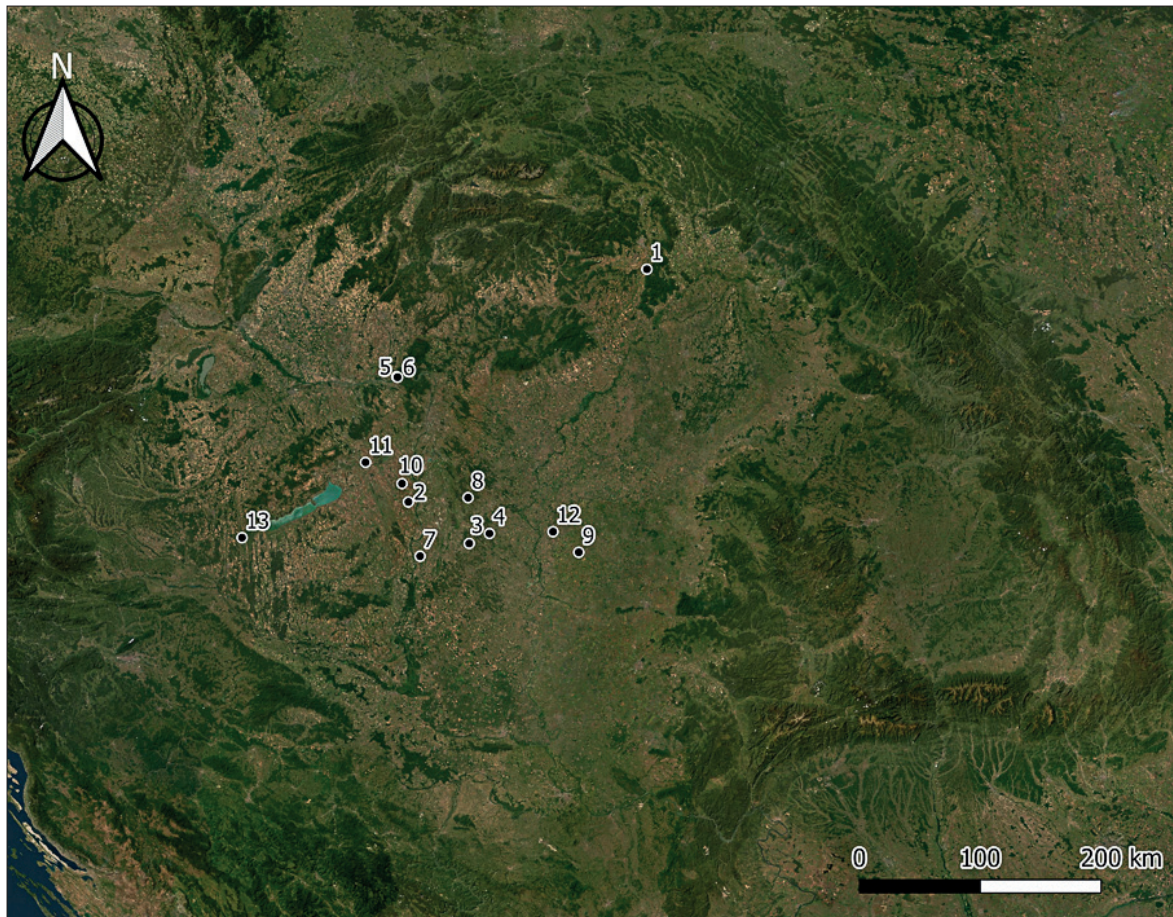


Fig. 7. Metal-threaded textile finds from archaeological excavations in the Carpathian Basin between the 11th and the first half of the 13th century. 1 – Abaújvár-Földvár (after [BAKOS *et al.* 2020](#)), 2 – Baracs-Apátszállás (after [KULCSÁR 1995](#), 230), 3 – Bugac-Felsőmonostor (after [SZABÓ 1938](#), 35), 4 – Bócsa (after [SZABÓ 1938](#), 35), 5 – Esztergom-Prímás szigeti apácakolostor (after [LOVAG 2014](#), 79–80), 6 – Esztergom-Zsidód (after [MOLNÁR 2005](#), 112), 7 – Kalocsa-Székesegyház (after [NAGY 1968](#), 113), 8 – Kerekegyháza-Kápolnahalom (after [SZABÓ 1938](#), 35), 9 – Orosháza-Gellértgyháza (after [ZALOTAY 1957](#), 38), 10 – Perkáta-Nyúli-dűlő (after [HATHÁZI – KOVÁCS 2014](#), 268), 11 – Székesfehérvár-Nagyboldogasszony-bazilika (after [SÍPOS 1999](#)), 12 – Szentes-Kaján-Temetőhalom, 13 – Zalavár-Bencés monostor (after [RITOÓK 2010](#), 8).

