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PHD THESIS SUMMARY

THE EVOLUTION OF JEWELRY AND CLOTHING
ACCESSORIES FROM OLTENIA
BETWEEN XI AND XVIII TH CENTURY

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Without pretending this is a detailed analysis of the jewelry, this study aims to systemize the information regarding the Medieval jewelry from Oltenia in an unitary study, in order to obtain a bigger picture upon the jewelry categories and the methods used to obtain it, upon mapping and chronological setting. Elaborating a homogeneous work regarding the territory of Oltenia has been one of my goals since I have been named museographer at Oltenia's Museum from Craiova.

Oltenia, naturally bordered by the Danube, the Timiș - Cerna corridor/passage, Olt River and Southern Carpathians, correspond today, with more than 80% of its surface, with the historical province of Oltenia. In the Medieval period, this region was a part of Wallachia, and had a special political status due to the important administrative center from Craiova.

The chronological period studied in this work is between two very important moments for the regional history: the return of the Byzantine Empire on the Lower Danube and the rejoin of Oltenia with Walachia, following the Belgrade treaty from 1739.

This study presents a few of the metal processing characteristics on a long period of time. A catalogue containing the discoveries with both known and unknown precise context and discovery site, some of them being complete novelties. The presentation of the research stage, a brief history of Oltenia within the targeted chronological time frame, the jewelry typology are all contributing to structuring the evolution of Medieval jewelry in this part of the country.

The jewelry will be divided by function and typology. The head, neck, arms and hands ornaments and clothing accessories will be structured by form, execution technique and decorations. These ways of structure does not provide accurate indicators for the chronological differences and for the various stages of development for certain jewelry categories. Some shapes have been used for a very long time period and also represent a good example of eclecticism for the elements which compose the shape and decoration for an object.

A separated chapter will represent gathering and synthetising the information regarding the goldsmiths and their workshops. Both the instruments and the techniques used to manufacture the jewelry will be described. Based on the technical support provided by a physico-chemical testings lab, for some of the parts we have additional data regarding the materials used for the jewelry and the fabrication techniques and processes. Following the fluorescent and X-Rays test, we gather new information about the „jewelry industry” which was functioning in Oltenia. By the results of this study it is desired to have a better

understanding of the few available knowledge regarding the jewelry making tradition on this territory.

A jewel is both a work of art and piece with historical value, but also an individual ornamental object, which is subject to the fashion that is available during a time period, a crucial accessory of a fashionable costume from a certain age. When it becomes out of fashion, the jewel is melted and transformed in a new jewel with or without gems/precious stones. All these actions are defining it as a part with historical value, which has been discovered through archaeological excavations in the form of treasures and hoards containing only jewels or both jewels and coins.

The jewelry and clothing accessories from the 11th - 18th century have **diverse origins**: they were found in ancient settlements, cemeteries, or isolated tombs, following systematic archaeological researches and excavations or randomly discovered during farming procedures, especially the mixed treasures, containing both coins and jewelry. The metal detector discoveries are removing the parts from their historical context, but they bring additional information regarding the shapes, types and areas where the jewelry could be discovered.

For the territory of three counties (Dolj, Vâlcea, Olt county) are mentioned and signalled such discoveries of mixed treasures in Desa and Dobrești, Râmnicu Vâlcea and Ocnele Mari but also at Morunglav.

Regarding the discoveries of jewelry and clothing accessories coming from ancient settlements, we can notice that most of them are located in the proximity of inhabited areas - citadels, small cities, former Roman camps (Drobeta Turnu Severin, Copăceni, Ocnele Mari, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Craiova, Slatina), the treasures contain various types and categories of jewelry and accessories made from bronze, brass and silver especially consisting of rings, earrings but also veil pins, buckles and metal buttons. These findings can be dated between the 13th and 17th centuries, the early ones coming from Burila Mare (rings and other jewelry) and from the area of Drobeta, and the late ones being discovered in Craiova.

Isolated discoveries of singular artefacts, a ring or a buckle, have been signalled on the North-West side of Văleni village, in the vicinity of Brâncoveni monastery (ring), Gruia (buckle) and Țandăra (three rings).

During the 14th century there has been increased amount of discoveries, fact which can be related by the establishment and development of the medieval state. But with the continuous expansion of the Ottomans towards the Danube, in the XIV-XV centuries a wide range of treasures is encountered. The most complete image of ornamental trims is provided

by these accumulations of treasures. We are referring to the mixt treasures of coins and jewelry (Basarabi, Covei, Craiova „Manutanță”, Desa, Gogoșu, Jiana Mare, Jidoștița, Schela Cladovei and Verbița), the only case where the treasure was only containing jewelry is the discovery from Șimnic, which we may consider a treasure type accumulation and was handed to the Museum of Craiova as compact lot. The discovery from Goranu can also be included in this treasure lot.

The objects from the discovered treasures may vary both in numbers and typological diversity. There are some treasures which can be considered homogeneous while others are heterogeneous.

