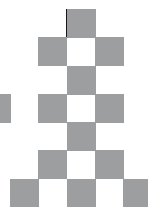


Studia Carpathico-Adriatica

2022



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The Slovak-Croatian Commission of Humanities at the Ministry of Education,  
Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Science  
and Education of the Republic of Croatia

Studia Carpathico-Adriatica, Vol. III

From the Carpathians to the Adriatic: the Archeology of the Migration Period  
and the Middle Ages



# Studia Carpathico-Adriatica

## Vol. III

### From the Carpathians to the Adriatic: The Archeology of the Migration Period and the Middle Ages

Edited by  
Martin Homza, Željko Holjevac, Krešimir Filipec & Andrej Vrtel'

2022  
Comenius University Bratislava

*Studia Carpathico-Adriatica* is the yearbook of the Slovak-Croatian Commission of Humanities

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Typography by Matúš Brilla

Slovak texts translated by Cástor Enrique Sánchez Rodriguez

Published by Comenius University Bratislava, 2022

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ISBN 978-80-223-5684-8 (print)

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# Editorial

## Úvodník / Uvodnik

It is our great pleasure to present the third volume of the journal *Studia Carpathico-Adriatica* to all the readers, scientists and other interested professionals. This volume is the result of the cooperation of the Croatian-Slovak Committee for the Humanities, and the published papers were presented at the scientific conference "From the Carpathians to the Adriatic: the Archeology of the Migration Period and the Middle Ages" from June 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at the University of Trnava in Slovakia. At the opening of the conference, the following spoke: University of Trnava Provost Miloš Lachner and Croatian Ambassador in Slovakia Aleksandar Heina, together with Martina Klofáčova from The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and Staša Skenžić from The Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia. The Croatian-Slovak committee is active at both ministries and led by Prof. Martin Homza from The Faculty of Philosophy of Comenius University in Bratislava and Prof. Željko Holjevac from The Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar in Zagreb, who bear the greatest credit for the continuation of this fruitful collaboration and that the fourth meeting of the Committee was held. Archaeologists from Slovak and Croatian institutions participated in the scientific conference. The lectures aimed to raise awareness of everything that unites these two Central

European countries positioned along the northern and southern sides of the Pannonian Plain, along the Carpathian Mountains and the Adriatic Sea, from Late Antiquity through the Middle and Modern Ages. The presentations covered a wide variety of topics related to various aspects of our history, the time before the great waves of migration, the period in which various Slavic peoples, including the Croats, came to their new residences and occupied their new land, which they have as a heritage to this day. Similarities, but also differences, experiences and similar and different processes were emphasized because life in a new space was not always the same. Finally, from the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, both peoples found themselves under the rule of the same common rulers – the experiences are different.

The papers cover a wide variety of topics. Jana Škrgulja's paper researches issues of identity and ethnicity during the 5<sup>th</sup> century, deals with the southern part of Pannonia, but also with general issues of the role of identity in society and draws parallels with today's society, and the conclusions from the present are transferred to events from the past. In her paper, Petra Nikšić also deals with the Late Antiquity period and tries to determine the distribution pattern of Mediterranean imported tableware in the southern part

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\* KREŠIMIR FILIPEC, PhD. Archaeological Institute of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (the Republic of Croatia).

of the Noric-Pannonian border area and to assess to what extent these findings serve as an indicator of the preservation of communications and trade until the end of Late Antiquity in that area, including the time of Slavic migrations.

Tomáš König deals with the oldest Slavic history and the time of the conquest of the new homeland, and at the center of his research is the questioning of an archaeological phenomenon known throughout the researched area: flat burials, including isolated graves, with traces of burning, which are closely associated in the literature with the oldest archaeological cultures characteristic of early Slavic, and somewhat younger burials under mounds are also processed. North of the Sava River, Slavs, whose migration started from the middle Danube, settled in the early Slavic period. The occupation of the area, which is located in the south, by the Slavs, happened probably after the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and it cannot be ruled out that it was in connection with the Avar Kaganate, its strong influence and interests. The image we have speaks of the different genesis of the two ecumene they represent, which are still clearly separated spatially. In the area north of the Danube, the appearance of the early Slavs is correlated with the border line of expansion of the late Avar Kaganate. This topic, about the Slavs and early Slavic history, was also touched upon in the Reviews by the eminent Czech archaeologist Naďa Profantová.

Ante Alajbeg's paper is in search of the 7<sup>th</sup> and early 8<sup>th</sup> centuries in Dalmatia. He deals with kinship and funeral practices in early medieval Dalmatia. It opens many questions, such as the origin of elites and explains the appearance of new, different phenomena. New forms begin to appear along the eastern borders of the Frankish Kingdom and Empire, and some show

very great similarities between Croatia in the Mediterranean and Great Moravia in the northern part of the Carpathian Basin. No area in this part of Europe has so many Frankish imports, so much quality material, as Croatia and Great Moravia. Undoubtedly there must be a causal link, connections and influences, but also people and nobility who reacted in a similar way at that time. In this sense, the paper of Petra Jeršek, who singled out microunits that reflect the grouping of early medieval cemeteries in northern Dalmatia, continues. By mapping early medieval cemeteries in that area, the author suggests that the question of the lower limit of the older or "pagan" horizon of early medieval cemeteries in Dalmatia (older or early Croatian period I) is still relevant, as is the question of dating graves to the 7<sup>th</sup> century on the basis of material culture.

Tomáš König and Natália Gerthoferová deal with biritual cemeteries from the early Middle Ages that were found between the Western Carpathians and the Adriatic. Such cemeteries are often viewed as unique phenomena, but according to the authors, their burial model is still not comparable. Avar-era cemeteries show that both funeral rites were a common practice during a long period, and it is assumed that this feature is most likely the result of the common coexistence of peoples with different cultural manifestations on the periphery of the Avar cultural sphere.

Krešimir Filipec writes that the great cultural similarity of the areas of Pannonia separated by the river Drava from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century is evidenced by the results of archaeological research. Throughout the area, the same or similar processes recognizable in other parts of the former Frankish Pannonia are taking place, which after the 10<sup>th</sup> century were mostly conditioned by the Hungarian

invasions, settlement and formation of the Hungarian state, but also by the spread of similar fashion. It is an area under the strong influence of both Croatia and Hungary. At the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the whole of Croatia was finally more tightly connected with Hungary. The processes are very similar to those in other areas under Hungarian rule.

In the last article, Ana Azinović Bebek gives an overview of Croatian pilgrimage activity in the post-medieval period with special emphasis on pilgrimages to more distant places. She emphasizes that stronger ties between the north and

the south never existed before that time, when two pilgrimage sites – Remete in Croatia and Marianka in Slovakia, inspired by the Habsburg dynasty, were connected. She concludes that today there are not so many pilgrimages of Croats to Marianka, but they are still active, thanks to the Croats from Gradišće living in the vicinity of Bratislava, who revived the annual votive pilgrimage of Croats to that old Marian shrine.

At the end of the magazine there are reviews, various contributions and news.

I believe that everyone will find something for themselves in this issue of the journal.



FROM THE CARPATHIANS  
TO THE ADRIATIC:  
THE ARCHEOLOGY  
OF THE MIGRATION PERIOD  
AND THE MIDDLE AGES

JANA ŠKRGULJA\*

# Uncovering of Ethnic Identities in Southern Panonnia during the 5<sup>th</sup> Century

Razotkrivanje etničkih identiteta u Južnoj Panoniji tijekom 5. stoljeća /  
Odhaľovanie etnických identít v južnej Panónii v 5. storočí

*Rad istražuje pitanja identiteta i etniciteta tijekom 5. stoljeća. Sukladno naslovu, odnosi se na južnu Panoniju, ali se bavi i općim pitanjima uloge identiteta u društvu. Povlače se paralele s današnjim društvom, a zaključci iz sadašnjosti prenose se na događaje iz prošlosti. Propituju se arheološke metode s obzirom na korištenje narativnih izvora u svrhu arheološke interpretacije kao i postmodernističke hiperkritičnosti i potpunog odbacivanja kulturno-historijske metode.*

Ključne riječi: identiteti, etnicitet, Južna Panonija

Identity is a grouping of qualities, attributes and values that define how we view ourselves, and how we think other people see us. Every person has lot's of varies of their own identity, and that parts of inner self help each person to connect with other people, to feel inner sense of self and our core. People can lose their identity, too. When that happens, we can follow different changes in a life of a person. We can observe changes in the workplace, loss of profession, loss of a role in the society. This kind of personal loss creates an empty space.

Identity should not come from what others think about certain person. On the other hand, we should include personal worry about being judged by others in the society. The result is creation of the image or presentation to the others. Sometimes it is different what one could feel inside

and what the same person shows on the outside. This could be a problem.

In 5<sup>th</sup> century *Southern Panonnia* it could have been an often problem with various people who changed their loyalty to certain tribe, depending on what the current political circumstances were and what was better for the individual at the certain moment. As we know, people at that time no longer based their affiliation on inheritance alone, but instead sided with the stronger leader. During the period of the great migrations, due to large migrations that took place in a relatively short time, belonging to a certain group was not based solely on inheritance, but it was also subject to change, so sometimes people knew how to side with the group from which they could have more benefits, meaning they would go where they saw better predispositions

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for creating a better quality of life. This is especially visible in the attempt to cooperate and integrate the newly arrived population among the Romans. In order for the newly arrived population to successfully integrate into the new community, they had to receive a certain level of external confirmation and acceptance by the community they enter or become a member of. The level of external confirmation is very important because dependence on it prevents the truth of a person or community from presenting itself freely. Such types of integration limitations affect personal development and the opportunity to spend life in personal satisfaction. Dissatisfaction accompanied by a low level of self-confidence stands in contrast to personal satisfaction. Low self-esteem can be related to past problems, from childhood, parental neglect, abuse and trauma. These factors often shape the way we look at ourselves, and also affect our communication with others and this often shapes the inner view and interaction with others. There is no doubt that the rapid changes in the environment, places of residence, adaptation to a different social structure, language, religion and culture during the great migrations of the population necessarily caused great stress for individuals, but also for entire groups during the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The quick ability to adapt enabled greater success for survival in new circumstances, but it also influenced the change in identity determinants.

## Relations to archaeology

Archaeologists have much to contribute to our understanding of ethnicity. In particular, processes of ethnogenesis—that is, the creation of ethnicity and the long-term persistence and disappearance of ethnic groups often are accessible using archaeological data provided by archaeological material. This review emphasizes the potential for archaeological study of ethnicity to contribute to questions of ethnic dynamics. We begin by discussing the background of anthropological approaches to group identities leading up to the work of Barth, summarizing common usage of „ethnicity“ and related terms, and outlining their semantic range while comparing ethnicity to other important group identities. Thus, Geoff Emberling describes the dynamics associated with ethnicity in early states, as well as the importance of ethnic identity in these societies. Finally, we consider steps involved in identifying ethnic groups in the archaeological record. There is limited discussion of ethnicity in modern nation-states, where processes of ethnic differentiation are dissimilar not only in scale (migration and colonialism), but also in kind (the ubiquitous importance of racial differences).<sup>1</sup> Interrelationships, with regard to identity, range from individual identity to cultural identity, within which we consider issues of social identity. The bond that connects identity and ethnicity is unbreakable.

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<sup>1</sup> BARTH, Fredrik: *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Oslo: Waveland Press, 1969, pp. 9–38; ERIKSEN, Thomas Hylland: *Ethnicity and nationalism: Anthropology, Culture and Society*. London: Pluto Press, 1993, pp. 8–14; HALL, Johnatan: *Hellenicity. Between Ethnicity and Culture.*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002, p. 9; BRUBAKER, Roger: Ethnicity Without Groups. In: *European Journal of Sociology*, a. 43, 2002, nr. 2, p. 163; EMBERLING, Geof: Ethnicity in Empire: Assyrians and Others. In: MCINERNEY, Jeremy (ed.): *A Companion to Ethnic Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2014, pp. 158–159.

The concept of ethnic identity or ethnicity can mean different things to different people, and its validation in terms of a theoretical construct is often questionable, especially when we talk about ethnicity in the context of prehistory. In historical periods, validation is more strongly justified. Ethnic attributions, like areas of culture, may have descriptive value, but their potential remains to be determined. In the context of the analysis of archaeological material, the identification of an ethnic group is often challenging and demanding, but archeology can nevertheless contribute significantly to the understanding of the long-term social and political dynamics of ethnicity.<sup>2</sup>

The study of ethnicity marks a paradigm shift in anthropology: from viewing culture as a whole to focusing on subgroups of people. Work on the subject has even been dated B.B. (before Barth) and A.B. (after Barth), according to its relationship to the founding work of the new paradigm<sup>3</sup>. Ethnicity has been a topic of renewed interest since then, and recently elements of consensus over definitions and delineations of ethnic processes have

begun to emerge. With some exceptions, anthropological treatments of ethnicity increasingly have the appearance of “normal science”, articulating the theory and exploring its ramifications.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of great archaeological interest in ethnicity earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century, archaeologists have only recently begun to consider ethnicity within Barth’s paradigm.<sup>5</sup> Such delayed reactions are not uncommon in communication between the subfields, as continued archaeological interest in cultural evolution shows, but there are other reasons for the delay. Thus, advocates of the cultural-historical method believed that identity markers are clearly reflected in archaeological cultures.<sup>6</sup> Studies by Kramer and others suggested, quite rightly, that inferring ethnic difference from archaeological evidence was difficult.<sup>7</sup> In addition, archaeologists have been wary of studying ethnicity because of the ends to which such studies have been put. Kossinna’s work in identifying “Germans” in prehistory is only one wellknown example.<sup>8</sup> As Rowlands points out, however, archaeological studies of ethnicity also can assist

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<sup>2</sup> EMBERLING, Geof: Ethnicity in Complex Societies: Archaeological Perspectives. In: *Journal of Archaeological Research*, a. 5, 1997, nr. 4, p. 295.

<sup>3</sup> BARTH, Fredrik. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, pp. 9–38; DESPERS, Leo A. (ed.): *Ethnicity and Resource Competition in Plural Societies: World Anthropology: An Interdisciplinary Series*. Paris: Mouton Publishers, 1975, p. 189.

<sup>4</sup> KUHN, Thomas: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago [IL]: University of Chicago Press, 1970, pp. 210.

<sup>5</sup> SHENNAN, Stephen: Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity. In: *One World Archaeology*, a. 10, 1989, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> TRIGGER, Bruce G.: *A History of Archaeological Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 303–311; SHENNAN, Stephen: Archaeological Approaches, pp. 5–14; GRAČANIN, Hrvoje – ŠKRGULJA, Jana: Etnički identiteti u južnoj Panoniji i Dalmaciji u Justinijanovo doba. In: *Povijesni prilozi*, a. 50, 2016, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> KRAMER, Carol: *Pots and peoples*. In: LEVINE, Luis De – YOUNG, T. Cuyler (eds.): *Mountains and Lowlands: Essays in the Archaeology of Greater Mesopotamia: Bibliotheca Mesopotamica*, vol. 7. Udena: Udena Publications, 1977, pp. 91–112.

<sup>8</sup> ARNOLD, Bettina: The past as propaganda: totalitarian archaeology in Nazi Germany. In: *Antiquity*, a. 64, 2015, nr. 244, pp. 465; KOHL Philip – FAWCETT, Clare: *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 150; TRIGGER, Bruce G.: *A History of Archaeological Thought*, pp. 163.

in providing identities for local groups, and so politically empower them; identifying ethnic groups in archaeological remains can have positive consequences.<sup>9</sup> The work of social anthropologists on ethnicity gives archaeologists an opportunity to understand more clearly and accurately the dynamics of past societies. Understanding ethnicity, then, is a necessary precondition to adequate understanding of the past, in spite of Kramer's doubts.<sup>10</sup>

We should also mention differences between race, ethnicity and nationality. The term race implies biological differences, linked to phenotypes and genotypes. It is also an outdated concept. The term ethnicity implies groups within society that share culture, tradition, religion, language, ancestry and much more. Nationality implies a sense of belonging to a certain nation through origin, birth or naturalization. Ethnic identity shows extent to which one identifies with a particular ethnic group or more groups. It refers to individual sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of individuals's thinking perceptions, inner feelings, and behavior according to ethnic group membership. Ethnic identities can be based on our biological past, they can be influenced by it, but that is also not necessary. Person can also choose to emphasize certain identities in certain times or places. If we observe of ethnic identity today, we can see how complex this subject is and conclude that it is very hard to discover ethnicity through archaeological excavations. Ethnicity in the discipline

can be defined in a number of ways, though it is often implicit. It can be biologically determined, based primarily on genetic relatedness, functional based on shared cultural behavior, or interpreted solely on similar types of artifacts as was done in early archaeological studies. Ethnicity, as defined by Jones is "identification with a broader group in opposition to others on the basis of perceived cultural differentiation and/or common descent".<sup>11</sup> Determining this archaeologically is tricky since it requires finding material correlates and biological indicators that suffice. It is further complicated since individuals can have layers of ethnicity expressed in different contexts, and ethnic affiliations can vary in strength of expression over time. Early studies assumed that cultural groups were bounded and homogeneous entities that would correlate with distinct archaeological typologies and artifacts. While certain types of artifacts may signal ethnic affiliations, these must be separated from those that signal other group associations or identities.

We could also mention the division of identity into self identification (responders: identification with the country of the origin and identification of the country of the settlement) and opinions of others (responders: actual acceptance by the national majority, perceived acceptance by national majority, public opinion: positive or negative score on claims in public, tendency to generalize in public), which should be taken into account when harmonizing data provided by historical sources, i.e. archaeology.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> ROWLANDS, Michael: The politics of identity in archaeology. In: BOND, Georg C. – GILLIAM, Angela (eds.): *Social Construction of the Past: Representation as Power*. London: Routledge, 1994, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> KRAMER, Carol: *Pots and peoples*, pp. 91–112.

<sup>11</sup> JONES, Lancaster F.: Ethnic diversity and national identity. In: *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, a. 33, 2017, nr. 3, pp. 285–305.

<sup>12</sup> HEELSUM, Anja Van: Ethnic diversity and national identity. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, a. 33, 1997, nr. 3, pp. 285–305.

## The Migration Period and southern Pannonia

During The Migration Period, there was a major change in cultural material and funerary practices associated with the migration of the barbarians into the Roman Empire. Goths, Gepids, Lombards, Angles, Saxons, and Franks became the dominant cultural groups at the continent following the collapse of the Roman Empire in today's Europe. One of the major ways of identifying this change and their spread is the use of specific types of brooches and buckles in graves. This single artifact was seen as an indicator of ethnic identity. While this direct association between artifact and ethnicity has been proved false, it is still used due to a lack of alternative methods. Primary sources are analysed, specifically, Procopius' *Gothic War* and the chancellery documents of Cassiodorus' *Variae*.

This study aims to defend a middle ground within the historiographical debate. As we said, ethnic identity is fluid and situational: it is hard to see clear distinction between Roman and Goth/Gepid (German), but that does not mean there was no Gothic/Gepidic etc. identity at all. In the early Empire age, Germans were a collective term of Roman writers for the inhabitants of the area east of Rhine.<sup>13</sup> For our understanding today is challenging that ancient authors used the term Germans in different way than many 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century researchers. Thus, not all groups that spoke German according to today's criteria were Germans for people in Late Antiquity. The Goths, for example, were not considered

as Germans but, like the Huns, to the Scythian peoples. Also, the inhabitants of Scandinavia at that time was not considered Germans since in the eyes of ancient geographers Scandinavia was not part of Germania. In theory, the line between barbaric and Roman was clear and strict. In practice, however, these categories were constantly changing, they depended on the situation and, above all, they were constantly flexible. Barbaric could signify the greatest possible contrast to Roman, but it could simply be distinctly Roman.<sup>14</sup>

Science has ascribed to German groups a multifaceted important role during 5<sup>th</sup> century. But also, non-Germanic groups played an important role during that time, starting with Huns, especially in time of Attila. Ethnic groups in 5<sup>th</sup> century were diverse. They included people of very different backgrounds and languages – multilingualism was the rule rather than the exception. Language in Antiquity and in the early Middle Ages played a generally subordinate role as a sign of group affiliation. Foreign groups crossed Roman borders not only in the North Sea, the Rhine and the Danube, but also in the north and west of Britain, in North Africa, Egypt and Asia Minor.

When it comes to the archaeology of the so-called Migration Period in Southern Pannonia, there are several debilitating factors that make the research and interpretation extremely challenging. We may start with the very term Great Migration, which is still prevalent in Croatian archaeology. The same goes for the periodization, since it can be effectively argued that the Great Migration

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<sup>13</sup> FEHR, Hubert – RUMMEL, Philip Von: *Die Völkerwanderung*. Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag GmbH, 2011, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

Period cannot be limited to only the 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, as it is usually taken.<sup>15</sup> The first step towards a possible solution of the problems here presented is a necessary acceptance of interdisciplinary approach to the research and the cooperation of cognate academic disciplines. This bears to be emphasized nowadays, since such an approach to the study of the past and the present has become a commonplace. In our case, the synergy of two disciplines, history and archaeology, seems to be self-evident.<sup>16</sup> The main issue is how to integrate the historical and archaeological evidence, which opens the questions whether such an integration is possible in the first place and whether it is necessary to keep the approaches of historical and archaeological analyses apart for better understanding. However, we have to bear in mind, given their fragmentary nature and, in many cases, chronological distance from the events they describe – the latter in itself posing a significant problem since it reduces substantially the relevance and

trustworthiness of the historical record – their limitations when we analyze them and use them for reaching conclusions. Moreover, we have to be aware that historical texts were written with certain purposes and goals, and that they reflect the background, interests and preferences of their authors as well as the audiences to which they are directed.<sup>17</sup>

That is to say, the historical texts are themselves constructions that offer particular views on the past and present reality and strive, in political terms, to convince readers in veracity and reliability of the written. When there is no comparative narrative material, which is mostly the case for late antiquity, the information derived from literary sources must not be taken at face value and be accepted as absolutely truthful. As for archaeology, the discrepancy in approaches between traditional archaeology and post-processual archaeology is something that also has to be taken into account. Indeed, the post-processualist idea that the material culture is

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<sup>15</sup> See SPRINGER, Matthias: *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, vol. 32, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006, pp. 509–510; ROSEN, Klaus: *Die Völkerwanderung*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. München: C. H. Beck, 2003, pp. 28–30; FEHR, Hubert – RUMMEL, Philip Von: *Die Völkerwanderung*, 7ff; HÄRKE, Heinrich: Archaeologists and migrations. In: NOBLE, Thomas F. X. (ed.): *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms*. London & New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 217–229. On the term and concept of Late Antiquity, which I believe to be a more appropriate designation than the Great Migration Period, see: MARCONE, Arnaldo: A Long Late Antiquity? Considerations on a Controversial Periodization. In: *Journal of Late Antiquity*, a. 1, 2008, nr. 1, pp. 4–19; JAMES, Edward: The Rise and Function of the Concept “Late Antiquity”. In: *ibidem*, pp. 20–30.

<sup>16</sup> RUMMEL, Philip Von: “Gotisch, barbarisch oder römisch? Methodologische Überlegungen zur ethnischen Interpretation von Kleidung”. In: POHL, Walter – MEHOFER, Mathias (eds.): *Archaeology of Identity / Archäologie der Identität*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010, pp. 51–77, believes that the ethnicity can only be understood interdisciplinary, i.e. through both archaeological and historical discourse. Much more sceptical about the potential of archaeology in the study of ethnic identities is BRATHER, Sebastian: Bestattungen und Identitäten – Gruppierungen innerhalb frühmittelalterlichen Gesellschaften: *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 17 Denkschriften der philosophisch-historischen Klasse* 406. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010, pp. 25–49. Cf. also IDEM: *Ethnische Interpretation in der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie*. Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004, pp. 323–377.

<sup>17</sup> JONES, Siân: Historical categories and the praxis of identity: the interpretation of ethnicity in historical archaeology. In: FUNARI, Pedro Paulo A. et al. (eds.): *Historical Archaeology: Back from the Edge*. London & New York: Routledge, 1999, pp. 223–224.

meaningfully constituted and that the material evidence functions as a form of language, which can be read, understood, dissolved into its components and used to access the author, has improved the research possibilities of the archaeological record.<sup>18</sup> However, at the same time, the post-processualist approach has imposed serious limitations with the notion that the understanding of ethnic identity is beyond the reach of archaeology because the material culture is a result of the archaeological investigations offering only the artifact itself and not its explanation or its symbolical meaning.<sup>19</sup> In other words, the archeology cannot decipher the ethnic signs because they are not mentioned in the literary sources and thus the translation is lacking, i.e. there is no confirmed meaning for the discovered artifact. Hence, the archaeological evidence would only be indicative of social and not ethnic identity. This has led to the post-processualist dismissal of the culture-history approach in analysis of the material evidence as obsolete or outdated. To be sure, the ethnocentric interpretation of the archeological evidence, which has spawned from the old culture-history paradigm embedded in the notion that the ethnicity can be recognized and identified exclusively on the basis of the typology of archaeological artifacts, is no longer tenable. Therefore, the question is whether a person buried

in a “Germanic-style” dress is necessarily of a “Germanic” ethnic identity. Furthermore, how much can the literary sources be used for the determination of ethnic identity, since they primarily reveal the standpoint of their authors, i.e. they are ideologically or politically motivated? What the outside observers saw as an ethnically defined group may have only been a community of people united by the area they inhabited, goals they pursued, religion they shared, class interests they stood for or profession they practiced, without need to feel any bond based on belief in common descent and a shared past. Thus, we must not assume that ethnicity is the paramount concern of any given group identified by the literary sources, even if it is described in ethnographic terms.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, this does not exclude the possibility that the members of group described in sources as the Goths or the Gepids really identified themselves in terms of such ethnic designations. On balance, we believe that we are not utterly lost in an attempt to translate the archaeological evidence into a meaningful historical construct.<sup>21</sup> Archaeology can provide, in cooperation with other academic disciplines, answers to various questions, even those regarding the ethnic identity. Thus, the culture-history methodology, improved with new theoretical approaches, maintains its

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<sup>18</sup> HODDER, Ian: *Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology*, 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Also see a critical review of Hodder's book by SPECHT, Jim in the *Australian Archaeology*, a. 25, 1987, pp. 131–135.

<sup>19</sup> CURTA, Florin: Some Remarks on Ethnicity in Medieval Archeology. In: *Early Medieval Europe*, a. 15, 2007, nr. 2, p. 162.

<sup>20</sup> AMORY, Patrick: *People and identity in Ostrogothic Italy 489–554*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 14–17; HALSALL, Guy: *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376–568*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 35–45; POHL, Walter: Telling the Difference: Signs of Ethnic Identity. In: NOBLE, Thomas F. X. (ed.): *From Roman Provinces*, pp. 99–138.

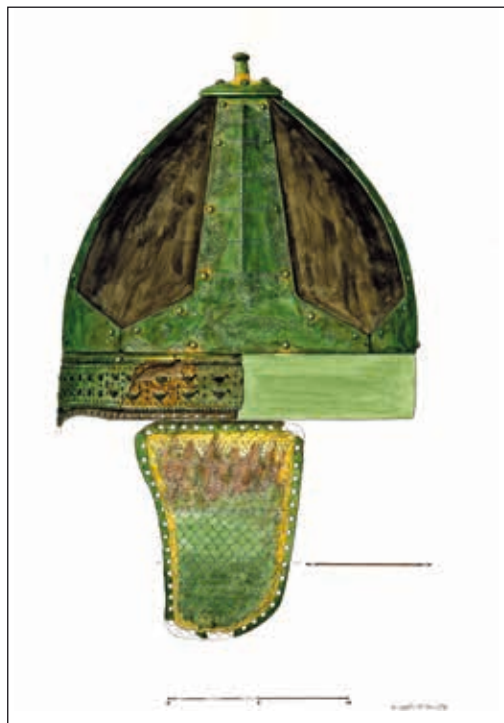
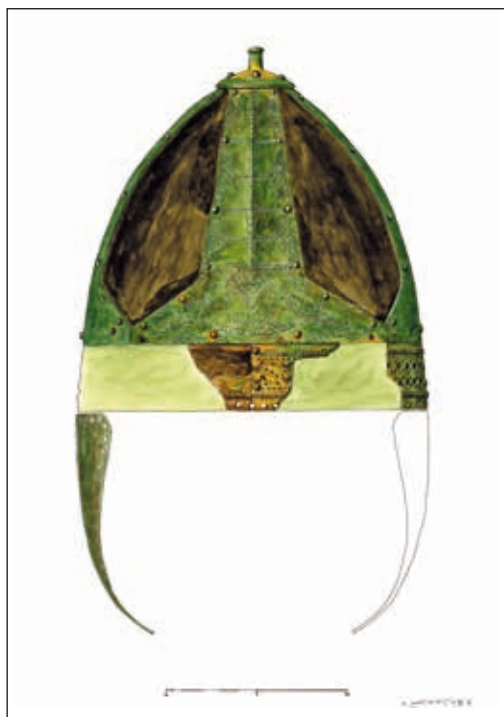
<sup>21</sup> BINTLIFF, John: The Death of Archaeological Theory? In: BINTLIFF, John – PEARCE, Mark (eds.): *The Death of Archaeological Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 7–22.

validity and usefulness for an attempt to determine the ethnic identity in the archaeological material. The preference of an ethnic group for certain artifacts or the manner in which they were used by them may serve in defining the ethnic boundaries, which means that the material culture takes on an active role in formation of a distinct ethnic identity. To summarize, it is necessary to look objectively, as much as it is possible, on the previous and current research approaches, to detect and compare their strengths and weaknesses and to extract and combine the positive conclusions of the two opposed schools of thoughts. The definition of a certain artifact depends on the context of the find. If the archaeological context is unknown and not clear (which is the case with the finds from the area taken into consideration here), we can agree that it is impossible to ascribe a certain find to a certain ethnic group. However, if the archaeological context is clear and complete, if what is known from literary sources offers a firm basis, and if complementary archaeological, anthropological and various others analysis can be adduced to corroborate this, then the culture-history interpretation of archaeological material is possible. Translated into an example, if all individuals buried in a graveyard are found dressed in dresses with shared features, we can assume with a high degree of certainty that they are all members of one ethnic identity group which we can name, whether they were the Huns, the Goths, the Gepids or someone else. One further point not to be omitted: although the importance of archaeology that has been stressed here may seem flattering for the discipline, it cannot be taken in absolute terms, because the archaeological method is often inapplicable when it comes to The Migration Period.

## Southern Pannonia

The finds from the area of southern Pannonia adting back to 5<sup>th</sup> century period are most often found outside the clear archaeological context, they were discovered a century or so ago, and their are small in number. As objects, they are mostly very impressive. However, given the mentioned deficiencies, they cannot be considered as reliable testimonies of a particular historical situation, but offer the possibility of various interpretations that often go beyond what can be proved. To interpret these finds with the main purpose of establishing one's shaky hypotheses is something that does not belong to the scientific discourse nor, however such hypotheses may seem interesting, it contributes to better understanding of historical events or processes. This is especially dangerous if the conclusions reached by renown researchers, whose personal vanity may have influenced their train of thoughts and induced them to adjust their findings to the notions that they had formed beforehand, are taken as absolutely authoritative and merely repeated in the scientific literature without re-examination. It is not the intention here to accuse or offend, but to stress the necessity of following the positive examples of research work done by our contemporaries and predecessors and avoiding the mistakes that can be recognized in the scientific literature. To add to the point, the practice of investigating the archaeological sites and withholding the finds or not publishing the results of the research is something that must not be condoned, since it prevents the development of archaeological and historical knowledge.

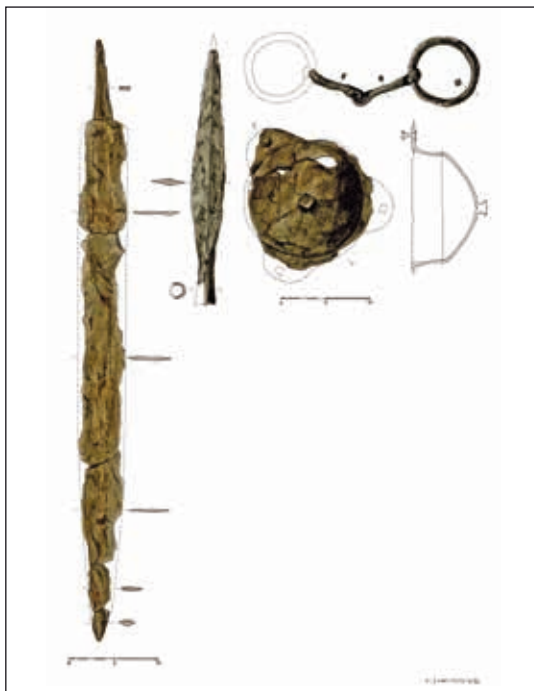
Having all these deficiencies and pitfalls in mind, it is clear that the area between the Drava, the Danube and the



Slika I. – IV.: Baldenheim type helmet from the vicinity of Batajnica, Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, drawing: Krešimir RONČEVIĆ.



Slika V.: Vessel, chainmail from the vicinity of Batajnica, Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, drawing: Krešimir RONČEVIĆ.



Slika VI.: Umbo of a shield, spearhead, horse tack from the vicinity of Batajnica, Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, drawing: Krešimir RONČEVIĆ.

Sava river is still more or less an archaeological tabula rasa for the period in question and it craves for new archaeological investigations. Only if we have methodologically soundly conducted excavations and clear archaeological contexts, especially when it comes to graves, the archaeological evidence may be used to establish the picture of the time and people that are subject of the research.

I now intend to present and discuss the concrete examples of finds from Syrmia and Dalmatia as instructive for what we have been talking about so far. First, there is a problem of the Baldenheim type helmets. Especially interesting is the case of the Baldenheim type helmet from Batajnica.<sup>22</sup>

A find found in the vicinity of Batajnica, which is connected with The Migration Period and the question of the ethnicity of the find, was published by Zdenko Vinski in *Situla 2*, 1957. The find is mostly dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, but it credibly shows the problem of making archaeological conclusions regarding ethnicity for the 5<sup>th</sup> century. It is a grave that, according to the grave inventory, is attributed to the Germans. A Baldenheim-type helmet, a spata, a spearhead, a checkered armor protection, an umbo of a shield, horse's bit and a small biconical clay vessel, decorated with a stamped ornament, were found in the grave.

The ethnic affiliation of the person that wore the helmet is still an unresolved issue. The helmet was found in 1939. The information that it was discovered in a grave with other artifacts is dubious and conflicting. The data about the grave from the inventory book in the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb are lacking. The grave is mentioned by Zdenko Vinski, but the inventory book records only the vicinity of Batajnica, which means that even the site of the find is not clearly known. With all due respect for Zdenko Vinski, we cannot disregard the fact that there is a trend of accepting at face value the conclusions of researchers who are seen as authorities. Even Vinski himself, in his 1957 study where he had published the find, was not sure any longer whether there were one or two graves.<sup>23</sup> Thus it may have not even been a grave. It is equally possible that the items were collected from different spots. Some artifacts indeed suggest that they may have belonged to a Gepid (sword, a vessel with stamped ornament), whereas others rather indicate that they may have been in possession of an Ostrogoth (helmet, umbo). The alleged grave also contained fragments of a horse's bit and fragments of a chained armor protection with metal rings. On balance, since there is no reliable inventory record, the helmet that is, by its feature, definitely a product of Gothic

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<sup>22</sup> VINSKI, Zdenko: Ein Spangenhelmsfund aus dem östlichen Syrmien. In: *Germania*, a. 32, 1954, nr. 3, pp. 176–82; IDEM: *Arheološki spomenici velike seobe naroda u Srijemu*. Ljubljana: Narodni muzej, 1957, pp. 3–27; CSALLÁNY, Dezsó: *Archäologische Denkmäler der Gepiden im Mitteldonaubecken (454–568 u. Z.)*. Budapest: Verlag der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1961, pp. 238–239; DIMITRIJEVIĆ, Danica – KOVAČEVIĆ, Jovan – VINSKI, Zdenko: *Seoba Naroda: Arheološki nalazi jugoslovenskog Podunavlja*. Zemun: Narodni muzej, 1962, pp. 73–75, nr. 72; SIMONI, Katica: Dva priloga istraživanju germanskih nalaza seobe naroda u Jugoslaviji. In: *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu*, a. 10–11, 1977–1978, pp. 219; TOMIČIĆ, Željko: Der Untergang der Antike und deren Nachlebensformen in Südpannonien (Nordkroatien). In: BRATOŽ, Rajko (ed.): *Slovenija in sosednje dežele med antiko in karolinško dobo. Začetki slovenske etnogeneze / Slowenien und die Nachbarländer zwischen Antike und karolingischer Epoche. Anfänge der slowenischen Ethnogeneze*, vol. I: (Situla 39). Ljubljana: Narodni muzej, 2000, pp. 271.

<sup>23</sup> VINSKI, Zdenko: *Arheološki spomenici*, pp. 3–27.

workshops of northern Italy should not been ascribed to a Gepid who had allegedly obtained it as a spoil of war. However, this is the current interpretation, which is repeated in the literature. We believe that there are not enough indications on the basis of which the helmet could be ethnically attributed to Gepid, who could have obtained it in the sense of war prey. Also, it is almost unbelievable that the community that buried the deceased, a prominent member of one army, would bury him with the ethnic markings of another army. If we imagine similar parallels in the present, they are almost unimaginable. The questions of the findings from the vicinity of Batajnica do not stop there because, on the basis of them, other identity markers brought by these findings can also be discussed. In the case of a helmet, a spade, an umbo, a spearhead, chained armor protection and horse bit, we can clearly recognize the military character, that is, the official identity of the deceased. The helmet and the vessel also reveal something about the status identity of the deceased. The helmet reveals a higher social position, while the vessel, which is small in size and completely average, within the framework of that period, does not necessarily speak in favor of a high social status. If it really belonged to the grave, it reveals more about the religious identity of the deceased and points to paganism and the period before the Christianization of the Germans in southern Pannonia.

Furthermore, the finds of the Baldenheim type helmet from Dalmatia (one specimen from Salona, two specimens from Naron) are explained as originally

belonging to the Ostrogoths but, during the Ostrogothic-Byzantine war, ending up in the hands of Byzantine soldiers.<sup>24</sup>

There is also the question of the justification of the thesis according to which the Ostrogoths are regularly buried without placing weapons in the graves. Vinski believed that the helmet belonged to Gepidus, which he received after the Ostrogoths left Sirmium in 535. Relying on Werner, he considered it a work of the Ravenna workshops. The question of the exact location of the find and its context, as well as the absolute interpretation of the find itself, remains open. According to the finder, all objects (except for the vessel, for which it is not certain) are from the same grave. This very conclusion gave birth to a handful of new questions that can be applied to this find, but also to almost all the findings that we date to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, which were found on the soil of the former southern Pannonia. Namely, most of these findings are individual and found outside of a clear archaeological context and are not accompanied by detailed archaeological documentation. The best examples for comparison and analysis of such findings are provided by rare sites that have been archaeologically investigated and documented following the methodology.<sup>25</sup>

## Concluding remarks

Archeology is a science that studies people, their behavior, civilizational achievements, traditions, ritual issues, costumes and other elements of life in the past. Questions of identity, including social, cultural, ethnic identity, as well

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<sup>24</sup> UGLEŠIĆ, Ante: Spangenhelme vom Typ Naron/Baldenheim vom Boden der Römischen Provinz Dalmatien unter besonders Berücksichtigung der Herkunft dieses Helmtyps. In: *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Zadru. Razdio povijesnih znanosti*, a 39 (26), 2000, pp. 61–70.

<sup>25</sup> VINSKI, Zdenko: *Arheološki spomenici*, pp. 25–26.

as other identity determinants, are thus not only interesting, but become inevitable. The problem, but also the strength of archeology lies in creating conclusions based on material evidence, which often cannot describe every segment of the life of a group or an individual. The material part should be a clear reflection of the spiritual, as well as our assumptions about how and why people made certain decisions, rejected or accepted certain attitudes and changed their identity determinants. The question arises whether such complete conclusions can be made solely on the basis of the remains of material culture. Following the principles of interdisciplinarity, we believe that no single discipline should independently provide far-reaching conclusions. The importance of archaeological material as historical evidence, even if it has been

found outside the archaeological context, cannot be neglected, nor it can be reduced to a mere social identity function. However, if the archaeological context is not clear, the evidential strength of the material is strongly diminished and the interpretation must be very cautious. The automatism in reaching conclusions that cannot be substantiated is best avoided. Furthermore, it is necessary to be prepared not only to re-examine, re-evaluate and re-interpret the material but also to inspect and verify the record concerning the circumstances of the find. Such an approach, along with new systematic field research, will help to assemble research puzzles into a coherent and more plausible historical picture of the events and research of the population of southern Pannonia during the period of The Migration Period.

