

EPHEMERIS NAPOCENSIS

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Any correspondence will be sent to the editor:
INSTITUTUL DE ARHEOLOGIE ȘI ISTORIA ARTEI
Str. M. Kogălniceanu nr. 12–14, 400084 Cluj-Napoca, RO
e-mail: choprean@yahoo.com

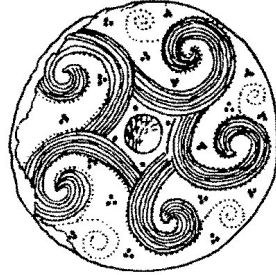
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EARLY MEDIEVAL SPURS IN TRANSYLVANIA (7TH–10TH CENTURIES AD)*

Călin Cosma¹

Abstract: *A total number of 12 spurs have been discovered in Transylvania, belonging to different chronological sequences between the 7th and 10th centuries AD. The finds come from nine sites located on different Transylvanian areas. The spurs discovered in Transylvania belonged to some warriors who had distinct functions in the Transylvanian society. Some finds can be also interpreted as objects used by the elites in the military parades. The presences of these spurs, and implicitly of the warriors who had worn them, in settlements located along the trading routes connecting the Transylvanian plateau with Pannonia is normal considering the need of the communities of this period, or more precisely of the political authority which had jurisdiction over the region, to control and protect the commercial activities that were carried out on the roads leading towards other European territories.*

Keywords: *spurs, military equipment, warrior, Early Medieval period*

For the early Middle Ages and not only, the spurs, important accessories of military equipment, reported beside other weaponry items in various geographical areas and diverse ethnocultural environments, provide multiple opportunities for a more restricted dating of find-sites as well as data on the social status of their holders within respective community, extending on their entire geographical insertion area. Spurs present in areas other than the area of origin were believed to account for foreign influences that various geographical areas were under, impacting on the political status of the area of discovery.

The Transylvanian territory makes no exception: over time, several spurs dating to the early Middle Ages were identified here. Some, like the spurs from the southern half of Transylvania, raised the specialists' interest². There are however, deficiencies. A series of spurs were mistakenly published, errors which reflected on their typology and dating. We believe it is appropriate to reconsider the debate on the spurs in Transylvania dated to the early Middle Ages based on recent evidence related to the typological specificities of the already published spurs, data also completed by novel finds.

I. Catalogue of finds

1. Breaza (Lisa commune, Braşov county)

1.1. Iron spur (Pl. 1/1). The spur from Breaza was identified in an earth layer overlying a Dacian settlement. Respective earth layer is overlapped by an occupation layer of a 13th–14th

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¹ Institute of Archaeology and Art History Cluj-Napoca, Romanian Academy Cluj Branch, M. Kogălniceanu str. 12–14, 400084, Cluj-napoca, Cluj county, RO: e-mail: cosma.calin@yahoo.com.

² MADGEARU 1994, 153–163.

centuries fortification³. The lower half of one of the two sides did not preserve, being originally broken. The spur is “D”-shaped in plan. The heel band is oval in section; the slightly thickened end of the preserved side is outward curved. The spike, made of the same bar as the sides, is straight and rectangular/rhomboid in section. The spike terminates in a pyramidal point. The upper part of the two sides as well as the spike preserve bronze wire inlay of equal length, placed in parallel. Sizes: $H_{\text{total}} = 8.5$ cm; $H_{\text{spur without spike}} = 7$ cm; $H_{\text{spike}} = 1.5$ cm; $W_{\text{maximal of sides}} = 0.7$ cm. History Museum of Sibiu, inv. no. A 8000.

2. Dăbâca (Dăbâca commune, Cluj county)

2.1. Iron spur plated with golden foil (Pl. 2/1). Found inside a large building (surface dwelling with at least two rooms) identified inside the fourth enclosure of the fortification main construction phase⁴. Originally broken, the body preserves very little from the upper part of the two sides, together with the spike. The spike, rather short, is in the shape of two overlapping cones. $H_{\text{spike}} = 2$ cm. Museum of Transylvanian History of Cluj-Napoca, “Early Middle Ages” exhibition room, illegible inv. no.?

2.2. Iron spur plated with thin iron foil (Pl. 2/2). Discovered inside a large building (surface dwelling with at least two rooms) identified inside the fourth enclosure of the fortification main construction phase⁵. Originally broken, the body preserves very little from the upper part of the two sides, together with the spike. The two sides were made of an oval-shaped section bar. The spike, whose point is broken, is long and cylindrical in section. Item sizes: $H_{\text{spike preserved}} = 4.5$ cm. Museum of Transylvanian History of Cluj-Napoca, “Early Middle Ages” exhibition room, illegible inv. no.?

3. Iernut (city, Mureș county)

3.1. Iron spur (Pl. 1/3). Found in a dwelling of the early Middle Ages settlement, site “Pe Șes”, Sf. Gheorghe thorp, Iernut city⁶. The spur is “D”-shaped in plan; sides are oval in section. The arms terminals are outward bent, upward twisted and thickened. The spike, made of the same bar as the body, is straight and rectangular/rhomboid in section. The spike point is pyramidal. Item sizes: $H_{\text{total}} = 7.5$ cm; $H_{\text{spur without spike}} = 4.9$ cm; $H_{\text{spike}} = 2.6$ cm; $W_{\text{maximal of sides}} = 1$ cm. Institute of Archaeology and Art History of Cluj-Napoca.

3.2. Iron spur (Pl. 3/1–2). Identified in a dwelling from the early Middle Ages settlement, site “Pe Șes”, Sf. Gheorghe thorp, Iernut city⁷. The spur drawing appears in a catalogue of Transylvanian finds dated to the 8th–9th centuries⁸. The drawing exhibits a knob by mid preserved side, however the way that the side ended prior to cleaning is indicative of a different spur type than the real spur⁹. It was published prior being cleaned and restored. Subsequent x-ray, cleaning and restoration revealed the actual shape of the discussed item, different from that published in 1997. It is as follows: one of the arms was originally broken approximately by mid distance; it is “U”-shaped. The arms were made of rectangular section bar. The arm terminal (the one preserved) is bent outwards, forming a hook. The spike, made of the same bar as the body,

³ NÄGLER 1969, 89–121, especially 100–102, Fig. 6.2–3.

⁴ PASCU ET AL. 1968, 160–161, 169, 177–178.

⁵ PASCU ET AL. 1968, 160–161, 169, 177–178.

⁶ For digs at Iernut, Sfântu Gheorghe thorp, “Pe Șes” site see: *Cronica cercetărilor arheologice din România*, starting with 1990 and next.

⁷ For excavations at Iernut, Sfântu Gheorghe thorp, “Pe Șes” site see: CCA, starting with 1990 and next.

⁸ RUSU 1997, pl. XVII/4–5.

⁹ The spur from Iernut published in 1997, was discussed by I Stanciu within a study on the early Middle Age pottery from Transylvania. The quoted author is right to notice that the two knobs by mid sides are peculiar. The fact that the item was not cleaned and restored at that point deprived I. Stanciu from providing a real typological framing of the artifact: STANCIU 2000, 137–138, 155, no. 29, Pl. IX/5. We mention that the same study references three “Carolingian” spurs as being discovered at Iernut. In fact, there are two spurs dating to early Middle Ages (both presented herein: no. 3.1–2 in the catalogue of finds), and others dated to the Middle Age.

is pyramidal and its point is sharp. Sizes: $H_{\text{total}} = 11.5$ cm; $H_{\text{spur without spike}} = 10$ cm; $H_{\text{spike}} = 1.5$ cm; $W_{\text{maximal of sides}} = 1.00$ cm; $T_{\text{maximal of sides}} = 0.2$ cm; $W_{\text{maximal between sides}} = 5.3$ cm. Institute of Archaeology and Art History of Cluj-Napoca.

4. Medişoru Mare (Simoneşti commune, Harghita county)

Iron spur (Pl. 1/2). The spur from Medişoru Mare was found inside a dwelling (Cottage 2), within a 7th–8th C settlement¹⁰. The artifact is completely preserved. Its shape is semicircular. Terminals are outward everted, upward twisted and slightly thickened. The spike was made of the same bar and is pyramidal. The item was silver plated or inlaid. However, details concerning such ornament, the way it was made and placement on the item surface are lacking. Both the item description (rather sketchy) as well as the published drawing are not accompanied by size details.

5. Oradea (city, Bihor county)

Bronze spur (Pl. 4/1). Prior 1890, the Museum of Ethnography in Berlin purchased a bronze spur coming from Oradea¹¹. There is no specific information on the accurate context of discovery of the item. The spur preserved completely. The artifact is in “U” shape. The sides were made of a bar semicircular in section. The terminals are bent inward in the form of two hooks. The lower part of the sides to the point where the terminals are inward bent is ornamented with grooves. The spike base, made of the same bar as the body, is round and has several grooves, while the upper part is pine cone-shaped and is ornamented with longitudinal ribs. Sizes: $H_{\text{total}} = 8.2$ cm; $H_{\text{spur without spike}} = 5.7$ cm; $H_{\text{spike}} = 2.4$ cm; $W_{\text{maximal of sides}} = 0.5$ cm; $W_{\text{maximal between sides}} = 5.2$ cm. Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin, inv. no. 11310.

