CONTEXTUALISING BOW FIBULAE WITH BOEOTIAN SHIELD PLATES: CULTURAL TRANSFER PROCESSES DURING EARLY IRON AGE IN THE CENTRAL BALKAN AREA

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Abstract. – Despite the fact that double-looped fibulae with catch-plates in the form of a Boeotian shield have been frequently discussed, it is worthwhile examining the type again from a supra-regional perspective. The following paper, therefore, has two aims. First, the typo-chronological development of the fibulae with catch-plates in the form of a Boeotian shield within the Central Balkan area is considered. The second part of the paper focuses on the processes of the spread of the fibula type. The question is raised as to what extent local elites – integrated in supra-regional networks – could have functioned as transmitters and agents in the processes of cultural transfer.

Key words. – Early Iron Age, double-looped bow fibulae, typo-chronology, elites, networks, cultural transfer.

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1 „Na sve to elemente so že mnogi raziskovalci vezalo ilirsko ekspanzijo oz. vsaj delno ilirizacijo doslej žarnogrobičnih teritorij.” (Gabrovec 1970, 42).
2 Gabrovec 1970, 39–43; see also Vasić 1973, 133, following the view of an enlarged territory of the Glasinac group – originally defined by Čovic 1964 – by the end of the 7th century.
3 See Petrescu-Dimbovita 1976.

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therefore, has two purposes. First, the typo-chronology of the fibulae with catch-plates in the form of a Boeotian shield and its variants is discussed supra-regionally, building upon previous studies, and the question of its region of origin is raised once again. The second part of the paper focuses on the mechanisms for the spreading of this fibula type. In general, the idea of a nonspecific diffusion of the type prevails without attempting to identify the producers, transmitters, and recipients. By analysing grave contexts, including early variants of the type, the question is raised as to what extent local elites – integrated in supra-regional networks – could have functioned as transmitters and agents in the processes of cultural transfer.

**RESEARCH HISTORY**

Double-looped bow fibulae with circular cuttings were already known by the end of the 19th century through the early excavations on the Glasinac high-plateau. Already in 1893, F. Fiala referred to “typical Glasinac fibula”. The type is important within the relative chronology systems and is regarded as a leading diagnostic form for the phase of Glasinac IVc. After several revisions of the chronology system, B. Ćović restricted the type to phase of Glasinac IVc-1. Double-looped fibulae with catch-plates in the form of a Boeotian shield also play an important role within the relative chronology system of R. Vasić, established in the territory of the former Serbian republic. Among other types, the fibula type distinguishes horizon 2 from other relative horizons. S. Gabrovec mentions the “Glasinac type” as type 8 in his work on double-looped bow fibulae.

In the course of compiling the volumes *Die Prähistorischen Bronzelfunde*, T. Bader and D. Gergova dealt with double-looped bow fibulae in the 1980s. T. Bader distinguished two variants of the bow fibulae with a Boeotian shield plate on the basis of the form of the bow. Using the ornamentation of the bow, D. Gergova distinguished, altogether, five variants of the type called B II 2 within her nomenclature.

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5 Vasić 1999, 65, according to the analysis of R. Vasić, the main distribution area is localised in the Central Balkan area, distributed to the Western Balkans, Slovenia, Oltenia and Transylvania as well as Greece.
7 Truhelka 1893, 83–84.
8 Fiala 1893, 127.
9 Benac, Ćović 1957, 100–102.
10 Ćović 1987, 608.
11 Vulpe 1965, 121. A. Vulpe first used this description for the fibulae in his work about the Basarabi culture. The term is particularly used in the Serbian- and German-speaking literature and is maintained in this article.
12 Vasić 1977, 17–18.
13 Gabrovec 1970, 32.
14 Bader 1983, 85, variant A includes fibulae with bows with a round cross section, while variant B has octagonal bow sections.
tyre. A general overview of the entire distribution of the type was provided by R. Vasić in a 1974 article about the chronology of the Early Iron Age in the Balkans, which was then fully elaborated upon in his PBF volume in 1999. Although noting differences and variations in the execution of the bow, he didn’t classify individual variants.