In addition, there is no way to learn from the archaeological record about the marital status of the Árpád Age people discovered in the graves of the period. Conclusively, the neutral terms ‘women’s hearwear’ and ‘headdress’ are used in this study.

In the description of the cemetery at Orosháza-Gellértgyháza, Elemér Zalotay mentions “a braid of metal threads” found under the skull of the deceased in Grave 457 and the remains of “some golden headgear” at the right side of the skull and under the back of the head in Grave 460; both features could be dated with high certainty to the 12th century.³⁵ Further examples of this find group are the headdress remains with metal threads found in the 13th-century Grave 4 of the churchyard of Baracs-Apátszállás³⁶ and the gold-threaded hem remains from Perkáta, published by Gábor Hatházi and Loránd Olivér Kovács.³⁷

35 [ZALOTAY 1957](#), 38.

36 [KULCSÁR 1995](#), 230.

37 [HATHÁZI – KOVÁCS 2014](#), 268, 2. kép.

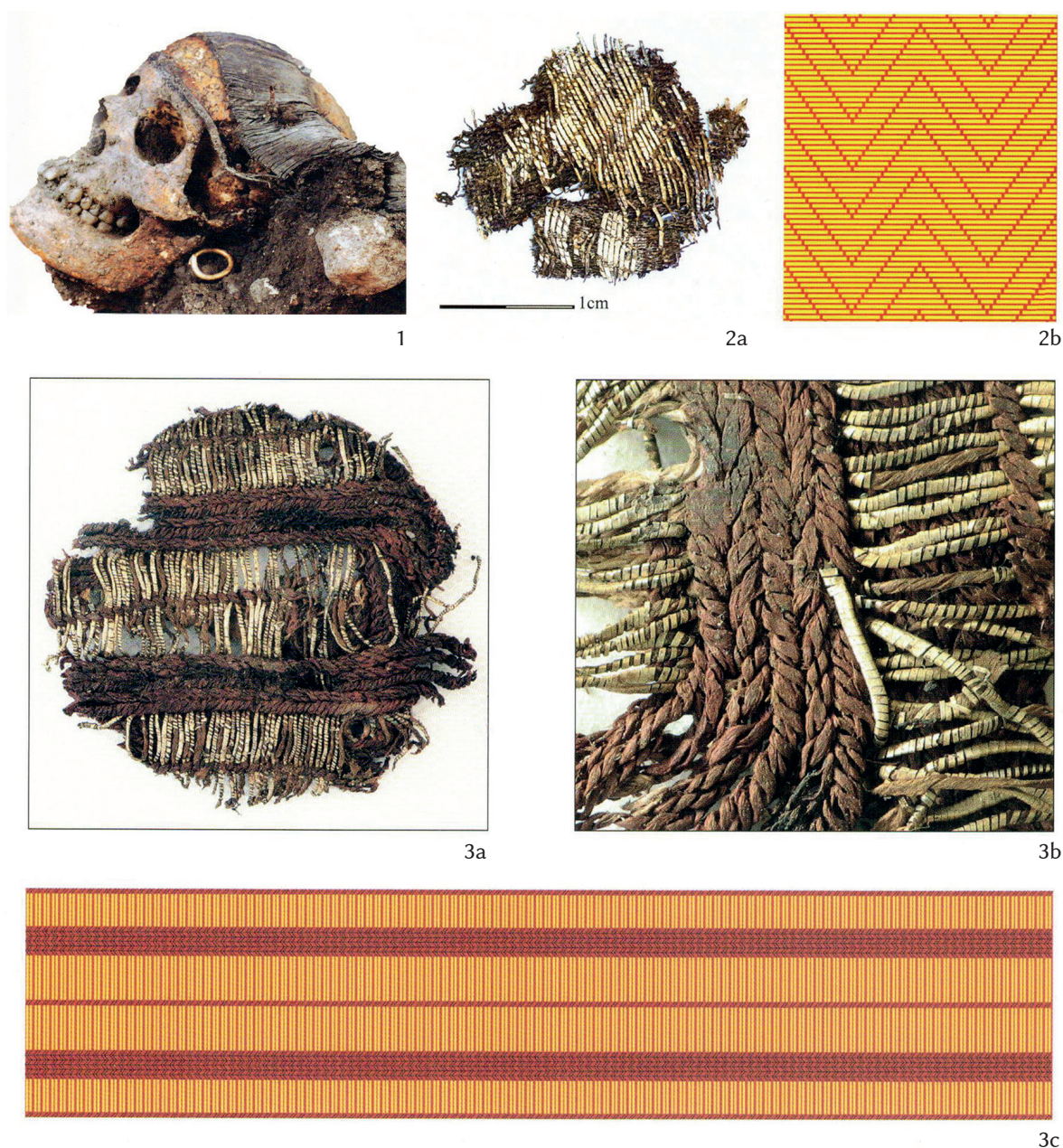


Fig. 8. Metal-threaded textile remains from Bulgaria. 1 – metal-threaded headwear remains from Grave 91 in the Holy Forty Church (after [CHOKOEV 2021](#), Obr. 33), 2a–b – metal-threaded belt remains in the collection of the Regional History Museum in Shumen (after [CHOKOEV 2023](#), Obr. 19a.7), 3a–c – remains and reconstruction of a 14th-century metal-threaded belt in the collection of the Varna Museum (after [CHOKOEV 2021](#), Obr. 32).

Any analysis of headwear remains from the territory of the Árpád Age Kingdom of Hungary³⁸ must include the hairpins used to fasten headwear; such finds are known primarily from the Transylvanian Basin. Erwin Gáll and Zsolt Nyárádi looked for the origins of hairpins in Western and Central Europe.³⁹ Currently, no hairpin find is known to have been discovered together with metal-threaded textile remains; thus, the analysis of hairpins does not enhance our understanding of the structures

38 Most of these finds were certainly headwear (bonnets) as they have been recovered from graves of adult women.

39 [NYÁRÁDI – GÁLL 2017](#), 716–719.

of Árpád Age headwear. All one can say is that based on available data, the two types (hairpins and metal-threaded fabrics) do not occur together, but some graves contain both hairpins and S-terminal temple ring jewellery,⁴⁰ while no metal-threaded headwear fragment known from the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary has been found together with metal accessories (rings or hairpins).

Árpád Age metal-threaded textile finds—identified as hems, headwear, or part of other personal items (for example, purses)—seem to concentrate in the *medium regni*, the central part of the Kingdom of Hungary, and power centres (comital seats), while another concentration of such finds in the Southern Hungarian Plain may be due to the proximity of trade routes along the Lower Danube, Maros, and Tisza rivers (Figs 7–8).⁴¹

