ANNULAR BROOCHES FROM THE 13th AND 14th CENTURY FROM VOJVODINA

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Abstract – By studying the features and contexts of the discovery of annular brooches from Vojvodina the author puts forward a proposal of their typology, in an effort to comprehend their layered functionality, both utilitarian and symbolic – particularly apotropaic. Special emphasis is placed on the interpretation of individual inscriptions. By placing the presented brooches in a broader geographic context and comparing them with analogous finds from neighbouring states, the author reaches interesting conclusions about the time and manner of their use, their potential producers, the directions of their expansion, and the distributors and bearers, highlighting the differences between discrete groups of finds.

Key words – Brooch, annular brooch, buckle, inscription, Middle Ages, identity.

This paper was written as a consequence of the author dealing with an inscribed silver annular brooch discovered in the archaeological excavation of the Templar church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Gora near Petrinja (Croatia). This find was published in the Contributions of the Institute of Archaeology in Zagreb.1 In that paper, the authors provide an extensive introduction to the topic, present different types of annular brooches, especially those bearing an inscription, and try to grasp the rich layers of their functions. At the same time, they observe that these extremely interesting finds have not been awarded due attention, not only in Croatia, but also in the neighbouring countries, with very few exceptions in Hungarian literature. This paper builds, in many ways, on the mentioned article, so readers are advised to consult it if they wish to gain a more comprehensive picture.

I also note that this paper is a part of a broader research,2 and it focuses exclusively on finds from Vojvodina (with the single exception of a brooch found on the right bank of the Danube in Serbia), a total of twenty-three finds, in addition to a review of six objects that resemble brooches, found in Serbia, south of the Sava and Danube rivers. Consequently, the typology of annular brooches that I put forward here is based on that assemblage and makes no pretensions to broad utilisation. It is mostly based on the form of annular brooches, followed by the method of decoration and type of inscription, if any is present. The way it was conceived makes it easy to incorporate it into a possible future typology of European annular brooches.

The paper will, therefore, present the annular brooches discovered in Vojvodina, most of which have already been published. It will look at their known features and archaeological contexts, and will compare them with analogous finds from neighbouring areas, with a view to put forward at least an outline of interpretations pertaining to their distribution, the directions

1 Belaj, Belaj 2016.
2 The research is carried out as part of the research programme Archaeological landscapes and identities of the Institute of Archaeology in Zagreb.
of expansion, the distributors and bearers, their various functions and, above all, their rich symbolism.

**FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS OF ANNULAR BROOCHES**

Annular brooches consist of a frame and a movable pin with a defined bed. This was sometimes attained by a narrowing the frame, a perforation in the frame or, more rarely, the bed was delineated by applications on the frame. In the case of multi-pointed annular brooches, in most cases one of the corners was widened and perforated.

Although annular brooches were often round, they sometimes came in other shapes too. However, a feature they all have in common is the frame, in the middle of which there is an empty space. This is what differentiates them from discoid brooches.

These are extremely interesting objects due to their multi-layered functionality stemming from their different features. First, their basic function was to fasten clothes. This, in fact, is what gave rise to them, spontaneously, with the 12th-century Byzantine fashion of clothing, which imposed for both sexes the wearing of a long-sleeved, ankle-length garment, the tunic (**kirtle, cotte, cotehardie**). It had a cut below the neck, which was fastened by an annular brooch. They were worn throughout Europe between the 12th and 15th centuries, and enjoyed their peak popularity during the 13th and 14th centuries. More robust brooches, bigger and harder, were also used to fasten long coats and mantles or robes draped over tunics. Due to their shape and the way they fastened the textile, the advantage of the annular brooch over fibulae lay in the fact that it was almost impossible for a brooch to accidentally open and fall off, and thus become lost.

Although it is likely, as demonstrated by numerous depictions, that most annular brooches were worn in the mentioned way, several brooches were found in graves in the deceased person’s pelvic area. This is particularly frequently documented in the Baltics and in Hungary, as well as in the observed area.

Annular brooches, especially those of more lavish construction, were occasionally worn as decorations, that is, as status symbols. Such objects are more often found in hoards than in settlements and graves, which yielded mostly less luxurious and cheaper specimens. This is probably a consequence of their great value and, due to this, the practice of passing them down as heirlooms through generations.

Specimens made of cheaper materials (bronze, tin and alloys of copper, tin, zinc and lead), made in moulds, were more accessible and, therefore, widespread in less affluent classes, which is why they were also found in rural areas. They were worn by members of both sexes, as well as by children, which comes to the fore in sculptures and portraits, and in graves. However, in the Carpathian Basin they seem to be more often found in female graves.

Annular brooches had an extraordinary symbolic potential. They were a suitable medium for devotions of love, fidelity and loyalty, as well as protection, but also of a number of other things. During the Middle Ages, protection could be reinforced by selecting appropriate materials, shapes, certain numbers, symbols, and especially inscriptions. Among the latter we differentiate between devotional, magical, and love inscriptions and those whose meaning we can no longer grasp today. The latter group comprises numerous inscriptions that were probably connected with the **Hail Mary** prayer, which can often be deduced from the beginning of the inscription. I hope to show in the paper that it is worth dedicating time and effort to try to decipher also some of the uncoded inscriptions. Inscriptions were considered as efficient as the spoken word, so inscriptions on different materials were also copiously used during the Middle Ages as a cure and against spells, a practice that has remained in certain places to this day.

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3 Different shapes of annular brooches will be discussed later in the paper.
4 Discoid brooches lack the space in the middle and are more typical for the 11th than 12th century (Hinton 2005, 173, fig. 6.1).
6 Savsø 2009, 190.
7 Šimek, 2017.
8 Egan, Pritchard 2002, 247.
10 Varga 2015, 86.
11 Although, with the lack of metric analyses, it would be more appropriate to refer to “bronze” objects as “made of a copper alloy”, in the paper we use the term “bronze” due to the fact that this is how they were described in the literature.
12 This is at odds with Hinton’s belief that they were not worn by peasants (Hinton 2005, 178).
14 Heindel 1986, 70.
15 Savsø 2011, 266.
16 For a more extensive review of different aspects of protection provided by brooches, especially those bearing inscriptions of various types, see Belaj, Belaj 2016.
ANNULAR BROOCHES FROM VOJVODINA

The observed area has yielded round annular brooches with a wide and straight frame with a semi-circular cross-section (with inscriptions, decorations, or without them); rhombic, six-foiled, six-pointed brooches; brooches with a six-pointed frame whose arms were double connected, and eight-pointed brooches. As regards the material they were made of, we can distinguish luxurious specimens made of precious metals and those made of base metals, which made them more accessible to broader social classes.17

I Circular annular brooches

IA Inscribed circular annular brooches

Circular annular brooches (also called ring brooches in the English literature) differ from other annular brooches by their shape. Their frames can have different cross-sections, most often flat or in the shape of an elongated rectangle; sometimes the upper surface can be slightly convex,18 but they can also have a more or less circular, or even hexagonal, cross-section. Due to this shape, with relatively flat surfaces, they are a convenient medium for various inscriptions, although throughout Europe inscriptions can be found on annular brooches of different shapes.

Among the neighbouring countries, most inscribed annular brooches come from the territory of Hungary, so, consequently, most research on them was done by Hungarian archaeologists, in recent times by Gábor Hatházi19 and Ottó Fogas20. In doing so, they did not limit themselves to the territory of Hungary but, rightly so, looked at the entire territory of the former Kingdom of Hungary. In this work I have made particular use of the most recent work by Fogas, who not only described in detail and analysed the inscriptions, but also reported on the known archaeological contexts of individual finds. Since he analysed the known finds from the territory of the former Kingdom of Hungary, he also included in his work the finds from Vojvodina. In the other neighbouring countries the number of annular brooches of this group is significantly lower, so there are no similar studies; instead, individual finds were given greater or less attention in the scholarly literature.21

I have divided the inscribed circular annular brooches, a total of five, into two subtypes, based on the type of their inscription.

Brooch with an incomplete Mary’s inscription

The 1948 and 1949 excavation of the central tumulus in Hinga (Nosa–Hinga) near Subotica (Northern Bačka district, Vojvodina) yielded a mediaeval cemetery dated, based on coins and other archaeological material, to between the beginning of the 12th and the end of the 14th century, possibly the beginning of the 15th century. The excavations yielded seven bronze cast annular brooches, five of which had a wide and flat inscribed frame.22 Four specimens bear the same inscription, and these we shall discuss a bit later. The fifth brooch, somewhat bigger and thinner than the rest (its diameter is 3.26 cm, frame width 0.93 cm, thickness 0.11 cm) was found in a fragmented state, only a little more than a half of the frame was preserved, broken into two pieces. Unfortunately, this brooch was not found in a grave, but as a chance find in 1949.23 It is dated based on the type of letters to the 14th century.24 In Šafarik and Šluman’s interpretation, the preserved part of the inscription, written in a developed Gothic script, reads IURGOM MARIA.25

Although the quality of the cast is not very high, and neither is the condition of the object, based on the photograph, it seems to me that the preserved part of the inscription may read + MARI (…) IVREOM, which is not necessarily the case, because the cross frequently appears between each and every word in the inscription) suggests that the inscription was devoted, like so many others, to the Virgin Mary. The ending, for the time being, remains unclear, however, I will put forward a possible solution.

