

Proceedings of the 21th International Colloquium of Funerary Archaeology
25th-28th May, 2023, Târgu Jiu, Gorj County (Romania)

WARRIORS AND THEIR WEAPONS IN BRONZE AND IRON AGES



INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR
PREHISTORIC AND
PROTOHISTORIC SCIENCES –
Commission *Mortuary Practices*
in Prehistory and Protohistory

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
“VASILE PÂRVAN” BUCHAREST –
CENTRE OF THRACOLOGY

GORJ COUNTY COUNCIL

GORJ COUNTY MUSEUM
„ALEXANDRU ȘTEFULESCU”
TÂRGU JIU

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INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR
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Practices in Prehistory and
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3. Participants at the colloquium, in front of the „Alexandru Ștefulescu” County Museum, Târgu Jiu: First row: Marija Ljuština, Davide Delfino, Alexandra Comșa, Diana Dimitrova, Valeriu Sîrbu, Olena Dzeladze, Aurora Peșan, Mihail Băț, Dumitru Condrea, Katarina Dmitrović. Second row: Cristian Schuster, Valeri Kavruk. Third row: Răzvan-Marius Cernamoriți, Dragoș Măndescu, Horea Pop, Lyubava Konova, Carol Terteci, Iosif Vasile Ferencz.



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1-2. Aspects during the presentation of communications.
3. Colloquium participants in the conference room.

SHINY ARMS FOR THE AFTERLIFE: FIRST IRON AGE FUNERARY PRACTICES OF SOUTHWESTERN SERBIA

Marija LJUŠTINA (Belgrade - Serbia)

Key words: *Iron Age, Southwestern Serbia, Pešter plateau, necropolises, tumuli.*

Abstract: *Geographic characteristic of Southwestern Serbia, as well as its specific position reflects in dynamic changes in the past reflected through archaeological testimonies. Its later prehistory landscape is characterised by tumular necropolises, twelve of them being attributed to the Iron Ages. Presence of spearheads, knives and swords in grave inventory indicates warrior spirit of the Glasinac culture newcomers who came from the west and established a powerful chiefdom, as confirmed by construction of a rich princely grave at the site of Church of St. Peter and Paul in Novi Pazar. Some of the analysed necropolises revealed changes of some elements within the funerary standards as the time passed. In comparison with the inhumation, which was here standardized in the phase Glasinac IVb, in the later phase cremation predominated. Grave goods, generally characterised by more sophisticated bronze jewellery and pottery imported or made under the Greek influence, point to stronger connections with southern parts of the Balkan peninsula.*

Introduction

Southwestern part of Serbia generally refers to the region of Novi Pazar, including the territory of the city of Novi Pazar along with the Tutin and Sjenica municipalities. In this mountainous zone two plateaus - Sjenica and Pešter - stand out. The wide Pešter plateau offers very specific life conditions. It is sharply divided from the surrounding zones by both its height and its geomorphological characteristics. It is an area without forest, with average height 1100- 1250 m above sea level, having characteristics of the karst and with very little water. Valleys of the important rivers Lim and Ibar provided good connectivity of the region, which is rich in smaller river flows belonging to the Raška and Ibar watershed. It makes a natural connection between the Morava valley and the river Drina, i.e. between the eastern and western parts of the Central Balkans (Премовић-Алексић 2014, p. 7-8; Ljuština 2020; Ljuština 2022). Geographic characteristic of the region, as well as its specific position reflects in dynamic changes in the past reflected through archaeological testimonies. Its later prehistory landscape is characterised by tumular necropolises, twelve of them being attributed to the Iron Ages (Figs. 1a-b).

Significance of the region in the mediaeval times, as the core of the early Serbian state, has been recognised and mediaeval sites and monuments have been explored and protected. In confirmation to the statement goes the fact that the first site in Serbia to be added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites was Stari Ras and Sopoćani, an impressive group of medieval monuments consisting of fortresses, churches and monasteries in the vicinity of Novi Pazar, inscribed at the 3rd UNESCO session in 1979. In contrast to the mediaeval period, local prehistory remained underestimated. However, several decades of efforts of our colleagues from the Faculty of Philosophy and Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade, along with the colleagues from the Museum u Ras, Novi Pazar, provided a solid base to claim that later prehistoric periods in the region were worth further investigation (cf. Ljuština 2020; Ljuština 2022).

Iron Age sites with traces of funerary practices

Interest in the Iron Age population of southwestern Serbia arose thanks to the spectacular discovery of a princely tomb at *the site of the Church of St. Peter and Paul in Ras, Novi Pazar*, in 1957. Excavations showed that under the church there was a tumulus erected

during the Bronze and Iron Ages, which at the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th century BC was supplemented by a peripheral stone circle and a central burial structure, and became the final resting place of a local aristocrat, with an extremely luxurious grave inventory. The grave goods comprised: imported objects (metal vessels, Greek painted pottery, jewellery, especially figure-shaped pieces of amber), a number of domestic type fibulae, produced in local workshops, and the most interesting group of gold and silver objects, hammered pieces of metal sheets - decorative pieces which were once most probably used as applications on clothing, as well as jewellery, bracelets, rings, pins, fibulae etc. It is important to emphasize that neither the primary protective excavations nor the subsequent explorations revealed any weapons. The absence of weaponry in the grave indicates a princess rather than a prince (Мано-Зиси and Поповић 1969; Јуришић 1969; Васић 1996; Јовановић 2003; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 43-44).

The tumulus could not be fully explored, given the existence of the church and the necropolis. However, the fact that protection works are still being carried out nowadays, with the joint activities of colleagues from the Ras Museum in Novi Pazar and the Archaeological Institute in Belgrade, results in new valuable data, such as the appearance of the tumulus mantle (Fig. 2), which completes the picture we have of this site.

In the area of research, a total of 12 sites with traces of funerary practices has been identified (Fig. 1b). Most of them are concentrated on the Pešter plateau.

One of the most instructive was the necropolis at the site of *Latinsko Groblje* in the village of *Glogovik*. It consisted of eight mounds. The biggest of them is the mound I, which was 1,7m high and 25m in diameter. Burial practices were executed during three periods: the Bronze Age, the Iron Age and the Middle Ages (Срејовић and Летица 1980, p. 156; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 40). Mound I is the only one to have revealed burials from all of the mentioned periods, so it has been used for comparison with archaeological finds from both the other mounds at *Latinsko Groblje* and the other Pešter necropolises that have been explored so far. The primary mound was formed on a circular stone platform, from which a peripheral stone circle and two grave constructions (1st burial horizon, from Middle Bronze Age/Late Bronze Age) were preserved. Above it, but eccentric in position, was the younger mound with burials in urns (2nd burial horizon). Graves of the second burial horizon were buried directly above the primary mound. These graves comprised cremated remains in shallow pits or ceramic urns protected by circles of pebbles and covered with lids or stone slabs. The second burial horizon is the confirmation of presence of bearers of the Brnjica group of the Late Bronze Age in this part of southwestern Serbia (Летица 1982, p. 14; Ljuština 2022, p. 73-74).

