

A Bronze Ornamented Dagger from Ig from the Early Bronze Age

Translation

Significant prehistoric archaeological finds from the Ljubljansko barje kept in the collections of the National Museum of Slovenia merit special attention. In addition to, e.g., the anthropomorphic vessel,¹ the ornamented bronze triangular dagger or the dagger with a semicircular hilt plate certainly belongs among them.²

Since its discovery in 1876, the bronze dagger has been the subject of lively considerations. In the marshy environment near the village of Studenec (Ger. Brunndorf), the present-day settlement of Ig, it was found by Karel Dežman (Ger. Deschmann), when he excavated the remains of prehistoric pile-dwellings (Fig. 1; 3). It soon found its place in the famous works of Robert Munro³ and Oscar Montelius.⁴ A writer and priest Janez Jalen provided for its literary immortality in the popular trilogy Bobri (Beavers).⁵ In 1985, the dagger was stolen from the museum, but after 33 years Interpol tracked it down at an auction in England. The vast documentation proved that it belonged to the National Museum of Slovenia. In 2018, it was thus returned and is today again on display as part of the permanent exhibition.⁶

Even though the precise circumstances of the find from the Barje are not known,⁷ the expert papers still guess about them. The roughly adopted thesis says that the dagger was found lying in the marshy environment over the pile-dwelling cultural layer, which led to the conclusion that this is probably a stray marsh find.⁸ Based on this assumption, various interpretations emerged saying that either the item had strayed totally accidentally to the area of the former pile-dwelling settlement – was lost⁹ – or this is a find resulting from well-thought-out ritual

practices in the water or marshy environment,¹⁰ or in the spot of a several centuries abandoned settlement or pile-dwelling settlement.¹¹

On the other hand, those authors who display scepticism towards such explanations and do not completely rule out the possibility that it could be a find which was – perchance completely accidentally – deposited in a settlement are in the minority.¹²

Since the circumstances of the discovery of the bronze dagger from Ig¹³ are very blurred, yet conclusions are still drawn on this basis about the status and from it about the significance, it seems sensible to evaluate anew and, above all, critically those sources which directly or indirectly lift the veil of mystery about the time, place, and wider context of the discovery and present potential new findings, which is the content of this contribution.

DAGGER

The dagger with a semicircular hilt plate from Ig is 20.6 cm long (Fig. 2). It is the widest, 5.8 cm, at the hilt plate, which is semicircular in shape and has six rivets. It arches slightly at the transition into the blade of rhombic cross-section. The ornament of incised lines, hanging triangles, and semicircles continues from the hilt plate to the blade. According to the metal analysis (SAM), it is made of bronze in which copper, with more than 81%, and tin, with slightly less than 9%,

¹ Velušček 2007.

² See Ložar 1943, 71–75; Gabrovec 1971, 88; Vuga 1982, Fig. 14; Pavlin 2007, 19; Šinkovec 1995, 99; 1996, 142.

³ *The Lake-Dwellings of Europe* from 1890 (after Montelius 1900, 233).

⁴ Montelius 1900, 128–131, Fig. 318; 1903, Fig. 85.

⁵ Jalen 1964, 53–54.

⁶ P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 177; P. Turk 2020, 104.

⁷ E.g. Gabrovec 1971, 88.

⁸ E.g. Šinkovec 1995, 99; Gaspari 2002, 39; 2004, 41; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 177, 183; P. Turk 2020, 104.

⁹ Pavlin 2007; cf. Vuga 1982; Šinkovec 1996, 125, 161–162.

¹⁰ E.g. Šinkovec 1996; Teržan 1996; Gaspari 2004, 41; Pavlin 2007, 19; P. Turk 2007, 215; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 183; cf. Gabrovec 1983, 40; Dular 1987, 84.

¹¹ E.g. Vuga 1982, 20–21; Gaspari 2014, 74; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 172.

¹² Korošec 1955, 266; Velušček 2008, 35; cf. Dular 1999, 84.

¹³ The simple formulation ‘a dagger from Ig’ is used according to Gabrovec (1971, 88) and other authors (e.g. Šinkovec 1996, 142; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 177), even though the dagger was actually found in the marshy land north of the settlement of Ig.

prevail. Somewhat less tin (~8%) was found in the analysed rivet.¹⁴

Stane Gabrovec¹⁵ dates the bronze find to the end of the Early Bronze Age, into the BA A2 stage, which more or less matches the opinion of other researchers.¹⁶ A slightly wider dating from BA A2 to B1 stages (17th–16th century BC) is suggested in the expert articles by Peter Turk.¹⁷

The dagger was discovered in 1876 in the area of the IInd (Dežman's) pile-dwelling (Fig. 3). A shorter report from the second excavation season lasting from July to October 1876 testifies to this fact¹⁸: *'Bronzeobjecte¹⁹ sind bisher sehr spärlich vorgekommen. In Ganzen wurden deren nur 12 Stück gefunden: ... e) ein 20 Cm. Langer, mit beiderseitiger Ciselirung in Strichen, Parallellinien und Halbkreisen schön verzierter Dolch mit 6 anstehenden Nietten zur Befestigung an die Handhabe, unstreitig das schönste Kunstobject der bisherigen Funde;...'*²⁰

The so-called IInd pile-dwelling settlement was excavated by Dežman in 1876 and later again in 1877 (Fig. 3). He marked it as the main pile-dwelling (in the original *der Hauptpfahlbau*).²¹ It probably acquired its adjective due to rich finds and a larger number of stilts which were thicker and more densely set.

Certain authors believe that there are no data connected to the discovery of the ornamented dagger,²² or that the find was discovered in settlement 2, but without the accompanying pottery material.²³ Others cite very important stratigraphic data but which differ from one another. According to one interpretation, the dagger was supposedly found without other objects approximately 1m

above settlement finds.²⁴ According to another,²⁵ which also places the dagger above the Eneolithic cultural layer and for which it is immediately clear that it is only conjecture, its stratigraphic position is comparable to the position of the bronze short sword half a metre above the pile-dwelling settlement remains, dated most probably to the beginning of the Urnfield culture,²⁶ which was discovered in 1875 at the Ist pile-dwelling in Ig (Fig. 3).²⁷

Eduard von Sacken, who was the first to publish the tanged sword,²⁸ states for the metal finds from the Ist pile-dwelling,²⁹ among which, in addition to the sword, the copper³⁰ dagger,³¹ a whole bronze pin with a profiled biconical head (Fig. 3)³², and a fragmented bronze pin with a trumpet-shaped terminal (Fig. 3: 5)³³, are also deemed interesting, that metal finds together with other pile-dwelling remains originate from a unified layer under the peat and are thus important for determining the age of the settlement.³⁴

²⁴ Šinkovec 1995, 99; Pavlin 2007, 19; cf. Gaspari 2004, 41.

²⁵ See P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 177, 183; P. Turk 2020, 104.

²⁶ For the dating of the short sword cf. Dular 1974, 15; Gabrovec 1983, 46; Harding 1995, 30; Šinkovec 1995, 103–104; P. Turk 2007, 215; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 183, Fig. 230.

²⁷ Deschmann 1875, 280.

²⁸ Sacken 1876, 29, Pl. 1: 21.

²⁹ Metal objects found in 1875 during the excavation of the so-called Ist pile-dwelling are listed by Dežman: *'ein gut erhaltenes dolchartiges Schwert in der bekannten Schilfform, ein roh gearbeitetes an der Rändern gehämmertes, wahrscheinlich durch Umguss von Bronze hervorgebrachtes Messer, eine ganze mit einem Knopf versehene, eine abgebrochene Haarnadel...'* (Deschmann 1875, 280), which are later adopted and supplemented by other authors, e.g. Sacken 1876, 28–29, Pl. 1: 21–23 and Vuga 1980a, 201, 206, Fig. 1: 17; 2: 5, who are also the first to publish the finds from the Bronze and Iron Ages.

³⁰ *'... von kupferreicherer Legirung als die ersteren'* (Sacken 1876, 29; cf. Korošec 1955, 257).

³¹ Sacken 1876, 29, Pl. 1: 23. Rajko Ložar (1943, 66–71) rendered this and other comparable finds as daggers, which was then established in the modern sources (e.g. Korošec 1955, 257; Dimitrijević 1979, 321). However, it is true that ever since its discovery, different interpretations have occurred which, according to the interpretation, completely change the function and meaning of the find (a few examples: Deschmann 1875, 280: knife; Sacken 1876, 29: knife or dagger; Müllner 1879, 141: spear point; Ložar 1943, 66–71: dagger; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 156, Fig. 198: spear point or dagger).

³² Sacken 1876, 29, Pl. 1: 22.

³³ Sacken 1876, 29; Vuga 1980a, 201, footnote 6, Fig. 2: 5.

³⁴ Sacken 1876, 28.

¹⁴ Šinkovec 1995, 99; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 177; P. Turk 2020, 104.

¹⁵ Gabrovec 1983, 31–32.

¹⁶ E.g. Hänsel 1968, 36, 43; Šinkovec 1995, 99; 1996, 142; Pavlin 2006; P. Turk 2007.

¹⁷ P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 177; P. Turk 2020, 104.

¹⁸ Kos 1978, 53.

¹⁹ It can be discerned from the entirety of Dežman's text that his expression *'Bronzeobjecte'* marks all metal finds, both copper and bronze, from the first two excavation years (Deschmann 1876, 474–475; cf. Deschmann 1875, 280; for the commentary about the denomination of the metal see Korošec 1955, 257).

²⁰ Deschmann 1876, 474.

²¹ Deschmann 1878, 4; Leghissa 2021, 12. For remarks on the location of the main pile-dwelling see Ložar 1942, 89.

²² Ložar 1943, 67; Gabrovec 1971, 88.

²³ Gabrovec 1983, 31.