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17 Søvnd 2009, 185–190.
18 In these cases we may speak of annular brooches with a “wide and straight frame”.
19 Hatházi 2004a; 2004b.
20 Fogas 2009.
21 This particularly applies to the brooch from Gora, near Petrinja in Croatia (Belaj, Belaj 2016) and Peter’s brooch from Budimlja, near Berane in Montenegro (Belaj 2017).
22 Šafarík, Šluman 1954; Stanojev 1989. All the finds from Hinga are kept in the Mediaeval Collection of the Subotica Municipal Museum.
23 Šafarík, Šluman 1954, 14.
24 Šafarík, Šluman 1954, 41.
25 After Šafarík, Šluman 1954, 8, Tab. III: 1 [the specimen in the middle of the upper row], 14. I do not know why Ottó Fogas did not review this brooch in his work on annular brooches with Gothic inscriptions in the Carpathian Basin (Fogas 2009).
The beginning of the inscription is not in doubt, it is the name of Mary. Unfortunately, the middle is not preserved, so we may only wonder about the meaning of its ending: IVREOM? Could it be the word IUDAEO-RUM from the inscription from the cross of Christ (Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeeorum)? This inscription is frequently found on annular brooches throughout Western Europe, in the form IVDEORVM.26 If this is indeed this word, then it was rather inaccurately written, which is not altogether unusual, as scribal errors often appear on annular brooches. However, it was recently observed that inscriptions were sometimes deliberately obscured, that some such “errors” were made on purpose to lend the inscription magical protection, which means that these were not in fact errors but deliberate acts. It was believed that the protection would remain effective only if it was protected from spells itself, which was often obtained by changing the order of the letters, by writing the inscription backwards, upside down, as a mirror image etc. This made it impossible for others to quickly and easily read the inscription.27

So, could IVDEORVM become IVREOM and, if so, in what way?

The inscription first had to be shortened, certain letters had to be removed, in order to respect a certain symmetry: the middle letters EOR were preserved, one letter on either side was omitted (D and V), while the first two letters (IV) and the last one (M) were again preserved. A similar procedure of a symmetric selection of letters, from the beginning of the Hail Mary prayer, was observed on the inscription of the silver annular brooch from Gora.28 A different method of obscuring is found on another silver brooch, from Strasbourg,29 whose inscription contains only every third letter from the beginning of the same prayer, while towards the end only every fifth letter was written (with a few anomalies that nevertheless do not invalidate the accuracy of the method).30 Another method of obscuring entails relocating a letter, R, two places forward, before the letters EO. For this method we can also find an analogy, in fact two, on a bronze annular brooch from France. Its frame bears the inscription II AVE MARIA GRIATA PLA T DM. Debiais and Favreau rightly concluded that this is an abbreviated form of AVE MARIA GRATIA PL(EN)A D(O)M(INUS) T(ECUM),31 and we may also add that the letters I in GRATIA and T in D(O)M(INUS) T(ECUM) were written two places forward, within the corpus of letters selected for writing.32

Naturally, there was not only a single method of encryption, because it would not serve its purpose. It is important to observe here that in these cases we are not dealing only with symbolic obscuring of inscriptions by mirror-imaging a letter, by writing backwards, upside-down or mirror writing, by replacing a single letter or using another similar method against spells,33 but rather with a real desire to prevent or at least make it difficult for others to read correctly. Therefore, in such cases we ought to treat each object as a separate case. Nevertheless, I have to admit that in the case of the brooch from Hinga similar methods are considered on only a single word, perhaps even an incomplete one, which I again confess seems a bit stretched. Besides, in this case this is not a valuable silver specimen, but a cast bronze object, which we must assume was produced as part of a large series. Could this have then been a mistake made in the process of making the mould? Or, was the craftsman imitating a silver annular brooch he had once seen? It is unlikely that we will be able to provide an answer to these questions, unless we find a similar, but complete, specimen.

**Brooches inscribed with HILF MARIA MER T**

The already mentioned tumulus in **Hinga** also yielded four identical cast bronze annular brooches with a wide and straight frame, a straight iron pin, which bear an identical inscription written in Gothic majuscule, bordered with simple plastic lines (Pl. IA/2–5).34 Three specimens were found outside grave contexts, while one comes from a grave. This is the female grave no. 54, in which the annular brooch was found below the diaphragm, although the authors state that they “cannot exclude the possibility that it was dislocated from its...”

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26 For instance, such inscriptions are found on annular brooches that may be seen at: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=43496&partId=1; http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O103427/ring-brooch-unknown/ (30th December 2016); (Lightbown 1992, 494, no. 12).

27 Belaj, Belaj 2016, 265–266.

28 Belaj, Belaj 2016, 263; see also the table.

29 Debiais, Favreau 2008: 100–101, no. 94.


31 Debiais, Favreau 2008: 100, no. 93.

32 Belaj, Belaj 2016, 266.

33 Some examples of such symbolic obscuring of inscriptions are presented in Belaj, Belaj 2016, 266–268.

34 Шафарик, Шульман 1954, 8, 12, Tab. III: 1 [except the specimen in the middle of the upper row], 28, Tab. V: 6 [above right].
original position".\textsuperscript{35} The dimensions of all the objects are the same: diameter 3 cm, frame width 0.7 cm, thickness 0.13 cm. It seems they were made in the same mould. These objects were also dated, based on the type of letters, to the 14\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{36} A part of the inscription is legible and, in the opinion of Šafarik and Sluman,\textsuperscript{37} it reads MARIA MER, while the other part, according to the same authors, is illegible on all the specimens. This led them to the conclusion that it was probably already worn out in the mould. Ottó Fogas, on the other hand, believes that the illegibility was a consequence of the worn-out state during wearing.\textsuperscript{38} The photographs make it clear that not all the specimens were equally worn out, one of them is more legible than the others (Pl. IA/2), however, it is precisely the frame of this brooch that is perforated at the wrong place. Although the letters are indeed not equally legible, it can, nevertheless, be determined that its inscription reads +HILF+MARIA+MER+T. However, only the first cross is indeed a cross, while the remaining three cross-like symbols look more like a four-leaf clover whose leaves are more similar to that of a lily.

Similar annular brooches were also found at the Kiskunhalas Catholic cemetery ( Bács-Kiskun County, Hungary) during the salvage archaeological excavation carried out before the expansion of the Catholic cemetery in 2005 and 2007, which yielded a part of a Gothic church from the 14\textsuperscript{th}–16\textsuperscript{th} century and a number of graves. Finds of this type, but with a less legible inscription, of the same dimensions (3 x 0.7 x 0.13 cm) were found in graves 54,\textsuperscript{39} 273\textsuperscript{40} and 290,\textsuperscript{41} as well as outside the graves, two metres from the northern wall of the church.\textsuperscript{42} These graves contained the burials of adult women. The annular brooch from grave 54 was found between the last rib and the right arm; in grave 273 next to the lowest vertebra, immediately above the cross, while the brooch from grave 290 was found between the left pelvic bone and forearm. However, it is the specimen found outside the grave that has the best preserved inscription, while all the others have such worn-out letters that it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, to read them without analogous examples.

In his recent work, the Hungarian archaeologist Ottó Fogas\textsuperscript{43} dealt in detail with inscribed annular brooches found throughout the entire former Kingdom of Hungary, so I will present some of his ideas here. In his interpretation of this inscription, he underscores that the word “mer” is a middle German form of the word “mir” in today’s German language, while in the word “t” he sees an abbreviation of the word “tu/tui”, which he suspects to be an incorrect form of “du”. Therefore, his reading of the inscription, which I consider to be accurate, is: “Hilf Maria mir du”,\textsuperscript{44} or “(You) help me, Mary!”.

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Groups of this kind of annular brooches are numerous in the Carpathian Basin, and in the observed area it is also represented with a respectable number of specimens. One of the reasons for such a relatively high number, in comparison with other annular brooches, is in my opinion understandable and at least partly due to the attractiveness of inscribed brooches, which attract greater attention of researchers, leading to them being published relatively more often than some other assemblages. If we look at a broader area, most inscribed annular brooches come from Hungary, a total of twenty,\textsuperscript{45} which, it appears, is not merely a consequence of the level of research in individual countries, but indeed reflects their real distribution. Inscribed annular brooches can be found throughout Europe, especially in France, England, Scotland, and Germany and in the countries around the Baltic Sea. Hatházi established that they reached the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary from Western Europe, and that this fashion can be traced from the mid-13\textsuperscript{th} century until the beginning of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{46} I believe this is another consequence of the policy of rapprochement to the West, led by Hungarian kings for quite some time. In the case of the specimens from Hinga, which contain inscriptions in the old German language, we can easily surmise that they arrived together with the immigrant speakers of this language.\textsuperscript{47} Also, due to the

\textsuperscript{35} Šafarík, Sluman 1954, 20, 42.
\textsuperscript{36} Šafarík, Sluman 1954, 41.
\textsuperscript{37} Šafarík, Sluman 1954, 14.
\textsuperscript{38} Fogas 2009, 153–154, no. 20–23, 170, fig. 2: 6–9.
\textsuperscript{39} Fogas 2009: 152–153, no. 16, fig. 2: 10.
\textsuperscript{40} Fogas 2009: 153, br. 17, fig. 2: 11.
\textsuperscript{41} Fogas 2009: 153, br. 18, fig. 2: 12.
\textsuperscript{42} Fogas 2009: 153, br. 19, fig. 2: 13.
\textsuperscript{43} Fogas 2009.
\textsuperscript{44} Fogas, 2009, 157.
\textsuperscript{45} Fogas 2009.
\textsuperscript{46} Hatházi 2004a, 2004b; Fogas 2009, 147.
\textsuperscript{47} However, and this is especially the case in these areas, they should not be narrowly and exclusively associated with the German
inscriptions dedicated to Mary, we can agree with the assumption that they arrived in these lands by the mediation of various ecclesiastical orders that appeared in the 12th and 13th centuries, which cherished and spread the Marian cult. 48 The Hinga burials with annular brooches can most likely be dated to around the turn of the 15th century, while the actual objects were probably made around half a century earlier. 49

