

THE SITE BÜTZSEE-ALTFRIESACK, NORTHWEST OF BERLIN A DATING PROGRAM

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The region between the river systems of Oder and Elbe (Fig. 1) is still characterized by a lack of excavated Late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic sites. Findings are - except for the famous site of Friesack (see : B. GRAMSCH 1992) - normally only on the surface and were commonly sampled without any methodological parameters by amateur archaeologists. For this reason stone artefacts are the only data-base, and more detailed information concerning site formation processes, paleoenvironment, economy, technology, and exact dating is nearly completely absent.

But in the region around Berlin, we also find a special site-type, placed directly nearby the aligned ponds of ice-age drainage channel systems. One of the most well-known is the Wublitz-lake system (Fig. 1), but there are also several other lake systems in this area, e.g. near the towns of Brandenburg and Neuruppin. These systems are obviously objects to realize an easy extension of the present waterway-system, as e.g. early realized in the Wublitz-channel between Paaren and Nauen in 1936. The archaeological result of the expansion of this waterway-system were more than 150 Late Palaeolithic and Mesolithic bone and antler objects from several sites along the north-south stretching lake-system (B. GRAMSCH 1965). It is of special interest that bone- and antler-points were the predominant objects, while stone artefacts and other evidence of daily life, e.g. bones as the result of hunting, were very rare.

In 1992, the waterway in the lakes of Neuruppin and Bützsee was dredged out up to four metres deep, and the sandy sediment was transported with the help of a line-pipe-

system from the dredging-boat into sink-fields on meadows nearby. Here the sediments were dried before being transported as building-sands into the booming town of Berlin. Materials from several sites were dredged up as a result, but the findings are entirely without stratigraphic context and association, so that it is impossible to ascertain their exact chronological provenance with any degree of reliability. In 1993, an amateur archaeologist coincidentally found the first points and antler mattocks. During several months of collecting and after a short excavation-campaign by *Wurzel Archaeologie-Company* (for the work of this company see : E. CZIESLA 1998) on the sink-field in 1994 and by the Brandenburgisches Landesmuseum, the official bureau for the preservation of monuments, in 1998 (E. CZIESLA 1999a), more than two hundred bone- and antler-objects were recovered (see also : E. CZIESLA & H. HUSMANN 1995).

Apart from some Bronze-Age and Neolithic ceramics at the site of Bützsee-Altfrisesack, we are especially dealing with Late Palaeolithic and Early Mesolithic bone and antler artefacts. One uniserially (Fig. in : E. CZIESLA 1999a) and five biserially barbed reindeer antler harpoon-heads - together with some Ahrensbourgian points - are of special interest (see Fig. 2) and represent the older period. The Mesolithic findings are characterized by barbed and finely toothed bone points, well known and in huge quantities available from the sites, e.g. Hohen Viecheln and Friesack, also known as type 2 (Duvensee-Type; Fig. 4) and type 8 (Pritzerbe-Type; Fig. 3) according to the terminology-category of J.G.D. Clark (1936). A mapping of the distribution of these objects (widespread for Duvensee-points and within a limited area for Pritzerbe-points) on more

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than 80 sites in the northern German lowland is just in print (E. CZIESLA 1999b). There are also large scaled bone fish-hooks (Fig. 5) and several antler mattocks (see : E. CZIESLA, S. EICKHOFF & H. HUSMANN 1998). During the excavation, some perforated teeth, numerous fish-bones, and tortoise-shells were found via screening. In contrast to these very interesting and well preserved hunting objects, unmodified bones and antlers, like stone-artefacts, are rare. Obviously the site Bützsee-Altfrisesack shows not the remains of a "normal", every-day living camp, but probably a specialized hunting or fishing area, situated along the former lake-system. More places will be discovered, because the water-way-system around Berlin will be widened - it is one of the questionable German "reunification projects" - about more than four metres in the near future.

