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A hatalom forrása
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MAGYAR ŐSTÖRTÉNETI KUTATÓCSOPORT KIADVÁNYOK

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is not to provide a comprehensive study on the early history of the Hungarians, as in this age of diverse disciplinary developments such an undertaking would be impossible in a single monograph. The very concept of "early Hungarian history" itself is quite relative: as we will see in later chapters, because on the one hand it is not possible to precisely date the emergence of concepts referring to the Hungarians as a state or a people and on the other hand while these two concepts are related, they are far from identical.

Our aim is to present the current state of research on early Hungarian history. This primarily means the analysis of various theories of historical nature, and due to our archaeological interest, of course, a more thorough, critical examination of archaeological sources is included as well. The last phase of early Hungarian history is the 10th century, when the "oriental" cultural character, the nomadic way of life, can still be detected. The social structures and customs, but also the behaviours that developed in eastern landscapes, are well documented, but their slow, irreversible change is also an indisputable phenomenon. Overall, this century still clearly belongs to the era of early Hungarian history.

Regrettably, the status and quality of research on eastern archaeological materials is simply incomparable with that of the Carpathian Basin. This also contributes to the fact that a significant part of this work deals with the 10th century. In connection with earlier periods, we tried to use and present all of the relevant results and opinions. We believe that due to the many interpretation problems, it is not possible to write the history of the Hungarian people on the basis of the finds of Eastern origin at this moment. It is also questionable whether this could be achieved any time soon. That is why we attempted to present the most diverse theories as objectively as possible to both the academic and general audiences. We do not conceal and indeed we would already emphasize here in the Introduction that, in connection with the formation of the Hungarian identity, we cast our vote in favour of a *plural origin*.

The volume focuses on the issue of nomadic power structures, and in particular the question of the emergence of the Hungarian power structure. In reference to this, we also use the concept of "*steppe state*" as defined by Professor Walter Pohl in Vienna. Based on this and partly following József Deér, we try to find an answer as to the emergence of the "state". We believe that the factors shaping history are the *structures*, as the sources and creators of political and social-community identities.

As the following chapters will show, we are not only groping in the dark about the origin of statehood and identity. We have no clear evidence on the date of the Hungarian Conquest, the route of the conquering population, or their numbers. It is thus no coincidence that a very wide range of theories have been formulated on these issues. Further questions can be asked about the conquered populations, their integration into the 10th-century power structure, the diversity of lifestyles, and the 10th-century economy.

The results of excavations of 10th-century burial sites in the Carpathian Basin (Chapter 10) form the backbone of this work. The analysis is carried out by regions, in the following order: 1. Upper Tisza region, 2. Transylvania, 3. Trans-Tisza region, 4. the Great Plain and the Syrmia, 5. Northern Hungary and the Northern Kisalföld (Little Plain), and 6. Transdanubia. In Subchapter 7, we discuss sites in the Transcarpathian areas, to the north, west, and east. The subsequent chapter focuses on the 10th-century Hungarian rule in the Carpathian Basin, also providing an interpretation of the concepts of *Siedlungsbereich* and *Machtbereich* regarding this period and focusing especially on the problems of the settlement system, lifestyles, and customs. We also address some issues that are at the forefront of current research, i.e. the problem of nomadism in the Carpathian Basin, migration processes, and the issue of the centre-periphery.

As salt was the only commonly used condiment and preservative until modern times, due to its indispensability it was considered one of the most important commercial commodities in earlier centuries, the "oil" of the pre-modern era. Therefore, our review is complemented by Ferenc Wanek's summary on salt occurrences in the Transylvanian Basin.

The volume contains 125 images. We recommend this dissertation to professional archaeologists, university students as well as to the interested public at large.

Like all research, this venture was assisted greatly by many friends and colleagues, without whom it would be much poorer in terms of content and form. First of all, I would like to thank Gergely Szenthe, an employee of the Hungarian National Museum. For the most part, he views and researches the Avar era from a structuralist perspective, just as the author of the present work does the later era(s). I am grateful for his critical observations of our dissertation on 19th-century nationalism, but also for the often flawlessly accurate observations made in connection with the impact of these times on archaeological research. I hope that our joint efforts in this direction will be successful! At the same time, I must give special thanks to Attila Türk. He is not only one of the most important researchers of this period and topic, but his attitude in supporting the publication of studies by other colleagues – perhaps with differing opinions – is commendable and worthy of emulation.

On the note of structuralism: I must/should certainly thank my professor Radu Harhoiu, who set me on the path of academic research in the 1990s. His criticism and remarks, which were rather critically viewed back in that time, have proven very valuable ever since: "*... we archaeologists are able to see structures, so we have to study them*". All of this ultimately left its mark not only on the structure of this volume, but also on my (archaeological) thinking in a more general sense.

I would like to thank many of my colleagues and friends for the numerous ideas, working relationships, and discussions over the years: Ádám Bollók, Alpár Dobos, László Ferenczi, Bence Gulyás, Mihály K. Hőgyes, Norbert Kapcsos, Magdalena Krzemińska, Péter Langó, Gabriella M. Lezsák, Andrei Măgureanu, Florin Mărginean, Maxim Mordovin, Gheorghe Alexandru Niculescu, Zsófia Rácz, Dorin Sârbu, Bartłomiej Szymon Szmoniewski, Daniel Spânu, Ioan Stanciu, György Szabados, Miklós Takács, Mária Vargha, and Tivadar Vida, whose insights and critiques were very helpful.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Department of Early Hungarian and Migration Period Archaeology which in recent years has become the most important publisher in Hungary of new archaeological results related to the Age of the Hungarian Conquest.

I. THE SOURCES OF EARLY HUNGARIAN HISTORY

From the Middle Ages until the 19th century, the early history of the *Magyars*[1] was studied exclusively on the basis of written documents. Starting from the "century of science", however, new scientific disciplines, such as ethnography, linguistics, archaeology, and by the end of the century physical anthropology, were integrated into research activities. From a general point of view, this expansion of methods and themes resulted in an abundance of data, but these data illuminated different aspects of the past and sometimes it was not even possible to piece them together, especially when they were contradictory. Consequently, there has been a continuous debate among the representatives of the aforementioned disciplines, as well as within the disciplines, regarding particular research questions and even the competence of individual fields to answer such questions.[2]

I.1. Written sources

As noted above, until the 19th century written documents formed the exclusive basis for studying early medieval Hungarian history. In analysing written sources, it is necessary to consider their distance – both in a chronological and geographical sense – from the events they report about, the purpose for writing these works and whether the authors wrote their narratives as witnesses, or were merely interpreters. The genre and intent of their writings were similarly important, i.e. whether they were historical accounts or travelogues, rhetorical pieces or textbooks, etc., as the historical (political and social) relevance of such sources varies.

For much of the past, the basic sources of Early Hungarian history were the Hungarian chronicles. The chronicles surviving from the 13th and 14th centuries preserved the traces of earlier works, referring, for example, to more ancient narratives on the deeds of the Hungarians. However, these chronicles report specific events multiple times and in contradictory ways. Based on this data, an 11th-century "Hungarian Chronicle", the so-called Ancient Gesta (*Ősgeszta*), is identified, which was most probably compiled in the later years of Andrew I's reign [1046–1060].[3] As the chronological layers of different traditions cannot always be discerned, the original dating of the different traditions (i.e. when they were recorded for the first time) remains problematic. On the other hand, in the novelistic account of the early 13th-century *Gesta Hungarorum* ('The Deeds of the Hungarians') written by *Anonymous*, a scribe of King Bela, one can also see the intention of preserving the genealogical histories of ancient Hungarian noble families, and that of the royal family. From the *Gesta Hunnorum et Hungarorum* written by Simon of Kéza around 1282–1285 only excerpts remain, which narrate the common origins of the Huns and the Hungarians. The tradition of tracing back the origins of the Árpád Dynasty to Attila is probably of Eastern origin, as this derivation is also seen in case of the rulers of the Danube Bulgars.[4] Hunor and Magor, and the legend of the Wondrous Hind became fundamental parts of Hungarian literary tradition thanks to Simon of Kéza's Chronicle.[5] It should be noted, however, that similar stories (about two brothers chasing a stag) were com-

1 On "Magyar" as an ethnonym, see e.g. Makkay 1994, 35–43; Róna-Tas 1999, 271–272, 297–302.
2 See on this: Bálint 2006, 277–347.
3 For an overview of the respective literature, see: Veszprémy 2014, 273–288.
4 Róna-Tas 1999, 61–62.
5 Cf. Berze Nagy 1927. The reference of Kézai, the chronicler of Ladislaus IV "the Cuman" [1272–1290] on Attila the Hun was likely intentional, since Ladislaus's mother was of Cuman origin. This likely can be interpreted as royal propaganda. Beyond the fact that the legend plays now an important role in modern identity

mon throughout Eurasia. As Pál István Demény and Attila Mátéffy pointed out, this narrative tradition occurs predominantly among Turkic-speaking peoples.[6]

Long before the Hungarian chronicle tradition, Muslim, Byzantine, Slavic, and Western European sources also report on the early history of the Hungarians. However, these sources reflect the standpoints, prejudices, and interests of external observers (e.g. espionage, diplomacy) and this may have significantly influenced their content.

In Arabic sources, the earliest information concerning the Savard people (associated with the Magyars) come from al-Balādhurī, the historian who discussed Arab–Khazar relations. Ethnonyms referring specifically to the Magyars (Turks, *Unqalus*, etc.) appear only in later Arabic sources, and often times already in connection to Conquest Period Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin (see e.g. al-Mascūdī, al-Jayhani, Ibn Fadlan, Ibn Haukal, Harun ibn Jahja, Ibn Hayyān).[7]

Among the Byzantine sources, the most important ones are clearly *Tactica* (by Emperor Leo VI the Wise) and *De administrando imperio (DAI)* by Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus.[8]

In contrast to these, the Latin (Western) sources (chronicles, annals, letters) barely contain any data concerning the history of the Hungarians before the 10th century (the *Chronicon* of Regino and the *Annals of Fulda* are of primary importance), but preserved many *topoi* concerning the Hungarian population in the Carpathian Basin (e.g. *gens Hunnorum*). When reporting about military activities and referring to the Hungarians, they use different terms (e.g. *Ungri, Ungari*).[9] Concerning the settlement territory of the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin, the 10th-century Western sources rely completely on the antique traditions (focusing on Pannonia), and real geographical information only appears in 11th-century accounts, following the German attacks.[10]

I.2. Linguistic sources

The use of linguistic evidence[11] to study Early Hungarian history (i.e. prehistory) is clearly connected to the context of nation-state building with all its contradictions. Apart from the essay of János Sajnovics, linguist-historian-astronomer, on the family relations of the Hungarian and Lapp languages, which he wrote following his visit to Lappland in 1769–1770,[12] the scientific triumph of comparative linguistics only occurred in the second half of the 19th century; more precisely, it resulted from heated scientific and public debates during the 1870–1880s concerning the Finno-Ugric or Turkic origins of the Hungarian people and the Hungarian language,[13] and was a reflection of Central European linguistic nationalism.[14] Comparative historical linguistics studies the relations of different languages, classifying them into families and attempting to reconstruct proto-languages as completely as possible. The approach does, however, reflect national-Darwinism and evolutionist perspectives, as is quite typical for this period.[15]

politics as an ancient element of Hungarian literary tradition, Jenő Szűcs argued that historically it already started to influence the group consciousness of Hungarian nobility in medieval times (Szűcs 1997, 341–369).

6 Demény 2002, 39; Mátéffy 2013, 15.

7 Zimonyi 2014, 257–266; Zimonyi 2016.

8 Kapitánffy 2003; Farkas 2014, 267–272; Bollók 2017, 1291–1332.

9 Veszprémy 2014, 273–288; Bácsatyai 2017.

10 Kellner 1997, 80–82.

11 Language as a historical source: Róna-Tas 1999, 92–116.

12 About János Sajnovics: Hám 1889, 4–20.

13 On the other hand, the rumour that the "Finno-Ugrists" ("Finnists") are Habsburg agents was already widespread in the 1850s. Cf. Klima 2018.

14 Bibó 1994, 16–17.

15 Takács 2007, 71–74.

As a result of the debate, by the end of the 19th century research had established that the Finno-Ugric languages belong to one family, of which the Hungarian language is also a member, and that this family of languages, together with the Samoyedic languages form the family of *Uralic* languages.[16]

Based on linguistic evidence, it is also possible to demonstrate the impact of other languages on Hungarian. Regarding the period before the Hungarian Conquest and the 10th century, a significant amount of Turkic loanwords were found.[17] In general, Turkic loanwords can be grouped into three categories: those predating the period of Hungarian Conquest, ones which originate from immigrant population groups (during the Middle Ages), and finally those which date from the Ottoman period.[18] Among the many Turkic loanwords, a basic vocabulary pertains to wine culture (grape, wine, marc wine, lees, cask, filter – *szőlő, bor, csiger, seprő, ászok, szűr*),[19] and an even more significant group of words pertain to public life, religion and the state (fake, brave, letter, witch, wise, prison, farewell, battle, hayward, church, merit, morality, oath, to curse, suspicion, confession, to hate, to worship, to write, to torment, to beg, army, to cry, council, witness, plot (of land), hall, interpreter, wake (funeral ceremony), tumen (a military unit), law, lord, to repose, holiday).[20]

Ancient Iranian loanwords in Hungarian are earlier than the Turkic ones (e.g. cow, milk – *tehén, tej*, etc.),[21] but most Hungarian words in connection to animal husbandry (*abrak, akol, bárány, bivaly, csorda, iga, kacsa, kakas, kanca, malac,* etc.) and crop farming (beans – *bab,* furrow – *barázda,* harrow – *borona,* beets – *cékla*, sorghum – *cirok,* thresher – *csép,* spica – *kalász,* hoe – *kapál,* scythe – *kasza,* corncockle – *konkoly,* bran – *korpa,* shovel – *lapát,* flax – *len,* miller – *molnár,* barn – *pajta,* fallow – *parlag*, haricot – *paszuly,* buckwheat – *pohánka,* carrot – *répa,* etc.) are of Slavic origin.[22]

Nowadays, however, it has become clear that the history of languages is not the same as the history of peoples and equating the two is the result of modern nation-building that began in the 18th century.[23]

I.3. Archaeological sources

"They [the dead] present the 10th and early 11th centuries much, much better than the priests and monks who lived 200 or 300 years later and who first tried to speak for them."[24] This quote from István Bóna (1996) perhaps best sums up the methodological tension between historians and archaeologists researching the period of Hungarian Conquest. Archaeology in general (and specifically the archaeology of this period) is the most dynamically expanding field, primarily through cemetery research, and this is acknowledged by historiographers as well.

In contrast to cemetery research, settlement research essentially only began in the 1950s and 1960s. The archaeology of settlements has been hampered by a number of factors, notably, in most cases it was impossible to date settlements precisely within the 10th and 11th centuries and, therefore, this field of enquiry attracted relatively little professional interest. Another condition explaining the lack of interest was that settlements were much more difficult to excavate because of their size.[25]

16 See: Róna-Tas 1999, 93–100.
17 Berta–Róna-Tas 2002, 43–67.
18 Róna-Tas 1996, 95.
19 This transmission was possible only in the regions of the River Kuban and the northern shores of the Black Sea. Cf. Róna-Tas 1996, 99.
20 Róna-Tas 1996, 99.
21 Róna-Tas 1996, 98.
22 Róna-Tas 1996, 99.
23 The relevance of linguistics for the study of prehistory has been rightly criticized by Sinor 2005, 3–14.
24 Bóna 1996, 927.
25 Concerning the history of settlement archaeological research, see: AH 1996, 60–61; Takács 2010, 1–67; Langó 2010, 257–285; Gáll et al. 2017; Takács 1995, 5–50; Rácz 2019. Using the terms "cemetery" and "necropolis" would be ill-advised in regard to the 10th century funerary sites. Instead, the more neutral "funerary site" is preferred.

Regarding the dating of the cemeteries, the ethnocentric view that characterized research[26] in the 19th and much of the 20th centuries (artefacts → ethnicity) actually completely misled the archaeological research. Although István Bóna already recognized that this view was untenable, the insight of social science approaches and the reception of new ideas did not really have a profound impact on the archaeology of the pre-Conquest period, as these fields remained entangled in associating archaeological cultures with ethnic names documented in the written sources.[27] In Hungarian archaeology have not yet managed to overcome this methodological pitfall, let alone look beyond the two – evolutionary-based approaches – the so-called *retrospective* and *linear* research methods. This is summarized in the figure below *(Fig. 1)*.

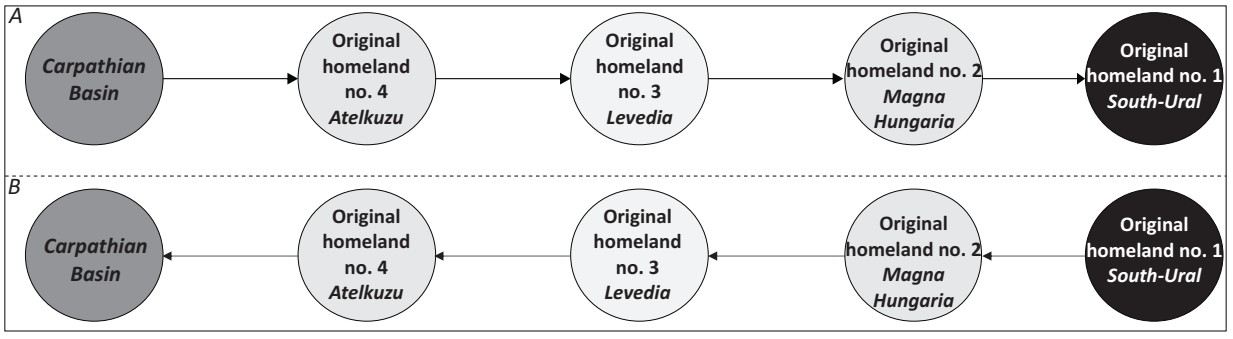

Figure 1. *Illustration of the retrospective (A) and linear (B) research models*

Neither *linear* (from the Urals to the Carpathians), nor *retrospective* (searching for Eastern antecedents of finds in the Carpathian Basin) approaches or models[28] offer a solution, as the customs and material cultures of cultural groups (regional cultures) detected by archaeological methods could sometimes change radically over time. What archaeologists – incorrectly – understood and imagined as a homogeneous culture could be in fact the manifestation of various fashions and influences in the context of open human societies. Radical social and political processes sometimes brought about cultural changes which were previously explained only in terms of migration.[29] Now we know, however, that this interpretation can be very deceptive. For example, the fundamental differences in burial customs and material culture in the 10th and 11th centuries[30] would suggest that a new population had arrived in the Carpathian Basin, even though we know that this is not true.[31] The dating of finds is also closely related to this problem: the eastern finds, which are close parallels to the Carpathian Basin ones, are in many cases contemporaneous, or of later date (e.g. the braid disks). Thus, we are confronted with a reverse chronology, when eastern finds actually post-date the parallel artefacts found in the Carpathian Basin. Instead of illustrating an East to West migration, interpretations should rather look the other way round *(Fig. 1)*.

All in all, these studies – which repeatedly gained momentum in the early 20th century and in the 1950s – remained influenced by the above approaches and has not yet achieved its goal. Currently, the archaeological localization of the *Atelkuzu (Etelköz*) remains questionable, and that of Levedia also raises complex issues, so much so that recently, an accomplished researcher in the field would not even count on its existence as a fact.[32] It is important to highlight that with regard to some archaeological sites found

26 Bóna 1996, 927–928; Bóna 1997, 345–362; Brather 2004, 517–564.
27 On evolutionist views in archaeology, see: Trigger 1990, 45–60.
28 Türk 2014, 20.
29 Some of the essays concerning this methodological debate: Bálint 2004, 35–65; Somogyi 2005, 189–224. On similar views, in connection to this theme, see: Brather 2004, 551–559; Quast 2010, 93–110.
30 See: Gáll 2013a, Vol. I, 802–804, Fig. 278.
31 Langó 2007, 241–246.
32 Türk 2014, 22.

in Ukraine, referred as the Subotcy-horizon or group, researchers have recently suggested that they represent the historic land of *Atelkuzu (Etelköz*). The evidence is discussed in detail in *Chapter IV*.

Among the various methods of archaeological research, physical anthropological research should be highlighted, which – in combination with other types of evidence – contributes to archaeological interpretations with many analytical results (i.e. concerning gender ratios in the cemeteries, analysis of stature and pathologic lesions, etc.).[33] Anthropological phenomena alone are, however, insufficient to decide about the issues of Hungarian prehistory.

Archaeogenetics is in a similarly close relationship with archaeology, which emerged as a separate field of research in the second half of the 20th century – due to technological progress – and now receives increasing attention.[34] While it has been long regarded as a key field for resolving problems of prehistory, archaeogenetic research also faces several methodological pitfalls:

1. Primarily, how do we decide about the sample size in regard to studies on historical populations? There arises not only the problem of how one calculates demographic ratios, but – in regard to the period of the Conquest – there is also the question of the very size of the group of conquering Hungarians. This has been examined – on a theoretical basis – and different estimates have been provided. One calculation is 400,000 (György Györffy), others estimated 100,000, and yet others postulate a group of just 14,000 (Gábor Vékony). The difference between the two extremes is almost 30 times. How many 10th-century skeletons should be sampled then, and which ones?[35]
2. Using bioarchaeological methods, we cannot determine sociological phenomena (emotions, social solidarity), as identity/identities is/are clearly not biological in essence, even though biological relations imply emotional bonds which can be interpreted from communal, sociological, and socio-psychological perspectives (for example, the concept of ethnic relationship is fictitious in most cases). If one accepts the assumption that the very nature of the *folk*, as a macro-group identity (in this case, of the *Hungarians*) is that it is created through political and sociological power relations, then it is imperative to ask the questions: to what extent is biological origin relevant, how far it is possible to – or should we – trace it back in time?
3. A particular power structure (one may call it either a ‘state’ or ‘power structure’) is not constituted on the basis of biological factors, but rather political and economic ones. The results of archaeogenetic research also illustrate thus far that – from a biological perspective – the 10th-century population of the Carpathian Basin was quite heterogeneous. How could it have been homogeneous?
4. In premodern times, power structures consisted of heterogeneous networks of micro communities, unified – with more or less success – by their ruling elites. Territories associated with such power structures were not fixed, and consequently the various peoples mentioned in the sources cannot be considered as closed groups ‘living in boxes’ – from a genetic point of view. Micro and macro groups controlling smaller or larger territories were constantly mixing with one another in the early medieval period, as well as in earlier periods.
5. Apart from the migrations of macro-groups, which were typically reported in written documents, there is another type of historical-sociological phenomena, concerning which, however, hardly any histori-

33 Éry 1996, 948–951.

34 In connection to the Hungarian Conquest, this problem was first addressed by archaeologists: Bálint 2008, 1170–1187; Bálint–Langó 2008, 1217–1219; Bálint 2010, 283–294. For the most recent analysis, see: Neparáczki et al. 2019; Maróti et al. 2022.

35 Using the above mentioned number of 400,000, a methodologically feasible way would be to collect a random sample of at least 1,000, covering each region of the Carpathian Basin evenly, where we know of Conquest-period cemeteries or graves. The lack of such an approach – and this we see as a major fallacy – would lead to the misinterpretation of available datasets. For a detailed introduction to sociological and demographic methods, see: Babbie 2008.

cal evidence is available, i.e. the migration of micro-groups, or individuals. This could have similarly contributed to the genetic heterogeneity of any given 'target' group or population.

The application of bioarchaeological methods (DNA, strontium isotope analysis) have not yet led to a paradigm shift in historical reconstructions. To this date, our conceptual framework on macro-groups is still influenced by folkish-nationalistic attitudes, which had developed during the era of national romanticism.

Taking into account these points, one may conclude that despite the fact that *archaeogenetic research* has enriched and continues to enrich our knowledge with a great deal of data, while helping to confirm or refute certain historical, cultural sociological, economic historical arguments and theories (see *Chapter X* on this as well), there are still significant limitations to the evaluation of archaeogenetic data in a *historical* context. Thus, to what extent it is useful to solve – and whether it is capable of solving – the problem of Hungarian *ethnic origins*, remains a question for future research.

Concluding this chapter, we should note that the joint results of the abovementioned disciplines may lead us either to more feasible interpretations, or to contradicting theories; however, their comprehensive analysis and evaluation should be the task of social scientists, archaeologists, and historians, who ideally have a comprehensive theoretical knowledge of social sciences.

I.4. Ethnography, cultural anthropology as a source of Hungarian prehistory

The interest of ethnology, ethnography – or as is more often called now, cultural anthropology – in Hungarian prehistory and in the period of Hungarian Conquest developed mainly in the middle of the 20th century[36] (albeit it dates back even earlier). Ethnography and cultural anthropology are similarly based on linear and retrospective methods. Therefore, such studies or observations – whether they concern the social structure, economic activities, nomadism, lifestyle, housing culture, pottery, horse breeding, the mythical world, or even the elements of 19th-century dress – require a great deal of caution, as it is obviously the case that no society – be it nomadic or sedentary – is so static that it survives without changes.[37]

36 Róna-Tas 1999, 140.

37 See the studies by Diószegi 1983 and HN 1997. For a similar, popularizing approach, see: HHK 2017, 10–107.

II. POWER FORMATIONS IN THE STEPPE REGION: "NOMADIC RIVALRY" AND THE PROBLEM OF NOMADIC GROUP IDENTITY

With regard to the political and social realities in the nomadic worlds of Eurasia and the Carpathian Basin, the most difficult problem of research is that the respective historical (narrative) sources lack the analytical tone. On the one hand, their authors were usually "outsiders", i.e. not from among the peoples who actually lived in these regions. On the other hand, the documents they produced were usually not historical inquiries, but written with a purpose (to manipulate, spread foreign propaganda, etc.). More generally, the problem is that the available sources tend to reflect the world view and socio-political stance of elites. Consequently, one should read them very carefully, and with a critical eye on how the political systems, identities, and cultural traditions of the illiterate nomadic societies, as well as the legal, ethical-moral norms within these frameworks, are described. In short, thorough source criticism is required in each case. Archaeology, on the other hand, provides unfiltered, indirect information, yet, archaeological data – by nature – have their limitations, and are not quite suitable for reconstructing the details of political systems, social relations, hierarchies, etc. In spite of this, archaeology is the only science, whose database on the period in question is constantly growing.

Studying early medieval governance and political-military structures, Walter Pohl distinguished two types, and he applied the concept of *steppe state* to nomadic political structures which emerged in the geographical and political context of the Eurasian steppe. The character of these (Asian) political systems was entirely different from the Mediterranean Greek-Roman type governance that managed to integrate Germanic power structures.[38] The concept of a *steppe state* is entirely different from the modern concept of the state. It is important to emphasize that the doctrine of popular sovereignty goes back to 18th-century traditions (Rousseau) and was not practiced in early medieval nomadic societies. In that time, power was not organized from bottom to top, but from top to bottom. Legitimacy did not come from the people, but from divine-sacred sources.[39] It is important to underline this, for one frequently finds in the current literature the names of peoples (documented in historical sources) interpreted in reference to modern political entities.[40] It is similarly important to pin down that the identity of "barbarian" groups was organized around the concept of the leader (i.e. the "khagan", the "king", etc.), thus, it was closely associated to the sacred-divine character of power. One may put it this way: the leader had people, and not the people a leader. For various reasons, the lack of a leader (e.g. his death) often (but not necessarily) led to the disintegration of power and to the disappearance of group identity (there are several examples in the written sources to illustrate this).

The constant fluctuations in the composition of the elite explains also why ethnonyms seem to change frequently (and are recorded accordingly in narrative reports) – as elites are constantly reorganizing

38 Pohl 2003, 571–574; Hall 2018, 17–37.

39 *"In the barbarian kingdoms God was understood to be the ultimate source of royal authority. This notion, which was widely prevalent in the sixth century, became focused into the formula that such a ruler was 'king by the grace of God' (rex dei gratia)—that he ruled by God's favour. This formulation became fundamental to medieval conceptions of kingship and was the distant ancestor of early modern divine right monarchy"*. Canning 2003, 17.

40 On the fluctuating, changing nature of early medieval power structures, see e.g.: Pohl 1991, 39–49. On ethnicity as a difficult and undefinable concept (*"hot potato"*), see: Mallešević 2004, 1–3. With regard to ethnonyms, see: Pohl 2018b, 5–17.

themselves due to their frequent conflicts. It is a very complex question to what extent early "barbarian" states maintained internal communication networks – beyond establishing political control and managing the resources needed by the elite. This must have played an important role in the redistribution of goods, and – indirectly – in the formation of a uniform material culture.

The elites of the steppe states had the most difficulty with keeping peoples with different origins and cultural backgrounds together, through establishing a coherent structure of power and through this creating an identity. A characteristic method of the elites to secure their position was the compilation of fictive family trees to prove that their lineage goes back to an ancestor whose authority was supreme and unquestionable,[41] like a divine messenger.[42] When such attempts turned out to be unsuccessful, they could also "import" new religious ideologies.[43] The economic basis of the steppe states – as political structures – was nomadism, and cultural anthropological research has constructed ambitious and thought-provoking models concerning the socio-political organization of these communities.[44] Based on their observations, the social-organizational model of nomadic societies can be characterized by dynamic clan systems with a conical hierarchy, which is already evidenced in the time of the Mongols, but applies certainly to earlier periods as well. According to Dávid Somfai-Kara, several "clans" can be distinguished relating to just one individual: his own (patrilinear) clan, his mother's clan, his wife's clan, the clan of his married daughter, and the clan of his brother-in-law *(Fig. 2)*.

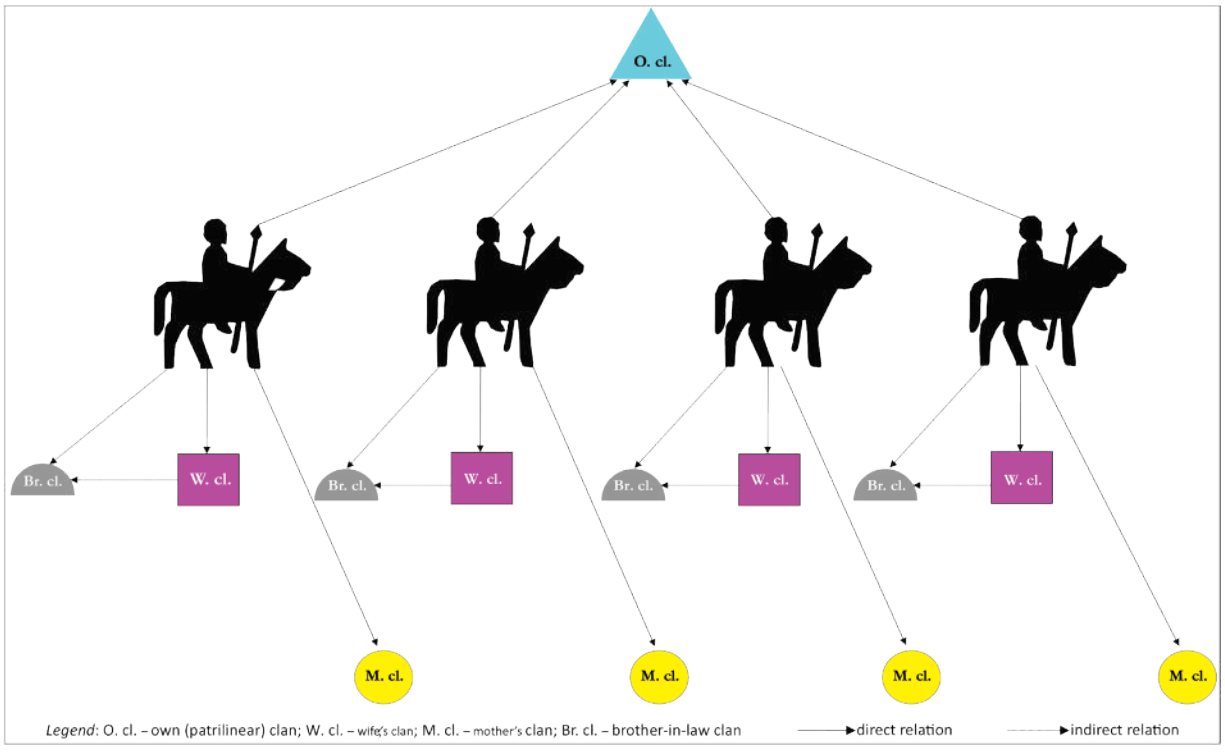

Figure 2. *Hypothetical model of clans related to a polygamous family with four half-brothers (based on Somfai-Kara's data: Somfai-Kara 2017, 343–355)*

41 Sneath 2007, 116–119.

42 The story of Attila the Hun finding the Sword of God was documented by *Priscos rhetor*: Blockley 2009, 281.

43 In this context, on the conversion of the Khazar elite to Judaism (Brook 2006; Golden 2007b, 123–162), and similarly the conversion of the Uyghur khagan to Manicheism (Sinor–Shimin–Kychanov 1998, 191–214) can be mentioned and thus the 10th-century example of the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin is also to be considered.

44 Somfai-Kara 2017, 343–355.

The constellation of these clans created complex personal networks, and there was an inherent drive to compete for power. This "nomadic rivalry" manifested in the rise of "big men" (of which the most well-known was Temujin) and their retinues, whose power was often short lived. From a historical-sociological perspective, the result of this competition was the emergence of a major clan, under which "brother-in-law clans"[45] were constantly competing to advance in a conical system and obtain the political power *(Fig. 3)*.[46]

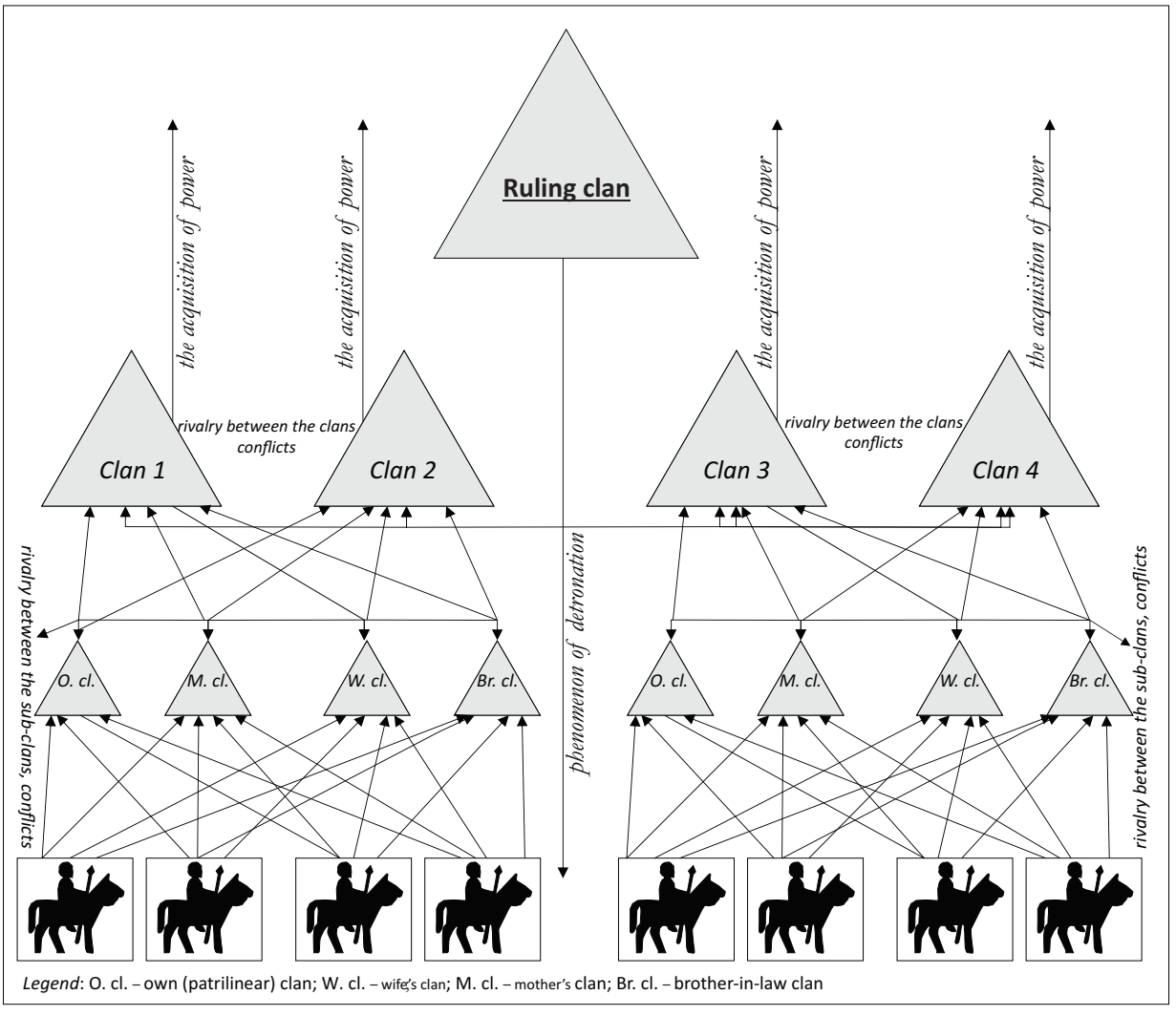

Figure 3. *Hypothetical model of the dynamic-conical clan system and nomadic rivalry (partially based on Somfai-Kara's data: Somfai-Kara 2017, 343–355; illustration by Erwin Gáll)*

Figures 2 and 3 clearly illustrate that the clan system was a complicated social network, in which modern aspects of identity, such as common language, played only a secondary role. In contrast to modern practices, the different members of these societies were not legally equal. Members of modern nations are equal before the law and treated accordingly, as they have a shared horizontal identity (*"horizontal society"*[47]), regardless of social statuses (e.g. a factory worker and the president of the state are equal

45 Somfai-Kara 2017, 344.

46 The concept of "conical clan" initially appears in the literature in the first half of the 20th century, used by the anthropologist Paul Kirchhoff (Kirchhoff 1959, 259–270). See also Friedman 1998, 137–139.

47 Friedmann 1999, 11–12.

before the law). In case of premodern nomadic states, each individual occupies a certain position within micro-communities, which have a vertical hierarchy; thus, their position is determined by the status of the leaders within this hierarchical system. Since the identity of an individual was determined by this verticality, loyalties were fragile and fluctuating.

The verticality of this system fully contrasts with our modern sensations and notions that evolved in the age of capitalism. On the other hand, there were forces of coherence – civilizational factors, common myths, religion – which in some ways created also "horizontal identities" within nomadic societies, which, however, should not be viewed in terms of modern notions. Several questions arise: taking into account contemporary conditions, how far such networks could extend (in terms of population numbers); to what extent the leadership of the conquering elite was coercive towards the subjugated population and what were the mechanisms of their rule? It seems likely that – due to the aforementioned reasons – a primitive horizontal coherence or identity manifested itself before the organization of state governance, as Jenő Szűcs already noted this too, however,[48] the origin and character of this process are yet to be explained.[49] On the other hand, it is very clear that one-dimensional views concerning the ethnic identity of peoples should be discarded. Instead, we should take into account partly the aforementioned horizontal identity of nomadic communities, which started to manifest already, and partly the vertical political structures, as a framework that brought individualism, political charge, and rivalry among "big men" (Kuber, Bayan, Álmos, etc.). The clan structures responsible for the creation of nomadic states either succeeded or failed in establishing the vertical type of identity, but resembling the horizontal identity typical for macro-groups *(Fig. 4)*.[50]

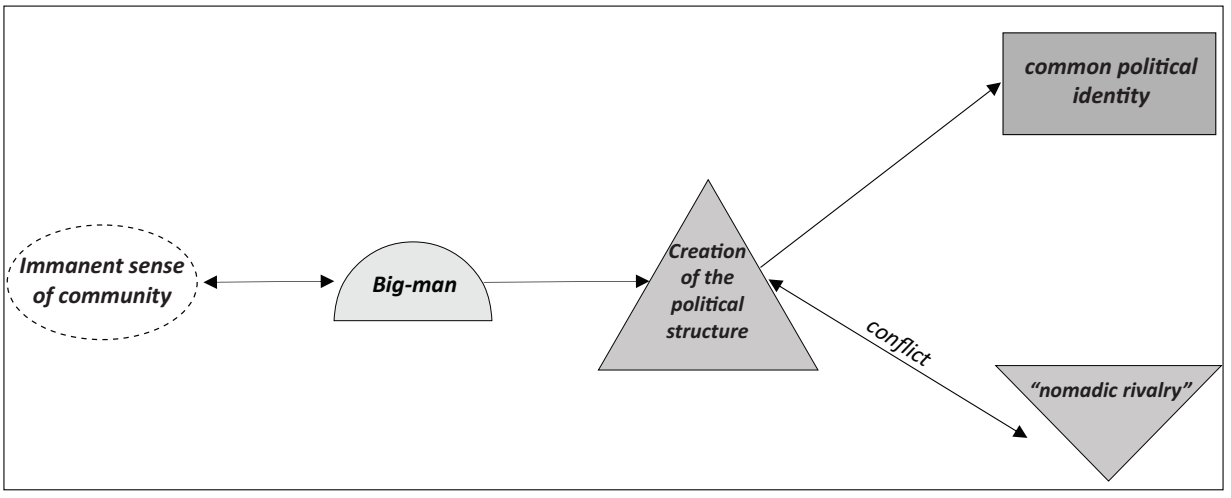

Figure 4. *The immanent sense of community, the nomadic political structures, and the process of the creation of identities (by the author)*

48 Szűcs 1997, 311.

49 *"…a legkorábbi nyelvemlékekben megfigyelhető összefüggések csakis egy olyan archaikusabb fogalomalkotással magyarázhatók, amelyben – a feudális struktúrával szemben – „nemzet" és „nép" valamiféleképpen belsőleg összefüggtek, a gondolkodás mintegy a nemzetség analógiájára, annak kategóriáiban alkotta meg a tágabb népkötelék fogalmát." ("Some [conceptual] connections in our earliest linguistic records can be explained only by an archaic formulation of concepts, in which "nation" and "people" were inherently intertwined in certain ways – in contrast to the feudal period, thus "nation" was conceptualized in an analogous way to the gens").* Szűcs 1997, 312.

50 Walter Pohl must have considered a similar phenomenon when writing that *"The Avars were a vertically organized macrofederation…"* (Pohl 2018a, 12).

The power structures of steppe states were based on political-military ties, loyalties, family origins, and relations interwoven in a complex way, which could remain fragile and changing, but whose acceptance – in a given political situation – led to the emergence of governance like structures. In fact, Jenő Szűcs must have thought of something similar – not in this form though – describing *gentilism* in regard to the period between 500–1000 AD.[51] Szűcs mentioned four elements of shared identity in a wider context of language and culture: *1. Uniform tradition, 2. Common law, 3. "Customs", and 4. Beliefs*.[52]

Making a conclusion now (and Szűcs was partly correct at this point), one should not dismiss the idea that the concept of *peoples* as macro-groups is relevant for understanding the nomadic world; but clearly has to be considered differently from what has been the modern 19th-century view, conceived during the time of national Romanticism and reaching back even to the medieval period.

Terminological confusions are due to these modern views, and they should be briefly addressed at this juncture. The concepts of *tribe*, and *tribal alliance* are widely used. Instead of *tribe*, written sources use the concept of *gens* regarding the Hungarians as well,[53] the concept of tribal alliance is, however, particularly problematic since it completely contradicts what we know about the character of early medieval nomadic states and societies.[54] The clan systems of nomadic states were entirely different from modern nations and their horizontal social structures, which emerged in the capitalist era.[55] In the following chapters, this will be an important consideration regarding the historic names of peoples attributed to various population groups. One should be aware that on an individual level identity (as the loyalty of the individual to certain groups, peoples) was fundamentally different since the institutions of modernity did not yet exist (there were no public schools, conscripted armies, mass media, etc.).

51 Szűcs 1997, 307. On the concept of *gens*, see also: Wenskus 1961; Geary 2014.

52 Szűcs 1997, 307.

53 Cf. e.g. Szabados 2013, 14–15.

54 For a similar approach, see: Zimonyi 2018, 79–89.

55 Anderson 2006; Gellner 2008; Hobsbawm 1990. We should be reminded that modern "mass societies", as real "horizontal" societies are the products of mass culture and mass media (mass production, production of sequels, etc.), which fundamentally changed the identity of the people. In this context, cf. Ortega y Gasset 1938. However, the modern concept is not to be derived from a single American, or Western European (medieval) model, as proposed by certain western European scholars. Jenő Szűcs discerned three regions regarding Europe only, and thus, one should account for three nation-models at least, despite that they can be traced back to a French archetype (Szűcs 1983).

III. EUROPE AND "EASTERN EUROPE" IN THE 6TH–10TH CENTURIES

III.1. Europe and "Eastern Europe" as historical concepts

The concept of Europe is – to a great degree – ambivalent. In a historical context, it has been interpreted in different ways. Currently, it is seen more as a political construct (European Union), however, from a geographical point of view, it is much larger, stretching between the Atlantic and the Urals (Charles de Gaulle already explained it this way). It is a telling detail that public perception in Russia would see the division line between Europe and Asia at the feet of the North Caucasus region, close to the town of Budyonnovsk.

Our modern concepts are certainly different from the geopolitical and geo-cultural perceptions in the early medieval period. In Late Antiquity, Europe (*Europa Occidens*) as a concept was not established yet, and in the Early Middle Ages, it was understood as a geographic, political, and cultural reality different from what it is today. During Carolingian times, chroniclers started to refer to *Europe* in a sense which excluded the adversaries of the Empire, i.e. the Arabs. The Carolingian Renaissance as a cultural phenomenon – i.e. the formation of an ecclesiastical school system and the spread of Carolingian culture – was also closely connected to this.[56] In fact, Charlemagne [768–814], King of the Franks, became the first to expand the boundaries of the Carolingian political, economic, and military systems to the eastern parts of mainland Europe. Since the time of the Roman Emperors Diocletianus and Constantinus, this kind of political, economic, and military cohesion had remained unprecedented in the region.[57] By the end of the 8th century and the beginning of the 9th century, however, the Carolingian expansion had reached the political boundaries of the Avar Khaganate. Under the flag of Christian values – based on the philosophy of Saint Augustine – the political, cultural ecclesiastical, and economic expansion of Christian Western Europe began.

Consequently, Europe as a historical-political concept should be used only in reference to the region which did not yet stretch beyond the western parts of the Carpathian Basin. The eastern peripheries became part of *Europe* only in the 9th century. The fact that the Carolingians were eventually unsuccessful during this early phase of western expansion (in spite of the 9th century political division of the Carpathian Basin) is another issue. At that time, the Carpathian Basin did not yet belong to Europe, and its deeper integration began only in the 11th century.

What, then, does our anachronistic (20th-century) concept of "Eastern Europe" – primarily used in a cultural, and later also in a geopolitical context – refer to?[58] In this study, we apply this term in reference to the geographical region stretching approximately from the east of the Carpathians to the Urals, including the area of the Northern Caucasus as well. The "highway of the peoples" is another well-established trope describing the Eurasian Steppe, where major east-west migrations took place. It is important to remember, however, that the concept of "Eastern Europe" was still unknown to cultural-political communities in the 6th–10th centuries.

56 Belloc 2012, 7.
57 Brown 1999, 270.
58 The concept used by Oskar Halecki (1923). See also Szűcs 1997, 236: note 11; Romsics 2005, 27–38; Heisler 1993, 48–51; Wolff 2000.

III.2. "Eastern Europe" in the 6th–10th centuries

Stretching between the Carpathians and the Urals, *Eastern Europe* was a colourful region, home to constantly changing, varying communities who lived a mobile way of life. Scholarly narratives discussing the ancient history of the Hungarians often describe these communities as closed, homogenous populations, which remained geographically fixed, and thus their geographical situations and mobility patterns could be illustrated on maps, as in case of modern states, with clearly discernible boundaries. However, only modern political entities had fixed geographical boundaries, and the method to define the boundaries of "original homelands" (*Urheimat*)[59] is – in our opinion – anachronistic and generally unfit for describing premodern phenomena, let alone the nomadic way of life and perceptions.

As discussed in the previous chapter, there is similar uncertainty with regard to historical ethnonyms, which do not (in the least) correspond to modern-day ethnic units and nations.[60] Navigating among such pitfalls and obstacles, we shall attempt to draw a more accurate picture of this macro-region, as well as of the historical processes unfolding in a period when the Hungarian nation and more importantly also the Hungarian *steppe state* were "born" – to use an undoubtedly inappropriate term (as we explain later).

The Hunnic Empire had a great impact on the history of this region, fundamentally influencing the populations living to the west from the Lower Danube,[61] but also the power structures elsewhere in "Eastern Europe", in the steppe between the Urals and the Carpathians.[62] This impact lasted until the 6th century, and even until the first decades of the 7th century and influenced e.g. the character of the Avar Khaganate.[63] During the intermittent period of almost three centuries, constant military conflicts arising from political aspirations characterized the scene. New political constructions emerged, or were defeated, due to subsequent or parallel processes of migrations. Ethnonyms mentioned in the sources remain often confusing, as they referred to clan-systems,[64] which constantly took different shapes due to unstable political situations *(Fig. 5)*.

Geopolitical confrontations typically emerged from commercial-economic conflicts, and *vice versa*.[65] Thus, understanding economic motives and interests is crucial for reconstructing the political history of the steppe region in the 6th century. The fall of the Rouran Khaganate, succeeded by the Gökturk Khaganate,[66] brought major changes, and the power of the latter relied significantly on a network of Sogdian traders. They also managed to seize the Northern Silk Road, as well as regions lying further north, conquering and gaining control over the Uyghurs and the Alans. A Syriac source appended to the work of Zechariah Rhetor is relevant here, as it mentions several nomadic groups living north of the Caucasus Mountain, including the Onoğur, Oğur, Sabir, Burgar, Khuturgur, Avar, Khasir, (I)di(r)mar, Sarurgur, Barsilq, Khwalis, Abdel, and Ephtalith peoples.[67] Naturally, the question remains: do these ethnonyms refer to extended clan systems or even larger, multi-ethnic political units? The reference to the *Avars* may

59 On this concept see for example: Róna-Tas 1999, 315.
60 Pohl 2018b, 5–17.
61 This interpretation was rightly mentioned in connection to the tomb of Childerich (Kazanski–Périn 2005, 287–298), horse accessories found at the burial site of Apahida similarly reflect Hunnic influence. See also: Attila's Europe 2021.
62 Kazanski 2017, 65–84.
63 On this point of view, see: Pohl 2018a, 16.
64 See *Chapter II*.
65 See, for example, the diplomatic mission of Turkic envoys in Byzantium to claim back their *"fugitive slaves"*, or that of the Byzantine legate, Zemarchus, who visited the Turkic Khagan, Sizabulos. The real purpose of the mission, in this case, was to obtain information and to secure the Silk Road, as in Byzantium the production of silk began this time, using cocoons imported from China. See: Róna-Tas 1996, 179.
66 For a historical overview, see e.g. Drompp 2005, 101–111.
67 Pseudo-Zachariah 2011, 448–450.

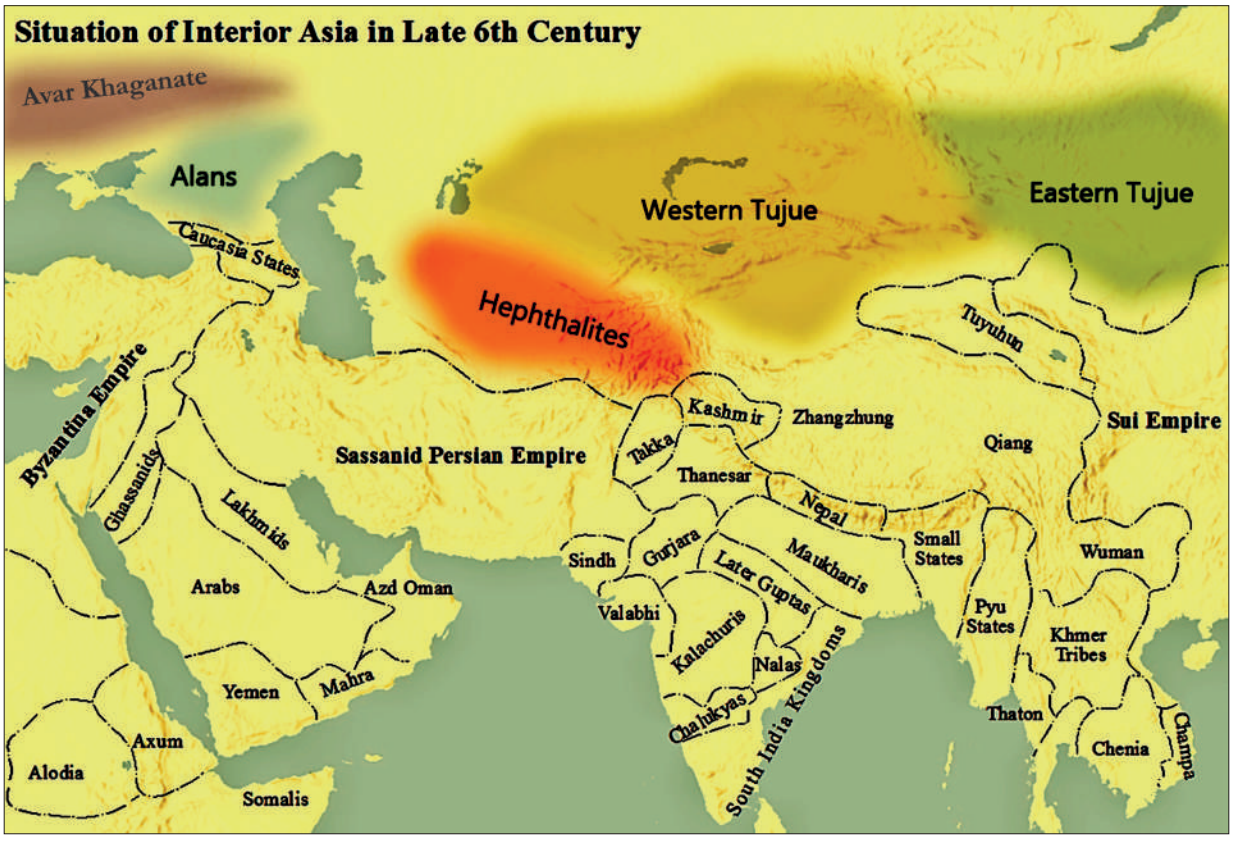

Figure 5. *A map of the geopolitical situation in the macro-region between the Black Sea and Central Asia at the end of the 6th century (after Qiang–Kordosis 2018, Fig. 1)*

indicate that Rourans, who were defeated in 552, were already present in this region in 555, i.e. before they conquered the Carpathian Basin *(Fig. 5)*.[68]

Until ca 750, the supremacy of the Western Turkic Khaganate did not significantly influence the situation in Eastern Europe, as the political centre of the Khaganate was situated further to the east. As much as we are able to reconstruct the course of events, the Bulgars (who belonged to the Ogurs) became independent from this political tie sometime around the beginning of the 7th century.[69] Whether they really became independent remains an issue, as Byzantine sources report (in 635) that the Bulgarian ruler revolted against his lord, the Avar Khagan. This allows for speculations that the territory of the Khaganate reached as far as to the area of the Don River.[70] The territory of the Bulgars was situated somewhere around the Dnieper, where the grave of the last Bulgar ruler was found. Kubrat died shortly after 650, and the decline and disintegration of the Bulgar political formation was an example of what typically awaited steppe states in the early medieval period: part of the population moved west under the leadership of Asparuh, while the other part moved to the area between the Dnieper and the Don Rivers and surrendered to the Khazars.[71]

68 According to written sources, the Khaganate also controlled the northern shores of the Black Sea until 626. Cf. Szádeczky-Kardos 1998, 213.

69 Before the Arab conquest, the presence of the Bulgars is reported in the 7th century in the *Geography* of Pseudo Movses Khorenatsi.

70 In contrast to this, Walter Pohl suggests that Kubrat became independent from the Turks, and not from the Avars. See Pohl 1988, 270–273; Pohl 2018a, 324–325.

71 Róna-Tas 1996, 183: 56. kép.

The history of the Eastern European steppe was also significantly influenced by the Brownian late antique "revolution",[72] and the emergence and expansion of Islam. The Eastern Roman Empire lost control of Syria and Egypt, and then Persia and the Sasanian Empire. In 698, Carthago fell, and then in 711 the Visigothic Kingdom was also conquered. The Muslim fleet was first halted in 717 at Constantinople. In result of the Arab conquest, the Eastern Roman Empire – *Rum*, as it is referred to in Muslim sources – shrank to a miserable size. Its economic capacity lagged far behind the opportunities of the newly emerged great power.[73] It is because of this development, as well as of structural changes that Peter Brown took note of its new name, *Byzantium (Fig. 6)*.[74]

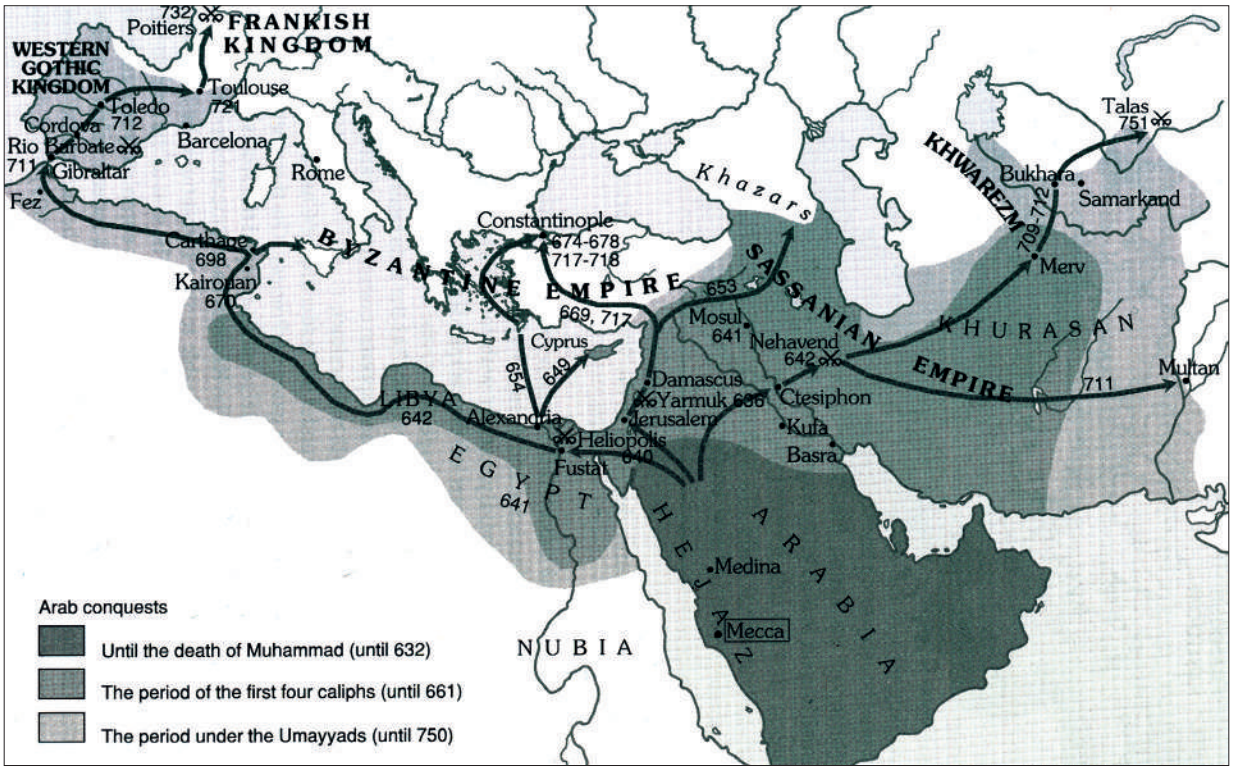

Figure 6. *Expansion of Islam up to 750 (after Róna-Tas 1999, Fig. 8)*

Parallel to these events, the steppe region witnessed various political games. The emergence of the Khazar Khaganate was almost contemporary to that of the Arab Khalifate. The latter grew to a global scale, conquering the world from India to Hispania. From this perspective, the question is interesting whether the political and military development of the Khalifate could influence – and if so, to what extent – the emergence of the Khazar Khaganate, which in turn was a political construction that played a key role in the history of Eastern Europe from the 7th to 9th centuries. It is necessary to highlight that the Khaganate came to power and started to exercise control over this region at a time, when the political, military and economic significance of this geographical area increased enormously, as the Turks lost their powers in the east.

Turning now to the problem of the *Khazars*, the name itself likely originates from the Latin *caesar*, as linguistic studies have suggested.[75] It is mentioned for the first time in the abovementioned source, in 555, as *Khasir*. Yet, the origin of the name, as well as the historical origins of these people have not been

72 Brown 1999, 181.
73 See more on this in Brown 1999; Haldon 1997; McCormick 2001.
74 This question is discussed extensively by Brown 1999, 181–193, 229–231.
75 Róna-Tas 1983, 126–133; Róna-Tas 1996, 189–190; Róna-Tas 1999, 228–229; Erdal 2007, 75–108.

clarified with reassuring certainty. Some researchers suggested that *Khazars* were migrating from east to west, separating themselves from the *tielö (T'ieh-lê)*, who controlled vast areas,[76] while others believed that due to attacks by the Khalifate (737) a group of them migrated to the east and joined the Uyghurs.[77] The opposite views demonstrate perfectly that we are on very thin ice when investigating the history of these populations and their movements.

The Khazar Khaganate emerged in a region enveloped by the Caucasus, the Volga, and the Don rivers and its boundaries extended to as far south as Caucasian Albania.[78] Some scholars suggest that its centre was situated to the north from the modern town of Derbent. The area of this fortress at the western shores of the Caspian Sea was in fact a conflict zone between the nomads (to the north) and the sedentary Iranian communities (to the south) *(Fig. 7)*.[79]

The emergence of the Khazar Khaganate cannot be precisely dated. However, a significant event dates from 627, when the siege of the city of Tiflis began,[80] and some 40,000 Khazar soldiers took part in the campaign against the Persians,[81] as allies of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius [610–641]. Due to the strengthening of the Khazar power structure, in the 630s they managed to permanently step out of the shadow of the Western Turkic power. Their leaders took the title of *khagan*, which was a clear indication of the intention of the Khazar elite to legitimize dynastic power (652/653). In the north, the military expansion of the Khaganate brought about the destruction of the power structure of the Bul-

Figure 7. *Reconstructed early medieval fortress of Derbent (Third Caucasian Archaeological Expedition, with the participation of Gabriella M. Lezsák, Lyudmilla Avar, Erwin Gáll) (Photo: Erwin Gáll)*

76 The name was used as a common noun for peoples in the northernmost area of the steppe zone. Since the end of the 4th century, Chinese sources mention the *tili*, and later the *tielö*. It does not bear any meaning; a possible interpretation is 'cart/wagon', sine the alternative name used for *tielö* was *kaokü*, meaning *"high chariot"* in Chinese (Vásáry 2003, 18–19).

77 Róna-Tas 1996, 190; Róna-Tas 1999, 229.

78 The population of Caucasian Albania became acquainted with Christianity relatively early, in 4th century AD, thanks to its Armenian neighbours. Despite the identical names, Caucasian Albania has no connection whatsoever to European Albania. The source discussing its history: Movsēs Dasxuranci 1961. For a Hungarian introduction to its history, see Csanád Bálint's work: Bálint 1995, 50–52.

79 The construction of the fortress of Derbent began around 550, during the time of Khosrau Anushirvan [531–579], Persian ruler. In 552–553, Derbent was taken by the Khazars, together with the northern part of Caucasian Albania. The Byzantine–Persian peace in 562 made it possible for the Persians to finish the construction, and they even began to build other fortresses in Caucasia (Vásáry 2003, 139).

80 Tbilisi (until 1936, the official Russian name was *Tiflis* – a Greek loanword)

81 This is most likely an overstatement considering early medieval population density.

gars and led to the integration of new populations into the Khaganate. Later on (e.g. in 711), the Khazars also actively took part in the Byzantine succession wars for the throne.[82]

Although the Khaganate was organized by nomadic clans whose military power was routed in their variegated network system, there were also farming communities in the Caucasus region, which pursued a sedentary lifestyle based on advanced agricultural techniques. This mixture of different social structures and lifestyles influenced the dynamics of economic and commercial activities of the Khaganate, involving different populations, who spoke Turkic, Finno-Ugric, Iranian, Slavic, and Paleo-Caucasian languages.[83] The administrative organization of a large area required a complex network and could catalyze the sedentarization of the nomads – perhaps this explains the relatively long existence of the Khaganate as a political formation.[84] The lifestyle of the nomadic elite could change significantly: from spring to autumn they lived a nomadic way of life, while in the winter they became urban dwellers and moved into towns.

Figure 8. *Ceramics dated to the 6th–7th (3) and 9th–10th centuries, found in Derbent (Third Caucasian Archaeological Expedition with the participation of Gabriella M. Lezsák, Lyudmilla Avar, Erwin Gáll) (Photo: Erwin Gáll)*

82 Róna-Tas 1996, 189–190.
83 Golden 2007a, 8. See also: Тортика 2015, 369–394.
84 On the economic organization of the Khaganate, see e.g. Noonan 2007, 207–244.

The Arab expansion reached the eastern part of the Caucasus Mountain in the 640s, when the territories of modern-day Azerbaijan (approximately the region of Caucasian Albania) and Armenia became provinces of the Khalifate. Caucasian Albania was the basis of further expansion. They conducted the first campaign against the Khaganate in 652, on the northern side of the Caucasus, and then conflicts began anew around 700 and in 722 the Arabs took the town of Balanjar. The geographic location of this town has not been clarified yet, but its occupation was the reason why the centre of the Khaganate was relocated to Etil/Itil, situated around the Volga estuary (its locations remains similarly unidentified).

The 737 attack against the Khaganate clearly marks the start of a new era in the steppe region: 1) The Khalifate managed to expand its control – even if temporarily – over parts of the Northern Caucasus, reaching the Volga River; 2) The khagan was captured by the Arab army and converted to the Muslim faith; 3) Parallel to this, the northward migration of the Bulgars began in the direction of the Kama and Volga Rivers.

Despite their defeat in 737, the Khazars retained their supremacy over the Eastern European region in the 8th and 9th centuries. In order to keep their distance from Byzantine-Christian and Arab-Muslim religious ideologies, the khagan and his retinue converted to Judaism, possibly in the last quarter of the 8th century, which became the "state religion" *(Fig. 8)*.[85] Although this was a success from the point of view of "foreign policy", it did not help to reinforce internal coherence, i.e. horizontal, popular solidarity among the various communities; on the contrary, it tended to weaken solidarity, bringing conflicts between different social groups.

From an economic point of view, the main effect of these political changes was that the northern section of the Silk Route and the waterway of the Volga became integrated into the transcontinental trade system, and trade from these regions was directed to the south.[86] Fur and slaves were traded, and in exchange for these goods from Scandinavia and from the northern Slavic and Volga Bulgar territories, Arab coins flooded the northern parts of Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. After the Arab conquest, the configuration of the road network and the role of particular routes crossing the Caucasus also changed. The eastern parts of the mountain region became more important, while the significance of other roads leading through the western parts of the mountain (to the Black Sea and Byzantium) decreased.[87]

The Khazar Khaganate partly withstood the expansion of Islam, although a significant number of Muslims lived within its territory. On the other hand, the conversion of the Volga Bulgars to Islam was an accomplished fact by the end of the 10th century (as a result of a longer development). When in 922 Ibn Fadlan visited the Bulgar court, his conversation with the Bulgar ruler revealed that the father of the khagan was pagan, and that the Bulgar elite[88] spoke an Oghur-type Turkic language. In addition to other Turkic groups, there were also Slavic and Kievan Rus traders among the Bulgars. Due to the expansion of Islam, this region also became connected to Eurasian trade and – eventually – to the Khalifate.

III.3. "Eastern Europe" and archaeological evidence from the 6th–10th centuries

Apart from a few emblematic archaeological discoveries dating from the 6th to 10th centuries, there is a very large number of mostly poorly furnished burials/burial sites and settlements documented in this vast geographical area *(Fig. 9)*. From the rich material, the burial site attributed to the aforementioned Kubrat, the ruler of the short lived, 6th-century Bulgar Empire, should be highlighted. His grave, dated to around

85 Golden 2007b, 123–162.
86 Frankopan 2015.
87 Polgár 2005, 27.
88 Ibn Fadlán 2007.

650 AD, was found in 1912, in the village of Malaya Pereshchepina, near the Poltava River. The ring, whose inscription helped to identify his person has remained an unparalleled find ever since. Nonetheless, the whole assemblage is spectacular: it consisted of 800 pieces, the weight of the gold objects was above 25 kg, while the weight of the silver finds was twice as much – around 50 kg. Altogether 16 gold and 19 silver vessels, a gold drinking horn (*riton*) and other drinking utensils, gilded wooden jugs, as well as a gilded iron sword and a dagger were collected from the grave. The latter objects were most probably worn by the ruler on festive occasions. His dress was held in place by an ornate belt. Jewellery inlaid with precious stones and Byzantine gold were also found among his grave accessories.[89]

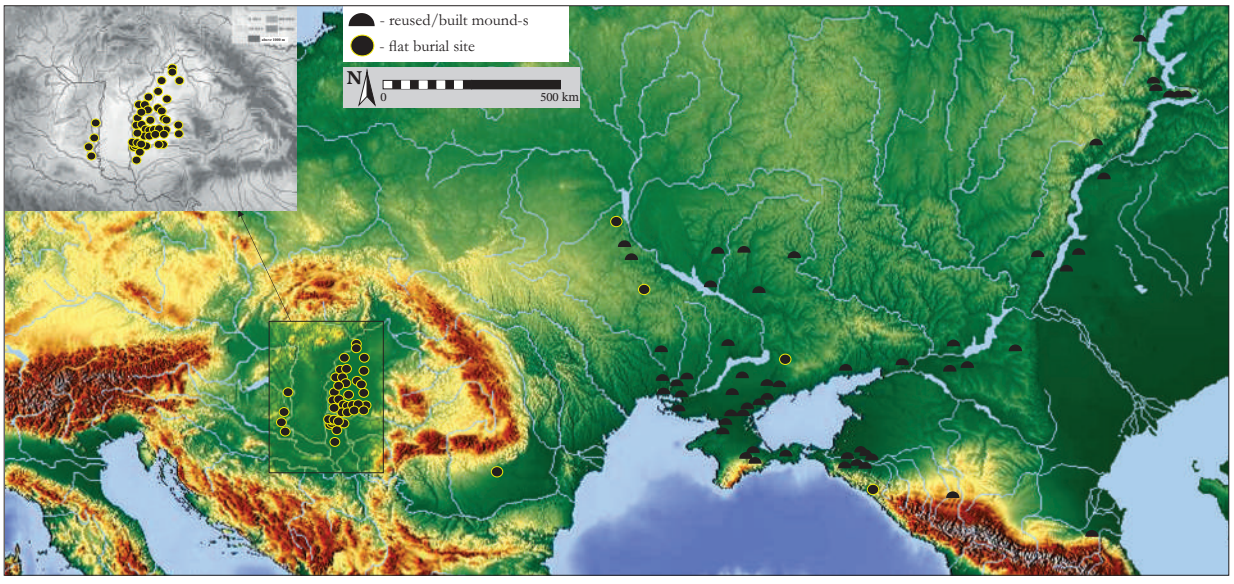

Figure 9. *Distribution map of archaeological sites attributed to the so-called Sivashovka/Syvashivka horizon; the Trans-Tisza phenomenon (see below) in the Carpathian Basin (map by Erwin Gáll; data after* Komap *2006, Puc. 1; Lőrinczy 1989, 1. kép;* Gulyás *2015, 501–504; respectively based on data collected during the I–III Caucasian Archaeological Expeditions, conducted by Gabriella M. Lezsák)*

Burials and graves attributed to the so-called Sivashovka/Syvashivka horizon *(Fig. 9)* – named after its namesake site, situated in the steppe, to the north of Crimea – have definitely much poorer finds. Based on more than 70 years of research, this "group" is interpreted by archaeologists as a heterogeneous population composed of different ethnicities.[90] Considering the spread of the respective sites over a vast area between the Dnieper and the Volga, it would be clearly mistaken to argue otherwise, i.e. to attribute the burials to a single population.[91] Each of the 119 sites identified so far by Rasho Rashev are single graves or grave groups.[92] The fact that more extensive cemeteries have not been found further complicates the situation – perhaps this is to be explained by the lifestyle of the population *(Fig. 10. 1–3)*. According to Oleksiy Komar, the finds indicate that (most of) these graves belonged to commoners – as he was able to establish some social categories on the basis of some grave groups, which could be indicative of social structures.[93]

89 The exclusive assemblage is currently stored in the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg. For the analysis of the grave, see: Werner 1984, and also: Komap 2006, 241–244.

90 Komap 2006, 125–133; Комар–Кубышев–Орлов 2006, 245–374.

91 For a generally sceptic view on nomadic burials, see: Renfrew 1992, 445–478; Gulyás 2015, 502.

92 In 2000, Rasho Rashev reported 98 graves, in 2007, 119 graves. This list included the one at Üč-Tepe (Рашев 2000, 16–27, Tabl. 9; Рашев 2007). New finds and interpretations: Прокофьев 2014, 302–304, 306, рис. 119; Sokolov–Gulyás 2024, 283–292; Gulyás 2023, 701–756.

93 Komap 2006, 241. On the Sivashovka/Syvashivka-group see also: Curta 2008, 149–185; Curta 2019a, 33–70.

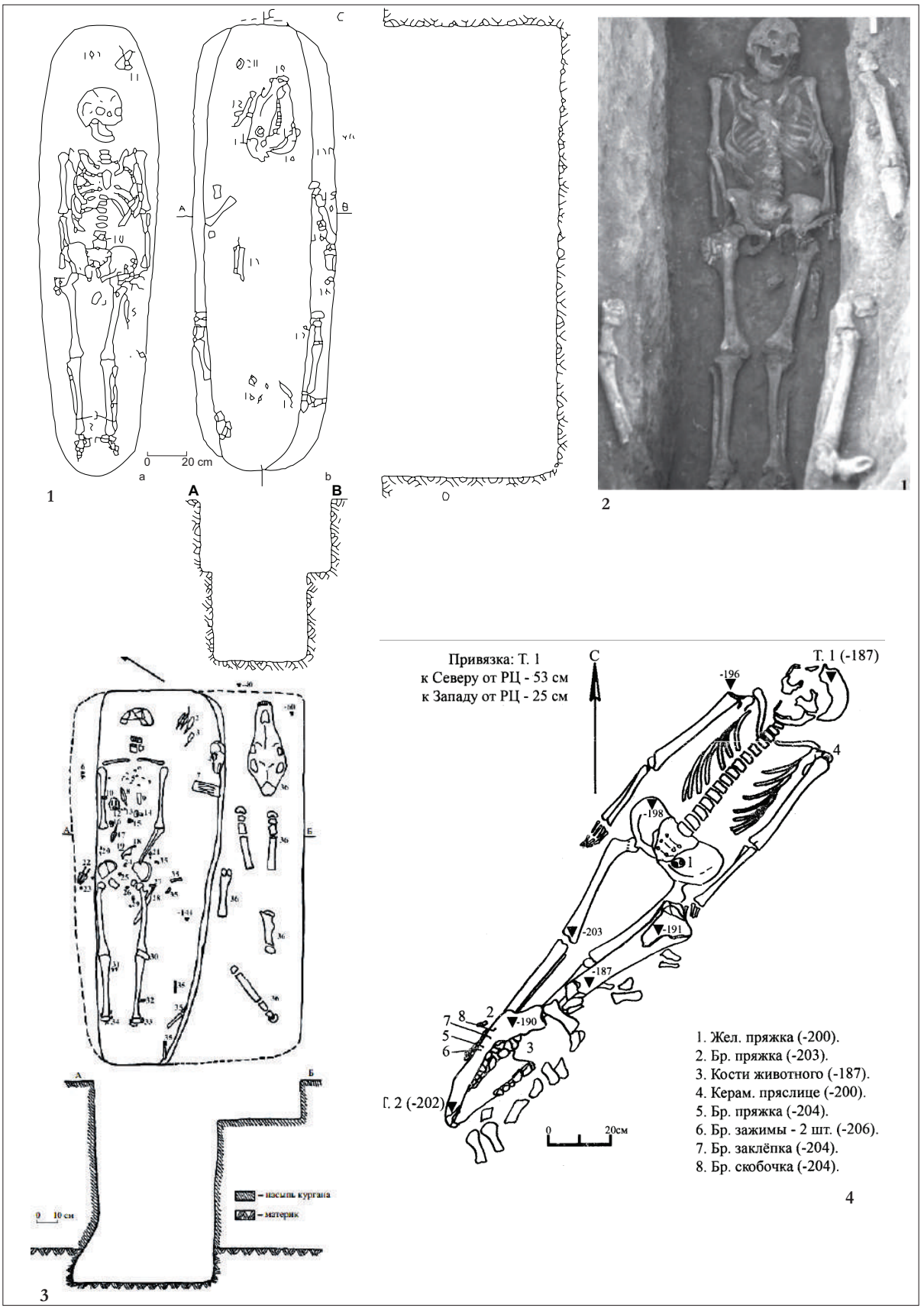

Figure 10. *Kostogryzovo kurgan 7, grave no. 1 (1–2) and kurgan 1, grave no. 7 (after* Комар *2006, Рис. 31, 36), and Kobi kurgan 7, grave no. 2 (after* Мамаев–Нарожный–Ростунов *2011, Рис. 2)*

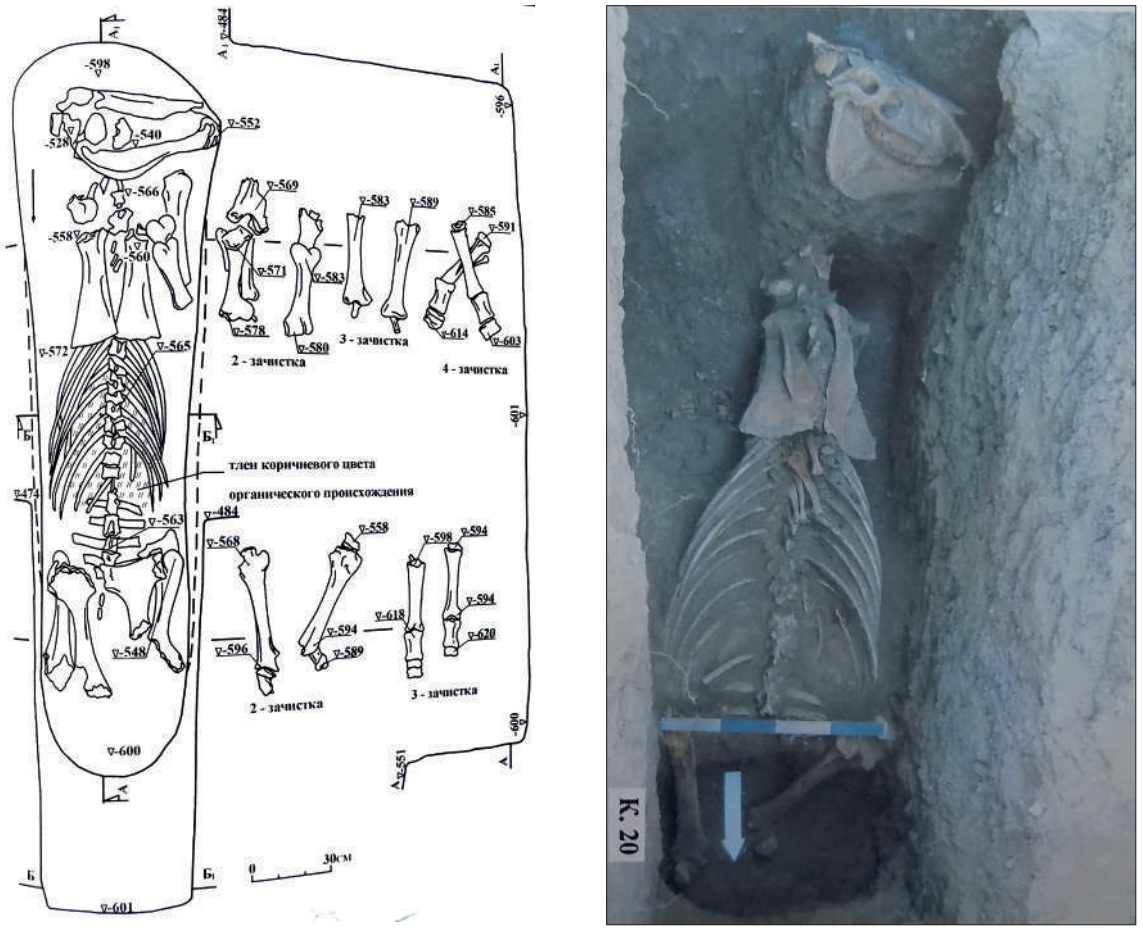

Figure 11. *Dagom, feature no. 20: horse burial (after Шестопалова 2015, Таб. 3)*

The characteristic features attributed to this group – i.e. the re-use of earlier kurgans; the NE / E orientation of the dead; the one-sided and two-sided stepped graves; the deposition of partial horse skeletons with horse accessories – seem rather uniform. Full horse skeletons were also recovered together with their accessories (including e.g. strap-end plates decorated with masks, and boots mounted with metal plates).[94] However, it is important to note that partial horse burials characterizing this "horizon" are not confined to this region only. According to some reports similar burials occurred elsewhere in the steppe, namely in the eastern Kazakh region,[95] or in the region of Tuva, near the Mongolian territory.[96] Similar horse burials are known also from the Hun period, e.g. in Kobi,[97] Malaï,[98] Leninsk, Pokrovsk,[99] etc *(Fig. 10. 4)*. Thus, in keeping with the argument made by Bence Gulyás, we should underline that it is not possible to associate this custom with the *kutrigurs* mentioned in the written documents.[100]

Burial customs traditionally interpreted as nomadic have been documented, however, not only in the steppe region, but also in the mountainous region of Ossetia, on the northern side of the Caucasus. Complete horse burials have been found, for example, also in the Carpathian Basin, which seem to have already appeared there in the Avar period. A truncated horse burial was found in the area of *Dagom*, not

94 Комар 2006, 241–244; Gulyás 2015, 502.
95 Botalov 2015, 9.
96 Kürti 1996a, 128.
97 Мамаев–Нарожный–Ростунов 2011, рис. 2.
98 Kazanski 2017, Fig. 4.
99 Komar 2018, 2. kép.
100 Gulyás 2015, 505–506.

far from Vladikavkaz, along the shores of the Duvadonystau River (*Fig. 11*). These finds may illustrate that either the nomadic groups controlled some parts of the mountainous regions, or the local population picked up nomadic customs. This needs to be clarified by future investigations. There is a remarkable similarity between the truncated horse burial found there and the materials in the Trans-Tisza region. The bone plate fittings of bows found in other burials around Vladikavkaz suggest a background of nomadic material culture *(Fig. 12)*.

Figure 12. *Burial with horse, bow, stirrup, and a mounted belt, near Vladikavkaz. Stored in the Museum of the North-Ossetian State University (after Шестопалова 2015, Таб. 8–9; documented by Erwin Gáll – The First Caucasian Archaeological Expedition with the participation of Gabriella M. Lezsák, Ákos Avar, Dávid Somfai Kara, Erwin Gáll) (Photo: Dávid Somfai Kara)*

These archaeological phenomena, illustrated on our map (*Fig. 9*), spread over the vast plains from the Dnieper to the Volga, and to the Kuban region and the Caucasus in the south. This shows clearly that burial rites and customs would – at best – hint at the lifestyles of the people in certain periods – e.g. in 550–650 AD – and not at their ethnic backgrounds. The work of Zechariah Rhetor and his reference on the nomadic peoples living in the steppe region (i.e. Onoğur, Oğur, Sabir, Burgar, Khuturgur, Avar, Khasir, (I)di(r)mar, Sarurgur, Barsilq, Khwalis, Abdel, and Ephtalith) has been already mentioned. The archaeological traces of these groups cannot be identified with certainty at the moment. Nonetheless, this draws our attention to the fact that maps based on historical knowledge and archaeological finds may potentially overlap. On the other hand, such maps can also conceal unclarified problems (*Fig. 13*).

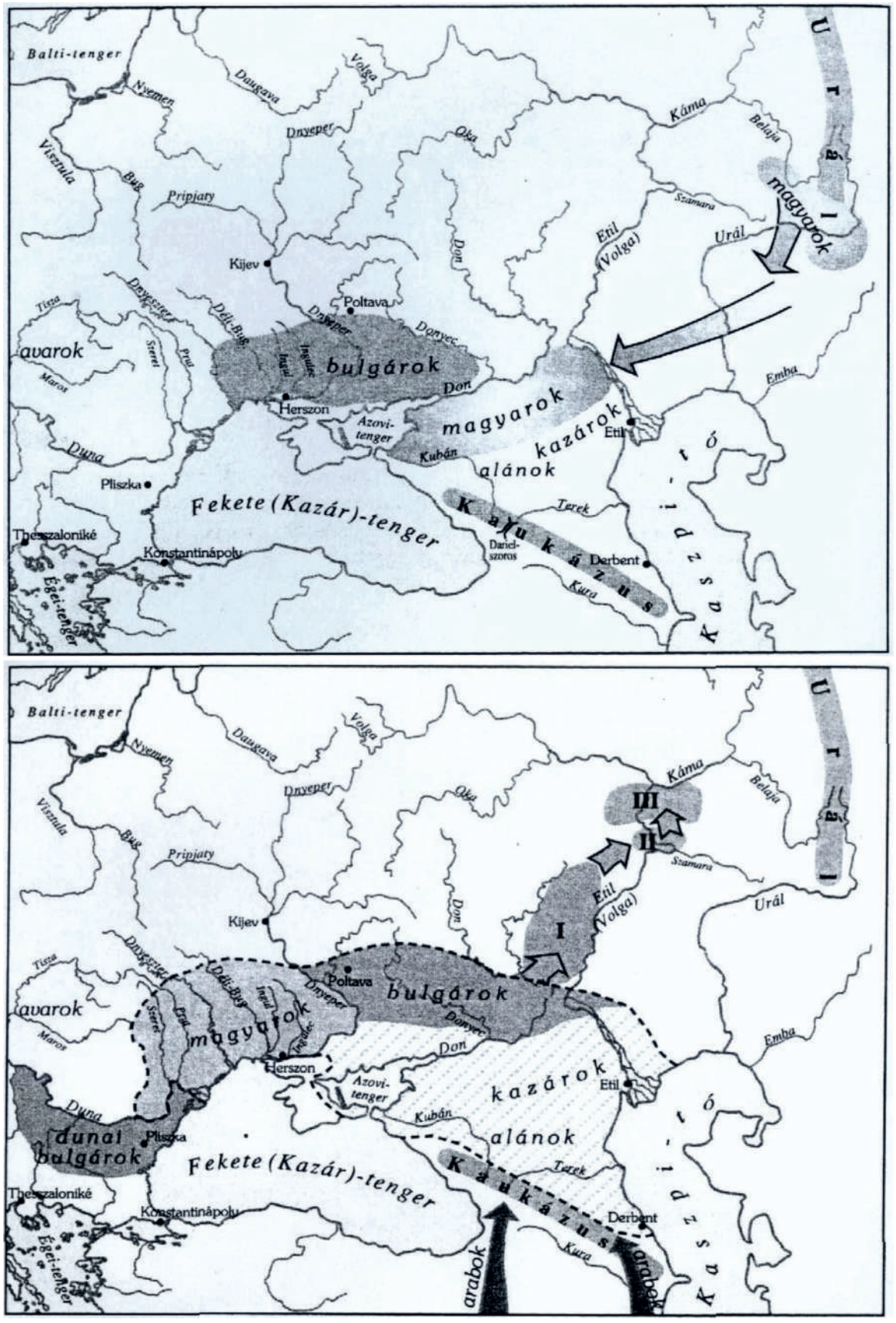

Figure 13. A–B. *New political realities after the fall of Kubrat's Bulgarian Empire: Hungarians, Khazars, Alans (after* Róna-Tas *1996, 55., 57. kép)*

In contrast to the rather uniform character of the Sivashovska/Syvashivka horizon, the Saltovo-Mayaki/Majaki "horizon" – "culture/cultural group/period" as variously referred to by different archaeologists – was inhomogeneous. From a chronological viewpoint, it can be considered as an 8th–10th century "horizon", representing the Khazar Khaganate,[101] but it is particularly important to refrain from using concepts which would imply a uniform historic-ethnic character, as it is now commonly accepted that this "cultural group" was an assemblage of subgroups. It covered roughly the same area as the Syvashivka horizon; on the other hand, it is clearly problematic to interpret this regional phenomenon in terms of different ethnic populations. Based on their lifestyles, it is possible to discern the dwelling sites of nomads (smaller and larger temporary settlements, which are usually very difficult to detect), and there are also other types of sites, including settlements with or without earth fortifications, small and large fortified towns (Verchnee Saltovo, Majak),[102] which had stone walls.[103] Itil, the capital, is mentioned in the written sources, but its location remains unknown. Within fortified towns and settlements, archaeologists observed – in addition to various characteristic small finds – the traces of yurts, houses constructed from daub walls (3×7m), with small hearths inside,[104] single room stone buildings,[105] and in some cases corridor-like entrances.[106]

Some 50 years ago, S. A. Pletnyova presented a systematic typology of burials: 1. Catacomb graves (niche graves) – Alans?; 2. Grave pits without kurgans – Bulgars?; 3. Grave pits with kurgans – Khazars?; 4. Cremations: – Slavs?[107] (urn cremations also occur in the piedmont area of the Caucasus and in the Kuban region). However, her conclusions should be revised, despite the fact that a new edition of her work was published in 2003.[108] The sites should be mapped and their geographical distribution should be analyzed, since the emblematic finds from Ingushetia demonstrated that there is much to learn about the 300-year history of the Khazar Khaganate (*Fig. 14*).

Twenty years ago, Csanád Bálint wrote about a "democratic twilight" – an unusual and modern term to describe the Khazar influence and the inhomogeneous nature of the Saltovo-Mayaki culture.[109] Bálint ruled out the possibility of identifying ethnicities on the basis of archaeological finds. In contrast to this, István Fodor argued, for example, that it is possible to identify the archaeological heritage of the Alans in the North Caucasus.[110] This, however, raised numerous questions.

According to Attila Türk – and we will expand on his argument in the next chapter – the reason why characteristically Hungarian burials cannot be found among the materials of the Saltovo-Mayaki culture, is that this region was not affected by the Hungarian migration.[111]

As we see it now, the archaeological identification of ethnic groups described in the written documents is far from being this straightforward. In the literature, there is no discussion about why the spatial-cultural oikumene of the Khaganate was able to remain stable for hundreds of years, keeping those communities and populations separate and united at the same time, who pursued partly different and partly similar lifestyles. It is important to revisit the issue of what exactly the archaeological evidence described

101 Werbart 1996, 212–218; Комар 1999, 111–136; Türk 2011, 11–54; Türk 2023, 115–183.
102 In his recent book, V. S. Fljorov argues that Verchnee Saltovo was an average looking fortress with some adjacent settlements, and that real cities did not develop in the territory of the Khaganate. See Флёров 2011, 66–67; Флёров 2015, 299–336.
103 On this problem, see: Коробов 2014, 121–132.
104 Колода 2016, 135–163.
105 Пономарёв 2015, рис. 1–2, 4–9.
106 Колода 2015, 111–129; Пономарёв 2015, рис. 3–4, 6–9.
107 Плетнёва 1967. See also: Голубєв 2017, 74–79; Винокуров–Пономарёв 2016, 82–124.
108 Плетнёва 2003. See also Türk 2023, 115–183.
109 Bálint 1996, 941. Based on the finds from Ingushetia, social inequalities could further complicate this picture.
110 Fodor 2018, 8.
111 Türk 2014, 22–23.

as the Saltovo-Mayaki culture indicates? Perhaps it is not unrealistic to conclude – and we won't make a mistake by misinterpreting the relevant sources – that it was a partly sedentary and partly semi-nomadic culture, economically focusing on both crop farming and animal husbandry, as Peter Golden argued.[112] As Valery Sergeevich Fljorov's research demonstrated, an in-depth social historical and political historical analysis will be possible only if Russian archaeology begins to process the vast amount of finds accumulated so far. Despite the many questions we are left with, the organization of the Khazar Khaganate shows many similarities to that of the Avar Khaganate (inasmuch as we know it in the Late Avar period). Their social and economic structures could be based on similar institutions and the lifestyle of their populations could be similar. We think that it is not just a coincidence that several political and economic structures could be integrated into this huge economic and commercial network that emerged until the 9th–10th centuries, connecting the Arab world and the distant North in a centre-periphery model.

