

ZIRIDAVA
STUDIA ARCHAEOLOGICA

34

2020

MUSEUM ARAD



ZIRIDAVA
STUDIA ARCHAEOLOGICA

34
2020

Editura MEGA
Cluj-Napoca
2020

MUSEUM ARAD

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-chief: Florin Mărginean, Victor Sava.

Editorial Assistants: Norbert Kapcsos.

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Vitalie Bârcă (Institute of Archaeology and Art History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Adina Boroneanț ("Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest, Romania)

Marin Cărciumaru (Valahia University of Târgoviște, Romania)

Sorin Cocîș (Institute of Archaeology and Art History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Dragoș Diaconescu (The National Museum of Banat, Timișoara, Romania)

Daria Loznjak Dizdar (Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb, Croatia)

Alin Frînculeasa (Prahova County Museum of History and Archaeology, Ploiești, Romania)

Erwin Gáll ("Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest, Romania)

Florin Gogâltan (Institute of Archaeology and Art History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Adrian Ioniță ("Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest, Romania)

Hrvoje Kalafatić (Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb, Croatia)

Aleksandar Kapuran (Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade, Serbia)

Rüdiger Krause (Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Germany)

Tobias Kienlin (Universität zu Köln, Germany)

Valéria Kulcsár (University of Szeged, Hungary)

Sabin Adrian Luca (Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu, Romania)

Barry Molloy (University College Dublin, Ireland)

Sorin Nemeti (Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania)

John O'Shea (University of Michigan, USA)

Karl Zeno Pinter (Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu, Romania)

Ioan Stanciu (Institute of Archaeology and Art History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Imre Szatmári (Munkácsy Mihály Museum, Békéscsaba, Hungary)

Miklos Takács (Institute of Archaeology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary)

Ioan Marian Țiplic (Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu, Romania)

In Romania, the periodical can be obtained through subscription or exchange, sent as post shipment, from Museum Arad, Arad, Piata G. Enescu 1, 310131, Romania.

Tel. 0040-257-281847.

ZIRIDAVA STUDIA ARCHAEOLOGICA

Any correspondence will be sent to the editor:

Museum Arad

Piata George Enescu 1, 310131 Arad, RO

e-mail: ziridava2012@gmail.com

The content of the papers totally involve the responsibility of the authors.

Layout: Francisc Baja, Florin Mărginean, Victor Sava

ISSN 2392-8786



EDITURA MEGA | www.edituramega.ro
e-mail: mega@edituramega.ro

Contents

Emil Grigorescu Middle Neolithic at Oradea-Salca “Pepinieră”.....	7
Ana Fetcu, Alina Bințișan, Mihai Gligor An Early Eneolithic isolated non-adult burial from Alba Iulia – <i>Lumea Nouă</i> (Romania).....	25
Alin Frînculeasa Earthen burial mounds and the Coțofeni Culture south of the Carpathians. The archaeological research in Ariceștii-Rahtivani – <i>Movila pe Răzoare</i>	35
Mária Bondár, Anna Szécsényi-Nagy Skull cult in the Late Copper Age.....	91
Tünde Horváth, Attila Botond Szilasi Salgótarján–Baglyas-kő: A multi-period prehistoric site and medieval castle.....	105
Călin Ghemiș The Bronze Age Shaft-hole Axe Discovered in Loranta, the Municipality of Brusturi, Bihor County.....	119
Sofia Bertea Preliminary analysis of the bronze age pottery from Dudeștii Vechi- <i>Cociohatul Mic</i>	125
Alexandra Găvan, Marian Adrian Lie A casting mould uncovered in the Bronze Age tell settlement from Toboliu. Notes on the origin and distribution of socketed chisels.....	157
Andrei Stăvilă, Alexandru Hegyi, Bogdan Alin Craiovan Non-invasive archaeological researches performed in the Middle Bronze Age settlement from Alioș-Valea Alioșu (Timiș County, Romania). Structures, chronology, and perspectives.....	169
Florin Gogâltan, Andrei Stăvilă The Late Bronze Age Settlement from Giroc (Timiș County). The 1992–1993 archaeological excavations	189
Ioan Cristian Cireap A spearhead discovered at Săvârșin – <i>Cetățuia</i>	243
Remus Mihai Feraru Feasts in Honor of Demeter in the Megarian Colonies on the Shores of Pontus Euxinus.....	249
Andrei-Cătălin Dișcă Roman Sites and Discoveries Around Potaissa (III). New Data and Clarifications Regarding the Topography of the Sites in Aiton.....	259
Sorin Nemeti, Ștefana Cristea New Reliefs Plaques from Pojejena (Caraș-Severin county) depicting the Danubian Riders.....	277
Igor’ Khrapunov, Anastasiya Stoyanova A Grave with Roman Imports in the Cemetery of Opushki in the Crimea.....	287
Norbert Kapcsos An attempt to reconstruct the chronology of the Roman and Early Migrations Period in the Lower Mureș Valley.....	305

