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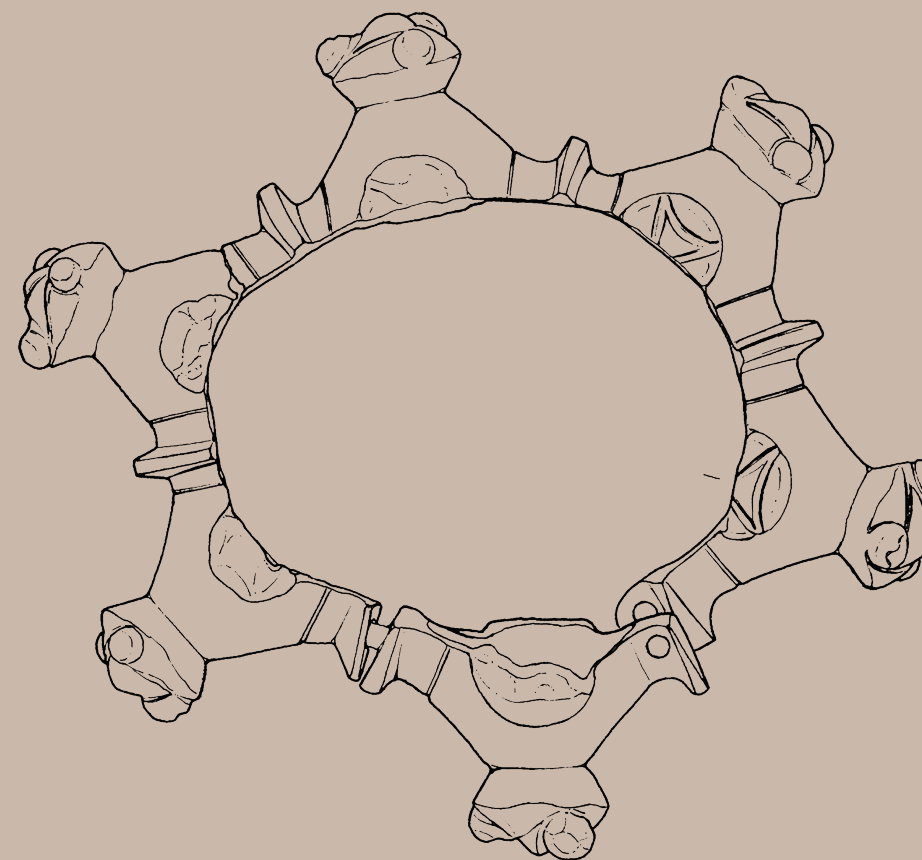
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VOLUME **19**

IRON AGE FEMALE IDENTITIES IN  
THE SOUTHERN CARPATHIAN BASIN

# IRON AGE FEMALE IDENTITIES IN THE SOUTHERN CARPATHIAN BASIN

Zagreb, 2022.



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16



Cijena: 200,00 KN

ZBORNİK INSTITUTA  
ZA ARHEOLOGIJU

SERTA INSTITUTI  
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VOLUME **19**

**ZBORNIK INSTITUTA ZA ARHEOLOGIJU  
SERTA INSTITUTI ARCHAEOLOGICI  
KNJIGA/VOLUME 19**

**IZDAVAČ/PUBLISHER**

Institut za arheologiju, Jurjevska ulica 15, HR-10000 Zagreb

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Sveučilišna tiskara, Zagreb

ISBN 978-953-6064-63-2

# IRON AGE FEMALE IDENTITIES IN THE SOUTHERN CARPATHIAN BASIN

EDITOR MARKO DIZDAR

Zagreb, 2022.

- 6 INTRODUCTION  
Marko Dizdar
- 8 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN IRON AGE ARCHAEOLOGY  
— A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH  
FOR THE EASTERN HALLSTATT CULTURE  
Carola Metzner-Nebelsick
- 16 REFLECTING ON THE TASK OF ESTABLISHING 'IRON AGE  
FEMALE IDENTITIES IN THE SOUTHERN CARPATHIAN BASIN'.  
DATA OR INFERENCES?  
Marie Louise Stig Sørensen
- FEMALE IDENTITY MARKERS AND SOCIAL PRACTICE**
- 26 BIOARCHAEOLOGY OF FEMALES IN THE EARLY IRON AGE  
DANUBE AREA — DATA AND OPEN QUESTIONS  
Petra Rajić Šikanjić — Daria Ložnjak Dizdar
- 36 BIOARCHAEOLOGY OF WOMEN FROM IRON AGE LOVAS  
Mario Novak
- 44 THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF FEMALE MOBILITY AND IDENTITY  
IN THE SOUTHERN CARPATHIAN BASIN  
Aurel Rustoiu
- 62 MIDDLE LA TÈNE GRAVES OF WOMEN AT THE CEMETERY  
OF OSIJEK — ZELENO POLJE IN EASTERN SLAVONIA  
(CROATIA): WOMEN'S COSTUME AND JEWELLERY AS  
A RECOGNIZABLE MARK OF IDENTITY AND STATUS  
Marko Dizdar — Domagoj Dujmić
- 86 DIVERSITY OF FEMALE IDENTITIES IN THE EARLY LA TÈNE  
PERIOD IN THE MIDDLE DANUBE REGIONS  
Peter C. Ramsi
- WOMEN AND CRAFTSMANSHIP**
- 102 ARCHAEOMETALLURGICAL ANALYSES OF THE LATE  
HALLSTATT AND LA TÈNE ASTRAGAL BELTS — NEW INSIGHT  
INTO TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR PRODUCTION  
Marko Dizdar — Mathias Mehofer

118 IRON AGE TEXTILE PRODUCTION IN NORTHERN CROATIA  
Julia Katarina Kramberger Fileš

148 DIES FROM SISAK FOR THE PRODUCTION OF PENDANT-  
AMULETS  
Dubravka Balen-Letunić

## WOMEN'S ROLE WITHIN THE REGIONAL NETWORKS OF INTERACTION

158 WOMEN'S ROLE WITHIN THE REGIONAL NETWORKS  
OF INTERACTION — CASE STUDY VAJUGA — PESAK  
Aleksandar Kapuran

172 WOMEN IN THE LATE HALLSTATT PHASE IN SOUTHEAST  
TRANSDANUBIA  
Bence Soós

198 LATE LA TÈNE BRONZE KNOBBED RINGS AND ARMRINGS  
IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN CARPATHIAN BASIN: BELOVED  
JEWELLERY AND AMULETS OF THE SCORDISCAN WOMEN?  
Marko Dizdar — Marija Ljuština — Asja Tonc

232 BOAT-SHAPED FIBULAE OF MIDDLE LA TÈNE SCHEME  
FROM THE IAPODIAN TERRITORY  
Asja Tonc

## FEMALES IN RITUAL AND SACRED CONTEXTS

260 ANIMAL REMAINS IN EARLY IRON AGE FEMALE BURIALS  
IN THE SOUTHERN CARPATHIAN BASIN  
Antonela Barbir

270 ELITE HALLSTATT PERIOD WOMEN BETWEEN EROTIC AGENCY  
AND ROUGH JUSTICE — SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON  
THE IMAGERY OF THE SITULA FROM PIEVE D'ALPAGO  
Louis D. Nebelsick

## INTRODUCTION

This book is a result of the research project of the Croatian Science Foundation, *Iron Age Female Identities in the Southern Carpathian Basin* (IP -06-2016-1749), undertaken at the Institute of Archaeology in Zagreb in the period from 2017 to 2021. The project brought together researchers from the Institute of Archaeology, the Institute for Anthropological Research, the Department of Archaeology at the University of Zagreb, the Ludwig-Maximillan University in Munich, the Institute of Archaeology and Art History in Cluj-Napoca, the Vienna Institute for Archaeological Science, the Archaeological Institute in Belgrade, the Archaeological Department at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, and numerous outside participants from the Archaeological Museum in Osijek, the Vinkovci City Museum, the Vukovar City Museum, and the Slavonski Brod Regional Museum.

Project research tried to answer questions about how the female body was perceived, what influenced female visual identity in the Iron Age, what was the role of women in the Iron Age society, and whether the funerary customs and jewellery reflect the status of the buried women. The exploration of the Danube area cemeteries of Batina and Sotin led to interdisciplinary research of cremated anthropological remains and archaeological analyses and interpretations that resulted in papers on the material traces for the reconstruction of the costume, status and roles of women in these communities and how different female identities were created by costume and jewellery. An important research question was whether a significant change in personal social identities can be observed in costume and jewellery, and how we can recognize the relationships between the body and different costume items by studying the items.