In summary, the first half of the period under study in the southern parts of Eastern Europe was characterized by the emergence of unstable political entities and structures. The Bulgar Khaganate of Kubrat dissolved fairly quickly, but in the mid-7th century the Khazar Khaganate was formed as a successor state of the Western Turkic Empire and it successfully re-established political and economic stability in the steppe region. The Khazar elite managed to retain its power for centuries and even expanded its boundaries northward. The Arab campaigns of 737 were followed by a period of economic and commercial upheaval, primarily affecting the trade of fur, wax, and slaves. These goods travelled across a vast area from Scandinavia to Bagdad, via the trade networks of the Abbaside Khalifate. This economic-political constellation can be described as the most fitting early medieval example of the *centre* (the Abbasid Khalifate, and the Sasanids, who became independent from it[113]), the *semi periphery* (Khazar Khaganate), and the *periphery* (regions to the north from the Khaganate) model. For centuries, Hungarian researchers have been trying to locate the "original homeland" or "homelands" of the Hungarians within the territory of the Khazar Khaganate. They claimed various regions as best candidates, arguing on the basis of linguistic and historical evidence. The III. Zichy expedition, and the works of Béla Posta[114] mark the start of an era when a growing amount of archaeological evidence was accumulated, and an academic discourse began concerning the definition of the Hungarian "homeland".

112 Golden 2007a, 8.
113 Belyaev 1969; Lieber 1990, 207–212.
114 Pósta 1905.

Figure 14. *Sabres from Ingushetia, possibly from Khazar elite graves (?) (The Ingush State Museum Tugan Mal'sagov in Nazran, Ingushetia) (The Second Archaeological Expedition with the participation of Gabriella M. Lezsák, Ákos Avar, Erwin Gáll) (Photo: Erwin Gáll)*

IV. THE SOURCES OF POWER – "*HUNGARIA*" AS A POLITICAL SYNTHESIS. HUNGARIAN ETHNICITY AND "ORIGINAL HOMELANDS" IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORICAL THEORIES: THE ORIGINS OF THE HUNGARIAN "STEPPE STATE", ITS EMERGENCE, AND THE PROBLEM OF DUAL GOVERNANCE

IV.1. The problem of Hungarian ethnicity and "original homeland(s)" in the light of historical theories

According to Jenő Szűcs, an awareness of community likely preceded the organization of ethnic groups as "steppe states".[115] He came to this conclusion deliberating on the argument according to which the popular tradition (the legend of Hunor and Magor) preceded the dynastic one (the Turul legend). Szűcs pointed out that the Bashkirs who lived around the Volga River in the 13th century managed to preserve their cultural identity as well as their common language. As the Savard Hungarian tradition also survived the geographical and political separation/isolation, we can take it for granted that a similar conclusion can be made in regard to the 9th century as well. On the other hand, Szűcs acknowledged that arbitrary political integration could interfere with "the emergence of this naïve 'organic' view".[116]

On the other hand, József Deér argued that the organization of political governance was a key factor in the formation of Hungarian ethnicity, and thus these two realities were interconnected and no ethnic identity existed independently from the dynastic myth of the Árpáds.[117] Nonetheless, mythic tales about brothers hunting for a stag were fairly common throughout Eurasia; thus, the question is really whether it is possible to interpret the story as an "ethnic tradition" connected to the early Hungarians?[118]

115 Szűcs 1997, 311–312. Bálint Hóman offers a roughly similar interpretation explained in a more antiquated style. His lines are truly an academic curiosity: *"A fajta és a nép őseredeti alakulások, a nemzet későbbi fejlemény, minden nép történetének későbbi időszakában jelentkezik. A fajta természeti, a nép és nemzet történeti, amaz társadalmi, ez pedig politikai alakulat. Az ember természeti lényként egy fajtához, társadalmi lényként egy néphez, politikai lényként egy nemzethez tartozik. A fajta közös eredetű, és a közös ősök testi-lelki vonásait viselő emberek és csoportok természetes úton létrejött közössége. A nép egy helyütt és azonos életformák között együtt élő, azonos nyelvű embercsoportok világszemléleti közössége. A nemzet egyazon állami szervezet keretei közt élő egyének és csoportok politikai közössége, az államszervező és államfenntartó nép politikai megjelenési formája" ("Race and ethnicity are ancient developments, nation comes later. Race is natural, ethnicity and nationality are historical, the former is a social, while the latter is a political formation. Humans belong to a specific race as natural beings, a specific ethnic community as social beings, and to a specific nation as political beings. Race has common origins, as a community that forms naturally, bearing the physical and spiritual characters of common ancestors. An ethnic group is the community of peoples who live together, use the same language and share a common lifestyle and world view. Finally, the nation is a political community, consisting of individuals and groups living in a political framework; it is the political expression of the people organizing the state.")* (Hóman 2001, 57). It is not difficult to notice the *evolutionary* viewpoint in Hóman's lines, which profoundly influenced history as a discipline at that time.

116 Szűcs 1997, 312.

117 It is again József Deér, who notices that the nomadic worldview lacks the immanent features of ethnic group identities (Deér 1938; Szűcs 1997, 301–302).

118 The Legend of the Wondrous Hind is a mythical reflection of ethnic origins; the authenticity of the legend

Basically, we are confronted with two historical interpretations: the one which considers the formation of the ethnic group prior to the emergence of the Hungarian power structure, and the other which argues the opposite way, i.e. the political structure and the elite organizes the people during the 9th century.

In the second half of the 20th century, this theoretical debate slowly started to settle,[119] due to the *Zeitgeist* of academic research, as the views of archaeologists – primarily István Erdélyi and István Fodor – gained prominence. In his 1975 monograph, István Fodor argued that the ethnic identity of the Hungarians is several thousands of years old.[120] His way of thinking was, however, a classic example of *mixed argumentation*,[121] and the publication was the manifestation of academic expectations (almost a demand) on behalf of the historians[122] to have the ancient history of the peoples in Eastern Europe reconstructed, based on archaeological evidence.[123]

With this point, we are facing the problem of "original homelands", a concept referring to geographical areas where the identities of respective ethnicities were "born". Before introducing the various theories, we should start with a critical remark, as we think that the concept is fundamentally inaccurate for four practical, methodological reasons:

1. It is not defined on a theoretical basis.
2. As Jenő Szűcs noted, in the Hungarian language our concepts "*nemz, nemzet" (engender, nation)* belong to a family of stem words, where other words with similar meanings – such as *"szülött, ivadék, sarj" (born, offspring, sprout)* – also belong.[124] Yet, when the emergence of ethnicity is seen rather as the consequence of a social-political, and military development, then the biological concept of "birth" is inadequate to describe the complex socio-political process leading to the structural organization of a power network, of the elite operating it, and of the common people, who were at its foundation.[125]
3. "Homelands"[126] were identified primarily on the basis of linguistic methods, but they are typically illustrated on maps as if they had precise geographical-political boundaries – similarly to modern-day nation states. This is not only inaccurate in most (or in all) cases, but also entirely deceptive. To what extent is it realistic to accurately define the territories of nomadic groups who were constantly on the move? The second question, which stems directly from this one, is whether in this region of vast plains, the nomads were focusing on territorial rulership, or rather on subjugating populations and seizing their livestock?
4. Most theories are centred on the idea that the Hungarian population was the custodian of (political) power, yet, this view is very close to our modern concept of popular sovereignty that emerged in the 18th century. They were also wrong in looking at ethnicity and the problem of language as being iden-

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has been validated by ethnographers, but it remains undatable, i.e. we do not know when exactly the story emerged (Szabados 2017a, 287). István Fodor suggested an Iron Age dating (Fodor 2009, 29).

119 Finding out why and when those works emerged, which place the concept of the nation before that of the elite as a foundation of the power structure, would be an interesting subject for a historiographical analysis.

120 Fodor 1975; Fodor 2009, 15–30.

121 On the problem of "mixed argumentation", see: Bálint 1995, 144; Niculescu 1997, 63–69.

122 Concerning the history of the Romanian people, for example, one could observe a similar use of archaeological evidence: in the 50s-60s-70s, there was a trend of viewing archaeology as a unique or exceptional body of knowledge. With further literature: Gáll 2015–2016, 264–266.

123 On the role of archaeology and the early history of the Hungarians, see: László 1961.

124 Szűcs 1997, 313. On the problem of the *gens*, see: Wenskus 1961; Geary 2014.

125 *"Kommunikation ist eine unabdingbare Voraussetzung für die Herausbildung ethnischer und regionaler Identitäten"* (Brather 2004, 520). This approach is relevant, however, communication is also fundamentally defined by the very interests of various entities taking part in it.

126 As the social-historical evolution of ethnicity was a continuous process, it would be more appropriate to use this term in the plural, i.e. "homelands".

tical problems (starting with the works of Pál Hunfalvy[127]); this is a false view that clearly connects to the phenomenon of linguistic nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe.[128]

In the Hungarian literature, theories about original homelands abound, and various spatial and chronological frameworks have been proposed; below, we have listed the most important and relevant ones:

IV.1.1. Theories on the Ural homeland

The cornerstone of Finno-Ugrism is the assumption that Hungarian ethnicity and language were born in the Ural homeland,[129] and that the Hungarians migrated from there to the Carpathian Basin. The Ural homeland theory is based on the results of comparative linguistics, it entails many methodological attributes of evolutionism and national Darwinism, and it has come to be part of the disciplinary canon in the 19th century, following disputes of the "Ugric–Turk War" (but building on 18th century foundations).[130]

To date, three different versions of this theory have emerged, explaining differently the routes along which the Hungarians could have migrated to the Carpathian Basin and established their consecutive *homelands*.

IV.1.1.1. Ural → Levedia→ Etelköz → Carpathian Basin (Fig. 15)

In the second half of the 20th century, Hungarian archaeologists – primarily István Fodor – attempted to verify suggestions concerning the locations of the ancient homelands, relying on archaeological materials. An evolutionist approach is immanent in Fodor's works,[131] insofar as his reconstruction of the migration route to the Carpathian Basin is based on the assumption that archaeological cultures can be matched with ethnicities.[132]

IV.1.1.2. Ural → "Magna Hungaria" → Etelköz → Carpathian Basin, the so-called theory of "quick migration" (Fig. 16)

The theory of the so-called *fast migration* was promoted by Attila Türk, building partly on László Sándor Tóth's theory,[133] partly on the critical remarks by Csanád Bálint,[134] and – to a great degree – on the results of archaeological excavations conducted by post-Soviet schools of archaeology. This theory also implicitly builds on the results of linguistics, as it does not challenge the basic idea that the original homeland was situated in the Ural region. With regard to subsequent original homelands, however, it relies only on archaeological results, dropping Levedia out of the sequence of homelands.[135] From a retrospective perspective, Türk sees an early 9th-century conflict as the main trigger for the move of the Hungarians, leaving their original homeland. However, he leaves this conflict without further explanation: the "*ancestors of the Hungarians*" fled, they crossed the Volga and settled in the region of Etelköz, then they moved

127 Hunfalvy 1876.
128 Bibó 1994, 16–17.
129 On the historiographical context, see: Romsics 2014, 521–529.
130 On the "Ugor-Turkic War", as a scientific dispute and on its consequences, see: Pusztay 1977; Zsirai 1994.
131 Fodor 1975; Fodor 1992.
132 For a critique on this method, in regard to materials dating from the Conquest Period, see: Langó 2007, 169–180.
133 Tóth 1998, 27–28.
134 Bálint 1996, 937–947.
135 Türk 2014, 19–29.

Figure 15. *The "original homelands" of the Hungarians and their migration according to István Fodor (after* Fodor *2009, 39. kép)*

to the Carpathian Basin during the second half – and at the end – of the 9th century.[136] Türk estimated the period of this migration at about hundred years; he mentioned, however, only twelve potential archaeological sites in 2014,[137] while in 2020 there were 27 sites reported,[138] but some are questionable;[139] one site (a grave at Ingul River) could also be dated to the 10th century.[140] Oleksiy Komar is also partially in favour of this theory,[141] which, however, also builds – to a great extent – on the assumption that archaeological cultures can be matched with ethnic groups.

136 For the critique of this theory, see: Fodor 2014, 162–163.
137 Türk 2014, 21.
138 Квитницкий et al. 2020, рис. 1.
139 Türk 2023, 246–248 (with bibliography).
140 Bokij–Pletnyova 1989, 86–98.
141 Komar 2018, 255–256.

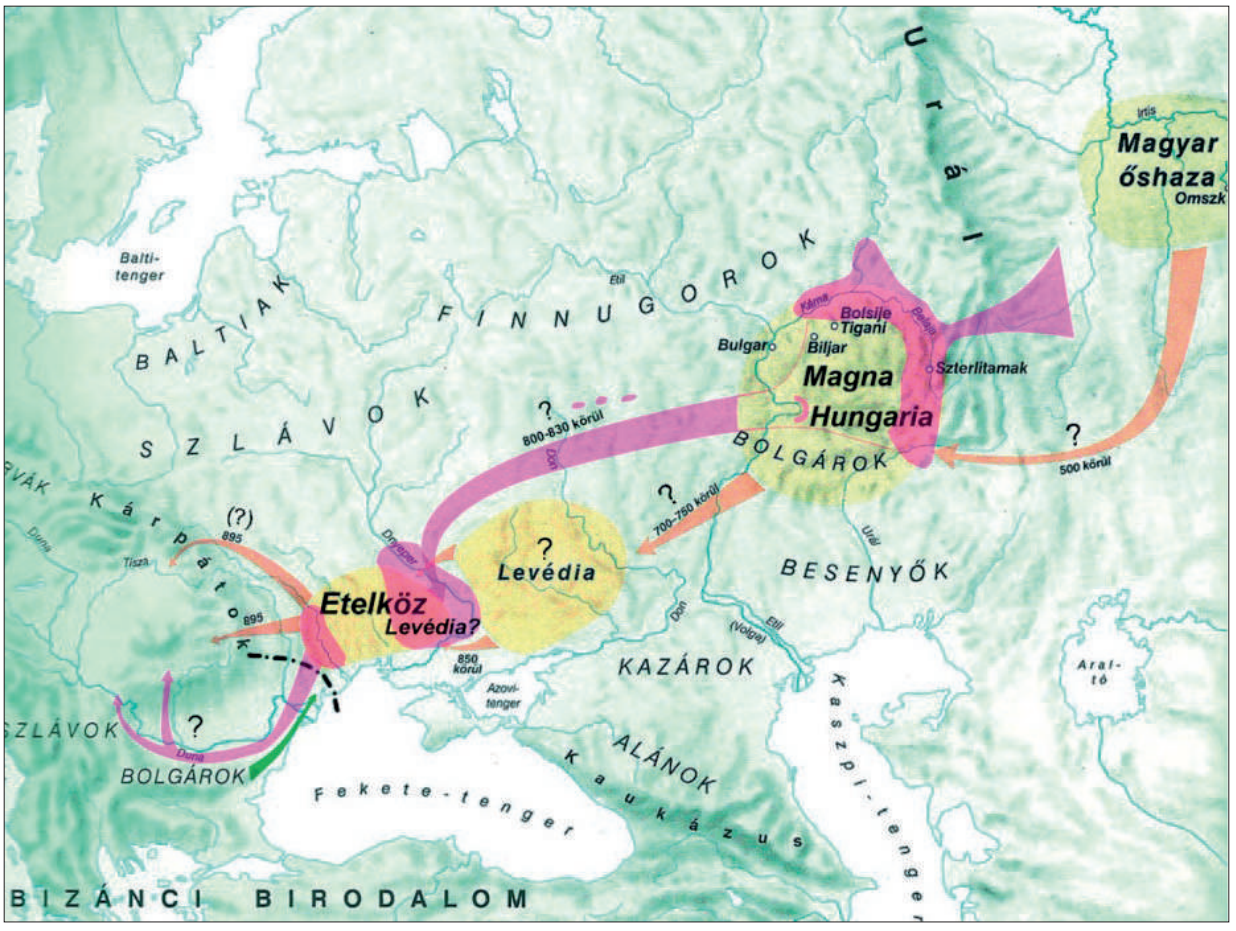

Figure 16. *The "original homelands" of the Hungarians and the route of their migration according to Attila Türk (after* Türk *2012, Fig. 1)*

IV.1.1.3. Ural → "Caucasus" → Atelkuzu/Etelköz → Carpathian Basin (Fig. 17. A–C)

The third version of the theory was promoted primarily by András Róna-Tas,[142] who basically argued that Hungarians left their original homeland in the 6th century, crossed the Volga River heading south, and first settled in the region bordered by the Azov Sea, and the Kuban, Don, and Volga Rivers.[143] Later, they moved to Atelkuzu (Levedia is considered by Róna-Tas only as a part of Atelkuzu). His main suggestion, concerning the location of the Hungarian territory in the Kuban–Volga–Don triangle, remains consistent with earlier linguistic research, i.e. László Bendefy's idea.[144]

The common elements of these theories can be summarized in the following points:

1. All of them rely heavily on linguistics, assuming that the original homeland was in the Ural region. All of them approve the (questionable) results of both linguistic and historical research, and the first two theories – favoured mostly by archaeologists and building on archaeological evidence – play, in fact, only an auxiliary role in addition to the well-established theory of the Ural homeland.
2. Chronologically, they date the historical development of the Hungarian ethnicity earlier than the emergence of the Hungarian power structure (a steppe state), and little attention is paid to how governance could be organized.

142 Róna-Tas 1996, 55. kép.

143 Taking into consideration the geographical context, it is not correct to refer to Róna-Tas as the last advocate of the Caucasus homeland theory. Cf. Fodor 2018, 8.

144 Bendefy 1942, 27. térkép.

Figure 17. A–C. *The "original homelands" of the Hungarians and the route of their migration according to András Róna-Tas (after* Róna-Tas *1996, 55. kép) and the Hungarian territory in the region of Kuban–Volga–Don according to László Bendefy (after* Bendefy *1942, 27. térkép)*

On the other hand, the one distinctive element in these theories is that I/1 and I/2 largely interpret the historical data on the basis of archaeological results, while I/3 hardly makes use of any archaeological sources, and is primarily based on the combination of linguistic and historical evidence.

IV.1.2. The theory on the "three kingdoms of Scythia"

This theory builds on the Hungarian chronicle tradition, whose oldest version can be found in Simon Kézai's *Gesta*; however, it was the *Chronicon* of Regino that first connected the Scythia-topos to the Hungarians.[145] According to Kézai's narrative:

> *"he [Menrot] and his wife, Enech, had two sons, Hunor and Magyar [Magor], from whom the Huns and Magyars descended. [...] And so it happened one day that they went hunting. In the wilderness, a doe leapt up in front of them. As they began to pursue her, she fled into the Maeotis swamp [Greek name for the Sea of Azov – note in HSR] where she then disappeared from their sight. They searched for her for a long time, but there was no trace of her anywhere. After they walked through the aforementioned swamp from one end to the other, they found it to be very suitable for cattle grazing. They then went back to their father, and as soon as they received his approval, they moved into the Maeotis swamp with their possessions, so they could settle down in there. The Maeotis region borders Persia. Apart from a very narrow ford, the sea encircles it from every direction. It does not have rivers at all, but it has plenty of grass, trees, fish, fowl, and game. Entering and leaving this region is difficult. Consequently, after having settled down in the Maeotis swamp, they did not leave it for five years. During the sixth year, they wandered out and accidentally came upon the wives and children of Belar's sons, who had been left alone in a deserted place. They snatched these people away, along with their wealth, at full gallop, into the Maeotis swamp. It so happened that the two daughters of Dulan, the Alan ruler, were among the captured children. Hunor married one, Magyar married the other. All the Huns are therefore descendants of these women. And it happened that, after having lived in the Maeotis swamp for a longer time, they grew into a gigantic clan. The land could thus neither accommodate nor nourish them. Therefore, they sent explorers to Scythia. After having explored this land, they moved to their new home along with their children and possessions, and there they settled down."*[146]

This mythical land was thought to have been situated in the steppe region northwest from the Caucasus, but the localization remains tentative (*Fig. 18*).[147] The area is indicated on Róna-Tas' map as well (*Fig. 17. A–B*).[148]

145 Györffy 1993, 49.

146 Simon of Kéza *"The Origin of Hungarians"* 6–7.

147 Szabados 2017a, 287–288. It is necessary to emphasize, however, that since in the past decades the major trend of research into the early history of the Hungarians was focusing – due to the aforementioned reasons – on the region of the Ural, the region of the Caucasus lay outside of the circle of interest. Having considered this one-sidedness of the research, and following a long period of preparations, a series of annual expeditions started in 2016, under the direction of Gabriella M. Lezsák, aiming to systematically survey the archaeological materials available in museums, which can be connected to the material culture of the Hungarians (M. Lezsák 2017b, 51–66). Apparently, some researchers think it is relevant to better know the archaeological materials in this region, which has been ignored for a long time, but this does not mean that they also imagine this region to be the only one that played a role in early Hungarian history. In this respect see also: Sudár 2020, 213–221.

148 Róna-Tas 1996, 55. kép; Kovács 2014, 7–21.

After the Legend of the Wondrous Hind, there follows a description of Scythia:[149] *"In fact the Scythian realm has a single border, but administratively it is divided into three kingdoms, namely Bascardia, Dentia, and Magoria."*[150] Bascardia apparently refers to Bashkiria, Magoria was considered by László Bendefy as the original homeland of the Hungarians living in the Caucasus region, and Dentia as the westernmost region of it;[151] Anonymus uses a different term, *Dentumoger*, which either refers to Dentia only, or Dentia and Magoria together.[152] György Szabados argued that the textual tradition describing the three kingdoms, is, however, more ancient and therefore also more authentic than Anonymus' reference to *"Dentumoger"*.[153]

In summary, this theory is based entirely on the interpretation of narrative sources.[154] It locates the original homeland within a fairly large territory, without attempting to define accurate territorial boundaries. Furthermore, it does not provide an alternative explanation to how Hungarian ethnicity and language were formed.[155] On the other hand, it has the advantage of incorporating the perspective of different population groups migrating and separating from one another, staying in contact, creating networks, based on shared interests, which – over the long term – could develop into shared identities.[156]

IV.1.3. The theory concerning the "Caucasus-homeland"

The theory of the "Caucasus homeland" was known already in the 18th century, and it was promoted – in an academic form – by the linguist Bernát Munkácsi.[157] Sámuel Hatvani Turkolly's letter from Astrahan describing a population living in the region of the Caucasus and speaking "Avar" was sensational news

149 This study does not aim to address the problem how the concept of Scythia developed in late antique and medieval works authors, and how it is channelled into our early historiography. One should note, however, that the description of Scythia appears not only in the *Chronicon*, but also in the Anonymus Gesta, which did not mention the Legend of the Wondrous Hind. SS RerHung I, 34–37, 145–146, 252. From the broad literature on the theme, see Gombocz 1917–1920, 129–194; Deér 1930, 243–263; Bendefy 1945, 61–112; Kristó 1970, 106–115; Kovács 2014, 7–21; Szabó 2014, 22–48.

150 SS RerHung I, 146, 253, II, 15. We note here that in different chronicle editions the names are spelled in differently. E.g. *"Bascardia"* (14th century chronicle edition), *"Barsatia"* (Simon of Kéza), *"Woscardia"* (Chronicon Posoniense), *"Dencia"* (Simon of Kéza, Chronicon Posoniense), *"Bencia"* (14th century chronicle edition), *Mogoria* appears also as *Magoria*.

151 Bendefy 1945, 72–73.

152 SS RerHung I, 34.

153 Szabados 2017a, 285–301.

154 Lezsák's essay is an exception, since it studies also the archaeological materials: M. Lezsák 2017a, 64–74.

155 From this point of view, one might consider the following note as not completely to the point: "*Bár a szellemi műveltség fő hordozója a nyelv, ám haszna esetünkben csekély, mert összefüggő magyar nyelvemlékek csak az 1000 utáni időkből maradtak fenn; ráadásul egy nép története nem azonos egy nyelv történetével; azért sem, mert a népek életük egy bizonyos szakaszában akár többnyelvűek is lehettek" ("Although language is the main carrier of intellectual erudition, it is of little use in our case, since comprehensive language monuments date only from the period following the year 1000 AD; for the history of the people is not the history of the language and neither because ethnic groups could be multilingual during certain periods of their history.")* Szabados 2017a, 285. It would be also necessary to emphasize that one ethnicity – one language views are fundamentally modern and originate from East-Central European nationalism; thus, they are irrelevant for the study of the early medieval period.

156 Szabados's observation is based on the following excerpt from the *DAI*: *"To the aforesaid nation of the Turks that settled in the east, in the regions of Persia, these Turks aforesaid who live toward the western region still send merchants who look them up, and often bring them official messages from them."* (DAI 1967, 173, 175).

157 Munkácsi 1901.

at the time (1725), which, indeed, fuelled the creation of this theory.[158] There were many enthusiasts who decided to embark on a journey and collect linguistic and historical evidence in support of the theory.[159] Looking at the geography of the region, however, there is a 750-km distance (measured from the estuary of the Don River) between the Maeotian Swamp (*Palus Maeotis*) and the Caucasus (where the "Avar language" population allegedly lived). The "rise" of this theory, as a "lost river", was connected to the Zichy expedition, which, in turn, was heavily criticized later by Bernát Munkácsi himself.[160] In his 1901 study, he concluded that Hungarian is a fundamentally Finno-Ugric language, and it has evolved into what it is today due to Turkic, Arian, and Caucasian influences.

The theory became marginalized in academic circles, as it did not seem to fit with the dominant views about the Finno-Ugric or Turkic-Tatar connections of the Hungarians.[161] Its last prominent advocate was László Bendefy, who thought that this homeland was situated in the piedmont area of the Northern Caucasus, and not in the mountainous-hilly regions.[162] Although Bendefy's idea does not connect to the original point described above, he placed this homeland exactly in the same region which was described by Róna-Tas (*Fig. 17. C*)!

In sum, there is no material evidence to be connected to Hungarians in the mountainous region of the Caucasus.[163] Small groups or individuals who migrated from this area could perhaps mix with those who belonged to the clans of the 8th–9th-century political formation of the Hungarians, but this is almost impossible to prove. In general, the archaeological evidence tends to contradict this theory. It is important to mention that there is a significant divergence in the settlement patterns and lifestyles regarding the hilly regions versus the flatland areas, and this divergence most probably did not occur to those who created/promoted the theory. There are now a significant number of excavated cemeteries known in the hilly and mountainous region of the Northern Caucasus, which can be dated to the 8th to 10th centuries. Two groups can be distinguished here: one with catacombs and inhumations and the other with cremations. None of these customs can be evidenced in the Conquest Period. For the record, we should underline that south from the Kuban there were also W–E oriented burials, which were dated to the 9th to 12th centuries, instead of horse burials the graves were lined with stones – according to late antique customs – or stones were found at the bottom of the graves (Akhmetovskaya [Krasnodar region], grave no. 2,[164] Andreyevskaya Shhel [Krasnodar region], graves no. 6, 9–11[165]). Concerning the infant sub-adult burials

158 Bendefy quotes the following passage from Sámuel Hatvani Turkolly's work: *"A Magyarok királya pedig lakon a Kuma nevű folyovizmelleti, Kinek Palotái jóllehet rongyosak, de ma is fennállanak, es azon falu melyet itt való pogány nyelven hívják Magyarnak...(1764)" ("The King of the Magyars lived near the Kuma River; and although the ruins of his castle may look dilapidated, it still stands today, and the settlement is called Magyar in the local pagan language. [1724])"* (Bendefy 1942). Probably this was the detail that later caught the attention of Mihály Vörösmarty as well. Sámuel Turkoly was a cavalry officer in Ferenc (II.) Rákóczi's army and fled to Russia in 1716. Kránitz 2014, 529: note 2, 530; Halasi Kun 1943, 71–99; Halasi Kun 1963.

159 Kránitz 2014, 529–544.

160 Kránitz 2014, 537–538.

161 Vámbéry 1895, 164. The stretch of land to the north – along the western side of the Caucasus up to the area between Maykop and Novorossiysk – was known to have settled by the Alans. This is based on authentic references dating from the 1st c. AD on, e.g. they are described in detail in the works of Ammianus Marcellinus and Jordanes. Before 552, they are also mentioned by Procopius. Until 1239, Alania remains an independent entity, then they were destroyed by the Mongol army. More on this: Róna-Tas 1999, 200–203.

162 Bendefy 1942.

163 More recently, Bálint Kerényi mentioned that *"..Mindez alapján nem lehet elvetni a kaukázusi őshaza elméletét…" ("All this' is insufficient to rule out the theory of the Caucasus homeland")*, without actually explaining – from a geographical point of view – what he meant by that (Kerényi 2019, 87).

164 Голубев–Давыденко–Федосов 2011, рис. 2.

165 Новичихин 2015, рис. 6.

found in Andreyevskaya Shhel, Andrei Novicikhin suggested a Hungarian ethnic connection, based on their W–E orientation, the palmette decoration of the purse suspension mount, and the blue bead worn at the neck. He concluded that Turkic-Ugor tribes lived "*in the piedmont area of the Western Caucasus*" during the 8th–13th centuries.[166] Taking into account the proximity of this area to the aforementioned Maeotian Swamp, this connection cannot be ruled out *(Fig. 18)*.[167]

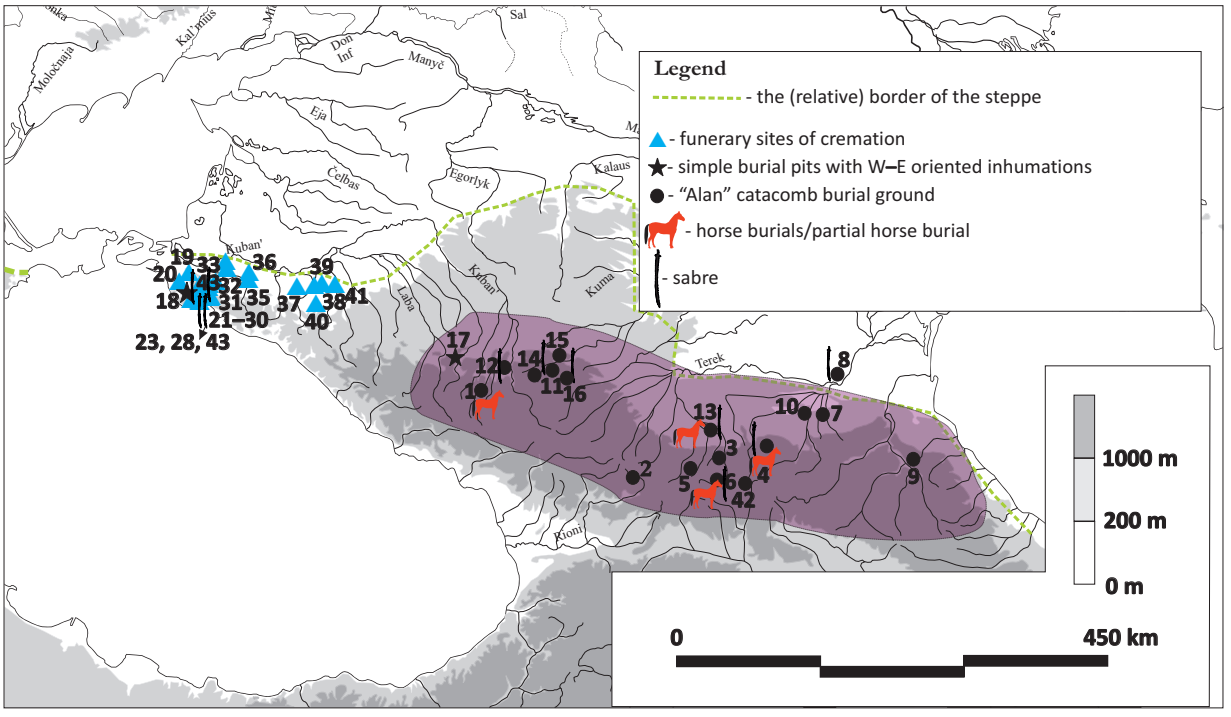

Figure 18. *Map of burial sites in Caucasian regions (and their characteristics) (after Савенко 2017, Прил. 1; Голубев–Давыденко–Федосов 2011; Новичихин 2015; Belinskij–Härke 2018; Komar 2018, 106. kép; Коматарова-Балинова 2018, Обр. 10)*

Sites: 1. Sentinskaya Gora; 2. Kamunta; 3. Koban; 4. Tarskoye; 5. Dziagis; 6. Dargavs; 7. Duba-Yurt; 8. Kobi; 9. Agachkala; 10. Martan-Chu; 11. Gora Rim-Gora; 12. Gora-Kol'tso; 13. Mebel'naya fabrika; 14. Ullu Dorbuila; 15. Leshoz; 16. Klin-Yar; 17. Akhmet-Kaya; 18. Andreyevskaya Shhel; 19. Gostagayevskaya; 20. Su-Psekh; 21. Leninskiy Put'; 22. Vosmaya Shhel; 23. Tsemdolina; 24. Bol'shiye Khutora; 25. Abrau-Dyurso; 26. Boltin; 27. Novorossiysk; 28. Yuzhnaya Ozereyevka; 29. Myskhako; 30. Borisovka; 31. Moldavanskoye; 32. Yevseyevskiy; 33. Obsesztveni; 34. Khabl'; 35. Bugaiski Bugor; 36. Kryukovskoye mis; 37. Takhtamukay; 38. Kazazovo; 39. Dish' River estuary; 40. Psekups; 41. Novovochepshiy

IV.1.4. Archaeology and the "absence of original homeland"

More than 20 years have passed since Csanád Bálint took a decisive step to eliminate attempts to match ethnicities with archaeological cultures and ruthlessly laid bare why the linear and retrospective methods – elaborately presented in the works of István Erdélyi and István Fodor – are untenable. As he summarized: *"... The fact is that while in the Carpathian Basin the archaeological heritage of the Hungarians can be defined with reassuring clarity, we are much in the dark concerning their brethren and ancestors who were buried in the historic region of Etelköz."*[168] Bálint stressed that finding the original homelands of the Hungarians by

166 Новичихин 2015, 109, рис. 1.
167 Sudár 2020, 213–221.
168 Bálint 1996, 943.

retrospectively trying to identify their cultural-archaeological traces would be impossible. From a methodological point of view, this approach is rooted in an evolutionist view, which is not feasible either. Concluding his study based on several examples, Bálint argued that the Hungarians underwent a radical cultural change when leaving the cultural oikumene of the Khazar Khaganate, which he characterized as a *"democratic twilight"*.[169] He also drew our attention to István Bóna's observations,[170] and despite Bálint's argument receiving much criticism,[171] his remarks – as we see it, 29 years later – did not fall on fertile ground.[172]

IV.2. Cautious reflections on the above theories

IV.2.1. Archaeological evidence and the localization of "original homelands"

The three theories contain considerable differences as they are the products of different historical periods and research trends. Each has its own past and they are several hundred years old now. In some respects they are connected, while in others they are fundamentally contradictory. Chronologically, the theory of the "*three kingdoms of Scythia*" is the earliest, already recorded in the Hungarian chronicles. The idea of Finno-Ugric connections – as the product of comparative linguistics – can be also traced back to the 15th century and the Renaissance period.[173] Inspired by the study of Finno-Ugric connections, the "*Ural homeland theory*" is the product of 19th-century academic research (comparative linguistics, and later also archaeology) and reflects evolutionist views.[174] The "*Caucasus homeland theory*" is the product of 19th-century national romanticism and reflects a naïve approach that also permeated the narratives of 18th- and 19th-century travelogues.[175]

When the so-called "Ugor-Turkic war" ended and "Finno-Ugrism" became dominant in the 20th century, archaeological approaches were confronted with growing pressure, as professionals saw the possibility – and felt the need – to supply archaeological data and apply archaeological methods to verify the theories and concepts of linguistic research. From the perspective of 21st-century research, this "experiment" was rather unsuccessful. One should not forget, however, that as a research trend it was not at all specific to Hungarian research into Hungarian prehistory or early Hungarian history. The technique of "mixed argumentation" marks a certain degree of backwardness in Central Eastern European research versus methodological developments in the west. To mention a similar case: Romanian archaeology in the 1950s and 1960s was also a "captive" of historical narratives as Lucian Boia has noted.[176]

169 In regard to the Subotcy horizon, Bálint does not agree with Türk (Türk 2014, 21), assuming that the finds are contemporaneous to Conquest-period materials from the Carpathian Basin (Bálint 1996, 943–944).

170 Bálint 1996, 944. *"E párhuzamosságot abban az esszémben Bóna István akadémikusnak azon megfigyeléséhez kapcsolódva magyaráztam, mely negyedszázada az MTA II. OK-ben olvasható (s negyedszázada, hogy senki sem reagált annak tanulságaira). Úgy látom, hogy a korábbi közegtől való elszakadás és az új kulturális környezetbe való bekapcsolódás a honfoglalóknál teljesen új anyagi kultúra kialakulását tette lehetővé és szükségessé." ("In my essay, I explained this simultaneity relying on an observation by István Bóna, which he published quarter of a century ago in the proceedings of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (and now a quarter of a century has passed without anyone drawing conclusions from it). As I see it now, the conquering Hungarians, by breaking away from their former homeland and adapting to the new one, developed an entirely new material culture.")* [English translation by author].

171 E.g. Kürti 1996b, 148–161.

172 In his 2007 book, P. Langó also follows this line of criticism (Langó 2007, 241–246).

173 Romsics 2014, 521.

174 Hunfalvy 1876, 223.

175 Kránitz 2014, 529–544.

176 Boia 1999, 152. See more on this issue, and on the early medieval period in Transylvania: Gáll 2015–2016,

As research frameworks, all of these theories are inflexible, inasmuch as they are based on medieval or modern ideas and realities of nation states – equating languages and cultures/nations,[177] relying on the idea of macro-groups, on modern concepts of "horizontal societies", and uniform identities.[178] Although the "Scythian" theory is an exception to this, its weakness is that it is based exclusively on the narrative reconstruction of collective memory that reflects Christian views documented in *Gestae*, written in Latin, i.e. in the language of external observers and recorded several hundred years after the actual events. It is not our task to decide about the reliability of such sources.

Since the 1950s and 1960s, archaeological results have received much more attention, mainly for methodological reasons, when it comes to answering questions regarding the reconstruction of national pasts. However, expectations gradually diminished. Although it is generally possible to connect material cultures, artefacts, burial customs, etc. to certain population groups, the universal application of this approach is highly questionable. The "*Ural homeland theory"* considered archaeological evidence to a limited degree, whereas in case of *Atelkuzu* and *Levedia* archaeological approaches played a more important role[179] in finding their locations. Below, we provide a few examples on how archaeological evidence has been dealt with, in order to illustrate the problematic questions:

I. Several finds have been excavated recently – e.g. suspension loops of sabres (in the Kuban region), as well as sabretache plates,[180] belt mounts,[181] braid plate (*Fig. 19. B*),[182] suspension loops (*Fig. 19. A*), fragments of sabre guards (in the Anapsky district, close to the Kuban)[183] – the technologies and decorations of which connect to 10th-century materials discovered in the Carpathian Basin (more precisely to the so-called *"sabretache-group"*).[184]

These parallels have not been considered by Oleksiy Komar.[185] In case of Komar, the negligence is striking, since some of these finds have been already published, but the distribution map in his publication did not include finds from the Kuban region.[186] Turning back to the interpretation of the finds, any conclusions concerning their historical contexts depend on answers to the following questions:

a) What does their distribution show? Did functionally diverse artefacts travel along the macro-regional communication networks in the 9th–10th centuries as trade goods, or were they used by elite communities, as "symbols" of local identity? It is important to stress that in the case of many artefact types, which were previously regarded as specifically characteristic for the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin – e.g. belt mounts, and also some sabretache plates, as well as rosette-ornamented harness mounts – research has proven that their use was more widespread as similar pieces could be found from the Urals to Scandinavia or to the Southern Balkans *(Fig. 20)*.
b) How then, and based on what feature (and the latter is a much more difficult question), can we date these artefacts? How do we decide between their dating to the 9th and/or to the 10th century?

257–323. For an excellent analysis on the archaeology and historiography of the Balkan states: Takács 2006b, 163–202.

177 As Pál Hunfalvy postulated *"A nemzetek eredete azonos az illető nyelvek eredetével (The origin of nations is the origin of their respective languages)"*. This clearly expressed the dominant view at the time, that language and nation are historically bound together (Hunfalvy 1876, 223).

178 Friedmann 1999.

179 The most recent attempt to locate these lands based on archaeological evidence was made by Komar 2018, 106. kép, showing the finds of the so called Subotcy horizon. See also: Türk 2023, 246–253.

180 Gáll–M. Lezsák–Novichikhin 2018, 59–78.

181 Gáll–M. Lezsák–Novichikhin 2018, Fig. 1/1–2.

182 M. Lezsák–Novichikhin–Gáll 2018, 143–168.

183 Gáll–M. Lezsák–Novichikhin 2018, Fig. 1/4–5.

184 Fettich 1933, 381–383, 387–389; Fettich 1937, 23–26.

185 Komar 2018, 106. kép.

186 Komar 2018, 106. kép.

Figure 19. *Plate discoid braid ornament (B) from Andreyevskaya Shhel and suspension loop of the sabre (A) near Kuban region*

c) In the case that we accept a 9th-century dating, and if we tentatively identify them as "Hungarian", then how do we contextualize the role of the respective region (where such an object could be found) in the history of the Hungarian migration? On the other hand, if 10th-century dating applies, should we conclude that such artefacts highlight the existence of a Hungarian macro-network, with regard to the Savard Hungarians, for example,[187] or simply the influence of global-scale commercial networks *(Fig. 20)*?[188]

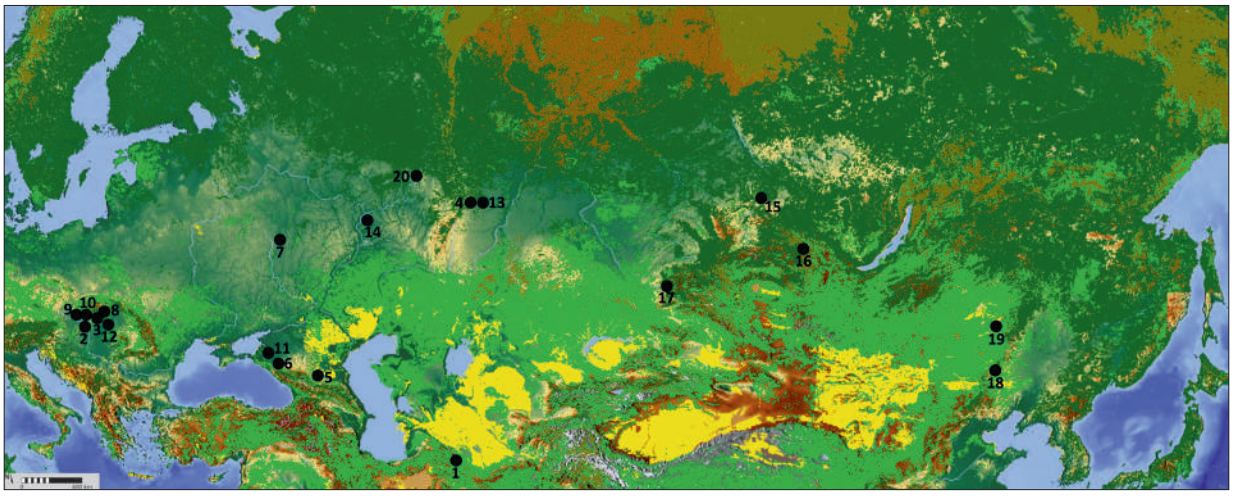

Figure 20. *Distribution of the analogies of the Hortobágy (grave no. 49) from the Carpathian Basin to China (after Szenthe–Gáll 2022, Fig. 75)*

187 We only mention this as a theoretical option, since the available sources suggest that we should search for such connections in a more southern lying region (B. Szabó–Bollók 2018, 499).

188 In this regard, see also for example the archaeological evidence of contacts between Central Asia and Scandinavia: Hedenstierna-Jonson 2020, 43–64.

Although the archaeology of the piedmont area of the Caucasus was relatively well studied (nota bene: most of the large burial sites remain unpublished[189]), this does not apply for the region of the steppe and its archaeological heritage in the 9th–11th centuries. Therefore, not taking the steppe area into account was a significant miss in the study of early Hungarian history.[190] Currently, the scattered nature of the relevant archaeological sites and finds do not allow far-reaching conclusions *(Fig. 19)*. All we can tell is that it would be advisable to conduct systematic archaeological research there. The study of material culture would immediately illuminate various aspects of commercial contacts as has been argued in a seminal study by Mechtild Schulze-Dörlamm,[191] and in a more recent monograph by Oleksiy Komar.[192]

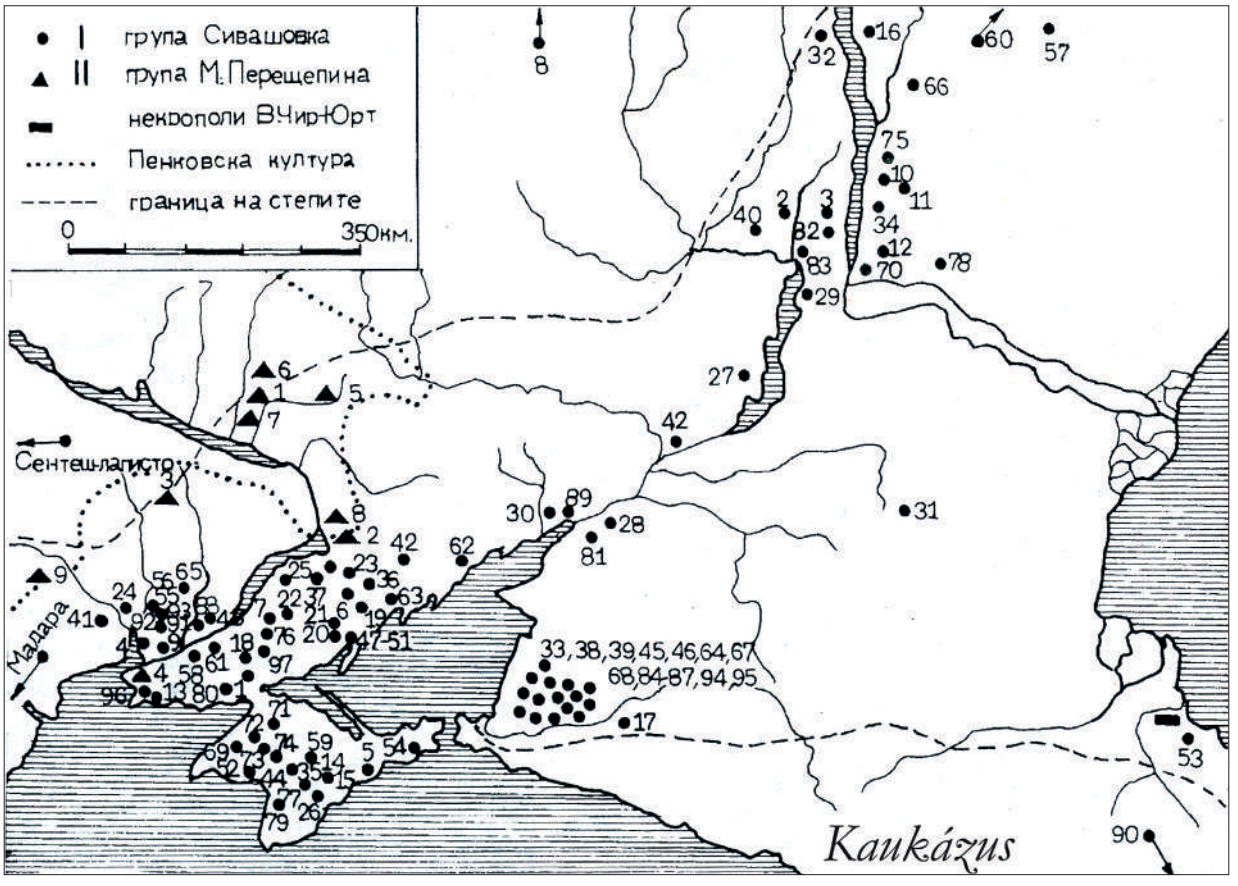

Figure 21. *Geographical distribution of archaeological sites of the "Sivashovka" horizon (after* Рашев *2000, Таб. 9*)

II. When looking at the distribution map of 5th–8th-century burial customs in the region, it is clearly visible that the Kuban 'belongs' to the Southern Russian steppe, whose material culture mostly – but not universally – represents populations who similarly lived a nomadic lifestyle,[193] represented by rituals like partial horse burials *(Fig. 21)*.[194]

189 Успенский 2013, 86–98.
190 Cf. M. Lezsák 2017b, 51–66.
191 Schulze-Dörlamm 1988, 373–478.
192 Komar 2018.
193 E.g. Рашев 2000, Tabl. 9; Рашев 2007, 70; Kazanski 2017, Fig. 1; M. Lezsák 2022, 259–263.
194 However, could be found also in Bulgaria (Рашев 2000, Tabl. 12.), Wallachia and Moldavia (dating from the 7th–12th centuries) (Fiedler 1992, Vol. I: 326–328), the Carpathian Basin (in the Hun and Avar period already) (Gulyás 2023, 701–756), the Taman-peninsula (Erdélyi 2008), the Northern Caucasus region (as well as in catacomb graves described as Alanian) (Дзаттиаты 2014; M. Lezsák 2022, 259–263), the Volga region and the regions of the Ural (Круглов 1990, 46–50; Komar 2018, 107. kép), along the Dnieper and Dniester

However, together with other nomadic customs, it was also taken over by sedentary communities as well (e.g. in Alania).[195] The reason why it was transmitted to non-nomadic communities could be explained perhaps by the circumstance that it represented a tradition associated with military or political prestige and the elites in general. That such cultural exchanges required communication, networking, the exchange of ideas, fashions, customs, and/or physical movement (migration) is implicit.[196]

IV.2.2. The Savard Hungarians,[197] the localization of their territory in the light of archaeological evidence

The localization of those groups of the Hungarian population which became detached from the main group due to the attacks of the Pechenegs is another cornerstone of early Hungarian history or prehistory. The time of this event still remains undated. It is recorded in Chapter $38_{24–30}$ of DAI, which mentions that some Hungarian groups, following their defeat by the Pechenegs in Levedia, settled "in the area of Persia".[198] Recently, János B. Szabó and Ádám Bollók argued that this passage refers to the region that is today Azerbaijan *(Fig. 22)*.[199]

From an archaeological point of view, a few relevant notes can be appended to their otherwise logical argument:

1. In order to outline the Savard "Persian" territory, using archaeological-topographical methods, the exact position of the Hungarian territory of Levedia should be determined, together with the characteristic material culture of the Hungarians.
2. In connection with this presumption, one should also have a detailed picture on the available archaeological materials dating from the 7th–10th centuries in Azerbaijan, which is hardly the case.
3. János B. Szabó and Ádám Bollók did not define the geographical boundaries of the respective region more closely, having ignored landscape conditions. Starting from the obvious fact that the Savards also lived a nomadic life, there is only a 200-km long, narrow strip of land that could be a suitable candidate (cf. our map), stretching along the sea in a S–N direction, and jutting into the mountain region of the Caucasus.

Rivers (Komar 2018, 18. kép), the eastern part of Kazakhstan (Botalov 2015, 9), and Mongolia (the region of Tuva) (Kürti 1996a, 128). The recently excavated Hsiung-nu graves from the 2nd–1st century BC (in Ulug-Khem/the left bank of the Yenisei, Ulug-Khemsky district, Tuva) also draw our attention to the fact that partial horse burials can be traced back to much earlier periods and such customs were more widespread than previously suggested (Kilunovskaya–Leus 2018, Fig. 45).

195 Concerning the orientation of the graves, we do not agree with Komar, who argued that this too is an ethnic marker: *"Потерпев неудачу в поиске среди кочевников восточноевропейских степей VI–VII вв. угров кушнаренковской традиции, мы вряд ли смутим сторонников версии о ранней дате миграции мадьяр, ведь последних следует искать в группе погребений с западной ориентировкой"* ("*The attempt to identify the Ugors, who carried on the Kusnarenkovo tradition, was unsuccessful in the context of 6th–7th century nomadic finds in the Eastern European steppe; this, however, does not contradict the research theory arguing for a fast Hungarian migration, considering that these Hungarians should be sought among the W–E oriented burials.)"* (Komar 2018, 81). There are several examples to demonstrate that grave orientation could change within a brief period, e.g. in case of Late Avar graves in the Trans-Tisza region. On this problem, see: Lőrinczy 1987–1989, 161–171. The spread of burial customs, which were interpreted earlier as *ethnospecific* markers, and also of elements of material cultures could represent in fact various different social interactions (e.g. long distance marriages, migration, etc.).

196 A detailed discussion is presented by Gáll–M. Lezsák–Novichikhin 2018, 59–78.

197 On the literature concerning the problem of *Savard* Hungarians: Czeglédy 1959, 373–385; Harmatta 1997, 129; B. Szabó–Bollók 2018, 479–542; Kerényi 2019, 77–98.

198 DAI 1967, 173. On DAI, see also: Bollók 2017, 1291–1332.

199 B. Szabó–Bollók 2018, 499–500. See also: Asadov 2022, 445–451.

4. Apart from the theories proposed by historians, field research has not yet begun. As a first step, however, materials from the local museums (collected in this area) should be surveyed.

Figure 22. *Political map of Azerbaijan (after http://mapsof.net/azerbaijan/azerbaijan-physical-large-map)*

IV.3. The origins of the Hungarian steppe state, its formation and character

The formation of a "nation" as a macro-group is the result of political decisions, and not of organic evolution. In case of early medieval clan societies, the "nation" as a political construction is a formation of clan networks, which could have various cultural backgrounds. We briefly discuss this background in the following.

Political histories of nations are based primarily on written records. "Steppe states" (nomadic power structure) as defined by Walter Pohl are exceptions to this, as their political nature did not connect to Roman roots, although they were geographically situated in continental Europe.[200] The concept of "steppe states", referring to political entities of nomadic cultures in the steppe region seems suitable to grasp the general character of the various power structures, which emerged there – we can all agree to this. Perhaps we are not at odds with reality when interpreting the concept of the "steppe state" as a persistent, institutionalized, and partly or entirely independent power exercised over a certain population. Due to the

200 Pohl 2003, 572–573.

nomadic way of life, however, its territorial dimension remains indefinite or unclarified, and that is why it cannot be considered a state in classical medieval terms.

From this viewpoint, i.e. leaving territoriality aside, the analysis in *Chapter II* on clan structures provides a logical explanation to the emergence of the Hungarian power of structure as well: the emergence of a more influential clan and their "pulling force" could have created a hierarchical power structure, an archaic state, under the leadership of a single clan of major influence, at the top of which stood the headman, whose name was *Álmos* – according to the written sources. Opinions are divided whether Levedi was his contemporary or not.

The earliest activities associated with the Hungarian power structure are reported in the 9th century, and some researchers argue that these only occurred after the middle of that century.[201] Some historians believe that Levedi and Álmos were not contemporaries, as Levedi must have lived in the 7th or 8th centuries.[202] Since it is only from this period onwards that one can talk about a hierarchical political structure that integrated a larger group of people, we can conclude that the beginnings of the Hungarian steppe state dates back either to the 7th, 8th, or 9th century. Such a broad dating, however, clearly demonstrates that we are walking on thin ice.

As mentioned earlier, József Deér argued that the identity of the Hungarian people was born through the very establishment of this power structure.[203] Deér definitely understood and "sensed" something which no other historian at that time was able to articulate appropriately in a theoretical manner, based on contemporary historical views and methods. In terms of clan structures, this process could have meant that the principal clan, led by Álmos, attracted and integrated several other clans, as sub-clans. What Deér partly understood is that group identity – the concept and perception of "us" – was, indeed, rooted in the political organization of the people, and thus, Hungarian ethnic identity was most likely the product of the 9th century, as it was tied to the emergence of a new power structure, which is symbolically documented in the story of the blood oath. The principal clan, at the core of the power structure, may have been the main actor extending this identity to others (i.e. other clans). This would be the only logical explanation of how the new power structure emerged.

These theoretical considerations are essential for discussions concerning the "birth" of a "nation", or better said: the establishment of the Hungarian steppe state. It was a process of structural integration that took place within a certain geographical radius, whereby the principal clan sought to integrate (or drawn under its influence) sub-clans, accumulating the kind of military power that is so vividly described in the Arab sources: *"Their chieftain rides at the head of 20,000 horsemen. The name of their chieftain is k.nd.h* [=kündü]. *This name is the title of their king, while the name of the man who practices the royal power over them is j.l.h.* [=gyula]. *Every Magyar does what the chieftain, called j.l.h, commands him to do in making war, repelling invasions/defence, and the like."*[204] The relevant conclusion from this is that from the 9th century on (or probably even earlier) there are indications on the existence of the Hungarian power structure/steppe state, documented in the written sources and reflected also in the term *Hétmagyar*. One might refer to this in fancy and exaggerating way as an "ethnopolitical synthesis".

IV.4. The dual structure of the Hungarian "steppe-state"

Based on Arab sources, many historians argued for a dual structure of governance with regard to the Hungarian steppe state, interpreted as an imitation of the Khazar system of state organization.[205] Others

201 Polgár 2011, 15–24.
202 Deér 1945–1946, 7–9; Dümmerth 1971, 411. For more details, see: Szabados 2011, 91–113.
203 Deér 1938.
204 Zimonyi 2016, 39.
205 Györffy 1959, 130–142; Róna-Tas 1996, 269–270; Kristó 2002, 65–69.

suggested that – based on what is actually described in the sources – the only certainty is that both the "*kündü*" and the "*jula*" could exercise military leadership rights, and that the latter was also responsible for the administration of "*other issues*".[206] To these remarks, a third can be added, namely that behind this dual system of governance there was a clan system with different cultural backgrounds. The dual structure could be most likely not an imitation of Khazar system of governance, but rather a reflection of inherent cultural conditions. The dual leadership of Álmos and *Levedi* embodied this system. Assuming that Levedi was born in the late decades of the 8th century, or at the beginning of the 9th century, he could have been a contemporary to Álmos, who was born in 819 according to dynastic traditions.[207] The circumstance that these two leaders were most probably in power at the same time would corroborate the reference on the dual system reflected in the two titles – *"kündü"* and *"jula"* – which later became united by the dynasty of the Árpáds, as a result of political games.[208] Political-military activities associated with the Hungarian Conquest were already initiated and executed by a centralized power.

The model discussed above calls for a "plural" interpretation of Hungarian origins. This was already argued for 100 years ago by Bálint Hóman,[209] although in a different way and without the methodological considerations described above. Indeed, we should return to a multi-dimensional approach, as the one-dimensional view of Hungarian identity stemming from anachronistic views amplified by modern aspirations leads to a dead-end. In this endeavour, archaeology regrettably had a lion's share in the past 60-70 year, due to methodological pitfalls.

IV.5. Atelkuzu/Etelköz – the problem of its localization in the light of recent archaeological research

Practically almost every historian who studied the 9th-century history of the Hungarians has taken a standpoint concerning *Atelkuzu*. Various theories have been formulated on where this land was situated and how long the Hungarians stayed there.[210] Historical reconstructions have been challenged, however, by recent theories proposed by archaeologists. Attila Türk and Oleksey Komar argued[211] that the migration of Hungarian groups was relatively fast and may have begun presumably late (in the 9th century). Due to the fast migration (across a vast geographical area), the material culture of the population in *Atelkuzu* was identified with Subotcy-type finds, as pointed out by Komar, who also outlined the geographical area where the Subotcy find horizon can be observed and argued that the region referred in the documents might possibly be situated to the north of the Black Sea.[212]

In the current phase of research, we would list here only a few problematic issues in regard to archaeological observations:

206 The relevant literature has been reviewed by Szabados 2011, 173–190. More recently, similar conclusions were outlined by János B. Szabó and Balázs Sudár: B. Szabó–Sudár 2019, 927–964.

207 Kristó 1980, 39, 41.

208 The historical narrative according to which Levedi rejected the offer of the Khagan, since he did not want to remain in a dependent situation and therefore he proposed to elect Álmos, or his son as the new prince, is presumably only an ex-post interpretation to explain how Levedi lost in the struggle for power.

209 Hóman 1935, 50–51, 93.

210 For a literature review, see: Róna-Tas 1999, 324; Harmatta 1984, 419–431; Kapitánffy 2003, 139–144. From the viewpoint of archaeology, it seems fairly obvious that the geographical extent of this land and the chronological background of this process cannot be fully assessed with historical methods. Archaeological and scientific approaches have the potential to come up with new, relevant, and clearer explanations.

211 Türk 2014, 21–24; Komar 2018, 250–256.

212 Referred by Komar as *"Levedia"*, which is very unclear and problematic (Komar 2018, 14, 20–21).

1. The geographical spread of Subotcy-type materials and sites across a large geographical area should not be automatically considered as proof of the migration of a homogenous population group from the east to the west. As Komar stressed in connection to these finds: "*Subotcy cultural elements represent a uniform chronological horizon in the regions of the Urals, the Volga, and to the north from the Black Sea. It is difficult – or downright impossible – to divide this chronological horizon into sub-periods, which may hint on the circumstance that the formation of this horizon was not the result of a slow process*."[213] Furthermore, the conclusion that the population of *Atelkuzu* was coming from the Ural region has not been verified yet by stable isotope (Sr) analysis.
2. Archaeological phenomena described by Komar as ethnic Hungarian (W–E orientation of graves, partial horse burials, horse accessories)[214] can already be relatively evidenced in the 7th and 8th centuries in the Don–Kuban region,[215] which was defined by László Bendefy and András Róna-Tas as the Hungarian homeland. Burial customs in the Don–Kuban region show a relative similarity with Conquest-period Hungarian finds. Apparently, this area – south of the Don, near the Azov Sea –, together with the valley of the Kuban River should be at the forefront of archaeological research in the future.
3. The first part of Komar's assumption is that the Subotcy horizon is the material reflection of the Hungarians' homeland in *Atelkuzu* (in the area between the Dnieper and Prut Rivers). The second part of it, is that the distribution of similar archaeological finds covers a much larger area.[216] Nonetheless, the lower and upper catchments of the Kuban, from where a significant amount of Subotcy and post-Subotcy type finds have been recovered, were not considered by Komar. However, according to Attila Türk szerint: *"Jelenlegi értelmezésük szerint elsősorban a szomszédos Szubbotci-leletkör, illetve poszt-Szubbotci régészeti horizontok hatásával számolhatunk" ("According to the current interpretation, we must mainly take into consideration the influence of the neighbouring Subotcy find horizon and post-Subotcy archaeological horizons.")*.[217] However, we see these phenomena less as an ethnic trend, and more as an influence of workshops' activities in the North Caucasian (Ciscaucasian) region, most probably responsible also for transmitting Arabic cultural influence on the local material culture. The Caucasus region was an important contact zone between sedentary and nomadic populations, both from cultural and economic viewpoints. Trade routes and communication networks crossing the region (i.e. the northern section of the Silk Road along the Caspian Sea and the northbound roads from the Near East, crossing the Caucasus)[218] constantly generated military conflicts. Regions to the north and south of the Caucasus were important for their raw materials as well.[219] These circumstances suggest that nomadic populations *around* the Caucasus were supplied by workshops in the Caucasus – quite like in the prehistory.[220] Instead of an ethnic interpretation of cultural phenomena, we are rather inclined to believe that these connections were due to economic-commercial activities.

213 Komar 2018, 239: *"...Субботцевские культурные элементы и комплексы появляются в Приуралье, Поволжье и Северном Причерноморье в рамках единого хронологического отрезка, который сложно или вообще невозможно разделить на более дробные, что говорит о стремительности процесса, например, быстрой миграции с оседанием части мигрантов в зонах промежуточных остановок."*
214 Komar 2018, 62, 81.
215 See e.g. Прокофьев 2014, 302–304, 306, рис. 119; Круглов–Парусимов 2020, 152–158.
216 For more on this, see: Komar 2018, 106. térkép.
217 Türk 2021, 136.
218 E.g. Callmer 1996, 53–71; Di Cosmo 2014, 17–26.
219 Ghazaryan 2013, 3–15; Ismayilov 2013, 16–36; Urushadze–Ghambashidze 2013, 77–96.
220 For example: Courcier 2014, 579–664; Kossack 1994, 23–54.

Our conclusions can be summarized as follows:

1. The geographical localization of *Atelkuzu* – approximately in the area between the Dnieper and the Prut – seems correct. The most recent researches indicate that 40 further burials can be attributed to the 34 graves collected by Komar.
2. However, the chronological framework of the Subotcy horizon should be more nuanced,[221] but this is still some ways off, considering that there are 26-27 known sites at the moment, whose periodization and multidisciplinary analysis have not started yet.

221 *"A Fekete-tenger északi előterének korai magyar lelőhelyei kapcsán a kutatás egyik legfontosabb feladata jelenleg az, hogy felállítsa a szubbotci típusú és a Plavnyi–Glinoje-típusú sírok kronológiáját." ("Currently, one of the most important research tasks in connection with the early Hungarian sites of the northern foreland of the Black Sea is to establish the chronology of the Subotcy-type and Plavny–Glinoje-type graves.")* (Kvitnyickij et al. 2022, 590).

V. THE NEW HOMELAND – THE NATURAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE CARPATHIAN BASIN

V.1. The Carpathian Basin

Geographically, the Carpathian Basin is divided into two parts: the central basin(s) and the surrounding mountainous areas, which are 1,500 km long and about 150-200 km wide. As far as the topography is concerned, it is important to emphasize from the point of view of our research that there has been no significant geographical change affecting this region since the 9th and 10th centuries.[222] 51% of the 325,000 km^2 large Carpathian Basin is occupied by lowland landscapes (lower than 200 m). Hills (201–500 m) account for 24%, mid-mountains (500–1000 m) for 20%, and mountains higher than 1,000 m for 5% of the area of the Carpathian Basin.[223] The inner basins and high peripheral mountains are integrated by a centripetal hydrographic network into a geographical unit.[224] The mountain ranges of the Carpathians bordering the basins are divided into four structural zones, which are separated by small basins (the Liptov-, Spiš-, and Gömör- basins and, the Szeklerland or Hațeg basin). These intramontane basins are 450–800 m above sea level and were formed by the relatively recent subsidence and the sedimentation of the rivers *(Fig. 23)*.

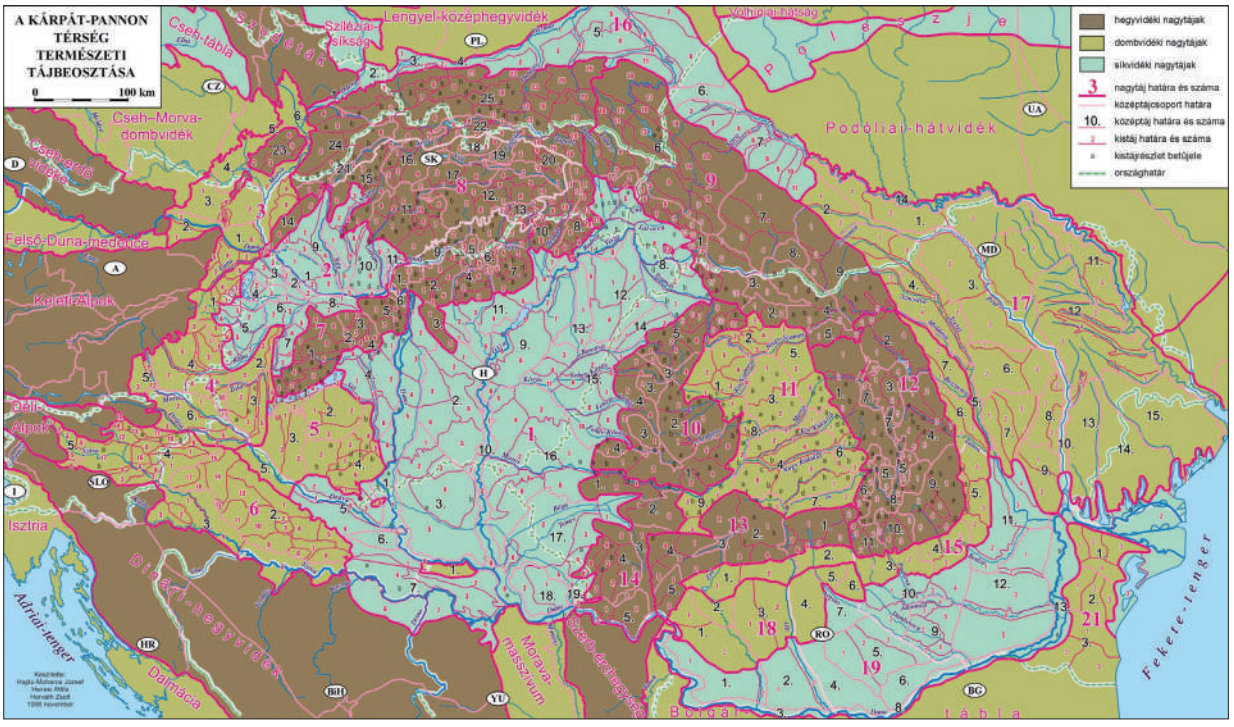

Figure 23. *Regions of the Carpathian Basin and their landscape types (after* Hajdú-Moharos–Hevesi *1997)*

With the exception of a few rivers (e.g. the Poprad, or the Dunajec), the hydrography of the Carpathian Basin has a uniform character. The Danube is the main hydrographic axis and the second largest river is the Tisza. The tributaries of the Danube are the Váh, Nitra, Hron/Garam, Ipeľ/Ipoly, and Tisza Rivers on

222 Györffy–Zólyomi 1996, 14.
223 Frisnyák 1990.
224 Frisnyák 2000, 53.

the left side, and the Rába, Drava, and Sava Rivers on the right. The most significant water bodies are without exception situated in the western part of the basin (Lake Balaton, Lake Fertő, Lake Velence). The hydrography and, of course, the social and environmental (faunal) conditions are significantly influenced by the climate.[225] The plains of the forest steppe in the central parts of the basin are divided into floodplains and flood-free zones according to their situation in relation to rivers and streams. The floodplains can also be divided into two (sub)categories: (a) low floodplains, which are permanently (or for most part of the year) covered by water; and (b) intermittently flooded high floodplains. This is a very important aspect, as before major landscaping works that transformed the environment in the years between 1848 and 1914, the floodplains of the Carpathian Basin (as a specific ecological type of landscape) occupied an approx. 48,700 km^2 large area including e.g. the Ecsed-swamp, the Hortobágy, the regions of the Kis- and Nagy-Sárrét, the Fertő-Hanság region. These areas were covered with water permanently or temporarily, if only for a short period of time, and their natural vegetation consisted of willow-poplar groves, silky-ash-pedunculate oak-mixed high floodplain forests, seaweed and reed swamps, and peat meadows, but with less saline landscapes than today *(Fig. 23)*.[226]

Rising above the wet and dry floodplains, the following types of terrains can be discerned – situated at higher elevations, which were major ecological resources for agricultural production: a) *Alluvial fan plains mantled by blown sand* (Nyírség, Kiskunság, Deliblát); b) *loess plains* (Mezőföld, Bácska, Hajdúhát); c) *terraced alluvial fans* around the edges of the basins (Mátraalja, Bükkalja) *(Fig. 23)*.

The second large group of landscape types in the Carpathian Basin consists of hills; this category includes a significant part of Transdanubia, the Drava–Sava area, and the Transylvanian Basin.[227] The third large group of landscape types is the – mostly uninhabited – mountain regions of the Carpathians covered by beech and pine forests *(Fig. 23)*.[228]

The Carpathian Basin, as a large landscape unit, is located at the intersection of three climate zones – oceanic (Cf), continental (Df), and Mediterranean (Cs). Certain climatic features typical for the Mediterranean zone are also present here, e.g. the double peak in precipitation (late spring and autumn) and a mild winter (compared to the continental zone), which likely already had an effect on socio-economic developments in the 10th century (this is discussed in detail in *Chapters IX* and *X*). The relative protection against winds is the primary effect of basin geography. The mountain range of the Carpathians influences the atmospheric dynamics of air movements, resulting in an increased number of sunny days and reduced precipitation for most part of the basin. According to historical climatological research, a global climate change occurred between 750 and 900, which led to large-scale warming in the Carpathian Basin as well.[229] In some cases, the location of 10th century sites in river floodplains clearly suggests that in the 10th century, marshes, swamps, and floodplains occupied a considerably smaller area.[230] The settlement historical consequences of this can be clearly seen.

The diverse soil types in the Carpathian Basin determine the vegetation cover and are the basis of the quality of human life as well. In the past, there have been already attempts to explain the characteristics of the settlement pattern at the time of the Conquest in relation to soil types (the sandy or clayey composition

225 Mika 1991.
226 Györffy–Zólyomi 1996, 19.
227 Frisnyák 2000, 54.
228 Hajdú-Moharos–Hevesi 1997, 294–306.
229 Györffy–Zólyomi 1996, 17.
230 Frisnyák 2000, 53; Vadas–Rácz 2010, 39–61. However, in regard to the Gepidic period it was recognized fairly early that – in contrast to Sarmatian sites, which appear very far from the watercourses – the Gepidic settlements are situated directly at the banks of the streams, and thus, reflect completely different economic preferences and lifestyles (Masek 2017, 292).

of the subsoil). Csanád Bálint claimed to have discovered such connections in regard to the distribution of Hampel's "A" (rich burials of the conquering Hungarians) and "B" (10th–11th century burials of common people) groups *(Fig. 24)*.[231]

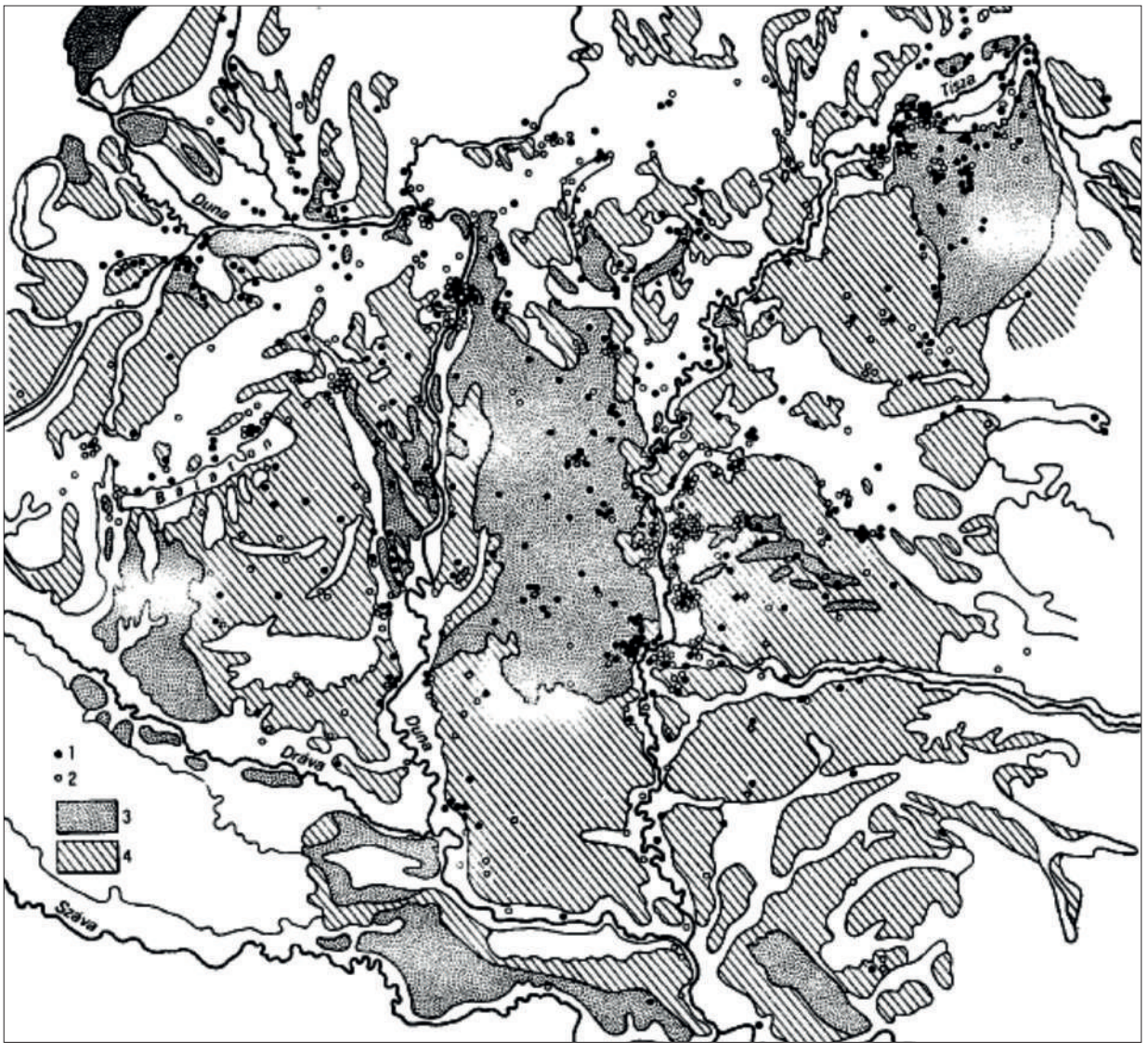

Figure 24. *Main soil types of the Carpathian Basin and the settlement area of the Hungarian population (after* Bálint *1980a, Térkép)*

V.2. Mineral resources of the Carpathian Basin

Settlement conditions were also significantly influenced by other circumstances, such as the quantity and quality of raw material sources. From a geological point of view, volcanic mountain ranges not only determined the formation of topographical and hydrographical features, but also provided a rich mineral resource base. Volcanism during the formation of some parts of the Carpathian Basin created rich ore deposits. Their exploitation was closely related to the technical abilities and preparedness of the popu-

231 Bálint 1980a, 35–52.

lations. With regard to the 10th century, we have no evidence of the exploitation of precious metals (the possibility cannot be ruled out, however). On the other hand, the exploitation of salt surface structures could provide a logical explanation for several archaeological phenomena. From a physiological point of view, salt is mainly needed by ruminants, especially cattle and sheep, and rock salt is absolutely necessary for the animal body. Consequently, the acquisition and possession of this raw material was vital for the administration of any power structure. Salt allows a larger amount of feed to be digested, reducing or eliminating digestive disturbances. Salt can be found in the Carpathian Basin only in Transylvania. The formation of iron deposits dates back to the geological era of the Early Badenian phase, about 14 million years ago (see also *Chapter XII*).

Even if there is no proof on the mining of precious metals, the metallurgy and processing of iron is evidenced by archaeological finds (smelting furnaces, iron slag, etc).[232] Iron makes up about 5% of the earth's crust and it is one of the most common elements, forming ferro- (Fe2 +) and ferri- (Fe3 +) compounds. Its accumulation and segregation depends on its state of oxidation. From our point of view, surface bog iron deposits as well as mined, neogene ores are both important. According to the literature, the occurrence of iron ores is common in the Mátra, Tokaj, Bakony, Mecsek, Sopron, and Somogy hills, but intensive research in the last two decades has shown that iron occurrences are much frequent *(Fig. 25)*.[233]

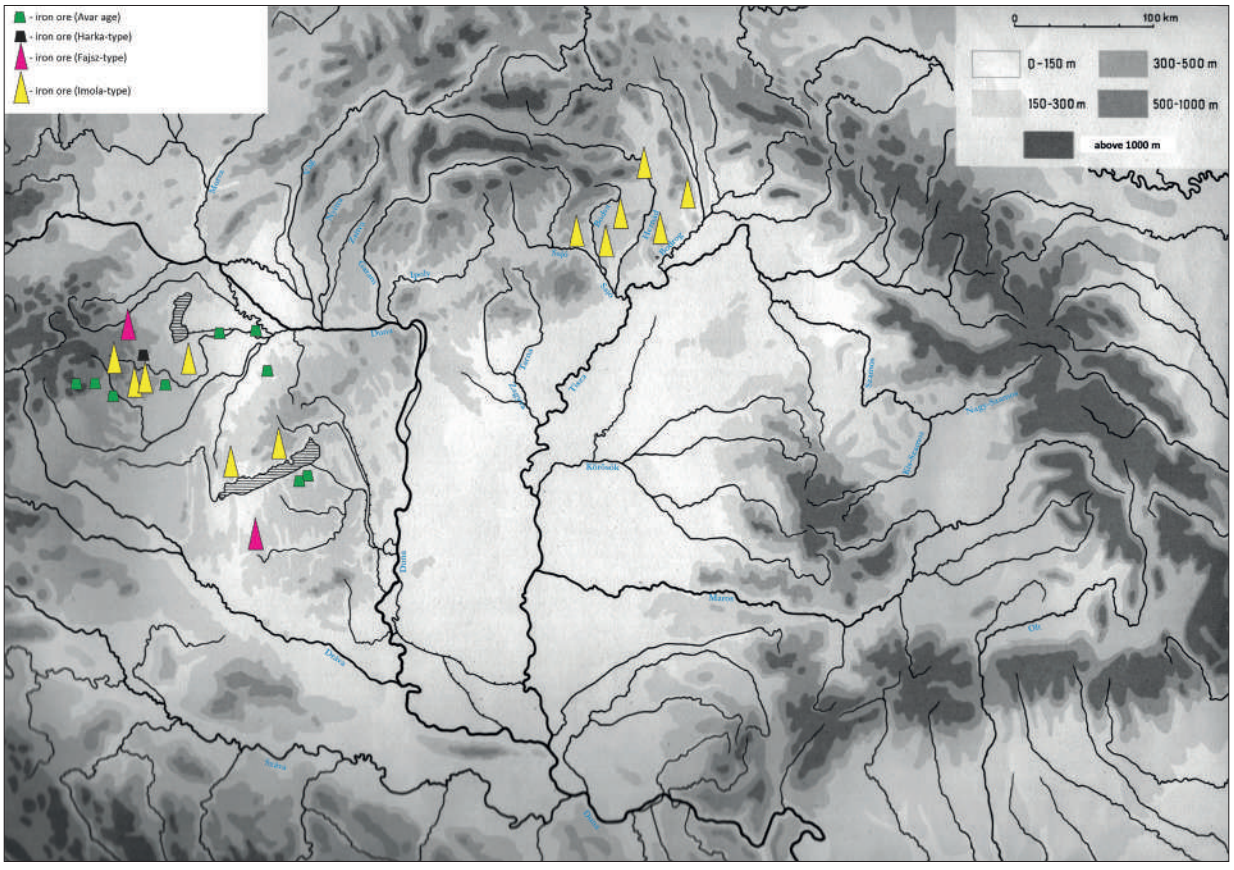

Figure 25. *Archaeological evidence of metallurgy in the Carpathian Basin (7–11th centuries) (map re-drawn after http://www.ipari.bzlogi.hu/linkelt_dokumentumok/vaskultura_konferencia/tablo/hu_hu.pdf)*

232 Gömöri 1994, 259–269; AH 1996, 63–64; Török 2011, 3–13; Gallina 2018, 391–450; Török et al. 2018, 404–420. János Gömöri listed 50 Árpád-period iron smelting sites; and an additional 66 sites with iron slag occurrences. Gömöri 2000, 18–19. Some of these probably dates back to the Conquest period.

233 Gömöri 2000, 258–262; Szabó 2012, 75–96.

In summary, landscape geography, mineral and raw material resources and migration phenomena together determined the overall picture of 10th century settlement – the lifestyle and economic priorities of the population that settled in the Carpathian Basin – inasmuch as we are able to see it on the basis of archaeological data. We discuss the archaeological evidence in detail in the following chapters.

VI. THE "ODD" 9TH CENTURY IN THE CARPATHIAN BASIN – GEOPOLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS BEFORE THE HUNGARIAN CONQUEST

VI.1. The western part of the Carpathian Basin as a region of "Europe"

In the 8th century, the Avar Khaganate receded into the Carpathian Basin and became a regional power.[234] However, this was not a standalone example in the context of the contemporary development of the European power network. In the second half of the 20th century – in line with the political situation at the time – the "island culture" theory was formulated by István Bóna,[235] according to which the Avar Khaganate, despite its fundamental crisis, secured its power position (until the campaigns of Charlemagne at the end of the 8th century) by literally creating a wall and "insulating" itself. In the last twenty years, however, researchers have completely re-evaluated this theory.

In the second half of the 6th century, the Eastern Roman Empire of Justinian, which had ruled the entire Mediterranean basin, went through a socio-economic collapse, and in the 6th–7th centuries the rise of the Muslim caliphates and the emergence of Frankish rule dissected the formerly bipolar world into smaller pieces (once dominated by the Eastern Roman Empire and the Sasanides). Smaller states emerged, of approximately equal power: the Caliphate that fractured into eastern and western parts, the Empire that lost much of its territory, and hence in regard to this period is referred to under a different name, as the *Byzantine Empire*; the Lombard Kingdom in Italy; the Caroling Kingdom or the Kingdom of the Franks (Francia), and the Khazar Khaganate in "Eastern Europe". The socio-economic centers of gravity also shifted north. The Frankish kingdom, although much weaker than the former Roman Empire, was essentially the political foundation of medieval (and modern) Europe. The most important states in Europe basically trace back their existence and state identity to this era.[236] The Late Avar Khaganate was part of this geopolitical environment, and not isolated from it, as István Bóna thought. As an adversary to the western powers (whose capacity to mobilize military forces was much greater – unfortunately for the Avars), the Khaganate remained unallied in terms of its geopolitical and economic positions.

Charlemagne [768–814], King of the Franks, was determined to expand the boundaries of his kingdom, increase the cohesion of its provinces, and expand its political, economic, and military systems to the eastern parts of mainland Europe. The political, cultural ecclesiastical, and economic expansion of Christian Western Europe began under the flag of Christianization,[237] it was, however, clearly motivated by the interests of western elites, and as such, the whole phenomenon of stable monarchic/imperial rule has been rather unparalleled in Western Europe's history since the 4th century.[238] In 791, after unsuccessful negotiations, the most significant military campaign of Charlemagne's reign began. His army advanced along the Danube, and reached Győr (the Roman Arrabona). Before the fall of 795, a catastrophic "civil" war shook the Avar Khaganate. The two supreme dignitaries, the *khagan* and the *jugurrus* (juγruš) turned against each other. It is likely that in 796 both the *khagan* and the *jugurrus* were killed possibly by

234 Szenthe 2015, 215–250.
235 Bóna 1984, 327–330.
236 See e.g. Wickham 2005, 825–831.
237 Rokay 2000, 11–25.
238 Brown 1999, 270.

their own bodyguards.[239] During the period that followed, the new *khagan* surrendered to the Carolingian Empire. He was baptized in 805, in the River Fischa, and took up the Christian name Abraham, regaining his "old dignity" from the hands of Charlemagne. This act marks the starting point of a series of events, which can be interpreted as the "pre-westernization" of the Carpathian Basin through the eastward expansion of western ecclesiastical and economic institutions.[240]

As a result of negotiations in 805, the *khagan* was able to retain the territory east of the Danube, but became a vassal of the Carolingian Empire. The solution was also satisfactory for Charlemagne, who was able to join the new territories to his empire, and from an economic point of view, the western half of the Carpathian Basin seemed a promising opportunity. Due to the crisis of the post-Khaganate, another meeting was held in 811 in Aachen. Finally, the ambassador of the *khagan*, as well as the third dignity in rank, the *tudun* (behind the *jugurrus*), who was responsible for governing the western part of the Khaganate, furthermore the princes and nobles of the Slavs who lived beyond the Danube, reached an agreement. The provinces west of the Danube (Sclavinia, Avaria, and Pannonia(e)) became the easternmost provinces of the Carolingian Empire, and in return, the Empire recognized the rule of the Old Moravian Principality over the territory north of the Danube, while the Avar elite of the post-Khaganate could keep the region of the Danube–Tisza Interfluve (the geographical area cannot be defined more precisely).

The territory of *Pannonia*(e) – including Austria, Transdanubia, and the Drava–Sava region – became part of the administrative system and ecclesiastical provinces of the Carolingian Empire. In 828, Louis the Pious [778–840] reorganized the eastern parts of the Empire, creating a whole series of landgraves within the provinces. Meanwhile, the Bulgarians occupied the eastern half of the Drava–Sava Interfluve, and thus, *Pannonia inferior* was reduced to the southern parts of Transdanubia, while *Pannonia superior*, which previously covered the whole of Transdanubia, extended now only to the Rába and Danube basins together with the basins around Vienna and Tulln *(Fig. 26)*.

The Carolingian world of Transdanubia differed significantly from the rest of the Carpathian Basin. Due to its integration into the Carolingian Empire (into *Europa Occidens* and the *regnum christianum*), the process of structural integration and civilization began, however, this clearly took a long time and did not affect the population as much as it did in Saxony. On the one hand, the course of social and intellectual changes took longer to unfold than the swift change of political events, on the other hand, the political and economic expansion of the Empire did not generate significant demographic migration from the west to the east in this case.[241] Based on the archaeological characteristics of Transdanubian burial sites, customs of the Late Avar Period still continued (e.g. horse burials, grave accessories), but new customs also appeared (e.g. mound burials). Some sites were already bi-ritual in the Late Avar Period, and this continued into the 9th century as well. In the Tulln and Vienna basins, truncated cattle skull burials appeared, which were previously completely unknown in this sparsely populated area.[242]

Contrary to trends observed in funeral customs, Carolingian goods – e.g. earrings – appeared among the elements of local material culture in parallel with finds from the earlier period of the Khaganate. The quantitative change slowly turned into a qualitative one, as new elements replaced the older ones, including dress accessories and weapons. This not only reflected the change in economic and political network systems, but cultural assimilation as well.[243]

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239 Annales Regni Francorum 796 (*Rau* I. 64–65): "…*chagan sive iuguro intestina clade addictis et a suis occisis"*. See also: Szőke 2014a, 31; Szőke 2019, 60.

240 See on this e.g. Brown 1999, 267–289. From the point of view of archaeology, the works of Miklós Szőke Béla are instructive concerning the situation in the Carpathian Basin (Szőke 2000, 133–135; Szőke 2011, 265–294; Szőke 2014a, 31–42; Szőke 2019, 459–465).

