

Some Observations on Communications and Contacts in the Central Balkan and Neighbouring Regions During the 7th to 5th Century BC Based on the Distribution of Weapons¹

Vojislav Filipović²
Belgrade

Abstract: This paper will discuss main Central Balkan communication routes as well as the distribution of weapons and defensive equipment of the 7th–5th centuries BC. It will also provide a general picture of the main cultural groups and Paleo-Balkan tribes, as based on the historical sources, and compare their geographical spread with specific archaeological material. Frequently used communications routes based on some additional observations will be pointed out, too. In the earlier periods, the main Balkan communication routes had certainly led through the Morava – Vardar axis and the Morava – Nišava – Isker – Marica road, but during the 7th–5th centuries BC, these routes gradually faded out use and Drim, Ibar, Western Morava and Drina River valleys become the main corridors of north-south communications.

Key words: natural communications, contacts, routes, Central Balkan, Iron Age, weapons, defensive equipment

Contacts, communications, and mutual relations of Paleo-Balkan populations have been the topic of studies of many prominent archaeologists from the former Yugoslavia.³ Yet, some questions remain unclear, and we still do not have enough archaeological data that could help us to understand better the communities of the Early Iron Age of the Central Balkan region and adjacent areas. In this context, communication routes undoubtedly represent one of the less well known and less frequently discussed topics; however, some interesting studies have been done in the past, especially those by M. Parović-Pešikan,⁴

R. Vasić,⁵ and A. Palavestra.⁶ While these works presented selected contacts and tried to establish their directionality, the authors usually considered only several types of artefacts distributed over smaller territories. Without doubt, however, these pioneering works are an exceptional basis for further investigations on the topic, this short contribution included.

From the Neolithic the central parts of the Balkan Peninsula were positioned on the main communication routes between Asia and Europe in east-west direction and also between Central and Northern Europe and Mediterranean region in north-south direction. Certain parts of this area such as Danube plain had a primary communication role, while, in contrast, some smaller regions within the Balkan mountain range stood out as isolated areas. Natural conditions and geographical circumstances allowed some of the communication routes to be more suitable, but the frequency of use also depended on other fac-

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²Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade, Serbia.

³Mikulčić 1966; Papazoglu 1969; Čović 1976; Benac 1987; Vasić 1987a-h; Garašanin 1988; Tasić 1998.

⁴Parović-Pešikan 1960; 1986; 1994.

⁵Vasić 1982.

⁶Palavestra 1989; 1993, 281-283.

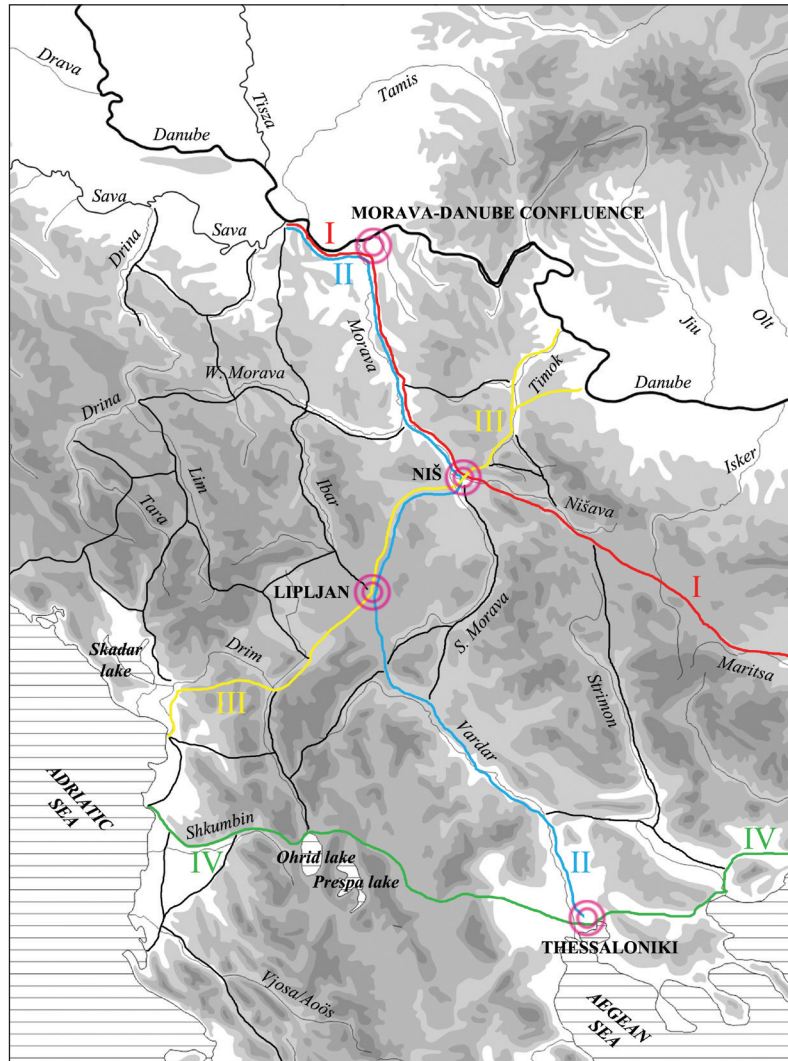


Fig. 1. Central Balkan road network with main rivers (*italics*) and crossroads (**bold**)