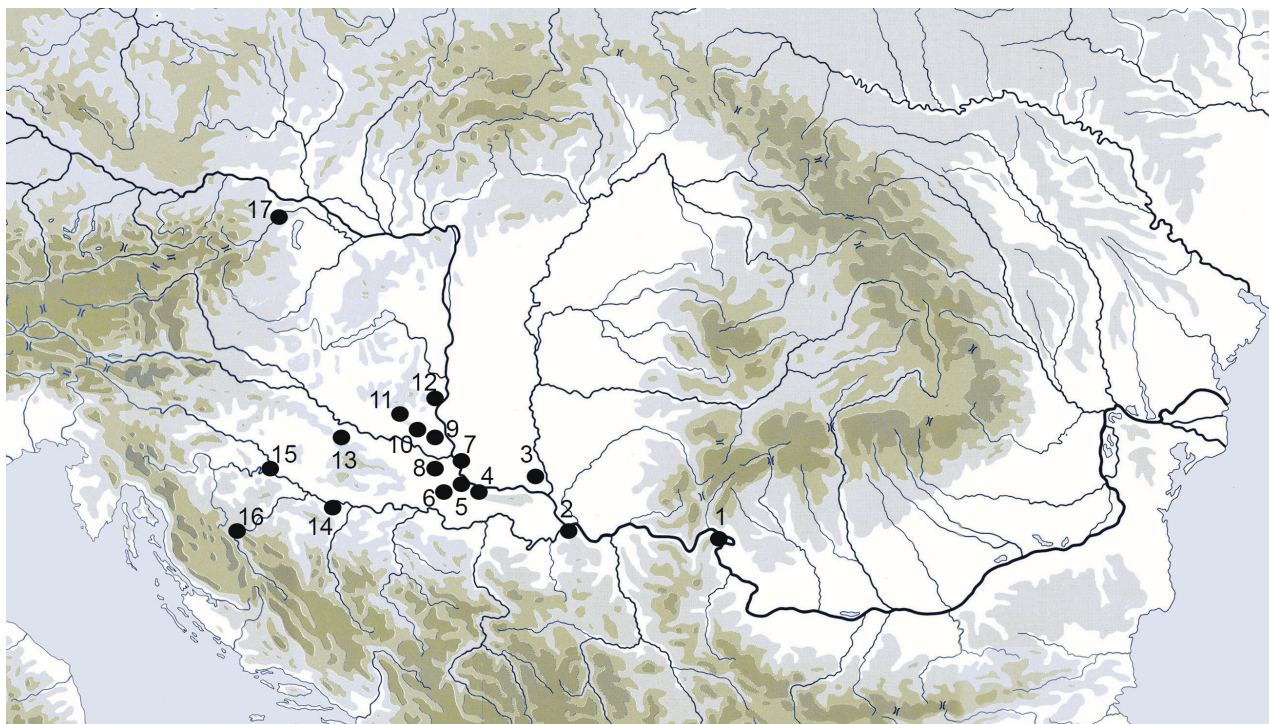
The key to answering these questions was the discovery of rare inhumation graves from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC at the site of Lovas in western Sarmia. The archaeological excavations undertaken within the project in 2018 and 2019 complemented the corpus of recently excavated female graves in the southern Carpathian Basin, opening up the opportunities for interdisciplinary research of the anthropological remains and various parts of bronze and glass costume items. The most valuable data are the identified positions of costume and jewellery items on the dead bodies and the relationship between the items and the bodies. Age, along with sex, is recognized by anthropological research as not only a biological phenomenon but also an important cultural phenomenon. Within the project, it was researched whether changes in women's lives can be recognized on the basis of changes in costume and jewellery items, and whether costume and jewellery can be the basis for recognizing collective identities in the Late Iron Age. These examples were researched for the graves in Zvonimirovo within the wider territory of the southern Carpathian Basin. Research emphasized distinctly female costume items, e.g. belts as significant marks of identity and status in a wider central European area.

Project research included not only excavations, interdisciplinary anthropological, archaeometallurgical and radiometric research, but also 20 participations in conferences, 14 papers in peer-reviewed journals, 18 papers in proceedings and a scientific monograph.

This book, as the final project publication, provides the current state of research on the particular women-related topics that were studied in detail during the project and described by the researchers working on the project and the researchers from a wider central European geographic area related to the project. The introduction contains valuable overviews of the history of research on the subject of women in central Europe in the Iron Age and on gender subjects, written by prominent European researchers of these subjects. *Female identities and social practice* are represented by topics from bioarchaeology, mobility, identity recognition from costume and jewellery, and identity differences in the explored graves in central Europe. The topic of *women and crafts* was examined through the results of the analyses of the parts of belts worn by women and the possibility to reconstruct the origin of raw materials and the workshops where they were made and their distribution methods; through an overview of Iron Age textile production in northern Croatia; and through the exceptional finds of jewellery moulds from the end of the Iron Age.

*The role of women in the regional networks* of interaction can be seen from various items of costume and jewellery throughout the Iron Age, as described in the research papers presenting different examples from the Danube area, the territory of the Iapodes, and the Vinkovci region. *Women in ritual contexts* are presented through the prism of the depictions of women on the contemporary situla art from the Italic area and by researching the role of animals in the Early Iron Age female graves in the Danube area.

The realized project research and results would not have been possible without the support of the Croatian Science Foundation. By financing this project, it has directed future research of similar subjects in the region. Today's challenges open up numerous opportunities to ask questions about the role and status of women in past societies.



SITES IN THE SOUTHERN CARPATHIAN BASIN MENTIONED IN PROCEEDINGS

1 Vajuga, 2 Beograd, 3 Feudvar, 4 Sotin, 5 Vukovar, 6 Vinkovci, 7 Dalj, 8 Osijek, 9 Batina, 10 Beremend, 11 Szentlőrinc, 12 Alsónyék, 13 Zvonimirovo, 14 Donja Dolina, 15 Sisak, 16 Ribić, 17 Mannersdorf



## WOMEN'S ROLE WITHIN THE REGIONAL NETWORKS OF INTERACTION — CASE STUDY VAJUGA — PESAK

The Early Iron Age necropolises in the territory of Serbia are few and significantly underresearched. Therefore, the discovery of the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis represented an important step towards the understanding of the mutual relations between the prehistoric communities of the Danube region and the Central Balkans during the Iron Age 1. By analysing certain details regarding the burial ritual and the material culture, especially fibulae as one of the most prominent elements of the female costume, we'll try to indicate the possible directions of cultural influences in the aforementioned territory during the Iron Age 1. We will primarily consider female individuals, as the bearers of those influences within populations, the bearers that were always associated with certain ethnic markers.

KEY WORDS: EARLY IRON AGE, CENTRAL BALKANS, NECROPOLIS, COSTUME, FIBULAE

### INTRODUCTION

Contrary to the preceding Bronze Age, only a few Early Iron Age necropolises have been recorded in the territory of Serbia, of which the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis is one of the most completely researched. Until the end of the 20th century, only collective burials at Gomolava (Tasić 1972), the necropolis in Stapari (Ђурић 2012), and the Ђерфелд necropolis in Doroslovo (Трајковић 2008) were known in the territory of Serbia. The research at the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis was initiated as rescue excavations and continued as systematic archaeological excavations that took less than a decade. Between 1982 and 1989, a total surface of 3.000 m<sup>2</sup> was excavated and a total of 22 inhumation burials was recorded (Popović et al 1986; Popović, Vukmanović 1992; 1998; Popović 1994). The authors of the excavations, P. Popović and M. Vukmanović, connected the necropolis with analogous necropolises at the sites of Moldova Veche, Ostrovul Mare, Balta Verde, and Basarabi (Popović, Vukmanović 1998: 103). Likewise, the authors highlighted that save for a few vessels attributed to the Kalakača type,

the ceramic inventory of the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis was characteristic of the Basarabi culture (Popović, Vukmanović 1989: 55). Following the publication of the *Vajuga — Pesak, Early Iron Age Cemetery* monograph in 1998, four new necropolises have been discovered in the territory of Serbia: Bent — Lugovi in Mojsinje near Čačak, Čitluk near Soko Banja, Signal near Svrljig, and Sinjac Polje near Bela Palanka (**Fig. 8**) (Никитовић et al. 2002; Стојић, Васић 2005; Filipović, Bulatović 2010; Kapuran et al. 2015). Except for a few of the small-scale excavated sites in the Iron Gates, within the territory of north-eastern Serbia, the closest analogies which could be connected with the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis are the Rujište hoard and the collective find of hair-rings from Boljetin (Лаловић 1975; Popović, Vukmanović 1989: 46, Fig. 27a: 8–17; Васић 1997: 94). Relying on the analogies and the existing chronological schemes, we will try to indicate the potential directions of cultural influences within the Central Balkans based on the jewellery from the graves, which we consider as a part of the costume brought into this territory by female individuals.

