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Glasinac – Notes on Archaeological Terminology

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Abstract: The contribution seeks to explore possible convergences in archaeological research, regardless of the theoretical/methodological approach, based on the case of the considerations of the Iron Age societies of the late prehistory in the Central Balkans. The typological-chronological analysis of decorated whetstones from the region of Glasinac, recently published by Blagoje Govedarica, points to the conclusion of diversification of social roles and horizontal distribution of power and authority, similar to the line of inquiry based upon the concept of heterarchy, currently explored by the authors of postprocessual affinities. In order to recognize these similarities, it is argued that a more efficient communication inside the discipline may be achieved by overcoming terminological barriers separating various theoretical approaches.

Key words: Glasinac, Iron Age society, hierarchy/heterarchy, status symbols

Introduction

Glasinac is one of the basic and most important terms in archaeology of the late prehistory of the Central Balkans. Its primary meaning is derived from a geographical label, denoting the area in eastern Bosnia.¹ Since by the end of the 19th century an impressive number of burial mounds was registered there, dated throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages,² this spatial denominator acquired a chronological dimension as well. The concept of the *Glasinac cultural group* rapidly became one of the pivotal phenomena of the late prehistory of the region.³ Furthermore, the archaeologically perceived similarities with the adjacent regions led the researchers to establish the *Glasinac-Mati cultural complex*, spanning over a vast area of the Central Balkans, implying cultural and ultimately ethnic affinity.⁴ Finally, the research into the immense number of funerary assemblages scattered over the Glasinac plateau resulted in some of the most explicit con-

siderations of the social dimensions of the communities inhabiting the region during the late prehistory, resulting in the introduction of the concept of *princely graves* into the central Balkan past.⁵

Undoubtedly, one of the main reasons for the omnipresence of *Glasinac* in research of the Balkan prehistory lies in the abundant record, relating by its character to several fundamental topics. Firstly, the long series of interlinked archaeological units enabled the refinement of chronological determination and a more precise spatial distribution of certain classes of artifacts, such as pottery and jewellery. This spatial/chronological seriation gave rise to the formulation of the concept of the *Glasinac cultural group* and its location in the wider pattern of distribution of material culture, in accordance with the postulates of the culture-historical approach.⁶ Furthermore, the perceived continuity of the archaeologically established cultural forms raised the issues of the transition from Bronze to Iron Ages and, ultimately, to the question of ethnogenesis⁷

¹ Palavestra 1997.

² Benac / Čović 1956; 1957.

³ Čović 1983; 1987; Palavestra 1997.

⁴ Čović 1987, 575; Vasić 1987, 572.

⁵ Benac / Čović 1957; Palavestra 1984; Babić 2002; 2004, 18.

⁶ Babić 2010.

⁷ Benac 1987.

– formation of ethnic communities known from the written sources and identified in archaeological record in the form of cultural groups.⁸ In this manner, a number of concepts vital in archaeological research of the Central Balkans have become inextricably linked to the term *Glasinac*, enabling several layers of interpretation: identification of basic analytic units – chronological and spatial clusters, their association to the ethnic groups described in the literary evidence, and finally, inference on the origins and changes of the social roles individuals played in the communities inhabiting the region during the Bronze and Iron Ages.

The investigation into the social affairs reflected in the rich funerary evidence from the Glasinac region has indeed been raised as early as the end of the 19th century, when Franz Fiala identified the graves with opulent offerings as the burials of tribal leaders, suggesting a hierarchical social structure based on kinship.⁹ When by the middle of the 20th century the systematic research in the region was renewed, the term *princely graves* soon became widely accepted, indicating the existence of a group holding the positions of social power, and distinguished by its economic prerogatives as well. Accordingly, the main criterion for discerning the members of this group has been the presence of luxurious objects in their graves, particularly the good imported from the south and bearing the stylistic traits of the Greek manufacture.¹⁰ The corresponding phenomenon has been described in other parts of continental Europe, and denoted by the concept of *chiefdom* – a community encompassing a number of kinship groups linked by the perception of common origins, and dominated by the lineage perceived to be the direct descendants from the founder.¹¹ This is the group that Alojz Benac and Borivoj Čović termed *princes*,¹² resonating with the French and German (*Fürsten*) terminology.

