

Book of Abstracts

Spheres of Interaction



Contacts and Relationships
between the Balkans and Adjacent Regions
in the Late Bronze Age / Iron Age
(13t/12th - 6/5th BCE)

PERSPECTIVES
ON BALKAN ARCHAEOLOGY



Perspectives on Balkan Archaeology
(PeBA)

Spheres of Interaction

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Contacts and Relationships between the Balkans and adjacent regions in the Late Bronze and Iron Age (13/12th–6/5th BCE)

15–17 September 2017
Institute of Archaeology Belgrade

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Conference Concept

The main objective of the conference(s) *Perspectives on Balkan Archaeology* is to provide a setting for the establishment of a sustainable and cross-border network of senior and young scholars from the Central and South-Eastern Europe, who deal with the prehistoric archaeology of the Balkans regions in a scientific way and thereby counteract the national and nationalistic narratives.

The concept of this year's conference is the role of the Balkans as a bridge between the Mediterranean and Europe – a fact that has become painfully apparent also during the latest events. The very same route along the rivers Vardar and Morava was one of the main communications already throughout the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. In addition to the river basin of Struma and Maritsa or the Adriatic coast it allowed interregional connections and relationships between various areas of the Southern Europe and adjacent regions that often affected their sociocultural development and could even shape the identity of individual groups. The conference *Spheres of Interactions* focuses on the general process as well as individual features of this interregional connections between the Late Bronze and Iron Age communities in the Balkans and the Aegean, the Apennine Peninsula, the Black Sea region, the Southeast Alps or the Carpathian Basin.

Following questions are going to be addressed:

- How are contacts and relationships expressed in material culture? How do relationships materialize in settlements, grave contexts, and sanctuaries or in certain (burial) rituals or technological choices?
- If connections are visible in the archaeological record, how can they be interpreted? Are they perceivable as stable and permanent or as variable networks? Are buffer-zones, contact zones or isolated regions identifiable?
- Can spheres of interaction be shown to change over time?
- How are different chronological systems affecting supra-regional studies and how can this issue be addressed?

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Friday, September 15th 2017

Chairs:

Prof. Dr. Miloš Jevtić
Archaeological Institute, Belgrade

Prof. Dr. Mitja Guštin
*Institute for Mediterranean Heritage, University of Primorska,
Koper*

09:15–09:30

Introduction

Miloš Jevtić

09:30–09:50

Introduction to the Conference

Mario Gavranović – Daniela Heilmann
*Institute for Oriental and European Archaeology, Austrian
Academy of Sciences, Vienna – Graduate School Distant Worlds,
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09:50–10:10

The Desegregation of Former Networks and the Emergence of New Ones. The Interaction between the Apennine Peninsula and Western Balkans between MBA and the Beginning of LBA

Alberta Arena – Vedran Barbarić – Irena Radić Rossi
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The transition between Middle Bronze Age (Br. C) and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (Br. D-Ha A1) constitutes an extraordinary turning point in the history of the interactions between the Apennine Peninsula and Western Balkans.

The spatial analysis of MBA (Br B and C) ceramic and metal types provides an overall picture of the interactions across the Adriatic Sea, both in the north-south and east-west directions.

Transmarine contacts appear to be remarkably intense (between Istria and Dalmatia, as well as between Dalmatia and Italian Adriatic coast), whereas the presence of some typical “Dinara” decorations (widespread in Central Bosnia and Herzegovina) also in some sites along the Dalmatian coast and on islands, testifies some sort of communication between the “inland world” beyond the orographic barrier of the Dinaric Alps and the coastal and insular one, much more integrated in the Adriatic interaction networks.

In this period, the presence of Aegean-type pottery is limited to the southern basin. These distributions seem to indicate the existence of some sort of border that divided the Adriatic basin into two main influence zones.

At the beginning of the LBA (Br D-HaA1), the situation drastically changes, with an apparent reduction of transmarine connections and

the introgression of Aegean-type pottery in the Northern basin of the Adriatic Sea.

Even if we are able to recognize the clear desegregation of the former networks, it is extremely challenging to detect the emergence of new trajectories, since from this period, especially in some key areas for the Adriatic mobility (i.e. Dalmatia), the archaeological evidence appears to be more problematic and sketchy.

Nevertheless, through the analysis of updated archaeological record from Central Dalmatia (hillfort Rat on the Island of Brač and Vranjic in the Kaštela Bay), together with old key excavations, such as Varvara (Herzegovina), Velika Gruda (Bay of Kotor, Montenegro) and Špilja Bezdanjača (Lika, Croatia) it seems possible to advance some hypothesis on the change of relationships across the Adriatic and between coastal regions and the inland world at the beginning of LBA (Br. D-HaA1).

Methodological problems will be at the very centre of the paper, as the theme of interaction, maybe much more than that of chronological definition, needs to be addressed trying to go beyond the comparison between isolated items (random comparisons) or the distribution of isolated types.

The cores of the systems of interaction or the borders between two different systems can only be identified connecting together different kind of evidences, as the distribution of an isolated features can barely be interpreted from an historical point of view.

Objects and space will be the key point of the paper trying to connect them through different kind of spatial analysis, such as co-occurrence Analysis and Network Analysis.

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10:10–10:30

Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Central Dalmatia in the Sphere of Interaction between the Carpathian Basin, the Apennine Peninsula and the Aegean

Sabine Pabst

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The region of Central Dalmatia in the eastern Adriatic area and its hinterland represents the starting point of the paper. Even though in the region between the rivers of Neretva in the south and Krka in the north the current state of late Bronze Age and early Iron Age sources and research is unfavourable, we can observe amazing supra-regional connections in the surviving metal finds. Mostly the metal objects came to light as single or aquatic finds, sometimes they occurred in hoards or burials in caves.

In the late Bronze Age strong Carpathian influences are noticed in Central Dalmatian weaponry and costume elements. A great many of these original Carpathian metal shapes display a wider distribution area comprising parts of Italy and Greece as well. New supra-regional comparative analyses into typology, chronology and chorology of several late Bronze Age metal artefacts confirm the thesis of a wide-ranging spread via the coastal region of Central Dalmatia and the Adriatic Sea up to Central Italy and the Aegean. Especially the contacts with the Aegean area have not been one-way from north to south. Reversely we can observe several Mycenaean influences in the late Bronze Age eastern Adriatic hinterland as well. These phenomena can be interpreted as part of extensive exchange and trade connections which took place between the Mycenaean society and the local communities of the western and eastern seaboard of the upper Adriatic (in combination with smaller population movements).

The communication routes partly changed at the transition from the late Bronze Age to the early Iron Age in the 11th/10th century BC.

