

STUDED FOOTWEAR IN THE 10TH CENTURY CARPATHIAN BASIN¹EMESE POLÓNYI²

Studded footwear is amongst the characteristic pieces of female apparel during the Hungarian Conquest period. Up to this point, they are only known from female graves in the territory of the Carpathian Basin (similar to the case for ancient Mordvinian, Pecheneg and Oghuz graves mentioned in the article), and the studs make up numerous well-differentiated groups according to their forms. The present article attempts to summarize the knowledge up to this point on Conquest period studded footwear, as well as briefly touching upon the possible analogies for this type of object and the customs of decorating footwear in early medieval Europe.

RESEARCH HISTORY

The find materials of Conquest period Carpathian Basin studded footwear are amongst the less studied objects. The first studded footwear came to light at the end of the 19th century, from grave 2 at Piliny-Leshegy, but the excavator, Baron Jenő Nyáry, did not place particular significance on the studs since this object type was not yet known to research.³ József Hampel proposed in connection with the finds from Csorna-Sülyhegy that the small studs may have decorated footwear,⁴ and later Elek Kada also came to this same conclusion in 1912 in connection with the finds from Kiskunfélegyháza-Ferencszállás. The identification of these pieces of apparel to the Conquest period is linked to the name Nándor Fettich,⁵ and their first in situ location was recorded by László Tary at the Csongrád-Vendelhalom excavation.⁶ Following the excavation of the Koroncó-Bábotá find in its original location by Gyula László, it was possible to make the first authentic reconstruction drawings of studded footwear.⁷ On the basis of the observations of Béla Szőke, the studded footwear can be linked to the female apparel of both the “leading and middle strata”.⁸ The most detailed summary of the find type up to this point was performed by Dezső Csallány in 1970, and at the same time he attempted to restore a few earlier finds.⁹ László Révész later pointed out the errors in this collection of data and the importance of correcting these.¹⁰ Béla Kürti uniformly dated the graves containing

¹ The present article summarizes the results of the search for the thesis written in 2015 entitled “Carpathian Basin 10th Century Finds of Footwear Decorated with Studs” and the later National Scientific Student Conference. The paper won 2nd prize in 2017 in Pécs, in the Division of Archaeology II at the Humanities section of the the 23rd National Scientific Student Conference. Supervisor: Attila Türk PhD, Department Head, Department of Early Hungarian and Migration Period Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Pázmány Péter Catholic University

² Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Institute of Archaeology, MA/MSc 2nd Year (emese.polonyi@gmail.com)

³ Nyáry, Jenő: A pilinyi Leshegyen talált csontvázakról (On the Skeletons Found at Piliny-Leshegy). *Archaeologiai Közlemények (Archaeological Publications)* 9 (1873), 16–24.

⁴ Hampel, József: *Altertümer des frühe Mittelalters in Ungarn I–III*. Braunschweig, 1905, 614.

⁵ Fettich, Nándor: Adatok a honfoglalás kor archaeológiájához (Data on the Archaeology of the Conquest Period). *Archaeologiai Értesítő (Archaeological Bulletin)* 45 (1931), 87–88.

⁶ Párducz, Mihály–Tary, László: A Csongrád-Vendelhalmi honfoglalás kori lelet (The Conquest Period Find at Csongrád-Vendelhalom). *Folia Archaeologica* 1–2 (1939), 189–199.

⁷ László, Gyula: A koroncói lelet és a honfoglaló magyarok nyerge (The Koroncó Find and the Saddle of the Conquering Hungarians). *Archaeologia Hungarica* 27 (1941), 26–28.

⁸ Szőke, Béla: *A honfoglaló és kora Árpád-kori magyarság régészeti emlékei (Archaeological Relics of the Hungarian People of the Conquest and Early Árpád Periods)*. Régészeti Tanulmányok I (Archaeological Studies I). Budapest, 1962, 17.

⁹ Csallány, Dezső: Weiblicher Haarflechtschmuck und Stiefelbeschläge aus der ungarischen Landnahmezeit im Karpatenbecken. *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica* 22 (1970), 284–299.

¹⁰ Révész, László: *A karosi honfoglalás kori temetők (The Conquest Period Cemeteries of Karos)*. In: Fodor, István – Veres, László – Viga, Gyula (eds.): *Magyarország honfoglalás kori és kora Árpád-kori sírleletei 1 (Hungary’s Conquest Period and Early Árpád Period Grave Finds 1)*. Miskolc, 1996, 98.



Fig. 1: Depiction of Basil II in the Codex Marcianus [Parani, Maria G.: *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)*. Leiden–Boston, 2003, 30.]

