

Cremation burials in Northern Croatia 1300–750 BC

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Zusammenfassung

BRANDBESTATTUNGEN IM NÖRDLICHEN KROATIEN 1300–750 v. CHR. Aktuelle Untersuchungen an mehreren Orten im nördlichen Kroatien führten zu der Entdeckung von Gräberfeldern mit Brandbestattungen in Urnen (Belišće, Sotin), in Gräbern ohne Urnen (Sotin) und unter Tumuli (Dolina), welche in die jüngere Phase der Urnenfelderkultur datiert werden können. Ihr Erscheinungsbild ist tief in der Bestattungsmethode verschiedener Gruppen der Urnenfelderkultur verwurzelt, die für die späte Bronzezeit im Gebiet des nördlichen Kroatien bestimmend war. Ihre Tradition wurde mit geringen Modifizierungen bis in die frühe Eisenzeit fortgeführt. Die Bestattungspraxis (Brandbestattung in einer Urne, Grab unter einem Tumulus), die Auswahl der Grabbeigaben (Zahl der Gefäße in Gräbern, Kleidung) und Spuren des Bestattungsritus (Zerbrechen von Gefäßen) bezeugen die zahlreichen auf dieses Durchzugsgebiet ausgeübten Einflüsse. Die ausgewählten Grabbeispiele verdeutlichen die vielen praktizierten Bräuche der Gemeinschaften, die entlang der Hauptflüsse im Raum zwischen Donau, Drava und Save siedelten. Die fruchtbaren Ebenen entlang dieser Flüsse waren gleichzeitig wichtige Durchgangsgebiete, welche die südöstlichen Alpen mit der Niederdonauregion sowie dem Balkan und dem Mitteldonaubereich verbanden.

Abstract

Recent investigations at several sites in northern Croatia have led to a discovery of cemeteries with cremation burials in urns (Belišće, Sotin), in graves without urns (Sotin) and under tumuli (Dolina), which can be dated to the younger phase of the Urnfield culture. Their appearance is deeply rooted in the method of burial of various communities of the Urnfield culture that characterized the Late Bronze

Age in the territory of northern Croatia, and the same tradition persisted, with minor modifications, into the Early Iron Age. The method of burial of the deceased (cremation burial in an urn, grave or under a tumulus), the selection of grave goods (number of vessels in graves, attire) and traces of funeral rites (breaking of vessels) bear testimony to various influences exerted on this transit territory. The selected examples of graves point to various customs practiced by communities settled along the main rivers in the area between the Danube, Drava and the Sava rivers. The fertile plains of these rivers were, at the same time, important thoroughfares that connected the southeastern Alpine area with the Lower Danube area, as well as the Balkans and Middle Danube area.

The cremation rite is deeply rooted in the Late Bronze Age of northern Croatia (Urnfield culture) with roots that most likely date from the Middle Bronze Age.¹ The early phase of the Urnfield culture is characterized by two distinct groups which differ from one another primarily in the way of burial and in the costume: the Virovitica group and the Barice-Gredani group.² In the Virovitica group, which inhabited the Podravina region, the cremated remains of the deceased were placed in a ceramic vessel – an urn, which was covered by a bowl. Fragments of other ceramic vessels could sometimes also have been placed in the graves.³ In certain documented cases the cremated remains of the deceased were placed at the bottom of the grave and then covered

1. VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973, 32.

2. VINSKI-GASPARINI 1983, 551–566. – MINICHREITER 1983. – DULAR, ŠAVEL, TECCO HVALA 2002.

3. VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973, 37.

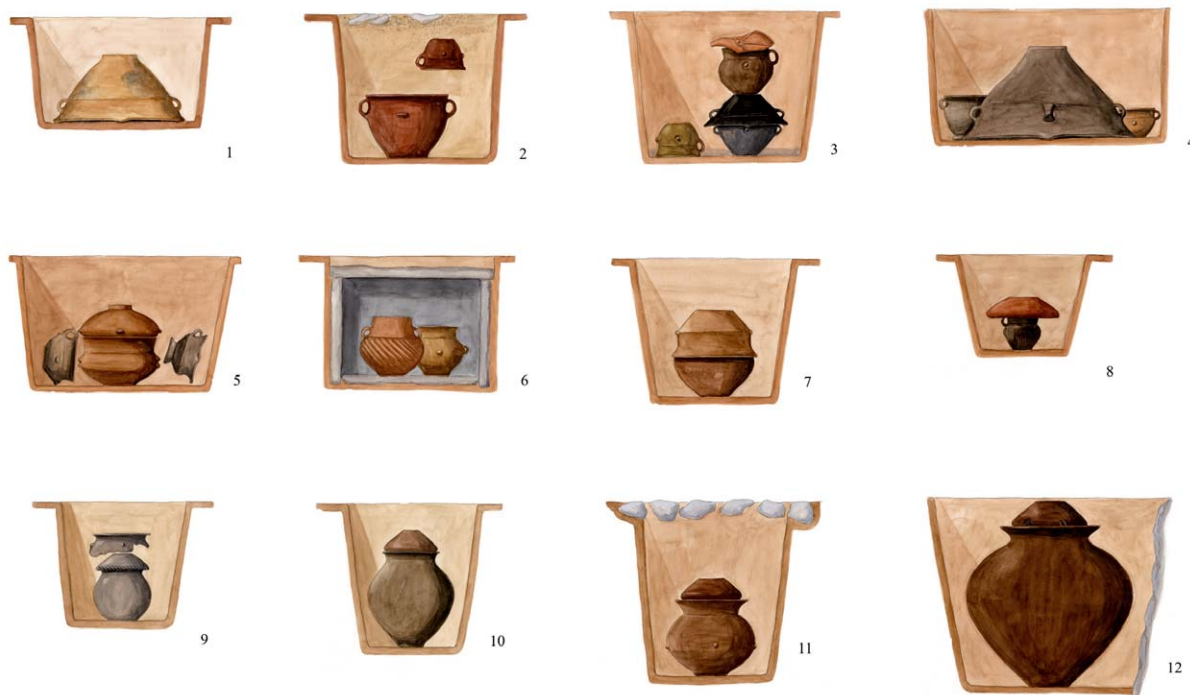


Fig. 1. Burial rites during the Urnfield culture in northern Croatia. (Drawing by K. Rončević).

1. Vlatkovac – 2. Moravče grave 1 (SOKOL 1996) – 3. Moravče grave 7 (SOKOL 1996) – 4. Gredani, grave 26 (MINICHREITER 1983) – 5. Voćin grave 1 – 6. Zagreb grave 2 (VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973) – 7. Dalj (ŠIMIĆ 1988) – 8. Slatina grave 13 – 9. Beliše grave 24 – 10. Krupače (BRUNŠMID 1898) – 11. Ozalj grave 6 (BALEN LETUNIĆ 1981) – 12. Ozalj grave 8 (BALEN LETUNIĆ 1981).

with a bowl (Jakopvec,⁴ Vlatkovac⁵). These graves, based on the typological features and analogies in the neighboring regions (Transdanubia, Styria),⁶ probably ought to be dated to an earlier period, possibly the end of the Middle Bronze Age. This way of burial, with cremated bones placed in the grave and covered with a bowl, is characteristic for the Barice-Gredani group in the Posavina region (the Sava river basin), whose beginnings date to the Middle Bronze Age. The excavated graves in Brusnice can be dated to the Br C period.⁷ In the older phase of the Urnfield culture (Br D, Ha A1), the graves contain, in addition to the bones of the deceased, pieces of bronze objects belonging to the costume of the deceased, which were cremated together with them (these were most often pins).⁸ Graves with more affluent costume accessories, like grave 24 from Popernjak near Županja, which according to the results of the anthropolog-

ical analysis contained the remains of a young girl, are rare.⁹ There were also graves with a third vessel, most often a footed bowl (Voćin, grave 1 [Fig. 1/5]).¹⁰ In this same period the territory of eastern Croatia was populated by the Belegiš II culture, presently known only through settlements.¹¹ However, the data obtained from the cemeteries investigated in eastern Syrmia reveal that the cremated remains of the dead, together with costume accessories, were likewise placed in an urn, which was sometimes covered by a bowl.¹²

The Ha A1 phase in northern Croatia witnessed the appearance of graves with cremated remains of the deceased placed in urns covered with a bowl, without any other ceramic vessel sherds.¹³ Recent salvage investigations in Slatina (November 2009) have shed light on the burial ritual in the Podravina region following the end of the Virovitica group. The graves contain cremation burials and the bones were placed in a pot or a jug, in most cases covered by a

4. BEKIĆ 2006, 108 and pl. 9/2.

5. LOŽNJAK DIZDAR 2011, 41 and fig. 2.

6. JANKOVITS 1992, 15, 59. – KISS 2007, 22. – TIEFENGABER 2007, 106–107.

7. ČOVIĆ 1988, 60.

8. VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973, 42. – MINICHREITER 1983 – ČOVIĆ 1988, 61.

9. MARIJAN 2010, 103 and t. 58/3, 4; t. 67/3, 4; t. 71.

10. LOŽNJAK 2003, pl. 2/1, 2.

11. FORENBAHER 1991.

12. TODOROVIĆ 1977. – TASIĆ 1974.

13. MAJNARIĆ-PANDŽIĆ 1988, 12 and t. I/1, 4; t. VI.

bowl. In northwestern Croatia we also know of burials in stone-lined graves (Zagreb-Vrapče grave 2 [Fig 1, 6]).¹⁴ A change in the material culture occurred during the 12th century BC in northern Croatia, recognizable above all in the new types and way of decoration of ceramic vessels. This is also the time of formation (by the end of the 12th century or the beginning of the 11th century BC at the latest, or from the beginning of the Ha A2 phase in relative chronological terms) of cultural groups of the younger phase of the Urnfield culture in northern Croatia. Within this period one can recognize the formation of several cultural groups, distinguished between themselves not only in pottery and costume, but also in variations in the burial rite. So far the Velika Gorica group and the Dalj group¹⁵ are known from the literature, but recent investigations indicate that several other regional groups of the younger phase of the Urnfield culture could be distinguished.¹⁶

Relatively little is known about the cremation burial rite at the eponymous cemeteries of the younger phase of the Urnfield culture in northern Croatia (Dalj, Velika Gorica). Due to the excavation methodology at the beginning of the 20th century and the unfortunate set of circumstances concerning the care of the museum material during the wars, the data have only been partially preserved.

Trial excavations in the Podravina, Posavina and Podunavlje regions (the basins of the Drava, Sava and Danube rivers respectively) were conducted in 2008 and 2009 in the frame of the scientific project “Development and mobility of protohistoric communities in continental Croatia”. Among other things, these excavations have yielded a new understanding about burial rites in the Urnfield culture in northern Croatia.

Velika Gorica Group

Modifications in the burial rites and grave goods can be recognized on the example of the eponymous Velika Gorica cemetery. In his 1908 excavation V. Hoffiller established and described that the earth surrounding the urns was black and mixed with charcoal. Ceramic vessels were used as urns, and they were only rarely covered by another smaller vessel. The cremated bones were sometimes scattered around the urn, while the grave goods were deposited adjacent to or above the vessels.¹⁷

In the literature the cemetery in Velika Gorica has been associated with the cemetery in Dobova¹⁸ on many occasions and it is obvious that the Velika Gorica-Dobova group was spread in the Posavina region around Zagreb and in the Krško Polje plain. Its distinguishing traits were the characteristic costume and burial rite, whereas investigations at the settlements of this group were of a limited scope.¹⁹

The settlements hitherto known in the territory of the Velika Gorica-Dobova group are mostly of the hillfort settlement type, while the lowland settlements are known from Staro Čiče and Križevci. This group used the cremation rite, generally in an urn containing pieces of costume worn by the deceased. Hoards are very rare (Ivanec Bistranski, Miljana) in this area, and both can be dated to phase IV after K. Vinski-Gasparini, that is, Ha B1 and partly Ha B2²⁰, which is synchronous with the cemeteries in Velika Gorica and Dobova, which serve as the basis for a definition of the costume of this group. The finds allow a definition of a varied female costume,²¹ while the male costume is mostly known through the finds of pins. Male graves also contain razors, which are known from Velika Gorica, and in Dobova razors were found in graves 171 and 301.²² On account of their large number, graves from Dobova are the primary element for a definition of the costume of the Velika Gorica-Dobova group. The dominant objects of the male costume are pins, in addition to knives, razors and spearheads, which appear in a small number of male graves.²³

While goods found in male graves are rather “modest”, as already pointed out by B. Teržan, as many as four costume groups could be distinguished in the case of women. Female costume is, to the greatest degree, defined by ring-shaped jewelry, so one can distinguish between: a group with necklaces, a group with bracelets and a group with hair jewelry, in most cases an ornament of bronze wire put twisted into figure-of-eights.²⁴ Women’s graves often contain fibulae, which vary greatly in these two cemeteries, so fibulae with a twisted bow, spectacle-fibulae, bow fibulae

14. VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973, 68 and t. 23/9.

15. VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973, 155–1164 and t. 102–105, t. 114–125. – VINSKI-GASPARINI 1983, 599–667. – METZNER-NEBELSICK 2002.

16. ŠKOBERNE 2004, 131–171.

17. HOFFILLER 1909, 121–122.

18. STARÈ 1975, 14. – DULAR 1978, 38–39. – VINSKI-GASPARINI 1983. – TERŽAN 1999, 111.

19. HOMEN 1982. – BALEN-LETUNIĆ, BAKARIĆ 1984. – VRDOLJAK 1996. – MAJNARIĆ-PANDŽIĆ 1994. – TEŽAK-GREGL, VOJVODA 1986, 46. – FILIPEC 2002, 14–19.

20. VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973, 165 and t. 112–113.

21. TERŽAN 1995, 339–341 and Abb. 13.

22. STARÈ 1975, 31 and t. 24/3.

23. TERŽAN 1995, Abb. 12.

24. TERŽAN 1995, 340, Abb. 13.

with a smooth bow, saddle-shaped and harp-fibulae can be recognized.²⁵

Based on the ceramic finds and the earliest graves in Dobova, the beginning of the Velika Gorica-Dobova group should be dated to the transition from the Ha A1 to the Ha A2 phase, that is the beginning of the 11th century BC.²⁶ At present it is impossible to ascertain the end of the group as the graves in Velika Gorica cannot be dated earlier than the first half of the 9th century BC,²⁷ while there are only a few graves in Dobova which are datable to the 8th century BC.²⁸ Much more light will certainly be shed on that question once the cemetery at Obrežje, near Bregana, has been published. 364 graves were investigated there between 2001 and 2003 belonging to a community²⁹ that was indubitably connected with the populations buried in Dobova and Velika Gorica.

Several richly furnished male and female graves can be singled out in the Velika Gorica-Dobova group. In addition to the rich female grave 289 from Dobova, dated by Dular as early as the Ha A1 phase,³⁰ the male grave I/1911 and female grave 3/1916 from Velika Gorica, which belong to prominent members of that community, are worth mentioning. When discussing the equipment of the male grave from Velika Gorica we have to consider the presence of weaponry, otherwise uncommon in graves of the younger phase of the Urnfield culture. Weaponry, if present at all, appears in a combination of a spearhead and/or axe. In the case of knives we should rather talk of tools in everyday use than of weapons. The weapons from I/1911 are exceptional for this area both in their selection and in workmanship. The closest parallels are the contemporary grave 63 of the Podolí group from Klentnice, likewise with a decorated sword, knife and a crescent-shaped razor as well as a set of ceramic vessels.³¹ Another conceptual parallel for the male grave equipped with a sword, battle knife, razor, whetstone and even tweezers, is found in grave 227 in

Fratta Polesine.³² It is only on rare occasions that one finds deceased persons buried with a sword, spear, battle knife, knife and razor in the wider south Pannonian area, where, at that time, swords were mostly deposited in hoards. The finds from Grave I/1911 at Velika Gorica have numerous typological parallels in the Románd hoard in Hungary: in pins of the lake-dwelling type, antenna-sword, decorated spearhead, razors,³³ a Vadena-type battle knife and axes of the Passau type.³⁴ This hoard gave the name to the entire horizon synchronous with the Ha B2 phase after H. Müller-Karpe. They are widely distributed in northwestern Transdanubia, few were found between the Danube and the Tisza, while they are very rare in northeastern Hungary.³⁵ As already proven by F. Starè and K. Vinski-Gasparini, grave I/1911 is to be dated to early Ha B1.³⁶ This has also been confirmed by recent chronological studies by M. Trachsel, who dates these pins in absolute terms to the first half of the 10th century B.C., which matches Trachsel's Ha B2 phase,³⁷ or Pare's Ha B1 phase.³⁸ As regards the exceptional grave I/1911, described as a double grave in the literature,³⁹ its inventory certainly leads to the conclusion that it belonged to a prominent person within the community, who was buried during the first half of the 10th century BC in his full gear, which, judging by the ornaments on the sword, spearhead, spear butt and battle knife, makes a stylistic whole and points to an extraordinary custom in south Pannonia at that time.

