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First Kings of Europe

EXHIBITION CATALOG

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Attila Gyucha and William A. Parkinson

UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press

THE FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

The Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press is the publishing unit of the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, a premier research organization dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and conservation of archaeological knowledge and heritage. It is home to both the Interdepartmental Archaeology Graduate Program and the UCLA/Getty Program in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage. The Cotsen Institute provides a forum for innovative faculty research, graduate education, and public programs at UCLA in an effort to positively impact the academic, local and global communities. Established in 1973, the Cotsen Institute is at the forefront of archaeological research, education, conservation and publication, and is an active contributor to interdisciplinary research at UCLA.

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IRON AGE

Letter from the President of the Field Museum of Natural History

FIRST KINGS OF EUROPE IS A MILESTONE EXHIBITION. It not only represents unprecedented cooperation between museums in Southeast Europe and North America but also sets the stage for future, continued collaborations, through which we can all learn more about our shared human history. Not since these prehistoric artifacts were made and used thousands of years ago have they been brought together in one place. Now, thanks to twenty-six lending museums from eleven European countries—Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia—the artifacts in *First Kings of Europe* tell the story of the evolution of social differences and political hierarchy in Southeast Europe.

As this catalog so richly shows, many of the artifacts are stunning works of artisanal craft, while others are simply made but markedly evocative. Together, they vividly illuminate how an emergent elite grew their power and influence by amassing wealth and controlling technology, trade, rituals, and warfare throughout several millennia, from the earliest sedentary communities to the first kings, queens, and states.

First Kings of Europe unites those with a shared history in the region—both people living in Southeast Europe today and North American communities originally from these areas—and issues a broader invitation to all visitors to form their own connections through the exhibition.

I am proud that *First Kings of Europe* has been developed by the Field Museum, led by Curator William Parkinson and his long-term collaborator, Attila Gyucha at the University of Georgia. Many thanks to all of our colleagues both at the Field and at all twenty-six partner museums who have worked together to such spectacular results and demonstrated what is possible through passion about the past and collaboration for the future.

Julian Siggers President & CEO
Field Museum of Natural History

Letter from the Directors of the European Lending Institutions

June 15, 2022

CONTEXT IS THE REAL KING, even if at times, you may have been led to believe otherwise. Picture the hundreds of objects depicted in this catalog scattered around nearly a dozen countries and more than twice as many institutions in a remote corner of Europe. They are not exactly gathering dust, to say the least. Quite the reverse, the artifacts in question invariably feature most prominently in permanent displays of prestigious museums, each of them not only a jewel in its own right, but at the same moment also a definite time capsule of condensed information and meaning, awaiting to be explored and revealed to the outside world.

But while it is true that every object may have a story to tell, the lessons to be learned ultimately depend on the ideas, knowledge, and intentions of the interpreters. And above all, the context they choose to use. With *First Kings of Europe*, the Field Museum of Natural History, along with its partner institutions in North America, the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University and the Canadian Museum of History, have conjured up a fascinating narrative of the emergence of social hierarchy in Southeast Europe. A narrative that is as comprehensive as it is thorough, as steeped in tradition as it is inventive, and as striking in execution as it was bold in conceptualization.

First Kings of Europe excels in bringing out the exquisite in each carefully selected artifact, juxtaposing the tangible and symbolic values of the pieces to highlight the messages of leadership and hierarchy at the core of this seminal exhibition. Much to our pleasure, the authors' quest for the dawn—and early morning—of burgeoning social complexity has not only added new and previously unexplored meanings to the exhibits on display, generated fresh collaborations, and forged strong bonds between participating institutions, but also given us a unique opportunity to showcase the masterpieces from our collections in exceptional settings at three outstanding North American venues. Arguably, the last time the artifacts on display shone this brightly was many lifetimes ago when they were still wielded, worn, or otherwise used by unnamed and long-gone leaders and rulers in Southeast Europe. For all of this, we are proud, and we are thankful. And we jubilantly raise our glasses to their early Royal Highnesses, the *First Kings of Europe*!

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ALBANIA

Institute of Archaeology,
Archaeological Museum in Tirana, Tirana

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

National Museum of
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo

BULGARIA

National Museum of History, Sofia

Rousse Regional Museum of History, Rousse

Varna Regional Museum of History, Varna

CROATIA

Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb

HUNGARY

Budapest History Museum, Budapest

Déri Museum, Debrecen

Hungarian National Museum, Budapest

Koszta József Museum, Szentes

Móra Ferenc Museum, Szeged

Munkácsy Mihály Museum, Békéscsaba

Szent István Király Museum, Székesfehérvár

KOSOVO

National Museum of Kosovo, Prishtina

MONTENEGRO

Museums and Galleries of Podgorica, Podgorica

NORTH MACEDONIA

Institute for Protection of Cultural Heritage
and Museum–Bitola, Bitola

Institute for Protection of the Monuments
of Culture and Museum–Prilep, Prilep

National Institution Museum–Gevgelija, Gevgelija

ROMANIA

Buzău County Museum, Buzău

Museum of Oltenia, Craiova

National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest

National Museum of Transylvanian
History, Cluj-Napoca

Neamț County Museum Complex, Piatra Neamț

The Museum of Gumelnița Culture, Oltenița

SERBIA

National Museum of Serbia, Belgrade

SLOVENIA

National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubljana

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THIS CATALOG IS A COMPANION BOOK to the *First Kings of Europe* traveling exhibition, and is accompanied by a volume consisting of eleven essays, entitled *First Kings of Europe: From Farmers to Rulers in Prehistoric Southeastern Europe*, and a souvenir booklet published by the Canadian Museum of History and the Field Museum. We cannot begin to thank everyone who has contributed to this project. From the hatching of an ambitious idea several years ago to the grand openings of the international exhibition in New York, Chicago, and Gatineau, this project has been a series of both literal and figurative journeys for everyone involved. We like to say that field archaeology is a team sport—it requires collaboration between various experts with different specializations who come together to investigate ancient societies. But an exhibition about archaeology takes the whole concept of collaboration to the next level and includes an even broader range of experts, including curators, designers, developers, registrars, conservators, mount makers, museum administrators, artists, publishers, editors, and diplomats. This unprecedented project, which required the coordination of nearly thirty lending institutions in eleven European countries and the close collaboration of three major North American museums—the Field Museum of Natural History, the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University, and the Canadian Museum of History—was at times exceptionally challenging but also extremely gratifying. We attempt here humbly to express our gratitude to those who have made this project a success, and we beg forgiveness from those we may have inadvertently left off the list. We promise to make it up to you when we meet in person in the form of beer, pálinka, raki, coffee, or ice cream!

From Albania, we would like to thank Professor Doctor Luan Përzhita, former director of the Institute of Archaeology and the current director, Belisa Muka and their esteemed colleagues Dr. Rovena Kurti Ruka and Rudenc Ruka. Rudenc also co-authored a chapter in the essay book with Dr. Michael Galaty of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. We also want to recognize the help and guidance of our friend Dr. Ols Lafe of Aleksander Moisiu University in Durrës.

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ultimately would not be represented in the exhibition. Finally, at the Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, previous directors Aco Kostov and Dr. Eleonora Petrova Mitevska, as well as Kristina Biceva, head of the Division for International Cooperation, worked with us to ensure the success of this project. The current director Arian Aslanaj and his colleague Biljana Jovanovska also helped us with their support. Drs. Naumov and Mitevska also co-authored a chapter for the essay volume.

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INTRODUCTION

First Kings of Europe

THE *FIRST KINGS OF EUROPE* EXHIBITION is an unprecedented international and intercontinental collaboration between museums in Southeast Europe and North America. Developed by the Field Museum of Natural History, the exhibition chronicles the transition from the world of egalitarian farming communities to that of societies ruled by formidable chiefs and mighty kings and queens in prehistoric southeastern Europe. Ultimately, we hope that the exhibition will facilitate visitors' understanding of how our own world of concentrated wealth and disparate inequalities began, along with the emergence of leadership, in the remote past.

The exhibition is the outcome of a true collaboration between the Field Museum and twenty-six museums in eleven Southeast European countries—Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia. *First Kings of Europe* showcases objects from these countries to explore the emergence of communities with increasingly complex political and economic inequalities, and to illustrate how emergent elites grew their power and influence by exerting control over four focal aspects of prehistoric life: technology, trade, rituals, and warfare. We selected artifacts crafted during the Neolithic, Copper Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age (about 8,000 to 2,300 years ago) from the exceptionally rich archaeological heritage of southeastern Europe to examine the importance of these four aspects in the evolution of social inequality and hierarchy in the Balkans and beyond. These artifacts let us explore how individuals and groups convinced others to respect their superiority and their differential access to goods, places, and decisions. They also let us discuss the strategies and techniques leaders used to express their status and manipulate the masses, and the roles material culture and events played in the maintenance and inheritance of political capital and social privileges.

Catalog No. 13 *Ceramic figurine from Bardhosh, Kosovo*

The story of the exhibition itself began in early 2017 when we submitted our concept and preliminary object (wish)list to the board of the Field Museum. Upon the approval of the proposal, organization began and a Field Museum delegation traveled to Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, and Romania to meet the representatives of potential partner institutions. During the next trip in 2018, we visited museums in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. Over the course of four additional trips in 2019, 2020, and 2022, we further discussed the details of collaboration with our colleagues, and the artifacts selected for display were photographed and measured. At each institution, we experienced incredible hospitality for which we cannot be more grateful.

In addition to these trips, thousands of emails have been exchanged, hundreds of phone calls and online meetings have taken place between the curators, Field Museum staff, the representatives of the participating museums, and the shipping company to elaborate loan peculiarities, secure export permits, and manage the extremely complicated logistics of the project. In the development of the exhibition, dozens of Field Museum specialists and external experts have participated. The

global pandemic did not leave the *First Kings of Europe* project untouched either, and the originally proposed opening date of March 2021 was pushed back by one and a half years.

First Kings of Europe is a traveling exhibition that will be displayed in three prestigious museums in North America. The exhibition, under the title "Ritual and Memory: The Ancient Balkans and Beyond," will be on view at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University between 21 September 2022 and 19 February 2023, then it will travel to the Field Museum and will be on view from 31 March 2023 to 28 January 2024. Finally, the Canadian Museum of History will host the exhibition from 4 April 2024 through 19 January 2025. At the Field Museum and the Canadian Museum of History, all the 114 selected individual objects and multi-item assemblages—altogether a total of about 750 objects—will be displayed in an area of 700 square meters (about 7,500 square feet), while, owing to the smaller exhibition area available, somewhat fewer artifacts will be exhibited at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World.

This volume presents the objects showcased in the exhibitions. Reflecting the exhibition structure, the book is subdivided into four chronologically organized sections: the Neolithic, Copper Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age. At the beginning of each section, we briefly summarize the major characteristics of each period, with emphases on the four key aspects of the exhibition that weave through the temporal periods (technology, trade, rituals, and warfare). Each individual artifact and artifact assemblage is described in the catalog entries by Southeast European specialists, predominantly from the lending institutions, with a focus on their importance in relation to the concept of the exhibition. The catalog entries are accompanied by photographs, the vast majority of which were taken by a Hungarian photographer, Ádám Vágó, on behalf of the Field Museum.

Two additional books also accompany the exhibition. An edited volume of essays, entitled *First Kings of Europe: From Farmers to Rulers in Prehistoric Southeastern Europe*, includes eleven chapters about various themes that are discussed in the exhibition. As with this catalog, the majority of the authors of that book of essays are local scholars. A souvenir book, published by the Canadian Museum of History and the Field Museum, is the third book in association with the exhibition highlighting the major points of the exhibition.

The Hungarian National Museum will host a conference with a focus on the origins and evolution of social inequality and hierarchy in southeastern Europe during prehistory in Spring 2023 and we hope to host another symposium in Chicago while the exhibition is on display there.

The *First Kings of Europe* exhibition provides a unique opportunity for people from countries in southeastern Europe to reflect on their common prehistoric past, for North American communities from these parts of Europe to come together and celebrate their common cultural heritage, and for people without direct connections to these regions to learn about and appreciate the long and rich cultural history of southeastern Europe.

Catalog No. 52 *Bronze hoard of cauldrons and cups from Hajdúsámson, Hungary*

A Land Before Kings: The Neolithic Period

OVER HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of years, during a geological epoch we call the Pleistocene, humans evolved to live in small, mobile groups that made their living by hunting wild animals and gathering wild plants, such as nuts and berries. In these groups, very little hierarchy developed, and forms of leadership were based largely upon consensus and achievement. Now, we live in a world where almost nobody makes their living by hunting and gathering wild resources—most of the eight billion people on our planet rely almost exclusively on agricultural products that are grown or raised. We also live in a world that is very unequal, where only a handful of people own most of the wealth and wield most of the power. Finally, until just a few hundred years ago, the vast majority of political leaders in the world were monarchs—kings and queens who were born into their positions. While more democratic and parliamentary forms of government have become more common in recent centuries, large parts of the world are still ruled under different kinds of monarchic governments. How did this happen? How did we go from a world where everyone was a hunter and gatherer living in a more-or-less 'egalitarian' society to one where people woke up as farmers and much of their future was dictated by their status at birth? This is the story of the *First Kings of Europe*.

The transition from a mobile lifestyle based on hunting and gathering to a more sedentary lifeway based on farming was one of the most significant changes in the history of humankind. Beginning about twelve thousand years ago, at the onset of our current geological epoch, which is called the Holocene, this process took place for the first time in Southwest Asia and unfolded over millennia—first through groups settling down into sedentary villages and then through the domestication of a relatively few plant and animal species. Eventually, farming and animal husbandry became the prevalent mode of subsistence throughout the region and population size started to increase. This demographic growth was likely one of the major drivers that pushed some groups of migrants through Anatolia and into the Balkan Peninsula. In some cases, areas that previously had not been occupied by hunters and gatherers, because they did not have the right resources, were ideal for newly arrived farmers, and they arrived in droves. In other cases, farming, sedentism, and other practices associated with the 'Neolithic package' were adopted by local groups of hunters and gatherers.

A sedentary lifestyle based on farming arrived in the Balkans about nine thousand years ago and, through processes of migration and adoption, many traditions spread across the region, including the knowledge of how to cultivate lands and grow cereals and legumes, raise and breed pigs, goats, sheep, and cattle, organize villages and construct durable houses, make stone tools for chopping down trees and grinding grains, produce ceramics to cook and store food, and satisfy the supernatural to secure a good harvest and a bright future for the village. The spread of the Neolithic way of life took nearly a millennium, and eventually the Balkan Peninsula and the Carpathian Basin became dotted

Catalog No. 1 *Ceramic figurine from Poduri, Romania*

with the hamlets and villages of early farmers. In some cases, people in the region continued many traditions that originally derived from Southwest Asia, but over time these were replaced by new traditions that were developed, maintained, and transformed by subsequent generations of Southeast European Neolithic agricultural communities.

Raising animals and farming crops during the Neolithic was labor-intensive and the workload would have been considerable, especially in the spring and the fall. In addition, after the harvest and throughout the winter, the crops needed to be stored and the livestock needed to be kept alive. As a result, the first farmers chose to locate their permanent villages in the most fertile areas available. Thus it is not by chance that the earliest Neolithic communities in southeastern Europe settled in the plain of Thessaly, modern-day Greece, and the densest concentrations of Neolithic villages were established in similar landscapes of river valleys, such as in Pelagonia, in present-day North Macedonia, or on the Great Hungarian Plain. With these sedentary communities surrounded by their carefully managed agricultural territories, landscapes became segmented, boundaries were drawn, and stress and conflicts between communities occurred more and more frequently, especially as the population that needed to be fed grew over time. In other words, the Neolithic landscape became 'politicized,' to use our own modern terminology.

As in Southwest Asia, in addition to farmsteads and smaller, more ephemeral villages, some Neolithic settlements in southeastern Europe were inhabited for many generations. Through cycles of building, destruction, and rebuilding of wattle-and-daub houses on top of one another, their settlements eventually built up into mounds. These kinds of mounded villages are called a variety of different terms in different languages, but archaeologists most frequently use a variation of the Arabic word *tell* to describe them. By about seven thousand years ago, tells dominated the landscapes in many regions from the southern Balkans to the northern edge of the Great Hungarian Plain. These sites frequently became important and attractive places for the regional communities who moved onto and near the tells, creating extensive villages occupied by many hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of individuals.

Neolithic settlements in southeastern Europe were frequently surrounded by ditches, ramparts, and palisades. Although these enclosures have sometimes been interpreted as symbolic features or the physical manifestation of social boundaries, they also likely served

Catalog No. 11 *Detail of ceramic figurine from Szegvár, Hungary*

defensive purposes during intergroup conflicts. Competition for arable land and other resources sometimes led to violence among the Neolithic communities—this is indicated not only by defensive structures and several examples of human skeletal remains with traces of violent trauma but also by burning episodes that have been observed in particular in the uppermost, latest levels of many tell sites.

The Neolithic communities of southeastern Europe are commonly assumed to have been what anthropologists call 'egalitarian,' where social status was based on age and gender or was achieved through personal skills and actions, rather than being automatically passed on to the next generation. However, some researchers have argued that access to tells, as important domestic or ceremonial places, may not have been always equal, with some groups, especially the descendants of the founding community, bearing higher social ranks than others.

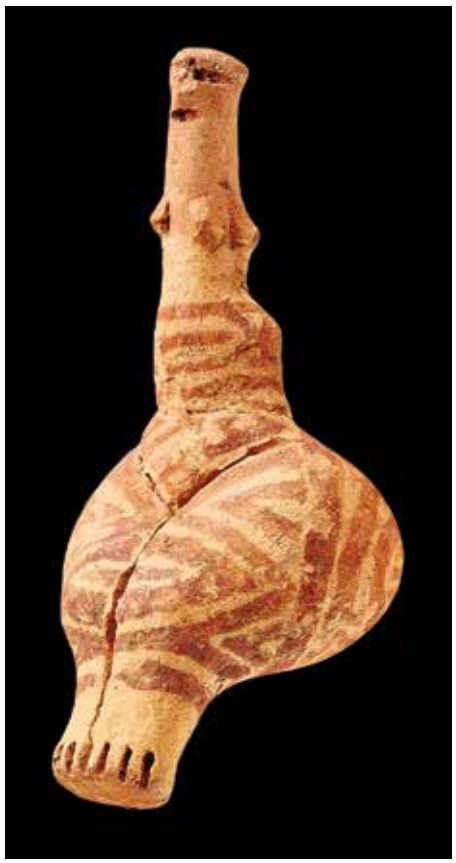
The treatment of the dead may also testify to the emergence of some incipient forms of inequality in Neolithic southeastern Europe. Burials are communal ceremonies where, in addition to reflecting the community's beliefs, the status of the dead and, equally importantly, the ambitions of the living are communicated through acts and objects. During the Neolithic, the deceased were regularly interred within settlements, and typically no or only a very few objects were placed with them. However, some people were treated differently. Archaeologists have recovered burials in southeastern Europe where the mortuary process deviated from the regional norm and the number and quality of grave goods that were included were truly extraordinary. For example, a woman who was placed in a wooden coffin at the tell-centered site of Polgár-Csőszhalom near the Tisza River in Hungary was buried with elaborately crafted objects made with a variety of different raw materials derived from remote regions, indicating her important status within the community (Catalog No. 7). Far-flung trade networks brought not only exotic goods to the Neolithic villages but also materials that were indispensable for performing daily tasks, such as flint objects from Bulgaria (Catalog Nos. 2 and 3); tools made of stone remained important for several millennia to come before metals became widely available.

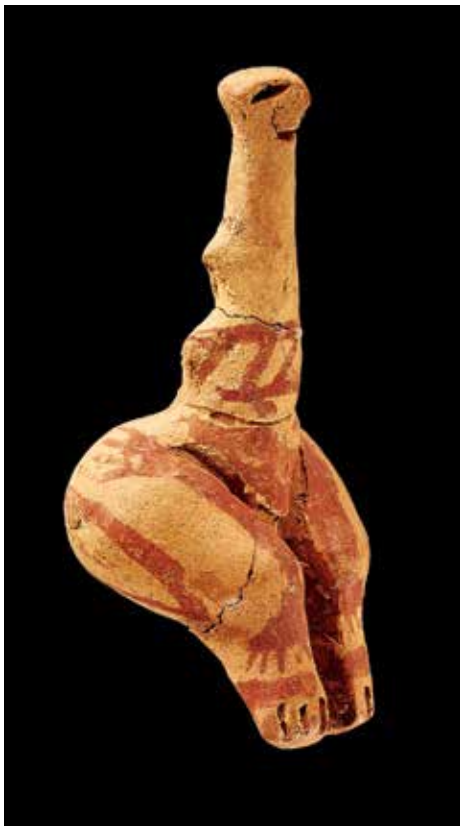
Ritual behaviors in Neolithic southeastern Europe were not limited to mortuary practices but occurred in household and village contexts as well. Throughout prehistory, the Neolithic archaeological record is truly outstanding from the point of view of the abundance of structures and objects illustrating the breadth and significance of ritual ceremonies. Features interpreted as stand-alone shrines or temples have been excavated at several sites. They are characterized by layouts and fixed architectural elements that do not occur in regular houses as well as assemblages believed to be sacred offerings. The Parța shrine, a ritual structure with large figures and altars from an important tell site in western Romania, is one example of how important beliefs and ceremonies were in Neolithic communities. The exhibition features a partial reconstruction of this shrine.

The exhibition also showcases spectacular Neolithic objects that would have been used as central elements during the course of different ritual activities. Human figurines made of fired clay were common artifacts in many regions of southeastern Europe, although their forms and decorations varied by region and period. A wide range of explanation has been proposed for the role of figurines in Neolithic communities—researchers have interpreted these objects as the representations of particular community members, ancestors, or supernatural creatures. Two examples from Kosovo in the exhibition represent the central Balkans, with characteristic facial features (Catalog Nos. 13 and 14). Many of the figurines crafted on the Great Hungarian Plain during the later periods of the Neolithic had complex incised geometric designs—some are seated on chairs or thrones, such as the ones from Szegvár in the exhibition (Catalog Nos. 10 and 11). In a few cases, figurines also have been found as parts of a larger assemblage of human representations and other objects. In a possible sanctuary at Poduri, in eastern Romania, twenty-one figurines of different size and decoration were recovered, along with thirteen chairs (Catalog No. 1), possibly indicating a group of community members, or perhaps a pantheon of gods.

An additional group of objects bearing important ritual significance, specific to the Neolithic of the Carpathian Basin, is face pots. As with figurines, these have incised motifs following strict design rules and emphasizing the faces (Catalog Nos. 8 and 9). During excavations, these artifacts are frequently found in deliberately broken conditions and in spatial association with households. Like figurines, face pots had important symbolic significance and likely were used in ritual, presumably fertility-related, ceremonies; some researchers have argued that they represent deities.

The Neolithic was a dynamic era with a series of trials and errors concerning many aspects of life, including settlement organization, subsistence, and social organization. People in southeastern Europe enacted a wide variety of responses to the challenges they faced, and the markedly heterogeneous archaeological record testifies to the flexibility and adaptive capability of Neolithic communities across the region.





