

Everything counts
(in small amounts) ...

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EVERYTHING COUNTS (IN SMALL AMOUNTS) ...

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Kultura

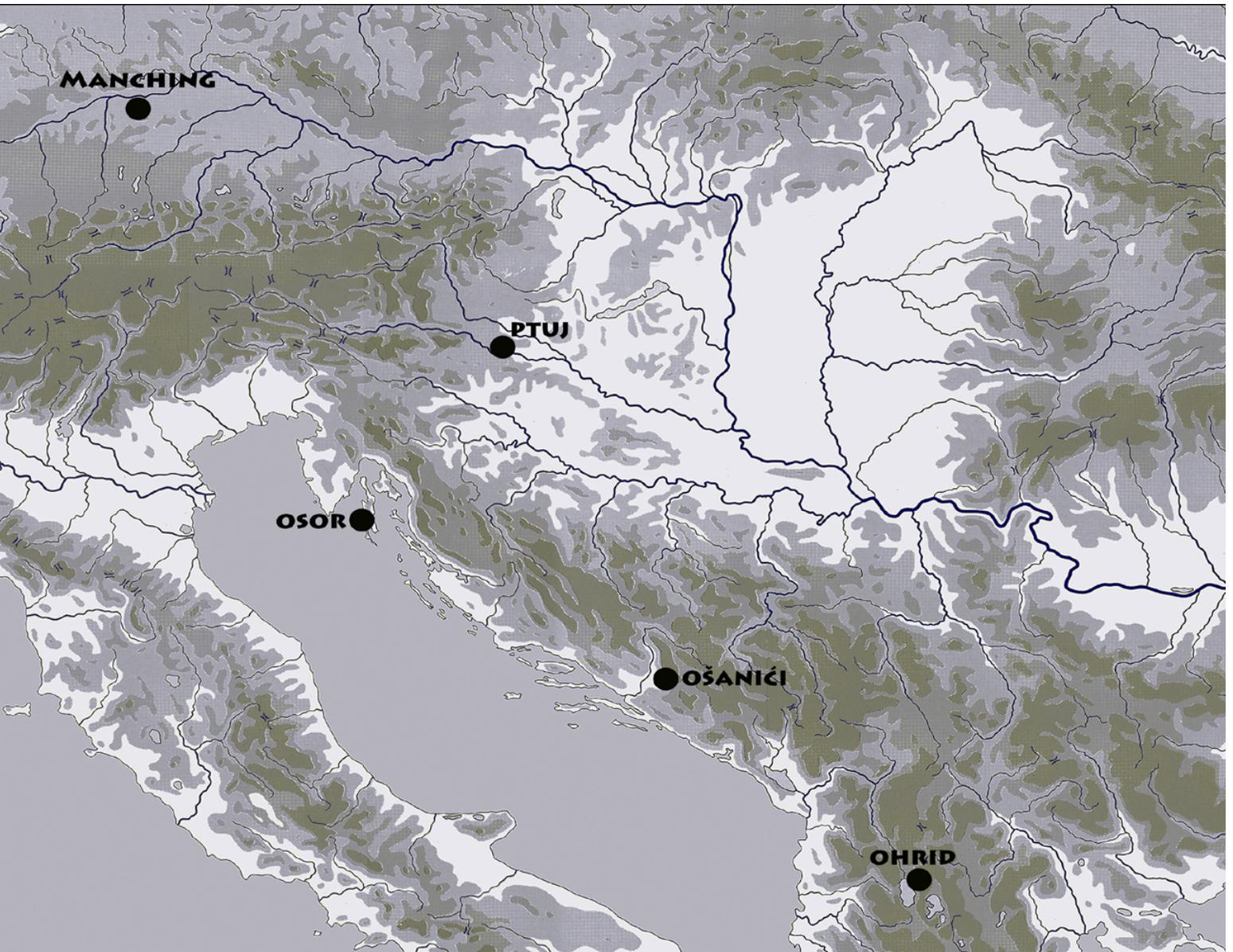


POKRAJINSKI MUZEJ PTUJ ORMOŽ



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Map of sites included in to the project *Clash Of Cultures*.

Everything counts (in small amounts) ...

The catalogue in front of you presents the exhibition with the same name. It is one of the results of activities in framework of the international project co-financed by the European Commission entitled *Clash of Cultures* in which *University of Primorska* was joined in collaboration with the *kelten römer museum manching* from Germany, *Zemaljski muzej Bosne i Hercegovine* from Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Lošinjski muzej* from Croatia and *Arheološki muzej Makedonije* from Macedonia. It was intended to promote cultural contacts between Mediterranean civilizations and prehistoric communities of Eastern and Central Europe in the Late Iron Age. For the presentation less known, but nevertheless important archaeological sites were selected in which contacts still recognisable in the archaeological record took place. The goal was to present their international character, their intensity but also the local cultural elements developed in these centers. Ohrid, Ošanići, Osor, Manching and Ptuj were not just important archaeological sites for demonstration of cultural contacts but were metaphors for the demonstration of European cultural history.

The present book and exhibition are dedicated to one of the most important archaeological sites in Slovenia - Ptuj. It came into existence as a collaboration project between the University of Primorska, Science and Research Center, Institute for Mediterranean Heritage with the Regional Museum Ptuj-Ormož; Institute for preservation of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, Conservation center, Center for preventive archaeology; National Museum of Slovenia and Regional Museum in Maribor. It presents the historical development of communities settled on the territory of today's Ptuj and its surroundings, their trade and cultural contacts in the period between the 5th and 1st century BC when these prehistoric communities were included into networks of contacts spanning from the Carpathian basin to the central Mediterranean, from the central Balkans to the central Alps.



