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TAJNI GRAD - GRAD TAJNI OPOROVINA I SUSTAV ŠPILJA U KANJONU LOVRANSKE DRAGE

A SECRET CITY - A CITY OF SECRETS OPOROVINA AND THE CAVE SYSTEM IN THE CANYON AT LOVRANSKA DRAGA

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Predstavljaju se istraživanja špiljskog kompleksa u kanjonu rječice Medvežica, odnosno doline Lovranske Drage, provedena tijekom 2006. godine. Rasprava se temelji na usporednoj analizi i vrednovanju rezultata prethodnih istraživanja s novoprikupljenim podacima. Bit će riječi o zabilježenih 14 špilja i abrija, u kojima je registrirana antropogena djelatnost. Najveća pozornost posvećena je istraživanju središnjeg špiljskog objekta Oporovine, gdje su istražene dvije sonde. Kronološki gledano, tijekom razdoblja kasnog neolitika i eneolitika kao sezonsko stanište koriste se špiljski objekti smješteni na istočnoj strani kanjona, oko Oporovine. Na zapadnoj strani kanjona, Vrtaška peć 1 koristila se povremeno i privremeno tijekom bronzanog doba, kada se život nastavio i u samoj Oporovini. Prava kulturološka metamorfoza špiljskog sustava zbiva se od kraja 4. pa do 6. stoljeća, kada se starosjedišćko romansko stanovništvo, vjerojatno iz obližnje antičke Lauriane, ondje sklanjalo u nemirnim vremenima. Stvaranjem “zgrade” velikih dimenzija u Oporovini te uređenjem drugih, manjih špiljskih objekata taj izuzetan, brižno planiran špiljski naseobinski kompleks odigrat će važnu povijesnu ulogu kasnoantičkog refugija.

This paper presents the research of the cave complex in the Medvežica stream canyon, i.e. the Lovranska Draga valley, conducted in 2006. The discussion is based on a comparative analysis and evaluation of the results of previous investigations in relation to newly gathered data. The paper discusses fourteen caves and abris in which anthropogenic activity has been registered. The greatest focus is dedicated to the research of the central Oporovina Cave, where two trenches have been excavated. In terms of the chronology, the caves situated on the eastern side of the canyon, around Oporovina, were used as seasonal settlement during the Late Neolithic and Eneolithic. On the west side of the canyon, Vrtaška peć 1 was used intermittently and temporarily during the Bronze Age, when life continued at Oporovina. The true cultural metamorphosis of this cave system took place from the late 4th to 6th century, when the indigenous Roman population, likely from nearby Roman Lauriana, sought refuge there during periods of unrest. With the creation of an “building” of significant dimensions in Oporovina and the adaptation of other, smaller caves, this exceptional, carefully planned cave habitation complex would play an important historical role as a Late Antiquity refugium.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: Istra, Kvarner, špilja Oporovina, špiljski sustav, naseobinski kompleks, sahranjivanje, materijalna kultura, neolitik, eneolitik, bronzano doba, kasna antika

KEYWORDS: Istria, Kvarner, Oporovina Cave, cave system, settlement complex, burial, material culture, Neolithic, Eneolithic, Bronze Age, Late Antiquity

UVOD

Zaselak i dolina Lovranska Draga smješteni su na istočnom, kvarnerskom rubu istarske obale, duboko usječeni u istočnu padinu strmih obronaka planinskog masiva Učke. Dužinom od oko 4 km i širinom od 1 km dolina se prostire od razine mora do preko 800 m nadmorske visine (sl. 1). S jedne strane prilično je zatvorena i kompaktna u svojim mikroklimatskim uvjetima, povezana izravno s vrletnim istočnim obroncima najvišeg vrha Istre, kako Učka i izgleda kada se promatra s morske strane¹. Taj “najviši” ili “uski” prostor još neokrnjenog prirodnog i kulturnog krajolika izravno se otvara prema moru i duboko uvučenoj šljunkovitoj plaži u uvali Medveja i izuzetan je ekosustav bogat speleološkim objektima koji su danas manje ili više poznati (sl. 1, 2, 3) (Blečić 2006).



Sl. 1 Topografski položaj špiljskog sustava u kanjonu Lovranske Drage (grafika: M. Blečić Kavur).

Fig. 1 The topographic position of the cave system in the Lovranska Draga canyon (graphic by: M. Blečić Kavur).

¹ Učka je u starijoj (talijanskoj) izvornoj dokumentaciji i kartografiji poznata pod nazivljem *Monte Maggiore* (najviša planina) i/ili *Monti Caldieri* (od tal. *caldaia* = kotao ili badanj, opisujući izrazite i nagle klimatske promjene), a dijeli, ali i spaja istarski poluotok (Peršić 2000, 10; Gilić 2000, 14). Ako se opaža s gornje, planinske strane, izgleda izduženo i poprilično usko (>uska, >uška...) pa od tog pridjeva vjerojatno potječe današnji oronim Učka, kao takav poznat i iz glagoljaške baštine (Gilić 2000, 13–14). Općenito je naziv Učka u stručnoj literaturi dugo vremena tumačen izvedenicom od zoonima vučka.

INTRODUCTION

The hamlet and the valley of Lovranska Draga are situated on the eastern Istrian coast facing the Kvarner Bay, cut deep into the eastern slope of the steep sides of the Učka mountain massif. About 4 kilometres deep and 1 kilometre wide, the valley rises from sea level to over 800 metres above it (Fig. 1). To one side it is quite closed and compact in terms of its microclimatic conditions, connected directly to the sheer eastern slopes of the highest peak on the Istrian peninsula, the way we see Učka when seen from the side facing the open sea¹. This “highest” or “narrow” expanse of still unspoiled natural and cultural landscape opens directly to the sea and the deeply recessed pebble beach in Medveja cove and constitutes an exceptional ecosystem rich in speleological structures presently known to us to a greater or lesser extent (Figs. 1, 2, 3) (Blečić 2006). The precondition for this is its geological foundation. The canyon is formed of macrocrystalline light grey dolomites and homogenous grey dolomites that traverse to limestone of Cretaceous and Palaeogene age. The rock is of carbonate composition, with particularly complex carbonate and flysch contacts. Flysch deposits are found on the steep slopes, mostly over limestone and stretch in a discontinuous zone from Medveja to Lovranska Draga, where we also find active talus slopes (Fig. 2) (Klepač 1987, 19–20; Benac 2007, 10–11). The complex of caves, abris, pits, sinkholes and the like is, therefore, the logical consequence of the processes that occur in the course of karstification in the geological past (Božičević 1987, 27–30).

Aside from the natural, this interplay has created a unique cultural ensemble organised around the largest cave in the canyon, *Poduporica*, also known as *Oporovina*² (Figs. 2–4). Up to the 1970s *Oporovina* was actively used by the local population, primarily for the collection of guano, humus and clay and sporadically as a pen for livestock. Trails were established and maintained to reach

¹ In earlier (Italian) original documentation and cartography Učka is known as *Monte Maggiore* (“highest mountain”) and/or *Monti Caldieri* (from Ital. *caldaia* = cauldron or trough, describing the pronounced and sudden changes in weather); it both separates and connects the Istrian peninsula (Peršić 2000, 10; Gilić 2000, 14). If viewed from the upper side, i.e. the mountaintop, it appears elongated and quite narrow (>uska (narrow), >uška...) and it is likely that the current oronym Učka, also known as such from the Glagolitic heritage, originates from this adjective (Gilić 2000, 13–14). The name Učka was largely and for some time interpreted in the expert literature as being derived from the zoonym *vučka* (an adjective derived from *vuk* (wolf)).

² The latter name has become conventional in the available literature and has, as such, also been used in this paper (Lengyel 1933, 220; Malez 1955, 58; Starac 2000a, 7). The local name *Poduporica* has entirely died out in the oral tradition of the local population.



Sl. 2 Pogled na uvalu Medveja i špilje na istočnoj strani kanjona iz pravca Lovranske Drage (foto: M. Blečić Kavur).

Fig. 2 Medveja cove and the caves on the eastern side of the canyon - view from Lovranska Draga (photo by: M. Blečić Kavur).

Preduvjet takvom stanju geološka je osnova. Kanjon tvore krupnokristalasti svjetlosivi dolomiti i homogeni sivi dolomiti koji prelaze u vapnence kredne i paleogene starosti. Stijene su karbonatnog sastava, a na pojedinim dijelovima posebno su složeni doticaji karbonatnog i flišnog kompleksa. Naslage fliša prisutne su na strmim padinama ponajviše na vapnencima, odnosno prostiru se na isprekidanom pojasu upravo od Medveje do Lovranske Drage, gdje su ujedno zastupljeni i aktivni sipari (sl. 2) (Klepač 1987, 19-20; Benac 2007, 10-11). Kompleks špilja, abrija, jama, ponora i sl., sukladno navedenome, logičan je slijed procesa koji su se odvijali prilikom okršavanja u geološkoj prošlosti (Božičević 1987, 27-30).

Izuzev prirodne, taj splet tvori i jedinstvenu kulturološku cjelinu organiziranu oko najveće špilje u kanjonu – *Poduporice* ili *Oporovine*² (sl. 2-4). Do 70-ih godina 20. stoljeća Oporovinu je aktivno koristilo mjesno stanovništvo, ponajprije za sakupljanje guana, humusa i ilovače te povremeno kao tor za sklanjanje stoke. Do nje su se uređivali i čistili putovi, danas u potpunosti zapušteni ili nestali, obrasli u mediteransku makiju i šikaru. Time je onemogućen prilaz s morske strane, iz pravca autokampa u Medveji, dodatno otežan

it, now entirely abandoned and inaccessible, having been overgrown with Mediterranean maquis and chaparral. This has made the area inaccessible from the seaside, from the direction of the camping in Medveja, further exacerbated by scree, but also from the upper side from Oraj or Križevica, which is very steep and also inaccessible (Figs. 1, 2, 4) (Blečić 2006).

Its great attractiveness, shrouded in a veil of mystery, has since the 19th century drawn the attention of many inquisitive people – of those undertaking excursions, and of experts and explorers, documented by the graffiti and signatures on its walls. The first actual specialist evaluation of Oporovina, however, and test excavations, was undertaken in 1929 by Belario de Lengyel. This biologist and speleologist offered only a very brief report of the results he achieved and the collected paleontological and archaeological material (Lengyel 1933; Laicini 2002)³. As far as the interpretation of individual archaeological finds is concerned, a further analysis was authored by Raffaello Battaglia, at the time an eminent archaeologist of the *Provincia del Carnaro*. Although their assessments were somewhat at odds, they came to the compromise conclusion that Oporovina is without a doubt the first

² Potonji naziv uvriježio se u dostupnoj literaturi pa je tako korišten i u ovome radu (Lengyel 1933, 220; Malez 1955, 58; Starac 2000a, 7). Lokalni naziv *Poduporica* posve je iščezao u usmenoj tradiciji mjesnog stanovništva.

³ Some of the material he gathered is stored at the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral in Rijeka (B. de Lengyel Collection, Revers 360 – archives of the Archaeological department of the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral in Rijeka), and some at the *Liceo di Fiume*.



Sl. 3 Pogled na Medveju i kanjon Medvejice s morske strane (foto: J. Rubeša).

Fig. 3 Medveja and the Medvejica canyon - view from the sea (photo by: J. Rubeša).

klizištima sipara, ali i prilaz s gornje strane od Oraja ili Križevice, koji je pak izrazito strm i nepristupačan (sl. 1, 2, 4) (Blečić 2006).

