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## SOME REMARKS ON THE TYPE OF WIDE OPEN BRACELETS WITH DOUBLE SNAKEHEADS

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**Abstract:** A rare type of open and wide bracelet with two backward-looking snakeheads has been a focus of archaeological interest since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The use of this bracelet type can be connected to the so-called Srem-group of southeastern Transdanubia, eastern Srem and northern Bačka. The assemblages from Bogdanovci (Croatia) and Čurug (Serbia) allowed researchers to date the finds within a narrower time frame, namely to the Čurug-phase during which the first contacts started between the Late Hallstatt autochthonous communities of the northwestern Balkans and the Celts living north of them. The latènization affected the local communities differently: the Srem-group could maintain its identity through its material culture, and new types of fibulae appeared only in female graves mixed with the local style jewelry. On a large scale, these local style bracelets, earrings, pins etc. have strong connections to the south as their prototypes are found in the rich assemblages of Macedonia, Thrace and Greece. Though the most well-known parallels and the accompanying finds have been the focus of archaeological interest, the bracelets have mainly been examined in the light of these assemblages as a whole. This study aims to collect the available data in order to draw some conclusions on the origin, typology, symbology and dating of the bracelets that have southern prototypes.

**Keywords:** Late Hallstatt, bracelet, snake, Srem-group, latènization

### INTRODUCTION

Wide open bracelets with two backward-looking snakeheads have been known since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when the first pieces of the type were sold at the auction of Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, in London. Since then, several pieces have been published, though with little information on their archaeological contexts. After more artefacts had been collected, it became clear that a new type of bracelet was possible to define, though its nomenclature was not uniform; the name tends to describe the find (e.g. *brassard terminé en double tête de serpents*: Kemenczei 2001, 126/70; *Armreif mit doppeltem Schlangenkopfende*: Kemenczei 2012, 346; see more: Garašanin 1954, 40; Vasić 1977, 29; Ilon 2013, 75).

The use of the jewelry can be connected with the so-called Srem-group that has several names in the archaeological literature (e.g. Sarmian group, South Pannonian Late Hallstatt group, Osijek group: Dizdar 2015, 51)<sup>1</sup>. The territory of the group lies between eastern Slavonia, southeastern Transdanubia, and northern Bačka with existing examples outside of the territory classically attributed to the group. Its existence can be dated between the mid-6<sup>th</sup> and second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC (Dizdar 2019, 322–323). Flat cemeteries are characteristic of the group, in which skeletal graves dominate. Croatian and Serbian researchers paid much attention to the group (e.g. Vasić 1977; 1995; Medović, Hänsel 2006; Ljuština 2010; 2013; Dizdar 2015; 2019) as the finds are concentrated in these territories. Sites are also known in Hungary; cemeteries

(Szentlőrinc: Jerem 1968; Szeged: Pilling, Ujvari 2012) and a settlement in Szajk (Gáti 2014) are documented. Also, some spare finds came to light south of Szentlőrinc from Magyar-telek (Soós 2019–2020).

The latest phase of the Srem-group defined by D. Božič was the so-called Čurug-phase characterised by Štrpci-Čurug type and Early La Tène fibulae which started during the second quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. During this period, an intense latènization started, local elements did not disappear in the following decades, though they did decrease (Božič 1981, 326–327; Dizdar 2015, 51–56; 2019, 322–323; see critics on the concept: Potrebica, Dizdar 2012). The youngest graves are marked by the inhumation graves 63 and 67 in Belgrade-Karaburma, these assemblages can be regarded as the earliest graves of LT B2 or Belgrade phase 1 (Božič 1981, 326; Ljuština 2010, 61; Dizdar 2015, 51–56).

In the course of the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, links began to form between the autochthonous south Pannonian population and the Celts living to the north, and this process continued during the second half of the same century. During this phase the local elite had contacts with the Macedonian and Thracian territories as well, and this is attested by the richly decorated and matching or similarly formed jewelry (Tonkova 1994; 1997; 2002; Vasić 2006b). There were multiple effects of this contact, and its reception was active and complex. The wide-open bracelets with double backward-looking snakeheads can be connected with both of these interactions and period. The study aims to examine and interpret this type of jewelry considering the spread of finds and their parallels, origins, typology, and the presumed way of use.

<sup>1</sup> In the following, the "Srem-group" form will be used as M. Garašanin who defined it used this name (1973, 511–515).

## MATERIALS

The archaeological literature documents eleven bracelets of two backward-looking snakeheads on each end from at least five different sites (Bogdanovci, Čurug, Velem, and unknown sites). Due to the fact that not much is known about the find contexts of the jewelry pieces, it is important to summarize the information that can help to interpret the finds. The circumstances of discovery for the bracelets in chronological order are as follows:

The earliest pieces were part of the Egger's-collection which consisted of at least 602 copper, bronze, silver and gold objects and was sold on 25–26<sup>th</sup> June in 1891 at the auction of Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge (London) after the death of the collector, Samuel Egger. Apart from their existence, there is no information given for the two identical silver bracelets as no documentation was made on where they were found (Fig. 1a-b). Even less is known about the beginnings of the collection, though it is almost certain that S. Egger and his brothers started collecting the finds before 1868 (Rómer 1868; Soroceanu 2011, 53–55, 71, Pl. XXIII: 251). Fortunately, illustrations of the bracelets are in the catalogue (Catalogue 1891, 80, Pl. XXIII: 251) from which a few conclusions can be drawn regarding their forms. R. Vasić presumes that the pieces originate from somewhere in Srem or Bačka (Vasić 2001, 27, Fig. 3).