Gnathian skyphos from Starše on Dravsko Polje.

It was a period of the wane of Early Iron Age, of the Hallstatt period, when in Ptuj finds from Mali grad at the foot of the Grajski grič (Castle hill) and those from the Turnirski prostor (Tournament space) on top of it reflected the contacts with communities from the western Pre-Alpine area as well as with those located to the east. During the older part of the La Tène period, at the end of 4th century BC, we can still trace objects coming from central Alps. Later on, the territory of Ptuj, as well as the major part of Slovenia and the Austrian region of Štajerska, became settled with Celtic communities. This was the period of intensive contacts between the Celts from the Carpathian basin and Mediterranean civilizations – perhaps we can observe these contacts in the form of the imported ceramic cup, the so called gnathian skyphos, discovered in Starše on Dravsko polje.

In the 3rd century BC, during the so called Middle La Tène period, the territory of Ptuj was located on the edge of so called Mokronog cultural group having its center on south-east of Slovenia. Items, discovered in graves from Brstje and Formin, still reflect traces of numerous elements characteristic of formal and decorative world of the Eastern Celts. However, as the years pass by, the local characteristics become more pronounced.

In the middle of the 2nd century BC, during the Late La Tène period, the greatest changes occurred. Inhumations on older cemeteries ended and hilltop settlements, as for example Turnirski prostor on the Grajski grič hill in Ptuj, were occupied and fortified again. Newly created proto-urban centers became seats of social elites which introduced a monetary based economy founded on their own coinage consisting of large and small silver coins as well as more and more often Roman coins. It is understandable that a century and half later the Roman army first occupied these settlements – as we can see by the presence of Roman arms on Turnirski prostor.

The exhibition *Everything counts (in small amounts) ..., Late Iron Age in Ptuj and its vicinity* is not just a presentation of finds. It is a chance to use modest fragments of a large mosaic of prehistoric settlement, buried deep below the modern, medieval and Roman city, for presentation of an integral image of population dynamics and cultural contacts. These contacts comprised territories from western Alps, northern Bavaria, and central Bohemian Mountains, central part of Pannonian plain, its southern part and all the way across Slovenia to cities of northern Adriatic where intensive contacts between prehistoric cultures and Mediterranean civilizations took place. Consequently it is a minimalistic program of presenting the archaeological heritage of Ptuj and its surroundings as one of the focal points in the Late Iron Age.



Panorama of Ptuj.

The end of the old era

The 5th century BC was a period of big changes in the Mediterranean. These changes were caused by political and economic superpowers of the time. Due to the expansionist politics of Sicilian Syracuse, having an ambition to create a maritime empire being able to contest with the Carthaginian in western Mediterranean, Greek presence intensified in the northern Adriatic. It stimulated trade with Etruscan centers on eastern Adriatic coast and was included in to preexisting networks of cultural and commercial connections. These ties linked the coastal zones of northern Adriatic with its hinterland – with the Pre-Alpine area.

On the territory of today's Slovenia this was a period of immense wealth in prehistoric societies, especially those inhabiting the territory of the Posočje region. Rich due to the deposits of iron ores in the surrounding mountains, they (similarly as communities in Austrian Koroška) maintained trade contacts with the territory of central Alps as well as northern Italy. However we can see a simultaneous slow decline in the importance of former blooming Iron Age of Dolenjska region. Centers of southern Dolenjska, open towards the Pannonian plain, lost their former importance and the central role was taken over by communities settled in the west.

Located far away from these events the territory of eastern Slovenia appeared almost deserted - allegedly due to consequences of Scythian nomadic invasions from the east which affected vast territories of Eastern Europe. Archaeological finds in Slovakia and Austria indicated traces of military irruptions, sieges of settlements and their destructions. In Slovenia on the other hand, historians and archaeologists linked this desolation to an epidemic, presumably plague, which should have, according to the interpretation of observations in Roman literature, devastated the landscape. It was assumed that this fatal disease was brought to the territory of Eastern Europe by the above mentioned nomadic horsemen from the east.



Detail of the kettledrum type fibula.



Kettledrum type fibula from Mali grad.

Modest archaeological finds from this period discovered on the territory of Ptuj come from Turnirski prostor on Grajski grič and the area of Mali grad at its foothill. They do not demonstrate only traces of settlements but also roles of networks of contacts at the end of Early Iron Age. Presented territory was located in a border region between cultural networks which were spanning on one side across Dolenjska, Posočje and northern Adriatic to Tirol and on the other side from western Hungary and eastern Austria across Moravia all the way to the Bohemian mountains. In both cases finds from Ptuj do not indicate the existence of a large prehistoric center, but rather a final range, the last point still connected to the network of contacts between communities.

During the 1999 excavations in Mali grad a small bronze fibula was discovered in the oldest layers. Its architectural complex is located on the western end of today's Prešeren Street running along the foothills of the Grajski grič. It is a rare form of fibulae with a crossbow shaped coil and 4 kettledrum-shaped decorations on the foot. Until recently such fibulae were known from Caverzano below Dolomites in Italy, Most na Soči in the Posočje region in Slovenia and the ancient istrian city of Nesactium in Croatia. Similar fibulae, produced in the same way, but having only 2 kettledrum-shaped decorations were more numerous. Their current number is about 20 examples spread across important prehistoric centers of the 5th century BC from Southern Alps in a zone running from Trento across Posočje, Carinthia and Dolenjska. It is most important that they were discovered in coastal cities – examples are known from Etruscan Spina and Syracusan Adria, the most important sites from this period in effusion of river Po. There, archaeologists interpreted them as attire of newcomers which, originating from prehistoric hinterlands, settled in the cities.



Fragment of pottery with graphite from Turnirski prostor.

