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Ni kontinuitet ni katastrofa: postimperijalna transformacija u Dalmaciji tijekom 7. i 8. stoljeća

Polazeći od činjenice da se oskudica arheoloških nalaza podudara s oskudicom povijesnih izvora, članak razmatra društvene i gospodarske procese koji stoje u pozadini slabe vidljivosti 7. i 8. stoljeća u dalmatinskom zaobalju. Posebna se pozornost posvećuje socijalnoj fragmentaciji, decentralizaciji pogrebnog prostora i lokalizaciji proizvodnje kao ključnim pokazateljima postimperijalne transformacije.

Ključne riječi: *rani srednji vijek, kontinuitet, diskontinuitet, socijalna fragmentacija, postimperijalna transformacija*.

Neither Continuity nor Catastrophe: Post-Imperial Transformation in Dalmatia during the 7th and 8th Centuries

Starting from the observation that the scarcity of archaeological finds coincides with the paucity of historical sources, this article examines the social and economic processes that account for the diminished visibility of the 7th and 8th centuries in the Dalmatian hinterland. Particular attention is devoted to social fragmentation, the decentralisation of burial space, and the localisation of production as key indicators of post-imperial transformation.

Keywords**:** *Early Middle Ages, continuity, discontinuity, social fragmentation, post-imperial transformation.*

Prekid, praznina, mračno doba – tek su neki od pojmova kojima se tradicionalno opisivalo 7. i 8. stoljeće u dalmatinskom zaobalju, a iz današnje perspektive djeluju prilično površno i promašeno. Međutim, likovanje nad pozitivističkim pristupom starije medievistike, koji valja promatrati kao dio logične razvojne putanje humanističkih disciplina, već se barem dva desetljeća pokazuje epistemološki suvišnim. Dok se i danas rasprava nerijetko vodi u bipolarnom registru, između krajnosti apsolutnog diskontinuiteta i apsolutnog kontinuiteta, treba istaknuti da su glavni pokretači promjena – strukturna kriza imperijalnog sustava i migracije – često pogrešno poimani kao međusobno isključivi.[1]

Jedan od zanemarenih problema jest očita razmjernost između arheološkog i povijesnog zapisa: razdoblja bogata povijesnim izvorima u pravilu su bogata i arheološkim nalazima, dok se oskudica jednog najčešće podudara s oskudicom drugog. Takva sinkronost na početku ranog srednjeg vijeka nije posebnost Dalmacije, ali je u dalmatinskom zaobalju osobito upadljiva. Ne može se objasniti samo nedovoljnom arheološkom istraženošću, pogrešnim datiranjem ili slučajnom nesačuvanošću pisanih izvora. Ona ponajprije upućuje na kontrakciju društvenog i gospodarskog krajolika, čiji je učinak dodatno pojačan promjenama u materijalnoj kulturi, demografiji i obrascima naseljavanja.

Zato se arheološka vidljivost 7. i 8. stoljeća neće drastično poboljšati novim iskopavanjima, no generalni osvrt na već razmatrane podatke s gospodarskog i društvenog gledišta mogao bi ponuditi uravnoteženiji nacrt postimperijalne transformacije u dalmatinskom zaobalju.

Raspad distribucijskih mreža

Drastičan pad trgovinske razmjene nije nimalo teško zamisliti: često spominjana oskudica arheoloških nalaza datiranih u 7. i veći dio 8. stoljeća njegova je zorna posljedica. U kontrastu s obiljem materijala iz kasnoantičkih slojeva nastupaju tek poneki, beziznimno slučajno nađeni predmeti koji se tumače dvojako. Glasovite matrice iz Biskupi-

[1] Napominjem da se zbog ograničenog opsega ovog članka nije bilo moguće osvrnuti na cjelinu dosadašnjih tumačenja početka ranog srednjeg vijeka u Dalmaciji. Bibliografski je odabir stoga nužno selektivan i podređen problemskom okviru rasprave. Za širi pregled vidi, među ostalim: Bilogrivić 2010; Džino 2010; Rapanić 2017; Džino 2020; Basić 2024; Katić 2025.

Interruption, hiatus, dark age—these are but some of the terms traditionally used to describe the 7th and 8th centuries in the Dalmatian hinterland, terms that from today's perspective appear rather superficial and misleading. The satisfaction once derived from rejecting the positivist approach of earlier medieval scholarship, itself properly understood as a stage within the logical development of the humanities, has for at least two decades ceased to serve any epistemological purpose. Although the debate continues to be framed, more often than not, in bipolar terms, set between the poles of absolute discontinuity and absolute continuity, it must be emphasised that the two principal drivers of change, namely the structural crisis of the imperial system and migration, have too frequently been treated, mistakenly, as mutually exclusive.[1]

One of the neglected problems is the evident correspondence between the archaeological and historical record: periods well documented in historical sources tend, as a rule, to be equally well represented through archaeological finds, just as a paucity in one sphere is generally matched by a paucity in the other. This synchronicity at the beginning of the Early Middle Ages is not peculiar to Dalmatia, but particularly striking in the Dalmatian hinterland. It cannot be explained solely by insufficient archaeological investigations, erroneous dating, or the accidental non-preservation of written sources. What it signals, above all, is a contraction of the social and economic landscape, the effects of which were further intensified by changes in material culture, demography and settlement patterns.

It is for this reason unlikely that new excavations alone will substantially enhance the archaeological visibility of the 7th and 8th centuries; a renewed examination of the already-published evidence, however, undertaken from an economic and social standpoint, may yield a more balanced picture of the post-imperial transformation in the Dalmatian hinterland.

[1] Given the limited scope of this article, it has not proved possible to engage with the full range of existing interpretations concerning the beginning of the Early Middle Ages in Dalmatia. The bibliographical selection is therefore necessarily selective and subordinated to the problem-oriented framework of the discussion. For a broader overview, see, among others: Bilogrivić 2010; Džino 2010; Rapanić 2017; Džino 2020; Basić 2024; Katić 2025.



Sl. 1 - Bronce iz Pliskova u Biskupiji (foto : Z. Alajbeg)
Fig. 1 - finds from Pliskovo in Biskupija (photo: Z. Alajbeg)

je (Pliskovo), skupni nalaz imitiranih Heraklijevih zlatnika iz Potkoma i matrica iz Čitluka kod Sinja najmarkantniji su primjeri. Činjenica da ni u jednom slučaju nije riječ o grobnim nalazima dodatno otežava interpretaciju, ali i usporedbu s prethodnim i kasnijim razdobljima.

Biskupijske se matrice tradicionalno pripisuju ranoavarsko-slavenskom kulturnom miljeu i drže tragom prisutnosti nove grupacije s područja Karpatske kotline tijekom 7. stoljeća.[2] Jedno od novijih

[2] Korošec 1958. Petrinec i Jurčević biskupijske matrice stilski povezuju s čuvenom ostavom Martynivkom u srednjem Podnjiprovlju (vidi Jurčević, Petrinec 2022, str. 155–157 i citiranu literaturu).

The breakdown of distribution networks

A drastic decline in trade is not difficult to envisage: its clearest consequence is the frequently noted scarcity of archaeological finds datable to the 7th and much of the 8th century. Set against the abundance characteristic of late antique layers, only a small number of objects has survived, all of them chance finds, and these have been interpreted in different ways. Among the most striking examples are the famous matrices from Biskupija (Pliskovo), the hoard of imitated Heraclian gold coins from Potkom, and the matrix from Čitluk near Sinj. The fact that none of these are grave finds further com-

mišljenja naglašava srodnost nekih predmeta iz tog skupnog nalaza s ostavom iz Velestina u Tesaliji, datiranom oko 700. godine.[3] U inventaru biskupijske ostave dominiraju predmeti ukrašeni geometrijskim i biljnim motivima, dok su figuralni prikazi zastupljeni tek na nekoliko od 25 nalaza – riječ je o glasovitom konjiću, tzv. ljudskoj masci te visoko stiliziranim prikazima kukca i ptičjih protoma. Skupni nalaz iz Pliskova zapravo je tipološki i stilski idiosinkratičan, bez izravnih analogija, kako je davno zaključio Josip Korošec, a poveznice u širem smislu najbrojnije su na području Karpatske kotline, odnosno na avarsko-slavenskom prostoru.[4]

Pet imitacija Heraklijevih solida pronađeno je u Potkomu kod Zrmanje prije gotovo stotinu godina. Oponašaju serije iz konstantinopolske kovnice emitirane između 613. i 629. godine, a zanimljivo je da se, prema Somogyijevoj analizi, četiri primjerka mogu pripisati pretpostavljenoj istočnojadranskoj kovnici, dok je jedan najvjerojatnije kovan na području pod avarskom kontrolom.[5] Legenda na

plicates both their interpretation and any comparison with the preceding and subsequent periods.

