

Roman Pottery and Glass Manufactures

Production and trade in the Adriatic region and beyond



Proceedings of the 4th International Archaeological Colloquium (Crikvenica, 8-9 November 2017)

edited by

Goranka Lipovac Vrkljan, Ana Konestra
and Anamarija Eterović Borzić

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Inside fashion fusion: Fibulae from Crikvenica

Martina Blečić Kavur

Abstract

During the archaeological excavations of the figlina at the Igralište site in Crikvenica, among other things, seven very well-preserved bronze fibulae were discovered, and are today accompanied by an older find of a fibula from the Kaštel site. According to their formal features, they belong to two groups – fibulae of the Middle and Late La Tène schemes are significant forms of the Late La Tène cultural traditions, while the cast fibulae of Aucissa type, strongly profiled fibulae and those with the multiply segmented bow are characteristic elements of Roman provincial culture. Their morphological and stylistic features, as well as the adequate context of their discovery, allow us a precise typological classification, chronological determination and cultural interpretation that is the basis of this discussion. Considered within the material culture of Kvarner and the wider northern Adriatic region, the second half of the 1st century BCE and the course of the 1st century AD, they represent valuable first finds in the archaeological record of the area, and some of them are presented here for the first time. Their presence is associated with cosmopolitan culture and various identities related with the early establishment and greatest flourishing of this significant and first explored ceramic workshop in the province of Dalmatia belonging to *Sextus M(e/u)tillius Maximus* in *Ad Turres*.

Key words

Crikvenica – Igralište, *Ad Turres*, ceramic workshop of *Sextus M(e/u)tillius Maximus*, fibulae, gender, identity.

Introduction

The Kvarner basin, stretching from Podvelebit to the eastern coast of Istria, and from the Kastav region to the entrance to Kvarnerić, is not a geographically homogeneous region.¹ On the contrary, a highly heterogeneous area that dissipates at its ends and merges with other, neighbouring ecological and cultural milieus (Figure 1).

Nevertheless, this territory acted and reacted coherently and cohesively, that is, as a semantically meaningful entity in all its natural and anthropogenic manifestations, especially during the Late Bronze and Iron Age. However, in the last centuries BCE fundamental changes took place which changed irreversibly the picture of the seemingly established and ‘idyllic’ world of the Iron Age – the nearby Histrian wars, along the western extension of Kvarner, the conquest of Nesactium in 177 BCE and, at least formally, the end of long prehistory of the Istrian peninsula inaugurated the Roman Republic in that region (Starac 2000; Matijašić 2017). These key historical events were, due to their physical closeness, directly reflected in the socio-political circumstances on the entire Kvarner Basin. Consequently, we have to consider already the period of the 2nd century BCE as the century of great changes and the beginning of ‘Romanization’ on the wider stretch of North Adriatic. The term ‘Romanization’ is certainly not presented here in an administrative or binary sense, but in the broadest

perspective indicates dynamic processes of intertwined economic and, of course, military-political intentions on that territory (Miškec 2003; Horvat 2009; Matijašić 2009; 2017; cf. Versluys 2014).

Unlike the Histrian Nesactium, the ‘cities’ of Kvarner were not militantly conquered, destroyed and demolished. Since the beginning of the 2nd century BCE, material culture actually supports the thesis of their political orientation and strategic involvement with the acquired status of *aleates* or *foederates* – as demonstrated by the archaeological remains discovered not only in Osor, but also in the to the north located Krk, Baška and Rijeka (*Tarsatica*) (Lipovac 1991: 37-46; Šašel 1992: 615; Starac 2000: 16, 22, 81; Blečić 2001: 74; Višnjić 2009a; Blečić Kavur 2015: 231-233). During the 1st century BCE, especially from its middle, Kvarner, like most of Liburnia, was peacefully integrated into the Empire (Starac 2000: 10-18; Konestra *et al.* 2020: 88-89). And the organization of a military alliance with local forces and the very arrangement of Caesar’s military troops is also indicated by the celebrated battle of Krk in the year 49 BCE (Bilić Dujmušić 2014; cf. Vitelli Casella 2018).

This was a period of economic development and prosperity, and it is thought that many private entrepreneurs preceded the establishment of military offices and constituted production, together with the organization of their estates – most likely as early as in the middle of the 1st century BCE. In this context, the figlina explored at the site Igralište in Crikvenica – *Ad Turres*, established *saltus* as a suburban territory

¹ The article is a supplemented and expanded paper presented at II. International Congress of the *Roman Ceramic and Glass Workshop* in Crikvenica in 2011 (Blečić Kavur 2011).