In one of his recent works, Blagoje Govedarica approached this long-lasting tradition of identifying the Glasinac tribal leaders on the grounds of abundance and structure of the grave offerings

from another perspective.¹³ Starting by the well established method of stylistic-typological analysis of the class of objects previously considered to be the status symbols of the princes – decorated whetstones, he questioned the traditional interpretation of the social structure of the Glasinac Iron Age communities and suggested possible alternative directions of further research. It is particularly interesting to note that, working within the culture-historical framework, Govedarica reached the conclusions strikingly similar to the ones proposed by the postprocessually inclined researchers.

Iron Age Social Structure (Questioned)

The idea of chiefdom as the universal organizational principle of the Iron Age societies in Europe has dominated the archaeological literature for the best part of the 20th century. This deeply rooted assumption of the ruling elite, mainly identified on the grounds of the funerary evidence, ruling a hierarchically ordered society, is grounded in the general anthropological concepts of the 19th century, presupposing the establishment of social hierarchy, control and centralization of resources, and merging of social and economic prerogatives as the inevitable and “natural” path of development from the prehistoric to civilized forms of social life.¹⁴ Social complexity is thus equaled with hierarchical order¹⁵, ultimately resulting in the widely accepted model of social evolution – band, tribe, chiefdom, state, represented by the neo-evolutionary approach of the 20th century.¹⁶

This tradition postulates that the historical development from the prehistoric barbarism towards civilization began during the Bronze Age by the formation of chiefdoms in the Aegean, entering its final stage in the Iron Age, when the major part of Europe was organized into the network of chiefdoms. The increase in cultural exchange, primarily trade with the urban centers of the Mediterranean, significantly contributed to the acceleration of the historical development,

⁸ Kuzmanović 2013.

⁹ Fiala 1892, 402-403; Fiala 1893, 723.

¹⁰ Babić 2002; 2005.

¹¹ Babić 2004, 38; Thurston 2009, 352.

¹² Benac / Čović 1957, 31.

¹³ Govedarica 2017, 37-65.

¹⁴ Thurston 2009, 356.

¹⁵ Crumley 1995, 1-5.

¹⁶ cf. Chapman 2003; Plucienik 2005.

at the same time creating the preconditions for the elites to establish the exclusive rights over the economy of prestige goods. This intensification of trade exchange between the Mediterranean centers and the European periphery is further conceptualized as the generator of the “global” social change, by enabling a number of individuals to gain economically, and consequently in terms of their social standing as leaders of communities, as the result of their position in the networks of exchange of luxurious and exotic items.¹⁷ The real power of chiefs, previously already based upon their origin and position in the kinship system, was thus further enforced and extended into the domain of economic control. Furthermore, since the direct bloodline is assumed to link these chiefs to the (real or imagined) ancestor-founders, it is implied that their power, along with the social and economic, also entailed some elements of cult activities, i.e. the elements of religious authority.¹⁸ Consequently, up until the end of the 20th century, it has been generally presumed that the Iron Age societies were hierarchically ordered according to the kinship principle, with the paramount chiefs encompassing social, economic and religious prerogatives, and that this pattern of development is cross-culturally and universally valid.

Contrary to this ideal-type model of social hierarchy, some current critical approaches to historiography rather point to the unstable and chaotic social relations between a number of smaller communities, without the necessity of the existence of some supreme leader.¹⁹ Even if some individuals succeeded in enforcing their power over a wider region, it was always a short-lived situation, indicating that the social system of ruling was not completely consistent and coherent. In other words, the projection of the ideally constructed characteristics of chiefdoms onto the majority of Iron Age societies across entire Europe does not correspond to the current assessment of the pertinent written record.