Vitalie Bârcă	
Funerary Ditched Enclosures in the Sarmatian Funerary Ritual. Observations Regarding Their Introduction, Distribution, Use, and Dating.....	325
Călin Cosma	
Dwellings with Weapons from the Early Medieval Settlement in Sfântu Gheorghe (Mureş County).....	377
Melinda Takács	
Late Avar Age Sites in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County.....	411
Margareta Simina Stanc, Daniel Ioan Malaxa, Dan Băcuet-Crişan	
The Exploitation of Animal Resources During the Early Medieval Period. Case Study: The Settlements in Popeni <i>Pe Pogor</i> and Cuceu <i>Valea Bochii</i> (Sălaj County).....	431
Daniela Tănase, Balázs Major	
Preliminary Data Regarding the Archaeological Research Performed between 2016 and 2019 at the Cistercian Abbey in Igriş/Egres, Timiş County.....	439
Florin Mărginean, Tamás Emődi	
The Medieval Church in Iermata Neagră – <i>Feketegyarmat</i> (Arad County).....	455
Dan Băcuet-Crişan	
A Medieval Knight Passionate about Dice games. The Spur Decorated with “Dice” Discovered in Aghireş <i>Sub păşune</i> (Sălaj county).....	479
Andrea Demjén	
Glass Artefacts Uncovered at the Pricske Quarantine Facility (Harghita County).....	489
Calin Ghemis, Constantin Iosif Zgardan	
Oradea 1703–1710 – the Blockade Coins.....	501
Abbreviations.....	511

A Medieval Knight Passionate about Dice games. The Spur Decorated with “Dice” Discovered in Aghireș *Sub pășune* (Sălaj county)*

Dan Băcuet-Crișan

Abstract: Rescue archaeological researches were performed in 2008–2009 on the site in Aghireș *Sub pășune* (the municipality of Meseșenii de Jos) in the need to rescue the archaeological remains from an area envisaged by the construction of the bypass road of Zalău. During these excavations archaeologists uncovered remains from Prehistory (the Bronze Age), La Tène, the post-Roman period, and the Early Middle Ages (the 8th–9th centuries, the 10th–11th centuries, and the 13th–14th centuries). Five medieval spurs were discovered, four of which originated in archaeological features and one in a layer: a pair from feature C. 30/2008 (located in S. 15/2008), another pair from feature C. 35/1/2008 (located in S. 15/2008), and a fifth from the culture layer (S. 16/2008). The spur under discussion here is made of iron, its two sides (triangular in cross-section) used for fastening on the footwear end in circular/annular terminals. One of the sides is embossed with three small squares made of the same metal piece as the side. The three squares have a decorative role and are in their turn adorned with small dots carved in the soft metal. A different number of dots can be seen on each square on the side of the spur: four, five, and six. The three squares (with a different number of dots on each) imitate the sides of a game dice. The five discovered spurs belong to the habitation level dated to the 13th–14th centuries. Based on the formal characteristics of these items I have included them among the findings specific to the 13th–14th centuries. Archaeological discoveries attest to the presence of dice since Antiquity and games with dice (made of clay, bone, stone, metal, and glass) are inseparable from the development of human society. The medieval world also had its games, including those with dice, and its players / game enthusiasts, including prominent members of the elites. Such ornate spurs (rare specimens which denote the rank/social status of those who wore them) could not belong to commoners but to representatives of the elite. The owner of the item found in Aghireș *Sub pășune* was probably one of the (local) potentates passionate about dice games.

Keywords: medieval knight; dice games; spur decorated with “dice”; spur embossed with three small squares; social status; 13th–14th centuries.

Site location and history of research. The village of Aghireș (in the municipality of Meseșenii de Jos) is located at the feet of the Meseș Mountains and is crossed by Creek Valea Mișii. The site in Aghireș *Sub pășune* (located on a high terrace on the right side of Mișii Valley) is a complex archaeological objective, with several stages of habitation.

Preventive archaeological researches were performed in 2008–2009 on the site in Aghireș *Sub pășune* (the municipality of Meseșenii de Jos), in order to rescue the archaeological vestiges from an area envisaged by the construction of the bypass road of Zalău. During these excavations archaeologists have researched remains dated to Prehistory (the Bronze Age), the La Tène Era, the Post-Roman Period, and the Early Middle Ages (the 8th–9th centuries, the 10th–11th centuries, and the 13th–14th centuries)¹.

Context of discovery. Five medieval spurs were discovered during these excavations. Four of them were found in archaeological features and one in the culture layer: a pair in feature C. 30/2008 (located in S. 15/2008), another pair in feature C. 35/1/2008 (located in S. 15/2008), and the fifth in the culture layer (in S. 16/2008)².

* Translated by: Ana Maria Gruia.

** The Romanian language version of this article was published in D. Băcuet-Crișan, *Elemente de cultură material medievală (sec. XIII-XV) din Depresiunea Silvaniei și zonele învecinate*. Cluj-Napoca 2020, 93–102.

¹ Băcuet-Crișan *et al.* 2009, 25; Băcuet-Crișan 2014, 36–37.

² Băcuet-Crișan *et al.* 2009, Pl. 178, 193, 265/1.



Fig. 1. Aghireș *Sub pășune* (marked with an X). Google Earth capture.



Fig. 2. Aghireș *Sub pășune*.

