

## REVIEWS

MÁRIA VARGHA, *Hoards, Gravegoods, Jewellery. Objects in hoards and in burial contexts during the Mongol invasion of Central-Eastern Europe*, Archaeolingua Central European Archaeological Heritage Series, Oxford 2015, VI + 95 pages, 56 figures. Printed ISBN 9781784912024; Epublication ISBN 9781784912031.

Mária Vargha's work published in 2015 is remarkable in many aspects. It was ten years since the last comprehensive work in the research of the High Middle Ages had been published. That comprehensive work on the research of churchyard cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, edited by Ágnes Ritoók and Erika Simon, comprised 27 papers written by 22 experts.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, since then the materials of numerous medieval exhibitions on the archaeology of the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries have been published, which the present volume aims to interpret and integrate professionally at an international level. Thirdly, it is also remarkable as it aims to analyse, using the method of contextualisation, various categories and types of jewellery at a macro-regional level the importance of which I intend to touch upon later, starting off with the problem posed by the settlement and the cemetery from Kána. Fourthly, and perhaps it is the most crucial aspect of this work, it is the first time that an expert has tried to do a comprehensive chronological analysis of the jewellery coming from different archaeological sources.

The first of the three chapters of the book covers the issue of jewellery of the High Middle Ages and their context in general (pp. 7–29)<sup>2</sup>. In my opinion, the structure of this chapter is a little complicated and not easy to follow. It might have been a better option to divide this chapter into two sections or to organise its content in two separate chapters, namely 1. *Problems with research: 1.1. The purpose and methodology of this study; 1.2. The medieval village of Kána: the present state of the research*, or it could have been divided into chapters or sub-chapters categorizing the sources and the contexts of the jewellery: *'Hoards', Churchyard cemeteries, Destroyed settlements*. It has to be noted that the analysis of the Friesach coins and that of *The Fuchsenhof* hoard can be found in this chapter too, together with the spatial interpretation of hoards dating from the time of the Mongolian raid and their importance. It must be mentioned that these hoards were excavated in regions that suffered from the destruction wrought by the Mongolian invasion. According to a keen observation made by Vargha, the number of these hoards is getting scantier and scantier and they are practically unknown in the — Transylvanian Basin. The written sources also seem to support the claim that the poor state of the research explains the phenomenon. In *Churchyard cemeteries* the present stage of the research

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<sup>1</sup> Á. Ritoók, E. Simonyi (eds.), "...a halál árnyékának völgyében járok". *A középkori templom körüli temetők kutatása*, Opuscula Hungarica 6, Budapest (Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum) 2005.

<sup>2</sup> If not indicated otherwise, page or drawing numbers refer to the peer-reviewed book.

in the Carpathian Basin is presented: up to now ten churchyard cemeteries dating from this period have been excavated completely. It would be interesting to see the sites on a map, so as to give a more complete picture by indicating the spatiality and intensity of archaeological excavations. Unfortunately, none of the ten sites have been published so far due to either objective or subjective reasons; the author also draws attention to the fact that some analyses have been done that concern Kána and Ducové/Ducó.

In the large scale excavations preceding the highway constructions in the 1990s several destroyed settlements were excavated, where the horror of the Mongolian invasion could be registered by archaeological means. With reference to this archaeological source, numerous categories of jewellery are presented. In Footnote 94, the author makes a correct observation saying “Though the more extensive use of shrouds could explain the absence of grave goods, it should be noted that in human remains in destroyed settlements often similarly few accessories can be found”.

In the second chapter of the book (pp. 31–63), the author continues with a typological analysis of the jewellery. She analyses 11 categories that are mostly known from hoards, churchyard cemeteries and destroyed settlements. The first category analysed here is made up of lock rings of the Árpadian era (pp. 34–40). Many of the observations made by Vargha can be considered an important progress. However, in my opinion, it must be perceived a mistake that her analysis was carried out under the concept of a unified Carpathian Basin, ignoring the theory that has been accepted for more than a decade by archaeologists of the Carpathian Basin that lock rings with S-shaped ends appeared at different times in the various micro-regions: their earliest appearance was registered in the Transdanubian region<sup>3</sup> and in the Transylvanian Basin they were registered the latest<sup>4</sup>. All this seems to indicate one thing: concerning this category of jewellery (and others), it should be analysed how they spread in the different micro-regions, so instead of the macro-regions, the research should have been focussed on micro-regions. In connection with this, I would like to mention the case of the so-called ‘giant’ smooth lock rings with S-shaped ends (see Fig. 1). The items found at Alba Iulia-Roman Catholic Cathedral, Dăbâca-Area IV Graves Nos. 114, 176, 212 and 267, Gilău Grave No. 2, Ulieş Grave No. 43, Peteni Grave Nos. 79 and 193 and Zăbala Graves Nos. 54, 74, 117, 168 and 184<sup>5</sup> are all longer than 4.2 cm,

