

Synergia I.

*A Kecskeméti Katona József Múzeum és
a Kecskeméti Középkorász Műhely évkönyve*

Studies from the Kecskemét Medieval Workshop

*Szerkesztette / Edited by:
Pánya István
Rácz Bernát*

2026



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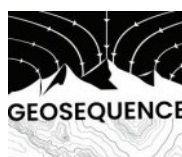
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Tartalomjegyzék | Table of contents

Szerkesztők előszava	11
Editors' preface	13
Köszönetnyilvánítás	15
Pánya István: Tizenöt év terepen – A 2011–2026 közötti településtörténeti kutatások áttekintése	17
Fifteen Years in the Fields – Overview of Settlement History Research in Bács-Kiskun County, 2011–2026	129
Múzeumbarátok arcképcsarnoka Volunteers of the Community Archaeology Programme	167
Pillanatképek a 2011–2026 közötti közösségi régészeti kutatásokból Snapshots from Community Archaeology Programmes, 2011–2026	179
Lektor Reviewer: K. Németh András, Laszlovszky József	
ANYAGKÖZLÉSEK PUBLICATION OF FINDS	
Pánya István – Rosta Szabolcs – Tóth Csaba: A madarasi anonim denárlelet The Anonymous Coin Hoard from Madaras	245
Lektor Reviewer: Ujszászi Róbert	
Vargha Mária – Pánya István: Árpád-kori ötvöskészlet Nemesnádudvarról Árpadian-age Goldsmith's Toolkit from Nemesnádudvar	281
Lektor Reviewer: Rácz Bernát	
Katona-Kiss Attila: Csillagbuzogányok a Duna–Tisza közéről (Bács–Kiskun vármegye) Star-Shaped Maces from the Danube–Tisza Interfluve (Bács-Kiskun County)	295
Lektor Reviewer: Ujszászi Róbert	
Samuel Beňa – István Pánya – Miklós Fóti: A Ceremonial Crossbow Bolt Head from the Medieval Village of Orbágyszentgyörgy Az orbágyszentgyörgyi ceremóniális számszeríj nyílhegy	309
Lektor Reviewer: Petr Žákovský	
K. Németh András: Gótikus emberalakos gyertyatartó talptöredéke Bogyiszló-Dalocsáról Gothic Human-Shaped Candelabrum Pedestal Fragment from Dalocsa	335
Lektor Reviewer: P. Horváth Viktória	
Dávid Áron: Vaseszközök Jászszenandrásról Medieval Iron Tools from Jászszenandrás	347
Lektor Reviewer: Terei György	
KATALÓGUSOK CATALOGUES	
Pánya István – Kovács Zoltán – Rosta Szabolcs: De instrumentis ferreis – Válogatás Bács-Kiskun vármegyei középkori és kora újkori vasleletekből	357
De instrumentis ferreis – A Selection of Medieval and Early Modern Iron Finds from Bács-Kiskun County	365
Katalógus / Catalogue	371
Lektor Reviewer: Müller Róbert, K. Németh András	

Tartalomjegyzék | Table of contents

Kálmán Dániel – Pánya István: Lenyomatok – Pecsétnyomók és pecsétgyűrűk Bács-Kiskun megyéből	427
Impressions – Seal Matrices and Signet Rings from Bács-Kiskun County	449
Katalógus / Catalogue	461
Lektor Reviewer: Lővei Pál	
 Pánya István – Steuer István – Tóth Csaba – Szilágyi Mihály – Tóth Szilárd – Lu Yahui – Hoppál Krisztina – Rosta Szabolcs – Dmytro Yanov: Parva moneta regalis – Községi régészeti kutatások során előkerült numizmatikai leletek Bács-Kiskun vármegyéből I.	517
Parva moneta regalis – Numismatic Finds from Community Archaeology Research Projects in Bács-Kiskun County	531
Katalógus / Catalogue	539
Lektor Reviewer: Ujszászi Róbert	
 FORRÁSKÖZLÉSEK SOURCES	
 Jack R. Wilson – Szabolcs Rosta – Bernát Rácz – István Pánya: Textual and Archaeological Evidence for Mongolian Looting Strategies in the Thirteenth Century A mongolok fosztogató stratégiája az írott források és a régészeti leletek tükrében	639
Lektor Reviewer: József Laszlovszky, István Vásáry	
 Pánya István – Rácz Bernát – Borbás Benjámin: A bátmonostori ágostonos remetekolostor kincstára Sources on the Medieval Furnishings of the Augustinian Friary of Bátmonostor	725
Lektor Reviewer: Szende László	
 Pánya István: Egy különös kincskereső, ifj. Burányi István A Strange Treasure Hunter, István Burányi Jr.	785
Lektor Reviewer: K. Németh András	
 TELEPÜLÉSTÖRTÉNET SETTLEMENT HISTORY	
 Ódor Péter: A középkori Tolna mezőváros egyházai és topográfiájuk Ecclesiastical Topography of the Medieval Market Town of Tolna	795
Lektor Reviewer: K. Németh András	
 Pánya István – Mesterházy Gábor – Klembala Zsombor: Emlékezés Kőhegyi Mihályra – A középkori Pető falu templomának kutatástörténete In Memory of Mihály Kőhegyi – The History of Research on the Medieval Church of Pető	821
Lektor Reviewer: K. Németh András	

An aerial photograph of a village, likely Orbágyszentszörgy, showing a cluster of houses with red-tiled roofs nestled among green fields and trees. The village is surrounded by agricultural land, with some fields appearing to be planted in crops like corn. The sky is overcast with soft clouds.

■ FIND PUBLICATION

ORBÁGYSZENTGYÖRGY

The former settlement from the west (Photo: István Pánya) | Az egykori település nyugatról

Samuel Beňa – Miklós Fóti – István Pánya

A Ceremonial Crossbow Bolt Head from the Medieval Village of Orbágyszentgyörgy

Introduction

The present artefact – a crossbow bolt head – was discovered during a metal detector survey at the site of the medieval village of Orbágyszentgyörgy, in the area of present-day Hajós village, Hungary. It measures approximately 11 cm in length, has a rhomboid-shaped cross-section, and features several engravings. One of its flanges bears engravings of a feather and a barely visible Gothic letter. The lower part of the bolt head, near the socket, appears to display scale motifs (figs. 1–2). Given the presence of these engravings (and its slightly larger size compared to a common crossbow bolt), it is reasonable to conclude that the artefact belongs to a well-documented but rare group of ceremonial crossbow bolt heads from East-Central Europe. All of these bolt heads exhibit variations of similar motifs, including ostrich feathers – often accompanied by a crown, emblematic monograms, and rounded scale patterns (figs. 3–5). The origin of these ceremonial bolt heads is traditionally traced to the Czech-speaking parts of the Bohemian Kingdom.

Geography and History of Orbágyszentgyörgy

The analysis and interpretation of the bolt presented in the study are greatly enhanced by the fact that archaeological, geographical, and historical data are available from the discovery site. In the following, we will briefly review the history and geographical conditions of the medieval Orbágyszentgyörgy village.

The village was situated on the edge of the Sárköz (Marsh Plain) and the Homokhátság (Sand Ridge). There is a difference of about 10 metres in elevation between the two landscapes. On the

western edge of the Sand Ridge, at the boundary of the two regions, stretched the Vörös-mocsár (Red Marsh), also known as Örjeg, from Kecel to the vicinity of Érsekcsanád. This was the bed of the old pre-Danube, which in the Middle Ages formed a narrow but difficult-to-cross north-south barrier.

Orbágyszentgyörgy was located on the southern border of Solt County.¹ To the south was Bodrog County and to the east stretched the Cuman settlements a few kilometres away. Principal roads led from here to the market towns of Baja, Solt, and Kecskemét. The main road from Kecskemét to Baja passed through the settlement, following the edge of the Sand Ridge. This route was passable even during rainy periods and was suitable for moving larger armies. From the east, the road came from the market town of Halas and the city of Szeged, heading west-northwest toward Kalocsa and Szekszárd, located on the other side of the Danube.

The former built-up area of the settlement existed in the area of Hajós Pincefalu (Wine Cellar Village). Here, the steep edge of the Sand Ridge is divided by several smaller east-west oriented valleys, providing natural access to the Örjeg marsh and from there to the lower-lying Sárköz areas. Traces of the settlement have been found both down below, on the edge of the marshy areas, and higher up, in the valleys and on the peninsula-like loess cliffs, during community archaeology research. The settlement's church stood on the northernmost promontory.²

¹ It is important to note that Solt County was established late, in the early sixteenth century. Before that, from the fourteenth century until the early sixteenth century, the area was called Solt District (Hung. Solti szék) and was part of Fejér County, see PÁNYA István 2017a–b.