Alfons Müllner, to whom Turk apparently refers,³⁵ cites the data about the find of a short sword that it was found *‘einen halben Meter höher im Moore, als die Kupfer- und Knochengeräthe’*.³⁶ It is interesting that a detailed clarification of the circumstances is presented solely for the tanged sword, since on the same page where he describes both the sword and the ornamented dagger with the hilt plate, Müllner³⁷ does not provide the equivalent or comparable stratigraphic data for the dagger. Hence, it is interesting that he introduces the prominent bronze objects into the text with the following words: *‘Auch unser Pfahlbau lieferte bisher ein paar Fundstücke aus Bronze, zwar merkwürdigerweise sind beide Waffen’*,³⁸ the chronological significance of which becomes clearer on the level of the entire chapter, in which he does not distinguish the bronze items from general finds from the pile-dwelling settlement.³⁹

Dežman thinks similarly, yet chronologically and developmentally differently. Based on the finds from the same research area which are made of different materials (stone, copper, and bronze) and due to a great number of bones and kitchen remains, he concludes that this is the proof of the several centuries long lifetime of the pile-dwelling.⁴⁰ He explains artefacts made of different raw materials developmentally: in the beginning, the use of stone prevailed, then there was copper,⁴¹ followed by bronze and iron, and, as he emphasises, the latter was not found at the pile-dwelling.⁴²

It appears important that Walter Šmid (also Schmid)⁴³ highlighted that there is no patina on the metal finds from pile-dwellings near Studenec. Sacken⁴⁴ and Dežman⁴⁵ before him noticed the same. If Sacken writes about artefacts and pro-

cesses unfolding *‘besonders unter Torf’*,⁴⁶ Šmid⁴⁷ offers the explanation for this phenomenon that the absence of patina is the consequence of the effects of humic acid, which is found primarily in peat.⁴⁸ This allows for the conclusion that he mistakenly places all pile-dwelling finds, including those made of copper and bronze, into the peat layer without exceptions.⁴⁹ Since we know that near Ig the latter stratigraphically covers the layer with pile-dwelling finds and is therefore chronologically younger,⁵⁰ the origin of thinking that the dagger was found in peat, approximately 1m above the cultural layer, could be sought in the partly adjusted understanding of stratigraphic relationships.⁵¹

Litzen pottery and dagger

In recent years, the belief that in 1876 Dežman was researching the area in the marshy land north of the Ig settlement, including the area east of Partovski jarek 1, which was recently graphically nicely illustrated by Elena Leghissa⁵² and which is recognised as the central part of the location of the IInd pile-dwelling (Fig. 3), has become fully established.

Even more solidly anchored is the thesis that the majority of finds from the area of the IInd pile-dwelling belong approximately to the mid-3rd millennium BC.⁵³ Exceptions, which are significantly younger, are few. Among them,⁵⁴ in addition to the triangular dagger, we can include the pottery fragments with the so-called Litzen

³⁵ P. Turk, M. Turk 2019; P. Turk 2020.

³⁶ Müllner 1879, 147.

³⁷ Müllner 1879, 147.

³⁸ Müllner 1879, 147.

³⁹ See Müllner 1879, 136–154.

⁴⁰ Deschmann 1876, 484.

⁴¹ *‘In den meisten dieser Werkzeuge spricht sich der Uebergang aus der Stein- in die Bronzezeit aus, namentlich repräsentieren die Objecte a c d h (copper finds are enumerated; the author’s note) sozusagen die ersten Anfänge in der Bearbeitung des Metalls’* (Deschmann 1876, 474).

⁴² Deschmann 1876, 474.

⁴³ Šmid 1909, 118.

⁴⁴ Sacken 1876, 29.

⁴⁵ Deschmann 1876, 475; 1878, 7.

⁴⁶ Sacken 1876, 29.

⁴⁷ *‘An den Bronzeobjekten von Brunnendorf hat sich keine Patina angelegt, da die im Moorboden vorhandene Humussäure die Patinabildung verhindert hat’* (Šmid 1909, 118).

⁴⁸ Tancik 1965, 67; Kroflič 2007, 7; De Melo et al. 2016, 967–968.

⁴⁹ Cf. Schmid 1910, 93a.

⁵⁰ E.g. Ložar 1942, 86.

⁵¹ E.g. Šinkovec 1995, 99; Gaspari 2002, 39; Pavlin 2007, 19.

⁵² Leghissa 2015, Fig. 1; 2021, Fig. 1; cf. Bregant 1964–1965, 180; Harej 1974, 76; Vuga 1982, 7; Velušček 1997, 20.

⁵³ See Leghissa 2017a; 2017b; 2021.

⁵⁴ These do not include cups (Leghissa 2017b, Pl. 127: 1–3), which are attributed to the influence of the Ůnětice culture (e.g. Gabrovec 1983, 33–34, Fig. 1: 7), since they are, as shown by Elena Leghissa (2017a, 188–189), undoubtedly much older.

decoration,⁵⁵ the general consensus on which was that it lacked known findspot data.⁵⁶ That this is not entirely true is revealed by the findings of the research performed by Elena Leghissa, who finds that all pottery found in 1876 and 1877 and ornamented with cord impressions (in the original *schnurförmige Eindrücke*)⁵⁷ can be attributed to the IInd pile-dwelling, to which three fragments of vessels with Litzen decoration also belong. As an additional argument, they all display the mark X, which is presumed to mostly denote vessels found in 1877 and in all probability originating from the IInd pile-dwelling.⁵⁸ The thesis is supported by a smaller pottery fragment on which a motif of a strap is less carefully made ‘with the technique of the wrapped-around cord’ (Fig. 4),⁵⁹ which was collected as a surface find in 1970 in the area of the IInd pile-dwelling site along Partovski jarek 1 (Fig. 3).⁶⁰

At an archaeological site, the presence of pottery is usually considered an indicator of the existence of either a settlement⁶¹ or a cemetery (grave), which generally cannot be expected on a marshland⁶² approx. 450 m from the edge of the dryland fan. If we also consider the explanations about the occurrence of pottery finds in individual sections of the Ljubljana (Fig. 1),⁶³ we cannot be far from the idea that fragments from the surroundings of Ig can be discussed as stray

marsh finds and explained as the consequence of ‘a different, unusual activity of Bronze Age people at long-abandoned places’.⁶⁴ We cannot forget that the well-known grave from Vrhnika (Fig. 1), from which pottery vessels are also known,⁶⁵ is supposed to be a depot or it is unlikely that these are simultaneously deposited finds.⁶⁶

Hence, when searching for the status of the dagger, it is the finds of pottery with Litzen decoration that are very important. It seems that they have not yet revealed everything they could. Thus, they are worthy of more detailed study.

It is Leghissa⁶⁷ who has been dealing with them the most of late, and it was she who presented the pottery from Dežman’s excavations from the National Museum of Slovenia for the first time with quality drawings. Furthermore, she showed experimentally that the Litzen decoration was supposed to be made with impressions of twisted double cord.⁶⁸

Leghissa recognised the use of the ornamental technique of impressing double twisted cord on four pottery fragments.⁶⁹ She found very convincing analogies for the bi-handled vessel⁷⁰ originating from the Ist pile-dwelling site⁷¹ in the culture of Corded Ware pottery,⁷² which then excludes it from further discussion within the Early Bronze Age issue.

The situation is different with the rest of the fragments, which are indeed discussed differently but they all most probably originate from the IInd pile-dwelling site. Paola Korošec⁷³, within the cluster of pottery with ‘Litzen ornamentation’, mentions three fragments from Ig, and Gabrovec⁷⁴ only two. Janez Dular⁷⁵ believes that ‘Von der Litzenkeramik von Ljubljansko barje sind nur einige Stücke bekannt’, yet he publishes the same two fragments from the area of Ig as Gabrovec.

⁵⁵ E.g. Korošec 1957, Pl. 1: 1–3; Korošec, Korošec 1969, Pl. 7: 10a,b; 54: 14; 55: 11; 56: 6; 118: 7; 119: 3; Gabrovec 1983, Pl. 1: 1–2; Dular 1999, Fig. 2: 2–3; Leghissa 2017b, Pl. 43: 5; 128: 1–2; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, Fig. 215.

⁵⁶ E.g. Gabrovec 1983, 24–25; Dular 1999, 84.

⁵⁷ After Leghissa 2021, 12; see also Deschmann 1876, 478; 1878, 4.

⁵⁸ Leghissa 2017a, 58–61, 78–79; 2017b, 43, 128, Pl. 43: 5; 128: 1,2; cf. Leghissa 2021, 12.

⁵⁹ From the drawing of the artefact, we conclude that the ornament is made by impressing a twisted cord (Harej 1974, Pl. 6: 8; cf. Črešnar 2010, Fig. 2: D). Simultaneously, we warn about the very questionable orientation of the drawing of the approx. 3 cm big fragment, on which the band with impressions runs horizontally, while the cord impressions are directed to the right.

⁶⁰ Harej 1974, 76, 89, Pl. 6: 8.

⁶¹ Cf. Gabrovec 1983, 24.

⁶² In the area of the IInd pile-dwelling site there was definitely a succession of the lacustrine ecosystem, where, due to the deposition of particles and sedimentation of a part of its own organic production, the march and peat bog started growing (see e.g. Kroflič 2007; Achino 2022, 8–12).

⁶³ See e.g. Gaspari 2012, 181–185, Pl. 1: 3–7; 2: 8,10–12; Erjavac, Gaspari 2012, 269–277, Pl. 1–3; Istenič 2019, 223–229.

⁶⁴ P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 172.

⁶⁵ Gabrovec 1983, Pl. 2: 1–4.

⁶⁶ P. Turk 2007, 215–216; Škvor Jernejčič 2020, 479–480.

⁶⁷ Leghissa 2015; 2017a; 2017b.

⁶⁸ Leghissa 2015, 291; cf. Kruh 2019, 47–49.

⁶⁹ Leghissa 2017a, 85; 2017b, Pl. 43: 5; 65: 1; 128: 1–2; cf. Korošec, Korošec 1969, Pl. 7: 10a,b; 54: 14; 55: 11; 56: 6.

⁷⁰ Leghissa 2015, Fig. 1: 10; Korošec, Korošec 1969, Pl. 7: 10a,b.

