



ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ
INSTITUTUL DE ARHEOLOGIE „VASILE PÂRVAN”

MATERIALE ȘI CERCETĂRI ARHEOLOGICE

SERIE NOUĂ
NR. XXI, 2025



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(peer-reviewed journal)**

**Revista *Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice* este indexată în următoarele baze de date:
Persée, Copernicus, ERIH PLUS, Scopus, CEEOL, EBSCO și DOAJ.**

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Revista se poate procura contracost la sediul EDITURII ACADEMIEI ROMÂNE, Calea 13 Septembrie nr. 13, sector 5, 050711, București, România; tel. 4021-318 8146, 4021-318 8106, Fax 4021-318 2444, e-mail: edacad@ear.ro, periodice@ear.ro

ORION PRESS IMPEX 2000 S.R.L., P.O. Box 77-19, București, România, Tel./Fax: 4021-610 6765, 4021-210 6787, Tel.: 0311 044 668, e-mail: office@orionpress.ro.

S.C.MANPRESS DISTRIBUTION S.R.L., Piața Presei Libere nr. 1, Corp B, Etaj 3, Cam. 301-302, sector 1, București, România, tel./fax: 4021-314 6339, e-mail: abonamente@manpres.ro, office@manpres.ro, www.romanianjournals.com.

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FROM THE CENTRAL REGION TOWARDS THE PERIPHERIES. A CHRONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF A PRESTIGE GOOD – THE MOUNT ORNAMENTED SABRETACHE

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Keywords: prestige goods, mount ornamented sabretaches, central region, periphery, chronological analysis, 10th century

Abstract: The spatial and chronological spread of sabretaches decorated with mounts, one of the emblematic prestige goods of the Hungarian Conquest period, represents a relatively underexplored area of 10th-century funerary archaeology. The present study examines the dating of this category of objects through five aspects. It concludes that although the spread of this specific item – considered a symbol of societal prestige – begins with the Hungarian Conquest, and its use is traceable as early as the 9th century, the quantitative peak of its usage was reached significantly later, during the mid-to-late 10th century. Other than the early/earlier examples from Karos and Szeged, a significant number of such items can be dated to much later periods. This clearly suggests that a parallel use of sabretaches decorated with mounts and those decorated with plates occurred, moreover, the specimen from Choma dates later than all known plate-decorated sabretaches.

The sabretaches from the Upper Tisza region, Cluj-Napoca, and Przemyśl share structural similarities, in contrast to the examples from the Szeged and Budapest's surroundings, and these structural similarities hold a chronological significance as well. It can be asserted, based on the earliest identifiable examples from the Upper Tisza region, that the spread of sabretaches decorated with mounts, similarly to those decorated with plates, appears to follow a multi-phase chronological process, the latest occurrences being those from Cluj-Napoca, Choma, and Przemyśl – in southern Poland. This fact likely has geopolitical and geoeconomic explanations, as both regions are known for their significant salt resources.

Cuvinte-cheie: bunuri de prestigiu, gențițe decorate cu aplice, regiune centrală, periferie, analiză cronologică, secolul X

Rezumat: Distribuția spațială și cronologică a gențițelor decorate cu aplice, una dintre piesele de prestigiu emblematice ale perioadei cuceririi ungare (secolul X), reprezintă un domeniu destul de puțin cercetat de către arheologia funerară a secolului al X-lea. Studiul de față analizează datarea acestei categorii de obiecte, urmărind cinci aspecte. Concluzia este că, deși răspândirea acestui obiect – considerat un simbol al prestigiului social – începe din secolul al IX-lea, respectiv începutul secolului al X-lea, apogeul utilizării sale a fost atins mult mai târziu, la mijlocul sau sfârșitul secolului al X-lea. În afară de exemplele timpurii de la Karos și Szeged, semnificativ de multe astfel de obiecte pot fi datate în perioade mult mai târzii.

Acest lucru sugerează în mod clar utilizarea în paralel a gențițelor decorate cu aplice și a celor decorate cu plăcuțe; în plus, gențița decorată cu aplice de la Choma (Ucraina) se datează mai târziu decât cele decorate cu plăcuțe.

Gențițele decorate cu aplici din regiunea Tisei Superioare, Cluj-Napoca și Przemyśl prezintă asemănări structurale, reprezentând deosebiri față de exemplarele din zona Szeged și din împrejurimile Budapestei. Totodată, aceste asemănări structurale au și o semnificație cronologică. Se poate afirma, pe baza celor mai timpurii exemple identificabile din regiunea Tisei Superioare, că răspândirea gențițelor decorate cu aplice, similar celor decorate cu plăcuțe, pare să urmeze un proces cronologic în mai multe faze, cele mai recente apariții fiind cele din Cluj-Napoca, Choma și Przemyśl – în sudul Poloniei. Acest fapt are probabil explicații geopolitice și geoeconomice, deoarece ambele regiuni (sudul Poloniei și zona Clujului) sunt cunoscute pentru resursele lor semnificative de sare.

1. INTRODUCTION: SPACE AND ITS STRUCTURES

Structures are the “creators” and shapers of history, and at the same time, human group identities originate from and are created by them, determining the (relative) territoriality of these groups¹. In pre-modern times, power was not organized from base to top, but from

top to bottom, that is, legitimacy did not come from the people, but from divine-sacred sources², and was organized around the *leader* (the khagan, the king etc.). We could also say that the leader or the elite had people, and not that the people had a leader, and thus, the principle of Rousseau's “*popular sovereignty*”³ that can be traced

¹ The concept of territoriality of political structures has changed its meaning several times throughout history. The modern concept of political territoriality can be defined as an active strategy for governing a geographical area (which may also become political): Vollaard 2009, p. 687–706, and it shows significant differences from the ancient concept of political territoriality (Ando, Richardson 2017).

² “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, p. 17).

³ Greenfield 1996, p. 3–40.

back to modern European traditions was unknown to the early medieval nomadic societies. The main characteristic of these societies is the phenomenon called “*nomadic rivalry*”, in an era of – often short-lived – structures created by nomadic “*big-men*” (e.g. the most well-known, Temujin the empire-builder) and their entourage and clans. From a historical-sociological perspective, the result of this competition was the emergence of a major clan, under which “*brother-in-law clans*”⁴ were constantly competing to advance in a conical system and obtain the political power.

This phenomenon, i.e. the constant change (fluctuation) of all the elites, fundamentally determined the highly relative territoriality of these nomadic Asian political structures⁵, since the structural instability was a consequence of the rivalry of the clans. The character of the nomadic groups should not be viewed from a modern territorial perspective, since their main objective was the acquisition and control of the resources of the territories (especially the salt lands and the pastures), and of masses of people to be exploited. This was facilitated by the road infrastructure created during the Roman period in the Carpathian Basin. In pre-modern times, nomadic formations occupied various positions in a “*vertical*” hierarchy of the micro-communities or micro-clans, and their position was determined by the various leaders and commanders of the vertical structure.

These structural observations can be applied to the “*dynamic-conical clan system*”⁶ of power in the Carpathian Basin during the 10th-century conquest period, the relative territorial extent of which can be “*identified*” by prestige goods and rituals such as the geographical distribution of 10th-century horse burials (Fig. 1). The slaughter of the horse is followed by the deposition of its head and tibiae in the grave, which is a clearly mnemonic, memory-enhancing ceremony, and indirectly, a sign of the individual’s status in the community. Partial (the head and the bones of the four legs) and symbolic horse burials were recorded in 1505 graves (704 sites). However, their chronological analysis is still pending, but we clearly must take this “*prestige phenomenon*” into account even in the 11th century, especially in the peripheral communities not yet reached by Christianity.

It is evident that the Carpathian Basin in geographical sense, cannot be considered a unified cultural region in the

early medieval period (we hardly find any horse burials east of the Central Mureş region and the majority of the area west of Lake Balaton), and in this regard, the interpretation of the geographical distribution of prestige goods is of particular importance.

2. ON PRESTIGE GOODS AND THEIR NETWORKS IN GENERAL

Objects representing prestige and their concept have been present since the existence of the very first human social structures, since the concept served the interest of the leader or the leading elite, which was (as a human feature) also prone to do so, to indicate and symbolize their own – acquired or inherited (or maybe sometimes imagined) – distinguished status. From this point of view, these elements can be classified as social *symbols*⁷, luxury items, *prestige goods*⁸ that are not required for survival, in contrast to those of daily necessity.

In order to acquire and/or maintain the status of an individual/social elite, it was essential to symbolize prestige goods recognized by the elite of the given political structures. In hierarchical societies, prestige goods served as a means of accumulating wealth and, more importantly, as symbols of power or authority. These observations are even more relevant in the case of the “*nomadic rivalry*” and the “*big men*” of the nomadic societies (such as the Hungarian society of the 9th–10th centuries).

If we take into consideration the distribution ratio of prestige goods, their network seems to have been characterized by a pyramid-like structure, with fewer nodes at the top and more at the bottom, and which display the hierarchy-centred pattern of burial networks (Fig. 2). These can be described in the terms of David L. Clark’s “*prestige chain exchange*”⁹ or Friedman and Rowlands’ “*prestige goods systems*”¹⁰.

In early medieval societies, male violence, carrying arms, and the use of weapons were integral parts of male identity, especially among the social elite (in contrast to the concept and social perception of productive labour). In consequence, weaponry and the associated object categories also served as status indicators and symbols,¹¹ and can be defined as elements of the “*prestige goods systems*”. And accordingly, weapons became part of both the personalized ritual of the man’s commemoration, and the identity of the group. These prestige objects can only be indirectly linked to the frequently mentioned (and highly diverse) social statuses in a specific, well-observed

⁴ Dávid Somfai-Kara lists several clans that can be linked to the 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*. Somfai-Kara 2017, p. 343–355. Modelling: Gáll 2020, figs. 2–3.

⁵ In these cases, we can observe essential differences compared to the Germanic power structures integrated by the Mediterranean-style Greco-Roman system. Pohl 2003, p. 571–574; Hall 2018, p. 17–37.

⁶ For the concept of the “*conical clan*” that was proposed in the first half of the 20th century, see Kirchhoff 1955, p. 1–10. The members of the modern nation are – in principle – treated equally by the law, and their identity is located on the same plane, *horizontally*, so to speak (“*horizontal society*”), so in their case, we can observe an *equality of identity* (Friedmann 1999, p. 11–12). For example, a president and a factory worker are equal before the law!

⁷ On symbols: DPS 1995, p. 224; Jung 1994, p. 227; Niedermüller 1993, p. 158; Mannheim 1995, p. 36, 131.

⁸ Often, goods considered to be of high status or high value by a society were in limited trade, such as amber, copper, glass beads, and seashells in ancient times. High-prestige goods served to increase the political value of trade for local elites.

⁹ Clarke 2014, p. 429–431.

¹⁰ Friedman, Rowlands 1977, p. 224–232.

¹¹ Davidson 1989, p. 11–24.

