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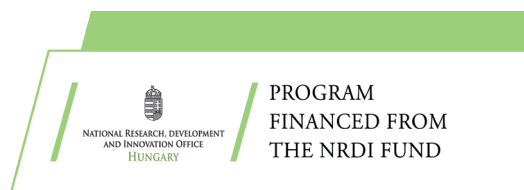
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31 August–3 September 2022

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## ‘NITRA-TYPE’ CAST EARRINGS IN THE MIDDLE AND LOWER DANUBE REGION

Natalia GERTHOFFEROVÁ<sup>1</sup> 

*The study reopens the question of ‘Nitra-type’ cast earrings by overviewing and analysing their origin, dating, and spatial distribution through comparing the finds from the Middle and the Lower Danube Region. These earrings were spread over a wide area in the Lower Danube Region, where the type emerged; they remained in fashion from the mid-9th to the end of the 10th century. There is evidence of their local production in this area. In the Middle Danube Region, they concentrated around the post-Great Moravian centres, mainly Nitra, where they were in vogue for a relatively short period from the end of the 9th to the mid-10th century. The ‘Nitra-type’ cast earrings indicate not only contacts between the territories of the First Bulgarian State and the area of Nitra but also the migration and settlement of people from the former.*

*A tanulmány a „Nyitra-típusú” öntött fülbevalók kérdését tárgyalja újra, áttekintve a típus eredetét, keltezését és elterjedését a Közép- és az Al-Duna-vidéken. E fülbevalók az Al-Duna-vidéken alakultak ki, ahol viszonylag nagy területen voltak divatban a 9. század közepe és a 10. század vége között; bizonyíték van helyi gyártásukra is. A Közép-Duna vidékéről néhány példány ismert, többségük viszont a poszt-nagymorva időszak központjainak területén sűrűsödik. A típus divatja is jóval rövidebb ideig, a 9. század végétől a 10. század közepéig tarthatott. A „Nyitra-típusú” öntött fülbevalók nem csupán kapcsolatot, de közvetlen népességmozgást is bizonyítanak a korai bolgár állam és Nyitra (Nitra, Szlovákia) területe közt.*

**Keywords:** *separately cast pendant, Nitra-Lupka, Northern Bulgaria, Post-Great Moravian Period, 9th–10th centuries*

**Kulcsszavak:** *külön öntött csüngő, Nyitra-Lupka, Észak-Bulgária, poszt-nagymorva időszak, 9–10. század*

### Introduction

The study discusses a specific type of early medieval earrings, called ‘Nitra-type’, which differed from typical Great Moravian jewellery made of wire or metal sheets. Their column-shaped pendants, articulated horizontally into a row of round or lenticular elements, were cast separately from the hoop of the earring. The lower part of some pendants also featured protrusions forming a horizontal star (Fig. 1). The lower part of the hoop was frequently wrapped around with a piece of wire for decorating it and keeping the pendant in place; these wires often did not persist. The production of such an earring required preparing first the three parts (the hoop, the wire, and the cast pendant) separately; it was more time-consuming than casting an earring in one

piece, but the completed earrings reflect higher quality workmanship than cast-in-one pieces.

The attention of Slovak research was first drawn to the earrings with a separately cast pendant after excavating an early medieval cemetery at Nitra-Lupka in the late 1950s (Chropovský 1959; Chropovský 1962). B. Chropovský referred to them as ‘Nitra-type jewellery’, assuming them to be a newly discovered type of Great Moravian earrings originating from Nitra and spreading to both the north and the south (Chropovský 1962, 213–214). B. Chropovský’s interpretation at the time was highly influenced by the lack of analogies, as the assemblage from Nitra-Lupka was one of the first excavated and published sites to yield such earrings.

The apparent connection between the Great Moravian territory and areas in the south soon

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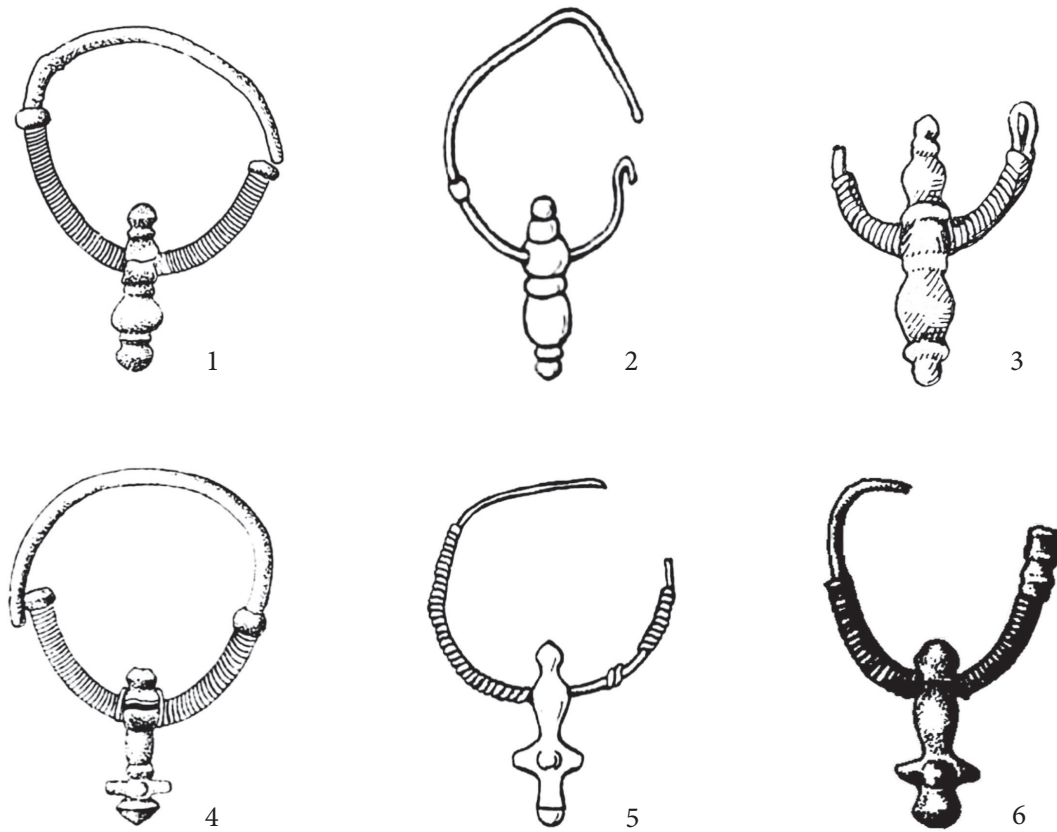