The female grave 3/1916 marks, on the other hand, a prominent member of the community, equipped with a harp-fibula and spectacle-fibulae, a hair ornament with pseudo-figure-of-eights and four torques, a sheet-bronze anklet and several spindle-whorls. The hair ornament with figure-of-eights and the spectacle-fibula with a figure-of-eight were found in grave 194 in Dobova, which also included a bowl and a pot. J. Dular dates that grave to the Ha B2 period that corresponds to phase IV of that cemetery.⁴⁰ The grave which is most similar to the rich female grave from Velika Gorica in terms of contents is grave 98 from Pobrežje, with a twisted torcs, saddle-shaped fibulae,

25. STARÈ 1975, pl. 1/4; pl. 18/2; pl. 41/1. – VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973, pl. 104/3, 9–11, 14. – KARAVANIĆ 2009, pl. 50/10; pl. 52/5, 6; pl. 53/7; 9; pl. 57/1–5; pl. 67/8–10; pl. 71/3–7, 9.

26. I agree with B. Teržan's opinion (TERŽAN 1995, 339, fn. 48) about the later beginning of the Dobova cemetery.

27. VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973, 157.

28. TERŽAN 1995, 339 and fn. 48.

29. MASON 2003, 68.

30. DULAR 1978, 37. – In B. Teržan's opinion the grave contained a very poorly preserved bow fibula with a twisted bow, the duration of which, in addition to the pendants, spans a longer period, thus shifting the date of this grave to Ha A2 phase (TERŽAN 1995, 339 and fn. 47).

31. PODBORSKÝ 1970, 69 and t. 25.

32. SALZANI 1989, 16–17 and fig. 16/3; fig. 17/14, 15, 18.

33. Which differ from the one from Velika Gorica by the position of the hump and belong to the Herrnbaumgarten type.

34. MOZSOLICS 2000, t. 84/1, 3, 19; t. 86/1, 7, 39; t. 87/6, 7, 9.

35. SCHALK 2000, 25–26 and Abb. 2.

36. STARÈ 1957, 204. – VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973, 155–156.

37. TRACHSEL 2004, 35 and Abb. 14.

38. PARE 1998, 405 and Tab. 5.

39. VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973, 155.

40. STARÈ 1975, t. 27/8–12. – DULAR 1978, combination table 1.

that is fibulae with a bow of a rhomboidal cross-section, fragments of sheet-bronze anklets (?)⁴¹ and a spindle-whorl.

One can also compare grave II/1910⁴² from Velika Gorica with grave 7 in Podbrežje, as both contain a spectacle-fibula and a saddle-shaped fibula, as well as a Hadersdorf-type knife.⁴³ Even though there are similarities regarding grave goods and costume (saddle-shaped and harp-fibulae), these graves also reveal differences, recognized in the rich ceramic set in grave 7 in Podbrežje, which is missing in the case of the graves in Velika Gorica. A curiosity of grave 3/1916 are four torques that might indicate, on the one hand, that several persons were buried in the grave, and on the other hand, could indicate the fashion of that time, which can be corroborated with several examples, for instance with an older grave of a rich woman from Dobova – grave 289 – containing several smooth torques decorated with ring-shaped pendants⁴⁴ or a somewhat younger rich female inhumation grave from Ostrožac, furnished with 5 twisted torques of various size;⁴⁵ further, with graves from Jezerine⁴⁶ and Kompolje.⁴⁷ The dates for the small spectacle-fibula and the harp-fibula suggest that the rich woman from Velika Gorica was probably buried during the 9th century BC, with regard to the parallels in the graves from Ljubljana, which are dated to the Ib phase.⁴⁸ The differences in the structure of the graves in Dobova and Velika Gorica⁴⁹ should be regarded – if one considers the unequal sample and circumstances of investigation of the Velika Gorica cemetery – as local particularities of the two communities, where one has to consider their way of life, economy and the identity of the community, which was developed according to the affiliation but also to the wish for a distinction and showing of status and power even in the world of the dead. Taking into consideration the small number of preserved grave assemblages from Velika Gorica, those might be burials of prominent individuals; if these two communities had been similar one would expect to find even more of them at the large cemetery in Dobova.

Such examples of differentiated communities in the case of cemeteries of a single cultural group are discernible in the contemporary Dalj group. Within the pottery of the Velika Gorica-Dobova group, which, in addition to the burial rite and costume, is one of the most important criteria for defining the group, among shapes characteristic for the wider south Pannonian circle one can also distinguish shapes specific for this area. These are amphorae of the Dobova type, upon which attention has been drawn in the literature on several occasions,⁵⁰ which are undoubtedly a local shape, as well as the frequent use of a *Seelenloch* on pots and bowls at the cemeteries.⁵¹

The Kupa Group

The analysis of the investigated cemeteries around Ozalj and the published assemblages at Budinjak have led to the conclusion that the burial rite and material culture of this area are different from those in the Posavina region, where the Velika Gorica-Dobova cultural group was distinguished. At present it is impossible to draw a border between these two groups and it is quite likely that it would not be precise, i.e. there would be an area of fusion where finds, characteristic for both groups, would be found, many of which being common. A smaller investigated cemetery in Ozalj (9 graves) exhibited several different ways of burial of cremated remains: in a vessel-urn covered by a bowl, or in a stone-lined grave pit into which the cremated bones with grave goods, or the urn with bones, were placed. A third method was also observed, where the ashes, bones and grave goods were placed directly into a pit dug into the rock.⁵²

The burial rites in the Pokuplje region (the Kupa basin) (grave goods and cremated bones placed into a large storage pot that probably served as a box) (Fig 1/10, 12) as well as pottery (amphorae, large oval urns) known from graves speak in favour of the connections of those communities with the Bela Krajina region (Metlika, Črnomelj) as well as Lower Carniola (Novo Mesto) in the period of the 9th and 8th centuries BC, inhabited at the time by the Ljubljana group⁵³. This area, together with flat cremation graves and

41. Judging by the cross-section these were most likely anklets, as the metal sheets were quite deformed by fire.

42. As this grave also yielded a crescent-shaped razor and a fragment of a pin without a head, this might also have been a double grave, in which case we set apart the spectacle-fibula and saddle-shaped fibula as belonging to the female costume.

43. PAHIĆ 1972, t. 2.

44. STARÈ 1975, t. 41/4, 5, 10.

45. RAUNIG 1982, t. I/2.

46. LJUBIĆ 1889, 111 and t. XVII/38.

47. DRECHSLER-BIŽIĆ 1961, 75, 89 and t. III/fig. 5; t. XXI, grave 43, fig. 2.

48. GABROVEC 1975, 343, combination table.

49. KARAVANIĆ 2009, 66.

50. STARÈ 1975, T1/A1 passim. – GRAHEK 2004, 137.

51. STARÈ 1975, pl. 7/2, 6, passim. – VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973, t. 102/18; t. 104/7; t. 105/10; t. 106/2.

52. BALEN-LETUNIĆ 1981, 15.

53. In J. Dular's opinion (DULAR 2003, 102), the Ljubljana group covered the area of central Slovenia and a good part of Lower Carniola and Bela Krajina, reaching the border territory of Croatia through the Kupa valley. B. Teržan thinks that the community that inhabited Bela Krajina was associated with the Ljubljana group with a double rite at the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age (TERŽAN 1999, 112).

graves under tumuli at Budinjak, is probably a peripheral phenomenon of a strong Late Bronze Age community, that is, the Ljubljana group, distinguished by Ž. Škoberne as the Budinjak group⁵⁴, also including the Iron Age finds. Precisely the settlement at Budinjak shows a continuity in the life of a community at the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age. In addition to the settlement at Budinjak, this community also inhabited settlements at Dubovac, Gradac in Karlovac and the Belaj and Kiringrad hillforts.⁵⁵ In relation to the state of research, little is known about the costume of this group. Grave assemblages are known from Ozalj, where grave 7 with a pin and two bronze rings belongs to the earlier graves with costume of that group.⁵⁶ The pin has a semi-globular head and a thickened neck decorated with horizontal incisions. This type of pin can be followed to the Posavina region, as is shown by the parallels in Donja Dolina.⁵⁷ R. Vasić recognized them as a shape known in the west Balkans and he dated these pins from the end of the 8th till the end of the 7th century BC.⁵⁸ A link with the Posavina region and the question of the eastern border of the Kupa group can also be sought through a pin with a biconical knob and flat head from Krupače, which can be connected with the grave from Ostrožac,⁵⁹ the inventory of which, on the other hand, shows many parallels with the Matijevići hoard, situated near the Una river, as well as with

the Gajina Pečina hoard from Lika.⁶⁰ These finds mark the border dividing the Iapodian community, which lived in the Lika region and the valley of the Una river, from the populations residing in the Pokuplje and Posavina regions⁶¹. Grave 7 from Ozalj would thus be the earliest known grave assemblage of the Kupa group, followed by the grave from Krupače with the pin with a biconical knob,⁶² which, considering the grave from Ostrožac, can be dated to the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 8th century BC. Then follow the cremation graves of a man and woman from tumulus 51A at Budinjak, dated to Podzemelj phase 1⁶³ by the burial under a tumulus as much as by the presence of male costume with a pin with a biconical head and the female costume with a double-loop fibula, which, based on an individual, nicely illustrate which changes were occurring in the everyday life of ordinary people.

