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## MIDDLE LA TÈNE BRONZE BELTS OF THE SCORDISCAN TYPE WITH LYRE-SHAPED SEGMENTS OF THE SURČIN VARIANT – WHAT DID THE SCORDISCAN WOMEN LIKE TO WEAR?

**Abstract:** A recognisable part of the Middle La Tène material legacy of the Scordisci are bronze belts of the so-called Scordiscan type, composed in different combinations of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments, with zoomorphic buckles and anthropomorphic pendants. They are a distinctive regional form of the female costume, which is characteristic for the communities settled along the Danube river that shared similar ideas about the decoration of women's bodies. This was confirmed with finds of belts discovered in cremation burials of women, which can be dated at the end of LT C1 and in LT C2. Regarding their shape, there are three basic variants of lyre-shaped segments, often decorated with enamel filled depressions. Belts with lyre-shaped segments of the Surčin variant, as a characteristic part of the Middle La Tène Scordiscan female costume, were probably produced in their workshops. Bronze belts of the Scordiscan type represent some of the more recognisable manifestations of visual identity and provide a valuable insight into the way in which Scordiscan women decorated their bodies, as well as into their public presentation.

**Keywords:** female costume, Scordisci, Middle La Tène, bronze belts, lyre-shaped segments, identity.

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### Introduction

In the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, the south-eastern part of the Carpathian Basin was settled by Celtic communities, which marks the beginning of the Late Iron Age defined by the characteristic material legacy of the La Tène culture.<sup>1</sup> In ancient written sources, the community that emerged out of the symbiosis of the Celtic settlers and the local population in that area was called the Scordisci. Their material legacy is attributed to the Central European La Tène culture. Certain characteristics of their material culture are considered to be contributions of the indigenous population's legacy and the position of the Scordisci on the south-eastern edge of the spreading La Tène culture. This influenced the emergence of the complex cultural landscape. In defining the characteristic content of

the material legacy of the Scordisci in all phases of their development, besides weaponry, some of the most significant determinants are functional and decorative objects of the female costume and jewellery, which are arranged in graves in various combinations. Due to that, they are of great importance in the cultural and chronological defining of the Scordisci material legacy. Since these objects are gender-specific, wearing them indicated different aspects of the social identities of women, as well as their position within the community. The Middle La Tène female costume of the Scordisci is represented by different types of iron and bronze belts, buckles and variously shaped fibulae, mostly made of bronze. Still, the most recognisable outer forms of the costume are various shapes of bronze belts that served as a functional, but also decorative elements of the visual identity of the women who wore them. They probably also had a symbolic meaning. Their shape, the material from which they were made and the way in which they were

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decorated communicated various messages, i.e., they offer valuable insights into how Scordiscan women decorated their bodies, as well as into their public presentation.

What we have found out so far shows that it is possible to distinguish certain forms of the Middle La Tène female costume of the Scordisci that belongs to the widespread legacy of the La Tène culture in the Carpathian Basin and Central Europe (Dizdar 2015; 2016; 2018). On the other hand, certain characteristic forms belonging to their legacy can also be identified. One of the forms considered to be characteristic of the Middle La Tène Scordiscan legacy, aside from bronze astragal belts of the Osijek type (Božič 1981; Filipović, Mladenović 2017; Dizdar, Tonc 2018; Dizdar 2019), represent bronze belts composed in combinations of a lyre-shaped and rectangular segment, due to which they were named the Scordiscan type (Challet 1992: 76).

Various forms of Middle La Tène belts from the area settled by the Scordisci, especially those made of bronze, were presented by J. Todorović (1968; 1971; 1972; 1974), N. Majnarić-Pandžić (1970), B. Jovanović (1982/1983; 1983; 1987) and S. Arsenijević (2013). Additionally, a great contribution to the research of the material legacy of the Scordisci, not just of their abundant numismatic heritage, was provided by my esteemed colleague Petar Popović in his numerous papers. One of the topics he studied was the distinctive forms of female costume decorated with enamel, most prominently the Middle La Tène bronze belts (Popović 2002). Likewise, bronze belts from the Scordiscan sites were included in various analyses directed towards certain forms of bronze belts from the Carpathian Basin. As a result, bronze belts that consist of lyre-shaped segments were analysed along with belts with rectangular segments of the so-called Hungarian type, most of which were discovered at sites in the eastern part of the Carpathian Basin (Stanczik, Vaday 1971; Rustoiu 2004/2005; 2008a; 2011). It is certainly important to point out that belts with lyre-shaped segments, besides at the Scordiscan sites (Jovanović 1982/1983; 1983; Guštin 1984: 340), were also discovered at sites in Transdanubia and in the Tisza valley (Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 25). The last discovered finds show that belts with lyre-shaped segments also appear at sites in the Drava valley (Dizdar 2011: 110, Fig.