Although the type of the double-looped bow fibula with a Boeotian shield plate is often discussed and regarded as significant concerning chronology or cultural history, no sub-categorisation applicable supra-regionally is presently available. For classification, it is the construction of the bow, specifically that issued by T. Bader and D. Gergova. In contrast, the form and ornamentation of the foot plate plays a subordinate role. The aim of the typo-chronological analysis is to suggest a differentiated classification of variants, using several criteria for the distinction: total length of the fibulae, the index of the height and length proportions of the foot plate, size and form of the cuttings, ornamentation of the foot plate as well as the construction and ornamentation of the bow. A total of 112 fibulae have been selected because they allow for the possibility of analysing the above-mentioned criteria (Fig. 1).

TYPO-CHRONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Variant 1

Fibulae of variant 1 are 7–12 cm long (median 9,1). The massive bow is round in cross-section and shows profiling on the end of the bows, which differ in their shape. Usually the bow is not decorated, with the exception of one example from Beli Izvor whose whole bow is ornamented with scores. The foot plate is high and rectangular with large-scale cuttings on both sides. In the middle part, the foot plate is ornamented with longitudinal ribs or several vertical scores. Some fibulae are ornamented with several concentric circles.

Within the grave of the warrior of Sofronievo, which is controversial in its dating, a fibula with a Boeotian shield plate was found, which is assigned to variant I due to its characteristics. Originally, the grave was dated to the 7th century BC, whereas B. Teržan suggested a clearly higher date. For a chronological classification of the grave context, she first cites, among other objects, ribbed borders comparable to findings from Križna Gora and Doroslovo, which can be dated from the second half of the 8th century to the first half of 7th century. Secondly, the chronological position of the phiale with omphalos is discussed. For a comparison, she consults the phialae from the Glasinac high plateau, which are dated to the phase of Glasinac IVb. Thus, the classification of the context from Sofronievo in the second half of the 8th century or rather the first half of the 7th century is further supported. However, for the dating of the ensemble, the bronze phialae are not necessarily conclusive, since they occurred in Gordion already towards the end of the 8th century and are part of grave furnishings in Italian graves throughout the 7th century.

To understand the chronological position of the Sofronievo grave, consideration can also be given to the objects of local production within the context. The ring-shaped pendants belong to the type Ghidici, which occur, according to D. Gergova, regularly together with material from phases IIa and b in Bulgaria, dating to the 8th and 7th centuries. In Sofronievo, the ring-shaped pendants were found together with an axe. The same combination was also found within the deposit of...

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15 Gergova 1987, 47. D. Gergova distinguishes the variants mainly on the basis of how the bow is formed (massive, round cross section, polygonal, rhombic) as well as the ornamentation (vertical scores, profiled ends or knots), including the ornamentation of the foot (longitudal ribs, grooving, concentric circles, V-shaped ornaments).
16 Vasić 1974.
17 Vasić 1999.
18 Vasić 1999, 65.
19 The lengths of the fibulae are mainly given in the volumes of the PBF, or they are ascertainable from the literature.
20 To get objective data concerning the form of the foot plate, the size of the foot plate in relation to the width was determined.
21 To get objective data concerning the size of the cuttings, the percentage of the cutting in relation to the whole foot plate was calculated.
22 Therefore, excluded from the analysis are numerous fragments not allowing for a proper classification, as well as localised forms which cannot be integrated into the proposed scheme.
23 Gergova 1987, nr. 181.
24 Hänsel 1976, 174, for the chronological classification he used the ceramic in Basarabi style.
25 Teržan 1987, 15–17, for the chronological classification she also refers to graves from Brezje containing bow fibulae with a Boeotian shield plate, traditionally known as a diagnostic form for phases IVc or IVc–I. A limitation of the phialae on the Glasinac high plateau to phase IVb is, therefore, questionable.
26 Teržan 1987, 17.
27 Gergova 1987, 64.
28 Gergova 1987, 13–16.
29 B. Nikolov interpreted the ax as the hilt of a mahaira (see Nikolov 1965, fig. 4a). The concave termination and the vertical pivots on both sides have parallels for instance in Zlot (Vasić 1977, tab. 20, 14.15).
Ruijiše, which belongs to Horizon 1, according to R. Vasić. The chronological position of the grave context and the appearance of the fibulae type in this region before the middle of the 7th century are, therefore, justifiable.

Also, an early dating of variant 1 is provided by a grave from Mikro Doukato (northern part of Greece), which has not yet been discussed to any great extent. The inhumation grave number 7 yielded single-looped bow fibulae with a Boeotian shield plate as well as one double-looped bow fibula, also with a Boeotian shield plate. The foot plates are characterised by cuttings and, therefore, cannot be added to the type with an hourglass catch-plate. In the very same grave, fibulae, each with a large spherical ball on the bow, were found, which are characteristic of the western part of Asia Minor and dated to the 8th and early 7th centuries.

