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PREHISTORIC AMBER AND GLASS BEADS FROM KOSOVO

Abstract: Amber and glass beads from prehistoric sites in Kosovo have been published in this paper. In addition to a detailed analysis of the archaeological material, the majority of which is now being made public for the first time, the place of amber in the prehistory of Kosovo and the importance of trade in the Iron Age of the central Balkans have also been discussed.

Archaeological material from major sites in Kosovo has not been entirely published. The preparations in the course of 1997 for the important exhibition "Archaeological Treasure of Kosovo and Metohija", Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, have been the opportunity to analyze and publish amber finds from some Kosovo sites, first of all the beads from Iglarevo, Pečka Banja and Rogovo.¹ Those from Romaja, Prčevo, Donja Bitinja and Karagač, which contribute to our understanding of prehistoric amber in the region, have been studied here from the available data in the literature. Some of the material being made known to the public for the first time, this study, although primarily pertaining to amber beads, has not left out glass and rock crystal (quartz) beads, usually part of amber necklaces. To avoid divagation from the main subject-matter, however, their analysis has remained descriptive. Typological determination proceeds from the modified nomenclature and classification usually applied to amber beads,

¹ I am grateful to my colleague Kemajl Luci of the Museum in Priština for giving me access to the amber material from Kosovo.

namely the system developed by E. Sprincz and C.W. Beck, which, in turn, is based on H.C. Beck's beads classification scheme of 1927.²

Iglarevo

Iglarevo is situated in the area of Prekoruplje, a natural border between the plain of Kosovo and that of Metohija, some 20 km east of Peć, by the road Priština - Peć, on the slopes of Mt. Grebnica descending towards the Klina river. The remains of a Bronze Age necropolis (bronze sword, dagger, knife etc.) were unearthed during the road building works in 1973.³ Systematic investigations, carried out by K. Luci between 1986 and 1991,⁴ yielded two necropolises: Iglarevo I (containing 39 graves) and Iglarevo II (9 graves). Burial practice included both inhumation and cremation. In the latter case, the remains from the stake had been placed in urns. Two types of inhumation burials occur: the richer ones, dated to the 14th-13th centuries BC, have pebbly base and stone construction, and as a rule contain furniture, sometimes rather opulent (bronze adornments, weapons, even a Mycenaean-type rapier); the poorer graves have neither of the two, and the dead were lying in contracted position.⁵

Amber was found in two graves only. One of them is a skeletal female burial (grave 1) with stone construction. The woman was laid onto the pebbly base in extended north-south position and enclosed by the stone construction 3 m long by 1.68 m wide. She wore massive plain anklets of the Juhor type. Other pieces of jewelry include two bronze saltaleons, a double-spiral headed pin, a bronze bracelet, and a necklace consisting of amber beads, one crystal bead and one blue glass paste bead.⁶ In one of children's graves a single amber bead turned up.

The necklace from grave 1 consists of amber grains, a larger globular crystal bead and a glass paste bead. Typologically heterogeneous amber beads are shown in Plate I:

1. Irregular rectangular bead with drop-shaped longitudinal section, 26 mm
2. Irregular rectangular bead with drop-shaped longitudinal section, 28 mm

² E. Sprincz, C. Beck 1981; H. Beck 1927; C. Beck, S. Shennan 1991, 51-62.

³ N. Djurić 1984.

⁴ K. Luci, 1998, 503-516.

⁵ K. Luci 1998, 503-516; M. Garašanin 1983, 755-758; K. Kilian 1976, 112.

⁶ K. Luci, in the press.

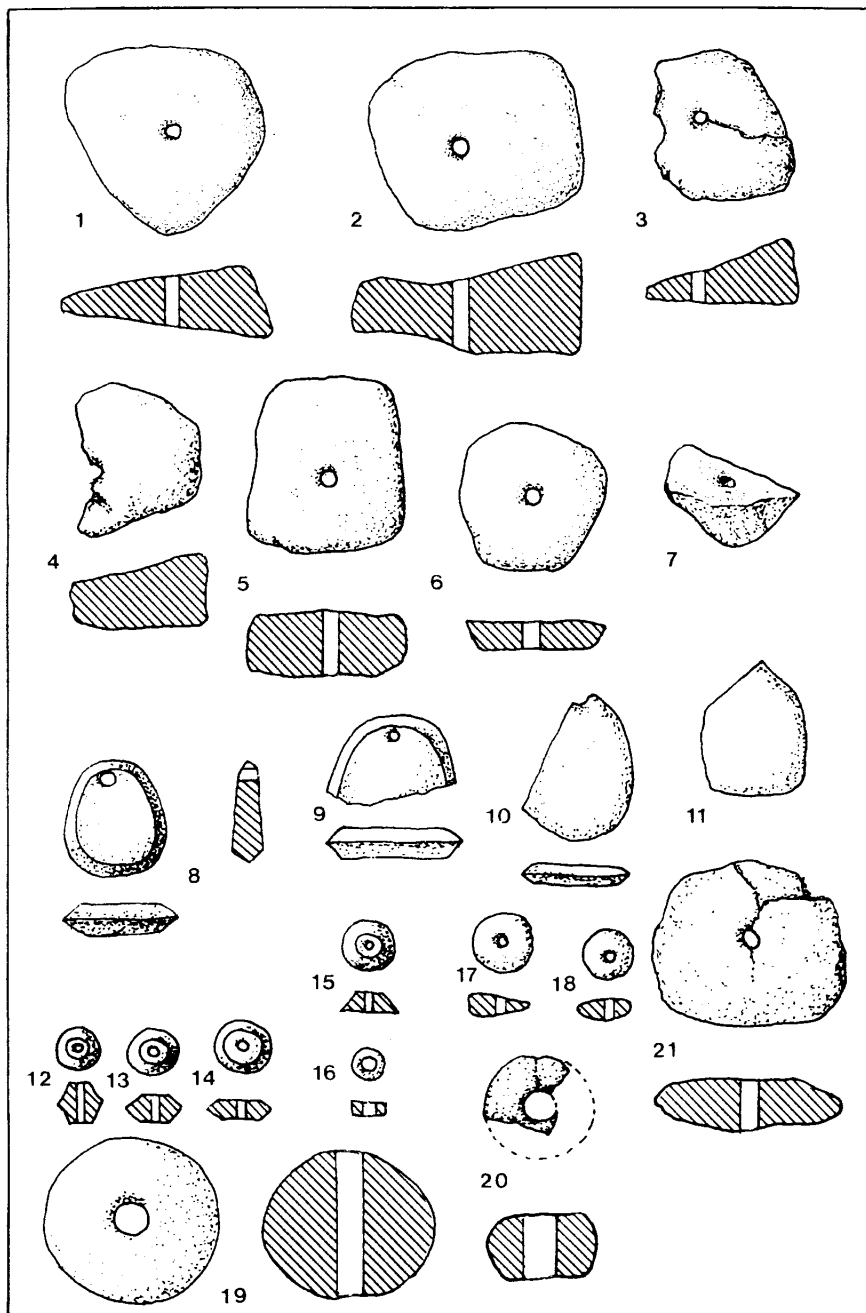


Plate I: Iglarevo, 1:1.

3. Irregular rectangular bead with drop-shaped longitudinal section, damaged, 21 mm
4. Irregular polygonal bead with drop-shaped longitudinal section, damaged, 20 mm
5. Irregular rectangular bead, 23 mm
6. Irregular polygonal bead, 19 mm
7. Irregular prismatic beads - 9 whole and 2 fragmented pieces, 9-18 mm
8. Oval, flat truncated biconical bead, pierced by the top, 15,5 mm
9. Oval, flat truncated biconical bead, pierced by the top, damaged, 16.5 mm
10. Oval, flat truncated biconical bead, pierced by the top, damaged, 19 mm
11. Oval, flat truncated biconical bead, pierced by the top, damaged, 18 mm
- 12-14. Thin, short and long truncated biconical beads - 22 pieces, 3-9 mm
15. Truncated conical bead - 8 pieces, 3-9 mm
16. Annular bead with sharp edges - 2 pieces, 4 mm
17. & 18. Irregular lentoid and irregular flat beads with drop-shaped longitudinal section - 68 pieces, 3-9 mm.

Another 39 pieces of typologically indeterminable amber beads were also found in the grave, along with an amount of rather crumbled amber.

The slightly flattened globular bead of transparent yellowish crystal (Pl. I, 19) constituted the biggest, central piece of the necklace. The grave also held a fragmented flattened globular bead of glass paste, probably part of the necklace too. The paste is translucent, of dark turquoise-blue colour (Pl. I, 20). All Iglarevo beads are centrally pierced along the shorter axis, except beads 8-11, which are pierced at the upper part.

The bead from child's grave 4 is of the irregular rectangular type, centrally pierced along the shorter axis (Pl. I, 21).