tors such as, for example, the relations among local populations, road safety, and natural causes such as floods, landslides, and so on. According to J. Cvijić,⁷ because the central part of the Balkan Peninsula is clearly separated from the coastal part by high mountain ranges, its character is more continental than Mediterranean, although it is geographically much closer to the coastal areas than, for example, to Central Europe. Cvijić called the present-day Greek part of the peninsula “secondary”, considering that it is separated from the north by high mountain ranges, which orient it toward the eastern coast and to the Aegean Sea. Furthermore, this part had quite poor connections with the trans-Balkan road network

historically.⁸ Certainly, the Central Balkans had best connections with the Pannonian Plain, as the northern extent is wide open to the Danube and Sava River valleys, originating in Central Europe, as well as rivers on the northern borders of the Balkans, such as the Drava or Tisza.⁹ However, although open to the north, the communication lines of the Central Balkans in the south direction became more dispersed, and concentrated only on a few primary roads. Two of them are the most important natural routes: *Morava – Vardar* (Fig. 1 / Road II) and *Morava – Nišava – Isker – Marica* (*Via Militaris*) (Fig. 1 / Road I). Cvijić has believed that the *Morava – Vardar*

⁷ Cvijić 2000b, 87-89.

⁸ Ibid. 92.

⁹ Cvijić 2000a, 26.

route was more traversable,¹⁰ although he also mentioned that *Via Militaris* was of a greater importance.¹¹ K. Jireček, the famous Czech historian and Balkanologist, on the other hand, considered *Via Militaris* to be the main Balkan communication route.¹²

In addition to these two roads, one should mention a route that connects the Central Balkans with the Adriatic coast. This road was of almost equal importance to the two above-mentioned roads and it was also the shortest and fastest route from the Lower Danube and Oltenia regions to the Mediterranean. This is the *Lješ – Niš – Archar / Radujevac* road (Fig. 1 / Road III).¹³ Starting at the present-day Lezhë in Albania, the road follows the Drim River valley and at one point, before entering the Mountain Prokletije, it diverges from the river gorge and ascends toward the mountainous region of Albanides, from where it then descends to the confluence of the Ljuma, Black, and White Drim Rivers. From that point on, the road enters the White Drim Canyon and continues toward modern-day Peć and further on to the Sitnica River valley and Lipljan, where it reaches the *Morava – Vardar* communication route.¹⁴ Both routes then continue along the Lab River valley towards present-day Kuršumlija. By the Toplica River valley, they reach the confluence of the Nišava and South Morava Rivers. The fourth major Balkan communication route was the so-called *Via Egnatia* (Fig. 1 / Road IV), which is the only road that cuts across the Balkans in east-west direction and connects its western and eastern shores. This route begins at the present-day Durrës and continues towards the southeast, where it reaches the Shkumbin River valley and continues to Ohrid and Prespa Lakes. Continuing through the present-day Bitola and Voden, it reaches Thessaloniki and eventually merges with the *Morava – Vardar* route.¹⁵ From that point on, the road continues towards the Strymon River delta and along the Aegean coast to Constantinople and Asia Minor.

All of these four primary trans-Balkan routes had their own crossroads. Today's Niš area is

certainly the most important and fundamentally strategic crossroad of the Central Balkans. Crossroads in the areas of Thessaloniki, the confluence of the Morava-Danube Rivers and Lipljan are also of particular importance.¹⁶ Parallel to the main roads, there was a contemporary network of secondary roads – often shortcuts – but their existence and significance can be only reconstructed based on the historical, military, and ethnographic sources: additional pathways of note are located between the Ohrid Lake and Kuks River valley by the Black Drim valley, which connected *Via Egnatia* and the *Lješ – Niš – Archar / Radujevac* route. Another shortcut led from the Ohrid Lake toward Skopje by the Vardar River valley to connect to the *Morava – Vardar* route. The road from Skopje toward the Vranje valley by the Preševo Watershed connected with the valley of the South Morava River. There was also a route from the Vardar River valley that led toward the Strimon and the Dorjan lake, from which the road continued further east, following the route of *Via Egnatia*.¹⁷ Likewise, another road led north along the Strimon River valley toward the Sofia plain, where it reached *Via Militaris*. There was a road from Skadar Lake towards Podgorica, which then separated into two different roads.¹⁸ One road led north toward the Lim River and the area of present-day Višegrad. From that point, one route perhaps continued west, but there was also another one that went eastward along the Đetinja River valley and further to the West Morava River valley.

Significant additional communication routes went through the Ibar River valley and connected this route with the Drim and Vardar routes at a crossroad near modern-day Lipljan.¹⁹ From the west Morava River valley, one could go north to the Valjevo plain, where the route continued either further to the Sava River, along the Kolubara River valley, or toward the Drina River valley by the Jadar River valley. The road that led to the point where the Sava flows into Danube Rivers followed the foothills of Mountain Rudnik in the Šumadija region. The most important route in

¹⁰ Ibid. 27.

