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Single-edged akinakai of Transylvania and Great Hungarian Plain. Reflection of a Balkan tradition

Denis Topal
Chişinău

Abstract: In the Scythian time in the territory of the Middle Danube, Transylvanian and the Southern Carpathian regions, the original group of single-edged akinakai is distributed. By the time the Scythians penetrated Carpathian region, a part of the population of Basarabi culture (bearers of the Illyrian tradition of single-edged weaponry) moved to the north, to the South Carpathians and Transylvania. Perhaps it is the circumstance that can explain the appearance of single-edged akinakai with a T-shaped handle of the *Nógrád* type in the foothills of the Southern Carpathians and the Apuseni Mountains in the south-west of Transylvania. The basis for the *Nógrád* akinakai, apparently, was the akinakai of the *Shumeyko* type (or *Piliny* type according to A. Vulpe), which spread at the turn of the Early and Middle Scythian periods. This is indicated by the features of *Nógrád* akinakai, characteristic of the *Shumeyko* type like a narrow elongated blade (often triangular), a massive kidney-shaped crosshair, a two-part handle and decoration with its transverse notches, a narrow elongated rhombic pommel. Like *Shumeyko* akinakai, the single-edged swords of the *Nógrád* type appear at the turn of the 7th – 6th centuries BC and exist until the end of the 6th century. At the same time, the bulk of the complexes with akinakai of the *Nógrád* type belongs to the second half or even to the late 6th century BC.

Key words: Akinakes, Scythian sword, Illyrian makhaira, Scyths, weaponry

This study, as the name suggests, deals with one of the most interesting Balkan traditions of antiquity, which is reflected in the weapons of the Scythian time on the western frontiers of the so-called Scythian world. I am very glad that this paper has found its place in the volume dedicated to the anniversary of Prof. Dr Blagoje Govedarica, who is itself the real embodiment of the best Balkan traditions like hospitality, humour and tastefulness.

Anyway, one of the most vivid ancient weaponry traditions of the Mediterranean like single-edged swords and daggers, almost always has an imported character, while remaining the “calling card” of the region where it appears. Its genesis is associated with the ancient East: the first documented single-edged blades or *sickle-swords* (*Sichelschwerter*) appear in Mesopotamia no earlier than the middle of the 3rd millennium BC.¹ These items penetrate the Mediterranean

basin at the turn of the 3rd–2nd millennium BC as a result of the Hyksos invasion into Egypt and become known as *khepesh* or *khopesh* (kh.p.sh, ḥpš).² In the 1st millennium BC, sickle-swords are almost completely supplanted by the elements of Ancient Eastern panoply, remaining only in the ceremonial context in Assyria until the middle of the 7th century BC.³ The earliest finds of single-edged weapons on the territory of Greece are associated with the post-Mycenaean time. At least, in the Geometric period in Greece, the special knives appear, although associated with sacrifices, but having a great influence on the development of Greek combat knives.⁴ In the 6th century BC, combat knives evolve, forming a recognizable silhouette of the Classical period. Their images appear already as weapons on

² Gordon 1958, 22.

³ Gernez 2007, 131-132.

⁴ Verčík 2010, 326; 2014, 55.

¹ Massafra 2012, 1, 11.

Greek vases, mainly in the hands of non-Greek characters (e.g. Persians, Amazons, Trojans), emphasizing their barbaric character. Thus, having appeared in Greece in the 7th century BC on the base of the North Balkan prototypes, already in Classical and Hellenistic time, the *makhaira* or *kopis* becomes a typical Greek weapon. Swords with the similar design of the blade and hilt are also known on the Adriatic coast of Italy, in Picenum. Most of the items found in Picenum belong to the first half of the 7th century, and their origin is reasonably associated with the Eastern Balkan region.⁵ And, since the 6th century BC, when the *makhaira* appears under the Greek influence in Italy, military burials containing them are also concentrated in Picenum.⁶ Since the 5th century BC, the Barbarian peoples of the Iberian Peninsula have an original type of single-edged weapon like the Iberian *falcata* (*falcata ibérica*), which was in service with the local tribes until the late 1st century BC. Its origin is associated with the Adriatic and, possibly, the Balkans.⁷ The few single-edged weapons found on the Black Sea coast are mainly associated with the Greek population of the coastal zone. The appearance of the Greek *makhaira* in the Black Sea region dates back to the third quarter – the late 6th century BC, and the earliest findings are associated with the settlements. At the same time, in the Archaic period, single-edged weapons of the Northern Black Sea region reveal themselves exclusively on Borysthene (Berezan island) in the form of combat knives of the Thracian-Illyrian circle. An abundance of single-edged swords of hybrid forms like *Chaush type*, including ceremonial ones like *Shulgovka type*,⁸ occurs under the influence of the Greek or Thracian traditions of the Scythians at the end of the Classical Scythian culture.

However, attempts to hybridize such Scythian weapons occurred earlier. One of these experiments probably took shape in the form of an original group of single-edged *akinakai* and their area does not extend beyond the limits of the Middle Danube, Transylvania and the Southern Carpathians (fig. 1). W. Ginters⁹ considered these single-edged *akinakai* (with a massive

kidney-shaped hilt and a curved blade) a local Hungarian form (fig. 2, 3, 4). According to W. Ginters, the main difference between the items of this series is their pronounced chopping character (unlike most Scythian or Persian *akinakai*), as evidenced by the curvature of the blade. Another important feature is a handle consisting of rings and balls, space between which, according to Ginters,¹⁰ was filled with organic material. Emphasizing the exceptional originality of this group of objects, the scholar does not undertake to judge its origins and chronology, suggesting that its development proceeded in parallel with the evolution of Southern Russian swords.¹¹

V. Vasiliev attributed these items to “hybrid” types (A4 and B4), for each of the divisions of his classification of Ciombrud *akinakai*, basing on the pommel’s design (straight is for A, antenna is for B) and dated back in conformity with the chronology of burial 10 near Băița (fig. 7A) or to “the first half of the 5th century BC”.¹² The reason for the appearance of such hybrid single-edged *akinakai* in the late phase of the Transylvanian group is regarded by V. Vasiliev as the relative isolation of Transylvania from the processes in the Pontic region.¹³ J. Chochorowski, analyzing the Vekerzug bladed weaponry, considers single-edged *akinakai* as an independent type. The Polish researcher also dates them back to the first half of the 5th century BC, noting the spread of such form in the second half of 6th century BC. The origins of such a transformation are, according to J. Chochorowski in the late HaD1 phase of the Hallstatt cemetery (where single-edged daggers with antenna pommel are well-known) or in Greek traditions, which led to the appearance of the Thracian *makhaira* and Illyrian *sica*.¹⁴

T. Kemenczei combined all of Hungarian single-edged weapons into type B, then split the single-edged *akinakai* into two divisions based on the design of the handle – ornamented handles, round or oval in section with a straight pommel are characteristic for the variation 2 and rectangular in section without any pommel are typical for the 3rd one.¹⁵ T. Kemenczei also insists on the

⁵ Stary 1981, 261.

⁶ Ibid., Karta 22.

⁷ Quesada-Sanz 2005, 63.

⁸ Топаз 2014b, 143–148.

⁹ Ginters 1928, 30.

¹⁰ Ibid., 32.

¹¹ Ibid., 33.

¹² Vasiliev 1980, 85–86.

¹³ Ibid., 86.

¹⁴ Chochorowski 1985, 104.

¹⁵ Kemenczei 1984, 43; 1991, 75.

“hybrid” origin of this type, noting that the design of the handle is typically Scythian (e.g. corrugation of the rod, the shape of the hilt), but the blade is made in the tradition of the local artisans of Transylvania and Great Hungarian Plain.¹⁶

A. Vulpe pays special attention to the single-edged *akinakai* of the Carpathian-Danube region and divides them by the shape of the pommel. Thus, he distinguishes *akinakai* of the *Cepari* type with antenna pommel¹⁷ and *Tiszadob* type with the straight pommel (or even without any pommel).¹⁸ Despite their relative synchronism (within the framework of the late 6th – the first half of the 5th century BC) and the undoubted genetic relationship between *Cepari* and *Tiszadob* *akinakai*, the latter is dated back a little bit earlier: starting from the second half of the 6th century BC.¹⁹ A. Vulpe interprets the appearance of this hybrid form as a kind of adaptation of the Scythian *akinakes* to the preferences of the local population, for whom a combat knife was a favourite weapon. And this happened, in his opinion, in the middle of the 6th century BC, after a period of coexistence of “newcoming” and “autochthonous” types of weapons.²⁰

Analyzing the chronological position of the complex from Gyöngyös, I. V. Bruyako also studied the analogies to the single-edged sword found there. In his opinion, the series of these swords is heterogeneous and consists of at least two variations like the swords with a T-shaped or antenna pommel and without a pommel. At the same time, I. V. Bruyako considers the presence of a kidney-shaped hilt as a clear Scythian sign, and the form of the blade, in his opinion, belongs to the Eastern Hallstattian (Illyrian) tradition. Ukrainian scholar believes that the T-shaped pommel may have appeared as a result of the “straightening” of the classical antenna-shaped one.²¹ The researcher considers the variation without pommel as an earlier one, which could reveal itself in the 7th century BC, while the swords with a T-shaped and antenna pommel could hardly be dated earlier than the 6th centu-

ry BC.²² It should be noted that now there are far fewer swords without pommel than others (5 out of 18). Besides, there is every reason to believe that two of these swords lost their pommels in antiquity, e.g. the finds from Tarnabod and Gyöngyös. This is indicated by the round-conical shape of the handle with a specific horizontal corrugation of the rod, characteristic only for the swords with a T-shaped pommel. Also, this series of swords are not numerous and diverse for such fractional division. Since the term *Tiszadob type* was assigned to the swords with a T-shaped handle, and the *Cepari type* (according to A. Vulpe) refers to the swords with an antenna pommel, research logic suggests their combination under a new title. As a compromise, the term *Nógrád type* is suggested.

