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## THE SCORDISCIAN LADY AND HER ATTIRE FROM “SREMSKA MITROVICA”

**Abstract:** An extraordinary grave group from the surroundings of Sremska Mitrovica contained an excellent example of a belt buckle and its fastening plate, depicting a horseman, which is an important and significant find in terms of female dress accessories. Along with the exceptional grave goods from Jarak and the rich hoards from the Srem and Banat regions, the presumed grave group confirms the existence of an important female elite in the Celtic community of the Scordisci, which was especially prominent before the Roman conquest.

**Keywords:** Scordisci, LT D1, Szárazd-Regöly hoards, Laminci type belt buckles, strap mounts, human heads, bracelets with ram’s head finials, double foil pendants

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The material legacy of the Celtic Scordisci tribe is a topic that has preoccupied my friend Petar Popović throughout his working life. The intention of this contribution is to, once again, draw attention to a group of finds from the surroundings of Sremska Mitrovica (hereafter “Sremska Mitrovica”). The extraordinary objects probably belonged to a woman from the upper echelons of the Celtic Scordisci elite during the most lavish phase of their existence.

Vojislav Filipović and Rastko Vasić published several archaeological finds from an anonymous antiques market in the *Glasnik* (Journal) of the Serbian Archaeological Society, at the end of 2017. What caught our attention, among other things, were black and white photographs and a comment relating to a group of objects, possibly representing a grave unit, from “Sremska Mitrovica”. According to V. Filipović and R. Vasić, based on their unreliable source, these objects may have been discovered in the village of Kuzmin near Sremska Mitrovica. Among the possible finds from the supposed grave unit, the authors mentioned a silver belt buckle, 18 silver belt (?) plaques (strap mounts; description by the author), a pair of silver bracelets, necklaces made of amber and quartz (glass; description by the author), and beads and pendants, including a large bear tooth. They concluded their overview by informing us that the finds had been sold to a buyer

from the United States of America at the end of 2016, or the beginning of 2017.<sup>1</sup>

V. Filipović re-published the same finds in 2019 on the website of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, with some detailed information on their origins and original colour photographs, instead of the black-and-white photos published previously, and dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017, along with pages of the *Hermann Historica* auction catalogue from 2018.<sup>2</sup> In November 2018, this valuable set of finds, now reduced to the silver objects - the belt buckle, 18 strap mounts polished to a shine and the pair of bracelets – reappeared, thanks to high quality colour photographs, accompanied by descriptions written by an expert, in an auction catalogue of the antiquity auction company *Hermann Historica*, based in Munich.<sup>3</sup> The valuable silver objects were offered at the auction, but did not sell and were returned to the owner/salesman. However, the whereabouts of the necklaces made of amber and quartz/glass beads, as well as of a bear tooth and a large amber bead are currently unknown. We have partly used the descriptive text of the catalogue in our work. The find has been offered to collectors of archaeological antiques in Austria and Germany since 2015, and in 2019 the silver objects were still

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<sup>1</sup> Filipović, Vasić 2017, 339–343, fig. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Filipović 2019.

<sup>3</sup> *Hermann Historica* 2018, 93–100.

on offer for sale from a distributor based in Vienna.

On account of the belt buckle of the Jarak group of the Laminici type (Fig. 1), we focussed our attention on this *magnificent* group of objects by analysing a similar belt buckle from “Donja Posavina”, whose belt terminal fastening plate is also decorated with a figure of a horseman (Fig. 2). The comparison of characteristics of their depiction on metal, and the motif of the warrior present on these two belts buckles, confirms their origins in the region of Syrmia, at the end of the Iron Age.<sup>4</sup>

**1. A silver-plated belt buckle** of the Jarak group of the Laminici type (Fig. 1), consists of two parts: the buckle itself and a square fastening plate. The thick iron base plate of the belt buckle features

edge there is a band between two repoussé lines, which is filled with embossed rings and dots. In the centre of the buckle is a prominent, contoured rib, hammered from the back. The wider lateral edge of the silver sheet is turned inwards around the iron base plate, thereby forming a sleeve. The buckle was flexibly attached to the fastening plate with metal wire. The belt hook is missing.

Before restoration, all twelve large nail heads were still in place.<sup>5</sup> During the process of being cleaned they were lost; imprints of the nail heads are still visible. Belt buckle length is 27.5 cm, and the height is 18.3 cm.

The fastening plate (Fig. 1) is made of silver sheet, bent into a U-shape on the upper and lower edges to be fixed to the belt. Unusually, the plate



Fig. 1. “Sremska Mitrovica”, female grave. Belt buckle with fastening plate length 37 cm and the height is 18,3 cm. After Hermann Historica catalogue 2018, cat. no. 3132 on page 95. Drawing - idealised reconstruction made by Janže Lorber.

a decorative coat of silver sheet. The upper and lower edges curve distinctly outwards and are held together with a bulged silver strip. At each lateral

also has an additional narrow plate, attached to it with two rivets. With the help of the U-shaped edge and an iron wire it was flexibly attached to the belt buckle.