² The site of the former church was excavated by István Knípl partially in 2012, see KJM Rég. Ad. 2015.5206.



Figure 1 – The crossbow bolt head from the medieval village of Orbágyszentgyörgy. (Photo: Szabolcs Kovács)
 1. kép – Számszerij nyílhegy a középkor Orbágyszentgyörgy faluból



Figure 2 – Details of engravings: an outline of a feather, a Gothic letter, and scale patterns. (Photo: Szabolcs Kovács)
 2. kép – Vésetek részletei: toll körvonalai, gótikus betű és pikkely minták



Figure 3 – A comparison of related bolt heads. Left to right: Prague (Czech Republic); Mstěnice (Czech Republic), Krosno (Poland); Munich (Germany), Vienna (Austria)³

3. kép – A tanulmányban bemutatott nyílhegyhez hasonló darabok összehasonlítása



Figure 4 – Bolt-heads from the National Museum of the Czech Republic. Left to right: Inv. no. H2-201; H2-277; close-ups.

4. kép – Nyílhegyek a Prágai Nemzeti Múzeumból

3 The images are from the following sources – Prague: KOULA, Jan 1893–1895 142; Mstěnice: MĚCHUROVÁ, Zdeňka 2009 128; Krosno: KOTOWICZ N. Piotr – MUZYCZUK Anna 2008 136; Budapest and Vienna: NICKEL, Helmut 1968 64, 66; Munich: Bayerisches Nationalmuseum. Inventory number: W 309. The image is available online at: <https://www.bayerisches-nationalmuseum.de/sammlung/00047801>



Figure 5 – Bolt-heads from the Hungarian National Museum. Left to right: Inv. no. 53.582; Inv. no. 53.583; close-ups.
 5. kép – Nyílhegyek a Magyar Nemzeti Múzeumból



Figure 6 – Place of the former church from the northwest (Photo: István Pányá)
 6. kép – Az egykori templom helye északnyugatról

In May 2025, a radar survey of the former church site was carried out with the help of surveyor Gergely Pázmándi. It turned out that the length of the building is about 24 metres (fig. 6-7). At least two phases of construction can be distinguished. Sometime in the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, a single nave church with a semicircular sanctuary, about 10 metres long, was built. It was rebuilt probably in the fifteenth century. The building may then have had a longer nave and a sacristy on the north side. This church is considered to be a very large one among the village churches, according to some seventy ground-penetrating radar surveys carried out on the Danube-Tisza Interfluvium Region. It is likely that its ruins must have been quite impressive, which is why the newly settled Swabian inhabitants may have thought that a building larger than a village church once stood here.

The crossbow bolt head presented in our study was found in the lower area near the swamp in October 2024 (fig. 8).⁴ The Swabians who settled here in the eighteenth century could still see the ruined parish church. The bare walls were thought to be the remains of a monastery, so the place was named Monastery Street (Klostr Kass > Kloster Gasse).⁵

The boundaries of the settlement can be reconstructed in broad terms (fig. 9). No data is available for its northern neighbour. The western neighbour of the medieval settlement was Hajósszentgyörgy, the boundary between them could have run along the line of the Örjeg or Vörös-mocsár. The north-western was Egyházasmorcs, which was also separated from it by the Örjeg marsh. The south-western neighbour was Ild (from the direction of Érsekhalma), but there is no data on the boundary between them. We know the topography of the eastern part of Orbágyszentgyörgy from charters dating back to 1488 and 1507.⁶ In this area of the settlement, the Kegyesfölde praedium was located. It is likely that it was an earlier settlement from the Árpadian Age (eleventh–thirteenth centuries), which became depopulated during the Mongol invasion of 1241. Afterward, it was incorporated into the later medieval territory of Orbágyszentgyörgy. To the southeast, Kegyesfölde bordered the village of Zside (Bodrog County), as well as the village of Csőszapa, inhabited by Cumans, and to the east, it was bordered by the village of Szentdemeter.⁷

Based on the results of community archaeology research, the settlement has been inhabited since the eleventh century. In the area of today's Hajós – Pincefalu, on the hill rising above the Sárköz, Árpadian-age pottery shards and coins have been found everywhere. The earliest find is an eleventh century silver denarius of King Saint Stephen (I. István), numerous twelfth-century anonymous Hungarian denarii, and copper coins of King Béla III discovered in the vineyards. The material from the second half of the thirteenth century is very scarce. Therefore, it is strongly suspected that, like the settlements in the Danube-Tisza region, it became deserted during the Mongol invasion of 1241 and after remaining empty for decades was resettled sometime in the first half of the fourteenth century. The first written record of the settlement dates from the middle of the century, in 1355,⁸ and based on the archival documents and archaeological finds, it existed with intermittent breaks until the early eighteenth century.⁹ Most of the settlements in Sárköz were owned by the Abbey of Szekszárd and the Archdiocese of Kalocsa during the late Middle Ages. Orbágyszentgyörgy did not belong to either, and its landowners were various minor noblemen (petty nobility – Hung. 'köznemes'). Their names are known from documents dating from the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹⁰

A significant event in the history of the settlement was the 1514 Dózsa Rebellion. On April 9, 1514, Tamás Bakócz, Archbishop of Esztergom, announced the Crusade against the Ottoman Empire in the St. George Square in Buda.¹¹ In response, recruitment began across the country, and both large and small camps were formed throughout Hungary, such as in Kalocsa in Solt County, in Eger in Heves County, and in Szerém County (Hungarian Szerémség/Szerém vármegye, Latin Syrmia, Serbian Srem), in the southern part of the country. However, due to the suspension of the planned campaign against the Ottomans, the armed peasants and minor nobles who had gathered attacked the villages and market towns in their path. According to the surviving documents, Priest Lawrence (Lőrinc pap), an important assistant of György Dózsa, left Kalocsa with his troops and headed toward the southern part of Solt County, after which he moved on to Bodrog County and eventually laid

4 The archaeological find was discovered by the civilian metal detectorist Vilmos Pisák.

5 WICKER Erika 2008 38; TJM Rég. Ad. 13.430.

6 1488: BALÁZS Gábor et al. 2007 64–66; DF 280109; DL 67332; DALMADY Ödön 1900 13; 1507: DL 67339.

7 About the praediums geography and history, see PÁNYA István – FÓTI Miklós 2025a and 2025b.

8 1355: ZO II. 593–594.

9 1384: DL 67297; 1429: DL 12096; 1455: DL 88299, DL 88300; 1467: DL 88446; 1520: DL 67340; 1520: DF 233515; PÁNYA István 2017a-b.

10 1488: DF 280109; DL 67332; 1507: DL 67339; 1520: DL 67341.

11 C. TÓTH Norbert 2015 32.



Figure 7 – Left: Ground-penetrating radar image (60 cm depth) of the church, Right: hypothetical layout of the church
 7. kép – Balra: az egykori templom radarképe (60 cm mélység). Jobbra: az épület feltételezett alaprajza



Figure 8 – The bolt at the moment of its discovery (Photos: István Pánya and Vilmos Pisák)
 8. kép – A nyílhegy az előkerülés pillanatában

