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Ljubljansko barje v bronasti dobi ...

Ljubljansko Barje in the Bronze Age ...

Andrej GASPARI

Prispevek Antona Velušča v 76. številki Arheološkega vestnika prinaša pomembne dopolnitve in popravke podatkov o bronastodobnih najdiščih, kontekstih in najdbah na Ljubljanskem barju ter jih opremi s komentarji, ki osvežujejo diskusijo o razvoju krajine od bakrene dobe naprej in potencialnem ritualnem ozadju pojava dela bronastodobnega gradiva v strugi Ljubljanice in močvirskih depozitih. Besedilo pregledno obravnava zelo kompleksno problematiko, ki nedvomno potrebuje nadaljnje fokusirane študije in raziskave ter iz njihovih rezultatov izhajajoče preverjanje validnosti dosedanjih interpretacij. A sem po koncu branja prispevka A. Velušča z razočaranjem obstal pri oceni, da je razprava v posameznih segmentih šibka in nedosledna, nekatere pomensko in vsebinsko pomembne podrobnosti pa izpuščene. Na eni strani tako avtor opozarja na nesistematičnost predhodnih študij, na drugi pa ob favoriziranju naselbinskega ozadja najdb izpušča obravnavo zanj očitno nepomembnih kontekstov iz Ljubljanice in okoliškega močvirja ter njim primerljivih fenomenov iz ožjega in širšega prostora, ki dajejo kredibilnost tezam o namernem ozadju pojava predmetov v značilnih ambientih.

Pozornost, ki jo mojim tezam, domnevam in zapisom v zvezi z najdbami iz Ljubljanice namenja A. Velušček, je v več pogledih izjemna, menim, da tudi neobičajna za znanstveni diskurz. V že sicer obsežnem aparatu besedila namreč izstopa številčnost citatov mojih del oziroma del, katerih soavtor sem (skupno sem naštel 395 referenc); ugibam, da tolikšnega števila sklicev v okviru posamičnega prispevka primerljivega obsega v znanstveni reviji verjetno ni bilo deležno veliko avtorjev katerekoli stroke, tudi če odmislimo njihovo, v znatnem delu, negativno konotacijo.

Za – po mojem razumevanju nezadostno podprte – dekonstrukcije "mojih" tez A. Velušček ne zamudi praktično nobene priložnosti, vključno z objavami, ki zadevajo najdbe iz časa 30.000 let pred jedrno tematiko prispevka (op. 12), kjer si do pričakovanega učinka pomaga s selektivnim citiranjem, ki poleg nedoslednosti in pavšalnih kvalifikacij zaznamuje tudi nekatere druge dele njegove razprave. V sklicu na globino depozitov z morebitnimi paleolitskimi ostanki v barjanskih tleh je avtor verjetno spregledal poznoglacialno (OSL) datacijo peščene gline na mestu problematizirane najdbe iz lesa tise (*Taxus baccata*), kar nakazuje njen izvor v starejših sedimentih iz zahodnega dela barjanske ravnine na območju Vrhnike, ki so paleontološko in arheološko potrjeni. Pripisan značaj konice je pisca v prispevku A. Velušča citirane razprave o ožgani tisini grči pleistocenske starosti (ki so jo v mokrišče verjetno prinesli vodni tokovi s hribovitega obrobja Ljubljanskega barja?) tako vznemiril, da je avtorjem objav najdbe pripisal neznanstvenost, njihove trditve označil kot znanstveno in etično nevzdržne, njihovo delo pa škodljivo znanosti. Te diskreditacije so v izrazitem slogovnem nasprotju s previdnimi komentarji o leseni najdbi iz Ljubljanice v študijah tujih avtorjev, v kar se lahko vsak prepriča sam. Tudi tu bodo prihodnje raziskave pokazale, kdo se moti.

Redki, bolj ali manj prepričljivo dokumentirani konteksti odkritja kovinskih najdb bi glede na naslov prispevka A. Velušča zaslužili celovitejšo predstavitev, kot na primer leta 1938 odkrit človeški skelet s sulično ostjo, zapičeno v prsni koš, malo pod izlivom Bistre[1] ali večkrat izpostavljeni kovinski predmeti (npr. meč, bodalo in igla) iz šotnih plasti

[1] Gaspari 2002.

nad ostanki kolišč,[2] ki nudijo kar nekaj izhodišč za razmišljanje o dojemanju tovrstnih prostorov.