Formation of the later, larger mound can be connected with the Iron Age burials. According to the graves' shapes, depths and inventory, two burial horizons can be sorted out: the older one (3rd burial horizon - graves 22 and 38) and the younger one (4th burial horizon - graves 23, 36, 36a, 40, 42, 53). The final diameter of the mound (14m) was reached by putting the peripheral stone circle (Figs. 3-4). The graves from the 3rd burial horizon undoubtedly belonged to the newcomers which suppressed or assimilated aboriginal inhabitants of the whole Pešter plateau. Members of the first generation of the newcomers were buried in the graves of the 3rd burial horizon, while their offspring were buried in the graves of the 4th burial horizon. Funerary ritual (skeletal graves), arrangement of graves (concentric) and peripheral stone circle are identical in both the older and the younger Iron Age mound. The difference is in more solid grave constructions. The deceased were placed on stone beds, the

bottom of which was covered with tiny stone particles. The lateral sides were built of stone as well. The skeletons were in stretched position, their arms along the lateral sides of the body (Летица 1982; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 40; Ljuština 2022, p. 73).

The inventory of the graves - presumably female - from the 3rd burial horizon is dominated by iron objects. The deceased from the grave 22 had four large iron plaques, two iron arc fibulae with two loops and triangle catch-plates, and some 1000 amber beads on the chest. A long iron knife was found by the left hand, and two ceramic cups - near the head (Fig. 3/8-14). The deceased from the grave 38 had a small ceramic beaker, probably an iron knife, four iron plaques and a necklace of more than 835 amber beads (Fig. 3/1-7) (Летица 1982, p. 15; Палавестра and Крстић 2006, p. 312-313; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 40).

There is a possibility to connect the presence of knives in the inventory (Fig. 3/7, 14) with martial character of the population, revealed through the changed funerary practices in the 4th burial horizon. In most of the 4th horizon graves there were iron weapons: spears, swords and knives. In the grave 36 a male was buried along with his long iron sword and two iron spears (Fig. 3/15-17). There were: a knife, a sword and a spear laid by the deceased in the grave 40 (Fig. 3/15-27). Inventory of the grave 42 consisted of: a jug with one handle and an iron sword placed by the head of the deceased, and three long iron spears near the left leg, their tips to the feet (Fig. 3/20-24). In the grave 53, there were an iron knife, a ceramic jug with one handle and an iron spearhead (Fig. 3/28-30). Presence of a single pottery vessel and lack of weaponry in the graves 23 (Fig. 3/19) and 36a (Fig. 3/18) was explained by the idea of these graves being female. It is worth noting that not a single piece of jewellery was found in the graves belonging to the 4th burial horizon (Летица 1982, p. 15; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 40-41).

All of the types of jewellery from the 3rd burial horizon were in fashion only during the early phase of the First Iron Age. At the Glasinac plateau, such types of jewellery were discovered in the graves determined as Glasinac IVb and dated at the period 750-625 BC. Because of discontinuity between the 2nd and the 3rd burial horizon at Latinsko Groblje, it can be presumed that the population shift at the Pešter plateau happened about 700 BC, when the local Late Bronze Age population were suppressed by some western newcomers. The grave goods from the 4th horizon testify to a warrior culture, which is not as rich as the one from the 3rd horizon. However, cultural continuity is obvious and can be seen both in funerary practices and pottery production. The graves from the 4th burial horizon can be synchronized with the Glasinac IVc phase (cca. 625-500 BC) (Летица 1982, p. 15; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 41).

The same shift of cultures was recognised at the site of *Utrina* in another village, *Delimeđe*, on the Pešter plateau. Within the same burial mound there were Late Bronze Age cremation burials and the Iron Age skeletal graves. The graves were dug into the circular base, that was lined by a peripheral circle made of larger stones. The peripheral circle was only partially preserved. Four elliptic grave constructions, lined with larger pieces of stone, belong to the younger burial horizon. In three of them, some poorly preserved remains of stretched skeletons were found, together with iron spears, an iron knife and pottery vessels. The time of burial of the fourth grave, in which the deceased was laid on his right side with legs slightly bent, remains unknown, for no grave goods were discovered. The fact that his head was placed on a stone slab with a concave urn base, which was very similar to the slab on which an urn belonging to the Donja Brnjica-Gornja Stražava group was found at the site Dojeviće (Летица 1979, Т. II/1) leads to the presumption that this grave is also younger than the graves with cremation (Lazić 1996, p. 10). Most of the pottery finds, which were scattered

over the whole mound, can be chronologically attributed to the same period as the skeletal graves. Sherds of coarse ware, made of clay mixed with sand, with rough surfaces, grey or dark brown in colour, were found outside the grave constructions (Jevtić 1983, p. 25; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 39-40).

Another place of interest is *Novopazarska Banja* (the Spa of Novi Pazar), situated some 4 km to the northeast from Novi Pazar, opposite to the Pešter plateau, on the lowest north-eastern slopes of the Rogozna Mountain. It is worth mentioning that the hot mineral springs of the spa have been known to the inhabitants of the region since the deepest past. The cult place was worshiped in the Roman times, too. Remains of the Roman spa baths are situated to the southeast from the Turkish bath and the site of Igralište. In 1875 Novopazarska Banja was visited by English archaeologist Arthur Evans, who left precise descriptions of the bath, considering its central part to be remnants of the antique thermae from the 4th century (Премовић-Алексић 2014, p. 123; Ljuština 2022, p. 77).

Rescue excavations at the site of *Igralište* in *Novopazarska Banja* revealed a multi-layered site. Its stratigraphy does not reveal a picture of overlapping and negation, but of existence within the same sacral and cultural postulate. There were four big mounds containing graves from the Late Bronze Age Brnjica group, a part of a larger tumulus with graves dating from the Iron Age, as well as some remains of buildings from the first centuries AD. The part of the Iron Age tumulus that was discovered, contained a skeletal grave (G-1/86) with the deceased in stretched position on his back, lined with a stone construction. The tumulus had two stone rings. The tumulus was originally about 8 m in diameter and some 0,80 m high. The position of the deceased at the mound's periphery indicates burial practice in a concentric pattern around a central grave. The grave inventory consisted of: two calotte-shaped bowls and some fragments of one or maybe two beakers with two handles, which were preserved near the head of the deceased. By his left side there were three spears and a knife near the chest, and a whetstone near the legs (Fig. 5/1-10). This grave reveals great similarity with the graves of the 4th burial horizon in the tumulus I at the site Latinsko Groblje in Glogovik and confirms its attribution to the Glasinac cultural circle (Јовановић 1995, p. 32; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 44).