These treasures have been discovered during agricultural works, in areas which were populated centuries ago. Due to the fact they were not discovered during controlled archaeological research and diggings, some of the information regarding the discovery context have been lost before the treasures reach the institutions entitled to preserve, classify and study them.

Half of these treasures have been buried during the reign of Mircea the Elder or after his death. Mircea the Elder's reign (1386-1418) took place in the context of a strong Ottoman expansion towards the Danube, the Christian coalition formed to stop the Ottomans have been defeated in the battle of Kosovo. A direct result of this battle was that Baiazid took over Vidin and Nikopoles, posing a direct threat to Wallachia.

A great number of coin treasures have been found around the Severin Fortress, an important military and economical center, a strategic point in the North–West of Wallachia, also a transit and storing point for the merchants. The main cause of the treasures burial was the increased number of Ottoman plunder raids on the North of Danube. For treasures buried during Mircea the Elder's reign may be the reason to the continuous fights for supremacy over the Severin Fortress. After Mircea's death, the political struggle facilitated the increase of Turkish raids in the area.

This is the time where the treasures from Gogoșu, Basarabi, Covei, Jiana Mare, Șușița and Schela Cladovei have been buried, considering that between 1417-1420 numerous plunders of the auxiliary Ottoman troops took place to the North of the Danube. In this period, countless military operations were organised by the sultan Mehmet I, which affected the North of Oltenia. The declared aim for the military operations was the conquest of Severin fortress (1419) and the destruction of the fortification system built under the reign of Mircea the Elder.

Regarding the Jidoștița treasure, the discoverer's statements are contradicting: it was discovered either in a house cellar, either on the shore of Danube. The recovered coins can be dated between the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century, some of the coins being minted by Mircea the Elder.

The hoard accumulation of the treasure from Schela Cladovei has started in the economical development period from the middle of the 14th century and ended in the second decade of the 15th century, at the beginning of Mihail's I reign, the son of Mircea the Elder. The treasure did not contain silver coins minted under Sigismund of Luxemburg, due to the fact that these coins were losing their value. In return, the treasure contains gold jewelry, and gold and silver coins with high value at that period.

The first Covei treasure, which may have belonged to the Tismana Monastery, may have been buried somewhere in the troubled periods between 1512-1527 or 1538-1547.

For the Verbița treasure, the accumulation of its components may be established around 1598-1608. Numerous military actions took place in the first years of the 17th century: in 1600 the beys of Vidin and Nikopolos crossed the Danube in order to conquer Craiova, and were defeated by Preda Buzescu; in 1601 the Craiovești boyars together with the Buzescu boyars and noblemen dethroned Ieremia Movilă, while waiting for the arrival of Mihai the Brave, the rightful ruler; in 1604 Preda Buzescu fought and withstood the Tatar invasions.

The moment of burial for the second Afumați treasure (Covei) may be related with the uprising of the Seimens from 1653-1655, when in the region are documented numerous plunders and destruction at Sadova and Jitianu monasteries. The violence of the uprising forced the population to protect or bury their goods and flee towards Transilvania.

In the period of 1716-1718 Walachia was in a precarious situation: following the Austro-Venetian-Turkish War from July 1716, Oltenia enters under Austrian administration. The year of 1717 brought plunder to Oltenia from the Turkish and Tatar armies and the enslavement of a part of the population; 1718 was a year marked by drought followed by famine.

The constant abuse committed by the Austrian army and the raids led by the Vidin bey across the Danube probably determined the hiding and burial of the Desa treasure, which may be dated towards the end of the year 1721.

The military conflict between Russia, the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire create a state of uncertainty for the population from the right shore of Olt river, and many of them choose to take refuge to safer areas, in the fall of 1737. Towards the end of October,

an Austrian army is defeated close to Craiova by Romanian, Turkish-Tatar armies, led by Ioan Nicolae Mavrocordat. Following these events, the 18th century treasure discovered in Craiova, in a place called „Manutanță” was hidden and buried. The place of discovery is on a hill, with limited accessibility. The treasure consists of 48 pierced silver coins (1548-1729), probably hanged on a textile thread, a cross (fragmented) and a silver buckle.

The pieces from the treasure's inventory are made of silver and gilded silver. The use of gold was limited for the manufacturers of jewelry only for certain social categories (in our case, these can be noticed at the parts and discoveries from Schela Cladovei and Goranu) and this habit can be noticed in Oltenia. Besides gold and silver, bronze jewelry elements have been discovered, showing the social structure of the Romanian society at that time.