## THE VAJUGA — PESAK NECROPOLIS

The Vajuga — Pesak necropolis was located on a natural elevation running parallel to the right bank of the Danube, within the Ključ region (**Fig. 6: 1**). The necropolis was comprised of two or possibly three large and approximately circular platforms made of pebbles — the Northern and the Southern. The dead were laid on the pebbles on their back and covered with another layer of pebbles and sand, which marked the final step in the formation of the burial mound (Popović, Vukmanović 1998: 89). Aside from jewellery and weapons, items recorded at the necropolis include pottery that is primarily characteristic of the Basarabi horizon of the Iron Age 1, and the Kalakača horizon to a lesser extent (**Fig. 2: 9–10**). The deceased were of both sexes; no child burials were recorded. Female individuals within the population buried at the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis were recorded in the following graves:

Grave 1 (Mound I, the southern platform). Grave goods were comprised of plaited double pins in the shape of a figure-of-eight, saltaleoni, bronze beads, a torque, an amber bead — all presumably located near the head (**Fig. 1: 1–4**), while anklets and a ceramic vessel were located by the feet. The grave also contained an iron fibula and a bronze pin beneath the layer of pebbles. The mound included a collection of pottery, four spiral double pins, bronze wire, an amber bead, a bronze bead, two saltaleoni, a bronze torque, four anklets with a rectangular cross-section and two anklets with a triangular cross-section, a spectacle fibula (**Fig. 1: 1**), a double-looped iron fibula with an hourglass-shaped catch plate, and a bronze pin with horizontal incisions on the head.

Grave 5a (Mound IV, the northern platform). Grave goods consisted of an iron knife and a bronze armband.

Grave 6 (Mound V, the northern platform). The remains of the dead were not preserved, and the distribution of finds within the grave indicated the following: three iron and one bronze anklet were located on the right leg, and two iron and one bronze anklet were located on the left leg (**Fig. 1: 8**). Further to the east, there was a collection of finds comprising three saltaleoni, nine spirally coiled double bronze pins, a double-looped iron fibula with a triangular catch plate, and seven iron anklets of different cross-sections and types.

Grave 8 (Mound V, the northern platform). There were two saltaleoni on the head and a

group of five plaited double pins in the shape of a figure-of-eight on each side of the head. There was a torque around the neck and two fibulae with pendants on the chest. The first iron fibula had an hourglass-shaped catch plate, a bow wrapped with bronze wire, and a bronze pendant. The second fibula, attributed to the same type, had a wheel-shaped pendant, while the catch plate has not been preserved (**Fig. 1: 9–11**). There were three bronze and two iron anklets on the right foot and one iron anklet on the left foot. No ceramic vessels were found in this female grave.

Grave 12a (Mound VIII, the northern platform). This grave, lying in a southwest–northeast direction, contained only lower limb bones. The grave goods were comprised of saltaleoni, four spirally coiled double pins with heads in the shape of a figure-of-eight, and the bow of a bronze-plated and ribbed iron fibula.

Grave 14 (Mound X, the northern platform). A damaged skeleton with the head to the north and the legs to the south. There were two bronze armbands near the hands, a saltaleone beneath the head, a fragment of an iron fibula beneath the chest, and a ceramic bowl and a bronze button in the vicinity of the skeleton (**Fig. 1: 12–14**).

Grave 17 (Mound XIII, the eastern platform). A double row of saltaleoni with a conical button and a bronze wire ring were recorded above the head. Three spirally coiled double-pins with the head in the shape of a figure-of-eight were recorded left of the head (**Fig. 7**). There was a fibula with pendant and a bronze sheet tube in the chest area; seventeen bronze sheet buttons between the chest and the feet; a bronze clasp below the right femur and a bow of a fibula on the level of the knees (**Fig. 2: 1–5**); a total of nine iron and four bronze anklets on each leg; a bronze ring on the right toe; and a ceramic vessel below the feet.

Grave 19 (Mound XV, the eastern platform). Around the skeleton, which lay in a south-east-northwest direction, there were dislocated spirally coiled double pins with the head in the shape of a figure-of-eight, a bronze pin with a globular head, bronze and iron anklets, a bronze saltaleone, and potsherds (**Fig. 2: 6–8**).

In certain aspects, the burial ritual from the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis resembles the burial traditions practised during the Middle and Late Bronze Age mound burials along the Drina (Kosorić 1976: 20). In those mounds, the dead were likewise laid on a rectangular 'bed' comprised of pebbles, but in a crouched position on the side. The tradition of such inhumation burial rites might be indicated by the solitary burials from the Kalakača

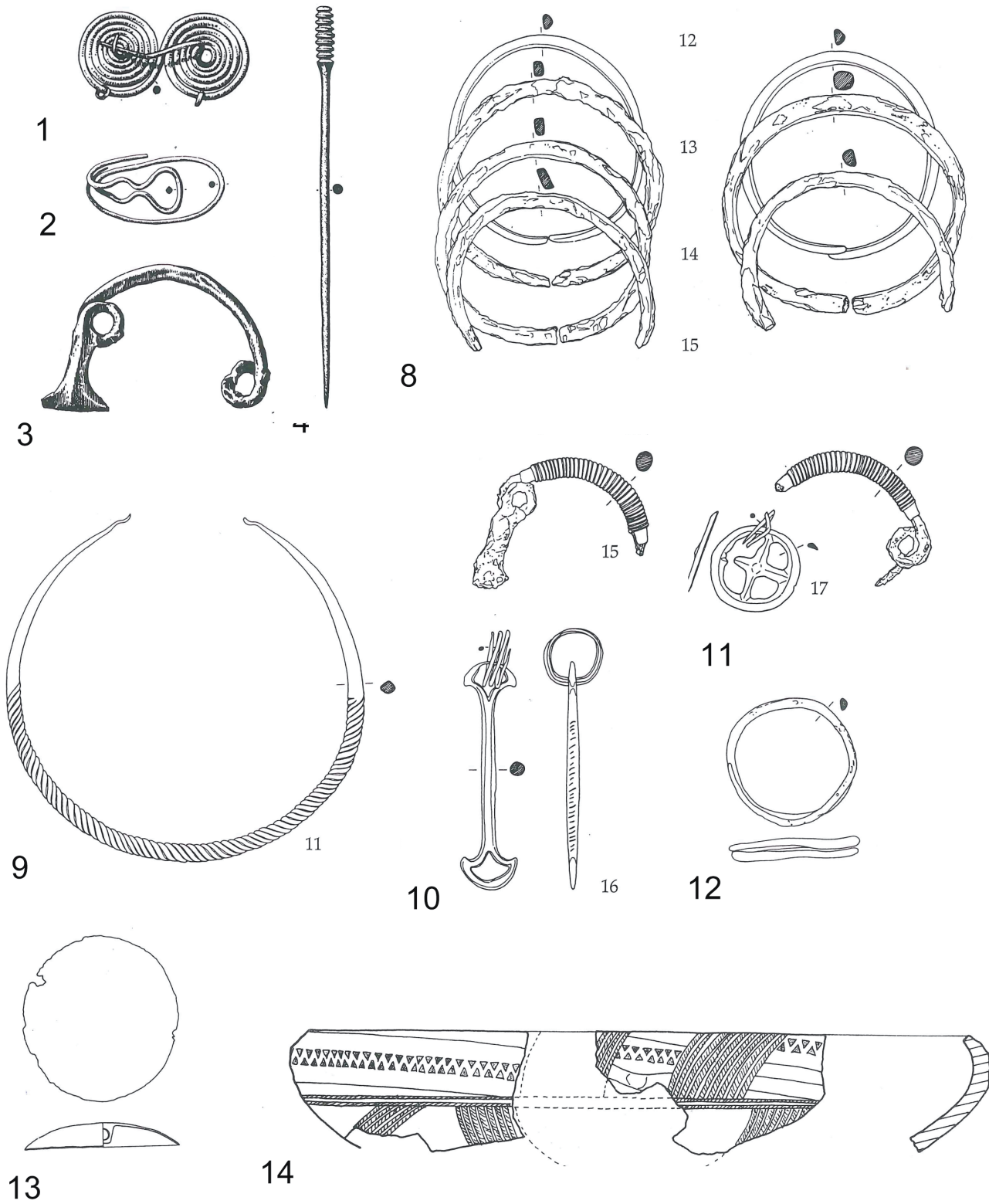


Figure 1 — 1–4 Grave 1; 8 Grave 6; 9–11 grave 8; 12–14 Grave 14 (after: Popović, Vukmanović 1998)

