



# ANTÆUS

*Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico  
Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*

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# 34

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Beyond archaeological finds and sites:  
multidisciplinary research projects  
in Hungary

II



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## ABBREVIATIONS

ActaArchHung	Acta Archaeologica Hungarica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Budapest)
Agria	Agria. Az Egri Múzeum Évkönyve (Eger)
Alba Regia	Alba Regia. Annales Musei Stephani Regis (Székesfehérvár)
AmJPhysAnthropol	American Journal of Physical Anthropology (Washington D. C.)
AKorr	Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt (Mainz)
Antaeus	Antaeus. Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Budapest)
ArchA	Archaeologia Austriaca (Wien)
ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értesítő (Budapest)
ArchHung	Archaeologia Hungarica (Budapest)
Arrabona	Arrabona. A Győri Xantus János Múzeum Évkönyve (Győr)
BAR IS	British Archaeological Reports, International Series (Oxford)
BBVF	Bonner Beiträge zur vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie (Bonn)
BMMK	A Békés Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei (Békéscsaba)
BudRég	Budapest Régiségei (Budapest)
CommArchHung	Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae (Budapest)
DMÉ	A Debreceni Déri Múzeum Évkönyve (Debrecen)
FolAnthr	Folia Anthropologica (Szombathely)
FolArch	Folia Archaeologica (Budapest)
FontArchHung	Fontes Archaeologici Hungariae (Budapest)
GSAD	Glasnik Srpskog Arheološkog Društva (Belgrade)
HevesMRK	Heves Megyei Régészeti Közlemények (Eger)
HOMÉ	A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve (Miskolc)
JAMÉ	A nyíregyházi Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve (Nyíregyháza)
JOÖMV	Jahrbuch des Oberösterreichischen Musealvereines (Linz)
JPMÉ	A Janus Pannonius Múzeum Évkönyve (Pécs)
JRGZM	Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums (Mainz)
MAA	Monumenta Avarorum Archaeologica (Budapest)
MBV	Münchener Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte (München)
MhBV	Materialhefte zur Bayerischen Vorgeschichte (Kallmünz, München)
MFME	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve (Szeged)
MFME StudArch	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve – Studia Archaeologica (Szeged)
MGAH	Monumenta Germanorum Archaeologica Hungariae (Budapest)
MPK	Mitteilungen der Prähistorischen Kommission der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Wien)
RégFüz	Régészeti Füzetek (Budapest)
RGZM Kataloge	Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum – Kataloge Vor- und Frühgeschichtlicher Altertümer (Mainz)
RKM	Régészeti Kutatások Magyarországon – Archaeological Investigations in Hungary (Budapest)
RégTan	Régészeti Tanulmányok (Budapest)
RLÖ	Der römische Limes in Österreich (Wien)
SIA	Slovenská Archeológia (Bratislava)

SMK	Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei (Kaposvár)
StudArch	Studia Archaeologica (Budapest)
Századok	Századok. A Magyar Történelmi Társulat folyóirata (Budapest)
SzMMÉ	A Szolnok Megyei Múzeumok Évkönyve (Szolnok)
VAH	Varia Archeologica Hungarica (Budapest)
VMMK	A Veszprém Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei (Veszprém)
WMMÉ	A Wosinsky Mór Múzeum Évkönyve (Szekszárd)
ZalaiMúz	Zalai Múzeum (Zalaegerszeg)
ZGy	Zalai Gyűjtemény (Zalaegerszeg)
ZfA	Zeitschrift für Archäologie (Berlin)

PÉTER LANGÓ

**UELGI – GESZTERÉD – BODROGSZERDAHELY**

NOTES ON THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF A TENTH-CENTURY MOUNT TYPE

**Keywords:** belt mount classification, connection between the Steppe and the Carpathian Basin, Hungarian Conquest Period, 10<sup>th</sup> century

*The Uelgi site and the mounts chosen for analysis*

A series of new research projects during the past few years have led to major advances in the study of the eastern parallels to the early assemblages of the tenth-century ancient Hungarians of the Carpathian Basin. These new studies were essentially inspired by the finds from the Subotsy site, excavated and published by Ninel' Mihajlivna Bokij and Svetlana Aleksandrovna Pletneva.<sup>1</sup> The sites and find assemblages that could be linked to the material represented by the grave goods of the burials uncovered at this site (termed the Subotsi horizon) outlined a ninth-century find material that can be regarded as the forerunner of the material culture appearing in the Carpathian Basin in the tenth century.<sup>2</sup>

The international conferences held every two years (Международный Мадыарский симпозиум) are organised with the express goal of exploring the archaeological and cultural contexts of these relics and the interpretation of individual finds.<sup>3</sup> It is not mere chance that first comprehensive reports on the Uelgi site in the southern Urals, whose investigation was begun in 2009, appeared in the publications accompanying these conferences.<sup>4</sup> This outstandingly important burial ground with far-reaching implications for the early history of the ancient Hungarians is currently being investigated by the specialists of the Chelyabinsk State University (Челябинский государственный университет) under the direction of Sergej Gennad'evič Botalov, director of the Southern Uralian Archaeological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The cemetery section uncovered during the past few years is remarkable not only for its astounding richness in finds, but also because no other site has yielded a similarly high number of artefacts that share so many similarities with the material relics of the ancient Hungarians at the very time they arrived to and occupied the Carpathian Basin, their final homeland (*fig. 1*).<sup>5</sup>

Two stray finds from this site form the starting point of the present study, given that the two mounts in question have virtually perfect counterparts among the mounts found on various tenth-century sites of the Carpathian Basin (*figs 2–3*).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bokij – Pletneva 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Komar 2011 56–68; Türk 2012a; Türk 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Madjari 2011; Botalov – Ivanova 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Botalov – Grudočko 2011; Grudočko – Botalov 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Türk 2012b.