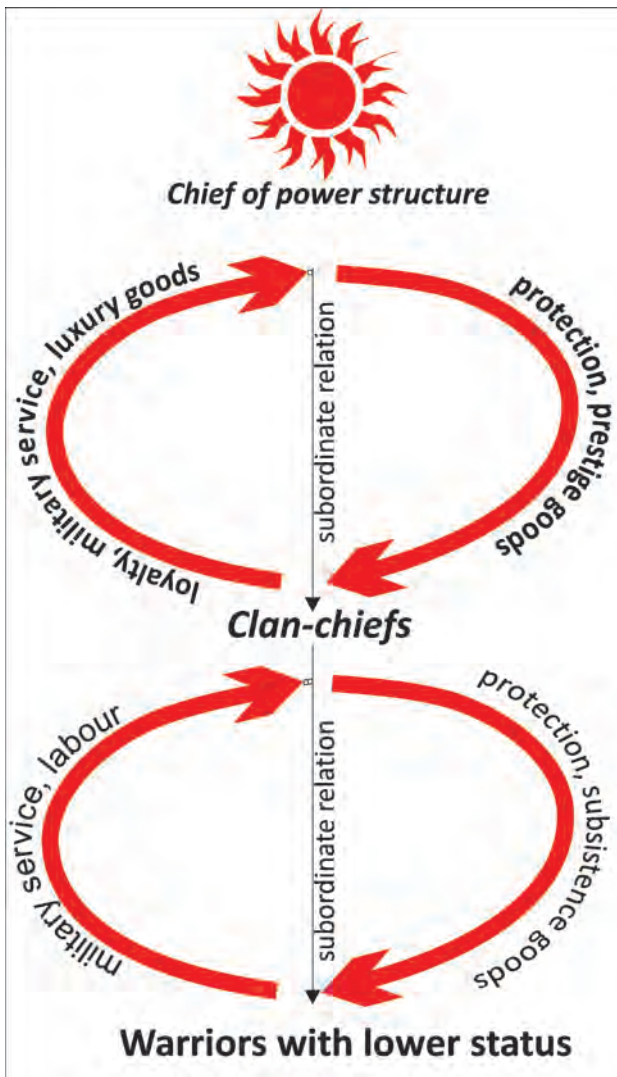


Figure 2. Model of the hierarchical clan system (edited by the authors).

context. In a rivalry-based age with loosely structured social frameworks, they could symbolically represent an individual's often *temporary* (or even imagined) status, such as that of a warrior, chief, or man. However, these objects indeed played a pivotal role in the functioning of the society as a whole, while the loss of access to prestige goods could lead to a legitimacy crisis or even a complete political collapse for the given macro-group.

3. ON PRESTIGE GOODS IN THE LIGHT OF 10TH-CENTURY FUNERARY ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE CARPATHIAN BASIN

Since other, more accurate narrative of archaeological sources such as fortifications are absent, we can only analyse the finds and the archaeological signs of rituals in graves that can be considered of great value (e.g. partial

horse burials), and finally, prestige goods in the Carpathian Basin's society of the 10th century.

These items and ritual elements could be related to personal and community values; thus, they were concluded to be symbols of these communities within the micro- and macro-group, and as such, they formed their emerging symbol system. Since – as mentioned earlier – direct, personal relationships were the determining factors in the system of “*brother-in-law clans*”, these prestige objects and rituals most certainly also expressed the socio-political status within the group, and based on these data, a vertical structure can be modelled in addition to the collective identity¹². With these 10th-century prestige goods, people could achieve a strong visual display of special identity and status at various social gatherings¹³, thus these were integrated into the symbolic communication mediums of power via the sociological act of burial. These military items (weapons and their accessories) became the main artefacts of symbolically generalized communication media. In this regard, the tendency was to decorate the weapons, and respectively other military accessories, with gold or silver gilt fittings, some of them of exceptional artistic quality, delivering powerful visual statements of identity and visualising power.

Regarding the 10th-century prestige goods, we can distinguish two categories: finds recorded in either small or large quantities, therefore we have classified them into two groups:

Group A (*gold and silver mounted sabres/14, quivers with gilded silver mount/8, sabretache plates/29, mount ornamented sabretaches/15*) – the small quantity can be integrated in the visual communication system of a smaller group.

Graves belonging in Group B (mounted belt, simple sabres without ornaments, horse burials [Fig. 1]) and their context are closely related to the finds of the aforementioned group, and together, these are expressions of certain cultural habitus, since elements of this group, such as the mounted belt and the horse sacrifice, can also be found in the graves of Group “A”.

The concentration and network node of the objects of Group “A” in the Upper Tisza region indicate that merely a narrow circle of the power elite could benefit from high-quality goods¹⁴, while sporadic appearance in other regions can have several explanations, ranging from the clan system, the personal, subordinate relations, to micro-group or personal migration.

In the case of simpler iron sabres, at least 5 nodes can be identified on the distribution maps of the Carpathian Basin (Upper Tisza region, Körös–Tisza region, the areas of Cluj-Napoca and Budapest, Nitra, and the Váh river valley) (Fig. 5/A), while graves containing mounted

¹² Perhaps the most fundamental feature of any collective identity is the duality of separation and unification: it separates one group from another externally, while creating unity/unifying within the group.

¹³ Høilund Nielsen 1997, p. 129–148.

¹⁴ Gáll, M. Lezsák 2018, p. 89–95, Fig. 7.

Funerary sites containing horse burials in the 10th and the first half of the 11th century

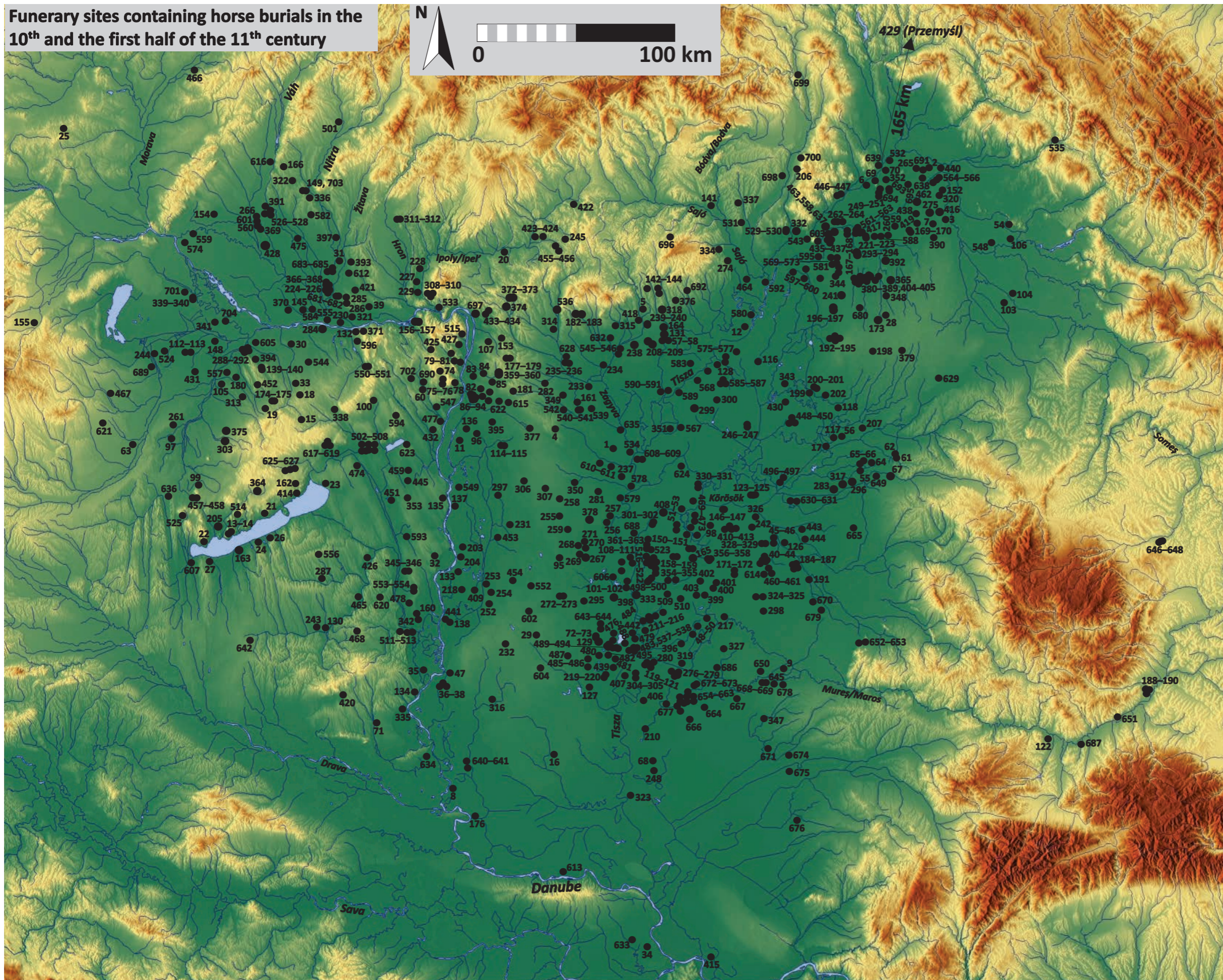


Figure 1. The spreading of a new cultural habitus: distribution of 10th–11th century horse burials (partial and symbolic) in the Carpathian Basin (for their list, see Annex 1).

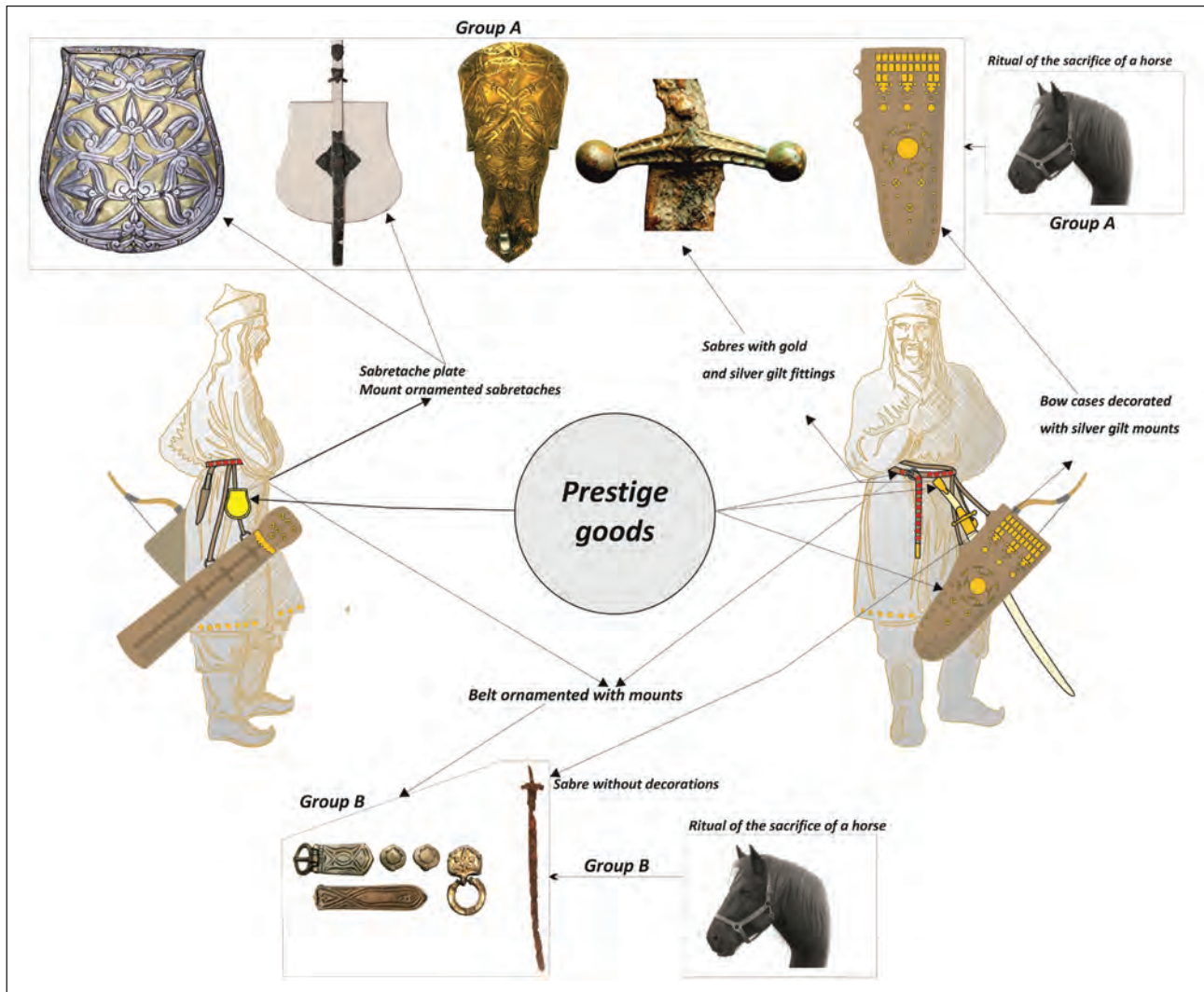


Figure 3. Conquest Period prestige goods from the Carpathian Basin in funerary contexts (Groups "A" and "B").

belts are relatively evenly distributed throughout the Carpathian Basin, from the middle Mureş valley to Lake Fertő (Fig. 5/B)¹⁵.