<sup>4</sup> Guštin, Koledin 2019–2020, 202–203, figs. 4; 5; 8.

<sup>5</sup> Filipović, Vasić 2017, fig. 6e.

The fastening plate, bordered with four hatched, embossed ribs, is decorated with a depiction of a horseman sitting atop a stallion. The rider holds a shield in his left hand and a sword in his right. The contours of the entire embossed figure are bordered with a row of fine dots, punched from the

the appearance of a horseman on the fastening plates, the belt buckles from “Sremska Mitrovica” and from “Donja Posavina” were produced locally for the Scordisci elite. The motif of a horseman certainly fits within the so-called “Hellenistic” concept of the Illyrian tribes between the Adriatic

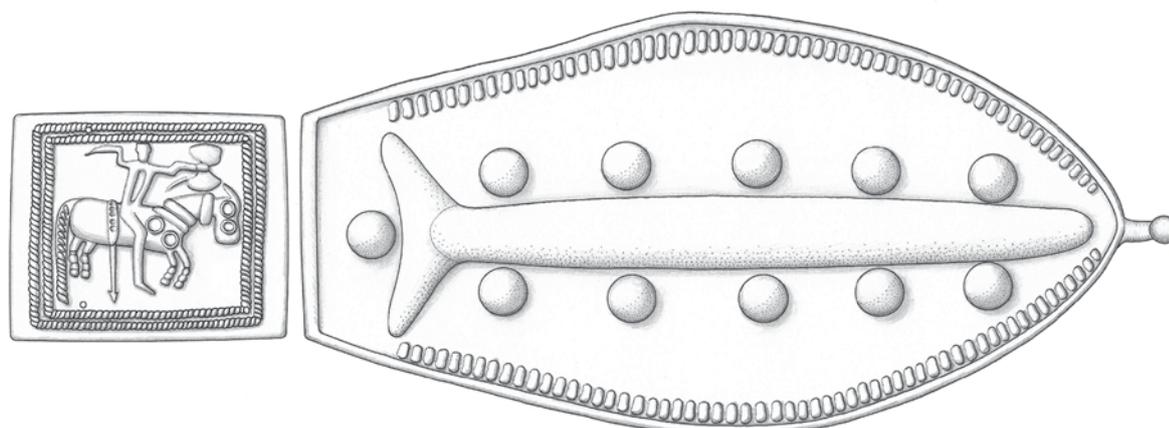


Fig. 2. “Donja Posavina”, isolated find. Belt buckle and fastening plate with a horseman. Belt buckle with fastening plate length 35 cm and the height is 15 cm. Drawing - idealised reconstruction made by Janže Lorber.

top. The horse is decorated with embossed rings and dots; six of them are on the body representing the decorative *phalerae*, the seventh on the head serves as the eye. Width 9.5 cm, height 9.7 cm.

The belt buckles of the Jarak group appear in a geographically limited area between the surroundings of the town of Vršac and the Sava river (examples from the “Donja Posavina” region, Hrtkovci, Sisak-near Silos, Sisak-Kupa and Židovar), as well as an example beyond this area from Breza near Sarajevo.

The best parallel for the belt buckle from “Sremska Mitrovica” is an example from “Donja Posavina” (Fig. 2), whose belt terminal fastening plate also depicts a horseman. These fastening plates share the same theme of representing an equestrian figure, as well as some details of decoration. One example represents precise craftwork performed with different tools – produced by hammering from the back, and also partly from the front, using a simple punch (Fig. 1), whereas the other one is more schematic and only embossed from the back (Fig. 2). They also share the border of hatched embossed ribs, with the difference being that on the “Donja Posavina” fastening plate it is doubled.

According to their method of manufacture and

Sea and the Sava river. The motif is also known from a large group of decorative *phalerae* and ceramic vessels with equestrian motifs, related to the Thracian, pre-Dacian and Dacian population from the final centuries BC.<sup>6</sup>

2. **Flat silver strap mounts**, 18 pieces with representations of clean-shaven male heads (Fig. 3). The lateral edges of the plates have been bent into a U-shaped profile, perhaps to enable them to be attached onto a leather strap. All the heads were produced by hammering from the back, with some details hammered from the front, using a simple punch. Height 28 mm, width 25 mm.

The heads are almost triangular in shape, with the chin sharply pointed. The mouth is indicated by a single line with four or five short vertical lines representing teeth, and the nostrils with two dots. On the forehead is a headband represented by two grooves. Above the band, the hairstyle is represented by a series of parallel lines. The head is framed with a twisted band, which should be interpreted as a torc; its finials seemingly depicted just below the chin. The eyes are round with punched pupils.