¹¹ Cvijić 2000b, 100.

¹² Jireček 1959, 73.

¹³ Petrović 2007, 87; 2008, 31-40.

¹⁴ Cvijić 2000b, 96-97.

¹⁵ Ibid. 29.

¹⁶ For area of Thessaloniki cf. Hammond 1972. For the region around Danube and Morava confluence see Cvijić 2000b, 29.

¹⁷ Cvijić 2000a, 28-29.

¹⁸ Cvijić 2000b, 96.

¹⁹ Cvijić 2000a, 28.

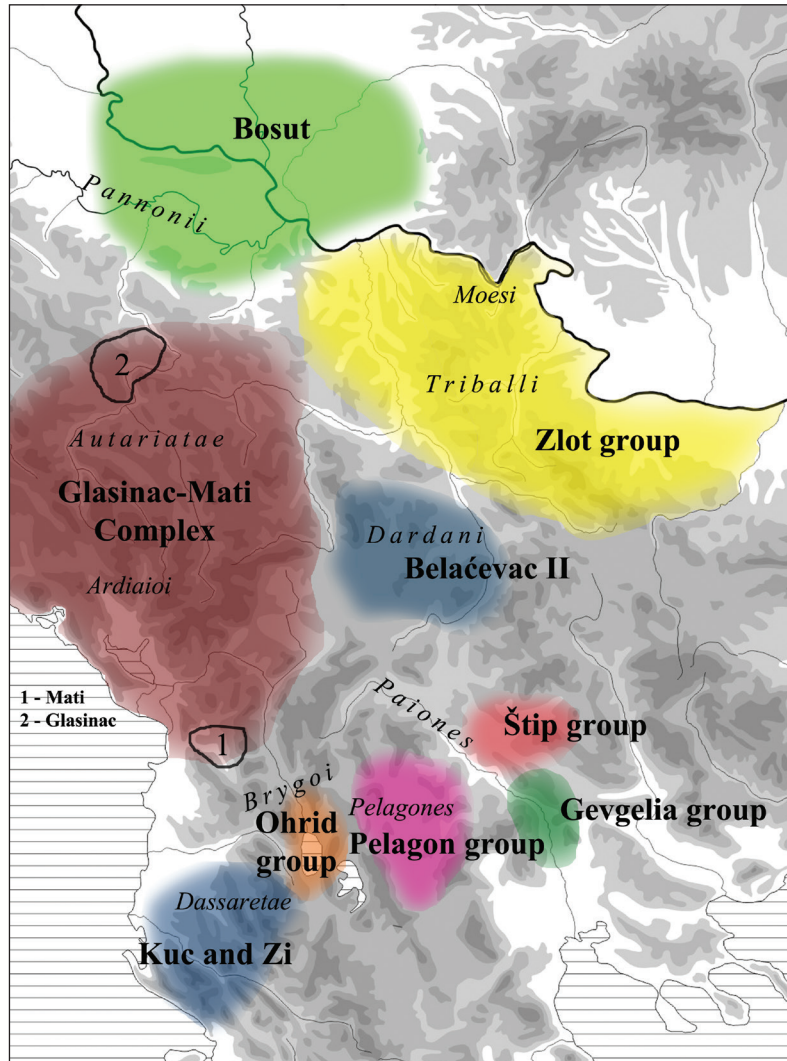


Fig. 2. Distribution of the cultural groups and tribes of the Central Balkan region

the eastern part of the Central Balkans connected the Velika Morava River valley with the Timok Basin, passing through the Stolice Saddle.²⁰ We should also mention the route through the valley of the Trgoviški Timok River to Nišava River that connected *Via Militaris* with *Lješ – Niš – Archar*. The northern part of eastern Serbia did not show potential of a communication hub, not at least until the construction of the road through the Djerdap Gorge during the 1st century AD. The possibility of using river as a route of communication should not be excluded, but there are no clear data at this moment.

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On the basis of the previous research by the leading archaeologists and classical historians from the former Yugoslavia, such as A. Benac, B. Čović, M. Garašanin, D. Srejšević, R. Vasić, M. Parović-Pešikan, I. Mikulčić, F. Papazoglu, M. Suić, S. Gabrovec and many others,²¹ we can pinpoint the regional distribution of the Paleo-Balkan tribes and their cultural groups during the period between the 7th and 5th century BC. In the broadest and simplified terms, the most commonly suggested distribution of the cultural groups and tribes of the Central Balkan region can be seen on Figure 2 and will be discussed further below.

²⁰ Ibid. 60-61.

²¹ See notes 2 and 3 as well as: Srejšević 1960, 1973 and 1991; Suić 1976; Gabrovec 1987. For complete older literature see bibliography in *Praistorija Jugoslavenskih zemalja V*, ed. A. Benac (Sarajevo 1987).