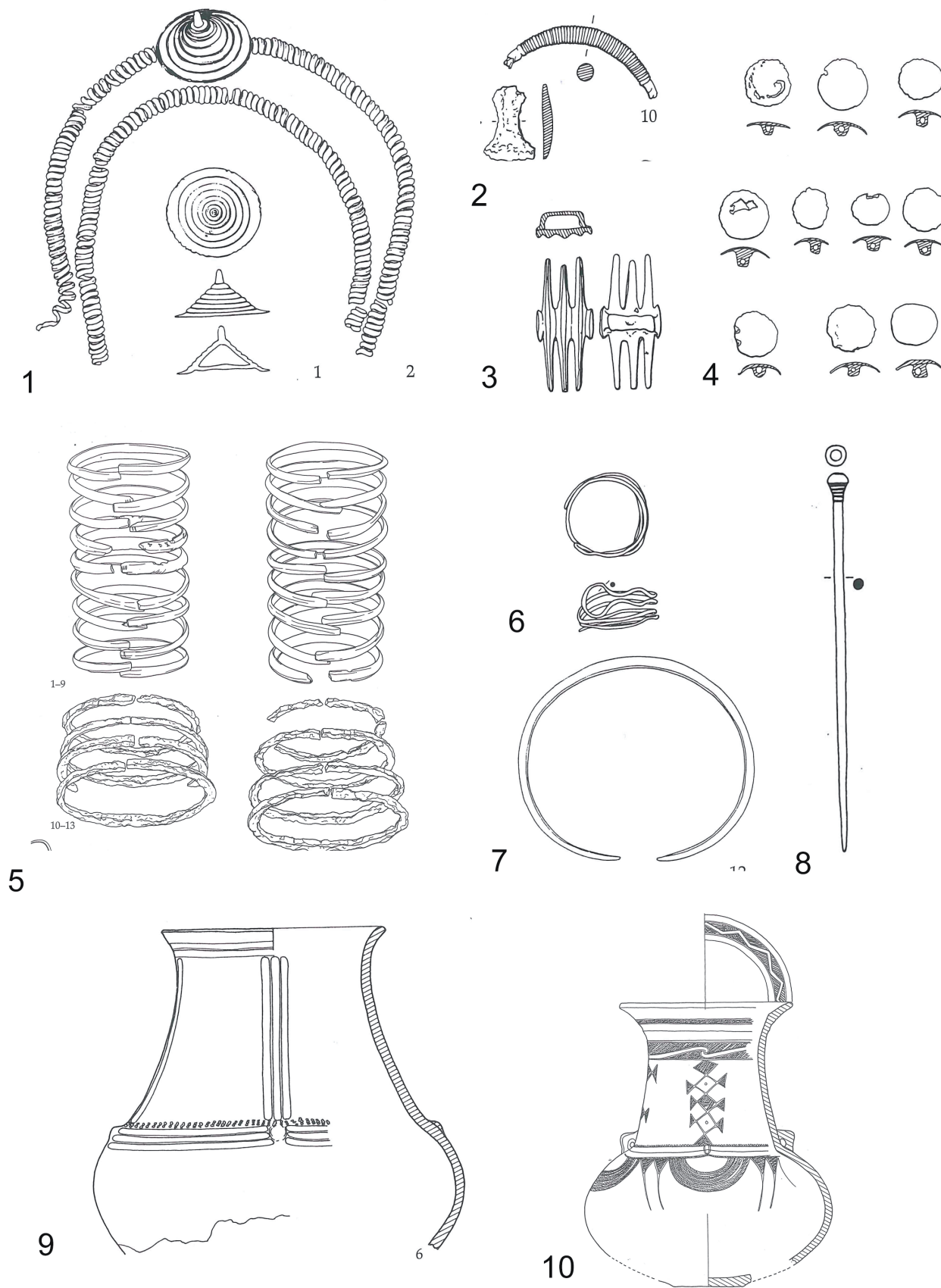


Figure 2 — 1–5 Grave 17; 6–8 Grave 19; 9 Pottery group 13b; 10 Pottery group 20 (after: Popović, Vukmanović 1998)

period in Vrdnik, Zemun, and Jaša Tomić, where the dead were laid on the side with their legs bent (Medović 1984; Medović 2003: 102, Abb. 3a–c; Petrović 1991; Миладиновић-Радмиловић, Капуран 2010). The inhumation burials on the side with bent legs may indicate traditions dating back to the Tumulus Culture period in the southeast Pannonian Plain during the Late Bronze Age (Kapuran 2019: 69). Within the territory of Serbia, a similar burial rite and grave architecture have been recorded in three necropolises — Bent Lugovi in Mojsinje, Mala Gradina in Stapari, and Sinjac Polje. The practice of laying the dead on a pebble surface is attested in Grave 7 of Mound I at the Mojsinje necropolis (Nikitović et al. 1997: 126–127, Fig. 18) and Mound II at the Sinjac Polje necropolis near Bela Palanka (Kapuran et al 2015: 150–151). The first necropolis is contemporary with the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis and the latter is chronologically younger. Also, there are certain indications that a body at the Stapari necropolis near Užice was buried on a pebble surface which covered the grave pit (Ђурић 2012: 95). It must be highlighted that both presented cases are burials of female individuals. According to the available documentation, the buried woman from Grave 7 in Mound I at the Mojsinje necropolis was likewise laid on a pebble surface, although this case must be treated with caution considering that it represents a secondary burial within the sepulchre object (mound) from the Late Bronze Age (Nikitović et al. 1997: 126–127, Fig. 18). The idea that the aforementioned represents a specific detail of the Early Iron Age burial ritual is supported with the central grave of Mound II from the Mojsinje necropolis (Никитовић et al. 2002: 38, Сл. 17). Even though the skeleton was poorly preserved, scarce human bones, two iron spears and a hair-ring were recorded within the grave constructed of pebbles.

At the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis there were composite bow fibulae made of iron, wrapped with bronze wire (**Fig. 1: 10–11**), and according to R. Vasić, those can be dated to the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> cent. BC (Vasić 1999: 56). A similar dating can be assumed for the solitary spectacle-shaped bronze wire fibula from the necropolis that originates from Grave 1 (**Fig. 1: 1**) (Vasić 1999: 34). Certain examples of fibulae have pendants, as is the case with the example from Grave 8 (**Fig. 1: 10**), which has the same shape as the chain links of the incensory from the Vințu de Jos hoard in Romania (Petrescu-Dumbovita 1977: 161, Pl. 392: 5) or the site of Kisterenye in Hungary (Kemenczei 1988: 96, Fig. 5: 1–2). The other composite fibula from Grave

1 at the Vajuga necropolis has a wheel-shaped pendant (**Fig. 1: 11**) that resembles the finds from the grave at the necropolis in Vrtište in the South Morava river basin or Grave 7 at the Đepfeld necropolis in Vojvodina (Vasić 1977: 69, Pl. 21: 10; Трајковић 2008: 33, 187: 15).