<sup>6</sup> Botalov – Grudočko 2011 36–37, fig. 8; Grudočko – Botalov 2013 132, fig. 23.



fig. 1. Location of Uelgi in Russia and the uncovered territory (after *Grodučko – Botalov 2013*)

#### *Description of the two mounts<sup>7</sup>*

1. Cast, silver-gilt mount. The obverse of the heart-shaped mount is gilded; it is worn and bears scratch marks in some spots. An open ring acting as a suspension loop, of which only a section has survived, is set in the centre of the base of the heart shape. The edge is damaged in one spot. The edge is raised on the reverse of the open ring. The pattern shows up in some spots on the reverse. The three mounting spikes, arranged in a triangle, are hammered. Height 2.28 cm, width 2.63 cm.
2. Cast, silver-gilt mount resembling the previous one regarding both its form and ornamentation. It differs from the previous mount in that the edge is not damaged and that traces of a casting seam survive on one side of the open ring set at the base of the heart shape. Height 2.31 cm, width 2.65 cm.

The two mounts have their counterparts among the so-called Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely type mounts, known from several sites in the Carpathian Basin.<sup>8</sup> In her study on the early horizon of ancient Hungarian finds from the Carpathian Basin, Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm assigned these mounts to Čerđin type mounts.<sup>9</sup> The distinctive traits of the Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely mounts all appear on the mount from the southern Urals, namely the heart shape, the framed decorative motif, the beaded border and the floral pattern with a dot motif on each side.

The similarities would suggest that there is a meaningful link between the finds brought to light at sites lying some 3500 km apart and that the similarities between them are not accidental or superficial resemblances. It therefore seemed reasonable to examine in detail the other mount sets and to analyse their structure and manufacturing technique in order to confirm or to reject the assumed cultural links.

<sup>7</sup> I am greatly indebted to Sergej Gennad'evič Botalov and Ivan Valerievič Grudočko for their kind permission to publish the finds.

<sup>8</sup> *Révész 1996a* 115.

<sup>9</sup> *Schulze-Dörrlamm 1988* 404–405, 464.



fig. 2. The mounts from Uelgi with two Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely type mounts  
(after *Botalov – Grudočko 2011*)

The possible link between the mounts would raise a series of additional questions: are they indeed part of a well-definable class of find assemblages which can be securely dated before the tenth century, as has been recently assumed by Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm and Károly Mesterházy,<sup>10</sup> and can it be conclusively proven that the Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely mounts can be derived from ninth-century steppean prototypes? If this was indeed the case, it can provide further arguments (evidence) for the efforts to identify the possible elements taken from the imagery of the eastern, steppean *koine* in the ornamental vocabulary appearing on one portion of the belts worn by the ancient Hungarians in the tenth century.

I shall first review the comparable mounts from the Carpathian Basin, followed by an assessment of their ninth- and tenth-century cultural contexts and their relation to the mounts quoted as potential parallels in the archaeological literature. By examining the individual iconographic elements of the mount type, I shall perhaps be able to confirm or reject the suggestion that the mounts found at Uelgi indeed date to the ninth century and can be associated with the mounts of the ancient Hungarians.

#### *Comparable mounts from the Carpathian Basin*

Our first task, then, is to review and analyse the so-called Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely type mounts from the Carpathian Basin. An assemblage containing mounts of this type was first found at Geszteréd-Kecskelátó-dűlő in 1927, when the swine guarded by swineherd János Balázs grubbed up the finds from the ground.<sup>11</sup> The silver-gilt mounts (*fig. 4*), described as “belt adornments” at the time by Lajos Kiss,<sup>12</sup> are now interpreted as harness mounts (breast collar, crupper, or bridle mounts),<sup>13</sup> while another set of thirty-two mounts are now regarded as having

<sup>10</sup> *Schulze-Dörrlamm 1988; Mesterházy 1994.*

<sup>11</sup> *Kiss 1938 13; Révész 1996b 77–81.*

<sup>12</sup> *Kiss 1938 13.*

<sup>13</sup> The interpretation of the mounts as harness ornaments was first suggested by Gyula László (*László 1943* notes 31 and 85), who believed that the mounts discussed here could be distinguished from the belt mounts in

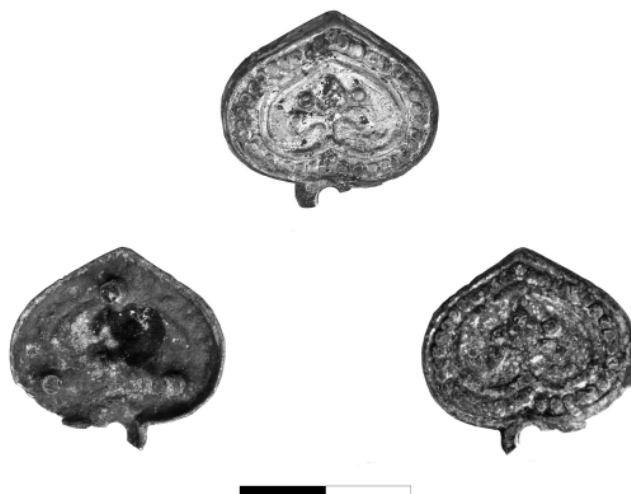


fig. 3. The mounts from Uelgi (after *Botalov – Grudočko 2011*)

adorned the belt.<sup>14</sup> The decoration of these mounts shares many similarities and their surface is strongly worn, which is generally explained by their long use. The mounts differ from the pieces found at Uelgi in one single respect, namely that either a small boss was set at the base of the heart-shaped mount, or it was left as it was, while the southern Uralian mounts have a round ring functioning as a suspension loop. The mounts are highly similar regarding their form and iconography, and their size too corresponds to that of the pieces found in the southern Urals.

The other grave assemblage came to light in the Bodrogszerdahely cemetery in Slovakia, which was investigated during three campaigns in 1926, 1937 and 1941, but a comprehensive report on these investigations has only been recently published.<sup>15</sup> Grave 2, uncovered in 1937, yielded three mounts, which Gábor Nevizánsky interpreted as belt mounts.<sup>16</sup> He assumed that there had been several more in the grave, which, however, got lost during the excavation by Jiří Neustupný and Bedřich Svoboda.<sup>17</sup> The form and ornamentation of the mounts was

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view of the size of the rivets with which they had been attached. Based on the field observations made during the excavation of the Karos cemeteries, László Révész confirmed László's suggestion that the mounts may have adorned a harness (*Révész 1996a 67–76*). Initially, Révész accepted László's opinion that the mounts from Geszteréd had been breast collar or crupper mounts, but he later changed his mind and believed that the mounts had most likely trimmed the bridle (*Révész 1996a 80*), suggesting that their position could be reconstructed similarly as in the case of the bridle from Graves II/29 and III/11 of the Karos cemetery (*Révész 1996a 78; Révész 1999 93–94, 101*).

