Iron, Land and Power: The Social Landscape of the Southeastern Alps and the Karst in the Iron Age

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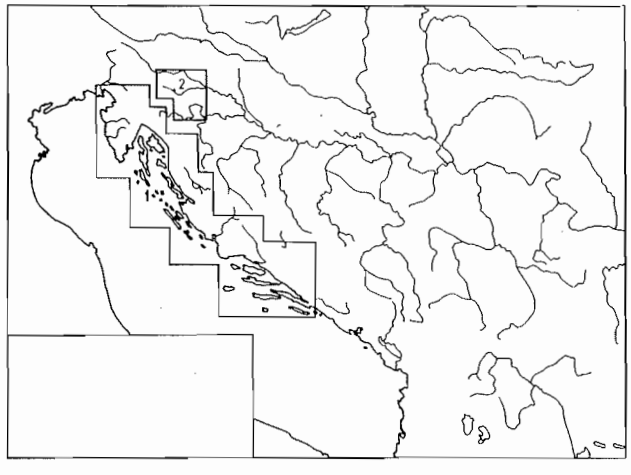
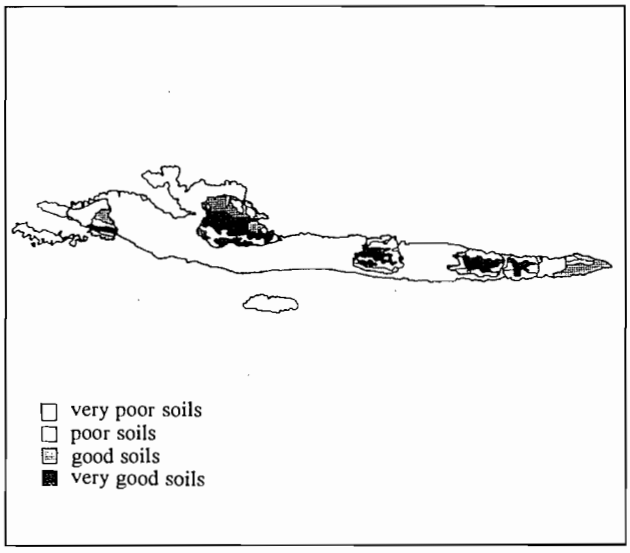
The aim of this paper is to compare the social landscapes of the Southeastern Alps and the Karst regions of Western Slovenia, Istria and Dalmatia in the Iron Age, and to attempt to explain the differences in organization and underlying meaning, which are apparent between the two regions (see Map 1).

The Karst of the Dalmatian coast is well known, both as a geographical entity and from recent archaeological work. It will be discussed here for these reasons, in preference to the regions of Istria, the Slovenian coast and Notranjska, which resemble it to some extent in broad archaeological and geomorphological conditions. The Zadar region in Northern Dalmatia and the island of Hvar have both been the subject of extensive research in recent years and provide a more complete data base than is available in other parts of Dalmatia. The Bronze Age and Iron Age landscapes are therefore more complete and better understood (Batović and Chapman 1985, 158-195, Chapman and Shiel 1989, 1-30, Gaffney and Stančič 1991).

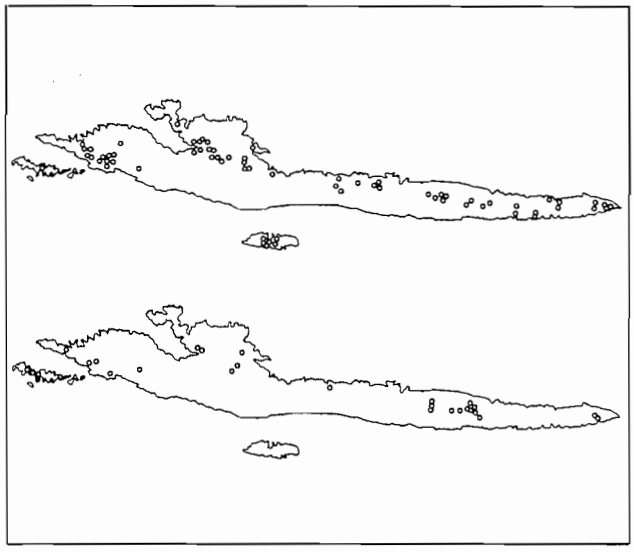
The Karst today is environmentally constrained. The hydrography is such that water is scarce. Good arable soils are limited to discrete areas, separated by limestone and dolomite uplands, which carry poor soils and are often heavily eroded, although in the past the soils may have been somewhat better. This was however only to a



Map 1: Locational map of the regions under discussion, 1 Notranjska, Istria and Dalmatia, 2 Dolenjska and Bela Krajina.