Regarding the discoveries from cemeteries or singular, isolated tombs, we can confirm that the funeral inventory of the tombs offer the general picture for the evolution of Medieval jewelry. We can notice the isolated tombs from Făcăi „Cimitir”, Drobeta „Gura Văii”, Găneasa, Hinova, Hinova, Scorila village (Vlădaia commune) and Vrancea village (Baloți commune). Probably we can assume the isolated tombs are in some cases part of cemeteries or burial lands and an extended research may confirm this theory. In Olt county, cemeteries were found and researched in Ipotești, Piatra Sat and Căluu monastery; in Mehedinți county, cemeteries were studied in Drobeta, Ostrovul Mare, Crivina, Izvoare, Gruia, Izâmșa, Tismana and Coșuștea monastery; in Dolj county at Portăreți, Bucovăț, Verbicioara and Craiova (Obedeanu Fountain and Făcăi-Braniște); in Vâlcea county the cemeteries from Făurești, Șirineasa and Bistrița monastery can be mentioned, and in Gorj county, the cemetery from Tismana monastery. A part of the tombs from the cemeteries of Crivina, Izvoarele, Tismana (Devesel commune, Mehedinți county) have been destroyed by the Danube and Olt river.

Examining the evolution of jewelry inventory extended on a large period of time allows us to mark the dynamics of its development. Some of the jewelry shapes of the Medieval period can be dated and related to the previous period of time, while others represent new types which reflect the development and evolution of fashion. There are some parts which have been worn for a long period of time like rings, earrings, clothing accessories (buttons, belt buckles), or bracelets (like the ones from torsioned and twisted wires, with decorative plates at both ends).

The bracelets are a type of jewelry which evolved in the Balkan Peninsula during the whole chronological period targeted in this study.

Also, it can be noticed in both space and time the spread of a certain decorative motive on groups of jewelry pieces. For this reason, following the forming process of the jewelry pieces is possible only by comparing the ones found in Romania with the ones from surrounding areas Bulgaria, Hungary, Macedonia, Croatia, Ukraine, Russia and also by emphasising the early prototypes.

Thus, it is necessary to observe the common traits but also the differences in the evolution of Medieval jewelry in this area.

For the presentation of the typological frame, the jewelry pieces were classified based on criterias (shape, setting) and by associating them with different objects from treasures and funeral contexts.

The jewelry pieces are functionally divided and typologically treated. Jewelry for the head, neck, arms and hands and also the clothing accessories are typologically structured, by shape, decoration motifs; even though these are not accurate indicators for the chronological differences, nor for the development stages of certain categories, due to the fact that some shapes have been used for long periods of time and also represent a good example of eclecticism for the elements which create the shape and setting of an object.

The jewelry types are diverse, grouped by the part of the body which they are decorating and according with the distribution in the decoration system of the costumes: tiaras, hair pins or veil pins, earrings (from the head jewelry category), necklaces, bead necklaces, medallions, pendants, crosses (neck jewelry), rings and bracelets (hands and arms jewelry), buckles and cords (belt jewelry) and various clothing accessories like appliques or buttons.

Tiaras are a part of head jewelry, with a long history, and are pieces or assemblies of pieces used for parades and other ceremonies, in order to show and confirm the social status of the person who bares them, mostly considered jewelry for females. Wearing tiaras was a fashion related to the oriental tradition, the Byzantine ceremonies and in the Carpatho-Danubian region these are related to Southern Danube traditions.

Very few tiaras were kept and discovered intact, these are rare and scarce pieces of Medieval jewelry. The individual discoveries have a form of complex decoration and they are among the most beautiful jewelry discoveries. The tiaras are composed jewelry pieces and are formed of plates, pendants, chains, earrings ornaments, support base and clamping or fixing systems.

The tiaras were made of metal, composed of multiple small plates (**band-shaped tiaras - type 1**) or textile materials with metal parts, which were worn on the forehead

(**forehead band tiaras - type 2**). Other types, surrounding the head over the veil, where made of decorative plates, from which hanged chains, appliques, small bells, stems (**pendant tiaras - type 3**) or were made using piercing techniques (**openwork tiaras - type 4**).

The parts composing and decorating the tiaras are made from various types of metal and fixed on a textile or leather straps. Besides metal (gold, silver, bronze) the tiaras have small cassettes decorated with gems or glass beads. By their ornaments, they are classified as openwork tiaras or *au repoussé* pendant tiaras. By the shape of the parts fixed on the supports, they can be cylindrical, hemispherical, with square, rectangular or triangular shaped plates.

This type of jewelry, appearing since the 12th century, has been discovered in eight settlements from Mehedinți, Dolj and Vâlcea. They were a part of funeral inventory (Drobeta „Terme”, Ostrovul Mare, Portărești, Vrancea village) or this type of jewelry was treasured, as the ones discovered in Covei, Jidoștița, and Gogoșu - the tresuring moment being explained by the turmoil periods from the end of the 14th century and the begining of the 15th century. The tiaras were no longer found towards the end of the 15th century and they were replaced as jewelry by the veil ornaments.

The earrings are among the widely distributed categories of Medieval jewelry. The term is generally used for the pieces used to decorate the ears, although it is obvious that some of them were used to decorate especially the ear lobes. Other types of earrings due to their shape and size, were worn over or around the ears, attached to the veil or cord (temple earrings) by chains or threads.

Very few models, especially the ones with simple shape, have been made using bronze. All the others were made using silver, sometimes with gilded silver. Most of the earrings were discovered in tombs, and only in three cases these were parts of buried treasures (Șușița, Jiana Mare, Jidoștița and Desa).