At the turn of the 19/20<sup>th</sup> centuries, two silver bracelets (Fig. 2a-b), one silver twisted wire earring (Fig. 2c), a silver omega-shaped pin with a rectangular cross-section (Fig. 2f), and three bronze Dux-type fibulae with chainlets (Fig. 2d) were discovered during vineyard processing in Bogdanovci, the land of lord-lieutenant I. Hideghéthy. J. Brunšmid visited the site in 1904, where Hideghéthy showed him the place where the first archaeological material came to light in 1895. He speculated that the unburnt metal finds could be interpreted as assemblages belonging to a female inhumation grave. As the workers did not pay attention to the finds, it is possible that the whole assemblage was not collected and/or more graves' finds were mixed together, which J. Brunšmid also suggested because of four other Dux-type fibulae (Fig. 2e) similar to the previous ones. It is also uncertain from which grave a small finely decorated silver *pyxis* (Fig. 2g), four amber (Fig. 2h), one glass (Fig. 2i), and twelve coral beads (Fig. 2j) originate. During the walk, Brunšmid also noticed several potsherds dated to the Neolithic and the Early Iron Age allowing him to suggest that settlements dated to the aforementioned periods could have been in use in the northern part of Bogdanovci where environmental conditions would have been advantageous. In his view, the disturbed graves also prove that the Hallstatt period settlement was not abandoned in the Late Iron Age (Brunšmid 1909).

One of the richest silver hoards in Central Europe was found in Čurug (Serbia) in 1927. The assemblage was disturbed during earthworks by the owner, Đ. Ćesarov. The National Museum of Belgrade received part of the hoard, and J. Petrović, the curator of the Institution, went to visit the site. He surveyed the area speaking with the locals, and it turned out that the finds were part of one deposition that

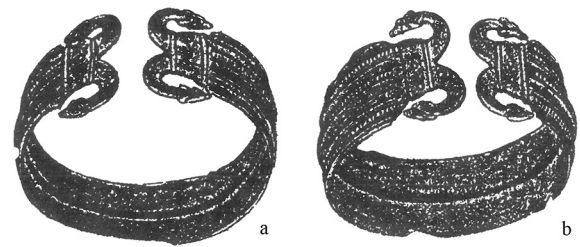


Fig. 1. Egger's-collection, silver bracelets (without scale; after Vasić 2001, Fig. 3)

was buried in a single group 120–150 cm under the recent ground-level. It is not clear if the whole assemblage went to the museum, as more finds were probably kept by the locals. Though the research generally identifies the assemblage as a hoard, it cannot be ruled out that it was originally a rich grave due to the number of fibulae (Božić 1984, 31). M. Grbić published the finds one year after the discovery and the assemblage began to receive attention in a relatively short time (Grbić 1928; Márton 1933, 81–82; Vasić 1995, 83–85; Ljuština 2013, 99). The following finds arrived at the museum: four silver Štrpci-type fibulae (Fig. 3j), four silver open-wide band bracelets having two backward-looking stylized snakeheads on each end (Fig. 3a-d), two silver wide band bracelets with trapezoidal ends (Fig. 3e), three triangular-headed earrings (?) decorated with filigree and granulation (Fig. 3h) and probably three fragments of the same type of earrings, three silver rings with oval heads also decorated with filigree and granulation (Fig. 3i), an Early La Tène bronze Dux-type fibula (Fig. 3g), three complete and three fragmentary bronze fibulae made of bow of loops in three rows with bronze chainlets and trapezoid pendants (Fig. 3f), bronze fragments of a belt with a plastic horizontal rib in the middle, two bronze rods, one bronze wire, one bead of green stone and one of yellow stone, seven amber beads, a green glass paste bead in the form of a rosette, a blue glass paste bead with yellow circles, and four pieces of amber (Fig. 3k-r; Grbić 1928; Garašanin 1954, 40–41, Pl. XXVIII–XXXI; Vasić 1995, 83–84).

There is less to know about the only gold piece of two backward-looking snakeheads (Fig. 4). It was bought by the Hungarian National Museum in 1960 with an indication of "County Baranya" (southeast-Transdanubia) as a finding place, and it was broken in half by its excavators (Kemenczei 2001, 101).