The artifact's formal characteristics and manner of production. The rowel spur under discussion (Pl. 1) was presented in 2009 in the report of the preventive archaeological research performed in the area of the bypass road of Zalău³. The item was made of iron and its two sides (triangular in section) that allowed its fastening onto footwear ended in circular terminals. One of the sides is decorated with three small squares in relief. These three decorative squares (all with the sides measuring 7 mm × 7 mm) are decorated in their turn with small dots embossed into the soft metal.

³ Băcuet-Crișan *et al.* 2009, 58.

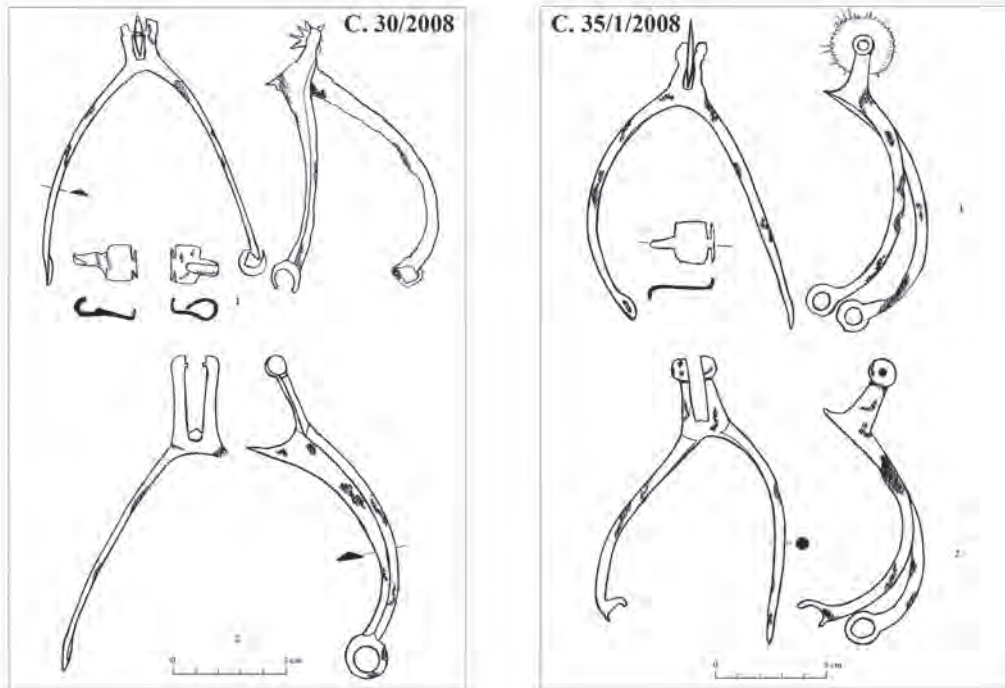


Fig. 3. Aghireş Sub păşune. Spurs dated to the 13th–14th centuries (taken from Băcuet-Crişan *et al.* 2009).

A different number of dots decorated each side of the squares on the spur’s side: four, five, and six (Pl. 2). The squares with four and five dots are well preserved and highly visible, but in the case of the square with five dots the fifth dot is more difficult to notice due to corrosion. The three squares (featuring a different number of dots) imitate the sides of a game dice. The concave dots preserve slight traces of color (green) from the bronze with which they had been initially filled (metal intarsia). This suggests that during the spur’s period of use the dots indicating the numbers of the game dice faces were highly visible.

In his 2016 study A. A. Rusu also makes reference to this discovery, mentioning that “a unique discovery was made in Aghireşu (Cluj County), where metal dice were found welded onto a 13th–14th-century spur.”⁴ This statement contains two errors that I shall hereby analyze/clarify:

- despite the fact that the spur was discovered in the settlement of Aghireş in Sălaj County, A. A. Rusu locates the discovery in Aghireşu, Cluj County!

- the three squares with dots (the “dice”) were not created independently and subsequently “welded” onto the side of the spur. On the contrary, the three squares were “modeled” out of the body of this side (Pl. 3). Spurs with relief decoration on one or both sides are known from the area of Moravia and the ornaments are modeled directly on the spur’s side(s).

In 2019, in another published work⁵, A. A. Rusu “persisted” in mentioning the erroneous location of the place of discovery⁶. On that occasion he stated that the spur was discovered “in a relatively modest dwelling, but not a peasant one”⁷ despite the fact the authors of the discovery have recorded the fact that the artifact was uncovered “in the culture layer/section S. 16/2008”!⁸

Formal and stylistic analogies. Final consideration. The five discovered spurs belong to the habitation layer that can be dated to the 13th–14th centuries. Through their formal characteristics (the type of rowel, the shape of the sides, the fastening system, and the buckles) they can be included among the discoveries specific to the end of the 13th century and the 14th century⁹.

⁴ Rusu 2016, 357.

⁵ Rusu 2019, 770.

⁶ After the publication of the 2016, during a private conversation I told Mr. Rusu of his erroneous geographic location of the discovery in question. Still, in 2019 he repeated the error (Rusu 2019, 770).

⁷ Rusu 2019, 770.

⁸ Băcuet-Crişan *et al.* 2009, 58, Pl. 265/1, Fig. 20.

⁹ Băcuet-Crişan *et al.* 2009, 59; Györfi 2006, p. 111.