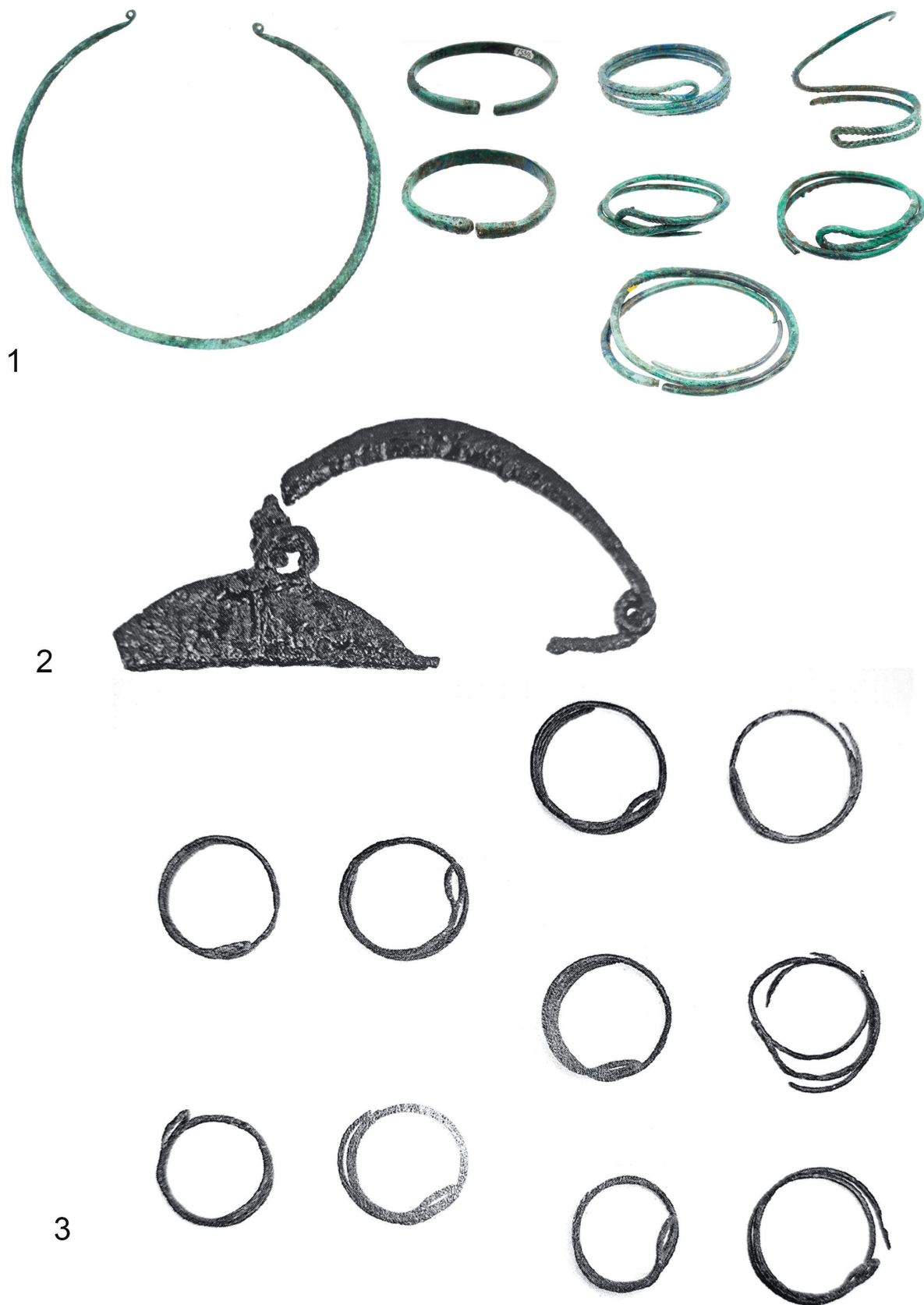
At the Basarabi necropolis in south-western Romania, which is both geographically and chronologically closest to the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis, some graves contained the earlier fibulae with the hourglass-shaped catch plate, the younger fibulae with the catch plate in the shape of a Beotian shield, and the fibulae of the Gogoșu type (Dumitrescu 1968: Fig. 22). The burial rite is almost identical, although the orientation of the dead is not as uniform as is the case with the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis. The architecture of the mounds at the Basarabi necropolis likewise differs from the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis, as the soil mounds at the Basarabi necropolis are considerably larger. However, the analogies between the grave goods, jewellery, and ceramic vessels are substantial and unambiguous, and indicate that the aforementioned necropolis is younger. Something similar can be concluded for the finds from the graves at the Balta Verde necropolis, believed by B. Bercui and E. Comsa to show very strong Illyrian and Thracian influences (Vulpe 1986: 51–52, Abb. 4: 5–13; Dumitrescu 1968).

## OTHER EARLY IRON AGE NECROPOLISES IN SERBIA

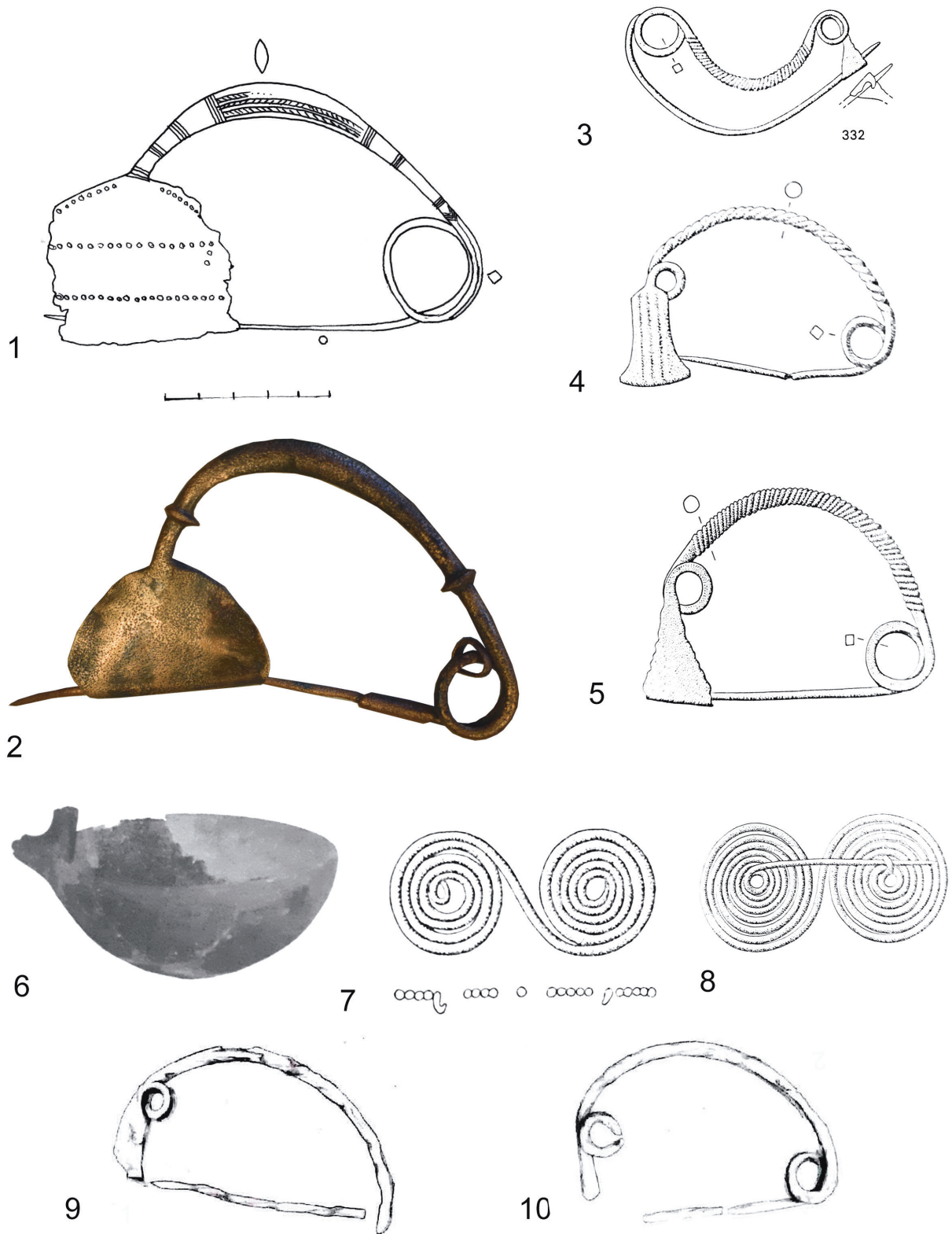
As we pointed out, new data on several necropolises in the territory of Serbia have been acquired since the publication of the monograph on the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis. Those necropolises are slightly older and attributed to the Kalakača period, with slight differences in the ornamentation of ceramics. The necropolis in the village of Stapari near Užice in Western Serbia was discovered six decades ago, yet published in detail considerably later (Zotović 1985: 65–67; Ђурић 2012). First data on the Bent — Lugovi necropolis in the village of Mojsinje near Čačak, located on the left bank of the West Morava, come from the 1990s, and the rescue archaeological excavations were conducted from 1997 to 2000 (Nikitović et al. 1997; Никитовић et al. 2002). The necropolis is comprised of low mounds, with three burial horizons attributed to the Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age. The second phase of the burials at the Mojsinje necropolis is also earlier than the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis.