Fig. 1. 'Nitra-type' cast earrings. 1: Nitra-Lupka (Chropovský 1962, Obr. 20, 8); 2: Gradeshnitsa (Grigorov 2007, Obr. 9, 7); 3: Kurvingrad (Čorović-Ljubinković 1951, Sl. 12, 3); 4: Nitra-Lupka (Chropovský 1962, Obr. 20, 11); 5: Galiche (Grigorov 2007, Obr. 8, 9); 6: Dolné Lefantovce (Rejholcová 1992, Obr. 13, 8). Various scale

1. kép. "Nyitra-típusú" öntött fülbevalók. 1: Nitra-Lupka (Chropovský 1962, Obr. 20, 8); 2: Gradeshnitsa (Grigorov 2007, Obr. 9, 7); 3: Kurvingrad (Čorović-Ljubinković 1951, Sl. 12, 3); 4: Nyitra-Lupka (Chropovský 1962, Obr. 20, 11); 5: Galiche (Grigorov 2007, Obr. 8, 9); 6: Dolné Lefantovce (Rejholcová 1992, Obr. 13, 8). Különböző méretarányok

caught the attention of other researchers. M. Čorović-Ljubinković and Z. Kurnatowska both formulated their hypotheses about the presence of a uniform jewellery fashion alongside the Danube in the Early Medieval Period; they believed the 'Nitra-type' earrings did not spread from only one region but various production centres (Čorović-Ljubinković 1970, 115–116; Kurnatowska 1980, 161–162).

Zh. N. Vazharova, and M. and Dj. Janković published syntheses and catalogues with evaluations of the records of early medieval sites and earrings obtained as stray finds in northern Bulgaria and Serbia (Vazharova 1965; Vazharova 1976; Jankovich, Jankovich 1990). M. Janković also dedicated a separate study to the 'Nitra-type' cast earrings, presuming their local production in Eastern Serbia (Jankovich 1983, 104–105). Since primary publications of excavated 9th–10th-century sites in the Balkans are scarce, their works are still pivotal for the research of the local material culture.

T. Štefanovičová considered the population buried at Nitra-Lupka to be a group that had immigrated from Southeast Europe during the reign of Svätopluk, thus assuming a southern origin of the 'Nitra-type' earrings (Štefanovičová 1990, 219). K. Mesterházy supported her idea of people coming from the South but believed that it must have happened before Svätopluk's reign, already around the 830s, and interpreted the presence of these earrings at Nitra as an isolated phenomenon (Mesterházy 1991, 163). P. Langó, who focused on earrings with wire wrapping, considered the presence of earrings at Nitra-Lupka neither to be evidence of immigration from the Balkans nor as part of an isolated phenomenon but only a result of Byzantine-Balkan influence (Langó 2012, 253, 256, 260).

Currently, V. Grigorov devoted several works to collecting early medieval earrings from Bulgaria, including ones with a separately cast pendant (Grigorov 2004; Grigorov 2007, 22–24); he also offered

an interpretation of this find group in the context of Great Moravia (Grigorov 2013). Most 'Nitra-type' cast earrings correspond to V. Grigorov's Types III.1 and III.2 (Grigorov 2007, 23–24, Obr. 8, Obr. 9. 1–10; Grigorov 2013, 100–102, Obr. 2).

Despite 'Nitra-type' cast earrings are in the lime-light in the Balkans nowadays, they are still out of the focus of research in Central Europe. Accordingly, the main objective of this paper is to draw attention to the 'Nitra-type' cast earrings and analyse by comparing the respective archaeological records of the Middle and Lower Danube Regions, their dating, spatial distribution, origin, and means of spreading within this area.

#### *Evaluation of sources and methodology*

The 'Nitra-type' cast earrings included in this analysis could be classified into two categories based on the shape of the pendant: earrings with a simple segmented column-shaped pendant and ones with star-like protrusions on the lower part of the pendant. Since the two variants occur simultaneously in the Middle Danube Region and have been analysed together, there was no point in creating a new typochronological classification and discussing them separately.

Even though we use the term 'Nitra-type' earrings, we are aware that the original typological classification by Chropovský was not flawless as the original term covered various types of cast and sheet metal earrings not typical of Great Moravian cemeteries. We tried to prevent errors or mix-ups by focusing only on cast earrings, which are easily identified with great certainty in find assemblages.