A comprehensive archaeometry project, aimed at studying medieval metal-threaded textiles in Hungary, commenced in 2017. The effective combination of instrumental analyses, including SEM, EDX, EPMA, EBST, TEM, and micro-Raman spectroscopy, revealed dissimilarities in the copper content of the sheet metal bands coiled around the yarns in the metal threads, allowing for the determination of intentional technological selection in cases of different thread types. No significant differences could be detected in the technology applied to make diverse 7–40 µm thick gilded silver threads in the 13th–17th centuries,⁴² which means the macroscopic analysis of these threads alone is unsuitable for their precise dating.

A find from Szentes-Kaján, Temetőhalom and its connections outside the Carpathian Basin

Besides the Carpathian Basin, metal-threaded clothing remains were popular in Eastern Europe during the Árpád Age. Ribbons interwoven with metal threads, used as headwear, were found on several sites in Central Europe, including Stary Brzesc in Poland.⁴³ Well-preserved bonnets have also been discovered in Villach-Judendorf in Austria.⁴⁴ The structures of these pieces of headwear differ markedly from that of the one unearthed in Grave 33 of the Szentes-Kaján-Temetőhalom cemetery, suggesting that their analogues should be sought outside the archaeological record of western and central Europe.

Archaeological evidence attests to the fashion of using metal-threaded textiles and ribbons in the hems of garments and headwear in Rus already in the 10th–11th centuries.⁴⁵ One of the most outstanding bonnets was found in Kurgan C-198 on Gnozdovo, Russia.⁴⁶ The remains of another high-quality, card-woven, metal-threaded ribbon have been discovered in the Tithe Church in Kyiv; however, its precise function has remained unidentified (Fig. 6.5).⁴⁷ These two finds cannot be considered close analogues to the textile remains from Szentes-Kaján because both were card-woven. In the 12th–13th centuries, headwear in Rus was no longer adorned with metal-threaded fabrics;

40 NYÁRÁDI – GÁLL 2017, 716–719.

41 The distribution of metal-threaded textile finds matches the trade routes outlined by the scatter of 10th-century goods imported from the Balkans. The occurrence of such a find in Zalavár, at the southern end of Lake Balaton, is difficult to interpret (see RITOÓK 2010), and no other finds incorporating metal threads have been discovered in the wider area of the site. For more on 10th-century trade routes, see MESTERHÁZY 1993, 453–456.