The matrices from Biskupija have traditionally been assigned to an early Avar-Slavic cultural milieu and taken as evidence for the presence of a new population group that had arrived from the Carpathian Basin during the 7th century.[2] One of the more recent views has stressed the similarity between certain objects from this hoard and the assemblage from Velestino in Thessaly, dated to around 700.[3] Within the Biskupija hoard, objects decorated with geometric and vegetal motifs predominate, whereas figural representations are confined to only a few of the twenty-five finds, namely the famous horse figurine, the so-called human mask, and the highly stylised depictions of an insect and avian protomes. The Pliskovo assemblage is, in fact, typologically and stylistically idiosyncratic and lacks direct analogies, as Josip Korošec observed long ago, while its broader connections are most numerous in the Carpathian Basin, that is, within the Avar-Slavic world.[4]

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3 Curta i Szmoniewski matricu iz Čitluka kod Sinja upotrebljavaju za povezivanje dalmatinskih nalaza s pretpostavljenom enklavom autohtonog stanovništva na sinjskom području (prema Miloševiću), koja je, kako tvrde, bila dobro povezana s vanjskim svijetom, a osobito otvorena bizantskim utjecajima (Curta, Szmoniewski 2019, str. 199–200). Njihovo mišljenje prihvaća Džino (Džino 2021, str. 121–122). Ipak, nijedna od biskupijskih bronci nimalo ne nalikuje lavolikoj matrici iz Čitluka, pa čak ni figura konjića (o matrici iz Čitluka vidi Milošević 2017, str. 84–92).

4 Nešto šire analogije mogu se pronaći u križolikom okovu iz Felnaca (Rácz 2014, T. 9, 16; u starijoj literaturi navođen kao Fönlak, selo u rumunjskom dijelu Banata), okovima iz groba 1 s lokaliteta Kunszentmárton-Habranyi-Telep (Rácz 2014, T. 46.6–7), okovima iz Szentesa i Zselickislaka (Rácz 2014, T. 78.1, 4) i antropomorfnoj figurici s lokaliteta Paks-Gyapa (Rácz 2014, T. 79.1). Također, sličnosti se naziru i među Zábojníkovim tipovima 178 (2), 179, 182 i 197 (Zábojník 1991). Chausidis kritizira pripisivanje bronci iz Velestina bizantskom i kršćanskom kulturnom krugu kod Curte i Szmoniewskog. Tvrdi da se njihovi zaključci baziraju tek na olakom odbacivanju dosadašnjih pretpostavki, površnim analogijama i pogrešnom reinterpretiranju ikonografije (Chausidis 2019).

5 Somogyi pretpostavlja da je u jednom od dalmatinskih obalnih gradova postojala kovnica koja je djelovala bez ovlaštenja bizantske financijske vlasti, a čije imitacije nisu bile namijenjene internom prometu. Poštujući normative dimenzija i težine, zanemarivalo se točno prikazivanje legendi i likova na solidima, što bi trebalo značiti da su kovanice bile namijenjene nekome izvan Carstva – u ovom slučaju Slavenima u zaobalju, koji

2 Korošec 1958. Petrinec and Jurčević stylistically associate the Biskupija matrices with the famous Martynivka hoard from the Middle Dnieper region (see Jurčević, Petrinec 2022, pp. 155–157 and the literature cited there).

3 Curta and Szmoniewski use the matrix from Čitluk near Sinj to connect the Dalmatian finds with a presumed enclave of the indigenous population in the Sinj area (following Milošević), an enclave which, in their view, remained well connected to the outside world and particularly receptive to Byzantine influence (Curta, Szmoniewski 2019, pp. 199–200). Their view is accepted by Džino (Džino 2021, pp. 121–122). Even so, none of the bronzes from Biskupija bears any resemblance to the lion-shaped matrix from Čitluk, not even the horse figure (for the matrix from Čitluk, see Milošević 2017, pp. 84–92).

4 Somewhat broader analogies may be found in the cross-shaped mount from Felnac (referred to in older literature as Fönlak, a village in the Romanian part of the Banat) (Rácz 2014, Pl. 9, 16), in the mounts from grave 1 at the site of Kunszentmárton-Habranyi-Telep (Rácz 2014, Pl. 46, 6–7), in the mounts from Szentes and Zselickislak (Rácz 2014, Pl. 78, 1, 4), and in the anthropomorphic figurine from the site of Paks-Gyapa (Rácz 2014, Pl. 79, 1). Similarities can also be discerned among Zábojník's types 178 (2), 179, 182, and 197 (Zábojník 1991). Chausidis, for his part, criticises Curta and Szmoniewski's attribution of the Velestino bronzes to the Byzantine and Christian cultural sphere. He argues that their conclusions rest on little more than a hasty rejection of earlier assumptions, superficial analogies, and a mistaken reinterpretation of the iconography (Chausidis 2019).

potonjoj imitaciji, tvrdi Somogyi, stilski je neobična, izvedena nezgrapno i jedva da prenosi izvorni sadržaj. Takva neformalna transformacija teksta i drugih identifikacijskih detalja mogla je biti itekako prikladna na području izvan Carstva, i to baš u vremenu kada je, uslijed smanjenog priljeva bizantskog novca, simbolika carskih solida već blijedjela.[6]

Imitacije su, jasno je, najočitije na numizmatičkim nalazima, ali postojanje takvih proizvoda upućuje i na mogućnost proizvodnje imitacija nakita bizantskog stila diljem srednje i jugoistočne Europe. Upravo bi takvo što bilo prikladno razdoblju atrofirane trgovine, u kojem je potražnja, premda u strmoglavom padu, uvijek veća od ponude, pa se pribjegavalo više ili manje vještom imitiranju nedostupnih uzora. Imitacije iz Potkoma javljaju se, dakle, kao rezultat disolucije carskog gospodarskog sustava u dalmatinskom zaobalju, a usto i kao nagovještaj dugog perioda nemonetarne ekonomije.

Analizirajući tehničke karakteristike biskupijskih matrica, Korošec je prepoznao najmanje tri skupine srodnih radioničkih obilježja.[7] Premda takav zaključak ne djeluje nimalo iznenađujuće, u literaturi je često bio zanemaren, zbog čega je ovaj skupni nalaz promatran kao monolit. Poput solida iz Potkoma, moguće je i da ova ostava sadrži predmete nastale ne samo u različitim radionicama nego i u različitim kulturnim sredinama. U svakom slučaju, lokalno otiskivanje nakita pomoću matrica, među kojima barem neke nisu lokalnog podrijetla, još je jedan od simptoma tržišne disrupcije. Urušavanje regularne distribucijske mreže krajem 6. ili početkom 7. stoljeća rezultiralo je ne samo redukcijom nego i lokalizacijom proizvodnje, a time i lokalizacijom stila. Upravo u tim procesima treba tražiti razloge nedostatka direktnih analogija biskupijskim matricama.

S tim u bliskoj vezi javlja se i problem datiranja. Dok ostava iz Potkoma vrlo vjerojatno datira u kraj Heraklijeve vladavine ili nedugo poslije, dakle oko sredine 7. stoljeća, matrice su teže odredive. Koroščeva datacija u 7. stoljeće definitivno ostaje validna, čemu možemo tek nadodati pretpostavku da je nešto veća vjerojatnost datiranja u drugu polovinu 7. stoljeća.

su ih primali kao poklon ili danak. Jedini primjerak analogan zlatnim imitacijama nastalim na avarskom području posebno je značajan, jer ukazuje na bilateralne kontakte vlasnika ovih pet kovanica (Somogyi 2010, str. 446). Vidi i Šeparović 2021, str. 42–44.

6 Somogyi 2010, str. 445.

7 Korošec 1958, str. 34–35.

Almost a century ago, five imitations of Heraclius' solidi were found at Potkom, near the Zrmanja, copying issues struck at the Constantinopolitan mint between 613 and 629. According to Somogy's analysis, four of these specimens can be attributed to a presumed eastern Adriatic mint, while the fifth was in all likelihood struck within territory under Avar control.[5] Somogy further argues that the legend on this last imitation is of an unusual style, clumsily rendered and barely conveying its original content. Such an informal transformation of the text and other identifying details would have been entirely fitting for a region beyond the Empire's borders, at a time when the symbolism of the imperial solidi was already beginning to fade due to the diminished influx of Byzantine coins.[6]

Imitations are, of course, most clearly visible in numismatic finds, yet its presence also raises the possibility that imitations of Byzantine-style jewellery were being produced too across central and south-eastern Europe. Such a development would have been entirely appropriate to a period of atrophied trade, in which demand, though in steep decline, still exceeded supply, leading to the more or less skilful imitation of unattainable models. The imitations from Potkom thus appear as a result of the dissolution of the imperial economic system in the Dalmatian hinterland, even as they foreshadow the long non-monetary economy that was to follow.

