

НАЦІОНАЛЬНА АКАДЕМІЯ НАУК УКРАЇНИ  
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І ДАВНЯ ІСТОРІЯ  
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# СТАРОЖИТНОСТІ РАНЕЬОГО ЗАЛІЗНОГО ВІКУ

## АРХЕОЛОГІЯ І ДАВНЯ ІСТОРІЯ УКРАЇНИ

Наукова серія з проблем археології та давньої історії

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E-mail: gorbanenko@gmail.com

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### РЕДАКЦІЙНА КОЛЕГІЯ:

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ЧАБАЙ В.П., член-кореспондент НАН України

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*M. Ljuština, I. Ninčić*

## SCYTHIAN WEAPONS AND HORSE HARNESS IN THE TERRITORY OF SERBIA

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*The article analyses the objects of Scythian origin in the territory of Serbia, which show the cultural contacts. Weapons and harness of Scythian origin in Serbia are not numerous and come mostly from burials and as accidental finds. Weapons were found in burial mounds of the Early Iron Age in the areas of Atenica, Pilatovići near Požega, and Romaja near Prizren. The finds can be traced from Vršac in the north to Prizren in the south, and the vicinity of Požega in the west. In most cases they are the items imported from the territory of traditional residence of the Scythians.*

**Keywords:** *weapons, horse harness, Scythian, Serbia, import, arrowheads, bits, akinakes.*

**Introduction.** Speaking in general terms, the communities — bearers of the Early Iron Age cultures in the territory of Serbia were attributed to the tribes of the Balkan peninsula of Illyrian, Thracian, Triballian, Autariataean and Daco-Getic origin. A rather small amount of material remains which could be associated with Scythian tribes is insufficient to reflect their way of arrival to the Balkans, with only arrowheads indicating some sort of exchange. Mutual conflicts are not excluded [cf. Jovanović, 1999, p. 39]. Archaeological excavations, so far, have not led to a discovery of a settlement or a necropolis that could be associated with Scythians, but rather to a certain number of movable artefacts, generally found as grave goods. The artefacts, with solid archaeological context, are considered to be imported part of the grave inventory in the sites related to other Iron Age ethnic groups. Research of the so-called Scythian horizon, thus, begins with investigations of these sites in Serbia and refers to identification of artefacts of Scythian origin and their stylistic and typological analysis (Fig. 1).

In the late 1950<sup>s</sup> archaeological excavation began in the prehistoric site of Ritopek, in the vicinity of Belgrade, in which the Bronze Age, and Early and Late Iron Age objects and graves were ascertained. Two pairs of horse bits with bridles (part of a horse harness) were discovered within the grave inventories, as well as two decorative plates for harness [Тодоровић, 1966, с. 153], which are considered one of the first and most recognizable Scythian finds in Serbia. During the same period two mounds in Atenica, near Čačak, were excavated [Букнић, Јовановић, 1966]. Excavations resulted in greatest number of the Scythian finds discovered in a single site in Serbia. A bone dagger hilt, seven arrowheads, a horse bit, as well as a harness ring, were all discovered in the context of a princely grave. Once more in a funerary context, in the site of At, on the outskirts of Vršac, a spearhead was found, together with two bronze arrowheads [Јовановић, 1974, с. 305]. In Pilatovići, near Požega, the greatest number of arrowheads uncovered in a single spot, were found in the 1970<sup>s</sup>. A total of 25 pieces were found in the outer rim of the mound, within a cremated grave [Zotović, 1985, p. 97]. During the 1970<sup>s</sup>, excavations in Zlotska pećina (Zlot cave), a cave site with a wider chronological span, led to a discovery of two axes of Scythian origin [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 102], with a similar specimen found in a mound in Romaja near Prizren [Бурић, Глишић, Јовановић, 1975, с. 41—42].

A number of Serbian scholars made their contributions to better understanding of the Scythian horizon of finds. B. Jovanović was engaged in analysis of Scythian animal style, trying to present artefacts, decorated in the style typical for Scythians, found in former Yugoslavia, and to



Fig. 1. Map of archaeological sites with Scythian weapon and horse harness finds on the territory of Serbia

determine analogies and origin of this decorative manner [Јовановић, 1977, с. 19—29]. R. Vasić wrote about Thraco-Cimmerian, Scythian and Thraco-Getic influences in the Danube basin of former Yugoslavia [Vasić, 1987, p. 559—571]. However, M. Parović-Pešikan contributed to the study of the Scythian horizon in greatest extent in her attempt to present the finds and perform typological analysis with contemporary works from countries of the Scythian origin taken into consideration [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 101—107]. Her paper from the mid 1990<sup>s</sup> was a review of findings provided by archaeological research in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, considering the question of Scythians in the territory of Serbia.

## A REVIEW OF THE SCYTHIAN HORIZON FINDS IN SERBIA

### WEAPONS

When the weapons of Scythian origin are in question, amongst many finds of arrowheads in

the territory of Serbia, there is only one short iron sword, a Scythian akinakes, found near Vršac (Fig. 2). It was discovered by chance on the Magarčevo Brdo site. It is made out of wrought iron and 30 cm long [Milleker, 1898; Господари ..., 1990, с. 200]. Archaeological context of the find is unclear due to nature of discovery. M. Parović-Pešikan classified this weapon as a dagger, on the basis of the length, and recognized it as type 1 in the typology of A. Мелукова [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 102]. To be categorized as a sword, a weapon must be at least 40—45 cm in total length, or 30—35 cm in blade length [Топал, 2004, p. 26]. Type 1 includes daggers with a flat horizontal crossbar on top, kidney shaped hand protector, and a blade in the form of an elongated triangle with a rhomboid cross section. Similar pieces were found on several sites in Ukraine [Мелукова, 1964, с. 47]. In the opinion of R. Vasić, the dagger could be dated at the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC [Васић, 1987, с. 564]. Since there is no archaeological context of the find, M. Parović-Pešikan chronologically positioned this piece to the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, based on typological similarities with the finds from Hungary and Transylvania [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 102]. In this area Scythian akinakai start to appear in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, and are linked to the cultural groups of Vekerzug and Cium-