Early Iron Age artefacts from the north-western Balkans and Central Dalmatia are showing special connections with north-western Greece and the southern Albanian-Macedonian area. At the same time the transadriatic contacts with Central Italy became stronger and had a different character. Additional structural analyses of early Iron Age warrior equipment and costume sets of several regions now suggest a different social background. It must be assumed that a larger number of emigrants deriving from different Carpathian and north-western Balkan regions moved abroad via the coastal region of Central Dalmatia and the Adriatic Sea

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11:00–11:20

Are We All Well Connected? Challenges and Potentiality of Social Network Analysis in Exploring Interactions in the South-Western Balkans during Middle and Late Bronze Age

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In recent years the social network analysis (SNA) has become increasingly popular among archaeologists in their attempts to trace patterns and processes of interaction in past societies. In its basic definition, a network is considered as a set of nodes and links. However, the definition of what those nodes and links actually are is far from self-evident. One can consider the nodes, for example, the households in a village, and the links between them ties of marriage, or regard them as set of sites in a particular region, and their links the shared use of a particular resource. Besides the effort in pinpointing what features are relevant in reconstructing a network, and which of these are relevant in generating centrality, a very basic but critical factor that deeply influences the possibility of undertaking a solid SNA for the region under exam is the quality and quantity of data at our disposal. These are indeed often too scarce and scattered, and accessible only with difficulty.

The SW Balkans offer an ideal case study for the application of different models of connectivity, not least because of their geographical position between the Aegean and Europe, and because in the Middle and Late Bronze Age new interregional contact patterns appeared. The documentation of the archaeological record has reached by now a level that allows comparisons and conclusions, while analysis of connectivity doesn't need anymore to rely on Mycenaean artefacts alone.

The aim of this paper is to explore the potential of the use of SNA to assess interactions of Middle and Late Bronze Age societies in this

region, to identify relevant features, and to outline tracks for further research. This work relies on material culture analysis, mostly ceramics, from newly excavated sites, especially Sovjan in SE Albania, and assemblages from old excavations and collections. In particular, by exploring connectivity as well as types, duration and quality of networks that are recognizable from the archaeological record at our disposal, we will address the concept of south-western Balkans as “buffer zone” dividing (or connecting?) the Balkans and the Aegean cultural spheres.

It will also be argued, that networking between scholars is fundamental for attempting a successful SNA. This will be exemplified by presenting the preliminary results of the “Balkan Bronze Age Borderland” workshops (2015 and 2016), which aims at connecting young and established scholars who are actively researching in the region. To put it in other words, for exploring and understanding networks in past societies, it is mandatory to establish a network of scholars to enable circulation of data, share knowledge, and direct confrontation of ideas and methodologies.

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11:20–11:40

Early Iron Age Settlements and their Relations with Cemeteries in Macedonia. Social, Economic and Cultural Relationships between Regions.

Aleksandra Papazovska

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Late Bronze Age and the partially the Transitional period on the territory of the R. of Macedonia are characterized with turbulent turmoil, which caused establishment of fortified and mainly single-layer settlements on a new positions. They show specific reasons for their creation, time of existence and development, clearly reflecting the turbulent times in which they existed.

Two types of settlements can be distinguished in relation with their cemeteries. The settlements positioned on high and dominant hilltops are usually related with so called “flat cemeteries” with inhumated burials, unlike the unfortified settlements on low terraces which are connected with the cemeteries where cremation was dominant ritual practice. There are significant differences among the both types of settlements and cemeteries.

During the Early Iron Age people were organized in small family or clan communities in living mainly nomadic life in fluctuating habitats. This way of life is evident in the manner of building of the dwellings, which are usually light above-ground construction or half dugout pit-house, such are those discovered in the 5th and 6th settlement in Kastanas, the 4th settlement in Skopje fortress, or those in the 14th layer of the 3rd settlement at Vardarski Rid. This way of life was partially changed at the end of the 10th century BC, when more stabile period had come in every aspects of living. Larger family complexes were constructed in the settlements, made of stone foundations and mud brick walls. Such examples were discovered at the site Gradishte -Pelince and in the 13th layer of the 3rd settlement at Vardarski Rid, which are identical to those found in the 7th settlement in Kastanas (layers 8-5), one of the best excavated settlements of this period in the Balkans.

At the end of the 11th and beginning of the 10th century BC, iron was widely used causing stabilization of the economical and social life among the Early Iron Age communities and creating ideal conditions for establishing powerful communities, which later were historically confirmed. As a result of their economical power based on developed metallurgy, crafts and trade, the settlements of the so called “grdish-ki” type were organized on the territory of R. of Macedonia, during the Advanced Iron Age. The significant development of the spiritual life and beliefs is noticeable as well. On the other hand, the excavated cemeteries dated in the 7th and 6th centuries show demographic increased communities. All this circumstances preconditioned the establishment of the first proto-urban centers and further development of these protohistorical communities in the historic times.

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11:40–12:00

The Settlement near Chepintsi, Sofia (Bulgaria) in the Context of the Final Bronze Age in Central Balkans and Lower Danube Regions

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The Late Bronze Age data from the Central West Bulgaria are quite a few compared to those from North-West or South-West regions of the country. The investigated in 2015 settlement near Chepintsi, situated immediately north-east of Sofia residential buildings, presented some more information considering the LBA/EIA characteristics of the area. The site, with its 157 features investigated dwellings, as well as dug into the virginsoil- and ground- features could be interpreted as a two-sectored settlement with their surrounding non-residential areas.

Bronze needles and a sickle of “Knopfsicheln” group as well as a lead-weight from the site are to be mentioned first of all. The pottery assemblage is hand-made, presenting a variety of forms. The fabric is well prepared, the surface – smooth, the decoration (if present) is executed with grooves only. The pottery shapes and decoration have their best parallels in Eastern Serbia and Macedonia LBA/EIA complexes that could ascertain the date of the site to the final Late Bronze Age and the transitional period between the two ages (according to the Bulgarian prehistory periodization).

The site is probably, one of the biggest ones from that period investigated in Bulgaria so far. Analyzing its characteristics would present a primary data base for a better understanding of the cultural identity, characteristics and contacts at the end of the 2nd millennium BC in the Central Balkans.

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14:00–14:20

Connections between the Balkans and the Aegean. The case of the Iron Age Burial Customs in Northern Greece

Anne-Zahra Chemsseddoha

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Located between the Balkans and the Aegean Sea, Northern Greece is a stimulating region to observe and study cultural contacts. It is both turn toward South and the sea with the Chalcidice peninsula, the Thermaic Gulf, the Pierian coast, as well as toward North with the passes through the mountains, the Axios/Vardar River, the Pelagonian plain in the northwest and the Strymona River to the North-East. Contacts between North and South are visible since the prehistoric period, and especially in the Mycenaean period, during the EIA and the historical times with the Greek colonization, recorded in the ancient sources.