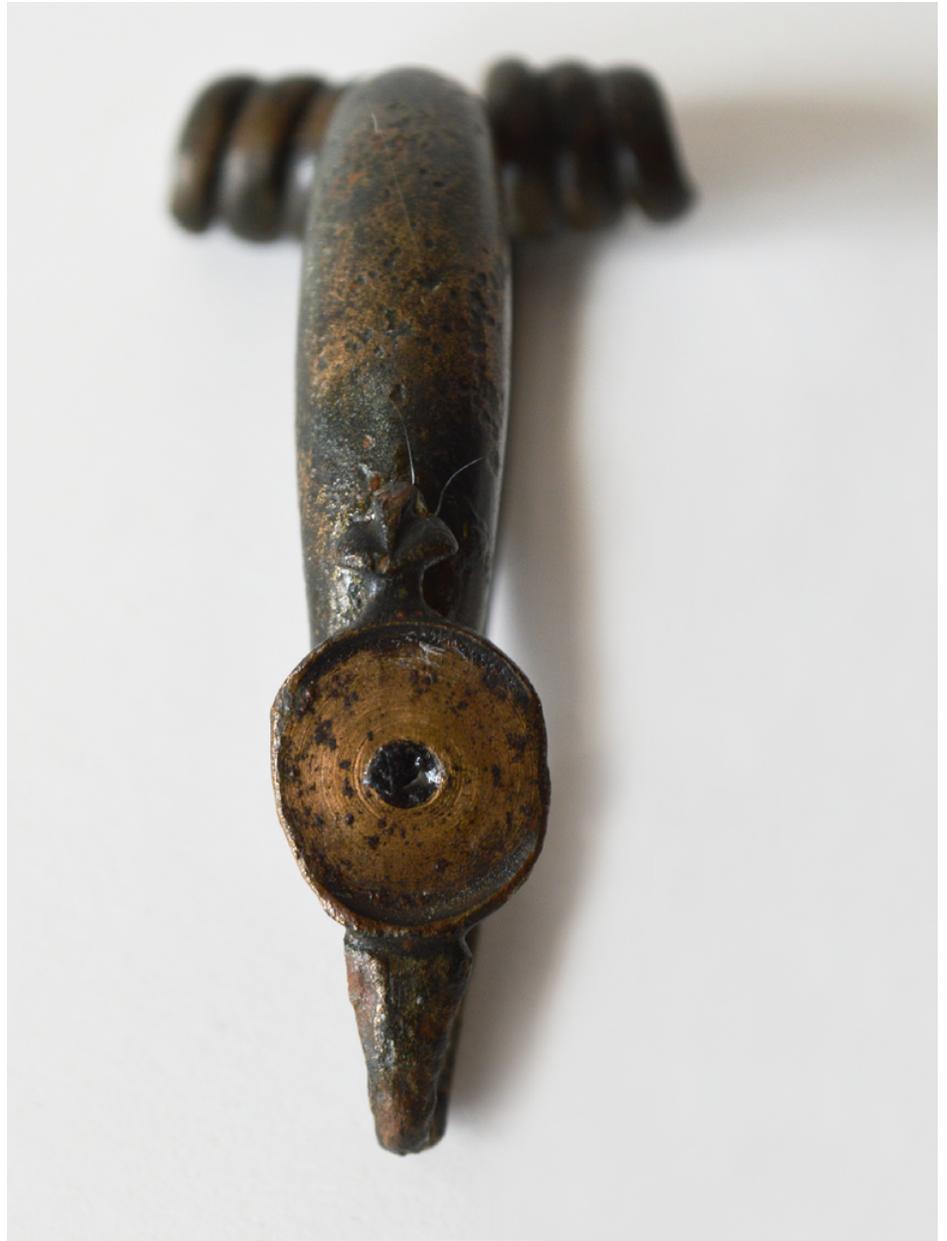
In any case the fibula from Ptuj is an item which was most probably produced in workshops located in Posočje or northern Italy. It came to the territory of Štajerska as a trade good or personal attire of a newcomer arriving to the region across central Slovenia or even more likely down the valley of river Drava from Koroška. This tiny item confirms the existence of contact networks spanning across hundreds of kilometers, it confirms mutual acquaintance of prehistoric communities and even more – it demonstrates the widened connoisseurship of the latest fashions which, produced in centers of northern Italy were worn simultaneously on the coasts of Mediterranean as well as on the promenade of Ptuj.

Not far away, on the territory of Turnirski prostor on the Grajski grič along the medieval granary, a complex of several kilns was discovered during the second half of the eighties. They were, due to the discovered fragments of pottery, dated in to the final part of Late Iron Age. They were dug into layers of sediment which included fragments of pottery demonstrating an older settlement of this place. Among them stands out a fragment of a pot with a concave shoulder, vertical neck and slightly thickened mouth, decorated with impressed circles on the shoulder. It is a form characteristic for the end of Early Iron Age on the territory of eastern part of Central Europe – from the Bohemian Mountains across southern Austria and western Hungary to eastern Slovenia – all the way to Ptuj. It is one of the last examples of free-handmade pottery. It was made with a technology which will still persist in centuries to come, but the primacy will be taken by pottery produced on a fast spinning potter's wheel. At the same time this fragment presents a technology which will mark the next centuries – the adding of graphite in to pottery.

These described modest finds demonstrate the course of cultural contacts in the period spanning from the middle of the 5th to the middle of the 4th century BC. Considering the broader cultural history of the 5th century BC it seems that kettledrum fibulae represent a specific jewelry form which developed on the southern Pre-Alpine territory under the influences of new technological innovations and esthetical elements from the Western Hallstatt circle of Central Europe. They were mostly spread in the “melting pot” of cultures where influences from Greek, Etruscan and northern Adriatic, Alpine and south-eastern Pre-Alpine cultural circles amalgamated.

