Until recently, the region along the middle course of the Nišava river has represented an archaeologically insufficiently explored area with regard to the Early Iron Age. The geostrategic significance of this natural transportation route, which links the Morava Valley and the Sofia Basin, certainly influenced the economic and cultural movements between the central Balkans, Thrace, the Black Sea and the Aegean. As a result of the rescue excavations conducted along the E-80 route (Niš–Dimitrovgrad motorway), several sites have been explored, including two necropolises from the Iron Age which, it is believed, will contribute to gaining a clearer insight into the chronological span, as well as certain ethnic questions related to the Paleo-Balkan communities of eastern Serbia.

**RESEARCH HISTORY**

The Early Archaic bronze sculpture of the “Blacksmith from Vraniste”, which was discovered in the 1960s by Milan Pavlović, a teacher from Bela Palanka, is certainly the most interesting find from the Early Iron Age (Pl. I/1).¹ This sculpture depicts a man working with an anvil, and probably originates from the Peloponnese. It was roughly dated between 750 and 725 BC.² The first major rescue investigations related to

¹ Popov 1994, 19, 22, kat. 21; Mirm 2005, 50. The context of the find is not sufficiently clear.

² The article results from the projects: Archaeology of Serbia: cultural identity, integration factors, technological processes and the role of the central Balkans in the development of European prehistory (No. 177020) and Cultural changes and population movements in the early prehistory of the central Balkans (No. 177023), funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.
the Iron Age involved two necropolises with cremated deceased, Selište in Velika Lukanja and Madjilka in Pirot. Two chance finds of bronze axes – celts, originating from the vicinity of Dimitrovgrad and Pirot, would also correspond to this Early Iron Age horizon. A somewhat larger number of stratigraphically clearer finds were obtained from systematic excavations conducted at the site of Pirotski Grad between 1986 and 1987. A more accurate cultural determination of the ceramic production with characteristics of the Basarabi culture was provided by the syntheses of M. Jevtić and R. Vasić. What should also be mentioned here is the very useful habilitation work of the archaeology graduate Aleksandar Manić from Pirot, which incorporated all the relevant prehistoric finds from this area that were known prior to the outset of the major rescue investigations along the E-80 motorway. However, the results of the rescue investigations conducted by the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and the Institute of Archaeology are pivotal for this paper, while the results obtained by the Centre for Archaeological Research of the Faculty of Philosophy will be included in a separate publication. The cave habitats were explored as part of an international, Serbian–American project, jointly managed by Prof. D. Mihailović (Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade) and Prof. S. Kuhn (Arizona, USA).

SETTLEMENTS

The habilitation work of A. Manić in the municipal territories of Dimitrovgrad and Pirot (as well as Bela Palanka) included a number of sites that could be determined as Hallstatt C and D (Map 1). In the municipality of Dimitrovgrad, these are the sites of Barje (Parapat) in Borovo; Vranište in Velika Lukanja; Kladenčište in Pirot; Sinjac: Selište, Crkvište, Velika Lukanja; Petrlačka Pećina and the cave in Senokoska pećina. The rescue investigations of the sites of Selište, Crkvište, Crnoklište and Kladenčište during 2013 were directed by M. Blagojević. The director of the excavations was A. Kapuran.
In the municipality of Pirot, there are still no indications of the exact location from where the sculpture of the “Blacksmith from Vranište” originates, however, by means of preliminary field surveys, possible sites were ascertained in the village of Grljan, Kale in Jalbotina, Gradište in Kamnik, Pobijeni Kamnik in Krupac, Konopište in Milojkovac, Turske Bare in Ponor, Pirotski Grad, Visoki Breg in Poljska Ržana, Česma in Crnoklište and Seliste in Velika Lukanja.

The investigations conducted along the E-80 motorway route, in the territory of Bela Palanka, included the sites of Belavina, Seliste and Crkviste in the village of Sinjac, as well as Kladenčiste in Špaj, whereas the sites of Turske Bare in Ponor, Romanija in Bele Vode and Donja Pecina in Ostrovica, situated on the border of this municipality and Sicevo, were previously explored.

The map of the central Nišava Valley, in the area stretching from Šišev Gorge to Dimitrovgrad (Map 1), shows a dense distribution of settlements, positioned on slightly sloped, terraced elevations, mainly representing protection from flooding of the Nišava river and its tributaries. The sites of Barje, Vlasi, Graha, Gnjilan, Pobijeni Kamnik, Konopište, Turske Bare, Seliste in Velika Lukanja, Črnoklište, Sinjac and Kladenčiste belong to a group of an open lowland settlement type.

In the vicinity of the village of Sinjac, three sites were explored – Seliste, Crkviste and Belavina, extending in a southeast-northwest direction, covering an area of about 5 ha (Fig. 1). They possess a multicultural stratigraphy, from the Middle Neolithic (Starčevo), Late Copper Age (Kostolac culture), Early and Late Iron Age to the Middle Ages. During the Early Iron Age, a large sepulchral complex emerged here. It is important to highlight that the deposits, resulting from the force of devastating floods (probably caused by the collapse of the natural dam at the Zavoj lake) and erosion, are clearly distinguishable in the stratigraphy of these sites. An approximately 1 m tall drift of the secondarily deposited finds of pottery and daub, formed above the subsoil,

Fig. 1. Sinjac Polje site

Сл. 1. Локалитет Сивац йоље

![Sinjac Polje map](image-url)
best testifies to the intense erosion that this area was exposed to in the Middle Neolithic.

At the site of Crkviste, in trench 1, three pits filled with fragments of pots and pithoi were noted, which are believed to have served the function of storing grain (Pl. VI/6, 7, 8, 10). In recent times, however, there have been other opinions that interpret them in three ways: as being residential, economic (storerooms)\(^{11}\) or used for cult purposes. The conical section of pit 1 excludes the possibility that it represents a residential dugout (Fig. 12). The baked and stone lined base in the central part, along with a structure resembling an oven calotte in section, might suggest that this was some sort of smokehouse for curing meat, since numerous animal bones were detected in the same place. A feature of an identical shape was discovered at Koprivlen and, according to the authors of the research, had a cult role.\(^{12}\) Pit 2, in trench 1 at Crkviste, is assumed to have possibly been used for storing provisions, whereas pit 4, of a conical section, is also believed to represent a cult pit. Although, in recent times, identical features in the territory of Bulgaria have mainly been defined as cult pits, silo pits for storing provisions are a common occurrence in the Danube and Morava valleys, indicating the orientation of the prehistoric communities towards agriculture.\(^{13}\) Their position should also be taken into consideration as they were most frequently located away from the centres of settlements, as is the case with the pit which was situated in the apse of the basilica at Kladenčiste (Fig. 5). A large number of pits from Crnoklište will be discussed in more detail in other papers.\(^{14}\) Identical pit structures were discovered at the sites of Meanište and Kovačke Njive near Vranje.\(^{15}\) The pit located in the sacral complex at Belavina is assumed to have had a cult character, since the fragments of an almost complete, richly ornamented krater (Pl. IV/7) were located in all the excavated layers, from the top of the pit to its bottom.

Some Early Iron Age settlements in the central Nišava Valley were positioned on dominant hills, thus it is not excluded that they were of a hill-fort type. Since only a preliminary field survey was carried out, their topographic features could point to the fact that the sites of Kale in Jalbotina, Gradiste in Kamnik and Pirotski Grad may have been hilltop fortifications. Cave settlements in which Iron Age and Eneolithic habitation horizons were noted are Senokoška, Petrlaška (Fig. 13a) and Donja Pećina in Ostrovica (Fig. 13b).

\(^{11}\) Jevtić 2010.
\(^{12}\) Vulićeva 2002, Fig. 77/4.
\(^{13}\) Jevtić 2011, 32, сл. 36.
\(^{14}\) The head of the field research in 2013 was P. Pejić from the Ponišavlje Museum in Pirot, while the project leader of the rescue investigations was M. Blagojević. During 2014, additional rescue investigations were conducted under the leadership of Dr. A. Bulatović.
\(^{15}\) Several pits of a similar character were discovered in the same area where the Early Bronze Age necropolis was located, which was explored in the course of the rescue excavations conducted along the E-75 motorway route during 2012; Bulatović et al. 2014.
NECROPOLIS

In terms of the developed Iron Age in the Nišava Valley, apart from the explored necropolises of Selište and Belavina, there are indications of at least two others. At the site of Komje in the village of Držina, on the left bank of the Jerma river (Map 1/15), during the course of the expansion of the local road, an inhumation grave was discovered containing grave goods in the form of poorly preserved and fragmented bronze artefacts, buttons, fibulae, bracelets, small tubes, loops and applications, which may belong to the Late Hallstatt period.

