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THE WARRIOR GRAVE FROM SVETA TROJICA NEAR STARIGRAD PAKLENICA

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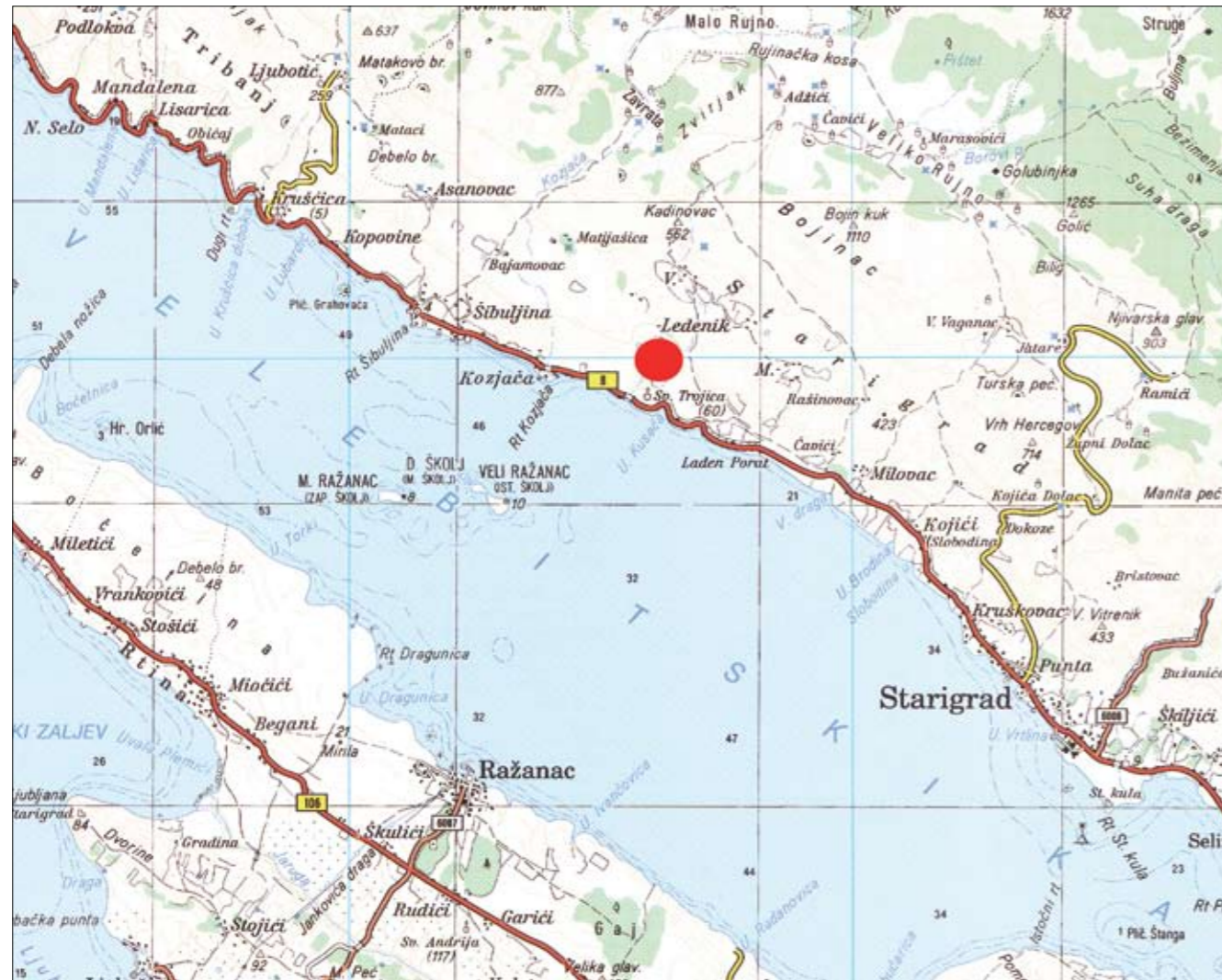
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A stray find consisting of pottery shards and metal objects, allegedly found by shepherds, but more likely by metal detectorists on the hill slopes east of the Tribanjska draga canyon (situated in the vicinity of Starigrad-Paklenica), was donated to the Zagreb Archaeological Museum in 2006. Since the find was not discovered by archaeologists, we lack most of the contextual data but it seems quite certain that these are the remains of a cremation burial. The artefacts - at least some of them - point to the likely possibility that the deceased must have served in the Roman army. While there is no real doubt about his soldierly background - an individual buried with a sword, spear and shield could hardly have been a mere civilian - the find is nevertheless quite odd as far as the general context is concerned, considering both the known burial practices of the local Liburnian population and the typology of the objects found in the grave. We can most likely discard the possibility that the deceased had been an indigenous person, but

the artefacts buried with his ashes do not make him a Roman either, despite the fact that some of them most likely have a Roman origin. These artefacts represent the strongest evidence of Roman military presence at the site of Sveta Trojica and their restoration allowed a more detailed analysis of the presumed destroyed grave assemblage, in the hope of shedding light on the context of the finds on a wider scale.

