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## **ANTHROPOMORPHIC REPRESENTATIONS ON MEDIEVAL RINGS IN SERBIA**

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**Abstract:** Jewellery represents a very indicative and chronologically sensitive type of archaeological material, expressing the fashion and style of a certain period, and certain examples have characteristics related to specific cultures and indicating ethnic affiliation of persons wearing it. Medieval rings, just like jewellery in general, represented an integral part of the traditional garb as well as a decorative piece that an individual carried in life and was often buried with it too. Their unchanging shape makes them the most conservative piece of jewellery, which has retained the same form until the present time. What varied through time/space were materials the rings were made of, the quality of production, the choice of motives and also the appearance of the hoop and the shape of the head of the ring.

This paper offers an analysis of medieval rings with anthropomorphic representations. According to the number of figures represented on the head of the ring, two groups are distinguished: rings with one or with two human figures. With respect to the elements represented alongside the figure defining it more precisely, the first group includes rings with warriors and holy warriors. With respect to the variations in compositions with two figures, we can distinguish four groups of rings: the ones with a cross between human figures; the ones with hands raised in the act of benediction; the ones with a halo; the ones without a halo around the figures' heads.

The rings are dated back to the 12th century and the first decades of the 13th century. According to results of archaeological research, they are mostly found on necropoles in Eastern Serbia. Similar to the most of the rings from this period, they belong to the Byzantine cultural circle, i.e. they imitate Byzantine models, and certain examples can be linked to the strengthening of Christianity among the Slav populations of the Balkans.

**Keywords:** rings, anthropomorphic representations, human figures, archaeology, Middle Ages, Serbia.

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### 1. Introduction

**A**rchaeological research studies of medieval sites on the territory of Serbia have provided us with diverse mobile archaeological material. A considerable number of findings belong to jewellery, which usually comes from necropoles under scrutiny and seldom from settlements. However, museum collections also have certain examples that

are accidental findings or gifts from individuals, without any relevant data on the conditions in which they were found.

Jewellery represents a very indicative and chronologically sensitive type of archaeological material which can point to connections and relations between peoples in a given space through the acceptance of the style and fashion of the time when it was created. Embellishing and decorating are considered to be some of the earliest activities in human culture. Because of this, jewellery has had a wide range of applications in all historical periods and at all social levels. Jewellery represents an expression of fashion and style of a given period and certain examples have characteristics related to specific cultures and indicate ethnic affiliation of persons wearing it. Also, jewellery is very often an indicator of power, the material and social status of an individual within a community. The custom of ring wearing has been known since ancient Eastern Mediterranean civilisations. It was only in the Greek and later Hellenistic and Roman cultures that the ring shapes diversified due to different manufacture and decoration techniques. Rings from the Roman period have origins in Greek, Hellenistic and Celtic jewellery, while the elements of Roman and Byzantine jewellery were incorporated into the medieval ring style.<sup>1</sup>

Medieval rings represent artistic products with specific stylistic characteristics. Rings were a very widespread and favourite piece of hand jewellery worn by men during their lifetime and they were also often buried with them. They had multiple significance in the life of a medieval man: to decorate him, to show his importance, to protect him from the evil, to mystically connect him with another person (wedding bands), but also to serve as a signet when required. All the mentioned characteristics of a ring influenced its shape, ornamentation and topics. The basic ring shape is a round hoop; that is the reason why it is considered to be the most conservative piece of jewellery, having maintained the same form until today. Factors that varied through time and space were materials they were made of, the quality of production, the choice of motives, as well as the appearance of the hoop and the shape of the head of the ring. The band can be smooth or decorated with motives linked to the style of the given period, while the head is treated differently. It was at first in the same line with the hoop and then it became slightly larger than the hoop. Later it became more set apart, raised, enlarged or diminished, thus creating new forms of rings.