Catalog No. 1
Figurine group
Ceramic
Poduri-Dealul Ghindaru, Romania
4900–4750 BC
Figurines (21)
Height: 3.4–8.7 cm
Width: 1.5–4.7 cm
Inv. No. 10095–10113, 10115–10116
Chair models (13)
Height: 1.5–3.3 cm
Width: 1.8–4.5 cm
Inv. No. 10117–10128, 10691
Perforated clay ball
Diameter: 0.9 cm
Inv. No. 10703
Neamț County Museum Complex,
Piatra Neamț, Romania
Bibliography: Monah et al. 2003:
107–10; Bailey 2010:114, Figure 5:1.

This set of twenty-one incised and painted female figurines and thirteen small chairs was discovered in a ceramic vessel in a possible sanctuary. Based on their shape, size, and decorations, each figurine seems to represent a different character. The various interpretations generally agree on the symbolic significance of the assemblage; however, some argue that the figurines played a role in understanding and maintaining group identity in the village, while others have proposed that they represent a council of goddesses, with the larger figurines in their chairs embodying older divinities.

Attila Gyucha

Catalog No. 2
Blade core
Flint
Rousse, Bulgaria
4650–4500 BC
Length: 8.4 cm
Width: 6.5 cm
Thickness: 4.7 cm
Inv. No. I 5526
Rousse Regional Museum of History, Rousse, Bulgaria
Bibliography: Unpublished

The raw material of this artifact, so-called Ludogorski flint, originates from the Razgrad region, probably from the Ravno–Kamenovo district, some 60–70 km from Rousse, where there was a large and important workshop for flint extraction and tool production during the Neolithic and Copper Age. This workshop circulated both the raw material and finished tools over large distances.

Dimitar Chernakov

Catalog No. 3
Blade core
Flint
Kamenovo, Bulgaria
4500–4200 BC
Length: 19 cm
Width: 14 cm
Thickness: 9.7 cm
Inv. No. I 7235
Rousse Regional Museum of History, Rousse, Bulgaria
Bibliography: Unpublished

This flint blade core was made of Ludogorski flint from the Ravno–Kamenovo district, presumably by the same workshop that extracted and curated a similar piece in the exhibition from Rousse (Catalog No. 2). The artifact was recovered from the center of the Kamenovo site during an archaeological excavation in 2016.

Dimitar Chernakov

Catalog No. 4
Altar
Ceramic
Vučedol, Croatia
6000–5300 BC
Height: 9.9 cm
Length: 6.2 cm
Width: 6.3 cm
Diameter of the basin: 8.4 cm
Inv. No. P-Vč 8023
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Schmidt 1945: Table 52:3a–b

This zoomorphic, four-legged altar was recovered during the excavation of the Gradac site at Vučedol in 1938. With the lack of field documentation, the exact find context of the object remains unknown. One of the potential interpretations is that it represents a deer—it is also possible, however, that the intention was not to depict a particular species but to represent animal symbolism in general. Neolithic animal representations are often related to specific ceramic types, in particular altars and vessels with unique shapes, that were manufactured and used for ritual purposes.

Jacqueline Balen

Catalog No. 5
Altar
Ceramic
Vicinity of Szeged, Hungary
5300–5200 BC
Height: 12 cm
Length: 12 cm
Width: 13.5 cm
Inv. No. 41.1935.1
Hungarian National Museum,
Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Gallus 1938:Figures 1–5.

The Neolithic farming communities of the Carpathian Basin produced elaborate ceramics with incised and painted decorations, including objects of special purpose, probably conveying sacral messages. One of the most spectacular examples of these objects is this ceramic altar. The manufacturer placed stylized ram heads on the four corners and engraved spiral and meander patterns on the sides. It is likely that the vessel was not intended for everyday purposes but was utilized during rituals.

Hargita Oravecz and Katalin T. Biró

Catalog No. 6

Altar

Ceramic
Vrbjanska Čuka, North Macedonia
6000–5500 BC
Height: 5.2 cm
Length: 6 cm
Width: 8 cm
Dimensions of the basin: 6.2 x 6.4 cm
Inv. No. 441
Institute for Protection of the Monuments of Culture and Museum–Prilep, Prilep, North Macedonia
Bibliography: Temelkoski and Mitkoski 2005:52, Table VII:1; Naumov 2011:100, Figure 4:8.

This small altar has four legs, with stair-like applications on the lateral and inner parts. Similar objects are common from the tells of the Pelagonia region in the southwestern part of North Macedonia. The shallow basin with a central perforation indicates that the artifact had a non-utilitarian function, and was most likely used for offerings, libation, and the burning of organic materials during ritual activities.

Aleksandar Mitkoski

Catalog No. 7

Burial assemblage

Bone, marble, shell, tooth
Polgár-Csőszhalom,
Feature 836/1827, Hungary
4900–4600 BC

a. *Beads from around the left foot*
Spondylus (9)
Diameter: 0.4 cm
Length: 0.3–0.4 cm
Inv. No. Gy.sz. 2019.14

b. *Necklace*
Spondylus and deer canine beads, 240
Diameter: 0.3–0.6 cm
Length: 0.2–1.1 cm
Inv. No. Gy.sz. 2019.3

c. *Girdle of beads around the waist*
Marble, 57
Diameter: 0.9–1.6 cm
Length: 0.8–1.5 cm
Inv. No. Gy.sz. 2019.11

d. *Necklace*
Spondylus and deer canine beads, 97
Diameter: 0.3–1.4 cm
Length: 0.2–2.4 cm
Inv. No. Gy.sz. 2019.2

e. *Girdle of beads*
Spondylus and deer canine beads, 132
Diameter: 0.4–1.2 cm
Length: 0.1–2.5 cm
Inv. No. Gy.sz. 2019.15

f. *Headdress*
Spondylus beads, 82
Diameter: 0.9–1.4 cm
Length: 0.9–2.0 cm
Inv. No. Gy.sz. 2019.1

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Catalog No. 7 *continued*

g. *Armrings from the right upper arm (3)*
Spondylus
Diameter: 8.1–9.5 cm
Width: 0.8–3.9 cm
Inv. No. Gy.sz. 2019.4–6
h. *Armrings from the left upper arm (3)*
Spondylus
Diameter: 7.5–9.8 cm
Width: 0.4–1.8 cm
Inv. No. Gy.sz. 2019.7–9
i. *Ring from a right-hand finger*
Bone
Diameter: 2.5 cm
Width: 0.4 cm
Inv. No. Gy.sz. 2019.10
Déri Museum, Debrecen, Hungary
Bibliography: Raczky and Anders 2017:66–69, Figure 6:4–6.

This assemblage was buried with a mature woman, likely in her fifties. Organic remains observed in the grave pit suggest that she was placed in a wooden coffin. The burial assemblage contains numerous imported, exotic goods. The jewelry items made of *Spondylus* shell, marble, and deer canines indicate the elevated social status of the deceased. A veil dyed in red ocher may have covered her face.

János Dani

Catalog No. 8
Anthropomorphic vessel
Ceramic
Törökbálint-Dulácska, Hungary
5200–4950 BC
Height: 32.4 cm
Maximum width: 16 cm
Inv. No. 2019.12.157.1
Budapest History Museum,
Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Virág 1998:Figures 2:1a–c, 3:1a–c; Virág 2000:Figure 2:1a–c; Virág 2020:77–80, catalog no. 352.

The fragments of this vessel were found in a deep, shaft-like pit located next to a corner of a house. The female figure seated on a stool was most likely made for a single ritual event involving fire, during which the vessel was broken into pieces and thrown into the pit. The symbolic facial representation followed strict rules, with an M-shaped incised frame and densely incised zigzag lines below. In addition to this element, the diadem-like, raised back of the head and the *Spondylus* bracelets represented by deep incisions on the wrists and upper arms also indicate the special function of this unique vessel.

Zsuzsanna M. Virág

Catalog No. 9
Face pot
Ceramic
Biatorbágy-Tyúkberek, Hungary
5200–5000 BC
Height: 31.2 cm
Rim diameter: 11 cm
Base diameter: 8.5 cm
Inv. No. 2019.13.36.1
Budapest History Museum,
Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Virág 1998:Figure 7: 1a–c; Virág 2000:Figure 4:3a–b

This ceramic vessel, representing a stylized human figure, was found in a pit. The vessel features two identical human faces on the opposite sides of the neck. Similar vessels showing symbolic facial representations were ornamented according to strict rules, with an M-shaped incised frame decorated with densely incised zigzag lines below, and were used primarily by individual households. In addition to their protective function, they could also have been utilized during rituals. Once these vessels lost their significance, they were broken into pieces and thrown into pits, often along with refuse. Vessels depicting two faces, so far only attested in the region of Budapest, likely served as symbols of dualities in human life and thoughts.

Zsuzsanna M. Virág

Catalog No. 10
Figurine
Ceramic
Szegvár-Tűzköves, Hungary
5000–4500 BC
Height: 25.8 cm
Maximum width: 10.5 cm
Maximum thickness: 14.6 cm
Inv. No. 59.1.1
Koszta József Museum,
Szentes, Hungary
Bibliography: Csalog 1959:34–37, Figures 7–10; Csalog 1960:59, Figure 1:2; Korek 1987:53, Figure 14; Makkay 2005:120, Figure 1:1–2.

This ceramic figurine, known as the Sickle God, is one of the most famous finds from the Neolithic period in southeastern Europe. It sits on a stool or throne, the face is covered with a mask, and the arms are adorned with bracelets. The figurine holds a sickle, or according to another interpretation, a boomerang-like weapon, on the right shoulder. The object has been interpreted as a male god; however, more recent explanations suggest that it may represent an outstanding member of the local Neolithic community.

Edit Király

Catalog No. 11

Figurine

Ceramic
Szegvár-Tűzköves, Hungary
5000–4500 BC
Height: 23.2 cm
Maximum width: 11.5 cm
Maximum thickness: 10.5 cm
Inv. No. 67.17.1
Koszta József Museum,
Szentes, Hungary
Bibliography: Korek 1987:53, Figure 14; Makkay 2005:121, Figure 2:3.

This artifact is one of five seated figurines that have been recovered from the Szegvár-Tűzköves site. The female figurine's head and legs are missing. The body and the stool are decorated with a complex incised decoration that commonly occurs on ceramic vessels manufactured on the Great Hungarian Plain during the Late Neolithic.

Edit Király

Catalog No. 12
Face pot
Ceramic
Szegvár-Tűzköves, Hungary
5000–4500 BC
Height: 21.5 cm
Rim diameter: 5.5 cm
Base diameter: 9.1 cm
Inv. No. 66.1.1
Koszta József Museum,
Szentes, Hungary
Bibliography: Korek 1987:57, Figure 21.

This face pot was painted in red, the traces of which are still discernible on the surface. The neck and the upper part of the body are decorated with a complex pattern of linear and dotted incisions, which are characteristic for the Late Neolithic on the Great Hungarian Plain (see also Catalog Nos. 10 and 11). Below the rim of the vessel, there is a human face composed of incised eyes and eyebrows and an appliqué nose. Face pots have generally been interpreted as objects produced for and utilized during ritual ceremonies.

Edit Király

Catalog No. 13
Figurine
Ceramic
Bardhosh-Prishtina, Kosovo
5200–4600 BC
Height: 24.5 cm
Maximum width: 11.5 cm
Inv. No. BA 2/02
National Museum of Kosovo,
Prishtina, Kosovo
Bibliography: Berisha 2012:25,
Figure 39.

A rescue excavation of the Neolithic settlement at Bardhosh recovered many fragments of anthropomorphic ceramic figurines in 2002. Similar figurines are typical across the territory of the Vinča Culture, a Neolithic cultural unit that extended from Kosovo up to the Danube River. However, some of the distinctive stylistic elements of this figurine from Bardhosh occur frequently in the area around Prishtina.

National Museum of Kosovo

Catalog No. 14
Figurine
Ceramic
Bardhosh-Prishtina, Kosovo
5200–4600 BC
Height: 11.4 cm
Maximum width: 5.2 cm
Inv. No. BA 6/02
National Museum of Kosovo, Prishtina, Kosovo
Bibliography: Berisha 2012:25, Figure 39.

This figurine has an animal body and a human head. Based on its characteristics, the object is the product of the Vinča Culture of the Balkans (see Catalog No. 13). Similar, so-called centaur-type, figurines are rare in the Neolithic archaeological record of southeastern Europe.

National Museum of Kosovo

Catalog No. 15
Hoard
Copper
Pločnik, Serbia
5000–4500 BC
Hammer-axe
Length: 18.5 cm
Maximum width: 5 cm
Inv. No. 04_2420
Heavy axes (9)
Length: 12.5–17.6 cm
Maximum width: 2.6–3.5 cm
Inv. No. 04_2413, 04_2415–2419, 04_2421–2423
Flat axe
Length: 14.5 cm
Maximum width: 4 cm
Inv. No. 04_2414
National Museum of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia

Bibliography: Grbić 1929:15, Figures 98–102; Šljivar et al. 2006:254–57, Plate IV; Antonović 2014:Tables 1–3, 9.

An assemblage of a total of eighteen copper and stone axes and chisels, the so-called Hoard II from Pločnik, was found in close proximity to a metallurgical workshop in 1928. The eleven copper axes are generally regarded as the oldest large metal objects discovered in Europe. The period when these artifacts were produced was characterized by rapid social changes, during which individuals with special status emerged within the communities of the Vinča Culture in the Neolithic Balkans. Due to their massive size, their nearly pure copper content, and their advanced shapes, the object types represented in this hoard persisted for a long period of time in southeastern Europe.

Vera Bogosavljević Petrović

The First Gilded Era: The Copper Age

OVER A THOUSAND YEARS AFTER most people in southeastern Europe had settled into a village lifestyle based on farming and animal husbandry, a series of technological and social changes occurred that differentiated this region from the rest of the continent. In northern and western Europe, the agricultural way of life that characterized the Neolithic started later than in southeastern Europe, and in many regions, it gave way immediately to the Bronze Age. But throughout southeastern Europe, archaeologists have recognized a formal Copper Age that followed the Neolithic period and preceded the Bronze Age. Starting in the fifth millennium BC and ending at the beginning of the third millennium BC, the Copper Age—also called the Chalcolithic, the Eneolithic, or the Final Neolithic in central and southeastern Europe—was characterized by the production of large copper artifacts, especially axes and adzes, and also by other changes in social organization, including the establishment of some of the first formal cemeteries in Europe, the practice of ritually burying groups of artifacts in what are called 'hoards,' increasingly larger spheres of social interaction, the first clear intrusion of influences and groups from the east into southeastern Europe, and the adoption of novel innovations of long-lasting impact in the region.

The earliest use of copper in southeastern Europe dates at least to the beginning of the Neolithic period, around 6200 BC, when early agricultural groups in the Danube Gorges shaped and drilled chunks of 'native' copper metal and copper minerals, such as malachite and azurite, to make beads. Throughout the Neolithic period, farmers across southeastern Europe continued to modify copper metal and minerals to create a limited set of objects, mostly jewelry, such as bracelets, rings, and earrings. Sometime around 5000 BC, metalworkers developed an innovation that would allow them to extract copper metal from copper minerals—smelting. The innovation of copper smelting technology in the Balkans is associated with extensive mines at sites such as Ai Bunar in Bulgaria and Rudna Glava in Serbia, which were used during the fifth millennium BC. The ability to extract glimmering copper metal from rock must have been seen by others as an almost magical act carried out by the specialists who possessed such important knowledge.

After 4500 BC, artifacts made of smelted copper, including large mold-made axes and adzes (Catalog Nos. 16, 23–25), circulated throughout southeastern Europe, linking the diverse farming communities from the Carpathian Basin to the Adriatic, the Aegean, and the Black Sea into networks of social interaction through which flowed ideas, information, and objects. Copper was not the only metal to be exploited during this time. Gold, panned from the rivers of the Balkans, also began to be used for crafting a wide variety of objects, including ornaments and status symbols, such as anthropomorphic pendants that are present in the archaeological record of many regions, from Greece to the Carpathian Basin (Catalog Nos. 19–22).

In addition to innovations in metallurgy, the Copper Age also witnessed the widespread adoption of a new

Catalog No. 25 *Various gold objects from Grave 36 of the Varna cemetery, Bulgaria*

funerary practice wherein the deceased would be buried in stand-alone cemeteries that were not directly associated with settlements. Although inhumation burials were common throughout the Neolithic, the dead were usually interred within villages, in or near houses or in unused parts of the settlement. These so-called 'intra-mural' burials continued into the Copper Age, but they were complemented in many areas with formal, 'extra-mural,' cemeteries that were used by communities from different villages. This created an important new venue for the performance of funerary rituals, which now would be carried out not only in front of the members of one's own household and village, but on a regional stage as well. The funerary ceremony had always been an occasion for family and loved ones to demonstrate not just their remorse about the passing of a family member or close friend, but also their wealth and power through ceremonies and the objects they placed in the grave with the deceased. When this practice was viewed by people from many villages, it provided an opportunity for families to demonstrate their status and affluence beyond the boundaries of their own village.

In burials throughout the Neolithic, when mourners placed grave goods with the dead, they frequently included objects that denoted different aspects of the individual's persona—a young woman may have been buried with a shell bracelet, and a young man may have been buried with a stone celt. During the Copper Age, the burial ritual began to be used to mark aspects of a person's life other than gender, age, and personal skills, such as positions of rank and hierarchy within their community. Nowhere is this clearer than in the Copper Age cemeteries of Varna and Durankulak along the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria. In those cemeteries, during the middle of the fifth millennium BC, several hundred people were buried with unprecedented amounts of gold, carnelian, copper, and other rare objects that were used to mark the relative statuses of different people. One burial of an adult male at Varna contained almost a thousand gold artifacts and a variety of other objects made of exotic materials indicating the individual's outstanding status and power in the region. Other graves contained artifacts but no dead bodies; these 'empty graves,' called 'cenotaphs,' most likely represent people who died elsewhere and for some reason were not brought to the cemetery to be buried. The assemblage from Grave 36 in the exhibition was part of a cenotaph, probably associated with a young man (Catalog No. 25). While cemeteries like Varna illustrate flashes of emerging inequality and hierarchy within Copper

Catalog No. 25 *Gold scepter from Grave 36 of the Varna cemetery, Bulgaria*

Age communities during the fifth millennium BC, by 4000 BC, many of the economic and political inequalities seem to have diminished, or became largely invisible in the archaeological record, throughout the region. These inequalities would emerge again during the Bronze Age.

Another tradition that evolved during the Copper Age was the burial of groups of objects in what archaeologists call 'hoards.' Sometimes, these caches of objects may have been functional—people burying valuable things in troubled times so others would not find them—but the regularity of the artifacts that were buried together and the manner in which they were concealed suggest that in many cases these were ritually placed into the ground to recognize specific events, moments, deities, or people. For example, displayed in the exhibition, the cache of copper axes from Pločnik in Serbia (Catalog No. 15) and the assemblage of various objects from Brad in Romania (Catalog No. 23) may have been buried to demonstrate wealth, to mark a successful battle, or to commemorate a tribal alliance.

The Copper Age also represents the first clear evidence of intensive interactions between the communities of southeastern Europe and the eastern European steppic region. In the last centuries of the fifth millennium BC, these interactions—which may or may not have included migration—are demonstrated by burials mostly from the eastern Balkans equipped with steppe-style zoomorphic stone scepters. Similar to their role in the steppe, these objects might be interpreted as status symbols of a new, emerging elite in southeastern Europe. The two scepters in the exhibition, from Casimçea in Romania and Šuplevec in North Macedonia (Catalog Nos. 26 and 27), represent the broad geographical extent of these interactions. About a millennium later, at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the third millennia BC, people of steppe origins migrated in large numbers into southeastern Europe, especially into the eastern Carpathian Basin and the eastern Balkans. A burial assemblage in the exhibition from Gruda Boljevića in Montenegro testifies to the spread of these groups to some other regions of the Balkans as well (Catalog No. 28). Marked on the landscape by substantial burial mounds called 'kurgans' and objects and motifs associated with groups of eastern Europe, the influx of these new people with different economic and political systems likely had a dramatic impact on the lifestyle of the agricultural villagers who had lived in the region for thousands of years.

During the Copper Age, major innovations were introduced in southeastern Europe, including the wheel and the wagon. Their importance for the local communities is indicated by wagon models, such as the one showcased in the exhibition from Szigetszentmárton in Hungary (Catalog No. 29). People from the steppe may have brought domestic horses with them during the transition between the Copper Age and the Bronze Age, and these became important symbols of power and prestige across southeastern Europe in the millennia to come. In fact, horses might have played a significant role in laying the foundation for dramatic changes in leadership and hierarchy that occurred throughout the region during the Bronze Age.

Catalog No. 16
Mold with axe
Ceramic, copper
Vučedol, Croatia
3000–2500 BC
Mold
Ceramic
Length: 18 cm
Width: 8.5 cm
Thickness: 4.3 cm
Inv. No. P-Vč 8013
Flat axe
Copper
Length: 13.6 cm
Width: 4.2–5.3 cm
Thickness: 1 cm
Inv. No. P-Vč 8012
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Schmidt 1945:26, Table 49:1–2.

This ceramic mold with the associated copper flat axe was found in 1938. Although it had begun in the Neolithic period (see Catalog No. 15), early metallurgy in the northern Balkans and the neighboring regions reached its full bloom during the time of the Vučedol Culture, in the first half of the third millennium BC, when sophisticated copper artifacts were manufactured by full-time craft specialists. The production and consumption of copper objects was of high significance both socially and economically, as indicated, among other artifacts, by the remains of metallurgical furnaces and molds unearthed at numerous Vučedol Culture sites.

Jacqueline Balen

Catalog No. 17
Mold
Ceramic
Sarvaš, Croatia
3000–2500 BC
Length: 21 cm
Width: 10.1 cm
Thickness: 3.7 cm
Inv. No. P-7915–7916
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Schmidt 1945:143, Figure 81:A; Balen 2005:Figure 39, catalog no. 226.

Like the mold with axe in the exhibition recovered from the Vučedol site (Catalog No. 16), this two-part mold for casting daggers or blades can be attributed to the Vučedol Culture. In the same pit at the settlement, a two-part mold for casting chisels also was unearthed. Vučedol Culture communities introduced a new casting technique and used two-part molds, thereby developing the serial production of copper objects.

Jacqueline Balen

Catalog No. 18
Architectural model
Ceramic
Căscioarele, Romania
4600–3900 BC
Length: 51 cm
Width: 13 cm
Height: 24.2 cm
Inv. No. 12156
National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania
Bibliography: Dumitrescu 1968; Gimbutas 1984:71, 76, Figure 42:1; Lazarovici and Lazarovici 2013:512, Figure 26.

The tell site of Căscioarele was a significant ritual center in its region. This elaborate artifact is probably a model of a sanctuary, with gables representing bull's heads. Artifacts with bull's head representations—called 'bucrania'—have been found in Neolithic and Copper Age structures interpreted as cult buildings. Ceramic architectural models dating to these periods are known from several regions of southeastern Europe (see Catalog No. 19), and have been understood as the manifestation of household and community identities, the symbolic representation of ceremonies, or the embodiment of actual or imagined ritual structures.