Due to the lack of stratigraphical data, the only means of establishing a chronological scheme for these pieces is through direct AMS radiocarbon dating. For this the author was very happy to have the participation of Dr.P.B.Pettitt from the "Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art" from the University of Oxford in this important work. Also a lot of additional Late Upper Palaeolithic and Early Mesolithic findings, all originating from the depths of several lake-systems in the region of Berlin-Brandenburg (collections of the amateur-archaeologists Stimming, Klicks, Langerhans, Stein and Lau from the end of the last and the beginning of this century), could be registered, some of them lying unpublished for more than 100 years in the Museum Schloß Charlottenburg in Berlin and in the regional museum of Genthin (E.CZIESLA 1999c). A dating project with the title : "Late Pleistocene and early Holocene organic artefacts from Brandenburg : establishing a chronological framework" was developed. The finds are exceptionally well-preserved and totally unconserved which, in addition to the fact that they can be dated directly, lead us to believe that they are ideal AMS radiocarbon samples. This work should become an initial pilot study for the Northern European Flatland to establish a broad chronological framework for organic artefacts of clear typological form for this region, on the basis of which further research can be designed. The first results will be published in the near future (E.CZIESLA & P.B.PETTITT; in prep.).

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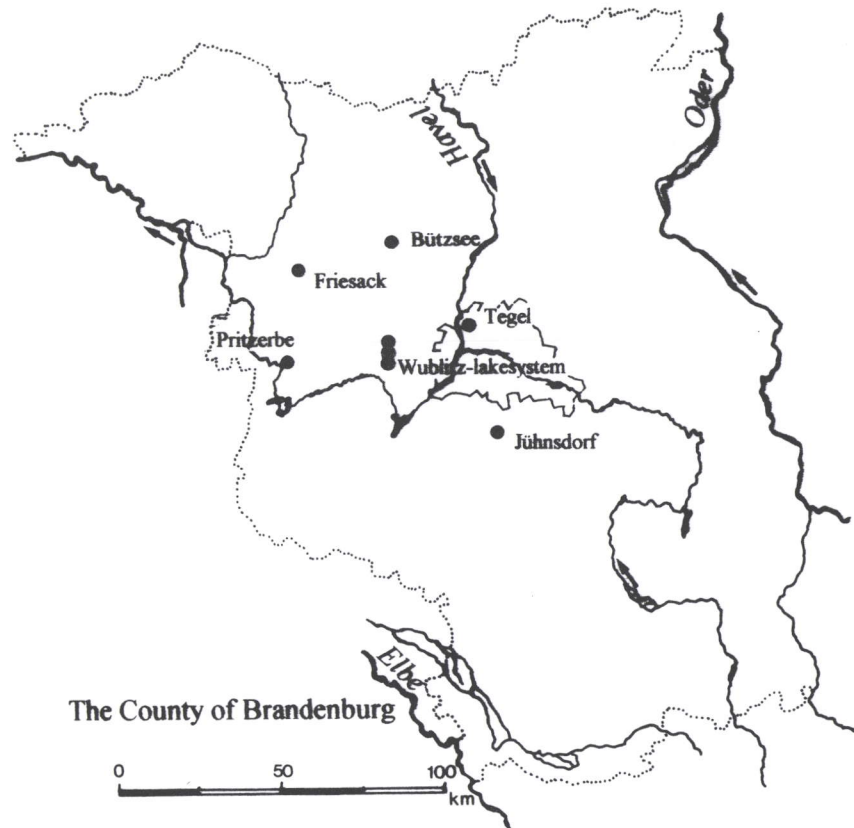


Fig. 1 : Map of Brandenburg

The area of the counties of Berlin and Brandenburg in between the river-systems of Elbe and Oder, with the most important Palaeolithic and Mesolithic sites.