If we go back to the Pešter plateau, not all the necropolises show unity in funerary space between the populations of Late Bronze Age Brnjica group and the Iron Age Glasinac group. At the site of *Gračanska Polja* in the village of *Gračane* there was a large tumular necropolis, with registered 64 tumuli. Small mounds are dispersed along the edges of a hilly plateau. Only four isolated mounds are slightly larger, 10-12 m in diameter and 1 m high. The tumuli were constructed of stone and earth and usually denuded in the southeast sections due to a heavy wind erosion. There were neither stone coverings nor peripheral stone circles. Five mounds were explored, two smallest (No. II and III) of which did not have burial units. It is important to notice that the tumulus II was attributed to the earlier phase of the First Iron Age, based on the fragmented cup decorated with false cord motifs. Unornamented pottery from the tumulus III can generally connect it to the Late Bronze Age and/or the First Iron Age. The tumulus I has two burial horizons. A presumption was made that the older burial horizon of the tumulus I at *Gračanska Polja*, with skeletal graves, can be attributed to the end of the Middle and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. The younger burial horizon can be connected with the Glasinac Iron Age culture and dated at the period from the middle of the 6th to the middle of the 5th century BC, thanks to the analogies with the 4th burial horizon at Glogovik-Latinsko Groblje (Jevtić 1997, p. 303-304; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 41).

The Iron Age graves from the mound I in Gračanska Polja belong to three adults (graves 1, 2 and 4) and 2 infants (graves 6 and 7) (Fig. 6). Only the grave 1, which belonged to a gracile adult male, up to 40 years old, had a massive rectangular construction. Stone construction of the grave 6, in which only parts of skull and a richly decorated small jug (Fig. 8) were found, was heavily damaged. The skeletal grave 7 of an up to 1 year old child was without grave construction or grave goods. Inventory of the male grave 2 (up to 20 years old) contained an iron knife by his waist (Fig. 6/11) and a ceramic cup by his feet. The graves 1 and 4 were burials of warriors and yielded modest selection of offensive iron weapons. In the grave 1 (Fig. 6) there were: a curved single-bladed sword about 40 cm long, a small iron knife, two iron spears with long sockets and narrow blades, and a small single-handled cup with slanting rim decorated with channelling. Inventory of the grave 4 (up to 60-year-old male) included: a short iron spear (Fig. 6/10) and a long iron knife (Fig. 6/14) by the deceased's legs, a small knife with curved blade (Fig. 6/5) by the waist, and a part of some mechanism resembling modern iron pocketknife with wooden sheath. Pieces of adornment (Fig. 6/1, 3) were also made of iron. Along with the metal finds, there were also two undecorated jugs with single handle raising above the slanting rim. They were placed near the deceased's knees. The find of an iron knife (Fig. 6/7) in the vicinity of the damaged child burial (grave 6) emphasizes the impression of warlike character of the Iron Age burial horizon in the tumulus I (Jevtić 1997, p. 305; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 42).

In the central part of the base of the large tumulus IV in Gračanska Polja, a massive construction of broken stones was discovered, together with the remains of a skeletal burial (grave 1). The robust male which was buried there, was placed in stretched position on his back, with only a small biconical beaker with two handles. Above the stone covering of the central grave, in a thick layer of broken stones, there were traces of a sacrificial construction and a cremated grave (grave 1a), which comprised small pieces of human bones and larger bone fragments belonging to domesticated ruminants. The parts of skeletons belonged to two individuals – one partially cremated and one not cremated. The whole find can be treated as a grave with cremation. In a layer with tiny stones and soil, along with some particles of human bones, there were scattered pieces of fired wood, charcoal, burnt clay, pottery sherds, bronze jewellery, amber beads, a larger pendant of rock-crystal, iron weapons etc. (Fig. 7/1-10). Judging by the traces of fire on the finds, it is obvious that they were collected from the pyre. A bronze boat-shaped fibula with trapezoid catchplate ending in large ring (Fig. 7/1) is chronologically the most distinctive find, dated at the IVc phase of the Glasinac culture and the end of 6th and beginning of the 5th century BC (Jevtić 1997, p. 304; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 41-42).

Only one grave with clearly distinctive burial construction was discovered on the base of the tumulus V in Gračanska Polja. The deceased was in stretched position, on a surface of tiny broken stones, and was surrounded by a stone row and covered with stone slabs. By the skeletal remains of a male from the mound V there were two short iron spears, a small curved iron knife (Fig. 7/12-14), an elongated whetstone (Fig. 7/13) and three ceramic vessels. At the bottom of the mound there were scattered bones of a male, obviously from a destroyed burial to whom a long and narrow spear (Fig. 7/15) was attributed (Jevtić 1997, p. 304; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 42).

The pottery from the graves from Gračanska Polja, particularly single-handled jugs with slanting rim (Fig. 8, from the inventory of the infant grave 6 in mound I) and pottery sherds from the bottom and the filling of the mounds have close parallels with the finds from Glasinac-Mati complex.

A tumulus in the Pešter village of *Melaje* revealed significantly different funerary remains. At the base of the mound there was a large circular area, lined with a row of broken stones, with traces of intense fire. Above the layer of burnt soil, a thick layer of ashes and charcoal was found, as well as pieces of carbonised wood, burnt animal bones, and tiny particles of human bones, which indicate ustrinum. The pyre place was covered with soil and broken stones. There were neither separate grave constructions nor grave goods placed into the graves after the burning process had been completed (Јевтић 1992, p. 8). Pottery sherds were spread all over the earthen covering of the mound. Except the numerous fragments decorated with the false cord technique (at the base of the mound an extraordinary find of an imprint tool was found), there were some fragments of vessels made on potter's wheel, of Greek provenance, and also some hand-made pottery under Greek influence. Only on the basis of ceramic material, two burial horizons can be sorted out: an older horizon with the false cord pottery (Basarabi style) and a younger horizon with Greek imports (Јевтић 1992, p. 10; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 43). The tumulus from Melaje, accompanied with the pottery find from the tumulus II Gračanska Polja in Gračane, is indicative of connectivity of the region with the north-eastern cultural circle, characterised by the pottery decorated in the Basarabi style. It is possible that more detailed analysis of pottery from the other sites will provide more material in support of it.