Attila Gyucha

Catalog No. 19

Architectural model and hoard

Ceramic, gold
Sultana-Malu Roşu, Romania
4500–4000 BC

a. *Architectural model*
Ceramic
Length: 31 cm
Width: 17 cm
Height: 21 cm
Inv. No. 10625

b. *Anthropomorphic pendants (3)*
Gold
Length: 2.2–5.5 cm
Width: 2.7–4.4 cm
Inv. No. 8651–8653

c. *Saltaleoni (string of beads)*
Gold
Length: 1.9–6.5 cm
Inv. No. 8656

d. *Chained ring*
Gold
Length: 7.1 cm
Diameter of rings: 1.1 cm
Inv. No. 8655

e. *Disc*
Gold
Diameter: 1.4 cm
Inv. No. 8654

The Museum of Gumelniţa Culture, Oltenita, Romania

Bibliography: Şerbănescu 1997:236; Gheorghiu 2009:Figure 11:8; Andreescu et al. 2011:140, Figure 7:1, 5.

During the excavation of the Sultana tell site in 1982, the gold objects of this assemblage were found on a hearth. After the conservation of all materials from the excavation, it was assumed that the gold hoard and the architectural model were part of the same assemblage, which was utilized during the course of ritual and ceremonial activities. The model may be understood as the representation of a sanctuary; however, others have speculated that this and similar models from the Lower Danube region of Romania symbolized entire villages.

Attila Gyucha

Catalog No. 20
Hoard
Gold
Moigrad, Romania
4000–3500 BC
Anthropomorphic pendant
Length: 31.4 cm
Width: 24.1 cm
Weight: 764.51 g
Inv. No. 54570
Appliqués (3)
Length: 8.5–9.7 cm
Width: 6.3–8 cm
Weight: 17.40–20.20 g
Inv. No. 54571–54573
National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania
Biblography: Fettich 1953:161–70; Horedt 1977; Slej et al. 2004:129, catalog no. 3; Pernicka and Anthony 2010:171–73, 235, catalog no. 121.

No precise information is available about the find circumstances of the Moigrad hoard. The assemblage, recovered around 1908, consists of both prehistoric and historic artifacts. The Copper Age objects were made of cast and hammered gold foil. Although the anthropomorphic pendant has contemporaneous analogies throughout southeastern Europe (see Catalog Nos. 21 and 22), its large size is unique. The smaller appliqués also may be interpreted as schematic human representations.

Corina Borș

Catalog No. 21
Anthropomorphic pendant
Gold
Târgu Mureş/Marosvásárhely, Romania
4000–3500 BC
Length: 11.3 cm
Width: 10.3 cm
Weight: 82.42 g
Inv. No. 94/1877.97
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Patay 1958:Table XVII:4.

To the east of the Tisza River, in the eastern part of the Great Hungarian Plain and in Transylvania, following the Neolithic tradition of the use of *Spondylus* shells and jewelry of colored stone beads, copper and gold objects started to be manufactured in large numbers during the Copper Age. These artifacts, such as heavy copper axes and gold anthropomorphic pendants that were fastened to clothing, were frequently deposited in hoards and burials (see Catalog Nos. 19, 20, 23, and 24). The raw materials were probably supplied from Transylvanian mines. This gold pendant demonstrates the social and economic status of the owner.

Hargita Oravecz and Katalin T. Biró

Catalog No. 22
Anthropomorphic pendant
Gold
Progar, Serbia
4000–3500 BC
Length: 9 cm
Width: 7.3 cm
Weight: 34.80 g
Inv. No. P-10823
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Vinski-Gasparini 1959.

This anthropomorphic gold pendant was purchased by the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb in 1907, and its find circumstances are unknown. Similar objects, commonly interpreted as schematic human representations, were produced across a vast territory stretching from the Black Sea and the Aegean to the Carpathian Basin (see Catalog Nos. 19–21), reflecting strong and regular connections among the Copper Age communities of southeastern Europe.

Jacqueline Balen

Catalog No. 23
Hoard
Ceramic, copper, gold, tooth
Brad, Romania
4200–4050 BC
a. *Vessel*
(shown above)
Ceramic
Height: 12 cm
Maximum diameter: 21 cm
Inv. No. 20276
b. *Axe-adze*
Copper
Length: 16 cm, Width: 4 cm
Inv. No. 17575
c. *Bracelets (2)*
Copper
Diameter: 9 cm and 10 cm
Width: both 1.3 cm
Inv. No. 17576–17577
d. *Disks (2)*
Gold
Diameter: 4.8 cm and 6.3 cm
Inv. No. 17573–17574


d


e


f


g

e. *Disks (3)*
Copper
Diameter: 2.9–5.2 cm
Inv. No. 17578–17580
f. *Necklace*
Copper beads, 262
Diameter: 0.3 cm, Length: 0.1–0.2 cm
Inv. No. 22215–22474
f. *Necklace*
Copper and vitreous beads, 27
Diameter: 0.2–0.4 cm
Length: 0.4–0.6 cm
Inv. No. 22181–22207
g. *Necklace*
Deer canines, 182
Length: 1–1.5 cm
Inv. No. 22475–22656
Neamț County Museum Complex,
Piatra Neamț, Romania
Bibliography: Ursachi 1990;
Anthony 2010:40–41, Figures 1–10.

This hoard was found in a settlement, and consists of valuable personal adornments and a copper axe that had been placed in a ceramic vessel. Large assemblages with similar, symbolically charged objects, including necklaces made of deer canine, have been recovered from several other contemporaneous Romanian and Moldavian sites. These assemblages may have been the buried treasures of high-status individuals of Copper Age communities.

Attila Gyucha

Catalog No. 24

Axe-adzes (2)

Copper

Hajdúhadház-Mészhomok-Téglagyár, Hungary

4400–4000 BC

Length: 34 cm and 25.2 cm

Maximum width: 7 cm and 6 cm

Inv. No. IV.1928.184, IV.1928.186

Déri Museum, Debrecen, Hungary

Bibliography: Zoltai 1929:43, Plate 12; Patay 1984:58, 73, 78, Tables 22:260, 32:359, 40:415, 68:C

These copper axe-adzes were found in a sand mine, at a depth of 5 m. They were made by casting from pure copper, and two maker's marks can be seen on the lower part of the shaft-hole of the smaller axe. During a controlled excavation at the find spot, a burnt surface with charcoal remains was identified. This may have been a profane place where industrial activities occurred, or alternatively, a sacred place for performing ritual activities. As the Brad and Varna specimens displayed in the exhibition demonstrate (Catalog Nos. 23 and 25), similar axe-adzes were manufactured across the Carpathian Basin and the Balkans for several centuries during the Copper Age, and these large and heavy artifacts can be considered as status markers.

János Dani

Catalog No. 25
Burial assemblage
Gold, copper, carnelian, stone, shell, marble, mineral, tooth
Varna, Grave 36, Bulgaria
4600–4400 BC
a. *Bracelets (2)*
Gold
Diameter: 6.7 cm and 6.9 cm
Width: 2.6 cm and 2.7 cm
Weight: 47.10 g and 55.10 g
Inv. No. I.1631–1632
b. *Bull-shaped appliqués (2)*
Gold
Length: 5.9 cm and 3.7 cm
Width: 6.5 cm and 3.9 cm
Weight: 11.69 g and 6.73 g
Inv. No. I.1633–1634
c. *Miniature diadem*
Gold
Height: 4.3 cm
Length: 3.4 cm
Weight: 11.71 g
Inv. No. I.1635
d. *Astragalus*
Gold
Length: 4.3 cm
Width: 3.4 cm
Weight: 11.71 g
Inv. No. I.1636
continued page 42


a


b


c


d


e


f


g


h

Catalog No. 25 *continued*

e. *Implements (2)*
Gold
Length: 8.8 cm and 4.1 cm
Width: 1.5 cm and 4 cm
Weight: 17.05 g and 5.47 g
Inv. No. I.1637–1638

Convex appliqués (2)
(not shown)
Gold
Height: 1.6 cm and 0.8 cm
Diameter: 3.5 cm and 3.3 cm
Weight: 16.65 g and 5.58 g
Inv. No. I.1639–1640

f. *Ring-amulet pendants (7)*
Gold
Length: 1.8–2.2 cm
Width: 1.6–2.0 cm
Total weight: 13.59 g
Inv. No. I.1650–1656

g. *Scepter*
Gold, 9 elements
Total length: 22.5 cm
Maximum width: 5.3 cm
Total weight: 85.47 g
Inv. No. I.1641–1649

h. *Ram-horn–shaped dress appliqués (30)*
Gold
Length: 1.2–2.1 cm
Width: 2.8–4 cm
Total weight: 48.80 g
Inv. No. I.1657–1686

Convex dress appliqués (33)
(not shown)
Gold
Diameter: 1.8–2.1 cm
Total weight: 95.88 g
Inv. No. I.1687–1719

i. *Rings (16)*
Gold
Diameter: 1.6–3.5 cm
Total weight: 27.64 g
Inv. No. I.1720–1735

String of beads
(not shown)
Gold, 168
Diameter: 0.3–0.8 cm
Total weight: 97.61 g
Inv. No. I.1738


i


j


k


l

j. *String of beads*
Gold, 257
Diameter: 0.7 cm
Total weight: 124.79 g
Inv. No. I.1737
k. *String of beads*
Gold, 136
Diameter: 0.3–1 cm
Total weight: 45.07 g
Inv. No. I.1741
Left to right:
l. *String of beads*
Gold, 57
Diameter: 0.2–0.4 cm
Total weight: 2.90 g
Inv. No. I.1740
l. *String of beads*
Gold, 44
Diameter: 0.6 cm
Total weight: 16.26 g
Inv. No. I.1736
l. *String of beads*
Gold, 54
Diameter: 0.2–0.6 cm
Total weight: 15.65 g
Inv. No. I.1743
l. *String of beads*
Gold, 22
Diameter: 0.5–0.6 cm
Total weight: 4.94 g
Inv. No. I.1739
l. *String of beads*
Gold, 14
Diameter: 0.5–0.6 cm
Total weight: 2.85 g
Inv. No. I.1742

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m


n

Catalog No. 25 *continued*

m. *Axe*
Copper
Length: 15.5 cm
Width: 3.1 cm
Thickness: 3.1 cm
Inv. No. I.1746
Awl (not shown)
Copper
Length: 13 cm
Diameter: 0.4 cm
Inv. No. I.1747
n. *Plate*
Marble
Height: 4.5 cm
Rim diameter: 16 cm
Inv. No. I.1748
o. *Blades (2)*
Flint
Length: 5.4 cm and 29.5 cm
Maximum width: 1.9 cm and 2.1 cm
Inv. No. I.1749, 1754


o


p

p. *Beads (2)*
Carnelian
Diameter: 0.5 cm and 0.7 cm
Width: 0.6 cm and 0.9 cm
Inv. No. I.1745
Beads (11) (not shown)
Mineral
Length: 0.1–0.3 cm
Diameter: 0.3–0.4 cm
Inv. No. I.1752

q

r

q. *Beads (1,400)*
Dentalium shell
Length: 0.9–1.8 cm
Diameter: 0.4–0.6 cm
Inv. No. I.1751
r. *Amulet*
Cattle tooth
Length: 5.1 cm
Width: 1.6 cm
Thickness: 1.2 cm
Inv. No. I.1753
Varna Regional Museum of History, Varna, Bulgaria
Bibliography: Biegel 1986:81–87, Plates 126–50; Ivanov 1988:196–98.

This burial, which did not contain human remains, was excavated in the central part of the southern boundary zone of the Varna cemetery. These kinds of burials without human remains are called 'cenotaphs' and were sometimes laid out as though there was a body in the grave; some in the Varna cemetery even have plaster masks to represent the face of the deceased. In this case, the grave goods were found in three distinct clusters. The gold artifacts were recovered from the central section and were deposited in four layers on top of one another. It seems that these regalia and the gifts were dug into this sacral place to preserve the memory of someone of high rank in the community.

Vladimir Slavchev

Catalog No. 26
Scepter
Stone
Šuplevec, North Macedonia
4300–4200 BC
Length: 10.5 cm
Width: 2.6 cm
Inv. No. 15445
Institute for Protection of Cultural Heritage and Museum–Bitola, Bitola, North Macedonia
Bibliography: Simoska and Sanev 1976:48, 127, catalog no. 227.

The scepter may form a horse head, and was inserted into a wooden handle. The presence of this object in the Pelagonia region of North Macedonia indicates cultural changes during the Copper Age in the Balkans. This scepter type occurred in some regions of southeastern Europe possibly with groups coming from the Pontic-Caspian steppe area, and is a symbol of prominence and high status.

Jasmina Gulevska

Catalog No. 27
Scepter
Stone
Casimçea, Romania
4300–4200 BC
Length: 17 cm
Width: 7.5 cm
Inv. No. 11650
National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania
Bibliography: Govedarica 2004: Table 20; Anthony 2010:50.

This scepter was found in a burial along with stone axes, arrowheads, and blades. Like the similar object from Šuplevec in the exhibition (Catalog No. 26), the Casimçea specimen can be interpreted as a status symbol and may be regarded as one of the earliest pieces of evidence for interactions between societies in southeastern Europe and the Pontic-Caspian region. These interactions likely included the movement of people from the East European steppe zone to some regions of the Balkans.

Attila Gyucha

Catalog No. 28
Burial assemblage
Ceramic, stone, gold
Gruda Boljevića, Montenegro
3100–3000 BC
a. *Axe with cap*
Stone, gold
Length: 12 cm
Shaft-hole diameter: 2.2 cm
Inv. No. 1553
b. *Plate*
Ceramic
Height: 6.1 cm
Rim diameter: 20 cm
Inv. No. 1552
c. *Hair rings (2)*
Gold
Diameter: 1.3 cm and 1.9 cm
Inv. No. 1557

b

c

d

d. *Funnel*
Ceramic
Height: 18.2 cm
Rim diameter: 14.1 cm
Base diameter: 4.2 cm
Inv. No. 1555

e. *Jug*
(see next page)
Ceramic
Height: 22.5 cm
Rim diameter: 6.4 cm
Inv. No. 10004
Museums and Galleries of Podgorica, Podgorica, Montenegro
Bibliography: Baković 2012; Guštin and Preložnik 2015.

This assemblage was recovered from a monumental 'princely' tumulus, one of the earliest examples of burial mounds in the southern Balkans. The construction of similar 'princely' mounds in Montenegro may be linked to the so-called Yamnaya people who migrated from the East European steppe primarily to the northern Balkans and the Carpathian Basin at the turn of the fourth and third

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e

Catalog No. 28 *continued*

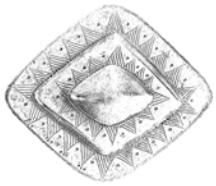
millennia BC. A large concentration of 'princely' tombs in Montenegro shows that this area was of importance in the cultural and social development of the Balkans at the end of the Copper Age and the beginning of the Bronze Age. The axe was a status symbol and has close formal analogies in Yamnaya burials, whereas some other objects indicate Aegean or southern Adriatic connections. The ceramic vessels, typical for the 'princely' tumuli in this region, may have been used during a libation ritual.

Nemanja Radunović

Catalog No. 29
Wagon model
Ceramic
Szigetszentmárton, Hungary
3500–3000 BC
Length: 7.6 cm
Width: 7.3 cm
Height: 7.2 cm
Inv. No. 1972.19.1
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Kalicz 1976.

By the end of the Copper Age, in the Carpathian Basin and the neighboring regions, new measures of value came into use: cattle and wagons. This is indicated by cattle burials beside the deceased and quadrangular vessels with four wheels and axles, sometimes supplied with stylized cattle heads. At Szigetszentmárton, during the digging of foundations for a house, an inhumation burial was found with rich ceramic grave goods destined for the 'Nether World,' including this model of a wagon with incised zigzag motifs and a red ocher coating. Some details of the burial remain unclear, but it is possible that a cow was also buried near the deceased.

Hargita Oravecz and Katalin T. Biró



New Routes to Power: The Bronze Age

THE BRONZE AGE WAS A TIME OF significant social transformation for the agricultural villagers who lived in southeastern Europe. Many of the economic and political innovations that had emerged during the Neolithic and the Copper Age coalesced during the Bronze Age to form a world that was permanently altered—a new world, rife with hierarchy and inequality, had come to replace the more equal worlds of the Neolithic and the Copper Age. Bronze, a hard, new metal, was widely circulated throughout southeastern Europe, and was used not only to make gilded goblets wielded by celebrating chieftains but also for crafting effective weapons. Warfare occurred much more frequently and at a significantly larger scale than ever before and a warrior class formed in many Bronze Age societies. In both warfare and social display, horses became critical elements. The tradition of hoarding, which began during the Copper Age, continued in the Bronze Age and became much more elaborate. The cemeteries that had become the stage for expressions of regional identity and individual differences during the Copper Age grew along with the increasing size of Bronze Age communities. But perhaps the most significant transformation that occurred during this period was the establishment of durable hierarchical political systems with ranks of hereditary leaders, at least in some parts of southeastern Europe, which would mark the beginning of a trajectory toward increasing social inequalities and the eventual separation of people into discrete social classes.

Catalog No. 68 *Bronze situla with stylized birds from Nyírlugos, Hungary*

Smelted copper had been used in the Copper Age to make large, mold-made tools, such as adzes and axes, but it was a soft metal and it dulled very quickly. As a result, people continued to manufacture axes out of stone, called 'celts,' because it was harder and better for cutting and chopping hard things, like wood. At some point, ancient metalworkers discovered that mixing copper with other elements made it harder and more useful; this process, called alloying, turned copper into bronze. Some prehistoric smiths experimented using arsenic as an alloy, but they quickly realized that tin was the better solution. But unlike copper, which occurs geologically in several places throughout southeastern Europe, tin is much rarer and the ancient sources we know were exploited are located as far away as Cornwall, England, to the west, and Afghanistan, to the east. Thus the component parts of bronze linked the communities of southeastern Europe into an intercontinental trading network that connected distant worlds. The exhibition features copper ingots from Dragomelj in Slovenia (Catalog No. 33) and from Bulgaria (Catalog No. 34) that are characteristic of how copper as a raw material for bronze production was transported in southeastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean during the Bronze Age.

A few centuries after the introduction of bronze metallurgy, an array of advanced weapon types was invented and crafted in large numbers by smiths in southeastern Europe. These weapons were used by specialized warriors—a new class that emerged in the Bronze Age. The exhibition features both offensive and defensive weapons; for example, a helmet from Mezőkövesd in

Hungary (Catalog No. 48), a unique two-part cuirass found in the Danube River near Pilismarót in Hungary (Catalog No. 49), swords from Șimleu Silvaniei (Szilágysomlyó) in Romania and Komsi in Albania (Catalog Nos. 45 and 66), and spearheads from Tenja in Croatia (Catalog No. 46). Not only the large amounts of weapons but also the regular construction of massive fortifications around central, strategically placed settlements—some with evidence for sieges—indicate the common occurrence of conflicts and warfare during the Bronze Age. These wars brought about devastation for communities but provided opportunities for warriors to enter into the newly emerged military elite of the period. Homer's epic poems illuminate this world and reflect on a warrior hero cult that might have developed across southeastern Europe. Weapons were major elements in the display of elevated social status over the course of communal ceremonies and performances. The gold daggers from Perșinari in Romania (Catalog No. 41) and the gold greave from Szeged in Hungary (Catalog No. 44), featured in the exhibition, were not used in combat but might have signaled the high rank of their bearers.

The domestic horse, which may have been introduced into southeastern Europe from the steppic region at the end of the Copper Age, became a status symbol during the Bronze Age. Horses might have been utilized in the course of public ceremonies and performances to underline elevated rank. As cheek pieces from Cârlomănești in Romania (Catalog No. 30) and Tószeg in Hungary (Catalog No. 31) demonstrate, even the bridle elements of horses were elaborately decorated—an indication of their importance for expressing social differences and hierarchy between elite warriors and commoners.

Many of the weapons and other metal objects were deposited in hoards, which became common during the Middle and Late Bronze Age. Continuing the tradition that started in the Copper Age, many Bronze Age hoards included not only pieces of scrap metal for reuse but a wide range of objects that were buried together to commemorate an event, moment, or person. Many hoards also came to be associated with increasing demonstrations of status and wealth inequality. The regularity of the kinds of objects and the systematic manner in which they were deposited indicates that these were not just random caches of materials. The exhibition highlights many different examples of hoards, including some of the most iconic ones in Europe. The

Catalog No. 40 *Bronze axes and sword with engraved decorations from Hajdúsámson, Hungary*

Lovas hoard from Croatia, for example, incorporated more than 480 pieces of bronze and twenty-two gold hair ornaments (Catalog No. 35). The Apa hoard from Romania includes the weaponry that would have been used by an elite warrior during the Middle Bronze Age (Catalog No. 36), and the Hajdúsámson hoard from Hungary contains twelve beautifully decorated bronze axes and a sword (Catalog No. 40). Another hoard from Hajdúsámson has bronze vessels that might have been used during feasting or a ceremony and placed into the ground afterwards (Catalog No. 52). Other hoards incorporate many gold objects, such as the Sarasău (Szarvaszó) hoard, parts of which are owned by Hungary and Romania (Catalog No. 39). This hoard is reunited in the exhibition for the first time since it was found in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Many of the burial traditions that since the beginning of the Neolithic had been used to mark aspects of social roles, such as gender and age, began during the Bronze Age to be used to emphasize other aspects of social relationships, such as hierarchical rank. There was a proliferation of different regional funerary traditions, including the widespread practice of cremation in places such as the Great Hungarian Plain where some cemeteries boast thousands of urn burials. After being burned on the funeral pyre in designated parts of cemeteries, the remains of the deceased would be gathered and buried in ceramic urns—the exhibition presents the reconstruction of a pyre and features a burial assemblage from Békés in Hungary that contained the remains of a cremated individual (Catalog No. 51). In many Bronze Age cemeteries, the differential status of individuals was expressed by the placement of specific grave goods with the deceased—the regular occurrence of status objects in the burials of children reflects on the emergence of hereditary ranks in Bronze Age societies of southeastern Europe.

Underlying the social changes that unfolded in the period were several significant developments in transportation and agricultural technology. The earliest representations of wheeled carts are dated to the end of the Copper Age, but the common presence of fired clay wheel models at Bronze Age sites in southeastern Europe testifies to the widespread use and outstanding importance of wagons by this era. Excavations have yielded not only wheel models but entire ceramic wagon models, some of them beautifully decorated, such as an object from Pocsaj in Hungary displayed in the exhibition (Catalog No. 32). In several regions, horse-drawn chariots were used exclusively by the elite and played a role in warfare and elite display. In addition, the ox-driven plow was adopted in the region sometime during the Copper Age and became much more common during the Bronze Age, which would have had a massive impact on agricultural productivity.

Strict, institutionalized hierarchies permeated the economic and political systems in many Bronze Age societies of southeastern Europe. Throughout the Neolithic and the Copper Age, there had been flashes of hierarchy, for example, in the burials at Varna and Durankulak, but the emergence of these hierarchical systems remained localized to specific regions, and generally did not last longer than a few generations. During the Bronze Age, by contrast, hierarchical societies based on inherited ranking spread throughout many regions of southeastern Europe. In these contexts, people found themselves in a new, unequal world with horse-riding warrior chiefs who donned ostentatious accoutrements of gold and bronze. These hierarchical communities of the Bronze Age laid the foundation for the emergence of the tribal kingdoms of the Iron Age.

Catalog No. 30

Cheek piece

Antler

Cârlomănești-Cetățuia, Romania

1700–1500 BC

Length: 14.5 cm

Maximum diameter: 1.7 cm

Inv. No. 49463

Buzău County Museum,
Buzău, Romania

Bibliography: Motzoi-Chicideanu et al. 2012:50–51, Plate 11.