The fibula from Ptuj indicates, as one of the most western discoveries of its kind, cultural influences coming from the west. However, only a few decades younger pottery demonstrates the spread of cultural influences, procurement with raw materials and technologies from the east. These two finds clearly demonstrate that, despite small number of finds, the area of Ptuj was still acting as a crossroad of cultures – the most eastern border of western and the most western border of eastern cultural elements and technologies.

Fibula of Münsingen type.



Last contacts with the West

Until recently a single bronze fibula of Münsingen type was the only item which could be linked to the Early La Tène settlement of this area - it was most probably discovered on the territory of Ptuj, perhaps even on Panorama. It is a small fibula with a massive thickened semicircular shaped bow and a cross-bow spring with three coils. The shorter foot is, on that part where the pin fits to it, decorated with oblique incisions. At the end, where the foot leans against the bow, it is widened in the form of an oval pierced plate with cut edges finishing in a smaller palmete shaped protuberance.

It is a form of fibulae occurring in three regions – in north-western Hungary and southern Slovakia; in south-western Bohemia and in western Switzerland. Outside of these areas examples are known only from Dürrenberg, Pottenbrunn and Mannersdorf in Austria, Rast in Bavaria and Ptuj. Despite similarities fibulae from different territories could be divided according to specific elements of manufacture. Based on the shape and modeling of the plate and the palmete shaped protuberance at the end of the foot, we can assume that the fibula from Ptuj, being identical to the find from Rast, comes from Swiss workshops. Consequently it is one of the oldest items, produced in the new Late Iron Age style, discovered on the territory of Slovenia.

On the territory of central Slovenia numerous artifacts were discovered in late Early Iron Age centers which are characterized by the new Late Iron Age style of manufacture and decoration. Weapons, jewelry and decorative items could be explained as the results of cultural contacts and trading networks lasting for centuries. Some of these items also influenced the development of local production on the territory south of the Alps. It is assumed that first Celtic communities, when entering in to northern Italy, followed these trading routes at the end of the 5th and beginning of the 4th century BC. These migrations transformed the networks and contacts, but still individual items from the central Alpine were brought to Slovenia in the beginning of 4th century BC. In the next decades, this territory was settled by the newcomers from the east.



Bronze profiled ring from grave number 7
from Srednica.

East side story

Only a few decades later everything changed on the territory of eastern Slovenia. Hillsides of Pohorje represent the western border which stopped the wave of Celtic immigrants coming from the east. New modes of pottery production and shaping, this time made on the fast spinning potter's wheel, new forms and decoration of jewelry and most of all new weapons characterized the small communities which in a relatively short period of time settled the territory between southern Slovakia, the "knee" of Danube in Hungary and the territory of Štajerska between Ptuj in Slovenia and Graz in Austria.

The communities which initially left behind only modest cemeteries consisting of only a smaller number of graves demonstrate that their migrations were not so much consequences of population pressures, but that the creative and technological change enabled the inclusion and strategic settlement on a territory which was from the 5th century already demographically weakened. For years numerous archaeologists focused mostly on warriors, especially swordbearers. They were perceived as a reflection of the change in technology of armament and consequently of fighting techniques which enabled the conquest of new territories. But the cemeteries, as the one discovered in Srednica near Zgornja Hajdina, demonstrate that this was a much more sophisticated and complex process of occupation.

In the middle of the 4th century BC a small community inhumed four deceased members on the territory of the Drava river terrace near Zgornja Hajdina. They chose the area of a deserted Early Iron Age cemetery for the inhumations which presented with its mounds the only topographically significant spot in an area today known as Srednica. Three women were buried in the old way as guardians of traditions. They were placed, decorated with their attire, into an elongated grave pit, while ceramic pots were placed beside their heads. But the warrior was buried in a different way – he was cremated and his ashes were placed into a smaller square pit into which his arms, jewelry and ceramic pots were added.



Photograph of the skeletal grave number 7
from Srednica.

A major novelty discovered in the more modest grave number 7 represent the ceramic vessels - a set reflecting the burial rite and an obligatory grave good in all burials at that time. It is composed from an oval pot with a narrow and elongated neck and a bowl.

These bowls are a reflection of the most important technological change in the Late Iron Age. Introduction of a fast spinning potter's wheel enabled a more accurate and faster, but most of all much more standardized shaping of ceramic vessels. Observing bowls from Srednica we can, contrary to younger examples discovered in graves and pottery kilns in the region, still recognize the traces of a handmade modeling. They were corrected at the end on a fast spinning potter's wheel which led to a slight deformation of their shape – their forms and decorations are tilted and even in their inner one can observe the irregular surface.

Another novelty of the period were small iron fibulae as discovered on the chest of the deceased in grave number 7. Beside them the deceased was given into the grave a small iron knife, a bronze ring and two oval bronze discs. The first disc with a flat surface represents an older form of a belt garniture and is known mostly from Bohemian sites. While the second one has the surface profiled and a comparable find is known from Romania – the groove on the lower side indicates that it might have been a piece of a plate fibula – a form known from central Alps. Despite the archaic look of all the finds, we can assume that the profiled plate represents an old piece which was used for a long time, an old familiar item which was much later placed in to the grave.

The burial in its integrity indicates that the female, according to her grave goods, could be proclaimed being the keeper of traditions and owner of artifacts illustrating history and the routes of first immigrants.



Ceramic vessel from grave number 4 from Srednica.



Amber ring from grave number 4 from
Srednica.