<sup>14</sup> The number of graves is also dubious. Most scholars accept Lajos Kiss's report, who believed that all the finds had originated from a single burial because only the fragments of a single skull belonging to an elderly male had been found (*Kiss 1938 10–11*); however, it is quite possible that the swine had disturbed several graves – in this case, the finds represent the grave goods of several burials. This seems to be borne out by the two separate mount sets in the assemblage and the fact that the examination of the different mount types refuted Gyula László's earlier contention that the mounting spikes of the Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely mounts were longer than those of the other mount types and the former should therefore be interpreted as harness ornaments. After measuring the mounting spikes of the mounts I found that although they had slightly different lengths even in the case of similar mounts, their length was roughly the same on the average. Thus, I can conclude that there is no distinct criterion which would enable us to draw a distinction between different mount types based on the length of the mounting spikes (*fig. 5*). It follows from this that the Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely type mounts in the assemblage could equally well have been belt mounts or harness ornaments – there is not one scrap of evidence for their one-time function and neither can the nature of their use be determined from the metrical data or the traces of use-wear.

<sup>15</sup> *Nevizánsky – Košta 2009; Nevizánsky – Košta 2012*. The first report described the findings of the excavation conducted by Nándor Fettich, Gyula László and Mihály Malán, see *Erdélyi 1961*.

<sup>16</sup> It proved difficult to determine the exact position of the mounts in the grave. After a meticulous study of the photos and the surviving records, Gábor Nevizánsky was able to determine the position of the three mounts among the human skeletal remains. *Nevizánsky – Košta 2009 314*.

<sup>17</sup> *Nevizánsky – Košta 2009 316; Nevizánsky – Košta 2012 119*.

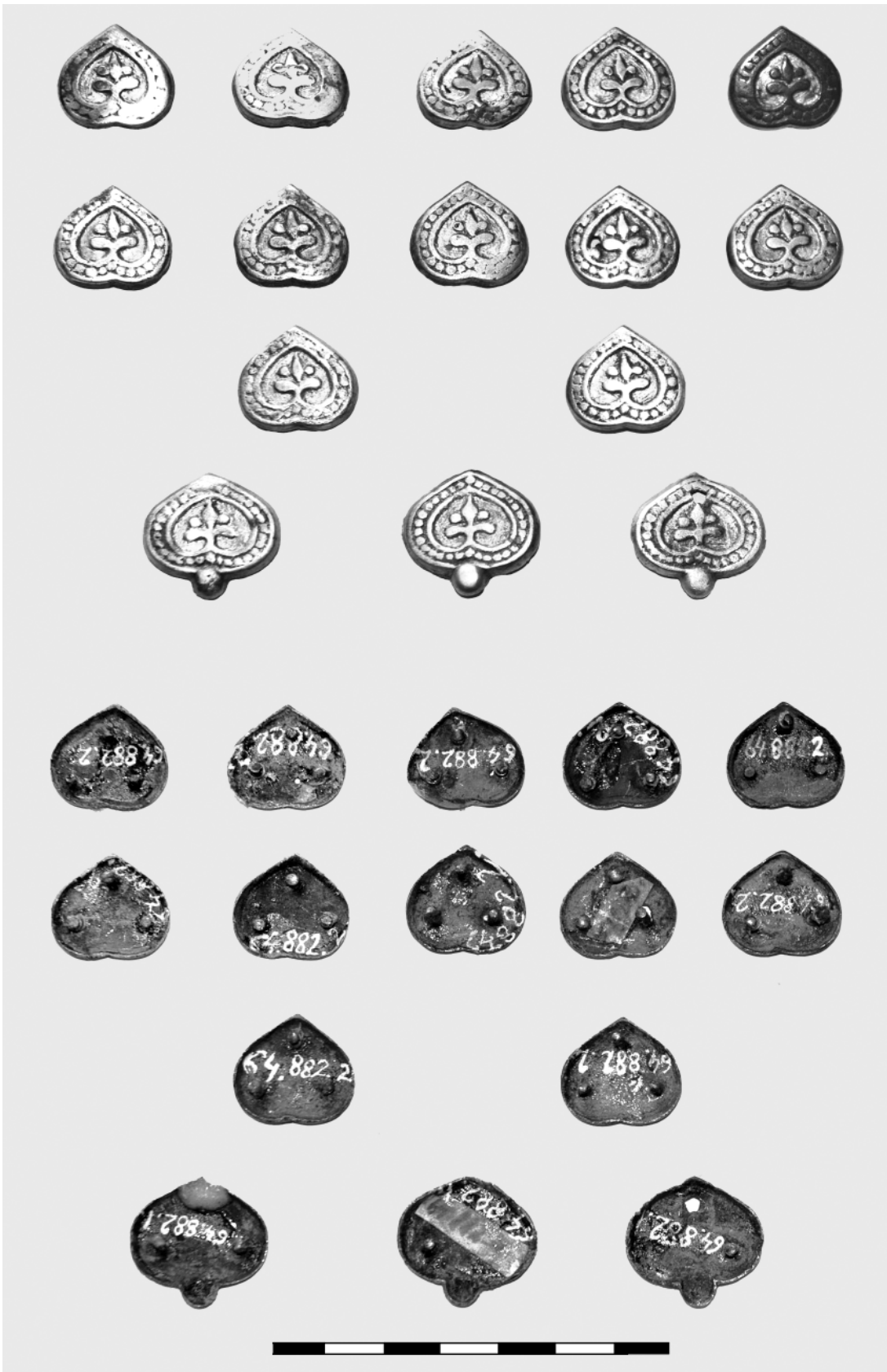


fig. 4. The belt set from Geszteréd (obverse and reverse)





fig. 5. Different mounts from the Geszteréd grave. The length of the mounting spikes

identical to the pieces from Geszteréd.<sup>18</sup> they were likewise cast from silver<sup>19</sup> and their size too was the same as of the above mounts (fig. 6).