In the same zone a number of tumular necropolises (Bobovik, Crnoča-Gomile, Crnoča-Piskavac, Doljani-Krš, Glogovik-Humke, Raspoganče Glavica) can only testify to the Iron Age funerary practices by the presence of the local Glasinac culture pottery (Fig. 9). Despite the scarce data obtained from the sites, it is important to pay attention to them for the future research activities. In 1986, in the vicinity of Novi Pazar, a partially devastated tumulus was discovered, while building a local road between the villages Bobovik and Roginje. The site known as *Bobovik* is located on a slope, with presumably only one mound. The size of the mound, its structure, type of grave constructions and number of burials remain unknown. Some parts of human skeleton, a small ceramic vessel, some fragments of spiral bronze headgear and six bronze calotte buttons originate from the mound. All of the researchers (Јазвић 1989, p. 149; Јевтић 1996, p. 9; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 39) attributed the finds to the First Iron Age. The site of *Gomile* is situated on the outskirts of the village of *Crnoča*, towards the Golać hill. A group of 11 mounds with diameters 12-20 m and heights 0.80-1.70 m could be recognised at the site. One of the mounds was excavated in 1978. Its diameter was 16.5 m, its core consisted of massive stone slabs, and its cairn - of broken stones and pebbles. There were no traces of human remains inside the mound. The cairn comprised pottery sherds and stone hammer-axes, typical for the end of Eneolithic or the Early Bronze Age. The second mound explored in the same campaign revealed finds of the same type. Remains of the First Iron Age (Hallstatt C) graves were found in one of the mounds (Јетица 1982, p. 10; Јевтић 1996, p. 8; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 39; Премовић-Алексић 2014, p. 233; Ljuština 2022, p. 72-73). Immediately above the site Gomile in *Crnoča*, at a small plateau – the site of *Piskavac*, there are four mounds (diameters 25-35m, heights 2-2.5 m). Stone was taken out from one of the mounds, and a large number of ceramic sherds and a couple of bronze pendants were discovered. These finds can be chronologically attributed to the Late Hallstatt period, namely to the phase Va of the Glasinac culture (500-350 BC) (Јетица 1982, p. 10, 15; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 39). In the village of *Doljani* near Sopoćani, at the site *Krš*, a devastated mound was found. The only information that can be given for the mound is that it yielded some grave finds from the Iron Age (Hallstatt C-D period) (Јевтић 1996, p. 9; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 40). In the village of *Glogovik*, well-known by the site of Latinsko Groblje, another necropolis was discovered at the site of *Humke*. It consisted of 6 mounds,

two of which were flattened by agricultural activities, while the others reach the height of 2m. In three of the mounds excavated in 1977, there were some Iron Age graves, the inventory of which indicated that they belonged to the phase Va of the Glasinac culture (Јетица 1982, p. 10, 15; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 40). Further away for the Pešter plateau, in the vicinity of Sjenica, in the area of the village *Raspoganče*, the site of *Glavica* is situated. A mound was determined at the site, with some finds dating from the Iron Age (Јевтић 1996, p. 9; Jevtić and Ljuština 2008, p. 45).

Martial society? Iron Age funerary practices in the Novi Pazar region

Comprehension of funerary practices sheds light on the Iron Age communities, their mobility and connectivity during the first half of the 1st millennium BC. Complementary data can be obtained from the nearby settlement sites of hillfort type (cf. Ljuština 2020). During the First Iron Age, this region testified to the shift in cultures, being a boundary area between the local Late Bronze Age Brnjica group populations and newcomers from the Glasinac culture. The bearers of the Brnjica group, who settled the region in the last centuries of the 2nd millennium BC, practiced cremation of the deceased. Their standard funerary practice included placing bodily remains in urns covered with large bowls, well protected by stone constructions inside smaller tumuli with peripheral stone enclosures. Nothing in the mortuary record can be indicative of warrior identity of the deceased. Such necropolises were discovered at the sites of Humpa in Dojeviće, Igralište in Novopazarska Banja, Utrine in Delimeđe and Latinsko Groblje in Glogovik, and more recently at two sites - Vlaško Groblje and Grčka Crkva - in the village of Pružanj (Ljuština 2022). Interestingly, some of the sites (Igralište in Novopazarska Banja, Utrine in Delimeđe and Latinsko Groblje in Glogovik) testified to the secondary burials from the First Iron Age belonging to the Glasinac culture. Among the Iron Age graves of inhumed deceased at these sites, with the site of Gračanska Polja in Gračane as an important addition, the graves with iron weapons can be found (Fig. 9).

Comparison of the data obtained by the analyses of the treatment of bodily remains, position, type, number, quality, luxuriousness of grave goods on one side, with the features concerning tumulus size and its architectonic features on the other - indicates that among the Iron Age graves in western Serbia a gradation, probably based on the social status and role in the society the deceased played in his/her lifetime, should be recognised (Dmitrović, Ljuština 2020, p. 104). This particularly stands for the communities incorporated in the Glasinac cultural circle. The study on the female costume by B. Teržan (Teržan 2021) confirmed that in the territory of the Glasinac culture, rigorous and normative structural principles were in use, on which its social organisation was based. These principles regulated relations and bonds both among the members of the society on the nuclear level – within a particular family group, as well as among the separate families or clans (cf. Teržan 2021, p. 51). In spite of the fact that tracing objects identifying martial character of the Glasinac population was not the focal point of B. Teržan's study, she did recognize that in Latinsko Groblje in Glogovik, where in the tumulus I male warrior graves predominated, the two female burials (Fig. 4a-b), similarly as in the tumulus C of Podilijak in the core territory of the Glasinac culture in southeastern Bosnia, contained a piece of weapon. According to B. Teržan (Teržan 2021, p. 48) these knives (Fig. 3/7, 14) acted in the grave inventories in a similar manner as in the male graves, where as a rule one-bladed swords/machairas are found (Fig. 3 15, 20, 25, 28). B. Teržan's analysis confirmed that through female costume in each of the analysed tumuli from both southeastern Bosnia and southwestern Serbia the same kind of differentiation, hierarchization and/or polarisation of its female sphere is expressed (Teržan 2021, p. 49). Selecting the grave position in tumulus was not left to coincidence, but rather a matter of rigid, although unwritten, rules. The place was determined in regard to central grave and

cardinal points, while at the same time it depended on age, class and status of the deceased within the framework of its family group (Teržan 2021, p. 49).

Speaking of more precise chronological attribution of the sites and finds, it is worth noting that it was actually the members of martial society of the Glasinac culture who settled the studied area of southwestern Serbia in the second phase of the development of the culture. Despite we lack the warrior graves *sensu stricto* in the Pešter plateau from this early phase, presence of knives in the inventory of the female graves 22 and 38 Latinsko Groblje in Glogovik point to the significance and importance of weapons even for presumably non-warrior part of the society.

Expected mobility of the populations generally prone to war is additionally confirmed by relations with more remote regions. In the case of southwestern Serbia, the relations it had during Ha C with the north-eastern cultural circle characterised by the pottery decorated in the Basarabi style, were recognised in presence of specific pottery at the tumular necropolises in Melaje and Gračanska Polja as well as in some contemporary hillforts (cf. Ljuština 2020). The pieces of information are very few and incomplete so that it cannot be debated about the character of the relations.

In the course of time, some elements in funerary practices of the populations in the Novi Pazar region changed. Cremation predominated, grave goods, which consisted of more elaborated and refined bronze jewellery and ceramic vessels in some cases imported or made under the influence of the material from north Greece or south Macedonia (Fig. 9), point to stronger connections with Kosovo and southern parts of the Balkan peninsula. In the mounds II and III at Latinsko Groblje in Glogovik, as well as in some of the mounds from the neighbouring sites Glogovik-Humke and Crnoča-Piskavac there were some graves with grave goods characteristic for the Glasinac Va phase. This should be considered the last phase of the First Iron Age in the region.