A Hungarian collector living in Velem – I. Kern – holds possession of a silver bracelet (Fig. 5), which was obtained through an exchange with F. Hamvas. The latter claimed to have found it in a hollow next to the scout house (Garabonciás/Cserkészházak) in Velem-Szentvid, but the exact position and context are unknown. The owner allowed G. Ilon to catalogue the bracelet with numerous finds and publish it along with part of the Kern collection (Ilon 2013). The site itself is on one of the side spines of the Kőszeg mountains with a good view of the adjoining areas. It is well-known in the archaeological literature thanks to the efficient work of K. Miske, who also documented the looting of the site at the

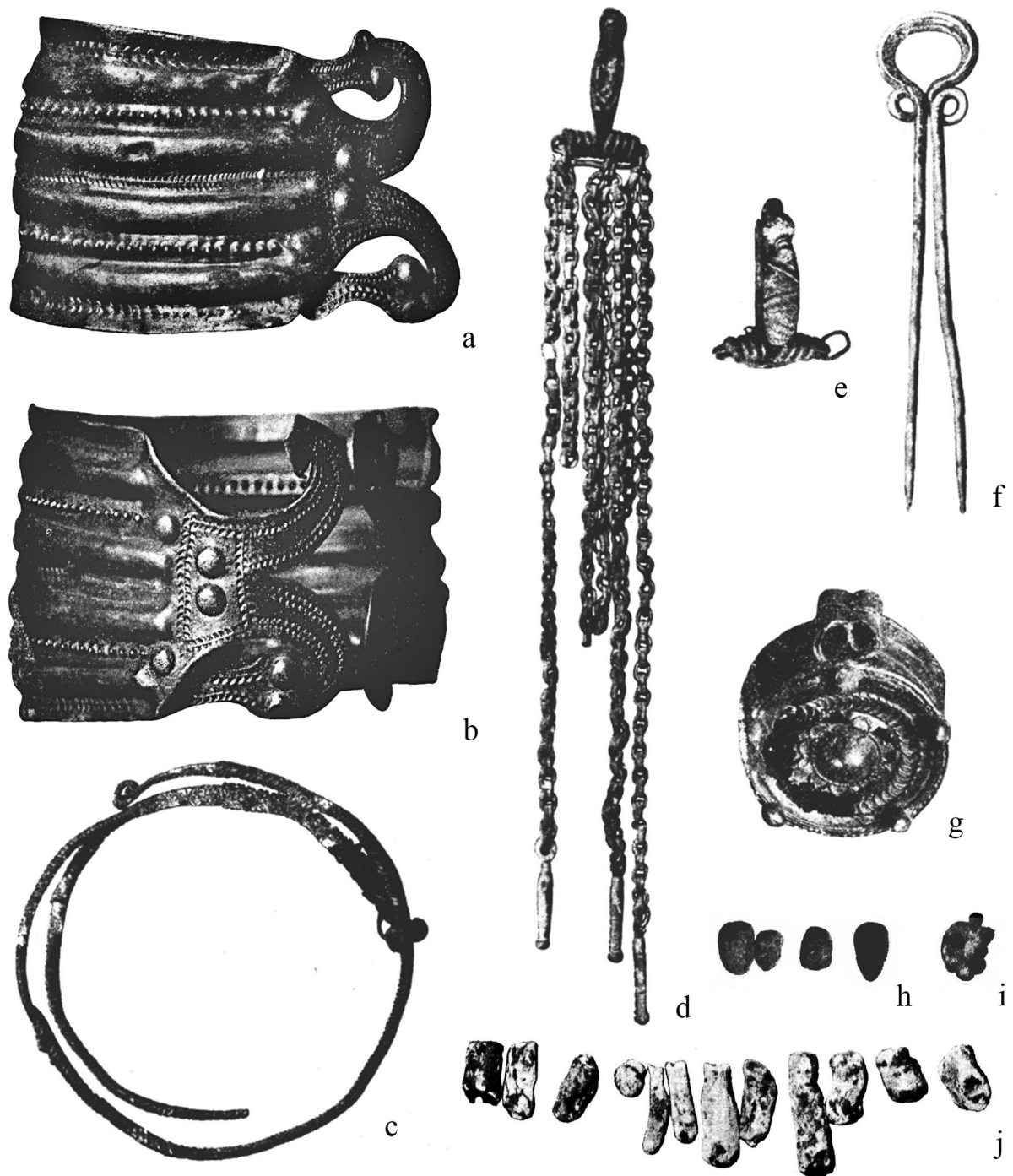


Fig. 2. Bogdanovci, grave(s)?: a-b: silver bracelets, c: silver bracelet, d-e: bronze fibulae, f: silver pin, g: silver pyxis, h: amber beads, i: glass paste bead, j: coral beads (without scale; after Brunšmid 1909, Pl. 23).

end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was the first who wrote about the Iron Age finds originating from the territory (Miske 1896, 250) and also based on his monograph (Miske 1907). J. Déchelette defined the oppidum culture comparing the materials of Mont Beuvray, Manching, Stradonice, and Velem-Szentvid (Déchelette 1914, 969–971, Fig. 404; Szabó 2015, 62). Among others, a French-Hungarian team led excavations on the

late La Tène settlement and fortification (1988–1994) during which finds dating from Ha B to LT D also came to light (Guillaumet *et al.* 1998–1999). Though no bigger emphasis was put on researching the turn of the Late Hallstatt and Early La Tène periods, other finds from the mountain indicate that the territory was also inhabited during the 5–4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC (Miske 1907, e.g. Pl. XL: 2; XLII: 23–24; XLIII: 7, 14–15, 17,

