

## NOVE NAJDBE IZ ČASOV PRESELJEVANJA NARODOV V SPODNJI VIPAVSKI DOLINI

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Zahodno od vasi Bilje pri Novi Gorici je v januarju leta 1976 krajevna skupnost pripravljala odkop nove gramoznice na parc. št. 146 k. o. Bilje. Pri strojnem odstranjevanju humusa nad peščenimi sloji so našli nekaj železnih predmetov in kosti. Prisotni opazovalci so med najdbami videli »turški meč in živalske kosti«; na srečo pa je lastnik bližnje hiše, Komel Ivan iz Bilj št. 3, vse predmete takoj zbral in jih shranil. Za najdbo smo izvedeli po naključju pri enem izmed terenskih obhodov v Biljah in Bukovici; hranitelj najdbe je okoliščine opisal po najboljših močeh, saj je predmete dobesedno pobral z buldožerjevega pluga.<sup>1</sup> Kosti ni shranil v prepričanju, da so živalske, vendar njegov opis govori le o nekaj dolgih kosteh, medtem ko lobanje ali njenih delov niso opazili.<sup>2</sup>

Pri ogledu najdb je bilo takoj razvidno, da gre za grobno najdbo, vendar ni bilo več niti misliti na kakršnokoli raziskovanje. V juniju 1976. leta je na tem mestu bila odprta že obsežna, približno 50 m široka, 100 m dolga in 2 do 5 m globoka gramoznica. Na dnu jame nameravajo urediti nogometno igrišče, zato bodo robove jame še preurejali v tribune; ob tej priliki bo potreben nadzor za morebitne posamične najdbe med humusom, ki na severnem robu sedaj čaka v velikih kupih. Posebnih uspehov pa si od tega ne obetamo. Iz opisanih okoliščin najdbe je razumljivo, da o dokumentaciji najdbe, o legi posameznih predmetov, niti o zanesljivi pripadnosti k eni grobni celoti ne moremo govoriti. Na vzhodnem robu gramoznice so šolarji pri iskanju med peskom našli še kose železne pločevine in eno od zakovic, kar vse so deli enega ščitnega umba. Na kupih humusa ob severnem robu pa so našli štiri zakovice, ki nedvomno sodijo prav tako k okovju umba (v tej objavi so risane poleg ohranjenega kosa), dasi njihova pripadnost seveda ni zanesljiva.

### Opis predmetov

1. Dvorezen železen meč-*spatha* je dobro ohranjen. Konica lista in zaključek trna manjkata. Po vsej dolžini lista teče širok žleb. Prečka na prehodu lista v trn je ojačana; na njej in na trnu so sledovi lesene obloge (**tab. 1, sl. 1**). Mere: dolž. 86 cm; dolž. rezila 74,5 cm; šir. rezila 5,1—3,3 cm.

2. Enorezen železen nož; list rezila je širok, z močno ojačanim hrbtom. Tik pod hrbtiščem in po sredini lista tečeta na obeh straneh kaneluri. Prehod iz rezila v trn je zvonasto oblikovan. Konica lista in zaključek trna sta odlomljena (**tab. 1, sl. 2**). Mere: dolž. 48 cm; dolž. rezila 38,5 cm; šir. rezila 3,8 cm.
3. Enorezen železen nož; list je nekaj ožji, z močno ojačanim hrbtom. Po sredini lista teče na vsaki strani kanelura. Hrbtišče klekasto prehaja v zelo dolg trnast nastavek za ročaj. Konica lista in zaključek trna manjkata (**tab. 1, sl. 3**). Mere: dolž. 40 cm; dolž. rezila 26,5 cm; šir. rezila 3,6 cm.
4. Železna ščitni umbo. Pri izkopu precej poškodovan, vendar so opazne še tudi starejše poškodbe. Je valjasto-konične oblike, gumb na vrhu stožca manjka. Spodnji rob je nekoliko poševen, ohranjena je ena luknjica za zakovično pritrjevanje umba na podlago. Kovan je masivno iz enega kosa (**tab. 2, sl. 1**). Mere: premer umba spodaj 15,7 cm; viš. 9 cm.
5. Konična, tanko skovana železna prečka je morda del ščitnega okova. Trikotno razširjen in močno stanjšan zaključek je poškodovan, širši in masivnejši del pa odlomljen (**tab. 2, sl. 3**). Mere: dolž. 14,7 cm; šir. 1,4 cm.
6. Železen predmet v obliki tanko skovane prečke, z dvakrat pravokotno zapognjenim zaključkom, drugi, širši del odlomljen (**tab. 2, sl. 2**). Mere: viš. 14,2 cm; šir. 6,6 cm.
7. Železna ost kopja. Stožčasto zožen tulec je v spodnjem delu odlomljen, v njem so ostanki lesenega držaja. List je ozke podolgovate oblike z močno poudarjenim rebrom. Robove lista spremlja plitva, slabo ohranjena dvojna kanelura. Konica lista je odlomljena (**tab. 1, sl. 5**). Mere: dolž. 20,5 cm; šir. lista 3,2 cm; največji premer tulca 3 cm.
8. Večji železen nož, prelomljen v dva kosa. Hrbet rezila je ojačan, prehod iz lista v trn klekast; na njem je opazna ojačana prečka (**tab. 1, sl. 4**). Mere: ohranjena dolž. 22,5 cm; šir. lista 3,3 cm.
9. Manjši železen nož. Hrbet lista močno ojačan, rezilo izrabljeno (**tab. 1, sl. 7**). Mere: dolž. 14,8 cm, šir. 2,1 cm.
10. Dvodelna bronasta pasna spona, s trikotnim masivnim okovom. Trn ni ohranjen. Okvir spona je ovalen, masiven, na gornji strani okrašen s skupinami globokih prečnih zarez; rame za trn in okov okroglega preseka sta močno stanjšana. Trikotni okov je obešen na ramenu s tanjšo skovano dvojno zanko, ki je bila pri izkopu prelomljena. Zgornja ploskev okova kaže sledove posrebitve; okrašena je z nizi krožcev in mrežasto šrafiranih trikotnikov. Ohranjeni sta jedri dveh železnih zakovic za pritrjevanje, vendar oblika njihove glave ni spoznavna (**tab. 2, sl. 5**). Mere: dolž. 9,2 cm.
11. Manjši kosi železnega ščitnega umba: del stožčaste izbokline in dva dela poševnega oboda z eno zakovico (**tab. 1, sl. 8**). Mere rekonstrukcije: premer spodaj 20,8 cm; viš. 9 cm.
12. Manjši, popolnoma ohranjen železen nož s širokim rezilom (**tab. 1, sl. 6**). Mere: dolž. 12,4 cm; šir. rezila 1,6 cm.
13. Dva kosa železne, polkrožno zaključene pločevine. Morda del ščita, na obeh na eni strani sledovi lesene obloge (**tab. 2, sl. 4**). Mere: 4,8 × 3,3 cm in 3,2 × 2,3 cm.
14. Štiri velike železne zakovice s široko ploščato glavico so nedvomno del ščitnega okovja; pri dveh dobro ohranjenih je viš. 1,5 in 1,6 cm, premer glavice je 2,8 cm in pri eni 3,1 cm. (Risane pri umbu **tab. 2, sl. 1**)