When examining the technical properties of the Biskupija matrices, Korošec distinguished at least three groups sharing related workshop features.[7] Unsurprising as this finding is, it has been largely disregarded in the literature, with the consequence that the assemblage has come to be treated as a sin-

5 Somogy assumes that one of the Dalmatian coastal cities housed a mint operating without the authorisation of the Byzantine fiscal authorities, and that its imitations were not intended for internal circulation. While adhering to the standard norms of size and weight, the precise rendering of the legends and imperial images on the solidi was neglected, which would suggest that the coins were intended for recipients outside the Empire—in this case, for the Slavs in the hinterland, who received them as gifts or tribute. The single specimen analogous to the gold imitations produced in the Avar sphere is of particular importance, as it points to bilateral contacts maintained by the owner of these five coins (Somogy 2010, p. 446). See also Šeparović 2021, pp. 42–44.

6 Somogy 2010, p. 445.

7 Korošec 1958, pp. 34–35.

Socijalna fragmentacija

Prema onome što znamo iz arheološkog zapisa, gospodarski krah potkraj 6. i tijekom prve polovine 7. stoljeća pomeo je protagoniste kasnoantičkog ustrojstva u dalmatinskom zaobalju s povijesne pozornice. Sekularne i crkvene elite u tom ruralnom krajoliku nisu pronašle način prilagodbe na nove okolnosti, o čemu nedvosmisleno svjedoči informacijska praznina koja se tradicionalno nazivala mračnim dobom. Za očekivati je značajniju depopulaciju, koja je nastupila kao logična posljedica sveobuhvatnih promjena, i to prvenstveno među pripadnicima lokalnih elita – najvećim gubitnicima novog poretka. No, kako se danas zapravo svi slažu, dio stanovništva sasvim je sigurno ostao. Kako su se oni prilagodili novonastalim okolnostima?

U novom necentraliziranom političkom ustrojstvu nije postojala formalno definirana vlast, što opet ne podrazumijeva život u bezvlašću i neredu. Istražujući oblike vodstva u sličnim, segmentiranim ili multicentričnim sustavima, Marshall D. Sahlins razvio je koncept „Velikog Čovjeka" (*Big Man*). Riječ je o vođi regionalne rodovske skupine koji na položaj ne dolazi nasljeđivanjem, izborom ili nekim drugim formalnim načinom, već svoj autoritet i položaj u zajednici gradi djelima kojima se izdvaja od većine pripadnika skupine.[8] Njegovo je vodstvo u pravilu privremeno i javlja se u slučaju potrebe za političkom integracijom nekoliko grupa, poput obrane, pljačkaških pohoda, suradnje nakon elementarnih nepogoda i preraspodjele eventualnih viškova. Budući da moć „Velikog Čovjeka" ne proizlazi iz materijalnog, nije ni za očekivati da bi se takvi pojedinci mogli registrirati na temelju grobnih nalaza.

Budući da su nalazi bez konteksta od nevelike pomoći, preostaje tek pogled na kronološki najbliži skup podataka – prvu fazu ranosrednjovjekovnih groblja. Prisjetimo se stoga temeljnih odlika rodovskih groblja i grobnih tumula, dakle lokaliteta na kojima je početak pokapanja moguće datirati u

[8] Sahlins 1963; Haviland 2004, str. 320. Prihvaćajući Sahlinsov model, Džino zaključuje da se dalmatinski *Big Men* javljaju kao prilagodba stanovništva na krizne situacije potaknute političkim promjenama, blizinom Avara i militarizacijom društva (Džino 2014). Uz važnu Evansovu raspravu (Evans 1989, str. 159–204), Džino donosi najdetaljniju analizu društvenog ustrojstva u poslijerimskoj Dalmaciji (vidi i Džino 2021). U domaćoj literaturi Sahlinsov koncept primjenjuje i Bilogrivić (Bilogrivić 2018).

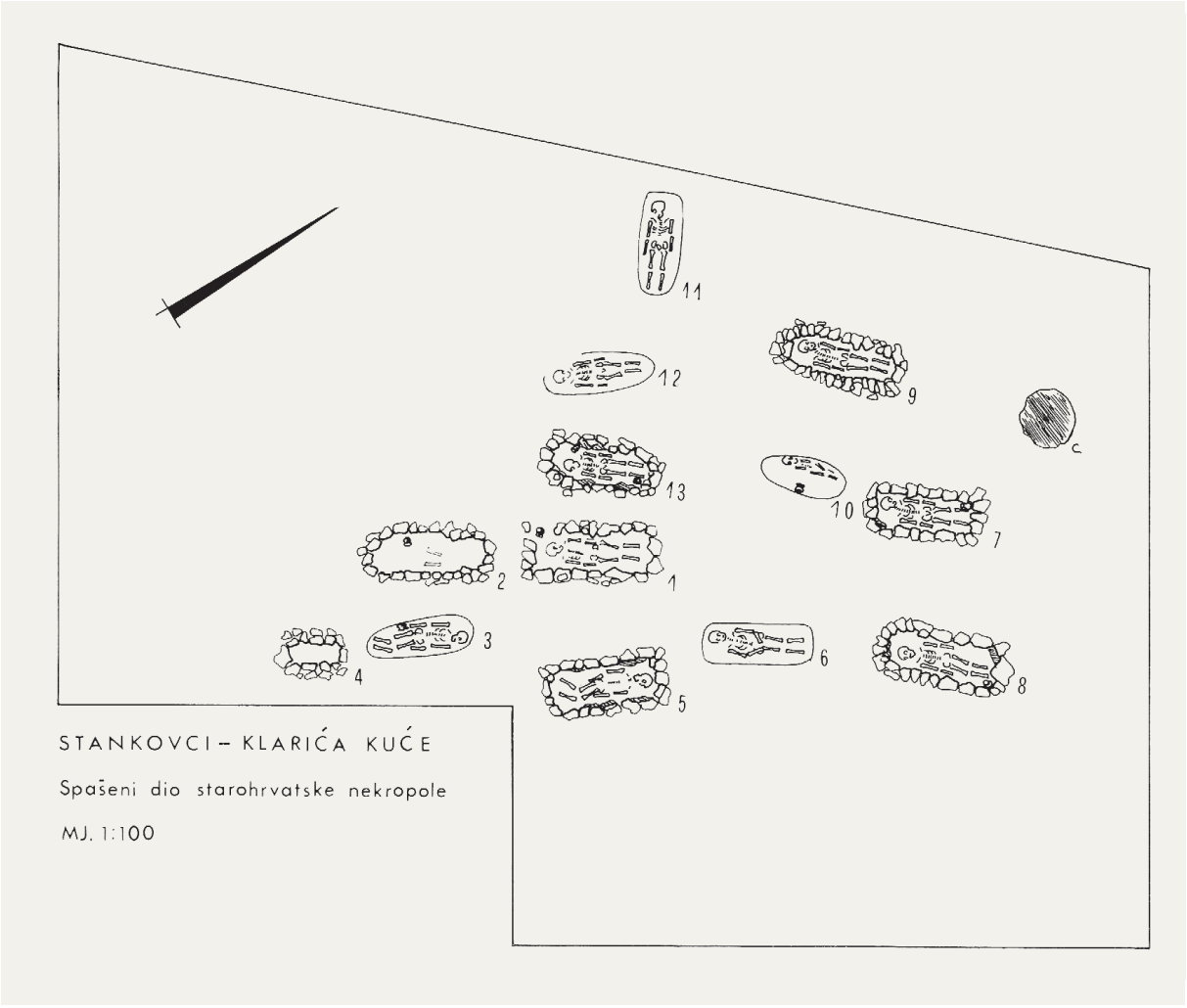
gle, undifferentiated whole. As was the case with the solidi from Potkom, it is possible that this hoard, too, contains objects produced not only in different workshops but also in different cultural milieux. In any case, the local production of jewellery by means of matrices, at least some of which were not of local origin, is yet another symptom of market disruption. The collapse of the regular distribution network at the end of the 6th or the beginning of the 7th century resulted not only in the reduction in production, but its localisation, and with it in the localisation of style. It is precisely within these processes that the reasons for the lack of direct analogies for the Biskupija matrices should be sought.

Closely related to this is the problem of dating. While the Potkom hoard very probably dates to the end of Heraclius' reign or shortly thereafter, that is, to around the mid-7th century, the matrices are more difficult to place. Korošec's dating to the 7th century certainly remains valid, to which one may only add the supposition that they are somewhat more likely to belong to the second half of the 7th century.

Social fragmentation

On the basis of what we know from the archaeological record, the economic collapse during the closing decades of the 6th century and the first half of the 7th century removed the protagonists of the late antique order in the Dalmatian hinterland from the historical stage altogether. Neither the secular nor the ecclesiastical elites of this rural landscape found a means of adapting to the altered circumstances, a fact unmistakably attested by the informational void conventionally termed the Dark Age. One may reasonably expect a more substantial depopulation as a logical consequence of these far-reaching changes, affecting above all the members of the local elites—the greatest losers under the new order. Yet there is today broad agreement that a portion of the population did in fact remain. The question, then, is how those who stayed adapted to their new circumstances.