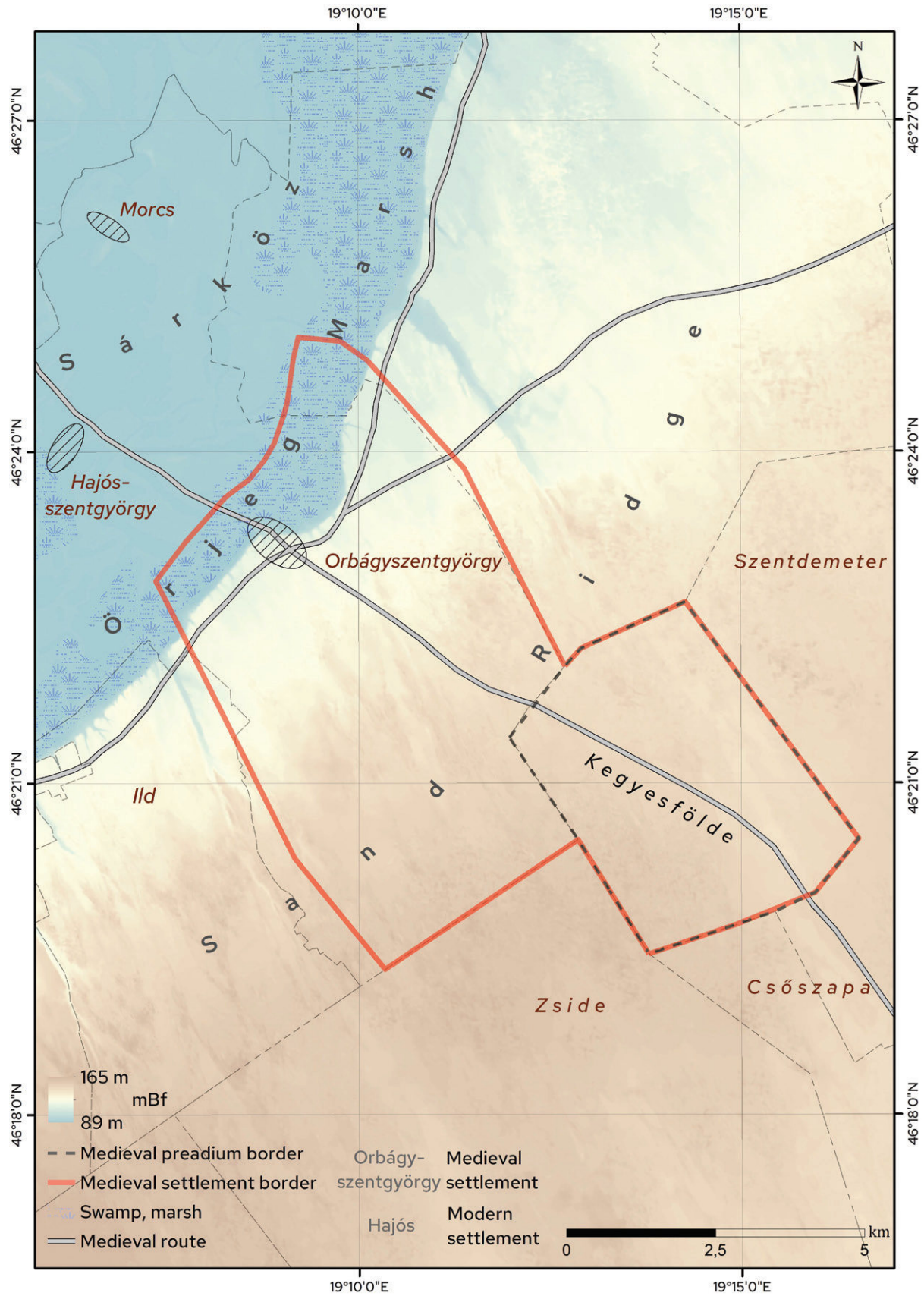


Figure 9 – The extent of the former settlement
9. kép – Az egykori település kiterjedése

siege to the beautifully constructed castle of the archbishop of Kalocsa in Bács.¹² Antal Verancsics also mentions a nobleman from the Sárköz (Solt County) named Antal Nagy, who, with his troops, devastated Bodrog and Bács Counties, and then continued toward Szerém County.¹³ It is possible that the insurgents led by this priest or nobleman plundered Orbágyszentgyörgy in 1514. This is confirmed by the charters issued by King Louis II in 1520, which were requested by the nobles of Orbágyszentgyörgy. The first document confirms that the nobles had the right of High justice (Latin: *jus gladii*, German: *Blutbann/ Blutgerichtsbarkeit*) long before, but the related charter was burned by the rebels during the “*rustica seditio*” (peasants’ uprising). The king decreed: “...to them, and to all their heirs and successors, we graciously confirm and grant full freedom, from the full extent of our royal power, to establish gallows, wheels, stakes, and other forms of torture on their property in the territory of the mentioned Orbágyszentgyörgy, located in the Solt District of Fejér County, and on any other property they own in our Kingdom of Hungary, in any county. They may arrest and execute any thieves, outlaws, night robbers, arsonists, murderers, poisoners, and other wrongdoers who are caught red-handed in their territory and are publicly and clearly apprehended at the crime scene, and the captured individuals – as the judge deems appropriate – may be hanged, broken on the wheel, decapitated, burned, or executed in accordance with their crimes, unworthiness, and other offenses.”¹⁴ The second charter reveals that, in addition to the right to judge, the local nobles were also granted the right to hold a free annual fair and weekly market: “...(King Louis II) graciously allowed and approved, on the same property, to hold free markets, or annual free fairs, on the feast days of Saint George the Martyr and Saint Margaret, and on the days immediately before and after these feasts, namely on any suitable and sufficient days each year, as well as a free weekly market every Monday, on any Monday, every year, under the same freedoms and privileges, forever.”¹⁵

These two sources indicate that the settlement could have suffered significant damage in 1514, and in addition to the charters, the nobles may have also incurred material losses. The basis for the robbery-plundering is clear: it was a noble settlement with market rights, and its financial

situation could have been known to those in the surrounding area. Furthermore, the two charters clearly show that the nobles of the settlement (members of the Derden, Szentmiklósi, Hajósi, Kalocza, Korláth, Lada, Kákonyi, Boldor, and other families) had already received their privileges much earlier.

Their surnames are typical Hungarian names, most of them characteristic of the Sárköz region, except two: the meaning and origin of the names Derden and Lada¹⁶ are unknown, but they also raise the possibility that there were foreign settlers (*hospes*) among the inhabitants of the village, which functioned as a market centre. It is worth making a small detour to look at the presence of *hospes* in the area under study.

We know little about the *hospes* of medieval settlements in the Danube-Tisza Interfluvial Region, and further in-depth research is needed on this topic. Only a few written sources are available on such settlements. For example, the village of Timak in Bodrog County (now the northern border of Bács-szentgyörgy, Hungary) was still inhabited in 1410, but by 1413 it had become a deserted village.¹⁷ The owner, László Töttös of Bátmonostor, resettled the area a year later, in 1414.¹⁸ Unfortunately, no documents remain in the Töttös family archives regarding the origin or ethnicity of the people involved in the resettlement. The presence of *hospites* can be indirectly inferred from place names, church patron saints, and other scattered data. In Bodrog County, south of Orbágyszentgyörgy, about 30 km away, there existed a settlement named Arany, in the area of modern-day Vaskút.¹⁹ The patron saint of its church was Saint Ulrich, a completely foreign name in the region (*ecclesia in honore sancti Oldrici constructa*).²⁰ Based on topographical and aerial archaeological surveys, it was revealed that the settlement had a so-called “spindle structure” (German: *Angerdorf*).²¹ This type of settlement is found with about 60% frequency in the lower part of the Danube-Tisza region (south of the Baja-Szeged line), while

16 It is possible that Lada ~ láda is of Hungarian origin („láda” means chest). Later, in 1578, the Lada family lived in Kecel, north of Orbágyszentgyörgy.

17 1410: ZO VI. 75; 1413: ZO VI. 225.

18 1414: ZO VI. 299.

19 1520: DL 82546; 1494: DL 88786; 1391: DL 78050.

20 1331: ZO I. 378; It is important to note that the most common patron saints in the Danube-Tisza Interfluvial area were Saint Nicholas, Saint George, Saint Thomas, Saint Martin, Saint Stephen, and Saint Ladislaus.

21 This settlement type was the most frequently used structural variant during the German eastern expansion in the High Middle Ages, and is still the most common in the northeastern area today, see HAVERSATH, Johann-Bernhard – RATUSNY, Armin 2002 50–53.

12 BARTA Gábor 1972 68.

13 1514: SZALAY László 1857 7–10.

14 1520: DL 67341, see the transcription MonRust 500., We can read about a similar loss of documents in the case of Locsmánd, Sopron County, which today belongs to Austria, see BARISKA István 1993 201.

15 1520: DL 67340; MonRust 495.

the remaining 40% of settlements have a linear street structure. North of this line, this type of settlement has only been sporadically found, with the majority of settlements being of the simple linear street type.²² Currently, we do not know the exact reasons behind the sharp distinction in settlement structures across the Danube-Tisza region. However, the existence of spindle-shaped settlements here is rather puzzling, as several towns in Upper Hungary, which were also inhabited by hospites during the Middle Ages (such as Szepsi/Moldava nad Bodvou, Kassa/Košice, and Bártfa/Bardejov, Slovakia), are of the same type.