The area of the present-day Srem, the Mačva region, southern Bačka and southwestern Banat was controlled by the so-called Bosut culture, as defined by N. Tasić and P. Medović almost half a century ago.²² This cultural phenomenon spread over the strategic point of the Sava and Danube confluence, which was easily connected with the surrounding territories. The Velika Morava River valley, Eastern Serbia and Western Bulgaria, up to the Isker River to the east and Nišava River to the south was distinguished by the Zlot group, which have some similarity to the Ferigile group from Oltenia in Romania, as well as the Late Bosut culture and some Scythian elements. The Zlot group originated from the Basarabi complex of the Iron Age period.²³ Geographically speaking, the Zlot group spread over parts of the four big natural communication routes: through the Danube Gorge, Velika and Južna Morava River valleys, Nišava River valley, and Timok River valley. Later historical sources from the Classical and Hellenistic period define this territory as belonging to the Triballi tribe. Hence, one can assume that this Paleo-Balkan tribe was the core population of the Zlot group.²⁴ Indeed, on the basis of the written sources of ancient historians, such as Herodotus (Hdt. 4.49) and Thucydides (Thuc. 2.96), it can be suggested that the Triballi occupied the territory enclosed by the Velika Morava River in the west, the Danube River in the north, the Isker River in the east, and probably the Nišava River in the south.²⁵

During Hallstatt C period, on the territories of Kosovo, Southern Serbia and Northern Macedonia, stamped pottery decorated by using a specific tool²⁶ or a wheel appears,²⁷ and is usually named Belačevac I horizon.²⁸ The development of this material group during the period from the 7th to the 5th century BC is similar to the horizon of the stamped pottery from the previous phase, and it is called Belačevac II horizon, i.e. the younger horizon of this cultural manifestation.²⁹ In addition to indigenous pottery, pottery made

on potters' wheel appears in this phase, coming from the southern regions. Influence of the Greek culture can be noticed at the strongholds Hisar, Cernica, and Belačevac starting from the 6th century BC.³⁰ In contrast with the previous phase, the territory previously occupied by the Belačevac II group seems to shrink, including only Kosovo without the Metohija region. This group spreads eastward toward the Južna Morava River valley. Its material culture was usually recognized as belonging to the Paleo-Balkan Dardani tribe (Plin. Nat. 3.29), which, in this case, controlled the two main Central Balkan routes through the Kosovo and Metohija territories.

During the period from the 7th to the 5th century BC, the extensive so-called Glasinac-Mati cultural complex extended from the Adriatic Sea in the west to the Morava and Ibar River valleys to the east, from the Sava River in the north to the Mati River in the Northern Albania in the south.³¹ It originated from the Bronze Age Glasinac culture of the Glasinac plateau in eastern Bosnia. Pottery from the region between Glasinac the plateau and Mati River valley shows exceptional level of similarity in the period from the 7th to the 5th century BC.³² B. Čović has considered the Autariatae (Ps.-Scyl. 24) to be the tribe linked with the archaeological material of the Glasinac-Mati complex and has noticed that this cultural material was used by several Illyrian tribes with a common origin and similar religious, cultural, and language patterns, such as the Ardiaei (Strab. 7.5.), Docleatae (App. Ill. 47), Illyrii proprie dicti (Plin. Nat. 3.144), Labeatae (Liv. 44.23.3) and others.³³

Based on the archaeological material from the necropoleis and settlements in the lower Vardar / Axios River valley, R. Vasić defined Gevgelia group extending from Demir-Kapija in Macedonia to Bohemitsa and Chausitsa in present day Greece.³⁴ Recently, D. Mitrevski suggested a different name for this material culture, the Donjovardarsko-Peonian group.³⁵ Chronologically, this group can be anchored to the Hallstatt C1-

²² Brukner et al. 1974, 258-260; Medović 1978, 48-50.

²³ Vasić 1973, 101-103; 1987b, 660-662; 1997, 92-94; Jevtić 1992; 2004, 159; Kapuran 2014, 85-87.

²⁴ Vasić 1992, 395.

²⁵ Papazoglu 1969, 48-49; Filipović 2014, 47-52.

²⁶ Bulatović 2007, 48; Lazić 2009, 62.

²⁷ Vasić 1987c, 676; Garašanin 1988, 68.

²⁸ Tasić 1998, 170.

²⁹ Ibid. 1998.

³⁰ Bulatović 2007, 49.

³¹ Čović 1987, 642-643.

³² Jevtić 1983, 39-41.

³³ Cf. Teržan 2015.

³⁴ Vasić 1987e, 701-703.

³⁵ Mitrevski 2008, 175-177.

D3 period (750–475 BC).³⁶ The people connected with this material culture controlled the Morava – Vardar route. Furthermore, the Gevgelia group inhabited the crossroads of this communication and the transversal road from the Vardar / Axios River valley towards Struma / Strymon River. Ethnos that could perhaps be connected with this group is the tribe of the Paiones (Hom. Il. 848-850; Diod. Sic. 16.15, 2.6, 3.4, 4.2).³⁷

The so-called Štip group was also defined by R. Vasić,³⁸ but later he gave up on this term and defined the archaeological material as part of the Early Iron Age culture of the Central and Eastern Macedonia.³⁹ Chronologically, this culture can be identified to Hallstatt B3-D3 (8th – second half of the 5th century BC).⁴⁰ This material culture spread through the Bregalnica River valley, Štip and Kočani regions in the present day Republic of Northern Macedonia and the middle Vardar River valley. One of the Paiones tribe was identified as ethnos connected with this material group.⁴¹

