

NUOVA **ANTOLOGIA**   
**MILITARE**  
RIVISTA INTERDISCIPLINARE DELLA SOCIETÀ ITALIANA DI STORIA MILITARE

N. 7  
2026

Fascicolo 25. Marzo 2026  
**Storia Militare Medievale**

a cura di

MARCO MERLO, FABIO ROMANONI e PETER SPOSATO



*Società Italiana di Storia Militare*

**General Editors:** Virgilio Ilari, Jeremy Black, Giovanni Brizzi.

**Legal Editor (dir. responsabile Gregory Alegi Ed. executive (comitato di redazione):**  
Viviana Castelli, Alessandro Carli, Emiliano Bultrini, Francesco Biasi, Francesco Pellegrini.  
**Special appointee for Intl cooperation:** Dr Luca Domizio.

**Scientific Editorial Board : Foreign members:** Prof. Jeremy Armstrong, Christopher Bassford, Floribert Baudet, Stathis Birtachas, Lee L. Brice, Loretana de Libero, Fernando Echeverria Rey, John France, Francisco García Fitz, Tadeusz Grabarczyk, Gregory Hanlon, Rotem Kowner, Armando Marques Guedes, Harold E. Raugh Jr, Yannis Stouraitis: **Italian members:** Giampiero Brunelli, Aldino Bondesan, Piero Cimbolli Spagnesi, Alessandra Dattero, Immacolata Eramo, Carlo Galli, Maria Intrieri, Roberta Ivaldi, Nicola Labanca, Luigi Loreto, Luca Loschiavo, Serena Morelli, Francesco Somaini, Gioacchino Strano, Giusto Traina, Federico Valacchi.

**Senior Academic Advisory Board.** Prof. Massimo de Leonardis, Magdalena de Pazzis Pi Corrales, John Hattendorf, Yann Le Bohec, (†) Dennis Showalter, Livio Antonielli, Marco Bettalli, Antonello Folco Biagini, Franco Cardini, Piero del Negro, Giuseppe De Vergottini, Gian Enrico Rusconi, Carla Sodini, Donato Tamblé,

**Special Consultants:** Lucio Caracciolo, Flavio Carbone, Basilio Di Martino, Antulio Joseph Echevarria II, Carlo Jean, Gianfranco Linzi, Edward N. Luttwak, Matteo Paesano, Ferdinando Sanfelice di Monteforte, Simonetta Conti, Elina Gugliuzzo, Vincenzo, Angela Teja, Stefano Pisu, Giuseppe Della Torre

*Nuova Antologia Militare*

Rivista interdisciplinare della Società Italiana di Storia Militare

Periodico telematico open-access annuale ([www.nam-sism.org](http://www.nam-sism.org))

Registrazione del Tribunale Ordinario di Roma n. 06 del 30 Gennaio 2020

Scopus List of Accepted Titles October 2022 (No. 597)

Rivista scientifica ANVUR (5/9/2023) Area 11, Area 10 (21/12/2024)



Direzione, Via Bosco degli Arvali 24, 00148 Roma

Contatti: [direzione@nam-sigm.org](mailto:direzione@nam-sigm.org) ; [virgilio.ilari@gmail.com](mailto:virgilio.ilari@gmail.com)

©Authors hold the copyright of their own articles.

For the Journal: © Società Italiana di Storia Militare

([www.societaitalianastoriamilitare@org](http://www.societaitalianastoriamilitare@org))

Grafica: Nadir Media Srl - Via Giuseppe Veronese, 22 - 00146 Roma  
[info@nadirmedia.it](mailto:info@nadirmedia.it)

Gruppo Editoriale Tab Srl -Viale Manzoni 24/c - 00185 Roma

[www.tabedizioni.it](http://www.tabedizioni.it)

ISSN: 2704-9795

ISBN Fascicolo 979-12-5669-350-4

NUOVA **ANTOLOGIA**   
**MILITARE**  
RIVISTA INTERDISCIPLINARE DELLA SOCIETÀ ITALIANA DI STORIA MILITARE

N. 7  
2026

Fascicolo 25. Marzo 2026  
**Storia Militare Medievale**

a cura di

MARCO MERLO, FABIO ROMANONI e PETER SPOSATO



*Società Italiana di Storia Militare*



Stamp of the Teutonic Knights from the 14th century. (“Visitatorum Magister in Allemaniae”). Material: brass Deutschordens-Zentralarchiv, Singerstraße 7, 1010 Vienna, Austria Foto Frank Bayard 2012 Wikimedia Commons CC SA 3.0

# History and Development of the Sabre in the Middle Ages

by CHRISTOPHER SZABÓ

**ABSTRACT:** This study aims to describe the development of the cavalry sabre on the steppe from a single-edged sword following incremental changes from this form to the eventual curved grip, curved blade and reverse edge and follow its development as different empires and peoples adopted it. Historical, linguistic, archaeological and iconographical material is investigated to define; describe and follow the spread of the weapon, notably in a cavalry context, as well as a link to the invention of the stirrup by Asian nomads. Some widespread false beliefs are also addressed, including the Arab/Persian invention of the sabre, or that this type of curved sword only came to prominence in the eighteenth century.

**KEYWORDS:** SABRE, CAVALRY, NOMADS, STIRRUP, EURASIA.

## *Introduction*

Many Western works hold to the outdated idea that sabres came to Europe from the Ottoman Empire, or even India. This has been common in French, German and English works, an example of which is the *Martini A-Z of Fencing*. Regarding the sabre, it states: “It became known to western Europe as a result of contact with the Hungarian light horsemen (*housas* or Hussars) who had themselves adopted the weapon from the Turks.”<sup>1</sup> The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* has the following entry: “sabre, heavy military sword with a long cutting edge and, often, a curved blade. Most commonly a cavalry weapon, the sabre was derived from a Hungarian cavalry sword introduced from the Orient in the eighteenth century.”<sup>2</sup>

1 Edward D. Morton. *A-Z of Fencing*. Martini, Queen Anne Press, London, (1988), p.155. (It is not clear what a ‘housa’ is, nor what language it is supposed to be in.)

2 *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Sabre,” accessed, 6 June 2025.

### *Definition of the sabre*

Unlike straight swords, there are very few definitions or typologies of medieval sabres. One of the first to create a typology of swords was Jan Petersen's work on Viking swords in Norway in 1919.<sup>3</sup> A better known, and more complete, typology was published by Ewart Oakeshott in 1960<sup>4</sup> While Oakeshott's book is still considered a standard work, others have added to this literature. Unfortunately, beside a few brief references to the sabre, there are no seminal typologies in Western languages. An interesting, but for the purposes of this article, frustrating work, is that of bladesmith James Elmslie, who, while unpublished, has attended numerous conferences and has attempted to describe single-edged European swords. Like Oakeshott, he does not consider Hungary, Poland or Croatia to be part of the West, and leaves sabres out of his typology. Other, more local works, such as that of Alfred Geibig on Medieval Swords in Germany, and, for example Jří Kořta and Jiří Hošek in the Czech Republic deal with sword types in those countries but not sabres.<sup>5</sup> These typologies describe the blade types, as well as the cross-guards and hilts of these respective sword types. For the purposes of the present article, these will not be described in detail for the sabre.

Hungarian, Ukrainian, Russian and other scholars have published wide-ranging materials on the sabre, and Gergely Csiki in his Ph.D thesis listed Svetlana Pletneva and Umar Kočkarov on their definitions of early sabres, as well as, among others, Hungarian archaeologists József Hampel, Nándor Fettich and Gyula László, giving his own definition as: "Cutting weapons, that have a single-edged blade, a *fokél* ground back from the point and has a pentagonal or triangular cross-section."<sup>6</sup> Here the *fokél* (literally 'point-edge' in Hungarian), is often given as *elman*, which is Turkish.<sup>7</sup>

3 Jan Petersen. *De norske vikingesverd. En typologisk-kronologisk studie over Vikingetidens vaaben*. Videnskapsels kapets s kru'ter, Kristiana/Oslo. (1919).

4 Ewart Oakeshott. *Arms and Armour from Prehistory to the Age of Chivalry*. The Boydell Press. Woodbridge, U.K. (1960.)

5 Alfred Gebig, *Beiträge zur morphologischen Entwicklung des Schwertes im Mittelalter eine Analyse des Fundmaterials vom ausgehenden 8. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert aus Sammlungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Wachholtz, Neumünster. (1991).

6 Gergely Csiki. "Az avar kori szúró- és vágófégyverek. Osztályozás – tipológia – kronológia – technológia." (Ph. D Dissertation, Eötvös Lóránd University, Budapest. (2009), p. 130.

7 There seems to be no point in using a Turkish expression for part of a blade that is not

Csíki does not consider the direction of the grip, normally bent opposite to the curve of the blade, to be significant, however, others do.<sup>8</sup> László Simon defines the sabre thus: ‘According to the literature the sabre is a type of close-combat cutting weapon, with a greater or lesser curved blade, of which the back-edge is ground double-edged, the grip is slightly bent towards the longer cutting edge.’<sup>9</sup>

Before moving away from definitions, Oakeshott’s brief mention of the sabre should be included. He says of the curved blade: ‘The curved “scimitar” is based on the eastern European sabres, such as those found in Hungary like the Charlemagne sword in Vienna.’<sup>10</sup>

He adds, of a type of falchion: ‘It may have developed under an Eastern European influence, for it is very closely akin to the Sword of Charlemagne—the Hungarian one—in Vienna (see fig. 74), a type which had been in use in Eastern Europe since the ninth century.’<sup>11</sup>

Strangely, while he admits that the falchion’s point owes something to ‘Eastern Europe’, he fails to find the origin of the European sabre there. Instead, he attempts to trace its origins back to the ‘seax’ and further: ‘This sword type (it was called the Sax, and we shall hear more about it) remained almost unchanged in the north until the end of the Viking period, and survived throughout the Middle Ages as the falchion, and on into modern times under the guise of the sabre.’<sup>12</sup>

### *What the sabre is not*

It is important to note that swords found in Europe in the Middle Ages (from c. 1250) known as ‘falchions’ or ‘messer’ (or *langmessser* or *kriegsmesser*) are not sabres. While there is debate about their origins, they appear many centuries after the sabre does and none originated on the steppe. Some, like Oakeshott and Żabiński et al point to a possible Nordic origin. The other influence is listed as that of Hungary.

---

known to be Turkish.

8 Csíki, cit. p. 130.

9 László Simon. ‘Adatok a szablyák kialakulásáról.’ A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve 30.30/2, (Miskolc, 1993), p.177.