3: 1), and all the way to the Dolenjska region (Križ 2009: 322, cat. no. 46). However, the number of finds of belts with lyre-shaped segments in the area settled by the Scordisci, where belts composed of differently shaped segments were also discovered (Dizdar 2016), enabled their definition as a special variant, the Scordiscan type (Challet 1992: 73–76, Tab. 12). Bronze belts composed in combinations of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments were placed in a separate group (Gk-S) by J. Bujna, who divides these belts into four types. Actually, three of them represent pendants at the ends of the belts, while the type Gk-S-D, which he calls the Scordiscan type, has characteristically stylised lyre-shaped segments (Bujna 2011: 116–118, Fig. 49).

The largest number of bronze belts from the area settled by the Scordisci known so far is composed in combinations of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments. Some sites have yielded only lyre-shaped segments, based on which nothing more can be said about the composition of the belts themselves. Unfortunately, so far, grave assemblage is not known with a bronze belt with lyre-shaped segments from the area settled by the Scordisci. Nevertheless, traces of burning documented on certain belts, but also on belts from neighbouring areas, indicate that they definitely come from cremation burials, i.e., that the deceased women were cremated with the belts. This burial rite prevents a precise analysis of their functional position and the way in which they were worn.

Each of the belts so far discovered at the Scordiscan sites, as well as in neighbouring areas, represents a unique form with different combinations of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments, as well as buckles and pendants, although some similar shape characteristics of segments can also be noticed. Based on the find of a belt from Hrčkovci with lyre-shaped and rectangular segments (Fig. 4), it was assumed that belts could have been composed of two symmetrical halves (Jovanović 1982/1983: 27, 31; 1983: 49–50). However, this belt was not entirely preserved and the assumption is not completely reliable. Based on the composition of the preserved belts with lyre-shaped segments, i.e., composition and arrangement of the segments, B. Jovanović recognised four variants: – belts composed only of lyre-shaped segments; – belts composed of alternating lyre-shaped and rectangular segments; – lyre-shaped segments placed

at the final part of the belt with a pendant at the end;  
– lyre-shaped segments placed on the part of the belt leading to the buckle (Jovanović 1982/1983: 31; 1983: 51). V. Challet distinguishes only two variants that actually correspond with the aforementioned classification. The first variant consists of belts composed in combinations of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments; the second variant was represented by belts composed only of lyre-shaped segments (Challet 1992: 101–104). Considering the finds known until now, it is not possible to recognise belts made only of lyre-shaped segments (Bujna 2011: 118). The closest find of that variant is a find of a belt with lyre-shaped segments damaged by fire from Pecka bara, where no segments of other shapes were found; but only a few segments of this belt were preserved (Jovanović 1983: 51, Fig. 8; 10; Popović, Sladić 1997: 103, Fig. 4: 2; Popović 2002: 350–351).

most commonly hollow and have a groove along their top edges, while some of the segments are decorated with variously shaped depressions with enamel. Only rarely were there belts with lyre-shaped segments in combination with rectangular segments that have a short rib along the top side of the two longer edges, while the central part can also be decorated with depressions filled with enamel. Likewise, on the segment loops through which rings are passed, there can be depressions with enamel, most commonly triangular in shape, along which there can also be parallel grooves. Otherwise, on the lyre-shaped and rectangular segments, there can be variously shaped depressions filled with differently coloured enamel, most commonly red. At the ends of the belts, there can also be complex pendants with lyre-shaped top portions, while their lower part usually includes a rectangular plate from which bronze pendants hang.

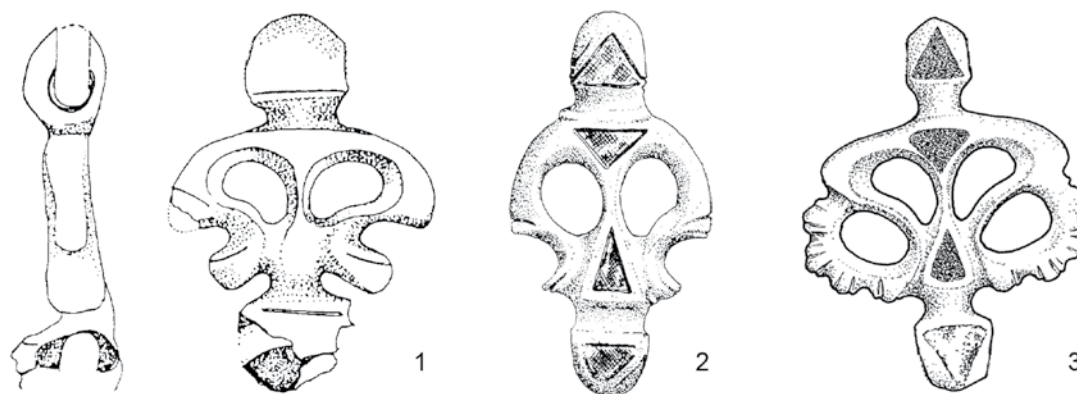


Fig 1. Variants of lyre-shaped segments: 1 Hrtkovci variant; 2 Surčin variant; 3 Zvonimirovo variant.