Although it is difficult to define the costume in view of the small number of graves, we should perhaps single out the pin with a biconical knob on the neck as a regional form, typical for the western Balkans. Amphorae from Treščerovac (Fig. 2/21) are another regional form, and they are also known from cemeteries in Bela Krajina and in Novo Mesto.⁶⁴ Costume pieces indicative of the affiliation to the Ljubljana group are hollow anklets of sheet bronze, like the one found at Krupače, and a bronze-wire bracelet from Treščerovac. Upper armlets known from Matijevići and from the Ostrožac grave should also be added to this costume, while a similar bracelet was also found in a destroyed tumulus in Ozalj. The continuity of this community from the Late Bronze Age into the Early Iron Age has been proven by investigations at Budinjak and by the finds from Ozalj. One of the changes that occurred at the beginning of the new period was the change in the burial rite, which gradually shifted from cremation to inhumation and therefore, considering the sites in Ozalj and Budinjak as well as the cemeteries in the neighboring areas (Križna gora,⁶⁵ Mekota⁶⁶), we should perhaps reckon with a parallel use of both rites. Burials under tumuli also appear, and the continuity of population is also noticeable in costume (e.g. hollow anklets, which were subsequently characteristic for

54. ŠKOBERNE 2004, 131–171. – We find the introduction of the term Budinjak group justified, as that name primarily describes a community of people that continuously inhabited a settlement next to which they buried their dead in the way that depended on the fashion of the period, but with piety toward the ancestors, as shown by the fact that various phases of burial were documented under a single tumulus (e.g. tumulus 7) (ŠKOBERNE 2005), from a flat urn grave through tumuli constructed at a later date through cremation graves to skeletal graves in a single tumulus, which bears testimony to blood relation of the buried family members. The burial rite and material culture in the Late Bronze Age of the Budinjak site bear closest resemblance to Bela Krajina and the eastern part of Lower Carniola, showing that it is not inappropriate to refer to this group as the Budinjak group. It is another question how to solve the relative-chronology issues, considering the nomenclature of the groups marking the Early Iron Age. An excellent solution in that respect was provided by S. Gabrovec for Lower Carniola with phases Ljubljana IIb and Podzemelj 1 (GABROVEC 1975), which are synchronous and mark different traditions and fashions in a period when changes in costume, burial rite and new settlements are evident.

55. ČUČKOVIĆ 2004, 188. – MAJNARIĆ-PANDŽIĆ 1986, 29–33. – BALEN-LETUNIĆ 1987.

56. BALEN-LETUNIĆ 1981, 14 and pl. 2/10.

57. MARIĆ 1964, t. III/7.

58. VASIĆ 2003, 97 and t. 37/714; t. 64.

59. RAUNIG 1982.

60. VINSKI-GASPARINI 1973, 168 and t. 128.

61. Considering the finds from Gajina Pečina and the Ostrožac grave they are attributed to the costume and territory of the Iapodes (RAUNIG 1982, 10).

62. BRUNŠMID 1898.

63. ŽELLE 2002.

64. GRAHEK 2004, 134 and fig. 28.

65. URLEB 1974.

66. MULABIĆ 1986.

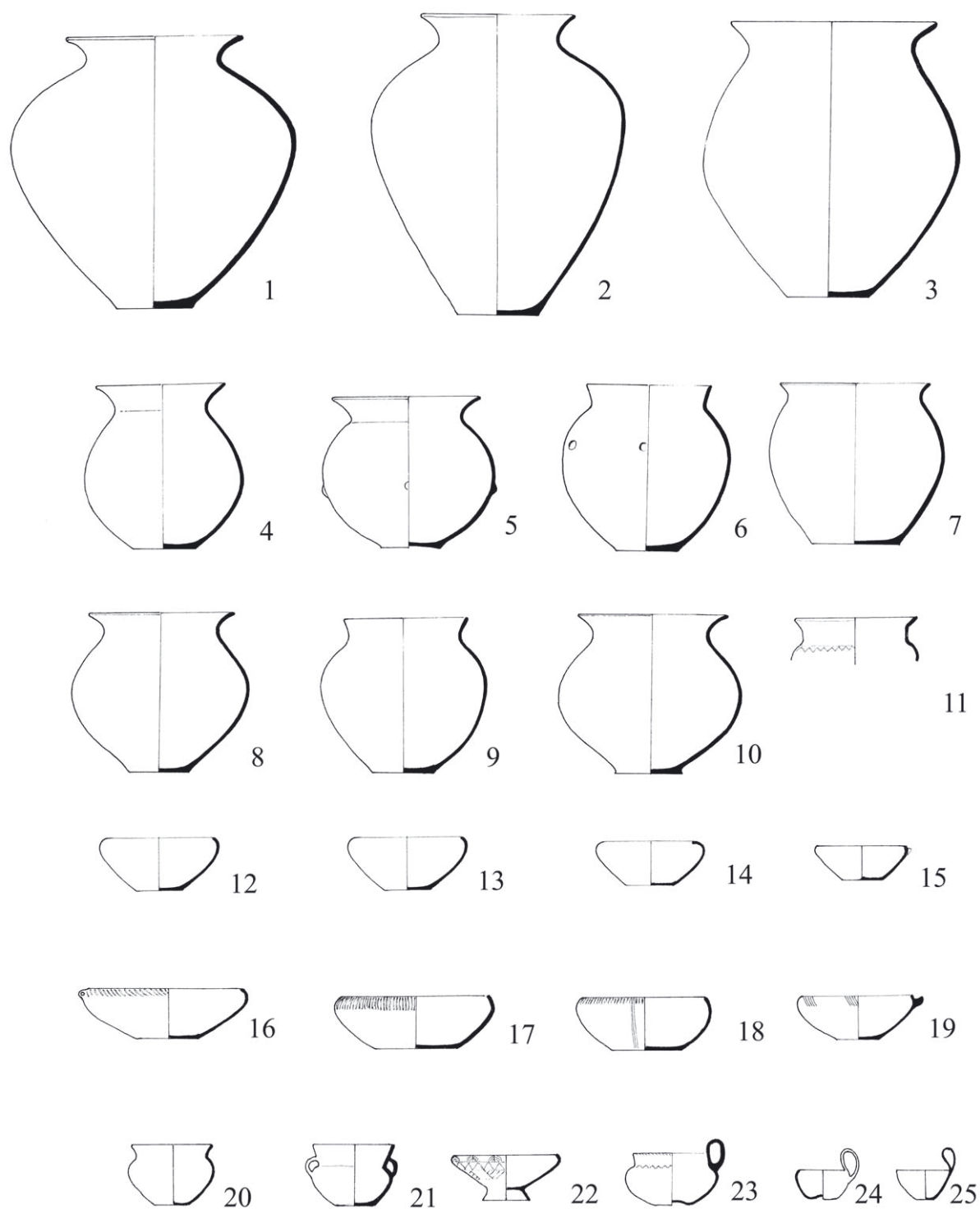


Fig. 2. Local forms of ceramics in graves of the Kupa group. (Drawing by M. Galić)



Fig. 3. Reconstruction of grave 1 from Sotin. (Drawing by K. Rončević)

the Hallstatt culture of Lower Carniola), even though they were open to innovations. The questions that remain open certainly concern with the strategic significance of this area as a corridor to the Adriatic and the link between Pannonia and Caput Adriae, which is discernible in numerous influences entering to this area from the Balkans (inhumation burial rite, pins with a biconical knob, double-loop fibulae), Caput Adriae (pins with a conical head, single-loop fibulae), Lower Carniola (anklets, bracelets), Pannonia (horse harness) and Central Europe (Mörigen type sword). The second question that ought to be made clearer is the relationship of this Late Bronze Age community with the presumed Iron Age community of the Colapiani, which inhabited the Kupa river valley. The answer to this question will only be provided once the large-scale investigations of Late Bronze Age cemeteries are undertaken, which in turn will presumably shed more light on the borders dividing the communities during the Early Iron Age. The third question, partly overlapping the first, is the definition of the border with the Iapodes, demarcated for the beginning of the Iron Age by the graves found at Duga Gora and Ostrožac, with the Duga Gora cemetery – judging by the finds of costume (multi-headed pin, fibulae with knobs on the bow) – belonging to the same community of the Kupa group,⁶⁷ while the grave

from Ostrožac has already been attributed to the community of the Iapodes.⁶⁸

Dalj Group

The Dalj group is one of the most readily recognizable cultural groups of the younger phase of the Late Bronze Age in the territory of eastern Croatia, the eponymous cemetery of which was investigated as early as the beginning of the 20th century. We know of the reports on the finds of cremation burials with or without urns,⁶⁹ from Dalj as well as the reports on the finds of inhumation burials, like those also mentioned in Batina.⁷⁰ In view of the fact that no grave assemblages have been preserved in the case of these large and long-lasting cemeteries along the Danube, it is impossible to offer a comprehensive reconstruction of the way of burial and possible modifications during the Late Bronze Age.