Within the new non-centralised political order, no formally defined authority existed, though this is not to say that its absence entailed lawlessness or disorder. Examining forms of leadership in comparably segmented or multicentred systems, Marshall D. Sahlins formulated the concept of the 'Big Man': the leader of a regional kin-based group, who arrived at his position neither through inheritance

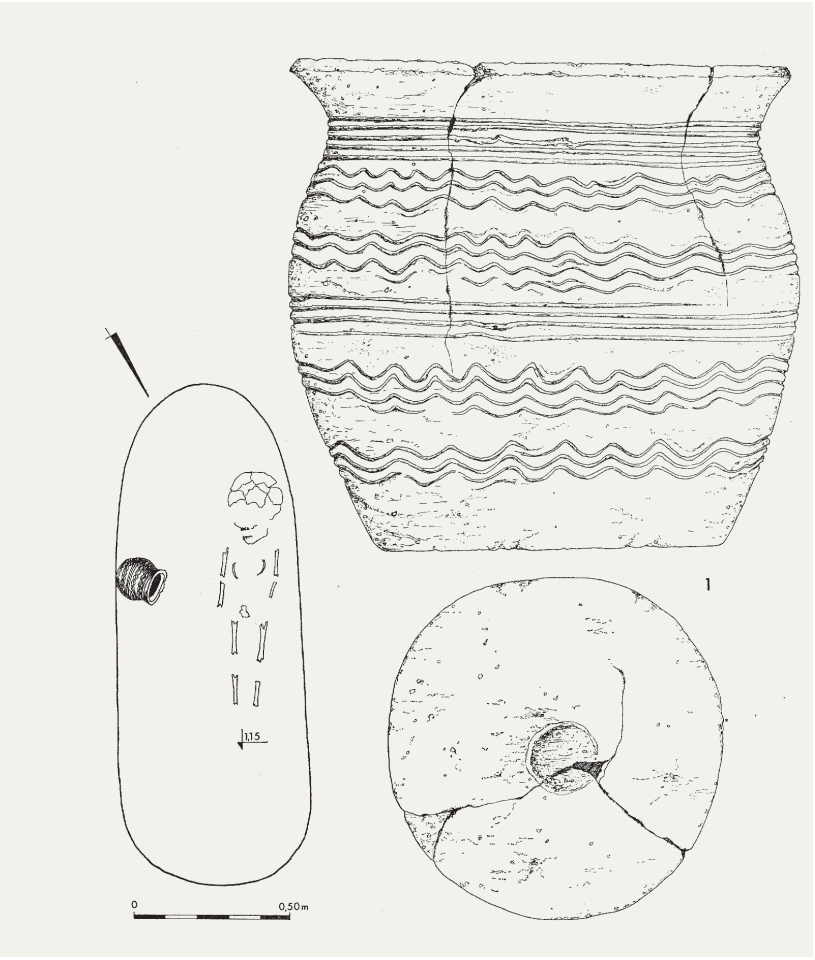


Sl. 2 - Tlocrt groblja Stankovci – Klarića kuće / (preuzeto iz: Belošević 1975, str. 192)
Fig. 2 - Ground plan of the Stankovci – Klarića kuće cemetery (after: Belošević 1975, str. 192)

prvu polovinu 8. stoljeća: Nin – Materiza, Krneza – Duševića glavica, Kašić – Razbojine, Smilčić – Kulica, Biljane Donje / Trljuge – Pržine, Stankovci – Klarića kuće, Orlić – Zadruga, Lučane – Bare te Glavice (Gluvine kuće I i II, Jojine kuće).[9] Riječ je o grobljima s ne više od tridesetak pokojnika, uglavnom i znatno manje, na kojima gotovo da nema dijagnostičkih nalaza. Karakterizira ih ekstremno nizak udio dječjih grobova, a posebna su i po posudama s češljastim ukrasom, registriranima na većini groblja, te tragovima paljenja vatre u svojstvu pogrebnog obreda. Te poveznice sugeriraju da nije riječ o gotovo potpuno devastiranim grobljima koja su izvorno mogla brojiti više od stotinu grobova, poput Ždrijaca ili Velima, već da se radi o kronološki ograničenom kulturnom fenomenu prouzročenom socioekonomskim promjenama u tadašnor election nor any other formal mechanism, but rather earned his authority and standing within the community through deeds that distinguished him from the majority of its members.[8] Such leadership tended to be temporary in character, arising wherever several groups required political integration — for defence, raiding expeditions, cooperation in the wake of natural disasters, or for the redistribution of any surplus. Since the power of the "Big Man"

[9] Vidi Alajbeg 2022 i citiranu literaturu.

[8] Sahlins 1963; Haviland 2004, p. 320. Adopting Sahlins's model, Džino argues that Dalmatian Big Men emerged as an adaptation by the population to crisis situations brought about by political change, the proximity of the Avars, and the militarisation of society (Džino 2014). Alongside Evans's important discussion (Evans 1989, pp. 159–204), Džino offers the most detailed analysis of social organisation in post-Roman Dalmatia (see also Džino 2021). Within Croatian scholarship, Sahlins's concept has also been applied by Bilogrivić (Bilogrivić 2018).



Sl. 3 - Stankovci – Klarića kuće, dječji grob 10, jedan od rijetkih ukopa djece na grobljima ove faze (preuzeto iz: Belošević 1975, str. 195)
Fig. 3 – Klarića kuće, child's Grave 10, one of the few child burials in cemeteries of this phase (taken from: Belošević 1975, str. 195)

njoj Dalmaciji. Broj ranosrednjovjekovnih grobova u nevelikim i osamljenim prapovijesnim tumulima nije ni mogao biti visok, stoga sâm odabir takve lokacije za groblje potvrđuje inicijalnu namjeru ukapanja malog broja ljudi.

Vrlo nizak broj pokojnika na tim grobljima prvenstveno je rezultat pucanja dotadašnjih čimbenika socijalne kohezije: administrativnog aparata, crkvene organizacije i gospodarstva čiji su nositelji bili krupni zemljoposjednici. Raspad sustava zato je mogao biti vrlo brz i temeljit, kao što se i nazire iz arheološkog zapisa, jer nijedna od tih triju sastavnica nije mogla samostalno nastaviti funkcionirati. Logičan refleks među preostalim stanovništvom bilo je socijalno fragmentiranje, pri čemu glavni oblici društvene organizacije postaju srodstvo i

did not derive from material wealth, one would not expect such individuals to be identifiable on the basis of grave finds.

Since finds without context are of limited use, attention must instead turn to the chronologically closest body of evidence: the first phase of early medieval cemeteries. It is therefore worth recalling the defining characteristics of clan cemeteries and burial tumuli whose initial use can be dated to the first half of the 8th century: Nin–Materiza, Krneza–Duševića glavica, Kašić–Razbojine, Smilčić–Kulica, Biljane Donje/Trljuge–Pržine, Stankovci–Klarića kuće, Orlić–Zadruga, Lučane–Bare, and Glavice (Gluvine kuće I and II, Jojine kuće).[9] These are cemeteries with no more than roughly thirty burials, and in most cases considerably fewer, in which diagnostic finds are almost entirely absent. They are also characterised by an extremely low proportion of children's graves, while most of them are further distinguished by vessels with combed decoration and by traces of fire as part of the funerary rite. These shared features suggest that we are not dealing with almost completely devastated cemeteries that may originally have contained more than a hundred graves, such as Ždrijac or Velim, but rather with a chronologically limited cultural phenomenon brought about by the socio-economic changes affecting Dalmatia at the time. The number of early medieval burials in small and isolated prehistoric tumuli could in any case never have been great; the very choice of such locations for burial confirms an original intention to inter only a small number of people there.

The very low number of burials in these cemeteries was primarily the result of the breakdown of the earlier factors of social cohesion: the administrative apparatus, the ecclesiastical organisation and the economy sustained by large landowners. The collapse of the system may therefore have been both rapid and thorough, as the archaeological record indeed suggests, since none of these three components could have continued to function independently. The logical response among the remaining population was social fragmentation, in which kinship and marriage became the principal forms of social organisation,[10] and the effects of this change

[9] See Alajbeg 2022 and the references cited there.

[10] These were, in fact, the fundamental units of communities within non-centralised political systems. On this, see Haviland 2004, pp. 317–324.

brak,[10] a odjek promjene jasno se ocrtava u pogrebnoj praksi: decentralizacija pokapanja nastupa kao zrcalni odraz decentralizacije političkog sustava.

