

Ulomci karičastog oklopa kao amuleti na kasnorimskom groblju Štrbinci kod Đakova

Fragments of a Chain Mail as Amulets in the Late Roman Cemetery at Štrbinci near Đakovo

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Na provincijalno-rimskom groblju Štrbinci kod Đakova, iz druge polovice 4. i prve polovice 5. st., dosad je istraženo stotinjak kosturnih grobova. Među većinom priloga, prosječnih u smislu učestalosti pojavljivanja na kasnorimskim grobljima Panonije, zatečena je i nekolicina nalaza iznimnih po svojoj materijalnoj, statusnoj i/ili kulturnoj rijetkosti, dragocjenosti ili pak neobičnosti. Među njima su i dva ulomka željeznih lančanih prepleta, oba priložena u grobovima djece. Ti nalazi u ovom su radu protumačeni kao dijelovi karičastog oklopa, a njihova uloga u grobnom kultu kao ritualno-apotropejski postupak povezan s preranom smrću. Vjerojatno je običaj prilaganja takvih predmeta u provincijalno-rimsku sredinu dospio iz barbarskog kulturnog kruga, najvjerojatnije gepidskog ili gotskog.

Ključne riječi: Panonija, Štrbinci, kasnoantičko groblje, karičasti oklop, amulet

Around a hundred skeletal graves have been excavated so far at the provincial-Roman cemetery at Štrbinci near Đakovo from the 2nd half of the 4th and the 1st half of the 5th century. Among the majority of grave goods, average in terms of the frequency of presence in the late Roman cemeteries in Pannonia, there were several that can be considered exceptional by virtue of their material, status and/or cultural rarity, value or singularity. Among these finds are two fragments of iron chain mesh, both deposited in children's graves. These finds are interpreted in this work as pieces of a chain mail, and their role in the funerary cult as a ritual-apotropaic procedure connected with premature death. The custom of depositing such objects in a provincial-Roman milieu probably arrived from the barbarian cultural circle, most likely the Gepid or Gothic one.

Key words: Pannonia, Štrbinci, late roman cemetery, chain mail, amulet

I. ARHEOLOŠKI KONTEKST NALAZA

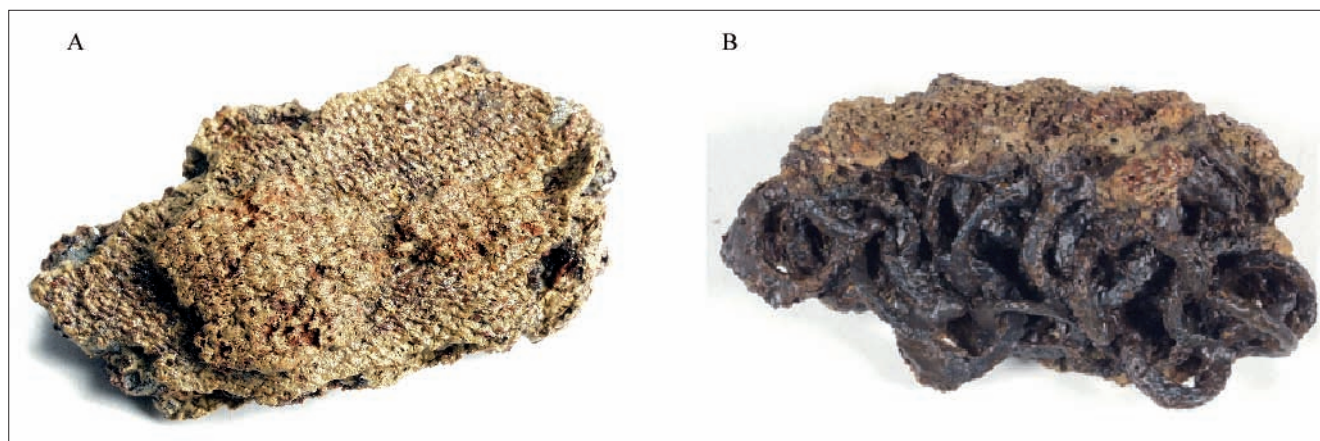
Na Štrbincima kod Đakova, pretpostavljenom ali još uvijek nepotvrđenom položaju rimske Certisije (Certissia), od 1999. god. provodi se sustavno iskopavanje kasnorimskog groblja.¹ Dosad je ustanovljeno više od stotinu kosturnih ukopa u zemljanim rakama (u drvenom lijesu ili bez njega) i u zidanim grobnicama. Približno dvije trećine ukopa bilo je popraćeno priložima, prosječno 2-3 predmeta u jednom grobu. Kod muškaraca su to pretežno dijelovi opreme pojasa i lukovičaste fibule, kod žena i djece nakit, a kod svih spolova i uzrasta glineno i stakleno posuđe (Migotti, Pavlović 2004). Zidane su grobnice sve do jedne

1. Izostale su kampanje u 2000. i 2006. god.

I. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE FINDS

At Štrbinci near Đakovo, on the assumed but still not definitely ascertained position of Roman Certissia, the systematic excavation of a late Roman cemetery has been ongoing since 1999.¹ More than a hundred skeletal burials in earthen graves (in a wooden coffin or without one) and in built tombs have been discovered so far. Approximately two thirds of the burials contained grave goods, on average 2-3 objects in a single grave. In male graves these mostly consist of parts of belt sets and crossbow fibulae, of jewellery in women's and children's graves, and of clay and glass ves-

1. With the exception of the 2000 and 2006 campaigns.



Sl. 1 Lančani preplet iz groba 45 na Štrbincima (foto D. Doračić): a – prije mehaničkog čišćenja, b – poslije mehaničkog čišćenja
 Fig. 1 A chain mesh from grave 45 at Štrbinci (photo by D. Doračić): a – before mechanical cleaning, b – after mechanical cleaning

bile srušene i okradene, pa je podatak o opremljenosti pokojnika nepovratno izgubljen. Među očuvanim priložima, većinom prosječnim u smislu učestalosti pojavljivanja na kasnorimskim grobljima Panonije, zatečena je i nekolicina nalaza iznimnih po svojoj materijalnoj, statusnoj ili kulturnoj rijetkosti, dragocjenosti ili pak neobičnosti. Među ove posljednje spadaju i predmeti zatečeni u tek dva groba (45/2001. i 84/2004.) od njih stotinjak. Raspravu o prirodi i smislu tih predmeta kao grobnih priloga posvećujem poštovanom kolegi Željku Tomičiću u prigodi njegove obljetnice.