brud [Топал, 2004, с. 29]. D. Topal associated the Vršac akinakes with the type named after the famous Fettersfeld find [Топал, 2014, с. 7—8]. The swords of the Tisa basin and Transylvania are predominantly smaller in size, and are considered symbolic in character, with their utilization being questioned. Differences in military practice could be the reason behind this phenomenon. Bearers of the cultural groups in this area preferred battle axes and bows and arrows, as indicated by a larger amount of these weapons found in Transylvania and the Tisa basin then in steppes [Топал, 2004, с. 26]. Similar akinakai were discovered on several sites near Harkov. However, the lack of archaeological context makes their dating difficult. Based on the typological characteristics, authors concur on a range from the late 7<sup>th</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC [Бабенко, 2009, с. 24—26].

Besides the sword from Vršac, one bone dagger hilt was discovered in Atonica near Čačak (Fig. 3). Archaeological site in Atonica consists of two princely mounds, explored in systematic excavation campaign of 1958—59 [Ђукнић, Јовановић,

1966, c. 2]. Mound I contains a female burial of a princess in the middle part, and a burial of a younger male at the side. Mound II is bigger and contains a burial of an adult male — the prince. Both graves are rich in goods, including weapons, gold and silver jewellery, bone decorations, Greek bronze vessels, pottery, horse harness, cult and ritual items and other objects. Mound II, in which the bone dagger hilt was discovered, was dated at the late 6<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, based on the Etruscan box with decorative relief [Васић, 2009, c. 111]. Hilt end is decorated with a relief of a griffin head, which is comparable with Scythian animal style, while the opposite end is decorated with concentric circles and a sequence of hatched triangles, typical for Illyrian geometric style. Similarly decorated bronze vessels, however, point to a Greek origin [Букнић, Јовановић, 1966, c. 47]. Bone horse bit ends of Scythian provenance, identically decorated as the dagger hilt from Atenica, were discovered in Kurgan 2, on the site of Aksyutince in Ukraine [Ильинская, 1968, c. 38]. If the animal head should be interpreted as a bird head, similar pattern could be found with Greek machairai. Greek swords are of curved blades with an average blade length of 44—48 cm. Early types have hilts decorated with a bird head, while later models have heavily stylized curved hilts, without any recognizable prototype [Cermanović, 1957, p. 76]. Similarly decorated sword hilt was found in Hungary, in the area of influence of Vekerzug culture [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, c. 102]. Bone dagger hilt end, similarly modelled, was discovered in one of the graves of Chotin necropolis. Burial site in Chotin, in southern Slovakia, is the most important and best explored site of the Vekerzug culture [cf. Kozubova, 2013]. Zoomorphic figure presumably represents a bird head with a curved beak [Kozubova, 2013, p. 105].

Three specimens of Scythian axes were discovered in Serbia, two of which in Zlotska pećina and one in Romaja mound near Prizren. Zlotska pećina is one of the most important prehistoric sites in Serbia, as well as the most completely explored prehistoric cave site in Northeastern Serbia. Horizons of occupation range from early Eneolithic, up until the Late Iron Age [Капуран, Булаговић, Јовановић, 2014, c. 123—125]. First specimen is an axe-hammer, with flat or slightly protruding edges (Fig. 4, 1a). Other specimen from Zlotska pećina, discovered in grave 5, has lowered and bent blade edges (Fig. 3, 1b) [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, c. 102]. The first example from Zlotska pećina is an early type of axe-hammer with flat or slightly bulging edges, with analogous finds in Starshaya mogila near the village of Aksyutince and in a mound near the village of Popovka on the left bank of Dnieper river, which are dated at the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC [Ильинская, 1968, c. 92]. A. Kozubova classifies these axes as the type 2, variant 2, amongst finds from the Chotin necropolis, in the Vekerzug cul-

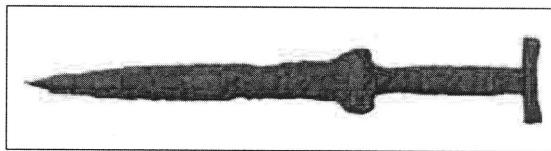


Fig. 2. Akinakes from Vršac [www.muzejVršac.org.rs]

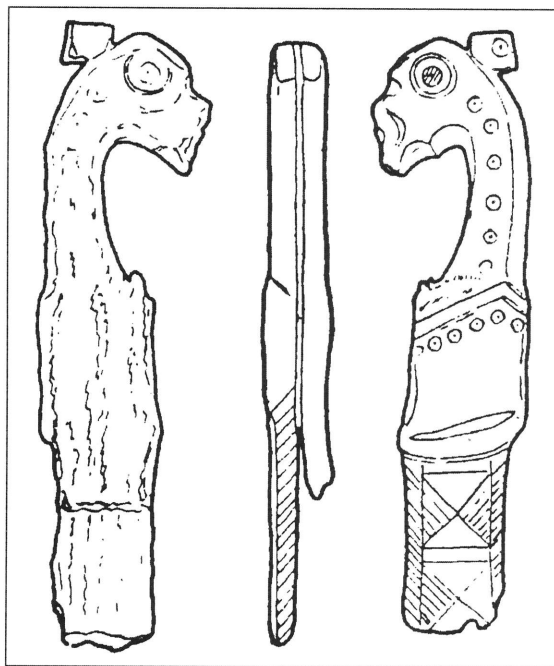


Fig. 3. Atenica — bone dagger hilt [Букнић, Јовановић, 1966, таб. XXII, 7a—c]