⁷¹ Sacken 1876, Taf. 2: 1; Leghissa 2017a, 125.

⁷² Leghissa 2017a, 125–128.

⁷³ Korošec 1957, Pl. 1: 1–3.

⁷⁴ Gabrovec 1983, Pl. 1: 1–2; cf. Korošec, Korošec 1969, Pl. 54: 14; 55: 11.

⁷⁵ Dular 1999, 84, Fig. 2: 2–3.

Leghissa⁷⁶ assigns two fragments into the Early Bronze Age. For the fragment she believes to be a two-handled globular vessel with a funnel-shaped neck,⁷⁷ she finds analogies in the Eneolithic culture of Corded Ware pottery. In general, from the set of pottery finds from the IInd pile-dwelling site, she recognises elements connected to the tradition of the cultures of Corded Ware and Globular Amphora, but only in the forms of the above-mentioned vessels and in the position of the decoration on part of the shoulder, and not in the execution of the corded ornament, since the decoration of impressing cord coiled on a flat object distinctly prevails at this pile-dwelling site.⁷⁸

Ana Kruh is of a different opinion. She believes that the ornament on the mentioned fragment was made by impressing a thicker cord, in which imprints are directed to the left, and that is why she assigns the vessel to the Kisapostag culture, in its earlier regional horizon of Nova tabla I.⁷⁹

In fact, the presence of finds from the Kisapostag culture at the Ljubljansko barje is stressed for the first time at Mali Otavnik (*Fig. 1*).⁸⁰ While the site of Blatna Brezovica-Zornica (*Fig. 1*) is assigned to its earlier horizon,⁸¹ Mali Otavnik, based on the larger number of finds, can assume a more intensive settlement in the later horizon of Nova tabla II.⁸² Furthermore, within the later horizon of finds from Mali Otavnik, an ornament made in the manner of Litzen pottery by imprinting a double coiled cord on dishes of similar forms as are known in the Kisapostag culture,⁸³ which indicates the introduction of novelties in the making of the ornament which later becomes characteristic for the Litzen pottery.⁸⁴

For the Ljubljansko barje, coarse pottery with brushed or/and combed⁸⁵ ornament that can

primarily be found on pots with a funnel-shaped neck is characteristic for the early period of the Bronze Age settlement. Here, we will only mention the pots from the sites of Mali Otavnik⁸⁶ and Blatna Brezovica-Zornica.⁸⁷

Prior to the discovery of Mali Otavnik in 2006,⁸⁸ the most noted pieces of Litzen pottery were a bowl fragment from Ig⁸⁹ and mainly a bowl from Notranje Gorice (*Fig. 1*).⁹⁰ For them, there is no doubt that they belong to the earlier part of the Bronze Age.⁹¹

Ana Kruh⁹², hesitantly due to the poorer illustrativeness of the preserved piece, assigns the fragment from Ig to the S1 type of bowls. The fact that they belong to this type of bowls is the decisive fact that on the apparently funnel-shaped neck⁹³ there are two bands in the shape of an undulating line made by imprinting a double coiled cord, which is typical for the Litzen pottery, both in the execution of the ornament and the motif.⁹⁴ The motif of an undulating line or a zigzag⁹⁵ frequently appears on the vessels from Prekmurje, in Styria, Dolenjska, and in the northern part of the Croatian territory between the Sava and the Drava. It is connected with individual identically ornamented pottery vessels discovered in the area of Transdanubia and Slavonija, of which the same can be said for the vessel from Ig.

Ana Kruh⁹⁶ assigns the bowl from Notranje Gorice to the S2 type, for which conical vessels with a funnel-shaped, everted, possibly slightly arched neck and a flat bottom are characteristic. Their typical feature is a band-shaped handle connecting the shoulder with the middle of the neck. The vessel's neck is ornamented with, most frequently, three but possibly also four horizontal bands made of parallel cord imprints. One or

⁷⁶ Leghissa 2017a, 86.

⁷⁷ Leghissa 2017a, 86, 128–130; 2017b, Pl. 43: 5; see also Gabrovec 1983, Pl. 1: 2; Dular 1999, Fig. 2: 3.

⁷⁸ After Leghissa 2017a, 266–267; 2021, 15, 17.

⁷⁹ Kruh 2019, 187.

⁸⁰ Črešnar 2010.

⁸¹ Kruh 2019, 184–188.

⁸² Kruh 2019, 189–213.

⁸³ Matija Črešnar (2010, 133) calls three bowls globular bowls and is of the opposite opinion from Andrej Gaspari and Ana Kruh (see Gaspari 2008, 62, Pl. 2: 3,4; 12: 1; Kruh 2019, 215, Fig. 57). In his opinion, the ornament is made in the Kisapostag culture manner, while the vessels shape is from the circle of the Litzen pottery.

⁸⁴ Kruh 2019, 215.

⁸⁵ Since there is much inconsistency in sources regarding the use of the terms *brushing* and *combing*, and since

they are often interchanged, while in general both methods appear on pottery from the same sites (e.g. Harej 1976, 95; 1981–1982, 44; 1986, 100; Kruh 2019, 159, 193, 195; Leghissa 2021, 12), they are not distinguished in meaning in this article.

⁸⁶ Gaspari 2008, e.g. Pl. 4: 1–5; 5: 1–4,6–8; 6: 1–4; 7: 1–4.

⁸⁷ Dirjec 1991, e.g. Pl. 1: 1; 2: 1,2; 3: 1–4.

⁸⁸ Gaspari 2008.

⁸⁹ E.g. Dular 1999, Fig. 2: 2.

⁹⁰ E.g. Dular 1999, Fig. 2: 1.

⁹¹ E.g. Gabrovec 1983, 26; Dular 1999, 84.

⁹² Kruh 2019, 38, Fig. 16: 10.

⁹³ Cf. drawings of the find in Dular 1999, Fig. 2: 2, and Leghissa 2017b, Pl. 128: 1.

⁹⁴ Kruh 2019, 49.

⁹⁵ After Kruh 2019, 49, 50.

⁹⁶ Kruh 2019, 38.

more vertical bands can frequently also be found on the handle. The peculiarity of the bowl from Notranje Gorice is a tiny handle or a horizontally perforated knob at the transition from the neck to the shoulder on the bowl, which is defined as a typical element of the S1 type of bowls. Bowls of S2 type⁹⁷ are present at sites in Lower Austria, Burgenland, and Slavonija. Individual vessels are also found in Transdanubia, central Bosnia, and also at the Ljubljansko barje.

Important and nearby analogies for the Litzen decoration in finds from the Ljubljansko barje are found at the site of Loke 2 near Družinska vas, where both the motif of the undulating line and of parallel bands appear.⁹⁸ The site is also interesting due to the fact that among the Litzen pottery, the most frequently represented are bowls of S1 type. They appear in the same settlement pits, hence probably in simultaneous contexts where among pottery material the biggest share belongs to pots with a funnel-shaped neck, while the surface of these vessels is mainly ornamented with combing. Even though Ana Kruh⁹⁹ finds the most analogies for the Litzen pottery from Loke 2 primarily in the north-east of Slovenia, she nevertheless finds that there are differences between the areas in the type of coarse pottery, which poses the question of the existence of regional differences within the circle of the Litzen pottery. Coarse pottery with the brushed or combed decoration is known also from the area of pile-dwelling sites near Ig¹⁰⁰ and Notranje Gorice¹⁰¹ and from the Ljubljana around the mouth of the Zornica (Fig. 1), which are discussed as stray water finds.¹⁰²

Most of it supposedly originated from the IInd pile-dwelling site.¹⁰³ Zorko Harej¹⁰⁴ believes that among the material from Partovski kanal/jarek (Eng. ditch) I (or from the IInd pile-dwelling) '*this technique is quite numerous and thus the possibility should be considered that Dežman did not collect this type of pottery*'. Within Dežman's excavations the habit of discarding pottery of lesser quality, naturally by the standards of the late 19th century,

was brought to attention by Tatjana Bregant¹⁰⁵ with the discovery of pottery finds in the secondary position, which is summarised and appended with new findings by other authors.¹⁰⁶

It is fairly frequently also found at the Parte site (Fig. 3),¹⁰⁷ but where the combed or brushed ornamentation appears on pots with a high cylindrical neck,¹⁰⁸ which in form and chronology sets them along the pots with barbotine from the mid-3rd millennium.¹⁰⁹

The situation is completely different with a smaller pot with a funnel-shaped neck from the area of the IInd pile-dwelling site, the entire surface of which is decorated with brushing or combed ornament in bands that are especially distinctive on the neck.¹¹⁰ Analogies for it can be found in another similarly decorated but bigger pot, supposedly also from the IInd pile-dwelling near Ig¹¹¹ and also at Mali Otavnik,¹¹² in the Ljubljana near the mouth of the Zornica,¹¹³ and in Loke 2 near Družinska vas.¹¹⁴

As mentioned, the pottery with brushed (or combed) decoration can also be found at the pile-dwelling site at Notranje Gorice,¹¹⁵ where the first excavations were made in 1907 and 1908.¹¹⁶ Similarly as in the case of some pile-dwelling near Ig,¹¹⁷ the area of the site was populated more than once: for the first time in the 4th millennium BC¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁵ Bregant 1964–1965, 180–181.

¹⁰⁶ E.g. Harej 1974, 76; 1976, 95; Leghissa 2017a, 56–57.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Harej 1981–1982, 44.

¹⁰⁸ E.g. Harej 1978, Pl. 6: 1; 1987, Pl. 9: 2.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Parte: Harej 1981–1982, Pl. 29: 1; 1987, Pl. 11: 1; Založnica: Velušček, Čufar 2003, Pl. 1: 1; 6: 8; 12: 7.

¹¹⁰ Harej 1986, 62, Pl. 8: 2.

