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Continuity of the Late La Tène warrior elite in the Early Roman Period in south-eastern Pannonia

Keywords: warrior elite / Late La Tène Period / Roman conquest / southeastern Pannonia / Scordisci / warrior equipment / prestige goods

Schlagwörter: Kriegerelite / Spätlatènezeit / Römische Eroberung / Südostpannonien / Skordisker / Waffenausstattung / Prestigegüter

Summary

During the Roman conquest and the ensuing stabilization in the late 1st c. BC and 1st c. AD the most prominent position in the society of the Scordisci, Taurisci and those of autochthonous Pannonian communities was held by local warrior elites. Their roots can be recognised in important social and economic transformations that occurred in the first half and the middle of the 2nd c. BC. The burials of the warrior elite of the LT D1 phase (second half of the 2nd and early 1st c. BC) are recognised by the presence of offensive and defensive weaponry, costume accessories and rich offerings consisting of ceramic and bronze vessels. Items of horse gear and spurs were also found in warrior graves, occasionally also wagon parts, which portrayed them as warrior-horsemen. The finds in the graves of prominent warriors are a proof of the connection of a social system with the circulation of goods; in other words, the possession of prestigious goods was a fulfilment of social needs, that is, the display of one's status and position within the community. The finds suggest the possibility of an exchange of military equipment or even a certain mobility of groups of warriors. The importance of the warrior elite is further suggested by objects sacrificed to the war gods, and this group could be represented by objects found in so-called fluvial contexts and the recently discovered Scordiscan sanctuary in Osijek.

In the final conquest of the south Pannonian region during the Pannonian War (12–11 BC) and in Bato's uprising (6–8 AD), Tiberius used

the warrior elite of the Scordisci as allies. After the establishment of Roman power the burials of the warrior elite were continued regardless of the appearance of a new political-administrative government because members of the local aristocracy were entrusted with the defence of the limes. They continued to be buried, in accordance with their ancient customs, together with their personal weapons, now of Roman origin, and also continued to offer provisions to the deceased that included numerous imported goods together with certain pottery forms of local origin thus testifying to their keeping of their previously acquired status. Thus, Romanisation was implemented by the ruling social class, the warrior elite being able to preserve some of their previously attained positions and to remain in its original area.

Zusammenfassung

Während der römischen Eroberung und der nachfolgenden Stabilisierungsphase im späten 1. Jh. v. Chr. und 1. Jh. n. Chr. hatten bei den Skordiskern, Tauriskern und einheimischen pannonischen Gemeinschaften lokale Kriegereliten die prominentesten sozialen Stellungen inne. Ihre Wurzeln lassen sich in wichtigen sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Umwälzungen der ersten Hälfte und Mitte des 2. Jhs. v. Chr. erkennen. Die Gräber der Kriegerelite der Phase Lt D1 (2. Hälfte 2. Jh. und frühes 1. Jh. v. Chr.) lassen sich am Vorhandensein von Angriffs- und Verteidigungswaffen, Trachtzubehör und reichen Beigaben von Keramik und Bronzegefäßen identifizieren. Bestandteile von Pferdegeschirr und Sporen kommen ebenfalls in Kriegergräbern vor, gelegentlich auch Wagenteile, welche die Bestatteten als Reiterkrieger kennzeichnen. Die Funde in Gräbern herausragender Krieger sind ein Beleg für die Verbindung zwischen einem Sozialsystem und dem Güterumlauf; mit ande-

ren Worten diente der Besitz von Prestigegütern der Erfüllung sozialer Bedürfnisse, d. h. der Zurschaustellung des eigenen Status und der eigenen Stellung innerhalb der Gesellschaft. Die Funde implizieren die Möglichkeit eines Austausches kriegerischer Ausrüstung oder sogar eine gewisse Mobilität von Kriegergruppen. Die Bedeutung der Kriegerelite zeigt sich außerdem in Gegenständen, die den Kriegsgöttern geopfert wurden, nämlich Objekten aus sog. Flussfunden sowie dem neu entdeckten skordiskischen Heiligtum von Osijek.

Während der endgültigen Eroberung Südpannoniens im Pannonischen Krieg (12–11 v. Chr.) und während des Pannonischen Aufstands unter Bato (6–8 n. Chr.) benutzte Tiberius die Kriegerelite der Skordisker als Verbündete. Nach der Etablierung der römischen Macht wurden Bestattungen der Kriegerelite ohne Rücksicht auf die neue politisch-administrative Regierung fortgesetzt, weil Mitglieder der lokalen Aristokratie mit der Grenzverteidigung beauftragt waren. Sie wurden wie zuvor in Einklang mit den alten Sitten zusammen mit ihren Waffen begraben, die jetzt allerdings aus römischer Produktion stammten, und pflegten weiterhin, den Toten Beigaben mitzugeben, darunter viele Importgüter und bestimmte Keramikformen lokaler Herkunft, wodurch sie demonstrierten, dass sie ihren zuvor erworbenen Status weiter behaupteten. Somit erfolgte die Romanisierung durch die soziale Führungsschicht, wobei die Kriegerelite einige ihrer früher erlangten Positionen behaupten und in ihren angestammten Gebieten bleiben konnte.

Sažetak

U vrijeme rimskog osvajanja i učvršćivanja vlasti u kasnom 1. st. pr. Kr. i na početku 1. st. pos. Kr., najistaknutiju poziciju u društvenoj strukturi Skordiska, Tauriska kao i ostalih autohtonih panonskih zajednica imala je domaća ratnička elita. Njezin nastanak može se prepoznati u važnim društvenim i ekonomskim promjenama koje su se događale u prvoj polovici i sredinom 2. st. pr. Kr. Grobovi ratničke elite iz LT D1 (druga polovica 2. – početak 1. st. pr. Kr.) prepoznaju se po prisutnosti napadačkog i obrambenog naoružanja, predmeta nošnje kao i bogatom popudbinom koja se sastojala od keramičkih i brončanih posuda. Konjska oprema i nalazi ostruga također su pronađeni u ratničkim grobovima, ponekad s dijelovima kola, pomoću čega ih prepoznajemo kao ratnike-konjanike. Nalazi u istaknutim ratničkim grobovima dokaz su povezanosti društvenog sustava s cirkulacijom dobara. Naime, posjedovanje prestižnih predmeta odgovara zadovoljavanju društvenih potreba, odnosno predočavanju statusa i položaja u zajednici.

Nalazi ukazuju na mogućnost razmjene naoružanja, pa čak i određene mobilnosti ratničkih skupina. Važnost ratničke elite nadalje se prepoznaje u predmetima žrtvovanim ratničkim božanstvima. Ovu skupinu nalaza predstavljaju predmeti pronađeni u tzv. vodenom kontekstu ili pak u nedavno otkrivenom svetištu Skordiska u Osijeku.

U konačnom osvajanju južne Panonije u vrijeme Panonskog rata (12. –11. god. pr. Kr.) i Batonovom ustanku (6. –8. god. pos. Kr.), Tiberije je bio u savezu s ratničkom elitom Skordiska. Nakon uspostave rimske vlasti, pokopi ratničke elite se nastavljaju, bez obzira na uspostavu nove političko-administrativne uprave, budući da su članovi lokalne aristokracije bili uključeni u obranu granica. Oni su i dalje bili pokapani u skladu s ranijim običajima, dakle s naoružanjem ali sada rimskog porijekla, te s popudbinom koja uključuje brojna uvezena dobra, zajedno s određenim keramičkim oblicima lokalnog porijekla, čime se isticao ranije stečeni istaknuti status. Na taj je način romanizacija bila provedena kroz vladajući društveni sloj, odnosno ratničku elitu koja je uspjela zadržati neke ranije stečene privilegije na svom području.