Diskusija o nekaterih opazovanih fenomenih je nepričakovano lapidarna, kot na primer razprava o potencialnih ozadjih pojava nepoškodovanih primerkov orožja z nizkim deležem kositra. Ob Veluščkovem opozarjanju na spornost tez o namernem deponiranju tovrstnih predmetov (op. 378–380), ki naj bi sugerirale sleparski odnos do božanskega v evropski bronasti dobi, pogrešam avtorjevo videnje oziroma interpretacijo njihovega pojava v rekah. V argumentaciji, ki naj bi zmanjševala relevantnost že mnogo pred mojimi izvajanji ponujene teze in jo banalizira, se A. Velušček sklicuje na odlomke iz Stare zaveze.

Na drugi strani se pridružujem avtorjevi izpostavitvi potrebe po celovitih in z različnimi analizami podprtih interdisciplinarnih raziskavah razvoja barjanskega okolja in konsolidacije hidrografske mreže. Njegovo razumevanje interpretacij poteka struge Ljubljanice na zahodnem delu Barja v pozni prazgodovini bi veljalo dopolniti z objavljenim mnenjem, v skladu s katerim so lahko ravno manjša jedra najdb iz konca srednje in mlajše bronaste dobe pokazatelji izvornih delov struge. Izliv Bistre v Ljubljanico sem zato v več objavah izpostavil kot naravni fenomen, ki ima kot območje pojavljanja najdb tudi v nekoliko širšem območju več dobro znanih analogij (npr. izliv Blejskega jezera pri ustju Jezernice,[3] sotočje obeh Sav pri Lancovem,[4] brzice in slap na izhodu savske tesni pri Medvodah[5] itd.).

Glede na interpretacijo, ki jo favorizira A. Velušček, prav tako izostaja njegov komentar zelo očitnih razlik v zastopanosti (in delno tudi ohranjenosti) kovinskih najdb iz naselbinskih in izvennaselbinskih (vodnih) kontekstov ter primerjava z okvirno sočasnimi fenomeni iz širšega prostora, na primer območja med Severno Italijo in Podonavjem. Razlage ozadja pojava obravnavanega segmenta kovinskih najdb v vodnih kontekstih, do katerih sem prišel v okviru lastnih raziskav, so skladne z ugotovitvami novejših sinteznih obravnav, kakršna je celovita študija rečnih najdb iz srednjega toka Temze.[6]

V prizmi avtorjevih kalkulacij (op. 269–272) števila v vodo dospelih predmetov v določenem časovnem obdobju (težo izračunov sicer tudi sam ustrezno relativizira), velja spomniti na nepopolnost evidence, ki izhaja iz delovanja amaterskih iskalcev, pa tudi na zelo visok potencial za odkritje novih, morda bolj izpovednih kontekstov v težko dostopnih in/ali nepreiskanih delih struge.

Ponoven premislek bi zahtevali tudi zapisi A. Veluščka o podepozicijskem premeščanju predmetov zaradi delovanja vodnega toka, ki naj bi ga prejšnji raziskovalci obravnavali nepopolno. V zvezi z omenjeno problematiko avtor navaja izključno primere nesporno povezanih najdb na daljših razdaljah, ne omeni pa najbolj znanih skupnih najdb predmetov, nedvomno odloženih ali izgubljenih v okviru enega dogodka (npr. skupne najdbe novcev, orodja ipd.), ki kažejo prostorsko zelo ozko zamejeno območje pojavljanja (deloma tudi v odvisnosti od morfoloških enot na rečnem dnu), za razumevanje razpona učinkovanja tafonomskih dejavnikov pa imajo določen pomen tudi omenjena najdba skeleta iz Ljubljanice pod izlivom Bistre in dobra ohranjenost pomembnega dela keramičnih posod. Ob tem A. Velušček prejšnjim raziskovalcem (op. 329–333) oponaša različne navedbe o (ne)prekrivanju območij pojava sočasnih keramičnih in kovinskih najdb ter njihovim objavam očita nesistematičnost (op. 397), kot deziderat pa izpostavi "kvalitetno monografsko objavo" – domnevam, da kot kakovostno protiutež dosedanjim študijam. V op. 283 avtor problematizira nedoločnost interpretacij kompleksa Pri Ahčanu in prelaganje iskanja odgovorov na "bodoče obsežne interdisciplinarne raziskave". Ni povsem jasno, kaj je s tem narobe, zlasti če to vzporejamo z vsebino zadnjega odstavka besedila A. Veluščka.