## 2. Findings of rings with anthropomorphic representations

Rings discussed in this paper were selected according to the motive of the decoration on their heads: human figures. We have ca twenty findings of rings with representations of human figures found during archaeological research studies of medieval sites in Serbia conducted so far and in necropolises and settlements, but also the ones acquired through accidental findings and those examples that came to museums through gifts and repurchases.<sup>2</sup> According to the number of figures, there are rings with heads decorated with one and those decorated with two human figures. Rings ornamented this way are the most common in necropolises from Eastern Serbia. A large number of them come from two sites,

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<sup>1</sup> Popović 1992: 9; Manojlović-Nikolić 2011: 118.

<sup>2</sup> Manojlović-Nikolić 2011: 117–126; *Id.* 2012: 173-183.

i.e. two necropolises, which were defined, according to grave goods of the deceased, as necropolises of rural population: from Mirijevo – Belgrade, the site of Čurtovo Brdo, on which burials were conducted during a longer period, from the 11th up to the 15th century, and the village of Trnjane, near Požarevac, in the area the locals call Staro groblje (“old cemetery”), which was used for burials in the period from the 11th to the 13th century.<sup>3</sup> Three rings were discovered at the site of Veliko Polje in Rgotina, the municipality of Knjaževac, which is dated to the period from the 9th to the 12th century.<sup>4</sup> Individual findings are associated with the site of Kurjače near Požarevac, the village of Debrč near Šabac and from Brestovik, the site of Visoka Ravan.<sup>5</sup> The finding conditions are unknown for two rings, except for the fact that one of them comes from the Danube river valley, while the documentation of the Historical Museum of Serbia states for the second one merely that it comes from the territory of Serbia.<sup>6</sup>

Representations of human figures are present on both banded and fully cast rings, which were mostly made of bronze or more rarely silver. Banded rings were molten in one-piece moulds, usually with open ends and a more or less widened head. The band of a finished ring would be bent so that the ends would meet or more often overlap and it is possible to note that some examples were closed into a hoop afterwards. The oval shape of the head is predominant and slightly diverges from the line of the hoop. The decoration could have been made during the very process of casting and then additionally worked on afterwards, thus correcting the errors made in casting or accentuating decorative details. However, there are also such examples where the decorations were incised entirely after the casting. The fully cast rings were made in two-part moulds and they have a closed hoop. Their heads are usually more massive, diverging from the hoop line, and are of oval, round, rectangular or often even hexagonal shape. The head is more accentuated than the hoop or the plastic shoulders.

Medieval banded rings were mostly made of bronze. It was cheap jewellery and, being widely available, it was affordable to a larger number of people. Fully cast rings were also predominately made of bronze and, to a smaller degree, of silver. Decorations for fully cast rings were incised into the mould, but they were also worked upon further or completely engraved afterwards. During archaeological excavations on the territory of Serbia, both banded and fully cast rings were found, which were made at the end of the 10th and beginning of the 11th centuries, although the largest number of findings of these rings comes from the 12th century.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. Analysis and interpretation of anthropomorphic representations

Anthropomorphic representations, i.e. depictions of human figures, are shown on the fields of ring heads of different shape, and they are almost evenly distributed on both banded

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<sup>3</sup> Bajalović-Birtašević 1960: 16–21, 33, 34; Marjanović-Vujović 1984: 87–92.

<sup>4</sup> Živić 1997: 330, 331, Tab. I/D, 1–3.

<sup>5</sup> Marjanović-Vujović 1968: 217, 218; Bikić 2010: 99, 100.

<sup>6</sup> Bajalović-Hadžić-Pešić 1984: 44, 91; Pop-Lazić 1972: 147, 148.