Belts composed of variously shaped segments, such as belts composed of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments, testify to the extremely complex procedure of typological classification of bronze belts. Classifications seem even more complex if we attempt to single out certain variants, due to which it is necessary to define distinct criteria when listing basic shapes, whereby the most significant criteria are the shapes of segments. Of course, one of the aggravating circumstances in classifying bronze belts is certainly the degree of their preservation, since they are often only partly preserved, which does not necessarily represent the original composition of the belt. Besides lyre-shaped segments, the integral parts of the Scordiscan type of belt are rectangular segments, which are

This composition gives them an anthropomorphic shape (Dizdar, Ložnjak Dizdar 2020).

Each of the bronze belts of the Scordiscan type discovered so far, with different combinations of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments, actually represents a unique form. The inconsistent arrangement of differently shaped segments in belts is the reason it is so difficult to conduct a precise typological classification of these belts, especially when they are preserved only partially. Therefore, it might be more appropriate to classify lyre-shaped segments according to the shape of their bodies and, so far, three variants can be distinguished (Fig. 1) (Dizdar 2015: 191):

– the first variant is represented by lyre-shaped segments with curved lateral sides that, at the

end, after they touch the central part of the body, terminate in small protrusions with rounded endings – Hrtkovci variant (Fig. 1: 1);

– in the second variant the aforementioned lateral protrusions, after they touch the central part of the body, do not exist anymore or they are barely noticeable, and they are flat on the bottom side, which contains grooves – Surčin variant (Fig. 1: 2);

– the third variant is characterised by an extension of lateral protrusions after they touch the central part of the body and close in the middle, so that the lateral protrusions have a figure-of-eight shape, whereby its lower parts were hemispherically ribbed – Zvonimirovo variant (Fig. 1: 3).

The recognised variants probably indicate that several workshops produced lyre-shaped segments. It is necessary to point out that B. Jovanović (1982/1983: 31–32; 1983: 56–57)

and P. Popović (2002: 351) rightly assumed that the simply formed lyre-shaped segments, listed here as the Surčin variant segments, were probably produced in the Scordiscan workshops and are a characteristic part of their material legacy (Dizdar 2015: 191, Fig. 3; 2018: 18).

### Lyre-shaped segments of the Surčin variant

The lyre-shaped segments of the Surčin variant have characteristically curved lateral sides that, after they touch the central part of the body, do not exist anymore or they are barely noticeable, and they are flat on the bottom side, which contains grooves (Fig. 1: 2). To this variant is attributed a

chance find of a lyre-shaped segment from Osijek, which has triangular depressions on its body; the top one is wider, while the bottom one is taller and narrower. Segment loops through which rings passed also contain triangular depressions (Fig. 2: 1) (Todorović 1974: Fig. 114; Jovanović 1983:

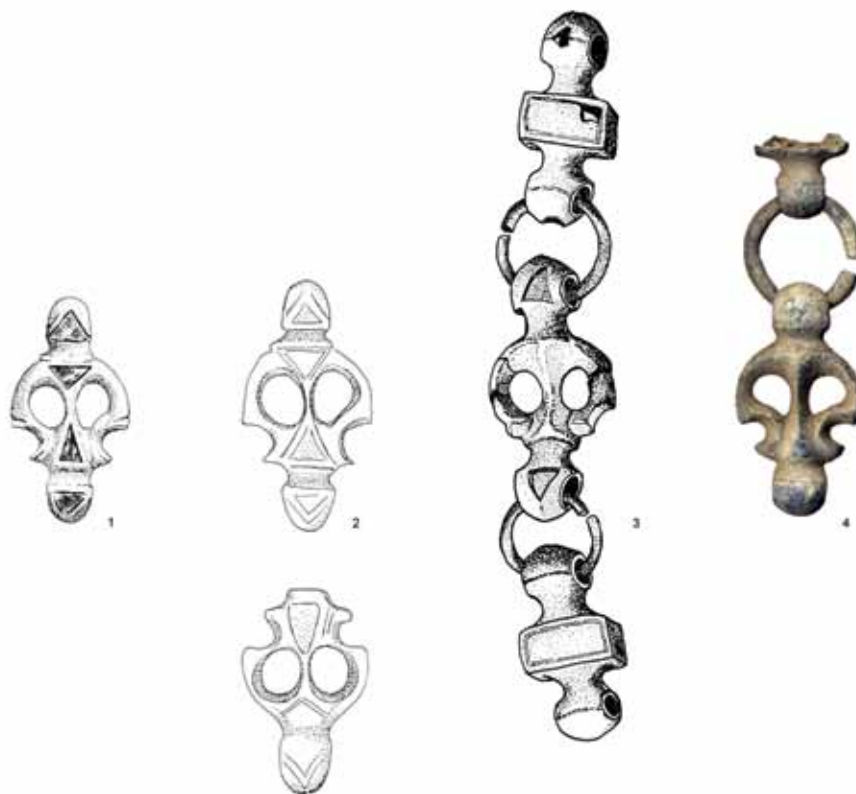


Fig. 2. Finds of lyre-shaped segments of the Surčin variant: 1 Osijek (after: Todorović 1974); 2 Surčin (after: Jovanović 1983); 3 Beljarica near Zemun (after: Todorović 1974); 4 Stari Kostolac – Čair (after: Stojić, Jacanović 2008).

47, Fig. 5; Popović 2002: 351, Pl. II: 2; Bujna 2011: 118, Fig. 49: 11; Dizdar 2015: 191, Fig. 3: 1). Lyre-shaped segments with triangular depressions on the body and loops were also found at the Surčin cemetery, in A. Poturičić's vineyard (Fig. 2: 2). Along with triangular depressions, there is also one parallel groove on each side of the segment loops. The belt also consisted of hollow rectangular segments with a groove along the edges (Majnarić-Pandžić 1970: 47, 96, Pl. XLI: 5–7; Jovanović 1983: 46, Fig. 4; Popović 2002: 351; Dizdar 2015: 191, Fig. 3: 2). A smaller part of a belt with rhythmically arranged lyre-shaped and rectangular segments was discovered by chance on Beljarica, near Zemun (Fig. 2: 3). The segments have loops at their ends with triangular depres-

sions on lyre-shaped segments, while the rectangular segments contain a horizontal groove. There is also a groove along the edges of the rectangular segments (Todorović 1968: 158, Pl. LII: 2; 1971: 158, Pl. LXXI: 6; 1974: Fig. 59; Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 20; Jovanović 1983: 46, Fig. 3; Popović 2002: 350; Bujna 2011: 118, Fig. 49: 10; Dizdar 2015: 191, Fig. 3: 3). The lyre-shaped segment discovered at the site of Stari Kostolac – Čair (Fig. 2: 4) partly corresponds to the Surčin variant. There is one horizontal groove on each loop of the segment. A single ring that connected the lyre-shaped segment with the rectangular one was also preserved (Stojić, Jacanović 2008: 264, Fig. 96).

decorated with blue enamel on the loop (Dizdar, Ložnjak Dizdar 2020). The pendant, which has a lyre-shaped top part, is thought to represent a stylised female figure and has depressions with blue enamel at the edges, while in the central part there is red enamel (Majnarić-Pandžić 1970: 37, 89, Pl. XXVI: 4; Jovanović 1983: 45, Fig. 2; 1987: 838, Pl. LXXXIII: 1; Todorović 1974: 102, Fig. 80; Majnarić-Pandžić 1998: 332–333, no. 156; Popović 2002: 351, Pl. II: 5; Bujna 2011: 118, Fig. 49: 9). The anthropomorphic pendant from Novi Banovci is considered to be one of the most beautiful examples of colour effect, which was represented by bronze belts composed of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments.



Fig. 3. Anthropomorphic pendant from Novi Banovci (after: Todorović 1974; photo by: I. Krajcar, AMZ).

The top part of the anthropomorphic pendant from Novi Banovci, probably from one of the destroyed graves, is similar in shape to the Surčin variant segments (Fig. 3).<sup>2</sup> The pendant has a unique composition and was probably placed at the end of the belt, which, along with hollow rectangular segments with a groove along the edges, also had lyre-shaped segments, one of which was

### Lyre-shaped segments of the Hrtkovci and Zvonimirovo variants

Scordiscan sites yield more bronze belts composed in combinations of lyre-shaped segments of the Hrtkovci variant and rectangular segments with a groove along the edges, which are hollow on the bottom side. Lyre-shaped segments of this variant have curved lateral sides, which at the end, after they touch the central part of the body, terminate in small protrusions with rounded endings (Fig. 1: 1). A belt composed of such lyre-shaped segments was discovered in Hrtkovci, in the vicinity of a prehistoric multilayer settlement on Gomolava (Fig. 4). Some lyre-shaped and rectangular segments, a buckle and rings were deformed during cremation, which indicates that the belt probably originates from a cremation burial. The lyre-shaped and rectangular segments mostly interchange in a rhythmical fashion (Fig. 4). The belt was dated to the period from the second half to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC (Jovanović 1982/1983: 27–29, Fig. 1–2; 1983: 47, 49, Fig. 7; 9; Skordisci 1992: 123, cat. no. 45, Pl. XIII; Popović 2002: 350, Pl. II: 1; Bujna 2011: 118, Fig. 49: 8). This belt was probably similar in composition to the belt discovered in Bački Monoštor, which also shows traces of cremation, and has directly linked lyre-shaped segments (Jovanović 1982/1983: 29–30, Fig. 3; 1983: 47, Fig. 6). A part of a belt was discovered by chance in Bačko Gradište, with a preserved part of a lyre-shaped segment, rectangular segments and an anthropomorphic pendant

<sup>2</sup> My thanks go to Dr I. Drnić from the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb for the photo of the pendant from Novi Banovci.