I.1. Grob 45

U zemljanoj raci bila je ukopana djevojčica starosti 8-12 godina, kojoj je bio priložen veći broj različitih predmeta. Pojedini od njih zatečeni su na mjestu nošenja, dok su drugi bili odloženi uz glavu ili noge. Na desnoj ruci nađena je brončana narukvica, a na lijevoj veći broj brončanih, koštanih i željeznih narukvica, odnosno njihovih ulomaka. S unutrašnje strane lijeve bedrene kosti zatečen je očnjak divlje svinje, a do lijevog stopala sljedeći predmeti: 2



Sl. 2 Lančani preplet iz groba 84 na Štrbincima (foto D. Doračić)
 Fig. 2 A chain mesh from grave 84 at Štrbinci (photo by D. Doračić):

sels in the case of both sexes and all ages (Migotti, Pavlović 2004). The built tombs were destroyed and plundered to the last, so the information on the outfit of the deceased has been irreversibly lost. Among the preserved goods, in general average in terms of frequency of occurrence in the late Roman cemeteries in Pannonia, several finds were encountered that can be considered exceptional by virtue of their material, status or cultural rarity, value or singularity. The last group includes the objects encountered in only two (45/2001 and 84/2004) out of a hundred or so graves. I dedicate the discussion on the nature and meaning of these objects as grave goods to our esteemed colleague Željko Tomičić on the occasion of his jubilee.

I.1. Grave 45

A girl aged 8-12 was buried in an earthen grave, with a number of various grave goods. Some of these were discovered on the spot where they were worn, while the remainder was deposited next to the head or legs. A bronze bracelet was found on the right hand, while on the left there was a large number of bronze, bone and iron bracelets or fragments thereof. A canine of a wild pig was found at the interior side of the left thigh bone, while the following objects lay next to the left foot: 2 bronze rings and 3 iron ones, 2 bronze necklace clasps, 1 bronze object of unknown function, a large number of various monochrome and polychrome beads of glass and limestone, a pile of amorphous pieces of blue glass and a small plate-shaped fragment of mother-of-pearl. Three bases of glass vessels – one of them painted and gilded – were found approximately adjacent to the left side of the skull, which otherwise vanished without a trace in the context of an altogether poorly preserved skeleton. A wrapped piece of textile measuring 4,1 x 2,1 x 1,4 cm (Fig. 1a) was found with them. Although the latter item attracted attention by virtue of its mysteriousness, it remained obscured by the gilded glass base as an exceptionally rare and valuable find in the Pannonian milieu (Migotti 2003, 36-66). In the publication of the material from the 2001 excavation I described the former object as a wrapped piece of textile, in which the

brončana prstena i 3 željezna, 2 brončane kopče ogrlice, 1 brončani predmet nepoznate namjene, veći broj različitih jednobojnih i šarenih perli od stakla i vapnenca, hrpica bezobličnih komadića plavog stakla i mali pločasti ulomak sedefa. Otprilike uz lijevu stranu lubanje, inače netragom iščezle u sklopu općenito slabo očuvanog kostura, nađena su 3 dna staklenih posuda, od kojih jedno oslikano i pozlaćeno, te zamotani komad tkanine veličine 4,1 x 2,1 x 1,4 cm (sl. 1a). Premda je posljednji prilog privukao pozornost svojom zagonetnošću, ostao je zasjenjen pozlaćenim staklenim dnom kao iznimno rijetkim i dragocjenim nalazom u panonskom okružju (Migotti 2003, 36-66). U objavi građe s iskopavanja 2001. prvo-spomenuti sam predmet opisala kao zamotani komad tkanine, kod kojega je rendgenski snimak otkrio sadržaj nepoznatog podrijetla, ali ne i njegovu narav (Migotti 2004, 171). S obzirom na snažnu simboliku polaganja uz glavu, te na odgovarajući ritualni smisao triju staklenih dna zatečenih na istom mjestu, iznijela sam pretpostavku da je tkanina čuvala neku dragocjenost u smislu apotropejsko-ritualno-vjerske relikvije (Migotti 2004, 202). Naknadno mehaničko čišćenje pokazalo je da je u tkaninu bio umotan komad prepleta željeznih karika vanjskog promjera 0,6-0,8 cm, načinjenih od plosnate žice (sl. 1b). Broj i točnu veličinu karika, kao ni veličinu prepleta u cjelini, nije bilo moguće ustanoviti zbog nagužvanog oblika zadobivenog umatanjem. Nalaz je, kao i cjelina dosad istraženog groblja, datiran u drugu polovicu 4. i prvu polovicu 5. st.

I.2. Grob 84

Približno po sredini zemljane rake bili su neznatno očuvani istruli tragovi kostura pokojnika neodređenog spola. S obzirom na takvo stanje kostura kao i na priloženu brončanu bulu i perle, osobito one velike šarene, može se pretpostaviti ukop djeteta čiji spol na temelju samih priloženih predmeta nije moguće pouzdano odrediti². Na mjestu tragova kostura zatečen je veći broj priloga na hrpi, malo podalje od njih i ocakljeni glineni vrč, a u isprevrtnoj zapuni rake ulomak trakaste brončane narukvice, ukrašene nizom krugova s točkom po sredini i snopovima usporednih kosih crta. Veoma izlizan brončani novac uočen je na površini zapune rake, pa nije sigurno je li bio priložen u grobu.³ Na zajedničkoj hrpi bila su dva privjeska od neprozirnog crnog stakla, od kojih jedan u obliku bačve ukrašene bijelim nitima, a drugi u obliku nepravilnog prošupljenog kvadra, ukrašenog motivom oštre valovnice izvedene plavom niti, 6 perli od neprozirnog stakla, jednobojnih i šarenih, različita oblika i veličine, te jedna jantarna u obliku valjka, brončana bula s ostacima sadržaja te ulomak željeznog karičastog prepleta. Posljednji predmet (vel. 1,9 x 1,3 cm) sastoji se od

X-ray image revealed contents of unknown origin, but not their nature (Migotti 2004, 171). Taking into consideration the powerful symbolism of depositing objects beside the head, and the corresponding ritual meaning of three glass bases encountered on the same spot, I put forward the assumption that the textile kept a value of sorts in the sense of an apotropaic-ritual-religious relic (Migotti 2004, 202). The subsequent mechanical cleaning showed that a piece of mesh of iron rings with an outer diameter between 0,6-0,8 cm, made of flat wire (Fig. 1b), was wrapped within the textile. It was not possible to ascertain the number and precise size of rings, or the size of the mesh as a whole, due to the crumpled condition caused by wrapping. The find, like the whole of the so far excavated cemetery, is dated to the second half of the 4th and the 1st half of the 5th century.