241 Szőke 2014a, 33.

242 Szőke 1979, 51–103.

243 Szőke 2014a, 33; Szőke 2019, 418–454.

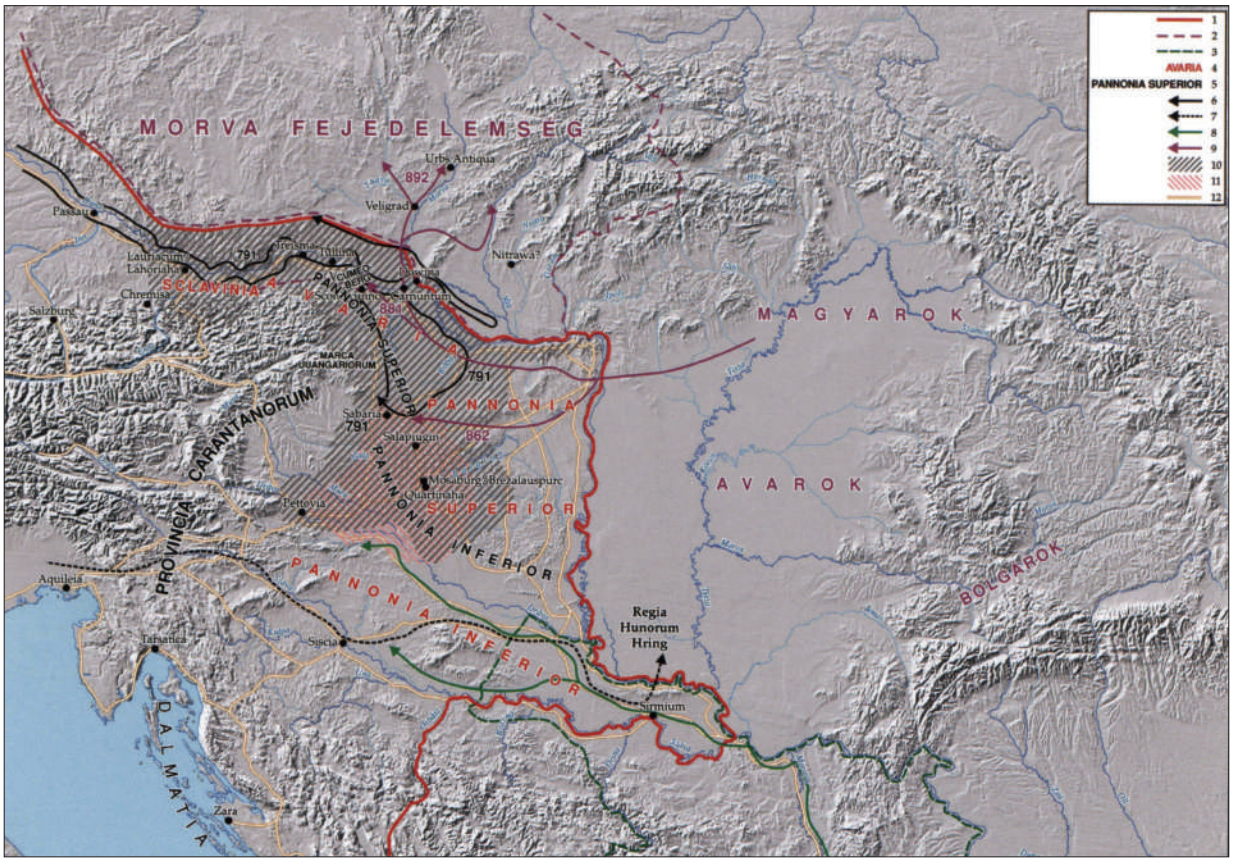


Figure 26. *Geopolitical situation of Carolingian Pannonia in the Carpathian Basin in the 9th century according to the interpretation of Miklós Szőke Béla (after* Szőke *2014b, 1. kép)*

Of course, the Carolingian rulers considered the spread of Christianity to be of primary importance. As early as the 930s and 940s, this manifested in burial practices, but also in the changes in the landscape.[244] Residences of counts and Carolingian aristocracy as well as church buildings appeared. According to Miklós Béla Szőke, the structural integration and acculturation of the elite progressed significantly by the middle and second half of the century. *Europa Occidens* had already extended its boundaries to the Danube at that time *(Fig. 26)*.

VI.2. The eastern peripheries and the Bulgarian conquest

During the same period, or somewhat later (by a decade or two), during the attack between 827 and 831, the Bulgarian Khanate not only raided into, but also occupied the Central Danube region, Sirmia/Srijem, Eastern Slavonia, and certain parts of the Tisza region (not exactly known which). The Mureş Valley was likely occupied by the armies of Omurtag Khan – this army was either the one turning back from the Tisza in the direction of Transylvania (whose leader, Onega(bon) of the Kuviar clan, was killed at the Tisza), or another army, which penetrated into the Transylvanian Basin and into the valley of the Olt via the Turnu Roşu Pass. In the next year, the Bulgarian conquest was secured by Khan Malamir in a peace treaty with the Franks, but we do not know the date when exactly Transylvania was occupied. This can be only speculated retrospectively, based on a source from 892. In that year King Arnulf requested,

244 Szőke 2019, 418–428.

through his envoys to the Bulgarian khan "Laodimir" (Vladimir) that *"... the Moravians should not be allowed to buy (or transport) salt"*.[245] From here, one would rightly presume that during the 9th century the Bulgarians laid their hands on some of the salt mines in Transylvania, in the Central Mureş region.[246] Notably, it is this region, where burials were found whose exact parallels – both in terms of funerary rites and grave finds – could be identified in the territory of the Lower-Danube, in present-day Romania and mainly in Bulgaria, i.e. precisely in the territory of the Bulgarian Khanate. The fortress of Slon (dated to the 8th–10th centuries) is also related to these sites, and its location suggests that the Tatar Pass was used as the main commercial and military route connecting the valley of the Lower-Danube with the Transylvanian Basin.[247] According to Maria Comşa, the Rucăr-Bran and Turnu Roşu Passes and the Surduc Pass (in the surroundings of Hunedoara[248]) were also used at that time, but the use of these routes is already documented in Roman times.[249]

The archaeological heritage of the Bulgarian Khanate in the 8th to 10th centuries is well known, primarily from recent excavations in the old capitals, Pliska and Preslav,[250] but also from several other burial sites.[251] There is also a wealth of archeological data available from Dobrogea, which probably was also part of the Khanate. The finds from Transylvania look similar to those Bulgarian and Wallachian materials (e.g. in Sultana) which could be dated mainly to the 9th–10th centuries.[252]

As we can see on the map, the aforementioned group of Transylvanian burials occupies the central part of the Mureş valley, an area with significant salt and gold deposits *(Fig. 29)*. Concerning the extraction of the latter, we have no clear evidence from this period (as mentioned in *Chapter V*). The burial sites and settlements are situated within a distance of approximately 70 kilometers from the two banks of the Mureş (from Orăştie to Ciumbrud). The most important of them are the 9th century sites in Alba Iulia (Staţia de Salvare, site II), Blandiana (site "A"), Ghirbom, and Sebeş. Pottery fragments from these sites were all wheel thrown pieces *(Fig. 29)*. All documented types were characteristic to contemporary Bulgarian pottery at the Danube: yellow and reddish-brown, one-handled and two-handled bottles (*amphorae*) *(Fig. 27)*, jars with round, swollen rims and with smoothed surfaces or deeply smoothed mesh-like decora-

245 Annales Fuldenses 121.

246 The geopolitical importance of Pliska, as the centre of the Bulgarian Khanate, is beyond doubt: "*While not as densely populated, with a total enclosed area of 23 square kilometers it was substantially larger than Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire, or Aachen, capital of Charlemagne's Carolingian Empire. Recent discoveries have shown that Pliska was inhabited as early as the Bronze Age. As the First Bulgarian Empire officially adopted Christianity in 864-865 AD, Pliska also became the home to one of the largest churches and monastery complexes in Europe known as the Great Basilica. Up until now, Bulgarian archaeologists and historians had been aware of two satellite towns of the Ancient Bulgar capital Pliska – the Kabiyuk Fortress, and the Stan Fortress. An archaeological team, however, has now discovered a third satellite town of Pliska located barely 10 kilometers outside the first capital south of the Danube River of the First Bulgarian Empire.*" http://archaeologyinbulgaria.com/2016/09/27/bronze-age-discoveries-reveal-ancient-bulgar-capital-pliska-was-settled-much-earlier-than-middle-ages/ (Last accessed: 25.10.2020); http://archaeologyinbulgaria.com/2016/07/28/restoration-of-great-basilica-in-pliska-getscatholic-church-donation-to-mark-1150-years-of-bulgaria-vatican-relations/ (Last accessed: 25.10.2020); http://archaeologyinbulgaria.com/2020/10/12/third-satellite-town-of-early-medieval-bulgarian-empires-capital-pliska-found-during-digs-for-turkish-stream-natural-gas-pipeline/ (Last accessed: 25.10.2020); Regarding Pliska see also: Post-Roman Towns 2007, 209–704; Aladzhov 2022.

247 Comşa 1983, 101–102; Ciupercă 2009, 112–119.

248 Comşa 1983, 102–104.

249 Ciupercă 2009, 112–113.

250 See the respective studies in the volume edited by Joachim Henning: Post-Roman Towns 2007. See also: Curta 2019b, 78–100; Curta 2022, 57–77.

251 Fiedler 1992; Matei–Renţa 2023.

252 Fiedler 1992.

Figure 27. *Alba Iulia, Staţia de Salvare, site II, amphora from the 9–10th centuries (after* Rusu *2010, Fig. 11)*

tions, slightly funnel-shaped pots, one cauldron shaped pot with a pierced handle (a unique example), and pots reminiscent of the "Mediaș-type."[253] The former are also common in Bulgaria, and so it is probable that these finds came to Transylvania in the 9th century just after the conquest. Whether this signals in fact a northward expansion/migration of workshop activity, technology and masters, or it was only due to import, cannot be answered at the moment, in the absence of in-depth scientific investigation.

The exact parallels of the vessels found in Alba Iulia, Sebeș, and Blandiana are known in large numbers from settlements and burial sites in Bulgaria, Dobrogea, and the southern part of Wallachia (Pliska, Madara, Preslav, Kadikj, Histria, Sultana, etc.). These finds were brought from Bulgaria, crossing the Carpathians either through the valleys of the Olt and the Jiu Rivers, or through other routes, from Dobrogea and Silastra to the Transylvanian Basin. In Ploieşti-Bucov, 8th–9th century settlements were found, from the time of the Bulgarian rule, with similar finds, and in the valley of Mostiştea, in Sultana, a burial site was excavated consisting mostly of inhumations, all of which can be considered as evidence for a network of settlements connecting the Danube area and Transylvania, whose material culture reflects coherence.[254]

The burial sites in Ciumbrud, north of Alba Iulia, along the Mureș River, and in Orăștie (Dealul Pemilor X8) in Southern Transylvania are just as well interesting. There were 32 W–E oriented, 9th–10th-century graves found in Ciumbrud, and 8 more in Orăștie. Grave accessories found in the graves of females have already been published: in 4 graves, 14 different types of richly decorated filigrane pendant earrings were found, and there were beads, *lunulae*, and a disk-shaped pendant ornament collected from 3 other graves.[255] Bulgarian research interpreted the Ciumbrud burials the same way as the ones in Blandiana, i.e. as "Bulgarian" burials.[256] In regard to Ciumbrud, however, there is no evidence on drink (pottery) and food offerings, and in some graves there is a large number of accessories (mostly earrings). These do not apply to the Blandiana "group". Recently, this picture has become even more nuanced: cremations were documented in the early phase of the site in Alba Iulia (Staţia de Salvare), and also in case of the recently excavated site in Miceşti;[257] both sites could have been bi-ritual ones *(Figs. 29–30)*.[258]

253 On the Mediaș archaeological "group", cf.: Horedt 1976, 35–57; Horedt 1979, 385–394; Țiplic 2002–2003, 9–22; Țiplic–Tomega 2016; Gáll et al. 2017; Harhoiu 2020, p. 226–233: Beilage 6; Стачу 2015, p. 163–216, рис. 25.

254 Bóna 1988, 190; Ciupercă–Mirea 2010, 115–162.

255 Dankanits–Ferenczi 1959, 605–612; Pinter–Boroffka 1999, 313–330; Pinter–Boroffka 2001, 319–346. There was a large number of head jewelries in Ciumbrud (e.g. grave "A"), and also in Orăștie (grave no. 1: 4 earrings; grave no. 7: 8 earrings).

256 Horedt 1958, 120, note 2.

257 Bălan–Ota 2012, 54–56.

258 On the problem of cremation burial sites along the Little Someș River, see: Gáll et al. 2017, 112–113.

Regarding burial customs, there are some thought-provoking details. In Alba Iulia, eight cattle burials were found, and in seven of them, cow skulls were placed in the graves, without the skeletal parts, and in one case there was a partial bovine skeleton in the grave.[259] Cattle-skull burials occur primarily in the Southern Great Plain (e.g. Čoka-Tűzköveshalom, grave no. 7, Szeged-Makkoserdő, grave no. 52, Gerla-Szakácsföld, grave no. 8, and perhaps Szarvas-Grexa, grave no. 419).[260] In Alba Iulia the cattle skulls were always placed at the legs, the orientation of the graves was W–E, similarly to the ones found e.g. at the Szekszárd-Bogyiszló road, and they were situated in the middle of the burial site.[261] In several cases, sheep skulls were placed next to the cow skulls. In case of partial cattle burials, the positioning of the cow skulls and of the long bones was similar to that of horse burials. In all cases, the graves were rich in finds (including ceramic vessels, iron knives, bronze pendants, animal bones), and in one case the skulls of sheep and cattle were found in a Roman brick grave. The question is whether it would be possible to define at least some of these 9th-century sites as Late Avar – based on these customs?

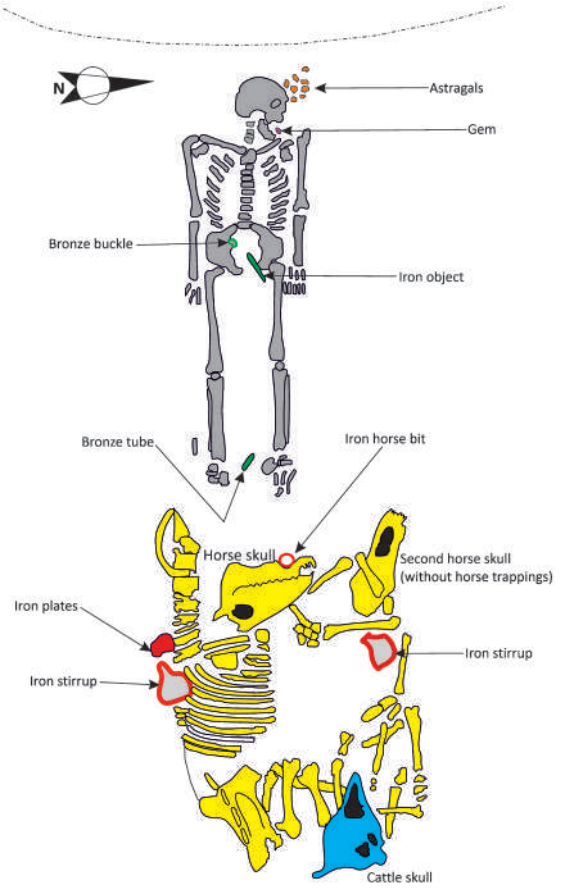


Figure 28. *Blandiana, site "A", grave no. 2 (redrawn after HRE 2006, 68: Fig. 1)*

Grave no. 2 in Blandiana (site"A") is an example of a unique burial *(Fig. 28)*. Among the grave goods of the W–E oriented grave, there was a special object: a scepter depicting an elephant. Its style is possibly mimicking antique examples (see *Fig. 30. 5*). In a pit, separate from the grave (this detail is not illustrated clearly on the map of the excavation), a complete horse skeleton, a horse skull, and a cattle skull were found, along with 3 lyre-shaped buckles, two round stirrups, and a bridle with cheek pieces (*Fig. 30. 1–2*).[262]

As pointed out already,[263] the question is really the dating of burials of the Blandiana and Ciumbrud "groups"? Is it the second half of the 9th century, or the beginning of the 10th century, and are the two groups contemporary, or is there also a chronological difference which could also account for the rather obvious cultural differences? Based on our chronological analysis, it seems that we can rightly assume the continuation of the two groups into the 10th century, since – in our opinion – the Hungarian Conquest did not destroy the 9th-century economic infrastructure, but only rearranged it, or integrated it into the Eastern trading system, transforming the local material culture into a more colorful one *(Fig. 30)*.[264]

Thus, we have practically two groups with different burial practices, but we do not know anything about their origins, and the chronological background of their burials is also uncertain. Like other "steppe states", the Bulgarian Khanate had a mixed population, composed of Bulgarian Turks, who were linguis-

259 Ciugudean–Dragotă–Popescu 2022, 78–114.
260 Kovrig–Korek 1960, 257–287; Móra 1932, 54–68; Bende 2017, 24, 148–149, 314–315.
261 Rosner 1999, 103, 105–106, Abb. 13.
262 Anghel–Ciugudean 1987, 179–196.
263 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 804–807.
264 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 805–807.

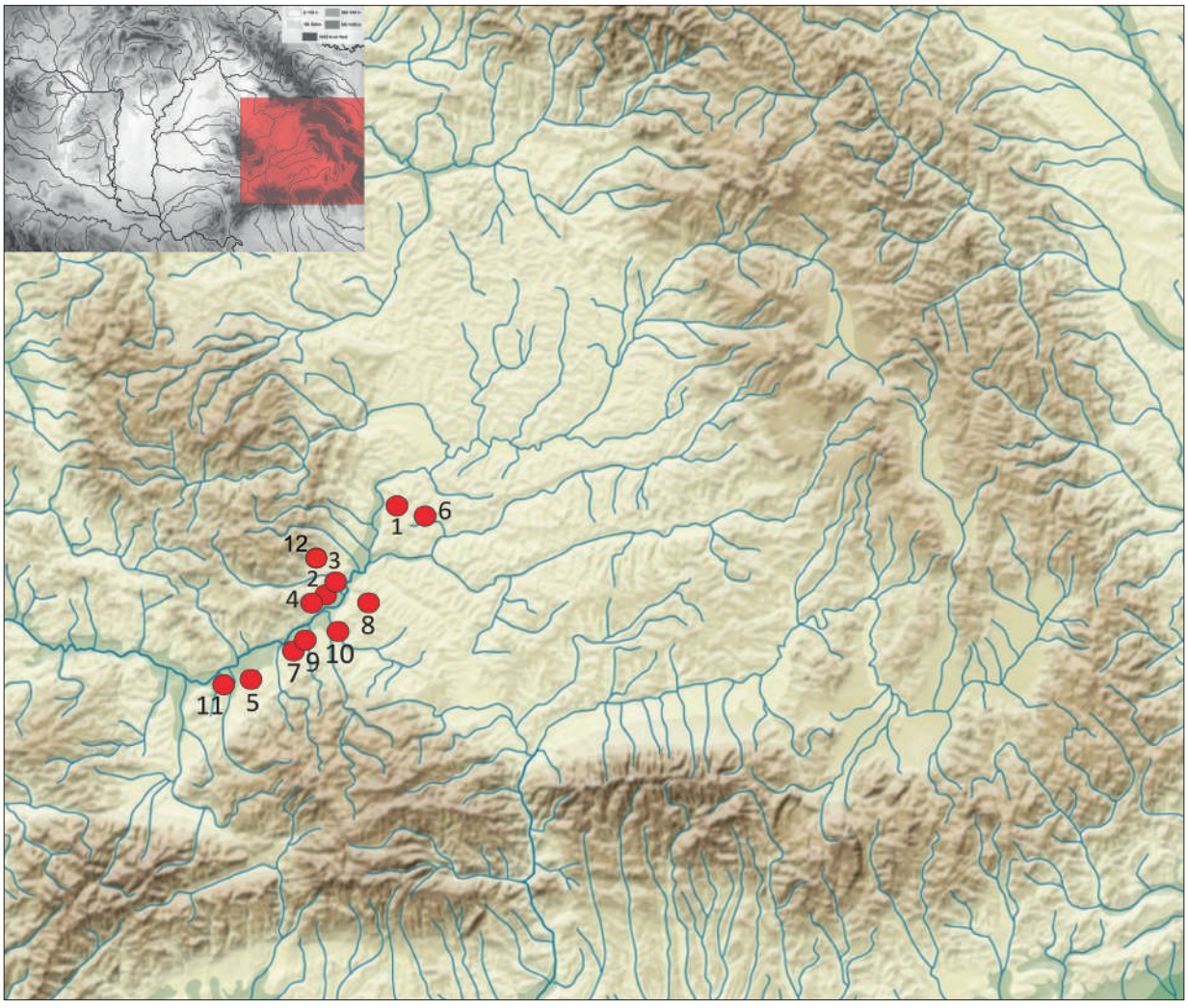


Figure 29. *Geographical distribution of burial sites representing the "Blandiana" and "Ciumbrud" groups and the Bulgarian influence in the Transylvanian Basin (mapped by Erwin Gáll)*
Sites: 1. Ciumbrud; 2–4. Alba Iulia-Castle, -Staţia de Salvare, burial site no. II., - Partoş; 5. Cugir; 6. Sânbenedic; 7. Blandiana, site "A"; 8. Ghirbom; 9. Sibişeni; 10. Sebeş; 11. Orăştie- Dealul Pemilor X8; 12. Miceşti (?)

tically Slavicized in the 9th century, various Slavic peoples, and Balkan Latins *(Vlachs)*.[265] One of the pivotal elements of the early Bulgarian Khanate's administrative policy was the relocation of different populations. In the case of Transylvania, the burial rites are indicative of this: archaeological observations testify to the presence of inhumations, which may indicate that, in addition to the pagan Bulgarian Turks, a different population also arrived or lived here (Slavic peoples, Vlachs/Romanians).

We can conclude that the Carpathian Basin was divided between the two great regional powers of the period, and at some point in the early 9th century the Moravian political formation also gained new territories in the northwestern part of the basin. What happened, then, with that part of the Late Avar population in the Great Hungarian Plain, in the Upper-Tisza region, or in the North Transylvanian Basin, which did not become "Carolingian" or "Bulgarian" after the dissolution of the Khaganate? Since the institutions of the Late Avar Khaganate disappeared, political-institutional continuity was unconceivable. The local population could obviously survive – biologically – but there is no information on the contin-

265 On the archaeological identification of the *Vlachs* see: Takács 2004, 239–270.

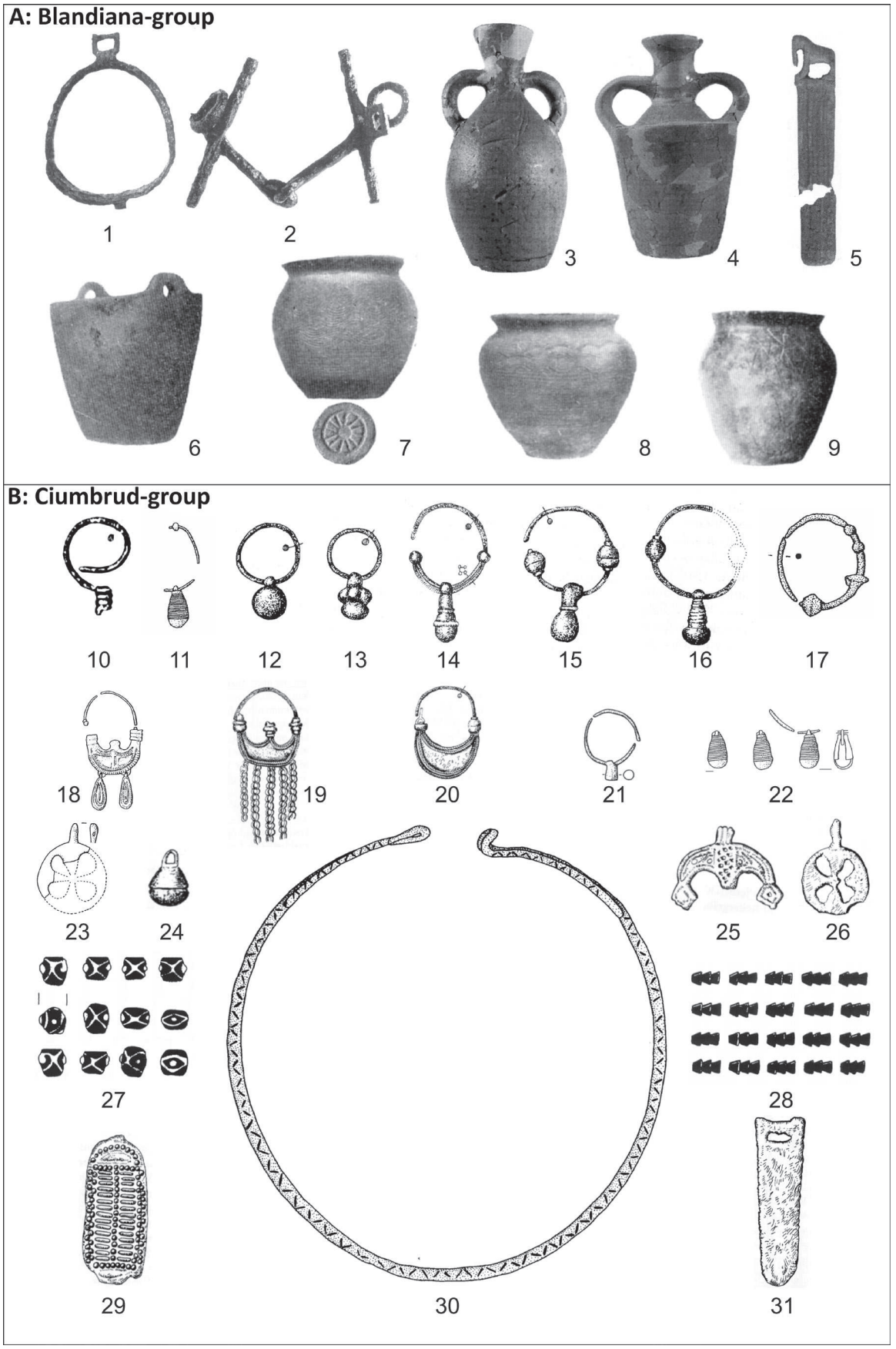


Figure 30. *Material culture of the "Blandiana" and "Ciumbrud" groups (after* HARHOIU–SPÂNU–GÁLL *2011, Fig. 63)*

uation of cultural customs, or let alone, of a common group identity. Based on the fact that the Carolingian and Bulgarian authorities could control only the western and eastern peripheries of the Carpathian Basin, whereas the central area remained a conflict as well as contact zone between these powers, there is suspicion that some Late Avar groups (elites) could preserve their identity there – in the north-eastern regions of the Great Plain (e.g. at Hortobágy-Árkus[266]). This could be answered with more certainty on the basis of more systematic archeological research – processing an extended body of finds – and scientific investigations. In the valley of the Little Someș, for example, a Slavic-speaking population group could have possibly survived.[267]

From a geopolitical point of view, it is reasonable to refer to the 9th century as an "odd" one. Since with the disintegration of the Avar Khaganate the Carpathian Basin became the playground of various political powers. The fall of the Khaganate marked the painful end of a 300-year-old state formation, but at the same time, a geopolitical opportunity opened for the organization of the Hungarian "steppe state" in Eastern Europe. With this, we have just arrived at the start of the Conquest and the rise of a new nomadic power.

266 The concept of the "Avar survival", which is widespread in the Hungarian research, has been refined in the past few decades and several approaches have been suggested. 1. The Avar Khaganate, as an institutional basis, disappeared, therefore, one cannot talk about political-institutional continuity; 2. The population of the Late Avar Period survived (for example Hortobágy-Árkus, Tiszafüred-Majoros), however, there is no evidence on the survival of an "Avar" cultural and political identity; 3. The character of this hypothetic "Avar" identity is highly doubtful: there is no knowledge of how closely the person of the Khagan, as a central institution, was associated with the formation of legal identity, and whether this could develop into a group identity. Also, the quick disappearance of the material culture after the fall of the power structure suggests, that the objects identified today with an "Avar" identity, were rather created and sustained in a power network and the related distributional system (Szenthe–Gáll 2021, 345–366; Gáll–Szenthe 2020, 181–197; Szenthe–Gáll 2022, 338–345).

267 Gáll et al. 2017, 133–139.

VII. THE HUNGARIAN CONQUEST AS A MILITARY POLITICAL PHENOMENON. THE HUNGARIAN CONQUEST: A SUCCESSFUL ESCAPE OR A MILITARY "PROJECT"? THE ROUTES OF CONQUEST – THE SHACKLES OF CONVENTIONAL INTERPRETATIONS

VII.1. Conquest-period Hungarians and the Carpathian Basin in the 9th century

The earliest – and most likely reliable – reference on the presence of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin dates from 862 AD. According to the *Annales Bertiniani*, at the invitation of the Moravian Rastislav or Karlmann / Carloman (who was fighting with Louis [II] the German), a Hungarian army of horsemen crossed the Carpathians in this year and destroyed Carolingian Pannonia. The chronicler Hincmar referred to these – hitherto unknown – people as *Ungri*. It was then, that a double coalition developed (Hungarians and Moravians against Bulgarians and Franks), which lasted for a quarter of a century.[268] According to some opinions,[269] the Hungarians were already permanently settled in the Carpathian Basin at that time, but the argument proposing this on the assumption that otherwise their homeland in Etelköz would have been too far to fight battles here, simply does not hold up. In the light of 10th-century expeditions, it is clear that the radius of their campaigns covered much more distant areas. We agree with István Bóna, according to whom these campaigns could have started out from Atelkuzu.[270] Regardless of this issue, it is certain that the area enclosed by the Carpathians was at the forefront of geopolitical developments and became an area of interest for the Hungarian steppe state.

The next piece of information about the Hungarian army dates from 881, when Svatopluk was assisted from two directions, by the Hungarians and the Kabars, who marched all the way to Vienna (*Annales Iuvavenses maximi* a. 881). The answer was not long in coming: in 883 the Bulgarians attacked Svatopluk, and in 892, when Svatopluk "*again denied allegiance*" to the Franks, he could again count on his Hungarian allies, but also on the Bulgarian retaliation that came with it. Some researchers argued that since the chronicle reference distinguished between the Hungarians and the Kabars, the Hungarians clearly had to live in the Carpathian Basin at that time.[271] In our opinion, neither the archaeological material, nor the written sources provide clear evidence to substantiate this point. The "lack of the first-generation", as an archaeological axiom has been postulated by Miklós Szőke Béla,[272] but it does not seem to hold up. On the one hand, there was not just one biological generation in any ethnic population, but all age groups

268 Bóna 2000, 13.
269 Szőke 2014a, 37; Szőke 2019, 271–275.
270 Bóna 2000, 13.
271 Szőke 2014a, 37–38.
272 On the concept of the "first generation" see e.g. *Chapter XI*. Miklós Szőke Béla refers to Sarmatian and Avar examples. Cf. Szőke 2014a, 38: note 50. On the context, i.e. the possible model of the conquering Hungarian population consisting only of a warrior elite, see *Chapter IX (Figs. 37–38)*. On the sociodemographic and archaeological interpretation of the "first generation" see: Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: p. 804–805.

were represented. On the other hand, we are simply unable to date archaeological phenomena accurately within the first two-thirds or three-quarters of the 10th century. Consequently, we can hardly tell with complete certainty, if a burial can be dated to the first two decades of the 10th century, or not (see *Chapter X*).

No matter how we interpret the Hungarian migration in the 9th century – as a process of subsequent conquests, or as a single event, in one large "wave" – without the events in the 890s, we would not be talking about a *conquest*. *Tourkia*, as the Hungarian "steppe state" was referred in 10th-century sources, became an important macro-power, and the conquest of the Carpathian Basin, as the most relevant event in Hungarian history, was facilitated by the political games in the 890s. The path leading there was rather difficult, and it has various historical interpretations, which we discuss below.

VII.2. A successful escape or a military "project"?

Similarly to the problem of Hungarian origins and the formation of statehood and ethnicity, there is a disagreement concerning the possible causes of the conquest itself and the course of events. The reason for this is uncertainty apparently due to the small number and different interpretations of written sources, and historical interpretations can be often misguided by antique topoi. From the point of view of archaeology, one should not take a position on this issue, but focus merely on presenting – as clearly as possible – the basic dichotomy of historical theories.

It is certain that in 892, Svatopluk "*again denied allegiance to the Franks*" and tried to capture the Frankish envoys, who had been sent to the Bulgarians and were, nonetheless, able to reach Belgrade. In September 892, the situation changed dramatically. Arnulf's envoys sent to Khan Vladimir were unsuccessful this time. When the former Byzantine hostage, Simeon, ascended to the throne, he was motivated by revenge and immediately began military preparations against Byzantium. The answer to this was the anti-Bulgarian alliance of Byzantium and the Hungarian princes, forged by Niketas Scleros, Emperor Leo VI's envoy, who negotiated with Arpad and Kursan at the Lower-Danube. As a result of the contract, the Byzantines sailed the Hungarian army – led by Arpad's son Liüntika (Levente) – across the Danube, to the back of the Bulgarian khan, Simeon. Simeon was forced to stop the campaign against Byzantium and turned against the Hungarians, but he was defeated and forced to seek refuge in the castle of Drastar (Silistra).[273]

Around the same time, a Hungarian army appeared in the Carpathian Basin, but immediately retreated on the news of Svatopluk's death. The question is where exactly did they retreat to? Some researchers argue that this event was already in line with preparations for the conquest. In the wake of this army, Árpád also arrived in the Great Plain in the spring of 895, and following some minor battles, Bulgarian rule ended.[274] All of this prompted Simeon to make immediate peace with Byzantium; thus, he was able to defeat Levente's army. As other researchers note, it was about the same time that the Pechenegs, as the new allies of the Bulgarians, attacked the Hungarians in Atelkuzu. Different interpretations on the conquest, however, disagree whether this attack really happened.

Most historians consider the event of the conquest to have a "dual" character, and this duality also explains the different interpretations in regard to the routes of conquest (see below). As a result of the 894 campaign, Árpád marched into the Carpathian Basin in the spring of 895, to conquer it;[275] in parallel to this, however, the attack of the Pechenegs led to a general flight (from *Atelkuzu*).[276] It is in context of

273 Bóna 1988, 199–200.
274 See for example Bóna 1988, 200; Fodor 2009, 72.
275 Fodor 2009, 73.
276 Czeglédy 1954, 275; Czeglédy 1975, 52. Sándor László Tóth, however, argued that there was not one, but two Hungarian–Pecheneg conflicts: one in 899, and another in 894 (Tóth 1998, 188).

this narration that a rather theoretical, *topos*-like view on a "chain of movements" appears, which can be found in ancient Greek historiography, and according to which, the Uz tribes attacked the Pechenegs, expelled them from their territory, and subsequently it was them who drove the the Hungarians away from their homeland in Atelkuzu.[277] As László Vajda pointed out, the essence of this theory is an image of peoples moving as bouncing balls – as in a physical-mechanical experiment.[278] In addition to this, a national-Darwinist and evolutionist view is also perceptible in the background.[279] There are several other historical examples on such sequential migration that spread from peoples to peoples.

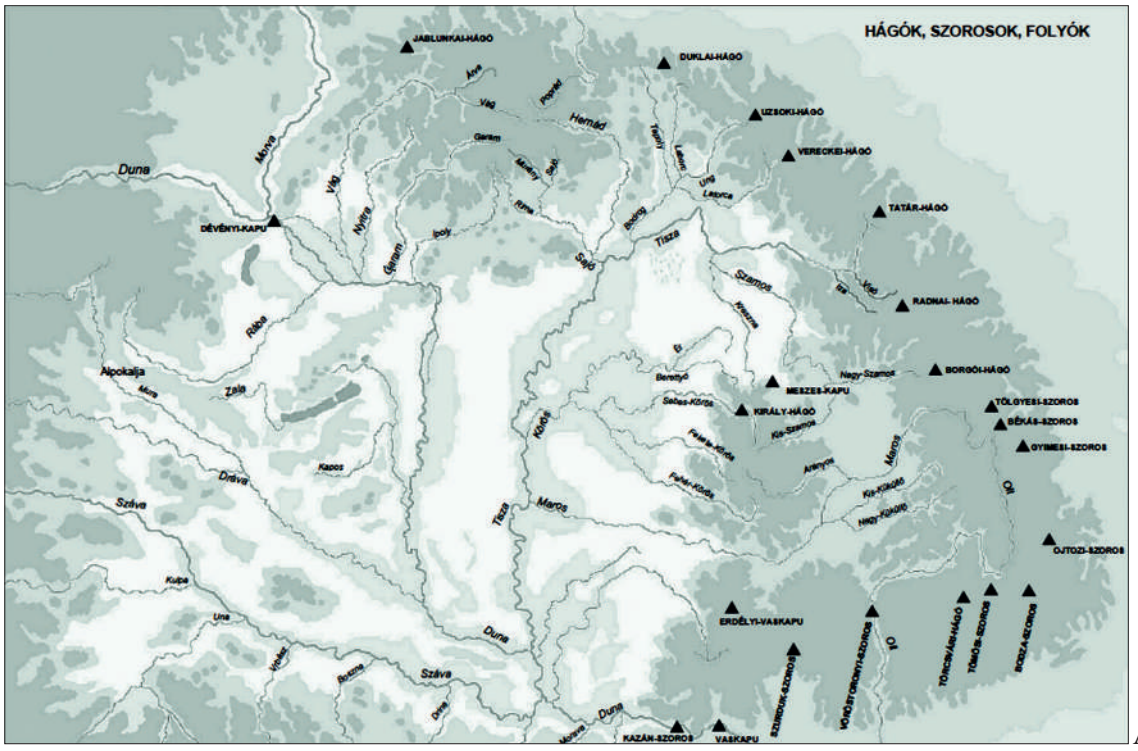
In opposition to this theory emphasizing duality (conquest and escape), another theory suggests that there is no evidence for the Pecheneg attack in 894, which could take place only much earlier, "perhaps in Levedi's time", therefore, it is unreasonable to think that this provoked a response that led to the conquest. Since "*at the end of the 9th century, there were no acts of war between the Pechenegs and the Hungarians* – as György Szabados explains in connection to the conquest – *the Pechenegs could not possibly expel the Hungarians from Etelköz*." *("Mindezekből arra következtetek, hogy a IX. század végén semmilyen harci cselekmény nem történt besenyők és magyarok között. Ennek az a folyománya, hogy a besenyők nem űzhették ki a magyarokat Etelközből".)*[280]

Thus, the research is divided on this issue as well; on the one hand, more recently there is less talk about the "chain of movements" theory in regard to the Pecheneg attack (i.e. the Uz attacked the Pechenegs and the Pechenegs attacked the Hungarians), and on the other hand the conquest is rather regarded as the outcome of a pre-planned strategy, which was only accelerated by the Pecheneg attack. The rejection of the idea of the Pecheneg attack practically means that the conquest was a pre-planned military-political "project". However, Szabados did not provide an alternative explanation for why the Hungarian community had to leave its territory in *Atelcuzu*/*Etelköz* at northern shores of the Black Sea, with much more abundant resources, and settle instead in less favorable conditions in the Carpathian Basin in the 9th–10th centuries.[281]

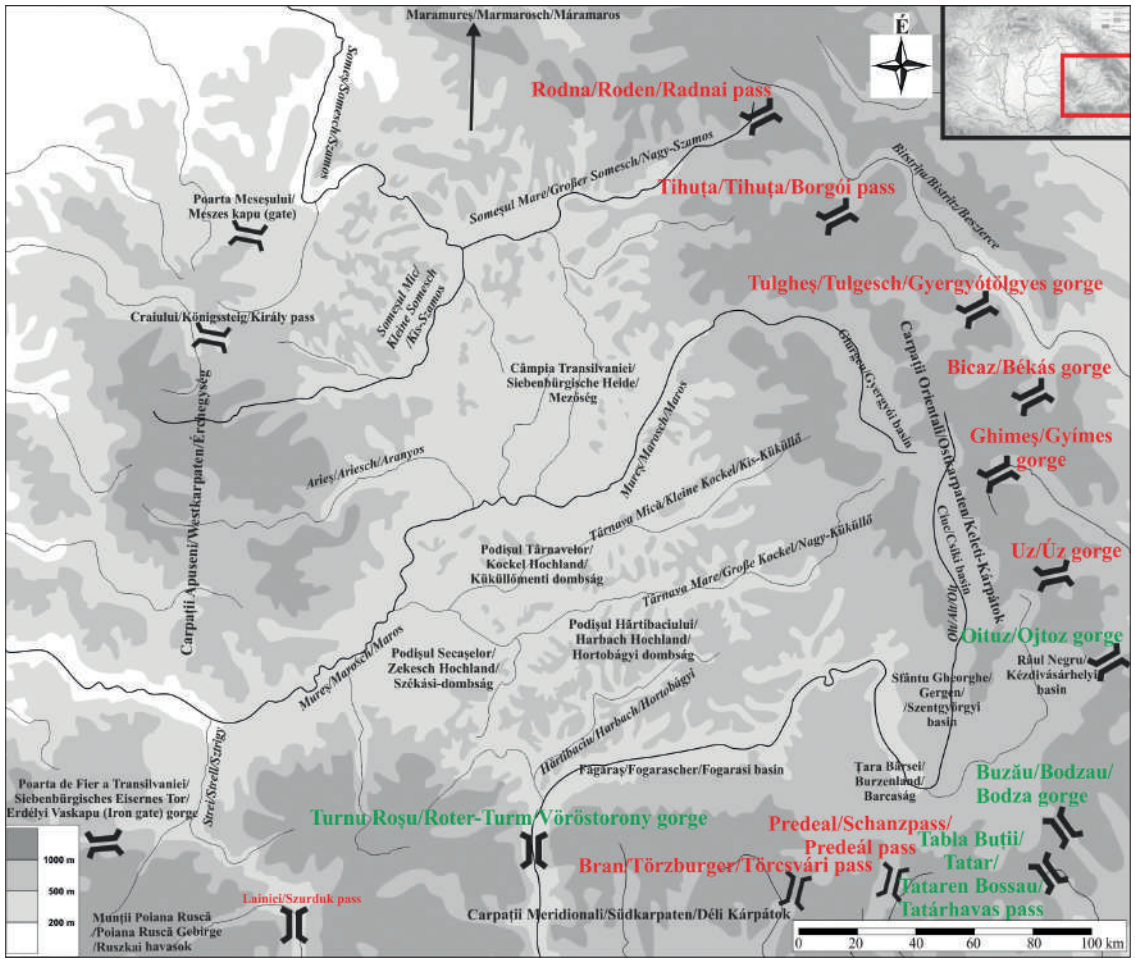
VII.3. The possible routes of the Hungarian conquest and the limits of interpretations

As there is no consensus on causal links that led to the conquest, different ideas have emerged about its routes as well, which are mainly related to the above described theories on the character of the conquest. Proponents of the theory of the "dual-type conquest"[282] mostly argued that there were two routes. The 895 invasion led by Álmos proceeded along the Dniester Valley and transgressed the Carpathians via the Verecke Pass. It was in this direction that they reached the Great Plain, directly upon the transit of the Hungarian army in 894; as has been presumed, the army had already occupied the Upper Tisza region[283] the previous year. This is the route presented in the romance-like narrative of the *Gesta* by *Anonymus (Fig. 31. A–B)*.[284]

277 E.g. Fodor 2009, 71.
278 Vajda 1995, 112–127; Szabados 2011, 147.
279 On national Darwinism as an ideological trend, see: Takács 2007, 71–74.
280 Szabados 2011, 151. His reasoning concerning the localization of Etelköz/Atelcuzu was, however, faulty.
281 E.g. Polgár 2019, 173–274.
282 Quotation marks are here to indicate that this concept should not be confused with Gyula László's theory, generally known as the *dual conquest*-theory.
283 E.g. Bóna 1988, 200; Fodor 2009, 73.
284 Györffy 1993, 94.



A



B

Figure 31. A–B. *Passes and gorges of the Carpathians around the Transylvanian Basin (Map: Erwin Gáll)*

Another theory, that is more popular today, argues that the Hungarians expelled from Atelkuzu used all the passes of the Eastern Carpathians. István Bóna convincingly argued for this in his work on the history of Transylvania. The theory is based on the passage attributed to the "Old Gesta". As Bóna summarized. "Their flight stretched over three months. Pursued by the Pechenegs (the Hungarian name of the Pechenegs, *"besenyő"*, derives from the Old Hungarian *"bese"*, meaning "eagle"), who slaughtered their horses and livestock, the Hungarians flooded through the Eastern Carpathian passes and forests into the haven of Transylvania ("*Exinde montes descenderunt per tres menses et deveniunt in confinium regni Hungariae, scilicet in Erdelw"*). There, they and what was left of their herds could rest and regain strength ("*In Erdelw igitur quieverunt et pecora sua recreaverunt"*)." Bóna also accepts the chronicle's view that Álmos was not allowed into Pannonia,[285] suggesting that there is no reason to question the lore of the Hungarian ruling family, according to which one of the ruling personages, Álmos, died before he could reach Pannonia; he was sacrificed, in Khazar fashion, while in Transylvania, presumably because of the defeat suffered at the hands of the Pechenegs ("*Almus in patria Erdelw occisus est, non enim potuit in Pannoniam introire"*).[286] This suggestion seems, however, logically problematic taking into account that if Árpád was already in the region of the Upper Tisza, why would he have the execution of his father approved? Bóna also assumed that the other Hungarian army, having been defeated in Bulgaria, had no other option than escaping to the Transylvanian Basin, and this army moved in direction of the Great Plain only afterwards.

To sum up: proponents of the "dual-type conquest" envisioned at least two, or rather three possible routes: 1. via the Veretsky Pass, as described by Anonymus; 2. via all possible passes along the Carpathians, based on the tradition of the "Old Gesta";[287] 3. via an escape route to the Transylvanian Basin. On the other hand, György Szabados, who rejected the idea of the Pecheneg attack as an immediate cause of the conquest and argued for a planned military operation instead, did not discuss the possible routes or directions.[288] The differences of opinion are not surprising: on the one hand, written sources provide poor evidence, and are often misleading; on the other hand, archeological data are completely useless in this respect – as we shall see later.

Therefore, it is instructive to examine more closely the natural geographical and topographical features of those passes, which, according to historians and archaeologists, were suitable for a larger group of people (namely, the common people who had been left in Atelkuzu) to cross the mountains. The respective passes and gorges are the following ones:[289] Rodna Pass, Tihuța/Bârgău Pass, Tulgheș Pass, Bicaz Gorge *(Fig. 32. 2)*, Ghimeș gorge, Uz Pass *(Fig. 32. 1)*, Oituz Pass *(Fig. 32. 3)*, Buzău Pass, Predeal Pass *(Fig. 32. 4)*, Rucăr-Bran Pass, Turnu Roşu Pass, Surduc Pass *(Fig. 31. A–B)*.

Considering modern-day conditions, all of these passes are apparently suitable. This was not always the case, however, particularly not in the early Middle Ages, in the 9th and 10th centuries. Considering their lengths and their difficult terrains, it is much doubtful whether the Rodna Pass and the Tihuța/Bârgău Pass could be used, whereas the Tulgheș Pass and the Bicaz Gorge could have been most likely unsuitable. One may also have doubts about the suitability of the Ghimeș Gorge and the Uz Pass. This issue was addressed by Pál Binder, whose studies highlighted that in the 11th–12th centuries nomad peoples (e.g. Cumans, Uzes) used the most accessible gorges and passes, namely the Turnu Roşu, Buzău, Oituz, and

285 Bóna 1988, 200.
286 Bóna 1988, 200.
287 On the "Old Gesta", see: Györffy 1993, 184–188.
288 Szabados 2011, 159–162.
289 The *pass* or saddle, is a type of denudation surfaces, which develops through the gradual subsidence of a drainage divide where most of the time a route passes through. A strait, gorge, or gorge valley is mostly a valley with a high fall, a very deep and narrow, steep-walled upper section. It is usually a narrow, deep, steep, rarely vertical-sided valley cut into hard, resistant rocks (limestone, dolomite, sandstone). It can also occur by ruptures of (karst) caves. The *canyon* (a Spanish name) is a valley cut in hard rocks, forming a very deep and steep sloped, narrow gorge in an upper catchment environment (e.g. the Bicaz gorge) (Vofkori 2009, 270–271).

the Tatar Passes (marked green in *Fig. 31. B*).[290] Thus, nomads could have attacked Transylvania mainly from the south and southeast. With the exception of the use of the Rodna Pass, in 1241 by the Mongols, there is no indication that this pass could have been used in earlier times.

Based on these observations, we believe that the idea of a cataclysmic "invasion" – as argued primarily by the proponents of the "dual-type conquest" – cannot be supported. The simultaneous use of all the passes of the Eastern Carpathians (spanning an area of 300 kilometers along the mountain ridges) would

Figure 32. *Principal passes of the East Carpathians (1. Uz Pass; 2. Bicaz Pass; 3. Oituz Pass; 4. Rodna Pass)*

have been completely illogical and counter to common sense. Besides, a panic-stricken flight could not have been managed by the army (leading and supervising women, children, and the elderly). Also, there is no evidence for the catastrophic image portrayed ever so often, almost cinematically, by eminent historians and archaeologists. As a matter of fact, there are no archaeological discoveries to be associated with the Hungarian migration at any of the aforementioned locations of the Eastern Carpathians. The closest Conquest-period sites are located more than 250 km away from them, in the western part of the basin (see *Chapter X.2*). Thus, it is likely that these passes were not used during the conquest.

Whether or not there was a Pecheneg attack is impossible to decide on the basis of archaeological evidence. On the other hand, we are convinced that migrating into the Carpathian Basin along the valley of the Dniester River, which rises in the Northern Carpathians, was a much easier and, therefore, a much more likely option for the Hungarians, than marching through the vast mosaic of woodlands and swamps in Moldavia and then climbing more than 1,200 meters high to reach the eastern parts of Transylvania.

290 Binder 1969, 207–218; Binder 1972, 271–282; Binder 1974, 324–333.

To get there, the easiest way was clearly through the Turnu Roşu Pass, which had been used since Prehistoric times *(Fig. 33)*. One of the main roads in the Roman period also led there. Therefore, this direction cannot be excluded from the possible routes of the Hungarian conquest either, although it is situated 500 km away from the Veretsky Pass, which is why it is rather improbable. Perhaps, the Hungarian army defeated in Bulgaria could have taken this route *(Fig. 33)*.

Figure 33. *The Turnu Roşu Pass (Aquarelle painting by Miklós Barabás in 1831)*

VII.4. The end of the Hungarian conquest

In the light of the available sources, it can be summarized that the peak of the conquest (i.e. the decisive moments, if not all its major events) can be dated partly to the year of 895. The success of the conquest has to be viewed clearly in context of geopolitical developments in the 9th century: 1. the Hungarians did not have to confront the Franks or the Bulgarians to gain control over the territory of the Carpathian Basin; 2. the Hungarian elite was primarily interested in acquiring lands, which remained "no-mans-land", unclaimed by these two great powers; 3. from the perspectives of the Franks and Bulgarians, parts of the Carpathian Basin were considered peripheral and negligible.

The almost generally accepted theorem, according to which Hungarians managed to occupy Transylvania and the Great Plain[291] during the first phase of the conquest (in 895) cannot be substantiated, thus, there is still room for rethinking the chronology *(Fig. 31. A–B)*.

291 Bóna 1988, 200; Fodor 2009, 73–74.

VIII. *"SAGITTIS HUNGARORUM LIBERA NOS DOMINE"*[292] THE VICTORIOUS DECADES AFTER THE CONQUEST: "INCURSIONS" OR STRATEGIC CAMPAIGNS? THE GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT IN THE FIRST 70 YEARS OF THE 10TH CENTURY

VIII.1. The Hungarian "steppe state" and the problem of territoriality in the Carpathian Basin

In around 895, not only a new population arrived in the Carpathian Basin, but also a new, dynamic power structure established itself in "Europe". The question of exactly how much of the area was conquered at the end of the 9th century/beginning of the 10th century is rather anachronistic. The military elites of early medieval nomadic states had a view different from the territorial approaches of modern historiography and archaeology. Although territorial/geographical dimensions were not important for the nomadic population as one would usually think, we should not think in extremes: the "power network" controlled by the Hungarians was certainly limited to the geographical area of the Carpathian Basin. In 895 (or rather earlier), the new power structure gained control (at least) over the strategic points of the Carpathian Basin. Leaving the geopolitical environment of the Eurasian steppe, it joined a new geopolitical field or "game". In regard to the years between 895 and 899, it was pointed out that "*they needed to gather strength, to replace their lost livestock, especially horses, which were essential for warfare*",[293] however, we think that it was more important to establish their local "power networks" during these years. There is no reassuring answer to the question of territoriality, *par excellence*, but since the "attitudes" of nomadic power structures were determined by the domination of peoples, we have to think of the situation in the Carpathian Basin more in this way.

In the first half of the 10th century, the geopolitical situation was fundamentally influenced by the conquest. Since the beginning of the 19th century, Hungarian historiography refers to this five to six decade long period as the period of "incursions" (*Ungarneinfälle* in German).[294] However, the concept is rather misleading and incorrect. It reflects a romanticizing approach and does not consider the logic of geopolitical games in the early 10th century. Unfortunately, it is so embedded in the public consciousness that it will be difficult to change and replace. The historical background of its use is clear: as a result of national romanticism, the idealized representation of national history played an important role in shaping social values – according to the *Zeitgeist (Fig. 34)*.[295]

This was closely related to the educational role of national history.[296] In connection to this concept, Péter Király also considers it incorrect that it not only makes students believe that these military actions

292 *"A sagittis Hungarorum libera nos, Domine!"* (Save us, Lord, from the arrows of the Hungarians!). For a critical analysis of this reference, see: Halmágyi 2014, 149.
293 Fodor 2009, 75.
294 On the concept of "incursions", see: Bóna 2000, 13–14.
295 Takács 2007, 51–70.
296 Oroszlán 1966, 58.

were "playful pranks", but also lessens the significance of these actions in context of the conquest. Besides, the Hungarian term ("*kalandozások*") cannot be translated into any foreign language very accurately.[297] Contrary to this romantic image, the "incursions" of the Hungarian armies in *Europa Occidens* and even Byzantium were not simply some expeditions of "poor swains", or "poor young men", as has been later interpreted. There is nothing to beautify these military events, or understate their real significance: the acts of brutality were in fact due to keen political-economic calculations, in relation to which the following issues need to be examined.

Figure 34. *Statue of Árpád, the great prince (Budapest) – a typical 19th century paragon (Photo: Erwin Gáll)*

VIII.1.1. Against whom?

The new *nomad power* in the Carpathian Basin essentially came into conflict with two large regional powers or civilizations.[298] The campaigns to the West and those against Byzantium fit into a completely different geopolitical mosaic, and thus, we discuss them separately.

I. Why *Europa Occidens*? Taking the productivity of the economic system of the West in the medieval or early modern periods as a starting point would be likely misleading. While the Carolingian Empire did indeed foster an economic upswing in the western part of the continent, in a broad (global) historical context, it was still only a peripheral power in the 9th–10th centuries, with much weaker production capacity than East Asia, and with lower demographics. The military capacity of the Empire was also incomparable to that of Asian powers, and it was further weakened by political instability.[299]

The geopolitical situation of the Hungarian power structure in the 10th century was influenced by complex circumstances:

- In 817, Louis the Pious divided the Empire among his sons, Lothar, Pippin, and Louis, (a decision also corroborated by the Treaty of Verdun in 843) and thus Western Europe fragmented into small political units. Despite the political fragmentation, economic development did not stop, based on which political gamers and opponents were able to find – economically interested – allies, such as the Hungarian power structure, whose proximity was an advantage.[300]
- The armies mobilized by the Hungarian power were also not far from Italy or the German territories, and could be easily deployed in times of conflict.
- The organization of the campaigns was greatly aided by the Roman infrastructure.

Between 899 and 955, we know of about 38 campaigns, which were directed to the west, but the real number may have been much higher.[301] The campaigns had a tangible outcome: by the 910s, rulers of states within a radius of around 500 kilometers from the Hungarian territory paid annual taxes to the

297 Király 2006, 34–87.
298 There is a consensus that the *Byzantinization* of the Eastern Roman Empire occurs in the 8th century, when they were pushed back by the Arab conquest and lost their power (Brown 1999, 181–183).
299 Wickham 2005, 825–826.
300 E.g. Kovács 2000, 23.
301 Kristó 2003, 58.

Hungarian princes.[302] The real purpose of the campaigns – referred as "incursions" – was to collect these taxes, and collection of the booty only complemented it. Since – regardless of the historical context – the soldiers were generally motivated by booty, these activities cannot be attributed to cultural differences between sedentary and nomadic populations.[303] Since the second half of the 20th century, this phenomenon is rather interpreted as being part of a well-conceived strategy.[304]

II. Why Byzantium? The campaigns against the Byzantine Empire were of a different nature. On the one hand, getting there and levying taxes on Constantinople was a significantly more difficult task, due to the geographical location of Constantinople and the size of the Byzantine territory. On the other hand, the impoverished Balkans offered much less opportunity for looting.[305] Perhaps this explains why we know of only 9 campaigns directed to the southeast,[306] some of which were joint expeditions with the Pechenegs, Bulgarians, and the armies of the Kievan Rus' (e.g. 934, 970).

VIII.1.2. Against whom not?

When 35 years ago Csanád Bálint pointed out that Hungarians did not engage in campaigns to the north, north-east, and east, he managed to redirect the one-sided view of Hungarian historiography from focusing predominantly on the western campaigns.[307] In a research historical context, this was a significant observation, underlining that the ultimate purpose of these campaigns was not looting as a substitute for trade. If it were only for that, campaigns would have been organized also in the aforementioned directions, out of economic considerations. From the 8th century onwards, with the development of the transcontinental trade system (connecting the northern sections of the Silk Road and the N–S waterway of the Volga), a huge amount of Arab money flowed towards the northern part of "Eastern Europe", especially Scandinavia, as a result of exchanges between the Arab world and the Scandinavian, northern Slavic, and Volga Bulgarian territories.[308] Northeastern Europe and Scandinavia became integral parts of the economic system established by the world-conquering Arab Caliphate.[309] Indirect data might hint directly at a possible explanation of why there were no Hungarian campaigns directed to the east and northeast. Notably, no *dirham*s were found in the Carpathian Basin from the 9th century, but there is a significant number of them from the first two thirds of the 10th century, not to mention the so-called *dirham* hoard from "Huszt" (former county Máramaros, Hungarian Kingdom) *(Fig. 35)*.

Based on various distribution maps of *dirham* finds in Europe,[310] the Hungarian nomad power seem to have become an integral part of the aforementioned trade network – like an "arm" stretching towards the more western parts of Europe. This could explain to some extent why the Hungarian elite did not lead campaigns towards the northeast and east, and perhaps the economic interests of the Arabs also fell in line with the successful realization of the Hungarian conquest. On the other hand, the richness of the Pontus region and the fact that the Hungarian power structure abandoned its former position are thought-provok-

302 Révész 1999a, 177.
303 For a counterexample, one may refer here to László Révész: *"..érdekes lenne olvasni például arról, miként élték meg az avarok a frank sereg látogatását" ("...it would be interesting to read about the Avars' experience of the coming of the Frankish army"*) (Révész 1999a, 179).
304 Vajay 1968, 81–84; Bálint 1970, 71.
305 Bálint 2000a, 16; Bálint 2000b, 345.
306 Kristó 2003, 58.
307 Bálint 1983, 351–359.
308 Noonan 1998; Noonan 2000–2001, 140–218.
309 E.g. the piece of a taquete silk fabric found in Derecske has Iranian parallels (Berta et al. 2018, 13).
310 E.g. Brather 1995–1996, 99.

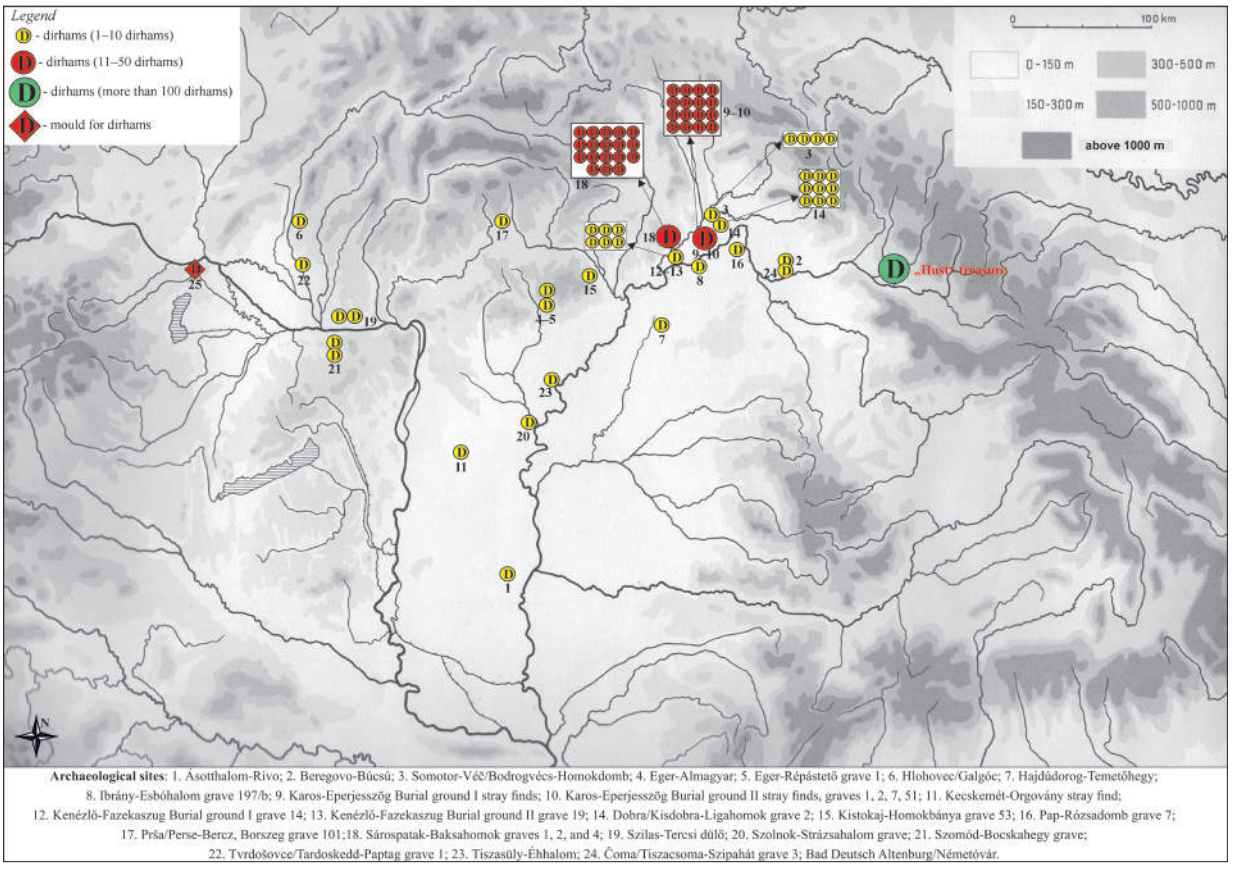


Figure 35. *Geographical distribution of dirhams in the Carpathian Basin (after: Gáll–M. Lezsák–Novichikhin 2018, Fig. 10)*

ing in several ways. The weight of Bálint's argument is significantly reduced by the circumstance that, when leaving the rich northern parts of the Black Sea, the Hungarians also likely considered the influential role of the Vikings and Pechenegs, with whom they did not have to deal in a more western location.[311]

VIII.1.3. Strategic campaigns or tribal looting?

Debates concerning the nature of Hungarian attacks between the years 899 and 970 (targeting at least 47 destinations in total) have been ongoing for two centuries now. There are often noticeable dichotomies in different interpretations of early Hungarian history, which surface here again: Do these attacks reflect a conscious, long-term political perspective, or rather only the will that grew out of the sheer desire for looting to embark on journeys hundreds of kilometers long? If the campaigns could be simply explained by the latter, we would more likely see not only Western Europe, but also North-Eastern and Eastern Europe as targets. The interpretation of "incursions" primarily as plundering expeditions was proposed for example by medievalists Gyula Kristó[312] and Ferenc Makk.[313] Well over half a century ago, however, Szabolcs Vajay argued that one should not see the campaigns as "invasions of barbarian hordes", but rather as strategic, offensive-defensive military operations executed on a European scale.[314] Vajay's theory

311 A synthetic analysis of the Rus' and the Pechenegs, see e.g. Curta 2019b, 158–169, 274–300.
312 Kristó 1980, 335–349; Kristó 1995a, 281–286; Kristó 2002, 110–115.
313 Kristó–Makk 2001, 154 (The respective part is Ferenc Makk's work).
314 Vajay 1968, 81–84.

mainly resonated with archaeologists,[315] and László Révész also comprehensively criticized the theory of pillaging and looting expeditions organized in a tribal context.[316]

VIII.2. The chronology of the campaigns

Numbering perhaps no more than 5.000 horsemen, the Hungarian "expeditionary" armies managed to paralyze Italy for a whole generation or so. We know of 13–16 Italian, 28 German, 12 French, and 1 Spanish/Moorish campaigns from the period between 899 and 955, and there were approximately 9 Balkan expeditions before 970 *(Fig. 36)*.[317]

Figure 36. *10th-century Hungarian military expeditions in the directions of Europa Occidens and the Byzantine Empire (after Fodor 2009)*

However, in the second quarter of the 10th century, under the rule of Otto I, the Empire was reunified, and since its military was reorganized, it became a growing concern for the newly-established Hungarian power in the Carpathian Basin. This explains partly why the Hungarians attempted to blackmail the Byzantine emperor, seeking alliance with the Bulgarians, Pechenegs, and the Rus. The Hungarian defeat in 955 was historically inevitable, and following three campaigns against Byzantium (958, 961, 968) and the battle of Arkadiupolis (970), where the Russian, Bulgarian, Pecheneg, and Hungarian coalition (under the leadership of Prince Sviatoslav I of Kiev) was defeated by the Byzantine army, the period of 10th-century Hungarian incursions ended.

315 Bálint 1970, 71; Bálint 1983, 351–359; Bakay 1978a, 30–31; Kovács 2000, 23.
316 Révész 1999a, 177.
317 Kristó 1980, 229–392; Bácsatyai 2017, 13–30, 225–229; Fodor 2009, 76–81.

The series of campaigns from 899 to 970 were the highlights of Hungarian military history. There was nothing less civilized about these campaigns than about the attacks of Arab, Viking, or even Frankish warriors – men were slaughtered, settlements were destroyed, and churches were burnt. The 10th-century Hungarian military campaigns against *Europa Occidens* or Byzantium should be seen for what they truly were, and not for what they were imagined to be by 19th-century national romanticism.

IX. THE CARPATHIAN BASIN IN THE 10TH CENTURY AND THE CONQUERING HUNGARIANS

Archaeology is the only true source of information concerning the conquering Hungarian elites, warriors, and women as well as the conquered populations in the Carpathian Basin, which has one of the richest archaeological records in Europe (unfortunately, this applies primarily to the territory of present-day Hungary and Slovakia, while the state of research leaves much to be desired in the case of Transylvania, the Crişana, and the Banat region [Romania], as well as Voivodina [Serbia]). The settlements and burial sites of the conquering Hungarians and of the conquered populations can be mapped with the help of archaeology, and the growing number of finds is providing new information. Relying on new methods (e.g. archaeogenetic research, strontium isotope analysis, etc.), archaeological interpretations are constantly being improved, and hence the results of historical research can also be revised in the light of new archaeological data.

Thus, it is essentially in the hands of archeological research to provide a more accurate reconstruction of 10th-century social conditions. Given the absence of local literacy, only written sources produced by foreigners came down to us, which are generally unreliable.[318] Concerning the daily life, and the economic, social, and religious conditions, these sources do not reveal anything relevant, or are plainly misleading. Therefore, this chapter, as well as the next chapter (with seven subchapters) will focus on the archeological results. In this chapter, we provide a general overview and in the next we present the archaeological finds region by region, on the basis of which regional and general conclusions can be formulated.

IX.1. Theories on the numbers of the conquering and conquered populations

First of all, we have to address a much-debated question, to which many answers have already been offered, that of the numbers of the conquerors and of the conquered population in the Carpathian Basin. Over the past 150 years, historians have proposed different calculations, providing the most extreme ratios and numbers. It is not surprising that such calculations go to the extremes, as there are only two relevant references with quantitative data: one is the late (13th century) version of the *Gesta*, which unrealistically reports 216,000 warriors, and the other is Ibn Rustah (870), according to whom, however, the leader of the Hungarians – *künde* (k.nd.h) – marched out with 20,000 horsemen. Thus, written sources provide data only on the size of the Hungarian army and not on the number of the whole population in the 9th or 10th century.

Statistical calculations based on archaeological data are not much help either, as we do not have a comprehensive set of data covering the Carpathian Basin evenly. Besides, most burials cannot be dated precisely enough to ascertain the number of individuals in different age groups buried between the late 9th and early 10th centuries. Consequently, the currently available data are ambiguous and not suitable for statistical analysis.

318 The preservation of written sources dating between the end of the Roman era and the start of 11th century is so poor and fragmented (Szádeczky-Kardoss 1971, 7), that the information they hold concerning the history of the region is almost uninterpretable.

Regarding the ratio of the conquering and conquered populations, there have been three theories (with minor variations), as outlined by Miklós Takács more than 19 years ago.[319] In terms of numbers and ethnic identities, which were seen as closely related problems in these models, it is possible to trace the often-changing interpretations *(Fig. 37)*:

I. The first, as well as the oldest, theory was formulated at the beginning of the 19th century, according to which the Hungarians were only an armed elite group, and the conquered population was represented in greater numbers. Needless to say, this idea reflected the views of the nobility in the 19th century.[320] In fact, Hampel's "A and B groups" also grew out of this view, and his ideas were also significantly influenced by the linguistic nationalism which was becoming more and more influential at that time in Central and Eastern Europe.[321] According to Hampel, the warrior elites were in much smaller numbers than the slaves. With an ethnicizing approach, he also contrasted the "Hungarian" warrior horsemen, as the elite, and the "Slavic" indigenous population, as slaves.[322] At the beginning of the 20th century, this theory certainly flourished, elaborated on by Hungarian historians. For example, Gyula Szekfű was the first to use the concept of the *nomadic state*.[323] The interpretation of elite warriors as an essentially pastoral community is attributed to Erik Molnár,[324] who also believed that there was a large number of indigenous Slavic slave population. The latest version of the theory of the *nomadic state* was presented by Gyula Kristó in the 1990s.[325]

II. The second theory was proposed by those who worked on the assumption that there was a "dual conquest". It was originally formulated by Ármin Vámbéry[326] and Géza Nagy,[327] who argued that the immigration of a larger, "Hungarian"-speaking "proto-Hungarian" population group preceded the actual conquest in 895 organized by a smaller, Turkic-speaking Hungarian population. It was elaborated on by Gyula László[328] and developed by the archaeologists, Gábor Vékony and János Makkay. Hóman's theory, also belongs here, according to whom the warrior elite and the common people had a dual ethnic identity – Turkic and Hungarian – but this symbiosis had already developed on the steppe.[329] Hóman did not make a point concerning the sizes and the relative ratio of the two groups.

III. According to the third theory, by István Kniezsa, Finno-Ugric Hungarians arrived in greater numbers in 895.[330] György Györffy elaborated on this theory and his calculations concerning the numbers and ratios of the 10th-century population in the Carpathian Basin became deeply ingrained in the views of Hungarian historians and archeologists, and his theory has remained the most influential to this date. The following table presents the above described theories systematically:

319 Takács 2006a, 67–98.
320 Takács 2006a, 72.
321 Hampel n.d., 119–120. Concerning the history of nationalist views in the Carpathian Basin see: Takács 2007, 71–74. On 18th–19th-century Romanian nationalism in Transylvania: Mitu 1997. A summary on Croatian and Serbian nationalism, with a bibliography: Takács 2006b, 163–202.
322 Hampel n.d., 119–120.
323 Szekfű 1988, 22–29.
324 Molnár 1949, 81–87, 96–120, 161–163.
325 The relevant studies by Kristó have been collected by Takács 2006a, note 67. The most important ones to be mentioned here: Kristó 1993, 82–85; Kristó 1995a; Kristó 1995b, 3–62; Kristó 1996.
326 Vámbéry 1882.
327 Nagy 1895.
328 For more information, see: Takács 2006a, 78–83.
329 Hóman 1935, 31, 50–51, 93.
330 Kniezsa 1938, 454–455.

	Number of Hungarians	*Number of other population groups among the conquering population*	*The ratio of the conquering and conquered populations*	*Characterization*	*Theory*
Gergely Czuczor, Henrik Marczali, Ferenc Pulszky, Gyula Szekfű	No data		Few warriors, large number of (Slavic) slaves	"Hungarian" "warrior elite"	I.
Gyula Pauler[331]	70,000	10,000 (Kabars)		"Hungarian" + "Kabar" "warrior elite"	I.
Erik Molnár	No data		Few warriors, large number of (Slavic) slaves	"Hungarian" "warrior elite" (pastoral society)	I.
Gábor Vékony[332]	14,000 (14,374.5)		1%	"Turkic" "warrior elite"	II.
János Makkay[333]	70,000		14%	"Turkic" "warrior elite"	II.
Kristó Gyula[334]	70,000	30,000 (Kabars)	20–28%	"Hungarian" "warrior elite"	I.
Györffy György[335]	300,000	100,000 (Kabars and other auxiliary people)	60%	Ethnic community	III.
Róna-Tas András[336]	200,000		40%	Ethnic community	III.
Erdélyi István[337]	70,000 or 100,000		–	Ethnic community	I.
Fodor István	250,000 – 400,000		50%	Ethnic community	III.
I. Hungarian warrior elite + "Slavic" slave population II. Turkic warrior elite + earlier "Hungarian" population III. Medium or large population size					

Figure 37. *Number of the Hungarian conquerors according to different theories*

331 Pauler 1900, 129–130.
332 Vékony 2001, 99.
333 Makkay 1994, 71–72.
334 Kristó 1995a, 133–134.
335 Györffy 1963, 46–47; Györffy 1977a, 140; Györffy 1983, 38; Györffy 1984, 605–614.
336 Róna-Tas 1996, 277.
337 Erdélyi 2001.

IX.2. Structure of the Conquest-period society

Different estimations on population numbers led to different interpretations concerning the hierarchical relations characterizing the society in the 10th century. Again, different models have been proposed (3 + 1), as Miklós Takács illustrated with the following graphic:[338]

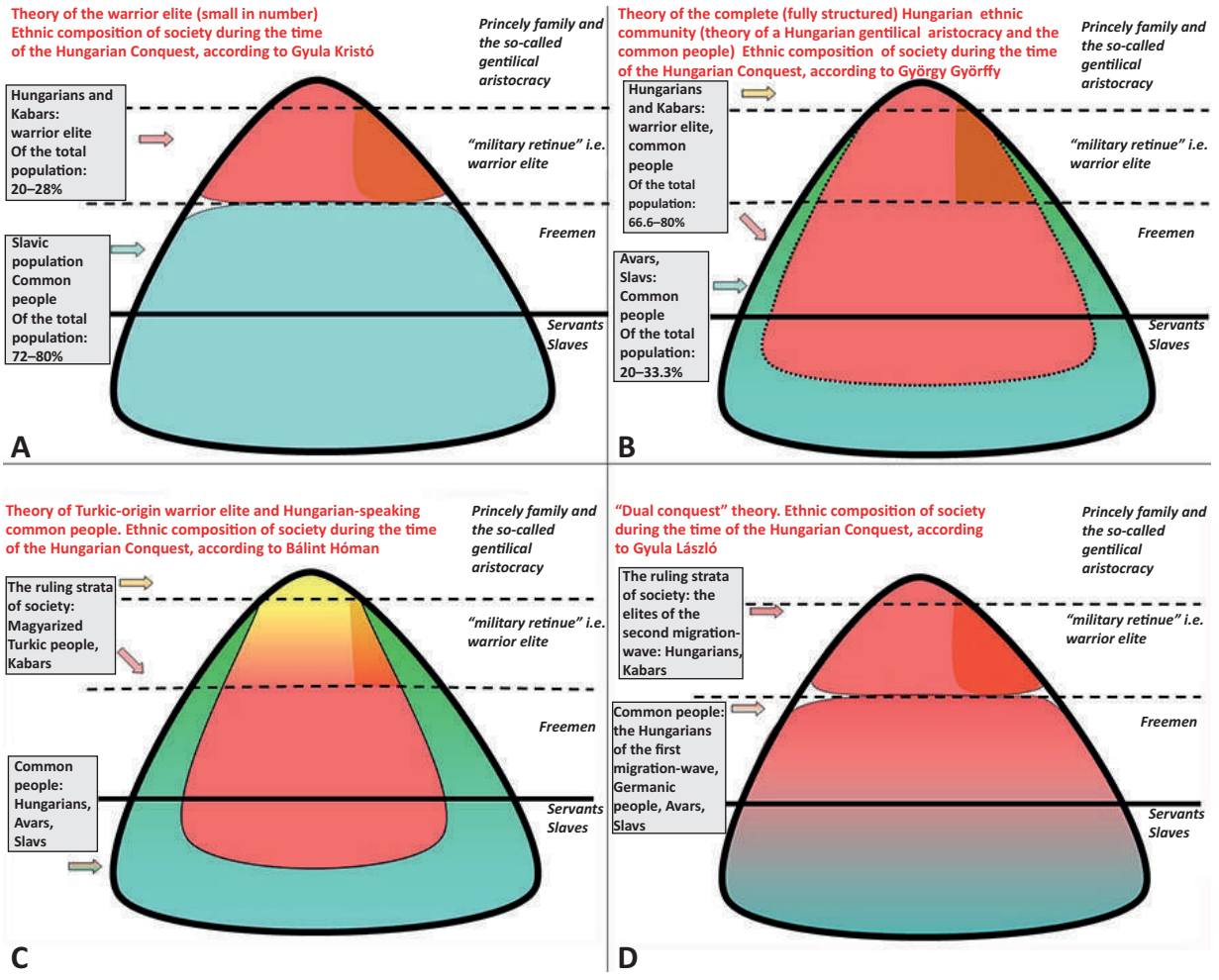


***Figure 38. A–D**. Diagram illustrating the theoretical models of social hierarchy in the Conquest period (after Takács 2014, 1. ábra)*

In our opinion, a systematization distinguishing essentially three models (i.e. with two versions of the second one) is more appropriate:

1. The first model is that of a classic nomadic social stratification, i.e. an incomplete one consisting exclusively of a warrior elite.[339] This, of course, implies that only this nomadic elite subjugated the indigenous peoples of the Carpathian Basin. It is partly similar to the *Slavicization* of the Bulgarian-Turks, with the difference that reverse linguistic assimilation could take place in this case, as conceived by Gyula Kristó, who elaborated on the final version of this theory, whereby the Hungarian elite assimilated the Slavs by the end of the 11th century and beginning of the 12th century *(Fig. 38. A)*.[340]

338 Takács 2014, 137–138.
339 Marczali 1895, 53; Hampel n.d., 119–120; Kristó 1995a, 219.
340 Takács 2006a, 74–77.

2. The second model claims that the society of the conquering Hungarians was more complex, but mostly of a semi-nomadic nature, consisting of both the elite and the common people,[341] and thus, there was no ethnocultural gap between them and the subjugated population, as in the previous model *(Fig. 38. B)*.

2./A) Hóman's theory is in close connection with the complex model of social organization; according to him, the Turkic-speaking nomadic warrior elite was sustained by a Finno-Ugric population, the so-called "proto-Hungarians". As a result, the Turkic-speaking warrior elite became "Hungarian" by the time of the conquest, similarly to the *Slavicization* of the Bulgarian Turks *(Fig. 38. C)*.[342]

3. The third model is based on the much criticized, but well-known theory of "dual conquest". It is different from the second model, inasmuch as the complex social stratification is – in this case – the result of subsequent migrations, which had an ethnic significance (first of the Onogurs, whose language was Hungarian, and then the Turkic-Hungarians) *(Fig. 38. D)*.[343]

IX.3. Theories on the organization of the economy in the 10th century

While theories describing the demographics and the social structure of the conquering Hungarian population are different, the models concerning the 10th-century economic organization are much less divergent. There is no doubt about the fact that the early Hungarians came from an area, where nomadism had become the dominant strategy for thousands of years, but whether this was the case in the Carpathian Basin as well, is a matter of debate. There are essentially two answers to this in the literature:

1. According to the first, the classical nomadic economic system established in Eurasia was "transferred" to the Carpathian Basin and this situation changed only with the creation of the new Hungarian state and King Stephen I's rule.[344] The communities in the peripheral areas of the Carpathian Basin pursued a sedentary lifestyle, while the population in the central parts of the basin lived in a nomadic economic system. Written sources report about nomadism along the Danube in the middle of the 10th century, about the keeping of large beasts, particularly horses, which were of central importance. Another source dating from the early 11th century explains Achtum's/Ajtony's wealth with his countless horses and sheep. In addition to horses, sheep were a similarly important species in nomadic animal husbandry.[345]
2. In contrast to this, István Fodor's theory suggests that the Carpathian Basin was not completely suitable for the Eurasian nomadic economy,[346] since the geomorphological character of the Great Plain (about 100,000 km^2), and of the Little Plain (*Kisalföld*) (10,000 km^2) was partly unsuitable for long-distance transhumance. Winter and summer pastures (and accommodations) were relatively close, and after a certain period (a few decades) this could have led to sedentarism. If this change took place for at least a period of three generations, i.e. spanning the first two thirds of the 10th century, Fodor's suggestion would be fully acceptable. In the next chapter, we illustrate this with some archaeological data as well.

341 Györffy 1958, 595, 611; Szőke 1962.
342 Hóman 1935, 93.
343 Vámbéry 1895, 74–75; Nagy 1895, CCCLII; László 1970, 161–190; László 1978.
344 Kristó 1999, 47–50.
345 *Legenda maior S. Gerardi*: SRH 489, 495, 421. Váczy 1958, 312–316.
346 AH 1996, 27–30.

IX.4. Some remarks

Based on the above theories, which were formulated in the 19th century (and have since been elaborated on), the question arises: What can archeologists bring to the discussion of models concerning the demographics, social hierarchies, and economic organizations of the conquering population? One could be certainly skeptical about demographics, as – for the time being – archaeology does not have the means to deal effectively with this issue. On the other hand, it has much to say regarding social hierarchies (burial archaeology) and economic activities/farming (settlement archaeology). Nonetheless, it is our conviction that – despite the fact that Gyula László and Béla Szőke examined the whole of the Carpathian Basin – archaeological observations and chronological analyses should focus instead on individual regions and micro-regions first.[347] This task will be carried out in *Chapter X*.

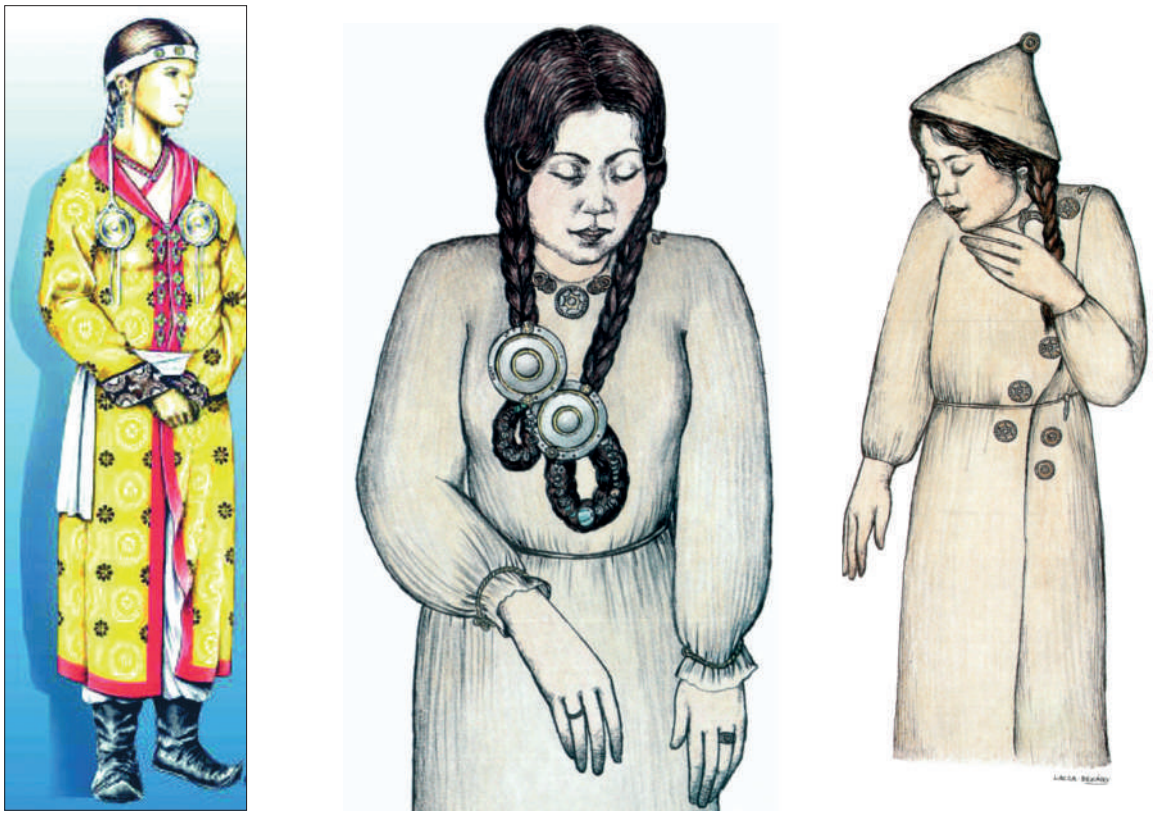


Figure 39. A–B. *Reconstructed use of disc braids, based on the Szentes-Derekegyháza and Sárrétudvari-Hízóföld finds (after* Langó–Türk *2003; M.* Nepper *1991, 89–90: Rek. 1–2)*

IX.5. 10th-century costumes in the Carpathian Basin. Asymmetric cultural influences in the light of archaeological data

According to written and archeological evidence, the Hungarian conquest did not only change the political landscape of the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century, but also the clothing fashions. The new elite had a significant impact, not only politically, but also on dress and clothing, and not only in the Carpathian Basin, but also beyond that. This can be partly explained by the political success of the Hungarian con-

347 Based on these viewpoints, a *long durée* approach was applied in case of the Little Someș valley: Gáll et al. 2017.

quest as reported in the written sources. For instance, Archbishop Theotmar of Salzburg mentions that the Moravians had their hair cut in Hungarian style. Another source mentions the Hungarian-style hats and clothes of the Bavarian bishops, and a third one informs that a Bulgarian in the Byzantine also had a Hungarian-style hair cut.[348] Of course, these references concern only the circles of the elite. On the other hand, archaeology provides a comprehensive picture of clothing styles in the Carpathian Basin.

There were no general trends observed, but an essentially eastern fashion became dominant for several generations. The classic Hungarian-type women's dress became widespread particularly in the lowland areas of the basin in the Conquest period (see also *Fig. 121*). The details of costumes could be documented primarily in case of rich female burials; thus, the reconstructions concern primarily the elite, but their costumes apparently served as models for the lower social strata as well. The tradition of wearing headbands[349] – already known in the Avar period – was generally widespread in the Great Plain, but in some regions (e.g. the Upper Tisza region) it was less common *(Fig. 40)*. Usually thin, pressed or cast, gilded silver or gilded bronze plates were attached to leather or textile bands two to three centimeters wide. In addition to different types of headbands, the wear of pointed hats could be documented (e.g. Püspökladány-Eperjesvölgy, grave no. 207).[350] The use of lock rings was widespread throughout Central and Eastern Europe,[351] while on the other hand, torques (neck rings) seem to appear in significant numbers only in some graves (particularly of females), but their use does not seem to have been general.[352] Women wore their hair in one or two braids, at the end of which cast or plated discs could be fitted *(Fig. 39. A–B)*.[353] Based on excavation observations (by István Dienes), leather or textile ribbons attached to the discs could be woven into the braids.[354] In some cases (e.g. Sárrétudvari-Hízóföld, grave no.167), the braids were richly decorated with colorful pearls *(Fig. 39. B)*,[355] and there were also flower petals and leaf-shaped shells found, which could be woven into their ends.

Figure 40. *Headdress ornaments, caftan ornaments, and belt mounts (after László 1967, 105)*

According to excavation observations, the upper garments of wealthier individuals were caftans. Under them, linen or brocade garments were worn, with metal embellishments. The positioning of mounts did not always follow the neckline; in most cases, one finds single-cast, round fittings, pendants, or diamond-shaped fittings, arranged in a V-shape, in one or two rows. The hems of the two wings of the caftans closing in parallel at the front were decorated with pressed mounts (Orosháza[356]), large pendants, or plated mounts (Buj, Szeged-Bojárhalom, Szeged-Algyő, Teremia Mare).[357] In some cases, the large number of shank buttons suggests that they could be used not only for buttoning up the dress, but also as decorations

348 Bálint 2006, 326–327.
349 Dienes 1972, 37: 11; AH 1996, 53; M. Nepper 2002, I. kötet: 90. kép, 236/b. kép.
350 M. Nepper 2002, I. kötet: 218.
351 Szőke 1962, 35–39, 89; Giesler 1981, 116–120, etc.
352 Giesler 1981, 90–92.
353 M. Lezsák–Novichikhin–Gáll 2018, 196–220.
354 AH 1996, 54–55.
355 M. Nepper 2002, I. kötet: 216–217, 355, 237. kép.
356 Dienes 1972, 37: 11.
357 Bálint 1991, Taf. XLV–XLVI; Kürti 1978–1979, I. fényképtábla; Gáll 2013a, Vol. II: 201–202.

(Szeged-Algyő, Sárrétudvari-Hízóföld).[358] Precious metal embellishments, buttons, etc., were either attached to the garment with threads, or riveted onto leather bands (those with ears on the back were threaded to the garment, and those with nails and little plates were riveted onto thin leather bands in a row), which could be sewn onto the parts of the clothes they wanted to decorate. There is not much information on the use of belts in female costumes. More generally textile bands could be used, and there are very few examples decorated with fittings, which were similar to those used on the garments.[359]

As excavation observations have become more and more accurate, boots could be documented in an increasing number. They were also decorated with fittings, and sometimes covered with silk.[360] They seem to illustrate regional fashions, as there are regions from where we have no examples *(Fig. 41)*.

***Figure 41**. Mount ornamented boots (after http://mek.oszk.hu/01900/01992/html/index960.html: drawn by Zsolt Nyári based on the reconstruction by László Költő and Zsolt Nyári)*

Men's wear was similarly very diverse. They wore pointed headgear, or conical hats, the top of which could be decorated with conical fittings made of precious metal. Of these, we know of two examples already, and based on the large number of Scandinavian finds, this could have been an imported fashion.[361] The upper garment of men's clothing was the caftan, buttoned on the right side. The buttons were made of bronze, silver, or gilded silver. Similarly to women's caftans, the men's wide-sleeved garments were also adorned with metal ribbons, made of thin silver or gold sheets. Coins of various origins were also used sometimes to decorate the hems. The legs of their pants were fitted in leather or felt boots.[362]

Elite men were also buried in richly decorated dress – similarly to women. However, these costumes could be used also on feast days. Some types of jewelry (e.g. finger rings, bracelets) were found almost exclusively in men's graves, which, however, draws our attention to the significance of ornamented weaponry and horse accessories (gilded silver or gold ornamented sabers, ornamented bow cases, e.g. with discs in the middle, which have been interpreted as sun symbols[363]) *(Fig. 42. B)*. Such grave accessories are known mainly from the Upper Tisza and Middle Tisza regions.[364]

Belts adorned with various gilded bronze, gilded silver, and (very rarely) gold fittings were widespread among the men of other social strata. The most common type of belts was the so-called "Bulgarian" belt, almost one and a half meter long, to which the wealthier men could attach mounts of various shapes *(Fig. 42. A–B)*. However, the leather straps decorated with such fittings could not have been pulled through the buckle ring, therefore, a separate connecting strap was sewn to the inside of the belts, which then could be pulled through the buckle, while the belt itself decorated with the fittings was left in front of the buckle to the left hip and from there hanging down to the left knee. These narrower straps were riveted with smaller mounts, and closed by larger belt ends. In some cases, wider belts were found (e.g. Tomnatic-Kleine

358 Kürti 1978–1979, 334, 336.
359 Horváth 2004, 151–171.
360 AH 1996, 54; Varga 2017, 471–479; Berta et al. 2018, 15; Türk–Harangi 2024, 169–185.
361 Kovács 2003, 205–241.
362 AH 1996, 52–54.
363 Révész 1996a, 193–206. At the same time, Á. Bollók offers a different interpretation: Bollók 2006, 62–84.
364 Révész 1996a, 193–206.

Hügel, grave no. 2), and there are examples also of thinner belts. The number of ornaments was usually between 15–20, however, there were 128 fittings counted in the case of a belt found in a grave in Zemplín.[365] High-ranking men could also afford to decorate their sabretaches with plates or fittings *(Fig. 42. A)*.