42 WEISZBURG *et al.* 2017.

43 MOSZCZYNSKI 1990, 133–135.

44 PETRASCHECK-HEIM 1970.

45 ORFINSKAYA 2018, 415–418.

46 ORFINSKAYA 2018, 424, ris. 8.

47 KLOCHKO – BREDIS 2016, Il. 8.

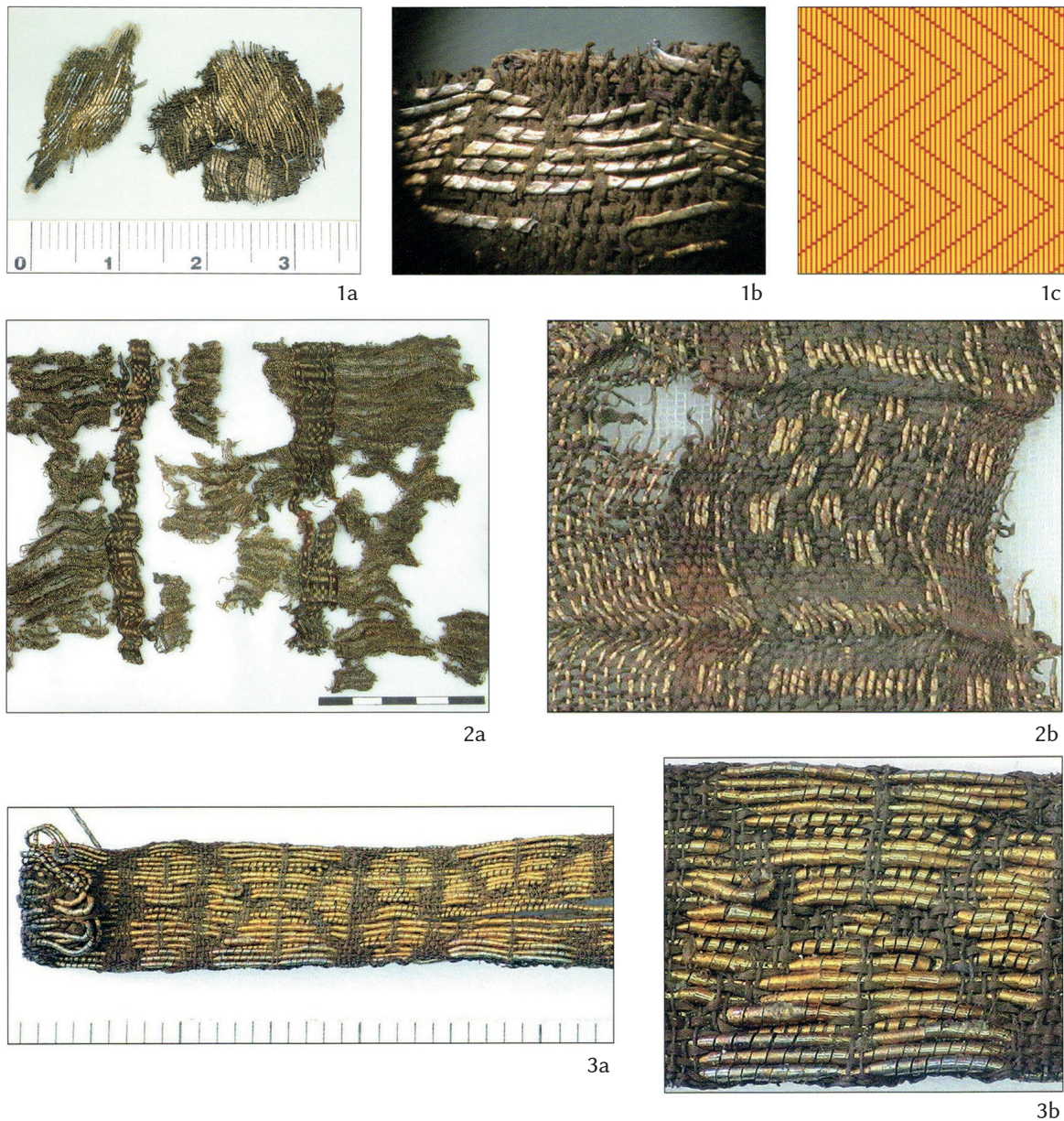


Fig. 9. 1a–c – metal-threaded belt remains in the collection of the Regional History Museum in Shumen (after [CHOKOEV 2021](#), Obr. 214a–b, Obr. 215), 2a–b – silk interwoven with metal thread from the medieval cemetery of Drinovo village in the collection of the Regional Museum in Târgoviște (after [CHOKOEV 2021](#), Obr. 211).