THE SVETA TROJICA SITE

The site lies to the east of the deep Tribanj gorge (Tribanjska draga), situated near the village Šibuljina on the east Adriatic coast, about 6 km north-west of the town of Starigrad Paklenica (ancient *Argyruntum*), at the foot of Mount Velebit (Map 1). The existence of a prehistoric settlement ascribed to the local Liburnian population has been long known, for instance, it is listed in the catalogue of Iron Age hill-forts compiled



Map 1. Position of the Sveta Trojica site.

in the 1970's.¹ Besides the hill-fort settlement, the archaeological area (named Sveta Trojica - Holy Trinity, after the small church located above the state road along the coast) includes a Byzantine fortress that forms part of the fortification system built during the reign of Justinian I (AD 527 - 656), whose northern wall still dominates the landscape.² Although recognised as an important prehistoric site, the Sveta Trojica area had not been researched until recently. The damage caused by illegal road construction initiated a more detailed survey of the entire archaeological area. Many shards of coarse settlement pottery but also Hellenistic ware,

as well as fragments of Greco-Italic and Lamboglia 2 amphorae,³ point to the importance of the site, which could be considered as an urban centre of the local proto-historic community. Another survey by the authors focused on the area of the prehistoric settlement.⁴ The hill-fort is situated on a visually dominant position on a naturally well protected top, with the deep gorge of Tribanjska draga preventing access from the west and steep stone cliffs on the south, while the east and north are protected by massive dry-stone walls. Two plateaus, a larger rectangular one in the eastern part and a much smaller one of oval shape on the western

edge, both protected by the massive north wall, formed the core of the settlement. The smaller western plateau probably served as an acropolis, i.e. the centre of sacral power or the residence of the local aristocracy. Probably due to the limited space on the hill top, the settlement expanded to the lower slopes of the hill, where numerous finds of pottery have also been found. The remains of a shipwreck with Lamboglia 2 amphorae found in one of the bays at the foot of the Byzantine fortification suggest that the inhabitants of the proto-historic settlement used it as a natural harbour,⁵ adding the maritime path in their network of connections that is reflected in the finds of North African, Illyrian and Roman Republican coins.⁶

The first trial excavations were carried out in October 2010, focusing on the area where the grave finds were allegedly discovered.⁷ The trial trenches, however, revealed no traces of graves or features related to a settlement. Most of the finds were discovered in the surface layers or in the mixed layer of soil and gravel lying directly on the limestone bedrock, most probably accumulated at the foot of the hill by erosion from upper slopes. Along with fragments of amphorae (likely Lamboglia 2) and other types of pottery (mostly coarse ware pots and bowls), some metal finds have been gathered there as well, most remarkably a damaged bronze hinged brooch with smooth undecorated bow of round cross-section that can be defined as type Aucissa, more precisely variant Feugère 22c, frequent on the Adriatic coast.⁸ The appearance of this type is usually dated in the Augustan era, from around 15 BC lasting until the middle of the 1st century AD.⁹ Although the Aucissa brooch has frequently been associated to Roman military dress, it was also used by civilians, so it cannot be regarded as proof of Roman military presence at the site. However, another indication is given by the finds of iron nails with conical head (Fig. 1), a type found on soldier's shoes throughout the Empire. The back of the head is decorated with crossed ribs and dots or only crossed ribs, a combination that mostly appears on nails dating to the Late Republican and Augustan period, while the motif of radially arranged dots without the cruciform decoration appears on caligae nails from the later period, with

examples from Haltern or Augsburg-Oberhausen.¹⁰ The closest parallels come from the Posočje and Notranjska regions in present-day Slovenia. *Caligae* nails are found among the *militaria* from Grad near Reka, location of a battle between the local inhabitants of the hill-top settlement and the Roman army around 35 BC or in the Early Augustan period at latest.¹¹ To the same time-frame belong examples from sites in Notranjska, where due to conical head and decoration we have analogies for our examples on Žerovnišček¹² and at Baba near Slavina,¹³ while nails with flattened head decorated with the same motif come from Stari grad above Unec,¹⁴ also in Notranjska. Far in the West, analogies come from present-day Spain: nails with conical head and decoration of crossed ribs with dots come from Andagoste, a battle site dated between 40 - 30 BC.¹⁵ The same type appears frequently on sites associated with Caesar's war operations in Gaul, for example on the famous site of Alesia, conquered in 52 BC, as well as on Uxellodunum, besieged by Caesar in 51 BC.¹⁶ Finds of Roman military equipment, including this type of *caligae* nails, were found in the sanctuary of the Corent oppidum destroyed during Caesar's conquests as well as in settlement layers, also dated in the middle of the century or the Augustan era at latest, and in the same time-frame goes the material from oppidum Gergovia.¹⁷

Thus the *caligae* nails from Sv. Trojica can also be dated to the second half of the 1st century BC, ending with the Augustan era. Another possible indication of Roman military presence - at least in the area, if not on the site itself - is the find of a Mark Anthony's legionary denarius, minted between 32 - 31 BC and used for soldiers' salaries.¹⁸ The best evidence comes however from the finds belonging most likely to the same grave assemblage, as corroborated by the dating of the single pieces.

⁵ DUBOLNIĆ 2007, 34.

⁶ DUBOLNIĆ GLAVAN - GLAVAŠ 2011.

⁷ A first report published in TONC 2011. The ceramic and other metal finds are still being processed.

⁸ FEUGÈRE 1985, 312, 321. The needle is missing, and the head is only partially preserved.

⁹ ETTLINGER 1973, 94; FEUGÈRE 1985, 323-324.

¹⁰ BROUQUIER-REDDÉ - DEYBER 2001, 303, T. 93: 138, D 4-4; HARNECKER 1997, T. 69: 755; HÜBENER 1973, T. 44: 1; POUX 2008, 380.

¹¹ BOŽIČ 1999, 74, Fig. 2: 6, 8; ISTENIČ 2005, 83-84, Sl. 5: 7-13; ISTENIČ 2005a, 190.

¹² LAHARNAR 2009, T. 5: 13, 14.

¹³ LAHARNAR 2011, Fig. 4.

¹⁴ GASPARI 2009, Fig. 7: 6, 7.