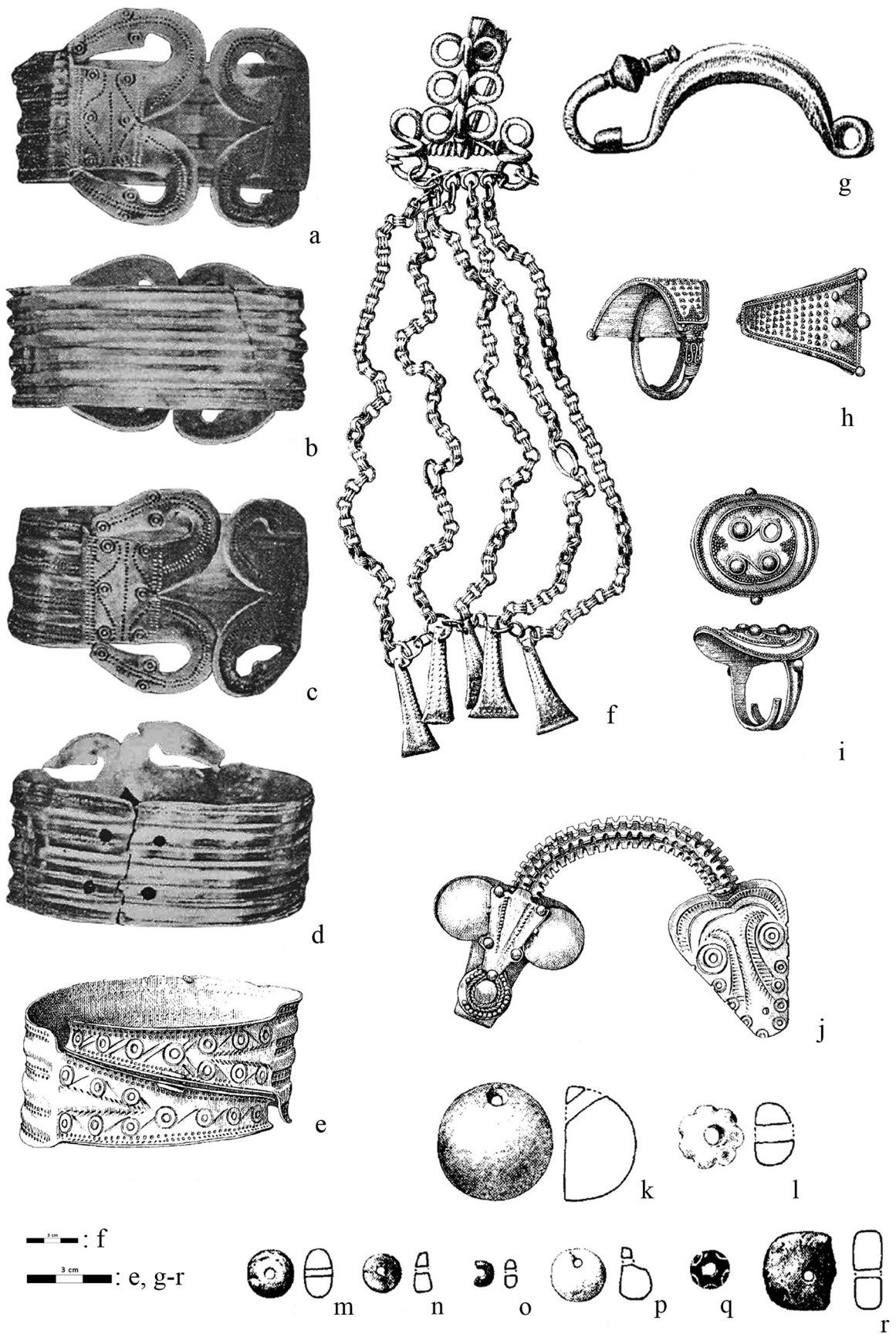


Fig. 3. Selected finds from the Čurug hoard: a-d: silver bracelets (without scale), e: silver bracelet, f-g: bronze fibulae, h: silver earring (?), i: silver ring, j: silver fibula, k-r: beads made of stone, glass paste and amber (after Benac 1987, Pl. LVI-LVII: 1-11; Ljuština 2013, Fig. 8-9).





Fig. 4. Baranya, gold bracelet fragment (without scale; after Szöllösi, Đurković 2015, IV: 218)

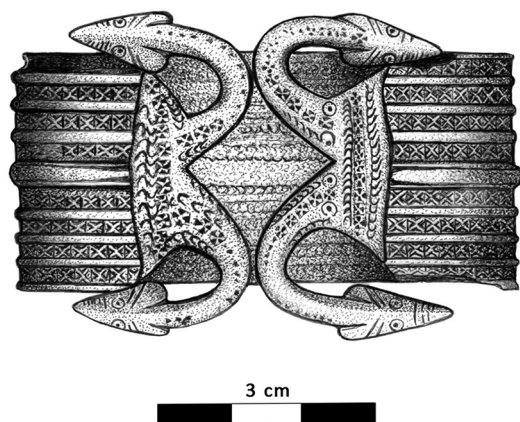


Fig. 5. Velem-Szentvid, silver bracelet (after Ilon 2013, Pl. XXXIII: 12)

22, 24, 26–27, 57; LIII: 1). Recently, an identical bracelet was found in the collection of the Smidt Museum in Szombathely, where the find was catalogued as a "silver napkin ring". Its find place is not indicated (Kolonits 2019).