Pećka Banja

Pećka Banja is situated in Metohija, at the northern edge of the Beli Drim valley, 12 km west of Peć, by the road to Kosovska Mitrovica. The remains of two graves in a mound having been found in the course of building works, the investigations ensued directed by J. Glišić of the Museum of Kosovo. The central grave construction within the tumulus was preserved,

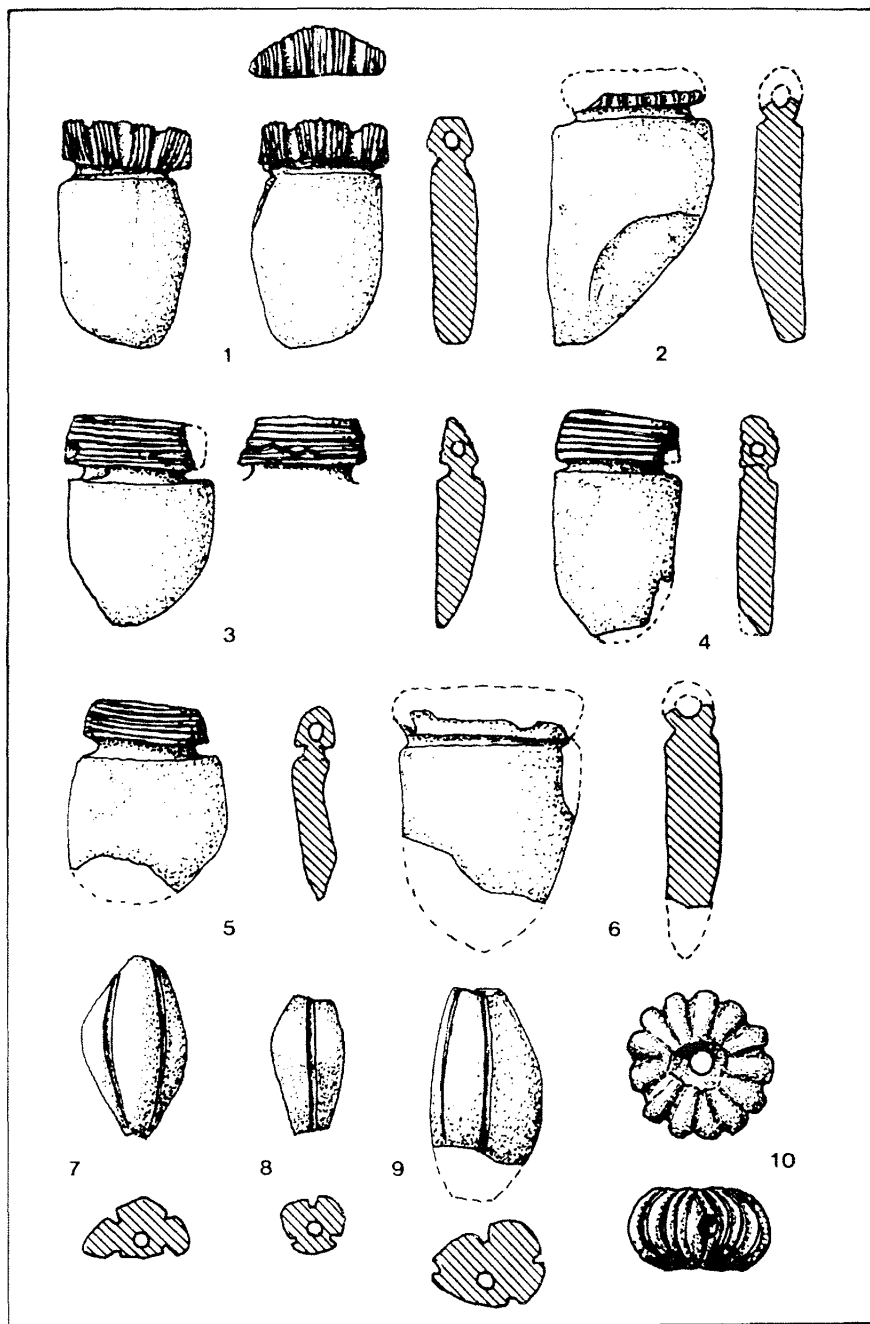


Plate II: Pećka Banja, 1:1.

but by the time the excavations started the material had already been dislocated, which makes it impossible to reconstruct the exact grave assemblages and their relations. The grave construction with a base of stone slabs was built of broken stone in the form of irregular rectangle with rounded edges, about 2 m long. Abutting on it was a *sigā* drywall. The whole structure had been covered with earth topped with a mantle of smaller stones. It remains unclear whether we are dealing with a tumulus, which cannot be directly corroborated, or the construction had been sunk into a natural mound - an elevation, not uncommon in the area. Two assemblages - male and female - were inferred from the finds, although traces of neither inhumation nor cremation were detected. Pottery was discovered outside the graves.

In the man's grave silver adornments were found (ring in the form of the Mramorac-type belt, bipartite saltaleon fastened in the middle with a loop, three bronze helmets of Graeco-Illyrian type (lacking nasal part), a necklace of amorphous amber pieces, glass beads and snail's shells, three bronze fibulae, 12 large calotte-shaped ornamental buttons of bronze, four of which coated with sheet silver, and iron spearheads. The female grave contained a set of silver jewelry intended for a very frail woman or a girl (two Mramorac-type bracelets, two fibulae with rectangular foot, two massive bracelets with snake-head ends, a ring, omega pins and saltaleons), and eight Scythian arrowheads of bronze. The grave also held a number of amber beads, mostly amorphous, but also some shaped as wineskins or orange segments, as well as few glass beads. Among the finds which could not be related to the grave assemblages stands out a bronze ornament with stylized palmette and bull's head, probably part of horse's harness. Pottery finds constitute a separate group of artifacts - imported, Greek black-figure earthenware (one *olpa*, two cups-*skyphoi* and a smaller *skyphos*) and a number of local vessels. Pećka Banja has not been published in its entirety. The material is dated into the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th century BC.⁷

Pećka Banja yielded a variety of amber beads (Pls II-IV):

1. Wineskin-shaped bead with three groups of vertical ribs in the upper part, horizontally pierced at the upper part, 30 mm
2. Wineskin-shaped bead with vertical incisions in the upper part, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 34 mm

⁷ A. Palavestra 1984; J. Jeftović ed., 1990; K. Luci 1998a, 575.

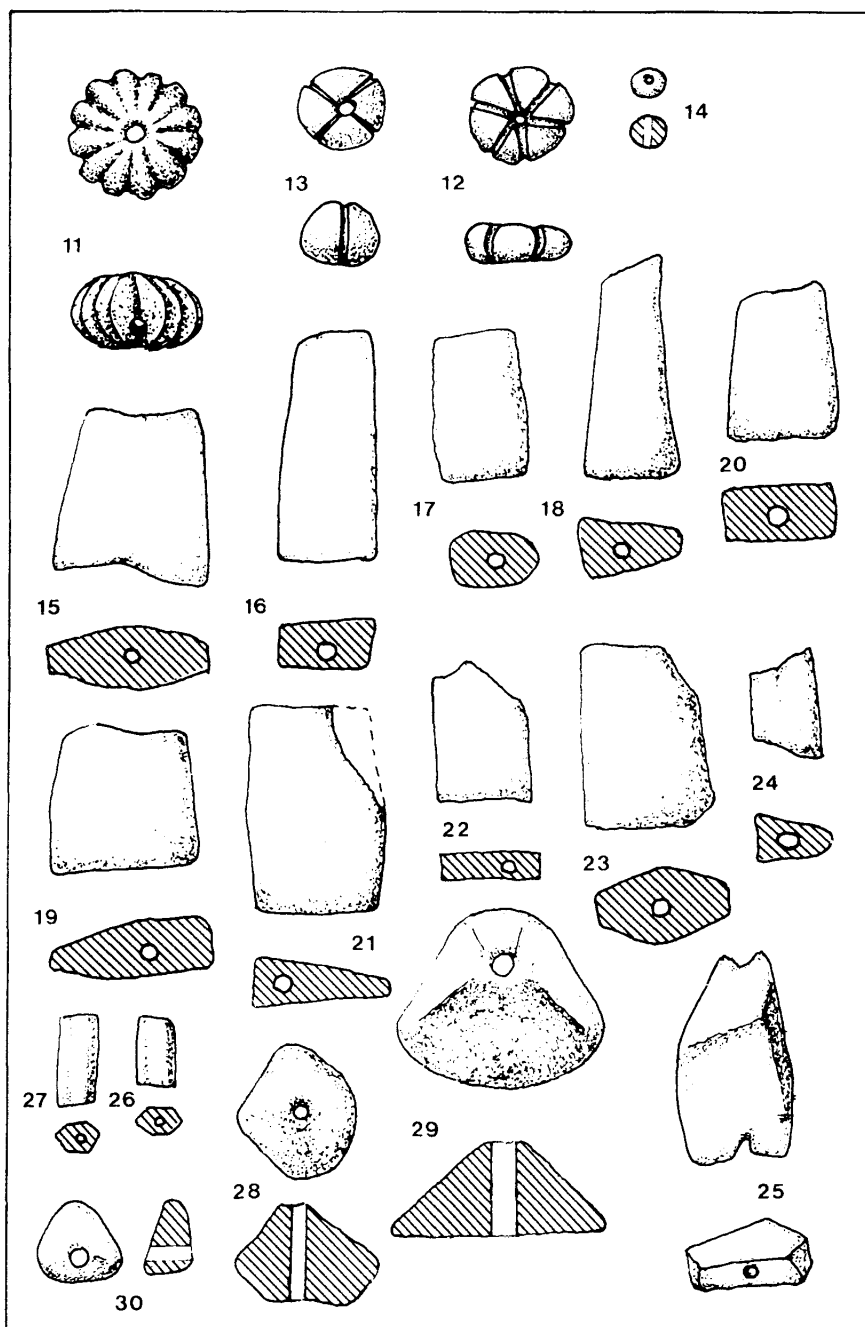


Plate III: Pečka Banja, 1:1.