¹¹¹ Korošec, Korošec 1969, Pl. 65: 8, or Leghissa 2017b, Pl. 74: 1. The pot fragment carries inv. no. B1778 and lacks all other marks that generally appear on several fragments from Dežman's excavations near Ig. Among them are fragments with inv. Nos. around B1778, which are all decorated by combing (see Leghissa 2017b, Pl. 73: 1,2,5; 74: 2–6), indicating that this fragment is also probably from the same pile-dwelling site (cf. Leghissa 2017a, 58–61).

¹¹² E.g. Gaspari 2008, Pl. 4: 6.

¹¹³ Gaspari 2012, Fig. 9: 5; Pl. 1: 5.

¹¹⁴ Kruh 2019, Fig. 32: 15.

¹¹⁵ Years ago, the set of finds from the 4th millennium was joined by a pot with a funnel-shaped neck and combed decoration (Velušček (ed.) 2004, 228; in Harej 1976, Pl. 1: 4), which could probably be assigned to the Early Bronze Age (cf. Gaspari 2008, Pl. 6: 1; 7: 4), which is also defended by Ana Kruh (2019, 184).

¹¹⁶ Schmid 1910.

¹¹⁷ E.g. Velušček, Čufar, Levanič 2000.

¹¹⁸ E.g. Parzinger 1984; Velušček (ed.) 2004, 225–228.

⁹⁷ After Kruh 2019, 40, 42.

⁹⁸ See Kruh 2019, Fig. 32: 1–3,5–8.

⁹⁹ Kruh 2019, 158–159, 210, 218, Fig. 32: 1–3.

¹⁰⁰ E.g. Harej 1974, Pl. 6: 7; 1978, Pl. 4: 10; 6: 1; 1981–1982, 44, Pl. 15: 8; 25: 2; 31: 3,4; 1987, Pl. 9: 2,5,6,8,9.

¹⁰¹ E.g. Korošec 1957, Pl. 6: 1,2.

¹⁰² See Dolenc 1982, Pl. 11: 206; Gaspari 2012, Pl. 1: 5.

¹⁰³ Harej 1986, 62, Fn. 560; Leghissa 2021, 12.

¹⁰⁴ Harej 1986, 62, 150, Fn. 560.

and for the second, as revealed by rare pottery finds, most probably at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC.¹¹⁹

Among Bronze Age pottery finds from Notranje Gorice, Paola Korošec sees similarity of form between two pots with a funnel-shaped neck and combed ornament¹²⁰ and a bowl with Litzen decoration.¹²¹ Harej¹²² believes that these pots are one vessel with the best analogies in a pot from the IInd pile-dwelling.¹²³ Ana Kruh¹²⁴ assigns the two pots from Notranje Gorice into the earlier regional horizon of the Kisapostag culture.

At Notranje Gorice, there is supposed to be little brushed (or combed) pottery.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, horizontally-stratigraphically the fragment with brushed ornament that was found outside the narrow area of the pile-dwelling site is still interesting,¹²⁶ which could point to only partial overlapping of settlement areas of the 4th and 2nd millennium BC.¹²⁷ As an intriguing fact, it was found alongside a cup with a conical handle.¹²⁸ Its analogies were found along the sites from the Early to the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age in northern Italy.¹²⁹ Robert Erjavec is of a similar opinion on, at first glance, a comparable cup with a band-shaped handle from the Ljubljana at the mouth of the Borovniščica, which is thus dated to the Bronzo Antico 2–Bronzo Medio 1 stage.¹³⁰

Ana Kruh, as mentioned before, divided the Kisapostag culture in Slovenia into two horizons: Nova tabla I and II. The earlier horizon lasted approximately from 2200 to 2000 BC,¹³¹ while the later one from approx. 2000 to 1750 BC.¹³² The Early Bronze Age sites, such as Ig, which is shorter for the area of the IInd pile-dwelling, Blatna Brezovica-Zornica, Mali Otavnik, Bevke-Zalohe (Fig. 1), and Notranje Gorice, she assigned into horizon Nova tabla I.¹³³ However, she found analo-

gies for the majority of pottery finds from Mali Otavnik in the later horizon of Nova tabla II.¹³⁴

In both horizons, pots with a funnel-shaped neck are frequent and at the Ljubljansko barje are known from the sites of Blatna Brezovica-Zornica, Mali Otavnik, and Notranje Gorice.¹³⁵ In the earlier horizon, the pots are generally decorated with irregular brushing, in some vessels the entire exterior surface is brushed.¹³⁶ Within the later horizon, the ornament on the pots from Mali Otavnik was similar, since it is mostly made in such a way that the surface of the vessel was pulled over in all directions with a brush or a tool similar to a comb.¹³⁷ In at least one example, bands of incisions appear over the entire vessel, where it seems that they are more arranged or set vertically on the funnel-shaped neck.¹³⁸ Analogies for such a decoration are found at the IInd pile-dwelling near Ig,¹³⁹ on the vessel from the Ljubljana¹⁴⁰, and in Loke 2.¹⁴¹ It also appears in Prekmurje, where bands are made along the entire exterior surface in a smaller number of vessels, although they are more regular.¹⁴² Such organised decoration is also found in Loke 2.¹⁴³

In addition to several variants of pots with a funnel-shaped neck, Ana Kruh¹⁴⁴ also places into the earlier horizon semi-globular deep bowls which can be decorated with horizontal impressions of a coiled cord under the rim and are known from Blatna Brezovica-Zornica.¹⁴⁵ A smaller undecorated bowl with analogies in northeastern Slovenia was also found at this site.¹⁴⁶ She also assigns a vessel supposedly decorated by imprinting a thicker cord under the rim from the IInd pile-dwelling near Ig into the earlier horizon¹⁴⁷ and probably also the small jug from Mali Otavnik the neck of which is decorated by impressing a coiled cord.¹⁴⁸

¹¹⁹ E.g. Gabrovec 1983, 26.

¹²⁰ Korošec 1957, 16, Pl. 6: 1,2; Harej 1976, Pl. 1: 4.

¹²¹ E.g. Harej 1976, Pl. 1: 1.

¹²² Harej 1986, 100, footnote 975, Pl. 15: 2.

¹²³ See Harej 1986, Pl. 8: 2.

¹²⁴ Kruh 2019, 184.

¹²⁵ Harej 1976, 95.

¹²⁶ Harej 1980, 85, 87–88, Pl. 1: 3.

¹²⁷ Cf. Gabrovec 1983, 26.

¹²⁸ Harej 1980, 87–88, Pl. 1: 2.

¹²⁹ Perini 1994, Fig. 19; Bermond Montanari et al. 1996, 57–62, Fig. 3: 21,38.

¹³⁰ Erjavec, Gaspari 2012, 274, Pl. 1: 4.

¹³¹ Kruh 2019, 187–188.

¹³² Kruh 2019, 211–213.

¹³³ Kruh 2019, 184–188.

¹³⁴ Kruh 2019, 194–195, 200–202.

¹³⁵ After Kruh 2019, 184, 194–196.

¹³⁶ Kruh 2019, 184.

¹³⁷ After Kruh 2019, 195.

¹³⁸ Gaspari 2008, Pl. 4: 6; see also Kruh 2019, 195.

¹³⁹ See Korošec, Korošec 1969, Pl. 65: 8, or Leghissa 2017b, Pl. 74: 1; Harej 1986, Pl. 8: 2.

¹⁴⁰ Gaspari 2012, Pl. 1: 5.

¹⁴¹ Kruh 2019, Fig. 32: 15.

¹⁴² Kruh 2019, 194–195, Fig. 45; see e.g. Guštin et al. 2017, Fig. G231, G395, G396, G417–G419, G422, G440, G441, G509.

¹⁴³ See Kruh 2019, Fig. 32: 13,14.

¹⁴⁴ Kruh 2019, 186–187.

¹⁴⁵ See Dirjec 1991, Pl. 5: 6,8,10.

¹⁴⁶ Dirjec 1991, Pl. 5: 9.

¹⁴⁷ See e.g. Dular 1999, Fig. 2: 3.

¹⁴⁸ Gaspari 2008, 66, Pl. 2: 1; after Kruh 2019, 215.

As mentioned, according to Ana Kruh¹⁴⁹ the finds from the younger horizon of Nova tabla II are known only from Mali Otavnik. We have already mentioned pots with a funnel-shaped neck. This horizon also includes biconical bowls with a funnel-shaped neck and cord ornament,¹⁵⁰ on which characteristics of two cultural groups can be recognised: Kisapostag in shape and Litzen pottery in ornament.¹⁵¹ Semi-globular or conical bowls with a short funnel-shaped neck are also present.¹⁵²

Along with these vessels, in Notranje Gorice¹⁵³ and in the area of the IInd pile-dwelling near Ig¹⁵⁴ we also find typical Litzen pottery that cannot be assigned to the Kisapostag culture. Since, according to Ana Kruh,¹⁵⁵ it appears on the sites of the older horizon of Nova tabla I, the question of what that means remains.

If we follow Matija Črešnar and Biba Teržan,¹⁵⁶ *'the transition from the Kisapostag to the Litzen pottery horizon should be sought towards the end of the 19th century BC. It should be also noted, however, that their interrelationship could not yet be clearly defined. It could be that the Litzen pottery has only been a derivation of the second phase of the Kisapostag horizon and its characteristic pottery decorated with zigzag and wavy stripes, as well as impressed circles. The end of the Litzen pottery may be sought around the end of the 17th century BC.'*

Kruh¹⁵⁷ assigns finds from the south-eastern Alpine area and the western edge of the Pannonian Basin, in the area of eastern Slovenia, northern Croatia, and the south-eastern part of Austria, into the first group or the earliest regional cultural group or circle of Litzen pottery. It could conditionally¹⁵⁸ also include the area of the Ljubljansko barje, with a single yet typical fragment of a bowl from Ig.