Comparable mounts have most recently been brought to light from Grave 61 of the Karos-Eperjesszög II cemetery. The forty mounts had adorned a belt fastened with a buckle. The mounts and the buckle indicating the presence of the belt were found in a position conforming to how it was worn, around the waist, although the belt was deposited in an unbuckled state (fig. 7).<sup>20</sup> The man buried with a bow and a purse embellished with a purse plate wore a belt with a buckle that can be assigned to the category of tendril-ornamented buckles with a floral pattern (fig. 8).<sup>21</sup> Similarly to the set from Geszteréd, the mounts included a few extremely worn pieces and five mounts showed signs of repair: they were perforated by secondarily attached rivets. Similarly to Károly Mesterházy, László Révész too noted the similarities between these mounts and the pieces found at Geszteréd and Bodrogszerdahely. In his view, “there can be no doubt that the three belt sets had been made at the same time, in the same workshop” (fig. 9).<sup>22</sup>

The likelihood that the mounts were made in the same workshop tradition is accentuated by the fact that they all came to light in a well-defined area, namely the Upper Tisza region. The proximity of Karos to Bodrogszerdahely (the two sites lie less than 10 km apart) too supports this assumption. A minute comparison of the mounts reveals that the size of individual mounts is roughly the same, regardless of whether they are wider or more slender. One reason for the slight differences in size is the extent of wear and deformation (as can be seen, for example, on a mount from Karos, which became slightly bent during its continuous use). At the same time, minor differences can be discerned in the decorative design of the obverse, indicating that even the mounts of the same belt set were not cast from the same mould.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The similarities were already noted by Mesterházy 1994 34.

<sup>19</sup> The results of the X-ray fluorescence analysis of the reverse of mount H1-118847 are as follows: Cu: 7.97%; Au: 0.3%; Hg: 0.12%; Pb: 1%; Bi: 0.46%; Ag: 89.65%; Sn: 0.49%. Nevizánsky – Košta 2012 133, Tab. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Révész 1996a 115.

<sup>21</sup> Révész 1996a 114. László Révész cited the following analogies to the belt buckle: Nagykőrös-Feketedűlő, Grave 2; Kenézlő-Fazekaszug, Cemetery II, Graves 42 and 50; Rétközberencs-Paromdomb, Grave 2 (Istvánovits 2003 177); Ajak-Anarcs-Czöbel-birtok (Istvánovits 2003 16) and Grave 11 of the Karos III cemetery. However, none of these burials yielded coins, which would enable a finer dating of the graves. At the same time, some of the neighbouring burials did contain coins: two Berengar coins (888–924) in Grave 1 at Nagykőrös; two silver denars of Berengar, one minted in Milan, the other in Pavia (888–915) in Grave 1 of the Rétközberencs cemetery. Révész 1996a 197 dated the most lavish burial of the Karos III cemetery to the earlier tenth century.

<sup>22</sup> Révész 1996a 115; Mesterházy 1994 32.

<sup>23</sup> Differences can mostly be noted in the finer details of the floral motif in the centre.

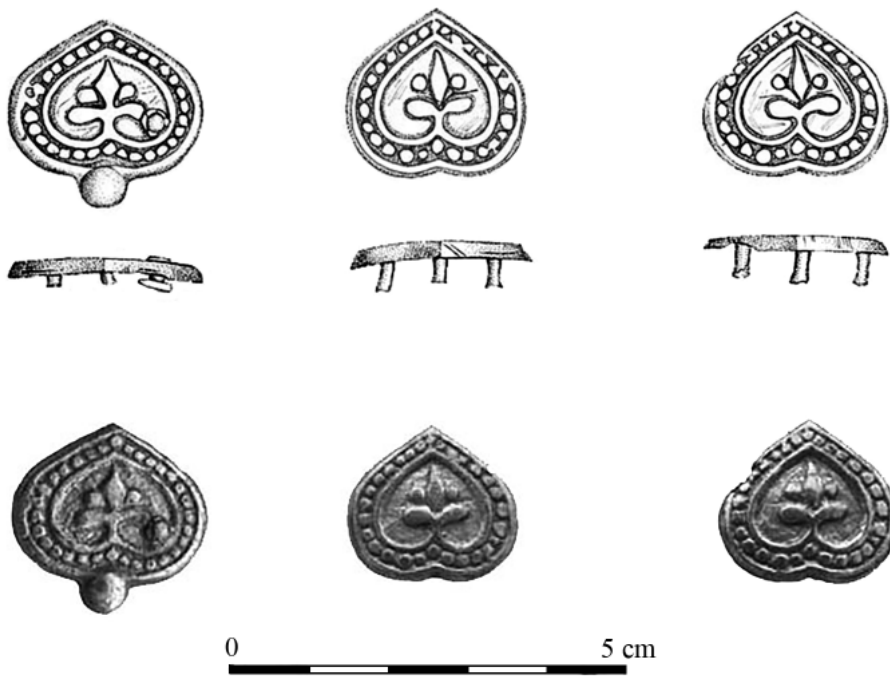


fig. 6. Mounts from Grave 1937/2 of the Bodrogszerdahely cemetery (after *Nevizánsky – Košta 2009*)