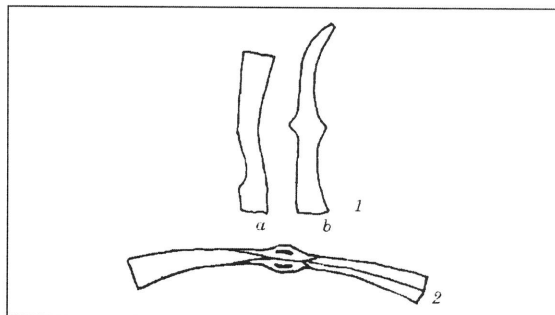


Fig. 4. Zlotska pećina: 1a — Type I axe; 1b — Type II axe [Васић, 1977, таб. 20, 16, 17]

ture area of influence. Main characteristic of this type is an asymmetrically set handle opening, as well as a wide, fan-like spread blade. Opening is located in the first third of the axe length from the flat end, with the blunt end having a rectangular cross section. These axes are dated from the late 7<sup>th</sup> to the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century BC [Kozubova, 2010, p. 51—53]. The other piece from Zlotska pećina, discovered in grave 5, has a lowered and bent blade edge, and is identical to late type axes discovered in Hungary and Transylvania, in the cultural area of Vekerzug [Паровић-Пешикан,

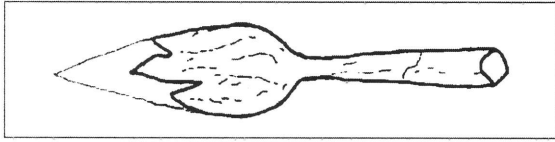


Fig. 5. Spearhead from Vršac-At [Јовановић, 1974, c. 305, V. 200]

1994, c. 102]. It is similar to the axe from Romaja, though there are no analogous finds in Scythia. Similar axes in Chotin necropolis are classified by A. Kozubova as type I — axes with symmetrically set handle opening and a rectangular blunt end, and dated at the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC [Kozubova, 2010, p. 47—51].

Romaja necropolis consists of a total of 16 mounds grouped in two zones. Three mounds were explored in the early 1970<sup>s</sup>. A «najak» type axe was discovered in grave 5 (Fig. 4, 2) along with a large stone plate construction and a partially preserved human skeleton [Djurić, Glišić, Todorović, 1975, p. 41—42]. It is made of iron, with one end shaped into a blade, and the opposite ending like a mallet, with a handle opening set in the middle. Total length is 20 cm, with the blade being 2 cm long, and mallet diameter of 2 cm [Djurić, Glišić, Todorović, 1975, p. 45]. According to A. Kozubova typology, this axe belongs to type I, variant 1, of axes with symmetrically set handle opening and a blunt end with a rectangular cross section [Kozubova, 2010, p. 47—51]. The Romaja axe bears most resemblance to the second axe find from Zlotska pečina.

Only one spearhead of Scythian origin was discovered in Serbia, in At, on the outskirts of Vršac (Fig. 5). During the exploitation of sand pit on the north-western outskirts of the town, several graves from different periods were discovered. The older prehistoric burials dated back to the local Early Iron Age, while the younger belonged to the final stage of the middle La Tène of the Carpathian basin. The youngest graves were from Late Antiquity [Јовановић, 1974, c. 299]. The spearhead was discovered in a grave along with two bronze arrowheads, a string of amber beads and spiral ornaments made of bronze wire. Another grave contained a carinated pot-urn, analogous to those in the so-called «Scythian» burial sites of the Carpathian basin, from North-eastern Slovakia to Transylvania and the Eastern Danube basin [Јовановић, 1974, c. 305]. The spearhead is made of iron, with an almond-shaped blade, long inset shaft and a cross-section shaped like an elongated rhomboid. Chronological attribution of the spearhead from Vršac-At was made possible by the discovery of a carinated pot-urn in one of the graves. These types of vessels were discovered in graves of Chotin necropolis in southern Slovakia, and are linked to the early stage of the Vekerzug culture, around 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, though later production is not excluded [Kozubo-

va, 2013, p. 142]. The presence of the pot indicates spearhead dating to roughly 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Following A. Melyukova's typology, M. Parović-Pešikan classified this piece to the leaf-shaped spearheads type, with a long, narrow inset shaft without distinctly expressed central rib and inset shaft length equal to blade length, which places it into type 3, group 1 [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, c. 103]. Spearheads of this type are either completely flat, or forged with two slopes, with a thickening in the middle, so that cross-section has a very elongated rhomboid shape [Мелюкова, 1964, c. 38]. This form can be found in burial sites in Transylvania and Slovakia and is dated from 6<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Vršac piece could match this cultural and chronological frame, though, considering arrowheads from the grave, it could be older [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, c. 103]. According to A. Kozubova, this spearhead can be classified as type V — spearheads with almond-shaped blade leaf and a long inset shaft. They are dated as early as the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, with some examples that could be dated at the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC [Kozubova, 2013, p. 98—99].

Except arrowheads, remains of other archer equipment, like bow and quiver, were not found in Serbia. Grave finds are usually in small lots, up to 10 pieces, with damage and deformation being common due to grave burning practices [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, c. 103]. Two bronze trilobated arrowheads, made of cast iron, were discovered in a grave in Vršac-At, along with an iron spearhead, a string of amber beads and spiral ornaments made of bronze wire (Fig. 5, 1) [Господари ..., 1990, c. 199]. Burials were dated at around 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, based on a find of a carinated vessel in one of the neighbouring graves [Јовановић, 1974, c. 305]. These vessels are related to the early phase of the Vekerzug culture, though later production is not excluded [Kozubova, 2013, p. 142]. According to the typological division made by A. Kozubova, based on the research of Chotin necropolis, the Vršac arrowheads should be classified as type II, variant 3 [Kozubova, 2013, p. 91]. Arrowheads of this type are trilobated, with a blade leaf of triangular or almond shape, and are dated at the 6<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century BC [Kozubova, 2013, p. 89—90].