Depending on the complexity and shape of the attachment link, of the pendant or pendants inserted on the link, the earrings can be devided in multiple types, with differences in shapes and ornaments for each type.

In type 1 there can be found the simplest earrings which are made of silver or bronze link (silvered bronze sometimes), being used during the whole Medieval Period and discovered together with more complex shapes. Type 1 earrings are represented by a simple circle with open endings, mostly made of bronze or silver wire, sometimes even iron, with various thickness. The differences may appear regarding the open ends model and the link

decorations. The discoveries that reached our time are carefully preserved, but definitely the common people also had common earrings models, with no chronological relevance.

Type 2 - This category includes earrings made from looped wire or „interwoven/kniting” wire rings. They feature a circular section hoop with conical ends, wrapped in a twisted spiral wire secured with simple loops. This type emerged in the 11th century and is found in Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania, particularly in sites along the Danube, until the late 14th century. It has been discovered at Craiova „Fântâna Obedeanu”, Drobeta Turnu-Severin and Portărești.

Type 3 is based on multiple versions, its main aspect is **the introduction of a single spherical body (type 3a) or multiple spherical elements on the hoop (type 3b)**; this type was commonly used between the 12th and 15th centuries. Its variety is mainly determined by the shape and decoration of the beads.

Type 3a - Earrings with a single body inserted on the hoop. These earrings feature a spherical or ellipsoidal pendant, which could either be decorated or not. Earrings with a biconical setting on the hoop are large, heavy ornaments with a thick wire hoop. At the lower end of the hoop, two cones made of metal foil - either plain or decorated with filigree wire and granules - are attached. Earrings with a globular setting consist of a circular bent bar with a spherical pendant affixed at the bottom. These were mainly discovered in Byzantine provinces or regions under Byzantine influence and were widely circulated between the 10th and 15th centuries, possibly even later. They also come in various ornamental styles.

Type 3b - Earrings with multiple elements (three) on the hoop. This type includes earrings with a larger central biconical or spherical pendant, fenced by smaller, rounded beads. Decoration is achieved through granulation and filigree work. The hoop could be smooth or twisted at the upper section.

The earliest pendant earrings date back to the 9th century and emerged under Byzantine influence. Such pieces were probably locally crafted jewelry, not specific to any particular group or confined to a distinct area. Earrings with plain pendants date between the 10th and 14th centuries, while those adorned with granules appear later, dating from the 12th to 14th centuries. From the 12th century onwards, the central section of these earrings is often highlighted with a soldered wire and other decorative elements (filigree, granules, small metal tubes). During the same period, temple earrings became vastly used, circulating in various forms until the 16th century.

Type 4 - Question mark-shaped earrings: this type features an upper segment bent into a circular or semi-circular shape resembling a question mark, with the lower part

extending vertically and decorated with bundles of wire and various ornaments. Two variants can be distinguished based on the decoration of the vertical segment: the first, **variant 4a - decorated with a spirally wrapped wire bundle and a globular pendant** (found at Craiova "Fântâna Obedeanu" and Gura Văii).

For the second **variant 4b, decorated with granulated ornaments** we mention two pieces discovered at Gruia. Their geographical distribution includes Serbia (right bank of the Danube), northern Bulgaria and eastern Hungary between the 12th and 14th centuries. In Romania, they have also been found in southern Moldova and Dobrogea.

Type 5 - Mace-shaped pendant earrings: these earrings have a wide distribution throughout South-Eastern Europe, including Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, Transylvania and the Lower Danube. Silviu Oța classifies them into two groups: one with a thick lower bar and the other with the pendant attached to a simple hoop. They can be decorated with filigree and granules or cast, making them considered reproductions of Byzantine examples.

Question mark-shaped earrings served as the basis for larger, late-period jewelry, while mace-shaped pendant earrings appeared in the 11th century but were no longer worn in the following century.

By the late 15th century, large temple earrings were replaced by smaller, more delicate earrings, decorated with filigree, granules, precious stones or pearls. The reduction in diameter and the placement of decorative motifs along the hoop allowed for direct attachment to the veil, positioned vertically near the temples, with the decorative motif facing forward. The rest of the hoop was tucked under the edge of the veil, a position later adopted by veil pins.

Type 6 - Crescent-shaped earrings: these are smaller-sized earrings, richly decorated. Some luxurious example from the late 16th century were discovered at Căluu Monastery. The semi-circular setting is adorned with pearls, cabochon stones and filigree wire.

Type 7 - Radial-type earrings: at the 16th century necropolis in Bucovăț, Dolj county, two pairs of similar earrings were discovered. These earrings consist of a central disc decorated with rhombic motifs, filigree and granulation. Along the edges, multiple granulated peduncles are arranged radially. The pieces are made of silver and a silver-gold alloy. Similar examples, either in pairs or as single pieces, can be found in museums from Craiova, Vâlcea and Severin. This type was used during the 16th and 17th centuries.

For the 17th and 18th centuries, characteristic earrings imitated early medieval luxury jewelry (made of gold and silver) but were often crafted from inferior materials.