Trial archaeological investigations at the cemetery in Sotin were carried out in 2008 and 2009 and yielded 13 cremation burials of the Dalj group, as well as many graves from the Roman period. In addition to burials in urns (pots are the most common, as in grave 1, while in one case – grave 4 – an amphora was used), burials directly in the grave were also

68. RAUNIG 1982, 10.

69. HOFFILLER 1938, 2.

70. METZNER-NEBELSICK 2002, 198.

67. BALEN-LETUNIĆ 1986, 55.

observed (grave 10, 6). Grave 1 is interesting due to its excellent preservation and numerous ceramic finds (Fig. 3). Besides the burnt bones, a large pot that served as the urn also contained fragments of broken cups and another complete pot. Three more pots and two bowls/plates were deposited in the grave. A cup and a kantharos were found in two pots, indicating that these pots probably contained liquids. One of the bowls contained animal bones.

In grave 4 burnt bones with the ashes were placed partly in an amphora and partly in the burial pit. A bronze hair-ring found above the burial pit was probably used to fasten some kind of organic material that enwrapped the bones of the dead person. Judging by the quantity of the bones discovered, this was probably the grave of a child.

Grave 24 is a typical representative of the Urnfield culture with a pot serving as the urn. Bronze rings with overlapping ends were found among the burnt bones.

An exceptional and perhaps multiple burial was found in grave 10 in Sotin. This was a large rectangular grave into which two heaps of burnt bones were deposited: one with plenty of charcoal and pieces of partly burnt bronze objects, and the other with bones without charcoal. Animal bones, an iron ring and ceramic vessels were found on the other side of the grave.

Preliminary analyses of the ceramic vessels indicate that the graves can be dated to ceramic horizons II and IIIa-b after C. Metzner-Nebelsick.⁷¹ The dating of grave 1 to horizon IIIb (perhaps even earlier in the 8th century BC), that is to the Ha C1b phase, is made easier by the find of a bronze fibula with two loops of type 6a after S. Gabrovec, of the kind typical for Styria.⁷² Grave 10 from Sotin, by virtue of its form and number of ceramic vessels (the same as grave 23), points to the burial customs of the eastern Hallstatt circle.⁷³

Two graves of the younger phase of the Urnfield culture were discovered in the 2008 excavations in Beliše in the lower Podravina region during the investigation of an Early Slavic cremation cemetery, while the remaining part of the cemetery was destroyed by sand quarrying. The burnt remains of the deceased were mixed with fragments of pottery (probably broken on the pyre) and placed in an urn, which was then covered with a bowl and deposited in the burial pit. Pottery fragments found above the urn are an indication that ritual breaking of pottery vessels took place above the grave. The ceramic goods in grave 24 (bowl fragments above the urn in particular [Tab. 1/3]) date it to the Ha B phase, that

is, ceramic horizon II after C. Metzner-Nebelsick.⁷⁴ The deceased person in grave 27 was buried in the same way, except for the fact that no ceramic vessels were broken above the grave. The analogies for the ceramic vessels (Tab. 2), with the closest one from tumulus 81 from Sopron,⁷⁵ date the grave to the very end of the Ha B phase, perhaps even the beginning of the Ha C1a phase. None of the cremation graves yielded any metal pieces from their costume, which would render the dating of the graves far easier.

Graves from Beliše, considering the urn forms and analogies with Doroslovo and Dalj, should be considered as part of the Dalj group, even though a combination of an urn and lid from grave 27 as well as the similarity with the finds of the grave from tumulus 81 in Sopron points to a link with Transdanubia.

The area of Baranja, eastern Slavonia, western Syrmia and western Bačka was marked in the younger phase of the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age by the Dalj group. This most fertile part of the south Pannonian plain was inhabited by a community with settlements which, in most cases, were erected on barely accessible positions on the elevated loess plateau overlooking the Danube (Batina, Dalj, Sotin), although lowland riverine settlements are also known (Vinkovci, Osijek). The material legacy of this group has been well defined by the finds from graves, the earliest of which are the grave from Dalj-Studenac and the investigated graves from Doroslovo,⁷⁶ attributable to the beginning of the 11th century BC. The population then started burying their dead in Vukovar-Lijeva Bara and Sotin. Several challenges face the task of defining the costume in the territory of the Dalj group, such as: uncertainties regarding grave assemblages in spite of objects that can be taken as exceptionally important chronological and cultural markers precisely for the beginning of the Iron Age; apparent strong influences from various directions, recognizable above all in costume and already pointed to in the literature,⁷⁷ but which time and time again raise new questions and thoughts about the people who happened to be in this area in the first centuries of the last millennium BC. A challenge equally great has been set by the knowledge of the large number of investigated cemeteries (Batina, Dalj,

71. METZNER-NEBELSICK 2002, 167–175.

72. TERŽAN 1990, 98 and map 10.

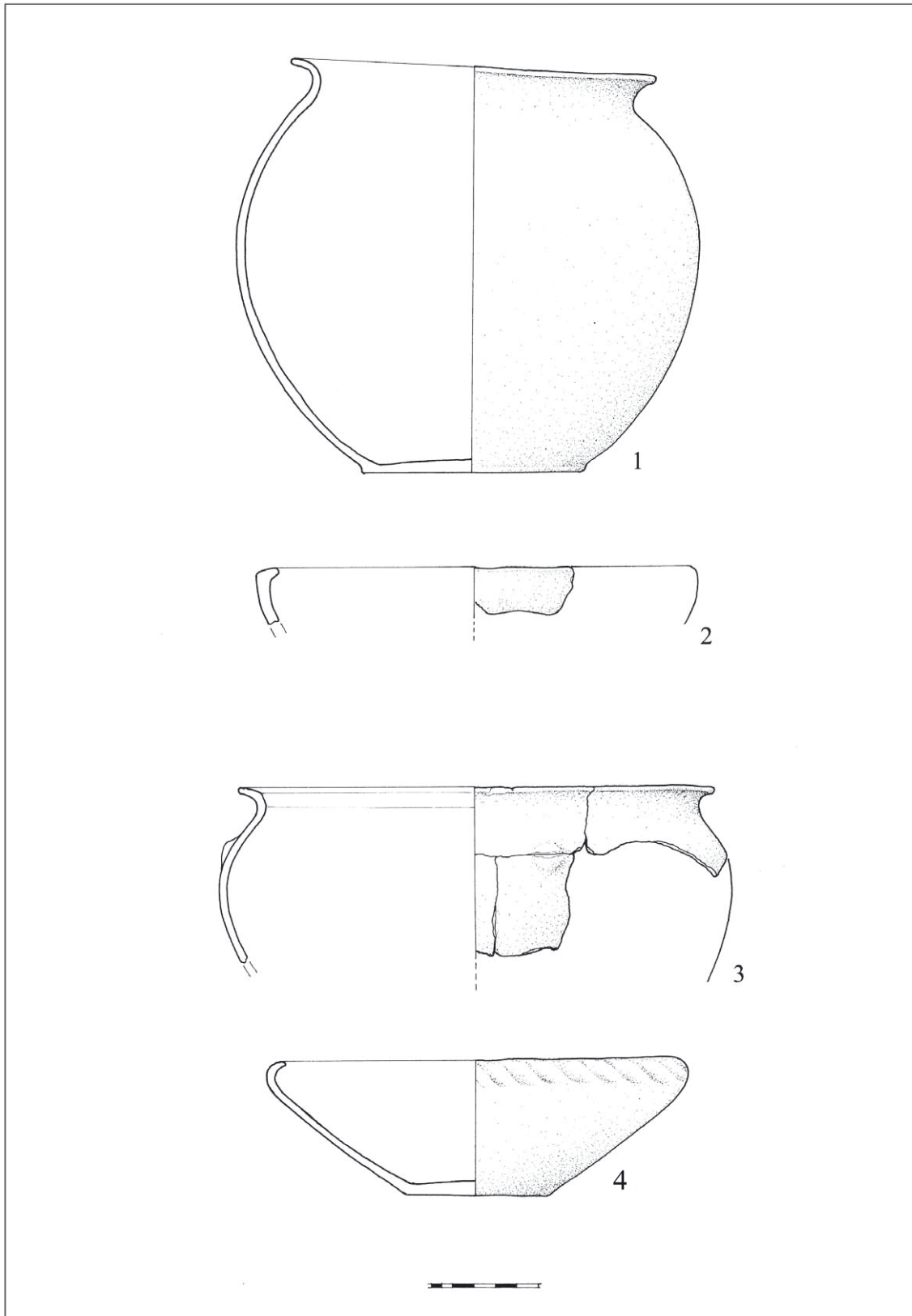
73. METZNER-NEBELSICK 2002, 179–180 and Abb. 79–80.