<sup>3</sup> Gy. Török, *Die Bewohner von Halimba im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert*, *Archaeologia Hungarica* 39, Budapest (Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum) 1962, Fig. 37; K. Mesterházy, *Felső-Tisza-vidéki ötvösműhely és a honfoglalás kori emlékek időrendje*, *Agria. Egri Múzeum Évkönyve* 25–26 (1989–1990), p. 235–274, here p. 248, Footnote 33.

<sup>4</sup> E. Gáll, *The date of the appearance of the S-ended lock-rings in the Transylvanian Basin*, *Ephemeris Napocensis* 19 (2007 [2009]), p. 157–175, here p. 165. On the distribution of the lock rings with S-shaped ends in the micro-regions of the Carpathian Basin, see for example: E. Istvánovits, *A Rétköz honfoglalás és kora Árpád-kori emlékei*, *Régészeti gyűjtemények Nyíregyházán 2*, Magyarország honfoglalás és kora Árpád-kori sírleletei 4, Nyíregyháza (Nyíregyházi Jósza András Múzeum/Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum) 2004, p. 141–146; L. Révész, *Heves megye 10–11. századi temetői*, Magyarország honfoglalás és kora Árpád-kori sírleletei 5, Budapest (Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum/Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Régészeti Intézet) 2008, p. 457; E. Gáll, *Az Erdélyimedece, a Partium és a Bánság 10–11. századi temetői*, Magyarország Honfoglalás kori és kora Árpád-kori sírleletei 6, Szeged (Szegedi Tudományegyetem Régészeti Tanszék/Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum/Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Régészeti Intézet) 2013, vol. I, p. 656–658; C. Horváth, *Győr és Moson megyék honfoglalás és kora Árpád-kori temetői és sírleletei*, Magyarország Honfoglalás kori és kora Árpád-kori sírleletei 8, Szeged (Szegedi Tudományegyetem Régészeti Tanszék/Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum/Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Régészeti Intézet) 2015, p. 357.

<sup>5</sup> E. Gáll, *Doboka-IV. vártérség templom körüli temetője. Régészeti adatok egy észak-erdélyi ispáni központ 11–13. századi fejlődéséhez*, Kolozsvár (Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület) 2011, 40, 74, 85, 92,

in some cases reaching almost the length of 6.0 cm. They are important as according to their contexts, in the Transylvanian Basin these ‘giant’ lock rings can be dated from the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Future research should aim to analyse the use of these lock rings in other regions because at this moment it cannot be stated with certainty that they can be dated to the same time in also other micro-regions of the Carpathian Basin.

Vargha continues her analysis with the category of rings (pp. 40–44), whose analysis starts with the rings found at the cemetery in Kána. It must be noted that in almost each case simple band rings were registered and in two cases they are decorated. Among them the analysis of the *pyramid-shaped ring top* is important, as it allows dating this type of ring to the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries with certainty. Nevertheless, in the analysis of the seal rings and rings with inset stones, which are quite frequent in the hoards from the time of the Mongolian invasion, it was successfully pointed out that they are hardly known from the cemeteries, apart from some single items. The chronological evolution of the rings shown on Fig. 24 is not only revealing but the dating of the different types of this jewellery is also important. I would like to highlight the chronological observation made by Vargha: this ring type is mainly characteristic of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Brooches constituted the next category of the analysed items, where *circular brooches*, *bird shaped brooches* and *rhombus shaped brooches* were separated as different types (pp. 44–48). In the case of bird shaped brooches (pp. 46–48), the author gives a wide European survey of this type of items. She continues the analysis of the different item categories with hairpins, which is mainly based on the recent Transylvanian researches (p. 49). I do not really understand why she did not begin her analyses with this category. I would voice doubts about the statement she made in her analysis of the buttons (pp. 50–51): “Though buttons (shank-backs) were present in both the Conquest period and in early Arpad era graves, researchers have typically focused on their use in later periods”; as the writer of the present paper has also addressed a separate chapter to the analysis of this category in the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Vargha carried on analysing further categories of the material culture, viz. the buckles connected to belts (pp. 51–57). An important discovery made by her is that the round buckles cannot be ascribed only to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, as they were known much earlier, already from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Due to their number, much less space was assigned to the last two categories. From a structural point of view some clothes ornaments analysed by Vargha should have been placed before the belt buckles, and the cross found in a looted grave might have been analysed right after the lock rings.