Two specimens of bronze arrowheads were discovered in peripheral grave of mound I in Atenica (Fig. 6, 2a), with another five pieces, made of iron, in the central grave of mound II (Fig. 6, 2b) [Вукнић, Јовановић, 1966, c. 19—48]. The majority are trilobated arrowheads with a hidden inset shaft, with the exception of those with an opening on the inset shaft and the blade tip cut off [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, c. 103]. The arrowheads from Atenica are dated at 6<sup>th</sup>—5<sup>th</sup> century BC, with an exception of one double-edged arrowhead from mound II, which could be assorted to the first chronological group [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, c. 103; Мелюкова, 1964, табл. 6—7]. Most



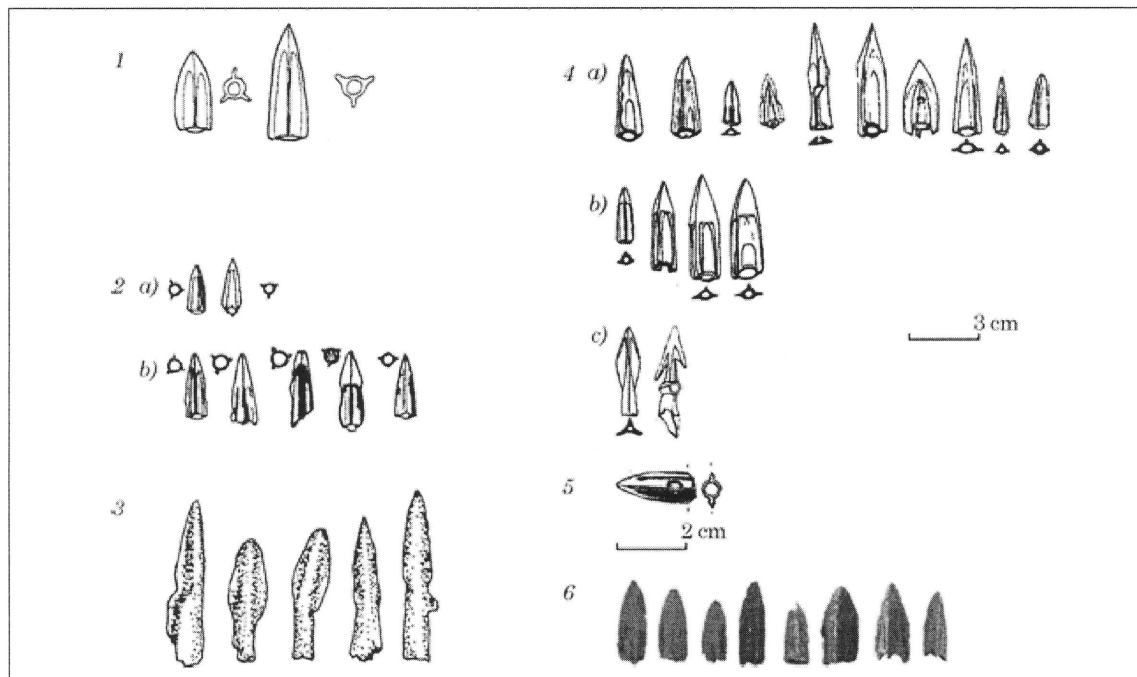


Fig. 6. Arrowheads from Vršac-At [Јовановић 1974, p. 305, V. 200] (1); Arrowheads from mound I in Atenica (2a); Arrowheads from mound II in Atenica [Ђуквић, Јовановић, 1966, таб. XX, 19, 20; XXIV, 1—5] (2b); Arrowheads from Pilatovići [Zotović, 1985, tab. XXXII, 4] (3); Arrowheads discovered on the Danube bank (4: a — Type 1; b — Type 2; c — Miscellaneous [Тодоровић, 1971, таб. XXXIX, 5—20]; Arrowhead from an unknown site in Ram [Стојић, Јацановић, 2008, таб. LXXXIX, 1] (5); Arrowheads from the male grave in Pečka Banja [Љуци, 1998, с. 582, сл. 220] (6)

of them are trilobated arrowheads with a concealed inset shaft, with the exception of those with an opening on the inset shaft and cut off blade points [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 103]. According to A. Kozubova's typology, both arrowheads from the mound I, as well as three pieces from mound II, can be classified as type I, variant 3 of trilobated arrowheads of triangular or almond shape. They are dated at the 6<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. One of the arrowheads from mound II is of trihedron-triangular type — type II, variant 2, dated at the second half of 6<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Last piece is a double-edged arrowhead, dated not before the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC [Kozubova, 2013, p. 91].

In Pilatovići necropolis, near Požega, out of 30 registered mounds, a total of 17 were preserved, more or less damaged by agricultural or other works. Two smaller sites were ascertained during the 1970<sup>s</sup>: Ravni lug, a military and civilian burial ground, and Trnjaci, where a prominent member of society was buried, most probably an Illyrian prince with his closest family members [Zotović, 1985, p. 80—88; Jevtić, 2016]. Arrowheads discovered in the grave in Pilatovići are the oldest specimens found in Serbia (Fig. 6, 3). A total of 25 pieces were discovered in the southern peripheral part of the mound, within a cremated grave [Zotović, 1985, p. 97]. Majority of the arrowheads are double-edged, though there

are some trilobated pieces, with a large cylindrical inset shaft and an oval blade head. In accordance with A. Melyukova's typology, M. Parović-Pešikan classified them as group I, type 1. Dating is set to 7<sup>th</sup>—6<sup>th</sup> century BC [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 103; Мелюкова, 1964, с. 18]. Arrowheads of the second type of the first chronological group, with similar dating, are also present. These pieces have sharp leaf shape of the blade, with the greatest width in the base [Мелюкова, 1964, с. 18].