Naturally, the decorated spur is the most interesting artifact of the lot. If the three squares represent the sides of the game dice, the pair spur probably also displayed one side decorated with three squares, but with a different number of dots (one, two, and three), so that together the two spurs would have rendered all six sides of a game dice.

One knows that the decoration of spurs did not start during the Middle Ages, but was known since Antiquity¹⁰, the Migrations Period, and the Early Medieval Period (such as the items from the Moravian power center)¹¹. Several decorated items have been attested from the Transylvanian medieval archaeological environment. The artifacts in question have been decorated (with incisions) on the neck (lines associated with dots or just lines)¹² or on the meeting area of the two sides (incised lines)¹³. Other items display sides decorated with a stripe of straight incised lines¹⁴.

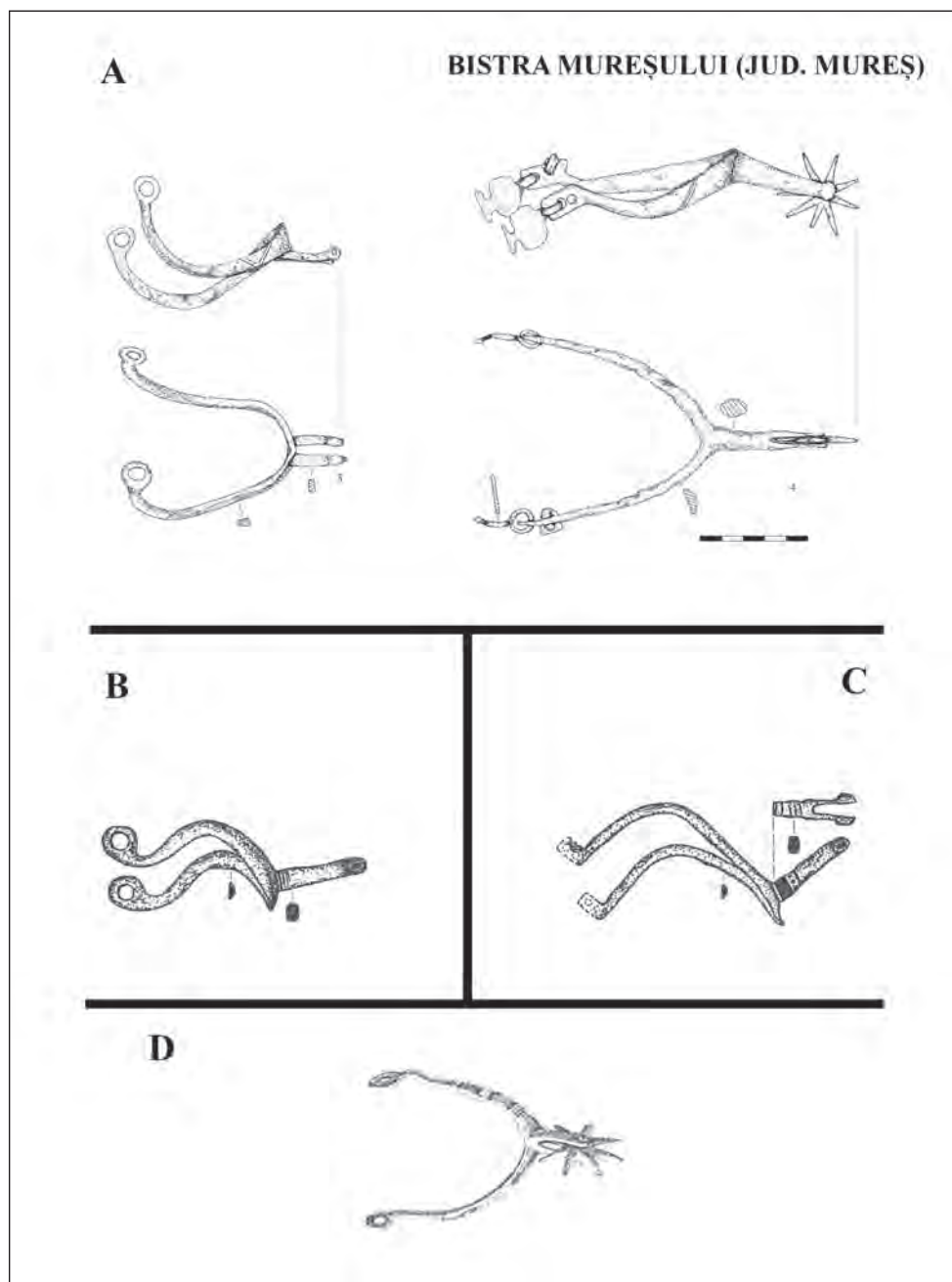


Fig. 4. Decorated medieval spurs. Analogies (A taken from Györfi 2014-1015; B-D taken from Györfi 2006).

¹⁰ The item from the Dacian fortification in Brad/Zargidava (Ursachi 1995, Pl. 49/5).

¹¹ Kavánová 1976, Tab I-IV, VII, IX-X.

¹² Györfi 2006, 119/nr.33, 125/nr. 55.

¹³ Györfi 2006, 126/nr. 61.

¹⁴ Györfi 2006, 118/nr. 28.