The earrings discovered in the hoard of Desa (Dolj county) belong to a different category (**type 8 - earrings with hanging pendants**), which had a wide distribution in the 17th and 18th centuries, though they were already present in the 15th century. From the central body of these earrings, one or more openwork pendants were suspended. Other similar pieces, likely originating from Oltenia, are preserved in historic collections in Craiova, Severin and Vâlcea.

For the 17-18th centuries, there can be found specific earrings, which imitate the early Middle Age shape of the high value products (gold and silver) through inferior materials.

By the late 16th century large temple earrings were replaced by smaller, more delicate earrings, decorated with filigree, granules, precious stones, or pearls (**type 9**). The decrease in diameter and the placement of decorative motifs along the hoop allowed for direct attachment to the veil, positioned vertically near the temples with the decorative motif facing forward. The rest of the hoop was tucked under the edge of the veil, a position later adopted by veil pins.

The role was to secure veils, previously served by tiaras, was later taken over by **decorative pins**. These consisted of a sharp metal shaft (made of brass, bronze, or silver) with a decorative element at the opposite end to prevent slipping. Serving a couple of functions, medieval head-covering ornaments may vary in shape and size. Considering their practical use, it is theoretically possible that they also supported larger temple earrings or fastened certain clothing elements.

Ornamental pins form a distinct category of jewelry that appears sporadically and is less commonly found than rings, earrings, or bracelets. They can also be found in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Based on weight and the size of their decorative elements, they can be classified into two categories: **hairpins** - smaller, lighter pieces with a clear functional role and **veil pins** - featuring larger, more elaborate decorative elements made of precious or silver-plated metals, sometimes even gilded.

For the Late Middle Ages, these pins can also be classified based on the decorative shape of the head: **spherical-headed pins (type 1)** - found between the 14th and 16th centuries (Portărești, Drobeta Turnu Severin), **polyhedral-headed pins** - dated to the 15th century, **spherical openwork-headed pins (type 2)** - usually decorated with granules and filigree (late 15th - 16th century: Jidoștița, Șimnic), **rosette-shaped-headed pins (type 3)** - larger in size, decorated with filigree, glass paste, granules, or pseudo-granules (late 16th - 17th century, even into the 18th century: Căluieu, Drobeta Turnu Severin). A special category

consists of **bird-shaped-headed pins (type 4)** - customized or three-dimensional, discovered in Drobeta Turnu Severin. Another category contains **simple-shaped hairpins (type 5)**, including pieces dating from the 13th to 15th centuries, found in the Drobeta area.

Such head ornaments persisted until the 18th century, as shown by dowry records. Late-period examples are also found in the museum collections of Drobeta Turnu Severin. Produced in Balkan workshops, these earrings have a hoop attached to a plaque with a movable axis. The metal plate features an oval or circular setting with a green or red gemstone/glass. Crescent-shaped pendants or small colored beads are attached to the body of the earring with links.

Neck Ornaments - neck jewelry includes a necklace composed of metal plates and tubes, several medallions (pendants), beads and crosses. Collars were not common in the Middle Ages since clothing was already richly decorated with embroidery.

Necklaces are rarely encountered and the only known example lacks information about its discovery site. It is chronologically placed in the 17th century.

Pendants were made of bronze or bone and could be part of a necklace or individually sewn onto a fabric band. Although little data is available about the three pieces in this category, they testify to the variety of this type of jewelry.

Beads were discovered both as singular pieces and as part of necklaces combining multiple types of elements. However, they were never found alone, always in association with metal jewelry or coins. Those pieces could be made of glass paste (in various shapes), shells or bone. The colors varied, including green, sand-colored, red, blue and black. One specimen featured yellow inserts.

Pectoral Crosses served religious and aesthetic purposes. Since the owner's desire to impress often outweighed the simplicity of a symbolic object, crosses worn around the neck were decorative pieces, discussed primarily for their aesthetic role. Three different crosses have been identified, one of which is a small, common-use metal example. Another is a silver secular cross, dated to the late 16th century (1599–1600). A secular cross-shaped medal was probably given to Stroe Buzescu by Wallachian ruler Nicolae Pătrașcu for distinguished military service.

Bracelets were among the most commonly worn jewelry types throughout the Middle Ages, used by both men and women. In iconographic sources, they are depicted as distinct decorative elements on clothing, also serving a practical function by securing sleeves. With the introduction of Ottoman fashion and wider sleeves, bracelets became standalone jewelry pieces.

Beyond their decorative purpose, certain bracelet types indicated the wearer's social status. This is confirmed by the discovery of gold bracelets, such as those from Dudașul Schelei.

Throughout their evolution, bracelets remained largely unchanged. The types found in Oltenia are also documented in other parts of Romania, the Balkan Peninsula, Russia, Crimea and Central Europe (in the early phase). Their development can be traced between the 11th and 16th centuries, with later forms being assimilated into folk art in regions north and south of the Danube and within the Ottoman Empire.