Po opisu najdiščnih okoliščin (Kometl Ivan), zanesljivo bolj ali manj, sodeč spadajo k grobnici celoti naslednji predmeti: dvorezen meč-spatha, veliki nož, umbo, ost kopja, zlomljeni veliki nož, nožič in pasna spona. Kot že rečeno, so ostale predmete zbrali v okolici te skupne najdbe, osteoloških ostalin, najdenih skupaj s predmeti, ni bilo moč zbrati, saj so jih ob izkopu zavrgli.<sup>3</sup>

## Interpretacija

Za tipološko in kronološko opredelitev slučajne najdbe iz Bilj upoštevamo samo predmete iz domnevne grobne celote, saj ostali kosi ugotovitvam ne oporekajo. Analogije za grobno celoto imamo v inventarju vojaških grobov

germanskih plemen iz časa preseljevanja narodov.<sup>4</sup> Dolg, dvorezen meč, imenovan spatha je pogost pridelek v vojaških grobovih iz tega obdobja; za naš primerek je možna le okvirna datacija v 5.—6. stoletje, saj ni v celoti ohranjen.<sup>5</sup>

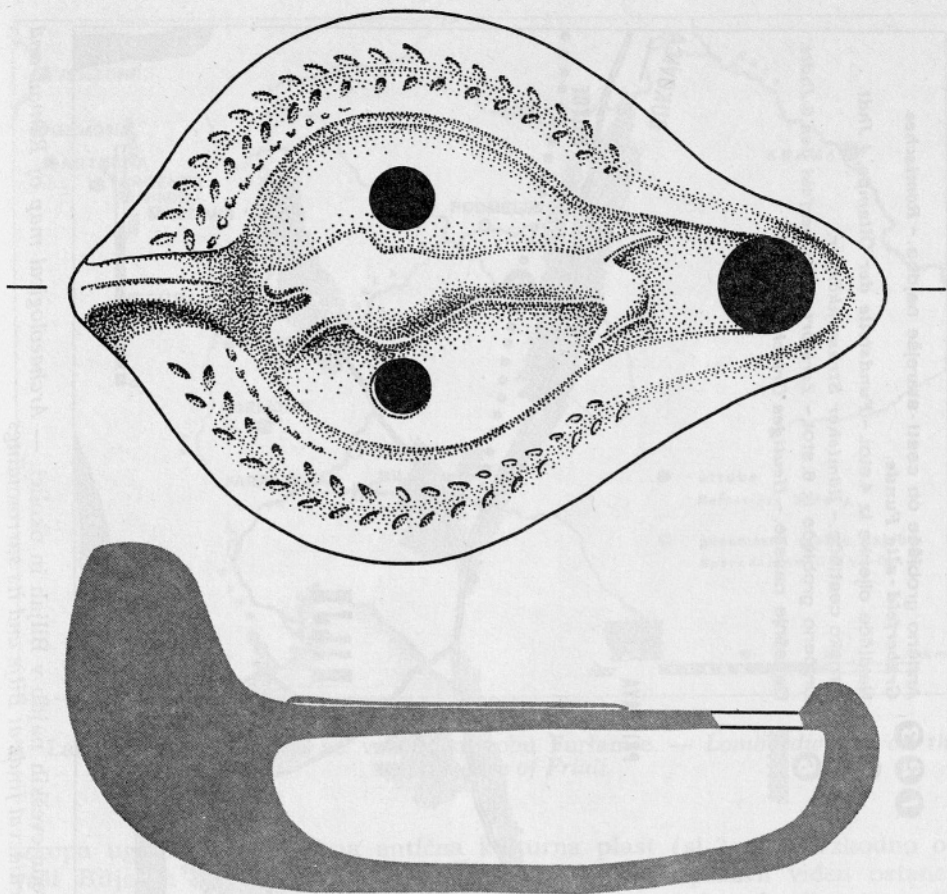
Dolgi, enorezni, bojni noži, pri germanskih plemenih imenovani saxi ali scramasaxi, prav tako sodijo k bojni opremi, povezani so z novim načinom bojevanja na konjih, ki se je uveljavilo s pojavom Hunov v Evropi. Za analogijo sestava grobne celote imamo primer v grobu 44 iz Szentendra v Panoniji.<sup>6</sup> Vrezane žlebiče oziroma kanelure na noževem listu, ki jih zaradi slabše ohranjenosti predmetov avtorji sicer ne omenjajo, pa poznamo z nekaj manjšega primerka iz dveh skeletnih grobov, odkritih 1943, v Gorici.<sup>7</sup> Okvirna časovna določitev tudi zanje je 5.—6. stoletje.

Ost kopja kot metalno orožje je pri velikosti našega predmeta gotovo upravičeno poimenovanje. Najbližjo krajevno analogijo imamo spet v obeh grobovih iz Gorice, ki ju S. Stucchi okvirno datira v 6. stoletje.<sup>7a</sup>

Oblika našega ščitnega umba sodi po J. Wernerju v čas panonske faze langobardske zgodovine. V sredini 6. stoletja naj bi cilindrično-konična oblika umba začela postopno prehajati v polkrožno obliko, ki jo pozna severna Italija.<sup>8</sup> Analogijo naši obliki imamo tudi v grobovih št. 44 v Szentendru in št. 31 v Kajdacsu.<sup>9</sup>