Izuzetnom atraktivnošću, obavijenom velom misterioznosti, još je od 19. stoljeća plijenila pozornost znatiželjnika i izletnika, stručnjaka i istraživača što je posljedično dokumentirano brojnim preostalim grafitima i potpisima na njezinim zidovima. Ipak, prvo stručno vrednovanje Oporovine, kao i probno sondiranje, proveo je Belario de Lengyel 1929. godine. Taj biolog i speleolog donio je tek šturi izvještaj o postignutim rezultatima i prikupljenoj paleontološkoj i arheološkoj građi (Lengyel 1933; Laicini 2002)³. Što se tumačenja pojedinih arheoloških nalaza tiče, dodatnu analizu proveo je Raffaello Battaglia, tada ugledni arheolog *Provincia del Carnaro*. Premda su im se mišljenja ponešto razlikovala, kompromisno zaključuju da je Oporovina nedvojbeno prvo prapovijesno špiljsko nalazište na obalama Kvarnerskog zaljeva te iznimno poticajan lokalitet neolitičkih, vjerojatno i paleolitičkih obilježja (Lengyel 1933, 221-222; Malez 1955, 58; Malez 1970, 2; Malez 1974, 24; Malez 1986, 23; Komšo 2003, 42, T. 1). Nažalost, konačna objava prikupljene građe te dokumentacije o njoj u potpunosti je izostala. Kako god bilo, od tog je trenutka Oporovina prisutna na “prapovijesnoj sceni” sjevernog Jadrana i šire regije. Uprkos tomu, sve do 1953. godine nije bila istraživana. Tada je iznova i samo ogledno sondira Mirko Malez, koji

prehistoric cave site on the shores of the Kvarner Bay and an exceptionally promising site of Neolithic and, likely, Palaeolithic characteristics (Lengyel 1933, 221-222; Malez 1955, 58; Malez 1970, 2; Malez 1974, 24; Malez 1986, 23; Komšo 2003, 42, T. 1). Unfortunately, the final publication of the collected material and its documentation was entirely absent. Whatever the case may be Oporovina has been present on the “prehistoric scene” of the northern Adriatic and the broader region since that time. In spite of this fact there was no further excavations until 1953. It was then that Mirko Malez undertook new and only test excavations; at Oporovina on several occasions (Malez 1955; Malez 1960; Malez 1974; Malez 1979; Malez 1980; Malez 1986). He allegedly collected numerous osteological finds of fauna, potsherds, bone and flint artefacts and osteological human finds, placing them in the “Epipaleolithic” and “Mesolithic” period. The set of gathered data led researchers to the conclusion that the cave had been used sporadically and as a “shrine for the burial of the dead” (Malez 1974, 25; Malez 1979, 99-100, 245; Malez 1986, 23, 35).

Ranko Starac conducted more recent excavations, in the late 1980s. Small-scale test excavations was conducted at Oporovina (Fig. 9) and, for the first time, in the opposite facing Vrtaška peć 1. At Oporovina Starac recorded finds from the Eneolithic and Bronze Age (Fig. 12)⁴ and human bones as well as finds from the Late Antiquity period. Bronze Age and Late Antiquity artefacts were documented at Vrtaška peć 1 (Starac

³ Građa koju je prikupio dijelom je pohranjena u Pomorskom i povijskom muzeju Hrvatskog primorja, Rijeka (Zbirka B. de Lengyela, Revers 360 – arhiv Arheološkog odjela PPMHP), a dijelom u *Liceo di Fiume*.

⁴ On only one occasion does M. Malez cite finds from the Iron Age (?) (Malez 1986, Fig. 4).



Sl. 4 Špiljski sustav na istočnoj strani kanjona sa središnjom špiljom Oporovina, snimljeno iz pravca Vrtaških peći (foto: D. Komšo).

Fig. 4 The cave system on the eastern side of the canyon with the centrally placed Oporovina Cave - view from the Vrtaške peći caves (photo by: D. Komšo).

će u Oporovini iskopavati nekoliko puta (Malez 1955; Malez 1960; Malez 1974; Malez 1979; Malez 1980; Malez 1986). Prikupio je navodno brojne osteološke nalaze faune, ulomke keramike, koštane i kremene izradevine, kao i osteološke nalaze ljudi te ih smjestio u razdoblje “epipaleolitika” i “mezolitika”. Skup prikupljenih podataka naveo je istraživača na zaključak da se špilja koristila povremeno, i to “kao svetište za pokapanje mrtvih” (Malez 1974, 25; Malez 1979, 99–100, 245; Malez 1986, 23, 35).

Novija istraživanja, krajem 80-ih godina 20. stoljeća, proveo je Ranko Starac. Manja sondažna iskopavanja obavljena su u Oporovini (sl. 9), ali i, po prvi put, u nasuprotnoj Vrtaškoj peći 1. U Oporovini je Starac tipološki i kronološki zabilježio nalaze iz eneolitika i brončanog doba (sl. 12)⁴ te ljudske kosti i nalaze materijalne kulture iz razdoblja kasne antike. U Vrtaškoj peći 1 dokumentirani su pak predmeti iz brončanog doba i iz vremena kasne antike (Starac 1994; Starac 2000a; Starac 2000b; Komšo 2003, 43, T. 1)⁵ (sl. 13, 2–3).

Tek 2006. godine pokrenuta su, i u prvoj fazi ostvarena, novija istraživanja, koja su okosnicu rada

1994; Starac 2000a; Starac 2000b; Komšo 2003, 43, T. 1)⁵ (Figs. 13, 2–3).

It was only in 2006 that recent research was launched, and completed in the first phase level, that focused on an assessment of the canyon as a whole (Blečić 2006; Komšo, Blečić 2007, 119–120)⁶.

There were a number of reasons to revive the researches. They were motivated primarily not only as a revision of the previous investigations and their results, although this was certainly among the challenging incentives. The attention was focused on gaining a comprehensive overview of the cultural heritage of the area as a whole, precipitated by a new archaeological and interdisciplinary approach in the frame of the activities of Učka Nature Park. Consequently was conducted an archaeological survey of parts of the northern and southern sides of the canyon (Figs. 1–4) that provided a detailed ubication of all the caves and the gathering of

⁵ The archaeological material is stored at the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral in Rijeka.

⁶ The research was conducted in April of 2006, with financing provided by Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and the sponsorship of the Municipality of Lovran, the Učka Nature Park Public Institution and the Lovranske vile d.o.o. company. Participating in the excavations along with the author were Ivan Blečić, Nenad Kuzmanović and Tihomir Percan. We express our sincerest thanks to them all.

⁴ M. Malez samo jednom prilikom navodi i nalaze iz razdoblja željeznog doba (?) (Malez 1986, sl. 4).

⁵ Arheološka građa čuva se u Pomorskom i povijesnom muzeju Hrvatskog primorja, Rijeka.

nastojala usmjeriti na vrednovanje kanjona u cjelini (Blečić 2006; Komšo, Blečić 2007, 119-120)⁶.

Bilo je mnogo razloga za ponovno pokretanje istraživanja. Ponajprije, motivi nisu bili samo revizija prijašnjih istraživanja i njihovih rezultata, iako su oni neupitno bili među izazovnim poticajima. Pozornost je bila usmjerena na sagledavanje kulturne baštine toga područja u cjelini, a što je potaknuto novijim arheološkim i interdisciplinarnim pristupom u sklopu djelatnosti Parka prirode Učka. Zbog toga su rekognoscirani dijelovi sjeverne i južne strane kanjona (sl. 1-4), pri čemu su detaljno ubicirane sve špilje te sabrani svi dostupni podaci o ljudskim aktivnostima u tim objektima. Ukupno je zabilježeno i katalogizirano 14 špilja i abrija; pored Oporovine to su: Zemunica, Abri Kosača 1 - 6, Abri Uho i Abri Cisterna na istočnoj strani kanjona te Vrtaške peći 1 - 4 na zapadnoj strani kanjona⁷. Međutim, sedimenti s kulturnim slojevima ili ostacima istih definirani su samo u tri špilje, i to u Oporovini, Abri Kosača 1 i Vrtaškoj peći 1, dok su iz ostalih u potpunosti erodirali. Stoga ćemo se usredotočiti na predstavljanje samo nekih, vrlo vrijednih spoznaja kojima u novom aspektu vrednujemo Oporovinu kao prapovijesno nalazište, povezano u interpretaciji odnosa postojeće i poznate građe te ukazujemo na nadmoćan i vrlo složen kasnoantički horizont življenja Oporovine i okolnih špilja.

OPOROVINA

Izvjesno je da je svaka špilja kanjona Medvežice imala, i ima, neku svoju posebnost kojom se razlikovala od ostalih. U cjelini su sve one bile integralnim dijelom špiljskog sustava povezanog oko najizrazitije špilje - Oporovine (Komšo, Blečić 2007) (sl. 4). Ta je špilja smještena na istočnim liticama Lovranske Drage, ispod Oraja, na 270 m nadmorske visine, superiorno dominirajući kanjonom u cjelini. Impozantni ulaz bubrežastog je oblika, zabačenih bočnih strana koje se trapezasto rastvaraju do najviše širine otvora. Impresivnih je i dimenzija, visine 14 i širine 15 m, okrenut prema sjeverozapadu s djelomično odlomljenim, nekad isturenim svodom špilje

all available data on human activity in these structures. On the whole fourteen caves and abris were registered and catalogued; besides Oporovina these are: Zemunica, Abri Kosača 1 through 6, Abri Uho and Abri Cisterna on the eastern side of the canyon and Vrtaška Peć 1 through 4 on the western side⁷. Sediments with cultural layers, however, or the remains of these layers, were identified at only three caves - Oporovina, Abri Kosača 1 and Vrtaška Peć 1 - and had entirely eroded in the others. Consequently we will focus on the presentation of only some, very noteworthy insights that throw a new light on our assessment of Oporovina as a prehistoric site, correlating in the interpretation the existing and known material and pointing to the overwhelming and very complex Late Antiquity habitation horizon at Oporovina and the neighbouring caves.

OPOROVINA

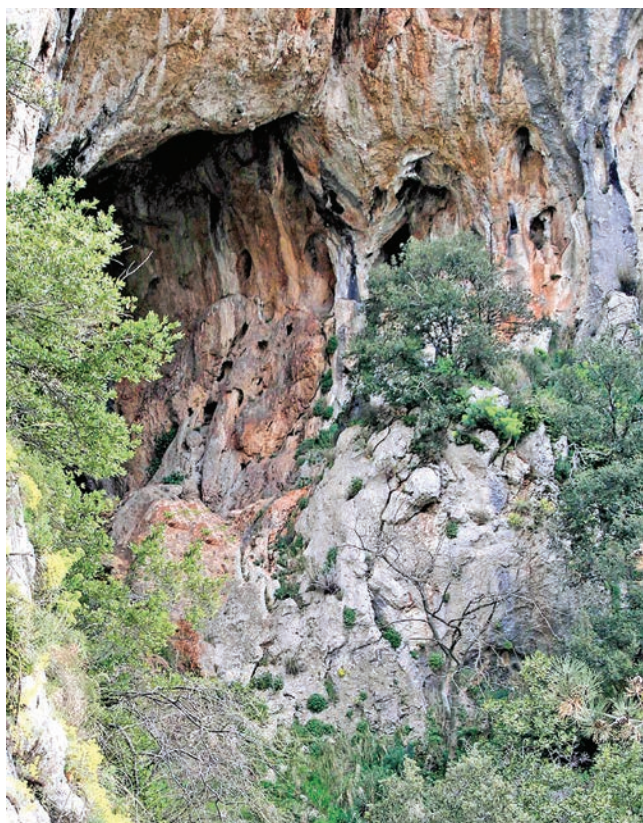
It is evident that every cave in the Medvežica canyon had, and has, a specific quality setting it apart from the others. On the whole they were all an integral part of a cave system linked around the axis of the most prominent of the caves - Oporovina (Komšo, Blečić 2007) (Fig. 4). This cave is located on the eastern cliffs of Lovranska Draga, below Oranj, at 270 metres above sea level, offering a superior and dominant position with regard to the canyon as a whole. The impressive entry is kidney-shaped, with sides widely set that open in trapezoidal form towards the apex of the entrance opening. It is of impressive size, with a height of 14 and a breadth of 15 metres, facing northwest - the once protruding vault of the cave has partially broken off (Figs. 4, 5). It thus leaves one with the impression of a monumental building, a natural phenomenon, that oversees the space from the peaks along the crest of Mount Učka (Vojak and Suhi vrh) and Lovranska Draga to Medveža cove and further towards the island of Cres.