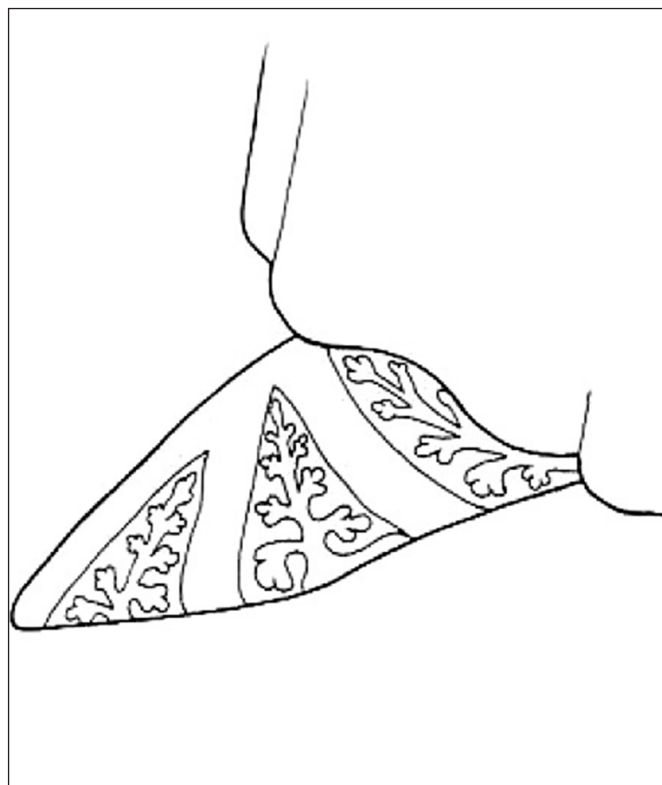


Fig. 2: Western European footwear. Detail from the depiction on the crypt of Edward III in Westminster Abbey (Grew, Francis – Neergaard, Margrethe de: *Shoes and Patterns. Medieval finds from excavations in London 2*. London, 2001, 114)

studded footwear to the first half of the 10th century, and identified the women resting in the graves as the wives of armed men who had become wealthy through their adventures.¹¹

THE DISTRIBUTION OF FOOTWEAR DECORATION IN EARLY MEDIEVAL EUROPE

The decoration of footwear with studs in the material culture of the Byzantine Empire can be traced back to the Early Byzantine period. There are numerous known pictorial depictions of red footwear decorated with hemispherical studs, which symbolized a leading imperial or military rank (fig. 1).¹² In contemporary western Europe, the footwear was decorated with textiles with diverse motifs in place of the beads, studs, metal plates or precious stones (fig. 2).¹³

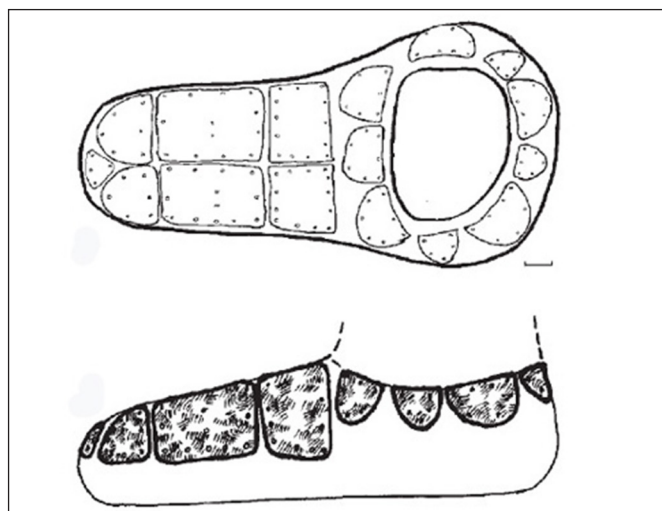


Fig. 3: Reconstruction of the footwear decorated with silver plates from grave 2 at Dmytrivka [Супруненко, О. Б.: *Давньоугорський некрополь поблизу с. Дмитрівки в нижній течії Псла (The Old Hungarian Necropolis in Dmytrivka in the Psel Low Flow Area)*. In: Моця, О. П. (Ред.): *Маляри в Середньому Подніпров'ї. Археологія і давня історія України 7*. Київ, 2011, 117.]

¹¹ Kürti, Béla: Honfoglalás kori magyar temető Szeged-Algyőn (Conquest Period Hungarian Cemetery at Szeged-Algyő). *Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve (Annual of the Móra Ferenc Museum)* 1978–79/1 (1980), 167.

¹² Parani, Maria G.: *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)*. Leiden–Boston, 2003, 30.

¹³ Grew, Francis – Neergaard, Margrethe de: *Shoes and Patterns. Medieval finds from excavations in London 2*. London, 2001, 114.