Based on the positions within the graves, and only a single find from Hinga was found near the diaphragm of the deceased person, and this too may have been dislocated, we unfortunately cannot discern the function of this assemblage. However, we are aided by analogies from the neighbouring countries. It was pointed out in the Hungarian literature that inscribed annular brooches were often found next to the pelvis of buried women, although there are also graves in which such brooches were found at positions which would suggest a role as fasteners of the upper cut of the garment, the neck cut, in other words, on the chest. It beggars belief, both due to the shape and the material, as well as their fragility, that they may have been used as belt buckles. Due to this, Fogas associates this phenomenon with the Christianisation of the Cumans and the lazyges, because many such objects were discovered in rich female burials of these peoples. He believes that these former “pagans” treated these new objects as apotropaic, and that their women wore them instead of previous amulets on their bag straps. 50 He finds the arguments for his assumption on ancient stone sculptures in the Cuman steppes, the so-called kamennaya baba sculptures (“stone women”). These sometimes depict, in addition to utilitarian objects such as combs, knives and the like, also amulets suspended on straps. 51 After Christianisation, this practice could no longer persist, so the previous amulets had to be replaced by something new, annular brooches with religious inscriptions. 52 For Cuman women, just as for many others in the European West, such inscriptions obviously had an apotropaic meaning! Here we ought to emphasise that, following the Mongol desolation, in order to replenish the population, it was in fact the Cumans that were brought to the immediate neighbourhood of Hinga. 53 It seems that we can now assume that in time a part of this population started to be buried at the cemetery in Hinga, if not earlier, then at least from the turn of the 15th century. Naturally, here we have to allow for the possibility that members of other ethnicities were also buried with these objects, because inscribed circular annular brooches can in no way be considered an exclusively Cuman phenomenon. 54

The remaining task is to determine who distributed these objects. Since the inscriptions, not only in Hinga but also elsewhere in the mediaeval Hungarian Kingdom, were written in German, often with Saxon features, 55 we can surmise the existence of a German monastery somewhere in the vicinity. The term Saxon refers to the Germans that, during the 12th and 13th centuries, arrived from different lands in Transylvania (Siebenbürger Sachsen) as accomplished miners. Some of them reached Serbia 56 by the second half of the 13th century, as well as Bosnia in the first quarter of the 14th century. However, the actual place of production ought to be sought in a bigger and stronger centre. In Fogas’s words, “the production of inscribed annular brooches can be conceived only in controlled circumstances, with royal permission”, due to a considerable “possibility of misuse, from counterfeiting seals to minting fake coins”. Fogas cites the Paris Regulations between 1260 and 1360, prohibiting coppersmiths from making inscribed objects such as finger rings, annular brooches and, particularly, signet rings. 57 Of course, the prohibitions themselves point to the existence of certain practices. Nevertheless, it is more likely that the centre of production should be sought in a bigger town, which, in Fogas’s opinion, might be the Romanian town of Sibiu (Hung. Nagyszeben), where a mint existed from at least the beginning of the 15th century. 58

I B Circular annular brooches without inscription

It would be logical to assume that there were more inscribed circular annular brooches than those that did not bear an inscription. However, this is not clear from the literature. In my opinion, such a situation may have a perfectly logical explanation; such objects are less

Military Order or the Hanseatic influence, as German scholars used to believe (Heindel 1986). This has already been pointed out by Fogas (2009, 147–148).

49 Fogas, 2009, 161–162.
50 Fogas, 2009, 161.
51 Fogas, 2009, 161, 172, fig. 4: 3–5.
52 Fogas, 2009, 161.
53 Шафарик, Шулям 1954, 5, 32.
54 Vargha 2015, 46.
56 Takács 2001, 34, with the cited literature.
57 Fogas, 2009, 162.
58 Fogas, 2009, 162.
“eloquent” and, therefore, also less interesting for the researchers of the mediaeval period so, consequently, they were published to a lesser extent. We may hope that in the near future this situation will change and that these objects, apparently less attractive, will find their way into the scholarly literature.59

In 1923, a silver cast annular brooch decorated with incised lines forming a triangular motif was found in Dobrica, a village in the South Banat District in Vojvodina (Pl. IB/6).60 Triangles along the outer edge were additionally decorated with incised oblique lines.61 It was found in a hoard of jewellery and coins, buried on the eve of the Mongol invasion in 1241.62 It is dated to the beginning of the 13th century.63 Its diameter is 2.4 cm.64

Annular brooches with a wide and flat frame decorated with a triangular motif are relatively frequently found in the Baltic area. The Stangenwald cemetery, from the 13th–14th century, near Rybachy (Germ. Rositten) on the Curonian Spit (Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia), excavated in the 1960s and 1970s,65 yielded five specimens decorated with a simple triangular ornament of incised lines.66 This motif reminded Biermann and his associates of stars or the Sun, and they dated such finds in the Baltics to the 14th and 15th centuries.67 The triangular motif on annular brooches is also found much nearer to us, as well as earlier, but much more elaborate. The Abony hoard ( Pest County, Hungary), discovered in 1931 and dated by coins to the time of the Mongol invasion, contained two circular silver annular brooches, one of which is decorated with a triangular motif consisting of alternating triangles whose longer sides interchangeably follow the outer and inner edge of the frame respectively, with their contacts forming a double zigzag line. There is a small circle next to the middle of each side of every triangle, making up interesting triangular motifs within each and every triangle.68

A bronze cast annular brooch with an undulated outer edge with six settings for inserting stone, glass, enamel or the like comes from an unknown site in Serbia (Pl. IB/7).69 Decoration of this type is typical for 14th-century brooches,70 however, it is already present on annular brooches found in hoards from the period of the Mongol invasion in 1241, for instance, a circular brooch from the Bajót hoard and a cordate brooch from the Nyáregyháza–Pusztapótharaszt hoard.71 The Serbian find is dated to the 13th century. Its diameter is 2.3 cm.72

The already mentioned Bajót hoard, dated by coins to the time of the Mongol invasion, yielded two circu-

lar annular brooches. One is made of gilded silver and is relatively well preserved. Its wide circular and flat frame featured four cylindrical settings for stones (one of which is missing), with an ornamental “coral” between each of them.73

Among the objects from the hoard of silver coins and jewellery found in 2006 in Dupljaja, a village in the South Banat district in Vojvodina, next to the foundations of a large structure at the site of Grad, there were also three annular brooches.74 Two specimens have a circular frame decorated with four small six-leaf flowers: one is made of silver and the other of gilded silver. The hoard is dated to the time of the Mongol invasion.75 Somewhat similar finds, decorated with stylised flowers with a different number of petals, were found in Hungarian hoards from the same period: Bajót76 and Karácsonyi77

An inscribed gold brooch from 14th-century England is another specimen that bears a slight resemblance.78

59 For instance, in the Hungarian literature, and it is precisely Hungary that yielded the highest number of annular brooches of different shapes. So far, only inscribed annular brooches (Fogas 2009) and rhombic and six-pointed star-shaped brooches (Oдор 1998) have attracted any greater attention of scholars.

60 It is kept at the National Museum in Belgrade (inv. no. 247).

61 Mлыопшын 1990, 178, no. 296.

62 Saria 1925, 92, fig. 10, 93; Радыш 2014, 111.

63 Saria 1925, 92, fig. 10, 93; Mлыопшын 1990, 178, no. 296; Радыш 2014, 111.

64 After Saria (Saria 1925, 93). Mлыопшын (1990, 178, no. 296) mentions that the outer diameter is 2.2 cm, while the interior one is 2.1 cm. This would mean that the frame is only half a millimetre wide, which is, clearly, not possible, so one of the cited dimensions cannot be accurate.

65 This is a narrow spit closing the Curonian Gulf. The site (Куришка коса) is located in the Russian part, in the Kaliningrad Oblast.


67 Biermann et al. 2011, 257.

68 Parádi 1975, 128, 130, fig. 7: 1.

69 Mлыопшын 1990, 179–180, no. 298; Радыш 2014, 112, fig. 2: 3. The object is kept at the National Museum in Belgrade (inv. no. 1321).

70 Vargha 2015, 46.

71 Vargha 2015, 46, note 214, with literature.

72 Mлыопшын 1990, 179.

73 Parádi 1975, 130, 132–133, fig. 9: 2.

74 Radičević 2013, 88. The objects are kept at the Vrсac Municipal Museum.

75 In the words of Dejan Radičević, a publication of the hoard is currently being prepared.

76 Parádi 1975, 130, 132–133, Fig. 9: 1.

77 Parádi 1975, 134, 136–137, Fig. 11: 3.

78 Lightbown 1992, 495, no. 15.
Even though this is one of the most numerous groups of annular brooches in the Carpathian Basin, in the observed area it is represented with only four specimens. It is difficult to reach sound conclusions based on such a small number of finds. Nevertheless, if we take a look at a broader territory, even such modest data fits into the broader picture, especially that painted by the finds from Hungary. Here too we have objects made of precious metals, discovered in hoards from the period of the Mongol invasion, as well as a cast bronze specimen, probably somewhat younger, whose features imitate those of more luxurious specimens. The scarcity of annular brooches from Serbia probably points to the peripheral role of this area compared to the Hungarian core, especially when it comes to the elite class of society as the probable bearers of this group of objects.