* * *

The understanding of the development of the Late La Tène Culture in Eastern Croatia (i.e. south-eastern Pannonia) as well as the knowledge about the transition phase to the Early Roman Period have changed considerably in the last years. The results of the latest excavations, in addition to the analysis of finds collected since the end of the 19th century, show this process was similar to what had been going on in other parts of Central Europe, despite certain idiosyncrasies resulting from the settlement of Celtic communities on the edge of the Celtic world and their symbiosis with the still strong autochthonous population.

The most important community in south-eastern Pannonia during the Late Iron Age were the Scordisci – people inhabiting and controlling, during its apogee, the area stretching from the Slavonian mountains in the west to the valley of the Morava river in the east. Most of their sites in eastern Croatia – primarily settlements – can be dated to the LT D1 phase, which according to central European absolute chronology corresponds to the second half of the 2nd and the first third of the 1st c. BC (Fig. 1). Contemporaneous cemeteries with warriors' graves are presently known from Sotin (Majnarić-Pandžić 1972–1973) and Mali Bilač in the Požega valley (Dizdar/Potrebica 2002; 2003; 2014). Numerous Late La Tène finds were also collected in Dalj, Osijek, Vukovar, Sotin and Vinkovci but with-

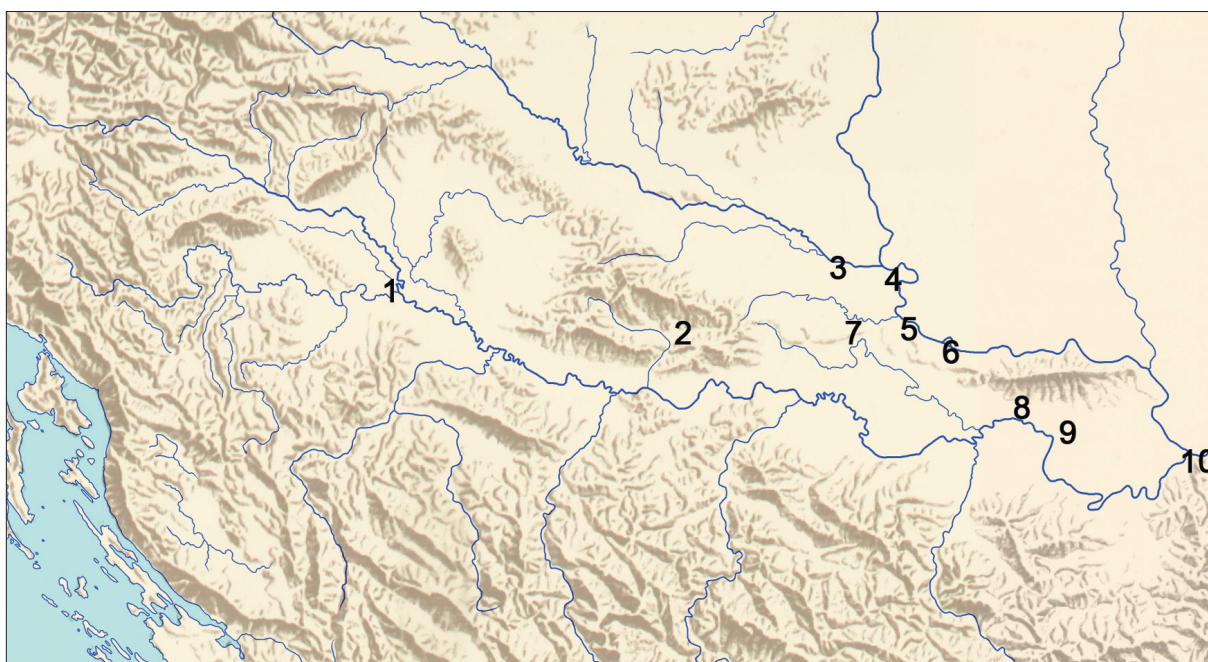


Fig. 1. The most important Late Iron Age and Early Roman Sites in south-eastern Pannonia: 1 Sisak; 2 Mali Bilač; 3 Osijek; 4 Dalj; 5 Sotin; 6 Ilok; 7 Vinkovci; 8 Srijemska Mitrovica; 9 Hrtkovci; 10 Belgrade.

out any data about circumstances of discovery – they could be finds from destroyed graves but they may also have been discovered inside settlements (Majnarić-Pandžić 1970; Šimić 1997; Dizdar 2001). Analogies for these finds have been found in Late La Tène graves of the Scordisci discovered on sites in Syrmia and Northern Serbia (Kupinovo, Novi Banovci, Karaburma, Hrtkovci, Obrenovac, etc.) where rich graves of Late La Tène warriors containing imported bronze vessels have been documented.

What appears to have been a sanctuary of the Scordisci – dated to the same period – was excavated in the Lower Town in Osijek in 2008 and 2009 (old military barracks of the federal army). Numerous finds of weapons, horse gear, wagon pieces, fragments of bronze vessels, as well as human and animal bones have been interpreted as traces of ritual activities of the Scordisci warriors (Filipović 2010). It is extremely difficult to give an assessment about the original context due to the poor preservation of the lowermost layers of the site, but it seems nevertheless quite likely that these finds could be considered as remains of some kind of sanctuary. The impressive quantity and above all the types of discovered objects, most particularly the weapons and horse harness gear, show their affiliation to ritual activities of the Scordiscan warriors. At present there are no real analogies in the territory of the Scordisci for the site of the Osijek Barracks and its finds, except for one contemporary assemblage of similar content – the hoard of weaponry and horse gear belonging to the equipment of

14 horsemen-warriors from Veliki Vetren in the Morava river Basin in Serbia (Stojić 1999; 2003).

Burials of Scordiscan warriors with weapons, horse gear and bronze vessels give an insight into the social structure and economic standing of that community (Egri/Rustoiu 2008).

The standard offensive weapon used by these warriors was a two-edged sword with a uniformly wide blade, sometimes more than 1 m long (Fig. 2). The blade ended in a curved top, indicating that these swords were used exclusively for slashing, mostly by horsemen (Dizdar 2009; Dizdar/Potrebica 2014). Such swords lay in scabbards that had a reinforcement in the shape of two horizontally laid letter S's on the upper part of the front side and a suspension loop on the back side, while the chape-end was in the form of a wide letter V with pointed clamps (Fig. 3) (Božić 1981, 319 Pl. 3,30). Such swords in scabbards, besides those found in Scordiscan cemeteries, were numerous in graves of the warrior elite in the territory of the Padea-Panagjurski Kolonii group (Łuczkiwicz/Schönfelder 2011).

In the warriors' graves long iron knives with a mildly curved blade and a hilt plate with rivets have also been found (Fig. 4), such as one from grave III from Sotin (Majnarić-Pandžić 1972–1973, 58 Pl. IV,2) or the one from Paka (Dizdar/Potrebica 2005, 60 Fig. 2; 2014, 363–365 Fig. 4). The knives of the *sica* type are similar; they are often found in warrior graves in Dacian territory, and their symbolic signification is presumed (Rustoiu 2002; Borangic 2009).