Figure 3 — Rujište hoard (Лаловић)(photo by: N. Borić)



**Figure 4** — 1 Mojsinje necropolis, Tumulus V, Grave 3 (photo by: K. Dmitović); 2 Tumulus V, Grave 4 (after: Nikitović, Stojić Vasić 2003); 3 Voljetin hoard (after: Jaњић 2016)



**Figure 5** — 1 Fibula from Čitluk hoard (after: Filipović, Milojević, forthcoming); 2 Kruševac (thanks to: M. Miladinović); 3–5, 8 Mala Gradina in Starari (after: Vasić 1999); 6–7 Mala Gradina necropolis Grave 18 (after: Ђурић 2012); 9–10 Čitluk necropolis (after: Стојић, Васић 2005)



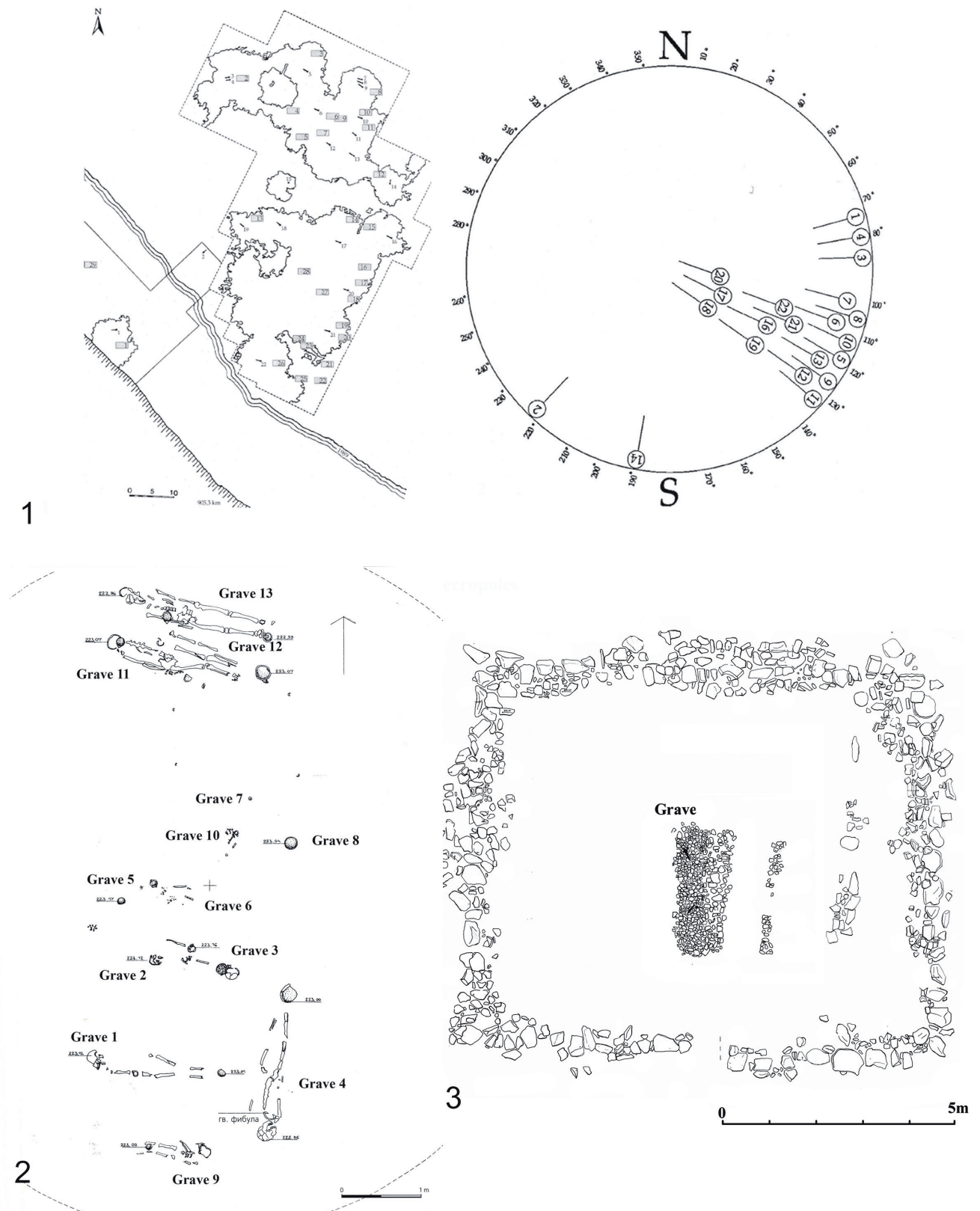
Regardless of that, there are certain parallels between these two necropolises regarding the burial ritual, the architecture of graves, and the specific finds of material culture. According to the authors of excavations, the inhumed dead from the Early Iron Age at the Mojsinje necropolis are attributed to horizon 2 (Никитовић et al. 2002: 51–55). Several inhumation graves with grave goods that indicate their attribution to the Kalakača culture, or Iron Age 1 according to the classification of R. Vasić (1977: 9–17), have been recorded beneath mounds I, II and V (possibly beneath mound III?). Since there are no absolute dates, the authors rely on the stylistic and typological characteristics of the finds to conclude that horizon 2 belongs to the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC (Nikitović et al. 1997: 131; Никитовић et al. 2002: 119). The deceased were buried in the same west–east direction (except for Grave 4 in Mound V, which was oriented north–south), or the direction in which the West Morava runs (the orientation of the graves at the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis follows the direction in which the Danube runs) (Popović, Vukmanović 1998); they lay on their backs with modest grave goods. The similarities in the burial ritual between the necropolises of Mojsinje and Vajuga — Pesak are further strengthened by the pottery grave goods that are positioned next to the feet of the dead, contrary to the solitary burials in Vojvodina in which the pottery is buried in no particular order (Medović 2003: Abb. 3a–c). Modest grave goods likewise represent a common characteristic of both the Vajuga — Pesak and Mojsinje necropolises. However, since there are only two necropolises from the Kalakača period in Western Serbia, the Mojsinje necropolis has particular importance for the comprehension of relations between different regions of Serbia during the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC. Within the aforementioned Mound V, Grave 3 contained an inhumed female individual, buried with grave goods comprising a torque, hair-rings, a three-looped bronze belt buckle, and spiral bracelets made of iron (**Fig. 4: 1; 6: 2**), quite resembling the costumes of female individuals buried at the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis (Никитовић et al. 2002: 42, T. XIV: 117, 120–121).