6. Peştera (village part of Aştileu commune, Bihor county)

1. Iron spur (Pl. 3/3). A catalogue of Transylvanian finds dated to the 8th–9th centuries publishes the drawing of a spur, whose find spot is Peştera¹². In fact, the item was discovered by I. Emödi from Oradea¹³ in Igrîţa cave, located by the border of Peştera, a village part of Aştileu commune, Bihor county. The spur, preserved completely, is “U”-shaped, with the lower part of the sides slightly outward curved. The arms were made of a bar with rectangular section. The two arms terminals are bent outwards, in the shape of two hooks. The spike, made of the same bar as the body, is pyramidal and the point is sharp. Sizes: $H_{\text{total}} = 9.4$ cm; $H_{\text{spur without spike}} = 8$ cm; $H_{\text{spike}} = 1.4$ cm; $W_{\text{maximal of sides}} = 1.00$ cm; $T_{\text{maximal of sides}} = 0.2$ cm; $W_{\text{maximal between sides}} = 8.5$ cm. I. Emödi collection at Oradea.

7. Şura Mică (Şura Mică commune, Sibiu county)

Iron spur (Pl. 2/3). At Şura Mică, land section named “Râşloave”, a completely preserved spur was found inside a dwelling dated by the excavation authors in the 8th–9th centuries¹⁴. The spur is semicircular. The arms were made of a thin bar of rectangular section. The upper part of the heel band is wider compared to the two arms. The two terminals, slightly wider, are provided with rectangular slots. The spike, made of the same bar as the body, is short and pyramidal. Sizes: $H_{\text{total}} = 6$ cm; $H_{\text{spur without spike}} = 4.5$ cm; $H_{\text{spike}} = 1.5$ cm; $W_{\text{maximum of sides}} = 1.7$ cm; $T_{\text{maximum of sides}} = 0.3$ cm; $W_{\text{maximal between sides}} = 8.5$ cm. History Museum of Sibiu.

8. Tărtăria (Sălişteia commune, Alba county)

8. 1–2. Two identical iron spurs (Pl. 5/1–2). In 1943, during the reconstruction of the national road on Mureş valley, near the railway station of Tărtăria, close to the prehistoric site of “Gura Luncii”, two spurs were discovered by chance¹⁵. Even though there are no additional

¹⁰ SZÉKELY 1988, 170–171, Fig. 20/1.

¹¹ OLSHAUSEN 1890, 187–188, Fig. 4; ZSCHILLE/FORRER 1891, 6, Pl. III/1.

¹² RUSU 1997, 423 no. 239, pl. XVII/1.

¹³ The excavation author, I. Emödi, provided us with details on the item features (shape, drawing, sizes etc), to whom we express our thanks herein.

¹⁴ NÄGLER/RILL 1981, 46–47, Fig. 12/1–3.

¹⁵ Subsequent the discovery, the two spurs were discussed in various historiographic contexts: HORED T 1949, 55–57, Fig. 3; HORED T 1954, 496–497, Fig. 3; HORED T 1958, 113, Fig. 33; HORED T 1986, 80, Fig. 34.1–

details on the find and/or other possible archaeological remains that would allow a more detailed view on the type of archaeological complex they belonged to, they were most likely part of burial goods¹⁶. The spurs preserved entirely, except for the slight corrosion of the sides plates ends. They are “U”-shaped and made of an oval-section bar. Both items have wider terminals in the shape of rectangular plates with double very well defined rows of three rivets. The spike was made of the same bar as the body. It is round in section and the point is sharp. It is relatively long and has two grooves at base. Sizes: $H_{total} = 17.9$ cm; $H_{spur\ without\ spike} = 14.3$ cm; $H_{spike} = 3.6$ cm; $W_{sides} = 0.8$ cm; $T_{maximal\ of\ sides} = 0.2$ cm; $W_{maximal\ between\ sides} = 8.6$ cm; $L_{plates} = 1.6$ cm; $W_{plates} = 1.6$ cm. The collection of the Museum of Transylvanian History of Cluj-Napoca, inv. no. V. 1629-V.1630.

9. Teiuș (city, Alba county)

Iron spur (Pl. 4/2). The collections of the Museum of Transylvanian History of Cluj comprise a spur originating from Teiuș or its surroundings. There is no data on the exact find spot or the way it was discovered. Thus, it is hard to specify the type of archaeological complex it belonged to.

The lower part of the spur arms was originally broken. The item is semicircular. The sides are oval in section. In the lower part, each side preserves an iron rivet. Together with other two rivets, no longer preserved, placed by the terminals, they supported an iron plate at a distance from the two spur sides. The empty space between the spur sides and the plate supported the fastening element to the footwear. The spike, made of the same bar as the body, is round in section and the top is broken. By spike base, on one of the sides, a projecting plate fragment is preserved. Sizes: $H_{total} = 7$ cm; $H_{spur\ without\ spike} = 5.5$ cm; $H_{preserved\ of\ spike} = 1.5$ cm; $W_{of\ sides} = 0.8$ cm; $T_{maximal\ of\ sides} = 0.4$ cm; $W_{maximal\ between\ sides} = 6.6$ cm. Collection of the Museum of Transylvanian History of Cluj-Napoca, inv. no. V. 34462.

II. Typology, chronology

A first typological group consists of the items from Breaza, one of the spurs at Iernut and the artifact from Medișorul Mare (Pl. 1, 6/I.). This was found in a complex dated to the 7th–8th centuries. The archaeological level where the spur from Breaza was identified yielded no further categories of archaeological materials dated to the early Middle Ages. The stratigraphy and spur were interpreted as reuse of a Dacian tower in early Middle Ages¹⁷. Analogies from Moravia, Předmostí¹⁸ are provided in order to support the dating of the spur at Breaza in the 8th–9th or only 9th centuries. The item there is similar by spike shape, however, the body shape and especially the two terminals are totally different from the spur at Breaza. Concerning the second analogy, the spurs at Rohrborn in Germany, they resemble the artifact at Breaza only by the ribbed decoration in the upper part of the two sides¹⁹. Nonetheless, the spike and body shapes as well as the side terminals of the two items from Germany differ entirely from the spur at Breaza. The spur identified on the territory of Bulgaria at Odârca dated to the 7th–8th centuries²⁰, also used as correspondent to the spur at Breaza²¹, is similar only in shape (semicircular), however both terminals as well as the spike are of different type. The spur from Iernut was discovered inside a dwelling where other artifacts dated to the 7th–8th centuries were also found²².

2; MADGEARU 1994, 154, 158; SIMINA 1996, 155–161, Fig. 1; PINTER 1998, 142, Fig. 2/2–3.

¹⁶ HORED T 1949, 55–57, Fig. 3; HORED T 1954, 496–497, Fig. 3; HORED T 1958, 113, Fig. 33; HORED T 1986, 80, Fig. 34.1–2; MADGEARU 1994, 154, 158; SIMINA 1996, 155–161, Fig. 1; PINTER 1998, 142, Fig. 2/2–3.

¹⁷ NÄGLER 1969, 101.

¹⁸ NÄGLER 1969, 101 and n. 7; DOSTÁL 1966, 158, no. 69.2, Pl. XXXVII/10.

¹⁹ REMPEL 1966, 104, Pl. 51/1–2.

²⁰ DONČEVA-PETKOVA 1987, 75, Fig. 7.a.

²¹ MADGEARU 1994, 154.

²² Novel research C. Cosma.

The three spurs from Breaza, Iernut and Medişoru Mare are relatively simple as type, being found over a rather long time frame, starting with the spurs from the Dacian period²³ and to a certain extent, to the German spurs dated until the 5th century²⁴.

The inlay decoration technique, with bronze in the case of the spur at Breaza, respectively silver in the case of the spur of Medişoru Mare, places them by the start of the early Middle Ages. Compared to the period until the 5th century²⁵, such procedure is often found on vast areas of early Middle Ages Europe, without being though a very refined chronological criterion for the above mentioned period²⁶.

According to the spike shape and size of the spurs of Breaza, Medişoru Mare and Iernut, the three artifacts belong to a period prior the 9th century, period when the spike length is reduced²⁷. Beginning with the end of the 9th century and then, in the following period, the spike length increases substantially, representing the actual element of chronological delimitation of the spurs²⁸. It should be stated, within the same context, that the spike of the spurs of Breaza, Iernut and Medişoru Mare was made of the same metal bar as the body, which is indicative in certain cases, of a later dating, sometime in the interval between the 6th C and the beginning of the 8th century²⁹, compared to the attached spike-spurs dated earlier. Moreover, in various European areas oval-shaped spurs gradually disappear during the 8th century, being replaced by long "U"-shaped spurs³⁰.

In north or north-east of Europe, there are spurs terminating in outer hooks, even though due to corrosion, one of the two terminals is in the shape of a knob³¹. The items from these areas, dated beginning with the 7th century, provide good analogies for the body and spike shape of the three spurs of Breaza, Iernut and Medişoru Mare³².

There are artifacts, like the spur discovered on the territory of Bohemia at Toušěň, item dated to the 7th century, whose terminals are thicker and in the form of small knobs³³. Other artifacts of the kind have ends twisted in the shape of a coil and attached to the side. They were discovered on the territory of Bavaria³⁴. The spurs in the latter area, found at Moos-Burgstall, are considered a "Hakensporen" type derivation and are dated to the second half of the 7th century, more precisely by the end of this century³⁵. The items from Bohemia and Bavaria are the closest analogies for the spurs at Iernut, Medişoru Mare and Breaza.

We believe that the most plausible dating of the discussed items is the second half of the 7th century with a possible extension in the first three decades of the 8th century (Pl. 6/I).

²³ For instance see: GLODARIU/IAROSLAVSCHI 1979, 126–127, Fig. 73/13–16, 18–20, 25–26; URSACHI 1995, 145–146, Pl.: 49/1–5; 247/1–8.

²⁴ See for instance: ŽAK 1959, 88–105, Fig. 1; GODŁOWSKI 1994, 169–178; KAZANSKI 1994, 430–435.