The Illyrian trace could be manifested not only in the curvature of the single-edged blade of swords like *Nógrád type* but, probably, also in the design of the pommel. The resemblance to the T-shaped tops of combat knives of the *Basarabi type* (fig. 5) is striking,²³ related by its origin to the common tradition in the Balkans for the manufacture of single-edged weapons. Therefore, it could be supposed that the pommels of *Nógrád* swords did not “straighten up”, but rather, on the contrary, “bent” over time by following the tastes of the Scythian people inhabiting Transylvania and the Southern Carpathians. The earliest assemblages with single-edged swords of the *Basarabi type* date back to the early HaC. Well-dated burials include the barrow 2 of the Balta Verde burial ground (*Basarabi-II* phase of the HaC or even late HaB3 period), burial 7 of barrow B near Podiljak (eastern Bosnia) with the grave goods typical of the Glasinac IV-B phase in the middle of HaC, burial 181 of the Frög burial ground (south Austria), Frög-3 phase of HaC.²⁴ The swords of this type are discovered from the Middle Danube to the Alpine zone, similarly designed or “sickle swords” according to P. F. Stare²⁵ are also known for the Adriatic coast of Italy, in

¹⁶ Kemenczei 1984, 43.

¹⁷ Vulpe 1990, 94-95.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 92-94.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

²⁰ Vulpe 1984, 54.

²¹ Бруяко 2005, 282.

²² *Ibid.*, 283.

²³ It is very significant (and pleasant, as well) that A. Kozubová (2019, 85) recently came to similar conclusions. Her most fresh study appeared exactly in the process of performing this article.

²⁴ Guštin 1974, 83.

²⁵ Stary 1981, 261. P. F. Stare connects their appearance with military trans-Adriatic relations, which were also reflected in the distribution of double-ridge conical helmets (*Kammhelme*) in Novilara, Istria and Slovenia.

Picenum (fig. 6). Already during the HaC2 period, single-edged swords of the *Tržišče – Donja Dolina* type without pommels appear on the Eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, which already in HaD1 are replaced by the swords of the Šmihel type. Similar evolutionary processes are taking place near the Iron Gates: single-edged blades without the pommel like *Gogoșu* (or *Griffplattenmesser*, according to A. Vulpe) and *Telești*²⁶ occupy the place of swords of the Basarabi type, and now the silhouette of the Thracian combat knife could be easily recognized here.

Apparently, by the time of penetration of the Scythians into the region, part of the bearers of the Basarabi culture was moving north, to the South Carpathian and Transylvania. Perhaps that can explain the appearance of single-edged akinakai with a T-shaped handle of the Nógrád type precisely in the foothills of the Southern Carpathians and the Apuseni Mountains in southwestern Transylvania. Despite the statement by I. V. Bruyako that most of the Hungarian and Transylvanian single-edged akinakai are stray finds,²⁷ more than half of all items now are attributed to the assemblages (12 out of 20). The highest concentration of burials with Nógrád swords is located in the eastern part of the Western Romanian Carpathians (Apuseni Mountains): e.g. Mirăslău (fig. 3, 6; 4, 6), Ciombrud (fig. 4, 15), Aiud (fig. 4, 7, 18) and Băița (fig. 4, 13). In addition to a handmade vessel (fig. 8E, 3) and iron axe (fig. 8E, 2), there was a fragment of the handle of the single-edged dagger (fig. 4, 15; 8E, 1) in Ciombrud burial 2.²⁸ The burial ground near Ciombrud (fig. 8E) V. Vasiliev attributed to the early, archaic phase, although to the late assemblages, synchronous to the burials from Cristești, Delenii, Frata etc.²⁹ A single-edged sword (fig. 3, 6; 4, 6) with a preserved iron fragment from the scabbard was presumably found in a burial near Mirăslău,³⁰ but unfortunately, nothing is known about other finds from this disturbed assemblage.

An inhumation with a fragment of the hilt and blade of a single-edged sword³¹ was discov-

ered on the southern outskirts of Aiud city (“Hellos” locality), on the terrace of the Mureș river in 1913 (fig. 8H). The shape of the hilt (fig. 4, 7) is of particular interest and is massive, three-part in section, characteristic of Early Scythian swords like Kelermes type of the second half of the 7th century BC.³² An unusual sign is the lack of a pommel, which was absent in the original design of the sword. A. Vulpe considers this assemblage one of the latest, which basing on arrowheads refers to the second half of the 6th or even the first half of the 5th century BC.³³ According to S. V. Makhortykh and S. A. Skoryi, who have a special study on Scythian swords without pommels, the burial from Aiud could be dated back to the first half of the 6th century BC.³⁴ In another burial near Aiud (1st of 1886, “Parc” locality (fig. 8G)) was discovered another single-edged akinakes (fig. 4, 18; 8G, 1)³⁵ which A. Vulpe determines as “indefinite type”,³⁶ but anyway could also be considered as Nógrád type. It is distinguished by a high kidney-shaped hilt and a narrow rectangular pommel, it is likely T-shaped (it is difficult to say more precisely because of the safety of the item). In addition to the hilt of a sword with a fragment of a blade from this burial, a double-blade iron axe (fig. 8G, 4), a gold earring (fig. 8G, 2) and bronze arrowheads (fig. 8G, 3) were found.³⁷ Judging by the quiver set, consisting of bi- and trilobate spiked arrows,³⁸ this grave can be attributed to one of the earliest in Transylvania. Burial 1 of 1886 from Aiud can be synchronous to burial 9 from Cristești, burial 3 from Budești-Fânațe, 1, 4 and 5 from Mărișelu, *i. e.* refers to the second half of the 7th century BC. One of the most recent discovered assemblages from Transylvania with an Nógrád sword was accidentally discovered near Pâclișa village (fig. 7C) and then transferred to the Alba Julia Museum in 2014.³⁹ According to the author of the discovery, along with an iron sword (fig. 2, 4; 3, 2; 7C, 1) were discovered four arrowheads (fig. 7C, 2). The shape of the arrowheads, widespread

²⁶ Vulpe 1990, 79-85.

²⁷ Бруяко 2005, 283.

²⁸ Ferenczi 1965, 91; Vasiliev 1980, Pl. 10, 6; Vulpe 1990, Taf. 29, 192.

²⁹ Vasiliev 1980, 13.

³⁰ Herepey 1897, 66, Áb. 6.

³¹ Roska 1914, 13, Áb. 1, 1

³² Topal 2014a, 14.

³³ Vulpe 1984, 54, 59; Vulpe 1990, 93.

³⁴ Махортых / Скорый 1986, 74.

³⁵ Herepey 1897, Áb. 3; 4.

³⁶ Vulpe 1990, 97, Taf. 30, 203.

³⁷ Herepey 1897, 65, 66.

³⁸ Ibid., Áb. 3, 4-9; 4, 1-7.

³⁹ Borangic / Anghel 2018, 18-19, Fig. 2.

in the late Middle Scythian period, does not allow dating this complex more exactly than in the framework of the 2nd half of the 6th century BC.