I.2. Grave 84

The insignificantly preserved decayed remains of a skeleton of indeterminate sex lay approximately along the centre of the earthen grave. Considering such a condition of the skeleton and the deposited bronze bulla and beads, the large polychrome ones in particular, we can assume the burial of a child whose sex cannot be identified with certainty on the basis of the deposited grave goods only². On the spot of the traces of the skeleton a large number of objects were found on a pile, with a glazed clay jug lying at a short distance from them, while a fragment of a strap bronze bracelet, decorated with a sequence of circles with a dot in the centre and bundles of parallel slanting lines was found in the overturned fill of the grave. A highly worn out bronze coin was perceived on the surface of the grave fill, so it is not certain if it formed part of the grave goods.³ The joint pile contained two pendants of opaque black glass, one of which had the shape of a barrel decorated with white threads, while the other was shaped as an irregular perforated cuboid, decorated with the motif of a sharp waveline in the form of a blue thread; 6 beads of opaque glass, single- and multi-coloured, of various shapes and sizes; a cylindrical amber bead; a bronze bulla with the remains of its contents; finally, a fragment of an iron ring mesh. The last object (measuring 1,9 x 1,3 cm) consists of 5 rings made of a flat wire with an outer diameter of around 0,8 cm, arrayed on the (preserved) half of the ring with the outer diameter of around 1,3 cm, with occasional traces of textile into which the mesh was wrapped (Fig. 2). Its dating is the same as that of a similar find from grave 45.

II. DETERMINATION OF THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE FINDS

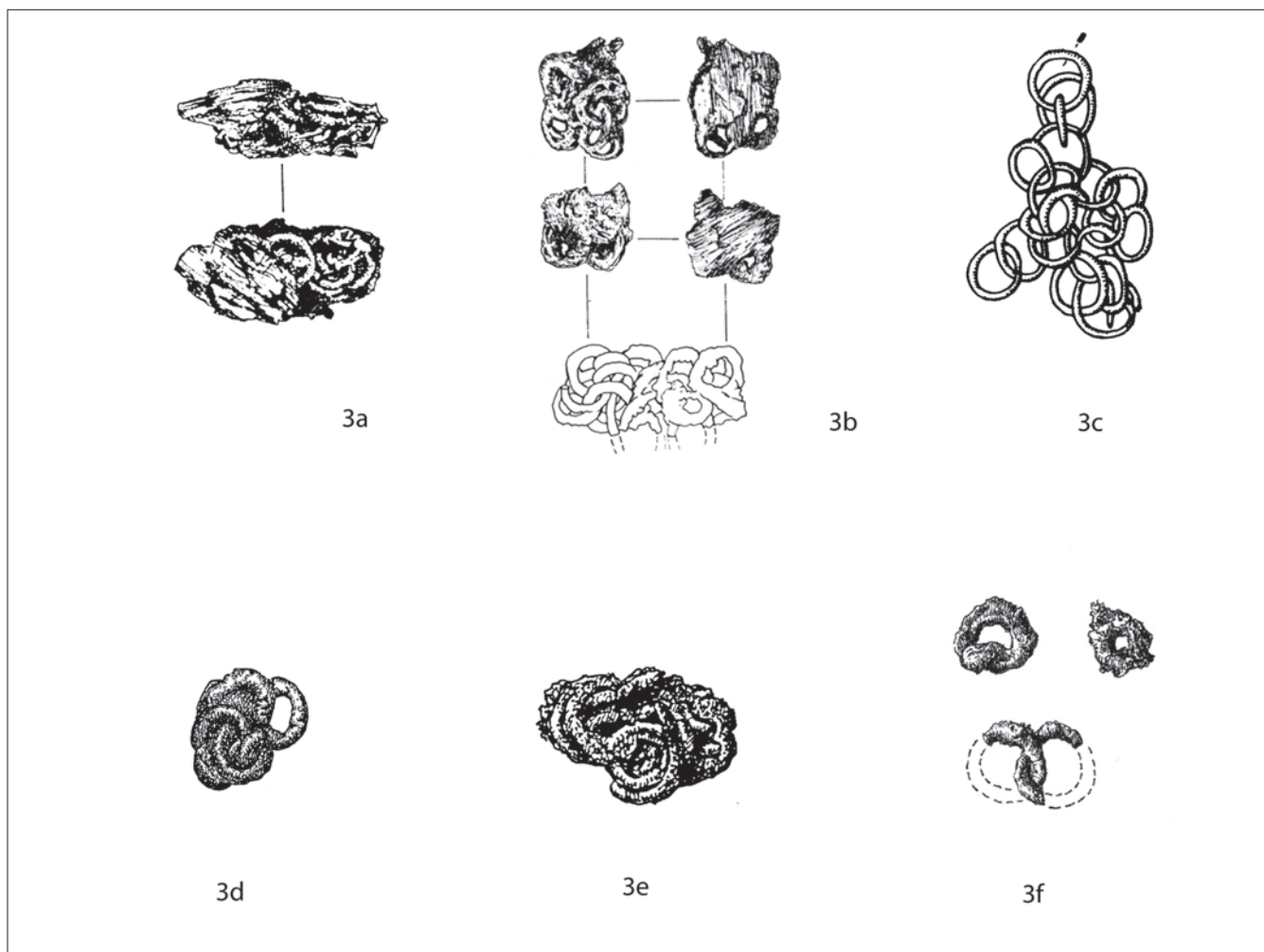
At first glance the described objects look like fragments of a military chain mail (lorica hamata) (comp. Radman-Livaja 2005, 76-78, cat. no. 133-134). Unfortunately, not

2. Bula daje naslutiti dječaka, ali ne bezuvjetno. O dvojbenosti određivanja spola na temelju nalaza usp. Migotti 2004, 180-181, bilj. 15.

3. Konstantin I, posmrtni kov 347-348., kovnica pod nadzorom Konstancija II. Odredio: Hrvoje Kalafatić.

2. The bulla allows the assumption that it was a boy, but not unconditionally. Regarding the dubious nature of determining sex on the basis of finds comp. Migotti 2004, 180-181, note 15.