In the original publication all 18 strap mounts

<sup>6</sup> Guštin, Koledin 2019–2020, 197–201, figs. 6–7.

were intact.<sup>7</sup> It seems that they were damaged later during the restoration process. In some cases, evidence of damage can be discerned on the edge, whilst some heads have been punctured (Fig. 3).

tion of the hair and the almond-shaped eyes are also found on the bronze fitting that crowns the iron calotte of the Novo mesto type helmet from the Sava river near Stara Gradiška.<sup>13</sup>



Fig. 3. “Sremska Mitrovica”, female grave. Strap mounts from silver sheet with depictions of human heads. After Hermann *Historica* catalogue 2018, cat. no. 3134 on page 100.

The backwards combed hairstyle, indicated with a series of parallel lines, clean shaven look, and torc are characteristic for representations of human heads in the La Tène period and correspond to the majority of Celtic anthropomorphic depictions.

Stylised classic Celtic heads typically have an overly long triangular nose and almond-shaped or oval eyes, such as those on the Rynkeby and Gundestrup cauldrons, masks from Compiègne Forest, the stone relief of Montsalier near Marseilles, the warrior statue of Saint-Maur-en-Chaussée, the head of Garancières-en-Beauce, discs from Manerbio sul Mella<sup>8</sup> or on the much older, yet similar, disc from Hořovičky.<sup>9</sup> To this list can be added the heads on the kantharos from Balatonederics,<sup>10</sup> both figurines from Nyergesújfalu<sup>11</sup> and the bronze stamp from Gradišče above Dunaj, all of which have similarly formed eyes.<sup>12</sup> A comparable depic-

The combination of a backwards combed hairstyle and round eyes are found on the silver pendants of human masks from the hoard of Židovar,<sup>14</sup> while round eyes like those on the strap mounts from “Sremska Mitrovica” are also common in the Celtic world.

For example, round eyes are found on the depictions of human heads on ceramic *kantharoi* in Novo mesto, Rozvágy, Kósd, Körösszegapáti, Blandiana, Nyékládháza, Kakasd, Zalokomár, Levice and Deta.<sup>15</sup> We find them also on the bronze torc with globular heads on the finials from Vas County and on a figurine from Ószőny.<sup>16</sup> Such eyes are also on the supposed belt plate of bronze sheet from Staré Hradisko,<sup>17</sup> on bronze knife handles terminating with two heads from Zemplin and Žerovnišček near Bločice,<sup>18</sup> as well as on the

<sup>7</sup> Filipović, Vasić 2017, fig. 6e; Filipović 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Olmsted 2001, pls. 12; 60–61.

<sup>9</sup> I Celti 1991, 141.

<sup>10</sup> Knez, Szabó 1980–1981, fig. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Szabó 1982, figs. 12–17; 19; 22–26.

<sup>12</sup> Laharnar, Turk 2018, 152, fig. 147.

<sup>13</sup> Mihaljević, Dizdar 2007, figs. 3–7.

<sup>14</sup> Sladić 2006, 44–45, figs. 27–30.

<sup>15</sup> Knez, Szabó 1980–1981, figs. 1–4; 9; 11; 13–14; Rustoiu, Egri 2011, figs. 20–24.

<sup>16</sup> Szabó 1982, figs. 1: 2–3; 18; 20.

<sup>17</sup> Meduna 1961, pl. 1: 10–11; Hradišče nad Okluky 2018, 154–155.

<sup>18</sup> Stegmann-Rajtár 2014, 103–107, figs. 3–5. For Janus-heads see also Rustoiu, Egri 2011, 87–92.

handle of a short sword from Dinnyés.<sup>19</sup> On the famous Bavai Vase we observe a combination of slanted and round eyes.<sup>20</sup>

Good comparisons for the heads on our mounts on Fig. 3 appear to be the heads on some pieces of precious jewellery (Fig. 4) from the swampy confluence of the rivers Kapos and Koppány, in the area between the villages of Szárazd and Regöly (hereafter the Szárazd-Regöly marsh). The numerous objects of gold, silver, bronze, glass and amber were sold to the National Museum in Budapest in the period between 1890 and 1906. All the gold, and some exceptional silver objects, were later arbitrarily ascribed to one gold (Szárazd) and one silver and gold (Regöly) hoard. The origin and circumstances of discovery, as well as the character of finds (hoards or votives) remained unclear even after the presentation and evaluation of the finds by Tibor Kemenczei.<sup>21</sup>