Map 2: Hvar - hillforts and soils.

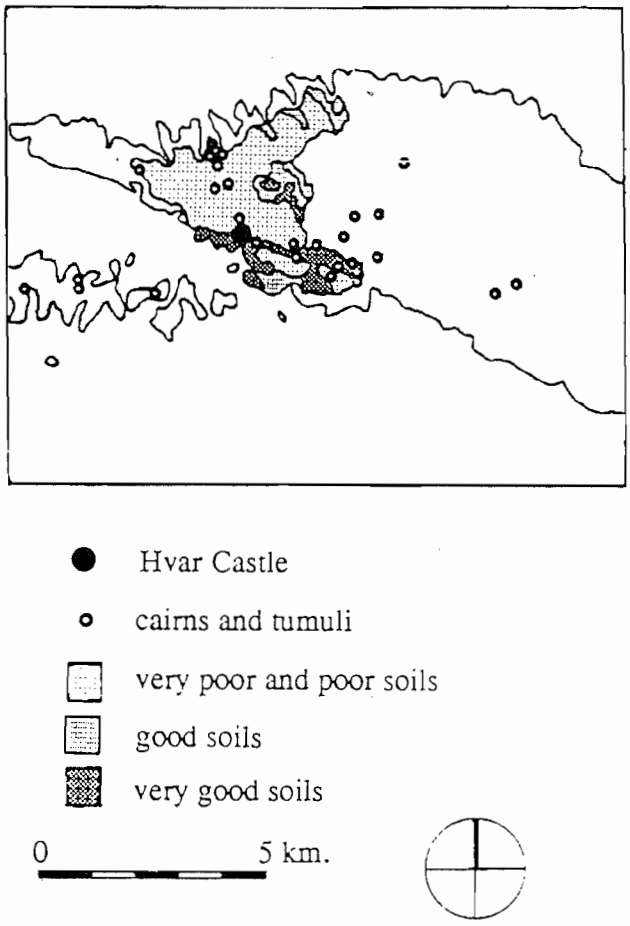


Map 3: Hvar - cairns and barrows.

limited extent, as is indicated by the geomorphological work carried out by the Neothermal Dalmatia Project (Chapman and Shiel 1989, 1-30). Indeed, the intensification of land use in the Bronze Age and Iron Age is responsible for the start of these processes of degradation. This is only intended to be a brief overview of the background and, as such, is subject to broad generalizations with regard to the above.

The Bronze Age landscape in this region is characterized by three major categories of field monument, all of which are constructed of piled stone or rubble, derived from field clearance. These are hillforts, cairns and linear features (walls etc.). The Hvar data shows a clear relationship between the distribution of hillforts and the distribution of good agricultural land, a situation which seems to be reflected elsewhere in other parts of the Karst, e.g. Istria and the western Slovenian / Triestine Karst (Karouškova- Soper 1983, 63-75). It is inferred from this that hillforts were located to exercise control over scarce arable land, although on Hvar, at least, never actually on good soils. Cairns show a somewhat similar distribution. They often occur in groups in close proximity to both hillforts and good soils (see Maps 2 and 3). This class of structures is derived primarily from field clearance, but it is clear that they had other functions. Gaffney and Stančič have demonstrated a clear relationship between hillforts, cairn groups and control of land. Cairns had a ritual function, as is witnessed by the cairn group near Hvar Castle, which is built on poor soil (see Map 4). This cairn group had, at least in part, a mortuary function. However on Hvar, as a whole, only 18 % of the total number of cairns known can be shown to have contained burials, but further ritual functions may be attributed (Gaffney and Stančič 1991, 48-66). The hillforts themselves were not only defended settlements, but must also have had a ritual function. It must also be remembered, that hillforts in the Karst have a close link to land clearance, surrounded as they are by massive ramparts of piled stone.