(Hunyady 1942: Pl. XXXIV: 1; XXXV: 13–14; Todorović 1968: Pl. L: 1; Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 17; Jovanović 1991: 30–31, Fig. 1–2; Popović 2002: 351, Pl. II: 4). The aforementioned part of the belt with only lyre-shaped segments was discovered in Pecka bara in eastern Serbia. The segments were mostly damaged in cremation, which indicates that the belt probably originates from a cremation burial (Janković 1969: 101; Jovanović 1983: 51, Fig. 8; 10; Popović 1990: 169; Popović, Sladić 1997: 103, Fig. 4: 2; Popović 2002: 350–351).

chance finds from destroyed cremation burials. A part of a belt, which seems to be composed of rhythmically arranged lyre-shaped and rectangular segments and has an elaborately decorated anthropomorphic enamelled pendant, was discovered at the site of Bölcske – Madocsahegy (Tischler 1890: Pl. B2; Hunyady 1942: 104; Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 17, Fig. 5: 9; Eluère 1973: 318, Fig. 2: 5; Szabó 1989: 29, Pl. V: 6; 1992: 154; Challet 1992: 102, Fig. 60; Rustoiu 2008a: 131, Fig. 63: 8; Bujna 2011: 118, Fig. 49: 1). A belt composed of lyre-shaped and hollow rectangular

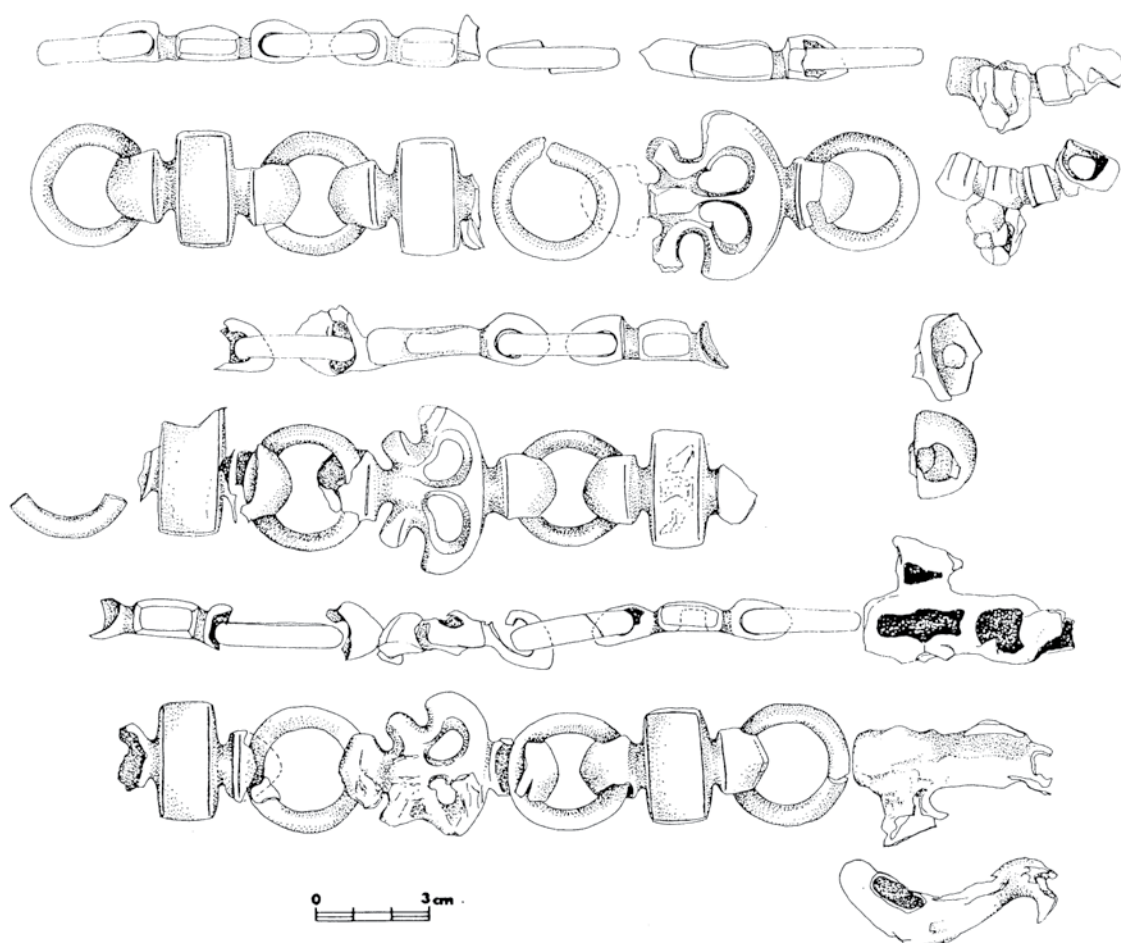


Fig. 4. Bronze belts from Hrtkovci (after: Jovanović 1982/1983).