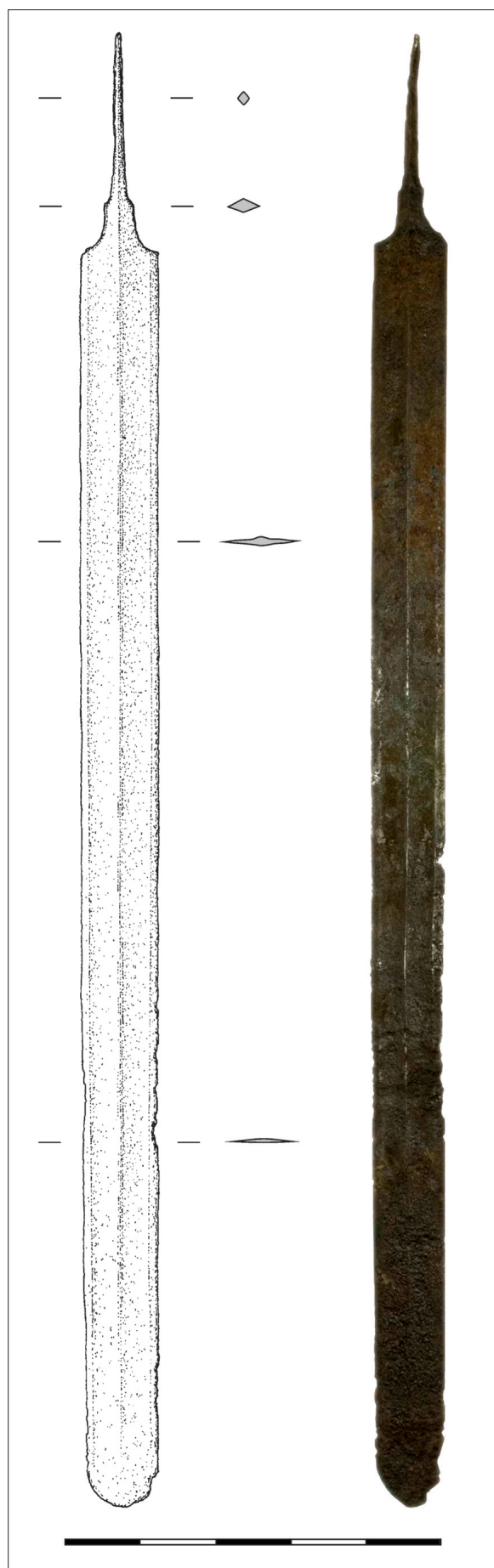


Fig. 2. Late La Tène sword from Gačište.

Spears of various forms are the most numerous finds in warrior graves. The type with a pronounced central rib and a short socket, sometimes more than 50 cm long, is less common; it was probably used for close combat, while the short-leaved spears with elongated blades were used as throwing-spears, i. e. projectiles.

In LT D1 shield bosses of circular form were common (Fig. 4), such as the one found in grave III in Sotin (Majnarić-Pandžić 1972–1973, 66 Pl. IV,10), with close analogies in other Scordiscan cemeteries as well as in the territory of the Padea-Panagjurski Kolonii group (Bockius/Łuczkiwicz 2004; Łuczkiwicz/Schönfelder 2011). An Arqua Petrarca-Mokronog type of shield boss was found in Mali Bilač (Dizdar/Potrebica 2005, 58 Fig. 1; 2014, 361 Pl. 2,1); it has parallels at the sites of the Taurisci and at *Caput Adriae* (Guštin 1991, 57–58 Fig. 30; 2002, 15–16 Fig. 2). The finds from Mali Bilač suggest the possibility of an exchange of military equipment or perhaps even a certain mobility of warrior groups in the south-eastern Alps and southern Pannonia. Horse harness items as well as spurs were also found in warrior graves of the Scordisci, and occasionally also wagon parts. Such finds undoubtedly portray them as horsemen-warriors (Božič 1984; Łuczkiwicz/Schönfelder 2011), thus emphasizing their prominent social status. Sometimes these artefacts have been deposited only on a symbolical level, e. g. the buckle and double button in grave 92 at Karaburma (Fig. 3) (Todorović 1972, Pl. XXVII,14, Pl. XXIX,20). The most prominent finds are horse bits of Thracian type XVI (Werner 1984; 1988; Łuczkiwicz/Schönfelder 2011), which were also documented on sites in the north-western Balkans and in the south-eastern part of the Carpathian Basin where they are particularly frequent at the sites of the Padea-Pangjurski Kolonii group from the second half of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st c. BC (Zirra 1981; Frey 1983; Łuczkiwicz/Schönfelder 2011). Finds of bronze ring-bits discovered in grave 16 at Karaburma as well as on other sites (Osijek, Dalj) are also quite distinctive (Werner 1988; van Endert 1991; Kull 1996). Bronze buttons of various types and trefoil-shaped strap separators were also considered as standard parts of horse gear (Božič 1993; 2001; Stojić 2001), like zoomorphic buckles with round swellings on a rectangular frame (Werner 1979; Božič 2001; 2004; Łuczkiwicz/Schönfelder 2011). Wagon parts – among them axle-caps and fittings of wheel-axles – were also found (Hrtkovi) (Dautova Ruševljan/Vujović 2006).

The Late La Tène Scordiscan warrior elite further emphasised their status by displaying prestigious goods, most often imported bronze vessels (Figs. 3 and 5). Bronze vessels, as part of