The analysis based on the finds excavated in the Kána cemetery is concluded by some observations important for the summary of the typo-chronology of the items and an interesting demonstrative illustration. Vargha’s analysis reveals that in many cases the find types of the conquest period (such as the lyre-shaped buckles) were used until as late as the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but she also warns us that all the items can only be dated in their contexts. The analyses conducted by the Budapest archaeologist are made demonstrative by the scheme of the chronological evolution of various objects, which can be considered perfect from a methodological point of view (Fig. 21, 24, 35, 39).

101, 38, Pl. 12, 39. Pl. 8, 40. Pl. 15.; A. Isac, E. Gáll, Sz. Gál, *A 12<sup>th</sup> cemetery fragment from Gilău (Cluj county) (germ.: Julmarkt; magh.: Gyalu)*, *Ephemeris Napocensis* 22 (2012), p. 301–312; M. E. Crângaci-Țiplic, S. Oța, *Piese inedite din colecția Muzeului Național de Istorie a României descoperite în necropola de secol XII de la catedrala romano-catolică de la Alba Iulia*, *Acta Musei Napocensis* II: 39–40 (2002–2003), p. 91–106; Cs. Derzsi, A. Sófávi, *Régészeti kutatások a kányádi középkori templomnál (2005–2006)*, *Acta Siculica* 2008, p. 267–285, here: p. 269, 275, 11. Pl. 5; Z. Székely, *Necropola medievală de la Peteni, com. Zăbala, jud. Covasna*, *SCIVA* 41 (1990), 87–110, here Pl. 12: 4, Pl. 13: 13; Z. Székely, *A zabolai (Zăbala — România) kora-középkori temető*, *A Veszprém megyei Múzeumok Közleményei* 19–20 (1993–1994), p. 277, 284, 4. Pl. 2, 4–8.

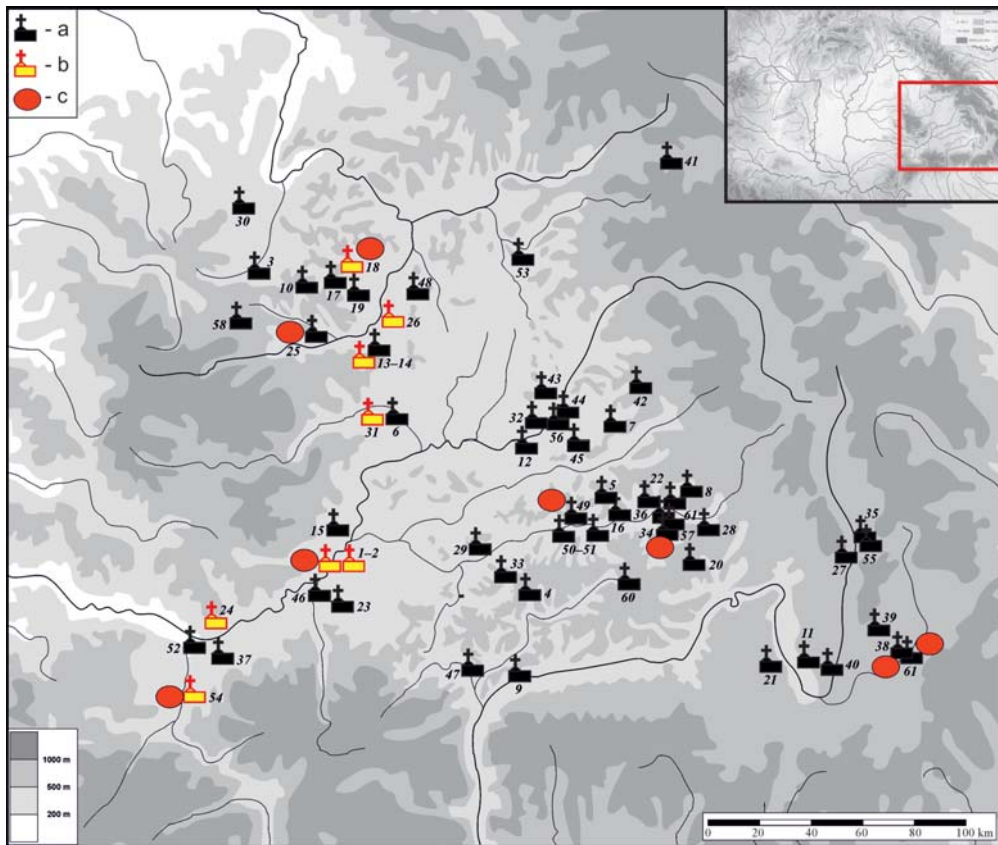


Fig. 1. List of the churchyards from Transylvanian Basin in the 11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries (germ. — german name; hung. — hungarian name; old-r. — old romanian name; j. — județ (county); drawn by E. Gáll.

a — churchyards from the 11<sup>th</sup> c.; b — churchyards in the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> c.; c — *S-ended lock rings* (giant size).