Based on the extensive study on Pelagonia by I. Mikulčić,⁴² R. Vasić defined the Pelagon group.⁴³ Chronologically, this culture spans the 8th to the second half of the 5th century BC, when influences from the Late Archaic Greece were noted.⁴⁴ The Pelagones (Strab. 7.7.8, 7a.1.20, 9.5.11) could be identified as a tribe of this cultural group. They monitored *Via Egnatia* and were probably similar to the Paiones.⁴⁵

The Ohrid group was identified by R. Vasić on the basis of excavations of necropoleis around the Ohrid Lake that commenced in 1918.⁴⁶ Chronologically, this group spanned the beginning of Hallstatt D1 up to D3 in its older phase (6th century – second half of the 4th century BC).⁴⁷ This group also controlled *Via Egnatia*. Many tribes were suggested as the ethnic group that constituted the Ohrid material group; R. Vasić and M. Ga-

rašanin have attributed it to the Dassaretæ tribe (Liv. 42.36.9),⁴⁸ E. Petrova to the Paionean aristocracy,⁴⁹ and I. Mikulčić to the Eneheleans (Apollod. 3.5.4; Hdt. 9.43; Paus. 9.5.3) and even just the foreign aristocracy, which dominated the tribe.⁵⁰

The so-called Kuç and Zi cultural phenomenon connected with the tumulus necropoleis in the south of present day Albania, has been defined by Zh. Andrea on the basis of the graves and burial customs. She, however, has identified this group as phase Barç IV,⁵¹ and connected the graves to the Illyrians.⁵² M. Garašanin, on the other hand, has underlined that during the earlier phase of the Iron Age in this part of Albania there are noticeable influences from the east, south, and also the north.⁵³ The dispersion of the Kuç and Zi cultural phenomenon can roughly be limited to the area between the Ohrid and Prespa Lakes in proximity to the northern shores of the Ionian Sea and the southern coast of the Adriatic Sea, with the northern border somewhere around the Shkumbin River valley. Even now, its southern border cannot be defined.⁵⁴ This cultural phenomenon encompassed a part of *Via Egnatia*. In the later phase, the eastern border was moved further west, probably due to the pressure from the Ohrid group. Perhaps the Kuç and Zi group can be connected with the Taulantes and Bilion tribes (FGrH 1 F 99), but proving this connection is quite an ungrateful task at this moment.

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If we place certain types of weapons and defensive equipment on our map of cultures and road networks, we can notice following patterns of distribution in the Central Balkan region. First of all, in terms of a defensive equipment, the appearance of iron ribbed umbos on shields can be traced to around the 7th century BC, all of which were located in the interior of the Balkans.⁵⁵ More specifically, all shields were discovered in the territory or border area of the Glasinac-Mati com-

³⁶ Vasić 1987e, 702.

³⁷ Ibid. 710-711; Mitrevski 1997, 198-200.

³⁸ Vasić 1973, 108 ff.

³⁹ Vasić 1987d, 690-692.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 691-695.

⁴¹ Ibid. 698-700.

⁴² Mikulčić 1966.

⁴³ Vasić 1973, 107; 1987f, 712-714.

⁴⁴ Vasić 1987 f, 715.

⁴⁵ Vasić 1987e, 710-711; Mitrevski 1997, 198ff.

⁴⁶ Vasić 1987h, 724 ff.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 725-728.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 731; Garašanin 1988, 71.

⁴⁹ Petrova 1996, 123 ff.

⁵⁰ Mitrevski 1997, 217.

⁵¹ Andrea 1985, 221-222.

⁵² Ibid. 222.

⁵³ Garašanin 1988, 53-54.

⁵⁴ Papadopoulos 2014.

⁵⁵ Filipović 2015a, 357-359.

plex. During Hallstatt D2/3, typical Greek shield, *aspis*, has been found only in the far south at the Trebenište cemetery.⁵⁶ A similar pattern can be observed in terms of the distribution of bronze greaves. The earlier examples occurred in the area of northern Albania and the Glasinac plateau and chronologically belong to period of the 8th and beginning of the 7th century BC.⁵⁷ These are bronze pieces with rings for attachment of hide straps. The early pieces occurred only in the Glasinac-Mati complex. In this region, chronologically later types of bronze greaves, which follow the anatomy of the leg, belong to the 5th century BC. They are considered as typical Greek infantry equipment, along with the already mentioned *aspis* shields, *xiphoi* swords, and bronze helmets.⁵⁸ Their distribution shows that have been used by many cultures in this territory.

