

SUMMARY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOPOGRAPHY OF THE PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENTS IN SOTIN

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Sotin offers excellent possibilities for the archaeological research since one of the most important prehistoric sites in the Croatian Danubian region is located in this area (Map 1). Prehistoric settlement is poorly known. Unfortunately there was no systematic research. Most of the archaeological material important for understanding of its stratigraphy is still hidden in the thick cultural layers. In the upper segments of the layers archaeological finds were devastated due to various agricultural activities, particularly deep ploughing which is why some artifacts were found on the surface. Quite a few such finds were collected keeping record about the exact place and circumstances of the discovery which is important for understanding horizontal and vertical stratigraphy.

Sotin is characterized by very favourable natural characteristics. They are concentrated next to the narrow and somewhat elevated position north-east of the present-day settlement where a loess plain steeply falls for some ten meters towards the flooded Danube bank. Six deep ditches were formed naturally in the belt which measures about a kilometer and half in length. They divided the peripheral segment of the plain into several separate wholes which were quite suitable for founding a settlement. Namely the ditches provide natural protection from the lateral sides, but they also enable contact with the Danube bank, with many sources of drinking water.

People in the past were aware of these advantages. It is more than likely that the geomorphological characteristics significantly affected the selection of the position, size and direction of spatial growth of the prehistoric settlement. Topographical analysis of the archaeological finds supports this thesis and offers main information on the distribution of the most important layers. Largest portion of the prehistoric settlement lies at the peripheral part of a dominant plain, roughly north-east of present-day Sotin (Map 2). Its strata cover the length of 1500 m, from the position named Fancaga at the north-west, via Popino brdo («Pope's hill») and Ilkićev vinograd («Ilkić's vineyard») to Srednje polje and Plandište at the south-east. Actually they are located between six natural ditches, so that their width is up to 300 m.

Judging from the surface finds, the earliest traces of the settling were mostly found in the south-eastern part of Sotin. Certain finds from this region are characteristic of Neolithic, such as a tool made of horn (cat. no. 1, Plate I, 1a-b) and polished tongue-shaped axes. Numerous artifacts which can definitely be attributed to the Baden culture were discovered on this position. Then there are the Kostolac culture finds. I would like to mention a fragment of acephalic female terra cotta belonging to the Baden culture (cat. no. 3, Plate I, 3a-b). Certain Eneolithic artifacts were sporadically found elsewhere in Sotin such as a stone axe from the Danube bank of Vručak (cat. no. 2, Plate I, 2) and much rarer fan-shaped axe from the central part of Sotin (cat. no. 7, Plate II, 1). Positions of their discovery seem to belong to the uninhabited periphery which coexisted with the Eneolithic settlement.

About a kilometer north-west of this oldest part of Sotin, on the position named Fancaga, and above the hydronym Stublina are the remains of a Bronze Age settlement. Finds of the Pannonian incrustated pottery (cat. no. 4-6, Plate I, 4-6) testify to this fact. Certain Late Bronze Age artifacts were found out of Fancaga, mostly belonging the Late Bronze Age. Namely positions of some finds, such as a hollow axe (cat. no. 3, Plate II, 3) or sickle fragments (cat. no. 8, Plate II, 2) suggest a possibility of existence of dwelling objects from the Late Bronze Age south-east of Fancaga as well, all the way to Srednje polje.

A huge stratum from the Early Iron Age is situated between the Eneolithic and Bronze Age settlement. Archaeological remains of this settlement which was about one kilometer long are located on a high plain over the banks of Vručak and Kamenac. Judging from the abundant pottery (cat. no. 10, Plate II, 4; cat. no. 13, Plate II, 7) the settlement belonged to the Dalj cultural group. Its complexity is reflected in the considerable number of pottery of the Bosut cultural group, particularly its Basarabi phase (cat. no. 17-22, Plate III, 3-8). In addition to common finds such as spindle whorls (cat. no. 12, 14, Plate

III, 6, 8), there were numerous examples of mostly zoomorphic terra cotta in the settlement, which are rather rare elsewhere in the Croatian Danube region. Representations of bovines i.e. cows are dominant among the depictions of domestic animals (cat. no. 15, Plate III, 1). Terra cotta representing equines are also present. One of them represents a female i.e. a mare which bears an incised cross within a circle on her left thigh (cat. no. 16, Plate III, 2), indicating solar symbolics. Pin with a twisted neck and flat triangular head with a round hole (cat. no. 23, Plate III, 9) is a rare find in the Croatian Danube region. It probably reached Sotin via trade. Necropolis of the Dalj culture was located south west of the contemporary settlement. This is confirmed by a ceramic vessel (cat. no. 11, Plate II, 5) which belonged to one of the destroyed urn graves from the position named Šaragljice.

Topographic analysis of various archaeological material from the last few centuries BC, such as abundant pottery (cat. no. 26-27, Plate IV, 1-2), frequent late La Tène fibulae (cat. no. 29, Plate IV, 4) or somewhat rarer sieve handles (cat. no. 28, Plate IV, 3) and fragments of glass bracelets (cat. no. 24-25, Plate III, 11-12), indicates that the Late Iron Age settlement developed from its immediate predecessor. Money was introduced under the domination of the Scordisci. In addition to Celtic coins (cat. no. 30, Plate IV, 5a-b), drachmas from Apollonia (cat. no. 32, Plate IV, 7a-b) and Dyrrachion (cat. no. 31, Plate IV, 6a-b) were also used. Finds of Roman Republican denarii (cat. no. 33, Plate IV, 8a-b) herald the final ending of prehistory which was directly related to the conquest of the Pannonian region under the Emperor Augustus. However life did not end. On the bases of the settlement from the end of the Late Iron Age early Roman Cornacum was formed, which is attested by various finds.