A remarkable fact is that historical documents, including legal records and dowry lists, mention bracelets exclusively in pairs, never as single items, which provides an important clue about the fashion of wearing this type of jewelry.

In Romanian historiography, twisted and braided bracelets with plates at the ends are considered part of a Byzantine tradition. This is linked to a „Byzantine civilization revival” at the Lower Danube, where traditional goldsmithing techniques were revitalized.

They are classified based on the material used (metal, glass) and manufacturing technique. The only type encountered in Oltenia between the 11th and 18th centuries, is the metal type which circulated in two parallel forms.

I. Closed bracelets - Extremely rare, with examples preserved in the Severin museum collection.

II. Bracelets with open ends are classified depending on the material used for their production (flat metal strip or wires) and by the execution technique (casting, twisting or braiding).

II.1. The band bracelets are cast from bronze and can have two versions, depending on the ends of the pieces: thin and wide, decorated with rows of dots (Izâmșa, Orlea - one piece in each location, Crivina - two pieces) or with straight ends (Izâmșa, Hinova - a specimen with one pointed head and one straight head, Cetatea Severinului - one silver plated piece). Also in this category we can include one of the two bracelets from Bucovăț necropolis, a late specimen made of brass.

II.2. Braided wire bracelets - silver specimens have been discovered at Gogoșu and Șușița, but also two gold specimens, one of them fragmented, which were found at Schela Cladovei. The bracelets are made from four silver or gold braided wires with terminal trapezoid plates. At the connection point between the wire and the plates there is a circular button. The bracelet from Șușița was made using five braided wires. All the mentioned before bracelets are decorated with filigree and granules on the plates from the ends.

II.3. Twisted wire bracelets - have been used during the entire considered period, the evolution of their basic type being dated between 10/11th - 16th centuries, subsequently the later models were assimilated in the popular art of the areas located to the South and the North of the Danube and other regions of the Ottoman Empire. These bracelets reach the South-Eastern European space together with the return of the Byzantium in the Balkanic Peninsula, made mostly of copper and rarely of silver. After the considerable decrease of power of the Byzantine Empire in 1204, varieties of these bracelets are produced especially of silver, and rarely of gold.

Rings are the most numerous pieces of jewelry discovered until present days, these jewelry pieces were worn both by men and women. They appear frequently in the discoveries from necropolis, settlements and rarely within treasures or hords. The rings provide more details and information than any other type of jewelry regarding the personality of the ring owner: social status, family status and preferences.

Besides the original feature of the setting, heraldic motifs and inscriptions represent a type of document about the owner of the ring. The pieces which can be directly associated with historical personalities and representing a brand of the social status or ranking are not numerous at all.

The signet ring of the Banu Manta came into the possession of the Darvari family and later in the collections of the Oltenia Museum. Manta is attested and named great ban of Craiova from August 31, 1596 to October 5, 1597, making himself noted for his military skills.

A member of the ruling family of Wallachia seems to have owned the two gold sealing rings from the treasure at Schela Cladovei. The first ring, made before 1365, is engraved with the heraldic insignia of the Wallachia: the shield, the helmet and the eagle. The second ring has the heads of two birds incised.

What will encourage special interest are the rings discovered at the Căluu Monastery, Olt county. If further research will confirm the information on the tombstones, there can be certainty in at least one case, that of lady Stanca, the wife of the great boyar Radu Buzescu, who is shown in the fresco portrait wearing four rings. This is not a singular case, in the era several rings could be worn at once.

A signet ring from the Oltenia Museum collections, made of gold with a precious stone, having ornaments made with enamel, has engraved in the negative, on a greenish stone, the name of a certain Janos Debrec(z)en(i). It could be that János S(zappanos)

Debreczani († c.1614) a Hungarian poet and archivist of the Nagyvárad / Oradea administration.

Regarding the execution techniques, the models and the materials used, a great variety is observed. They were made of diverse materials, but the vast majority of them are bronze, silver and brass. The execution techniques also differ from one period to another (hammering - the earliest ones, casting - the later ones), and the decoration techniques are varied in turn, being found in particular incising, granulation, filigree, enameling, the technique of making the decoration using *niello* but also the mounting of semi-precious stones. The decorative motifs used (but there are also undecorated pieces) are geometric (circles, rhombuses, zigzag lines), cross shapes, fir branches / tree of life, animals (and fantastic animals, usually appearing as a singular motif), birds - with the separate category of eagle/vulture, crown, shield, star, solar symbol (rosette), hearts, flower (lily), plant motifs, human figures or combined.

The rings represent the most numerous and heterogeneous typological group of jewelry. The difficulty of classifying in clear terms or distinct types is not easily overcome. They are specimens that can easily be classified into several types either by shape, functionality or decorative motifs.

Based on their functionality, they can be classified as **decorative rings (type I)** and **signet rings (type II)**. These two categories can be divided into four more, starting from the method of manufacture: *rings with a link cast together with the plate (type 1)* or *rings where the link and the plate do not form a combined structure (type 2)*, *rings with gem stones decorated mount (type 3)*, *braided rings* (only for decorative ones - **type 4**).