Additionally, the term 'Nitra-type earrings' does not refer to the place of origin of the specimens. Despite that, rather than inventing a descriptive term, we kept 'Nitra-type' for its conciseness and widely understood reference to the earring type in focus but put it between single quotation marks to emphasise its lack of direct connection to this geographical location. Adoption of this term by researchers in Bulgaria or Serbia would be definitely unjustifiable as these earrings represent only one of the common early medieval jewellery types in the Lower Danube Region (referred to as '*naushnice sa posebno livenim priveskom*', Jankovich 1983, 104) or '*obetsi s profilirana visulka ot topcheta/s tri konichni varha visulka*' [earrings with a spherical/three-cone pendant'] Grigorov 2004, 72–73, Obr. 4, Obr. 5). Nonetheless,

Nitra-Lupka is a significant site with an unparalleled amount of 'Nitra-type' cast earrings outside the Lower Danube Region. Its record holds evidence of the possible immigration and presence of people from the South in the area of Nitra in the 9th–10th centuries, which definitely adds to the importance of the site.

J. Ogden pointed out that 'material and technique influence style to a considerable extent' (Ogden 1994, 153). For that reason, it is important to consider not only the morphological characteristics of the jewellery in focus but also the raw materials used and the traits of the technology applied in their making. The skills and abilities of the jewellers determine local fashion to a considerable extent – that is why the 'Nitra-type' cast earrings stand out so conspicuously amongst Middle Danube sheet metal and wire earrings.

Therefore, we differentiate between earrings with a separately cast pendant and cast-in-one pieces because even though both were cast, their production was highly dissimilar, and despite morphological similarities, the two can be considered to represent distinct types. Moreover, even if with some overlap, the cast-in-one forms succeeded the composite ones, and therefore, they were not included in the analysis.

Unfortunately, most finds (especially in the Balkans) come from only partially excavated cemeteries or are stray finds without a precise findspot or find context (see, e.g., Čorović-Ljubinković 1970, 115; Grigorov 2004, 69; Radichevich 2007, 349), which limits the possibilities of more detailed research.

The analysis of the spatial distribution of cast earrings includes sites in both the Middle and the Lower Danube Regions (Fig. 2). The characteristics of the distribution, dating, place of origin, and spread of the earrings in question in the two regions were also compared.

#### *Spatial distribution and origin*

Generally, the sites with 'Nitra-type' cast earrings are scattered along the Danube. They seem to have a strong bond with the river, especially in the Balkans, where the Danube represents the biggest natural connection to Central Europe. However, the settings of the sites with 'Nitra-type' cast earrings in the Middle and Lower Danube Regions are visibly different (Fig. 2).

The sites in the Lower Danube Region are scattered quite evenly over a wide area, covering a relatively narrow strip of land south of the Danube. The

