FUROR NORMANNORUM

A 9–11. századi kétélű kardok kutatása: régészeti, metallurgiai megközelítések

Research on 9-11th Century Double-Edged Swords: Archaeological and Metallurgical Approaches

NKFI Mecenatúra 2021/140807

19–23/09/ 2022.
Szent II. János Pál Pápa Díszterem, 1088 Budapest, Szentkirályi u. 28–30.

September 19 (Monday)

14.00–14.30	Opening speeches
14.30–15.00	Introduction of the PPKE 'Double-edged Swords Research Group'
15.00–15.40	Plenary speech – Neil Price (University of Uppsala): Arms and the (Wo)man: Swords, Gender, and Death in the Viking Age
15.40–16.20	Plenary speech – Gareth Williams (British Museum): Swords for the living and the dead
16.20–17.00	Discussion
17.00–17.30	László Tapolcai (Eötvös Loránd University): The Political and Territorial Changes in East-Central Europe after the Battle of Lechfeld (955–972)
17.30–19.00	Reception at the hall

September 20 (Tuesday)

Archaeometallurgy – Chairman: Béla Török

9.00–9.40	Plenary speech – Alan Williams (The Wallace Collection, London): Swords in Medieval Europe – possible methods of analysis
9.40–10.00	Discussion & coffee break
10.00–10.20	Mathias Mehofer (University of Vienna): Archaeometallurgical analyses of early medieval weaponry from Austria

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DOUBLE-EDGED SWORDS AND POLEARMS OF WESTERN ORIGIN IN THE TERRITORY OF PRESENT-DAY SERBIA: AN OVERVIEW AND REINTERPRETATION

Milica Radisic

Findings of weapons of western – Late Carolingian origin are not a common occurrence in the territory of today's Serbia. Around twenty examples are known, with approximately half of them being double-edged swords, and the rest axes and spearheads. The weapons are primarily concentrated in Vojvodina and the Serbian part of the Danube valley; these territories represent the furthest south-eastern periphery of the appearance of Carolingian weapons in Central Europe. Items we will discuss here have mostly been already published in catalogues, review papers, or individually in professional articles, but they have not been gathered in one place before. Several of the swords have been analysed by Z. Vinski and L. Kovács in the 1980's and 1990s, and in the meantime, I. Fodor, D. Mrkobrad and M. Aleksić focused their attentions on a number of other specimens of swords and battle axes. Most recently, A. Sajdl wrote about winged spearheads.

The goal of this paper is to provide a complete overview of all the weapons, with their typological and production characteristics, for a wider scientific public and possibly discuss new details where necessary (in accordance with capabilities i.e., current availability of the material). Considering the fact that those were accidental or insufficiently documented findings from graves, there are no conditions for contextual analysis and a closer interpretation of the socio-symbolic role of the weapons. On the other hand, available specimens represent evidence of political events and broader interregional contacts in the period between the 9th and the 11th century. In this sense, pieces with an earlier dating, otherwise few in number, can be interpreted in the context of the expansion of influence of the Carolingian Empire, and indirectly, the Principality of Great Moravia as well, while pieces from the second half of the 10th and the 11th century are thus linked to the expansion of the Hungarian state towards the Balkans.

Along with the standard types of swords well-known throughout Europe, such as types W, X, Y, and Z from Sombor, Novi Bečej, Zrenjanin, Kovin, Vršac, and Banatski Brestovac *(Fig. 1. 1–3),* a special type of double-edged sword has also been documented in Serbia – one without a pommel, with a short rhomboid crossguard. Such are the swords from Horgoš and Batajnica in Vojvodina (Fig. 1. 4), and from Kladovo in Eastern Serbia. Resembling them are two swords from the Jegeniš gravel pit in the Croatian Drava region and one from Ernei in the central part of Romania. Hence, this represents a group of unusual swords from more or less peripheral parts of the Carpathian Basin, which could indicate a special (local?) circle of workshops for production of such weaponry. It is important to note that the aforementioned swords have not yet been considered as an exceptional group of weapons. Another specificity related to this group of findings is the fact that

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Fig. 1. Swords from Vršac (1), Zrenjanin (2), Kovin (3), Batajnica (4)

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the swords from Horgoš and Batajnica had a bent blade at the time of discovery (the latter was straightened in conservation). Based on the current state of research, it seems that bent weapons represent an extremely rare occurrence in East-Central Europe; to the best of the author's knowledge, there are only two examples from Slovakia which date back to the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century.

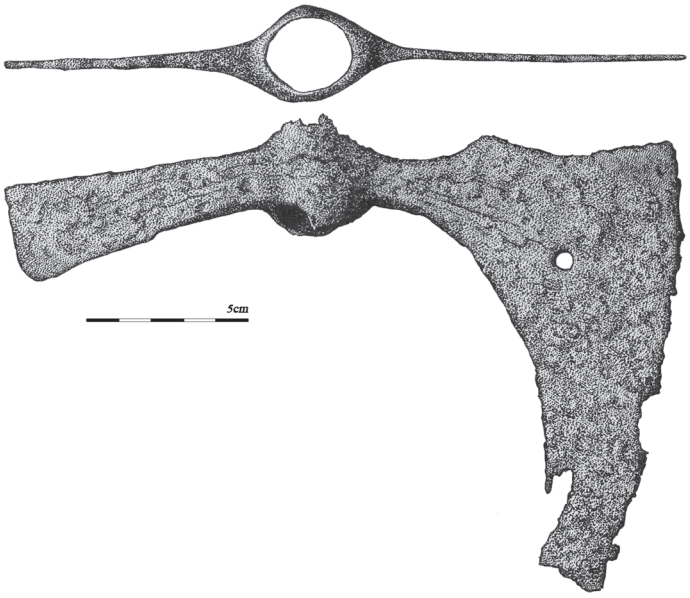

Fig. 2. Axe from Doroslovo

The presence of double-edged Late Carolingian swords in the Carpathian Basin has been interpreted not only through the operations of mercenaries in the army of the Hungarian rulers, but also in terms of a change in the tactics of warfare of the Hungarians themselves. In the context of the mercenary army in the southern parts of the Hungarian state, of significance is the finding of a battle axe of a Kievan-Russian origin, from a partially documented horseman's grave in Doroslovo, Bačka *(Fig. 2).* Some are of the opinion that foreign weapons could have been used by the local army, as well, especially since a slightly higher concentration of swords was observed in the region of Banat, which, according to historical sources, was the location of Ajtony's independent principality, resisting the Hungarian conquest until the first decades of the 11th century. This is all the more probable as the practice of using Western weaponry existed among the Slavic elite of the Great Moravian and Pannonian principalities even before the Hungarian migrations.

Standing out among the findings of spears are the specimens of winged spearheads from Šuljam in Syrmia, and Bačevci in Western Serbia, from the banks of the river Drina. The latter spear holds remains of a wooden pole in its socket, which makes it possible to determine its more precise chronology through a future radiocarbon dating. This makes for a highly favourable circumstance considering the fact that the chronology of the spears is not quite clearly defined, so the datings range across a wide span of two centuries.

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