<sup>7</sup> Marjanović-Vujović 1984: 89–91, 112, 113.

and fully cast rings, more often on those made of bronze and more rarely on those made of silver.<sup>8</sup> According to the number of figures, two groups can be distinguished: rings decorated with one (Fig. 1) and rings decorated with two human figures (Fig. 2–4).<sup>9</sup>

### 3. 1. Rings with one human figure

The rings with representations of warriors, according to the elements shown in the hand of the said figure which would allow a closer classification, belong to the group of rings on which a single human figure is depicted. The whole composition is usually given in a very schematic, linear way, by carving in and by puncturing.

Rings that have a human figure represented on the head, either holding a spear, a sword or a mace and with a halo around the head of the said figure, are known in the literature as rings with representations of holy warriors (Fig. 1: 1, 2). This group also includes representations of human figures that hold some sort of a weapon, but the ones that do not have a halo are classified merely as warriors (Fig. 1: 3–5). Rings with representations of holy warriors and warriors, a total of nine, were found in the graves on the necropolises of Mirijevo and Trnjane, as well as the site of Veliko Polje in Rgotina, near Knjaževac, while the finding location remains unknown for the remaining two examples.

Representations of holy warriors can be seen on six rings. Two of those rings, from the necropolis of Mirijevo, were made of bronze by casting, one of them being fully cast and the other banded with open ends. They are dated into the 13th century.<sup>10</sup> A standing figure was represented on the circular head of both rings, carved in with a halo (nimbus) around his head. On one of those two rings, a figure was shown with a spear in his right hand (Fig. 1: 1). The hand is bent in the elbow and raised, holding up the upper part of the spear. The whole representation is given in a very schematic way; the body was not accentuated, so the legs were depicted as two lines coming from the shoulders of the figure. According to the interpretation given by Marija Bajalović-Birtašević, the figure shown here is holding a sword in his hand.<sup>11</sup> However, due to its length, we believe that the weapon shown cannot be defined as a sword and we are more prone to determine it as a spear as we have already stated in the given description of the composition. On the second ring, although also very stylized, the warrior figure was depicted with more details: the halo around the head of the figure is more accentuated and body contours, especially the stomach, are clearly drawn. The hands are shown bent in elbow and pointing downwards with a five-spiked mace in the right hand (Fig. 1: 2). This example is an exception due to the fact that the ring shoulders are accentuated with a rectilinear carved-in ornament – two short intersecting lines.

The representation of a holy warrior on a ring from the Medieval jewellery collection of the Historical Museum of Serbia is especially interesting. Unfortunately, the place and

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<sup>8</sup> Manojlović-Nikolić 2011: 119.

<sup>9</sup> Illustrations were not given for all findings in this paper, only those most characteristic and best preserved examples of rings.

<sup>10</sup> Bajalović-Birtašević 1960: 18, 21, 34, T. X/7, T. XII/1; Bajalović-Hadžić-Pešić 1984: 44, Cat. 361, 362, T. VII/8, 9.

<sup>11</sup> Bajalović-Birtašević 1960: 18.

further discovery conditions for this ring are unknown, but it can certainly be chronologically attributed to the 12th and first decades of the 13th century, i.e. the time when rings decorated this way were common on our medieval sites.<sup>12</sup> The ring is made of bronze and is fully cast, with a round head on which a very stylized figure of a holy warrior was carved in.<sup>13</sup> The holy warrior is shown in a short military uniform of the early Byzantine type, with a sword in his right hand, pointed upwards, and a halo around his head. Large wings bent downwards are what makes this representation of a holy warrior stand out from those already commented upon. Namely, a holy warrior depicted this way can be identified as Archangel Michael in the function of *princeps militiae caelestis*, as he is usually represented in the Eastern, but also the Western Christian iconography.<sup>14</sup> Three more rings with holy warrior representations are known from the site of Veliko Polje in Rgotina, the municipality of Knjaževac.<sup>15</sup> The rings from the site of Veliko Polje were made of bronze and fully cast, with the head set apart from the hoop; two of them have a round head and one has a hexagonal head. The representations are very schematized so that it is not possible to determine which type of weapon is depicted, i.e. if it is a sword or a spear. The only thing that is easy to single out is the halo around the figures' heads, which is the reason they were classified as rings with representations of holy warriors.<sup>16</sup>