Finally, if we look at the names of medieval settlements, we find many toponyms derived from ethnonyms: Lengyel ("Polish", in one location each in Bodrog²³ and Bács²⁴ Counties), Németi ("German", in one location each in Bodrog²⁵ and Bács²⁶ Counties), Tóti (meaning "Slavic/Slavonian", in Bodrog County²⁷), and Horváti ("Croatian", in Bács County²⁸). Besides these, there are medieval settlement names whose origins raise several questions. For example, Valfer²⁹ in Bodrog county, as well as Falkomar³⁰, Praga³¹, and Krakkó³² in the northern part of Bács County, within a small cluster of settlements. The latter two names perhaps preserve the memory of the source cities of Czech and Polish settlers. To summarise the above: the presence of hospites in the region between the Danube-Tisza Interfluvium during the Middle Ages is currently unexplored in historiography/archaeology. In the case of Orbágyszentgyörgy, the presence of hospites was suggested by the crossbow bolt head presented here, the privileges known from the charters of 1520, spindle-structured settlements, and some foreign-sounding surnames like Derden.³³

In the history of Orbágyszentgyörgy and its vicinity, another significant change was brought about by the Turkish campaign of 1526. The Battle of Mohács took place on August 29, ending in a complete defeat for the Hungarian army. After the battle, the Turkish troops marched to Buda and, a few days later, built a bridge over the Danube, crossing to the Pest side. It was mid-September, and the Turks needed to leave the country before the rainy autumn set in. The army split into two parts: the Rumelian corps, led by Grand Vizier Ibrahim, moved southeast along the Kecskemét – Félegyháza – Szer – Szeged route, while the other part, under the command of the Sultan, marched along the Danube, following the road by the river towards Baja – Zombor (Sombor, Serbia) – Pétervárad (Novi Sad, Serbia).³⁴ The Sultan's army, advancing southward, first ravaged Solt, then Bodrog County, and finally the densely populated area of Bács County closer to the Danube.³⁵

For about two decades after the Battle of Mohács our sources are silent regarding the village. The Turks began to establish a new vilayet, the province of Buda, just at the end of 1541. The first series of surveys of the new sanjaks subordinated to Buda were completed in 1546. That time Orbágy(szentgyörgy) was inhabited by 8 hanes (household, unit of taxation). Before Orbágy, the village of Hajós Szengyörgy (Hajósszentgyörgy) was recorded. Both villages are partly inhabited by the same families mentioned in the medieval charters. Surprisingly, we find the Derden family among the inhabitants of Hajós in 1546 as Dördem, and a decade later as Dörden. It is well known that the dialect of the time favoured the vowel ö instead of e. The Bodor family, which is present both in Hajós and Orbágy, are descendants of the noblemen called Boldor in the charters. Other names also show the continuity of the local population, a rather peculiar phenomenon in this region devastated by the Turks. The medieval Bodrog County to the south of Orbágy was completely depopulated after the Battle of Mohács (1526) and the first steps towards its re-colonisation by new settlers from the Balkans can be seen only decades later, in the fifties. The new survey of the sanjak, completed in 1560, shows that the population of Hajós had increased, but that of Orbágy had not changed. Significant

the immigration of the Rascians. The surname Cseh was relatively common in Bács County according to the tithe register of 1522.

22 PÁNYA István 2022 99.

23 1323: ZO I. 236; 1524: DL 89202; 1434: DL 80467.

24 1308: DF 285 246; 1408: CD X/4. 672.

25 1344: DL 87162.

26 1522: DL 37163.

27 1251, 1328, 1374: DL 209197; 1525: DL 89212.

28 1415: DF 280210; 1522: DL 37163.

29 1347: DL 76854; 1522: DL 37328; 1419: DL 79587; probably from the German personal name Volfurd, see 1157: CD II. 144; 1418: DF 226277.

30 1382: DL 6905; 1522: DL 37163, perhaps from the French term *faulconnier*, "falcon trainer".

31 1382: DL 6905; 1482: DL 18730.

32 1382: DL 6905; 1507: DF 250321; 1456: DL 15109, its name appears in the charters as *Krako/Crakow*.

33 Similarly, the fact that the *tahrir defteri* of 1546 listed a Dávid Cseh and his son Mójzes Cseh (Hung. *cseh*, i.e. Bohemian) in Hajósszentgyörgy, is also an indication of settlers of foreign origin. Mójzes Cseh persisted in the village until 1582 when he moved on, probably due to

34 BÁNLAKY József 1928 12/B/5; THÚRY József 1893 270; BÁNKÚTI Imre 1957 13.

35 THÚRY József 1896 72; VASS Előd 1980 18; ÉRDÚJHELYI Menyhért 1899,139; PÁNYA István 2017b 148; PFEIFFER Attila 2017 86.

changes can be observed ten years later, in 1570: Orbágy was on the way to complete depopulation, with only three taxpayers, but the population of Hajósszentgyörgy was also decreasing (14 households). After the list of the inhabitants we find the remark that the deserted places of Szen(t) György and Kegyös are the arable land of Hajósszentgyörgy. Both can be identified as medieval parts of Orbágyszentgyörgy: the latter is the equivalent of Kegyesfelde, the former can be understood by the eighteenth century maps, where the southern part of the vanished Orbágy was called praedium Szentgyörgy. This means that although the local nobility moved to the neighbouring village of Hajós, they were able to keep a part of their former lands under Ottoman rule.

The last detailed survey of the sanjak in 1578 testifies relevant ethnic changes in the region.³⁶ Only nine Hungarian heads of family were recorded in Hajósszentgyörgy—the Dörden family is also missing—and a new Rascian population arrived under the leadership of a knez, Mirča Radoje. The situation in the village of Orbágy was even more dramatic: all the Hungarians left and were replaced by Rascians, also led by a knez, Filip Radoje. Finally, the poll-tax register of 1590 gives a glimpse of the changes at the end of the century, showing that the South Slavic settlers were driven out by the Hungarians, as Orbágy was called a “deserted and abandoned village” (karye-i Orbad’, hali ve harabe). Hajós, on the other hand, remained an inhabited settlement, although its population changed considerably. Both new South Slavs and Hungarians were registered. For example, György Keserű could be a descendant of Ambrus Keserű de Orbágyszentgyörgy, who was mentioned in the charter of 1507.

The village of Orbágy(szentgyörgy) was uninhabited for decades from the Long Turkish Wars (1591–1606).³⁷ It was repopulated in the last decades of the seventeenth century, but in the first years of the eighteenth century, during Rákóczi’s War of Independence (1703–1711), its inhabitants left the village forever.³⁸ After the Swabian resettlement of Hajós at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Orbágy(szentgyörgy) was incorporated into the new village and merged into its eastern border.

Spatial Distribution of the Objects

Archaeologists, historians, and amateur researchers have documented around 30 similar crossbow bolts across Europe. However, many more examples likely exist, uncovered through undocumented finds. The majority of these items originate from regions that historically belonged to the late medieval Kingdom of Bohemia and the Kingdom of Hungary, with a total of 10 documented pieces from the Czech Republic. Including the present piece from Hajós/Orbágyszentgyörgy and five additional examples from Slovakia, the preserved corpus from the former Kingdom of Hungary amounts to 15 pieces.³⁹

This geographic distribution is most likely tied to the strong political, economic, and cultural ties between the two kingdoms throughout the fifteenth century and well into the sixteenth. During this period, the Kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary were frequently bound together through personal unions, a political legacy of the Emperor and King Sigismund of Luxembourg (1368–1437). Common rulers included not only Sigismund himself but also his son-in-law, Albert II of Habsburg (r. 1438–1439), and his successor, Ladislaus the Posthumous (r. 1453–1457).⁴⁰

A possible vector of cultural influence in this context may have been the influx of Bohemian mercenary troops under Ján Jiskra of Brandýs (ca. 1400–1469). The death of King Albert II in 1439 left the Kingdom of Hungary in political turmoil, triggering an intermittent war between two factions (1440–1444, 1449–1452). Albert’s death occurred shortly after the birth of his son, Ladislaus the Posthumous, leaving Hungary without an adult ruler. This situation sparked a power struggle between factions supporting the infant Ladislaus and those favouring Władysław III Jagiello (1424–1444) as king. The rivalry fractured the kingdom, weakened central authority, and plunged the realm into chaos.