The heads on the gold beads, the silver pectoral and the silver plate from the Szárazd-Regöly marsh, with their almost triangular form (Fig. 4), with bands dividing the face from the upper part of the head, the chin sharply pointed and round half-pearl formed eyes, broadly correspond to the heads on the strap mounts from “Sremska Mitrovica” (Fig. 3). The twisted wire fringing the heads on the pectoral (Fig. 4: 2), and the twisted band around the heads on the mounts (Fig. 3) should probably be interpreted as a Celtic torc. This interpretation seems to be supported by the small spheres on the top of the human heads on the pectoral, and the barely visible spheres beneath the chin of the heads on the mounts. Miklós Szabó recognised the heads on the jewellery from the Szárazd-Regöly marsh as belonging to the La Tène fashion. He dated them, in view of their artistic style and manufacture, predominantly to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>22</sup>

When considering the small strap mounts (approximate size of 28 x 25 mm), the best parallels come from the nearby necropolis in Čurug, southern Bačka. Within cremation grave 36 from Detelinara 1, six small iron mounts were found (21 x 18 mm), as well as a larger example (37 x 21

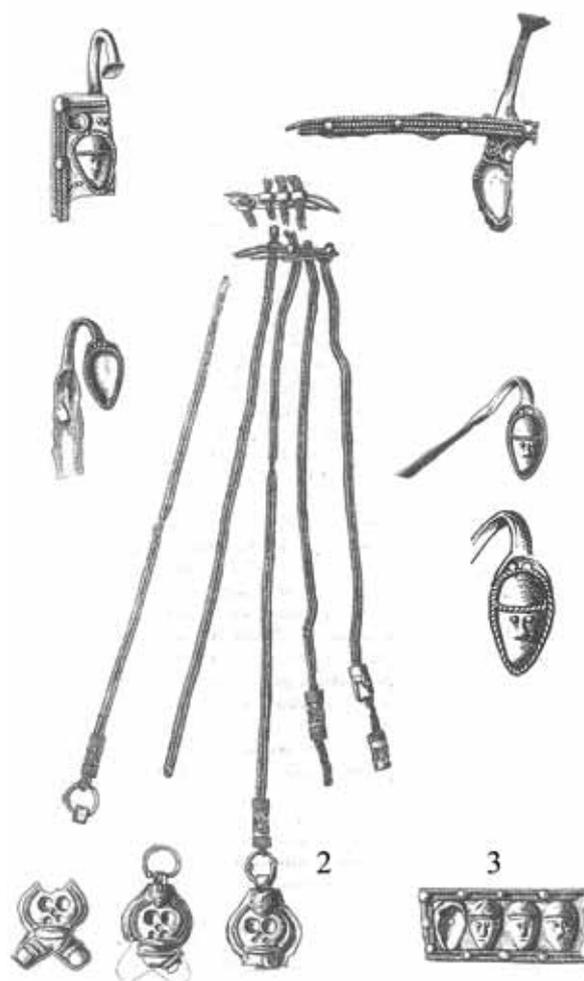


Fig. 4. Szárazd-Regöly marsh, votives. 1 detail of a gold bead decorated with depictions of human heads (after Szabó 1999, fig. 63e); 2 parts of the silver pectoral with anthropomorphic pendants; 3 silver plate with depicted human heads (after Hadaczek 1907, 65).

<sup>19</sup> Rustoiu, Egri 2011, fig. 32: 1.

<sup>20</sup> Olmsted 2001, pls. 60–61.

<sup>21</sup> Kemenczei 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Szabó 1975, 152–154, fig. 7; pls. 7; 8: 1–3; 9: 1, 5; Szabó 1999, 115; Szabó 2006, 114–115, fig. 20; Szabó 2012, 1806–1807.

mm). All have lateral edges bent into a U-shaped profile. The grave group also consisted of a classic Laminci A-type belt buckle with fastening

scribed) are known also from grave 1 in Cvjatkova mogila at Šipka. From 22 pieces, 8 of them are still gilded, dated in the second half of 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>25</sup>



Fig. 5. Katerini, tomb A. Photos and idealised drawings of gilded silver strap mounts with heads of a goddess with lion's skin or with lion's heads (after Grammenos 2004, 160–161, the idealised drawings made by Janže Lorber).

plate, a fragment of a bronze fibula, a glass bead, a stone pendant and numerous pottery fragments. The mounts are decorated with embossed circles and crescents, similar to the belt buckle. Important for our discussion is the presence of these strap mounts on more specimens, together with the dating of the grave to the LT D1 period.<sup>23</sup>

In both cases, at “Sremska Mitrovica” (Fig. 3) and at Čurug, the mounts have the same form, which indicates their use as decoration for leather straps. The gilded silver mounts from Tomb A at Katerini in the province of Pieria (Fig. 5), dated between 375–350 BC,<sup>24</sup> with two silver wire loops at the back probably had a similar function; a leather strap was likely inserted into the wire loops. Silver mounts with similar depicted lions embossed head like those on the figure 5: 2 (the back side is not de-