A small platform, facing the entrance to the cave, forms the space in front of the cave (Figs. 5, 6). Along with the front sections of the cave, it is exceptionally large and dry, while the interior of the cave narrows, becoming increasingly more humid and cold as a result of the active circulation of veins of water through the permeable limestone karst. The space in front of the cave

⁶ Istraživanja su provedena u travnju 2006. godine sredstvima Primorsko-goranske županije te uz sponzorstvo Općine Lovran, Javne ustanove Parka prirode Učka i Lovranskih vila d.o.o. Pored autora, u iskopavanju su sudjelovali Ivan Blečić, Nenad Kuzmanović i Tihomir Percan. Svima iskreno zahvaljujemo.

⁷ Jedan od rezultata istraživanja i katalogiziranja arheoloških lokaliteta kanjona Medvežice, tj. Lovranske Drage jest da je Oporovina kao sastavni dio Arheološke zone Lovranska Draga, k.o. Tuliševica, u svojstvu nepokretnog kulturnog dobra pod br. Z-2728 bila upisana u registar kulturnih dobara Republike Hrvatske 2006. godine (NN 124/06).

⁷ One of the results of the research and cataloguing of the archaeological sites at the Medvežica canyon, i.e. at Lovranska Draga, is that Oporovina is an integral part of the Lovranska Draga Archaeological Zone, cadastral municipality of Tuliševica, in the capacity of immovable cultural property registered under no. Z-2728 in the Register of Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia in 2006 (Narodne novine 124/06).



Sl. 5 Pogled na ulazni prostor Oporovine (foto: M. Blečić Kavur).

Fig. 5 View of the entrance area at Oporovina (photo by: M. Blečić Kavur).

(sl. 4, 5). Tako ostavlja dojam monumentalne građevine prirodnog fenomena, koja nadzire prostor od vrhova grebena Učke (Vojak i Suhi vrh) i Lovranske Drage do uvale Medveja i dalje prema otoku Cresu.

Manji podij, koji se nalazi ispred samog ulaza u špilju, čini pretprostor (sl. 5, 6). Uključujući i prednje dijelove špilje, izrazito je velik i suh, dok se unutrašnjost špilje sužava i postaje sve vlažnija i hladnija, zbog aktivne cirkulacije vodenih žila kroz propusni vapnenački krš. Pretprostor i ulazni špiljski prostor čine jedinstvenu, posebno zanimljivu cjelinu – predvorje (sl. 6).

Osim u matičnu stijenu uklesanih rampi, ulaznih pregrada i stepenica, primjetno je kako je u zidovima sa svih strana uklesan veliki broj polukružnih i kružnih utora, udubljenja i polustepenica, koji su mogli služiti kao nosači, i/ili potpornji za složenu i prilično visoku konstrukciju izrađenu od drva (sl. 7, 8). Na te tzv. građevinske elemente ukazao je još i B. de Lengyel, analizirajući mogućnost i razloge/potrebe izrade tako zahtjevne gradnje (Lengyel 1933, 222). Naprotiv, M. Malez im u svojim radovima ne posvećuje nikakvu pozornost, ignorirajući ih u potpunosti. O isklesanim stijenama i mogućnosti postojanja drvene višekratne konstrukcije izvještava potom R. Starac, koji je nastojao detaljnije opisati prostor te jasnije dočarati ili



Sl. 6 Predvorje Oporovine s ulazima u glavni i bočni hodnik (foto: M. Blečić Kavur).

Fig. 6 The mouth of Oporovina Cave with entrances to the main and subordinate halls (photo by: M. Blečić Kavur).

and the entrance form a unique, particularly fascinating area – the cave mouth (Fig. 6).

Along with the ramps, entrance partitions and steps carved into the bedrock, we also see that a large number of semi-circular and circular recesses, depressions and half-steps have been carved on the walls on all sides, which may have served as load-bearing points and/or braces for a complex and quite high structure fabricated of wood (Figs. 7, 8). B. de Lengyel indicated the presence of these “structural elements”, analysing the possible reasons/purposes for such a demanding structural building (Lengyel 1933, 222). In his work M. Malez does not refer to them at all, ignoring them entirely. Later R. Starac reports of the carved rock and the possible existence of a multi-level wooden structure – he endeavoured to offer a more detailed description of the space and to evoke with greater clarity, or to reconstruct, the appearance of a three-tier refugium structure, associating it with the period of 4th to 6th century AD (Starac 1994, 27, 29). A significant number of these carved recesses have been registered in the current level of insight and documentation, with over 20 recesses confirmed on just the northern side of the vertical wall of the cave mouth (Figs. 7, 8) (Komšo, Blečić 2007, 120, Fig. 16.2). Comprising multiple groups, they have not been set in a regular and identifiable spacing, which could indicate the periodic replacement of old and worn beams, using a recess carved right next to the old recess. Their arrangement is not, however, entirely without order, connection or logic. They rise in cascade fashion, continuing upwards, with the greatest concentration at the central section. Based on the elevation, this central part should be connected on

rekonstruirati izgled refugijalne trokatne građevine, povezujući je s razdobljem od 4. do 6. stoljeća (Starac 1994, 27, 29). Po dosadašnjem stanju poznavanja i dokumentiranja uklesanih utora popisan je njihov znatan broj, a samo na sjevernoj strani okomite zidne stijene predvorja potvrđeno je više od 20 utora (sl. 7, 8) (Komšo, Blečić 2007, 120, Fig. 16.2). Grupirani u više skupina, nisu postavljeni u pravilnim i definiranim razmacima, što upućuje na mogućnost redovite zamjene starih ili dotrajalih nosača s novim, uz novi isklesan utor u neposrednoj blizini. Međutim, njihov raspored ipak nije posve neuređen, nepovezan ili nelogičan. Kaskadno se uspinju, nadovezujući se prema višim dijelovima, s najvećom koncentracijom upravo u središnjem dijelu. Prema visinskoj koti, taj središnji dio trebao je biti spojen u ravnini s drugim, južnim zidom predvorja. Općenito, zabilježeno je 6 razina utora, koji su mogli nositi tako kompleksnu i solidno osmišljenu, zasigurno dobro čuvanu gradnju (sl. 7). Potporni stupovi, kao neizbježan statički oslonac građevine, nalazili su se duž otvorenog, ulaznog dijela predvorja, jer se utori i udubljenja većih dimenzija (za nosive grede) nalaze na svim većim kamenim blokovima matične stijene, koja u tim oblicima



Sl. 7 Utori u sjevernom zidu predvorja Oporovine (foto: D. Komšo).
Fig. 7 Recesses in the northern wall of the mouth of Oporovina Cave (photo by: D. Komšo).

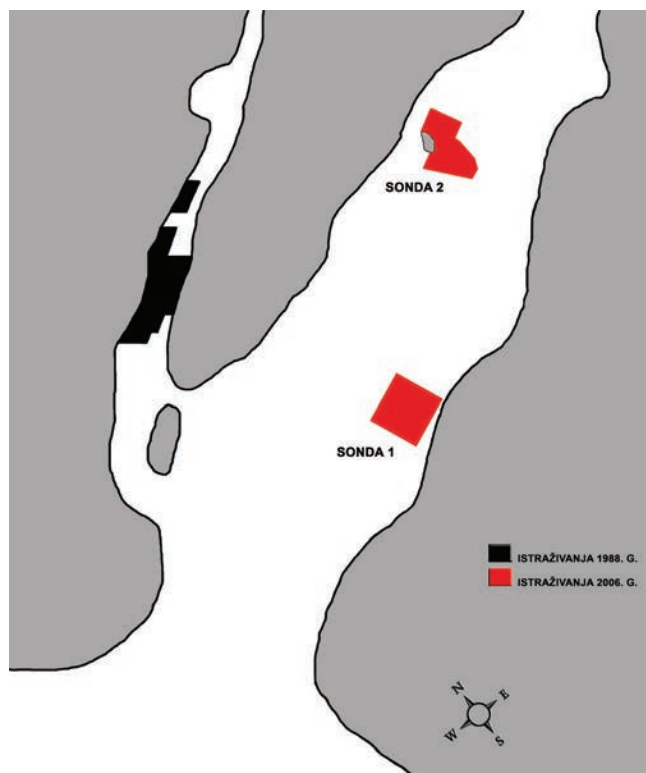
level with the other, southern wall of the cave mouth. In general, 6 levels of recesses have been identified, that could have borne a complex and solidly conceived, certainly well protected structure (Fig. 7). The load-bearing posts, as an essential static support for the structure, were situated along the open entrance area of the cave mouth, with the larger recesses and hollows (for load-bearing posts), found at all larger blocks of the bedrock, where it juts out to the surface in this form. The appearance, size and depth of the recesses and/or hollows vary, but they are most often round or oval, given that this is the form in which a wooden post could properly stand, i.e. be firmly embedded (Fig. 8). This spatial and physical disposition of the Oporovina Cave mouth, dry and reliably protected and sunlit throughout the day, was suitable for short and extended habitation by a large number of people. Steps cut into the bedrock are also found at Tominčeva jama below Škocjan, dated to have been created in the prehistoric period (Leben 1970, 418 – with earlier literature). Given that the cultural layers indicate the use of this space from the Eneolithic onwards, these interventions are more likely to be characteristic of a more recent period of construction, possibly from the Late Antiquity in fact, when the cave was used as a ritual location (Ciglencečki 1997, 195)⁸. Also interesting in terms of a wooden structure installed in the interior of a cave is Mornova zijalka near Šoštanj (Brodar 1996, 20–23). It is hypothesised, based on the



Sl. 8 Detalj utora na južnom pružanju zida predvorja Oporovine (foto: M. Blečić Kavur).

Fig. 8 A detail of the recess in the southern stretch of the wall of the mouth of Oporovina Cave (photo by: M. Blečić Kavur).

⁸ We should also mention the famed Predjama in this regard – the “largest cave castle in the world”, where in all phases of construction and renovation, the same architectural and building solutions were applied in relation to carving the bedrock for wooden structures, where the bedrock became the back wall of the fortification.



Sl. 9 Tloris špilje s ucrtanim sondama novijih istraživačkih kampanja 1988. i 2006. godine (crtež: M. Blečić Kavur).

Fig. 9 Floor plan with indicated trenches from the more recent excavations campaigns in 1988 and 2006 (drawing by: M. Blečić Kavur).