The landscape of the Bronze Age was divided into discrete, strongly bounded units, dominated by a hillfort centre. The territorial unit was further defined by cairn groups, adjacent to the hillfort, within the area of good soil and on the boundaries of the territory. This may also have been a way of legitimating the rights of the group in residence over the area it occupied, effectively by emphasizing the investment of labour by the group itself, and by its (or their) ancestors, in the land, as well as defining its centre (the hillfort). This was redefined or reinforced by the occasional utilization of the cairns in a



Map 4: Hvar - plan of Hvar castle region.

mortuary context. The transfer of stone from field clearance to hillfort ramparts would also serve to reinforce the link between the fortified centre and the land itself, as well as having a purely practical purpose.

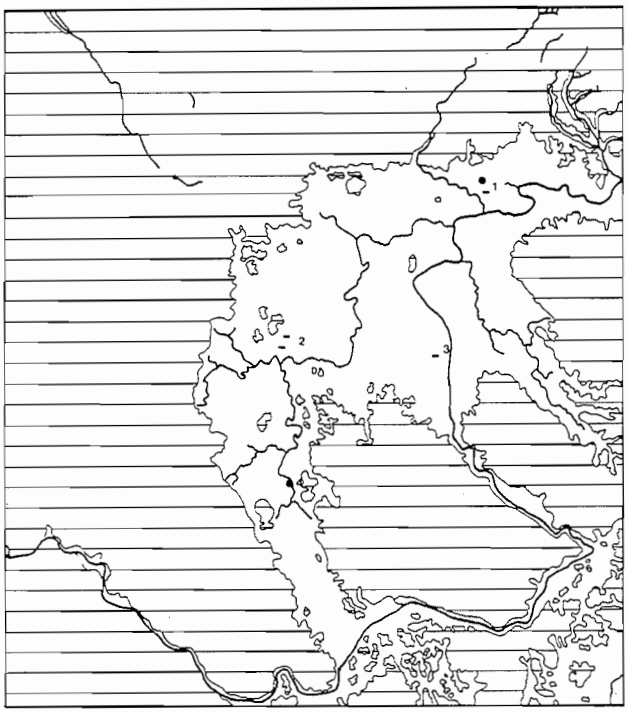
The lack of excavation on many hillfort sites makes them difficult to date, but where such data is available, it can be seen that many of them continued in use into the Iron Age. This lack of data, except in isolated cases like the Pridraga cairnfield in the Zadar region (Chapman, Shiel and Batović 1987, 124-146), also makes it difficult to date cairns and linear features.

The Iron Age on Hvar shows great continuity from the preceeding Bronze Age. The situation in the Zadar region is somewhat different. Although the number of hillfort sites and small enclosures is almost the same as in the previous Bronze Age period, cairn groups and linear features disappear, or more accurately cease to be created (Chapman and Shiel 1988, 1-30). This does not mean that these Bronze Age structures ceased to be a major feature of landscape organization, or that territorial organisation was necessarily different. Bronze Age and Iron Age non-hillfort settlement was not identified on Hvar. The major difference between the Bronze Age and Iron Age periods in the Karst seems to be the emergence of a definite site hierarchy with regionally dominant centres in the later period. This development may have been stimulated by the growth of external long-distance exchange in the Adriatic in the first millennium BC, and the differential access of sites to exchange networks. Gaffney and Stančič (op. cit.) regard Hvar Castle as a possible regionally dominant centre on Hvar, whilst Chapman (1988) suggests a similar status for the site of Nadin in the Zadar region. The pattern is repeated in other parts of the Karst, as is shown by Nesactium in Istria and Škocjan in western Slovenia (Karouškova-Soper 1983, 63-74).