3. Constantine I, posthumous issue 347-348, the mint under the control of Constantius II. Determined by: Hrvoje Kalafatić.



Sl. 3 Ulomci lančanih prepleta s različitih nalazišta u Panoniji i Slobodnoj Germaniji; a – Tiszadob-Sziget, grob 17 (prema Istvánovits 1993), b – Tiszadob-Sziget, grob 22 (prema Istvánovits 1993), c – Drochlin, grob 207 (prema Kaczanowski 1987), d – Szőreg-Téglagyár, grob 74 (prema Bóna, Garam, Vida 2005), e – Szőreg-Téglagyár, grob 17 (prema Bóna, Garam, Vida 2005), f – Szőreg-Téglagyár, grob 79 (prema Bóna, Garam, Vida 2005)

Fig. 3 Fragments of chain meshes from various sites in Pannonia and Free Germania; a – Tiszadob-Sziget, grave 17 (after Istvánovits 1993), b – Tiszadob-Sziget, grave 17 (after Istvánovits 1993), c – Drochlin, grave 207 (after Kaczanowski 1987), d – Szőreg-Téglagyár, grave 74 (after Bóna, Garam, Vida 2005), e – Szőreg-Téglagyár, grave 17 (after Bóna, Garam, Vida 2005), f – Szőreg-Téglagyár, grave 79 (after Bóna, Garam, Vida 2005)

5 karika načinjenih od plosnate žice vanjskog promjera oko 0,8 cm, nanizanih na (očuvanu) polovicu koluta vanjskog promjera oko 1,3 cm, s mjestimičnim ostatcima tkanine u koju je u preplet bio umotan (sl. 2). Datiran je kao i slični nalaz iz groba 45.

II. ODREĐIVANJE PRIRODE NALAZA I NJIHOVE NAMJENE

Na prvi pogled opisani predmeti izgledaju kao ulomci karičastog vojničkog oklopa (*lorica hamata*) (usp. Radman-Livaja 2005, 76-78, kat. br. 133-134). Nažalost, ni jedan od njih nije očuvan dovoljno da bi se mogle razaznati zakovice koje bi sigurno potvrdile način spajanja karika svojstven oklopu. Ne može se, prema tome, isključiti ni mogućnost da su to dijelovi lanca ovješnog o pojas, koji je i sam služio za nizanje uporabnih predmeta ili amuleta. Vjerodostojnost jednog ili drugog tumačenja trebalo bi

one of them is preserved to a degree that would enable the clear detection of the rivets that would confirm the method of attachment of rings characteristic for a mail. We cannot therefore exclude the possibility that these were parts of a chain suspended from a belt, which itself served for arraying functional items or amulets. The plausibility of one or the other interpretation ought to be substantiated by the context of the finds and a typological comparison. Unfortunately, in spite of the relatively good insight into the material from the late Roman cemeteries of Pannonia, at least that which is published, I did not succeed in finding any similar pieces in the cemeteries of that area, dated to the 4th and 5th centuries. In terms of chronology and space, the closest parallels come from the so-called barbarian ethnic-cultural circle (primarily the Sarmatian, Gepid and Avar) of the 5th and 6th centuries in Pannonia, but also from the middle imperial period in the territory of Free Germania beyond the northeastern borders of the Empire.

potkrijepiti kontekstom nalaza i usporedbom tipologijom. Nažalost, usprkos razmjerno dobrom uvidu u građu kasnorimskih groblja Panonije, barem onu objavljenu, nije mi pošlo za rukom naći niti jedan sličan prilog na grobljima tog prostora, datiranim u 4. i 5. st. Vremenski i prostorno najbliže usporednice potječu iz tzv. barbarskog etničko-kulturnog kruga (prije svega sarmatskog, gepidskog i avarskog) 5. i 6. st. u Panoniji, ali i iz srednjocarskog razdoblja na prostoru Slobodne Germanije izvan sjeveroistočnih granica Carstva.

Groblje Tiszadob-Sziget (sjeveroistočna Mađarska) iz kraja 4. i početka 5. st. smješteno je na zapadnom rubu sarmatskog prostora na kojemu su se od 3. st. ispreplitali utjecaji iranskih i germanskih naroda: Gota, Sarmata, Gepida i drugih (Istvánovits 1993, 139-141). Iz dvaju grobova odraslih muškaraca potječu nalazi lančanih prepleta posve nalik onima sa Štrbinaca. U grobu 17 ispod prekrivenih nogu odraslog pokojnika bili su odloženi sljedeći predmeti: željezna kopča, po jedan srebrni i brončani prsten, glavica srebrne lukovičaste fibule, raznobojne staklene perle te ulomak željeznog lančanog prepleta (vel. 3 x 1,6 x 1,2 cm) s ostacima hrđe i drveta (Istvánovits 1993, 99-100, Abb. 7,8-13) (sl. 3a). Iz crteža dade se razabrati promjer karika od približno 1 cm. U grobu 22 zatečen je, osim staklene perle u zapuni, samo ulomak željeznog lančanog prepleta (vel. 4 x 1,6 x 1,6 cm) s ostacima drva i tekstila, promjera karika oko 1 cm (Istvánovits 1993, 103, 105, Abb. 11,7) (sl. 3b).

U kataloškom opisu lančani preplet iz groba 17 E. Istvánovits navela je kao ulomak lanca ili karičastog oklopa, što je i inače osnovna dvojba kod vrednovanja te građe. U opisu je spomenula tragove drveta, dok je u razradi taj podatak stavila pod znak pitanja, smatrajući da upravo on otežava razumijevanje naravi i namjene predmeta. Usprkos tome, lančani je preplet autorica konačno procijenila kao ulomak oklopa, upravo kao i onaj iz groba 22, pri određenju kojeg nije ni imala dvojbi. Zaključila je, štoviše, da upravo lančani prepleti s groblja Tiszadob-Sziget pokazuju da to nisu ulomci lanaca nego karičastog oklopa. Premda je postavila pitanje o namjeni ulomaka lančanih oklopa u grobovima, nije na nj pokušala odgovoriti. Kao prostor nastanka običaja prilaganja takvih predmeta u grobove navela je kulturni krug Przeworsk (Poljska) u Slobodnoj Germaniji, na ishodišnom prostoru Vandala, na kojemu se njihova kultura dodirivala s onom gotskom i gepidskom (Istvánovits 1993, 130-131; Bierbrauer 1994, 22-25; Martin 1997, 363-364). S obzirom na učestalost ulomaka karičastog oklopa u grobovima na prostoru kulture Przeworsk već od kraja 2. st., vandalsko ishodište tog običaja uistinu je vjerojatno. Kao ilustraciju donosim samo jedan u nizu primjera iz toga etničko-kulturnog prostora, onaj s nalazišta Drochlin gdje su u nekolicini paljevinskih grobova (2.-4. st.) nađeni prepleti od željeznih karika promjera 0,6-1,2 cm (Kaczanowski