The above-mentioned circumstances of discovery clearly show that out of eleven bracelets, four were probably deposited in a hoard, two in a grave, and five can be counted as spare finds. The artefacts probably all originate from the regional triangle of Srem, northern Bačka, and southeastern Transdanubia. The style of the bracelets also points to these territories as production places, and the two pieces from county Vas (Velem, Smidt's collection) can be regarded as a northwesternmost occurrence outside of the original territory.

## TYOLOGY

The bracelets belong to a well-defined type as all are open and have two backward-looking stylized snakeheads on each end coming out from a trapezoid shoulder. The bodies of the bracelets are articulated by ribs along their length. It is clear that these finds were created following the same idea. As for their decorations, a fishbone pattern, incised lines, and concentric circles are the most frequent. It has to be noted that other forms and techniques were also used, such as repoussé

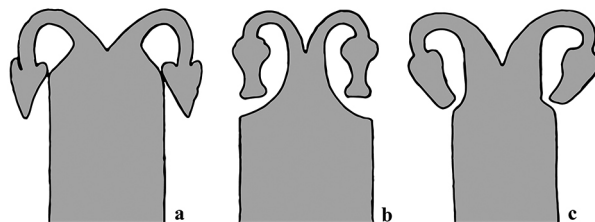


Fig. 6. Typology of the bracelets with two backward-looking snakeheads: a: Baranya-subtype, b: Bogdanovci-subtype, c: Čurug-subtype (drawing M. Kovács, digital preparation J. Bicskei)

(Bogdanovci bracelets) and four punched triangles arranged in squares (Velem, Smidt collection). The latter is quite rare, though it could also show chronological relations or regional differences. The main distinctions are the shape of the zoomorphic heads. Based on these, three distinct subtypes can be distinguished:

I. The Baranya-subtype is the most numerous as it includes pieces from Velem, the Smidt's, the Egger's collections, and an unknown site from Baranya. The heads of this subtype are so stylized that they do not even resemble snakes, they are in the forms of triangles or teardrops. Not all the pieces have stylized eyes (Fig. 6a: Fig. 1, Fig. 4–5)<sup>2</sup>.

II. The bracelets that have an hourglass-like serpent head belong under the Bogdanovci-subtype. Only two pieces from Bogdanovci fall under this category and they are the only ones on which the repoussé technique was also applied to the shoulders and eyes (similar to the Mramorac-type belts and bracelets) (Fig. 6b: Fig. 2a-b)<sup>3</sup>.

III. The Čurug-subtype resembles actual animal heads the most accurately, though they are still quite stylized. Their form is an elongated triangle with rounded edges near the eyes and a straighter cut edge on the tip. In all the known examples, the eyes are articulated by concentric dots. Four pieces can be connected with this type, all of which originate from the Čurug hoard (Fig. 6c: Fig. 3a-d)<sup>4</sup>.

It is important to note that the Čurug- and the Bogdanovci-subtypes occur only in those sites after which they were named. The question therefore arises: is it possible

<sup>2</sup> 1. Baranya (unknown site): Gold, broken in half. L: 9,6 cm, Wt: 42,56 gr (Kemenczei 2012, 346, n. 97. Abb. 9: 7; Szöllösi, Đurković 2015, IV: 218). 2. Egger's-collection (unknown site): Silver. D: 7 cm (Catalogue 1891; Soroceanu 2011, 71, XXIII: 251). 3. Egger,s-collection: Silver. D: 7 cm (Catalogue 1891; Soroceanu 2011, 71, XXIII: 251). 4. Smidt's collection (unknown site): Silver, under processing (Kolonits 2019). 5. Velem (County Vas, Hungary): Silver. D: 7 cm, W: 3,3 cm, Wt: 80 gr. (Ilon 2013, 75, 117, Pl. XXXIII: 12, XXXVIII: 12).

<sup>3</sup> 1. Bogdanovci (Croatia): Silver. L: 21 cm (Brunšmid 1909, 232–233, Pl. 23: 3). 2. Bogdanovci: Silver, broken in half (Brunšmid 1909, 232–233, Pl. 23: 4).

<sup>4</sup> 1. Čurug (Serbia): Silver. D: 6,9 x 4,9 cm, W: 3 cm, Wt: 40 gr (Grbić 1928, II: 5; Garašanin 1954, 40, Pl. XXVII: 1). 2. Čurug: Silver, broken in half. D: 8,1 x 4,9 cm, W: 2,7 cm, Wt: 50 gr (Grbić 1928, II: 3; Garašanin 1954, 40, Pl. XXVII: 2). 3. Čurug: Silver. D: 7 x 5,1 cm, W: 3 cm, Wt: 50 gr (Grbić 1928, II: 6; Garašanin 1954, 40, Pl. XXVII: 3). 4. Čurug: Silver, broken in half, four holes for reparation. D: 6,9 x 4,8 cm, W: 2,8 cm, Wt: 54 gr (Grbić 1928, II: 4; Garašanin 1954, 40, Pl. XXVII: 4).

to distinguish three subtypes? It is hard to determine whether the Čurug- and Bogdanovci subtypes were just unique replications or not. One could answer this if more examples were unearthed with accompanying finds. As no other objects were collected with the Baranya-subtypes, a more specific dating is not possible compared to the others. At least a few were almost certainly made by different artisans or in workshops. As only those bracelets that were found together seem identical (the bracelets of the Kern and Smidt's Collections probably originate from the same find context), this likely means that there were several artisans, or that they were replicated from a very specific memory (see the problematics in Quesada *et al.* 2000). The idea probably traveled with different agents between the distinct regions and communities where they were reformed after the local taste keeping the main form of the bracelets.