Seveda si bodo bralci o validnosti tez oziroma argumentacije A. Veluščka izoblikovali svoje mnenje, pri čemer pojasnjujem, da moja opažanja in domneve o ozadjih pojava predmetov v strugi ter spremembah njenega toka in barjanskega okolja v pomembnem deležu temeljijo na podvodnih raziskavah, ki sem jih izvajal s sodelavci in sodelavkami v okviru Skupine za podvodno arheologijo oz. pod okriljem območnih enot Zavoda za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije, v drugem pa na študijah distribucije arheoloških najdb plovil ter posamičnih in skupnih najdb v barjanskih depozitih iz časa po opustitvi kolišč.

A. Velušček se v podporo svojim (proti)argumentom večkrat sklicuje na mnenja strokovnjakov oziroma poznavalcev. Med njimi je ponovno nekdo, ki ga že dlje časa pesti nekakšna nestrpnost do mojih razlag in domnev, pri čemer njegovih del v objavljenem seznamu literature ne zasledimo. A. Velušček se kljub tem konzultacijam uspe izogniti ombembi okoliščine, da obravnavan korpus kovinskih

[2] Glej Gaspari 2004.
[3] Gaspari 2012a.
[4] Šinkovec 1995, 106, št. 209.
[5] Gaspari 2012b.
[6] Clifford 2026.

najdb iz Ljubljanice v prevladujočem deležu izvira iz delovanja amaterskih iskalcev in nestrokovnjakov, v okviru katerega je dokumentiranje natančnih lokacij in najdiščnih okoliščin, ki bi omogočale utemeljene razlage ozadij zgostitev in posamično odkritih predmetov, predstavljalo izjemo. Brez iluzije, da bi to lahko kakorkoli vplivalo na avtorjevo presojo, izpostavljam v nekaterih krogih znano dejstvo, da je bil zlasti v času pred razglasitvijo Ljubljanice za kulturni spomenik državnega pomena leta 2003 pomemben del (najbolj) atraktivnih kovinskih najdb zamolčan, ukraden in preprodan. Ljubljanica je naravnost vzorčni primer za opazovanje učinkovanja neposrednih posledic, ki jih imata nepooblaščeno preiskovanje in odtujevanje najdb za znanstvene interpretacije arheoloških najdišč. Število iz reke odtujenih najdb ostaja uganka, podobno njegove implikacije za študij diskutiranih fenomenov, vendar je ob upoštevanju okoliščine, da so določene sedimentacijske oblike v strugi zelo statične in torej nepreiskane, evidentno, da je Ljubljanica v dobršnem segmentu še neraziskano arheološko najdišče, ki lahko ob ureditvi situacije v smeri ustreznega zavarovanja javnega interesa zagotovi še marsikateri odgovor na vprašanja in dileme, izpostavljene v prispevku A. Velušček.

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GASPARI, A. 2012a, Vodno kultno mesto na izlivu Blejskega jezera pri Mlinem. – V: A. Gaspari, M. Erič (ur.), *Potopljena preteklost. Arheologija vodnih okolij in raziskovanje podvodne kulturne dediščine v Sloveniji*, Radovljica, 309–314.

GASPARI, A. 2012b, Kultni kompleks bronastodobnega orožja iz lesene konstrukcije v savski tesni pri Medvodah. – V: A. Gaspari, M. Erič (ur.), *Potopljena preteklost. Arheologija vodnih okolij in raziskovanje podvodne kulturne dediščine v Sloveniji*, Radovljica, 319–324.

ŠINKOVEC, I. 1995, Katalog posameznih kovinskih najdb bakrene in bronaste dobe / Catalogue of Individual Metal Finds from Eneolithic and Bronze Ages. – V: B.Teržan (ur.), *Depojske in posamezne kovinske najdbe bakrene in bronaste dobe na Slovenskem* 1 / *Hoards and Individual Metal Finds from the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages in Slovenia* 1, Katalogi in monografije 29, 29–127.

Ljubljansko Barje in the Bronze Age ...

Translation

Anton Velušček's contribution to Volume 76 of Arheološki vestnik provides important additions and corrections to the evidence relating to Bronze Age sites, archaeological contexts, and finds from the Ljubljansko Barje (Ljubljana Marsh). It also offers observations that reinvigorate the discussion on the development of the landscape from the Copper Age onwards and on the possible ritual background to the occurrence of part of the Bronze Age assemblage within the channel of the Ljubljanica River and in marshland deposits. The paper presents a clear overview of an exceptionally complex subject, one that undoubtedly calls for further targeted research and a critical re-evaluation of existing interpretations in light of new evidence.