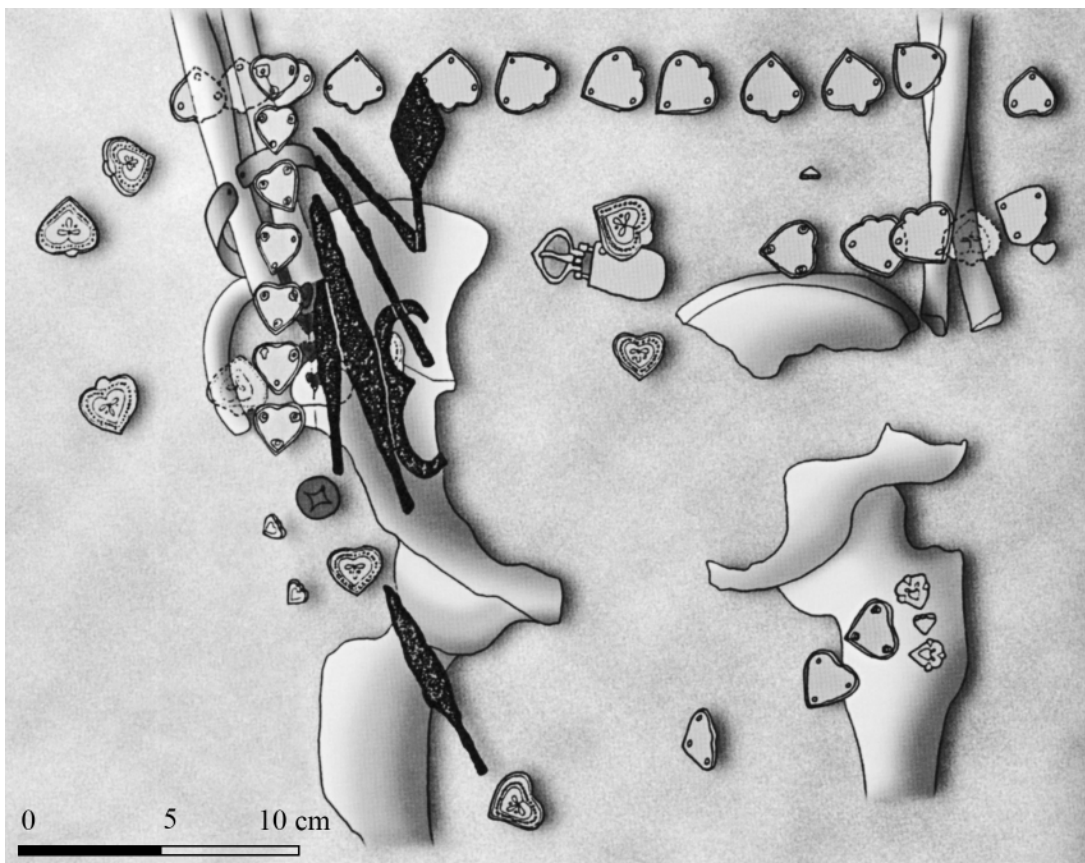


fig. 7. The find circumstances of the belt mounts from Grave 61 of the Karos II cemetery (after *Révész 1999*)

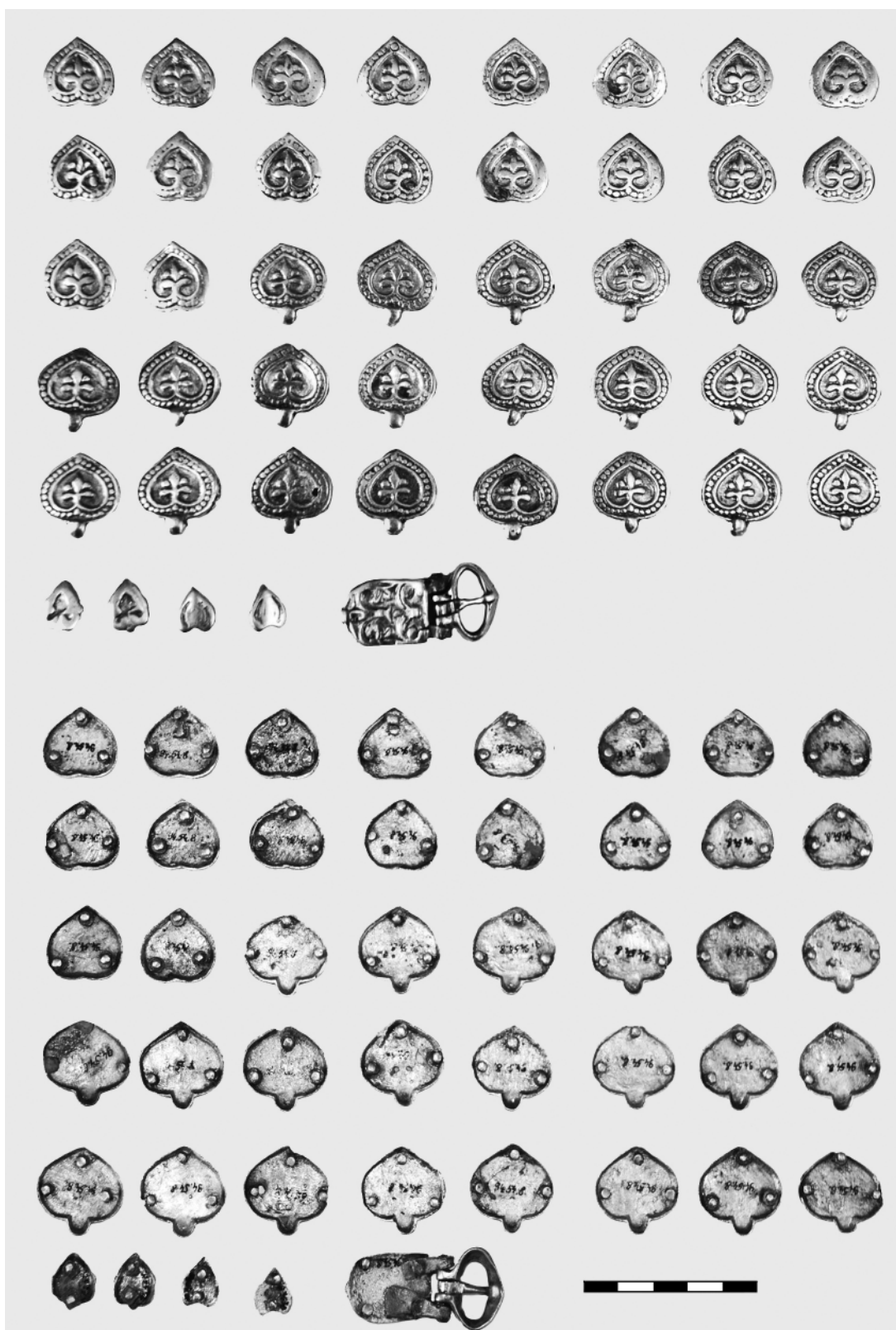


fig. 8. The belt set from Grave 61 of the Karos II cemetery (obverse and reverse)



fig. 9. Magnified photo of the mounts from Karos (1) and Geszteréd (2)

*The Eastern and Northern European parallels to the mounts*

As far as I know, pieces resembling the Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely mounts have not been found elsewhere, except for Uelgi. In her pioneering study on the early find types of the ancient Hungarians, Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm outlined a group of similar mounts, representing a broader class that is not solely based on formal similarities. She derived this mount type from the Upper Kama region and named the group after the pieces found at Čerdin. She dated her group to the ninth century. She assigned both heart- and drop-shaped pieces to this group and regarded the beaded border and the “stylised palmette motif” as their most distinctive traits,<sup>24</sup> but did not view the minor differences between the floral motifs on individual mounts as being of importance (*fig. 10*).