A lot of medieval artifacts found in Bistra Mureșului have been recently published¹⁵. The lot, dated to the 14th–15th centuries, includes two pairs of spurs. One of them had both sides decorated (one of the sides had three lines, and the other had four incised lines), while another spur had two pairs of lines on one of the sides¹⁶.

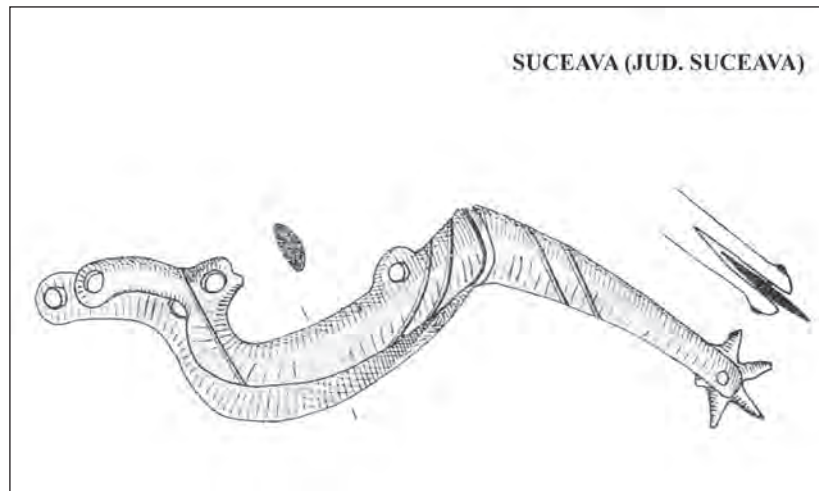


Fig. 5. Decorated medieval spur. Analogy (taken from Matei 1989).

Another example consists of an item discovered in Moldavia, in Suceava, dated to the second half of the 15th century. The spur is made of bronze and is decorated through incision with pairs of straight parallel lines placed on the side and neck¹⁷.

Archaeological discoveries attest the production and use of dice since Antiquity and dice games are linked with the development of human society. Dice were made of clay, bone, stone, metal, and glass. The medieval world also included people passionate about games (and gambling) and people who played dice games – some of which were prominent members of the elites¹⁸. Decorated spurs (rare items that indicate the social rank/status of their owners) could not have been owned by commoners, but only by members of the elites. The owner of the spur discovered in Aghireș Sub pășune was probably one of the (local) potentates who were passionate about dice games.

Acknowledgment

A. Tulbure and O. Orțan (County History and Art Museum Zalău) have performed the drawings of the spurs discovered in Aghireș Sub pășune.

N. Gozman (County History and Art Museum Zalău) is the author of the photographs of the spur decorated with dice.

T. Jugrăstan (County History and Art Museum Zalău) has performed the restoration of the spur decorated with dice.

N. Gozman (County History and Art Museum Zalău) is the author of the general photograph of the site in Aghireș Sub pășune.

Dan Băcuet-Crișan

Zalău History and Art County Museum
Zalău, ROU
bacuetz@yahoo.com

¹⁵ Györfi 2014–2015, 132.

¹⁶ Györfi 2014–2015, 129, Fig. 9.

¹⁷ Matei 1989, 210, Fig. 25.

¹⁸ On playing dice games during the Middle Ages see Rusu 2019, 769 and subsequent pages.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Băcueț-Crișan 2014 D. Băcueț-Crișan, *Contribuții arheologice privind nord-vestul României în sec. VII-XI. Cercetări în Depresiunea Silvaniei*. Cluj-Napoca 2014.
- Băcueț-Crișan et al. 2009 D. Băcueț-Crișan, S. Băcueț-Crișan, I. Bejinariu, H. Pop, Al. V. Matei, *Cercetări arheologice preventive pe traseul șoselei ocolitoare a municipiului Zalău*. Cluj-Napoca 2009.
- Györfi 2006 Z. Györfi, *KözépkoritarajossarkantyúkErdélyben (13. – 14. Század)*. Dolgozatok I (XI), 2006, 99–127
- Györfi 2014–2015 Z. Györfi, *Medieval weaponsfrom Bistra Mureșului*. Marisia XXXIV-XXXV, 2014–2015, 117–137.
- Kavánová 1976 B. Kavánová, *Slovanskéostrohy na územíČeskoslovenska*. Praga 1976.
- Matei 1989 M. D. Matei, *Civilizație urbană medievală românească. Contribuții*. București 1989.
- Rusu 2016 A. A. Rusu, *Jetoanele medievale din ceramică: utilități cu multiple dubii de interpretare*. AnB XXIV, 2016, 337–378.
- Rusu 2019 A. A. Rusu, *Castelul și spada. Cultura materială a elitelor din Transilvania în evul mediu târziu*. Cluj-Napoca 2019.
- Ursachi 1995 V. Ursachi, Zargidava. *Cetatea dacică de la Brad*. București 1995.

