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for the Study of Silk Road Textile  
Symposium

# TEXTILES AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

## PROCEEDINGS

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## Typology of the Archaeological Textile Finds from the Hungarian Conquest Period (10<sup>th</sup> century AD) in the Carpathian Basin and Their Historical Context

It is a fact that organic remains represent only a minute percentage of the archaeological finds from the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries due to the climatic and soil conditions of the Carpathian Basin. Most of the surviving objects are of small size and poor condition. Mostly due to the poor preservation of the material, archaeologists in Hungary have generally failed to take into consideration the technical features of the textile remnants when identifying contemporary garments and textiles.

The first grave that definitely included textile finds was excavated in 1850, but systematic research only began with the analysis of finds from the excavation at Szabadkígyás-Pálliget, published by Bálint Cs. in 1971. For a



long time, publications about this site remained the most important reference point regarding textiles from this period. Another groundbreaking step was done in 2009 by a team of some researchers (E. Nagy, Katalin textile restorers and her archaeologist team), who first of all were collected all textile finds originated from the 10<sup>th</sup> century in the Carpathian Basin and they comprehensively analysed the largest silk textile fragment (a *samite*) which had been recovered from a grave in site at Fonyód. Based on historical data, the authors thoroughly studied the use of silk in the context of the Hungarian population and the period of the Hungarian Conquest and found East European and Byzantine parallels, which was a significant contribution.

In regard to materials from the 10<sup>th</sup> century, two categories of textiles have been identified thus far. Linen, of which there was a more dense (better quality) type, and another, of inferior quality. On the other hand, there has also been a number of silk finds and their different weaving patterns could be also identified. Most of the silk finds recovered thus far were *samite*.

A different type of silk (*taqueté façonné*) was first documented at Tárpa (in 2012), and then in 2016, at Derecske which demonstrates that the occurrence of *taquetü* fabric was not a unique phenomenon in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. However, there are no examples among the published textile materials from Northern and Western Europe, and it seems that they occur also quite rarely in Byzantium. Parallels of the *taqueté* fabric found in Derecske are known from Iran. Whereas there are evidence of silk finds throughout the whole of Europe, *taqueté* silk remains absent in Western Europe or among the famous Viking finds in Northern Europe. All this suggests that Hungarians in the 10<sup>th</sup> century had access to different source(s) of silk — as there is no way that this material could be taken as booty from the western raids.

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