### THE ORIGIN OF SNAKE BRACELETS AND SNAKE SYMBOLISM

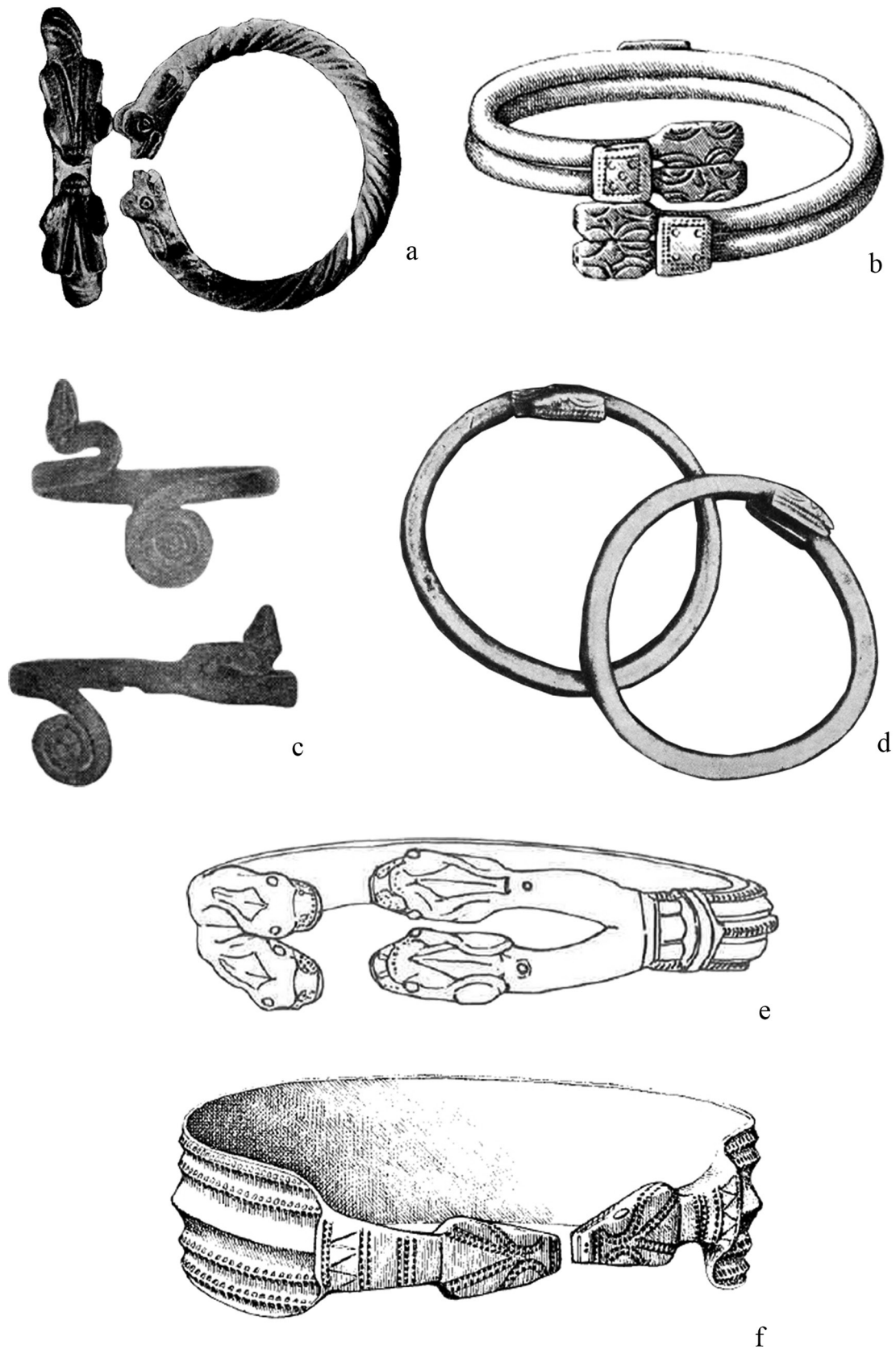
The generally accepted research defines the zoomorphic heads as snakes, though some researchers have also proposed interpretations of horses (Brunšmid 1909, 233) or dragons (Ilon 2013, 75). However, the presence of similar depictions on objects such as fibulae, pins, and rings in the northern and western Balkans supports a snake representation. Snake imagery also likely demonstrates a cultural difference with other neighboring cultures and territories that tend to exhibit more bird-related iconography (Jerem 1971, 185). The popularity of the snake in the Balkans could lie in its multi-faceted nature, with such objects possibly having had a protective, healing or apotropaic meaning, as well as additional levels of interpretations for similar items (Popović 1996, 121) from the southern territories of Thrace (Tonkova 1997, 27), Macedonia, and Greece.