¹⁵ OCHARAN LARRONDO - UNZUETA PORTILLA 2002, 323, Fig. 2: 11-12.

¹⁶ BROUQUIER-REDDÉ - DEYBER 2001, 294, T. 93: 138, type D4-4; GIRAULT 2007, Fig. 14.

¹⁷ POUX - FEUGÈRE - DEMIERRE 2008, Fig. 6: 30, 7: 18; 8: 11, 9: 10.

¹⁸ DUBOLNIĆ GLAVAN - GLAVAŠ 2011, 104-105, T. 2: 26.

¹ BATOVIĆ 1977, 855-857, 871.

² TOMIČIĆ 1990, 142-143, 146-7; JURIĆ 1995, 245-246.

³ DUBOLNIĆ 2006, 10-14, T. II - V.

⁴ TONC 2010.

THE GRAVE FINDS

The finds that belong to the supposed grave assemblage can be divided in two categories: *militaria*, i.e. a sword, a spearhead and a shield boss (Fig. 2), and ceramics - i.e. a large pot (Fig. 3), probably serving as an urn, a chalice on foot and a shallow vessel (a lid).¹⁹ Allegedly, some glass shards were part of the assemblage, but they have not been collected and a bronze fibula, which is now misplaced or lost. Thus the exact type of the brooch remains unfortunately unknown.

The sword is bent (Fig. 4: 1), but its overall shape clearly points to a *gladius* of the Mainz type.²⁰ Its original length was 64 cm (the tang is 15 cm long while the blade is 49 cm long). The blade is very slim (the width does not exceed 3, 8 cm at the widest part, i.e. at the top and it gradually tapers toward the tip), only slightly waisted and long-pointed (Fig. 4: 2). Although one has to take into consideration the fact that the blade is not well preserved, it was probably not much wider, i.e. it is likely that it only slightly exceeded 4 cm. It does not appear that there was originally a pronounced central rib or any grooves on the blade. The length of the blade corresponds rather well to the average size of the Mainz type swords known from auxiliary graves of the Augustan period, but the width of the blade is however below the average width (cca 5-6 cm).²¹ According to C. Miks' typology of Roman swords, the blade of this specimen seems to be related to his "Mühlbach" variant of the Mainz type, both by its shape and by its dimensions.²² The timeframe of this type would approximately be from the last 3 decades of the 1st century BC till the Claudian period, i.e. the mid-1st century AD at the latest. The Augustan period would nevertheless seem to be the most likely manufacturing period.

Roman spears and javelins, with some exceptions, are not easily determined as such most of the time, unless found within a clear archaeological context. This remark chiefly applies to the leaf-shaped spears, which are certainly the most widely distributed type of that weapon ever since the prehistoric period. The basic shape of the leaf-shaped spearhead obviously prevents it from having a vast number of variations

¹⁹ RADMAN-LIVAJA 2010, 257, cat. 9

²⁰ ULBERT 1969, 120-122; BISHOP - COULSTON 1993, 69-71; FEUGÈRE 1993, 138-144; DESCHLER-ERB 1999, 22-23; BISHOP - COULSTON 2006, 78-79; MIKS 2007, 58-65; POUX 2008, 316-319; PERNET 2010, 54, 59, 105-106.

²¹ PERNET 2010, 102, fig. 68, Type 3; It should be pointed out that none of these swords belong to Miks' "Mühlbach" variant of the Mainz type, *vide infra!*

²² MIKS 2007, 61

and one should not forget that random elements and circumstances such as the skill of the craftsman or the available technological resources always played an important role in the mass production of such simple weapons. Roman leaf-shaped spearheads cannot thus be determined typologically in a very accurate manner and their dating depends first and foremost on the context of the find.²³

The spearhead from Sveta Trojica, with its round-edged leaf-shaped head that gradually tapers toward the top and a slightly pronounced rib, is a rather typical leaf-shaped spearhead of the Roman period with parallels on quite a few sites.²⁴ Its overall length is 28,4 cm, the socket being 11 cm long. The widest part of the spearhead is 4 cm wide, while the socket diameter is ca. 2 cm (Fig. 5).

The conical circular shield boss (Fig. 6: 2) must have belonged to a flat shield, generally associated with auxiliary troops during the first two centuries of the Imperial period.²⁵ This type was widely adopted by the Roman auxiliaries during the Augustan period and it is therefore hardly surprising to find many analogies for the Sveta Trojica shield boss dated to the Augustan and early Tiberian period. The closest ones were found in Magdalensberg²⁶, Novo Mesto - Beletov vrt,²⁷ Verdun pri Stopičah,²⁸ Mihovo,²⁹ Reka pri Cerknem³⁰ and Idrija pri Bači.³¹

Considering all the aforementioned, despite the lacking archaeological context, there is no much doubt that the military artefacts found in what must likely have been an incineration grave can be dated in a rather precise timeframe. A larger timeframe would cover

²³ MANNING 1985, 160-170; BISHOP 1987, 110-111; MARCHANT 1990, 1, 5; SIM 1992, 114-116; BISHOP - COULSTON 1993, 53, 69; FEUGÈRE 1993, 169-171; PETCULESCU 1994, 61; RADMAN-LIVAJA 2004, 27; BISHOP - COULSTON 2006, 53-54, 76-78; POUX 2008, 335-341

²⁴ ULBERT 1959, 96, T. 27, 17; BÖHME 1978, 165, T. 17, B5; MANNING 1985, 160, V 26; FEUGÈRE 1993, 170; HARNECKER 1997, 32-33, Kat. Nr. 800; UNZ - DESCHLER-ERB 1997, 20, Kat. 264; RADMAN-LIVAJA 2004, 28, cat. 9

²⁵ BISHOP - COULSTON 2006, 92; for the origin and development of such shield bosses in the Roman military equipment cf. NABBELFELD 2008, 45-47; POUX 2008, 344-348; PERNET 2010, 109-112, as well as the quoted bibliography

²⁶ DOLENZ 1998, 86-87, M215-216;

²⁷ KNEZ 1992, 63, 91-92, T.61:2, grave 169, T. 67:3, grave 187; PERNET 2010, 223, pl. 122, 124

²⁸ BREŠČAK 1989, 10, 12-13; PERNET 2010, 223, pl. 141-144.