In this volatile environment, Jiskra, an experienced leader from the Hussite wars (1419–1434), emerged as a significant figure. He was hired by Queen Elisabeth (1409–1442), the widow of King Albert, to secure the throne for her son Ladislaus.

36 FÓTI, Miklós 2023.

37 1638: BOROSY András 1998 23; 1657: BOROSY András 1983 76.

38 BÁRTH János 1984 175; 1670: BOROSY András 1984 85; 1698: BOROSY András 1986 14; 1699: BOROSY András 1986 67; 1700: BOROSY András 1986 159–160; BÁRTH János 1997 13.

39 A useful overview (including foundational literature) is provided by KOTOWICZ, N. Piotr – MUZYCZUK, Anna 2008 135–140 and ČÁMBAL, Radoslav et al. 2021 259–260. We would like to express our thanks to Dr. Petr Žákovský (Institute of Archaeology, Czech Academy of Sciences, Brno, Czech Republic) for his insight on this topic.

40 The topic of Sigismund of Luxembourg’s dynastic legacy and personal unions involving the Kingdom of Bohemia and Hungary has recently been treated by BURKHARDT, Julia 2023 224–236.

Backed by a hardened force of mercenaries from the lands of the Bohemian crown and Austria, Jiskra successfully took control of many counties in northern Hungary, where he fortified key towns and maintained a semi-autonomous military presence. After the crusade at Varna (1444) and the death of Władysław III, intermittent conflicts between Jiskra's forces and those of János Hunyadi (ca. 1400–1456), the newly elected governor (1446), continued with varying success until the acclamation of Ladislaus the Posthumous in 1452 and Jiskra's subsequent political marginalization.⁴¹

The years of fighting and general instability gave rise to the phenomenon of *bratřici* (or "brotherhoods"),⁴² groups of largely independent warrior bands led by Czech captains and augmented by Polish, Slovak, Hungarian, and even German-speaking members. Originally tied to Jiskra's armies serving the Habsburg cause, these bands gradually became independent, resorting to raiding and plundering to sustain themselves.

Aside from Hungary, the phenomenon of the *bratřici* also took root in the Duchy of Austria, which experienced a succession crisis following the sudden death of Ladislaus the Posthumous (1457). In addition to his role as King of Bohemia and Hungary, Ladislaus held territorial lordship in some areas of the Austrian lands. His death triggered a military-political struggle among the remaining members of the Habsburg dynasty, including Emperor Frederick III (1415–1493), Albrecht VI (1418–1463), and Sigismund of Tyrol (1427–1496), for control over Ladislaus's inheritance.

The warring power factions in Austria made significant use of mercenary bands from the Bohemian lands as well as the heterogeneous *bratřici* groups from Hungarian territories. Ján Jiskra himself was well acquainted with Frederick III, and many of his warriors fought under the Emperor's banner. While the mercenary groups provided a potent short-term solution to the conflict, the inability of faction leaders to adequately compensate them led to a situation of destabilisation similar to that in Hungary. Parts of Austria became plagued by the actions of newly formed warrior brotherhoods, which, with their honour tarnished and pockets empty, turned to devastation and brigandage. After a prolonged struggle, the Emperor, in cooperation

with the Austrian Estates, managed to contain the problem and expel the brotherhoods by 1465 – achieving this partially through buyouts and partially through military force.⁴³

The political elites of both Hungary and Bohemia, meanwhile, reacted to the death of Ladislaus the Posthumous by electing kings from among the domestic nobility: Matthias Hunyadi (1443–1490) in Hungary and George of Poděbrady (ca. 1420–1471) in Bohemia. During Matthias' rule, the final remnants of the *bratřici* were either eliminated or integrated into royal service, forming the backbone of the Hungarian king's famous mercenary forces. A final episode in this regard was the Battle of Veľké Kostoľany (1467, Hung. Nagykosztolány), in which the last large grouping of independent *bratřici* forces, led by the Czech captain Jan Švehla, made a final stand against the royal army. The attack was personally led by King Matthias, and after a month-long siege, the fortified camp of the *bratřici* was stormed. All of their leaders were either jailed or executed.⁴⁴

The Bohemian King George, a scion of the prominent Hussite baronial family of Kunštát, was well connected with the local warrior nobility. In fact, he was likely a military entrepreneur himself. Among the many ambitious activities he undertook during the years of interregnum in Bohemia (1440–1453) was the facilitation of mercenary forces for other princes in East-Central Europe. George was also well acquainted with the phenomenon of *bratřici* in Hungary and Austria. Some of these groups even served alongside the Bohemian royal army in various theaters of war during King George's reign.⁴⁵ In addition, one of George's most important army captains was the famous condottiere and former leader of a *bratřici* group in Austria, Václav Vlček of Čenov (ca. 1420–1500).⁴⁶ The royal government's entanglement with these semi-independent warrior groups – along with other controversies – became a major point of contention between King George and the growing baronial political opposition in 1465.⁴⁷

The political opposition, coupled with worsening relations regarding the Hussite religious question in the eyes of the papacy, caused the ties between the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary to become intertwined once again. This time, King Matthias launched a crusade against the Bohemian Hussites and his former father-in-law, George

41 For a comprehensive overview of key political events mentioned in this section see the following works: ENGEL Pál 2001 278–297; ČORNEJ, Petr – BARTLOVÁ, Milena 2007 71–77.

42 A summary on the subject of these brotherhoods may be found in: TRESP, Uwe 2004 59–69.

43 TRESP, Uwe 2004 47–52.

44 ENGEL Pál 2001 298–300, 309–311.

45 For the rise of George of Poděbrady on the political scene in Bohemia see: ČORNEJ, Petr – BARTLOVÁ, Milena 2007 90–111.

46 For Vlček see: TRESP, Uwe 2004 523.

47 The complaints are published and analysed in: BOUBÍN, Jaroslav 1992 85–97.

of Poděbrady. The political outcome of a series of devastating wars was a diarchy.⁴⁸ In 1469, the rebel faction of the Bohemian nobility and other power holders in the peripheral lands of the Bohemian Crown recognised Matthias as their sole legitimate ruler. This, in turn, established a shared administration between Hungary and parts of the Bohemian territories.

After King George's death in 1471, Vladislaus II Jagiellon (1456–1516) became the new ruler of a truncated Bohemian kingdom. Following Matthias's death in 1490, another period of personal union emerged, with Vladislaus and his son, Louis II (r. 1516–1526), ruling both realms until the Battle of Mohács in 1526.⁴⁹ Thus, while the origin of ceremonial bolt heads is traditionally traced to the Czech-speaking parts of the Bohemian Kingdom, the shared political destiny of the two realms during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries likely stimulated significant social, economic, and cultural exchanges. This, in turn, facilitated the dispersal of these rare objects deeper into the Hungarian kingdom, including the Danube–Tisza interfluvium.

Chronological Assessment of the Objects

When it comes to chronological assessment, two cases from the Czech Republic are crucial for estimating the timeline of these types of bolt heads. First, excavations at the extinct settlement of Mstěnice revealed not only fortified structures but also various items related to courtly life and arms and armor. Recently, Czech archaeologist Josef Unger connected the destruction of the village to the aforementioned conflict between King Matthias and George of Poděbrady, which engulfed the Moravian region in 1468. This event, in conjunction with dendrochronological analysis of the remains of fortifications, establishes a *terminus ante quem*

for the bolt head, tentatively placing it in the mid-fifteenth century.⁵⁰

Second, a bolt head was discovered in a fortified tower in Český Šternberk. Based on archaeological excavations and preserved documents, it was established that the tower was constructed in 1476 and destroyed by fire in the early sixteenth century. Therefore, based on these case studies, it is assumed that most of these bolt heads date from the mid-fifteenth to early sixteenth century.⁵¹

Further finds of similar artefacts have been reported in Poland, Austria, and Germany. In terms of size and stylistic depictions, they align closely with artefacts found in Bohemian–Hungarian regions. However, some finds are located far from these core areas in seemingly unusual archaeological contexts. One notable example is a bolt head discovered during archaeological excavations in the town of Zheleznodorozhny in the Kaliningrad oblast, Russia (formerly Gerdauen in German), during construction works of the Orthodox Church of Saint Peter and Paul.⁵²

The church's location is within walking distance of the medieval ruins of the Gerdauen castle. In the fifteenth century, the town and castle alternated between belonging to the Teutonic Order and falling under the suzerainty of the Kingdom of Poland. The area was also a theater of military operations during the Thirteen Years' War (1454–1466), in which mercenaries from the Kingdom of Bohemia participated. The bolt head likely relates to these events.⁵³

The most famous examples of these bolt heads, representing the most lavishly decorated specimens of the entire group, trace their provenance to the Ottoman arsenal. Two of these bolt heads are housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, while one remains in the Army Museum in Istanbul. Most of these items are between 10 and 12 cm in length, but the three pieces marked with the Ottoman arsenal insignia measure over 30 cm. (fig. 10).⁵⁴ These markings suggest the bolt heads were likely war trophies captured during the continuous wars

48 The conflict lasted from 1468 to 1479 and is referred to by various names, often described as the Bohemian–Hungarian War or the Second Hussite War. The latter designation directly references the original Hussite Wars of Religion (1419–1434), as some of the key issues surrounding political legitimacy and religion were also part of the *casus belli* for this later war. See: ČORNEJ, Petr – BARTLOVÁ, Milena 2007 241–272; ENGEL Pál 2001 302–306. The fallout of the conflict, as well as the administrative, economic, and military realities of Matthias's rule in parts of the lands of the Bohemian Crown, are discussed extensively in: KALOÚS, Antonín 2009.