The Southeastern Alpine Region,in particular the area of Dolenjska and Bela Krajina, eontrasts sharply with the social landscape of the Karst (see Map 1). Both Dolenjska and Bela Krajina are karsitic areas, directly adjacent to the northern part of the Karst area. However, environmentally they are quite different. Major rivers, the Sava, Krka and Kolpa, run through the north, centre and south of the two regions. This means that good arable soils are available in the valley bottoms. The rivers are separated by hilly, karsitic interfluves, which have extensive forest cover. Water is only scarce in the lowland karst of Bela Krajina. The position of the area at the head of the Adriatic, makes it a natural corridor between the Italian peninsula, the Pannonian plain, the Alps and the Balkans.

The Late Bronze Age landscape in the area is incompletely known. A small number of hilltop and upland edge settlements are known, together with flat cemeteries in or close to the river valleys. Most of the upland settlements were constructed on terraces, without evidence of man-made defences. These settlements are

relatively small in size, with less than 1 hectare of land enclosed. No attempt can be made about the site territories with any certainty, as an unknown number of settlement sites lie under Iron Age hillforts. The flat cemeteries are usually located on good land in the river valleys, on prominent isolated hills (see Map 5). Where archaeological work has been carried out, as in Ljubljana (Stare 1954), Metlika (J. Dular 1985, 89-93, Breščak, pers. comm.) and Črnomelj, for example, settlement evidence has been found in the vicinity of these cemeteries. This lack of data is a result either of a lack of systematic surface collection, or, in most cases, due to the presence of mediaeval and modern urban activity in the immediate vicinity. The known sites show a distinct locational bias towards the river valleys or lowlands and the immediate upland rim. Field clearance cairns are not present in the river valleys, for obvious reasons (deeper, stone free soils and modern agricultural exploitation), but neither are linear features, which might be expected to survive, on the basis of analogy with the earthen linear features in southern Britain. The same is true of the upland interfluves, which, although heavily forested, have been extensively surveyed for standing field monuments (J. Dular 1985, J. Dular et al. 1991, 65-198, Križ, pers. comm.). Therefore boundaries in the landscape are ill-defined, with emphasis being placed on the centres. The peripheries may have been defined by natural features but this is unlikely in the river valleys and the extensive lowland of Bela Krajina or Krško polje.



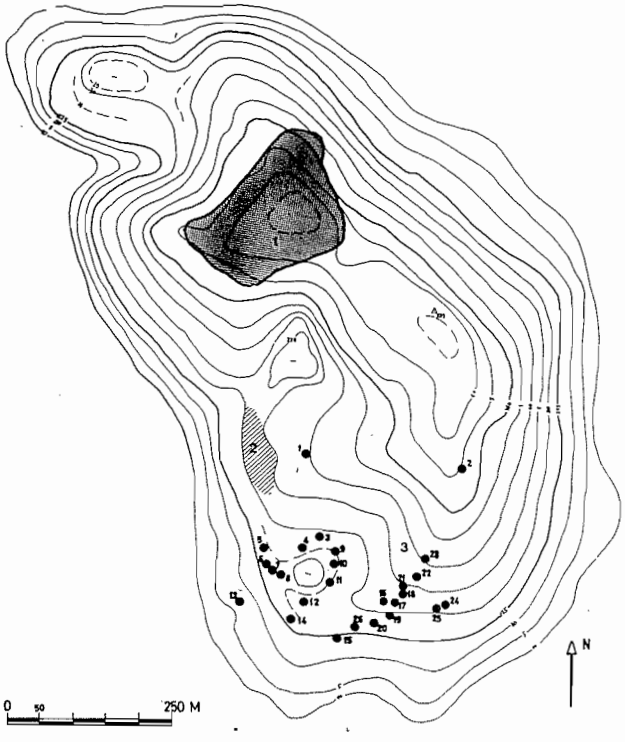
Map 5: Late Bronze Age Bela Krajina, 1 - land over 200 m, 2 - cemeteries, 3 - settlements.