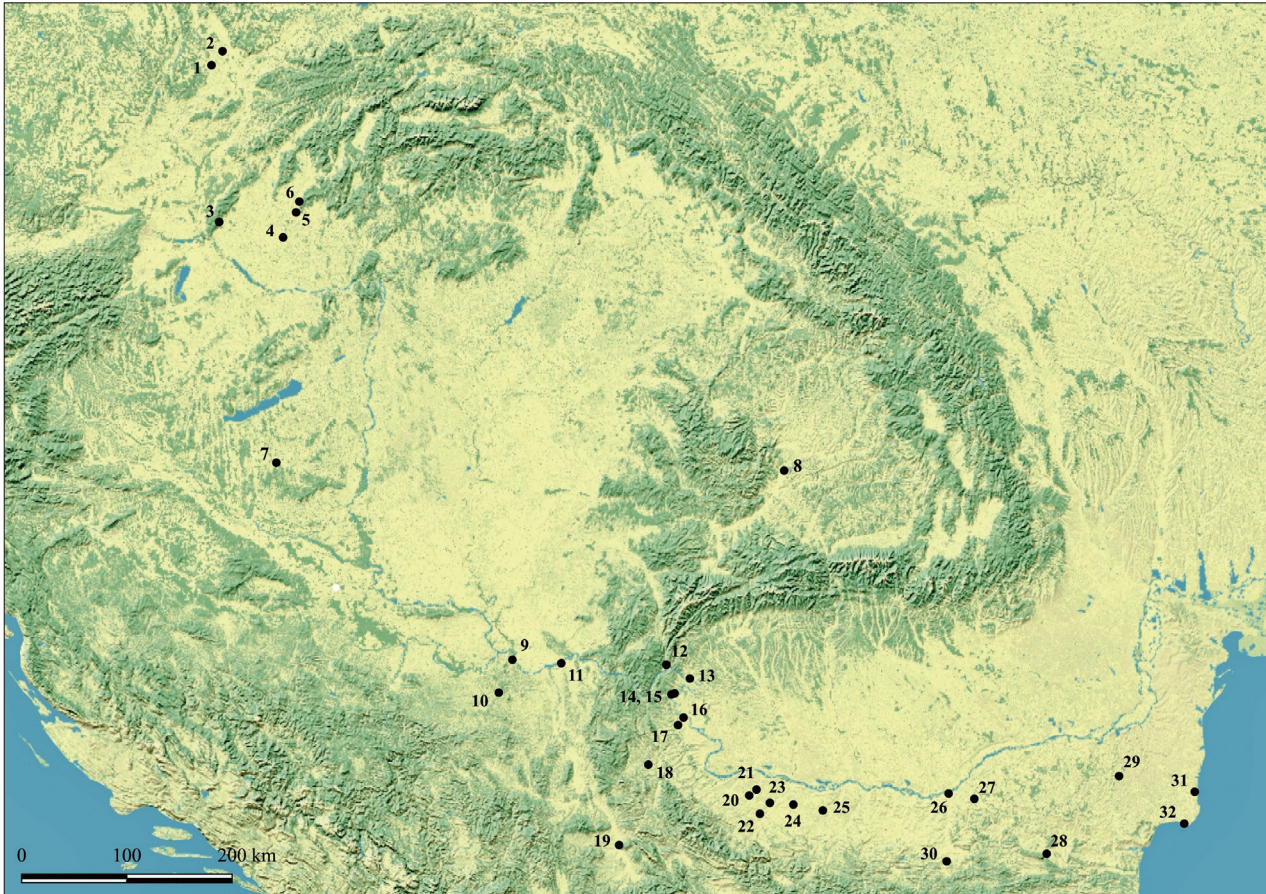


Fig. 2. Distribution of the sites with 'Nitra-type' cast earrings in the Lower and Middle Danube regions.

2. kép. Öntött „Nitra-típusú” fülbevalók lelőhelyei a Közép-Duna-medencében és az Al-Dunánál.

1: Prostějov-Okružní ulice; 2: Olomouc-Slavonín; 3: Svätý Jur-Neštich; 4: Trnovec nad Váhom-Horný Jatov; 5: Nitra-Lupka; 6: Dolné Lefantovce; 7: Kaposvár; 8: Ciumbrud; 9: Vinča; 10: Slatina; 11: Kostolac; 12: Orșova; 13: Trajanov most; 14: Brza Palanka; 15: Grabovica; 16: Prahovo; 17: Ključ-Negotin; 18: Gamzigrad; 19: Kurvingrad; 20: Jakimovo; 21: Valchedram; 22: Gradeshnitsa; 23: Mihajlovo; 24: Galiche; 25: Dolni Lukovit; 26: Batin; 27: Tabachka; 28: Veliki Preslav; 29: Kragulevo; 30: Veliko Tarnovo-Tsarevets; 31: Durankulak; 32: Balgarevo

only exception is a site on the northern bank of the Danube at Orșova in the Banat. V. Grigorov noticed a change in the spatial distribution of early medieval jewellery at the Danube's banks in Bulgaria throughout the 9th and 10th centuries. Since the second half of the 9th century, jewellery production shifted from the northern side of the Danube to the south. He explained this change as reflecting socio-political processes at the beginning of the 9th century when the Bulgars resettled thousands of Byzantine captives north of the Danube. However, after the Hungarians' arrival and expansion within the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century, several communities had to flee the territories where the Bulgars lost control and resettle in areas south of the Danube (Grigorov 2013, 111).

Even though the borders of the First Bulgarian State could have changed quite dynamically, the ar-

eas along the Danube as far west as Belgrade and the Raška Valley remained under Bulgar rule for a long time, representing a stable part of the state's territory (Takács 2016, 513; Radišić 2018, Map). In the territory of today's Serbia, 'Nitra-type' cast earrings concentrate mainly in the Timok Valley (*Тимочка Крајина*), especially in its northern part, the Ključ zone. The Timok Valley is a region defined by a meander of the Danube and bordered by the Timok River in the south. Ključ is a specific geographical zone in northeastern Serbia, at the eastern peripheries of the Carpathian Mountains, where the landscape changes from the mountainous region of the Iron Gates to the Wallachian Plain. Even though there is a tendency to look at the territories of today's Serbia and Bulgaria separately (according to the contemporary borders), the distribution of the 'Nitra-type' earrings reflects the unity of the whole

area along the Lower Danube. This unity was also a result of the integration of parts of today's Serbia into the territory of the First Bulgarian State during its expansion in the 9th and 10th centuries, as also corroborated by other archaeological evidence (Radišić 2018). The Timok Valley can be accessed from Bulgaria through the lowlands along the southern bank of the Danube. Therefore, the abundance of 'Nitra-type' cast earrings in the Timok Valley should not be surprising, as this region is, geographically, an integral part of the Lower Danube Region lowlands.

M. Janković believed that 'Nitra-type' cast earrings were produced by workshops in the Ključ zone, at the sites Trajan's Bridge and Prahovo (M. Jankovich 1983, 105, 111, Tab. I). Local production was made possible by some rich and accessible metallic ore deposits nearby, providing gold and iron, but mainly copper. The Bor metallogenic zone has always been an important copper resource (M. Jankovich 1983, 112; Jelenković et al. 2008, 353). The earliest evidence of mining and metallurgical activity in this region dates to the Roman Period, starting around the end of the 3rd century AD. Exploitation ceased at the turn of the 6th and 7th centuries, seemingly due to the low economic capacity of the newcomer Slavic population (Petković 2009, 189, 194). The number of sites along the Danube in the territory of today's Serbia increased again from the mid-9th century, when the area got under the control of the First Bulgarian State (Špehar 2015, 337; Bugarski, Radišić 2016, 97; Špehar 2017, 230). Mining and metallurgical activity likely also resumed around that time in the Timok Valley.

What is pointing to the origin of 'Nitra-type' cast earrings being located in the Lower Danube Region (more precisely, the territory of the First Bulgarian State) is not only more known sites in a larger area and evidence of their production there but also a bigger variety of shapes (see, e.g., Grigorov 2007, Obr. 8–9).