Best preserved specimens of arrowheads were collected on the Danube bank near Zemun [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 103]. Out of a total of 16 pieces, with the exception of two, all are with a concealed inset shaft (Fig. 6, 4). Despite excellent condition, interpretative value of these finds is restricted by a lack of an archaeological context. According to the typology from Chotin necropolis, 10 arrowheads can be classified as type 1 (trilobated type), out of which only one is a variant 2 (tower shaped), while the rest are variant 3 (triangular or almond shaped) (Fig. 6, 4a). They are dated from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC [Kozubova, 2013, p. 89—90]. Four arrowheads are analogous to type 2 (trilobated-triangular shaped), variant 1 (tower shaped) (Fig. 5, 4b). They are dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, particularly to the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, but also appear in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century [Kozubova, 2013, p. 89—90]. One of them is a

triple-edged arrowhead with an inset shaft that makes up roughly a third of the total length, and a blade leaf of elongated rhomboid shape (Fig. 5, 4c). This form is not found in Chotin necropolis, with closest analogy in chronological group II, according to A. Melyukova, dated to 6<sup>th</sup>—5<sup>th</sup> century BC in south-western Ukraine [Мелюкова, 1964, табл. 7, Б10]. The last example is a swallowtail type arrowhead (Fig. 6, 4c), with a long perforated inset shaft, a kind that is not found in sites of Vekerzug culture, or in Scythia, which makes its Scythian origin questionable.

A double-edged bronze arrowhead with a concealed inset shaft came from an unknown site in Ram, and was dated at Early Iron Age, from the early 6<sup>th</sup> until late 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Fig. 6, 5). The arrowhead is with a round cross section [Сројић, Јацановић, 2008, с. 233]. According to the typology of A. Kozubova, this piece should be asserted to type 3, variant 3, of double-edged arrowheads with an almond shaped blade leaf [Kozubova, 2009, p. 69]. They are rare in the neighbouring countries, with only a single arrowhead of this type, which was discovered in Chotin necropolis. They are dated roughly at the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC [Kozubova, 2009, p. 80—81].

Protective archaeological excavation at the site Pećka Banja, located on the road to Kosovska Mitrovica, 12 km west of Peć, yielded a devastated rich tomb of a princely couple. Graves were dated at the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, based on Greek black-figure pottery. Gender attribution of one of the burials as male was based on the nature of finds, including weapons, silver and bronze buckle and one male ring, since skeletal remains were not found [Љуци, 1998, с. 577]. Weapon finds include eight arrowheads made of cast bronze (Fig. 6, 6), roughly 1,5—2,2 cm in length [Љуци, 1998, с. 582]. According to A. Kozubova's typology, all of the pieces found in Pećka Banja are of type I, variant 3: trilobated arrowheads with a concealed inset shaft, almond or triangular shape. They are dated at the 6<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC [Kozubova, 2013, p. 89—90].

## HORSE HARNESS

In the central grave of mound I in Atenica an iron horse bit with bridle was discovered, along with pieces of chariot fittings (Fig. 7, 1). Judging by the burning marks, the deceased was burned on the chariot [Букнић, Јовановић, 1966, с. 29]. Rein was connected to bridle via rings, which could be round or in other shapes, and such a ring was found in mound II in Atenica (Fig. 6, 2). The round ring was attached to a triangular buckle [Букнић, Јовановић, 1966, с. 32]. The type of bridle discovered in this grave is not distinctive for Scythia in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, though a similar form of early Scythian bits made of bone can be found. Bone sample could have been used as a pattern for later iron models discovered in

the Carpathian necropolises of Vekerzug culture [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 104]. According to A. Kozubova's typology, this type of bridle can be classified as type II, Sentes-Vekerzug bridle, with rings on the side ends. Since the Atenica piece is heavily fragmented, it is not possible to determine the variant of type II, which places dating into a broader range from the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> up until the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC [Kozubova, 2011, p. 79—83]. The ring discovered in mound II of Atenica probably served as a part of a horse harness. Although these rings were used for other purposes, this type of ring with a buckle was discovered frequently in Scythian graves along with other pieces of horse harness, as seen in kurgan 2 in Aksyutince [Ильинская, 1968, табл. XVI, 10]. Bit with bridle discovered in Tolsta mogila has this kind of ring interconnected to the external loop, so that rein can be attached to the triangular buckle [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 104].

Two pairs of horse bits with bridle were discovered in Ritopek. First pair of bits was discovered in grave 12, and is a type with longways bars, that end with pyramidal heads (Fig. 7, 1). C-shaped (arc-shaped), they have three rectangular slots on the middle widened parts. Bars are tied by bits, made of two twisted joints also connected by rings. On one end, the bit is attached to the bars with a hoop, while the other ends with a ring. Total length of the bit is approximately 20 cm [Тодоровић, 1966, с. 155]. It has a close analogy in mound Tolsta mogila from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 104]. There are no analogous finds in Chotin necropolis. The other pair of bits with bridle was discovered by chance, without any archaeological context (Fig. 7, 2). The bit is S-shaped, made of iron, and roughly 30 cm long [Тодоровић, 1966, с. 156]. Bridle of this type, with ends decorated with animal heads, can be found in the mounds of forest steppe as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC as seen in Aksyutince [Ильинская, 1968, с. 118].