49 ČORNEJ, Petr – BARTLOVÁ, Milena 2007 403–437, 472–483; ENGEL Pál 2001 345–371.

50 UNGER, Josef 2012 177.

51 DURDÍK, Tomáš – BRYCH, Vladimír 1984 674–676.

52 KOTOWICZ, N. Piotr – MUZYCZUK, Anna 2008 135–138.

53 For the involvement of the castle and town of Gerdauen (Polish: Gierdawy) during the Thirteen Years' War (1454–1466), see: BISKUP, Marian 1967 787. For Bohemian mercenaries: TRESP, Uwe 2004 52–59.

54 In their otherwise comprehensive overview KOTOWICZ, N. Piotr – MUZYCZUK, Anna 2008 139, ascertain that only one hypertrophic bolt head with Ottoman markings is preserved. This is incorrect. Compare: NICKEL, Helmut – PYHRR, W. Stuart 1987/1988 23.



Figure 10 – Hypertrophic bolt head with the mark of the Ottoman arsenal. The item exhibits all the characteristic visual elements of this family of items: a crown surmounted by an ostrich feather, Gothic letters, and scale patterns. In addition, it features pious invocations in Czech (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 66.199. Bequest of Stephen V. Grancsay)

10. kép – Teljes felületén díszített nyílhegy az oszmán fegyvertár jelzésével. A lelet a tárgy család összes jellegzetes vizuális elemét mutatja: strucc tollal díszített koronát, gótikus betűket és pikkelymintákat. Ezenkívül cseh nyelvű könyörgéseket is tartalmaz

against the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, conflicts in which troops from both Bohemia and Hungary participated. The involvement of Bohemian troops fighting alongside Hungarian forces as mercenaries, crusaders, or dynastic allies against the Ottomans is well-documented from at least the 1440s. Many Bohemian captains fought and died in the armies of János Hunyadi (ca.1400–1456), such as at the Battle of Varna (1444) or the Second Battle of Kosovo (1448). Bohemian barons and common mercenaries were also present at the Battle of Mohács (1526), where several prominent members of Bohemian noble families perished, including Štěpán Šlik, Burian of Gutštejn, and Jan Buštěhradský of Kolovraty. It is conceivable that these or other unnamed Bohemian noble captains brought such items with them on campaign.⁵⁵

Large-scale military operations in late medieval Europe – such as the Mohács campaign – often incorporated elements of ostentatious ritual aimed at a domestic audience during mobilization and departure for the war zone. The ceremonial bolt heads may therefore have been among the war trophies captured by the Ottomans after a victorious battle. Alternatively, these bolt heads could have been seized during the Ottoman occupations and sackings of Buda in the sixteenth century, such as in 1526, 1529, and 1541. Given that Vladislaus II Jagiellon and his son Louis maintained an international court, it is plausible that the royal armory at Buda contained items of Bohemian martial provenance, including lavish oversized ceremonial bolt heads inscribed with Czech text.⁵⁶

Probable Purpose of the Objects

Archaeological finds of ceremonial bolt heads have been documented since the late nineteenth century. However, to this day, no exact consensus exists on how these objects were used in their

original historical contexts. The existing literature presents at least three main hypotheses.⁵⁷

The first hypothesis, proposed by Hungarian scholar János Kalmár (1889–1977), posits that when fully assembled with a wooden shaft and fletching, these items served as badges of honour for municipal (urban) archers' associations. These associations, established in many towns across the Holy Roman Empire and broader Latin Christendom, had a dual function: they acted as local militias and as medieval and early modern sports clubs, uniting the community's capable marksmen and archers. During the late medieval period, members primarily used crossbows and war bows, though handheld firearms became the principal weapons for competition and practice in later periods. Older and newer weapons coexisted for an extended time.

Sporting competitions, which doubled as paramilitary exercises, often featured a "crowned leader" of the events, known as the *Schützenkönig* in German-speaking areas. Kalmár suggested that the ceremonial bolt might have been used by the leader to commence or conclude festive competitions. Alternatively, it could have been awarded as a prize to the competition's winner. A key iconographic connection in Kalmár's hypothesis is the frequent depiction of the Gothic monogram S, which he linked to Saint Sebastian, the patron saint of many late medieval archers' guilds in Western Europe.⁵⁸

The second hypothesis was advanced by Helmut Nickel (1924–2019), a curator at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Nickel, unconvinced by Kalmár's Saint Sebastian connection, proposed an alternative theory. He argued that the bolt heads signified the rank of a commander of a unit of Bohemian mercenary crossbowmen. Nickel's theory was strongly supported by the Bohemian provenance of these objects, particularly a bolt head with Czech inscriptions that bore marks of the Ottoman arsenal and was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum. Moreover, the distribution of these items, concentrated in conflict zones where Bohemians fought as allies or mercenaries, further supported his argument.⁵⁹

Nickel's hypothesis rested on a comparative iconographic analysis of other medieval objects. Chief among these were pavises, the large shields carried by specialised heavy infantrymen who provided cover for marksmen armed with missile

55 Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (1405–1464), later Pope Pius II (1458), reported to Pope Nicholas V (1397–1455) in a letter describing the Second Battle of Kosovo (1448) that a multitude of Bohemians and Germans had followed János Hunyadi on the crusade. According to Aeneas, they perished to the last man. See: PÁLOSFALVI Tamás 2018 165. For additional evidence of Bohemian participation in anti-Ottoman military operations, see IDEM 152, 247, 252, 288–289. For the names of fallen Bohemian noblemen at Mohács (1526), see B. SZABÓ János 2006 82–83.

56 For the ritualistic-performative aspects of military mobilization (and its socio-political context) on the eve of the Mohács campaign, see: KALOUS, Antonín 2016 514–525. The occupation of Buda by Ottoman forces during the sixteenth century is discussed by VESZPRÉMY, László 2016 497–512.

57 A comprehensive collection of the main hypotheses, including a detailed bibliography, is provided by: ČAMBAL, Radoslav et al. 2021 259–260 and KOTOWICZ N. Piotr – MUZYCZUK Anna 2008 139–140.

58 KALMÁR János 1962 71–82.

59 For the foundational article that covers the core of the argument, see NICKEL, Helmut 1968 61–93.

weapons. Since projectile weapons, missiles, and pavises were intrinsically connected in medieval warfare, Nickel believed that examining shared visual motifs across these objects would yield significant insights.

Nickel identified key iconographic elements that unified the entire corpus: emblematic monograms surmounted by ostrich feathers, often accompanied by crowns, and a distinctive rounded scale pattern. These motifs trace their origins to the royal court of King Wenceslaus IV of Luxembourg (1361–1419) and are notably present in manuscript illustrations from around 1400. Nickel argued that, beyond religious invocations or saintly names, the enigmatic monograms likely represented royal initials of Bohemian kings, such as W (Wenceslaus), A (Albrecht), or W (Wladislaus). Finally, Nickel suggested that oversized arrows, found in Franco-Burgundian and Habsburg contexts as possible batons of command, lent further credence to his hypothesis that these objects signified the rank of Bohemian commanders of marksmen.