# Imported Pottery as an Indicator of the Preservation of Communications and Trade in the Noric-Pannonian Area in Late Antiquity

Importovana keramika ako indikator zachovania komunikácií a obchodu v noricko-panónskej oblasti v neskorej antike / Uvozno keramičko posuđe kao pokazatelj očuvanja komunikacija i trgovine na noričko-panonskom prostoru u kasnoj antici

*Kasna antika bila je vrijeme unutarnjih nemira i provala barbarskih skupina koji su uzrokovali ekonomski pad i smanjenje transporta i uvoza keramičkih i drugih proizvoda prema noričko-panonskom prostoru. Unatoč tome, komunikacije i trgovačke veze nisu sasvim prekinute ni nakon slavenskog osvajanja. Cestovni pravci koje su Rimljani gradili i održavali imali su, između ostalog, trgovačku namjenu sve do kraja kasne antike. Osnovni uvozni proizvod nije bilo posuđe već prehrambeni proizvodi poput ulja, vina, žitarica, ribljih prerađevina, plodova i dr. Posuđe je bilo ambalaža te robe ili sekundarni proizvod koji je dopreman na istim brodovima uz prehrambene proizvode, ali u manjim količinama. U uvozno keramičko posuđe ubrajaju se afrička keramika s crvenom prevlakom (ARSW), fokejska keramika s crvenom prevlakom (LRCW), sjevernoafričke i istočnomediteranske amfore i sjevernoafričke uljanice. Mediteransko uvozno posuđe nije jednako zastupljeno na čitavom noričko-panonskom području. Na nekim se lokalitetima pojavljuju sve navedene skupine posuđa, dok su na drugima zabilježeni samo pojedinačni primjerci. Cilj ovoga rada je utvrditi uzorak rasprostranjenosti mediteranskog uvoznog posuđa na južnom dijelu noričko-panonskog graničnog područja i procijeniti do koje mjere ti nalazi služe kao pokazatelj očuvanja komunikacija i trgovine sve do kraja kasne antike na tom prostoru.*

Ključne riječi: Kasna antika, trgovina, komunikacije, ARSW, LRCW, amfore, uljanice, noričko-panonski prostor, Lobor

„The Noric-Pannonian area includes large parts of the Alpine and pre-Alpine regions, the Danube Valley, the Pannonian Plain and smaller mountains located within it. In late antiquity, six provinces existed in that area, Noricum Ripense and Mediterraneum and Pannonia Prima, Secunda, Savia and Valeria. Given that this was a geographical area of such size and diversity, the focus of this paper is on the southern part of the Noric-Pannonian border area in the provinces of Noricum Mediterraneum and Pannonia Savia (Map 1). More precisely, it

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is the area of northeastern part of Slovenia and the northwestern part of Croatia. As the state of research in these areas is not at the same level, the number of excavated and published sites is much smaller in northwestern Croatia, for the study of communications and trade routes in late antiquity, more distant sites in the remaining parts of continental Croatia, Slovenia, southern Austria and northeastern Italy were sometimes taken into account. Besides that, the port in Aquileia or perhaps in the nearby Grado, was the main distribution center for the supply of the Noric-Pannonian area with Mediterranean products until the end of late antiquity, or more precisely in the period between the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. During this period, a transformation of the way of life occurred. A number of urban centers slowly or abruptly ceased to exist in the form in which they were in the earlier Roman period, and the population searched for protection and security in smaller hillfort settlements in the nearby Alpine and pre-Alpine areas. Significant settlements were not far from the established Roman communications, but no longer in their

immediate vicinity.<sup>1</sup> As it seems at the moment, the import of Mediterranean products by these communications was maintained even after the Slavic conquests, until the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, but certainly not with the same intensity as it was in the earlier part of late antiquity.

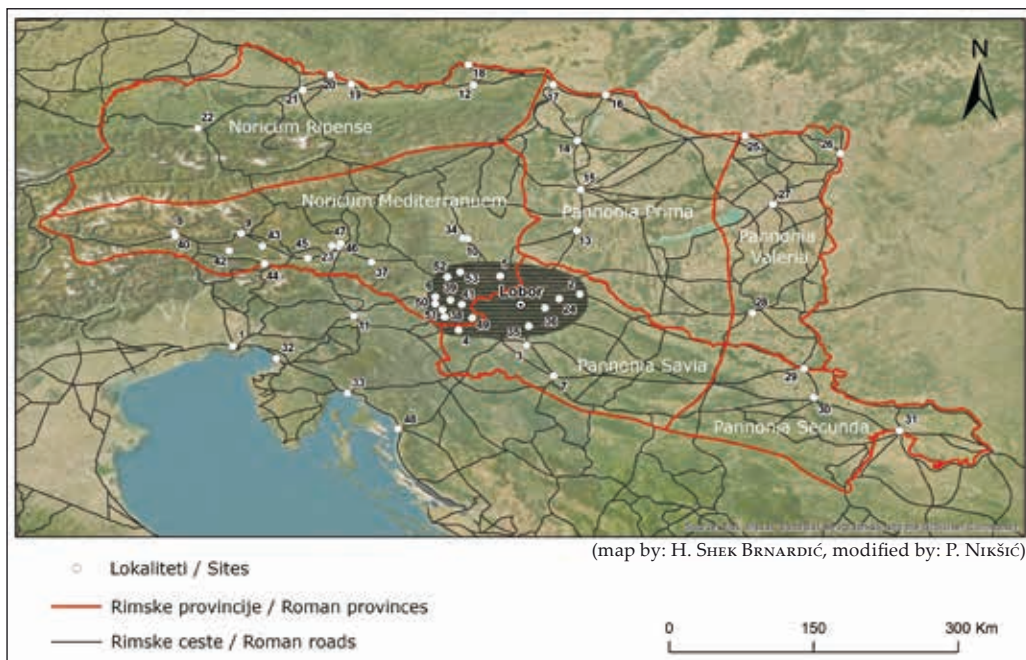
This paper seeks an answer to the basic question of the extent to which Mediterranean imported pottery<sup>2</sup> is an indicator of the preservation of communications and trade in the Noric-Pannonian area in late antiquity. At the same time, it tries to give answers to the questions that arose during the research of Mediterranean pottery in the Noric-Pannonian area. It turned out that individual examples of one or more groups of Mediterranean pottery were found at several sites, so the question arises whether such appearance of a certain group of pottery is also evidence of communication and trade or only personal property of individuals.<sup>3</sup> Given that Mediterranean pottery is divided into groups according to the origin of production and its purpose, it is also necessary to clarify whether all groups of imported pottery are equally valuable indicator of trade or whether containers

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<sup>1</sup> KNIFIC, Timotej: Vranje near Sevnica: A Late Roman Settlement in the Light of Certain Pottery Finds. In: *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 45, 1994, p. 220. The author points out that the hillforts in late antiquity were located far from the main roads, but it should be noted that that was not the case in general. For example, Vipota, Rifnik and Vranje were all located 6–8 km away from an urban center or an important road.

<sup>2</sup> The finds of imported pottery in the mentioned area are divided into groups according to S. Ladstätter, who included North African and Eastern Mediterranean amphorae, ARSW, LRCW and North African oil lamps into the category of true imported pottery. LADSTÄTTER, Sabine: *Die materielle Kultur der Spätantike in den Ostalpen: Eine Fallstudie am Beispiel der weslichen Doppelkirchenanlage auf dem Hemmaberg*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000, pp. 85–117; EADEM: Handelsbeziehungen der Provinz Noricum in der Spätantike am Beispiel der keramischen Fundmaterials. In: BAKIRTZIS, Christos (ed.): *VIIIe Congrès International sur la Céramique Médiévale en Méditerranée, Thessaloniki, 11–16 Octobre 1999*. Athènes: Édition de la Caisse des Recettes Archéologiques, 2003, pp. 303–307.

<sup>3</sup> HÁRSEGY, Piroška – OTTOMÁNYI, Katalin: Imported and Local Pottery in Late Roman Pannonia. In: LAVAN, Luke (ed.): *Local Economies? Production and Exchange of Inland Regions in Late Antiquity*. Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2015, p. 475. The authors use the term personal property for the earliest examples of ARSW in Pannonia, but the same term can be applied to late examples of Mediterranean pottery, which also appear individually at the small number of sites.



Map 1.: Relief map with the marked borders of the Noric-Pannonian area with its provinces, the southern part of the Noric-Pannonia border area (striped) and the sites from which the text mentions: 1. Aquilea, 2. Iovia Botivo, 5. Poetovio, 6. Celeia, 7. Siscia, 11. Emona, 33. Tarsatica, 38. Vranje, 39. Rifnik, 41. Tinje, 48. Senia, 49. Svete gore, 50. Vipota, 51. Prapretno, 52. Brinjeva gora, 53. Jurišna vas.

such as amphorae, in which food products were actually delivered, have priority.<sup>4</sup> The small amount or complete absence of Mediterranean pottery in some parts of the studied area is also problematic, so the state of research should be taken into account before excluding the possibility of communications and trade where Mediterranean pottery has not been found due to low level of research. The preservation of communications and trade by which

Mediterranean goods were distributed to the Noric-Pannonian area can only be equal to or greater than what is known from the current state of research.

The research of Mediterranean imported pottery in the Noric-Pannonian area and the site of Lobar – Our Lady of the Mountain was conducted as part of the project of the Croatian Science Foundation „Lobar – early medieval center of power.“<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> BAUSOVAC, Maja: Late Roman Amphorae from Rifnik near Celje (Slovenia). In: MENCHIELLI, Simonetta – SANTORO, Sara – PASQUINUCCI, Marinella – GUIDICCI, Gabriella (eds.): *LRCW3, Late Roman Coarse Wares, Cooking Wares and Amphorae in the Mediterranean, Archaeology and archaeometry, Comparison between western and eastern Mediterranean: BAR International Series 2185 (II)*. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2010, p. 698; BAUSOVAC, Maja: *Študija poznoantične lončenine iz utrjene višinske naselbine Rifnik pri Šentjurju: Doktorska disertacija, Univerza v Ljubljani*, 2011, p. 70. At several sites (Rifnik, Vranje, Kranj, Tonovcov grad, Koper) the amphorae were found in the immediate vicinity of the church, so they are associated with the use during Mass and interpreted as containers for a luxury product that was not for everyday use. They were sometimes secondarily used for skeletal burials.

<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank my mentor (DOK-2018-09-5720) and the „Lobar – early medieval center of power“ (IP-2016-06-6622) project director Dr. Krešimir Filipić on the provided archaeological pottery finds and documentation.

## Communications, trade and finds of imported Mediterranean pottery

As mentioned earlier, imported Mediterranean pottery includes groups of amphorae and tableware, as well as oil lamps. These are North African and Eastern Mediterranean amphorae, African (hereinafter: ARSW) and Phocaean red slip ware, also called Late Roman C ware (hereinafter: LRCW), and North African oil lamps. Amphorae were used mainly for the transport of olive oil and wine, but also fish products, various fruits and cereals. The transport of oil to Noricum Ripense is mentioned in Eugippius' biography of St. Severinus.<sup>6</sup> The stages of the trade route from the countries of origin of agricultural and other products to their final destination in the Noric-Pannonian area included origin ports in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, the main port and distribution center in the Adriatic (Aquileia), road and river routes through Noric and Pannonian provinces, urban and rural settlements, villae rusticae, military forts and hillforts of the Noric-Pannonian area.

Agricultural and other products from North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean were imported into Pannonia via Italy, Dalmatia and Noricum.<sup>7</sup> The port at Aquileia was the most important emporium for the distribution of Mediterranean

products to Noricum, Pannonia, Moesia and Dacia, for which the Sava, Drava and Danube river routes was of key importance. The main road to the Noric-Pannonian area led through Emona, from which the road to Celeia, Poetovio, Iovia Botivo and Mursa and the one to Neviodunum, Andautonia, Siscia and Sirmium separated (Map 2). Alternative roads led from the Adriatic ports to the eastern part of Pannonia, as well as from Senia via Romula or Quadrata to Siscia.<sup>8</sup> Mediterranean goods could have reached the Lobor area from two directions, through Noricum Mediterraneum or Pannonia Savia. This may have changed over time, especially after the invasion of the Huns in which Poetovio was destroyed and no late forms of Mediterranean pottery were found there, those that existed, for example, in Siscia. The security of communications has certainly conditioned and determined the trade routes by which Mediterranean and other goods were distributed. Although Tarsatica is not mentioned as a port through which Mediterranean pottery was distributed further inland, given the quantity and variety of North African dishes found there, this possibility cannot be discarded.<sup>9</sup> Tarsatica was a part of the Claustra Alpium Iuliarum fortification system and as such shows a similar spectre of imported Mediterranean pottery as other sites from that system, primarily

<sup>6</sup> EUGIPIUS: Vita sancti Severini XXVIII. Trans.: ROBINSON, George W. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914.

<sup>7</sup> HÁRSEGY, Piroška – OTTOMÁNYI, Katalin: Imported and Local Pottery, pp. 476–478; MILETIĆ ČAKŠIRAN, Ivana: Tipološko kronološka klasifikacija rimske keramike iz Siscije: Doktorska disertacija, Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 2019, p. 116.

<sup>8</sup> VIKIĆ-BELANIĆ, Branka: Keramika i njen udio u trgovinskom prometu južne Panonije u rimsko carsko doba. In: *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 19, 1968, pp. 512 and 513; LANDSTÄTTER, Sabine: Handelsbeziehungen der Provinz Noricum, p. 304; GRAČANIN, Hrvoje: Rimske prometnice i komunikacije u kasnoantičkoj južnoj Panoniji. *Scrinia slavonica*, a. 10, 2010, pp. 11–27; IDEM: *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju (ok konca 4. do konca 11. stoljeća)*. Zagreb: Plejada, 2011, pp. 29–39, fig. 1.

<sup>9</sup> PERCAN, Tihomir: Antička fina keramika. In: RADIĆ ŠTIVIĆ, Nikolina – BEKIĆ, Luka (eds.): *Tarsatički principij, Kasnoantičko vojno zapovjedništvo*. Rijeka: Grad Rijeka, 2009, pp. 72–77.

Ajdovščina and Hrušica.<sup>10</sup> It is assumed that the imitations of North African and Eastern Mediterranean dishes were distributed through Aquileia, and their production is located in the area of Caput Adriae, Ravenna and Aquileia itself.<sup>11</sup>

Although urban and other settlements and road stations in the lowlands are almost always mentioned along road and river routes, life in late antiquity continued in hillfort settlements in isolated, inaccessible places. Urban and rural settlements, as well as *villae rusticae* in the lowlands were dying out under the constant threat of internal unrests and attacks of the barbarians. Mediterranean pottery is one of the rare pieces of evidence for maintaining communications and trade links between the hillfort settlements of the Noric-Pannonian area and other remote provinces. The cessation of imports of Mediterranean and other goods into Pannonia, especially Valeria, occurred in the first decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and after 380 AD the circulation of coins had ceased. Mediterranean pottery reached many sites when the circulation of coins no longer existed or there is no evidence for it, and so it was in Lobar.<sup>12</sup> In Pannonia Prima, Secunda and Savia, the cessation of imports is dated to the time of the Hun invasion.<sup>13</sup> Although this

data refers to the entire Pannonia, i.e. all four Pannonian provinces, the data on the southern parts of Pannonia and the southern part of the Noricum-Pannonian border area are somewhat lacking. Examples of ARSW dated from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> century have been found in Siscia, and a LRCW bowl and African oil lamp dated to the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> and first quarters of the 6<sup>th</sup> century have been found in Lobar.<sup>14</sup> Mediterranean pottery dated until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century was found in several sites in the Slovenian part of the studied area as well. It can therefore be said that the attacks of barbarian groups did not completely stop imports into the Noric-Pannonian border area, but also into southern Pannonia itself. The Pannonian area geographically closest to the Adriatic ports certainly did not have the same level of trade disruption as the areas closer to the Danube. Likewise, the northern part of the Noric-Pannonian border area, which particularly refers to Carnuntum, Vindobona and the territory around them, shows the preservation of communications and trade with the Mediterranean until the final withdrawal of the population caused by the attacks of barbarian groups.<sup>15</sup> This is not surprising considering that Carnuntum was located

<sup>10</sup> GIESLER, Ulrike: Die Kleinfunde, Feinkeramik. In: ULBERT, Thilo (ed.): *Ad Pirum (Hrušica), Spätromische Passbefestigung in den Julischen Alpen*. München: C. H. Beck, 1981, pp. 84–92, Taf. 34–36; VIDRIH PERKO, Verena: Rimskodobna keramika z Ajdovščine pri Rodiku. In: *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 48, 1997.

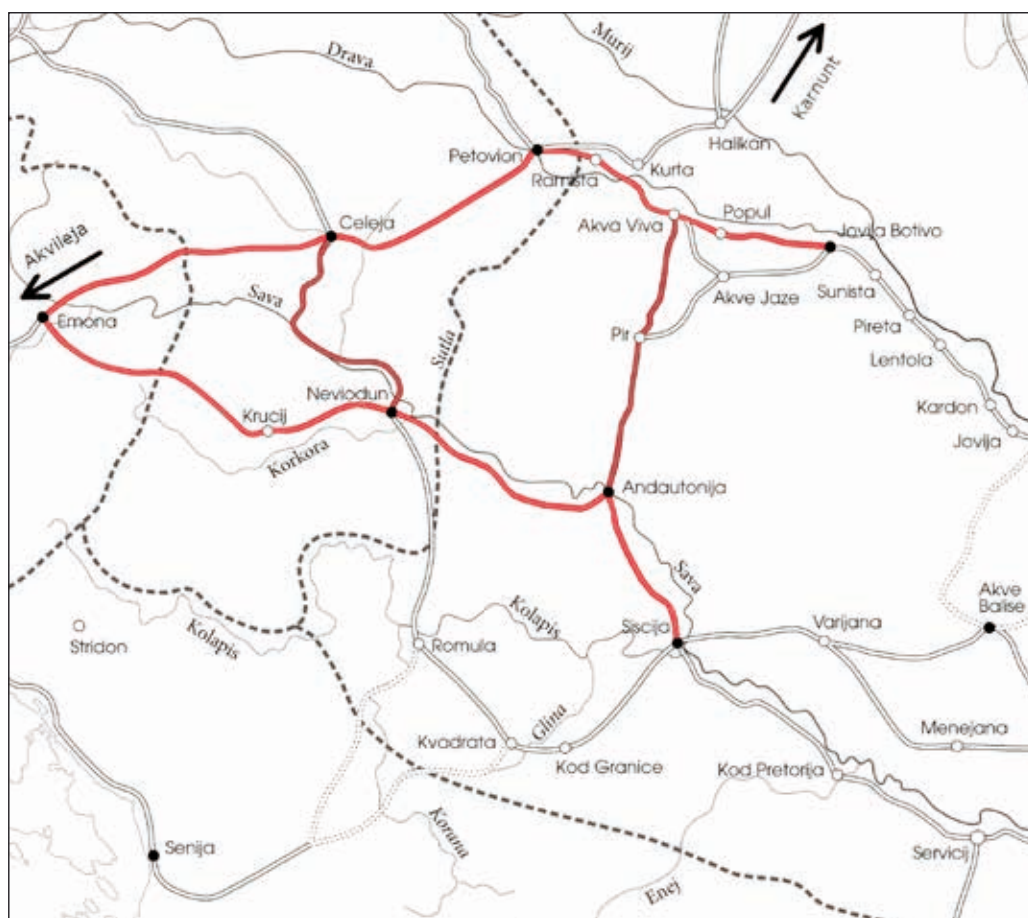
<sup>11</sup> LANDSTÄTTER, Sabine: Handelsbeziehungen der Provinz Noricum, p. 306; HÁRSEGY, Piroska – OTTOMÁNYI, Katalin: Imported and Local Pottery, p. 481.

<sup>12</sup> NAĐ, Miroslav – BILIĆ, Tomislav: Numizmatički nalazi. In: FILIPEC, Krešimir – BUNČIĆ, Maja: *Lobar – ranosrednjovjekovno središte moći, 20 godina arheoloških istraživanja*. Zagreb: Arheološki muzeja u Zagrebu, Arheološki zavod Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Centar za ranosrednjovjekovna istraživanja Zagreb – Lobar, 2021, p. 127, kat. br. 167. The last coin in chronological order was the one that belonged to the emperor Arcadius, which can be dated to the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century, and the Mediterranean imported pottery can be dated almost a century later.

<sup>13</sup> HÁRSEGY, Piroska – OTTOMÁNYI, Katalin: Imported and Local Pottery, pp. 471, 474 and 516.

<sup>14</sup> FILIPEC, Krešimir – BUNČIĆ, Maja: *Lobar – ranosrednjovjekovno središte moći*, p. 37, kat. br. 24. The oil lamp fragment was previously unpublished.

<sup>15</sup> HÁRSEGY, Piroska – OTTOMÁNYI, Katalin: *Imported and Local Pottery*, pp. 471–481 and 484–486, Map 1. The authors listed the Pannonian sites where ARSW, African oil lamps and African and



Map 2.: Main (light red) and vicinal (dark red) Roman roads in parts of the provinces Noricum Mediterraneum, Pannonia Savoia and Italia – Venetia et Histria (source: Gračanin, Hrvoje: *Južna Panonija*, sl. 1; modified by: P. Nikšić).

on the old Amber Road, which led from Aquileia, via Poetovio in the southern part of the Noric-Pannonian border area, towards the north. Carnuntum is also the site where the earliest, as well as the latest examples of ARSW were found. Several forms of ARSW and African oil lamps found there can be dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century (Hayes 73, 89a, 91a; Hayes IIa). The Hayes 73 form, along with other

ARSW forms, oil lamps and amphorae, was also found at Vindobona. In Baden bei Wien, an oil lamp of the form Hayes IIa was found, which can be dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Wien-Oberlaa site yielded only ARSW of the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century, but no later examples. The situation is similar in Savaria, Salla and Ad Flexum, where the latest examples of ARSW and oil lamps can be dated to the

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Eastern Mediterranean amphorae were found, as well as the forms to which these vessels were attributed and their dates. The mentioned sites are mostly located in today's Hungary, but also in Austria and Slovakia. This paper presents data on the finds of imported pottery only at the sites near the old Amber Road, that is on the border of today's Austria, Slovakia and Hungary.

beginning or the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. As for Slovakian sites near the old Amber Road, only undefined fragments of ARSW were found in Roman Gerulata. It is interesting that the ARSW findings are also known from Barbaricum, from the Bratislava-Dúbravka and Cífer-Pác sites, but they can be dated to the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century at the latest, so they are not relevant for the study of the preservation of communications and trade at the very end of Late Antiquity in that area. Carnuntum and Vindobona remain the only sites in that part of Pannonia Prima that can confirm the contacts with the Mediterranean until the end of their existence.

Most of the Mediterranean pottery in Pannonia Savia was found in Siscia (Sisak), a city on the main road Emona – Sirmium, which is not actually in the Noric-Pannonian border area, but it is important for determining the preservation of trade routes for Mediterranean products. It is also one of the few cities to which the Mediterranean products were probably imported until the end of late antiquity. The ARSW forms Hayes 50, 52b, 53a, 58a, 60a, 61, 62b, 67, 70, 81 and 91 have been recorded there. The amount of imports was obviously decreasing over time as most of these forms can be dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The form Hayes 81 can be dated to the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and only the form Hayes 91 can be dated later, from the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup>

century. It cannot be said with certainty, however, that the form was in use in the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, but the possibility cannot be discarded. In addition to tableware, North African amphorae of unknown type and Eastern Mediterranean LRA 1, which can be dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, were also found.<sup>16</sup>

In Iovia Botivo (Ludbreg), on the main road Poetovio – Mursa, a fragment of a deep plate or shallow bowl was found whose profile corresponds to the form Hayes 61a, but it is not clear whether it is original or imitation because the term ARSW was not explicitly used.<sup>17</sup> This form dates from 325 to 420. If it is an original North African product, it is the only example of Mediterranean pottery in that part of the Podravlje region. A large number of ARSW vessels was not found in Poetovio (Ptuj) either. The forms Hayes 48/60, 50 and 58 dating from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and some other examples that could be dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century were identified. In addition to tableware, North African oil lamps of the form Hayes I and II/Atlante VIII and X were also found.<sup>18</sup> North African oil lamps of the form Hayes II/Atlante X and Levantine amphorae LRA 4 (the so-called Gaza type) were found in Celeia (Celje), and can probably be dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup>

ARSW dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century was found in Jurišna Vas,<sup>20</sup> as well as on Brinjeva gora, where an earlier form of North

<sup>16</sup> MILETIĆ ČAKŠIRAN, Ivana: *Tipološko kronološka klasifikacija*, pp. 116–118, 219 and 238, footnote 144, T. 145: 1, T. 152: 1, 4.

<sup>17</sup> VIKIĆ-BELANČIĆ, Branka: Sustavna istraživanja Ludbregu od 1968.–1979. god. In: *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu*, a. XVI–XVII, 1983–1984, nr. 3, p. 157, T. 11: 14.

<sup>18</sup> GABLER, Dénes: Terra sigillata im Töpferviertel von Poetovio. In: *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 37, 1986, pp. 137, 138; LANDSTÄTTER, Sabine: *Die materielle Kultur*, pp. 110–112, Abb. 54–56; EADEM: *Handelsbeziehungen der Provinz Noricum*, Abb. 2–4.

<sup>19</sup> LANDSTÄTTER, Sabine: *Die materielle Kultur*, p. 112, Abb. 56; EADEM: *Handelsbeziehungen der Provinz Noricum*, Abb. 3; BAUSOVAC, Maja: *Vivas Felix Celeia, Arheološko najdišče Osrednja knjižnica Celje*. Celje: Pokrajinski muzej Celje, 2014, p. 95.

<sup>20</sup> LANDSTÄTTER, Sabine: *Handelsbeziehungen der Provinz Noricum*, Abb. 4.

African oil lamps Hayes I/Atlanta VIII was also recorded.<sup>21</sup> On Rifnik near Šentjur, fragments of ARSW of unknown form were found, which can be dated from the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century according to the fabric. On the other hand, a relatively large amount of late antique amphorae, namely North African spatheia (Keay 26), Eastern Mediterranean LRA 1 and 2, and fragments of Western Mediterranean provenance were found. Unlike tableware, the amphorae are mostly dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>22</sup> The Eastern Mediterranean amphora LRA 2 was also found in Vipota.<sup>23</sup> North African spatheia were found together with Eastern Mediterranean amphorae at Ajdovski gradec near Vranje, and they are dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> and early 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup> As far as ARSW is concerned, the forms Hayes 45, 61b, 67, 73a, 81b, 87, 91d, 94d and 102 have been identified there, which shows that the supply of this hillfort with North African tableware lasted from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The form of North African Hayes II/Atlanta X oil lamp was also recorded. The LRCW find is sporadic.<sup>25</sup> A fragment of an original or an imitation of the ARSW form Hayes 61a<sup>26</sup>, which was not attributed to that group, was found on Svete gore near Bizeljsko, as well as ARSW form Hayes



Figure 1.: a) Fragment of a North African oil lamp from Lobor, form Hayes II/Atlante VIII (photo: P. Nikšić); b) An oil lamp from Carthage with the same border decorative motifs (source: BONIFAY, Michel: Études, Fig. 209: 7, modified by P. Nikšić).



Figure 2.: a) A photograph and b) a drawing of the fragment of a LRCW bowl from Lobor, form Hayes 3e (photo: P. Nikšić; drawing: P. Nikšić).

61b.<sup>27</sup> In addition, two examples of LRCW form Hayes 3, dating to the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> and the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, have been identified, although they had been previously incorrectly attributed and dated.<sup>28</sup> In Tinje above Loka, ARSW

<sup>21</sup> PAHIČ, Stanko: Brinjeva gora 1953. In: *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 32, 1981, pp. 109, 110, T. 1: 11.

<sup>22</sup> BAUSOVAC, Maja: Late Roman Amphorae, pp. 65–67 and EADEM: *Študija poznoantične lončenine*, pp. 63–74.

<sup>23</sup> CIGLENEČKI, Slavko – PIRKMAJER, Darja: Zatočišče poslednjih Celejanov na Vipoti. In: *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 38, 1987, pp. 222–223 and 225, T. 1: 25, 26; BAUSOVAC, Maja: Late Roman Amphorae, p. 696.

<sup>24</sup> KNIFIC, Timotej: Vranje near Sevnica, pp. 219 and 220.

<sup>25</sup> LANDSTÄTTER, Sabine: *Die materielle Kultur*, pp. 109, 112, 115 and 116, Abb. 53: 2, 56 and 58.

<sup>26</sup> KOROŠEC, Paola: Raziskave na Svetih gorah na Bizeljskem. *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 20, 1969, p. 247, T. 2: 4.

<sup>27</sup> EADEM: Svete gore nad Bistrico ob Sotli v poznorimskem obdobju. *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 48, 1997, p. 336, T. 1: 3.

<sup>28</sup> KOROŠEC, Paola – KOROŠEC, Josip ml.: Arheološke raziskave na Svetih gorah ob Sotli v letu 1974. In: *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 29, 1978, p. 445, T. 7: 1; KOROŠEC, Paola: Svete gore, p. 334–336, T. 1: 1, 2.

dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century was found, along with the fragments of amphorae that could not be more precisely classified and a LRCW form Hayes 3e, which the author claims is evidence of preserved trade connections with the Mediterranean.<sup>29</sup>

Fragments of a LRCW bowl belonging to the form Hayes 3e (Figure 2: a, b) and a small fragment of a North African Hayes II/Atlante X oil lamp were found in Lobar (Figure 1: a, b).<sup>30</sup> In addition, a larger amount of several variants of imitations of ARSW form Hayes 61a was found, which, as already mentioned, can be dated from the second quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

It is often stated that the population of the Noric-Pannonian border area, as well as the Alpine and pre-Alpine areas in general, withdraws from urban and rural settlements in the lowlands to the hillfort settlements, which then, especially at the end of late antiquity, operated as self-sustaining and self-sufficient communities.<sup>31</sup> Coarse, kitchen pottery, which differs from settlement to settlement, especially as the distance between them becomes greater, partially confirms it. Nevertheless, the demand for agricultural products of Mediterranean origin clearly existed when significant quantities of ARSW, LRCW, North African and Eastern Mediterranean amphorae and North African oil lamps were found in northeastern Slovenia and, somewhat less, northwestern Croatia. First of all, the finds show that trade in urban settlements has not completely died out, nor has the life in them. In Celeia and Poetovio, the finds of North African oil lamps dated to the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century have been found,

which was the time after the invasion of the Huns. There are no finds of Mediterranean pottery in the Croatian part of the Drava Valley that could be dated between the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, the finds from Siscia, where all groups except LRCW were represented, clearly show the continuation of the import of Mediterranean products until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> or even the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the use of the main road through Posavina, from Emona to Sirmium, or an alternative route from Senia to Siscia, so the Mediterranean products would be transported from the Adriatic port where ships docked to Siscia.

Other sites of the studied area belong to the group of late antique hillfort settlements, and their supply of imported products depended mostly on the main roads Emona – Poetovio and Emona – Siscia, as well as vicinal roads Celeja – Neviodunum and Andautonia – Aqua Viva. In Jurišna Vas and Brinjeva gora, the settlements that we can assume were connected to the road Celeja – Poetovio, tableware and oil lamps of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, but no later examples, were found. For the time being, it seems that the trade in Mediterranean products on the road between Celeia and Poetovio and north of that communication has not functioned since the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast, settlements in the Kozjansko area and its surroundings had access to Mediterranean products in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, which can be proved especially by the finds of amphorae in Rifnik, Vipota and Vranje, as they are direct evidence of trade with the Mediterranean. Given the ARSW finds in Emona that can be dated to the

<sup>29</sup> CIGLINEČKI, Slavko: *Tinje nad Loko pri Žusmu*. Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU, Založba ZRC, 2000, p. 58.

<sup>30</sup> FILIPEC, Krešimir – BUNČIĆ, Maja: *Lobar*, p. 37, kat. br. 24.

<sup>31</sup> KNIFIC, Timotej: Vranje near Sevnica, p. 220 and MASON, Phil: Late Roman Črnomelj and Bela krajina. In: *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 49, 1998, p. 305.

<sup>32</sup> VIDRIH PERKO, Verena: Afriška sigilata v Emoni. In: *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 43, 1992, p. 97.

second half or end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century<sup>32</sup>, it is obvious that, despite constant unrest and attacks of barbarian groups in late antiquity, trade between the Adriatic and the interior was functioning, perhaps with minor interruptions. The supply of sites in the area of Kozjansko and its surroundings certainly depended on the roads Emona – Celeia and Emona – Nevioudunum, as well as the vicinal road between Celeia and Nevioudunum. Considering that the settlement on Ajdovski gradec near Vranje was located only a few kilometers from the Sava Valley and the road Celeia – Nevioudunum, it is obvious that this road was used for the import of Mediterranean products in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century, which is consistent with finds from Siscia. The other two mentioned roads were of even greater importance as main roads, and they were surely used in that time as well.

Mediterranean pottery from the site in Lobar, according to the current state of research, shows that the import of Mediterranean products into the area actually functioned only in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> and perhaps the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, and the find of LRCW bowl of form Hayes 3e is significant as it connects this site with those in Kozjansko. Since Lobar is a truly isolated place away even from the vicinal road Andautonia – Aqua Viva, it is assumed that there was another local road that connected the territories of Siscia and Poetovio, and by which the settlement in Lobar was located. Given the borderline dating of the finds from Lobar to the period between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century, it is not possible to exclude any of the directions from which these items could have been imported. Imitations of deep plates or shallow bowls of ARSW form Hayes 61a and its variations (Figure 3) from the Lobar site should also be mentioned here, and which, if originating from northern Italy, as suggested in the

literature, may also be related to imports of Mediterranean products.

## Conclusion

The fact is that, during late antiquity, the population from urban and rural settlements in the lowlands increasingly retreated to easily defendable, hillfort settlements. Turbulent times and frequent attacks and devastation caused by barbarian groups affected daily life of these settlements and their surroundings. Although the prevailing opinion is that hillfort settlements were isolated, self-sustaining and self-sufficient, and that the security of communications and trade on main and vicinal roads in late antiquity was compromised by war and looting, the finds of Mediterranean imports in many hillfort settlements give a slightly different picture.

The finds of Mediterranean pottery are perhaps the best indicator of at least partial preservation of communications and trade until the end of late antiquity because they are a product whose origin is easily determined, as is the fact that it was transported to the Adriatic ports from which it was distributed towards the inland. Unlike Mediterranean pottery, glazed, stamped and burnished pottery are all the product of numerous local and regional workshops in the Noric-Pannonian area and as such it is more difficult to determine their exact origin. Coarse, kitchen pottery usually confirms the self-sustainability of a site and its immediate surroundings.

Mediterranean pottery is divided into several groups according to purpose and origin. To prove the preservation of communications and especially trade, North African and Eastern Mediterranean amphorae, as the primary cargo of the ships, provide direct evidence of trade links.

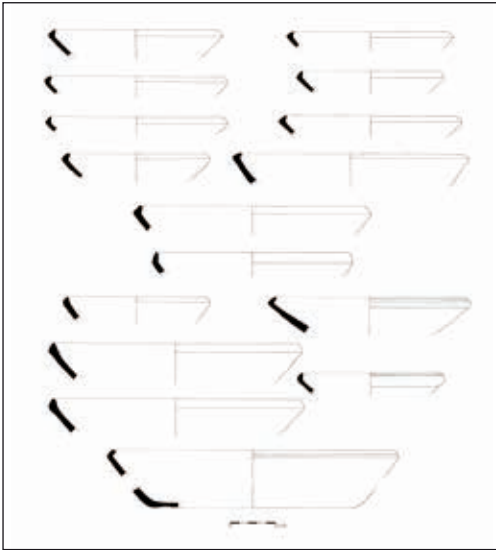


Figure 3.: *Imitations of ARSW from Lobor, form Hayes 61a and the variations of that form (drawing: P. Nikšić).*

They contained olive oil and wine, and probably other food products, transported by sea to the Adriatic ports, the main of which was Aquileia, and then without changing the container to the settlements of Noric-Pannonian area, such as Vranje, Rifnik, etc. On the other hand, tableware and oil lamps are among the secondary cargo that was transported by ships together with food products, but it was of minor importance and occupied a smaller part of the cargo space. In addition, the smaller dimensions of the items made them easier to transport from the main distribution port. Therefore, the term personal property appears as an explanation for the occurrence of ARSW, LRCW and North African oil lamps at some sites in small quantities and individually, especially in combination with the complete absence of amphorae. It cannot be ruled out that some tableware or oil lamps arrived to some sites by relocation of their owners rather than direct trade, and as such may no longer have had the primary link with the import of Mediterranean

products. Such a case might have happened in Lobor.

If the appearance of oil amphorae can really be associated with churches that are usually located in the center of hillforts, and not the daily consumption of oil, as indicated by the more frequent appearance of amphorae in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century and their finding location near church complexes, unlike tableware, which is more common in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century, the lack of amphorae at sites with churches and church complexes may be explained by the purchase of oil in smaller quantities that did not require amphorae, but rather other containers, for which there is no evidence.

Finally, it should be emphasized once again that the establishment of a communication network and trade routes in late antiquity depends largely on the state of research and publication of finds from individual sites and from entire areas. As for the studied southern part of the Noric-Pannonian border area, so far more sites have been excavated in Slovenia than in Croatia, and Lobor is the only Croatian site north of the Sava where imported Mediterranean vessels of the 5<sup>th</sup> and perhaps 6<sup>th</sup> century were found. Large amounts of late antique pottery from other hillfort settlements such as Kuzelin and Lonja have not yet been published, so contemporaneous finds of Mediterranean pottery may be expected in the future. The level of communication and trade in the Noric-Pannonian area in late antiquity can only be higher than that resulting from the current state of research, so it is more than likely that the communication and trade network will expand with future research and publications, and the fact that Mediterranean products were sought after and available by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century will be reinforced.

# The Early Slavs: from the Western Carpathians to the Adriatic\*\*

Včasní Slovania medzi Západnými Karpatmi a Jadranom / Rani Slaveni između zapadnih Karpata i Jadrana

*Premetom štúdie je fenomén plochých žiarových hrobov a pohrebísk predovšetkým z pohľadu ich priestorového výskytu v období včasného stredoveku. Zatiaľ čo náleziská tohto charakteru, známe z územia Chorvátska, boli doposiaľ posudzované len v kontexte osídlenia západného Balkánu, v tejto štúdii je sledovaným územím geografický priestor rozkladajúci sa od Západných Karpát až po Jadran. Relatívno-chronologické odlišenie evidovaných nálezísk je postavené na prítomnosti či absencii keramických nálezov klasifikovaných ako pražský typ. Priestorová distribúcia plochých žiarových pohrebísk naznačuje postupnosť šírenia tohto fenoménu južným smerom, poukazuje na výrazný vplyv Avarskeho kaganátu na spoločenstvá uplatňujúce žiarový rítus. S veľkou pravdepodobnosťou možno toto obyvateľstvo stotožniť so Slovanmi.*

**Kľúčové slová:** ploché žiarové pohrebiská, včasný stredovek, pražská kultúra, stredné Podunajsko, Chorvátsko.

This paper aims to help clarify the hitherto available information on the earliest period in which the Slavs started to populate the area between the Western Carpathians and the Adriatic Sea. Although the area bordered by the Eastern Alps in the west and the Danube in the east is not bisected by any major natural barriers, the process of Slavic settlement at the beginning of the Early Middle Ages (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> century) has not been researched in its entirety.

The subject of research is flat burial grounds and isolated graves showing evidence of cremation – an archaeological phenomenon that can be found in the whole studied area. It is precisely these

funeral rite manifestations that the literature connects closely with the oldest archaeological cultures commonly known as *Early Slavic*. Although cremated human remains are often found in connection with burial mounds, the issue here is basically a later phenomenon that noticeably continued well into the later stage of the Early Middle Ages (9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> century) in Central Europe.

## Source Base

In Central Europe, cremation rite was most comprehensively dealt with by Polish archaeologist Helena Zoll-Adamikowa in a monograph published decades ago.<sup>1</sup>

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\*\* Research and preparation of this article was supported by the VEGA 1/0523/22 research project.

<sup>1</sup> ZOLL-ADAMIKOWA, Helena: *Wczesnosredniowieczne cmentarzyska ciałopalne Słowian na terenie Polski, vol. 1. Źródła*. Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków – Gdańsk: Ossolineum – Wydawnictwo PAN, 1975;

Although her work focuses on the territory of Poland, the sepulchral regionalisation it presents matches the distribution of cremation burials over Central Europe as a whole. As for the Central Danube region, however, the state of research of this phenomenon has only been accurately described in the later conclusions of Gabriel Fusek in his monograph on the Early Slavic period. Fusek stated that according to the regionalisation developed by Zoll-Adamikowa, the burial manifestations found at the flat cremation sites in the region correspond to sepulchral zone B.<sup>2</sup> This zone is characterised by a dense concentration of smaller burial grounds and isolated graves. In general, pit graves are excavated only rarely there.

The spatial distribution of flat cremation sites in the territory of Slovakia that Fusek published in an earlier article remains basically unchanged.<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, only a few new finds and evaluations have been published since. Just two

finds of an older date complement the site inventory compiled by Fusek, namely the graves from Lipová-Ondrochov<sup>4</sup> and Trnovec nad Váhom,<sup>5</sup> as well as the more recent one from Blatné.<sup>6</sup> In the meantime, Gabriel Fusek and Igor Hrubec re-evaluated the rediscovered missing finds from Fiľakovo – most likely from a flat cremation burial ground, reclassifying them as Early Slavic.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, the previously studied site in Bešeňov, which turned out not to be a bi-ritual necropolis, has also been re-classified.<sup>8</sup>

For the territory of Moravia, Karolína Absolonová compiled a list of all early medieval funerary sites showing traces of cremation.<sup>9</sup> Accidentally, however, it includes a cremation grave from a Langobard cemetery in the village of Lužice in south Moravia.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, the same applies for the finds from settlement sites that had been registered earlier in Podolí<sup>11</sup> and Zbýšov.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the pottery vessels from the central Moravian municipality

IDEM: *Wczesnosredniowieczne cmentarzyska ciałopalne Słowian na terenie Polski*, vol. 2. *Analiza, wnioski*. Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków – Gdańsk: Ossolineum – Wydawnictwo PAN, 1979.