By the beginning of 1980s, archaeologists also started reconsidering the idea of chiefdom conceived as an extremely centralized hierarchized social order. The individuals previously identified

as chiefs buried in princely graves are now rather interpreted as military commanders, members of the warrior aristocracy, whose emergence intensified social differentiation.²⁰ However, in spite of numerous indications that these military leaders were not the only absolute rulers, it has remained rather under-researched whether the authority of these military commanders embraced both military and political power. Concerning their religious prerogatives, rather than presupposing some absolute authority in this domain, it seems more plausible that some of the highly esteemed warriors were the subjects of specific cult practices and imagery, especially at times of burial.²¹ Finally, it has been suggested that the possibility existed of regional alliances among the relatively small communities. These unions being short-lived, the formation of a permanent individualized authority was highly unlikely.

Conclusively, the traditional stance of centralized authoritarian elite of the Iron Age, exercising absolute power over the rest of the community has increasingly been reconsidered, after more than a century of consistent presence in archaeological literature.²² New models have been considered, especially the concept of *heterarchy*.²³ The abovementioned analysis Govedarica performed of the Glasinac whetstones also points to the direction of such a heterarchical social order in the region of Glasinac.

Reconsidering Glasinac Hierarchies

The basic criteria for identifying princely graves and further postulating chiefdom as the typical social structure of the Iron Age, have long been the overall expenditure invested in their erection and the structure of the grave offerings.²⁴ Drinking vessels, especially those made of bronze, warrior equipment and other luxurious objects, especially those imported from the Mediterranean, are considered typical, and in the most prominent cases horse chariots are also present. The body of the deceased is decorated with jewellery,

¹⁷ Rowlands 1973; Frankenstein / Rowlands 1978; Wells 1980; 1985.

¹⁸ Čaće 1986; Thurston 2009; Palavestra 1995.

¹⁹ Thurston 2009, 360.

²⁰ Thurston 2009.

²¹ Babić 2004, 109-110.

²² Thurston 2009; Hill 2006.

²³ Collis 1994; Crumley 1995, 1-5; Hill 2006;

²⁴ Babić 2002; Palavestra 1984.

suggesting at the same time both the economic affluence and a certain ceremonial function.

Borivoj Čović, one of the first authors to systematically investigate the exceptional burials from Glasinac, suggested that the presence of a battle axe and/or a decorated whetstone should be considered as a particularly indicative symbol of the supreme authority of the warrior-ruler.²⁵ Registering chronological ordering of these two types of insignia, Čović concluded that the symbols of a ruler's authority were changing over time and that the oldest and the latest princely graves contained battle axes, while in the intermediate period the role was played by decorated whetstones. Not investigating the possibility that the nature of the power changed along with the symbols signaling it, Čović considered this alternation as purely formal, rather than substantial change in the modes of expression of the highest social status. He also identified a progressive increase in the number of so-called "warrior graves" in the Iron Age necropolises of Glasinac, concluding that the nomadic communities of Eastern Bosnia gradually became a "warrior people".²⁶ In other words, the warrior character of the Iron Age communities in Glasinac decisively determined the character of the hierarchical structure, where the supreme political ruler was at the same time the leading warrior and commander. Čović further compared the situation observed in the region of Glasinac to the other parts of Europe and postulated the existence of a hierarchical structure of relatively small groups based on kinship, presided by warrior leaders, who in turn were buried in monumental constructions and furnished with opulent offerings. However, at the time when Čović explicitly articulated this hypothesis, the concept of chieftdom has already been subject of numerous critiques.