The third hypothesis, recently formulated by Lech Marek, emphasises the close connection between the iconographic and textual evidence found on the bolt heads and the culture of courtly love. Some bolt heads, for instance, contain fragments addressed to a “dear lady” (*pane myley* – e.g., *paní milé*, *mamyla panny – má milá paní*). This interpretation is further supported by other figures associated with the visual discourse of courtly love, such as a pelican, rose, heart, and wreath. These symbols and short inscriptions are integral to the chivalric lore surrounding courtly love and echo the widespread topos of Cupid shooting an arrow into a lover’s heart or eyes – motifs well attested in literature, art, and other forms of chivalric equipment, such as the parade saddle of Albrecht II of Habsburg (1397–1439). Marek also proposes the possibility that the emblematic monograms – besides referring to monarchs and saints – may represent the initials of a lady desired by a chivalrous knight.⁶⁰

In connection with the elements of courtly love, Marek suggests that the decorative bolt heads may have been used at tournaments fought on foot between armored chivalric men-at-arms. The customs prevailing in the Francophone part of late medieval Europe suggest that oversized arrows were used by tournament marshals (*juges du camp*) as badges of office. Moreover, the marshals would throw an arrow onto the tournament grounds (an enclosed barrier) as a signal to stop the fighting and prevent grave

injuries once the combat became too dangerous.⁶¹ Interestingly, the evidence from early sixteenth-century Habsburg lands – the close neighbour and dynastic ally of the Bohemian-Hungarian realm under the Jagellonians – shows oversized arrows being used by Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519) as a badge of command in military-administrative contexts. Maximilian’s pseudo-biographical works, such as *Der Freydal* and *Der Weisskunig*, also depict chivalric tournaments fought on foot at the barriers, making the evidence open to further interpretations. Perhaps the two contexts may have merged, as civilian, chivalric, and military affairs were often intertwined.⁶²

While tournaments and jousts fought on horseback are well-documented, sources describing foot tournaments in the Lands of the Bohemian Crown – or indeed the Kingdom of Hungary – seem to be lacking. Also absent is any explicit evidence (visual or textual) describing the use of oversized and/or decorated arrows or bolts in either kingdom. Further evidence and multidisciplinary approaches may perhaps one day provide more clarity on the subject.⁶³

60 MAREK, Lech 2017 155–57, 183–84.

61 MAREK, Lech 2017 157. Compare: NICKEL, Helmut 1968 85–86. On tournament foot combat, see: TZOURIADIS, Iason-Eleftherios 2020 155–184.

62 TZOURIADIS, Iason-Eleftherios 2020 181–183, NICKEL, Helmut 1968 79–80. Indeed, the young Louis II of Hungary and Bohemia (1506–1526) received a boy’s armor for foot combat from Maximilian in 1515, crafted by the Austrian court armorer Konrad Seusenhofer. GULYÁS, Borbála 2017 140.

63 For tournaments in Medieval Bohemia and Hungary see the classic contributions by Erik Fügedi and Josef Macek in FLECKENSTEIN, Josef 1985 371–389, 390–400. Compare also: GULYÁS, Borbála 2017 131–154 and SNELLGROVE, Karolína 2021 25–38.



Figure 11 – Pavise shields bearing principal visual motifs. Left to right: Dresden (N 0033)⁶⁴, New York (29.158.595)⁶⁵, Vienna (126 123)

11. kép – Fő vizuális motívumokat viselő pavéze pajzsok

Iconographic Analogies with the Orbágyszentgyörgy Bolt-Head

As mentioned previously, a large number of pavises carry identical iconographic elements as the ceremonial bolt heads, including the one from Orbágyszentgyörgy: a crown surmounted by a feather, an emblematic monogram, and a scale pattern (fig. 11). The following tables do not constitute an exhaustive list. However, since the publication of Helmut Nickel's pivotal article in the 1960s, new artefacts have come to light, and several others have been re-dated to different time periods. The results of this list – along with the existence of the bolt heads found within the

territory of the former Hungarian Kingdom – provide further evidence for the cultural exchange at the height of the Bohemian-Hungarian personal union and the shared historical destiny of both kingdoms.

Two groups of pavises in the following tables need to be highlighted. The first is the so-called Zwickau group, which bears the coat of arms of the Saxon city of the same name. Most of the shields in this group were purchased from Bohemian workshops. The coat of arms of Zwickau was subsequently painted over an older layer created in a Bohemian workshop in the city of Chomutov. Unlike Nickel's proposal⁶⁶, which dated these items to the reign of Albert II (r. 1438–1439), recent estimations place them in the late fifteenth century⁶⁷ and thus within the time frame of the diarchy between King Matthias and Vladislaus II (after 1471) and the later personal union of Bohemia and Hungary after Matthias' death in 1490.

The second important group comes from a series of pavises in the Vienna City Museum.

64 According to the curators of the Dresden State Art Collections, the pavise is dated to the second half of the fifteenth century. The depicted visual elements refer to Vladislaus II of Jagiellon, King of Bohemia and Hungary. See: <https://www.skd.museum/programm/alle-macht-der-imaginatio-tschechische-saison-in-dresden/boehmische-spuren-im-residenzschloss/>. The image of the shield is accessible online via the virtual collection of the Dresden State Art Collections: <https://skd-online-collection.skd.museum/Details/Index/287957>

65 Part of the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Inventory number: 29.158.595. Image available online: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/23333>

66 NICKEL, Helmut 1968 69–76.

67 The Zwickau family of pavises was subject to a recent analysis: HERZER, H. Matthias 2019 243–261, BREIDING, H. Dirk 2019 69–95.

Collection of shared iconographic elements on pavises

Table A (various collections)

LOCATION AND INVENTORY NUMBER	FEATHER MOTIF	EMBLEMATIC MONOGRAM (OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY A CROWN)	SCALE PATTERN
Dresden Rüstammer, Inventory no: N 0033		X	X
Budapest Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Inventory no: 55.3264		X	X
Warsaw Muzeum Wojska Polskiego, In- ventory no: 1379	X	X	X
Warsaw Muzeum Wojska Polskiego, In- ventory no: 1380	X	X	X
Prague Národní muzeum - Historické muzeum, Inventory no: H2-482		X	
Prague Národní muzeum - Historické muzeum, Inventory no: H2-483	X		X

Table B (Zwickau group)

LOCATION AND INVENTORY NUMBER	FEATHER MOTIF	EMBLEMATIC MONOGRAM (OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY A CROWN)	SCALE PATTERN
New York The Met Museum, Inventory no: 29.158.595	X	X	X
Leeds (UK) Royal Armouries, Inventory no: V.2	X	X	X

LOCATION AND INVENTORY NUMBER	FEATHER MOTIF	EMBLEMATIC MONOGRAM (OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY A CROWN)	SCALE PATTERN
Philadelphia (USA) Museum of Art, Inventory no: 1977-167-744	X	X	X
Zwickau I City Museum of Zwickau, Inventory number unknown, see: NICKEL, Helmut 1968 73.	X	X	X
Zwickau II City Museum of Zwickau, Inventory number unknown, see: NICKEL, Helmut 1968 73.	X	X	X
Paris I Musée de Cluny, Inventory number unknown, see: NICKEL, Helmut 1968 73.	X	X	X
Paris II Musée de Cluny, Inventory number unknown, see: NICKEL, Helmut 1968 73.	X	X	X
Turin Armeria Reale, Inventory no: FI		X	X
Berlin Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Inventory number unknown, see: NICKEL, Helmut 1968 73.		X	X

Table C (Vienna group)⁶⁸

INVENTORY NUMBER	FEATHER MOTIF	EMBLEMATIC MONOGRAM (OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY A CROWN)	SCALE PATTERN
126 112		X	X
126 113		X	
126 123		X	
126 127		X	
126 157		X	X
126 104		X	X
126 121		X	
126 128		X	X

⁶⁸ Images of pavises from this group can be accessed online through the Vienna City Museum's collection by searching for the inventory number: <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/>



Figure 12 Shields with iconographic connection to Matthias Hunyadi, King of Hungary.

Left to Right: Budapest (55.3264)⁶⁹, Vienna (126 121)

12. kép – Hunyadi Mátyás magyar királyhoz ikonográfiailag kapcsolódó pajzsok

Vladimír Denkstein⁷⁰ has credibly proposed that these belong to the Moravian and Hungarian troops who took part in the fighting on behalf of King Matthias against Emperor Frederick III during the 1480s in Austria. Several shields are present that bear not only the coat of arms of power holders from the Moravian Margraviate, but also the Hungarian royal coat of arms and other motifs found on the ceremonial bolt heads. The striking resemblance between the motifs seen on several pavises and bolt heads reveals that this originally Bohemian custom was gradually integrated into Hungarian practice – at least at the royal court of King Matthias.