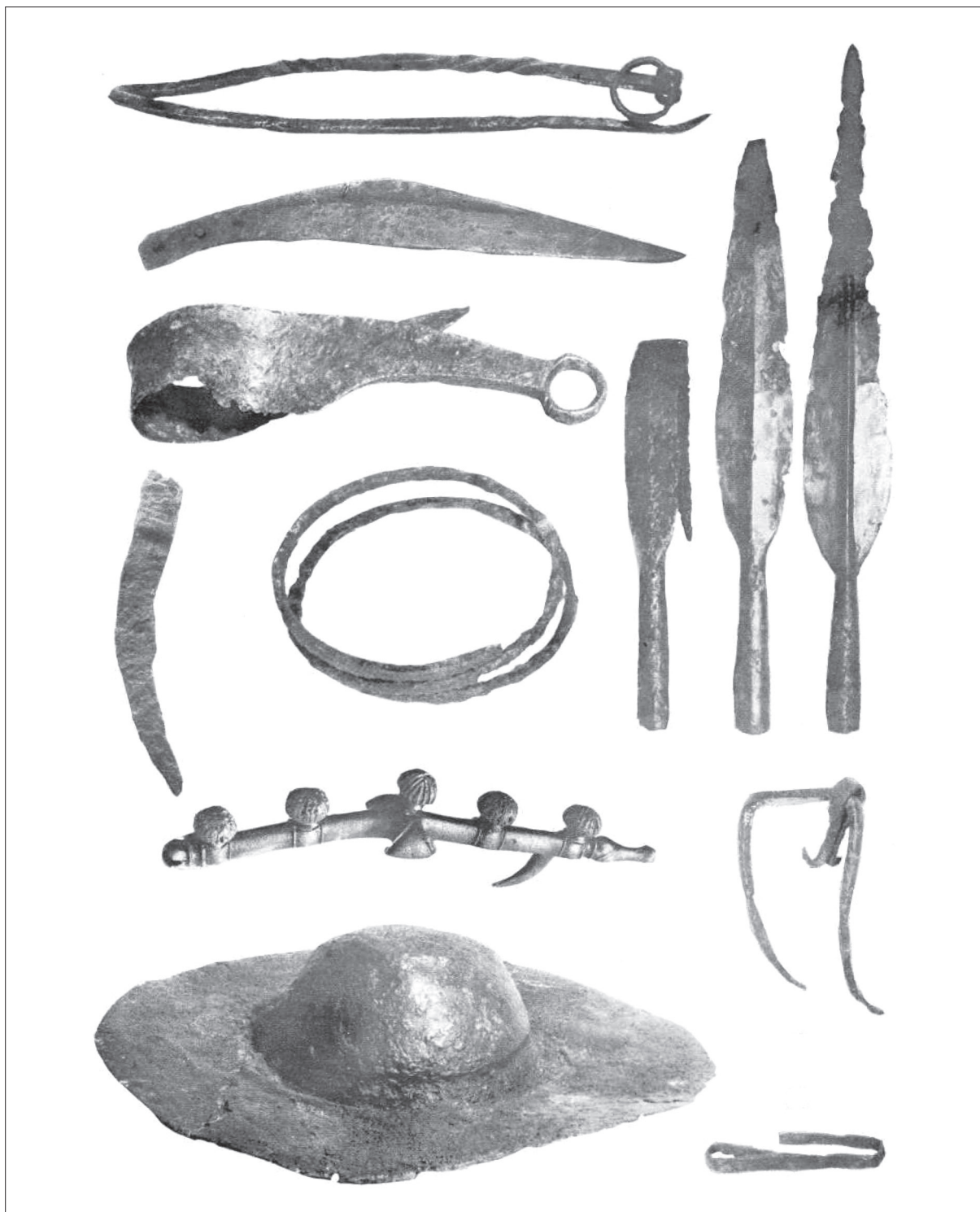


Fig. 4. Late La Tène grave 3 from the Sotin-Zmajevac cemetery.

Numerous finds of weapons and horse gear from the Scordiscan cemeteries can be associated with the warrior class. They show the prominent position and the role played by warrior-horsemen within their community. The development of this warrior elite could be the result of important social transformations which started to occur in the first half and mid-2nd c. BC.

As already pointed out, a distinctive feature of the military aristocracy burials are grave

goods such as bronze vessels, which formed part of symposium sets used for showing the social status of the warrior.

This cavalry aristocracy was also the main agent of various ritual acts through which, besides the deposition of numerous objects into graves, they displayed the strength, influence and power they yielded (Dizdar 2012). Their prominence is suggested by objects sacrificed to the war gods, most probably during initia-

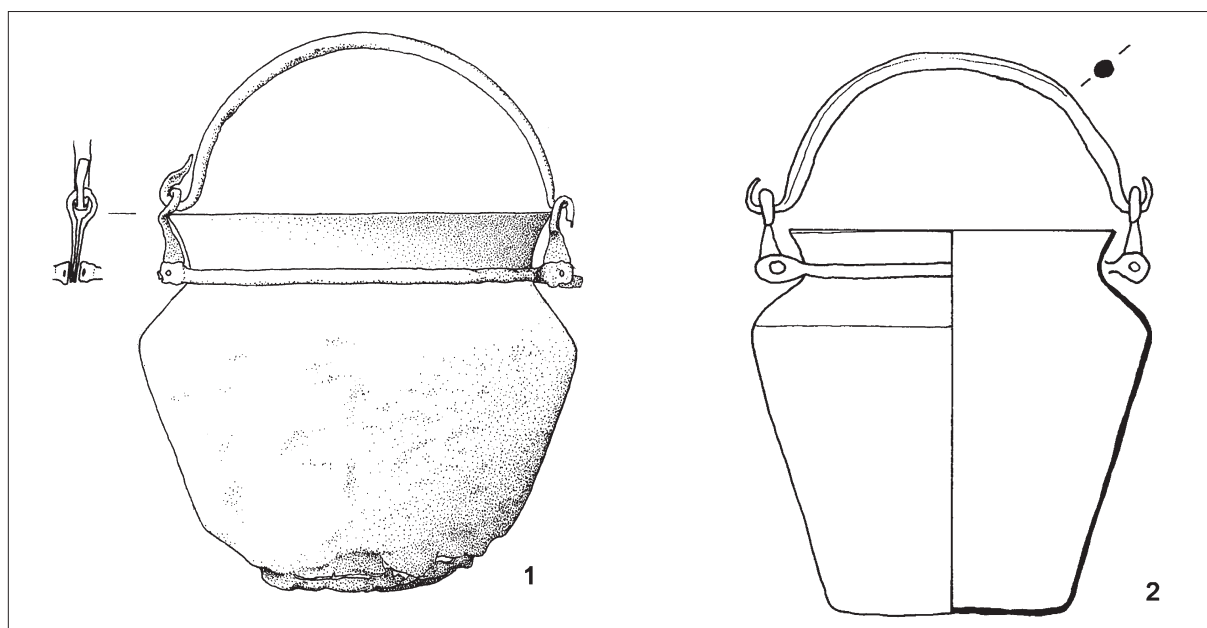


Fig. 5. Bronze buckets from grave 1 from the Sotin-Zmajevac cemetery and an unknown site in Serbia.

tion rituals or as a pledge for victory in battle. Examples of such finds are objects found in the so-called fluvial context (Mihaljević/Dizdar 2007) as well as those in the recently discovered Scordiscan sanctuary in Osijek (Filipović 2010).

The material legacy of the Scordisci shows no signs of decline during the 1st c. BC. On the contrary, this seems to be the period of their greatest rise, which partly contradicts hypotheses based on the analysis of literary sources, suggesting that after their defeat in 84 BC against the consul Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiagenus, the Scordisci began to lose previously controlled territories. This was probably true only as far as southern Serbia is concerned: an important communication route passed through this territory towards Macedonia and Greece, which the Scordisci controlled by occupying important elevated fortified settlements. Also, their political dependence on the neighbouring Dacians is still not archaeologically proven (Papazoglu 1969, 255–261; Šašel Kos 2005, 153). It is more probable that the two peoples were in some kind of alliance, which is substantiated by a significant proportion of their common material heritage, and even a similar social organisation with the warrior elite as the leading group.

After all, the warrior aristocracy, regardless of various tribal identities, most probably represented the basic political and economic power of the society. The Scordisci, just like the neighbouring Padea Panagjurski Kolonii group, probably encompassed various ethnic identities that were, nonetheless, united by a warrior aristocracy (Rustoiu 2008; Łuczkiwicz/Schönfelder 2011). The elites of various indigenous communities had likely preserved certain features

of their own distinct identity, but they also took over the external features of the social position they had acquired (Dizdar 2012).

On the Scordiscan territory, burials from the LT D2 phase, which preceded the loss of independence in the late 1st c. BC, are still lacking. Nevertheless, the situation was probably similar to that of the Taurisci in the south-eastern Alpine region, where burials have been documented. These were graves of the warrior elite which contained numerous weapons that must have played an important role during the Roman conquest of the south-eastern Alps and south-western Pannonia.¹

Although finds from the LT D2 period (80/70–15 BC) in Eastern Croatia are very rare, some of them suggest the presence of prominent individuals, similar to the situation in the previous period. A completely preserved bimetall helmet was found for instance in the Sava river near Donja Varoš in the vicinity of Stara Gradiška. It is quite likely one of the most spectacular finds from the late phase of the La Tène Culture (Mihaljević/Dizdar 2007). In terms of its form and construction elements, this helmet belongs to the eastern Celtic type of helmet (Novo Mesto type). The closest parallels come from the warrior graves in Carniola, dated from the mid and the second half of the 1st c. BC (Schaaff 1986; 1988; Guštin 1990). Other finds, particularly different types of fibulae, testify that the territory

1 Based on the examples of Mihovo, Bela Cerkev, Verdun, and Novo Mesto (Windl 1975; Stare 1973; Dular 1991; Breščak 1989; Knez 1992; Božič 2008; Egri 2012, 514).