These facts may indicate that the higher category of "prestige goods" most likely presume **Hodges' type 2 "solar system type"**¹⁶. Also, the early medieval "cultural borders" may also be delineated by this archaeological landscape in the east, west, and south directions¹⁷.

¹⁵ Révész 1996, p. 79, 94, 113/2. kép; Gáll 2015, Fig. 22.

¹⁶ Hodges 2012, p. 4: 2.

¹⁷ On borders, see Pohl 2008, p. 130–132. Regarding cultural borders in Transylvania, after recording 420 archaeological sites from the 7th–10/11th centuries, we concluded that: 1. the known archaeological sites are mainly distributed on an area stretching from the western, low floodplains to the somewhat higher, 500–600 m hilly areas, although there are a few occurrences in areas with a much higher altitude, as well; 2. however, the burial/funerary sites are documented primarily

Since the dispersion in the Carpathian Basin of a certain prestige good, the sabretache plate, indicates a multi-stage chronological process¹⁸, we considered it important to also analyse the chronological aspect of this problem in the case of another prestige good, the mount ornamented sabretache!

in the western parts of Transylvania (the valleys of the Someşul Mic, the middle course of the Mureş, and the lower course of the Târnava Mică and Târnava Mare Rivers), regardless whether we talk about the "Avar" (7th–8/9th centuries), "Bulgarian" (9th–10th centuries), or "Hungarian Conqueror" groups (10th century). The lack of funerary sites in **eastern** and **central Transylvania** dated to the 7th–11th centuries can be attributed primarily to the fact that *these areas were a kind of "stateless"*, unintegrated into the *network of powers*, so we can speak of the existence of a cultural "border" between the East and West Transylvania. Gáll *et alii* 2024, p. 323–382.

¹⁸ Gáll, M. Lezsák 2018, p. 89–95.

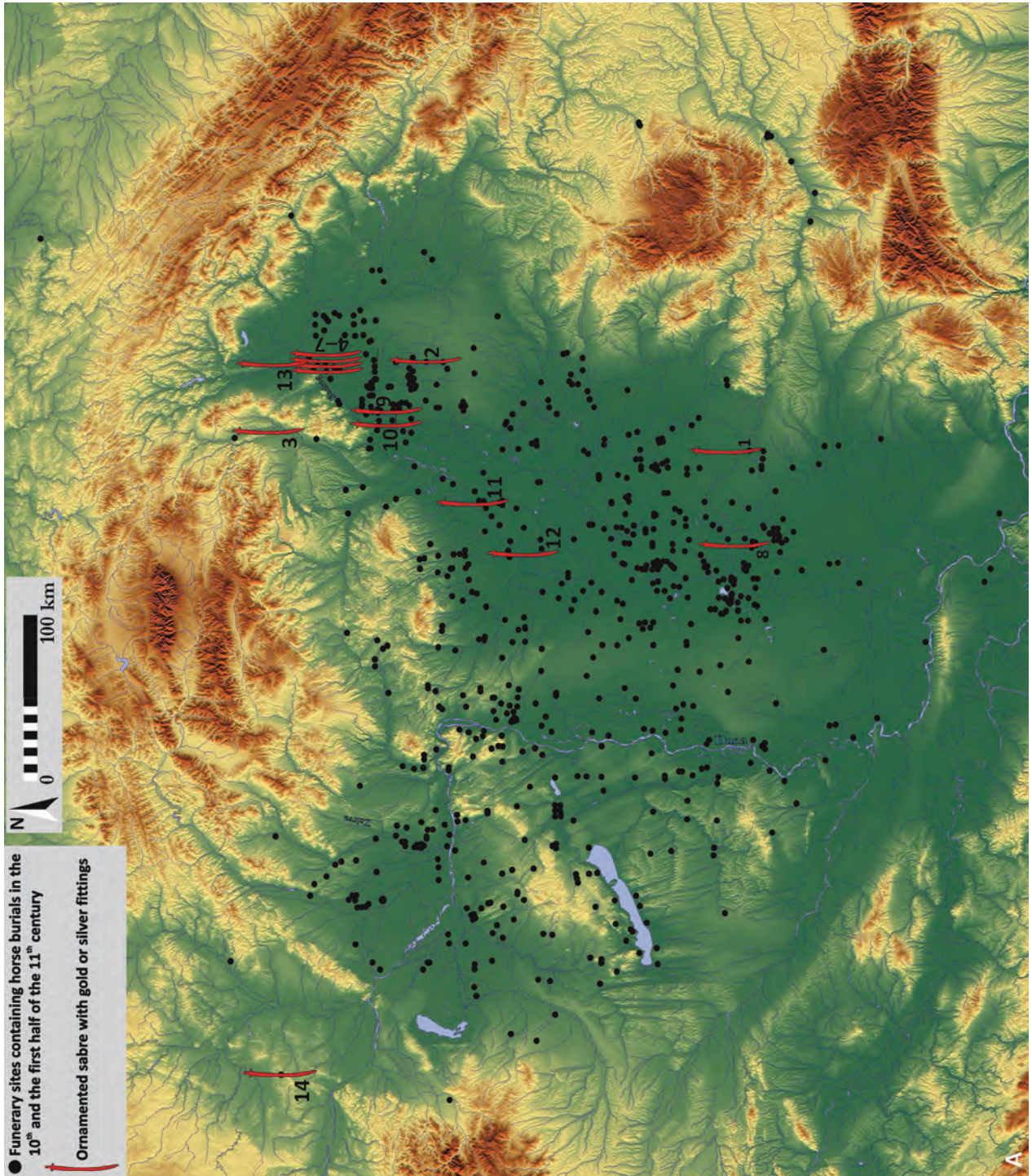


Figure 4/A. Distribution of prestige goods belonging to Group "A" in the Carpathian Basin.

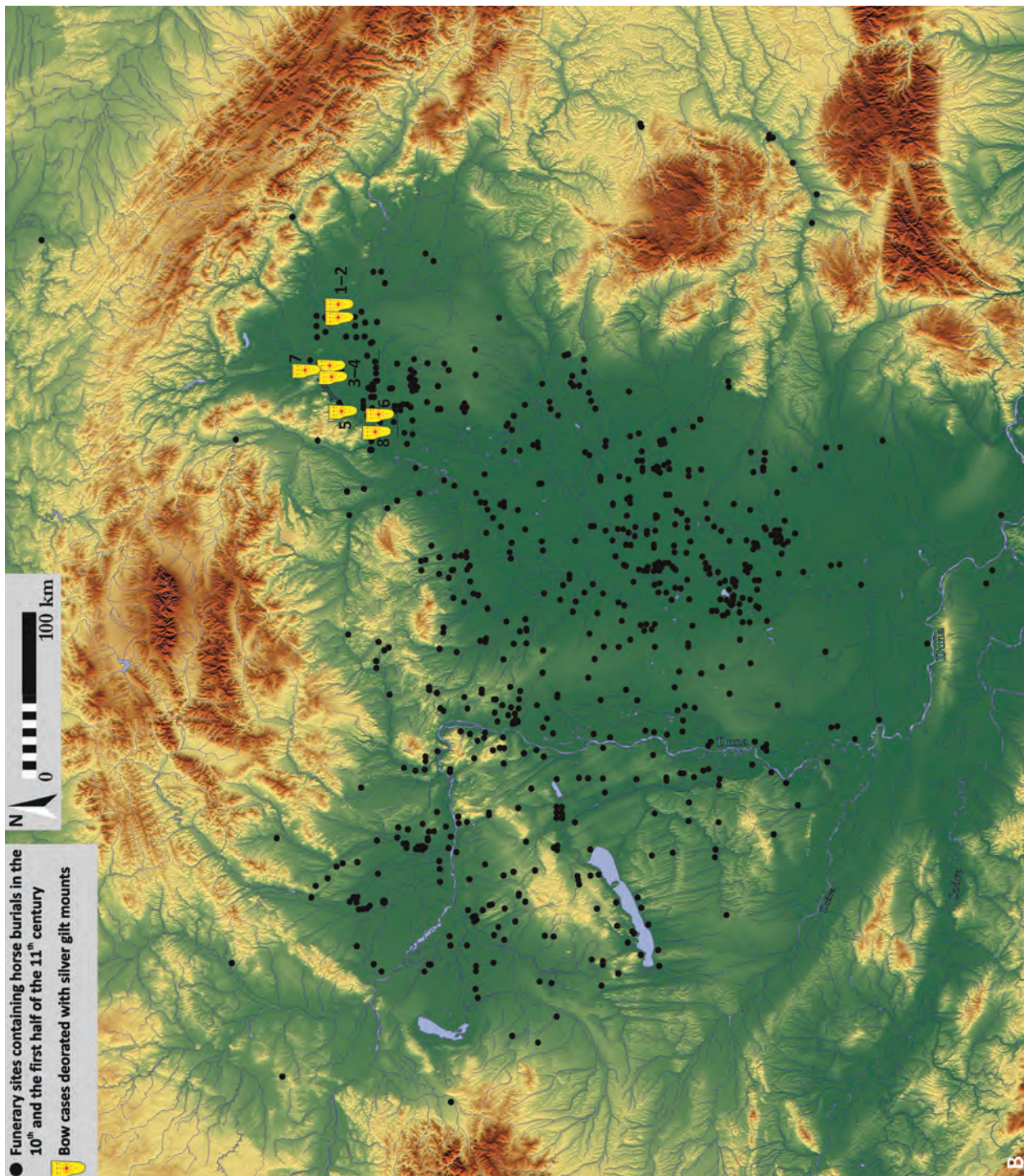


Figure 4/B. Distribution of prestige goods belonging to Group "A" in the Carpathian Basin.