The Tiszadob-Sziget cemetery (northeastern Hungary), from the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century, is situated on the western edge of the Sarmatian territory, where influences of the Iranian and Germanic peoples – the Goths, Sarmatians, Gepids and others – intermingle from the 3rd century onwards (Istvánovits 1993, 139-141). Finds of chain mesh highly resembling those from Štrbinci come from two graves of adult men. The following objects were deposited beneath the crossed legs of an adult man in grave 17: an iron clasp, one silver and one bronze ring, the head of a silver crossbow fibula, glass beads of various colours and a fragment of an iron chain mesh (measuring 3 x 1,6 x 1,2 cm) with traces of rust and wood (Istvánovits 1993, 99-100, Fig. 7,8-13) (Fig. 3a). The diameter of the rings of approximately 1 cm can be discerned from the drawing. In grave 22, in addition to a glass bead in the fill, only a fragment of an iron chain mesh (measuring 4 x 1,6 x 1,6 cm) was found, with traces of wood and textile, whose rings had a diameter of around 1 cm (Istvánovits 1993, 103, 105, Fig. 11,7) (Fig. 3b).

In the catalogue description, E. Istvánovits described the chain mesh from grave 17 as a fragment of a chain or a chain mail, which is otherwise the basic doubt when interpreting that material. Her description mentions traces of wood, while in the elaboration she placed that information under a question mark, reasoning that this was precisely what rendered an understanding of the nature and function of the object more difficult. In spite of that, she eventually assessed the chain mesh as a fragment of a mail, much like the one from grave 22, whose interpretation she never had any doubts about. What is more, she went on to conclude that precisely the chain meshes from the Tiszadob-Sziget cemetery demonstrate that these are not fragments of chains but of a chain mail. Even though she raised the question of the function of fragments of chain mails in graves, she did not attempt an answer. As the area of origin of the custom of depositing such objects into graves she put forward the cultural circle of Przeworsk (Poland) in Free Germania, in the zone of origin of the Vandals, in which their culture came into contact with that of the Goths and the Gepids (Istvánovits 1993, 130-131; Bierbrauer 1994, 22-25; Martin 1997, 363-364). Considering the frequency of presence of the chain mail fragments in the graves in the territory of the Przeworsk culture starting already at the end of the 2nd century, the Vandal origin of that custom indeed seems likely. As an illustration I bring here only one in a series of examples from that ethnic-cultural zone, the one from the site of Drochlin, where in several cinerary burials (2nd-4th cent.) meshes of iron rings 0,6-1,2 cm in diameter were found (Kaczanowski 1987, 75-77, Pl. XX,6) (Fig. 3c). Here one has to keep in mind that the mentioned ritual custom spread also among the Goths and the Gepids, increasing the chance that it would be encountered and accepted also by the Roman-provincial population in Pannonia. In this light it is easier to understand the finds of pieces of a chain mesh in a south Pannonian cemetery.

1987, 75-77, T. XX,6) (sl. 3c). Pritom je važno imati na umu da se spomenuti ritualni običaj proširio i među Gotima i Gepidima, čime se povećala mogućnost da ga upozna i prihvati i rimsko-provincijalno stanovništvo u Panoniji. U tome je svjetlu lakše razumjeti nalaze komada lančanog prepleta na jednom južno-panonskom groblju.

U trima od ukupno 129 grobova gepidskog groblja Szőreg-Téglagyár (jugoistočna Mađarska) iz 5.-6. st., zatečeni su ulomci lančanih prepleta, odnosno nizova željeznih karika. U grobu djevojčice (74) na mjestu vrata zatečena je niska od staklenih perli i jedne jantarne, na prsima koštani češalj, a u zdjelici ulomak prepleta od zahrđanih, međusobno slijepljenih željeznih karika promjera 1,4 cm, bez tragova tkanine (M. Nagy, u: Bóna et al. 2005, 132, T. 60,74) (sl. 3d). U grobu muškarca (17) bili su priloženi koštani češalj, željezna kopča, željezni nož s karikom za ovjes o pojas te ulomak prepleta od zahrđanih, međusobno slijepljenih željeznih karika promjera 1,3 cm (sl. 3e). Na drvenoj oplati noža i pripadajućoj karici za ovjes očuvani su tragovi tkanine koji, međutim, nisu zamijećeni na prepletu željeznih karika. Podatak o položaju posljednje spomenutog predmeta u odnosu na kostur nije očuvan (M. Nagy, u: Bóna et al. 2005, 125, T. 49,17). U grobu žene (79) bili su priloženi glineni pršljen za vreteno, željezna kopča za pojas, kolut od spljoštene željezne žice promjera 4,4 cm, s tragovima tkanine, te 2 međusobno spojene i još 2 razdvojene željezne karike lanca, promjera od 1,4-1,8 cm, bez tragova tkanine. Točni položaj posljednje spomenutog predmeta nije poznat (M. Nagy, u: Bóna et al. 2005, 132, T. 61,79) (sl. 3f).

Nalaze iz ova tri groba namjerno sam predočila kao sadržajnu cjelinu, upravo kao i autorica objave, premda se željezne karike iz groba 79 razlikuju od međusobno veoma sličnih ulomaka lančanog prepleta iz grobova 17 i 74, barem sudeći na temelju ilustracija. Na taj je način moguće jasnije sagledati dvojbu oko tumačenja opisanih nalaza, usprkos tome što su vrednovani u istom kontekstu: ulomci karičastog oklopa ili pak lanci za ovjes korica noža ili nekoga drugog predmeta o pojas? (M. Nagy, u: Bóna et al. 2005, 164). Iz komentara M. Nagy može se naslutiti njeno priklanjanje prvom tumačenju, premda u tekstu nije naznačena uočljiva razlika između lančanih prepleta i pojedinačnih (cjelovitih ili prekinutih) karika u lancu. Naime, moguće je da je, za razliku od međusobno srodnih predmeta iz grobova 17 i 74, nalaz iz groba 79 (sl. 3f) bio ulomak lanca za ovjes uporabnih i ukrasno-amuletnih predmeta, odnosno za njihovo pričvršćivanje o pojas.⁴ Takvi su nalazi vrlo svojstveni gotovo svim sredinama barbarskog etničko-kulturnog kruga u razdoblju 5.-7. st., premda treba napomenuti da su u toj ulozi znatno uobičajenije trake od kože ili tkanine. Lanci su, pak, mogli biti od plemenitih

4. Iz usmenog podatka od 19. siječnja 2007. proizlazi da M. Nagy drži kako je samo nalaz iz groba 17 vjerojatno bio ulomak oklopa.