Through the modern literature, this region has been characterized as a corridor North/South, a periphery of the Greek world or of the Balkans. Since few decades, the various discoveries and excavations have actually shown that this is a place of complex relationships which are expressed in various manners depending on communities, spheres of activities, as well as a region with local original specificities. In this communication we shall see how the contacts and relationships are materialized in the Iron Age burial customs in the area between the Pindus range and the Drama plain. This region has yielded dozens of burial plots, mostly discovered by recent excavations which have deeply renewed our knowledge on the funerary rituals. It seems that connections are not expressed in the same way according to the practices (types of cemeteries, architecture of the graves, treatments of the deceased) or the funerary ideologies reflected in the burial gifts. The geographical distribution of the first displays a patchwork of small regions with specific set of practices, whereas the second displays a different geographical pattern.

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14:20–14:40

Macedonians east of the Axios River.

When, How, Why?

Ioannis Xydopoulos

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Until fairly recently, the archaeological exploration regarding the early stages of the Macedonian expansion had impressive results, but the situation has changed dramatically after the excavations conducted in the last two decades. Our data is confined mainly to the mortuary rituals, as these were conducted in the cemeteries of the period in Macedonia, something that brings us to the problem of the so-called “warrior graves“. The tumuli cemetery at Vergina is one case of tombs with weapons, while these are found also at other sites like Agrosykia Pellas and Pateli (Agios Panteleemon). It seems that being buried with weapons was commonplace in this part of the Greek world, and was not depicting the actual status of the dead during his lifetime. Regardless of the possible connection of these wealthy graves with the Macedonian royal family (with the so-called “Lady of Aegaei“ being the most spectacular example), these archaic burials suggest a stratification in society analogous to the societies of other Macedonian settlements. Symptomatic equipment almost identical to those found at Vergina and Archontiko is also attested at some archaic burial sites to the east of the Axios River, reaching up to the Anthemous valley, with that at ancient Sindos being the best known. Particularly remarkable is that the mortuary practices at Sindos are the same with those attested at Vergina and Archontiko.

Still, the main difference comes from the excavation of the cemetery at Haghia Paraskevi, in the area of Anthemous, which has yielded different finds: the 435 graves that were investigated were covered with low mounds and were organized in parallel lines. The graves contained rich grave-goods, gold lozenge-shaped sheets which covered the mouth of the deceased, silver and bronze jewellery of the so-called “Macedonian

bronzes“ bronze and iron arms and weapons made locally, clay figurines and local and imported pottery. The finds present similarities to those of the Macedonian kingdom, such as the neighbouring cemetery of Thermi, Nea Philadelphia or Sindos, and imply a flourishing community with contacts with various areas of the Aegean and close relations to Macedonia. How, then, should one interpret these similarities? In an effort to answer the question posed above, the reconstruction of the history of Macedonia in the sixth century and of the possible Macedonian expansion in the areas east of the Axios River is decisive.

The suggestion that the Macedonians advanced deep into these areas already during Amyntas' I reign is fascinating. The political expansion of the Macedonians east of the Axios cannot be confirmed by archaeology, despite the fact that the already excavated tombs in the Archontiko cemetery (in Bottiaea) are strikingly similar to those that have been discovered in Vergina (in modern Emathia but in ancient Bottiaea), in Sindos, in Haghios Athanasios and in Haghia Paraskevi. These similarities, then, perhaps indicate a common cultural environment, regardless of the inhabitants' ethnic identity in these regions (Thracians, Macedonians, non-Greeks or Greek colonists), but nothing more.

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14:40–15:00

Investigating the Interregional Influences and Life Cycle of Two Metal Vessels Used as Urns in a 4th ct. BC Intra Muros Burial at Vergina / Aegae

Athanasia Kyriakou

School of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

At Aegae, the first capital of the Macedonia kingdom, an extended necropolis has been brought to light so far. Among the numerous tombs some are characterized by impressive architectural design and grave goods of great artistry. Despite the existence of the large necropolis three burials were discovered a few years ago in the area of the sanctuary of Eukleia, in the public sector of the ancient city. Although there were no structures to denote the spot of the burials, the components certainly match the elite burials in Macedonia: metal urns, purple cloths, gold wreaths, and gold decorative attachments.

This paper aims at the investigation of the metal vessels of one of the burials that belonged to a male teenager and is dated to the late 4th c. BC: a cylindrical bronze vase and a gold pyxis. The latter was contained in the former. The bronze vessel is plainly decorated on the lid, the handles and the base, whereas the gold one bears no decoration at all. The scope of the study is to connect the two artifacts with metal vases discovered in Macedonia or neighboring regions and detect the network of actors involved in their production and use.

The examination of the two vessels builds on the publication of the gold oak tree wreath that “crowned” the cremated bones and advances the approach of the burial. Furthermore it is expected to shed more light on issues of ideology and mortuary practices addressed by the find.

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15:00–15:20

Western Frontiers of European Scythia. A Case-Study on Panoply

Denis Topal

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Western part of Scythian culture consists of Carpathian-Dniester region, Transylvania, Great Hungarian plane, Silesia, Southern Carpathian and Southern Danube regions. The histogram based on the chronological data of Scythian swords and daggers shows us s. c. “normal” or Gauss distribution — symmetrical bell-shaped curve with a maximum in the central part — in the interval between the last quarter of 6th and the 1st quarter of 5th centuries BC. Thus, Scythian akinakes is a unified tradition, continuously existing from 7th to the 4th century BC, so akinakes widely spreads after Middle East campaigns and disappears after the ruining the Great Scythia.

On the western frontiers of the Scythian world the situation does not differ too much, almost two thirds refer also to the Middle Scythian period. Less often of them (14%) belong to the final stage — Classical Scythian time. The distribution of the earliest items is connected mainly with Transylvania, Southern Carpathians and Middle Dniester. Then comes the time of the greatest distribution of akinakai — in the Middle Scythian period, especially at the end of period. This period could be really called Great Scythia, because it is the time of the widest spread of a cultural phenomena, a military complex from Volga to Oder. And the last period, the “Golden autumn” of Scythian culture also reflected in the character of the distribution of swords and daggers, their area by the nature of things reduced and akinakai then concentrate in the steppes between Danube and Dniester and to the South of the Danube.

Weaponry complex also varies from region to region. For instance, spearheads are typical mainly for the steppes between the Dniester and the Danube, the Southern Carpathians, and the principal concentration is associated with the Great Hungarian Plane. With the territory of Alföld is also linked the bulk of the finds of axes, though the akinakai

of Vekerzug culture are rare finds even on the big cemeteries. The mapping of different functional groups of akinakai gives us also an interesting picture — for example, daggers and short swords tend mainly to Transylvania and forest-steppes of Carpathian-Dniester region, while the long and extra-long swords is especially characteristic of the steppes. The correlation of various types of weapons emphasizes this important feature. E. g., the link between the axe and the spear remains a weak one, however, the axes are strongly associated with short swords, while the spear with average and long swords. The explanation for this fact is likely to lie in the similarity of functions of an axe and a long sword: both types of weapons are for slashing. Rather the presence of two kinds of slashing weapons was excessive in the panoply, so the axe (as a slashing weapon) was supplemented with a dagger (as a thrusting weapon) and the spear (as a thrusting weapon) was complemented by a slashing weapon as a long sword probably was.