The information regarding the other potential necropolis, located at the site of Poljska Ržana (Map 1/13), was provided by R. Vasić. Specifically, it is an accidentally discovered necropolis with cremated deceased, from which a ceramic beaker decorated in the Basarabi style and a stone axe are today in private ownership.

In the course of the rescue investigations along the motorway route in the vicinity of the village of Sinjac, three sepulchral features were discovered (Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4). At the site of Selište, two tumuli with four inhumed and twelve cremated deceased were explored, while two devastated graves with two inhumed and four cremated deceased were located at the adjacent site of Belavina. Erosion, along with the long-term depositing of material from a nearby hill, made these sepulchral features invisible from the surface. The question remains as to whether the dispersal of the mound happened over time, which, based on analogies, is believed to have not exceeded 1 m in height. This was probably the reason for the graves being easily accessible to robbers. At the site of Belavina, grave constructions of stone were destroyed by deep ploughing, since they were situated only about 30 cm below the surface.

Tumulus 1 (Fig. 4) at its base comprised a wide oval ring in the form of stone paving of a N–S orientation, encircling a square-based burial chamber (dimensions 6 x 6 m and 0.5 m wide), which contained two inhumed deceased (graves 2 and 3) and an urn containing a cremated deceased (urn 1). At the outer paving ring, there were several ritually broken vessels underneath and between the stones (Pl. V/3, 4, 6) and a subsequently inhumed deceased, aged 20–24, with an approximate

---

16 Manić 2010, 8–9.
18 Although there are no clear indications as to whether greater amounts of soil had been heaped over the deceased in the form of a burial mound, it has been decided to use the term “tumulus”, since the strong effect of erosion could have caused the disappearance of the original mound. On the other hand, in the older Vajuga–Pesak necropolis, the deceased were lying on the platforms of stones, directly below the surface. For this information we thank Dr. M. Jevtić who had been surveying the necropolis prior to the systematic excavations.
19 A similar situation was encountered at the necropolis of Lugovi–Bent in Mojsinje where, in a tumulus less than 1 m in height, the existence of three burial horizons from the Bronze and Iron Age was noted. Kapuran took part in these investigations as a member of the team.
stature of 1.71 m (grave 1). The skeleton was in a supine position, with an iron spear, a knife, a tool in the form of an awl or a punch, a bronze fibula with a saddle-shaped foot and a dual loop (or a distributor) with protomes discovered next to him (Fig. 6). In grave 2, in the central part of the tumulus, a male individual of 18–20 years of age was buried, positioned supine and of a N–S orientation. The anthropological analysis indicates that this was a healthy man, next to whom were an iron spear, a curved iron knife, a fragmented iron fibula with a ribbed bronze cover, a small bronze tube (the lower part of a spear) and, placed above his head, a single-eared beaker (Fig. 7). Grave 3 belongs to a female of an approximate age of 30, orientated in the opposite direction to the individual in grave 2, and whose grave, in our opinion, could have been plundered at a later date since her mandible was near the pelvis and the upper, devastated part of the skeleton did not include any finds. Near the legs, two bracelets made from a spirally twisted bronze wire and a bronze loop with overlapping ends were discovered (Fig. 8). Not far from her legs, an urn covered with a stone was found, containing the remains of a cremated deceased (urn 1) and a few animal bones. Except for a few corroded metal objects of unknown use, the content of the tumulus included a saltelon, a bronze double-shank pin and, situated on the stone ring, a bronze La Tène fibula (Pl. I/6, 10, 12).

Under the stone paving (particularly on the periphery) several areas were discovered, comprising black soil, crushed pottery and burnt human bones (hereinafter referred to as incinerations), which preceded inhumations. In the process of removing the stone ring, six such incinerations were noted (Fig. 4). Incineration 2 (urn 1 would represent incineration 1) (sq. 8–9) is located on the far western edge of the stone construction and, within it, fragments of a large vessel with tongue-like handles (which could not be reconstructed) were discovered along with the cremated remains of an individual. In the far southern part of the stone paving, five other incinerations were detected, of which incineration 3 (sq. 16) contained two individuals placed in a large conical pot (Pl. V/7). Incinerations numbers 4 (sq. 18), 5 (sq. 20) and 6 (sq. 36) each comprised a single individual, whereas incinerations numbers 7 (sq. 37) and 8 (western extension of trench 9) comprised two individuals each. In incinerations numbers 4 and 5, fragments of ceramic vessels (urns) were mixed with the bones.

The central part of tumulus 2 (Fig. 3) comprised a low wall (of only two stone courses) in the form of a
rectangle (11 x 9 x 1.2 m in size), enclosing the central stone platform (2.7 x 2.8 m in size) on which a female individual was lying (grave 4), with only a small number of bones preserved. Traces of an outer ring have not been recorded around the stone construction as in the case of tumulus 1. Furthermore, it is not sufficiently clear whether the skeleton had been devastated by erosion, an increased Ph value of the soil, a subsequent grave robbery or perhaps a combination of all the factors listed. Nevertheless, apart from the skeleton, the finds from the platform comprised an iron spear, a fragmented shank with a rivet (most likely from the spear), a knife, a fibula and an iron buckle, a fragmented bow of an iron fibula with a bronze cover and, at head height, a ceramic beaker (Fig. 9). Outside the sacral context, a fragmented fibula and a sharp profiled tip of a small bronze object (perhaps an earring?) were discovered (Pl. I/4, 9).

At the adjacent site of Belavina (Fig. 2), within the narrow route of a local road, an 8-m-long and 2-m-wide pavement (or a wall) of a N–S orientation was discovered. On the eastern side of this structure, two destroyed grave constructions with two inhumed and four cremated deceased were noted. Skeletal fragments and potsherds, along with unburnt animal bones, were concentrated only in two small areas of black soil, between the stones (features 2 and 6) (Fig. 10, 11), as was also the case under the stone ring at Seliste. Unfortunately, reconstruction of the original appearance of the constructions that contained these incinerations was not possible. The only thing that can be stated with any certainty is that outside the areas filled with black soil and stone, as well as in the pit (feature 2), no pottery originating from the Early Iron Age has been discovered.

**MATERIAL CULTURE**

**Metal finds**

The bronze sculpture of the “Blacksmith from Vraniste” represented the beginning of a new epoch in the development of the Iron Age, which arrived in the Nišava Valley after the collapse of the Urnfield cultural complex. The Hallstatt C finds from this area can also include an openwork cage pendant from around Dimitrovgrad, for which there are analogies in the “Macedonian Bronzes” and can be dated to the 7th–6th century BC (Pl. I/2).

What represent culturally and chronologically clearly determined finds discovered at Seliste are fibulae, dual loops, double-shank pins, bracelets, saltelon and iron weapons. The fibulae can be divided into three groups. The first group comprises fragmented fibulae with an iron core and a ribbed bronze cover. Taking into account the entire corpus of finds from tumuli 1 and 2, it is believed that similar fibula bows (Pl. I/3–5)
Fig. 6. Tumulus 1, Grave 1

Сл. 6. Тумул 1, гроб 1
may also have had a saddle-shaped rectangular foot. The technique of combining iron and bronze represents the continuation of the traditions characteristic of Hallstatt C. The bronze fibula with a saddle-shaped foot, of the Marvinci–Gogošu type, has numerous analogies in the vast area stretching from Donja Dolina,42 to Grivac and Slanište in the Morava Valley,22 Arilje in the west,23 the Lisičji Do necropolis in the Vardar Valley in the south,24 Ferigile25 in the north and Gradec, near Vidin,26 in the north-east. All of these are roughly dated to the 6th/5th century BC. However, the bronze dual loops with protomes found in the vast area extending from Trebeništa,27 through Salakovec,28 to Thracian-Scythian graves in Bulgaria29 and to the Romanian Banat can also be dated to the 5th century BC.30 Some authors are of the opinion that these loops had been attached to the funerary shroud of the deceased,31 while others believe that they represented pre-monetary means of payment.32