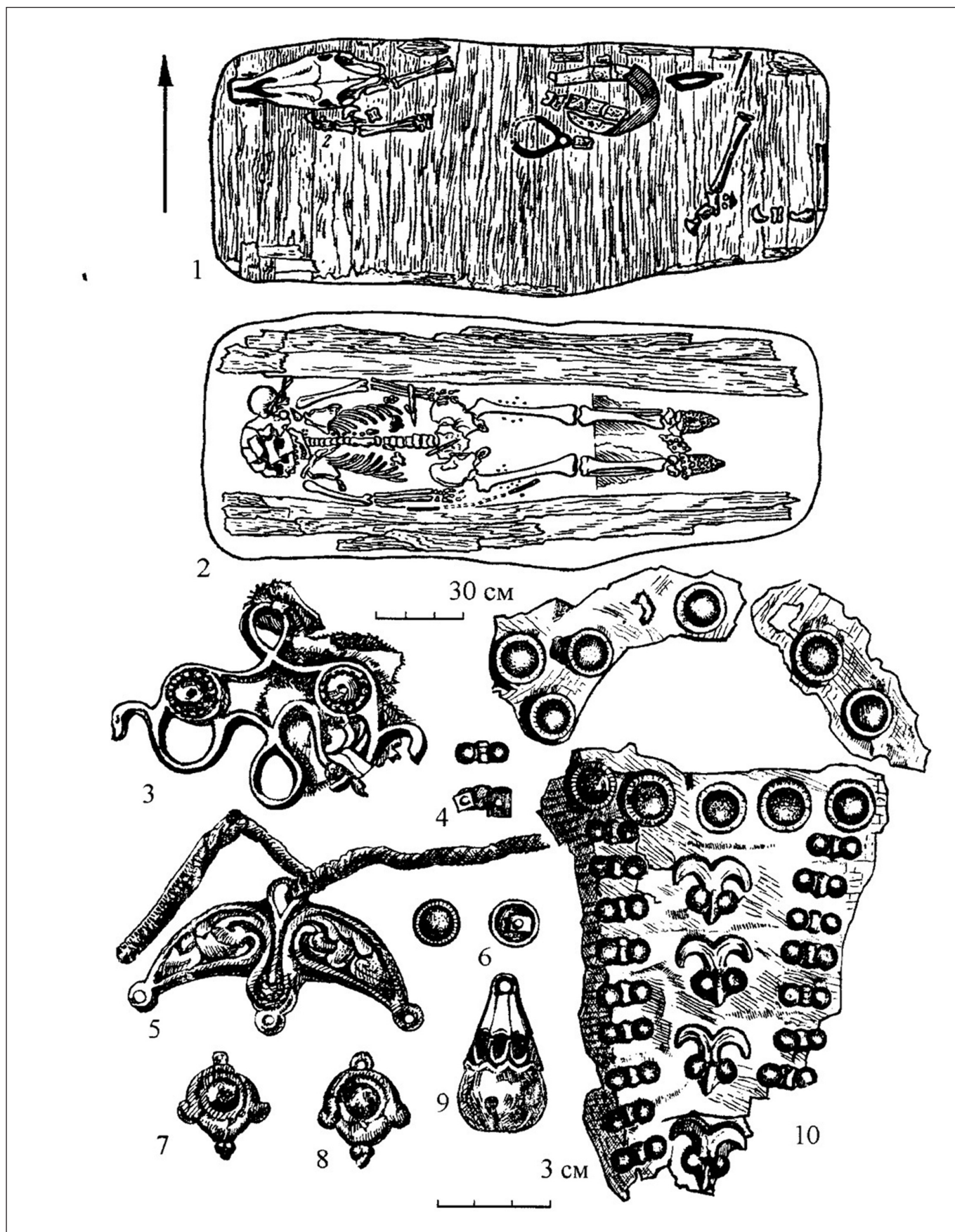


Fig. 4: Finds from grave 10/2 at the Uvak site, including studded footwear Круглов, Е. В.: Печенеги и огузы некоторые проблемы археологических источников Pecheneg and Oguz Tribes: Certain Problems of Archaeological Sources. In: Евлевский, А. В. (Ред.): Степи Европы в эпоху средневековья. Том 3. Донецк, 2003, 61.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF FOOTWEAR DECORATED WITH STUDS IN THE EASTERN EUROPEAN REGION

The custom of decorating footwear with studs or metal plates can be observed in the find materials from the steppe region, which can also be brought into close relation to the early Hungarian people. Several elements of the find materials from the cemetery found next to the village of Dmytrivka belonging to the Subotcy horizon can be compared with the 9th–11th century grave finds from the Volga River and Danube River regions. Included in this is the footwear decorated with metal plates discovered in graves 2 and 14 (fig. 3), which even though no parallels are known from the Conquest period find materials in the Carpathian Basin, decoration with metal plates implies a certain degree of similarity in the conceptual background.¹⁴ The custom of decorating footwear with studs was also widespread amongst the group of Finno-Ugric peoples of the Volga River region, and similar to the Conquest period Hungarians, they are found as grave goods for wealthy women. The footwear studs of the Finno-Ugric peoples were made from a copper-based alloy. They had pendant ornaments similar to the clothing studs, for which there are also no known similar examples from the Carpathian Basin.¹⁵ The closest parallel to the studded footwear known from Conquest period finds is from 9th–11th century Pecheneg and Oghuz burials. They appear as grave goods from female or children's graves, and in the case of several types they show similarities on the basis of their formal characteristics to a few Carpathian Basin examples (fig. 4).¹⁶