3. Wineskin-shaped bead with horizontal incisions in the upper part, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 28 mm

4. Wineskin-shaped bead with horizontal incisions in the upper part, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 30 mm

5. Wineskin-shaped bead with horizontal incisions in the upper part, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 26 mm

6. Wineskin-shaped bead with mutilated upper part which makes it impossible to discern or determine the type of incisions, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 26 mm

7. Elongated, biconical, ribbed (4 ribs) bead with irregular cross-section, pierced along the longer axis, 24 mm

8. Elongated, biconical, ribbed (4 ribs) bead with irregular cross-section, pierced along the longer axis, 18.5 mm

9. Oval, elongated, biconical ribbed (4 ribs) bead with irregular cross-section, pierced along the longer axis, damaged, 23.5 mm

10. Flattened globular, ribbed (13 ribs) bead, pierced along either axis, 19.5 mm

11. Flattened globular, ribbed (12 ribs) bead, pierced along either axis, 17.5 mm

12. Flat, ribbed (6 ribs), disk bead with rounded edges, pierced along the shorter axis, 14 mm

13. Spherical, ribbed bead (4 ribs), pierced along the axis, 12 mm

14. Spherical bead, pierced along the axis, 6 mm

15-25. Irregular rectangular beads, pierced along the longer axis, 14.5-30.5 mm

26. & 27. Elongated beads with hexagonal cross-section, pierced along the longer axis, 9 and 11 mm respectively

28-33. Irregular prismatic beads, 11-29 mm.

In addition to these, another 95 irregular polygonal or amorphous beads were found. There prevail elongated shapes pierced along the longer axis. Their size varies from 12 to 45 mm. The most characteristic shapes are shown in Plate IV.

No more than three glass beads were found:

34. Flattened globular, ribbed (5 ribs) bead, transparent, pale turquoise-green, pierced along the shorter axis, 24 mm

35. Flattened globular, ribbed (7 ribs) bead, transparent, blue, pierced along the shorter axis, 17 mm

36. Slightly biconical bead, transparent, turquoise, damaged, 14.9 mm.

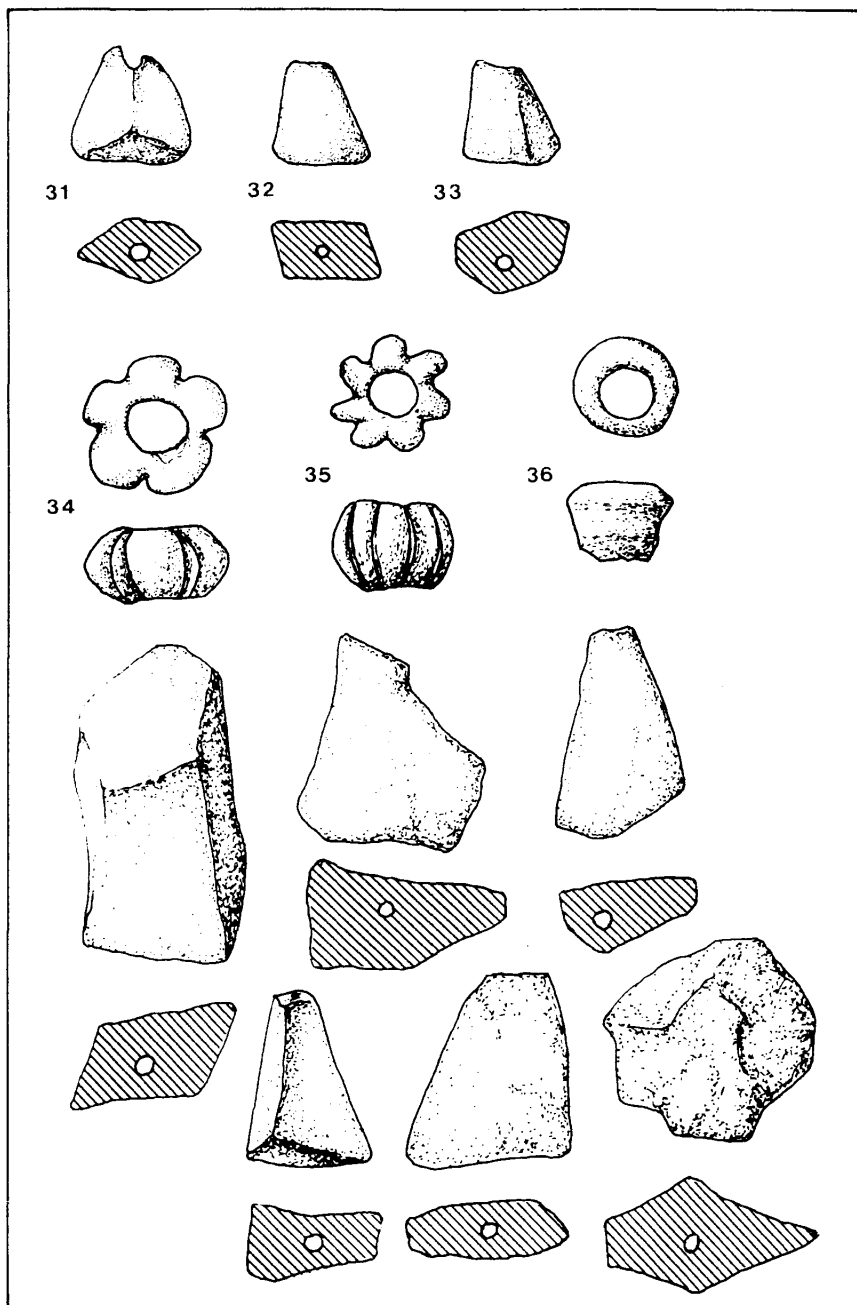


Plate IV: Pećka Banja, 1:1.

Rogovo-Fuše

The necropolis under mounds Rogovo-Fuše, stretching on either side of the road Djakovica - Prizren, is situated near Djakovica, on the elevated Beli Drim terrace, not far from Švanjski Most. The isolated mounds are now mostly destroyed by tillage. In the course of 1966 the excavations of two tumuli were carried out under the direction of M. Garašanin. Mound II held the remains of an Early Iron Age grave. Mound I yielded better results. The oldest layer is that of Late Bronze Age inhumation burials. There follow a somewhat younger layer, containing urn burials of the Donja Brnjica type, and the latest layer, that of Early Iron Age graves. In the centre of the mound the traces of an urn and several groups of grave goods (pottery, spirally twisted bracelets etc.) were found. The Early Iron Age material could be dated to the 6th and 5th centuries BC.⁸

The Early Iron Age material from mound I includes a number of amber beads (PIs V & VI):

1. Wineskin-shaped bead with its upper part separated by a horizontal incision and decorated with horizontal, vertical and oblique intersecting incisions, horizontally pierced at the upper part, 50 mm

2. Wineskin-shaped bead with its upper part separated by a horizontal incision and decorated with vertical and zigzag incisions, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 60 mm

3. Wineskin-shaped bead with its upper part separated by a horizontal incision and decorated with vertical incisions, horizontally pierced at the upper part, 37 mm

4. Wineskin-shaped bead with its upper part separated by a horizontal incision and decorated with intersecting oblique incisions, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 30 mm

5. Wineskin-shaped bead with its upper part separated by a horizontal incision and decorated with zigzag incisions, horizontally pierced at the upper part, 34 mm

6. Wineskin-shaped bead with its upper part separated by a horizontal incision and decorated with vertical incisions, horizontally pierced at the upper part, 32.5 mm

7. Wineskin-shaped bead with its upper part separated by a horizontal incision and decorated with vertical incisions, horizontally pierced at the upper part, 33.5 mm

⁸ M. Garašanin 1966; N. Tasić 1998, 528.