Only three pieces of decorative plates were discovered in Serbia, two in Ritopek and one in

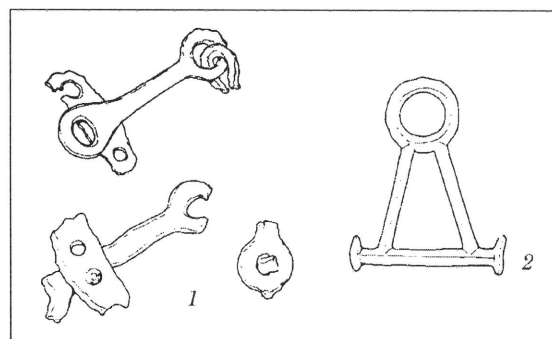


Fig. 7. Iron bits with bridle from Atenica [Букнић, Јовановић, 1966, таб. XVIII, 3—5] (1); Ring for attaching rein to bridle from Atenica [Букнић, Јовановић, 1966, таб. XXIII, 20] (2)

Baraće near Tekija. Ritopek plates are chance finds, however, nature of the site with numerous graves, indicates a possible grave context [Тодоровић, 1966, с. 155—156]. The larger piece is shaped like an animal head surrounded from the lower side with radially lined spiral volutes made by casting bronze (Fig. 9, 1). The smaller one is shaped like a very stylized animal head (maybe a fantastic beast like a griffin), with an arched ornament, and is also made of cast bronze (Fig. 8, 2) [Јовановић, 1977, с. 22]. Modelling and style of both decorative plates from Ritopek indicate Scythian animal style. Spiral ornaments, however, like those on the larger plate, are not typical for Scythian art. Stylized head of the first plate could have represented a deer, a common motif of Scythian animal style, and is widespread on the territory populated by Scythians. Spiral volute ornamentation of deer horns originates from a tradition of designing horns as bird heads, with examples in mounds of north Crimea and Thrace. Examples of heavily stylized horn ornamentation, as well as more common realistic way, indicate deviations from characteristic decorative patterns of Scythian animal style of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC [Јовановић, 1977, с. 23]. There is a presumption that animal on the plate is not a deer, but a griffin. In that case, spiral ornaments would represent wings of a griffin or a lion, although modelling fashion would not be typical. Head of the animal is also not depicted in a way typical for a lion or a griffin, but in a distinctive way for deer depictions of animal style in the lower Danube basin and Black Sea steppes. The Ritopek plate probably served as a decoration for horse harness. Deer depiction fits Scythian animal style, but with an iconographic order somewhat changed. Mutually opposed position of horns and head is a deviation, and with this taken into account, the depiction could be considered a sort of a deer

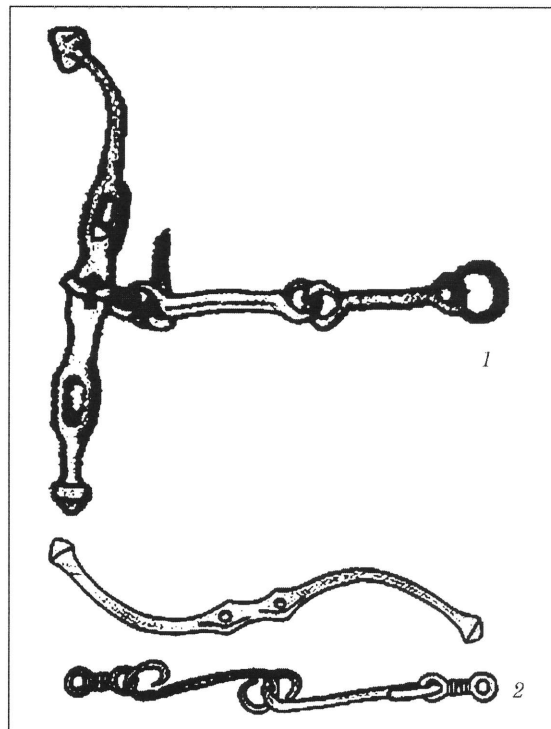


Fig. 8. Bits with bridle: 1 — grave 12 in Ritopek [Тодоровић, 1966, табл. II, 13]; 2 — chance find from Ritopek [Тодоровић, 1966, табл. III, 8]

protoma, and not a complete figure [Јовановић, 1977, с. 24]. Similar deer head design can be seen on a decorative application from Craiova hoard, with loosely depicted horns, reduced to unusual, almost symbolic dimensions, ending with volutes, decorated with shallow, parallel notches. Another analogous piece can be found in a grave in Transylvania. This bronze application depicts a roughly contoured deer, in a usual iconographic