1. Metlika	*- Old town centre (settlement)*
	- Borštek (cemetery)
2. Črnomelj	*- Sadež (cemetery)*
	- Trdinova ulica (cemetery)
3. Griblje	*- cemetery*
4. Pusti Gradac	*- Okljuk (settlement)*

The close association of settlement and cemetery indicates a strong link between group legitimation and the mortuary population, that is the presence of the ancestors. Access to arable or agricultural land is important, but so is access to exchange networks (Mason 1988, 211-223). No dominant centres can be properly defined, as no settlements have been extensively excavated, and mortuary sites are also incompletely preserved. The larger cemeteries, with over 300 burials, such as Ljubljana (Puš 1971 and 1982, Stare 1954), Mokronog (Gabrovec 1973) and Novo mesto (Knez 1966, 1972 and 1984, Križ, pers. comm.), may represent regional centres, or centres of mortuary activity for wider areas. Indeed the two are not mutually exclusive. It would seem that the landscape was less bounded than that of the Karst, and the competition, and the competition was channeled through other mediums than those in the karst landscape, that is overt control over the division of land.

The transition to the Iron Age in the 8th century BC resulted in the transformation of the social landscape, although a strong element of continuity can be detected (see Mason 1988 for references). The dominant structures of the Iron Age landscape are much more visible. Defended upland settlement becomes common in the form of enclosures or hillforts. Many of these sites are located on earlier, Late Bronze Age settlements, such as Metlika (Breščak, pers. comm.), Stična (Gabrovec et al. 1969), Pusti Gradac (J. Dular 1985, 67-68) and Vrhtrebnje (J.

Dular et al. 1991, 74), whilst others lie close to Late Bronze Age cemeteries and settlements, such as Vinji vrh near Šmarjeta (Križ, pers. comm.), Novo mesto - Marof (Knez 1972) and Črnomelj (J. Dular 1985, 56-60). Once again a preference is shown for locations on the upland edge or on prominent topographical features within the lowland areas, like the sites of Kučar and Cvinger (see Map 6). The settlements were enclosed by massive ramparts, usually of drystone construction, but sometimes



Map 6: Cvinger near Dolenjske Toplice, 1 settlement, 2 iron- working area, 3 barrow groups.

of timber-revetted soil (Križ 1990, 24). These massive stone ramparts bear witness to at least a limited expansion into the upland interfluve areas. The stone for their construction was derived from field clearance, not quarrying, and the great increase in the number of sites, both in the valleys and on the upland rim, may well have been at least partly due to population increase, although other equally important factors will be considered below.

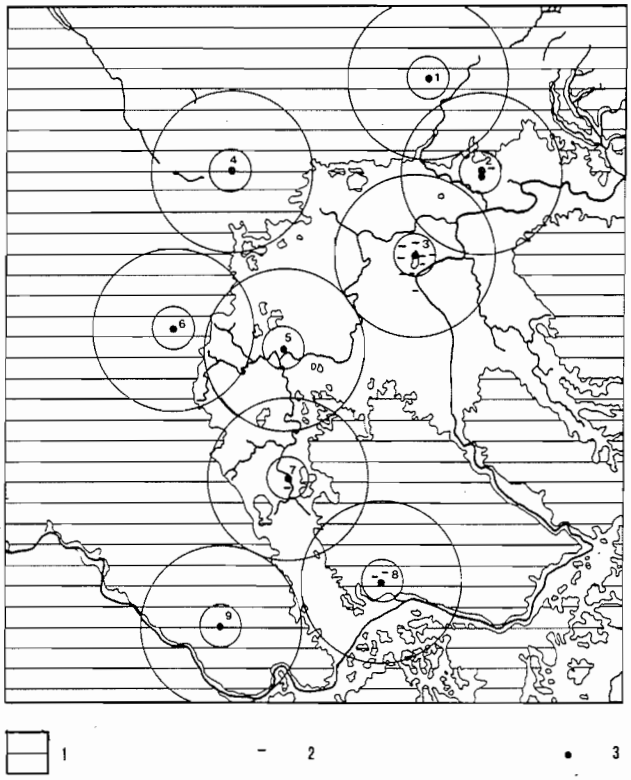
The area enclosed by the ramparts of a hillfort varied considerably. The largest sites, such as Magdalenska gora (Gabrovec 1990, 39-42), Stična (see above) and Vinji vrh (A. Dular 1990, 71-72, 1991, 20-24) cover areas over 20 hectares in extent, but these are major regional centres. Smaller regional centres, such as Cvinger (see above), Kučar near Podzemelj and Slemine (J. Dular 1985, 24), cover between 7 and 10 hectares, whilst most of the sites are much smaller. The smaller size of some sites is more apparent than real, as extensive areas of settlement have been found outside the ramparts, spatially separated from the defended area, e.g. Metlika (see above) and Vrhtrebnje / Benečija (J. Dular et al. 1991, Breščak 1990, 83). The larger sites may represent the integration of all settled parts of the centre, whilst at other centres a deliberate distinction was made between defended and undefended parts. In the case of Metlika, a hillfort was constructed away from the earlier settlement, which continued to function, whilst at Vrhtrebnje, a hillfort was constructed on an earlier, Late Bronze Age settlement, and a new settlement or industrial site was founded in the river valley below.