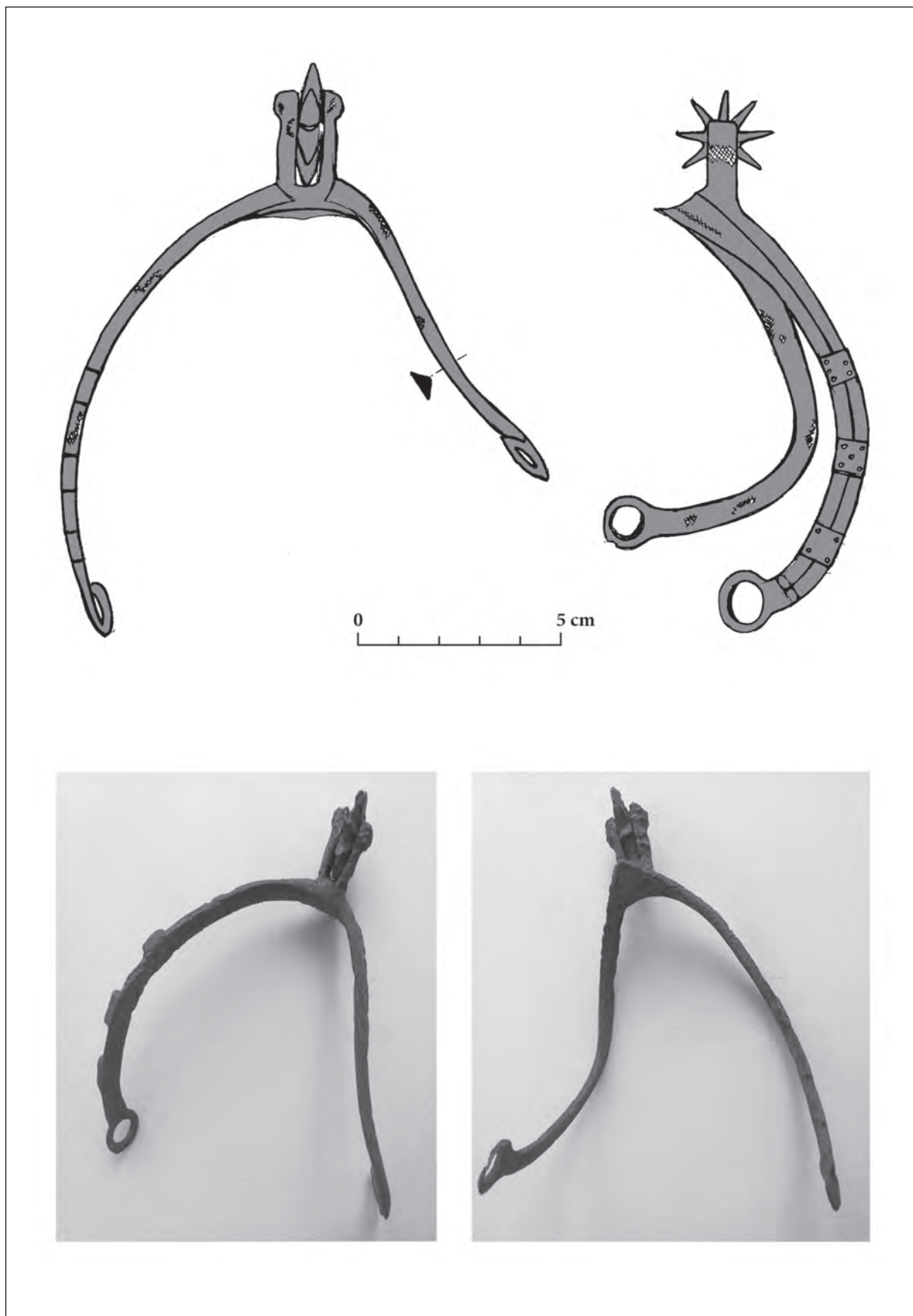


Plate 1. Aghireş Sub păşune. Medieval decorated spur (trench S. 16/2008).