First lady

The grave of a wealthy lady from Srednica

Migrations and military conquests of Eastern Celts, praised in texts of ancient writers, were always observed through the perspective of looking for graves of those which presumably led these expeditions – warriors armed with long swords. But the exact reading of the texts as well as observations of oldest small cemeteries, which are a reflection of a mosaic-like occupation of the territory by a small numbered military elite, demonstrate, that females had their place in the first ranks of Celtic migrations. Grave goods demonstrate their high social status and their role as keepers of cultural traditions.

Such a “story” is also demonstrated by the discovery of a female grave designated as number 4 from Srednica. The deceased was buried in an elongated grave pit wearing her full attire with all the jewelry reflecting her social status. Near the head, surrounded by larger stones, were placed two ceramic vessels forming a service similar to those known from contemporary male graves. Discovered were a vessel with a round belly and a thin very narrow neck still reflecting the traditions of Early La Tène style pottery and a smaller bowl. Both are among the oldest finds of pottery shaped on a fast spinning potter’s wheel from the territory of today’s Slovenia dated in to the middle of 4th century BC.

The deceased was adorned with female jewelry typical of the Eastern Celts, marked especially by the combination of ankle rings and bracelets. She also had an extremely rare grave good – a torc. Her ribbed hollow ankle rings were made from bronze metal sheet and are a typical element of the period of the end of Early La Tène on the territory stretching from central Europe towards the east. They were worn in combination with bracelets – in the grave were discovered three different examples. First one was made from thick iron wire, the second one was massively cast from bronze and had a thickening while the third one was a fragile bracelet made from interlaced thin bronze wire. It is a rare find occurring mostly in graves of Eastern Celts. A similar special distribution is demonstrated also by the finds of amber rings which were worn as pendants on necklaces by the most



Fragment of a bracelet from bronze wire
with a loop from grave number 4 from
Srednica.



Fibula of Duchcov type from grave number 4 from Srednica.

prominent females. A characteristic jewelry form of the Eastern Celts, which became a part of a broader fashion, is a bronze fibula of Duchcov type with a ribbed bow.

As a symbol of the social status of the deceased we can also recognize the extremely rarely preserved find - a massive iron necktie with thickenings at the ends. Discovered were also the remains of most probably a second necktie made from iron sheet metal and decorated with oblique lines and impressed circles.

It is a form and decoration of jewelry typical for the period of Early La Tène known mostly from Central Europe. As an international element could be designated also the find of a hollow two-piece metal ring, most probably an amulet or part of a belt garniture.

The lady from Srednica was placed into the grave with numerous grave goods which connect her to the material world of the Early La Tène period of Eastern Celts. At the same time she got elements, characteristic for the connections with the older central European traditions. It seems that she was a keeper of traditions and the forbearer of first Celtic lineages which settled on the territory surrounding today's Ptuj.



Decorated frontal side of the sword
scabbard from grave number 9 from
Srednica.

Herald of novelties

Grave of the swordbearer from Srednica

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A special role on the Celtic cemetery in Srednica should be ascribed to the only male burial discovered – to the one of a swordbearer. He could be recognized as the herald of novelties. A crucial material novelty which changed the political map of Europe was his armament, while a ritual novelty reflecting the changes in beliefs was his burial.

Contrary to females around him the deceased was cremated – his body was turned over to fire and violently destroyed. It was a new burial rite which will determine all the future generations across Europe – but it was still connected to the old ways of placing grave goods into the grave. The later were not damaged but tidily placed into the center of the grave above the cremated remains.

These grave goods, most important among them the long sword, represent the novelty which enabled that a small military elite of the Eastern Celts so easily subjugated vast territories of eastern and south-eastern Europe. These swords were not only technological novelties and reflection of new fighting techniques, but most important symbols of a new social class of highly mobile free warriors. They, heading a small number of colonists, in only few decades conquered and settled the territory from western France to Bohemia and later to Transylvania.

Actually we can recognize the whole Celtic migrations as well as the way of the individual swordbearer on the form and decoration of his weapons. Long sword with an open chape end and reinforced mouth of the scabbard can be included in a larger group of swords denominated after the place of first such sword discovered and exactly described. These are typical sword of the end of Early La Tène period – the Hatvan-Boldog group. Their discoveries are distributed on a territory between southern France and all the way to Transylvania. While the sword from Srednica could be according to the decoration of the scabbard composed from asymmetrically



Decorated rear side of the sword
scabbard from grave number 9 from
Srednica.



Photograph of the cremated grave number 9 from Srednica.

placed linear and curved elements executed with incision and in high relief included in to a group concentrated mostly around the Danube Knee in today's Hungary. It's in relief shaped construction elements as the reinforcement clasp and decorative buttons on the scabbard, link it to a smaller group of similar swords spreading from Graz basin in Austria to Lake Balaton in Hungary and to the territory of Ptuj in the south.

Standard equipment of a warrior from the middle of 4th century BC was consisting also from an iron fibula, a larger knife and a pottery set. The fibula was made from wire and had a massive knob on the foot which was flattened to a disc shaped form in our case. The ceramic set consisted always from an oval vessel with an elongated narrow neck, considered being a container for liquids, and a smaller bowl. They were not only reflections of libation offerings performed during the burial, but most probably a part of belief in afterlife where the warrior will, in his full attire again toast to his fellow trawlers with whom he passed the long way from the Danube to the Drava plains.



Decorated frontal side of the sword
scabbard from Formin.

Everything counts

Finds from the destroyed cemetery in Formin

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Finds from the cemetery from Formin are of crucial importance for the understanding of the Middle La Tène artistic expressions of Celts on the territory of eastern Slovenia. It is a site from which we know the most heterogeneous collection of decorated sword scabbards. Unfortunately the majority does not originate from preserved graves but were collected between 1935 and 1939 during works in a gravel pit. Systematic excavations at the beginning of the seventies discovered only mostly Roman graves.