II Rhombic annular brooches

This is the most numerous group of annular brooches in the Carpathian Basin. Objects of this type are also referred to in the literature as rectangular, four-pointed, or diamond-shaped brooches. We can distinguish several types within this group, based on their shape and techniques of decoration or manufacture. So far they have received attention only in the Hungarian scholarly literature,\(^79\) while elsewhere they are only sporadically mentioned in the publications of assemblages from excavations or in museum catalogues.

Those consisting of a simple small rhombus, whose corners (still) do not have extended and thickened tips, and which are not decorated, are few. Another type has drawn-out points ending in knobs with a truncated base, below which there are several deeply incised lines. In one corner there is a perforated widening serving as the setting for a movable pin. The frame itself is sometimes undecorated and smooth, and it can also be decorated with punched circles.

Four cast bronze annular brooches were found in Novi Banovci (Srem District, Vojvodina), but without known circumstances of discovery. One brooch is rhombic, with the greatest width of 4.85 cm, with a frame around 3.34 cm wide, 1.81 cm thick and weighing 4.49 g. The bronze straight and sharp pin, 1.98 cm long, is also preserved. One of the corners was widened and perforated to serve as the setting for the pin (Pl. IIA/8).\(^80\)

Another similar brooch, made of silver, was recently discovered in Serbia, in the mentioned hoard from Dupljaja, dated to around 1241.\(^81\)

A similar brooch, whose frame is not decorated with punched circles either, was found in Sotin (Vukovar–Srijem County, Croatia), at the site Danube bank Vruckak.\(^82\) The Hungarian National Museum keeps another brooch from an unknown site, which Zsuzsa Lovag interprets as a find from the Kingdom of Hungary.\(^83\) It is dated to the second half of the 13th century. Many more rhombic annular brooches are known from the surrounding countries, however, these are either additionally decorated with punched circles along the frame, or are made of wire, due to which I have not listed them as analogies for the Novi Banovci brooch.

Unlike certain other groups of annular brooches, rhombic brooches were found in graves, based on the known data from Hungary and Croatia, exclusively on the chest of the deceased persons. This corroborates their function known from sculptures, where it is obvious that they were used for fastening the upper clothing items.

III Hexafoil annular brooch

A cast bronze gilded six-leaf annular brooch was found on the right bank of the Danube between Ritopek and the mouth of the Morava River (Belgrade City). The gilt is visible only in traces. There is a plastic rib on each joint of the arches. The pin is attached in a groove in the middle of one of the arches. It is largely preserved, although its tip is missing (Pl. IIB/9). The width of the brooch is 2 cm.\(^84\)

I am not familiar with analogous finds from the neighbouring countries of Serbia. In the Baltic region such brooches are common and reflect a widespread urban fashion of that area during the high and late Gothic period. For instance, the Stangenwald cemetery from

\(^79\) Ódor 1998.


\(^81\) Радићевић 2013, 88.

\(^82\) Иликић 2010, 389, no. 7, 393, T. I: 7.

\(^83\) Lovag 1999, 90–91, no. 233, 231, fig. 233. A higher quality photograph is available at: http://www.museumap.hu/record/-/record/display/manifestation/oai-aggregated-bib4160499/7f5ddf4c-4-23f0-4176-b233-2f6eda7a450/24/24/3/53/titleOrder/asc (30th December 2016).

\(^84\) Милошевић 1990, 180, no. 299; Радишић 2014, I11, 112, fig. 2: 2. The object is kept at the National Museum in Belgrade (inv. no. 1322).
the 13th–14th century yielded two such objects, one of which was found in a grave. They are dated from the 14th to the early 15th century.85

IV Six-pointed annular brooches

These are sometimes referred to in the literature as hexagonal brooches, however, in my opinion, this is a less appropriate name due to the fact that the joints of their tips are in most cases so elongated, even more so than in rhombic brooches, and pronounced, similar to eight-pointed brooches, that I find it more appropriate to call them six-pointed brooches. Both six- and eight-pointed annular brooches are often also called star or star-shaped brooches. In certain cases this is a justified appellation, however, not always. The tips of by far the largest number of such brooches end with a vegetal form, sometimes a lily or its imitation.

A luxurious example of such a brooch was found in Banatski Despotovac, near Zrenjanin (Middle Banat District, Vojvodina).86 This is a pronouncedly star-shaped six-pointed richly decorated annular brooch whose points end with stylised lilies.87 Between individual points, thin rods sprout from the joints of the points, almost equalising them in length.88 There were applied knobs on top of each and every point, as well as on their joints, four of which, based on the published photograph, are now missing.89

A somewhat similar specimen was found in Slavkovci, near Vinkovci (Vukovar–Srijem County, Croatia). A silver hoard of mediaeval jewellery of a rich person was ploughed up there as far back as 1893. The find was first reported by Josip Brunšmid,90 and then published more extensively by Željko Demo.91 Among other objects, the hoard contained a six-pointed silver cast annular brooch of high-quality workmanship. The hoard is dated to between the end of the 14th to the first or second third of the 15th century.92

A brooch that was actually not found, but which we know indirectly from a mould from Majša, is similar in certain details.93 To explain, a fragment of a mould for making annular brooches, a rhombic and a six-pointed one, was found in the neighbourhood of the settlement that existed from the end of the 13th century until the 16th century.94 János Gábor Ódor dated it to the middle third of the 14th century, based on the shapes of annular brooches.95 One of the two annular brooches that were cast in it was, therefore, hexagonal. Its tips were decorated with alternating lilies and knobs. It was 6.9 cm wide. The depression for the brooch has a triangular cross-section, on average 0.15–0.2 cm deep, and the cast object had to be additionally processed. The pin of the brooch was cast at the same time as the brooch itself.96 Ódor dates it to the middle third of the 14th century.97 The lily motif is often found on tips of six-pointed annular brooches in the Carpathian Basin. For instance, we encounter it on a specimen made of cast bronze found in the ruins of the Cistercian monastery in Pilisszeskenereszti (area of Budapest City, Hungary), dated to the first half of the 14th century.98 A well-preserved similar bronze specimen was found in a grave from the site Szabadbattyán–Somló (Fejér County, Hungary). Unfortunately, we know it only from a drawing,99 which reveals that the tips of the frame end with lilies so stylised they resemble a three-leaf clover. The object was found in a grave in association with a coin of King Bela IV (1235–1270).100 The specimen from Banatski Despotovac, in many respects, has a conceptual analogy in an eight-pointed, particularly luxurious annular brooch. It was found in a large assemblage at the site Kelebija / Kelebia–Négyes (Bacs–Kiskun County, Hungary), near Subotica, excavated in 1962.101 This is an eight-pointed annular brooch whose frame is composed of two intertwined rhombic annular brooches.

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85 Biermann et al. 2011, 259, fig. 29, 260–261 (with analogies from the Baltic region), 329, fig. 14: 5, 6.
86 In view of the quality of the workmanship, the eight-pointed annular brooch from Kelebia belongs in the same category. This will be discussed more extensively later in the text.
87 Hatházi 2005, 113, fig. 110.
88 Ódor even calls this object a “buckle with twelve points”, Ódor 1998, 128, note 9.
89 Unfortunately, I am not familiar with details about this object.
90 Brunšmid 1904.
91 Demo 2014, 96–112.
92 Demo 2014, 96.
93 To date, only a few workshops have been proven archaeologically, based precisely on the finds of moulds for their manufacture.
94 Ódor 1998, 123, 124, fig. 1, 125 fig. 2.
95 Ódor, 1998, 130.
96 Ódor 1998, 123, 124, fig. 1, 125, fig. 2, 129, fig. 8: 1.
98 Lovag 1999, 91, no. 236.
99 Ódor 1998, 129, fig. 8: 2, 132.
100 Brunšmid 1904, 91.
101 Kelebia is a frontier village, however, this site is located on the Hungarian side of the border.
with narrow frames,\textsuperscript{102} which have blooming tips which, together with the bud placed between them, make up a lily motif. Both the frame and the lily petals are decorated with an uninterrupted series of small punched circles. This specimen was obviously made according to the same idea as the annular brooch from Banatski Despotovac, however, with a number of different solutions: on the joints of the points and towards their tips there are applied knobs, but these are far smaller; from the joints of the points also grow shoots resembling buds (one is missing), but here they are only half the length of the points and do not end with applied knobs, but are flattened out. The pin is set in a similar way, laid in a hole on the frame below one of the tips, but it is thinner and carries a rather large flat shield with a coat of arms.\textsuperscript{103} The objects from Kelebia are attributed to one of the Cuman clans settled in the Tisza river basin during the 14\textsuperscript{th} and the first half of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century. It was established to represent a family treasure collected over a longer period.\textsuperscript{104} The act of hiding the treasure is dated to the end of the 14\textsuperscript{th} or the first third of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century, while the objects span the period from the last decades of the 13\textsuperscript{th} century until the end of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{105} Judith H. Kolba dated the find to the end of the 13\textsuperscript{th} century,\textsuperscript{106} while Mihály Köhegyi dated it to the first third of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{107}

The tips of the points on many six-pointed annular brooches have ends so stylised that the lily motif can only very rarely be discerned, and mostly based on analogies. The shapes of these endings bear a greater resemblance to leaves or a trefoil of sorts. One such specimen is a cast bronze object from a similar specimen from this site is kept at the same museum.\textsuperscript{110} Another fragment of a similar specimen from this site is kept at the same museum.\textsuperscript{110}

The annular brooch from \textit{Arača} in the Banat region, near Novi Bečej (Middle Banat District, Vojvodina), famous for its Romanesque-Gothic basilica, found outside of a grave between the western wall of the basilica and the tower,\textsuperscript{111} can be freely called a \textbf{star-shaped six-pointed} annular brooch. This is a cast and flattened bronze brooch, with a “plate-shaped” frame, whose points are decorated with an alternating incised vegetal (?) motif and small punched circles, ending with a vegetal, trefoil motif on which there are three circular depressions (Pl. IIC/11).\textsuperscript{112} It is 6.8 cm wide, while the frame is 0.12 cm thick at the thickest point.\textsuperscript{113} Instead of in a corner of the frame, the setting for the flat pin, which is also preserved, is located in the middle.