Basing on the fact that the distribution of weapons with the different functions was not really uniform, we could also try to calculate the proximity between various cultural groups. And basing on the structure of the panoply we could come out at a certain typological grouping of regions. Thus we could move from small cultural groups to the cultural units, enclaves, communities of people preferred to similar types of weapons. Calculation of the strength of the proximity (using “unequal signs” method) demonstrated several of these “enclaves”. The first, “Carpathian” is based on the greatest degree of similarity between Transylvania and West-Podolian group, to which joins also the Moldavian group, the main types of this unit are the dagger or short sword and the axe. The following “Steppe” unit includes the Danube, Dniester, South Carpathian and South Danube groups characterized by spearheads and average or long swords. The last “Western” unit combined Hungarian and Polish groups with the wide spread of axes and spearheads. It should be noted that it is too early for the final conclusions on this grouping and their bizarre configuration. However, basing on the indirect evidences it could be assumed that the preferences in weaponry were influenced by a range of factors: the topography, traditions in tactics, cultural proximity etc.

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16:00–16:20

The Brand New Hoard – The Brand New Heavies

Martina Blečić Kavur – Aleksandar Jašarević

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In recent decade there has been an increased interest in research of Late Bronze Age of northern Bosnia. This resulted in the publication of new findings, revision and reinterpretation of older one. Special position in further studies will surely belong to new-found Late Bronze Age hoard from Srebrenik (northern Bosnia). The Srebrenik hoard discovered by accident 2016, is the largest hoard of bronze metal work yet found. It consist of over 150 pieces divided into group of weapons, tools, ornaments and ingots, which defined the hoard to be of large quantity and mixed composition, with diverse items preserved to a different extent. In cultural and historical aspects, it represents the application of a classical pattern of hoard finds from the south Pannonia region. Hoards with similar compositions from the Early Urnfield period, can be also found in the southeastern Alps, the southwestern Pannonian basin with Slavonia and Sylvania, and in Transylvania. In most cases, just as in this hoard, sickles predominate in terms of quantity. Analogies for the objects in it were mostly found in Bosnian hoards of the IInd phase. On the basis of chronological analysis, the hoard has been placed in the Ha A1 phase of the Central European periodization, consequently in the hoards of the IInd phase of the Urnfield culture of Continental Croatia – Veliko Nabrđe.

In all cases, the hoard is understood to have the prominent attributes of male, but unusual choice of ornaments from hoard of Srebrenik proposes and equally important female attributes. One can recognize a status suggested by some items as direct indicators of the status symbols of their possessor.

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16:20–16:40

Some Light in Dark Ages: Remarks on Cultural Continuity between Late Bronze and Early Iron Age in West Morava Basin

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The West Morava basin of Western Serbia has long tradition of archaeological investigation and is best known for the long lasting prehistoric tradition of burying under tumuli. In contrast to the Early and Middle Bronze Age, both characterized by the burial ritual comprising inhumation and incineration, our knowledge of the Late Bronze Age funerary practice is fragmentary and insufficient to reconstruct the events at the turn of the II to the I millennium BC in the region. When the middle part of the basin, the vicinity of Čačak, is in question, it seems that burial customs during this period kept basic form from the previous phases, on the first place regarding use of burial mounds, incineration and depositing remains of the deceased in urns. The site Katovac in Baluga near Čačak is the single one in the Morava valley revealing grave finds belonging to the so called transitional period from the Bronze to the Iron Age. The remains of a black-polished urn with channelled decoration represent an occasional find, where latter excavation established only one layer with pottery of Basarabi style, without any trace of older grave units. In Baluga, besides the damaged urn, there were six more vessels – presumably grave goods, all having strong parallels with contemporary cultures from the Danube valley and Central Serbia. On the others side, in the upper part of the basin, in the mountainous area of Western Serbia, the indigenous Late Bronze Age population inhumed their dead in supine position, as proven by the necropolis Stapani near Užice.

This insufficiently investigated period ends with the graves from Kalakača phase of the Bosut group found in the mound necropolis in Mojsinje and several ceramic sherds from the nearby hillforts. The

26 graves with the inhumed deceased from Mojsinje represent a rare phenomenon (along with the Stapari necropolis near Užice) from this period known to the south from the Danube and the Sava rivers. The grave inventory provided some elements to separate two burial phases, although there is no solid stratigraphic proof for it.

Archaeology of the centuries at the turn of the II to the I millennium BC, when the communities from the West Morava basin lived at the most remote edge of the urn field world, have not provided us with sufficient data to claim what happened with the Bronze Age population who incinerated their dead. The only connecting link with the Early Iron Age would be usage of tumuli in burial practice, which leads us to presume that the Late Bronze Age population went through substantial changes during the centuries immediately preceding the Iron Age *sensu stricto*, when the region was for a short time integrated in the Danubian world of the Bosut group. It can also be expected that in the area, far from the leading cultural centres, prolonged life of previous cultural patterns slowly changed and consistently kept most of its funerary practice.

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16:40–17:00

The Grave of the “Priest of Glasinac”. A Forgotten Fateful Find of West Balkan Archaeology

Blagoje Govedarica

German Archaeological Institute, Berlin

The central part of the big tumulus unearthed on Glasinac field by the first engineer regiment of the A-H Imperial Army in 1880 and documented by Lt. J. Lexa, enclose the grave of one revered religious person of the EIA. This is indicated by a splendid votive chariot and a luxurious bronze oenochoe, which despite the quite unclear find circumstances, can be ascribed with certainty to this grave. This burial of a sacred person is unique in its kind in Glasinac; moreover it also represents a rare type of funeral for the area of the western Balkans.

In fact, this grave is an epochal initial find, which had a crucial influence on the development of archaeology in this part of the Balkans. However, it is noteworthy that the significance and potential of this find was immediately recognized in the cultural and political spheres, perhaps even in excessive measure, whereas it was almost completely neglected by science. Only F. von Hochstetter and O. Seewald directed more attention to the find, mostly with a description of the votive chariot, while domestic scientists systematically excluded it. Further noteworthy, and in this context very indicative, that finds from the grave are not mentioned at all in the fifth volume of the “Praistorija jugoslavenskih zemalja”. B. Čović presents them quite reservedly in his popular scientific book “Od Butmira do Ilira.”