²⁹ PERNET 2010, 223, pl. 118

³⁰ GUŠTIN 1991, 58, T. 30:4, T. 34:2; PERNET 2010, 230-231, pl. 136, 139

³¹ GUŠTIN 1991, 58, T. 12:6, T. 17:1; PERNET 2010, 230-231, pl. 116

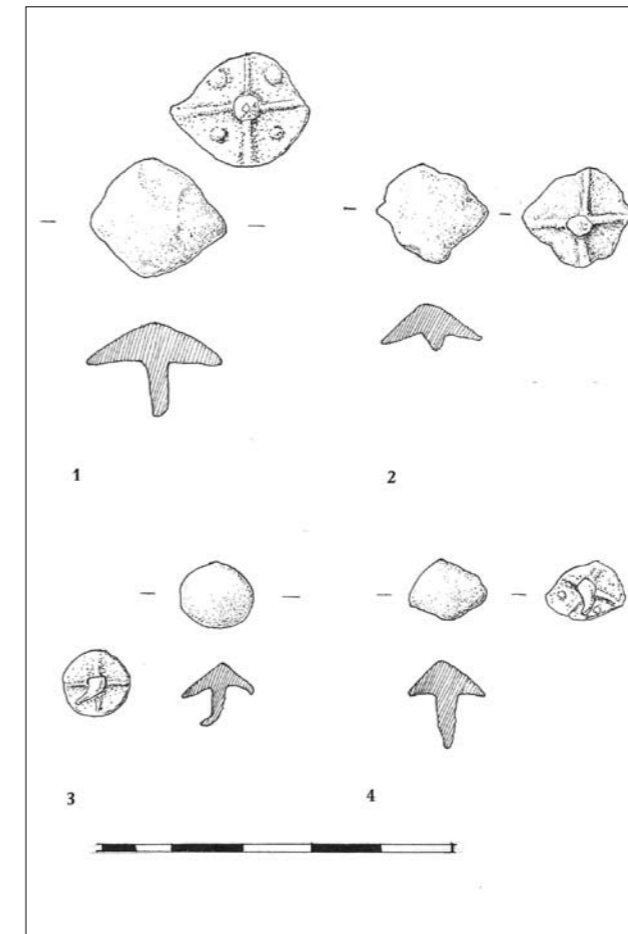


Fig. 1. Iron shoe nails found in the trial excavations on Sveta Trojica (drawing by: M. Galić).

the last decades of the 1st century BC and the first two decades of the 1st century AD, but we could probably narrow it to a shorter time span, i.e. the late Augustan and the beginning of the Tiberian period.

The chalice has a hemispherical body, with vertical thickened, rounded rim (Fig. 7). The vessel stands on a hollow pedestal foot with two ribs on the upper part, immediately below the body of the vessel. The chalice is in poor state of preservation and very fragmented, the surface is soft, breaking off easily, with no traces of slip preserved. The color is light orange (Munsell 2.5 YR 6/8 light red); rim diameter around 17 cm, base of foot has a diameter of 9 cm, while the upper cylindrical part is of 3,4 cm diameter. The approximate height of the vessel is 13 cm, thickness of wall 2 mm and the rim is 4 mm thick. Traces of the relief decoration can be seen on the lower part of the vessel, with the decorative zone separated from the undecorated upper part by a shallow groove. A rosette and part of a garland can be distinguished, while the other motifs are too damaged to discern.

The shape has best analogies in the forms *Conspectus R 2 = Atlante 15D*. The form 15D has a deep vessel with outward pronouncing rim and a relatively high pedestal foot, with two variants of which the first, type A, is closest to the shape *Dragendorff 11* of the Arretine ware, and also the closest parallel to our chalice.³² On the vessels from the Emilia region the decoration is limited to the lower half of the body, with characteristic motifs of so-called „vesciche pennute“ and various floral motifs, such as eight-leaf rosettes. The cups lack an inner slip and the outer surface varies from good, uniform fine slip to the one of lesser quality, with the color also varying from red to black hues, suggesting an easily perishable slip.³³ The characteristic motifs, most of them clearly a reflection of those found on Arretine sigillata ware, enabled to distinguish these vessels as „Padanian ware“, also suggesting the existence of a subsidiary workshop of the Arretine manufacturers in the Bologna area.³⁴ Already A. Stenico supposed the existence of different workshops producing the vessels that are morphologically and chronologically close to Arretine sigillata, locating them generally along the western, Italian coast of the Adriatic and its hinterland, suggesting the name „Terra Sigillata adriatica“, i.e. Adriatic sigillata ware.³⁵ On Magdalensberg cups of this shape have been classified as type 3, varying in quality of texture and decoration, that can be figural or floral. Type 3 vessels appear in contexts dated between 20 BC and AD 10.³⁶ A similar dating, to the periods Middle and Late Augustan, is proposed for the *Consp. R 2* vessels, frequent on Haltern.³⁷ Similar chalices are known on other sites in present-day Croatia. A fragment of chalice type *Drag. 11* with depiction of Eros, a product of M. Perennius Tigranus' workshop, comes from Osijek - *Mursa*.³⁸ Fragments of cups type Magdalensberg 3 and ascribed to the Adriatic production are known from Sisak - *Siscia*. The fabric is orange, with light brown shiny or opaque slip on the outer side, while one piece is of light brown fabric, with opaque chocolate-brown slip.³⁹ In the coastal area, there are more pieces of Arretine sigillata from Velika Mrdakovica near Šibenik, on the river Krka.