10 Oakeshott, E. *Arms and Armour* p. 328.

11 Oakeshott, cit., p.169.

12 Oakeshott cit., p.59.

An important weaponry tradition which may have had considerable influence on the development of late medieval falchions was that of bladed weapons in Hungary. Its impact may have been especially strong due to close relations between Hungary and German speaking countries in the Late Middle Ages.<sup>13</sup>

There remains the *dusack*. A German source says it developed from a side arm used by the Hussite army of the fourteenth century and adopted by German-speaking regions as the *düssagge*, *dusack* etc. Later, it would be used as a training weapon by German fencers.<sup>14</sup>

### *Origin of the word, 'sabre'*

While dealing with etymology, it might be useful to look at the word often used for sabre or sabre-like weapons, namely, the 'scimitar'. Most English dictionaries, including the Oxford English Dictionary or the American Heritage Dictionary have essentially the same entry:<sup>15</sup>

Scimitar. n A curved oriental sword. [Ital. scimitarra].

Other dictionaries, including the Oxford Dictionary, cite both Italian '*scimitarra*' and French '*cimiterre*' or similar words as the source.<sup>16</sup> The word itself, however, is not found in any of the languages of people who used such weapons, such as Turks, Persians, Hungarians, East and South Slavs and Arabs. Speculation to the Persian word for sword, *shamshir* exists, but the OED finds it 'unsatisfactory'. Given that the term is a non-specific one and does not add to the understanding of the sabre, it will not be used in this article, except in quotations.

The origin of the word 'sabre', until the twentieth century, was considered to

13 Grzegorz Żabiński Russell A. Mitchell Falko Fritz. *A Falchion / Langes Messer Fencing Treatise by Johannes Lecktüchner (1482)*. (Silesia, Texas, Hamburg, c. The Authors, 2012), p. 23.

14 Waffensammlung Carl Beck. *Säbel, «Dusägge», deutsch Ende 16.Jahrhundert. Klinge mit unbekannter Meistermarke und originaler Wolfsmarke, Passau*. (Museum Sankturbanhof. Stiftung Sankturbanhof Sursee, 2018).Online. <https://www.waffensammlung-beck.ch/waffe2.html>

15 Boyer, M, et al. *The American Heritage Dictionary*. (Dell Publishing, New York, 1985), p 612.

16 Branford, William. *The South Africa Pocket Oxford Dictionary*. (Oxford University Press, Cape Town) 1987, p. 685

be well established, namely that it came from the Hungarian word *szablya*, primarily through contact with Polish cavalry and through the spread of Hungarian light cavalry, the *huszárok* or in English, 'Hussars'.

The verb *szab* dates from 1211 in its first written form and means something similar to 'define', but its noun form dates from the same century as in *szabó* or 'tailor' and these words strongly imply some kind of cutting. However, the linguists are not satisfied as to its Hungarian origin.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, an interesting linguistic study was done by a Polish scholar who argued that the word was Hungarian after all, but the origin of this word harked back to the Far East.<sup>18</sup> He states: 'Thus the conception of the Hungarian origin of the word for sabre is probably correct but simplified.'

The author, Marek Stachowski, maps out the linguistic connections he found, going all the way to the Pacific Ocean linking speakers of the Tungusic language group (the best-known of whom are the Manchus) all the way to Europe. He says:

'As can be seen, some details of the routes of borrowing taken by the word for sabre in Europe still remain difficult to settle. Notwithstanding, four evolutional centres can be found: [11] Tungusic, where the word *sele* was originally formed; [12] Kipchak, where the *l – m > m – l* metathesis, the *m > b* change, and a syncopy have probably occurred; [13] Hungarian, where contamination with the verb *szab* 'to cut' could have taken place; [14] Polish, where the word-initial *s-* was changed into *š-*.'<sup>19</sup>

There are two problems with this very interesting etymology:

1. A number of links are speculative, such as Manchu/Mongolian to Avar and Kipchak (a Turkic language) and proto-Hungarian, where *selebe* became *\*seb(e)le* and from proto-Hungarian to Old Hungarian *\*szeble* (? ↔ *szab*) (ca. 10<sup>th</sup> c.?) In linguistic notation, the asterisk \* refers to a word that is not attested in the given language.<sup>20</sup>
2. The author argues that the Kipchak-Cuman word *selebe*, meaning 'sabre', is attested, but he also states it is found in Kirgiz. The Cumans, who did speak a Kipchak Türk language, entered Hungary in the thirteenth century, but the Hungarians already had the sabre from at least

<sup>17</sup> Branford, cit, p.674, under Sz.

<sup>18</sup> Stachowski, Marek. 'The Origin Of The European Word For Sabre.' *Studia Etymologica Cracoviensia* vol. 9 (Kraków University, 2004), pp. 133-141.

<sup>19</sup> Stachowski, cit., p.137.

<sup>20</sup> Stachowski, cit., p.135.

the ninth century. However, even giving Professor Stachowski the benefit of the doubt, there remains a linguistic problem he appears not to notice. If *selebe* entered Hungarian, then surely it would not have been 'contaminated' by the word *szab* (cut) but rather the Old Hungarian *szel*, (slice). The word, according to the etymological dictionary is attested since 1138 in Hungarian, and is considered to be an 'ancient Finno-Ugric period' word.<sup>21</sup> If the Cuman word *sele-be* or something similar was heard by Hungarians, and they adopted perhaps a new version of the sabre, they would most likely called it a *szell-ő*' or 'slicer', rather than adopt the form *sel-be*, which does not work emically in the language.

Therefore, while the origin of the word *szablya* is not firmly established, the Hungarian form strongly influenced the other European languages.

This leaves the question of what the Hungarians called their sabres in the ninth and tenth centuries? Given that the word *kard* means generic 'sword', and that the word 'kard' is considered to be a loan word from an Iranian language, possibly Alan, it is likely they would have simply called their type of sword *kard*.<sup>22</sup>

### *Origin and development of the sabre, single-edged swords*

An investigation of the literature dealing with early sabres reveals that the development of the weapon is linked to Eurasian nomad peoples, as Khazanov has pointed out. He dates the invention of the sabre proper to the ninth century, but admits it could be earlier, linking the early spread of the sabre in Europe to the Avars, Khazars and the Magyars.<sup>23</sup> Csíky states, in a similar vein: 'The research into sabres is coincident with the history of the research into nomadic weapons.'<sup>24</sup>

Current understanding of sabre development goes back to the seventh century, with the geographical spread separated by some four thousand kilometres: Hungary and Uzbekistan. There is no consensus on where the sabre originated within this vast area.

21 Gábor Zaicz (Ed.). *Etimológiai Szótár Magyar szavak és toldalékok eredete*. Tinta, Budapest. (2006), p.689.

22 Zaicz cit., p.349.

23 Khazanov, Anatoly. 'The Eurasian Steppe Nomads in Eurasian History.' *Nomad Aristocrats in a World of Empires*. (Ed. Jürgen, Paul Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag. Wiesbaden, 2013), p. 201.

24 Csiky. cit..125.

It is important to note that archaeologists have found that before the curved blade developed, the *fokél* (Hungarian: Meaning 'point-edge' or *elman* was seen on straight single-edged blades.<sup>25</sup> This will be referred to further as the 'reverse or back edge', because the single-edged blade, while suitable for cutting, did not present an effective point without it.<sup>26</sup>

The first known straight single-edged swords with a reverse edge originate from the sixth and seventh centuries, from sites such as Üç Tepe in Azerbaijan and a ring-pommel sword from the Mala Pereščepino site in Ukraine. Csíky considers these weapons to be proto sabres.<sup>27</sup> These also have their contemporary parallels in the Avar material found in Hungary.<sup>28</sup>

Another example of these early Avar weapons can be found in the Csákberény-Orondpuszta site in Western Hungary, which was first opened in 1935 and was finally published in 2017. Among other periods, the site contains a large Early Avar Age cemetery (c. 560-630) where two relatively well-preserved swords were found. These were both single-edged, one of them (grave 150) was decorated with silver and the blade had a slight curve, so could be seen as a proto-sabre.<sup>29</sup>

An illustration of some of these swords can be seen in the Ukrainian East European Archaeological Journal, which the authors attributed to the Khazar Khaganate.<sup>30</sup> Another early proto-sabre can be found in the Szegvár-Oromdűlő dig.<sup>31</sup>

25 The term 'false edge' is often used for this part of the blade, but it seems rather a strange term, as the edge is very real for anyone who touches it! It also does not make much sense to use a Turkic or Hungarian term. While some English-speakers do use the Turkic '*elman*', the people who first invented and used the proto-sabre and sabre were not by any means uniformly Turkic-speaking. The Avar ruling class likely spoke a Tungusic language, Alans spoke an Iranian language, Magyars spoke a Uralic one. The term 'Turco-Mongol' sabre is also misleading, as the Mongols only started using these weapons in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

26 Csíky.cit. p. 214.

27 Csíki. Cit.

28 Csíki. Cit., p.217.

29 Éva Garam - Tivadar Tivadar (Eds), *A Csákberény-Orondpusztai Avar Kori Temető* (Szent István Király Múzeum, Székesfehérvár, 2017), p. 170, 234.

30 It is worth noting that these periodisations are not absolute. Slightly curved single-edged blades are found in the mid-seventh century, as are such blades in the eighth and ninth, merely becoming more common in the later centuries.

31 Gábor Lőrinczy, Balázs Major, Attila Türk. *The Szegvár-Oromdűlő Cemetery and the Avar Period in the Trans-Tisza Region* (Martin Optiz, Budapest), 2022). p. 604.



Fig. 1. *Zhibeidao*. The Met Collection. Arms and Armor. Gallery 377. Sword with Scabbard Mounts, c.600. Object number 30.65.2. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2025. (c. 600.A.D.) Online.

It appears that due to the continuous population of the Carpathian Basin by nomadic peoples and polities, notably in the Avar Age (c.650-820) a development can be seen from double-edged swords to single-edged ones; to single-edged swords with a reverse-edge about a third back from the point; to curved-bladed sabres. Simon created a typology for these proto sabres:

The earliest Avar swords, according to Simon, are of Asian origin and look for all intents and purposes like the contemporary Chinese *zhibeidao* swords of the Sui and Tang Dynasties.<sup>32</sup> Chinese swords are generally divided into *dao* and *jian* where the former is single-edged (regardless of curvature) and the latter is double-edged.<sup>33</sup> A well-known example of a Sui Dynasty *dao* can be seen at the Metropolitan Museum in New York.<sup>34</sup>

Recent DNA studies have shown that the Early Avars were closely related to the people of the Rouran Khaganate which ruled part of China and the steppe from 380 to 555 A.D. One of the studies states that: ‘Our data are compatible with the Rouran origin of the Avar elite.’<sup>35</sup>

Another DNA study is more certain:

32 Avar swords found in Hungary are shown next to Sui Dynasty Chinese swords and appear almost identical. Also, Simon, Cit. p.172

33 Shen-yang Song, Wei Qian et al. ‘Ironmaking and steelmaking process research on Chinese long ring pommel Dao in Han dynasty.’ *Scientific Reports* (Springer Nature, London, 2025), p.1 and 11.

34 The Met Collection. Arms and Armor. Gallery 377. Sword with Scabbard Mounts, c.600. Object number 30.65.2. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2025.