Swords from burial 10 (fig. 7A) at Băița⁴⁰ in the north-west of Transylvania and barrow 5 (fig. 8I, 4) at Cepari⁴¹ in Wallachia is distinguished by the original antenna-shaped (or sickle-shaped) pommels with bulges at the finials. The burial near Cepari village (fig. 8I) was performed according to the ritual of burning in a stone box and, in addition to a single-edged sword, was equipped with a dagger (fig. 8I, 5) with a zoomorphic pommel (of *Găiceana* type, according to A. Vulpe), a spearhead (fig. 8I, 8), a two-blade axe (fig. 8I, 1) and a vessel (fig. 8I, 10) characteristic for Ferigile-Nord phase (4th type of grave goods). All this, according to A. Vulpe, indicates the end of the 6th or even the beginning of the 5th century BC.⁴² The burning in a rectangular pit near the village Băița, in addition to a single-edged sword with a high crosshair and an antenna pommel, contained a spearhead (fig. 7A, 1), two scoops with a high handle (fig. 7A, 3, 6) and a vessel with plaits (fig. 7A, 7). The sword from this burial (fig. 4, 13; 7A, 2) was equipped with an iron sheath.⁴³ A. Vulpe believes that the dating of the Cepari burial (late 6th – early 5th century BC) can also be transferred to the Băița complex,⁴⁴ although V. Vasiliev insisted on the first half of the 5th century BC.⁴⁵ Of particular interest is a strongly deformed cross-shaped (quiver?) plaque, ornamented with carved lines (fig. 7A, 5), similar to the plaque from burial 7 of the same burial ground.⁴⁶ The appearance of this category of objects is associated with the migration wave of the second half – the end of the 6th century BC,⁴⁷ despite the fact that Băița plaques belong to the third group of items of this type (according to Yu. Polidovich), dating slightly earlier than the zoomorphic plaques.⁴⁸ As a rule, the cruciform plaque of “Olbia type” is dated back to the 2nd half of the 6th century BC, and the earliest is from the

burial 12 of 1910 excavated in Olbia and from the burial 3 of barrow 3 of Aksay-I burial ground. Olbia burial refers to the second⁴⁹ or even the third quarter of the 6th century BC,⁵⁰ while the Aksay burial is reliably dated along the North Ionian amphora within the middle – 2nd half of the 6th century BC⁵¹ or even more precise: the late 2nd – the early 3rd quarter of the 6th century BC.⁵² Other northern Black Sea burials with cruciform plaques (like Opishlyanka and Gusarka) are also the oldest burials of the Middle Scythian phase. They are even placed in the so-called *transitional period* between Early Scythian-3 and Middle Scythian-1 phases (2nd – 3rd quarter of the 6th century BC) or Middle Scythian-1a period, according to D. S. Grechko.⁵³

The sickle-shaped pommel is also characteristic for the one-edged sword from Curtea de Argeș (fig. 4, 17). Besides, the bronze hilt is originally ornamented with engraving: the top with a chess ornament, the hilt with parallel zigzags and transverse lines.⁵⁴ The burial with a single-edged akinakes with an antenna pommel from Curtea de Argeș A. Vulpe dated back to the 2nd half of the 6th century BC.⁵⁵ The pottery from this burial is identical to the vessels from burials with akinakai of the Ferigile burial ground,⁵⁶ which belong to the Ferigile-Nord phase of the late 7th – 6th centuries BC.⁵⁷

Two stray finds are known in Transylvania: from Benic (fig. 4, 14) and Dumbrava (fig. 2, 1; 3, 2; 4, 19). In 1897, near Benic village was discovered with an iron dagger with a bronze crosshair decorated with vertical zigzags in the centre.⁵⁸ Recently, a stray find of a single-edged akinakes of the Nógrád type in the northeast of the region was published. Between the Vătava and Dumbrava villages (Mureș county), an iron sword of excellent preservation was found with a massive kidney-shaped hilt, a ribbed handle and a rectangular pommel riveted at the edges.⁵⁹ Also, this, at the moment, the most eastern item, was equipped

⁴⁰ Trohani 1984, Fig. 3.

⁴¹ Vulpe 1990, Taf. 30, 196.

⁴² Vulpe 1984, 54; 1990, 60.

⁴³ Vulpe 1990, 94.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 95.

⁴⁵ Vasiliev 1980, 86.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 77, Pl. 22, 3.

⁴⁷ Fettich 1929, 86; 1934, 44; Kemenczei 1986, 131; Полидович 2009, 483.

⁴⁸ Полідович 2000, 36.

⁴⁹ Paul 1987, 29.

⁵⁰ Алексеев 2003, 155.

⁵¹ Дьяченко и др. 1999, 108; Алексеев 2003, 202.

⁵² Гречко 2012, 82.

⁵³ Ibid., 93-95, T. 1.

⁵⁴ Vulpe 1967, Pl. XVI, 2, Fig. 19.

⁵⁵ Popescu / Vulpe 1982, 88, 107; Vulpe 1984, 54.

⁵⁶ Vulpe 1967, 58.

⁵⁷ Vulpe 1990, 126.

⁵⁸ Ginters 1928, Taf. 13, c.

⁵⁹ Rezi / Cioată 2013, 33, 34, Pl. 2, 1; 3, 1-5.

with a small iron ending, probably remaining from the scabbard.⁶⁰ By the analogies, the authors of the publication dated back the sword from Dumbrova to the late 6th – early 5th century BC.⁶¹

According to T. Kemenczei, there are only two chronologically defined assemblages from Hungary with swords like Nógrád: e.g. the burial 7 of 1907 at Gyöngyös⁶² and the cremation from Tarpa.⁶³ Some of the finds at Gyöngyös were accidentally discovered during ploughing and identified by L. Márton as grave goods of a cremation (bronze zoomorphic pommels and bells, iron spearheads, bits etc.).⁶⁴ Others, in particular, a single-edged sword coming from burial 7 (fig. 4, 2), were revealed during the excavation of additional trenches. As a result, a dozen more cremations were discovered and other artefacts (e.g. iron winged axe, chisel, spoon, bronze bracelets) were considered as stray finds.⁶⁵ Therefore, the dating of the sword from Gyöngyös is based on a combined analysis of chronological signs.⁶⁶ The sword from Gyöngyös T. Kemenczei⁶⁷ basing on a pommel in Animal style and harness, dates back to the second half of the 6th – early 5th century BC. J. Chochorowski⁶⁸ is convinced that assemblages such as Gyöngyös and Miskolc-Diósgyőr correspond to the late phase of the Mezőcsát culture of the HaB3 period. Anyway, this attempt was met the resistance by I. V. Bruyako, who believed that most of the chronological indicators of Gyöngyös do not gravitate to the previous horizon (*i. e.* Thracian-Cimmerian horizon), but to the next one (after a certain *lacuna*) – *i. e.* fits into the early stage of Vekerzug culture at the turn of the 7th – 6th centuries BC.⁶⁹

The burial from Tarpa (fig. 8F) (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county) was attributed by Hungarian researchers to the 7th – 6th centuries BC.⁷⁰ Another assemblage (fig. 7B) comes from Nagykáta village (formerly Egreskáta). There is no explanation for the fact that there, together with a sword

(fig. 4, 12; 7B, 1) of the Nógrád type,⁷¹ a “Celtic” bowl (fig. 7B, 2) typical for LaB was found.⁷² This case should be treated nothing more than a historiographic contradiction, since the 5th century BC is still considered the upper permissible border of the Scythian presence in Pannonia.⁷³

Recently, another burial (fig. 7D) with a single-edged sword (fig. 4, 1; 7D, 1) from Bátmonostor (Bács-Kiskun county), in southern Hungary was published. It has a volute pommel,⁷⁴ which is rare for the Tisza region. In addition to the sword, a burial made in a square pit with pillar structures was accompanied by rich grave goods (fig. 7D, 2-12). Among the grave goods are: a gray-clay two-handed vessel (fig. 7D, 9), a bronze trilobate arrowhead with hidden sleeve (fig. 7D, 11), three iron axes (fig. 7D, 4, 5, 8), a flat iron winged axe (fig. 7D, 6), iron spearheads (fig. 7D, 7, 12) etc.⁷⁵ According to the authors of the excavation, the grave goods could be attributed to the second half of the 6th – the turn of the 5 – 4th centuries BC, however, ¹⁴C analysis allows to cut off the entire 5th century BC,⁷⁶ leaving the late 6th century BC as the upper limit.

Other items from the Great Hungarian Plain are represented by stray finds: eponymous one from Nógrád (fig. 2, 2; 3, 1; 4, 5),⁷⁷ Tiszadob (fig. 4, 3),⁷⁸ from the vicinity of Tarnabod (fig. 4, 4),⁷⁹ former village of Báb near Tarnabod in Hungary (fig. 4, 9) and Želiezovce (fig. 4, 10; 9, 3)⁸⁰ in Slo-

⁷¹ Bottyán 1955, Taf. 17, 11.

⁷² Kemenczei 2009, 37.

⁷³ Бруяко 2005, 277; 2014, 43.

⁷⁴ Gyucha et al. 2015, 181, Fig. 4, 3.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 181-182, Fig. 2-5.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 189.

⁷⁷ Hampel 1876, 49, Fig. 34. Researchers of Scythian weaponry often mention the discovery of a single-edged sword with a ribbed hilt from the former Bereg county (Ginters 1928, 37, Taf. 15, b; Vulpe 1990: 92, Taf. 41A, 8). An appeal to the original publication showed that this was due to the erroneous reading of W. Ginters of an article by J. Hampel, which provides an image and description of a sword from Nógrád (Hampel 1893, 386, Abb. 1). And the localization near Bereg (Ukrainian: *Berehove*) refers to another akinakes — from Ardanovo (Hungarian: Árdánháza) in Transcarpathia, which was found on the territory of the former Bereg county.