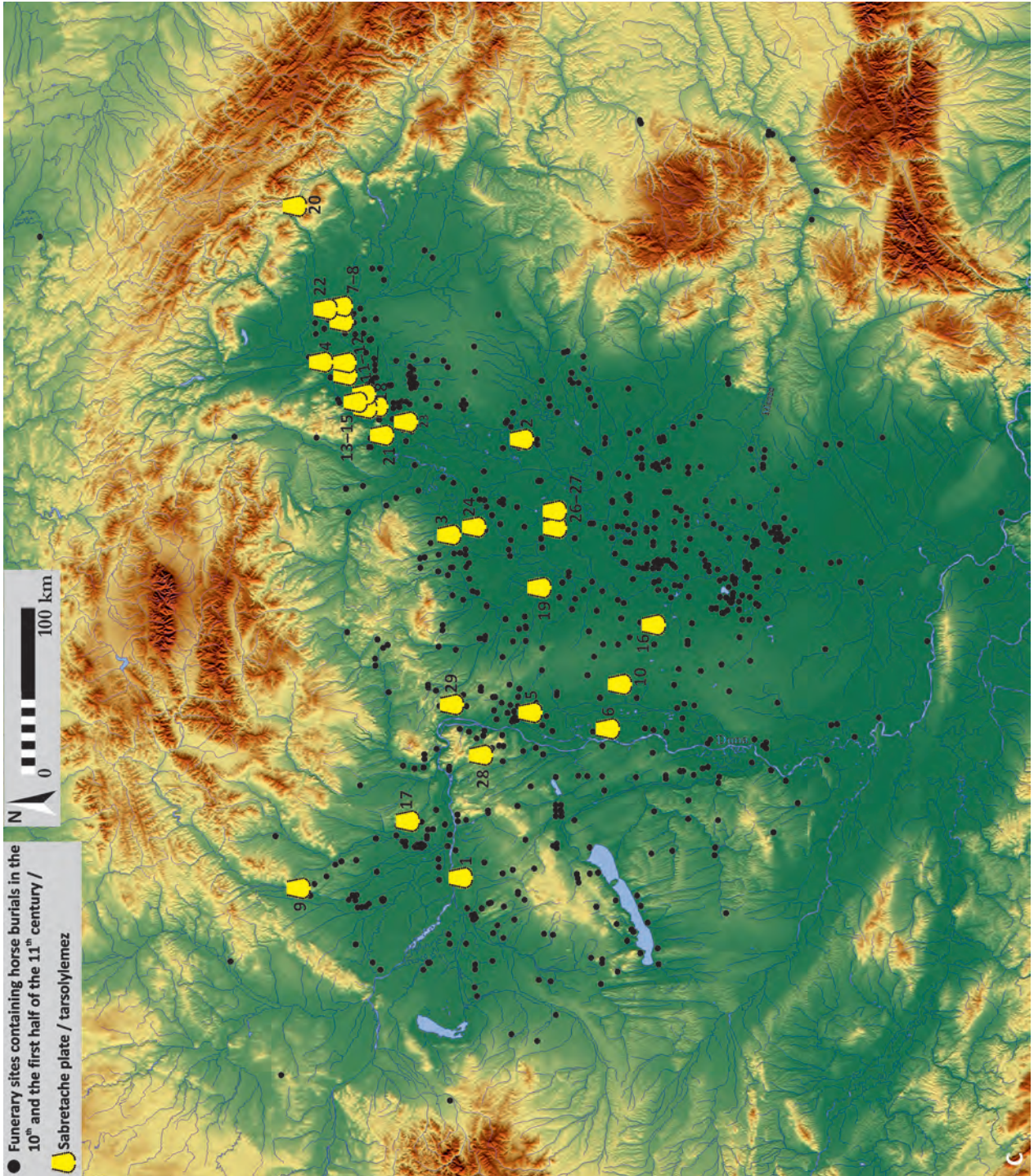


Figure 4/C. Distribution of prestige goods belonging to Group "A" in the Carpathian Basin.

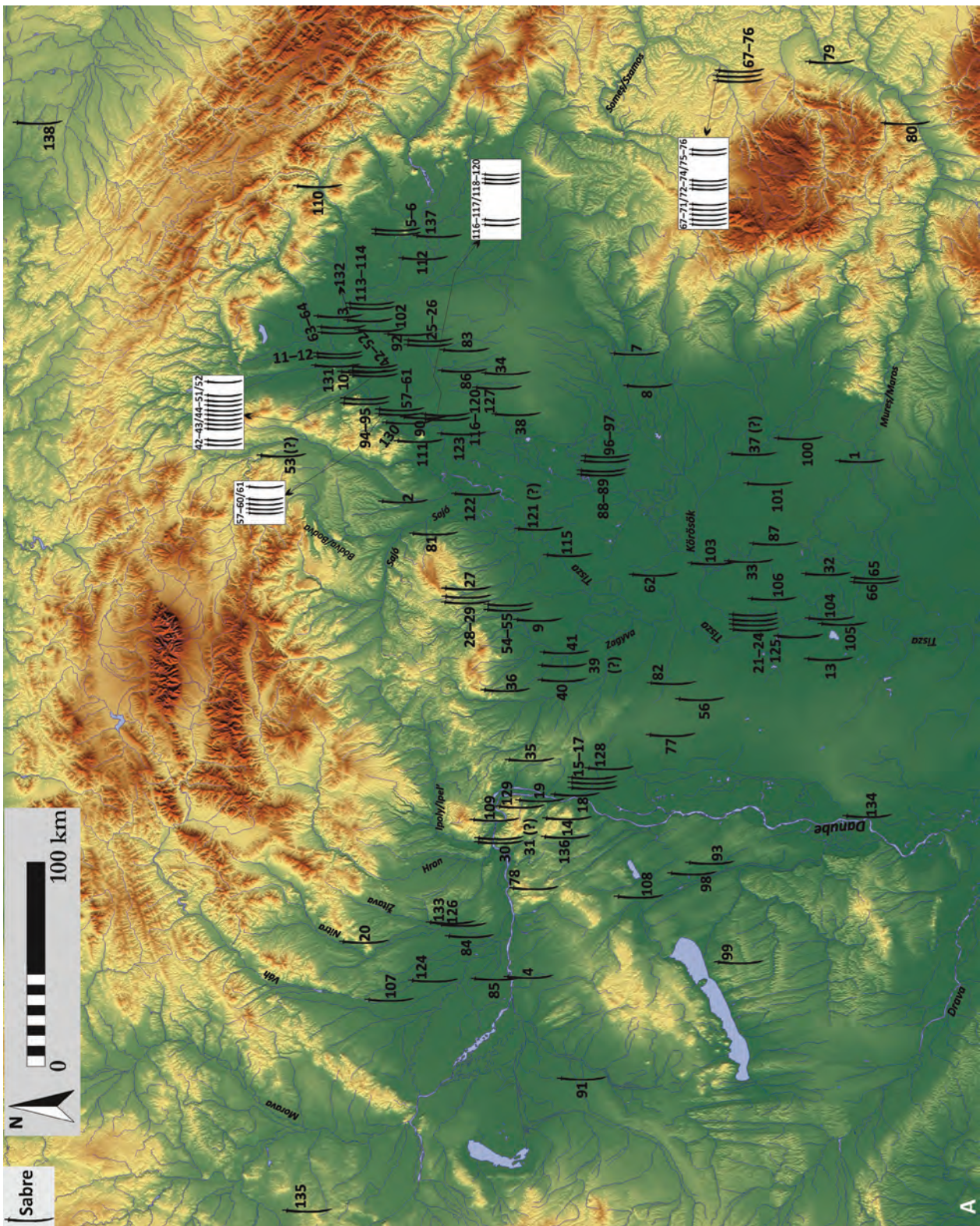


Figure 5/A. Distribution of prestige objects belonging to Group “B” in the Carpathian Basin.

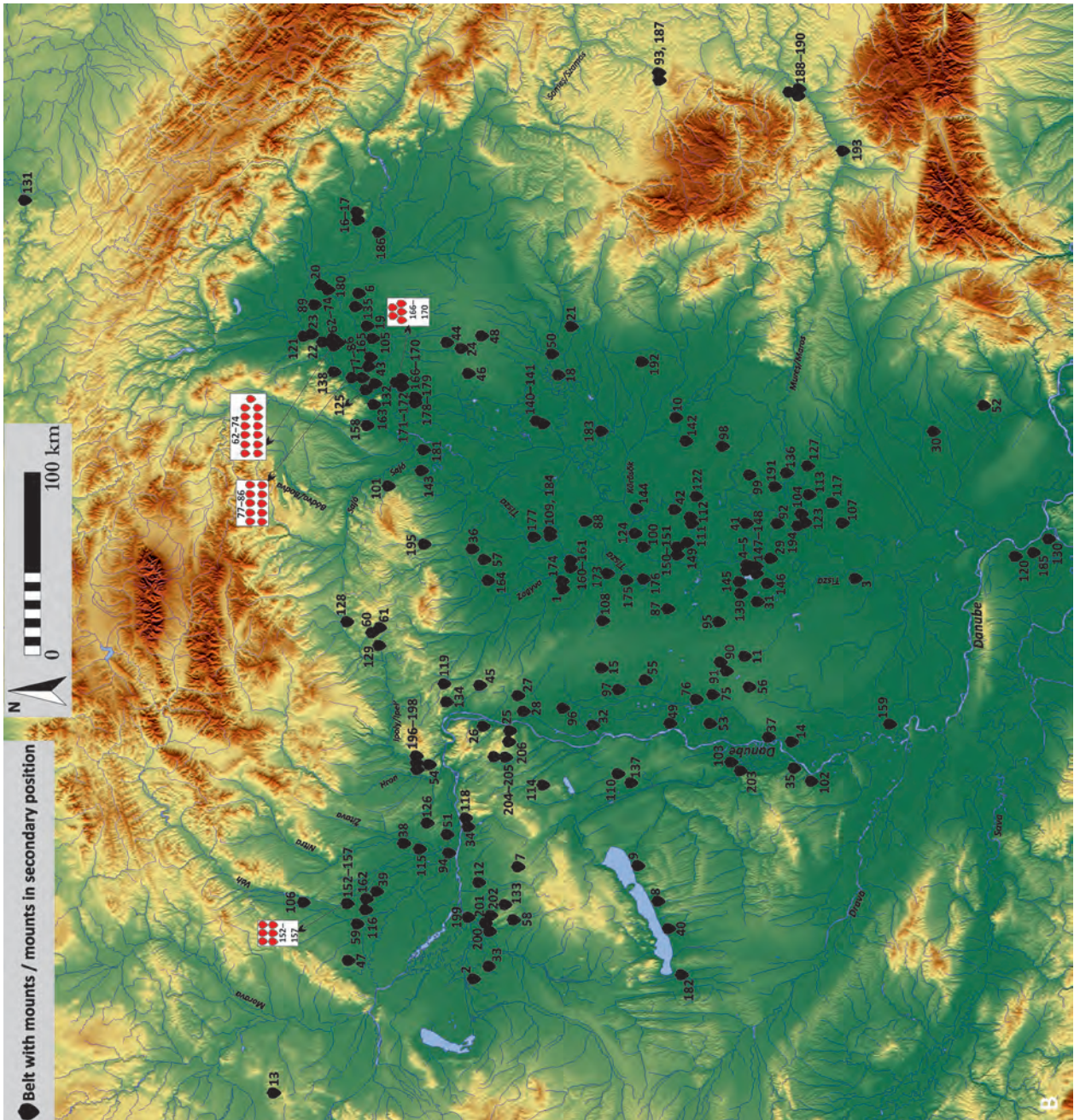


Figure 5/B. Distribution of prestige objects belonging to Group "B" in the Carpathian Basin.

4. ABOUT THE CARPATHIAN BASIN MOUNT ORNAMENTED SABRETACHES IN GENERAL¹⁹

In contrast to the sabretache plates, usually attributed by researchers to the Carpathian Basin, mount ornamented sabretaches had a broader space distribution, practically from Denmark to Inner Asia²⁰. The first mount ornamented sabretache that can be evaluated as a prestige good was identified by Tibor Horváth in grave no. 9 of Karos I burial site²¹, and it was followed by the Streda nad Bodrogom find, which was reconstructed by Gyula László in 1944. The influence of 19th-century evolutionary theories regarding mount ornamented sabretaches can be clearly observed in István Dienes' approach, who considered that the ornaments of sabretaches can be arranged in a *developmental* order, i.e. they were first decorated with a few engravings, and consequently, as the mounts have become more common, a plate covering the entire cover developed over time²². This view was refined by László Révész, who partly accepted Dienes' theory, but also formed a critique, stating that a strict chronological order cannot be conceived, especially in the light of the mount ornamented sabretaches and sabretache plates found in the Karos II burial site²³. Based on his analysis, he dated this object category to the first half of the 10th century, but he also left open some chronological questions regarding the chronology of the mount ornamented sabretaches. We will address these issues in the following.