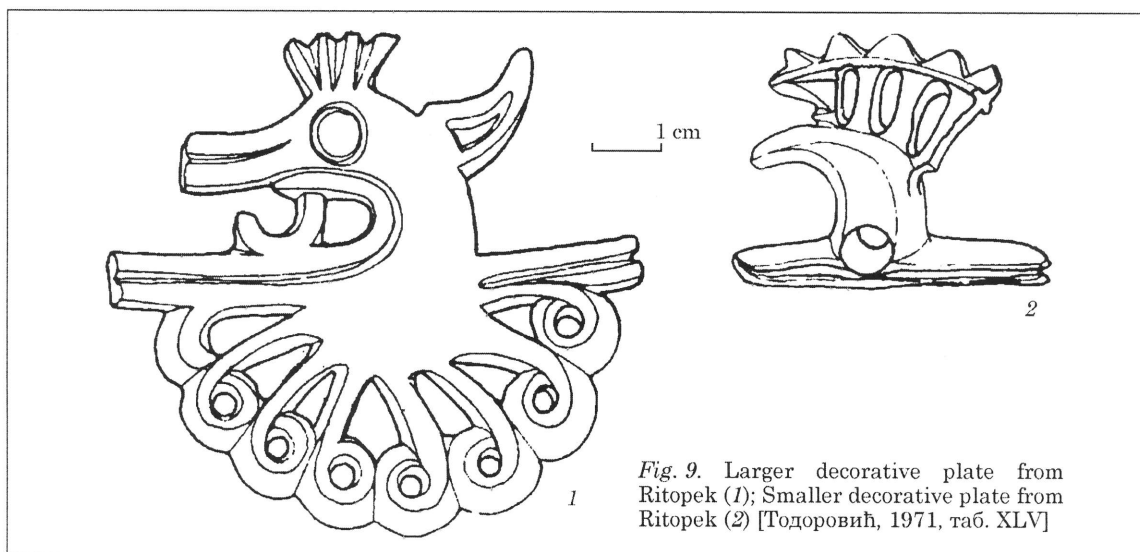


Fig. 9. Larger decorative plate from Ritopek (1); Smaller decorative plate from Ritopek (2) [Тодоровић, 1971, таб. XLV]



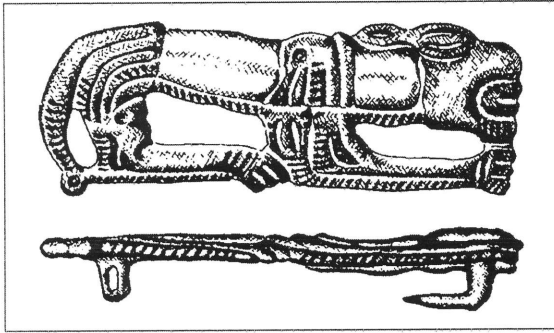


Fig. 10. Bronze buckle from Baraće [Todorović, 1968, tab. I

pose, with bent front legs, and summarized horn represented by triangles, resembling simplified lyre [Јовановић, 1977, с. 24].

Second plate from Ritopek is conducted even more summarily, though it can be with some certainty concluded that it is a bird head, most probably of a griffin. Fastening hole, instead of a buckle or a ring, is not a common feature of items made in animal style of the Iron Age [Јовановић, 1977, с. 25]. These depictions of certain parts of animal bodies are typical for Scythian lands in the 5<sup>th</sup>—4<sup>th</sup> century BC [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 106]. Closer analogy can be found in a silver plate from a rich Thraco-Getic grave in Agighiol in Dobruja, dated to around 400 BC. The plate has a griffin head depicted in a similar manner, with a stand decorated with spiral curls representing stylized clutches with interposed palm tree motifs, considered to be made by a local craftsman [Berciu, 1974, p. 69—70]. Agighiol application is an evidence of the development of same tendencies of Scythian art, with intensive Greco-Thracian influences in the time of arrival of Scythian tribes in Dobruja [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 106]. Some authors conclude that Ritopek plates are likely products of local craftsmen, inhabiting north-eastern parts of the Pannonian basin and Transylvania in the 5<sup>th</sup> and first half of 4<sup>th</sup> century BC [Јовановић, 1977, с. 25].

A bronze buckle made in Scythian animal style (Fig. 9) was discovered in Baraće, in the Iron Gates, by chance, without archaeological context, although the site was of multi-layered settlement character [Todorović, 1968, с. 57; Јовановић, 1977, с. 21]. The buckle is in shape of an elongated lion, made by cast bronze. Middle part of the body is divided by a pronounced rib, while the edges are decorated with deeply rifled lines and strips, decorated with skewed notches. Mane is depicted by short transverse rifles, as well as hind limbs. Ears and eyes are depicted in an ornamental element of «eight», while mouth is pronounced with massive semi arched strips. Buckle dimensions are roughly 9,1 × 2,6 cm [Јовановић, 1977, с. 21]. Dating of the find can be accomplished with some certainty based on analogous pieces discovered in

north-western Bulgaria. Lion shaped item found in Kalugerovo, near Botevgrad, is conducted in an even more evident geometric manner [Јовановић, 1977, с. 21], while Toros buckle has a somewhat shorter animal body. Application from Baraće stylistic design is more similar to Toros find, dated at the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 104].

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Appearance of the spearheads typical for the warlike, nomadic tribe from the Black sea coasts in the region of the Central Balkans, together with parts of weaponry and horse harness in princely graves in Atenica and Pilatovići, was explained by «probable contacts between the Illyrians and the Scythians» [Букнић, Јовановић, 1966, с. 85], at the moment of their penetration into the Pannonian zones during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, most probably as a consequence of trade or war loot. According to M. Parović-Pešikan [Паровић-Пешикан, 1994, с. 107], the material of Scythian origin, being few in number, was brought to the Central Balkans as a result of exchange with neighbouring regions, and not as a consequence of settling of Scythian tribes. The problem of presence of Scythian products in funerary context of the Early Iron Age of the Central Balkans is a specific field or research, but S. Babić [Бабић, 2004, с. 133] stated that the Scythian arrowheads from the graves indicated a possibility to trace their meaning not in the contacts with nomadic settlers of the Lower Danube Basin and the Black Sea region, but in some other contexts. Namely, a function different from the obvious purpose of a projectile can be attributed to the arrowheads, leading to a totally different context. For the Scythian warriors, bronze arrowheads were not only the most common type of weaponry, but they had a symbolic sense, representing warriors themselves, their strength and honour [Бабић, 2004, с. 134 with references]. If it is presumed that the presence of arrowheads is a sort of preparation for the monetary system in exchange between the Greeks and the Scythians in the Pontic area, their presence in the Central Balkans graves with Greek import can be understood as a sign that the similar procedure was applied to the inhabitants of the Central Balkans, too. Since the number of these finds is very small in every single case and having in mind the number of grave units as well, it can be concluded that this attempt did not make a deep impression on the Balkan peoples [Бабић, 2004, с. 134]. On the other hand, this attempt, no matter how (un)successful was, had its roots in the concept in which the arrowheads had a symbolic meaning, closely tied with the notion of prestige. It is not certain to which extent the arrowheads in the graves from Atenica and Pilatovići symbolized prestige of their owners (in Atenica members of the princely family

had them, but in Pilatovići — probably a servant carrying arms), but it is undeniably clear on the basis of their deliberate selective deposition that they have their position in the study on the prestige [Ljuština, Dmitrović, 2010, p. 133].