<sup>2</sup> FUSEK, Gabriel: *Slovensko vo včasnოსlovenskom období*. *Archaeologica Slovaca Monographiae, Studia*, vol. 3. Nitra: Archeologický ústav SAV, 1994, p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> IDEM: Der Bestattungsritus und die materielle Kultur der Slawen im 6.–8. Jh. in der Südwestslowakei. In: BIALEKOVÁ, Darina – ZÁBOJNÍK, Jozef (eds.): *Ethnische und kulturelle Verhältnisse an der mittleren Donau vom 6. bis zum 11. Jahrhundert*. Bratislava: Verlag der Slowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996, pp. 37–49.

<sup>4</sup> TOČÍK, Anton: Flachgräberfelder aus dem IX. und X. Jahrhundert in der Südwestslowakei (I). In: *Slovenská archeológia*, a. 19, 1971, nr. 1, p. 207, fig. 60: 8, 22.

<sup>5</sup> IDEM: Flachgräberfelder aus dem IX. und X. Jahrhundert, p. 171, fig. 39: 11–13.

<sup>6</sup> BARTÍK, Juraj – FARKAŠ, Zdeněk: Pokračovanie výskumu v Blatnom. In: *Archeologické výskumy a nálezy na Slovensku v roku 2002* (2003), p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> FUSEK, Gabriel – HRUBEC, Igor: Včasnოსlovenské žiarové pohrebisko vo Fiľakove. In: *Študijné zvesti Archeologického ústavu SAV*, a. 33, 1999, pp. 233–239.

<sup>8</sup> ZÁBOJNÍK, Jozef: Birituálne pohrebiská v severnej a západnej časti Karpatskej kotliny v období avarského kaganátu. In: *Študijné zvesti Archeologického ústavu SAV*, a. 36, 2004, p. 345.

<sup>9</sup> ABSOLONOVÁ, Karolína: Žárový pohřební ritus Slovanů na Moravě v 6. až 11. století. In: *Časopis Národního muzea, řada historická*, a. 175 (2006), nr. 1–2, pp. 5–22.

<sup>10</sup> KLANICA, Zdeněk – KLANICOVÁ, Soňa: Das Langobardische Gräberfeld von Lužice (Bez. Hodonín). TEJRAL, Jaroslav et al. (ed.): *Langobardische Gräberfelder in Mähren*, vol. I. *Spisy Archeologického ústavu AV ČR Brno*, vol. 39. Brno: Archeologický ústav Akademie věd ČR Brno, 2011, p. 283.

<sup>11</sup> JELÍNKOVÁ, Dagmar: Doplnky k mapě nalezišť s keramikou pražského typu na Moravě. In: *Památky archeologické*, a. 76, 1985, nr. 2, p. 469.

<sup>12</sup> KNIES, Jan: Přeistorické nálezy z pozdní doby slovanské na Moravě. Literatura slovanských nálezů na Moravě doby pozdní. In: *Český lid*, a. 3, 1894, nr. 5, pp. 463 and 464.

of Slatinky were re-evaluated around the time the aforementioned inventory was published and were determined to be pre-historic finds corresponding to the Lužice culture.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, the cremated remains from the location known as Přední kruhy in the municipality of Staré Město have recently been put in connection with the prehistoric period.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the finds from the early medieval cremation burials at Prušánky<sup>15</sup> and Nechvalín<sup>16</sup> have also been recently re-examined and it now appears that these were not human graves. In the meantime, other cremation graves have been discovered in Znojmo, south Moravia.<sup>17</sup> The cremation grave from the flat burial ground in Pustiměř (somewhat neglected in scholarly writing) seems to suggest that bi-rituality could also have been practised in the territory of Moravia.<sup>18</sup>

As for the territory of Austria, Wolfgang Breibert recently summarised

numerous finds documenting the practice of cremation in the Austrian Danube region in a monograph on the early medieval tumulus burial ground in Bernhardsthal in Lower Austria.<sup>19</sup> In his research, however, Breibert focused only on bi-ritual burial grounds he classified as “Slavic”, leaving out Avar necropoli. Andrej Pleterski wrote a separate study on the finds from cremation graves excavated in the town of Enns in Upper Austria.<sup>20</sup>

As far as the area of the Carpathian Basin is concerned, Jozef Zábójník also covered a significant part of finds of flat cremation graves in his study on bi-ritual burial grounds.<sup>21</sup> However, he only studied the earlier part of the Early Middle Ages focusing on the Avar necropoli. This must explain why his inventory does not include the evidently later bi-ritual necropolis excavated in Alsórajk, in Western Transdanubia.<sup>22</sup> In

<sup>13</sup> JELÍNKOVÁ, Dagmar – NEKVASIL, Jindra: K otázce kulturního zařazení některých keramických tvarů z pohřebiště Slatinky-Nivky. In: *Archeologické rozhledy*, a. 58, 2006, nr. 3, pp. 570–583.

<sup>14</sup> BARTÍK, Jaroslav – CHRÁSTEK, Tomáš: Pravěké osídlení v okolí velkomoravského kostela ve Starém Městě – „Špitálkách“. In: *Přehled výzkumů*, a. 62, 2021, nr. 1, p. 62.

<sup>15</sup> MAZUCH, Marian – HLADÍK, Marek – SKOPAL, Rostislav: *Úpravy hrobových jam a dřevěné konstrukce v hrobech na pohřebištích Velké Moravy (sociální, duchovní a chronologický fenomén): Spisy Archeologického ústavu AV ČR Brno*, vol. 56. Brno: Archeologický ústav Akademie věd ČR Brno, 2017, pp. 36 and 37.

<sup>16</sup> M. Mazuch, personal communication.

<sup>17</sup> KLÍMA, Bohuslav František: Třetí dekáda archeologických výzkumů velkomoravského hradiště sv. Hypolita ve Znojmě v letech 2006–2015. In: *Sborník prací Pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity, řada společenských věd*, a. 32, 2018, nr. 2, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> DOSTÁL, Bořivoj: *Slovanská pohřebiště ze střední doby hradištní na Moravě*. Praha: Academia, 1966, p. 160.

<sup>19</sup> BREIBERT, Wolfgang: Bemerkungen zu frühmittelalterlichen Hügelgräberfeldern in Niederösterreich im Kontext der Neuentdeckung von Bernhardsthal. In: MILO, Peter – MACHÁČEK, Jiří (eds.): *Das frühmittelalterliche Hügelgräberfeld von Bernhardsthal: Archäologische Forschungen in Niederösterreich, Neue Folge*, vol. 7. Krems: Landessammlungen Niederösterreich – Donau-Universität Krems, 2019, pp. 123–125.

<sup>20</sup> PLETERSKI, Andrej: *Zgodnjeresrednjeveška naselbina na blejski Pristavi. Tafonomija, predmeti in čas – Frühmittelalterliche Siedlung Pristava in Bled. Taphonomie, Fundgegenstände und zeitliche Einordnung: Opera Instituti Archaeologici Sloveniae*, vol. 19. Ljubljana: Inštitut za arheologijo ZRC SAZU – Založba ZRC, 2010, pp. 145–149.

<sup>21</sup> ZÁBOJNÍK, Jozef: Birituálne pohrebiská v severnej a západnej časti Karpatskej kotliny, p. 340 and 341.

<sup>22</sup> SZÓKE, Béla Miklós: Das birituelle Gräberfeld aus der Karolingerzeit von Alsórajk-Határi tábla. In: IDEM (ed.): *Archäologie und Siedlungsgeschichte im Hahóter Becken, Südwest-Ungarn. Von der Völkerwanderungszeit bis zum Mittelalter*. Antaeus: Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, vol. 23. Budapest: Archäologisches Institut der UAW, 1996, pp. 61–146, fig. 15–47.

the south of the Carpathian Basin, besides the bi-ritual burial ground of the Avar khaganate found in Pančevo<sup>23</sup> in the South Banat region, a new necropolis was recently discovered in Šarengrad in Eastern Slavonia.<sup>24</sup> Bi-ritual burial practices cannot be ruled out in Čelarevo in the Bačka District or in Novi Slankamen in the Sarmia region, although in these cases the relationship between cremation and inhumation graves is not clear.<sup>25</sup>

In his study, Pleterski summarised the finds from flat cremation graves – mostly of an older date – in the territory of Slovenia.<sup>26</sup> Besides the small cremation burial ground in the village of Lipovci – which was published in its entirety only later<sup>27</sup> – two isolated graves have been added to Pleterski's inventory. One of them was discovered in nearby Turnišče,<sup>28</sup> the other in Novo Mesto.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the finds in Slovenia include isolated graves and two

burial grounds: a cremation cemetery and another considered to be bi-ritual.

In their extensive study, archaeologists Tajana Sekelj-Ivančan and Tatjana Tkalčec comprehensively analysed the phenomenon of cremation burials in the territory of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.<sup>30</sup> More recently, Emina Zečević elaborated a cartographic update of this study (albeit in reduced scope) focusing exclusively on the Western Balkans.<sup>31</sup> In recent years, the source base has been expanded by some new finds that have been excavated in northern Croatia. One of them is the cremation burial ground in Belišće, the other an isolated cremation grave found while excavating the remains of a wooden church in Lobor.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, several of the finds the aforementioned scholars had previously described as questionable (Bakar, Donji Stenjevec, Žminj) are

<sup>23</sup> MANO-ZISI, Djordje – LJUBINKOVIĆ, Mirjana – GARAŠANIN, Milutin – KOVAČEVIĆ, Jovan – VESELINOVIĆ, Rajko: Zaštitno iskopavanje kod Pančeva. In: *Muzeji*, a. 1, 1948, pp. 53–95.

<sup>24</sup> RIMPF, Andrea – RAPAN-PAPEŠA, Anita – DIZDAR, Marko: Rezultati zaštitnih istraživanja kasnoavardobnoga groblja Šarengrad – Klopore 2019. godine. In: *Annales Instituti Archaeologici*, a. 16, 2020, pp. 8–17.

<sup>25</sup> BUGARSKI, Ivan: O slovenskim nalazima na jugu avarskog kaganata. In: RUMIANČEVA, Olga – TRIFUNOVIĆ, Stanko (eds.): *Balkany, Podunavie i Vostočnaja Evropa v rimskoje vremena i epochu Srednevekovia*. Moskva: Institut archeologii Rossijskoj akademii nauk – Muzej Vojvodiny, 2022, p. 170.

<sup>26</sup> PLETERSKI, Andrej: Zgodnjesrednjeveški žgani grobovi v vzhodnih Alpah. In: *Frühmittelalterarchäologie in der Steiermark. Beiträge eines Fachgesprächs anlässlich des 65. Geburtstags von Dieter Kramer*. Schild von Steier – Archäologische und numismatische Beiträge aus dem Landesmuseum Joanneum, Beiheft, vol. 4. Graz: Landesmuseum Joanneum, 2008, p. 33–39.

<sup>27</sup> ŠAVEL, Irena – KNIFIC, Timotej: Popava pri Lipovcih 2. In: *Zbirka Arheologija na avtocestah Slovenije*, vol. 41. Ljubljana: Zavod za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije, 2013, pp. 24–31.

<sup>28</sup> NOVŠAK, Matjaž – TOMAŽ, Alenka – PLESTENJAK, Ana: Brezje pri Turnišču. In: *Zbirka Arheologija na avtocestah Slovenije*, vol. 40. Ljubljana: Zavod za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije, 2013, pp. 30–32 and 90.

<sup>29</sup> BELAK, Mateja: Staroslovanski žarni grob s Kapiteljske njive v Novem mestu. In: TECCO-HVALA, Sneža (ed.): *Studia praehistorica in honorem Janez Dular: Opera Instituti Archaeologici Sloveniae*, vol. 30. Ljubljana: Inštitut za arheologijo ZRC SAZU – Založba ZRC, 2014, pp. 397–403.

<sup>30</sup> SEKELJ-IVANČAN, Tajana – TKALČEC, Tatjana: Slavensko paljevinsko groblje na položaju Duga ulica 99 u Vinkovcima. In: *Prilozi Instituta za arheologiju u Zagrebu*, a. 23, 2006, pp. 141–212.

<sup>31</sup> ZEČEVIĆ, Emina: Tragovi Slovena u 6. i 7. stoleću na zapadnom Balkanu. In: GAVRITUHIN, Igor Olegovič – TRIFUNOVIĆ, Stanko (eds.): *Balkan, Podunavlje i Istočna Evropa u rimsko doba i u ranom srednjem veku*. Novi Sad: Muzej Vojvodine – Institut arheologije Ruske akademije nauka, 2019, pp. 407–441.

<sup>32</sup> FILIPEC, Krešimir: Rani Slaveni u Belišću. In: *Zbornik Grad Belišće – Muzej*, a. 3, 2009, pp. 27–30; IDEM: Slavenski paljevinski grob iz Lobora. In: *Archaeologia Adriatica*, a. 3, 2009, nr. 1, pp. 347–357.

no longer considered to have originated in the Early Middle Ages at all.<sup>33</sup> In fact, interpreting the finds from two locations in the village of Glavice in Dalmatia (Gluvine kuće II and Jojine kuće) as cremation graves raises an issue, namely the absence of cremation remains.<sup>34</sup> From among the burial grounds whose field documentation was published, only the necropolis from the northern Bosnian village of Petoševci is considered by consensus to be bi-ritual.<sup>35</sup>

Although flat inhumation burials attributed to people of the Avar khaganate were not the subject of the research, their common chronological and territorial contexts made it necessary to take this cultural sphere into account as well. The earlier part of the Early Middle Ages covers two development stages of the expansion of Avar territory. Scholarly writing refers to the first one – narrower in scope – as *the early Avar khaganate* and to the second as *the late Avar khaganate*.<sup>36</sup>

## Source Assessment

Cremation graves have been continuously documented in the studied

geographical area for over a century, a fact reflected in the different character of the available data, both in terms of quantity and quality. For this paper, the source base has been approached in such a way to make the best and most extensive use of the information at hand. This, however, means that only a very narrow range of the information available for all studied sites could be used. From the very beginning, therefore, the outcome was expected to be of a rather low resolution.

The first monitored attribute determines the level of reliability of the studied finds. Based on the data from the current literature, it was possible to differentiate between reliable and questionable sites. The second attribute defines the character of the site from the viewpoint of the burial rite. Based on Zábajník's definition of a bi-ritual burial ground, necropoli have been classified as being either cremation or bi-ritual.<sup>37</sup> The third attribute indicates the presence or absence of pots classified on the basis of their morphological features as *Praque-type pottery*. This was based exclusively on the information provided by the literature.<sup>38</sup> The fourth

<sup>33</sup> FABIJANIĆ, Tomislav: *Problem doseljenja Slavena/Hroata na istočni Jadran i šire zaleđe u svjetlu arheoloških nalaza: Doktorski rad*. Zadar: Sveučilište u Zadru, Odjel za arheologiju, 2008, pp. 78–79, 84–85, 89 and 95.

<sup>34</sup> PETRINEC, Maja: Dosadašnji rezultati istraživanja ranosrednjovjekovnog groblja u Glavicama kraj Sinja kao prilog razrješavanju problema kronologije starohrvatskih groblja. In: *Opuscula archaeologica*, a. 26, 2002, nr. 1, p. 206.

<sup>35</sup> BILOGRIVIĆ, Goran: Urne, Slaveni i Hrvati. O paljevinskim grobovima i doseobi u 7. stoljeću. In: *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, a. 36, 2018, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> ZÁBAJNÍK, Jozef: *Slovensko a avarský kaganát: Studia Archaeologica et Mediaevalia*, vol. 9. Druhé prepracované a doplnené vydanie. Bratislava: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Komenského, 2009, p. 9, fig. 1. For the sites documenting the border of the Avar cultural zone in the Central Danube region, see IDEM: Das Awarische Kaganat und die Slawen an seiner nördlichen Peripherie (Probleme der archäologischen Abgrenzung). In: *Slovenská archeológia*, a. 47, 1999, nr. 1, pp. 153–173.

<sup>37</sup> IDEM: Biritualne pohrebiská v severnej a západnej časti Karpatskej kotliny, p. 339.

<sup>38</sup> See generally BEKIĆ, Luka: *Rani srednji vijek između Panonije i Jadrana. Ranoslavenski keramički i ostali arheološki nalazi od 6. do 8. stoljeća – The Early Medieval between Pannonia and the Adriatic. Early Slavic Ceramic and other Archaeological Finds from the Sixth to Eighth Century: Monografije i katalogi*

attribute was the cultural connection to the Avar khaganate. This, however, could only be documented for some bi-ritual necropoli.<sup>39</sup>

## Basic Spatial Analysis

A total of 141 published sites with evidence of cremation in flat burials have been used for this paper (fig. 1). The current literature considers 20 of these sites to be questionable. The relevance of the questionable sites is not justified in regions with numerous signs of the presence of the monitored range/circle of finds. Otherwise, however, it may indicate potential use in interpretations.

The sites considered reliable are concentrated in the Central Danube region – especially north of the Danube River – as well as in a small area south of the Zala River, which empties into Lake Balaton, albeit in a significantly lower number. They clearly form clusters in these areas. Reliable sites can also be found south of the Drava River, although more or less evenly dispersed. Among the questionable sites, perhaps those in Istria deserve special attention, as they are the only ones known in the region.

So far, the only area in Pannonia without any traces of flat cremation burials is the one that extends east of Lake Neusiedl and Lake Balaton, as well as a major part of today's Slavonia. The same applies for the alpine regions of Carinthia and Styria in Austria, as well as the mountainous areas of Dalmatia and the Western Balkans.

## Sites Containing Prague-type Pottery

All of the flat cremation graves containing Early Slavic – Prague-type – pottery are located in the Central Danube region, with the exception of four sites: Pókaszpetk and Zalakomár in Hungary – Kehida is still questionable in this respect – as well as Bled and Novo Mesto in Slovenia (fig. 2). Their territorial distribution shows a clear correlation with the existing watercourses, mostly tributaries of the Danube.

Taking into consideration the outcomes of research that attributes chronological sensitivity to the finds classified as Early Slavic, it is necessary to put them in a spatial relationship with the cultural zone of *the early Avar khaganate*. From the perspective of relative chronology,

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– *Arheološki muzej Istre*, vol. 27. Pula: Arheološki muzej Istre, 2016; DOŠTÁL, Bořivoj: *Břeclav-Pohansko III. Časné slovanské osídlení*. Spisy Univerzity J. E. Purkyně v Brně, Filozofická fakulta, vol. 261. Brno: Univerzita J. E. Purkyně, 1985; FUSEK, Gabriel: *Slovensko vo včasnოსlovanskom období*; JELÍNKOVÁ, Dagmar: *Doplňky k mapě nalezišť s keramikou pražského typu na Moravě*; IDEM: *Nejstarší slovanské osídlení Moravy*. In: ŽEŇUCH, Peter (ed.): *XIV. medzinárodný zjazd slavistov v Ochride. Príspevky slovenských slavistov*. Bratislava: Slovenský komitét slavistov – Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV, 2008, pp. 267–297; SZAMEIT, Erik: *Zum archäologischen Bild der frühen Slawen in Österreich. Mit Fragen zur ethnischen Bestimmung karolingerzeitlicher Gräberfelder im Ostalpenraum*. In: BRATOŽ, Rajko (ed.): *Slovenija in sosednje dežele med antiko in karolinško dobo. Začetki slovenske etnogeneze – Slowenien und die Nachbarländer zwischen Antike und karolingischer Epoche. Anfänge der slowenischen Ethnogenese: Situla*, vol. 39/1. Ljubljana: Narodni muzej Slovenije, 2000, pp. 507–547; VIDA, Tivadar: *Die awarenzeitliche Keramik I. (6.–7. Jh.): Varia Archaeologica Hungarica*, vol. 8. Berlin – Budapest: Archäologisches Institut der UAW, 1999, pp. 147–155.

<sup>39</sup> SZENTPÉTERI, József et alia: *Archäologische Denkmäler der Awarenzeit in Mitteleuropa: Varia Archaeologica Hungarica*, vol. 13/1, 2. Budapest: Archäologisches Institut der UAW, 2002; ZÁBOJNÍK, Jozef: *Birituálne pohrebiská v severnej a západnej časti Karpatskej kotliny*, p. 340 and 341.

the Early Slavic period corresponds to the early and middle Avar period.<sup>40</sup> The resulting picture reveals two important pieces of information. The distribution of the cremation burials – especially in the Central Danube region – does not appear to be connected with the spatial structure generally associated with people of the Avar khaganate. However, the boundary of these two structures or, more exactly, their intersections – Devínska Nová Ves, Zalakomár, Pókaszepetk – correspond precisely to bi-ritual necropoli.

### Sites with No Prague-type Pottery

The geographical distribution of sites with no pottery classified as Prague-type covers essentially the entire study area (fig. 3). Besides the territory north of the Danube, it also includes the remaining part of the Austrian Danube region, the basin of the Leitha, the Western Carpathian basin – more exactly the area between the Zala and Mura rivers – the Drava and Sava interfluvium, the Alpine area of Slovenia, the lowlands south of the Sava, and central Dalmatia.

The Central Danube is still the area with the densest concentration of flat cremation burials present at both cremation and bi-ritual burial grounds. However, their spatial distribution has changed. It actually copies the imaginary line delimiting the cultural sphere of the late Avar khaganate. Similarly, a spatial connection to the borders of the Avar cultural zone can also be observed in a small area

south of the Zala River. Only the sites in Eastern Slavonia can be found deeper in the territory of this cultural sphere.

Besides the bi-ritual burial grounds of the Avar khaganate, the research area also contains several bi-ritual necropoli of a different nature, which are discussed in a separate paper in these proceedings.

### Interpretation

The image of the geographical distribution of flat burials with the presence of cremation is based on very different data than the one identified with the Avar cultural sphere. Therefore, the correlation between these two spatial structures might indicate the interaction between the peoples they represent.

No flat cremation graves are found in a substantial part of the vast territory south of the Danube River, which more or less corresponds to Pannonia. This fact can be put in a direct context with the presence of a people practicing inhumation, especially the apparently dominant component of the Avar khaganate, the Avars.

With regard to the relative-chronological level of possible relationships, the sites containing Prague-type pottery correspond to burials connected to the early Avar khaganate (fig. 2). However, the correlation of the spatial structures they create can only be observed at their intersections in the form of bi-ritual burial grounds. The resulting picture tends to suggest different origins for the peoples (whose territories were still clearly

<sup>40</sup> FUSEK, Gabriel: *Slovensko vo včasnoslávskom období*, p. 108; IDEM: Beitrag zu Problemen der Datierung von der Besiedlung der Westslowakei in der älteren Phase des Frühmittelalters. In: DULNICZ, Marek – MOŹDZIOCH, Sławomir (eds.): *The early Slavic settlement in Central Europe in the light of new dating evidence: Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies*, vol. 3. Wrocław: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, 2013, p. 147.

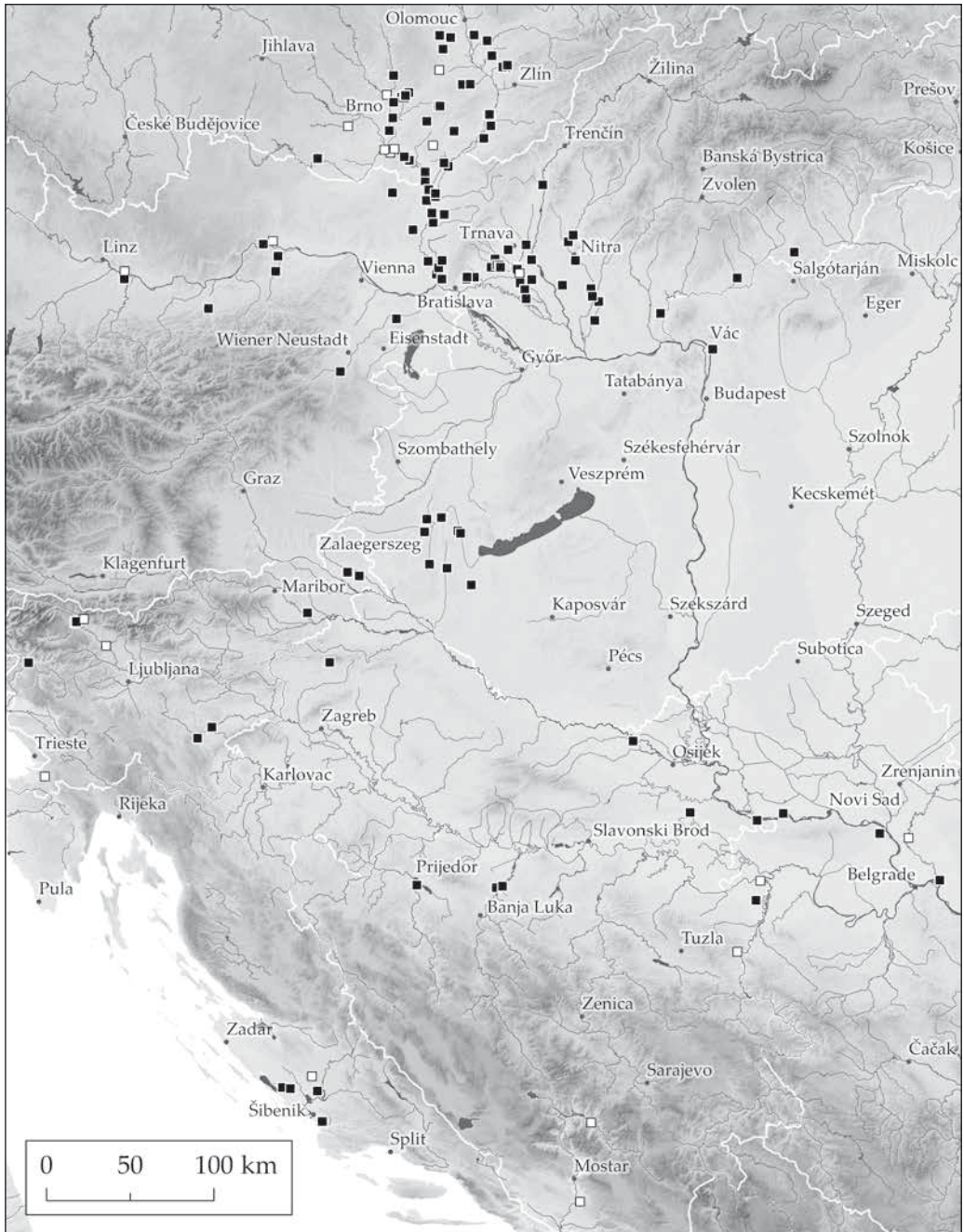


Fig. 1: Flat cremation graves and burial grounds, including bi-ritual necropoli. Sites accepted in the current literature are marked by black-filled symbols; non-confirmed sites are marked with open symbols.

separated at this time). However, the picture that appears when looking at other burial grounds with the presence of cremation is quite different (fig. 3). This can be best seen in the area north of the Danube (fig. 4). In this case, the distribution of these sites copies the border line of the *late Avar khaganate*. The fact that cremation burials concentrate at places where the two peoples converge suggests not only their chronological connection but also that the population practicing cremation preferred the bordering territories for establishing their settlements. Given that Mikulčice – one of the most important settlements of the pre-Great Moravian elites<sup>41</sup> – was also built in the vicinity of this border suggests that its location was chosen in line with their interests.<sup>42</sup>

To the north and west of the study area, the border zone of the *late Avar khaganate* coincides with the distribution of bi-ritual necropolises (fig. 5). It is on this basis that the area is considered to be the border line separating two peoples with

different cultural expressions and religious ideas.<sup>43</sup>

Unlike the Central Danube region, the bi-ritual burial grounds south of the Zala River are not distributed evenly along the border but, instead, concentrate in a small area creating a separate enclave. However, this difference may not be coincidental and can be explained by several more or less concurrent sites located nearby.<sup>44</sup> The issue here is the phenomenon of those burial grounds corresponding to the Keszthely culture, a cultural sphere distinct from the surrounding Avar environment. This population seems to have consisted of Christians of quite diverse origin whose presence could have been the result of an intentional decision of the Avar khagans.<sup>45</sup> The fact that a population using cremation also assembled in this very region might be due to the same reasons.

In Eastern Slavonia, the cremation necropolises as well as the only bi-ritual burial ground known thus far were

<sup>41</sup> KÖNIG, Tomáš: Elite Settlements of the pre-Great Moravian Period in the Central Danube region. In: BAČA, Martin (ed.): *Pod stromom života. K životnému jubileu doc. Michala Šliuku: Studia Archaeologica et Mediaevalia*, vol. 13. Bratislava: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave, 2022, pp. 55–58.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. FIEDLER, Uwe: Die Slawen im Bulgarenreich und im Awarenkhaganat. Versuch eines Vergleichs. In: BIALEKOVÁ, Darina – ZÁBOJNÍK, Jozef (eds.): *Ethnische und kulturelle Verhältnisse an der mittleren Donau vom 6. bis zum 11. Jahrhundert*. Bratislava: Verlag der Slowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996, pp. 201, 202 and 209.

<sup>43</sup> ZOLL-ADAMIKOWAOVA, Helena: Slawisch-awarische Grenzzone im Lichte der Grabfunde. In: *A Wosinsky Mór Múzeum Évkönyve*, a. 15, 1990, pp. 99 and 100.

<sup>44</sup> HEINRICH-TAMASKA, Orsolya: Bemerkungen zur Landschafts- und Raumstruktur auf dem Gebiet der „Keszthely-Kultur“. In: BEMMANN, Jan – SCHMAUDER, Michael (eds.): *Kulturwandel in Mitteleuropa. Langobarden – Awaren – Slawen: Kolloquien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte*, vol. 11. Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, 2008, p. 435, fig. 3.

<sup>45</sup> POHL, Walter: A Non-Roman Empire in Central Europe: the Avars. In: GOETZ, Hans-Werner – JARNUT, Jörg – POHL, Walter (eds.): *Regna et Gentes. The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World: The Transformation of the Roman World*, vol. 13. Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2003, pp. 591 and 592. On the diverse origins of this Christian population, see VIDA, Tivadar: Local or Foreign Romans? The Problem of the Late Antique Population of the 6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD in Pannonia. In: QUAST, Dieter (ed.): *Foreigners in Early Medieval Europe: Thirteen International Studies on Early Medieval Mobility: Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums*, vol. 78. Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2009, pp. 233–259.

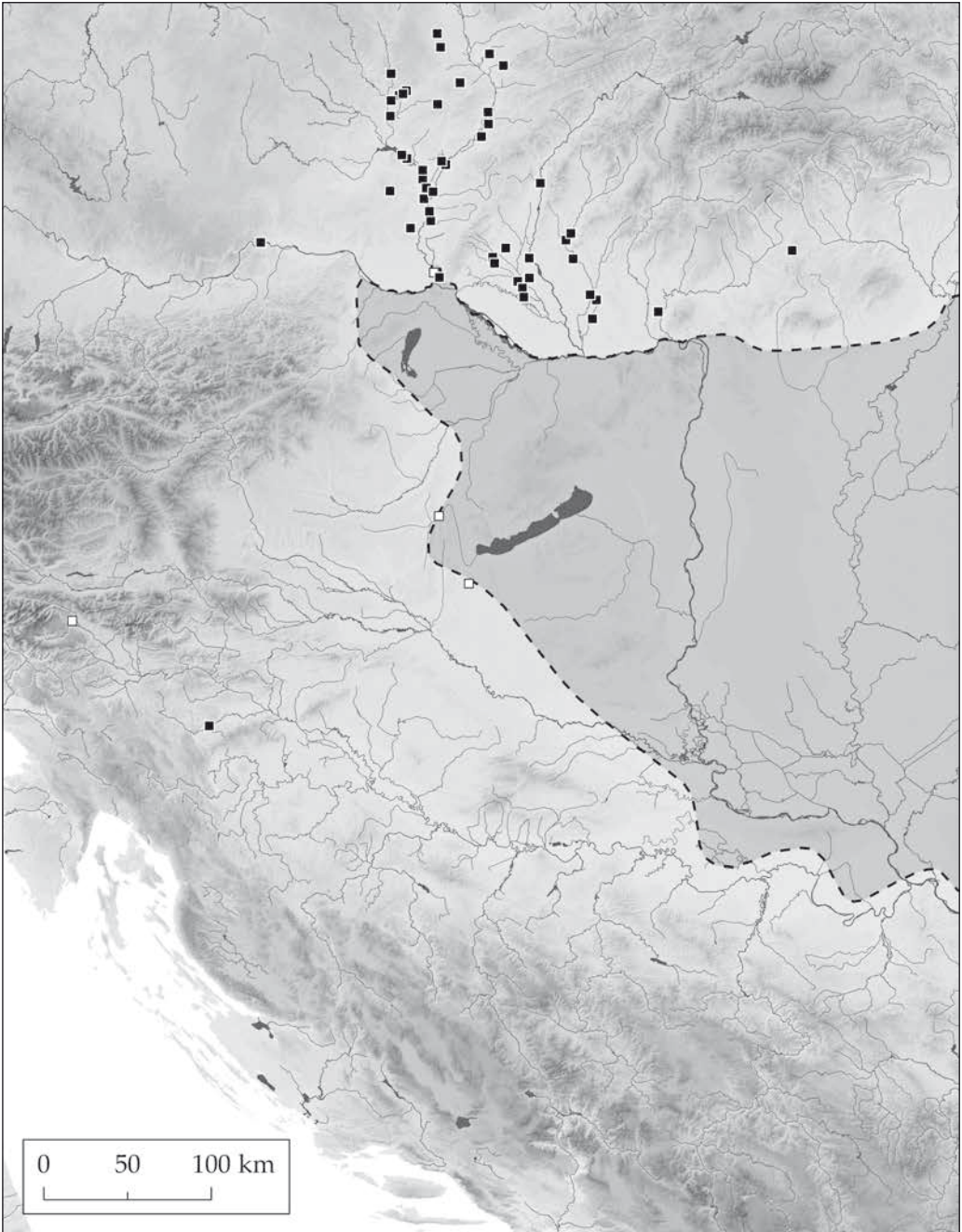


Fig. 2: Flat cremation graves with Prague-type pottery. Cremation graves and burial grounds are marked by black-filled symbols; bi-ritual burial grounds are marked with open symbols. The shaded area corresponds to the zone of distribution of inhumation burials associated with the so-called early Avar khaganate (after ΖΑΒΟΥΝΙΚ 2009).

located in the inner Avar territory (fig. 3). The cultural manifestations of the local population point to a culturally mixed sphere. Rather than an ongoing acculturation process,<sup>46</sup> the issue here is more likely to have been the Slavs populating this territory.

Despite the absence of flat cremation burials in the regions of Carinthia and Styria in Austria and in the northwest of Slovakia, these regions have finds from settlement sites containing Prague-type pottery.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, the same applies to some smaller regions in the Central Danube region which, however, present numerous vestiges of settlement.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, it cannot be ruled out that the issue here is a sepulchral zone in which cremated remains were buried without leaving sufficiently important traces (e.g. ground level disposition, predominantly isolated graves, etc.). Nevertheless, taking into consideration the information obtained from the surrounding regions, the issue here is most likely the result of the current state of research.

## Conclusion

Although written sources repeatedly mention the Slavs and the Avars being in close contact in the period in question, they contain insufficient information to pinpoint the places the described events occurred.<sup>49</sup> However, a spatial analysis makes it possible to claim that the presence of cremation at flat burial grounds can be connected with the Slavs.

Slavic settlements in the earlier part of the Early Middle Ages can be traced by means of cremation burials especially in the Central Danube region. The high concentration of sites north of the Danube seems to reflect two facts. It is the result of the estimated population density but, above all, the duration of their presence in the area, namely throughout the whole Early Slavic period. The distribution of the sites containing Prague-type pottery shows a distinctive self-standing territorial structure, which most likely corresponds to a specific period of time. This information, therefore, suggests the chronological relevance of the material culture in question.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> ŠMALCELJ-NOVAKOVIĆ, Pia: Research Problems Concerning 8<sup>th</sup>-Century Material Heritage in Continental Croatia Revisited: New Directions, Challenges and Ideas. In: *Medieval Archaeology*, a. 66, 2022, nr. 1, p. 75.

<sup>47</sup> For the territories of Carinthia and Styria, see FUSEK, Gabriel: Včasnoslovanské nálezy z Nitry-Šindolky/Slovensko – Frühslawische Funde aus Nitra-Šindolka/Slowakei. In: GUŠTIN, Mitja (ed.): *Zgodnji Slovani. Zgodnjesrednjeveška lončenina na obrobju vzhodnih Alp – Die frühen Slaven. Frühmittelalterliche Keramik am Rand der Ostalpen*. Ljubljana: Narodni muzej Slovenije, 2002, p. 187; GUTJAHN, Christoph: Early medieval Slavs in Styria. A first archaeological search for traces. In: LUX, Judita – ŠTULAR, Benjamin – ZANIER, Katharina (eds.): *Slovani, naša dediščina – Our heritage: the Slavs*. Vestnik, vol. 27. Ljubljana: Zavod za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije, 2018, pp. 42–54. For the territory of northwest Slovakia, see FUSEK, Gabriel: *Slovensko vo včasnoslovanskem obdobji*, pp. 123–125; IDEM: Nové poznatky o včasnoslovanskem osídlení stredodunajského priestoru. In: ZEŇUCH, Peter (ed.): *XIV. medzinárodný zjazd slavistov v Ochride. Príspevky slovenských slavistov*. Bratislava: Slovenský komitét slavistov – Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV, 2008, p. 222.

<sup>48</sup> E.g. CHYBOVÁ, Helena: *Pravěké a slovanské osídlení Kroměřížska. Průvodce archeologickou expozicí a sbírkami Muzea Kroměřížska*. Kroměříž: Muzeum Kroměřížska, 1998, p. 105.

<sup>49</sup> BUGARSKI, Ivan: O slovenskim nalazima na jugu avarskog kaganata, p. 166.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. CURTA, Florin: The Prague Type: A Critical Approach to Pottery Classification. In: *Archaeologia Bulgarica*, a. 5, 2001, nr. 1, pp. 73–106. See also IDEM: The Early Slavs in the Northern and Eastern Adriatic Region. A Critical Approach. In: *Archeologia Medievale*, a. 37, 2010, pp. 307–329.

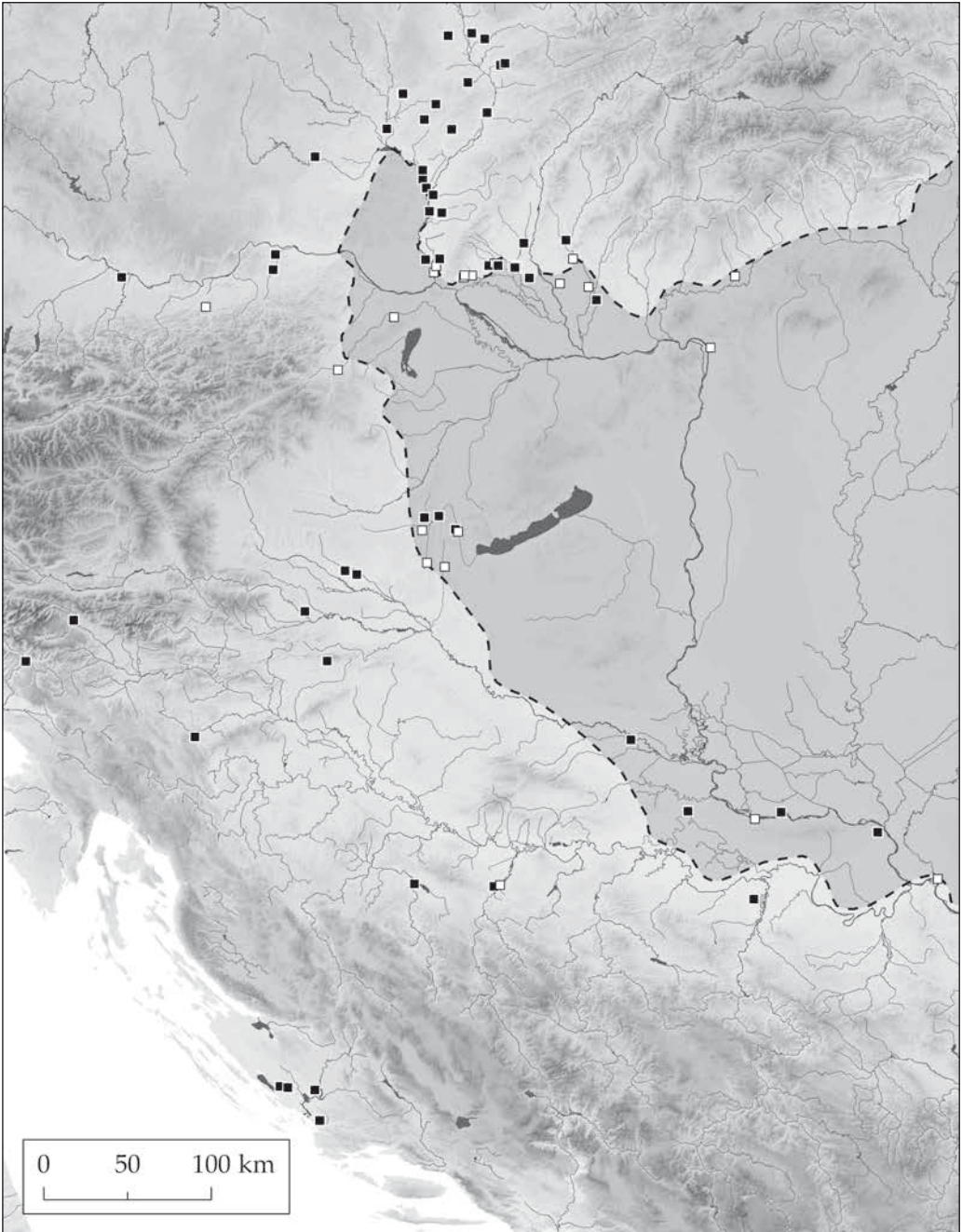


Fig. 3: Flat cremation graves excluding sites with Prague-type pottery. Cremation graves and burial grounds are marked by black-filled symbols; bi-ritual burial grounds are marked with open symbols. The shaded area corresponds to the zone of distribution of inhumation burials associated with the so-called late Avar khaganate (after ZÁBOJNÍK 2009).