In contrast, the few known sites in the Middle Danube Region are concentrated near Nitra and Olomouc, two centres continuously settled in the post-Great Moravian Period. Unlike Great Moravian centres in South Moravia, which were either destroyed by the Hungarian raids or suffered a significant loss of importance, Olomouc kept its central position even in the 10th century and became the new administrative centre of the region (Kouřil, Procházka 2018, 62, 70; Šlězár 2018, 133). That Nitra and the surrounding settlements also retained their

central position is supported by the lack of evidence of any military conflict with the Hungarians, who, on the contrary, settled in Nitra area alongside the local population (Hanuliak, Rejholcová 1999, 102–103; Štefanovičová 2008, 144; König 2016, 186–187; Bednár, Ruttkay 2018, 230–238).

The key site in the Middle Danube Region regarding the earring type in focus is undoubtedly Nitra-Lupka, where 'Nitra-type' earrings appear in unusual abundance. The detailedness and elaboration of the earrings from Nitra-Lupka resemble the pieces found in the Lower Danube Region, which could indicate their southern origin; the lack of a workshop and other evidence of earring production at the Lupka site also corroborate the assumption that they were imported. These bronze earrings were not exclusive enough to be traded goods or part of a loot or tribute. Therefore, they probably got to Nitra with people, presumably as personal jewellery of women who came here from the south. Why they migrated to the area of Nitra has yet to be answered; if only women moved, one might suspect marriage arrangements in the background. In this light, the reason why the pottery produced in Nitra-Lupka is easy to be distinguished from other Great Moravian products (Fusek, Horváth 1998, 279) could be that at least a part of the Lupka population was of foreign origin. However, only further analyses (e.g., of strontium isotopes) can provide decisive evidence for this theory.

Not only earrings indicate that the population settled in Nitra-Lupka came from the territory of the First Bulgarian State: the record of the site also includes two lyre-shaped buckles (Chropovský 1962, Tab. 12. 8, Tab. 13. 15). Such buckles were used on belts with various functions, as parts of clothing, or horse harness (bridle, or stirrups); they appear in graves of both males and females (Révész 1987, 258–264). The type used to be interpreted as a mark of Hungarian presence (Révész 1987, 280; Langó 2012, 255), but such buckles were also common in the Lower Danube Region at the time (see, e.g., Vazharova 1976, Obr. 127. 3; M. Jankovich 1983, 107–108, T. 4. 16, T. 6. 3; Doncheva 2015, 11, Obr. 5). Lyre-shaped buckles were in fashion in the Lower Danube Region since the beginning of the 9th century (Stanilov 1991, 11). With their increasing popularity at the end of the 9th century (Doncheva 2015, 11), they could have been widespread in the Carpathian Basin thanks to the Hungarians; that, however, does not mean that the lyre-shaped buckles had

not been in use in the Balkans before their arrival. S. Stanilov observed slight differences between the lyre-shaped buckles found in Hungarian and Bulgarian cultural contexts and observed that the Hungarian pieces are more richly decorated (Stanilov 1995, 112). The finds from Nitra-Lupka are simple bronze buckles without any special decorative elements. Lyre-shaped buckles were produced by workshops at Zlatar and Novosel near Preslav; their products are similar to the pieces found at Nitra-Lupka (Boney, Doncheva 2011, Tab. 32. 209–210; Doncheva 2019, Obr. 2; Doncheva 2020, Tab. 1). Other analogies come, e.g., from Pliska (Stanilov 1991, Obr. 5. 1), Gradešnica (Mašov 1979, Fig. 15. 4), and Blandiana (Anghel, Ciugudean 1987, Fig. 5. 6).

The piece of twisted wire from Grave 42 in Nitra-Lupka (Chropovský 1962, Tab. 12. 7) could be a part of a horsewhip, a saddle, or a blanket (Tyurk et al. 2021, 106, 108). P. Langó also connected such finds with the Hungarians (Langó 2012, 255); however, similar pieces are also known from Bulgaria (Tyurk et al. 2021, 106). Based on the lack of any other Hungarian find in the cemetery and the connection represented by the lyre-shaped buckles, twisted wires and, most importantly, the ‘Nitra-type’ cast earrings with the territory of the First Bulgarian State, we assume these finds likely got to Nitra-Lupka from the Lower Danube Region.

The ways the ‘Nitra-type’ cast earrings reached Central Moravia remain unclear. Only four such earrings are known there, coming from two sites, Olomouc-Slavonín and Prostějov-Okružní ulice (Fojtík, Šmíd 2008, Tab. 27. 2–3; Kouřil 2009, Abb. 1. 2–3). Several finds in the area of Olomouc – mainly pottery and military equipment (see, e.g., Přichystalová, Kalábek 2014, 234, 245, 258) – point to a connection with the Lower Danube Region (Šlězár 2018, 121). Accordingly, the option of all these having been imported to Central Moravia from there cannot be excluded. However, the assumption of P. Kouřil that the spread of the ‘Nitra-type’ cast earrings to Moravia should be connected with Nitra rather than the Balkans directly seems more probable (Kouřil 2009, 176). More ‘Nitra-type’ cast earrings have been found in Nitra-Lupka than in any other site in the Middle Danube Region (one or two pieces per site, with the only exception of Trnovec nad Váhom-Horný Jatov, the record of which included two complete earrings and two others with possibly missing pendants; see Točík 1971, Taf. 30. 13–14, Taf. 30. 17, Taf. 46. 5). Based on that, we assume that Nitra-Lupka was the

‘core’ locality from where such earrings got to other sites in the territory of Slovakia and Central Moravia. The spread of the ‘Nitra-type’ cast earrings in the Middle Danube Region was probably an accompanying feature of relocating people. The assumption is also based that, except for Nitra-Lupka and Trnovec nad Váhom-Horný Jatov, only one grave contains such earrings at every known site. Interestingly, the single grave with such earrings in Dolné Lefantovce and Kaposvár, respectively, was that of a child (Bárdos 1985, 6; Rejholcová 1992, 261).