The uncertain circumstances of the find cannot be a reason for this attitude, considering that most of the graves that were excavated in Glasinac after this initial discovery were also not documented properly. Consequently, detailed analyses of the case of the grave of the “priest of Glasinac” should be undertaken. The aim of this paper is to initiate discussion about this find, not only in view of its scientific value and research purposes, but also as a kind of socio-archaeological phenomenon.
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17:00–17:20

The Earliest Iron Keepers in Western Serbia – Notes from Kalakača Graves

Katarina Dmitrović
National Museum, Čačak

Mortuary practices from the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age in Western Serbia are not enough known, particularly in relation to the previous Bronze Age phases – Early and especially Middle – where mostly belong excavated graves from this territory. Even having such uneven and insufficient picture of transition to the 1st millennium BC, the basic funerary concept can be easily noticed. That is about exclusive use of tumuli that represented fundamental funerary pattern in the territory of Western Serbia since the Early Bronze Age, consistently kept until the Roman period.

Graves belonging to Kalakača horizon, the period which belongs to the Early Iron Age, are quite rare on the territory of the central Balkans, on the south from the rivers Sava and Danube, but they are not often even in south Pannonia. In Western Serbia, this horizon is known from necropolises of Mojsinje, Stapani, possibly Dobrača near Kragujevac. These graves are characterized by skeleton burials lying on the back in stretched position, usually having a typical ceramic cup with purposely broken handle, placed in the foot region and metal items, where should be emphasized very early iron objects from Mojsinje.

It is very interesting to remark that these graves were buried within older necropolises under the mounds, from the Early and Middle Bronze Age; the grave inventory is tied again to the influences from the north – north-west, as it was noticed for the whole time span of Metal Ages in this territory.

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Saturday, September 16th 2017

Chairs:

Dr. Rastko Vasić
Archaeological Institute, Belgrade

Prof. Dr. Carola Metzner-Nebelsick
*Institute of Prehistoric, Protohistoric and Roman Archaeology,
Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich*

08:45–09:00

Introduction

Rastko Vasić

09:00–09:20

Similarity and Differences between the Material Cultures of Belegiš II – Gava Group from the Southern Pannonian Basin and the Morava River Basin

Aleksandar Kapuran – Aleksandar Bulatović
Archaeological Institute, Belgrade

The process and different phases of the penetration of the communities with characteristic „channeled pottery“ from the southern Pannonian Basin across the Central Balkans became much more clear after last two decade of new excavations and discoveries, especially in the region of Central and South Morava river. From the prehistory until present times the Morava Basin represents the main route from the north to the south of Balkan Peninsula. The absence of the bronze hoards south of the Danube and Sava in Serbia, as one of the most typical features for the transition period from Bronze to the Iron Age in the Pannonian Basin, caused a lot of dilemma in the archaeological interpretation during long history of research, starting from the first discoveries in Mediana near Niš until latest excavations of the hill-fort Hisar in Leskovac. Some of the recent absolute dates provide a better chronological determination for the Early Iron Age cultures at several multilayered settlements in Morava Basin, but on occasion they also led to the significant changes in a generally accepted chronological system. The use of “Aegean migration“ in the earlier scholarship tradition as a paradigm to explain cultural processes and shifts generated eventually a lot of critics by the new generations of archaeologists who claim that there is no valuable evidence for that. In the light of the new discoveries this paper seeks to provide better understanding of the Belegiš - II Gava cultural complex in the central Balkans and highlights reasons for accepting or rejecting thee migrations theories.

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09:20 – 09:40

Burials in the Late Prehistory of Djerdap. Sepulchral Practice and Cultural Change in the Case of Archaeological Site Konopište

Aca Đorđević – Milijan Dimitrijević
National Museum, Belgrade

Archaeological site Konopište is situated on the right bank of the Danube, in the village of Mala Vrbica, a few kilometres downstream from the town of Kladovo (Serbia). It is a multilayered site which has been excavated from 1981 to 1988. The excavation was managed by P. Popović of the Archaeological Institute in Belgrade. The following stratigraphic horizons have been differentiated: the Middle Ages necropolis, built structures and necropolis dated in the classical period resp. EIA, necropolis of the transitional period (Gava group), necropolis of the LBA (group Dubovac-Žuto Brdo), and a tomb of Starčevo culture.

With respect to the quality and relevance of the archaeological finds, the excavations has been restarted in 2014. Among the finds of the 2015 campaign, two graves from the LBA (Žuto Brdo group) and two graves of the transitional period (Gava group) have been unearthed.

Žuto Brdo culture: in the grave No. 1 only the lower part of the urn was preserved, containing osteological remains; the grave No. 2 included the urn-bottom and a dozen of small ceramic pots. Osteological remains of the latest were located in a pit nearby the ceramic deposition.

Gava culture: the contents of the 1st unearthed tomb are two urns and three bowls; the 2nd grave contained three urns, two bowls and a cup. All urns contained osteological material, and some of them metal objects: pins, fibulae, etc. The peculiarity concerning the metal finds within the graves of the transitional period, which is rare and unusual, is the additional sign of importance of the necropolis at Konopište.

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09:40–10:00

Eastern Slavonia and Western Srijem – Contact Zone during Early Phase of the Late Bronze Age

Hrvoje Kalafatić

Archaeological Institute, Zagreb

The area of Eastern Slavonia and Western Srijem was in (pre)historical periods contact zone of various cultural phenomena. A similar situation occurs at the end of the MBA and the beginning of the LBA when in this region developed Belegiš culture, Virovitica group and the Barice-Gređani group. The subject of this paper is the clarification of relationships between these groups in the specified area.

Looking at the territorial distribution of those communities, we can notice that the Virovitica group inhabited wider area of the river Drava Basin from western surroundings of Osijek, over the entire Croatian, Hungarian and Slovenian part of the river Drava Basin and penetrates far west in Austria. Eastern Slavonia at the present state of research represents a borderland in which the Virovitica group permeates with Barice-Gređani group and Belegiš culture.

Studies of the Barice-Gređani group has enabled not only the differentiation of the group in relation to the simultaneous cultural phenomena, but also the definition of territorial spreading in the wider Sava River Basin. Belegiš culture is present in eastern Croatia in its first phase, then at the beginning of the LBA “disappears”, and “reappears” in its later phase. Circumstances of its reappearance impose questions and few models are proposed to explain this dynamics. It is important to emphasize that in the cemeteries of Barice-Gređani group and of Virovitica group appear elements of funeral ritual of other/opposing cultural group, more often in areas that can be defined as border/contact zones. The situation becomes even more complicated when we look at the presence of Belegiš culture finds in the settlements and the lack of simultaneous cemeteries.

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10:00–10:20

Contacts between Transdanubia, the Balkans, Northern Italy and Greece in the Late Bronze as Reflected by Protective Weaponry

Katalin Jankovits

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Warrior aristocracies played a prominent role in various regions of Europe during the LBA. The use of offensive weapons, especially of the long double-edged swords that had evolved earlier, led to the emergence of efficient protective weaponry crafted from sheet bronze (principally cuirasses, greaves, helmets and shields). It seems likely that rank-and-file warriors too wore some sort of protective armour made of organic material such as leather or more sturdy textile – however, these rarely survive in the archaeological record.