5. THE ISSUE OF DATING THE CARPATHIAN BASIN MOUNT ORNAMENTED SABRETACHES

The basis of every archaeological analysis is the most accurately possible chronological dating of the finds, the most basic prerequisite of which is a very precise archaeological context. However, the time span when these objects were in use and their burial in the grave are two different things, and basically each case requires a separate analysis²⁴. In 10 of the 15 cases, we have more or less reliable documented archaeological contexts, and we attempted to examine their dating based on several aspects.

A. Dating by seriation

Using a mathematical-statistical method based on the combination of finds and interrelations between finds (*PAST seriation program*), the connections between the

funerary inventory containing the 10 examined mount ornamented sabretaches show a considerably uniform character and the same cultural habitus; we hardly find any object type that would be different from the rest of this group, and this difference has chronological significance in only one case (the trapezoidal stirrup from Karos). Other prestige goods in these graves are mounted belts (4 cases), simple, undecorated sabres (4 cases), and a single sabre ornamented with gilded silver fittings; so far, no double-edged swords or sabre-handled swords have been identified in mount ornamented sabretache burials.

B. Dating by 10th century typo-chronology

Typo-chronology used in dating 10th century numismatic material and analogies can also be applied in numerous cases of mount ornamented sabretache burials. While two previously unidentified coins were found in the Cluj-Napoca grave, a dirhem dated between 961–976 was identified in grave no. 3 in Choma²⁵. However, only two burials are known to contain finds typical of the second half of the 10th century (grave no. 41 of Karos II – trapezoidal stirrup, grave no. 6 of Przemysł – lyre-shaped buckle); the dating of the objects found in the other graves – from clothing items to horse tack – cannot be pinpointed more accurately within the 10th century. Even though the Szeged – *Öthalom* grave cannot be dated precisely based on the inventory, the mount ornamented sabretache itself constitutes an independent type, which may justify the chronological separation (see Fig. 6).

C. Dating based on the wear marks observed on the objects and the biological age of the skeletons

In the majority of the mounts of such items, we can identify wear marks and repairs, which indicates their prolonged use²⁶. The advanced age of the skeletons found in some graves (Karos funerary site II, grave no. 41: around 50 years old, grave no 11: *senilis*; Cluj-Napoca – *Plugarilor Street*, grave no. 25: 60–65 years old) confirms this and it is directly related to this. Also, in cases such as Tiszavasvári – *Nagy Gyepáros*, we can narrow down the dating of the grave and the object due to the age of *infans II*.

D. Horizontal stratigraphic internal chronology of cemeteries/cemetery sections containing mount ornamented sabretaches and the dating of graves with sabretache plates

The aforementioned homogeneity of the finds confirms that we can only specify a more accurate chronology by analysing the internal chronology of the

¹⁹ A decent or less good catalogue of the majority of the 15 mount ornamented sabretaches with bibliography: Sabretache Plates 2022.

²⁰ E.g. Hedenstierna-Johnson, Holmgvist Olausson 2006, p. 56–59; Gräslund 1984; Sabretache Plates 2022; Türk *et alii* 2024, 137–156.

²¹ The find was not published until 1996. Révész 1996, p. 140–141, 78. kép.

²² Dienes 1973, p. 206–209.

²³ Révész 1996, p. 143–144.

²⁴ Possible versions in the production, acquisition, use, and storage of artifacts: Steuer 1998, p. 141: Abb. 4.

²⁵ Other opinions: Al Halabi *et alii* 2024, p. 293–300.

²⁶ However, we must add that this can be accurately verified directly and primarily through microscopic examinations. For this reason, typo-chronological analyses based on drawings and low-quality photographs are *unreliable*.

	Horse burial / Lovastemetkezés	Age/sex (M - female) / Kor, nem (M - férfi)
Cluj-Napoca-Plugarilor str. gr. no. 25		M, 60-65
Przemyski-Rycerska str. gr. no. 6		M, 29-39
Karos-II Gr. 41		M, 150
Streda na Bodrogom/Bodrogszerdahely Gr. 3		X
Szeged-Óthalom V. Gr. 124		M, <i>maturus</i>
Karos-II Gr. 11		M, <i>senilis</i>
Páty-Malom dűlő Gr. 170		M, adult
Karos II Gr. 61		M, 40-50
Tiszavasvári-Nagy Gyepáros gr. no. 16		<i>infans II</i>
Choma gr. no. 3		M, adult

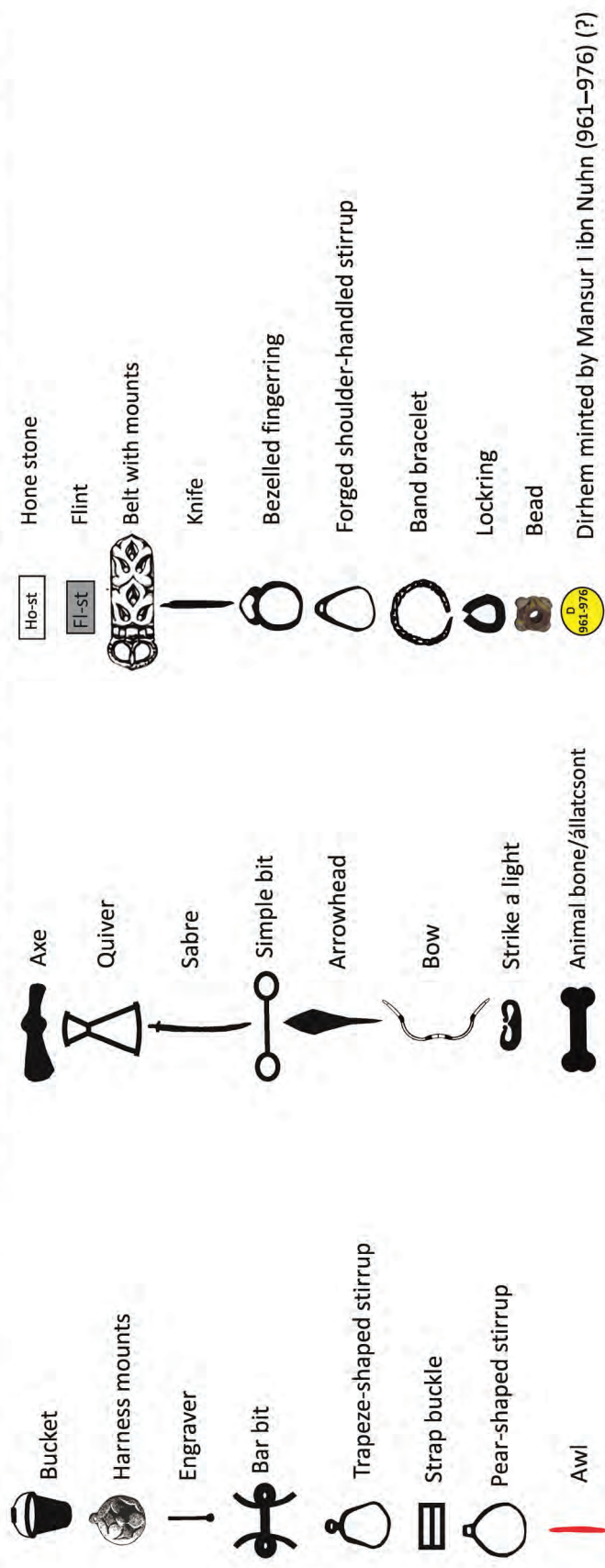


Figure 6. Seriation-based systematization of deposits of the Carpathian Basin's mount ornamented sabretache graves.



Figure 7. Reconstructed mount ornamented sabretache of grave no. 25 of Cluj-Napoca – Plugarilor street.

cemeteries in question. Based on the context of about 15 mount ornamented sabretaches in the Carpathian Basin, this is possible in the case of about eight cemeteries²⁷.

D.1. Streda nad Bodrogom – Bálványdomb (Fig. 8)

Based on the pendant mount found in grave no. 4 (located northeast of grave no. 3) among the rich inventory from the small cemetery of Streda nad Bodrogom –

²⁷ Since it is unpublished, the analysis of the cemetery of the Páty-Malom dűlő was not mentioned here. In their brief analysis, the authors dated it to the first half of the 10th century (Berta, Major 2022, p. 31–35).

Bálványdomb, the cemetery or cemetery section can be dated to the second half of the 10th century²⁸.

D.2. Karos – Eperjesszög cemetery II (Fig. 9)

Research dates one of the most important cemeteries of the Hungarian Conquest period to the early years of the 10th century. However, grave no. 41 of the Karos II cemetery was identified in section of the cemetery used in the later years²⁹. László Révész classified this section among the burials of Group II, belonging to the cemetery's later phase. However, the fact that graves no. 11 and 61, identified in an earlier section of the cemetery, were located next to grave no. 52, whose biological relative/sibling (grave no. 11 of the Karos III cemetery) was dated to the mid-10th century based on a radiocarbon (¹⁴C) sample³⁰, is also worthy of attention. The ornamentation on the sabre hilt from grave no. 11 in the Karos cemetery II shows visible stylistic resemblance to the sabretache plates from Karos – Eperjesszög cemetery II grave no. 29 (the same funerary site), Tarcsl – Vinnai dűlő, as well as to the ones from grave "A" of Rakamaz – Strázsahalom³¹. Following Fettich's terminology, pieces from this "plated" group can be dated approximately to the second third of the 10th century.

D.3. Cluj-Napoca – Plugarilor Street (Fig. 10)

The classical typo-chronological dating of the grave goods found in the 26 graves in the Cluj-Napoca cemetery is generally difficult to carry out within the 10th century. However, based on current research, the earrings with grape bunch pendants from graves no. 3 and 8 cannot be dated earlier than the mid-10th century³².

D.4. Przemyśl – Rycerska Street

The cemetery in southern Poland has been dated from the early 10th century to the 950s/960s³³. Along the mount ornamented sabretache burial, a pair of silver earrings with grape bunch pendants (grave no. 2) and an S-ended lockring (grave no. 16) confirm the dating of this burial site to the second half of the 10th century³⁴.

D.5. Szeged – Öthalom, grave no. 124

The burial group excavated in Szeged – Öthalom's 63,000-m² Sandpit V consists of eight burials located at significant distances from each other. The graves of this group are not part of a single continuous community, but represent different chronological phases, which

²⁸ Bálint 1991, p. 123–132.

²⁹ Révész 1996, p. 194, 197.

³⁰ Türk *et alii* 2021, p. 54.

³¹ AH 1996, p. 89.

³² Gáll 2013, Vol. I: p. 266.

³³ AH 1996, p. 440.

³⁴ Gáll 2020, p. 222–225.



Figure 8. Map of the Streda nad Bodrogom-Bálványdomb funerary site.