The most prominent find from the Mojsinje necropolis is the iron fibula from Grave 4 of Mound V, which generally falls within the category of rare finds in the Central Balkans (**Fig. 4: 2; 6: 2**)

(Никитовић et al. 2002: 42–44, T. III: 1). The fibula is relatively large (22 cm in length) and its bow holds the preserved remains of the textile in which its owner was most likely wrapped (Нинчић 2002: 67). Judging by the shape and the unusual catch plate, R. Vasić considers that the closest analogies can be found among the Lofkënd type of fibulae from Albania and northern Greece, which were utilized during the 9<sup>th</sup> cent. BC (Papadopoulos 2010: 247). It is our opinion that the iron fibula from the Mojsinje necropolis could instead represent a modified variant of double-looped bow fibulae with a circular catch plate (*Zweischleifige Bogenfibeln mit kreisförmiger Fußplatte*) which are represented at the Vlaštica necropolis in Kosovo (Vasić 1999: T. 54; 28: 339–340), the Milci necropolis (Пашиќ et al. 1981: 37, T. XV: 846) or the Gorno Pole necropolis in Northern Macedonia (Videski 2005: cat. no. 175) (Vasić 1999: 54–55, T. 28) and in the Mačedonce hoard from Southern Serbia (Васић 2001: 224, Сл. 1: 1). The fact that this type of fibula with a circular catch plate was found together with a fibula with an hourglass-shaped catch plate inside Mound I at the Vlaštica necropolis indicates that they were contemporary (Vasić 1987: 679, LXXI: 1–2). Judging by the upper portion of the catch plate of the fibula from Grave 4 at the Mojsinje necropolis, it can be concluded that there is a possibility that the person who made the fibula decided to back-bend the middle of the disk-shaped catch-plate and therefore create a significant difference compared to the fibulae of the Lofkënd type with the back-bent lower portion of the catch plate. It should be highlighted that the connections between the fibulae with the circular catch plate and those with the hourglass-shaped catch plate indicate a chronological concurrence with the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis based on the context discovered at the Vlaštica necropolis (Тасић 1998: 173–174, 539, Кат. 156–157) (Popović, Vukmanović 1998: 61).

In the meantime, two fibulae of the *Bogenfibeln mit zwei Bügelknoten* type (Pabst 2009: 43, Abb.5: 3) have been recorded. One of them, discovered in the riverbed of the West Morava (**Fig. 5: 1**),<sup>1</sup> was brought to the Museum with no archaeological context, and the other fibula most likely came from the Čitluk necropolis in the vicinity of Soko Banja, according to the finder (**Fig. 5: 2**) (Стојић, Васић 2005; Vasić 2009: 36–37; Filipović, Milojević forthcoming). The example from Kruševac is similar to the examples from Northern

<sup>1</sup> — The fibula is unpublished. It is displayed within the permanent exhibition of the National Museum in Kruševac. I would like to thank Milica Miladinović, the curator of the National Museum in Kruševac, for the provided photo of the fibula.



**Figure 6** — 1 Valjuga-Pesak necropolis (after: Popović, Vukmanović 1998); 2 Mojsinje necropolis, Tumulus V (after: Nikitović et al. 2003); 3 Sinjac Polje necropolis, Tumulus II, Grave 4 (after: Kapuran et al. 2015)

Macedonia, which are based on the analogies from Vergina dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> — 10<sup>th</sup> cent. BC (Vasić 1999: 46). However, S. Pabst believes that such fibulae might also represent Aegean cultural influences on the Balkans, occurring later than the mentioned period, which seems more realistic in this case (Pabst 2009: 45).

The Early Iron Age necropolis in the village of Stapani near Užice was discovered in 1958 at the site of Mala Gradina that lies above the Đetina River in Western Serbia (Zotović 1985: 67; Ђурић 2012: 73). Between 1958 and 1960, a total of 13 inhumed and 5 cremated bodies were recorded. The inhumed bodies were laid on their back with modest grave goods. Considering that the necropolis was quite disturbed by tillage, Grave 18 is of particular importance for the subject of this paper, as it contained a spectacle-shaped fibula and a ceramic cup, both characteristic of the Kalakača culture (**Fig. 5: 6–7**) (Ђурић 2012: 91, T. II: 10–11). A fibula with a saddle-shaped bow was recorded at the adjacent hillfort site (**Fig. 5: 3**), while a fibula with a triangular catch plate was recorded outside the burial context at the necropolis (**Fig. 5: 5**) (Zotović 1985: 67, T. XIV: 14; Vasić 1999: 32, 52–53, T. 11: 151–152; 27: 327, 332). The site also included another spectacle-shaped fibula and a fibula with an hourglass-shaped catch plate (**Fig. 5: 4, 8**) (Vasić 1999: cat. no. 152 and 358). The practice of placing a ceramic vessel by the feet of the dead, as well as the fibulae which chronologically correspond to the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> cent. BC, incorporate this necropolis into the domain of the Kalakača cultural horizon in Serbia.

The Signal necropolis in the village of Palilula near Svrlijig was excavated in 2007 by V. Filipović (Filipović, Bulatović 2010). A total of four inhumed dead individuals were buried under a stack of stones serving as grave architecture. The grave goods were comprised of hair ornaments made of iron and an Ω-shaped double-pin. Unlike the poorly preserved grave goods made of iron, the pottery from the graves can be attributed to the Kalakača cultural domain (Filipović, Bulatović 2010: 81).

The Čitluk necropolis near Soko Banja is considered as one of the underresearched necropolises of inhumed individuals from the Kalakača horizon of the Early Iron Age (Стојић, Васић 2005;

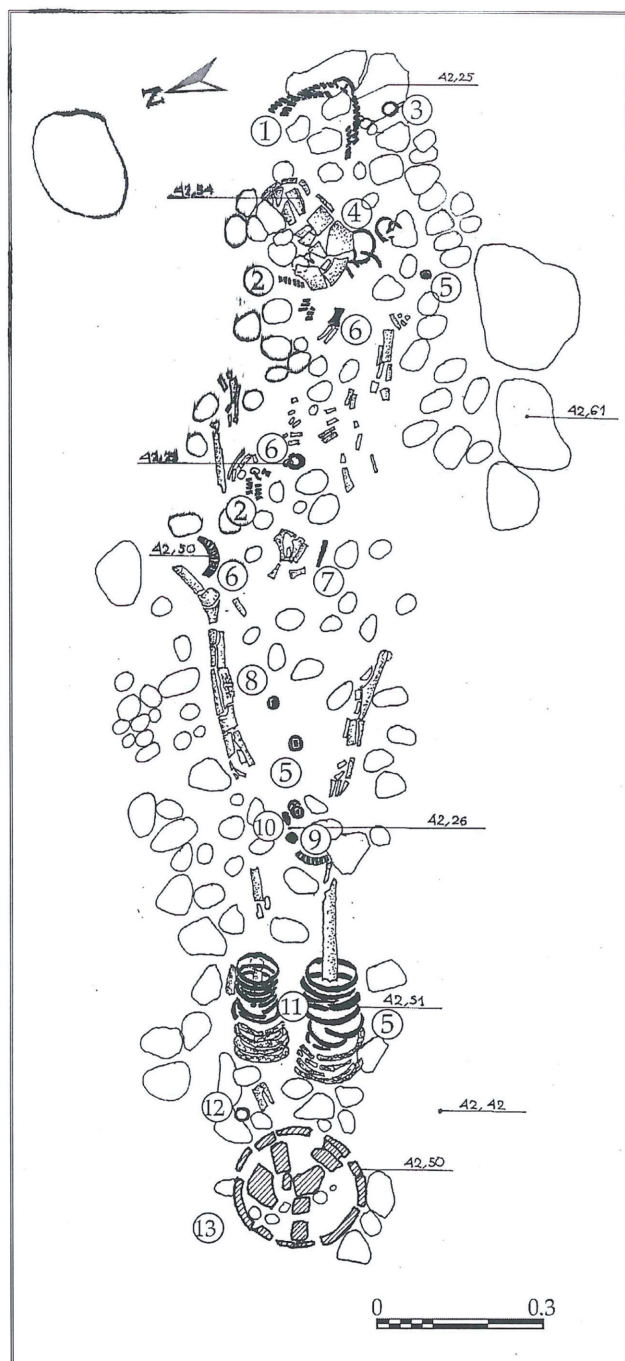
Vasić 2009: 36–37). In spite of confusing and vague excavations, it is clear that the necropolis area contained certain artefacts (jewellery) made of iron and pottery.<sup>2</sup> Two fibulae and the torques are attributed to the Kalakača horizon (Vasić 2009: 36–37). Likewise, the pottery from the necropolis possesses characteristics typical of the Kalakača culture (Стојић, Васић 2005: 179, Сл. 1).

The Sinjac — Polje necropolis near Bela Palanka in Eastern Serbia was discovered in 2013 during the rescue archaeological excavations within the construction of the Niš — Dimitrovgrad Highway (Kapuran et al. 2015). Since the necropolis is probably younger than the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis, the analogy can be found in the aforementioned burial ritual, which can be observed in Grave 4 of Mound II (**Fig. 6: 3**). Due to the high acidity of the soil, the remains of the dead were quite poorly preserved. The remains lay on a rectangular stone platform and the grave goods were comprised of a ceramic beaker, a spear, a knife, a buckle, a fibula, and a bronze spear-butt (Kapuran et al. 2015: 151, Fig. 9).