According to topics of compositions depicted on them and the decorating manner, the rings with warrior representations also belong to the same type – rings with one human figure – since they also show a figure of one man, but only with a weapon and without a halo. We have three such rings: two from the necropolis of Trnjane and one from the Medieval jewellery collection of the Belgrade City Museum. Special attention is given to the ring from Trnjane, which is the only one of the nine rings analysed in this paper that was made of silver with a casting technique (Fig. 1: 3).<sup>17</sup> On the oval, widened head of the ring a human figure in motion is represented walking with a sword in his right hand, drawn out and raised. The exceptionally accentuated geometricality and linearity of the entire figure is perceptible the most in the upper part of the body, which is depicted as an almost equilateral triangle. Legs, hands and the sword are represented by straight and broken lines, the head is notably small and not proportional to the body, made by a circular imprinted puncture. Although shown with legs apart, which should indicate that the idea of the craftsman of this ring was to show liveliness and movement, the rigidity of the figure is dominant. The upper part of the body and the hands are shown *en face*, with the legs in profile, which might somewhat remind us of static representations of men on medieval tombstones known as *stećak*.<sup>18</sup> On the second ring from Trnjane, which was cast in bronze, a warrior with a shield is depicted.<sup>19</sup> An extremely schematically shown human figure holds

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<sup>12</sup> Pop-Lazić 1972: 147, Cat. 26, T. V/26.

<sup>13</sup> The only photo available of this ring is of a very poor quality, so it was not given as an illustration.

<sup>14</sup> Dalton 1925: T. LXIII; *Id.* 1961: 322,329.

<sup>15</sup> Živić 1997, 330, 331, Tab. I/D, 1–3.

<sup>16</sup> Due to very poor preservation level of these findings as well as insufficiently clear drawings from literature, a more detailed analysis of those representations was not possible; suitable illustrations were also unavailable.

<sup>17</sup> Marjanović-Vujović 1984: 25, 87, Grave 125.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*: 88.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*: 55, Grave 340.

a shield in his left hand and a smaller object in his right hand, maybe a shorter blade (Fig. 1: 4). The attitude of the figure, shield in one hand and blade in the other, would suggest a warrior shown in a defensive posture. This has been, for now, the only representation of a warrior with a shield, unlike the common depiction with a sword or a spear. Both rings from Trnjane are dated into the 12th century.<sup>20</sup>

The ring from the Medieval jewellery collection of the Belgrade City Museum of unknown discovery conditions was dated into the 12th century.<sup>21</sup> It is a banded bronze ring with an open hoop and an oval widened head, on which there is a linear carving of an unusual representation. A figure of a man is shown walking and carrying a sword upside-down in his left hand, holding its tip and carrying a branch-like object in his right hand (Fig. 1: 5). By the manner in which he carries the sword, it would seem that he is moving it, bringing it to someone or putting it aside after cutting the branch off (given the designation of the object in his right hand). Because of this and the way the figure was depicted, it cannot be said with certainty that this is indeed a warrior. The given representation rather suggests that this ring shows what we might call an everyday life scene, where the sword was used to cut off the branch.