- 1). Alba Iulia (germ.: Karlsburg, Weissenburg; hung.: Gyulafehérvár; old-r.: Bălgrad) — *Roman-Catholic Cathedral*, j. Alba; 2). *Alba Iulia-Roman Baths*; 3). Almașu (hung.: Váralmás, Nagy-almás, Almás) j. Sălaj; 4). Alma Vii (germ.: Almen; hung.: Szászalmád, Almád, Szászalmás, Német-Almás, Almás), j. Sibiu; 5). Avrămești (hung.: Szentábrahám), j. Harghita; 6). Bădeni (germ.: Bogendorf; hung.: Băgyon), j. Cluj; 7). Băra (germ.: Kreutzdorf; hung.: Berekeresztúr), j. Mureș; 8). Brădești (hung.: Fenyéd), j. Harghita; 9). Cârța (germ.: Kiertz; hung.: Kercz, Kerc), j. Sibiu; 10). Chidea (hung.: Kide), j. Cluj; 11). Chilieni (germ.: Kilön; hung.: Kilyén), j. Covasna; 12). Cipău-Sfântu Gheorghe (germ.: Tschappen; hung.: Csapószentgyörgy), j. Mureș; 13). Cluj-Napoca-*Mănăștur* (germ.: Klausenburg-Abstdorf; hung.: Kolozsvár)-*Piața Centrală*, in our day: *Piața Unirii* (germ.: Hauptplatz; hung.: Fő tér), j. Cluj; 15). Cricău (germ.: Krakau; hung.: Boroskrakkó), j. Alba; 16). Cristuru Secuiesc (germ.: Kreuzburg; hung.: Székelykeresztúr), j. Harghita; 17). Dăbâca (germ.: Dobeschdorf; hung.: Doboka)-*A. Tâmaș's garden*; j. Cluj; 18). *Dăbâca-Areal IV*; 19). *Dăbâca-Boldăgă/Boldogasszony*; 20). Drăușeni (germ.: Draas; hung.: Homoróddaróc), j. Brașov; 21). Feldioara (germ.: Marienburg, Märrembirg; hung.: Barcafeldvár, Földvár), j. Brașov; 22). Forțeni (h.: Farcád), j. Harghita; 23). Gârbova (germ.: Urwegen, Urbijen, Ausendref; hung.: Szászorbó; old-r.: Gârbova Săsească), j. Alba; 24). Geoagiu de Jos (germ.: Gergesdorf; hung.: Algyógy), j. Hunedoara; 25). Gilău (germ.: Julmarkt; hung.: Gyalu), j. Cluj; 26). Jucu (dsch.: Schucken; h.: Zsuk, Nemeszúk), județ Cluj; 27). Leliceni (hung.: Csíkszentlélek), județ Harghita; 28). Lueta (hung.: Lövete), j. Harghita; 29). Meiaș (germ.: Mediasch; hung.: Medgyes), j. Sibiu; 30). *Moigrad-Porolissum-Archaeological Park* (hung.: Mojgrád), j. Sălaj; 31). Moldovenesti (germ.: Burgdorf; hung.: Várfalva; alt rum.: Varfalău, Orfalău), j. Cluj; 32). Morești (g.: Mühlendorf; h.: Malomfalva; old-r.: Malomfalău), j. Mureș; 33). Moșna (germ.: Maešn, Meschen; hung.: Szászmuzsna; alt rum.: Moșna, Mojna, Meșindorf), j. Sibiu; 34). Mugeni (germ.: Begesen; hung.: Bögöz), j. Harghita; 35). Nicolaești (hung.: Csíkszentmiklós), j. Harghita; 36). Odorheiu Secuiesc-Sântimreu/Szentimre