Conclusions

Presence of spearheads, knives and swords in the graves under tumuli in the Pešter necropolises Latinsko Groblje in Glogovik, Gračanska Polja in Gračane, Utrina in Delimeđe, as well as in Igralište in Novopazarska Banja, indicates warrior spirit of the newcomers who came to the region from the west and established a powerful chiefdom, as confirmed by the construction of the rich princely grave at the site of Church of St. Peter and Paul in Novi Pazar.

Selection of objects which became grave inventory, and also the position a grave occupied inside the space of tumulus was not left to coincidence. Despite not very numerous sites and graves in the examined sample, rules and regulations were recognised. They depended upon the social status of the deceased, the establishment of which was influenced by martial merits. Warrior identity was emphasized by the presence of the shiny arms, even in the symbolic form of knives in female graves. This is how one can read the funerary record. How it really functioned during the lifetime of the people archaeologists discovered equipped for the afterlife, remains unknown.

Some of the analysed necropolises revealed changes of some elements within the funerary standards as the time passed. In comparison with the inhumation, which was here standardized in the phase Glasinac IVb, in the later phase cremation predominated. Grave goods, generally characterised by more elaborated and refined bronze jewellery and ceramic

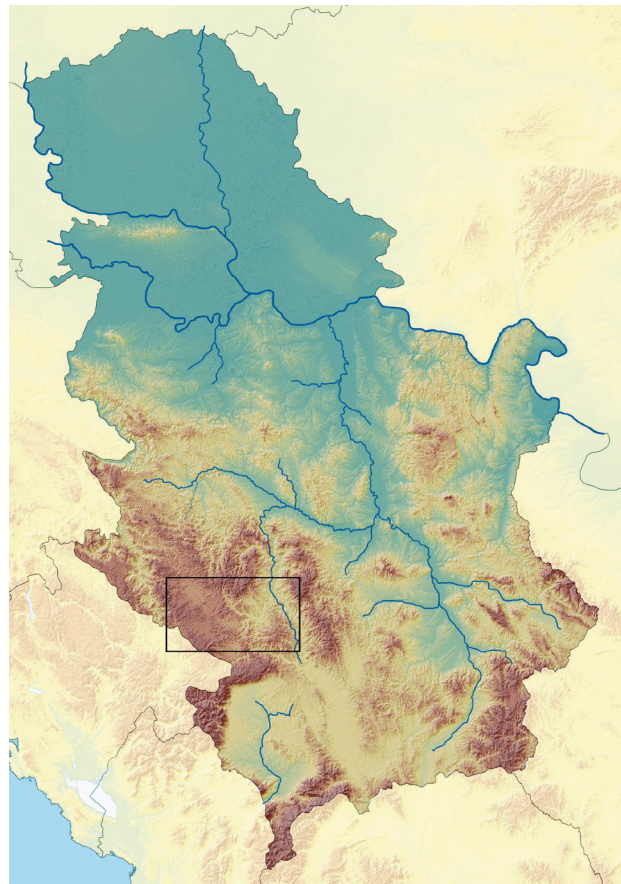
vessels in some cases imported or made under the influence of the material from north Greece or south Macedonia, point to stronger connections with Kosovo and southern parts of the Balkan peninsula. However, weapons remained in grave inventory pertaining to traditionally martial society.

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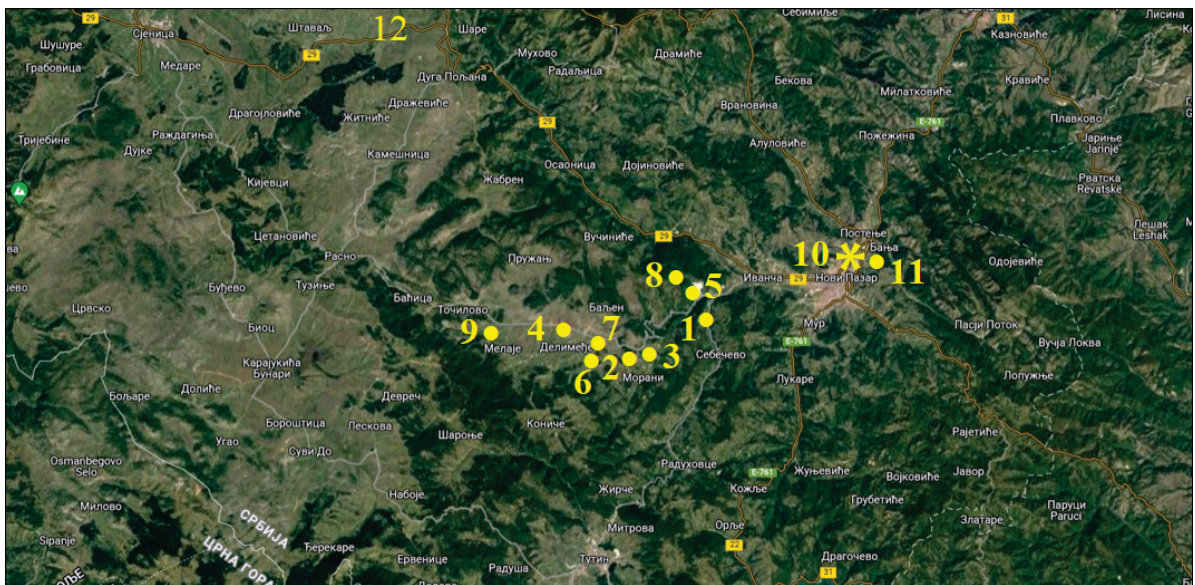
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1a



1b

Fig. 1a = Map of Serbia with marked region of Novi Pazar; **1b** = Map of the Iron Age necropolises in the Novi Pazar region: 1 = Bobovik, 2 = Crnoča, Gomile, 3 = Crnoča, Piskavac, 4 = Delimeđe, Utrina, 5 = Doljani, Krš, 6 = Glogovik, Humke, 7 = Glogovik, Latinsko Groblje, 8 = Gračane, Gračanska Polja, 9 = Melaje, Livada kod džamije, 10 = Novi Pazar, Church of St. Peter and Paul, 11 = Novopazarska Banja, Igralište, 12 = Raspoganče, Glavica.



Fig. 2. Novi Pazar, the site of St. Peter and Paul church during the excavations in 2022, with marked mantle of the tumulus (after Ljuština 2023).