35 Zoldán Maróti, Endre Neparáczki, Oszkár Schütz et al. ‘The genetic origin of Huns, Avars, and conquering Hungarians.’ *Current Biology* 32, Elsevier, Cambridge, MA USA, (2022), p 2867.



Fig. 2. Munkácsi Mihály Múzeum, Békéscsaba. „utazás TÉRben és I DŐben” Békéscsaba az évezredek idővonalán [Traveling in Space and Time. Békéscsaba on the timeline of the millenia.] A Kunágota arany avarkori kard. [The Golden Avar Period Sword from Kunágota] (Online.)

Our results provide robust genetic support for the Northeast Asian ancestry of the Avar-period elite in the core region of the Avar empire (DTI) from the middle third of the 7th CE to the early 8th CE Carpathian Basin (early to middle Avar period). We show a striking genetic match with a Rouran-period individual as well as with ancient individuals from Xiongnu and especially Xianbei periods from the eastern Asian steppe.<sup>36</sup>

It is therefore no surprise that the Early Avar swords and Chinese swords from the same period look much the same. Of the 193 Avar swords known from grave-finds known in 1993, some were captured Germanic or Byzantine double-edged weapons; Simon studied 120 were single-edged.<sup>37</sup>

Curved blades are seen in the Middle Avar period (second half of the seventh C to the first half of the eighth.) Some seven exemplars are known in Hungary from this period.<sup>38</sup> Further examples are found in the late seventh century, as Vida points out: ‘In 670–80, the Onogurs, a population fleeing the Khazars, arrived in the Carpathian Basin.’ He links their arrival with: ‘The appearance of new weapon types, such as the sabre ....’<sup>39</sup>

Artistic depictions of swords, seen as sabres or proto sabres, are found on

36 Guido Alberto Gnechi-Ruscione, Anna Szécsényi-Nagy, István Koncz et al. ‘Ancient genomes reveal origin and rapid trans-Eurasian migration of 7th century Avar elites.’ *Cell* 185, Elsevier Inc., Cambridge, MA. (2022), p. 1408.

37 Simon, cit. p.172

38 Gábor Lőrinczy, Balázs Major, Attila Türk. Lőrinczy, Gábor. Cit. p. 627.

39 Tivadar, Vida. ‘The Early And Middle Avar Period’ (568–turn of the 7th–8th centuries). In: Visy, Zsolt (Ed). *The Migration Period. Hungarian Archaeology at the Turn of the Millennium* (Budapest 2003), pp. 302, 306.



Fig. 3. *Zhibeidao* type swords from China. The Met Collection. Arms and Armor. Gallery 377. Sword with Scabbard Mounts, c.600. Object number 30.65.2. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2025. (c. 600.A.D.) Online.

murals in the Sogdian archaeological sites of Afrasiab (Samarkand) and Penjikent, where the swords are suspended from belts using two points, much like the nomad weapons, as well as having, in some cases, a slightly curved grip. The proceedings of a conference dealing with these murals states:

A close examination of the original painting has shown the two of the figures mentioned by the said specialists, namely figures 39 and 40, are equipped with perfectly straight swords, while in the two other cases, i.e. figures 37 and 38, the visual impression of the curvature of blades is due to numerous local losses of paint coat.<sup>40</sup>

With some exceptions, the curved sabre blade appears in the archaeological record in the eighth century, and the increasing number of these finds shows the quick spread of this technology from the Caucasus to the Volga region in a relatively short period.<sup>41</sup>

At the same time as the proto-sabre appears in the Avar Khaganate (and possibly the Rouran Empire before it) the Early Turk Khaganates they appear to have

40 Irina Arzhantsev Olga Inevatkina. Afrasiab Wall-paintings Revisited: 'New Discoveries Twenty-Five Years Old. Royal Nauruz in Samarkand.' *Proceedings Of the Conference Held in Venice On The Pre-Islamic Paintings At Afrasiab.* (Supplement Number 1. Rivista degli studi Orientali Nuova Serie Volume LXXVIII. Sapienza University, Rome, 2006), p.190.

41 Oleksii Komar, Oleg Sukhobokov. Vooruzheniye i voyennoye delo Khazarskogo kaganata 'Armament and military affairs of the Khazar Khaganate' *Essays of Military history of Old Ukraine.* (Kiev, 2005) (In translation), p. 230.



Fig. 4. 1 The Visegrad sword and its scabbard. 2. The Kunszentmiklós-Bábony gold-plated sword. 3. The silver plated Szalkaszentmárton sword. *Mátyás Király Múzeum, Visegrad. Műtárgyak a Múzeumban.* (Online)

used the proto-sabre and sabre early on. Historian Vadim Gorbunov of Barnaul University wrote: 'Long blade weapons (swords and sabers) were an indispensable tool for close-in-action of Turkic horsemen.'<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Gorbunov V. 'Klinkovoe oruzhie tjurkskoj' ['Long-bladed Weapons of the Turkic Cavalry']. *Istoricheskoe oruzhievedenie* [Weapons History Journal], Online № 2, p.3.

He argues that the Turkic word ‘kilij’ refers to both sword and sabre. He states: ‘Turkic word with the meaning «long blade weapons for melee» – kilich, translated by linguists as a sword [Ancient Turkic dictionary, 1969: 442-443], but it is likely that it also meant the sabre because there is no separate term for this type of weapon in early Turkic written monuments.’<sup>43</sup>

Gorbunov lists a number of Turkic swords and sabres from the First Turkic Khaganate (552-657 AD) and the development of the true sabre, with a curved blade and offset grip, point and reverse edge can be traced to the Turgesh Khanate (699-756) in Central Asia.<sup>44</sup>

Khazanov says: ‘In the Eurasian steppes, sabers became quite a common weapon in the ninth to twelfth centuries, and perhaps even earlier.’<sup>45</sup>

According to Professor Csaba Hidán, a specialist in Hungarian, Balkan and nomad military history and re-enactment:

The sabre was formed in areas where they used high-pommel saddles, stirrup irons and rode in the nomad style. The time of its appearance was probably the end of the seventh century, beginning of the eighth and appeared approximately at the same time in the Carpathian Basin, Eastern Europe and the Western zone of Central Asia, as well as the territory north of the Caucasus.<sup>46</sup>

The reference to the ‘nomad style’ of riding needs some explanation. A renowned expert on equestrianism and especially saddlery, and well-known author, Elwyn Hartley Edwards, wrote:

The light horsemen, exemplified by successive waves of horse-peoples from Asia and the East, were individually better riders than those of Europe. They used a shortened stirrup, sat with a bent leg and inclined the body *forward* – a seat virtually identical to that which we are encouraged to adopt today when riding across country.<sup>47</sup>

Edwards continues: ‘Mongols of the thirteenth century adopted this seat and there are numerous depictions of Hungarians (themselves descendants of the steppe horsemen) and Polish horseman from the fifteenth century riding in a for-

43 Gorbunov. cit.

44 Gorbunov. cit. p.15.

45 Khazanov. cit. p. 201.

46 Csaba Hidán. *Emlékezzünk Régiokről IX. - Csaták Villáma, A Szablya* 0:58-1:20 Magyarorsághoz Intézet MKI, Online.

47 Elwyn Hartley Edwards. *The Saddle. In Theory and Practice*. J.A. Allen, London. (1990), p.7.

ward position with a shortened leather.<sup>48</sup> The author contrasted this with the Western heavy cavalry:

The medieval knight braced himself between the cantle and the stirrup, with leg straight and extended to the front, the better to withstand the shock of violent contact. To help him maintain this optimum position, the stirrup leathers were fastened to the front of the saddle, compelling him to adopt a straight, forward thrust leg.<sup>49</sup>

It appears that not only the sabre, but also the modern, ‘frame’ or ‘tree saddle’, was introduced to Europe by the Avars. Archaeological finds from the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries in today’s Mongolia (in what was likely the Rouran Khaganate) show complete frame saddles and stirrups.

It further appears that the development of the sabre is linked to the invention of the high-pommel saddle (which Edwards called a ‘high-peaked, dipped-seat saddle’ and stirrups, both of which first appear in the archaeological record on the steppe during the Rouran Khaganate. (Fourth to fifth Centuries.) Scholars point out that ‘the possibility that the Eastern Steppe played a key role in the early development and spread of the frame saddle and stirrup.’<sup>50</sup>

Also, as was shown above, a group of Rouran migrated very rapidly across Eurasia to form the Avar elite, therefore the connection appears to be well-founded (Fig. 5).

An Avar saddle found near Tiszafüred is dated to the middle of the seventh century by the archaeologists.<sup>51</sup> The burial, which featured the saddle remains, a spear point, a set of belt fittings including a buckle, stirrups, and a straight single-edged sword without a cross-piece.<sup>52</sup> The saddle, as described in the article is very similar to that found in Mongolia and later, tenth century Magyar saddles, such as the Soltszentimre or Koroncó saddles described by Gyula László.<sup>53</sup> (Fig. 6).

48 Edwards, cit.

49 Edwards, cit., p.5.

50 Jamsranjav Bayarsaikhan, Tsagaan Turbat, Chinbold Bayandelger ‘The origins of saddles and riding technology in East Asia: discoveries from the Mongolian Altai.’ *Antiquity*, Volume 98 - Issue 397 (Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. 7-13.

51 Éva Garam. ‘Avar nyereg Tiszafüdről.’ *Archaeologiai Értesítő*. 96.1. (Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1969) p.90.