²⁵ See: ŽAK 1959, 88–105, Fig. 1; GLODARIU/IAROSLAVSCHI 1979, 126–127; GODŁOWSKI 1994, 169–178; KAZANSKI 1994, 430–435; ISAC 2006, 446–448, Fig. 5/2a-b.

²⁶ See: ŽAK 1959, 88–105; MOOSBURGGER-LEU 1971, 114–117; RUTTKAY 1976, 344–352; BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 103–160; ŽAK/MAČKOWIAK-KOTKOWSKA 1988; PROFANTOVÁ 1994, 60–85; KIND 2002, 283–299.

²⁷ ŽAK 1959, 88–105; RUTTKAY 1976, 344–352; BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 103–160; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 52, Fig. 6–7; ŽAK/MAČKOWIAK-KOTKOWSKA 1988; PROFANTOVÁ 1994, 60–85.

²⁸ HILCZERÓWNA 1956; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 52, Fig. 6–7; KIND 2002, 288–289.

²⁹ ŽAK 1959, 88–105; RUTTKAY 1976, 344–352; BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 103–160; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 52, Fig. 6–7; ŽAK/MAČKOWIAK-KOTKOWSKA 1988; PROFANTOVÁ 1994, 60–85.

³⁰ ŽAK 1959, 88–105; RUTTKAY 1976, 344–349; BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 135–138; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 51–53, Fig. 3; WACHOWSKI 1987, 523–528, Fig. 3–4.

³¹ For instance an item found at Vilnius in Lithuania: ŽAK 1959, 95, no. 21, Fig. 2g.

³² ŽAK 1959, 88–105; POLESKI 1992, 168–170, Fig. 3/6–10; POLESKI 1992a, 317, Fig. 1/6–10.

³³ PROFANTOVÁ 1994, 64–67, Fig. 5.3.

³⁴ FREEDEN 1987, 522, Pl. 46/11–12.

³⁵ FREEDEN 1987, 522, 559–561, Pl. 46/11–12.

Initially, the spur of Oradea was dated to the late Roman period or the beginning of the migration period. Subsequently, it was reanalysed and dated to the early Middle Ages³⁶. The piece from Oradea (Pl. 4/1, 6/II) pertains to the largest group of hooked- spurs, “Hakensporen”, the variant with hooks bent inward to the sides³⁷. The type is found in west-Baltic areas, in the north-Danubian Slavic environment on the territory of Slovakia and the Czech Republic, but also in Poland or Russia, areas for which local production is supposed, once overtaken from the Frankish and later, Carolingian worlds³⁸. Chronologically, spurs with inner hooks, of various variants, cover a large time frame, from the 6th to the 10th century³⁹. The spur from Oradea was included in type I. 2 Žak, Mačkowiak-Kotkowska, dated to the second half of the 7th century⁴⁰. Some of the best analogies for the item at Oradea come from the Bohemian territory, exemplars dated in the second half of the 7th century and the first decades of the 8th century⁴¹. Given that the spur from Oradea has no discovery context, we believe it may be dated, based on analogies, in the second half of the 7th century and the beginning of the 8th century (Pl. 6/II).

The second spur identified in the settlement of Iernut and the spur at Peștera, are identical in style (Pl. 3, 6/III). They are included in group “Hakensporen”, the variant with hooks bent outward the sides⁴². Having as prototype items dated in the Roman imperial period, with arms ending in an outer hook, respective artifact type was overtaken in early Middle Ages and manufactured in two different cultural circles, the Merovingian and the Baltic environments⁴³. They are mainly found along the Baltic coast and in Latvian-Lithuanian territories, as first area, and in Rhenania, where the Baltic model was under Alamannic-Proto-prussian influences, stabilising in the 7th century, from where it would spread to Croatia and to even northern Europe⁴⁴ or the territory of Belarus⁴⁵. The spurs identified in Saxonia, Silesia and Scandinavia, even though few, are connected to the western environment⁴⁶. For Little Poland, it is specified there is a Slavic tradition of manufacturing hooked- spurs, while for the Silesian area, influences in the spurs production, including the hooked-spurs, coming from the Slavic regions on Elbe (today Saxonia) are recognised⁴⁷. The Carolingian influence in spur production on the territory of Poland⁴⁸ is also underlined. The “U”-shape as well as the manufacturing technique of the two spurs from Iernut and Peștera is found in central-west Europe. There, however, the majority of spurs have their terminals bent inward, detail which excludes the spurs from Iernut and Peștera from the typological variants found in central-west Europe sites dated in the early Middle Ages⁴⁹.

³⁶ PETERSEN 1939, 189–190.

³⁷ For this spur type see for instance: RUTTKAY 1976, 346, Fig. 72/A1; BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 118–123, Fig. 2/I; ŽAK/MAČKOWIAK-KOTKOWSKA 1988.

³⁸ RUTTKAY 1976, 346, Fig. 72/A1; BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 118–123, Fig. 2/I; WACHOWSKI 1987, 523–528; GAJEWSKI 1983, 297–299; ŽAK/MAČKOWIAK-KOTKOWSKA 1988; PROFANTOVÁ 1994, 60–85; KONIAREK 1996, 203–210.

³⁹ RUTTKAY 1976, 346, Fig. 72/A1; BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 118–123, Fig. 2/I; WACHOWSKI 1987, 523–528; GAJEWSKI 1984, 297–299; ŽAK/MAČKOWIAK-KOTKOWSKA 1988; POLESKI 1992, 168–170, Fig. 3/1–5; POLESKI 1992A, 317, Fig. 1/1–5; PROFANTOVÁ 1994, 60–85; KONIAREK 1996, 203–210.

⁴⁰ ŽAK/MAČKOWIAK-KOTKOWSKA 1988, 339, no. 126, Pl. V/3, 408–413.

⁴¹ PROFANTOVÁ 1994, Fig. 6.

⁴² ŽAK 1959, 88–105; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 55–56, Fig. 9.

⁴³ ŽAK 1959, 105; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 55–56, Fig. 9.

⁴⁴ ŽAK 1959, 105; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 55–56, 70, Fig. 9.

⁴⁵ SEDIN 1995, 162, Fig. 2/8.

⁴⁶ WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 55–56.

⁴⁷ WACHOWSKI 1987, 524.

⁴⁸ WACHOWSKI 1987, 523–528.

⁴⁹ RUTTKAY 1976, 346, Fig. 72/A1; BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 118–123, Fig. 2/I; ŽAK/MAČKOWIAK-KOTKOWSKA 1988. For comparison see for instance the spurs discovered on the Bohemian

Relatively simple from the fastening technique point of view, the spurs with outer hook were used for rather long periods between the 6th/7th century until the beginning of the 10th C century⁵⁰. Obviously, there is an evolution through time of the spur shape and the outer hook making. The earliest items, dated to the 6th/7th – 8th centuries, have oval bodies, short spike, while the terminals, bent outwards, are rather short and distanced from the two sides⁵¹.

The spurs from Iernut and Peștera belong to type I.1. Wachowski⁵². From the entire distribution area, the spur found at Tyniec n. Sleza, in Poland, dated initially in the 8th century⁵³, and subsequently around year 800⁵⁴, is almost identical with the items discovered at Iernut and Peștera. Primarily, the spur from the Polish locality was presented as a local product imitating the Alamanni model of the 7th century⁵⁵. Subsequently, it was reconsidered as Slavic spur, made according to Carolingian models⁵⁶. Due to the fact that terminals are very close to the sides, almost joint, the spur was framed in the Ösensporen type⁵⁷. The procedure of approaching, almost attaching the terminals was also noticed in a series of spurs with inward-curved hooks identified in Moravia, belonging to type IC Bialekova⁵⁸. There are no proper holes in either the Moravian samples or the spur at Tyniec n. Sleza in Poland. The technique for approaching hook ends so much, to almost attaching them to the spur sides precedes the classical items with slots for belts or buckles.

The shape (“U”) of the spurs from Iernut and Peștera, also a useful dating criterion, is found among Carolingian origin spurs, excavated on the Dalmatian coast, in Zalavár area or the former Yugoslavia, Bohemia and Moravia. Items there, made of rectangular section iron heel bands, unadorned, weighing very little, with a not very long spike, however with terminals provided with riveted plates or buckle slots, are deemed chronologically subsequent to massive bronze or iron exemplars, ornamented with noble metal foils and dated in the 9th century with slight chronological differences from an area to another⁵⁹.

The item from Poland, at Tyniec n. Sleza is edifying for a most accurate dating of the spurs from Iernut and Peștera, allowing the chronological framing of the two Romanian artifacts by the end of the 8th century until mid 9th century (Pl. 6/III). The proposed dating may also rely on the remark that spurs whose hook ends are thin and sharp, element lacking from the items at Iernut and Peștera, although emerge rather sporadically and are not univocally dated, were insofar noticed to only a few late exemplars from the 9th–10th centuries⁶⁰.

For both spurs of Iernut and Peștera, the chronological framing in the last decades of the 8th century and the first half of the 9th century is also proven by other archaeological materials associated with the two artifacts. In Igrîța cave, high-speed wheel-made pottery sherds were also

territory: PROFANTOVÁ 1994, 60–85.

⁵⁰ ŽAK 1959, 88–105; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 55–56, 70, Fig. 2; WACHOWSKI 1987, 523–528; POLESKI 1992, 168–170, Fig. 3/6–10; POLESKI 1992a, 317, Fig. 1/6–10.

⁵¹ ŽAK 1959, 88–105; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 52–56, Fig. 3,5; POLESKI 1992, 168–170, Fig. 3/6–10.

⁵² WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 55, Fig. 9.

⁵³ ŽAK 1959, 95, no. 22, Fig. 2h.