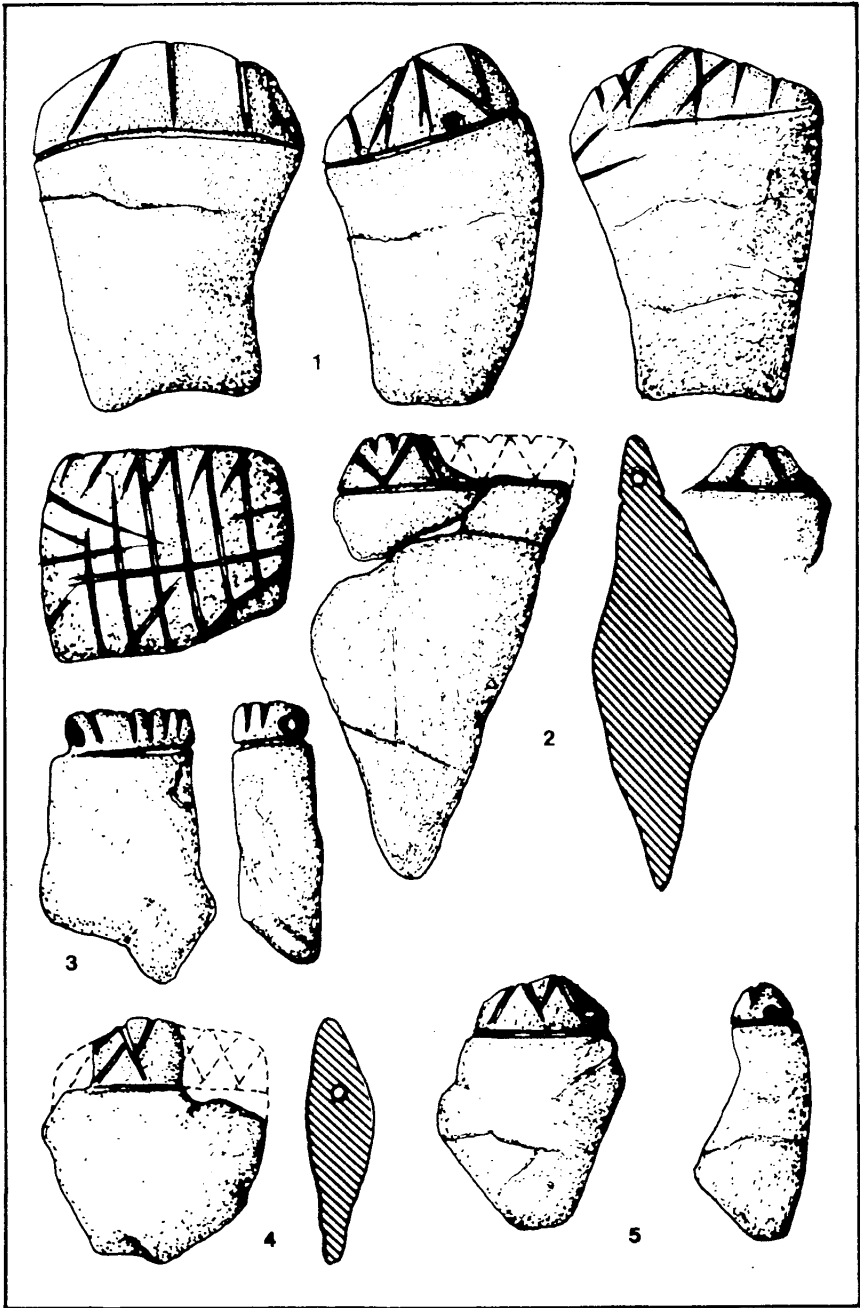


Plate V: Rogovo-Fuše, 1:1.

8. Wineskin-shaped bead with its upper part separated by a horizontal incision and decorated with vertical incisions, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 32.5 mm

9. Wineskin-shaped bead with its upper part separated by a horizontal incision and decorated with vertical incisions, horizontally pierced at the upper part, 28 mm

10. Rhombic bead, pierced along the longer axis, damaged, 30 mm

11. Trapeziform bead, vertically pierced, 19 mm

12-18. Elongated triangular beads, vertically pierced, two of them damaged, 5.5-14 mm

19. Irregular cubical beads with rounded edges, 11 pieces, 10-11 mm

20-24. Irregular polygonal beads, pierced along the longer axis, 18-26 mm.

Donja Bitinja

Donja Bitinja is situated in the Lepenac valley, near Štrpce, between Prizren and Uroševac. During a survey campaign a small-scale trench excavation at the site yielded the remains of a mound with stone mantle. No graves were detected, but some grave goods were: two ceramic mugs and pieces of amber necklace. These artifacts allowed the dating of the find into the turn of the 6th and 5th centuries BC. The excavations were directed and the results published by I. Cerović.⁹

Only six amber beads were found (Pl. VIIa):

1. Wineskin-shaped bead with its upper part separated by a horizontal incision, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 37 mm

2. Elongated conical bead, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 22 mm

3. Elongated conical bead, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 17 mm

4. Elongated conical bead, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 15 mm

5. Elongated conical bead, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 13.5 mm

6. Elongated conical bead, horizontally pierced at the upper part, damaged, 12 mm

⁹ I. Cerović 1990.

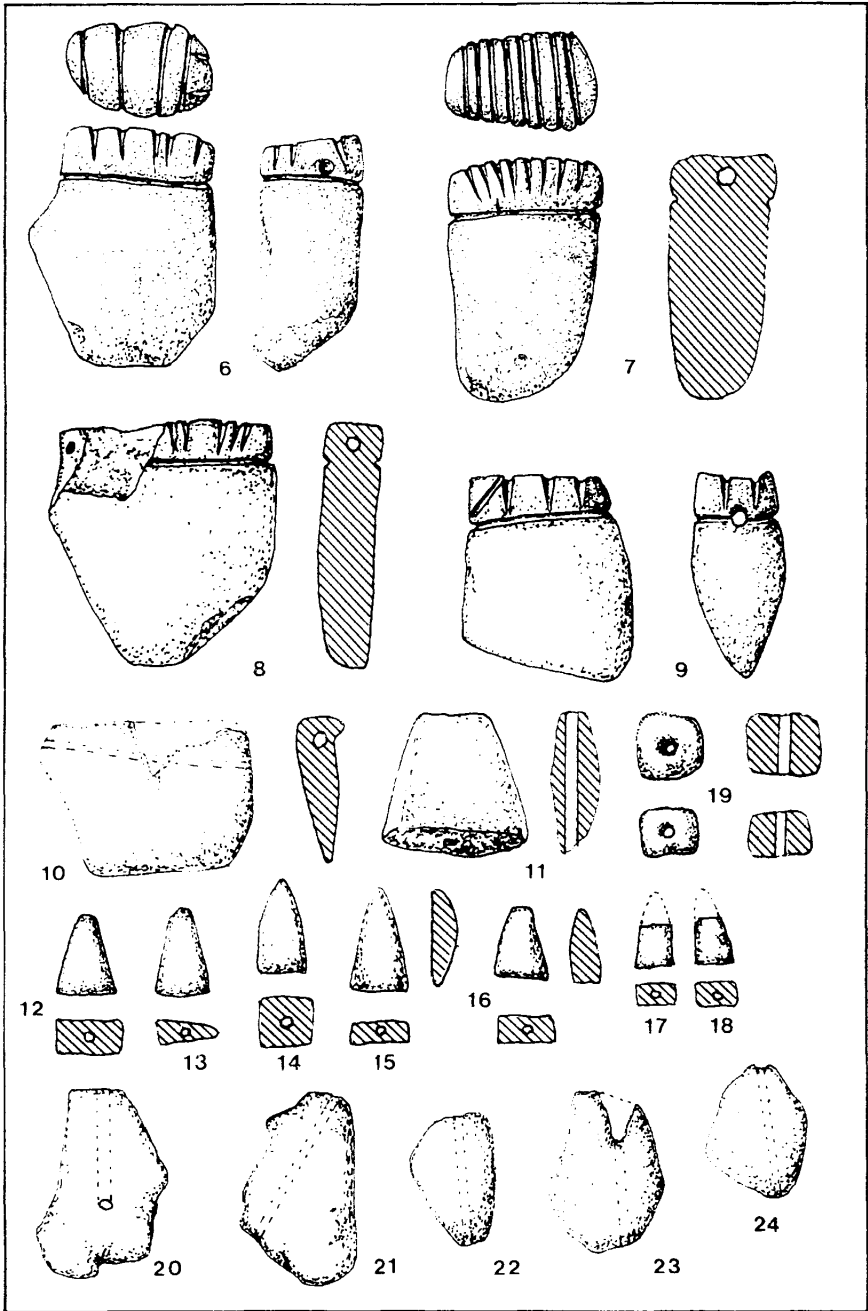


Plate VI: Rogovo-Fuše, 1:1.