Despite these merits, the paper ultimately leaves the impression that several aspects of the discussion are insufficiently developed and methodologically inconsistent, while a number of conceptually and archaeologically significant issues receive little or no attention. On the one hand, the author rightly highlights the unsystematic nature of previous research; on the other, in advocating a predominantly settlement-based explanation for the archaeological record, he largely omits discussion of contexts from the Ljubljanica River and the surrounding marshland that do not appear to fit this interpretative framework. Likewise, little consideration is given to comparable phenomena documented elsewhere in the region and beyond, even though such evidence provides an important comparative basis for interpretations that propose the deliberate deposition of artefacts in characteristic aquatic and wetland environments.

The attention that A. Velušček devotes to my hypotheses, interpretations, and published statements

concerning the Ljubljanica finds is remarkable and, in my view, rather unusual within the conventions of scholarly debate. Particularly striking is the frequency with which my publications, including those that I co-authored, are cited throughout the paper. I counted a total of 395 references to my work. It is difficult to recall many examples of a journal article of comparable length in which a single author's publications have been cited so extensively, irrespective of discipline, even if we disregard their largely critical and negative connotations.t.

In his attempts to deconstruct what he regards as 'my' interpretations – attempts that, in my opinion, are often insufficiently substantiated – A. Velušček misses virtually no opportunity, even in publications dealing with finds dating some 30,000 years earlier than the principal subject of his paper (note 12). To achieve the desired effect, he resorts to selective citation, an approach that, together with inconsistencies and sweeping generalisations, characterises several other sections of his discussion.

In referring to the depth of the deposits that may contain Palaeolithic remains within the marsh sediments, the author appears to have overlooked the Late Glacial OSL date obtained for the sandy clay associated with the disputed yew (Taxus baccata) wooden find. This date indicates that the object most likely derived from older sediments originating in the western part of the Ljubljana Marsh near Vrhnika, where both palaeontological and archaeological evidence for Pleistocene deposits is well documented.

The proposed interpretation of the object as a point evidently provoked a strong reaction from the author of the discussion cited by Velušček who, in commenting on the 'burnt yew burl' of Pleistocene age – which may obviously have been transported into the marsh by watercourses draining the hilly margins of the Ljubljana Marsh – characterised the authors' interpretation as unscientific, described their conclusions as scientifically and ethically untenable, and even argued that their work was detrimental to science. Such discrediting language stands in marked stylistic contrast to the cautious assessments of the same wooden find published by foreign scholars, a difference that readers can readily verify for themselves. Here, too, future research will ultimately determine which interpretation proves correct.

The relatively few, yet more or less convincingly documented, contexts of metal finds deserved more comprehensive treatment than they receive in Velušček's paper, particularly in view of its title. Among these are the human skeleton discovered in 1938 just downstream from the confluence of the Bistra stream,[1] with a spearhead embedded in the chest, and the repeatedly cited metal objects – including a sword, a dagger, and a pin – recovered from peat deposits overlying the remains of pile-dwelling settlements.[2] These contexts offer valuable starting points for considering how such wetland environments may have been perceived and used during the Bronze Age, yet they receive only limited discussion.

The discussion of several observed phenomena is unexpectedly cursory. This is particularly evident in the treatment of possible explanations for the occurrence of intact weapons manufactured from low-tin bronze. While Velušček questions the validity of interpretations advocating the deliberate deposition of such objects (notes 378–380), arguing that these would imply a deceitful relationship with the divine in the European Bronze Age, he offers no alternative explanation for their occurrence in riverine contexts. In an effort to diminish the relevance of this interpretation – proposed long before my own contributions and ultimately reduced to a caricature – A. Velušček even cites passages from the Old Testament as part of his argument. At the same time, I fully concur with the author's emphasis on the need for comprehensive, interdisciplinary investigations of the development of the Ljubljana Marsh landscape and the consolidation of its hydrographic network, supported by a broad range of analytical methods. His reconstruction of the course of the Ljubljanica River across the western part of the marsh during later prehistory should, however, be considered alongside the published view that the small clusters of finds dating to the end of the Middle and the Late Bronze Age may in fact mark segments of the original river channel. For this reason, in several publications I have highlighted the confluence of the Bistra with the Ljubljanica as a natural locus for the deposition of artefacts, noting that comparable concentrations of finds are well documented in similar hydrological settings elsewhere, including the outflow of Lake Bled at the mouth of the Jezernica,[3] the confluence of the two branches of the Sava River near

[1] Gaspari 2002.
[2] See Gaspari 2004.
[3] Gaspari 2012a.