⁵⁴ WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 70.

⁵⁵ ŽAK 1959, 105.

⁵⁶ WACHOWSKI 1987, 524–527.

⁵⁷ WACHOWSKI 1987, Fig. 4/2.

⁵⁸ BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 122.

⁵⁹ See for instance: STEIN 1967, I–II; RUTTKAY 1976, 346–349, type A 1–9; BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 123–138, types II–V; VINSKI 1983, 465–501; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 62–68, types VI–XI; SZŐKE 1996, 88–96, Pl. 19/1–2, 42/5; KOROŠEC 1999, 117 with adjacent plates; KOUŘIL 2001, 241–255; PROFANTOVÁ 2003, 101–102 with adjacent figures; KAVÁNOVÁ 2003, 369, fig. 56.

⁶⁰ WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 55, type I. 1.

identified⁶¹. Inside the dwelling at Iernut, beside the spur, wheel-made pottery and a socketed iron spearhead could be found. The pottery made by high-speed wheel is generally dated most early by the end of the 8th century, with maximum use in the 9th century and even by mid 10th century⁶². The spearhead from Iernut is also found in archaeological sites of central-west Europe (most often associated with spurs) and the Carolingian environment during the 8th – 9th centuries⁶³. For instance, a spearhead with socket hole for attaching the shaft by rivet, identical with that of Iernut, was discovered in Moravia at Staré Město-Špitálky⁶⁴.

Typologically, the spur coming from Teiuș city area (Pl.: 4/2; 6/IV), is not found among medieval spurs around Europe dated starting with the 10th century and subsequently⁶⁵. The manufacturing technique (iron semicircular section side, spike made from the same bar as the body), sizes and shape and the two rivets placed on the two sides, allow a reserved inclusion of the spur from Teiuș in type IV Bialeková⁶⁶. Uncertainty is due to the fact that compared to the spurs in the mentioned type, the item from Teiuș has a projecting plate by the spike base and terminals are not wider. It may not be excluded that the latter existed at the end part of the sides, but did not preserve. Type IV Bialeková is mainly found on the territory of the former state of Great Moravia, territory for which a local production is supposed. They are also found in the area of lake Balaton or the territory of medieval Croatia. The oldest exemplars emerge around year 800, while the maximum use period is the first half of the 9th century, being no longer found, except for sporadically, in the second half of respective time frame⁶⁷. Given that the spur from Teiuș has no discovery context and is fragmentary, lacking a series of useful dating elements, we believe that based on analogies, the chronological framing of the artifact in the first half of the 9th century is acceptable (Pl. 6/IV).

The spur at Șura Mică (Pl.: 2/3; 6/V) was framed in type “Ösensporen” and was dated by the excavation authors, based on analogies, in the 8th century⁶⁸. The referenced items belong to type “Hakensporen” and by no means to “Ösensporen” type⁶⁹. Regarding the upper part shape, the spur from Șura Mică resembles very much Germanic spurs dated up to the 5th century and also the spurs dated beginning with the 6th/7th century⁷⁰. Yet, according to the fashion the spurs terminate, the item from Șura Mică is entirely different from the spurs dated in above mentioned periods.

The spur of Șura Mică may be included in the large category of “Ösensporen” type. However, compared to the classical types (hole made by bending and attaching terminals to the arms, perpendicular hole by the end of the sides or by attaching this element to the sides’ terminals), the spur from Șura Mică differs by pierced holes made by the end of the arms as well as by the horizontal hole shape. This feature does not allow the inclusion of the spur from Șura Mică in types II Bialekova⁷¹ and A6 Ruttkay⁷², dated beginning with the second half of the 8th century and the first half of the 9th century with an extension until the end of the period.

⁶¹ COSMA 2002, 213, no. 143; Pottery made by high-speed wheel is also found in I. Emödi collection at Oradea, which is novel: information I. Emödi.

⁶² STANCIU 2000, 127–191; COSMA 2002, 35–38, 109–112.

⁶³ See for instance: REMPEL 1966; DOSTÁL 1966; STEIN 1967, I–II; RUTTKAY 1976, 297–305; COSMA 2002, 152, no. 11.7.1–11.7.4.

⁶⁴ DOSTÁL 1966, 210, Pl. XLII/7.

⁶⁵ HILCZERÓWNA 1956; KIND 2002, 283–289.

⁶⁶ BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 131–134, type IV, Fig. 2.IV, 13.

⁶⁷ BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 134.

⁶⁸ NÄGLER/RILL 1981, 47 and note 18.

⁶⁹ See: KLANICA 1968, 121–134, Fig. 3, which is referenced by the digs authors from Șura Mică.

⁷⁰ See for instance: ŽAK 1959, 88–105, Fig. 1–2; GODŁOWSKI 1994, 169–178; KAZANSKI 1994, 430–435.

⁷¹ BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 123–126, type II, Fig. 2/II.

⁷² RUTTKAY 1976, 348, type A 6, Fig. 72/A6.

Given details concerning the terminals, the spur from Șura Mică may be placed in type IX Wachowski dated to the 9th century, with a possible extension towards the start of the 10th century⁷³. Respective type has a rectangular hole in the lower part of the arms, where the fastening strap was stretched by a mobile metallic or leather loop riveted by the end. The spur was artificially “elongated” this way, so all exemplars of the type were in general short. Its genesis is incompletely explained. Certain indications point to the Latvian-Lithuanian space as distribution area, where respective spur type would have reached from Scandinavia⁷⁴. J. Wachowski appreciated it is possible that in the case of type IX, we are dealing on one hand with an autonomous north-European solution, or on the other hand, with a takeover of continental Carolingian forms⁷⁵. It is certain that type IX is found in the Latvian-Lithuanian region and not on the Carolingian state territory⁷⁶, and we have no information that it is present in other areas of central-south-east Europe.

Accordingly, we believe that the most plausible dating for the Șura Mică spur is the 9th century (Pl. 6/V). However, the pottery associated with the spur, which might support the proposed dating has not been published yet. Concerning the pottery material, it is only specified it was low-speed and, most importantly, high-speed wheel-made. Or, pottery made according to the latter technique was used in Transylvanian sites especially in the 9th century and the start of the following period⁷⁷, thus sustaining the time frame proposed for the spur at Șura Mică.

The two spurs from Tărtăria are identical in shape (Pl.: 5/1–2; 6/VI). They were made by the same blacksmith. They are not rare items in the archaeological landscape, being identically found in numerous sites in central-west Europe. Within the large “U”-shaped spurs group, with prototypes in Carolingian workshops, spurs whose terminals end in rectangular or other shape plates, riveted, are a special type⁷⁸, different from spurs with sides ending with a slot for leather straps and/or buckles as accessories for fastening the spur on footwear⁷⁹. Previous typologies regarding spurs identified on the territory of former Czechoslovakia, place the two artifacts from Tărtăria in type A3 Ruttkay⁸⁰ and VA Bialekova⁸¹. In both typologies, iron spurs made of thinner, unornamented bars, alike those at Tărtăria, are believed slightly later than the massive spurs plated with precious metal foils and spike inserted through the spur body, and are dated to the second and third quarter of the 9th century, possibly until the end of the period. Within K. Wachowski’s very technical typology of Merovingian and Carolingian spurs coming from the European region, the two spurs from Tărtăria belong to type VII⁸². Respective group is deemed most practical from the viewpoint of the spur fastening to the footwear, the leather strap being riveted directly to spur plates. During the early Carolingian period, 6 rivets in double rows of three were always used. During the late Carolingian period, there was no longer a rule, hence spurs with one to 10 rivets, of which prevailed variants with six or eight rivets, may be found. Depending on rivets shape and number, type VII Wachowski has several variants and subvariants. The spurs from Tărtăria belong to type VII3a1 Wachowski, which is approximately

⁷³ WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 66–68, Fig. 2, 27, 79, tab. 18.

⁷⁴ WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 66–68.

⁷⁵ WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 66–68.

⁷⁶ WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 66–68, 79, tab. 18.

⁷⁷ STANCIU 2000, 127–191; COSMA 2002, 35–38, 109–112.

⁷⁸ For this spur type see for instance: STEIN 1967; GIESLER 1974, 525–527; RUTTKAY 1976, 346–347, type A 3; BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 135–136, type VA; VINSKI 1983, 465–501; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 49–51, 62–66, Fig. 19, 21; SZŐKE 1994, 265–266, Pl. 10/2–3; SZŐKE 1996, 88–96, Pl. 19/1–2, 42/5; KOROŠEC 1999, 117 with adjacent plates; PROFANTOVÁ 2003, 101–102 with adjacent figures; KAVÁNOVÁ 2003, 369, Fig. 56; STRAUB 2005, 5–24, Fig. 10/2.

⁷⁹ See for instance: STEIN 1967; GIESLER 1974, 525–527; KOUŘIL 2001, 241–255.

⁸⁰ RUTTKAY 1976, 346–347, type A. 3, Fig. 72.A.3.

⁸¹ BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 135–136, type VA, Fig. 2.VA.

⁸² WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 62–66, Fig. 19–25.

dated from mid 8th century until around year 900⁸³. Starting with the 10th century, plates with one or two rivets become typical, while concurrently, plates of Ottonian spurs are much smaller compared to those of previous spurs of Carolingian origin, which are relatively bigger⁸⁴. All data converge to the dating of the two spurs from Tărtăria starting earliest with the second quarter of the 9th century, or rather in the second half of the 9th century (pl. 6/VI).