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES FOR FOOTWEAR STUDS, THE MAIN TYPES OF STUDS AND THE DESIGN OF THE FOOTWEAR

In the case of footwear studs, widespread production technique methods were employed in the Conquest period. Their raw materials were copper or silver based alloys. The studs made from silver alloys were in many cases decorated with gilding in part or over their entire surface, and in affixing them to the footwear they most commonly employed mounting spikes that were often also provided with underplates. The hemispherical studs that are the most common type appearing within the find group in question are in many cases combined with cast silver studs of large size decorated with stylized floral or animal motifs, gilding or glass or stone inlays.

The two basic groups of footwear studs are the hemispherical studs and the studs of larger size. The former can be divided into several sub-categories based on their material composition and the latter can be categorized on their material composition and formal characteristics (fig. 5). In most cases the studs can be found on the boot section covering the foot, but in one case that can be authentically reconstructed (grave 1 at Buj-Gyeptelek) they were also found in the area of the lower shin (fig. 6), which clearly indicates the use of a boot that reached the middle of the leg.¹⁷ It is possible to conclude on the basis of the corroded leather remains found on the back of the studs in a few cases, as well as from the distance between the underplate affixed to the mounting spike of the stud and the back side of the stud, that the material was quite thick, and thus in these cases the footwear was definitely made from leather. In two graves the back sides of the studs were provided with mounting flaps, which is a technique for affixing them used for softer materials, so at grave 12 at Szentes-Borbásföld and grave 43 at Székesfehérvár-Rádiótelep the footwear may have been

¹⁴ Супруненко, О. Б.: Давньоугорський некрополь поблизу с. Дмитрівки в нижній течії Псла. In: Моця, О. П. (Ред.): *Мадяри в Середньому Подніпров'ї. Археологія і давня історія України* 7. Київ, 2011, 110–124.

¹⁵ Никитина, Т. Б.: Погребальные памятники IX–XI вв. Ветлужско-Вятского Междуречья. *Археология Евразийских степей*. Выпуск 14. Казань, 2012, 11–17.

¹⁶ Круглов, Е. В.: Печенеги и огузы некоторые проблемы археологических источников. In: Евлевский, А. В. (Ред.): *Степи Европы в эпоху средневековья*. Том 3. Донецк, 2003, 61–67.

¹⁷ Csallány, Dezső: Weiblicher Haarflechtschmuck und Stiefelbeschläge aus der ungarischen Landnahmezeit im Karpatenbecken. *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica* 22 (1970), 295–299; Istvánovits, Eszter: *A Rétköz honfoglalás és Árpád-kori leletanyaga (The Find Materials of the Conquest and Árpád Periods in the Rétköz Region)*. Régészeti gyűjtemények Nyíregyháza 2 (Archaeological Collections in Nyíregyháza 2). Nyíregyháza, 2003, 32–33.



Fig. 5: Image table summarizing the footwear studs known to this point from the Carpathian Basin [Polónyi, Emese: *A Kárpát-medence 10. századi veretekkel díszített lábbelileletei*, 11. kép (Carpathian Basin 10th Century Finds of Footwear Decorated with Studs, Fig. 11.) Thesis, 2015.]