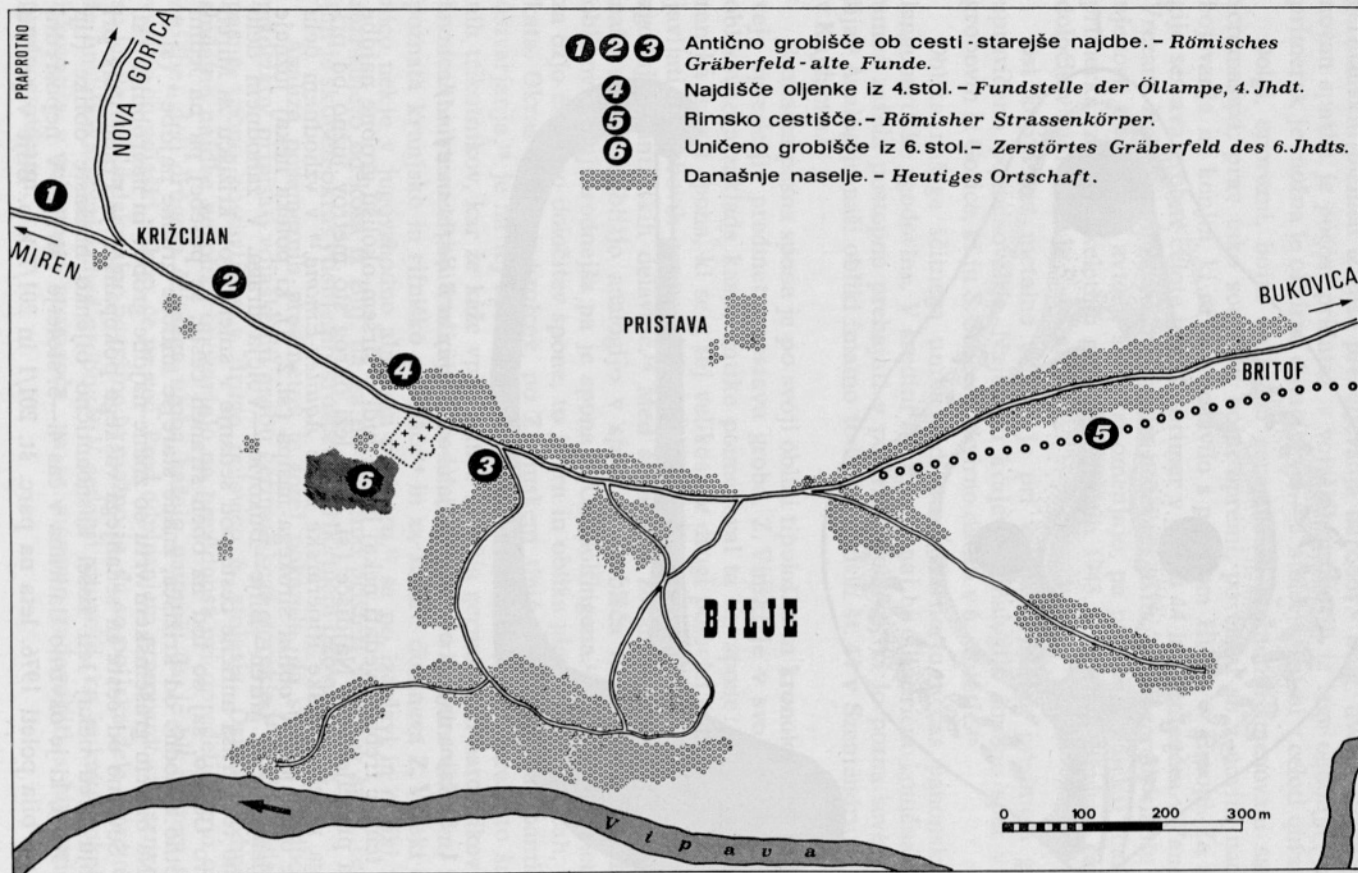
Bronasta pasna spona je po svoji obliki tipološko in kronološko najzanesljiveje opredeljiv predmet v sestavu groba. Z. Vinski je v svoji obširni analizi oblikovnega zaklada kasne antike poimenoval ta tip spone: dvodelna mediteranska pasna spona, ki se v tej velikosti v drugi polovici 6. stoletja začne pojavljati v grobovih germanskih vojščakov, izvira pa iz kasnoantičnih oziroma zgodnjebizantinskih delavnic.<sup>10</sup> Med številnimi zbranimi primeri najdemo za našo spono najbližjo analogijo v sponi iz grobišča S. Giovanni v Čedadu,<sup>11</sup> oblikovno najsorodnejša pa je spona iz Gundolfingena.<sup>12</sup> Pomembna elementa za ožjo časovno določitev spona, to je trn in oblika glavic na zakovicah, manjkata. Okras iz nizov krožcev, po Z. Vinskem tipičen element kasnoantičnega ustvarjanja,<sup>13</sup> je na tej sponi dopolnjen z vmesnima nizoma mrežasto šrafiranih trikotnikov, kar že kaže vpliv okusa in želja germanskih naročnikov v delavnicah s staroselsko tradicijo. Dvodelne spona s trikotnim okovom, ki jih poznata kranjsko in rifniško grobišče<sup>14</sup> in za katere domneva Z. Vinski delavnico nekje v jugovzhodno alpskem prostoru,<sup>15</sup> se po izdelavi in obliki toliko razlikujejo od kosa iz Bilj, da ga ne moremo prišteti v njihov krog, čeravno jim je skupen okras vtisnjenih krožcev na trikotnem okovu.

Analiza posameznih predmetov je torej pokazala, da smemo najdbo brez pridržkov pripisati vojaškemu grobu germanskega porekla,<sup>16</sup> časovno glede na pasno spono postavljeno v drugo polovico 6. stoletja. Ostali predmeti te slučajne najdbe nekoliko opozarjajo na previdnost pri opredeljevanju obsega najdbe: deli drugega ščitnega umba kažejo namreč, da je bil na tem mestu vsaj še en vojaški pokop, če ne več. Pred odpiranjem gramoznice na tem mestu so ležale tod obdelovalne površine in možno je, da so poljska dela v preteklosti že uničila katerega izmed grobov.<sup>17</sup> V sedanji situaciji, ko je kakršnokoli raziskovanje v tej smeri nemogoče, pa se moramo zadovoljiti s hipotetičnimi predpostavkami.