The annular brooch depicted on a tombstone in \textit{Pannonhalma} (Győr-Moson-Sopron County), featuring the family coat of arms of László Csetsur, an abbot from Pannonhalma (†1372), with an annular brooch in the shape of a six-pointed star with stylised lilies on the ends, is similar to the specimen from \textit{Arača} in its shape and the position of the pin, as well as in the ends of the tips (even though the lateral shoots of the trefoils on

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{102} A partial similarity to the specimen from Kelebia, regarding the concept of the frame with two intertwined rhombic annular brooches, is exhibited by a cast bronze specimen of unknown origin, kept at the Hungarian National Museum. Its tips also feature vegetal motifs, but not lilies. Lovag mentions a Hungarian origin and dates it to the first half of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, noting that it shows no traces of use, due to which she allows for the possibility that this is a modern-period cast of the original object (Lovag 1999, 91, note 237, 231, fig. 237).
\item \textsuperscript{103} Hatházi 2005, 171, tab. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Tóth 1972, 219.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Hatházi 2005, 172; Demo 2014, 111.
\item \textsuperscript{106} Kolba 1985, 54.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Köhegyi 1972, 208.
\item \textsuperscript{108} Cranjeon 1989, 61, 62, cat. no. 331.
\item \textsuperscript{109} Kept at the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb (inv. no. S-1720).
\item \textsuperscript{110} This find still awaits publication. The same collection contains another two fragments of similar specimens. Since the site of their discovery is unknown, save for the justified assumption that they come from Slavonia or Srijem, they have not been included in the corpus of annular brooches discovered in the territory of Vojvodina.
\item \textsuperscript{111} The basilica was built next to the parish church during the second quarter of the 13\textsuperscript{th} century, during the reign of Bela IV, and it is associated with the activity of the Benedictines (Cranjeon 2004, 125). Towards the end of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century, probably following the signing of the 1483 peace agreement between Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, it was most likely the Franciscans that built a fortified monastery with a keep next to the basilica. The burials at the cemetery started even before the building of the parish church and later continued next to it and still later next to the basilica. It is understandable that the construction of the parish church, basilica and the monastery considerably damaged and dislocated the graves buried in that area (Cranjeon 2004, 127).
\item \textsuperscript{112} The find is kept at the Museum of Vojvodina (field inv. no. T. I. 9/75).
\end{itemize}
the point tips are less pronounced).\textsuperscript{114} We encounter great similarities at several other sites. At \textit{Perkáta Kőhalmi dűlő}, where a church with a cemetery was excavated between 1986 and 1988, a bronze six-pointed annular brooch was found in a small bowl in grave 273. Its frame features rather sloppily executed hexagonal rosettes between individual points. The ends of the points were expanded into, probably, vegetal endings with three circular depressions. If these indeed depict schematised lilies,\textsuperscript{115} then they were schematised beyond recognition.\textsuperscript{116} The grave has been dated by a denar of Louis I of Anjou (1342–1382), found in the thorax area.\textsuperscript{117} Similar, but much less well preserved specimens were found at \textit{Jászdózsa–Négyzállás}, a cemetery used from the mid-13th century until the final third of the 15th century, ingrave 47 next to the lowest rib;\textsuperscript{118} also, in the vicinity of Kecskemét, in a small bowl from a grave;\textsuperscript{119} at the site of \textit{Chl’aba} (Hung. \textit{Helemba}) in Slovakia, in a house dated to the 15th century.\textsuperscript{120} The latter find ends with a trefoil (by which it closely resembles the specimen from \textit{Perkáta}, but also, as we shall see, to the eight-pointed star-shaped annular brooch from \textit{Hinga}). The frame is decorated with punched six-pointed rosettes (again like the specimen from \textit{Perkáta}), however, they are not positioned between the points but right in their midst. In addition to the outer edge, the inner edge of the frame also forms a six-pointed star (like the specimen from \textit{Arača} and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the specimen from \textit{Perkáta}). The hole for the pin, which is missing, is located on the frame, between two points (like the specimen from \textit{Arača} and the one depicted on the tombstone in \textit{Pannonhalma}).\textsuperscript{121}

* * *

Based on the scant data on the few annular brooches of this group, we can again reach conclusions only by looking at the broader geographic context. In the Carpathian Basin, brooches of this type are almost always made of bronze, discovered at sites in diverse contexts: mostly in graves, but also in hoards, among the ruins of a monastery and, in two cases, only indirectly from a mould and from a depiction on a sculpture respectively.\textsuperscript{122} Among the brooches found in graves, only in three cases do we know their position in the grave: two were found in the pelvic area, and one next to the lowest rib. Therefore, we can conclude that this group of brooches could conceivably have been worn somewhere in the belt area, which is in contrast with depictions known from sculptures in Western Europe.\textsuperscript{122}

V Six-pointed annular brooches with doubly connected points

This group is in fact a subgroup of six-pointed annular brooches, and the development of the form will be nicely shown on the specimens from \textit{Arača}. Ödor believes that this may have happened as a result of the merging of the lily-shaped tips during casting,\textsuperscript{123} but I find this somewhat implausible. I would rather say that in this way the makers wanted to improve the hardness and resilience of the objects. Nevertheless, due to the mostly different positions within the graves, pointing to a different function played by these brooches compared with the previously mentioned ones, they were distinguished as a separate group.

When it comes to the development of the form, it comes most to the fore in the specimens from \textit{Arača}, especially on the \textit{better preserved specimen}. This is a cast bronze annular brooch, discovered next to the left elbow in adult female grave 4, whose thoracic bones are unfortunately dislocated, so it may have had the usual function of an annular brooch. This is basically a case of a six-pointed annular brooch with curved points, whose joints feature decorations resembling rosettes, formed with punched circles, from which large stylised lilies spring out, separated from one another by only a few millimetres. However, they were connected during casting, and this joint has never been removed. Thus, the lilies themselves form another “ring”. The iron pin is only partially preserved (Pl. IIIA/12). It is 3.8 cm wide.\textsuperscript{124}

The second find from \textit{Arača} is similar, but much less well preserved, perhaps also less well made. It was found in the child’s grave 91, between the chest and the right elbow. The pin is not preserved. It is 3.5 cm

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{114} Kovács 1973, 84, 85, fig. 26.
  \item \textsuperscript{115} Ödor 1998, 128.
  \item \textsuperscript{116} That this is not a case of worn-out ends we can conclude especially if we look at the almost identical endings of the points on the eight-pointed brooch from Hinga, later in the text.
  \item \textsuperscript{117} Ödor 1998, 126, fig. 4: 2, 131, no. 5.
  \item \textsuperscript{118} Ödor 1998, 129, fig. 8: 5, 130, no. 2.
  \item \textsuperscript{119} Ödor 1998, 129, fig. 8: 4, 130–131, no. 3; the text inaccurately mentions Fig. 7: 4.
  \item \textsuperscript{120} Ödor 1998, 129, fig. 8: 7, 130, no. 1.
  \item \textsuperscript{121} Ödor 1998.
  \item \textsuperscript{122} Ödor 1998, 128.
  \item \textsuperscript{123} Ödor 1998, 128.
  \item \textsuperscript{124} Cramojet 2004, 35, 57, T. III: cat. no. 18. The object is kept at the Museum of Vojvodina (inv. no. AS 26A).
\end{itemize}
wide, that is, just a little bit smaller, and its thickness is 0.1 cm.\textsuperscript{125}

The excavation of a small village church with an accompanying cemetery at \textit{Kameniti hat} in Subotica (North Bačka District, Vojvodina) yielded two annular brooches that resemble each other.\textsuperscript{126} The diameter of both finds is 3.8 cm. The first, made of silver, was found in 2001, in grave 52 next to the right clavicle.\textsuperscript{127} The pin is not preserved (Pl. IIIA/13). Its frame looks like, for instance, the frame of the specimen from \textit{Novi Banovci}, however, inscribed around the frame there is a circle connecting all the point tips.

The other annular brooch from the same site was found in the 2003 excavation, in sondage III. This one is made of bronze, with circular ornaments that are barely visible on the published drawing, but it has a preserved pin (Pl. IIIA/14).\textsuperscript{128} The cemetery has been dated, by silver coins of Charles Robert and Louis I of Anjou, from the end of the 13\textsuperscript{th} until the second third of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, and it is attributed to the Cuman immigrants in the wake of the Mongol invasion.\textsuperscript{129}

A very similar find to the first mentioned specimen from \textit{Kameniti hat} comes from \textit{Aparhant} (Tolna County, Hungary).\textsuperscript{130} Interestingly, it is also decorated with punched circles, but only on the segment that would be decorated on six-pointed annular brooches. It looks like a semi-product, as if the tips of the points were supposed to be processed at a later date, while the surplus part of the outer hoop, the undecorated parts, was removed. Nevertheless, this was obviously not done.