Bracelets with serpent heads appear at the turn of the 6–5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC in the South. The fashion of snakeheads continued into the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century in Thrace where local workshops created jewelry crossing Greek and local models (Tonkova 2002). Two gold stylized serpent-headed open bracelets decorated with filigree and granulation dated to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC originate from the Koukova Mound in Duvanlii, which could have been part of a royal and/or priest adornment. They could also have been worn in pairs, probably above the elbows. Similar pieces came from Demir Karija (Fig. 7a) dated to the late 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (Mikulčić 1970, 138, Pl. I-II: 426–429; Tonkova 1997). Their prototypes were already worn during the Archaic and Early Classical Periods in Macedonia and Thrace, with innovations on these pieces including the application of filigree and granulation. Another type of open bracelet with an attached double-ring body and double stylized snakeheads came from Pelagonija (Fig. 7b) dated to the 5–4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC (Vasić 1987a, 716, Pl. LXXIV: 2–3). During the Early Hellenistic Period, the jewelry fashion remained nearly unchanged, just

slightly simplified, though the use of silver instead of gold became the norm. The spiral serpent-like bracelets from Hisarya (Fig. 7c), Aytos, and Kravevo can be interpreted as imports from the Aegean Region in this period (Tonkova 1994, 193, Fig. 17; 1997, 18–20, 26, Fig. 1a, 5, 17). In grave 11 of Beranci-Crkvište, dated to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, two modest silver pieces came to light (Guštin, Kuzman 2016, 323–324, Fig. 6: 8–9). Similarly modest silver bracelets are also known from Radolište (Fig. 7d) where the serpent heads bend over each other (Parović-Pešikan 1964, Fig. 14). Snakeheads also appear on other objects, such as on pins from Trebenište (Vasić 2003, Pl. 41: 789–791, Pl. 43: 855–856). As seen above, the snake bracelets vary in form, are spread out over a large territory, and can clearly be connected with the local elite for whom imitating the animals was important.

Snakeheads on bracelets from the Northwestern Balkans during the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> till 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC also present unique forms. One of the closest parallels to the wide-open band bracelets ending with double backward-looking snakeheads is from the "princely grave" of Novi Pazar dated between 470–460 BC. Though the body of the silver bracelet is massive with a half circle cross-section, the piece also has ribs, from which the middle rib is ornamented with a fishbone pattern and two snakeheads (Fig. 7e; Vasić 1977, 34, Pl. 34: 15). In Mramorac, a pair of silver Mramorac-type belts came to light along with an open gold bracelet (Fig. 7f) with a serpent head on each end. It also has vertical ribs on its body, such as the Novi Pazar piece, and has trapezoidal shoulders. With the belts, the bracelet can be dated to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (Vasić 1977, 24–25, Pl. 35: A3; 2001, 23). Close analogies to the bracelets from Mramorac made of silver (two pieces) were discovered (Benac 1987, Pl. LXVI), such as in Kruševica from a probable tumulus (Srejšević, Vukadin 1988, 8, Pl. III: 5), the "princely tomb" of Pečka Banja (Popović 1984, 30, Pl. IV; Palavestra 1999) and Kačanj. The latter pieces originate from a grave that contained four deceased with Illyrian helmets, iron spearheads, Greek ceramics, one-looped bow fibulae, omega-head pins, amber, and glass beads, to name part of the grave assemblage. Z. Marić connected the graves with the Glasinac culture and dated it to the phase Va (Marić 1959, Pl. II: 1; Čović 1987, 626–633, Pl. 36: 31). Bracelets imitating snake heads on their endings are also known from the Szentes-Vekerzug cemetery connected with the Scythian Alföld-group (Párducz 1954, 31, 36, 66, Fig. 13: 1–2).

Interestingly, on the Mramorac-type belts, repoussé backward-looking and triangle-double headed motif appears sometimes with a palmette body. Such examples come from Novi Sad (Širbu 2019, Fig. 1, 5: 1b), Umčari (Vasić 1977, Pl. 35: B5–6) and Titel (Hänsel 1998, 97, Pl. 3: 9–10), which shows parallels with the arrangement of the double-headed open bracelets. Stylized snakeheads also show up on an open silver ring from a female grave in Velika dated to the second quarter or second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Sokač-Štimac 1984, 130, Pl. 2; Popović 1996, 106–107, Fig. 3: 6; Dizdar 2015, 54).



**Fig. 7.** Different types of bracelets with snake heads: a: Demir Karija, silver bracelet (after Mikulčić 1970, Pl. II: 427); b: Pelagonija, silver bracelet (after Benac 1987, Pl. LXXIV: 2); c: Hisarya, silver bracelet (after Tonkova 1994, Fig. 17); d: Radolište, silver bracelet (after Parović-Pešikan 1964, Fig. 14); e: Novi Pazar, silver bracelet (after Vasić 1977, Pl. 34: 15); f: Mramorac, gold bracelet (after Benac 1987, Pl. LXVI: 2), without scales.

## PARALLELS AND DATING OF THE BRACELETS

Of the eleven bracelets, five are spare finds and only comparisons with the Čurug and Bogdanovci assemblages can allow for a more precise dating. It has to be kept in mind that some of the accompanying finds could also have been worn during an extended period (e.g. one or several lifetimes), therefore the dating of the bracelets can be made in a broader framework. The assemblages from the two sites are classified as attire (earrings, beads, pins, fibulae, bracelets, rings, belt?), a pyxis, and undefinable or raw material pieces.