The double-shank pin with a head shaped like the letter “M”, of Trebeništa type,33 recovered from the centre of tumulus 1, is associated with Greek influences and it has numerous analogies from Donja Dolina,34 Gosinja Planina on Glasićac,35 across Pecka Banja,36 Novi Pazar,37 Krševica,38 Hisar,39 Kaldrma,40 Trebeništa,41 and the necropolis of Signal near Svrljig.42 The small bronze tube with a rivet, decorated with ribboning, has its closest analogies with the finds from Trebeništa43 and the peripheral tumulus in Atenica, and is considered to represent the lower part of a spear handle, the so-called butt.44 It is also interesting to mention a find of a circular iron buckle with four “eyelets” made of white glass paste, from the grave in tumulus 2, identical to a surface find from Pećine near Kostolac.45

Bracelets made of a spirally twisted bronze wire represent common finds at the Basarabi necropolises in the north,46 Suva Reka near Gеvgelija in the south,47 and Rogatica (Glasićac) in the west.48

The Larče bronze fibula “with a small paw” from tumulus 1, which does not belong to the Early Iron Age burial context, is dated to the 2nd century BC and has numerous analogies at sites in the Danube Valley, Kostolac,49 Gomolava and Surčin.50

Prior to the discovery of the necropolis at Sinjac, burials with iron weapons in eastern Serbia had been noted only at the Vajuga–Pesak necropolis in Korošovo, which is chronologically older.51 Compared to the area here presented, there are more necropolises of this type in the Danube Valley and, accordingly, R. Vasić chose to focus on a separate group of necropolises of the Vajuga–Moldova type, since birital burials had also been practised at Moldova.52 Iron weapon finds from Sinjac have numerous analogies, with the spindle-shaped iron spear with a rib, from grave 2 in tumulus 1, resembling spears from Ravni Lug in Pištovci,53 Basarabi,54 Krivodol,55 Nevestino near Kyustendil56 and Govedarnik near Knjaževac.57 The iron spear of a rhomboid cross-section (Fig. 6/1) bears a resemblance to spears from the necropolises of Tri Čeljusti,58 Donja Toponica,59 Romaja,60 Selište,61 Govedarnik62 and Sveti Gajevi at Mihailov Ponor.63 The iron spear with a long

---

21 Marić 1964, T. IX/34, 35.
25 Vulpe 1967, Pl. XXIII/7.
28 Stojić 2006, Abb. R.
29 Melkokova 1979, 228, Ris. 48.
30 Guma 1977, Pl. IX b.
31 Ibid.
32 Topalov 2004; Stojić 2006.
33 Vasić 1999, 123.
34 Marić 1964, T XII/4.
35 Benac, Čovic 1957, T VIII/13.
39 Tasić 1998, 576, Kat. 211.
40 Sanež et al. 1976, Kat. 669, 670.
41 Popović 1994, 147–149.
42 Filipović, Bulatović 2010, Fig. 2/6.
43 Lahtov 1965, T. XXII/17.
44 Đukić, Jovanović 1965, XX/18.
46 Dušmireșcu 1968, Fig. 18/4–5.
47 Pașa 1978, Cl. 9a–6.
48 Benac, Čovic 1956, T. XII/2, 3, 5.
49 Ibid., 484/138b.
50 Sladić 1999, 53/11; 177/2.
52 Jevtić 1993, 314.
53 Jeťopuš (ed.) 1990, 169, Kat. 104/1
54 Vulpe 1986, Abb. 2/2.
56 Buškosek 1985, Obl. 4/4.
57 Stojić, Iljić 2011, 152/6. Sl. 64.
58 Kuzman 1985, T. B/2.
59 Trbohmović, Trbohmović 1970, 72, Kat. 126.
60 Đurić et al. 1975, T. XI/5.
61 Vulpe 1986, Abb. 18/5.
63 Peković 2006, 37, Kat. 30824.
Fig. 7. Tumulus 1, Grave 2

Сл. 7. Тумул 1, гроб 2
conical shank and a somewhat shorter spindle-shaped blade with a pronounced rib (Fig. 9/1) has analogies at the necropolises of Basarabi,64 Beli Izvor in Vratsa,65 Ploesti,66 Gradiste on the Juhor mountain in the Morava Valley,67 Arareva Gomila on Glasinac,68 Mihailov Ponor69 and Ražana.70

Iron knives are present in all the graves with weapons at Sinjac. The curved, single-edged knife (Fig. 7/3) with a short blade and an unpreserved tang, most closely resembles the finds from grave 3 at the necropolis of Vajuga,71 grave 58 at Doroslov,72 Mihailov Ponor73 and the Fergile necropolis.74 The single-edged knife (Fig. 6/4) with a curved handle and one preserved rivet is similar to finds from Glasinac,75 Juhor,76 Velika Krsna,77 Fergile,78 Basarabi,79 Balta Verde,80 Teštel-Dragoješt,81 Krivdo82 and Rodeni.83 The single-edged knife with a straight body and a wide tang is one of a rare type, with its closest analogies found at Zlotiska Pečina.84

Based on the reconstruction of the funerary ritual, the incinerations from the necropolis at Belavina justifiably seem to be concurrent with the earlier phase of the necropolis at Seliste. The role of the long stone paving, which is on the western side of this sepulchral complex, still remains insufficiently clear. What can only be claimed with any certainty is that the pit near feature 6 (Fig. 2) most probably had a cult character, since the fragments of the ceramic krater were discovered in all levels from the top of the pit to its bottom. It can also be asserted that ceramic beakers and bowls decorated with a false cord, stamping in the form of an “S” spiral and concentric circles or triangles could have also represented ritually broken vessels (Pl. IV/1–6).

Other finds that chronologically belong to the Late Hallstatt comprise a bead of yellow glass paste with four pairs of blue eyes (Pl. I/7), for which there are numerous analogies from Mihailov Ponor,85 Stubarija,86 Donja Dolina87 and Gorni Pol near Štip,88 a saltelon of spirally twisted wire (Pl. I/10), also common at a number of necropolises from all stages of the Early Iron Age, a bronze prong with its head shaped like a rhombus and of a square cross-section (Pl. I/9) and a bronze bead (Pl. I/8). The iron buckle with reinforcement in the form of a rib in the centre (Pl. I/11) most closely resembles a buckle from Kopana Glavica,89 although it also has certain analogies with an exclusive find of a gold-plated buckle from the princely grave in Velika Krsna.90

Ceramic Finds
The Middle and Late Hallstatt ceramic production at the sites in the central Nišava Valley is primarily divided into stratigraphically reliable finds that are obtained from archaeological investigations, and those gathered in the course of field surveys or brought into the museum by the finder. The first group comprises finds from Pirotski Grad (Pl. II/12–20), Crnoklishte (Pl. III), Belavina (Pl. IV), Seliste in Sinjac (Pl. V), Crkviste in Sinjac (Pl. VI), Kladenčiste (Pl. VII), Petrlasko Pečina (Pl. VIII) and Donja Pečina (Pl. IX) and, accordingly, have priority over the other group.

Although the majority of forms are familiar, there are some less well known ceramic forms as well. The basic pottery types of the Basarabi complex in our territory, elaborated on by M. Jevtić,91 represent shallow and deep cups, conical bowls, bowls with an inverted rim, S-profiled bowls, beakers, pitchers, amphorae, pots, pithoi, tripod stands and lids. As will be shown, some types are combined regarding their appearance and production method, indicating characteristics of two or more types. A small number of ceramic forms belong to pottery manufactured based on Greek models.

Cups are not chronologically sensitive finds unless they are ornamented, but can be roughly grouped as

---

64 Dumitrescu 1968, Fig. 15/10; Vulpe 1986, Abb. 2/6; 3/20.
65 Buiočilen 1985, Obp. 5/h.
68 Beća, Čović 1957, T. XXXII/23.
69 Ćeković 2006, 34, kat. 30818.
72 Trajković 2008.
73 Ćeković 2006, 35, kat. 30830.
74 Dumitrescu, 1968: Fig. 16/2; Vulpe 1967, Pl. XVII/7.
76 Stojic 1986, T. 38/4b.
77 Katić 2013, 15.
78 Dumitrescu 1968, Fig. 16/1; Vulpe 1967, Pl. XVII/13.
80 Vulpe 1990, Taf. 57/D3.
81 Sreb 2003, Fig. 14/1.
82 Tončeva 1980, Pl. XLII/3.
83 Ibid., Taf. 28, kat. 178.
84 Jevtić 2004, str. 79/3.
85 Ćeković 2006, 36, kat. 30827–30829.
86 Medović 2007, Sl. 6.
88 Čepen et al. 1976, Kat 593.
89 Ćeković 2006, 94, n. 30836.
90 Katić 2013, str. 10.
Fig. 8. Tumulus 1, Grave 3 and Urn 1
Сл. 8. Тумул 1, гроб 3 и урна 1
those with a shallow or deep recipient, i.e. of a conical or spherical cross-section. A rare example is a fragment of a rim with a handle decorated with “S” stamping and a white incrustation, from Petrlaska Pečina (Pl. VIII/5). Conical bowls appear in far fewer numbers than bowls with an inverted rim (Pl. II/1; Pl. VII/4), although the principal problem when interpreting their real function is the fragmented state of the finds (especially where the bottom is missing) since certain conical forms may also represent lids (Pl. III/1; Pl. VI/2; Pl. VII/4). In the Nišava Valley, this simplest form of bowl is decorated by impressing, fluting and applying horn-shaped protomes.