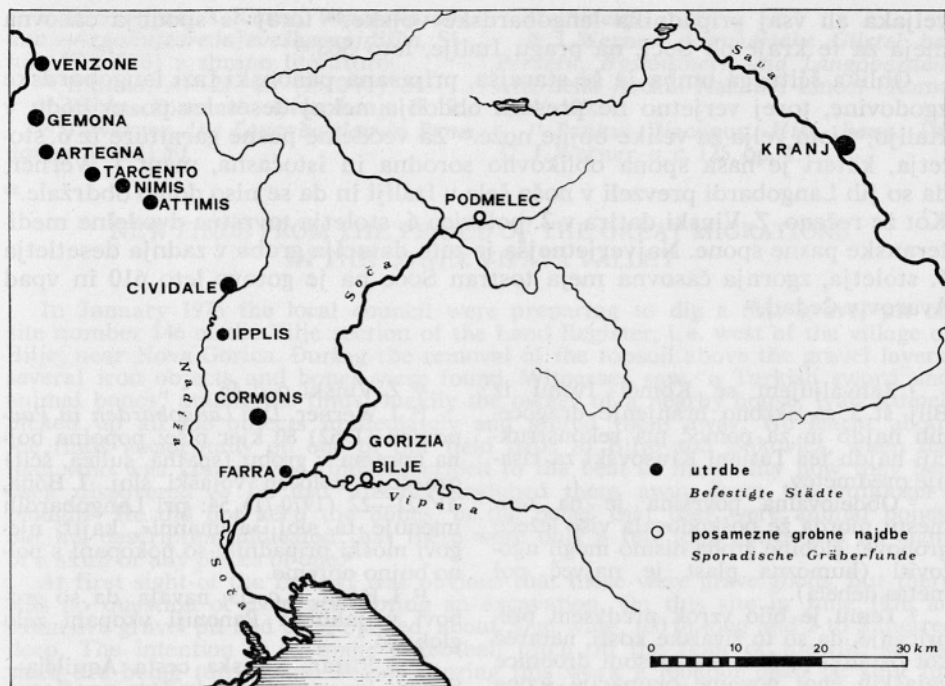


1 Slučajna najdba oljenke v Biljah. — *Oil lamp at Bilje (chance find)*

Ob tem je treba povedati nekaj besed tudi o širšem okolišu grobne najdbe iz časa preseljevanja. Najdišče (sl. 2, 6) leži okrog sto metrov južno od približnega poteka rimske itinerarske ceste *Aquilea-Emona*,<sup>18</sup> v vzhodnem delu vasi še ohranjene v obliki širokega nasipa (sl. 2, 5), ki poteka nekaj južneje od sedanje ceste Miren—Bilje—Bukovica—Volčja draga. V zahodnem delu verjetno teče trasa antične ceste pod sedanjo v smeri proti križišču za Miren in Novo Gorico, saj so tod na obeh straneh ceste, še posebej pa na ledini Praprotno zahodno od križišča, znane starejše antične grobne najdbe<sup>19</sup> (sl. 2, 1, 2). Na bivšem graščinskem vrtu so znane najdbe grobov in nagrobnika (sl. 2, 3).<sup>20</sup> Severno od ceste in sedanjega vaškega pokopališča je Franc Volk pri rigolanju pred nekaj leti našel kasnoantično oljenko hrušaste oblike (tip Ivanyi XII), ki je okvirno datirana v čas 4.—5. stoletje (sl. 1).<sup>21</sup> V neposredni bližini je bila poleti 1976. leta na parc. št. 201/1 in 201/7 k. o. Bilje v profilu



2 Arheološka karta antičnih in zgodnesrednjeveških najdb v Biljah in okolici. — *Archaeological map of Roman and early mediaeval finds at Bilje and its surroundings*



3 Langobardska najdišča na vzhodnem robu Furlanije. — Lombardic site on the eastern edge of Friuli

izkopa ugotovljena strnjena antična kulturna plast (sl. 2, 4).<sup>22</sup> Vzhodno od vasi Bilje je bil v opuščnem glinokopu Goriških opekarn viden ostanek antičnega kanala in več antične keramike, poleg so menda naleteli tudi na del cestišča.<sup>23</sup> V prostor med vasi Bilje in Bukovica je teoretično postavljena rimska cestna postaja *Ad Fornulos*,<sup>24</sup> ki pa na terenu samem še ni locirana določneje.

Grob [ali grobovi] germanskega vojaka ob glavni prometni zvezi z Balkana v Italijo torej nikakor ni presenetljiv ali izjemen pojav. Žal ostaja njegova izpovedna vrednost zaradi okoliščin najdbe nepopolna. Kljub temu pa bo gotovo nekaj prispevala k reševanju ali vsaj osvetlitvi problematike časa preseljevanja narodov oziroma vprašanja 6. stoletja v spodnji Vipavski dolini.

Na tem mestu ne nameravamo seči v široko razpravo o tem vprašanju, saj so ga posebej v zadnjih letih obravnavali mnogi avtorji.<sup>24a</sup> Omejila se bom na najnovejšo študijo D. Svoljšaka in T. Knifica, v kateri sta avtorja dosedanje izsledke upoštevala in prišla do zaključka, da je bila spodnja Vipavska dolina do Vrtočina v langobardskih rokah vsaj do začetka 7. stoletja in da alpski Slovani Soče do leta 600 niso dosegli.<sup>25</sup> Najdba iz Bilj to trditev podpira. Glede na analogije grobnih celot upravičeno pripisujemo najdbo grobu langobardskega

veljaka ali vsaj pripadnika langobardske vojske,<sup>26</sup> torej je spodnja časovna meja za te kraje ob Soči, na pragu Italije, leto 568.<sup>27</sup>

Oblika ščitnega umba je še starejša, pripisana panonski fazi langobardske zgodovine, torej verjetno ne presega obdobja nekaj deset let po prihodu v Italijo;<sup>28</sup> isto velja za velike bojne nože.<sup>29</sup> Za večdelne pasne garniture iz 6. stoletja, kateri je naša spona oblikovno sorodna in istočasna, meni J. Werner, da so jih Langobardi prevzeli v nošo šele v Italiji in da se niso dolgo obdržale.<sup>30</sup> Kot že rečeno, Z. Vinski datira v 2. polovico 6. stoletja grovstne dvodelne mediteranske pasne sponse. Najverjetnejša je zato datacija groba v zadnja desetletja 6. stoletja, zgornja časovna meja tostran Soče pa je gotovo leto 610 in vpad Avarov v Čedad.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zahvaljujem se Komel Ivanu iz Bilj št. 3 za skrbno hranjenje dragocenih najdb in za pomoč pri rekonstrukciji najdb ter Tatjani Krasovski za risanje predmetov.

<sup>2</sup> Obdelovalna površina je na tem mestu morda že poškodovana više ležeče grobove; globine groba nismo mogli ugotoviti (humozna plast je največ pol metra debela).