In three out of the total of 129 graves of the Gepid cemetery of Szőreg-Téglagyár (southeastern Hungary) from the 5th-6th century, fragments of chain meshes, that is sequences of iron rings, were found. In the grave of a girl (74), at the position of the neck, a string of glass beads and an amber one was found, in addition to a bone comb on the chest, and, in the pelvis, a fragment of a mesh of rusted iron rings pasted together, with a diameter of 1,4 cm, with no traces of textile (M. Nagy, in: Bóna et al. 2005, 132, Pl. 60,74) (Fig. 3d). The grave of a man (17) contained a bone comb, an iron clasp, an iron knife with a ring for suspension on the belt and a fragment of a mesh of rusted iron rings pasted together, with a diameter of 1,3 cm (Fig. 3e). Traces of textile were preserved on the wooden part of the knife and the accompanying suspension ring, but they were not apparent on the mesh of the iron rings. The information about the position of the last mentioned object with respect to the skeleton has not been preserved (M. Nagy, in: Bóna et al. 2005, 125, Pl. 49,17). In the grave of a woman (79) the goods included a clay spindle-whorl, an iron belt buckle, a ring of flattened iron wire with a diameter of 4,4 cm, with traces of textile, and 2 connected and 2 detached iron rings from a chain with a diameter of 1,4-1,8 cm, without traces of textile. The precise position of the last mentioned object is unknown (M. Nagy, in: Bóna et al. 2005, 132, Pl. 61,79) (Fig. 3f).

I have deliberately presented the finds from these three graves as an assemblage, just as the author of the first publication, although the iron rings from grave 79 differ from the two highly similar fragments of the chain mesh from graves 17 and 74, at least judging by the illustrations. In this way it is possible to conceive more clearly the uncertainty regarding the interpretation of the described finds, even though they were evaluated in the same context: fragments of a chain mail or chains for suspension of a knife scabbard or some other object from the belt? (M. Nagy, in: Bóna et al. 2005, 164). From M. Nagy's comment one can sense her inclination towards the first interpretation, even though no visible difference is stressed in the text between the chain meshes and individual (complete or broken) rings in the chain. It is possible that, unlike the objects from graves 17 and 74, that are similar to each other, the find from grave 79 (Fig. 3f) represented a fragment of a suspension chain for functional objects and those serving as decorations or amulets, that is, their attachment to a belt⁴. Such finds are characteristic for almost all centres of the barbarian ethnic-cultural circle in the period from 5th-7th centuries, even though it should be mentioned that leather or textile straps are much more common when it comes to fulfilling that function. The chains, in turn, could be made of precious metals, bronze or iron, and their size and shapes, and methods of attachment and distribution of pendants varied: from a single object suspended from a belt to a chain extending vertically from the centre of the belt to the knee

4. From the personal communication of January 19th 2007 it follows that M. Nagy holds that only the find from grave 17 was a fragment of a mail.

metala, bronce ili željeza, a njihova veličina te oblici i načini pričvršćivanja i raspoređivanja privjesaka bili su različiti: od pojedinačnog predmeta okačenog o pojas do lanca pruženog okomito od sredine pojasa do koljena ili čak niže, okićenog privjescima u čitavoj dužini (Dübner-Manthey 1990, 67; Vallet 1996, 687-690; Zeller 1996, 675-683; Martin 1997, 365-369; Garam 2002, 153-165; Bóna, Nagy 2002, 128-129, Pl. 21,77/5-10, passim; J. Cseh, u: Bóna et al. 2005, 30; M. Nagy, u: Bóna, Garam, Vida 2005, 164, 209, T. 35,49/2, passim). Premda je opisani dio ženske nošnje svojstven barbarskom kulturnom krugu, osobito onom zapadnom, zametak običaja nošenja uporabnih predmeta i amuleta na lancu potječe iz rimske civilizacije (Martin 1997, 365-370; Martin-Kilcher 2000, 67; Garam 2002, 153, 164-165). S druge strane, lančani prepleti iz groba 17, te moguće groba 74 s groblja Szőreg-Téglagyár, kao i slični nalazi s drugih gepidskih groblja, gotovo se sigurno mogu smatrati dijelovima oklopa. Pretpostavku o karičastom oklopu M. Nagy dodatno je potkrijepila podatkom da se u gepidskim torbicama od organskog materijala znaju, osim lančanih prepleta, zateći i ulomci drugih predmeta neupotrebljivih radi oštećenosti ili necjelovitosti. S obzirom na to, zaključila je kako treba računati s mogućnošću da su se u gepidskim grobovima, upravo kao i u avarskima, prilagali ne samo cjeloviti primjerci oružja, već i njihovi dijelovi, uključujući i komadiće karičastog oklopa (M. Nagy, u: Bóna et al. 2005, 164). Ni ta se autorica, međutim, nije upustila u tumačenje opisanog *pars pro toto* prilaganja. No ona upozorava na još jednu mogućnost podrijetla takvih nalaza: preostatci nakon pljačkanja grobova (usmeni podatak, 19. siječnja 2007.).

Na temelju ovih razmatranja prijeko je potrebno, konačno, odrediti predmete sa Štrbinaca. Lančani preplet iz groba 45 po svom izgledu potpuno se uklapa u skupinu dijelova karičastog oklopa, o čemu svjedoči i kontekst nalaza iz kojeg proizlazi da je predmet bio pažljivo umotan i odložen izdvojeno od većine ostalih priloga. Po svom izgledu preplet iz groba 84 teoretski je mogao biti i dio lanca za privjeske, u tom slučaju primjerke nakita zatečene na istome mjestu. Međutim, tragovi tkanine zamjetljivi jedino na lančanom prepletu pokazuju da je taj predmet najvjerojatnije bio umotan te na taj način izdvojen od ostalih priloga. Prema tome, može se pretpostaviti da je i to bio ulomak karičastog oklopa. U svjetlu štrbinčinskih nalaza ostatke tkanine i mjestimice drva na prije opisanim nalazima iz barbarskih grobova u Tiszadob-Sigetu moguće je razumjeti kao tragove umotavanja, odnosno pohrane predmeta u drvenu kutiju. Znakovito je da su se i u rimskoj, odnosno provincijalnoj kulturi amuleti uobičajeno pohranjivali na sličan način (Martin-Kilcher 2000, 67).