Figure 42. A–B. *Reconstructed use of a belt set (Karos-Eperjesszög burial ground II, grave no. 29 and burial ground III, grave no. 11) (after Révész 1999)*

In addition to dress and weapons, horse accessories were also decorated. There is a certain gender-based divide in terms of the types of ornaments decorating these accessories: in the case of women, harness were almost always decorated with rosette-ornamented harness mount (*Fig. 122*), while men's horse accessories were decorated with pieces very similar to those used on their belts, or only with simple silver plates, sewn onto the bridle. In some cases, the wooden saddle was also decorated with plates, and in many cases the stirrups and bits were decorated with silver inlays or wire plating.[366]

From the earlier era (the 8th–9th centuries), only a few dress accessories survived into the 10th–11th centuries. In addition to different hair rings, found e.g. in 10th-century burials in Upper Hungary, we know of objects, the use of which had been characteristic for the Late Avar period, e.g. needle cases, found in Čakajovce, Hódmezővásárhely-Kopáncs, Karos-Eperjesszög funerary site II, Szabolcs-Petőfi utca, Trnovec nad Váhom, etc.[367]

365 Budinsky-Krička–Fettich 1973.

366 AH 1996, 51–52.

367 Kovács 1994, 82–84, Abb. 25–26; Párducz 1943, 184, LXII. táb. 3; Révész 1996a, 22–23, 186, 53. táb. 6; Točik 1971, XXVIII/2, Taf. XXXII/20. The comprehensive analysis of the needle cases: Szenthe–Gáll 2022, 205–219, Fig. 82, Fig. 86.

X. THE CARPATHIAN BASIN IN THE 10TH CENTURY ITS POPULATION AND THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ITS REGIONS

Introduction

Studying the imaginary narratives on national pasts was certainly a priority of nation-building in the 18th–19th centuries,[368] aimed at demonstrating the homogeneity (or uniformity) of the nation.[369] The French concept of territorial unity (state = nation),[370] associated with modern democratization and mass phenomena, has been incorporated into this scientific discourse.[371] The relationship of this approach and capitalism (feeding on technological evolution) is both obvious and fundamentally necessary.[372] In parallel with the presentation of codified national histories, academic research into the history of nation states as territorial establishments began, but the goal to present cultural homogeneity and unity deeply influenced the scientific discourse itself.

The politicization of academic research followed quite organically from this experience of modernity, as the ideological basis of the 19th-century.[373] As Miklós Takács pointed out, the identity crisis of the nobility significantly influenced how the Conquest period population was viewed, and how its characteristics were interpreted – through the glasses of modernity.[374] What we are trying to emphasize here is not that the particularities or local dimensions of history were not closely tied to historical, sociological, and cultural trends or phenomena playing out on a macro scale, or that such phenomena were not affected by local identities (based on local networks), but rather that it is often possible to trace cultural traits and relations characteristic of individual landscape regions (as natural geographical frameworks), which would remain otherwise hidden when focusing on a generalizing view, originating from our modern nation-centered views. The governing and controlling of a power structure, state, or empire was fundamentally different from our modern concepts, due to differences in the infrastructure and ways of communication characterizing the migration period or the Conquest period.[375]

By way of introduction, it is also important to pin down the following facts, which framed our analysis and conclusions:

368 The concept of the nation – as we perceive it today – is the product of modernity, and not of medieval times, in other words: "*It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round*." (Gellner 2008, 54). According to Benedict Anderson's definition, the nation is an imagined community, the boundaries and sovereignty of which are conceived as inherent (Anderson 2006). As we have just indicated above, national identities can be traced back to particular antecedents and structures in the past, and this is why they become different. On this point of view, see: Szűcs 1983.

369 According to Reinhart Kosseleck, projecting back modern political communities into the past is anachronistic, *topos*-like and false (Koselleck 2003).

370 The historical projections of different nations concerning certain territories are completely false. The debate between August Ludwig Schlözer and György Aranka is a good example on modern nation building in Transylvania, where the concept of nation appears as a homogenous historical-cultural and biological entity (Biró 2011).

371 The medieval concept of nation is contrasdictory to this. From a Hungarian point of view, see: Kristó 1998; Szűcs 1983.

372 Gellner 2009.

373 N. N. (Czuczor Gergely) 1842, 57.

374 Takács 2006a, 72.

375 Crone 1992, 51–55.

1. As Péter Langó pointed out, we know nothing about how the conquering Hungarians perceived the landscape, i.e. the Carpathian Basin as a geographical unit.[376] Whatever their understanding was, it must have changed radically with the conquest of the central parts of the basin and during the first decades of the 10th century. Hopefully, we will be able to demonstrate – on the basis of archaeological evidence – that the mountain ranges of the Carpathians should not be considered necessarily as a political or cultural border. This is indicated by "Hungarian-type" burials in Southern Poland and in Southwestern Ukraine (cf. *Chapter X.7*).
2. Geographically, the Carpathian Basin can be divided into seven regions: 1) the Upper Tisza region; 2) Transylvania; 3) the Trans-Tisza region and the Banat; 4) the Danube-Tisza Interfluve; 5) the Little Hungarian Plain; 6) Transdanubia; and 7) the northern part of the Carpathian Basin. In terms of the amount of archaeological materials, the completion of the excavation projects, or the post-processing of the finds, there are considerable differences between these regions, which renders comparisons difficult and advises us to proceed carefully.
3. As mentioned in *Chapter I*, Conquest-period archaeology focuses predominantly on burial sites – both because of subjective and objective factors. Therefore, our analysis builds primarily on this source group. It is not only a matter of choice or preference, simply because we have barely any knowledge of settlements dated with certainty to the 10th century,[377] despite the significant number of settlement excavations in the last 70 years.[378]

X.1. The Upper Tisza region as the "core" region in the 10th century

X.1.1. Analysis of 10th century burial sites and graves in the Upper Tisza region

The regional analysis of archaeological materials should reasonably start with the Upper Tisza region *(Fig. 43)*, because – on the one hand – we have the earliest dated burials here and on the other hand partly the concentration of 10th century sites or finds is so high, that it is basically unparalleled in comparison to other regions.

Thanks to László Révész, Eszter Istvánovits, Anikó Tóth, and László Kovács, a number of quality studies are available on this region.[379] In his monograph, László Révész investigated the burial ground in Karos and the social stratification of its population. He observed a system of burials consisting of small, related groups (families?), who had been buried together with warriors (men of service) and slaves. Archaeogenetic analysis of the richest graves in two different burial groups revealed that two individuals who were described as chiefs (Karos II, grave no. 52, Karos III, grave no. 11) were actually two brothers *(Fig. 44. A–B)*.[380] This result is of great importance and will likely influence the research in coming years. From the point of view of historical sociology, we will be able to grasp 10th-century social structures more accurately,[381] as well as the "*big man*" phenomenon.[382]

376 Dienes 1972, 25–26; Bóna 2000; Langó 2007, 20–25.
377 Langó 2007, 41–57.
378 Takács 1995, 5–50; AH 1996, 60–61; Langó 2010, 257–285; Takács 2010, 1–67; Gáll et al. 2017; Rácz 2019.
379 Révész 1996a; Istvánovits 2003; Tóth 2014; Kovács 2015. Using the terms "cemetery" and "necropolis" would be ill-advised in regard to the 10th century funerary sites. Instead, the more neutral "funerary site" is preferred.
380 Neparáczki et al. 2019; Maróti et al. 2022.
381 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 289. kép.
382 On this concept, see: Sahlins 1963, 283–303.

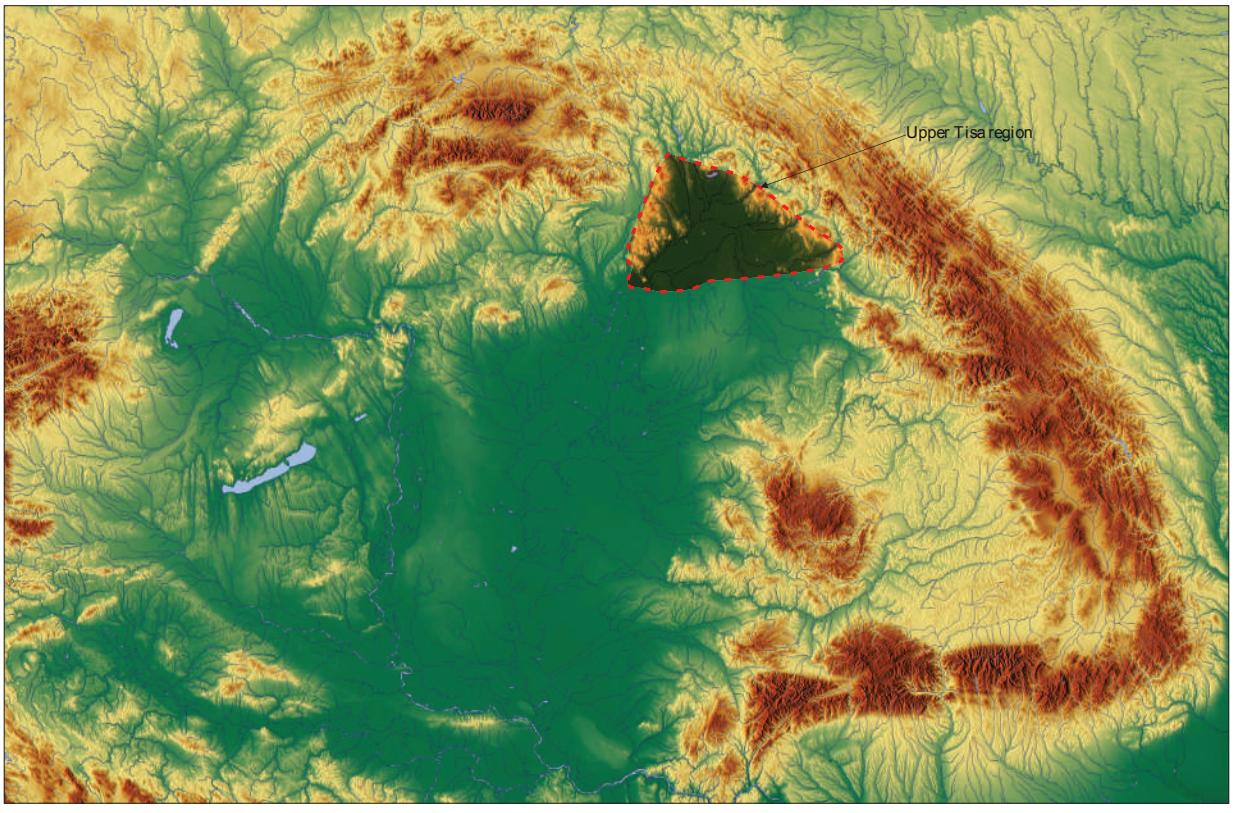


***Figure 43**. The Upper Tisza region in the Carpathian Basin (Basemap: Gergely Szenthe)*

László Révész also published a summative work on the find assemblages in the Upper Tisza region, which demonstrated that the richest male burials dating to the first two thirds of the 10th century are concentrated here. Apart from three exceptions, however, none of the finds were from documented excavations. The aforementioned two graves are among these three exceptions – they were excavated by Révész himself.[383] Not only the human remains are genetic matches, the grave goods were almost identical, including silver-gilt sabres, mounted belts, bow quivers decorated with discs, arrow quivers decorated with mounts, and partial horse burials (consisting of a horse harnesses, i.e. stirrups, birdles, strap buckles) *(Fig. 44. A–B)*.

The layout of the looted burial site in Véč was presumably similar to that of the Karos II site. A large number of stirrup irons, mounted belts, and sabres were found there.[384] The richness of a solitary grave in Zemplín-Malomdomb is also comparable to that of grave no. 52 in Karos II *(Fig. 45)*. The golden lock rings, torques, bracelets, ankle bracelets, five plated braid discs, a set of round silver buttons decorating the dress, as well as a sacrificial cup, a wooden bucket, a gilded sabre, and arrowheads all demonstrate the rank of the individual.[385]

In 1974, Ferenc Nagy, foreman of the Győzelem Tsz. (i.e. farmers' cooperative) in Rakamaz, reported archaeological finds discovered on the outskirts of the village. Archaeologist Péter Németh visited the site and managed to collect several artefacts, including a sabre, pear-shaped inlaid stirrups, and a sabretache plate. Péter Németh and István Dienes conducted a rescue dig, successfully locating the prestigious high-profile burial (grave "A"), which turned out to be the richest one in the county *(Fig. 46)*, and

383 Révész 1996a, 21, 26–29, 42. tábla, 80. tábla; Neparáczki et al. 2019.
384 AH 1996, 140–142.
385 Budinsky-Krička–Fettich 1973; Horváth 2020, 333–339, 229–252. tábla. For a critique of this interpretation, see: László 1976, 79–86. Nándor Fettich's response to the critiques: Fettich 1969, 109–113.

mapping out another 18 graves.[386] Based on the sword with a sabre-type hilt in Grave "C", use of the site could be dated to the second third of the 10th century at the earliest.

There was also a particularly significant, high-status burial in Tarcal.[387] During the planting of a vineyard, four graves were found, and the richness of one was exceptional and, indeed, stunning. The belt decorated with gilded silver mounts, the iron sabre decorated with gilded silver plates, the gilded silver sabretache plate, and the bow quiver were clearly produced by one of the local workshops in the Upper Tisza region *(Fig. 47)*.

In Eperjeske, nine graves were excavated, which were likely part of a larger site.[388] The burial ground in Streda nad Bodrogom was similarly rich, as indicated by sabretaches, bow quivers decorated with silver gilt mounts, and partial horse burials.[389] However, the richness of the graves fell short in comparison to those found in the Bodgrogköz region and further to the south (Karos, Rakamaz, Geszteréd, Zemplín). Topographically, all of these sites are situated in the Bodrogköz and along the two sides of the Tisza[390] – in an area of about 70 kilometres in length.

In the Upper Tisza region, richly furnished women's graves have also been documented (Karos II, graves no. 45, 47, 49, 56; Karos III, grave no. 6), but they were more modest than the graves of the "chieftains". Grave goods included disc braids (grave no. 47) *(Fig. 48)*, diamond-shaped shirt neck ornaments (grave no. 47), discs decorating the caftans, buttons (grave no. 47), finger rings (grave no. 45), shoe mounts (grave no. 45), and horse harnesses decorated with rosette-ornamented harness mounts (grave no. 49).

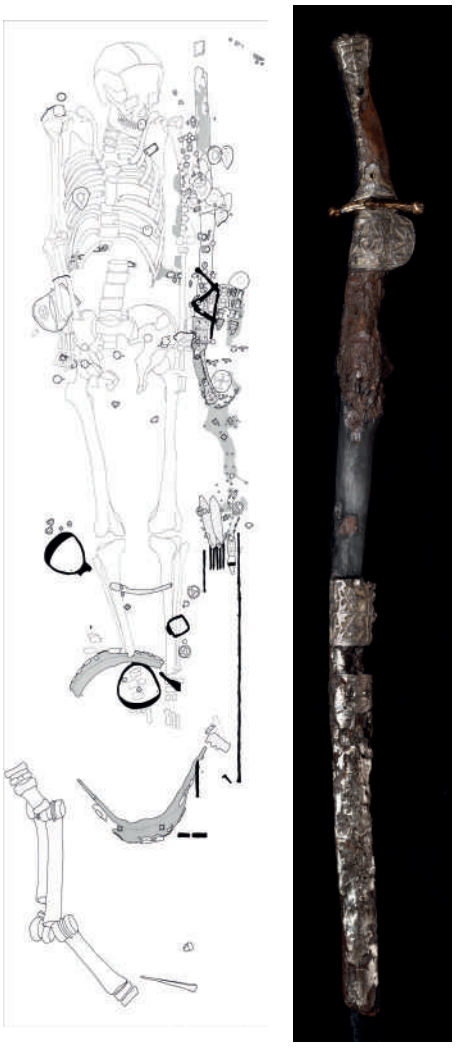


Figure 44. A–B. *Karos II burial ground, grave no. 52, sabre with gilded silver fittings (after Révész 1996a, 78. tábla; Ottó Herman Museum, Miskolc)*

A pair of braid discs was found in a robbed and truncated grave in Rakamaz-Túróczi-part, and this find has special significance among the assemblages dating to the Conquest period. The decorations of the two gilded silver discs are unparalleled: the depiction of an eagle spreading its wings, and holding a chick in its claws was associated to the symbol of the Árpáds, the falcon.[391]

Apart from the graves of "chieftains", there were also less richly furnished burials in these cemeteries, which possibly belonged to those individuals who were part of the "entourage" (e.g. Karos II, graves no. 11, 29, 41, 61; Rakamaz-Strázsadomb, grave "C"). Although funerary archaeology is not an accurate imprint of social hierarchies, in addition to the rich burials, the social stratification is well illustrated by the graves which possibly belonged to simple warriors (e.g. Karos II, graves no. 14, 60; Rakamaz-Strázsadomb, grave

386 Dienes 1975, 305–306; AH 1996, 110–119.
387 Jósa 1895, 75–76; Hampel 1900, 710–719; AH 1996, 120–123; Bollók 2015, 502–532.
388 Kiss 1920–1922, 42–55; Kiss 1933–1934, 218.
389 Erdélyi 1961, 17–30.
390 There was only one grave (in Geszteréd) lying further away from the Tisza (ca. kb. 50 km), which is discussed separately, in *Chapter X.3*.
391 Csallány 1959, 310–325; Dienes 1972, 17; AH 1996, 162, 163: 1, 164–167.

Figure 45. *The topographical position of the solitary grave in Zemplín-Malomdomb*

no. 9), and to others (possibly servants or slaves), whose graves were very poorly furnished or unfurnished (e.g. Karos II, graves no. 10, 12).

Not all Bodrögköz sites had high-status graves though. The two burial grounds in Kenézlő *(Fig. 49)*,[392] and others in Streda nad Bodrogom,[393] Dobrá,[394] Čierna,[395] Sárospatak-Baksahomok[396] were much poorer than the graves of the "chieftains" documented in the aforementioned places. Yet, the same cultural patterns could be observed, as testified by the finds (sabretaches, mounted belts, sabres, bows, bow and arrow quivers, as well as partial horse burials, see *Chapter XI*).

Having surveyed these burial grounds and solitary graves, we clearly see that they are concentrated in the Bodrogköz micro-region and its surroundings. There is one exception though: the possibly solitary grave in Geszteréd, which was situated ca. 50 km from the Tisza, to the south. Since some of the finds from these sites (e.g. the sabretaches from Rakamaz, Tarcal, Karos II, grave no. 29) show a great degree of similarity regarding both their decoration and technique, we cannot rule out the possibility that they were produced by the same master. Chronologically, all of them can be dated basically to the second third of the 10th century.[397]

Figure 46. *Rakamaz-Strázsadomb, grave "A": gold pommel of the sabre (1), gilded silver sabretache plate (2) (after Bollók 2015, 75. kép; Jósa András Museum, Nyíregyháza)*

392 Jósa 1914, 303–344; Fettich 1931, 78–119; Horváth 2020, 116–188, 68–122. tábla.
393 AH 1996, 136–139; Horváth 2020, 52–68, 19–36. tábla.
394 Dókus 1900, 52–60; AH 1996, 157–158; Horváth 2020, 188–194, 123–126. tábla.
395 AH 1996, 129. Since the burials were disturbed, the dating of the site to a later period is based exclusively on the finds (the sabre and the two-edged sword).
396 AH 1996, 168–171; Horváth 2020, 278–292, 183–202. tábla.
397 See on this Ádám Bollók's remarks: Bollók 2015, 571. We will come back to this in *Chapter XI*.

Regarding this 10th-century burial horizon in the Bodrogköz, László Révész noted the peculiar gender composition of the burials. In case of the Karos II site, 64% of the individuals were males, buried mostly with mounted belts and weapons. Explaining the patterns of gender (and age) composition, Révész presumed that these communities had been arbitrarily organized – they consisted of the military retinues of lesser and greater leaders, their families, and other warriors who joined their service. He underlined that such sites can be found also in other regions of the Carpathian Basin (we will return to this later). The Karos and Rakamaz burials in particular suggest that the Conquest-period society in the Upper Tisza region consisted of strictly hierarchical, arbitrarily created small communities, organized in a so-called *vertical* structure (see *Chapter II*). In addition to the aforementioned two, there was another burial ground in Karos, where grave goods were almost completely absent (Bodroghalom-Eresztevényhomok). On the one hand, this corroborates the heterogenous composition of the society in the 10th century,[398] and on the other hand, it shows the possibly asymmetric relations of the conquerors and conquered populations (see more on this in *Chapter XI*).

Figure 47. *Tarcal-Rimai-dűlő: gilded silver sabretache plate (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest)*

In regard to the chronology of the Karos burials, the graves – which had eastern analogies – were considered by Révész as the "first generation" of the conquerors. In his opinion, this model applies to most sites in the Upper Tisza region.[399] Among the rich graves, however, the Rakamaz and Zemplín ones clearly

Figure 48. *Karos burial ground II, grave no. 47: silver gilt plate discoid braid ornaments (Ottó Herman Museum, Miskolc)*

398 Révész 2006, 195–197.
399 Révész 2006, 204.

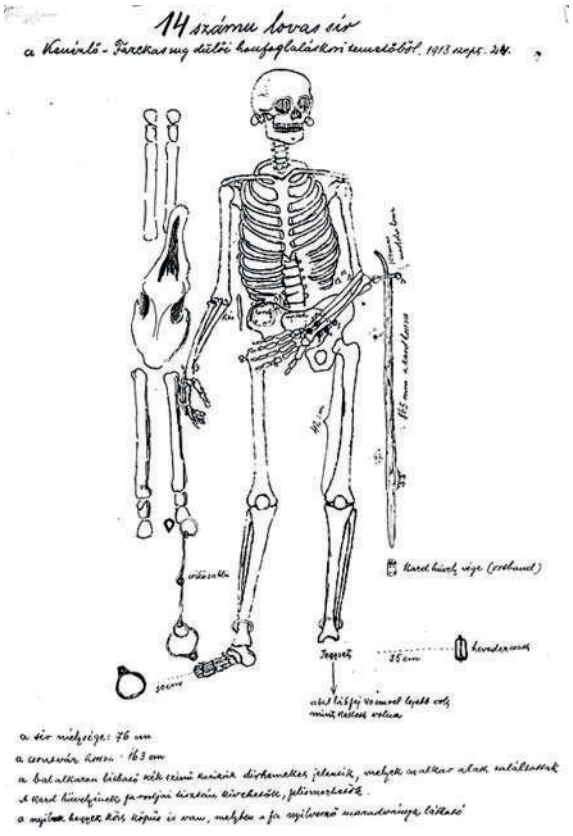


Figure 49. *Kenézlő I burial ground, grave no. 14 (after Jósa 1914, XXVIII. kép)*

date to a later period, and the ones in Geszteréd and Eperjeske also cannot be dated to the first quarter of the 10th century.

To the northwest, south, and east of this 10th-century burial horizon in the Bodrogköz, other important burial grounds were found. The chronology of the burials in the Nyíri-Mezőség[400] and Rétköz regions[401] are similar to what we have seen in case of the Bodrogköz, but the graves are somewhat poorer.

In the small region of the Nyíri-Mezőség, Anikó Tóth has identified 13 burial sites which could be dated to the 10th century. Of these, the two burial grounds in Tiszaeszlár-Bashalom, and the ones in Tiszaeszlár-Vörösmarty street and Tiszavasvári-Aranykerti tábla are the most important. In Tiszaeszlár-Bashalom (I), horse burials were documented in 11 graves, sabres were collected from 2 graves, quivers from 5 graves, while arrowheads were documented in 7 graves.[402] In Tiszaeszlár-Bashalom (II), partial horse burials were found in 7 graves, belt mounts in 1 grave, sabres in 3 graves, bows in 2 graves, and arrowheads in only one grave.[403] In Tiszavasvári-Aranykert, 7 horse burials were documented; mounted belts were found in 2 graves, there was a sabre in one grave, bows in 3 graves, quivers in 3 graves, and arrowheads in 3 graves as well.[404] In all three burial grounds, high-status graves of females were also excavated. In the case of Tiszaeszlár (Újtelep), 4 truncated graves were excavated, in three of which partial horse burials were documented.[405] In Tiszaeszlár-Dióskert, a richly furnished grave of a female was found, but none of the other graves had weaponry.[406]

Similarly to the Bodrogköz, there were also poorer graves in this region, without horse burials and with few weapons. However, these could not be dated to earlier than the second half of the 10th century (e.g. in Tiszalök-Vajasdomb).[407] In Tiszadob-Sós-szék, we know of 8 graves, which were rescue excavated, but none of them had weaponry. Based on the braid discs, bracelets with curled terminals, rolled bronze bracelets with spiral terminals, and pendant shirt neck fittings, the graves could be dated to the middle and the second half of the century.[408]

Regarding the chronological background, Anikó Tóth's conclusion is important, namely: *"...there is no trace of the first generation; the burials start sometime in the first third of the 10th century."*[409]

400 Tóth 2014.
401 Istvánovits 2003.
402 Tóth 2014, 32–33.
403 Tóth 2014, 43–45.
404 Tóth 2014, 143–144.
405 Tóth 2014, 57–60.
406 Tóth 2014, 46–53.
407 Tóth 2014, 124–133.
408 Jakab 2014, 277–294, 117–123. tábla.
409 Tóth 2014, 244.

The archaeological character of the Rétköz is similar to that of the Nyíri-Mezőség; in the Rétköz, however, there is one completely excavated 10th–11th-century burial ground (Ibrány-Esbóhalom), which significantly nuances the picture as we have known it so far. From a topographical point of view, the 10th-century burial sites are situated along the road that runs on the border of the Rétköz region.[410] The burial ground in Ibrány-Esbóhalom consisted of 269 graves in total, and from the middle of the 10th century it was probably used by newcomers, who must have come from elsewhere *(Fig. 50)*.[411] This burial ground of commoners is the only one of its kind in the Nyírség and has been almost completely excavated. Hardly any weaponry was found (only arrowheads and two axes) and a horse burial was only documented in one case.

Two kilometers from here, close to the Tisza River, in Tiszabercel-Ráctemető, 30 burials have been excavated – a high-status couple (?) with their household and slaves.[412] Based on the typo-chronological dating of the finds (bracelet with coiled terminals, massive wire bracelet, pendant neck fittings, square shaped dress, or belt mounts) the burials post-date the middle or second third of the 10th century *(Fig. 51)*.

Figure 50. *Ibrány-Esbóhalom, grave no. 197.A: silver gilt plate discoid braid ornament (Jósa András Museum, Nyíregyháza)*

The female grave in Buj-Gyeptelek was probably a solitary one; the finds could be dated to the second half of the 10th century the earliest.[413] It is uncertain whether the burial at Gáva-Szincse-domb was also a solitary one, but again this grave could be dated to the middle of the 10th century.[414] Of the burial ground in Rétközberencs-Paromdomb, there were four graves rescue excavated, which contained a sabre, a mounted belt, and coins of King Berengar (I) of Italy [888–915]. Thus, the graves probably date to the first half of the 10th century.[415] The graves in Szabolcsveresmart-Szelérd-domb – with a sabre and quiver – also could not be dated precisely.[416]

Thanks to Gyula László, the burial ground in Tiszabezdéd became a paradigmatic example in the history of research, illustrating his theory on "extended families".[417] The site was originally excavated by András Jósa,[418] on the basis of which Gyula László carried out a sociohistorical analysis of the burials in his 1944 book. Instead of using the original numbering of the graves (assigned by Józsa according to the order of occurrence), László introduced an alphabetical system based on spatial relations, which is, however, more difficult to follow. The graves were situated in a linear order (raw cemetery), in a north–south direction; from this spatial order, László concluded that each individual had their designated place, similarly to the plots of a settlement, and argued that internment did not follow the chronological order of deaths, but a preestablished (social) order. He also argued that the burials belonged to an extended family, with the

410 Istvánovits 2003, 446.
411 Istvánovits 2003, 375.
412 AH 1996, 179–180.
413 Istvánovits 2003, 32–33, 37. tábla 1–4, 38. tábla.
414 Istvánovits 2003, 55–57.
415 Istvánovits 2003, 176–179.
416 Istvánovits 2003, 181–184, 168–171. tábla.
417 László 1944, 128–134.
418 Jósa 1896, 385–412.

Figure 51. *Tiszabercel-Ráctemető, grave no. 4: silver gilt plate discoid braid ornaments (Jósa András Museum, Nyíregyháza)*

lavishly furnished grave situated in the middle that belonged to the head of the family. The star find from this not so rich burial ground was a sabretache plate depicting griffins and a cross *(Fig. 52)*. László Révész dated these finds roughly to the second third (or the early years of the last third) of the 10th century.[419]

Six kilometres to the south of Tiszabezdéd, on the outskirts of Tuzsér, situated on a south–north oriented ridge (called the Boszorkány-hegy [Witches' Mountain]), there were Conquest-period graves found during the planting of vineyards around the end of the 19th century.[420] Jósa excavated only those graves which had been dug up accidentally. They were situated in a north–south oriented line and apparently belonged to high-status individuals, but there were likely also other graves there. Deep ploughing must have destroyed some of the graves, however, it is not impossible that some graves have remained undisturbed, buried in the Boszorkány-hegy. The excavated graves were poorly f urnished – except one, a (probably coffined) burial (grave no. 6), in which an arrow quiver fastened with iron bands, an incomplete set of belt mounts, and an undecorated sabretache plate were found.[421] The braid disc found in Anarcs is not far from here,[422] indicating that there could be other rich burials in this area *(Fig. 53)*.

Figure 52. *Tiszabezdéd-Harangláb site, grave no. I: gilded copper plate sabretache plate (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest)*

419 Révész 2003, 440. See also: Prohászka–Révész 2004, 137–168.
420 Jósa 1900, 214–224; Révész 2000, 7–32.
421 Jósa 1900, 214–224; Hampel 1905, Vol. II: 669–676, Vol. III: Taf. 434–437.
422 Hampel 1902, 297–298; Fettich 1937, 83. LXVII. táb. 1.

Without applying a strict chronology, Eszter Istvánovits dated the Rétköz burials generally to the years between 896 and 970. However, *first generation burials* (as referred by Károly Mesterházy)[423] were absent here too. Probably, the burials in Rétközberencs-Paromdomb could be defined as such.

In the upper reaches of the Tisza, approximately in the area of the Szatmár-Bereg plains, other Conquest-period burial sites have been discovered, mainly along the Tisza and its tributaries. Currently, this region is referred as Transcarpathia (*Kárpátalja*). Unfortunately, the state of research has not improved since the time of Tivadar Lehoczky. The burials are relatively poor: there are no sabres with gilded and silver fittings known from here, but weaponry and partial horse burials have been documented. In Berehove, we know of two different sites where burials with sabres were documented (one in each), and the famous headgear finial *(Fig. 54)* and inlaid stirrups were also found at one of these sites. Based on the technology applied in the case of pressed plates, the second third of the 10th century is – in our opinion – the most likely dating for these graves.

Not far from here, in Tarpa, the most significant Conquest-period site (including graves with horse burials and sabres) of recent decades was discovered. A female grave was already identified there in 1975, which possibly belonged to a high-status member of the community. More recently, new archaeological investigations were started to identify the burial site, and the grave of a male person was also discovered. In this west–east oriented grave, the skull and the leg bones of a horse were placed at the feet of the warrior, together with horse accessories (two saddles, a bridle bit, and a strap buckle). On the left side of the body, the excavators found an arrow quiver with some arrowheads, below that, at the left hand, there was a silver ring, the pair of which was found at the right hand. The caftan dress was decorated with square-shaped, gilded silver mounts and the belt was also decorated with similar mounts *(Fig. 55)*. The leather belt as well as many parts of the upper garment were preserved in good condition allowing for a detailed reconstruction

Figure 53. *Anarcs: gilded silver plate discoid braid ornament decorated with palmette motifs (Jósa András Museum, Nyíregyháza)*

Figure 54. *Berehove, grave no. I: headgear finial (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest)*

423 Mesterházy 1990, 235–240.

Figure 55. *Tarpa-Nagyhegy: grave of a male, dressed in a caftan decorated with mounts (after* https://sirasok.blog.hu/2012/12/07/honfoglalo_harcos_targyai_harom_dimenzioban*)*

of the dress.[424] Another grave contained a sabre and a partial horse burial. In this case again, it remains unclear whether these burials can be linked to the so-called *first generation* (based on the material finds).

In Svalyava, situated in the valley of the Latorica/Latorîţea (a tributary of the Tisza) in the lower lying parts of the Northeastern Carpathians (towards the Hungarian Plain), a grave with a sabre, a sabretache *(Fig. 56)*, a band bracelet, and a horse burial was discovered in the 19th century. It was possibly a solitary grave, but at the moment its status is uncertain.[425]

X.1.2. Significance of 10th-century burial sites in the Upper Tisza region

X.1.2.1. Settlement history of the Upper Tisza region

The burial sites marking the boundaries of the most important region of Hungarian settlement during the first half of the 10th century are located partly on the higher ground along the Bodrog, and partly along the Tisza, to the south of Zemplénagárd. We essentially agree with László Révész's conclusion that access to flood pastures was required to sustain large herds of horse and sheep.[426] Nonetheless, the question remains whether this small area was suitable for short-distance (2–20 km), or medium-distance (20–70 km) transhumance, or there were different communities pursuing different lifestyles, which settled in separate small groups, and lived there simultaneously. The application of scientific methods will probably make a difference in finding answers to this question.

Figure 56. *Svalyava: silver gilt sabretache plate (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest)*

424 http://cultura.hu/kultura/harcosokat-rejtettek-a-honfoglalas-kori-sirok/; http://szime3dar.com/targykatalogus/tarpai-honfoglalas-kori-sirlelet/.

425 Lehoczky 1870; Hampel 1900, 704–711; Hampel 1905, Vol. II: 588–595, Vol. III: Taf. 400–402.

426 Révész 1996a, 202.

X.1.2.2. Statistical data on the concentration of finds in burial sites in the Upper Tisza region

In sum, the concentration of high-status finds is much higher in the Upper Tisza region, which makes it distinctive among other regions in the Carpathian Basin. We mention here a couple of examples to illustrate this point: László Révész, who compiled a general list of assemblages, has found that 51 sabres out of 129 in total (39.53%) were from this region. It is also conspicuous that at least 34 of them came from merely 9 sites (*Fig. 123*).[427]

The concentration of sabres ornamented with gilded and silver fittings is even more striking. Essentially, all of them are from this region (*Fig. 118*). Similarly, ornamented bow cases are known only from this region. The distribution of other types of objects, described by László Révész as "badges of honour", show a similar pattern, be it sabretache plates, mount ornamented sabretaches, or belt mounts (*Figs. 115–117, 120*). *"Prestige chain networks"* could have certainly influenced the concentration of "high quality" finds (as Ádám Bollók referred to them). With two exceptions – from Hlohovec and "Báránd" (*Fig. 119*) – all of these objects are from the Upper Tisza region.[428] This is why we think that Révész' conclusions are still valid (29 years later), without major corrections; *"in the first half of the 10th century the power centre of the Hungarian princes was situated in the Upper Tisza region"*.[429] On a side note perhaps, we would underline that we should rather think of this power centre as a "central region", and not as a particular location.

X.1.2.3. Chronological issues

There are several burials known from around this region, which presumably belong to the "first generation", however, when looking at each landscape region separately, the situation is less clear or convincing. Apart from the few graves, which can be, indeed, considered as "first generation" as they have eastern parallels,[430] the evidence from this region remains still unclear. Presently, we are unable to tackle this problem, and we should probably rethink the traditional periodization of the 10th century starting from the very basics. The periodization of the most important archaeological sites is shown in *Fig. 57*.

X.1.2.4. The question of the dating of graves no. II/52 and III/11 at Karos

The technical-scientific revolution[431] from the end of the twentieth century to the beginning of the twenty first century resulted in the integration and application of new methods and techniques in archaeological research, among which is radiocarbon dating.

In the research of the Hungarian Conquest Period, the radiocarbon method gained ground even slower than in that of the Avar Period.[432] The distribution of the current radiocarbon data is far from covering the dwelling area marked out by 10th-century AD cemeteries. Of the 24 AMS-dated Hungarian Conquest Period graves, three (five samples) were discovered in the northern part of the Transylvanian Basin, one in the northern zone of the Great Hungarian Plain and the Upper Tisza Region, while the rest – 24 samples from 19 graves – were unearthed in cemeteries and burial places in the area of Szeged. The *terra incognita* in this regard includes the northern regions of the Carpathian Basin, the Lesser Hungarian Plain, most of the Great Hungarian Plain, Transdanubia, and the southern part of the Transylvanian Basin.[433]

427 Révész 1996a, 198.
428 Bollók 2015, 571–572.
429 Révész 1996a, 202.
430 In this case, we should look into the problem of whether these eastern parallels, indeed, mean that these individuals arrived here directly from *Atelcuzu/Etelköz*, or there are alternative explanations (i.e. trade contacts) for cultural analogies.
431 Narayanamurti–Tsao 2021.
432 Szenthe–Faragó–Gáll 2024, 459.
433 Szenthe–Faragó–Gáll 2024, 460.

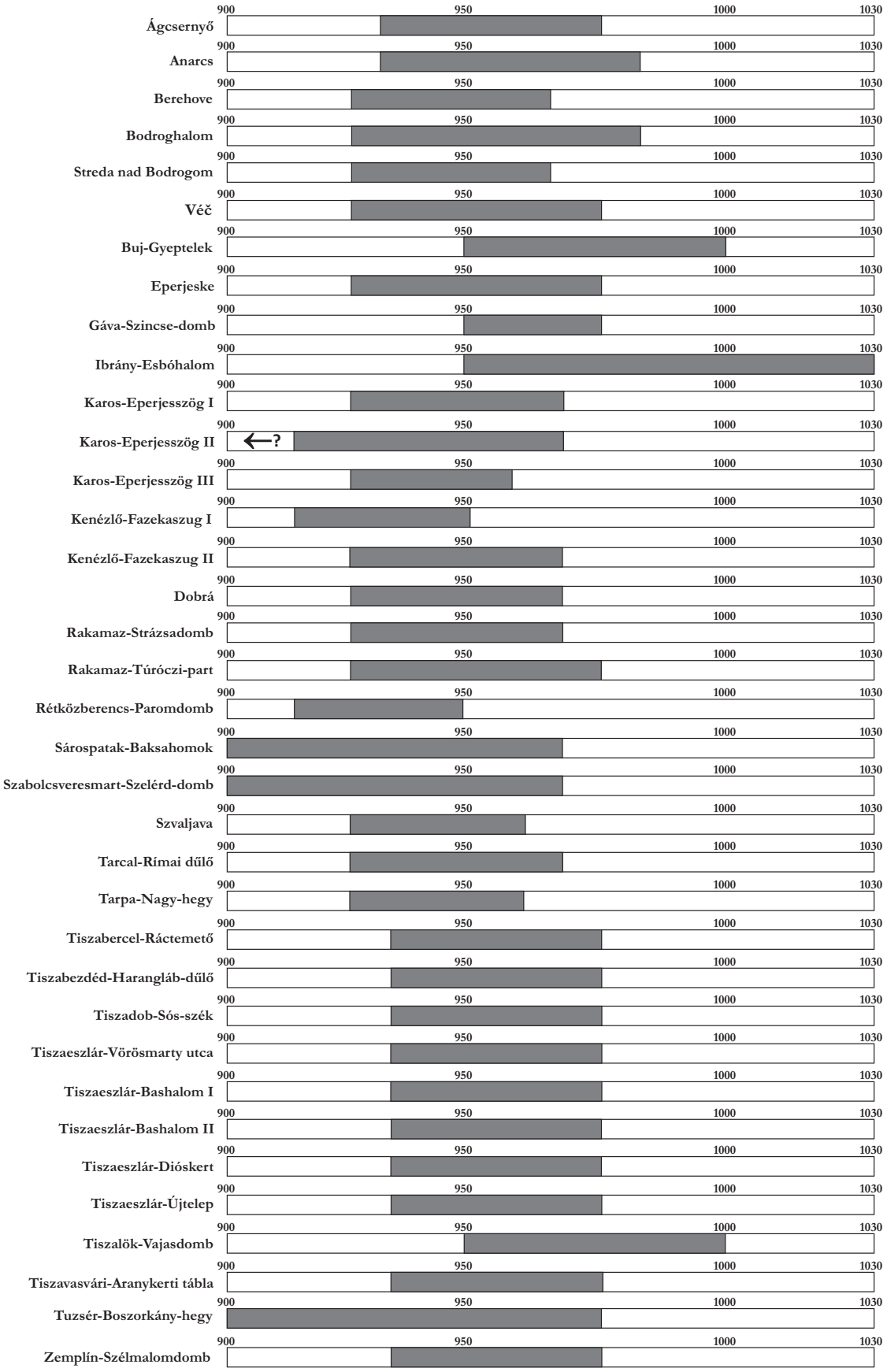


Figure 57. *Relative chronology of 10th-century burial assemblages in the Upper Tisza region*

In this regard, the radiocarbon data obtained from the human skeleton in grave no. 11 of the Karos-Eperjesszög III cemetery can be considered an outstanding achievement. Based on the results of a joint archaeometric and radiocarbon analysis published in 2021, the 38–45-year-old male was laid to rest in the mid-10th century AD, implying that he was a member of the second or third generation of Hungarians.[434]

These analyses were expanded in a more recent study by the analysis of sheep and horse bones from the burial (a total of 9 ^{14}C data), and then the results were examined using combinatorial and Bayesian analysis. The year of the first reports about the Hungarians, 862, was incorporated into the Bayesian analysis statistical model, as a result of which the burial was re-dated – contrary to the study from 2021 – to the end of the 9th century. This could mean that if the 38–45-year-old man indeed was deceased at the end of the 9th century,[435] but certainly before 892, then he could have been born around 845–854.[436] Based on the genetic analyses,[437] it is possible that he had been biologically related to the 45–50-year-old individual from grave no. 52 of the Karos II cemetery, who was dated after 904–911 by both ^{14}C data, and the coins found in the burial. This could also mean that more than 20 years may have passed between the burials of the two individuals. If we consider the year 911 post-quem, then the individual from grave no. 52 of Karos II cemetery could have been born between 861–866, thus the strontium isotope analyses may produce new data (were they born in the given place or not?) in both cases. On the other hand, a new, more reliable AMS analysis of the bone material (human and animal) from grave no. 52 of Karos II cemetery should be carried out. In order to prove these very interesting results definitively, a comprehensive examination of the human and animal bones found in cemeteries II and III is needed, on how the radiocarbon results relate to the two burial sites dated to the first two thirds of the 10th century based on typochronological analyses. This would be especially important in the case of cemetery III, consisting of a single row of graves, since objects such as the braid discoid plate ornaments and the band bracelets with coiled terminals from grave no. 5 or the square-shaped caftan fittings from grave no. 6 were previously considered to be dated to around the middle of the 10th century.[438]

Somogyi and Türk's analysis is definitely a significant step forward, which should be followed by further studies of probably even medium-sized cemeteries.

X.2. The Transylvanian Basin as a periphery in the 10th century

X.2.1. *Analysis of 10th-century burial sites in the Transylvanian Basin*

The Transylvanian Basin is geographically separate from the central part of the Carpathian Basin. Its western border is the Transylvanian Mountains, which has two passes: a narrower one along the Mureş River, and in a broader one along the Someş River. This geographical situation influenced the political history of Transylvania and the social development of the region in many ways. With regard to the 10th century, it was important that the wooded steppe covered only small areas in this region, north of Cluj-Napoca. It was similarly important that Transylvania has a dense network of rivers and is rich in salt deposits and precious metals *(Fig. 58)*.

434 Türk et al. 2021, 54–55; Szenthe–Faragó–Gáll 2024, 482, Fig. 14.
435 As dated in 2020 by Ágnes Kustár, anthropologist at the Hungarian Natural History Museum's Department of Anthropology.
436 In this matter, strontium isotope analysis could produce important results.
437 Neparáczki et al. 2018.
438 Révész 1996a, 34, 87, 95–96, 114. tábla 6–10, 115. tábla 6–14.

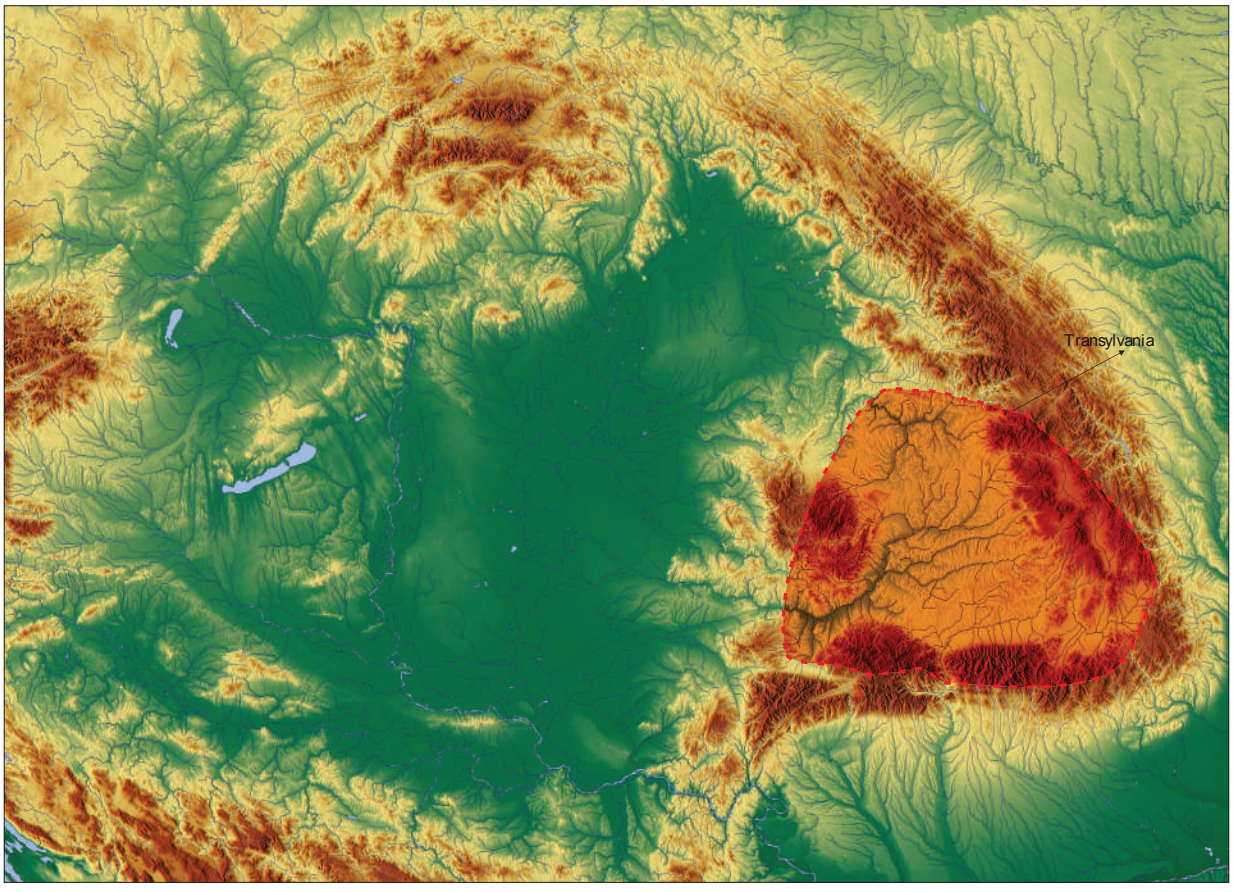


Figure 58. *Geographical position of Transylvania (Romania) in the Carpathian Basin (Basemap: Gergely Szenthe)*

Archaeological evidence demonstrates that some parts of this semi-independent region were also occupied by the Hungarian "steppe state". As in other regions of the Carpathian Basin, this meant the occupation of former centers, former Roman settlements and strategic sites along the networks of ancient roads. From this point of view, the situation of Roman roads and centres was important, as this could influence military operations during the conquest.[439] On the other hand, there is no data to confirm the presumption that the Transylvanian Basin was already perceived in the 10th century as a separate geopolitical entity! The castle of Turda (*"castrum, quod vocatur turda"*) is referred in 1075 as *ultra silvam*, and in 1111 as *Alba Transsilvana*.[440]

The nomadic-semi-nomadic pastoral lifestyle of the ancient Hungarians, keeping a significant amount of large beasts, is well known to researchers studying the 10th century (see *Chapter VIII*). For ruminant animals, particularly cattle and sheep, salt intake is absolutely necessary for nutritional or physiological reasons. Sodium improves their digestion of fodder and relieves digestive problems. In the Carpathian Basin, salt can be found only in Transylvania *(Fig. 60. A)*. The geological formation of salt deposits can be traced back to the Early Badenian epoch, around 14 million years ago (for more on this, see *Chapter XII*). Salt deposits were situated primarily in the northwestern and central areas of the basin. As attested by medieval examples, salt was transported to the west along two main routes: along the River Mureş (to Szeged), and along the inland route to Sălacea and Szolnok.[441]

439 For more, see: Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 821–835; Gáll 2014, 82–95.
440 Benkő 2001, 22.
441 Based on the so-called World System Theory (WST), the economic and political significance of salt dates

The geographical differences of the microregions within the basin influenced the lifestyles of the local population in different ways. Mapping the 10th-century archaeological sites, we see that they are concentrated in the western areas of the basin, and it is possible to discern two chronological phases *(Fig. 62. B)*.

I. Dating to the first half of the 10th century, there are burial sites of warrior strata, which occur only in some places, more precisely only around Cluj-Napoca (Kalevala [today: Semenicului], Plugarilor, and Zápolya [today: gen. Traian Moşoiu] streets) *(Fig. 59; Fig. 63)*. These sites are situated in the area of the III and IV terraces, or plateaus of the river, thus, dominating the surrounding landscape. In addition to the topographical situation of the sites, the burial customs and the grave finds also clearly reflect the symbolic status of these communities ruling over their neighbours. On the other hand, the sites were close to the Roman road, and thus, we also see the continuing role of Roman infrastructure *(Fig. 60. B)*.

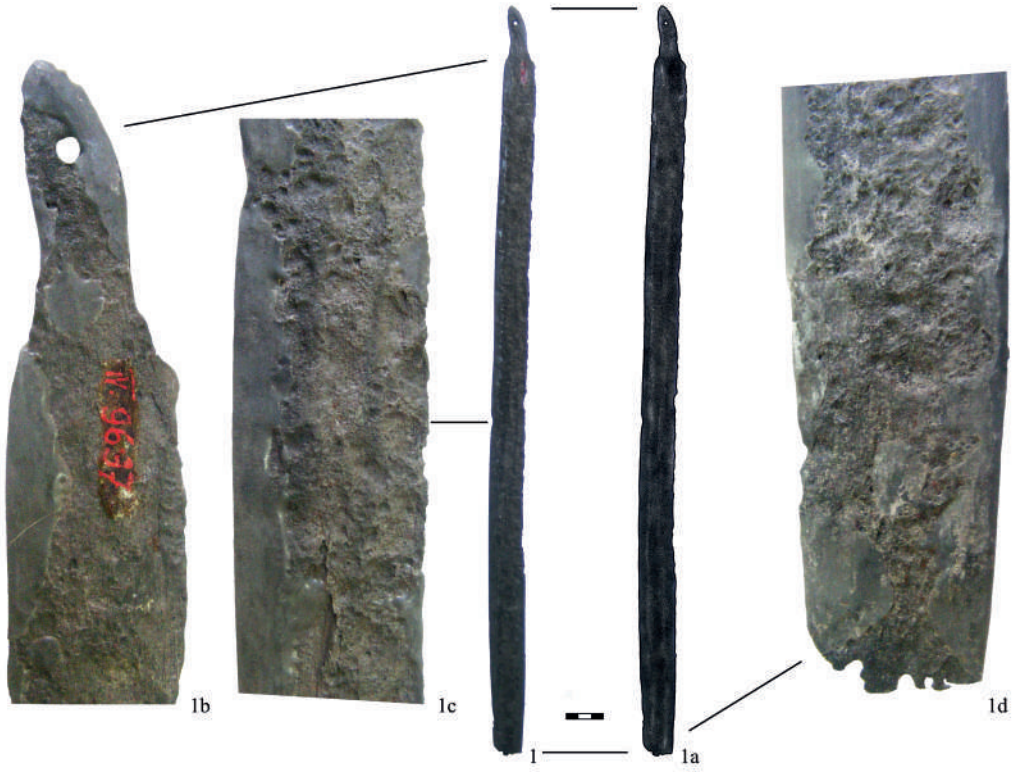


Figure 59. *Cluj-Napoca-Zápolya street (today: gen. Traian Moşoiu), grave no. 4: sabre (The National History Museum of Transylvania, Cluj-Napoca) (Photo: Márk Haramza)*

The concentration of graves with weaponry and horse burials in the Kalevala, Plugarilor, and Zápolya streets indicates the presence of an active warrior strata *(Fig. 59)*.[442] Observations concerning the burial context and anthropological studies of the skeletal remains also confirm this. In the grave of a 60–65 year old *senilis* man (Cluj-Napoca-Plugarilor street, grave no. 25), a diverse set of weaponry was found, which indicated not only his military profession, but also his social status. In the case of other graves there (graves no. 4, 10, 12, and 22), as well as in the Zápolya street cemetery (graves no. 4, 6, and 10), the simpler grave goods of *maturus/senilis* individuals rather just indicate that they were warriors. Skeletal remains from the Plugarilor street

back as early as the Bronze Age: Kiss 2011, 211–239. It is similarly important to note that salt mines in Transylvania were – from the very beginning – royal property, and salt transports were centrally coordinated by royal authorities (Hahn 1993, 15–22; F. Romhányi 2016, 17, 26, 61; Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 821–835; Gáll 2014, 82–95).

442 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 826–831.

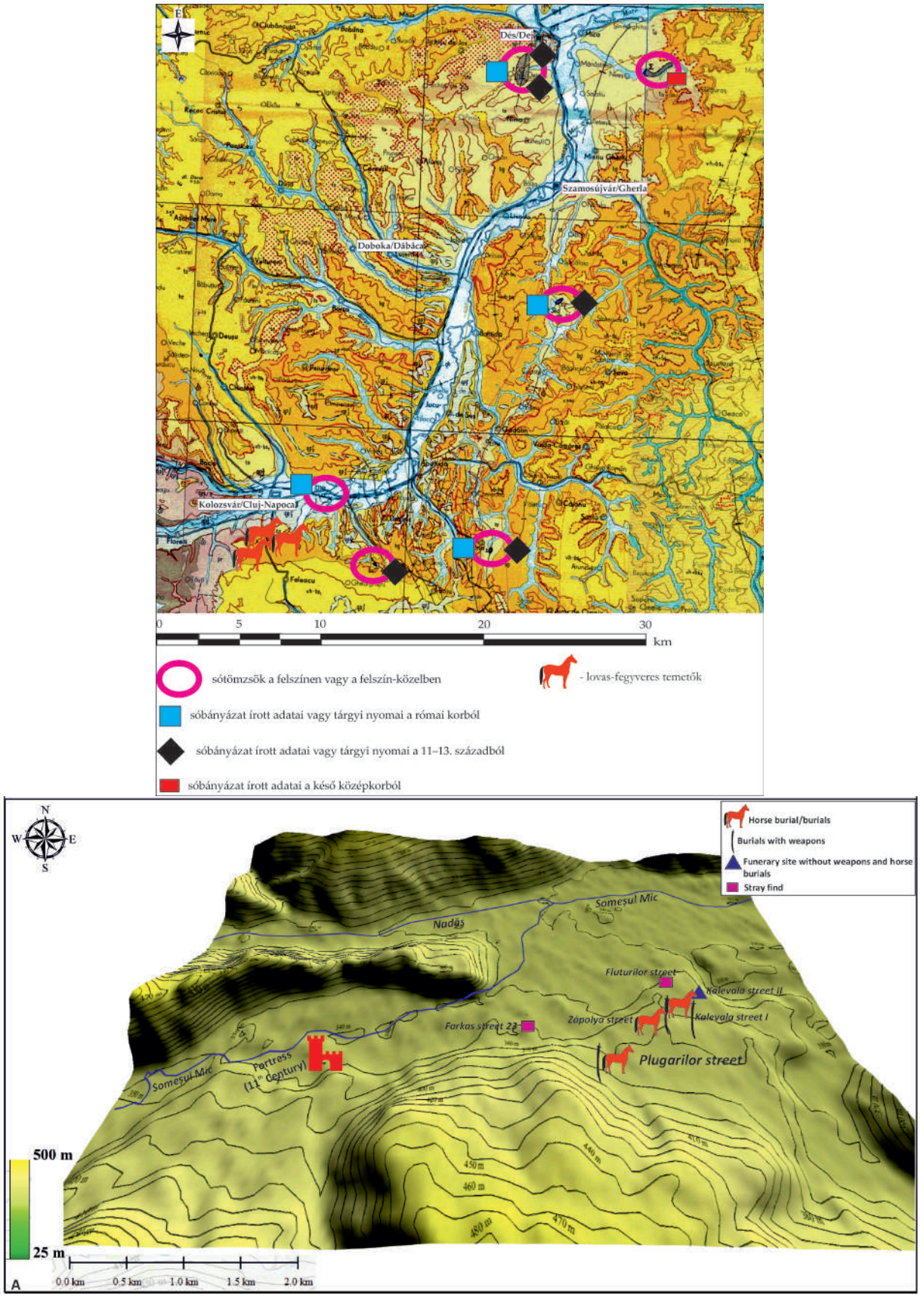


Figure 60. A–B. *Surface and near-surface salt deposits and salt-mines in the catchment of the Someşul Mic River, and the situation of 10th-century burial sites in the area of Cluj-Napoca (after* Gáll et al. *2017, Fig. 8 and Map 10)*

have been subject to anthropological analysis (by Antónia Marcsik), and the absence of lesions/markers related to physical work indicated that these men were "professional" warriors.[443] On the skull of a skeleton (grave no. 22, Plugarilor street), there was a healed cutmark, showing that the man recovered from his injury.[444] Once again, these observations confirm the special status of these communities.

Although precious-metal grave goods were not found, the aforementioned burials and burial sites were remarkable for the amount of weapons and diverse weaponry placed in the male graves. 19 out of the 40 graves in total excavated in these three burial sites had weaponry, and in comparison to other regions in the Carpathian Basin this is a high ratio (47.5%). Weapons must have played an important role for the members of these communities, not only as tools of war, but also as status symbols. They were found also in children's graves.

Based on these observations and the topographical situation of these sites, these communities in Northwestern Transylvania (especially in Cluj) presumably played an important role in controlling the extraction and transportation of salt *(Fig. 60. A)*.

In this region, which belongs to the basin of the Little Someş River, 7th–9th-century settlements and cremation cemeteries (*Aiton, Baciu, Căianu, Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-Napoca-Someşeni, Dăbâca, Dorolţu, Iclod, Jucu*) can be found practically in the entire area of the basin. There has to be a reason why the use of these sites ends in the 9th century. In agreement with István Bóna, however, we think that the upper chronological boundary of cremation cemeteries should be dated not to the 9th century, but to the 10th century. This is corroborated in the international literature, where one finds that the practice of cremation is documented in other areas in the 10th and 11th centuries as well.[445] Furthermore, there is also circumstantial evidence: in the valley of the Little Someş River we do not find burial sites with a large number of relatively poorly furnished graves dating to the period of the Conquest. The ones around Cluj represent a different population group, – an "island" – with an above-than-average ratio of burials with weaponry. This suggests that the local population (practicing cremation burials) was not annihilated by the Hungarians in the 10th century, but could rather have been integrated into the economic, political, and military structures imposed on them after they were defeated. Materials from the Cluj burials suggest that these groups had close connections to the Upper Tisza region and that the conquering Hungarians had established a military centre here as early as the beginning of the 10th century, in order to control this region. The construction of a wood-and-earth fortification at Cluj-Napoca-Mănăştur that functioned in the 11th century as the centre of the county, was certainly not incidental *(Fig. 60. B)*.

II. 10th-century burial sites, burial customs and grave goods are documented in the central and southern parts of Transylvania (Gâmbaş-Măguricea/Kis Magura *(Fig. 61)*, Alba Iulia-Roman Catholic Cathedral, -Staţia de Salvare, -Izvorul Împăratului, -Brânduşei street, Blandiana Sites "B" and "C", Orăştie-Dealul Pemilor X2, Deva-Micro 15) and they differ significantly from what we have just seen in the region of the Little Someş *(Fig. 63)*.[446] Their connections point in the direction of the Southern Great Plain. Cultural influences (through colonization and/or trade) came to Transylvania from different directions. In the first half of the 10th century, there are already indications that Hungarians controlled the southern parts of Transylvania, however, similarly to Carolingian Pannonia (see *Chapter VI*), it is only from the mid-10th century onward that we have solid archaeological proof of cultural influences. Based on archaeological

443 Marcsik 2002–2003, 88.

444 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 826–831.

445 Bóna 1988, 183. See also: Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 822; Gáll et al. 2017, 136–142, 66. kép, 165–168.

446 Gáll 2013a, I. kötet: 94–96, 114–184, 185–187, 188–189, 194–195, 320–328, 329–336, 337, 464–471, II. kötet: 20–21. tábla, 36–79. tábla, 80. tábla, 81–85. tábla, 158–165. tábla, 166–171. tábla, 252–258. tábla; Dragotă 2018, 325–351; Dragotă 2019, 107–124; Marcu Istrate 2008, 108–109; Marcu Istrate 2022, 11–55; Ciugudean–Dragotă–Popescu 2022, 78–114; Ţiplic 2022.

evidence from Southern Transylvania, it is unfortunately impossible to tell when – if at all – the Hungarian warrior elite appeared there (this could be explained only by the conquest however). It seems that a more significant wave of migration occurred around the middle of the 10th century, and based on the typological connections of archaeological finds, it was coming from the west – from the Southern Great Plain.

In Alba Iulia, populations with different cultural backgrounds coexisted. This is clearly reflected in the burial customs documented in local burials. It was possible to discern the traces of the Avars, the Bulgarian-Turks (who settled in Transylvania in the 9th century, under Bulgarian rule), as well as of a third group, whose funerary practices seem to have changed from cremation to inhumation, and whose cultural background was presumably Slavic, inferred from the concentration of Slavic place-names around Alba Iulia.[447]

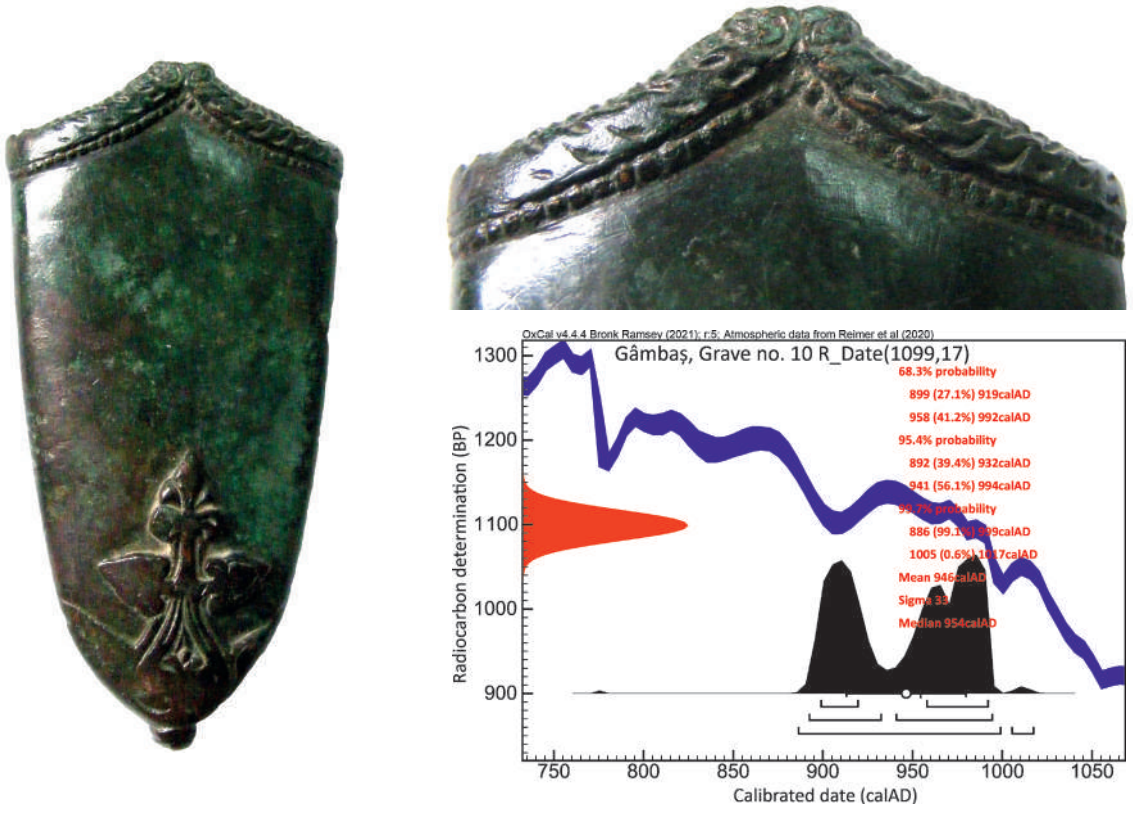


Figure 61. *Stray find from Alba Iulia: sword scabbard chape (National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca) (Photo: Márk Haramza) and the ^{14}C calibration of grave no. 10 in Gâmbaş*

After the Bulgarian conquest, new population settled here, and it is also likely that colonization of the region continued under Avar rule, which explains the significant Avar and Slavic elements of the local population. The 10th-century conquest did not destroy these mixed communities. They were integrated into the new political-social-economic structure. From an archaeological viewpoint, it is difficult to study how rapidly this process occurred (e.g. how fast new burial customs were introduced during the first two thirds of the 10th century). The burials excavated in Brânduşei street were different from what is typically attributed to the Hungarian population. However, there are also two other known burial sites (Alba Iulia-Staţia de Salvare, -Izvorul Împăratului), which could have been used both by the indigenous population and the Hungarian conquerors (with partial horse burials).

447 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 637–639, 821–824, 898–900, 905–908.

The deposition of an egg in some graves was documented as a conspicuous ritual element, which remains unprecedented in the context of other (typical) burial sites of Conquest-period populations. There are also other elements in the material culture of Southern Transylvania, (e.g. bridle bits with cheek pieces made of a single piece of bone; or the loop eyed, trapezoid shaped stirrups), which are not present elsewhere in the Carpathian Basin, and the question arises whether there could be another wave of migration from the east in the 10th century. Considering the relatively low number of conspicuous finds, one should not rule out the possibility that perhaps foreign (northern?) elements were also present around Alba Iulia, who could have served as mercenaries in the military retinue. This suggestion is also supported by another find from Alba Iulia: a sword scabbard chape. A similar piece was found in Székesfehérvár-Demkóhegy, which was similarly an important central place *(Fig. 61)*. On the other hand, one should note that the Alba Iulia church – the excavation of which attracted considerable media attention – did not yet exist in the 10th century; it is dated to the 9–10th (related to the spreading of the Christianity by the Bulgarian state[448]) or to the 11th century.

In conclusion, the socioeconomic organization of the population in Transylvania seems to have been different from that in the Great Hungarian Plain *(Fig. 62. B)*. The deformed vertebrae of skeletons found at the Staţia de Salvare site imply that the local community was exposed to heavy physical stress. Men at arms buried in the cemetery in Cluj-Napoca-Plugarilor street had no such lesions. This may hint at a "division of labor" between different population groups (conquerors and conquered?) in the 10th century, which apparently connects to their social statuses and ethnic origins. Pastoral, nomad or semi-nomad groups apparently mixed with sedentary communities, and the conquerors may have used the conquered population as labour force, for various physical tasks.

When mapping the burials with weapons and horses, and the biritual and cremation necropolises (which were falsely dated to the 7th–9th centuries), their spatial distribution shows a complementary pattern. As for the regions situated to the east from the Mureş and the Little Someş, we do not know of typical Conquest-period Hungarian burials (at present). On the other hand, as shown on *Fig. 62. A*, there is a large number of cremation and biritual sites in Eastern-Central Transylvania, some of which can be dated with certainty to the 10th century (e.g. in Boarta and Mediaş).[449]

Nonetheless, onomastic data may suggest that the eastern parts of the Transylvanian Basin could have been also colonized once by Slavic population groups. Taking into account the lack of Conquest-period finds in regions Eastern Transylvania, it would be perhaps fruitless to look for typical Conquest-period cemeteries there.[450]

X.2.2. 10th-century burial sites and Transylvania as a "periphery". The "peripheries" of a peripheral region

X.2.2.1. Transylvania as a periphery

In comparison to other regions in the Great Plain, the Upper Tisza region, or the Little Hungarian Plain, the Conquest-period burial sites (dating to the first two thirds of the 10th century) are few and far between in Transylvania *(Fig. 62. B)*. This does not support the idea that Hungarians were present in massive numbers, but rather suggests their military interest in connection to securing salt resources. This likely resulted in a different configuration of "power positions" and political-cultural realities. Within the Hungarian "power

448 See *Chapter VI*. According to Daniela Marcu Istrate, this was built around the mid-10th century, and can be linked to Hierotheos' activity (Marcu Istrate 2022, 11–55).

449 Bóna 1988, 182.

450 Gáll–Fülöp–Hőgyes 2020, 385–413.

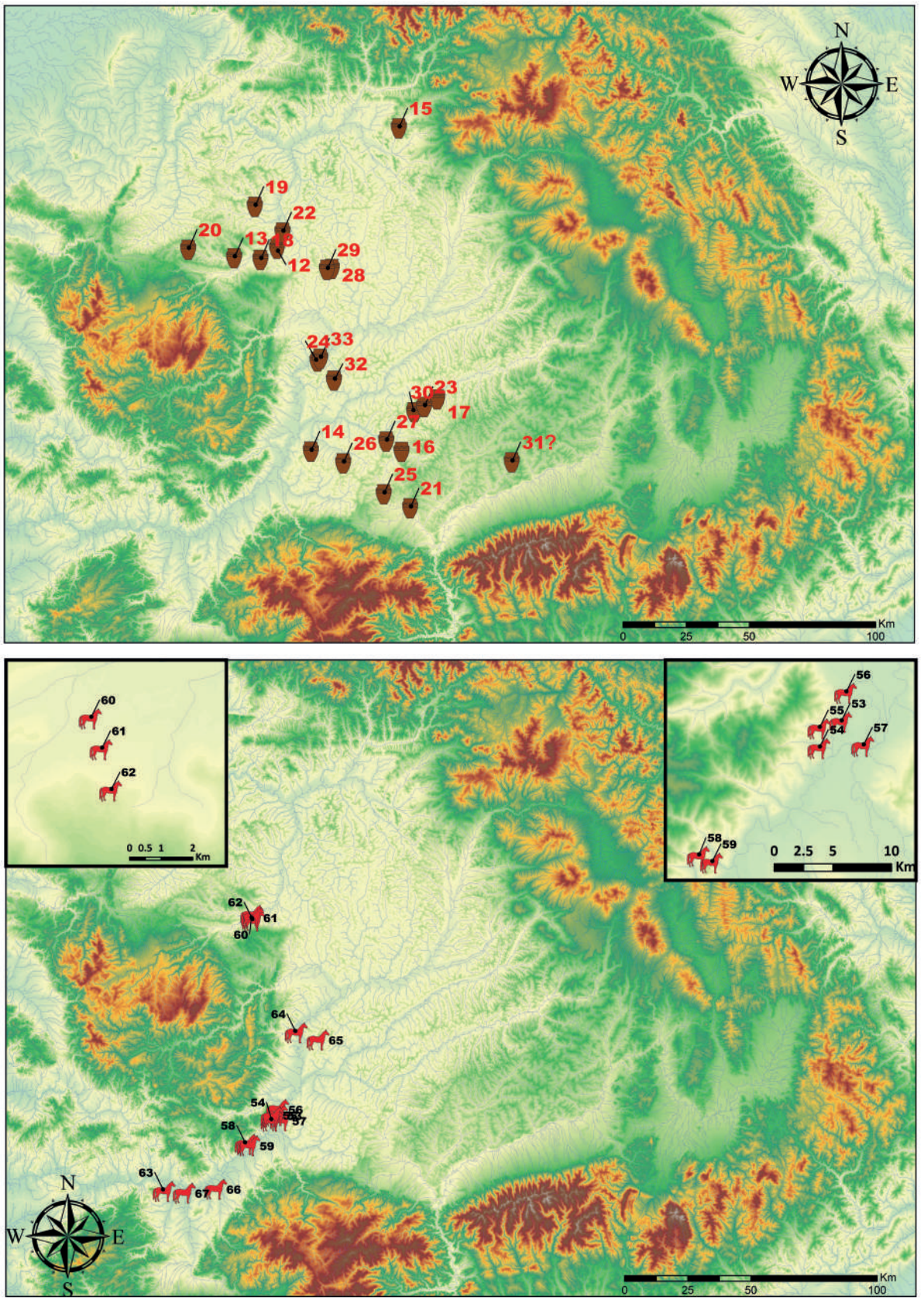


Figure 62. A. *Macrotopography of the incineration necropolises from the "Mediaş" and "Nuşfalău" groups in the Transylvanian Basin;* ***62. B****. Macrotopography of the funerary sites of the "Hungarian conquerors" in the Transylvanian Basin dating to the 10th century*

network", the western parts of the Transylvanian Basin could be, indeed, peripheral. In comparison to other regions of the Carpathian Basin, the relatively poor archaeological evidence clearly reflects this, as does the different composition of archaeological assemblages.[451]

Although there is no written evidence to confirm that Transylvania was considered as a separate region in the 10th century, the above presented characteristics of the settlement pattern, and the concentration of Conquest-period materials in the western part of the Transylvanian Basin show that the Hungarian power structure – dominating the central parts of the Carpathian Basin – did not stretch beyond the central parts of the Transylvanian Basin. To the east of the valley of the Mureş and the Little Someş, 10th-century burial sites were absent. This was pretty much the case during the Avar period as well: with regard to the 6th–9th centuries, a "different world" began east of Bratei, where typical Avar-period burials were completely absent. At least judging by the image of funerary archaeology, Eastern Transylvania was a region, with different cultural characteristics *(Fig. 62. B)*.[452]

Considering that the western part of the Transylvanian Basin was a region situated on the peripheries of two nomadic power structures (the Avar Khaganate and the Hungarian Grand Principality), the more eastern lying parts of the basin should be interpreted as "periphery of the periphery". In this region, already referred in the 13th century as Szeklerland, we do not know of any burial sites dating to the 10th–11th centuries. Thus, the cultural characteristics of this region before the 12th-century Szekler colonization is an intriguing problem.[453]

The periodization of the most important archaeological sites is shown in *Fig. 63.*

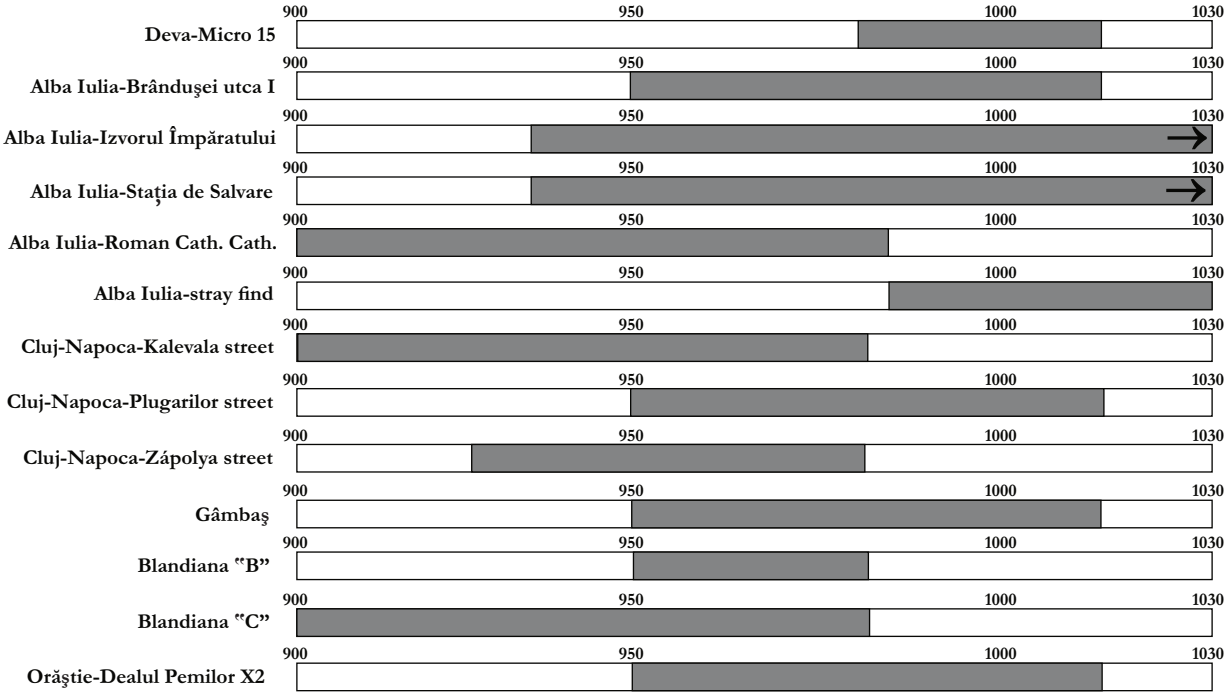


Figure 63. *10th-century burial sites in the Transylvanian Basin and their periodization*

451 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 821–835; Gáll 2014, 82–95.
452 Gáll–Fülöp–Hőgyes 2020, 385–413.
453 See our sceptical remarks on this, with a bibliography: Gáll 2017, 141–162.

X.3. The Trans-Tisza region and the Banat in the 10th century

Unlike *Transdanubia*, a medieval term, *Trans-Tisza* is a modern one.[454] From the point of view of archaeology, the *Trans-Tisza region* is a concept different from that of geography, where it is used in reference to the area east of the Tisza (now the eastern part of Hungary). The *Upper-Tisza* region, discussed in *Chapter X.1*, extends beyond the Tisza and includes the landscape regions of the Rétköz and the Nyíri Mezőség as well. Hereby, we refer to the *Trans-Tisza* as a (meso)region consisting of three regions: (1) the area to the south from Nyíregyháza, and north of the Körös; (2) the region bounded by the Körös/Criş – Tisza/Tisa – Maros/Mureş Rivers; (3) the *Banat* region, south of the Maros/Mureş. (We prefer the term *Banat*, instead of *Temesköz* (~*Temes district*), as it is more widespread in the international literature). Accordingly, we discuss the Trans-Tisza region in three parts. The delineation of the first one is a bit difficult, as there is also a hypothetical boundary to the south from Nyíregyháza. As for the second and third, their boundaries are defined by the major rivers *(Fig. 64)*.

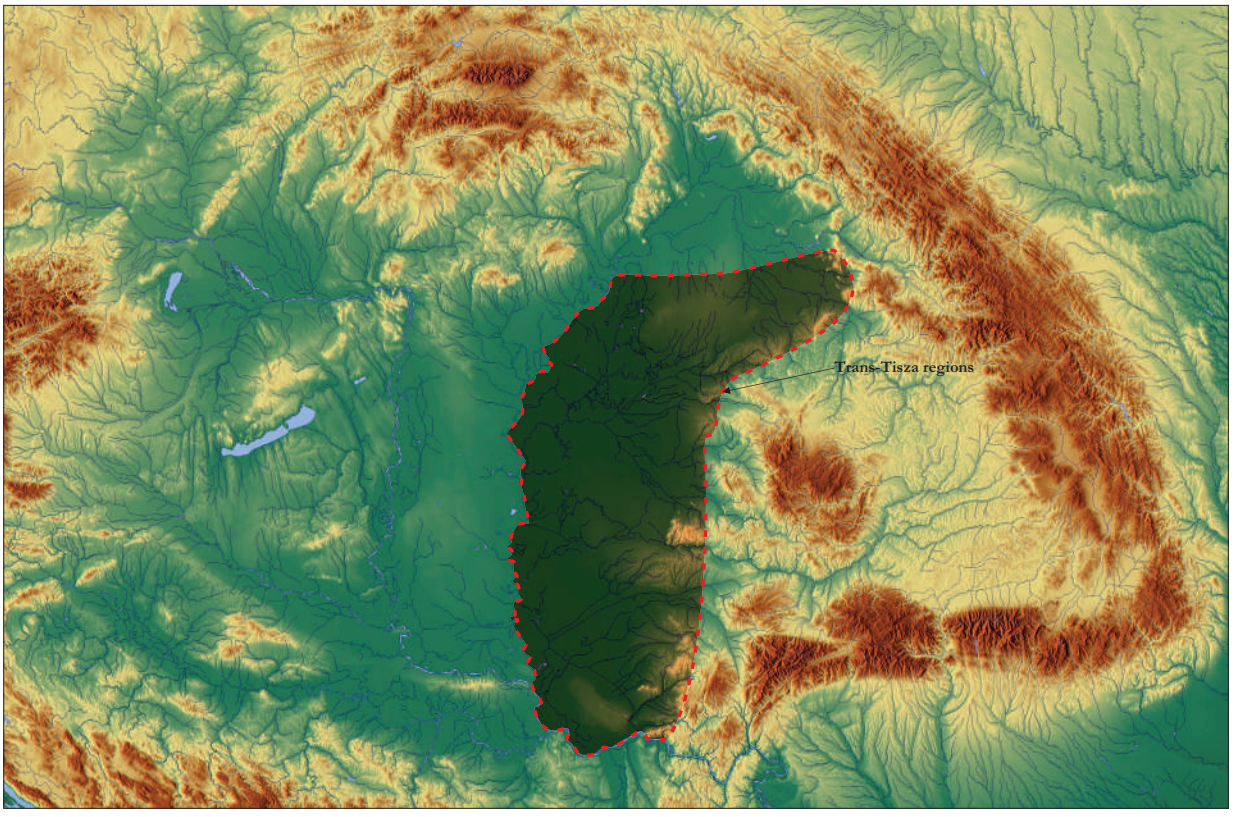


Figure 64. *The Trans-Tisza region in the Carpathian Basin (Basemap: Gergely Szenthe)*

X.3.1. 10th century burial sites in the region north of the Körös

X.3.1.1. Analysis of 10th century burial sites

The area north of the Körös and east of the Tisza consists of the following landscape regions: Nagykunság (once a congruent marshland), Hortobágy, the plains on both sides of the Hortobágy, Hajdúság (Hajdúhát and Dél-Hajdúság), Nyírség, and the Bihar-plains *(Fig. 64)*.

454 Kristó 2000, 9.

Concerning the area to the north from Nyíregyháza, we have detailed site catalogues, however, only the part which belongs to Hajdú-Bihar county has been surveyed for 10th–11th century finds, and the situation is similar in the Romanian part of the Bihar plains, and in the Sălaj (further east).[455] As for the area to the south of Nyíregyháza and the Nagykunság, there is no such survey available. In case of Hajdú-Bihar County, there have been only 17 sites published by Ibolya M. Nepper, and out of the 78 burial sites in total, there are only 12 sites (graves or burial grounds) dating to the 10th, which renders our analysis problematic.[456]

In contrast to the Bodrogköz and the Upper Tisza region, where we know of a significant amount of 10th century burial sites,[457] in Hajdú-Bihar County there is only a few of them, despite that there have been large scale excavations there. The thoroughly researched sites seem to have been used also in the 11th century (e.g. Ártánd-Nagyfarkasdomb, Hajdúdorog-Temetőhegy, Hajdúdorog-Gyulás, Hajdúszoboszló-Árkoshalom, Körösszegapáti-Pállapály, Magyarhomorog-Kónya-domb, Püspökladány-Eperjesvölgy, Sárrétudvari-Hizóföld, Tiszafüred-Nagykenderföldek). In the Nagykunság, there were two graves found in Kétpó, which cannot be dated before the 11th century either. The sites which can be dated narrowly to the 10th century include e.g. Geszteréd, Újfehértó-Micskepuszta, Nádudvar, Sárrétudvari-Őrhalom, Sárrétudvari-Poroshalom, Hajdúdorog-Gyulás, and Hencida-Szerdekhalom.

In Geszteréd, north of the village, a presumably solitary grave was dug up by a wild boar on May 24, 1927. It preserved the richest Conquest period assemblage in the Carpathian Basin: a man of senior age was buried here, with his horse and gold fitted sabre. The director of the local museum, Lajos Kiss, conducted the excavation of the site, but did not find other graves – the wealthy "chieftain" must have been buried alone.[458] The grave goods represent the circle of "plated" objects, therefore, the middle, or the second third of the 10th century is a likely dating in our opinion *(Fig. 65)*.

To the east from here, in Balkány, finds from a female grave were documented sometime before 1871, and there was also a beautiful inlaid stirrup found in 1904,[459] which hint on the presence of similarly rich graves. We see here perhaps a micro-regional group of richly furnished graves, whose connection to the Upper Tisza region is beyond doubt. (Topographically, it is situted 40-50 kms to the south from the Tisza River.)

In Újfehértó-Micskepuszta, just about 1-2 kms from Geszteréd, 21 graves were discovered. In at least 6 of them, some forms of horse burials were documented. Based on a coin of King Berengar [888–915], and two sabres, as well as the mounts of a sabretache, the burials could be dated to the second third of the 10th century.[460]

In Hajdúdorog-Gyulás, 65 graves were found, which were much poorer: apart from a few arrow-

Figure 65. *Geszteréd: gold pommel of the sabre (Jósa András Museum, Nyíregyháza)*

455 M. Nepper 2002, Vol. I: 14; Gáll 2013a, Vol. II: Map 1.
456 Mesterházy 1974, 95–174.
457 Károly Mesterházy refers to approximately 100 sites. Mesterházy 1989–1990, 242.
458 Kiss 1928, 228–231; Kiss 1938, 3–26; AH 1996, 77–81.
459 AH 1996, 129–130.
460 AH 1996, 206–208.

heads and arrow quivers, only symbolic horse burials were documented (only the harnesses of the horses were placed in the graves).[461] The site was used since the mid-10th century.

To the south from here, the characteristics of the burial sites were rather different from what could be observed in the Upper Tisza region.

In Nádudvar-Mihályhalom,[462] and perhaps also in Derecske-Földesi út, there were solitary graves found.[463] Also around Derecske, in the area of the Nagymező-dűlő, three graves were excavated in 2016 *(Fig. 66. B)*.[464]

In Berettyóújfalu-Nagy-Bócs-dűlő, a presumably solitary grave of a 40–50-year-old man was discovered, including a horse burial.[465]

In Sárrétudvar-Poroshalom and Sárrétudvar-Őrhalom, the grave groups could be dated to the second quarter of the 10th century. In Sárrétudvari-Poroshalom, the richest grave was grave no. 1, whose close parallels can be found in the Upper Tisza region, indicating that this population either came from there, or they could have purchased their gold jewelries from craftsmen based there. Graves no. 1 and no. 2 were next to each other, and some 15 meters away from them there was another grave group, of which the richest one was a female grave (no. 9). The pear-shaped stirrup with inlay decoration and the sabre in grave no. 1 were exceptional finds.

In Sárrétudvar-Őrhalom, there was a group of five graves with horse burials, which probably represent a family. Unfortunately, all five graves were robbed; the arrowheads, the fragments of their sabres, the bows and arrow quivers indicate that they were wealthy people – their graves were perhaps the richest ones in this area.

The sabretache plate found in Báránd[466] indicates perhaps a similarly extraordinary burial site in the area north of the Körös (in the Sárrét region).

In Hencida-Szerdekhalom, there were 25 graves, whose spatial arrangement was similar to that of the Sárrétudvar-Poroshalom site. They were dated to the first half of the 10th century.[467]

In Magyarhomorog-Kónyadomb, there were 17 graves, also similarly arranged, and interpreted by László Kovács in connection to a temporary dwelling site (Hun. *"szállás"*).[468]

In contrast to the Bodrogköz and the Upper Tisza region, female dresses in Hencida were richer than the male ones, considering the amount of precious metal finds in the graves. Based on the diverse orientation of the burials, a mixing of the Hungarian and Avar populations was suggested, with the Conquest period Hungarians in one group and with the Avar slaves in the other.[469] Another remarkable local feauture was the scarcity of weapons, which suggests, however, a completely different cultural sociological interpretation, to be described with the following term: *structural integration* (see *Chapter XI*).

In Ártánd-Nagyfarkasdomb,[470] Hajdúdorog-Temetőhegy,[471] Hajdúszoboszló-Árkoshalom, Körösszegapáti-Pállapály, Püspökladány-Eperjesvölgy, Sárrétudvari-Hizóföld[472] both small and large groups of

461 AH 1996, 229–231.
462 Csallány 1959, 308, 310, Abb. 17/3–4.
463 Csallány 1959, 293, Abb. 11/1, abb. 13/1.
464 Berta et al. 2018, 11–17.
465 Lőrinczy–Szelekovszky 2018, 255–290.
466 M. Nepper 2002, Vol. I: 453, 253. kép, vol. II: 365–366. tábla.
467 Fettich 1937, 95–101.
468 Kovács 2006, 215–248; Kovács 2019, 237–264.
469 László 1943, 22–32.
470 Mesterházy 1990, 50–57.
471 AH 1996, 226–228.
472 M. Nepper 2002, Vol. I: 58–107, 122–127, 128–389, vol. II: 25–112. tábla, 114–340. tábla; Bodri 2018, 291–303.

burials were found, all of which could be dated to the second half of the 10th century.[473] However, burials continued into the second half of the 11th century as well, and it is generally problematic whether these sites were used by the same population, or by different groups, who arrived subsequently.

There are also other sites (e.g. Berekböszörmény, Debrecen-Dr. János Balogh's farm, Hajdúböszörmény-Bodaszőlő-Büdöskút, Hajdúböszörmény-Erdős farm,[474] Hajdúszoboszló-49, Bercsényi street, Nyíracsád[475] etc.), and they have not been excavated completely, which is rather unfortunate, considering the richness of their finds. In Biharkeresztes-25, Bethlen Gábor street, for example, there was a presumably large cemetery – or one comprised of separate burial groups –, which was destroyed.[476] A plated braid disc of extraordinary craftsmanship survived from a grave, which could be dated to the second half of the 10th century, based on coins from the grave *(Fig. 66. A)*.

Figure 66. A–B. *Biharkeresztes-25, Bethlen Gábor street, grave no. 1: silver gilt plate discoid braid ornament (Debreceni Déri Múzeum, Debrecen); Derecske-Nagymező-dűlő, grave no. 643: silver gilt disc ornament of a woman's caftan (courtesy of Attila Türk)*

In the eastern part of Bihar County (today in Romania), Biharea-Şumuleu/Somlyóhegy is clearly the most important site, with its 8 graves. Weaponry was documented in almost all of them,[477] however, it is impossible to tell how much of the site was excavated.[478] There are finds from the area of the Ier River as well (Tarcea, Curtuiuşeni, Galoşpetreu), but due to the limitations of research, there is no detailed information concerning the location and extent of the respective sites.[479] To the north from here, in Moftinu Mic, near Carei, a part of a burial site was excavated. In contrast to burial customs typical for the Conquest period (west–east orientation of graves), however, there are very diverse oriented graves here (N–S, E–V, V–E),[480] and there is such a large number of them that it cannot be explained as a deviant practice

473 Only one site, Püspökladány-Eperjesvölgy was subject to detailed chronnological analysis, and the second half of the 10th century was established as its start date (Bodri 2018, 291–303).
474 Kovács 1983, 19–53.
475 AH 1996, 244.
476 M. Nepper 2002, Vol. I: 27–29; AH 1996, 216–218.
477 Contrary to common beliefs, the site was not situated next to the earthen fortification, but 3 kms away from that.
478 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 51–59, vol. II: 8–15. tábla.
479 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 102, 106–107, 112–113, vol. II: 22–23, 35. tábla.
480 1. Parallels for the great irregularity of orientation (W–E, E–W, N–S) found in this cemetery are to be seen in Transylvanian biritual cemeteries, and those in the Lower Danube region, as well as in the biritual cemeteries in the northern area of the Carpathian Basin and in Western Hungary. The varied orientation in biritual

(motivated e.g. by the fear of the undead).[481] The geographical context may also suggest that the local population was different. Perhaps a pagan (Avar) community lived here; the poor furnishing of their graves, as well as the complete lack of weaponry and horse burials indicate their inferior social status.