Burying cremated human remains was clearly not a custom related to the Avars, as it was common in the Central Danube region from the very beginning of the Early Slavic period. The absence of burial traces in mountainous areas – especially in Carinthia and Styria – is, therefore, mainly the result of their sparse settlement. However, the spatial distribution of cremation burials points to the Avar khaganate having significant influence on the settlement structure of the Slavic population. South of the Danube, this was the case from the Early Slavic period. The higher density of sites near the Zala River might be the result of an intentional scheme aimed at placing a population of different origin in the western periphery of the Khaganate. In the late Avar period, this influence was also very noticeable in the Central Danube region. When Avar territory expanded northwards, partly at the expense of the Early Slavic one, these two peoples – whose settled territories had been apart at first – became close neighbours. The sites containing evidence of cremation burials suggest that the Slavs – who practiced cremation – would preferably look for this contact zone for their settlements. In Eastern Slavonia, the Avar and Slavic peoples were in even closer contact during the same period. This entire territory can be considered a culturally mixed

one. It is, therefore, conceivable to think that the issue here might have also been the intentional resettlement of Slavs.

The distribution of cremation graves containing Prague-type pottery basically fits the generally accepted area occupied by the Prague culture. The southernmost sites have been found in Slovenia and northwestern Croatia.<sup>51</sup> The significantly lower number of such sites south of the Danube River clearly indicates the direction the Slavs followed when populating this part of Europe.<sup>52</sup> It is, therefore, justified to assume that the territory south of the Sava River was only more densely populated by the Slavs when pottery thrown on a tournette became predominant over archaic Prague-type pottery. In the Central Danube region – where only more conservative conditions can be assumed in this respect – this was the case after the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup> However, the same probably applies to other regions further south.<sup>54</sup> In principle, these conjectures fit the conclusions the team of researchers led by Benjamin Štular and Edisa Lozić arrived at when studying the settlement process in the Eastern Alpine area from Late Antiquity.<sup>55</sup> According to them, the basins of the Mura and Drava rivers were most likely populated after the year 500 by a group of Slavs who spoke a different Slavic language than those who later settled the Sáva region

<sup>51</sup> BEKIĆ, Luka: *Rani srednji vijek između Panonije i Jadrana*, p. 112; BELAK, Mateja: Staroslovanski žarni grob s Kapiteljske njive v Novem mestu; PAVLOVIČ, Daša: Začetki zgodnjėslovanske poselitve Prekmurja. In: *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 68, 2017, pp. 349–386; PLETERSKI, Andrej: *Zgodnjėsrednjeveška naselbina na blejski Pristavi*, p. 63 and 64.

<sup>52</sup> See also VIDA, Tivadar: *Die awarenzeitliche Keramik I. (6.–7. Jh.)*, p. 154.

<sup>53</sup> FUSEK, Gabriel: *Slovensko vo včasnoslovanskem obdobju*, pp. 106–108; MACHÁČEK, Jiří: K absolutní a relativní chronologii keramiky středodunajské kulturní tradice na jižní Moravě. In: *Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské university, řada archeologická M 5*, a. 49, 2000, p. 37.

<sup>54</sup> GUSAR, Karla: Nalazi slavenske keramike s lokaliteta Podvršje-Glavčine. In: *Archaeologia Adriatica*, a. 3, 2009, nr. 1, pp. 305–322.

<sup>55</sup> ŠTULAR, Benjamin – LOŽIĆ, Edisa et alia: Migration of Alpine Slavs and machine learning: Space-time Pattern Mining of an Archaeological Data set. In: *PLoS ONE*, a. 17, 2022, nr. 9, pp. 1–19.

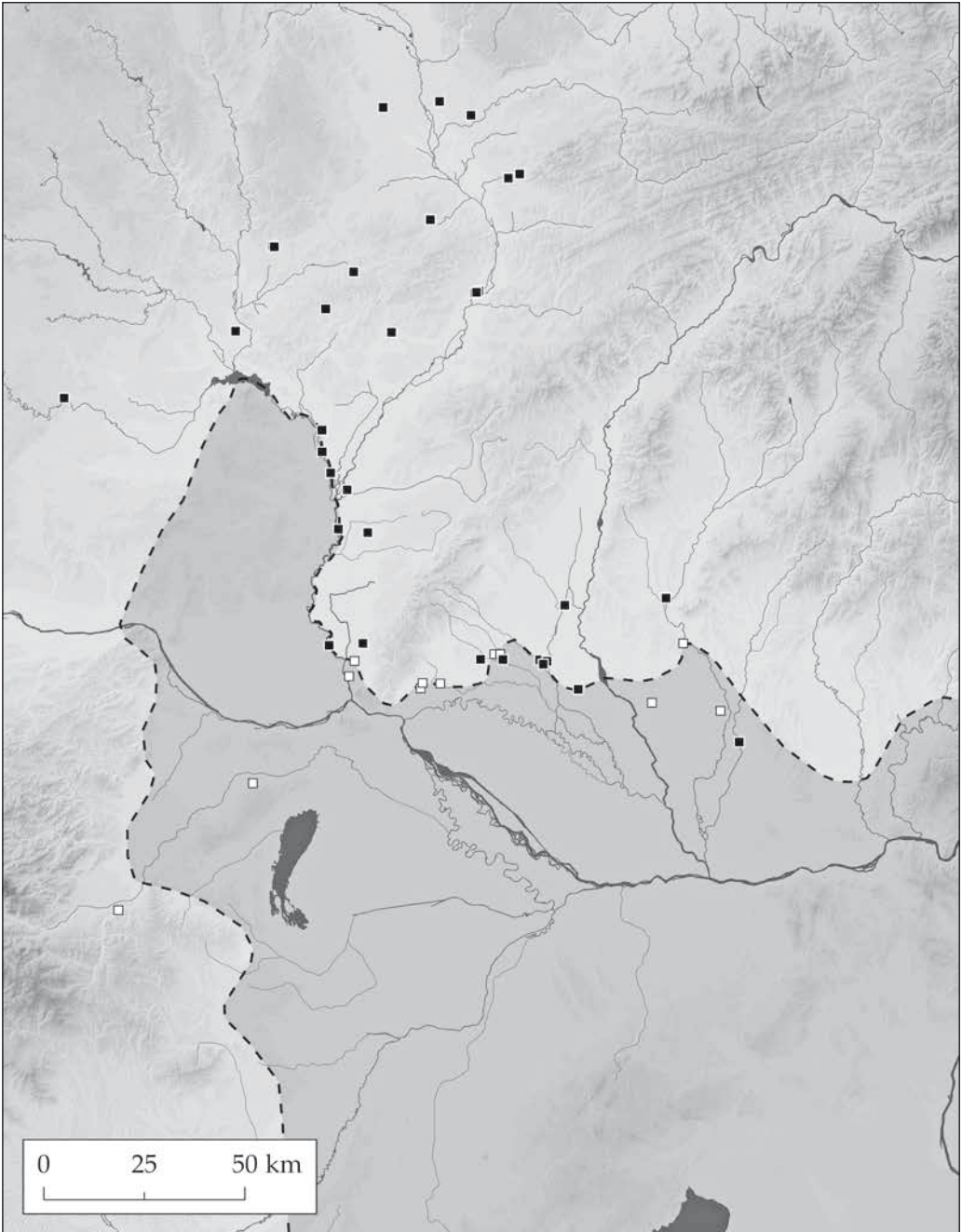


Fig. 4: Flat cremation graves excluding sites with Prague-type pottery. Cremation graves and burial grounds are marked by black-filled symbols; bi-ritual burial grounds are marked with open symbols. The shaded area corresponds to the zone of distribution of inhumation burials associated with the so-called late Avar khaganate (after ZÁBOJNÍK 1999 and 2009).

– sometime before the year 700. At this point, however, it is necessary to emphasise that these scholars used not only different sources but, above all, that they deliberately omitted information about the cultural classification of the finds in their analyses. As a matter of fact, as for the earlier part of the Early Middle Ages, this would apply primarily to the pots classified as *Prague-type pottery*.

Taking into account the information in this study, the following considerations can be made concerning the settlement of Dalmatia and the Western Balkans by

the Slavs. The territory north of the Sava River was populated during the Early Slavic period by Slavs arriving from the Central Danube region. It would take the Slavs some time before they took over the southwards situated regions, probably after the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century. It cannot be ruled out that this was somehow connected to the Avar khaganate, its powerful influence and interests. This presumed connection might have been the factor determining that – as far as their origin is concerned – this settlement was carried out by a people identified as South Slavs.\*

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\* I would like to thank P. Drnovský (Univerzita Hradec Králové, Filozofická fakulta), D. Golubović (Infobiro Mediacentar Sarajevo), M. Maruna (Archeološki muzej Zadar), V. Mikulková (Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, Akademická knižnica), P. Šlězár (Národní památkový ústav, územní odborné pracoviště v Olomouci), L. Vagalinski (Bulgarska akademiya na naukite, Natsionalniyat arheologicheski institut s muzey) for giving me access to bibliographic materials; M. Mordovin (Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, Bölcsészettudományi Kar) for helping me locate specific sites; A. Alajbeg (Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenica, Split), K. Filipec (Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Filozofski fakultet) and M. Mazuch (Akademie věd České republiky, Archeologický ústav Brno) for providing detailed information on various sites; G. Fusek (Slovenská akadémia vied, Archeologický ústav) for several valuable observations about the spread of Prague-type pottery; and especially P. Bandura for the preparation of the distribution maps.

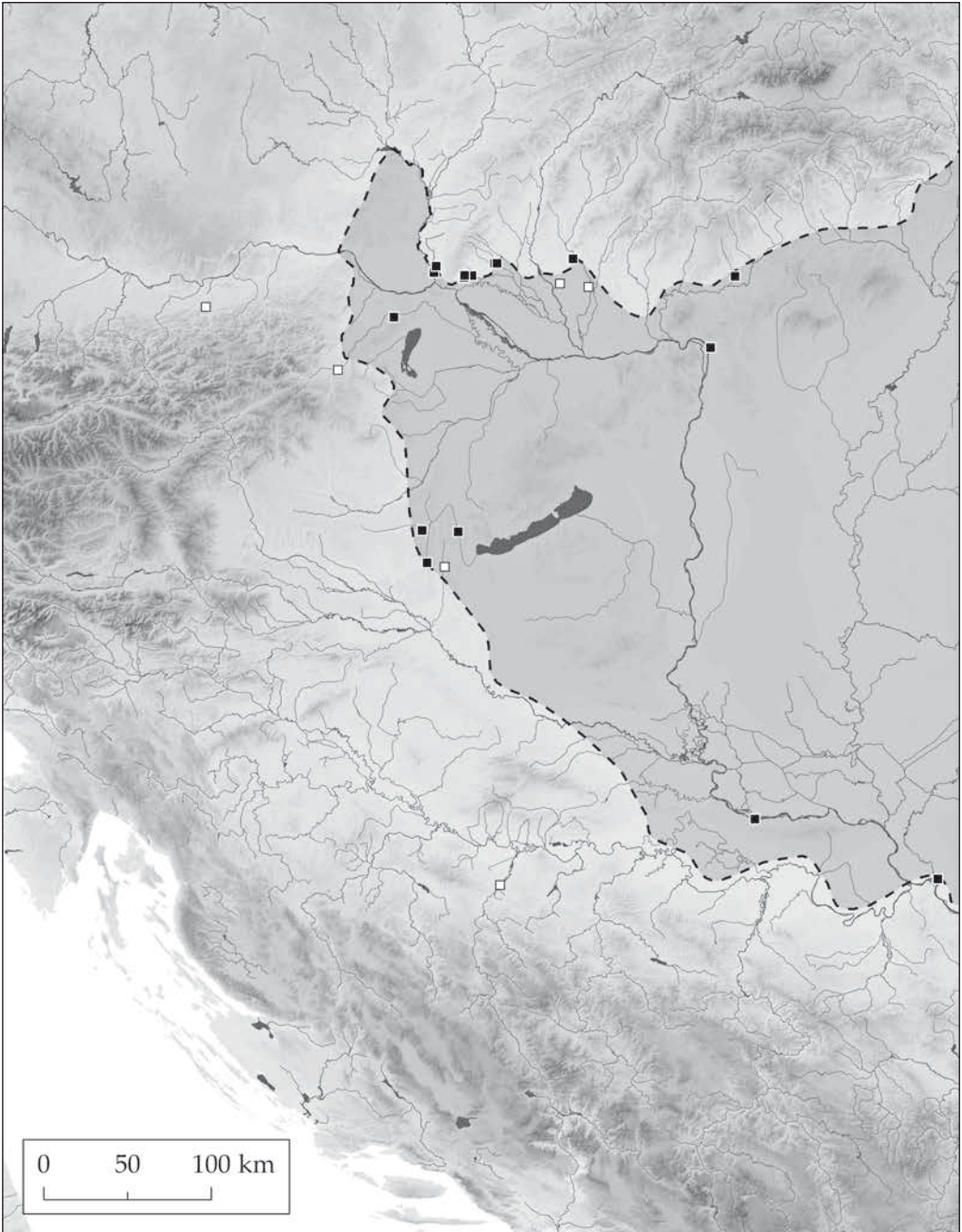


Fig. 5: Flat bi-ritual burial grounds, excluding sites with Prague-type pottery. Flat bi-ritual Avar necropoli are marked by black-filled symbols; sites not associated with the Avar khaganate are marked with open symbols. The shaded area corresponds to the zone of distribution of inhumation burials associated with the so-called late Avar khaganate (after ZÁBOJNÍK 1999 and 2009).

# Kinship and Burial Practice in Early Mediaeval Dalmatia

Príbuzenská a pohrebná prax v ranostredovekej Dalmácii / Srodstvo i pogrebna praksa u ranosrednjovjekovnoj Dalmaciji

*U skupini takozvanih ranosrednjovjekovnih grobalja s poganskim osobinama pokapanja u Dalmaciji primjetan je nezanemario broj lokaliteta koje pobliže povezuju dva obilježja: mali broj grobova i manjak uvezenih predmeta. Dok se na prvi pogled čini da je riječ tek o proporcionalnim parametrima, podrobniija analiza otkriva dodatne poveznice. Uspoređujući groblja u Ravnim kotarima i Cetinskoj krajini, autor zaključuje kako su groblja s malim brojem pokojnika zapravo odraz socioekonomske situacije nakon raspada kasnoantičkog teritorijalno-političkog i crkvenog aparata u dalmatinskom zaobalju.*

Ključneriječi: Ranisrednji vijek, ranosrednjovjekovna Dalmacija, ranosrednjovjekovna groblja, Slaveni

The category of sites discussed here includes flat inhumation cemeteries with no more than thirty-odd graves. Actually, the number of graves is rather fewer in most cases. Some of them are explicitly designated by researchers as sites that are not significantly devastated, while in other cases they assume that the number of graves was originally much higher. Due to the almost complete lack of diagnostic finds, these cemeteries have been dated quite broadly, from the seventh to the mid-ninth century, based on ceramic vessels and the simplest jewellery types. Are they mainly the salvaged remains of once large cemeteries, or should the reasons for their parallels be sought in other factors? Is the lack of imported objects proportional to the number of graves, or an indicator of the then socio-economic circumstances?

We will try to find the answers in the area of two Dalmatian microregions – Cetinska krajina and Ravni kotari.

## Destroyed or merely small cemeteries?

Several rather small cemeteries from this phase from the area of Ravni kotari were published more than forty years ago, viz. the sites of Kašić – Razbojine, Smilčić – Kulica, Trljuge – Pržine in Biljane Donje and Stankovci – Klarića kuće. The cemetery at Razbojine in Kašić was excavated after a number of graves had been destroyed by agricultural activities. Thirty-seven graves were salvaged, of which twenty-three contained finds typical of the earlier phase of early medieval cemeteries in Dalmatia. The most numerous were iron knives and

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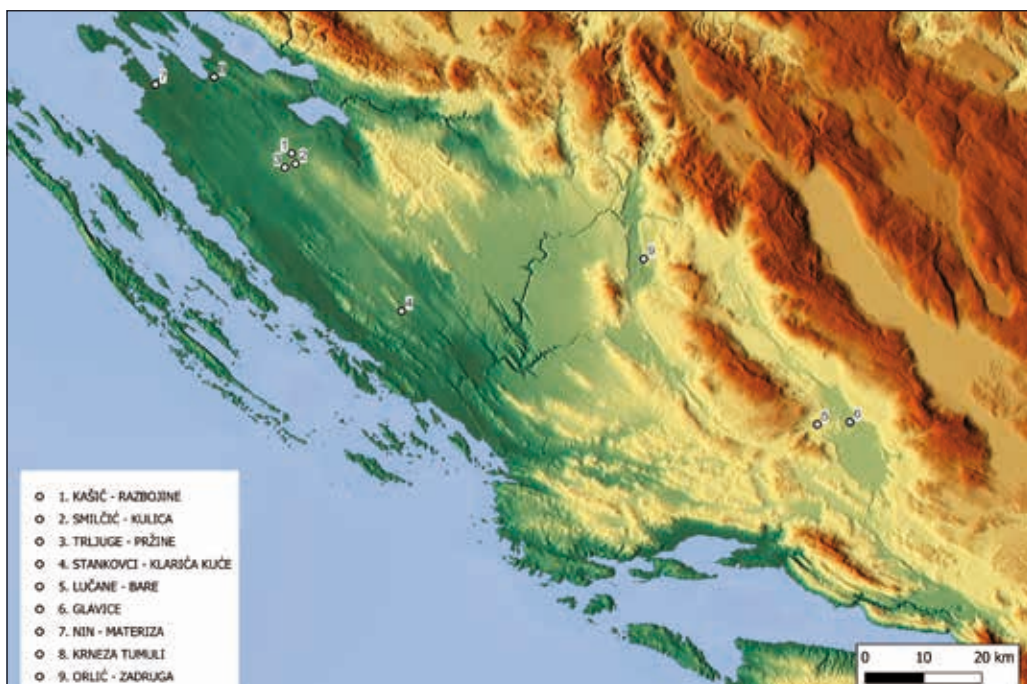


Fig. 1: A map with selected early mediaeval cemeteries in Ravni kotari and Cetinska krajina.

ceramic vessels. Iron frames, a buckle, and two bronze circlets were also unearthed. One child's grave was recorded, and it was possible to determine the sexes of nineteen male and seven female skeletons. Dušan Jelovina dated Razbojine to the second half of the seventh and the first half of the eighth century.<sup>1</sup>

The cemetery at Kulica in Smilčić was also partially destroyed by agricultural activities, and only five graves were rescued by excavations. Four of them contained two knives, one ceramic vessel, a spindle whorl, and a fragment of an unidentified iron object. One more vessel was recovered from a previously destroyed grave. Due to the poorly preserved bones, it was possible to establish the sex of only two males. Janko Belošević

dated the cemetery to the eighth and the first half of the ninth century.<sup>2</sup>

The cemetery at the site of Pržine was discovered during sand excavation works near the hamlet of Trljuje in Biljane Donje. Twenty-eight graves were salvaged by two archaeological excavation campaigns. Belošević dated seventeen of them to the eighth and the first half of the ninth century, and the rest to the tenth and eleventh centuries. A stratigraphic distinction between the two phases was identified, since the graves from the later phase were sporadically buried into the layer of earlier graves. Finds were discovered in ten out of seventeen graves from the earlier phase, i.e. solely ceramic vessels and iron knives. Although the anthropological sample was poorly preserved, Belošević pointed out

<sup>1</sup> JELOVINA, Dušan: Ranosrednjovjekovna nekropola na „Razbojinama“ u selu Kašiću kod Zadra. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* ser. III, a. 10, 1968, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *Materijalna kultura Hrvata od 7.–9. stoljeća*. Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber, 1980, p. 52.

that there were no children's graves and argued that this phenomenon had been characteristic of the "early horizon of Old Croatian graves in Dalmatia".<sup>3</sup>

The cemetery near the hamlet of Klarici in Stankovci was also partly destroyed by sand digging and agricultural activities. Thirteen graves were salvaged by rescue excavations, of which six were male, five female and two children's burials. Finds were recorded in ten graves, mostly ceramic vessels and knives. A fragment of a bronze ring, a bronze cirlet and a two-piece bone comb were also discovered. Belošević particularly pointed out the fire pit next to Grave 7, which he associated with a pagan funeral rite.<sup>4</sup> He dated the cemetery near Klarića kuće to the eighth century.

Let us continue with cemeteries in the region of Cetinska krajina. Twenty-five graves were discovered at the site of Bare in Lučane near Sinj. Ante Milošević divided them into two phases, based on stratigraphic distinctions and variances in grave architecture. He associated six graves with the earlier phase. Four of them contained the following finds: three ceramic vessels, four iron knives, an iron nail, an iron tinder with flints, and a fragment of a (late antique?) glass vessel. He tentatively dated the later graves, characterised by carved crosses on stone slabs and the lack of finds, to a somewhat later medieval period, and the six graves from the earlier phase to the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. As for the latter phase, he indicated that a female was buried in one grave, whereas the rest comprised the remains of males. Since the cemetery was

bordered by gullies, a field and a slope, he concluded that it was in its original state and that the site was not significantly damaged.<sup>5</sup>

As many as five early medieval burial places were identified in nearby Glavice, viz. in the hamlet of Poljaci. Only one grave from this phase was discovered at each of the sites of Liske and Kongor, whereas two were unearthed at both Gluvine kuće I and Gluvine kuće II. Later graves were predominant, and characterised by carved crosses on stone slabs. The largest number of early medieval graves from the earlier phase was recorded at the neighbouring site of Jojine kuće – 14 out of 36. Therefore, it can be noted that the pattern from the Lučane cemetery is echoed at Gluvine and Jojine kuće. The tally of graves with finds from Glavice is somewhat smaller, and the greatest difference is evident in the number of ceramic vessels: only one from Gluvine kuće I and Jojine kuće each, while five graves from the latter site contained somewhat larger fragments of pottery, which Maja Petrinec interprets as traces of a funeral rite.<sup>6</sup> In this context, we should also mention the ash pits discovered around the graves from the earlier phase at Jojine and Gluvine kuće II. The remaining finds are mostly typical everyday objects, with the exception of the ones discovered in Grave 1 at Gluvine kuće I: a bowl, a knife, a bone needle-case with a fitting and an iron needle, two rings made of hammered bronze sheet decorated with engraved crosses, a pair of silver earrings ornamented with granules and two bronze antique items

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 55–57.

<sup>5</sup> MILOŠEVIĆ, Ante: Ranosrednjovjekovna nekropola u „Barama“ u Lučanima kod Sinja. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, ser. III, a. 14, 1984, pp. 286–287 and 302–303.

<sup>6</sup> PETRINEC, Maja: Dosadašnji rezultati istraživanja ranosrednjovjekovnog groblja u Glavicama kraj Sinja kao prilog razrješavanju problema kronologije starohrvatskih grobalja. In: *Opuscula Archaeologica*, a. 26, 2002, p. 210.

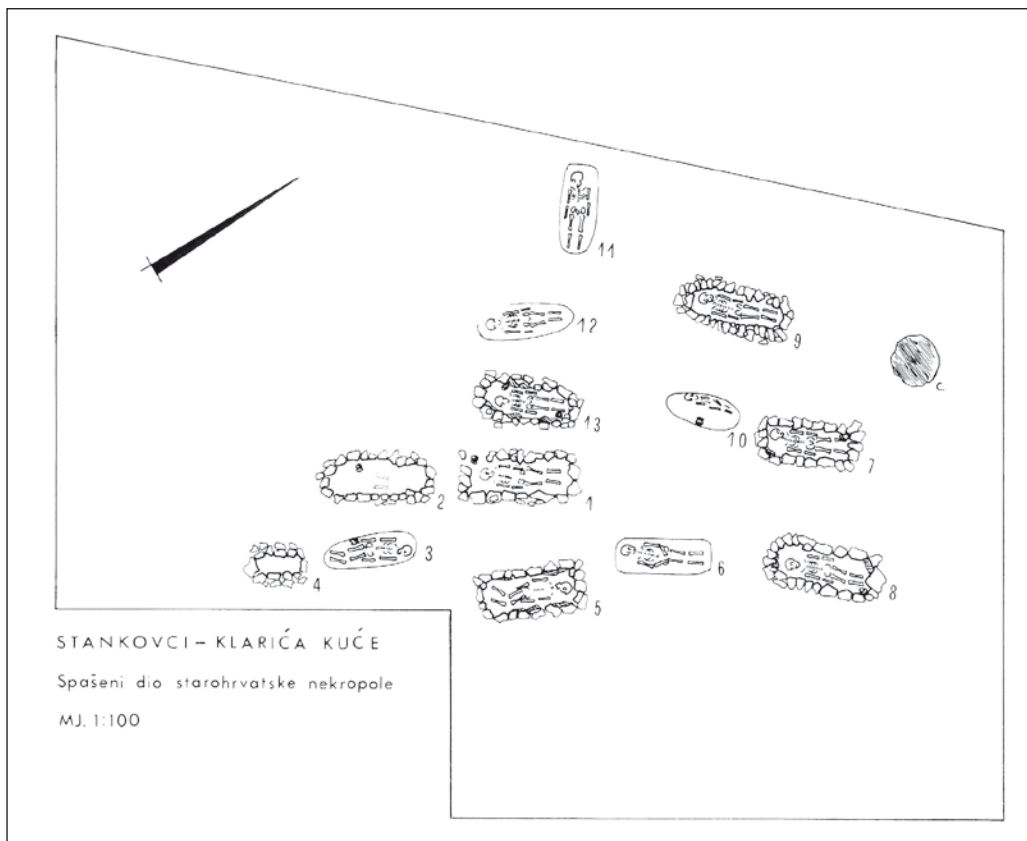


Fig. 2: Ground-plan of the Stankovci – Klarića kuće cemetery (BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *La nécropole paléocroate Stankovci – Benkovac*. In: *Inventaria Archeologica*, nr. 20, p. 192).

– an Aucissa fibula and a small bell.<sup>7</sup> Adult burials are predominant among the graves from the earlier phase, since only two graves at Jojine kuće belonged to children. Petrinec dated the Glavice graves from the earlier phase to the eighth century, while Milošević opted for the seventh and eighth centuries.<sup>8</sup>

The Nin – Materiza site should be added to this group. It is an early medieval cemetery formed by the south-eastern

and north-western sides of an earthen tumulus, which itself contained graves of a much later date. Finds were recorded in 13 out of a total of 25 early medieval graves. The most numerous were ceramic vessels, followed by iron knives and tinders. One unornamented bronze ring and beads of a glass necklace were also unearthed. Due to the poor preservation of the bones, only eight males, three females and one child were identified. Fire pits

<sup>7</sup> MILOŠEVIĆ, Ante: Ranosrednjovjekovno groblje kod Gluvinih kuća u Glavicama kod Sinja. *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* ser. III, a. 24, 1997, pp. 111–126; PETRINEC, Maja: Dosadašnji rezultati istraživanja, pp. 211–215.

<sup>8</sup> PETRINEC, Maja: Dosadašnji rezultati istraživanja, p. 215; MILOŠEVIĆ, Ante: Ranosrednjovjekovno groblje kod Gluvinih kuća, p. 121; MILOŠEVIĆ, Ante: *Arheologija Sinjskoga polja*. Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2017, pp. 95–99.

were recorded around Graves 16, 20 and 21, which Belošević interpreted as a pagan burial custom.<sup>9</sup> He also noted that a number of graves had been damaged by agricultural activities, and roughly dated the cemetery to the eighth century, while pointing out that he had no solid evidence for precise dating.

Let us go back to the initial question: are all these cemeteries just the last remnants of large burial places that used to have dozens, maybe even more than a hundred graves, or does the number of discovered graves constitute a representative sample? There is no single answer for all the sites. Belošević's descriptions seemingly reveal that only a fraction of the mentioned Ravni kotari sites were rescued, sufficing merely to record cemeteries. On the other hand, there are no indications of significant devastation in Lučane and Glavice. It is theoretically possible that both statements are true, and that the number of destroyed Ravni kotari graves was neither that large nor crucial for the analysis of those cemeteries. However, in addition to the very number of graves and the almost complete lack of diagnostic finds, these sites also have several other factors in common.

## Children's graves

The extremely low proportion of children's graves is perhaps the most notable parallel. It is a fact that children's graves were significantly under-represented in early medieval cemeteries until the mid-ninth century, but such very low percentages are specific only to this group of cemeteries.<sup>10</sup> This variable could hardly have been affected by significant devastation

of the site, since children's graves were not isolated in any of the investigated early medieval cemeteries, but rather located next to adult graves. Leaving aside the reasons for such burial practices, it can be assumed that the extreme under-representation of child burials also carries chronological implications. The cemeteries from this phase exhibit an increase in the quota of children's graves proportional to the nearing of their disuse. A closer look at the plan of the western cemetery at Ždrijac leads to the conclusion that their concentration was lowest in the central part (Ždrijac West I), i.e. a large group of graves with no diagnostic finds. Furthermore, it is evident that the rate is increasing in the more westerly section of the cemetery (Ždrijac West II), characterised by spurs of the so-called Croatian type and bone containers of the Late Avar style. The share of children's graves is highest in the eastern part of the western cemetery (Ždrijac West III), represented by an earring of the so-called Köttlach type and a denarius of Emperor Lothar (845–855), i.e. finds from the mid-ninth century or a little later. This assumed sequence is even clearer in the eastern Ždrijac cemetery, which, based on the finds of Carolingian spurs and a sword, a cruciform appliqué and rings with a pentagram, coincides with Ždrijac West II and III sectors. The share of children's graves is highest in this separate cemetery and corresponds to the percentages from so-called cemeteries with Christian burials, i.e. those tentatively dated to the period between the mid-ninth and the end of the eleventh century.

Based on the number of graves, it is only possible to assume that burials in

<sup>9</sup> BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *Materijalna kultura*, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> EVANS, HUW M. A.: *The Early Mediaeval Archaeology of Croatia A. D. 600–900*. Oxford: BAR International Series 539, 1989, pp. 177–179.

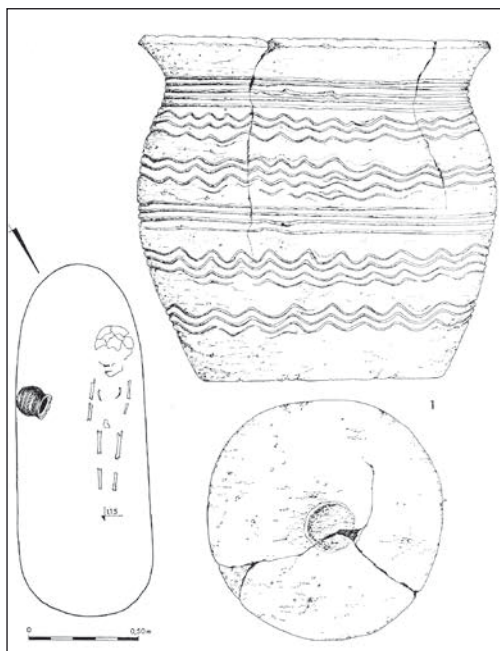


Fig. 3: *Stankovci – Klarića kuće, child's Grave 10* (BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *La nécropole paléocroate*, p. 195)

the sector with the lowest quota of children's graves (Ždrijac West I) began during the first half of the eighth century, but it is impossible to offer a more precise date due to the complete lack of diagnostic finds.<sup>11</sup> It is precisely this issue that ties it even more closely to the cemeteries discussed in this paper.

## Combed decoration

In his discussion on the Lučane – Bare cemetery, Ante Milošević singled out the ceramic vessel from Grave 1. Almost the

entire body of that vessel is ornamented with dense horizontal lines, i.e. a combed decoration. There are not many parallels to this decoration, and Milošević identified them in the vessels from Grave 30 at Razbojine, Grave 10 at Klarića kuće and a vessel from Benkovac with no information on the circumstances of its discovery.<sup>12</sup> However, significantly more concrete analogies to the combed decoration from Lučane are the vessels from Grave 4 at Jojine kuće,<sup>13</sup> Grave 5 at Razbojine,<sup>14</sup> Grave 3 at Pržine,<sup>15</sup> as well as the vessels found outside the graves at Kulica.<sup>16</sup> In point of fact, these are almost all the sites that we have mentioned, which can hardly be a coincidence. It is particularly indicative that the territorial diffusion does not corroborate claims that the combed decoration is a local phenomenon, since it appeared both in Ravni kotari and in the region of Cetinska krajina.

Another interesting facet is that Milošević also found a somewhat broader analogy to the Lučane vessel among the urns from Maklinovo brdo, on which the combed decoration is but a border of the zones ornamented with waves or series of vertical lines.<sup>17</sup> Based on the parallels with the Kašić urns, as well as the assumed connection of other grave finds with late antique cemeteries, he dated six graves from the earlier horizon at Bare in Lučane to the second half of the seventh century.<sup>18</sup> Notwithstanding, the strongest analogies to the Kašić urn ornaments can in

<sup>11</sup> ALAJBEG, Ante: O topografskoj kronologiji groblja s poganskim osobinama pokapanja u sjevernoj Dalmaciji. In: *Archaeologia Adriatica*, a. 9, 2014, p. 154.

<sup>12</sup> MILOŠEVIĆ, Ante: Ranosrednjovjekovna nekropola u „Barama”, pp. 301–302.

<sup>13</sup> PETRINEC, Maja: *Groblja od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države*. Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2009, p. 401, tab. 123.

<sup>14</sup> BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *Materijalna kultura*, tab. LIV, fig. 6.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, tab. LXII, fig. 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, tab. LVII, fig. 5.

<sup>17</sup> MILOŠEVIĆ, Ante: Ranosrednjovjekovna nekropola u „Barama”, p. 302.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 302–303.

fact be found on the vessels from Grave 30 at Razbojine, Grave 10 from Klarića kuće (precisely those singled out by Milošević as the most similar to the Lučane vessel), as well as from Grave 5 from the inhumation cemetery at Maklinovo brdo.<sup>19</sup> The latter grave is located within the incipient part of the cemetery with no diagnostic finds, where burials probably began in the first half of the eighth century.<sup>20</sup>

## Traces of funeral rites

Four of the discussed sites have recorded traces of funeral rites, i.e. fires lit in the immediate vicinity of graves: Materiza in Nin, Klarića kuće in Stankovci, Gluvine kuće II, and Jojine kuće in Glavice. They are mostly fire pits with ash remains, measuring up to one metre in diameter, with no finds such as pottery fragments or animal bones. Belošević emphatically associates the fire pits at Materiza and Klarića kuće with burial customs, while Petrinec concluded that the fire holes with ashes at the sites in Glavice were shallower, but also that they predate the graves from the earlier phase. She assumed that they were in fact vestiges of cremation burials damaged during the digging of graves from the earlier phase, even though no remains of human bones had been found.<sup>21</sup> In the vein of Belošević, Branko Marušić associated the fires lit in the immediate vicinity of graves in Istrian cemeteries from the seventh and eighth centuries with pagan burial customs.<sup>22</sup> Leaving the meaning of this custom aside, it should be pointed

out that fires lit next to graves have not been recorded either in late antique or later medieval cemeteries. Although this phenomenon is regarded as one of the fundamental features of Dalmatian cemeteries from this phase, it has not been recorded in its largest published cemeteries – Ždrijac in Nin and Maklinovo brdo in Kašić. Moreover, it seems that fires lit near graves were characteristic of such small cemeteries. This conclusion leads to a comparison with yet another group of sites from this phase – tumuli cemeteries.

## Tumuli

Not many tumuli with early medieval graves have been discovered in the Dalmatian hinterland. The barrows in Kašić, Krneza and Podvršje can be associated with cemeteries from this phase. In fact, they are all reused earthen mounds with prehistoric or late antique burials. The Glavčurak barrow in Kašić, otherwise notable for its Ostrogothic-style finds, was almost completely destroyed by sand mining. Belošević rescued three ceramic vessels, two iron knives, a bucket handle and an iron sickle from two excavated and an unknown number of destroyed graves.<sup>23</sup> Six early medieval graves were discovered in the tumulus of Jokina glavica in Krneza in the layer above the prehistoric burials. Four of them contained the following finds: two ceramic vessels, a necklace made of glass beads, silver circlets, a tinder with flints, an iron awl and two iron knives.<sup>24</sup> As many as seven

<sup>19</sup> BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *Materijalna kultura*, tab. LXIV, fig. 26, 27, 28.

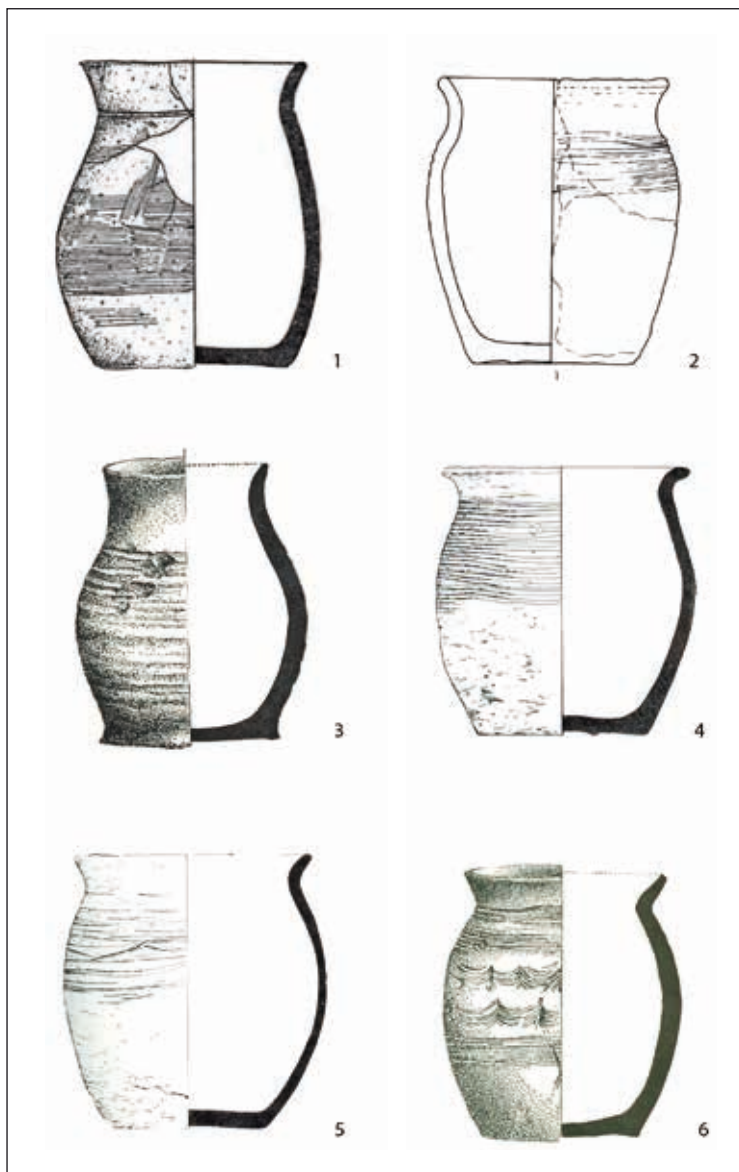
<sup>20</sup> ALAJBEG, Ante: O topografskoj kronologiji, p. 153.

<sup>21</sup> PETRINEC, Maja: Dosadašnji rezultati istraživanja, p. 206–209.

<sup>22</sup> MARUŠIĆ, Branko: Nekropole VII i VIII stoljeća u Istri. In: *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 23, 1967, p. 336.

<sup>23</sup> BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *Materijalna kultura*, p. 50.

<sup>24</sup> GUSAR, Karla: Jokina Glavica – ranosrednjovjekovni grobovi. In: MARIJANOVIĆ, Brunislav (ed.): *Tumuli iz Krneze i Podvršja kod Zadra*. Zadar: Sveučilište u Zadru, 2012, pp. 53–55.



Tab. I: *Ceramic vessels with combed decoration.*

ceramic vessels were found outside the burial units. Two males, two females and one child were buried in the graves. It

le frame and two ceramic vessels.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the destroyed graves, a fire pit measuring about half a metre in diameter

was not possible to determine the sex of one adult dead person. At the neighbouring Duševića glavica, three ceramic vessels, two iron knives and a belt-set with two bronze pendants and an iron hoop were unearthed in nine early medieval graves, also above a prehistoric layer.<sup>25</sup> Two vessels were recorded outside the grave units. An anthropological analysis made it possible to determine that one male, three females and one child were buried in the graves, while the osteological sample from the other burials was not sufficiently preserved. The early medieval graves at Matakova glavica in the neighbouring Podvršje were destroyed, but the excavations at their level, above the late antique graves, unearthed a whetstone, a bronze buck-

<sup>25</sup> GUSAR, Karla – VUJEVIĆ, Dario: Duševića glavica. In: MARIJANOVIĆ, Brunislav (ed.): *Tumuli iz Krneze*, pp. 107–108.