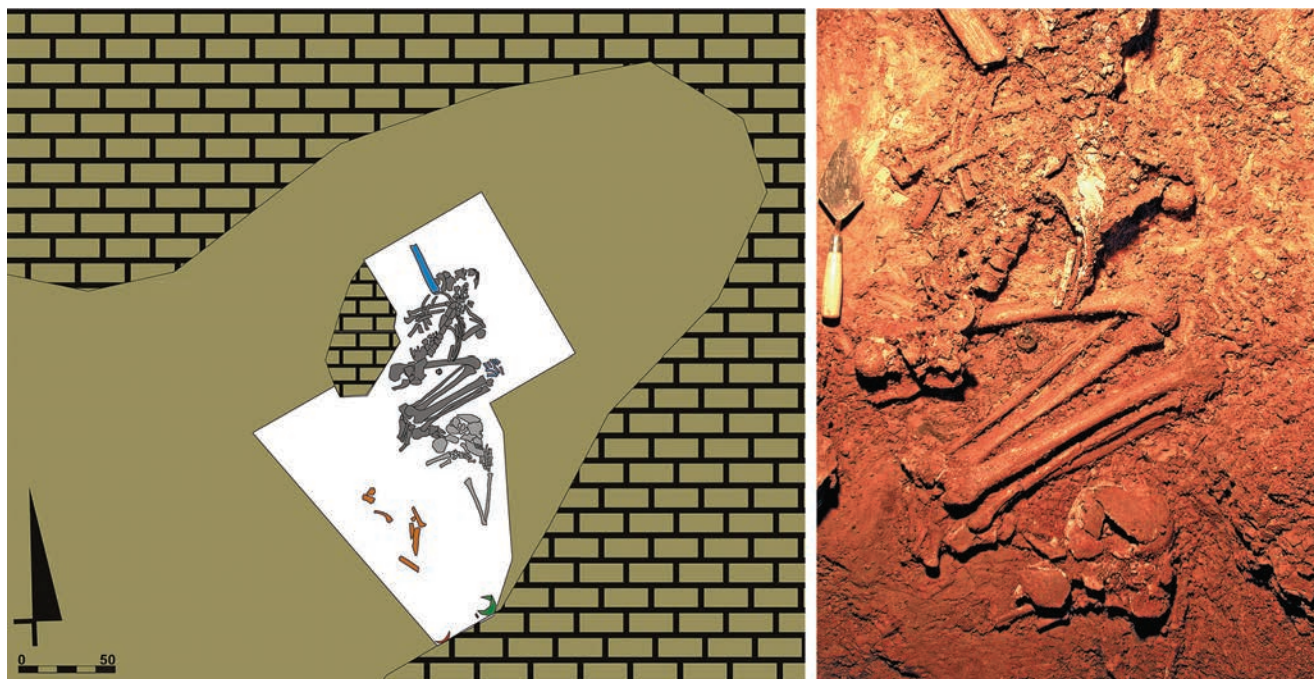
izbija na površinu. Izgled, dimenzije i dubine utora i/ili udubljenja su različiti, no najčešće su okrugli ili ovalni, jer je tako u njima pravilno mogla stajati, tj. biti čvrsto uglavljena drvena greda (sl. 8). Tako prostorno i fizički organizirano predvorje Oporovine, suho i pouzdano zaštićeno, a cjelodnevno obasjano suncem, bilo je pogodno za kraće, ali i za duže prebivanje većeg broja ljudi. U matičnu stijenu uklesane stepenice poznate su i iz Tominčeve jame ispod Škocjana, čija se izvedba smješta u prapovijesna razdoblja (Leben 1970, 418 – sa starijom literaturom). Budući da kulturni slojevi ukazuju na korištenje tog prostora od eneolitika dalje, takvi će zahvati vjerojatnije biti odlikom znatno mlađe gradnje, nije isključeno upravo iz vremena kasne antike, kada se špilja koristi i kao kulturni prostor (Ciglenečki 1997, 195)⁸. Po drvenoj konstrukciji postavljenoj u unutrašnjosti špilje zanimljiva je i Mornova zijalka pri Šoštanju (Brodar 1996, 20–23). Pretpostavlja se, temeljem stratigrafije, da je spaljena i/ili izgorjela (Brodar 1996, 23), čime se izravno može usporediti

stratigraphy, that it was set fire to and/or it burned down (Brodar 1996, 23), whereby it can be compared directly with Oporovina, although it does not have as clear a preserved situation in its stratigraphic picture, given that the outer spaces have eroded. Past the cave mouth, with a still easily identifiable entrance system, two corridors extend further in, constituting the interior of the cave. To the left a narrow 20 metre subordinate corridor extends in the form of a small crevice (Figs. 6, 9). The main corridor is to the right and, with its size, a length of 63 metres and a height of 9 metres, forms a long and irregular hall (Figs. 6, 9). The floor of this hall rises along the entire length, from the entrance inwards. The sediment was washed away towards the entrance, exposing the bedrock, while deeper inside the ground is flat, covered by light brown sandy clay, with several large stone blocks that have collapsed from the vault (Malez 1974, 23; Komšo, Blečić 2007, 120–121).

The excavations conducted in the past by B. de Lengyel and M. Malez covered the area of the main hall. M. Malez attempted but failed to locate the trench excavated by his predecessor. He therefore excavated several test trenches – two in the front area and one in the back part of the hall (Lengyel 1933, 220–221; Malez 1974, 23–25). R. Starac conducted a partial investigation of the subordinate corridor, excavating two trenches (Starac 1987; Starac 1990, 225; Starac 1994, 27–29) (Fig. 9).

The excavations of the 2006 campaign saw two trenches dug in the main hall. The first was dug in the front area of the hall, along the edge of the cave wall (Figs. 9, 10), investigating a 4 m² area to a relative depth of 65 cm. Various, partially preserved cultural layers in the cave have been documented, which have in places been entirely disturbed. Also discovered in the trench was one garbage pit and, given the size of the trench, a relatively large number of finds. Among them we find functional artefacts of various types and forms, of ceramic, bone and horn, flint artefacts and semi-finished products, metal fragments, parts of costumes and jewellery. A large quantity of animal bones and a very large number of seashells and snails were collected, clearly bearing witness to the diverse selection of foodstuffs and dietary habits of the community that lived there. From the first analysis of the artefacts found here we can speak of the use of the hall during the Late Neolithic, Eneolithic, Bronze Age and Late Antiquity period (Komšo, Blečić 2007, 121). The results would then be entirely consistent with the dating of the material collected during the excavation of the previous 1988 campaign.

⁸ U tome smislu valja spomenuti i čuvenu Predjamu – “najveću špiljsku utvrdnu na svijetu”, gdje su u svim fazama izgradnje, tj. obnove, korištena ista arhitekturna i građevinska rješenja vezana uz klesanja matične stijene s drvenim konstrukcijama, pri čemu matična stijena postaje stražnji zid utvrde.



Sl. 10 Istraženi ostaci ljudskih kostiju, sonda 2 (crtež i foto: D. Komšo, M. Blečić Kavur).
Fig. 10 The excavated human bone remains, trench 2 (drawing and photo by: D. Komšo, M. Blečić Kavur).

s Oporovinom, iako nema tako sačuvanu situaciju u stratigrafskoj slici, budući da su vanjski prostori špilje erodirali. Nakon predvorja, s još dobro raspoznatljivim ulaznim sustavom, razdvajaju se dva kanala koja čine unutrašnjost špilje. S lijeve strane pruža se sporedni uski hodnik, dužine 20 m, oblika manje pukotine (sl. 6, 9). Glavni hodnik nalazi se s desne strane, a zbog svojih dimenzija, dužine 63 m i visine 9 m, ima izgled dugačke i nepravilne dvorane (sl. 6, 9). Tlo dvorane uzdiže se cijelom dužinom od ulaza prema unutrašnjosti. U prednjem dijelu su sedimenti isprani i matična stijena izbija na površinu, a na ostalom je dijelu tlo ravno, prekriveno svjetlosmeđom pjeskuljastom ilovačom, s nekoliko velikih kamenih blokova koji su otpali sa svoda (Malez 1974, 23; Komšo, Blečić 2007, 120-121).

Dosadašnjim istraživanjima B. de Lengyel i M. Malez zahvatili su prostor glavne dvorane. M. Malez pokušao je pronaći sondu koju je istraživao prethodnik, ali bezuspješno. Zbog toga sâm postavlja nekoliko probnih sondi, od kojih su dvije u prednjem dijelu i jedna u stražnjem dijelu dvorane (Lengyel 1933, 220-221; Malez 1974, 23-25). R. Starac djelomice je pak istražio sporedni kanal, i to dvjema sondama (Starac 1987; Starac 1990, 225; Starac 1994, 27-29) (sl. 9).

Iskopavanjima u kampanji 2006. godine u glavnoj su dvorani istražene također dvije sonde. Prva je postavljena u prednjem dijelu dvorane, uz rubni dio matične stijene (sl. 9, 10), istražena u površini od 4

Our knowledge of the prehistoric pottery assemblage at Oporovina has already solidly defined it as an Eneolithic site of the northern Adriatic type of the Nakovana culture (Starac 1990, 225, Fig. 3; Starac 1994; Starac 2000b, Oporovina; Forenbaher 2000, 375, 378). A significant quantity of pottery of the same characteristics has also been found in the course of this investigation. With regard to this example, we can say that we have quite clear insight, and continue to hold that Oporovina is one of the definite sites of the northern Adriatic type of the Nakovana culture that we will, both in terms of typology and style, need to interpret in a more comprehensive manner in terms of its cultural connections with the other sites in Istria (Forenbaher 2000, 379; Čuka 2009, 18-19; cf. Forenbaher, Kaiser, Miracle 2013, 602-603)⁹.

With regard to the older periods, the Mesolithic and Neolithic, the “definition” of the site and its interpretation is unusual and exceptionally complicated in the literature. Oporovina, namely, has been designated and mapped at multiple “relevant” places as a Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic site. These hypotheses and proposals have been present from the very start and in the first writings by experts on Oporovina. B. de Lengyel offers a cursory proposal of the cultural

⁹ The northernmost site, Pupičina peć, with only a single potsherd from a biconical bowl with characteristics of Nakovana culture pottery (Forenbaher, Kaiser 2006, 186, T. 5.9:1), was not attributed to this culture.

m² do relativne dubine od 65 cm. Dokumentirani su različiti, djelomično očuvani kulturni slojevi, koji su na nekim mjestima bili i sasvim poremećeni. U sondi je istražen i jedan jamski objekt za deponiranje otpadnog materijala te, s obzirom na veličinu sonde, relativno brojni nalazi materijalne kulture. Među njima su zastupljeni funkcionalni predmeti različitih tipova i oblika, i to od keramike, kosti i rogova, kremene izrađevine i poluizrađevine, metalni ulomci, dijelovi nošnje i nakita. Prikupljeno je i mnoštvo životinjskih kostiju te iznimno velik broj morskih školjaka i puževa, koji jasno svjedoče o raznolikom prehrambenom izboru i navikama zajednica koje su ondje obitavale. Po prvoj analizi nađenih predmeta može se govoriti o korištenju toga dvoranskog prostora u vremenu kasnog neolitika, eneolitika, brončanog doba i u razdoblju kasne antike (Komšo, Blečić 2007, 121). Rezultati bi tako bili u potpunosti usklađeni s datacijom građe prikupljene za istraživanja u prethodnoj kampanji iz 1988. godine.

Poznavanjem skupa nalaza prapovijesne lončarije Oporovina je već solidno definirana kao eneolitički lokalitet sjevernojadranskog tipa nakovanske kulture (Starac 1990, 225, Sl. 3; Starac 1994; Starac 2000b, Oporovina; Forenbaher 2000, 375, 378). Keramika istih obilježja nađena je u većoj mjeri i u ovoj istraživačkoj kampanji. Što se ovog primjera tiče, možemo reći da imamo prilično jasne spoznaje, smatrajući Oporovinu i dalje jednim od sigurnijih nalazišta sjevernojadranskog tipa nakovanske kulture koju ćemo, i tipološki i stilski, morati opširnije interpretirati u njezinoj kulturnoj povezanosti s ostalim nalazištima Istre (Forenbaher 2000, 379; Čuka 2009, 18–19; cf. Forenbaher, Kaiser, Miracle 2013, 602–603)⁹.