52 Garam. Cit., pp. 83-90.

53 Gyula László. *A Honfoglaló Magyar Nép Élete*. 1944. (Facsimile Edition, Múzsák Kiadó,(1988), p.346.

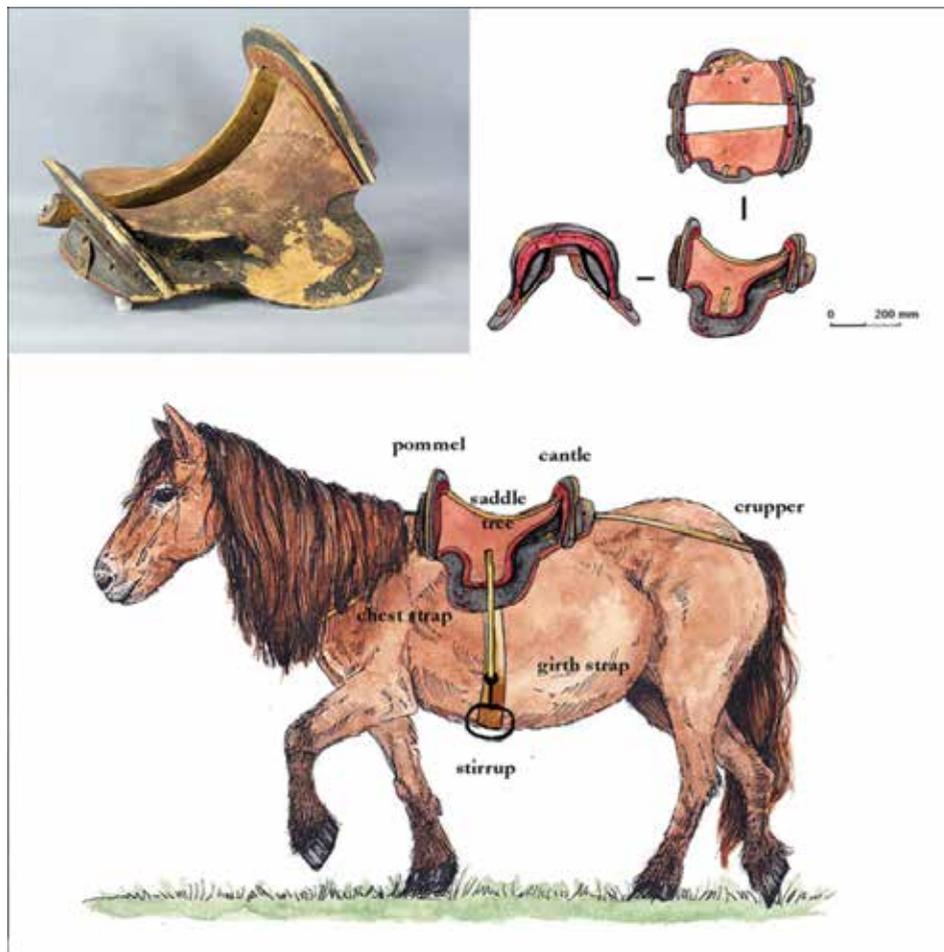


Fig. 5. Birch composite frame saddle from Urd Ulaan Uneet (top left) and artist's reconstruction (figure by P. Lopez Calle). *The origins of saddles and riding technology in East Asia*. (Early years of the fifth C)

### *The sabre in its final form*

Returning to László Simon's definition of the sabre: 'The sabre is a type of close-combat cutting weapon, with a greater or lesser curved blade, of which the back-edge is ground double-edged, the grip is slightly bent towards the longer cutting edge.'<sup>54</sup> This form of the single-edged cavalry weapon found its final

<sup>54</sup> László Simon. 'Adatok a szablyák kialakulásáról.' A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve

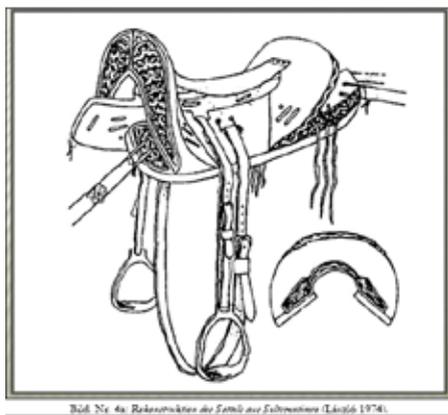


Bild. Nr. 4a. Rekonstruktion des Sattels aus Eisensteinen (László 1974).

Fig. 6. László, Gy. *A Honfoglaló Magyar Nép Élete*. 1944. (Facsimile Edition, Múzsák Kiadó, 1988), p.346. Reconstruction of the saddle from Koroncó. Subsequent saddles were of this type across the steppe, in Hungary and Byzantium.

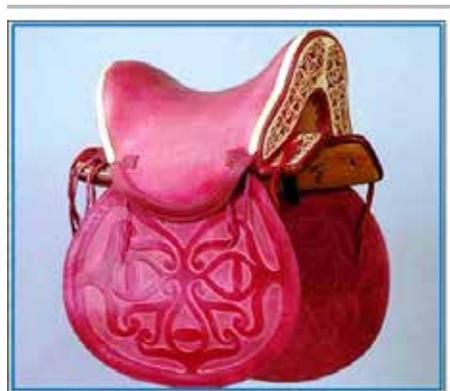


Bild. Nr. 4b. Rekonstruktion des Sattels aus Holzsteinen, von Attila Pánczél, Márta Lobmajer.

Fig. 7 Reconstruction of the Saddle from Soltszentimre, by Attila Pánczél Márta Lobmajer

form in the ninth century. Before the curved blade was invented, Khazanov noted: ‘In principle, blades with only one cutting edge are well-suited for hacking and slashing from horseback. The best use of this advantage became possible after the invention of metal stirrups, because the saber blow is most effective when a horseman is thrusting upon them.’<sup>55</sup>

In this period, the Western Türk Khaganate was disintegrating, and new powers rose in the Western Steppe, including Bulgaria (632-665) and Khazaria. All these peoples are recorded as using the sabre. Ziemann says of the Early Bulgars: ‘Kubrat, the ruler of the Unnogundurs (most likely a sub-group of the Bulgarians), expelled the Avars and concluded peace with the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610–641).’<sup>56</sup> The ‘Magna Bulgaria, or Old, Great Bulgaria, north of the Black Sea, split up after the death of Kubrat, who had five sons and with one

30.30/2, (Miskolc, 1993), p.177.

<sup>55</sup> Khazanov, A. ‘The Eurasian Steppe Nomads in Eurasian History,’ p.200.

<sup>56</sup> Daniel Ziemann. ‘From the Eurasian Steppes to Christian Europe: Bulgarians and Magyars in the Early Middle Ages.’ In: Michael Gehler, Robert Rollinger. *Empires to be remembered: Ancient Worlds through Modern Times*. (Springer, Wiesbaden, 2022), p.159.

exception, they all took their people and moved elsewhere.<sup>57</sup> One likely founded Volga Bulgaria in the seventh century, although its origins are unclear. Danube Bulgaria, or the First Bulgarian Empire, would eventually control much of the southern Balkans and parts of Transylvania and the Great Hungarian Plain.

Tomáš Vlasatý reports a ‘Bulgarian Type’ sabre in the Czech Republic and mentions an early Bulgar sabre from the turn of the ninth to the tenth century at Stará Břeclav near the border with Slovakia and Austria and another at Nemilany, further north. Both these weapons are characterised by a curving blade but a straight tang and pommel, which separates them from the ‘Magyar/Hungarian’ or Khazar type sabres.<sup>58</sup>

The Bulgarian-type sabre appears to be a simpler version of the ‘true sabre’, with a slightly curved edge, reverse edge at the point and in some cases, the grip bent forward toward the cutting edge. The biggest difference between these sabres and later Khazar and Magyar ones is the attachment method of the hilt. The Bulgar sabres seem to have a pommel holding the tang, grip and guard together, while the later Khazar and Magyar sabres use a pin through the tang. Another difference is the guard, which in the others are bent towards the point, whereas the Bulgarian ones are also small but straight.<sup>59</sup>

Sir Richard Burton, the Victorian soldier, diplomat, and author, in his 1884 work *The Book of the Sword*, compared the usefulness in cavalry combat of the curved blade in comparison to the straight blade. As a soldier who used swords in combat in an age when they were widely used, his insights are valuable:

The straight Sword is hard to handle when the horse moves swiftly; and the broad steel blade loses its value by the length of the plane along which it has to travel. On the other hand, the bent blade collects all the momentum where the curve is greatest. Lastly, the ‘drawing cut’ would be easier to the mounted man and would most injure his enemy.

He adds:

It is this drawing motion, which added to the curve of the weapon and its oblique presentation, increases the trenchant power. The ‘Talwar’, or half-curved sabre of Hindustan, cuts as though it were four times as broad and only one-fourth the thickness of the straight blade. But the ‘drawing

---

57 Ziemann. cit., p.159.

58 Tomáš Vlasatý. Bulgarian type sabre from Stará Břeclav. Project Forlog. Online.

59 Tomáš Vlasatý. Cit. 7/25.

cut' has the additional advantage of deepening the wound and cutting into the bone. Hence men of inferior strength and stature used their blades in a manner that not a little astonished and disgusted our soldiers in the Sind and Sikh campaigns.<sup>60</sup>

### *Khazar sabre, the earliest 'true sabre'?*

David Nicolle says the Khazars began adopting what he calls the 'true sabre', i.e., a single-edged, curved blade, with a sharp point, reverse edge and an angled grip, in the mid-eighth century.<sup>61</sup>

As the Khazar sabres are the earliest known form of the 'true sabre', it is reasonable to date the earliest occurrence of the true sabre to the mid-eighth century, in an area from the Altai Mountains in the East to the Volga River in the West and the Caucasus Mountains in the South. The sabre was clearly used as a cavalry weapon by various steppe peoples, some nomadic and others semi-nomadic.

Starting in the seventh century, the Khazars ruled a large territory from Kiev in the West to Volga Bulgaria in the North and the Caucasus mountains in the South. The empire or kingdom was a multi-ethnic state that began as a steppe state and became a settled, trading empire. Khazar finds are subsequently widespread in this region and later burials and urban centres provide numerous examples of true sabres. The Khazar material mirrors the development of the sabre elsewhere, such as the proto-sabres of the Saltovo archaeological site and the development of true sabres in find sites such as Severskij Donec or Krasna Gorka and others.<sup>62</sup>

Given that the Khazars were a powerful trading empire, it is likely that they spread the true sabre into the areas mentioned above, as well as further afield.

### *Sabres in the Rus*

One of the first states to adopt sabres (in the tenth century) was the Kievan Rus. From the tenth century, princes of Kiev, Oleg and Igor began to hire Pecheneg

60 Richard F. Burton. *The Book of the Sword*. (Dover Publications, 1987), p. 127 and 131.

61 Mikhail Zirohiv and David Nicolle. *The Khazars. A Judeo-Turkish Empire on the Steppes. 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.* (Osprey, Men-at Arms New York, 2019), p. 24.

62 Attila Türk. *A Magyar őstörténet és a szaltovói régészeti kultúrkör*. Ph. D thesis. University of Szeged, (2011), pp. 98-99.

mercenaries, who were equipped with bows and sabres, among other weapons.<sup>63</sup>

The Rus military was organised in the following way: There was the prince, supported by a personal retinue, or *druzhina*; hired mercenaries and then common people who were likely deployed to do menial labour, such as digging ditches or cutting down trees. Dmytryshyn says before the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, many of the *druzhina* members were Scandinavians, while after 1054, they were more likely to be Slavs and Pechenegs.<sup>64</sup>

### *Magyars and the sabre*

The Magyars entered the Carpathian Basin in a migration in the ninth century and were armed in a similar fashion to other steppe peoples, they appeared as horsemen with sabres; high saddles; stirrups; composite bows and lances. Some wore helmets and armour, while others wore more rudimentary body protection. Their main close-in weapon was the sabre.<sup>65</sup>

The best-known Magyar-type sabre from this period is the Vienna sabre, known as 'The Sabre of Charlemagne' or 'Attila's Sword.' Neither is correct, the weapon has all the hallmarks of a ninth or tenth century Magyar or Khazar sabre.