The hillfort centres were not only defined by settlement and ramparts. There are also barrows, both single examples, and groups closely associated with the settlements. They are usually located within a radius of 1 km of the settlements, with which they are associated. These are mortuary monuments built of soil, the earliest of which are contemporary with the latest Late Bronze Age flat cremation cemeteries, as at Metlika and Novo mesto (op. cit.). Initially the burial rite was identical to Late Bronze Age burial practise, with the exception of the addition of weapons. Later, inhumation became dominant, burials being arranged in concentric circles in the mound, often without a central burial. At Novo mesto (op. cit.), barrows were built adjacent to, and, later, over, part of the Late Bronze Age cemetery, whilst at Metlika, the barrow cemetery was located between the hillfort settlement and the lower (undefended?) settlement. A similar situation prevailed at Vrhtrebnje / Benečija. The other centres, which have Early Iron Age burials and, apparently, no Late Bronze Age mortuary areas, are in areas, which are rural and often heavily forested, so that there is probably not a real absence of such sites. It is clear that the legitimation of the centre in the Iron Age, and of the elite, resident in the centre, was linked partly to

association with the previous Late Bronze Age mortuary and/or settlement complex.

A third class of site is also found in this 1 km core zone around the hillfort centre. Every Iron Age centre has extensive evidence of iron smelting. Iron slag and bloom is common on the surface of hillfort interiors and has frequently been found during the excavation of structures within them (J. Dular et al. 1991). However, iron artefacts are very rare. In every case, an industrial area of iron smelting, with bowl furnaces, has been found outside the hillfort ramparts; these smelting areas are extensive and are located on the windward side of each hillfort (see Map 6). Iron is found in quantity in Dolenjska and Bela Krajina, the ores being mainly lignite, which is relatively evenly distributed over the whole region. No evidence of mining has been found, ore thus may have been extracted by pitting. The lack of finished iron objects in settlement contexts suggests that it was exchanged out of the region, probably to Northern Italy and the Danube region, which are the sources of most of the foreign prestige goods in the region (Mason 1988). The Early Iron Age expansion into the upland zones between the rivers may, therefore, have been concerned as much with access to iron ore and timber for smelting, as it was with the search for new agricultural land.

The Early Iron Age landscape was, then, based on a series of hillfort centres with well-defined core zones, oriented towards the river valleys and lowlands. The core zone comprised the conspicuous hillfort settlement and barrows, as well as an industrial area. The core zone probably acted as a focus and collection point for iron ore from a wider area. The wider territories controlled by the different centres varied and is difficult to define. In Bela Krajina the sites are evenly spaced over the landscape and dominated a 3 km radius territory (see Map 7), whilst in the Krka valley the distribution of sites is denser, with a radius of 2 km for territorial units. The core zone remains constant in size. The territorial units were not strongly defined, or bounded, outside the core zone, and were probably subject to considerable fluctuation in size over time. Equally the status of major centres was not static. Major centres in the earlier part of the Early Iron Age were later replaced or superseded by new centres. The evidence for this is taken from the mortuary record,



Map 7: Early Iron Age Bela Krajina - putative territories (1 km core zones and 2 km territories), 1 - land over 200 m, 2 - cemeteries, 3 - settlements.