\textit{Hinga} also yielded a cast bronze annular brooch, a special variant of a six-pointed brooch, with points so extremely curved that each forms a semicircular arch that extends and forms a whole circle together with the neighbouring arch. Shaped in this way, it looks like six connected circles on whose outer joints there are small protrusions, the tips of the points, decorated with impressed six-foil flowers, while the interspace in the middle of the brooch looks like a six-pointed star (Pl. IIIA/15). It is 4.95–5.43 cm wide and has a pin attached to the outer edge of one of the circles, however, this part is missing. Unfortunately, it was found outside a grave.\textsuperscript{131}

In the literature we can find extremely similar annular brooches. One such specimen was found in \textit{Baia} in Romania,\textsuperscript{132} while two were found in 14\textsuperscript{th}-century graves in Hungary.\textsuperscript{133} The latter, it seems, were found in the pelvic area, that is, around the belt. Based on the fact that no other ornaments were found next to the belt, apart from these brooches, Szabó assumes that, at that time, they did not use leather straps with metal plates and belts with interlaced metal threads, but belts sewn from silk and cloth, and such brooches would, in that case, serve as buckles.\textsuperscript{134} Two other similar specimens were observed at the Baltic cemetery of \textit{Stangenwald}. In the Baltic region, such objects are dated from the 14\textsuperscript{th} to the 16\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{135} There are two other similar finds from the same site, but these are eight-pointed and have a circular interior edge of the frame, so what in \textit{Hinga} looks like circles, at that site looks like arcades.\textsuperscript{136}

\* \* \*

This subgroup of annular brooches is very interesting because, out of eight objects from the Carpathian Basin known to me, as many as five were found in Vojvodina. We can find more numerous analogies at Baia in Romania, on the other side of the Carpathians, and in the Baltics. As a probable reason for this kind of distribution, we may single out German religious orders, as well as the Teutonic Order, which might also have been the key distributors of this type of find.

Another interesting thing has to do with the position of the brooches of this type in graves, since they most often appear somewhere around the chest of the deceased person, which points to a probable different function in the costume compared with six-pointed annular brooches whose points were not additionally connected.

\section*{VI Eight-pointed star-shaped annular brooches}

In addition to different previously presented objects, \textit{Hinga} yielded a cast bronze eight-pointed star-shaped annular brooch. It was found below the thorax, that is,
“in the area of the abdomen” of the deceased person in grave 138. The inner edge of the frame is shaped like a truncated eight-pointed star, although one point is missing at the position of the hole where the missing pin should have been set. The points of the star have vegetal endings (Stanojev calls them cordate extensions), each with three circular depressions, like, for instance, a six-pointed annular brooch from Perkát. It is 5.8–6.2 cm wide. The grave was dated by a coin of King Louis the Great (1342–1382) found on the mandible. However, what singles this specimen out are the four letters “K” impressed in a depressed field on every other point of the star (Pl. III B/16). Therefore, we can also include this find among inscribed annular brooches, but, for the time being, without realistically hoping to decipher the meaning of the inscription.141

An almost identical specimen, although with two broken-off tips, was found in Hungary. Szabó includes it among the finds from 14th-century graves, found on the pelvis, which he interprets the same way as in the case of six-pointed annular brooches with doubly connected points.143

Novi Banovci also yielded an eight-pointed star-shaped brooch whose frame has a circular interior edge.144

OBJECTS RESEMBLING ANNULAR BROOCHES FROM THE BALKAN AREA OF SERBIA

Finally, I mention certain finds that resemble annular brooches, but which, in my opinion, are not in fact brooches.

To start with, these are round annular buckles with a very wide frame and a small central opening, made of cast bronze, which, instead of a moveable pin, have a fixed bar within the frame. Vinča, on the right bank of the Danube (Belgrade City), yielded three such finds (Pl. IV/17–19).145 while one was found in Kruševac (Rasina District), 3.2 cm in diameter (Pl. IV/20),146 and at Davidovac–Gradiste near Vranje (Pčinja District), likewise with a diameter of 3.2 cm, dated to the 14th–15th century.147 All these objects resemble each other, their frames are decorated with vegetal ornaments, and only one among them has a rectangular central opening instead of a circular one, which appears to have been perforated at a later date, judging by the photograph, only on this specimen the interior edge is not reinforced with a slight plastic thickening. It seems that the transverse bar served for passing some kind of light textile, which means that they do not belong to the annular brooches that are the subject of this paper. The chance find from Davidovac, in particular, suggests this to be the case, at least based on the published photograph, on which wearing traces appear to be discernible on most of the central bar. Even though we cannot exclude this possibility, I do not believe that these objects had a moveable pin on the central bar, like double loop annular buckles, because, at least based on the photographs, these bars do not appear to be sufficiently hard and robust and they differ from belt buckles in the ratio of the outer and inner diameters. Instead of this, might it be possible that some of these objects were worn sewn on the clothes? I find an argument for this assumption in a tiny perforation visible on a photograph of one of the finds from Vinča. Similar small perforations on annular brooches are often found in the literature, and in many cases it is obvious that they were perforated at a later date.

Besides the mentioned “buckles”, another object that resembles annular brooches is a ring from a habitation horizon at the site of Rudine, at the foot of Braničevski Grad, near Kostolac in the Danube area of Serbia (Braničevski District), dated to the 12th century.

137 The sex of the deceased person could not be ascertained (Шафарик, Шулман 1954, 26), however, judging by the bronze applications found on the forehead, one of which contained a lily motif, I suppose this was a young female.
138 Шафарик, Шулман 1954, 26, 42; Станојев 1989, 79, 84, cat. no. 434.
139 Ődor 1998, 126, Fig. 4: 2, 131, no. 5.
140 Шафарик, Шулман 1954, 26.
141 Шафарик, Шулман 1954, 26, 30, Tab. VII: 2.
142 Szabó 1938, 48, fig. 204, 49.
143 Unfortunately, in his work he does not offer any detailed information about individual objects.
144 The find is not published. It is kept at the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb.
145 Михошевић 1990, 180–181, no. 300–302; Радишћ 2014, 113. The finds from Vinča are kept at the National Museum in Belgrade (inv. no. 892, 2964 and 3196).
146 Берић et al. 2004, 15, 29, no. 185; Радишћ 2014, 113. The find is kept in the Collection of Medieval Applied Art of the National Museum in Krusevac (inv. no. 2527).
147 Митровић 2010, 102, br. 255; Радишћ 2014, 113. The find is kept at the National Museum in Vranje.
148 Motifs of blooming lilies can be discerned on the published photograph, whose quality is quite low.
150 Whitehead 1996, 44–45.
### Annular Brooches from the 13th and 14th Century from Vojvodina (197–222)

#### Table 1. Table view of selected properties of annular brooches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>skupina prstenastih broseva / Annular brooch types</th>
<th>br. / no.</th>
<th>lokalitet / site</th>
<th>materijal / material</th>
<th>promjer / size</th>
<th>kontekst / context</th>
<th>položaj u grobu / position in grave</th>
<th>datacija / dating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-A Okrugli s natpisom / Round inscribed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dobrica</td>
<td>srebro / silver</td>
<td>2,4</td>
<td>ostava / hoard</td>
<td>do 1241. / until 1241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Srbija – nep. nalazište / unknown site</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>2,3</td>
<td></td>
<td>XIII. st. / 13th c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dupljaja</td>
<td>pozlaćeno srebro / gilt silver</td>
<td>ostava / hoard</td>
<td></td>
<td>do 1241. / until 1241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dupljaja</td>
<td>srebro / silver</td>
<td></td>
<td>ostava / hoard</td>
<td>do 1241. / until 1241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Rombični / Rhombic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Novi Banovci</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>4,9</td>
<td></td>
<td>do 1241. / until 1241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dupljaja</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td></td>
<td>do 1241. / until 1241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Šesterolinski / Hexfoil</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>desna obala Dunava</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Banatski Despotovac</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Šesterokrakli / Six-pointed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Novi Banovci</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Arača</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>6,8</td>
<td>izvan groba / outside of the grave</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arača</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>D. grob / child's grave</td>
<td>1. lakat (disloc.? / l. elbow (disloc.?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Šesterokrakli dvostruko spojenih krakova / Six-pointed with double-connected arms</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kameni hat</td>
<td>srebro / silver</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>grob / grave</td>
<td>4. ključna kost / r. clavicle</td>
<td>kraj XIII. – 2. pol. XIV. / end of 13th – 2nd half of 14th c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kameni hat</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>izvan groba / outside of the grave</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hinga</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>5,4</td>
<td>izvan groba / outside of the grave</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Osmerokrakli zvjez dopolnički / Eight-pointed star-shaped</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hinga</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>6,2</td>
<td>Ž. grob / abdomen</td>
<td>2. pol. – kraj XIV. / 2nd half – end of 14th c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Novi Banovci</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 2. Table view of selected properties of objects resembling annular brooches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>skupina nalaza / types</th>
<th>br. / no.</th>
<th>lokalitet / site</th>
<th>materijal / material</th>
<th>promjer / size</th>
<th>kontekst / context</th>
<th>datacija / dating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>broševima slični nalazi / Objects resembling brooches</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vinča</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>slučajni / chance</td>
<td>XIV. – XV. / 14th – 15th c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vinča</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>slučajni / chance</td>
<td>XIV. – XV. / 14th – 15th c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Krnuševac</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>utvrda / fort</td>
<td>srednji vijek / Middle Ages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Davidovac-Gradiste</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>slučajni / chance</td>
<td>XIV. – XV. / 14th – 15th c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rudine</td>
<td>bronca / bronze</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>naselje / settlement</td>
<td>XII.-poč. XIII. / 12th – beginning of 13th c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and the first decades of the 13th century. The frame of the ring is decorated with incised lines forming a triangular motif, while the exterior triangles are additionally decorated with punched dots. The frame has a triangular cross-section, however, it is not straight but slanted, and its inner edge is raised, in relation to the outer edge, by around 45°. Radić included this object among circular annular brooches (round buckles), pointing out that it is missing the pin. However, the frame is open in one place and on the drawing we cannot discern any place for the setting of the pin, which leads me to conclude that this is a ring, whose function must remain unclear.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON ANNULAR BROOCHES IN THE OBSERVED AREA

The picture we presented regarding the known annular brooches in the observed area is not final; it comprises only those finds that were available to the author, and it will certainly be complemented in the future. In spite of all its limitations, I hope its outlines are sufficiently credible to allow me to put forward certain conclusions. The paper presents five circular annular brooches with an inscription, and four without one; two rhombic brooches; a six-foil brooch; four six-pointed ones, five six-pointed brooches with doubly connected points and two eight-pointed annular brooches, a total of twenty-three specimens (T. 1). I have also provided a short review of the objects that resemble annular brooches, found in Serbia south of the Sava and Danube rivers – a total of six (T. 2).