## CONCLUSION

The significance of the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis within the context of the Central Balkans lies not only in the fact that aside from the Doroslovo necropolis it remains one of the most completely researched Early Iron Age necropolises in Serbia and represents an example of the interweaving of the Late Bosut — Kalakača and Basarabi cultural influences in one spot. The fact that grave goods comprised of iron and bronze jewellery distinguish female from male graves within Early Iron Age necropolises resulted in greater interest for the female population within the scope of the ethnicity studies of certain communities, as female individuals brought ethnic markers of costume from their native territories. New data acquired by the discovery of the Vajuga — Pesak necropolis have significantly influenced the conclusions regarding the mechanisms of connections between the Danube and Morava regions and their interactions through the exchange of goods or perchance the establishing of marital ties. The directions of those cultural influences carried by female individuals in the Central Balkans during

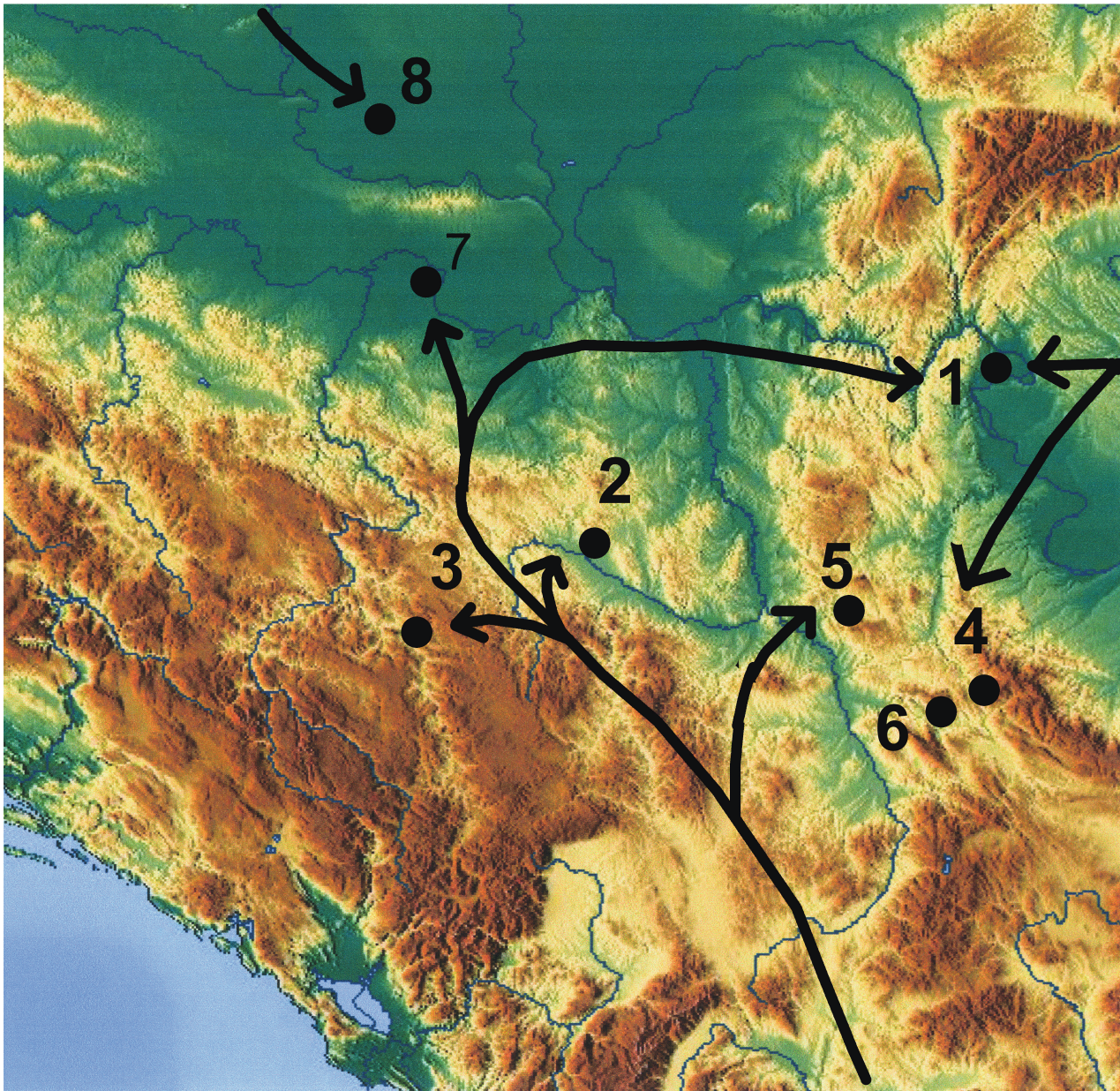
<sup>2</sup> — The owner of the estate collected the finds from the graves and handed them to the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia in Belgrade. On his incentive, small-scale archaeological excavations were conducted and a short report about them was published in the Kruševac National Museum's Annual No 11. The report does not precise the number of archaeological trenches that were excavated at the necropolis nor the precise context of finds. Therefore, it is our opinion that the report relied primarily on oral data provided by the estate owner, who was most likely involved in illegal excavations.



**Figure 7** — Valjuga-Pesak, Grave 17 (after: Popović, Vukmanović 1998)

the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC can be assumed from the examples of the aforementioned Early Iron Age (Iron Age 1 according to R. Vasić) necropolises attributed to the Kalakača or Basarabi horizons (Vasić 1977: 9–17). During the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, meaning the Iron Age 1, or more precisely the 9<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> cent. BC (Vasić 1977: 13), the areas of Northern Bosnia, Eastern Slavonia, the Serbian Danube region, and the Morava region were settled by communities with unified ceramic production, production of bronze and iron objects and jewellery, and inhumation of the dead. The burial ritual that is represented primarily by the inhumation of the dead, laid on their back and with a ceramic vessel by their feet, most likely came to the Iron Gates region from the south or south-west of the Central Balkans, since the individual burials of the Kalakača type in Vojvodina indicate a different burial ritual which implies that the dead were laid on the side with bent legs and disarticulated pottery. Likewise, the burials from the Morava region indicate that the custom of placing the dead on a stone foundation came from Western Serbia. Judging by the finds of the material culture, primarily iron fibulae and composite fibulae with an hourglass-shaped catch plate, they have their highest concentration in the Danube region, within the present-day borders of Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria, which could indicate it was their point of origin during the Iron Age 1, in the 8<sup>th</sup> cent. BC or the Basarabi I period (Bader 1983: 84, T. 48). Assuming that the fibulae represent the most sensitive piece of female costume in terms of chronology, we can conclude that the cultural influences in the Central Balkans during the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC followed the direction from the south-east to the north (Vasić 1977: 37) and that during the end of the period and the beginning of the Iron Age 2, those influences came to the Central Balkans from the eastern parts of the Balkan Peninsula (**Fig. 8**) (Палавестра 1984: 76; Филиповић 2013: 215; Heilmann 2016: 21).

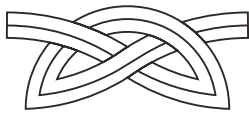
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**Figure 8** — 1 Valjuga-Pesak; 2 Mojsinje; 3 Stapani; 4 Signal; 5 Čitluk; 6 Sinjac Polje; 7 Gomolava; 8 Doroslovo  
(made by: A. Kapuran)

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CIP zapis dostupan u računalnom katalogu Nacionalne i sveučilišne knjižnice  
u Zagrebu pod brojem 001154795.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available in the Online Catalogue  
of the National and University Library in Zagreb as 001154795.

ISBN 978-953-6064-63-2

Ovu publikaciju sufinancirala je Hrvatska zaklada za znanost istraživačkim projektom  
Iron Age Female Identities in the Southern Carpathian Basin (IP 06-2016-1749).  
Knjiga je tiskana sredstvima Ministarstva znanosti i obrazovanja RH.

This publication was supported in part by Croatian Science Foundation under  
the research project Female Identities in the Southern Carpathian Basin (IP 06-2016-1749).  
This book was published with the support of the Ministry of Science and Education of the  
Republic Croatia.

Naklada 300 komada  
Number of printed copies 300