We would like to emphasise that the finds in E–W or N–S orientated graves are not different from those with W–E orientation, which makes it clear that further research and analyses should be done on burial customs, and possibly by discovering similarities with other regions we could get closer to understanding ethnic and cultural phenomena.A few kilometers to the north from here, in Csenger, a grave with horse burial was found, containing rosette-ornamented harness mounts (the only one of its kind in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County) and an earring with globular pendants.[482] The bridle and stirrup from Csengersima could also indicate a burial with horse.[483]

South of the Ier River, Conquest period burial sites dating to the middle and the second half of the 10th century are known in Oradea-Terasa Salca Gheţărie and Salonta.[484] North of the Sebes-Körös/Crișul Repede, the only sabretache plate is known from "Bárand" (Sárrét region).[485]

In the area of the Nagykunság, Kétpó-Szenttamás-Állami Gazdaság is undoubtedly the most important site to this date. The remaining finds from two graves include a band bracelet, a lion buckle, pressed golden mounts, silver gilt belt mounts, rosette-ornamented horse harness mounts, strap ends, and a silver cup.[486] Based on the pressed golden mounts the assemblage could be dated to the middle or the third quarter of the 10th century. To the north from here, in the surroundings of Tiszafüred the silver gilt fittings of a sabre have been found, which point to a prestigious burial.[487] In the outskirts of Tiszapüspöki, a female grave was found, containing braid discs. It was possibly a solitary grave, however, the archaeologists publishing the finds noted that this is yet uncertain.[488] In Tiszafüred-Nagykenderföldek, there were 115 graves altogether and the use of the site was dated to the second half of the 10th century, however, it clearly goes up to the 11th century.[489]

X.3.1.2. Summary

X.3.1.2.1 The character of burial sites and burials

Burial sites situated to the north of the Körös River look very heterogenous. In all probability, this diversity reflects differences in social status and lifestyle. We know of relatively few solitary graves, and the number of weapons in male graves is less significant. For example, in Hencida or in Moftinu Mic, weaponry was absent, or few. The most representative burial was that of the "chieftain" in Geszteréd, which – in our opinion – should be considered separately from the ones in the Upper Tisza region.

In this region we find typically solitary graves (Berettyóújfalu-Nagy-Bócs-dűlő, Geszteréd, Nádudvar-Mihályhalom, perhaps Derecske-Földesi street), or small sites with few burials (perhaps families?)

Transylvanian cemeteries may offer a solution to this problem; 2. The largest concentration of graves with an inverse orientation in space and time occurred in the 8th–9th centuries. With Christianity spreading during the 11th century, W–E orientation became common in the Carpathian Basin. Therefore, the groups of graves with E–W, S–N, N–S orientation from the 10th century are supposed to belong to a transitional period (Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 154, 597–601).

481 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 246–250, vol. II: 114. tábla.
482 Fábián 2008, 293–302.
483 Fábián 2008, 296.
484 Gáll 2013a, Vol. II: 1. térkép.
485 M. Nepper 2002, Vol. I: 453, 253. kép, vol. II: 365–366. tábla.
486 Madaras 2013, 161–184.
487 AH 1996, 289–290.
488 Fodor–Kertész 2015, 257–263.
489 AH 1996, 290–292, 11. térkép.

(Sárrétudvari-Őrhalom, Sárrétudvari-Poroshalom, Derecske-Nagymező-dűlő). Larger 10th century burial sites (e.g. Hencida – 25 graves, Hajdúdorog-Gyulás – 65 graves), or the ones which start in the 10th century, but continue into the 11th as indicate perhaps the process of sedentarisation, and the emergence of permanent, village-type settlements. The question is whether these burial sites were used continuously during the 10th and 11th centuries, i.e. by the same population.

X.3.1.2.2. Chronological questions

Our analysis reveals that in this region, – contrarily to previous assumptions –, we have no information of burials dating to the first quarter of the 10th century, except for maybe one find, a bridle from Hencida-Szerdekhalom. Thus, the presence of the "first generation" is not evidenced and remains problematic also in regard to the nine sites mentioned by Károly Mesterházy.[490] The radiocarbon dating of grave no. 643 in Derecske should be highlighted here. According to the plateau on the calibration curve, it could be dated the latest to 895 (with 93.5% certainty). However, based on the two *sygma cal. readings*, the years between 925 and 940 should be taken into account as well. Thus, scientific dating (9th century) would contradict the typochronology. However, we probably have an example of a "first generation" burial, when accepting the 925–940 dating. Unfortunately, the age of the woman buried in the grave is not mentioned in the report. The radiocarbon dating of bone materials from two other female graves could provide perhaps further clues.

Since the excavation was extensive and also well documented, the lack of evidence concerning burials dating to an earlier period cannot be explained by the shortcomings of research; there should be other factors. However, the archery equipment found in one of the graves (no. 25) in Magyarhomorog-Kónya-domb – dated by a *denarius* of King Andrew I – indicates that pagan customs still prevailed in the 11th century.[491]

The periodization of the most important archaeological sites is shown in *Fig. 67*.

X.3.2. 10th century burial sites in the Körös/Criș–Tisza/Tisa–Maros/Mureș region

X.3.2.1. Analysis of 10th century burial sites in the Körös/Criș–Tisza/Tisa–Maros/Mureș region

The Körös/Criș–Tisza/Tisa–Maros/Mureș region is a geographically uniform region, and, from the point of view of archaeology, it is the most intensively researched area in the Carpathian Basin. To the south from the Fehér-Körös/Crișul Alb, and from the Körös River system, Conquest period sites can be found mostly in the western part of the region, evenly distributed around the floodplains of the Tisza and the Körös *(Fig. 64; Fig. 68)*.[492] There are altogether 51 sites, dating narrowly to the 10th century, and there are 34 more, starting in the 10th century and going up to the 12th century.

As for the first category, there is a group of them in the area, where the Fehér-Körös/Crișul Alb and Fekete-Körös/Crișul Negru flow into each other (including Békés-Tarhos-Városerdő,[493] Békéscsaba-Erzsébethely,[494] Mezőmegyer-Kerepeczki-tanya,[495] Șiclău-Gropoaie,[496] Szabadkígyós-Pál liget,[497] Szabad-

490 Burials described as "first generation" by Károly Mesterházy rather testify to the eastern economic and trade connections of the Conquest period (Mesterházy 1989–1990, 235–242, 17. kép).
491 Kovács 2019, 53, 39. kép, 37. tábla.
492 Révész 2016a, 578, 580, 1. kép.
493 Jankovich et al. 2008, 641–645, 11/1. lh.
494 Révész 1997, 169–195.
495 Banner 1943, 172–174.
496 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 444–457, vol. II: 231–248. tábla; Gáll–Mărginean 2015, 265–304.
497 Bálint 1971, 49–88.

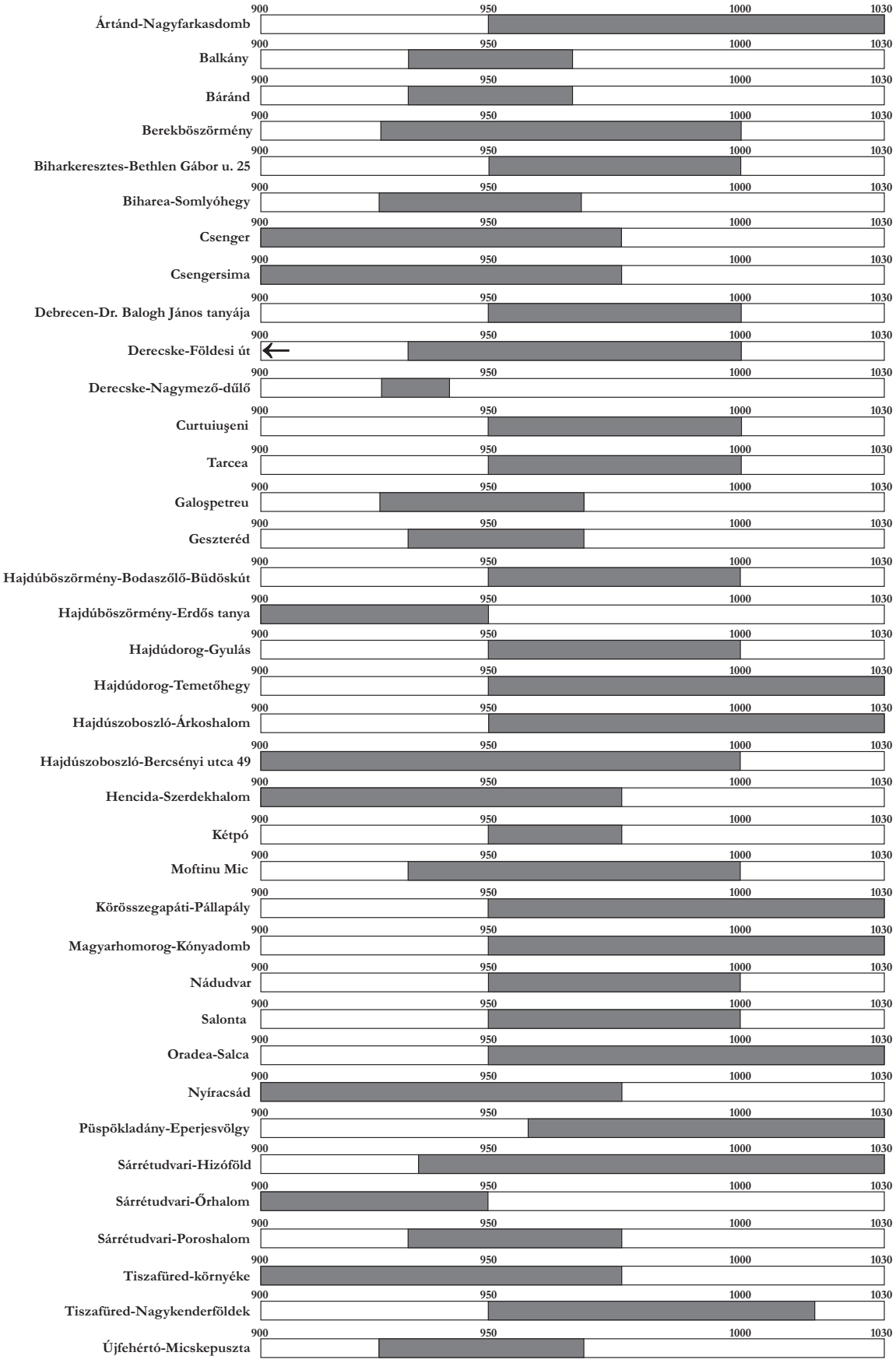


Figure 67. *The chronology of 10th century burial sites in the Trans-Tisza region (north of the Körös River)*

kígyós-Tangazdaság,[498] Sarkad-Peckesvár[499] etc.), and there is also another group around the marshland situated north of the Maros/Mureș (Kunágota-'Boldog A. földje',[500] Medgyesegyháza-'Uhrin A. földje',[501] Medgyesegyháza-Kétegyházi street,[502] Dombegyháza[503]). Many sites were situated along a north-south line, between the landscape region of Szarvas and the sites of Nădlac-Lutărie and Nădlac-7M (along the Maros/Mureș River); see e.g. Békéssámson-'Posztós J. telke',[504] Földeák-Mártírok street,[505] Hódmezővásárhely-Csomorkány,[506] Kunszentmárton-Köttön,[507] Örménykút-Veres tehén dombja,[508] Szegvár-Oromdűlő,[509] Szegvár-Szőlőkalja[510] etc.

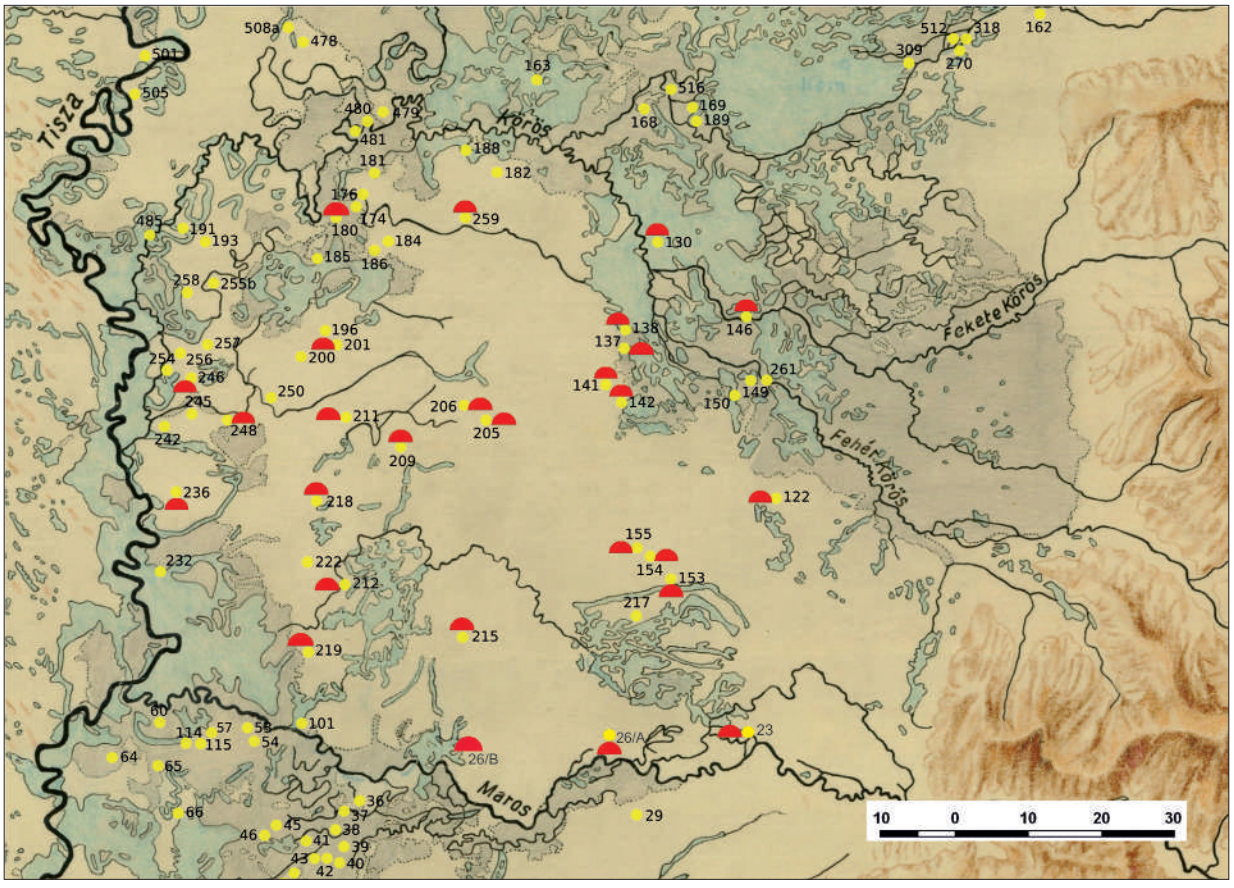


Figure 68. *10th century burial sites in the Körös-Tisza-Maros region (after Révész 2016, 3. kép, amended with: 26. A: Pecica, 26. B: Nădlac-7M) (red semi-circles indicate solitary graves, grave groups, and smaller burial grounds)*

498 Pálóczi Horváth 1971, 7–46.
499 Fettich 1931, 73–75; AH 1996, 347–348; Medgyesi 2015, 121–122.
500 Móra 1926, 123–135.
501 Révész 2016a, 626.
502 Liska–Medgyesi 2002, 409–447.
503 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 32: no. 241; Bálint 1991, 219: No. 61.
504 Dienes 1965, 154–155.
505 Bálint 1991, 221: No. 75.
506 Bálint 1991, 223: No. 91.
507 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 51: no. 608; Bálint 1991, 145: No. 148.
508 Kovács–Vaday 2011, 587–637.
509 Bende–Lőrinczy 1997, 201–285.
510 Lőrinczy 1985, 141–162.

Although, the number of sites dating to the 10th century is significant, only a few of them have been thoroughly researched. Sites like Békés-Tarhos, Békéscsaba-Erzsébethely, Mezőmegyer, Örménykút-'Veres tehén dombja', Sarkad-Peckesvár, Şiclău-Gropoaie, Szabadkígyós-Pálliget, Kunágota, Szabadkígyós-Tangazdaság, Medgyesegyháza-Uhrin A. földje, Medgyesegyháza-Kétegyházi street were dated narrowly to the 10th century, however, only the site of Szabadkígyós-Pálliget was completely excavated. In Kunágota and Şiclău, there were rich burials, whereas other sites, in Szabadkígyós-Pálliget and Szabadkígyós-Tangazdaság, were poor. These sites could have belonged to typical Conquest period communities, as a generally higher (but diverging) ratio of male graves (with weaponry and partial or symbolic horse burials) is attested. The site in Kunágota, consisting six graves, was completely excavated by Ferenc Móra. In one of the graves, a horse burial, a Byzantine sword, a full set of silver gilt belt mounts, and parts of an archery equipment were found, dated by two Byzantine coins (of Romanos I, and Constantine VII, Stephanos and Constaninus [931–944]), to the second third or third quarter of the 10th century.[511]

In the area between the valleys of the Körös and the modern-day settlements of Mezőberény, Békéscsaba and Gyula, 10th–11th settlements and burial sites were documented, which had been inhabited/used uninterruptedly. The most important one was Gyula-Szövetkezeti Téglagyár.[512] To the southwest from there, between Szabadkígyós and Dombegyháza, there were rather small burial sites, which represent perhaps temporary dwelling sites – they were abandoned in the last third of the 10th century.

In the surroundings of Gyoma and Kunszentmárton, there are 12 sites. The ones dated narrowly to the 10th century yielded generally poor finds (e.g. Kunszentmárton-Köttön-dűlő, Békésszentandrás-Homokos, Szarvas-Tessedik street). László Révész estimated the average number of burials at these sites to around 20–50, but there were also solitary burials (e.g. Békésszentandrás-Homokos). The use of these sites ended during the second half of the 10th century, or at the end of the century.[513] As they were situated generally along the floodlplain of the Körös, temporary, or permanent floods might explain why there is no evidence for more permanent settlements. These communities did not seem to have pursued a sedentary lifestyle.

In the area between Szentes and Mindszent, the most important sites are Szentes-Borbásföld, Szentes-Derekegyházi oldal, Szentes-Szentlászló, and Szentes-Nagyhegy. Szentes-Borbásföld and Szentes-Derekegyházi oldal have been excavated completely. In Szentes-Borbásföld, 20 graves were found by Győző János Szabó (including 9 males, 7 females, and 3 subadults). The burials were dated to 950–980/990. Among the male burials, archery equipments were found in 7 graves, and silver belt mounts in one. There were horse bones in half of the graves, and two other graves contained horse harnesses.[514] In Szentes-Derekegyházi oldal, there were 8 graves (5 female and 3 male burials).[515] Two women's graves contained shirt fittings with pendants, caftan mounts with pendants, earrings with globular pendants, and band- and wire bracelets. There was also a pressed silver braid disc plate in one grave.[516] In Szentes-Szentlászló, the excavated part of the site could be dated to the second half of the 10th century. There were three graves with horses, five graves with horse harnesses. The finds included a sword with a sabre grip, archery eqipments (in seven graves), three axes, hair rings with open terminals, earrings with trapezoidal spiral pendants, earrings of Byzantine and Balkan origin, and a pectoral cross.[517] In Szentes-Nagyhegy, important finds have been systematically destroyed in the course of the last last fifty years or so.

511 Révész 2016a, 610.
512 Medgyesi 2015, 78–92; Fodor–Szatmári–Vörös 2022, 73–124.
513 Révész 2016a, 594.
514 Révész 1996b, 299–336.
515 Langó–Türk 2003.
516 Langó–Türk 2003, 6. kép.
517 Széll 1941, 233–245; Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 74–75: nos. 1027–1028; Bálint 1991, 257, No. 293–294; Révész 2016a, 596–597.

The rescued finds included e.g. hair rings with open, or coiled terminals, a signet ring, iron quiver-straps, band bracelets with coiled terminals, wire bracelets with open terminals, silver gilt dress fittings, a pair of trapezoidal stirrups, a foal bridle, a strap end, and arrowheads.[518] Based on them, the site was dated approximately to the second half of the 10th century.

To the east from there, in Gádoros-Bocskai street, a small site was identified, consisting of 4 graves: a man, a woman, a younger man, and a younger woman were all buried with their horses.[519] The man's grave contained also his belt (decorated with silver gilt mounts), his archery equipment, and his sabre. The young man had his archery equipment and a shepherd's axe. The woman was buried with a pair of earrings (with globular pendants), a string of beads, a stone finger ring, and silver band bracelets. Her horse harness was decorated with two types of mounts: some were rosette-ornamented mounts, while others were similar to the mounts of her belt. The young woman had gold earrings with globular pendants, a silver band bracelet, a ring, an ankle bracelet, and shoe mounts. Her horse harness was decorated with silver plates and heart shaped pendants, her saddle was decorated with palmette ornamented bone plates.

In Nagyszénás-Ferenc Szabó's farm, three poorly furnished graves were excavated. Based on a trapezoid shaped stirrup, they were dated to the second half of the 10th century.[520]

In Eperjes-Takácstábla, three graves were disturbed in 1944. In two of them, there were horse bones; the finds rescued included a pressed silver braid disc decorated with palmette motives, a band bracelet with rounded terminals, and rosette-ornamented harness mounts. Validating the finds, the 1969 excavation found four more graves, including two female burials. In one, there were shirt neck fittings with pendants, and in the other, rhomboidal shirt neck fittings decorated the dress. In one, there was a horse harness, in the other, a partial horse burial.[521]

The southernmost sites in the region are around Mindszent and Szegvár. In the outskirts of Szegvár, we know of two sites. In Szegvár-Szőlőkalja, 62 graves have been excavated, however, the dating of these graves to the first half of the 10th century was not substantiated.[522] In Szegvár-Orom-dűlő, 372 graves have been excavated. The use of this site started in the last third of the 10th century and remained uninterrupted until the last quarter of the 11th century.[523] Although we have a fragmentary knowledge of the local archaeology, the area of Szegvár was relatively densely settled. In Mindszent, we know of only one site, in the area of Koszorús-dűlő, where there was a grave of a man, buried with his quiver and bow and his horse; there were also two graves of children here.[524]

As Révész's map illustrates, 10th century burial sites occur more frequently in the northern and middle parts of the region, while in the southern part, there is only one, Mindszent-Koszorús-dűlő. Smaller sites with 1 to 20 richly furnished graves (including horse burials, sabres, mounted belts in men's graves, silver gilt dress mounts, pressed braid discs, earrings with globular pendandts, rosette-ornamented harness mounts in women's graves) are clearly distinguishable in this region as well from other sites with a larger number of burials including horses and weaponry (e.g. Szentes-Szentlászló, Szentes-Nagyhegy).

To the east from here, in the region of Orosháza, we know of small sites. In Gerendás-Petőfi Tsz, and Gerendás-Vízvári-tanya, a few graves were found, including horses and weaponry.[525] In Orosháza-Puszta-

518 Hampel 1900, 701–703; Hampel 1907, 143–144; Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 74: nos. 1017–1025. sz.; Bálint 1991, 255–257, No. 280–288; Révész 2016a, 597–598.
519 Fettich 1937, 102–104; Bálint 1991, 37–51; Révész 2016a, 599.
520 Langó et al. 2017, 531–556.
521 Bálint 1991, 52–74; Révész 2016a, 599.
522 Lőrinczy 1985, 141–162.
523 Bende–Lőrinczy 1997, 201–285.
524 Langó–Türk 2004, 404.
525 Dienes 1965, 157–158; Bakay–Kiszely 1972, 103–122; Révész 2016a, 609.

szentetornya there was a solitary grave,[526] and in Orosháza-A.Nagy's farm[527] six graves were found which had weaponry, and some had horse burials. In Orosháza-I.Pusztai's farm, three graves were documented, dating to the end of the 10th century.[528] South from there, in Székkutas-Juhász-farm, four graves were discovered, which have not been pulished yet.[529] In Földeák-Mártírok street, there was a grave of a man buried with his horse, however, the context of the grave and the burial custom could not be documented accurately; the grave was richly furnished, including a mounted belt, a sabre, archery equipment, a staff with bone cane head carved into a bird skull, a horse harness, and bone fittings of a saddle.[530]

In the area of Hódmezővásárhely, we do not know of small burial sites with richly furnished graves, despite that there has been a regional survey focusing on 10th–11th century sites.[531] In Hódmezővásárhely-Nagysziget, the burials were dated the earliest to the second half of the 10th century, and the use of the site goes up to the 11th century as well.

To the east from there, in Pecica, a solitary female burial has been discovered recently.[532] 8 kms from Arad, in Ceala, another grave was discovered – earlier –, and a two-edged sword was collected as a scatter find. These finds may hint on small burial site, dating to the mid-10th century *(Fig. 69)*.[533]

Figure 69. *Arad-Ceala, grave "X": pommel, grip, and cross-bar of the sabre (Museum Arad, Arad) (Photo: Csaba Kovács)*

X.3.2.2. Summary

X.3.2.2.1. The social historical context

The sites in this region can be dated generally to the first two thirds of the 10th century. Most of them were of small size – i.e. they represent small communities. Future investigations should focus on the multi-disciplinary analysis of biological connections among individuals buried at these sites. Another question

526 Dienes 1972, 79, Abb. 26; Kovács 1989, 51; Kovács 2011, 144–145; Révész 2016a, 609. There have been also scatter finds collected more recently, which indicate, however, other burials: Bíró–Langó 2017, 52–74.
527 Dienes 1965, 139–142; Kovács 2011, 144; Révész 2016a, 609.
528 Dienes 1965, 142–151; AH 1996, 345–346.
529 Révész 2016a, 610.
530 Móra 1926, 123–135; Révész 2016a, 610.
531 Révész 2016a, 604–606.
532 Mărginean–Andreica 2012, 321–338.
533 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 40–43, vol. II: 3–6. tábla.

is how long the larger cemeteries were used, and whether they could be used subsequently by different mobile communities? Part of this problem is how we interpret solitary graves. We know of at least two or three in Békéscsaba-Erzsébethely, Pecica, and Orosháza-Pusztaszentetornya, and there are others perhaps also in Békéssámson-J. Posztós' farm, and Földeák-Mártírok street.[534] In case of the first two sites, there is evidence for female burials; in Földeák-Mártírok street, there was a male burial.

X.3.2.2.2. Chronological issues

In this relatively large region, there are less than two dozens of graves, which could be dated to the first half of the 10th century (Békéscsaba-Erzsébethely, Földeák-Mártírok street, Gádoros-Bocskai street, Kunágota-A. Boldog's farm, Orosháza-Pusztaszentetornya). Examples of clustered burials are known also from the early 11th century (e.g. in Orosháza-Ignácné Pusztai's farm), thus, it would not be correct to date these within a narrow period; they can be dated generally to the 10th century and probably early 11th century. Whereas north of the Körös River, it is somewhat difficult to see the presence of the "first generation"; in this area, it is nearly impossible.

X.3.2.2.3. The survival of pagan practices

The survival of pagan burial customs expanding into the 11th century is one of the characteristics of the burial archaeology in this region (e.g. burials with horses and weaponry were documented in case of Újkígyós-Skoperda-farm, grave no. 3, Békés-Povádzug, graves no. 45 and 58, Sarkadkeresztúr-Csapháti legelő, grave no. 117).[535] This is perhaps something unique in context of the whole Carpathian Basin.

The periodization of the most important archaeological sites is shown in *Fig. 70*.

X.3.3. 10th century burials in the Banat

X.3.3.1. Analysis of 10th century burials in the Banat

Since the time of Matthias Corvinus, the Banat region was seen as part of the *Alvidék* (*terra inferiore* ~ nether-lands). *Banat* is a modern name, an 18th century concept,[536] referring specifically to the eastern part of the *Délvidék* (a more recent historical term, synonymous to *Alvidék*). The Banat region covers 28522 km^2. Due to the diversity of its natural geography, there are several landscape regions here. In addition to mountain landscapes, one finds valley regions, plains, and river basins as well. Its unique vegetation is characterized by floodplain environments, but features also plants tolerant of arid conditions and salt environments (*xerophile* and *halophyte* plants). The plains are covered by fluvial deposits (Pleistocene and Holocene loess mud and other loess-like deposits). The natural land cover of the Banat Hills is woodland. Due to the variations of the terrain, climate, and bedrock, the water system of the region is complex and dense: the main rivers are the Danube, Tisza, Maros/Mureş, Bega, Timiş-Bârzava, Nera, Caraş, and Cerna *(Fig. 64; Fig. 71)*.[537]

The 10th burial sites are situated mostly in the valley of the Maros/Mureş and along the Tisza, as indicated on László Révész's map *(Fig. 71)*.[538] Approximately 85% of the sites are situated south of the

534 Dienes 1965, 154–155; Bálint 1991, 221: No. 75.
535 Medgyesi 2002, 147, 162; Medgyesi 1993, 488–489, IV. tábla; Trogmayer 1962, 18–19.
536 Kókai 2010, 13–16.
537 Kókai 2010, 17–36.
538 Révész 2016b, 644: Abb. 2.

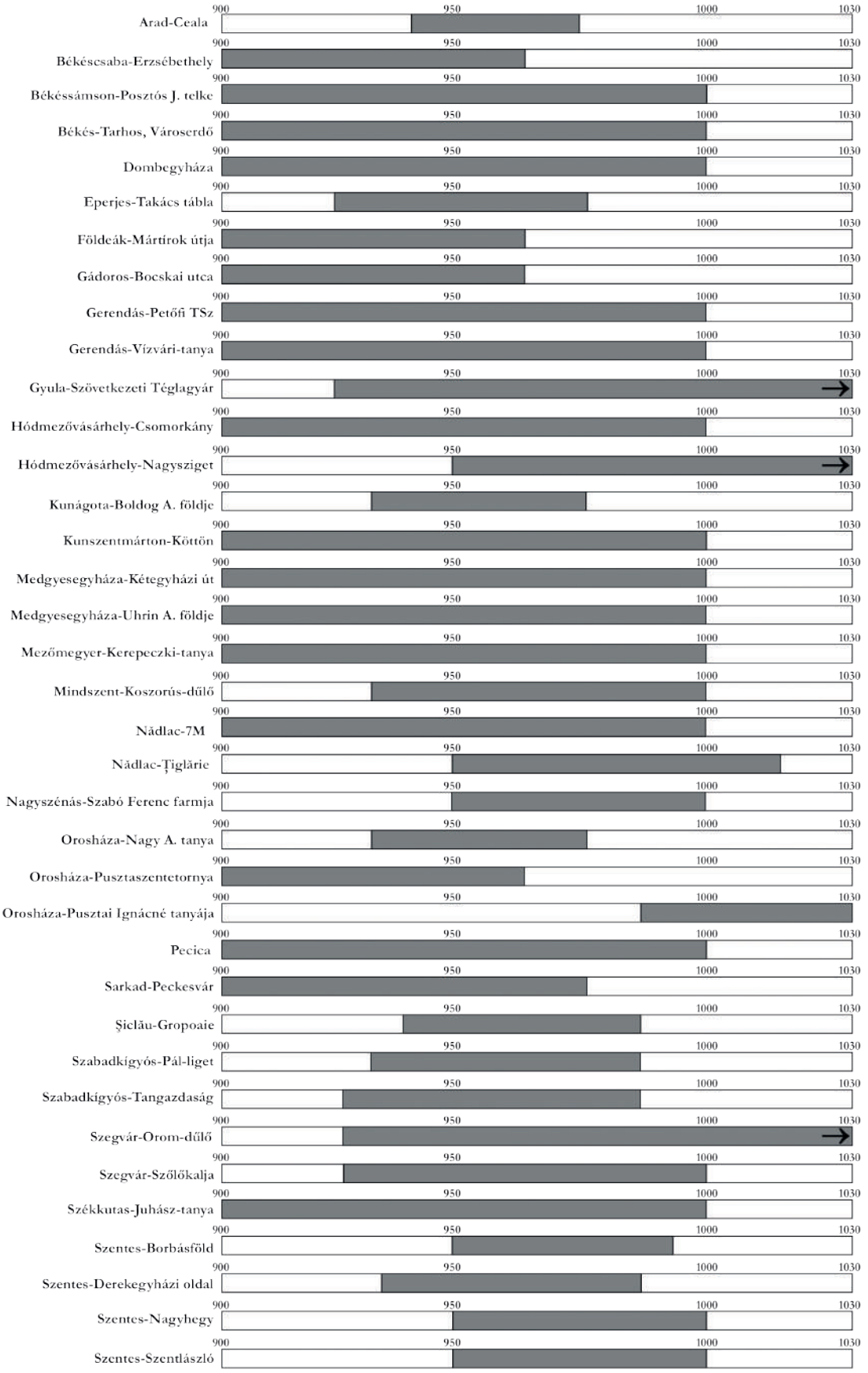


Figure 70. *Relative chronology of 10th century burial sites in the Körös/Criș–Tisza/Tisa–Maros/Mureș region*

Maros/Mureş, within a 10-15 kms distance from the river.[539] Currently, we know of 28 sites, which can be divided into two groups (including two subgroups), based on their geographical situation:[540]

1.a) Burial sites situated directly at the Tisza/Tisa–Maros/Mureş confluence (around Kiszombor, Deszk, Ószentiván, Kübekháza, Vălcani)

1.b) Grave groups, solitary burials situated to the south from Cenad (Dudeştii Vechi-Bukovapuszta, mounds no. II, III, IV, V, VIII, IX).

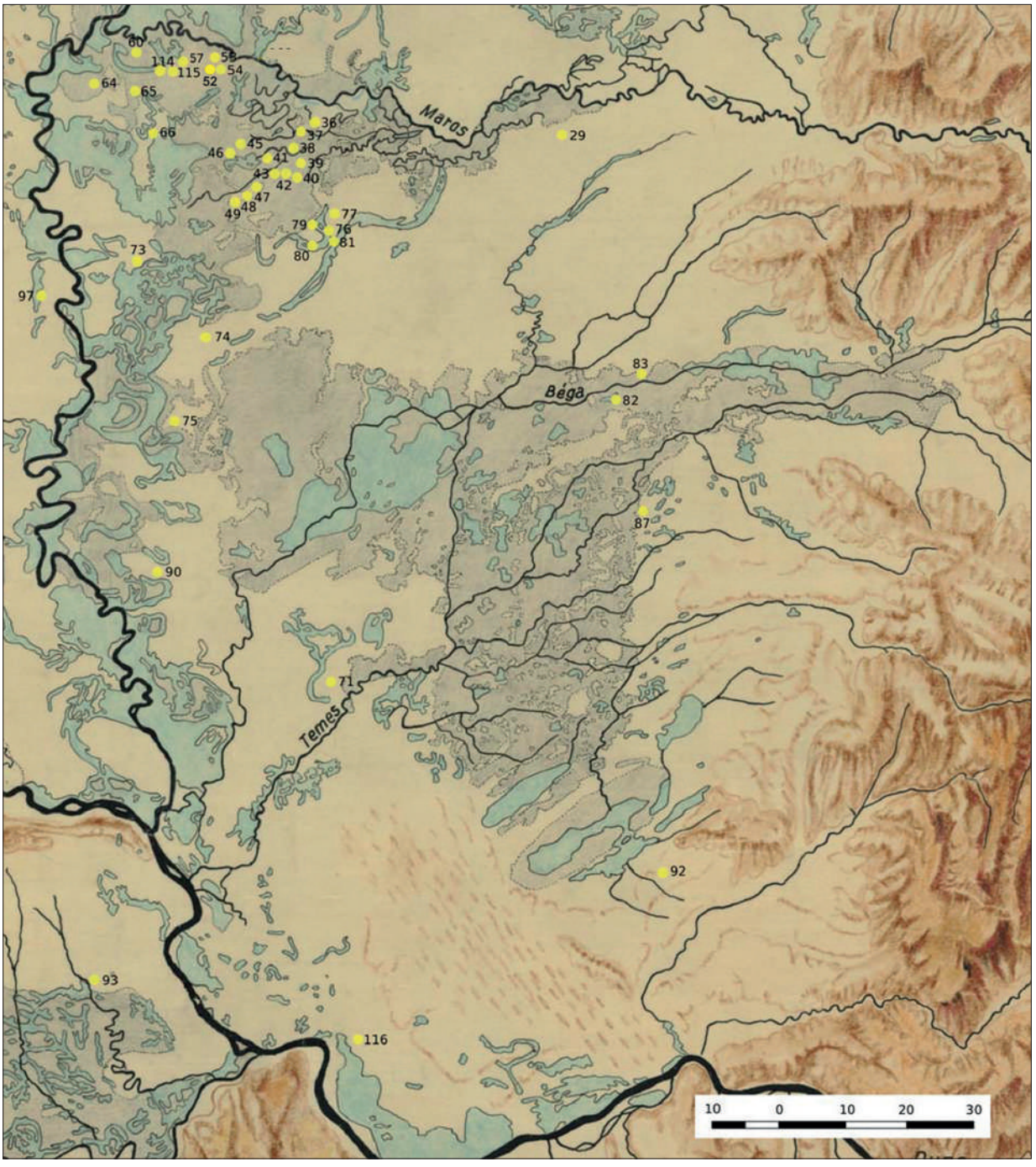


Figure 71. *10th century burial sites in the Banat region (after Révész 2016b, Abb. 2)*

539 The distribution of Early Avar sites is similar (Gáll–Romát 2016, Map 2).

540 Révész 2016b, 644: Abb. 2; Radičević–Špehar 2015, Appendix: 154–156: Fig. 1. See also: Bálint 1941.

Both groups are situated in the Tisza–Maros/Mureş–Aranca triangle.

2. Burial sites around Comloşu Mare – Teremia Mare – Tomnatic.

To the south from here, we hardly know of any sites. Chance occurrences of graves have been documented along the Tisza, in Jazovo, Karlova, Kikinda-Galád-dűlő, Novi Bečej, and along the Csörsz-ditch, in Sânpetru German, Ciacova, Uivar, Dumbrăviţa, and Vršac.

Taking into account that our data are insufficient due to the poor state of research, the most important fact to be underlines is the presence of small sites (small groups of burials). Most of the 39 sites in total (not counting stray finds) are solitary burials or small grave groups (2–10 graves) (Sânpetru German-G.A.S.). The largest sites are Kiszombor-E (20 graves) and Vălcani (196 graves). Partial or symbolic horse burials could be documented at most sites. The deposition of weaponry was also general all male burials had parts of archery equipments, and female graves had jewelries. In Kiszombor E, – excavated by Ferenc Móra, Péter Langó, Attila Türk –, there were 20 burials dating to the Conquest period. The number of graves with horse burials was conspicuously high, and the number of archery equipments was also significant.[541] The more recently excavated site of Kiszombor C consisted of three graves, in one of which there was a sabre with a silver gilt pommel. (Notably, this is the southernmost location in the Carpathian Basin where a sabre was found.[542]) There was also a trapezoidal stirrup in this grave, thus, the burial could not be earlier than the mid-10th century, as has been proposed in case of Arad-Ceala as well.

The richest female grave in the region was found in Teremia Mare, which belongs, in fact, among the richest in the whole Carpathian Basin in context of the Conquest period *(Fig. 72)*.[543] A similar rich grave was found also in Szeged-Bojárhalom, and the one in Teremia Mare could have belonged to that circle too.

The grave in Teremia Mare is situated only 800 metres from two other graves in the outskirts of Tomnatic.[544] The coins found there, reported by Kisléghi, have been lost since, which is a huge disadvantage, as they would have provided a more accurate date. The Type-II partial horse burial,[545] and the finds (mounts, strap end, lyre-shaped buckle) show that one of these graves was richly furnished (including weaponry, an ornate belt, and a horse burial), while the other grave was presumably poorer. The bead mentioned by Kisléghi was probably an amulet. Also in this area, e.g. in Dumbrăviţa (Újszentes), there were also very poor (almost unfurnished) graves (no. 1 and 2), illustrating that small burial sites were not always rich in grave goods.[546]

Figure 72. *Teremia Mare-Kristóf Stock's field: gilded bronze earrings (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest)*

541 Révész 2016b, 638.
542 Révész 2016b, 637.
543 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 376–386, vol. II: Pl. 198–202.
544 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 366–368, vol. II: Pl. 194.
545 Bálint 1969, 107–114.
546 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 502–504, vol. II: Pl. 274.

X.3.3.2. Summary

X.3.3.2.1. The social historical context

Most of the burial sites in the Banat region are small – consisting of a few graves –, or solitary graves. The sites around the Maros/Mureş–Tisza confluence probably indicate a dense network of dwelling sites, i.e. "farmsteads" of mobile, nomadic communities. Our information is insufficient to tell how extensive this area of settlement was.

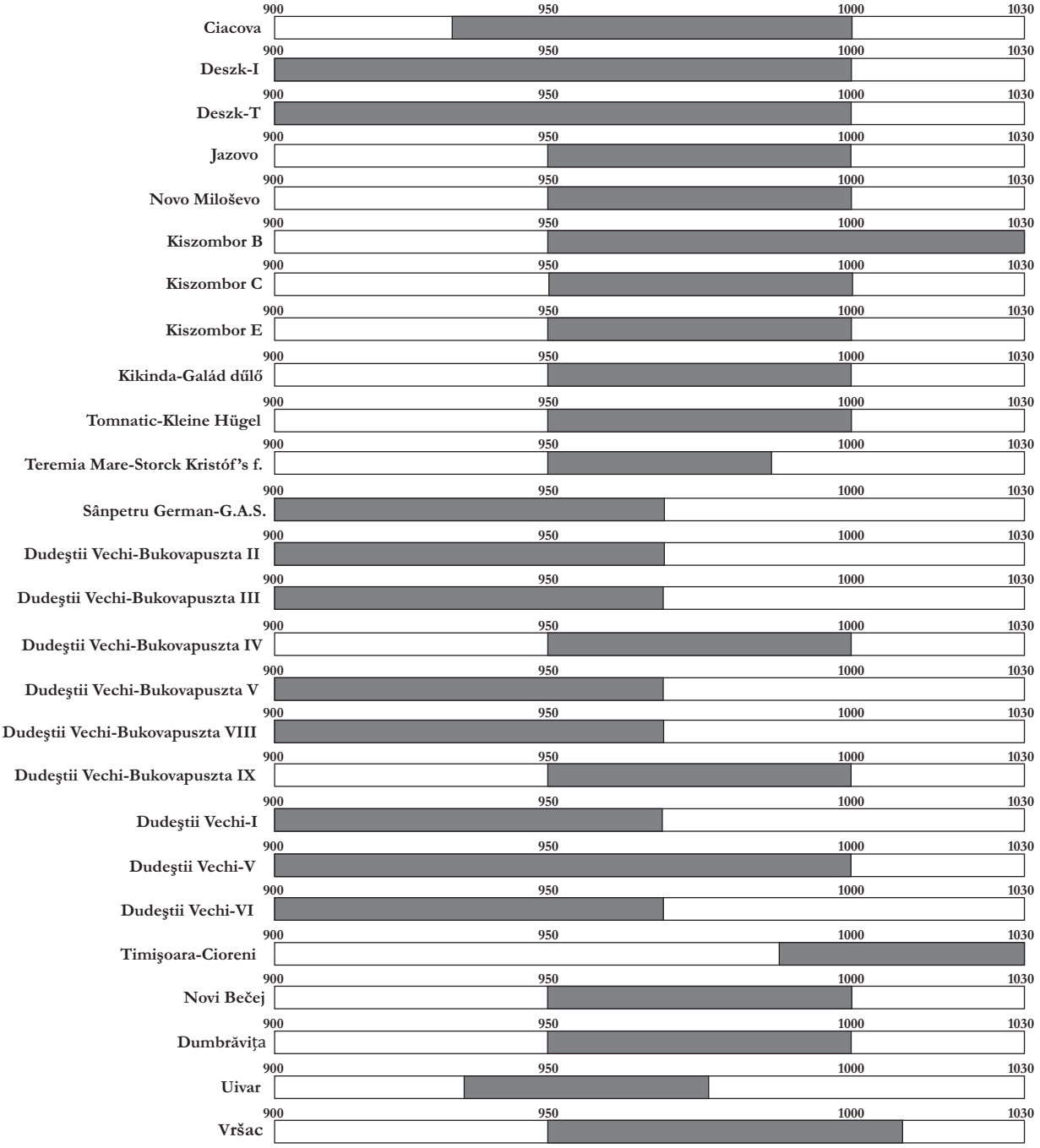


***Figure 73**. The relative chronology of 10th century burial sites in the Banat region*

X.3.3.2.2. Chronological issues

Larger burial sites – consisting of a significant number of graves (Kiszombor B, Timişoara-Cioreni, Vălcani) – started only in the second half of the 10th century, and they go up to the early or middle of the 11th century.

Graves dating to the early 10th century are generally rare (e.g. Sânpetru German), however, it has not been ascertained yet, whether they belong to the "first generation". Most of them can be dated to around the middle of the 10th century (e.g. Kiszombor E and F sites, Teremia Mare, Tomnatic).

The periodization of the most important archaeological sites is shown in *Fig. 73*.

X.4. The Danube–Tisza Interfluve and Syrmia in the 10th century

In the region of the Danube-Tisza Interfluve, environmental conditions fundamentally influenced settlement suitability and the lifestyles of the communities. As there are no comprehensive studies available on this theme, our assessment relies on a mosaic of data accumulated by previous research. The Danube–Tisza Interfluve is a (meso)region in the western part of the Great Plain, covering an area of 25 000 km^2. To the east, south and west, it is bounded by the two major rivers, the Danube and the Tisza, and to the north, by the hilly landscapes along the northwestern edges of the Pest Plain. Its geology and plant geography is diverse, as is its landscape geography – environmental conditions in the central sand plateau are significantly different from that of the Danube and Tisza valleys *(Fig. 74)*.

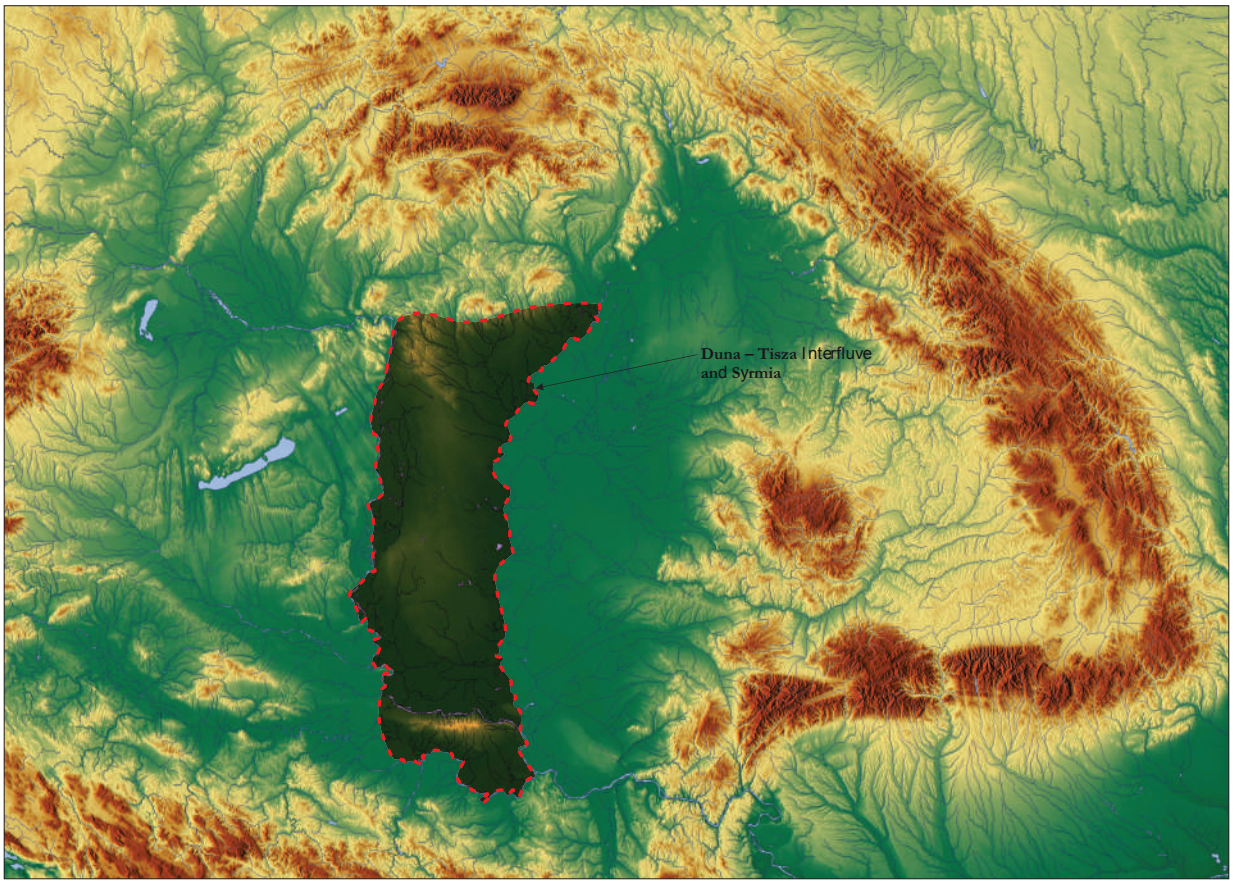


Figure 74. *The Danube–Tisza Interfluve in the Carpathian Basin (Basemap: Gergely Szenthe)*

Based on geological and geomorphological characteristics, the following regions have been defined: the *Danubian Lowland*, the *Danube–Tisza Sand Ridge (Homokhátság)*, the *Lower Tisza Valley*, and the *Plains of Bačka (Hu: Bácska)*, which divide into 16 landscape regions (from north to south): *Pest alluvial plain, Tápió Region, Csepel Plain, Solt Plain, Kalocsa-Sárköz Region, Mohács Island, Gerje-Perje Plain, Pilis–Alpár Sand Ridge, Kiskunság Sand Ridge, Bugac Sand Ridge, Dorozsma–Majsa Sand Ridge, Kiskunság Loess Plateau, Lower-Tisza-Plain, Illancs, Bácska Loess Plateau, Telecskai Hills (Fig. 74)*.[547]

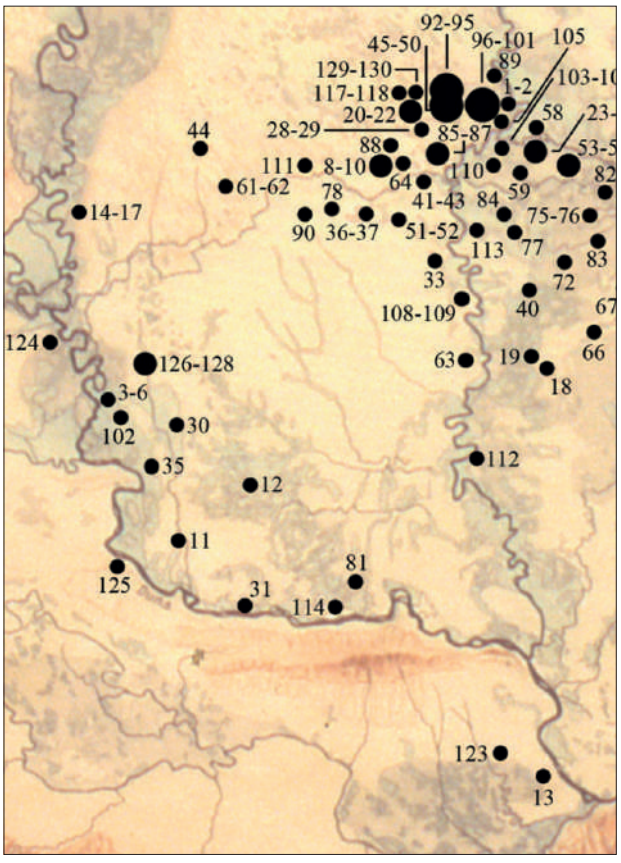


Figure 75. *Conquest period burial sites in Bačka and Syrmia (after Takács 2013, 1. térkép)*

Comprehensive works discussing the landscape history and the early medieval landscape conditions of the GHP and the Danube–Tisza Interfluve, are not available. Besides, our understanding is based mostly on early modern records. In the 10th century, and in the early medival period, animal husbandry was the dominant form of economy in most part of the region. In some areas, however, conditions were suitable for crop farming too.

The fundamental importance of the region for the archaeology of the Conquest period is illustrated by a chance discovery in 1834, when the winds of the *puszta* blew off the sand from the grave of a Conquest period warrior – who could be presumably identified with "Bene the Valiant", mentioned by Anonymous. His skeletal remains and grave goods were collected by the local shepherds and presented to the deputy county officer. This discovery, almost 200 years ago, marks the start of Conquest period archaeology in Hungary, thus, the Danube–Tisza Interfluve could be considered as its "birthplace".

X.4.1. The southern part of Bačka and Syrmia

Regarding the southern parts of Bačka and Syrmia, Miklós Takács collected 18 burials, which he described as the "middle rank" of Conquest period society *(Fig. 75)*.[548]

The site of Batajnica-Velika Humka was excavated in 1958[549] and recently published by Perica Špehar and Nika Strugar Bevc. It is the southernmost Conquest period site in the Carpathian Basin, and based on the finds (pear shaped and trapezoidal stirrups, earrings with grape shaped pendants) the Serbian archaeologists suggested that the burials are later than the mid-10th century.[550] Many of the men's graves had weaponry, horse harnesses and horse burials and the female graves were also relatively rich. The typochronology of the finds, indeed, supports the suggested dating.

547 Marosi–Somogyi 1990; Dövényi 2010.
548 Takács 2013, 656–660. See also: Radišić 2021, Map 1.
549 Vinski 1970, 59: note 83; Radičević–Špehar 2015, 138, 143, 154: no. 4, Fig. 1.
550 Шпехар–Стругар Бевц 2016, 131.

Figure 76. *Batajnica, grave no. 51: belt mounts (after Шпехар–Стругар Бевц 2016, Sl. 7/2)*

Although both the Hungarian and ex-Jugoslavian historians and archaeologists tended to almost ignore Syrmia when studying the Conquest period,[551] the 115 graves excavated in Batajnica have taught a valuable lesson, fundamentally challenging their suppositions. The site is situated only 5kms from Belgrade, and typical Conquest period burials were found (including weaponry, horse burials, belt mounts, similar to what has been found in Cluj-Napoca-Zápolya street *(Fig. 76)*, grave no. 1, as well as arrow quivers, arrowheads, and bone plates of the bows). These materials illustrate that the southernmost parts of the central plains in the Carpathian Basin should be interpreted not only as "*Machtbereich"*, but also as *"Siedlungsbereich"* – i.e. as a territory not only occupied, but also settled by the Hungarian power structure. This suggestion is corroborated also by more recent finds from Surduk (heart shaped pendants, earrings with globular pendants), published by Zeljko Demo.[552] On the opposite side of the river, in the Banat, typical Conquest period finds are known from Pančevo, dating to the 10th century (cf. *Chapter X.3*). Another Conquest period site in Syrmia was Vukovar-Lijeva Bara, where graves with weaponry and horse burials have been excavated, dating to the second half of the 10th century.[553] In the southern region of Bačka, in Sombor-Rančevo, we know of a grave furnished with weaponry,[554] similar to the ones found in Doroslovo-Szentkút street,[555] Bogojevo.[556] In Apatin, mounts of a caftan, or of a belt were found, which hint on the presence of a rich female grave dating to the 10th century.[557]

In summary, Takács's survey was an important milestone in research, underlining that hydrological conditions influenced 10th century settlement. However, this applies not only to Bačka or Syrmia, but more generally to the whole Carpathian Basin.[558] The map compiled by Takács clearly demonstrates the point: all Conquest period sites were situated around the floodplains of the Danube and the Tisza.

X.4.2. The Danubian Lowland, the Danube–Tisza Sand Ridge (Homokhátság) and the Lower-Tisza Valley

The area of the Danubian Lowland, the Danube–Tisza Sand Ridge (*Homokhátság),* and the Lower-Tisza Valley has been thoroughly researched; in comparison to Bačka and Syrmia, we have much more archaeological information here *(Fig. 74)*.

X.4.2.1. The Danubian Lowland

There is a characteristic group of sites lining up between the Csepel Plain and the present-day settlement of Bátmonostor. Around Bátmonostor, we know of three sites, one of which was dated more precisely

551 For the research history cf. Takács 2013, 645–647.
552 Demo 2014, 67–68; Radičević–Špehar 2015, 149, 156: no. 32, Fig. 1, fig. 6/3.
553 Demo 2009.
554 Takács 2013, 660: no. 124, note 227; Radičević–Špehar 2015, 156: no. 30, Fig. 1.
555 Fodor 1981, 149–164; Stanojev 1989, 45; Takács 2013, 657, 660; Radičević–Špehar 2015, 147, 155: no. 8, Fig. 1.
556 Stanojev 1989, 27; Radičević–Špehar 2015, 155: no. 6, Fig. 1.
557 AH 1996, 299; Radičević–Špehar 2015, 154: no. 1, Fig. 1.
558 Takács 2013, 656.

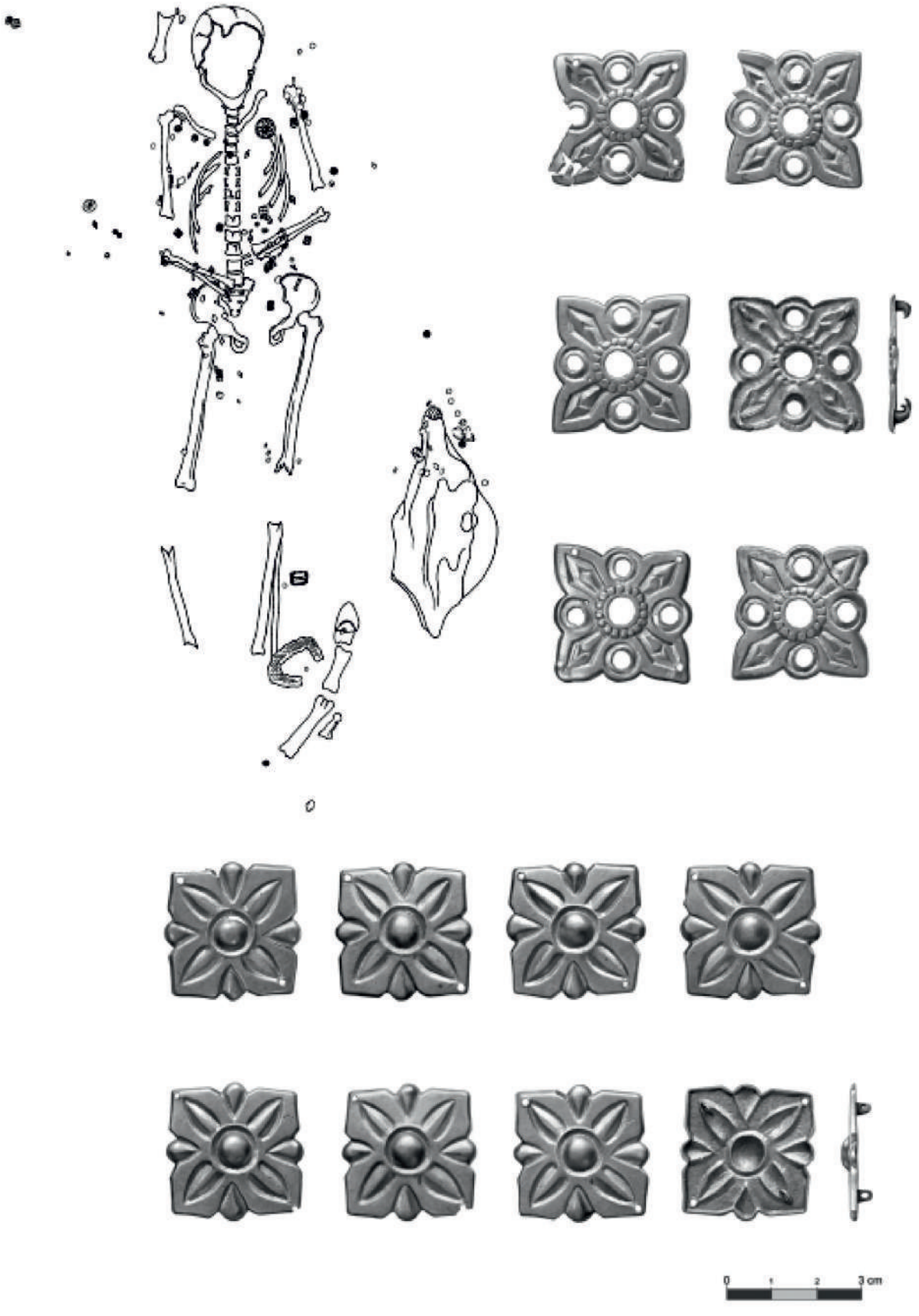


Figure 77. *Harta-Freifelt, grave no. 3: rectangular mounts (after* Langó et al. *2016, Fig. 7)*

to the second half of the 10th century.[559] In the region of the Kalocsa Sárköz, there have been 7 burial sites and one solitary grave documented. Among them, Dusnok,[560] Homokmégy-Halom,[561] Kecel-Lehoczky farm,[562] and Kecel-Vádéi-dűlő[563] could be dated with certainty to the 10th century. In Homokmégy-Székes, the cemetery opens in the 10th century and it is still used in the 11th century.[564] Harta-Freifelt, with its 22 graves, is a particularly significant 10th century site in the region. Based on the finds, the graves were dated to the first half, or second third of the 10th century. In the richest grave (no. 3) – of a woman –, there were almost 200 pieces of silver objects, including sheet braid discs, belt mounts, and other grave goods, indicating the exceptional wealth of her family *(Fig. 77)*. Other female graves at this site also stand out from the 10th century burial horizon of this region. Although their grave goods were similar to the ones found in the Middle Tisza Region, genetic research has pointed out – and this was again, an important milestone of research – that there is no biological connection between these individuals.[565] The accuracy of this research and data was, however, criticized by László Révész.[566]

In Solt-Kalimajor, not far from Harta, a relatively large, 10th century burial site was found, which had been used in the 11th century.[567] In Dunavecse-Fehéregyháza, 24 graves were documented, and there was a unique sabretache plate found *(Fig. 78)*.[568] In Kunadacs-Köztemető, there was a male grave – probably a solitary one, or part of a small group. It contained an ornate belt decorated with mounts and with a strap end, which was an outstanding piece of art.[569]

To the north from here, in the Pest Plain, in the outskirts of Soroksár, a part of a Conquest period burial site was excavated. In one of the female graves, there was a cast bronze, gilded pair of braid discs, depicting griffs.[570] Not far from there, there was another small burial site, with a few graves containing weaponry.[571] In Dabas-Felsőbesnyő, a site consisting of 18-19 graves was excavated. Based on the finds (trapezoidal stirrups, shirt neck fittings with pendants, hair rings with S terminals), it was dated to the second half of the 10th century.[572]

Figure 78. *Dunavecse-Fehéregyháza: silver gilt sabretache plate (József Katona Museum, Kecskemét)*

559 H. Tóth 1990, 166; Bálint 1991, 211–213; Varga 2014, 497–520.
560 Révész 2020, 351.
561 Gallina–Varga 2016, 67.
562 Gallina–Varga 2016, 290.
563 Gallina–Varga 2016, 300.
564 Gallina–Varga 2016, 324–325.
565 Langó et al. 2016, 289–416.
566 Révész 2020, 66–67.
567 Horváth 1993, 325: note 34.; Langó–Petkes–Soós 2015, 201–219.
568 Kada 1912, 326–329; AH 1996, 307–308.
569 Horváth 1993, 323, 334, 3. kép; AH 1996, 333–337.
570 Füredi 2012, 208.
571 Bencze–Szigeti 2009–2010, 53–79.
572 Füredi 2012, 209. See also: https://sirasok.blog.hu/2011/02/14/dabas_2.

Figure 79. *Bugyi-Felsővány, grave no. 2: belt mounts and gilded silver sabretache plate (after* Füredi *2012, 11., 13. kép)*

In the grave of a young woman (no. 39), there were Italian coins dating to the second third of the 10th century, which probably indicate the earliest phase of the burials.[573] Grave no. 2 in Bugyi-Felsővány contained the remains of an individual with a trepanned skull, as well as a sabretache plate, a partial horse burial, horse harness, parts of a reflex bow (decorated with dotted circles), a quiver (without arrowheads), and belt mounts *(Fig. 79)*.

573 Kovács 2011, 140.

In addition to the aforementioned sites, there are a few more sites/burials known in the area of the Pest Plain, within the administrative boundaries of Budapest. In District XXIII, in Marx Károly street (sand pit/Juta Hill), there was a solitary grave of a man found. In District XVIII, in Pestszentlőrinc–Gloriette/ Sándor Varjú's field, a foal bridle, a denarius of King Lothar II, a strap buckle, and a pear shape stirrup were found, indicating a burial dating to the second half of the 10th century.[574] In Rákospalota, there was a grave that must have belonged to a rich woman, whose caftan was decorated with pendants;[575] another grave in Pestszentlőrinc contained a sabre and other remarkable finds *(Fig. 80)*.[576]

X.4.2.2. The Danube–Tisza Sand Ridge

The basic charactersitics of burial sites in the regions of the Danube–Tisza Sand Ridge and the Danube Lowland are no different. At the site of Madaras-Árvai-dűlő – administratively separate from, but geographically similar to Bačka –, there were six graves. The excavation of the site was, however, incomplete. Based on the site map, the area occupied by the burials could not have been much larger.[577] The finds from the female and male graves are the finest ones in this region, including cast openwork braid ornaments, shirt neck fittings, silver boot mounts, band bracelets, silver overlays decorating the swell and the cantle of a saddle, quivers, and arrowheads. The burials could be dated to the first and the second thirds of the 10th century.

Figure 80. *Budapest-Pestszentlőrinc: a selection of finds from the Conquest period grave (after Bálint 1980, Abb. 5)*

Not much further to the north, in Balotaszállás, one of the richest 10th century female grave was found, containing 16 pressed golden mounts ornamented with meandering patterns, small golden ribbons and sheets, silver hook-and-eye closures, large silver gilt horse harness mounts. This assemblage is among the most prestigious ones from this period.[578]

The grave found in Kiskunhalas-KISZ-lakótelep, was perhaps a solitary one, or part of a small burial site.[579] To the north from here, in Tázlár, a solitary grave, which could have belonged to a woman, who was of relatively old age, contained rosette-ornamented harness mounts. This was again either a solitary burial, or part of a small burial group.[580] In Csólyospálos-Csólyos-puszta, five graves were excavated, which contained band bracelets, braid discs, neck shirt fittings with pendants, and

574 Bencze–Szigeti 2015, 95–130.
575 AH 1996, 305.
576 Bálint 1980b, 241–250.
577 Kőhegyi 1980, 205–241.
578 Révész 2001.
579 Dienes 1965, 240–241.
580 Gulyás et al. 2023, 823–881.

shoe mounts.[581] Similar rich graves with horse burials were found in Bugac-Alsómonostor[582] and Kiskunfélegyháza-Ferencszállás.[583] However, in the area of Kiskunfélegyháza, the most important Conquest period finds were found at two other sites. In Kiskunfélegyháza-Izsáki street/határdomb, there was a (solitary?) grave of a man, whose grave goods included a mounted belt, a horse harness with richly decorated silver gilt mounts, and a saddle.[584] The site of Kiskunfélegyháza-Radnóti Miklós street we know more accurately. The burial here is one of the richest in context of the whole Hungarian Plain. It contained a sabratache plate *(Fig. 81)*, 39 French coins, which decorated a horse harness, an arrow quiver, and a partial horse burial.[585]

Figure 81. *Kiskunfélegyháza-Radnóti Miklós street: silver gilt sabretache plate (József Katona Museum, Kecskemét)*

To the north-northwest from here, there are several small and richly furnished burials sites (solitary graves or grave groups). In Nyárlőrinc-Bogárzó-dűlő, a (solitary?) grave was excavated, which contained earrings and a rosette-ornamented horse harness.[586] In Kecskemét-Városföld, a male burial with weaponry and rhomboidal shirt neck fittings, and a female burial with caftan fittings (mounts with pendants) were found, which indicate a group of burials, whose size remain, however, unknown.[587] In Nagykőrös, two graves were disturbed by construction workers. The one included an earring, dress fittings, two coins of King/Emperor Berengar [888–924], iron quiver belts, an arrowhead fragment, a bridle, and a pair of stirrups. The other contained a golden hair ring, belt mounts, a sabre, a bow, arrowheads, iron quiver belts, and a partial horse burial (with saddle, stirrup, bridle, and probably a strap buckle).[588]

The burials found in the area to the west/southwest from here, close to the Danube Lowland, are particularly significant. First of all, the (presumably solitary?) grave in Izsák-Balázspuszta has to be mentioned.[589] According to anthropological observations – by Antónia Marcsik – the richly furnished (but unfortunately disturbed) grave held the remains of a 20-year-old man, who had a claft lip and claft palate. The man was buried with his sabretache plate, mounted belt, bow and quiver, and with parts of his ornately equipped 7-year-old horse (of which the skull and limb bones were found). In addition to the horse harness, the wooden saddle was also rescued. There was only one arrowhead found in the grave. Whether there was only this one deposited in the grave originally, and there were others, which could have disappeared due to disturbance, remains a question.

10 kms from here, in Ladánybene-Benepuszta, the grave of "*Bene the Valliant*" was discovered (in 1834, as the very first Conquest period find in Hungary). To this day, only fragments of the original

581 Kada 1912, 323.
582 Szabó 1941, 287; Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 26: No. 96; Horváth 1993, 328.
583 Kada 1912, 325–326.
584 AH 1996, 327–329.
585 H. Tóth 1974, 112–125.
586 Horváth 2009, 101–121.
587 AH 1996, 325–327.
588 Dienes 1960, 177–187.
589 H. Tóth 1976, 141–184; Marcsik 1976, 185–190; Matolcsi 1976, 191–223.

assemblage preserved, e.g. his skull, with both symbolic and actual marks of trepanation, and his grave goods, including a sabre, a quiver, arrowheads, mounted belt, horse harness mounts, coins, and horse bones indicating a partial horse burial *(Fig. 82. A–B)*.[590]

Figure 82. A–B. *Face reconstruction of "Bene the Valiant" from Ladánybene-Benepuszta (by Gyula Skultéty) and the strap end from his grave (drawn by Miklós Jankovich)*

To the north from Ladánybene, the Danube–Tisza Sand Ridge borders on the North Hungarian Mountains. This region is the Jászság, where we know of only few Conquest period graves. In Jászfényszaru, finds from a disturbed grave have been inventoried, and in the outskirts of the settlement two other graves were excavated. In one, a middle-aged man was buried with his sabre *(Fig. 83. A)*. The bronze lock of his sabretache was also found. In the Jászság, this is the first documented example of a burial with a sabre. Similarly to examples from the Upper Tisza Region, the sabre was placed in this grave in an unusual position, upside down, with the grip at the feet, and with the blade pointing towards the head. The other grave – of a young man – included an iron knife, a bone spike decorated with a dotted circle, a fire striker, a foal bridle, and several arrowheads.[591] There is also a silver gilt headgear finial – probably from Pusztamonostor, next to Jászfényszaru –, decorated with palmette motives and punched design *(Fig. 83. B)*.[592] To this date, there has been only one similar find discovered in Berehove (known as the headgear finial from Beregszász).[593]

590 First publication: Jankovich 1835, 281–296. For a comprehensive literature survey, see: AH 1996, 338–340; Bollók 2015, 77–116.

591 https://index.hu/tudomany/2018/06/25/honfoglalas_kori_sirok_kerultek_elo_jaszfenyszaru_hataraban/. Interviewed by Zoltán András Gulyás.

592 http://jku.hu/2017/11/02/a-suvegcsucs-tortenete/; Fodor 2017, 237–254.

593 AH 1996, 132–133 with further references.

Figure 83. A–B. *The sabre from the grave in Jászfényszaru (after https://mult-kor.hu/honfoglalas-kori-szablyas-sirra-bukkantak-jaszfenyszaru-hataraban-20180626) and the silver gilt headgear finial from Pusztamonostor (after* Fodor *2017, 2. kép)*

X.4.2.3. The Lower-Tisza Valley

The Lower Tisza Valley, and particularly the surroundings of Szeged is one of the most thoroughly investigated area of the Carpathian Basin from the perspective of archaeological research. Having compiled a regional survey *(Figs. 74–75)*,[594] Attila Türk, Gábor Lőrinczy, and Antónia Marcsik identified 38 sites dating to the 10th–11th centuries.[595] These sites were situated west of the edge of the floodplain, and the main characteristics of the burials fit perfectly into the pattern observed in the Great Plain: there are solitary graves (e.g. Szeged-Kiskundorozsma-Hosszúhát-halom), as well as small and large groups of burials.[596]

In case of Szeged-Öthalom (sand pit no.V), an area of 63.000 sq metres was stripped and 8 burials were found, which did not form a coherent group,[597] and their chronological background was also different. A. Türk, G. Lőrinczy, and A. Marcsik basically argued that in case of those sites where the extent of excavation area was only limited – namely in Bordány-Mező-dűlő, Szeged-Kiskundorozsma-Vöröshomok-dűlő, Zsombó-Bába-dűlő, and Zsombó-Ménesjárás-dűlő, one should not take it for granted that these were all solitary burials, taking into account the spatial fragmentation of the Szeged-Öthalom site. The question is remains whether the burials documented there had any biological relation (i.e. they were relatives, or members of small communities). If not, one should not consider such burial clusters as one site used by families, rather as *"burial places"/"funerary places"*, which were used in different periods, by different – nomadic, mobile – communities. Scientific investigations (^{14}C dating) and the typochronological analysis of the finds (graves no. 36, 124, 132, and 237) rather support this latter interpretation: the spatially separate burial mounds in Szeged-Öthalom, had been used as burial grounds in different periods *(Fig. 84)*.[598]

594 Türk–Lőrinczy–Marcsik 2015.
595 Türk–Lőrinczy–Marcsik 2015, 40–41.
596 Takács 2013, 1. térkép.
597 Türk–Lőrinczy–Marcsik 2015, 44–45.
598 Graves no. 36 and 124 could have been possibly earlier (even a 9th c. dating would be conceivable), while the graves no. 150 and 287 (including a band bracelett with coiled terminals) can be dated clearly to the middle of the 10th century.

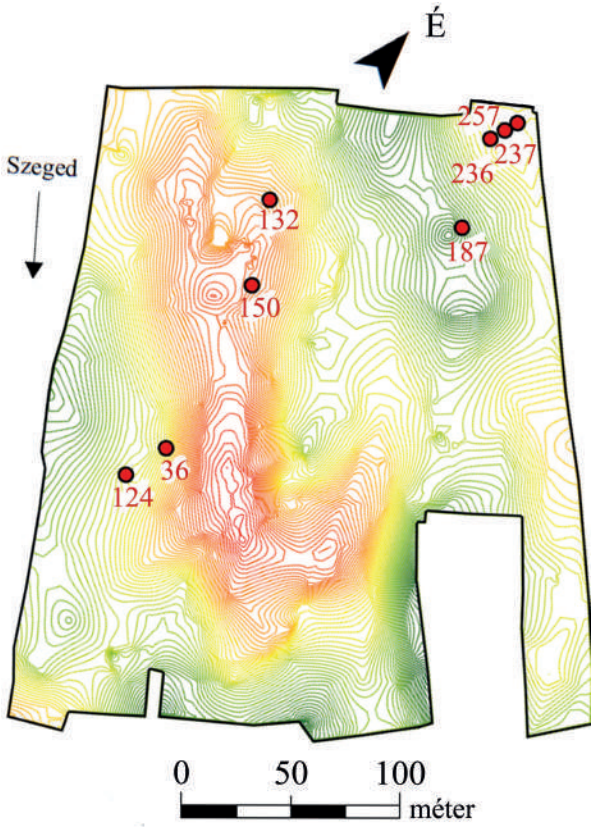


Figure 84. *Szeged-Öthalom, V. homokbánya: the topographical layout of the graves (after Türk–Lőrinczy–Marcsik 2015, 66/2. kép)*

There are 9 more sites around Szeged, where smaller burial groups (with 2–7 graves) were documented in the aforementioned survey. In case of Szeged-Bojárhalom, the finds include 272 gilded caftan fittings with pendants. The significance of this assemblage was – in addition to its esthetic quality and richness –, that the first reconstruction of Conquest period female dress was attempted on the basis of it.[599] In Szatymaz-Jánosszállás-Katonapart, 6 graves were documented. The finds included a superb braid disc plate, earrings with cast filigree pendants, caftan fittings with pendants, and pressed round shaped mounts decorating a dress. The burials were dated to the middle and the second half of the century.[600] In Szeged-Öthalom (1950), Szeged-Csongrádi street, and Szeged-Kiskundorozsma-Hosszúhát, there were altogether 10–18 graves documented, dating to the first and second halves of the 10th century.[601] In men's graves, there were bows, quivers, and arrowheads. In case of a partial horse burial the trapezoidal stirrup was similar to the one found in Mâsca *(Fig. 85. 1)*. In women's graves, rhomboidal and round shaped shirt neck fittings, square shaped dress fittings, stone rings, band- and wire bracelets, and boot mounts were found *(Fig. 85. 2)*.

Figure 85. *Szeged-Kiskundorozsma-Hosszúhát, graves no. 500 and 595: trapezoidal stirrup (1) and lozenge-shaped spangles (2) (after Türk–Lőrinczy–Marcsik 2015, 22/1. kép, 35/3–12. kép)*

599 Reizner 1891, 97–114.
600 Bálint 1991, 19–37.
601 Grave no. 1 at Szeged-Csongrádi street contained, among other finds, a sword with a sabre grip, and the silver coins of Contantine VII and Romanos II [954–959], Byzantine emperors. Thus, the site can be dated to the last third of the 10th century.

In Szeged-Algyő, and Sándorfalva-Eperjes, extensive burial sites – with around 100 graves – have been investigated, to which no similar ones have been found yet in the area of the Great Hungarian Plain. In our opinion, this is due to particular conditions and the lack of more systematic of research. The burials in Sándorfalva-Eperjes have not been fully unpublished yet, however, the site has been dated to the second third of the 10th century. Based on some objects, e.g. a bone plate decorated with dotted circles, a dating to the second half of the 10th century could be more appropriate.[602] In case of male graves, bone arrows, quivers, arrowheads are generally typical finds. There was, however, also a grave of an ornately dressed and bejeweled woman documented here (no. 93), in which an arrowhead was found, placed on the left side of her chest and pointing to the direction of her feet.[603] In other female graves, there were various types of jewelries and dress fittings (simple hair rings, cast earrings with globular pendants, beads, torques, rhomboidal silver gilt mounts, and shirt neck fittings with pendants).[604]

As for Szeged-Algyő, a detailed assessment would not be possible either since there has been no comprehensive site report prepared yet.[605] In men's graves, bone arrows, quivers, arrowheads were again the most common finds, but there was only one burial with a sabre. In women's graves, there were simple hair rings, plated braid discs, earrings with globular pendants, beads, torques, rhomboidal silver gilt mounts, shirt neck fittings with pendants, caftan fittings with pendants, and a cross, demonstrating altogether the variety of dressing habits in the 10th century.[606] Horse burials were found mostly in men's graves. In the grave of a senior female, however, there was also a partial horse burial.

X.4.2.4. Middle-Tisza Region

The 10th century burial sites in the Middle-Tisza Region basically tell the same story as other sites in the Great Hungarian Plain *(Fig. 74)*. From Szeged to Tiszanána, we know of few sites, – burial groups, or solitary graves (e.g. the one in Tiszakécske-Ókécske) –, [607] while the burials in Csongrád-Vendelhalom (47 graves, 11 male burials with weaponry, including 4 with sabres), dating from the second third of the 10th century and later, already show a different picture.[608]

In Szolnok-Strázsahalom, there was one grave, which could be part of a small group of burials, dated by the dirham of the Sasanid amir, Nasr II ibn Ahmad from 920/921. It contained a sabretache, rhomboidal shirt neck fittings, and parts of a mounted belt *(Fig. 86)*.[609]

In Nagykörű, 12 graves were excavated, which could be similarly part of a larger site. Mounted belts and weaponry (bows, quivers, arrowheads), as well as partial horse burials were documented.[610]

Figure 86. *Szolnok-Strázsahalom: silver gilt sabreteche plate (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest)*

602 Fodor 1985, 17–33.
603 Fodor 1985, 23.
604 Fodor 1985, 25.
605 Kürti 1978–1979, 323–347.
606 Fodor 1985, 25.
607 Fettich 1937, 63–64, XXVIII–XXIX. tábla; AH 1996, 353–354.
608 Varga 2013, 105–143.
609 AH 1996, 282–285.
610 Madaras 2014, 75–81.

From Tiszasüly-Éhhalom, 10 kms north of Szolnok, there is a rich assemblage of finds, partly consisting of stray finds, which were collected over a period of many decades.[611] Unfortunately, the full extent of the site could not be determined. Excavations recovered only three graves, and its not possible to tell whether we are dealing here with just one large burial site, or separate groups of burials, situated in Éhhalom, and on the nearby hills. The stray finds collected so far (mounted belts, bone arrows, arrowheads, sabre with silver gilt fittings *(Fig. 87)*, pair of stirrups, bridle with cheek pieces) indicate that a rich, equestrian-military community lived here.

The site of Tiszanána-Cseh-tanya, situated 15 kms to the north from Éhhalom, at the Tisza, was excavated by István Dienes. The graves here were to a considerable degree different from the ones in the Southern Great Plain – i.e. from other small burial groups and scattered, solitary burials. The total number of burials at this site was estimated at around 45–60,[612] having considered that part of the site has been destroyed by the local mine. There were few male graves, generally poorly furnished, containing weaponry, sabretaches, horse skeletons, and horse harnesses. The heavily worn rosette-ornamented horse harness mounts from a female grave also suggested that the community had a fairly modest lifestyle. Based on the finds, the excavated part of the site should be dated to the second half of the 10th century.[613] To the west from here (Szalaszend), a small group of six burials was discovered recently.[614]

In Tarnaörs-Rajnapart, a relatively richly furnished grave of a 13–14-year-old male was found; his dress was decorated with golden ribbons, and he also had his saddle and his horse harness decorated with silver sheets in the grave. László Révész dated it to the first half of the 10th century.[615] Whether there was only this one grave at the site, or there were other burials scattered around – similarly to Szeged-Öthalom –, is not clear at the moment.

In the outskirts of Tarnaörs-Szentandrás, there was a disturbed burial site documented, dating to the first half of the 10th century. According to László Révész, it is one of the richest burial sites in this region.[616]

Finally, the grave in Heves-Kapitányhegy also belongs to this circle. It was discovered in 1936, however, an excavation has not been carried out later to validate the finds and it is not yet possible to decide whether the grave (of a woman) was a solitary one, or part of a small group of burials. Her grave goods included typical, rosette-ornamented horse harness mounts. On the other hand, she wore a gold-foiled bronze band bracelet decorated with almandine gemstone,[617] and her stirrup was also a unique artefact, a masterpiece of ironwork, which is unparalleled in the archaeological heritage of the Conquest period. The gilt copper shirt stud was the product of a foreign workshop *(Fig. 88)*.[618]

Figure 87. *Tiszasüly-Éhhalom: sabre (János Damjanich Museum, Szolnok)*

611 AH 1996, 292–294.
612 Révész 2008, 283–309.
613 Révész proposes a different dating – to the second and third thirds of the century. Cf. Révész 2008, 309.
614 Libor–Takács 2019, 28–34.
615 Révész 2008, 282.
616 Révész 2008, 275–280.
617 A similar technique could be observed in case of a band bracelet from Korobchino (near Dniepropetrovsk). Komar 2018, 11. kép 5.
618 Pataky 1939, 200–208; Révész 2008, 194–195.

X.4.3. Summary – the 10th century archaeology of the Danube–Tisza Interfluve and Syrmia

It is rather difficult to summarize the archaeological characteristics of a large geographical area stretching from the southern borders of Syrmia to the mountain range of the Mátra in the Northern Hungarian Mountains *(Fig. 74)*. Apart from methodological issues, the varying intensity of archaeological investigations (different in each micro-region) also adds to this difficulty, narrowing our interpretive frames. Thus, our observations depend on the current state of research.

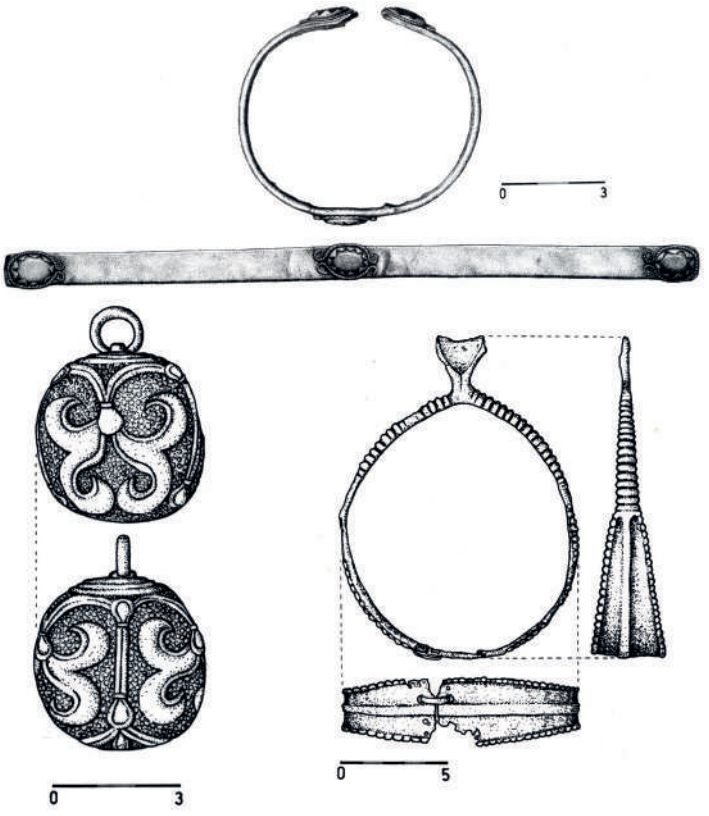


Figure 88. *Heves-Kapitányhegy: grave goods from a woman's grave (after Révész 2008, 151. kép, 50. tábla)*

X.4.3.1. On the problem of short and mid-distance nomadism

Looking at the number of burials documented at the different sites, it seems that in the first two thirds of the 10th century mostly solitary burials and small burial groups occurred in the region. There were only few large sites, with around 100 graves, however, their chronological background seems problematic. Following traditional interpretations, one would argue that solitary burials and small burial groups all represent the same cultural community. Breaking with this tradition, however, one would be inclined not to consider communities as static (i.e. sedentary), but rather as mobile (nomadic), and consequently, the striking dominance of such sites would rather point to important socio-economic conditions characteristic for the region, which could be most likely explained by environmental (hydrographical) factors. Namely, the unregulated river network provided plenty of water; periodic indundations of the floodplains sustained a fast-growing vegetation and fertile meadows. It would be interesting to calculate the biomass production of these areas, and how many times a year the vegetation could regrow, and how this compares to conditions in the Eurasian steppe. The area controlled/colonized by the Hungarian communities perhaps did not extend beyond what was necessary for keeping their herds. Their nomadic lifestyle was perhaps characterized by short- (2–16 km) and mid-distance (20–70 km) transhumance – at least, during the first two thirds of the 10th century. The results of archaeogenetic investigations may also strengthen this conclusion. For example, there was no evidence found of biological relations among the burials in Szeged-Öthalom. These they did not represent just one community, but different communities, which could have used the "burial site" subsequently.[619] In other cases, the orientation of graves could be also interpreted as indication of such "phenomena". On the other hand, those sites, where a large number of graves could be documented, are dating to the second

619 Although archaeogenetical investigations have been conducted also in case of Harta (see above), that is an example of a larger burial site, which was used *"…by a larger community for a brief period of time only and that many family members and relatives whose kinship could be demonstrated by genetic analyses did not pass away and were not interred here."* Cf. Langó et al. 2016, 410.

half of the 10th century, and they usually go up to the second half of the 11th century. This could already signal the changes in economic conditions, which affected the most part of the society, through the expansion of the settlement area, and fundamental changes in their lifestyle.

X.4.3.2. Chronological issues

It has to be underlined that in regard to chronological issues and the problem of burials dating to the early period, scientific evidence brought further complications: the Szeged-Öthalom (2009) and Zsombó-Ménesjárás (2004) sites were carbon-dated to the 9th century.[620] More specifically, these results suggest that in the region of the Great Hungarian Plain there are graves dating to the last decades of the 9th century, which already present the cultural characteristics of Conquest period Hungarian burials. Contradicting the dating of the Conquest to 895/896 – set in stone –, a paradigmatic conclusion may be advanced on the basis of these discoveries, however, one should be certainly careful with risking an answer to this problem of fundamental importance. Firstly, control measurements would be required – the radiocarbon analyses shoud be replicated by other laboratories. Secondly, the accuracy of radiocarbon data in case of Zsombó-Ménesjárás-dűlő was 68,3% (*1 Sigmacal value*), thus, there is a (lesser) chance there, that the sample dates from the 10th century. Regardless of this, the results are thought-provoking, and the typochronology of flat bottom stirrups could also support this dating,[621] although the type was used also in the 10th century. Taking into account that the burials found at the abovementioned sites were scattered, and apparently did not represent locally established communities, one might also propose – as a working hypothesis –, their connection to different (groups) of warriors, who arrived here from Atelkuzu.

There periodization of Conquest period sites in the Great Hungarian Plain raises also other issues. Almost 30 years passed since Károly Mesterházy argued that there is a burial "horizon" in the first third of the 10th century, which he interpreted as the "first generation", yet, this could be evidenced only in the northernmost zone of the central region of the Carpathian Basin.[622] However, the early dating would not be fully applicable to and convincing in case of any of the 21 sites collected by Mesterházy.[623] This is not to say that the "first generation" was not present in the area of the Great Hungarian Plain, but it was perhaps less numerous than previously argued by the eminent scholars. The revision of this question should be among the tasks of future research. Currently, we see the dating of the sites in this region less problematic only from the second quarter of the 10th century onward.

We should also underline that the more prestigeous burials in this region (either female or male ones) can be dated to the period between 950 and 970 – as has been argued by Ágnes Füredi and Attila Türk. The importance of this is that these sites seem to post-date the rich burials in the Upper-Tisza Region (whose periodization remains, nonetheless, also problematic). On the other hand, the distribution of rich burials is conspicuous: they are not situated between Soroksár and Kiskundorozsma,[624] but between Soroksár and Teremia Mare, which means that this group extends also to the Trans-Tisza Region.

Historians hypothesized that before the 970s, and more specifically during the years of 955–958, the residence of the Hungarian princes was likely situated somewhere in the region of the Danube–Tisza Interfluve, i.e. where the *karcha* owned his lands.[625] It was due to the growing Byzantine threat in the Lower-Danube Region, that the centre was relocated to Northeastern Transdanubia, to the Fehérvár–Esztergom–Óbuda triangle.[626] This hypothesis cannot be confirmed on the basis of archaeological evi-

620 Türk–Lőrinczy–Marcsik 2015, 112; Szenthe–Faragó–Gáll 2024, 482, Fig. 14.
621 Türk–Lőrinczy–Marcsik 2015, 84–86.
622 Mesterházy 1989–1990, 271: 17. kép.
623 One example to illustrate this is Tiszasüly-Éhhalom, where the context of stray finds remains unknown.
624 Füredi 2012, 229.
625 Concerning the *Karha*, see: KMTL 1994, 385.
626 Makk 2004, 119–127.

dence, since the 10th century burials sites consist mostly of few graves and the amount of weaponry is not comparable to what we have in case of the Upper-Tisza Region.