The use of two-piece cuirasses can first be noted in the Aegean during the LH II–III A2/B1 period. Cuirasses of this type have been recovered from both burials (Dendra, Graves 8 and 12, Mycenae, Graves 15 and 69) and settlements (Thebes). In the Danube region, the use of cuirasses began in the Bz D–Ha A1 period, under Aegean influence. The cuirasses of the Danube region were all parts of hoards, the single exception being the cuirass fragment from Čaka that was deposited in the grave of an aristocratic warrior. We cannot exclude the possibility that the first cuirasses had been obtained by mercenary soldiers originating from the Danube region.

The first greaves of sheet metal similarly appeared in the Aegean during the LH II period. In Hungary, their concentration can be noted in southern Transdanubia during the Bz D–Ha A1 period. Their ornamental motifs include wheels or Sun discs, stylised birds and various geometric patterns. Greaves bearing wheel-like motifs can principally be found in southern Transdanubia, although they also occur in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, northern Italy and Austria, and one exemplar was brought to light in a burial uncovered on the Acropolis in Athens

(LH IIIC). The craftsmanship and ornamentation of the latter differs significantly from the Aegean greaves (Enkomi, Kallithea), suggesting that it was an import from East Central Europe or northern Italy, or that it had been made by an itinerant bronzesmith who had learnt his craft in East Central Europe.

A hoard from an unknown site whose find circumstances and find context are similarly unknown became known in 2015. The assemblage had been purchased by the Museum of Military History (Budapest) in the 1990s. The pair of greaves is most closely matched by the greaves of the votive hoard from Pergine near Trento. It seems likely that the hoard originates from southern Transdanubia, Croatia or Serbia. The craftsmanship of the Pergine greaves (larger bosses and delicate repoussé lines) and its ornamental motifs (a stylised bird and a human depiction) suggest that they are later than the pieces decorated with wheel motifs and that they can be assigned to the Ha A2 period. These greaves offer additional proof that contacts between these regions and their workshops were maintained not only during the Bz D–Ha A1 period, but also in the ensuing period.

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11:00–11:20

The Late Hallstatt Connections between the Southeastern Carpathian Basin and the Central Balkans: The beautiful Ladies Coming from the South

Marko Dizdar

Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb

The beginning of the EIA in the southeastern Carpathian Basin was marked by the Dalj and Bosut groups that continuously developed during the first centuries of the last mill. BC. Although some finds from cemeteries assigned to the Dalj and Bosut groups indicate existing of connections with the area of the Central Balkans, from the second half of the 7th cent. BC, “southern” finds appear to be more numerous. Most of them are belonging to the items of female costume and jewellery, which points to the transfer of knowledge and ideas, but also the potential mobility of small groups or individuals. These connections intensified in the early 6th cent. BC when in the cemeteries in the southeastern Carpathian Basin different forms of fibulae and belts appear, that originate from the territory of the Glasinac cultural complex. Besides various types of Glasinac fibulae, one of the most recognizable forms is the bronze astragal belts which occur in several types and variants. During the 6th cent. BC these belts transformed into a special local form that will, with certain modifications, remain to the 1st cent. BC. Astragal belts represented an important part of Late Hallstatt female costume and became a distinguish part of female visual identity and an evidence of creativity of own recognizable style. These belts are one of the best examples for supra-regional transfer of ideas and firmly confirm connectivity between Southeast Carpathian Basin with the Central Balkans at the beginning of the Late Hallstatt period. Beside items of female jewellery, the existence of on going contacts between these two regions during the later stages of the EIA is also clearly demonstrated through objects made of precious metals.

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11:20–11:40

Connections between the Southern Carpathian Basin and the Central Balkans in the 8th century BC – Female Attire

Daria Ložnjak Dizdar
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Characteristic for the beginning of the EIA is the introduction of the new types of female attire (e.g. double looped fibulas). With the appearance of the new jewellery types, the distribution networks changed too. Starting from the rare inhumation graves in Danube region, the new combinations of female attire will be analysed and then compared with the Central Balkan region.

Southern part of middle Danube is a region at a crossroad of the different communication routes, which is particularly evident from the distribution maps of different parts of attire in LBA and EIA that overlapped in this territory. The question is however, who really met here? Traders, travellers, craftsmen, individuals with high mobility... Were similar types of fibulae a result of similar artisan taste who made them in *Zeitgeist* and who communicated within the trade and exchange of items and knowledge? What caused the disappearance of traditional jewellery types and an innovation in the production of attire types, including the usage of the new materials, in southern Carpathian Basin in the course of the 8th cent. BC?

This paper is an attempt to elucidate different regional chronologies by comparing contemporary attire patterns. The focus of the discussion will be on double-looped fibulas, torques and pendants in terms of the chronology and distribution patterns.

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11:40–12:00

**Chronology and Classification of Openwork Belts in
Southeastern Europe**

Vojislav Filipović

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12:00–12:20

Common trends and regional particularities in western Balkan Iron Age: the composite belts of the 7th-6th centuries B.C from north Albania

Rovena Kurti

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The large number of tumuli excavated in north Albania, and more specifically in the middle valley of Mat and the Shtoj plain, respectively in the central and northwestern region, have provided an important quantity of metal objects, particularly jewelry, which give us a comprehensive insight into costume patterns of Late Iron Age in Albania for the region. The binomial “Mat-Glasinac” culture has been used by various authors as an expression of the strong cultural connections during this period between these regions of Albania with other regions further north in the Balkans, and more particularly with the group of tumuli of the Glasinac plateau in southeastern Bosnia. However, for the various categories of jewelry we encounter also many local variants or types, as evidences of closer regional characteristics. In this context, I will analyze in this contribution the composite belts from north Albania, which very likely represent a ceremonial type of jewelry and probably a status bearer. On one side, we see a northern influence on the various components of these belts, but on the other side, local types of pendants and their compositions, can help us identify closer regional characteristics between these two regions of Albania and probably the south of Montenegro. In addition, the great diversity within this group bears witness also of more individual choices between the communities buried in these tumuli.

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14:20–14:40

At the crossroads - An introduction to a new beginning of Jalžabet project

Saša Kovačević

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After almost 30 years of standstill and more than fifty years from beginning of the first archaeological trial excavation, archaeological investigations of prominent EIA site Jalžabet near Varaždin (NW Croatia) are again in full swing. Gomila in Jalžabet is a prehistoric monument whose significance is measured in European and world terms. It is one of the largest unexcavated burial mounds in Central Europe with diameter of almost 70 m and preserved height of more than 8 m. Burial mound II, excavated in 1989 by Marina Šimek, contained exceptional EIA burial of cremated horse, with complex grave architecture with dromos and numerous rich grave goods. But those two monuments are only a small part of a complex prehistoric landscape, preserved puzzles of a long lost community. The Institute of archaeology's project started with intensive field survey, aerial photography, cutting trees, cleaning and mowing of the gigantic tumulus Gomila and geophysical prospection of selected areas on Bistričak. In this lecture, we will present short history of research and for the first time introduce the freshest results of the project and once again promote Drava valley region as area which was very densely populated from the beginning to the end of the EIA.