The fragmentary state of the items from Dăbâca (Pl.: 2/1–2; 6/VII), the lack of technical details, like missing terminals in both items and missing spike point in one of them, hinder the establishment of a very accurate chronology. The discovery context was dated in the 9th – 10th centuries⁸⁵. The overlapping cone-shaped spike is identical in items dated to the 9th century⁸⁶. The spike shape of the second item and especially its length frames typologically in the category of Ottonian type spurs or the spurs on the Polish territory, widely distributed starting with the 10th century⁸⁷. Precisely due to the spike length, the second item cannot be dated in the 9th century, when in Europe, spurs with relatively short spike are still “fashionable”. In fact, increased spike lengths and the emergence of the long spike ending in various point types are deemed elements for a chronological delimitation between the spurs of the 9th century and those of the 10th century, the latter having, as already mentioned, a much longer spike compared to those in the 9th century⁸⁸. According to this detail, the spur from Dăbâca (with cylindrical and longer spike), may be included in type I Hilczerówna dated in the 10th century and the beginning of the 11th century⁸⁹ (Pl.: 2/2; 6/VII).

Based on the association of the two spurs at Dăbâca (discovered inside the same dwelling) and the fact that longer spike- spurs cannot be dated to the 9th century, one should agree that the other spur, with two overlapping cones-shaped spike (Pl.: 2/1; 6/VII) dates in the 10th century. The suggested chronology is supported by the fact that among the spurs dated starting with the 10th century, count exemplars whose spikes end in overlapping cone shapes, as well⁹⁰. The beginning of the 10th century is a terminus post quem for the dating of the two spurs at Dăbâca. The occupation layer where the spurs were identified, according to other materials with higher dating significance, dates earliest in the second half of the 10th century and the first decades of the 11th century⁹¹. Over the 11th century, the two spur types were used intensely for a short period of time if we consider that they do not exceed the first decades of the 11th century. Moreover, the stratigraphy at Dăbâca shows that the occupation layer where the two spurs were excavated is overlapped by another level, where including spurs of another type, dated in the 11th century and the following period, were identified⁹².

III. Final considerations

All over Europe, spurs within early medieval sites were associated with warriors. When plated or ornamented with precious metal plates, spurs are considered either property

⁸³ WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 66, Fig. 21.

⁸⁴ HILCZERÓWNA 1956; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 63; KIND 2002, 283–292, Fig. 3–4.

⁸⁵ PASCU ET AL. 1968, 160–161, 168–169, 171–181.

⁸⁶ PAULSEN 1933, 228, Pl. 30/4.

⁸⁷ HILCZERÓWNA 1956; KIND 2002, 283–292, Fig. 1/3–4.

⁸⁸ HILCZERÓWNA 1956; WACHOWSKI 1986–1987, 52–53, Fig. 6–8; KIND 2002, 288–289.

⁸⁹ HILCZERÓWNA 1956, 22–34, 138–139, Pl. Ia-d – II.

⁹⁰ HILCZERÓWNA 1956; KIND 2002, 288–289.

⁹¹ The bell-shaped buttons found in the same occupation level like the two spurs (PASCU ET AL. 1968, 160–161, 168–169, 171–181, Fig. 3) date in the 10th C and the first decades of the 11th century. See to this end: BÓNA 1970, 232–233, n. 215; HOREDIT 1986, 127–130. With regards to the dating issue of fortifications in Romania see: COSMA 2002, 47–53 with bibliography.

⁹² PASCU ET AL. 1968, 158–183, Fig. 4.

of high rank individuals within the community or military parade artifacts⁹³. Therefore, the Transylvanian spurs have special importance for understanding early Middle Ages political and social phenomena.

In Transylvania, spurs finds for each chronological stage over the last four centuries of the first Christian millennium (Fig. 1; Pl. 6) are few. Therefore, we can neither make a comparison with central-west European regions nor with eastern areas, like for instance with the Polish territory, where spurs identified and dated in the entire interval of the 6th/7th – 10th centuries are in high numbers. In Bulgaria, few spurs dated in the 8th–9th and 9th–10th centuries were found⁹⁴. None of them provides analogies with the spurs from Transylvania. We notice they are lacking in Muntenia and Moldova. On the territory of Bukovina and Bessarabia, spurs were identified in few places, in the settlements at Revno and Dobrynovcy, sites dated to the 8th–10th centuries⁹⁵. One of the items from Revno is similar with the spurs of Iernut and Peștera.

It should also be noted that the Transylvanian spurs, dating until the 9th century, were mainly discovered within fortified settlements, caves (Igrîța cave on Crișul Repede river) and only in one case within a grave (Tărtăria). Hence, the situation here is similar to that from Bulgaria, Bessarabia and Bukovina, where spurs were especially identified within settlements. Circumstances are however different in central-west European areas, where spurs come mainly from graves, but also from settlements or fortifications⁹⁶.

The spurs from Transylvania cannot be assigned to Avar warriors, who did not use respective artifact type over their history⁹⁷. We believe that the spurs discussed herein may be assigned to warriors who entered Transylvania purposefully. In central-south-east Europe, wherever excavated, spurs were assigned to the Slavic population⁹⁸. In Transylvania's case, the finds distribution map shows that the majority of places of origin dated to the 7th–9th centuries are located on large rivers, main access routes from the Transylvanian plateau to Pannonia, in areas different from Gâmbaș burials ring, assigned to the Avar environment (Fig. 1). Except for the spur from Teiuș city, which although dated to a period corresponding to the abolishment of the Avar power centre on mid Mureș valley, it is restricted to the ring of Avar Transylvanian finds. Circumstances are very similar to those in central-west Europe north the Danube occupied by Slavic tribes. There too, spurs emerge only in the Slavic environment, which geographically is not included in the Avar cemeteries ring⁹⁹. The concentration of Transylvanian spurs on trade routes is explicable to a certain extent, if one considers that local communities of the time or more precisely, the political authority of jurisdiction, wished to control and ensure trade of various goods, including salt, on respective roads to other territories.

The dating of the Transylvanian spurs may be corroborated to a large extent with a series of events occurring in the area during the second half of the first Christian millennium. The spurs from Breaza, Iernut and Medișoru Mare, datable in the second half of the 7th century and

⁹³ HILCZERÓWNA 1956, 140–141; ŽAK 1959, 105; RUTTKAY 1976, 344–345; BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 135–136; ŽAK/MAČKOWIAK-KOTKOWSKA 1988, 410–413.

⁹⁴ KURNATOWSKA 1973, 105, Fig. 5/1–3,7; DONČEVA-PETKOVA 1987, 75–76, Fig. 7/a-b; KURNATOWSKA 1980, 152, Fig. 53/880, 206, Pl. XXVII/404, 235, Pl. LVI/1293.

⁹⁵ MUSTEAȚĂ 2005, 68, 158, 178, Fig. 35/4–7.

⁹⁶ Beside the insofar quoted bibliography on spurs from central-west Europe, where information on the items find spot is also found, for spurs discovered within unfortified settlements see for instance the settlement at Nagyrécsén in Zalavár area, Hungary, where a spur similar to the one at Tărtăria, dated in the second half of the 9th century was also identified: STRAUB 2005, 5–24, Fig. 10/2.

⁹⁷ Within large Avar cemeteries in the central area of the Avar Khaganate of Pannonia, as well as those in Transylvania, inside graves assigned to Avar warriors, no spurs were found.

⁹⁸ See for instance: HILCZERÓWNA 1956, 140–141; ŽAK 1959, 105; KURNATOWSKA 1973, 123–124; RUTTKAY 1976, 344–352; BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 103–138.

⁹⁹ BIALEKOVÁ 1977, 122–123.

the first decades of the 8th century, may be related to the penetration of Slavic groups on Mureș valley and south-east Transylvania, archaeologically recorded in respective area¹⁰⁰, whose chieftains wore including spurs ornamented or plated with precious metal foils.

Novel archaeological realities, like the cremation barrow cemeteries from certain areas of central-east Europe, emerging in the second half of the 7th century, were assigned to new waves of Slavic migration from eastern and north-eastern Europe¹⁰¹. On the Transylvanian territory, the phenomenon is recorded, for instance, by the two Slavic barrow cemeteries at Nușfalău and Someșeni¹⁰². The spur of Oradea, a place by the eastern border of the Avar Khaganate and on Crișul Repede river, dated to the second half of the 7th century and the beginning of the 8th century, belonged to a Slavic warrior or chieftain, part of the Slavic groups migrating to central-west Europe, Transylvania included. Obviously, his prerogatives were granted by the Avar authority, as it is known that the latter involved the other peoples within the borders or influence areas of the Khaganate in the defence and control of the territory under its rule, even by monitored “colonisation”¹⁰³.

The presence of spurs at Iernut, Peștera, in Teiuș area and Tărtăria, may be related to the political and military events from central and south-east Europe by the end of the 8th century and the 9th century. By the end of the 8th century and the start of the 9th century, the Avar Khaganate with its centre in the Pannonian field is abolished as political entity following successive and concerted military action of the Frankish kingdom under the leadership of Charlemagne and of the first Bulgarian Tsarate, under Krum Khan¹⁰⁴. Subsequent the events of the first decade of the 9th century, borders between the two powers are established somewhere on Lower Tisza¹⁰⁵. In the area, friction between the Carolingian empire and the Bulgarian Tsarate would persist over the second and third decades of the 9th C and would eventually conclude with the peace of 829. The expansionist policy of the first Bulgarian Tsarate in the second half of the 9th century also targeted the territory between Tisza and the Danube. The Bulgarians established strategical points on Tisza starting from its flow to mid basin¹⁰⁶. In these areas, they became from the second half of the 9th century, the neighbours of Great Moravia, which in respective period displayed significant expansionistic tendencies in the Danube and Tisza mid basins¹⁰⁷. The Transylvanian plateau was also subject of dispute between the three political powers. In 892, the peace between the Bulgarians and the Carolingians is renewed with the precise aim to put an end to Great Moravia’s expansionism¹⁰⁸, targeting control of the salt mines and communication routes from Transylvania to west Europe.