Glede starijih razdoblja, mezolitika i neolitika, “definicija” nalazišta i interpretacija građe prilično je neobična i u literaturi izuzetno zamršena. Naime, Oporovina je na više “relevantnih” mjesta obilježena i kartirana kao kasnomezolitičko i ranoneolitičko nalazište. Takve su teze i prijedlozi prisutni od samih početka i prvih stručnih zapisa o Oporovini. B. de Lengyel ovlaš predlaže kulturne pojave, ne iznoseći jasne i pouzdane argumente, pri čemu građu uopće ne objavljuje. Ni M. Malez nije objavio predmete materijalne kulture iz novijih istraživanja. Usprkos nepostojanju sigurnih podataka o ikakvom kontekstu nalaženja i/ili samom gradivu, Oporovinu je većina istraživača i u ozbiljnim radovima interpretirala kao

phenomenon, failing to put forward a clear and reliable argumentation, and makes no publication of the material. M. Malez also does not publish artefacts from the more recent excavations. In spite of there being no sure data regarding any find context and/or the material itself, Oporovina has been interpreted by the majority of investigators, and in serious papers, as an Early Neolithic site (Batović 1979, 484; Petrić 1980; Bagolini, von Eles 1978, 49). Recently Johannes Müller offered a broader support of this premise, referencing data from papers by M. Malez. Besides classifying the site in the Late Mesolithic, associating it with finds of early Impressed ware pottery in cave sites, the author also informs us of the find of “simple” pottery, chronologically identifiable phase A Impressed ware (Müller 1991, 331–333, Abb. 1–2; 12; Müller 1994, 198, 312, Abb. 3; 78, 81; 345). The opinions of experts on this matter differ (Komšo 2003, 45; cf. Forenbaher, Miracle 2006, 494–495), just as the entire concept of *supercultural* phenomenon on the eastern shores of the Adriatic has for multiple reasons been questioned and critically discussed (Budja 2001; cf. Forenbaher, Kaiser 2006; Forenbaher, Miracle 2006; Forenbaher, Kaiser, Miracle 2013). Although the *corpus delicti* pottery that would bear witness to this has never been published, the quantity of data “manipulated by tradition” is frightening, especially in more recent papers (Marijanović 2000, 77, Fig. 7; Marijanović 2003; Falkenstein 2013, 132, 137, Fig. 6.1). In an effort to offer a meaningful relativisation of this insight, we should point out that, to date, we have not isolated a single sherd of (Impressed ware) pottery from the Early Neolithic period that would originate from the campaigns in either 2006 or 1988. Not wanting to limit our perspective by a radical rejection of possible finds of Early Neolithic pottery in the course of future researches – all the more so given our solid knowledge of Impressed ware pottery from almost all excavated cave site on the Kvarner Bay islands (Müller 1994, T. 44–55; cf. Forenbaher, Kaiser, Miracle 2013), it should be pointed out that a detailed typological/stylistic study of the existing material will also be much more definitive for this so significant period in the history of Oporovina. The fact is that the data from the existing literature cannot be cross-checked, as a result of which we can no longer, in any regard, consider them relevant. The Early Neolithic phase at Oporovina cannot, therefore, for the time being, be substantiated or included in this horizon, irrefutably defined for the area of southern Istria and the Kvarner Bay islands (Forenbaher, Miracle 2006, 492–495, Fig. 13.2; Forenbaher, Kaiser, Miracle 2013, 596–599).

⁹ Najsjevernije nalazište, Pupićina peć, sa zastupljenim samo jednim ulomkom bikonične zdjele odlika nakovanske keramike (Forenbaher, Kaiser 2006, 186, T. 5.9:1), nije pribrojeno toj kulturi.

ranoneolitičko nalazište (Batović 1979, 484; Petrić 1980; Bagolini, von Eles 1978, 49). U novije vrijeme širu podršku takvom promišljanju pružio je Johannes Müller preuzimajući podatke iz radova M. Maleza. Uz to što nalazište svrstava u kasnomezolitičko, povezujući ga s nalazima rane impresso keramike u špiljskim nalazištima, autor nas izvještava i o nalazu tzv. jednostavne keramike, kronološki opredjeljive impresso A stupnju (Müller 1991, 331-333, Abb. 1-2; 12; Müller 1994, 198, 312, Abb. 3; 78, 81; 345). O toj su tvrdnji stručnjaci podvojeni (Komšo 2003, 45; cf. Forenbaher, Miracle 2006, 494-495), baš kao što je i čitav koncept *superkulturnih* fenomena na istočnoj obali Jadrana iz toga razdoblja već iz više razloga problematiziran i kritički raspravljan (Budja 2001; cf. Forenbaher, Kaiser 2006; Forenbaher, Miracle 2006; Forenbaher, Kaiser, Miracle 2013). Premda *corpus delicti* keramike koja bi tome svjedočila nije nikada i nigdje objavljen, količina "tradicijom manipuliranih" podataka zastrašujuća je, osobito u novijim radovima (Marijanović 2000, 77, sl. 7; Marijanović 2003; Falkenstein 2013, 132, 137, Fig. 6.1). U pokušaju suvislog relativiziranja takvog znanja, ističemo kako do sada nismo izdvojili niti jedan ulomak (*impresso*) keramike iz razdoblja ranog neolitika koji bi potjecao iz kampanje u 2006. ili u 1988. godini. Ne želeći time ograničiti naše perspektive radikalnim odbacivanjem mogućnosti nalaženja ranoneolitičke keramike u budućim istraživanjima, tim više što dobro poznajemo *impresso* keramiku s gotovo svih istraživanih špiljskih nalazišta na kvarnerskim otocima (Müller 1994, T. 44-55; cf. Forenbaher, Kaiser, Miracle 2013), valja istaknuti kako će detaljnija tipološko-stilska studija postojećeg gradiva biti već mnogo određenija i za to toliko značajno razdoblje povijesti Oporovine. Činjenica jest da podatke iz dosadašnje literature nije moguće provjeriti, zbog čega ih više ne možemo ni u kojem smislu smatrati relevantnima. Prema tome, ranoneolitička faza Oporovine do daljnjega ne može biti argumentirana niti uključena u taj horizont, nepobitno definiran za prostor južne Istre i kvarnerskih otoka (Forenbaher, Miracle 2006, 492-495, Fig. 13.2; Forenbaher, Kaiser, Miracle 2013, 596-599).

U suprotnosti s time stoji međutim razdoblje kasnog neolitika. Naime, Oporovina nikada nije smatrana kasnoneolitičkim nalazištem, a i donedavno je općenito na sjevernom Jadranu to razdoblje bilo vrlo slabo poznato (Petrić 1980, 214-215). Novija istraživanja ipak ukazuju na postojanje određenih mjesnih oblika, možda neke inačice koja podsjeća na hvarsku kulturu, premda su određenija mišljenja i dalje vrlo rezervirana (Forenbaher, Kaiser 2006, 202-203; Forenbaher, Miracle 2006, 528-530, Fig. 13.4; Forenbaher, Kaiser, Miracle 2013, 601; cf. Barfield 1999). Iz

The Late Neolithic period, however, stands in contrast to this. Oporovina has not, namely, ever been considered a Late Neolithic site and in general, until recently, there was very little insight into this period on the northern Adriatic (Petrić 1980, 214-215). More recent research does, however, offer evidence of the existence of certain local forms, perhaps some variant reminiscent of the Hvar culture, although opinions are still very reserved (Forenbaher, Kaiser 2006, 202-203; Forenbaher, Miracle 2006, 528-530, Fig. 13.4; Forenbaher, Kaiser, Miracle 2013, 601; cf. Barfield 1999). There are, however, a number of potsherds originating from Oporovina that we could, based on the preliminary analysis, compare to northern Adriatic post-Vlaška / late Danilo/Vlaška pottery or with pottery reminiscent and having elements of Hvar pottery. Small potsherds with incised geometric decorations are characteristic; two horizontal bands (perhaps spiral), filled out with parallel oblique lines, between which we see the residue of red colour applied after the firing (Fig. 11). Finds of pottery of this type are known of from Istria and the Trieste Karst region (*Carso*): in the neighbouring area several potsherds originate from Pupičina Cave and from Trdačina (Forenbaher, Kaiser 2006, 202).

Proceeding from this perspective we can tentatively propose a conclusion that sees Oporovina as having been in use during the Late Neolithic, which was, in some as yet unclear stratigraphic relation, succeeded by an Eneolithic culture of the northern Adriatic Nakovana culture.

As needed, in certain contexts Oporovina is used again in the Bronze, and in particular the Late Bronze Age. For now we have a small number of finds from both campaigns that can with certainty be attributed to Late Bronze Age pottery, for which a more comprehensive typological/technological analysis remains to be undertaken. Outstanding, however, is the find of a bronze, deliberately damaged spearhead, with a flame-shaped blade form with a cylindrical hafting socket (Fig. 12). These spearheads, especially the large ones, were often ritually or deliberately destroyed or deposited, as is confirmed by our specimen, given that it was found jammed into a cleft on the cave wall above the entrance to the left, subordinate corridor. The analysis has shown that our spearhead can be dated in the older phase of the Late Bronze Age in the Kvarner Bay area. It is associated with spearheads from the older period of the Urnfield culture, i.e. with the Ha A1 phase in the relative central European periodisation, distributed across the broader European area, especially the Carpathian Basin and the Alpine hinterland (Blečić Kavur 2014, 96, Fig. 54, 120).



Sl. 11 Ulomci urezivanjem ukrašene keramike odlika nakovanske kulture (foto: D. Komšo).

Fig. 11 Sherds of incised decorated pottery with characteristics of the Nakovana culture (photo by: D. Komšo).

Oporovine međutim potječe nekoliko ulomaka keramike koje bismo, preliminarnom analizom, mogli usporediti s postvlaškom/kasnom danilsko-vlaškom keramikom sjevernog Jadrana ili s keramikom koja podsjeća i ima elemente hvarske keramike. Karakteristični su manji ulomci posuda s urezanim geometrijskim ukrasom; dvije vodoravne trake (možda spiralne), ispunjene paralelnim kosim crtama, između kojih su ostaci oslikane crvene boje koja se premazivala nakon pečenja (sl. 11). Nalazi takve keramike poznati su iz Istre i Tršćanskog krasi: na obližnjem prostoru nekoliko ulomaka potječe iz Pupićine peći i iz Trdačine (Forenbaher, Kaiser 2006, 202).

Polazeći od takve perspektive uvjetno možemo predlagati zaključak po kojem je Oporovina korištena u vrijeme kasnog neolitika, koji će u nekom, još nejasnom stratigrafskom odnosu naslijediti eneolitička kultura sjevernojadranske nakovanske kulture.

Shodno potrebama, u određenim je kontekstima Oporovina korištena ponovno i u vrijeme brončanog, posebice kasnog brončanog doba. Za sada imamo mali broj keramičkih ulomaka koji se sa sigurnošću mogu pripisati kasnobrončanodobnoj keramici iz obje kampanje, čemu tek predstoji podrobnija tipološko-tehnološka analiza. Izrazit je zato nalaz brončanog,

A second trench was dug in the back of the cave that yielded quite new and unexpected results (Fig. 9, 10). Several groups of human bones were excavated there under a large calcareous sinter layer, without the possibility of identifying a clear stratigraphy. These are, as it currently stands, likely six individual interred in a curled up/contorted and/or clenched position – not buried, but rather laid immediately beneath the surface (Fig. 10). The curled up position is not the characteristic of some particular ritual or burial method, but reflects rather the maximum use of the available, very narrow, constricted and not easily accessible space. It appears that the deceased were thrust one against the other or one atop another, without particular consideration or order, indicative of a mass grave. An additional difficulty in the primary identification of the position and relation of the skeletons is the knowledge that M. Malez also conducted excavations at this place, during which the trench was disturbed (dug up) and not fully investigated¹⁰.

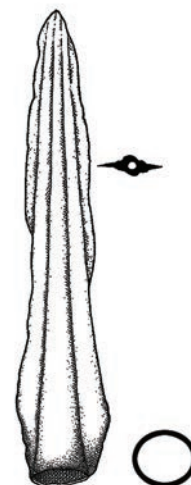
¹⁰ During the excavation an old-style screwdriver with a plastic handle into which the initials M. M. had been incised was found in the lower level of the clay that had been dug, for which we can presume with a high level of certainty that it belonged to Mirko Malez.

namjerno oštećenog vrha koplja, koji pripada tipu plamenastog oblika lista s cilindričnim tuljcem za nasad (sl. 12). Takva su koplja, osobito velika, najčešće bila ritualno i namjerno uništavana ili ostavljena, a to potvrđuje i naš primjerak, budući da je nađen pribijen u procjep špiljske stijene iznad ulaza u lijevi, sporedni hodnik. Analiza je pokazala da naše koplje možemo smjestiti u stariju fazu kasnog brončanog doba na Kvarneru. Povezuje se uz vrhove koplja starijeg vremena kulture polja sa žarama, tj. s Ha A1 stupnjem relativne srednjoeuropske periodizacije, rasprostranjenom na širokom europskom prostoru, osobito Karpatske kotline i alpskog zaleđa (Blečić Kavur 2014, 96, sl. 54, 120).