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14:40–15:0

Late Bronze Age Settlement Kalnik-Igrišće (NW Croatia) in the context of southern part of Pannonian plain

Snježana Karavanić – Andreja Kudelić
Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb

Kalnik-Igrišće is multilayered site situated in northwestern Croatia at Kalnik mountain at about 500 m above sea level. The first systematic excavation in 1988-1990 have been carried out by Department of archaeology in Zagreb in collaboration with City museum in Križevci. Since then a notable number of scientific publication has been written. The site has finds from Medieval, Roman, LaTene and Late Bronze Age period, but also an evidence of eneolithic Lasinja Culture occupation. The area of the site is the part of southern Panonia plane which was exposed in prehistory to different cultural influences from Carpathian Basin, southeastern Alpine region and Balcan region. The Late Bronze Age material culture of the settlement shows characteristics from all of them. In the paper we will present the results of our excavation from 2006. till now. There is evidence of a vessels form standardization and high quality pottery production as well as bronze-casting activity. Special attention will be given to the sampels of carbonized plants found in the context of Bronze Age house.

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15:00–15:20

Pottery with Indented Walls between Dolenjska in the South-Eastern Alpine Region, the Northern Balkans, Pannonia, and the Middle Danube Region

Dragan Božič

University of Nova Gorica

Pottery with indented walls appears very often in the graves of the Dolenjska group of the Hallstatt culture. It includes several different forms: pots, footed vases (ciboria), kernoi, cups, two-handle dishes, dishes, and footed dishes. Janez Dular, in his 1982 book on Hallstatt period pottery from Slovenia, dated the first appearance of indented pottery in Dolenjska to the Serpentine fibulae phase. However, in 1990, Biba Teržan argued that in fact such pottery had already been found in graves from the Stična 2 phase at the latest. This would mean that indented pottery lasted an extremely long time, from the Stična 2 phase to the Negova phase. Such a long period is defended by Lucija Grahek in her book on the Iron Age settlement pottery from Stična, published last year. She first writes that Teržan's early date is quite convincing before citing appropriately documented grave groups with indented pottery, mostly from Kapiteljska njiva and Mačkovec in and near Novo mesto, but also from Metlika and Stična which, in her opinion, belong to the Stična 2 and Serpentine phases.

In the Sveta Lucija group in the Soča region in western Slovenia, indented pottery is practically unknown. We only know of two vessels from graves at Most na Soči. On the other hand, there are a lot of Late Hallstatt sites to the east and to the north of Dolenjska, where indented vessels were found in graves and fragments at settlements. They appear in north-western Bosnia (Donja Dolina, Sanski most and Čarakovo), north-western Croatia (e. g. settlements of Zbelava, Sv. Petar Ludbreški and Sigetec near Varaždin, as well as Gradec in Zagreb), north-eastern Croatia (Osijek, surroundings of Vinkovci), Vojvodina (Mošorin) and Baranya (Beremend and Szentlőrinc), but also in Transdanubia (Sopron – Krautacker and Ménfőcsanak-Szeles) and even to

the north of the river Danube (e. g. the cemetery of Bučany in Slovakia and the settlements of Jevišovice and Ivančice in Moravia).

This research will focus on the comparison of forms with indented decoration represented in Dolenjska and other regions. Can we identify the workshops which produced local forms of indented pottery? Can we recognize imports from certain regions? In addition, the much earlier appearance of such pottery in Dolenjska compared to other regions will be verified. Teržan and Grahek based their early dating on grave groups from different sites in Dolenjska and Bela krajina from modern and older excavations. A thorough analysis of these assemblages will show if their dating is correct or not.

Of special importance for the chronology of indented pottery are graves from tumulus 48 in Stična, where this pottery doesn't appear in any of the numerous graves of the Serpentine phase but is quite common in Certosa phase graves. Similarly, a lot of indented pottery was found at tumulus cemeteries, which existed only in the Certosa and Negova phases, such as Dolenjske Toplice, Znančeve njive in Novo mesto, and Molnik near Ljubljana.

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16:00–16:20

The Sea Peoples and the Discourse of Balkanism in Archaeology of the Late Bronze Age

Uroš Matić – Filip Franković

*Institute of Egyptology and Coptic Studies, University of Münster
– Institute of Prehistoric and Oriental Archaeology, University of Heidelberg*

One of the “commonplaces” of Balkan prehistoric archaeology are the supposed movements of large populations from the Balkans in several migration waves which eventually reached the Eastern Mediterranean. The carriers of these migratory waves were differently identified as proto-Illyrians, Bosnian Illyrians, Daco-Mysians, Phrygians, Mysians and Dardanians or bearers of the Urnfield culture. The migrants were traced archaeologically via objects supposedly produced in metallurgical workshops of Alpes and Carpathians or the presence of the Peschiera fibulae and handmade burnished pottery. They were then interpreted by Balkan archaeologists as being among the Sea Peoples attested in Egyptian sources and referred to as “invaders” who destroyed Late Bronze Age centers of culture in the Eastern Mediterranean. Some authors even re-traced the ethnic groups described in Greek and Roman sources to ethnonyms attested in New Kingdom Egyptian sources. Thus, for example Dardanians were re-traced to *d3rdny* and Mysians to *ms* attested in New Kingdom Egyptian texts from the reign of Ramesses II.

However, there are numerous problems with these interpretations aside from their clearly culture-historical “pots equals peoples” premise. In this paper we would like to address these problems from both Egyptological and archaeological standpoint. Firstly, even if we would agree with “pots equals peoples” premise for the sake of the argument, it is a fact that Peschiera fibulae, for example, are not depicted being worn by any of the Sea People warriors represented on New Kingdom Egyptian temple battle reliefs. Also, the argument on distribution of certain classes of objects thought to have foreign origin was based on formal typological features and not on archaeometry. Secondly, among

many other problems with using New Kingdom Egyptian sources to re-trace ethnic identity and ancestral homelands of ethnic groups attested in Greek and Roman sources, is the orthography, vocalization and localization of ethnonyms attested in New Kingdom Egyptian sources. Thirdly, it also seems that the culture-historical archaeological background impeded Balkan archaeologists to be up to date with both Egyptological and archaeological literature. The consequence is that the “authorities” are referred to without criticism and blindly followed without consulting the original sources. Our fourth and the last point is that Balkan prehistorians did not consult their colleagues in the field of Egyptology. We therefore propose a dialogue between disciplines as the first step in deconstructing Balkan Sea Peoples and the supposed migrations they originated from. In this paper we criticize balkanism in archaeological narratives on the Sea Peoples, both in Balkan and non-Balkan archaeology, as a pejorative discourse in which the destruction of centers of “high culture” can be blamed on the migrants from the Balkan hinterland, as rough as their pottery. Although Balkan archaeologists have largely been reluctant towards Egyptologists in this region, the irony is that no one else than G. Maspero, an Egyptologist, coined the term Sea Peoples in 1881 and traced the origin of their supposed migrations to the Balkans.