³² ATLANTE, 229.

³³ FAVA 1972, 151-152.

³⁴ FAVA 1962, 47-50; FAVA 1972, 149-155; ATLANTE, 229, T. LXXVII: 3.

³⁵ STENICO 1971, 152-155.

³⁶ SCHINDLER-KAUDELKA 1980, 45-46.

³⁷ CONSPECTUS, 168.

³⁸ BRUKNER 1981, 19, T. 20: 4.

³⁹ MAKJANIĆ 1995, 60-61, T. 66: 205-207.



Fig. 2. Weapon finds from the warrior grave (photo by: I. Krajcar).

Fragments that resemble M. Perennius Tigranus' products, namely female figures playing the lyre, were found in grave I on the Velika Mrdakovica Late Iron Age and Roman necropolis.⁴⁰ An entire chalice on foot type Drag. 11 made in the Cn. Ateius workshop comes from grave 86, with decoration suggesting a dating in the earlier phase of the workshop's existence, i.e. end of 1st cent. BC and first decade of AD.⁴¹ From grave 4 on the same necropolis come more fragments of somewhat later production with predominance of floral motifs, garlands and rosettes typical for the Rasinius workshop.⁴² A similar shape is also present among the Sarius cups, with a close parallel for our chalice in grave 30 on Velika Mrdakovica, dating according to Brusić to the last decade BC.⁴³ Closer to the Starigrad area, in Nin - *Aenona*, there is a chalice of shape Consp. 2.3. decorated with figural and floral motifs, dated to the first decade AD.⁴⁴ Fragments ascribed to type Magdalensberg 3 or Consp. R 2 cups

are also known from the legionary camp Tilverium.⁴⁵ In Slovenia, fragments of Consp. R 2.1.1. and R 2.3.1. cups were found in Kranj, differing a bit from the Sv. Trojica grave find in the more concave upper part of the vessel.⁴⁶ Similar chalices are also present in Celje and Ljubljana-Emona, where they are found in layers dating between the last decade BC and Late Augustan/Tiberian period.⁴⁷ Although the chalice from Sv. Trojica lacks the quality of proper sigillata ware, the shape has close analogies in the examples here listed, making very likely the attribution to the same time-frame as cups from dated contexts, i.e. most likely in the Middle to Late Augustan period. It can be even proposed that this is an imitation of the genuine Arretine ware, maybe of „Adriatic production“.

The pot, maybe used as an urn, has an everted thickened rim, a short concave neck, flat bottom and spherical body with largest diameter in the upper part



Fig. 3. Ceramic pot - urn from the warrior grave (photo by: I. Krajcar).

of the vessel (Fig. 6: 1). It was probably made on a slow-rotating potter's wheel, as indicated by its irregular shape and wheel rings on the inside wall. Two slightly curved, almost half-round applique handles (grips) are placed on the shoulder. The rim's diameter is around 21 cm, that of the bottom 13,6 cm; largest width is 26 cm, height 18 cm, wall thickness is 0,8 cm. The entire body of the vessel is decorated with shallow horizontal grooves, similar to a combed decoration, while on the neck the decoration is made by short, shallow half-rounded grooves, perpendicular to the body. The fabric is coarse, with pitted surface, and the color varies from very dark to light brown and orange, most probably as result of a burning process. If that the case, the exposure to high temperature or fire may have occurred while the pot was already fragmented, hence the differences of the color on juxtaposed pieces. A few fragments of a rim of dark brown color with fabric corresponding to that of the urn belong to a shallow vessel, which can be determined as the urn's lid. The lid diameter seems to be somewhat larger than the vessel's opening, however the poor state of preservation does not allow a more precise measurement.

This vessel, most probably used as an urn (although without certain context this remains unsure), corresponds by shape to olle, type of coarse ware generally used for preparation and storage of food, but also appearing in funerary context. The rounded spherical shape and applique handles have an analogy in grave 36 in Nave from Tiberian period, thus resembling the olle type 50, variant C of the typology

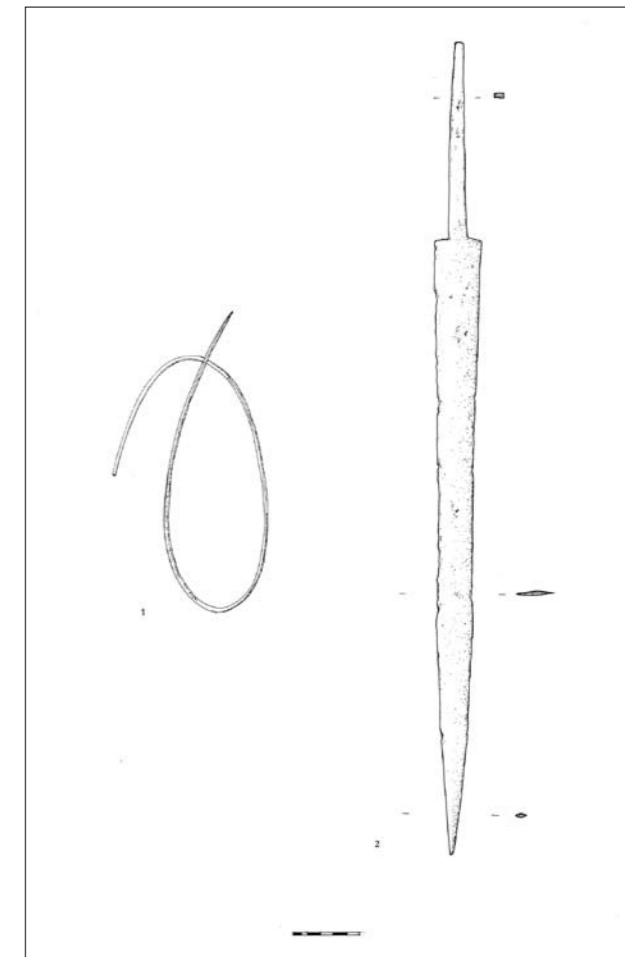


Fig. 4. Sword from the Sv. Trojica grave, shown bent (1) and in its original shape (2) (drawing by: M. Galić).