This cheek piece, richly decorated with incised and plastic motifs, was discovered in the fill of a pit within a settlement. Similar objects, which are part of a bridle used during horse riding, occur frequently in Middle Bronze Age sites from Central Europe to the northern Pontic steppe (see Catalog No. 31).

Florin Gogâltan

Catalog No. 31
Cheek pieces (5)
Antler, bone
Tószeg-Laposhalom, Hungary
1900–1600 BC
Discoid cheek pieces (2)
Diameter: 7 cm and 8.7 cm
Inv. No. 52.33.120–121
Bar cheek pieces (3)
Length: 8.9–11.6 cm
Width: 2.4–2.9 cm
Inv. No. 52.33.125–127
Hungarian National Museum,
Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Bökönyi 1953:116–18, Figure 3; Mozsolics 1953:76–78, Figures 9–10, 13; Banner et al. 1957:117, Figure 23:16a–b, 17a–b; Bándi 1963:46, 51, 57, Figures 1:6, 2:1, 7–8.

These cheek pieces were found in unknown stratigraphic contexts during the excavation of the Tószeg-Laposhalom tell site. The objects show wear on their surface and in their holes indicating that they were used for fastening leather straps on a bridle. Some researchers attribute these cheek pieces to indirect Mycenaean influences from mainland Greece in the region. The artifacts suggest that horse-riding reached an increased degree of importance in the Carpathian Basin during the Middle Bronze Age.

János Gábor Tarbay

Catalog No. 32
Wagon model
Ceramic
Pocsaj-Leányvár, Hungary
2100–1900 BC
Length: 13.5 cm
Width: 9.1 cm
Height: 7.5–8 cm
Inv. No. IV.77.6.1–2
Déri Museum, Debrecen, Hungary
Bibliography: Mesterházy 1976; Hajdú 2015; Hajdú 2017:10.

This wagon model has incised and incrusted decorations of pairs of four-spoke wheels on the shorter sides and horizontal zigzag lines on the longer sides. The wheels may represent the sun and its celestial path, thus the passage of time, whereas the zigzags are traditionally considered to have symbolized water. Therefore, the repeating motifs on the wagon may evoke a mythological narrative, a kind of Bronze Age cosmogony that is not possible to precisely decode. The object may have been used over the course of ritual activities, as indicated also by ocher remains found inside it.

János Dani

Catalog No. 33
Hoard
Copper
Dragomelj, Slovenia
1100–900 BC
Plano-convex ingots (5)
Diameter: 8.5–17.6 cm
Thickness: 3.2–7 cm
Inv. No. P 19172, P 19176,
P 19180, P 19182, P 19184
Biconical ingots (4)
Length of fully
preserved ingot: 38.3 cm
Width: 4.9 cm
Height: 6.3 cm
Length of fragmented
ingots: 7–11.9 cm
Width: 3.3–3.8 cm
Height: 4.9–6 cm
Inv. No. P 19166, P 19174,
P 19183, P 19202
National Museum of Slovenia,
Ljubljana, Slovenia
Bibliography: Turk 2003:113–15,
Figure 6.

This hoard was buried within a contemporaneous, Late Bronze Age settlement, and is composed of plano-convex and biconical copper ingots as semi-finished products. Unlike the vast majority of Late Bronze Age hoards that were deposited during ritual ceremonies, this assemblage seems to attest to metallurgical activities, as suggested by casting molds recovered in close proximity to the hoard. The weight of the entirely preserved biconical ingot is 2.844 kg, which is almost exactly six times more than the Cypriot mina of 0.475 kg, the standard eastern Mediterranean weight unit used around 1000 BC. It testifies to the spread of standardized units of weight already during the Bronze Age.

Peter Turk

Catalog No. 34

Ingot

Copper

Unknown provenance, Bulgaria

1400–1200 BC

Length: 46 cm

Width: 26 cm

Thickness: 3–5.5 cm

Weight: 25.9 kg

Inv. No. IV 4291

Rousse Regional Museum of History, Rousse, Bulgaria

Bibliography: Doncheva 2012:713, Figure 15.

This pillow-shaped, so-called oxhide-type, ingot is widely considered to have been an early form of currency. There is a maker's mark in the bottom left corner of the object that bears resemblance to those on many similar ingots found in a ship that was wrecked off the coast of Turkey in the eastern Aegean around 1300 BC. This ingot was likely produced on the island of Cyprus, and is excellent evidence for intensive trade relations between the Mediterranean and southeastern Europe during the Late Bronze Age.

Dimitar Chernakov

Catalog No. 35
Hoard
Gold, ceramic
Lovas, Croatia
1500–1300 BC
Vessel
Ceramic
Height: 9.8 cm
Maximum width: 9 cm
Inv. No. 9995
Hair locks (19)
Gold
Length: 1.6–4.8 cm
Diameter: 1.9–6 cm
Inv. No. P-9996–10009-1–6
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Vinski 1958:3–4, 18–26, Plates V:3, 3a, VI; Ložnjak Dizdar and Potrebica 2017:53, 55, 57, Figure 16.

The Lovas hoard, discovered in 1939, was placed in a large ceramic vessel and contained a variety of bronze finds (more than 480 pieces), a small ceramic vessel with two handles, so-called 'kantharos,' and twenty-two hair ornaments made of gold wire. These gold hair locks were deposited inside the kantharos. The hoard was unearthed near a contemporaneous settlement, where some of the same types of bronze objects have also been recovered. This hoard is the largest assemblage of Middle Bronze Age metal artifacts recovered from a single context in Croatia.

Filip Franković

Catalog No. 36

Hoard

Bronze
Apa, Romania
1700–1500 BC
Sword
Length: 62 cm
Inv. No. 15914
Axes (3)
Length: 20–26 cm
Inv. No. 15909–15910, 15912
Arm spiral
Length: 22 cm
Diameter: 13.5 cm
Inv. No. 15915
National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania
Bibliography: Popescu 1940; Popescu and Rusu 1966:Fasc. 1, R 1; Soroceanu 2012:17–20, Tables 1–5.

This assemblage was found in 1939, when a trench was being dug by a soldier. The hoard is composed of two swords (one in a highly fragile condition), a disc-butted axe, an axe with ridged half-sleeve, a shaft-tube axe, and an arm spiral. The artifacts are characteristic for the so-called Apa–Hajdúsámson metallurgical horizon of the Middle Bronze Age in the Carpathian Basin. The swords are the earliest weapons of this type in the region. The Apa hoard allows the reconstruction of the military elite's weaponry during this period. Other weapon types of this horizon include spearheads and daggers.

Florin Gogâltan

Catalog No. 37
Hair rings (2)
Gold
Sărmăşag, Romania
1400–1200 BC
Circumference: 43 cm and 44.5 cm
Weight: 13.84 g and 13.90 g
Inv. No. P81630–P81631
National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Bibliography: Popescu 1956:231, Figure 138:9–11; Călian and Oberländer-Târnoveanu 2019: 208–209.

The find circumstances and the original composition of the treasure these diadems were part of remain unknown. In 1901, fifteen gold objects from the hoard were inventoried into the collection of the National Museum of Transylvanian History. Of those, only four hair rings remain, out of which the exhibition features two items. The objects were made of a wire with two laurel leaves at each end, and might have been worn by a female member of the Late Bronze Age elite.

Florin Gogâltan

Catalog No. 38

Hoard

Gold

Oradea/Nagyvárad, Romania

1300–1200 BC

Bracelets with spiral ends (4)

Diameter: 4.1–8.4 cm

Weight: 102.21–264.72 g

Inv. No. 43.1911.1–4.

Bracelets with tapering ends (9)

Diameter: 5.1–6.3 cm

Weight: 35.1–66.79 g

Inv. No. 43.1911.5–6, 43.1911.8–14.

Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary

Bibliography: Mozsolics 1973: 200–201, Plates 83–85, 86:4–9; Kemenczei 1999a:126, No. 51; Kemenczei 1999b:71, Figures 38–39.

This hoard consists of a total of twenty gold bracelets with tapering ends, of which nine are featured in the exhibition, and four heavy gold bracelets with spiral ends. The assemblage represents a characteristic deposition tradition that emerged in the territory of the upper Tisza region and Transylvania during the thirteenth century BC. These gold bracelet hoards show similarities in terms of object types, and they were most likely communal offerings of several individuals.

János Gábor Tarbay

Catalog No. 39

Hoard

Gold

Sarasău/Szarvaszó-Vâlcelușe Hill, Romania

1300–1200 BC

a. *Spiral pendants (11)*

Diameter: 5.6–8.4 cm

Weight: 8.27–43.10 g

Inv. No. 16.1848.1–4

Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary

Inv. No. 358466–358472

National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania

b. *Crescent-shaped pendants (3)*

Length: 3.2–3.5 cm

Width: 3.6–3.8 cm

Weight: 3.23–3.96 g

Inv. No. 16.1848.6–8

Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary

c. *String of beads (43)*

Diameter: 2.9–4.1 cm

Inv. No. 16.1848.5

Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary

d. *Necklace of beads (239)*

Weight: 23.81 g

Inv. No. 358476

National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania


c


a

e. *Chain of rings*
Length: 134.8 cm
Width: 3.2 cm
Weight: 10.78 g
Inv. No. 16.1848.9
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
f. *Rings (3)*
Diameter: 2.3–2.8 cm
Weight: 3.83–5.03 g
Inv. No. 358473–358475
National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania
Bibliography: Rómer 1865:37–45, Figures 1–6; Hampel 1886:Plate XLVI; Popescu 1956:188, 230, Figure 141; Mozsolics 1973:206, Plates 91–92; Borș and Tătaru 2017.


e

This hoard was found in 1847 by a cowherd after heavy rain exposed the objects, which were lying on the surface of the ground. The original assemblage consisted of several kilograms of gold, but because the collection was looted, many objects ended up in private collections. A significant part, however, was confiscated by the Treasury of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Currently, the remaining objects are divided between the Hungarian National Museum and the National History Museum of Romania. The collection is reunited here for the first time. The hoard is believed to have been an ornament set worn and deposited by the local elite.

János Gábor Tarbay and Corina Borș

Catalog No. 40

Hoard

Bronze

Hajdúsámson-Hegedűs Hill, Hungary

1700–1600 BC

Sword

Length: 53 cm

Maximum width: 7 cm

Inv. No. Sz. 1907.1204

Disc-butted axes (3)

Length: 19.2–19.8 cm

Maximum width: 6.7–7.6 cm

Inv. No. Sz. IV.89.5.1, 1907.1205–1206

Shaft-tube axe

Length: 20.3 cm

Maximum width: 7.3 cm

Inv. No. Sz. 1907.1207

Shaft-hole axes (8)

Length: 14.6–16.7 cm

Maximum width: 5.4–7.3 cm

Inv. No. 1907.1208–1214, 1216

Déri Museum, Debrecen, Hungary

Bibliography: Zoltai 1908; Mozsolics 1967:121–23, 139–40, Tables 9–11; Bóna 1992:55–58; David 2002:3–78; Dani et al. 2020.

This is the so-called First Hajdúsámson Hoard, one of the best known and most emblematic finds of the European Bronze Age. It consists of a total of thirteen bronze items, most of which are beautifully decorated: a solid-hilted sword, three disc-butted axes, a shaft-tube axe, and eight shaft-hole axes. This weapon hoard was deposited in a unique pattern: the axis of the sword was oriented north–south, the tip pointing south, and the axes were placed in lines alongside the sword, with their blades facing west. This arrangement indicates that the assemblage was most likely an offering or a sacrifice to divine powers.

János Dani

Closeup of the pommel on the base of the sword's handle.

Catalog No. 41
Daggers (3)
Gold
Perșinari, Romania
1700–1600 BC
Length: 19.2–22.5 cm
Maximum width: 9.6–11.6 cm
Weight: 247.15–408.05 g
Inv. No. 23240, 23242–23243
National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania
Bibliography: Zaharia and Iliescu 1968; Leahu 1988; *L'Europe* . . . . 1999:135, 252–53, catalog no. 146; Oberländer-Târnoveanu and Ungaro 2010:124–25; Meller and Bunnefeld 2021:118–23.

These three daggers, or halberds according to other researchers, were part of a larger hoard of twelve gold daggers, a gold sword, and several silver axes. Considering that gold is a very soft and malleable metal, one can assume that these daggers had no utilitarian purpose, rather they were ceremonial tools or insignia of power. These high-status goods indicate long-distance connections between East Europe and the Mycenaean world of Greece during the Bronze Age.

Corina Borș

Catalog No. 42

Dagger

Silver

Unknown provenance

2500–1900 BC

Length: 22.2 cm

Maximum width: 6 cm

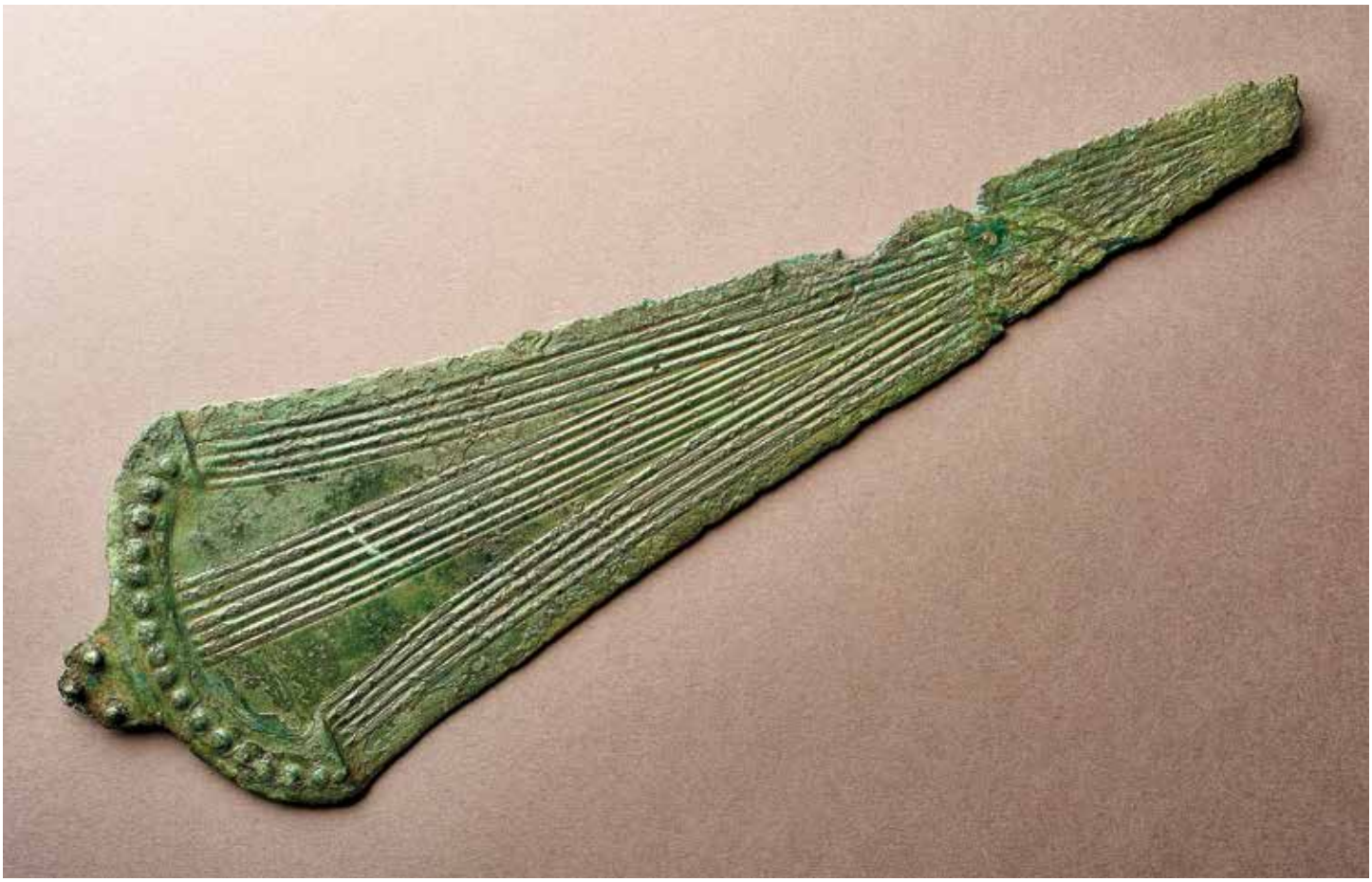
Inv. No. 3.1886.1

Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary

Bibliography: Mozsolics 1967:58–59, 173, No. 9, Plate 45:1; Mozsolics 1968:35, 57, Plate 19:3; Kemenczei 1999a:122, No. 24; Kovács 1999:58, Figure 31.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Hungarian National Museum purchased this unprovenanced Bronze Age silver dagger from an antiquities dealer. The object lacks parallels in the Carpathian Basin, but similar artifacts are known from Crete and Cyprus from the Early Bronze Age, suggesting that this object may have been produced there. Similar to the gold greave from Szeged-Gyálarét in the exhibition (Catalog No. 44), it was acquired in a folded state indicating that the dagger was deliberately damaged before its deposition. Micrographs on the cutting edges revealed several notches caused by blade-on-blade contact, implying that it may have been used, despite the fact that it is made of silver.

János Gábor Tarbay



Catalog No. 43

Dagger

Bronze
Vajzë, Albania
1800–1600 BC
Length: 36.7 cm
Maximum width: 11.3 cm
Inv. No. 1207
Archaeological Museum in Tirana, Tirana, Albania
Bibliography: Prendi 1957:89–90, Plate 15:a; Hammond 1974:141–42, Figure 4:e; Korkuti 1985:Figure 1:1, Plate 16:1; Peroni 1985:203, 205, Figure 2:4.

This is an Italian type, so-called 'Montemerano' dagger. This is a unique object and rare evidence for Transadriatic connections between Albania and the Italian Peninsula in the first half of the second millennium BC. As illustrated by a sword in the exhibition from Komsi (Catalog No. 66), the local elite in the area of modern-day Albania typically preferred Aegean-type weapons during most of the second millennium BC.

Rovena Kurti

Catalog No. 44
Greave
Gold
Szeged-Gyálarét, Hungary
1250–1150 BC
Length of fragments: 10.2–12.1 cm
Width of fragments: 15.2–16.3 cm
Inv. No. 2019.3.1
Móra Ferenc Museum,
Szeged, Hungary
Bibliography: Szabó and Czukor 2017:9.

To date, this gold greave is the sole piece of Bronze Age defensive armor made of precious metal found in Europe. Along with several other, small, gold adornments, it was deliberately deposited on an island in a marshy area near the Tisza River. The richly decorated artifact was folded several times and cut into three pieces before it was buried. The greave testifies to the importance of war and weaponry in elite ideology on the Great Hungarian Plain during the Late Bronze Age.

Péter Czukor

Catalog No. 45

Sword

Bronze
Șimleu Silvaniei/Szilágysomlyó, Romania
900–850 BC
Length: 102.9 cm
Maximum width: 4.1 cm
Inv. No. 11.1949.6
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Roska 1942:275, No. 224; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1978:150, No. 265, Plate 264B.1; Bader 1991:160–61, Plate 54.376; Kemenczei 1991:88, No. 528.

It is unclear whether this long sword with an antenna-shaped handle was part of a hoard or if it was an individual find. This masterpiece of Transylvanian Late Bronze Age metallurgy is decorated with stylized birds that were believed to enhance the magical power of the objects they adorned. Analogous weapons are primarily known from Central and West Europe, such as Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy, indicating a high degree of warrior mobility between distant regions.

János Gábor Tarbay

Catalog No. 46
Spearheads (5)
Bronze
Tenja, Croatia
1300–1100 BC
Length: 14.1–22.1 cm
Inv. No. P-3227, P-3241, P-3244–3246
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Ljubić 1889:86, Plate XII:60–70; Holste 1951:8, Plates 13, 14:1–18; Gimbutas 1965:314, Figures 216A–216B; Vinski-Gasparini 1973:83, 186, Plates 31–32.

These five bronze spearheads are part of a large hoard. The hoard was found at the end of the nineteenth century and not much is known about the circumstances of its discovery. The assemblage contains a total of eighty-two bronze objects, including a sword, daggers, spearheads, axes, sickles, and bracelets. Bronze weapons frequently occur in contemporaneous Late Bronze Age hoards in many regions of south-eastern Europe.

Filip Franković

Catalog No. 47
Phalerae (6)
Bronze
Krehin Gradac,
Bosnia and Herzegovina
850–700 BC
Large phalera
Diameter: 24 x 24.8 cm
Height: 10.3 cm
Inv. No. P-1935
Small phalerae (5)
Diameter: 8.4–9 cm
Height: 3.3–4.1 cm
Inv. No. P-1937–1940, P-1945
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb,
Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Čović 1971:Plate VI:1–2; Čović 1987:448–49, Figures 142–44; König 2004:200–206, Plates 70–76; Blečić Kavur 2012:47, 51–56, 59, 61, Figure 5:13–14, 18–20.

Discovered in 1882, these objects, dating to the transitional period between the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, belong to a large hoard of jewelry, tools, and weapons. The five smaller artifacts in this selection have been interpreted as phalerae, that is, decorative ornaments worn as part of a costume. The large piece probably had the same function; however, alternative interpretations also have been offered, including that it was a shield boss.

Filip Franković

Catalog No. 48
Helmet
Bronze
Mezőkövesd, Hungary
1000–900 BC
Height: 23.6 cm
Rim diameter: 22.9 cm
Inv. No. 1960.2.2
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Patay 1969:173–74, Figures 1, 8, Plate 43:2; Hencken 1971:44–45, Figure 21:a; Mozsolics 2000:55–56, Plate 52:3; Mödlinger 2013:174, catalog no. 6, Figures 1:2, 12.

This bronze helmet was part of an elite warrior hoard deposited in a large ceramic vessel. It was placed in a situla (bucket-shaped vessel), covered with a cauldron, along with two arm spirals. The helmet's body was embossed from a flat disc, and cast-on technology was used to produce the knob. It is a thick and quite efficient piece of armor that was fixed onto an organic padding with rivets. A total of fifteen similar objects have been recovered mainly from their presumed production center in the northeastern Carpathian Basin.

János Gábor Tarbay

Catalog No. 49

Cuirass

Bronze

Pilismarót-Danube River, Hungary

1200–1100 BC

Front

Height: 45.6 cm

Width: 35.5 cm

Depth: 16.5 cm

Inv. No. 83.22.1

Back

Height: 50.5 cm

Width: 40.3 cm

Depth: 16.6 cm

Inv. No. 83.22.2

Szent István Király Museum, Székesfehérvár, Hungary

Bibliography: Petres and Jankovits 2014:45–46, 48–53, Figures 2–9; Mödlinger 2017:172, 184–88, 213, No. 134.

This two-part cuirass was allegedly found in the Danube River and was purchased from a private collector in 1982. The breast plate depicts a stylized male body, and was made by embossing and using the so-called 'repoussé' technique. According to the Hungarian classification, the artifact belongs to the eastern Alpine–Carpathian cuirass group. Presumably influenced by Greek workshops, it was made for a warrior in the Danube region and its deposition in the river may have occurred for ritual or ceremonial reasons.