In the European literature, annular brooches are dated based on the archaeological context, if they were found in a closed and narrowly dated archaeological context. If this was not the case, they are dated based on typological and stylistic features. In the latter case they are generally dated rather broadly, within one or even two centuries. However, even when they were discovered in a well-dated archaeological context, caution is necessary when it comes to distinguishing the date the objects were made from the date of the context in which they were found. It has been observed that certain types of annular brooches, as well as some other objects, are found in settlements and hoards from the time of the Mongol invasion into this part of Europe, but when it comes to graves, we find them in larger numbers only from the 14th century. In other words, we ought to resist jumping to conclusions regarding chronological parallels between similar finds from different contexts. Dates have already been put forward in the consulted literature for some of the annular brooches presented in this paper, but not for all. Among the dated specimens, the oldest are the silver annular brooches from Dobrica and from Dupljaja, found in hoards from the time of the Mongol invasion. Annular brooches from cemeteries (Kameni hat, Hingga, Arača), both inside and outside grave contexts, are dated mainly to the 14th century. If we compare this with the situation in Hungary, we can conclude that they are mostly synchronous. There, too, as already stated, annular brooches made of precious metals had been known prior to the Mongol incursion into these lands, primarily from hoards, while bronze specimens appear in the mid-14th century, arriving in graves towards the end of that century or at the beginning of the next. The reason the brooches made of precious metals are so rarely found in graves most likely lies in their high value, due to which, so we may surmise, they were treasured and passed down through generations.

Even though it is emphasised in European literature that annular brooches were worn by members of both sexes, here, just as in Hungary, they are found almost exclusively in female graves (only a single brooch was found in a child’s grave – I refer, of course, only to burials whose sex has been determined and published). Also, they are often not found on the chest, as suggested by Western European sculptures, but in the pelvic or abdominal area. This would appear to corroborate the assumption that the local population in these lands (Cumans, Iazyges, as well as others) wore annular brooches in a different way than was the case in the West. It also appears that, here, another important function of these brooches was additionally pronounced, the apotropaic one!

It suffices to look at the map (Map 1) to see that almost all the annular brooches from the territory of Serbia were found in present-day Vojvodina. The only exception is the specimen discovered between Ritopek

151 Milojević 1990, 180, no. 301.
152 Popović, Ivančević 1988, 139, fig. 10: 11. The find is kept at the National Museum in Požarevac.
154 Popović, Ivančević 1988:140.
155 Vargha 2015, 48, 62.
156 Similar to the luxurious belts, which were not placed in graves but were inherited as symbols of nobility (Radić 2014, 122).
and the mouth of the Morava River, on the right bank of the Danube, while the circular annular brooch with depressions for inserting gemstones or similar objects comes from an unknown site. This is an exceptionally important fact because Vojvodina, at that time, formed part of the Kingdom of Hungary, so this area was, naturally, more exposed to Western influence. However, at that time Vojvodina was populated by different ethnicities, including those that came from the West, as well as those that arrived from the East. Due to its position on the periphery of the Hungarian Kingdom, similar to the position of the present-day Croatian region of Slavonia, we may consider it a contact zone of different influences, including cultural ones. All of this is clearly revealed by the distribution map of annular brooches. The fact that also in the other areas south of the Danube and Sava rivers similar objects are almost entirely missing fits well into this picture: Croatia, south of the Sava, yielded only one such object;\textsuperscript{157} I know of only one specimen from Slovenia\textsuperscript{158} and Montenegro,\textsuperscript{159} while I do not know of a single similar specimen from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria or Macedonia. Therefore, there is a complete lack of precisely those large and inexpensive annular brooches from the mentioned areas,\textsuperscript{160} while even those more luxurious ones appear only exceptionally. For some of these countries we cannot say that they did not have developed connections with Western European areas, so the “exposure to Western influence” cannot be the only criterion when pondering the distribution of annular brooches.

Milica Radi\v{s}i\v{c} concluded, based on the distribution of annular brooches, that the western fashion to which these objects belong was obviously not adopted by the local population in mediaeval Serbia, with the exception of the elite social class.\textsuperscript{161} On the other hand, she associates the appearance of circular annular brooches in the Danube basin with foreign immigrants and the “influence of the western Catholic church in the newly conquered, southern areas of the Hungarian Kingdom”, for instance with the Dominican missionary centre in Vr\v{s}ac.\textsuperscript{162} However, there were certainly also other factors that contributed to the spread of the fashion of wearing annular brooches in the southern

\textsuperscript{157} The mentioned silver annular brooch from Gora near Petrinja, Croatia, north of the Sava, yielded two circular annular brooches without inscription in Ivanec (for the excavation of the cemetery see: Belaj 2009; Belaj, Sirovica 2010; 2011; 2012b); three rhombic brooches were found in Sotin (Tomić 2009, 236, fig. 8, 3; Ilkić 2010, 386, 389–390, no. 7, 8, 393, T. I, 7, 8) and at Torcic–Cirkviše (Krznar 2015, 57, fig. 10; the other two specimens were found in 2015 and 2016 and still await publication); two were found at Kliskovac, near Suhiropolje (Tomić, Jelinčić 2011, 2012, fig. 212 and 213, 138, cat. no. 23 and 36, 140, 142, T. 2; PN 31 and 57), while one comes from Bentez, near Beketinci (Minichreiter, Marković 2013, 306, 330, 331, Tabla 58, 6) and at the Paka fort near Novi Marof (Simek 2017, fig. 15). The hoard from Slakovci, near Vinkovci, contains a six-pointed annular brooch (Brumisid 1904; Demo 2014, 96–112), while an eight-pointed star-shaped brooch was found in Sotin (Ilkić 2010, 386, 389, no. 6, 393, T. I, 6). A paper that will present them all together is currently in preparation.

\textsuperscript{158} This find, we are dealing with a gilt bronze rhombic annular brooch with applied glass knobs, also has more luxurious workmanship (Pleterski, Belak 2002, fig. 9, 252, 272, 299, T. 5, 33).

\textsuperscript{159} This is a well-known and often published luxuriously decorated cast golden annular brooch with a proprietorial inscription, which casts it as a “buckle of Peter, Grand Duke of Hum”, discovered as far back as the end of the 19th century in Budimlja, near Berane. It is incomparable with the annular brooches presented in this paper in every way. For a more detailed analysis of the brooch see: Belaj 2017, with the relevant literature.

\textsuperscript{160} Fogas believes that the owners of cast bronze annular brooches probably belonged to the upper class, although not exactly nobility (Fogas 2009, 156).

\textsuperscript{161} Радишши 2014, 111, 123.

\textsuperscript{162} Бујони 2013, 305; Радишши 2014, 120.
Pannonian areas. For instance, military orders: the annular brooch from Gora near Petrinja arrived there with the Knights Templar, while the one from Ivaneč, in the Hrvatsko Zagorje region, came with the Knights Hospitaller. Those from the Baltic presumably came with the Teutonic Knights (German military order),\(^{163}\) although there it was obviously also accepted by the local Prussian population. In the Baltics we also have to reckon with the important role of the Hansa and its commercial channels. We also encounter this type of find by following the movements of the Saxons to the borders of today’s Moldavia (Baia), however, I do not know whether the Saxons transferred this fashion to the domicile population in the same way as the Teutonic Knights appear to have done in the Baltics.

It really seems unusual and interesting that the fashion of wearing annular brooches was not more widely accepted by the local population, at least in the case of the higher social classes. Naturally, this picture will perhaps change as research gains in intensity and late mediaeval cemeteries and settlements are increasingly published. However, based on the present knowledge, I do not believe there will be any substantial changes.

It is interesting that annular brooches enjoyed great popularity among the Cumans and the Iazyges. Also of interest is Fogas’s interpretation that this happened because these peoples used these brooches, especially the inscribed ones, which they acquired by the mediation of the Franciscan missionaries, to supplement various “pagan” amulets they had previously worn during their pre-Christian period. In discussing this, Fogas mentions inscribed annular brooches. Indeed, such brooches were found in Vojvodina only at the Hinga cemetery, and we have seen that ethnic Cumans were present in its immediate neighbourhood. The Cumans arrived in the Hungarian Kingdom towards the end of the 11th century, while they settled there in larger numbers for the first time probably in 1239.\(^{164}\) They reached the observed areas in larger numbers for the first time before the Mongol invasion, in the spring of 1241, which is mentioned in the Ravanica charter by Duke Lazar Hrebeljanovic.\(^{165}\) There is little information in the sources regarding their population, but certain toponyms preserve their memory. We are interested in their presence in these lands, a testimony to which is found in the name of the Kumane village in the Novi Bečej municipality, very close to Arača. The aforementioned charter from 1241 also mentions the villages Kumanija in the Mačva region, Koumani near Braničevó and Drmano (from the Cuman personal name Drman), near Kostolac.\(^{166}\) We have already seen that the literature attributes to them the Kameni hat cemetery, and we have surmised that some of them were also buried at the cemetery in Hinga.