A closer look at the typical elements of the Čerdin mounts reveals that they all recur in the early medieval material culture of Northern and Eastern Europe as well as on the Asian steppe.<sup>25</sup> Drop- and heart-shaped mounts were fashionable for a long time across a rather extensive territory,<sup>26</sup> a point illustrated also by Schulze-Dörrlamm through several examples.<sup>27</sup> Beaded borders were widespread on ninth- and tenth-century mounts and this element also appears as a distinctive trait in another of Schulze-Dörrlamm’s groups; the motif itself was widely popular in the Carpathian Basin<sup>28</sup> and beyond.<sup>29</sup> The floral motif along the

<sup>24</sup> Schulze-Dörrlamm 1988 405.

<sup>25</sup> Pletnjov and Pavlova’s Type XII (*Pletnjov – Pavlova 1994–1995* 69–72); in the classification proposed by Stojčič Bonev and Stela Dončeva, the pieces are assigned to sub-group B of the heart-shaped mounts (*Bonev – Dončeva 2011* 113–114); Muraševa’s Groups VIII/2 and IX/1 (*Muraševa 2000* 34–35).

<sup>26</sup> For more recent studies in Russia, see *Belavin 2000* 104–106; *Mogil’nikov 2002* 177, 215; *Bisembaev 2010* 117; *Kazakov 2010*.

<sup>27</sup> Schulze-Dörrlamm 1988 388–391, 417, 419. For the classification of these mount types, see also *Muraševa 2000*.

<sup>28</sup> *Fettich 1937* Taf. XCII; *Révész 2008* 75.

<sup>29</sup> *Muraševa 2000* 34–35; *Pletnjov – Pavlova 1994–1995* No. 526, Nos 640–641, No. 677, No. 763.

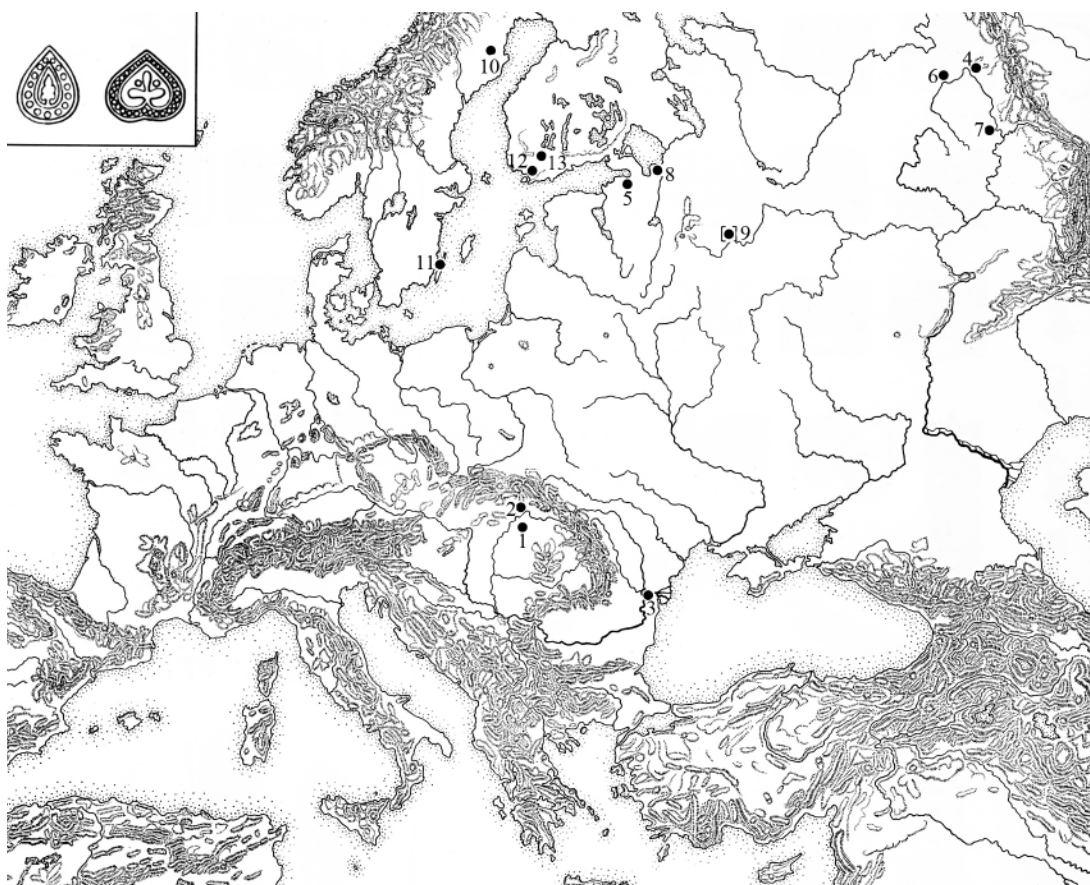


fig. 10. Distribution of Čerdin type mounts as outlined by *Schulze-Dörrlamm 1988*

central axis of the Čerdin mounts was a popular design on ninth- and tenth-century belt adornments.<sup>30</sup>

The single shared traits of the belt mounts reviewed by Schulze-Dörrlamm and the pieces from the Carpathian Basin are the floral motif and the beaded border enclosing it; however, there are striking differences between the ornamental motifs on individual pieces even compared to each other, and thus the same degree of similarity that can be demonstrated between the mounts from the southern Urals and the Carpathian Basin is not attested in the case of these mounts (*fig. 11*).

The chronological boundaries of the extensively distributed belt ornaments assigned to this category by Schulze-Dörrlamm are much wider and thus they can hardly all be exclusively dated to the ninth century. For example, the Dinogetia mounts were recovered from a later tenth century context<sup>31</sup> and the Klinta Treasure too falls into the same period.<sup>32</sup> The relics from Gråträsk in Lapland can hardly be dated before the tenth century.<sup>33</sup> The necklace from Hämelinna–Linnanniemi in Finland had a mount and Arab and Western European coins threaded onto it, indicating that it had been deposited in the eleventh century.<sup>34</sup> Aleksei A.