On the other hand, Govedarica introduced a revision of the chronology of princely graves proposed by Čović, suggesting that these burials are relatively simultaneous and should be dated into the period from 700 to 750 BCE (Glasinac IV b). This led him to a different interpretation of the symbolic function of whetstones, and therefore opened the path to a different insight into the social order of the Iron Age communi-

ties from Glasinac. He emphasizes that the whetstones were primarily the implements for sharpening of metal blades, such as daggers, knives, or swords, and that this function made them a customary part of a warrior's equipment, rather than a symbol of individual princely authority.²⁷ Simple whetstones are a part of grave inventories in many parts of Europe during the Bronze Age, often in combination with bronze daggers. Later, during the Iron Age, whetstones are associated with swords, instead of daggers, following the change in the typical weapon. Bearing in mind this longevity of the pattern, Govedarica suggests that the original intention was to indicate a warrior and to symbolize "sharpness and power of his weapons".²⁸

Contrary to the simple whetstones whose utilitarian function indicates warrior's prowess, Govedarica agrees that the appearance of the decorated whetstones, coinciding with the intensification of the practice of depositing large amounts of weaponry into graves (8th century BCE, Glasinac IVb) may be interpreted as the consequence of the rise of the warrior aristocracy and the consequent changes. In this context, the implements may be interpreted as one of the ways to display wealth and power, but rather than individualized power, they signaled the membership of a privileged and highly ranked social group.²⁹ In other words:

"The luxury rendering of the examples from the rich graves of the Iron Age warrior aristocracy certainly underscores the symbolic significance of these tools, but does not exclude their practical use nor older warrior symbolism, rather it reinforces the latter – to a greater degree, it would appear, than indicating a specific power-holder."³⁰

Govedarica thus questions the previous interpretation of Čović, supposing the role of an individual ruler encompassing both military and political power, and opens up the possibility of alternative views. Remaining true to the model of chieftdom presided by warrior aristocracy,³¹ he nevertheless notes the fact that princely graves

²⁵ Čović 1987, 607, 623.

²⁶ Čović 1976, 283.

²⁷ Govedarica 2017, 58-59.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

³¹ *Ibid.*

without decorated whetstones were registered,³² indicating other ways of social stratification in the Glasinac Iron Age and “the existence of warrior, civilian, and spiritual aristocracy”.³³ Not developing to full extent, he thus suggested a social structure based upon horizontal, rather than vertical, hierarchical distribution of power and authority.

Heterarchy and Other Alternatives

Although never explicitly using the term, Govedarica pointed to the direction of *heterarchy*. The term is first introduced in the field of neurology, soon to be applied in various other disciplines. Its basic idea is to describe the mutual relationship of elements that are not ranked or may be ranked in many different ways.³⁴ Applied to relations among humans, heterarchy denotes a socio-political system in which a number of individuals, groups and/or institutions share a more or less equal horizontal distribution of power and authority.³⁵ As opposed to hierarchically ordered relations of power, heterarchy posits that social segments (individuals, groups and/or institutions) ground their social power on various aspects or fields of action. Within the same society, multiple, parallel lines of power distribution may exist simultaneously, and different leaders emerge in different social situations, negotiating consensus by different means. Accordingly, the relations are not conditioned by some preconceived overarching hierarchy of social values, but by a particular context, so that a change in temporal or spatial dimensions may lead to drastic changes in the distribution of power. This leads to the permanently shifting scale of priorities and disables the formation of a fixed hierarchical structure.

In archaeology, as the consequence of identified shortcomings of the traditional model of chiefdom, the source for postulating alternative solutions has once more been sought for in the domain of ethnographic data, more specifically the examples of the so-called *segmentary socie-*

ties.³⁶ It is important to stress that these ethnographic analogies are not aimed at projecting uncritically and mechanically the present social solutions onto the past, but as indications of alternative possibilities of social ordering and as an impetus for formulation of new hypotheses.³⁷ For example, segmentary societies across Africa do not recognize a central authority, and the social power is distributed more or less equally among individual households, clans or some other small-scale formations.³⁸ Each household represents an autonomous socio-economic unit, establishing intensive relations of cooperation and obligation with other similar groups. Status diversification is not intense, although there are differences in wealth and privileges, that may act as a criterion of political leadership. In the relations between households (more exactly, their male representatives), clans, villages, a high level of competitiveness is present, leading to frequent conflicts and the resulting reshaping of relations of power. Since the possibility is always present of separation of various segments of the network and their spatial relocation, these societies are highly unstable, prone to divisions and recompositions of constitutive parts.

