

## SUMMARY

## A LIBURNIAN NECROPOLIS IN ITS NATURAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Sineva KUKOČ

Liburnian gravesites and their relationship with settlements (Nin, Lisičići near Benkovac, Asseria, Dragišić, Velika Mrdakovica near Zaton, Šibenik, Bribir, Zadar and others) have been only modestly investigated. This article analyses certain aspects of Liburnian burials by using the example of the necropolis in Nadin (Nedinum) in the context of current insights into the position of Liburnian graves in their cultural and natural environments. The article also includes a summary of the issue of Liburnian burial mounds, or more precisely, the question of the contemporaneous inhumation of the Liburnians under mounds and in necropolises in plains during the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC. The necropolis located under the important Liburnian settlement of Nedinum (mentioned in ancient written sources and already probed), although in the initial stages of excavation, is a representative example of the cult of the dead and Liburnian culture in general. The necropolis, as a part of a Nedinum cultural complex (with several hillforts, a necropolis and mounds), reflects, although not linearly, all the main events which took place from the Bronze Age to the Roman period: the relationship towards Late Bronze Age heritage (settlements and gravesites/mounds), the beginnings of Iron Age culture, the forming of a network of settlements and the appearance of the first settlement centres (Nedinum), the forming of Liburnian territorial municipalities (*civitas*), and urbanisation during Hellenism and particularly during Romanisation, when *municipia* were formed. Therefore, the area of Nadin is particularly important for understanding certain concepts, such as the territorial Liburnian municipality (*civitas*), the Liburnian city (*oppidum*) and also the Roman *municipium*. Nedinum, unlike certain other Liburnian *civitas* with fortified central settlements, underwent Romanisation and became an important Roman centre.

Cela I in the necropolis of Gradine (Nedinum) is an area comprising a single Roman burial plot (14 m x 6.8 m). It is a complex composed of graves and architectural elements. It is the first such complex to be investigated with regard to the Liburnians. Nineteen graves have been found in Cela I (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18- 18a, 19, 20), most of them with a single lid and, with minor exceptions, all with the same SE-NW orientation. All the graves are Liburnian, except for three cremations in urns. Judging from the investigated Cela I, the necropolis of Nadinum had two phases. The first phase, the older one, is Liburnian and started in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, while the second is Roman, when a large planned necropolis was built over the Liburnian gravesite. The necropolis was located by the road (Gräberstrassen) and was composed of a network of burial plots arranged in two or three series on either side of the road. The large Roman necropolis only partially destroyed the spatial structure of the older Liburnian necropolis. This conclusion was reached because the majority of graves, which are very damaged, belong to the Liburnian phase. Based on the current state of investigations, the graves from the Liburnian phase predominantly contain remains in a bent position and funerary gifts from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards. The Liburnians enclosed rectangular burial plots with a certain type of wall structure, which confirms a certain level of planning and the monumentality of Liburnian necropolises from the early Iron Age.

Although the initial archaeological excavations of the necropolis at Nadinum (Cela I) have defined certain aspects of Liburnian and Roman horizontal and vertical spatial (chronological) relations, nothing more precise can be said about these relations in the gravesite of Nedinum overall. The Roman planimetrics perhaps does not entirely cover the older Liburnian necropolis. The main value of Cela I in Nadinum is that it offers an insight into the otherwise poorly known spatial structure of Liburnian Iron Age gravesites. It also sheds a special light onto original Liburnian and Roman spatial and cultural relations. The spatial structure of Liburnian necropolises is only partially known from sites in Nin (Aenona), Dragišće, and, as of recently, Ljupče. However, Liburno-Roman relations within a necropolis context can be observed in Dragišće, Velika Mrdakovica, and above all in Liburno-Roman Zadar (Iader) in the large Roman necropolis on the site of Relja, which offers key comparative material for the Roman phase of the necropolis in Nadinum. However, it should be noted that at the Iader site, vertical Liburno-Roman relations are not as obvious as at the Nadinum site.