It is thus very likely that the spurs of Iernut, Peștera and Teiuș, dating by the end of the 8th century until mid 9th century, pertained to warriors who played a role in the conflicts finalised by the abolishment of the Avar Khaganate, the centre from Transylvania included, or in the Bulgarian campaigns to mid basin of Tisza or inland the Transylvanian plateau. The spearhead found next to the spur in the dwelling at Iernut proves we are dealing with warriors. Both pieces are part of the military equipment of a warrior who reached the area with a specific goal, either on a military campaign or in order to defend and control the road on Mureș valley. The origin

¹⁰⁰ See for instance: COMȘA 1987, 219–230; SZÉKELY 1988, 169–198.

¹⁰¹ RUSU 1971, 721, n. 38; COMȘA 1987, 219–230; BIALEKOVÁ 1993, 44.

¹⁰² COSMA 2002, 63–80.

¹⁰³ COMȘA 1987, 229; FIEDLER 1996, 195–214; COSMA 2005, 27–30.

¹⁰⁴ RUSU 1977, 177–178; OVČAROV 1987, 171–190; BÓNA 1994, 67–75; WOLFRAM 1994, 218–221; RUSU 1997, 231.

¹⁰⁵ RUSU 1977, 178; DUMITRAȘCU 1997, 720.

¹⁰⁶ OVČAROV 1987, 171–190.

¹⁰⁷ GALUȘKA 1991, 40–47.

¹⁰⁸ GALUȘKA 1991, 42–46.

of the three spurs in central European regions controlled by the Carolingian empire and Great Moravia, suggests their bearers arrived here from respective territories.

The spurs from Tărtăria, dated to the second half of the 9th century, may be related to escalated conflict between Great Moravia, on one hand, and the Carolingian empire and the first Bulgarian Tsarate on the other. The covenant of 892 between the two mentioned political powers seems to have worked in Transylvania's case, where security points controlled by both Bulgarians and Carolingians were established with the intention to launch an "embargo" on the "salt road" on Mureş valley¹⁰⁹. Archaeologically, the cessation of Moravian origin burials forming the Ciumbrud-Orăştie/Dealul Pemilor X8 group corroborated with the emergence of the Bulgarian origin cemeteries forming group Blandiana A¹¹⁰, as well as the few weapons and military equipment pieces of Carolingian origin discovered in a few places in Transylvania¹¹¹ may be linked to such circumstances. These items also include the two spurs from Tărtăria, worn by a warrior who most likely came from territories west the Danube, area effectively controlled by the Carolingian empire, thus supporting the theory of a Carolingian- origin finds horizon in Transylvania during the second half of the 9th century¹¹².

The presence of Şura Mică spur in the Transylvanian archaeological environment, with analogies found only in the Latvian-Lithuanian region, where it is dated to the 9th century, with a possible extension to the 10th century, is of main interest. It may be considered an imported item, however since it was found at Şura Mică, within the Slavic environment represented by the Mediaş group, it may be assigned to a Slavic chieftain or warrior, who might have been involved in the events of the 9th century, generated by the salt control in Transylvania.

The spurs of Dăbâca, plated with golden foil, suggest that their holder was of high rank within the community. They are most likely parade artifacts, reaching Dăbâca from the Ottonian kingdom via either their bearer or subsequent an order placed there.

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¹⁰⁹ PINTER 1998, 142–143; PINTER/BOROFFKA 2001, 334–336.

¹¹⁰ PINTER 1998, 142–143; PINTER/BOROFFKA 2001, 334–336.

¹¹¹ PINTER 1998, 135–144.

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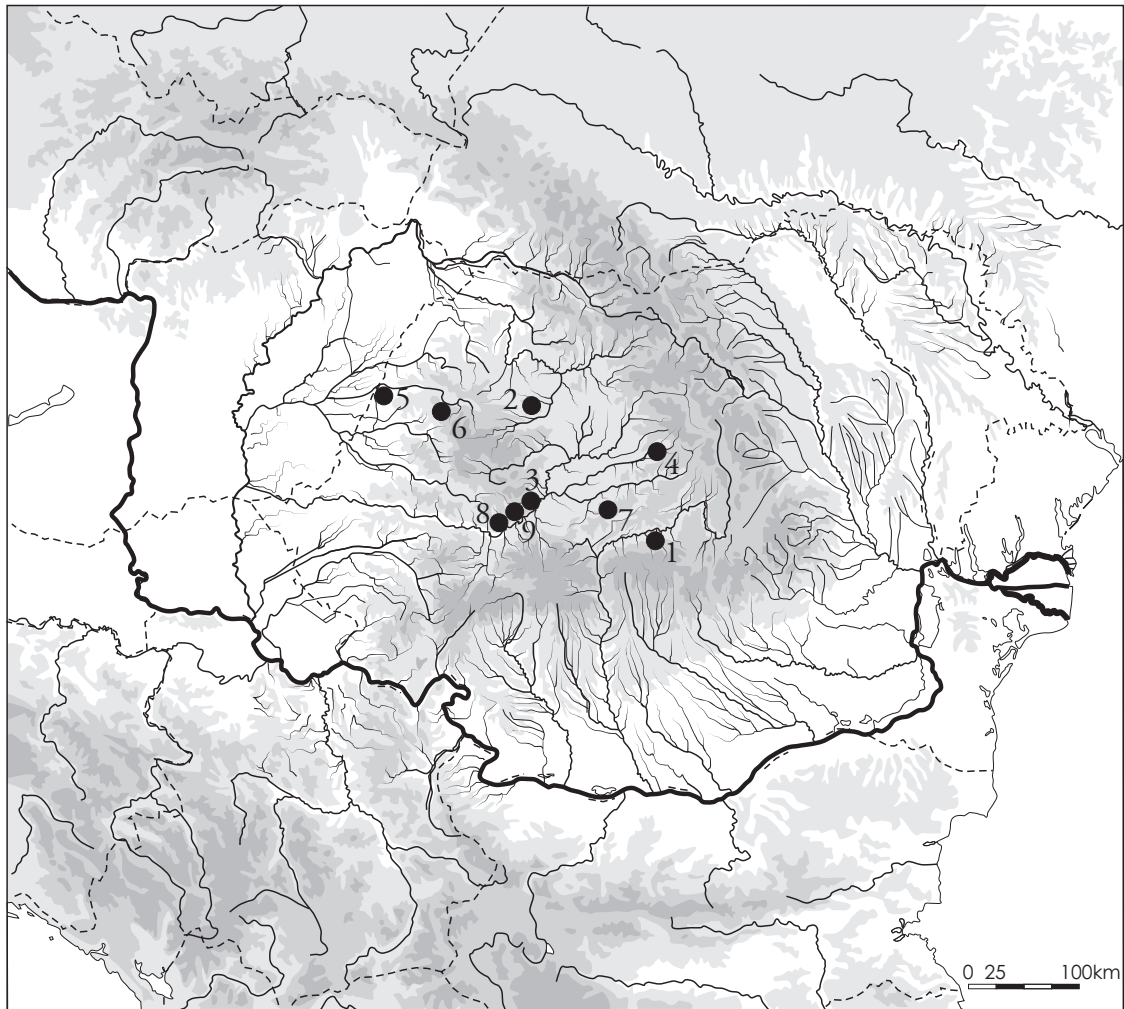
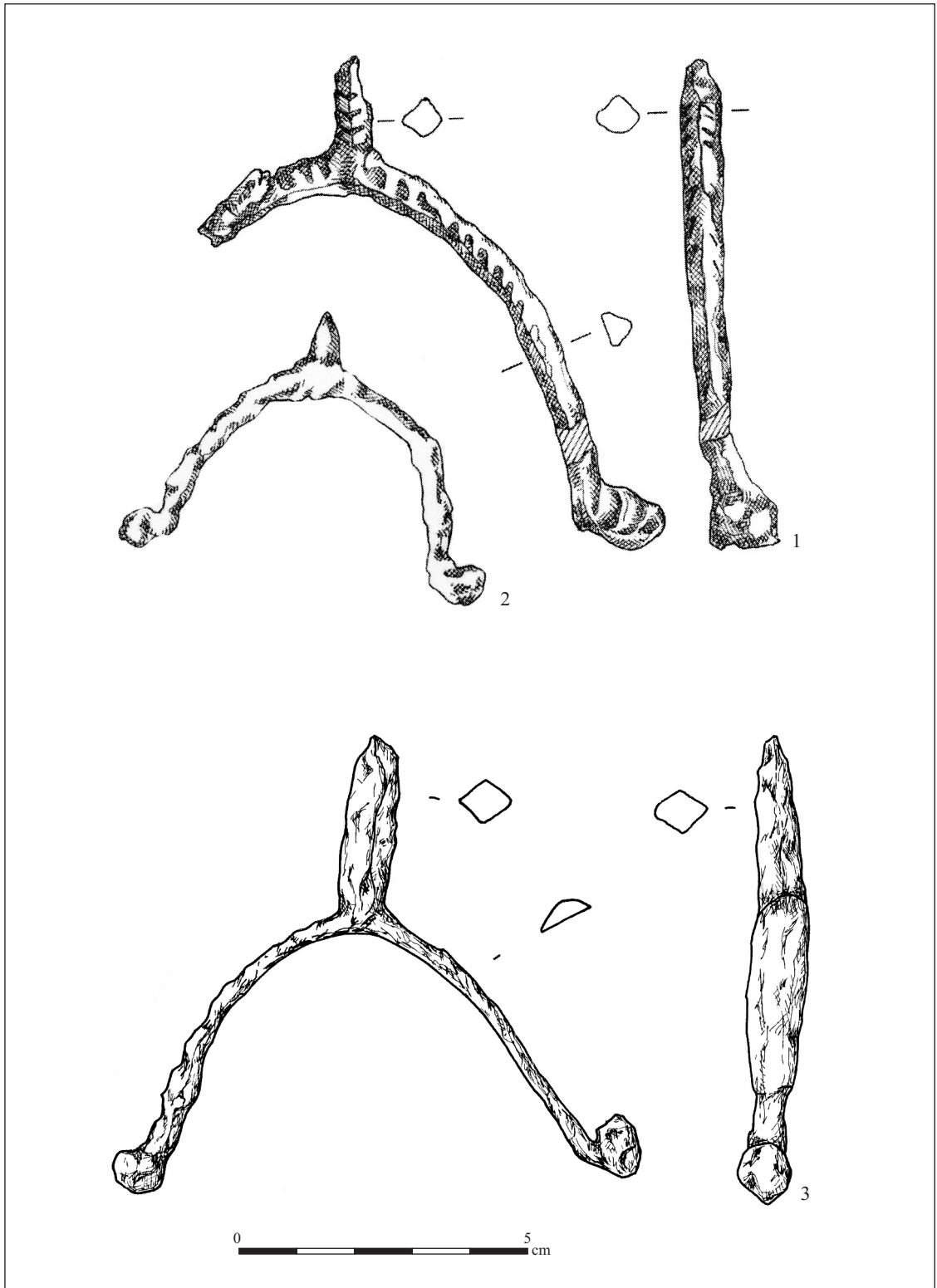
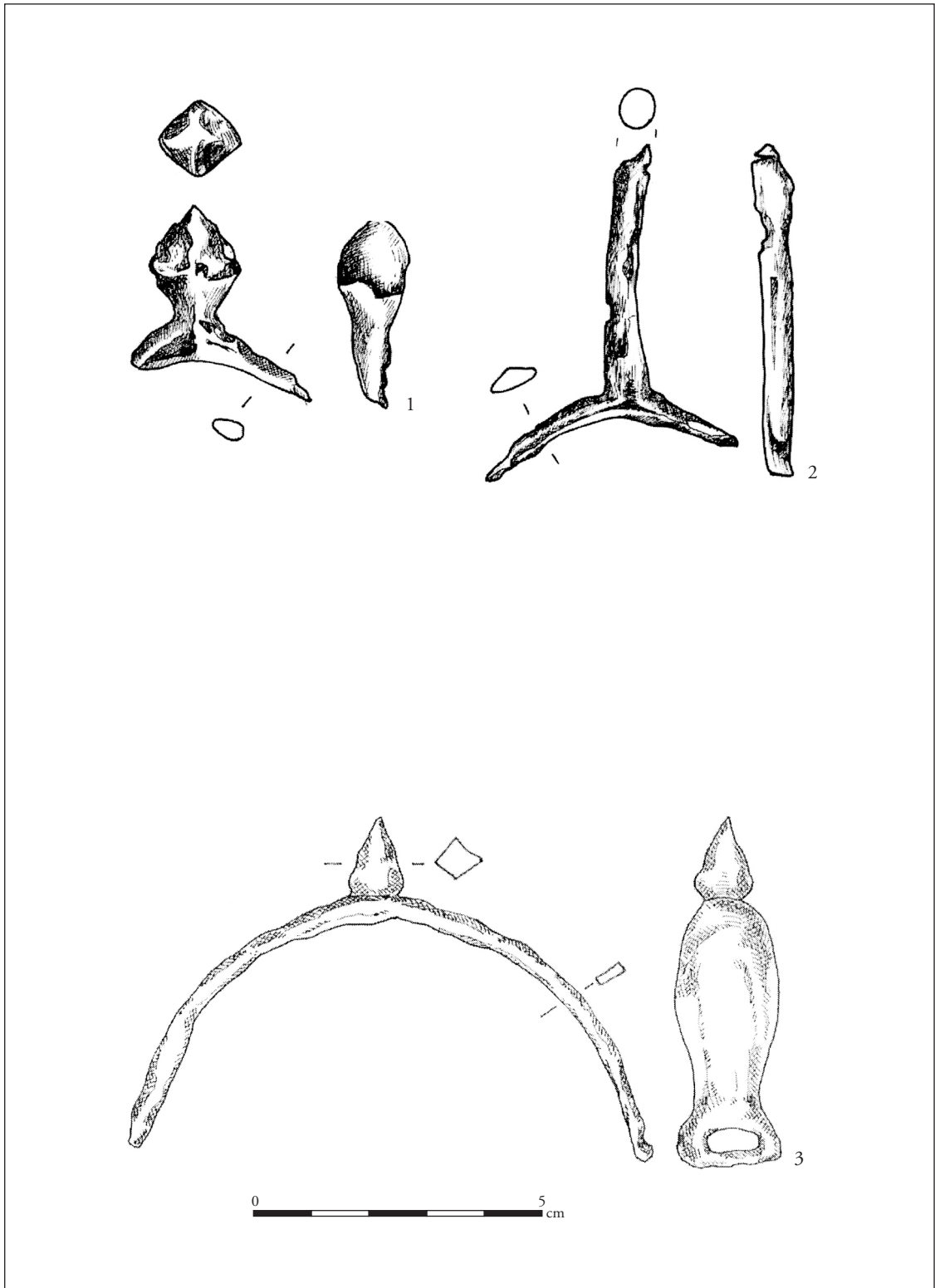