Despite the bad preservation of iron finds we can recognize, reconstruct and link the stylistic characteristics of their decoration in a broader cultural context. According to its formal elements represents the decoration of a scabbard with a narrow rib in the middle a further evolution of the Early La Tène traditions. The mouth of the scabbard was reinforced with a decorated clamp which widened on the front side on to two, this time already pushed aside, ornamental discs. The edge of the mouth was decorated with an incised decoration in the form of a meander or actually from the older formal traditions developed linked uninterrupted spiral.

An exceptional find, preserved only on a fragment of an extremely corroded scabbard, is a symmetrically placed in a combination of high relief and incision made symmetrical decoration. Preserved is only the end of the ornament in the form of a semicircular expansion in which are two spirals. Above are located two medallions decorated with a triskele. The decoration could be included in the group of scabbards with symmetrically placed net like ornament known only from central Alps and the territory of the Eastern Celts.

Also an exceptional find is the fragment of a scabbard decorated with an asymmetrical decoration using symmetrical copying of parts of the motive. Stylistically it could be associated with the beginning of development of the so-called Hungarian Sword Style of decorations. One of the most beautiful products of its style, it in-



cludes hidden older decorative elements such as stylized face masks and bird's heads camouflaged in abstract decorations.

The scabbard decoration produced with deep incising features a depiction which is almost enchanting due to its careless composition. It seems that the producer of this completely asymmetrical adornment struggled with the worked material and the surface which he tried to fill according to the aesthetical norms of his culture. Disharmony of the depiction, small mistakes in execution and a complete deconstruction of the composition demonstrate that the best preserved sword from Formin was decorated by an artisan who was hardly a master of his trade.

Decorations of sword scabbards from Formin demonstrate the stylistic heterogeneity, the melting of traditions and innovations, the transitoriness of stylistic elements from the Alpine and Pannonian world as well as the immense creative potential of workshops of the Eastern Celts at the end of 4th and beginning of 3rd century BC.



Decorated frontal side of the sword scabbard from Formin.



Iron shield boss from Formin.

Not by the sword ...

Weapons and equipment of warriors from Formin

Although most of the attention is owing to their rich decoration focused on the swords, there were also numerous other finds discovered in Formin. These are mostly elements of weaponry and warriors' attire – iron spearheads, iron belt chains, knives, scissors, razors, shield bosses and especially larger iron fibulae.

Fibulae were mostly made from iron. Among them stand out several fragments of larger fibulae with a globule on the bow and a fragmented fibula of Mötschwil type - the latter could be included in the not numerous variant Gemeinlebern which has two ribs decorated with oblique incisions on the bow – one on the “head” and one on the foot below the clamp. Finds of these fibulae have an interesting distribution. They are known from Dühren and Manching in Bavaria, Gracarca in Koroška as well as Podzemelj and Formin in Slovenia. They were dated in the later part of Middle La Tène period and considered being heralds of new connections and influences coming from the territory of Central Europe.

When discussing relations between genders of the buried on Celtic cemeteries several authors noted the existence of larger unbalanced cemeteries in the Middle La Tène period. And Formin is one of them. Despite the lack of contexts we can assume, based on the preserved artifacts, a larger proportion of male burials – an exceptionally large proportion of graves with weapons. It seems that on the central part of the Carpathian basin exist female dominated, while on its fringes male dominated cemeteries. Owing to the obsession with Celtic invasions towards the south, numerous experts saw in them the gathering of armies for the march towards Macedonia and Greece. But the cemetery in Formin demonstrates that it is more plausible to see in them a larger militarization of all bordering regions.



Bronze fibula with pseudo-filigree
decoration from Formin.

Cherchez la femme!

Lack of female jewelry in the cemetery in Formin

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Taking into consideration the quantity of discovered weapons, especially swords and spearheads, we can assume that in Formin were discovered at least 15 graves of warriors. On the other hand we can hardly recognize female burials! Today we can recognize, based on the attire especially fibulae and walnut shaped ankle rings, merely 4 to 5 burials where 3 of them could be older and 2 younger. Their deficiency could be a consequence of the acquisition of finds which were randomly collected in the grave pit. Larger items such as swords, spearheads and much larger iron fibulae were recognized and preserved while smaller bronze fibulae and due to the combustion destroyed walnut shaped ankle rings were overlooked by the collectors.

Among the discovered finds, which could be ascribed to female burials, stand out the remains of burned bronze walnut shaped anklets, a pair of bronze fibulae decorated with a pseudo-filigree decoration, two baton shaped buckles of Brežice type and a Mötschwill type fibula. Large walnut shaped ankle rings with three to four thickenings were a rare element on the territory of today's Slovenia. In larger numbers they were present on the territory of the Carpathian basin - the territory of the Eastern Celts ranging from Lower Austria to Transylvania.

Another element, characteristic for the formal spectrum of Eastern Celtic material culture developed into a local form on the south-eastern Alpine territory, were fibulae with a pseudo-filigree decoration. These were smaller fibulae, made from wire which had the end of the foot and bow linked with a massive cast net-like widening with a massive clamp into which conical coils made from thin wire were inserted. They were discovered on a territory from Austrian Koroška to northern Bosnia and Slavonia.

A similar spatial distribution is demonstrated also by the finds of baton shaped buckles, designated as the Brežice type. It was a bronze baton with a circular loop on one and a blunt tip on the other end. Their surface was often decorated with oblique incisions and cross-like motives. Buckles were often fastened to a chain made



Iron bracelet with rings from Formin.