This sabre is unique in that it has probably never been buried and therefore has been the focus of much study and speculation. Certain scholars have doubted its Hungarian provenance, including such early ones as Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, who suggested in 1801 that it could have been sent to Charlemagne (r. 768-814) by the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (r.763-809).<sup>66</sup> While the two did send embassies to one another, there is no mention of a sabre and the Arabs did not use sabres, but straight swords.

These Magyar sabres are better documented than other ninth and tenth century sabres for the simple reason that most of them are found in graves in Hungary, both on its present territory and that of the Historical Hungary, as opposed to in different countries and territories, each with different approaches to archaeology.

---

63 Basil Dmytryshyn. *A History of Russia*. (Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1977), pp. 62-6

64 Dmytryshyn, cit., p.64.

65 Zsolt Petkes and Balázs Sudár. *Honfoglalók fegyverben. M.Ő. 3*. Helikon Kiadó Budapest, 2015, pp. 68-142.

66 Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, *Beschreibung der ehemals zu Aachen aufbewahrten drey kaiserlichen Krönungs-Zierden* (1801), p.22.



Fig. 8. This sabre is kept in Vienna. Unfortunately, the museum does not allow downloads, so this photo was obtained from: *Világunk* Blog, Juhász Balázs -Juhász-Kiss Regina, August 2020 in Vienna. (Online). Der “Säbel Karls des Großen” (Sabre of Charlemagne) Kaiserliche Schatzkammer, (Treasury Kunsthistorische Museum, Hofburg, Wien).

Whatever the provenance of ‘Attila’s’ or ‘Charlemagne’s Sabre’, it has very close correspondences with the many sabres found in Hungary. Márk Haramza, in his doctoral thesis, considering all previous information, reported the existence of some 147 sabre finds from the tenth century. These came from confirmed grave finds (71), verifiable stray finds (36), uncertain data (28), finds dated to the tenth century, but demonstrably from different periods.

Some remarkable examples of sabres have emerged from this period, perhaps best demonstrated by the Geszteréd ‘Golden’ Sabre. Lajos Kiss, writing in the National Museum’s archaeological journal in 1938 said: ‘The Geszteréd find is the greatest and most excellent find in the country.’ He wrote that it only stood comparison with the Vienna Sabre.<sup>67</sup> The sabre was found near the village of Geszteréd, in Szabolcs County in northeastern Hungary, on May 4, 1927, by János Balázs, a swineherd, who noticed his pigs had dug up sparkling materials. This was reported to the museum in Nyíregyháza, where the abovementioned Lajos Kiss, the curator, investigated the finds. The grave turned out to be that of a high-ranking male, complete with typical accoutrements.<sup>68</sup> The sabre remains the richest find of its type in Hungary.<sup>69</sup>

67 Lajos Kiss. *A Geszterédi honfoglaláskori sírlelet*. Volume 24 of *Archaeologia Hungarica*, ISSN 0066-5916. (Budapest, Csaba and Co., 1938), p.9.

68 Kiss. cit. Pp. 11-16.

69 Ádám Bíró. ‘Helyzetkép a honfoglalás kori magyar szabalyák kutatásáról. Megjegyzések a

At a conference held in the village in question, Ádám Bíró said of the archaeological material, naturally including sabres:

The available weapons find material is unique in Eurasia for the period: The vast amount and the outstanding quality (in other words coming from mostly from well-documented digs, having undergone detailed examination and comparatively well dateable) finds – and here we are not only talking about sabres – would predestine the Hungarian – research to a leading role in the international weaponry research of the early Middle Ages.<sup>70</sup>

Other examples of such richly decorated sabres have been found in: Rakamaz, Tarcsl, the region of Tiszafüred, Tiszasüly, three in the Karos cemeteries, and outside the present borders of Hungary: Arad (Romania), Gnadendorf (Austria) and the region around Kosice (Slovakia).<sup>71</sup>



Following the rapid Christianisation of the Hungarian Kingdom by Grand Duke Geza and King Stephen I (Saint Stephen) in the period circa 970-1040, the country's nobles and upper classes began to use Western European swords and armour and fought as knights, and the old Magyar type of sabre disappears from the archaeological record. This was not the end of the sabre in the Kingdom of Hungary, however.

Fig. 9 reconstruction of the Gesteréd golden saber from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Hungarian National Museum.

geszterédi szablya jelentősége kapcsán.' (IN: Conference at Geszteréd, The Historical Significance of the Golden Sabre of Geszteréd. Geszterédi Aranyszablya Társaság, 2019 ) p. 64

70 Bíró. cit. p. 64

71 Bíró, cit. p.73.

*Sabres in Hungary and the Steppe between 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries*

Sabres of a different type have been found from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries, in regions associated with nomadic peoples like the Pechenegs and Cumans who were brought into the kingdom and acted as military auxiliaries, using sabres, composite bows and other 'Eastern' materials. These sabres are longer, wider and have more curved blades than the ninth and tenth century Hungarian weapons. An example of such larger sabres could be the village of Kana as well as Sárbogárd–Tinód. These sabres have been linked to the Pechenegs as they are too early for the arrival of the Cumans.<sup>72</sup> Examples of Cuman sabres and other weapons, such as maces, have also been found.<sup>73</sup>

Other peoples of the kingdom to use light cavalry tactics, which included the sabre, were the Jász or Iazyges, an Iranian people, and the Székely, a Hungarian-speaking people. The Székely continued using light cavalry tactics, composite bows and sabres.<sup>74</sup> Sófalvi says the reason they did this is their role as border guards in the south-east corner of the Hungarian kingdom and later the Transylvanian Principality. He believes that the need to cross the Carpathian Mountains while chasing or counter-attacking Cumans, Mongols of the Golden Horde, Ottoman Turks and Crimean Tatars (as Ottoman vassals) led to their keeping their light cavalry style of warfare.<sup>75</sup> The sabres reflect developments on the steppe.

*Curved swords in the Islamic World*

Although many have associated curved blades with the world of Islam and the Middle East, and these weapons are found in the region in occasional mentions in the eighth century, only in the 11th do the Seljuk Turks introduce them in larger numbers. Iran is considered the first Muslim region to have curved blades, but even there they do not become widespread as they are on the steppe, Hungary

72 Hatházi Gábor – Pálóczi Horváth András. 'Besenyő és kun régészeti emlékek Magyarországon'. In: *Török nyelvű népek a középkori Magyar Királyságban*. (Altaistics Department, Szeged University, 2016), pp. 35-116.

73 Hatházi – Pálóczi Horváth. Cit-

74 László Szabó. 'A jászok hazánkban.' In: *Magyarrá lett keleti népek*. Ed. Szombathy Viktor, László Gyula. (Panoráma, Budapest, 1988), pp. 176-179.

75 András Sófalvi. 'A székelység szerepe a középkori és a fejedelemség kori határvédelemben.' Erdélyi Múzeum. LXXIV Kötet 2012. 3. Füzet. (Erdélyi Múzeum, 2012, Kolozsvár), p. 4.

and the Rus. It does not help that the native names of the Arabs, Persians and the Turks are all generic words for ‘sword.’ Thus, the Arabic *sayf*, the Persian ‘shamshir’ and the Turkic kilich/kilij are all generic words for ‘sword.’

Nicole says: ‘Quite when curved sabres were adopted by Muslim horseman remains uncertain. It remained more characteristic of Turkish troops than their Persian, Kurdish or Arab comrades for several centuries.’<sup>76</sup>

Moshtagh Khorasani, adds: ‘Curved swords were not native to the Middle East. Lebedynsky rightfully challenges the conventional association of the curved sword with the Middle East. He contends that the birthplace of this weapon is not this region.’<sup>77</sup>

He continues: ‘It is noteworthy that straight swords continued to be prevalent until the 14th and 15th centuries was only after this period that curved swords began to emerge in significant quantities.’<sup>78</sup>

Alexander adds: ‘During the time of the Prophet the Arabs used swords, not sabers. This is confirmed by both textual evidence and material survivals’.<sup>79</sup>

While some curved swords (proto sabres or early sabres) are found in Iran and the Middle East in the Abbasid Period (750-1258) these appear to be limited to Turkic soldiers and found mainly in the Khorasan region of Iran. This is perhaps not surprising, as Iran is adjacent to the steppe region.<sup>80</sup>

Many propose that the curved sword did not appear suddenly but rather developed gradually over time. This theory suggests that the curvature of Persian swords became more pronounced as centuries passed. Allan and Gilmour have noted this continuum in the development of Persian swords. They distinguish between the Saber, which has a slight curve, and the shamshir, which boasts a more pronounced curve.<sup>81</sup>

It is interesting to note that while curved swords were found in the Islamic

76 David Nicolle. *Saracen Farris 1150=1250 AD*. (Osprey Publishing, London, 1994), p.32 and p.45.

77 Moshtagh Khorasani, M., “The Evolution of Curved Swords: A Comparative Study of China and Iran” *Parseh J Archaeol Stud.*, 9(31), (Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, Tehran, 2025), p. 42.

78 Moshtagh. Cit. pp. 43-44.

79 David Alexander. ‘Swords and Sabers during the Early Islamic Period.’ *Gladius XXI*, (Center for Humana and Social Studies, Madrid, 2001), p. 193.