Based on the current state of research, she dates the Litzen pottery of the first group to the BA A2(b-c) stage, whereas she leaves open the possibility of its additional typological-chronological division. Based on radiocarbon dates from sites in Prekmurje, she sets the time span of the appearance

of the Litzen pottery, absolutely chronologically, from the 19th to the mid-17th century BC, with the bottom limit as indicated by the date from the site of Grofovsko 1 possibly moved to the mid-16th century BC.¹⁵⁹

Fine pottery includes smaller and bigger globular jugs with high funnel-shaped neck, bigger pots and oval bowls with the funnel-shaped neck, and semi-globular or conical bowls with the flat rim. Typical for them is a decoration of more than four strings of cord impressions, frequently represented are also the motif of the undulating line and the applique decoration in the shape of oblong or round knobs on the transition from the neck to the shoulder of the vessel.¹⁶⁰

Coarse pottery is undecorated, globular pots with funnel-shaped necks and semi-globular or conical bowls prevail. The absence of decoration, as indicated by finds from the Dolenjska region where pots are ornamented by combing, is apparently regionally conditioned.¹⁶¹ Since the Ljubljansko barje is geographically closer to central Dolenjska, we can assume a similar development also here and was most probably different from the one in Prekmurje.

The second group¹⁶² is also important for our area and is represented by finds from sites south of the Danube in Lower Austria, Burgenland, and north-western Transdanubia. Individual examples of vessels are also found in Salzburg, in Lower Austria along the lower stream of the March River on the other side of the Danube, in flatland parts of present-day south-western Slovakia, and southern Transdanubia, and possibly also in eastern and central Slovenia, at the sites such as Brinjeva gora near Zreče, Notranje Gorice at the Ljubljansko barje, Krtina near Moravče, and even the site of Pod pri Bugojnu in central Bosnia.

In eastern Austria, at the sites of the second group, vessels of similar shapes can be found which are typical for the first group. They can be compared to the pottery from the area of Slovenia, Croatia, and the Austrian part of Styria.¹⁶³

A peculiarity of the second group are bigger jugs with a low funnel-shaped neck.¹⁶⁴ The distinction from the vessels of the first group is

¹⁴⁹ Kruh 2019, 189.

¹⁵⁰ Gaspari 2008, Pl. 2: 3,4; 12: 1.

¹⁵¹ Kruh 2019, 215.

¹⁵² After Kruh 2019, 201, Fig. 51; Gaspari 2008, Pl. 3: 3,4.

¹⁵³ Schmid 1910, Fig. 7.

¹⁵⁴ E.g. Gabrovec 1983, Pl. 1: 1.

¹⁵⁵ See 2019, 184.

¹⁵⁶ Črešnar, Teržan 2014, 675.

¹⁵⁷ Kruh 2019, 218.

¹⁵⁸ Kruh 2019, 163.

¹⁵⁹ Kruh 2019, 219; cf. Teržan, Črešnar, Mušič 2012, 22.

¹⁶⁰ After Kruh 2019, 162.

¹⁶¹ See Kruh 2019, 163–164.

¹⁶² After Kruh 2019, 168.

¹⁶³ After Kruh 2019, 220.

¹⁶⁴ See Kruh 2019, Fig. 34.

mostly in the ornament,¹⁶⁵ where the prevalence of patterns in the shape of horizontal bands on the neck and, above all, decoration on the shoulder is characteristic. Motifs that cannot be found on vessels assigned to the first group also appear, especially the motif of tendrils appearing on the vessel shoulders as decoration in various formative derivatives. Corded decoration in combination with applique one, in the form of round or oblong knobs, on some vessels in the form of applique ribs also frequently appears. Exceptionally, vessels decorated with the wavy motif are also found. A similar motif of horizontal stripes that we know from the bowl from Notranje Gorice,¹⁶⁶ can be found at e.g. the site of Loke 2 from the first group, where in general the wavy motif in combination with one or more horizontal stripes occurs more frequently.¹⁶⁷ A peculiarity of the dish from Barje is a tiny handle or horizontally perforated knob at the transition from the neck to the shoulder, which is defined as characteristic of bowls of S1 type in the first group.¹⁶⁸ Ana Kruh¹⁶⁹ places the second group into the BA B1 stage, with a possible beginning in A2 stage.

Based on the analysis, which to a great extent relies on the study by Ana Kruh,¹⁷⁰ we can conclude that at the Ljubljansko barje we have a varied chronological and cultural/stylistic mix of Early to (Early) Middle Bronze Age pottery finds.

Funnel-shaped pots with combed or brushed decoration are chronologically less sensitive and appear both within the Kisapostag culture, in both its regional variants, and within the Litzen pottery as is revealed by the finds from the Loke 2 site near Družinska vas.¹⁷¹ At the Ljubljansko barje they are found at Mali Otavnik, Blatna Brezovica-Zornica, Bevke-Zaloke,¹⁷² in the Ljubljana near the mouth of the Zornica, Notranje Gorice, and at the IInd pile-dwelling near Ig.

Conical pots with a funnel-shaped neck are most frequent in the younger horizon of Nova tabla II.¹⁷³ Pots with incisions in bands are found at Mali Otavnik, in the Ljubljana near the mouth

of the Zornica, at the IInd pile-dwelling near Ig, in Loke 2, and Prekmurje.

Similar is true for corded decoration. According to one theory, pottery of the Kisapostag culture is ornamented by impressing a whipped cord, while the Litzen decoration was made by impressing a double coiled cord. Plastic appliques are also characteristic for the Litzen pottery, often appearing on the shoulder or transition of the neck into the shoulder of jugs and bowls.¹⁷⁴ On deep bowls from the Blatna Brezovica-Zornica site, an ornament under the rim made by impressing the coiled cord appears,¹⁷⁵ which, according to the analogies for the form of the vessel, could be dated to the Nova tabla I horizon,¹⁷⁶ to which the vessel from the IInd pile-dwelling is also supposed to belong,¹⁷⁷ but which is decorated with impressions of a thicker cord,¹⁷⁸ or, according to an alternative explanation, with impressions of a double coiled cord.¹⁷⁹ In the area of the IInd pile-dwelling, another smaller fragment was found that was also ornamented by impressing a thicker whipped cord (*Fig. 4*). The chronological problem presented here is that the use of the whipped cord (including in the form of a thicker cord) is also documented in the younger horizon of Nova tabla II of the Kisapostag culture, which is at least partly contemporary with the development of the Litzen pottery.¹⁸⁰ It appears that, especially if we are dealing only with small, poorly definable fragments, we cannot debate their cultural belonging with certainty.

The situation is different with the very typical Litzen decoration made in the technique of the double coiled cord, which is the key distinguishing element versus the Kisapostag pottery. It can be found on the vessels from Mali Otavnik, where the form allows a presumption of the attachment to the Kisapostag culture, at the IInd pile-dwelling, and Notranje Gorice, but from where both examples, as mentioned above, undoubtedly belong to the Litzen pottery.

To recap, at the Ljubljansko barje all three horizons or cultural phenomena suggested by Ana Kruh are represented. The sites of Blatna Brezovica-Zornica and Bevke-Zaloke (BA A1) undoubtedly belong to

¹⁶⁵ After Kruh 2019, 167–168.

¹⁶⁶ See e.g. Dular 1999, Fig. 2: 1.

¹⁶⁷ Kruh 2019, 159.

¹⁶⁸ After Kruh 2019, 40.

¹⁶⁹ Kruh 2019, 220.

¹⁷⁰ See Kruh 2019.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Kruh 2019, 210.

¹⁷² Črešnar 2014, 429, Fig. 23.4.5: 3.

¹⁷³ After Kruh 2019, 194.

¹⁷⁴ After Kruh 2019, 214.

¹⁷⁵ See Dirjec 1991, Pl. 5: 6.

¹⁷⁶ After Kruh 2019, 186–187.

¹⁷⁷ E.g. Dular 1999, Fig. 2: 3.

¹⁷⁸ Kruh 2019, 187.

¹⁷⁹ Leghissa 2017b, Pl. 43: 5.

¹⁸⁰ Kruh 2019, 204, 219.

the oldest horizon of Nova tabla I. In this respect, the population of Mali Otavnik seems more diverse. For some vessel forms, analogies can be found in the older horizon. More finds originate from the younger horizon of Nova tabla II of the Kisapostag culture (BA A2).¹⁸¹ Partly contemporary with or even slightly younger may be finds of the culture of Litzen pottery from the IInd pile-dwelling (BA A2(b-c)), while the population in Notranje Gorice was most probably the youngest and can be even set into the BA B1 stage.

Janez Dular believes that population of the Ljubljansko barje at the end of the Early and in the starting portion of the Middle Bronze Age is also indicated by metal finds, such as the triangular dagger from Ig and two swords from Lavrica and the Ljubljana (Fig. 3; 6: 7,9).¹⁸² To these the finds from the Ljubljana published after 2000 need to be added: a short sword (Fig. 6: 12),¹⁸³ a dagger with a trapezoid handguard plate (Fig. 6: 11),¹⁸⁴ three left-handed tanged sickles¹⁸⁵ (Fig. 6: 8,13,14), and a flanged axe (Fig. 6: 10).¹⁸⁶ Since all these objects were not used much,¹⁸⁷ Primož Pavlin¹⁸⁸ assumes from their position and distribution that they were deliberately thrown into the river 'either as a form of prayer before a trip or as an offering of thanks for a safe voyage'. A completely different conclusion can be deduced in the case of the dagger with a hilt plate from the IInd pile-dwelling near Ig, for which it seems that it could be simultaneous with the settlement. Hence, in the case of the dagger it is probably not a stray marsh find¹⁸⁹ but something completely

different, which requires additional clarification or argumentation.

A stray, or a settlement find, that is the question¹⁹⁰

A stray,¹⁹¹ individual,¹⁹² or chance¹⁹³ find, which according to the location of the discovery can be water, marsh, lowland, highland, mountain,¹⁹⁴ or cave,¹⁹⁵ is by definition 'an archaeological object found by chance and with little or no associated archaeological context'.¹⁹⁶ It differs from a settlement,¹⁹⁷ grave, or depot find by its individuality and/or frequently the circumstances of the discovery with the absent or difficult to explain original context.

