

# A Fourteenth Century Sword from Moldovenești (Hung.: Várfalva)<sup>1</sup>

BENCZE Ünige\*  
GÁLL Erwin\*\*

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## Abstract

*The two-edged swords are a small but significant group of the medieval material culture of Transylvania.<sup>2</sup> For various subjective and objective reasons the scholarly world, which dealt with swords of the migration and the early medieval period of Europe, neglected the research of this group of swords. Although the European sword was classified in numerous types and sub-types precise definitions of date and place cannot be done. Therefore in some cases it seems more practical to look for a period during which it might have been in use than to try to date the sword or its types, even if this does not supply a certain date.<sup>3</sup> Swords were widespread and very distributable objects throughout Europe and it is impossible to assign certain specific regions of origins. Since, out-of-context finds get published rarely it is our aim to publish this single find in order to make its type and details available for the researchers dealing with medieval weapons.*

### 1. About the context of the find

According to the historian Tudor Sălăgean, three years ago Adrian Cohorzan gave the sword to the National Museum of Transylvanian History. The architect related that he had found the sword not far from Moldovenești on the territory of a sand extraction site. Based on a hand-drawn sketch preserved in the museum, the sword was found during extraction with the excavator on a 1,50 m terrace right next to the River Arieș (germ.: Ariesch, hung.: Aranyos). (*Pl. 1*)

### 2. The description of the sword

The corroded sword was preserved only in a fragmented state; in our opinion its real length was around 1, 15 – 1, 20 m. In the middle of the polygonal pommel, which is attached at the end of the hilt, a disc shaped projection can be observed. During the weighing of the sword we realized that the pommel had significant weight but we couldn't measure it separately. The hilt on the side of the pommel suddenly narrows down while on its other end, before the cross-guard, imprints of wood could be clearly recognized. Looking at it from profile its boat-shaped cross-guard is preserved

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\* Doctoral candidate, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, bunige@yahoo.com.

\*\* Romanian Academy, „Vasile Parvan” Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest, Romania, ardarichus9@gmail.com.

<sup>1</sup> The drawing was made by Emese Apai.

<sup>2</sup> For a typology based on pommel and cross-guard styles of the medieval two-edged sword see: Hoffmeyer 1954.

<sup>3</sup> Oakeshott 1997, 16.