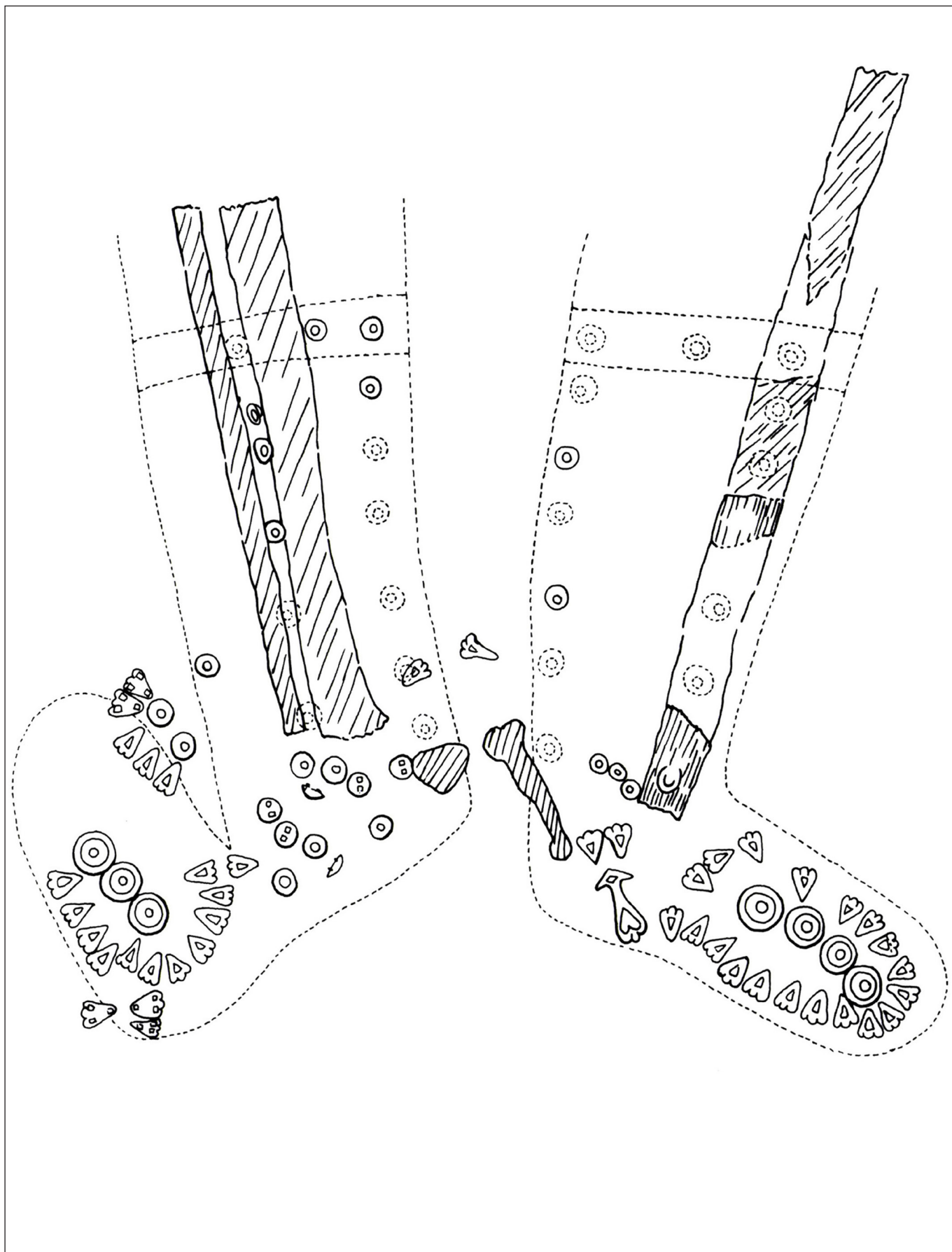


Fig. 6: Footwear studs from grave 1 at Buj-Gyeptelek [Csallány, Dezső: *Weiblicher Haarflechtschmuck und Stiefelbeschlüge aus der ungarischen Landnahmezeit im Karpatenbecken*. *Acta ArchHung* 22 (1970), 298.]