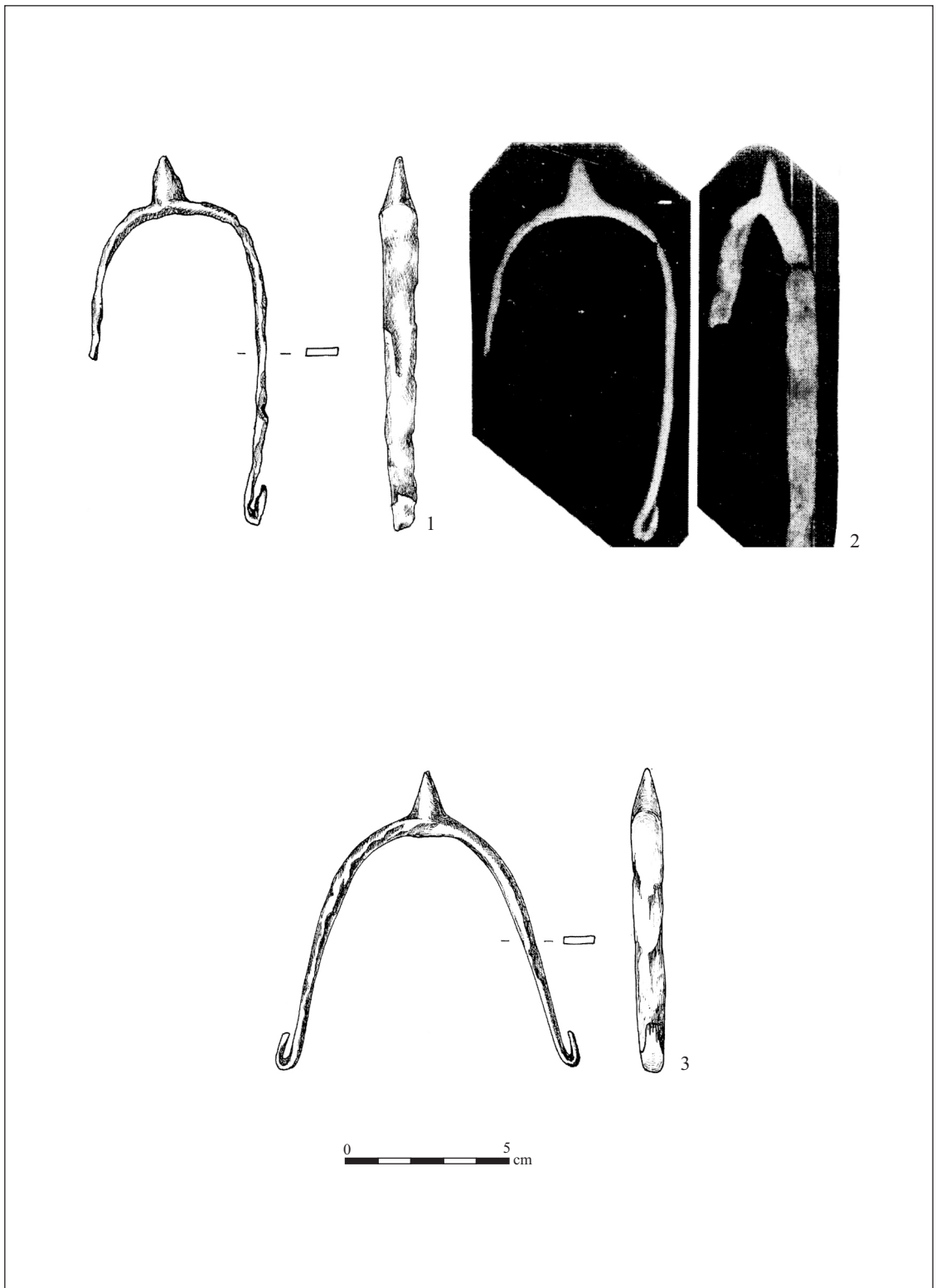
Fig. 1. The geographical location of the finds. 1 – Breaza. 2 – Dăbâca. 3 – Iernut. 4 – Medișorul Mare. 5 – Oradea. 6 – Peștera. 7 – Șura Mică. 8 – Tărtăria. 9 – Teiuș.