Variant 1 is mainly distributed in the north-western part of modern Bulgaria. Beyond this area, objects related to this variant are located on the bank of the Danube in Beli Izvor and in the Thracian part of northern Greece as well as in the Moldova region (Fig. 2).

Variant 2

Variant 2, with lengths from 6–10 cm (median: 8.2 cm), is the most frequently occurring type. Bows are either round or polygonal in cross section, although polygonal cross-sections prevail in the western parts of the distribution area. The profiling of the bow consists of embossed rings as well as scores near the loops. Characteristic is a low and broad foot plate with plain

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30 Vasić 1977, tab. 11.
31 See also Metzner-Nebelsick 2002, 110–112.
34 Caner 1983, 45.
cuttings on both sides, which are limited to the middle parts. The foot plate is mainly decorated with a carved ornamentation showing a double-“V”; less often the ornament is executed in a ribbed manner. Fibulae with concentric circles are mainly known from the eastern part of the distribution area. On examples assigned to variant 2, *Tremolierstich* is used for decoration mainly along the edges of the foot plates.

Within the eastern distribution area, pieces of variant 2 are combined with massive bracelets with punched ends, as well as open-worked belts, as known from Ruska Bijala–Moravica. Novo Selo–Dub. This characteristic combination of bracelets with punched ends and open-worked belts is also found in Hrtkovci, Vrtište, and Zlot – contexts which are assigned to horizon 2, according to R. Vasić and, therefore, are absolutely dated to the second half of the 7th century and the first half of the 6th century. D. Gergova assigns the open-worked belts to her phase IIb, which describes roughly the 7th century. Fibulae of variant 2 combined with open-worked belts are also found in the rich grave

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36 Srejović 1960, fig. 28.
37 Vasić 1977, tab. 22A.
38 Vasić 1977, tab. 21.
39 Vasić 1977, tab. 20.
40 Gergova 1987, 63.
of a female individual from Donja Dolina–Greda as well as in Donja Dolina–Greda Mato Petrović jun. There, open-worked belts are assigned to horizon 2a, corresponding the second half of the 7th century and the beginning of the 6th century.

At the Glasinac high-plateau, several contexts with pieces of variant 2 are known, mainly deriving from female graves. According to their additional furnishings, graves with this variant are comparable to one another and can be assigned to the same phase. In Brezje Tumulus 1, Grave 2, the fibulae are combined with an iron spectacle fibula and ornamental discs with protuberances, objects which are, in addition to the fibulae with a Boeotian shield plate, characteristic of IVc-1 contexts. This supports a dating of the second half of the 7th century. A similar date is supposed for the fibulae known from Dedeli grave 13 (Vardar Valley), which were found together with local ceramics and typical costume. The

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41 Truhelka 1904, tab. 40.
42 Truhelka 1904, tab. 44.
43 Gavranović 2011, 23.
44 Benac, Ćović 1957, tab. 24.
45 Vasić 1999, 43.
46 Mitrevska 1991, tab. 3.
added jug-stoppers provide a hint for the dating, since they are hardly known in Macedonia before the middle of the 7th century.47

Finally, a fibula from Chios can be assigned to variant 2. The object is known from stratified findings of the harbour sanctuary,48 which Boardman assigns to his period IV49 and which is dated, according to early Corinthian ware, to the second half of the 7th century.50

The subcategory 2a is comprised of fibulae with very low foot plates and oval-shaped cuttings on both sides. For chronological classification, two grave contexts are significant. In Grivac,51 the fibula is combined with bracelets with punched ends like the already-discussed findings from the territories of eastern Serbia and Bulgaria. Therefore, a chronological position similar to that proposed for variant 2 seems likely. Grave 27 from Milci near Gevgelija, datable only generally to the 7th and 6th centuries, yielded two spiral rings and locally made jugs with cut away necks in addition to a fibula comprised of an iron spear.52 Variants outlined in subcategory 2b are characterised by a long, rectangular foot plate and low cuttings on both sides. Due to the elongate foot plate, the fibula from the Doroslovo urn grave 14153 is assigned to this sub-variant. C. Metzner-Nebelsick integrates the grave