(germ.: Oderhellen, Hofmarkt; hung.: Székelyudvarhely), j. Harghita; 37). Orăștie (germ.: Broos; hung.: Szászváros), j. Hunedoara; 38). Peteni (hung.: Székelypetőfalva), j. Covasna; 39). Petriceni (h.: Kézdikóvár, Peselnek), j. Covasna; 40). Reci (hung.: Réty), j. Covasna; 41). Rodna (germ.: Altrodenau, Rodne; hung.: Óradna; alt-rum.: Rogna, Rocna), j. Bistrița-Năsăud; 42). Săcădate (hung.: Szakadát), j. Mureș; 43). Sâncrai (germ.: Königsdorf, Weichseldorf; hung.: Marosszentkirály), j. Mureș county; 44). Sângeorgiu de Mureș (germ.: Sankt Georgen; hung.: Marosszentgyörgy), j. Mureș; 45). Sânvășii (hung.: Nyárádszentlászló), j. Mureș; 46). Sebeș (germ.: Mühlbach, Melnbach; hung.: Szászsebes; old-r.: Sebeșul Săsesc, Sas-Sebeș), j. Alba; 47). Sibiu (germ.: Hermannstadt; hung.: Nagyszeben), j. Sibiu; 48). Sic (germ.: Secken, Marktstuhl; hung.: Szék, Székakna), j. Cluj; 49). Sighișoara (germ.: Schässburg, Schäsbrich; hung.: Segesvár)-*Dealul Viilor/Weinberg*, j. Mureș; 50). Sighișoara-*Bergkirche*; 51). Sighișoara-*Klosterkirche*; 52). Simeria Veche (hung.: Ópiski), j. Hunedoara; 53). Șirioara (h.: Sajósárvár), j. Bistrița-Năsăud; 54). Streisângeorgiu (hung.: Sztrigyszentgyörgy); j. Hunedoara; 55). Șumuleu-Ciuc, Miercurea-Ciuc (germ.: Schomlenberg; hung.: Csíksomlyó), j. Harghita; 56). Târgu Mureș (germ.: Neumarkt am Mieresch; hung.: Marosvásárhely, Székelyvásárhely), j. Mureș; 57). Ulieș (hung.: Kányád), j. Harghita; 58). Văleni (hung.: Magyarvalkó), j. Cluj; 59). Văleni (hung.: Patakfalva), j. Harghita; 60). Viscri (germ.: Deutsch-Weisskurch; hung.: Szászfehéregyháza), j. Brașov; 61). Zăbala (germ. Gebildorf; hung.: Zabola), j. Covasna county).

As for the observations concerning the use of the artefacts, the integration of social-psychological analyses could have helped the analysis of the chronological evolution of these jewellerys, and would have contributed to the result.

The *comparative chronology of the artefacts* should be extended to other regions of the Hungarian Kingdom, parallel to the burial customs registered in those regions.

The third and final chapter is not closely connected to the first two ones, but it contains some interesting observations concerning the *material culture of hoards and their socio-economic interpretations* (pp. 65–86). Nonetheless, it is a risky attempt to try to use archaeological sources to detect social *differences*, as Vargha correctly explained.

To sum up, Vargha's study is perhaps the first attempt of this kind in the literature of Hungarian archaeology (p. 87). Although in some of her analyses she should have chosen micro-regional analyses rather than the concept of a unified Carpathian Basin, Vargha's observations can be considered a major progress in the archaeology of the High Middle Ages in the Carpathian Basin.

Finally, I would like to make some comments on the title of the book. Central-Eastern Europe as a geographic place does not exist, and as a cultural-political illusionary reality can in the modern era be connected to the concept of *Mitteleuropa*, and it covers a much larger area (German area and the former Habsburg Empire), respectively the Eastern Europe can be connected especially to the concept of Oscar Halecki from 1923.<sup>6</sup> I believe the author made a mistake when choosing this geographical name as the title. As the analysis, apart from some parallels, was focussed on the medieval Hungarian Kingdom, this political concept should have been used, but to retain neutrality, I would have recommended the neutral geographical term of the Carpathian Basin.

Erwin Gáll

Address of the Author  
 Institutul de Arheologie "Vasile Pârvan"  
 Str. Henri Coandă nr. 11  
 010667 București  
 Romania  
 e-mail: ardarichus9@gmail.com

<sup>6</sup> I. Romsics, *Közép- és/vagy Kelet-Európa?* [in]: P. Módos (ed.), *Középeurópai olvasókönyv*, Budapest 2005 (Osiris Kiadó), p. 27–38; V. Heiszler, *Az illanó illúzió: Közép-Európa*, Tiszatáj 47:4 (április 1993), p. 48–51.