Čini se da je groblje Kašić – Razbojine jedini lokalitet ove skupine na kojem je registrirana značajnija destrukcija, no treba podsjetiti na Jelovinin zaključak, koji nije primio dovoljno pozornosti: grobovi su pronalaženi u skupinama međusobne razdaljine od desetak metara,[11] za što je pak izgledno da nije riječ o posljedici devastacije. Raspršenost grobova na tako velikoj površini donekle podsjeća na situaciju u Glavicama, gdje su skupine grobova ili, bolje reći, groblja registrirana u duljini od nekoliko stotina metara.[12] Prostorni odnos glavičkih groblja upućuje na mogućnost da se u blizini preostalih registriranih groblja ove skupine nalazi još pokoje istodobno groblje sličnih karakteristika, što ujedno implicira njihovo teško detektiranje.[13] Barem se za groblja na gredi u Glavicama može zaključiti da se radi o stanovnicima istog sela koji se pokapaju razdvojeni prema rodovskoj, možda čak i obiteljskoj osnovi – temeljnim jedinicama novog društvenog poretka. Stanovništvo dalmatinskog zaobalja disolucijom carske uprave praktički se našlo na ničijoj zemlji, na svojevrsnom brisanom prostoru između bizantske obale i avarske Panonije. Budući da ni u arheološkom ni u povijesnom zapisu ne postoje nikakve indicije o stvaranju novog državnog uređenja, može se zaključiti da je društvo u zaobalju u ovakvom obliku – bez centralne vlasti, odsječeno od globalne trgovačke mreže i raspršeno na male rodovske zajednice – dočekalo velike promjene oko 800. godine.

Važno je i pitanje postoji li konkretna relacija između kremacijskih i rodovskih inhumacijskih groblja. Od problema nedovoljne istraženosti i objavljenosti ne može se pobjeći, no ipak je moguće upozoriti na određene okolnosti koje bi mogle barem malo razjasniti situaciju. Nijedno kremacijsko groblje do danas nije radiokarbonski datirano i

[10] To su zapravo temeljne jedinice zajednica unutar necentraliziranih političkih sustava. O tome vidi Haviland 2004, str. 317–324.

[11] Jelovina 1968, str. 24.

[12] Petrinec 2002, str. 205–206.

[13] Naravno, takva bi situacija zahtijevala pretraživanje vrlo velikih površina, što je praktički nemoguće klasičnim iskopavanjima, no zato bi vrlo korisne bile geofizičke prospekcije, koje se u Hrvatskoj, a pogotovo u Dalmaciji, još nedovoljno primjenjuju.

are clearly visible in funerary practice: the decentralisation of burial emerged as a mirror image of the decentralisation of the political order.

It seems that the cemetery at Kašić–Razbojine is the only site of this group where more substantial destruction has actually been recorded, yet one should recall Jelovina's conclusion, which has not received sufficient attention: graves were found in clusters set some ten metres apart,[11] which strongly suggests that this was not the result of devastation. The dispersal of graves across such a wide area somewhat recalls the situation at Glavice, where groups of graves—or rather cemeteries—were recorded along a stretch of several hundred metres.[12] The spatial relationship between the Glavice cemeteries suggests that, close to the other recorded cemeteries of this group, further contemporary burial grounds of similar character may once have existed, which would in turn account for their being difficult to detect.[13] At least in the case of the cemeteries on the ridge at Glavice, it may be concluded that these were the inhabitants of the same village, burying their dead separately on a kin-based, perhaps even family-based, basis—the fundamental units of the new social order. With the dissolution of imperial administration, the population of the Dalmatian hinterland effectively found itself in no man's land, in a kind of open space between the Byzantine coast and Avar Pannonia. Since neither the archaeological nor the historical record contains any indication whatsoever of the emergence of a new state order, it may be concluded that society in the hinterland, in this form—without central authority, cut off from the global trade network, and dispersed into small kin communities—encountered the major changes around the year 800 in precisely such a condition.

An important question is whether there was any concrete relationship between cremation cemeteries and clan-based inhumation cemeteries. The problems posed by insufficient investigation and publication cannot be avoided, yet certain circumstances may nonetheless be identified that shed at least partial light on the matter. No cremation cemetery

[11] Jelovina 1968, p. 24.

[12] Petrinec 2002, pp. 205–206.

[13] Confirming such a situation would naturally require the investigation of very large areas, which is practically impossible by means of conventional excavation. All the more useful, therefore, would be geophysical prospection, still insufficiently used in Croatia, and especially in Dalmatia.

ni na jednom nisu pronađeni dijagnostički nalazi.[14] Najčvršći kronološki pokazatelj je stratigrafska sekvenca u Dubravicama, gdje je horizont s urnama djelomično uništen ukapanjem kosturnih grobova, i to onih u kojima su pronađeni solid Konstantina V. i Lava IV. (760. – 775.) te zvjezdolike naušnice. Mali broj ukopa na kremacijskim grobljima i izostanak dijagnostičkih nalaza definitivno nalikuju rodovskim grobljima, što je još jedan od razloga zašto bi pojavu običaja spaljivanja pokojnika trebalo datirati u razdoblje prije socijalnih preslagivanja krajem 8. stoljeća.

Nedostatak dijagnostičkih nalaza ujedno je i posljedica ekonomske prilagodbe stanovništva, to jest zaokreta prema osiguravanju opstanka. Ekonomski kapital, koji je u kasnoantičko doba bio temelj hijerarhijskog, institucionalnog i redistributivnog poretka, u postimperijalnom razdoblju gubi sposobnost konverzije u trajnu društvenu i simboličku nadmoć te se svodi na neposredni resurs reprodukcije zajednice. Proizvodnja više ne generira akumulativne viškove koji bi se mogli institucionalizirati, već osigurava minimalne materijalne uvjete opstanka lokalnih skupina.[15] Lokalna je razmjena svakako postojala i bila je prvenstveno potaknuta visokim ili niskim poljoprivrednim prinosima, a mijenjalo se za druge prehrambene proizvode ili obrtničke rukotvorine.[16] Trampa je tako mogla omogućiti i kolanje jedinih stilski senzitivnih lokalnih proizvoda u ondašnjem zaobalju – keramičkih posuda.

Doba lokalizacije

Da su keramičke posude i predmeti dnevne upotrebe na rodovskim grobljima mahom proizvođeni lokalno i nije neka novost. Pucanje trgovačkih mreža rezultiralo je gotovo pa potpunim prestankom dotoka nakita, novca ali i ostalih dobara. No to nije moglo prouzročiti potpuni nestanak specijaliziranog rada. Lokalne zajednice imale su lončare, kovače i druge obrtnike. Dok su gliništa temeljni životni resurs koji je i najmanja zajednica imala u neposrednom okruženju, baš kao izvore vode ili plodnu zemlju, nabava metala za izradu oruđa ili nakita iziskivala je kontakt s nešto udaljenijim zajednicama. Priobalni pojas prilično je siromašan metalnim rudama, a najbliža ležišta željeza, bakra i

[14] O ranosrednjovjekovnim kremacijskim grobljima u Dalmaciji vidi Bilogrivić 2018.
[15] Alajbeg 2014, str. 158.
[16] Loseby 2008, str. 619.

has yet been radiocarbon dated, nor have diagnostic finds been recovered from any of them.[14] The most reliable chronological indicator remains the stratigraphic sequence at Dubravice, where the urn horizon was partially destroyed by later skeletal burials, including those in which a solidus of Constantine V and Leo IV (760–775) and star-shaped earrings were found. The small number of burials within cremation cemeteries and the absence of diagnostic finds certainly resemble the clan cemeteries, which is a further reason to date the emergence of cremation as a funerary rite to the period preceding the social realignments at the end of the 8th century.

At the same time, the absence of diagnostic finds is a consequence of the population's economic adaptation, that is, of a turn towards the mere maintenance of subsistence. Economic capital, which in the late antique period had formed the basis of a hierarchical, institutional and redistributive order, lost in the post-imperial period its capacity to be converted into lasting social and symbolic dominance, and was reduced instead to the immediate resource of communal reproduction. Production ceased to generate cumulative surpluses that could be institutionalised, but secured instead merely the minimum material conditions required for local groups to survive.[15] Local exchange certainly continued, driven above all by variations in agricultural yield, whether high or low, and goods were exchanged for other foodstuffs or for craft products.[16] Barter thus may have enabled the circulation of the only stylistically sensitive local products in the hinterland at that time—ceramic vessels.

The age of localisation

It is hardly a new observation that ceramic vessels and everyday objects found in kin cemeteries were, for the most part, produced locally. The breakdown of trade networks resulted in the near-complete cessation of the influx of jewellery, coinage and other goods. Yet this could not have caused the complete disappearance of specialised labour. Local communities retained their potters, smiths and other craftsmen. Clay deposits, much like water sources or fertile land, formed a basic resource available even to the smallest community in its immediate

[14] For early medieval cremation cemeteries in Dalmatia, see Bilogrivić 2018.
[15] Alajbeg 2014, p. 158.
[16] Loseby 2008, p. 619.

srebra nalazila su se u Bosni i na Baniji.[17] Potražnja za metalom bila je možda i najsnažniji pokretač razmjene, koja je čak i u doba nerazvijene trgovine pridonosila kolikoj-tolikoj razmjeni kulturnih obrazaca. No prvo ćemo se nakratko osvrnuti na, uz željezne noževe, najbrojnije nalaze na rodovskim grobljima – keramičke posude.