⁷⁸ Kemenczei 1984, 39, Abb. 3, 2.

⁷⁹ Párducz 1969, Táb. VII, 2.

⁸⁰ Findings of a cruciform plaque in Animal style, arrowheads (Kemenczei 2009, 177, Taf. 184, 1-6) are associated with the destroyed burial from Želiezovce. According to Yu. Polidovich, a plaque from Želiezovce belongs to the first (early)

⁶⁰ Ibid., 37, Pl. 2, 2; 3, 6.

⁶¹ Ibid., 36.

⁶² Márton 1908, Táb. II, 5.

⁶³ Párducz 1968, Táb. XXI, 5.

⁶⁴ Kemenczei 2009, 168-169.

⁶⁵ Márton 1908, 37-38; Kemenczei 2009, 169.

⁶⁶ Bruyako 2005, 279.

⁶⁷ Kemenczei 1991, 75.

⁶⁸ Chochorowski 1987, 165.

⁶⁹ Bruyako 2005, 283.

⁷⁰ Párducz 1968, 82; Kemenczei 1991, 75.

vakia.⁸¹ In general, they are similar to the bulk of single-edged akinakai of the Nógrád type, although the handle of the sword from Želiezovce is oval in section,⁸² while the sword from Tarnabod is decorated with oblique parallel notches and the hilts are equipped with original “spikes”.⁸³

Akinakai of the *Shumeyko* type (or *Piliny* type, according to A. Vulpe), which spread at the turn of the Early and Middle Scythian period, served as the basis for the akinakai of the Nógrád type. This is indicated by the features of single-edged akinakai of the Nógrád type, characteristic of the Shumeyko type such a narrow elongated blade (often triangular), a massive kidney-shaped hilt, two-part handle and decoration with transverse notches (fig. 9), a narrow elongated pommel. Akinakai of the Shumeyko type are well known in Transylvania for the complex of finds of the late 7th – first half of the 6th century BC from Brateiu⁸⁴ and a sword from Gădălin,⁸⁵ possibly from a destroyed burial. A small concentration of random and poorly documented finds of swords and daggers of this type is observed in Romanian Moldova. In the Iași County, akinakes of the Shumeyko type was discovered in the Băcu village is supposedly in the burial.⁸⁶ Perhaps the Shumeyko type should also include a copy without finial found in Moșna.⁸⁷ Two items come from the Galați county – from Gănești⁸⁸ and Bălăbanești,⁸⁹ one from Vaslui county found at Dumești.⁹⁰ In the Great Hungarian Plain, stray finds from Piliny⁹¹ and Timár⁹² can be attributed to the akinakai of the type under consideration. They are adjoined by a stray find from the Arad County in the historical locality of Crișana (Romania), found, presumably, near the Horia or Pecica villages.⁹³ At the moment, the most western find of an akinakes of

group of the second half of the 6th century BC (Полідович 2000, 38-39), which is not contradicted by the presence in the complex of arrowheads with hidden plug.

⁸¹ Botyán 1955, Taf. 36, 14.

⁸² Kemenczei 2009, 177.

⁸³ Kemenczei 1991, 75.

⁸⁴ Vasiliev 1979, 21.

⁸⁵ Wollman 1970, 245, Fig. 2, 4.

⁸⁶ Nițu 1953, 6-7, Fig. 2.

⁸⁷ Ionomu 1983, 65.

⁸⁸ Buzdugan 1976, 245.

⁸⁹ Buzdugan / Coman 1977, Fig. 2, 3.

⁹⁰ Buzdugan 1976, 243.

⁹¹ Hampel 1876, 129, Fig. 127.

⁹² Kemenczei 1984, 36, Abb. 1, 1.

⁹³ Buzdugan 1976, 240, Fig. 4, 5.

the Shumeyko type can be considered a recently published item from Legnica in Lower Silesia.⁹⁴

Closer to the end of the Middle Scythian period, other varieties of single-edged weapons appear (fig. 1C). These include single-edged swords with a zoomorphic pommel designed in the Scythian Animal style from Penc⁹⁵ and a knife from burial 102⁹⁶ of the Szentes-Vekerzug burial ground.⁹⁷ Single-edged akinakai based on types characteristic of the late Middle Scythian period also appear: for example, items from Muncelu de Sus⁹⁸ and Cincșor.⁹⁹ However, single-edged akinakai are known not only in the Carpathian-Balkan region, but also in the Black Sea region,¹⁰⁰ and in the Caucasus.¹⁰¹ At the same time, in the Black Sea, single-edged akinakai, most likely, are nothing more than a not widely used experimental attempt. In the Caucasus, on the contrary, the traditions of single-edged daggers date back to an

⁹⁴ Baron / Miazga 2013, 335, Fig. 1.

⁹⁵ Patay 1955, 68, XVII.

⁹⁶ A similar design of the pommel (in the form of a bird of prey) is found on other combat knives: e. g. from the burial 17 of the Csárdaszállás burial ground (Havassy 2001, 134, Kat. 21) and Velký Grob (Studeníková 1987, 38, Abb. 11). A similar knife was found in the Caucasus during the excavation of one of the burials of the 1st Alleroy burial ground (Виноградов 1972, Fig. 45, 1).

⁹⁷ Párducz 1955, 5, Fig. 3, Pl. XIII, 2.

⁹⁸ Vulpe 1990, 95, Taf. 30, 201.

⁹⁹ Isac 1994, 179, Fig. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Such finds are known from the materials of the Kamianka Hillfort (Граков 1962, 84, Fig. 1, 1), the Berezan island (Чистов 2008, 308, Fig. 1) and a stray find near the Staryi Saltov village, Kharkiv region (Меркулов / Боков 2011, 195, Fig. 1). At the same time, only a fragment of a single-edged sword from the Berezan settlement has a distinct archaeological context, it was found in the filling of a pit dated from the second or third quarter of the 6th century BC using various ceramic materials (Чистов 2008, 307).

¹⁰¹ Among them are single-edged daggers from burial 1 (76) and 4 of the Serzhen-Yurt burial ground (Козенкова 2002, fig. 71, 14; 75, 14), burials of the 2nd Nizhnyi Chegem burial ground (Виноградов 1972, Fig. 28, 1) and akinakes with antenna pommel from the Karabashevo mound near the Marukh village (Козенкова 1995, T. 15, 3), Nesterovskaya burial ground (Крупнов 1960, T. 62, 2). The most ancient items are from Nizhniy Chegem and Serzhen-Yurt, which can be attributed to the second half of the 7th – beginning of the 6th century BC (Махортых 1995, 112; Маисурадзе / Пирцхалава 2011, 74; Козенкова 2002, 89). Tomb near the Marukh village, and the burial of the Nesterovskaya burial ground, apparently, were completed later, although they date back to the time not later than the 6th century BC (Алексеева 1971, 58; Козенкова 1995, 63).

earlier time, to the local Koban culture traditions, possibly of Transcaucasian origin.¹⁰²

Sažetak

Jednosjekli akinaki iz Transilvanije i Velike Mađarske ravnice. Odraz balkanske tradicije

Jednosjekli mačevi i bodeži koji predstavljaju jednu od najčešćih formi drevnih oružanih tradicija Sredozemlja, gotovo uvijek imaju uvozni karakter, pokazujući pri tom "posjetnicu" regije iz koje potječu. Njihova geneza povezana je s drevnim istokom: prvi jednosjekli noževi ili srpasti mačevi (*Sichelshwerter*) pojavljuju se u Mezopotamiji najkasnije sredinom trećeg milenijuma pr. n.e. U prvom milenijumu pr. n. e., srpasti mačevi su gotovo u potpunosti zamijenjeni formama istočnog naoružanja, ostajući samo u ceremonijalnom kontekstu u Asiriji do sredine 7. st. pr. n. e. Najraniji nalazi jednosjeklog oružja na teritoriji Grčke, povezani su s postmikenskim razdobljem. To je *mahaira* ili *kopis* koja nastaje u 7. st. pr. n. e., na temelju prototipa iz sjevernog Balkana i koja postaje tipično grčko oružje u doba klasicizma i helenizma. Obilje jednosjeklih skitskih mačeva hibridne forme, poput tipa *Chaus*, uključujući i ceremonijalne primjerke tipa *Shulgovka*, nastalo je pod utjecajem grčke ili tračke tradicije na kraju klasične faze Skitske kulture (4. st. pr. n. e.). Pokušaji hibridizacije takvog skitskog oružja, dogodili su se i ranije, na prelazu iz 7. u 6. st. pr. n. e. u obliku originalne skupine jednosjeklih akinakija (tipa *Nógrád*), ali njihovo područje se ne širi izvan granica Srednjeg Dunava, Transilvanije i Južnih Karpata.