On another note, it is worth considering that at the end of the Early Avar Period, richly furnished graves tend to appear exactly when a crisis was weighing on the Khaganate, and perhaps the Balotaszállás–Szeged–Teremia Mare burials reflect the same kind of representive need as an answer to the military, politically, socially crisis around the mid-10th century.[627]

Finally, the periodization of larger sites has not been clarified either. As pointed out above, it seems at the moment that they could not be dated earlier than the second third of the 10th century. The periodization of the most important archaeological sites is shown in *Fig. 89. A–B*.

X.5. Upper Hungary and the northern part of the Little Hungarian Plain in the 10th century

X.5.1. Analysis of 10th century burials in Upper Hungary and in the northern part of the Little Hungarian Plain

The hilly landscapes to the north from the Great Hungarian Plain, stretching between the Upper-Tisza region and the Vienna Basin, generally offer little prospects for the archaeology of the Conquest period. However, in the floodplains of the tributaries of the Danube, which flow across the Little Hungarian Plain from north to south, or in the piedmont area of the Mátra Mountain, there has been a considerable number of Conquest period burial sites documented so far, and a significant amount of finds have been collected. Having surveyed the respective finds assessment reports, we can tell straight away that these sites, – with few exceptions –, are grouped in the floodplain zones of the rivers *(Fig. 90)*.[628]

Due to the difficulty of designating a clear boundary between the Great Hungarian Plain and the piedmont area of the Mátra, the Heves–Besenyőtelek line was technically considered as such. Burials situated to the north from it, were considered separately from the Great Hungarian Plain, together with the sites in the Little Hungarian Plain. It is important to note that this decision is arbitrary, since rivers in the northeastern parts of the Great Hungarian Plain already belong to the catchment of the Tisza *(Fig. 90)*.

In the area directly to the west from the Upper-Tisza Region, more precisely from the Taktaköz landscape region, and the Hernád/Hornad River, typical Conquest period burials were found in Monaj and Szikszó. In Monaj, a burial was found in a Prehistoric mound; it contained a sabre, a quiver, and a horse harness;[629] at the nearby site of Szikszó-Vadász-patak, there were two disturbed graves with horse burials and sabres documented.[630]

In Tiszaszederkény (Tiszaújváros), not far from the confluence of the Hernád and Tisza Rivers, there was only one grave, whose furnishings included a band bracelet and finds from a partial horse burial.[631]

To the west from there, in Szakáld-Mulatódomb, we know of 25–30 destroyed graves. The finds included lock rings, boot mounts, arrowheads, sabretache or quiver buckles, and pear-shaped stirrups, which could be dated to the first two thirds of the 10th century.[632]

In Kistokaj-Gerenda a fascinating burial site was partially excavated. 73 graves were documented, which represent actually two different sections of the site (44 graves and 29 graves respectively). Diverse

627 On the *"Prunkgräber"* model, cf. Kossack 1974, 3–34. Adapted to the Avar period by Tivadar Vida: Vida 2016, 259–260.
628 Točik 1968, Abb. 1; Révész 2008, Színes térkép.
629 Csoma 1887, 60–65; Révész 1992, 94.
630 K. Hellebrandt–Simán 1980, 95; Révész 1992, 94.
631 K. Végh 1970, 86–87. László Révész mentions, however, 4 graves (Révész 1992, 95).
632 K. Végh 1970, 87, X–XI. tábla.

***Figure 89. A** The relative chronology of 10th century burial sites in the area of the Danube–Tisza Interfluve*

Figure 89. B. *The relative chronology of 10th century burial sites in the area of the Danube–Tisza Interfluve*

finds were collected from the graves, including simple lock rings, a richly textured band bracelet with coiled terminals, a wire bracelet, rhomboidal shirt neck fittings, braid discs depicting animal figures, earrings with globular pendants, buttons, fire strikers, arrowheads, the head of a lance etc.). Some finds were certainly import objects (e.g. the cast grape shaped earrings, the signet rings depicting birds etc.), which is hardly surprising, since the Tisza was one of the axes of the commercial routes since Prehistoric times. There was only one grave, which included a partial horse burial, raising the question why this custom was not more widespread here? Examples from elsewhere suggest that the burials could be dated to the second half of the 10th century. Perhaps the two burial groups indicate that the site was used parallel by

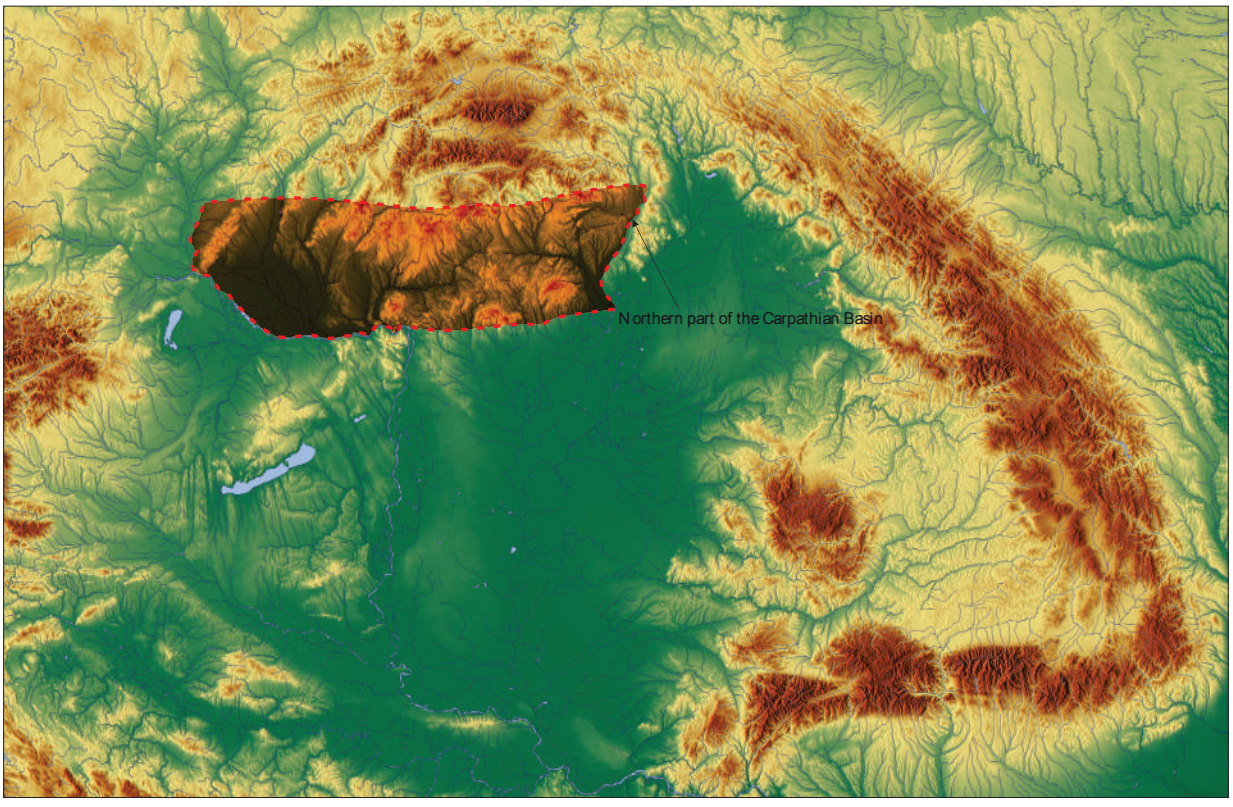


Figure 90. *The geographical situation of Upper Hungary (Horné Uhorsko, today in Slovakia) and the northern part of the Little Hungarian Plain (Malá dunajská kotlina, today in Slovakia) in the Carpathian Basin (Basemap: Gergely Szenthe)*

the Hungarians and by another population, whose cultural background was different. It is illustrative in this respect that there was a lance in one of the graves, which is a unique type of find.[633]

In Miskolc-Repülőtér, there were 25 – somewhat similar – graves found. Only ten of them were furnished (including lock rings, beads, bracelets, shank buttons), and weaponry was found in only three (a sabre in one grave, and arrowheads in three graves). There was only one grave containing a horse burial, and another one containing a horse harness. Ceramic finds were found in 8 graves, and a wooden bucket in one grave. It is likely that this group of burials was part of a – partially rescued – site, dating to the period between the mid-, and the end of the 10th century.[634]

In Edelény-Finke, there was a 10th century male burial, containing an arrowhead and a partial horse burial.[635] To the west from Borsod County, in the valleys of the Eger, Laskó, Tarna, Bene Streams, and the Zagyva River, the occurrences of burials sites (groups) dating to the 10th or the 10th–11th century was scattered, which likely reflects the mosaic state of research. A counterfeit Bulgarian dirham, dating to 901–902, found in one of the graves in Eger-Almagyar, illustrates that this region could be colonized fairly early.[636]

In Eger-Répástető, the graves and stray finds (including partial horse burials, a dirham, a sabre, band bracelets, strirrups, bridles, arrowheads) can be dated to the first two thirds of the 10th century, which is also fairly early.[637]

633 K. Végh 1993, 53–103.
634 Megay 1961, 100–108; Révész 1992, 98–107.
635 K. Végh 1970, 79–80.
636 Révész 2008, 98–99.
637 Szabó 1964, 105–108; Révész 2008, 104–108.

In Eger-Szépasszony-völgy, the exact number of burials remains uncertain, however, 60 graves were excavated, 36 were documented and 33 appear on the site map. The number of horse burials and horse harnesses was relatively high. The finds included lock rings, band bracelets (some with coiled terminals), a golden ring, a cast openwork bronze braid disc, and a very rare cosmetic spoon, whose analagoies are known from the Caucasus region.[638] Belt mounts were found in only one grave, a sabre in another one, and there are also two arrowheads from two other graves.[639]

In Dormánd-Hanyipuszta, further away from the Mátra, to the west from the Laskó Stream, a partial excavation of a burial site yielded 16 graves. The number of horse burials and horse harnesses were relatively high, however, only a few quivers and arrowheads were found. The graves were richly furnished with jewelry (including hair rings, arm and ankle bracelets, undulating wire wrapped bracelets). The most spectacular find was a pair of plated braid discs, dating to the second third of the 10th century. László Révész dated the burials to the first two thirds of the 10th century,[640] however, we suggest a later dating, to the second third and the end of the 10th century.

In the valley of the Tarna Stream, there is also a topographically coherent group of burial sites. The northernmost one is a rich 10th century grave in Pétervására-Laktanya. Its context remains unclear. The grave goods include a bezelled finger ring, a silver band bracelet, 16 dress fittings, glass beads, shank buttons, and an earring with globular pendants.[641]

The site of Aldebrő-Mocsáros-dűlő (sand mine) is situated to the south from Pétervására, in the valley of the Tarna, on one of the tops of a higher ridge. It is probably the most thoroughly investigated – nonetheless, only partially excavated – burial site in the region.[642] The 34 graves excavated probably amount to around half of the total number of burials – as has been estimated by the archaeologist. Weapons were

Figure 91. *Aldebrő-Mocsáros-dűlő, grave no. 20: silver gilt plate discoid braid ornament (István Dobó Castle Museum, Eger)*

638 Мастыкова 2009, 88.
639 Nagy 1968, 69–100; Révész 2008, 109–123.
640 Révész 2008, 74–95.
641 Révész 2008, 262–264.
642 Révész 2008, 18–51.

rare finds (including only arrowheads and quivers), mostly only horse harnesses could be collected. Among the jewelries, there were lock rings, cowries and beads, reflecting fashionable trends. The cast openwork plated and sheet braid discs (graves no. 13 and no. 20.) were the most spectacular finds *(Fig. 91)*. The excavated part of the burial site could be dated to the second third of the 10th century and later. On the other hand, the relatively high number of stepped graves – as a distinctive burial custom –, as well as the less transparent presence of typical Conquest period burial finds indicate perhaps a different cultural context.

Figure 92. *Karancslapujtő: belt mounts and belt buckle (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest)*

In Kál-Legelő, in the lower catchment of the Tarna, 68 graves (the complete site) were excavated by Győző János Szabó, who has been also investigating the site of Aldebrő-Mocsáros-dűlő. An interesting feature observed at this site was the network of ditches around the 10th century.[643] The deposition of an egg – as a unique, but in context of the Conquest period rather unusual custom – was observed in case of a child's grave. There were only two graves with horse harnesses, and none with horse burials. The number of burials with weaponry was, however, rather significant here: two sabres (in 2 graves), bones of the bow (in 1 grave), arrowheads (in 7 graves), and iron quiver straps (in 2 graves) were collected. The most frequently found jewelries were simple lock rings, earrings with globular pendants, beads, band bracelets (with simple, or coiled terminals), dress fittings, and shank buttons. László Révész suggested two alternative intervals for the dating of the site: 900–980, or ca. 930–980.[644] In our opinion, the second option is more realistic. Observations concerning atypical burial customs – the aforementioned egg, or the fact that only horse harnesses were documented in the graves – raises two possibilities: these customs either reflect the different cultural background, of the micro-community (similarly to Aldebrő-Mocsáros), or the consequences of an economic situation (shortage in the number of horses owned by the community).

In the area of Ludas (in the valley of the Bene Stream, which is the tributary of the Tarna), there was a partial horse burial documented. It was either a solitary grave, or the only remaining one of a small burial site.[645] Around Visonta (in the catchment of the Rédei Stream, another tributary of the Tarna), the 10th–11th century sites could be found again in a group. It is, however, only in case of Visonta-Felsőrét, that the site had been used already in the 10th century. Its excavation was complete, yielding 71 graves, however, without weaponry, or horse burials. Based on the finds (beads, lunula, simple lock rings, lock rings with S-terminals, earring with globular pendant, rhomboidal shirt neck fittings, band bracelets with coiled terminals) the site was used in the second half of the 10th century and in the 11th century.[646]

Between the catchments of the Ágói Stream and the Zagyva River, the southernmost 10th century site was Lőrinci-Selypi-puszta, where horse harnesses and weaponry were found in the graves.[647] To the north from here, in Gyöngyöspata-Csákbereg-puszta (in the catchment of the Ágói Stream), a sabre and

643 Révész 2008, 198.
644 Révész 2008, 239.
645 Révész 2008, 248–249.
646 Révész 2008, 349–377. According to Révész, the start date of burials is the second third of the 10th century.
647 Révész 2008, 227–235.

a pair of stirrups were collected – there was possibly a grave there, including a horse burial. Unfortunately, only the sabre preserved until today. The globular ends of the concave, iron cross-guard were cast of bronze, and wilded to the iron bar, which was decorated with a pattern of silver inlaid little leaves, arranged in V-forms. According to Révész, this is a top quality smith's work and the grave can be dated to the first half of the 10th century.[648]

In Gyöngyöspata-Kecskekő (in the catchment of the Zagyva River), there were also some pagan burials excavated. Particularly interesting is the damaged, two-edged blade of a sword, which was deposited in a grave without its grip (grave no. 3). There were also lock rings, ankle bracelets, bones of the bow, and arrow-quivers (however, no arrows) found in the burials, dating the burials to the second half of the 10th century.[649]

Figure 93. *Szob-Ipolymenti országút, grave "A": silver gilt plate discoid braid ornament (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest)*

In Nógrádkövesd-Vasútállomás (in the upper catchment of the Galga Stream), there was a group of four graves found, however the full size of the burial site remains unknown. In one grave, a partial horse burial, arrow-quiver, and arrowheads were documented.[650]

To the west from here, in the upper catchment of the Ipoly/Ipel' River, there were presumably several small Conquest period sites.

In Piliny-Leshegy, there was a group of five graves excavated and the site was presumably not larger. Horse burials were found in four of them. Apparently, this was a rich group, indicated also by the lavishly decorated mounted belt, by the bow and quiver in a man's grave, or by the jewelries in woman's grave. Based on graves no. 4 and 5, which also included weaponry, István Fodor argued that this group of five was a family, this, however, seems problematic.[651]

In Karancslapujtő-Nyárvas dűlő, there was a similar site. The finds from one of the graves (no. 1) were interpreted in connection to the "first generation" *(Fig. 92)*.[652]

To the north from here, in Prša-Bórszeg/Bércz, in the Ipoly/Ipel' valley, a group of five 10th century burials was documented by Anton Točik, separately from the 11th century cemetery. Based on the finds – a partial horse burial, a horse harness, a mounted belt, earrings with cast, grape shaped pendants, band bracelets with coiled terminals, and a coin of Nasr II ibn Ahmad [913–932] – the burials were dated to the mid-10th century. The full extent of the cemetery (small or large?) remains, however, uncertain.[653]

From this region, there is also a large number of stray finds (post-dating the mid-10th century) and there is a considerable number of later cemeteries too, starting in the the mid-10th century, and going up to the 11th (e.g. Nógrádsáp,[654] Sóshartyán-Hosszútető[655]).

648 Révész 2008, 182–183.
649 Révész 2008, 184–188.
650 Patay 1957, 58–59; Horváth 2019, 51–55, 11–12. tábla.
651 AH 1996, 402–403; Horváth 2019, 57–65, 41. tábla 8–17.
652 Dienes 1964, 18–39; Mesterházy 1989–1990, 238; Horváth 2019, 42–45, 7–9. tábla.
653 Točik 1968, 38–40, Taf. XXIX; Horváth 2019, 138–152, 61–66. tábla.
654 AH 1996, 400–402; Horváth 2019, 152–158.
655 AH 1996, 406–408; Horváth 2019, 162.

In Levice, in the lower catchment of the Hron River (to northeast from the Ipoly/Ipel' River), a small, but rich burial site, – consisting of 13 graves (perhaps a family?) –, was excavated by Slovakian archaeologists. Partial horse burials were documented in two graves, and arrowheads in only one. The female graves were relatively rich.[656] Based on the coins, the burials could be dated to the first decades of the 10th century, however, the pressed rectangular mounts, the bracelets with coiled terminals, and the massive wire bracelets rather suggest that the second third of the 10th century would be a more probable dating. In the lower catchment of the Hron, there are two other burial sites known – in Bíňa and Chľaba.[657]

In Malé Kosihy, in the lower catchment of the Ipoly/Ipel', a 10th–11th century site yielded a good number of graves with arrowheads, quivers, partial horse burials (in the men's graves), and less richly furnished female burials.[658]

The site of Letkés-Téglaégető, situated just a few kilometres from there, was used almost for 150 years. Part of the cemetery (site I) was dated to the 10th century, based on the burial customs; the finds (arrowheads, quivers) were similar to those found in Malé Kosihy.[659]

At the site of Szob-Ipolymenti országút, there were approximately 17 graves, dating to the second third of the 10th century, or maybe rather to the second half of the 10th century. In grave no. 13, sheet braid discs, mounts with pendants, a twisted spiral bracelet with coiled terminals, and beads were found *(Fig. 93)*.[660]

In Szob-Kiserdő, there was a site with 82 graves, dating to the second half of the 10th century. The finds included Byzantine and western coins, earrings with grape shaped pendants, and weaponry. Weapons were found in four graves, and in two of them there were two edged swords *(Fig. 94)*.[661]

To the north, not far from the Danube, in Vojnice/Bátorove Kosihy-Papajtó, there was a (partially excavated) site with 15 graves. The community was rather poor; a partial horse burial with weaponry was documented only in one grave. In another grave, a cast earring with beaded pendants and a coin were found, based on which the site was dated to the second half of the 10th century.[662]

Not far from here, near Marcelová, another site was partially excavated (16 graves), where there were no partial horse burials or weaponry. An earring with globular pendants, shirt neck fittings with pendants, and a lock ring with S terminals suggest that an atypical 10th century community could have resided here.[663]

Figure 94. *Szob-Kiserdő, grave no. 21: sword (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest)*

656 Nevizánszky 2013, 185–202.
657 Nevizánszky 2006, Tab. XII–XIII.
658 Hanuliak 1994.
659 Bakay 1978b, 59–91.
660 Bakay 1978b, 53–55; AH 1996, 408.
661 Bakay 1978b, 6–52, 128–141.
662 Točik 1968, 40–49, Taf. LI–LII.
663 Točik 1968, 33–35, Taf. XXIII.

In Chotín, in the lower catchment of the Váh/Vág, a (completely excavated) row cemetery consisted of 53 graves. There were no horse burials or weaponry found. Based on the grave goods (heart shaped pendants with small laces, simple lock rings) the site was dated to the second third of the 10th century and later.[664]

In Svätý Peter, a row cemetery consisting of 10 burials was dated to the second half of the 10th century, based on a sword and trapezoid shaped stirrups.[665]

In Nesvady-Partokdűlő, in the region between the Nitra and Váh Rivers, there were three graves excavated. The full extent of the site remains unknown. Horse burials were found in two graves (no. 2 and 3). Grave no. 1 was disturbed – there was probably also a horse burial in this one. Mounted belts, sabre, bone arrows, arrowheads, parts of quivers were typical Conquest period finds here, dating the site to the first half of the 10th century.[666]

Directly to the east from Perbete, István Dienes documented three more graves, which contained a mounted belt, sabretache fragments, hair rings, beads, a flint stone, and parts of a partial horse burial (pair of stirrups, bridle).[667]

In Čakajovce, in the upper catchment of the Nitra River, the presence of a Conquest period/10th century population could have been attested, whose burial site was used since the 9th century, according to excavation data.[668]

In Bánov, near the Váh River, the partial excavation of a burial site yielded 18 graves. The burials were similar to those in other sites of similar size. The custom of stepped, or niched grave construction is unknown among peoples of eastern cultural background in the 10th century (including the Hungarians). Partial horse burials and weaponry (including bow, quiver, and arrowheads) were documented in four graves, which fit into the characteristics of 10th century burials. Based on a lock ring with S-terminals, earrings with globular pendants, shirt neck fittings with pendants, caftan fittings with pendants, and a twisted wire bracelet the burials could be dated to the second third of the 10th century.[669]

Another site near the Váh River was Mlynský Sek/Lipová-Ondrochov. Seven graves were excavated here in a single trench. The burials were generally very poor, except for one grave, of a man, who was equipped with a bow and quiver. The cast strap end of his belt was decorated with a galopping stag figure.[670]

Further to the north, in Sereď-Mačianske vŕšky, there were three sites in the area of a large sand mine (Sered' [I], [II], [III]). Sereď (I) was situated in the

Figure 95. *Hlohovec: silver gilt sabretache plate (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest)*

664 Točik 1968, 26–32, Taf. XIX.
665 Točik 1968, 21–26, Taf. XIII–XIV.
666 Szőke 1941, 214–224; Točik 1968, 35–37, Taf. XXIV–XXVI.
667 Dienes 1959, 145–158; Točik 1968, 37–38, Taf. XVI/20–31.
668 Rejholcová 1995.
669 Točik 1968, 9–17, Taf. I–VII.
670 Točik 1968, 32, Taf. XXIII/1–2, 4–7, 10–11.

northern part of the sand mine, and included a considerable number of partial horse burials (graves no. 1/52, 6/53, 15/53, 18/53, 1/57, 1/58), as well as a burial with a horse harness (grave no. 8/53). As for weaponry, a sabre was found in one grave (no. 1/57), – besides, sabres are relatively rare finds in the region of the Little Hungarian Plain –, and there were bow bones, arrow quivers, arrowheads in several graves.

Jewelries included a silver bezelled finger ring with a gemstone, as well as a very rare type of undulating wire bracelet. Mounted belts were found in five graves. The overall character of the site was similar to those examples, where a more significant amount of weaponry was found, but this one is definitely among the most significant burial sites in the Little Hungarian Plain.[671]

Sereď (II), with 23 burials, was situated in the southern part of the sand hill. Its character was similar to that of Sereď (I), with two distinctions: instead of a sabre there was a sword found there, and mounted belts were absent. Based on the bone plates of quivers decorated with dotted circles, this site was of a later date than Sereď (I).[672]

Finally, Sereď (III) was situated more distantly, and the only information we have is that there were partial horse burials and horse harnesses found there.[673] In the nearby Dvorníky, there were three graves disturbed; a mounted belt and buttons were found in one of them.[674]

One of the most significant find in the Carpathian Basin is also from this area (the valley of the Váh), namely, the beautiful silver gilt sabretache plate found in Hlohovec *(Fig. 95)*. In addition to the sabretache plate, a pair of silver earrings with globular pendants and golden hoop, and a silver twisted torques was also found here, accompanied by a coin of Nasr ibn Ahmad, struck in 918.[675]

In Červeník, the graves were not situated in a row, but at a considerable distance from one another. For example, graves no. 1 and 2 were 20 metres away from grave no. 10. There were nine Conquest period burials here (apart from others), which raises the question, whether these individuals belonged to the same community, or to different (mobile) communities, whose members used this site in different periods. Three or four partial horse burials were documented (in graves no. 1 [?], 7, 9, 11), weaponry was documented in three graves (no. 1, 7, 11), and a mounted belt in one case (grave no. 1). Female graves were relatively richly furnished, including rhomboidal shirt neck fittings, caftan mounts with pendants, boot mounts, and coins (grave no. 3), which date the burials to the middle and the second half of the 10th century.[676]

Further to the west, in Vozokany, to the north from Žitný ostrov, along the Little Danube, three, richly furnished female burials were documented; dating to the second third of the 10th century.[677] Materials from several Conquest period graves were rescued in Košúty, in a sand dune area, however, the number of graves remains uncertain. A sheet braid ornament and a small rectangular mount clearly indicate a female burial, a quiver mount and stirrups, however, suggest that there were burials with horses and weaponry, dating the site to the second third of the 10th century.[678]

Lastly, the burial site in Zemianska Olča should be mentioned, also in the region of Žitný ostrov, where partial horse burials, a golden lock ring, and a sabre were documented.[679] Recently another Conquest period burial site was found in Dunajská Streda.[680]

671 Točik 1968, 40–49, Taf. XXX–XLII.
672 Točik 1968, 40–49, Taf. XLIII–XLIX.
673 Točik 1968, 63–64, Taf. XVII/9–16.
674 Točik 1968, 26, Taf. XV–XVI.
675 Rómer 1871, 165–166; Točik 1968, 26, Taf. XVII; AH 1996, 380, 388–390.
676 Točik 1968, 17–20, Taf. VIII–XII.
677 Točik 1968, 40–49, Taf. LIII–LIV.
678 Točik 1968, 32, Taf. XXI.
679 Točik 1968, 63–64, Taf. XVII/9–16.
680 We hereby thank András Csuthy for this information.

X.5.2. Summary

X.5.2.1. Burial sites and settlement area

Most burial sites were situated along the edges of the floodplains, along the Hernád/Hornád River (bordering the Taktaköz region), then, along the Sajó River, the Kánya, Laskó, Tarna, Bene, Gyöngyösi Streams, the Zagyva, Ipoly/Ipel', Hron, Váh Rivers and along the Little Danube (in the northern part of the Little Hungarian Plain, today in Slovakia). Mikós Takács referred to these groups as "*chains of settlements",* as they most likely indicate the area of settlement.[681]

X.5.2.2. The size of the burial sites in the light of current research

Due to different research opportunities, different types of sites are unevenly represented. There are fewer completely excavated sites in this region than in the Great Plain, or in the Bodrogköz. Apart from Kál-Legelő, Visonta-Felsőrét, Szob-Kiserdő, Chotín, other sites have been partially excavated and their extents remain uncertain. Regardless of this problem, the following remarks will be in order:

X.5.2.2.1. In case of Červeník, the social context is perhaps similar to that of Szeged-Öthalom, sandpit V – with groups of graves distanced from one another, representing different communities, which could have used the site in different periods.

X.5.2.2.2. In case of Edelény-Finke, Ludas, and Pétervására-Laktanya, solitary graves were found. In Pétervására-Laktanya, there was a female burial, in the other two sites, there were male burials with horses and weaponry.

X.5.2.2.3. There was likely a significant number of small sites / groups of burials, which have not been identified yet, or have been already destroyed (e.g. Tiszaszederkény, Eger-Répástető, Nesvady-Partokdűlő, Sereď-Mačianske vŕšky (I) and (II)). It remains uncertain how large they were actually, since field archaeologists were not often even present at their discoveries.

X.5.2.2.4. The completely excavated sites (Kál-Legelő, Visonta-Felsőrét, Szob-Kiserdő, Chotín) were likely used by a few families for many generations. Larger sites, like Kistokaj, could be defined as village cemeteries.[682]

In spite of the fact that the region is relatively poorly covered by research, the available data suggest that there are different types of sites (in terms of size, and the amount of burials), on the other hand, it is uncertain what social phenomena have influence on this.

X.5.2.3. Cultural differences

A lesser or greater amount of weaponry could be documented at most sites; there are, however, examples of burial sites, or burial groups, where no weaponry, or horse burials were found. Regardless of Hampel's theory (of 'A' and 'B' groups), the question remains *why* there is such a difference. In light of the Čakajovce site, one might interprete the lack of weaponry in Vojnice/Bátorove Kosihy-Papajtó, Chotín, Marcelová, Visonta-Felsőrét, as evidence indicative of a population, whose cultural background was different from that of the Conquest period Hungarians (cf. *Map 3*).

X.5.3.4. Chronological issues in the light of finds assessment

Lastly, there is the problem of chronology regarding burial sites – groups and solitary burials. According to Károly Mesterházy, there are 14 burial sites in the region, where the finds attest the presence of the "first gener-

681 Takács 2013, 656.
682 Kovács 2013, 530–542.

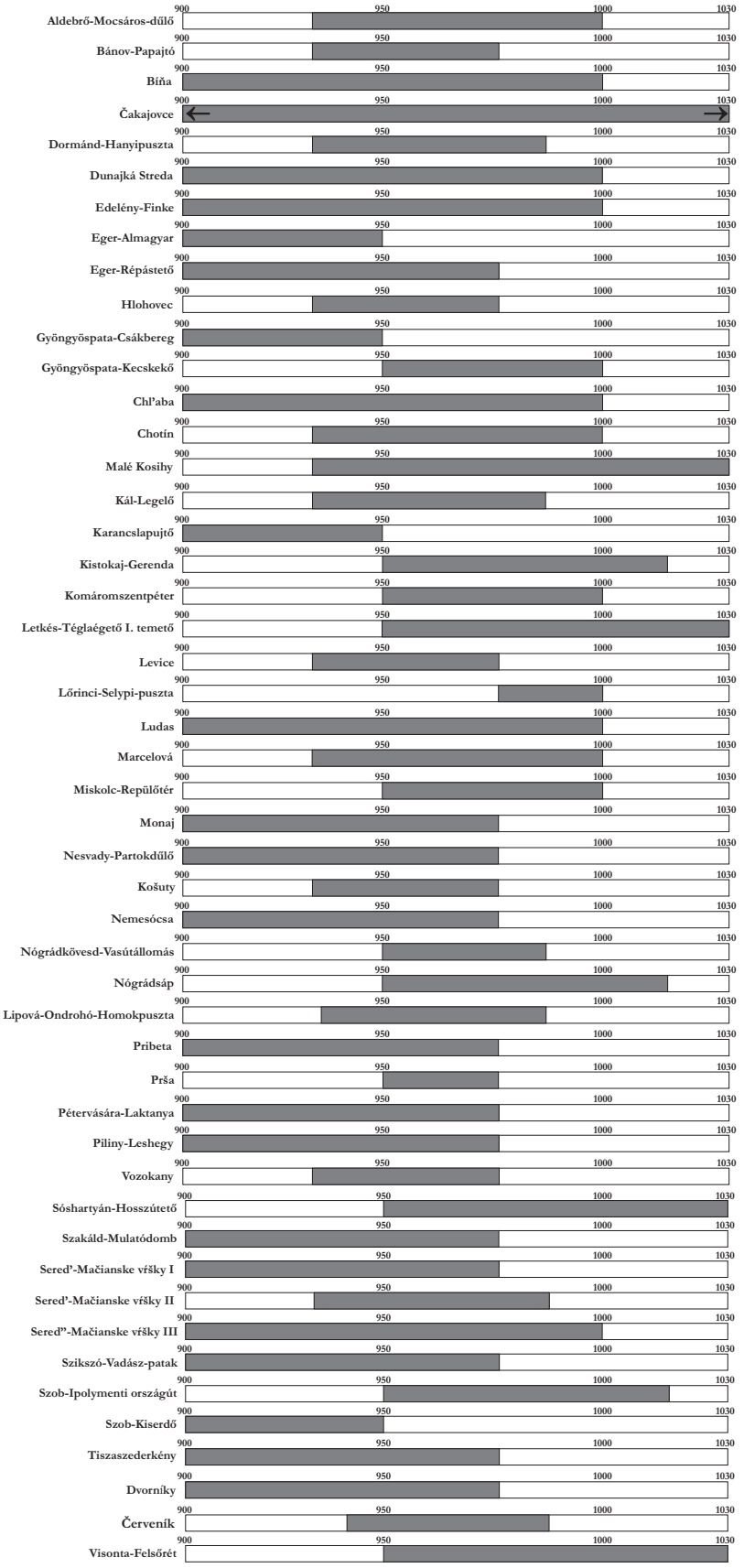


Figure 96. *The relative chronology of 10th century burial sites in Upper Hungary and the northern part of the Little Plain (today in Slovakia)*

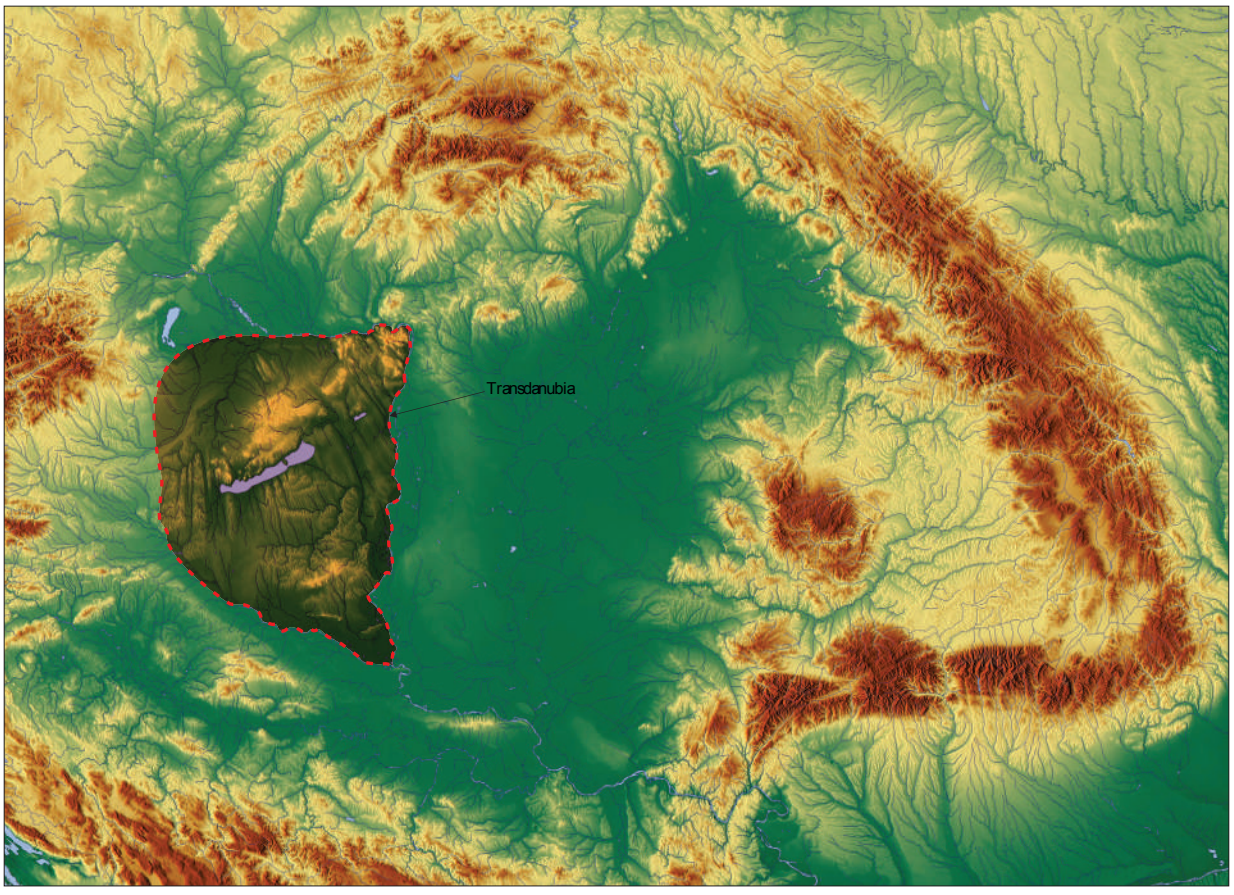


Figure 97. *Geographical situation of Transdanubia in the Carpathian Basin (Basemap: Gergely Szenthe)*

ation".[683] This assumption is, however, problematic, since it was only the Sered' (I) site, which could be dated to the first quarter of the 10th century. This dating may apply to Karancslapujtő as well, however, further analysis is required.[684] There is also one grave in Hlohovec, which could have belonged to the "first generation", however, we have no information concerning the anthropological age of the person buried there. At first glance, the dirham find in Eger-Almagyar could perhaps also indicate an early date.[685] However, the finds context of the coins, does not provide evidence in this respect. The case of Eger-Répástető is similar, described fairly clearly by László Révész, who dated the finds to the first two thirds of the 10th century. The situation is identical with the grave in Gyöngyöspata-Csákbereg, which included a beautiful sabre, or three other graves in Nesvady-Partokdűlő, and the burials in Ludas and Piliny-Leshegy.

The more precisely datable sites could be dated to the second third off the 10th century or later (e.g. Levice, Kál-Legelő). Materials from Prša, Sóshartyán-Hosszútető, Malé Kosihy, Szob-Kiserdő, Vojnice/Bátorove Kosihy-Papajtó, Svätý Peter could be dated to even later – i.e. the mid-10th century.

Although the burial sites in Kál-Legelő, Visonta-Felsőrét, Szob-Kiserdő, Chotín were excavated completely, they are post-dating the second third of the 10th century. The periodization of the most important archaeological sites is shown in *Fig. 96*.

683 Mesterházy 1989–1990, 271: 17. kép.
684 Zelencova–Saprykina–Türk 2018, 689–720.
685 Révész 2008, 98.

X.6. The "Transdanubia phenomenon"[686] in the 10th century – the western- southwestern periphery of the Hungarian nomad power?

X.6.1. Analysis of 10th-century burials in Transdanubia

The Transdanubian region (i.e. the Roman *Pannonia* and Carolingian *Transdanubia*) consists of several geographically distinct parts (mesoregions): the southern part of the Little Hungarian Plain (the Kisalföld, divided by the Danube, now, only the southern part is situated in Hungary), the Transdanubian Mountains, the flat and hilly landscapes of the Transdanubian Hills, and the West-Hungarian Borderland. In the Kisalföld (Little Plain) region, to the south-southwest of the Danube, the character of the funerary sites is partly similar to what we have observed thus far (in case of the Great Plain), while in the more western parts of Transdanubia, we can observe diverse archaeological phenomena *(Fig. 97)*.

In the area of the Little Hungarian Plain, south of the Danube, in Neszmély-Melegeshegy, two burials were found, which were perhaps part of a "typical" Conquest-period burial site. The finds include leaf-shaped mounts, wrought iron bridle bits with cheek pieces, band bracelets with broadened terminals, and a coin of Berengar (I), King of Italy [915–924]).[687]

Not far from there, in Dunaalmás, a part of a burial site (with 13 graves) was excavated, where plated braid discs plates, belt mounts, and arrowheads were found. Both sites are likely dated to the second third of the 10th century or later.[688]

The most significant site in this region is Bana-Ördögásta-hegy, where a rich grave was discovered in 1956, and the finds were collected by Ákos Kiss, staff member of the Kuny Domokos Museum in Tata.

Figure 98. *Bana: silver sabretache plate (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest)*

A silver sabretache plate with a copper back cover *(Fig. 98)*, an iron fragment and silver inlaid bronze guard of a sabre, two small gold plates (perhaps eye covers?), belt mounts, and horse harnesses were part of this assemblage, which is undoubtedly the most representative from this region. On first inspection, Ákos Kiss documented the depth of the grave and also collected a 28-cm long piece of the sabre's blade, in addition to other finds. A rescue excavation took place later, whereby other finds were recovered from this burial (grave no. 1), including the fragments of stirrups, two arrowheads, a strap buckle, and 1 large and 16 smaller harness mounts; another – female – grave was also discovered, with a partial horse burial, but it only contained a few mounts. There is some information that during the interwar period this grave, and the whole site too, could have been robbed multi-

686 The problem was first discussed by Gyula László and further elaborated on by Károly Mesterházy. The concept itself was forged by Péter Tomka. See: László 1944, 67–68; Tomka 1996, 251–253; Mesterházy 2002, 327–340.

687 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 57–58: No. 740; Kovács 1989, 17: Nr. II; AH 1996, 371.

688 Kralovánszky 1988, 244–282.

ple times. It seems likely that there was a small burial ground here, dating to the first two thirds of the 10th century.[689]

To the south-southeast of Bana, still in the area of the Little Hungarian Plain, only a few Conquest-period sites are known. To the west from there, however, around the Rába and Marcal Rivers, there are more.

Szomód-Bocskahegy is one of these, where there was a possibly solitary grave of an "archer", buried with archery equipment and a horse harness. Among his grave goods, there were also two dirhams of Ahmad ibn Ismail [H295–301/907–914] and Nasr ibn Ahmad [H301–331/914–943] Sasanid amirs, issued in Samarkand in 907/908 (H295), and 923/924 (H311) respectively.[690]

In Csikvánd, two graves with horse burials and weapons (arrowheads) were documented.[691]

In Gyömöre-Károly Friedrich's garden, there was one grave, containing a horse burial, a set of rosette ornamented harness mounts, seven leaf-shaped harness mounts of gilded silver, and a saddle decorated with silver plates. This was probably a solitary grave. Ciprián Horváth assumed that its dating cannot be narrowed to a period shorter than half-a-century.[692]

In Győr-Téglavető-dűlő, 61 graves were excavated. The site perfectly fits into what we had known so far about larger burial sites: the graves were west–east oriented, poorly furnished, without weaponry and horse burials. This is certainly indicative of the social status of the community, however, its different cultural background cannot be ruled out. Having re-evaluated the available materials, Horváth dated the burials to the second half of the 10th century.[693]

Koroncó is also situated in the southern part of the Little Hungarian Plain and is definitely one of the most interesting sites. Apart from a single grave (possibly of a man), which could not be dated precisely within the 10th century (Koroncó-Bábota I[694]), we know of four more locations around the village, where burials with rosette-ornamented harness mounts were documented.

In Koroncó-Bábota II, there was a probably solitary burial, with finds which included an earring with globular pendants, a beadwork, a bronze band bracelet, a round shaped silver ornament, shoe mounts, and a harness with rosette-ornamented harness mounts. Two stirrups and the bridle bit with cheek pieces indicated that the saddle and the reins were also placed in the grave.[695] Horváth dated the finds to the first two thirds of the 10th century.

In Koroncó-23, Dózsa György street, there was another (possibly solitary) grave of a female, containing a partial horse burial, an earring with globular pendants, a silver band bracelet, a bronze wire ring, and 28 rosette-ornamented harness mounts. The partial horse burial, possibly consisting of the saddle and the reins, is indicated by two stirrups and the bridle.[696] Based on the rosette-ornamented harness mounts – which may have been in use for a longer period – Horváth assumed a dating between 900 and 975.

In the case of Koroncó-Rácz-domb, the furnishing of the grave was almost identical to the two aforementioned examples. Whether or not this was a solitary grave remains uncertain. It was situated on a slope, and its excavation was not professionally done. Cast shank buttons, a gilded bronze band bracelet, remains of a horse skeleton, rosette-ornamented harness mounts, and a strap buckle were found, which indicate a horse burial.[697] The suggested dating was 920/930–1000.

689 Kiss–Bartha 1970, 219–260.
690 Kovács 2011, 180. Péter Langó conducted new archaeological excavations in 2009.
691 Horváth 2014, 26–27.
692 Horváth 2014, 33–35.
693 Horváth 2014, 45–53.
694 Horváth 2014, 79–80.
695 Horváth 2014, 81–84.
696 Horváth 2014, 85–88.
697 Horváth 2014, 91–92.

Finally, there is another set of rosette-ornamented harness mounts from Koroncó, which may have belonged to a similar female burial.[698]

In Nyúl-Öreghegy, there were graves – possibly with horse burials, and definitely with weaponry – documented at the beginning of the 20th century.[699] To the northwest of Győr, in Öttevény (no. 62, Lenin street/ no. 36, Templom street) a partial horse burial was excavated. This was likely a man's grave, based on the poor furnishing (hair ring, iron knife), either a solitary one, or maybe one among distantly scattered graves (as in the case of the Szeged-Öthalom site). Based on the type of the stirrups, it could be dated to the first two thirds of the 10th century.[700] In the nearby Mosonszentmiklós another (possibly) solitary grave was found that included a horse burial. A horse harness, an ornamented belt, and arrowheads were found.[701]

To the west of the Rába River, rosette-ornamented mounts were found at the following sites: Csorna-Sülyhegy,[702] Enese-Belterület,[703] Rábacsanak-Tsz Major.[704] They were interpreted as female burials.

The 11 burials in Veszkény-Tormostyándűlő deserve special attention. Based on the partial horse burials (saddles, bridle bits with antler cheek pieces) and the grave goods (bronze shank buttons, beads, bronze torques, twisted wire and band bracelets) they were dated to the second third of the 10th century and later, despite the presence of earlier coins.[705]

Among the Conquest-period burial site in the region, Szakony-Kavicsbánya is at the westernmost location. The small (?) burial ground, consisting of three graves with partial horse burials – two of which were female burials with rosette-ornamented harness mounts – may have belonged to a high-status family.[706] The "isolated" location of the site is intriguing, considering that the graves were dated to the first half of the 10th century.[707] Not far from there, in Kőszeg-Kőszegfalvi-rétek, other graves were identified, which however could be dated to a later period, the second half of the 10th century.[708] Gábor Kiss, who compiled the inventory of Conquest-period and Árpád-period sites in Vas County, noted that *"Ha a megye 10–11. századi benépesülését vizsgáljuk, a kötetünkben bemutatott régészeti leletek tükrében elmondhatjuk, annak ellenére, hogy a vasi terület már 900-ban a magyarok fennhatósága alá került, tényleges benépesítése azonban alighanem csak a 955. év utáni augsburgi vereség után indulhatott meg…" ("Having investigated the settlement history of the county in the 10th–11th centuries, we can assume – based on the archaeological sites introduced in this volume – that while the Hungarians were already in control of Vas County in 900 A.D, colonization most likely began only after their defeat in Augsburg in 955…").*[709] Among the 37 sites listed by Kiss, there are only a few stray finds dating to the 10th century; the Ikervár-Virág street, Virág street site, which he himself excavated, could be dated to the second half of the century.[710]

In the Transdanubian Mountains, bordering on the Little Hungarian Plain, no systematic archaeological investigations have been performed. There are mostly only stray finds (e.g. two stirrups in Csetény[711]), or disturbed (robbed) burials (e.g. Csetény[712]). There have been also smaller or larger fragments of burial sites

698 Horváth 2014, 89.
699 Horváth 2014, 135–136.
700 Horváth 2014, 182–184.
701 Horváth 2014, 125–126.
702 Bella 1895, 253–256.
703 Révész 1996a, 64.
704 Révész 1996a, 64.
705 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 83: No. 1200.
706 Dienes 1972, 24–25. The analysis of the burial ground: Horváth 2022, 73–141.
707 Gömöri 2002, 33. As "first generation": Horváth 2022, 138.
708 Horváth 2012, 187–205.
709 Kiss 2000, 280.
710 Kiss 2000, 41–118.
711 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 29: No. 179.
712 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 28–29: No. 178.

Figure 99. *Várpalota, reconstruction drawing of a female grave (no. 1) with her ornaments (after Perémi S. 1986, 15. ábra)*

documented, but the best known site in the region is certainly Halimba – described in the literature with a modern term, as a "common cemetery".[713] Similarly to Alba Iulia-Brânduşei street funerary site 1, it is certain that the origin of the local population here was different from that of the Conquest-period Hungarians. In Zalaszántó, there is a 10th-century site,[714] and not far from there, to the north, in Zalaszentgrót, there is another one, dated to the second half of the 10th century.[715]

In case of Mór-Sóderbánya, only a small part of the site is known, due to disturbance. Based on the harnesses found there, the graves contained horse burials. In grave no. 1, an arrowhead and a quiver were found, and among the stray finds there were four perforated coins (two coins of Rudolph of Burgundy [922–926], King of Italy, issued in Milan; and coins of King Hugh of Provence [924–947] and King Lothair II [948–950]). The burials were dated to the middle and the second half of the 10th century. The dating could be based, however, only on a discoid braid ornament with palmette ornaments, which was also a stray find.[716]

In Várpalota, a similarly small part of a burial site was excavated, consisting of 7 graves dating to the middle and the second half of the 10th century. Among them, there were richer-than-average female burials (containing earrings with globular pendants, a band bracelet with coiled terminals, and a two part silver necklace), as well as unfurnished burials *(Fig. 99)*.[717] Based on excavation observations, it seems that the furnished graves (no. 1, 6, and 7) were oriented differently (close to west–east) than the unfurnished ones (northwest–southeast).

The site of Nagyvázsony-Nőzsér is situated in the Veszprém–Nagyvázsony Basin, which was formed through subsidence along the faults between the Southern Bakony Mountains (i.e. the southern stretch of the Transdanubian Mountains) and the Balaton Uplands.[718]

The site of Szentbékkálla-Öreghegy (Töttösi-dűlő) is situated in the Káli Basin. A two-edged sword with sabre grip was found there in the early 20th century.[719]

Along the northern shores of Lake Balaton, in the area of the Balaton Uplands, we know of only a few partially excavated burials sites, and – unfortunately – many more stray finds (e.g. in Balatonalmádi,[720] Balatongyörök,[721] two sites in Felsőörs,[722] Hegymagas[723]).

713 Török 1962; Szigeti–Szilágyi 2013, 861–884; Szigeti 2023.
714 Horváth 2014, 347: 75. kép.
715 Dienes 1959–1960, 107–126.
716 Kralovánszky 1967–1968, 249–252.
717 Perémi S. 1986, 121–130.
718 Perémi S. 1998, 34.
719 Perémi S. 1998, 31.
720 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 22: No. 42; Perémi S. 1998, 28.
721 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 22: No. 44.
722 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 36: Nos. 315–316.
723 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 39: No. 380.

Figure 100. *Budaörs-Tűzkőhegy, grave no. 1 (man) (exhibited in situ in the Budapest History Museum) (Photo: Judit Szigeti) and his grave goods (after Irásné Mélis 1992, 2. kép)*

Allegedly, there was a grave with a horse burial found in Balatonakali, from which a bracelet with an animal head ornament and a ring also came to light.[724]

In Balatonfüred-10, Morva street, two graves were excavated in the garden of a house. Whether it is the case that there were only these two graves there, or the actual site is larger, remains undecided. Unfortunately, the archaeological investigation was restricted to trial trenches only, due to the built-up nature of the area. Grave no. 1 is the richest one in this region: it contained a pair of silver earrings with globular pendants, 11 gilded dress ornaments, 10 large dress ornaments, and boot mounts.[725] Grave no. 2 – of a man(?) – was situated next to it, from which only two lock rings were recovered.[726] Both graves could be dated to the middle of the 10th century.

It is important to discuss the region of Székesfehérvár as well. Due to the rapid development of the county seat during the 19th century, from the 1890s onwards a number of 10th–11th-century burial sites were discovered, which were later evaluated by Kornél Bakay, whose results remain valid until present.[727] The burials in Székesfehérvár-Sárkeresztúri street can be probably dated to the second third of the 10th century or later, with some reservations however.[728] In Székesfehérvár-Demkóhegy, a couple of swords and one sabre were found (in grave no. 6) and the context of the finds suggests a dating to 950–1020/1030.[729]

724 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 22: No. 41.
725 S. Perémi 1986, 115–121.
726 S. Perémi 1986, 116.
727 Bakay 1965–1966, 43–88; Bakay 1968, 57–84.
728 Bakay 1965–1966, 61–63, 83–85.
729 Bakay 1965–1966, 45–56, 65–75.

Leaving the Danube Bend to the south, Conquest-period burials turn up only in the region around Budapest. Along the west coast of the Danube, the Budakeszi-Barackos site should be mentioned first, where male graves containing partial horse burials and weaponry (bow, arrow quivers, arrowheads), and relatively rich female graves (containing e.g. pendant shirt neck fittings) were found. Grave no. 2 of a man, with a horse burial, could be dated to the middle of the 10th century based on the coin of Otto, the German king [936–962]. Altogether, 57 graves of the estimated total of 70–75 graves have been excavated.[730] An important site has been discovered near Páty (77 graves, among the grave goods, sabres, sabretache plate, mount ornamented sabretache).[731]

In Budaörs-Kamaraerdei-dűlő, a part of a burial site was excavated, consisting of 25 poorly furnished graves. Among these, the most interesting one was a double grave (no. 158) of a 24–30 year old woman and a 20–22 year old man, whose skeletons were separated by a narrow bench. The man wore two hair rings with S-shaped terminals as well as a necklace composed of three perforated coins.[732] Prior to this discovery, three pear-shaped stirrups were also found in Budaörs-Kamaraerdei-dűlő, however, in a location which remains unknown. The relationship of this find to the aforementioned site is apparently questionable.[733]

In Budaörs-Tűzkőhegy, two graves were excavated. Based on the extent of the excavation, one should not rule out the possibility that there were other graves there *(Fig. 100)*.[734]

Figure 101. *Belt mounts from the grave in Vereb (after AH 1996, 375: Fig. 1)*

730 Erdélyi 1993, 135–152.
731 Berta–Major 2022, 31–35, 41–45.
732 Ottományi 2008, 103; Kovács 2011, 140.
733 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 25: No. 104.
734 Irásné Mélis 1992, 95–107.

Not far from there, in Budapest-Csúcshegyi-dűlő (in the 3rd district) two graves were excavated. In one of them, there was a partial horse burial, and in the other, there was a horse harness, symbolically indicating a horse burial, including silver inlaid stirrups, a foal bridle, and a shepherd's axe (Hun: *fokos*).[735]

In Budapest-Testvérhegy (Erdőalja street), an "archer's" grave was found. The grave goods included a harness and a perforated *denarius* of Emperor Berengar I's [915–924] (?), which was issued in Milan.[736]

At the head of the Elisabeth Bridge, on the Buda side, a silver inlaid sword and a spearhead with gilded ornaments were found in the 19th century[737] – perhaps they come from a 10th- (or maybe 11th-) century grave.

In the Farkasréti cemetery in Budapest, a 10th-century male burial was discovered, and the finds – purchased by the museum in 1909 – included a mount ornamented sabretache and a mounted belt. They are well known in the literature,[738] and were studied by István Dienes, who pointed out that sabretache plates evolved from the trend of decorating the sabretaches with an increasing amount of mounts, which "merged", thus, covering the side of the sabretaches.

In Budapest-Kaszásdűlő (Benedek Elek street), a grave with a horse burial was excavated, which contained a sabre and a mounted belt. The finds remain unpublished to this date,[739] and the grave was probably part of a larger burial site.

It seems that the fragments of these sites found so far were parts of row cemeteries dating to the 11th century. Some could have a 10th-century phase as well (e.g. in Lipótmező-Kurucles or Csillaghegy-Pusztakúti street).[740]

To the south of Budapest, along the Danube, in the southern outskirts of Százhalombatta, the high-status burial of a warrior was identified. It was allegedly a solitary grave. The grave goods included a sword, two gilded buttons, and two pressed silver plates which were used as pendant harness mounts, but the finds have been lost.[741]

Not far from there, to the west, along the road between Vereb and Lovasberény, at kilometer marker 13, another burial was documented in 1853. The 22–24-year-old warrior whose skull was trepanated, was buried with his horse (as indicated by a pair of stirrups and the bridle). There were 20 mounts and a strap end of a belt found; the mounts with ring pendants are unparalleled in the Carpathian Basin, they probably decorated the horse harness *(Fig. 101)*. There were also 12 coins found in the grave, of which the latest ones were of King Berengar I [915–924]. Other finds included a finger ring with a gemstone, an arrowhead, as well as band- and wire bracelets. In order to validate the finds, an excavation took place later, but no other graves were found; consequently, this was either a solitary grave, or a sole survivor from a small burial site.[742]

To the south of there, in Szabadegyháza-Petőfi street, an – allegedly – solitary grave of a man was found, buried with his horse. His grave goods included 12 perforated coins of Berengar: 9 of them were Milanese coins, which he issued as King of Italy [888–915], and 3 were his later coins (two Milanese and one Pavian *denarius*), which were issued by Emperor Berengar I [915–924]. Based on these coins, the grave can be dated to the first third, or first half of the 10th century.[743]

Immediately to the south of this site, in Nagylók-Erdőmajor, there was a probably solitary grave of a warrior, which contained a partial horse burial, an open ended bronze bracelet with spearhead terminals,

735 Garády 1936, 30–33.
736 Kovács 1989, 22–23: XXI.
737 AH 1996, 365–367.
738 Dienes 1973, 177–217.
739 I owe this information to a kind communication by Judit Szigeti.
740 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 25: Nos. 107–108.
741 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 68–69: No. 942.
742 Érdy 1858, 14–27.
743 Kovács 2011, 145.

silver-gilt belt mounts and strap, small golden plates, two pear-shaped stirrups, and a bridle with cheek pieces.[744]

In 1968, István Bóna excavated the grave of an 8–10-year-old girl in Dunaújváros-Radiátorgyár, and dated it to the first half of the 10th century.[745] He also opened test trenches to investigate the surroundings of the grave, but found no other graves. Thus, this one was another example of solitary graves (or similar to the Szeged-Öthalom example).

Northeast from Sárbogárd, in the area of Forrás-dűlő, near the Tringer-tanya farm, 9 graves were disturbed in 1961, during earthworks constructions. An excavation followed, conducted by Alán Kralovánszky and Kinga Éry, who found another 91 graves and also a complete cattle burial (the latter was, however, dated to the Roman era). The site can be considered as completely excavated. Various finds were recovered, including earrings with globular pendants cut from sheet, lunular pendants, cowries, beads, disc ornaments cut from sheet, shank buttons, mounted belts, bows, arrow quivers, arrowheads, stirrups, strap buckles, bridles, and a horse yoke. Kralovánszky dated the earliest burials to around 900, assuming that the start date of the site was determined by the occupation of Transdanubia. The closing date of the burials was around 970–990.[746] In contrast to Kralovánszky's opinion, we think that none of the finds can be dated to the first third of the 10th century.

Further to the south, in Nagydorog-Bezzegpuszta, we know of two graves, one of which contained a partial horse burial.[747] From Tengelic, rosette-ornamented harness mounts were brought to the local museum.[748] In Szedres-Ifigéniapuszta, rosette-ornamented harness mounts, pear-shaped stirrups, and a bridle with cheek pieces were recovered from a female burial, which was part of a small burial site. The finds were generally dated to the first two thirds of the 10th century.[749] In Szekszárd-Hidaspetre, horse bones, a pair of pear-shaped stirrups (or foal bridle?), silver gilt (and rather broad) belt mounts, and perforated coins were collected from a man's grave. There were also five perforated coins among the recovered grave goods: 2 coins of Berengar, King of Italy [888–915] (one Milanese and one Pavian issue), and 3 coins of Hugh of Provence, King of Italy [926–931] (all three denars were issued in Milan).[750] The 8 excavated graves in Szakcs can be dated to the second half of the 10th century.[751]

Further to the west, and south of Lake Balaton, more systematic investigations have been carried out, and we have information concerning more than a dozen sites, of which the most important ones will be introduced below. In Balatonszemes (112, Landler street), a solitary burial was found; considering that there was another grave/skeleton there (albeit buried without grave goods), this may have been a double grave. Taking into account its orientation (right angle to the other one), however, one should rather disregard the suggestion that the two graves were related. The grave with the archery equipment contained also belt mounts, harness mounts (with rattle), and three perforated coins, i.e. two Milanese denars of Berengar (I), King of Italy [888–915], and Emperor [915–924], as well as a quartered solidus, issued during the reign of the Emperors Mikhael II, Theophilus and Constantine, Byzantine [832? – 839?]. Thus, the burial could be dated to the first half of the 10th century.[752]

Still in this area, in Balatonlelle (7, Temető street), a grave with a horse burial was found, which contained an arrowhead – whether or not this was a solitary burial remains a question.[753]

744 Fehér–Éry–Kralovánszky 1962, 56: No. 719; Petkes 2012, 82: 35. sz.
745 Bóna 1971, 170–175.
746 K. Éry 1968, 93–147; Kralovánszky 1985, 360–374.
747 Ódor 1999, 157.
748 Ódor 1999, 163.
749 Ódor 1999, 160.
750 Mészáros 1962a, 4–5.
751 Mészáros 1962b, 201–209.
752 Költő 1990, 85–101; AH 1996, 361–362; Kovács 2011, 139.
753 Költő–Bajzik 2008, 6. ábra. In the literature, the site is referred as *"Arany János utca 4. szám"*, based on

In Fonyód, a grave was found during the extension of the buildings of the Palonai Primary School. Again, there is no information as to whether the grave was a solitary one. The 20–22-year-old man had a pendant in his neck, cut from a sheet, and a silver earring in his right ear. His dress was decorated with sheet straps, around his wrist and his ankle. Together with the parts of his belt (buckle, belt mounds, strap end) two coins were found, the Pavian issues of Hugh of Provence and of Lothar, King of Italy [931–947], which were attached to the belt. Based on these finds, the grave could be dated to the second half of the 10th century.[754]

To the west from Fonyód, in Balatonújlak-Erdő-dűlő, a complete burial ground was excavated, consisting of 17 graves (with 18 skeletons). Coins were found in four graves, which date the small site to the second third of the 10th century or later. In the case of the male burials, the deposition of horse harnesses and horse burials was typical, whereas in the case of female burials this occurred only once. Male burials with horse harnesses, bow quivers, and arrows and female burials with dresses ornamented with silver mounts characterize this site, in addition to poorly furnished graves. Female graves (no. 10, 15, and 17) were exceptionally rich *(Fig. 102)*. Use of the site could be dated to the second third of the 10th century, and based on the hair discs in two graves and the archery equipment in grave no. 6, it is also possible that its end date was around the 980s.[755]

In Balatonszentgyörgy (ERDÉRT telep), the graves could not be dated precisely within the 10th century.[756]

Further to the south, in Vörs (Papkert-B), a multi-period site was excavated, with 47 graves dated to the 10th century (out of the 716 in total). There were four male burials, containing archery equipment and horse harnesses. In grave no. 167, a two-edged sword was found next to the individual. Grave no. 450 was a child's grave with jewelry and a Milanese denar of Berengar (I), King of Italy [888–915]. Based on the finds from other graves (e.g. silver coiled lock ring, bronze wire bracelets, rings with stepped heads and punched decorations), the site was used until the beginning of the 11th century.[757]

Figure 102. *Balatonújlak-Erdő-dűlő, grave no. 17 with braid discs (after Langó–Siklósi 2013, 7. kép)*

In case of the almost completely excavated site of Vörs (Majori-dűlő), archery equipment was found in 16 graves (out of 370). These consisted of arrowheads, iron mounts or overlays of quivers, and bones of the bows. Harnesses or partial horse burials, otherwise so characteristic of Conquest-period burials in the 10th century, were not found. The jewelries included hair rings with open ended and S terminals, earrings (in one grave), and braid discs with animal shapes (in another one). Grave no. 208, of a 15–17-year-old girl, included a wire bronze bracelet with coiled and twisted terminals and pressed mounts. She also wore braid discs and beads in her hair. In grave no. 213, of a woman, 2 brilliant uncirculated, but perforated Milanese denars of Lothair, King of Italy [947–950] were found, together with rolled bracelets, torques, and finger rings. Based on these, the burials were dated to the second half of the 10th century and the beginning of the 11th century.[758]

a letter by Máté Varga, however, we made a correction here; he is currently planning on re-investigating the area by trial trenching. I hereby thank him for the information.

754 AH 1996, 370, 369: 1; Kovács 2011, 140.

755 Langó–Siklósi 2013, 143–159; Kovács 2011, 139–140.

756 Költő–Bajzik 2008, 6. ábra.

757 Költő–Szentpéteri 2014, 31.

758 Hegyi–Költő 2017, 597–625.

Further to the south from the shores of Lake Balaton, in the undulating area of the Transdanubian Hills, 10th-century burial sites were identified in Tab (Ugajpuszta),[759] and Sérsekszőlős (based on a sabre find).[760] Not far from there, in Tengőd (Hékútpuszta), there was a small (presumably completely excavated) site, consisting of only five graves (four male burials, and one female burial), three of which had horse burials. In each male grave, weaponry was found, but only pieces of archery equipment. Among their jewelry, the most notable piece was a simple golden lock ring. Horse harnesses were found in three graves, including three foal bridle bits, pear-shaped and Saltovo-type stirrup, and wooden stirrups with metal eyes. The possible dating of the graves is 900–970.[761]

In Törökkoppány (Temetődomb), 13 graves were excavated.[762] Other burial sites are known also in Koppányszántó (Belterület)[763] and Somogyszil (Kálvária).[764]

Surveying the Transdanubian sites, it is important to mention Majs (Udvardi rétek).[765] There has been a heated debate concerning its dating. Approximately 1,100 graves were found,[766] and currently we would rather push its dating to a later period, following the establishment of Christianity and royal power.

X.6.2. Summary

Summarizing the lessons learnt from our survey of the Transdanubian region (which borders on the Drava River) is a difficult task, all the more so since the intensity of archaeological research carried out in different subregions is not consistent (e.g. the county of Somogy is better researched than the county of Tolna). Keeping in mind these highly subjective factors, the following remarks seem to be in order concerning the 10th-century archaeology of Transdanubia:

X.6.2.1. Burial sites and settlement history

The westernmost boundary of the 10th-century settlement area is indicated by the sites situated along the Rába River and its tributaries (Gerence-stream, Bitva-stream), along the valleys of the Zala, the Marót-völgy-canal, the catchments of the Koppány, Kis-Koppány, and Sió Rivers.[767] Apparently, colonization followed the direction of the valleys, expanding the settlement area to the west and south.[768]

X.6.2.2. Chronological issues

At the heart of the archaeological analysis lies the chronological relation of cemeteries, burial groups, and solitary graves. In Transdanubia, Károly Mesterházy listed 12 sites, which could represent the "first generation", and all of them were situated close to the Danube.[769] Since his results are outdated, it will be instructive to briefly evaluate his methodology.

Indeed, it is possible that the use of those sites, which are thought to have been the earliest, started around the year 900, but there is no proof to validate this assumption. In case of Bana, Budapest-Testvérh-

759 Költő–Bajzik 2008, 6. ábra.
760 Révész 1996a, 113. kép.
761 Révész 1999b, 267–299.
762 Költő–Bajzik 2008, 6. ábra.
763 Hampel 1905, Vol. II: 605–607.
764 Költő–Bajzik 2008, 6. ábra.
765 Kiss 1983.
766 See: Mesterházy 2002, 331–332.
767 Takács 2013, 656.
768 Horváth 2014, 344–352.
769 Mesterházy 1989–1990, 271: 17. kép.

egy, Dunaszekcső, Neszmély-Melegeshegy, Szabadegyháza, and Szakony, their characterization as "first generation" sites is rather hypothetical. In case of Balatonszemes-Landler street no. 112, Szomód-Bocskahegy, and Vereb, this problem is even more obvious. In Balatonszemes (112, Landler street), the coins of Emperor Berengar provide a *terminus post quem* (915+), and therefore, the young man buried there could not be among those who actually participated in the Conquest. In Szomód (Bocskahegy), the person, in whose grave the latest dirham was found, dating to 923/924, could have belonged to the "first generation" only if he had been at least 50–60 years old when he died – this, however, could not be ascertained. In case of Vereb, the situation was clear: the coins again provide a *terminus post quem* (i.e. after 915+), ruling out the possibility that the 22–24 year old man was of the "first generation."

There are two graves for which the "first generation" dating could be potentially appropriate. In Szabadegyháza (Petőfi street), there was an allegedly solitary grave of a man with horse burial. The "first generation" dating may apply only on the condition that the man was 40–50 years old. This is the case in Budapest (Testvérhegy) as well, where the burial could be dated with a coin.

In conclusion, it is only from the second third of the 10th century onwards, that we have more precisely dated burial sites, and grave groups – in Balatonfüred-Morva street no. 10, Balatonújlak-Erdő-dűlő, Dunaalmás, Fonyód, Mór-Sóderbánya, Sárbogárd-Tringer farm, Szekszárd-Hidaspetre, Székesfehérvár-Sárkeresztúri street (?), Várpalota-Semmelweis street, Veszkény-Tormostyándűlő.

In many cases, we have mostly only solitary graves, which could be dated roughly to the first two thirds of the 10th century – e.g. in Budaörs-Tűzkőhegy, Budapest-Csúcshegy, Budapest-Farkasréti cemetery, Dunaújváros-Radiátorgyár, Enese-Belterület, Gyömöre-Friedrich Károly's garden, Koroncó-Bábota I, II, Koroncó-Dózsa György street no. 23, Koroncó-Rácz-domb, Nagylók-Erdőmajor, Öttevény, Mosonszentmiklós, Nagyvázsony-Nőzsér, Szakony-Kavicsbánya, Szedres-Ifigéniapuszta, Tengelic, Tengőd-Hékútpuszta.

Larger burial sites could not be dated earlier than the middle of the 10th century – in Budakeszi-Barackos dűlő, Budaörs-Kamaraerdei-dűlő, Győr-Téglavető-dűlő, Ikervár-Virág street, Páty-Malom-dűlő, Szakcs, Szentbékkálla-Öreghegy, Székesfehérvár-Demkóhegy, Vörs-Papkert-B, Vörs-Majori-dűlő.

It is clear from this brief chronological summary that in this region – despite some sites having been completely excavated (Halimba, Ikervár-Virág utca, Vörs-Majori-dűlő, Majs), most burials cannot be dated earlier than the second third of the century as they can be dated generally to the second half of the 10th century. It is only in case of Halimba that an earlier (9th century) dating may apply. Apart from this atypical example, however, large burial sites could not be dated to the beginning of the 10th century.

X.6.2.3. Size of burial sites

Despite the research backlog in certain (small or middle sized) regions of Transdanubia (e.g. Tolna County), the current state of research is outstanding in comparison to other parts of the Carpathian Basin. There are many completely excavated sites and burial groups here, and due to the excavation of larger cemeteries (Halimba, Majs, Vörs-Papkert-B), several thousand graves are known, albeit only a small fraction of them were dated to the 10th century.

X.6.2.3.1. As for solitary graves, in most cases it is impossible to tell whether the grave was, indeed, a solitary one. Such burials are known in Dunaújváros-Radiátorgyár, Koroncó-Bábota II, Koroncó-Dózsa György street no. 23, Koroncó-Rácz-domb, which were identified as female burials, and there were also male burials with weaponry, e.g. in Balatonlelle-Temető street no. 7, Balatonszemes-Landler street no. 112, Budapest-Testvérhegy, Fonyód-Palonai Magyar Bálint Primary School, Mosonszentmiklós, Nagylók-Erdőmajor, Öttevény-Lenin street no. 62 / Templom street no. 36, Szabadegyháza-Petőfi street, Szekszárd-Hidaspetre, Szentbékkálla-Öreghegy (?), Tengelic, and Vereb.

Although the grave in the Farkasréti cemetery in Budapest (which contained sabretache mounts) is usually interpreted in the literature as a solitary grave, we did not include it here, since there is no documentation available. It is important to underline once again that the solitary position of these graves is uncertain because of the small scale of excavation.

X.6.2.3.2. Small burial sites (consisting of only a few graves) were probably much more widespread and significant. However, most of these sites could have remained unidentified, as they have not been excavated yet, or may have been destroyed by later agricultural cultivation. Such sites are e.g. Balatonfüred-Morva street no 10, Balatonújlak-Erdő-dűlő, Bana-Ördögásta-hegy, Budapest-Csúcshegy, Budaörs-Tűzkőhegy, Csikvánd, Dunaalmás, Mór-Sóderbánya, Nagydorog-Bezzegpuszta, Neszmély-Melegeshegy, Nyúl-Öreghegy, Szakony-Kavicsbánya, Szedres-Ifigéniapuszta, Várpalota-Semmelweis utca.

X.6.2.3.3. In case of Budakeszi-Barackos dűlő, Csorna-Sülyhegy, Páty-Malom-dűlő, Sárbogárd-Tringer-farm, Vörs-Papkert-B, we are probably talking about 50–90 graves. The structure of these burial grounds remains, however, problematic. In Vörs-Papkert-B, the site was perhaps simultaneously used by the conquerors and by another population (Late Avars). In Székesfehérvár-Sárkeresztúri street, there is an uncertain number of burials which remained unexcavated.

X.6.2.3.4. The burial sites in Ikervár-Virág street, Székesfehérvár-Demkóhegy, Vörs-Majori-dűlő probably belonged to communities whose lifestyle was already sedentary, but whose presence can be evidenced already in the second half of the 10th century.

Our data demonstrate that there were different types of sites (smaller, larger), depending on the number of the graves, yet we are unable to tell what social phenomena lie in the background. There is a thought provoking idea by Péter Langó concerning the Balatonújlak site, which opens up new research perspectives for the archaeology of the Conquest period and for the study of power networks, namely that *"…valószínűleg azonos időszakban hasonló, heterogén gazdasági hátterű csoportok használták ezeket a Kárpát-medence különböző tájain fellelt sírmezőket."* (*"…these burial grounds, which could be found in different regions of the Carpathian Basin, were likely used simultaneously by populations of similar character, but heterogenous economic background")*.[770]

X.6.2.4. The "Transdanubia phenomenon", or the western periphery of the Hungarian steppe state?

Archaeologists advocating the widespread, but much debated theory of the "Transdanubia phenomenon" started with two observations:

1. In comparison to the 10th-century assemblages in the Upper Tisza region, or elsewhere in the Carpathian Basin (mainly in the Great Plain), there are relatively few burial sites in Transdanubia, and they are rather small, but rich in grave goods.
2. The Transdanubian sites are later than those in other regions.

The use of the aforementioned concept (introduced by Péter Tomka) to describe a particular phenomenon has been criticized by many,[771] nonetheless, it still prevails in our discourse, and we are, therefore, also compelled to address the question of whether or not it is indeed appropriate to talk of a "Transdanubia phenomenon". Contrarily to the critical opinions, our answer lies somewhere in the middle: it is both a yes and a no.

Regardless of any theoretical background, the map of typical Conquest-period burial sites in Transdanubia clearly shows a horizon stretching from the Little Hungarian Plain to the Lake Balaton. However, as *Chapter XI* will demonstrate, south of the Lake Balaton these sites tend to occur only in the eastern parts of Somogy County. We are in agreement with Péter Langó who notes that "*…ezek közül leglényegesebb összetevő még mindig a kutatástörténet segítségével magyarázható meg…A Dunántúl prog-*

770 Langó–Siklósi 2013, 157.
771 Révész 2005, 186–187; Langó–Siklósi 2013, 154, 156.

resszív mezőgazdasági kultúrája pedig sok, viszonylag csekély mélységű emléket elpusztíthatott a modern műemlékvédelem megjelenéséig…" ("..the most important factor to be considered here is research history…Until the emergence of modern heritage protection, agricultural cultivation in the Transdanubian region destroyed a large part of the archaeology, buried close to the surface…").[772] Nonetheless, this condition alone does not explain the phenomenon. Concerning the southern and southwestern parts of Transdanubia (without the valley of the Danube), the "Transdanubia phenomenon" seems clearly observable (thus, the concept is useful), as we have no information on typical Conquest-period burials in that region. When we imagine a diagonal line going south from the western shores of the Balaton Lake, the 10th-century burials – representing the Conquest-period settlement network – occur only in the counties of Tolna, Somogy, and Fejér (see our site register).[773] What then explains this contrast?

Our map of the respective sites also clearly shows the western borders of the country. As we noted in previous subchapters (*X.2* and *X.4)*, however, the archaeological data are not relevant in regard to the question of the *"Machtbereich"*, understood as the extent of political-military control over a particular area. The 10th-century burial sites are indicative only of the *"Siedlungsbereich"* (whether nomadic, or semi-nomadic). Having surveyed the northern part of Transdanubia, Ciprián Horváth concluded that in the first half of the 10th century, the border settlements of Western Transdanubia were situated beyond the Rába River,[774] and this zone presumably stretched down to the lower catchment of the Zala River, and then, from the western shores of Lake Balaton to the area bordering the Danube and the Mura Rivers. Most of these sites were situated in the Rábaköz region, south from the Hanság region, in the lower catchment of the Zala River, around the Balaton Lake, and in Eastern Somogy.[775] Further west, there is no information on Conquest-period sites dating to the 10th century. Needless to say, the situation seems very similar to what we have seen in case of the Transylvanian Basin.

It is beyond doubt that, from a political viewpoint, this region was the periphery of the new nomadic power. Archaeological data suggest that the local population was integrated into the new power structure (e.g. Vörs-Papkert-B). We have no knowledge of what social or power mechanisms this integration implied, but the occurrences of typical Conquest-period graves with horse burials and weaponry illustrate the point that this control was not just nominally exercised by a distant power, but military outposts were created, in parallel to the structural integration of the local elites of the conquered population

The periodization of the most important archaeological sites is shown in *Fig. 103. A–B*.

X.7. The "steppe state" beyond the Carpathians?

As seen in the previous chapter, the topographical situation of the political-military boundary of the Hungarian power structure is not known exactly. Different suggestions have been put forward, primarily by historians, outlining the territory of the Hungarian power structure, stretching from the Vienna Basin in the

772 Langó–Siklósi 2013, 156.

773 We should note here that the Conquest-period burials occur mostly where the small burial groups and solitary graves of the Avar population in the 7th century, i.e. in the Little Hungarian Plain, in Tolna County, in the Mezőföld region, and in the northern part of Fejér County (e.g. in Mór, where there was specifically also an Avar site). It is a similarly intriguing question why we find the Conquest-period burials on the heavy soils of the high relief area of the Buda Hills (Budakeszi, Budaörs), which were already heavily forested by that time, while the Zsámbék Basin, a few kiolmeters to the west, was much more suitable for settlement. It would be useful to consider the soil character, hydrography, and the road network in connection to this problem. We hereby thank Gergely Szenthe for drawing our attention to this.

774 Horváth 2014, 347.

775 Horváth 2014, 75. kép; Költő–Bajzik 2008, 6. ábra.

Figure 103. A. *Relative chronology of the most important 10th century burial sites in Transdanubia*

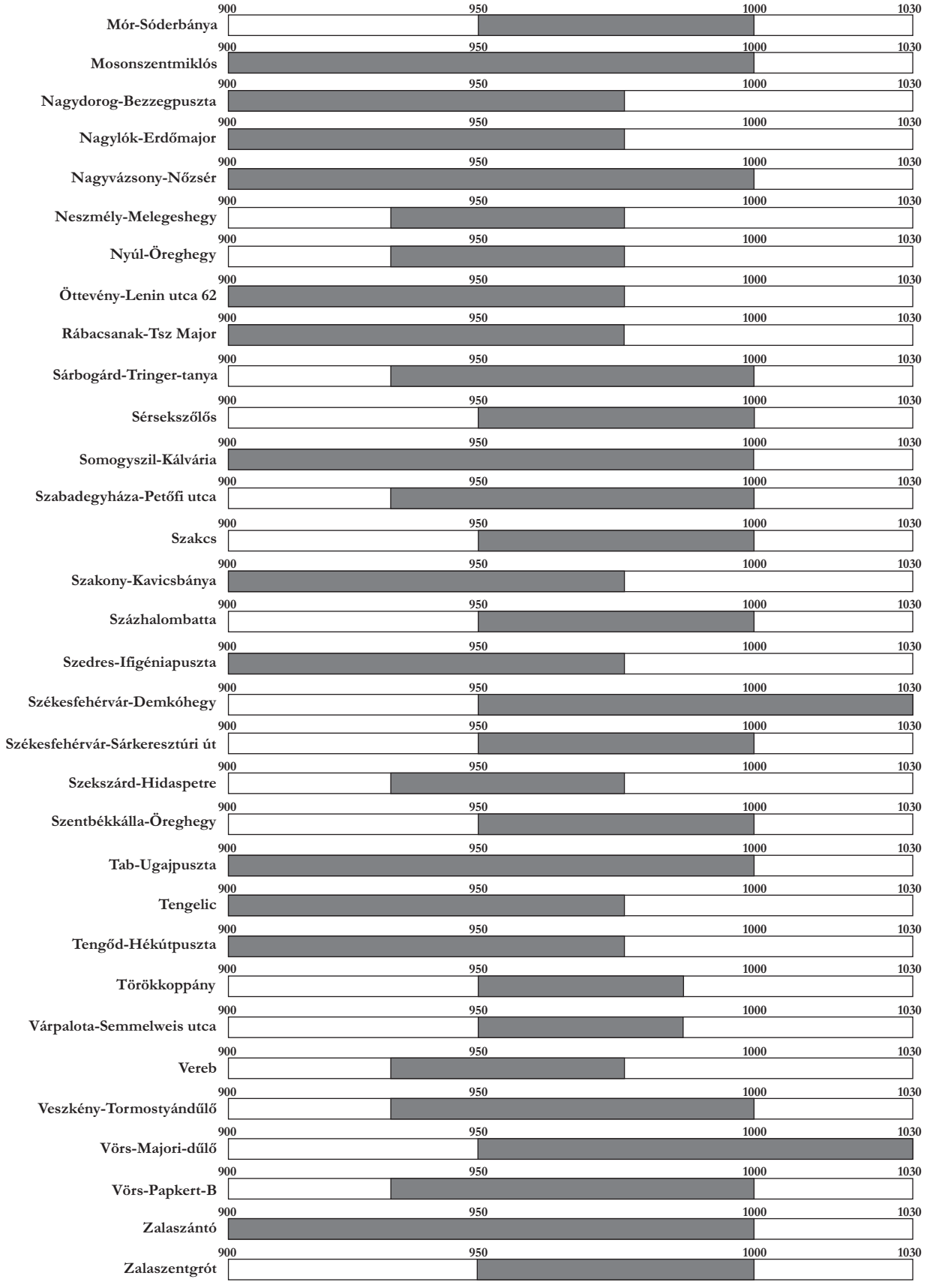


Figure 103. B. *Relative chronology of the most important 10th century burial sites in Transdanubia*

west, to the Dniester in the east, and to Bucharest in the south. Historical reconstructions were substantially influenced by chance discoveries of certain finds, many of which were not brought to museums and thus have not been professionally evaluated. In these regions, data collection was not systematic and did not cover the entire regions, but was rather selective, focusing on certain finds, which were similar to the ones in the Carpathian Basin. The conclusions were drawn accordingly, on the basis of historical preconceptions.

X.7.1. The problem of Conquest period "Hungarian" finds to the east from the Carpathian Basin

Firstly, we introduce the theories about the "Hungarian" finds, which were found in the region to the east from the Carpathian Basin. Archaeologists were, in this case, again more careful: István Fodor, for instance, assumed – when surveying the respective sites beyond the Carpathians – that these could be *"the burials of the Etelköz Hungarians",* but also *"of 10th-century Hungarian border guards"*.[776] With this, however, he partly alluded to historical reconstructions, according to which the 10th-century Hungarian border zone was situated in a range of 600 km measured from the Upper Tisza region, extending to the east and south as well.

Historical reconstructions proposed by historians and archaeologists, according to which the border zone of the Hungarian Grand Principality could have reached even the Dniester, and the roads around Bucharest – otherwise lying not far from the centre of the Bulgarian Khanate or Tsardom – could have been controlled by Hungarian troops, have been clarified, nuanced and interpreted in geopolitical and settlement historical contexts by Roman A. Rabinovichi and Svetlana S. Rjabceva. According to the two Chișinău researchers, the fairly densely settled area between the Eastern Carpathians and the Dniester should not be defined as a border zone, but rather as a sphere of interest that stood under the influence of the Hungarian Grand Principality until the middle of the 10th century.[777] From a historical perspective, the basis of their theory was the assumption that the *Ulichian* and *Tverts* population managed to maintain their independent status from the Rus until the 940s. They also backed up their historical data with archaeological evidence pointing to the similarity between local burials finds and finds from the Carpathian Basin.[778]

We are going to come back to this question later; for now, however, we shall have a look at the burials discussed by István Fodor, as his conclusions have been cited by a number of historians and linguists as well.[779] Geographically, the closest archaeological site to the Verecke Pass is Krylos, which could be linked to the 10th-century Hungarians.[780] Considering the topographical location of this site, one cannot rule out the possibility that this part of Galicia was indeed under Hungarian supremacy. Two important factors have been ignored, however, which – in our opinion – led to a serious methodological error: a comparative regional analysis has not been carried out, which would be instrumental for contextualizing the burials; and on the other hand, the analysis of the burial contexts has also not been carried out. The two kurgan graves in Krylos were situated within a 10th-century cemetery (of the *druzinha*).[781]

776 AH 1996, 439.

777 Рябцева–Рабинович 2007, 195–230. See also: Langó 2017, 80–85. This geopolitical phenomenon is – to a great degree – similar to the eastern sphere of interest of the Early Avar Khaganate. See Szenthe 2019, 215–218, Fig. 1.

778 Türk 2016, 84.

779 See e.g. Róna-Tas 1999, 118: Fig. 16.

780 Erdélyi 2008, 60–61.

781 It has to be underlined regarding the latter that Hungarian researchers selected Hungarian-type finds from the cemetery and interpreted them independently, taken out of their finding context. For example: Fodor 1994, 55, 5. kép.

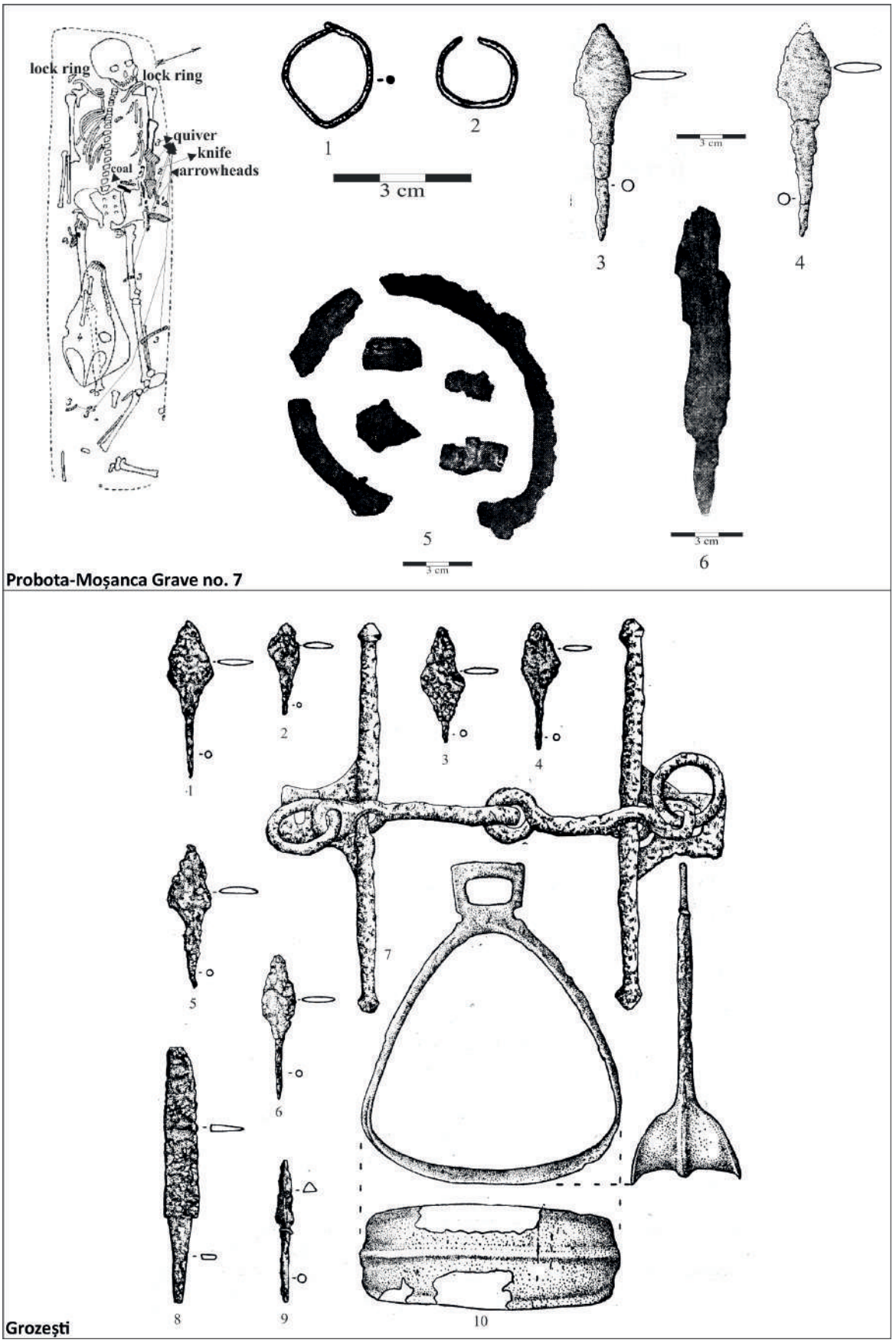


Figure 104. *Graves from Grozeşti and Probota (after* GÁLL *2015, Pl. 1–2)*

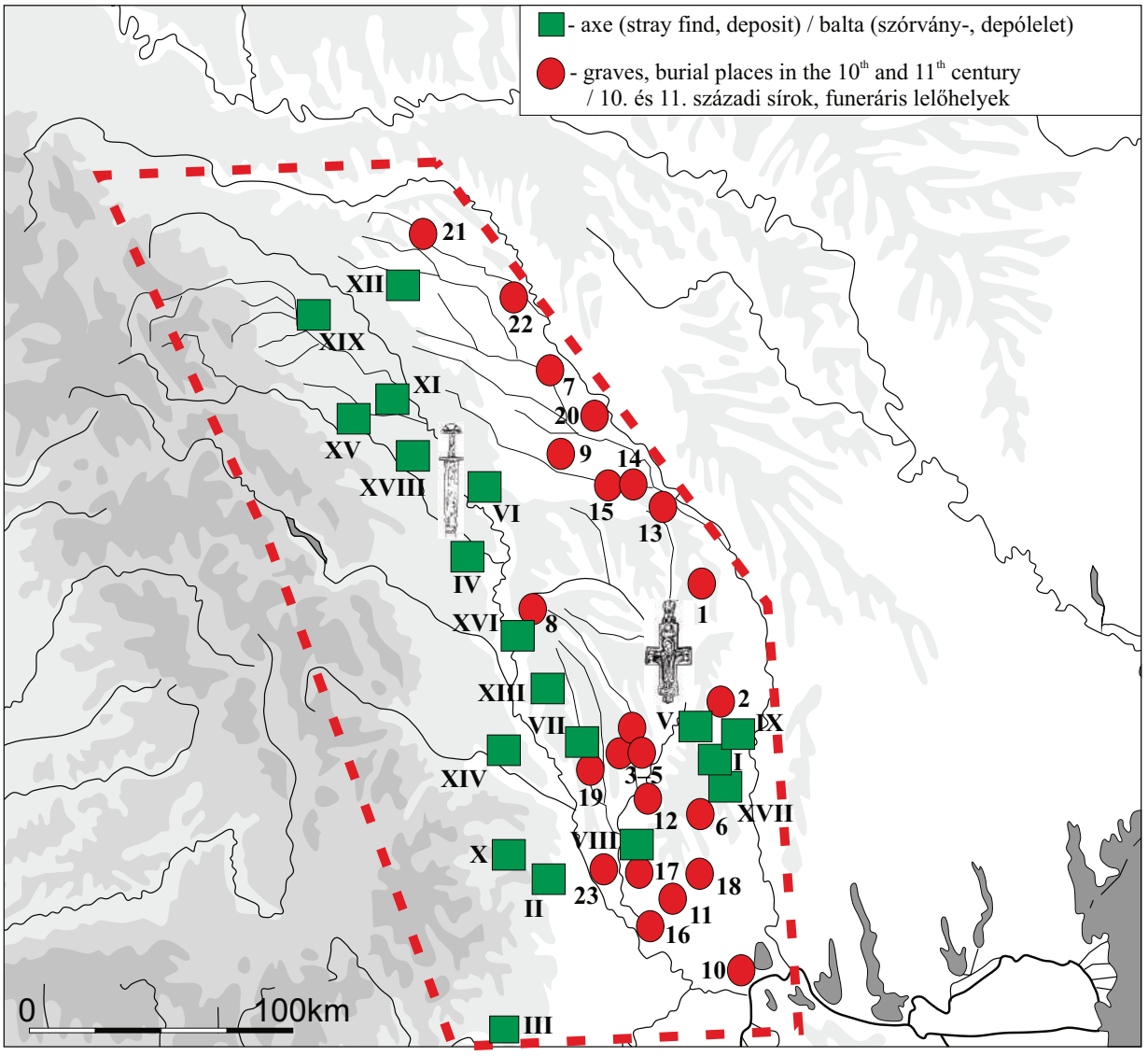


Figure 105. *10th–11th-century burial sites and stray finds (mainly axes, a sword, and a cross) from Moldavia / Romania (after* Gáll *2015, Fig. 6)*

Firstly, there are several problems with their precise dating within the 10th century, and then their relative dating in relation to other burials in the cemetery. The two kurgans and the burials were situated relatively far from one another within the perimeters of the site. István Erdélyi argued that although the two mounds could have belonged to "Hungarian" mercenaries, who were in the service of the Princes of Halych, the burials are definitely not of the typical "Hungarian" type, indicated by partial horse burials in the Carpathian Basin. They could be just as well of Pecheneg cultural background.[782]

300 air km from Krylos, there are two other sites, in Grozeşti and Probota, close to the middle reaches of the Prut. The burial in Grozeşti could be dated to the first two thirds of the 10th century, while the one excavated in Probota could not be dated more precisely within the 10th century *(Fig. 104)*.[783]

There is also a grave in Holboca, whose finds are chronologically much later, but are – to a great degree – similar to what we have in the case of burials with arrowheads and quivers in the Carpathian

782 Erdélyi 2008, 60–61.
783 Gáll 2015, Fig. 3.

Basin.[784] Our map clearly indicates that there was, in fact, a whole chain of small groups of burials along the Prut River in the 10th century (*Fig. 105*). Their precise dating, however, remains problematic.