<sup>3</sup> Temu je bilo vzrok predvsem pričanje, da so to živalske kosti, namreč kot ostanki prehrane z mesom drobnice vojaških enot povojne okupacije »cone A«, ki se je vaščani s posmehom spominjali.

<sup>4</sup> I. Bóna, Langobarden in Ungarn, AV 21—22 (1970-71) 45 ss, Abb. 3—6. J. Werner, *Die Langobarden in Pannonien* (München 1962): Várpalota, Grab 11 in 25, Taf. 4 in 13. Z. Vinski, Arheološki spomeniki velike seobe naroda u Srijemu, *Situla 2* (1957) 21—27: grobni nalaz iz okolice Batajnice.

<sup>5</sup> Z. Vinski, o. c. 21. J. Werner, o. c. 79.

<sup>6</sup> I. Bóna, AV 21—22 (1970-71) Abb. 3, 4.

<sup>7</sup> S. Stucchi, Gorizia, *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità* Ser. 8, Vol. 6, Fasc. 1—2 (Roma 1947) 41.

<sup>8a</sup> S. Stucchi, o. c. 42.

<sup>8</sup> J. Werner, o. c. 80 (Poysdorf: Grab 6, Taf. 45, 3).

<sup>9</sup> I. Bóna, o. c. Abb. 3—6.

<sup>10</sup> Z. Vinski, Kasnoantički starosjedioci u salonitanskoj regiji prema arheološkoj ostavštini predslavenskog supstrata, *Vjesnik za arheologiju i historiju dalmatinsku* 69 (1967 [Split 1974]) 45.

<sup>11</sup> Z. Vinski, o. c. tab. XLV, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Z. Vinski, o. c. tab. XLVIII, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Z. Vinski, o. c. 46.

<sup>14</sup> Z. Vinski, o. c. tab. XLVII, 1—4.

<sup>15</sup> Z. Vinski, o. c. 46.

<sup>16</sup> J. Werner, *Die Langobarden in Pannonien* (1962) 80 kjer piše: popolna bojna oprema v grobu (spatha, sulica, ščit) označuje določen vojaški sloj. I. Bóna, AV 21—22 (1970-71) 54: pri Langobardih imenuje ta sloj »arimanni«, kajti, njegovi moški pripadniki so pokopani s polno bojno opremo.

<sup>17</sup> I. Bóna, o. c. 53: navaja, da so grobovi veljakov v Panoniji vkopani zelo globoko.

<sup>18</sup> S. Rutar, Rimska cesta Aquileia—Siscia, *Izvestja Muz. društva za Kranjsko 9* (1899) 28.

<sup>19</sup> *Arheološka najdišča Slovenije (ANSI)*, Ljubljana 1975, 126: Bilje.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>21</sup> Z. Subic, Rimske oljenke v Sloveniji, AV 26 (1975) 83, T. 5—19.

<sup>22</sup> Poročilo Zavoda za spomeniško varstvo Gorica v *Varstvu spomenikov* za leto 1976.

<sup>23</sup> D. Svöljšak, *Varstvo spomenikov 12* (1969) 86.

<sup>24</sup> S. Rutar, o. c. 28: Mutatio Ad Forumulos omenja na cesti Aquileia-Siscia *Itinerarium Burdigalense*. Novejša dognanja se bolj nagibajo k lokaciji Bezovlak (Prvačina) v dolini potoka Vogrščka: cfr. J. Šašel, Rimske ceste v Sloveniji, *ANSI* (1975) 78, 88 in tam navedena literatura.

<sup>24a</sup> J. Šašel, *Alpes Iuliana*, AV 21—22 (1970-71) 39—42 z literaturo; Idem, K zgodovini Julijsko-alpskega obrambnega področja, *Situla 14—15* (1974) 260. B. Grafenauer, *Zgodovina slovenskega naroda I* (1964) 300 ss; Idem, Naselitev Slovanov v Vzhodnih Alpah in vprašanje kontinuitete, AV 21—22 (1970-71) 27 in tam zbrana literatura.

<sup>25</sup> D. Svoljšak, T. Knific, *Vipavska dolina — zgodnjerednjeveška najdišča*, *Situla* 17 (1976) z zbrano literaturo.

<sup>26</sup> I. Bóna, *AV* 21—22 (1970-71) 54.

<sup>27</sup> Paulus Diaconus, *Hist. Lang.* II, 7.

<sup>28</sup> J. Werner, *Die Langobarden in Panonien* (1962) 80.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>30</sup> J. Werner, *Nomadische Gürtel bei Persern, Byzantinern und Langobarden*, *Atti della Accad. Naz. dei Lincei* (Roma 1974) 109.

<sup>31</sup> Paulus Diaconus, *Hist. Lang.* IV, 37. J. Werner, *o. c.* 125, op. 4.

## NEW FINDS FROM THE PERIOD OF THE GREAT MIGRATIONS IN THE LOWER VIPAVA VALLEY

In January 1976 the local council were preparing to dig a new gravel pit on site number 146 of the Bilje section of the Land Register, i. e. west of the village of Bilje, near Nova Gorica. During the removal of the topsoil above the gravel layers, several iron objects and bones were found. Witnesses saw "a Turkish sword and animal bones" among the finds; luckily the owner of a nearby house, Ivan Komel, picked up all the objects immediately and stored them away. We learnt about the finds accidentally on one of our field trips to Bilje and Bukovica, when the man who was keeping the finds described to the best of his ability how they had been discovered — he had literally snatched them away from the bulldozer's plough!<sup>1</sup> He did not keep the bones, in the belief that they were animal bones, but his description indicated that there were only a few long bones and no signs of a skull or any pieces of one.<sup>2</sup>

At first sight of the finds it was obvious that these were grave goods, but there was no question of even attempting an excavation. On this site in June 1976 an extensive gravel pit had been opened, about 50 m wide, 100 m long and 2 to 5 metres deep. The intention is to make a football pitch on the floor of the pit, so the sides are being turned into stands. During this work a lookout must be kept for possible individual finds among the topsoil, which is piled in great heaps on the northern edge. I do not hope for any particular success in this, however. It is obvious from the circumstances of the finding of the objects that we cannot speak about the position of individual articles or even reliably state whether they belong to a single grave or not. Children searching through the sand on the eastern edge of the gravel pit found pieces of iron plate and a rivet, all parts of a shield boss. In a pile of earth on the northern edge they found 4 rivets which undoubtedly are part of the fittings of a boss (they are drawn in this publication alongside the pieces of iron), although of course there is no guarantee that they all belong to the same shield.