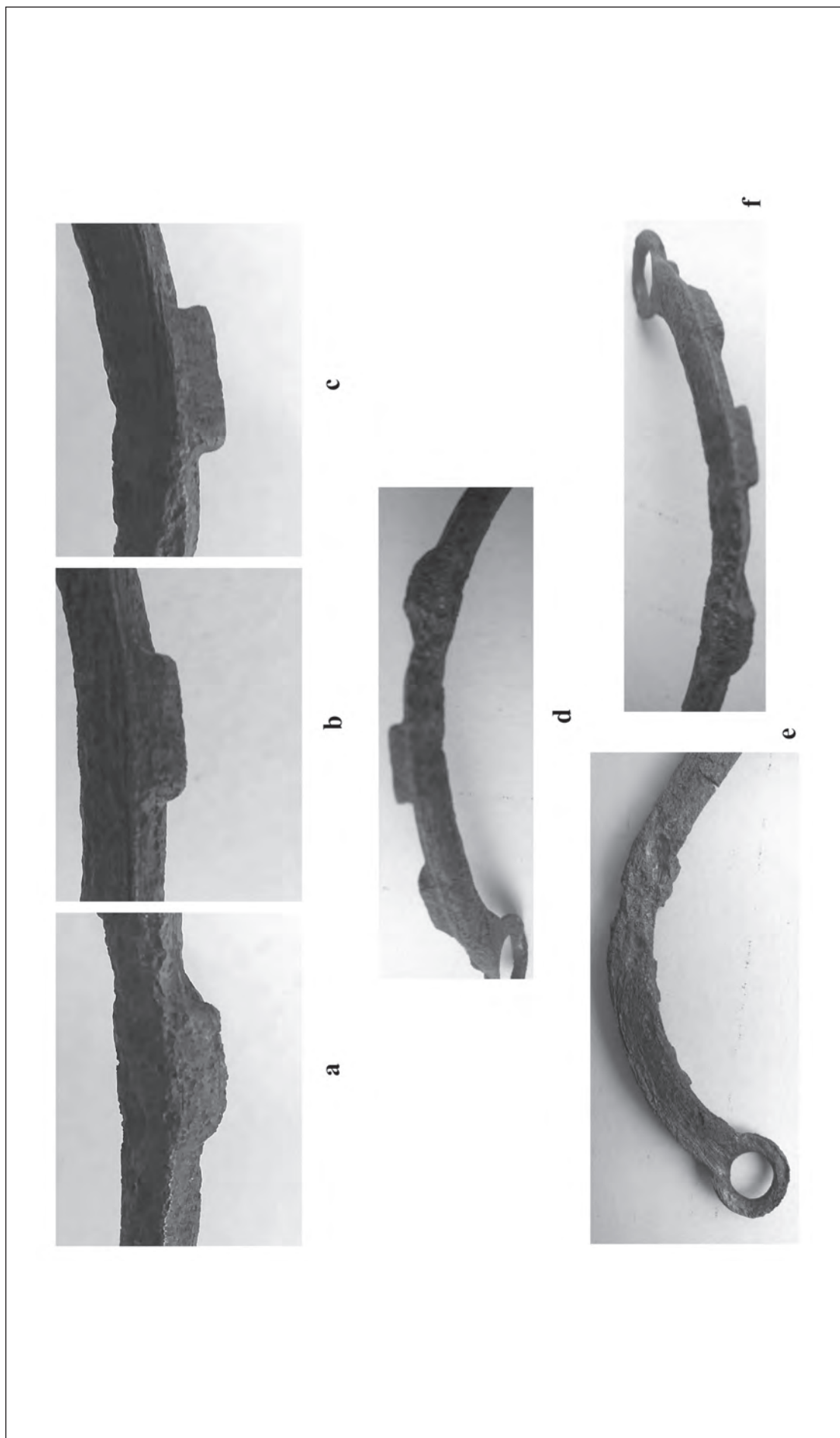


Plate 2. Aghireș Sub pășune. Medieval decorated spur (trench S. 16/2008). Details.