Clothing accessories are defined as utility, decorative and/or symbolic elements made mostly of fabric, leather or metal. You can also use mineral materials (glass, stones) but also hard materials of animal origin (bone material, ivory, mother-of-pearl from shells, coral, etc.) and vegetable (amber or wood). Suit accessories are fasteners in the form of pins, eyelets, buttons, belt components, but also ornaments that are added to the belt or directly on the garment, such as appliqués.

In the clothing accessories category, we include: **a.** support dependent parts, and **b.** independent pieces.

The first category of clothing accessories includes: the surguci or plume - a piece of jewelry attached to a fur hat (cușmă) or a regular hat, brooches, mantle chains, appliqués, sequins and clothes fasteners: clothespins, studs and buttons. The second category includes

waist high cords, belts with everything related to them - buckles, cuffs, belt ends, appliques, etc.

The presentation begins with head ornaments, specifically the *surguci* or plume, a piece of jewelry attached to a fur hat (*cușmă*) or a regular hat. It is believed that the circular brooches from the Covei hoard were used to decorate the head covers, as they have tubes on the reverse side designed to hold feathers. The *surguci* is a piece of jewelry of Turkish origin, initially worn by the sultan and later by officials as a symbol of their rank.

Singular discoveries include three pieces: two belt brooches from the Maria Istrati-Capșa collection and a cloak chain, accidentally discovered at Covei (Afumați).

The cloak chain was worn during the 16th century and the first half of the 17th century. It was found alongside a silver vessel and a single coin - a 1648 thaler. The piece consists of a multiple „loop -in-loop” chain and fastening components.

The brooches, made of silver, decorated with filigree and granulation, have a circular shape. Their decoration includes either seven filigree rosettes (one containing a gemstone setting) or granulated triangles within filigree circles. One of the brooches still retains its fastening system for attaching it to the belt.

Metal clothing appliquéés were used to adorn ceremonial clothing. To be attached to fabric, they needed to be sewn, so they were either perforated or had fastening systems on the reverse (such as a plate, hook or rivet). Before the 14th century, they were not part of a women's attire. The Gogoșu hoard preserves 22 out of 26 trefoil-shaped gilded silver appliquéés, featuring a central raised circular disc. Each corner has three rivets for attaching to fabric.

Clothing fasteners: hooks and clasps preceded buttons and were widely used. Such pieces have been discovered in multiple archaeological sites but were rarely mentioned in burial descriptions. They were used both to fasten garments and as decorative elements and were found in graves of both men and women. During excavations at Căluieu Monastery, two graves in the church's narthex (one belonging to a child) contained gold-plated silver sequins positioned near the chest. These sequins were teardrop-shaped and perforated for attachment to fabric with a twisted metallic threaded with cotton cord. In another grave, belonging to a man, small metal **chainmail rings** were preserved in the remains of textile fragments, along with simple **clasps**.

Decorative and functional jewelry - due to their craftsmanship and ornamentation, **buttons** can be considered true pieces of jewelry, made of bronze, silver, and gilded silver (Căluieu). Although buttons first appeared in the 11th century, they became widespread in

Europe only in the 13th century. Buttons were primarily used for fastening upper-body garments but also played a decorative role, complementing the artistic character of medieval clothing. They were listed in the dowry records, property inventories and sometimes mentioned alongside other jewelry.

The tight-fitting cut of medieval garments made buttons essential. Based on materials, a medieval attire featured: **type 1: metal buttons, type 2: textile buttons, type 3: bundles of threads fashioned into buttons.**

Type 1.1 - *Globular metallic buttons*: the most common type, featuring a loop for attachment, made of bronze, brass, silver or gilded silver. They are frequently found, though not always described in burial records (Ocnele Mari). These buttons also served as simple pendants (Făcăi-Braniște) or tiara decorations (Portărești).

Type 1.2 - *Cast silver buttons*: fourteen oval-shaped examples were found at Covei, differing in size. Their decoration includes engraved bands with floral motifs (tulips, acanthus leaves, and lilies in alternating patterns). A button from Făurești necropolis, Vâlcea County, has a rectangular loop and a fir tree branch motif extending from the bottom to the attachment loop.

Type 1.3 - *Cylindrical button*: a later, poorly crafted example of silver, with no exact discovery place. It consists of two hemispheres joined by a thin filigree-like wire, forming a petal-shaped openwork design (eight petals) with a central disk.

Another type is **type 4 - *Semi-spherical cap-shaped buttons*:** four richly decorated specimens exist in museum collections in Craiova and Vâlcea. Made of bronze, they were cast in a mold and feature vegetal motifs, such as flowers and meanders.

The last major category of clothing accessories consists of belt fittings, including buckles, belt tips, belt tongues, and appliqués, as well as belt clasps in later centuries.