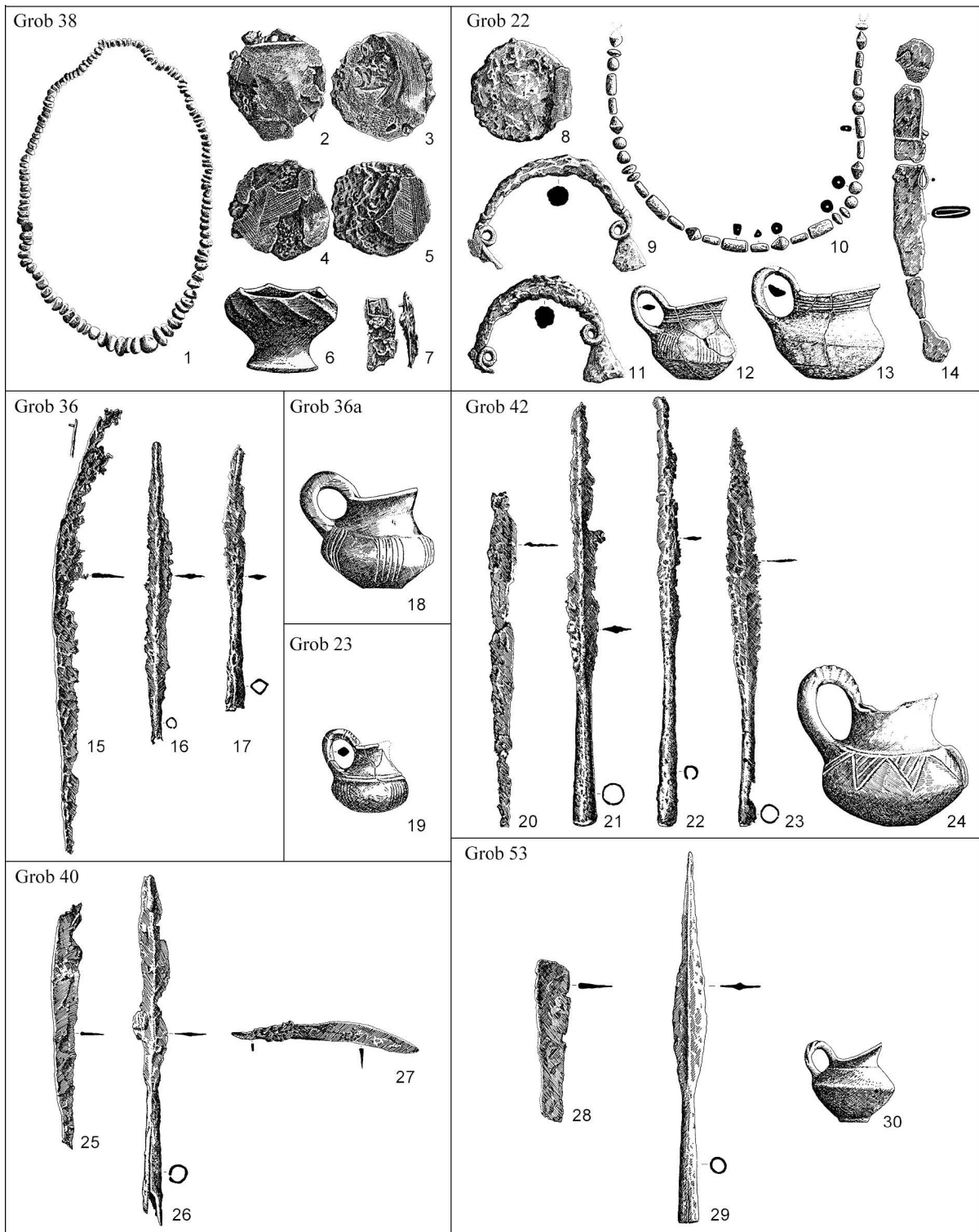


Fig. 3. Glogovik, the site of Latinsko Groblje - mound I, inventory of the graves 22, 23, 36, 36a, 38, 40, 42, 53 (after Teržan 2021).

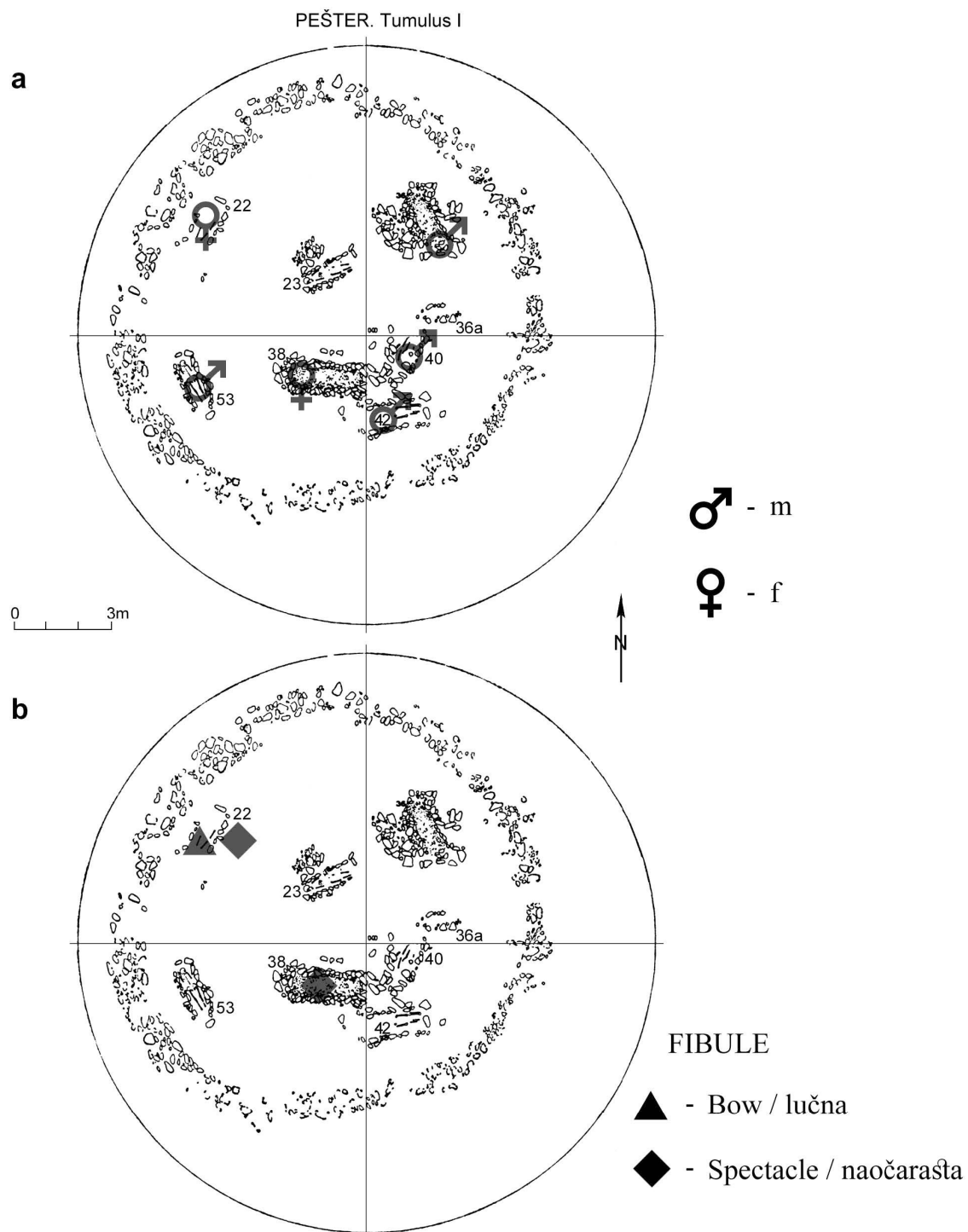


Fig. 4. Glogovik, the site of Latinsko Groblje - mound I, ground plan – a = arrangement of graves in relation to sex, b = arrangement of graves in relation to the fibulae types (after Teržan 2021).