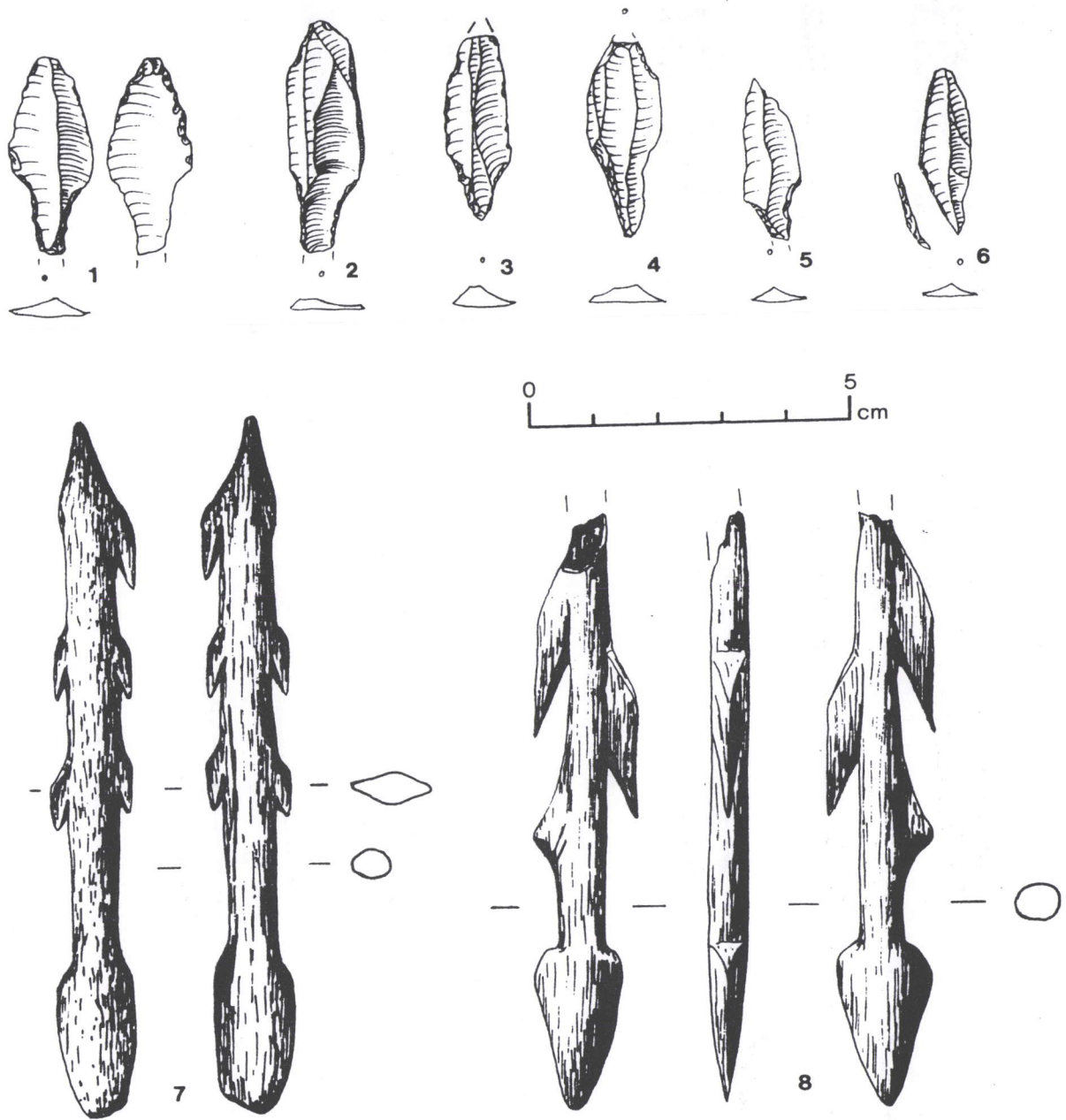


Fig. 2 : Site Bützsee-Altfriesack

Ahrensbourgian stone points (1-6) and two of almost five biserially barbed harpoon-heads (7 & 8). Up to now 34 of these harpoons have been found in Germany, 20 alone in the so-called Havelland, a district west of Berlin. (Scale 1:1). (All drawings of Fig.2 - 5 by Carmen Gütschow, Wurzel Archäologie GmbH).