Proučavanje ranosrednjovjekovne grobne keramike u domaćoj je arheologiji uglavnom zanemareno, vjerojatno zbog stava da ne nosi kronološki osjetljiva obilježja.[18] Jedan od najrelevantnijih osvrta na tu problematiku, premda prilično općenit, i dalje ostaje poglavlje o keramici u Beloševićevoj *Materijalnoj kulturi*, danas gotovo pola stoljeća staroj publikaciji. Njegovu se pregledu nema što zamjeriti, tim više što je u tom trenutku takav osvrt bio nemali korak prema konkretnijoj sistematizaciji i tipološkoj klasifikaciji keramičkog fundusa. Doima se da je nedovoljan napredak u analizi keramike posljedica drastičnog pada broja novootkrivenih, a pogotovo objavljenih ranosrednjovjekovnih groblja tijekom posljednjih četiriju desetljeća.[19]

Imajući u vidu prethodno rečeno, potrebno se detaljnije osvrnuti na Beloševićeva razmatranja. On naglašava da ranosrednjovjekovna grobna keramika u Dalmaciji nosi sve bitne tehnološko-tipološke karakteristike slavenskog lončarstva. Tehnološke razlike među posudama ponajviše ovise o sastavu gline i načinu pečenja, a morfološki je čitav fundus posuda podijelio u dvije temeljne skupine. Prvu tvore lonci jajolikog, trbušastog ili blago bikoničnog oblika, kratkog vrata i širokog oboda te najčešće asimetričnog tijela, a odredio ju je kao *keramiku tipično slavenskih oblika*.[20] Drugoj, znatno malobrojnijoj skupini, pribraja posude s ručicama,

[17] Lazić, Zovko Brodarac 2019.

[18] Vidi Fabijanić 2008, str. 162–163, 169.

[19] Glede materijala s relativno novijih istraživanja, značajan doprinos predstavljaju radovi o keramici iz Podvršja i Krneze, s tim da je na Glavčinama riječ o naseobinskoj keramici – kategoriji koja je bila praktički nepoznata (Gusar 2009; Gusar 2012; Gusar, Vujević 2012). Vidi još i: Bekić 2016; Fabijanić, Karađole, Krnčević 2025; Jeršek 2025.

[20] Bekić ističe da su dalmatinski lonci znatno manji nego na sjevernijim slavenskim područjima, što objašnjava jednostavnom činjenicom da iz Dalmacije poznajemo samo grobnu keramiku. Usto dalmatinsku keramiku izdvaja i po morfološkim karakteristikama, s obzirom na to da je najšira u donjem ili srednjem dijelu lonca, dok su tipični srednjoeuropski primjerci najširi u gornjem dijelu posude (Bekić 2016, str. 168).

vicinity, whereas the acquisition of metal for tools or jewellery required contact with somewhat more distant communities. The coastal belt is rather poor in metal ores, and the nearest deposits of iron, copper, and silver lay in Bosnia and Banija.[17] Demand for metal was perhaps the single strongest driver of exchange, which, even in a period of underdeveloped trade, still contributed to at least some degree of cultural exchange. Before pursuing that point further, however, it is worth pausing briefly to consider the most common finds in clan cemeteries after iron knives—ceramic vessels.

Croatian archaeology has largely neglected the study of early medieval grave pottery, presumably on the assumption that it bears no chronologically sensitive features.[18] One of the most relevant discussions of the issue, though rather general in character, remains the chapter on pottery in Belošević's *Materijalna kultura*, a publication now almost half a century old. Little can be held against his survey, not least because it marked, in its day, a considerable advance towards a more concrete systematisation and typological classification of the ceramic assemblage. It would seem that the limited progress in the analysis of pottery is a consequence of the drastic decline in the number of newly discovered, and especially newly published, early medieval cemeteries over the last four decades.[19]

With this in mind, it is necessary to look more closely at Belošević's observations. He emphasised that early medieval grave pottery in Dalmatia displays all the principal technological and typological characteristics associated with Slavic pottery. The technological differences between vessels depend chiefly on the composition of the clay and the firing process, while morphologically he divided the entire assemblage into two basic groups. The first consists of pots of ovoid, globular or slightly biconical form, with a short neck and broad rim, most often with an asymmetrical body; he defined these

[17] Lazić, Zovko Brodarac 2019.

[18] See Fabijanić 2008, pp. 162–163, 169.

[19] In terms of material from more recent excavations, an important contribution is provided by the studies of pottery from Podvršje and Krneza, although in the case of Glavčine the material in question is settlement pottery—a category that had previously been virtually unknown (Gusar 2009; Gusar 2012; Gusar, Vujević 2012). See also Bekić 2016; Fabijanić, Karađole, Krnčević 2025; Jeršek 2025.

oblika vrča i cilindrične posude te je naziva *keramikom osobitih oblika*. Za potonju skupinu drži da se razvila kulturnim kontaktima novodoseljenih Hrvata s autohtonim stanovništvom. Ističe i specifičnu pojavu urezivanja znakova u obliku grančice, slova X ili monograma. Dvoji radi li se o lončarskim potpisima ili ti znakovi nose neko drugo značenje, no zaključuje da je glavna karakteristika ranosrednjovjekovne grobne keramike upravo njezina lokalna proizvodnja, u kojoj svako selo ima lončara ili čak nekoliko njih.[21]

Posebno je zanimljiva Beloševićeva keramika osobitih oblika, za koju, kako tvrdi, nema morfoloških analogija u ranosrednjovjekovnom slavenskom krajoliku.[22] Bekić taj zaključak ispravlja i upućuje na nezanemariv broj poveznica među posudama s jednom ili dvjema ručkama na području srednje Europe, koje se čak i u avarsko-slavenskom kontekstu pripisuju „utjecajima starosjedilačkog romanskog stanovništva i Bizanta."[23] No obojica su suglasni da je ova skupina keramike tehnološki potpuno podudarna ostatku keramičkog fundusa s dalmatinskih groblja,[24] što bi ujedno sugeriralo i da, naprimjer, vrčevi sa Ždrijaca i Klarića kuća nisu pristigli razmjenom.

Razmatrajući keramiku osobitih oblika sa Ždrijaca u širem kontekstu, Milošević ju je povezao s posudom s dvjema ručkama pronađenom zajedno s polukružnim privjeskom u uništenom grobu u Drveniku kod Makarske. Uvjerljive analogije ždrijačkim posudama pronašao je i u dvjema posudama s nekropole u Dokleji. Zaključuje da je takva keramika izravni pokazatelj kasnoantičkog kontinuiteta te dokaz sudjelovanja autohtonog stanovništva u „formiranju nove etničke slike ranosrednjovjekovne Dalmacije", pri čemu odbacuje mogućnost utjecaja kao uzročnika pojave ovih posuda na Ždrijacu.[25]

as *pottery of typically Slavic forms*.[20] To the second, considerably smaller group, he assigned handled vessels, jug-shaped vessels and cylindrical vessels, calling it *pottery of distinctive forms*. He held that this latter group developed through cultural contact between the newly settled Croats and the indigenous population. He also drew attention to the specific phenomenon of incised marks in the shape of a twig, the letter X or a monogram, uncertain whether these functioned as potters' marks or carried some other significance, yet concluding that the defining feature of early medieval grave pottery lay precisely in its local production, with every village having one potter, or even several.[21]

Particularly interesting is Belošević's pottery of distinctive forms, for which, in his own view, no morphological parallels exist within the early medieval Slavic world.[22] Bekić revises this conclusion, pointing to a not inconsiderable number of parallels among one- and two-handled vessels from central Europe which, even within an Avar-Slavic context, have been attributed to what has been termed "the influence of the indigenous Romance population and Byzantium".[23] Yet both scholars agree that this group of pottery is technologically entirely consistent with the rest of the ceramic assemblage from Dalmatian cemeteries,[24] which in turn would suggest that, for example, the jugs from Ždrijac and Klarića kuće were not obtained through exchange.

21 Belošević 1980, str. 112–113.

22 S tim se zaključkom slaže i Milošević (Milošević 1989, str. 356). Beloševićev prijedlog kronološkog slijeda, prema kojem najstariju slavensku keramiku u Dalmaciji predstavljaju urne iz Kašića (7. st.), zatim slijedi keramika osobitih oblika (8. st.) i na kraju keramika tipično slavenskih oblika (druga polovina 8. i prva polovina 9. st.), nije održiv, jer i sam naglašava da se posude potonjih dvaju tipova pronalaze kako na istim lokalitetima tako i u istim grobovima (npr. Nin – Ždrijac, grob 197).

23 Bekić 2016, str. 170.

24 Belošević 1980, str. 114; Bekić 2016, str. 170.

25 Miloševićev je zaključak i znatno izravniji, jer tvrdi da se takve posude trebaju datirati u 7. stoljeće, uključu-

20 Bekić points out that Dalmatian pots are considerably smaller than those from more northerly Slavic regions, a difference he attributes simply to the fact that only grave pottery is known from Dalmatia. In addition, he distinguishes Dalmatian pottery on morphological grounds, since its widest point lies in the lower or middle part of the pot, whereas typical central European examples are widest in the upper part of the vessel (Bekić 2016, p. 168).