Ágnes Kovács and János Gábor Tarbay

Catalog No. 50
Short sword
Bronze
Zajta, Hungary
1700–1500 BC
Length: 34 cm
Maximum width: 4.1 cm
Inv. No. 66.1929.2
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Tompa 1937:89, Plate 35:4; Mozsolics 1967:178–79, Plate 65:2; Kemenczei 1991:No. 13, Plate 3:13; Tarbay 2021:107–109, Figure 11:A–F

This short sword was allegedly found in a warrior equipment hoard, including three swords, one disc-butted axe, and one arm or leg spiral. The object was cast in a single piece. It has an ergonomic handle, a symmetric, leaf-shaped blade with razor-sharp cutting edges, and a perfect point of balance, which is a deadly design, the purpose of which was to cause harm in the most effective way during combat. Based on prehistoric tip damage and dents along the cutting edges, it was used with both thrusting and slashing movements. This object is a representative example of a supra-regional sword group distributed between the Carpathian Basin and northern Europe in the Middle Bronze Age.

János Gábor Tarbay

Catalog No. 51
Burial assemblage
Ceramic
Békés-Jégvermi Garden, Grave 6, Hungary
1450–1300 BC
Urn
Height: 28 cm
Rim diameter: 16.7 cm
Base diameter: 9.6 cm
Inv. No. 2020.1.1
Bowl
Height: 6.5 cm
Rim diameter: 20.5 cm
Base diameter: 8.5 cm
Inv. No. 2020.1.2
Jug
Height: 11.6 cm
Rim diameter: 9.6 cm
Base diameter: 6 cm
Inv. No. 2020.1.3
Munkácsy Mihály Museum, Békéscsaba, Hungary

Bibliography: Duffy et al. 2019a:247, Figure 4 top; Duffy et al. 2019b:71–72, Tables 3–4.

This urn cremation burial was one of the nearly ninety graves excavated at the Middle Bronze Age cemetery near Békés. The grave represents a typical burial assemblage at the site, where the bowl was placed upside down on the top of the urn and the jug was placed next to the urn. In the urn, the cremated remains of an adult female were recovered. This burial and the cemetery as a whole remind us that rigid institutionalized hierarchies were not adopted everywhere in later prehistory—the Middle Bronze Age in the lower Körös Basin is one example where inequalities remained relatively limited.

Györgyi Parditka and Paul R. Duffy

Catalog No. 52
Hoard
Bronze
Hajdúsámson-Vineyard of
Ignác Tafler, Hungary
1050–950 BC
Cauldrons (3)
Height: 13–15.5 cm
Maximum diameter: 22.5–26.5 cm
Inv. No. IV.1909.169–170,
IV.1909.257
Cups (3)
Height: 4–6 cm
Maximum diameter: 11.3–15.5 cm
Inv. No. IV.1909.171–172,
IV.1909.258.
Déri Museum, Debrecen,
Hungary
Bibliography: Zoltai 1909;
Zoltai 1926:129–31, Figures 1–2;
Patay 1990:22, 55–56, 60–61,
Tables 6–8, 39:84, 42:100–101;
Mozsolics 2000:47, Table 36.

This hoard contained six bronze vessels: three cauldrons with two handles mounted with double cross-attaches and three cups representing two different types. The objects were specially arranged: they were placed inside one another, perhaps to symbolize social cohesion or the unity of those who were involved in the feasting or sacrificial ceremony, during which the assemblage was used before it was buried in the ground.

János Dani

Catalog No. 53
Bird-shaped vessel
Ceramic
Tiszafüred-Majoroshalom, Hungary
1900–1700 BC
Height: 14 cm
Length: 16.8 cm
Width: 13 cm
Inv. No. 72.4.124
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Kovács 1977:95–96, Plates 45–46; Kovács 1990; Szathmári 2003:515, Figure 2:11; Guba and Szeverényi 2007:85–87.

This bird-shaped vessel, called 'askos,' was found in a secondary context—that is, not in association with a burial—in a cemetery dating to the Middle Bronze Age and Late Bronze Age. The artifact shows evidence of anthropomorphism, as it has a human face. Askoi in the Bronze Age were used as ceremonial vessels, and they contained special liquids, such as blood or psychoactive fluids for ritual consumption.

János Gábor Tarbay

Catalog No. 54
Bird-shaped vessels (2)
Ceramic
Budapest-Királyok Street, Hungary
1150–800 BC
Height: both 9.5 cm
Maximum width: 16 cm and 12.6 cm
Base diameter: 4.6 cm and 3.8 cm
Inv. No. 66.58.2, 68.8.2
Budapest History Museum,
Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Kalicz-Schreiber et al. 2010:68, Table 47:6, 109, Table 78:6.

These bird-shaped vessels are ornamented with incised lines. They were likely used during ceremonies and were closely linked to the spiritual world of Late Bronze Age society. It is perhaps no coincidence that these two askoi were found next to a vessel containing bird eggs in the cemetery, which further emphasizes the role of these artifacts as symbols of vitality and fertility.

Gábor Szilas

Catalog No. 55
Fibula
Bronze
Sviloš, Serbia
1300–1100 BC
Length: 24.6 cm
Maximum width: 17.8 cm
Inv. No. P-6734
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Åberg 1935:57, Figure 99; Holste 1951:9, Plate 16:34–40; Ercegović 1955:17, Plate I–III; Vinski-Gasparini 1973:108–109, 185, Plate 88:1.

This fibula, or brooch, of the 'passementerie' type was discovered around 1915 as part of a hoard. The hoard consisted of eight additional bronze artifacts, including jewelry and weapons. This elaborate fibula must have been worn as an adornment on a costume.

Filip Franković

Catalog No. 56
Fibula
Bronze
Sečanj, Serbia
1100–900 BC
Length: 27.8 cm
Maximum width: 10.8 cm
Inv. No. 06_26184
National Museum of Serbia,
Belgrade, Serbia
Bibliography: Đorđević 2015:63–67,
Figure 2.

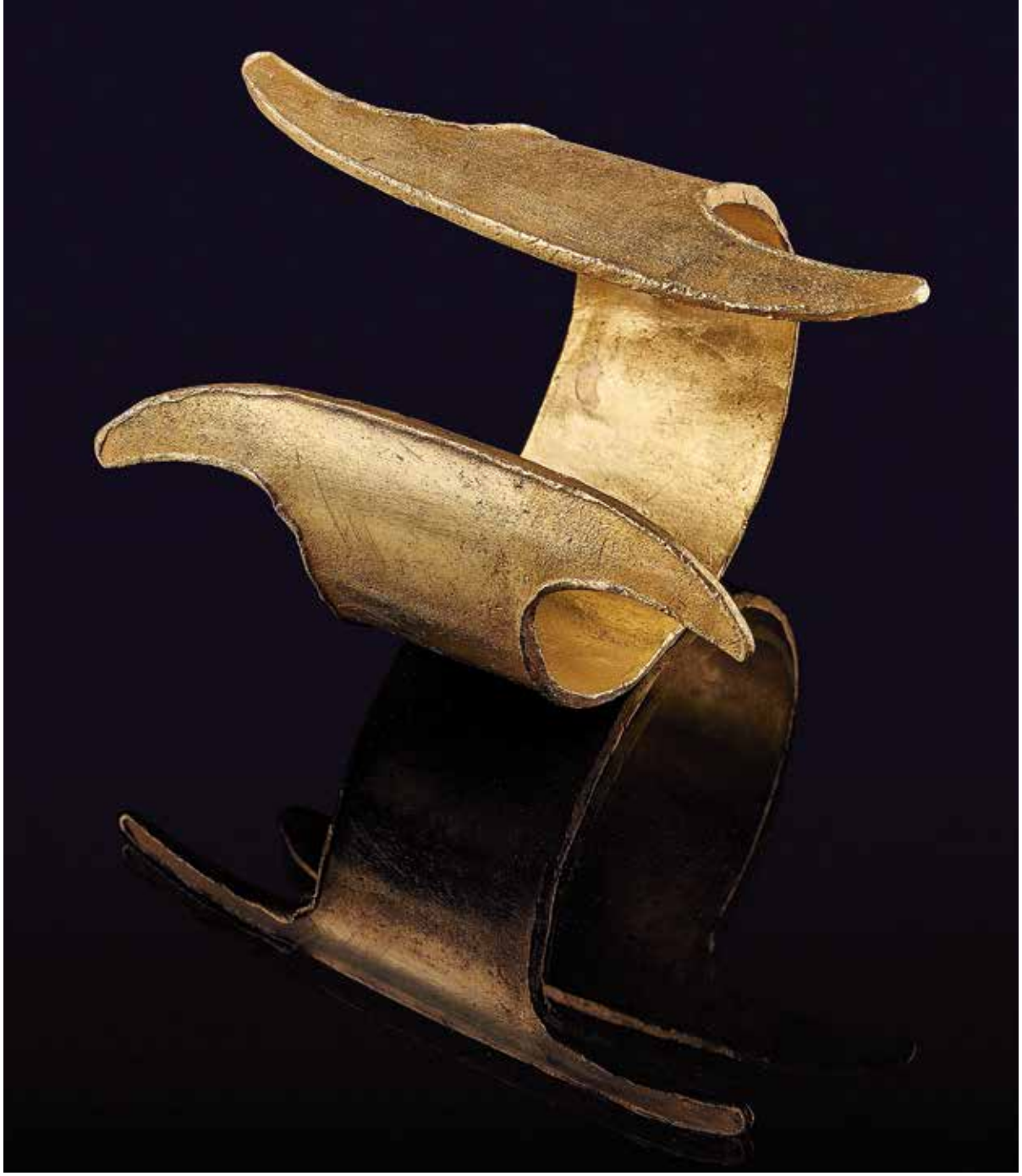
This fibula is a chance find, and was likely part of a larger hoard. Its massive size, similar to another fibula from Sviloš in the exhibition (Catalog No. 55), suggests that it was worn only on special occasions or was used as a votive item to symbolize the proprietor's power. The geographical distribution of this particular fibula type indicates that the Carpathians and Transylvania were the areas of origin, with production centers also in northern Hungary and elsewhere in Central Europe.

Aca Đorđević

Catalog No. 57
Necklace
Carnelian beads (17)
Rehova, Albania
1400–1200 BC
Diameter of beads: 0.7–1 cm
Width of beads: 0.5–0.9 cm
Inv. No. 270
Institute of Archaeology,
Tirana, Albania
Bibliography: Aliu 2012:119, 218, Plates 27, 345; Kurti 2017:290–94, Plates 98:c, 99:e; Kurti et al. 2018:33, Figure 2:d

These seventeen carnelian beads are from a necklace of 103 beads. Late Bronze Age carnelian beads in Albania indicate contacts and exchange with the elite in Mycenaean Greece, who acquired these items via long-distance trade from Egypt and Mesopotamia. Necklaces made of this exotic material were status markers recovered from female burials.

Rovena Kurti



Catalog No. 58
Armband
Gold
Abrud/Abrudbánya, Romania
2000–1500 BC
Length: 8.3 cm
Width: 7.8 cm
Thickness: 6.7 cm
Weight: 145.98 g
Inv. No. 57.1892
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Mozsolics 1951:82, Figure 3; Mozsolics 1968:23–27, 47, Plate 19:1; Kemenczei 1999a:123, No. 32; Kovács 1999:46–47, Figure 20; Tarbay and Lukács 2022.

The find context of this armband is unknown. The object belongs to a unique group of heavy gold armbands with crescent-shaped ends from the Carpathian Basin that dates to the end of the Middle Bronze Age. Despite the lack of elaborate decoration, the Abrud specimen was a finished product and was worn on the wrist or upper arm. To date, only a handful of similar armbands have been recovered, and it is highly likely that these artifacts were worn by the privileged members of the local elite.

János Gábor Tarbay

Catalog No. 59
Hoard
Gold
Hinova, Romania
1100–1000 BC
Bracelet
Diameter: 8.4 cm
Width: 5.2 cm
Weight: 580.3 g
Inv. No. 150218
Diadem
Length: 59.3 cm
Width: 2.6 cm
Weight: 20.65 g
Inv. No. 150246
Necklace of beads (80)
Total length: 59.3 cm
Diameter of beads: 2.6 cm
Total weight: 293.28 g
Inv. No. 150257-78–157
National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania
Bibliography: Davidescu 1981; *Goldhelm* . . . . 1994:138–42, catalog nos. 38.1, 38.3, 38.15; Davidescu and Vulpe 2010; Oberländer-Târnoveanu and Ungaro 2010:132–34, catalog no. 5.2.

These objects are part of a hoard discovered in 1980 in a cemetery dating to the Late Bronze Age. The assemblage consists of jewelry, various unfinished items, and ingots that were placed in a ceramic vessel. The hoard had a total weight of 4.9 kg of gold. The find is considered a votive deposit interred in the very center of the cemetery.

Corina Borș

Catalog No. 60
Armband
Gold
Dunavecse, Hungary
1600–1450 BC
Length: 13.8 cm
Diameter: 6.2 x 7.1 cm
Weight: 282.50 g
Inv. No. 1972.5.1
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Kovács 1977:94, Plate 28; Kovács 1991; Kovács 1999: 49–50, Figures 24, 24a; Tarbay 2022; Tarbay and Maróti 2022:Table 1:4.

This unique gold sheet armband with high silver content lacks exact parallels—only an armband from Bilje in Croatia and another specimen from Tápióbicske in Hungary show similarities with the object. The armband has an elaborate decorative pattern that depicts stylized celestial bodies; these ornaments occur in the Middle Bronze Age Transylvanian–Eastern Carpathian metallurgical circle. Although the Dunavecse armband is an ostentatious prestige object, abrasion traces along its crescent-shaped ends indicate that it was likely worn by the bearer.

János Gábor Tarbay

Catalog No. 61
Arm- or legband
Bronze
Ostra, Serbia
1500–1200 BC
Length: 13.8 cm
Width: 6.6 cm
Inv. No. 22824
National Museum of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia
Bibliography: Vukmanović 1979: Figure 1; Vukmanović and Radojčić 1995:33, Figure 39.

This massive bronze arm- or legband would have been worn by a chiefly member of the Bronze Age society from the Pomoravlje region in Serbia. The complex, incised decoration on and alongside the terminals includes dots, chevrons, hatched triangles, and wave motifs. The object was likely buried in the ground by an elite individual during the course of a sacrificial ceremony.

Jovan D. Mitrović

Catalog No. 62
Pins (2)
Bronze
Peklenica, Croatia
1350–1200 BC
Length: 52.5 cm and 55.7 cm
Head diameter: 3.2 cm and 3.6 cm
Inv. No. P-6798, P-10334
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Vinski-Gasparini 1973: Plate 20:7, 9; Dizdar et al. 2011:47.

These two bronze pins were found in a hoard discovered in 1925. The assemblage contained a total of fourteen bronze objects, including swords, a dagger, axes, sickles, and additional pins. These particular pins share the same stylistic attributes, and can be described as poppy-headed pins with ribbed decorations on the neck.

Filip Franković

Catalog No. 63
Figurine
Ceramic
Dalj, Croatia
1700–1400 BC
Height: 23 cm
Maximum width: 14.5 cm
Inv. No. P-11468
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Hoffiller 1928; Ložnjak Dizdar and Potrebica 2017:58–59, Figure 21.

This ceramic figurine, known as the Dalj idol, is the most famous example of Bronze Age figural art in Croatia. It allegedly originates from a destroyed grave. Similar artifacts are known from a number of Middle Bronze Age sites across the broader region (see Catalog No. 64). The head of the Dalj idol is missing, whereas the body represents a human figure dressed in a long gown adorned with various decorative objects made of metal.

Filip Franković

Catalog No. 64
Figurine
Ceramic
Cârna-Grindul Tomii, Romania
1600–1300 BC
Height: 15.6 cm
Maximum width: 6.8 cm
Inv. No. 13461
National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania
Bibliography: Dumitrescu 1961:70, 251–52, Plates XXXVI, LXXVIII, CLIV, CLX:S5; Chicideanu-Şandor 2003:101–12.

Like the Dalj figurine (Catalog No. 63), this artifact is a stylized representation of a human figure in a long gown. The incised and incrusted decorations, showing 'embroidery style,' likely indicate jewels and other decorative elements on the gown. The enigmatic figurine was recovered from an urn in the Cârna cemetery. Similar objects occur in a range of different archaeological contexts in and beyond the Carpathian Basin.

Florin Gogâltan and Corina Borș

Catalog No. 65
Figurines (6)
Ceramic
Shtoji, Tumulus 6, Albania
2800–2500 BC
Height: 6.4–17.7 cm
Width at shoulder: 3.3–8 cm
Width at base: 3.6–9.7 cm
Inv. No. 14083–14088
Archaeological Museum in Tirana, Tirana, Albania
Bibliography: Koka 1985:242–43, Plate 1:9–10; Koka 1990:40, 43, Figure 16, Plates 8, 10; Koka 2012: 99–102, Plate 31; Govedarica 2016: Figure 3, Plates 1–3.

These six anthropomorphic figurines were offerings placed on a soil platform that covered the central grave of a tumulus. These so-called violin idols were cult objects used during rituals performed for the buried individual. Based on gender attributes, the Shtoji artifacts are schematic representations of four females and one male, while the smallest figurine, with no gender features, might represent a child. These objects are among the most important figurative representations from the Early Bronze Age Balkans, almost certainly influenced by Early Cycladic figurative art in the Aegean, where similar figurines were made of marble.

Rovena Kurti

Catalog No. 66

Sword

Bronze
Komsi, Albania
1400–1300 BC
Length: 69 cm
Maximum width: 9.6 cm
Inv. No. 16512
Archaeological Museum in Tirana, Tirana, Albania
Bibliography: Kurti 1978:312, Plate 2:1; Prendi 1982:220, Plate 11:2; Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993:45, Plates 13, 67; Wardle 1993:123; Bodinaku 1995: 261, 263, Figure 2:2.

This Mycenaean-type sword was found in a looted burial mound. The rivet hole at the top of the hand grip distinguishes the object from the canonical Mycenaean 'horned' swords, suggesting it may have been manufactured locally. The sword may have belonged to a warrior chief. Similar Aegean-type weapons were highly prized by the chieftains of the Bronze Age southern Balkans and were deposited in their graves symbolizing the privileged status of the bearers.

Rovena Kurti

Catalog No. 67
Hybrid vessel
Ceramic
Cârna-Ostrovogania, Romania
1600–1300 BC
Height: 9.5 cm
Rim diameter: 5.5 cm
Base diameter: 9.6 cm
Inv. No. I 55837
Museum of Oltenia, Craiova, Romania
Bibliography: Chicideanu-Şandor 2003: vol. I., 80, vol. II., Plate 151:6.

This vessel is a chance find from the edge of a Late Bronze Age cemetery. It renders a rare shape combining the body of a water bird with human feet and the head of a horned animal. The artifact is richly decorated on its entire surface, including the depictions of multiple necklaces on the neck; similar necklace motifs also occur on anthropomorphic figurines dating to the same period (see Catalog Nos. 63 and 64). The perforations on the vessel indicate that it was hung. The object might have been used in the course of ritual practices.

Corina Borș and Florin Gogâltan

Catalog No. 68
Situla
Bronze
Nyírlugos-Szennyespuszta, Hungary
1000–900 BC
Height: 38 cm
Rim diameter: 35.3 cm
Base diameter: 18.2 cm
Inv. No. IV.1914.77
Déri Museum, Debrecen, Hungary
Bibliography: Zoltai 1915:127; Jósa 1965:22, 36, 43, Table XLV:26; Kemenczei 1984:81, 179, Table CCXV:c; Patay 1990:41, Table 32.

The body of this bucket-shaped vessel, a so-called 'situla,' consists of bronze sheets assembled using rivets and two handles made by casting. On the shoulder of the vessel, positioned symmetrically between the handles, a special sun–bird–boat motif is depicted: two heads of water birds on the top and the sun-disc in the center of the boat. A hoard of fragmentary bronze jewelry, presumably scrap metal for remelting, was found in this situla.

János Dani

Catalog No. 69

Bird-shaped lamp

Bronze
Unknown provenance
1200–900 BC
Height: 12.2 cm
Length: 18.4 cm
Width: 7.1 cm
Inv. No. 60.1951.16
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Hampel 1886:Plate LXVIII:5a–b; Hampel 1896:168; Kovács 1977:98, Plate 70; Novotná 1991:66–67; Ondrkál et al. 2020.

This exceptional object was acquired by the Hungarian National Museum at the end of the nineteenth century. Based on its stylistic analogies, it was most likely manufactured in Slovakia or northeastern Hungary. The artifact has a hollow body and attached loops for hanging, and it was cast using the lost-wax technique, a technology which is most appropriate for producing objects with complex geometry. There are only two close parallels to this find: the Čičarovce bronze bird with bull horns and a recently discovered object from Liptovský Hrádok, both from Slovakia. New scientific analysis on the latter suggests that these artifacts were used as fat-powered lamps in ritual contexts.

János Gábor Tarbay

Catalog No. 70
Kantharos
Gold
Rădeni, Romania
1200–1000 BC
Height: 13.3 cm
Rim diameter: 13 cm
Inv. No. 5548
Neamț County Museum Complex, Piatra Neamț, Romania
Bibliography: Vulpe and Mihăilescu-Bârliba 1985; Soroceanu 2008:231–34, Tables 60:168–69, 61:170; Mihăilescu and Oberländer-Târnoveanu 2019:235, Figure 37:1; Țârlea and Popescu 2019:234.

In 1965 or 1966, a total of possibly eight chalices with handles, so called 'kantharoi,' were accidentally discovered during farming, but only five are still preserved today. The hoard might be interpreted as a drinking vessel set used during lavish ritual activities or feasts expressing the high social status of the owner. The cups bear close similarities to some vessels in the famous Vulchitrun treasure from Bulgaria.

Florin Gogâltan and Corina Borș

The Birth of Royalty: The Iron Age

LIKE THE COPPER AGE AND the Bronze Age, the beginning of the Iron Age is signaled by the introduction of a new metal. The know-how of iron metallurgy dispersed rapidly, and tools and weapons made of iron began to supplant many of their bronze counterparts throughout southeastern Europe at the onset of the first millennium BC. The Iron Age also saw many other significant changes across the region. Complex trade networks unfolded over long distances and diplomatic relations linked remote societies. Large standing armies fought bloody battles with weapons that did not change fundamentally until the introduction of firearms. Inequalities in status and wealth reached unprecedented levels, and lavish ceremonies commemorated victories and defeats and celebrated the living and the dead. All these processes were orchestrated and controlled by military leaders, powerful chiefs, and mighty kings and queens.

In the first centuries of the first millennium BC, iron quickly became a popular material. As opposed to the ingredients of bronze (i.e., copper and tin), that were typically acquired from remote areas at high cost, iron deposits occur naturally in many places throughout southeastern Europe. However, working with iron requires higher temperatures than working with copper or bronze. The rapid spread of advancements in pyrotechnology from Southwest Asia culminated in the mastery of iron-working throughout the Balkans and neighboring regions over the course of a mere couple of centuries. In addition to the archaeological record, which up to the Iron Age was our only source of information for reconstructing the past, we also have Greek and Roman literary sources that provide us a wealth of written information about this exciting period. These sources report about a variety of ethnic groups and independent tribes that lived throughout the Balkans and beyond. These sources provide not only the names for different groups but many times also identify the territories they inhabited. Southeast European societies, including the numerous tribes of Illyrians in the western and Thracians in the eastern Balkans, the Dardanians, Paeonians, Macedonians, and Greeks in the south, the Pannonians in the north, and Scythians in the eastern Carpathian Basin, were interlinked by political, communication, and trade networks to an extent that had never been seen in preceding periods.