Prisutnost bubrežastog balčaka na ovim mačevima, jasan je skitski znak, dok oblik sječiva pripada istočno-halštatskoj (ilirskoj) tradiciji. Ilirski trag može se očitovati ne samo u zakrivljenosti jednosjeklih mačeva tipa *Nógrád*, već vjerovatno i u dizajnu jabučice drške. Tu je izražena sličnost sa drškom T-oblika borbenih noževa tipa *Basarabi*, čije porijeklo je povezano s balkanskom tradicijom izrade jednosjeklog oružja. Najraniji primjerci jednosjeklih mačeva tipa *Basarabi* datiraju još u rani Ha C period. Dobro datirani ukopi uključuju grob 2 u Balta Verde (*Basarabi-II* faza Ha C, ili kasni Ha B3 period), grob 7 tumula B u Podilijaku (istočna Bosna) s grobnim priložima tipičnim za fazu Glasinac IVB srednjeg Ha C, kao i grob 181 iz nekropole Frög (južna Austrija), faza Frög-3 Ha C. Također, tokom perioda Ha C2 jednosjekli mače-

vi tipa *Tržišče-Donja Dolina*, bez jabučice, pojavljuju se na istočnoj obali Jadranskog mora, gdje će u doba Ha D1 biti zamijenjeni mačevima tipa *Šmihel*. Slični razvojni procesi događali su se na području Đerdapa: jednosjekli noževi bez jabučice, kao što su *Gogošu* (ili *Griffplattenmesser*) i *Telești*, zauzimaju mjesto mačeva tipa *Basarabi*, a ovdje se već može prepoznati kontura tračkog borbenog noža.

Očigledno, u vrijeme prodiranja Skita na ovo područje dio nosilaca kulture *Basarabi* preselio se na sjever, do Južnih Karpata i Transilvanije. Možda to može objasniti pojavu jednosjeklih akinakija s T-drškom *Nógrád* tipa, posebno u podnožju Južnih Karpata i u planinama Apuseni u jugozapadnoj Transilvaniji. Akinaki tipa *Shumeyko* (ili tip *Piliny*), koji su se širili na prelazu iz ranog u srednje skitsko razdoblje, poslužili su kao osnova za akinakije tipa *Nógrád*. Na to ukazuju obilježja jednosjeklih akinakija tipa *Nógrád*, karakterističnih za tip *Shumeyko*, poput uskog izduženog (često trokutastog) sječiva s masivnom bubrežastom, dvodjelnom drškom, ukrašenom poprečnim zarezima i uskom izduženom jabučicom. Akinaki tipa *Shumeyko* dobro su poznati u grobovima kasnog 7. i prve polovine 6. st. pr. n. e. na području Transilvanije. Kao i akinaki tipa *Shumeyko*, tako se i jednosjekli mačevi tipa *Nógrád* pojavljuju na prelazu između 7. u 6. st. pr. n. e. i traju sve do kraja 6. st. Pri tom se može reći da naveći broj nalaza akinakija tipa *Nógrád*, pripada drugoj polovini, odnosno kasnom 6. st. pr. n. e.

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¹⁰² Виноградов 1972, 111-112.

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Abbreviations

ВДИ	Вестник древней истории. Москва.
МИИХНСК	Материалы по изучению историко-культурного наследия Северного Кавказа. Москва.
НАВ	Нижеволжский археологический вестник. Волгоград.
САИР	Свод археологических источников России. Москва.
ААН	Acta Archaeologica Hungarica. Budapest.
АЭ	Archaeologiai Értesítő. Budapest.
АК	Archäologische Korrespondenzblatt. Mainz.
AMN	Acta Musei Napocensis. Cluj-Napoca.
FA	Folia Archaeologica. Budapest.
MCA	Materiale și cercetări arheologice. București.
MSVF	Marburger Studien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte. Rahden/Westf.
PA	Przegląd Archeologiczny. Wrocław.
PZ	Prähistorische Zeitschrift. Berlin.
SAA	Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica. Iași.
SCIV(A)	Studii și cercetări de istorie veche (și arheologie). București.

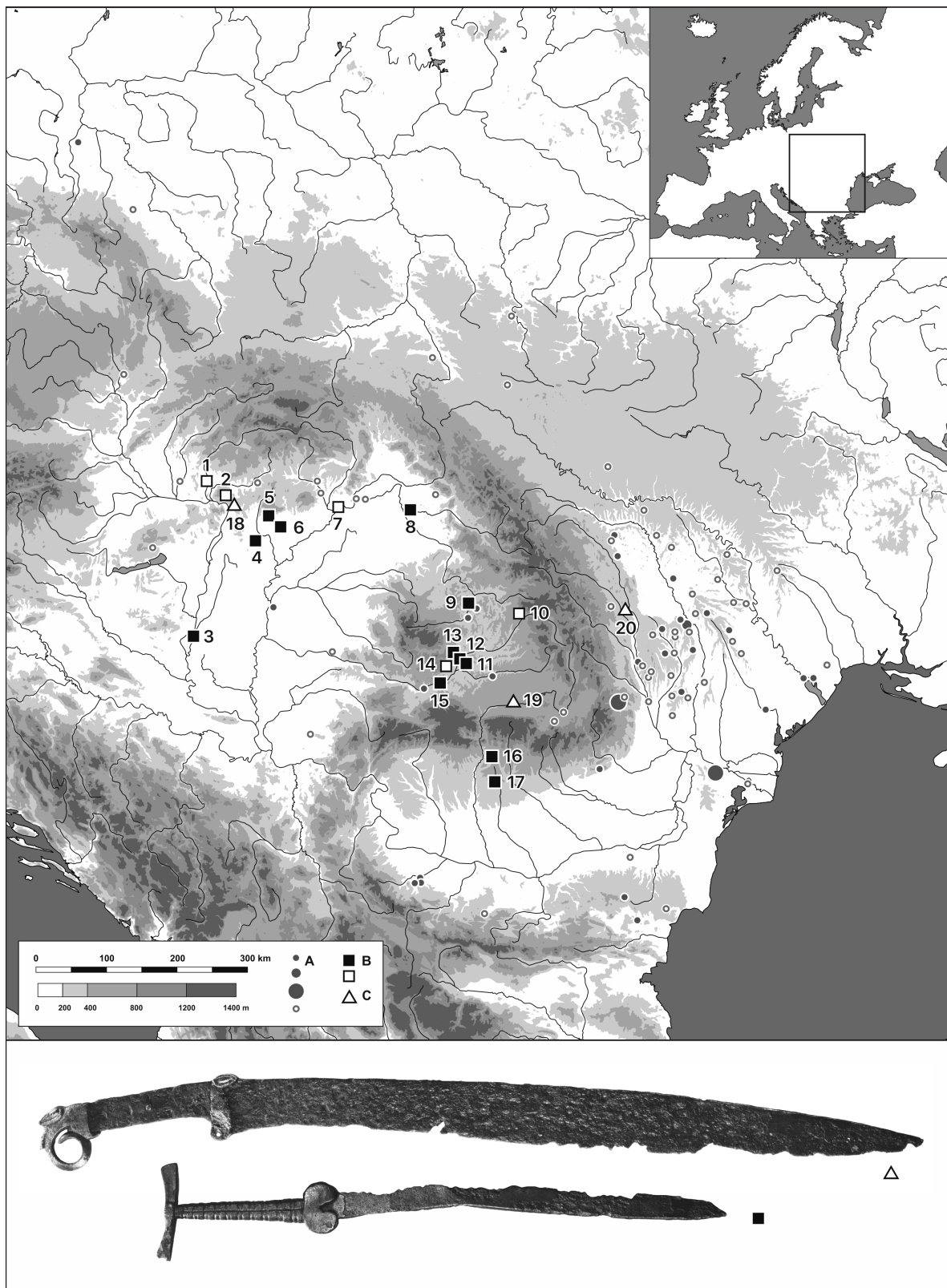


Fig. 1. Distribution of Middle Scythian akinakai in Carpathian-Danube region (A), Nógrád type (B, 1-17) and other types of single-edged akinakai (C, 18-20): 1 – Želiezovce; 2 – Nógrád; 3 – Bátmonostor; 4 – Nagykáta; 5 – Gyöngyös; 6 – Tarnabod; 7 – Tiszadob; 8 – Tarpa; 9 – Băița; 10 – Dumbrava; 11 – Ciumbrud; 12 – Aiud; 13 – Mirăslău (Miriszló); 14 – Benic; 15 – Pâclișa; 16 – Curtea de Argeș; 17 – Cepari; 18 – Penc; 19 – Cincșor; 20 – Muncelu de Sus.