The mounts are of two different sizes, as is the case of Čurug. A total of 13 pieces are smaller, square (approximately 25 x 25 mm) and decorated with the embossed heads of a goddess (Omphale or Artemis) with a lion's skin, and six pieces are larger, about 50 mm long, rectangular and decorated with lion's heads and paws between two “egg and dart” borders. We can see a similar motif for example on the catch-plates of gold fibulae of the Macedonian type from the surroundings of Thessaloniki, dated to the period from 330 to 300 BC.<sup>26</sup>

3. **Two large silver spiral bracelets** terminate with rams' heads (Fig. 6; 7: 1). Each has nine coils. The spiral bands have a slight roof-shaped ridge in the middle, located between two longitudinal grooves, and are adorned alternately with punched marks, concentric circles, crescents with dots at the ends, and U-shaped marks.

<sup>23</sup> Čurug-Detelinara 1, Grave 36 (Trifunović 2019, 256, fig. 18: 2–8).

<sup>24</sup> Grammenos 2004, 160–161. The photos do not show the back sides of the mounts, so it is difficult to have a right picture of the loop function.

<sup>25</sup> Dimitrova 2019, 74, 92, fig. 8.

<sup>26</sup> Williams, Ogden 1994, 78–79, cat. no. 33.

The bands widen at the ends into 3 cm long, trapezoid finials, above which is a curving sheet of silver with filigree decoration and inlays of coral, which is further affixed by a notched-head rivet at the inner end of the metal sheet. To the finials protruding from the finials are attached, by means of notched-head rivets, animal heads with red coral inlays. The eyes are formed by large, round coral cabochons on top, set in notched frames and surrounded with additional notched wire. The nostrils are, likewise, encircled by notched wire. One head displays an antique repair to fix a fracture sustained in Antiquity: the overlapping ends of the fracture are, thus, held together with twisted silver wire. Weight 127.3 g and 124.7 g. Maximum diameter approx. 8 cm, length approx. 12 cm.

The torc and the bracelet are fine examples of the goldsmith's work, both of which have a copper alloy core.<sup>27</sup>

On the bracelets from Băiceni and "Sremska Mitrovica", a technique involving ropework collet lines was used to decorate the section between the animal head and the coils. On the coils there are small incised circles connected with curved lines (Fig. 7). Such decoration of the coils with lines, half circles and circles with a dot in the middle have strong similarities with the decoration of well-known silver bracelets with wide strip ending on both sides in a triangular terminal known, with horizontal ribs and geometric ornamentation from the several hoards as Čurug in Vojvodina and Vladinya, Granitovo and Stališka makhala in Thrace dating in the second half of 4<sup>th</sup> centu-



Fig. 6. "Sremska Mitrovica", from female grave. Silver spiral bracelets with depictions of ram's heads (after Hermann *Historica* catalogue 2018, cat. no. 3133 on pages 98–99).

Looking closely at the main strokes of the animal heads with a high nasal ridge on the bracelets from "Sremska Mitrovica" (Fig. 6; 7: 1), they correspond, without doubt, to a ram's head.

There is no direct analogy for these two incredible spiral bracelets. V. Filipović and R. Vasić declared the bracelet finials to be snake-heads, which are well known on bracelets, earrings and torcs in the ancient Greek world, as well as in the Early Iron Age of the Mediterranean and its hinterland, where they were quite popular.

For the finials of the bracelets, we have a good parallel in the finials of the 16.5 cm long gold triple spiral bracelet (Fig. 7: 2) and on the gold torc from the Thraco-Getique princely treasure hoard from Băiceni, in Iași county, dated to around 400 BC.

ry BC.<sup>28</sup> There is no doubt that we can recognise the local [Thracian, Triballi] manufacturing enriched in the case of bracelet from surroundings of „Sremska Mitrovica” with the challenging filigree and granulation goldsmithing.

A key difference between them is the form of the eyes. In the case of Băiceni they are embossed and encircled by twisted wire. In the case of "Sremska Mitrovica" they are formed by coral cabochons, surrounded with notched wire. Inlays of coral are also found on the necks, the area be-

<sup>27</sup> Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Dinu 1975; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1995; Popescu 1997, 193, cat. no. 172. Also found in the grave were other gold objects such as a richly decorated helmet and numerous decorated appliques.

<sup>28</sup> Tonkova 2017, 22; Simon 2022.



Fig. 7. 1 “Sremska Mitrovica”, female grave, silver spiral bracelet (after Filipović 2019);  
2 Băiceni, grave, gold spiral bracelet (after Popescu 1997, 193, cat. no. 172).

tween the heads and the coils. On the Băiceni bracelet, a classical rosette made of twisted wire is located on the top of the heads, but on the bracelets of “Sremska Mitrovica” a simple notched-head rivet is on the top.