47 So-called jug-stoppers are combined in the Varday Valley with pendants with spherical balls, which are assigned to Macedonian Iron Age IIB (Kilian-Dirlmeier 1979, 63–64.)
48 Boardman 1967, fig. 138, nr. 240.
49 Boardman 1967, 211.
50 Boardman 1967, 62.
51 Vasić 1977, tab. 23.
52 Папиќ, Вишић, Георгиев 1987, 77, tab. 9.
Daniela HEILMANN, Contextualising bow fibulae with Boeotian shield plates (9–26)

into her horizon 4,54 which is dated between 625 and 550 BC.55 Further contexts with fibulae of this sub-category derive mainly from graves also yielding weapons (Dedeli grave 27 and 50, Milci grave 6), combined with local ceramics dating roughly in the 7th and 6th centuries.56

Variant 2 as well as the proposed subcategories are widely spread within the Central Balkans and beyond. The type has been most popular from the Danube to the north-western parts of modern Bulgaria and to Macedonia, as well as from the Glacinac high plateau to Central Serbia. Subcategory 2a is mainly known along the Vardar river course and probably describes a local variant. Subcategory 2b is also known in Macedonia and especially from the western part of the distribution area, where it is localised mainly as a single item in warrior graves (Figs. 3, 4, 5).

Variant 3

Clearly smaller in length are fibulae assigned to variant 3, with lengths from 3.5 to 7.5 cm (median: 4.8 cm). The bow is, probably due to the small size and modified manufacturing technique, without exception round in cross section. Less common are embossed rings. The endings of the bow are decorated mainly with a few grooved lines or the whole bow is grooved with lines. The foot plate is square and broad, whereas the cuttings are small and round. Predominant as a decoration in the middle of the foot plate is the “V” ornament. Concentric circles are missing completely, and the edges are rarely decorated using the Tremolierstich technique.

In Tumulus 13, grave 28 from Zabrinjica, fibulae of variant 3 are combined with small spectacle fibulae.57 S. Pabst refers to them as a Glasinac type and proposes a dating in the 7th and 6th centuries.58 Spectacle fibulae of this type are combined at Glasinac high plateau with single-looped bow fibulae with a trapezoidal foot.59

55 Metzner-Nebelsick 2002, 175–177, 179.
56 Mitrevski 1991, tab. 8, 16; Пашин, Винчич, Георгиев 1987, 77, tab. 4.
57 Vasić 1999, Nr. 521, 522 und 171.
58 Pabst 2012, 105–106, S. Pabst assigns them roughly to phase IVc, without seperating phases IVc-1 and 2.
59 Gosinica Planina T25 G2 (Benac, Ćović 1957, tab. 11), Hrastovača T1 G1 (Benac, Ćović 1957, tab. 37).
both of which are dated, according to B. Čović, into the phase of Glasinac IVc-2, in the second half of the 6th century. Six fibulae of variant 3 are known from the secondary inhumation in the princely tumulus of Pilatovici. There they are also found with spectacle fibulae of the Glasinac type as well as with an astragali belt. R. Vasić dates the variant with almost completely closed cutting to the end of the 1st half / the middle of the 6th century.

The distribution area of variant 3 is clearly marked and is limited to the Glasinac region as well as to Central Serbia. Single finds are known from the Carpathian Basin, Slovenia, Bosnia, and the Adriatic coast (Fig. 6).

**The Variants compared**

Comparing the variants, variant 1 is most distinct from variant 3. Variant 1 is comprised of noticeably larger examples with long, rectangular foot plates and either plastic decorations in the middle of the plate or concentric circles. The delicate variant 3 is, instead, characterised by smaller examples with square, broad foot plates and decorated with fine grooves composed in a “V” ornament. The cuttings on both sides are small and round and already point to the further developed type with two round holes in the catch-plate. Furthermore, the pronounced profiling at the ends of the bow is missing and only indicated through fine grooves. Variant 2 is represented most frequently and comes as close as possible to the classical “Glasinac fibula.” The profiling of the bow, regarding the variants 2, 2a und b, is similar, as are the ornamentations. Differences can be noticed above all in the form of the foot plate and the size and shape of the cuttings.

Concerning the development of the double-looped fibulae with a Boeotian shield plate, three phases are noticeable. Although the fibula type tends to be dated at the earliest from the middle of the 7th century, a date before the mid-7th century is plausible for variant 1. The main distribution area of variant 1 is restricted to territories in the north-west of Bulgaria and southwest Romania and, thus, supports the development of the type within these regions, as already proposed by D. Gergova in the 1980s.