Bronze fibula of Mötschwil type from Formin.

from smaller bronze rings or larger into a figure of 8 shaped joints as in case of Formin. Authors interpreted them as elements of belt garnitures or buckles for the buckling up of cloaks. Due to their decoration they also stressed their apotropaic significance. They were initially discovered on a territory between Austrian Štajerska, across Dolenjska to Podravina. Their largest numbers were discovered in graves in Brežice, Novo mesto and in Zvonimirovo. Only isolated, not typical finds, were discovered around Danube in Hungary.

Consequently, by contemplating just 4 elements of female attire and jewelry we can confirm the story of cultural contacts observed on the decoration of sword scabbards. In the older part of the Middle La Tène period were more intensive contacts with the territory of the Eastern Celts as demonstrated by the walnut shaped ankle rings. Pseudo-filigree fibulae demonstrate that these influences triggered the development of local forms of jewelry. While the Brežice type buckles are local, for the Mokronog cultural group characteristic forms, which were only rarely spreading to the east. In the younger period the contacts with the Central European territory intensify as demonstrated with the variants of the Mötschwil type fibulae.



Bronze belt chain from Brstje.

A warrior and a lady

Story of the presumably double burial from Brstje near Ptuj

First Late Iron Age finds were discovered already in 1959 in a gravel pit near the village of Brstje to the east of Ptuj. Persons present at the discovery reported that all the finds were discovered in a single pit allowing the possibility of a wealthy double burial of a male and a female. Iron weapons were almost completely lost, only minor fragments of a sword, spearhead and a large head of a nail fixing the shield boss have survived - still enough to recognize a warrior. With him was buried a female with few in numbers, but interesting grave goods. She had two glass finger rings, a massive bronze bracelet with a knob, a bronze fibula and a bronze belt chain. Several isolated finds were discovered later during the extension of the gravel pit, while in 1970 was unearthed a male grave with weapons and pottery.

A rare find is the bronze fibula of the so called Zvonimirovo type named after a site in Croatia where a larger number of them was discovered. Their form is denoted by the decorated thickened clamp at the end of the foot and with oblique incisions decorated thickening on it. Consequently it is assumed that their production center could be located in their eponymous site.

A more often present find is the massive bronze bracelet with a single knob. Similar examples are known from sites from Dolenjska region where they are most numerous in Novo Mesto. Individual examples are known also from Koroška and Stajerska.

By far the most interesting finds are the remains of the belt chain. The belt was composed from numerous elements shaped into three forms. The initial part of the belt, beginning with a plate with two horse protomes, is composed from joints which have in the middle a square field divided in two and filled with reddish glassy mass. The middle part of the belt is composed from simple profiled joints, while its end is composed from larger square plates decorated with impressed circles with a point and smaller triangular depressions also contain-

Termination of the belt chain in the
form of a horse's head.





Bronze fibula of Zvonimirovo type
from Brstje.

ing a reddish glassy mass. Although visually the least attractive, the central part has good parallels in profiled joints discovered in graves 502 and 643 on Kapiteljska njive in Novo mesto. Belts of such type appear in larger numbers on two territories – in Bavaria and in Bohemia/Slovakia.

Three finds, discovered in the presumable grave from Brstje clearly demonstrate trade contacts, cultural attribution and stylistic intentions of Celtic populations settling the territory surrounding Ptuj. Several finds, in this case a massive bronze bracelet with a single knob, demonstrate the connections with the central and south-eastern area of today's Slovenia for which it is assumed that it was settled by the Celtic tribe of Taurisci and related groups. It is a reflection of the inclusion of inhabitants into the formal spectre of the Mokronog group spreading from southern edge of Austria in Koroška and Štajerska all the way to northern Croatia. Alongside communications with the center of this territory, the trade and perhaps even mobility of populations took place along its edges as demonstrated by the distribution of the Zvonimirovo type fibulae.



Ribbed bronze ring from Panorama.

Birth of a city?

Late La Tène period in Ptuj

The middle of the 2nd century BC was a period of intensive changes on the whole south-eastern Pre-Alpine territory. Most probably outer influences, on one hand the spread of influence of Celtic Boii on the north-east as well as the Dacian expansionism far away in the south, but most important the growing pressure of the Roman republic in the west, which spread its influence in the military campaign against the Pannonian Segestica, have changed the prehistoric world. Economic and military contacts with Mediterranean civilizations created this time different social elites. We do not know them from rich graves, but we can still reconstruct their existence based on the renewal of old and the construction of new fortified settlements, but most of all due to the inclusion in a monetary economy and the start of their own minting.

This is a period when burials in the plains ceased in the territory of eastern Slovenia and Podravje. At the same time remains of old defensive architectures of older prehistoric settlements such as Ormož and Poštela were renewed. The stone wall, discovered at the western part of Turnirski prostor on Grajski grič in Ptuj, interpreted as a part of defensive walls demonstrate the erection of new settlements. At one time authors interpreted these building activities as heralds of uneasy periods and the withdrawal of populations behind safe walls. Today, taking into consideration the settlement patterns in the whole landscape, we can assume that this was just the establishment of hierarchized system of settlements where the physical as well as visually fortified settlements became residences of social elites. In the Late La Tène period the number of sites in the landscape, especially on fertile plains from the foothills of Pohorje all the way to Goričko, increased dramatically. Modest remains demonstrate traces of a highly dispersed pattern constituting from smaller numbers of buildings – most probably individual farmsteads.

It seems that in this period the territory of later Roman Ptuj and its surrounding was sparsely populated. For habitation were interesting river terraces in Spodnja and Zgornja Hajdina, Zgornji Breg and Rabelčja vas as well



Ceramic pot from Mali grad.

as the foot of Grajski grič. In almost all excavations in the last years were discovered fragments of typical Late La Tène pottery while rare metal finds from this period are known only from Turnirski prostor.