<sup>26</sup> GUSAR, Karla – VUJEVIĆ, Dario: Istraživanja tumula Matakova glavica u Podvršju, *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu* ser. III, No. 42 (2009), p. 340; GUSAR, Karla – VUJEVIĆ, Dario: Matakova glavica. In MARIJANOVIĆ, Brunislav (ed.): *Tumuli iz Krneze*, pp. 162–163.

was discovered in the same layer. Its closest parallel is the one from the cemetery at Klarića kuće in Stankovci.<sup>27</sup>

The graves from the site of Orlić – Zadruška can also be added to this group, even though they are not multi-layered earthen mounds. Three early medieval graves were found under very small tumuli in the immediate vicinity and within a late antique farm compound. Graves 1 and 2 were under mounds made of stone and fragments of tegulae, with finds of pottery, animal bones, and traces of coal and ashes, while the third grave was covered by a small pile of stones.<sup>28</sup> A ceramic vessel, an iron knife and an awl were found in the first grave, while the second contained a ceramic vessel, an iron arrow-head, an iron knife and two iron rivets in the right hand of the dead person. The third grave was buried within the perimeter of the Roman farm compound, but contained no finds. Maja Petrinc dated these graves to the eighth century.<sup>29</sup>

The principal features of tumuli cemeteries seemingly demonstrate that their mutual similarities are conspicuous and indicative, all the more so because they overlap with the attributes of flat cemeteries. Yet again, the number of graves is small, diagnostic finds are missing, the proportion of children's graves is low and fire was used in funeral rites. A portion of the graves from this group of sites was also destroyed before excavations, mostly at Matakova glavica and Glavčurak. It is small wonder, since earthen mounds are generally one of the most endangered types of archaeological sites. As for the

other sites, the possibility that the number of destroyed graves affected the sample can be ruled out, since tumuli are enclosed entities by their nature and could not have contained a significant number of graves to start with.

The site of Nin – Materiza – a flat cemetery formed around a prehistoric mound – is a direct symbolic link between early medieval tumuli cemeteries and flat cemeteries. In this context, it should be pointed out that Karla Gusar concluded that the closest analogies to the material from the tumuli in Krneza and Podvršje actually originate from Materiza.<sup>30</sup>

## Dating

The fundamental attributes of the cemeteries presented above are accompanied by dates ranging from the seventh to the mid-ninth century, whereby the dominant date is the eighth century. As noted in the introduction, the dates are mostly based on the lack of diagnostic finds – early Byzantine and early Slavic, as well as Carolingian. Such a conclusion derived by abduction instantly appears to be tenuous, mainly because it implies a higher probability of the absence of diagnostic finds in the eighth century than in the seventh and ninth centuries. Carolingian finds from the tail end of the eighth and the first half of the ninth century are quite numerous and there are almost no cemeteries from this period without imported spurs or swords, except for those discussed in this paper. Consequently, such an argument seems acceptable. On

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 159.

<sup>28</sup> PETRINEC, Maja: Frühmittelalterliche Gräber aus Orlić Angesichts Bisheriger Erkenntnisse über den Horizont mit Heidnischen Bestattungsmerkmalen. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, ser. III, a. 42, 2015, pp. 90–91.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 129–130.

<sup>30</sup> GUSAR, Karla: Jokina glavica, p. 64.

the other hand, the absence of diagnostic finds from the seventh century is not surprising at all, because they are in fact rare in the Dalmatian hinterland, and it is hard to say whether there are fewer artefacts from the seventh or the eighth century. This is precisely why the seventh century seems to have been readily discarded.

In all the discussed cemeteries and their uniformly equipped graves, only three graves contained finds suitable for typological dating. Grave 1 at Gluvine kuće I, equipped with two rings made of hammered sheet bronze decorated with engraved crosses, and a pair of silver star-shaped earrings, is dated by Petrinec to the eighth century.<sup>31</sup> Her dating is the same for Grave 11 at Jojine kuće, which contained three pairs of silver circlets, a necklace, a ring made of hammered sheet silver decorated with an illegible engraved motif, and an iron knife.<sup>32</sup> It should be pointed out that the radiocarbon dates of the Glavice graves were published long after the preliminary data and typological dates, which makes them more interesting. The graves with diagnostic material were not analysed, because the analyses were carried out as part of research into the eating habits of Dalmatian populations from the Iron Age to the early Middle Ages. AMS 14C analyses dated Grave 3 from Glavice to Cal AD 668–778, and Grave 48 to Cal AD 715–891 or Cal AD 776–947.<sup>33</sup> Based on statistical

differences, it can be concluded that these two graves were not buried simultaneously, that is, they belong to different phases – exactly as assumed on the grounds of the stratigraphic and typological traits of the Glavice cemeteries.

The third burial with diagnostic material is from Duševića glavica. The rather damaged Grave 6 was without preserved human remains, but it did contain a ceramic vessel, a fragment of a small iron knife, and two cast bronze objects. The first item belongs to the group of semicircular or crescent-shaped pendants, of which quite a few have been found in Dalmatia to date, whereas the second one is a circular mount with animal protomes, as yet unique in this area. The most numerous and closest analogies to the mount originate from early medieval cemeteries in the area of modern-day Albania, and a few were unearthed in the Carpathian Basin.<sup>34</sup> AMS 14C analysis dated the adjacent Grave 9 to Cal AD 640–770, while Karla Gusar and Dario Vujević dated Grave 6 “to the 8<sup>th</sup> century or at the earliest to the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century considering the fact that in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century mostly cremation rite with burials in ceramic urns is represented in Croatia.”<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, Maja Petrinec used a similar mount of Zabošnjak type 203 from Grave 53 in the late Avar cemetery at Bernolákovo, Slovakia, and dated Grave 6 from Duševića glavica to the

<sup>31</sup> PETRINEC, Maja: Dosadašnji rezultati istraživanja, p. 212.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 211–215.

<sup>33</sup> LIGHTFOOT, Emma – ŠLAUS, Mario – O’CONNEL, T. C.: Changing Cultures, Changing Cuisines: Cultural Transitions and Dietary Change in Iron Age, Roman, and Early Medieval Croatia. In: *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, a. 148, 2012, p. 556. The latter text contains erroneous grave numbers for the samples from the site of Glavice – Gluvine kuće, as indicated by Jakov Vučić. See Vučić, Jakov: Ranosrednjovjekovni ukop s novcem Bazilija I. iz Stankovaca. In: *Diadora*, a. 36, 2022, p. 215, nota 65.

<sup>34</sup> GUSAR, Karla – VUJEVIĆ, Dario: Duševića glavica, pp. 112–113; PETRINEC, Maja: Frühmittelalterliche Gräber aus Orlić, pp. 117–120.

<sup>35</sup> GUSAR, Karla – VUJEVIĆ, Dario: Duševića glavica, p. 118.

eighth century.<sup>36</sup> Female grave 13 from nearby Jokina glavica, equipped with a pair of silver circlets, a necklace made of glass beads, and a ceramic vessel, was AMS 14C-dated to Cal AD 770–900.<sup>37</sup>

The available dates are not numerous, but they are quite relevant in this small-scale sample. It is particularly significant that the ranges of two graves without diagnostic material (Gluvine kuće Gr 3, and Duševića glavica Gr 9) are very similar – a good part of the seventh and most of the eighth century, altogether excluding the end of the eighth and the first half of the ninth century. On the other hand, the richest grave from Jokina glavica involves the final three decades of the eighth and the entire ninth century. Therefore, it is indisputable that burials in at least some of these cemeteries began long before the appearance of graves with Carolingian finds. Typological and radiocarbon dates of these small-scale cemeteries fill the chronological gap between the late antique and larger early medieval cemeteries such as Ždrijac, Velim or Maklinovo brdo.

## Conclusion

According to field reports, it seems that the number of destroyed graves was highest at the site of Razbojine in Kašič. Although it is impossible to estimate their number, considerable destruction could very well have caused the loss of graves with diagnostic finds. However, one phenomenon in the mentioned cemetery is

significant, viz. Jelovina pointed out the rather large distance between groups of graves of up to ten metres, which is quite certainly not the outcome of destructive processes.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, such a situation is actually reminiscent of the scattered groups of graves in Glavice. As to the other cemeteries, there are no solid indicators that the number of destroyed graves considerably distorted the overall picture. Therefore, Belošević's claims that all the mentioned Ravni kotari sites are almost entirely destroyed can be regarded as exaggerated, a good example being the tumuli cemeteries. For that matter, was not the vast majority of medieval cemeteries discovered only after partial destruction caused by ploughing or construction activities?

Naturally, dating is essential for clarification of the emergence of cemeteries with low numbers of graves. Radiocarbon dates from Glavice and Krneza corroborated the assumptions previously presented by Janko Belošević, Dušan Jelovina, Ante Milošević, and Maja Petrinec claiming that burials in these cemeteries had begun as early as the second half of the seventh or during the first half of the eighth century. This dating places these cemeteries in an appropriate socio-economic context. Taking into account all of the above, it seems likely that the archaeological excavations in fact involved the grave groups of which there could have been several in a limited area, ten or more metres apart from each other. This

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<sup>36</sup> PETRINEC, Maja: Frühmittelalterliche Gräber aus Orlič, pp. 117–120; cfr. ZÁBOJNÍK, Jozef: Seriation von Gürtelbeschlaggarnituren aus dem Gebiet der Slowakei und Österreichs (Beitrag zur Chronologie der Zeit des awarischen Kaganats). In: ČILINSKÁ, Zlata (ed.): *K problematike osídlenia stredodunajskej oblasti vo včasnóm stredoveku*. Nitra: Archeologický ústav Slovenskej akadémie vied v Nitre, 1991, p. 315, tab. 36, fig. 16.

<sup>37</sup> GUSAR, Karla: Jokina glavica, p. 54.

<sup>38</sup> JELOVINA, Dušan: Ranosrednjovjekovna nekropola na „Razbojinama“, p. 24. See the plan of the tomb (*ibidem*, tab. 1, p. 49).

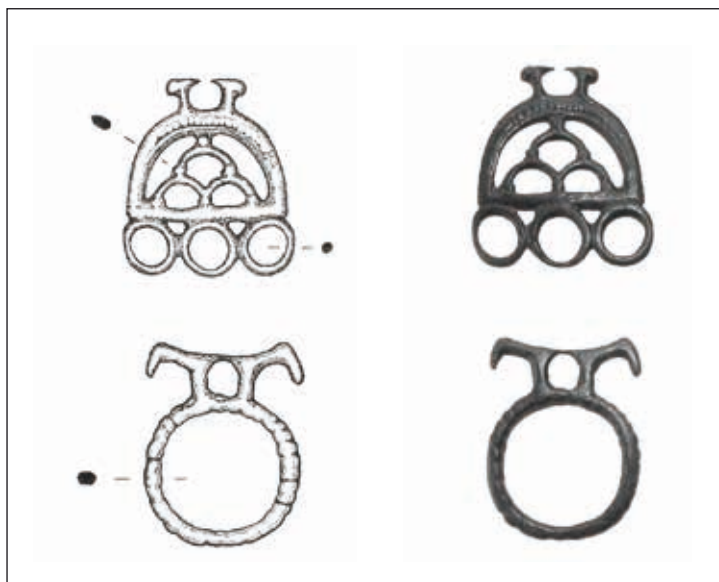


Fig. 4: Duševića glavica, Grave 6 – semicircular pendant and circular mount (GUSAR, Karla – VUJEVIĆ, Dario: *Duševića glavica*, tab. VI, 1–4, p. 130)

is exactly as confirmed in Glavice or at the tumuli in Krneza. Such sporadic burials would entirely correspond to the socio-economic situation in the Dalmatian hinterland after the collapse of the late antique territorial-political and church apparatus, and before the political defragmentation at the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century, caused by the advent of new elites. Therefore, the small number of graves mainly comes across as a reflection of a situation in which the main factors of social cohesion were no more, and kinship became the cornerstone of a new social order and the main criterion in joint burials.

withstanding, the political and economic erosion in the Dalmatian hinterland was not the only cause of the transformation of the cultural habitus and its reorientation from the Adriatic to the continent – a process that Danijel Džino reasonably termed becoming Slavs.<sup>39</sup> The small number of graves, the custom of burning fires as part of the funeral rite, and even analogous decorations on ceramic vessels culturally connect these inhumation cemeteries with the few cremation cemeteries discovered in Dalmatia to date.<sup>40</sup> Hence, the decisive elements in the cultural transformation were early medieval migrants from the north – the Slavs.

In accordance with this catastrophic scenario, which also implies considerable depopulation, the autonomous economic reflex was a change of course toward maintaining survival. A few imported items, i.e. diagnostic finds, are not key evidence that trade links were still active, but rather a symptom of general economic regression – a steep decline in supply and demand, as well as a drastic contraction of the market. Not-

<sup>39</sup> DŽINO, Danijel: *Becoming Slav, Becoming Croat: Identity Transformations in Post-Roman and Early Medieval Dalmatia*. Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2010, p. 13.

<sup>40</sup> For early medieval cremation cemeteries in Dalmatia, see: FABIJANIĆ, Tomislav: *Problem doseljenja Slavena/Hrvata na istočni Jadran i šire zaleđe u svjetlu arheoloških nalaza: Doktorska disertacija, Sveučilište u Zadru* (PhD Thesis, University of Zadar), 2008, pp. 29–103; BILOGRIVIĆ, Goran: Urne, Slaveni i Hrvati. O paljevinskim grobovima i doseobi u 7. stoljeću. In: *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti Zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti HAZU*, a. 36, pp. 1–17.

# Early Medieval Cemeteries in Northern Dalmatia, Croatia – State of Research and Open Questions

Ranostredovské cintoríny v Severnej Dalmácii, Chorvátsko – stav výskumu a otvorené otázky / Ranosrednjovjekovna groblja u sjevernoj Dalmaciji – stanje istraživanja i otvorena pitanja

*Kartiranjem ranosrednjovjekovnih groblja na prostoru današnje sjeverne Dalmacije izdvojene su mikrocjeline koje odražavaju grupiranje lokaliteta ovog tipa. Za svaku mikrocjelinu (ninsko područje, Ljubački zaljev, Kašić Donji s okolicom, šire bribirsko i kninsko područje) izloženo je stanje istraživanja te su naglašene najvažnije informacije o grobljima. Dodatan osvrt posvećen je stanju istraživanja predmeta ranokarolinške provenijencije, inače posebno brojnima na ovom geografskom području. Kratki ekskurs tematizira srodne nalaze iz Velike Moravske te prezentira određene sličnosti, ali i različitosti u materijalnoj kulturi.*

Ključne riječi: rani srednji vijek, topografska analiza, nalazi karolinške provenijencije, ostruge, Velika Moravska

The area of northern Dalmatia is known for its many extremely important early medieval cemeteries. Since the spatial extent of Dalmatia has changed considerably in the past, starting with the Roman province of Dalmatia, it is important to emphasize that this review includes only northern Dalmatia according to modern regionalization. Therefore, the rivers Zrmanja and Krka,<sup>1</sup> i.e. Ravni kotari (northdalmatian flatlands) and the upper Krka region, were set as a geographical boundary. Increased interest in the research of early medieval heritage in

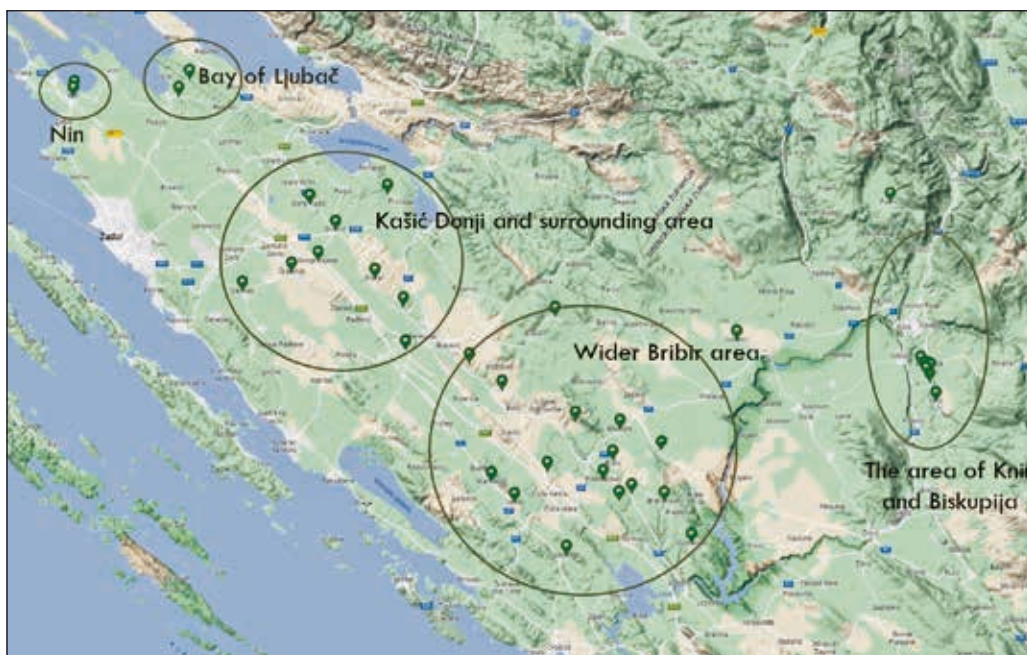
Dalmatia appeared at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Lujó Marun and the Knin (Croatian) antiquarian society investigated a whole multitude of sites (Otres, Morpolača, Biskupija, Orlić, Gaćezezi, etc.).<sup>2</sup>

After the Second World War, a new momentum in research followed, and many cemeteries were investigated especially by S. Gunjača (1909-1981), D. Jelovina (1927-2008), J. Belošević (1929-2016) and Z. Gunjača (1939-1994), and after them the younger generation of archaeologists continued the research. According to the current state of research, the cemeteries

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<sup>1</sup> Most often, the Šibenik region and the course of the Krka River are taken as the dividing line between northern and central Dalmatia. CRKVENČIĆ, Ivan – FRIGANOVIĆ, Mladen – PAVIĆ, Radovan – ROGIĆ, Veljko – SIĆ, Miroslav: *Geografija SR Hrvatske: Južno Hrvatsko primorje*, vol. 6. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1974, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> JELOVINA, Dušan: Osnivanje i rad Kninskog starinarskog društva. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 18, 1988, pp. 241–251; VRŠALOVIĆ, Dasen: *Srednjovjekovna arheologija u Hrvatskoj: prvih sto godina 1878.–1978*. Zagreb: Kiklos – krug knjige, 2013, pp. 6–9.



Map 1: *Spatial distribution of early medieval cemeteries between Zrmanja and Krka rivers, with indicated microregions (Google maps, modified by P. JERŠEK).*

of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century are topographically most numerous in northern Dalmatia, and there are a lot of cemeteries of a younger, so-called „christianized“ horizon here as well.<sup>3</sup> By mapping all known cemeteries, it is possible to single out several microregions, or areas where their grouping is noticeable (Map 1). An analysis of the spatial distribution of cemeteries shows a greater concentration in Nin, around Kašić Donji and surrounding area, around Bribir and further east in the fields around the upper Krka, near Knin and Biskupija.

## City of Nin

Nin is characterized by extremely favorable location on the sea coast, on the very

northwestern edge of Ravni kotari. It is believed that the Romanized natives of *Aenona* and the newly settled Slavic population managed to achieve coexistence. Protective archaeological investigations around the church of St. Asel (Anselmo), the cathedral of the early medieval Croatian diocese in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, revealed a cemetery with several burial phases. The earliest phase, tentatively dated between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, consists of several graves adjacent to the apse of the early Christian church, and the burial phase from the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century until the 11<sup>th</sup> century consists of graves gathered in smaller groups.<sup>4</sup> The results of these investigations were not published in full, only grave 41 with luxury finds has been published and recently dated to

<sup>3</sup> BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *Materijalna kultura Hrvata od VII do IX stoljeća: s posebnim obzirom na rezultate istraživanja groblja na području sjeverne Dalmacije*. Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber, 1980, p. 136.

<sup>4</sup> KOLEGA, Marija: Nin – arheološka istraživanja ispred župne crkve Sv. Asela (Anselma). In: *Obavijesti Hrvatskog arheološkog društva*, a. 33, 2001, nr. 2, pp. 92–94.

between 656 and 769 AD (carbon-14 dating),<sup>5</sup> but most of the graves from the site belong to the High and Late Middle Ages. Of particular interest are the burials from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, which are located between the Romanesque bell tower and the early Christian church (Fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> The results, the results of this research are of great importance for the understanding of funeral customs and burial phases in relation to the church.

In the immediate vicinity of the church of St. Asel, a multi-layered cemetery that partially preceded the church of St. Cross in Nin was excavated. The oldest layer is at the level of ancient Nin and roughly dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The graves were buried in the early medieval reconstructions of ancient architecture, which conditioned their arrangement. The burial site continues to be used after the construction of the church of St. Cross.<sup>7</sup> In the nearby Banovac site a smaller number of burials was found around early medieval residential architecture built over the remains of a Roman building. The finds consist of ceramic pots, flints, knives, all characteristic for the horizon of cemeteries of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the first half



Fig. 1: Nin, St. Asel – construction phases in the complex with the position of the burials (KOLEGA, Marija: Ranokršćanski sloj arhitekture u Nadžupnom kompleksu Sv. Asela u Ninu, p. 22).

of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. These burials are associated with the people who inhabited these buildings.<sup>8</sup> The age of the skeleton from grave 16 (600-668 AD) was determined by radiocarbon analysis.<sup>9</sup> The first explored necropolis of the older horizon of early medieval cemeteries is the Materiza mound near Nin. This prehistoric mound was used for the burial of 25 people on the side of the mound, and the interesting phenomenon of lighting fires in and around the graves was observed. As there are no clearer markers for a more precise dating, the cemetery is roughly dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> Nin-Ždrijac, the largest

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 94; EADEM: Nin-sv. Asel, grob 41. In: Ante MILOŠEVIĆ (ed.): *Hrvati i Karolinzi: rasprave i vrela*. Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2000, pp. 62–63.

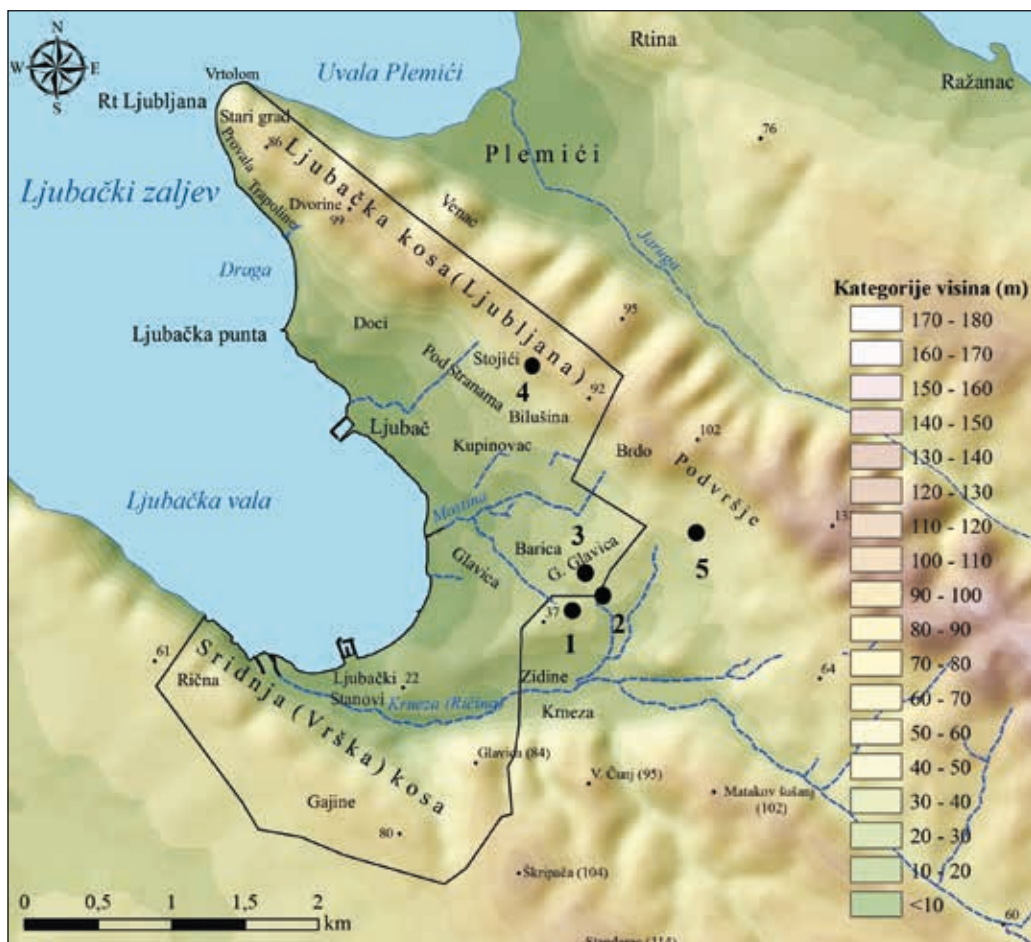
<sup>6</sup> KOLEGA, Marija: Ranokršćanski sloj arhitekture u Nadžupnom kompleksu Sv. Asela u Ninu. In: *Ars Adriatica*, 2014, nr. 4, pp. 20 and 24.

<sup>7</sup> BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: Srednjovjekovno groblje u okolišu crkve sv. Križa u Ninu. In: *Radovi Filozofskog Fakulteta u Zadru, Razdio povijesnih znanosti*, a. 37, 1998, nr. 24, pp. 105–106 i 129, T. XXXI.

<sup>8</sup> RADOVIĆ, Mate: Starohrvatski grobovi otkriveni na položaju Banovac u Ninu. In: *Diadora: Journal of the Archaeological Museum in Zadar*, a. 24, 2010, p. 162.

<sup>9</sup> DADIĆ, Majda: Starohrvatski grobovi otkriveni na položaju Banovac u Ninu, s osvrtom na ostale srednjovjekovne grobove. In: *Diadora*, a. 33–34, 2020, pp. 359–380.

<sup>10</sup> BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: Starohrvatska nekropola uz humak 'Materiza' kod Nina. In: *Diadora*, a. 6, 1973, pp. 221–244; IDEM: *Materijalna kultura Hrvata od VII do IX stoljeća*, pp. 19–21.



Map 2: Bay of Ljubuč with the marked location of prehistoric mounds with or without early medieval burials and early Christian basilica gemina (1 – Duševića glavica, 2 – Matakova glavica, 3 – Jokina glavica, 4 – tumuli on Ljubačka kosa, 5 – Podvršje-Glavčine) (MAGAŠ, Damir – RADOŠ, Denis: *Prirodno-geografske značajke Ljupča*. In: FARIČIĆ, Josip – LENKIĆ, Jerolim (ed.): *Župa Ljubuč – zrcalo povijesnih i geografskih mijena u sjeverozapadnom dijelu Ravnih kotara*. Zadar – Ljubuč: Sveučilište, Župa sv. Martina, 2017, p. 17; modified by P. JERŠEK).

systematically explored early medieval cemetery in Dalmatia dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Among the finds, the equipment of Carolingian provenance, the denarius of the Frankish emperor Lothar I (840-855) 840-855 AD and a large number of ceramic pots stand out. The triple grave 322 in a wooden chest is particularly significant, equipped

with a double-edged sword, spear, pair of spurs, torq, beaded-necklace, glass bottle and a drinking glass.<sup>11</sup>

### Bay of Ljubuč

Early Christian double basilicas (*basilica gemina*) from Glavčine site in Podvršje were burned in the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup>

<sup>11</sup> IDEM: *Starohrvatsko groblje na Ždrijacu u Ninu*. Zadar: Arheološki muzej, 2007, T. XLIV, T. CII–CIII.

century.<sup>12</sup> The appearance of early medieval pottery on the site is associated with the newly arrived Slavs who, it seems, temporarily resided in the church.<sup>13</sup> For this reason the discovery of early medieval burials in nearby prehistoric mounds in Krneza and Podvršje is not so surprising (Map 2: 1 – 3). Matakova glavica has secondary burials from the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the early Middle Ages, where a burnt layer was noticed next to the graves.<sup>14</sup> On Matakova glavica, as well as on Jokina and Duševića glavica sites, ceramic pots and knives represent typical finds. It is important to emphasize that there are C-14 dates for several graves from these cemeteries. Unfortunately, having C-14 dates is more of an exception than the rule, since we have only a few absolute dates at our disposal. Osteological remains from grave 13 from Jokina glavica were dated between 770 and 900 AD, and grave 9 from Duševića glavica between 640 and 770 AD.<sup>15</sup> For comparison, three nearby prehistoric tumuli on Ljubačka kosa did not have secondary early medieval burials, which indicates that not all

tumuli in the wider area of bay of Ljubač were used for this purpose (Map 2, 4).<sup>16</sup>

## Central Ravni kotari – Kašić Donji and surrounding area

A particularly large number of early medieval cemeteries were discovered in central Ravni Kotari (Map 3). The smaller row-grave cemetery at Maklinovo brdo site in Kašić brdo in Kašić proved to be one of the most significant cemeteries of the earlier horizon. It dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and most of the finds are objects of daily use, the most numerous of which are ceramic pots.<sup>17</sup> In the immediate vicinity, a cremation cemetery was also discovered at the location of the Stojan Drča's vineyard, the first site after the indications from Marun's time that speaks of the existence of the cremation rite in Dalmatia.<sup>18</sup> Traces of cremation with fragments of burnt bones and ceramics were observed on the already plowed surface. The burials were roughly dated in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, which was not archeologically supported when the cemetery

<sup>12</sup> UGLEŠIĆ, Ante: Podvršje-Glavčine, rezultati arheoloških istraživanja. In: Željko TOMIČIĆ – Ante UGLEŠIĆ (eds.): *Zbornik o Luji Marunu: zbornik radova sa Znanstvenog skupa o fra Luji Marunu u povodu 150. obljetnice rođenja (1857.–2007.)*. Skradin – Knin, 7.–8. prosinca 2007. Šibenik – Zagreb – Zadar: Gradska knjižnica "Juraj Šižgorić" – Hrvatski studiji Sveučilišta u Zagrebu – Institut za arheologiju – Odjel za arheologiju Sveučilišta u Zadaru, 2009, p. 146.

<sup>13</sup> GUSAR, Karla: Nalazi slavenske keramike s lokaliteta Podvršje – Glavčine. In: *Archaeologia Adriatica*, a. 3, 2009, nr. 1, pp. 305–322. Different interpretation is proposed by: DŽINO, Danijel: Starokršćanski bazilikalni kompleks i grobovi u tumulima u Ljupču: odgonetanje „mračnog“ doba Dalmacije. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, 2018, nr. 44 – 45, pp. 89–113.

<sup>14</sup> GUSAR, Karla – VUJEVIĆ, Dario: Matakova glavica. In: Brunislav MARIJANOVIĆ (ed.): *Tumuli iz Krneze i Podvršja kod Zadra*. Zadar: Sveučilište u Zadru, 2012, pp. 151–174.

<sup>15</sup> GUSAR, Karla: Jokina glavica – ranosrednjovjekovni grobovi. In: Brunislav MARIJANOVIĆ (ed.): *Tumuli iz Krneze i Podvršja kod Zadra*, pp. 49–83; GUSAR, Karla – VUJEVIĆ, Dario: Duševića glavica. In: MARIJANOVIĆ, Brunislav (ed.): *Tumuli iz Krneze i Podvršja kod Zadra*, pp. 103–136.

<sup>16</sup> VUJEVIĆ, Dario: Istraživanja tumula na Ljubačkoj Kosi 2007. godine. In: *Archaeologia Adriatica*, a. 5, 2011, nr. 1, pp. 1–31.

<sup>17</sup> BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *Starohrvatsko groblje na Maklinovu brdu u selu Kašiću kod Zadra*. Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2010, pp. 89–90.

<sup>18</sup> IDEM: Die ersten slawischen Urnengräber auf dem Gebiete Jugoslawiens aus dem Dorfe Kašić bei Zadar. In: *Balkanoslavica*, a. 1, 1972, pp. 73–86 and IDEM: *Materijalna kultura Hrvata od VII do IX stoljeća*, pp. 46–48.



Map 3: *Spatial distribution of early medieval cemeteries around Kašić Donji (Satellites pro-Apple map, modifications by P. JERŠEK).*

was published.<sup>19</sup> At the Kašić-Razbojine cemetery, 37 skeletal burials with stone burial architecture and finds of knives, flint and ceramic vessels were investigated.<sup>20</sup> A slightly more complex necropolis is located at Glavčurak in Kašić, where graves from the 6<sup>th</sup> century were also buried. They extend to the south of the sand mound, but also over it, while the early medieval graves of the older horizon are

buried on the mound. Somewhat younger early medieval graves were found on the periphery of the mound.<sup>21</sup> All burials from the Kašić-Grede site are dated after the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>22</sup> At the Mastirine site in Kašić, a cemetery in the surroundings of the six-conch church built in the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century on the site of an ancient *villa rustica* was investigated.<sup>23</sup> The adjoining cemetery was in use after

<sup>19</sup> Which does not mean that they should not be placed in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, however, I am of the opinion that the dating of burials in general should be based on as clear parameters as possible.

<sup>20</sup> JELOVINA, Dušan: Ranosrednjovjekovna nekropola na ‚Razbojinama‘ u selu Kašiću kod Zadra. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 10, 1968, pp. 23–52.

<sup>21</sup> BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: Ranosrednjovjekovna nekropola u selu Kašiću kraj Zadra. In: *Diadora*, a. 4, 1968, pp. 221–246; IDEM: *Materijalna kultura Hrvata od VII do IX stoljeća*, pp. 49–50.

<sup>22</sup> VRŠALOVIĆ, Dasen: Srednjovjekovno groblje na ‚Gredama‘ u selu Kašiću kod Zadra. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 10, 1968, pp. 69–92; PETRINEC, Maja: *Groblja od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države*. Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2009, pp. 54–55.

<sup>23</sup> MILJENKO, Jurković: Kašić kraj Zadra, Mastirine. In: Ante MILOŠEVIĆ (ed.): *Hrvati i Karolinzi: katalog*. Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 2000, p. 266.

the construction of the church, as indicated by the jewelry forms that were found.<sup>24</sup> Kašić cemeteries show very well how the burial place changed throughout the early Middle Ages.

Some 7 km east of Kašić, next to the early Christian church of St. Martin in Pridraga, early medieval graves with finds of spurs, rings and single-beaded earrings were discovered. The same site was used as a cemetery throughout the Late Middle Ages.<sup>25</sup> Just south of Kašić, at the Begovača site in Biljane Donje, a large medieval cemetery with 604 graves was excavated. It formed around an early medieval church built on ancient remains. There are about 200 early medieval graves, and graves 253 and 258, located around the apse, contain Carolingian-type spurs and belong to the oldest burial phase.<sup>26</sup> One fragmentarily preserved sword from a devastated grave was found on the Smokva gluvača site in Škabrnja, where graves have been encountered before. Radiocarbon analysis of the bones gave a date ranging from 720 to 895 AD. The typology of the sword points to the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>27</sup> Systematic archaeological research at Galovac-Crkvina included an early

Christian church equipped with new pre-Romanesque church furniture and a large cemetery in its surroundings. The church was built on the remains of ancient architecture, and a cemetery from the 9<sup>th</sup> century developed around it and continued to be used until the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century. About 150 burials belong to the early Middle Ages. Among the finds the most numerous are single-beaded, triple-beaded and tetra-beaded earrings.<sup>28</sup>

## Central Ravni kotari – wider Bribir area

Bribirska glavica's strategic position favored the continuity from the Liburnian hillfort of Varvaria, Roman municipium to the medieval Breberium. Two locations with early medieval burials are situated right next to the city walls, near the city gates at the site of Vratnice and on the eastern slope at the site of Novi put (New road), discovered during the construction of the new access road. Five ancient burials were also discovered at Vratnice. Various versions of single-beaded earrings and plain hoops are the most common types of finds at both locations.<sup>29</sup> The Novi put cemetery was only recently published

<sup>24</sup> JELOVINA, Dušan: Starohrvatsko groblje na ‚Mastirinama‘ u selu Kašiću kod Zadra“. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 12, 1982, pp. 36–66.

<sup>25</sup> JURIC, Radomir: Novija istraživanja srednjovjekovnih groblja na zadarskom području. In: *Histria Antiqua*, a. 8, 2002, pp. 303–307.

<sup>26</sup> JELOVINA, Dušan – VRŠALOVIĆ, Dasen: Srednjovjekovno groblje na ‚Begovači‘ u selu Biljanima Donjim kod Zadra. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 11, 1981, pp. 55–136; PETRINEC, Maja: *Groblja od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države*, p. 62.

<sup>27</sup> BEKIĆ, Luka – UGLEŠIĆ, Ante: Nalaz ranokarolinškog mača iz Škabrnje. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 47, 2020, pp. 231–250.

<sup>28</sup> BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: Osvrt na konačne ishode istraživanja položaja Crkvine u selu Galovcu kod Zadra. In: *Diadora*, a. 18–19, 1997, pp. 301–350; PETRINEC, Maja: *Groblja od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države*, p. 73.

<sup>29</sup> ZEKAN, Mate: Pet srednjovjekovnih nekropola Bribira. In: SMITH-DEMO, Barbara – BURIĆ, Tonči – ZEKAN, Mate (eds.): *Bribir u srednjem vijeku*. Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 1996, pp. 41–47; JELOVINA, Dušan: Starohrvatsko groblje pred glavnim ulaznim vratima u staru Varvariju. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 20, 1990, pp. 7–63; URODA, Nikolina: Bribir-Vratnice. In: Matea BRSTILO REŠETAR – Kristian GOTIĆ (eds.): *Varvaria-Breberium-Bribir: razotkrivanje slojeva*. Zagreb: Hrvatski povijesni muzej, 2019, pp. 136–137.



Map 4: *Spatial distribution of early medieval cemeteries around Bribirska glavica (Satellites pro-Apple map, modified by P. JERŠEK).*

in its entirety only recently.<sup>30</sup> Similar finds mark the burials within the city walls, at the site of the cemetery surrounding the 6<sup>th</sup> century rotunda, later church of St. Joachim and Anne.<sup>31</sup>

At the foot of the nearby Ostrovica hillfort is the Greblje cemetery, where a small group of graves in wooden coffins can be dated to the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, but the cemetery also continued to be used in the following century.<sup>32</sup> The results of the research have been published in summary form only. The same applies to Dubravice, located near the Krka River. This cemetery

is best known for cremation graves in shallowly dug urns and pits, which are partially destroyed by skeletal graves. Z. Gunjača, who excavated the site, believed that these are two different cemeteries that should be dated from the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>33</sup> The full publication of the cemetery is still missing. Unfortunately, after archaeological research there is often a long wait for full publication of cemeteries, which would also enable their further consideration in the archaeological literature. More recently, in 2004/2005, archaeological research was carried out

<sup>30</sup> URODA, Nikolina: Groblje „Novi put“ na Bribirskoj glavici. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 47, 2020, pp. 303–340.

<sup>31</sup> ZEKAN, Mate: Pet srednjovjekovnih nekropola Bribira, pp. 47–48; MILOŠEVIĆ, Ante – URODA, Nikolina: Arheološka slika Bribira: povijest istraživanja. In: Matea BRSTILO REŠETAR – Kristian GOTIĆ (eds.): *Varvaria-Breberium-Bribir: razotkrivanje slojeva*, pp. 35–39.

<sup>32</sup> DELONGA, Vedrana – BURIĆ, Tonči: *Ostrovica kod Bribira: arheološko-povijesna skica*. Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 1998, pp. 18–21.

<sup>33</sup> GUNJAČA, Zlatko: Groblje u Dubravicama kod Skradina i druga groblja 8-9. stoljeća u Dalmaciji. In: BUDAČ, Neven (ed.): *Etnogeneza Hrvata*. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske – Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta, 1995, pp. 159–168..

in Velim-Velištak cemetery, where 27 cremation and 139 skeletal burials were discovered. This is the largest cremation cemetery investigated so far, and the relationship between skeletal and cremation graves is of particular interest. However, currently only preliminary information is available in the form of a short scientific article.<sup>34</sup> Scarce data is also available for the cemetery around the church of St. Martin in Donji Lepuri, north of Bribir. It is known that the oldest burials date to the early medieval period, while most of the graves are from the Late Middle Ages. In this location there was an early Christian church that was significantly renovated in the pre-Romanesque period, and the relationship between the burials and church is yet to be clarified.<sup>35</sup> One of the published graves, female grave 223, contained luxurious gold lunular star-shaped earrings and necklace beads made of pressed gold sheet.<sup>36</sup> Piramatovci-Vrbica cemetery is roughly dated by finds after the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, but the results of the research have not yet been published.<sup>37</sup> Another unpublished cemetery in Radašinovci-Vinogradine is similarly dated.<sup>38</sup> Research at Laluše in

Vačani was conducted relatively recently (2011 – 2014). In this smaller cemetery, the most representative is the burial in a sarcophagus (grave 10) with the findings of a type K sword (Petersen), a pair of spurs with fastening equipment, completely preserved glass bottle and solidus of Constantine V. Kopronymos and Leo IV. Of particular interest are numerous analyses of ancient DNA, stable carbon and nitrogen isotopes, the results of which, as well as the cemetery, have so far been presented only partially.<sup>39</sup>

### The area of Knin and Biskupija

The easternmost microregion consists of cemeteries around Knin. The first, also amateur research (between 1886 and 1908), focused on Crkvina in Biskupija where a large number of church furniture fragments belonging to the pre-Romanesque church of St. Mary were found alongside also very famous graves in wooden caskets, vaulted tombs and stone sarcophagi.<sup>40</sup> Revision excavations followed on three occasions.<sup>41</sup> The site is internationally recognized for its very richly equipped

<sup>34</sup> JURIĆ, Radomir: Ranosrednjovjekovno groblje u Velimu kod Benkovca. In: *Diadora*, a. 22, 2007, pp. 217–233.