In a map published by Fodor,[785] another grave is shown in Frumuşica, situated in the area bordering the Dniester, not far from the river, in the northern territory of the Republic of Moldova. The "border guards" hypothesis may apply to this and the other two sites, but there is also a different interpretation: there could be micro communities from the Carpathian Basin, serving the local territorial lords (*big-men, chiefs*) as mercenaries. For instance, the presence of Viking warriors in the Carpathian Basin is a better-known example of this phenomenon.[786]

Contrary to the suggestions of Roman Rabinovics and Svetlana Rjabceva, there are also other finds from Moldavia, which have been traditionally associated with the cultural context of the Kievan Rus, for example, the fragment of the two-edged S- or T-type sword from Paşcani.[787] However, drawing a conclusion from this (i.e. what we know about the material culture) in regard to a geopolitical question of this magnitude, would again be problematic in this case. For example, several Bjelo Brdo type finds[788] – specific for the Carpathian Basin – are known also from Bulgaria,[789] yet, we do not draw geopolitical conclusions from this. Our opinion is rather the opposite of what the Chişinău researchers suggest: the 9th–11th-century cultural developments in the Moldavian territories between the Carpathians and the Prut may have been rather heterogenous *(Fig. 105)*.

There is a burial near Tei Lake in Bucharest,[790] which should be deleted from the list of 10th-century "Hungarian" sites beyond the Carpathians.[791] The finds recovered at Lake Tei near Bucharest have been uncritically interpreted as a grave, they are practically scatter finds: 1. firstly, the weapon from the grave – referred to as a sabre – never made it to a museum,[792] and thus we have no knowledge of its type and dating; it was perhaps a more modern sabre; 2. concerning other finds, like axe, which had been in stored

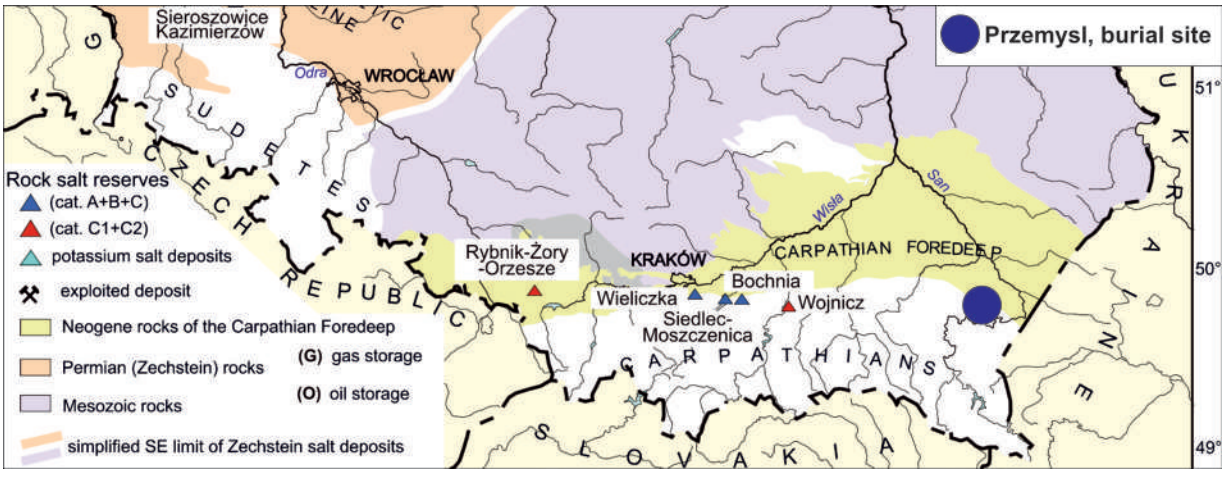


Figure 106. *Surface and near-surface salt deposits in the Southern Poland and situation of the "Hungarian" Conquest period burial ground in Przemyśl (after Czapowski–Bukowski 2010, Fig. 1, supplemented)*

784 Gáll 2015, Pl. 1.
785 AH 1996, 438: map.
786 Katona 2017, 26–60.
787 Spinei 2009, Fig. 9/13.
788 Giesler 1981. See also: Bálint 1976, 231.
789 Райцев 2008, Tab. LXXVI, LXXVIII, LXXIX, LXXXI, LXXXIV, LXXXVI, XCII.
790 AH 1996, 438: Map, 439. According to Morintz–Rosetti 1959, 9–47, the grave belonged to a Hungarian warrior who died in battle against the Bulgars. See also *Chapter VII*.
791 Gáll 2020, 407–414.
792 I would like to thank Theodor Ignat (Bucharest Municipal Museum) for the data.

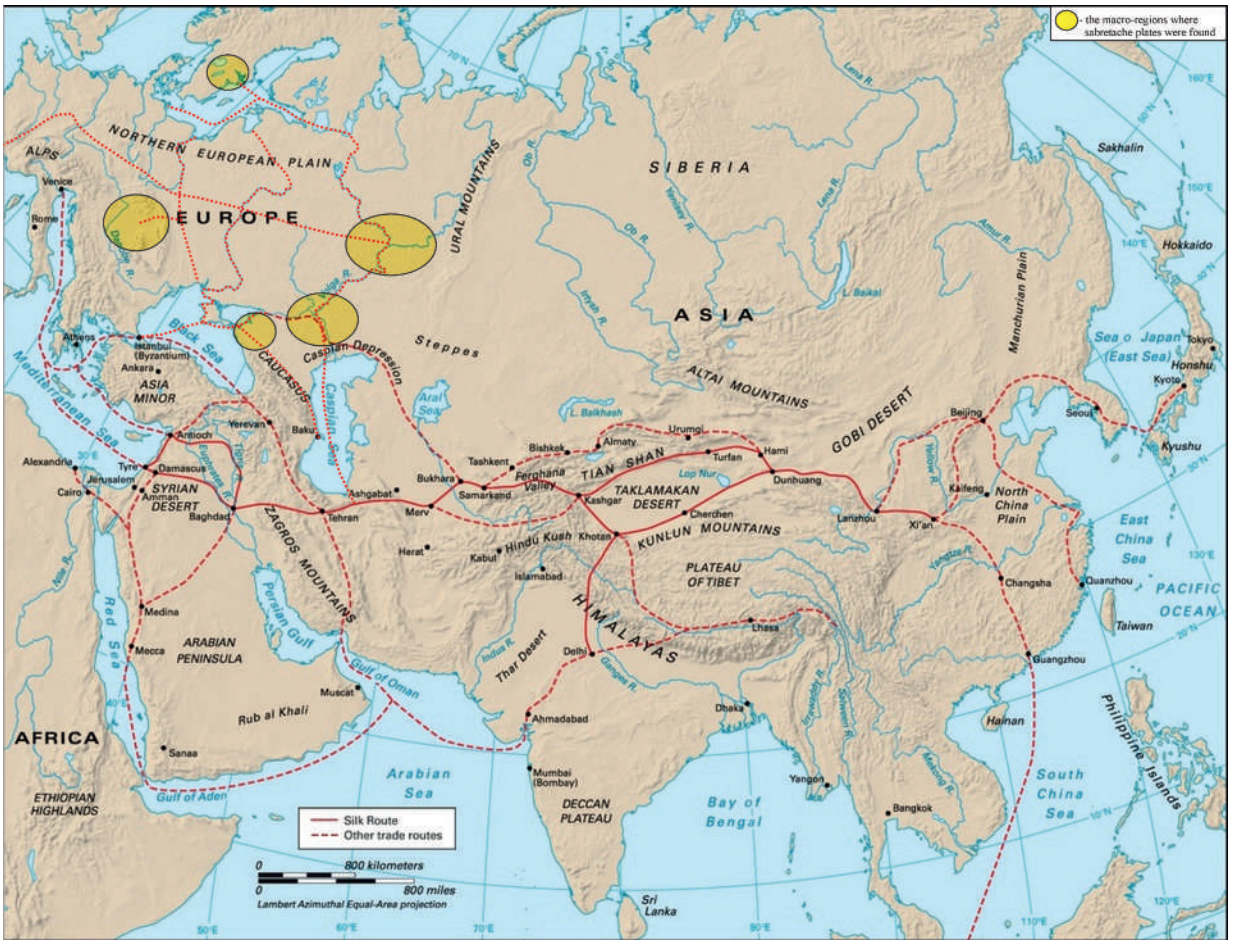


Figure 107. *The commercial routes during the early Middle Ages and the macro-regions where sabretache plates were found (they are clearly related to the major trade routes)*

at the museum, the analysis by V. Yotov points out that this type of object was in use in the 7th–11th centuries, in the neighbouring Bulgarian territories[793] and, however, not documented in 10th century Hungarian graves; the ones found in the Carpathian Basin all have much longer butts;[794] 3. the dating of the peer shaped stirrup cannot be narrowed down to the 10th century either, in fact, this type is spread around Eastern Europe already in the 9th century.[795]

Apparently, the geopolitical context could not have determined the cultural milieu of micro-communities, and therefore, it is theoretically possible to connect these finds to a "Hungarian" cultural background; nevertheless, this would not fit into the political-military context of the 10th-century Hungarian power.

X.7.2. *"Polak, Węgier – dwa bratanki, i do szabli, i do szklanki"*? The problem of 10th-century finds in Lesser Poland

Either from a geopolitical or an economic viewpoint, the 10th-century "Hungarian" burials in Lesser Poland should be interpreted differently. There are two aspects, which underline their significance:

793 Йотов 2004, Обр. 17.
794 Kovács 1986, 325: 21. ábra.
795 Komar 2018, 88; Йотов 2004, Таб. 27; Ioniță 2005.

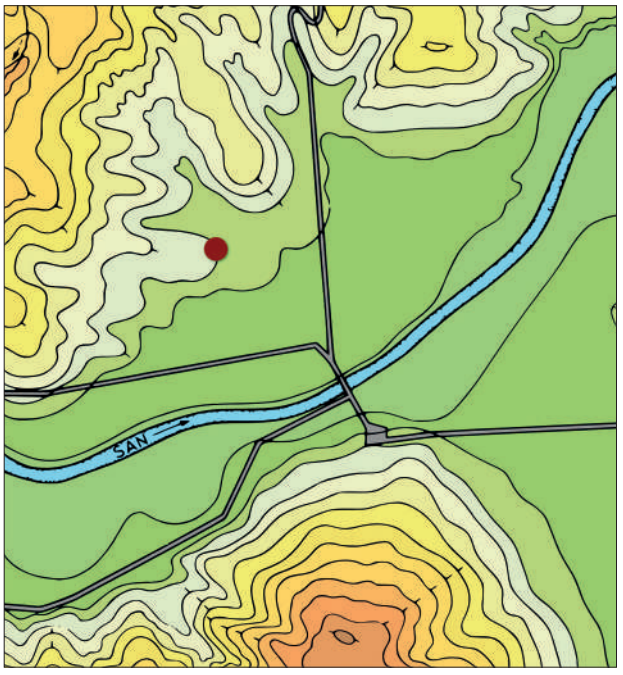


Figure 108. *The 10th century funerary site in the area of Przemyśl (thanks to courtesy of Magdalena Krzemińska)*

1) There are important salt deposits to the north from the piedmont area of the Carpathians *(Fig. 106)*.[796]

2) The north → south and east → west trade routes intersect in this region, and this lends not only economic, but also political and military significance *(Fig. 107)*.

The occurrence of 10th-century finds in this region should be considered in geopolitical and economic contexts as well. In contrast to the aforementioned sites in Romania, the finds from Southern Poland are not stray finds, or solitary burials, but groups of burials indicative of an incompact network of settlements. The burial ground in Przemyśl was one such site.

It occupied one of the higher plateaus of the River San, where the river just leaves behind the higher terrains towards the plains of the Sandomierz Basin *(Fig. 108)*. 16 graves were excavat-

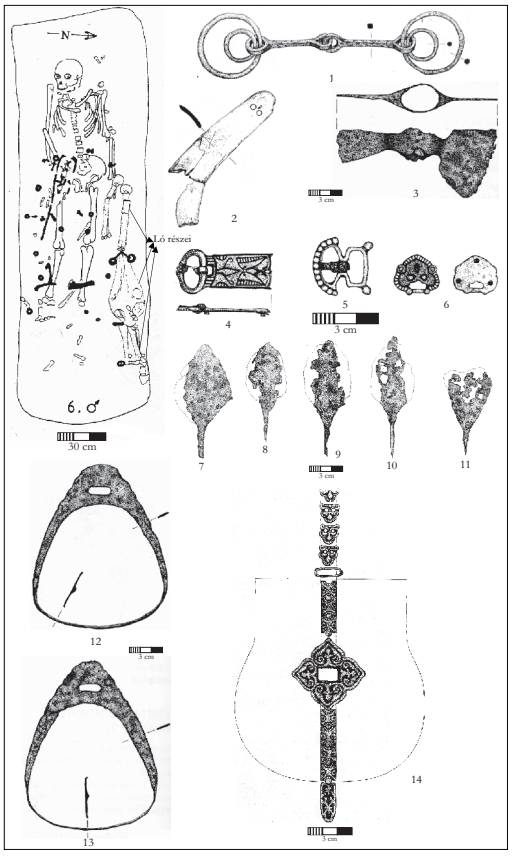


Figure 109. A. *Przemyśl, grave no. 6 (after AH 1996, 443: 2, 444: 3, 445: 4);* ***109. B.*** *Przemyśl, grave no. 6, exhibition (National Museum of Przemyśl; Photo: Erwin Gáll)*

796 Czapowski–Bukowski 2010, 509–511, Fig. 1.

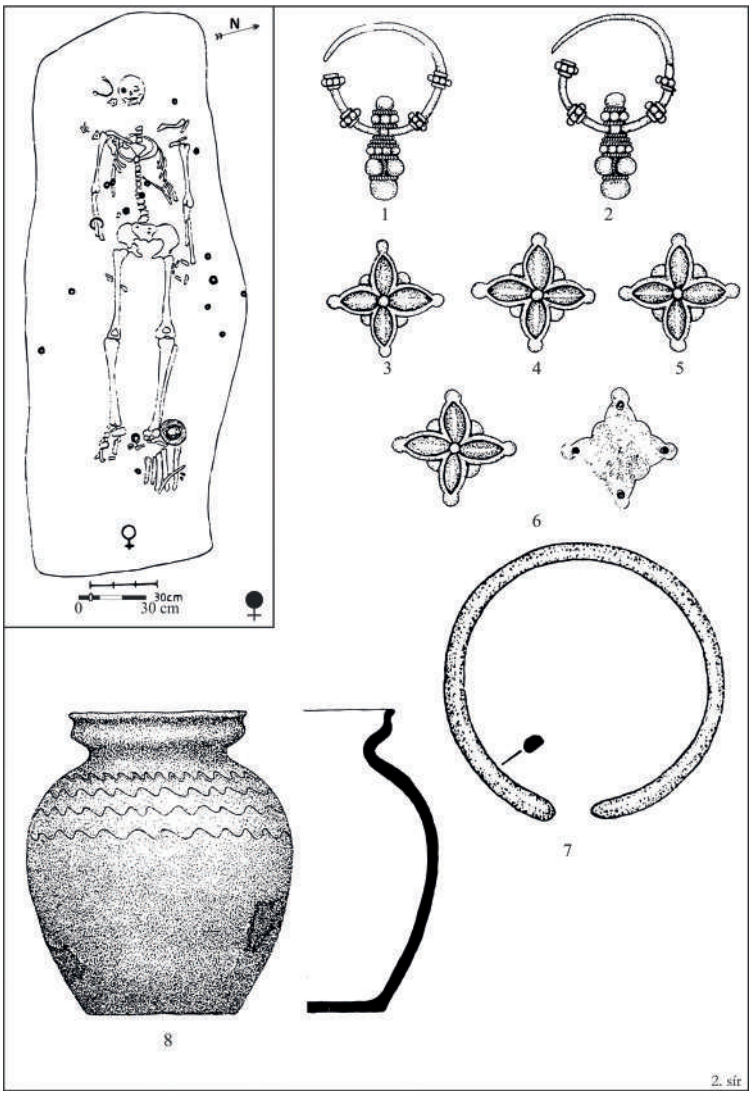


Figure 110. *Przemyśl woman's grave no. 2 (after AH 1996, 442: 1)*

ed there, representing only a fragment of the burial ground. However, the site could not be significantly larger, judging from the topographical conditions. Graves no. 1, 6, and 13 were male burials and based on the burial customs and grave goods, they were similar to the burials in the Upper Tisza region. The graves with horse burials were the richest, particularly grave no. 6. Parts of a horse skeleton were discovered between the side of the pit and the left feet of the man, oriented in the same direction as the human remains. Parts of the horse harness – stirrups and the rein – were also placed in the grave: the wrought iron eyes of the stirrups and a foal bridle bit with four rings were found. The furnishing of the grave also included a sheperd's axe, bone plates and other parts of the quiver and arrowheads *(Fig. 109)*.[797]

Among the female burials, grave no. 2 was the richest. At the left feet of the individual, 6 cattle ribs were found, and above them chicken-egg-shells were identified. The grave goods included a pair of earrings with grape shaped pendants, a silver bracelet, 4 caftan mounts, a clay vessel, the half of a glass bead, and pieces of an iron wire *(Fig. 110)*.[798]

According to the excavator, use of the site started in the first decades of the 10th century; based on the finds, however, this might seem a bit too early, since the earrings with grape-shaped pendants and the hair rings with S terminals would suggest the second third of the 10th century as a more likely starting date.

Approximately 40 km to the east of Przemyśl, in Sudova Vyshnya, disturbed burials were found in the valley of the Wisnia, a tributary of the San. The dating of these finds is similar to that of the burials in Przemyśl, i.e. the second third of the 10th century. Most of the site was destroyed, unfortunately, but the similarity of the finds with certain elements of the material culture in the Carpathian Basin suggest that these male and female burials were connected to the military society in the Carpathian Basin.[799] The most exclusive finds here included a bronze-plated braid disc, heart-shaped pendants, rosettes, boot mounts, and a bronze wire torque. These finds certainly represent the female burials, on the other hand, the cross bar of a sabre – decorated with a star-shaped mount – must have clearly come from a male burial *(Fig. 111)*.

797 AH 1996, 441, 443: 2, 444: 3, 445: 4.
798 AH 1996, 441, 442: 1.
799 Dąbrowska 1979, 341–356.

In addition to these two sites, there have been a number of single finds from Southern Poland (Radymno) *(Fig. 111)*, which similarly indicate a connection between the Carpathian Basin and this region. From the survey of Marek Florek, we know of an additional 10 sites (burials and castles) in Southern Poland, where such Conquest-period finds of "Hungarian origin" were documented *(Fig. 112)*.[800]

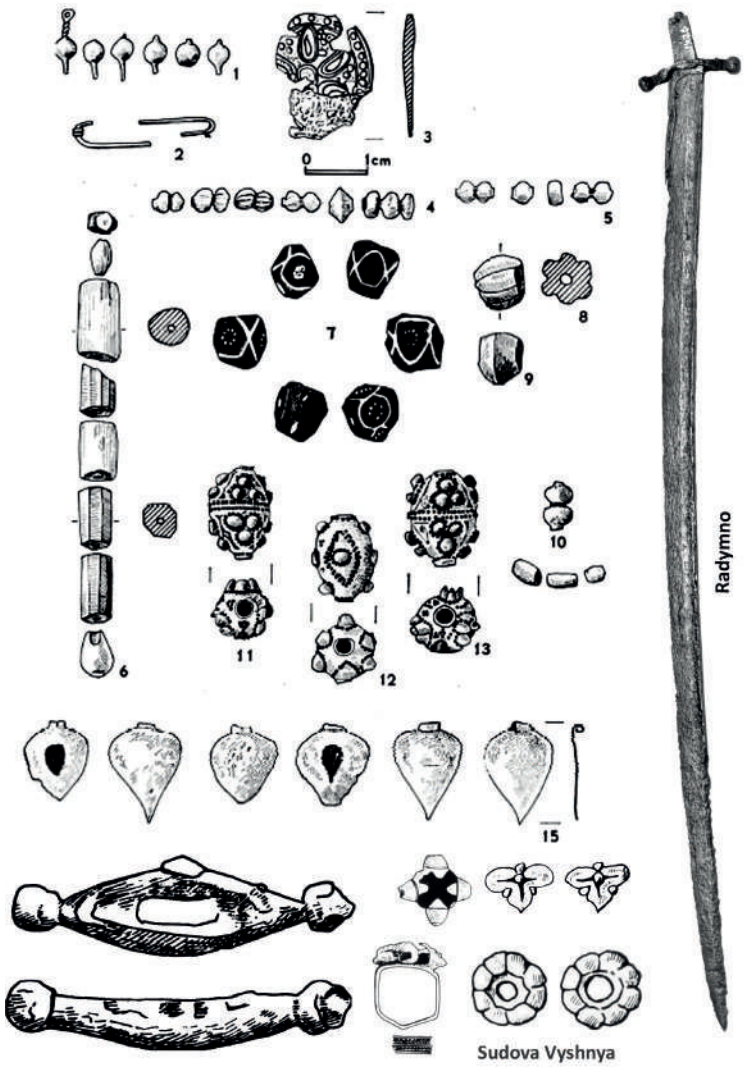


Figure 111. *Selection of grave finds finds from Sudova Vyshnya (after Dąbrowska 1979, Figs. 3, 5) and the sabre from Radymno (thanks to courtesy of Magdalena Krzemińska)*

These finds together with the documented burial sites illustrate the close connection between these communities and the Carpathian Basin. This can be explained only by the aforementioned geopolitical aspects. The available finds date from the second third of the 10th century or later. György Györffy suggested that around the middle of the 10th century the Hungarians extended their rule over the eastern border zones of White Croatia (in Galicia), which they managed to control until 992.[801] From this point of view, the dating of the archaeological evidence is not clear; an earlier dating of the burials in Sudova Višnia is possible, but research into this problem requires more precise excavations in the future. Until then, it seems reasonable to argue that the military networks of the Hungarian steppe state extended to this region as well, to control the trade routes or the salt deposits. The chronology remains to be clarified. Our working hypothesis is that the Hungarian elite was looking for an alternative source of income in the 940s.

X.7.3. "Drang nach Westen?" What happens west of the Carpathian Basin?

With regard to the region west of the Carpathian Basin, evidence for "Hungarian" burials or stray finds should be considered in a completely different context than elsewhere, i.e. in connection to military campaigns. The most relevant find and the closest one to the Carpathian Basin is the grave of a young man

800 Florek 2017, Fig. 9.
801 AH 1996, 438.

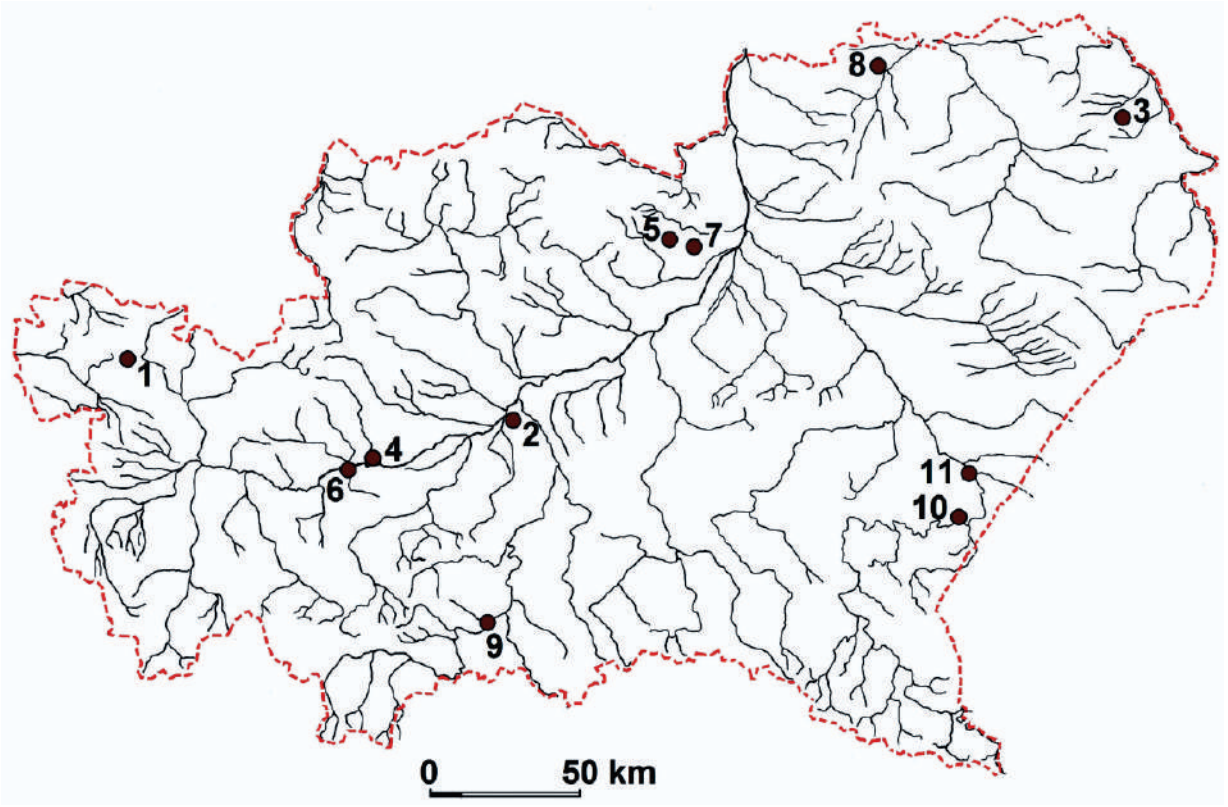


Figure 112. *Finds of "Hungarian origin" from Southern or Lesser Poland (after* Florek *2017, Fig. 9) Sites: 1. Czechowice; 2. Demblin; 3. Haliczany; 4. Igołomia; 5. Kaczyce; 6. Cracow-Okół; 7. Lipnik; 8. Lublin-Sławinek; 9. Naszacowice; 10. Przemyśl; 11. Radymno*

in Gnadendorf (Austria).[802] Its importance is underlined by the fact that it was not until July 2000 that a 10th-century "Hungarian" grave was professionally excavated to the west from the actual settlement area of the conquering Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin. The grave was found by construction workers during public utility works, who called the local museum. The excavation of the grave was conducted by Erich Lauermann, staff member of the museum, who found the remains of a young, 14-year old warrior. The grave contained a silver gilt sabre, silver gilt belt mounts (part of a belt), a partial horse burial, and 10 silver coins of Louis III, the Eastrern Frankish ruler and of Berengar I, King of Italy, dating to the period between 898 and 902 (they were sewn on the dress of the young man). Unusually, no bow, quiver, or arrowheads were found in the grave. Analysis of the textile remains revealed that the dress was made of linen and silk. The sheet of his sabre and the grip had shark or ray skin covers – the Hungarian master craftsman could have acquired these materials only through long distance trade.

The anthropological analysis also highlighted a number of interesting details: 3–6 months before his death, he must have suffered a trauma to his skull, which stemmed from a blow by a sword. The wound started to heal, however, and this was not the cause of his death, but rather a severe blow to his right elbow, which probably cut an artery and he bled to death. The young man's incipent illness, Klippel-Feil syndrome, was also revealed by the analysis. This extremely rare disease causes calcification of the cervical vertebrae, motion problems and hearing loss, but only at an older age, so he could not have experienced any symptoms. The origin- and insertion points of the tendons on his limb bones showed that he was a very fit man.

802 The Gnadendorf finds were published in Das frühungarische Reitergrab 2006.

The belt mounts and the ornaments of his sabre were all worn and repaired – they were not made for him specifically. It has been suggested that he was not yet girded (i.e. has not yet received his very own insignia), but his high status relatives were trying to give him everything he needed for his journey to the otherworld. Thus, his items were likely "borrowed" from his senior relatives, which might explain why only part of a belt was found in his grave (only 7 mounts were found, while a full collection usually included 30 or 40 mounts).

It is difficult to tell when exactly the man died. Based on the coins and the grave goods, he was buried in the early 900s. However, radiocarbon (^{14}C) analysis returned a date between 980 and 1018. During the years between 900 and 917, following the Hungarian Conquest, the region became a zone of constant warfare; on the other hand, there were also intense conflicts between Prince Géza and Henry II, Duke of Bavaria after 980. The ^{14}C data and the trapezoid shape of one of the stirrups rather supports this later dating *(Fig. 113)*![803]

To the west of the 10th-century Hungarian territory, we know of only a few solitary graves. A survey conducted by Mechtild Schulze-Dörrlamm found not more than 9 burial sites.[804] The farthest one was in Burgundy, in Aspres-les-Corps, where a Hungarian warrior was buried, who may have taken part in the 924 campaign.[805] These burials and finds differ significantly in character from what we have in case of the Southern Polish sites.

803 Das frühungarische Reitergrab 2006, 18: 36.
804 Schulze-Dörrlamm 2006, 62.
805 Schulze 1984, 473–475, Abb. 1–2; Schulze-Dörrlamm 2010, 13–29.

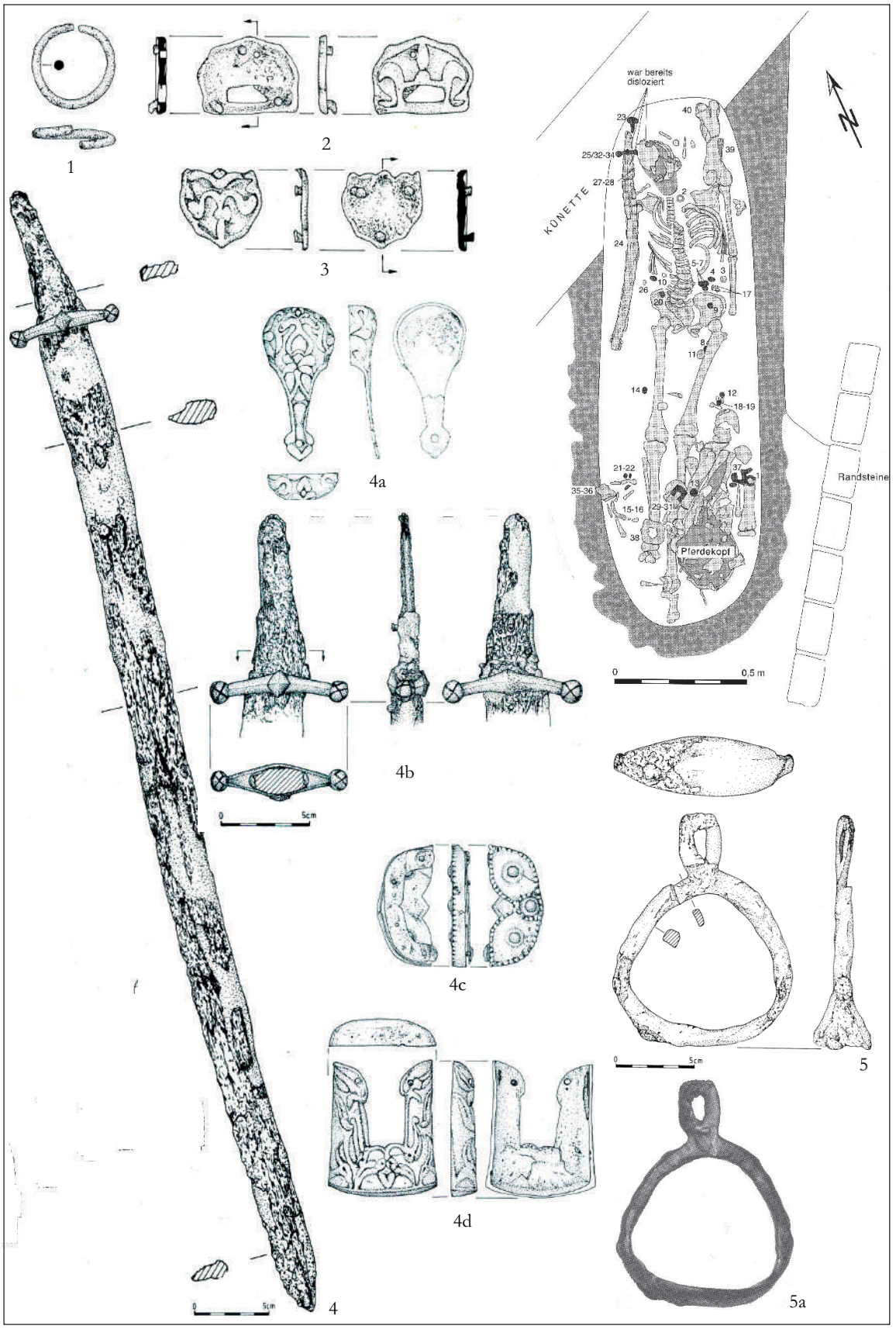


Figure 113. *Most important finds from the Gnadendorf grave (after* DAS FRÜHUNGARISCHE REITERGRAB *2006, Abb. 3, 5: 1, 6: 5–6, 11: 23a, 12: 24, 15: 28–29, 18: 36)*

XI. THE 10TH CENTURY ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE CARPATHIAN BASIN – A SUMMARY: CORE AREAS, INNER PERIPHERIES, AND "BORDERS"

XI.1. The expansion of the Hungarian power structure in the light of archaeological data. The research problem of the "Machtbereich" and the "Siedlungsbereich"

The Hungarian Conquest and the fundamental changes it had catalized – transforming the political situation in the Carpathian Basin – have been discussed already in the earliest available chronicles, and subsequently by various historians. In the second half of the 19th century, however, archaeologists, linguists, and anthropologists also started researching this theme. In the 20th century, archaeological studies have introduced a particular framework of research: based on the macro-topography of the finds (mostly from cemeteries and graves), researchers delineated the settlement area and the political territory of the Hungarians, interpreting the observable spatial phenomena as representative of an "archaeological culture" and of a particular group of "people" (ethnos).[806] Based on studies focusing on other regions, however, methodological concerns have been raised, firmly opposing this view. It has been argued that the two abovementioned concepts should be treated separately. In early medieval times, the territorial rule of elites could significantly extend beyond the actual settlement area colonized by the respective populations.

On the other hand, the concept of "archaeological culture" became also outdated – regardless of the fact that it is still being used in the research on the Migration Period. Having now carefully mapped the supraregional, macro-scale distribution of 10th century grave groups, burial sites, and the distribution of different categories of grave goods dating from the first two-thirds of the 10th century, it becomes apparent that archaeological evidence does not represent one coherent political territory (controlled by a Hungarian elite), but only provides an imperfect representation of the regions colonized by the conquering population,[807] and – more broadly – a representation of the different cultural customs of peoples inhabiting these regions; also potentially informs us about possible cultural changes. The close examination of specific goldsmiths' works – e.g. certain sabretache-plates –, demonstrated that some richly more furnished graves cannot be dated to earlier than the second third – middle of the century[808] (a similar pheomenon occurred in the case of the Early Avar Age as well [Kunbábony circle]).[809] In conclusion, it is, indeed, advisable to treat the *"Machtbereich"* (political territory) and the *"Siedlungsbereich"* (settlement area) separately.

As for the nomadic and semi-nomadic ways of life and the ways of rulership, the elites created an organizational hierarchy, a network system – that supported warfare, controlled trade, craftmanship, production, and agriculture as well. In context of the 10th century, this network can be interpreted as a

806 On the criticism of this concept in context of the Migration Period see Brather 2004, 524–526.

807 A uniform typo-chronological system can be potentially misleading.

808 On the dating with ^{14}C of grave no. 11 at the Karos III see: Türk et al. 2021, 54; Szenthe–Faragó–Gáll 2024, 482, Fig. 14; Somogyi–Türk 2024, 551–569; Somogyi–Türk 2025, 25–38.

809 On the *"Prunkgräber"* model, cf. Kossack 1974, 3–34. Adapted to the Avar period by Tivadar Vida: Vida 2016, 259–260.

"complex warfare society" – or a "*proto-state*" (in a European context). The pyramidal structure of this socio-political system was headed by the chiefs – borrowing a concept from the cultural-anthropological literature –, and an essential feature of this system was the transferability of the title through inheritance. In other words, the Hungarian power structure that emerged in the 10th century was based on the principle of dynastic rule, and it was characteristically different from the 8th–9th century rule of "*big-men*" type leaders (another anthropological loandword), like Álmos, or Levedi. The concept of the "*steppe state"* coined by Pohl should be interpreted in context of this development.[810]

Referring to the complex socio-political processes following the Hungarian conquest, we used the term "Hungarian power structure". During the course of the 10th century, there were further military expeditions, and structural integration started around the seats of the clan-heads; this network expanded, and a complex network of relations developed among the different groups (through *acculturation*,[811] *assimilation,*[812] *and structural integration*[813]).

From an archaeological viewpoint, this development can be grasped only through burial archaeology – as has been discussed in *Chapter X*; and during the first two-thirds of the 10th century there is hardly any other type of archaeological evidence.[814] In some places, the burial sites are aligned with Roman roads, which indicates clearly that these topographic features were still in use, or at least visible in the 10th century.[815]

810 Pohl 2003, 571–574. On this concept see also: Hall 2018, 17–37.

811 *Acculturation* (whose basic level is *adaptation*), is a cultural change taking place, when two or more traditions merge (For a summative discussion: Dennis 2009, 14–16; critically assessed of the phenomenon by Murphy 1964, 845–854). According to Milton Gordon, acculturation is the first step of assimilation, interpreting assimilation as a whole made up of integrative phenomena with different stages, and this first step (acculturation) would mean that a person or a group adapts the system of norms and values, the attitudes, linguistic, and material culture (e. g. clothing elements) of another society (Gordon 1964). The flow of the process to be undisturbed depends on the degree to which the new elements taken over from the other culture can be integrated in the original culture! It is an important fact that acculturation does not necessarily ends in assimilation! In our research of this era, we think the term *acculturation level* created by Gyöngyi Bindorffer appropriate, its highest level or its result is *cultural assimilation* (Bindorffer 2001, 141). In the same way: "*Also, there were individuals who were Avars or Lombards in a fuller sense than others who claimed to be so; and one could easily be Lombard and Gepid, or Avar and Slav, at the same time*." (Pohl 1991, 41).

812 For the concept of *assimilation*, there are different definitions: 1. it can be considered as the process when giving the original "culture" of a group is substituted with another "culture" (Rose 1956; Gordon 1964; Horowitz 1975, 111–140; Korzenny–Abravanel 1998); 2. Others see this rather as a mutual phenomenon, when two or more cultures melt, forming a new one (Park–Burgess 1921, 740–774; Fichter 1957). Can we talk about either type of these assimilations or about both of them depending on the geographical environment? According to Gordon's assimilation theory, assimilation may have several stages, which can be independent of one another, namely *acculturation*, *structural, marital, identification, attitude- and behaviour acceptance assimilation*.

813 "Structural integration" connects more closely to the political sphere. Its purpose is not assimilation (of individuals or groups) *per se*, but it is rather the organizing principle of mutual political/social relations of communities. In our view, integration is bound to adaptation as well as to the capacity to do so. It modifies the cultural character of the respective entity and from this point of view, *"structural integration"* goes hand in hand with "acculturation", which is ultimately the fulfilment of the process of integration, which may release and reshape community identities, and lead ultimately to the formation of the political "ethnos".

814 *"Landscape geographer Brian K. Roberts states that landscape contains within itself the physical remains of many structures, not only castles, great churches, and other buildings, but also boundaries and routeways, settlements and farms, place-names and administrative districts. Only archaeology can reveal with clarity the physical traces of these scenes."* (Thurston 2002, 30). See also: Roberts 1996, 146–170.

815 "*The topographical position of the cemeteries makes this situation even more unequivocal: these sites are situated on the higher terraces of the Someş River along the Roman roads, which indicates the continuity of infrastructure. From there, they could control the whole Someş valley."* (Gáll 2013b, 480).

The chronological and spatial dynamics of how these network relations were established can be approached from the viewpoint of the so called *"prestige chain networks"*, as reflected by the geographical-regional distribution of certain objects, indicating "dependent" links (cf. *Chapter II*). This model is illustrated in *Fig. 114*.

When applying this "network" model, – recently very popular –,[816] to the 10th century finds in the Carpathian Basin, combined with a strict typo-chronological assessment, two observations can be made:

1. The distribution of certain objects – including the ones described by Ádám Bollók as "objects of exceptional quality" *(Fig. 119)*,[817] as well as the three most common category of Conquest Period finds (sabretache plates *(Fig. 115)*,[818] mount ornamented sabretaches *(Fig. 117)*,[819] and sabres with gold and silver fittings *(Fig. 118*[820]) (cf. *Chapter X.1–6*) – shows on the one hand that there are observable spatial concentrations; on the other hand, the distribution suggests that there could have been a very narrow social group among the members of which these objects were common. This could be confirmed by typo-chronological evaluations as well – e.g. by the chronology of the aforementioned sabretache plates.

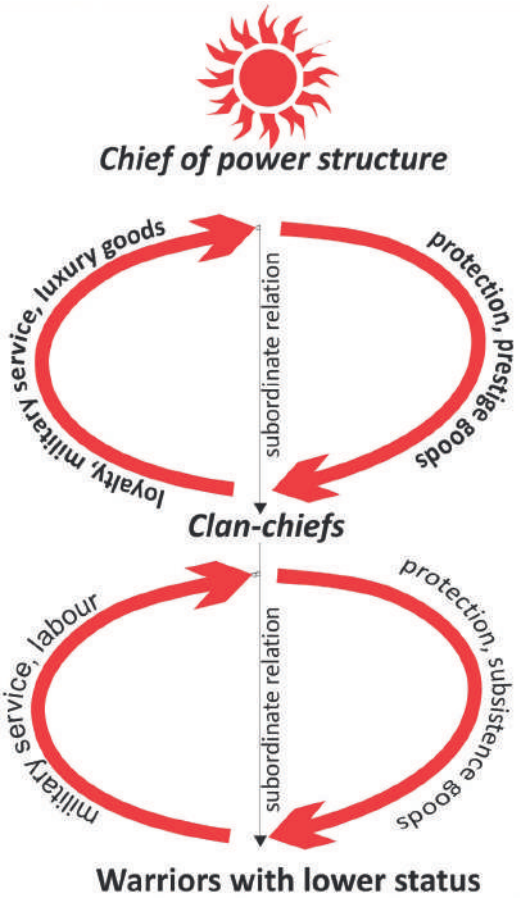


Figure 114. *A model of "prestige chain networks"*

The chronological analysis and the spatial distribution of early sabretache plates (*Fig. 116. A*) within a micro-region,[821] suggests that only small groups of the elite had access to these objects. On the other hand, their use becoming more widespread could be explained most probably by the social prestige attributed to them later on. Either this, or the individual- or group- migration of the aforementioned narrow circles or members of the elite explains why these objects appear also in other regions *(Fig. 116. B–C)*.

In case of two the two other object categories (mount ornamented sabretache; sabres with gold/silver fittings) the same observation applies: the earliest examples occur in the Upper Tisza region, and later they have become more widespread *(Figs. 117–118)*.

The distribution of the finds "of exceptional quality" shows visible concentrations in certain areas and the results of typo-chronological analysis suggests that this pattern signals the branching of the interpersonal clan-system *(Fig. 119)*.

These categories of objects are only the "tip of the iceberg" in the sense that they manifest only the top category of "prestige networks" in the Conquest Period. However, their distribution pattern reflects tendencies, which can be observed generally among the simpler 10th century finds. From this point of

816 In contrast to the approach of *"world system theory"*, network methods work at small scale, and can be relevant for discovering nodes and links within the individual entities of a "system", i.e. within a burial ground, or just one grave.
817 Bollók 2015, 571–572.
818 Gáll–M. Lezsák 2018, Fig. 9.
819 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 230. kép.
820 Révész 1996a, 113/2. kép.
821 Gáll–M. Lezsák 2018, 89–95, Fig. 7.

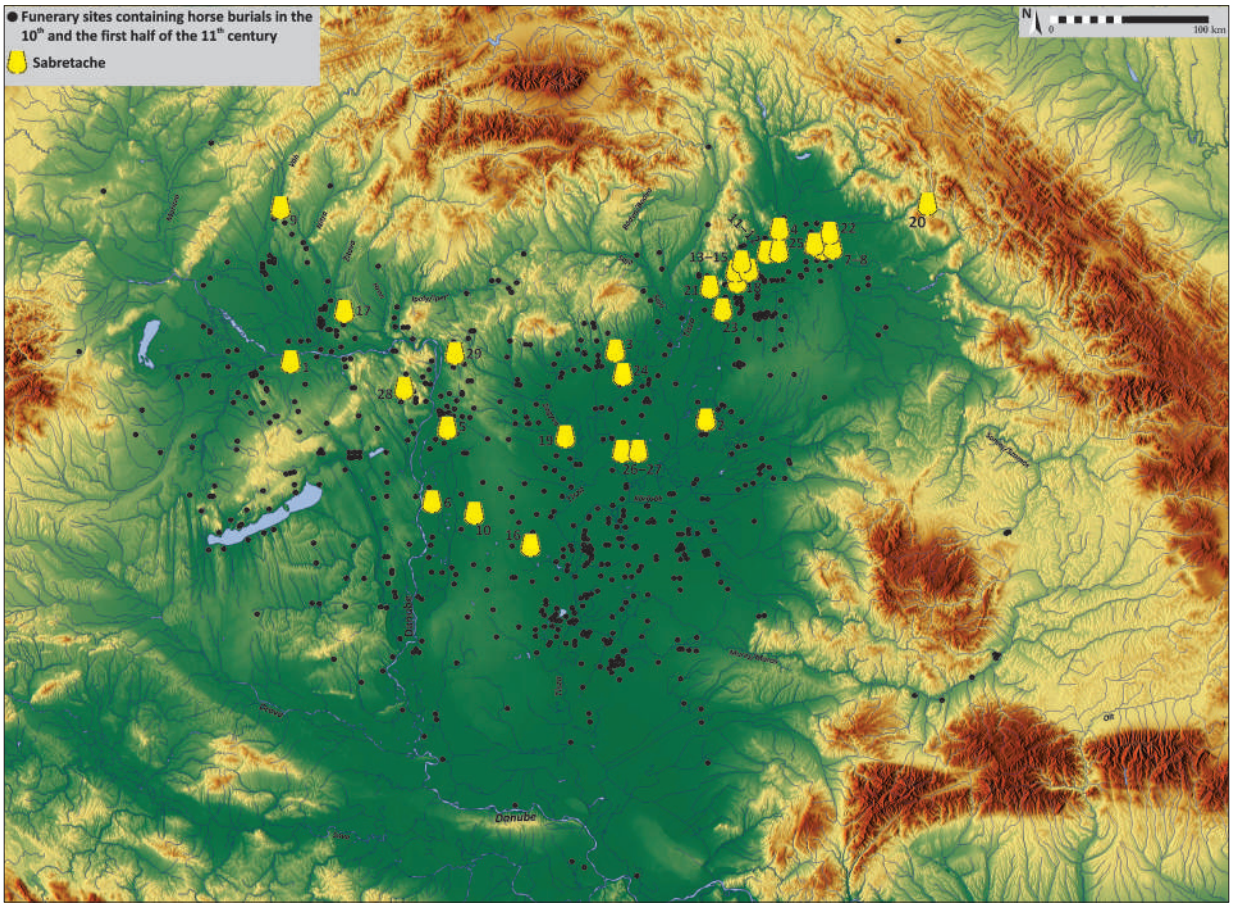


Figure 115. *Sabretache plates in the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century*
Sites: 1. Bana; 2. "Báránd"; 3. Besenyőtelek-Szőrhát; 4. Véč; 5. Bugyi-Felsővány, grave no. 2; 6. Dunavecse-Fehéregyháza; 7–8. Eperjeske, graves no. 2, 3; 9. Hlohovec; 10. Izsák-Balázspuszta; 11–12. Karos-Eperjesszög II, graves no. 29, 52; 13–15. Kenézlő-Fazekaszug I, graves no. 3, 14, Kenézlő-Fazekaszug II, grave no. 28; 16. Kiskunfélegyháza-Radnóti Miklós utca; 17. Pribeta, grave no. 3; 18. Rakamaz-Strázsahalom, grave "A"; 19. Szolnok-Strázsahalom; 20. Svalyava; 21. Tarcal-Rimai-dülő, grave no. 4; 22. Tiszabezdéd-Harangláb-dűlő, grave no. 8; 23. Tiszaeszlár-Bashalom I, grave "D."; 24. Tiszanána-Cseh-tanya, grave no. 1; 25. Tuzsér-Boszorkányhegy, grave no. 6; 26–27. Túrkeve-Ecsegpuszta; 28. Páty-Malomdűlő, grave no. 184; 29. Csomád

view, the cultural impact of the Upper Tisza region – as the primary core region – seems already very likely, based on the investigations carried out so far.[822] In a centre-periphery model, the acquisition and possession of prestige goods was the catalyst of military, political, and social processes and conflicts and their concentration might predict the occurrence of such events and phenomena.

2. The prestige objects (jewellry, mounted belts, weapons, horse accessories) and/or prestige "investments" (such as horse burials) represent, in terms of social hierarchy, a colourful and heterogeneous socio-economic structure, which is fully linked to the aforementioned narrow upper elite in its cultural habitus. The proliferation of object types suggests a specialised network of craftsmen ("peddlers"?) and/or a networked spread of technological know-how, but it is not possible to answer the questions in concrete terms because of the uncertainty of the chronological context. This is perfectly illustrated by the spread of mounted belts in the Carpathian Basin *(Fig. 120)*. Since a comprehensive typological and chronological study of these remains to be done, they can only be dated to the 10th century in general, and we cannot separate the earliest group from the later examples dating to the end of the 10th century.

822 Révész 1996a, 199–206.

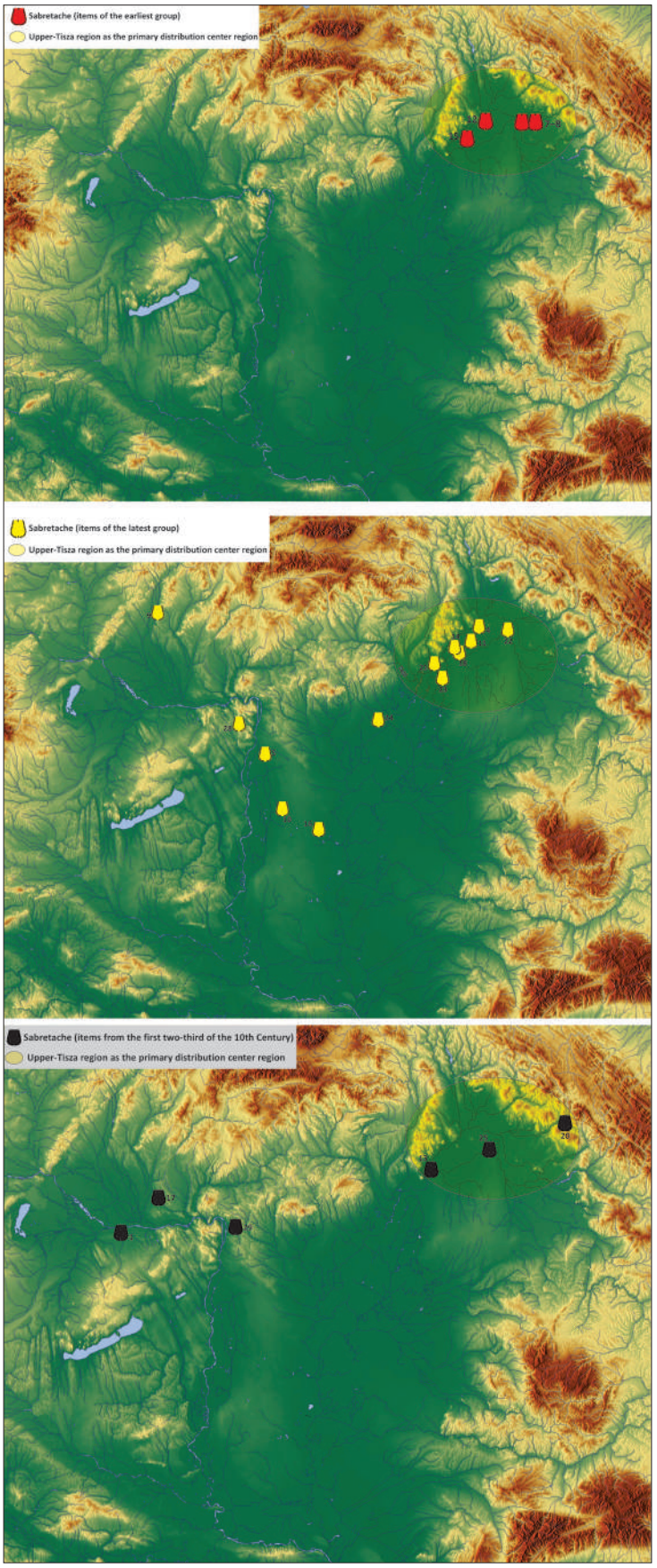


Figure 116. A–C. *The geographical distribution of sabretache plates and their dating*

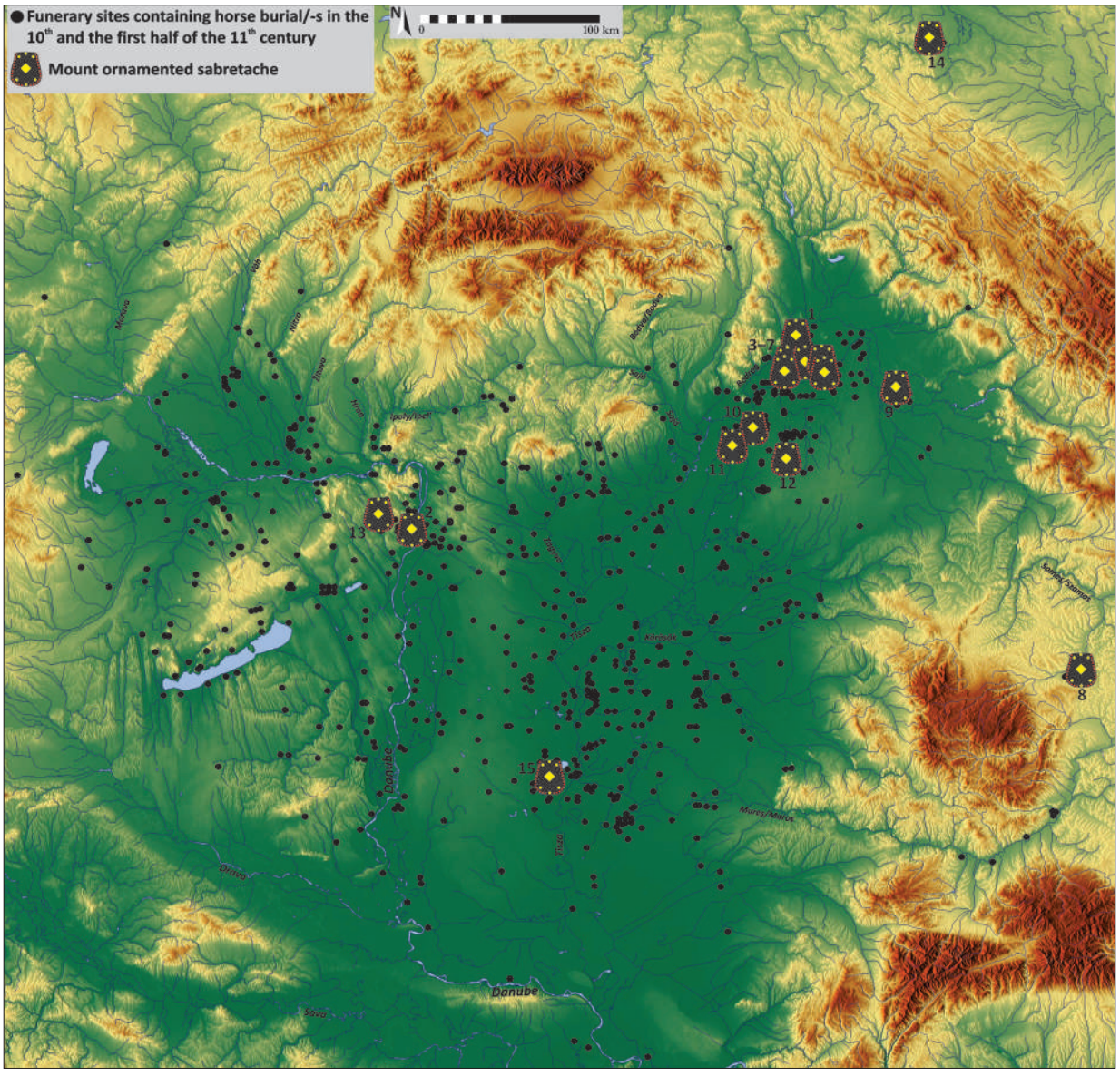


Figure 117. *Mount ornamented sabretache in the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century*
Sites: 1. Streda nad Bodrogom-Bálványhegy; 2. Budapest-Farkasrét; 3–7. Karos-Eperjesszög I, grave no. 9 and stray find, Karos-Eperjesszög II, graves no. 11, 41, 61; 8. Cluj-Napoca-Plugarilor street, grave no. 25; 9. Čhoma; 10. Tiszaeszlár-Bashalom II, grave no. 13; 11. Tiszavasvári-Nagyepáros; 12. Újfehértó-Micskepuszta; 13. Páty-Malom dűlő, grave no. 170; 14. Przemyśl, grave no. 6; 15. Szeged-Öthalom, grave no. 124

In contrast to the mounted belts, the distribution of plated braid discs is concentrated in a much smaller area *(Fig. 121)*.[823] This category of objects is completely absent from the 10th century burials of the Transylvanian Basin, the western and southern parts of Transdanubia, Syrmia, the southern parts of the Great Plain and, with the exception of the Tisza–Mureş–Aranca triangle, the Banat. This may mean that the fashion patterns that can be reconstructed from women's dress were determined by a particular cultural habitus. (In contrast, the mounted belts that were quite common in the early Middle Ages.) At the same time, the micro-regional spread of certain types of objects suggests that so-called regional fashions also developed during the 10th century.

823 Csallány 1959, 281–325; Csallány 1970, 261–299; Kiss 1985, 249–251; M. Lezsák–Novichikhin–Gáll 2018, 143–168.

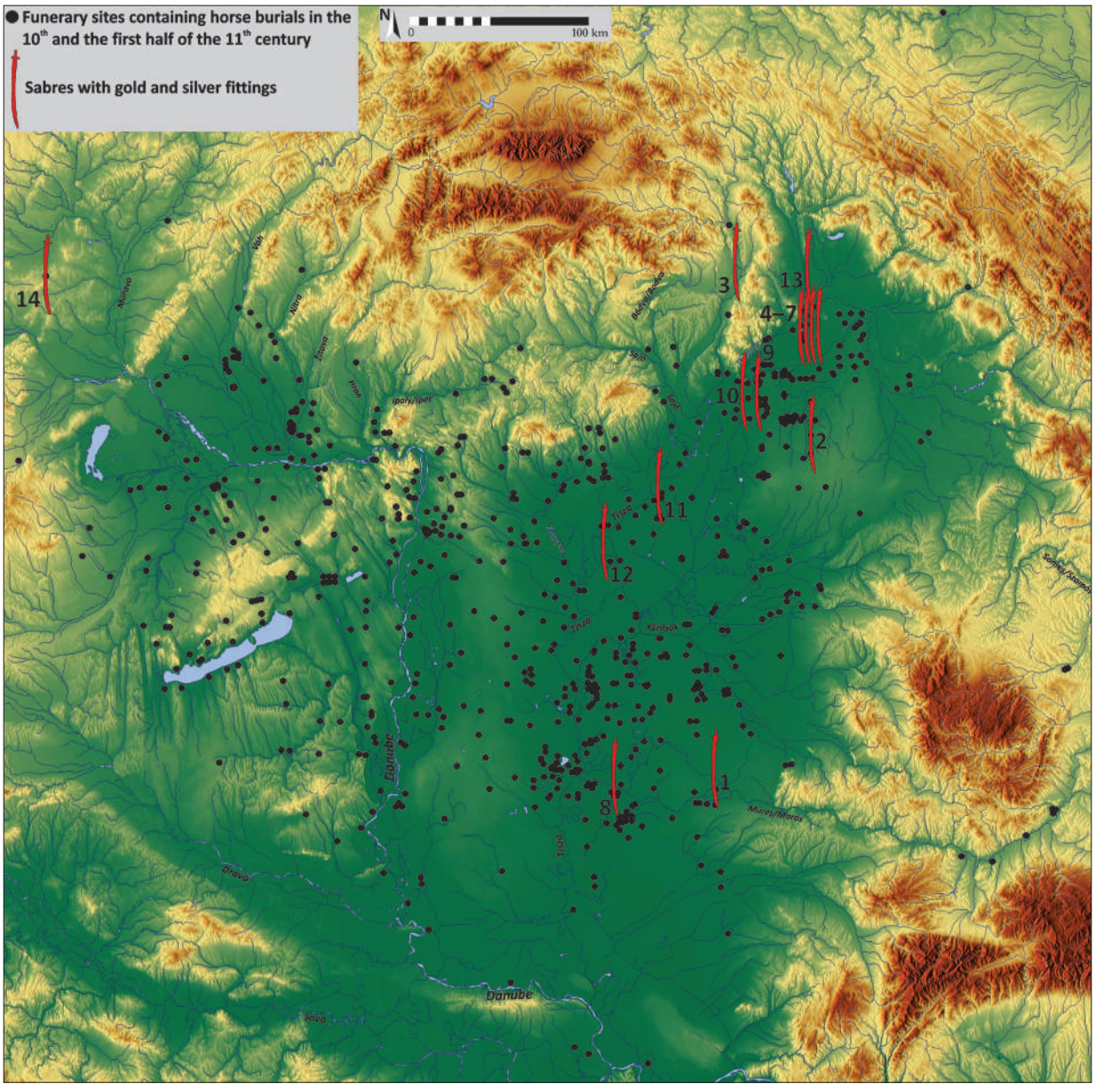


Figure 118. *Sabres with gold and silver fittings in the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century*
Sites: 1. Arad-Ceala, grave "X"; 2. Geszteréd-Nyíri-puszta; 3. Košice area; 4–7. Karos-Eperjesszög II, graves no. 11, 50, 52, Karos-Eperjesszög III, grave no. 11; 8. Kiszombor "C"; 9. Rakamaz-Strázsadomb, grave "A"; 10. Tarcal-Rimai-dűlő, grave no. 4; 11. Tiszafüred area; 12. Tiszasüly-Éhhalom; 13. Zemplén-Szélmalomdomb; 14. Gnadendorf

Overall, this picture is similar to the distribution of rosette-ornamented harness mounts (found also in female graves). These are generally dated to the first two-thirds of the 10th century, but their dating is more likely to extend to the whole of the 10th century *(Fig. 122)*.[824]

Weapon categories found in men's graves, however, provide a picture with completely different details: sabres, are less frequently known from 10th-century graves *(Fig. 123)*,[825] however, their distribution seems to follow the territorial distribution pattern of disc braids and rosette-ornamented harness

824 Horváth 2014, 92.
825 Kovács 1990, 39–49; Révész 1996a, 178–185, 113/1–2.

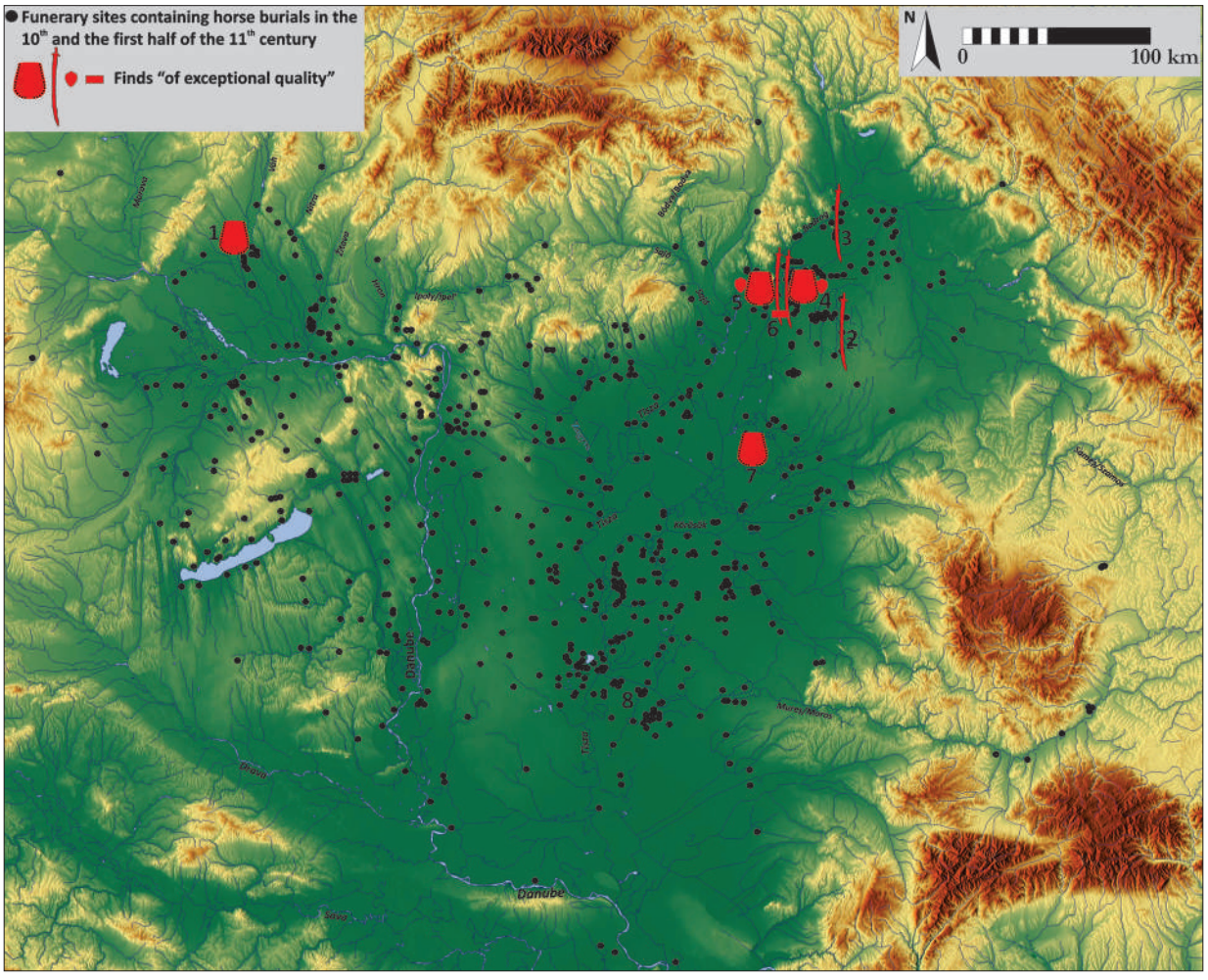


Figure 119. *Finds of exceptional quality in the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century*
Sites: 1. Hlohovec (sabretache plate); 2. Geszteréd-Nyíri-puszta (sabre with gold fittings); 3. Karos-Eperjesszög II, grave no. 52 (sabre with silver fittings); 4. Rakamaz-Strázsadomb, grave "A" (sabre with gold fittings, sabretache plate, silver gilt caftan mounts or bow case mounts); 5. Tarcal-Rimai-dűlő, grave no. 4 (sabretache plate, silver gilt caftan mounts or bow case mounts); 6. Tiszaeszlár-Bashalom I, grave no. 10 (silver gilt buckle); 7. "Báránd" (sabretache plate)

mounts, with the exception of the Transylvanian Basin, where, – in contrast to the low number of the aforementioned object types –, a significant number of sabres were documented, especially in the region of Cluj-Napoca. [826]

Based on the spatial pattern of these archaeological phenomena, what conclusions can be drawn about the Hungarian Conquest, in regard to its spatial and temporal character? As can be seen from our maps, the staggered north–south distribution of the finds may suggest that the occupation of the Carpathian Basin, the conquest of the population found there, and the structural integration of the local elite can be described as a process running roughly from north to south/south-east/south-west. A multi-stage process of military occupation, settlement, mixing, assimilation, and internal migration can be expected during the 10th century.[827] The spread of a particular cultural milieu in the territories of the populations included in the power network is clearly demonstrated by the archaeological evidence of horse burials, whose distribution spread from the central Mureș Basin to the Vienna Basin *(Fig. 124)*.

826 Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 826–831.
827 Gáll 2013a, Vol. II: Pl. 335.

The archaeological record suggests a type-2 "solar network system", described by Hodges,[828] corresponding to the "proto-state" level. The archaeological evidence may also delineate the early medieval "cultural boundaries" to the east, west, and south.[829] At this stage of the research, it is difficult to define more precisely the complex social and other processes on the grounds of archaeological evidence, but it can be concluded that the appearance of large cemeteries (with a more significant number of graves), i.e. which are indicative of large-scale settlement, cannot be dated to the first third of the 10th century (see the previous chapter). The chronological occurrence of these burial sites should be corroborated by ^{14}C serial measurements per sub-region.[830] General conclusions for the whole Carpathian Basin do not seem to be feasible.[831] Generalisations in the analysis of the finds can still be observed in archaeological analyses. The differences between the excavated cemeteries (even between cemeteries in the same microregion) show that the diverse archaeological picture following the Hungarian conquest and migration cannot be explained by generalising models. Research into spatial differences is essential. In the future, cemeteries should be studied primarily in terms of their intra-site and micro-regional relations, and only then should the individual sites be contextualized in relation to the archaeology of the whole Carpathian Basin.

Beginning with the military occupation, the Hungarian conquest set in motion complex social historical processes linked to two fundamental issues *(Fig. 125)*:

1) the interest of the 10th century conquerors in integrating into their power structures the different social groups or individuals of the conquered population;
2) the extent to which the individuals of the conquered populations and communities were able to integrate into the new power network, and became eventually "Hungarian".

These two closely related – and perhaps mutually reinforcing – sociological phenomena may have affected the conquered population to a lesser extent during the 10th century (especially in the first part of it). Whether the conquerors had the intention to bring the entire conquered population up to the same "level" as themselves, is a speculative, but interesting question. Individual integration may have taken place through the formation of military escorts.[832] This phenomenon likely existed already in the early period, but its scope remains unknown. Some local groups became clearly integrated in terms of what is referred as the *big-men model* in cultural anthropology *(Fig. 125)*. One such example is that of an adventurous leader/chieftain, Bogat (Bugat) (bogat = 'rich'), whose name suggests Slavic origin,[833] and who could have commanded Slavic units accompanying the Hungarians in their Western ventures.[834] This idea seems to be confirmed by the fact that in 900, archbishop Theotmar of Salzburg accused the Moravian bishops of making their followers cut their hair in the Hungarian way.[835] All this would mean

828 Hodges 2012, 4:2.
829 On the problem of political boundaries, see: Pohl 2008, 130–132.
830 Szenthe–Faragó–Gáll 2024, 443–492.
831 E.g. belts from Cluj-Napoca and Sered' have been dated to the first two thirds of the 10th century, while similar belts from Batajnica have been dated to the end of the 10th century. This perfectly illustrates the fragility of such a system. Cf. Шпехар–Стругар Бевц 2016, 131, Sl. 7/2.
832 Reuter 1997, 32–37. From this point of view see e.g. graves no. 3, and 13 of the Karos III burial site, Révész 1996a, 197–198.
833 Cf. Györffy 1970, 217–219.
834 While one is to avoid the pitfalls of cultural determinism, the N–S orientation and the stone lining of the grave found in Aspres-les Corps (France) are still remarkable (Schulze-Dörrlamm 1984, 473–476). Regarding the burial rite documented in this grave – different from the one documented in the Hungarian graves of the Conquest period see: Gáll 2013a, Vol. I: 602–606. Written sources may also refer to this difference: in the famous story of Sankt Gallen, we learn that warriors who fell from the roof of the church were burned, a rite practised by the Slavic-speaking population of the Carpathian Basin. This burial rite was unknown among the Hungarians who were typically buried with their horses.
835 Bálint 2006, 326–327; Langó–Patay-Horváth 2015, 367–380.

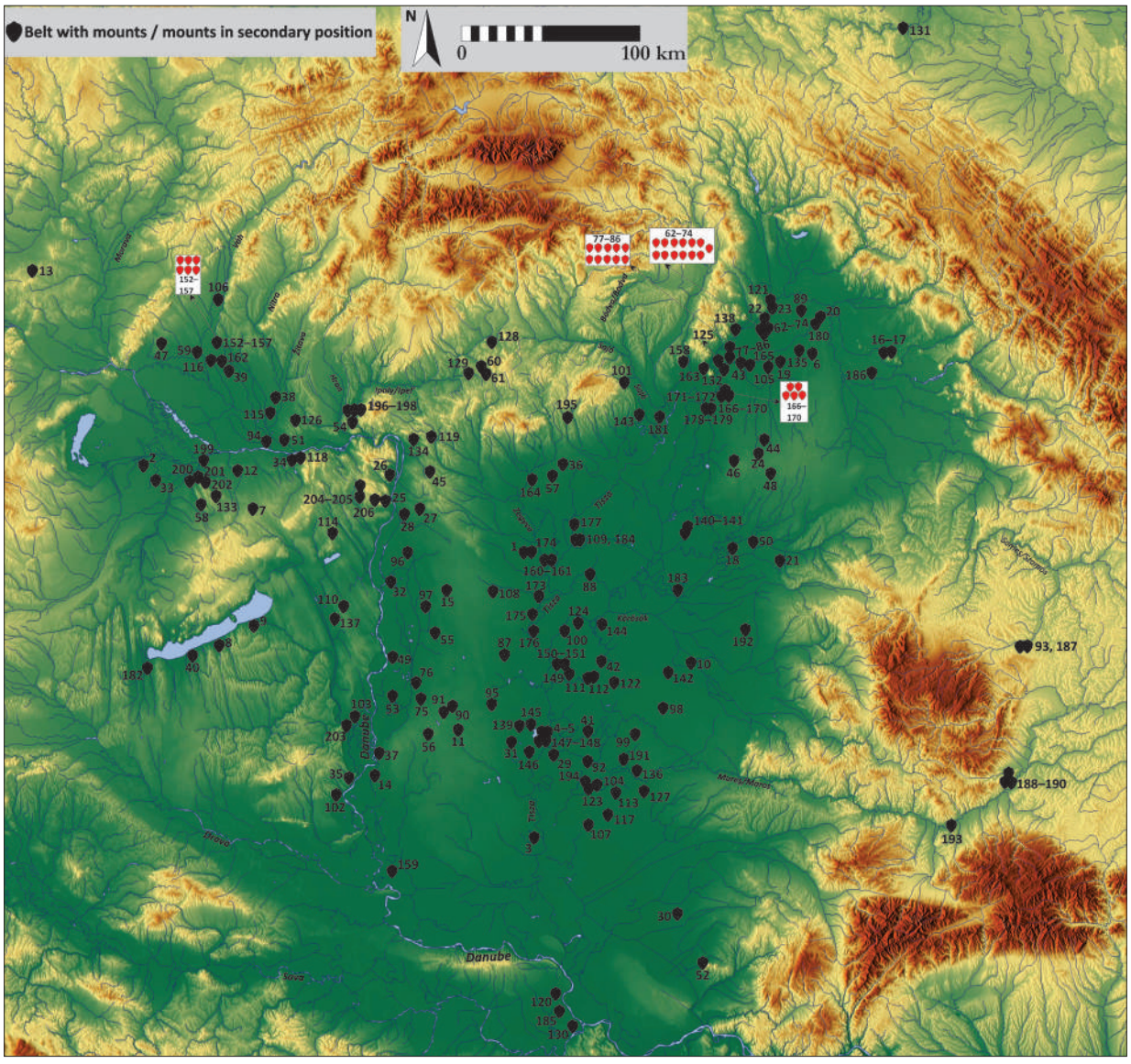


Figure 120. *The spatial distribution of mounted belts in the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century (including those in secondary use)*

Sites: 1. Abony-Beöthy kastély kertje; 2. Acsalag; 3. Ada; 4–5. Szeged-Algyő; 6. Anarcs; 7. Bakonyszombathely; 8. Balatonszemes-Landler street no. 112; 9. Balatonkiliti; 10. Gyula-Szövetkezeti Téglagyár; 11. Balotaszállás; 12. Bana-Ördögásta-hegy; 13. Gnadendorf; 14. Bátmonostor; 15. Ladánybene-Benepuszta; 16–17. Berehove; 18. Berettyóújfalu; 19. Beszterec; 20. Tiszabezdéd-Harangláb-dűlő; 21. Biharea-Somlyóhegy; 22. Streda nad Bodrogom; 23. Véč; 24. Bökény; 25. Budapest-Farkasrét; 26. Budapest-Kaszásdűlő/Benedek Elek street; 27. Budapest-Pestszentlőrinc Gyártelep; 28. Budapest-Pestszentlőrinc, Vörös Hadsereg road; 29. Deszk-Ambrus; 30. Detta; 31. Domaszék; 32. Dömsöd; 33. Dör; 34. Dunaalmás; 35. Dunaszekcső; 36. Erdőtelek-Bernáthegy; 37. Érsekcsanád; 38. Nové Zámky; 39. Šaľa; 40. Fonyód; 41. Földeák; 42. Gádoros; 43. Gáva-Vásártér; 44. Geszteréd-Kecskelátó dűlő; 45. Gödöllő-Öreghegy; 46. Hajdúböszörmény-Erdős-tanya; 47. Blatné; 48. Hajdúsámson; 49. Harta-Freifelt; 50. Hencida; 51. Chotin; 52. Vršac; 53. Homokmégy-Halom; 54. Salka; 55. Izsák; 56. Jánoshalma; 57. Jásszentandrás; 58. Kajárpéc-Gyűr; 59. Sládkovičovo; 60. Karancsalja; 61. Karancslapujtő-Nyárvas dűlő; 62–74. Karos-Eperjesszög funerary sites no. I–III; 75. Kecel-Lehóczky-tanya; 76. Kecel-Vádéi-dűlő; 77–86. Kenézlő-Fazekaszug funerary sites no. I–II; 87. Kiskunfélegyháza; 88. Kétpó; 89. Dobrá; 90. Kiskunhalas-Bodoglár; 91. Kiskunhalas-Rekettye; 92. Kiszombor "E"; 93. Cluj-Napoca-Zápolya street; 94. Komárno; 95. Kömpöc; 96. Bugyi-Felsővány; 97. Kunadacs; 98. Kunágota; 99. Mezőhegyes; 100. Kunszentmárton; 101. Miskolc; 102. Mohács; 103. Mözs-Szárazdomb; 104. Dudeştii Vechi-Bukovapuszta-►

that the complex networking of the Hungarian power structure in the 10th century involved some of the conquered communities (cf. e.g. the sites of Alba Iulia-Staţia de Salvare, Hortobágy-Árkus). Opportunities for structural integration could have been attractive to the aspiring elite groups (or individuals) of these micro-communities, thus, in parallel with the Hungarian campaigns directed to Western Europe and Byzantium in the 10th century, there was a more peaceful version of networking: the subjugation of local leaders through structural integration.

The archaeological evidence therefore suggests that, from the time of military occupation onwards, control of the populations and their territories was probably achieved through structured dependency relations typical of clan systems. To use Jenő Szűcs' terminology, networks of interdependent *gentilic* structures depended on hierarchical personal relationships.[836] In our opinion, the spatial distribution and density of archaeological phenomena can also be explained by this hierarchical clan system. A more precise investigation of this question is a future research task, and the methodological results of *rank-size analysis* may be successfully integrated into this field of investigation.[837]

XI.2. The issue of 10th century nomadism and archaeological evidence of settlement in the Carpathian Basin

A comparison of the cemeteries of the six regions (*Chapter X*) clearly reveals the absence of graves dating back to the first two decades of the 10th century. Overall, the existence of the first-generation burials described by Károly Mesterházy is difficult to prove, except in a few cases. It can therefore be said that the first generation of conquering Hungarians, i.e. the population that conquered the Carpathian Basin, is very difficult to identify in the archaeological record, or such evidence is either not available or absent.

836 This socio-historical phenomenon can be somewhat paralleled with the "Avarisation" of the "Gepids" or the "Hunisation" of the various "Germanic" peoples, since the elites and various military forces of the respective populations were also involved in certain military ventures in these cases.