74. METZNER-NEBELSICK 2002, 169 and Abb. 73.

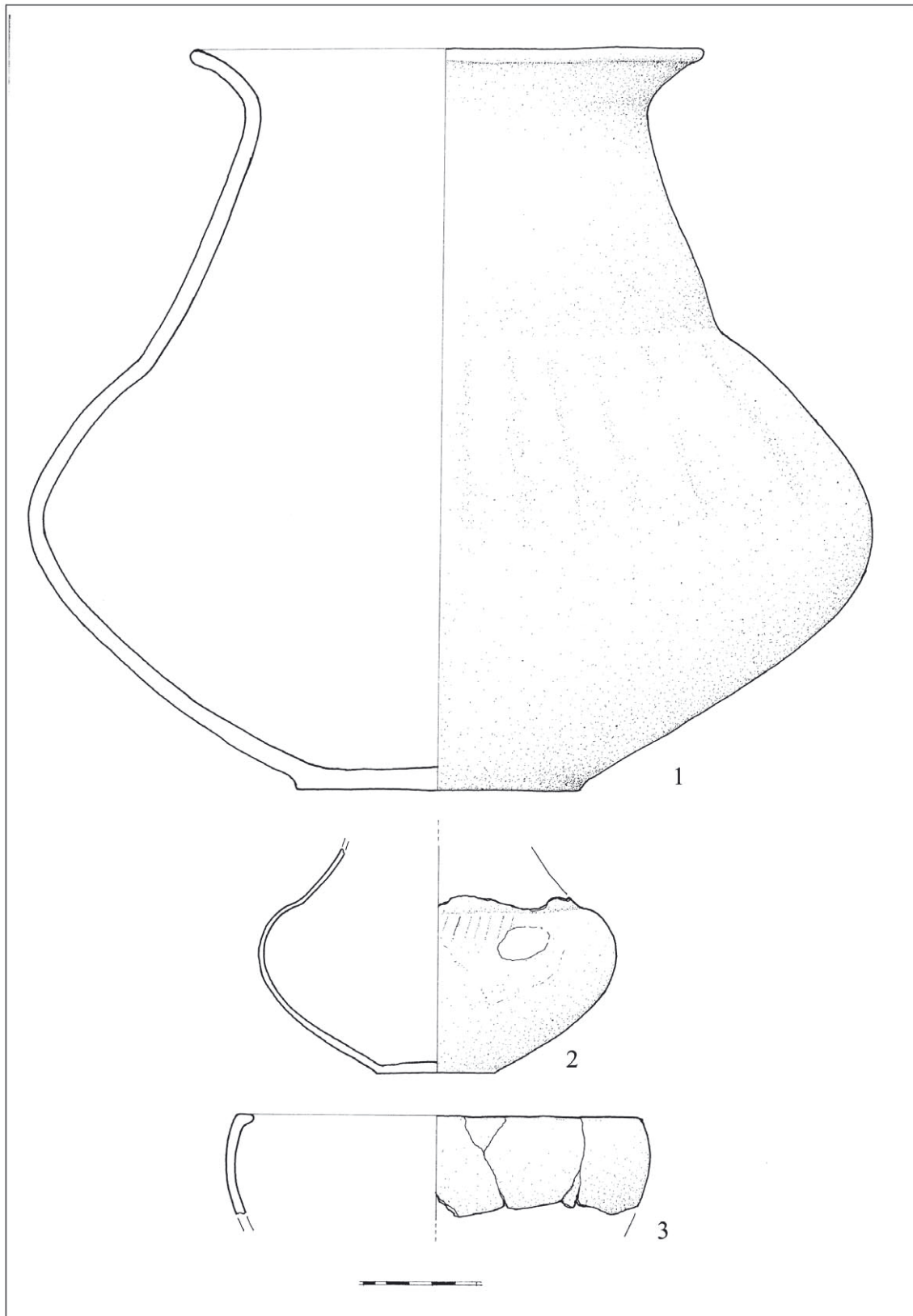
75. PATEK 1982, 16 and fig. 9/5. – PATEK 1993, 51 and Abb. 36.

76. ŠIMIĆ 1988. – TRAJKOVIC 2008, *passim*. – Based on the finds from the destroyed graves in Batina (METZNER-NEBELSICK 2002, pl. 3, 1; pl. 16, 1; pl. 25, 4) and Dalj (HOFFILLER 1938, pl. 10/6; pl. 13/6; pl. 14/9, *passim*) it can be concluded that people were also already buried in these cemeteries in the 11th century BC.

77. VINSKI, VINSKI-GASPARINI 1962. – METZNER-NEBELSICK 2002.



Tab. 1. Belišće, grave 24. (Drawing by M. Galić)



Tab. 2. Belišće, grave 27. (Drawing by M. Galić)

Doroslovo, Vukovar, Sotin, Šarengrad), the material legacy of which not only reveals diverse cultural influences, but also various local communities that buried their members in these cemeteries, as in the case of Velika Gorica and Dobova. There is not much information for defining the male costume, as the pins known from the cemeteries in Dalj and Batina mostly belong to the Early Iron Age (multi-headed pins and pins with a ribbed neck). The Dalj cemetery yielded a large number of whetstones, which presumably belonged to male graves. A burned decorated tanged sword from Dalj is an exceptional find that may have reached this area from northeastern Hungary or northern Europe. A close parallel to a similar custom of sword deposition is found in the aforementioned grave 63 at Klentnice in Moravia. The female costume can be defined to a greater degree, as was the case in other contemporary groups. During the Late Bronze Age women wore spectacle-fibulae (Šarengrad, Vukovar), but these were not documented among the finds from Batina. Ring-shaped hair ornaments are frequent and appear in several forms: a simple circle of coiled bronze wire, a coil of bronze wire with a pseudo-twisted decoration, cast bronze rings with overlapping ends and cylindrical ornaments of sheet bronze with incised decoration. Interestingly, cylindrical ornaments of sheet bronze appear in an area stretching from Gomolava to Dalj,⁷⁸ while they are absent from Batina. The situation is different with cast bronze ring-ornaments; these appear in Batina and Dalj, but not south of that area. A pseudo-twisted hair ornament of bronze wire was found at the cemetery in Doroslovo. The Dalj group is also characterized by bracelets with overlapping ends of a D-shaped cross-section decorated with incised clusters of vertical and V-lines. Bronze-wire earrings with arrayed shell beads stand out from the finds from Dalj, to which we could add a chance find from Sotin. A bracelet of that type was found in Dalj. Forms of fibulae suggest that the female costume in the territory of the Dalj group became increasingly varied towards the beginning of the 8th century BC; in addition to bow fibulae with a flat-beaten foot, which already appear in this area in the 9th century B.C., local forms with a campaniform foot now appear, as well as a type with biconical knobs on the bow – a local form worn by prominent female members of the society. Diadems played a similar role in marking the status (grave 202 from Vukovar-Lijeva Bara, the Šarengrad hoard). Among other fibulae, those with knobs on the bow of the Danubian variant, as well as fibulae with a ribbed bow, which are characteristic for the lower Danubian basin, are worthy of distinction. The female costume also included saddle-shaped anklets (Bijelo Brdo, Sotin, Šarengrad), the

conceptual form of which should be sought in the central Danubian basin and upper Drava basin. The forms of fibulae worn in this area became even more varied during the 7th century BC. Another bronze item frequently found in female costume are small decorative cones of sheet bronze, found in particularly large numbers in Dalj. Regionalisms are also noticeable in the ceramic assemblage (certain forms – jugs, bowls with a foot, kantharoi – and the characteristic decoration in the form of vertical fluting). The Dalj group is the only group that accepted the technology of the new Iron Age without changes in the burial rite. The presence of inhumation graves in Vukovar and Šarengrad, judging by the costume and proportion with the cremation burials, can be connected with the neighboring Bosut population that inhabited Syrmium, southern Bačka and Banat, and who had a settlement in Ilok throughout the duration of the group. The border, that is the zone of “mixture” between these two cultural groups, should be looked for in the area between Ilok and Vukovar. Dalj also yielded inhumation graves, but their precise number is unknown due to the circumstances of the investigation. In addition to the influence from the lower Danube basin, perceptible in the burial rite and costume, influences from the Balkans (double-loop fibulae with a twisted bow and triangular foot) and the northeast (Tisza basin) are visible in ceramic forms (pots with a biconical body), costume (decorative cones, cast ring-shaped hair ornaments, sheet-bronze hair ornaments⁷⁹, whetstones) and zoomorphic small sculpture. A particularity of the Dalj area and Syrmia are hoards containing horse harnesses of Thracio-Cimmerian type (Šarengrad, Batina), which also points to the eastern Carpathian impulses. These numerous influences reaching this area from the lower Danube basin, eastern Carpathians and from even further afield like the Black Sea, as well as from the central Danube basin, southeast Alps and the Balkans, are not surprising given the strategic significance of the confluence of the Drava and the Danube and of the confluence of the Sava and the Danube, along which the routes of the time passed. The openness of the Dalj community towards innovations is also underlined by its easternmost position in the eastern circle of the Urn-field culture, later in the Hallstatt circle, if one considers the costume and burial rites that were inherited from the central European cultural area. The burial rite in the Croatian Danubian area remained the same at the beginning of