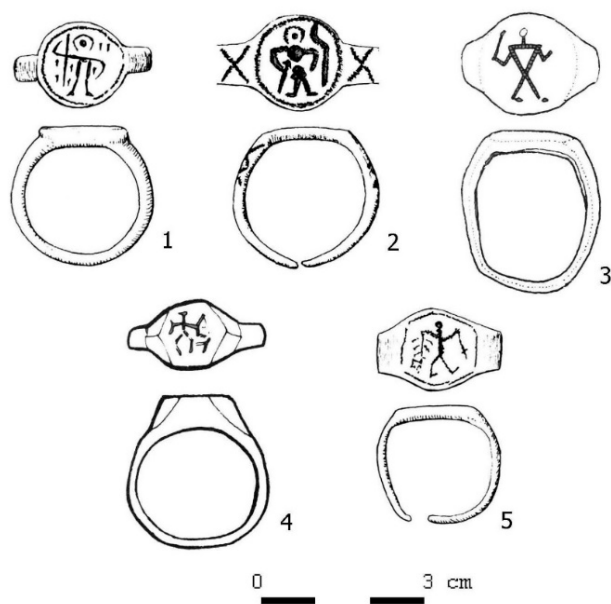


Fig. 1 – Rings with representations of holy warriors and warriors (Mirijevo: 1, 2; Trnjane: 3, 4; unknown finding location: 5)

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*: 112, 113.

<sup>21</sup> Bajalović-Hadžić-Pešić 1984: 91, 92, Cat. 313, T. VII/7.

### 3. 2. Rings with two human figures

According to the differences in the manner of representing the compositions with two figures standing and on the basis of findings we have at hand, we were able to establish four groups of rings: with a cross between human figures (Fig. 2), with hands raised in the act of benediction (Fig. 3), with a halo (Fig. 4: 1, 2), and without a halo around the head of figures depicted (Fig. 4: 3, 4).

There are three findings from the group of rings with the composition of a cross between figures on the head of the ring: from the necropolis of Trnjane, the village of Debrč near Šabac and from the Danube valley area, unknown site location (Fig. 2: 1–3).<sup>22</sup> Human figures represented in this way on medieval rings are connected through Roman and Byzantine rings to Christian themes.<sup>23</sup> Motives of saints are the most common on golden rings from the second half of the 4th up to the end of the 7th century. Those were usually two busts with a Latin cross between them; certain examples also have an inscription.<sup>24</sup> Representations of male and female standing figures holding a cross, interpreted as Emperor Constantine and Empress Helena, also belong to that same period. Representations of these two saints can also be found on amulets worn as a protection against ailments, especially the plague (*constantinatae*).<sup>25</sup> Findings of rings with this ornament from the 12th and the first decades of the 13th century, with two figures and a cross between them, can be interpreted as religious representations of Emperor Constantine and Empress Helena as well, but also as an imitation of those models, transferred to the representations of laic couples.<sup>26</sup>



Fig. 2 – Rings with two human figures with a cross between them  
(Trnjane: 1; Debrč: 2; unknown finding location: 3)

<sup>22</sup> Marjanović-Vujović 1984: 33, T. XII/190/1; *Id.* 1968: 218, T. I/8; Bajalović-Hadžić-Pešić 1984: 91, Cat. 311, T. VII/6.

<sup>23</sup> Radojković 1969: 78, note 40, with literature references.

<sup>24</sup> Radojković 1969: 80; Bikić 2010: 121, note 650, with literature references.

<sup>25</sup> Čorović-Ljubinković: 1958, 149.

<sup>26</sup> Milošević: 1990, 86.

Another interesting composition, which is also the most common one, is the representation of human figures in the act of benediction or, as it is interpreted sometimes – the baptism of Christ. Both figures are almost identical in size, only one – the one giving the benediction – is shown with his hand raised towards the head of the other. We have six rings with this decoration, three from the necropolis of Trnjane (Fig. 3: 1–3),<sup>27</sup> one from Kurjače (Fig. 3: 4),<sup>28</sup> and one from Brestovik (Fig. 3: 5),<sup>29</sup> while the finding location remains unknown for one ring (Fig. 3: 6).<sup>30</sup> There are two opposed tendencies and interpretations in the treatment of this composition: the belief in Christ as God, who must dominate in every scene, and a certain iconographic pattern according to which Christ should be somewhat smaller than St. John, since it is St. John who brings him into religion through baptism. Christ and St. John are almost the same size here; however, St. John's hand is elongated so that it reaches more or less above Christ's head. This way, both approaches were reconciled, i.e. Christ was not shown as smaller than St. John and the iconographic pattern was also taken into account with John's hand being above Christ's head. Simple drawing as well as the material that rings were made of (bronze) indicate that wider layers of population used them. We therefore assume that the composition might also be showing the benediction of a common man made after the scene of the baptism of Christ.