The motif of the wavy line with a larger grain in each loop has a good comparison in the tubules and finials in the hoards from Židovar and Hrtkovei, dated to the LT D1 period, and also in the tubules on the pectoral from the Szárazd-Regöly marsh (Fig. 4: 2).<sup>29</sup> The flat spiral bands of the bracelets from “Sremska Mitrovica”, with the slight roof-shaped ridge in the middle, and their inlays, can be compared to similarly formed coils and inlays of the gold finger ring from Nesebăr (Mesembria – “Pearl of the Black Sea”), in ancient Thrace. The Nesebăr example dates to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.<sup>30</sup> The decoration, consisting of inlays of

semi-precious stones, corals, glass, etc., is actually a feature that seldom appears in jewellery from the end of the Classical period, but predominates in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

The finials of the spiral bracelet and the torc from Băiceni were described by Mircea Petrescu Dîmbovița and Marin Dinu as horned horse heads. Based on the position of the horns, they correspond to ram horns, but their ribbed form reminds us of Capricorn horns.<sup>31</sup> The depictions of ram horns also appear on other animal heads. A fine example of such a case is the Celtic kantharos from Novo mesto in Dolenjska, from the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Here the ram horns were added to snake heads executed in high relief at the ends of the handles.<sup>32</sup> In addition to Novo mesto, several

<sup>29</sup> Jevtić 2006, 156; Dautova-Rušeavljan, Jevtić 2006, 296, 300, fig. 6.

<sup>30</sup> L’Or des cavaliers Thraces 1987, 254, cat. no. 459.

<sup>31</sup> They cite such motifs from the Orient (Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Dinu 1975, 107–109); in the catalogue I Daci (Popescu 1997, 193, cat. no. 172) the finials are described as Capricorn heads.

<sup>32</sup> Knez, Szabó 1980–1981, 83, figs. 2; 5–6; Kaul 2011; Rus-toiu, Egri 2011, 69.

depictions of horned snake heads are known from south-eastern Europe and well-presented also on the main plate of the Gundestrup cauldron.<sup>33</sup>

“Sremska Mitrovica” (Fig. 8). They are also well known from the workshop centre at Staré Hradisko in Moravia.<sup>37</sup> Dragan Božič divided these kinds of



Fig. 8. “Sremska Mitrovica”, female grave. Small quartz/glass and amber beads, a large amber bead and a partly silver-plated bear tooth (after Filipović 2019).

4. **Bear tooth** with a perforation, the sharp end is plated with silver sheet (Fig. 8). During the Iron Age, animal teeth were quite often used as amulets or as parts of necklaces. V. Filipović and R. Vasić have already noted the presence of two perforated bear canine teeth in the rich hoard found on the settlement of Židovar, dated to the Late La Tène period (LT D1).<sup>34</sup> A perforated animal canine tooth from the same period is also known from Čurug.<sup>35</sup>

5. **A large amber bead** (Fig. 8). The existence of unusually large amber beads in Celtic graves of the Early La Tène period is sporadically reported, such as, for example, the bead with a 4.5 cm diameter from the rich grave 63 at Pilismarót-Basaharc.<sup>36</sup> In the Middle La Tène period, the presence of amber beads, mostly in combination with glass beads, on necklaces declined. It is possible this was due to the shift to cremating the dead during this period; thereby destroying amber beads in the process.

In the Late La Tène period amber is often represented by large and thick rings of apparently special significance, such as the example from

beads into three variants and listed them for some hoards in the Celtic world (Ptení, the Szárazd-Regöly marsh and Spodnji Lanovž in Celje), as well as from the graves of Adria and Aquileia, and the settlement in Oderzo, in the hinterland of Caput Adriae.<sup>38</sup>

#### 6. **Necklace of amber beads**

Numerous amber beads in various shapes belong to the necklace (Fig. 8). Based on their forms they correspond to the amber beads from the hoard of Židovar of the LT D1 period.<sup>39</sup>

#### 7. **Necklace from quartz/glass beads**

The numerous small sized beads are of mostly a round shape (Fig. 8). Based on the published photo, it is impossible to determine if they are made from quartz or glass.

<sup>33</sup> Kaul 2011, 105–106.

<sup>34</sup> Filipović, Vasić 2017, 342, fig. 6c.

<sup>35</sup> Trifunović 2012, fig. 15: 2.

<sup>36</sup> I Celti 1991, 284.

<sup>37</sup> Čižmarová 1996, 177–181, fig. 4: 11–12; from other places in Moravia: fig. 5: 5–10.

<sup>38</sup> Božič 1998, 146–148, 151–152, fig. 18. To this list should be added the bead from “Sremska Mitrovica” (Fig. 8) and the beads from the silver hoard of Lički Ribnik (Klemenc 1935, pl. 3: 40) and from the cemetery at Prozor (Bakarić 2006, 168, cat. no. 170).