Aside from cemeteries of the Scordisci, bronze belts composed in combinations of lyre-shaped segments of the Hrtkovci variant and rectangular segments were also found in neighbouring areas of Transdanubia and the Tisza valley, while most finds were discovered at sites between Lake Balaton and the Danube river. They are mostly

segments with a groove along the edges or crescent-shaped depressions, between which are ring-and-dot motifs, was found in a cremation burial at the site of Cece – Hardpuszta. A part of an anthropomorphic pendant was also preserved (Sellye 1939: 47, Pl. I: 1–14; Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 17; Challet 1992: 102, Fig. 61; Horváth, Keszi 2004:

45, 346 k p.). A belt from the site of S rosd was probably composed of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments with a groove along the edges, with one of the segments shaped as a double-lyre. The top part of an anthropomorphic pendant was also preserved (Tompa 1937: 112, Pl. 53: 4–5, 8; Hunyady 1942: Pl. XXXV: 2–3; Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 19, Fig. 5: 5a–b; Rustoiu 2008a: 131, Fig. 63: 4; Bujna 2011: 118, Fig. 49: 2). A double-lyre shaped segment was discovered in Tengelic. The segment has a short zoomorphic buckle in the shape of a horse head in the middle of one of the lateral sides (Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 20, Fig. 5: 4a–b; Challet 1992: 95, Fig. 47). A lyre-shaped segment with a horizontal groove on loop comes from the site of S rszentl rincz (Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 19, Fig. 5: 3a–b; Bujna 2011: 118, Fig. 49: 7), while another lyre-shaped segment originates from an unknown site (Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 21, Fig. 5: 2a–b). Yet another part of a belt with lyre-shaped segments also originates from an unknown site. There was probably a pendant at the end of the belt (Challet 1992: 104, Fig. 64; Bujna 2011: 118, Fig. 49: 12). An anthropomorphic pendant of a belt and a loop of a segment, probably lyre-shaped, was discovered in Szentes in the Tisza valley (Tischler 1890: Pl. B4; Hunyady 1942: Pl. XXXIV: 2; Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 20, Fig. 5: 6; Elu re 1973: 318, Fig. 2: 3; Challet 1992: 103, Fig. 62; Sch tze aus der Keltenezeit in Ungarn 1998: 84, cat. no. 177; Rustoiu 2008a: 131, Fig. 63: 7; Bujna 2011: 118, Fig. 49: 3). A fragment of a lyre-shaped segment and hollow rectangular segments are also attributed to Szentes (Tischler 1890: Pl. B5; Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 21; Challet 1992: 103, Fig. 62); the second segment has a zoomorphic buckle on its lateral side (Tischler 1890: Pl. B6; Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 21; Challet 1992: 103, Fig. 62). Parts of a belt composed of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments were discovered in a woman’s cremation burial in Tele sti in Oltenia. There was an anthropomorphic pendant at the end of the belt. The grave was dated to the LT C1 and is considered to prove the mobility of women, with whom these belts crossed the borders of the areas in which they were produced; whereas the woman from the grave in Tele sti also kept elements of her local costume (Calotoiu 1986; Rustoiu 2004/2005: 54–55, Fig. 1: 6–13; 2008a: 128, Fig. 62: 6–13; 2008b: 38,

Fig. 5: 6–13; 2011: 167, Fig. 5: 6–13; 2017: 43, Fig. 8: 3). A belt mostly composed of rectangular segments with a groove along the edges, but also fragments of lyre-shaped segments, belong to E. Marcel’s collection of finds, allegedly gathered in south-western Slovakia in the area around Galanta (Pichlerov  1986: 162, Pl. IX: 65).