Conical bowls with an inverted rim are usually the most common type of ceramic finds at Early Iron Age sites. They differ in the manner in which the rim is shaped and in the protomes, handles and decoration. The most prevalent type has a clearly defined inverted rim (Pl. II/2, 8, 9, 12; Pl. III/2, 3; Pl. IV/2; Pl. V/1; Pl. VI/1, 2; Pl. VII/2, 3; Pl. VIII/3, 4; Pl. IX/1–5). The flat topped rim is somewhat rare (Pl. II/1; Pl. IV/1), whereas the least frequent type has a slightly bevelled rim (Pl. II/5; Pl. VIII/2). S-profiled bowls represent a rare type of find in the territory of the central Nišava Valley and appear only in one instance at Crkviste (Pl. VI/4), Belavina (Pl. IV/4) and Crnoklište (Pl. III/18). Conical cups are common finds, but they are not chronologically sensitive enough to devote attention to. The ornamentation is reduced to a few basic forms of decoration: faceting, impressing, stamping and the application of a white incrustation. Faceting or, more specifically, the horizontal and oblique cutting of the surface around the opening (Pl. II/4; Pl. V/1; Pl. IX/2, 3), is further accentuated by an impressed ornament in the form of a false cord (Pl. II/5, 9, 11; Pl. III/4). The stamping of a row of “S” motifs (Pl. II/8, 9; Pl. IV/2; Pl. VI/1; Pl. VIII/1–4), a row of triangles that form a strip (Pl. II/12, 14; Pl. VII/3), concentric circles (Pl. II/5), circles connected with oblique tangents (Pl. II/1) and a tremolo pattern (Pl. II/13; Pl. VII/2) are characteristic of decoration within the Basarabi cultural circle. Bowls can also contain combinations of all the listed decorating techniques. The most interesting example of ornamenting is a stylised “swastika”, executed using a technique of pricking the interior of a bowl (Pl. V/1).

In terms of the diversity of forms and decorations, beakers represent the most attractive ceramic finds that can be encountered at Early Iron Age settlements and necropolises. They appear in several variants and a range of sizes. The most richly decorated are the single-eared beakers found near the head of the deceased and amongst the contents in both tumuli 1 and 2 (Fig. 7/1; Fig. 9/4; Pl. V/2). Their rims are slanted and bellies pronounced, with miniature horn-shaped protomes applied (Pl. V/2). The other types of beakers have a slightly rounded cross-section (Pl. V/4), a pronounced conical neck (Pl. III/6, 7) and a sharp biconical profile (Pl. II/3). The ornamental techniques of decorating the beakers from tumuli 1 and 2 show that they were probably made by the same hand, and are decorated with horn-shaped applications, while the hatched strips and garlands were executed using tremolo, along with an “S” stamping in a horizontal row (Fig. 7/1; Fig. 9/4). On the beaker from Poljaska Ržana, the techniques of false cord, a row of “S” stamps, impressed concentric circles and fluting were combined (Pl. II/3), and a similar technique is repeated on the beaker from Crnoklište (Pl. III/8). The handles of the beakers exceed the level of the rim and are mainly decorated with fluting (Pl. III/9, 11), stamping (Pl. II/3; Pl. VI/13; Pl. VII/10), the application of a white incrustation and a motif of series of hatched rhombi (Pl. III/10), hatched triangles (Pl. VI/14) and a false cord (Pl. VII/8). One small beaker is ornamented solely by the technique of incising hatched strips and hatched hanging triangles (Pl. III/8), while another by a double, incised strip and circular punctures with a white incrustation (Pl. V/3).

Pitchers are also rare among the finds of Iron Age ceramic production and are represented by an example with a sharp profile from Crkviste (Pl. VI/3), decorated with tremolo, and one from Seliste (Pl. V/8), with punctured volutes accompanied by oblique flutes, and represent a unique style of ornamentation in this region.

Amphorae are the most lavishly decorated ceramics even though they are not strictly typologically defined, with classifications varying widely from author to author. In this paper, amphorae represent vessels of a biconical form with a widely everted rim, narrow neck, shoulders of a wide diameter and a narrow bottom. In some cases this type overlaps and converts into pithoi, given their large dimensions and utilitarian or sacral function which they are assumed to have performed. Based on size, they can be classified into a group of smaller (Pl. III/13; Pl. IV/3, 5; Pl. VII/6) or larger dimensions (Pl. III/14, 16, 17; Pl. V/6; Pl. VIII/7). Both groups can, in some way, be associated with the sacral complexes at Seliste and Belavina (Pl. IV/3, 5). The miniature amphorae from Belavina are decorated with a combination of a false cord and impressed triangles and, at Crnoklište, with an incised strip with hatched triangles and a false cord (Pl. III/13). The larger ones are more modestly decorated,
Fig. 9. Tumulus 2, Grave 1

Сл. 9. Тумул 2, гроб 1
displaying a false cord and a roughened neck (Pl. III/14, 16). The urn with a cremated deceased, from tumulus 1, although lacking its rim, represents the most interesting example of combining fluting, tremolo and the stamping of concentric circles (Fig. 7/4). Forms typologically indistinguishable from pithoi are biconical amphorae with a distinctly pronounced belly and very thin walls (Pl. III/15; Pl. VI/10, 11; Pl. VIII/6).

Pots are the most common and also the most diverse type of finds besides bowls. In the whole territory of the Balkans during the Early Iron Age, they appear in several basic types: conical (Pl. V/7, 9; Pl. IX/8), conical with an inverted rim (Pl. V/10), with a pronounced belly (Pl. IV/8; Pl. VI/5, 8), inverted bell-shaped (Pl. VI/6, 7; Pl. VII/5; Pl. IX/9) and biconical pots with a widely everted rim. Their dimensions vary, ranging from miniature, of about only 15 cm (Pl. IX/9) to 0.5 m in height (Pl. V/7; Pl. VI/6–8). The ornamentation is reduced to applying strips decorated with imprints made by a finger (Pl. III/21) or a tool (Pl. III/20), incising notches and cross-hatching (Pl. III/19; Pl. IX/9). Some examples, on their upper segments, have radially arranged spool-shaped handles (Pl. V/7, 10; Pl.7/5), between which circular indentations are impressed, or a strip with circular indentations applied. In some cases, in addition to the pair of spool-shaped handles, they are decorated with crescent handles (Pl. V/9, 10; Pl. IX/9).

Tripod stands also represent a regular item of inventory at Early Iron Age settlements and necropolises, and serve a double function, i.e. being used in houses for heating rooms, or for certain metallurgical processes. A large number of them have been discovered in pits at Sinjac, Crnokli{te and Kladen~i{te (Pl. VI/9), mostly as lower segments with characteristically circular perforations.

Pottery patterned on Greek models represents the last type. Only two examples from this group have been noted at Sinjac, and are associated with some cult activities performed during burials. The krater discovered in the cult pit near the graves at Belavina is decorated with a false cord and “S” stamps (Pl. IV/7). The other vessel was scattered amongst the stones of the ring of tumulus 1. Its upper part with the rim is missing and it had two horizontal handles with three protomes each (Pl. V/5). The analogies for this type of vessel can be found at the Varvara necropolis in Skopje and Sopot near Veles,92 at Seuthopolis,93 as well as the Zimnicea necropolis.94

An interesting find is a serrated tool used for decorating ceramic vessels (Pl. VI/12). These tools are a common find at sites in Serbia,95 which indicates the existence of the development of local ceramic production in settlements.

Judging by the shapes of the vessels and their ornamentation, it can be concluded that Early Iron Age ceramic production at the sites in the central Nisava Valley mostly dates from the time of the dominant Basarabi cultural complex. For a more accurate cultural and chronological determination, the influences coming from several directions, the Morava Valley, the Danube Valley, Bulgaria, Oltenia and the Vardar Valley, would have to be taken into account. Given the numerous parallels that were characteristic of the finds from the Danube Valley, the Morava Valley and Bulgaria, an opinion was formed that there had been a certain cultural unity during the second half of the 7th and most of the 6th century BC.96 For some elements of the decoration, such as those seen on the beaker from tumulus 1 (Pl. V/3), analogies can be found in the remote sub-Alpine region of Dolenjska97 and Bela Krajina.