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60 Čović 1987, 618–619.
61 Zotović 1985, Taf. 32.
63 see Vasić 1999, 65.
64 Gergova 1987, 52.
however, that variant 2 also developed in the very same region. Most probably, the “Glasinac fibula” with symmetric cuttings and the characteristic “V” ornamentation had its beginnings in the Central Balkans region, which is discussed in the following section. Vasić’s argument for the spread of the fibulae from the Central Balkans to the western Balkans, Slovenia, Oltenia, Transylvania, and to the south is most likely applicable to variant 2. Finally, the small variant 3 is noticeable neither in Bulgaria nor in Macedonia but is, instead, restricted to the Central and Western Balkans and further developed within the same region into the type with two holes in the foot plate.

To better understand the distribution processes of the fibula type, a closer look both at the fibulae of variant 1 as well as the early fibulae in the Central Balkans is necessary.

The distribution of variant 1 is mainly concentrated in the region between the Danube and Stara Planina and in locations further south within the lowlands around Sofia. As discussed above, the characteristics of variant 1 are a high foot plate with large cuttings on both sides. Within the variant, the more southern group stands out. Pieces within this group show similarly arranged concentric circles as well as a profiled vertical rib in the middle of the foot plate. Comparable to them is the fragmented object from Beli Izvor and a younger one from Mizija (Fig. 7, nr. 6–10).

Fibulae from Sofronievo, Altimir and Beli Izvor, therefore, show no decoration with concentric circles and the cut foot plates resemble more the preceding types with the hourglass catch-plate. The middle part of the foot plate is either decorated with vertical scores or several narrow ribs (Fig. 7, nr. 1–5).

According to these differences, two spheres of workshops are probably discernible within the distribution area of variant 1.

As a result of mapping the “concentric circle” decoration element within the entire distribution area of the fibulae with a Boeotian shield plate, a clear focus is identifiable in the east (Fig. 8). Fibulae with concentric circles were originally distributed around Sofia (variant 1) whereas variant 2 with this decoration is also found along the rivers Struma and Vardar.

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66 Further chronological differences between fibulae within variant 1 are not identifiable due to the current state of research, characterised by the lack of closed finds regarding the types found in the lowlands around Sofia. Fibulae originating from the regions between the Danube and Stara Planina mainly derive from tumuli, which are, unfortunately, often destroyed by modern agricultural activity (Николов 1965 1965, 164–172; Gergova 1987).
67 As the standardised arrangement of the concentric circles is not repeated on the fibulae further south, the specimens along Struma and Vardar are most likely local productions adopting the style of ornamentation.
It is worth noting that decoration with concentric circles is less typical for fibulae in the western part of the distribution area. However, the question remains: which characteristics distinguish early specimens on the Glasinac high plateau and how are they related to the pieces further east?

Examples with relatively large cuttings on the foot plates are fibulae from Brezje Tumulus I Grave 2, Bandin Odžak Tumulus III Grab 1–2, as well as Rusanović Tumulus LXXXXIV Grab 1. In Brezje, four fibulae with a Boeotian shield plate found together in one grave are all executed differently. The foot plate of one example is characterised by the decoration with narrow vertical ribs, similar to the specimen in the north-western plain of the Danube. A direct import from this region cannot yet be proven. Rather, an early local production is assumed because the bow of the Brezje fibula is polygonal and the foot plate is additionally decorated with Tremolierstich on the edges. Such features are not typical for early variants from the eastern regions, but recorded in the western distribution area (Fig. 8).

As the fibula with a Boeotian shield plate is without forerunners on the Glasinac high plateau, it is likely to trace the local production back to an external impetus. The missing concentric circles on the early specimen suggest the workshops located in the southern parts of Stara Planina did not act as a transmitter. However, foot plates with vertical lines or ribs are characteristics which connect the western and eastern distribution areas, and it could be assumed that the group transmitting the fibula type was located within this region. To understand better what these connections looked like and how the “Glasinac fibula” was established on the Glasinac high plateau, two contexts with early variants from the eastern and western distribution areas, respectively, will be the focus of a detailed analysis.