Following the ethnographic inspirations, archaeologists have frequently pointed to the possibility that similar decentralized heterarchical societies may have existed in the Iron Age Europe.³⁹ Contrary to the traditional tenet postulating the existence of a tribal elite controlling the resources, the current approach emphasizes the role of households as autonomous social unit, not only in terms of economic, but also political aspects.⁴⁰ These suggestions are particularly grounded in the conspicuous absence of archaeological data that would indicate substantial differences among the registered settlements in terms of social stratification.⁴¹ Consequently, it may be assumed that the individual households, consisting of kinship groups and other members, were basically economically self-sufficient, but at the same time intertwined through mutual cooperation. Common interests, such as defense

³² Ilijak – tumulus III, grave 9; Čitluci – tumulus I, grave 5; Arareva gromila, grave 1.

³³ Govedarica 2017, 62.

³⁴ Crumley 1995, 3.

³⁵ Chapman 2003, 80-83; Hill 2006; Thurston 2009.

³⁶ Collis 1994, 32; Hill 2006, 170.

³⁷ Chapman / Wylie 2016; Kuzmanović 2009; Wylie 2002.

³⁸ Hill 2006.

³⁹ Crumley 1995; Hill 1995; 2006; Hingley 1995; Sastre 2002.

⁴⁰ González-Ruibal 2006; Hill 1995; Hingley 1995.

⁴¹ Hill 2006, 173-174.

against enemies, distribution of resources, working parties, and other forms of mutual aid, were established through various forms of fictional kinship.⁴² Social mechanisms of ritual gift-giving and hospitality further symbolically created links of mutual obligations and cooperation among individuals and groups.⁴³ The luxurious imported objects, registered abundantly in the archaeological record of the European Iron Age, may thus be interpreted as *social capital* and a catalyst of social change, rather than as a consequence of large-scale trade relations with the Mediterranean.⁴⁴

This line of argument leads to the interpretation of the European Iron Age communities as local heterarchical units, primarily oriented towards running individual households, but at the same time linked through various social mechanisms into a wider network of relations of mutual dependence, cooperation and competition. However, these relations did not lead to the establishment of stable political organizations over a large area, but to short-term alliances prone to constant remodeling via the same social mechanisms. As the result of this instability and mutual competitiveness, heterarchical societies did not enable guaranteed transfer of wealth and privileges over generations, so the status differences, although present, were rarely institutionalized as recognizable permanent status groups.⁴⁵ Forms of leadership are perceived as an object of common interest, rather than as a stable privilege.

Conclusively, heterarchical forms of social governance are substantially different from hierarchical ones by the absence of an absolute ruler; instead, social power and authority are horizontally distributed among a number of individuals and/or institutions. Extreme competitiveness and social mobility, as crucial elements of heterarchies, preclude a long-term usurpation of power in the interest of individuals and the establishment of ultimate leader.

Consequences

The introduction of heterarchy as an alternative social model does not, however, include an abso-

lute rejection of the idea of chieftom as a possible form of social ordering. The critical appraisal of traditional interpretations is not aimed at disputing any possibility of such situations, but questions the concept of hierarchical chiefdoms being the only universally present social model throughout Iron Age Europe. The diversity of settlement patterns, economic strategies and symbolic systems identified over the continent points to the direction of a number of alternative social solutions, heterarchy being one of them. At the same time, various models may be represented and combined in various ways, depending on specific contexts.⁴⁶ Illustrative in this respect are the examples of nomadic communities combining hierarchical and egalitarian modes of behavior, depending on seasonal movements and subsistence strategies.⁴⁷ In other words, it may be possible that concrete social realities significantly deviate from the ideally projected social ordering.