for Lombardian examples.⁴⁸ In Velika Mrdakovica, the vessels used as urns are also pots of coarse ware with short neck, rounded body widest in the lower part and everted rim, covered with shallow vessels of bigger diameter than the urn's rim. These urns are usually undecorated vessels of lighter brown color, sometimes with traces of firing.⁴⁹ Although the shape and lack of decoration doesn't make them proper analogies for the pot from the Sv. Trojica warrior's grave, it is interesting to note the exposure to fire or

⁴⁰ BRUSIĆ 1999, 20, cat. nr. 259.

⁴¹ BRUSIĆ 1999, cat.nr. 256.

⁴² BRUSIĆ 1999, 20-21, cat. nr. 262.

⁴³ BRUSIĆ 1999, 24-25, T. 45: 271.

⁴⁴ BRUSIĆ 1999, 21, cat. nr. 257.

⁴⁵ ŠIMIĆ-KANAET 2003, 117; ŠIMIĆ-KANAET 2010, T 26: 282, T. 27: 296, T. 28: 297-299.

⁴⁶ SAGADIN 2003, 72, T. 2: 1-3.

⁴⁷ VIČIČ 1993, 157-158, T. 1: 4; VIČIČ 1994, T: 10: 22, 23; VIČIČ 1997, T. 2: 12

⁴⁸ About *ollae* in general - SUB ASCIA 1987, 194 and CONUBIA GENTIUM 1999, 310-312, DELLA PORTA ET AL. 1998, 134-136, 139-159; for Nave grave 36 - SUB ASCIA 1987, 62, T. 30: 2, about type 50 - DELLA PORTA ET AL. 1998, 148-149, T. LVII.

⁴⁹ BRUSIĆ 2000, 40-41. Apparently there are no analogies for the decoration of the Sveta Trojica pot, although parallels for the shape can be found among the Mrdakovica finds. We would like to thank Toni Brajković from the Šibenik City Museum for this information regarding the unpublished material.

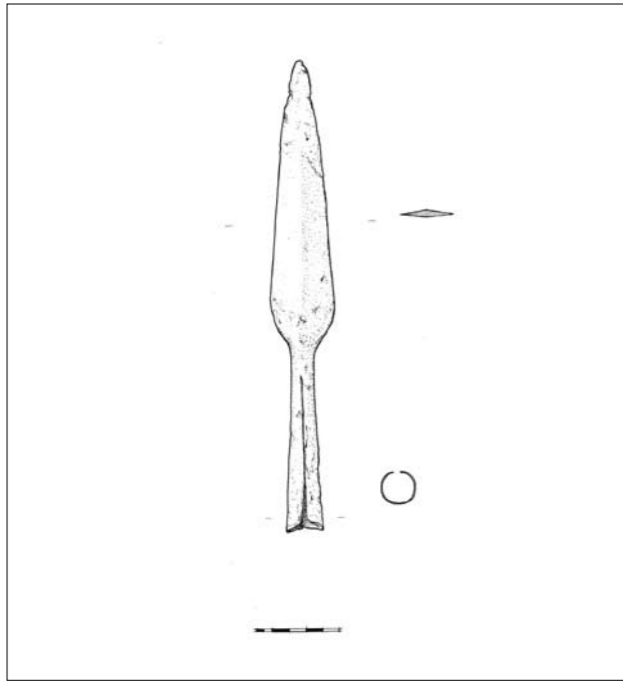


Fig. 5. Spearhead from the Sveta Trojica grave (drawing by: M. Galić).

high temperature that as mentioned can be seen also on our pot. Burials in urns appear in phase three of the Velika Mrdakovica necropolis, i.e. end of 1st cent. BC, contemporary to appearance of incineration on Dragišić, with cremation remains being layed in a ceramic urn, sometimes covered with another vessel or a stone plate, and then placed in a simple burial pit. Unfortunately we do not know the details of the burial rite used on Sveta Trojica, therefore it is hard to find a real comparison, as consequence also a reliable dating. On Novo Mesto or Verdun there are also pots of coarse ware appearing in grave assemblages, however those on Beletov vrt in Novo Mesto are of more elongated, ovoid shape and with genuine combed decoration, i.e. composed of much deeper cut lines. The Verdun cemetery unfortunately still remains not entirely published, so no real comparisons can be seeked there. The dating of the urn thus remains a mere estimation on the basis of the similar olle types or the urns of Velika Mrdakovica, i.e. after the Augustan age until Tiberian time or later.

The finds presented here when analysed separately show no reason to doubt their belonging to a specific grave assemblage, in fact the dating of all the grave goods falls in the Late Augustan - early Tiberian period.