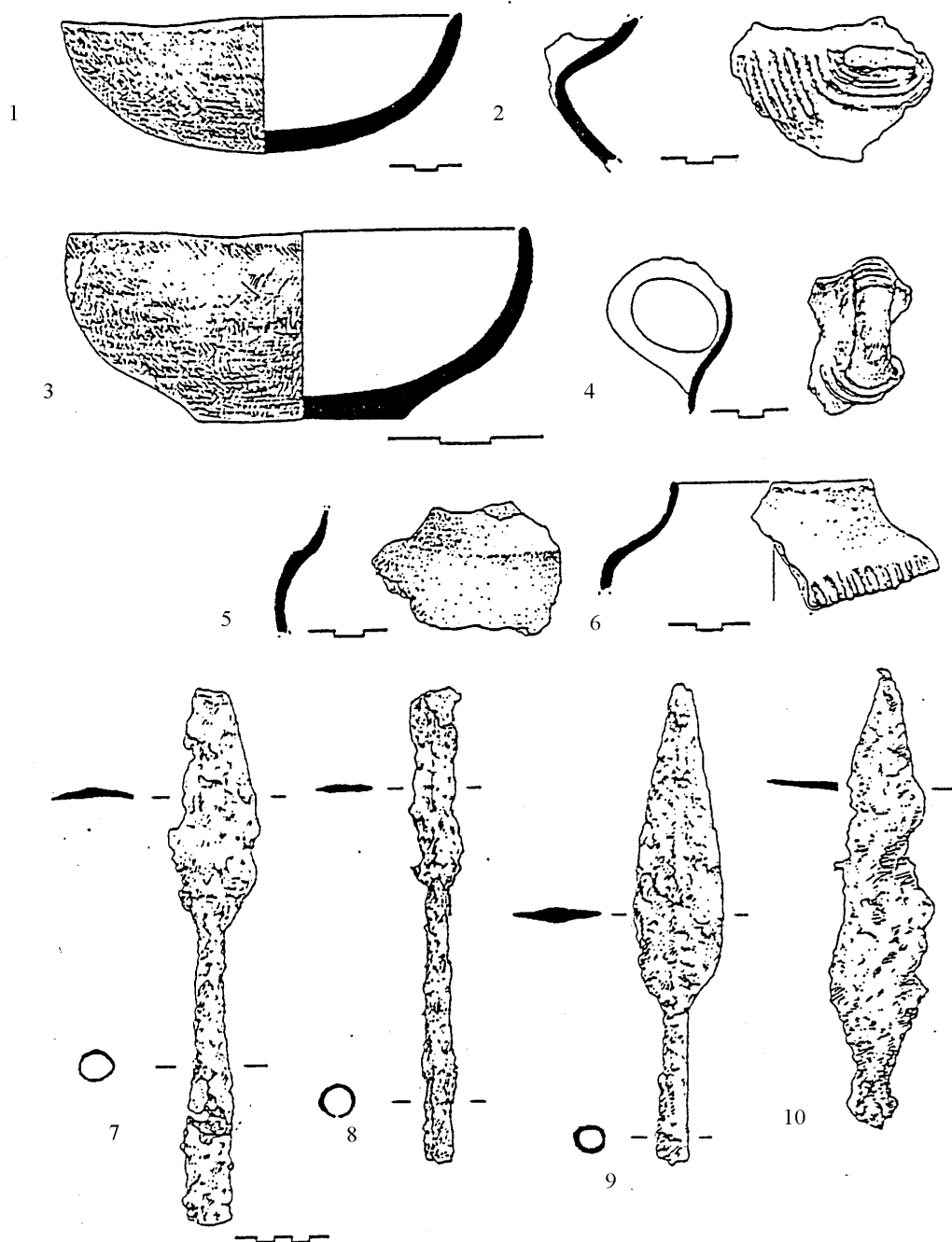


Fig. 5. Novopazarska Banja, the site of Igralište – inventory of the grave 1/86 (after Јовановић 1995).