U stražnjem prostoru špilje postavljena je druga sonda, koja nam je pružila posve nove i neočekivane rezultate (sl. 9, 10). Naime, ondje je ispod velike sigaste naslage istraženo nekoliko skupina ljudskih kostiju, bez mogućnosti definiranja jasne stratigrafije. Riječ je o, za sada, vjerojatno šest individua pokopanih u zgrčenom i/ili skvrčenom položaju, koje nisu ukopavane nego su polagane neposredno ispod same površine (sl. 10). Zgrčeni položaj nije obilježje nekog posebnog rituala ili načina pokapanja, nego odražava maksimalno korištenje zadanog, vrlo uskog i stisnutog te slabo dostupnog prostora. Čini se kao da su pokojnici naguravani jedni pored drugih i jedni na druge, bez veće pozornosti ili reda, što asocira na masovnu grobnicu. Dodatnu poteškoću pri primarnom određenju položaja i odnosa skeleta predstavlja spoznaja da je na tom mjestu iskopavanja provodio i M. Malez, pri čemu je sonda bila poremećena (prekopavana) i nije bila istražena u potpunosti¹⁰.

U čitavom je skupu nalaza nađen samo jedan predmet materijalne kulture – brončana pojasna predica (sl. 10, 13: 1). Zahvaljujući tomu, vrijeme pokopavanja više individua pobliže smo datirali u šire 5. i rano 6. stoljeće (Blečić 2006; Komšo, Blečić 2007, 121, Fig. 16.3; Komšo 2006, 71). S obzirom na osnovna tipološka obilježja – ovalnog je oblika s ravnim trnom zadebljane i ravno odsječene baze – pridružuje se jednostavnom tipu predica pojasnih kopči kasnoantičke provenijencije (Vinski 1989, 14–15, T. XV: 11; Simoni 1989, 122, T. 5, 2; Fabijanić 2009, 124–127; cf. tip A7 prema Schulze-Dörrlamm 2009, 16, 238). Najbližu i relevantnu analogiju nalazimo kod primjeraka iz nasuprotne Vrtaške peći 1, gdje je nađena i predica sa štitolikom bazom trna, ali i željezne ovalne predice te

¹⁰ Prilikom iskopavanja u donjem je sloju prebačene ilovače pronađen i starinski odvijak s plastičnom oblogom, urezanih inicijala M. M., za koji možemo s priličnom dozom sigurnosti pretpostaviti da mu je vlasnik bio Mirko Malez.

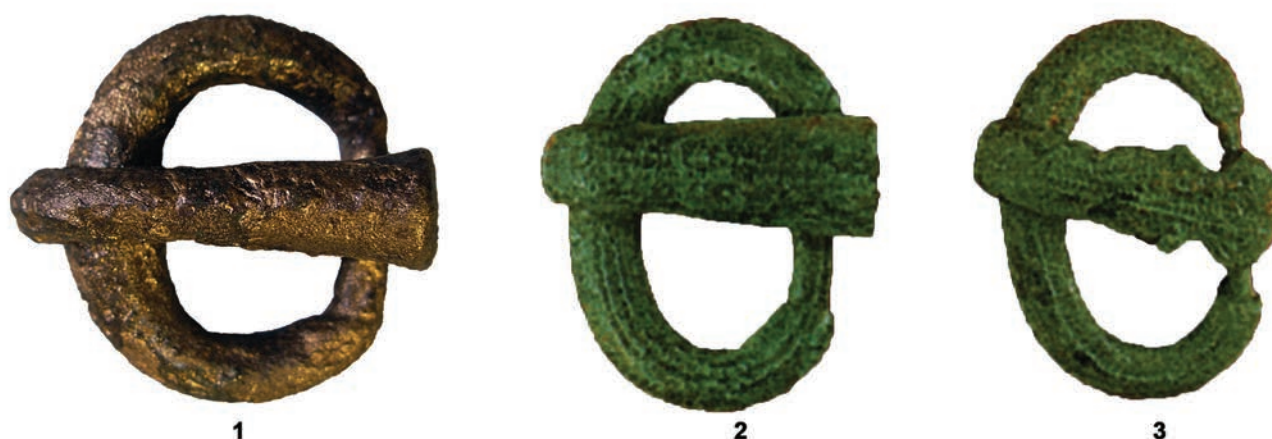


Sl. 12 Vrh brončanog koplja (prema M. Blečić Kavur 2014).

Fig. 12 Bronze spearhead (according to M. Blečić Kavur 2014).

Only a single material find was discovered in the entire assemblage – a bronze belt buckle (Fig. 10, 13: 1). Thanks to this find we have approximately dated the burial of multiple individuals to the broader 5th and early 6th century (Blečić 2006; Komšo, Blečić 2007, 121, Fig. 16.3; Komšo 2006, 71). Considering the basic typological attributes – oval form with a straight prong and thickened and flat truncated base – it is associated with the simple type of belt buckles of Late Antiquity (Vinski 1989, 14–15, T. XV: 11; Simoni 1989, 122, T. 5, 2; Fabijanić 2009, 124–127; cf. type A7 according to Schulze-Dörrlamm 2009, 16, 238). We find the closest and relevant analogy among specimens from the opposite facing Vrtaška peć 1, where a belt buckle was found with a shield-shaped prong base, as were iron oval buckles and other material (Starac 1994, 26; Starac 2000b, Vrtaške peći) (Fig. 13: 2–3). Similar, but contemporaneous examples are known from the excavations of the not very distant Predjama, with mass burial over an exceptionally long period of time and an emphasis on the Late Antiquity period (J. Korošec 1956, 15–17, 41–43; P. Korošec 1982, 84–87; Ciglencečki 1999, 294, 298, Fig. 1).

Certainly the best known in terms of Antiquity period burials in the neighbourhood is the Bubijska jama cave in the Kordun region, and the other caves in the immediate vicinity, where we in fact find several characteristics also relevant to the burials at Oporovina (Perkić 2002, 105–109). To this we should also add several sites already known in the literature (Ciglencečki 1997, 195); two burials with finds of Roman material culture from Mornova zijalka near Šoštanj (Brodar 1996, 20–23) and



Sl. 13 Brončane pojasne predjice: 1 Oporovina, sonda 2/2006 (foto: D. Komšo), 2-3 Vrtaška peč 1, iz istraživanja 1988. godine (prema Starac 2000b).
Fig. 13 Bronze belt buckles: 1 Oporovina, trench 2/2006 (photo by: D. Komšo), 2-3 Vrtaška peč 1, from the research campaign in 1988 (according to Starac 2000b).

drugo gradivo (Starac 1994, 26; Starac 2000b, Vrtaške peći) (sl. 13: 2-3). Sličnih, ali istovremenih primjera poznajemo i iz istraživanja ne tako udaljene Predjame, s masovnim pokopavanjem tijekom iznimno velikog vremenskog raspona, s naglaskom na razdoblju kasne antike (J. Korošec 1956, 15-17, 41-43; P. Korošec 1982, 84-87; Ciglencečki 1999, 294, 298, Fig. 1).

Po pokopavanju iz antičkoga doba svakako je sada već najpoznatija u užoj regiji Bubijska jama na Kordunu, zajedno s ostalim špiljama u neposrednoj okolini, gdje je zapravo prisutno nekoliko odlika referentnih i za pokopavanje u Oporovini (Perkić 2002, 105-109). Tomu treba pridodati i druga nalazišta koja su u literaturi od ranije poznata (Ciglencečki 1997, 195); dva ukopa s nalazima rimske materijalne kulture iz Mornove zijelke pri Šoštanj (Brodar 1996, 20-23) i Levakovu jamu pri Podbočju, gdje je zapravo bila istražena doista čitava nekropola (Guštin 1976, 270-271)¹¹. Paralela s istovremenim nalazištima izdvaja i špilju

Levakova jama near Podbočje, where, in fact, an entire necropolis has been excavated (Guštin 1976, 270-271)¹¹. Parallels with contemporaneous sites also point to the Andritsa Cave in the Peloponnese to the southwest of Argolis, where an almost identical situation has been preserved, a "mass grave" in which 33 individuals are interred. From all the indications the interment was performed in the second half of the 6th century, and is associated with the reign of Justinian and the incursion of the Slavs and Avars into the Peloponnese (Andritsa 2005; Hall 2008). It is interesting that mothers were interred near or immediately next to (their) children, which is consistent with the situation known to us from the subordinate fissure corridor at Oporovina¹² (Fig.

¹¹ U obje špilje nađeno je više rimskih novčića te drugih karakterističnih priloga i dijelova nošnje pokojnika. Dobro je prisjetiti se, barem što se važnih numizmatičkih nalaza tiče, da su u Levakovoj jami zabilježeni novčići Aleksandra Severa i dr. (Guštin 1976, T. 4: 5-10), dok je u Predjama, među ostalima, zabilježen novac Galijena, Klaudija II., Salonine i dr. (J. Korošec 1956, 47); svi oni potječu i iz "kordunskih špilja". Novčići nisu datacijski osjetljivi: poznato je da se novac iz 3. i 4. stoljeća rado koristio i u 5. i 6. stoljeću, a ponegdje čak i kasnije (Ciglencečki 2000, 147). Levakova se jama ističe po nalazu deformirane lubanje, široko datirane u vrijeme seobe naroda (Guštin 1976, 270, sl. 10; Tomazo-Ravnik 1976, 289). Deformirana lubanja poznata je još i iz Škocjanskih jama (Slabe 1976, 284-285). Činjenica je još više srodna upravo situaciji poznatoj iz Bubijske jame (Perkić 2002).

¹¹ Several Roman coins and other characteristic grave goods and parts of costumes of the deceased were found in both caves. It is worth recalling, at least in terms of significant numismatic finds, that coins of Severus Alexander and others were found in the Levakova jama cave (Guštin 1976, T. 4: 5-10), while at Predjama, among others, we see the coins of Gallienus, Claudius Gothicus, Saloninus and others (J. Korošec 1956, 47); they all are also known from the "Kordun" caves. The coins are not date-sensitive: it is known that coins from the 3rd and 4th century were in broad use in the 5th and 6th century and even later in places (Ciglencečki 2000, 147). Levakova jama stands out by the find of a deformed skull, broadly dated to the Migration Period (Guštin 1976, 270, Fig. 10; Tomazo-Ravnik 1976, 289). Deformed skull is also known from the Škocjan Caves (Slabe 1976, 284-285). The fact is even more related, actually, to the situation known from Bubijska jama (Perkić 2002).

¹² An older individual with a small child is buried at Mornova zijalka (Brodar 1996, 22, Fig. 6), and, it is stated, two adults and five children at Levakova jama (Guštin 1976, 270).

u Andritsi na Peloponezu, jugozapadno od Argoliode, koja nam je sačuvala gotovo identičnu situaciju, tzv. masovnu grobnicu u koju su sahranjene 33 individue. Prema svim pokazateljima pokopavanje se provodilo u drugoj polovici 6. stoljeća, a povezuje se uz vladavinu Justinijana te prodiranje Slavena i Avara na Peloponez (Andritsa 2005; Hall 2008). Zanimljivo je da su majke pokopane u blizini ili neposredno uz (svoju) djecu, što odgovara slici poznatoj iz sporednog pukotinskog hodnika Oporovine¹² (sl. 9). Ondje je naime, istražen pokop odrasle, vjerojatno ženske osobe¹³, pored koje je ukopano dvoje djece (Starac 1994, 27, 29, Prilog XV). Osim toga, znatan je broj ranobizantske keramike (amfora, vrčeva i sl.) zabilježen istraživanjima u obje novije kampanje u Oporovini te u Vrtaškim pećima, a koja je ujedno zastupljena i među nalazima iz Predjame (J. Korošec 1956, 42–43).