FIBULAE IN CONTEXT

Sofronievo

During agricultural activities in the region of Vraca, several grave mounds were detected and partially excavated in an unsystematic way in the 1960s. Among the findings was the well-known grave of Sofronievo. According to the descriptions of B. Nikolov, the cremated remains of a human being and a horse were found under a thin layer of pebbles. The inventory of the grave appears to have been among the remains of the pyre and the cremated bones. In addition to a double-looped bow fibula with a Boeotian shield plate, the grave inventory included weapons, horse gear, and a bronze omphalos phiale, as well as bracelets and pendants. Furthermore, ceramic fragments in the Basarabi style were assigned to the grave.

Due to the sparsely known details, it is difficult to embed the burial custom within a local context, and only a few general remarks are possible. According to B. Nikolov, the Sofronievo grave is a cremation burial. However, the cremated bones seem not to have been collected in an urn. As he is speaking about a layer of burnt material, however, a reconstruction as a pyre grave is possible. Cremation burials dating from the Early Iron Age are furthermore found in the south-eastern parts of the village of Sofronievo, where the cremated bones were regularly collected in urns. The custom of burying a human individual together with a horse is otherwise unknown in the north-western plain of the Danube. C. Metzner-Nebelsick pointed out that burials with horse-gear are well known within pre-Scythian groups in the Carpathian Basin as well as in the Ukrainian steppe. In contrast, burials of horses are unusual. However, in regions of the Caucasian mountains and within the Koban Culture, a warrior accompanied in the grave by a horse is very common. Therefore, while the ritual of cremation is a local custom in the region around Sofronievo, the cremated bones and the burial of the individual together with a horse are, in contrast, a singular phenomena.

In addition to the exceptional burial custom, the combination of the grave inventory is unconventional and stands out from that of local custom. Within the inventory, primary horse-gear, a horse bit, is identifiable. Further decorations of laces in the form of

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68 Benac, Čovč 1957, tab. 24.
69 Benac, Čovč 1957, tab. 22.
70 Benac, Čovč 1957, tab. 25.
71 Rarely known are double-looped bow fibulae with hourglass foot plates, as in grave Ilijak Tumulus IV grave 1 (Benac, Čovč 1957, tab. 6) which is most likely an influence from the Danube region and less likely a local production, since the decoration of the bow is mainly found along the Danube (see distribution Bader 1983, 81–84).
72 Николов 1965, 201.
73 Николов 1965, 166–170.
74 Hänsel 1976, 174.
75 Николов 1981.
Stirnriemenbeschlag as well as knobs with protuberances or pendants can also be linked with horse-gear.

The horse bit from Sofronievo is, according to C. Metzner-Nebelsick, assigned to the variant “tordierte rundkappige Trense mit blattförmigem Zügelhaken”, which is part of two-part bits in general. In the Early Iron Age, they were distributed mainly in the Carpathian Basin, the northern part of the Pontic steppe, and the northern part of the Caucasus. In the regions south of the Danube, the addition of horse-gear in graves is rarely attested and is not part of the typical grave inventory.

Also singular within the region is the addition of a bronze omphalos phiale. This possibly Phrygian form is mainly known from Asia Minor, the Peleponnesus, and southern Italy. In the region of the Central Balkans, the phialae are found, in addition to Sofronievo, only in graves on the Glasinac high-plateau.

In addition to the “foreign” and exceptional furnishings, the fragments of the vessels decorated in Basarabi style, as well as the clothing, represent local components, which identify the individual as part of the local community located in the north-western plain of the Danube. The exclusive burial custom, the representation of the individual as a horseman as well as the addition of the bronze phiale, probably regarded as an exotic object by the local community, differentiated the individual from the rest of the group members and characterised it as socially distinct. The accompanying “horse” raises the question of the extent to which the warrior from Sofronievo was part of the network stretching between the Caucasus and the Carpathian Basin. At the same time, the “phialae” indicates an embedding in networks which do not refer to the Caucasus but, instead, look to eastern Mediterranean regions. These contacts were already discussed by B. Teržan who regarded the Danube as a link between the eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea and the Balkans. As a further region for communication and exchange, the Eastern Balkans was also taken into consideration. Strikingly similar regional interactions were proposed by M. Kašuba during a discussion about fibulae with spherical bowls on the bow in the 10th and 9th centuries. The imports from the Eastern Mediterranean region probably reached the Danube plain through a network already in existence at the very beginning of the Iron Age.

This unconventional combination of objects referring to different regions as well as local products is also explained by the need of local elites for new concepts to display their status before these modes became standardised during the second half of the 8th century.