The Zvonimirovo variant is represented by lyre-shaped segments with a characteristic extension of the lateral sides after they touch the central part of the body and close in the middle, by which the lateral protrusions have a figure-of-eight shape, and its lower parts were hemispherically ribbed (Fig. 1: 3). A belt with such lyre-shaped segments was discovered in grave LT 29 in Zvonimirovo, dated to LT C2. Most of the segment with a zoomorphic buckle, was damaged during the cremation with the deceased woman. Some rectangular segments have depressions in the middle that are filled with red enamel, while some rectangular segments have no decorations, i.e., have a rib along the longer edge. On the lyre-shaped segments, there are also depressions filled with red enamel (Dizdar 2011: 110, Fig. 3: 1). A belt with lyre-shaped segments of this variant was discovered in grave 390 on Kapiteljska njiva in Novo Mesto, which had also been burned with the deceased woman. The belt was composed of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments with depressions and segments with only a rib along their longer edge (Kri  2009: 322, cat. no. 46). At another unknown site in Hungary, a larger portion of a belt was found, which was composed of rectangular and lyre-shaped segments of the Zvonimirovo variant, which were placed only at the preserved ends of the belt (Tischler 1890: Pl. B1; Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 21; Challet 1992, 101: Fig. 59). A single lyre-shaped segment of the Zvonimirovo variant was probably part of a belt from the site of Kunszentm rton – Bokonya in the Tisza valley, which seems to originate from a grave. The belt was also composed of hollow rectangular segments with bell-shaped and triangular depressions filled with red enamel on the segment loops. The remains of the belt were dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. An anthropomorphic pendant probably belongs to this belt, which was located at its end (Kov cs 2017: 15, 21, 82–83, cat. no. 199–204).

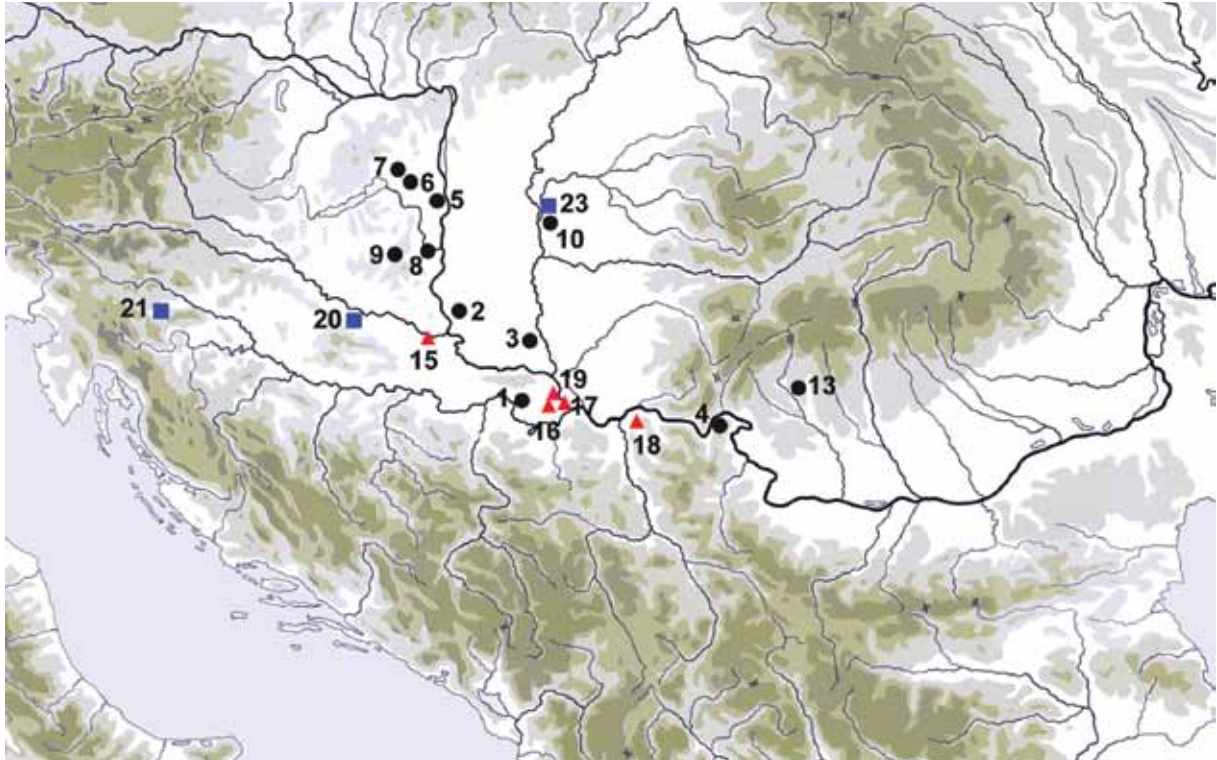


Fig. 5. Distribution of bronze belts of the Scordiscan type with lyre-shaped segments of the Hrtkovci variant (●), Surčin variant (▲), Zvonimirovo variant (■):

- Hrtkovci variant (●): 1. Hrtkovci; 2. Bački Monoštor; 3. Bačko Gradište; 4. Pecka bara; 5. Bölske – Madocsahegy; 6. Cece – Hardpuszta; 7. Sárossd; 8. Tengelic; 9. Sárszentlőrincz; 10. Szentes; 11. Unknown site in Hungary; 12. Unknown site in Hungary; 13. Telešti; 14. Unknown site in southwestern Slovakia.
- Surčin variant (▲): 15. Osijek; 16. Surčin; 17. Beljarica near Zemun; 18. Stari Kostolac – Čair; 19. Novi Banovci.
- Zvonimirovo variant (■): 20. Zvonimirovo – Veliko polje; 21. Novo Mesto – Kapiteljska njiva; 22. Unknown site in Hungary; 23. Kunszentmárton – Bokonya.