Lancovo,[4] and the rapids and waterfall at the exit of the Sava gorge near Medvode.[5] In view of the interpretation favoured by Velušček, his paper also leaves unexplained the striking differences in both the representation and, to some extent, the state of preservation of metal finds recovered from settlement contexts compared with those from extra-settlement, particularly aquatic, contexts. Equally absent is any discussion of comparable patterns documented across the broader region between northern Italy and the Danube basin, despite the considerable interpretative value that such comparisons might offer. The interpretations proposed here, based on my own research into the background and significance of this category of metal finds in aquatic contexts, are consistent with those advanced in recent synthetic studies, notably the comprehensive study of river finds from the Middle Thames.[6]

In the context of the author's calculations (notes 269–272) concerning the number of objects entering the aquatic environment within a given period – a line of reasoning whose limitations he himself appropriately acknowledges – it is worth recalling the incompleteness of the available archaeological record. This reflects not only the activities of amateur finders but also the considerable potential for the discovery of new, and perhaps more informative, contexts in inaccessible and/or as yet unexplored sections of the river channel.

A. Velušček's discussion of the post-depositional displacement of artefacts by fluvial processes likewise warrants reconsideration. In addressing this issue, he refers exclusively to examples of unquestionably associated finds dispersed over relatively long distances, while overlooking some of the best-known assemblages of objects that were undoubtedly deposited or lost during a single event – for example, hoards of coins, tools, and similar artefacts – which display a very limited spatial distribution, in some cases constrained by the morphology of the riverbed itself. Also relevant for assessing the extent of taphonomic processes are the previously mentioned human skeleton recovered from the Ljubljanica downstream of the confluence with the Bistra, as well as the remarkably good preservation of a substantial proportion of the ceramic vessels. Together, these contexts provide important evidence for evaluating the spatial scale and depositional effects of post-depositional processes. At the same time, Velušček criticizes earlier researchers (notes 329–333) for presenting differing observations regarding the degree of spatial overlap between contemporary ceramic and metal finds, characterizing their publications as unsystematic (note 397). As a desideratum, he calls for a 'high-quality monographic publication,' presumably envisaged as a more satisfactory alternative to the studies published to date. Yet, in note 283, he simultaneously questions the perceived vagueness of interpretations relating to the Pri Ahčanu complex and criticises the suggestion that definitive answers should await 'future large-scale interdisciplinary investigations'. It is difficult to understand why such caution should itself be considered problematic, particularly when this criticism is compared with the concluding paragraph of Velušček's own paper.

Ultimately, readers will form their own judgement regarding the validity of A. Velušček's arguments and interpretations. I would nevertheless point out that my own observations and hypotheses concerning the occurrence of artefacts within the Ljubljanica riverbed, as well as changes in the river's course and the marsh environment, are based to a considerable extent on underwater archaeological investigations conducted together with colleagues within the framework of the Underwater Archaeology Group and under the auspices of the regional units of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia. They are further informed by studies of the spatial distribution of archaeological boat remains, together with analyses of isolated and associated finds recovered from marsh deposits dating to the period following the abandonment of the pile-dwelling settlements. In support of his arguments and counterarguments, A. Velušček repeatedly invokes the opinions of specialists and expert advisers. Among them appears, once again, an individual who has long displayed a certain intolerance towards my interpretations and hypotheses, although none of this person's works is included in the published bibliography. Despite these consultations, Velušček avoids mentioning a fundamental circumstance: that the overwhelming majority of the metal finds from the Ljubljanica considered in his paper derive from the activities of amateur finders and non-specialists. Under such circumstances, the systematic documentation of precise find locations and depositional contexts – essential prerequisites for robust interpretations of artefact concentrations and isolated finds – has

[4] Šinkovec 1995, 106, No. 209.
[5] Gaspari 2012b.
[6] Clifford 2026.

been the exception rather than the rule. Although this observation is not expected to influence the author's conclusions, it is important to recall a fact well known within parts of the archaeological community: particularly before the Ljubljanica was designated a cultural monument of national importance in 2003, a significant proportion of its most attractive metal finds was deliberately concealed, illicitly removed, and subsequently traded. The Ljubljanica thus represents an almost textbook example of the direct impact that unauthorised archaeological exploration and the illicit removal of artefacts can have on the scientific interpretation of an archaeological site. The number of artefacts removed from the river remains unknown, as do the full implications of these losses for the interpretation of the phenomena discussed here. At the same time, the persistence of stable sedimentary formations within parts of the riverbed that have never been systematically investigated demonstrates that the Ljubljanica remains, to a considerable extent, an unexplored archaeological site. If the public interest in its protection can be more effectively secured in the future, the river is likely to yield many of the answers to the questions and interpretative challenges raised in Velušček's paper.

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Za podporo tej raziskavi niso bili pridobljeni ali analizirani nobeni novi podatki. / No new data were generated or analysed in support of this research.