Već smo rekli kako je na položaju naše sonde 2 53 godine ranije iskopavao M. Malez. Upravo je na tome mjestu dokumentirao čuveni “čovječki kostur u horizontalnom položaju”, s okruglim privjeskom od jelenjeg roga. Skelet je po anatomske-morfološke osobitosti pripisao u red *Homo sapiens subfossilis*, tj. lovaca iz vremena mezolitika (Malez 1974, 24–25; Malez 1979, 100; Malez 1980, 26–27, Fig. 1; Malez 1986, 23, 35)¹⁴. Iako građa nikada nije objelodanjena, a dvojba je izrečena, u znanstvenoj su se literaturi do nedavno mogle pratiti različite, vrlo nadahnute diskusije o toj problematici. Živko Mikić plasirao je podatak kako materijal nije dovoljan za detaljniju antropološku obradu, datirajući ga istovremeno u kasni mezolitik ili rani neolitik, povezujući ukrašenu okruglu pločicu sa “solarnom simbolikom kulta mrtvih”, referirajući se pri tome na stav Nikše Petrića (Mikić 1981, 75; Petrić 1977, 15–16). Još se ranije u svojoj sintezi o špiljskim nalazištima na području jugoistočnih Alpa France Leben osvrnuo i na značajan nalaz iz Oporovine, smještajući čovječki kostur u vrijeme ranog neolitika (Leben 1970, 430). U zadnjoj objavi koja se bavi pitanjem neolitičkih ljudskih

9). The burial of an adult, likely female¹⁵, individual was excavated there, next to which two children are interred (Starac 1994, 27, 29, Appendix XV). Besides this a significant quantity of Early Byzantine pottery (amphorae, jugs and the like) was registered in the research conducted in the frame of both more recent campaigns at Oporovina and at Vrtaške peći. Similar finds were also present among the finds from Predjama (J. Korošec 1956, 42–43).

We have already noted M. Malez excavated 53 years earlier at the position of our trench 2. It was here precisely that he documented the notable “human skeleton in horizontal position”, with a round pendant made of deer horn. By its anatomical/morphological characteristics he attributed the skeleton to the order *Homo sapiens subfossilis*, i.e. hunters from the Mesolithic period (Malez 1974, 24–25; Malez 1979, 100; Malez 1980, 26–27, Fig. 1; Malez 1986, 23, 35)¹⁴. Although these materials have never been published, and the doubts have been articulated, we saw, until recently, in the scientific literature various, very inspired discussions on the issue. Živko Mikić proposed that the material was insufficient for a detailed anthropological analysis, and dated it to the Late Mesolithic or Early Neolithic, associating the decorated round disc with the “solar symbolism of the cult of the dead”, referencing in the process the opinion of Nikša Petrić (Mikić 1981, 75; Petrić 1977, 15–16). Even earlier, in his synthesis of cave sites in the southeastern Alps, France Leben noted the significant find at Oporovina, placing the human skeleton in the Early Neolithic (Leben 1970, 430). In the last publication, which discusses the question of Neolithic human burials on the Adriatic, the information of earlier researchers is given line for line, and the site is mapped and treated as unreliable (Zlatunić 2003, 57–58)¹⁵.

¹² U Mornovoj zijalki sahranjena je starija individua s malim djetetom (Brodar 1996, 22, Sl. 6), a u Levakovoj jami, navodi se, dvije odrasle osobe i petero djece (Guštin 1976, 270).

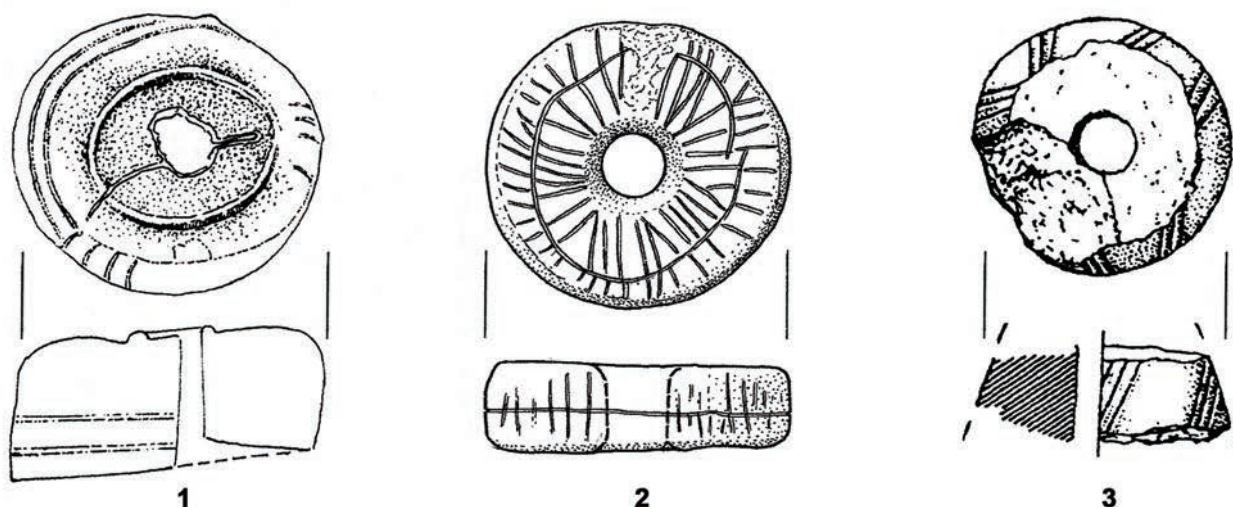
¹³ To uvjerljivo potvrđuju nalazi nakita i nošnje, posebno srebrna naušnica, datirana u 6. stoljeće (Starac 1990, 225, Sl. 2).

¹⁴ U nekim je radovima M. Malez opisivao i iznio te podatke (npr. iz 1960; 1974; 1979; 1986), smještajući ostatke ljudskih kostiju nedosljedno u epipaleolitik, ponekad u mezolitik, pa čak i u neolitik. Kontradiktornost i kontroverznost autorovih stavova još su veći u odnosu na druge njegove radove (npr. iz 1955; 1970) u kojima posve izostavlja navedene hipoteze, iznoseći samo od prije poznate rezultate B. de Lengyela. Ujedno, autor je često navodio da je i u starijim sondama nađena veća količina ljudskih kostiju, iako ih istraživač nigdje nije eksplicitno objavio.

¹³ This is convincingly confirmed by finds of jewellery and costumes, in particular a silver earring, dated to the 6th century (Starac 1990, 225, Fig. 2).

¹⁴ In some papers M. Malez described and presented these data (e.g. in 1960, 1974, 1979 and 1986), placing the human bone remains inconsistently in the Epipaleolithic, at times in the Mesolithic, and even in the Neolithic period. The contradictions and controversial nature of the author's opinions are even greater in relation to his other papers (e.g. in 1955 and 1970) in which he entirely leaves out the cited hypotheses, citing only the previously known results of B. de Lengyel. The author also frequently states that a large quantity of human bones were also found in earlier trenches, although the researcher nowhere explicitly published them.

¹⁵ In contrast, there is accurate mapping even of the relatively recent investigations of fossil humans in the territory of Croatia or the Balkans, especially those cited in relation to ritual burials in the Late Palaeolithic / Early Mesolithic / Early Neolithic (Forenbaher 1999, 528; Paunović et al. 2001, 58–59, Fig. 4; Benac 2012, 70; Falkenstein 2013, 132, Fig. 6.1).



Sl. 14 Ukrašeni okrugli pršljenovi: 1 Predjama (kost, prema P. Korošec 1982), 2. Monkodonja (kost, prema Hänsel et al. 2000), 3. Monte S. Michele (kamen, prema Riavez 1997).

Fig. 14 Decorated round spindle whorls: 1 Predjama (bone, according to P. Korošec 1982), 2. Monkodonja (bone, according to Hänsel et al. 2000), 3. Monte S. Michele (stone, according to Riavez 1997).

ukopa na prostoru Jadrana doslovce se prenose podaci ranijih istraživača, a nalazište je kartirano i tretirano kao nepouzdan (Zlatunić 2003, 57-58)¹⁵.

Ako je okrugli pločasti privjesak od (jelenjeg) roga uistinu nađen, po opisanome mogao bi pripadati okruglim koštanim pršljenima, tzv. vretencima, koji su se izrađivali u vrijeme kasne antike, od 4. do 6. stoljeća, a kakve nam predstavlja upravo inventar iz Predjame, koja je i najbliža (J. Korošec 1956, 44, T. XXXII: 4-6; P. Korošec 1982, 91-92, T. 3; Ciglencčki 2000, 55) (sl. 14: 1). Koštani pršljeni nisu učestali nalaz. Poznati su, naime, vrlo slični keramički pršljeni koji su u potpunosti morfološki i stilski kopirali koštane izvornike (P. Korošec 1982, 92, f. n. 124; Vinski 1989, T. XI: 2, T. XX: 9). Jedan takav primjerak, s urezanim linearnim ukrasom, potječe i iz istraživanja masovne grobnice kod gradine Monkodonja, datirane u ranosrednjovjekovno razdoblje (Hänsel et al. 2000, 140, 146, sl. 5: 1; Hänsel, Mihovilić, Teržan 2015, 250, Sl. 94,1) (sl. 14: 2). Istome vremenu pripisuje se i nalaz iz nekropole Monte S. Michele, grob 31 (Riavez 1997, 81, 83, T. 16: 7), koji je pak izrađen od kamena (*pietra grigia?*) i ukrašen urezanim paralelnim

If the disc shaped pendant of (deer) horn was in fact found, from its description it could be a round bone spindle whorl (a spindle) of the kind fabricated in the Late Antiquity period, from the 4th to 6th century, the kind we see in the inventory from Predjama, which is also the closest (J. Korošec 1956, 44, T. XXXII: 4-6; P. Korošec 1982, 91-92, T. 3; Ciglencčki 2000, 55) (Fig. 14: 1). Bone spindle whorls are not a frequent find. We know, namely, of very similar ceramic spindle whorls that entirely morphologically and stylistically copied the bone originals (P. Korošec 1982, 92, f. n. 124; Vinski 1989, T. XI: 2, T. XX: 9). One such specimen, with an incised linear decoration, originates from the excavation of a mass grave at the Monkodonja hillfort, dated to the Early Middle Ages (Hänsel et al. 2000, 140, 146, Fig. 5: 1; Hänsel, Mihovilić, Teržan 2015, 250, Fig. 94,1) (Fig. 14: 2). Also attributed to the same period is a find from the necropolis at Monte S. Michele, grave 31 (Riavez 1997, 81, 83, T. 16: 7), made of stone (*pietra grigia?*) and decorated with incised parallel lines along its edge (Fig. 14: 3). We also know, however, of spindle whorls made of lead, for example from Kuzelin (Sokol 1998, 32-33, cat. 73-76), with the same decorative motif. We concur, therefore, that the disc shaped pendant of (deer) horn is to be understood as a Late Antiquity artefact, which would draw back yet another veil from the secret "city" at Oporovina, showing that "Malez's man" with grave goods should be regarded as a modern human from the

¹⁵ Nasuprot tomu, vjerno se kartira i do relativno novijih istraživanja fosilnih ljudi na teritoriju Hrvatske ili Balkana, posebno onih apotrofiranih u vezi s ritualom pokapanja u kasnom paleolitiku/ranom mezolitiku/ranom neolitiku (Forenbaher 1999, 528; Paunović et al. 2001, 58-59, Fig. 4; Benac 2012, 70; Falkenstein 2013, 132, Fig. 6.1).

linijama po rubnom dijelu (sl. 14: 3). Znani su međutim i pršljeni od olova, npr. iz Kuzelina (Sokol 1998, 32–33, kat. 73–76), s istim motivom ukrašavanja. Suglasni smo stoga okrugli pločasti privjesak od (jelenjeg) roga razumjeti kao kasnoantički predmet, čime bi bio razgrnut još jedan veo tajne oporovinskog “grada” pokazujući da “Malezovog čovjeka” s priložima moramo uvažavati kao modernog čovjeka iz kasnoantičkog doba te shodno tomu smatrati da zasad za mezolitičku fazu korištenja Oporovine nema sigurnih pokazatelja¹⁶. Kasnoantički kulturni sloj Oporovine identičan je tako onome u Vrtaškoj peći 1, gdje su datacije povezane uz karakteristične nalaze nošnje i nakita te uz kovanicu Teodorika (Starac 1994, 25–26; Starac 2000a, 9; Starac 2000b, Vrtaške peći; Komšo, Blečić 2007, 121).