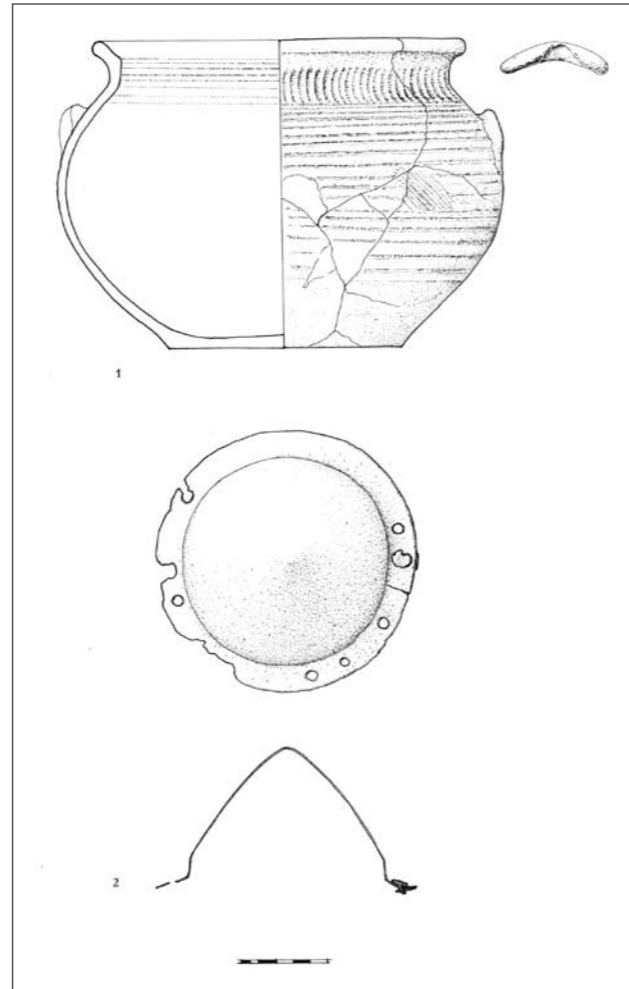


Fig. 6. Grave finds: 1: Ceramic pot - urn; 2: shield boss (drawing by: M. Galić).

CONCLUSION

It is the way the deceased had been buried which betrays a different ethnic origin. The local Liburnian burial rite throughout the Iron Age was inhumation in fetal position in flat cemeteries or under burial mounds, while the burials in extended supine position appear as an exception, namely on Grobnik and Kastav in the Kvarner area, in Nadin and in the family tombs on Dragišić and Velika Mrdakovica, both near Šibenik, on the river Krka.⁵⁰ The two last mentioned sites are also the only ones with use of cremation burial prior to the establishment of Roman rule in the area. However, even more striking is the appearance of weapons in the

⁵⁰ On Liburnian Iron Age burial customs see BATOVIĆ 1987, 355-358; BRUSIĆ 2000, 8-11 for Velika Mrdakovica, BRUSIĆ 2000a, 7-12 for Dragišić.

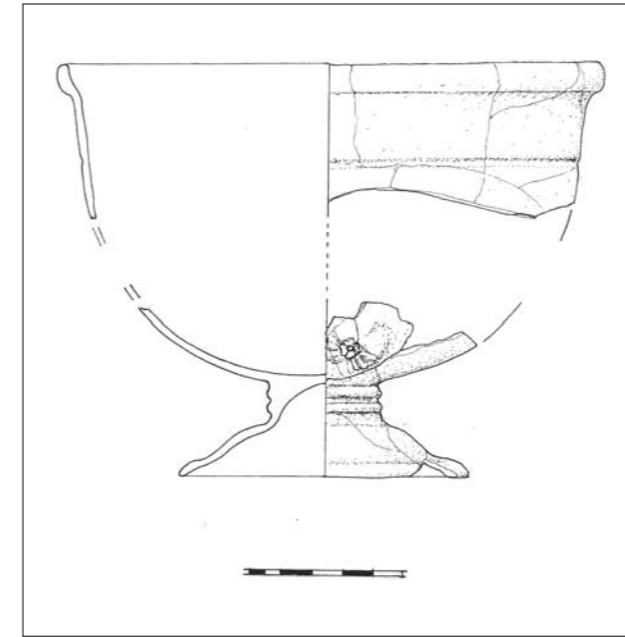


Fig. 7. Chalice on foot from Sv. Trojica (drawing by: M. Galić).

grave, since the practice of burial with weapons was unfamiliar to the Liburnians. This makes the buried man definitely an exception in the regional context, but the fact that he had been buried with his weapons definitely points to a non-Roman practice as well. His ethnic origin is primarily revealed by the way his sword had been discarded. Bending swords prior to burying them with the remains of the deceased is a well-known Celtic burial custom.⁵¹ It was still quite a common practice in the Augustan period and it is well attested in the burials of Roman auxiliaries of Celtic origin.⁵² Thus, the incinerated man buried with a ritually bent sword of Roman origin - or of Roman inspiration at least - was very likely a Roman auxiliary soldier of Celtic descent. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that some burials associated more or less closely with Roman auxiliaries found in the eastern Alpine area contained also Roman *gladii* (or short swords inspired by the Roman *gladius* form) which were neither bent nor deliberately destroyed.⁵³ As already pointed out, the cremation graves of auxiliaries in

⁵¹ BRUNAUX - LAMBOT 1987, 14; FEUGÈRE 1996, 165; BOŽIČ 1984, 78; LEJARS 1994, 113-117; SANKOT 2003, 45-47; ritual bending is also a common feature of Tauriscan graves, see TOMIČIĆ - DIZDAR 2005, 66.