As the distribution map shows, no ‘Nitra-type’ earrings appear on the plains in the Carpathian Basin, where the majority of Hungarians settled after their arrival from the east (Fig. 2). The cemetery in Kaposvár was dated to the second half of the 9th century, which means it had been abandoned before the Hungarians actually arrived there (Bárdos 1985, 5). Even though Hungarians used to wear cast ornaments, they seem to have not acquired a taste for these earring types. In fact, it is a question whether they ever saw a ‘Nitra-type’ cast earring, as the type likely spread with migrating people before (as illustrated by the Kaposvár cemetery) or just around their arrival. As ‘Nitra-type’ cast earrings were probably used only for a short period, the production of the type had perhaps been discontinued before the encounter with this cultural element could have taken place.

‘Nitra-type’ cast earrings have also been found in the Ciunbrud cemetery in Transylvania (Dankanits, Ferenczi 1959, Fig. 4. 6, Fig. 4. 11). The pendants of the jewellery recovered from there were cast separately and were visibly modelled after ‘Nitra-type’ cast earrings. However, they lack the details characteristic of the pieces in the Lower Danube Region and Nitra-Lupka. Interestingly, the record of the cemetery (Dankanits, Ferenczi 1959, 610), just like Nitra-Lupka (Chropovský 1962, 215), did not contain any weapon.

There are 9th–10th-century cemeteries in Transylvania, along the middle course of the Mureş River between Orăştie and Ciunbrud, with burial customs and inventory closely linked to the Lower Danube Region (Gáll et al. 2020, 150–151). These cemeteries, also known as *Blandiana A group*, were interpreted as representing an era when the Bulgarians imposed power on the strategic points (especially the main trade routes) in the area to control the salt trade (Madgearu 2002–2003, 43; Madgearu 2005, 111; Yotov 2012, 328, 330). They only lost that

in the 10th century when the Hungarians settled in the Carpathian Basin and took over Transylvania (Madgearu 2002–2003, 57; Gáll 2013, 906; Grigorov 2013, 103, 115).

The Bulgarian presence, or at least cultural influence, is reflected mainly by the jewellery and pottery types in these cemeteries (see, e.g., Madgearu 2002–2003, 51–53; Grigorov 2013, 114–115; Takács 2016, 507–508). Even though the Ciumbrud cemetery was interpreted earlier as related to Great Moravia (Dankanits, Ferenczi 1959, 610; Chropovský 1962, 212, 214), it has become clear by today that the 9th–10th-century *Blandiana A group* has a connection with the First Bulgarian State instead, and that the 'Nitra-type' cast earrings arrived in Transylvania undoubtedly from the Lower Danube Region rather than Moravia or the area of Nitra.

#### *Dating and development of the type*

The 'Nitra-type' cast earrings were in vogue in the Middle and Lower Danube regions about the same time, with only slight differences. Their generally accepted dating is the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century, which could be considered the heydays of their use. The general increase in jewellery production in the Lower Danube Region is dated to the same period (M. Jankovich 1983, 111; Grigorov 2013, 110–111).

According to a thorough analysis by V. Grigorov, the 'Nitra-type' cast earrings with a pendant with star-like protrusions (Type III.1) appeared in the Lower Danube Region around the mid or late 9th century, a little bit earlier than the variant with the column-shaped pendant (Type III.2), which emerged around the end of the century. Both types remained in fashion until the last decades of the 10th century (Grigorov 2007, Obr. 26; Grigorov 2013, 102, Obr. 6. a).

K. Mesterházy interpreted the population of Nitra-Lupka as people fleeing the south and seeking refuge during the Bulgarian-Frankish wars, suggesting that the migration took place before the 830s (Mesterházy 1991, 163). However, this seems too early because the 'Nitra-type' cast earrings did not appear in the Lower Danube Region, the area of their origin, before the mid-9th century. The fact that both variants appear in Nitra-Lupka indicates that the related relocation occurred when the younger variant was already also in use, i.e., at the end of the 9th century.

P. Langó does not agree with the hypothesis that the earrings found in Nitra-Lupka testify to immigration from an area along the Lower Danube in the south (Langó 2012, 260), arguing that the discovered specimens are not the oldest in the Nitra area but are contemporary with the finds from other Middle Danube sites (Langó 2012, 256). However, we presume that the 'Nitra-type' cast earrings were used only for a short time, possibly a few decades, in the Middle Danube Region, and specimens got only occasionally to other sites around Nitra during this short period. It must be pointed out that only four graves are known in Slovakia (assumed that the finds from Svätý Jur-Neštich came from a disturbed grave; see Hanuliak 2004, 276) and two in Moravia to contain 'Nitra-type' cast earrings, which means only six individuals are known to have worn such earrings outside the Nitra-Lupka site. This dataset, small in number and limited in terms of relative chronology, makes it problematic for one to reconstruct the pattern of the type's spread in the Middle Danube Region in such a short period; hence, the finds appear to be contemporary with each other. Moreover, the limited and isolated presence of the 'Nitra-type' cast earrings in the Middle Danube Region (compared to the Lower Danube Region) and the parallel use of both variants also suggest their southern origin.