Another interesting thing to do is to look at the distribution of the “objects resembling annular brooches” in the territory of Serbia. Vinča (which yielded three such objects) and Rudine are located near the Danube, but on the southern, Balkan side, while Kruševac is situated in central Serbia, and Davidovac in southern Serbia. Not one such object that I know of was found in Vojvodina. In other words, the distribution areas of these finds and annular brooches do not overlap in the least. Can we assume, based on this, that these were a variant of sorts of annular brooches, which then, in such an indirect way, eventually found their way into the fashion of the local population? What is more, perhaps these are, after all, local products – because, it seems, they have no direct analogies in the West – modelled on the Western fashion, which is reflected in their very shape and in the lily motif. It is important to stress that these finds, according to current interpretations, are dated somewhat later, to the 14th and 15th centuries.

I hope that this paper shows that annular brooches were an unjustly neglected category of finds, because these are very interesting objects whose various features help us to decipher different questions pertaining to certain segments of mediaeval society. The multifaceted nature of their symbolism is most readily discernable from the inscriptions present on them, but it is also sometimes hidden in the choice of the materials, shapes and concepts, together with a number of other things that have not even been touched upon in this paper. A lot can be gleaned from the study of their features, as well as their distribution. Therefore, I hope that they will be awarded greater attention in the future.

***

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\(^{163}\) Biermann et al. 2011, 215.

\(^{164}\) Sardelić 2015, 261, with literature.

\(^{165}\) Узелаш 2009, 15, with literature.

\(^{166}\) Узелаш 2009, 15.
Nitić and Jelena Čeriman (National Museum in Belgrade), Lidija Balj, MSc (Museum of Vojvodina) and Marin Bugar (National Museum in Kruševac) for the photographs of the finds, and Dejan Radičević, PhD (Department of Archaeology, Philosophical Faculty, University in Belgrade) for information about the finds from Dupljaja and for the insight into their photographs; Milica Radišić (Archaeological Institute, Belgrade), Neda Dimovski, Mária Vargha (Institut für Geschichte, Universität Wien), Tibor Ákos Rácz (Ferenczy Múzeum, Szentendre), Andrej Farcas (Budapesti Történeti Múzeum), Anja Ragolić, PhD (Institut za arheologijo, Ljubljana) and many other colleagues who helped me in the search for the finds and literature. I am most grateful to my colleague Milica Radišić for her critical reading of the manuscript and for all manner of selfless help.

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1988, 125–179. (M. Popović, V. Ivanisević, Grad Braničevo u srednjem veku, Starinar XXXIX 1988, 125–179.)


Saria 1925 – B. Saria, Iz numizmatičke zbirke Narodnog muzeja u Beogradu (V. Ostava frizatskog novca iz Dobrice u Banatu), Starinar 3 1925, 91–97.


Prstenasti broševi sastoje se od okvira i pomične igle, koja ima definirano ležište. Javljaju se u različitim oblicima. Nosili su se diljem Europe od XII. do XV. vijeka, a najveću popularnost imali su tijekom XIII. i XIV. stoljeća. Uglavnom su zakapali prorez na tunici ispod vrata, ali oni robusniji i plaštne na jednom ili oba ramena, no nalazeni su i u predjelu zdjelica i trbuhâ po kojnikâ. Izrađivani su od različitih materijala, i to u različitim centrima diljem Europe.

Nalazi prstenastih broševa iz Vojvodine

Na promatranom području nađeni su različiti tipovi prstenastih broševa: pet okruglih s natpisom te četiri bez natpisa, dva rombična, jedan šesterokrakih i još njih pet kojima su krakovi dodatno spojeni te dva osmerokraka prstenasta broša – sve ukupno dvadeset i tri nalaza. Osim njih, poznati su i nalazi sličnih broševa, koji imaju nepomičnu prečku unutar okvira – njih pet, te jedna broša slična karika. S obzirom na materijal od kojeg su izrađeni razlikujemo luksuznije primjerke izrađene od plemenitih metala, uglavnom nalažene u ostavama, te – mnogo češće – one izrađene od neplemenitih metala, koji su samim time bili pristupačniji čim društenim slojevima i uglavnom su nalaženi u grobovima.

Okrugli prstenasti broševi dijеле se prema tome nose li na sebi natpis ili ne. Okrugli prstenasti broševi s natpisom podijeljeni su u dva tipa – prema vrsti natpisa na njima.


Rombični prstenasti broševi neukrašenih okvira te naređenih vrhova koji završavaju kuglicama pronađeni su u Novim Banovcima te u ostavi iz Dupljaje. Ova skupina broševa – prema poznatim analogijama iz Mađarske i Hrvatske – nalazena je u grobovima isključivo na prisima pokojnika.

Šesterokrak prstenasti broš, izrađen od lijevanog bronca te pozačen, nadjen je na desnoj obali Dunava, između Ritopeka i ušća Morave, i za sada je usmiljen nalaz ovog tipa na širem području.

Šesterokrak prstenasti broševi. Luksuzan primjer ovakvog broša pronađen je u Banatskom Despotovcu. Riječ je o izrazito zvjezdolikom brošu, čiji krakovi završavaju stiliziranim ljiljanima u i koji su aplicirane kuglice. Motiv ljiljana na vrhovima šesterokrakih prstenastih broševa sreće se i drugdje u Karpatkoj kotlini. No, ponekad su oni doliku stilizirani da se jedva razaznaju. Primjeri su broševi iz Novih Banovaca
te Arače. Pogledamo li siri geografski okvir, i ovu skupinu broševa možemo zamišljati negdje na pojasu.


Osmerokraki zvjezdoliki broševi. U Hingi je pronađen brončani primjerak datiran novcem kralja Ludovika Velikog a ukrašen s četiri utisnuta slova "K", dok iz Novih Banovaca potječe osmerokraki zvjezdoliki prstenasti broš čiji je unutrašnji rub okvira okrugao. Na području pronađeni su međusobno slični broševi u Podunavlju, a rijetka pojava prstenastih broševa u Podunavljima povezuje se sa stranim doseljenicima i “utjecajima zapadne katoličke crkve u novoosvojenim, južnim područjima Ugarske”. Slično možemo reći i za druge suvjesne zemlje – naravno, s izuzetkom Mađarske – jer se ovočava veza njihove pojave sa, primjerice, centrima viteških redova, a nalazimo ih i u područjima Istočne Europe naseljenim Sasima. Zanimljiva je velika popularnost koju su prstenasti broševi, osobito oni s natpisima, stekli kod Kumana i Jaziga, kao i Fosagovo mišljenje da su im oni nadomjestili “poganske” amulete. Interesantno je promatrati i rasprostranjenost “nalaza sličnih prstenastim broševima” na tlu Srbije, jer se područja rasprostranjenosti tih nalaza i prstenastih broševa nimalo ne poklapaju. Iz tog možemo pretpostaviti da se, možda, radi o svojevrsnoj lokalnoj inačici prstenastih broševa.

Prstenasti broševi se, dakle, pokazuju kao neopravdano zapostavljena kategorija nalaza, jer riječ je o vrlo zanimljivim nalazima koji nam raznim svojim značajkama pomažu u procesu odgoventavanja raznolikih pitanja koja se tiču određenih segmenta srednjovjekovnog društva. Intrigantna je višeslojnost simbolike koju oni sadrže. Mnogo se može doznati proučavanjem kakao njihovih značajki, kako njihove rasprostranjenosti.
Plate I – A. Inscribed circular annular brooches: 1–5) Hinga (photo by: S. Kolović, Subotica Municipal Museum);
B. Circular annular brooches without inscription: 6) Dobrica (photo by: National Museum in Belgrade),
7) Serbia – unknown site (photo by: National Museum in Belgrade)

Tabla I – A. Okrugli prstenasti broševi s natpisom: 1–5) Hinga (foto: S. Kolović, Gradski muzej Subotica);
B. Okrugli prstenasti broševi bez natpisa: 6) Dobrica (foto: Narodni muzej u Beogradu),
7) Srbija – nepoznato nalazište (foto: Narodni muzej u Beogradu)

Plate III – A. Six-pointed annular brooches with double-connected arms:
B. Eight-pointed star-shaped annular brooch: 16) Hinga (photo by: S. Kolović, Subotica Municipal Museum)

Tabla III – A. Šesterokraki prstenasti broševi dvostruko spojenih krakova:
12) Arača (foto: M. Đukić, Muzej Vojvodine), 13–14) Kameniti hat (foto: S. Kolović, Gradski muzej Subotica), 15) Hinga (foto: S. Kolović, Gradski muzej Subotica);
B. Osmerokraki zvjezdoliki prstenasti broš: 16) Hinga (foto: S. Kolović, Gradski muzej Subotica)

Tabla IV – Nalazi slični prstenastim broševima: 17–19) Vinča (foto: Narodni muzej u Beogradu), 20) Kruševac (foto: P. Čeranić, Narodni muzej Kruševac)