837 Thurston 2002, 137–142.

► *Mound no. II; 105. Nagyhalász-Nesze kocsma; 106. Červeník; 107. Kikinda; 108. Nagykőrös-Fekete-dűlő; 109. Nagykörű (1892); 110. Nagylók; 111. Nagymágocs-Homokbánya; 112. Nagymágocs-Mágocs-ér; 113. Tomnatic-Kleine Hügel; 114. Vereb; 115. Nesvady; 116. Košúty; 117. Comloşu Mare; 118. Neszmély; 119. Nógrádsáp; 120. Novi Banovci; 121. Zemplín-Szélmalomdomb; 122. Orosháza; 123. Dudeştii Vechi-Bukovapuszta-Mound no. III; 124. Öcsöd; 125. Zalkod; 126. Pribeta; 127. Periam; 128. Prša; 129. Piliny; 130. Zemun; 131. Przemyśl; 132. Rakamaz-Strázsahalom; 133. Ravazd; 134. Rád; 135. Rétközberencs-Paromdomb; 136. Şeitin; 137. Sárbogárd; 138. Sárospatak-Apróhomok; 139. Zsombó; 140. Sárrétudvari-Poroshalom; 141. Sárrétudvari-Hízóföld; 142. Szabadkígyós-Pálliget; 143. Szakáld; 144. Szarvas-Tessedik utca; 145. Szeged-Jánosszállás; 146. Szeged-Királyhalom; 147. Szeged-Öthalom; 148. Szeged-Öthalom, V. homokbánya; 149. Szentes-Borbásföld; 150–151. Szentes-Nagyhegy; 152–157. Sereď-Mačianske vŕšky funerary sites no. I–II; 158. Szerencs-Kácsatető; 159. Svilojevo; 160. Szolnok-Strázsahalom; 161. Szolnok-Ugar; 162. Matúškovo; 163. Tarcal-Rimai dülő; 164. Tarnaörs-Szentandrási határ; 165. Tiszabercel-Újsor; 166–170. Tiszaeszlár-Bashalom I–II; 171–172. Tiszaeszlár-Újtelep; 173. Tiszajenő; 174. Abony-stray find; 175. Tiszakécske; 176. Tiszakürt; 177. Tiszasüly-Éhhalom; 178–179. Tiszavasvári-Aranykerti tábla; 180. Tuzsér-Boszorkány-hegy; 181. Tiszaszederkény-Vegyi Kombinát; 182. Vörs-Papkert-B; 183. Szeghalom-Korhány; 184. Nagykörű-middle of the village; 185. Batajnica; 186. Tarpa; 187. Cluj-Napoca-Plugarilor street; 188. Alba Iulia-Izvorul Împăratului; 189. Alba Iulia-Staţia de Salvare; 190. Alba Iulia-Brânduşei street; 191. Nădlac-Lutărie; 192. Salonta; 193. Orăştie-Dealul Pemilor X2; 194. Cheglevici; 195. Eger-Szépasszonyvölgy; 196–198. Malé Kosihy; 199. Győr-Malomszéki-dűlő; 200. Koroncó-stray find; 201. Ménfőcsanak; 202. Nyúl-Páskom; 203. Szekszárd; 204–205. Páty-Malom dülő; 206. Budaörs-Tűzkőhegy, Naphegy street*

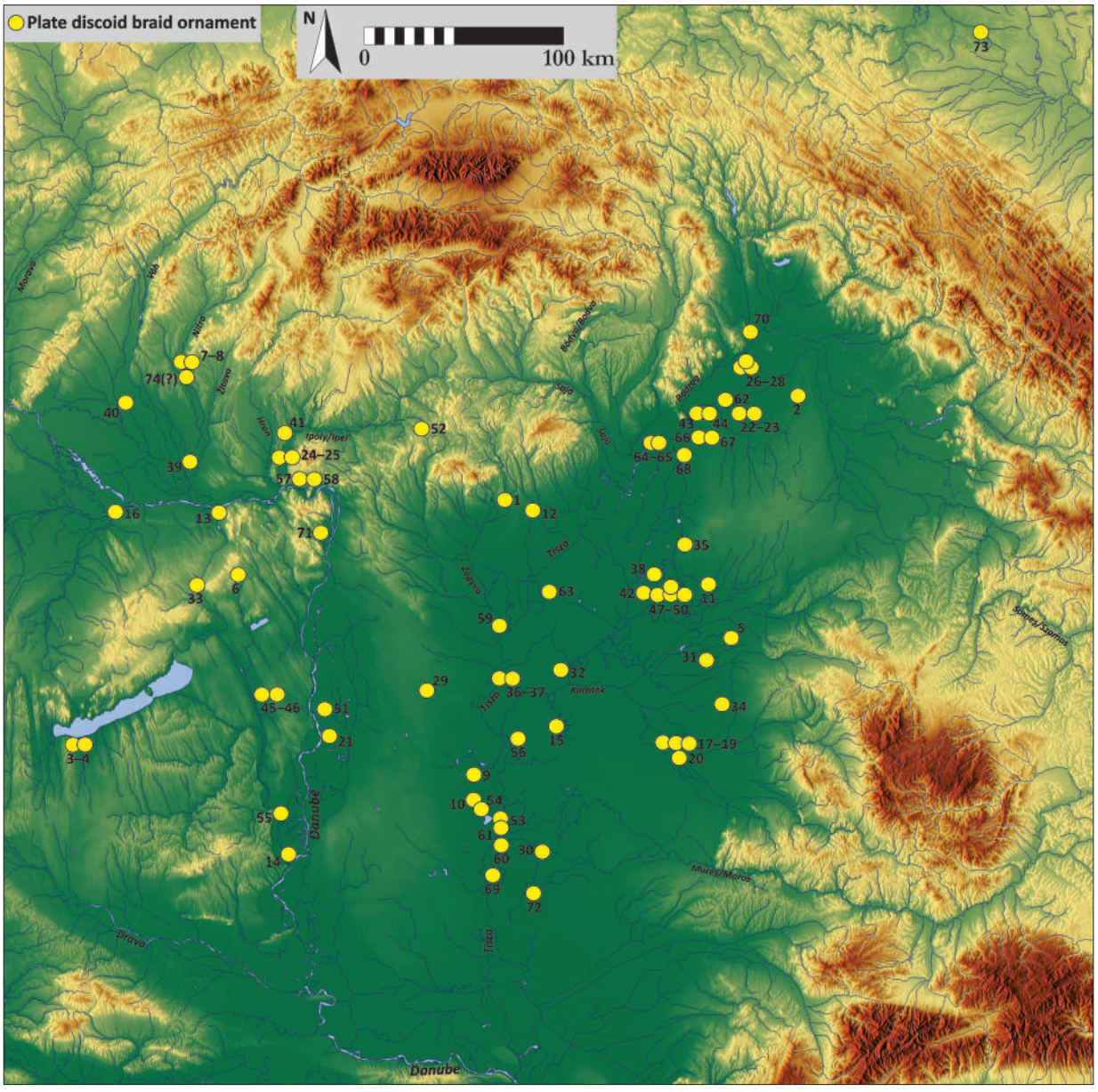


Figure 121. *The distribution of plated disc braids in the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century*
Sites: 1. Aldebrő-Mocsáros, grave no. 20; 2. Anarcs-Czóbel-birtok; 3–4. Balatonújlak-Erdő-dűlő, graves no. 15, 17; 5. Biharkeresztes-Bethlen Gábor út, grave no. 1; 6. Csákvár-Rókahegy; 7–8. Čakajovce-Templom-dűlő, graves no. 376, 579; 9. Csengele-Verovszki József tanyája; 10. Csólyospálos-Csólyos puszta; 11. Derecske-Földesi út; 12. Dormánd-Hanyipuszta, grave no. 1; 13. Dunaalmás-Tatai út, grave no. 1; 14. Dunaszekcső-Tüskéshegy, stray find; 15. Eperjes-Takács tábla/Kiskirályság; 16. Győr-Víztorony; 17–19. Gyula-Szövetkezeti Téglagyár, graves no. 2, 13, 34; 20. Vărşand-Laposhalom, grave no. 48; 21. Harta-Freifelt, grave no. 3; 22–23. Ibrány-Esbóhalom, graves no. 197/a, 206; 24–25. Malé Kosihy-Felső Kenderesek, graves no. 104, 269; 26–28. Karos-Eperjesszög II, graves no. 47, 72, Karos-Eperjesszög III, grave no. 5; 29. Kecskemét-Csongrádi út; 30. Kiszombor "B", grave 127; 31. Magyarhomorog-Kónya-domb, grave no. 107; 32. Mezőtúr-Dohányosgerinc, grave find; 33. Mór-Söderbánya; 34. Salonta, grave no. 1; 35. Nagyhegyes-Elep-Mikelapos; 36. Nagyrév-1, stray find; 37. Nagyrév-2, stray find; 38. Nádudvar-Mihályhalom, grave no. 1; 39. Nesvady-Partok homokdomb, stray find; 40. Košúty, stray find; 41. Sikenica, stray find; 42. Püspökladány-Eperjesvölgy, grave no. 17; 43. Rakamaz area (1914), stray find; 44. Rakamaz-Túróczi-part (Gyepiföld), stray find; 45–46. Sárbogárd-Tringer-tanya, graves no. 24, 29; 47–50. Sárrétudvari-Hízóföld, graves no. 32, 102, 118, 262; 51. Solt-Tételhegy, stray find; 52. Sóshartyán-Hosszútető, grave no. 30; 53. Szeged-Algyő, grave no. 105; 54. Szatymaz-Jánosszállás-Katonapart, grave no. 2; ►

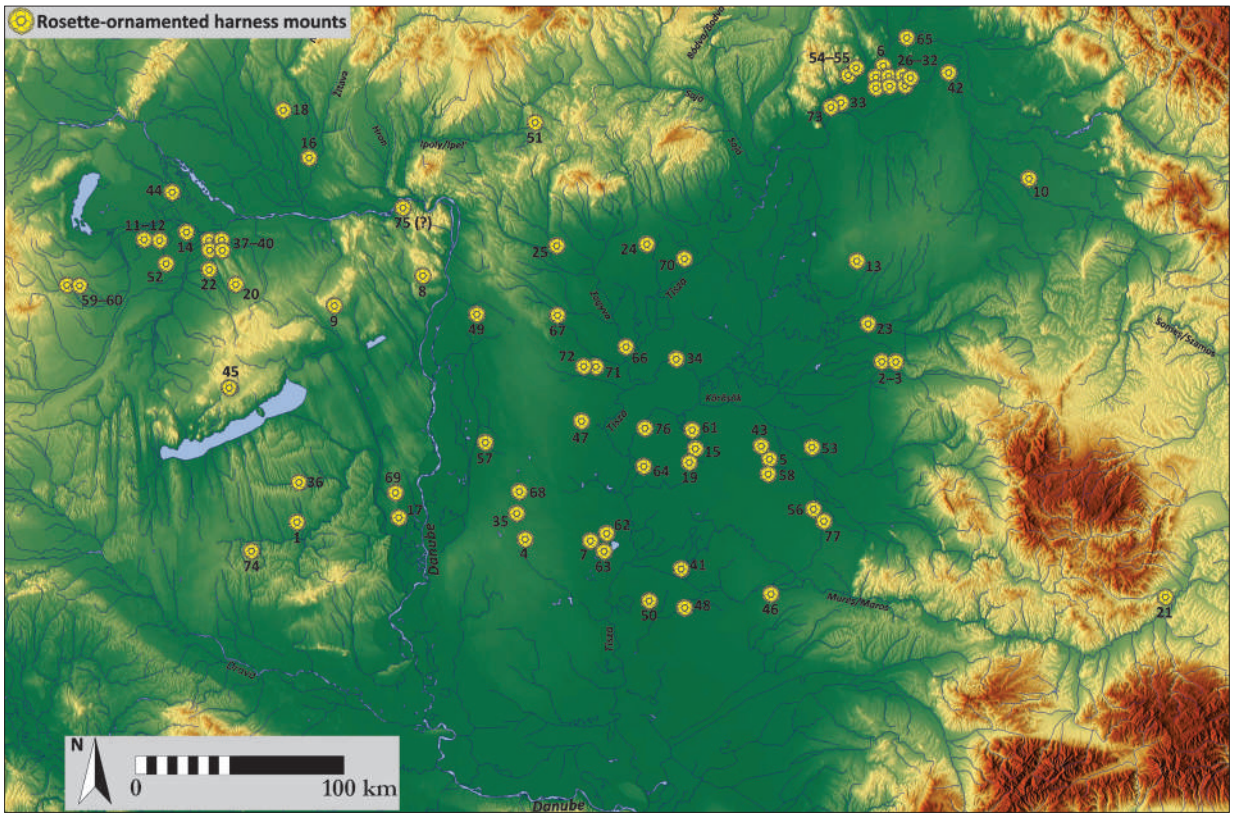


Figure 122. *The distribution of rosette-ornamented harness mounts in the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century*
Sites: 1. Alsóhetény; 2–3. Ártánd-Nagyfarkasdomb, graves no. 6, 207; 4. Balotaszállás-Balotapuszta; 5. Békéscsaba-Erzsébethely; 6. Streda nad Bodrogom-Bálványdomb; 7. Bordány-Kistemplomtanya, grave no. 1; 8. Budaörs; 9. Csákberény, grave no. 22; 10. Csengersima; 11–12. Csorna-Sülyhegy, stray finds (1888); 13. Debrecen-Újföld, Kondoros-part; 14. Enese-Belterület; 15. Eperjes-Kiskirályság; 16. Nové Zámky, grave no. 59; 17. Fácánkert-Kajmádpuszta; 18. Horný Jatov; 19. Gádoros, grave no. 2; 20. Gic; 21. Alba Iulia-Staţia de Salvare III; 22. Gyömöre; 23. Hencida-Szerdekhalom, grave no. 5; 24. Heves-Kapitányhegy; 25. Jászfényszaru; 26–32. Karos-Eperjesszög I, grave no. 12, Karos-Eperjesszög II, graves no. 13, 49, 53, 56, stray find, Karos-Eperjesszög III, stray find; 33. Kenézlő-Fazekaszug, stray find; 34. Kétpó-Szenttamási Állami Gazdaság; 35. Kiskunhalas-Dénes M. u; 36. Koppányszántó, stray find; 37. Koroncó-Bábota II, solitary grave; 38. Koroncó-Rácdomb; 39. Koroncó-Újtelep; 40. Koroncó, stray find; 41. Makó; 42. Mándok-Tetenke; 43. Mezőmegyer; 44. Mosonmagyaróvár-Moson-Királydomb; 45. Nagyvázsony-Nőzsér; 46. Sânpetru German-G.A.S.'s field, solitary grave; 47. Nyárlőrinc-Bogárzó-dűlő; 48. Dudeştii Vechi-Bukovapuszta Mound II, grave no. 1; 49. Ócsa-Alsópakony; 50. Oroszlámos; 51. Piliny-Leshegy, grave no. 2; 52. Rábacsanak-Tsz-major; 53. Sarkad-Peckesvár; 54. Sárospatak-Alsóhomok; 55. Sárospatak-Baksahomok; 56. Şiclău-Gropoaie, grave no. 7; 57. Soltszentimre; 58. Szabadkígyós-Pálliget, stray find; 59–60. Szakony, graves no. 6, 7; 61. Szarvas-Kákapuszta; 62. Szatymaz-Őszeszék; 63. Szeged-Négyhalomdűlő; 64. Szentes-Nagyhegy; 65. Svinice; 66. Szolnok-Vár; 67. Tápiószele; 68. Tázlár; 69. Tengelic; 70. Tiszanána-Cseh-tanya, grave no. 1; 71. Törtel-Demeter-tanya; 72. Törtel-Nyilas vasúti megálló; 73. Zalkod-Szegfarka; 74. Zselickislak; 75 (?). Esztergom area; 76. Kunszentmárton-Szentesi út; 77. Şimand; 78. Unidentified site (HNM)

► *55. Szekszárd-Gyűszűvölgy, stray find; 56. Szentes-Derekegyház, grave no. 5; 57. Szob-Ipolymenti út, grave "A"; 58. Szob-Kiserdő, grave no. 37; 59. Szolnok-Szanda, stray find; 60. Szőreg-Homokbánya, grave "A"; 61. Tápé-Malajdok B, grave no. 6; 62. Tiszabercel-Ráctemető, grave no. 4; 63. Tiszabő, stray find; 64–65. Tiszadob-Sós-szék, graves no. 5, 8; 66. Tiszaeszlár-Dióskert, grave no. 1; 67. Tiszaeszlár-Vörösmarty utca, grave no. 2; 68. Tiszavasvári-Aranykerti tábla, grave "C"; 69. Novi Kneževac, stray find; 70. Zemplín-Szélmalomdomb; 71. Budapest-Harsánylejtő; 72. Vălcani-Vamă, grave no. 9; 73. Sudova Vyshnya. Questionable find: 74 (?). Nitra-Cerman/Csermend*

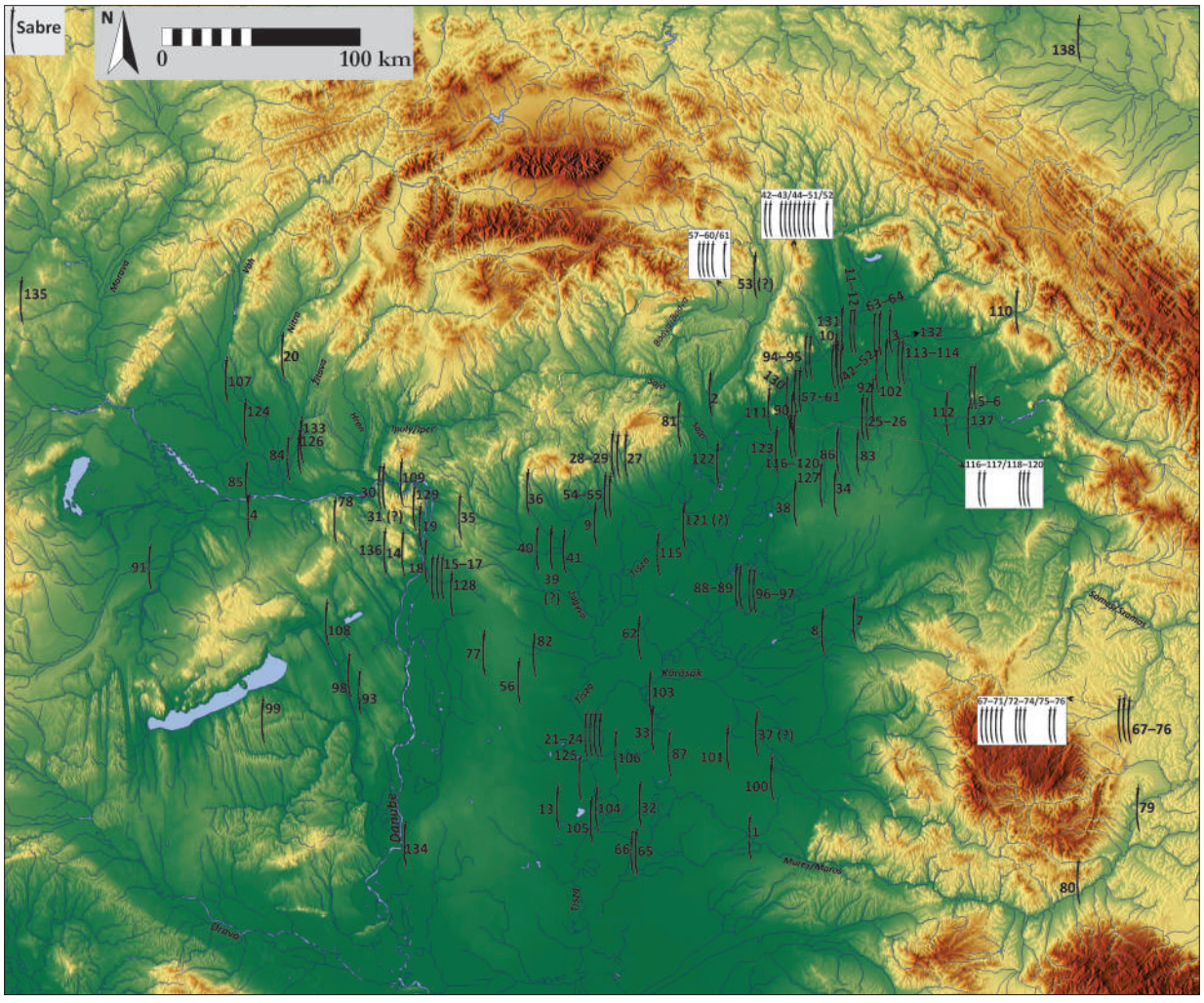


Figure 123. *The distribution of sabres in the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century*
Sites: 1. Arad-Ceala/Csálya, grave "X"; 2. Aszaló; 3. Čierna-Nagyrétidomb; 4. Bana-Ördögásta-hegy; 5–6. Berehove-Kishegy; 7. Biharia-Somlyóhegy, grave no. 8; 8. Biharkeresztes-Vasútállomás, grave no. 1; 9. Boconád-Szilapos puszta; 10. Streda nad Bodrogom-Bálványhegy; 11–12. Véč; 13. Bordány-Mező-dűlő; 14. Budaörs-Tűzkőhegy, grave no. 1; 15–17. Budapest-Pestlőrinc-Rákos; 18. Budapest-Boráros tér, stray find; 19. Budapest-Óbuda-Kaszásdűlő/Benedek Elek street; 20. Čakajovce-Templom-dűlő, grave no. 730; 21–24. Csongrád-Vendelhalom, grave no. 17/1937, grave from the year of 1955, 2 stray finds; 25–26. Demecser-Borzsovapuszta; 27. Eger-Répástető, grave no. 1; 28–29. Eger-Szépasszony-völgy, graves "A", no. 18; 30. Esztergom-Könyvtár; 31 (?). Neighbourhood of Esztergom; 32. Földeák-Mártírok street, grave no. 1; 33. Gádoros-Bocskai street no. 44, grave no. 1; 34. Geszteréd-Nyíri-puszta; 35. Gödöllő-Öreghegy; 36. Gyöngyöspata-Csákbereg-puszta; 37 (?). Neighbourhood of Gyula; 38. Hajdúböszörmény-Erdős-tanya; 39 (?). Neighbourhood of Jászberény; 40. Jászfényszaru-village border; 41. Jászjákóhalma; 42–43. Karos-Eperjesszög I, stray find from 1899, grave no 2/1936; 44–51. Karos-Eperjesszög II, graves no. 5, 6, 11, 20, 36, 41, 50, 52; 52. Karos-Eperjesszög III, grave no. 11; 53 (?). Neighbourhood of Košice; 54–55. Kál-Legelő, graves no. 2, 58; 56. Kecskemét-Madari tanya; 57–60. Kenézlő-Fazekaszug I, graves no. 3, 14, 18, 25; 61. Kenézlő-Fazekaszug II, grave no. 4; 62. Kétpó-Hibrid telep; 63–64. Dobrá grave no. 2, stray find; 65. Kiszombor "C"; 66. Kiszombor "E"; 67–71. Cluj-Napoca-Zápolya utca graves no. 1, 4, 6, 10, 11; 72–74. Cluj-Napoca-Plugarilor street, graves no. 4, 22, 25; 75–76. Cluj-Napoca-Kalevala street, graves no. I, III; 77. Ladánybene-Benepuszta; 78. Lábatlan-Duna-meder; 79. Gâmbaș-Kis Magura, grave no. 1; 80. Blandiana "B", grave no. 11; 81. Miskolc-Repülőtér, grave no. 5; 82. Nagykőrös-Fekete-dűlő, grave no. 2; 83. Napkor-Vásárosnaményi út; 84. Nesvady-Partok-dűlő, grave no. 3; 85. Zemianska Olča-Végh A. kertje, grave no. 9; 86. Nyíregyháza-Polyák-bokor; 87. Orosháza-Pusztaszentetornya; 88–89. Püspökladány-Eperjesvölgy, graves no. 16, 22; 90. Rakamaz-Strázsadomb, ►

The high proportion of solitary graves, grave groups, and small burial sites dating from the first two-thirds of the 10th century suggests that there were probably no settled communities in the central parts of the Carpathian Basin during this period. The larger cemeteries indicate settled communities, but their dating is problematic and very few of them point to the first decades of the 10th century. None of the large cemeteries can be dated earlier than the second third of the 10th century. The late 20th-century theory that there were large burial sites associated with the conquering Hungarians as early as the beginning of the 10th century cannot be accepted. For example, the often-mentioned site of Püspökladány clearly dates from the second half of the 10th century (see the subchapters in *Chapter X*). On the basis of the archaeological data in no case can we detect burials associated with a large, settled community, active from the beginning of the 10th century. This situation can best be explained by the mobility and medium-distance nomadism of the communities living in the lowlands of the Carpathian Basin. The existence of a network system of mobile (nomadic) communities is supported by archaeological and archaeogenetic data and the observations that can be drawn from them. On the one hand, the topographical position of the graves found at the Szeged-Öthalom (sand quarry no. V) site (several tens of metres apart) and the lack of biological relations confirmed by archaeogenetic analysis suggest that they belonged to different communities, and the burial site may have been used by several communities at different times (the graves belong to the 9th and second half of the 10th century respectively) (see *Chapter X.4*). This can be explained by the nomadic, migratory lifestyle of these communities.

The discovery of kinship ties between individuals buried in cemeteries in different regions offers a new methodological perspective and a new challenge for future research. Archaeogenetics can assist archaeological findings in the study of the network systems of 10th century communities. From this point of view, one example proved to be more than surprising: investigations showed that the mother of the child buried in grave no. 236 of the Szeged-Öthalom V. homokbánya site (sand mine V) rests in the cemetery of Harta-Freifelt, almost 140 km away.[838]

From the mid-10th century onwards, the overall archaeological picture changes considerably, both in the central area and on the periphery of the Carpathian Basin. Sites with a larger number of graves will become increasingly common, and this clearly indicates a slow, but profound social-historical process, i.e. the settlement and resettlement of communities. What other social phenomena were taking place at the same time is, of course, difficult to trace, and we know little about them, just as we know nothing about

838 Csősz–Mende 2015, 374. The results have been criticized by Révész 2020, 65–67, 18. kép.

► *grave "A"; 91. Rábacsanak-Alsógyep-dűlő; 92. Rétközberencs-Paromdomb, grave no. 1; 93. Sárbogárd-Templom-dűlő; 94–95. Sárospatak-Baksahomok, graves no. 1, 10; 96–97. Sárrétudvari-Hízóföld, graves no. 66, 264; 98. Sárszentágota; 99. Sérsekszőlős-Szőlőspuszta; 100. Şiclău-Gropoaie, grave no. 3; 101. Szabadkígyósi-Pálligeti tábla, grave no. 1; 102. Szabolcsveresmart-Szelérd-domb grave no. 4; 103. Szarvas-Tessedik street, grave no. 1; 104. Szeged-Algyő, grave no. 18; 105. Szeged-Csongrádi út, grave no. 21; 106. Szentes-Nagymágocsi út; 107. Sereď-Mačianske vŕšky funerary site I, grave no. 1 /1957; 108. Székesfehérvár-Demkóhegy, grave no. 6; 109. Szob-Vendelin-földek, grave no. 51; 110. Svalyava; 111. Tarcal-Vinnai-dűlő, grave no. 4; 112. Tarpa-Nagyhegy; 113–114. Tiszabezdéd-Harangláb-dűlő, graves no. 8, 10; 115. Tiszaderzs-Kupasor; 116–117. Tiszaeszlár-Bashalom I, graves no. 10, 11; 118–120. Tiszaeszlár-Bashalom II, graves no. 1, 7, 8; 121 (?). Neighbourhood of Tiszafüred; 122. Tiszaszederkény-Vegyi Kombinát grave, no. 2; 123. Tiszavasvári-Aranykerti tábla, grave no. 1; 124. Trnovec nad Váhom-Remíz-dűlő, grave no. 183; 125. Tömörkény-Piactér, grave no. 1; 126. Dvory nad Žitavou-Tenyíri-dűlő, stray find; 127. Újfehértó-Micskepuszta, grave no. 1; 128. Üllő-Ilona út (?); 129. Visegrád-Sibrik-domb; 130. Zalkod-Szegfarka-dűlő; 131. Zemplín-Szélmalomdomb; 132. Zemplénagárd-Terebes-halom; 133. Bešeňov-Sírdűlő; 134. Baja; 135. Gnadendorf; 136. Páty-Malom dűlő, grave no. 170; 137. Choma, grave 51; 138. Sudova Vyshnya*

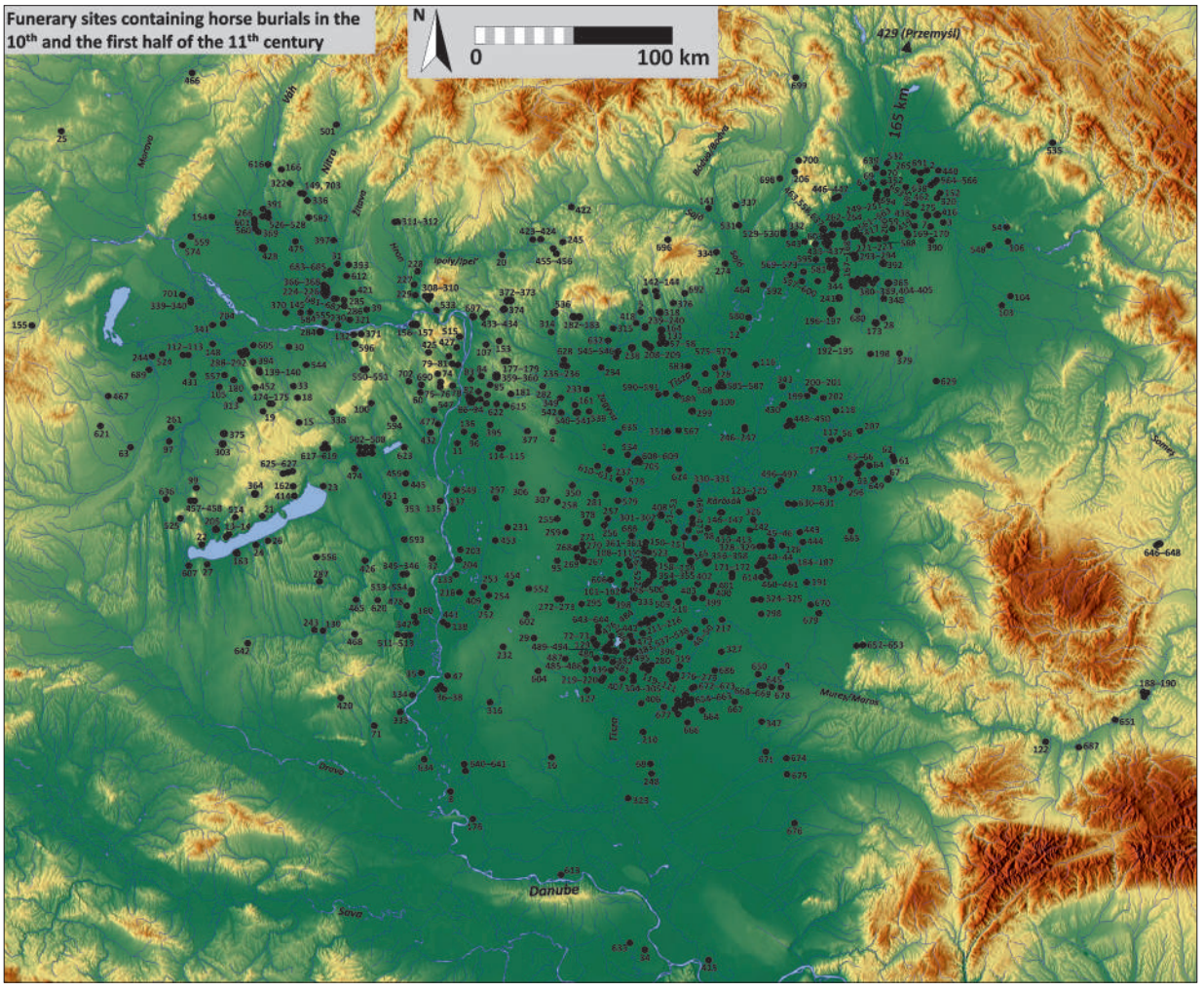


Figure 124. *Horse burials in the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century (after* Gáll–Hőgyes–Fülöp *2020, Fig. 11, supplemented version)*

the communities to which these sites may actually belong. The question also remains: to what extent is it true that during the Hungarian campaigns of the 10th century so many prisoners were brought into the Carpathian Basin that they outnumbered their captors? [839] A further question is the cultural impact of the population found and conquered here, of which very little is known.

839 Györffy 1977b, 72.

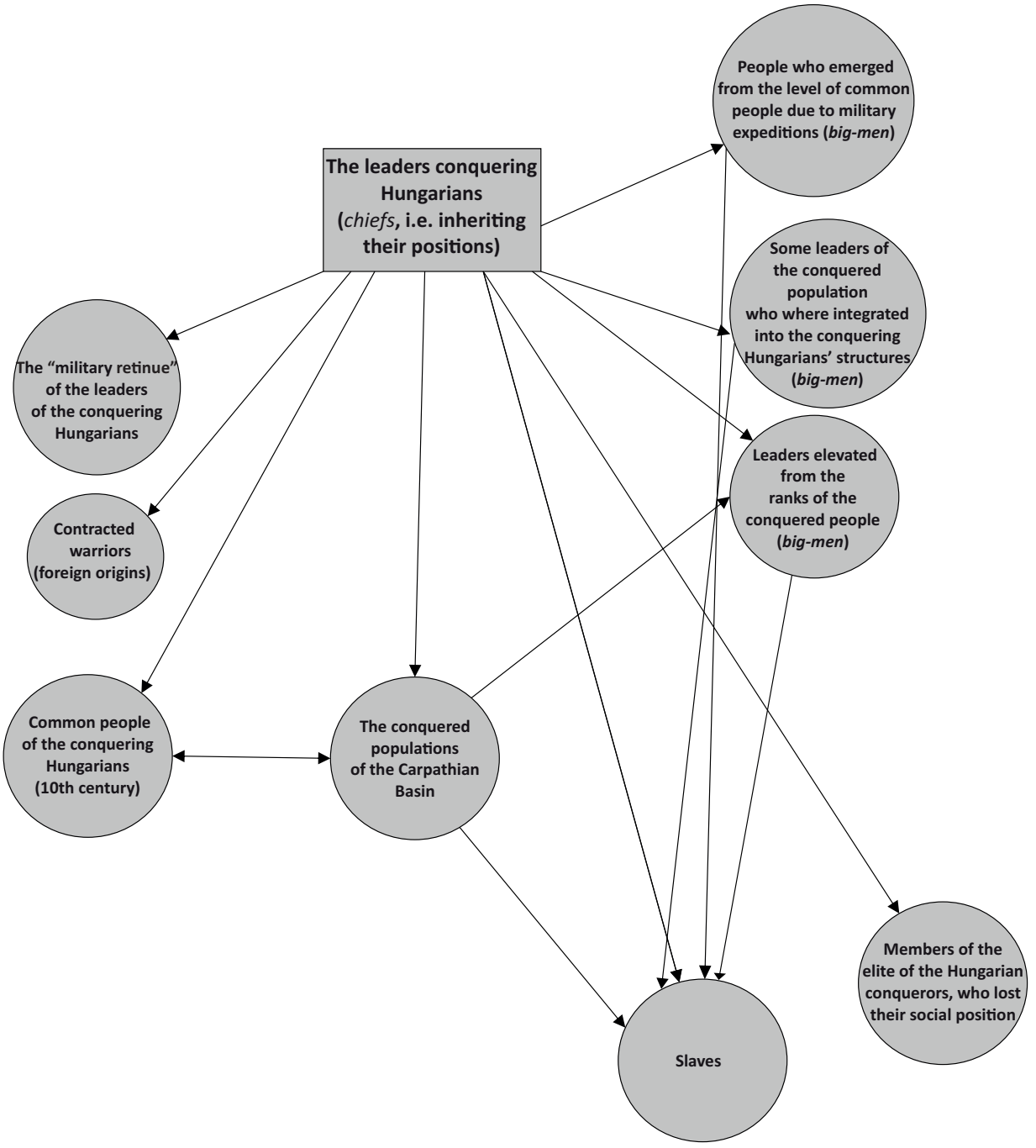


Figure 125. *A theoretical model showing the dynamics of social integration, the populations, and the political structure characterizing the Conquest Period (after* Gáll *2013a, Vol. I: 289. kép, supplemented version)*

XII. APPENDIX: SALT OCCURRENCES IN THE TRANSYLVANIAN BASIN

Ferenc Wanek

The formation of salt deposits in the Transylvanian Basin began about 14 million years ago (during the Badenian epoch of the Middle Miocene), when the ranges of the Carpathians did not yet raise above the level of the Paratethys Sea, that was formed as an inland sea, separated from the Tethys Ocean by the ranges of the Pyrenees-Alps-Balkan Mountains and the Anatolian-Caucasus-Pamir-Himalaya Mountains, which were formed a bit earlier *(Fig. 1)*.[1] In this sea, under the then-dominant sub-tropical climate, the high evaporation rate could not be balanced by precipitation, but salt water inflows from the Tethys resulted in a metastable hydrological system (as the water evaporated, the salt remained and large amounts crystallized out of the solution in deep water areas, whereas in shallow water areas gypsum silted).[2]

Figure 1. *The Paratethys Sea*

Due to paleogeological changes and fragmentation of the Paratethys, salt became gradually buried under thick sediments, as the area of fragmented sea surfaces kept on growing, which increased the process of sedimentation.

Only some parts of the salt deposits which formed in the deep water areas of the Paratethys are preserved today, while other parts eroded away due to the rise of the Carpathians, breaking up the once continuous layers of sea sediments.

1 Due to continental plate movements, Eurasia and Africa slid toward each other (while the Indian Penninsula and Madagascar departed from the latter) and the Tethys Ocean in between them slowly subsided, sinking into the mantle. Due to the lower density of the continental crust, the Eurasian continental plates stayed on top, while the converging oceanic plate subducted beneath it, forming mountain ranges from the Pyrenees to the Himalaya, and dissecting the area between the two continents, formerly covered by the ocean. The separated part of the ocean to the north of the mountains is called Paratethys Sea. The Mediterranean Sea is a remnant of the Tethys, while the Black Sea, Caspian Sea, and the Aral Sea are the remnants of the Paratethys. The rest of the basin silted up.

2 Krézsek–Bally 2006, 405–446; Báldi et al. 2017, 193–206.

The figure below *(Fig. 2)* illustrates what remains of the deep water salt deposits of the Paratethys (apparently overlaid by younger, thicker sediments). It is clearly visible how the rise of the Carpathians cut through and fragmented the once continuous salt deposits into smaller ones, as these can be found now on both sides of the Carpathian mountain range.[3] Another note to be added to this figure is that traces of gypsum, which were deposited in the shallow water areas around the western edges of what was once the deep water sea, can be found around the western edges of the basin, also in the vicinity of Turda [in the area of Pietroasa–Moldovenești–Cheia–Tureni].

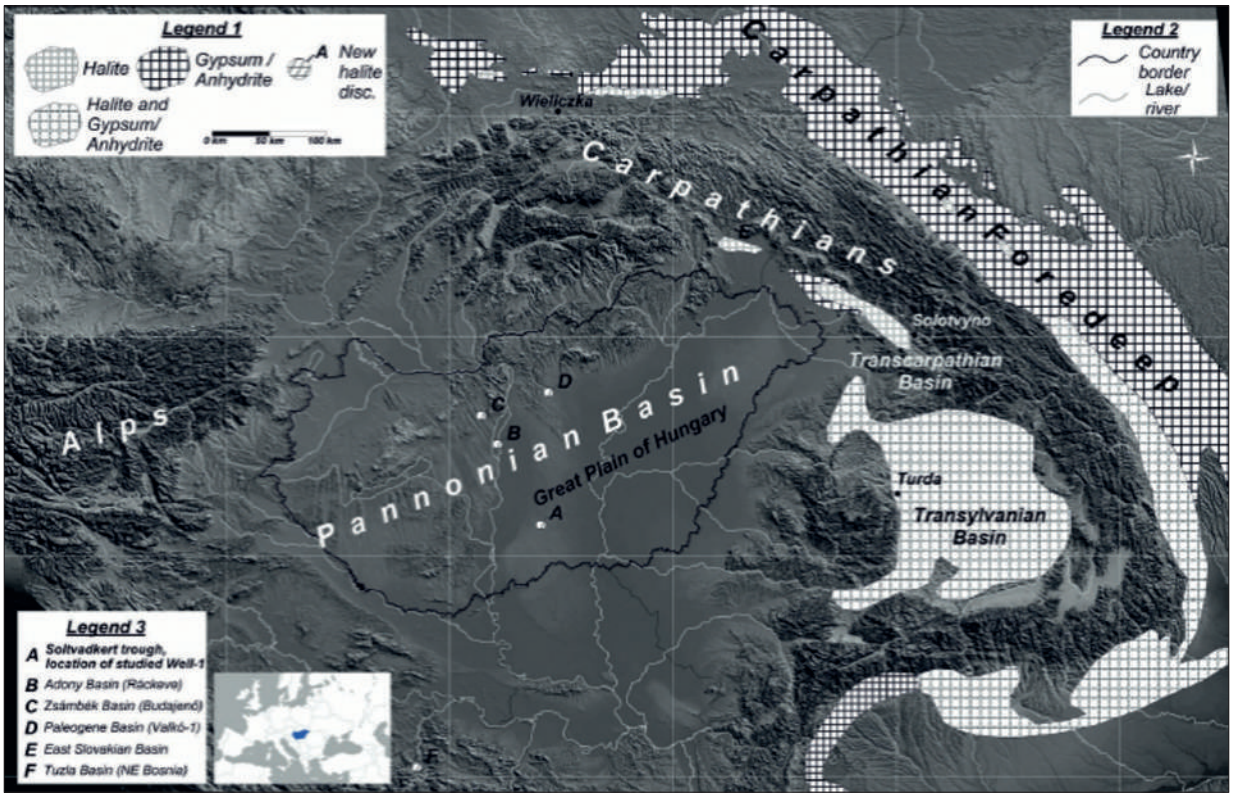


Figure 2. *Deep water salt deposits of the Paratethys Sea in the Carpathian Basin*

Due to its crystalline structure and plasticity, the deposited rock salt is extremely reactive to both vertical and horizontal pressures stemming from the weight of later sediments above it and the tectonic movements. This means that the salt deposits are capable of restructuring and "moving" into low pressure areas, and, consequently, layers of salt deposits may become thinner (or even vanish) in high pressure areas, while concentrating in low pressure areas. In certain places, salt tectonics may bring salt to the surface, breaking through the overlying layers – this phenomenon is referred as diapirism in the literature.

Practically, in the case of the Transylvanian Basin, this means that diapirism can be observed most commonly around the edges of a basin, where the pressure is the lowest. Thus, surface salt deposits occur there most frequently. Due to this plasticity, salt is also apparently working its way through in the middle parts of the basin, forming domes in certain locations, forcing the overlaying layers into a dome-like formation as well. The significance of this phenomenon is that below the non-permeable layers of these domes upflowing gas accumulates, and these methane gas chambers, concentrated in these domes, are among the most valuable natural treasures of Transylvania *(Fig. 3)*.[4]

3 Báldi et al. 2017, 193–206.

4 With respect to geological, tectonical factors and their genetic relations, the joint occurrences of salt and gas are not coincidental. Moreover, historical discoveries of gas reserves are closely related to the study and research of salt deposits and salt springs. Cf. Wanek 2008, 1–16.

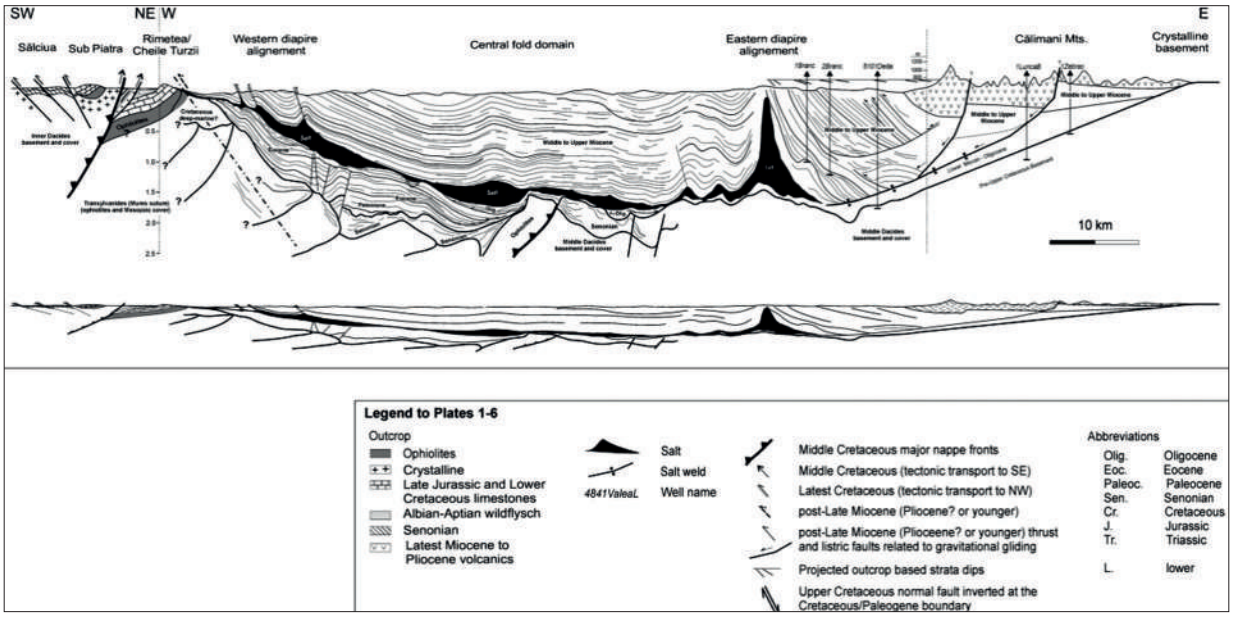


Figure 3. *Two E–W cross-sections of the Transylvanian Basin (salt masses indicated in black)*

The Transylvanian Basin has huge salt reserves, amounting to approximately 4,000 cubic kilometres. (i.e. one should imagine 4,000 salt cubes, the edges of which are 1 km long each); however, naturally, they do not form an evenly thick layer *(Fig. 4)*.[5] Most of this reserve is so deep, that it remains unaccessible for mining. There is, however, an amount of salt on or near the surface (accessible through mining), which should be enough for humanity's needs (industrial use, snow removal, nutrition) for several hundred years. Hungary has not a single gram of salt reserves which could be mined. Nonetheless, most European countries share this condition with Hungary.

I have discussed this in detail to make the maps below understandable. I attach them separately, as a simple inventory of sites would be incomprehensible and uninterpretable.

As mentioned above *(Fig. 3)*, diapirism occurs around the edges of the Transylvanian Basin, where these salt bodies form a so-called salt- or diapir zone (these are indicated on the maps in dark blue for surface salt deposits and dark blue stripping for near surface salt deposits, and the 'Σ' sign). They are also described below, where I have added also new data, which are not shown in the series of 1:200,000 geological map surveys printed in 1968 in Romania, however, I have reliable and detailed information about them from more recent literature.[6]

We must mention the Maramures Basin as well: although it constitutes a separate region, the paleogeological origin of the local salt deposits was the same. They were formed in the same basin, under the same conditions, and they also extend into the territory of present-day Ukraine. Its well-developed salt plugs emerged in the territory of present-day Romania, in Ocna Sugatag, Coştiui, and Vad.

Artesian water sources above the salt formations in the Transylvanian Basin (referred in the literature as the Ocna Dejului Formation)[7] obviously have high salt content, and thus, they only provide fresh water near surface water sources. Consequently, the water supply in the basin is a critical problem over the long term.[8] When such water sources reach the surface, in the form of salt water springs, they can be used as

5 Stoica–Gherasie 1981, 248.
6 Stoica–Gherasie 1981, 248.
7 Filipescu 2011, 37–48.
8 Újvári 2001, 28–32.

medicinal waters,[9] and in the past this water has been even used by the local population for flavoring or conserving food.[10] Thanks to this, salt water springs in Transylvania were already inventoried in the 18th century[11] – and these works are important sources of data for us.

In the following, I briefly introduce the near surface salt deposits in the Transylvanian Basin, most of which were mined in the past or have been mined in recent times (although their significance is declining), or can be exploited in the future – as they have been already investigated.

My compilation relies partly on the literature,[12] as well as on the results from my own research, commissioned by the Romanian Geological Institute in 2002. The number of salt deposits identified here (46) in regard to the area of the Transylvanian Basin even exceeds the number of other deposits found elsewhere in Romania (i.e. in the area beyond the Carpathians, but excluding Maramureș: 45).[13] However, I have not yet included in this list those occurrences, where the sediment overlay is thicker than 100 m; thus, I left out the ones in Livezile and Dumitra the north of Bistrița, and in Albeștii Bistriței to the south, and similarly the ones in Odorheiu Secuiesc and Corund, as well as several others, which are even deeper.

Figure 4. *The dispersion of the thickness of rock salt under the Transylvanian Basin (after Stoica–Gherasie 1981, 248)*

I start with the salt occurrences located at the western edge of the Transylvanian Basin, south of Dej *(Fig. 5)*:

1. Ocna Dejului – overlaid; mined at least since the Roman times until present *(Fig. 5. 1)*.[14]
2. Sânmărghita – directly under the Quaternary alluvium. Not indicated in the geological survey *(Fig. 5. 2)*.
3. Nireș– surface salt occurrence – mined in the medieval period. It was more thoroughly researched in the 20th century *(Fig. 5. 3)*.[15]
4. Petrești-Salatiu – directly under the Quaternary alluvium. Not indicated in the geological survey *(Fig. 5. 4)*.
5. Gherla – directly under the Quaternary alluvium. Not indicated in the geological survey *(Fig. 5. 5)*.
6. Sic – the survey describes it as a surface occurrence; it is, however, slightly overlaid *(Fig. 5. 6)*.

9 Pricăjan 1985, 435.
10 Hála 1995, 348–365.
11 Fichtel 1780, 134; Czekelius 1854, 39–56; Bernáth 1880, 200–217; Fischer 1887, 377–528; Chiricescu 2006, 164–174.
12 The above referred volume by Stoica–Gherasie 1981 was my primary source of data, to which I have also added the data published by Bányai 1957, 199. Where I had knowledge of additional data, these are references in the footnotes.
13 Drăgănescu 2006, 13–16.
14 Iorgulescu–Niculescu–Peneș 1962, 120.
15 Iorgulescu–Niculescu–Peneș 1962.

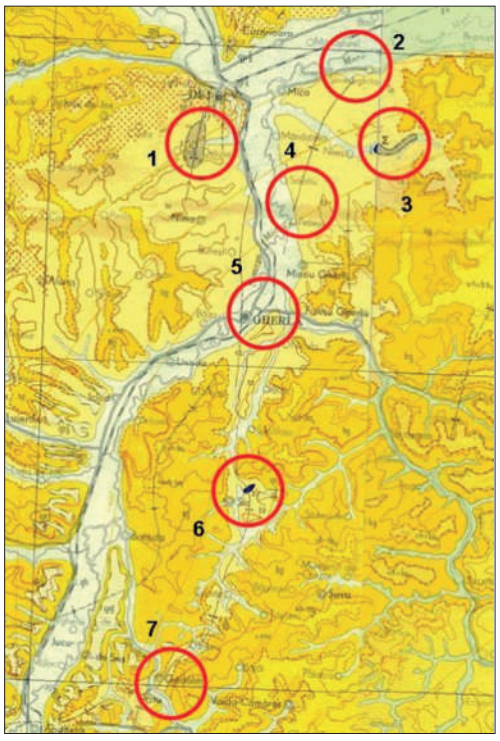


Figure 5. *Salt occurrences between Dej and Apahida illustrated on the geological map of Romania 1: 200,000 (pages 10–11)*

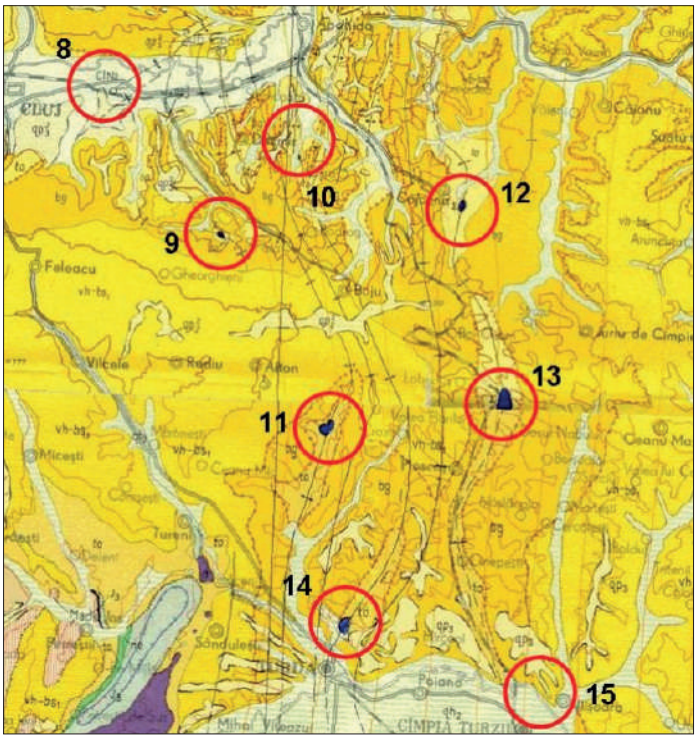


Figure 6. *Salt occurrences between Cluj-Napoca and Câmpia Turzii illustrated on the geological map of Romania 1: 200,000 (pages 11, 18–19)*

7. Gădălin – near surface occurrence. Not indicated in the geological survey *(Fig. 5. 7)*.
8. Someşeni – this subsurface salt occurrence can be detected as a continuous deposit between the area east of Cluj-Napoca and Dezmir overlaid by the alluvium of the Someşul Mic River; not indicated in the geological survey, although it was already mined in the Roman period. The geological survey only indicates salt springs (ClNa) *(Fig. 6. 8)*.[16]
9. Between Pata and Gheorghieni – slightly overlaid, but indicated as a surface occurrence. It was presumably mined in the Middle Ages *(Fig. 6. 9)*.[17]
10. Between Dezmir and Cara – situated at a shallow depth, while on the surface there are only salt springs. Not indicated in the geological survey *(Fig. 6. 10)*.
11. Aiton – to the south east of the village, in the upper catchment of the Ceanu valley; indicated on the map as a surface deposit; it is, however, covered by soil; its location is indicated by the salt springs. Mined in the medieval period *(Fig. 6 11)*.
12. Cojocna – surface deposit, mined since early medieval times until the 18th century (collapsed) *(Fig. 6. 12)*.
13. Near Valea Florilor – traces of surface extraction can be detected; this significant salt value could be exctracted following stock valuation *(Fig. 6. 13)*.
14. Turda – there is abundant literature on this one; mined continuously (?) at least since Roman times until 1932 *(Fig. 6. 14)*.
15. Viişoara – directly under the Quaternary alluvium. Not indicated in the geological survey *(Fig. 6. 15)*.
16. Ocna Mureş – a huge deposit, perhaps mined already before the Roman period. Extraction ended in

16 Wanek 2010, 41–51.
17 Wanek 2016, 34–40.

the interwar period due to collapse (flooding), but it was used for soda production until the 2000s, with a water pump *(Fig. 7. 16)*.

17. Ocnișoara – mined in medieval times, not indicated in the geological survey; situated perhaps southwest of the village *(Fig. 7. 17)*.
18. Ocna Sibiului – closed in the interwar period; extraction began at least in the medieval times; today there are salt ponds in the place of the collapsed shafts.

The occurrence of salt deposits is most frequent along the northern edge of the basin, but they are indicated only scantily in the available geological survey (1:200.000).

19. Căianu Mic – a significant one; with prehistoric traces of mining *(Fig. 8. 19)*.
20. Săsarm – traces of mining dating from the Roman period or before,[18] however, my field observations and the placenames suggest a medieval (Anjou period) dating *(Fig. 8. 20)*.
21. Beclean – not indicated on the geological map; however, it is a surface salt occurrence; the feet of the bridge to Beclenuţ were built, and in low water the salt is visible on the surface; in all probability the deposit continues until Varkudu *(Fig. 8. 21)*.
22. Mogoșeni – a thinner, therefore, a less significant reserve, but an easy one to extract, near surface occurrence *(Fig. 8. 22)*.
23. Cociu – near surface occurrence (according to boreholes, at a depth of 6–8 meters). Not indicated in the geological survey *(Fig. 8. 23)*.
24. Bistrița-Năsăud – with archaeologically documented background (Bronze Age),[19] it is, however, my belief that the placenames ("la Ocna") indicate Anjou period mining activity, and perhaps use also continued (illegally) in the early modern times (sold as contraband). Not indicated in the geological survey. There is a significant amount of literature on this *(Fig. 8. 24)*.

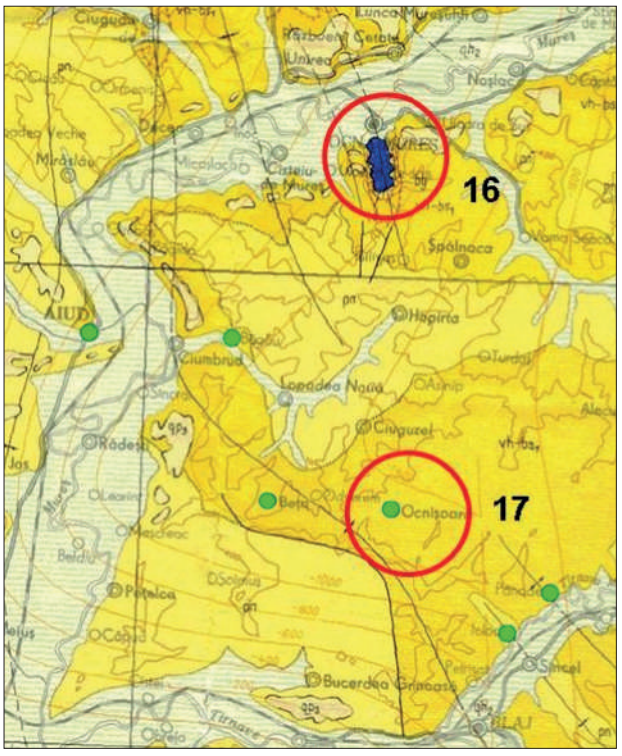


Figure 7. *Salt occurrences between Unirea and Blaj illustrated on the geological map of Romania 1: 200,000 (pages 18–19)*

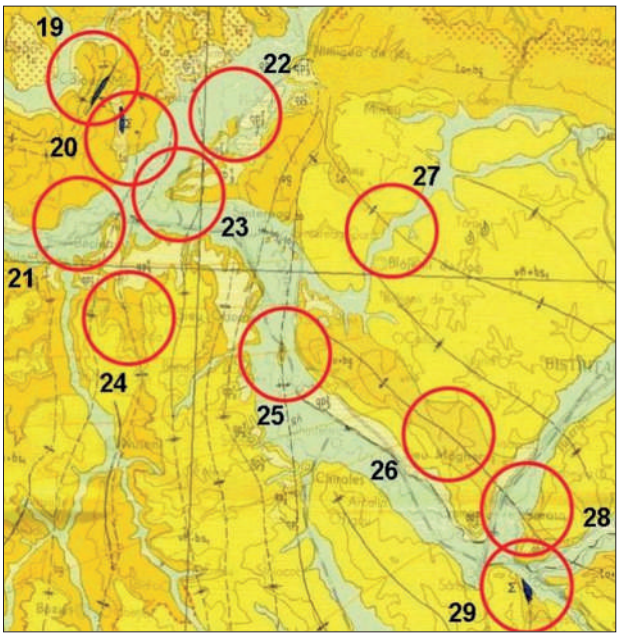


Figure 8. *Salt occurrences in the Şieu Valley illustrated on the geological map of Romania 1: 200,000 (page 11)*

18 Andronic et al. 2006, 56–86.
19 Andronic et al. 2006, 56–86.

25. To the south from Șieu-Sfântu – overlaid by the alluvium of the Șieu River; it was found during pier construction for the railway bridge (over the Lechința River) that connects Sărățel and Beclean. Not indicated in the geological survey, but an "island" like patch is shown in the alluvium, which – I am convinced – is a mistake made by the cartographer, who did not color it blue. Thus, this "island" must represent the location of the overlaid salt deposit *(Fig. 8. 25)*.
26. Between Șieu-Sfântu and Valea Măgheruşului – there is an anticline (an arch-like fold) shown on the geological map, indicated by a thick line with divergently oriented arrows. This could have carried the salt deposit close to surface, which is indicated by the salt springs and salt efflorescence. Around Valea Măgheruşului, the sediment overlay cannot be thicker than 10 m *(Fig. 8. 26)*.

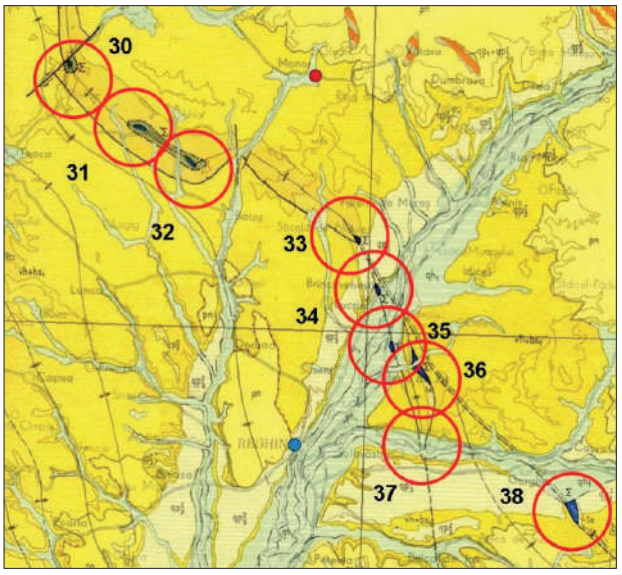


Figure 9. *Salt occurrences in the Upper Mureş Valley and the Gurghiu Valley illustrated on the geological map of Romania 1: 200,000 (page 11)*

27. Another anticline similar to the previous with salt springs and salt efflorescence can be detected between Blăjenii de Jos – Tăure, and from there turning in the direction of Nimigea de Jos. In Blăjenii de Jos it is on the surface *(Fig. 8. 27)*.
28. A surface occurrence is found in the outskirt of Sărata, where the River Bistrița crosses a salt deposit. At low water, it is visible on the surface, and the local Roma population earns a living from illegally extracting and trading the salt. Not indicated in the geological survey *(Fig. 8. 28)*.
29. To the east from Sărățel – near the salt bath, the Șieu River crosses a salt deposit, which is extracted by the local peasants, who feed it to their animals. Traces of ancient extraction can be detected as well *(Fig. 8. 29)*.

The salt zone continues from here parallel to the volcanic ranges of the Eastern Carpathians:

30. Pinticu *(Fig. 9. 30)*.
31. To the west of Uila *(Fig. 9. 31)*
32. To the south of Uila *(Fig. 9. 32)*.
33. Săcalu de Pădure *(Fig. 9. 33)*.
34. Brâncovenești – the Mureș River flows in south-southeast direction, crossing a salt plug *(Fig. 9. 34)*.
35. Ideciu de Sus *(Fig. 9. 35)*.
36. Ideciu de Jos – surface occurrences are found on both sides of the Idecs stream *(Fig. 9. 36)*.

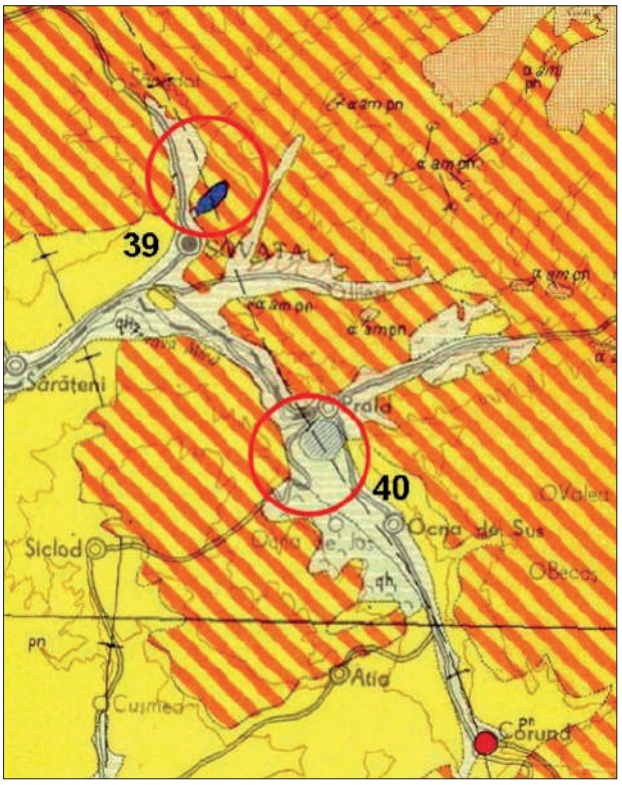


Figure 10. *Salt occurrences in the region of Sovata–Praid illustrated on the geological map of Romania 1: 200,000 (page 20)*

37. Jabenița – its name refers to medieval mining activity *(Fig. 9. 37)*.
38. Gurghiu *(Fig. 9. 38)*.
39. Sovata – not extracted currently, however, the importance and intensity of tourism is apparently due to the presence of salt (salt lakes are situated mostly in place of the former shafts, as e.g. in Ocna Sibiului, Cojocna, and Sic, except the Lacul Ursu, which is the result of human intervention) (a cross-valley dam) *(Fig. 10. 39)*.[20]
40. Praid – described as overlaid, however, it is a surface occurrence *(Fig. 10. 40)*.[21]
41. Lueta – to our knowledge, salt mining only started here in the mid-20th century, after WWII *(Fig. 11. 41)*.[22]
42. Mereşti *(Fig. 11. 42)*.
43. Aldea – salt deposits were discovered here during cellar constructions.[23] Not indicated on the geological survey map *(Fig. 11. 43)*.
44. Mărtiniș– overlaid, or near surface occurrence, indicated by salt springs and salt efflorescence. Not indicated in the geological survey *(Fig. 11. 44)*.
45. Sânpaul – as the previous one, it was already mined in the Roman period *(Fig. 11. 45)*.[24]
46. Mercheașa – not indicated in the geological survey, although the salt stock of near surface occurrences has been evaluated *(Fig. 11. 46)*.

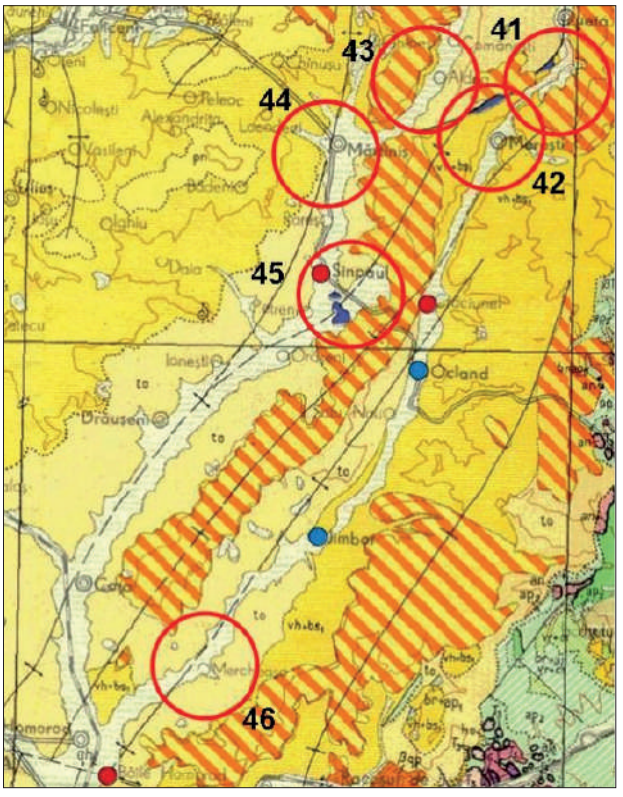


Figure 11. *Salt occurrences in the region of Homorod illustrated on the geological map of Romania 1: 200,000 (page 20)*

With this, the description of the "salt zone" of the Transylvanian Basin ends. The occurrences of salt springs are apparently much more widespread, with heavily saline wells and salt springs surround the diapir zones, outlining the boundaries of surface salt occurrences and salt plugs, which can be considered extractable, according to our present knowledge.[25]

20 Jánosi et al. 2005, 180.
21 A useful overview with further literature: Horváth 2006, 38–45.
22 Bányai 1957.
23 Bányai 1957.
24 Cavruc–Moga–Stănescu 2006, 53–55.
25 For the digitally scanned and merged tiles of the geological map I hereby thank Andrea Gál. The color codes she applied to indicate the locations have been left on the maps (which, however, indicate the different types of mud volcanoes, due to upsurges of gas together with salt water).

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ANNEXES

List of the sites

List 1.

The most important funerary sites of the 10th century mentioned in the text (see Map 1) (The list 2–3 and the maps 2–3 following this numberring)

Upper Tisza region

1. Čierna (hung.: Ágcsernyő)
2. Anarcs
3. Berehove (hu.: Beregszász)
4. Bodroghalom-Eresztevényhomok
5. Streda nad Bodrogom (hu.: Bodrogszerdahely)
6. Véč (hu.: Bodrogvécs)
7. Buj-Gyeptelek
8. Eperjeske
9. Gáva-Szincse-domb
10. Ibrány-Esbóhalom
11. Karos-Eperjesszög funerary site no. I
12. Karos-Eperjesszög funerary site no. II
13. Karos-Eperjesszög funerary site no. III
14. Kenézlő-Fazekaszug funerary site no. I
15. Kenézlő-Fazekaszug funerary site no. II
16. Dobrá (hu.: Kisdobra)
17. Rakamaz-Strázsadomb
18. Rakamaz-Túróczi-part
19. Rétközberencs-Paromdomb
20. Sárospatak-Baksahomok
21. Szabolcsveresmart-Szelérd-domb
22. Svalyava (hu.: Szolyva)
23. Tarcal-Rimai dűlő
24. Tarpa-Nagy-hegy
25. Tiszabercel-Ráctemető
26. Tiszabezdéd-Harangláb-dűlő
27. Tiszadob-Sós-szék
28. Tiszaeszlár-Vörösmarty street
29. Tiszaeszlár-Bashalom burial site no. I
30. Tiszaeszlár-Bashalom burial site no. II
31. Tiszaeszlár-Dióskert
32. Tiszaeszlár-Újtelep

33. Tiszalök-Vajasdomb
34. Tiszavasvári-Aranykerti tábla
35. Tuzsér-Boszorkány-hegy
36. Zemplín (hung.: Zemplén)-Szélmalomdomb

Transylvanian Basin

37. Deva (hu.: Déva)-Micro
38. Alba Iulia (hu.: Gyulafehérvár)-Brânduşei street
39. Alba Iulia (hu.: Gyulafehérvár)-Izvorul Împăratului
40. Alba Iulia (hu.: Gyulafehérvár)-Staţia de Salvare
41. Alba Iulia (hu.: Gyulafehérvár)-Roman Catholic Cathedral
42. Alba Iulia (hu.: Gyulafehérvár)-stray find (sword scabbard chape)
43. Cluj-Napoca (hu.: Kolozsvár)-Kalevala street (today Semenicului)
44. Cluj-Napoca (hu.: Kolozsvár)-Plugarilor (Szántó) street
45. Cluj-Napoca (hu.: Kolozsvár)-Zápolya (today gen. Traian Moşoiu) street
46. Gâmbaş (hu.: Marosgombás)-Măguricea/Kis Magura
47. Blandiana (hu.: Maroskarna)-Site "B"
48. Blandiana (hu.: Maroskarna)-Site "C"
49. Orăştie (hu.: Szászváros)-Dealul Pemilor X2

Trans-Tisza region and the Banat

50. Ártánd-Nagyfarkasdomb
51. Balkány
52. Báránd
53. Berekböszörmény
54. Berettyóújfalu-NagyBócs-dűlő
55. Biharkeresztes-Bethlen Gábor street no. 25
56. Biharia (hu.: Bihar)-Somlyóhegy/Şumuleu
57. Csenger
58. Csengersima
59. Debrecen-Dr. Balogh János tanyája
60. Derecske-Földesi út
61. Derecske-Nagymező-dűlő
62. Curtuiuşeni (hu.: Érkörtvélyes)
63. Tarcea (hu.: Értarcsa)
64. Galoşpetreu (hu.: Gálospetri)
65. Geszteréd
66. Hajdúböszörmény-Bodaszőlő-Büdöskút
67. Hajdúböszörmény-Erdős-tanya
68. Hajdúdorog-Gyulás
69. Hajdúdorog-Temetőhegy
70. Hajdúszoboszló-Árkoshalom
71. Hajdúszoboszló-Bercsényi street no. 49.
72. Hencida-Szerdekhalom
73. Kétpó

74. Moftinu Mic (hu.: Kismajtény)-Messzelátó-domb
75. Körösszegapáti-Pállapály
76. Magyarhomorog-Kónyadomb
77. Nádudvar-Mihályhalom
78. Salonta (hu.: Nagyszalonta)
79. Oradea (hu.: Nagyvárad)-Salca/Szálka-terasz
80. Nyíracsád
81. Püspökladány-Eperjesvölgy
82. Sárrétudvari-Hízóföld
83. Sárrétudvari-Őrhalom
84. Sárrétudvari-Poroshalom
85. Tiszafüred környéke
86. Tiszafüred-Nagykenderföldek
87. Tiszapüspöki
88. Újfehértó-Micskepuszta
89. Arad (hu.: Arad)-Ceala/Csálya
90. Békéscsaba-Erzsébethely
91. Békéssámson-Posztós J. telke
92. Békés-Tarhos, Városerdő
93. Dombegyháza
94. Eperjes-Takácstábla
95. Földeák-Mártírok útja
96. Gádoros-Bocskai street
97. Gerendás-Petőfi TSz
98. Gerendás-Vízvári-tanya
99. Gyula-Szövetkezeti Téglagyár
100. Hódmezővásárhely-Csomorkány
101. Hódmezővásárhely-Nagysziget
102. Kunágota-Boldog A. földje
103. Kunszentmárton-Köttön
104. Medgyesegyháza-Kétegyházi út
105. Medgyesegyháza-Uhrin A. földje
106. Mezőmegyer-Kerepeczki-tanya
107. Mindszent-Koszorús-dűlő
108. Nădlac (hu.: Nagylak)-7M
109. Nădlac (hu.: Nagylak)-Țiglărie/Téglaégető
110. Nagyszénás-Szabó Ferenc farmja
111. Orosháza-Nagy A. tanya
112. Orosháza-Pusztaszentetornya
113. Orosháza-Pusztai Ignácné tanyája
114. Pecica (hu.: Pécska)
115. Sarkad-Peckesvár
116. Șiclău (hu.: Sikló)-Gropoaie
117. Szabadkígyós-Pál-liget
118. Szabadkígyós-Tangazdaság
119. Szegvár-Orom-dűlő

120. Szegvár-Szőlőkalja
121. Székkutas-Juhász-tanya
122. Szentes-Borbásföld
123. Szentes-Derekegyházi oldal
124. Szentes-Nagyhegy
125. Szentes-Szentlászló
126. Ciacova (hu.: Csák)-Gheorghianu
127. Deszk-Funerary site I
128. Deszk- Funerary site T
129. Jazovo (hu.: Hódegyháza)
130. Novo Miloševo (hu.: Karlova)
131. Kiszombor Site "B"
132. Kiszombor Site "C"
133. Kiszombor Site "E"
134. Kikinda (hu.: Nagykikinda)-Galád-dűlő
135. Tomnatic (hu.: Nagyősz)-Kleine Hügel
136. Teremia Mare (hu.: Nagyteremia)-Stock Kristóf's field
137. Sânpetru German (hu.: Németszentpéter)-G.A.S.
138. Dudeştii Vechi (hu.: Óbesenyő)-Bukovapuszta mound no. II
139. Dudeştii Vechi (hu.: Óbesenyő)-Bukovapuszta mound no. III
140. Dudeştii Vechi (hu.: Óbesenyő)-Bukovapuszta mound no. IV
141. Dudeştii Vechi (hu.: Óbesenyő)-Bukovapuszta mound no. V
142. Dudeştii Vechi (hu.: Óbesenyő)-Bukovapuszta mound no. VIII-Antal Balthazar
143. Dudeştii Vechi (hu.: Óbesenyő)-Bukovapuszta mound no. IX
144. Dudeştii Vechi (hu.: Óbesenyő)-mound no. I
145. Dudeştii Vechi (hu.: Óbesenyő)-mound no. V
146. Dudeştii Vechi (hu.: Óbesenyő)-mound no. VI
147. Timişoara (hu.: Temesvár)-Cioreni
148. Novi Bečej (hu.: Törökbecse)
149. Dumbrăviţa (hu.: Újszentes)
150. Uivar (hu.: Újvár)-Gomila
151. Vršac (hu.: Versec)
152. Vălcani (hu.: Valkány)-Vamă

Danube–Tisza Interfluve and Syrmia

153. Apatin (hu.: Apatin)
154. Balotaszállás-Felsőbalota
155. Batajnica-Velika Humka
156. Bátmonostor-Angyal Lajos szőlője
157. Bátmonostor-Kispuszta, Pintér-tanya
158. Bátmonostor-Schärk
159. Bordány-Mező-dűlő
160. Budapest-District XVIII, Pestszentlőrinc-Gloriette/Varjú Sándor's field
161. Budapest-District XVIII, Pestszentlőrinc-Vörös Hadsereg road/outer part of the Üllői road
162. Budapest-District XV, Rákospalota
163. Budapest-District XXIII, Marx Károly road sand-pit/Juta-hill

164. Bugac-Alsómonostor
165. Bugyi-Felsővány
166. Csólyospálos-Csólyospuszta
167. Csongrád-Vendelhalom
168. Dabas-Felsőbesnyő
169. Doroslovo (hu.: Doroszló)-Szentkút
170. Dunavecse-Fehéregyháza
171. Tiszanána-Cseh-tanya
172. Bogojevo (hu.: Gombos)
173. Harta-Freifelt
174. Heves-Kapitányhegy
175. Homokmégy-Halom
176. Homokmégy-Székes
177. Izsák-Balázspuszta
178. Jászfényszaru
179. Jászfényszaru határa
180. Kecel-Lehoczkya-tanya
181. Kecel-Vádéi dűlő
182. Kecskemét-Városföld
183. Kiskunfélegyháza-Ferencszállás
184. Kiskunfélegyháza-Izsáki út-határ
185. Kiskunfélegyháza-Radnóti Miklós street
186. Kiskunhalas-KISZ-housing estate
187. Kunadacs-Köztemető
188. Ladánybene-Benepuszta
189. Madaras-Árvai-dűlő
190. Nagykőrös-Fekete-dűlő
191. Nagykörű-middle of the village
192. Nyárlőrinc-Bogárzó-dűlő
193. Pusztamonostor
194. Sándorfalva-Eperjes
195. Solt-Kalimajor
196. Sombor (hu.: Zombor)-Rancsevó-szállás
197. Surduk (Serbia)
198. Szalaszend
199. Szatymaz-Jánosszállás-Katonapart
200. Szeged-Algyő
201. Szeged-Bojárhalom
202. Szeged-Csongrádi út
203. Szeged-Kiskundorozsma-Hosszúhát
204. Szeged-Kiskundorozsma-Hosszúhát-halom
205. Szeged-Kiskundorozsma-Vöröshomok-dűlő
206. Szeged-Öthalom (1879)
207. Szeged-Öthalom (1950)
208. Szeged-Öthalom, V. homokbánya
209. Szolnok-Strázsahalom

210. Tarnaörs-Rajnapart
211. Tarnaörs-Szentandrás
212. Tázlár
213. Tiszakécske-Ókécske
214. Tiszasüly-Éhhalom
215. Vukovar (hu.:Vukovár)-Lijeva Bara
216. Zsombó-Bába-dűlő
217. Zsombó-Ménesjárás-dűlő

Northern-Carpathian Basin (Northern Hungary and the northern part of the Little Plain [Western-Slovakia])

218. Aldebrő-Mocsáros-dűlő
219. Bánov (hu.: Bánkeszi)
220. Bátorove Kosihy (hu.: Bátorkeszi)-Papajtó
221. Bíňa (hu.: Bény)
222. Čakajovce (hu.: Csekej)-Templom-dűlő
223. Dormánd-Hanyipuszta
224. Dunajská Streda (hu.: Dunaszerdahely)
225. Edelény-Finke
226. Eger-Almagyar
227. Eger-Répástető
228. Eger-Szépasszonyvölgy
229. Hlohovec (hu.: Galgóc)
230. Gyöngyöspata-Csákbereg
231. Gyöngyöspata-Kecskekő
232. Chl'aba (hu.: Helemba)
233. Chotín (hu.: Hetény)
234. Malé Kosihy (hu.: Ipolykiskeszi)
235. Kál-Legelő
236. Karancslapujtő
237. Kistokaj-Gerenda
238. Svätý Peter/Dolný Peter (hu.: Komáromszentpéter)
239. Letkés-Téglaégető I. temető
240. Levice (hu.: Léva)
241. Lőrinci-Selypi-puszta
242. Ludas
243. Marcelová (hu.: Marcelháza)
244. Miskolc-Repülőtér
245. Monaj
246. Nesvady (hu.: Naszvad)-Partokdűlő
247. Košúty (hu.: Nemeskosút)
248. Zemianska Olča (hu.: Nemesócsa)
249. Nógrádkövesd-Vasútállomás
250. Nógrádsáp
251. Lipová-Ondrochov (hu.: Nyitramalomszeg-Ondrohó)-Homokpuszta
252. Pribeta (hu.: Perbete)

253. Prša (hu.: Perse)-Bórszeg
254. Pétervására-Laktanya
255. Piliny-Leshegy
256. Vozokany (hu.: Pozsonyvezekény)
257. Sóshartyán-Hosszútető
258. Szakáld-Mulatódomb
259. Sereď (hu.: Szered)-Burial site III
260. Sereď (hu.: Szered)-Mačianske vŕšky Burial site I
261. Sereď (hu.: Szered)-Mačianske vŕšky Burial site II
262. Szikszó
263. Szob-Ipolymenti országút
264. Szob-Kiserdő
265. Tiszaszederkény (former name: Tiszaújváros)
266. Dvorníky (hu.: Udvarnok)
267. Červeník (hu.: Vágvörösvár)
268. Visonta-Felsőrét

Transdanubia

269. Balatonakali
270. Balatonalmádi
271. Balatonfüred-Morva street no. 10
272. Balatongyörök
273. Balatonlelle-Temető street no. 7
274. Balatonszemes-Landler street no. 112
275. Balatonszentgyörgy-ERDÉRT
276. Balatonújlak-Erdő-dűlő
277. Bana-Ördögásta-hegy
278. Budakeszi-Barackos-dűlő
279. Budaörs-Kamaraerdei-dűlő
280. Budaörs-Tűzkőhegy
281. Budapest-Csúcshegy
282. Budapest-Farkasréti temető
283. Budapest-District III, Testvérhegy, Erdőalja street
284. Budapest-Kaszásdűlő/Benedek Elek street
285. Csetény
286. Csetény
287. Csikvánd
288. Csorna-Sülyhegy
289. Dunaalmás
290. Dunaújváros-Radiátorgyár
291. Enese-Belterület
292. Felsőörs
293. Fonyód-Palonai Magyar Bálint Általános Iskola
294. Gyömöre-Friedrich Károly's garden
295. Győr-Téglavető-dűlő
296. Győr-Víztorony

297. Halimba-Cseres
298. Hegymagas
299. Ikervár-Virág street
300. Koppányszántó-Belterület
301. Koroncó-Bábota I
302. Koroncó-Bábota II
303. Koroncó-Dózsa György street no. 23
304. Koroncó-falu területe
305. Koroncó-Rácz-domb
306. Kőszeg-Kőszegfalvi-rétek
307. Mór-Sóderbánya
308. Mosonszentmiklós
309. Nagydorog-Bezzegpuszta
310. Nagylók-Erdőmajor
311. Nagyvázsony-Nőzsér
312. Neszmély-Melegeshegy
313. Nyúl-Öreghegy
314. Öttevény-Lenin street no. 62/Templom street no. 36
315. Rábacsanak-Tsz Major
316. Sárbogárd-Tringer-tanya
317. Sérsekszőlős
318. Somogyszil-Kálvária
319. Szabadegyháza-Petőfi street
320. Szakcs
321. Szakony-Kavicsbánya
322. Százhalombatta
323. Szedres-Ifigéniapuszta
324. Szentbékkálla-Öreghegy (Töttösi-dűlő)
325. Székesfehérvár-Demkóhegy
326. Székesfehérvár-Sárkeresztúri road
327. Szekszárd-Hidaspetre
328. Szomód-Bocskahegy
329. Tab-Ugajpuszta
330. Tengelic
331. Tengőd-Hékútpuszta
332. Törökkoppány
333. Várpalota-Semmelweis street
334. Vereb-Végh János földje
335. Veszkény-Tormostyán-dűlő
336. Vörs-Majori-dűlő
337. Vörs-Papkert-B nevű dűlő
338. Zalaszántó
339. Zalaszengrót
340. Páty-Malom dűlő
341. Gnadendorf (Austria)
342. Lanzenkirchen (Austria)

Funerary sites outside the Carpathian Basin (with hungarian conquerors' cultural habitus)

343. Sudova Vyshnya (Ucraine)
344. Przemyśl (Poland)

List 2.

Solitary graves mentioned in the text (or possible, questionable solitary graves)
(see Map 2) (The list 2 and the map 2 following the numberring of the list 1)

Upper Tisza region

7. Buj-Gyeptelek (?)
9. Gáva-Szincse-domb (?)
36. Zemplín (hu.: Zemplén)-Szélmalomdomb

Trans-Tisza region and the Banat

54. Berettyóújfalu-NagyBócs-dűlő
60. Derecske-Földesi út (?)
65. Geszteréd
67. Hajdúböszörmény-Erdős-tanya
87. Tiszapüspöki
90. Békéscsaba-Erzsébethely
91. Békéssámson-Posztós J. telke (?)
95. Földeák-Mártírok útja (?)
112. Orosháza-Pusztaszentetornya
114. Pecica (hu.: Pécska)
137. Sânpetru German (hu.: Németszentpéter)-G.A.S.
139. Dudeştii Vechi (hu.: Óbesenyő)-Bukovapuszta Mound no. III (?)
142. Dudeştii Vechi (hu.: Óbesenyő)-Bukovapuszta Mound no. VIII-Antal Balthazar (?)
143. Dudeştii Vechi (hu.: Óbesenyő)-Bukovapuszta Mound no. IX (?)

Danube–Tisza Interfluve and Syrmia

154. Balotaszállás-Felsőbalota
159. Bordány-Mező-dűlő (?)
163. Budapest-District XXIII, Marx Károly úti sand-pit/Juta-domb
174. Heves-Kapitányhegy (?)
177. Izsák-Balázspuszta (?)
184. Kiskunfélegyháza-Izsáki út-határ (?)
185. Kiskunfélegyháza-Radnóti Miklós street (?)
186. Kiskunhalas-KISZ-lakótelep (?)
188. Ladánybene-Benepuszta (?)
192. Nyárlőrinc-Bogárzó-dűlő (?)
204. Szeged-Kiskundorozsma-Hosszúhát-halom
205. Szeged-Kiskundorozsma-Vöröshomok-dűlő (?)

210. Tarnaörs-Rajnapart (?)
213. Tiszakécske-Ókécske (?)
216. Zsombó-Bába-dűlő (?)
217. Zsombó-Ménesjárás-dűlő (?)

Northern-Carpathian Basin (Northern Hungary and the northern part of the Little Plain [Western-Slovakia])

225. Edelény-Finke (?)
242. Ludas (?)
254. Pétervására-Laktanya (?)

Transdanubia

273. Balatonlelle-Temető street no. 7 (?)
274. Balatonszemes-Landler street no. 112 (?)
283. Budapest-District III, Testvérhegy, Erdőalja street
290. Dunaújváros-Radiátorgyár
294. Gyömöre-Friedrich Károly's garden (?)
302. Koroncó-Bábota II
303. Koroncó-Dózsa György street no. 23 (?)
305. Koroncó-Rácz-domb (?)
308. Mosonszentmiklós (?)
310. Nagylók-Erdőmajor (?)
314. Öttevény-Lenin street no. 62/Templom street no. 36 (?)
319. Szabadegyháza-Petőfi street (?)
322. Százhalombatta (?)
328. Szomód-Bocskahegy (?)
334. Vereb (?)
341. Gnadendorf
342. Lanzenkirchen (?)

List 3.

Burial grounds without weapon- and horse burials in the 10th century mentioned in the text

(see Map 3) (The list 3 and the map 3 following the numberring of the list 1)

Upper Tisza region

4. Bodroghalom-Eresztevényhomok
27. Tiszadob-Sós-szék
31. Tiszaeszlár-Dióskert

Transylvanian Basin

38. Alba Iulia (hu.: Gyulafehérvár)-Brânduşei street

Trans-Tisza region and the Banat

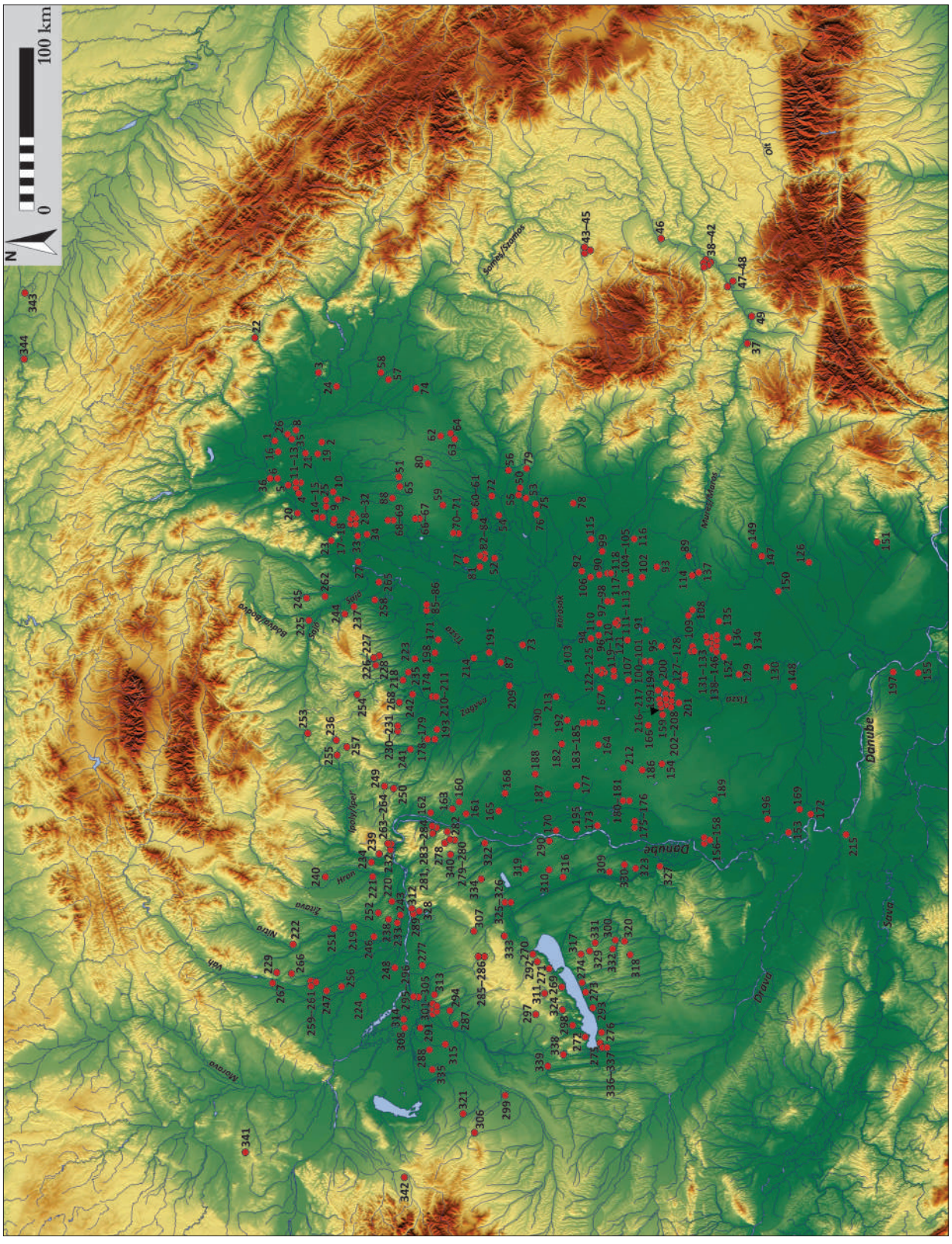
74. Moftinu Mic (hu.: Kismajtény)-Messzelátó-domb
119. Szegvár-Orom-dűlő
120. Szegvár-Szőlőkalja

Northern-Carpathian Basin (Northern Hungary and the northern part of the Little Plain [Western-Slovakia])

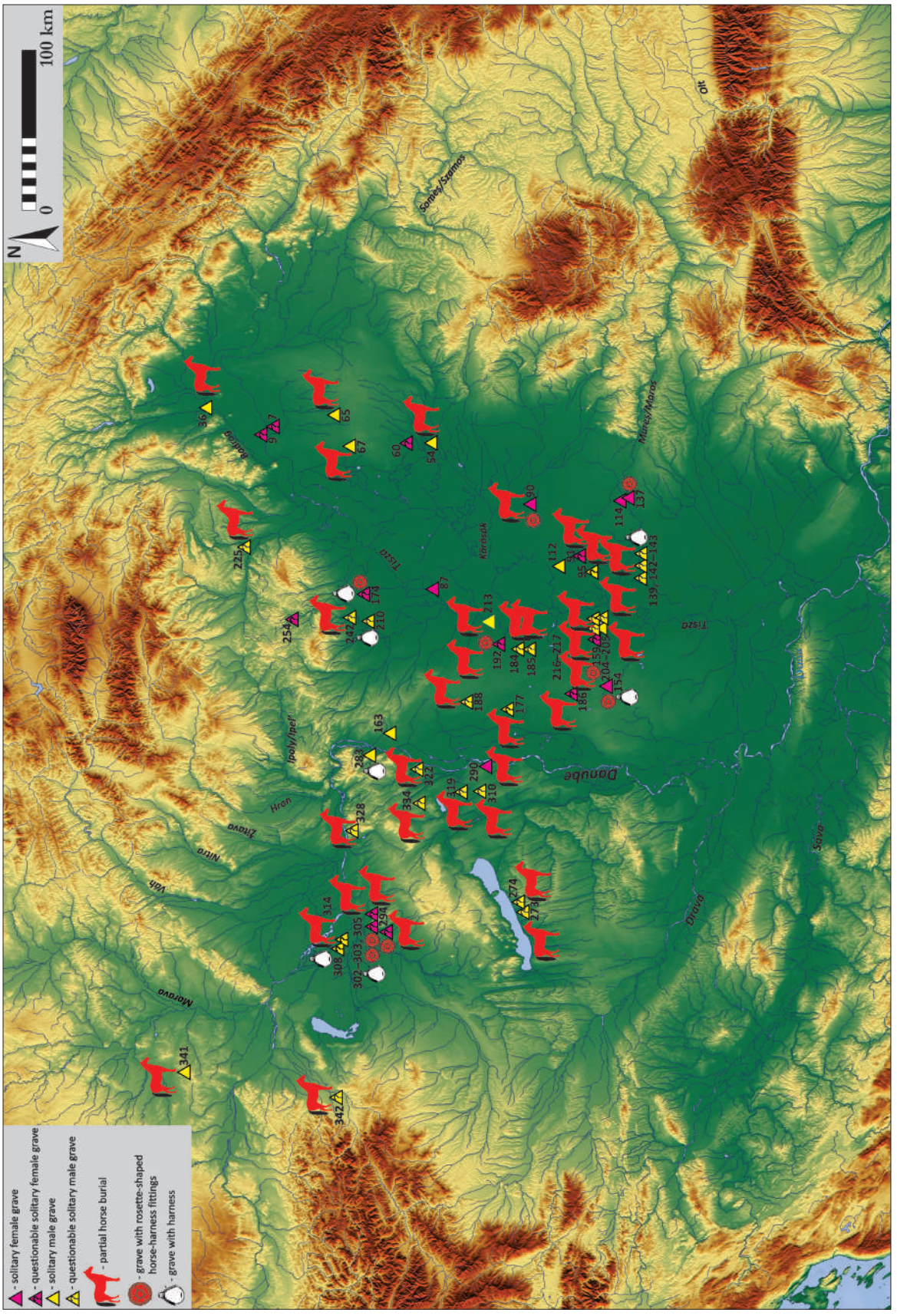
219. Bánov (hu.: Bánkeszi)
243. Marcelová (hu.: Marcelháza)
268. Visonta-Felsőrét

Transdanubia

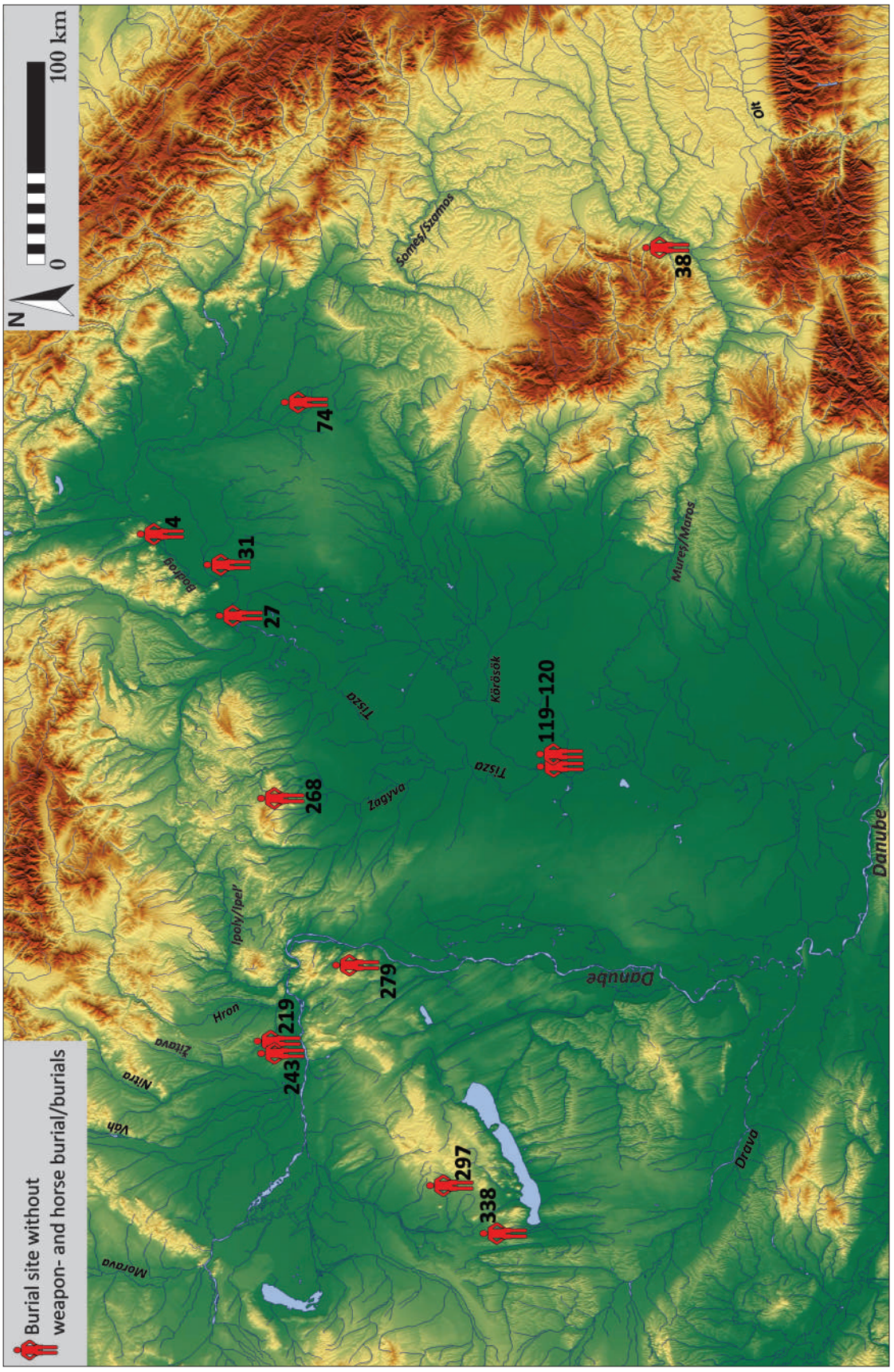
279. Budaörs-Kamaraerdei-dűlő
297. Halimba-Cseres
338. Zalaszántó



Map 1. *10th century burial grounds in the Carpathian Basin (Basemap: Gergely Szenthe) (for their numbering see List 1)*



Map 2. *10th century solitary graves (or possible, questionable solitary burials) in the Carpathian Basin (Basemap: Gergely Szenthe) (for their numbering see List 1)*



Map 3. *Burial grounds without weapon- and horse burials in the 10th century (Basemap: Gergely Szenthe) (for their numbering see List 1)*