If we consider only the bronze helmets of this period, the majority of the discovered pieces are of the Illyrian type and only several are of the Corinthian and Chalcidian types. Observed in a broader context, a higher number of the Illyrian type helmets have been found on the Adriatic coast and its hinterland as well as in the wider area of the Thessaloniki bay.⁵⁹ Chronologically earlier variants have most often been found along the route of *Via Egnatia* between Durres and Thessaloniki, while several pieces of that type were found even on the Peloponnese or Sicily.⁶⁰ The highest number of all variants comes from the territories of the Glasinac-Mati complex and the Ohrid group, but there is also a number of pieces from the Kuç and Zi and Pelagonska groups. Finally, the first find of bronze armour in the Central Balkan region should be mentioned.⁶¹ The piece was excavated illegally in the area around the confluence of the South and Western Morava Rivers and as far as we can tell, this piece represents the so-called bell cuirass of the middle phase, which can be dated to the 7th – first half of the 6th century BC.⁶²

In terms of weapons, there are a few notable pieces of offensive weapons. Spears of the so-

called *sigynna* type appeared for the first time in the 7th century BC and continued to be used until the 4th century BC.⁶³ In fact, this type of a spear resembles a Roman *pilum*, but chronologically belongs to the Early Iron Age of the Central Balkan region. Examples here have been found in the Vardar and Drim River valleys. Further similar examples have come from the Sanski Most and two pieces from the Grave 1 in Mound II in Osovo. Additional piece have come from the warrior grave XI in Mound A at the Halos necropolis in Greek Macedonia.⁶⁴ If we take a closer look at the swords, examples of curved single blade iron swords occur in almost all areas of the Central Balkans.⁶⁵ Glasinac type swords chronologically fit to the period of the first half of the 6th century BC, connected with the Glasinac – Mati complex.⁶⁶ Apart from Glasinac, Western Serbia, Northern and Southern Albania, only one handle of Glasinac type swords has been found at Delphi.⁶⁷ The *Xiphoi* swords, Greek two-edged swords with cross-guards and flame-shaped lower part of the blades, chronologically belong to the 6th century BC, and the majority of examples have been found in the border regions with the Greek world.⁶⁸ Only few pieces have come from the Drim River valley.⁶⁹

Furthermore, iron axes with parallel blades belong to the Hallstatt D period, and most of them occur in the territory of the Glasinac-Mati complex.⁷⁰ The so-called Scythian arrows, made of bronze, belong to the period from the end of the 7th to the 5th century BC.⁷¹ They appear in the territories of the Zlotska and Bosut III groups as well as the Glasinac – Mati complex.⁷² It is interesting that all examples from the territory of Glasinac – Mati come from graves. The contexts

⁶³ The term *sigynna* is taken from R. Vasić in press: Filipović in press.

⁶⁴ Filipović 2015a, 365-372.

⁶⁵ Parović-Pešikan 1982, 25-51.

⁶⁶ Дмитровић, К. / Васић, Р. 2012. Гвоздени мач гласиначког типа из збирке Народног музеја у Чачку, Зборник радова Народног музеја (Чачак) XLII, Чачак 2012, 13-20.

⁶⁷ Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993, 129-130, Nr. 449, Taf. 58.

⁶⁸ Numerous swords were found in the necropolises such as Sindos (Despiné 2016) or Achontiko (Chrysostomou / Chrysostomou 2012) in Greece, and in Trebenishte (Filov 1927) or Ohrid, Gorna Porta (Кузман 2013).

⁶⁹ Filipović 2015a, 372-378.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 388-390.

⁷¹ Melyukova 1964; Baitinger 2001, 28-30; Hellmuth 2006.

⁷² Filipović 2015b, 90-92.

⁵⁶ Filov 1927, 5-10.

⁵⁷ Kilian 1973, 528.

⁵⁸ Snodgrass 1967.

⁵⁹ Blečić Kavur / Pravidur 2012, 35 ff.

⁶⁰ Filipović 2015a, 359-362.

⁶¹ Filipović / Vasić 2017, 337-338, Fig. 1.

⁶² Snodgrass 1964, 71 ff, Fig. 30.