ZAKLJUČAK

Svaki je tajni grad ujedno i grad tajni. Naša Oporovina ekstravagantan je primjer tajnoga “grada” u liticama zastrašujućeg kanjona Medvejice, “grada tajni” prepunog legendarnih zgoda, i u arheološkom i u interpretativnom smislu. Stoga je mnogo toga još nerazjašnjenog i nedorečenog u konceptu Oporovine i mreže njezinih špilja kao arheološkog nalazišta, posebno gledano u širokom rasponu čovjekove prošlosti toga kraja. Podaci prikupljeni dosadašnjim istraživanjima razgrnuli su, kako smo vidjeli, neke od velova tajnih i zatajenih događaja, pretpostavljajući nove mogućnosti o korištenju i valoriziranju tog bogatog špiljskog sustava. Uz obrazloženu rezervu i iznimni oprez, do detaljnije analize materijalne kulture mislimo da je Oporovina kao sezonsko stanište više ili manje intenzivno korištena tijekom prapovijesnih razdoblja kasnog neolitika, eneolitika i kasnog brončanog doba. Sasvim je izvjesno, zbog prirode mikroregije, da su i ostali špiljski objekti smješteni na toj istočnoj, osunčanoj strani kanjona imali određenu namjenu i bili u uporabi, no njihovi su nam “podaci” izgubljeni ili erozijom sedimenata ili pod novijim zahvatima koji si se odvijali u tome prostoru (Komšo, Blečić 2007). Izgledno je da materijalna građa ne ide u prilog pretpostavkama o korištenju Oporovine u razdoblju mezolitika, ranog neolitika, željeznog doba, a ponajmanje u prilog tezi da je ona bila “obredno mjesto”, kako se to ranije tvrdilo.

Prava kulturološka metamorfoza tog špiljskog sustava dolazi od kraja 4. i tijekom 5. i 6. stoljeća. Nalazi ostataka

Late Antiquity period and, accordingly, consider – for the time being – that there are no sure indicators of a Mesolithic phase in the use of Oporovina¹⁶. The Late Antiquity cultural layer at Oporovina is identical to that at Vrtaška peć 1, where the datings are related to characteristic finds of attire and jewellery as well as a coin of Theodoric (Starac 1994, 25–26; Starac 2000a, 9; Starac 2000b, Vrtaške peći; Komšo, Blečić 2007, 121).

CONCLUSION

Every secret city is also a city of secrets. Our Oporovina is an extraordinary example of such a secret “city” in the forbidding crags of the Medvejica canyon, a “city of secrets” with an abundance of legendary events, both in the archaeological and interpretative sense. A great deal, therefore, remains unexplained and unsaid in the concept of Oporovina and the attendant network of caves as an archaeological site, especially with regard to the broad scope of the human history of the area. The data gathered in the course of the investigations to date have removed, as we have seen, some of the veils from the shrouded and concealed events, suggesting new possibilities concerning the use and assessment of this diverse cave system. Taking into consideration the expounded reservations and with great caution – in advance of a more detailed analysis of the material culture – we are of the opinion that Oporovina was used as a seasonal settlement with greater or lesser intensity during the course of prehistory – the Late Neolithic, Eneolithic and Late Bronze Age. It is quite certain, due of the nature of the micro-region, that the other cave objects situated on this eastern side of the canyon, exposed to the sun, were in use for some particular purpose, but that the “data” has been lost either to the erosion of sediments or to the more recent interventions that have occurred in the area (Komšo, Blečić 2007). It seems apparent that the material gathered does not speak in favour of propositions of the use of Oporovina in the Mesolithic, Early Neolithic and Iron Age periods, and least of all in favour of the hypothesis that it was a “ritual place”, as has been asserted in the past.

The real cultural metamorphosis of this cave system occurred in the late 4th and in the course of the 5th and 6th centuries. The finds of the remnants of daily life and the creation of an building of large dimensions bear witness to the extended habitation and particular use

¹⁶ Sličnu sudbinu ima i Podosojna peć u kanjonu Mošćeničke Drage, gdje je M. Malez “fiksirao” datume za mezolitik sjevernog Jadrana (Malez 1986, 25).

¹⁶ Similar fate is shared by the Podosojna peć cave in the canyon of Mošćenička Draga, where M. Malez “fixed” the dating to the northern Adriatic Mesolithic (Malez 1986, 25).

svakodnevnog života i stvaranje zdanja velikih dimenzija svjedoče o dugotrajnom obitavanju i o osobitom korištenju Oporovine tijekom kasnoantičkoga doba (sl. 4). Litica je tako postala odlično pribežište s unutarnjom strukturom dva različito korištena prostrana hodnika; tu je uvijek bio izvor pitke vode, tu su dodatna skloništa i prostori za čuvanje većih zaliha hrane i vode – sve što je prilikom opsada i sukoba bilo nužno, dragocjeno i bitno. Usljed toga, treba se barem u jednom složiti s Malezom, a to je da se Oporovina koristi povremeno i za pokapanje mrtvih. Tako skup sahranjenih individua u udaljenim, nevitnim ili nepristupačnijim prostorima špilje brojčano nije više zanemariv niti, s obzirom na okolnosti nalaženja, jednoznačan. Možemo samo pretpostavljati koliko postoji razloga takvoj potrebi, pa takvom odabiru mjesta, i na koncu načinu sahranjivanja (sl. 10). Promišljati svakako trebamo na iznenadne, nepredvidljive i teške momente te izuzev opsada i sukoba računati i s raznim bolestima i zarazama, kada je stanovništvo zbog sigurnosti bilo prisiljeno svoje pokojnike pokapati u blizini. Vrijeme sahranjivanja povezuje se s adaptacijom predvorja špilje, gdje su nađena i dva bakrenjaka iz vremena Konstantinovih sinova, datiranih od kraja 4. do kraja 6. stoljeća (Starac 1994, 29)¹⁷. U to je doba organizirana tzv. *Claustra Alpium lularum*, u čiji su sastav ulazile *Tarsatica* i tarsatička Liburnija. Zapadna joj je granica, prema *Flanoni*, bila gotovo sigurno kod *Lauriane*, naselja nižeg ranga. Preko *Lauriane* je cesta iz Tarsatike vodila za *Polu* (Blečić 2001, 76). Zbog stalnih previranja uzrokovanih prodiranjem barbarskih i barbariziranih naroda, od Gota pa sve do Slavena, prema istarskom i italjskom poluotoku (Blečić 2001, 80–81), starosjedilačko romansko stanovništvo, vjerojatno iz *Lauriane*, vidno osiromašeno, zbog čega izostaju dragocjeniji nalazi, sklanjalo se u ovaj izuzetan, brižno planiran špiljski naseobinski kompleks ili refugij. Kao i u slučaju Predjame, koja se smjestila na važnom strateškom prostoru i cestovnom čvorištu *Claustrea Alpium lularum* prema Italiji (P. Korošec 1982, 94–96; Ciglonečki 1999, Fig. 7), istočnim su obroncima Učke vodile i sporedne ceste prema unutrašnjosti Istre, na kojima su također bile raspoređene utvrde, osmatračnice i kontrolne postaje (Starac 1994, 24). Budući da predmeti materijalne kulture ukazuju i na vojnički značaj toga mikroregionalnog prostora, nije isključena mogućnost prisutnosti rimskih vojnika (s civilima), koji su aktivno morali sudjelovati u sistemu obrane *Claustrea Alpium lularum* na prostoru Tarsatike, ali i njezine *Liburnie Tarsaticensis*.

of Oporovina in the Late Antiquity (Fig. 4). The cliff then assumed the role of an excellent refuge with an internal structure of two spacious corridors used for differing purposes; there was always a source of potable water here, and additional shelters and spaces for the storage of large quantities of food and water – everything that was essential, precious and vital when under siege and during conflict. Consequently, we should at least in one regard concur with Malez; that Oporovina was used intermittently for the burial of the dead. Thus the group of interred individuals in the remote, non-vital or not easily accessible spaces in the cave is no longer numerically negligible, nor is it, given the circumstances of its discovery, unambiguous. We can only speculate as to the many possible reasons for this need, this selection of location and, finally, this method of burial (Fig. 10). We certainly need to consider sudden, unexpected and difficult moments and to, along with sieges and conflicts, take into account various diseases and contagions, when the population, for reasons of security, was compelled to bury their dead in the immediate vicinity. The time of the burial is associated with the adaptation of the cave's mouth, where two copper coins were found from the time of Constantine's sons, dated from the late 4th to late 6th century (Starac 1994, 29)¹⁷. This was the period of the establishment of what was known as the *Claustra Alpium lularum*, which included *Tarsatica* and the *Liburnia Tarsaticensis*. Its western frontier, towards *Flanona*, was very likely at *Lauriana*, a settlement of lesser importance. By way of *Lauriana* the road from *Tarsatica* led to *Pola* (Blečić 2001, 76). The constant unrest caused by the incursions of barbarian and barbarised nations, from Goths to Slavs, towards the Istrian and Italian peninsulas (Blečić 2001, 80–81), saw the indigenous Roman population, likely from *Lauriana*, evidently impoverished, as a result of which are missing finds of high value, seeking sanctuary in this exceptional, carefully planned cave habitation complex or *refugium*. Like at Predjama, situated at an important strategic location and crossroads of the *Claustrea Alpium lularum* towards Italy (P. Korošec 1982, 94–96; Ciglonečki 1999, Fig. 7), subordinate roads to the Istrian interior also ran along the eastern slopes of Učka, along which fortifications, observation and control posts were also distributed (Starac 1994, 24). Considering that the material culture indicates the military character of this micro-regional space, we cannot rule out the possible presence of Roman soldiers (with civilians) that must have played an active role in the *Claustrea Alpium lularum*

¹⁷ Cf. bilješka 11.¹⁷ Cf. note 11.

Kako bi im život bio što praktičniji i jednostavniji, stanovnici Oporovine preuređuju i podređuju čitav špiljski sustav vlastitim potrebama. Stoga su se koristili i brojni mali abriji u kojima su mogle povremeno prebivati manje skupine ljudi, ali i oni koji su imali sasvim specifičnu ulogu. Izdvaja se Abri Cisterna, s velikom vodospremom, koji je s Oporovinom povezan uklesanim putem na strmoj litici, potom Abri Uho, s brojnim uklesanim križevima, koji postaje obredno mjesto posvećeno meditaciji i prakticiranju vjere, sugerirajući time da je stanovništvo, bilo starosjedilačko, bilo novopridošlo, tada već nesumnjivo kristijanizirano. Napokon, nasuprotne Vrtaške peći uređuju se u utvrdu i postaju posljednje uporište u slučaju krajnje nužde. Nakon te povijesne epizode tajnoviti se "grad" u liticama napušta i neće se više koristiti u naseobinske svrhe¹⁸.

defensive system in the Tarsatica area, and its attendant *Liburnia Tarsaticensis*.

To make their lives as practical and simple as possible the inhabitants of Oporovina adapted and subjected the entire cave system to serve their needs. This also saw the use of numerous small abris in which smaller groups of people could intermittently reside, and those that were used for a quite specific purpose. Prominent among these are Abri Cisterna, with its large water reservoir, linked to Oporovina with a path carved into the steep cliff; Abri Uho, with its many carved crosses, that became a ritual space dedicated to meditation and the practice of faith, suggesting thereby that the population – whether indigenous or newly arrived – had by then undoubtedly been Christianised. Finally, the opposite facing Vrtaške peći caves were adapted as a fortification and became a final stronghold in the face of dire necessity. After this historical episode the secretive "city" in the cliff is abandoned and would no longer be used for habitation purposes¹⁸.

¹⁸ Rad je u sažetoj formi predstavljen na međunarodnom skupu *Arheološka istraživanja u Lici. Arheologija pećina i krša* Hrvatskog arheološkog društva, održanog u Gospiću 2007. godine. Za nesebičnu pomoć, dobronamjerne sugestije i kritičke rasprave pri daljnjem istraživanju, kolegama Maji Bunčić (Arheološki muzej u Zagrebu), Ranku Starcu (Pomorski i povijesni muzej Hrvatskog primorja Rijeka), Emilu Podrugu (Muzej Grada Šibenika), prof. dr. Borisu Kavuru (Univerza na Primorskom, Koper) i prof. dr. Prestonu T. Miraclu (University of Cambridge) izražavamo veliku zahvalnost.

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