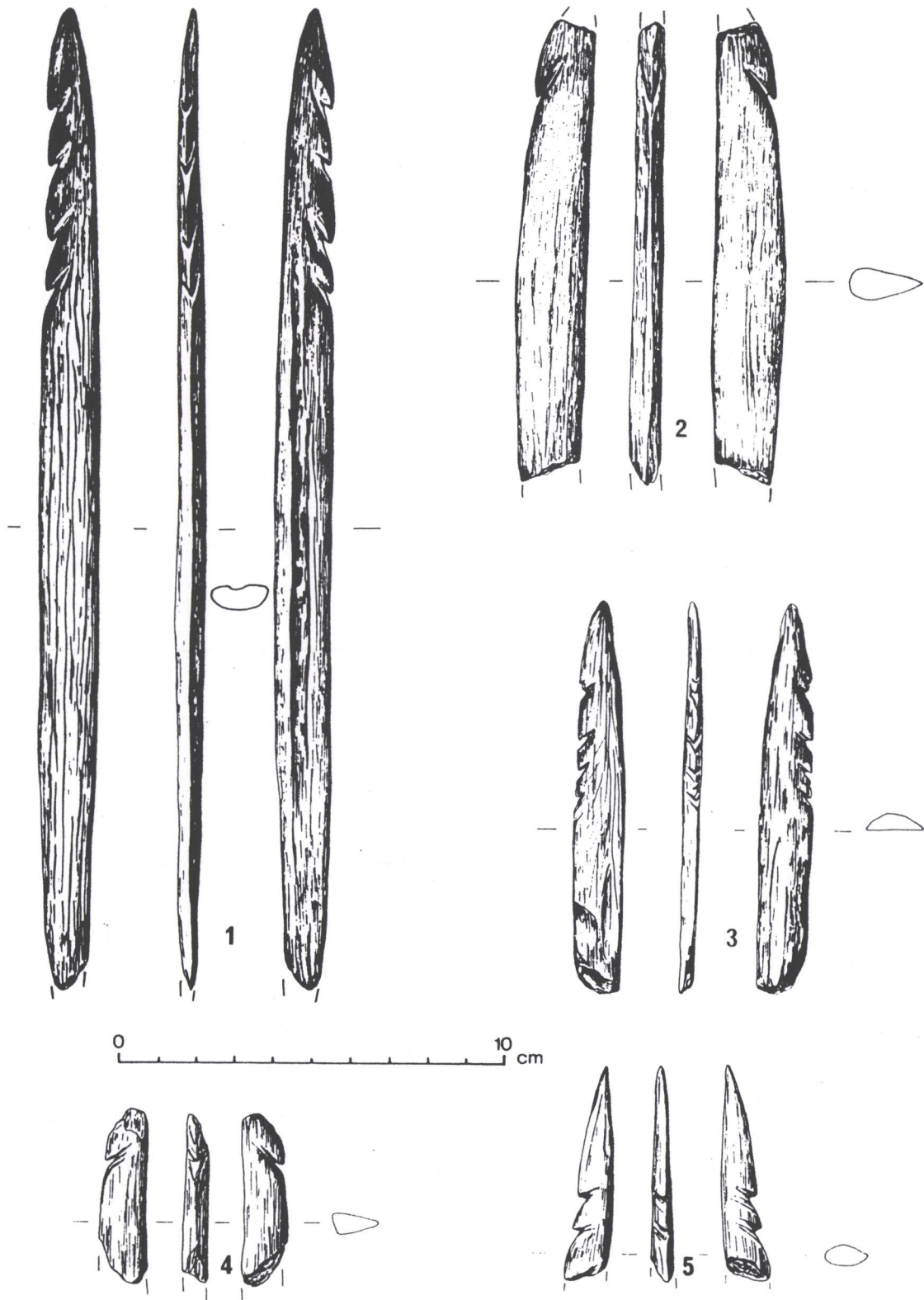


Fig. 3 : Site Bützsee-Altfrisesack

Five examples of barbed bone points. The original lengths of piece No.1 is 25,2 cms. In Germany, these Preboreal/Boreal barbed bone points of "Pritzerbe-Type" (or Type 8 by J.G.D.Clark 1936:116) are only distributed in the western part of the province Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the northern part of the province Brandenburg, a limited area of 100 x 200 km (dates more than 40 sites have been recorded; see : Cziesla 1999b).