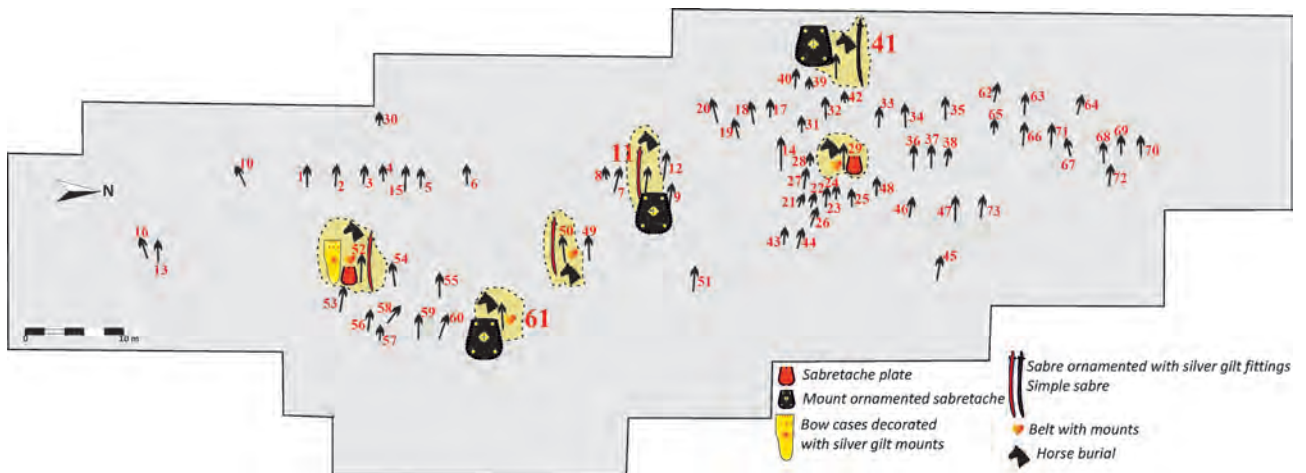


Figure 9. Prestige goods recorded in the Karos II cemetery (including mount ornamented sabretaches).



Figure 10. Map of the Tiszavasvári-Nagy Gyepáros funerary site.

suggests that this elevated, hilly site was used for burials at various times. Radiocarbon (^{14}C) analysis indicates that dating graves no. 36 and 124 to the 9th century is plausible, while graves no. 150 and 287 (based on the presence of band bracelets with twisted end) are definitely datable to approximately the mid-10th century.

D.6. Tiszaeszlár – Bashalom cemetery II

This cemetery consists of a single long row of graves, and an infant's burial, grave no. 2 is among the more accurately dateable finds. Grave no. 2 is remarkable by the coins from Hugh of Provence (926–931) and Lothair II (945–950), along with grave no. 3, containing Gâmbaş-type pendant mounts and rectangular garment ornaments. These findings clearly date the cemetery, used for a short period, to the mid-to-late 10th century³⁵.

D.7. Tiszavasvári – Nagy Gyepáros

Grave no. 16 of presumably an *infans II* belongs to Group I of these burials concentrated in two groups. Here, graves of two adults (one male, one female) and four children (*infans I* and *II*) are known. The high proportion of infant burials in this small cemetery suggests that it was used only for a short period³⁶. In *Group II*, several female

burials (graves no. 7, 9, and 12) contained kaftan pendants, shirt collar mounts, and rectangular garment mounts, which are dated to the mid-to-late 10th century. It can be presumed that the mount ornamented sabretache burial was also interred in the same period.

D.8. Choma – Szipahát

It is difficult to determine the precise time frame of this cemetery, estimated to contain 150–200 graves. However, certain grave goods, like earrings with grape bunch pendants (graves no. 41 and 52), twisted bracelets (grave no. 50), as well as the above-mentioned dirham, clearly place this section of the cemetery in the second half – the end of the 10th century³⁷.

In summary, we can state that several artifacts known from these cemeteries (such as the *earrings with grape bunch pendants* found in Cluj-Napoca – *Plugarilor Street* in graves no. 3 and 8, Przemysł grave no. 16, Choma graves no. 41 and 52; the *pendant mounts* from Streda nad Bodrogom – *Bálványdomb* grave no. 4, Tiszaeszlár – *Bashalom Cemetery II* grave no. 3, Tiszavasvári – *Nagy Gyepáros* graves no. 7 and 12; the *rectangular garment ornaments* from Tiszaeszlár – *Bashalom cemetery II* grave no. 3, Tiszavasvári – *Nagy Gyepáros* grave no. 9; the *kaftan pendants* from Tiszavasvári – *Nagy Gyepáros* grave

³⁵ A golden Byzantine solidus was found in male grave no. 7, Teophilus – Michael II – Constantine (832–839). Tóth 2014, p. 34–45.

³⁶ Tóth 2014, p. 157–158.

³⁷ Balahuri, Fodor 1998, Ris. 2–13.

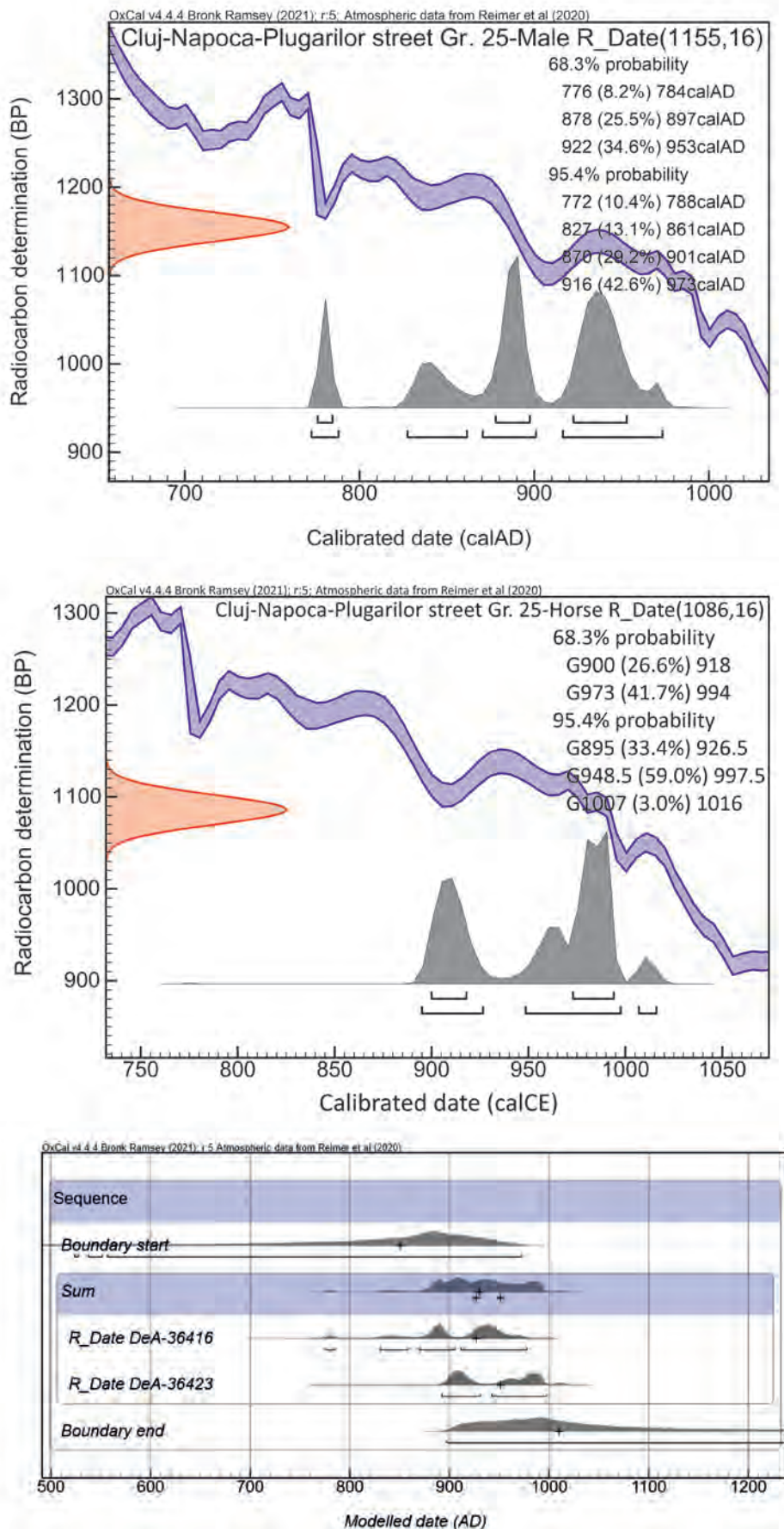


Figure 11. ¹⁴C calibration of Cluj-Napoca – Plugarilor street, grave no. 25 (equine and human bone samples).

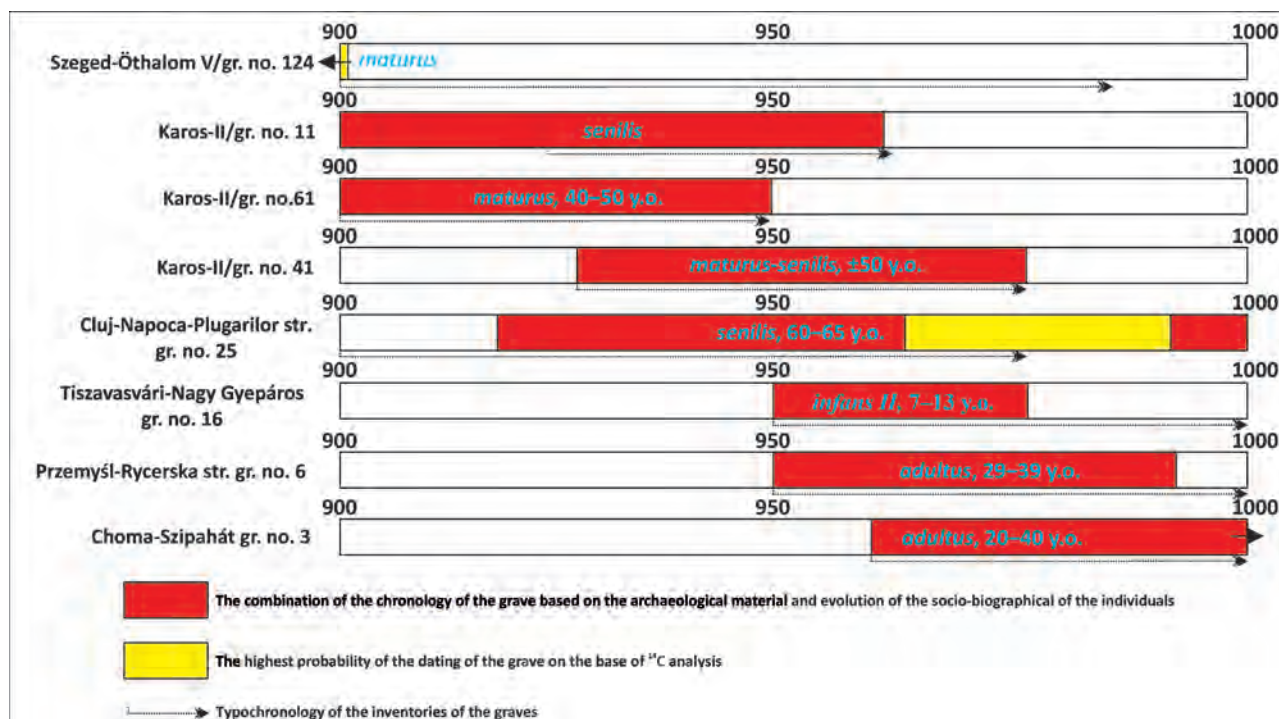


Figure 12. Combination table of archaeological dating and the age of the skeletal remains.

no. 9; *S-ended lock ring* from Przemysł grave no. 16; the *trapezoidal stirrup* from Karos that supports a later dating) indicate a funerary horizon from the middle or the second half of the 10th century.

E. Dating using the ¹⁴C method

Radiocarbon dating has gained a limited ground in the research of the Hungarian Conquest period³⁸, in consequence, we have only two radiocarbon dates for mount ornamented sabretache graves (Cluj-Napoca – *Plugarilor Street*, grave no. 25 and Szeged – *Öthalom V*, grave no. 124). The entirely unique ornamentation of the mount ornamented sabretache from Szeged – *Öthalom V*, grave no. 124 has been quite reliably dated with a 1-Sigma calibration accuracy of 68.3% to the 9th century³⁹.