Koja je, dakle, bila namjena malih ulomaka lančanog oklopa, pažljivo umotanih i odloženih u grobove dvoje djece na jednom kasnorimskom groblju u južnoj Panoniji?

or even lower, decorated with pendants along the entire length (Dübner-Manthey 1990, 67; Vallet 1996, 687-690; Zeller 1996, 675-683; Martin 1997, 365-369; Garam 2002, 153-165; Bóna, Nagy 2002, 128-129, Pl. 21,77/5-10, passim; J. Cseh, in: Bóna et al. 2005, 30; M. Nagy, in: Bóna, Garam, Vida 2005, 164, 209, Pl. 35,49/2, passim). Even though the described part of a female costume is characteristic for the barbarian cultural circle, particularly the western one, the seed of the custom of wearing functional objects and amulets on a chain derives from the Roman civilization (Martin 1997, 365-370; Martin-Kilcher 2000, 67; Garam 2002, 153, 164-165). On the other hand, the chain meshes from grave 17, and possibly from grave 74 from the Szőreg-Téglagyár cemetery, as well as similar finds from other Gepid cemeteries, can almost certainly be considered parts of a mail. M. Nagy additionally substantiated the assumption about a chain mail with the information that the Gepid purses made of organic material sometimes contain, in addition to chain meshes, fragments of other objects rendered unusable due to damage or incompleteness. Taking this into account, she concluded that one should count with the possibility that not only complete pieces of weapons were deposited into the Gepid graves, same as in the Avar ones, but also parts of them, including small pieces of chain mails (M. Nagy, in: Bóna et al. 2005, 164). However, this author also does not venture into an interpretation of the described *pars pro toto* deposition. She does, however, warn of another possibility for the origin of such finds: the remnants after the looting of graves (personal communication, January 19th 2007).

It is of the utmost importance to finally offer an interpretation of the objects from Štrbinci on the basis of these considerations. By its appearance, the chain mesh from grave 45 entirely fits in the group of pieces of a chain mail, testified also by the context of the find, which suggests that the object was carefully wrapped and deposited separately from the majority of the other goods. The mesh from grave 84 by virtue of its shape may have also been a part of a chain for pendants, in this case the pieces of jewellery found on the same spot. However, traces of textile visible only on the chain mesh show that that object was most likely wrapped and in that way separated from the remaining grave goods. Therefore, it can be assumed that this was also a fragment of a chain mail. In light of the Štrbinci finds, the remains of textile and occasionally wood on the previously described graves at Tiszadob-Sziget can be understood as traces of wrapping, that is, the deposition of objects into a wooden box. It is significant that amulets were usually deposited in a similar way also in the Roman, that is, provincial culture (Martin-Kilcher 2000, 67).

What then, was, the function of small fragments of a chain mail, carefully wrapped and deposited into the graves of two children in a late Roman cemetery in south Pannonia?

Unless it is a leftover from a plunder, a fragment of a weapon deposited into a grave can be interpreted in two

Ukoliko nije preostatak nakon krađe, ulomak oružja odložen u grob može se protumačiti na dva načina: 1. simbolička zamjena za čitav predmet kao obilježje vojničkog zanimanja; 2. amulet. Pritom treba napomenuti da se i u provincijalno-rimskim i u barbarskim grobovima s priloženim oružjem oklop u toj ulozi pojavljuje razmjerno rijetko i to, čini se, isključivo kod Gepida i Avara. Zanimljivo je da se kod obaju tih naroda ulomci oklopa zatječu i u grobovima žena i djece, očito u ulozi amuleta (Csallány 1961, 388; Szentpéteri 1993, 208; M. Nagy, u: Bóna, Nagy 2002, 159, bilj. 251). Prema tome, prilaganje dijelova karičastog oklopa u ukopnom ritualu može se razumjeti na dva načina koja se međusobno ne isključuju: kao simbolička prisutnost oružja u vojničkom smislu ili kao amulet u užem značenju te riječi. U oba slučaja nameće se pitanje je li u pozadini takva izbora stajala neposredna ili posredna povezanost pokojnika s vojničkim krugom, ili je on bio uvjetovan teže dokučivim razlozima, proizišlim iz duhovnog i kulturnog značaja etničke, društvene ili obiteljske pripadnosti umrloga. Kakogod bilo, nije teško proniknuti u smisao prilaganju ulomka obrambenog oružja u grob, s obzirom na to da je uloga amuleta štititi pokojnika od zlih sila (Martin-Kilcher 2000, 73; Nuzzo 2000). Znakovito je da se u svojstvu amuleta često pojavljuju upravo predmeti neuobičajeni i neočekivani u određenom kontekstu, primjerice, oružje kod žena i djece (Dübner-Manthey 1999, 71; Márton 2002, 135).

U oba groba na Štrbincima bila su pokopana djeca, što znači da su materijalno-društveni razlozi prilaganja ulomka lančanog oklopa u tim primjerima mogli proizići jedino iz obiteljske povezanosti s vojničkom službom. Novijim je istraživanjima u priličnoj mjeri poljuljano uvjerenje da su se provincijalni Rimljani strogo pridržavali pravila o neprilaganju oružja u grob (Márton 2002). Osim toga, oružje se nerijetko prikazivalo i na grobnim spomenicima ranijeg Carstva, najčešće u vojničkom kontekstu, ali i u onom statusno obilježenom građanskom (G. Fachinetti, u: Sacchi i drugi 2003, 189-198). U ovdje razmatranom kontekstu zanimljivo je da je karičasti oklop kod barbara bio odlika časničkog položaja (Sieg und Triumph, 406, 5.4a). Međutim, povezanost opisanih nalaza s vojničkom službom u užem smislu ipak bi bila primjerenija u slučaju barbarskog groblja. Naime, unatoč nekolicini nalaza koji daju naslutiti prihvaćanje pojedinih elemenata materijalne i duhovne kulture barbarskog kruga, prema ukupnim dosadašnjim saznanjima groblje na Štrbincima pripadalo je provincijalno-rimskom stanovništvu (Migotti, Perinić 2001, 149-155; Migotti 2004, 194). Stoga su ulomci karičastog oklopa iz tamošnjih grobova 45 i 84 najvjerojatnije bili amuleti u najužem smislu te riječi, pri čemu se ne može isključiti obiteljsko vojničko zaleđe. Inače, o amuletnoj naravi dvaju predmeta dodatno svjedoče i drugi prilozi u oba groba. Većina njih (šarene perle, dna staklenih posuda, ocnjak divlje svinje, odloženi nakit, brončana bula i drugo)