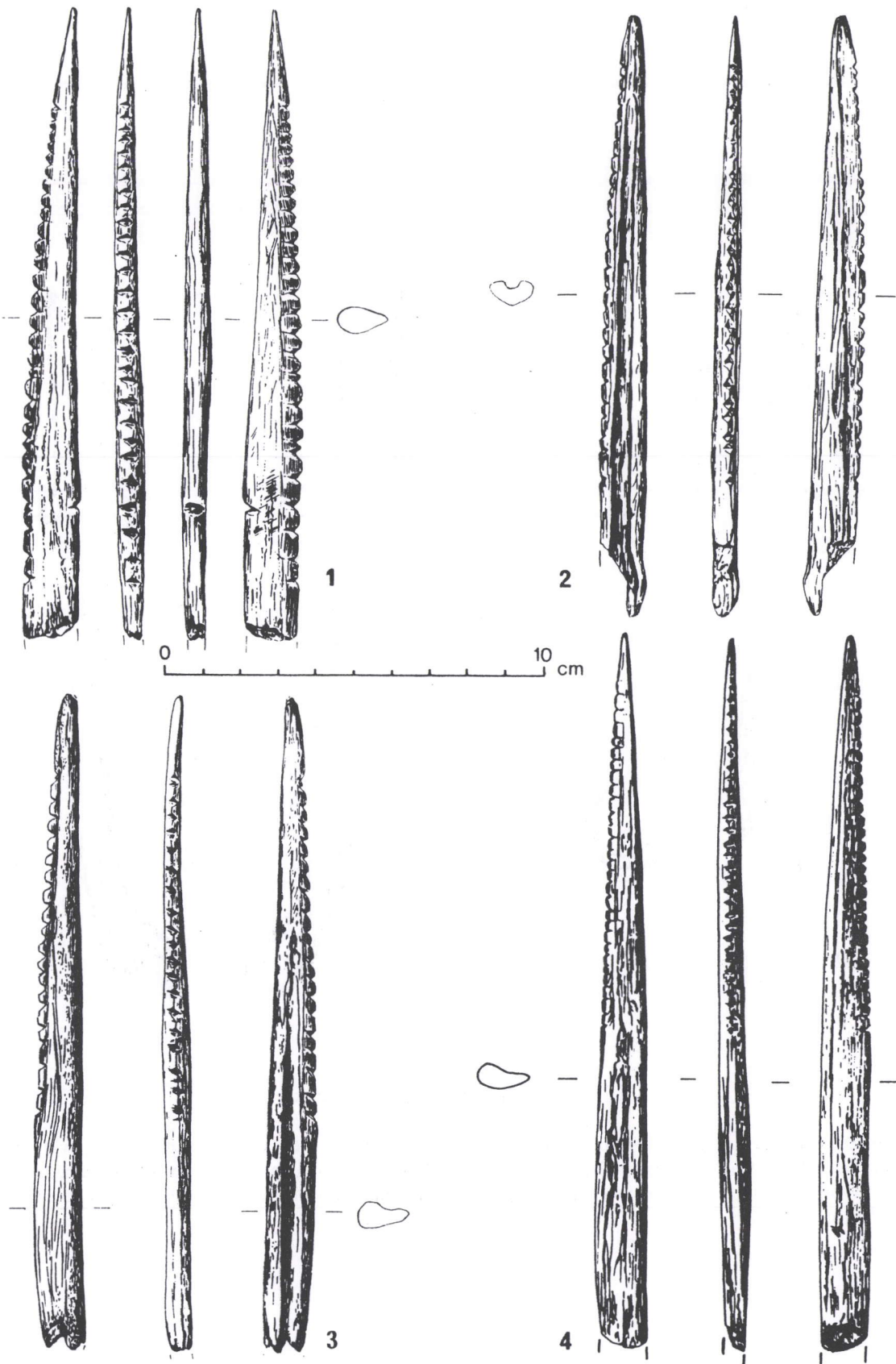


Fig. 4 : Site Bützsee-Altfrisesack

Examples of finely toothed spearheads of antler or bone, characteristic objects of so called "Duvensee-Type" (or Type 2 by J.G.D.Clark 1936). These preboreal/boreal points are distributed all over in the northeastern German flatland, and more than 60 sites with these typical objects have been recorded (see the distribution-maps in : Czieśla 1999b).