Fig. 2. *Akinakai* of *Nógrád* type (photos): 1 – *Dumbrava*; 2 – *Nógrád*; 3 – *Nagykáta*; 4 – *Pâclișa* burial (according to Rezi / Cioată 2013; Vágó 2015; Borangic / Anghel 2018).

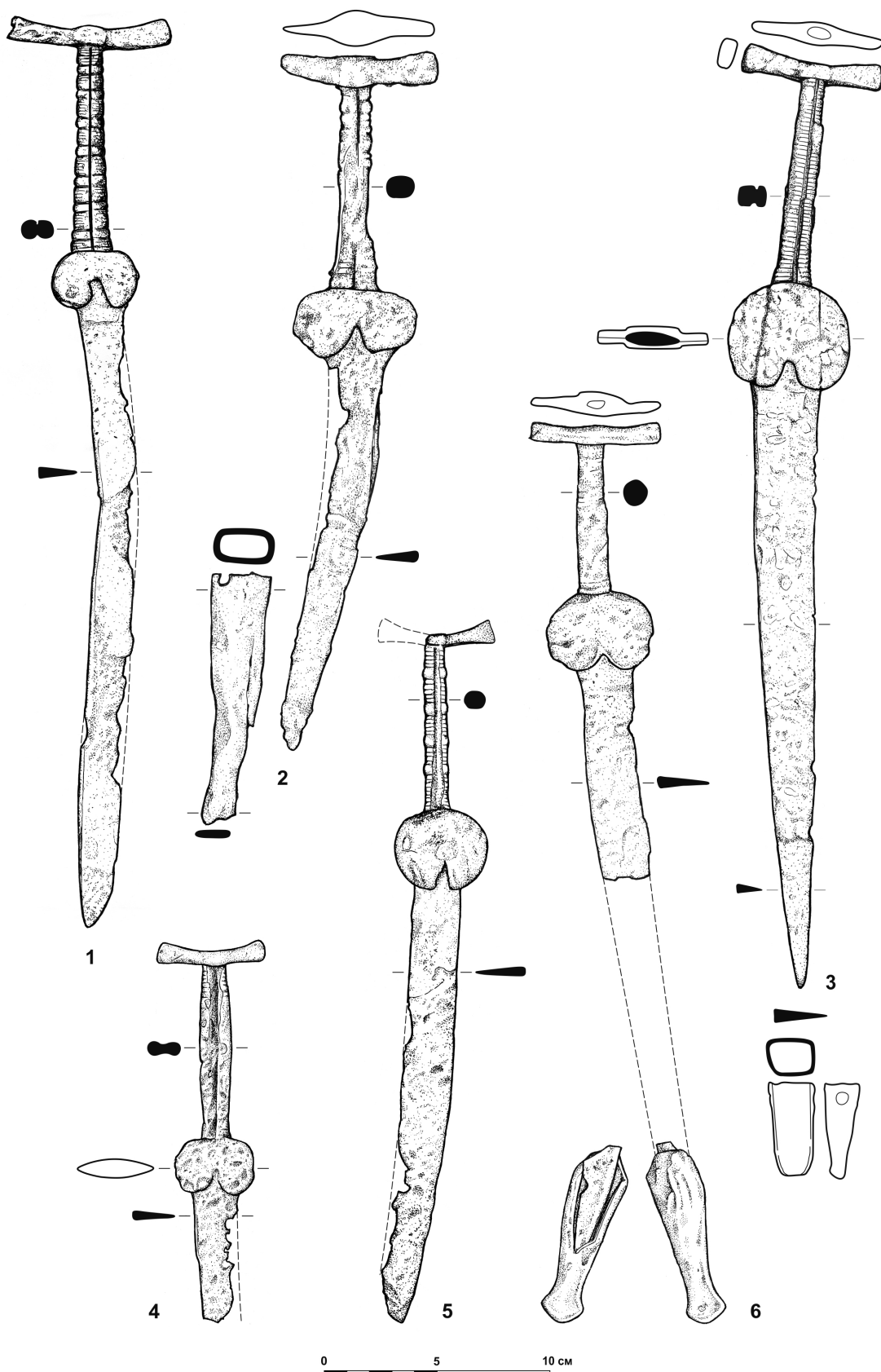


Fig. 3. Akinakai of Nógrád type (drawing by the author): 1 – Nógrád; 2 – Páclisa burial; 3 – Dumbrava; 4 – Želiezovce; 5 – Nagykáta burial of 1904; 6 – Miräsläu (Miriszló) burial.

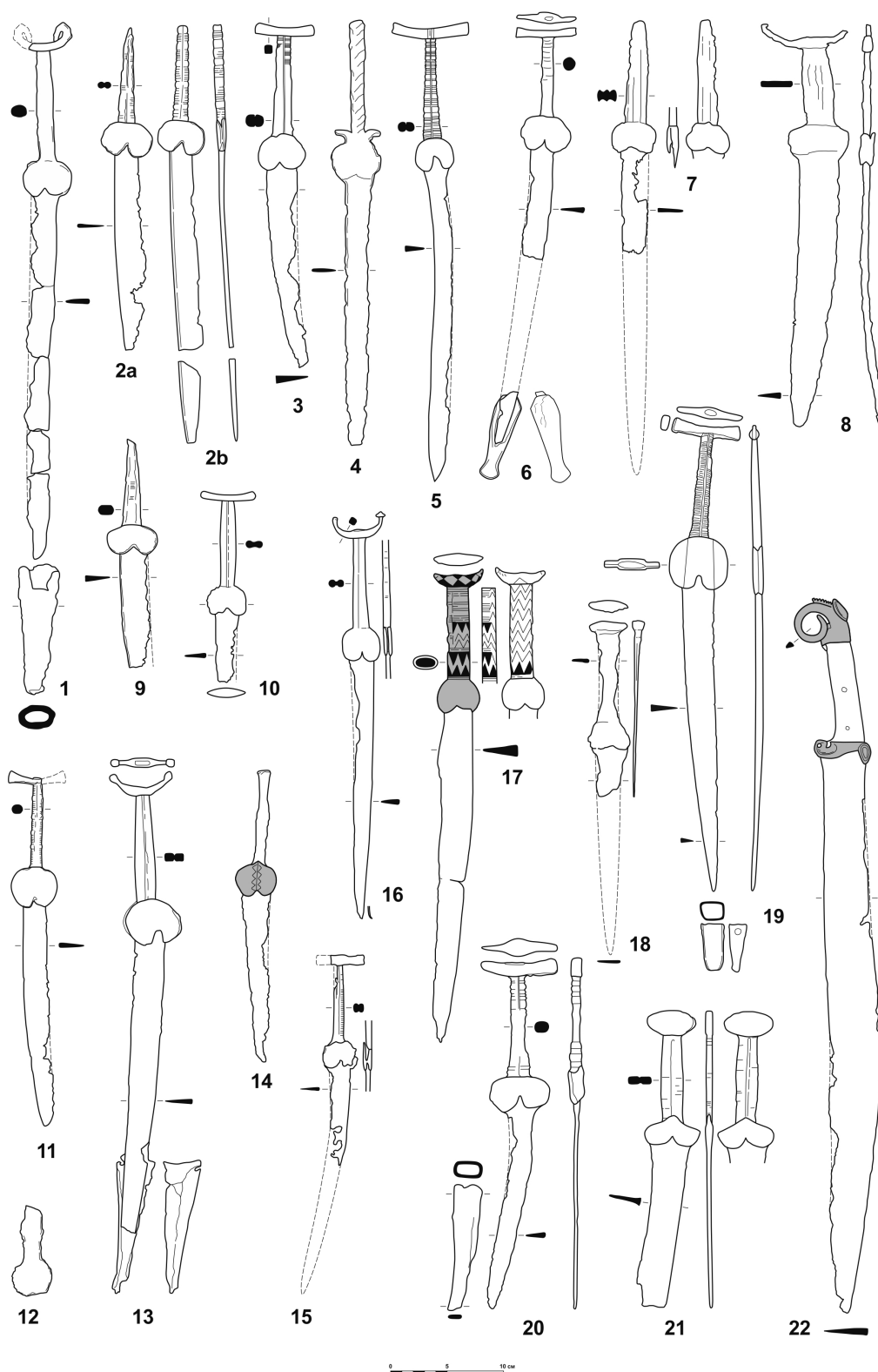


Fig. 4. Akinakai of Nógrád type (1-7, 9-20) and other types of single-edged weaponry (8, 21-22) of Carpathian-Danube region: 1 – Bátmonostor burial; 2 – Gyöngyös, burial 7 of 1907 (2a – Kemenczei 1984, 2b – Márton 1908); 3 – Tiszadob; 4 – Tarnabod; 5 – Nógrád; 6 – Mirăslău (Miriszló) burial; 7 – Aiud-Hellos, burial 13; 8 – Cincșor; 9 – Tarnabod-Báb; 10 – Želiezovce; 11 – Nagykáta, gr. 1904; 12 – Tarpa, barrow; 13 – Băița, burial 10; 14 – Benic; 15 – Ciumbrud, burial 2; 16 – Cepari, barrow 5; 17 – Curtea de Argeș burial; 18 – Aiud-Parc, burial 1 of 1886; 19 – Dumbrava; 20 – Păclișa burial; 21 – Muncelu de Sus; 22 – Penc.