<sup>35</sup> PETRINEC, Maja: *Groblja od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države*, pp. 81–82.

<sup>36</sup> JAKŠIĆ, Nikola: Il ruolo delle antiche chiese rurali nella formazione del ducato croato medievale. In: *Hortus Artium Medievalum*, a. 14, 2008, pp. 105 i 107; PETRINEC, Maja: O nakitu iz Golubića i ženskoj nošnji iz razdoblja 8. i prve polovine 9. stoljeća. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 46, 2019, pp. 51 and 57–63.

<sup>37</sup> KRŃČEVIĆ, Željko: Historijat arheoloških istraživanja na šibenskom području. In: *Stoljeće arheologije na šibenskom području*. Šibenik: Muzej grada Šibenika, 1995, pp. 47–48.

<sup>38</sup> The osteological material from the site was analyzed in detail and the presence of tuberculosis and leprosy among the population was established. JURIĆ, Radomir: Radašinovci – Vinogradine 1999.–2007. In: *Diadora*, a. 23, 2009, pp. 179–191.

<sup>39</sup> JOVIĆ, Jelena – KRŃČEVIĆ, Željko: Ratnik-konjanik iz Vačana. In: BRSTILO REŠETAR, Matea – GOTIĆ, Kristian (eds.): *Varoaria-Breberium-Bribir: razotkrivanje slojeva*, pp. 138–139.

<sup>40</sup> Selection of literature that provides an overview of grave finds: Izbor iz literature koja nudi pregled grobnih nalaza / selection of literature that provides an overview of grave finds: MILOŠEVIĆ, Ante (ed.): *Hrvati i Karolinzi: katalog*, pp. 209–228; PETRINEC, Maja: *Groblja od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države*, pp. 66–70.

<sup>41</sup> GUNJAČA, Stjepan: Revizija iskopina u Biskupiji kod Knina godine 1950. In: *Ljetopis Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, a. 57, 1949/1950, pp. 9–49; PETRINEC, Maja: Arheološka istraživanja



Fig. 2: The most representative spurs from the Biskupija-Crkvina site (spurs from the sarcophagus with hippocampi-left, spurs from the vaulted burial below the pavement level of the basilica-middle, spurs from the vaulted burial under the southern part of the narthex-right) (PETRINEC, Maja – JURČEVIĆ, Ante: *Crkvina – Biskupija, Insights into the chronology of the site from 8th to 15th century*. In: VICELJA-MATIJAŠIĆ, Marina (ed.): *Swords, Crowns, Censers and Books: Francia Media-cradles of European Culture*. Rijeka: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Rijeka, 2015, p. 351, 20.).

burials and many objects of Carolingian provenance. Graves in wooden coffins include a large number of spurs with fastening equipment and three swords of type K (Petersen).<sup>42</sup> Lavishly decorated, high-quality massive spurs were found in graves in vaulted tombs and in a sarcophagus in the northern room of the narthex of St. Mary's church (Fig. 2).<sup>43</sup> Several authors have recently discussed certain chronological differences among these burials.<sup>44</sup> In the village of Biskupija there are quite a few locations where early medieval burials have been discovered. At the Bračića podvornice site, Marun explored a cemetery with about fifty skeletal graves, most

of which were buried in wooden coffins that were coated with clay at the joints. Several cremation pits were also discovered at the time, which are assumed to be cremation graves.<sup>45</sup> According to the findings, the skeletal cemetery in the surroundings of the pre-Romanesque church at the location of Bukorovića podvornice can be placed between the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> and the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>46</sup> The cemetery next to the church on Lopuška glavica site can mostly be attributed to the High Middle Ages, but some burials can be placed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>47</sup> Only 2 kilometers from Crkvina, in Orlić, the exact location where two Carolingian swords were

i uređenje arhitektonskog kompleksa na Crkvini u Biskupiji u razdoblju od 2008. do 2017. godine. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 44–45, 2018, pp. 283–306.

<sup>42</sup> MILOŠEVIĆ, Ante (ed.): *Hrvati i Karolinzi: katalog*, pp. 209–219.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 220–225.

<sup>44</sup> JARAK, Mirja: *Crtice iz hrvatskoga ranog srednjeg vijeka – karolinški nalazi iz kraja 8. i prve pol. 9. stoljeća*. In: Mirja JARAK – Maja BUNČIĆ (eds.): *Zdenko Vinski – život i znanstveni rad. Zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa održanog u Zagrebu 2016. godine*. Zagreb: Odsjek za arheologiju Filozofskog fakulteta – Arheološki muzej u Zagrebu, 2020, pp. 221–241; PETRINEC, Maja: *Groblja od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države*, pp. 171–177; BILOGRIVIĆ, Goran: *Formiranje identiteta elite u istočnojadranskoj zaleđu na prijelazu sa 8. u 9. stoljeće – uloga karolinškog oružja*. In: *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu*, a. 52, 2019, pp. 122–124; ALAJBEG, Ante: *Trgovina robljem i kršćanstvo u arheološkom zapisu – primjer ranosrednjovjekovne Dalmacije*. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 47, 2020, pp. 271–272.

<sup>45</sup> MARUN, Lujo: *Starinarski dnevnik*, p. 119; PETRINEC, Maja: *Groblja od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države*, pp. 13–14 and 39–40.

<sup>46</sup> GUNJAČA, Stjepan: *Četvrta starohrvatska crkva u Biskupiji kod Knina i groblje oko nje*. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 2, 1952, pp. 57–79.

<sup>47</sup> IDEM: *Starohrvatska crkva i groblje na Lopuškoj glavici u Biskupiji kod Knina*. In: *Starohrvatska*

found in Marun's time has recently been determined.<sup>48</sup> More recent research at the location of the Roman *villa rustica* in Orlić produced very interesting results, discovering early medieval graves with mounds, a practice "that has not yet been recorded in systematically investigated early medieval cemeteries in Croatia".<sup>49</sup> The mounds are made of stones, tegulas, ceramic fragments and animal bones with traces of charcoal and ash. The famous golden jewelry which was supposedly discovered in 1932 comes from Golubić near Knin, and since then it has been scientifically analyzed several times, most recently by M. Petrinec.<sup>50</sup>

## Review of the state of research on finds of Carolingian provenance

The high prevalence of finds of early Carolingian provenance in northern Dalmatia requires a review of scientific achievements made so far by analyzing these very important and representative finds. The most numerous are the spurs with their fastening sets, followed by Carolingian-type swords. Most of these findings come from Biskupija-Crkvina but they were also found in Orlić, Morpolača,

Nin-Ždrijac, Kašić-Maklinovo brdo, Škabrnja, Biljane Donje, Podgrađe, Piramatovci, Bribir, Ostrovica, Vaćani and Bratiškovci. A certain number of these items are accidental finds, for some of them archaeological context isn't known or systematically documented, and some are poorly preserved. Z. Vinski stands out as the most important authority in the study of early medieval swords. It was he who contributed the most in terms of systematization, by applying Petersen's typological classification, and he was the first to publish all the then-known Carolingian swords from Croatia. In (northern) Dalmatia, swords of type K (Biskupija-Crkvina, Kninsko polje, Vaćani) are most numerous, while special type 1 (Orlić, Morpolača) and type H (Nin-Ždrijac) are less numerous.<sup>51</sup> The sword from Škabrnja resembles the Mannheim and related types, which are somewhat older than the types known so far from Dalmatia.<sup>52</sup> The sword from Nin-Ždrijac and other type H swords were studied in more detail by J. Belošević,<sup>53</sup> while more recently swords are researched by A. Milošević and G. Bilogrivić. Also, Geibig's typological classification of swords began to be applied.<sup>54</sup>

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*prosvjeta*, a. 3, 1954, pp. 7–29.: Starohrvatska crkva i groblje na Lopuškoj glavici u Biskupiji kod Knina. *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, nr. 3 (1954), pp. 7–29.

<sup>48</sup> PETRINEC, Maja: Orlić kraj Knina. In: Ante MILOŠEVIĆ (ed.): *Hrvati i Karolinzi: katalog*, pp. 313–314; EADEM: Frühmittelalterliche Gräber aus Orlić Angesichts Bisheriger Erkenntnisse über den Horizont mit Heidnischen Bestattungsmerkmalen. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 42, 2015, pp. 81–130.

<sup>49</sup> EADEM: Frühmittelalterliche Gräber aus Orlić, pp. 88–93.

<sup>50</sup> Petrinec provides an overview of previous thoughts on Golubić: PETRINEC, Maja: O nakitu iz Golubića i ženskoj nošnji iz razdoblja 8. i prve polovine 9. stoljeća, pp. 45–166.

<sup>51</sup> MILOŠEVIĆ Ante (ed.): *Hrvati i Karolinzi: katalog*, pp. 209–210 and 214–218 (Biskupija-Crkvina), pp. 268–269 (Kninsko polje), pp. 284–285 (Morpolača), pp. 304–307 (Nin-Ždrijac), pp. 313–314 (Orlić); Jović, Jelena – KRNČEVIĆ, Željko: Ratnik-konjanik iz Vaćana, pp. 138–139.

<sup>52</sup> BEKIĆ, Luka – UGLEŠIĆ, Ante: Nalaz ranokarolinškog mača iz Škabrnje, pp. 238–240.

<sup>53</sup> BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *Starohrvatsko groblje na Ždrijacu u Ninu*. Zadar: Arheološki muzej, 2007, pp. 273–278; IDEM: Osvrt na karolinške mačeve tipa H sa širem područja Dalmatinske Hrvatske. In: *Prilozi Instituta za arheologiju u Zagrebu*, a. 24, 2007, pp. 405–418.

<sup>54</sup> BILOGRIVIĆ, Goran: Karolinški mačevi tipa K. In: *Opuscula Archaeologica*, a. 33, 2009, pp. 125–182; BILOGRIVIĆ, Goran: O mačevima posebnog tipa u Hrvatskoj. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 38, 2011, pp. 83–110; MILOŠEVIĆ, Ante: Novi mač iz Koljana u svjetlu kontakata s nordijskim zemljama u ranom srednjem vijeku. In: *Histria antiqua*, a. 21, 2012, pp. 459–470.

In 1930 Lj. Karaman wrote a short description of the then known spurs from Dalmatia.<sup>55</sup> Z. Vinski also wrote about spurs of Carolingian type on several occasions, but not in the same studious and comprehensive way as he wrote about swords.<sup>56</sup> For example, in 1977/1978 he pointed out that despite the increasing number of spurs, a more complete scientific evaluation and discussion about spurs is missing and that “*the state of research requires an explanation*”.<sup>57</sup> In 1986 D. Jelovina paid some attention to the spurs of Carolingian type from the Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments (Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, Split). He states that there are 71 spur pieces in the museum, some in pairs and some not, but he mentions only basic information about spurs in general and does not go into a deeper analysis.<sup>58</sup> Spurs are also cataloged in the *Hrvati i Karolinzi* publication and M. Petrinec devotes ten pages on the topic in her book on early medieval cemeteries in Dalmatia.<sup>59</sup> A. Jurčević wrote about motifs and ornaments on Dalmatian spurs.<sup>60</sup> M. Jarak recently wrote on the subject of

spurs, addressing in particular the state of research and concluding that there is a lack of a modern synthesis that would include all finds of spurs and all knowledge obtained through research so far.<sup>61</sup> It seems that most authors leave open the possibility of domestic production of at least part of the spurs, primarily due to the large number of simple iron or bronze spurs, while only especially high-quality and luxurious specimens would be imported.<sup>62</sup> These simpler spurs are often identified as so-called Carolingian spurs of Croatian type and considered products of local Dalmatian workshops. However, through a comparative analysis A. Jurčević showed a distinct relation between the ornament made of a series of triangles on the prick base of these spurs, and the well-known censer from Runjavica near Vrlika, suggesting that they were made in Carolingian workshops.<sup>63</sup>

When she wrote about it in 1974, U. Giesler was the first to address the question of occurrence of bird-shaped strap ends as parts of spur fastening sets.<sup>64</sup> She directed her focus on the finds of bird-shaped strap ends from northern Dalmatia, as the place

<sup>55</sup> KARAMAN, Ljubo: *Iz kolijevke hrvatske prošlosti: historijsko-umjetničke crtice o starohrvatskim spomenicima*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1930, pp. 127–128.

<sup>56</sup> For example: VINSKI, Zdenko: Nešto o datiranju starohrvatskih arheoloških nalaza. In: *Peristil*, a. 1, 1954, pp. 188–199; IDEM: Novi ranokarolinški nalazi u Jugoslaviji. In: *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu*, a. 10–11, 1977/1978, pp. 143–190.

<sup>57</sup> VINSKI, Zdenko: Novi ranokarolinški nalazi u Jugoslaviji, p. 158.

<sup>58</sup> JELOVINA, Dušan: *Mačevi i ostruge karolinškog obilježja u Muzeju hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika*. Split: Muzej hrvatskih arheoloških spomenika, 1986, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> PETRINEC, Maja: *Groblja od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države*, pp. 168–177.

<sup>60</sup> JURČEVIĆ, Ante: Nalazi ranokarolinškog oružja i konjaničke opreme u doba formiranja Hrvatske Kneževine. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 38, 2011, pp. 115–128.

<sup>61</sup> JARAK, Mirja: *Crtice iz hrvatskoga ranog srednjeg vijeka*, p. 232.

<sup>62</sup> VINSKI, Zdenko: Novi ranokarolinški nalazi u Jugoslaviji, p. 159; BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *Materijalna kultura Hrvata od VII do IX stoljeća*, pp. 106–109 and PETRINEC, Maja: *Groblja od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države*, p. 168.

<sup>63</sup> JURČEVIĆ, Ante: Nalazi ranokarolinškog oružja i konjaničke opreme u doba formiranja Hrvatske Kneževine, p. 122–130.

<sup>64</sup> GIESLER, Ulrike: *Datierung und Herleitung der vogelförmigen Riemenzungen*. In: Kossack, Georg – Ulbert, Günter (eds.): *Studien zur vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie, Festschrift für Joachim Werner zum 65. Geburtstag 2*. München: Beck, 1974, pp. 521–543; JARAK, Mirja: *Crtice iz hrvatskoga ranog srednjeg vijeka*, pp. 224–226.



Fig. 3: Bird-shaped strap ends known to Ulrike Giesler in 1974 (GIESLER, Ulrike: *Datierung und Herleitung der vogelförmigen Riemenzungen*, pp. 522, 536 – 537).

of their greatest concentration, and especially on the numerous Biskupija-Crkvina finds (Fig. 3, 1, 3 – 5, 10). She also analyzed other examples known at the time, from Nin (Fig. 3, 6 – 7) and the fastening loop with a bird-like front plate from Ostrovica (Fig. 3, 8).<sup>65</sup> However, after her article some new specimens were found, for example the bird-shaped strap ends from a vaulted tomb under the narthex at Biskupija-Crkvina, strap ends from Nin-Ždrijac, Kašić-Maklinovo brdo and Vačani.<sup>66</sup> It should be pointed out that bird-shaped strap ends in Croatia are represented only in northern Dalmatia, at least according to the current state of research, and this is where the largest number of such strap ends was discovered in Europe in general. In addition, the question of bird-shaped strap ends is often considered in the archaeological literature in regards to other types of Carolingian strap ends and the broader issue of Carolingian styles of decorating metal objects.<sup>67</sup> Other Carolingian types of strap ends are usually only cataloged or referred to in the context of other analyses in Croatian archaeological literature or mentioned in connection with other analyses. It can be concluded

that despite all the attention paid to finds of Carolingian provenance in general, certain types of objects have not been sufficiently analyzed. It seems that, despite the general impression that we actually already know quite a lot about the Carolingian finds in Dalmatia, there are certain gaps in our knowledge and questions that were either not asked, or to which we simply did not get the right answers.

Carolingian influences in militaria and equestrian equipment were recognized not only in the area where the early medieval Croatian state developed, but also in Great Moravia. It should be mentioned that when analyzing these items researchers are faced with the problem of a lack of comparative material from Frankish Empire, where such equipment stopped being put in graves through the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century, with the exception of peripheral regions.<sup>68</sup> The largest number of equipment from Great Moravian territory comes from graves, spurs make up 33%, while double-edged swords make up 7% of the finds.<sup>69</sup> Mikulčice, with over 500 found specimens, stand out since this high number represents an exception even at the European level.<sup>70</sup> In the Great

<sup>65</sup> GIESLER, Ulrike: Datierung und Herleitung der vogelförmigen Riemenzungen, pp. 522 and 536–537; MILOŠEVIĆ, Ante (ed.): *Hrvati i Karolinzi: katalog*, pp. 209–210, 219 and 231; JELOVINA, Dušan: *Mačevi i ostruge karolinškog obilježja*, Tab. I, 13, 14; Tab. X, 117, 129 and 131; Tab. XI, 134; DELONGA, Vedrana – BURIĆ, Tonči: *Ostrovica kod Bribira*, p. 13.

<sup>66</sup> BUDIMIR, Miloško: Arheološka topografija kninske općine. In: Božidar ČEČUK (ed.): *Arheološka istraživanja u Kninu i Kninskoj krajini: Knin, 13–15. X. 1987*. Zagreb: Hrvatsko arheološko društvo, 1992, p. 29; BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *Starohrvatsko groblje na Ždrijacu u Ninu*, pp. 132–134, T. XXIII, 167; BELOŠEVIĆ, Janko: *Starohrvatsko groblje na Maklinovu brdu*, pp. 99–101, T. XXXIII, 3, 4; JOVIĆ, Jelena – KRNČEVIĆ, Željko: *Ratnik-konjanik iz Vačana*, p. 138–139.

<sup>67</sup> GIESLER, Ulrike: Datierung und Herleitung der vogelförmigen Riemenzungen, pp. 523–525.

<sup>68</sup> STEIN, Frauke: *Adelsgräber des achten Jahrhunderts in Deutschland: text*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1967; UNGERMAN, Šimon: Carolingian Imports in Great Moravia. In: Lumír POLÁČEK (ed.): *Great Moravian elites from Mikulčice*. Brno: Czech Academy of Sciences – Institute of Archaeology, 2020, p. 55.

<sup>69</sup> RUTTKAY, Alexander T.: Warfare in Great Moravia. In: Pavel KOUŘIL (ed.): *Great Moravia and the beginnings of christianity*. Brno: Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2014, pp. 79–80.

<sup>70</sup> KOUŘIL, Pavel: Ostentatious spurs from Mikulčice. In: Lumír POLÁČEK (ed.): *Great Moravian elites from Mikulčice*, p. 255.

Moravian sites, as well as in (northern) Dalmatian ones, iron spurs predominate in number, while bronze specimens are only exceptionally gilded or silver plated. One of the most representative are certainly the spurs made of gilded copper alloy, decorated with the motif of human masks from grave 44 near “Church 2” and the gilded copper spurs with floral decoration from grave 50 near “Church 6” in Mikulčice.<sup>71</sup> The most luxurious examples include iron spurs decorated with damascened-inlay (*Tauschierung*), while the most beautiful pairs come from Mikulčice, from grave 232 near “Church 2” and grave 100 near “Church 6”.<sup>72</sup> In the Croatian archaeological literature, however, iron spurs with damascene inlay in the form of spiral tendrils from grave

1205 in Ducové-Kostolec are particularly noteworthy since they represent a close analogy to the spurs from grave 7 from Biskupija-Crkvina.<sup>73</sup> Iron spurs with inlaid decoration are also known from Staré Město (graves 224/51 and 266/49)<sup>74</sup> and Borovce (grave 221), and spurs of the same type, but from a settlement context, were found in nearby Pobedim.<sup>75</sup> Here we can also mention the spurs from Ivanka pri Dunaji-Farkasek site (grave 34) in the Bratislava region, which has not yet been specified in detail, except that it can be more closely placed in the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>76</sup> Interestingly, the prevailing opinion is that even the most luxurious pairs of spurs found in Great Moravia finds were most likely made domestically, while the presence of Western

<sup>71</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 258–261; PROFANTOVÁ, Naďa: Mikulčice – pohřebiště u 6. kostela: pokus o chronologické a sociální zhodnocení. In: PROFANTOVÁ, Naďa – KAVÁNOVÁ, Blanka: *Mikulčice – pohřebiště u 6. a 12. kostela*. Brno: Archeologický ústav AV ČR, 2003, pp. 7–209 i KOUŘIL, Pavel (ed.): *Great Moravia and the beginnings of christianity*, catalogue, pp. 368 and 372.

<sup>72</sup> KOUŘIL, Pavel: Ostentatious spurs from Mikulčice, pp. 265–267; IDEM (ed.): *Great Moravia and the beginnings of christianity*, catalogue, p. 369.

<sup>73</sup> KOUŘIL, Pavel: Frühmittelalterliche Kriegergräber mit Flügellanzten und Sporen des Typs Biskupija-Crkvina auf mährischen Nekropolen. In: IDEM (ed.): *Die Frühmittelalterliche Elite bei den Völkern des östlichen Mitteleuropas (mit einem speziellen Blick auf die großmährische Problematik): Materialien der internationalen Fachkonferenz: Mikulčice, 25.–26. 5. 2004*. Brno: Archäologisches Institut der Akademie der Wissenschaften der Tschechischen Republik, p. 85; RUTKAY, Alexander T.: Ducové-Kostolec, Slovakia. In: Pavel KOUŘIL (ed.): *Great Moravia and the beginnings of christianity*, p. 250; ŠTEFANOVICOVÁ, Tatiana: Zur Frage der Elite der großmährischen Gesellschaft im Licht der Funde aus der Slowakei. In: Pavel KOUŘIL (ed.): *Die Frühmittelalterliche Elite bei den Völkern des östlichen Mitteleuropas*, p. 260, Abb. 5, pp. 14–15; KOUŘIL, Pavel: Ostentatious spurs from Mikulčice, pp. 265–267; PETRINEC, Maja: Sedmi grob i nekoliko pojedinačnih nalaza s Crkvine u Biskupiji kod Knina. *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 33, 2006, pp. 21–36.

<sup>74</sup> HRUBÝ, Vilém: *Staré Město: Velkomoravské pohřebiště „na valách“*. Praha: Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1955, pp. 186–187, T. 62/8, 63 (grave 266/49), 81/1–2 (grave 224/51); KOUŘIL, Pavel (ed.): *Great Moravia and the beginnings of christianity*, catalogue, p. 327 (grave 224/51).

<sup>75</sup> STAŠŠÍKOVÁ-ŠTUKOVSKÁ, Danica: Zu manchen spezifischen Äußerungen des Bestattungssitus im Frühmittelalter. In: BIALEKOVÁ, Darina – ZÁBOJNÍK, Jozef (ed.): *Ethnische und kulturelle Verhältnisse an der mittleren Donau vom 6. bis zum 11. Jahrhundert. Symposium Nitra 6. bis 10. November 1994*. Bratislava: Veda, 1996, p. 300, Abb. 7; KOUŘIL, Pavel: Zur chronologischen Stellung von Sporen, deren Arme mit rechteckigem Rahmen mit fester Schnalle beendet sind. In: Luděk GALUŠKA – Pavel KOUŘIL – Zdeněk MĚŘÍNSKÝ (eds.): *Velká Morava mezi východem a západem: sborník příspěvků z mezinárodní vědecké konference, Uherské Hradiště, Staré Město 28. 9.–1. 10. 1999*. Brno: Archeologický ústav Akademie věd České republiky, 2001, p. 248 and 250, Abb. 7, pp. 8–9.

<sup>76</sup> HUSÁR, Martin – TAMAŠKOVIČ, Jakub: Weapons from the early medieval cemetery of Ivanka pri Dunaji – Farkasek in a wider context. In: *Studia Historica Nitriensia*, a. 24, 2020, nr. 2, pp. 270 and 283.

masters is mentioned as a possibility.<sup>77</sup> Š. Ungerma recently referred to the possibility of distinguishing spurs that represent a direct Carolingian import from products made in domestic workshops, but modeled on Western imports. He points out decoration and manufacturing technology as parameters for differentiation, the analysis of which requires very precise methods.<sup>78</sup> As imports he assumes the most unique and prestigious spurs of extremely precise design and manufacture. As mentioned above, this question was resolved only in principle for Dalmatian spurs and the general conclusion is that the most lavish specimens quite probably represent a Carolingian import.<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, there are currently no studies dealing with the technological aspects of these finds, which would certainly complement the results of the typological and stylistic analysis. Therefore, the deformed lead spur arm matrix from Mikulčice should be mentioned as a completely unique find, the decoration of which resembles the spurs from the sarcophagus with hippocampi from Biskupija-Crkvina, but not the previously known spur types from Mikulčice. The matrix indicates that three technological parts are used for the production of this type of spurs, two arms ending with plates and a spike, which were cast separately and then joined together.<sup>80</sup>

## Instead of a conclusion

From this brief overview it is quite clear that the state of research of early medieval cemeteries in northern Dalmatia is not bad, it is certainly better than some other parts of present-day Croatia. But, bearing in mind the open questions highlighted earlier, what could contribute to future discussions? Certainly the publication of yet unpublished key cemeteries, specialized studies of archaeological material, but also paying more attention to settlements where these people lived during their lifetime. Insights into residential culture would provide context and an additional dimension to be evaluated. All of the above can contribute to the understanding of the processes taking place. Since they did not take place everywhere in exactly the same way and just as quickly,<sup>81</sup> these questions should be addressed at the microregional level. Likewise, the issue of the lower limit of the older or “pagan” horizon of early medieval cemeteries in Dalmatia, or the question of dating 7<sup>th</sup> century burials on the basis of material culture is still relevant.<sup>82</sup> It is quite possible that in recognizing the 7<sup>th</sup> century burials absolute dating methods will be the most helpful. Unfortunately, number of such dates is still very small.

<sup>77</sup> This also applies to the spurs from the grave 44 from Mikulčice – “Church 2” and grave 50 from Mikulčice – “Church 6” site, an overview of previous interpretations of these spurs is available in: KOUŘIL, Pavel: Ostentatious spurs from Mikulčice, pp. 261–263 and 267.

<sup>78</sup> UNGERMAN, Šimon: Carolingian Imports in Great Moravia, pp. 51–57.

<sup>79</sup> The spurs from the vaulted tombs under the basilica, from the sarcophagus discovered in the northern room of the narthex and from graves 1, 4, 7 and 88 from Biskupija-Crkvina, spurs from graves A and B in Morpolača are mentioned as direct imports. PETRINEC, Maja: *Groblja od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države*, pp. 169–171.

<sup>80</sup> POLÁČEK, Lumír: Lead spur matrix. In: IDEM (ed.): *Great Moravian elites from Mikulčice*. Brno: Czech Academy of Sciences – Institute of Archaeology, 2020, pp. 270–271.

<sup>81</sup> JARAK, Mirja: Groblja i nalazi 7. i 8. stoljeća i formiranje identiteta u ranosrednjovjekovnoj Hrvatskoj. In: *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu*, a. 54, 2021, p. 226.

<sup>82</sup> EADEM: Zapažanja o grobljima 8. i 9. st. u Dalmaciji. In: *Opuscula Archaeologica*, a. 26, 2002, p. 248.

# Birituality or Echoes of the Past at Early Medieval Cemeteries\*\*

Biritualita alebo dozvuky minulosti na včasnostredovekých pohrebiskách / Biritualnosť ili odjeci prošlosti na ranosrednjovekovnim grobljima

*Predmetom príspevku sú ploché birituálne pohrebiská z obdobia včasného stredoveku známe z priestoru medzi Západnými Karpatmi a Jadranom. Hoci sú všetky klasifikované ako birituálne, obraz pochovávaní na nich nie je porovnateľný. Plnohodnotné a dlhodobé uplatňovanie oboch pohrebných zvyklostí evidujeme totiž nateraz len na nekropolách obyvateľstva avarského kaganátu. Je zrejme výsledkom spolunažívania obyvateľstva s odlišnými kultúrnymi prejavmi sídliaceho na periférii avarského kultúrneho prostredia. Na ostatných nekropolách sa prejavuje len ako doklad výnimočného návratu ku žiarovému ritu u komunity, ktorá už inak prešla na inhumáciu.*

**Kľúčové slová:** Ploché birituálne pohrebiská, obyvateľstvo avarského kaganátu, včasný stredovek.

**B**i-ritual burial practices were widely spread during the Early Middle Ages. Jozef Zábajník's study of the Avar necropoli in the northern and western Carpathian Basin constitutes a significant contribution in this respect.<sup>1</sup> According to Zábajník's definition, only those Avar necropoli in which corpses were buried "both in skeleton and cremated form during one period" can be considered to be bi-ritual.<sup>2</sup> Studying their chronological and spatial occurrence, he came to two important conclusions. First, his results indicate that a bi-ritual burial system was in place throughout the entire Avar period.

Within the scope of its three-phase chronological framework, most of the recorded sites clearly correspond to the late Avar period.<sup>3</sup> Second, he also indicates that these burial customs occur exclusively at the periphery of the Avar cultural sphere.

In order to get a full picture of the bi-ritual mortuary customs used by people of the Avar khaganate, we need to consider sites within the entire Carpathian Basin and immediately adjacent relevant areas (such as Lower Austria). In the southern part of the Carpathian Basin (fig. 1), although based only on preliminary results, the necropolis with urn and

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\*\* Research and preparation of this article was supported by the VEGA 1/0523/22 research project.

<sup>1</sup> ZÁBAJNÍK, Jozef: Birituálne pohrebiská v severnej a západnej časti Karpatskej kotliny v období avarského kaganátu. In: *Štúdiijné zvesti Archeologického ústavu SAV*, a. 36, 2004, pp. 339–357.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 339.

<sup>3</sup> IDEM: Seriation von Gürtelbeschlaggarnituren aus dem Gebiet der Slowakei und Österreichs (Beitrag zur Chronologie der Zeit des awarischen kaganats). In: ČILINSKÁ, Zlata (ed.): *K problematike osídlenia stredodunajskej oblasti vo včasnom stredoveku*. Nitra: Archeologický ústav SAV, 1991, pp. 219–321.

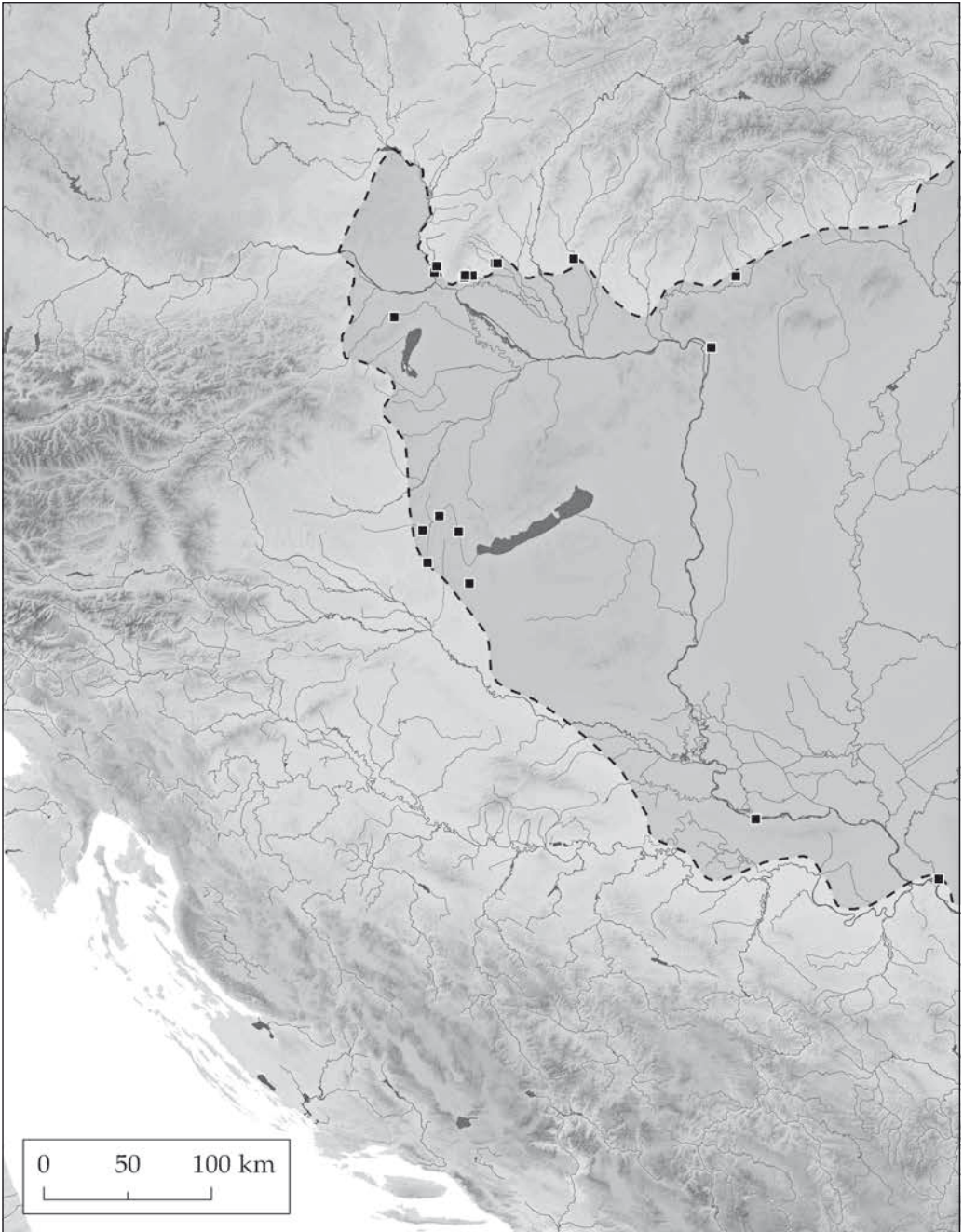


Fig. 1: Flat bi-ritual Avar necropoli. The shaded area corresponds to the zone of distribution of inhumation burials associated with the so-called late Avar khaganate (after ZÁBOJNÍK 1999 and 2009).

pit graves discovered in Šarengrad, Croatia appears to be comparable to other, published, results.<sup>4</sup> Evidence for cremation was found at several graves studied earlier in Pančevo, Serbia. At least one of them seems to have been a partial-cremation grave.<sup>5</sup> Although the relationship between cremation and inhumation graves in these locations remains unclear, bi-rituality cannot be ruled out in two other burial grounds documented at the Serbian sites of Novi Slankamen and Čelarevo.<sup>6</sup>

Should Helena Zoll-Adamikowa's thesis be valid – which saw differences in spiritual ideas behind the different burial rites – the bi-ritual necropoli indicate a close and long-term symbiosis of peoples with different forms of spirituality along the borders of the Avar cultural zone.<sup>7</sup> The well-known equestrian grave 34 from Bernolákovo – in which the incinerated remains of a human body were placed – testifies to the fact that it was not just a marginal manifestation, at most only tolerated by society.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the fact that the conclusions from Jozef Zábajník's study remain fully

valid, one very fundamental fact was not formulated. Bi-ritual funeral rites among people of the Avar khaganate constitute an exceptional phenomenon observable between the Western Carpathians and the Adriatic throughout the entire Early Middle Ages.<sup>9</sup> As it turns out, the degree and methods of such bi-rituality were so different throughout this period that it becomes necessary to elaborate on it in more detail.

Apart from the Avar necropoli, the flat Early Medieval burial grounds in question are not sufficient to claim beyond doubt that bi-rituality was common practice in the study area for a long period of time. Perhaps the burial ground in Bled, Slovenia – a vast necropolis with a set of five cremation graves distributed among inhumation ones – is the only one to come close to filling the requirements for a regular, bi-ritual burial ground.<sup>10</sup> In this case, Andrej Pleterski explains the differences in the burial practice as occurring during the earliest contact stage between the Slavs and the remaining older Romanic population.<sup>11</sup> However, as for the relevance of the information provided about this site,

<sup>4</sup> RIMPF, Andrea – RAPAN-PAPEŠA, Anita – DIZDAR, Marko: Rezultati zaštitnih istraživanja kasnoavardobnoga groblja Šarengrad – Klopore 2019. godine. In: *Annales Instituti Archaeologici*, a. 16, 2020, pp. 8–17.

<sup>5</sup> MANO-ZISI, Djordje – LJUBINKOVIĆ, Mirjana – GARAŠANIN, Milutin – KOVAČEVIĆ, Jovan – VESELENOVIĆ, Rajko: Zaštitno iskopavanje kod Pančeva. In: *Muzeji*, a. 1, 1948, pp. 69 and 72.

<sup>6</sup> Most recently, BUGARSKI, Ivan: O slovenskim nalazima na jugu avarskog kaganata. In: RUMIANCEVA, Olga – TRIFUNOVIĆ, Stanko (eds.): *Balkany, Podunavie i Vostočnaja Evropa v rimskoje vremena i epochu Srednevekovia*. Moskva: Institut arheologii Rossijskoj akademii nauk – Muzej Vojevodiny, 2022, p. 170.

<sup>7</sup> ZOLL-ADAMIKOVA, Helena: Slawisch-awarische Grenzzone im Lichte der Grabfunde. In: *A Wosinsky Mór Múzeum Évkönyve*, a. 15, 1990, p. 99 and 100.

<sup>8</sup> KRASKOVSKÁ, Ludmila: Pohrebisko v Bernolákove. In: *Slovenská archeológia*, a. 10, 1962, nr. 2, pp. 432 and 433, fig. 8.

<sup>9</sup> The bi-ritual burial grounds from Romania and Bulgaria represent phenomena characteristic of a different cultural development that includes other cultural-ethnic factors in a different geographical environment.

<sup>10</sup> PLETESKI, Andrej: *Zgodnjesrednjeveška naselbina na blejski Pristavi. Najdbe – Frühmittelalterliche Siedlung Pristava in Bled. Funde: Opera Instituti Archaeologici Sloveniae*, vol. 14. Ljubljana: Inštitut za arheologijo ZRC SAZU – Založba ZRC, 2008, pp. 61–66, 250 and 251.

<sup>11</sup> IDEM: *Zgodnjesrednjeveški žgani grobovi v vzhodnih Alpah*. In: *Frühmittelalterarchäologie in der Steiermark. Beiträge eines Fachgesprächs anlässlich des 65. Geburtstags von Dieter Kramer*. Schild von Steier – Archäologische und numismatische Beiträge aus dem Landesmuseum Joanneum, Beiheft 4. Graz: Landesmuseum Joanneum, 2008, p. 36.



Fig. 2: Alsórajk. Site plan of the early medieval burial ground. Sunken features interpreted as the remains of cremation graves are marked in grey (adapted after SZŐKE 1996, tab. 15).

we should not forget that this excavation was carried out at a time before modern documentation became common technical practice, and that just one of the five presumed cremation graves contained cremated remains of a human body.<sup>12</sup>

Among all the flat burial grounds considered to be bi-ritual, the necropolis explored in the village of Alsórajk in

today's Hungary occupies a special position.<sup>13</sup> Although it is located in the same region as several other bi-ritual necropolises, it is not related to the Avar khaganate. In fact, all the inhumation graves in this location date to the following historical period, the Carolingian. However, what makes this burial site special is the stratigraphic relationship of cremation and inhumation graves. The most important feature in this respect is the distribution of the four pits described as cremation pit graves 1 – 3 and 7. They were positioned at the southern end of the burial ground, forming a line respecting the inhumation graves (fig. 2). The location and stratigraphic position of cremation grave 7 in relation to the inhumation graves indicate its origin being later than the inhumations.<sup>14</sup> Equally important was the pit (cremation grave 21A) sunken in the backfill of a nearby inhumation grave.<sup>15</sup> Although these are the only examples of intrusive cremation burials found here, nothing contradicts the idea that the cremation graves correspond to the youngest burial horizon at Alsórajk.<sup>16</sup> However, should this assumption be correct, the site would no longer meet the criteria necessary to classify it as a bi-ritual necropolis. In any case, this is an unusual phenomenon for the Carolingian period, and for now is beyond any conclusive interpretation.

In other than bi-ritual burial grounds of the Avar khaganate, cremation is

<sup>12</sup> IDEM: *Zgodnjesrednjeveška naselbina na blejski Pristavi*, p. 64, fig. 3.26.

<sup>13</sup> SZŐKE, Béla Miklós: Das birituelle Gräberfeld aus der Karolingerzeit von Alsórajk-Határi tábla. In: IDEM (ed.): *Archäologie und Siedlungsgeschichte im Hahóter Becken, Südwest-Ungarn. Von der Völkerwanderungszeit bis zum Mittelalter*. Antaeus: Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, vol. 23. Budapest: Archäologisches Institut der UAW, 1996, pp. 61–146, fig. 15–47.

<sup>14</sup> However, no cremated remains were found in this sunken feature. See, IDEM: Das birituelle Gräberfeld aus der Karolingerzeit, pp. 127 and 128, fig. 20.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 140, fig. 30.