Based on the high number of child graves in Nitra-Lupka, the cemetery is assumed to have been used for only a short period, fifty years at most (Chropovský 1962, 216; Langó 2012, 255). That also means that if the 'Nitra-type' cast earrings first appeared in the Middle Danube Region at the end of the 9th century, they must have gone out of fashion by the mid-10th century at the latest. This dating seems to also be supported by archaeological evidence, as no such earrings are dated with certainty to the period after the mid-10th century. The younger one of the two graves (Grave 238) from Trnovec nad Váhom-Horný Jatov containing 'Nitra-type' cast earrings was dated to the 920s–950s (Hanuliak 1992, Abb. 23).

Since there is no evidence of the use of these earrings in the Middle Danube Region in the second half of the 10th century, their fashion probably did not catch on, and they were likely worn only by women who actually brought them directly from the Lower Danube Region.

The emergence of the cast-in-one earring variant imitating 'Nitra-type' cast earrings (e.g., Mesterházy 1991, Abb. 3. 2; Atanasov, Grigorov 2005, Tab. 4–5) might have also been amongst the reasons behind the

short popularity of the original variants. The shape and form of the earrings remained the same; only their production became simplified by casting all parts in one. The popularity of the cast-in-one variant was probably the combined result of efficient use of available technology and the systematisation of production, which made making such earrings less time-consuming and enabled mass production; thus, it became available for less wealthy people, who, by opting for that, could wear more decorative jewellery than the simple wire earrings of the 9th century.

### *Conclusions*

The earrings with a separately cast pendant, referred to as 'Nitra-type' cast earrings, stand out amongst the typical Great Moravian wire or sheet metal jewellery. The shape of the mould-cast specimens is quite similar, and the type is easy to identify in find assemblages. It has two variants: one with a simple, horizontally segmented column-shaped pendant and one with star-like protrusions on the lower part of the pendant. Well-preserved pieces often feature pieces of wire wrapped around the lower part of the hoop, added for decorating it and keeping the pendant in place. The discussion of the origin and spread of the 'Nitra-type' cast earrings is based on a comparison of their spatial distribution and dating in the Lower and Middle Danube regions.

The 'Nitra-type' cast earring type was developed in the Lower Danube Region, more precisely in the territory of the First Bulgarian State, where such earrings appear on sites in a wide zone along the southern bank of the Danube. Apart from sites in today's Bulgaria, the areas represented in the archaeological record by cemeteries with such earrings in today's Serbia (mainly the Ključ zone of the Timok Valley) and Transylvania (Ciurbrud) were also controlled by the Bulgars at that time. The specimens discovered in the Lower Danube Region were dated between the mid-9th and the last decades of the 10th century; the two composite variants were then replaced by a cast-in-one piece, which was considerably easier and faster to make.

'Nitra-type' cast earrings in the Middle Danube Region concentrate around Nitra and Olomouc, two centres that kept their administrative role even in the post-Moravian Period in the 10th century. They only remained in fashion in this area for quite a short time, from the end of the 9th to the mid-10th century. Their sporadic presence and shorter use there

(compared to the Lower Danube Region), as well as the fact that the known specimens concentrate only on a few sites around main centres, indicate that the earrings got into the area of Nitra from the territory of the First Bulgarian State. This hypothesis is also supported by the presence of lyre-shaped buckles and twisted wire objects (interpreted as part of a horse harness), typical for the Lower Danube Region, in the record of the respective sites. The newcomers must have settled in Nitra-Lupka, from where, again with relocating people, the earrings spread around occasionally. Future research with a focus on analysing the anthropological material of these sites could confirm or disprove the theory on these population movements.

The Hungarians never adopted the fashion of 'Nitra-type' cast earrings because they perhaps never even saw such jewellery or were simply not interested in these simple accessories; it is also possible that the production of this jewellery had ceased before the Hungarians arrived in the respective areas.

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### *List of sites with 'Nitra-type' cast earrings*

#### *Bulgaria*

Balgarevo (Milanova 1993);  
 Batin (Stanchev 1985);  
 Dolni Lukovit I (Vazharova 1976);  
 Durankulak (Melamed 1989);  
 Galiche (Vazharova 1976);  
 Gradeshnitsa (Mašov 1979);  
 Jakimovo (Milchev 1963);  
 Kragulevo (Bobcheva 1984);  
 Mihaylovo (Vazharova 1976);  
 Tabachka (Stanchev 1984);  
 Tsarevets (Dolmova, Ilcheva 1986);  
 Valchedram (Vazharova 1965; Milchev 1963);  
 Veliki Preslav (Mavrodinov 1959)

#### *Czech Republic*

Olomouc-Slavonín (Kouřil 2009);  
 Prostějov-Okružní ulice (Fojtík, Šmíd 2008)