M. Garasanih held that the Basarabi cultural group in the territory of the central Morava Valley had been developing in two phases (Iron Age Ia and IIb) which are differentiated based on the manner of decoration and, more specifically, that the tremolo decoration dominates in the younger phase.98 The single-eared beakers found in the tumuli at Seliste (Fig. 7/1; Fig. 9/4) may even speak of the recurrences that extend into the beginning of the 5th century BC, as evidenced by some metal finds in the graves. What stems from this is that there are certain discrepancies in the chronological determinations of the cultural movements in the Early Iron Age in the central Balkans. To date, beakers decorated with a combination of “S” stamping and tremolo have either not been found in the Morava Valley, or very little is known of them.99 The mixing of decorating styles which originate from neighbouring areas in the Balkans is reflected in the ceramic production. Only by form, not decoration, do these beakers have the most similarities with Crnokalačka Bara,100

---

92 Папазовска-Санев 2009, 97.
93 Чичкова 1984, Таблица V/1.64.
94 Сербу 2003, Fig. 18/11.
95 Јевтић 1992, 340; T. 246.
96 Васић 1997, 95.
100 Јевтић 1992а, T. VI/4.
Panjevački Rit, Dubič in Volkovo, as well as with Bosut. A rare shape of beaker handle from Kladenčiste (Pl. VII/9) is identical to the handles from Panjevački Rit and Crvene Livade.

Decorating with impressed concentric circles connected by tangents and “S” stamps, arrived from the territory of Bulgaria, in the region of the Stara Planina mountain range, and is believed to have reached the central Morava Valley from Pšeničeo towards the end of Iron Age I. An almost identical motif, with local differences, appears on pottery of the Babadag type.

The ceramic finds decorated with tremolo represent an additional problem, since this manner of decorating occurs in the territory of Bulgaria together with impressed circles, while this is not the case in the Morava Valley. On the urn from tumulus 1 at Seliste, the tongue-like handles are surrounded by concentric flutings and triple tremolo lines, with concentric circles impressed between them (Fig. 7/4), which bears a resemblance to the older finds from Pšeničeo and the Sakar mountain.

The closest analogies for deformed urns of large dimensions (Pl. V/6) are observed in the Thracian traditions of the Late Hallstatt necropolis of Rovinj, as well as at Mokranjske Stene in north-eastern Serbia. In contrast, richly ornamented urns – pithoi, from the pits at Crkviste (Pl. VI/10, 11), have characteristics reminiscent of decorating associated with the Gáva cultural influences, and analogies exist on the pottery from horizon III at Telak, the “Somotor” type finds from Šumen, Sava, Babadag and Ostrovo.

The influences of further accentuating flutings using a false cord on the bowls with an inverted rim most likely arrived from the South Morava Valley and northern Macedonia (Pl. II/5, 9; Pl. III/2, 4, 5), although it is also characteristic of the classical phase of the Basarabi culture. Analogies exist at Krs evica, Kacipup, Pelince, in Kumanovo and Varvara. The beaker from Crnklište, decorated with incised, hatched and elongated hanging triangles, also indicates the influences from the south (Pl. III/8), best illustrated by a beaker which was located near the legs of the deceased in a grave at Kunovo Ćuka. These influences recur at

---

102 Georgiev 1989, T. XVIII/1.
103 Medović, Medović 2011, T.X/5.
104 Stojih 2004, 38/1.
105 Stojic 1986, T. 32/5.
106 Bonev 2003, 129.
107 Čičikova 1972, Fig. 12; Jevtić 1983, 42.
109 Čičikova 1972, Fig. 107; Bonev 2003, T. 81/18.
110 Tončeva 1980, Pl. XLII/10; Bonev 2003, T. 85/12.
111 Kapuran 2013, Pl. 3/17.
112 Cigudean 1991, 81, Fig. 41/3, 5, 7.
113 Tončeva 1980, Pl. XXIII/1, 2, 5.
116 Jevtić 2004, 143.
118 Vukmanović, Popović 1982, T. X/7; T. XI/1, 2; T. XII/1, 5.
120 Papazovska 2009, 55, kat 68–69.
121 Sanev 1978, sl. 2.
nearly all sites of the central Nišava Valley, where the fluted bowls are decorated with a combination of a false cord (Falschschnur) and “S” stamps.

The influences of the east Serbian Zlot group can be seen in the decoration of beakers and pots. In pots, they are represented by the motif of incised cross-hatching (Pl. III/19; Pl. VII/7; Pl. IX/9), impressed triangles (Pl. III/20), crescent shaped handles (Pl. V/9, 10), etc.122 This is also the case with the rare finds of the sharp-profiled beakers with a widely everted rim (Pl. III/7)123 which, according to M. Jevtić, represent characteristic finds of the post-Basarabí period.124

A single find of a La Tène fibula in tumulus 1 at Sinjac, for which there is no clear explanation as to how it came to be in this context, chronologically corresponds to ceramic finds from the younger strata of Donja Pećina in Ostrovica (Fig. 13b). These ceramic finds, along with the fibula, belong to the 2nd century BC.

**BURIALS**

The rescue archaeological investigations which had to be conducted within the strict confines of the E-80 motorway route are the main cause of partially obtained (incomplete) information regarding the burial ritual at the aforementioned necropolises. Prior to these investigations, only Vajuga–Pesak near Korbovo125 and Signal near Svrlija126 were known in the entire area of eastern Serbia. It has been determined that the necropolis at Vajuga is older than Sinjac, while certain elements suggest that the Signal necropolis could possibly even be concurrent (the “omega” double-shank pin), although the ceramic finds and the burial ritual indicate a greater influence of the older traditions of the Kalakač–Insula Banului cultural complex, which the authors of the research interpret as a reflection of the conservative views of the communities in this markedly mountainous region.

For now, certain architectural elements of the sacral features at Seliste and Belavina do not have analogies in the territory of Serbia.127 The constructions of the “burial chambers” or the rectangular stone constructions in the central part of the tumulus (Fig. 3, 4) represent one of the rare customs for which there are analogies in the north, in the Carpathian Basin, i.e. Kaptol–Čemernica (tumuli XI and XII) and Süttő,128 or Kunovo Čuka in the valley of the Bregalnica river129 and Dabici130 in the south. At the aforementioned necropolises in Pannonia, the entranceways, dromoi, are characteristic of these kinds of grave chambers where, exclusively, cremated deceased were interred.131 It can be assumed that the rectangular “burial chambers” at Seliste may have represented a kind of substitute for cists, only larger in size, which further emphasised the status of the deceased. By analysing the elements of the burials at Kunovo Čuka, it can be concluded that the kinship between the deceased is probably underlined by their burials in a separate space. The stone ring (or paving) from tumulus 1, being of a more oval than a circular form, represents a unique example in Serbia. The paving in the form of a wall, which was located right next to the graves at the Belavina necropolis (Fig. 2), is also a unique element of the sacral architecture in this region.

The biritural burial practice in tumulus 1 at Sinjac cannot be disputed since the stratigraphy indicates only one subsequent burial (grave 1). Consequently, there is no evidence that urn 1 with a cremated deceased could have been buried at a later date, which means that the deceased in graves 2 and 3 were buried at the same time.