78. TASIĆ 1979, 14, t. III. – METZNER-NEBELSICK 2004.

79. This form has its roots in the area of Pontus and northern Caucasus, from where it reached Syrmia through northeast Hungary and the Tisza basin, and developed a local form characterized by larger size and incised decoration (METZNER-NEBELSICK 2002, 439–441 and Abb. 196. – METZNER-NEBELSICK 2004).

the Iron Age – cremation in urns – but the number of grave goods changed, and prominent members of the community were buried in a richer costume with larger ceramic sets.

Sava Group

No graves from the younger phase of the Urnfield culture have hitherto been found in the Croatian part of the Posavina region. Apart from the large cemeteries and numerous hoards from the older phase of the Urnfield culture belonging to the Barice-Gredani group, the understanding of the burial rite during the first centuries of the last millennium BC in the Posavina region were only known from the Donja Dolina site. A trial investigation at the position of the cemetery in Dolina na Savi, near the famous Donja Dolina site, took place in June 2009. In addition to a very damaged flat cremation burial in an urn (?), the excavation focused on tumulus 8 with two cremation burials without urns. The cremated bones of the person buried in grave 2 were mixed with ash, charcoal and fragments of a cup broken above the pyre, and were placed on the soil wrapped in organic material such as cloth or leather, fastened with a pin (Fig. 4). The tumulus then started to be layered above this wrapping. The excavation of the northeastern quarter yielded fragments of another two vessels. The burnt bones mixed with charcoal, one part within the ceramic cup and the other outside, together with pieces of bronze objects burned on the pyre with the dead woman (?) were placed on the first deposited layer of the tumulus, immediately above grave 2. A bronze rivet and possibly the remains of a fibula, the closest parallel of which was found in the Bokavić hoard, was dated to phase 4 after P. König.⁸⁰ The second layer of the tumulus was then laid above grave 1.

Based on the pin with a vase-shaped head above the bones in grave 2, which belongs to the Ha B3 period, as well as the fragments of pottery analogous to the Central Bosnian group after B. Čović,⁸¹ this grave should be dated to the end of the 9th/beginning of the 8th century BC. Grave 1 yielded a fibula burnt with the dead woman, while the cup that contained part of the cremated bones can be connected with the Dalj group. This grave should be dated to the first half of the 8th century BC at the latest. Anthropological analyses of the graves have not yet been completed, so the sex of the deceased can, at present, only be assessed by the grave goods.

Goods from graves in tumulus 8 in Dolina bear witness to the Pannonian and Balkan influences that were reaching

the Posavina region. The pin with a small vase-shaped head of the kind distributed from Transdanubia to southern Pannonia⁸² and the cup with a prominent fluted belly like those spread in northern Bosnia in the younger phase of the Urnfield culture are obviously influenced from the Danubian basin, where such a form and decoration are characteristic for the Dalj group.⁸³ On the other hand, the ceramics from grave 2, characteristic for the Central Bosnian group and the fibula from grave 1, point to southern, already Balkan, influences.

The finds from Dolina, incorporated into the already existing body of knowledge on the Late Bronze Age in the Croatian and Bosnian part of the Sava basin (the Posavina region), are a clear indication of the specific character of the area inhabited by the community known from settlements and minor cemeteries of the younger phase of the Urnfield culture and are distinct from contemporary neighboring communities.

In spite of distinct local and regional traits of specific groups of the younger phase of the Urnfield culture, these were communities that communicated with one another and among which news spread rapidly, whether of a technological, material or spiritual character. This is why a uniformity in the use of cremation burials is discernible during the Late Bronze Age, mostly in an urn, with widely distributed ceramic forms (pots with a conical neck, bowls with an inverted obliquely fluted rim), but also certain particularities pertaining to the wider or narrower community.

The cremation burial rite used throughout the life of the Urnfield culture in northern Croatia also remained deeply rooted during the Hallstattization process, which started towards the end of the 9th century BC.

Social differentiation that certainly began in the Late Bronze Age society (graves with swords, weapons, richly furnished women) can be seen through the process of "Hallstattization"⁸⁴ itself, in which this term comprises, above all else, the acceptance of cultural novelties introduced by a society that encountered, learned and applied the new technology, manifested in burials under tumuli (primarily of prominent members of the community), while the fashion in the costume (e.g. fibulae with knobs on the bow) were increasingly becoming widespread.

The results of the recent investigations in Sotin reveal that the cremation burial rite endured deep into the Early Iron Age, with noticeable modifications in the form of the

80. KÖNIG 2004, 171 and t. 43/126.

81. ČOVIĆ 1965, 37–39 and t. I/3; t. II, 1/7. – GAVRANOVIĆ 2007, 54–56 and Abb. 15/3, 5.

82. MOZSOLICS 2000, 9, 34 and t. 2/7. – MARIĆ 1964, 27 and t. III/10.

83. HOFFILLER 1938. – METZNER-NEBELSICK 2002, Abb. 75/18, 19.

84. This term was inaugurated in the literature by L. D. NEBELSICK 1994 and S. STEGMANN-RAJTAR 1992.



Fig. 4. Grave 2 in tumulus 8 in Dolina. (Photo by M. Dizdar)

grave and the number of grave goods: cremation burials without urns in rectangular grave pits, cremation burials in urns in rectangular grave pits. At this point it is impossible to discuss the ratios and relationships due to the insufficient number of samples. There were also inhumation burials documented at the beginning of the Iron Age, e.g. in Vukovar-Lijeva Bara and in Šarengrad, attributed to the members of the neighboring Bosut community. Another novelty is the burial under tumuli in Batina, which have not been investigated yet.

Modifications in the burial rite at the end of the Urn-field culture are most readily observable in the southern parts of Pannonia, that is the areas adjacent to the Balkans (e.g. Budinjak, Dolina), where the inhumation rite became increasingly more common, while in central Croatia and in the Podravina region the cremation rite still continued, but now under tumuli and increasingly rarer in urns. Part of the population presumably continued to be buried in flat cremation graves also in the Hallstatt period, as corroborated by the latest discovery of the graves from Slatina-Berezina. The examples from the surrounding areas (e.g. Doroslovo⁸⁵, Wildon⁸⁶) lend plausibility to this assumption.

85. TRAJKOVIĆ 2008, grave 1, 1–8; grave 6, 1–20; grave 7, 1–15; grave 17, 1–10.

86. GUTJAHR 2008.

The documented changes in the burial rite took place gradually and with the dynamics distinct from the changes in costume at the beginning of the Iron Age, as can be observed on several examples (e.g. Budinjak tumulus 51A,⁸⁷ Dolina tumulus 8, Vukovar grave 320⁸⁸). This process affected northern Croatia towards the end of the 9th century and lasted during the 8th century BC, i.e. corresponding to the Ha C1a phase after Ch. Pare.⁸⁹