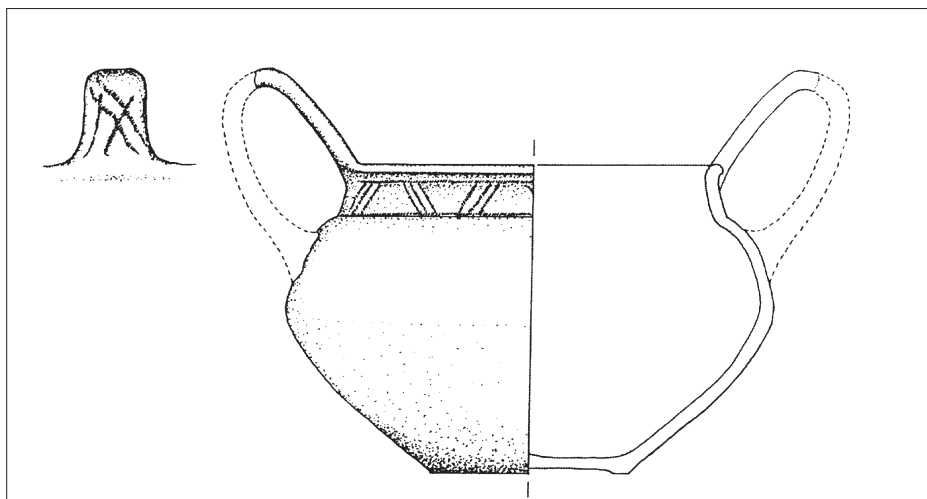


Fig. 6. Late La Tène kantharos from the fortified settlement Vinkovci-Dirov brijeg.

of Eastern Croatia was within the Central European La Tène Culture during the LT D2 period. The finds of fibulae originating from Northern Italy nevertheless suggest that exchange and trade did not exclusively depend on prestigious goods. An increasing number of LT D2 fibulae have been discovered in the Eastern Slavonian sites of the Scordisci, such as those of the Gorica type (Demetz 1999, 106–109), Almgren 18 type (Völling 1995, 187–188; Demetz 1999, 117–122) and numerous Jezerine type examples (Adam/Feugère 1982; Demetz 1999).

The overview of the situation during the Late La Tène period in south-eastern Pannonia, or more precisely the overview of the archaeological data pertaining mostly to the funerary rituals, shows rather clearly the prominent social position and the leading role played by the warrior elite before the arrival of the Romans. While their status in the pre-Roman period seems obvious, we must ask ourselves how extensively and in what sense their status changed afterwards. Undeniably, changes must have occurred, the whole social structure must have been altered (Egri 2012, 504), in a more or less radical way, but the answer is not straightforward. We believe that written sources as well as archaeological finds can provide some clues. Thus, despite many uncertainties, we may offer at least a broad picture of what could have been going on during the first decades of Roman rule.

Presumably, the old local elites had to secure a position in the new provincial social context, and thus must have played an important role during the Roman conquest and the Romanisation of southern Pannonia, both as opponents and allies of the Romans (Egri 2012, 518). Understandably, the elites which were opposed to Roman rule, after several decades of more or less open resistance, were eventually swept out. The fate of the princeps of the Daesidiati, Bato,

is probably not a paradigmatic example since we may assume that members of his retinue as well as allied princes, whose destiny was not recorded in Roman sources, ended their lives far more miserably when the rebellion was crushed (*Suet. Tib.* 20; Wilkes 1969, 75–76; Mócsy 1974, 38–39). Actually, the destiny of the elites who sided with the Romans should be more interesting for our subject. They certainly had to adapt to the new circumstances but they were also the ones who were able to preserve at least some of their privileges and maintain their outstanding position within their respective communities. Certain aspects of their way of life had to change, but they were able to safeguard their material wealth as well as their warrior ethos, from then on presumably as Roman mercenaries, allies and auxiliaries.

The Roman conquest encountered the south Pannonian communities at the peak of their development, both in terms of material culture and social and economic organisation. Octavian's Illyrian War of 35–33 BC marked the beginning of the conquest of southern Pannonia. The Pannonian town of Segestica was conquered in the early phase of the war after a month's siege. It should be pointed out that written sources emphasise the role of the city elite who were willing to comply with Octavian's request for hostages and more inclined to a peaceful agreement with the Romans, before being ousted by an intransigent and bellicose populace. The town was positioned on an important strategic point that controlled the communication route along the Sava. In the following years Segestica, renamed Siscia, became an important Roman military stronghold, from which the conquest of the eastern part of the region started.²

The final conquest of the eastern part of the region between the Sava, Drava and Danube and the subjugation of Pannonians was accom-

plished in the Pannonian War (13–9/8 BC), successfully concluded by Tiberius, who established the control of the communication route leading through the Sava basin, as the most direct route from Northern Italy and the south-eastern Alpine region to the Balkan provinces.³ As a side note, the fact that the Pannonians were armed like the Scordisci deserves a special mention. It suggests that the Pannonian ethnic communities had taken over the accomplishments of the more advanced La Tène Culture, more particularly its military equipment. Tiberius confiscated their weapons and, according to Florus (Flor. Epit. 2.24), had them broken and thrown into a river (Šašel Kos 1986, 167–179, 183–189; 2005, 506). Interestingly, this could have been a local custom as well, according to fluvial finds from the previous period in the same area (Mihaljević/Dizdar 2007).

As far as our topic is concerned, one should emphasise the fact that the Scordisci are recorded as Tiberius' allies during the Pannonian War (*Dio* 54.31.3). They most probably recognised Roman supremacy around 15 BC, when they must have become Roman allies, and their allegiance most likely remained unwavering even during Bato's rebellion (Mócsy 1974: 39; Šašel Kos 1986, 155–161; 2005, 153). The only written account of the loss of Scordiscan independence is given by Velleius Paterculus, who relates that Tiberius forced the Illyrians and Delmatae to acknowledge defeat, and added the provinces of Rhetia, Vindelicia, Noricum, and Pannonia to the Empire, as well as the territory of the Scordisci (*Vell.* 2.29.3). Just like in other areas, besides their military might Romans relied on local lords and ruling classes in order to impose their supremacy and preserve peace and order. Delegating some if not most of the policing duties to the local elite was an efficient way to preserve their own forces and ensure proficient control of the newly conquered territories. At the same time, the fortified Scordiscan settlements, former regional centres, were being abandoned, despite their presumed loyalty. New settlements were created in their immediate vicinity and it is more than likely that at least some of their inhabitants belonged to the indigenous population. However, primarily agrarian settlements (Gabler 1982) seem to have continued their existence as late as the 2nd c. AD (Dizdar 2012).

In the period between Tiberius' conquest and the start of the Pannonian-Dalmatian uprising in AD 6 (cf. Radman-Livaja/Dizdar 2010 and the

corresponding bibliographical references), several auxiliary units – probably not too many – must have been stationed in south-eastern Pannonia (Radman-Livaja 2012, 164–165). We presume that these units kept watch over that area, most likely in close cooperation with the Scordisci. Besides small auxiliary garrisons and legions or legionary detachments stationed at strategic positions like Siscia and Sirmium, security, both internal and external, must have relied on political agreements with autochthonous communities governed by their elites. Nevertheless, such an arrangement showed its limits during the Pannonian-Dalmatian uprising between AD 6 and 9.