in the find material of the era, silver threads are known primarily from the neck area (indicating that they were part of the garments' hems) and as the remains of embroidery.⁴⁸

However, as it emerges from grave finds, simultaneously, i. e. in the 13th century, bonnets adorned with strips interwoven with gilded silver threads came in fashion in the territory of the Second Bulgarian Tsardom (Fig. 6.1–3).⁴⁹ Several such remains were found in, e.g., Veliko Tarnovo⁵⁰ and Drastar (Fig. 8–9).⁵¹ The piece discovered at Szentes-Kaján could be similar to these. The precise

48 [STEPANOVA 2017](#), 117, 228, Fig. 64.

49 [CHOKOYEV 2006](#), 30, Obr. 23, 32; Obr. 26, 41 Obr. 30, 88; Obr. 32.

50 [CHOKOYEV 2021](#), 429, 445, Obr. 33.

51 [CHOKOYEV 2023](#), 67–74.

design of this headwear remained unknown; some believe the type is a predecessor to the *sokaj*, a traditional Bulgarian bridal headdress. There was probably a variety of designs: in some cases, they were attached to cap-like leather headdresses, while in others, to other plain-woven silk or linen textiles, fragments of which sometimes can be found in graves.⁵² Some such finds from Bulgaria are similar to, in addition to the fragments discovered at Szentes-Kaján, the gilded, silver-threaded fabric remains from Abaújház.⁵³

Summary

The archaeological record attests to a rapid change in fashion after the Hungarian Conquest; the new trend involved a rapid increase in the significance of metal-threaded clothing in the prestige signalling of the secular and ecclesiastical elite. From the 12th century onward, metal-threaded clothing (made using gilded silver threads, in contrast to the pure gold threads of the previous period) appears in the grave finds of central settlements and affluent rural communities. It must be noted that these communities likely had an exceptional economic potential, as corroborated by the frequent occurrence of gold S-terminal temple rings in their cemeteries. In the case of Szentes-Kaján, this body of evidence is completed by another find: carefully carved limestone blocks transported there from the Partium on the Criş River. Such blocks have been incorporated into the very foundation of the church building.⁵⁴

Some gold-threaded headwear might have connections in Western Europe; however, the parallels of the headwear discovered at Szentes-Kaján concentrate in the Balkans (Bulgaria), outlining a connection network that had been unknown or at least unconfirmed by a suitable set of relevant data. The similar find from Abaújház likely has similar connections, corroborated by the Byzantine chain pendant earrings, originating from the Balkans, in the same find assemblage, the analogues of which also concentrate in today's Bulgaria.⁵⁵ The analogues of a ring discovered in the grave are also known from the Balkans.⁵⁶ Moreover, the possibility of southern connections emerged in light of some architectural traits of the church building⁵⁷ and the connections outlined by the anthropological characteristics of the funerary community.⁵⁸

Due to its geographic position, objects originating from Byzantine territories in the Balkans appear in the area of Szentes in significant concentrations in Hungarian Conquest Period and early Árpád Age cemeteries (e. g., Szentes-Szentlászló).⁵⁹ The reasons also include the region's clear southern orientation in foreign policy and economy, as well as the proximity of the trade route along the Tisza River, which was already evident at the time of Ajtony.⁶⁰ However, these factors did not only play a significant role in the Southern Great Plain during the 10th century but—as the appearance of the Balkan-style metal-threaded headwear presented in this paper attests—also in later periods of the Árpád Age.

52 CHOKOYEV 2006, 167–173.

53 CHOKOYEV 2006, 72, 83–96, Obr. 31.

54 Identified by geologist Balázs Kóbor (University of Szeged, Szeged).

55 See JAKAB 2007, 256–260 with further literature.

56 KESZI 1999, 135.

57 TÜRK 2005, 216.

58 We are grateful to Aranka Csősz for sharing the results of her anthropological evaluation of the cemetery detail.

59 For example, pectoral crosses from the cemetery (see SZÉLL 1941, 234, 238). For information on the role of pectoral crosses along trade routes, see MESTERHÁZY 1993, 455.

60 The lands ruled by Ajtony drew their wealth primarily from the trade along the routes following the Tisza and Maros rivers; see MESTERHÁZY 1993, 454–455.

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