Coming back to the discussion of the fibula within the grave context, even if the fibula with a Boeotian shield plate can hardly be identified as an object for the representation of status or prestige, the fact that they were even used in elite contexts is worth noting. That is, it would appear significant that apparently well-connected elites were suitable transmitters for the exchange of ideas, lifestyle, and objects.

**Glasinac**

Fibulae with a Boeotian shield plate known from the Glasinac high plateau are dated, as already discussed, usually not before the middle of the 7th century and their development possibly stems from eastern models. To find a possible explanation for the occurrence of the fibula form on Glasinac, it is worthwhile discussing again the grave context from Brezje tumulus 1, grave 2, with a set of four double-looped bow fibulae.

The tumulus called “colossal” by F. Fiala (dm. 18 m, h. 1.5 m), contains at least two inhumations with undisturbed inventory. The burial in the north-east of the mound (grave 1) contains the burial of an individual, possibly identified as male on the basis of the iron sword and the spear head. In contrast, the body with...
rich inventory in the south-west of the mound can be interpreted as a female individual. Both individuals are equipped with bronze phialae (the same type as in the grave of Sofronievo) and, therefore, stand out from the common patterns of furnishings. Furthermore, grave 2 contains more than 600 amber beads, which underlines the position of the individual. In addition to these imports, objects of local origin included ornamental disks with protuberances, disk-shaped and spectacle fibulae as well as pendants. Due to the predominance of objects of local production, it can be assumed that individuals who had been part of the Glasinac group, as opposed to foreigners, were buried there.

Nevertheless, the high quantity of amber beads, the extraordinarily detailed and carefully executed disc-shaped fibulae and the phialae, as well as the relatively large tumulus stand out from the local burial group, characterising them as part of the local elite.

Considering the grave furnishing of the elites of the Glasinac high plateau, the regular occurrence of bronze vessels, which mainly derive from Italian workshops, is remarkable.\(^90\) In addition to the already mentioned phialae with omphalos, further imports from the Eastern Mediterranean are known on Glasinac.\(^91\) Therefore, it can also be assumed for the Glasinac that local elites were involved in a sphere of communication encompassing the Eastern Mediterranean, at least from the 7th century onwards. In the context of contact situations with groups further east, fibula forms could also have been transmitted. At the Glasinac high plateau, this new type of costume is first attested in graves of the elites, possibly as an exclusive prestige object, which could also explain their very high popularity and widespread use in the following decades.

**Elites and cultural transfer**

Since the studies of M. Werner and M. Espagne,\(^92\) cultural transfer has been seen as a dynamic process of cross-cultural interdependencies between spatial and social spheres.\(^93\) In archaeological records, these interactions are visible by observing the adoption of objects in culturally different spheres. Depending on the type of contact, foreign elements are adopted and integrated into the prevailing cultural code or transformed and adjusted to their own needs.\(^94\) Constitutive for processes of cultural transfer are situations of contact and exchange, which can differ enormously.\(^95\) Besides the identification of foreign elements in a cultural sphere, the determination of the agents transmitting cultural goods and ideas is an open question.

As demonstrated above, fibulae with Boeotian shield plates are also part of graves which distinguish themselves from the norm by virtue of exclusive burial rituals or monuments as well as imported and prestigious grave offerings. Due to these characteristics, the designation of these graves as those of local elites is suggested.\(^96\) The analysis of the entire grave contexts of the elites, discussed above, demonstrated the embedding in social spheres or different networks, such as to the Caucasus or Western Mediterranean regions. Furthermore, the graves from Sofronievo and Brežje are comparable by the offered omphalos phialae, referring to an Eastern Mediterranean communication sphere. By interacting in the same social spheres, it is possible that certain objects were transmitted through these local elites.

**SUMMARY**

The typo-chronological and supra-regionally examination of double-looped bow fibulae with catch-plates in the form of a Boeotian shield shows a development of the type in three stages. Variant 1, comprehensible already before the middle of the 7th century, is mainly restricted to the area of the north-western part of modern Bulgaria. Variant 2, in contrast, is widespread in the region of the Central Balkans and dates roughly between the middle of the 7th and the first half of the 6th century. The distribution area of variant 3, dating to the end of the 1st half / the middle of the 6th century, is clearly limited to Western Balkan areas.

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\(^{90}\) For contacts between Glasinac and Italian workshops see Teržan 1995, Jašarević 2014.