Romaja

The Iron Age necropolis Sakra is situated near the village of Romaja, Metohija, in the area delimited by the left banks of the Beli Drim and Došlica rivers, at the northeastern periphery of the Has district. Built on an alluvial river terrace, the necropolis consists of 16 mounds. Its distinct feature is a big mound, 40 m in diameter and over 5 m in height. The excavations were carried out and the results published by N. Djurić, J. Glišić and J. Todorović. Two small tumuli (I and II) did not show much, only traces of destroyed graves. It was the big mound that yielded most graves (38). Its construction and size favour its having been a sort of clannish necropolis in centuries-long use. It contains several skeletal graves with stone constructions, as well as cremations. Remains of the sacrificial constructions were also discovered in it with the traces of burning. Most of the burials date from the 6th and 5th centuries BC, but some younger, 3rd- and 2nd-century ones also occur.

The graves were furnished with local pottery and few imported, Graeco-Italic vessels, iron weapons, horse's harness, and almost no jewelry except for amber and glass beads. Amber was found in 6th- and 5th-century graves. The necropolis has been related to the Drilon variant of the Mat culture which, in turn, is closely associated with the Glasinac cultural complex.¹⁰

Romaja graves held a lot of diverse amber material. Considering the total of amber beads (415 pieces in eight graves) and the fact the site has been published¹¹ only the typological analysis will be carried out here (Pls VIIb & VIIIa):

1. Flat disk beads with rounded edges (grave 23)
2. Flat disk beads with rounded edges and drop-shaped longitudinal section (grave 23)
3. Flat disk beads with sharp edges (grave 23)
4. Spherical beads (grave 23)
5. Cylindrical beads with rounded edges (grave 23)
6. Cylindrical beads with sharp edges
7. Barrel-shaped beads (grave 23)

(In grave 23 were found 198 small beads, 3.7-10 mm, shapes 1-7, as well as one spherical ceramic bead and one bead of glass paste.)

¹⁰ J. Todorović 1979; N. Tasić, 1998a, 563.

¹¹ N. Djurić, J. Glišić, J. Todorović 1975; A. Palavestra 1993, 152-153.

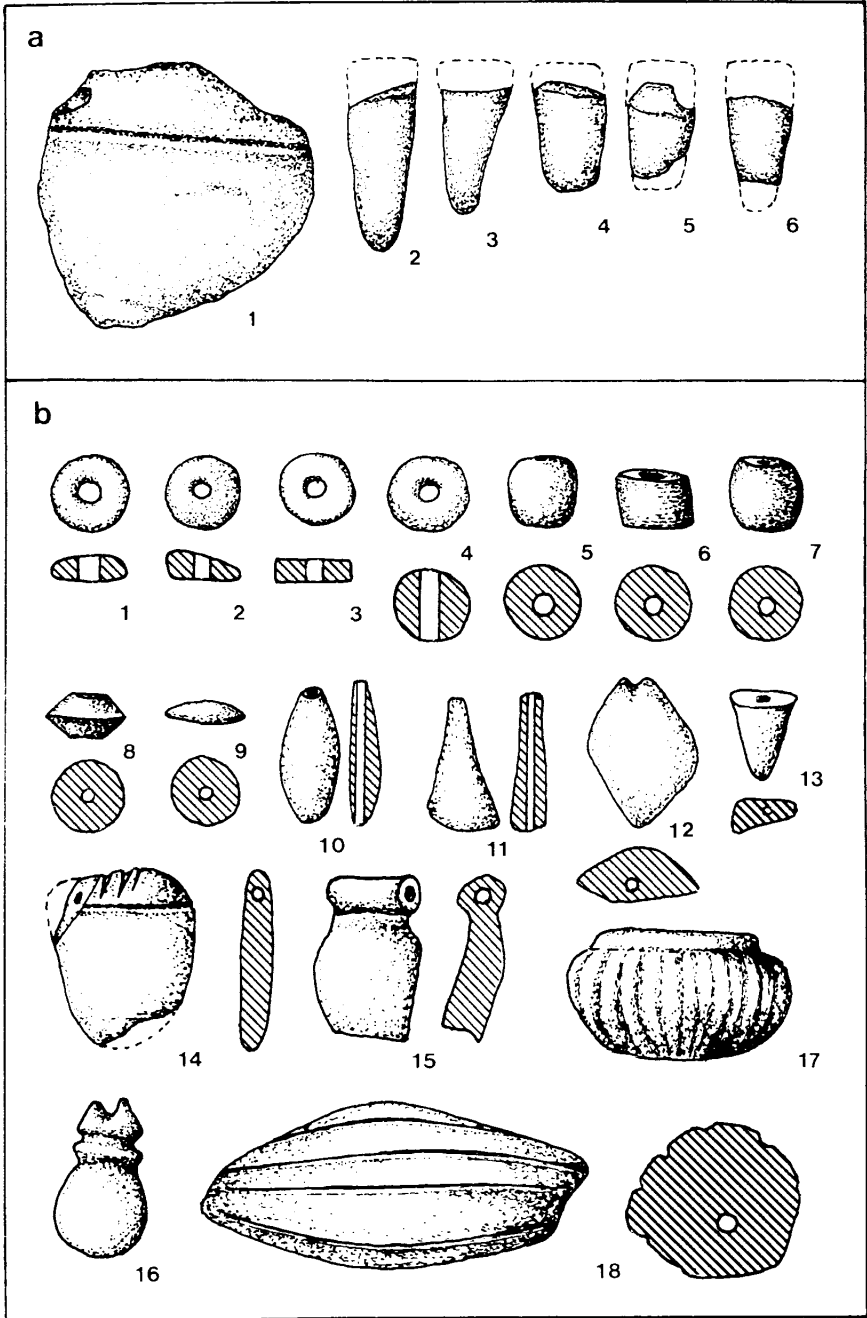


Plate VIIa: Donja Bitinja, 1:1; Plate VIIb: Romaja, 1-17 - no scale, 18 - 1:1.

8. Biconical beads (18 pieces, grave 25)
9. Lentoid bead (1 piece, grave 12)
10. Spindly beads (9 pieces, grave 25)
11. Irregular trapeziform beads (1 piece, grave 12; 10 pieces, grave 25)
12. Irregular rhombic beads (1 piece, grave 12; 4 pieces, grave 25)
13. Conical, vertically pierced bead (1 piece, outside the graves)
14. Wineskin-shaped beads with their upper part separated by a horizontal incision and decorated with vertical incisions, horizontally pierced at the upper part (2 pieces, grave 16; 3 pieces, grave 25)
15. Wineskin-shaped bead with its upper part profiled as a recumbent cylinder, horizontally pierced at the upper part (1 piece, grave 23)
16. Bulla (smaller wineskin, flask, bottle)-shaped bead with spherical receptacle, biconical neck and conical stopper (1 piece, 17 mm, grave 23)
17. Flattened globular, ribbed bead with one end truncated and cylindrically profiled, without incisions, pierced along the shorter axis (1 piece, 43 mm, grave 21)
18. Elongated ribbed (9 ribs) bead, pierced along the longer axis (1 piece, 52 mm, grave 21)
19. Tabular bead in the form of horse's head, fragmented (1 piece, outside the graves).

In addition to these, another 155 irregular polygonal and amorphous amber beads were found: 54 pieces in grave 4; 33 pieces in grave 16; 3 pieces in grave 20; 7 pieces in grave 21; 34 pieces in grave 25; 10 pieces in grave 33, and 14 pieces outside the graves.