### Description of the finds

- 1) Double-edged iron sword/spatha — well preserved. The tip of the blade and end of the tang are missing. A wide groove runs the length of the blade. The cross-piece at the join of tang and blade is reinforced; there are traces of a wooden covering on both the cross-piece and the tang (**Table 1, pic. 1**). Dimensions: length 86 cm, length of blade 74.5 cm, width of blade 5.1—3.3 cm.
- 2) Single-edged iron knife; wide blade with strongly reinforced back. Two grooves running just below the spine and along the middle of the blade on both sides. The part between blade and tang is bell-shaped. The tip of the blade and end of the tang are broken off (**Table 1, pic. 2**). Dimensions: length 48 cm, length of blade 38.5 cm, width of blade 3.8 cm.
- 3) Single-edged iron knife; the blade is somewhat narrower with a greatly reinforced back. A groove runs along the middle of both sides. The spine continues into a hooked, very long, tang-like protuberance for the handle. Blade tip and end of tang missing (**Table 1, pic. 3**). Dimensions: length 40 cm, length of blade 26.5 cm, width of blade 3.6 cm.
- 4) Iron/shield boss. Considerably damaged on excavation, but earlier damage is also visible. Cylindrical/conical in shape; the knob at the top of the cone is



- missing. The lower edge is somewhat askew; one hole for riveting the boss on to a base is still visible. Heavy structure, forged from one piece (**Table 2, pic. 1**). Dimensions: lower diameter 5.7 cm, upper 9 cm.
- 5) Conical, thinly beaten iron cross-piece, perhaps part of shield mounting. The very thin, triangular, splayed out endpiece is damaged, while the wider, heavier part is broken off (**Table 2, pic. 3**). Dimensions: length 14.7 cm, width 1.4 cm.
  - 6) Iron object in the form of thinly beaten cross-piece with an end-piece bent twice at right angles; the second, wider part is broken off (**Table 2, pic. 2**). Dimensions: height 14.2 cm, width 6.6 cm.
  - 7) Iron spear head. The lower part of the conical socket is broken off; fragments of the wooden shaft found in the socket. The blade is narrow and elongated with a pronounced midrib. A poorly preserved, double groove runs along the edges of the blade. The tip of the blade is broken off (**Table 1, pic. 5**). Dimensions: length 20.5 cm, width of blade 3.2 cm, greatest diameter of socket 3 cm.
  - 8) Large iron knife, broken into two pieces. The back of the blade is reinforced, and the join of blade and tang is crooked with a reinforced cross-piece (**Table 1, pic. 4**). Dimensions: remaining length 22.5 cm, width of blade 3.3 cm.
  - 9) Small iron knife. The back of the blade is greatly reinforced and the cutting edge much worn down (**Table 1, pic. 7**). Dimensions: length 14.8 cm, width 2.1 cm.
  - 10) Two-part, bronze belt buckle, with a heavy, triangular fitting. Prong missing. The buckle frame is heavy, oval, decorated on the upper side with groups of deep cross cuts; the side piece between prong and fitting is very thin and with a circular cross-section. The triangular fitting hangs on the side piece by a thin double loop which was broken during excavation. The upper surface of the fitting bears traces of silvering; it is decorated with rows of circles and with triangles blocked in with criss-cross scratches. The cores of two iron rivets for fastening on the buckle are preserved but the shape of their heads is not recognisable (**Table 2, pic. 5**). Dimensions: length 9.2 cm.
  - 11) Small pieces of an iron/shield boss; part of a conically convex section and two twisted pieces of the circumference, with one rivet (**Table 1, pic. 8**). Dimensions: lower diameter 20.8 cm, upper 9 cm.
  - 12) Small, intact iron knife with wide blade (**Table 1, pic. 6**). Dimensions: length 12.4 cm, width of blade 1.6 cm.
  - 13) Two pieces of iron plate with semicircular end. Possibly part of a shield; traces of wooden covering on one side of both pieces (**Table 2, pic. 4**). Dimensions:  $4.8 \times 3.3$  cm and  $3.2 \times 2.3$  cm.
  - 14) Four large iron rivets with wide flat heads, undoubtedly part of shield fittings; height of two well-preserved rivets 1.5 and 1.6 cm, diameter of heads 2.8 cm, one of them 3.1 cm (drawn beside shield boss, **Table 2, pic. 1**).

According to the description of the finding of the site (Ivan Komel), and in as far as this is reliable, the following objects belong to one grave unit: the double-edged sword/spatha; the large knife, shield boss, spearhead, large, broken knife, small knife and belt buckle. As already stated, the other objects were collected near this group of finds; the bones found with the artefacts were not kept, as they were thrown away at the time of the original excavation.<sup>3</sup>

### Interpretation

Only the artefacts from the postulated grave unit will be considered here for a discussion of typology and chronology of the chance finds from Bilje, as the other objects do not contradict any findings from this group. Analogies to the grave unit can be found in the inventory of military graves of Germanic tribes from the era of the Great Migrations.<sup>4</sup>

The long, double-edged sword, called a spatha, was a common artefact in military graves from this period; our example can be dated only approximately, to the 5<sup>th</sup>—6<sup>th</sup> century, as it is not complete.<sup>5</sup>

Long, single-edged knives, called saxes or scramasaxes in connection with Germanic tribes, belong to the battle equipment needed for the new style of war-

fare on horseback, which became popular with the appearance of the Huns in Europe. An analogy to our grave unit can be found in grave 44 from Szentender in Pannonia.<sup>6</sup> Engraved grooves on knife blades, otherwise not mentioned by authors because of the poor state of preservation of the articles, are known from a small example from two skeleton graves discovered in 1943 in Gorica.<sup>7</sup> These are also dated approximately to the 5<sup>th</sup>—6<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The size of the spearhead justifies our calling it a spear. The nearest local analogy is again to be found in the graves at Gorica, which S. Stucchi dates approximately to the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7a</sup>

The shape of our shield boss, according to J. Werner, sets it within the Pannonian phase of Lombardic history. In the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century the cylindrical/conical form began gradually to change to a semicircular shape, known in northern Italy.<sup>8</sup> Analogies to our form are also to be found in graves No. 44 at Szentender and No. 31 at Kajdacs.<sup>9</sup>