To conclude, the research on the Scythian horizon of finds in the territory of Serbia has its base in stylistic and typological analysis of material remains of Scythian origin in a different ethnical environment. The total number of archaeological sites and finds is not big, so conclusive remarks are very few. Geographic spread of the finds is not indicative of any pattern, since the finds can be traced from Vršac in the north to Prizren in the south, and the vicinity of Požega in the west. In most of the cases, we are faced with the items imported from the territories traditionally settled by the Scythians, by means of trade of local populations and neighbouring regions. The artefacts analysed reveal a very strong stylistic and typological connectivity with the material from the Carpathian basin and cultural zone of the Vekerzug culture. At the same time, their origin from the remote regions of Ukraine cannot be excluded from our considerations.

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*М. Люштина, І. Нінчич*

## СКИФСКОЕ ОРУЖИЕ И КОНСКОЕ СНАРЯЖЕНИЕ НА ТЕРРИТОРИИ СЕРБИИ

Существующие исследования скифского горизонта в Сербии все еще не результировали открытием археологической местности, которую однозначно можно было бы охарактеризовать как скифскую. Отсутствуют некрополи и поселения со скифскими элементами, однако, зафиксировано присутствие предметов, относящихся по своему происхождению к культурным кругам скифской цивилизации, и оно указывает на соприкосновения культур. Следовательно, изучение данного культурного горизонта подразумевает в первую очередь узнавание, а также стилистический и типологический анализ данных предметов в местностях носителей другого этнического происхождения.

Находки скифского происхождения в Сербии многочисленны и включают в основном предметы в археологическом контексте погребального инвентаря, вместе с определенным количеством случайных находок. Оружие обнаружено в известных могильных холмиках раннего железного века в местностях Атевица, Пилатовичи, Ат возле Вршаца и Ромаия у Призрена. Декоративная плитка из местности Барач, а также два боевых топора из Злотской пещеры обнаружены в поселенческом слое. Среди находок, собранных вне археологического контекста, выделяются целых 16 наконечников стрел, найденных на берегу Дуная. Небольшое количество находок делает невозможным более детальный статистический анализ контекста, в котором замечены куски оружия.

Географические местоположения не указывают на какой-либо образец распространения местностей, обладающих скифскими элементами. Предметы зафиксированы от Вршаца на севере до Призрена на юге, и до окрестности Пожеги на западе. Численность находок снова же ограничивает выводы о территориальном распределении.

С определенной долей уверенности можно сказать, что в подавляющем большинстве случаев речь идет о предметах, импортированных с территорий традиционного проживания скифов, попавших на территорию нынешней Сербии путем торговых связей местных населений и соседних цивилизаций. Артефакты указывают на наибольшее стилистическое, типологическое, а также географическое сходство с аналогичными предметами Карпатского бассейна,

культурного ареала культуры Векерзуг; в то же время, происхождение их дальних областей, нынешней Украины, не исключено.

**Ключевые слова:** оружие, снаряжение, скифы, Сербия, импорт, наконечники стрел, бляшки, псалли.

*М. Люштина, І. Нінчич*

## СКИФСЬКА ЗБРОЯ ТА КІНСЬКЕ СПОРЯДЖЕННЯ НА ТЕРИТОРІЇ СЕРБІЇ

На території Сербії не виявлено археологічних пам'яток, які можна однозначно інтерпретувати як скіфські. Відсутні некрополі і поселення з скіфськими елементами, проте зафіксовано предмети скіфського походження, які вказують на культурні контакти. Знахідки скіфського походження в Сербії нечисленні і включають, головним чином, предмети поховального інвентарю і певну кількість випадкових знахідок. Зброю виявлено в курганних могилах раннього залізного віку в місцевостях Атевіца, Пилатовічі, Ат у Вршац і Ромаія у Призрена. Декоративна плитка з місцевості Барач, а також дві бойові сокири з Злотської печери виявлені у шарі поселення. Серед знахідок, зібраних поза археологічним контекстом, виділяються 16 наконечників стріл, знайдених на березі Дунаю. Невелика кількість знахідок унеможливило більш детальний статистичний аналіз контексту, в якому виявлені фрагменти зброї.

Географія і кількість знахідок не уточнюють локальні особливості скіфських елементів або їх територіальний розподіл. Предмети зафіксовані від Вршац на півночі до Призрена на півдні, і до околиці Пожеги на заході. У переважній більшості випадків йдеться про предмети, імпортовані з території традиційного проживання скіфів, які потрапили на територію нинішньої Сербії шляхом торгових зв'язків місцевого населення з сусідами. Артефакти мають найбільшу стилистичну і типологічну подібність з аналогічними предметами Карпатського басейну, культурного ареалу культури Векерзуг; водночас не виключено їхнє походження з далеких областей нинішньої України.

**Ключові слова:** зброя, спорядження, скіфи, Сербія, импорт, наконечники стріл, бляшки, псалі.

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