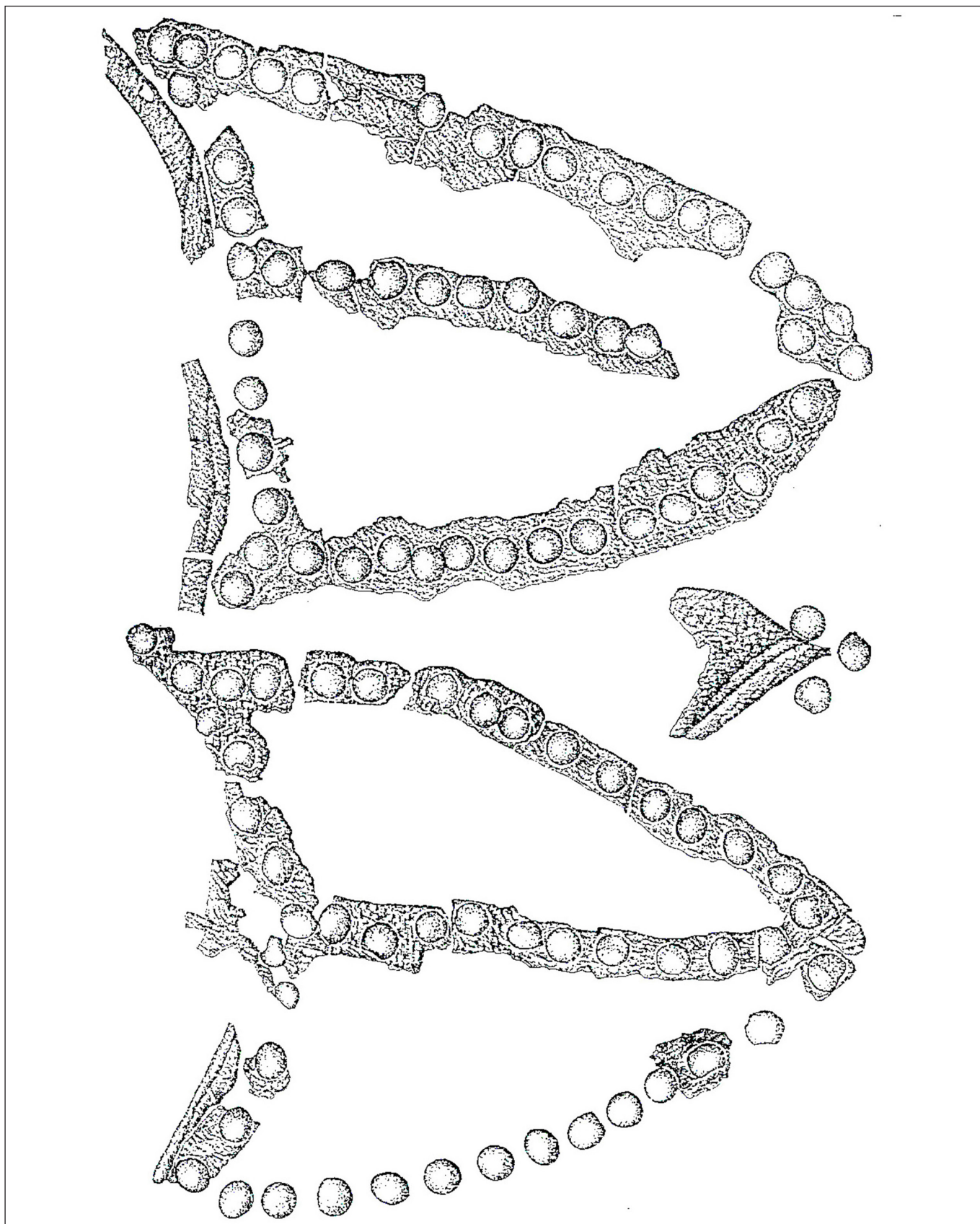


Fig. 7: Remains of the studded footwear from grave 45 at the Karos II cemetery [Révész, László: *A karosi honfoglalás kori temetők* (The Conquest Period Cemeteries of Karos). (Die Gräberfelder von Karos aus der Landnahmezeit. Archäologische Angaben zur Geschichte des oberen Theißgebietes im 10. Jahrhundert). In: Fodor, István – Veres, László – Viga, Gyula (eds.): *Magyarország honfoglalás kori és kora Árpád-kori sírleletei I* (Hungary's Conquest Period and Early Árpád Period Grave Finds I). Miskolc, 1996, 282.]

made from felt as well.¹⁸ At another two graves it is possible on the basis of the leather straps conserved below the studs with hemispherical heads that they were first affixed to leather straps and then to the footwear (fig. 7).¹⁹ The method of securing the footwear represents a problematic issue for research, since a clasp for fastening the footwear has not yet been found in Conquest period female graves. Dezső Csallány hypothesized in connection with the anchor-shaped studs that they may have played a role in securing the boots (“boot-fastening studs”),²⁰ however, this type of stud was only found at four sites, so in the case of the other 47 graves the question of securing the footwear is still unresolved. It can only be considered a possibility that leather straps were used for securing the footwear without the anchor-shaped studs, or they wore footwear with a narrow shape that did not have fasteners. The existence of footwear with a rounded toe in addition to a pointed-toe design is indicated by trapezoidal studs in some cases (grave 12 at Szentes-Borbásföld and grave 3 at Tiszaeszlár-Vörösmarty utca).²¹

THE CHARACTERIZATION OF THE GRAVES EXAMINED

As yet studded footwear from the 10th century in the area of the Carpathian Basin is only known from female graves. A great proportion of the deceased were between 20-40 years of age, but the object type can be found as grave goods alongside 12-14 year old girls and 67-76 year old ladies as well, so the find type cannot be interpreted as a piece of apparel for a given age group. Most often jewelry and clothing studs were found as grave goods at the sites examined, there are thirteen known sites of partial equestrian burials and nine graves with horse furniture that indicates the rank of the women interred.

There are no clearly defined areas concentrated within the Carpathian Basin on the basis of the material composition of the footwear studs, but no studs made from copper-based alloys have been found in the southern and Transdanubian areas. The graves newly added to László Révész's 1996 collection²² also confirm Révész's statement that the distribution area of the finds agrees with the depiction sketched by Dezső Csallány (fig. 8).²³ Besides one coin (grave 2 at Piliny-Leshegy, dinar of Hugo of Provence, terminus post quem: 926) from a grave containing studded footwear, there have been no finds that would make a more precise dating possible, so the dating of the individual cemeteries can be taken into account for the graves. The cemeteries and cemetery sections involved all date from the 10th century without exception and studded footwear is no longer present in the 11th century find materials of the Carpathian Basin.