The one object out of the whole grave contents which can most reliably be classified according to typology and chronology is the bronze belt buckle. In his extensive analysis of the range of forms of the late Roman period, Z. Vinski called this type of buckle a two-piece Mediterranean belt buckle, which in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century begins to appear in the graves of Germanic warriors but which originates from late Roman or early Byzantine workshops.<sup>10</sup> Among numerous examples collected, we find the nearest analogy to our buckle in the buckle from the San Giovanni necropolis at Cividale del Friuli,<sup>11</sup> while the buckle from Gundolfingen<sup>12</sup> is the closest in form. Two elements important for a closer dating of the buckle, i. e. the prong and form of the heads of the rivets, are missing. The decoration of a chain of circles (according to Z. Vinski a typical element of late Roman workmanship)<sup>13</sup> is here supplemented with two chains of triangles blocked in with meshed lines, which already shows the influence of the taste and wishes of Germanic clients in workshops of the old autochthonous tradition. Two-piece buckles with a triangular fitting, known from the Kranj and Rifnik cemeteries<sup>14</sup> and which, Z. Vinski thought were made in a workshop somewhere in the south eastern Alps,<sup>15</sup> differ from the Bilje piece in workmanship and shape to such an extent that the latter cannot be included as the same type, although they have the ornamentation of imprinted circles on a triangular fitting in common.

Analysis of individual artefacts has thus shown that this find can undoubtedly be ascribed to a military grave of Germanic origin,<sup>16</sup> dated to the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, on the evidence of the belt buckle. The remaining objects from this chance find point to the necessity for caution in defining the extent of the find: parts of a second shield boss show that there was at least one other military grave at this site, if not more. Before the gravel pit was opened up, this area was agricultural land and it is possible that some of the graves had already been destroyed in the past by ploughing etc.<sup>17</sup> In the present situation, where any investigation is impossible, we must be content with hypotheses.

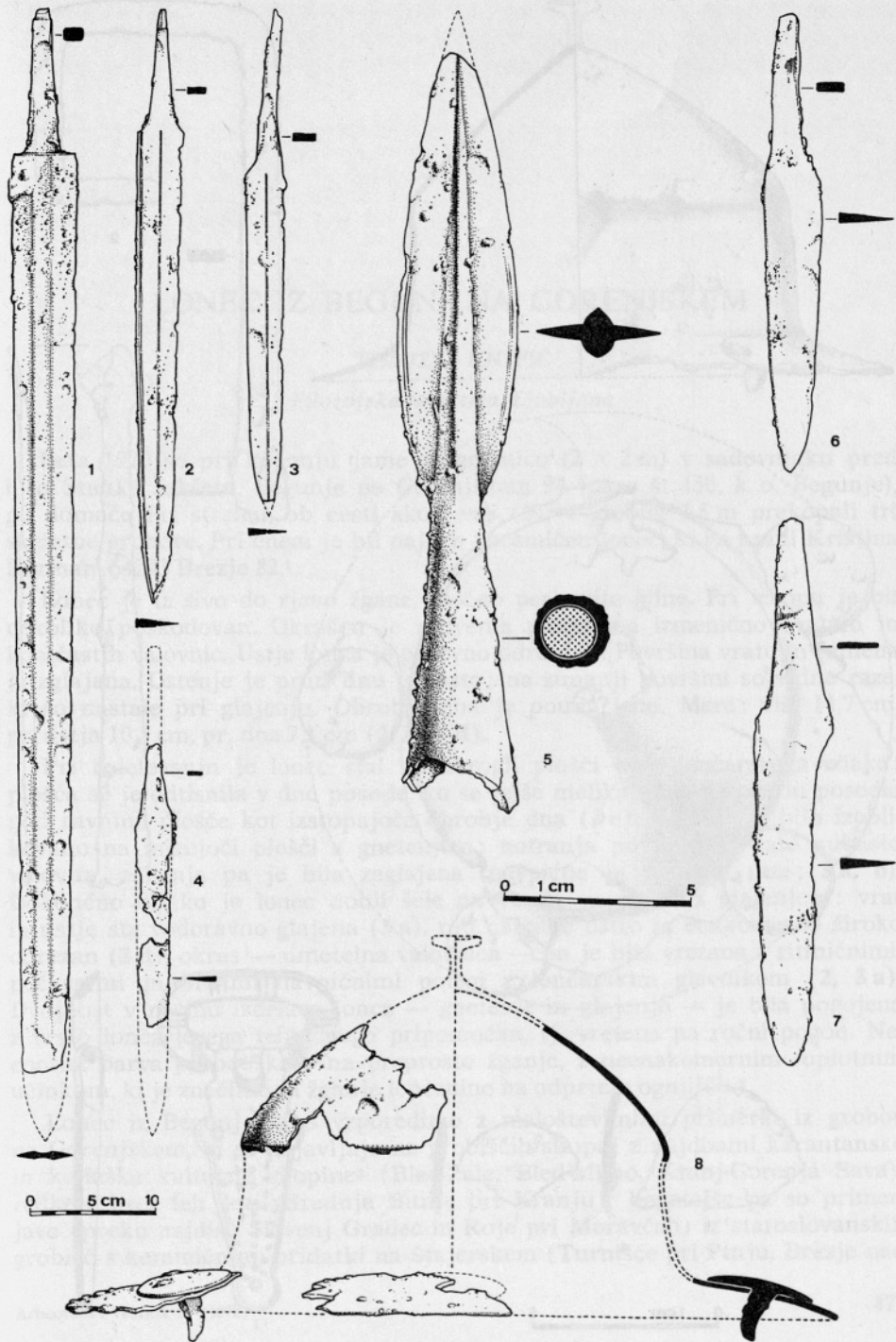
At the same time a few words should be said on the broader surroundings of these finds from the period of the Great Migrations. The site (**pic. 2, 6**) lies about 100 metres south of the approximate course of the Roman Aquilea—Emona road,<sup>18</sup> still preserved on the eastern side of the village in the form of a wide ridge (**pic. 2, 5**), which runs somewhat further south of the present-day Miren—Bilje—Bukovica—Volčja Draga road. At its western end the ancient road probably runs below the modern one towards the crossroads for Miren and Nova Gorica, as there, on both sides of the road but especially on the area of fallow ground known as Praprotno west of the crossroads, older Roman grave finds are known (**pic. 2, 2**).<sup>19</sup> Graves and a gravestone are known from the garden of the former manor house (**pic. 2, 3**).<sup>20</sup> While ploughing some years ago north of the road and of the present village cemetery, Franc Volk uncovered a late Roman, pear-shaped oil lamp (Ivanyi type XII) which approximately dates to the 4<sup>th</sup>—5<sup>th</sup> century (**pic. 1**).<sup>21</sup> Just nearby, on plots 201/1 and 201/7 of the Land Register a Roman occupation level was discovered during excavations in the summer of 1976 (**pic. 2, 4**).<sup>22</sup> East of the village of Bilje the remains of a Roman canal and some Roman pottery could be seen in the deserted clay pit of the Gorica brickworks and part of

a road was apparently also found.<sup>23</sup> The Roman post house "Ad Fornulos"<sup>24</sup> was theoretically situated somewhere between the villages of Bilje and Bukovica, but its exact position has as yet not been more precisely defined.