After the quelling of this large-scale rebellion, a much firmer Roman control was established in southern Pannonia during the reigns of Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius. Romanisation was spurred by stationing military units and settling new inhabitants from Italy as well as from thoroughly Romanized parts of the Empire, especially merchants and craftsmen, as well as by recruiting the indigenous population into auxiliary units.⁴

Since they are not mentioned among the rebel tribes, the Scordisci most likely remained loyal to Rome and probably took part in the subjugation of Pannonian insurgents. The role played by the Scordisci in the events that took place in south-eastern Pannonia in the late 1st c. BC and the early 1st c. AD can be further substantiated by the fact that the most important Roman urban centres (Sirmium, Mursa, Cibalae) or forts on the *limes* (Teutoburgium, Cornacum, Cuccium, etc.) were built upon or in the immediate vicinity of their major settlements (Dizdar 2012). In any case, the Scordisci, or at least the population which was formerly under their rule or part of their tribal union, probably represented an important ethnic component of the population in the south-eastern part of Roman Pannonia during the 1st c. AD. One might say that they were subsequently rewarded with *the civitas Scordischorum* for being faithful allies of Rome, but their *civitas* encompassed only the core of their previous territory in eastern Syria (Dimitrijević 1961; Todorović 1974, 146–149; Šašel Kos 2005, 154, 513). Ironically, the Scordisci actually lost much of their former influence, and some autochthonous previously unknown

2 Radman-Livaja 2004, 16–17; Šašel Kos 2005, 437–442; Radman-Livaja 2007, 159–168; Dzino 2010, 101–116; Radman-Livaja 2010, 182–186; 2012, 161–165.

3 Mócsy 1974, 34–37; Šašel Kos 1986 155–160; 1997a, 191; 1997b, 31; 2005, 458–465; Domic Kunić 2006; Dzino 2010, 117–136; Radman-Livaja 2012, 162–165.

4 Although mass recruitment does not seem to have started before Caligula's reign (cf. Radman-Livaja 2012, 167–169).

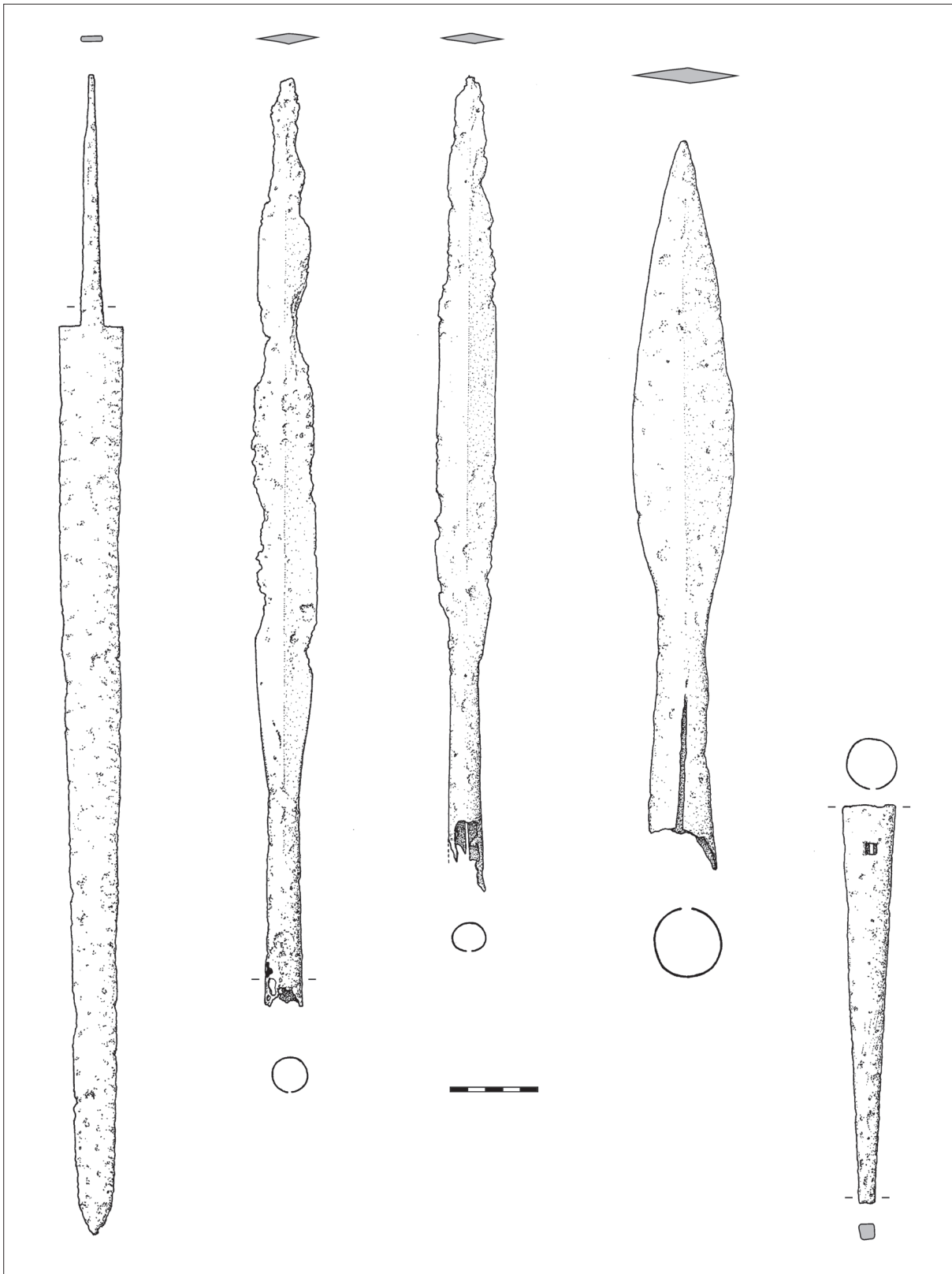


Fig. 7. Early Roman military equipment from Vinkovci-Vrtna street.

Pannonian groups started appearing in the literary sources, like the Andizetes and the Amantini. The decline of the Scordisci is further recognisable in the creation of peregrine communities such as the Cornacati, Tricornenses or Pincenses, which were artificially created by the Romans,

according to some authors (cf. Radman-Livaja/Ivezić 2012, 137–140 and the corresponding bibliography). These new communities probably received their names after the main settlement or stronghold in their territory, despite having been part of the former territory – perhaps even

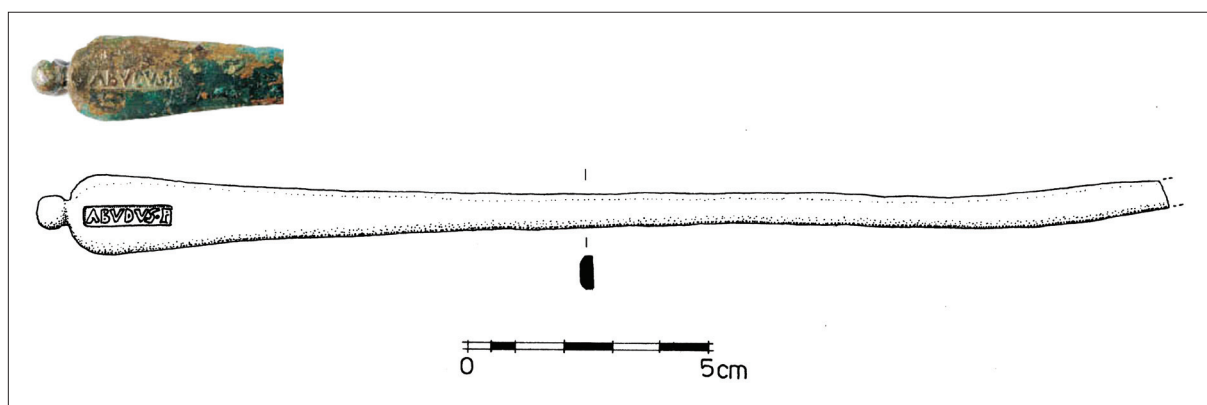


Fig. 8. Bronze handle with a stamp from Vinkovci-Vrtna street.