Like the literary sources, the archaeological record also testifies to regular, lasting contacts between remote regions. A large, elaborately decorated bronze vessel from a cemetery in Ártánd, Hungary, that was crafted in Sparta was buried with a member of the military elite of the Great Hungarian Plain (Catalog No. 102), indicating the length to which his trade prowess, and possibly his reputation extended. Spectacular ornaments made of amber deriving from the Baltic region have been recovered throughout the Balkans (Catalog Nos. 80, 90, and 96) and represent the robust trade networks that linked elites across Europe. Thracian burial assemblages and treasures are decorated with mythical figures and stylistic motifs that derived from Persia, Greece, and the steppe region (Catalog Nos. 111 and

Catalog No. 111 *Silver gilt pitcher with a mythical scene from Borovo, Bulgaria*

112), showing the widespread exchange of ideas among the specialized artisans who made these items for the elite within the vibrant, multicultural milieu of Iron Age southeastern Europe. Not unlike the ethnographically documented chiefs in the Pacific Islands or heroes from Homeric epic poems, who translated experiences from their voyages abroad into power at home, for Iron Age leaders, established connections to the outside world and relationships with foreign chiefs and rulers were critical for achieving and sustaining their elevated social status.

Status and power were achieved and sustained also by force and violence, which occurred more frequently and at a much larger scale during the Iron Age than in any preceding period. In this, iron played a vital role. Those who controlled iron-rich regions in southeastern Europe also controlled the exploitation of the ore and, most importantly, decided what metal objects would be manufactured from it. In many cases, they instructed their smiths to produce weapons and other combat-related gear in large quantities that they used to establish armies. These armies then were deployed to secure their power within their own societies and to expand it into other regions. The written records present us with vivid images of a world of warlike societies, ruthless chiefs and kings, cruel pirates, marauding troops, marching mercenaries, and extensive military campaigns. Many of these campaigns were recorded between Illyrians and Thracians on one side and Greeks, Macedonians, and Persians on the other. The tales of some indigenous, heroic kings, such as Bardylis and Genthius of Illyria, and Hales and Teres of Thrace, are also told in these sources.

There is also ample evidence for warfare in the archaeological record of southeast European societies during the Iron Age. New, advanced horse trappings, many types of which continued to be used for centuries to come, represent the importance of mounted troops in warfare. The extraordinary amount of weaponry crafted for specialized fighters, which is discovered typically in mortuary contexts, reflects the pervasiveness of warfare and its importance in achieving social status. Our exhibition showcases many common weapons, such as a sword from Kuçi i Zi in Albania (Catalog No. 73), and defensive armor, including various types of helmets from Çinamaku in Albania (Catalog No. 81) and Magdalenska gora in Slovenia (Catalog No. 84), as well as a cuirass from Bulgaria (Catalog No. 85). The entire assemblage of a princely grave from Ilijak in Bosnia and Herzegovina typifies not only various weapons but also

Catalog No. 85 *Bronze cuirass from an unknown site in Bulgaria*

personal objects worn and tools used by a distinguished member of the Illyrian military elite (Catalog No. 99). The whetstone buried with this leader was a regional symbol of social power, as were the stag appliqués made on precious metals found on the Great Hungarian Plain (Catalog Nos. 100 and 101).

The outstanding role of weaponry in elite status display is most ostentatiously illustrated by gold and silver gilded ceremonial helmets that are lavishly decorated with mythical motifs. The rare helmet from Peretu in Romania, which is on display in the exhibition (Catalog No. 114), is among the most exquisite artifacts manufactured throughout the history of Europe.

Inconceivable amounts of wealth were conspicuously buried during the Iron Age in southeastern Europe. Rulers and other members of the elite were interred with arms, wagons, horse trappings, metal vessels, and luxurious jewelry. One of the most ostentatious finds of the period was recovered from a wooden chest at Novi Pazar in Serbia. The chest contained metal and ceramic vessels of Greek origin, as well as an astonishing amount of gold, silver, and amber ornaments; a portion of this assemblage is displayed in the exhibition (Catalog No. 96).

Ancient Thrace is extraordinarily rich in dazzling burial assemblages. The exhibition showcases objects from a sumptuous grave discovered at Zlatinitsa-Malomirovo in Bulgaria (Catalog No. 112). Among other artifacts, the figurative silver gilded greave and the golden wreath adorned with a masterpiece of a Nike appliqué make this burial assemblage phenomenal, even in the context of other splendid Thracian tomb assemblages.

Other, similarly marvelous Thracian assemblages were recovered as treasures or hoards, with no direct evidence for associated burials. The Borovo treasure in our exhibition includes five silver gilded serving and drinking vessels that, like the bronze and silver vessels in the Zlatinitsa assemblage, signifies the importance of feasting in the life and death of the Thracian elite, with wine drinking as its focal feature (Catalog No. 111). These awe-inspiring Thracian metal artifacts were produced locally as well as in Greek workshops, probably in the Greek colonies established along the coast of the Black Sea. These colonies paid tribute and taxes to the Thracian kings, contributing significantly to their wealth.

In many regions, not only the richness of grave goods but also other aspects of the mortuary ritual emphasized power and wealth. For example, throughout the Balkans thousands of earthen mounds were constructed over the burials of elite individuals, many of whom had demonstrated their prowess in warfare and benefited directly from its social and political capital. A number of Thracian tombs also incorporated intricate architecture and colorful frescoes that featured motifs and techniques from far afield, especially ancient Greek city-states; the exhibition showcases elements from the famous Sveshtari and Starosel tombs in Bulgaria.

The archaeological record also speaks to the significant power that women held in Iron Age societies in different parts of southeastern Europe. Female graves furnished with abundant jewelry are especially common in the central Balkans. Excavations of the Donja Dolina cemetery in Bosnia and Herzegovina unearthed many examples, including the remains of a young girl whose *in situ* grave is displayed in the exhibition (Catalog No. 98). A female burial from the large necropolis of Milci in North Macedonia stands out because of its abundant and unique grave goods, illustrating her political, and likely ritual, power (Catalog No. 97). The written sources also preserved the memory of a mighty Illyrian queen, Teuta.

The world of cultural and political diversity, but at the same time hybridity, that characterized southeastern Europe from the beginning of the first millennium BC gradually faded away after the fourth century BC. The rise of the formidable Macedonian Empire, the migration of Celtic tribes from the north, and eventually the conquest of the Roman Empire fundamentally altered the social and cultural development of southeast European societies forever.

But that is another story to tell.

Catalog No. 71

Torques

Bronze

Tărtăria-Podu Tărtăriei vest, Romania

900–800 BC

Maximum diameter: 22 cm

Inv. No. 369610

National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania

Bibliography: Borș 2019:151–52; Ghervase et al. 2020.

This set of seven metal collars, or torques, is part of one of two unique hoards discovered at the fortified settlement of Tărtăria dating to the earliest phase of the Iron Age. The individual pieces of the torques were manufactured elaborately to fit into one another perfectly, including the rolled-up ends. Such adornments are quite rare from the period, and include artifacts found in mortuary contexts in the northern and central Balkans.

Corina Borș

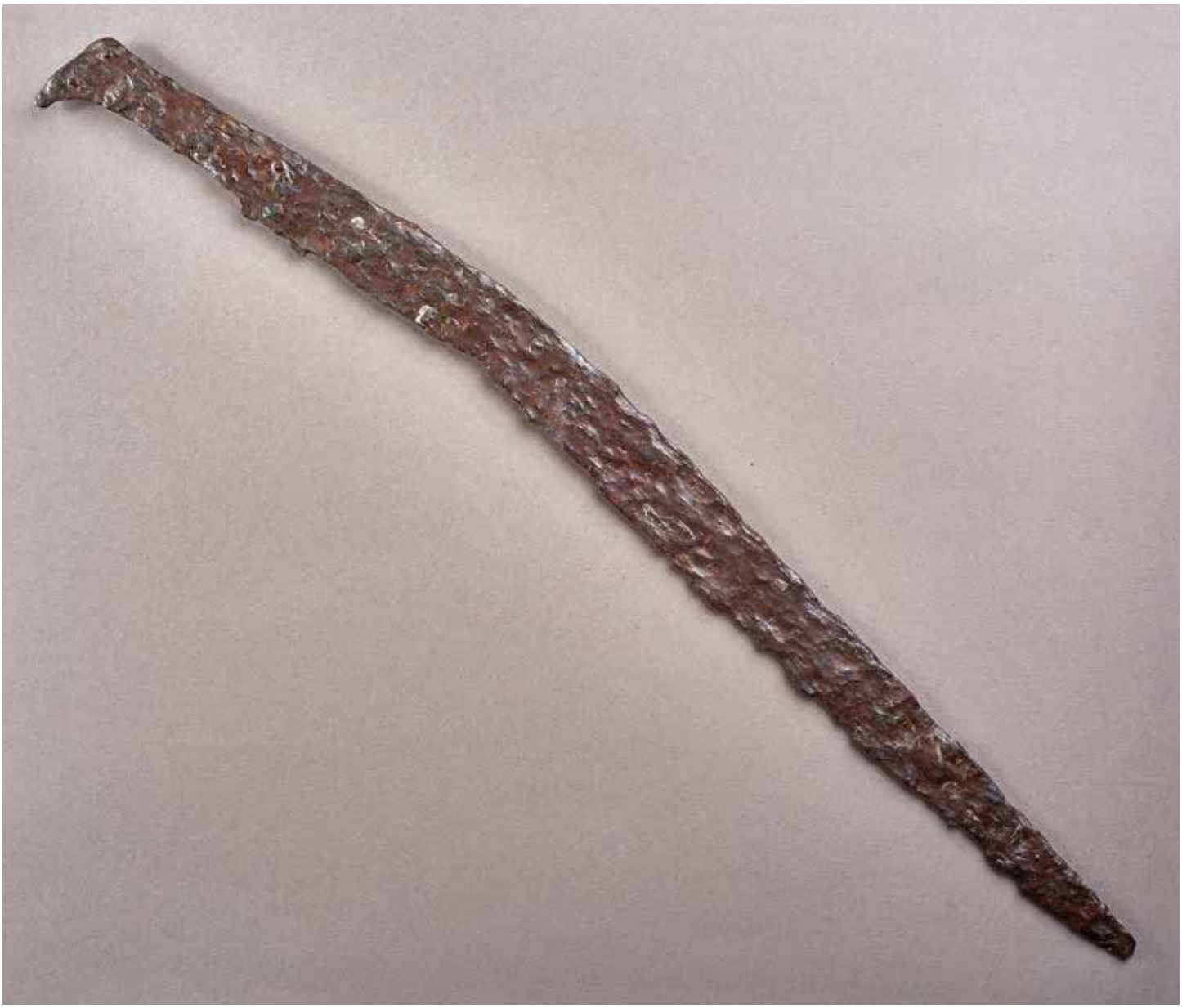
Catalog No. 72

Wagon model

Bronze, iron
Bujoru, Romania
800–700 BC
Maximum length: 26 cm
Maximum width: 15.5 cm
Maximum height: 16.5 cm
Inv. No. 135281
National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania
Bibliography: Beda 1976; Rotea and Bader 2000:catalog no. 72; Slej et al. 2004:152, catalog no. 56; Borș 2015.

This wagon model may have been a cult object. The wagon has a cauldron-shaped receptacle, and is adorned with water bird protomes. The artifact was part of a funerary assemblage interred in a burial mound. As illustrated by several other objects in the exhibition (for example, Catalog Nos. 68 and 69), water bird motifs commonly occur on Middle and Late Bronze Age as well as Early Iron Age ceramic and metal finds in the Balkans and the Carpathian Basin. Wagon models with water birds also have been found in Kosovo and Serbia.

Corina Borș



Catalog No. 73

Sword

Iron
Kuçi i Zi, Albania
800–600 BC
Length: 56 cm
Maximum width: 3.5 cm
Inv. No. 7309
Archaeological Museum in Tirana, Tirana, Albania
Bibliography: Prendi 1974:113, Plate 3:3; Andrea 1985:136, Plate 24:v. 9/1.

This locally manufactured, single-edged sword was recovered as part of a male burial assemblage. The assemblage also contained two iron spearheads, an iron knife, and an iron pin. Beginning in the eighth century BC, iron weaponry was buried commonly and in significant quantities in the graves of the warrior elites that emerged at that time.

Rovena Kurti

Catalog No. 74
Necklace
Glass beads, 98
Podzemelj, Slovenia
600–400 BC
Diameter of beads: 0.5–1.2 cm
Inv. No. P 2484
National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Bibliography: Dular 1978:27, Plate 23:1.

This necklace of various forms of beads was part of a burial assemblage from one of the most important Early Iron Age centers in southeastern Slovenia. Glass beads were frequent grave goods in rich female graves during this period. These objects were either part of numerous, piled necklaces or were sewn onto the dresses of women of high status.

Peter Turk

Catalog No. 75
Fibula
Silver
Čurug, Serbia
400–300 BC
Length: 11.8 cm
Maximum width: 7 cm
Inv. No. 06_2025
National Museum of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia
Bibliography: Garašanin 1954:40–41, Figures XXVIII–XXXI; Garašanin 1973:511–15, Figures 112–16; Vasić 1977:35, Plate 55.

This brooch, a so-called 'fibula,' was part of a large hoard of silver and bronze jewelry. The stylized snake heads on the object are indicative of the Illyrian cultural sphere. Another, Celtic-type fibula in the Čurug assemblage testifies to early contacts between the indigenous communities of southern Pannonia, including the tribes of Breuces and Amantines known from written resources, and the Celts.

Aca Đorđević

Catalog No. 76

Pendant

Bronze
Shtoji, Albania
600–500 BC
Length: 22.5 cm
Inv. No. 13449
Archaeological Museum in Tirana, Tirana, Albania
Bibliography: Koka 2012:196, 266, Plate 17:45–46; Kurti 2016:500, Plates 116:173, 185:2; Kurti 2020: 238, Figure 12.

This composite belt pendant was found as one of a pair in a female burial assemblage. The assemblage also includes bronze beads that likely formed chains to which the composite pendants were suspended and linked to the belt. Some elements of the pendant indicate traditional cultural affiliations of this part of Albania with the central and central-western regions of the Balkans. However, judging from its composition and complexity, the pendant reflects a tighter regional trend of female belt ornamentation that stretched from modern-day southwestern Montenegro to north-central Albania, with close ties to central Adriatic Italy.

Rovena Kurti

Catalog No. 77

Fibula

Bronze
Rrethe-Bazje, Albania
600–500 BC
Fibula length: 3.7 cm
Length with pendants: 12 cm
Width: 3.9 cm
Inv. No. 1274
Archaeological Museum in Tirana, Tirana, Albania
Bibliography: Islami and Ceka 1965:Table XIV:5; Prendi 1974:127, Table VI:14; Islami 2013:164, Table III:2; Kurti 2016:296, Plate 76, 172:3b4.

This fibula was found as one of a pair and belonged to a rich female burial assemblage with additional fibulae, bracelets, and a belt pendant. Based on the arch and the morphology of the catch-plate forming a Boeotian shield, the object represents a larger cultural sphere that includes the central and northwestern Balkans. However, other morphological features, such as the pendants and the overall composition, distinguish this type of fibula as characteristic of the middle Mati Valley of Albania and indicate its local manufacture.

Rovena Kurti

Catalog No. 78

Necklace

Glass beads, 76
Hrvatsko Polje, Croatia
800–100 BC
Diameter of beads: 1.1–1.7 cm
Inv. No. P-13695
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Bakarić 2017:catalog no. 68; Bakarić and Đukić 2018: catalog no. 108.

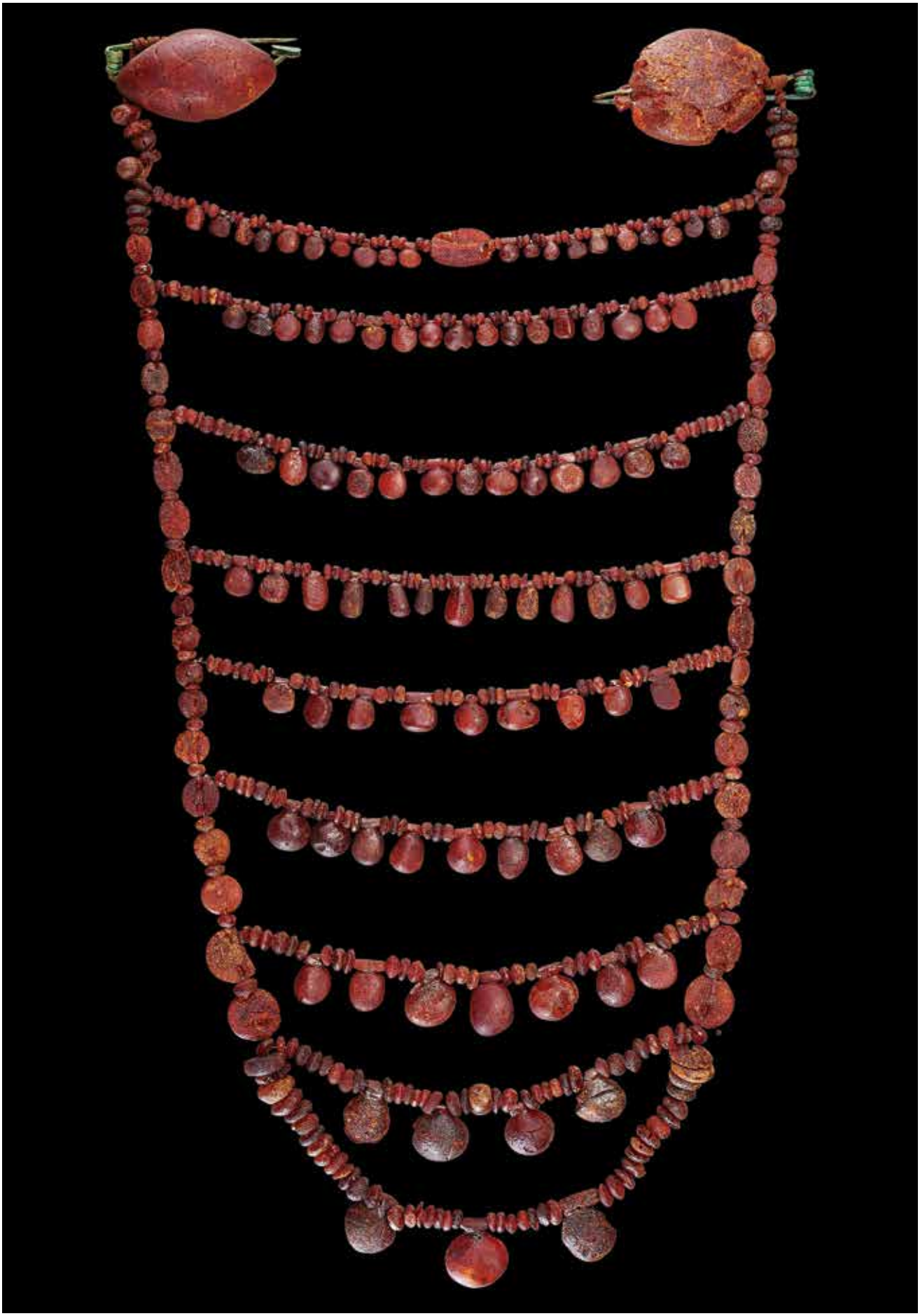
Although the find context is unclear, this necklace may indicate trading activities between the Iapodians, who occupied the central inlands of Croatia and the Una River valley in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the communities of neighboring regions during the Iron Age. Glass beads like these were probably not made in the Iapodian region—it is more likely that they were imported from elsewhere. The limited access to these goods is indicative of the elevated status of their owners.

Ana Đukić

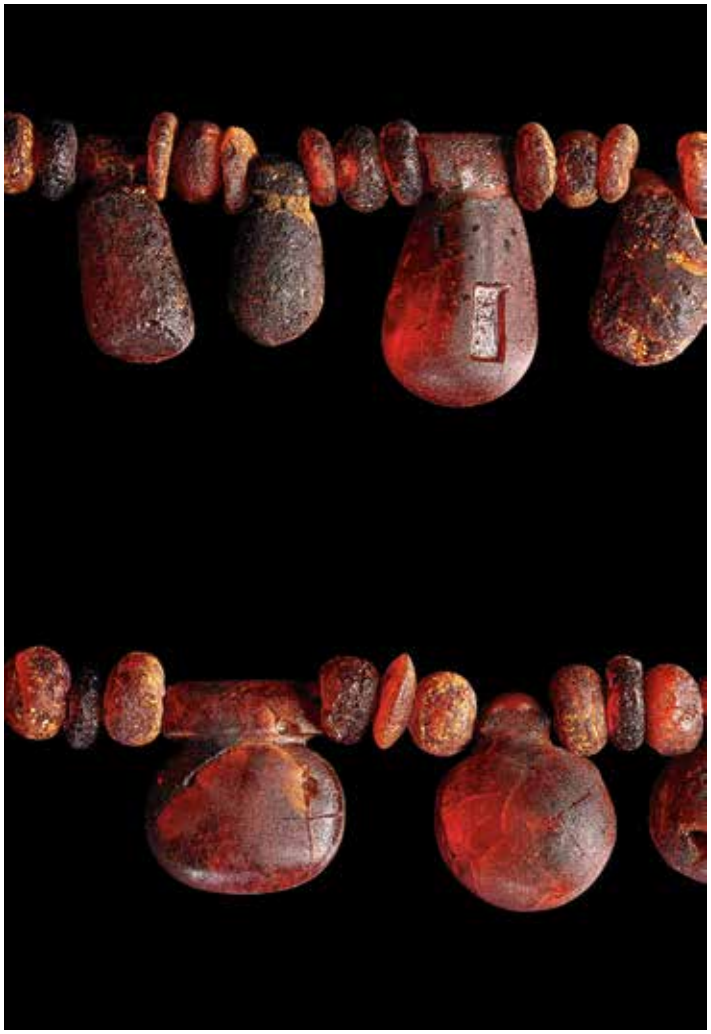
Catalog No. 79
Earring
Gold
Sinemorets, Bulgaria
250–200 BC
Length of chain: 8 cm
Height: 4.5 cm
Inv. No. 51269–51270
National Museum of History,
Sofia, Bulgaria
Bibliography: Agre 2009.

In the burial mound of a Thracian woman at the village of Sinemorets, a rich inventory was recovered, including gold jewelry, such as necklaces and a diadem. Along with other artifacts in the assemblage, the extremely elaborate earring with a winged Nike figure on a chariot pulled by a pair of horses with well-defined anatomical features and harnesses is the product of a Greek workshop, located likely in northern Greece or Macedonia. The artifact represents the regular, intensive interactions that occurred between the Thracian aristocracy and the prosperous Greek colonies on the Black Sea coast.

Pavlina Ivanova Devlova-Balakchieva and Attila Gyucha



Catalog No. 80
Breast ornament
Bronze, amber
Kompolje, Croatia
600–400 BC
Pectoral
Amber
Length: 75 cm
Width: 40 cm
Fibulae (2)
Bronze
Length: 8 cm and 8.5 cm
Inv. No. P-15099, P-15101
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Drechsler-Bižić 1962:105, Plate V:1–12; Drechsler-Bižić 1966; Bakarić 2017:catalog no. 129; Bakarić and Đukić 2018:catalog no. 106.