80 Moshtagh Khorasani. Cit., p.42.

81 Moshtagh Khorasani .Cit. p.44.

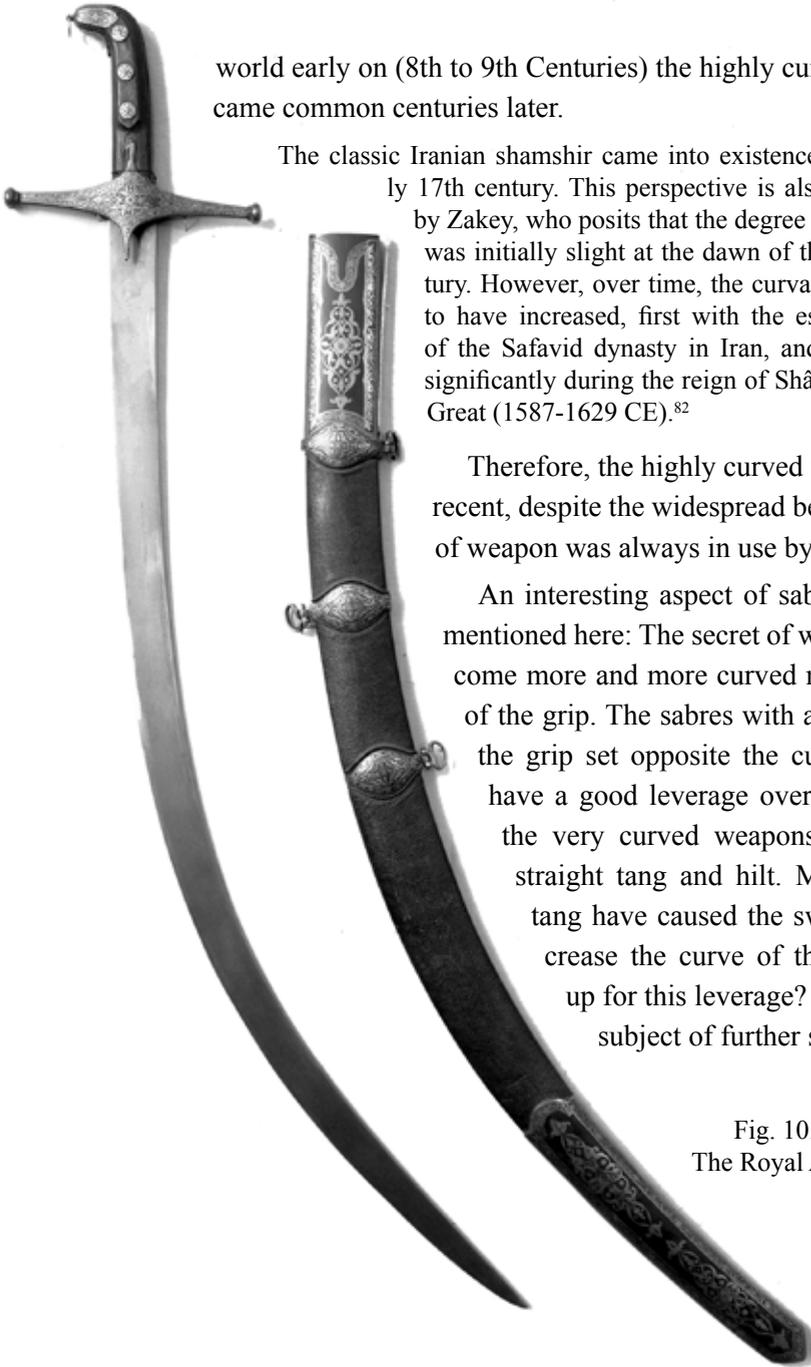
world early on (8th to 9th Centuries) the highly curved weapons became common centuries later.

The classic Iranian shamshir came into existence in the early 17th century. This perspective is also supported by Zakey, who posits that the degree of curvature was initially slight at the dawn of the 15th century. However, over time, the curvature appears to have increased, first with the establishment of the Safavid dynasty in Iran, and then more significantly during the reign of Shâh Abbâs the Great (1587-1629 CE).<sup>82</sup>

Therefore, the highly curved sabre is relatively recent, despite the widespread belief that this type of weapon was always in use by Muslim armies.

An interesting aspect of sabre design can be mentioned here: The secret of why the blades become more and more curved might lie in angle of the grip. The sabres with a lesser curve and the grip set opposite the curve of the blade have a good leverage over the blade, while the very curved weapons tend to have a straight tang and hilt. Might the straight tang have caused the swordsmiths to increase the curve of the blade to make up for this leverage? This could be the subject of further study.

Fig. 10. Syrian Shamshir.  
The Royal Armoury, Sweden.



<sup>82</sup> Moshtagh Khorasani. cit.

### *Paramerion*

An interesting addition to the history of curved swords would be the Byzantine *paramerion*, translated as meaning: ‘beside the thigh’ a reference to the way the sword was suspended, usually from two points, like a sabre. To make the parallel complete, it was also single-edged. It is thought that these weapons were suspended from a belt, much like the steppe sabres, while the main sword of the Medieval Romans, the *spathion* was double-edged and usually hung from a baldric.<sup>83</sup> Haldon says the *paramerion* ‘seems to be the sabre’.<sup>84</sup> Salmon, quoting the tenth century military treatise, *Sylloge Tacticorum*, states: ‘*They should indeed be girded with parameria, namely single-edged swords, which measure four spans including the hilt* (*Sylloge Tacticorum*, 38, 5).<sup>5</sup> “Paramerion” then clearly designated a single-edged sword, or more precisely a category of swords of the Middle Byzantine Period<sup>85</sup>

While scholars are not certain that the Byzantine weapon was indeed the sabre, it would not be surprising given their long-standing contacts with the steppe peoples, whom they both influenced and who influenced them in return.

### *Mongols*

With the sudden expansion of the Mongol Empire (1206-1294) sabres spread to China and, while they were already in widespread use on the Eurasian steppe, they influenced non-steppe civilisations, but only gradually. According to Moshtagh Khorasani, the Chinese kept the ‘straight backed knife’ for many centuries, ‘losing popularity only after the end of the Yuan (Mongol) dynasty in 1368 CE.’<sup>86</sup>

There is very little concrete material on the Mongol sabre. Their strategy, operations and tactics have been studied, as has their armour, bows and much else,

83 Timothy Dawson, *Byzantine Infantryman. Eastern Roman Empire, c.900-1204*. (Osprey, Oxford, 2007), p. 25.

84 John F. Haldon. ‘Some Aspects of Byzantine Military Technology from the Sixth to the Tenth Centuries.’ *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*. (Cambridge University Press, Volume 1, 1975), p. 31.

85 Thomas Salmon. ‘New Perspectives on the Byzantine “paramerion”’. *Acta Militaria Mediaevalia XVI*. (Kraków–Sanok–Wrocław 2020), p. 9.

86 Moshtagh. Khorasani. Cit., p.35.

but very little has been written about their sabres specifically. What is known is known from archaeology. One example would be three sabres found in modern Kazakhstan:

It seems that the sabres were forged by masters in Southern Siberia and were then brought to Northern and Central Kazakhstan by the Chingizid troops. The small number of long-bladed weapons of the 13th – 14th Centuries found on the territory of Kazakhstan determines high scientific value of the considered sabres.<sup>87</sup>

Other, later depictions of Mongols are found in Hungary, such as the fourteenth century *Chronicum Pictum*, or Illustrated Chronicle, showing a Mongol soldier with a sabre.<sup>88</sup>

The thirteenth century Mongol invasions and the rise of the Il-Khans (1256 to 1394) increased the number of sabres in Iran, although the famous highly-curved Persian sabre developed later.<sup>89</sup> It seems that the Mongol-influenced sabres spread in areas directly conquered by the Mongols, including China, Russia and Iran.

In summary, it can be said that the Mongols spread sabres to China, Iran and later, through Mongol dynasties, to India, but these did not spread very fast and did not spread to areas in Europe except Russia and Hungary, both of which were already familiar with them, as were the Persians.



Fig. 11. Bobrov L. A., Kushkumbaev A. K., Kairmagambetov A. M., Ismailov D. 'Three Sabres of the Mongol Empire Times from the Territory of Kazakhstan,' p.248.

87 Bobrov L. A., Kushkumbaev A. K., Kairmagambetov A. M., Ismailov D. 'Three Sabres of the Mongol Empire Times from the Territory of Kazakhstan.' *Vestnik NSU. Series: History and Philology*, 2020, vol. 19, no. 7: Archaeology and Ethnography, p. 245–256. (In Russ), p. 246.

88 *Chronicon Pictum*. [Budapest, National Széchényi Library, Cod. Lat. 404.](#)

89 Bobrov., Kushkumbaev et al, cit. p. 48.

### *Sabres in India*

Empires often stretched into northern India, and Persia was no different. From the time of Darius the Great (522-486 B.C.) to Arab invasions in the sixth century A.D. Later, Turkic conquerors established a Muslim state in the thirteenth century and Persian cultural influence and cultural exchange continued. The Persian Safavid Empire (1501-1736) continued this trend, notably in fighting arts and weaponry.<sup>90</sup>

While India has a plethora of indigenous weapons types, the most widespread of the sabre-derived weapons is the *talwar* thought to be influenced by the Persian shamshir and became widespread during the time of the Mughal Empire. (1526–1857). As regards the use of the *talwar*, the authors state:

Indians threw the whole force of their body into the blow. The sword techniques were executed with a bent elbow holding the sword and the arm was never completely straightened. The hand holding the stick or the saber is kept tightly but at the same time allowing the weapon to move freely while transmitting the power to the weapon in hand. The technique resulted in a types of strike known as “draw cut” or a “slicing cut”.<sup>91</sup>

It might be interesting to note that Hungarian hussars used a similar cut which was quite deadly, known simply as a *huszárvágás* or ‘hussar cut’, which also used on a very loose wrist and a whipping motion, and relied on the angled grip for its success.<sup>92</sup>



Fig. 12. Splendours of the Subcontinent. A Princes Tour of India 1875-6. Royal Collections Trust. Mohammed Ibrahim (Active 1877). Sword (Talwar). 1875. RCIN 11238

<sup>90</sup> Kurochkin, A. and Moshtagh Khorasani. 'Indian and Persian swordsmanship: A Comparative Analysis.' *Revista de Artes Marciales Asiáticas*, Volumen 10(1). University of León. (2015). pp. 42-67.

<sup>91</sup> Cit.

<sup>92</sup> Conversation with author's father, former Royal Hungarian Army tank lieutenant, trained in sabre by Hungarian hussars. (Germiston, South Africa, c.1999.)

### *Ottoman Empire and the sabre*

First the Seljuk Empire (1037-1194), then the Ottoman Empire (1299-1922) spread the sabre and other curved swords throughout the Middle East, Anatolia, Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Central Europe, as well North Africa.<sup>93</sup>

For the Byzantines, the Balkan peoples and Hungary, a looming threat was the expansion of the highly-organised (by the standards of the time) and militarily effective and innovative, Ottoman Empire.



Fig. 13 From top to bottom: \*Execution sword or parade sword; \*Late, short form of the kilij; \*Archaic, standard form of the kilij; \*European-made saber-kilij hybrid. Imperial Armoury at Topkapi, Istanbul

The Turkish empire used three main cavalry forces, all equipped with sabres of various curvatures, namely: The *akindjis*, usually equipped with the Turkish sabre, or *kiliç*, the *sipahis*, heavier, armoured cavalry equipped with either the sabre or *şimşir*, which refers to the heavily curved Iranian sword. Some used the *palyoş* as short sabre that could be double edged and the famous *yatağan* a short, forward-curving sword used by infantry, notably the Janissary Corps.<sup>94</sup>

93 Selcuk Aksin Somel. *The A to Z of the Ottoman Empire*. (Scarecrow Press, Plymouth, 2003), pp.xvi-lxx. By 'Eastern Europe, the author refers to geographical East Europe, namely, Moldova, the Black Sea region, Crimea and the Caucasus.