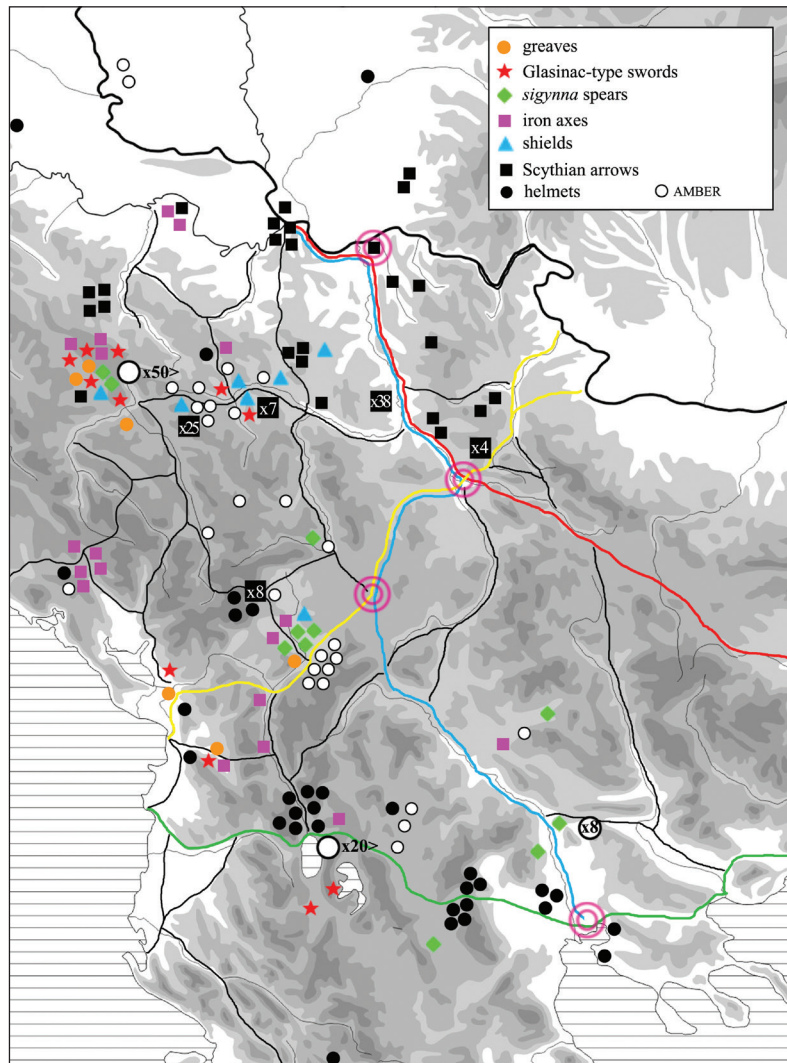


Fig. 3. Distribution of archaeological material of the 7/6th centuries BC mentioned in the text

in which the arrowheads were found are of particular importance. In fact, two finds seem to have belonged to a warrior – one comes from an incinerated grave from Mound I in Pilatovići and the second one is represented by a group find of 38 arrowheads from the site of Ostikovac. Arrowheads have been excavated in other graves, too, but in insufficient numbers to be able to confirm that they belonged to an archer. Presence of these arrows in the Triballi territory could suggest clashes between Autariatae and Triballi, as known from the historical sources.⁷³

We can notice some stabilisation and flourishing of trade relations between neighbouring popula-

tions in the Central Balkans during period from 7th to the 5th century BC. Based on the distribution of weapons and defensive equipment, it seems that the main Central Balkan communication routes, especially those leading from the point where Velika Morava River flows into Danube and along the Morava – Vardar route, gradually fade out. Yet, when compared with previous periods, *Via Egnatia* and the lower part of the Morava – Vardar axis shows much more intensity in terms of distribution of finds. The same can be said of the secondary communication routes on the territory of the Glasinac – Mati complex, such as the Ibar River valley, which enters the old road from Pristina to Ljes by the Drim River valley. It appears that the main transport route traversed the territory of Western Serbia and Eastern Bosnia. This route is indicated primarily

⁷³ Papazoglu 1969, 69 ff.

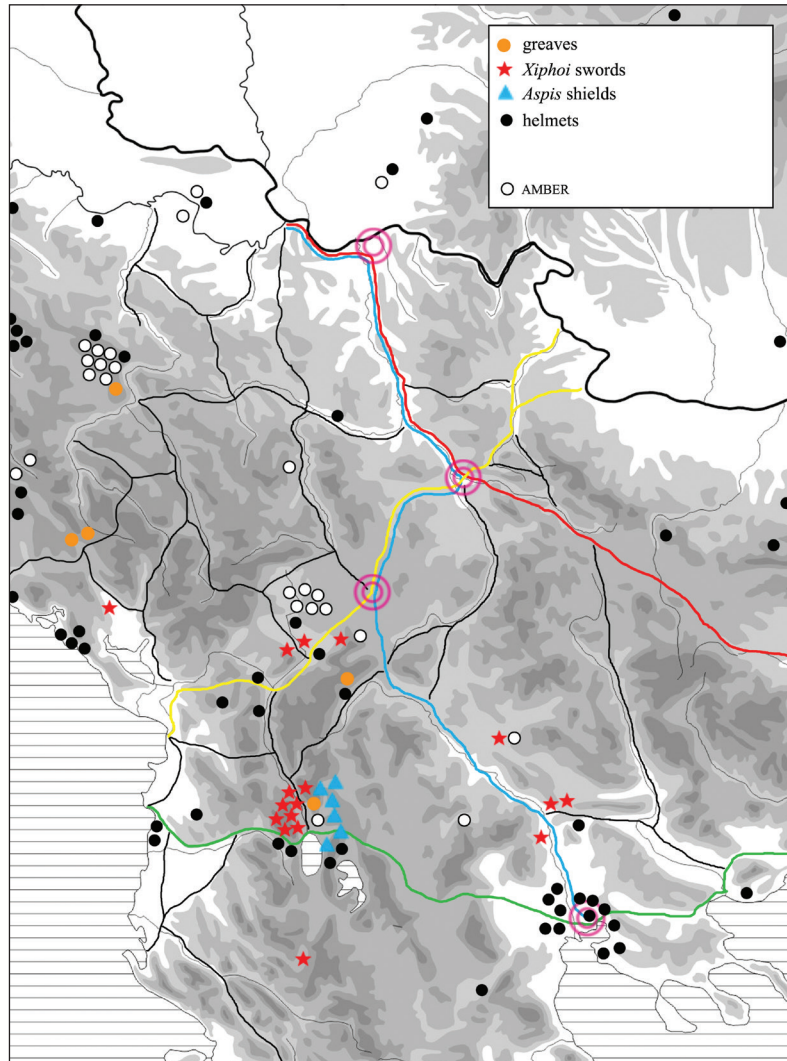


Fig. 4. Distribution of archaeological material of the 6th centuries BC mentioned in the text