of the ethnic corpus – of the Scordisci (Šašel Kos 2005, 144). It should also be pointed out that not a single *cohors Scordischorum* has ever been recorded, which might look odd considering that they were among the few reliable allies the Romans had in southern Pannonia. We believe that mass recruiting of auxiliary cohorts in Pannonia took place several decades after the quelling of Bato's revolt, i.e. during Caligula's and Claudius's reigns, in a time when Scordiscan decline and loss of influence was already well under way. During the Augustan period, most Scordiscan warriors most likely fought brigaded in their own war bands, under Roman supervision but commanded by their own chieftains. Being allies and/or mercenaries, such units were probably not formally part of the Roman army, although we may presume that some Scordiscans were enrolled in the *ala Pannoniorum* which seem to have been active already in Augustus' time (cf. Radman-Livaja 2012, 162, 167–169 and the corresponding bibliography). Decades after the Pannonian War and Bato's rebellion, when Romans started raising many auxiliary units in south-eastern Pannonia, the Breuci were quite possibly the most vital and most numerous local community, a fact acknowledged by the Romans, who named the newly raised units *cohortes Breucorum* (cf. Radman-Livaja 2012, 168).

Certain archaeological finds can be considered as a testimony of the turbulent events that took place at the beginning of the new millennium (Tonc/Filipović 2010), when new relations between the autochthonous ethnic groups and their new rulers were being established. It should nevertheless be emphasized that such finds can have multiple meanings and interpretations, both on the individual and collective level (Egri 2012, 505). At least some of these processes can be associated with the Pannonian-Dalmatian uprising in which the Scordisci, as already pointed out, must have fought on the Roman side. At this stage, only a small number of finds from Eastern Slavonia and Sarmatia might

represent evidence of Scordiscan involvement in these military operations as well as their role in the protection of the Danube frontier. Unfortunately, in most cases neither the circumstances of the discovery nor the original context of the finds are known. A good example is provided by the weaponry and bronze vessel fragments dated to the early 1st c. AD, found at the site of Vrtna Street in Vinkovci, associated with the early Roman military presence in Cibalae (Fig. 7). An iron sword with a straight blade, rhombic cross section and a slightly thickened top, as well as two long spears with a narrow leaf, also rhombic in cross section, and a short socket, showing Late La Tène typological characteristics, is the most noticeable among weaponry finds. A bronze handle with a stamp *ABVDVS F* is particularly significant (Fig. 8). The manufacturer's name, probably of Italic origin, has been identified in the inscription, while the letter *F* (for *fecit*) shows that it was either produced in an Italian workshop or perhaps by an Italian craftsman working in southern Pannonia. These finds could represent the grave goods of a local warrior allied to the Romans, or perhaps items which belonged to a Roman auxiliary soldier of Celtic origin who took part in the conquest and occupation of that region (Dizdar/Radman-Livaja 2004a).

The exceptional finds from the Odesalchi Castle in Ilok might also be related to the Scordiscan involvement in the protection of the Danube frontier (Tomičić et al. 2007). During the excavation at the Upper Town in Ilok, remains of rich early Roman burials were found. Grave inventories contained weaponry, imported pottery, glass and bronze vessels, dress accessories and jewellery, cosmetic sets, as well as ceramic vessels produced following the Late La Tène traditions. Grave 5 contained an iron sword (*gladius*) of the Mainz type, in its wooden sheath equipped with bronze fittings. A belt with decorated bronze fittings and strap ends (*cingulum*) was found with the sword (Fig. 9). A bronze *Aucissa* brooch from grave 3 could have belonged



to the military equipment as well. The largest proportion of ceramic vessels (Fig. 10) – Dresel 6B amphora with *Laecanius* stamp (Fig. 11), *terra sigillata*, thin-walled pottery – together with bronze and glass vessels as well as lamps, arrived from Italy. Such goods met the demands both of the military and the settlers, but also of the higher classes of the autochthonous population. A certain number of the vessels were probably produced in local Syrmian workshops, which started their activity in the early Roman period by copying imported originals (Dizdar 2010, 244–245; 2012, 128–130 Fig. 12–13).

Nevertheless, as far as the determination of the deceased's origin is concerned, the ceramic vessel finds belonging by their form and ornamental techniques to the autochthonous manufacturing heritage could be crucial. These were products of local potters who continued producing familiar forms of vessels for the needs of the autochthonous population (Fig. 12). Food and drink were originally contained in these vessels, as shown by preserved seeds of grain and fruit, mostly grapevine. Remains of figs and olives suggest that, together with luxury goods, Mediterranean agricultural products were also imported for the soldiers and newly settled Italians, mostly merchants and craftsmen (Dizdar et al. 2003; Egri 2013, 294). While some of the graves can be dated already during Tiberius' reign, all of them can be dated more broadly to the second quarter of the 1st c. AD.

Considering the finds of local pottery and grave offerings such as military equipment, we might presume that the deceased were members of the local Scordiscan aristocracy, who either served in the Roman army or, as allies of Rome, were given a role in the defence of the Danube frontier. They continued to be buried together with their personal weapons, now of Roman origin, as well as with imported goods but their graves also contained pottery of local origin. Although we are favouring this assumption, the lack of funerary inscription obliges us to be cautious. Thus, we cannot exclude the possibility that the man whose remains were buried in grave 5 was not a native but simply



Fig. 9. Early Roman military equipment – sword in a scabbard and a cingulum – from grave 5 from Ilok



Fig. 10. Ceramic vessels from Early Roman grave 3 from Ilok.



Fig. 11. Fragment of an amphora with a stamp from Early Roman grave 5 from Ilok.



Fig. 12. Pot from Early Roman grave 5 from Ilok.

a Roman auxiliary soldier serving in Cuccium, perhaps even a veteran who settled there after his retirement. Nonetheless, even if we cannot be certain that he was a native (presumably a Scordiscan), the way he was buried most likely betrays his Celtic origin, although one can only conjecture about his place of birth (e.g. Gaul, Noricum or Pannonia). The discovery of these graves points to another important fact: the weaponry and ware of local origin had been replaced with “new” artefacts – i.e. of Roman origin – but their symbolical meaning remained the same as it used to be in the previous period (Egri 2012, 517).