<sup>16</sup> The location of the three graves (cremation pit graves 20, 34 and 35) located at a significant distance from the inhumation ones in the northern part of the burial ground might be further proof of the chronological order of these burials.

a very marginal phenomenon (fig. 3).<sup>17</sup> Moreover, there is nothing to suggest that the burying communities accepted it as a kind of alternative.<sup>18</sup> In this context, the large necropolis with one cremation grave discovered in Pitten, Lower Austria, can serve as an illustrative example from the earlier part of the Early Middle Ages.<sup>19</sup> The later stage of the Early Middle Ages is represented by the burial ground from the northern Bosnian locality of Petoševci, which is comparable in scope and where two cremation graves have been found.<sup>20</sup> None of these necropoli, or other similar ones published in full – such as those in Lipová-Ondrochov<sup>21</sup> or Trnovec nad Váhom<sup>22</sup> – have yet provided compelling proof that the observed manifestations of “bi-rituality” should indicate communities with different spiritual ideas or peoples of different origins coexisting together.<sup>23</sup> Instead,

they constitute rare manifestations of some persisting spiritual ideas among a community that had already adopted inhumation as the dominant burial rite.<sup>24</sup> The etymological interpretation of the word *upír* (vampire) – originating from the Proto-Slavic word *\*opyrb* whose original meaning was *unburnt* (not cremated) – could suggest the motive for such a shift.<sup>25</sup> These manifestations, therefore, can be assumed to have occurred only under extraordinary circumstances. The connection between the change of burial rite and the fact that burial grounds were gradually becoming formalized is another significant source of information. Cremation burials found in these more formal cemeteries provide us with the data to make these assertions. Nevertheless, we can conclude that cremations were a rare phenomenon characteristic only of a few isolated graves.

<sup>17</sup> The source base evaluated in the paper is presented in the study by Tomáš König published separately in these proceedings.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. GLEESON, Patrick – McLAUGHLIN, Rowan: Ways of death: cremation and belief in first-millennium AD Ireland. In: *Antiquity*, a. 95, 2021, nr. 380, pp. 390–396.

<sup>19</sup> FRIESINGER, Herwig: Das frühmittelalterliche Gräberfeld von Pitten-Kreuzackergasse, p. B. Neunkirchen. In: IDEM (ed.): *Studien zur Archäologie der Slawen in Niederösterreich II*. Mitteilungen der Prähistorischen Kommission der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. 17/18. Wien: Verlag der ÖAW, 1975–1977, pp. 66 and 136.

<sup>20</sup> ŽERAVICA, Zdenko: Ranoslovenska nekropola Bagruša u Petoševcima kod Laktaša. In: *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja Bosne i Hercegovine u Sarajevu – Arheologija, nova serija*, a. 40/41, 1985/1986, pp. 153 and 154.

<sup>21</sup> TOČÍK, Anton: Flachgräberfelder aus dem IX. und X. Jahrhundert in der Südwestslowakei (I). In: *Slovenská archeológia*, a. 19, 1971, nr. 1, p. 207, fig. 60: 8 and 22.

<sup>22</sup> IDEM: Flachgräberfelder aus dem IX. und X. Jahrhundert, p. 171, fig. 39: 11–13.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. HEROLD, Hajnalka: Materielle Kultur – technologische Traditionen – Identität. Untersuchungen zur Archäologie des Frühmittelalters in Niederösterreich. In: *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters*, a. 37, 2009, pp. 112 and 128.

<sup>24</sup> JUNGCLAUS, Bettina – BIERMANN, Felix: New observations of the burial rite: Traces of fire exposure in Early Medieval inhumation burials – examples from the Slavic cemetery of Wusterhausen/Dosse (North-Eastern Germany). In: *Anthropologischer Anzeiger*, a. 78, 2021, nr. 1–2, p. 120.

<sup>25</sup> GULHAK, Alemko: *Hrvatski etimološki rječnik*. Zagreb: August Cesarec, 1993, p. 661.

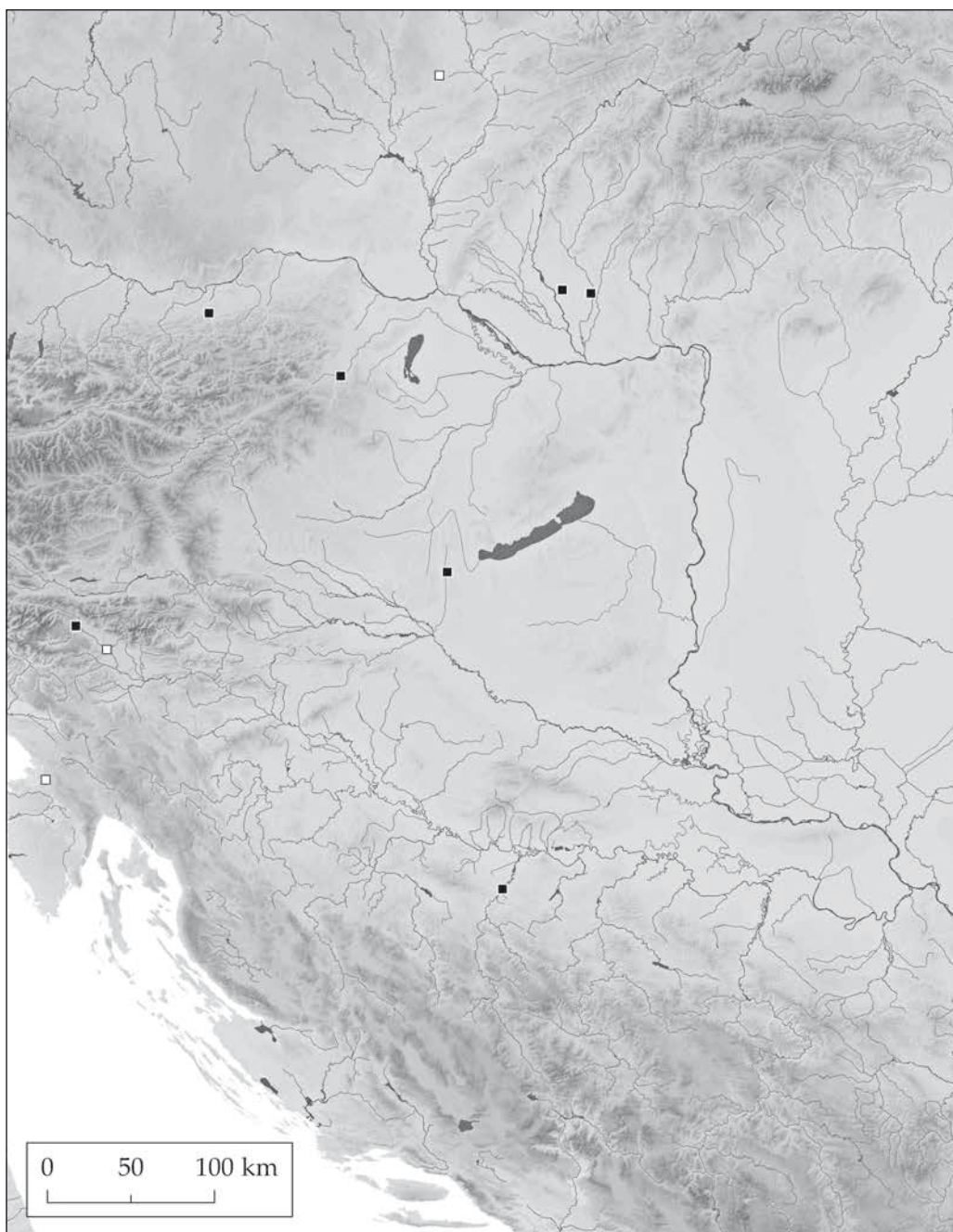


Fig. 3: Flat bi-ritual burial grounds, excluding sites associated with the Avar khaganate. Sites accepted in the current literature are marked by black-filled symbols (Alsórajk, Bled, Lipová-Ondrochov, Petoševci, Pitten, Purgstall an der Erlauf, Trnovec nad Váhom); non-confirmed sites are marked with open symbols (Kranj, Predloka, Pustiměř).

# Northern Croatia between Hungarians and Croats in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Centuries

Severné Chorvátsko medzi Maďarmi a Chorvátmi v 10. a 11. storočí /  
Sjeverna Hrvatska između Mađara i Hrvata u 10. i 11. stoljeću

*Franačka Donja Panonija, prema povijesnim izvorima, koncem 9. stoljeća bit će pod upravom vojvode Braslava, spojena s blatnogradskim posjedom (grofovijom), te će pod njegovom vlašću dočekati slom franačke uprave u Panoniji. O velikoj kulturnoj sličnosti tih dvaju rijekom Dravom odijeljenih područja Panonije od 9. do 11. stoljeća svjedoče rezultati arheoloških istraživanja. Na cijelom prostoru događaju se isti ili slični procesi kao i drugim dijelovima nekadašnje franačke Panonije. Početkom 10. stoljeća vojvodstvo nije zauzeto od Mađara, niti je više dio Franačkog Carstva, ali na određeni način nazaduje u odnosu na druge dijelove Europe, što se ponajviše vidi u tome što nema važnijih ili većih zgrada. U grobovima se pojavljuju predmeti kakvih dotad nije bilo, a to je također odstupanje od tradicije koja je postojala u 9. i početkom 10. stoljeća. Moguće je da je Donja Panonija vezana za Hrvatsku i Ugarsku. Pod jakim je utjecajem i Hrvatske i Ugarske – ona će uvijek imati određenu posebnost, no teško je odrediti što čini njezinu samosvojnost. Tvrdnje da je do pred kraj 11. stoljeća to ničija zemlja zvuče nerealno. Koliko je vojvodstvo slobodno, određuje Sveto Rimsko Carstvo, koje od osnivanja graničnih marki početkom 10. stoljeća konstantno pomiče granicu prema istoku na njegovu štetu. Moguće da je upravo ugroza s te strane dovela do pojačanih veza s južnim i sjevernim entitetom. Potkraj 11. stoljeća bit će napokon čvršće povezana s Ugarskom, ali i s Hrvatskom.*

Cljučne riječi: Donja Panonija, panonski Slaveni, Hrvati, Mađari

Frankish chroniclers, as well as other sources, provide us with very little information about historical events in Lower Pannonia in the first decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> Although we do not have much information about the events in that part of the Frankish Empire, it seems that certain processes of moving away from the earlier centers began to take place in that area at the time.<sup>2</sup>

They are not visible in the field and cannot be proven, but the previous immediate Frankish presence was difficult to prove as well. Only according to the data from the surrounding area, from the area of today's western Hungary, Slovenia and Austria, can it be concluded to some extent that the existing Frankish administration disintegrated or withdrew.<sup>3</sup> When only archeological data are

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<sup>1</sup> FILIPEC, Krešimir: *Donja Panonija od 9. do 11. stoljeća*. Sarajevo: University of Sarajevo, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> IDEM: Cemetery, Graves and two churches in Lobor – problems and solutions = Groblje, grobovi i dvije crkve u loboru – neki problemi i rjesenja In: *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu*, a. 54, 2021, nr. 1; pp. 397–410.

<sup>3</sup> ŠTIH, Peter: Madžari in slovenska zgodovina v zadnji četrtini 9. in prvi polovici 10. stoletja. In: *Zgodovinski časopis*, a. 37, 1983, nr. 3, pp. 171–201; FELGENHAUER-SCHMIEDT, Sabine:



Figure 1: Map of Central Europe and the division of Pannonia into: (1) ancient times (Roman Empire) into Upper (Roman provinces: First Pannonia and Savian Pannonia) and Lower Pannonia (Roman provinces: Valerian Pannonia and Second (Syrmia) Pannonia); (2) Division according to Frankish sources from the 9th century into Upper Panonija (north of the Drava river) and Lower Panonija (south of the Drava river); this same part of Francia is also called the area between the Drava and Sava rivers (regnum inter Dravum et Savum); (3) Division according to Conversio into Upper Panonija (between the Danube and Raba rivers) and Lower Panonija (between the Danube, Raba and Drava rivers) (According to: Filipec 2015, fig. 2)

observed, of which there are still very few, it seems that nothing radical has happened. The population, mostly due

to the absence of any historical sources from Lower Pannonia, should have been left more or less to itself at the beginning

Niederösterreich im 10. Jahrhundert. In: DAIM, Falko –LAUREMANN, Ernst (eds.): *Das frühungarische Reitergrab von Gnadendorf (Niederösterreich). Monographien des Römisch Germanischen Zentralmuseums*, vol. 64. Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2006, pp. 253–267; Sós, Ágnes Cs.: Die Slawische Bevölkerung Westungarns im 9. Jahrhundert. *Münchener Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte*, vol. 22. München: Beck, 1973; FILIPEC, Krešimir: *Donja Panonija od 9. do 11. stoljeća*, pp. 183–211; KARO, Špela: Archaeological traces of Ancient Hungarians in Slovenian territory – small finds from various findspot contexts. In: *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu*, a. 54, 2021, pp. 315–330.

of the Hungarian invasions.<sup>4</sup> This is quite possible, but unlike the previous era of which we knew almost nothing, the 10<sup>th</sup> century is known somewhat better. The population has not only not disappeared or been displaced, but it is precisely in these turbulent times of European history that the population has begun to grow demographically, especially since the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, which is best seen by the datable grave goods. Rare archaeological sites and finds still show opposite tendencies to those of a country ravaged by Hungarian invasions.<sup>5</sup> Demographic strengthening, from the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, can be explained either by favorable economic conditions, political stabilization or possibly immigration. Theoretically, we can assume where the new population could possibly have come from the two realistic directions, from Croatia south of the Sava River or from Prekodravlje, from the area occupied by the Hungarians.

The first demographic collapse of Lower Pannonia occurred long before the Hungarian devastation, as early as the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and large parts of the area remained unpopulated or sparsely populated until the end of Frankish rule. The demographic collapse of the population occurred after the collapse of the Avar supremacy over the local Slavs in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century and after the uprising of Ljudevit, the Duke of Lower Pannonia (818 – 823).<sup>6</sup> After the first third of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, there are

many smaller settlements between the Drava and Sava Rivers, but no larger settlements.<sup>7</sup> The settlements are small, scattered, but still almost unknown in the wider area. Old Avar cemeteries are generally abandoned until the first third of the 9<sup>th</sup> century with perhaps one or two exceptions (Lobor and perhaps Sisak). Lower Pannonia was sparsely populated or almost deserted throughout the 9<sup>th</sup> century, except for parts of present-day Slovenia, west of the Sutla and Dravinja Rivers, where demographic recovery began earlier, probably under the influence of Bavarian immigrants and those from the eastern parts of the Drava and Sava Rivers, east of the Požega Valley, which was under the Bulgarian rule. Lower Pannonia in the 9<sup>th</sup> century was a Frankish province, and as a result of the wars, it took a relatively long time for it to be rebuilt. Increased construction and mission centers, such as Lobor or possibly Sisak, are the result of external intervention. After intensive archeological research in the last thirty years, the area has been better explored, but despite this there are no significant findings.

According to historical sources, Frankish Lower Pannonia at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century was under the administration of Duke Braslav, merged with the Blatnograd estate (county) and under his rule faced the collapse of Frankish administration in Pannonia.<sup>8</sup> A fateful battle between the Frankish and Hungarian armies took place near one

<sup>4</sup> What is Carolinian Lower Pannonia see according to the map: FILIPEC, Krešimir: *Donja Panonija od 9. do 11. stoljeća*, p. 9, fig. 2.

<sup>5</sup> TOMIČIĆ, Željko: *Bjelobrđski kulturni krug. Groblja 9. do 13. stoljeća u međurječju Mure, Drave, Dunava i Save*. Zagreb-Požega: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Zavod za znanstveni i umjetnički rad, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> SZENTPÉTERI, József: Archäologische Denkmäler der Awarenzeit in Mitteleuropa. In: *Varia archaeologica Hungarica*, a. 13, 2002, nr. 1–2.

<sup>7</sup> TOMIČIĆ, Željko: Der Süden Pannoniens in der Karolingerzeit. In: *Anteaues Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, a. 31–32, 2010, pp. 93–112.

<sup>8</sup> FILIPEC, Krešimir: *Donja Panonija od 9. do 11. stoljeća*, p. 158–171.

of Braslav's cities.<sup>9</sup> The county of Blatnograd, with the Zalavár agglomeration and the area south of the Drava with Lobar and Sisak, shared a similar fate in the next period, at least until the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> Processes similar to those in other parts of the Carpathian Basin took place on Braslav's former estate, which included Lower Pannonia and Blatnograd, considering the emergence of new fashion and new decorative objects in graves under the influence of new cultural and political circumstances. According to archeological data, in no part of the area south of Lake Balaton the Hungarian rule can be confirmed before the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> or even the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup>

Croatian territory and the early medieval Croatian state, before the 10<sup>th</sup> century, were located a little south of the Sava River, roughly where the border between Roman provinces of Pannonia and Dalmatia was in the previous period. Early medieval Croatia did not suffer any demographic decline at that time.<sup>12</sup> On the contrary, settlements in that area were strengthening. At that time, there was an increasing number of burials in cemeteries and that number continued to grow throughout the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, and demographic growth was visible all the way to the southern borders of Pannonia. All indications point to the

fact that it was not damaged at all by the Hungarian attacks and there is no information about the destruction.<sup>13</sup> It is quite possible that the southern parts of Lower Pannonia were more strongly associated with the Croats in the south. It is also possible that colonists arrived from that area earlier. By the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Drava River, under strong Hungarian influence, began to separate the territory of the Pannonian Slavs under the political influence of the Croats from those under the political influence of the Hungarians, just as the western parts came under the influence of the Holy Roman Empire. Lower Pannonia came into the sphere of influence of the three states and all of them in the coming periods influenced its development.

In really extensive historical literature, especially until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the affiliation of today's northern Croatia has long been observed in the framework of Croatian-Hungarian relations, legal and political problems. The Drava River stood out as the historical border between Hungary and Croatia and was questioned when the Hungarians first crossed it and occupied the area south of it in the early 10<sup>th</sup> or maybe just late 11<sup>th</sup> century. Today, after several decades of continuous archaeological research, which has brought to light some new data, it is possible to see some

<sup>9</sup> ŠTEFANOVIČOVÁ, Tatiana – HULÍNEK, Drahošlav (eds.): *Bitka pri Bratislave v roku 907 a jej význam pre vývoj stredného Podunajska*. In: *Zborník príspevkov z kolokvia v Bratislave 19.–20. júna 2007*. Bratislava: Slovenský archeologický a historický inštitút – SAHI, o. z., 2008.

<sup>10</sup> FILIPEC, Krešimir: *Donja Panonija od 9. do 11. stoljeća*, pp. 158–171.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 183–211.

<sup>12</sup> PETRINEC, Maja: *Grobља od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države*. In: *Monumenta medii aevi Croatiae*, vol. 3. Split: Muzej Hrvatskih Arheoloških Spomenika, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> There are very few archaeological finds of Hungarian origin and all in secondary use: ŽERAVICA, Zdenko: *Ranoslavenska nekropola Bagruša u Petoševcima kod Laktaša*. In: *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja u Sarajevu*, a. 40/41, 1985/1986, pp. 193–194; MILETIĆ, Nada: *Ranoslovenske nekropole u Bosni i Hercegovini – komparativna razmatranja*. In: *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja u Sarajevu*, a. 44, 1989, pp. 175–200 and 185–186; TOMIČIĆ, Željko: *Spoznaje o arheološkom nasljeđu ranosrednjovjekovnog groblja na položaju Bagruša kraj Petoševaca*. In: *Archaeologica Adriatica*, a. 4, 2010, pp. 133–134.

solutions, but not the final solution and answer to this question. Obviously this question is much more complex than one would like to accept and obviously for a relatively long time, from the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the history of Lower Pannonian cannot be easily described without contemporary written sources, and when archaeological research is still insufficient.

## Historical sources

The first decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century were marked by Hungarian raids throughout Central Europe. After the Hungarian defeat at Augsburg in 955, the incursions into the west became less frequent and the formation of the Hungarian state began in an area where various tribes had already settled. It is possible that there was an attempt, after the collapse of the Frankish administration in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century, during the rule of the Holy Roman Emperor Otto II (973 – 983), to regain control of a part of Pannonia. Otto II confirmed a document to the Archdiocese of Salzburg in 977 and 982, a document which was allegedly issued in 860 by Arnulf to the Church of Salzburg, listing properties and possessions in the March of Carinthia and the Bavarian Eastern March.<sup>14</sup> Although the document is undoubtedly a forgery from the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, its content is explainable in the historical context. We have no reason to doubt that the Archbishop of Salzburg claimed the right to many of the mentioned estates, the only

question is why in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century a forger gave it to Emperor Otto II for confirmation. It would be logical to assume that at that time the Bavarian Catholic Church hoped that, after the military victory of Emperor Otto II, it could manage to get back the possessions it had in the past in that area, but that didn't happen. That is, the success was limited to border areas. It is also possible that the answer to the question of what happened to Pannonia in the 10<sup>th</sup> century was given by the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (945-959) in his work *De administrando imperio*. He writes, but it is not known exactly when, that Croats ruled in Pannonia, but did not annex it to coastal Croatia.<sup>15</sup> These Pannonians also had an independent ruler, so it was another state whose ruler sent envoys, and only Croats in „Pannonian Croatia“ (Slavonia, Slavonia), i.e. Lower Pannonia, out of friendship. The fact that he sent tribute or gifts to the Croatian prince does not mean that, at the time to which the analyzed sentence refers, Illyricum and Pannonia, i.e. Lower Pannonia or Pannonian Croatia, formed part of Dalmatian Croatia, because the ruler of Pannonia (Pannonian Croatia) generally sent ambassadors to various countries, which is, after all, the prerogative of his position as sovereign, which the writer described in words, and the only exception in the quality of these missions are the missions sent to the prince of Dalmatian Croatia. It is, however, a very dubious and incoherent source. Pop Dukljanin mentioned that Croatian

<sup>14</sup> FILIPEC, Krešimir: *Donja Panonija od 9. do 11. stoljeća*, pp. 172–182 and 277–297.

<sup>15</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS: *De administrando imperio*. Ed. Gyula MORAVCSIK; trans. Romilly J. H. JENKINS. Washington: Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967 (revised edition); KONSTANTIN PORFIROGENET: *O upravljanju carstvom*. Introduction and comments Nikola TOMAŠIĆ. Zagreb: Dom i svijet, 2003, p. 76; GRAFENAUER, Bogo: Prilog kritici izvještaja Konstantina Porfirogeneta o doseljenu Hrvata. In: *Historijski zbornik*, a. 5, 1952, nr. 1–2, pp. 1–56; FILIPEC, Krešimir: *Donja Panonija od 9. do 11. stoljeća*, pp. 92–198.

King Tomislav had prevented several Hungarian incursions and that he had successfully repulsed all incursions by their military leader Attila. Various other documents and charters can be mentioned here, as well as the mention of the Diocese of Sisak at the church congress in Split, but none of these documents provide an unambiguous picture of the history of Lower Pannonia. The mention of the Diocese of Sisak was recorded in 928 at the Split church council, noting that the diocese, like the other two mentioned, those of Skradin and Delminium, was well populated and had a sufficient number of priests. This is very unusual and difficult to verify. This conciliar note is fundamentally different from the letter of the Bavarian bishops to the pope around 900, which showed a completely different situation in the supposedly devastated Pannonia without a single church building. Undoubtedly, Prekodravlje should have been more devastated than southern Pannonia, but such diametrically different descriptions of the situation in Pannonia can be explained by the fact that, apparently, Bavarian bishops exaggerated parts of devastated Pannonia and used them as a stylistic figure when addressing the pope, or the situation fundamentally changed in twenty-five years (from about 900 to 928). The various other, very dubious, sources that emerge also do not provide enough evidence. It is possible that Croatian King Zvonimir (1075/76 – 1089) ruled Lower Pannonia and it is possible that it repeatedly passed from Croatian to Hungarian supremacy. This time was filled by uncertain historical sources, which say that the Hungarian king Stephen I (997

– 1038) occupied the whole of Pannonia and kept it, and that he was helped by his contemporary Croatian king Krešimir (1000 – around 1030) in fight with the Holy Roman Empire, for which he handed over Slavonia (Pannonia), which he demanded back in 1035, etc. Such a situation could have lead to the claim that it was no man's land – it would mean that after the Frankish rule it was never independent but it was always held by one of its neighbors – all and a part of it. It is possible that the two kingdoms divided the area of influence over that territory along the river. Historical sources do not help solve this problem.

After that, the documents from the time when the Diocese of Zagreb was already established are often analyzed in various discussions, and an attempt is made to find a solution based on them. Felician's document from 1134 is one of the oldest testimonies, not only for the history of the Diocese of Zagreb, but for the entire Lower Pannonia, and medieval Slavonia in general (Fig. 3). It is understandable that historians endeavored to at least somehow fill that huge time span, from 928 to 1093/1094, when the Diocese of Zagreb should have been founded, which is more than one hundred and sixty years of the history of Lower Pannonia.<sup>16</sup> The offering of the Diocese of Sisak at the Council of Split in 928 to Bishop Grgur did not necessarily mean that the diocese functioned at that time and that it was located within Croatia (the Kingdom of Croatia). The area where the Diocese of Sisak could have been rebuilt previously belonged, and probably still did at the time, to the Aquileian missionary circle and, theoretically, in that sense, it could

<sup>16</sup> KLAJČIĆ, Nada: Baltazar A. Krčelić (1715–1778) autor tzv. Odlomka ljetopisa iz 11. st. In: *Croatica christiana periodica*, a. 16, 1985, pp. 1–46; MARGETIĆ, Lujo: *Hrvatska i crkva u srednjem vijeku. Pravnopovijesne i povijesne studije*. Rijeka: Pravni fakultet Sveučilište u Rijeci, 2000, p. 289; FILIPEC, Krešimir: *Donja Panonija od 9. do 11. stoljeća*, pp. 313–336.



Figure 2: Zagreb Diocese according to the approximate borders from the 14th century with the indicated area of late antique dioceses whose territory it covered and known early Christian churches drawn. the approximate borders of the surrounding states are indicated.

have really been offered to Bishop Grgur of Nin, because the Diocese of Nin was founded on the same Aquileian missionary area, the one belonging to the Patriarchate of Aquileia. But even if the diocese was then rebuilt, this in no way explains what happened to the area for the next one hundred and sixty years. What is confusing is why the Diocese of Zagreb was founded on the same territory as the Diocese of Sisak. The so-called Felician's document from 1134 is an important document for the Dubrava estate, but for the history of the Diocese of Zagreb, it is a completely uncertain historical source that certainly has traces or hints

of truth in it. It proves nothing, but possibly points to what we already know from other sources, which is that somewhere in the last decade of the 11<sup>th</sup> century Lower Pannonia was under Hungarian rule. It is very difficult to think that someone would go that far to forge everything in it, but it shows a certain tendency to explain something that is important in the dispute over a forest where, presumably to fascinate the litigant and convince the court, it states all the strength of witnesses and other information that was supposed to help with the dispute.

The western part of the former Lower Pannonia, west of the Sutla and Dravinja

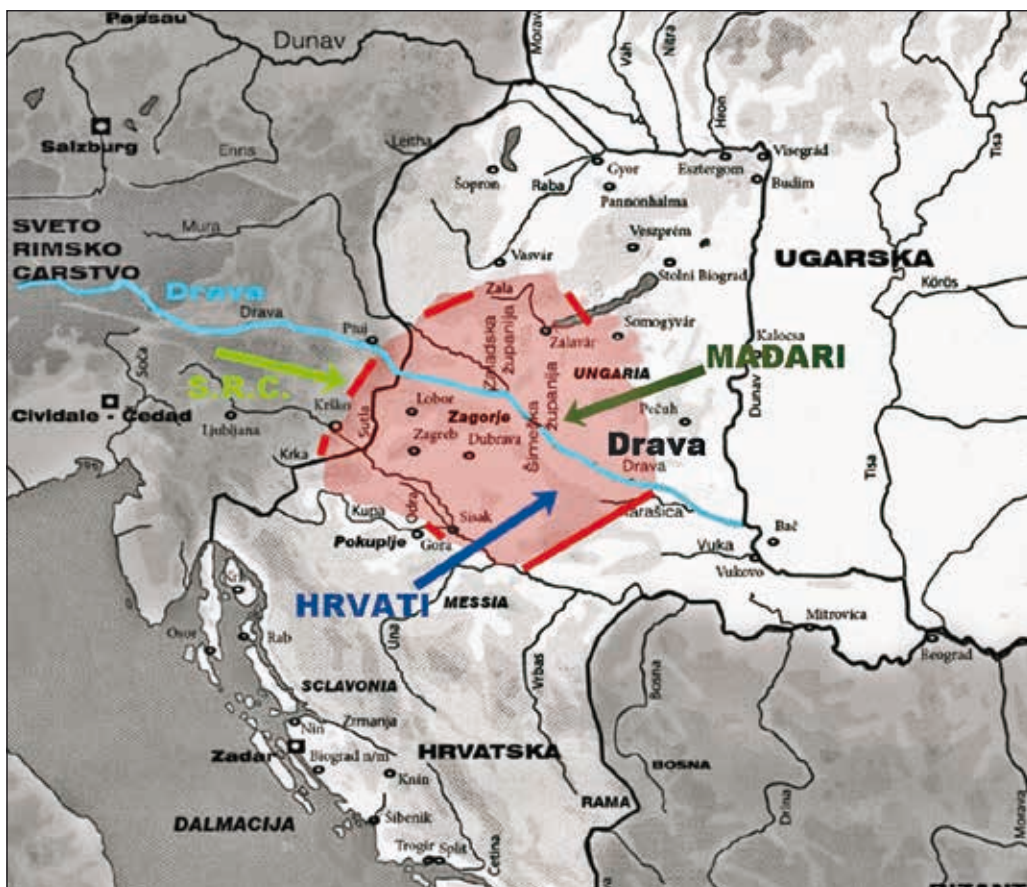


Figure 3: The Duchy of Braslav at the end of the 9th century with the Drava River drawn as the new border and area of influence of neighboring states.

Rivers, was included in the newly established border margraviate of the Holy Roman Empire in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and the eastern part would soon after be taken over by the Hungarians. These two parts of Lower Pannonia have had a completely different political and cultural development since then. In between, there remained a relatively small territory bordered by the Rivers Drava, Sava and Kupa with the two most important early medieval centers Sisak and Lobar.

### Border on the Drava River

When and whether the border on the Drava River between the Croats and the

Hungarians was set during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries is one of the questions to which we also do not have an unambiguous answer (Fig. 5). The fact that the Kingdom of Croatia might have ended on the Drava before the 10<sup>th</sup> century or even crossed it into the area of Prekomurje in the direction of Lake Balaton is also an option that is being considered and taken into account. It is quite certain that the same River Drava was crossed by the Hungarians in several places because they kept the eastern part of the area between Sava and Drava Rivers after repelling the Bulgarians from it. This is evidenced by rare archaeological finds from Đakovo, its surroundings and

Vukovar.<sup>17</sup> The Kaptol near Požega, as the Congregational Chapter and the seat of the Diocese of Pécs south of the Drava River, provided information on the establishment of a cemetery next to the church at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup> This church, along with those on Meraja in Vinkovci, in Borinci near Vinkovci and Klisa near Osijek, point to the intensified construction of churches at the turn between the 11<sup>th</sup> and early 12<sup>th</sup> centuries within the Hungarian state and the Diocese of Pécs. Such a situation has not yet been proven in the western part of the area between the Drava and Sava, although of course it is also possible. In general, it is difficult to determine that Croatian territory during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, including the land north of the Sava River.

The idea that one province all the way to the Drava River existed, which was very likely a relic of the past period, from the 9<sup>th</sup> century, when the whole territory was incorporated into the March of Friuli, which ended on the Drava, where the Friulian military operative zone and the March ended until 828. The idea that it was a complete area was built for a long time, so neither the Bulgarian usurpation, nor the Hungarian devastation, nor the creation of the Hungarian state in the last decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century in the northern and northeastern parts of the Pannonian Plain could erase that idea, not even at the time when the Hungarians crossed the Drava River.

At the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, after a hundred years in the same Frankish state, the great differences between the Pannonian Slavs and the Croats in Dalmatia, which were undoubtedly present at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, were erased. The Pannonian Slavs were under the Avars, and the Croats never were. All the preconditions have been created for this space, which was organized according to the Frankish model and which was integrated into the framework of Western European civilization, to become unique. The migration of people and marital connections, especially of the nobility, probably contributed to all this nearness. There is no doubt that the Croats, or some of them, were forced or took advantage of the situation in an interregnum created by the complete collapse of the Frankish administration in the Pannonian Plain and possibly occupied parts of the country or put it under their control. The Pannonian Slavs, especially the nobility, could have united themselves with the Croats. Undoubtedly, ties have been established with Hungary as well. In the graves of those killed in the Lobar cemetery, we have arrows still embedded in the remains of the buried, but they are all of the Western type. Either they are at war with each other or with someone from the west, the Hungarian arrows there are unknown. The Holy Roman Empire expanded its territory at

<sup>17</sup> DEMO, Željko: Ranosrednjovjekovno groblje bjelobrdske kulture: Vukovar-Lijeva Bara (X–XI. stoljeće). In: *Musei Archaeologici Zagrabienis Catalogi et Monographiae*, vol. 6/1–2. Zagreb: Arheološki muzej, 2009; FILIPEC, Krešimir: Srednjovjekovno groblje i naselje Đakovo – Župna crkva. *Istraživanja Katedre za opću srednjovjekovnu i nacionalnu arheologiju*, vol. 1. Zagreb: Centar za ranosrednjovjekovna istraživanja, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> BOJČIĆ, Zvonko – PODUNAVAC, Danimirka: Počeci Požeškog zbornog kaptola sv. Petra – srednjovjekovno crkveno i svjetovno središte Pečuške biskupije. Early Medieval Centers of Power, Programme and the book of abstracts, Zagreb 2021.



Figure 4: The main centers of Frankish Lower and Upper Pannonia in the 9th century.

the expense of Lower Pannonia until the High Middle Ages.<sup>19</sup>

Stronger connections between Croatia and Hungary probably date from the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, as both countries, Croatia and Hungary, faced the threat of the re-expansion of the Holy Roman Empire (Frankish Empire), and Croatia of the strengthening of Venice as well. In this context, the arrival of a new common Hungarian dynasty should not have been a major shock to the country. We have no reason to doubt that Lower Pannonia depended on Croatian aid and that a possible attack on Croatia in the north

began with the crossing of the Drava River. Unfortunately, we cannot prove that.

### Archaeological sources – some problems

Archaeological research does not show that anything radical happened in the first decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, such as the interruption of burial in some positions or something else that would lead to a certain discontinuity. Still some changes are visible! They mostly happened in Blatnograd, which was located almost on the border of the area held by Hungarian tribes at the time, where the deterioration

<sup>19</sup> Kosti, Miha: *...quae terram nostram et Regnum Hungariae dividit...* (Razvoj meje cesarstva na Dolenjskem v srednjem veku). In: *Zgodovinski Časopis*, a. 56, 2002, nr. 1–2, p. 43–93.

of the infrastructure and the emigration of people could have been felt. Was it a consequence of the proximity of the Hungarian border or was the Zalavár agglomeration left without an "urban" population due to the complete economic collapse of the entire province and the wider area? The nobility fled, the trade collapsed and the merchants began to bypass this area. The population of Lower Pannonia tried to respond in various ways to the problems that befell them at the time, and this shows all the complexity of relations in the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2).

Cemeteries from the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century south of the Sava River are more the exception than the rule. Only one cemetery from that time stands out south of the Drava and north of the Sava in Lobar in the position of Our Lady of the Mountain, which should be observed in this complex situation.<sup>20</sup> Other cemeteries, mostly those in rows, are established only during the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and usually cease to exist with the construction of churches in the cemeteries or with the relocation of cemeteries next to parish churches. The uninterrupted continuity of burials south of the Drava River is visible only in Lobar and nowhere else. It seems that Lower Pannonia was not demographically renewed or more densely populated until the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. To what extent can further events be monitored when there are

no reliable data and two problems arise in a large part of the whole area: poor expressiveness of material culture of the 9<sup>th</sup> and early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, associated with the Frankish supremacy over the province, and the absence or lack of evidence that the area south of Lake Balaton was inhabited by a new Hungarian ethnic group before the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century or the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century? Three different examples are provided by Zalavár (Zalavár agglomeration), Ptujski grad, Lobar and possibly Sisak, which is less well known. All four sites were part of the Duchy of Braslav in the late 9<sup>th</sup> and early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. They all experience different destinies, and after the 10<sup>th</sup> century they will find themselves in different states. Archaeological material will not be very different in the local cemeteries, which is a consequence of the spread of both Köttlach and Bijelo Brdo cultures. The sites are very complex and give us different views of the same events.

In Ptuj there was a crossing over the River Drava, there was probably a bridge, which was used during the Hungarian expeditions to Italy.<sup>21</sup> Old Hungarian objects in the graves at Ptujski grad have also been documented, which can be interpreted differently, but they at least include the place within the Hungarian state. What distinguishes the interpretations of the fate of Ptuj after 900, from the interpretation of the situation in Zalavár,

<sup>20</sup> FILIPEC, Krešimir: Zdenko Vinski i rani srednji vijek u savsko-dravskom međuriječju s posebnim osvrtom na diferenciranje bjelobrdске kulture u regionalnom smislu. In: JARAK, Mirja – BUNČIĆ, Maja (eds.): *Zdenko Vinski – život i znanstveni rad. Zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa održanog u Zagrebu 2016. godine*. Zagreb: FF-press; Arheološki muzej u Zagrebu, 2020, pp. 257–264.

<sup>21</sup> KOROŠEČ, Josip: *Staroslovenska grobišča v severni Sloveniji*. Ljubljana: Tiskarna Družbe Sv. Mohorja, 1947; IDEM: *Staroslovensko grobišče na Ptujskem gradu*, Dela 1. Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 1950; KOROŠEČ, Paola: Ungarische Elemente aus der Nekropole auf der Burg zu Ptuj. In: *Arheološki vestnik*, a. 36, 1985, pp. 337–350; TOMIČIĆ, Željko: Prilog istraživanju kronologije bjelobrdskog segmenta srednjovjekovnog groblja Ptuj-Grad. In: *Ptujski arheološki zbornik*, 1993, pp. 543–579; KOROŠEČ, Paola: *Nekropola na Ptujskem gradu, turnirski prostor = Das Gräberfeld an dem Schloßberg von Ptuj, Turnierplatz*. Ptuj: Pokrajinski muzej, 1999.

	Konstantin VII Porfirogenet i sin Roman (913. - 959.) bizantski car	Stjepan I. (1000. - 1038.) ugarski kralj	Petar I. (1038. - 1041.) i (1044. - 1046.) ugarski kralj	Andrija I. (1046. - 1060.) ugarski kralj	Bela I. (1060. - 1063.) ugarski kralj	Ladislav I (1077. - 1095.) ugarski kralj
<b>Vukovar</b> <b>Lijeva Bara</b> Srijem	<b>1</b> G					
<b>Lobor</b> <b>Majka Božja Gorska</b> Krivotska županija		<b>2</b> S				<b>1</b> S
<b>Bijelo Brdo</b> <b>Ulica Venecija</b> Slavonska			<b>1</b> G	<b>5</b> G	<b>2</b> G	
<b>Josipovo</b> <b>Mesarna</b> Slavonska				<b>4</b> G		
<b>Svinjarevci</b> Srijem					<b>1</b> G	<b>5</b> G
<b>Vinkovci</b> <b>Meraja</b> Slavonska						<b>5</b> G
<b>Zvonimirovo</b> <b>Veliko polje</b> Slavonska						<b>1</b> G
<b>Čepin Ovcara</b> <b>Tursko groblje</b> Slavonska						<b>2</b> G+N

*Kovanica nađena u grobu ili poljuće iz raznog groba: G; kovanica nađena u arheološkim staji: S; slučajni nalaz na lokalitetu: K.*

Figure 5: Northern Croatian sites between the Drava and Sava rivers where 10th and 11th century coins were found with the only locality indicated (Lobor) from the area of former Frankish Pannonia (supplemented according to: Filipec 2015, fig. 109).

is that it is considered that, if it was temporarily occupied by the Hungarians (which should not be excluded) or abandoned, it was certainly quickly returned to Frankish rule. The continuous and uninterrupted series of burials in the cemetery at Ptujski grad ceased during the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The cessation of burials was probably due to the relocation of the cemetery to the position next to the church. Ptuj not only remained under Frankish rule but became one of the most important strongholds of Frankish dominion between the Raba and the Drava, primarily the stronghold and possession of the Archbishop of Salzburg in Pannonia. What remains open is the question of whether there was a church at Ptujski grad and whether it was demolished

during the Hungarian attack. Unfortunately, we cannot give an answer to this question because the archaeological strata is very disturbed due to many later interventions in the same position.

Therefore, it cannot be proven that, like Lobor, a new cemetery was formed next to the early Christian church, next to which either a new Carolingian church was built or the old early Christian church was renovated and burials continued. Like Lobor, the church was demolished, perhaps during the Hungarian invasions of Italy in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. South of the Drava River in the western part of the area between the Drava and Sava there are no Hungarian objects, and coins are extremely rare. Only two coins of Hungarian king Stephen I

and one of King Ladislas I were found in Lopor. There is nothing that could be associated with either an attack or settlement (Fig. 4). There are Hungarian finds in Slovenia in the so-called "Strata Hungarorum" and in the peripheral parts of early medieval Croatia, south of the Sava River, there are broken up sets in children's graves.