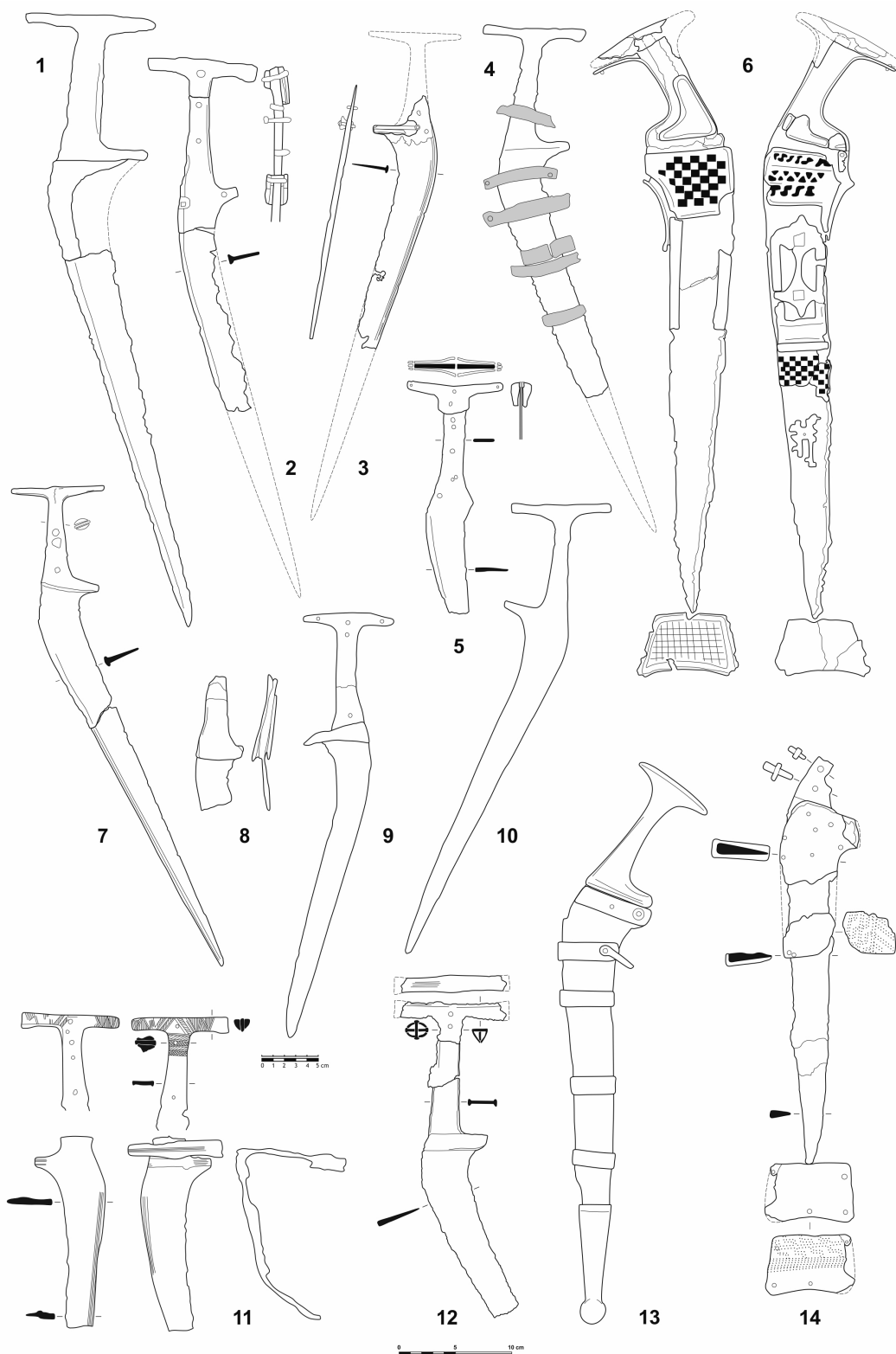


Fig. 5. Single-edged swords of Basarabi type: 1 – Balta Verde (Romania), barrow 2, burial 1; 2 – Basarabi (Romania), barrow 3, burial 3; 3 – Čvirigovec hillfort near Trenčianske Teplice (Slovakia), strayfind; 4 – Breg-Frög (Austria), barrow 181; 5 – Ostrovu Mare (Romania), strayfind; 6 – Novilara-Servici (Italy), burial 14; 7 – Podiljak (Bosnia and Herzegovina), barrow B, burial 7; 8 – Niševac (Serbia), disturbed burial; 9 – Vraca (Bulgaria), strayfind; 10 – Markovo (Bulgaria), strayfind; 11 – Legen-Kramarškov grob (Slovenia), burial; 12 – Legen-Slovenj Gradec (Slovenia), barrow B, burial 7; 13 – Novo Mesto (Slovenia), barrow 1, burial 16; 14 – Novilara (Italy), burial 65.