94 David Nicolle, *Armies of the Ottoman Turks, 1300-1774*. (Osprey Military, Oxford, 1983), p.20.

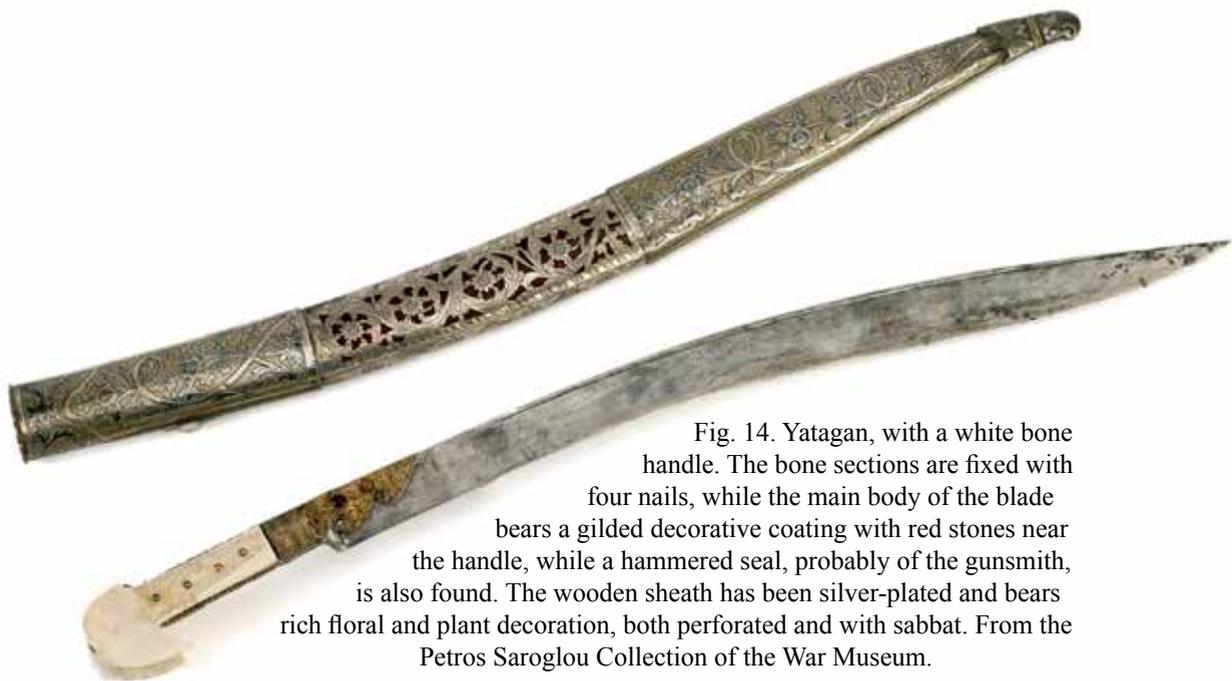


Fig. 14. Yatagan, with a white bone handle. The bone sections are fixed with four nails, while the main body of the blade bears a gilded decorative coating with red stones near the handle, while a hammered seal, probably of the gunsmith, is also found. The wooden sheath has been silver-plated and bears rich floral and plant decoration, both perforated and with sabbat. From the Petros Saroglou Collection of the War Museum.

Schmitt and Kiprovskaja have argued, that a key element in the Ottoman military in this period were the *akıncıs*, light cavalry units originating from *Türkmen* warriors. They were infamous for their plunder, burning and slave-raiding:

Focusing on the raiders and their plundering activities, we will assert that the *akıncıs* played a crucial role in the early Ottoman slave economy, as slave hunting was arguably the main economic driving force behind the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans in the late Middle Ages.<sup>95</sup>

János B. Szabó has pointed out, many peoples fleeing the Balkans found employment as mercenaries and became known as 'stradiots'. Many were Greeks or Albanians, and their fighting style mirrored that of the *akıncıs* and *sipahis*. He writes that it is likely that:

<sup>95</sup> Oliver Jens Schmitt and Mariya Kiprovskaja. 'Ottoman Raiders (*Akıncıs*) as a Driving Force of Early Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans and the Slavery-Based Economy.' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 65. (Brill, Leiden, 2022), pp. 504, 505.

As a result of the Ottoman conquest the military culture of the various emigrating Balkan groups showed many similar aspects with one another. This counted as a novelty in Western Europe and appeared to be greatly exotic.<sup>96</sup>

Pappas says of their weapons: ‘The majority of sources indicate that they were armed with sabres, or one-edged swords.’<sup>97</sup>

### *Rise of the hussars: the sabre spreads*

In response to the Turkish expansion of the Balkans, King Matthias I of Hungary raised a disciplined force of hussars from largely Balkan soldiers.

He wrote to Bishop Gabriel of Verona in Rome: ‘The ranks of the armed men among us are divided into three orders, the first of which is made up of armigeri ... The second order is the light cavalry, which we call hussars.’ (‘Armigeri’ were the heavily armoured knights.)<sup>98</sup> This is the first mention of the hussars as a separate unit of cavalry. Matthias wrote they *were equitum levis armature, quos hussarones appellamus.*<sup>99</sup> Thus armoured, but lightly.

The early hussars rode in the ‘Eastern’ style (as described above) and are described as having helmets, mail shirts, sabres, shields and a light lance.<sup>100</sup> In addition, the csákány (or horseman’s pick) or war hammers and maces were also used.

In the early sixteenth century, the traditional light cavalry archers disappeared, while the hussars continued to flourish among the Hungarian and Croatian cavalry. These cavalry adapted to the use of firearms (while keeping the old lances, sabres etc.)<sup>101</sup> A heavier, armoured version would appear in Poland. At this time, the sabre tended to become wider and heavier, with a broader reverse edge.<sup>102</sup>

96 János B. Szabó. *A középkor magyar könnyűlovassága. X-XVI. század.* (Attraktor, Budapest, 2017), 193. (Author translation.)

97 Nicholas C.J. Pappas. ‘Stradioti: Balkan mercenaries in fifteenth and sixteenth Century Italy’, (Sam Houston State University, 2008), Introduction.

98 Vilmos Fraknói. *Mátyás király Levelei. Második kötet. 1480-0490* (Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1895), p. 107.

99 Fraknói.cit.

100 Attila Zarnóczy. ‘Fegyverzet, katonai felszerelés, hadsereg Magyarországon Hunyadi Mátyás korában.’ *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 103. évf. 1. sz. (Budapest, 1990). pp.49-50.

101 B. Szabó.cit. pp. 248-257.

102 Hidán Csaba. *Emlékezzünk Régiokről IX. - Csaták Villáma, A Szablya* 4:09-4:20.



Fig. 15 King Stefan Batory's Hungarian sabre, known as the *Batorówka*. (1576-1586).  
Photo: Janet Szabó, Polish Army Museum, Warsaw. (2025).

### *The sabre in Poland*

The Poles were familiar with the sabre, through centuries of warfare against the Russians, Mongols, and Tatar khanates.

When Stefan Batory, Duke of Transylvania, was elected Polish king, the sabre became popular. Batory used the experiences of Transylvania and of Hungary to reorganise the Polish cavalry, which were organised into 'hussar' and 'cossack' units, of which 85 per cent were hussars. The Poles adopted Batory's sabre as the *batórowka* and the Polish hussars evolved into the heavy, winged *husaria*, winning many famous battles, the best-known at Vienna in 1683.<sup>103</sup>

### *Summary*

The sabre has a very long history indeed. Starting as a single-edged sword likely adopted from China in the Eastern Steppes in the fifth century, to the single-edged sword with the reverse edge at the point in the seventh, to the forward-bent grip and eventual curved blade in the eighth century. Following the rise and fall of the Turkic Khaganates, the Avar Empire and the Khazars, and followed by the vast Mongol Empire, the sabre spread from Manchuria to Hungary. After the end of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) a version known as *peidao* in China and variations of it became widespread there. Persian swords became more

103 Jan Ostrowski with Wojciech Bochnak. 'Polish Sabres: Their Origins and Evolution.' In: *Art. Arms and Armour: An international anthology. Vol I.* (Acqafresca, (Chiasso, Switzerland.1979-80), p. p. 221.

curved following the Mongol Empire's conquest and the curved sword spread to the world of Islam as the *sayf* or the *shamshir*. A version spread to India as the *talwar*. The sabre and other curved swords spread further during the Ottoman invasions of Byzantium, the Balkans, Hungary and regional powers. In this context the sabre became widespread in Poland. Following the Hungarian War of Independence (1703-17011), Hungarian and other émigrés took the sabre to all parts of Europe and thence to North America. The widespread use of sabres in the nineteenth century completes a history of 1,500 years of development of this versatile weapon.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES

- Fraknoi Vilmos. *Mátyás király Levelei. Második kötet. 1480-0490* Magyar Tudományos Akadémia. (1895).
- Chronicon Pictum. Budapest, National Széchényi Library, Cod. Lat. 404

### SECONDARY SOURCES

- Alexander, David. 'Swords and Sabers during the Early Islamic Period.' *Gladius XXI*, Center for Humana and Social Studies, Madrid. (2001).
- Arzhantsev Irina, Inevatkina Olga, 'Afrasiab Wall-paintings Revisited: New Discoveries Twenty-Five Years Old. Royal Nauruz in Samarkand.' *Proceedings Of the Conference Held in Venice On The Pre-Islamic Paintings At Afrasiab*. Paper presented at Sapienza University, Rome. (2006).
- B.Szabó János. *A középkor magyar könnyűlovassága. X-XVI. század*. Attraktor, Budapest. (2017).
- Bayarsaikhan, Jamsranjav, Turbat, Tsagaan, Bayandelger, Chinbold. 'The origins of saddles and riding technology in East Asia: discoveries from the Mongolian Altai.' *Antiquity*, Volume 98 - Issue 397 Cambridge University Press. (2023).
- Bíró Ádám. 'Helyzetkép a honfoglalás kori magyar szabalyák kutatásáról. Megjegyzések a geszterédi szablya jelentősége kapcsán.' (Conference at Geszteréd, The Historical Significance of the Golden Sabre of Geszteréd. Geszterédi Aranyszablya Társaság, (2019.)
- Bobrov L. A., Kushkumbaev A. K., Kairmagambetov A. M., Ismailov D. 'Three Sabers of the Mongol Empire Times from the Territory of Kazakhstan.' *Vestnik NSU. Series: History and Philology*, 2020, vol. 19, no. 7: Archaeology and Ethnography. (In Russ, 2020).
- Boyer, M, et al. *The American Heritage Dictionary*. Dell Publishing, New York. (1985).