In lieu of a conclusion

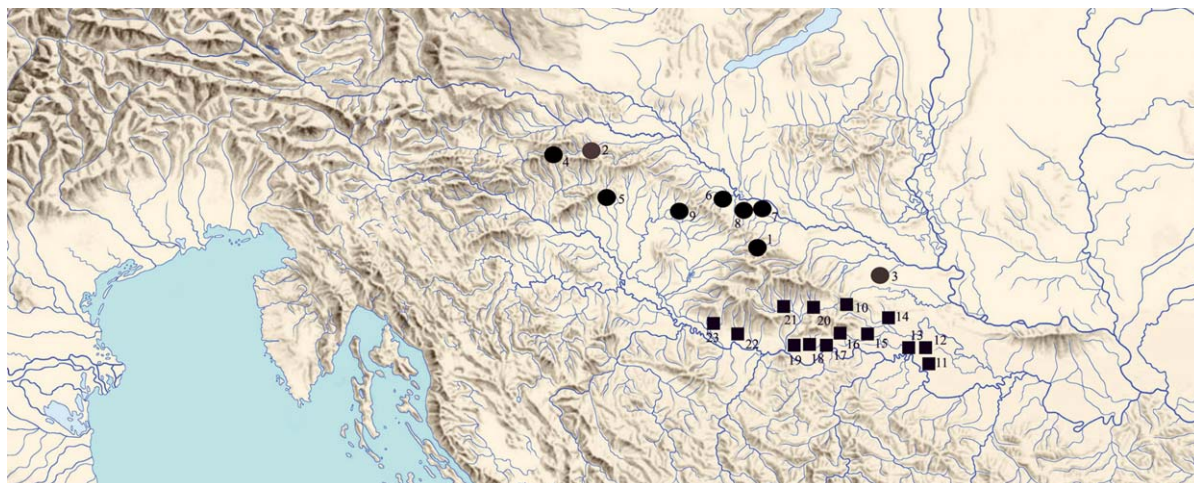
In the period between 1300 and 750 BC the dominant burial rite in northern Croatia was cremation, with exceptional cases of inhumation rite that can be dated around 800 BC and earlier, which are the result of influences from the neighboring communities to the south and the east.

Several variations regarding the placement of cremated remains of the deceased into graves can be distinguished: directly in a grave pit; in an urn; covered with a bowl in the incipient and older phases of the Urnfield culture (the end of the 14th, 13th and the beginning of the 12th centuries BC); an urn covered with a bowl without other ceramic

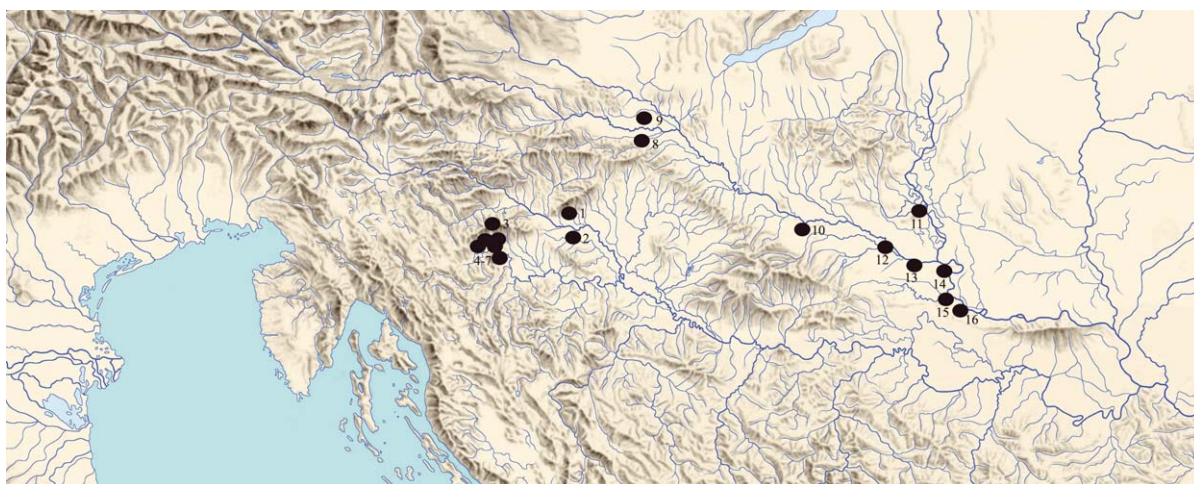
87. ŽELLE 2002.

88. VINSKI, VINSKI-GASPARINI 1962, 271 and t. III/fig. 48–53.

89. PARE 1998, Tab. 5.



Map 1. Burial rite in the older phase of the Urnfield culture in northern Croatia. Virovitica group: 1. Voćin – 2. Jakopovec – 3. Čepinski Martin – 4. Lepoglava – 5. Moravče – 6. Sirova Katalena – 7. Gačište – 8. Virovitica – 9. Drljanovac – Barice-Gredani group: 10. Vlatkovac – 11. Zapadna Kusara – 12. Popernjak – 13. Dubovo – 14. Strossmayerovac – 15. Perkovci – 16. Vranovci – 17. Brod – 18. Brodski Stupnik – 19. Oriovac – 20. Grabarje – 21. Požega – 22. Mačkovac – 23. Gredani.

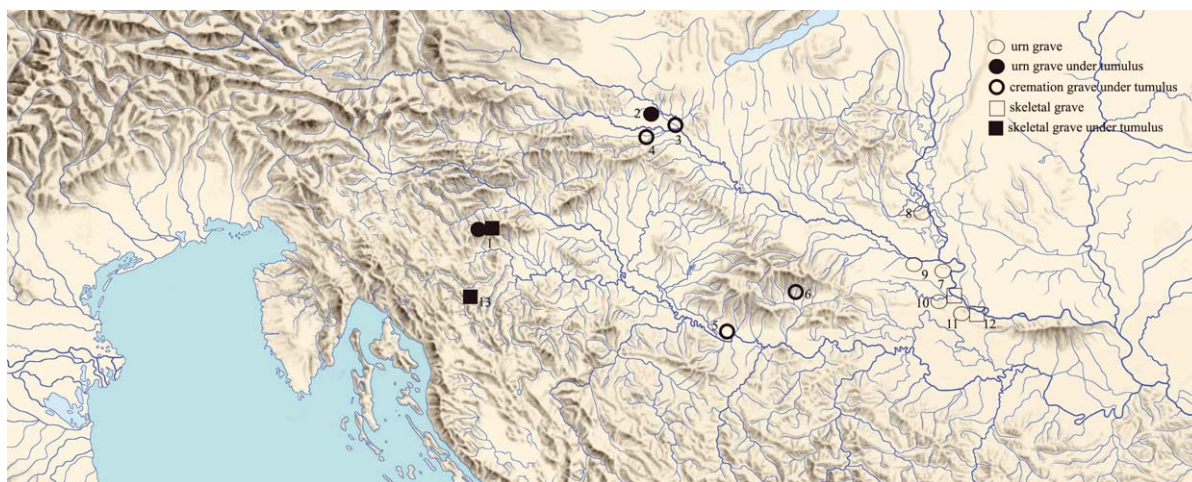


Map 2. Burial rite in the younger phase of the Urnfield culture in northern Croatia. 1. Zagreb – 2. Velika Gorica – 3. Budinjak – 4. Ozalj – 5. Krupače – 6. Žamarija – 7. Treščerovac – 8. Martijanec – 9. Nedelišće – 10. Slatina – 11. Batina – 12. Belišće – 13. Osijek – 14. Dalj – 15. Vukovar – 16. Sotin.

vessels. In grave architecture stone lining appears (12th, 11th and 10th centuries BC) (Zagreb-Vrapče), and in the 9th and 8th centuries BC a wreath of stones sometimes lines the grave (Budinjak, Ozalj). In rare cases graves contain burnt remains of costume in the older phase of the Urnfield culture.

During the younger phase the graves increasingly contain larger number of ceramic vessels and bronze costume pieces (9th, 8th centuries BC). The graves from Belišće, the pottery of which indicates the western border of the Dalj

group, as well as the graves from Dolina do not allow us to associate the burial rite with characteristic costume of the deceased of distinct groups, in contrast to the skeletal graves from Vukovar (inhumation graves from Vukovar-Lijeva Bara are the examples of burials of the members of the neighboring Bosut community, judging by the costume of graves 269, 202. Grave 320 is an exception, with goods pointing to the Urnfield culture). All the examples have to be taken with caution as they come from a small number of individual graves, not large investigated cem-



Map 3. Burial rite at the beginning of the Hallstatt culture in northern Croatia. 1. Budinjak – 2. Dvorišće – 3. Goričan – 4. Martijanec – 5. Dolina – 6. Kaptol – 7. Dalj – 8. Batina – 9. Osijek – 10. Vukovar – 11. Sotin – 12. Šarengrad – 13. Duga Gora.

eteries. The Hallstattization process, in the way of burial in these areas, begins at the end of the 9th century BC, and it is observable in the structure of grave goods (number of ceramic vessels – the feasting set from Budinjak, Sotin), the inhumation burial rite (Budinjak), the appearance of tumuli (Budinjak, Kaptol, Dolina) and in changes in the costume.

Novelties are selectively accepted in connection with the social status of the individual, as noticeable in graves of prominent persons, and the tradition of the Urnfield culture was preserved in the burial rite (cremation and occasional burial in an urn) deep into the Hallstatt period in southern Pannonia.⁹⁰

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