This breast ornament, or pectoral, is composed of amber beads and two fibulae with large amber beads on their bows. The pectoral was reconstructed for a past exhibition using individual objects found in Grave 63 of Necropolis I at Kompolje. The sheer number of amber beads, imported from the distant Baltic Sea, indicates that the individual interred in this grave must have played an important role in the community. The beads on the fibulae demonstrate that amber was widely used to decorate different types of functional and decorative objects in Iapodian communities.

Ana Đukić

Catalog No. 81
Helmet
Bronze
Çinamaku, Albania
500–400 BC
Height: 27 cm
Rim diameter: 19 x 25 cm
Inv. No. 8318
Archaeological Museum in Tirana, Tirana, Albania
Bibliography: Eggebrecht 1988:230, catalog no. 96; Teržan 1995:115; Blečić Kavur and Miličević-Capek 2011:55–56, Figure 15.

This Illyrian helmet was unearthed from a chieftain burial. The male burial assemblage also included three long, iron spearheads, an iron sword, an iron pin, and a local and a Greek-type ceramic vessel. Various sorts of Illyrian helmets were used in the area of Albania over a long period of time, from the seventh to the third centuries BC. The helmet from Çinamaku belongs to the last stage of development of Illyrian helmets that were widely distributed from Greece and Macedonia, especially in the western Balkans and along the eastern Adriatic coast.

Rovena Kurti

Catalog No. 82
Shield boss
Bronze
Donja Dolina, Bosanska Gradiška,
Bosnia and Herzegovina
650–600 BC
Diameter: 37 cm
Height: 8 cm
Inv. No. 22243
National Museum of Bosnia
and Herzegovina, Sarajevo,
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bibliography: Truhelka 1904:96,
Figures 69–70, Plate XLVI:1, 3–6.

This shield boss is part of the inventory of one of the richest warrior burials from the Donja Dolina cemetery. Shield bosses were high-value prestige items of individuals whose elevated social status and outstanding power as warriors were reflected by their weapons and gear.

Andrijana Pravidur

Catalog No. 83
Battle knife
Bronze
Jurjevo, Croatia
1100–800 BC
Length: 42 cm
Maximum width: 5 cm
Inv. No. P-20002
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Ljubić 1889:Plate X:37; Bakarić 2014:catalog no. 4; Bakarić and Đukić 2018:catalog no. 8.2.

This long knife has a curved blade, and is decorated with groups of lines and triangles that are often interpreted as stylized depictions of warriors. Warrior images are quite rare at the sites of the Iapodian group, so this artifact likely belonged to a person of high rank. Although the object is a stray find, the same location yielded other contemporaneous objects that may indicate there was a necropolis in the area.

Ana Đukić

Catalog No. 84
Helmet
Bronze
Magdalenska gora, Slovenia
600–400 BC
Height: 22.5 cm
Rim diameter: 32 x 33.7 cm
Inv. No. P 4284
National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Bibliography: Tecco Hvala et al. 2004:30, 126, Plate 11.

This helmet was placed in a warrior grave at the paramount Early Iron Age center of Magdalenska gora in Central Slovenia. Double-crested helmets were manufactured on Central Italian models, and their local variants gained remarkable popularity among high-status warriors. Contemporaneous depictions from metal vessels suggest that a lavish plumage was attached between the two parallel crests, probably made of horsehair, which extended with a decorative ribbon down to the middle of the warrior's back.

Peter Turk

Catalog No. 85

Cuirass

Bronze

Unknown provenance, Bulgaria

500–300 BC

Front

Height: 34 cm

Width: 32 cm

Back

Height: 41.2 cm

Width: 35 cm

Inv. No. 58179

National Museum of History, Sofia, Bulgaria

Bibliography: Unpublished

The exact find circumstances of this two-part, bell-shaped cuirass are unknown. Similar to its Greek counterparts, as well as Bronze Age predecessors (see Catalog No. 49), the front plate shows a schematic male body. At the openings of the arms, there is a cylindrical bend in which a bronze wire is placed. Traces of ancient repair can be seen over the right breast. The riveting holes indicate that the cuirass was lined with textile or leather. The object was used by a high-ranking warrior of a Thracian army.

Pavlina Ivanova Devlova-Balakchieva

Catalog No. 86

Greaves

Bronze

Krk-Šinigoj, Croatia

500–375 BC

Length: 43.2 cm

Inv. No. P-16959

Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

Bibliography: Balen Letunić 1991–92: 34, Table 2; Blečić Kavur 2015:112, Figure 42.

This pair of greaves was discovered along with a bronze helmet, and they might have been from a destroyed burial. The greaves, which represent the later variant of the so-called Greek greaves, were ergonomically modeled to fit the lower legs of the user, with functional and decorative lateral molded ribs in the form of a triple 'S.' Similar defensive weapons, originating from Greek workshops, have been found in numerous graves of the Iron Age warrior elites of various communities in the Balkans, on the eastern Adriatic coast, and in the southern and central Italian Peninsula. Besides serving as armor, they also marked elevated social status.

Ivan Drnić

Catalog No. 87

Head ornament

Bronze
Kompolje, Croatia
700–500 BC
Maximum diameter: 24 cm
Height: 8 cm
Inv. No. P-20217
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Drechsler-Bižić 1966; Drechsler-Bižić 1968:Plate IV:34–37; Bakarić 2014:catalog no. 20; Bakarić and Đukić 2018:catalog no. 15.

This head ornament, made of a thin bronze sheet and decorated with geometrical motifs and rod-like pendants, was discovered in Necropolis 1 at Kompolje. Such head adornments are characteristic of the Iapodian group (for Iapodians, see Catalog No. 78), and generally occur in female burials. As suggested by ethnological analogies, these artifacts were probably adorned with organic, perishable materials, such as leather or even plants and fruits.

Ana Đukić

Catalog No. 88
Fibula
Bronze
Vicinity of Gračac, Croatia
500–300 BC
Length: 16.4 cm
Width: 12 cm
Inv. No. P-19993
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Balen Letunić 2007: 382–83; Bakarić 2014:catalog no. 42:3; Bakarić 2017:catalog no. 141; Bakarić and Đukić 2018:catalog no. 96.

This solid bronze fibula decorated with engraved concentric circles and supplied with a human-shaped pendant was donated to the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb. Its find context remains unknown. The anthropomorphic pendant is usually interpreted as a warrior wearing a helmet. Iapodian warrior depictions are rare, rendering this artifact exceptionally valuable for the study of the attire and social stratification in Early Iron Age communities near the Adriatic coast.

Ana Đukić

Catalog No. 89

Head ornament

Bronze
Prozor, Croatia
700–600 BC
Maximum diameter: 20 cm
Length: 47 cm
Inv. No. P-20194
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Drechsler-Bižić 1968: Plate IX:70; Drechsler-Bižić 1972–73; Bakarić 2014:catalog no. 24; Bakarić and Đukić 2018:catalog no. 12.

Head ornaments made of bronze hoops and additional chains hanging on the nape of the neck are characteristic objects of the Iapodian region. This specimen was discovered in the course of the 1881 excavations at the Prozor necropolis. It is safe to assume that the chainmail part of the head ornament was fastened to an undercap made of perishable material, probably leather. The object may have been adorned with additional items to make the wearer's appearance even more ostentatious.

Ana Đukić

Catalog No. 90

Necklace

Amber
Kompolje, Croatia
600–400 BC
Swan-shaped bead
Height: 3 cm
Width: 3.7 cm
Thickness: 0.9 cm
Inv. No. P-15436
Round beads (111)
Diameter: 0.6–1.2 cm
Inv. No. P-15437-1–111
Anthropomorphic plaque
Height: 5.7 cm
Thickness: 0.3–1.2 cm
Inv. No. P-15438
Spacers (2)
Length: 4.5 cm and 4.3 cm
Thickness: 0.8 cm and 0.7 cm
Inv. No. P-15444-1–2

Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Drechsler-Bižić 1961: 102–103, Plates XXVIII–XXXII; Drechsler-Bižić 1966; Bakarić 2008; Bakarić and Đukić 2018:catalog no. 129:1.

This necklace was reconstructed for presentation purposes. The objects were recovered from Grave 47, one of the richest burials in the Kompolje necropolis. The grave contained numerous additional amber and bronze finds that demonstrate the exceptionally high social status of the deceased. Some bead types indicate connections with the Mediterranean, and the raw material illustrates long-distance trade relations between the Iron Age communities of the Iapodians near the Adriatic coast and the Baltic region in northern Europe.

Ana Đukić

Catalog No. 91
Pendants (8)
Bronze
Prozor, Croatia
700–600 BC
Length: 6.7–6.8 cm
Width: 2.9–3.3 cm
Inv. No. P-12889-1–8
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Drechsler-Bižić 1972–73; Drechsler-Bižić 1987:Plate XLIV:17; Bakarić 2017:catalog no. 58; Bakarić and Đukić 2018:catalog no. 83.

These bronze pendants were crafted in the shape of stylized female figures with triangular bodies; the arms are in the shape of crescent moons, and the heads were fashioned in a way that suggests head ornaments. Similar head ornaments were discovered at the Prozor necropolis (see Catalog Nos. 87 and 89). Although most of the burial assemblages from the cemetery are lost, these anthropomorphic pendants provide insight into the clothing customs of Early Iron Age women in the Iapodian region. The objects suggest that Iapodian women wore long, wide dresses and some sort of hat or head ornament.

Ana Đukić

Catalog No. 92

Pendant

Bronze

Kompolje, Croatia

700–500 BC

Length: 9.8 cm

Width: 9 cm

Inv. No. P-20280

Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

Bibliography: Drechsler-Bižić 1987: Plate XLIII:6; Bakarić 2014:catalog no. 28; Bakarić 2017:catalog no. 127:1.

This bronze pendant, composed of a semi-circular plaque with four additional pendants in the shape of stylized female figures, was recovered from Grave 154/3 at the Kompolje cemetery. The figurines indicate that wide dresses and head ornaments were important elements of the traditional Early Iron Age Iapodian costume in the Kompolje region. The concentric circular decorations on the object may suggest patterns on the fabrics, or other kinds of accessories worn by women.

Ana Đukić

Catalog No. 93

Pendant

Bronze
Kompolje, Croatia
700–500 BC
Total length: 10.2 cm
Plate length: 7 cm
Plate width: 3.3 cm
Inv. No. P-20325
Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
Bibliography: Bakarić 2014:catalog no. 38; Bakarić 2017:catalog no. 128; Bakarić and Đukić 2018:catalog no. 76.

This bronze pendant, composed of a semi-circular plate decorated with five hollow rods and five basket-shaped pendants, was discovered in Grave 163 at the Kompolje cemetery. The lavish decorations may reflect the desire of Early Iron Age people to highlight their status and wealth. The fact that only a few of these pendants have been discovered suggests that they belonged to people of elevated social status.

Ana Đukić

Catalog No. 94

Pendant

Bronze

Kompolje, Croatia

800–600 BC

Length: 8.6 cm

Width: 6.2 cm

Inv. No. P-18178

Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

Bibliography: Drechsler-Bižić 1987: Plate XLIV:17; Bakarić 2017:catalog no. 58; Bakarić and Đukić 2018: catalog no. 83.

This bronze pendant, composed of a rectangular plate with bird-shaped ends and five rod-like pendants with basket-shaped ends, was discovered in Grave 9 of the Kompolje necropolis. The stylized birds suggest that this object may have had a symbolic meaning for the wearer, or they may be related to an earlier Bronze Age tradition, when bird depictions were quite common in many regions of southeastern Europe (for an example, see Catalog No. 68).

Ana Đukić

Catalog No. 95

Belt

Silver
Vinča, Serbia
500–450 BC
Length of fragments: 15.1–47 cm
Maximum width: 18.7 cm
Width at narrow end: 4.1 cm
Inv. No. 06_25647
National Museum of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia
Bibliography: Vukmanović and Radojicić 1995:176–81, Figure 362.

The majority of similar, so-called Mramorac-type, finds have been found in the lower Velika Morava Valley; however, some examples have also been discovered throughout the Central Balkans and even farther afield. Mramorac-type gold and silver jewelry, including belts, bracelets, omega-shaped needles, and fibulae, were commonly deposited in the graves of tribal leaders or members of the Iron Age warrior aristocracy. The belts, likely manufactured in Greek workshops according to the tastes of the Balkan warrior elite, were worn in pairs and can likely be attributed to specific tribes, including the Triballi and Dardani.

Aca Đorđević

Catalog No. 96
Burial assemblage
Gold, silver, amber
Novi Pazar, Serbia
550–450 BC
a. *Rings (2)*
Gold
Diameter: both 2.7 cm
Inv. No. 08_709/I
Appliqués
Gold
b. Rectangular (25)
Length: 6 cm
Width: 1.6 cm
c. Rhomboidal (25)
Length: 3.6–3.9 cm
Width: 1.8–2.1 cm
d. Triangular (25)
Length: 2.9–3.1 cm
e. Tube-shaped (25)
Length: 3.9–4.9 cm
Diameter: 0.5–0.7 cm
Arrow-shaped (25) *(not shown)*
Length: 1.9–2.2 cm
Inv. No. 08_721/I–725/I

Beads
Amber
f. Human head-shaped (1)
Length: 2.4 cm
Width: 1.8 cm
Inv. No. 08_687/I
g. Bird-shaped (4)
Length: 1.2–2 cm
Width: 1.3–1.9 cm
Inv. No. 08_673/I–674/I
h. Animal-shaped (2)
Length: both 2.4 cm
Width: 1.4 cm and 2.4 cm
Inv. No. 08_664/I, 08_670/I
i. Ram-head–shaped (3)
Length: 2–3.2 cm
Width: 0.8–1.7 cm
Inv. No. 08_677/I
j. Bottle-shaped (2)
Length: 1.4 cm and 2.1 cm
Width: 1 cm and 2 cm
Inv. No. 08_676/I

continued page 136


b

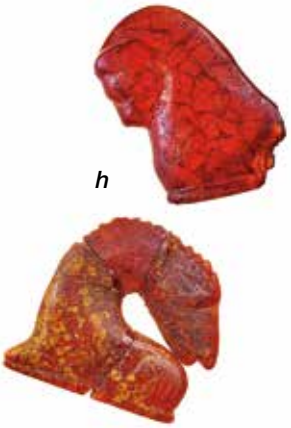

c


d


e


f


g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k


l


m

Catalog No. 96 *continued*

k. *Fibulae (2)*
Gold
Length: both 4.2 cm
Width: both 2.7 cm
Inv. No. 08_706/I

l. *Fibulae (2)*
Silver
Length: 4.4 cm and 4.6 cm
Width: both 3.1 cm
Inv. No. 08_731/I

m. *Double pin*
Silver
Length: 8.2 cm
Inv. No. 08_730/I

n. *Pectoral*
Gold
Diameter: 19.4 cm
Inv. No. 08_710/I

National Museum of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia

Bibliography: Mano Zisi and Popović 1969; Palavestra and Krstić 2006.

The Novi Pazar assemblage is one of the richest discoveries associated with a 'princely' grave in the Balkans. The assemblage was discovered in and around a wooden chest in the foundations of a Medieval church, and includes metal vessels, black-painted ceramic vessels, clothing adornments, and jewelry. The abundance of gold and silver objects, including more than 1,500 gold appliqués of various shapes and over eight thousand Baltic amber objects that were processed in Greek craft centers in southern Italy, represent not only the value of the raw materials themselves, but also the artistic achievements that were associated with a newly developed tribal aristocracy. Many of the artifacts from Novi Pazar are decorated with motifs that combined autochthonous ornaments with Greek-style elements that indigenous Balkan craftsmen increasingly adopted. The splendor and luxury of these finds testify to the power and wealth of the Early Iron Age Balkan elite.

Vera Krstić

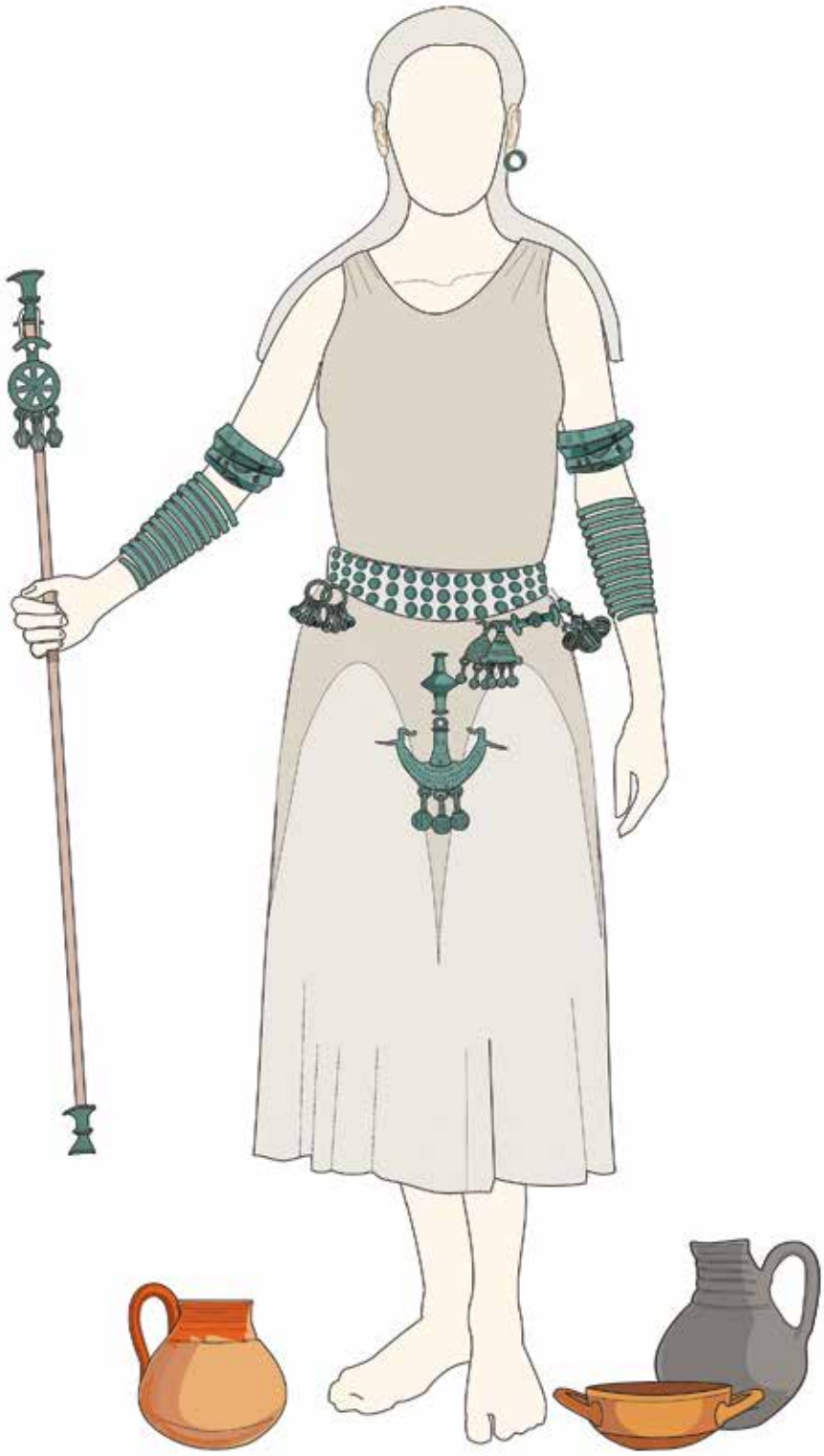
n

Catalog No. 97
Burial assemblage
Bronze
Milci, Grave 111, North Macedonia
700–650 BC

a. *Bracelets with tapering ends (2)*
Diameter: 8.9 cm and 9.2 cm
Maximum width: both 4.1 cm
Inv. No. 8427, 8429

Cult wand
b. Pendant
Total height: 13.3 cm
Diameter of disc: 6.2 cm
Length of smaller pendants: 4.2 cm
Inv. No. 8440

b. Fittings (2)
Length: 4.3 cm and 4.4 cm
Diameter: 3.4 cm and 3.6 cm
Inv. No. 8428, 8445
c. *Fitting*
Height: 6.5 cm
Diameter: 3.4 cm
Inv. No. 8443
d. *Bead*
Height: 6.8 cm
Diameter: 1.8–4.2 cm
Inv. No. 8442
e. *Spiral bracelets (2)*
Length: 12.2 cm and 13.8 cm
Diameter: 7.7 cm and 10.1 cm
Inv. No. 8430–8431
f. *Bead*
Height: 3.4 cm
Diameter: 1–2.2 cm
Inv. No. 8446
g. *Belt fittings (43)*
Diameter: 1.3–1.7 cm
Inv. No. 8434
h. *Pendant-rattles (2)*
Total height: 6.9 cm and 7.9 cm
Diameter of rings: 3.8 cm and 4.4 cm
Height of pendants: 4.1 cm and 4.5 cm
Inv. No. 8432–8433
i. *Pendant-rattle*
Height: 4.7–6.5 cm
Diameter: 2.6–3.8 cm
Inv. No. 8444
j. *Triangular pendants (2)*
Total height: 11.5 cm and 11.8 cm
Width: 7.3 cm and 5.9 cm
Height of pendants: 4 cm and 3.7 cm
Inv. No. 8437–8438
k. *Anchor-type pendant*
Total height: 13 cm
Height of pendants: 4 cm
Diameter of pendants: 2.2 cm
Inv. No. 8439
National Institution Museum–Gevgelija, Gevgelija, North Macedonia
Bibliography: Husenovski 2018; Husenovski 2019.



Reconstruction by B. Husenovski, illustration by D. Gusev.

A total of 170 graves have been excavated at the Milci necropolis, where Grave 111 stands out with its rich burial inventory. The female in Grave 111 was buried with an extensive set of personal ornaments and a cult wand made of bronze. These artifacts represent the so-called 'Macedonian bronzes' that were produced by a tribe known as Paeonians. The objects indicate the privileged status of the deceased within her community. In addition to the worship of the sun among the Paeonians, the cult wand and the 'Macedonian bronzes' vividly illustrate the emergence of an elite during the Iron Age, leading eventually to the development of kingdoms in the southern Balkans.

Boban Husenovski

Catalog No. 98

***In situ* burial**

Bronze, iron, amber, ceramic
Donja Dolina, Bosanska Gradiška, Šokić garden, Grave 1, Bosnia and Herzegovina
600–550 BC
Length: 145 cm
Width: 48 cm
Inv. No. 24184
National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bibliography: Truhelka 1904: 83–84, Figure 65.

This is one of the richest female graves from the Donja Dolina necropolis. The burial was recovered and transported *in situ* to the museum in Sarajevo in 1902. Most objects in the assemblage were produced locally, and testify to the high status of an approximately twelve-year-old girl. The fact that the female graves in general are richer than the male ones in the Donja Dolina cemetery signifies the outstanding social role of women in the Early Iron Age communities of the Central Balkans.