ASSESSMENT

Studded footwear appeared as a part of female apparel within the find materials of the Conquest period in the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century, but by the 11th century there is no trace of this type of find. On the basis of the grave goods examined, it can be stated that it was a piece of apparel for women of high financial standing, and the traces of wear observed on the surface of some studs seems to show that they were not objects that were made exclusively for burial purposes. No well-defined units are distinguishable within the Carpathian Basin on the basis of the type and material composition of the studs, but it can be stated that no

¹⁸ Révész, László: Honfoglalás kori temető Szentes-Borbásföldön (Conquest Period Cemetery at Szentes-Borbásföld). *Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve (Annual of the Móra Ferenc Museum) – Studia Archaeologica* 2 (1996), 306.

¹⁹ Révész, László: *A karosi honfoglalás kori temetők (The Conquest Period Cemeteries of Karos)*. In: Fodor, István – Veres, László – Viga, Gyula (eds.): Magyarország honfoglalás kori és kora Árpád-kori sírleletei 1 (Hungary's Conquest Period and Early Árpád Period Grave Finds 1). Miskolc, 1996, 101.

²⁰ Csallány, Dezső: Weiblicher Haarflechtschmuck und Stiefelbeschläge aus der ungarischen Landnahmezeit im Karpatenbecken. *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica* 22 (1970), 296.

²¹ Révész, László: Honfoglalás kori temető Szentes-Borbásföldön (Conquest Period Cemetery at Szentes-Borbásföld). *Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve (Annual of the Móra Ferenc Museum) – Studia Archaeologica* 2 (1996), 306.

²² Révész, László: *A karosi honfoglalás kori temetők. (The Conquest Period Cemeteries of Karos)*. In: Fodor, István – Veres, László – Viga, Gyula (eds.): Magyarország honfoglalás kori és kora Árpád-kori sírleletei 1 (Hungary's Conquest Period and Early Árpád Period Grave Finds 1). Miskolc, 1996, 103.

²³ Csallány, Dezső: Weiblicher Haarflechtschmuck und Stiefelbeschläge aus der ungarischen Landnahmezeit im Karpatenbecken. *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica* 22 (1970), 262.