Fig. 3 – Rings with two human figures shown in the act of benediction (Trnjane: 1–3; Kurjače: 4; Brestovik: 5; unknown finding location: 6)

<sup>27</sup> Marjanović-Vujović: 1984, 35, 38, 39, 57, T. XIII/208, XV/229, XXVIII/353.

<sup>28</sup> Marjanović-Vujović: 1968, 218, T. II/1.

<sup>29</sup> Bikić 2010: 99, Fig. 70/6.

<sup>30</sup> Pop-Lazić 1972: 147, 148, Cat. 27, T. VI/27.



Standing figures with halos also belong to Christian themes, such as the representations of Christ, Virgin Mary and saints, which were very common on earlier Byzantine rings.<sup>31</sup> Figures of saints are known to us from the three rings from the necropolis of Trnjane (Fig. 4: 1, 2).<sup>32</sup> Standing figures with halos are depicted in a very simple, schematic manner, which is typical for the period of the 12th and the first decades of the 13th century; findings from Trnjane were dated into the 12th century.

Almost identical, though without a halo, are representations of two figures holding hands in a very relaxed manner in a genre scene shown on two rings from the necropolis of Mirijevo (Fig. 4: 3, 4).<sup>33</sup> It can be assumed that they are most likely the so-called engagement or betrothal rings. Figures shown this way originate from the representations of Emperor Constantine and Empress Helena as well as saints' figures.<sup>34</sup>

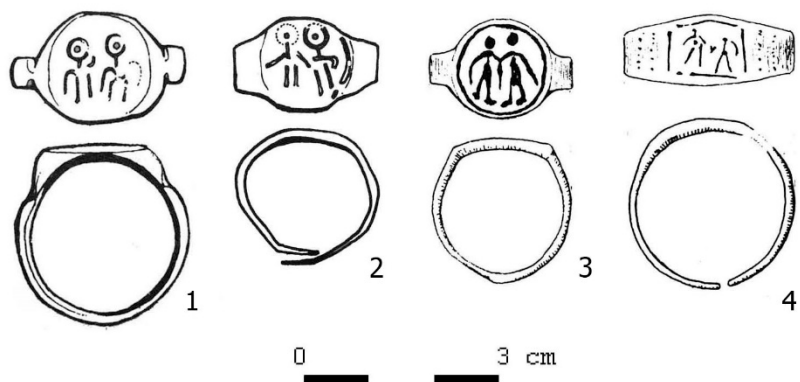


Fig. 4 – Rings with two human figures, with halos and without halos  
(Trnjane: 1–2; Mirijevo: 3, 4)

#### 4. Analogies and the question of models

Human figures fitted on fields of ring heads of different shapes and sizes are almost evenly represented on both banded and fully cast rings, most commonly made of bronze and more rarely made of silver.<sup>35</sup> Findings of rings with human figures represented, aside from the territory of Serbia, can relatively often be found on medieval sites in Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), dated into the period from the 11th to the 13th centuries. Direct analogies to the rings with the representations of holy warriors and

<sup>31</sup> Radojković 1969: 80.

<sup>32</sup> Marjanović-Vujović 1984: 22, 41, 55, T. VIII/94, XVI/241, XXVI/336.

<sup>33</sup> Bajalović-Birtašević 1960: 16, 19, 34, T. VIII/5, XVI/3; Bajalović-Hadžić-Pešić 1984: 92, 97, Cat. 414, 363, T. VII/5, VII/10.

<sup>34</sup> Radojković 1969: 80.