Graves of Celtic veterans and of the first Romanized natives were also found in the eastern cemetery of Sirmium. These burials were cremation graves in the form of a well. Besides

weapons, imported north-Italian products and ceramic vessels produced according to the Late La Tène tradition were also found in these graves. The earliest burials are dated to the late Augustan and Tiberian periods (Milošević 1985; 1987, 14–17; 2001, 161–163; Egri 2013, 294 Fig. 19,11). The Karaburma cemetery yielded – besides Early, Mid- and Late La Tène Scordiscan burials – several graves which can be dated thanks to the artefacts, mostly pottery, to the 1st c. AD (Fig. 13). Of special interest are graves which contained weaponry – one or two long spears with a rhomboidal section and a long socket, which may be faceted or with a strong mid-rib.⁵ The Karaburma cemetery was not in

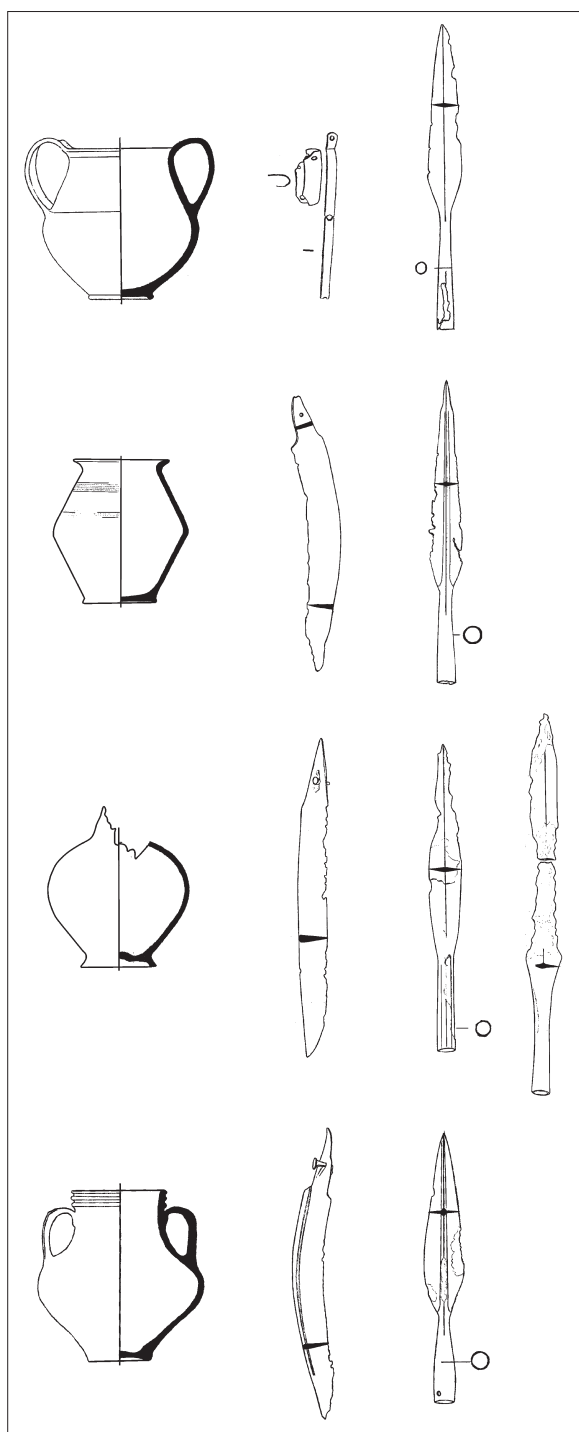


Fig. 13. Early Roman graves from the Karaburma cemetery.

use during the LT D2 period, but these graves prove that burials started again afterwards. These spearheads could probably have been hunting weapons, just like in the graves from western Hungary dated to the 1st and 2nd c. AD (Márton 2002, 134; Mráv 2005, 346; Horváth et al. 2012, 194).

Several other sites with cremation burials dated to the 1st c. AD are known in Syrmia; their autochthonous origin has been suggested on the basis of imported and local forms of pot-

tery.⁶ These early Roman cremation burials with ceramic vessel forms following Late La Tène traditions record a strong autochthonous heritage surviving until the end of the 1st c. AD, which can be recognised even during the 2nd c. AD in lowland settlements like in the vicinity of Sirmium (Brukner 1995). A similar pattern is documented in western Hungary, where burial mounds of the local elite contained weaponry, wagons and prestigious goods (Palágyi/Nagy 2002; Mráv 2004; 2006).

Grave offerings in the form of early Roman weaponry and imported bronze, ceramic and glass vessels and lamps, together with occasional ceramic forms of local origin, were also documented at contemporary cemeteries in Carniola which were in continuous use from the previous period. Helmets of the Weisenau type, *gladii*, spearheads and shield bosses were found in graves from Mihovo, Bela Cerkev, Verdun and Polhov Gradec. Some of the weapons were bent before deposition, which represents the continuation of burial traditions of the Mokronog group.⁷ Similar finds were recorded in graves in the Soča valley⁸ and in other areas of the southern Alpine region (Pernet 2010). Offerings of weapons show that warriors equipped in the Roman fashion were buried in these graves. We may presume that they most probably were Roman allies, mercenaries or auxiliaries engaged in conflicts which occurred during the Roman conquest of the south-eastern Alps and south-western Pannonia in the late 1st c. BC (Pernet 2010). Many burials confirm this pattern in the south-eastern Alpine area, while the graves from Srijemska Mitrovica and Ilok probably show its implementation in the Scordiscan area (Dizdar 2012). These graves represent a manifest testimony of the amalgamation of local and foreign elements in burial rites at the start of a new age (Egri 2012, 518).

The active role played by the Romans has always been emphasised in previous studies of the Romanisation process of southern Pannonia, while autochthonous communities were usually regarded as passive recipients of Roman culture and way of life. On the basis of the information available and the latest excavation results,

5 E.g. grave 44: Todorović 1972, Pl. XVII; grave 145: Todorović 1972, Pl. XXXVI. – Egri 2013, 297 Fig. 19,12).

6 Novi Banovci: Dimitrijević 1961, 93–94; Rakovac and Zemun: Brukner 1987, 40–41; Surčin and Donji Tovarnik: Srejšević 1965, 58; Obrež: Dimitrijević 1961, 98; Zemun-polje: Dimitrijević 1969, 86; Brukner 1987, 41.

7 Windl 1975; Breščak 1989; Božić 1999, 199–200; Mráv 2005.

8 Reka pri Cerknem, Idrija pri Bači: Guštin 1991; Gaspari 2008.

one should certainly not underestimate the role played in that process by the elites of autochthonous ethnic groups, especially the leading class of the Scordisci. These elites were undeniably in contact with the Romans decades before the conquest and we may presume that many felt attracted to the Roman way of life. The ruling class, i.e. the warrior elite, in order to preserve its social position, wealth and real estate had to strike deals with the Roman invaders, who in turn had good reasons to rely on local forces in order to reduce the financial burden of the occupation as well as the strain on manpower.

Burials of local aristocracy containing weaponry and prestigious goods clearly show their will to demonstrate the outstanding status they acquired in their society, and this practice was not to cease after the arrival of the Romans, most likely because their status was still exceptional.

Local elites must have played a crucial role as far as recruiting of allied or auxiliary units is concerned. Thanks to their support, the Romans managed both to control the native communities and ensure the protection of the new borders. On balance, what must have started as a pragmatic deal between the Romans and the local ruling class, became the first step towards the transformation of Pannonia into a fully Romanised province which, a few centuries later, would give birth to some of the staunchest defenders of the Roman Empire.

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References of Figures

Fig. 2: after Dizdar 2009.

Fig. 3: after Egri/Rustoiu 2008.

Fig. 4: after Majnarić-Pandžić 1972–1973.

Fig. 5: after Dizdar/Radman-Livaja 2004.

Fig. 6: after Dizdar 2001.

Fig. 7: after Dizdar & Radman-Livaja 2004a.

Fig. 8: after Dizdar/Radman-Livaja 2004a.

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Fig. 13: after Todorović 1972.

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