---

122 Kapuran 2013, 30; Jevtić 2004, sl. 86.
123 Lee., Pl. 1/13, 14; Pl. IV/1, 2, 5; Jevtić 2004, sl. 84, 87.
124 Jevtić 2004, 159.
126 Filipović, Bulatović 2010.
127 Lazghi 1989, 61–70.
128 Potrebica 2013, sl. 96, 103, 18.
129 Čapić 1978, Pl. 3.
130 Petački 1986, sl. 3.
131 Lee., 71.
as the deceased from urn 1. The beakers located above the heads of the deceased (graves 2 and 4) represent a deviation from the known funerary traditions, while urn 1 was located directly next to the legs of the deceased without weapons in grave 3. It should be particularly stressed that in the area extending from western Serbia to western Bulgaria, only a small number of necropolises and isolated burials from the Late Hallstatt are known to date. From the Carpathian Basin, through the Danube Valley (Ferigile) and the Morava Valley (Mojsinje, Atenica, Ljuljaci,132 Mala Krsna133) to Kosovo (Romaja), the cremation of the deceased was most commonly practised. The biritual burial represents an extremely rare instance. There are two viewpoints with regard to this type of ritual practice. While some consider it to be of Thracian influences (who Herodotus also claims buried and cremated with an equal frequency), others are of the opinion that the Illyrian traditions influenced the indigenous population.134 It is also believed that between the 8th and 7th century BC, in the southern regions of Romania, inhumations were predominantly practised,135 but later it was the exclusive privilege of the aristocracy. D. Srejović was of the opinion that the analysis of the funerary rituals could demonstrate some degree of relatedness between the Dardanians, Triballi and Moesians and the Pannonians in the north, as well as the Paeonians, Macedonians and Greeks in the south.136 All of this further points to the fact that our knowledge of the ethno-cultural characteristics of Early Iron Age communities is still insufficiently clear. The only example of a biritual burial in the Morava Valley is mound V at Mojsinje near Čačak. During the Early Iron Age, in the location of a tumulus of the Hügelgräber culture, a necropolis with inhumed and cremated deceased was established.137

The groups with partially burnt human bones that were located directly beneath the stone ring of tumulus 1 testify, for now, to a rare example of this kind of burial practice at the necropolises in Sinjac. Several areas of black (burnt) soil were noted, containing the partial remains of one or two buried individuals together with, occasionally, unburnt animal bones. In some cases, a large number of fragmented vessels, which could not be fully reconstructed, were located next to the skeletal remains. These groups of finds were denominated as incinerations, and are located based on the excavation

---

133 Karth 2013.
134 Срежовић 1979, 80; Гарашанин 1988, 74, 75.
135 Сербу 2003, 145.
136 Срежовић 1979, 82.
grid.138 The general characteristics of these incinerations are elaborated on in the anthropological section of this paper.

At the necropolis of Belavina, in feature 2, the cremated remains of a female and a child were detected, along with a number of unburnt animal bones, while feature 6 contained a total of four middle-aged individuals, i.e. two inhumed and two cremated. The contexts of the finds show that the burials at Belavina are identical to the group of incinerations discovered beneath the ring of tumulus 1 at Selište. Had the incinerations been performed immediately prior to the construction of the tumulus, they could represent some kind of preparation for the burial of prominent members of the community, who were inhumed along with weapons. Further analyses of the human remains may possibly additionally indicate the kinship of the deceased buried in this sacral complex.

The custom of laying the deceased onto a platform of stones (tumulus 2) has its closest analogies at the Vajuga–Pesak necropolis, with the biritual burials showing that the communities, during the Late Hallstatt, were gradually switching to cremating the deceased, which can be linked to both Thracian and Illyrian influences.139 The role of the “wall”, or the stone paving, for which there are analogies at Koprivlen (the southern sacral complex) remains the biggest enigma.140 Although there is no clear evidence confirming this, it can be assumed that the stone paving could have had the role of a ceremonial path leading through the sepulchral complex. Along with the human remains, a large number of unburnt bones of an ox, deer, pig and possibly an ass were discovered at Belavina.141 Based on the traces of subsequent gnawing, it can be surmised that these were pieces of meat from funeral repasts, which could have been shallowly buried, most likely together with the cremated deceased (the degree of devastation does not allow this to be completely asserted). Finds of animal bones at Early Iron Age necropolises have been noted not to allow this to be completely asserted. Finds of animal bones from funeral repasts, which could have been shallowly buried, most likely together with the cremated deceased, are not uncommon.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The methodology of the anthropological analyses conducted on the human remains at the necropolises of Sinjac includes five categories proposed by Ž. Mikić.143 Based on this scheme, category I comprises complete, well-preserved skeletons; category II – incomplete, well-preserved skeletons; category III – moderately preserved skeletons; category IV – partially preserved skeletons, while category V comprises poorly preserved skeletons. Sex determination on the skeletal material of juvenile and adult individuals was conducted using a combination of morphological and metrical methods. Particular attention was paid to the morphological elements of the skull, mandible and pelvis.144 Based on the obtained metrical elements, calculated indices are presented in tables, separately for each grave (Tables 2 and 3). Individual age was determined based on the degree of obliteration of the cranial sutures,145 the change on the occlusal surface of the dental material with the numerical classification of the attrition of the upper surface of all teeth in relation to age,146 and morphological changes on the joint surface of the pubic symphysis.147 At the necropolises of Sinjac, 26 epigenetic variations on the cranial and 11 on the postcranial part of the skeleton were analysed.148 The stature of juvenile and adult individuals was calculated based on standardised formulae.149 The analysis of the burnt human osteological material included the recording of the types of cracks formed on bones during the process of burning on the funeral pyre and the occurrence of an abnormal bone curvature.150 The degree of oxidation of the organic material in bones, i.e. the temperature of burning on the pyre, was determined using a macroscopic method, based on the colour of the bones.151

138 Sq. 8–9 contained a single individual, sq. 16 – two individuals, sq. 18 – two adult female individuals and a foetus, sq. 20 – a male individual, over 50 years of age, sq. 36 – a single individual, sq. 37 – an inhumed and a cremated individual and, in the western extension, an inhumed male and a cremated female individual.
139 M. Garašanin links it to the Paeonians and Dardanians; Garasanić 1988, 74, 75.
141 The analyses of the zooarchaeological remains were conducted by Stefan Milišević MA.
142 The analyses of the zooarchaeological remains were conducted by Stefan Milišević MA.
143 M. Garašanin links it to the Paeonians and Dardanians; Garasanić 1988, 74, 75.
144 The analyses of the zooarchaeological remains were conducted by Stefan Milišević MA.
145 Todd 1920, 285–334; idem. 1921a; idem. 1921b.
147 Trotter, Gleser 1952.
149 Trotter, Gleser 1952.
150 Delev 2002, 99–101, Fig. 71.
151 The analyses of the zooarchaeological remains were conducted by Stefan Milišević MA.
The anthropological analysis included the skeletal remains of 22 individuals, 10 of which belong to inhumed (45.45%) and 12 to cremated deceased (54.55%) (Table 1). Sex determination was possible on the skeletal remains of nine individuals (40.91% of cases). Male morphological characteristics and metrical values relate to the remains of three individuals (13.64%), whereas the skeletons of six individuals are female (27.27%). Sex could not be determined in 13 cases (59.09%). The remains of two individuals correspond to children (9.09%). The skeletons of two individuals belong to juveniles (9.09%), while the remaining 18 skeletons are associated with adults (81.82%). The mortality rate is most pronounced in adult individuals (aged 23–40). Due to the decomposition of the long bones of the upper and lower limbs, stature could be calculated only in the case of the deceased from grave 1. These are the remains of an adult male, with a stature of \(171 \text{ cm}\).

The poor preservation of the bones precluded the building of a comprehensive picture with regard to the population’s health status, since paleopathological changes could also be observed only on the skeletal remains of the inhumed individual in grave 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male (M)</th>
<th>Female (F)</th>
<th>Neutro (N)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fetus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5 – 1 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 – 2 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 – 3 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 – 4 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 – 5 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 – 6 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 – 7 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 – 8 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5 – 9 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5 – 10 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5 – 11 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.5 – 12 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5 – 13 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5 – 14.5 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male (M)</th>
<th>Female (F)</th>
<th>Neutro (N)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant I (15-18 years)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant II (19-22 years)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult I (23-30 years)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult II (31-40 years)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature I (41-50 years)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature II (51-60 years)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior I (61-70 years)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior II (71+ years)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Sex and age structure of individuals

Таблица 1. Полна и сحوالна структура индивида
Epigenetic characteristics were perceived on the skeletons of three individuals (13.64%). From a total of 37 observed epigenetic characteristics, only three relate to the cranial part of skeleton: **sutura supranasalis** (the individual buried in grave 3), **sulci frontales** (the individual buried in grave 1) and **ossa suturae lambdoideae** (the individuals buried in graves 1 and 2).

Markers of occupational stress, in the form of hypertrophy of the muscle and ligament attachment points and the presence of “squatting” facets, are visible on the remains of three individuals (13.64%). Due to the high degree of decomposition of the osteological material, it was impossible to accurately reconstruct the physical activities these individuals were engaged in during life.