Let's consider the example of arms and other warrior's equipment, pointing with high plausibility to the importance of war as a social fact among the majority of the Iron Age communities. However, the role of warriors was not equally pronounced, nor uniformly articulated in all the documented instances.⁴⁸ In some communities, all adult male members were expected to defend the unit in case of external threat, and in some others the role was institutionalized as a distinct status category. Additionally, warrior bands, mercenaries, and hired soldiers may have functioned as a separate social group, independently of other social interactions they may have been engaged inside some other groups.⁴⁹ Finally, the warrior aristocracy, where present, may have decisively influenced the ideological, political and economic order of the community, as the elite, privileged group. In all these instances, warriors are recognized as an important social category, but differently positioned and emphasized in the overall social pattern.

The rise of the warrior aristocracy has frequently been considered as a prominent element of the social life of the Glasinac communities. However, it may be productive to reconsider the

⁴² Karl 2004; Parkes 2003; 2006.

⁴³ Gosden 1985; 1989.

⁴⁴ Babić 2002; 2004.

⁴⁵ Hill 2006, 177.

⁴⁶ Chapman 2003: 80, 81.

⁴⁷ Wengrow / Graeber 2015.

⁴⁸ Thurston 2009, 367, 368; Hill 2006, 180.

⁴⁹ Hill 2006, 181.

ways in which they exercised their social power and esteem. Did this presumed aristocracy occupy the top of the hierarchically ordered society, commanding all the instruments of power and holding the supreme authority over the whole community, or is it more accurate to suggest a heterarchical structure, where warriors partake in a horizontal distribution of power, presiding over one segment of social system? The recent work of Govedarica enables thinking about the warrior aristocracy in the context of a heterarchical pattern, by suggesting parallel military, religious and political authorities.⁵⁰

Bearing this in mind, the interpretations of the nomadic Glasinac communities gradually evolving into “warrior people” during the Iron Age,⁵¹ accompanied with the rise of the warrior aristocracy,⁵² need to be reconsidered, especially in respect to terminology. Namely, simultaneously to the appearance of the warrior graves with opulent offerings, a general trend is noticeable of the increase of the amount of weaponry deposited in burials, including the ones not considered elite or princely. Since during the preceding Bronze Age period armory is almost entirely absent from grave inventories, this fact is usually taken as the key argument in favor of the thesis of emergent warrior aristocracy. It may, however, be more precise to discuss the general trend in ideology, emphasizing warriors’ qualities, and reflected in all the graves containing the equipment.⁵³ On the other hand, it is dubious whether this trend also included the distinguishing of the supreme tribal leader – war commander controlling the community in all aspects, from political to religious ones.

The introduction of the concept of heterarchy may contribute to solving these issues by ensuring the theoretical framework for formulation of new hypotheses on the many possible roles of warriors in society. For example, what is the connection between the massive presence of warriors’ graves and the pronounced competitiveness characteristic of heterarchic systems? Was the practice of deposition of arms the reflection of a warrior ideology? How wars were waged and were armored conflicts one of the basic social

mechanisms, along with (fictional) kinship and ritual exchange? What other groups and/or individuals partook in the presumed heterarchical horizontal distribution of authority, and is it possible to identify them on the grounds of the exiting funerary record? Do the graves containing horse teams indicate “the heroized deceased” and have some special religious functions, different from other princely graves?⁵⁴ The question may also be raised whether funerary rituals were a commonly practiced mode to generate and express power, or it was limited to specific forms of authority, e.g. warriors. Finally, one of the key issues raised in this line of inquiry is the scope of the communities presumably governed by the warrior aristocracy. From the perspective of heterarchy, the identified warriors may have been the representatives or leaders of relatively small social units, consisting of members linked by kinship and functioning more or less autonomously. On the other hand, written evidence clearly points to the existence of larger (micro) regional alliances. The issue is raised of the possible alternation of hierarchical and heterarchical structures, depending on the wider context. Heterarchical relations (belonging to warrior aristocracy) may become hierarchically ordered under certain conditions (distinction of supreme leader at times of war). In this respect, it is worth to note the concluding remarks of Govedarica’s recent paper:

“There was very likely not a single enthroned chieftain whose reign extended over the entire Glasinac area in that era, but rather in cases of need, and only then, such a function was probably accorded to one of the local headmen, one of those whose grave has been considered herein.”⁵⁵

Although not explicitly mentioning the concept of heterarchy, in this passage Govedarica quite convincingly opens up the possibility to think about alternative modes of social ordering, not hierarchically organized, where social segments are not permanently ranked within a complex system, but in a constant state of renegotiation. His conclusions, firmly grounded in the culture-historical approach, thus come very close to the ones currently discussed among the

⁵⁰ See also: Babić 2004, 108-110.

⁵¹ Čović 1976, 283.

⁵² Govedarica 2017.

⁵³ cf. Treherne 1995.

⁵⁴ Babić 2004, 108-110.

⁵⁵ Govedarica 2017, 63.

postprocessually oriented archaeologists. Once more, the conventional division of archaeological strands of thought proves to be limiting,⁵⁶ overlooking the common grounds and convergent paths. In order to overcome this limitation, it may be beneficent to strengthen the communication channels inside the discipline and overcome the terminological barriers. Our common knowledge of the past will surely advance if various insights are compared and mutually strengthened, regardless of the individual proclivities of researchers. This may contribute to change of perspectives, formulation of new research questions and ultimately lead to ever more plausible reconstructions of the past.⁵⁷

Rezime

Glasinac – beleška o arheološkoj terminologiji

Rukovodeći se stilsko-tipološkom analizom luksuznih kamenih bruseva poreklom iz kneževskih grobova sa Glasinca, Blagoje Govedarica je u jednom od skorašnjih radova (2017) ukazao na niz elemenata koji dovode u pitanje tradicionalno tumačenje društvene strukture gvozdenodopskih zajednica na teritoriji Centralnog Balkana. Ono što rezultate njegove analize čini naročito zanimljivim i relevantnim jeste to što je, koristeći bazične kulturno-istorijske metode, došao do zaključaka koji su u skladu sa tumačenjima koja je iznedrio kritički pristup procesne i postprocesne škole mišljenja u arheologiji. To je bio povod da, suprotno uobičajenom “paradigmatском” razdvajanju, razmotrimo moguće podudarnosti između tradicionalne, kulturno-istorijske arheologije, s jedne, i savremenih kritičkih pristupa, s druge strane. S tim u vezi, cilj ovog rada je da zaključke Govedarice o mogućem postojanju više nezavisnih poluga društvene moći na Glasincu – “ratničke, civilne i duhovne aristokratije”, razmotrimo i dovedemo u vezu sa modelom društvene strukture koji se u savremenoj literaturi označava terminom heterarhija. Iako se heterarhija po definiciji razlikuje od društvenog modela kojim se rukovodi kulturno-istorijski pristup, primećuje se da autori, bez obzira na model koji koriste, uglavnom slično opisuju logiku vladanja i društvenu dinamiku na pomenutom

⁵⁶ cf. Chapman 2003.

⁵⁷ Sensu: Chapman / Wylie 2016; Wylie 2002.

području. Ova i niz drugih podudarnosti u pogledu razumevanja društvene strukture gvozdenog doba, bez obzira na načelnu suprotstavljenost naučnih tradicija iz kojih takva razumevanja proističu, navodi nas da zaključimo da je unutarisciplinarni dijalog ne samo moguć, nego i nužan. Jedan korak bliže uspostavljanju svrsishodne naučne diskusije i razmene bio bi taj da se međusobno uporede i, koliko je to moguće, usaglasе postojeći termini kojima se referiše na moguće oblike društvene strukture.

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