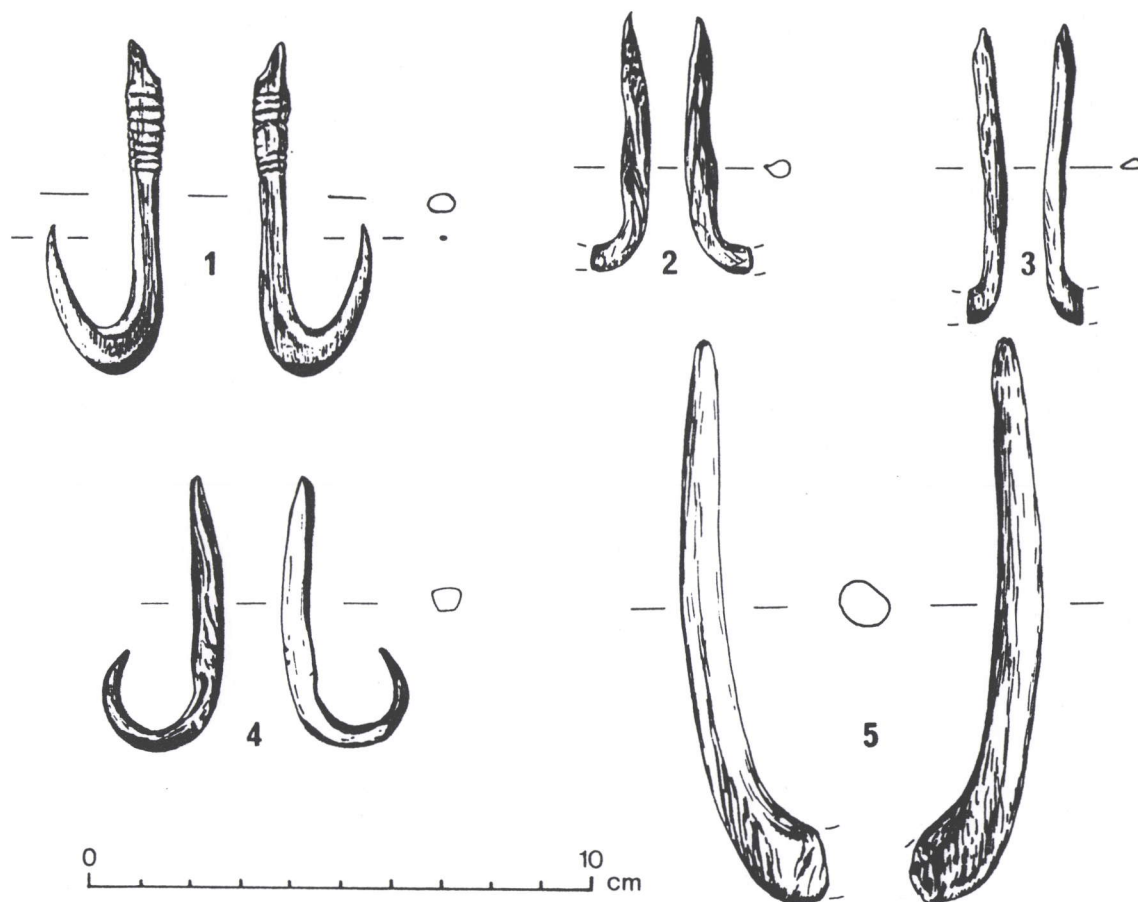


Fig. 5 : Site Bützsee-Altfriesack

Examples of very huge fish-hooks (perhaps for catching pike; *Esox lucius*), probably originating from Boreal times or younger. Piece No.5 is more than 11cm long, piece No.4 was produced from a boar-tooth ! Piece No.1 shows at its thigh parallel notches looking like a string, presumably to facilitate fixing.