<sup>35</sup> Manojlović-Nikolić 2011: 119.

warriors can be found on six examples from Macedonia<sup>36</sup>, while analogies for rings with two human figures depicted are more numerous with ten findings in total.<sup>37</sup> Other jewellery elements from grave goods of a deceased contribute to a closer dating of rings with human figures; especially significant, though very rare, are findings of coins. A ring from a grave in Kurjače near Požarevac (Fig. 3: 4) and a ring from the necropolis of Mirijevo (Fig. 4: 4) were found with coins of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180), which contributes to a more precise dating of these findings.<sup>38</sup> *Folles* of Alexios III Angelos (1195–1203) as well as Friesach denars of Duke Andrew (1196–1203) and Duke Bernhard (1202–1230) were found on the necropolis of Trnjane and consequently the burial period for this necropolis was dated into the 13th century.<sup>39</sup>

By decorating rings with the representations of human figures, craftsmen of old showed their skill in representing artistic compositions which imitate early Christian and Byzantine rings.<sup>40</sup> Local craftsmen approached representations of a figural composition in their own manner: very schematized bodies were sketched only in few lines, with heads often merely as an ornament in the form of a small hole or a puncture. Simplified drawings and sketched figures impose the question of the model according to which they were made. Certain authors believe, when discussing and interpreting figural compositions, that the inspiration for showing human figures was found in numismatics, i.e. in the representations on coins.<sup>41</sup> However, other iconographic models such as miniatures or mosaics should also be taken into consideration perhaps and in later periods also fresco painting, considering that such representations occur only rarely on coins.<sup>42</sup> On the basis of an artistic analysis, Bojana Radojković finds that the primitiveness of the drawing, but also a certain ease and freedom of craftsmen, remind of preroman miniatures from the 9th century, but also the linearity typical for the reign of Komneni and its art.<sup>43</sup>

The representations of human figures with a halo in the act of benediction, as well as those with a cross between the two figures on a ring's head can also be linked to the strengthening of Christianity among the Slav population of the Balkan Peninsula.<sup>44</sup> The stylistic evenness of a large number of examples indicates that they were made in local workshops. Also, on the basis of the material, techniques and manner of decoration, we may conclude that this was the jewellery of the rural population.

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Medieval jewellery on the territory of Serbia, hence rings as well, had its own development route with certain specificities and characteristics dictated by the society of

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<sup>36</sup> Maneva 1992: 88-90, T. 84: 22/7; T. 85: 54/28, P/17, 31/35, 45/13, 14.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*: 88-90, T. 84: 22/12, 31/152, 44/1, 45/10, 45/18, 57/16, 57/21, 57/51, 63/14, 75/3.

<sup>38</sup> Marjanović-Vujović 1968: 217, 218; Bajalović-Hadži-Pešić 1984: 44.

<sup>39</sup> Marjanović-Vujović 1984: 109.

<sup>40</sup> Radojković 1969: 80.

<sup>41</sup> Marjanović-Vujović 1984: 91; Maneva 1992: 89; Milošević 1990: 88.

<sup>42</sup> Radojković 1969: 81, 82; Bikić 2010: 121.

<sup>43</sup> Radojković 1969: 81, 82.

<sup>44</sup> Bajalović-Hadži-Pešić 1984: 44; Marjanović-Vujović 1984: 89–91.

that time. It was influenced by economic prosperity, which led to a faster and more intense development of jewellery of different types, as well as cultural tendencies in this area. The model for making jewellery in all of the eastern cultural areas of the Balkan Peninsula was Byzantium and this deeply rooted tradition must have influenced Serbian territories as well. Medieval population of these areas, sometimes with more and sometimes with less success, imitated Byzantine jewellery thus also relying on Roman jewellery via Byzantium.<sup>45</sup> Byzantine influence, reflected in jewellery as well as the material culture in whole, is also linked to the political situation in this part of the Balkan Peninsula. Being part of the Byzantine administrative organization and intersected by many important roads along the Danube and the Morava river, the territory of today's Serbia was mostly developed within the historical frame of the Byzantine Empire, especially the time of the Komnenian dynasty.