21 Belošević 1980, pp. 112–113.

22 Milošević agrees with this conclusion (Milošević 1989, p. 356). Belošević's proposed chronological sequence—according to which the earliest Slavic pottery in Dalmatia is represented by the urns from Kašić (7th century), followed by pottery of distinctive forms (8th century), and finally by pottery of typically Slavic forms (second half of the 8th and first half of the 9th century)—is not tenable, since he himself emphasises that vessels of the latter two types are found both at the same sites and within the same graves (e.g. Nin–Ždrijac, grave 197).

23 Bekić 2016, p. 170.

24 Belošević 1980, p. 114; Bekić 2016, p. 170.



Sl. 4 - Keramika s nekropole u Dokleji (1–2) i groblja Nin – Ždrijac (3–7)
(preuzeto iz: Milošević 1996, str. 275)
Fig. 4 - Pottery from the necropolis at Doclea (1–2) and the Nin – Ždrijac cemetery (3–7) (taken from: Milošević 1996, str. 275)

Dakle, i Belošević i Milošević suglasni su glede posuda kasnoantičkih obilježja, no razilaze se u njihovoj etničkoj atribuciji i dataciji: prvi drži da su ih proizvodili Slaveni tijekom 8. stoljeća, a drugi, jasno je, da pripadaju „preživjelim ostacima kasnoantičkog stanovništva na tom području“ i datiraju u 7. stoljeće. Posude s ručkama pronađene su u ždrijačkim grobovima 3, 23, 72, 204 i 262, od kojih ni u jednom nije bilo databilnih nalaza. Štoviše, indicija o početku korištenja ždrijačkog groblja tijekom 7. stoljeća nema, koliko god to bilo primamljivo zbog premošćivanja kronološke praznine.[26] Datiranje nastanka groblja u 8. stoljeće dosta je izglednije, no

jući i one sa Ždrijaca, te da su pripadale autohtonom stanovništvu (Milošević 1989, str. 356).

26 Alajbeg 2014, str. 154.

Discussing the pottery of distinctive forms from Ždrijac in a broader context, Milošević linked it with a two-handled vessel found together with a semi-circular pendant in a destroyed grave at Drvenik near Makarska. He also identified convincing analogies to the Ždrijac vessels in two vessels from the necropolis at Doclea. He concludes that such pottery is a direct indicator of late antique continuity and proof of the participation of the indigenous population in the "formation of the new ethnic picture of early medieval Dalmatia", rejecting the possibility that influence might have been the cause of the appearance of these vessels at Ždrijac.[25]

Belošević and Milošević thus concur on the late antique character of these vessels while diverging sharply in their ethnic attribution and dating: the former holds that they were produced by Slavs during the 8th century, while the latter, unambiguously, believes that they belonged to the "surviving remnants of the late antique population in that area" and dates them to the 7th century. Handled vessels were found in graves 3, 23, 72, 204 and 262 at Ždrijac, none of which contained datable finds. Indeed, there is no indication that the use of the Ždrijac cemetery began in the 7th century, however tempting such a conclusion might be for the purpose of bridging the chronological gap.[26] A dating of the cemetery's beginnings to the 8th century is considerably more plausible, yet on the basis of the grave inventories it cannot be claimed that such pottery was not also used throughout much of the 9th century. Indeed, a handled vessel, albeit of a somewhat different, globular form, was also found in one of the rare excavated early medieval settlement layers, east of the Church of the Holy Cross in Nin. In that same layer, the only diagnostic find is a strap-end akin to specimens of the Hohenberg type, dated to around the year 800.[27] Whether the proportion of pottery of distinctive forms to pottery of typically Slavic forms—to use Belošević's classification—reflects their actual ratio in everyday life cannot be said without a detailed understanding of the settlements

25 Milošević's conclusion is considerably more direct, since he argues that such vessels should be dated to the 7th century—including those from Ždrijac—and that they belonged to the indigenous population (Milošević 1989, p. 356).

26 Alajbeg 2014, p. 154.

27 Belošević 1969, 210; Belošević 1980, Pl. LXXXIII. For the dating, see Petrinec 2007, 81; Petrinec 2009, 158 and the references cited there.

prema grobnim inventarima ne može se tvrditi da takva keramika nije bila korištena i tijekom dobrog dijela 9. stoljeća. Dapače, posuda s ručkom, premda nešto drukčijeg, loptastog oblika, pronađena je i u jednom od rijetkih istraženih ranosrednjovjekovnih naseobinskih slojeva – istočno od crkve Sv. Križa u Ninu. U tom istom sloju jedini dijagnostički nalaz predstavlja pojasni jezičac blizak primjercima tipa Hohenberg, koji se datiraju oko 800. godine.[27] Predstavlja li takav omjer keramike osobitih oblika naspram keramike tipično slavenskih oblika, da upotrijebimo Beloševićevu podjelu, stvarni odnos zastupljenosti tih dvaju tipova u svakodnevnom životu, nemoguće je reći bez detaljnog poznavanja naseljā. Iz grobnih inventara poznajemo mahom malene lonce, dok ostali oblici, kojih je sasvim sigurno bilo, nedostaju. To nas upozorava da na ovom stupnju istraženosti ne bismo smjeli olako izjednačavati grobnu s naseobinskom keramikom, jer su u grobovima mogli biti prilagani tek najprikladniji oblici manjih dimenzija.

Nije znakovito samo to što se stanovništvo Nina tijekom 8. i 9. stoljeća ukapa s keramikom dviju različitih tradicija, već i ukupni keramički fundus grobljā ovog perioda djeluje kao hibrid slavenskog i autohtonog lončarstva. Do takvog se zaključka može doći traženjem analogija tehnologiji, pojedinim ukrasima i oblicima, ali još i više promatranjem u cjelini: usporedimo li je sa srednjoeuropskom slavenskom keramikom, zaključit ćemo da je keramika dalmatinskog zaobalja u dobroj mjeri drukčija. S druge strane, usporedba s keramikom autohtonog stanovništva na obali u razdoblju 8. i 9. stoljeća pokazala bi u najmanju ruku sličnu razliku. Na tom tragu treba istaknuti i jednu znakovitu razliku između keramike iz Dokleje i Drvenika s jedne strane te Ždrijaca s druge. Uspoređujući morfologiju svih ovih posuda s ručkama, može se primijetiti jedna bitna razlika: promjer ždrijačkih posuda najveći je u njihovu donjem dijelu, dok su preostale posude najšire u gornjem dijelu. Podsjetimo da je Bekić upravo najveći promjer u donjoj polovini posude odredio kao jednu od ključnih karakteristika slavenske keramike u Dalmaciji.[28] Posebnost ove keramike nastala je prožimanjem različitih praksi i kontinuiranim lokalnim razvojem tijekom 7. i 8. stoljeća, lišenim utjecaja serijski proizvođene uvozne robe.

[27] Belošević 1969, str. 210; Belošević 1980, T. LXXXIII. Za datiranje vidi: Petrinec 2007, str. 81; Petrinec 2009, str. 158 i citiranu literaturu.

[28] Bekić 2016, str. 168.

themselves. From grave inventories we know chiefly small pots, while other forms, which certainly did exist, are absent. This should caution against too readily equating grave pottery with settlement pottery at the current state of research, since only the smaller, more suitable forms are likely to have been placed in graves.

It is not only significant that the population of Nin was buried during the 8th and 9th centuries with pottery belonging to two different traditions, but that the ceramic assemblage of cemeteries from this period as a whole appears as a hybrid of Slavic and indigenous pottery traditions. Such a conclusion may be reached by seeking analogies in technology, certain decorations and forms, but even more by considering the assemblage as a whole: if compared with Slavic pottery from central Europe, one must conclude that the pottery of the Dalmatian hinterland differs from it to a considerable degree. On the other hand, a comparison with the pottery of the indigenous coastal population in the 8th and 9th centuries would reveal at least a similar degree of difference. In this connection, one notable distinction should be stressed between the pottery from Doclea and Drvenik, on the one hand, and that from Ždrijac, on the other. Comparing the morphology of all these handled vessels, one may observe one significant difference: the widest diameter of the Ždrijac vessels lies in their lower half, whereas the other vessels are widest in the upper half. It should be recalled that Bekić identified the widest diameter in the lower half of the vessel precisely as one of the key features of Slavic pottery in Dalmatia.[28] The distinctiveness of this pottery arose through the interpenetration of different practices and through continuous local development during the 7th and 8th centuries, free from the influence of serially produced imported goods.