When writing about Zalavár, it is mostly said that it was destroyed or abandoned during the Hungarian migration, as early as 900, and that then a part of the place (Benedictine monastery of St. Hadrian) was rebuilt during the reign of the Hungarian king Stephen I or even in the time of his father, Grand Duke Gejza.<sup>22</sup> What undoubtedly speaks in favor of a clear and uninterrupted continuity of life in this place are the churches that were not destroyed, perhaps just abandoned, and around which the deceased were buried continuously at least until the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. One should be very careful when looking for that continuity, sometimes short breaks or even those that have lasted for decades cannot be most clearly separated. There is the problem of the „second phase“ of the church of St. Hadrian, as it seems that it was built later than it would have been expected. Archaeological literature suggests that

Zalavár came under Hungarian rule after 900, which is indeed possible.<sup>23</sup>

In the Early Middle Ages, two churches, a wooden church and a pre-Romanesque basilica, were built in Lopor, on the site of Our Lady of the Mountain.<sup>24</sup> They stood side by side, the wooden church was built in the first third of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and the stone one after it. According to certain structural elements (the shape of the apse, the outer lesenes coincide with the pilasters on the inner wall) and according to similar floor plans, the basilica cannot be dated more closely. Such building and construction solutions for similar buildings with similar floor plans are usually dated to the end of the early Romanesque period or at least through the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when compared to those built in the early medieval Croatian area, Solin, Byzantine Zadar and Venice or the basilica in Zalavár-Récéskút (Blatno, Blatnograd), once the most important Pannonian center, approximately in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The wooden church was demolished by the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century because silver coins of the Hungarian King Stephen I appear in the layer above its ruins. After the demolition of the basilica, the burial of the dead begins in the ruins, in its interior. Burial around it continues and is best seen in graves dated to

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<sup>22</sup> SZŐKE, Béla Miklós: *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien: Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums*, vol. 145. Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2021, pp. 275–302.

<sup>23</sup> Sós, Ágnes Cs.: *Die Slawische Bevölkerung Westungarns im 9. Jahrhundert*; SZŐKE, Béla Miklós: *Die Karolingerzeit in Pannonien*, pp. 275–302.

<sup>24</sup> FILIPEC, Krešimir: Aquilean missionary center in the Frankish lower Pannonia the turn of 8<sup>th</sup> in 9<sup>th</sup> century. In: *Hortus Artium Medievalium – Journal of the International Research Center for Late Antiquity and Middle Ages*, vol. 19, 2013, pp. 301–310. IDEM: Zwei Kirchen aus dem 9. Jahrhundert in Lopor und ihr Inventar. In: *Anteaesus. Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol. 35/36, 2018, pp. 345–361; FILIPEC, Krešimir – BUNČIĆ, Maja (eds.): *Lopor – ranosrednjovjekovno središte moći: 20 godina arheoloških istraživanja = Lopor – Early Medieval Center of Power: 20 Years of Archaeological Research* (catalogue). Zagreb: Arheološki muzej u Zagrebu; Arheološki zavod Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu; Lopor: Centar za ranosrednjovjekovna istraživanja, 2021, pp. 73–110.

about the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> and early 11<sup>th</sup> centuries when a large number of objects in the tombs is observed. A certain well-being, and also following of the trends then present throughout the Pannonian Plain and surrounding areas is characterized by a large number of objects in the graves. This is the time of existence of the so-called Bijelo Brdo culture, a culture that, in this part of the country, connects the poorly explored 9<sup>th</sup> century with the High Middle Ages. According to archeological finds, the layer of graves above the layer with rubble belonging to the ruins of the pre-Romanesque basilica could be dated throughout the 11<sup>th</sup> century, or perhaps more towards the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and no later than the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. According to the graves, therefore, a longer period of burial is evident. It is possible that it is even a question of the entire period of functioning of the so-called Bijelo Brdo culture (from the last third of the 10<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century). Thus, the time of discontinuity during which the pre-Romanesque basilica was demolished and the late Romanesque church was not yet built, stretches from the last third of the 10<sup>th</sup> and the first third of the 11<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The demolition of the church cannot be dated even in this case, as it is not known whether it was demolished at the beginning or the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> or at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> or even later. It is possible that a similarity could be found with the locality of Ducové, Flur Kostolec, Trnava in Slovakia.<sup>25</sup>

Looking at it, it could have happened closer to the events related to the re-entry

of the Holy Roman Empire during the reign of Otto III in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, or when the Hungarians theoretically first occupied these areas south of the Drava River, possibly in the time of the Hungarian king Stephen I, because before that it was very unlikely, or perhaps most likely that it happened at the time after the death of Croatian King Zvonimir (after 1089) when northern Croatia was occupied by the Hungarians (the fact that at the time the basilica was still intact can be proven by the pre-Romanesque sculpture because it was certainly not made all at once, but as it was mentioned, there is no agreement about its dating). Most of the items above the ruin-related layer come from a relatively later period, from the late stages of the functioning of the so-called Bijelo Brdo culture and it could have really been destroyed only during the Mongol invasion in 1242, but such a thing would be possible only if certain types of objects were extended to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the end, perhaps no historical event can be associated with its demolition, it is possible that it simply perished in some earthquake or fire and for some time there was no church on the site until a new late Romanesque one was built. It is possible that the old population began burying their dead around the ruins and central apse of a pre-Romanesque basilica that was not completely demolished because it was incorporated into a late Romanesque church. It is possible that a small church once stood above the large pre-Romanesque basilica, but we cannot know this because we have no archaeological evidence.

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<sup>25</sup> RUTTKAY, Alexander: Mittelalterlicher Friedhof in Ducové, Flur Kostolec, Bez. Trnava: Beitrag zum Studium der Beziehungen zwischen den sog. Reihengräberfeldern und Kirchenfriedhöfen vor dem 13. Jahrhundert. In: Darina BIALEKOVÁ – Jozef ZÁBOJNÍK (eds.): *Ethnische und kulturelle Verhältnisse an der mittleren Donau vom 6. bis zum 11. Jahrhundert*. Bratislava: Veda, 1996, pp. 391–409.

When interpreting the findings from Lóbor, which is considered an integral part of Lower Pannonia, this should theoretically be expected during the Hungarian rule in the last decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, during the reign of the Grand Duke Gejza or King Stephen I, and according to Hungarian or Croatian historiography after 1090s. Ptuj, on the other hand, was never or was very shortly, in the time of the fiercest attacks, under the Hungarians or in the zone of their influence. In all three of these positions, which are not geographically very far from each other, almost the same or very similar situation was repeated, obviously something in the applied method and interpretations of sites and objects is not good. Objects of Hungarian provenance are found more often in the directions in which the Hungarians penetrated towards Italy or Bavaria. The ethnic presence of Hungarians cannot be proven before the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and then a completely different era begins.

All the archeological research so far shows that the intensified construction of churches in Lower Pannonia began only in the middle or even more probably towards the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, entire Pannonia, as well as the Croatian state, was already within the Kingdom of Hungary (the Croatian-Hungarian Personal Union). It seems that the process of building churches in the Frankish era was interrupted by the Hungarian invasions and the collapse of the political structure. In earlier times, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, this was taken over by the Frankish administration, and we have at least three churches from that period. Is it possible that after the 10<sup>th</sup> and throughout the 11<sup>th</sup> century

there was no interest in building new churches? This issue cannot be resolved at the current stage of research – this process would certainly not be possible without a strong central government without which there is no church organization that can organize the construction of new buildings. Was Lower Pannonia at that time, from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, no man's land (*terra nullius*), and what does that actually mean?

There is no solid evidence that any Hungarian administration was organized before the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Lower Pannonia (in its western, former Carolingian part), nor that any presence of Hungarian settlements was recognized or proven, and it is not even possible to prove the Hungarian short-lived presence. Archaeological research shows that something has apparently drastically changed, for example churches have been destroyed, and the population seems to have returned to the old way of life known before the Frankish occupation. Not only in the 10<sup>th</sup>, but until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the main threat will come from the west, from the territory of the Holy Roman Empire. There are no traces of Hungarians and Hungarian finds, and this is what distinguishes this part of Pannonia from the northern parts of the Pannonian Plain, and from those along the northern edges of the Carpathian Basin, where such a thing began to be observed already during the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to the spread of characteristic objects, mostly related to the fashion of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century, and spread over wide areas of Central Europe, in the Pannonian Plain, they are usually associated with the spread of the so-called Bičelo Brdo culture that has no other links with the area of today's Slovakia.<sup>26</sup> In the

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<sup>26</sup> Točík, Anton: *Altmagyarische Gräberfelder in der Südwestslowakei. Archaeologica Slovaca Catalogi*, vol. 3. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej Akadémie vied, 1968 and RUTTKAY, Alexander:

centuries following the establishment of the Croatian-Hungarian personal union in this part of the country, the domestic nobility, but also the Hungarian nobility if it can be judged by the names and surnames, will be more visible in this part of the country, but that is already the time of medieval feudal relations when marriage among the nobility was common. Since the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Lower Pannonia, more commonly called Slavonia, will have its own territory and autonomy. Neither the territory nor the autonomy will always be the same, but over time it will become larger. The entire local population and the nobility (Slavic, Croatian and Hungarian) will participate in its further development. There will be no class differences between them.

## Conclusion

The great cultural similarity of these two areas of Pannonia separated by the Drava River from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century is visible by the results of archaeological research. The same or similar processes are taking place throughout the area as in other parts of the former Frankish Pannonia. The duchy was not occupied by the Hungarians in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century, but it was no longer part of the Frankish Empire. A certain setback in relation to other parts of Europe is most visible in the absence of the erection of significant buildings – mostly churches. Objects appeared in the graves that had

not existed before in the burial customs, and this is undoubtedly a deviation from the tradition that was present in the 9<sup>th</sup> and early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries and the settings spread by Frankish missionaries. It seems that Lower Pannonia was connected with Croatia (it is possible that it was ruled for a short time and with interruptions by Croats who separated from those in Dalmatia and Croats from Dalmatia) and with Hungary (most likely during the reign of King Stephen I it joined his kingdom or was more strongly associated with it). It is strongly influenced by both Croatia and Hungary – but it always had a certain uniqueness, although it is difficult to determine what makes it unique. It is possible that it had its own nobility, its own self-government and it is possible that it was independent until the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, judging by the findings in the graves, because there are no other representative things, such as new churches. Claims that it was no man's land (*terra nullius*) until the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century sound unrealistic. The Holy Roman Empire determined how free it was because it had constantly been moving the border to the east to the detriment of Lower Pannonia since the founding of the border margraviate in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. It is possible that the threats from that side led to increased ties with the southern and northern entities. At the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century it was finally more closely associated with Hungary.

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O slovensko-maďarských vzťahoch po rozpade Veľkej Moravy. Archeologické a historické aspekty. In: *Slovenské štúdié*, 1992, nr. 2, pp. 159–165.

# Marianka and Croatian Pilgrims in the Early Modern Period

Mariánka a chorvátski pútnici v novoveku / Marianka i hrvatski  
hodočasnici u novom vijeku

*U članku se daje pregled hrvatske hodočasničke aktivnosti u novom vijeku s posebnim naglaskom na hodočašća u Marianku. Raspravlja se o omiljenim hodočasničkim mjestima Hrvata u novom vijeku, o običaju sahranjivanja s medaljicama, o omiljenim medaljicama i prikazima na njima te o brojnosti i umjetničkim prikazima na medaljicama kod pavlina. Povezuju se dva hodočasnička mjesta – Remete u Hrvatskoj i Marianka u Slovačkoj, kao dva omiljena hodočasnička mjesta poticana od Habsburške dinastije.*

**Ključne riječi:** *Hodočašća, pavlini, Marinaka, Remete, medaljice*

In Croatia, the Baroque is characterized by three phenomena: the Catholic Revival, the establishment of a stronger state in a military and administrative sense, and absolutism. The Counter-Reformation and Catholic Revival confirmed the Church's important place in society. Alongside monks and diocesan clergy, confraternities were also great promoters of popular piety, and they followed iconographic patterns and post-Trident piety.

Emperor Leopold I (1640–1705) established the so-called sacral representation, i.e., the religious and political ideology of the Habsburg monarchy in the Baroque Period. It implied fostering Catholic piety through reverence for the Eucharist, Blessed Virgin Mary, saints, and pilgrimages, making Leopold an excellent representative of Habsburg piety, i.e., of the so-called *Pietas Austriaca*. For his contemporaries, this form of piety was among

the main qualities a ruler should possess. The concept of *Pietas Austriaca* was based on the assumption that God granted the Austrian royal family a special mission to protect the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic Church from heresy. The royal family gave significance to pilgrimages and political importance to pilgrimage sites. Pilgrimages were considered the central element of sacral legitimization of newly-crowned rulers and their marriages, as well as important elements in producing male heirs and earning military victories. Emperor Leopold I, serves as a great example of the role of certain pilgrimage centres in that representation, especially Altötting in Bavaria, Mariazell in Austria, Stará Boleslav in Bohemia, and Marianka in Slovakia, formerly a part of the Kingdom of Hungary. All these holy places can be interpreted as the four strata of his sacral representation that have to do with his four main titles: Holy Roman

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Emperor, Archduke of Austria, King of Bohemia, and King of Hungary.<sup>1</sup>

## Early modern burial rites in Croatia

Early modern burial rites in Croatia were usually conditioned by local traditions. At that time, the territory of present-day Croatia was divided between the Habsburg monarchy, the Ottoman Empire, and the Republic of Venice. Although these historical and cultural circumstances should not yield uniform religious customs, preliminary data shows evident uniformity of post-Trident piety at all sites included in the research, with only some local variations.

The percentage of devotional objects discovered in graves varies from 25 to 35 percent, and it depends on the degree to which the cemetery has been excavated.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, the percentage of the overall number of finds in graves varies depending on the degree of excavation. Unfortunately, due to the poor degree of excavation and even lower rates of publishing finds, at Dalmatian cemeteries, only the types of piety that appear on the medals can be defined. Compared to other devotional objects, medals dominate most early modern cemeteries. Medals from pilgrimage sites are the most numerous at all cemeteries, followed by medals

with images of saints, and medals portraying various Marian devotions (the Virgin Immaculate, Queen of the Holy Rosary, Our Lady's *Seven Sorrows*) at the end.<sup>3</sup> Veneration of saints was above all dependent on monastic orders active in the given area. They all share a common pronounced veneration of the Virgin Mary through pilgrimages, veneration of saints, and praying the Rosary.

Early modern pilgrimages of Croatian believers were mostly directed towards the area of Austria, Bavaria, and Italy, with individual examples of pilgrimages to more distant areas. It can also be noted that people from Dalmatia visited pilgrimage sites in Italy more than other sites and that they very seldom travelled to sites that are in present-day Central Europe. People from continental Croatia travelled to Italy, as well as to Austria, Germany, Bohemia, and Slovakia.<sup>4</sup> Pilgrim medals from the area of Dalmatia dominantly reflected the veneration of Our Lady of Loreto. The most common saint was Franciscan Anthony of Padua, while Saint Benedict, very popular in continental Croatia, could be found in Dalmatia only rarely. Early modern piety in Dalmatia was more directed towards the veneration of the Virgin Mary and founding confraternities, which was characteristic of piety in western Adriatic in the early modern period as well.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SERFŐZŐ, Szabolcs: Pilgrimages of Emperor Leopold I in Central Europe. In: *Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti*, a. 41, 2017, pp. 59–66 and 60.

<sup>2</sup> AZINOVIC BEBEK, Ana: Wallfahrtsbeziehungen zwischen Kroatien und Österreich im Spiegel von Wallfahrtsmedaillen. In: *MEMO Sonderband*, a. 1, 2022; KÜHTREIBER, Thomas (ed.): *Wallfahrt und Regionalität in Mitteleuropa in der Frühen Neuzeit (17.–18. Jahrhundert)*. Krems an der Donau: Institut für Realienskunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit, 2012, pp. 133–143, p. 135, Pdf-Format, doi: 10.25536/2022sb01\_06.

<sup>3</sup> EADEM: Early Modern Cemeteries Lobar, Ilok and Rijeka; Similarities and Differences in Funeral Customs. In: KRZMAR, Siniša u.a. (Eds.): *Life and death in mediaeval and early modern times: Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Mediaeval Archaeology*. Zagreb: Institute of Archaeology, 2020, pp. 261–270 and 265.

<sup>4</sup> AZINOVIC BEBEK, Ana: Wallfahrtsbeziehungen zwischen Kroatien und Österreich, p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> PRIJATELJ PAVIČIĆ, Ivana: *Kroz Marijin ružičnjak*. Split: Književni krug, 1998, p. 49.

The number of pilgrim medals discovered and analysed thus far from all of Croatia indicates that the favourite early modern pilgrimage sites for Croatians at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century were Mariazell, Altötting, Cologne, Taferl, and Loreto. Only Marianka was identified out of pilgrimage sites on the territory of present-day Slovakia.

All pilgrimage sites were situated on the territory of the Holy Roman Empire, aside from the ones on the territory of present-day Italy. It can be assumed that it took a pilgrim from Zagreb eight to ten days of travel to reach Mariazell and Taferl, while it took them around 20 days to get to Loret or Cologne. It took them around ten days from Zagreb to reach Marianka. As far as it can be concluded, common people mostly went on pilgrimages that took ten to twenty days in one direction. The custom of pilgrimages taken by whole parishes, towns, regions, or nations to a pilgrimage site is confirmed by the data about Croatian pilgrimage day in Mariazell or Aachen's practice of showing relics on different spots in the town to different nations (Slavic peoples were shown the relics in a small square in front of the Aachen cathedral).<sup>6</sup>

Unlike medieval pilgrimages, the early modern ones were shorter and restricted to local or regional pilgrimage sites. It was a custom for the believer to visit more than one shrine during their lifetime, and

sometimes even for them to join a collective pilgrimage to a significant pilgrimage site. Group pilgrimages were part of *Demonstratio Catholica*, and it was believed that group prayers reached the Gateway of Heaven more easily and quickly."<sup>7</sup> Pilgrimages were an important instrument of the *Fidei Catholicae* propaganda; however, they were never obligatory like the regular celebration of Mass was. Participation in a pilgrimage was always a matter of choice and personal decision of each individual believer.<sup>8</sup>

There has been an interest in the topic of pilgrimage for around eighty years within the Croatian scholarly community. The first studies on pilgrimages of Croatians began with the research of medieval sources, mostly final testaments which included information on testamentary legates, the persons who went on pilgrimages to the site previously agreed upon instead of the testator. In the High and Late Middle Ages, they mostly went on pilgrimages to Rome, Assisi, Santiago de Compostela, and the Holy Land.<sup>9</sup> Historical research gained more momentum with the archaeological excavation in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century resulting in greater interest in the analysis and publication of research on pilgrimages and devotional objects. Early modern pilgrimages, devotional objects, and burial rites have especially been in researchers' focus in the last ten years. In

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<sup>6</sup> BUDAK, Neven: Hrvatska hodočašća u Aachen. In: *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Zagreb*, a. 24, 1991, pp. 15–21 and 19.

<sup>7</sup> FASSBINDER, Stefan: Abschied von der Dichotomie? Von mittelalterlichen Nah- und barocken Fernwallfahrten. In: BRATHER, Sebastian et al. (eds.): *Archäologie als Sozialgeschichte. Studien zu Siedlung, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im frühgeschichtlichen Mitteleuropa. Festschrift Heiko Steuer*. Rahden: VML, 1999, pp. 135–13 and p. 135.

<sup>8</sup> IDEM: Wallfahrt, Andacht und Magie, Religiöse Anhänger und Medaillen. In: *Beiträge zur neuzeitliche Frömmigkeitsgeschichte Südwestdeutschlands aus archäologischer Sicht. Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters*, Beiheft 18. Bonn: Rheinland-Verlag, 2003, p. 123.

<sup>9</sup> LADIĆ, Zoran: Prilog proučavanju hodočašćenja iz Zadra u drugoj polovici 14. stoljeća. In: *Croatica Christiana periodica*, vol. 17, 1993, nr. 32, pp. 17–31 and 18.

continental Croatia,<sup>10</sup> as well as in Istria,<sup>11</sup> publications of devotional objects as results of archaeological excavations are more and more common, while Dalmatia<sup>12</sup> lags considerably regarding interest and the number of publications.

## On pilgrim medals

The decree On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of Saints, and on Sacred Images passed at the Council of Trent is important for observing the veneration

- <sup>10</sup> MIRNIK, Ivan: Trsatske medaljice. In: *Dometi*, a. 11–12, 1992, pp. 501–506; DOBRINIĆ, Julijan, Riječke i trsatske zavjetne medalje, medaljice i medaljoni. Rijeka: Dobrinić&Dobrinić d.o.o., 2001; BELAJ, Juraj: Interpretiranje novovjekovnih nalaza iz grobne crkve Sv. Martina u Prozorju. In: *Prilozi Instituta za arheologiju u Zagrebu*, a. 23, 2006, pp. 257–294; AZINović BEBEK, Ana: *Novovjekovni nabožni predmeti nađeni prigodom arheoloških istraživanja na lokalitetima sjeverozapadne Hrvatske: Ph.D. Thesis*, University of Zagreb, 2012; GLAVAŠ, Vedrana: Izvješće o probnom arheološkom istraživanju lokaliteta Senj – Pavlinski Trg. In: *Senjski zbornik*, a. 39, 2012, pp. 35–74.; RAPAN PAPEŠA, Anita: Nalazi krunica iz grobova oko crkve Sv. Ilije na Meraji u Vinkovcima. In: PETKOVIĆ, Danijel (ed.): *Opera archaeologica & historico-topographica. Arheološki i povijesno-topografski radovi*. Vinkovci: Gradski muzej Vinkovci, 2012, pp. 187–210; AZINović BEBEK, Ana (ed.): *Tihi svjedoci vjere, baštine i raskoši. Konzervatorsko-restauratorski radovi, crkva sv. Nikole biskupa u Žumberku*. Zagreb: Hrvatski restauratorski zavod, 2017; AZINović BEBEK, Ana – JANEŠ, Andrej: Groblje oko crkve sv. Nikole biskupa u Žumberku. In: KRZMAR, Siniša et al. (eds.): *Groblja i pogrebni običaji u srednjem i ranom novom vijeku na prostoru sjeverne Hrvatske*. Zagreb: Institut za arheologiju, 2016, pp. 123–139; AZINović BEBEK – JANEŠ, Andrej: Kasnosrednjovjekovno i novovjekovno groblje uz crkvu Uznesenja Blažene Djevice Marije u Rijeci. In: RADIĆ ŠTIVIĆ, Nikolina – VIŠNJIĆ, Josip (eds.): *Pul Vele Crikve, Arheološka istraživanja riječkog kasnosrednjovjekovnog i ranonovovjekovnog groblja*. (in press.); MAŠIĆ, Boris: Hodočasničke medaljice iz Remeta. In: *Vjesnik arheološkog Muzeja u Zagrebu*, a. XLIII, 2010, nr. 3, pp. 205–227 2010; IDEM: *Religijske medaljice u srednjovjekovnoj arheološkoj zbirci Muzeja Grada Zagreba*. Zagreb: Muzej Grada Zagreba, 2014; PERKIĆ, Domagoj: Zaštitna arheološka istraživanja Crkve sv. Duha u Mušaluku kod Ličkog Osika. In: *Lička revija*, 2015, pp. 33–49; IDEM: Crkva sv. Jurja u Mateškom Selu: nalazi iz grobova kasnoga srednjeg i novog vijeka. In: *Prilozi Instituta za arheologiju u Zagrebu*, a. 34, 2017, pp. 185–226; VIŠNJIĆ, Josip: Preliminarno izvješće o provedenim probnim i zaštitnim arheološkim istraživanjima u Iloku 2012. godini. In: *Hrvatski restauratorski zavod: Izvješće o radu u 2012. godini*. Zagreb 2013; IDEM: Preliminarno izvješće o provedenim dodatnim probnim i zaštitnim arheološkim istraživanjima u Iloku tijekom 2013. godini. In: *Hrvatski restauratorski zavod: Izvješće o radu u 2013. godini*. Zagreb 2014.
- <sup>11</sup> KRNJAK, Ondina: Svetačke medaljice iz Brkača kod Motovuna. In: *Histria Archaeologica*, a. 35, 2004, pp. 111–142; EADEM: Svetačke medaljice iz Arheološkog muzeja Istre u Puli. In: *Acta Numismatica, Zbornik radova 5. međunarodnog numizmatičkog kongresa u Hrvatskoj*, 2008, pp. 139–152; EADEM: Svetačke medaljice – pobožna znamenja žiteljica samostana Sv. Teodore u Puli [Le medagliette devozionali – insegne religiose delle abitanti in convento di S. Teodoro a Pola]. In: *Katalog / Catalogo*, 81, Pula: Arheološki muzej Istre, 2010; EADEM: Vjerski život. In: *TEMPORIS SIGNA – Arheološka svjedočanstva istarskog novovjekovlja, katalog izložbe*, Pula: Arheološki muzej Istre, 2016, pp. 307–371.
- <sup>12</sup> BOŽEK, Sanja: Arheološka istraživanja na groblju kod crkve sv. Stjepana u Brelima. In: *Makarsko primorje*, a. 3, 1997, pp. 103–115; BURIĆ, Tonči: I ritrovamenti più antichi di rosari in Dalmazia. In: *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, a. 30, 2005, pp. 199–237; VRKIĆ, Šime: Svetačke medaljice iz stare crkve Sv. Jurja u Kruševu kod Obrovca. In: *Diadora, glasilo Arheološkog muzeja u Zadru*, a. 28, 2014, pp. 239–268; IDEM: Svetačke medaljice i drugi religiozni predmeti iz sv. Nikole u Zadru. In: BEKIĆ, Luka (ed.): *Sveti Nikola u Zadru. Arheološko iskopavanje u samostanskom sklopu sv. Nikola u Zadru 2014–2016*. Zadar: Međunarodni centar za podvodnu arheologiju u Zadru, 2017, pp. 171–187; MIRNIK, Ivan: Numizmatički nalazi ispod dubrovačkog episkopalnog kompleksa građevina / Numismatic Finds underneath the Dubrovnik Episcopal Centre., Dubrovnik: Društvo prijatelja dubrovačke starine, 2020; PERKIĆ, Domagoj: Svetačke medaljice, križevi i krunice iz fundusa Arheološkog muzeja u Dubrovniku, katalog, Dubrovnik: Dubrovački Muzej, 2020; MANENICA, Hrvoje: Ostatci crkve sv. Petra na Prosci u Pagu. In: *Diadora, glasilo Arheološkog muzeja u Zadru*, a. 31, 2018, pp. 177–197; PERKIĆ, Domagoj: Svetačke i hodočasničke medaljice iz Župe dubrovačke. In: *Zbornik Dubrovačkih muzeja*, a. 3, 2016, pp. 43–67.

of saints phenomenon. Among other things, the decree approved the role of images in the liturgy (Latin: *imago*; includes sculptures and statues as well), confirmed their validity, and emphasized their significance in religious education. Pilgrim medals clearly adhere to the rules of representation of saints. Due to the confined space for the image, they had to be very clear and easily recognizable to everyone.<sup>13</sup> Attributes and inscriptions of saints provided help with interpreting the image.

Images on medals discovered in graves at early modern cemeteries in continental Croatia are almost perfectly balanced – around 1/3 can be assigned to the group of medals with images of saints, around 1/3 to the group of medals with images venerating the Virgin Mary, and 1/3 to the pilgrim medal group.<sup>14</sup>

Pilgrim medals were mementos from pilgrimages. They have roots in miraculous images and statues venerated in certain pilgrimage sites. Miraculous images and statues are always items that can be moved (for processions), clothed, crowned, or built up upon.<sup>15</sup>

They are often artworks created in the Late Middle Ages and therefore, being archaic, are suitable for achieving a mystical effect. The early modern custom of statue clothing and crowning is usually marked with a larger celebration and recorded in Church archives, which helps with dating the medals. Medals with images of pilgrimage sites can be, with some caution, considered the proof of pilgrimage to the site depicted on the

medal. There are three basic ways in which a believer could get hold of the medal:

- On the pilgrimage
- Through donation; someone close to them could bring them the medal as a gift
- By buying the medal from a travelling merchant at a fair

We can never be absolutely sure which way the deceased individual obtained the medal. However, the probability that the pilgrimage was performed is high (whether in person or indirectly). Therefore, all pilgrim medal finds were taken as possible proofs of pilgrimage and they were interpreted as such. More data on the actual number of pilgrims can be found in pilgrimage sites' archival books.<sup>16</sup>

Pilgrim medals can be identified by the image of Mary venerated in the given pilgrimage site. She is usually dressed in a bell-shaped mantle, just like the Baby Jesus she holds in her arms. She is depicted with her attributes (sceptre, clouds, candlesticks, apple, angels, etc.) which, alongside the way she is dressed, crowned, and positioned (standing, sitting, with only her bust or with the whole image depicted, etc.) indicate which Mary this is. This depiction of the Virgin Mary can always be found on the obverse of the medal, while the reverse can include a favourite saint of the site, a saint of the order controlling the pilgrimage site, sometimes the pilgrimage church, and so on. The greatest help in identification is the inscription, naturally, if preserved.

<sup>13</sup> AZINović BEBEK, Ana: Novovjekovni nabožni predmeti nađeni prigodom arheoloških istraživanja na lokalitetima sjeverozapadne Hrvatske, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> EADEM: Early Modern Cemeteries Lobar, Ilok and Rijeka; Similarities and Differences in Funeral Customs, p. 263.

<sup>15</sup> FASSBINDER, Stefan: Wallfahrt, Andacht und Magie, Religiöse Anhänger und Medaillen, p. 125.

<sup>16</sup> AZINović BEBEK, Ana: Novovjekovni nabožni predmeti nađeni prigodom arheoloških istraživanja na lokalitetima sjeverozapadne Hrvatske, p. 31.



Figures 1 a and b: Oval medal discovered in Remete with the image of St. Maria Thall on the obverse (with imperial crown, in bell-shaped mantle, with crowned Baby Jesus in her left and a sphere in her right arm, inscription: PATRONA+HVNGAR:V:M:TALLE (Virgo Maria Tallensis Patrona Hungariae), on the bottom under the line: · O · S · PAVLI · P · E · F · F · I · V (Ordo Sancti Pauli Primi Eremiti Facto Fieri IV) and St. Paul of Thebes and St. Anthony the Great on the reverse (each of them sitting under a palm tree, St. Paul in a dress made of palm leaves, with his left hand on his knee and his right hand on his chest, St. Anthony with a book in his lap; a raven on the top and in the middle carrying bread in his beak, signature under the bottom line: GP, inscription: S.PAVLVS.P.EREM.S.ANTONIVS.ABB. (sanctus Paulus primus eremitus, sanctus Antonius abbas – St. Paul Hermit, St. Anthony Hermit)), measurements: 12.45 g; 43.4 x 27.3 mm; cast bronze



Figure 2 a and b: Oval medal discovered in Čazma with the image of St. Maria Thall on the obverse (with imperial crown, in bell-shaped mantle, with crowned Baby Jesus in her left arm and a sphere in her right, inscription: PATRONA · HVNGAR : V : M : TALLE; (Virgo Maria Tallensis Patrona Hungariae) · O · S · PAVLI · P · E · F · F · I · V, G-P (Ordo Sancti Pauli Primi Eremiti Facto Fieri IV Georg Pfründt) and of St. Paul of Thebes and St. Anthony the Great on the obverse (palm, on the top a raven carrying a small bread, on the bottom signature GP, inscription: S · PAVLVS · P · EREM · S · ANTONIVS · ABB; (sanctus Paulus primus eremitus, sanctus Antonius abbas - St. Paul Hermit, St. Anthony Hermit)), measurements: 13.3 g; 45 x 27 mm; cast bronze with more traces of copper, gilded



Figure 3 a and b: Oval medal discovered in Remete with the image of St. Maria Thall on the obverse (in bell-shaped mantle, with Jesus in her left arm, rays around them, inscription: B V TALL IN HVNG (Beata Virgo Maria Tallensis in Hungaria) and St. Joseph on the reverse (with his right profile, with a halo and a beard, holding Baby Jesus in his left arm, inscription: SAN IOSE), measurements: 3.4 g; 25.5 x 16.8 mm; cast bronze

## Medals from Marianka

There are three medals from Marianka published in the Croatian scholarly literature. Two of them were discovered during the excavation of the Pauline monastery of Blessed Virgin Mary in Remete's cemetery<sup>17</sup> in Zagreb, while one was discovered in the research of the parish church of St. Mary Magdalene in Čazma.<sup>18</sup>

Mary is depicted crowned with the imperial crown, in a bell-shaped mantle, with a small crowned Jesus in her left and a sphere in her right arm. The image usually comes with the inscription *Virgo Maria Tallensis Patrona Hungariae*. Two medals are identical (Fig. 1 – 2). One of them was discovered in a grave in the parish church of St. Mary Magdalene in Čazma, the other in a grave in the Pauline monastery in Remete in Zagreb. They were authored by the same person, Georg Pfründt, a Pauline monk and medal maker, who signed them (GP · O · S · PAVLI · P · E · F · F · I · V *Georg Pfründt Ordo Sancti Pauli Primi Eremiti Facto Fieri IV*). The reverse of the two

medals shows the patron saints of the Pauline order, St. Paul of Thebes and St. Anthony the Great. They are depicted sitting underneath a palm tree, St. Paul of Thebes in a dress made of palm leaves, with his left hand on his knee, and the right hand on his chest. St. Anthony the Great is depicted with a book in his lap and there is a raven carrying bread in his beak in the middle. The third medal (Fig. 3), discovered in the Pauline Monastery in Remete in Zagreb, depicts Mary from Marianka wearing a bell-shaped mantle. The reverse shows St. Joseph with Baby Jesus in his arms.

## On Pauline Fathers, Marianka, and Remete

The Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit is a solitary or hermitic order established in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Kingdom of Hungary and Croatia by uniting hermits in a monastic community. The order soon expanded throughout entire Central Europe. At its peak, it had 207 monasteries across European countries, 127 of them

<sup>17</sup> The Blessed Virgin Mary Monastery in Remete in Zagreb was founded in the last quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It suffered multiple Ottoman attacks in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, but despite those attacks, the Pauline Fathers of Remete did not abandon the monastery. It was active until the order was abolished in a 1786 Patent by Emperor Joseph II. The former monastery was turned into a parish in 1812. Archaeological excavation was conducted between 2007 and 2009 in most of the southern plateau along the today's parish church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Remete's southern façade. On that occasion, two earlier sacral structures were revealed. The modern, present-day parish church is of the same style as the two earlier structures. Altogether 282 graves were excavated, containing around 30 % of devotional objects (medals with images of saints, crosses, and rosaries). Alongside monks, laymen were also buried at the Remete monastic cemetery. High pilgrim activity was observed, especially towards Styria and Bavaria, but also to more distant pilgrimage sites such as Częstochowa, Cologne, Rome, and Loreto. (AZINOVIC BEBEK, 2012, p. 19).

<sup>18</sup> There were a Dominican monastery and St. Mary Magdalene's church in the town of Čazma from 1229. In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottomans captured Čazma and made it the centre of their Sanjak of Čazma (1552–1559) with a military crew consisting of 1400 soldiers. After the withdrawal of the Ottomans, the return of the normal life and reconstruction of Čazma began. Archaeological excavation was conducted in 1991 (by Čazma City Museum, Institute of Art History, IGH Institute), and in 2003 and 2005 (by Croatian Conservation Institute). The area of the northern and southern nave was completely excavated, as well as the western part of the main nave of St. Mary Magdalene's parish church in Čazma. Many functional finds and devotional object were discovered in 136 burials. Almost 56 percent of graves contained finds. A high pilgrim activity was recorded in Čazma as well. (AZINOVIC BEBEK, 2012, pp. 12–13).

in Croatia and Hungary. From 1577 onwards, the seat of the supreme head (governor) of the order was in Lepoglava, and in 1699 the Croatian Province seceded from the province in Hungary. In Croatia, the Pauline Fathers first came to Dubica (1244), after which they built a monastery in Remete near Zagreb (1278). Most of their monasteries were destroyed by Ottoman raids, and from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they were present only in Istria and the northwest of Croatia, alongside the aforementioned sites. Despite being a hermitic order, they gained large estates from nobility, making them a strong and wealthy order that expanded their activity to the economy, religion, preaching, and cultural realms. They founded the first Croatian grammar school in Lepoglava in 1503, a predecessor of public grammar schools. Even though the school was founded for the needs of the young Pauline Fathers, laymen could also study there. The order was abolished on the territory of Habsburg monarchy by Emperor Joseph II in 1786; only two monasteries in present-day Poland remained.<sup>19</sup> On that occasion, all monasteries in Croatia were closed. The Pauline Fathers returned to Croatia in 1972, to their former monastery of Kamensko near Karlovac. Today they also have their monasteries of Svetice and Sv. Petar u Šumi (Saint Peter in the Forest) are united in the Croatian Pauline province.

Marianka (Maria Thall) is the national, and the oldest, pilgrimage site in Slovakia situated near Bratislava. The church was constructed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and the Pauline monastery was built in the same century. Since 1603, the votive statue of Madonna, similar to the one in Mariazell, is worshiped. Aside

from having great religious significance, Marianka also played an important role in the Counter-Reformation activities of the Catholic Church in the Kingdom of Hungary, where, with around 70 – 80 percent, the Protestant population was dominant around 1600.<sup>20</sup> It is thought that Georgius Lippay, Archbishop of Esztergom, contributed the most to the veneration of the miraculous Madonna statue. Many kings, noblemen, and Church dignitaries would come to Marianka on pilgrimage. From the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, alongside Mariazell, Stará Boleslav, and Altötting, Marianka played a vital role in the representation of the Habsburg dynasty. The first visit of the royal family was recorded in 1647. The visits were always linked to crowning ceremonies or visits to royal estates and served as a way of legitimizing the royal family. For instance, Ferdinand IV visited the site with his father Ferdinand III and Archbishop Lippay after he was crowned the King of Hungary and Croatia in 1647 upon which he gifted the site generously with funds for the renovation of the church. Leopold I also cherished the custom of pilgrimage to Marianka. He even signed the wall during a lunch in the Pauline refectory, praising the Blessed Virgin Mary. Among other things, Marianka was the favourite spot for weddings of Slovakian nobility, upon which they gifted dresses made of bride and groom's wedding attire to the Virgin Mary.

The church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Remete, an advocate of Croats, is situated in Zagreb. At the entrance to the church is an inscription in stone, "*This church was built by the Marian devotion*". The Remete monastery dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and, alongside

<sup>19</sup> Jasna Góra Monastery in Czenstochowa and Saint Michael the Archangel Monastery in Kraków.

<sup>20</sup> SERFŐZŐ, Szabolcs: Pilgrimages of Emperor Leopold I in Central Europe, p. 62.

Lepoglava monastery, it was the most important Pauline monastery in Croatia. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it was destroyed by the Ottomans, and after the Pauline order was abolished, the site was under the Carmelites' administration. Since the Blessed Virgin Mary in Remete was beloved and honoured from the early days and the site of pilgrimage for leading Croatian nobility, bans, heads of counties, bishops, priests, monks, and believers, it acquired the title of *Advocata Croatiae* in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

A well-known Pauline monk and painter Ivan Krstitelj Ranger (1700 – 1753) worked in the Lepoglava monastery in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During the restoration of the priory room in Lepoglava in 1729, he painted the image of a saint in a carriage pulled by two lions (Fig. 4) and two medallions with the names of two Pauline monasteries (Remete in Croatia and Marianka in Slovakia) bound by the veneration of the Virgin Mary.<sup>21</sup>

A medallion with the inscription DIVA / VIRGO REMETENSIS / IN CROATIA (Fig. 5) held by two angels can be seen alongside the right northern edge of the fragment. On the left (southern) side, a medallion with the inscription DIVA VIRGO M. TALLENSIS / IN HUNGARIA (Fig. 6) can be seen. It clearly mentions the Blessed Virgin Mary of Thall. The medallions were dedicated to the two Pauline monasteries that venerated the Blessed Virgin Mary – Remete in Zagreb and Thall, i.e., Marianka in present-day Slovakia. It can be assumed that the fragment was part of a larger image with a central scene that included a saint in a carriage surrounded by medallions with names of other important Pauline monasteries.

## Conclusion

Three out of four pilgrimage centres were identified (excluding Stará Boleslav) were identified on pilgrim medals discovered in Croatia. Mariazell medals are dominant among them (60 items), followed by medals from Altötting (around ten items) and medals from Marianka (3 medals). Out of Pauline pilgrimage sites, the site of Częstochowa was also confirmed with 3 more medals. Comparison with other monastic orders (the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans) points to a conclusion that the Pauline Fathers were not particularly insistent on religious medals. The number of medals with the images of Franciscan, Jesuit, and Dominican saints, as well as the pilgrim sites of these orders, is multiple times greater than the number of Pauline saints and sites on pilgrim medals. Jesuit and Franciscan saints dominate.

Although they are not as numerous, medals with the image of the pilgrim site of Marianka stand out with their beauty and exquisite artistic value. They were produced by the well-known medal maker and Pauline monk Georg Pfründt, who worked in Nürnberg (1603 – 1663). His signature is GP; he signed both the obverse and the reverse of the medals and emphasized that he was a Pauline monk. Thanks to the fact that the Pauline Fathers promoted science, education, and art and to the activity of Ivan Krstitelj Ranger, Pauline painter, two medallions with the names of two Pauline monasteries (Remete in Croatia and Marianka in Slovakia) were preserved in the priory room in Lepoglava, the centre of the order. The Paulines Fathers are noted as the order that contributed to the artistic expression

<sup>21</sup> JELENČIĆ, Miroslav: Fragment zidne slike s prikazom sveca u trijumfalnoj kočiji. In: *Portal*, a. 6, 2015, pp. 149–160 and 149.