## Conclusion

Bronze belts composed of differently arranged lyre-shaped and rectangular segments – the so-called Scordiscan type of belts (Challet 1992: 76), with zoomorphic buckles and anthropomorphic pendants, were mostly discovered at sites along the Danube river from Lake Balaton to the mouth of the Sava river, where workshops that produced them were also probably situated (Fig. 5). Therefore, it is a recognisable regional form of the Middle La Tène women's costume characteristic of communities settled along the Danube river that shared similar ideas of decorating women's bodies and took part in creating a complex cultural landscape. These belts were previously recognised within the so-called Hungarian type of belts, which are thought to belong to the material legacy of the eastern Celts, perhaps best-known today for its characteristic forms of women's costume (Hauschild 2010: 173). The belts with lyre-

shaped segments of the Surčin variant are particularly characteristic of the material legacy of the Scordisci (Fig. 5), which were definitely produced in workshops located in their territory (Jovanović 1982/1983: 33; 1983: 55). Therefore, it is a segment shape that was represented in the Scordiscan legacy by a unique form and which was produced according to a widely-accepted paradigm and common concept of decoration. It is certainly necessary to point out that areas of distribution of differently shaped bronze belts overlap, which might point to the possibility of certain workshops producing differently shaped belts. This is supported by belts composed of differently shaped segments (Dizdar 2018: 17). Individual choice, or selectivity, could certainly have been of great importance as well. On the other hand, discoveries of certain belt or segment types outside of principal areas of distribution could point to the mobility of women who wore them or craftsmen who produced them. Likewise, they could have been objects of cultural



transfers, used for exchanging ideas and knowledge necessary for the production of such complex objects. However, finds like these are certainly evidence of established contacts, often between distant areas (Dizdar 2018: 24–27).

Although, for now, there is no data of finds of bronze belts with lyre-shaped segments in closed grave assemblages, aside from the grave in Telești and cemeteries in Zvonimirovo and Novo Mesto, we can conclude that wearing them was not only a socially determined category, but it simultaneously reflected various aspects of social identities and had a recognisable gender and age significance. The aforementioned graves are particularly significant for the dating of bronze belts of the Scordiscan type with lyre-shaped segments. The bronze belts with lyre-shaped segments from the Scordiscan sites were dated to the period from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and are assumed to originate from wealthy women's graves (Majnarić-Pandžić 1970: 15, 21, 37; Jovanović 1982/1983: 31–32; 1983: 52–54; Guštin 1984: 340, App. 1: 49; Jovanović 1987: 838, 840–841; Popović 2002: 350–351). Based on the finds in the aforementioned graves, we can assume that bronze belts composed of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments appeared in late LT C1 (Stanczik, Vaday 1971: 25–26; Bujna 1982: 337; Hellebrandt 1999: 86–88; Rustoiu 2002: 30; 2004/2005: 54–55; 2011: 167–168), but it seems they were worn much more in LT C2, or during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC (Challet 1992: 107; Bujna 2011: 116–118, 143). This was confirmed by the results of the excavation of the Zvonimirovo cemetery, where bronze belts with different lyre-shaped segments were found in several grave assemblages (Dizdar 2011: 111; 2013: 230; 2018: 18). A find of a part of a belt with a pendant from Bačko Gradište points to a similar conclusion, with finds from destroyed graves (Jovanović 1991) dated mostly to LT C2.

Similarities in concept and shape between bronze belts of the Scordiscan type with various combinations of lyre-shaped and rectangular segments testify to the existence of intense contacts in the area along the Danube river during the Middle La Tène. These belts represent a recognisable physical expression of a defined visual code and identity of women in the Middle Danube region, while the belts with lyre-shaped segments of the Surčin variant were most commonly worn by

Scordiscan women. Wearing them, as a part of a complex decoration of a woman's body, probably also had a symbolic meaning that sent a message that created an idealised image of the wearer and her social status, due to which the belts were burned with the deceased women during the Middle La Tène – from the end of LT C1 and during LT C2. The Middle La Tène bronze belts decorated with enamel have been the subject of many scientific studies written by my esteemed colleague Petar Popović, to whom we are thankful for many inspirational discussions about the material legacy of the Scordisci, and also all other things that make our lives better.

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