<sup>30</sup> *Pletnjov – Pavlova 1994–1995* Nos 550–592; *Doncheva 2012*.

<sup>31</sup> *Barnea 1967* 294.

<sup>32</sup> According to *Stenberger 1958* 166, the hoard was quite certainly buried after 1050.

<sup>33</sup> *Serning 1956* 95, 152. Although the interpretation of the ornamentation based on the photograph was difficult, the author emphasised that the floral motif adorning the mount resembled the one on the piece from Staraya Ladoga published by *Arne 1914* 137 and a similar motif decorated the piece found at Vivalden by Gustaf A. Hallström (*Serning 1956* 76–77). Inga Serning believed that the mounts were imports from the Russian lands.

<sup>34</sup> *Kivikoski 1973* 104.

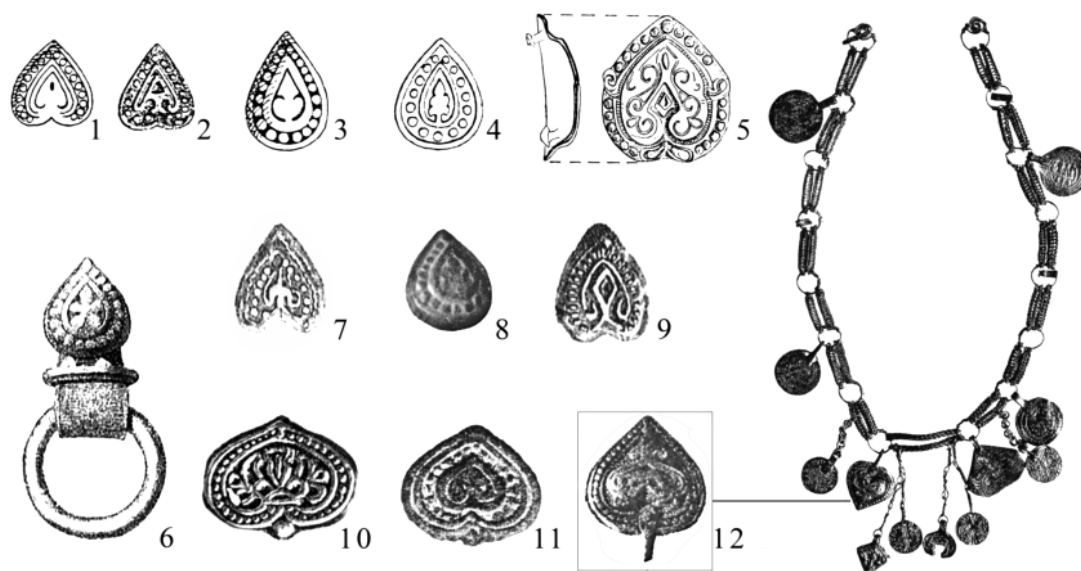


fig. 11. Čerdiv type mounts, without the Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely mounts 1–2: Čerdiv, 3: Tver, 4: Staraya Ladoga, 5: Dinogetia, 6: Gorka, 7: Rozdestvenskoe, 8: Gråträsk, 9: Michaleva, 10: Klinta, 11: Eura–Papilanmäki, 12: Hämeelinna–Linnaniemi

Spicyn dated the piece from the Gorka burial to the eleventh century,<sup>35</sup> while the mounts found at Michaleva and Roždestvenskoe were assigned to the tenth–eleventh centuries.<sup>36</sup> Ture Johnson Arne likewise dated the finds brought to light at Čerdiv, Ehem and Staraya Ladoga to the tenth–eleventh centuries.<sup>37</sup> Thus, in contrast to the ninth-century date proposed by Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm, the northern and southern counterparts of the mounts assigned to this group are generally dated to the tenth century, often to its later half, and to the eleventh century.

In the light of more recent discoveries, it would seem that the Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely and the Čerdiv mounts do not represent the same type. Several obvious formal differences can be noted between the mounts: for example, the dot motif on either side of the floral design on the Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely mounts is lacking on the other pieces, while drop-shaped mounts do not occur in the former group. The connections between the mounts assigned to the Čerdiv type will undoubtedly be refined because the mounts assigned to this group have a wide distribution both in time and space, and several differences can be noted in their manufacturing technique as well in as the way in which they were worn.<sup>38</sup> More recently proposed classification schemes (such as Stanislav Stanilov’s grouping, Valentin Pletnjov and Vanja Pavlova’s classification, László Révész’s typology, Veronika Muraševa’s analysis, Stojčo Bonev and Stela Dončeva’s typology and Oleksij Komar’s studies)<sup>39</sup> are based on several criteria and thus the mounts earlier regarded as representing the same type are now assigned to different groups.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Spicyn 1896 27.*

<sup>36</sup> *Spicyn 1902 45.*

<sup>37</sup> *Arne 1914 137–138.*

<sup>38</sup> The variations in size reflect the differences in how the mounts were attached and worn. Suffice it here to mention two extreme examples: the width of the Dinogetia mount is 3 cm, its height is 3.5 cm, while the mount found at Gråträsk has a length of 1.7 cm and a width of 1.2 cm. The attachment of the mounts differed: there are three mounting spikes on the reverse of the piece from Dinogetia, while the specimen from Gråträsk was attached with a single mounting spike. The casting quality of individual mounts differs, as does the decorative technique of their obverse.

<sup>39</sup> *Stanilov 1991; Pletnjov – Pavlova 1994–1995; Révész 1996a 103–133; Muraševa 2000; Bonev – Dončeva 2011; Komar 2011.*

<sup>40</sup> The advances made in the classification of individual artefact types are best reflected by Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm’s new pioneering studies on Byzantine buckle types, *Schulze-Dörrlamm 2002* and *Schulze-*

Based on the eastern analogies to the breast collar mounts of the Bodrogszerdahely cemetery, Károly Mesterházy believed that the similar mounts found at Bodrogszerdahely and Geszteréd were products of the same workshop, the implication being that the latter burial ground also dated from an early period. His contention that the mounts with good eastern parallels represented an early horizon, and that similar mounts had been crafted in the same workshop – and should thus be dated to the same period – was challenged in later studies.<sup>41</sup> A particular artefact could have been used over a longer period of time and it cannot be exclusively dated to a short period.<sup>42</sup> The comprehensive overviews of the Bulgarian and Eastern European mounts have conclusively demonstrated that the spread of certain types should not necessarily be correlated with population movements – they can equally well be explained by technological transfer and/or the adoption of a certain fashion.