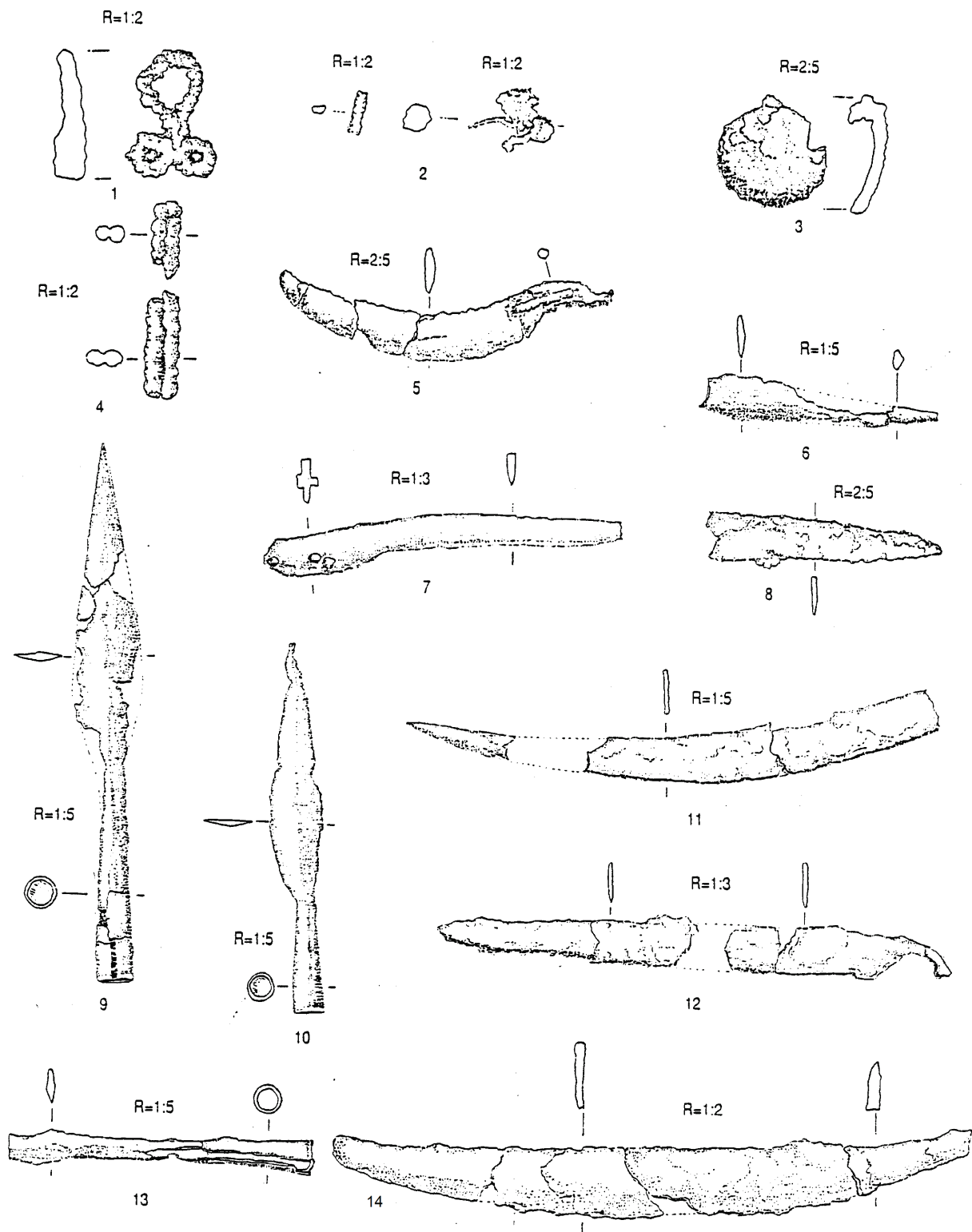


Fig. 6. Gračane, the site of Gračanska Polja – mound I, iron objects from the inventory of the graves 1, 2, 4 and 6 (after Jevtić 1997).

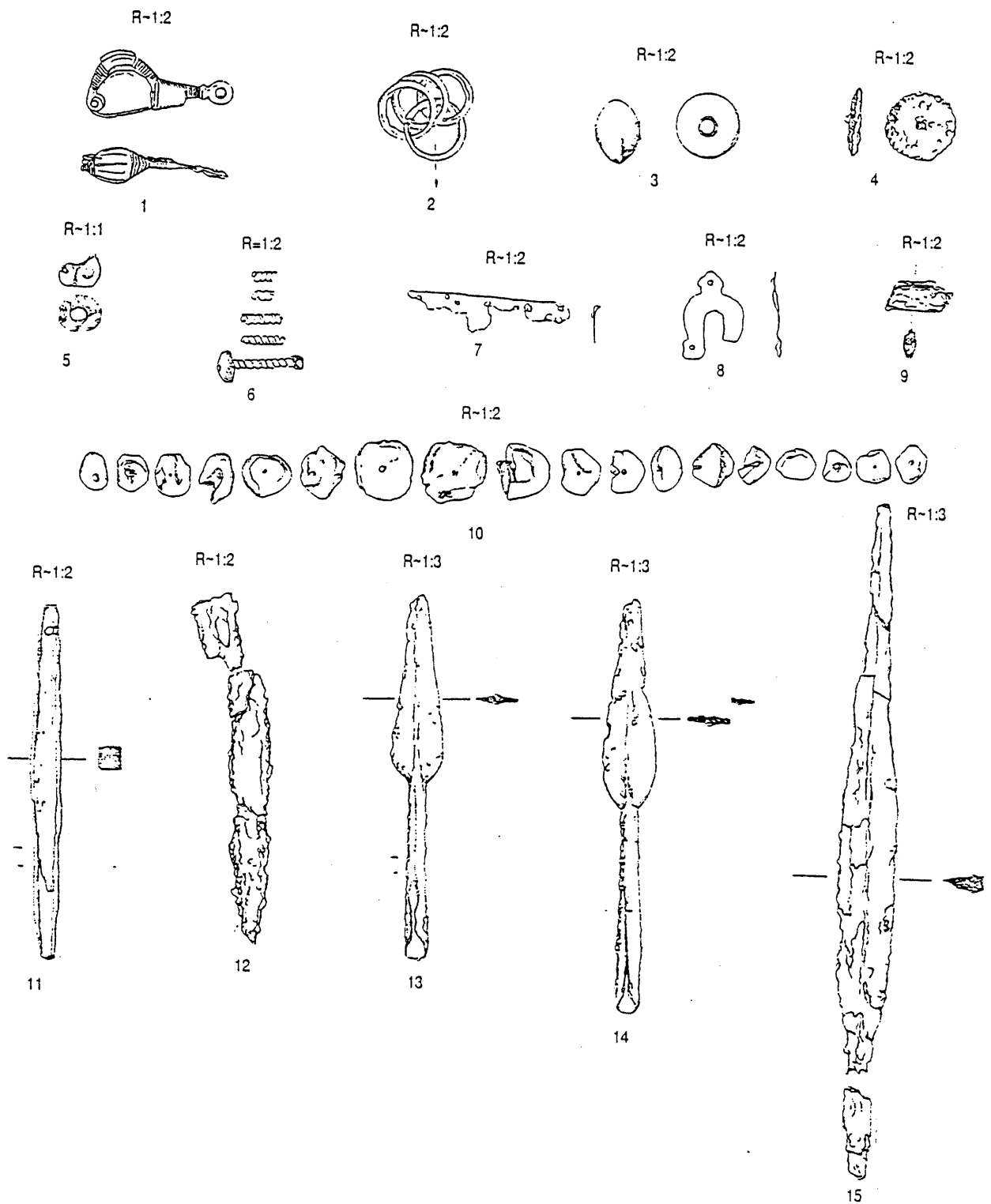


Fig. 7. Gračane, the site of Gračanska Polja – 1-10 = mound IV, inventory of the grave 1a, 11-15 = mound V, inventory of the grave 1 (after Jevtić 1997).



Fig. 8. Gračane, the site of Gračanska Polja - mound I, ceramic cup from inventory of the grave 6 (https://vm.muzejnp.rs/portfolio/pristorija-predmeti/#group_5317-4).

| Site with Iron Age burials | Tumuli | Late Bronze Age Brnjica culture burials | Local Glasinac culture pottery | Pottery in Basarabi style | Imported Greek wheel-thrown pottery | Iron weapons | Princely grave |
|--|--------|---|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Bobovik | x | | x | | | | |
| Crnoča, Gomile | x | | x | | | | |
| Crnoča, Piskavac | x | | G. Va | | | | |
| Delimeđe, Utrina | x | x | x | | | Spears, knives | |
| Doljani, Krš | x | | x | | | | |
| Glogovik, Humke | x | | G. Va | | | | |
| Glogovik, Latinsko Groblje | x | x | G. IVb G. IVc G. Va – mounds II and III | | x | Spears, swords, knives | |
| Gračane, Gračanska Polja | x | | G. IVc | x | | Spears, knives | |
| Melaje, Livada kod džamije | x | | x | x | x | | |
| Novi Pazar, Church of St. Peter and Paul | x | x | x | | x | | x |
| Novopazarska Banja, Igralište | x | x | G. IVc | | x | Spears, knives | |
| Raspoganče, Glavica | x | | x | | | | |

Fig. 9. Iron Age Necropolises in the Novi Pazar region, Southwestern Serbia.