Two shields can be safely connected to Matthias. One, housed in the National Museum in Budapest

(inventory number 55.3264)⁷¹, is believed to have belonged to the personal guard of King Matthias. It bears a crown surmounted by a monogram with three minims (III), referencing the King's first name, and is adorned with a scale pattern – all common elements found within the originally Bohemian corpus of motifs (fig. 12).

The second shield, part of the collection at the Vienna City Museum (inventory number 126 121), features the same emblematic monogram as the previous shield, along with the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Hunyadi noble family. Notably, it also includes a heavenly sunburst – a motif frequently seen on the Zwickau group of shields – as well as Saint George, a figure sometimes associated with ostrich feather imagery. Another pavise from the Viennese collection (inventory number 126 104), also

69 The image of the pavise comes from KOVÁCS Tibor 2017 420.

70 DENKSTEIN, Vladimír 1964 125–135.

71 KOVÁCS Tibor 2017 420.

linked to the Bohemian and Hungarian troops of Matthias, features a heavenly sunburst, an image of Saint George, and the scale pattern.⁷²

The King's noble subjects from the lands of the Bohemian Crown used a similar iconographic configuration, and it was perhaps they who acted as agents of transfer and inspiration for the visual designs on pavises and bolt heads found in Hungary. In this context, another Viennese pavise (inventory number 126 123), which belonged to soldiers of the Bishopric of Olomouc – an office held by the Moravian baronial family of Boskovice – also features familiar visual motifs: a lowercase Gothic monogram "b," a crown, and a heavenly sunburst. Vladimir Denkstein proposed that the monogram may actually refer to Boskovice, the noble family's ancestral seat.⁷³

Another shield from the Viennese collection (inventory number 126 158), which also features Saint George and a sunburst motif, most clearly represents the Bohemian-Hungarian connection during Matthias Hunyadi's rule. It depicts a combined coat of arms of Austria, Hungary, the Boskovice family, and the Bishopric of Olomouc on the same shield.

The remarkable connection between the visual motifs on the bolt heads and pavises testifies to the legacy of the united dynastic policy and the shared economic, military, and social affairs between the lands of the Bohemian Crown and the Kingdom of Hungary. Furthermore, the presence of the bolt head at Orbágysszentgyörgy highlights the interconnectedness of the Tisza-Danube interfluvial region with the upper parts of the Hungarian Kingdom and, ultimately, with the lands of the Bohemian Crown. The shared destiny between the realms of Saint Stephen and Saint Wenceslas undoubtedly fostered a profound cultural exchange in material culture, of which the bolt heads form just one fascinating aspect.

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72 For the connection between Saint George, ostrich feathers, and the sunburst, see footnote no. 60 in NICKEL, Helmut 1968 73.

73 DENKSTEIN, Vladimír 1964 130–131.

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ZO I. – NAGY Imre – NAGY Iván –

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ZO II. – NAGY Imre – NAGY Iván –

VÉGHÉLY Dezső

1872 | A zichi és vásonkeői gróf Zichy-család idősb ágának okmánytára. *Codex diplomaticus domus senioris comitum Zichy de Zich et Vasonkeo II*. Pest

ZO VI. – NAGY Imre

1894 | A zichi és vásonkeői gróf Zichy-család idősb ágának okmánytára. *Codex diplomaticus domus senioris comitum Zichy de Zich et Vasonkeo VI*. Budapest

Abbreviations

KJM Rég. Ad. – Kecskeméti Katona József Múzeum Régészeti Adattára, Kecskemét
TJM Rég. Ad. – Thorma János Múzeum Régészeti Adattára, Kiskunhalas

Samuel Beňa – Fóti Miklós – Pánya István

Az orbágyszentgyörgyi ceremoniális számszeríj nyílhegy

Absztrakt

Tanulmányunkban egy különleges és ritka, 15. század végi vagy 16. század eleji, díszített számszeríj nyílhegyet mutatunk be. E tárgy Hajós keleti felén, a Pincefalu területén került elő 2024 őszén, közösségi régészeti kutatás keretében. A mintegy 11 cm hosszú lelet rombusz keresztmetszetű nyílhegy felületét többféle motívum díszíti, köztük egy toll, egy gótikus betűt tartalmazó monogramos embléma, valamint pikkelyminták. E díszítés, illetve a nyílhegy szokatlanul nagy mérete arra utal, hogy a tárgy az ünnepi célú számszeríjvessző-hegyek ritka csoportjába tartozik. Hasonló nyílhegyek Magyarországról (Veszprém, Győr, Budapest), illetve Kelet-Közép-Európa különböző területeiről is ismertek. Eredetük elsősorban a Cseh Királyság területére vezethető vissza.

Az orbágyszentgyörgyi lelet jelentőségét növeli, hogy a feltárási helyről további régészeti, földrajzi és történeti adatok is rendelkezésre állnak. A nyíl-vessző jelenléte, valamint más bizonyítékok – így például korabeli írott források, amelyek kiváltságokat biztosítottak a helyi nemesek számára, illetve a település bizonyos jellemzői – arra utalhatnak, hogy a vidéken idegen telepesek (hospites) is megtelepedhettek, feltehetően a Cseh Királyságból. Ezen túlmenően a magyar és a cseh pavise-okon (magyarosan pavéze, nagyméretű, késő középkori pajzs) is megjelenő, hasonló vizuális motívumok tovább erősítik a két királyság közötti történeti kapcsolatokat, kiemelve a szoros politikai, gazdasági és kulturális összefonódást, különösen azokon az időszakokon, amikor közös uralkodó alatt perzonálunióban álltak.



The site of the former Orbágyszentgyörgy village from the north (Sand Ridge to the left, Örjeg Marsh to the right)
(Photo: István Pánya) | Az egykori Orbágyszentgyörgy falu helye északról (balra Homokhátság, jobbra Örjeg-mocsár)



*A Kecskeméti Katona József Múzeum és
a Kecskeméti Középkorász Műhely évkönyve
Studies from the Kecskemét Medieval Workshop*

A Synergia évkönyv célja a Kecskeméti Középkorász Műhely tagjai által írt középkortörténeti – régészeti, művészettörténeti, településtörténeti stb. – témájú tanulmányok megjelentetése. Címe – Synergia – a műhelymunkára, közös gondolkodásra utal (görög *συνεργία* ~ közös munka). Jelen kötet a sorozat első számaként elsősorban a műhely fő célterületére, a Duna-Tisza közére fókuszál, a tanulmányok között azonban helyet kapott néhány Tolna vármegyei és jászsági témát feldolgozó írás. Az angol és magyar nyelvű tanulmányok és katalógusok számtalan eddig ismeretlen tárgytípust, leletegyüttest, történeti adatot tartalmaznak, s ilyen tekintetben a sorozatunk első darabja rendkívül hiánypótló. Célunk egyrészt a szakértő közönség tájékoztatása a legújabb településtörténeti vonatkozású kutatásokról. Emellett szeretnénk, ha a helytörténet, régészet, éremtan iránt érdeklődő civilek is bepillantathatnának az intézmények falai között zajló munkálatokba. Bízunk abban, hogy e kötet nyelvezetében, megjelenésében mindkét közönségnek elnyeri a tetszését s hasznos időtöltéssel szolgál.

The purpose of Synergia is to publish studies on medieval history – including archaeology, art history, settlement history, and related fields – written by members of the Kecskemét Medieval Workshop. Its title, Synergia, refers to collaborative scholarly work and shared reflection (Greek *συνεργία* ~ joint work). As the first volume in the series, the present book focuses primarily on the workshop's main area of interest, the Danube-Tisza Interfluvium, though it also includes several contributions on topics from Tolna County and the Jászság. The studies and catalogues, published in English and Hungarian, present numerous previously unknown object types, assemblages, and historical data. One of our aims is to inform specialist readers about the latest research relating to settlement history. At the same time, we also hope to offer interested non-specialist readers with an interest in local history, archaeology, and numismatics an insight into the work carried out within our institutions. We trust that, in both language and presentation, this volume will appeal to both audiences and provide them with an informative and rewarding read.

Pánya István – Rácz Bernát

2026