The most reliable dating of the Cluj-Napoca – *Plugarilor Street* Grave 25, based on both human and animal samples, places it in the second half of the 10th century⁴⁰. The horse bone sample provides a quite accurate dating in the last third of the 10th century, which is also confirmed by eight further ¹⁴C dates from the cemetery⁴¹.

³⁸ Data obtained from 9 sites using the AMS method, and 7 other sites using the classical ¹⁴C method. Szenthe *et alii* 2024, p. 447, Fig. 2.

³⁹ Türk *et alii* 2015, p. 112, 17. kép 1.

⁴⁰ Gáll *et alii* 2023, 217–218, Fig. 11/A–B.

⁴¹ Unpublished research carried out by the authors.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In this brief analysis, we have attempted to analyse the time frames of use for the representative prestige goods of the Hungarian Conquest period, and we have arrived at the following conclusions:

1. If we created a combination table between the age of the deceased and the possible time frames of the burials (based on typo-chronology and ¹⁴C analyses), only the skeletal remains from Karos II cemetery's graves no. 11 and especially 61 could potentially belong to the first generation of Hungarian conquerors⁴². The ¹⁴C sample from the Szeged burial dates the individual to the 9th century, which indicates that this type of object was already in use before the Hungarian Conquest. In all other cases, we can state that the individuals were born at the earliest immediately after 900, but more likely after the first third of the 10th century (Fig. 12).
2. Based on the previous five segments of analysis, the popularity time curve of these objects definitely peaked in the middle or the last decades of the 10th century, which indicates a parallel trend in the use of mount ornamented sabretaches and sabretache plates. The mount ornamented sabretache from Choma is later than any of the sabretache plates.

⁴² From a sociological perspective, the individuals – regardless of their age – may have arrived in the Carpathian Basin from the East, but their lives had already ended here in the 10th century.

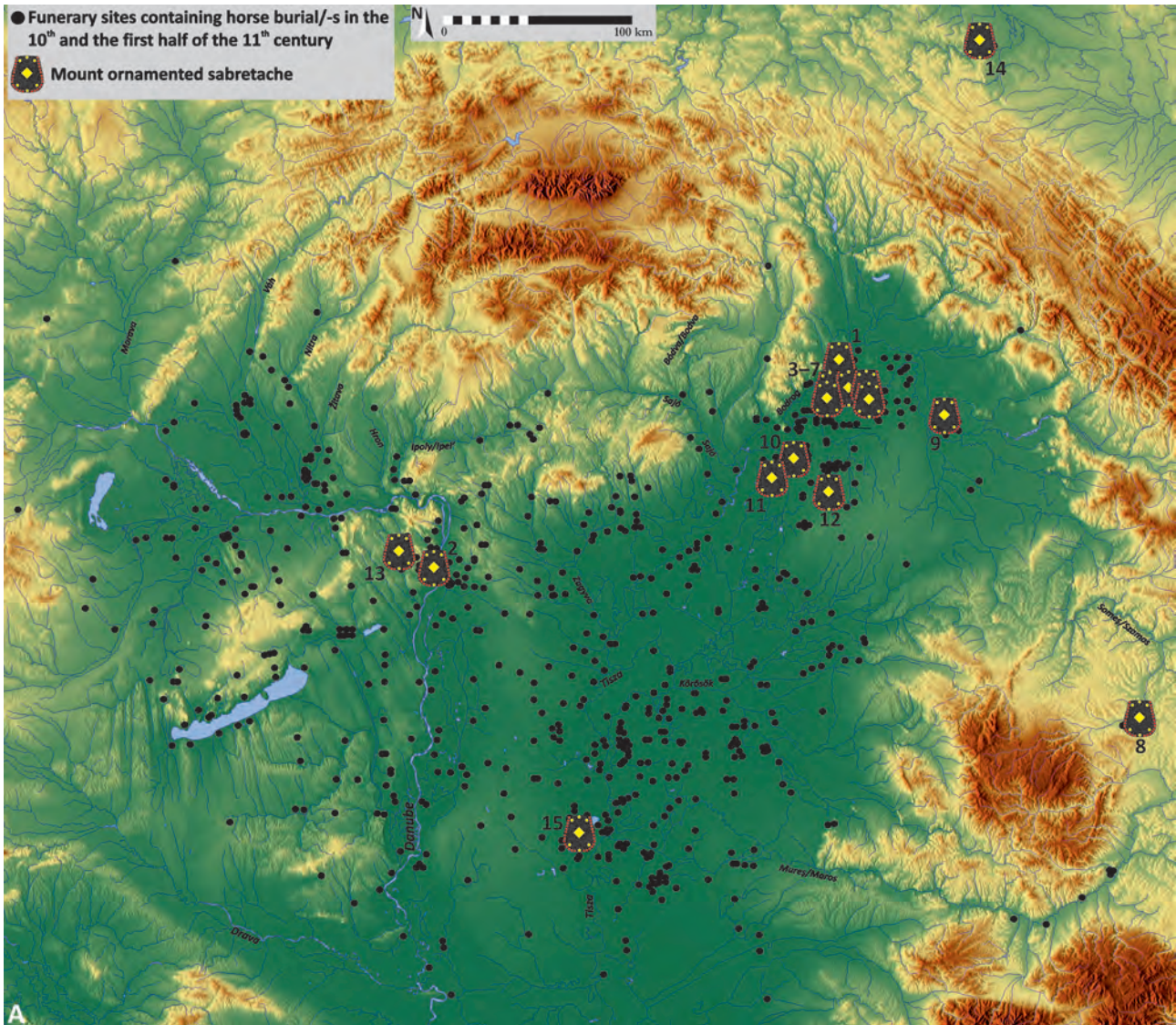


Figure 13/A. The mount ornamented sabretaches identified in the Carpathian Basin (A).

3. We can clearly observe that the mount ornamented sabretaches in the Upper Tisza region, in Cluj-Napoca and Przemyśl are structurally similar, in contrast to the sabretaches in Szeged and the Budapest area (Fig. 13/A–B). The fairly uniform archaeological finds registered in these graves (see Fig. 6), also confirm this, and this fact obviously has chronological significance.
4. Apart from the unique mount ornamented sabretache from Szeged, it seems fairly safe to state that the earliest specimens can be identified in the Upper Tisza region. Their spread – similarly to the sabretache plates – was the result of a multi-stage chronological process, with the latest examples being the **sabretaches from Cluj-Napoca, Choma, and Przemyśl in southern Poland. This process may have geopolitical and geo-economic explanations,**

considering that both regions were known for their significant salt resources!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Project no. TKP2021-NKTA-24 has been implemented with the support provided by the Ministry of Innovation and Technology of Hungary from the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund, financed under the TKP2021 funding scheme.

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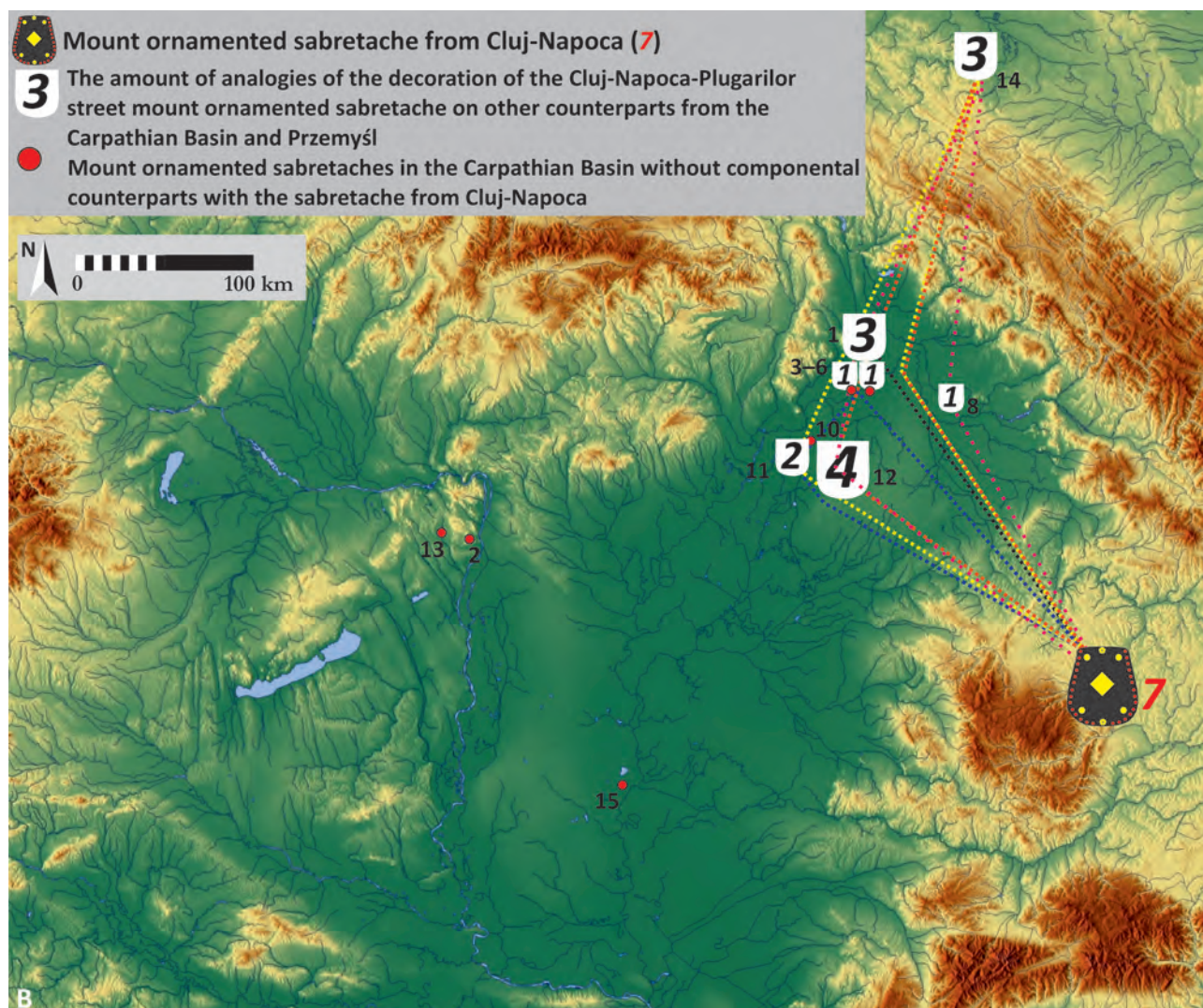


Figure 13/B. The number of parallels of the components of the mount ornamented sabretache from Cluj-Napoca on other mount ornamented sabretaches.