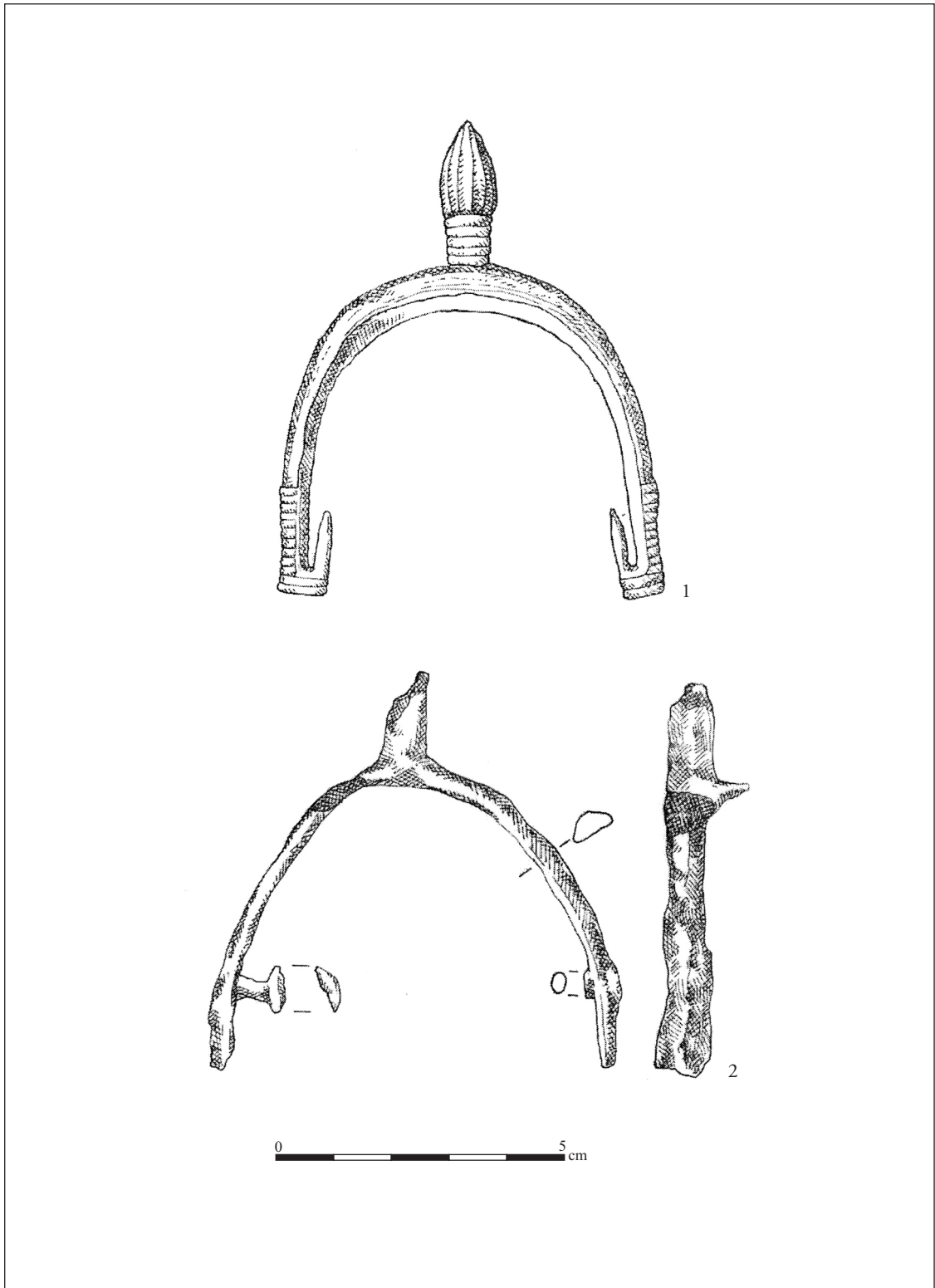
Pl. 1. 1 – Breaza. 2 – Medişoru Mare, no scale (after SZÉKELY 1988). 3 – Iernut.



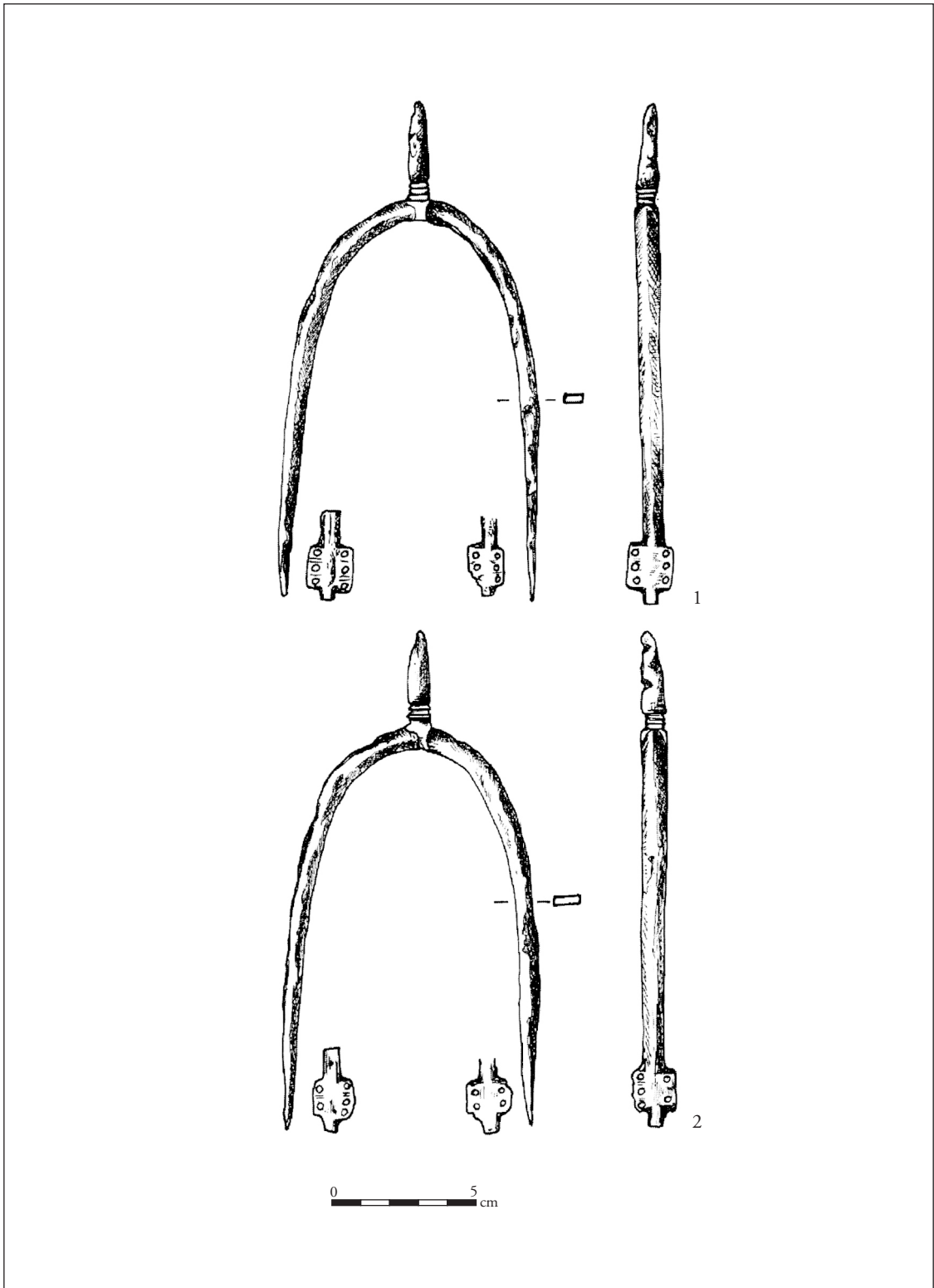
Pl. 2. 1-2 – Dăbâca. 3 – Șura Mică.



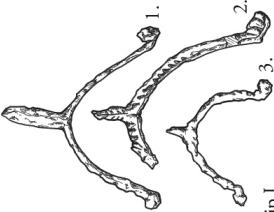
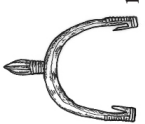
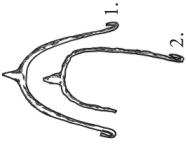
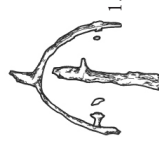
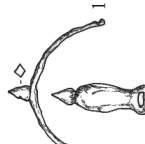
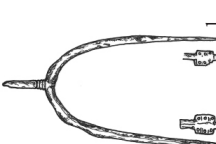
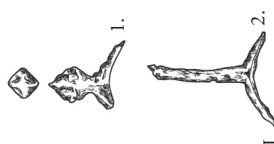
Pl. 3. 1, 2 – Iernut. 3 – Peștera.



Pl. 4. 1 – Oradea (after ZAK/MACKOWIAK-KOTOWSKA 1988). 2 – Teiuș.



Pl. 5. 1, 2 – Tărtăria.

650-730	 Tip I 1. Iernut 2. Breaza 3. Meșișoru Mare	780-850	 Tip II 1. Oradea	 Tip III 1. Peștera 2. Iernut	 Tip IV 1. Teiuș	 Tip V 1. Șura Mică	 Tip VI 1. Blandiana	 Tip VII 1-2. Dăbâca	950-1030/1050
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Pl. 6. The chronology of the spurs belonging to the 7-9 centuries AD from Transylvania.