The belts had multiple functions: a practical role - tightening the garment, a device for attaching accessories, and a symbol of rank and status. The 14th-16th century belt style, in terms of technique and decoration, belongs to the Byzantine-Balkan tradition. It is a precious metal belt (silver) with buckle closures, often decorated with appliqués or gemstones. This metal belt fashion continued in later centuries, with ornamented cords, buckle clasps, and chain belts becoming favored among noble families.

In the case of simple, undecorated belts (made of leather or textile), only the buckle has been preserved. Ornamented belts appliqués have left behind buckles, appliqués, belt tips, and links, with finds recorded at Ocnele Mari, Jiana Mare, Jidoștița, and Portărești (various rivets, buckles and iron links), Severin, Gogoșu, Jidoștița and Verbița (belt tips).

Until the 13th–14th centuries, belts were a symbol of social status. After this period, they became an integral and common part of clothing, worn by both men and women. The variety of belts was influenced by the combination of metals and manufacturing techniques, their shapes and components, and the range of decorative motifs (biblical scenes, real or imaginary animals and vegetal patterns).

Belt buckles of various shapes and sizes were crafted from metal, most commonly iron (Portărești, Gruia), bronze (eight specimens from Orlea, Ostrovul Mare, Copăcenii, and Severin), silver and gilded silver (Gogoșu, Verbița - found in hoards) and a single copper example (Gogoșu „Apa Roșie” site). They were produced by casting or hammering.

This category of clothing accessories includes several types of fasteners, though often only the buckle frame - used to secure the belt or sash - has been preserved. Based on their fastening mechanism, buckles fall into three types: **type 1**: simple loop fastening, without a plate; **type 2**: double-loop fastening; **type 3**: belt buckle with a fixing plate.

Later pieces, from the end of the studied period, include sashes and paftale clasps. **Sashes** made of velvet or leather bands, as well as articulated belts, were fastened with buckle clasps and richly decorated with various motifs and gemstones.

„Paftale” belt clasps were typical of women's clothing. As part of everyday attire, **belt buckle clasps** were a defining 17th-18th century accessory. While used by both men and women, their increased presence in women's fashion was noted over time. Paftale first appeared in medieval dress in the 15th century, and their use expanded in the following centuries, becoming both a fundamental accessory and a decorative piece. Some buckles featured perpendicular plates for securing the belt. These clasps were made exclusively of metal, but were often adorned with cabochon-set stones, polychrome glass, mother-of-pearl inlays, enamel, or nickel plating.

One of the key issues in the study of medieval jewelry is identifying the workshops where these pieces were produced. High-quality pieces were likely created in Byzantine or Western workshops, but possibly also in Transylvania or other neighboring centers. These objects reflect commercial and political relations and may have also served as diplomatic gifts. It is logical to assume that more modest pieces were crafted in local workshops. For example, one bronze bracelet from the Maria Istrati-Capșa collection was found in an unfinished state, suggesting local production.

Thus, a separate chapter in this study will focus on **metalworking techniques used by goldsmiths and silversmiths** during the medieval period. Goldsmiths were typically defined as artisans who crafted small jewelry pieces (from gold, silver and precious stones).

Silversmiths specialized in larger gold and silver objects, such as plates and tableware. Jewelers were often engaged in trade rather than production.

Metalworking and Decoration Techniques - a significant part of this study describes the techniques used to craft and decorate medieval jewelry. Understanding the elemental composition of artifacts helps improve knowledge about the medieval jewelry „industry” in the studied territory. The findings of this study aim to contribute to the limited understanding of jewelry-making traditions.

Analytical techniques provide insights into the manufacturing technologies of medieval artifacts and the origin of the metals used by the craftsmen. The analytical study of the fabrication techniques refers to all the production methods used by the goldsmiths: the type of alloy used in the jewel, the methods of producing it, the connection and ornaments of various parts etc.

The scientific methods used to study archaeological artifacts must be non-invasive, even though their detection limits may not always be fully satisfactory. Trace element analysis can provide additional insights into: the provenance of metals, trade routes, variations in techniques over time and space, the authenticity of artifacts.

Research on medieval jewelry composition in the Romanian space remains limited, but comparisons have been made with studies from Serbia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Hungary, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Poland.

Within the last years, the archaeologists have tried to find the missing information by publishing a serie of archaeological experiments regarding the fabrication process of the Medieval jewelry.

One of the first non-invasive analytical techniques used in archaeological studies is X-ray fluorescence (XRF). This method allows for the determination of multiple elements in metal samples.

A interesting question remains: Were complex alloys intentionally created in the Middle Ages?

Some alloys may have been developed to enhance the properties of metals used in jewelry-making. Others were designed to mimic the appearance of gold or silver, giving objects a more luxurious appearance while being made of cheaper materials. Alternatively, multi-component alloys may have resulted from limited access to raw materials, with metal reuse being a common practice.

Although the number of analyzed artifacts is too small to be statistically significant, they provide valuable insights into both manufacturing and decorative techniques, such as

mercury gilding in medieval jewelry. Further compositional analyses are required to confirm or challenge these findings and to offer a clearer perspective on medieval metallurgy, crafting techniques and possibly even the sources and trade networks of this period.