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**ANNEX 1. HORSE BURIALS (PARTIAL AND SYMBOLIC/WITH HORSE HARNESS) IN THE CARPATHIAN BASIN
(10TH CENTURY – FIRST PART OF THE 11TH CENTURY)**

Sites: **1.** Abony – *Piócáspart*; **2.** Čierna – *Nagyrétidomb*; **3.** Aranyosapáti; **4.** Albertirsa – *Öregszőlő*; **5.** Aldebrő – *Mocsáros*; **6.** Alsóberecki; **7.** Anarcs – *Czóbel birtok*; **8.** Apatin – *Római sánc*; **9.** Arad – *Ceala/Csálya*; **10.** Arad county; **11.** Áporka; **12.** Ároktő – *Dongóhalom*; **13.** Badacsonytomaj; **14.** Badacsonytomaj – *unknown site*; **15.** Csetény; **16.** Bačka Topola – *Zantagunaras*; **17.** Bakonszeg – *Nadányi tanya*; **18.** Bakonyszombathely – *Feketevízi erdő*; **19.** Bakonytamási – *Négylápa*; **20.** Balassagyarmat; **21.** Balatonakali – *Hegytető*; **22.** Balatongyörök; **23.** Balatonkenese – *Csittény*; **24.** Balatonlelle – *Temető utca 7*; **25.** Gnadendorf; **26.** Balatonszemes – *Landler Jenő utca*; **27.** Balatonújlak – *Erdő dűlő*; **28.** Balkány – *Verébsár-dűlő*; **29.** Balotaszállás – *Felsőbalota-Paptanya*; **30.** Bana – *Ördögásta-hegy*; **31.** Bánov; **32.** Baracs – *Kisszentmiklós-Nyíres*; **33.** Bársonyos – *Strázsaalom*; **34.** Batajnica – *Velika Humka*; **35.** Bátaszék – *Homokbánya*; **36.** Bátmonostor – *Sumár-dűlő*; **37.** Bátmonostor – *Angyal L. földje*; **38.** Bátmonostor – *Kispusztá-Pintér tanya*; **39.** Vojnice – *Papajti*; **40.** Békéscsaba – *Belterület*; **41.** Békéscsaba – *Erzsébethely*; **42.** Békéscsaba – *Kerepeczky-tanya*; **43.** Békéscsaba – *Mezőgazdasági szakiskola kertje*; **44.** Békéscsaba – *Vasútállomás*; **45.** Békés – *Földvári dűlő*; **46.** Békés – *Povád*; **47.** Baja; **48.** Békéssámsón – *Cigánd*; **49.** Békéssámsón – *Posztós J. telke*; **50.** Békéssámsón – *Szárazérpárt*; **51.** Békésszentandrás – *Homokos*; **52.** Békésszentandrás – *Pálinkás-ér*; **53.** Békésszentandrás – *Túl a Körös-dűlő*; **54.** Berehove – *Kishegy*; **55.** Berekböszörmény – *Pál dombja*; **56.** Berettyóújfalu – *Földesi út*; **57.** Besenyőtelek – *Szőrhát*; **58.** Besenyőtelek – *Tepélypuszta II. temető*; **59.** Beszterec – *Gyalap-tanya*; **60.** Biatorbágy; **61.** Biharja – *Somlyóhegy*; **62.** Biharja – *Fortress (?)*; **63.** Ikervár – *Virág utca*; **64.** Biharkeresztes – *Ártánd*; **65.** Biharkeresztes – *Bethlen Gábor street no. 25*; **66.** Biharkeresztes – *Vasútállomás*; **67.** Sântandrei; **68.** Bočar; **69.** Streda nad Bodrogom – *Bálványhegy*; **70.** Več; **71.** Bóly – *Téglásrét*; **72.** Bordány – *Mező-dűlő*; **73.** Bordány – *Rákos-Belterület*; **74.** Budakeszi – *Barackos*; **75.** Budaörs (?); **76.** Budaörs – *Kamara erdő-Törzsgyümölcsös*; **77.** Budapest; **78.** Budapest – *Farkasrét, D. I*; **79.** Budapest – *D. III, Testvérhegy, Erdőalja street*; **80.** Budapest – *D. III, Kaszásdűlő/Benedek Elek street*; **81.** Budapest – *D. III-Csúcshegy*; **82.** Budapest – *D. X-Rákos*; **83.** Budapest – *D. XIV-Mexikói street no. 41/c*; **84.** Budapest – *D. XVI-Csömöri road*; **85.** Budapest – *D. XVI-Cinkota, Ehmann telep*; **86.** Budapest – *D. XVIII-Vörös Hadsereg road*; **87.** Budapest – *D. XVIII-Pestszentlőrinc-Gloriette/Varjú Sándor's field*; **88.** Budapest – *D. XVIII-Pestszentlőrinc-Gyártelep*; **89.** Budapest – *D. XX-Pesterzsébet, Külső-Török Flóris street no. 121*; **90.** Budapest – *D. XX-Soroksár, Ócsai road no. 33*; **91.** Budapest – *D. XX-Pesterzsébet (unidentified place)*; **92.** Budapest – *D. XXIII-Marx Károly úti homokbánya/Juta domb*; **93.** Budapest – *D. XXIII-Vörös Október Tsz.*; **94.** Budapest – *D. XXIII-M0-09's site*; **95.** Bugac – *Alsómonostor*; **96.** Bugyi – *Felsővány*; **97.** Celldömölk – *Zsidó temető*; **98.** Csabacsúd – *Szabadság u. 4*; **99.** Csabrendek; **100.** Csákvár – *Rókahegy*; **101.** Csanytelek – *Dilitor*; **102.** Csanytelek – *Síróhegy*; **103.** Csenger; **104.** Csengersima; **105.** Csikvánd – *Kavicsos*; **106.** Choma – *Szipahát*; **107.** Csomád – *Újhegy*; **108.** Csongrád – *Kádár-tanya*; **109.** Csongrád – *Petenchalom*; **110.** Csongrád – *Rozsár dűlő*; **111.** Csongrád – *Vendelhalom*; **112.** Csorna – *Eperjes domb*; **113.** Csorna – *Sülyhegy*; **114.** Dabas – *Felsőbesenyő-Vencelei-dűlő*; **115.** Dabas – *Paphegy*; **116.** Hortobágy – *Bajnokhalom*; **117.** Berettyóújfalu – *Nagy-Bócs-dűlő*; **118.** Derecske – *Dr. Balogh János földje*; **119.** Deszk – *Funerary site "A"-Újmajor-Ambrus J. földje*; **120.** Deszk – *"D"*; **121.** Deszk – *"J"*; **122.** Deva – *Micro 15*; **123.** Dévaványa – *Fudéri-dűlő*; **124.** Dévaványa – *Mátyásgát, Dögtér (?)*; **125.** Dévaványa – *Timár F. földje*; **126.** Doboz – *Faluhely*; **127.** Ranutovac – *Fűzfásor*; **128.** Tizsaszőlős – *Domaháza-Graefl Je. birtoka/Pusztadomaháza*; **129.** Domaszék – *Nógrádi tanya*; **130.** Dombóvár – *I. téglagyár*; **131.** Dormánd – *Hanyipusztá*; **132.** Dunaalmás; **133.** Dunapataj – *Alsójárás, Csősz-domb*; **134.** Dunaszekcső – *Tüskehegy*; **135.** Dunaújváros – *Radiátorgyár*; **136.** Dunavarsány; **137.** Dunavecse – *Fehéregyháza*; **138.** Dusnok; **139.** Écs – *Petkevár*; **140.** Écs – *Tódomb*; **141.** Edelény – *Finke*; **142.** Eger – *Almagyar*; **143.** Eger – *Répástető*; **144.** Eger – *Szépasszonyvölgy*; **145.** Okoličná na Ostrove – *Viharos villa*; **146.** Endrőd – *Öregszőlők*; **147.** Endrőd – *Szujókereszt*; **148.** Enese – *Szabadság u. 72*; **149.** Lužianky – *Kajsianke-dűlő*; **150.** Eperjes – *Nagykirályság*; **151.** Eperjes – *Takács tábla*; **152.** Eperjeske; **153.** Erdőkertés – *Aradi street*; **154.** Blatné, *stray find*; **155.** Lanzenkirchen; **156.** Esztergom; **157.** Esztergom – *Könyvtár*; **158.** Fábiansébestyén, *stray find*; **159.** Fábiansébestyén – *Csárdahalom-Sváb S. földje*; **160.** Fácánkert – *Kajmádpusztá-Iphigenia major*; **161.** Farnos – *Büdös lapos*; **162.** Felsőörs – *Kishegy*; **163.** Fonyód – *Magyar Bálint általános iskola*; **164.** Füzesabony – *Kettőshalom, sand-pit II*; **165.** Gádos – *Bocskai u. 44*; **166.** Hlohovec; **167.** Gáva – *Szincsedomb*; **168.** Gáva – *Vásártér*; **169.** Gégény – *Vasútállomás*; **170.** Gégény – *Vasúti őrház*; **171.** Gerendás – *Petőfi Tsz. Homokbánya*; **172.** Gerendás – *Vízvári-tanya*; **173.** Geszteréd – *Kecskelátó-dűlő*; **174.** Gic – *Tsz. Homokbánya*; **175.** Gic – *Szőlőhegy*; **176.** Bogojevo; **177.** Gödöllő; **178.** Gödöllő – *Öreghegy*; **179.** Gödöllő – *Öreghegy-Lázár Vilmos no. 103*; **180.** Gyömöre – *Friedrich K. kertje*; **181.** Gyömrő – *Állomás utca*; **182.** Gyöngyöspata – *Csákberek pusztá*; **183.** Gyöngyöspata – *Kecskelátó, stray find*; **184.** Gyula – *Kálvária domb, stray find*; **185.** Gyula – *Nagy Szabados-tanya, stray find*; **186.** Gyula – *Szövetkezeti Téglagyár*; **187.** Gyula – *Vármegyeháza, stray find*; **188.** Alba Iulia – *Izvorul Împăratului*; **189.** Alba Iulia – *Stația de Salvare*; **190.** Alba Iulia – *Roman Catholic Cathedral*; **191.** Várşand – *Laposhalom*; **192.** Hajdúböszörmény – *Bodaszőlő*; **193.** Hajdúböszörmény – *Vid, Erdős-tanya*; **194.** Hajdúböszörmény – *1902, határa*; **195.** Hajdúböszörmény – *Vidi-zug, Béke Tsz V/2. tábla*; **196.** Hajdúdorog – *Gyulás*; **197.** Hajdúdorog – *Temetőhegy*; **198.** Hajdúsámsón – *Majorsági föld*; **199.** Hajdúszoboszló – *Árkoshalom*; **200.** Hajdúszoboszló – *Bercsényi utca 49.*; **201.** Hajdúszoboszló – *Tizedbeli Népkör*; **202.** Hajdúszovát – *Köselypart-Hegyeshatárhalom*; **203.** Harta – *Béke Tsz*

204. Harta – *Freifelt*; 205. Hegymagas; 206. Hejce; 207. Hencida – *Szerdekhalom*; 208. Heves – *Boconádi úti homokbánya*; 209. Heves – *Kapitányhegy*; 210. Jazovo; 211. Hódmezővásárhely – *Csomorkány major*; 212. Hódmezővásárhely – *Kopáncs*; 213. Hódmezővásárhely – *Nagysziget*; 214. Hódmezővásárhely – *Szakálhát*; 215. Hódmezővásárhely – *Szőlőhalom*; 216. Hódmezővásárhely – *Unknown site*; 217. Hódmezővásárhely/Veresegyház – *Tatársánc*; 218. Homokmégy – *Halom*; 219. Horgoš – *Pöröspusztá*; 220. Horgoš – *Röck I. földje*; 221. Ibrány – *Esbó-halom*; 222. Ibrány – *Nagy tanya-Temető tábla*; 223. Nagyhalász – *Homok-tanya*; 224. Imel' – *belterület*; 225. Imel' – *Békavár-Kovács V. udvara no. 484*; 226. Imel' – *Sasülő*; 227. Malé Kosihy – *Felső-Kenderesek*; 228. Pastovice; 229. Salka; 230. Iža – *Hirics K. szőlője*; 231. Izsák – *Balázspusztá*; 232. Jánoshalma – *Kisráta*; 233. Jászberény – *Alsómuszáj*; 234. Jászdózsa – *Kápolna halom*; 235. Jászfényszaru; 236. 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