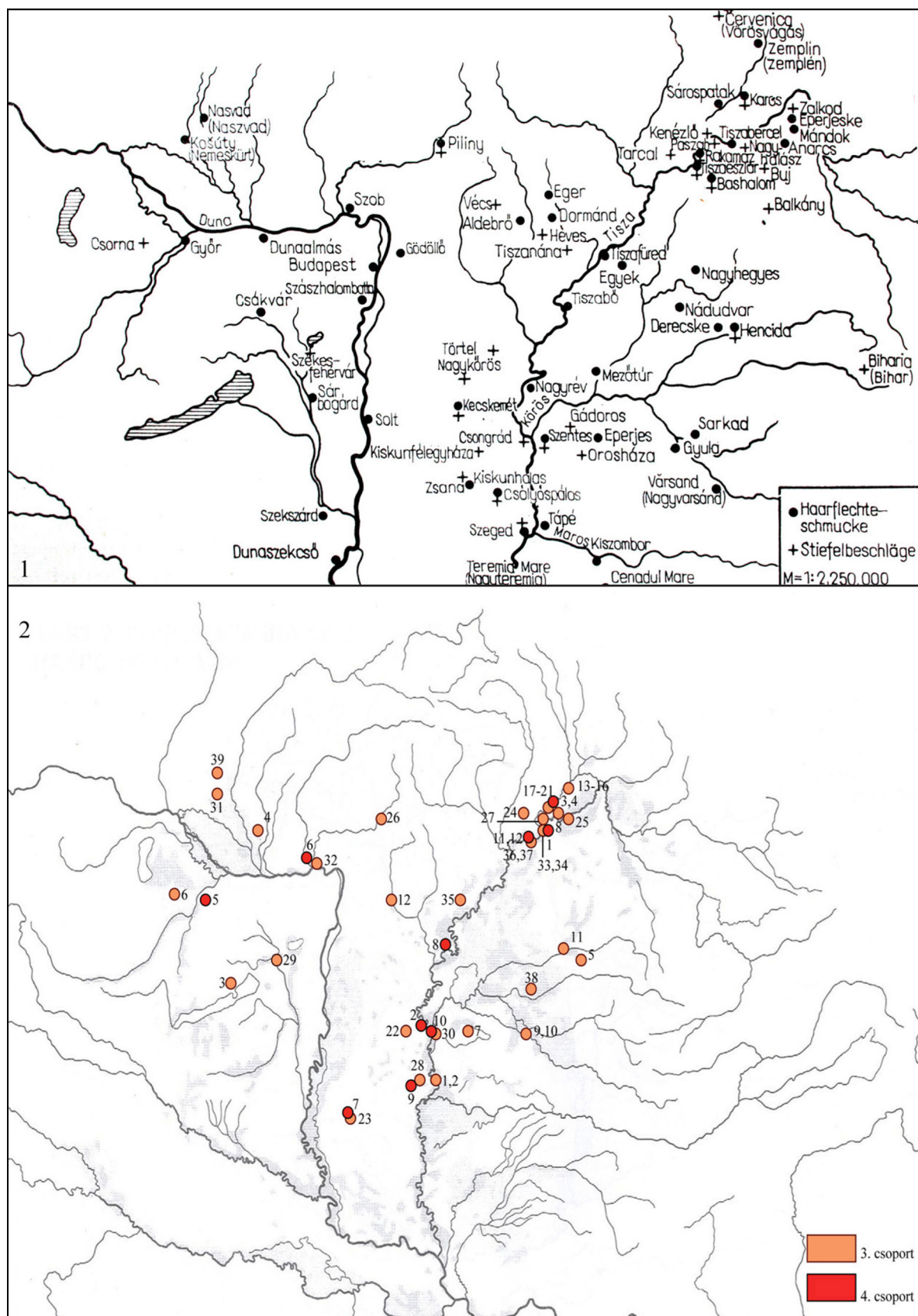


Fig. 8: Archaeological sites as compiled by Dezső Csallány [Csallány, Dezső: *Weiblicher Haarflechteschmuck und Stiefelbeschläge aus der ungarischen Landnahmezeit im Karpatenbecken*. *Acta ArchHung* 22 1970 262]; 2: Graves that positively contain studded footwear in the Carpathian Basin [Polónyi, Emese: *A Kárpát-medence 10. századi veretekkel díszített lábbelileletei* (Carpathian Basin 10th Century Finds of Footwear Decorated with Studs). Thesis, 2015. The numbers shown on map 2 indicate the sites included in the database for the thesis]

footwear studs made from copper-based alloys have been found in the southern and Transdanubian areas. The establishment of a possible typochronology will be a primary task of further research, as well as the augmentation of the databases for the Carpathian Basin and Eastern Europe.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would here like to express my thanks to the main advisor for my thesis, Dr. Attila Türk, who provided assistance in the selection of the topic and its elucidation, as well as my other thesis advisor, Dr. Péter Langó, for putting the Jászfényszaru find at my disposal and for help on methodological issues.

RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

BOLDOG, Zoltán

A honfoglalás kori viselet (Attire of the Conquest Period). In: Sudár Balázs – Petkes Zsolt (eds.): *A honfoglalók viselete* (Attire of the People of the Conquest). Budapest, 2014, 126–185.

CSALLÁNY, Dezső

Weiblicher Haarflechtschmuck und Stiefelbeschläge aus der ungarischen Landnahmezeit im Karpatenbecken. *Acta Archaeologica Hungarica* 22 (1970), 261–299.

КРУГЛОВ, Евгений Викторович

Печенеги и огузы некоторые проблемы археологических источников (Pecheneg and Oguz Tribes: Certain Problems of Archaeological Sources). In: Евлевский, А. В. (Ред.): *Стени Европы в эпоху средневековья*. Том 3. Донецк, 2003, 13–82.

RÉVÉSZ, László

A karosi honfoglalás kori temetők. Magyarország honfoglalás kori és kora Árpád-kori sírleletei I (Die Gräberfelder von Karos aus der Landnahmezeit. Archäologische Angaben zur Geschichte des oberen Theißgebietes im 10. Jahrhundert). Miskolc, 1996, 98–103.

СУПРУНЕНКО, Олександр Борисович

Давньоугорський некрополь поблизу с. Дмитрівки в нижній течії Псла. In: Моця, О. П. (Ред.): *Мадяри в Середньому Подніпров'ї. Археологія і давня історія України* 7. Київ, 2011, 110–124.

VARGA, Sándor

10–11. századi temetők Röske határából. Veretes csizmák elterjedése a Kárpát-medencében (Cemeteries from the 10th and 11th centuries in the vicinity of Röske. The distribution of boots adorned with mounts in the Carpathian Basin). In: Türk Attila (ed.): *Hadak útján II. A népvándorlaskor fiatal kutatóinak XXIV. konferenciája. Esztergom 2014. november 4–6.* (On the Path of War. The proceedings of the 24th Conference of Young Researchers of the Migration Period, Esztergom, 4–6 November 2014, Vol. II.) Budapest–Esztergom, 2017, 465–492.