As mentioned in the introduction, the category of 'stray finds' also includes the triangular dagger from Ig,¹⁹⁸ which is absolutely justified if we exclude the find from the other artefacts from the area of the IInd pile-dwelling, in which in general finds from around the mid-3rd millennium explicitly prevail. As we have shown, they include several pottery fragments that can be dated to the 17th and possibly even 16th century BC, therefore in the time when the dagger was made, used, and most probably also deposited.¹⁹⁹ Finds of Bronze Age pottery certainly indicate the very probable existence of a settlement in the time of the Litzen pottery culture,²⁰⁰ since they are too numerous and diverse for any other sensible explanation. Thus, it seems completely possible that the dagger was deposited or lost in the still alive probably pile-

¹⁸¹ In the opinion of Andrej Gaspari (2008, 75), at Mali Otavnik pričakovati tudi 'a settlement phase from the end of the Early Bronze Age or the Middle Bronze Age, where vessel forms from Bistra indicate intensive connections with the Adriatic coast and its hinterland,' can also be expected; however, from the continuation of the text it can be discerned that what it was actually meant was the transition from the Middle into the Later Bronze Age. On Figure 5, along the legend of the finds distribution for this settlement phase, it reads: 'keramika / pottery (BA C?)' (Gaspari 2008, 63, Fig. 5).

¹⁸² Dular 1999, 84; for the dating of the swords see Neumann 2009, 105–106.

¹⁸³ Pavlin 2006, 82–83.

¹⁸⁴ A. Gaspari, N. Trampuž Orel, P. Turk 2009, 204–205, Fig. 14; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 186, Fig. 234.

¹⁸⁵ Pavlin 2006, 79–89, Fig. 2: 1–3; see also Gaspari 2004, 41, Fig. 6: 4.

¹⁸⁶ Gaspari 2004, 41, Fig. 6: 2; Pavlin 2006, Fig. 1: 5.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. with e.g. Potočnik 1988–1989, 392.

¹⁸⁸ Pavlin 2006, 83.

¹⁸⁹ E.g. Vuga 1982; Šinkovec 1996; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019.

¹⁹⁰ A paraphrased phrase 'To be, or not to be, this is the question' from Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet* in translation of Oton Župančič (Shakespeare 1973, 63).

¹⁹¹ E.g. Šinkovec 1996, 125.

¹⁹² E.g. Miškec 2009, 293; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 177, 183.

¹⁹³ E.g. P. Turk 2007, 226; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 180.

¹⁹⁴ See e.g. Šinkovec 1995, 32, 33, 37, 43, 51.

¹⁹⁵ E.g. Velušček 1998, 8–10; for the technical term see Čerče, Šinkovec 1995, 217–218.

¹⁹⁶ <https://www.oxfordreference.com>; last accessed on 22 August 2023. In English, expressions *an individual find* and *an isolated find* are also used (e.g. Šinkovec 1995, 99; 1996, 125), from which emphasis on the individuality of the find can be discerned.

¹⁹⁷ The marking of a 'settlement find' encompasses every archaeological find found in a settlement, without the intention to judge about its role and significance for the inhabitants of the time.

¹⁹⁸ See e.g. Šinkovec 1995.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 177.

²⁰⁰ Cf. P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 177.

dwelling settlement and hence it is not discussed as a stray, here marsh, but rather a settlement find.

The thesis appears insufficient in the fact that from the rough BA A–B period in Slovenia, among bronze finds such as daggers, swords, a halberd, axes, sickles, and pins almost half of the artefacts,²⁰¹ i.e. ten, are from completely unknown contexts;²⁰² three pins are most probably from graves,²⁰³ ten are water finds,²⁰⁴ of which no fewer than seven are from the Ljubljansko barje, where also a marsh and another supposedly marsh find belong.²⁰⁵ Individual water and marsh finds are usually interpreted as ritually deposited finds.²⁰⁶

Nevertheless, metal finds had to be manufactured somewhere. Final objects, possibly those which were misplaced or abandoned for some other reason, could also theoretically be found within the settlement. We can assume the same for finds that were brought to the settlement and, due to unknown circumstances, remained there.²⁰⁷

Numerous Early, and above all, Middle Bronze Age metal finds from the settlements in northern Italy (*Fig. 5a, b*) testify to the reality of these events,²⁰⁸ where these objects were most probably

cast, as finds of metallurgic accessories²⁰⁹ and distribution²¹⁰ prove.

Early bronze finds in settlements are known also in Slovenia. At the Korte hillfort, which according to the pottery from the excavations in 1973 belongs to the Bronze Age, we find a bronze dagger with a hilt plate dated to BA A.²¹¹ In 1870, while building a military post in Maribor, an axe with slightly emphasised flanges of trapezoidal form was discovered, which is also dated to the BA A stage. Later, an ‘arrowhead’²¹² and a jug decorated with impressions of whipped cord were found in the vicinity.²¹³ The collected finds indicate a somewhat wider context, possibly also a settlement.

If, however, at this point we do not consider the dagger from the area of the IInd pile-dwelling near Ig as a settlement find, for now we do not know of bronze settlement finds from the BA A–B stage from the Ljubljansko barje; there are more from Eneolithic pile-dwelling settlements which are researched much better and to a greater extent.

In the wider area of the Hočevarica pile-dwelling settlement (*Fig. 1*) from approx. the mid-4th millennium BC, two copper axes were found²¹⁴ which for the Eneolithic man were undoubtedly precious objects, probably later comparable to a bronze dagger.²¹⁵ These two finds originate from the Ljubljanska River, yet there is practically no doubt that they belong to a pile-dwelling settlement.²¹⁶ The same is true for different finds from copper found in a greater number by Karel Dežman in the area of pile-dwellings near Ig,²¹⁷ and later also other excavators.²¹⁸ Several copper objects originating from the Ljubljanska, from the part around the pile-dwelling at Špica,²¹⁹ are also assigned among

²⁰¹ For comparison, which does not present the realistic picture because only swords are discussed among which some are typologically close to daggers and swords from the Ljubljansko barje, Daniel Neumann (2009, 100–106, 112–114) collected 99 swords from the Sauerbrunn-Boiu family (BA B1–C2). As it appears, 29 of them originate from graves, 55 are stray finds (among them no less than 39 are from the water environment, one could be from a settlement), one originates from a settlement layer, and for 14 their origin is unknown.

Also worth mentioning is the study of Thomas Urban (1993, 53–148), in which he showed that in northern Italy, in settlements from the Middle Bronze Age, the most pins are found among metal finds, which are followed by daggers, axes, and swords, keeping in mind that with the latter in the collection of all finds water finds prevail.

²⁰² Šinkovec 1995, Pl. 3: 17–21, 23; 27: 180–182; 36: 253.

²⁰³ Gabrovec 1983, 44, Pl. 1: 10; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 180, Fig. 228.

²⁰⁴ Šinkovec 1995, Pl. 3: 22; 28: 191, 193; 29: 199, 200; Gaspari 2004, Pl. 6: 2; Pavlin 2006, Fig. 2: 1a, b–3a, b; 6; P. Turk 2007, Fig. 9; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, Fig. 234; for the dating of the halberd from the Sava near Tomačevo see also e.g. P. Turk 2007, 226; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 178, Fig. 224.

²⁰⁵ See Šinkovec 1995, Pl. 28: 193; 29: 199.

²⁰⁶ Neumann 2009, 102; see also e.g. Teržan 1987, 77; Gaspari 2004, 41; P. Turk, A. Gaspari 2009; Pavlin 2012, 266; Škvor Jernejčič 2020, 480.

²⁰⁷ Cf. Hundt 1974, 173–174; Neumann 2009, 107–108.

²⁰⁸ E.g. Urban 1993, 53–139; De Marinis 1999, 25–85.

²⁰⁹ See e.g. Perini 1987, 34–35; Cierny et al. 2001, 57–77.

²¹⁰ See e.g. for left-handed sickles (Pavlin 2006, 82, Fig. 5) and for some swords from the Sauerbrunn-Boiu family (Neumann 2009, Fig. 4). Local production is presumed also for certain types of flanged axes (e.g. Perini 1987, 23), etc.

²¹¹ Šinkovec 1995, 93–94, Pl. 27: 180; cf. Sakara Sučević 2008, 443.

²¹² Pahič 1975, 304.

²¹³ Pahič 1975, 304; Šinkovec 1995, 36, Pl. 2: 11; Črešnar 2010, 132, Fig. 6: 11.

²¹⁴ Velušček (ed.) 2004, 54, Fig. 3.1.30; 3.1.35; 3.1.36.

²¹⁵ Cf. with e.g. P. Turk 2007, 226.

²¹⁶ Cf. Gaspari 2004, 37–38; Trampuž Orel, Heath 2008, 20, 22, Tab. 1, Pl. 1: 1, 2; A. Gaspari, N. Trampuž Orel, P. Turk 2009, 204; P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 152, Fig. 193.

²¹⁷ Korošec, Korošec 1969, Pl. 105.

²¹⁸ Harej 1981–1982, 46, Pl. 17: 6.

²¹⁹ E.g. Ložar 1943, 64; Šinkovec 1995, Pl. 35: 237–252; A. Gaspari, N. Trampuž Orel, P. Turk 2009, 202–203.

settlement finds. Both pile-dwelling areas belong roughly to the mid-3rd millennium.

That is not all. From these sites, to the copper finds should be added metallurgic accessories which prove that they not only knew metal objects but also cast them.

There is much proof about the use of copper and the importance of the activity for pile-dwellers from the area of the Ljubljansko barje. Metal finds, traces of copper on the whetstone,²²⁰ and/or metallurgic accessories are known from no fewer than ten sites, such as Hočevarica, Notranje Gorice, Stare gmajne, Maharski prekop, Blatna Brezovica, Založnica, areas of the first three pile-dwellings north of Ig, and Špica (Fig. 1). It appears that in the time of pile-dwellings of the 4th and 3rd millennia, the Ljubljansko barje was a noteworthy centre of metallurgic activities.