by the distribution of amber finds and defensive equipment, such as Glasinac-type swords and arrows of possible Scythian origins (Fig. 3). If we look at the Glasinac swords and greaves with rings, we can notice that their usage is limited to the territories in the eastern part of the West Balkan and the western part of the Central Balkan regions, roughly corresponding to the territory of the Glasinac – Mati complex. A similar distribution persists also in the late 6th and 5th century BC, at least in terms of the bronze helmets, greaves, and *xiphoi* swords, which points to southern influence (Fig. 4). It is clear that the population of the Glasinac – Mati complex became a dominant society in this territory during the 7th and 6th centuries BC. B. Čović has pointed out the Autariatae were the tribe that used this material culture, which spread from the Glasinac

plateau via Southwestern Serbia, Northern Montenegro, and Metohija to the Mati River valley in the present-day Albania.⁷⁴ He has also suggested that other Illyrian tribes could have had the same origins and similar cultic, ethnographic and language characteristics as the cultural complex. Pottery vessels from Southwestern Serbia and Metohija can confirm this, as they indicate strong cultural influence from the Glasinac plateau.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the astragal belt segments of the Glasinac type (previously known as the Arareva gromila type) have a similar distribution during this period.⁷⁶ Weapons and defensive military equipment, however, are completely absent

⁷⁴ Čović 1987, 642-643.

⁷⁵ Jevtić 1983, 39, 44.

⁷⁶ Filipović / Mladenović 2017, 156-157.

in the area between the Velika Morava and Isker Rivers, equal to the territory of the Zlot cultural group.⁷⁷ As mentioned before, this is because Zlot cultural group was probably Triballi tribe, which controlled less frequented parts of the Morava and Timok River routes during 6th/5th century BC.

Perhaps starting as early as the Neolithic, main Balkan communication routes comprised the Morava – Vardar axis and *Via Militaris*. They were often used during the following Late Bronze Age and the transitional Bronze to Early Iron Age period, as can be concluded on the basis of the distribution of archaeological material of the Aegean and Central European origins and of amber. On the other hand, during the period of the 7th – 5th century BC, these routes gradually faded out, and the main north-south routes shifted to the Drim, Ibar, Western Morava and Drina Rivers valleys.

Na engleski jezik preveli
Ognjen Mladenović i Vojislav Filipović

Rezime

Neka zapažanja o komunikacijama i kontaktima na srednjem Balkanu i susednim oblastima na osnovu distribucije oružja tokom starijeg gvozdenog doba

U radu se govori o glavnim komunikacijama na centralnom Balkanu, zajedno sa analizom distribucije oružja i defanzivne ratničke opreme između VII i V veka pre n. e. Na osnovu analize prirodnih činilaca i starih komunikacija, koje je još pre jednog stoleća uradio Jovan Cvijić, izdvojena su četiri glavna putna pravca na ovom prostoru: *Moravsko-varđarska* komunikacija koja je obuhvatala osu sever-jug, tzv. put *Via Militaris* (*Morava – Nišava – Isker – Marica*) koji je spajao centralni i istočni Balkan, zatim transverzalna komunikacija od Jadrana do Dunava *Lješ – Niš – Arc-har/Radujevac* i komunikacija koja je sekla Balkan po osi zapad-istok, tzv. *Via Egnatia*. Pored ove četiri glav-

ne komunikacije, postojala je i mreža puteva manje važnosti, ali i nekoliko glavnih raskršća, poput oblasti današnjeg Niša, Soluna, Lipljana na Kosovu i Metohiji ili ušća Morave u Dunav.

Prikazana je i tradicionalna slika arheoloških kultura na ovim prostorima, kako bi se analiza distribucije oružja i opreme mogla, pored konunikacionih pravaca, kombinovati i sa ovim parametrom, pa se na osnovu ove kompleksne slike čini da glavne balkanske komunikacije, poglavito one koje vode iz oblasti ušća Morave u Dunav i dalje ka jugu, u ovom periodu polako zamiru. Isto tako, *Via Egnatia* i donji deo *Moravsko-varđarskog* puta pokazuju jači intenzitet zastupljenosti pomenutih tipova analiziranog materijala. To se može reći i za sekundarne komunikacije na teritoriji tzv. kompleksa *Glasi nac – Mati*, kao što su doline Ibra i Drima, pa se čini da su tokom ovog perioda najintenzivnije korišćene komunikacije u zapadnoj Srbiji i istočnoj Bosni, što se može pretpostaviti na osnovu distribucije defanzivne opreme, glasinačkog tipa mača, tzv. skitskih strela, ali i čilibarskih nalaza. Sa druge strane, defanzivne opreme i čilibarskih nalaza nema na području između dolina Morave, Nišave i Iskera.

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⁷⁷ Filipović 2014.

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