\(^{91}\) Teržan 1995, 90, fig. 21.

\(^{92}\) Werner, Espagne 1985.

\(^{93}\) For further literature see Rossignol 2009, 217–221; Ulf 2009, 81–82.

\(^{94}\) Ulf 2014, 478–479.

\(^{95}\) Objects can be part of a gift-exchange system, to stabilise diplomatic relationships (Fischer 1973). Processes of acculturation expand the sphere of influence of certain groups and allow the transfer of certain cultural elements. (Rossignol 2009, 228). Dislocated individuals, for instance through marriage, can have an effect on the incorporating social sphere, depending on the existence and degree of weak ties within the involved networks (Nolde 2008). Regular processes of exchange, such as trade, transfer objects spatially, but the degree of cultural transfer through trade is seen as differentiated from the above mentioned mechanisms (Ulf 2009, 89).

\(^{96}\) Regarding the definition of elites see Gronenborn 2009, 240–242; Kleingärtner 2009, 13; Hartmann 2008.
The suggestion of an earlier date for the variants located in the eastern parts of the distribution area raised the question of how the type was distributed in order to contradict the general idea of a nonspecific diffusion without attempting to identify the producers, transmitters, and recipients.

By examining the spatial patterns of diverse ornamental elements on the footplates, it became clear that within variant 1 at least two workshops are identifiable. One workshop shows ornaments comparable to western variants on the Glasinac high plateau. A connection between these regions is, therefore, a reasonable conclusion. To understand better what these connections looked like and how the “Glasinac fibula” was established on the Glasinac high plateau, two contexts with early variants from the eastern and western distribution areas were the focus of a detailed contextual analysis.

The analysis revealed that fibulae with Boeotian shield plates are on the Glasinac high plateau as well as in the north-western part of modern Bulgaria, stated in graves which are distinguished from the norm by virtue of exclusive burial rituals or monuments as well as imported and prestigious grave offerings. Consequently, those graves can be designated as graves of local elites. The analysis of the imported objects in these contexts indicated an embedding of these elites in different communication spheres, which identify them as suitable transmitters for the exchange of ideas, lifestyles, and objects.
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КОНТЕКСТУАЛИЗАЦИЈА ЛУЧНИХ ФИБУЛА СА НОГОМ У ОБЛИКУ БЕОТСКОГ ШТИТА: ПРОЦЕСИ КУЛТУРНИХ ТРАНСФЕРА ТОКОМ РАНОГ ГВОЗДЕНОГ ДОБА НА ЦЕНТРАЛНОМ БАЛКАНУ

Кључне речи. – рано гвоздено доба, луцне фибуле с две петле, типоценологија, елите, мреже, културни трансфер.

Типоценолошка и супрарегионална анализа лучних фибула с две петле и с ногом у облику беотског штита указује на развој овог типа у три фазе. Варијанта 1, која се јавља још пре средине 7. века, угледано је ограничен на области у данашњој северозападној Бугарској. Насупрот томе, варијанта 2 је широко распрострањена на централном Балкану и окирило се датује у средину 7. и прву половину 6. века. Областите распространења варијанте 3 – датована на крај прве половине, односно у прву половину 6. века – очигледно је ограничена на просторе западног Балкана.

Предлогом за раније датовање варијаната распространењених у областима на истоку Полуострва покренута су питања о начину преноса овог типа, наспрот увређеном мишљењу заснованом на априорној предполагању производача, посредника и корисника. Анализом просторних образаца различитих орнаменталних елемента ноге фибула, код варијанте 1 уочене су најмање две радионице. Кол једне од тих радионица јављају се орнаменти који су упоредиви са сличним западним варијантама с Гласинца. Отуда се претпоставка о постојању везе између ових области намење као логичан закључак. Како би се разумела природа тих веза те начин настанка гласиначких фибула, две гробне целине са разним варијантама из источних и западних области биле су предмет контекстуалне анализе. Анализом је утврђено да су фибуле с ногом у облику беотског штита на Гласинцу, као и у северозападној Бугарској, констатована у оним гробовима који су се истичали погребним ритуалом или споменицима, као и увозним и претежним приломима. Стога би се могло говорити о гробовима припадника локалне елите. Анализа импортованих предмета у овим контекстима указује на укљученост тих елита у различите сфере комуникације, што их опредељује као привилегиране посреднике у размени идеја, начина живота и предмета.

Превео: Владимир Михајловић