The beginnings of this activity reach back roughly to the 2nd quarter of the 4th millennium BC, into the period of the Furchenstich pottery culture, which is known as the culture that in the Eastern Alpine region asserted the use of copper, metallurgic activities, and most probably also exploitation of local resources.²²¹ Until today, finds, either metal objects or metallurgic accessories, have only been discovered at the pile-dwelling settlement of Hočevarica.²²² Since its discovery in the 1990s until today, the number of mostly dendrochronologically dated pile-dwelling settlements of this culture has increased to five, which is a lot for a relatively small area of the Ljubljansko barje. Thus, to Hočevarica we can add Trebež, Črnelnik, Gornje mostišče, and Strojanova voda (Fig. 1).²²³ There is no doubt that without more extensive research, which has not yet been performed at any of these sites, at least at some of the artefacts made of copper and/or metallurgic accessories would not have been found.

Furthermore, metallurgic activities or the use of metal objects are attested at pile-dwellings of the second half of the 4th millennium. At Maharski prekop and Stare gmajne, metallurgic accessories were discovered and visible traces of its contact

with metal were found on the whetstone from Blatna Brezovica.

Smelting vessels are known also from Notranje Gorice and can probably also be dated to the 4th millennium BC.²²⁴

Pile-dwellings from roughly the mid-3rd millennium near Ig have been known as an important metallurgic centre for almost a century and a half.²²⁵ Today, Založnica²²⁶ and Špica need to be added to these.²²⁷

There is less useful data about the situation at the transition from the 3rd into the 2nd and the 1st half of the 2nd millennium. A bronze dagger was stumbled upon within extensive excavations of the primarily Eneolithic pile-dwelling settlement near Ig. Swords similar to the dagger were most probably found somewhere in the marsh near Lavrica and during the research of the Ljubljanska riverbed, south of Blatna Brezovica (Fig. 6: 7,9,12). A dagger with trapezoid handle plate, three sickles, and a bronze flanged axe (Fig. 6: 8,10,11,13,14) are also known from the Ljubljanska. Currently reliable are three settlements: Blatna Brezovica-Zornica, Bevke-Zaloke, and Mali Otavnik. Pottery finds indicate that they can be expected also at the wider area of the pile-dwelling from the 4th millennium in Notranje Gorice, in the wider area of the IInd pile-dwelling from the 3rd millennium near Ig, and possibly also somewhere near the mouth of the Zornica or the Bistra to the Ljubljanska²²⁸ (Fig. 1).

²²⁴ Velušček (ed.) 2004, 225, 301; Trampuž Orel 2009, 58.

²²⁵ E.g. Durman 1983.

²²⁶ E.g. Velušček, Greif 1998, 38; Velušček, Čufar 2003, 137, Pl. 4: 10; Velušček 2008, 38.

²²⁷ R. Klasinc, M. Ravnik, J. Kusetič, M. Jančar, S. Vučković 2010, Poročilo o zaščitnih arheoloških izkopavanjih na najdišču Špica (neobjavljeno poročilo / unpublished report); Šinkovec 2012.

²²⁸ From this area in the Ljubljanska, the pottery with the combed or brushed decoration originates (see Dolenc 2012, Pl. 11: 206; Gaspari 2012, Fig. 9: 5; Pl. 1: 5), most probably also the cup with a trapezoid-shaped handle and 'ansa a gomito' (Dolenc 1982, Pl. 11: 200; for dating and distribution see P. Turk, V. Svetličič 2022, 53), and two cups/jugs with two handles (Potočnik 1988–1989, 392, Pl. 23: 25,26) of the Early Bronze culture of Wieselburg-Gata, which is roughly dated between 2100 and 1700/1600 BC (BA A1b–A2) (Gömöri, Melis, Kiss 2018, 5). Almost identical analogies for them are found at Kras, in Friuli and the Po Plain, where they are also connected with the mentioned culture (see e.g. Bermond Montanari et al. 1996, 64, Fig. 4: 25–27; Salzani, Martinelli, Bellintani 1996, 285, Fig. 3: 5–8; Pizziolo, Visentini 2023, Fig. 103; Montagnari Kokelj, Visentini 2023, Fig. 116).

²²⁰ Bernardini et al. 2009, 274.

²²¹ Teržan 1983; Velušček, Greif 1998; Velušček (ed.) 2004; cf. also Lippert 1992, 19–48; Samonig 2003, 78; Gleirscher 2007, 94–95; Trampuž Orel 2009, 59; Frank, Pernicka 2012.

²²² See Velušček (ed.) 2004, Fig. 3.1.30; 3.1.35; 3.1.36.

²²³ Out et al. 2023, Tab. 1; Velušček et al. 2023, 31.

Especially interesting are the dagger from Ig and a typologically connected long dagger²²⁹ (marked also as a short sword²³⁰) and swords, about which Peter Turk²³¹ presents the following thesis: *‘The daggers and swords from central Slovenia share a similar decoration and shape of the handguard plates, in which they also differ from daggers and swords elsewhere. This may indicate the existence of local metallurgic-casting workshops.’*

Pavlin²³² also hints at the possible local production of this type of weapon somewhere in the South-eastern or Eastern Alps. We add the fact that on this side of the Alps and east of the Friuli plain, on the territory of the present-day Republic of Slovenia, five similar daggers and/or swords were found which belong to the group of daggers and early swords with semicircular hilt plate or full handle. Four finds are known from the Ljubljansko barje, while one is supposed to originate from a water reservoir near the castle of Jablje in Loka pri Mengšu, which is less than 20 km away as the crow flies from the IInd pile-dwelling at Barje. Hence, if we are looking for a workshop for these daggers or swords²³³ somewhere on the territory of Slovenia, one of the most convincing candidates must be the Ljubljansko barje with at least two settlements. An earlier workshop can be expected in the Bronze Age settlement near Ig, in the wider area of an even longer abandoned pile-dwelling from the approx. mid-3rd millennium; and later also at Notranje Gorice, also in the wider area of a pile-dwelling from the 4th millennium. As revealed by the finds from the Ljubljanska, a settlement from this time could also be anticipated somewhere in the wider surroundings of the confluence of the Ljubljanska with the Zornica or Bistra, possibly even at Mali Otavnik.²³⁴ Thus, the dagger from Ig can also be explained as the product of a workshop in Barje, which is additionally supported by the sword found near Lavrica, less than 3 km away (Fig. 6: 7).²³⁵

THE CONCLUDING THESIS

We showed that the dagger from Ig can be explained as a settlement find. We realise that with this we are questioning many an artefact and explanations about cultural practices related to it, which have the widest support among the expert public and which appear almost to be axiomatic. This article does not intend and cannot refute these theses. However, the concluding discussion will nevertheless bring attention to a few different starting points and pose questions arising from the find of the dagger from Ig.

The starting point for the find are Dežman's excavations near Studenec or present-day Ig, which according to the last estimate encompassed a lot more than 12,000 m²,²³⁶ and that has never happened again at Barje in at least roughly comparable scope.²³⁷ In this area, Dežman found a great number of pottery, metal, and other finds. Sources reveal that among the finds, primarily pottery, a selection was made of what they were going to collect and what to discard on the spot. For the time, they had a convincing excuse for this decision since the number of well-preserved and richly decorated vessels was enviable.²³⁸ It can be discerned from Dežman's notes that at the end of season 3, they decided to excavate also at the so-called IIIrd pile-dwelling (Fig. 3). In his presence, they came across few pottery finds, which were coarser and of thicker walls, which completely deterred the financiers and they were unable to afford even the test dig at the Strojanova voda pile-dwelling.²³⁹

The episode with the IIIrd pile-dwelling is presented here because it reveals how archaeological excavations were conducted between 1875 and 1877. Even though, according to Dežman, they followed vertical stilts in the field,²⁴⁰ archaeological finds were nevertheless key for the continuation of the dig. We mentioned that at Notranje Gorice Harej found pottery with brushed ornamentation – and in addition to this possibly also a simultaneous bowl – outside the central area of the pile-dwelling

²²⁹ After P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 179.

²³⁰ Pavlin 2006, 82; P. Turk 2007, 215.

²³¹ P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 177; cf. P. Turk 2007, 214–215.

²³² Pavlin 2006, 83.

²³³ For the dating of swords of the Sauerbrunn type from the Ljubljansko barje see Pavlin 2006, 82–83, and Neumann 2009, 100–106.

²³⁴ Cf. Gaspari 2008, 75.

²³⁵ Cf. Hundt 1974, 164–165.

²³⁶ Leghissa 2020, 20.

²³⁷ At the Ljubljansko barje, the second largest excavations of pile-dwellings by scope were carried out in the 1970s, when Tatjana Bregant researched 1,208 m² at Maharski prekop (see Bregant 1996, 27).

²³⁸ Cf. Deschmann 1876, 472.

²³⁹ Smole 1983, 155, 159; see also Deschmann 1876, 471–472.

²⁴⁰ Deschmann 1876, 472; 1878, 4; see also Ložar 1942, 89.

from the 4th millennium. We warned that the latter can point to only a partial overlap of settlement areas from different periods. Possibly, something similar can be searched for also in the wider area of the IInd pile-dwelling at Ig and that Dežman possibly did not even reach into the central area of the settlement from the Early Bronze Age.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ It is not known which direction it could have spread into and where the central part of the Bronze Age settlement could have been. It was found that Dežman did not excavate all locations in the wider area of distribution of the so-called first three pile-dwellings (Kos 1978, 58), which were researched near Studenec (present-day Ig) between 1875 and 1877 (Fig. 3) and where stilts and other finds can be found (Bregant 1964–1965, Appendix 2). Here are two examples. He did not research the intermediate space between the Ist and the IInd pile-dwelling (see Fig. 3), where later, during various works, vertical stilts were discovered several times, and pile-dwelling (Eneolithic) pottery was also discovered (for the position of the intermediate area with finds see Vuga 1970, 142; 1977, 166; 1980b, 130; 1981b, 199, Fig. 6; Harej 1974, 76, Fig. 1; for pottery see Vuga 1981b, Fig. 7; 1980b, 130). He also did not research the space north-east of the IInd pile-dwelling in the area around archaeologically positive trenches nos. 25, 27, and 31, set by Bregant (1964–1965, Appendix 2).