<i>Hungary</i> Kaposvár (Bárdos 1985)	Kostolac (Cjorovich-Ljubinkovich 1951); Kurvingrad (Cjorovich-Ljubinkovich 1951); Prahovo (M. Jankovich 1983);
<i>Romania</i> Ciumbrud (Dankanits, Ferenczi 1959), Orșova (Mesterházy 1991)	Slatina (Jankovich, Jankovich 1990); Trajanov most (M. Jankovich 1983); Vinča (Ćorović-Ljubinković 1970)
<i>Serbia</i> Brza Palanka (Cjorovich-Ljubinkovich 1951); Gamzigrad (D. Jankovich 1983); Grabovica (Ercegović-Pavlović, Minić 1986; Jankovich, Jankovich 1990); Ključ-Negotin (M. Jankovich 1983);	<i>Slovakia</i> Dolné Lefantovce (Rejholcová 1992); Nitra-Lupka (Chropovský 1962); Svätý Jur-Neštich (Kraskovská 1963; Vavák 2019); Trnovec nad Váhom-Horný Jatov (Točík 1971)

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„NYITRA-TÍPUSÚ” ÖNTÖTT FÜLBEVALÓK  
A KÖZÉP-DUNA-MEDENCÉBEN ÉS AZ AL-DUNÁNÁL

*Összefoglalás*

Jelen tanulmány a „Nyitra-típusú”-nak nevezett, külön öntött függővel díszített karikafülbevalókkal foglalkozik; a típust elsőként B. Chropovský írta le (Chropovský 1962, 213–214). Két változata ismert: az egyszerűbb oszlopos csüngője vízszintesen tagolt, míg a másik hasonló csüngőjének alsó részén csillag alakban elhelyezett, vízszintes tüskék láthatók. A jó állapotú példányok karikájának alsó részén gyakran megfigyelhető az eredeti bronzdrót tekerceselés; ez nem csupán díszítette az ékszert, de a csüngőt is rögzítette a karikán.

Bár a típus a Balkánon folyamatosan a kutatás látókörében volt (Ćorović-Ljubinković 1970; Vužarova 1976; M. Jankovich 1983; Grigorov 2004; Atanasov, Grigorov 2005; Grigorov 2013), Közép-Európában csupán néhány munka foglalkozott vele (Štefanovičová 1990; Kouřil 2009; Langó 2012). Jelen

cikkben a típus eredetét, keltezését és elterjedését vizsgáljuk az Alsó- és Közép-Duna-vidék vonatkozó leleteinek összehasonlításával.

A „Nyitra-típusú” fülbevalók az Al-Duna régióban alakultak ki, és a 9. század közepétől a 10. század végéig voltak divatban; lelőhelyeik itt egy viszonylag keskeny sávban húzódnak a Duna déli partján, a folyóval közeli kapcsolatban. Mindkét variáns példányai helyi műhelyekben készültek. Itteni gyártásuk kialakulását V. Grigorov migrációval, bizánci foglyoknak (köztük ékszerészeknek és más kézműveseknek) az első bolgár állam területére való áttelepítésével magyarázza (Grigorov 2013, 111). Az Al-Duna-vidéken ezek a fülbevalók egyaránt jelen voltak a mai Észak-Bulgária és Szerbia területén (különösen az ország északkeleti részén, a Ključ-vidéken és a Timok folyó környékén);

előfordulásuk nyugati határa Belgrád környéke. Ez az alföld földrajzilag természetes egységet képez a Kárpátoktól keletre húzódó, a Duna által határolt síksággal, mely egykor bolgár fennhatóság alatt álló, kulturálisan is egységes terület volt.

Az Al-Duna mellett az erdélyi sóbányák, illetve a kapcsolódó kereskedelmi utak is bolgár ellenőrzés alá kerültek legalább a 9. század végétől a 10. század elejéig (Madgearu 2005, 111; Yotov 2012, 330; Grigorov 2013, 103, 115). A terület és az első bolgár állam kapcsolatát bizonyítják a Csombord (Ciumbrud, Románia) mellett talált „Nitra-típusú” fülbevalók. A temető a Blandiana A csoport, azaz a bolgárok erdélyi jelenlétével összefüggésbe hozható régészeti anyag lelőhelyeinek egyike (Grigorov 2013, 114–115; Takács 2016, 507–508). A honfoglaló magyarok bejövetelét követően a bolgárok a 10. században kivonulni kényszerültek Erdély területéről (Madgearu 2002–2003, 57). A magyarok a Kárpát-medencébe érkezésük után sem vették át a „Nitra-típusú” öntött fülbevalók divatját, mivel vagy egyáltalán nem találkoztak e tárgyakkal, vagy egyszerűen nem keltette fel az érdeklődésüket; az is

lehet, hogy a típus gyártása még az adott régiókba érkezésük előtt megszűnt.

A Közép-Duna-vidékről csak igen kevés ilyen fülbevaló ismert; ezek Nyitra és Olmütz (Olomouc, Cseh Köztársaság) térségében, a poszt-nagymorva időszak 10. századi túlélő központi településein koncentrálnak (Bednár, Ruttkay 2018, 230; Kouřil, Procházka 2018, 62, 70). A típus változatai itt viszonylag rövid ideig, a 9. század végétől a 10. század közepéig voltak divatban. A Közép-Duna-vidéken megfigyelt szórványos előfordulásuk, a Balkánhoz képest rövidebb divatjuk és a helyi központok körül való koncentrációjuk, valamint a kapcsolódó temetőkben talált lant alakú csatok arra utalnak, hogy az itt talált leletek az Al-Duna vidékéről, egy az első bolgár állam területéről bevándorolt csoport személyes tárgyaiként jutottak el elsőként a Nyitra-Lupka lelőhelyen feltárt temetőhöz kapcsolódó településre, majd innen további egyéni vándorlással, költözéssel a környező településekre is. Ezt a hipotézist a temetők antropológiai anyagának jövőbeli elemzése erősítheti vagy cáfolhatja majd meg.