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<sup>45</sup> Popović 1992: 9; Manojlović-Nikolić 2011: 118.

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## **ВЕСНА МАНОЈЛОВИЋ НИКОЛИЋ**

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### **АНТРОПОМОРФНЕ ПРЕДСТАВЕ НА СРЕДЊОВЕКОВНОМ ПРСТЕЊУ У СРБИЈИ**

#### **Резиме**

Накит представља веома индикативну и хронолошки осетљиву врсту археолошког материјала који изражава моду и стил једног времена, али и материјални и друштвени статус појединца у оквиру заједнице. Прстење, као и накит у целини, било је саставни део ношње, украс који је човек носио за живота, а често је са њим и сахрањиван. Својим непромењеним обликом - алка, сматра се најконзервативнијим делом накита, а оно што га разликује кроз време и простор јесте материјал и техника израде, орнамент као и облик главе прстена.

Антропоморфне представе на средњовековном прстењу заступљене су на тракастом и на пуно ливеном прстењу које је углавном рађено у бронзи, ређе у сребру. Овако орнаментисано прстење најбројније је из некропола у Миријеву и Трњану, датовано у 12. и прве деценије 13. века. Према броју приказаних фигура издвојено је прстење украшено са једном и прстење са две људске фигуре. Прстење на чијој глави је приказана једна људска фигура са копљем, мачем или буздованом у руци и ореолом око главе фигуре познато је као прстење са представом светих ратника (Сл. 1: 1, 2), док је прстење са представом људске фигуре такође са оружјем, али без ореола окарактерисано као ратници (Сл. 1: 3–5). На основу разноврсности у приказивању композиције са две фигуре разликујемо прстење с крстом између људских фигура (Сл. 2: 1–3), уздигнуте руке у гесту благосиљања (Сл. 3: 1–6), с ореолима (Сл. 4: 1–2) и без ореола (Сл. 4: 3–4) око глава приказаних фигура.

Прстење украшено људским фигурама представља релативно честу појаву и на средњовековним локалитетима у Македонији у период од 11. до 13. века. Ближем датовању доприносе и други елементи, а нарочито су значајни, иако ретки, налази новца. Прстен из гроба у Курјачу код Пожаревца (Сл. 3: 4) и прстен из некрополе у Миријеву (Сл. 4: 4) нађени су с новцем византијског цара Манојла I Комнина (1143-1180) што доприноси прецизнијем датовању ових налаза у 12. век

Поједностављен цртеж, скициране фигуре, намећу питање узора по коме су рађене. Могуће је да су средњовековни мајстори узор и инспирацију за приказивање фигуралних композиција на прстењу налазили у нумизматици, у представама са новца. Такође, треба разматрати и неке друге иконографске узоре, на пример са минијатура или мозаика, а у каснијем раздобљу и са фресака. Приказивање људских фигура са ореолом, у гесту благосиљања, као и са крстом између фигура могу се довести у везу и са јачањем хришћанства међу словенским становништвом Балканског полуострва.

Средњовековни накит на територији Србије имао је свој пут развоја са специфичностима и карактеристикама које је наметало тадашње друштво. На то је утицао економски просперитет који је допринео бржем и интензивнијем развоју накита различитих врста, као и културна

струјања на овом простору. Коментарисано прстење припада византијском културном кругу, тј. подражава византијске узор. Стилска уједначеност великог броја примерака указује да је рађено у домаћим радионицама. Такође, на основу материјала, технике и начина украшавања може се закључити да је реч о накиту сеоског становништва.

**Кључне речи:** прстење, антропоморфне представе, људске фигуре, археологија, средњи век, Србија.

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ISTRAŽIVANJA – JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCHES 27, 45-57