Andrijana Pravidur

Catalog No. 99
Burial assemblage
Bronze, iron, stone
Ilijak, Glasinac, Tumulus XIII,
Grave 2, Bosnia and Herzegovina
625–575 BC

continued page 142


a


c


d


b


e

Catalog No. 99 *continued*

a. *Greaves (2)*
Bronze
Length: both 33.5 cm
Inv. No. 5673–5674

b. *Whetstone*
Bronze, stone
Length: 26.3 cm
Inv. No. 5675

c. *Fibulae (2)*
Iron
Length: 8.8 cm and 8.5 cm
Inv. No. 5676, 5679

d. *Phiale*
Bronze
Diameter: 15.8 cm
Inv. No. 5678

e. *Tweezers*
Bronze
Length: 9.9 cm
Inv. No. 5677

f. *Pins (2)*
Bronze
Length: 5.2 cm
Inv. No. 5680

g. *Buckle*
Bronze
Diameter: 5.4 cm
Inv. No. 5681

h. *Beads (3)*
Bronze
Diameter: 2–2.7 cm
Inv. No. 5681

i. *Sword*
Iron
Length: 51 cm
Inv. No. 5682


f


g


h


i


j

j. *Spearhead*
Iron
Length: 42 cm
Inv. No. 5683
National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bibliography: Fiala 1895:16, Figures 39–42.

Exceptionally rich, so-called 'princely' graves of distinguished individuals are indicative of the emergence of social differentiation and the appearance of elites in the Central Balkans during the Early Iron Age (see also Catalog Nos. 96 and 98). This grave from Ilijak, a burial site of the local aristocracy, contains defensive arms, which were rather status symbols than functional weapons, as well as offensive arms. These weapons, particularly the bronze greaves and the sword demonstrating the social power of the elite of the Glasinac Plateau, reflect regional traditions, and were produced locally.

Andrijana Pravidur

Catalog No. 100
Stag appliqué
Gold
Zöldhalompuszta, Hungary
700–500 BC
Length: 40.2 cm
Width: 20.6 cm
Inv. No. 2.1929.1
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Fettich 1928; Kemenczei 1999c

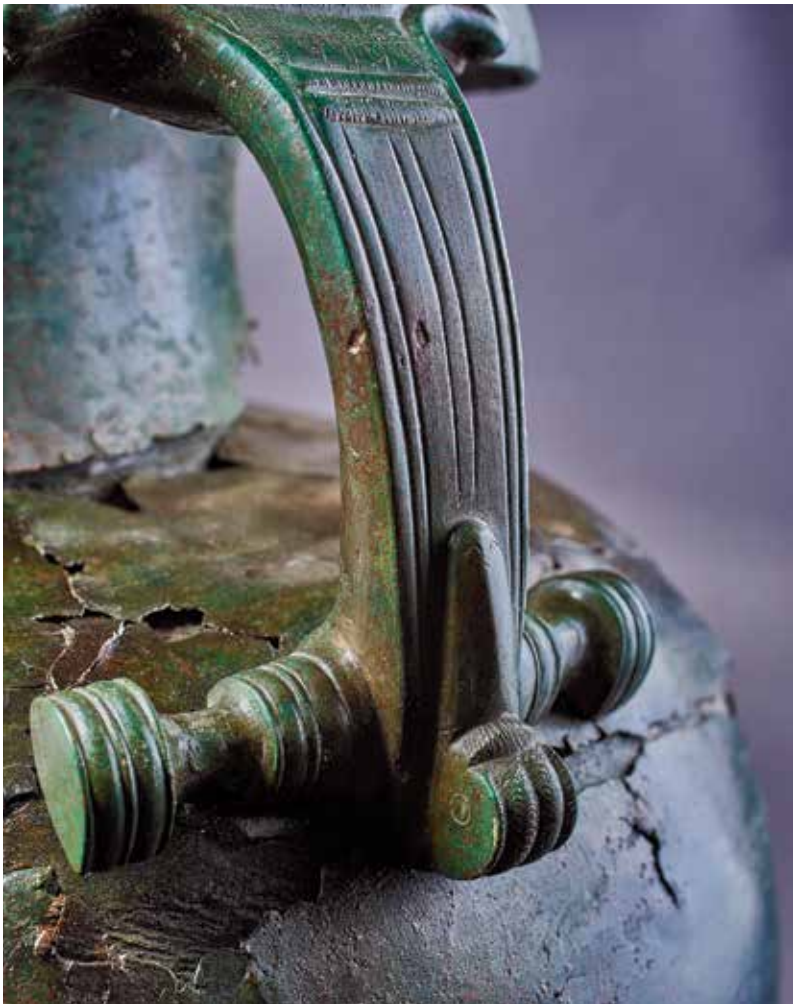
This golden appliqué came from the burial mound of a member of the Iron Age elite of the eastern Carpathian Basin. In terms of style and design, the best analogies for the object are from the tombs of Scythian rulers recovered beneath large burial mounds in the Pontic steppe and the Kuban region. These analogies, possibly produced in Greek colonies, such as Olbia on the Black Sea coast in eastern Ukraine, suggest that this appliqué, perhaps of a similar origin, was attached to a quiver, or less likely a shield, and served as a status symbol. The close resemblance between the gold stags from the Pontic steppe and the Carpathian Basin signifies the strong ties maintained by the elites of these remote regions.

Bence Soós

Catalog No. 101
Stag appliqué
Electrum
Tápiószentmárton, Hungary
700–500 BC
Length: 22.9 cm
Width: 8.6 cm
Inv. No. 47.1923.1
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Fettich 1927.

Based on the apparent similarity to the stag-shaped appliqué from Zöldhalompuszta (Catalog No. 100), the electrum appliqué from Tápiószentmárton might have belonged to a person of exceptional social status. It is possible that the object was found in a tumulus, but its precise find location and context are unknown. At the time of discovery, the object was rolled up and therefore could not have served its original function, presumably as the decoration of a quiver. Like the Zöldhalompuszta gold stag, this object may have been manufactured in one of the workshops of the Greek colonies in the northern Black Sea region, as it is in accordance with the aesthetics of the Scythian elite.

Bence Soós



Catalog No. 102
Hydria
Bronze
Ártánd, Hungary
700–500 BC
Height: 44.8 cm
Maximum width: 46.4 cm
Inv. No. 60.3.1
Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary
Bibliography: Párducz 1965:36, Figure 1; Párducz 1971; Kemenczei 2009:226, Figure 4:1.

This large bronze vessel, a so-called 'hydria,' was part of the burial assemblage of a chiefly member of the Iron Age society of the Great Hungarian Plain. The assemblage also contained weapons and personal adornments, including a gold diadem, characteristic of the elite of likely Scythian origin of the Middle Iron Age in the region. The vessel was produced in a workshop in Greece, probably in Sparta, and was used as a serving vessel during ceremonies. The object is the most remote known Greek hydria from its place of manufacture, and it likely reached the Great Hungarian Plain through commercial or diplomatic exchanges.

Attila Gyucha

Catalog No. 103

Kantharos

Ceramic
Perlati, Albania
450–400 BC
Height: 11 cm
Rim diameter: 11.5 cm
Base diameter: 7.5 cm
Inv. No. 1757
Archaeological Museum in Tirana, Tirana, Albania
Bibliography: Islami and Ceka 1965:454, Figure 5; Prendi 1985:73; Eggebrecht 1988:229, No. 95; Islami 2013:81, 146, 199–200, Figure 25:2, Plate 38:2.

This painted kantharos was likely an offering to a member of the chiefly class. This two-handle drinking-cup type was manufactured in Athenian (Attic) workshops. It may have reached the local elite of the middle Mati Valley through intermediaries from one of the two Greek colonies of Adriatic Albania, Dyrrachium and Apollonia. Nevertheless, another, overland route must not be excluded, such as that of the Vardar or Drina valleys.

Rovena Kurti

Catalog No. 104
Goblet
Silver
Agighiol, Romania
350–300 BC
Height: 18 cm
Rim diameter: 11.1 cm
Inv. No. 11179
National History Museum
of Romania, Bucharest, Romania
Bibliography: Bolomey 1968; Nicolaescu-Plopșor 1968; *Goldhelm* . . . . 1994:161–67; Trohani 2019:264, Figure 50:3; Teleaga 2020.

Recovered in 1931 from a burial mound, this vessel was part of the treasure of a wealthy member of the military aristocracy of the Thracian Getae tribe. In addition to bronze, ceramic, and iron artifacts, as well as horse harnesses made of silver and gold and a helmet and greaves with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic motifs, the assemblage contained a silver drinking vessel set. This unique, biconical vessel belonged to that set, and is decorated with mythical animal scenes inspired by Persian motifs but reinterpreted according to the spiritual beliefs of the Thracians, and specifically the Getae.

Attila Gyucha and Corina Borș

Catalog No. 105

Situla

Bronze
Valična vas, Slovenia
400–300 BC
Height: 25 cm
Rim diameter: 21.5 cm
Inv. No. P 11790
National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Bibliography: Turk 2005:catalog no. 58, Figures 60, 100.

This bronze bucket-shaped vessel, or 'situla,' depicts a procession of stags, the most prized game. This motif appears on other examples of the situla art as well as on gold vessels and metal fittings sewn onto the garments of contemporaneous Scythian dignitaries, where hunting stags is believed to have symbolized abundance and authority. The figural narratives of the situla art were part of the Orientalizing aesthetic influences transmitted from the Near East, starting as early as the seventh century BC. The classic and late examples of the situla art between the western Balkans and eastern Alps are local products in terms of both form and narratives, while individual motifs attest close connections with nearby and remote Iron Age peoples, including the Veneti, Rhaetii, and Etruscans.

Peter Turk

Catalog No. 106
Stela
Stone
Kamenica, Kosovo
500–100 BC
Height: 93 cm
Length: 125 cm
Thickness: 22 cm
Inv. No. KA/2010
National Museum of Kosovo, Prishtina, Kosovo
Bibliography: Berisha 2012:56, Figure 135; Gashi and Velo 2013: 163, Figure 218.

This carved relief, discovered at the Kamenica fort, shows a funerary procession. The man's coffin is followed by what appears to be his wife in front of the procession. The scene depicts the rite of group mourning. This ritual is still practiced in the mountainous region of Malësia e Gjakovës in Kosovo, so the object may reflect a long-lasting spiritual heritage. Most probably, the stela was produced in the fifth to fourth century BC, however, it may have been made during the Hellenistic Period, between the fourth and first centuries BC.

National Museum of Kosovo

Catalog No. 107
Urn
Stone
Ribić, Bosnia and Herzegovina
600–300 BC
Height: 52.5 cm
Length: 105 cm
Width: 97 cm
Inv. No. 589
National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bibliography: Sergejevski 1950:51–55, Figure 1, Plates III–VI.

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Catalog No. 107 *continued*

Similar urns crafted from local stone are unique funerary objects that were interred in the necropolises of the Iapodians in northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Incised images of humans and animals of sepulchral character on the object from Ribić evoke beliefs, customs, and rituals connected to the cult of the dead that were performed during the funerals of the Iapodians. These depictions also provide hints about the development of social stratification in Iron Age societies. Many of similar stone urns were reused during the Roman Period, in the first and second century AD.

Andrijana Pravidur

Catalog No. 108

Kantharos

Ceramic
Çinamaku, Albania
500–450 BC
Height: 13 cm
Maximum diameter: 11.5 cm
Inv. No. 7010
Archaeological Museum in Tirana, Tirana, Albania
Bibliography: Jubani 1969:Plate 2:3.

This handmade, two-handled vessel, also called a 'kantharos,' was found in a rich female grave, accompanied by silver and amber jewelry, as well as a Greek kylix, or wine-drinking cup. During the seventh to fifth centuries, locally made kantharoi with handles rising high above the rim were common in the Illyrian culture of present-day northern Albania. This fine specimen represents a later phase of kantharos production in northeastern Albania and the neighboring region of Kosovo.

Rovena Kurti

Catalog No. 109

Kantharos

Ceramic
Perlati, Albania
450–400 BC
Height: 18.8 cm
Rim diameter: 7.6 cm
Base diameter: 6.5 cm
Inv. No. 1761
Archaeological Museum in Tirana, Tirana, Albania
Bibliography: Islami 2013:82, Plate 39:2.

This kantharos belonged to the same chiefly assemblage as the Catalog No. 103 artifact. It was manufactured locally, and represents a characteristic vessel type in Iron Age northern Albania, Kosovo, and the Central Balkans.

Rovena Kurti

Catalog No. 110
Kantharos
Ceramic
Shtoji, Albania
600–500 BC
Height: 18.8 cm
Rim diameter: 7.6 cm
Base diameter: 6.5 cm
Inv. No. 13471
Archaeological Museum in Tirana, Tirana, Albania
Bibliography: Koka 2012:87, 183, 268, Plates 19, 72.

This kantharos was part of a rich male burial assemblage, along with three similar kantharoi, iron weapons, a bimetallic pin, and beads of amber, glass, and bronze. This handmade, locally manufactured object with incised and punched decorations testifies to a pottery type common in Iron Age Albania. In general, the kantharos was a typical vessel type in male burial assemblages.

Rovena Kurti

Catalog No. 111

Hoard

Silver gilt

Borovo, Bulgaria

350–300 BC

a. *Rhyton with a protome of a galloping horse*

Height: 20.2 cm

Maximum diameter: 10.3 cm

Inv. No. II 357

b. *Rhyton with a protome of a bull*

Height: 16.5 cm

Maximum diameter: 9 cm

Inv. No. II 359

c. *Bowl*

Height: 11.4 cm

Diameter: 29 cm

Inv. No. II 360

d. *Rhyton with a protome of a sphinx*

Height: 20.8 cm

Maximum diameter: 10.5 cm

Inv. No. II 358

e. *Pitcher*

Height: 18.2 cm

Maximum diameter: 9.9 cm

Inv. No. II 361

Rousse Regional Museum of History, Rousse, Bulgaria

Bibliography: Ivanov 1975; Stojanov 1998; Zdravkova and Ivanov 2002:Figures 6–8, 10–17.

The Borovo treasure consists of five silver gilt vessels that might have belonged to the Thracian king Kotys I (383–359 BC). The hoard was accidently discovered during plowing in 1974. There are engraved inscriptions on the vessels in Greek, including ΚΟΤΥΟΣ ΕΓ ΒΕΟ (Kotys from Beos) on two of the rhytons and the pitcher. The bowl and the pitcher have scenes related to the Greek cult of Dionysius. The assemblage signifies the impact of Greek culture on the Thracian elite, and was utilized for the ritual serving of wine during royal ceremonies.

Dimitar Chernakov

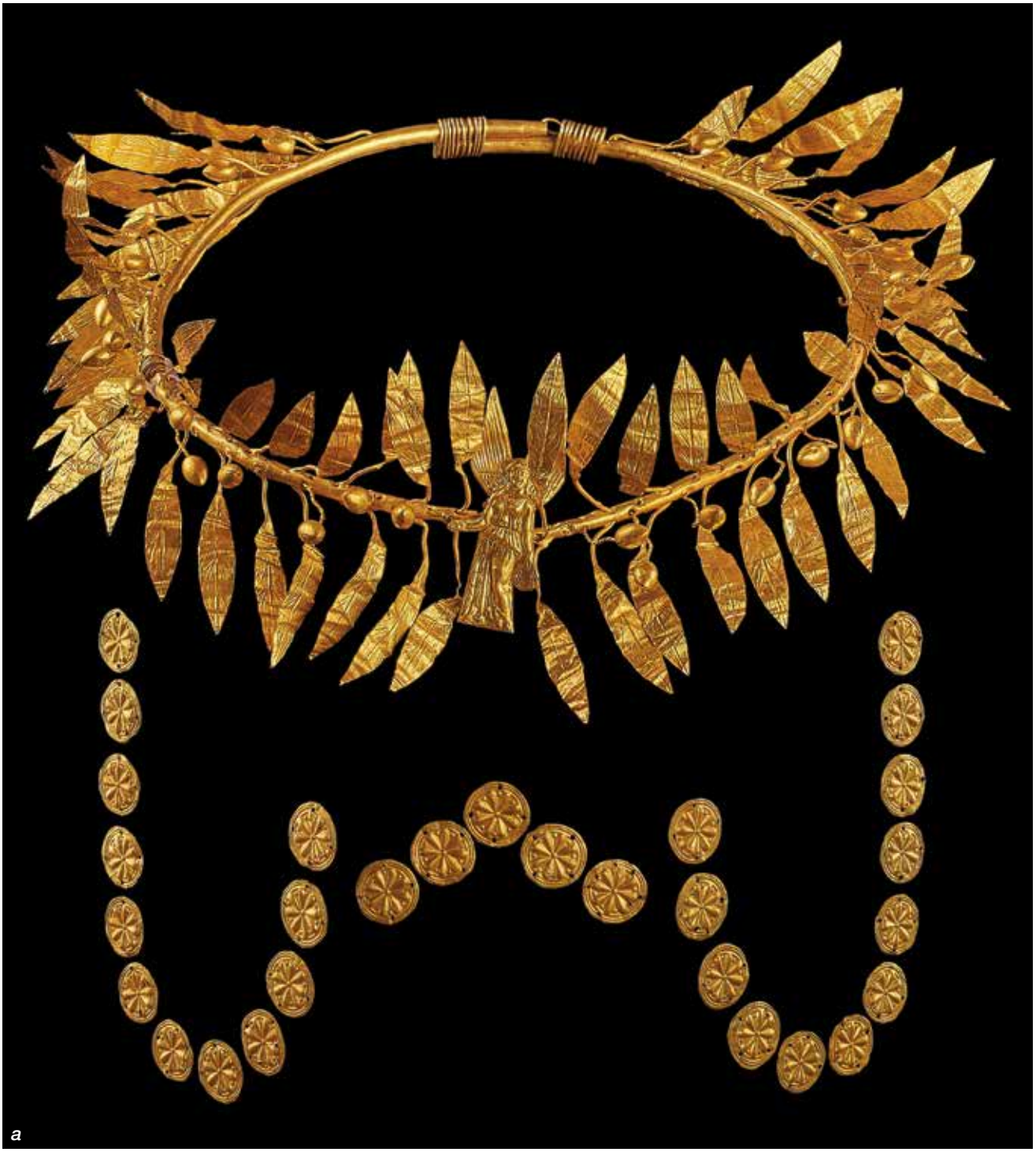

a


b


c


d


e



Catalog No. 112
Burial assemblage
Gold, silver gilt, silver, bronze, ceramic
Zlatinitsa-Malomirovo, Bulgaria
375–325 BC
a. *Wreath with Nike figure and rosette appliqués (29)*
Gold
Diameter of wreath: 19 cm
Maximum length of leaves: 4.6 cm
Diameter of appliqués: 2.1 cm
Inv. No. 50454–50455
b. *Greave*
Silver gilt
Length: 44.5 cm
Maximum width: 10.7 cm
Inv. No. 50457
c. *Rhyton*
Silver gilt
Height: 17 cm
Rim diameter: 9.9 cm
Inv. No. 50456
continued page 162

b

c

Catalog No. 112 *continued*

d. *String of beads*
Silver
Length of beads: 0.8–1.2 cm
Inv. No. 51350

e. *Horse head appliqués (12)*
Silver
Length: 4.2–7.4 cm
Width: 2.5–7.2 cm
Inv. No. 51344–51346, 51351–51355

f. *Phialae (4)*
Silver
Height: 4.5–5 cm
Rim diameter: 10.6–13.7 cm
Inv. No. 50869–50872

g. *Skifos vessel*
Ceramic
Height: 10.8 cm
Rim diameter: 12.4 cm
Base diameter: 6.8 cm
Inv. No. 51360

h. *Skifos vessel*
Ceramic
Height: 11 cm
Rim diameter: 12 cm
Base diameter: 6 cm
Inv. No. 51359

i. *Signet-ring*
Gold
Ring diameter: 2 cm
Bezel diameter: 2.5 cm
Inv. No. 50453

j. *Jug*
Bronze
Height: 24.4 cm
Maximum diameter: 14.4 cm
Base diameter: 11.1 cm
Inv. No. 52189

k. *Situla*
Bronze
Height: 21.2 cm
Rim diameter: 19.9 cm
Base diameter: 11.8 cm
Inv. No. 61763

l. *Tray*
Bronze
Height: 5.3 cm
Diameter: 35.9 cm
Inv. No. 52190

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Catalog No. 112 *continued*

m. Cylix
Ceramic
Height: 5 cm
Rim diameter: 14 cm
Inv. No. 51369

n. Krater-shaped vessel
Ceramic
Height: 29 cm
Rim diameter: 30.5 cm
Base diameter: 14 cm
Inv. No. 51366

o. Jug
Ceramic
Height: 11.5 cm
Rim diameter: 10 cm
Base diameter: 6.5 cm
Inv. No. 51361

p. Jug
Ceramic
Height: 14.9 cm
Rim diameter: 13.7 cm
Base diameter: 7.4 cm
Inv. No. 51362

National Museum of History, Sofia, Bulgaria

Bibliography: Agre 2011.

The Golyamata Tumulus, located between Zlatinitsa and Malomirovo, was excavated in 2005. The deceased, an eighteen- to twenty-year-old man, was placed in a 2-meter-deep rectangular pit that was dug into the natural terrain under the mound. His armament near the body included an iron sword, bronze arrowheads, spearheads, a scaled iron armor, and a bronze helmet. The head was crowned with a gold wreath adorned with an appliqué depicting the goddess Nike and a leather diadem decorated with gold rosettes. A gold signet-ring showing a realistic scene of investiture, with a tall woman offering a phiale in her left hand to an approaching horseman, was found on the little finger of the left hand. In addition, the grave goods included numerous ceramic and metal vessels, horse harnesses, and a ceremonial greave with a woman's face adorned with a torque and a necklace. The burial likely belonged to a Thracian prince or a heroized royal family member.

Pavlina Ivanova Devlova-Balakchieva

Catalog No. 113
Breastplate
Gold
Tsvyatkova Mogila, Bulgaria
350–300 BC
Height: 4 cm
Maximum diameter: 32 cm
Inv. No. 66069
National Museum of History,
Sofia, Bulgaria
Bibliography: Unpublished

Along with a horse skeleton, weapons, and offerings crafted from precious metals, this breastplate, or collar, was discovered during the excavations of a Thracian burial mound near Shipka. The object is made of several different elements and various materials. The solid iron, crescent-shaped base is covered with an embossed silver plate and a thick gold sheet. From the neck to the edge, the gold sheet is exquisitely decorated with twelve bands of hammered motifs.

The breastplate was a protective parade armament that covered the chest, the shoulders, and the back of the bearer who was a nobleman of extremely high social and political status in Thracian society.

Pavlina Ivanova Devlova-Balakchieva and Petranka Nedelcheva

Catalog No. 114
Helmet
Silver gilt
Peretu, Romania
325–275 BC
Height: 26.5 cm
Rim diameter: 20 × 17 cm
Inv. No. 73865
National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania
Bibliography: Moscalu 1989:141–52, Figures 7–12; *Goldhelm* . . . . 1994:155–60; Alexandrescu 1999:197–289; Teleaga 2020.

The helmet was discovered as a part of an assemblage during plowing in 1970. The succeeding excavations revealed the remains of an elaborate grave of a member of the Thracian Getae military elite buried under a mound. Among other objects, the grave goods included parts of a chariot, weapons, metal banquet vessels, horse trappings, a human head, and a ceremonial helmet richly adorned with human and animal figures. The helmet with apotropaic eyes to fend off evil magic is one of the three iconic artifacts of this kind known to date. The iconography of the Peretu objects, showing artistic influences from the Persians, Greeks, and Scythians, evokes a multicultural ideological framework that characterized the Thracian elite.

Corina Borș and Attila Gyucha

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