The analysis of the cremated remains has led to several conclusions. First of all, it should be mentioned that the degree of oxidation of the organic matter in bones in most cases shows an inconsistent burning temperature of the pyre. The lower limbs of the deceased had generally been exposed to lower temperatures, whereas the bones of the cranial part of skeleton and upper limbs, particularly the bones of the thorax, vertebral column and the pelvis had burnt at higher temperatures. The remains gathered from pyres were laid in the grave immediately after cremating, without the additional grinding of bones, and were most probably followed by an offering (pieces of animals) which was placed alongside the deceased. In some instances, besides the cremated deceased, a secondary burial of unburnt human osteological material was performed. In most cases, a relatively small amount of bones was retrieved from the pyre, weighing on average about 40 g. The only exception is the remains from urn 1, with an overall weight of 598.9 g. In addition to the large amount of recovered osteological material, the fact that it had

KRAJNIJALNI SKELET | Grob 1 | Grob 3
---|---|---
MANDIBULA
индекс робустиности шеи мандибуле | 41,38 | 46,15
индекс гране мандибуле | 44,26 | -
фронтомандибулярный индекс | 116,48 | -

**Table 2. Indices on the cranial skeleton**

POSTKRANIJALNI SKELET | Grob 1 | Grob 2 | Grob 3 | Grob 4 | Објекат 6, инд. 2
---|---|---|---|---|---
ХУМЕРУС
индекс поперечной пресечки | 90,00 | 84,21 | 81,63 | - | 84,78
| 72,00 | 81,82 |
РАДИЮС
дужинско-дебелински индекс | 16,52 | - | - | - | -
индекс поперечной пресечки | 5,22 | - | - | - | -
дужинско-мышечностиски индекс | 13,91 | - | - | - | -
ФЕМУР
индекс робустиациета | - | - | - | - | 105,88
| 12,39 | 12,92 |
Пиларстрични индекс | 103,92 | 110,71 | 112,00 | 116,00 | 112,73 |
| 101,96 | - | - | - | 117,86 |
Плацентарни индекс | 81,25 плати. | 67,10 хипер. | 81,25 плати. | - | 90,32 сур. |
| 81,25 плати. | 67,50 хипер. | 83,87 плати. | - | 90,62 сур. |
ТИБИЈА
дужинско-дебелински индекс | - | - | - | - | 23,88 |
| 20,42 |
Плактеномитички индекс | 64,70 мезок. | 55,56 платк. | 67,50 мезок. | 66,67 мезок. | 65,25 платк. |
| 74,63 сур. | 75,34 сур. |

**Table 3. Indices on the postcranial skeleton**

* вредности су прво дате за десну, а потом и за леву страну тела
been stored in an urn and placed in the central part of the tumulus points to a more attentive treatment dedicated to this deceased, compared to those buried beneath the ring of the tumulus, which indicates that this individual had a higher social status or was related to the deceased in graves 2 and 3.

Further investigation would enable us to complement the current knowledge about the population that lived in the area of Sinjac during the Iron Age, and allow for a more accurate reconstruction of its paleodemographic structure, relationships within the community and the conditions in which they lived. This would contribute to a better understanding of different criteria of the ritual practice according to which the deceased of different social or kindred status were buried.

**CONCLUSION**

Judging by the small number of finds from the settlements (obtained in the course of the preliminary field surveys) and the results of the systematic and rescue investigations, the Early Iron Age in the central Nišava Valley unfolded in three phases. The first phase of the transitional period between the Bronze Age and the Iron Age (Hallstatt A) is represented by two necropoleis and a settlement in Velika Lukanja and at Madjilka near Pirot. The second phase (Hallstatt C) comprises a number of settlements of the Basarabi cultural complex, from which the ceramic finds with classical Basarabi decoration and the recurrences of the Babadag and Pšeničëvo group originate. In the third phase (Hallstatt D), a certain symbiosis most likely occurred between the younger phase of the Basarabi complex (tremolo pottery) and Illyrio-Paeonian elements which are characterised by the metal finds from the graves at Sinjac (the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th century BC). This can also be seen in some burial rituals. Based on all that has been stated, D. Srejović and A. Palavestra maintain that the period in the middle of the 1st millennium BC was characterised by the particularly dynamic movement of material goods from one side of the Balkan Peninsula to the other, which not only impedes the ethnic identification of the Late Hallstatt communities, but makes it almost impossible.152 Since funerary customs represent a distinctive feature of the essence of a nation, they were least susceptible to changes.153 The biritual burial and rectangular burial chambers are, for now, a rare example in the central Balkans. Taking all the aforementioned into account, it is believed that the necropoleis at Sinjac have more elements in common with the south Balkan group (the upper and lower regions of the Vardar Valley and Paeonia) than with the central Balkan group (Morava Valley)154 however, in spite of that, strong Thracian influences prevail in burials.

A particular problem is the question of the ethnicity of the communities that lived and were buried in the central Nišava Valley, since the finds of the material and spiritual culture show influences arriving from a number of directions (Oltenia, the West, Great, South and Kosovo’s Morava river valleys, the Vardar Valley and Thrace). The necropoleis at Sinjac perhaps best confirm the assertion of R. Vasić, who states that, due to some very close contacts, a type of symbiosis occurred between the material culture of the Autariatae and Triballi, which lasted until the 5th century BC when the Autariatae defeated them on the battlefield.155 Taking into consideration all of the chronologically sensitive finds of ceramics, metal, the funerary architecture and rituals, it is believed that the necropoleis in the vicinity of the village of Sinjac chronologically belong to the end of the 6th and the first half of the 5th century BC. The cultural horizon with the La Tène pottery from Donja Pecina in Ostrovica, along with a fibula from tumulus 1 at Sinjac, which all originate from the 2nd century BC, would represent the last stage of prehistory in the central Nišava Valley. Finally, what needs to be said is that it would be right to wait for the pending results of anthropological and physicochemical analyses which would help to elucidate the problems regarding the ethnicity of the prehistoric communities that lived between the Morava Valley and the upper course of the Iskar river.

153 Срејовић 1979, 79.
154 Ibid., 94.
BIBLIOGRAPHY:


Булатовић 2007 – А. Булатовић, Врање, културна спадна и културни спад на тракиjsки резон под долините на Врањске реције, Археолошки институт и Народни музеј у Врању, Београд–Врање.


Jevtić 1983 – M. Jevtić, Keraunik starijeg gevozdenog doba na centralno balkanskom području, Centar za arheološka istraživanja Filozofskog fakulteta, Beograd.


Jevtić 2004 – M. Jevtić, Gvozdeno doba u okolinii Bora, u: M. Lazić (ur.), Bor i okolina u praistorijskoj, antici i sredovremenu veku, Muzej Vojvodine, Novi Sad.


Katić 2013 – V. Katić, Tribalski kneževski troy iz Vrpčkog Trebeništa 1972, zavod na zaštita na spomenicima na kulturnim i Narodnim muzej Ohrid, Ohrid.

Lazić 1989 – M. Lazić, Tobiografija i štićenolozija praistorijskih šumula u Srbiji i Crnoj Gori, Centar za arheološka istraživanja Filozofskog fakulteta, Beograd.

Lahtov 1965 – V. Lahtov, Problem Trebeniške kulture, Naroden muzej Ohrid, Ohrid.


Manić 2010 – A. Manić, Praistorijska nalazišta i gornjem Poniavlju, Habilitacioni rad odbijen u Na Rodnom muzeju u Beogradu, nije publikovan.


Palamestra 1984 – A. Palamestra, Kneževski troyovi i situacija izvozenog doba na centralnom Balkanu, Balkanološki institut SANU, Beograd.

Papazovska-Sanev 2009 – A. Papazovska-Sanev, Keraunikata od железното време по долината од Vardar (od XI do VI век прет Христа), Магистерски труд, Филозофски факултет, Институт за историја
на уметности и археологији, Универзитет св. Кирил и Методије у Скопју.


Поповић 2006 – М. Пековић, Археолошка зbirка војног музеја у Београду, Српско археолошко друштво и Војни музеј, Београд.

Поповић 1994 – Ј. Поповић, Антички ирачка зbirка, Народни музеј, Београд.


Потребица 2013 – Н. Потребица, Kneževi željezni doba, Меридијан, Загреб.

Рendić-Mićević 2005 – А. Rendić-Mićević, Makedonske bronze, željeznobodni nalazi na području Makedonije, Кatalog izložbe, Arheološki muzej у Загребу и Музеј Мakedоније, Загреб.


Срејовић 1979 – Д. Срејовић, Покушај етничког и територијалног разграничења старобалканских племена на основу начина сахрањивања, у: М. Гарааша-


Zotović 1985 – M. Zotović, Arheološki i etnički problemi bronzanog i gvozdenog doba zapadne Srbije, Zavičajni muzej Titovo Užice i Savez arheoloških društava Jugoslavije, Beograd,
Насеља и некрополе старијег гвозденог доба у срећном току реке Нишаве

Кључне речи: — Халштат С, Халштат Д, Басараби, Трибали, Трачани, насеља, некрополе, погребни обичаји.