Grave 21 contained one large, finely carved crystal bead:

20. Elongated, ribbed (12 ribs) bead, pierced along the longer axis, transparent, pale yellowish rock crystal, 77 mm.

Glass beads were not as numerous as amber beads:

21. Flattened globular beads, pale green, pierced along the shorter axis (5 pieces, grave 5)

22. Flattened globular beads, white, pierced along the shorter axis (3 pieces, grave 5)

23. Flattened globular bead, yellow, pierced along the shorter axis (1 piece, grave 23)

24. Flattened globular bead, pale blue, pierced along the shorter axis (1 piece, outside the graves)

25. Flattened globular bead, pale green, decorated with plastic zig-zag band of white colour, pierced along the shorter axis (1 piece, grave 4)

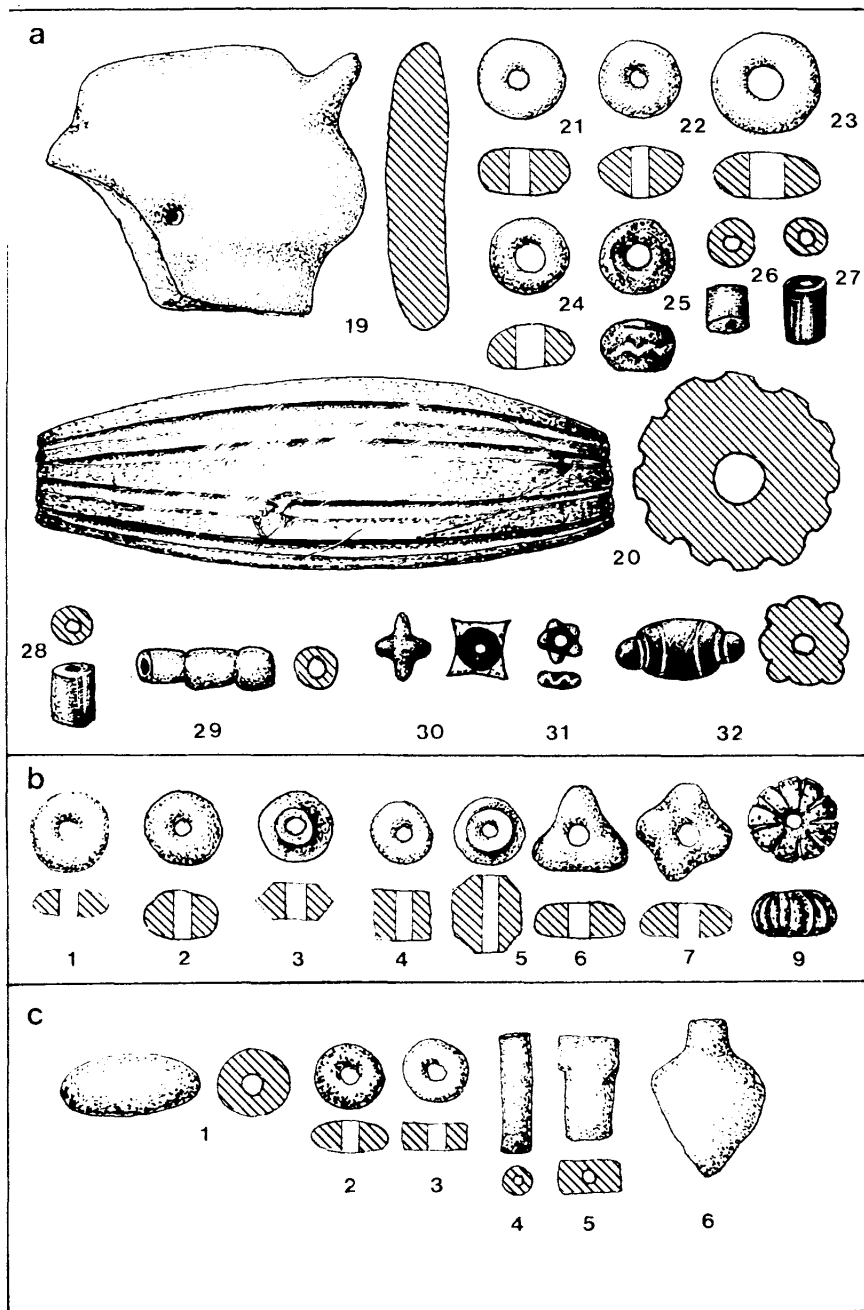


Plate VIIIa: Romaja, 19 - no scale, 20 - 1:1, 21-32 - no scale; Plate VIIIb: Boka-Prčevo, no scale; Plate VIIIc: Karagač, no scale.

26. Cylindrical beads, pale green, longitudinally pierced (2 pieces, grave 23)
27. Cylindrical beads, black, longitudinally pierced (7 pieces, grave 23)
28. Cylindrical bead, blue, longitudinally pierced (1 piece, grave 23)
29. Cylindrical, three-segment bead, blue, longitudinally pierced (1 piece, outside the graves)
30. Square bead, yellow with circular black core (1 piece, grave 23)
31. Flat disk bead, black, decorated with plastic zigzag band of yellow colour, longitudinally pierced (1 piece, grave 23)
32. Cylindrical bead with globular ends, blue, decorated with white bands (1 piece, outside the graves)

Prčevo-Boka

Prčevo is situated near Klina in the area of Prekoruplje, a Metohija region bordering on Kosovo. The site of Boka at Prčevo yielded a necropolis with 19 mounds. The excavations of 1973-1975 were directed by N. Tasić of the Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Seven tumuli were investigated, all of them built of earth and topped by stone calottes. Some mounds contained only one grave, others more than twenty. All graves housed skeletons, most often enclosed within constructions built of stone slabs. The traces of sacrificial rites were also discovered. The relationship is interesting between the graves in tumulus 14, where the overlying burial horizon held weapons, and the lower, inner one only jewelry. It was presumed that such a burial practice might have had a symbolical meaning, namely that warriors had been buried on top of women and children.¹² From more recent analyses of the material, the dating of the top, warriors' burial horizon to the 6th-5th centuries BC has been inferred, while most of the lower, jewelry-containing graves are likely to be earlier, probably from the 13th century BC.¹³ Numerous amber and glass beads¹⁴ will be put here through the typological analysis (Pl. VIIIb):

1. Flat disk beads with rounded edges (43 pieces, tumulus X; 5 pieces, tumulus XIV, grave 13; 17 pieces, tumulus XIV, grave 19)

¹² N. Tasić 1979.

¹³ N. Tasić, 1998b, 558.

¹⁴ A. Palavestra 1993, 153.

2. Flattened globular beads (5 pieces, tumulus X; 22 pieces, tumulus XIV, grave 19; 7 pieces, tumulus XIV, grave 14; 9 pieces, tumulus XIV, grave 12; 3 pieces, tumulus XIV, grave 17)
 3. Biconical, short beads, pierced along the shorter axis (6 pieces, tumulus X)
 4. Cylindrical beads (4 pieces, tumulus X)
 5. Cylindrical beads truncated at both ends (4 pieces, tumulus X)
 6. Flat trefoil beads (4 pieces, tumulus X; 1 piece, tumulus XIV, grave 19; 1 piece, tumulus XIV, grave 13).
 7. Flat quatrefoil beads (31 piece, tumulus X)
 8. Amorphous and irregular polygonal beads (43 pieces, tumulus X; 11 pieces, tumulus XIV, grave 13)
- Glass beads also occur:
9. Flattened globular, ribbed beads, pierced along the shorter axis (tumulus X)

Karagač

The prehistoric necropolis at Karagač is situated on a small alluvial terrace in the Ibar valley, in Kosovo, between Valački Krš in the north and Zvečan in the south, not far from Kosovska Mitrovica. The excavations of 1960-1962, directed by D. Srejšović, confirmed the continuous occupation of the site between the Neolithic and the Late Bronze Age. As evidenced by the material, the latter period had seen the abandonment of the settlement, and the alluvial terrace had since served as a burial ground all through the Iron Age. Several graves were established at Karagač, most of them from the 6th and 5th centuries BC, and some dated to the 10th-9th-century BC. The earlier horizon contained cremation burials in urns, while in the later period the remains from cremation stakes had been buried in stone constructions. Graves 1 and 3 from the latest horizon, e.i. 6th and 5th centuries BC, belong to the distinguished members of the community.¹⁵ They were furnished with pottery, bronze adornments, Glasinac-type fibulae, and amber beads (Pl. VIIIc):

1. Oval beads, pierced along the longer axis (6 pieces, grave 3)
2. Flat disk beads with rounded edges (7 pieces, grave 1)
3. Flat disk bead with sharp edges (1 piece, grave 3)
4. Cylindrical bead, pierced along the longer axis (1 piece, grave 3)

¹⁵ D. Srejšović 1973; N. Tasić 1998c, 543.

5. Rectangular bead, pierced along the longer axis (1 piece, grave 1; 2 pieces, grave 3)

6. Bulla (smaller wineskin, flask, bottle)-shaped bead with heart-shaped receptacle and cylindrical neck, transversally pierced at the neck (1 piece, grave 1)

7. Irregular polygonal beads (2 pieces, grave 1; 3 pieces, grave 3).

In addition to these beads, mention has been made of two amber beads of unspecified shape in grave 6.

In terms of chronology and typology, amber beads from Kosovo may be classified into two groups. The first would comprise the finds from Iglarevo, which are older and belong to the developed Bronze Age, i.e. to the 14th and 13th centuries BC. Iron Age finds, particularly of the 6th and 5th centuries BC, constitute the second chronological horizon.