Perchance, the central part of the Bronze Age settlement can be sought even more in the direction towards the location of the IIIrd pile-dwelling, where they unearthed coarse pottery with thick walls and an interesting stratigraphy, which led Dežman to think that: *‘Man wäre versucht, hier zwei über einander gestellte Pfahlbauten anzunehmen, eine ältere aus Rundhölzern der Pappel und eine jüngere aus Spaltklötzen der Eiche bestehend’* (Deschmann 1878, 19).

The assumption overlaps with the opinion of Elena Leghissa (2017a, 275, footnote 1219; 2021, 23, footnote 149), who in two vessels from the riverbed of the Iščica in the area of the Parte-Iščica pile-dwelling settlement (Fig. 3) sees similarity with Early Bronze Age pottery (see Velušček, Čufar, Levanič 2000, 85, Pl. 4: 8; 5: 1).

Similarity in form is undisputable, while the decoration – blunt incisions/grooves in all directions on the first vessel and the combination of barbotine with presumably brushed decoration on the other – is unusual for regional groups of both the Kisapostag culture and the Litzen pottery culture (cf. Kruh 2019). Nevertheless, we can agree with the opinion of Elena Leghissa. The use of ornamental technique, at least on the first vessel, and the shape of both vessels resemble the pottery of the Wieselburg-Gata culture (see e.g. Gömöri, Melis, Kiss 2018), the presence of which at the Ljubljansko barje has previously been mentioned.

In the wider area of the IIIrd pile-dwelling settlement a different stratigraphy in comparison to the Ist and IInd pile-dwelling settlements was much later also confirmed by Tatjana Bregant with trench excavations (1964–1965, 182–183). The same is determined by Harej for the site of Parte (for the position see Fig. 3), where he designates the layer, which contains sprigs, bark, pieces of wood, and

Also interesting are metal finds younger than settlements of the 3rd millennium. First and foremost, this is a dagger that acquired the status of the ritually deposited find *‘in the place of generally earlier pile-dwelling settlement (maybe intentionally right there, as an offering to the spirits of the ancestors)’*.²⁴² The thesis seems completely possible, but as an earlier pile-dwelling solely the settlement from the 2nd millennium and not the IInd pile-dwelling, which was abandoned in the 25th century BC at the latest, can be considered.²⁴³ According to a very conservative estimate, there is a more than 700-year time gap between the Eneolithic pile-dwelling and the dagger.²⁴⁴ We can justifiably assume that in the time of the dagger’s use, remains of the Eneolithic settlement were no longer visible in that area. If they could still see them, e.g. as we look at stilts and prehistoric finds in the Iščica river today (Fig. 6),²⁴⁵ we have to ask ourselves how Bronze Age people interpreted them. We have to keep in mind that, for example, remains of pile-dwellings in Switzerland were documented to be found long before Ferdinand Keller, yet it was only he who recognised in them the remains of ancient human dwellings.²⁴⁶ Furthermore, we should not forget how people in the past interpreted stone tools. They perceived them as unusually shaped stones made by lightning. By no means did they see in them what they really were – stone axes or tools.²⁴⁷

Hence, the existence of a settlement from the Early Bronze Age in the wider area of the IInd pile-dwelling settlement appears to be more than probable,²⁴⁸ which could be a justified reason for the performance of peculiar rituals in the century or two that followed,²⁴⁹ naturally, under the condition that the settlement is older than the dagger,²⁵⁰ but which, as shown above, is not probable. Nevertheless, the question remains:

leaves and is found over the cultural layer, as alluvial (e.g. Harej 1978, 62, Fig: profiles).

²⁴² Vuga 1982, 20–21.

²⁴³ See e.g. Leghissa 2021, 12–30.

²⁴⁴ Cf. P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 177.

²⁴⁵ E.g. Velušček, Čufar, Levanič 2000; Velušček 2013, Fig. 11; 2015, Fig. 7; Leghissa 2020, 16.

²⁴⁶ Hafner et al. 2020, 1–2.

²⁴⁷ E.g. Šprajc 1982, 8; cf. P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 163, Fig. 207.

²⁴⁸ Cf. P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 177.

²⁴⁹ Gaspari 2014, 74.

²⁵⁰ Cf. Kruh 2019, 184.

how to explain the human lower jawbone, from which a tooth was dated, from the 15th century BC,²⁵¹ a slightly later tanged sword that can be set in the time of the 13th and 12th centuries, the pin with a profiled biconical head that can be dated to the timespan between the mid-11th until the end of the 10th century,²⁵² and a later fragmented bronze pin with a trumpet-shaped terminal?²⁵³ All these finds were discovered in the area of the 1st pile-dwelling settlement (Fig. 3). Müllner states that the sword was found half a metre above the pile-dwelling cultural layer. We do not have comparable data for the jawbone and both pins. Moreover, the difference in time between the pin with the profiled biconical head and the 1st pile-dwelling²⁵⁴ exceeds a millennium and a half. There is an even longer gap between the Eneolithic settlement and the youngest pin, therefore Davorin Vuga²⁵⁵ believes that it was found '*probably in the peat above the pile-dwelling layer*'. We can justifiably assume that at the break of the millennia and in the centuries that followed no remains of the settlement from the first half of the 2nd millennium were to be seen on the surface. Nature and growth of the marsh must have taken their toll.²⁵⁶

Now, the question needs to be posed of how to explain the human lower jawbone, a slightly later sword, and even younger pins which were located more than 300 m away from the dryland in the environment which, according to the definition, is hardly passable and dangerous to men.²⁵⁷ In such an environment, how can one explain the probably unused Urnfield socketed axe with an accentuated lip and an ear, which was found in Mah between Babna Gorica and Ig (Fig. 6: 6)?²⁵⁸ Even more puzzling is the Mesolithic harpoon collected in the Ljubljana under the mouth of the Iščica (Fig. 6: 16).²⁵⁹ Research tends towards

the thesis that more than 11,000 years ago²⁶⁰ there was a lake in this area.²⁶¹ Just prior to the riverbed regulation, an axe made of deer antler (Fig. 6: 15) was discovered in the old riverbed of the Borovniščica. It probably originates from the period when pile-dwellings were alive at the Ljubljansko barje.²⁶² It is not known how the find ended up in the riverbed of the Borovniščica. Whether it was collected from the original position or what the situation was with the Borovniščica at the time of its deposition are also unknown. A complicated question about the significance of the finds is also opened up by the left-handed sickle from the Middle Bronze Age, which was found in the Ljubljana between Podpeč and Lipe (Fig. 6: 8).²⁶³ Since we find that through millennia, pile-dwelling settlements withdrew together with the lake towards the centre of the Ljubljansko barje,²⁶⁴ in the Middle Bronze Age the lake still had to be located in the place of the find. Blato, the youngest found pile-dwelling settlement to date, is dated roughly to the transition from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age (BA C/D) and is, in comparison to the findspot of the sickle, located much more towards the edge of the basin (cf. Fig. 6: 8 and 1).²⁶⁵

We can certainly claim for all mentioned finds that, according to the unknown turn of events, they were lost/deposited at the Ljubljansko barje. They prove, as hinted by Janez Dular²⁶⁶ referring only to the Early Bronze Age metal finds, the human settlement at Barje and/or in its surroundings in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages, and also in the Mesolithic, in the period of pile-dwellings, in the time of the Urnfield culture and in the beginning of the Iron Age. In short, these events are difficult to argumentatively explain by ritual practices. Hence, in this article an alternative explanation is suggested for the ornamented dagger with a hilt plate from Ig, i.e. that it is a settlement find.

²⁵¹ Leghissa 2017a, 238–239, 241, Fig. 165.

²⁵² Teržan 2002, 86–87.

²⁵³ For the dating of the pin see Vuga 1980a, 201, footnote 6; cf. Gaspari 2002, 39, footnote 59.

²⁵⁴ For the dating of the 1st pile-dwelling settlement see e.g. Leghissa 2021, 12.

²⁵⁵ Vuga 1980a, 201.

²⁵⁶ See Pavšič 1989; Verbič, Horvat 2009.

²⁵⁷ Melik 1927, 5; Gaspari 2017, 396–397.

²⁵⁸ See Šinkovec 1995, 68, Pl. 18: 102.

²⁵⁹ Potočnik 1988–1989, Pl. 3: 22; I. Turk 2004, 16, Fig. 2.2. In P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 85, Fig. 122, the origin of the harpoon is mistakenly attributed to a section of the Ljubljana near Blatna Brezovica. Similarly, the harpoon

is erroneously placed into the Iščica near its confluence with the Ljubljana by Gaspari (2014, 69, Fig. 60). For the correct position of the findspot of this find see Potočnik 1988–1989, 391, Fig. 1: 22, or Fig. 6: 16.

²⁶⁰ For the radiocarbon date of the harpoon see P. Turk, M. Turk 2019, 85; M. Turk 2022, 43.

²⁶¹ Cf. Melik 1946; Verbič, Horvat 2009.

²⁶² Vuga 1980b, 137, Fig. 19: 18; 1981a, 198.

²⁶³ Pavlin 2006, 80, Fig. 1: 3; 2: 3a,b.

²⁶⁴ E.g. Velušček, Čufar 2008; J. Turk, A. Velušček 2013.

²⁶⁵ Velušček, Toškan, Čufar 2011.

²⁶⁶ Dular 1999, 84; the same before him Gabrovec 1983, 40.

CONCLUSION

The article discusses the findspot circumstances of the bronze ornamented dagger from Ig. Following analysis of the sources, we set the thesis that the dagger is simultaneous with the settlement. Hence, its discovery at the site area of the Eneolithic IInd pile-dwelling settlement is not coincidental, since at least partial overlap of the settlement areas from the end of the Eneolithic and the Early Bronze Age most probably occurred. Since we have demonstrated that this is most probably not a ritually deposited find, it poses the questions of the provenience and significance of several other archaeological, primarily metal finds from the Ljubljansko barje.

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