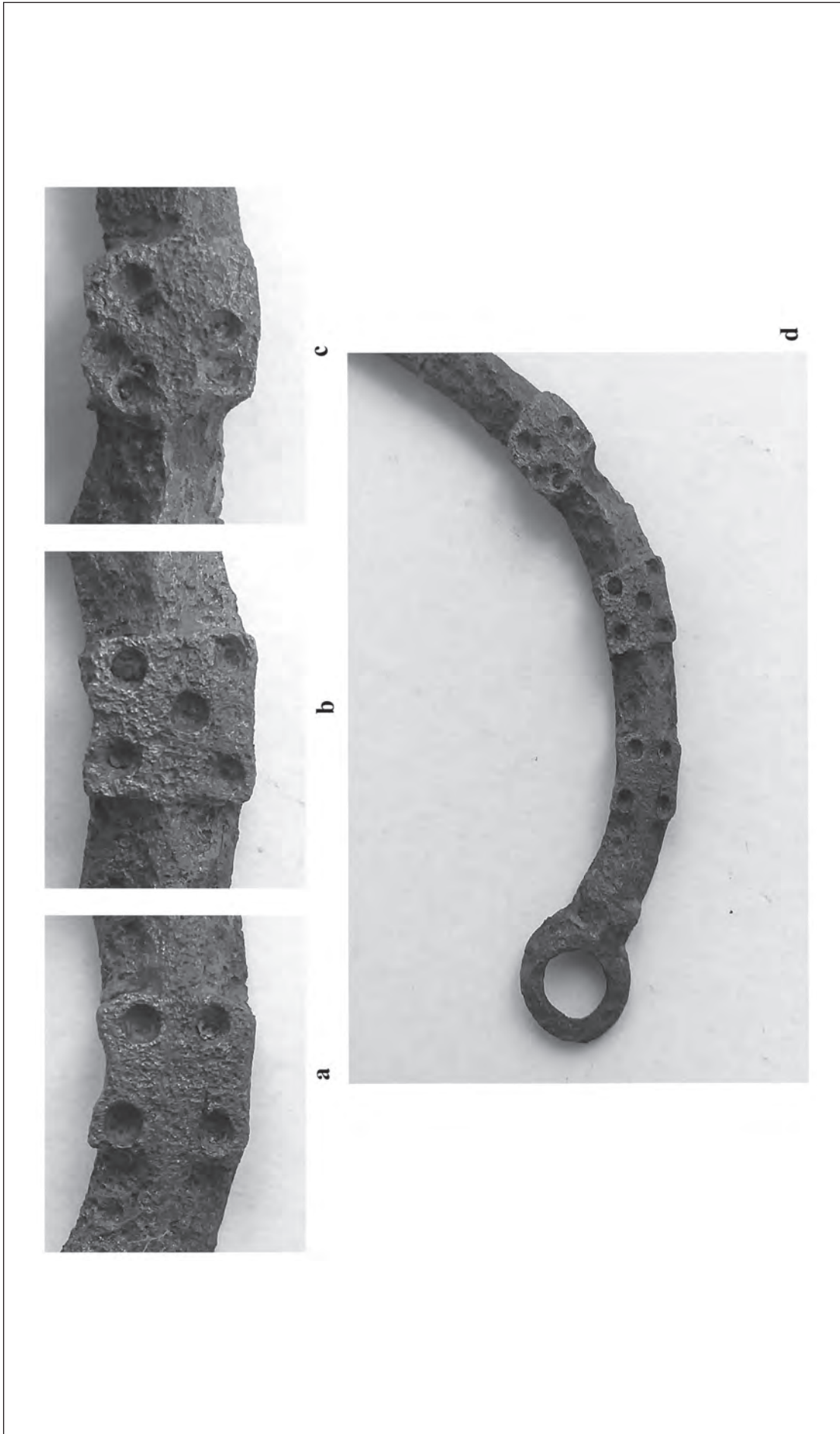


Plate 3. Aghireş Sub păşune. Medieval decorated spur (trench S. 16/2008). Details.

Abbreviations

ActaArchHung	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.
AAC	Acta Archaeologica Carpathica, Cracow.
ActaMN	Acta Musei Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
ActaMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis, Zalău
AnArchRessoviensia	Analecta Archaeologica Ressoviensia, Rzeszów.
AAS at CEU	Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU, Budapest.
Apulum	Acta Musei Apulensis – Apulum, Alba-Iulia.
Alba Regia	Alba Regia, Székesfehérvár.
Antaeus	Antaeus, Budapest.
Arrabona	Arrabona, Győr.
ArhMed	Arheologia Medievală, Cluj-Napoca, Brăila, Reșița.
ArchBaltica	Archaeologia Baltica, Vilnius.
Arch.Inf	Archäologische Informationen.
ATS	Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis, Sibiu.
ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értesítő, Budapest.
Banatica	Banatica, Reșița.
BBMÉ	A Béri Balogh Ádám Múzeum Évkönyve, Szekszárd.
BUFM	Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte Mitteleuropas.
BCMI	Buletinul Comisiei Naționale a Monumentelor, ansambluri situri istorice. București.
CommArchHung	Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungaricae, Budapest.
CCA	Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice, Comisia Națională de Arheologie, București.
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.
CMA	Complexul Muzeal Arad.
Dolgozatok	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Múzeum érem- és régiségtárából, Cluj.
Dolg.	Dolgozatok a Magyar Királyi Ferencz József Tudományegyetem Archaeologiai Intézetéből, Szeged.
Dolg. ÚS	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából, Új Sorozat. Cluj-Napoca / Kolozsvár.
EphNap	Ephemeris Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
HOMÉ	A Hermann Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve. Miskolc.
JAHA	Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology, Cluj-Napoca.
JAM	Jósa András Museum, Nyíregyháza.
JPMÉ	Janus Pannonius Múzeum Évkönyve.
JRGZM	Jahrbuch des Romisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz.
KRRMK	Kaposvári Rippl Rónai Múzeum Közleményei, Kaposvár.
LMI	Lista monumentelor istorice, updated in 2015.
MittArchInst	Mitteilungen des Archäologischen Instituts der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
MOL	Magyar Olaj- és Gázipari Részvénytársaság / Hungarian Oil and Gas Public Limited Company
Marisia	Marisia, Târgu Mureș.
NyJAMÉ	A nyíregyházi Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve, Nyíregyháza.
PBF	Praehistorische Bronzefunde. Berlin.
Przegląd Archeologiczny	Przegląd Archeologiczny, Wrocław.
Rad	Jósa András Museum, Archaeological Archive
RégFüz	Régészeti Füzetek, Budapest.

RKM	Régészeti Kutatások Magyarországon/Archaeological Investigations in Hungary, Budapest.
RAJ Arad	Repertoriul Arheologic al Mureşului Inferior. Judeţul Arad. Timişoara 1999.
RAN	Repertoriul Arheologic Naţional.
Sargetia	Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis, Deva.
SCIV(A)	Studii şi Cercetări de Istorie Veche şi Arheologie, Bucureşti.
SGB	Studii de Geografie a Banatului, Timişoara.
SIB	Studii de Istorie a Banatului, Timişoara.
Slavia Antiqua	Slavia Antiqua, Poznań.
SlovArch	Slovenská Archeológia, Nitra.
SMK	Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei, Kaposvár.
SovArh	Sovetskaja Arheologija, Moskva.
SRTM	Shuttle Radar Topography Mission.
StudiaUBB Historia	Studia UBB Historia, Cluj-Napoca.
SzKMÉ	A Szántó Kovács Múzeum Évkönyve, Pécs.
Századok	Századok, Budapest.
Terra Sebus	Terra Sebus. Acta Musei Sabesiensis, Sebeş.
Tibiscum S. N.	Tibiscum S. N., Caransebeş.
TransRev	Transylvanian Review, Cluj-Napoca.
ZalaiMúz	Zalai Múzeum, Zalaegerszeg.
ZSA	Ziridava. Studia Archaeologica. Arad.
Živa Antika	Živa Antika, Skopje.