1. Veliki vrh above Dolenji Suhor (hillfort)
2. Metlika
- Old town centre (settlement)
- Veselica (hillfort)
- Hrib (barrow cemetery)
3. Podzemelj
- Kučar (hillfort)
- Podzemelj (barrow cemetery)
- Zemelj (barrow cemetery)
- Grm (barrow cemetery)
- Skrilje (barrow cemetery)
4. Semenič (hillfort)
5. Črnomelj
- Old town centre (settlement)
- Grajska cesta, Loka (barrow cemetery)
6. Sv. Križ above Stražnji vrh (hillfort)
7. Pusti Gradac
- Okljuk (settlement)
- Veliki Nerajec (barrow cemetery)
8. Vinica
- Šlemine (hillfort)
- Stražni dol (cemetery)
- Steljnik (cemetery)
9. Gradišče above Gorica (hillfort)

which provides data on prestige exchange at an intra-site and an inter-site level. The evidence from burial must be

treated with caution; not all the burials are dateable, and many were excavated in the 19th century. Cessation of elite burial does not mean thât the settlement centre was abandoned, in fact it was probably subordinated to the new, dominant, regional centre. The area of Bela Krajina can be used to illustrate this. Settlement continuity can be demonstrated on all the major sites throughout the Iron Age. Initially an even distribution of sites and core zones can be seen over the region. However, the Podzemelj complex became dominant over the complexes of Črnomelj, Metlika and Pusti Gradac in the 7th century BC. Towards the end of the 4th century BC the Vinica complex increased in importance expanding to take in the Lahinja valley in the Late Iron Age. The Podzemelj complex went into decline with the expansion of Vinica, and the arrival of the La Tène Mokronog group in the north of the area in the 3rd century BC, and Metlika became a local centre of this group.

The social landscape of Early Iron Age Dolenjska and Bela Krajina was very different from that of the Karst. Unlike the Karst, which has a very bounded landscape, it is relatively open. It was not based on control of a defined region, but was defined in terms of a series of core areas, which exercised control over areas that fluctuated in size over time. Control over land and resources was joined by control over exchange. The social landscape in the South Eastern Alps was fluid and unstable over time, in sharp contrast to the stable social landscape of the Bronze Age and Iron Age in the Karst.

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Phil Mason

'The Gender Revolution'

I.

Ten years ago Salvatore Cucchiari (Cucchiari 1981) published his *'The gender revolution and the transition from bisexual horde to patrilocal band: the origins of gender hierarchy'.* The text is, in short, not a very sophisticated transposition of Freudianism, or rather, of Freud's psychic formative stages of the sexually defined individual, to the proposal of the formation of humanity as such, in cultural and social terms. The result is the myth, which is comparable to the Freudian mythical construction of the primal horde. The positive effect of this transposition is a very happy example of symptomatic reading which may be productive in both directions: one can easily detect the feeble passages of the Freudian 'primal' text on the individual formative stages and by the same time the contradictions which are the unavoidable intratextual conditions of such an unthinkable event as 'gender revolution'. Let me quickly resume the main points of Cucchiari's story.

At one time, the world, in human terms, was organized as pregender or pre-kinship society. The main features of this human world were the division of work, which would have not followed the sexual division. Small human groups or pre-kin hordes were composed of two main categories of people, namely of Foragers and Child-Tenders. The two mentioned categories were not functional, but ideal subgroups tied to one another by reciprocal obligations and expectations.

The basic division is crossed by another one, which tends by definition to contradict this ideal relationship. The division in question introduces 'proto-woman' on the one hand and 'proto-man' on the other, and these designations must be understood not only as 'anatomical ones' (after Cucchiari), but also with far-reaching consequences as we shall see very soon.

Finally comes the third, that is the spatial division, which on this level is a purely technical, namely a fictional, division of the pre-kin horde. Foragers, operating out of a horde camp, generally go far a field in search of food, whereas Child Tenders stay close to the camp, exploiting local resources, in addition, of course, to their main task, child-minding. This would also mean that the Foragers are traders and solely responsible for interhorde contact and relations, whereas Child Tenders are responsible for