<sup>39</sup> Sladić 2006, 59; Jevtić 2006, 127–134.

## Conclusion

Double foil pendants stand out among the Scordiscian silver jewellery hoards from Židovar, Hrtkovci and Kovin. They were constructed from symmetrical front and back halves, fashioned by hammering silver foil against a matrix and then

silver pendants of hollow double foil, which were parts of necklaces, into the following types: 13 examples depict human heads, four are anthropomorphic, 20 specimens have a bird shape, 11 are fashioned after ivy leaves, eight are of a biconical shape, and 37 depict insects.<sup>43</sup> Such a rich diversity is known only from this hoard. M. Jevtić supposed



Fig. 9. Kovin hoard (Vršac City Museum), (photo archive M. Guštin).

soldered together. It has to be noted that pendants of the same type belonging to one hoard were made using a single stamp, but in each hoard a different stamp was used.

Such double foil pendants have a long tradition. Mention should be made of, for example, the unique gold necklace from Roccanova in Basilicata with pendants in the form of simple flower buds, ram heads and a woman's head, dated to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>40</sup> The origins of highly elaborate silver double foil pendants from the Szárazd-Regöly marsh, Židovar, Hrtkovci and Kovin have been identified by M. Szabó and M. Jevtić, and later also by T. Kemenczei, in various silver pendants produced in workshops on the eastern coast of Adriatic. They also mentioned specimens from the region of Liburni (Baška on Krk, Jagodnja Gornja and Nin), from the territory of Japodes (Lički Ribnik<sup>41</sup> and Jezerine (Fig 10: 2), and from Sisak (Fig. 10: 3).<sup>42</sup>

In the publication concerning the hoard from Židovar, M. Sladić divided comparably formed

that the pendants in the form of human heads or human bodies were produced *ad usum celticum* in some eastern Adriatic workshops, or in some pre-Roman centre closer to the territory of the Scordisci.<sup>44</sup>

The double foil pendants from Židovar are clearly different from those on the eastern coast of the Adriatic and in its hinterland.<sup>45</sup> By the same method of manufacture, and partly comparable forms, they are closely connected with the pendants from the hoards of Hrtkovci in Syrmia and Kovin in Banat (Fig. 9; 10: 1).

The hoard from Kovin has, among other finds, two simple double foil pendants (Fig. 9). The hoard from Hrtkovci contained three types of double foil pendants (Fig. 10: 1; anthropomorphic, bird-shaped and seed-like), which have good parallels in the Židovar hoard. Of these, the best represented are those of an anthropomorphic shape (10 specimens). On the small head, the eyes, nose and mouth are depicted. There are two circular impressions in the middle of the body and the short legs are spread. The same type is known from four

<sup>40</sup> Deppert-Lippitz 1985, fig. 89; Guštin, Kuzman 2021, fig. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Klemenc 1935, pl. III: 12–17.

<sup>42</sup> Szabó 1975, 153–154; Jevtić 2006, 147; Kemenczei 2012, 335.

<sup>43</sup> Sladić 2006, 43–54.

<sup>44</sup> Jevtić 2006, 147, 149.

<sup>45</sup> See Tonc 2012.

specimens in the hoard from Židovar and three of the pectorals from the Szárazd-Regöly marsh (Fig. 4: 2). One pendant of this type, with a clearly visible small head, is known from grave 379 of the necropolis at Jezerine in the Una valley.<sup>46</sup> Therefore,

richly decorated with filigree wires and inlays of red glass (Fig. 10: 4). Under the base of this box a rod is inserted in both terminal loops of a thick loop in loop chain. From the rod hangs a 2.35 cm high and 6.15 cm wide rectangular plate. Its edges



Fig. 10. 1 Hrtkovci, part of hoard (photo Vojvodina Museum, Novi Sad); 2 Jezerine (photo National Museum of Bosnia and Hercegovina, Sarajevo) 3 Sisak-Kupa river, anthropomorphic pendant (after Dmić 2020, 120, fig. 80); 3 Židovar hoard, detail of box for valuables (after Sladić 2006, fig. 15).

it is reasonable to assume that the double foil pendants from the aforementioned hoards were produced in some specialised silver workshops in the Scordisci territory.<sup>47</sup>

The short overview of double foil pendants is also important for us because of the ram's head finials of the bracelets from "Sremska Mitrovica" (Fig. 6–7), which must have been hammered out with the help of a stamp, and were soldered with the help of the head-edge to the flat base plate. The technique is old, as we have seen, but again very popular during the period of depositing the hoards in the region of the Scordisci.

The rich hoard from Židovar, with its predominantly silver objects, such as the fibulae of the Jarak type, boxes for valuables, loop in loop chains, numerous double foil pendants of different types, silver and bronze finger rings, an amber necklace and toilet accessories, is dated to the LT D1 phase.