⁵² The closest examples are found in the eastern Alpine region: Novo Mesto - Beletov vrt, Verdun pri Stopičah

Verdun and Novo Mesto in Slovenia contained Roman weapons which were sometimes bent according to Celtic custom. Those graves contained pottery of local production as well, mainly hand-made coarse ware pots with combed ornament or biconical pots with everted rim made on potter's wheel, but also imports from North Italian workshops, such as jugs, amphorae and terra sigillata ware.⁵⁴ They certainly are a very close analogy to the Sv. Trojica grave as far as weapons and pottery grave goods are concerned. Since the burial rite as well the dating and specific artefact types find their geographically closest parallel in the Alpine area, on sites such as Novo Mesto - Beletov vrt, Mihovo or Verdun, it is tempting to look at this area as the place of origin of the deceased warrior. We might even conjecture that he could have been a native of the *Latobici* tribe. As a matter of fact, someone from the Latobican or Tauriscan territory could have been enrolled as an auxiliary soldier by that time. The presence of Celtic soldiers in Dalmatia before and after AD 9 is after all more than likely: besides epigraphic finds (albeit mostly later than the Augustan period), an important clue is given by the find of Celtic coins from Balina Glavica in northern Dalmatia which has been connected to the presence of soldiers of Celtic origin and dated in the same period as the grave find from Sveta Trojica, i.e. in the first decades of the 1st century AD.⁵⁵

The formation of the Roman settlement on the position today occupied by the city of Starigrad dates to the final years of the last century BC or the very beginning of the new era. It has been suggested by various authors that the Liburnian autochthonous population moved to the newly established Roman city on the coast from their own central settlement, probably from one of the hill-top fortified positions. This supposed centre of the local Pre-Roman community could be the very settlement of Sv. Trojica, situated on a position used again in Late Antiquity, probably even later, proving the importance of the site.⁵⁶ We can speculate if this abandonment (at least partial) and migration of the inhabitants is due only to political and economic reasons - i.e. a reflection of the new circumstances linked to the establishment of Roman rule and the foundation of a new coastal settlement - or if Roman military activities had a more

⁵³ Mihovo, Idrija pri Bači.

⁵⁴ BREŠČAK 1989, 4; BREŠČAK 1994, 18-21.

⁵⁵ ALFÖLDY 1962: 261, 263-267, 269-270, 272-277; ZANINOVIĆ 2001, 62; KOS 2002, 154-156.

⁵⁶ NEDVED 1995, 226; FADIĆ 1995, 235; JURIĆ 1995, 245; DUBOLNIĆ 2006, 13-14; DUBOLNIĆ 2007, 14.

important role in this process, since the grave finds can be dated to the time-frame of the establishment of *Argyruntum*. The auxiliary grave and other finds which could be connected to the Roman army open the question of the nature of the army's presence on the site: a seat of an auxiliary garrison, a battle site or just a temporary bivouac of an army unit, where one of its soldiers perished - due to sickness, injury or whatever reason - and had to be buried on the spot? The excellent strategic position of the site would rather make us believe that there was a garrison there, even if for a short period of time. The Sv. Trojica site lies in fact on one end of a mountain crossing, i.e. a pedestrian road that connected the Lika region with the coast by only a half-day hike through the at first glance impenetrable Velebit range, avoiding a major detour by other land or sea routes⁵⁷. This could also explain why the site was chosen as a base for a Roman unit, which could have made use of the routes already well established by the local communities, but of course without more research this remains mere speculation.

⁵⁷ DUBOLNIĆ GLAVAN, GLAVAŠ 2011, 108-110, Map 1.

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CAN SOLDIERS ON 3RD-CENTURY STELAE IN PANONNIA BE RECOGNIZED ONLY BY THE SAGUM?

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INTRODUCTION

The funerary iconography of the 3rd-century Roman soldier is well known in its essentials. Its two components, the sagum fastened by a brooch on the right shoulder and a belted long-sleeved tunic are indispensable. The brooch is round or T-shaped or cross-bowed and a prominent belt buckle is sometimes square (the so-called frame-buckle), but is mostly round, nicknaming the whole group of stones with such depictions as *ring-buckle gravestones*. The remainder: weapons (a dagger, a sword, one or more shafted weapons), armour (a shield and very rarely a helmet), a scroll and the like, are optional. Trousers are also presumed, but are not readily visible in relief depictions.¹ However, the picture of the 3rd-century soldier in Noricum does not match such image. There, the sagum and tunic are indispensable, but the belt is lacking in the majority of cases. The aim of this paper is to establish the picture of the Pannonian soldier, compare it to its Norican counterpart and try to explain the possible differences.

¹ OLDENSTEIN 1976, 226-234; COULSTON 1987, 143, 149; UBL 2002, 275; BISHOP - COULSTON 2006, 11; COULSTON 2007; SUMNER 2009, 41-52; JAMES 2010, 44-45.

DISCUSSION

The starting point of this discussion is based on works of some Austrian scholars of the last several decades: Hannsjörg Ubl, Lothar Eckhart, Erich Hudeczek, Erwin Pochmarski and Ortoľ Harl.² When discussing the 3rd-century soldier's dress as depicted on funerary stones in Noricum, with Pannonia mostly implied by extension, they never mention a belt, as indeed it is hardly ever depicted. Along the same line, there is a tendency in some of the commentators both to determine the occupation and to date a person depicted in sagum just by the sagum. In other words, every male person shown as wearing sagum on his tombstone should be a third-century soldier, even if other insignia of his occupation are lacking. This, of course, is a simplified picture, which has its various facets. On the face of it, some scholars allowed for civilians to be dressed in sagum as well. E. Hudeczek and E. Pochmarski presumed that the sagum should be viewed differently depending on whether it was worn in a

² ECKHART 1976; UBL 1979; POCHMARSKI 1991; POCHMARSKI 1996; UBL 2002; HARL 2003.