The arguments for the early date of the Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely mounts<sup>43</sup> are of an entirely different nature. The mounts from the Geszteréd and Karos burial grounds were extremely worn and damaged,<sup>44</sup> and repaired pieces were also quite frequent among them, reflecting the long use of the belts and, indirectly, their relative earliness. The signs of repair on a part of the Karos pieces<sup>45</sup> and the damages along the edges suggest that the mounts had been transferred to a new belt at least once. It seems likely that a part of the mounting spikes had broken off during this procedure and that a goldsmith had replaced them with slender T-shaped rivets.<sup>46</sup> Being stray finds, there are no secure anchors for dating the mounts from Uelgi – I can only rely on the expertise of the researchers familiar with the period's material culture who have dated the mounts to the site's ninth-century horizon.<sup>47</sup>

The mounts from Uelgi differ from their counterparts in the Carpathian Basin regarding a few technical and ornamental traits. The most striking among these is the already mentioned open ring for suspension, which is not matched by any of the tenth-century mount types of the Carpathian Basin.<sup>48</sup> Neither can traces of the design on the mount's obverse be seen on the reverse of the pieces from the Carpathian Basin. In contrast, the decoration shows up on the reverse on one of the southern Uralian pieces (*fig. 3*). One characteristic trait of the ornamentation of the mounts from the Carpathian Basin is that the beaded border is made up of an identical number of "beads" (thirty-one beads on the wide mounts and twenty-eight on the narrow ones), while on the pieces from Uelgi, the beaded border is made of more elements (thirty-eight beads).

A recently found set of mounts offers additional information about the Eastern European analogies of the mount type. The technical and decorative features of the belt mounts brought to light at Varninskij (*fig. 12*) share many similarities with the Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely mounts.<sup>49</sup> The mounts are heart-shaped and they bear a floral motif in the centre enclosed within a beaded border. However, the border's form differs and the two dot motifs on either side of the floral ornament are lacking. The mounts resemble the stray pieces from Uelgi in that there is an open ring (for suspension) at the base of the heart-shaped mount, which broke off on the southern Uralian pieces. A similar suspension ring has not been encountered on

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*Dörrlamm 2009.*

<sup>41</sup> *Révész 1996a* 119–132.

<sup>42</sup> *Keszi 2000; Langó 2005* 279–282; *Révész 2008.*

<sup>43</sup> *Révész 1996a* 115; *Révész 1996b* 77; *Nevizánsky – Košta 2009* 316.

<sup>44</sup> The mounting spike of the wide belt mount broke off on the set found at Bodrogszerdahely and was replaced with a rivet. *Nevizánsky – Košta 2009* 316; *Nevizánsky – Košta 2012* 119.

<sup>45</sup> Traces of repair performed on two separate occasions could be observed on the Karos mounts. It seems likely that the repairs had not been made by the same craftsman, indicated by the different materials used as well as by the differing traces left by the tools used and the divergent repair techniques.

<sup>46</sup> A closer look at the mounts reveals that the T-shaped rivets had been attached from the reverse, through the leather. A hole was first punched through the mount and the belt, and in contrast to the usual practice, the rivet was then hammered flat from the direction of the mount's obverse.

<sup>47</sup> *Botalov – Grudočko 2011* 88; *Grudočko – Botalov 2013; Komar 2013* 219.

<sup>48</sup> Round perforations of this type are typical for the lower part of pendant mounts. *Bálint 1991* 123–132.

<sup>49</sup> The cemetery investigated at Varninskij containing over three hundred burials has been dated between the fifth and tenth centuries.



fig. 12. Mounts with a similar structure found at Varninskij (after *Ostanina – Ivanov – Ivanovav 2007*)

other belt mounts, suggesting that this was a local element.<sup>50</sup> The potential link between these mounts is further accentuated by the date of the finds: the assemblages from Uelgi and the Varninskij site have both been dated to the ninth–tenth centuries.<sup>51</sup> There might be yet another link between the Carpathian Basin and the East: the gold mounts discovered at Korobčino. These pieces are made from a thin sheet of gold and the structure of their ornamentation, as well as the floral pattern, are basically very similar to the mounts discussed here.<sup>52</sup>

*Concluding remarks: the date of the mount type*

As I have seen, current research indicates that heart-shaped mounts decorated with floral motifs were widespread across the entire Eastern European region, as has been emphasised by Arne and, later, by Schulze-Dörrlamm. The various ornamental motifs appearing on these mounts are known from a vast territory in the ninth–tenth centuries and thus their appearance cannot be pinpointed to a particular region at the present stage of research. It is also obvious from the publications of new finds that while good parallels to these mounts can be found on the steppe and in South-East Europe, their exact counterparts are only known from the Carpathian Basin and the southern Urals. Thus, in the case of the Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely mounts, I can hardly speak of a wide distribution across several regions as in the case of the lobed (“Zemplén type”) mounts.<sup>53</sup> There is a consensus regarding the early dating of this mount type in both Hungarian and foreign scholarship, and I have not come across any new data that would challenge this dating. In the light of the above, the assumption of an identical workshop tradition seems wholly justified, as does the contention that the Geszteréd–Bodrogszerdahely mounts were part of the earliest find horizon of the ancient Hungarians after their settlement in the Carpathian Basin.

<sup>50</sup> Although suspension loops are quite common during this period, these generally lie in the mount’s horizontal plane, while the loops on these mounts fall into the vertical plane; a similar type can be noted on the rectangular mounts with an oblong perforation and on heart-shaped mounts which were suspended by means of a perforation through the body of the mount. Cp. *Muraševa 2000*.

<sup>51</sup> *Ostanina – Ivanov – Ivanova 2007* 52 colour photo.

<sup>52</sup> *Langó – Türk in print*.

<sup>53</sup> *Langó – Patay-Horváth 2016*.



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