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16:20–16:40

The Formatting of Early Iron Age Elites between the Mediterranean Civilisations and Middle Europe

Mitja Guštin

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The result of the Urnenfield Culture in Middle Europe and their colonisation towards the north Adriatic Sea in the Late Bronze Age was the appearance of new agriculture communities in the region between Pannonian Plain, Eastern Alps and hinterland of north Adriatic coast. This period of newcomers, characterised by huge plain necropolis with cremated deceased put into urns, led to the extremely change of the population picture in the area and to construction of new community identities. Beside the old traditional long-distant connections the newcomers established their way of life. The characteristic of this large community it is to be seen in funeral practices, in numerous hoards with bronze tools and weapons and in presence of rich decorated weapons and armour equipment of the outstanding warriors/ chiefs with p.e. characteristic cap helmets, etc. The most represent place of this period is Škocjan on the Karts with his mysterious tectonic landscape in which is an extraordinary cult abyss Mušja jama and to it belonging graveyards with buried guards of the cultic place. In large area of relative uniform societies for 3, 2 centuries a little group of modest built tumuli, spread in all region, with a warrior/chief with bronze sword is ending this period of Late Bronze Age and predict the transition period of Early Iron Age. This area between Pannonian Plain, Eastern Alps and hinterland of north Adriatic coast, became a new wave of colonisation and numerous cultural inputs, as from the south east – Balkan area as from the north Italic peninsula. The large area of relative uniform Late Bronze Age societies of Urnfield culture was in shortest period developed in very mighty societies of Early Iron Age.

The reason of this extremely fast changes of social structures in the region has to be seen in huge interest of Mediterranean high developed

societies to the access to the plains of Middle Europe. Archaeological we can observe this influences in funeral practices – the princes are buried in high banked tumuli with construction of wide wooden chamber covered with stones and dromos entrance built from wide dry-stone walls. In this graves the deceased are accompanied with extremely rich grave goods from different origin. The article is discussing these process graves related to the cultural interactions between the aforementioned communities and the ways in which these connections can be identified through the analysis of material culture from the Lower Danube valley, north-western Balkans and Italic peninsula.

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Poster Session

Frontier studies. Investigation into identity and cultural contacts in the border area of ancient Macedonia

Pero Ardjanliev (Skopje) – Marek Verčík (Prague) –
Barbora Weißová (Bochum/Berlin) – Petra Tušlová (Praha)

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Scythian Weapons and Horse Harness in the Territory of Serbia

Ivan Ninčić

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Speaking in general terms, the communities - bearers of the Early Iron Age cultures in the territory of Serbia were attributed to the tribes of the Balkan peninsula of Illyrian, Thracian, Triballian, Autariataean and Daco-Getic origin. A rather small amount of material remains which could be associated with Scythian tribes is insufficient to reflect their way of arrival to the Balkans, with only arrowheads indicating some sort of exchange. Mutual conflicts are not excluded. Archaeological excavations, so far, have not led to a discovery of a settlement or a necropolis that could be associated with Scythians, but rather to a certain number of movable artefacts, generally found as grave goods. The artefacts, with solid archaeological context, are considered to be imported part of the grave inventory in the sites related to other Iron Age ethnic groups. Research of the so-called Scythian horizon, thus, begins with investigations of these sites in Serbia and refers to identification of artefacts of Scythian origin and their stylistic and typological analysis.

Appearance of the spearheads typical for the warlike, nomadic tribe from the Black sea coasts in the region of the Central Balkans, together with parts of weaponry and horse harness in princely graves in Atenica and Pilatovići, can be explained by “probable contacts between the Illyrians and the Scythians”, at the moment of their penetration into the Pannonian zones during the 6th and 5th century BC, most probably as a consequence of trade or war loot. The material of Scythian origin, being few in number, was brought to the Central Balkans as a result of exchange with neighbouring regions, and not as a consequence of settling of Scythian tribes. A function different from the obvious purpose of a projectile can also be attributed to the arrowheads, leading to a totally different context. For the Scythian warriors, bronze arrowheads were not only the most common type of weaponry, but they had a symbolic sense, representing warriors themselves, their strength and honour. If it is presumed that the presence of arrowheads is a sort of

preparation for the monetary system in exchange between the Greeks and the Scythians in the Pontic area, their presence in the Central Balkans graves with Greek import can be understood as a sign that the similar procedure was applied to the inhabitants of the Central Balkans, too. Since the number of these finds is very small in every single case and having in mind the number of grave units as well, it can be concluded that this attempt did not make a deep impression on the Balkan peoples. On the other hand, this attempt, no matter how (un)successful was, had its roots in the concept in which the arrowheads had a symbolic meaning, closely tied with the notion of prestige.

The research on the Scythian horizon of finds in the territory of Serbia has its base in stylistic and typological analysis of material remains of Scythian origin in a different ethnical environment. The total number of archaeological sites and finds is not big, so conclusive remarks are very few. Geographic spread of the finds is not indicative of any pattern, since the finds can be traced from Vršac in the north to Prizren in the south, and the vicinity of Požega in the west. In most of the cases, we are faced with the items imported from the territories traditionally settled by the Scythians, by means of trade of local populations and neighbouring regions. The artefacts analysed reveal a very strong stylistic and typological connectivity with the material from the Carpathian basin and cultural zone of the Vekerzug culture. At the same time, their origin from the remote regions of the Black Sea cannot be excluded from our considerations.

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Monochrome ware. Typology, production and distribution from the Late Geometric to the Archaic period.

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The present paper aims at delivering an overview of the monochrome pottery and its development through the Late Geometric to the Archaic period. Monochrome ware is especially common among the findings from the settlements developed around the bay of the Thermaic Gulf and their cemeteries. After 20 years of study, it is evident that the beginning of its production is traced in the 8th cent. B.C. and lasted until the end of the 6th cent. The earlier specimens of this group have thicker walls, while those of the 6th cent. stand out for their eggshell walls. The set of vases published, represent mainly symposium vessels, such as stemless cups, phialae, oinochoe, mugs etc. The surface of monochrome ware is usually red, brown or grey. Banded decoration with the same color, only darker, is noted rarely.

In Central Macedonia, there was excavated a workshop of monochrome ware at Karabournaki, part of ancient Thermi. It seems that monochrome pottery wasn't distributed further than Axios river to the west. Also, there are no known examples from sites east of the Thermaic Gulf. The most remote examples come from Lete and Perivolaki in the area of Langada. Its absence from the Chalcidice Peninsula and Thasos is remarkable. Only a few examples are known from the settlement of N. Kallikratia, Sani and two shreds from Akanthos. Although, missing from the settlements of Kilkis region, its appearance in northern parts of the Balkans shows its wider diffusion.

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