While analogies for pottery of distinctive forms can certainly be found at sites belonging to the early Byzantine cultural sphere, and parallels for pottery of typically Slavic forms are readily found deeper inland, the only area in which their coexistence is encountered is precisely that of the Dalmatian hinterland. Yet in the cemeteries of the hinterland one does not find raw, unchanged prototypes, but rather their derivatives. Amalgamation, i.e. the fusion of different traditions, is in fact the most logical explanation, and the cemeteries of the 8th century point to

[28] Bekić 2016, p. 168.

Dok se analogije za keramiku osobitih oblika itekako mogu pronaći na lokalitetima ranobizantskog kulturnog kruga, a poveznicā s keramikom tipično slavenskih oblika ne nedostaje dublje u kontinentu, jedino područje na kojem susrećemo njihovu koegzistenciju jest upravo dalmatinsko zaobalje. No na grobljima u zaobalju nisu pronađeni sirovi, nepromijenjeni prototipovi, već njihovi derivati. Amalgamacija, odnosno stapanje različitih tradicija, zapravo je najlogičnije rješenje, a groblja 8. stoljeća ukazuju na poodmakli stupanj oblikovanja nove kulturne konfiguracije.

Konačno, lokalizacija proizvodnje ne odnosi se samo na keramiku već i na nakit. Prisjetimo se stoga predmeta bez izravnih analogija iz grobova faze Ždrijac I na zapadnom ždrijačkom groblju: lijevanih pseudogrozdolikih naušnica iz groba 48, zvjezdolikih naušnica od srebrne žice ukrašenih tehnikom granulacije iz groba 227 i brončanog medaljona iz groba 216 s prikazom ljudskih likova.[29] Pandan tim nalazima predstavlja tipološki poseban željezni pojasni okov s brončanim alkama iz groba 6 na Maklinovu brdu, a u Glavicama (Gluvine kuće I) par srebrnih pseudozvjezdolikih naušnica ukrašenih granuliranjem. Sav ovaj nakit djeluje kao rudimentarna lokalna produkcija prema ranobizantskim uzorima, a u slučaju pojasnog okova i prema kontinentalnim uzorima. Preostali materijal iz grobova te faze, uz predmete dnevne upotrebe, čine najjednostavniji tipovi nakita, poput prstenja od raskovanog lima ili običnih karičica, odnosno nakit kasnoantičke tradicije bez precizne kronološke vrijednosti.

Lokalizacija proizvodnje stoga nije samo posljedica trgovačkog sloma nego i simptom dublje društvene transformacije. Keramika i nakit dalmatinskog zaobalja tijekom 8. stoljeća ne odražavaju ni puki kontinuitet starijih tradicija ni jednostavnu translaciju doseljenih kulturnih obrazaca, već proces njihove lokalne preobrazbe u novim, postimperijalnim okolnostima.

Zaključak

Cilj ove rasprave bio je upozoriti da 7. i veći dio 8. stoljeća u dalmatinskom zaobalju ne treba razumjeti ni kao razdoblje jednostavne praznine ni kao tinjajući nastavak kasnoantičkih obrazaca. Ono što se nazire jest društvo atrofirane institucionalne gustoće, oslabljenih mreža razmjene i ograničenog

[29] Alajbeg 2014, str. 149–152.

an advanced stage in the shaping of a new cultural configuration.

Finally, the localisation of production was not restricted to pottery, but also included jewellery. Let us therefore recall the objects lacking direct analogies from graves of the Ždrijac I phase in the western Ždrijac cemetery: the cast pseudo-cluster earrings from grave 48, the star-shaped earrings of silver wire decorated in the granulation technique from grave 227, and the bronze medallion bearing human figures from grave 216.[29] Their counterpart is provided by the typologically distinctive iron belt fitting with bronze rings from grave 6 at Maklinovo brdo, and, at Glavice (Gluvine kuće I), by a pair of silver pseudo-star-shaped earrings decorated with granulation. All this jewellery appears to be a rudimentary local production inspired by early Byzantine prototypes, and in the case of the belt fitting also by continental models. The remaining material from the graves of this phase, apart from everyday objects, consisted of the simplest types of jewellery, such as rings made of hammered sheet metal or plain hoop earrings, in other words, jewellery of late antique tradition without precise chronological value.

The localisation of production, therefore, was not merely a consequence of commercial collapse, but also a symptom of deeper social transformation. The pottery and jewellery of the Dalmatian hinterland during the 8th century reflect neither the plain continuation of older traditions nor the straightforward transfer of incoming cultural patterns, but rather a process of their local reworking under new, post-imperial conditions.

Conclusion

This discussion has sought to establish that the 7th century and much of the 8th in the Dalmatian hinterland should be understood neither as a period of simple emptiness nor as a smouldering continuation of late antique patterns. What emerges instead is a society marked by atrophied institutional density, weakened networks of exchange, and a limited capacity to generate archaeological and historical visibility. The scarcity of archaeological data is therefore not a consequence of insufficient investigation or methodological shortcomings, but points above all to a different logic of social functioning.

[29] Alajbeg 2014, pp. 149–152.

kapaciteta za proizvodnju arheološke i povijesne vidljivosti. Oskudica arheoloških podataka zato nije posljedica nedovoljne istraženosti ili metodoloških promašaja, već ponajprije upućuje na drukčiju logiku društvenog funkcioniranja.

U središtu te transformacije stajala je socijalna fragmentacija. Urušavanjem imperijalnog i crkvenog aparata, kao i drugih mehanizama socijalne kohezije, dalmatinsko se zaobalje postupno pretvaralo u krajolik manjih i slabo povezanih lokalnih zajednica. U takvu su poretku srodstvo, lokalna pripadnost i prilagodba okolišu nadomjestili pripadnost širim političkim i gospodarskim strukturama. Upravo se u toj promjeni mogu tražiti razlozi decentralizacije pogrebnog prostora, lokalizacije proizvodnje i ograničenog društvenog značaja materijalne kulture.

Međutim, najvažnija posljedica tih procesa nije bio puki prijenos migrantske kulture na jug, ali ni jednostavni opstanak autohtonih tradicija, već kulturni preokret iz kojeg se postupno oblikovao novi krajolik ranosrednjovjekovne Dalmacije. Geomorfološka razlomljenost zaobalja dodatno je pojačavala lokalne razlike i ostavljala prostor za neujednačene kontakte te različite intenzitete integracije. U nekim je mikroregijama moglo doći do dubljeg stapanja autohtonih i slavenskih skupina, u drugima do slabije izloženosti demografskim strujanjima, a ponegdje i do izrazitog diskontinuiteta i konflikta. Zajednički nazivnik tih procesa nije, dakle, jedinstveni scenarij, još manje etnički monolit, nego zajednički postimperijalni okvir unutar kojeg su nastajale različite lokalne konfiguracije.

Stoga raspad imperijalnog sustava i migracije nisu međusobno isključivi uzročnici, nego prvotno neovisni, a zatim isprepleteni procesi koji su otvorili prostor za novi društveni poredak u dalmatinskom zaobalju. Pritom političku konfiguraciju 9. stoljeća ne treba gledati kao svečano finale transformacija 7. i 8. stoljeća: ti procesi nisu bili linearni, a još manje usmjereni prema određenom političkom raspletu. Njihov je dodatni značaj upravo u tome što omogućuju bolje razumijevanje okolnosti u kojima je Kneževina Hrvatska stupila na povijesnu pozornicu kao jedan od mogućih, ali ne i unaprijed zadanih ishoda postimperijalne transformacije.

At the centre of this transformation stood social fragmentation. With the collapse of the imperial and ecclesiastical apparatus, along with other mechanisms of social cohesion, the Dalmatian hinterland was gradually turning into a landscape of smaller and only loosely connected local communities. Within such an order, kinship, local belonging, and adaptation to the environment came to replace attachment to broader political and economic structures. It is precisely in this shift that one should seek the reasons for the decentralisation of burial space, the localisation of production, and the limited social significance of material culture.

The most important consequence of these processes was, however, neither the straightforward transfer of a migrant culture southwards nor the plain survival of indigenous traditions, but a cultural turning point out of which a new landscape of early medieval Dalmatia gradually emerged. The geomorphological fragmentation of the hinterland further intensified local differences and left room for uneven contacts and differing degrees of integration. In some micro-regions this may have led to a deeper fusion of indigenous and Slavic groups; in others, a weaker exposure to demographic currents; and in some cases, to marked discontinuity and conflict. The common denominator of these processes was therefore not a single scenario, still less an ethnic monolith, but a shared post-imperial framework within which different local configurations emerged.

The collapse of the imperial system and migration should therefore not be seen as mutually exclusive causes, but as processes that were initially independent and later became intertwined, opening space for a new social order in the Dalmatian hinterland. The political configuration of the 9th century should not, in turn, be viewed as the solemn culmination of the transformations of the 7th and 8th centuries: these processes were not linear, still less directed towards any predetermined political outcome. Their additional significance lies precisely in the fact that they allow for a better understanding of the circumstances in which the Principality of Croatia stepped onto the historical stage as one of the possible, but by no means preordained, outcomes of post-imperial transformation.

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