- Branford, William. *The South Africa Pocket Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, Cape Town. (1987)
- Burton, Richard, F. *The Book of the Sword*. Dover Publications. (1987).
- Csiky Gergely. "Az avar kori szúró- és vágófegyverek. Osztályozás – tipológia – kronológia – technológia." Ph. D Dissertation, Eötvös Lóránd University, Budapest. (2009).
- Dawson, Timothy. *Byzantine Infantryman. Eastern Roman Empire, c.900-1204*. Osprey, Oxford, (2007).
- Dymytryshyn, Basil. *A History of Russia*. Prentice-Hall, New Jersey. 1977).
- Edwards, Elwyn Hartley. *The Saddle. In Theory and Practice*. J.A. Allen, London. (1990).
- Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Sabre," Online. (2025.)
- Garam Éva és Vida Tivadar (Eds), *A Csákberény-Orondpusztai Avar Kori Temető*. Szent István Király Múzeum, Székesfehérvár, (2017).
- Garam, Éva. 'Avar nyereg Tiszafüdről.' *Archaeologiai Értesítő*. 96.1. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, (1969).
- Gebig, Alfred. *Beiträge zur morphologischen Entwicklung des Schwertes im Mittelalter: eine Analyse des Fundmaterials vom ausgehenden 8. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert aus Sammlungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Wachholtz, Neumünster, (1991).
- Guido Alberto Gnecci-Ruscone, Anna Szécsényi-Nagy, István Koncz et al. 'Ancient genomes reveal origin and rapid trans-Eurasian migration of 7th century Avar elites.' *Cell* 185, Elsevier, Cambridge, MA. (2022).
- Gorbunov V. 'Klinkovoe oruzhie tjurkskoj' ['Long-bladed Weapons of the Turkic Cavalry']. *Istoricheskoe oruzhievedenie* [Weapons History Journal], Online.
- Grzegorz Żabiński Russell A. Mitchell Falko Fritz. *A Falchion / Langes Messer Fencing Treatise by Johannes Lecküchner (1482)*. Silesia, Texas, Hamburg, c. The Authors. (2012).
- Haldon, John, F. 'Some Aspects of Byzantine Military Technology from the Sixth to the Tenth Centuries.' *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*. Cambridge University Press. Volume 1. (1975).
- Hatházi Gábor – Pálóczi Horváth András. 'Besenyő és kun régészeti emlékek Magyarországon'. In: *Török nyelvű népek a középkori Magyar Királyságban*. Szeged University. (2016).
- Hidán Csaba. *Emlékezzünk Régiokról IX. - Csaták Villáma, A Szablya*. Magyarországtudató Intézet MKI. Online. 0:58-1:20 (2022.)
- Khazanov, Anatoly. 'The Eurasian Steppe Nomads in Eurasian History.' *Nomad Aristocrats in a World of Empires*. Ed. Jürgen, Paul Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag. Wiesbaden. (2013).
- Kiss, Lajos. *A Geszterédi honfoglaláskori sírlelet*. Volume 24 of *Archaeologia Hungarica*, ISSN 0066-5916. Budapest, Csaba and Co. (1938).
- Komar, Oleksii, Sukhobokov Oleg, Vooruzheniye i voyennoye delo Khazarского kaganata

- ‘Armament and military affairs of the Khazar Khaganate’ *Essays of Military history of Old Ukraine*. Kiev. (In translation, 2005).
- Kurochkin, A. and Moshtagh Khorasani. ‘Indian and Persian swordsmanship: A Comparative Analysis.’ *Revista de Artes Marciales Asiáticas*, Volumen 10(1). University of León. (2015)
- László, Gyula. *A Honfoglaló Magyar Nép Élete*. 1944. Facsimile Edition, Múzsák Kiadó. (1988.)
- Lőrinczy, Gábor, Major Balázs, Türk Attila. *The Szegvár-Oromdűlő Cemetery and the Avar Period in the Trans-Tisza Region* Martin Optiz, Budapest, (2022)
- Maróti Zoltan, Endre Neparáczki, Endre, Oszkár Schütz et al. ‘The genetic origin of Huns, Avars, and conquering Hungarians.’ *Current Biology* 32, Cell Press, Elsevier, Cambridge, MA USA. (2022)
- Mikhail Zirohiv and David Nicolle. *The Khazars. A Judeo-Turkish Empire on the Steppes. 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.* Osprey, Men-at Arms New York. (2019).
- Morton, E.D. *A-Z of Fencing*. Martini, Queen Anne Press, London. (1988).
- Moshtagh Khorasani, M., “The Evolution of Curved Swords: A Comparative Study of China and Iran” *Parseh J Archaeol Stud.*, 9(31), Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, Tehran. (2025).
- Nicolle, David. *Armies of the Ottoman Turks, 1300-1774*. Osprey Military, Oxford. (1983).
- Nicolle, David. *Saracen Faris 1150=1250 AD*. Osprey Publishing, London. (1994).
- Oakeshott, Ewart. *Arms and Armour from Prehistory to the Age of Chivalry*. The Boydell Press. Woodbridge, U.K. (1960)
- Ostrowski, Jan with Bochnak Wojciech. ‘Polish Sabres: Their Origins and Evolution.’ In: *Art. Arms and Armour. An international anthology. Vol I*. Acqafresca, Chiasso, Switzerland. (1979-80).
- Pappas Nicholas C.J. ‘Stradioti: ‘Balkan mercenaries in fifteenth and sixteenth Century Italy’ .Sam Houston State University. (2008).
- Petersen, Jan. *De norske vikingesverd. En typologisk-kronologisk studie over Vikingetidens vaaben*. (Videnskapssels kapets s kru’ter, Kristiana/Oslo. (1919).
- Petkes Zsolt and Sudár Balázs. *Honfoglalók fegyverben. M.Ő. 3*. Helikon Kiadó Budapest. (2015).
- Salmon, Thomas. ‘New Perspectives on the Byzantine “paramerion”’. *Acta Militaria Mediaevalia XVI*. Kraków–Sanok–Wrocław. (2020).
- Schmitt, Oliver J., and Kiprovska, Mariya. ‘Ottoman Raiders (*Akıncıs*) as a Driving Force of Early Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans and the Slavery-Based Economy.’ *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 6 5. Brill, Leiden. (2022).
- Simon, László. ‘Adatok a szablyák kialakulásáról.’ A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve 30.30/2, Miskolc. (1993)

- Sófalvi, András.. 'A székelység szerepe a középkori és a fejedelemség kori határvédelemben.' Erdélyi Múzeum. LXXIV Kötet 3. Füzet. Erdélyi Múzeum,, Kolozsvár. (2012)
- Somel Selcuk Aksin. *The A to Z of the Ottoman Empire*. Scarecrow Press, Plymouth, (2003).
- Song, Shen-yang, Qian Wei et al. 'Ironmaking and steelmaking process research on Chinese long ring pommel Dao in Han dynasty.' *Scientific Reports* Springer Nature, London. (2025).
- Stachowski, Marek. 'The Origin Of The European Word For Sabre.' *Studia Etymologica Cracoviensia* vol. 9 Kraków University. (2004).
- Szabó László. 'A jászok hazánkban.' In: *Magyarrá lett keleti népek*. Ed. Szombathy Viktor, László Gyula. Panoráma, Budapest. (1988).
- Türk, Attila. *A Magyar őstörténet és a szaltovói régészeti kultúrkör*. Ph. D thesis. University of Szeged. (2011.)
- Vida, Tivadar. 'The Early And Middle Avar Period' (568–turn of the 7th–8th centuries). In: Visy, Zsolt (Ed). *The Migration Period. Hungarian Archaeology at the Turn of the Millenium* Budapest (2003).
- Vlasatý, Tomáš. 'Bulgarian type sabre from Stará Břeclav, Czech Rep'. Paper Presentation. European Military Affairs and the Bulgarians between the 6th and 17th centuries – Conflicts, Contacts and Influences. International Conference Sofia. 14th–18th May. (2025)
- Von Murr, Christoph Gottlieb. *Beschreibung der ehemals zu Aachen aufbewahrten drey kaiserlichen Krönungs. Zierden* (1801).
- Waffensammlung Carl Beck. *Säbel, «Dusägge», deutsch Ende 16. Jahrhundert. Klinge mit unbekannter Meistermarke und originaler Wolfsmarke, Passau*. (Stiftung Sankturbanhof Sursee,). Online. (2018.)
- Zaicz Gábor (Ed.). *Etimológiai Szótár Magyar szavak és toldalékok eredete*. Tinta, Budapest. (2006).
- Zarnóczki Attila. 'Fegyverzet, katonai felszerelés,hadsereg Magyarországon Hunyadi Mátyás korában.' *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*103. évf. 1. sz. Budapest. (1990).
- Ziemann, Daniel. 'From the Eurasian Steppes to Christian Europe: Bulgarians and Magyars in the Early Middle Ages.' In: Michael Gehler, Robert Rollinger. *Empires to be remembered: Ancient Worlds through Modern Times*. (Springer, Wiesbaden, 2022).



Pietro l'Eremita predica la prima crociata, dal codice occitano *Abreujamen de las estorias* (epitome storica), Avignone ca 1321 (BL, Egerton MS 1500, f. 45 v)

# Storia Militare Medievale

## Articoli / Articles - Military History

- *Siege and Fortification in Medieval Europe*,  
by JOHN FRANCE
- *The Battle of Leitha River in 1246: The Mustery of the King of Rus'*,  
by ILLIA PARSHYN
- "Riuzen Stürm" in the Epic Tradition of the 13th–14th-Century Holy Roman Empire,  
by KHRYSTYNA MERENYUK
- *The Treatises of Pierre Dubois Project for a New French Century*,  
by JÜRIG GASSMANN
- *Guerra e racconto: l'assedio di Pavia del 1315 nelle cronache del primo Trecento*,  
di FABIO ROMANONI
- *San Pietro a Vico (Lucca), 2 October 1341: "La battaglia più crudele e aspra che fosse per grandi tempi inanzi in Italia"*  
by FILIPPO NARDONE
- *Richard Musard and the Origins of the Savoyard Crusade*,  
by TAMÁS ÖLBEI
- *Les activités de renseignement des rois de France en Bourgogne ducale au XVe siècle*,  
par BENOÎT LÉTHENET
- *The Black Ethiopian: Crusader King Ferdinand of Aragon and the Heraldry of Wallachia and Moldavia*,  
by ALEXANDRU SIMON
- *Florentine Military Men in the Age of the Catasto: A Preliminary Examination (1427-30)*,  
by PETER SPOSATO
- *Disamina di una disfatta: la pars ghibellina bresciana tra Milano, Pandolfo Malatesta e Venezia (1402-1454)*,  
di PAOLO DE MONTIS
- *STUDI OPOLOGICI*
- *History and Development of the Sabre in the Middle Age*  
by CHRISTOPHER SZABO
- *Dall'usbergo all'armatura. Alcune note sull'evoluzione*  
di MARCO MERLO
- *La panoplia cavalleresca nell'Inquisitio Baronum et Feudatariorum Aprutii del 1279*,  
di MANUEL FRALLICCIARDI
- *STRUMENTI DI RICERCA*
- *Le Giornate di studio su Guerre nel Regno. Guerre del Regno. Dai Durazzeschi agli Asburgo (1381-1516)*,  
di GIULIA GRIMALDI

---

## Recensioni

- Gabriele Pedullà  
*Carlo VIII e la campagna d'Italia*  
(di SERENA MORELLI)
- Verreycken - Fureau,  
*Deux ouvrages récents sur guerre et crime au Moyen Âge*  
(par ROBERTO BARAZZUTTI)
- Rec. Luca Loschiavo  
*The Civilian Legacy of the Roman Army*  
(di Danilo Ceccarelli Morolli)
- Giovanni Amatuccio,  
*I Templari e la guerra*  
(di EMILIANO BULTRINI)