ways: 1. a symbolic replacement for a complete object as a mark of the military trade; 2. an amulet. It should be mentioned here that in both provincial-Roman and barbarian graves with deposited weapons the mail in that role appears relatively rarely, and, it seems, only with the Gepids and Avars. It is interesting that with both peoples mail fragments are found also in the graves of women and children, obviously in the function of amulets (Csallány 1961, 388; Szentpéteri 1993, 208; M. Nagy, in: Bóna, Nagy 2002, 159, note 251). Therefore, the deposition of parts of a chain mail in the burial ritual can be understood in two ways that are not mutually exclusive: as the symbolic presence of weapons in the military sense or as an amulet in the narrow sense of the word. In both cases the question arises as to whether a direct or indirect connection of the deceased with the military circle lay behind such a choice, or was it conditioned by reasons more difficult to grasp, stemming from the spiritual and cultural significance of the ethnic, social or familial affiliation of the deceased. Be as it may, it is not hard to grasp the meaning of the deposition of a fragment of a defensive weapon into a grave, considering that the role played by an amulet consisted in warding off evil forces from the deceased (Martin-Kilcher 2000, 73; Nuzzo 2000). It is significant that it often occurs that precisely unusual objects or those unexpected in a specific context appear in the role of an amulet, for instance, weapons next to women and children (Dübner-Manthey 1999, 71; Márton 2002, 135).

Both graves at Štrbinci were those of children, which means that the material-social reasons behind the deposition of a fragment of a chain mail in those cases could only derive from a familial connection with the military service. Recent research has to a significant extent shaken the belief that provincial Romans strictly followed the rule forbidding the deposition of weapons into graves (Márton 2002). Moreover, weapons were often depicted also on funerary monuments of the early Empire, most often in the military context, but also in the civilian one with attributes of status (G. Fachinetti, in: Sacchi et al. 2003, 189-198). In the context examined here it is interesting that the chain mail was a mark of an officer's status among the barbarians (Sieg und Triumph, 406, 5.4a). However, the connection of the described finds with the military service in the narrow sense would nevertheless be more appropriate in the case of a barbarian cemetery. In spite of a few finds that hint at the acceptance of certain elements of the material and spiritual culture of the barbarian circle, it can be concluded on the basis of the entire body of information obtained so far that the cemetery at Štrbinci belonged to the provincial-Roman population (Migotti, Perinić 2001, 149-155; Migotti 2004, 194). The fragments of a chain mail from graves 45 and 84 in that cemetery most probably represented amulets in the narrowest sense of the word, in which one cannot exclude a familial military background. Otherwise, the amuletic nature of the two objects is additionally substantiated by the remaining goods in both graves. Most of them (polychrome beads, bases of glass vessels, a canine tooth of a wild pig, deposited jewellery, a bronze bulla etc.) possess amuletic

sama po sebi ima amuletnu narav, koja se dodatno očituje u količini priloga većoj od prosječne, upravo kako i priliči ukopima povezanim sa zastrašujućim pojmom *mors immatura* (Martin-Kilcher 2000; Migotti 2004, 192-195, 206-208).

Nisu mi poznati nalazi ulomaka karičastog oklopa kao grobnog priloga u provincijalno-rimskom kontekstu Panonije. Znači li to da takve predmete na Štrbincima treba dovoditi u vezu s nerimskim etničkim elementom? Najvjerojatnije ne. U njima radije treba vidjeti utjecaj iz barbarske sredine, koji je naišao na plodno tlo prethodno ostvarenih kulturno-religijskih pretpostavki. Poznato je, naime, da su pojedini elementi barbarske materijalne i duhovne kulture dopirali do romaniziranog stanovništva provincija i ondje hvatali korijen, u sklopu sveopćeg odvijanja u kojemu su kulturni utjecaji strujali u oba smjera: iz Rima prema provincijama i Barbariku, ali i obratno.⁵

Zahvale

Na podacima koji su mi uvelike olakšali razumijevanje građe i pomogli pri pisanju rada veliku zahvalnost dugujem dr. Margit Nagy i dr. Judit Topál iz Budimpešte, te mr. Ivanu Radman-Livaji iz Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu.

nature in their own right, which is additionally revealed in the larger than average quantity of goods, as becomes burials connected with the awe-inspiring term *mors immatura* (Martin-Kilcher 2000; Migotti 2004, 192-195, 206-208).

I am not familiar with finds of fragments of a chain mail as a grave good in the provincial-Roman context of Pannonia. Does this mean that such objects at Štrbinci should be brought into connection with a non-Roman ethnic element? In all probability not. One should rather see in them the influence of the barbarian milieu, which found fertile ground set by the previously created cultural-religious conditions. It is known that certain elements of the barbarian material and spiritual culture reached the romanized population of the provinces and took root there, in the frame of a general development in which cultural influences flowed in both directions: from Rome toward the provinces and the Barbaricum, but also vice-versa.⁵

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5. Literatura o utjecaju rimske materijalne kulture na onu barbarsku nepregledna je i posebna je tema provincijalno-rimske arheologije. Što se pak tiče obrnutog smjera strujanja utjecaja, od barbara prema Rimljanima, osobito su slikoviti primjeri vojničke opreme i odjeće (Wild 1968, 192; Fischer 1988, 189; Heitz 2005-2006, 223), te građanskih modnih trendova u odijevanju i češljanju (Wild 1968, 234; Bonfante 1994, 6; Croom 2002, 147).

5. The literature about the influence of the Roman material culture on the barbarian one is vast and presents a separate topic within provincial-Roman archaeology. As regards the opposite direction of the flow of influences, from the barbarians to the Romans, examples of military equipment and clothes are particularly illustrative (Wild 1968, 192; Fischer 1988, 189; Heitz 2005-2006, 223), as well as those of civilian fashion trends in dressing and hairdressing (Wild 1968, 234; Bonfante 1994, 6; Croom 2002, 147).

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