Excavations more than half a century ago discovered the remains of a mighty dry stone wall interpreted as remains of walls on the western edge of Turnirski prostor. Several decades later excavations on the northern edge of this terrace, beside the monumental building of medieval Žitnica, discovered remains of kilns dated according to the pottery discovered in them and in their surrounding in the Late La Tène period. Consequently we can assume that on the plateau beside the representative quarters the artisan's part of the settlement network was located as well.

An exceptional find from this area is a bronze rod-like item with a loop on one end and a profiled saddle and two with incisions decorated buttons with a longer neck on the upper side. Despite the fact that we are currently lacking any comparisons and hypotheses about its function, it was according to the morphology of decorated buttons dated in the Late La Tène period.

From the same period is also the knobbed bronze ring discovered on Panorama which beside the pottery finds demonstrates that was in the period settled also the second slightly elevated location which gained its major importance with the erection of the Roman city. Similar finds come from female graves from Dolenjska as well as settlement contexts from regions where graves are not known. Due to their position in the graves we can assume that the females wore them on necklaces with other beads or pendants. Due to their apotropaic meaning we can assume that they were parts of attire of females with special status living in hierarchically more important settlements in the region.



Bronze rod-like item
from Turnirski prostor.

Carrier of a plume from a Roman helmet
from Turnirski prostor.



On the borders of an empire

Roman occupation of the territory of Ptuj

From the middle of the 2nd century BC we can observe a strengthening process of a political and economic formation which we based on writings of Roman authors know as the Norican Kingdom. Due to its strategic position we can assume that the influence of the later reached all the way to the territory of today's Ptuj and that the settlement on Grajski grič was most probably one of the kingdom's strongholds.

History of minor conflicts and confederate relations with the Roman republic led to a quite peaceful annexation of the kingdom during the reign of the emperor Augustus in year 15 BC. In years that followed the territory was incorporated into the province of Illyricum and the Roman military presence increased. Most probably during the great Pannonian-Dalmatian rebellion between years 6 and 9 AD a major military unit camped in its territory – the *legio VIII Augusta*. Present archaeological data suggest that the major military camp was located on the right bank of river Drava.

This was the period when Illyricum was divided into its southern and northern part - provinces Dalmatia and Pannonia into which the territory of today's Ptuj was included. It seems that in the earliest period of occupation, when the settlement patterns remained unchanged in the landscape, Roman army occupied three strategically most important areas. Large military camp was positioned on the right side of river Drava facing the prehistoric settlements, controlling the crossing across the river and the access to the densely settled left bank. At least at the beginning military units were positioned on both Late La Tène settlements on Panorama and Grajski grič. It seems that they instantly occupied both elevated and in case of Turnirski prostor with a defensive architecture protected locations.

Among the metal finds, originating from Turnirski prostor, that could be linked with an early Roman military presence we should emphasize the iron holder for a plume which was most probably a fragment of the military

helmet of Weisenau type. Just before its splitting ending into two rolled up ends is across the holder incised a line. A similar line is incised also at the beginning of the holder. Between both lines are incised two crosses in the shape of letter X – just a decoration or symbols of the *legio XX Valeria Victrix* which in year 6 most probably marched under Tiberius passing Ptuj to fight a war against the Marcomanni tribe?

The second important find is a lump of corroded iron rings. It is a part of a legionary chain mail - the so called *lorica hamata*. It was a standard equipment of legionary as well as auxiliary units during the Republic, especially popular among the officers. Its use came to an end in the first century AD when the harness made from metal plates became popular.

Two finds, discovered on Turnirski prostor bear witness to the turbulent times of the 1st century when the territory of today's Ptuj entered the stage of history. A century after the "studded sandals" marched into the region for the first time, the settlement became *Colonia Ulpia Traiana Poetovio*, a city in which different cultures will meet and mix for centuries to come.



Rings of a chain mail
from Turnirski prostor.

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Everything counts (in small amounts)...
Professional Monograph

Reviewers ■ dr. Andrej Gaspari, dr. dr. h. c. Mitja Guštin
Edited by, graphic design and typesetting ■ dr. Jonatan Vinkler
Photographs ■ dr. Martina Blečić Kavur, Danilo Cvetko, dr. Boris Kavur, Andrej Magdič, Vlado Topolovec
Translation ■ dr. Boris Kavur
Proofreading ■ dr. Gregor Pobežin

Published by ■ University of Primorska, University of Primorska Press, Titov trg 4, 6000 Koper
Koper 2015
Editor-in-chief ■ dr. Jonatan Vinkler
Managing editor ■ Alen Ježovnik

© 2015 Založba Univerze na Primorskem

ISBN 978-961-6963-32-9 (pdf) ■ www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/6963-32-9.pdf
ISBN 978-961-6963-33-6 (html) ■ www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/978-961-6963-33-6/index.html
ISBN 978-961-6963-34-3 (printed edition)

Print ■ Grafika 3000 d. o. o., Dob
Print-run ■ 200 copies

This publication was financially supported by the European commission with the Culture program. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

903(497.4Ptuj)7638"(0.034.2)

KAVUR, Boris

Everything counts (in small amounts) --- [Elektronski vir] / [text, translation] Boris Kavur ; [fotografije Martina Blečić Kavur ... et al.]. - El. knjiga. - Koper : University of Primorska Press, 2015

Način dostopa (URL): <http://www.hippocampus.si/isbn/978-961-6963-32-9.pdf>
Način dostopa (URL): <http://www.hippocampus.si/isbn/978-961-6963-33-6/index.html>

ISBN 978-961-6963-32-9 (pdf)
ISBN 978-961-6963-33-6 (html)

279154944



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ISBN 978-961-6963-32-9