In terms of typology, the beads from Iglarevo, among the earliest amber finds in the central and western Balkans, are characteristic of the developed Bronze Age. Still earlier are those from Žamnjak and Krmedski Novi Grad in Istria (1600-1500 BC), or from the tumuli at Belotić and Bela Crkva in the Drina valley (1500-1300 BC). Belonging to the same chronological horizon as Iglarevo are the amber beads from Vranjani in western Serbia (1400-1300 BC), from Jezero in the Padjine-Ročević complex, from Rudine near Ivanpolje at Glasinac (1400-1300 BC), from Vrčin in Istria (1300-1200 BC), as well as an isolated amber bead from the Bezdanjača cave in Lika (1400-1250 BC).¹⁶ Typologically, all amber beads of the developed Bronze Age in the central and western Balkans have simple geometrical shapes, just like the Iglarevo ones. These shapes include: flat disk beads with rounded edges (Belotić-Bela Crkva, Jezero, Vrčin, Bezdanjača), flattened globular (Belotić-Bela Crkva, Jezero, Vrčin), truncated biconical (Belotić-Bela Crkva, Jezero, Rudine) and lentoid beads (Žamnjak, Vrčin).¹⁷ Mycenaean beads from Greece mostly follow the same simple forms: irregular rectangular, flat disk, flattened globular, lentoid and truncated biconical. The occurrence of these shapes, however, is as frequent in Italy or in Central and Western Europe during the Bronze Age.¹⁸ Carefully carved

¹⁶ A. Palavestra 1993, 264-265.

¹⁷ A. Palavestra 1993, 181-250.

¹⁸ A. Harding, H. Hughes-Brock 1974; N. Negroni Catacchio 1971; E. Sprincz, C.W. Beck 1981; C. Beck, S. Shennan 1991.

oval, truncated biconical Iglarevo beads bear resemblance to amygdaloid Mycenaean beads, which are assumed to be the product of Mycenaean workshops in Greece.¹⁹ Disk and irregular rectangular beads with drop-shaped longitudinal section are characteristic of the Bronze Age. Rather than due to a piece's defects or careless carving, their asymmetrical sections have been considered the result of the intention to achieve as regular curve of the necklace as possible and its natural fittingness.²⁰

The second, later group of amber beads from prehistoric Kosovo sites has been dated to the 6th and 5th centuries BC, a period of the busiest amber traffic in the Balkans.²¹ The types of beads found in Kosovo sites commonly occur during the Early Iron Age of the central Balkans, and of its broader Balkan and Mediterranean environment. At the top of the list is the wineskin shape. Such beads were found at Rogovo, Pećka Banja, Donja Bitinja and Romaja. The type is characteristic of the central Balkans, notably of the horizon of the end of the 6th - beginning of the 5th century BC. At Pećka Banja its two basic variants occur: wineskin-shaped beads with either vertical or horizontal incisions in the upper part. In the central Balkans the former are much more frequent. Besides Kosovo, they were found in rich graves at Atenica, Lisijevo Polje, Novi Pazar, Glasinac and Kačanj, dating from the turn of the 6th and 5th centuries BC.²² Beads of this type are usually larger, oval heart-shaped pieces of amber with profiled and horizontally pierced upper part - the "head", separated from the bead's body by a plastic band or an incision. The incisions in the upper part are either just summarily engraved, as at Rogovo, Donja Bitinja and Romaja, or very carefully executed following a well-established pattern. The incisions are arranged in groups which are separated by broader, slightly lower fields. Sometimes a bigger central rib protrudes between the incisions.

Such beads have been variously named in the literature as "wineskins",²³ "heart-shaped beads",²⁴ "large bullae" or "heart-shaped bullae",²⁵ even as "*kraters* without handles".²⁶ Most of these terms, how-

¹⁹ A. Harding, H. Hughes-Brock 1974, 155.

²⁰ C. Beck, S. Shennan 1991, 57.

²¹ A. Palavestra 1993, 269-280.

²² A. Palavestra 1993, 208, 253.

²³ Dj. Mano-Zisi, Lj. Popović 1969, 23; D. Srežović, Č. Marković 1981, 70.

²⁴ B. Jovanović 1975.

²⁵ A. Palavestra 1984, 47.

²⁶ B. Filow, K. Schkorpil 1927; N. Vulić 1931, 1933, 1934.

ever, refer to a sort of receptacle. The term “wineskin” seems to be the most accurate as evidenced by an amber bead from Novi Pazar. It represents a ram’s hide ready to be made into a wineskin, with the head still in place, i.e. ram’s fleece with head and horns, a frequent iconographical motif in Greek art (e.g. golden fleece)(Fig. 1). This bead, now in the National Museum, Belgrade (Inv.n° 677a), was published by Dj. Mano-Zisi and Lj. Popović, who misinterpreted it as an unfinished, somewhat unskillful depiction of the ram.²⁷ The tail and hind legs can be clearly seen tied together at the belly just as in wineskins. The depiction of the tail and hind legs is identical to that on wineskin-shaped beads. It thus becomes clear why the craftsman, careless when carving the body of the wineskin (lacking any definite shape), had paid such an attention to the part of the wineskin where legs and tail get tied together. Thus the incisions, as Dj. Mano-Zisi and Lj. Popović rightly suggested, actually symbolize cords and tied skin.²⁸ The bead from Pećka Banja, where these details are clearly discernible (Pl. II/1), constitutes in fact the prototype of wineskin-shaped beads. In the upper part three groups of incisions are engraved: the central one depicting a thicker part of the tail, and two lateral ones representing tied leg skin. Other types of wineskin-shaped beads are nothing but variously stylized representations of the manner in which the receptacle is sewn and tied. The second type of wineskin-shaped beads from Pećka Banja - with horizontal incisions in the upper part - is not as frequent. Similar examples were found at Trebenište and named “*kraters* without handles” by Filow, Schkorpil and Vulić.²⁹ The Trebenište beads have an additional peculiarity - their lower parts are button-shaped, which obviously illustrates the tying of wineskins at the bottom. The beads from Pećka Banja have no such detail; the tying of a wineskin is only symbolized by horizontal incisions in the upper part.

Amber wineskins belong to the type of beads in the form of a receptacle, which include the “*bullae*” (small wineskins, bags or bottles) - well-known and frequent Mediterranean apotropaic amulets in the classical times.³⁰ One bulla-shaped amber bead was found at Romaja (N° 16), whereas beads N° 15 from Romaja and N° 6 from Karagač constitute the variants of

²⁷ Dj. Mano-Zisi, Lj. Popović 1969, 22.

²⁸ Dj. Mano-Zisi, Lj. Popović 1969, 23..

²⁹ B. Filow, K. Schkorpil 1929, 95, 96; N. Vulić 1933, 7, 21.

³⁰ A. Palavestra 1993, 254.

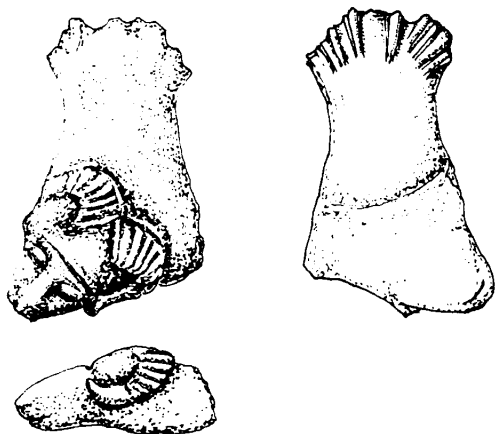


Fig. 1. Amber bead in the form of a ram's wineskin from Novi Pazar

bullae and wineskin respectively. Bulla-shaped amber beads had been very popular, which accounts for their frequent occurrence at 6th- and 5th-century sites in the central and western Balkans, such as Pilatovići, Novi Pazar, Atenica, Glasinac, Kompolje etc.³¹ As other carved amber beads of the central Balkan, wineskin- and bulla-shaped beads had probably come from south-Italic workshops. Wineskin-shaped ones were thus registered in Salerno³² or

at Aléria in Corsica,³³ while bulla-shaped beads occur at numerous sites in Italy and in the broader Mediterranean area.³⁴ That the shapes of wineskins or bullae, i.e. of receptacles in general, had been highly popular is testified by beads made in other materials, such as hollow bone beads with lids from Villalfonsina, end of the 6th century BC.³⁵

It is, however, in the central Balkans that the highest incidence and diversity of wineskin-shaped amber beads have been registered. It is possible that their production had been intended for that region, or some specimens might even have been manufactured by local craftsmen, but it is beyond doubt that their popularity in the central Balkans should be associated with wine - the important and prestigious export product of the classical Mediterranean. It is wine that a good deal of Greek import - e.g. "sets" of bronze drinking vessels - into the barbaric Mediterranean hinterland, the Balkans in particular, was intended for.³⁶ Amber beads in the shape of full wineskins must have symbolized the prestigious product, or might have served as an equivalent in the exchange, trade or ritual gift exchange.³⁷

³¹ D.E. Strong 1966; A. Palavestra 1993, 209, 254.

³² J. de la Genière 1961, 85.