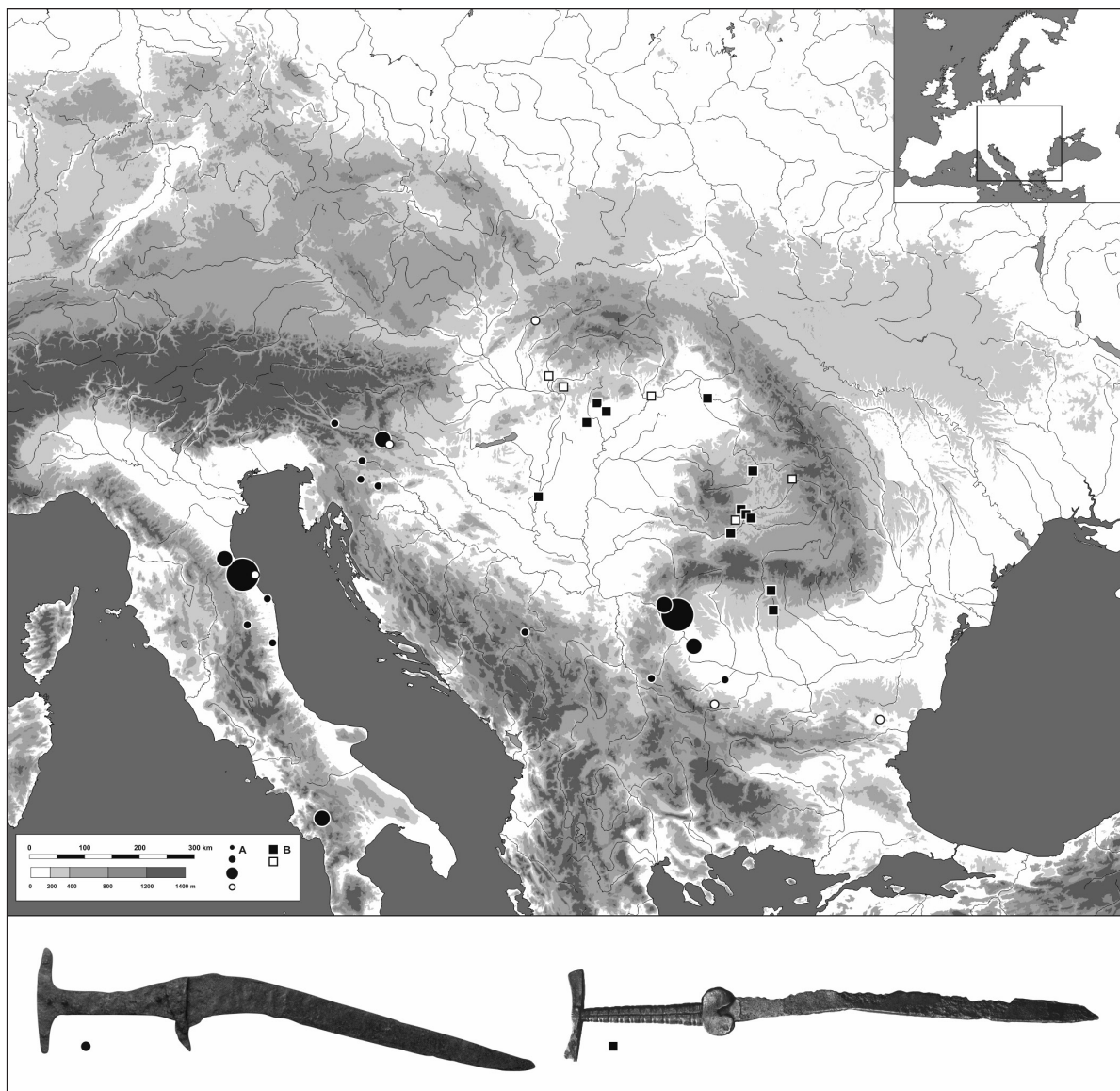


Fig. 6. *Distribution of Basarabi (A) and Nógrád type (B) single-edged swords*

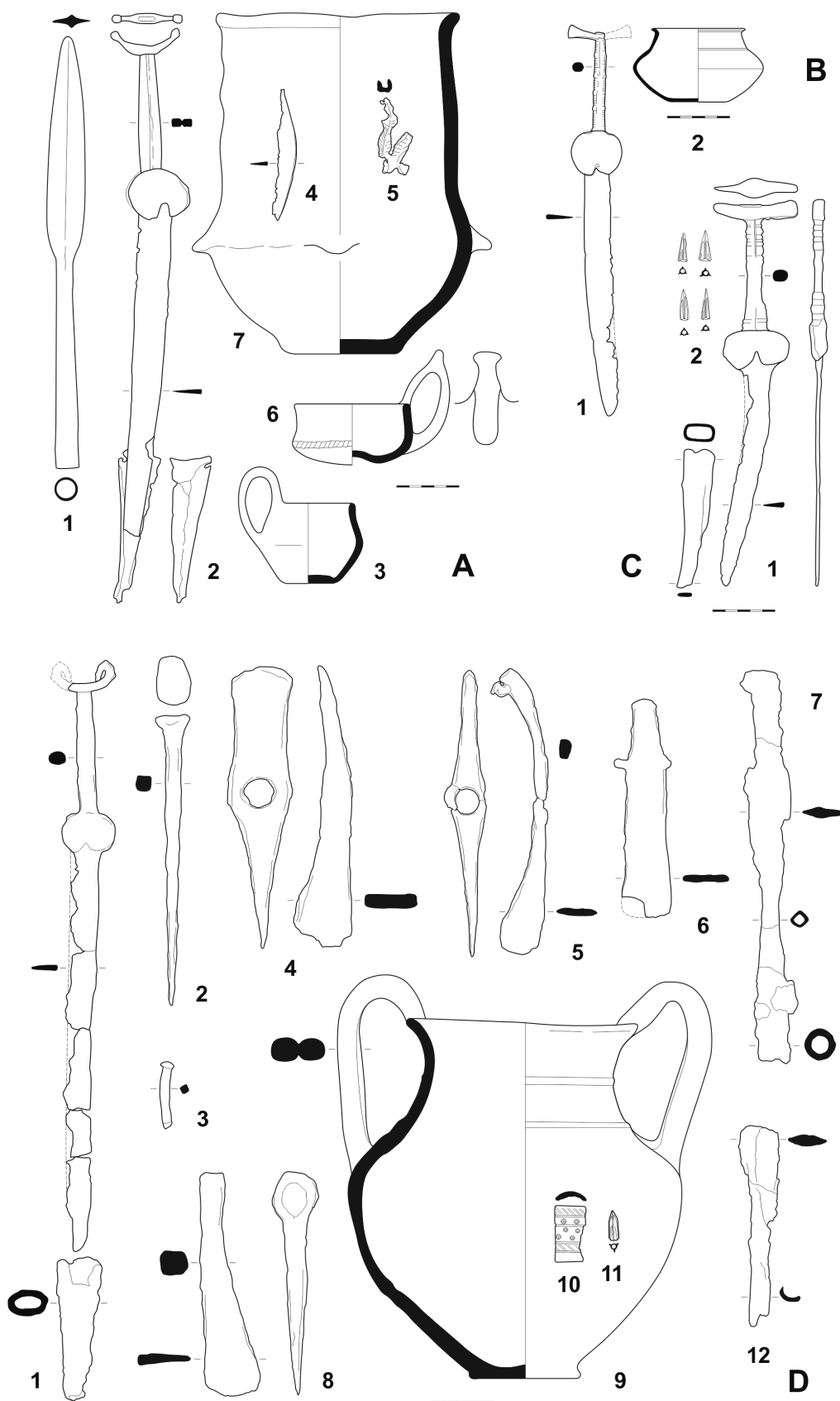


Fig. 7. Burials with Nógrád akinakai: A – Băița, burial 10; B – Nagykáta buruial of 1904; C – Pâclișa burial; D – Bátmonostor burial.

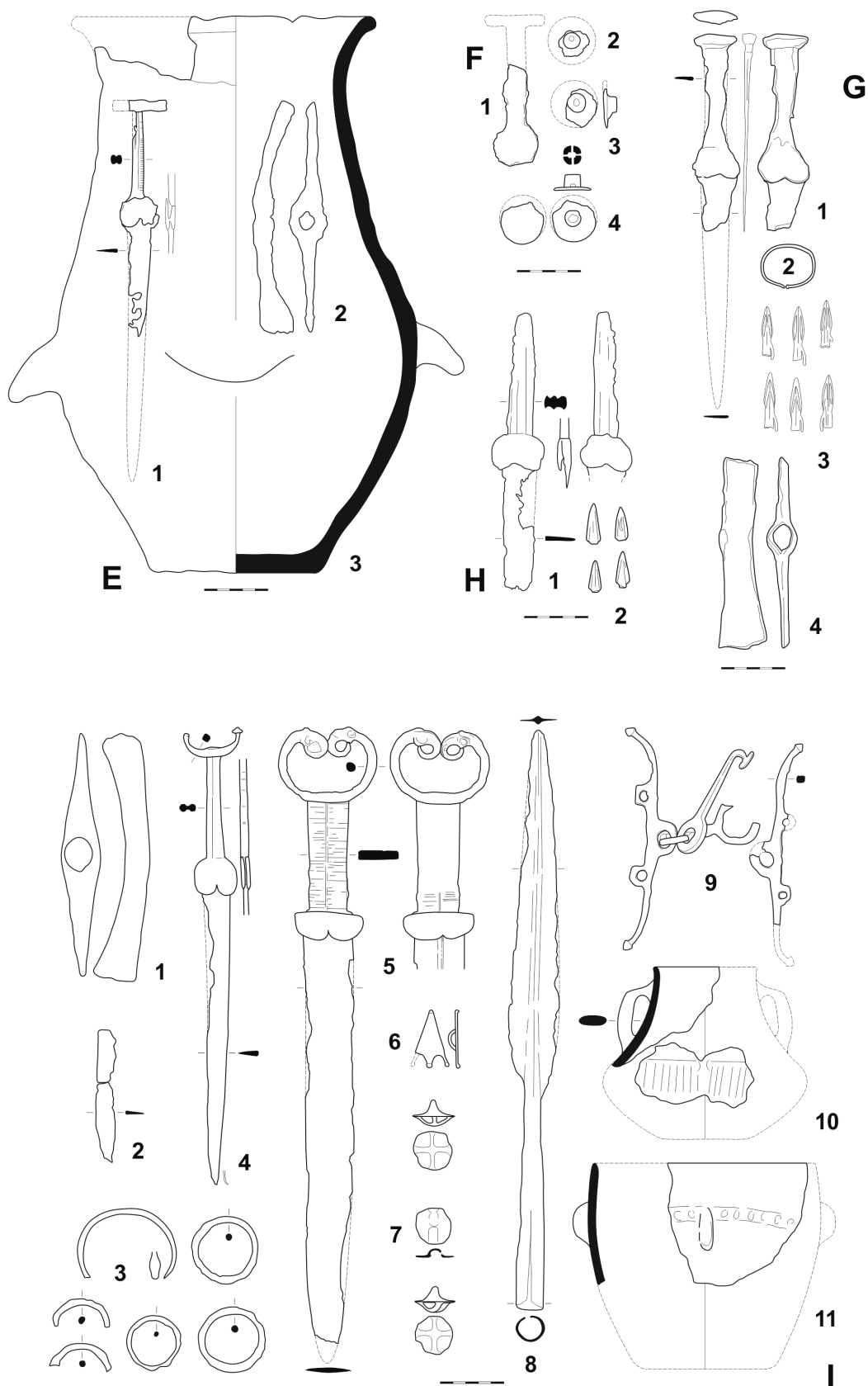


Fig. 8. Burials with Nógrád akinakai: E – Ciumbrud, burial 2; F – Tarpa;
G – Aiud-Parc, burial 1 of 1886; H – Aiud-Hellos, burial 13; I – Cepari, barrow 5.



Fig. 9. Ornamented sword handles of Nograd type (1-3) and other (4-7) Scythian swords: 1 – Nograd; 2 – Nagykata; 3 – Zeliezovce; 4 – Shumeyko barrow; 5 – Kul-Oba barrow; 6 – Raygorodok, barrow 2; 7 – Velika Belozerka, barrow 30 (according to Rezi / Vago 2015; Cioata 2013; Schiltz 1994; Алексеев 2012; Древности Приднепровья 1900).

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