Захваљујући заштићеним истраживањима на Коридору 10 Е-80 (агуо-пут Ниш—Димитровград), током 2013—2014. године истина је неколико локалитета и две некрополе из гвозденог доба, што ће, сматрајући, допринети јаснијем сагледавању хронолошког распорда и етничких питања везаних за одређене палеобалканске заједнице које су живеле на територији источне Србије.

Најзанимљивији налаз из старијег гвозденог доба је некропола, заступљена релативно изузетно јасно и специфично (Сл. 1). Она представља некрополу човека који је умахнут као покушача, а највероватније потиче од пољоплеменства. Оквирно се датује између 750. и 725. године пре н. е. Културне детерминације које се односе на камену Басарбу и Халштат засталица, као и на херцеговачку новицу, која је у доба раних култура представљена у некадашњем језгру некрополе. Камене тумула са многим разноврсним предметима представљају тачан пример на таоших некропола које су сачуване још у овом добу.

Првобитно се готово у потпуности представљала правоугаони монастирска кућа, у којој су се налазиле некадашње гробне оближње. У некој од некропола из старијег гвозденог доба је налазено неколико тумула које су припадале различитим некрополима.

Продужавајући истраживање на Џаљбани, у некадашњем Милановом Панчићу, на некропола из старијег гвозденог доба је откривено неколико некропола, од којих је један посвећен сакралним обичајима, а други представља некрополу човека из тог доба.

Аналитичка оцена некропола, која има за циљ прозакли фонда старијег гвозденог доба, пратиће натпорекломе у некрополима са надгробним облицима, као и некрополима са разним обичајима и обичајима из старијег гвозденог доба.

Овај некропол је представљен некрополом из старијег гвозденог доба и некрополом раних култура. Од тумула је откривено неколико тумула које су припадале различитим некрополима.

Продужавајући истраживање на Џаљбани, у некадашњем Милановом Панчићу, на некропола из старијег гвозденог доба је откривено неколико некропола, од којих је један посвећен сакралним обичајима, а други представља некрополу човека из тог доба.

Аналитичка оцена некропола, која има за циљ прозакли фонда старијег гвозденог доба, пратиће натпорекломе у некрополима са надгробним облицима, као и некрополима са разним обичајима и обичајима из старијег гвозденог доба.

Овај некропол је представљен некрополом из старијег гвозденог доба и некрополом раних култура. Од тумула је откривено неколико тумула које су припадале различитим некрополима.

Продужавајући истраживање на Џаљбани, у некадашњем Милановом Панчићу, на некропола из старијег гвозденог доба је откривено неколико некропола, од којих је један посвећен сакралним обичајима, а други представља некрополу човека из тог доба.

Аналитичка оцена некропола, која има за циљ прозакли фонда старијег гвозденог доба, пратиће натпорекломе у некрополима са надгробним облицима, као и некрополима са разним обичајима и обичајима из старијег гвозденог доба.

Овај некропол је представљен некрополом из старијег гвозденог доба и некрополом раних култура. Од тумула је откривено неколико тумула које су припадале различитим некрополима.

Продужавајући истраживање на Џаљбани, у некадашњем Милановом Панчићу, на некропола из старијег гвозденог доба је откривено неколико некропола, од којих је један посвећен сакралним обичајима, а други представља некрополу човека из тог доба.

Аналитичка оцена некропола, која има за циљ прозакли фонда старијег гвозденог доба, пратиће натпорекломе у некрополима са надгробним облицима, као и некрополима са разним обичајима и обичајима из старијег гвозденог доба.

Овај некропол је представљен некрополом из старијег гвозденог доба и некрополом раних култура. Од тумула је откривено неколико тумула које су припадале различитим некрополима.
ном наклачком, док се у висини главе налази један керамички пехар (Сл. 9). Ван сакраног контекста нађена је фрагмен-
tована фибула као и један оштро профилисани врх бронзаног предмета малih димензија (можда нашађивши?) (Т. I/4, 9).

На суседном локалитету Балавина (Сл. 2), у оквирима ускетора за локални пут, откривено је попочиње (или зид?), дугачко 8 м и висока 2,5 м, усмере N–S. С извица стране
не ове структуре, чија намена није до краја разјашњена, на-
lазиле су се две уништене гробне конструкције у којима су се налазили парцијални остаци два скелета и четири спа-
lена покojnika. Фрагменти скелета и керамичких посуда, заједно са неиспалим животињским костима, били су ис-
lучиво концентрисани у две мање зоне црне земље између камених облутака (објекти 2 и 6) (Сл. 10, 11), као и у случаи
ју „тумула“ I на Селишту. Услед високог степена десташи-
је, ближа реконструкција тих зона са кремацијом није мо-
гућа. За сада је једино сигурно то да изван зоне црне земље и камена, као и у јами (објекат 2), није пронађена керамика из старјег гробовног доба.

Међу осталим налазима из тумула (али вај контекста везаних за сахрање) и другим налазима на локалитету који би припадали позном Халшату издвајам једну перду од жуте пасте са четири пара очног падеља (Т. I/7), затим је два салтенове спаване ујутрене пише (Т. I/10), један брон-
зан врх у облику роба четвртогостог пресека (Т. I/9) и једну бронзану перлу (Т. I/8).

Керамичку продукцију развијеног и позног Халшата на локалитетима у средињем Пошшаљу треба у првом реду развратити на стратиграфске сигурне налазе који потичу са археолошких истраживања и на обе који су прикупљени на реконструисаним или су их у Музеј донели налазачи. У прву групу локалитета убрајамо налазе са Пиротског града (Т. II/12–20), Црновилица (Т. III), Балавине (Т. IV), Сели-
шта и Селигени (Т. V), Црковишта (Т. VI), Ладенчишина (Т. VII), Петрашке (Т. VIII) и Ђоње пењине (Т. IX), са њима они имати предност у односу на другу групу налаза.

Антрополошком анализом обухваћени су скелетни оста-
ци укупно 22 индивиду, од којих десет припада инхумирани-
im (45,45%), a два спаленим покожицеам (54,55%) (табела 1). Полна детерминација је могла да се изврши на скелет-
im остацима девет индивидуа (87,50% случајева), тако да се мушке морфолошке карактеристике и метричке вредно-
сти везују за остатке три особе (13,64%), док женском полу припадају скелети шест особа (27,12%). Пол није могао да се утврди у 13 случајева (59,09%). Дечјем узрасту одговара-
ju остати две особе (9,09%). Јуненином узрасту припадају скелети дву индивидуе (9,09), док се преосталих 18 скелета везују за опсаде особе (81,82%). Моргалит је најразраже-
нији код адултних индивидуа (стариост од 23 до 40 година). Декомпозицијом дугач костију горњих и доњих екстремите-
tа, телесна висина је могла да се израчунана само у случају покожица из гроба 1 у „тумулу“ I. У питању су остаци опра-
сле индивидеа мушког пола, чија је телесна висина износи-
ла 171 ± 4 ст. Лоша очуваност костију онемогућила је сагле-
dавање потпуне слике о здравственом статусу популације, пошто су палеонтолошке промене такође могле да се по-
сматрају само на скелетним остацима инхумирани индиви-
diue сахрање у гробу 1.

Епигенетске карактеристике су уочене на скелетима три индивидуе (13,64%). Од укупно 37 постмртних, само три

СТАРИНАР L XV/2015
Plate I – Metal finds from the Nišava valley

Table I – Метални налази из Понишавља
Plate II – Pottery finds from the Pirot region
Табла II – Налази керамике из Пирота и његове околине
Plate III – Pottery finds from Crnoklište

Таблица III – Налази керамике са Црноклишта
Plate IV – Pottery finds from the site of Belavina

Таблица IV – Налази керамике са Белавине
### Plate V – Pottery finds from Tumulus I

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE V – Налази керамике из Тумула I**
Plate VI – Pottery finds from Crkvište

Табла VI – Налази керамике са Црквиштэ
Plate VII – Pottery finds from Kladenčište

Tabla VII – Налази керамике са Кладенчишта
Plate VIII – Pottery finds from the Petrlaška cave
Табла VIII – Налази керамике из Пејрлашка йећице
Plate IX – Pottery finds from the Donja cave

Tabla IX – Налази керамике из Доне йећине