³³ M. Yon 1977, 594.

³⁴ A. Palavestra 1993, 254.

³⁵ R. Papi 1979, 47; A. Palavestra 1993, 253.

³⁶ P. Wells 1985; M. Dietler 1989; S. Babić 1991.

³⁷ F. Fisher 1973; S. Babić 1990.

Various ribbed beads (globular, flattened globular and elongated) constitute another type of carefully carved amber beads from the Kosovo sites, and are discovered at Pećka Banja and Romaja. This type is rather common to the Iron Age Balkans, notably in the horizon of the 6th and 5th centuries BC. They appear at the sites of Pilatovići, Novi Pazar, Atenica, Lisijevo Polje, Kačanj, Kruševica, Romaja, Trebenište, Glasinac, and in Iapodian sites such as Prozor, Golubić, Ribić, Jezerine, Lički Ribnik.³⁸ Their frequent occurrence is recorded in southern Italy, where they also belong to the horizon of the 6th and 5th centuries, e.g. at Salerno,³⁹ Armento and some other sites.⁴⁰

The damaged amber bead in the form of a horse's head from Romaja is rather interesting. Although its precise typological determination is made impossible due to the mutilations, the piece clearly belongs to the zoomorphic output of the south-Italic workshops of the 6th and 5th centuries BC. It has analogues in the beads from Novi Pazar and Kompolje,⁴¹ as well as in the Marzabotto amber representations of the horse found in 6th-century graves.⁴² Trefoil and quatrefoil flat beads from the Boka necropolis at Prčevo find no analogues in amber material, but similar clay beads occur in Glasinac Iron Age necropolises (documentation of the Zemaljski muzej, Sarajevo). The published amber material from Prčevo belongs to younger, Hallstatt burials, as indicated by ribbed glass beads from tumulus X, originally part of a necklace made of amber beads and characteristic of the 6th and 5th centuries BC. The elongated conical beads from Donja Bitinja - the so-called wolf's teeth, find their analogues in the amber beads from Novi Pazar and Glasinac.⁴³

The other shapes (cylindrical, rhombic, rectangular, triangular, truncated biconical, flattened globular, disk, lentoid, irregular polygonal etc.) of amber beads from the mentioned Kosovo sites often occur among the 6th- and 5th-century amber material of the central Balkans.⁴⁴

Four amber beads from Kosovo were tested by infrared spectroscopy in the Amber Research Laboratory of Vassar College, New York. The

³⁸ A. Palavestra 1993, 210, 254.

³⁹ J. de la Genière 1961, 83-89.

⁴⁰ D.E. Strong 1966, 87-89.

⁴¹ A. Palavestra 1993, 259.

⁴² G. Muffatti 1967, 479.

⁴³ A. Palavestra 1993, 205.

⁴⁴ A. Palavestra 1993, 181-262.

analysis was carried out by Prof. Curt W. Beck. Samples were taken of two Pećka Banja pieces, a wineskin-shaped bead and an irregular polygonal bead, and of two beads from Romaja grave 23, an amorphous bead and a flat disk bead. In all cases the results were typical of Baltic amber.⁴⁵

The amber beads from Kosovo testify to the rich and vivid communication of the central Balkan population with their broader Mediterranean setting. While raw amber originated from the Baltic, amber beads that reached Kosovo came from Mediterranean crafts and trade centres. Although amber is likely to have reached the central Balkans directly from the north by mediation of Central Europe during the developed Bronze Age, as evidenced by the finds in the Drina valley, Iglarevo amber may be presumed to have come from the south. When it first appeared in Mycenaean Greece in the horizon of 16th and 15th centuries BC (LH I/II), amber was limited to the Peloponnesus and major Mycenaean centres. During the following period, however, due the expansion of the Mycenaean culture - trade including - amber spread over a vaster territory. In the 13th century BC (LH III B) amber occur in association with Mycenaean-type bronze weapons in Epirus and Albania.⁴⁶ The same association of amber with Mycenaean-type bronze weapons at Iglarevo may suggest an indirect or direct northbound expansion of cultural and trade impulses from Mycenaean Greece.

Amber finds from the horizon of the 6th and 5th centuries BC are just part of luxury import into the Balkan mainland from the Adriatic coastal centres. That carved Iron Age amber finds from the central Balkans - including Kosovo - came from south-Italian centres of craftsmanship can be convincingly documented.⁴⁷ The sites where amber was found (Pećka Banja, Romaja, Boka, Donja Bitinja, Karagač) are all situated along the course of major caravan routes - often the only natural communications - connecting the Balkan mainland and the Adriatic coast. Amber finds in the territory of Kosovo thus bear evidence of an intensive trade connections between Mediterranean centres and the Balkan mainland.⁴⁸ Diverse aspects of such communications, such as active and passive trade, control over caravan routes, ritual exchange and the symbolical nature of gifts, are impossible to grasp solely through amber. There is no doubt, however, that the study of amber

⁴⁵ A. Palavestra 1993, 152, 153.

⁴⁶ A. Harding, H. Hughes-Brock 1974, 150-153; A. Harding 1984, 85-86.

⁴⁷ A. Palavestra 1993, 261.

⁴⁸ A. Palavestra 1994.

reveals the existence and vividness of cultural and trade communications in the Balkans and the Mediterranean in the course of the Iron Age.

Translated by Marina Adamović

ПРАИСТОРИЈСКЕ ЋИЛИБАРСКЕ И СТАКЛЕНЕ ПЕРЛЕ СА КОСОВА

Резиме

Археолошки материјал са важних праисторијских налазишта на Косову није још увек у потпуности објављен. Припрема велике изложбе у САНУ, „Археолошко благо Косова и Метохије“ - током 1997. године - била је прилика да се анализира и публикује ћилибарски материјал са неких налазишта на Косову. Ово се у првом реду односи на перле из Игларева, Пећке Бање и Рогова. Перле из Ромаје, Прчева, Доње Битиње и Карагача употпуњују слику о праисторијском ћилибару на Косову, а обрађене су према расположивој објављеној литератури. Осим ћилибарских перли, овде су приказане и стаклене перле и перле од горског кристала, које су најчешће биле интегрални делови ћилибарских огрлица. Иако је у овом раду примарна анализа ћилибара, стаклене перле и перле од горског кристала нису изостављене, с обзиром на то да се материјал са неких локалитета први пут објављује.

Ћилибарске перле са Косова могу се хронолошки и типолошки сврстати у две групе. Прву би чинили налази из Игларева, који су старији и припадају развијеном бронзаном добу, односно времену XIV/XIII века п.н.е. Други хронолошки хоризонт представљају налази из гвозденог доба, посебно из VI и V века п.н.е.

Ћилибарске перле са Косова сведоче о богатој и живој комуникацији житеља централног Балкана са ширим медитеранским окружењем. Иако је ћилибар као сировина балтички, ћилибарске перле стизале су на Косово су из занатских и трговачких центара на Медитерану. Премда је у развијено бронзано доба ћилибар вероватно стизао на централни Балкан и директно са севера, посредством средње Европе, о чему сведоче налази из Подриња, за ћилибар из Игларева би се могло претпоставити да је дошао с југа. Ћилибар се у микенској Грчкој, када се прво појавио у хоризонту XVI/XV в. п.н.е (LN I/II), ограничавао само на Пелопонез и најзначајније микенске центре. У наредном периоду, међутим, упоредо са ширењем микенске културе - а свакако и трговине - ћилибар се јавља на ширем простору. У XIII веку п.н.е. (LN III B), проналажен је ћилибар, уз бронзано оружје микенског типа, у Епиру и Албанији. Налази ћилибара из Игларева, такође уз бронзано оружје микенског типа, сугерисали би да су се културни импулси и трговачке комуникације из микенске Грчке посредно или непосредно ширили на север.

Налази ћилибара из хоризонта VI и V века п.н.е. само су део луксузног импорта, који је из трговачких средишта на Јадранској обали стизао у унутрашњост Балкана. За обрађени ћилибар са централног Балкана из гвозденог доба - па и са налазишта на Косову - може се убедљиво доказати да потиче из занатских центара у јужној Италији. Локалитети на којима је ћилибар пронађен (Пећка Бања, Ромаја,

Бока, Доња Битиња, Карагач) налазе се дуж трасе најважнијих караванских путева - често и јединих природних комуникација - који су повезивали унутрашњост Балкана и јадранску обалу. Налази ћилибара на подручју Косова, стога сведоче о живој трговачкој комуникацији између медитеранских центара и балканског залеђа. Сви аспекти ових комуникација, као што су активна и пасивна трговина, контрола караванских путева, ритуална размена и симболични карактер дарова, не могу се сагледати само на основу ћилибара. Ћилибар, међутим, недвосмислено показује постојање и разгранатост културних и трговачких комуникација на Балкану и Средоземљу у гвоздено доба.

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