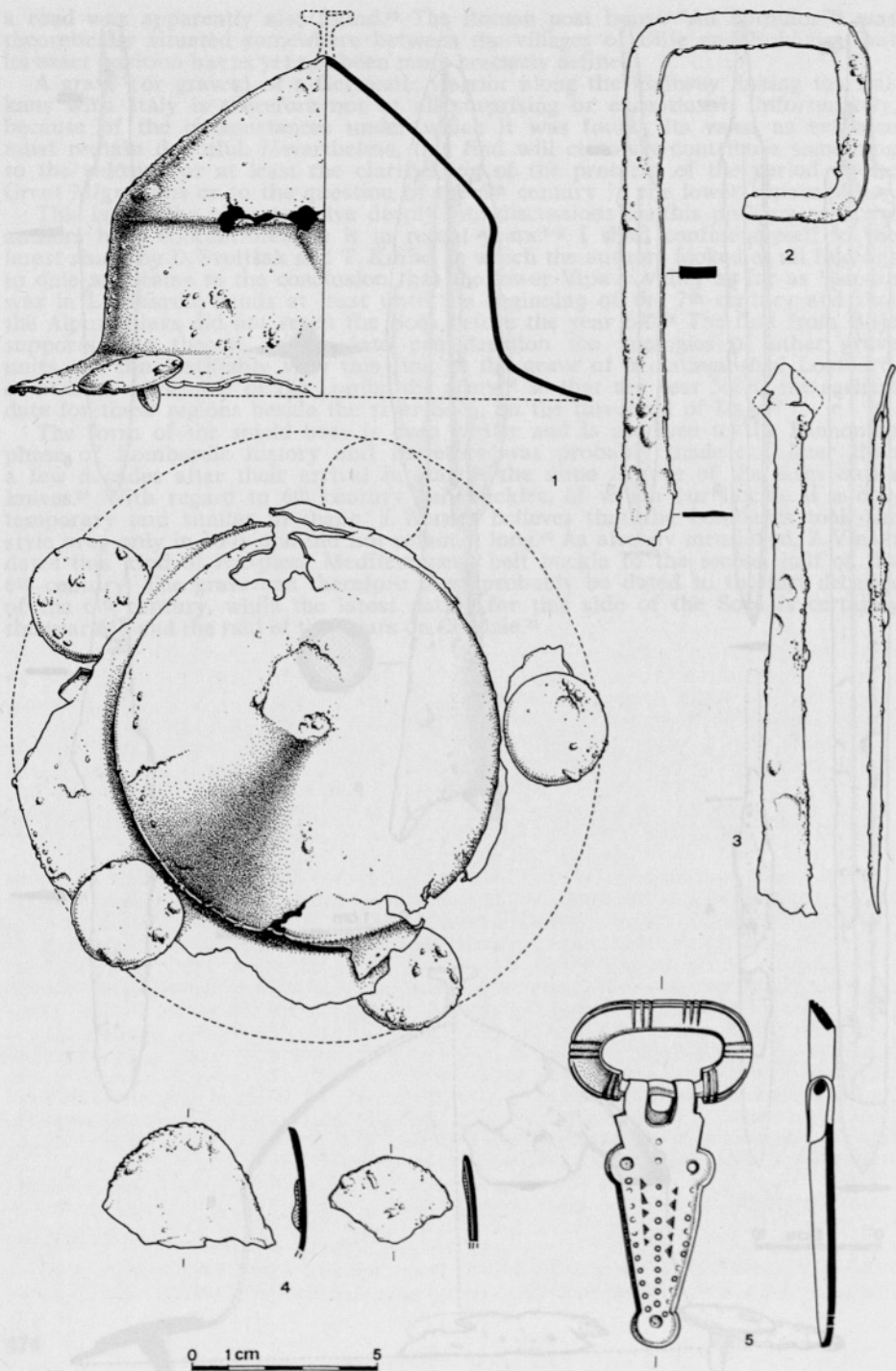
A grave (or graves) of a Germanic warrior along the highway linking the Balkans with Italy is therefore not at all surprising or exceptional. Unfortunately, because of the circumstances under which it was found, its value as evidence must remain doubtful. Nevertheless, this find will certainly contribute something to the solution or at least the clarification of the problem of the period of the Great Migrations or to the question of the 6<sup>th</sup> century in the lower Vipava valley.

This is not the place to delve deeply into discussions on this problem as many authors have concentrated on it in recent years.<sup>24a</sup> I shall confine myself to the latest study by D. Svoljšak and T. Knific, in which the authors looked at all findings to date and came to the conclusion that the lower Vipava valley as far as Vrtovin was in Lombardic hands at least until the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century and that the Alpine Slavs did not reach the Soča before the year 600.<sup>25</sup> The find from Bilje supports this theory. Taking into consideration the analogies of other grave units, we can justifiably view this find as the grave of a distinguished Lombard, or at least a member of the Lombardic army,<sup>26</sup> so that the year 568 is the earliest date for these regions beside the river Soča, on the threshold of Italy.<sup>27</sup>

The form of the shield boss is even earlier and is ascribed to the Pannonian phase of Lombardic history and therefore was probably made not later than a few decades after their arrival in Italy;<sup>28</sup> the same is true of the large battle knives.<sup>29</sup> With regard to 6<sup>th</sup> century belt buckles, of which our buckle is a contemporary and similar in shape, J. Werner believes that the Lombards took the style over only in Italy and did not retain it long.<sup>30</sup> As already mentioned, Z. Vinski dates this kind of two-piece Mediterranean belt buckle to the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The grave can therefore most probably be dated to the last decades of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, while the latest dating for this side of the Soča is certainly the year 610 and the raid of the Avars on Cividale.<sup>31</sup>



Tab. 1



Tab. 2