The most luxurious and enigmatic objects in the hoard are two small cylindrical boxes, as well as the cover of a third. The best preserved is

are decorated with filigree bands and, with an additional four bands, it is divided into five fields; the three largest fields are inlaid in the middle with red glass.<sup>48</sup> The filigree bands were enriched with small spheres. The artistry of the filigree bands is comparable to the two fragmented rectangular plates from the Szárazd-Regöly marsh (Fig. 4: 3), decorated with depictions of human heads.

As we have seen, the silver hoards of Židovar, Hrtkovci and Kovin are characterised by double foil pendants, various LT D1 fibulae and necklace or chain finials. Two of them (Židovar and Kovin) are even more closely connected by saddle-shaped finger rings and folding razors. All these precious objects testify to the existence of important local silversmith workshops in the Scordisci territory. The distribution of these distinctive jewellery pieces can be traced far afield, to the Kapos river valley, with the silver pectoral and the smaller decorated rectangular plate from the Szárazd-Regöly marsh (Fig. 4), and to the west to the Una river valley with the silver anthropomorphic pendant in grave 379 of Jezerine (Fig. 10: 2), as well as to Sisak with a pendant from the Kupa river (Fig. 10: 3).

In figure 11 we have summarised the main objects for the comparison of the "Sremska Mi-

<sup>46</sup> Radimský 1895, 150, fig. 347.

<sup>47</sup> Concerning the workshop producing the precious gold and silver finds from the Szárazd-Regöly marsh, the location in the territory of the Scordisci was already presumed by M. Szabó (1999, 115).

<sup>48</sup> Sladić 2006, 31–35; Jevtić 2006, 105–115.

trovica” grave with the Szárazd-Regöly hoard finds, the Židovar hoard and other corresponding hoards/graves of the period. There is no doubt that all of them correspond to the same period and are to be dated mostly on the end of LT D 1. They can be compared not only thanks to the presence of silver Jarak type fibulae, but also because of the close similarities in the numerous silver objects listed in the legend in figure 11

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
SZÁRAZD-REGÖLY MARSH	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
ŽIDOVAR		•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•		•	•
HRTKOVCIVUKODER		•	•	•	•	•							•	
KOVIN	•			•		•							•	•
„SREM. MITROVICA“	•	•						•	•				•	

Fig.11. The presence of finds in the contemporary hoards/graves with silver jewellery: 1 astragal belts; 2 use of filigree; 3 wavy line with a grain in each loop; 4 gold or silver necklaces; 5 silver tubules with a wavy line; 6 double foil pendants; 7 gold or silver beads or pendants with extensions; 8 loop-in-loop chains; 9 depictions of human heads with twisted wire or a head-band on the forehead; 10 coral/glass inlays; 11 basket-shaped pendants or boxes for valuables; 12 rings/bracelets with overlapped and spirally wrapped ends; 13 amber necklaces; 14 fibulae, typical for the LT D1 forms.

With its rich silver jewellery, composed of a large belt buckle of the Laminci type with a fastening plate depicting a horseman, outstanding spiral bracelets with rams’ heads finials and square strap mounts with Celtic heads, the grave from “Sremska Mitrovica” is an exceptional find. The named objects do not usually appear in female graves of the Scordisci (Fig. 11). However, it is regrettable that presumably only a part of the entire grave group is known to us – we lack the silver Jarak type fibulae and pendants – foil beads, which are so well attested in the hoards of the period. The grave from “Sremska Mitrovica”, together with the noted finds in fig. 11 and others from Sarmia and Banat,<sup>49</sup> confirms the existence of presumably the last generation of important and rich female elites in the Celtic community of the Scordisci.

In the marshes between the villages of Szárazd and Regöly, formerly settled by the Hercuniates

tribe, gold and silver jewellery was found, together with amber necklaces as well as votive offerings of an exclusively female character, with which can also be associated, either in the same period or later, coin hoards of the Kapos Type. The absence of male warrior and personal equipment would speak to an exceptional period of male absence in which the local female population intensively practiced rituals whilst waiting on the successful return of their husbands, brothers and fathers.

In such a scenario, whereby the male members of the tribe may have been largely absent, we can use the historical frame of the confrontations between the Dacian warriors of king Burebistas who, in the period 58 to 44 BC, sought to extend his reign to the west against the Celtic Boii and Tavrisci tribes, also passing through the territory of the Hercuniates. If this possible explanation can be accepted, then these offerings and burials listed in fig. 11 from the territory of the Scordisci could reflect these events and the finds should be dated to the transition from the LTD1 to the LT D2 period, and certainly to the decades before the final Roman conquest.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Guštin, Koledin 2019–2020; Guštin, Stanković-Pešterac 2020.

<sup>50</sup> I would like to thank Dr Dragan Božič for his useful peer review and Dr Andrew Lamb for amending the English text.

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