Three different types of brooches (Dux, Štrpci and looped) support the more precise dating of the bracelets from Bogdanovci and Čurug, and these objects serve a basis for a chronological starting point as they changed rapidly over time. A bronze Dux-type fibula with a curved, engraved segmented bow and a biconical knob at the end (Fig. 3g) came from Čurug. Closer analogies are documented from the Győr-Ménfőcsanak cemetery grave 16 (Uzsoki 1987, 26, Pl. XVIII: 5), Csabrendek (Szabó 1974, 82, Fig. 8: 3) and Donja Dolina-N. Šokić ridge (Marić 1964, Pl. XVII: 11, 343). M. Szabó dates the finds to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC as their earliest occurrence (1974, 84–85).

In Bogdanovci, seven bronze Dux-type type fibulae came to light: three pieces have medallion-shaped framed bows and attaching chainlets to their springs (Fig. 2d), and the other four have broadened bows decorated with a wide zigzag band (Fig. 2e) (Brunšmid 1909, 232, Pl. 23; Popović 1996, 116). The first style is a local variant of the Dux-type fibulae and belongs to the Karaburma type 63. The pieces from the site do not have any additional motifs in the frame, with parallels coming from Kupinovo (Drnić 2015, Pl. 34: 3–4), Rusanovići (Popović 1996, 119, Fig. 13: 4), Osijek grave 29 (Božić 1981, Pl. 6: 3) and Belgrade-Karaburma grave 63 (Todorović 1972, 62; Ljuština, Spasić 2012, 368–369, Pl. 1: 1). D. Božić, who defined the variant, dates the finds to the Belgrade I phase which parallels with the LT B2 period (1981, 327). P. Popović agrees with him but in a broader period as he places their use between the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. He also dates the aforementioned broad-banded fibulae with zigzag motifs with similar findings from Viminacium, Dalj, and Šabac to the LT B2 period (Popović 1996, 118–120, Fig. 12: 4–5). M. Szabó and K. Tankó date the similar zigzag decorated fibula from grave 1051 of Ludas-Varjú-dűlő to the LT B2a phase (Szabó, Tankó 2012, 92, Fig. 146, Pl. XXXVIII: 4).

The bronze fibulae made of bow loops in three rows (Fig. 3f) are known not just from Čurug, but also from Pilismarót-Basaharc grave 332 (Bognár-Kutzián 1975, 38, Pl. VI: 1), Mikulčice grave 2 (Ludikovský 1962, Fig. 1: 3, 5) and Vratnica, tumulus II (Čović 1987, 633, Pl. LXV: 3, 7). A similar technique of folded loops can also be observed on several types of fibulae in Jezerine, e.g. grave 83, 213, and 241 (Radimský 1895, 83–84, 118, Fig. 135, 249, 282). K. Ludikovský and M. Szabó date the finds to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Ludikovský 1962, 275; Szabó 1971, 508).

Four pieces of hinged fibulae or *Scharnierfibeln* (Fig. 3j) were in the Čurug hoard. This type of jewelry appeared in Macedonia during the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and

was worn until the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, with the Gordian-type fibulae regarded as their prototypes. Several variants of the hinged fibulae exist, including those that have at least ten star-like ornaments on their bows are called Štrpci- or Čurug-type and date to the middle and second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The catch-plate is a highly stylized snake head in the form of a palmette-motif. This head resembles another stylized serpent head, just in a local style (Vasić 1995, 85; 1999, 102, 116–117). The Štrpci-type fibulae are regarded as the final phase of the *Scharnierfibeln* that occurs in the northern Balkans. In general, the hinged fibulae are made of precious metals, or in some cases of bronze, and are found in graves with rich assemblages in groups of 4, 6, or 8 pieces. Their sizes probably corresponded with the status of the holder. After the period claiming the rich graves of Derveni grave Z, Vergina, Skopje-Ždanec, and the hoard at Tremnik the forms of fibulae spread to the north (Vasić 1995, 85; 1999, Pl. 69; Guštin, Kuzman 2016, 320).

In the Čurug hoard, apart from the four double zoomorphic-ended bracelets, two other silver bracelets with trapezoid endings were collected (Fig. 3e). These bracelets were produced with similar techniques, such as a three-ribbed body with punched lines, concentric circles, and also fishbone motifs on their endings. The two trapezoidal parts are not entirely the same as on one end the concentric circles are attached by a punched single line and the other by punched, double lines. The identical bodies and decorations possibly point to the same dating and workshop as the zoomorphic-ended bracelets from the Čurug hoard. Their closest parallels are from Sremska Mitrovica II dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Vasić 1977, Pl. 54: 10; Vasić 2001, 24) and Sombor (Vasić 1999, 116; Potrebnica, Dizdar 2014, 155). From Staliyska Mahala, Vladinya, Granitovo, and an unknown site, similar bracelets are also known. The main differences lie in the shaping of the ribs and the richness of the decoration. A. Dimitrova dated them to the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century BC (1966, 132, Fig. 6–14), and M. Tonkova put the place of production somewhere in the western Balkans (1994, 186).

The silver bracelet made from twisted wire with one rolled end (Fig. 2c) from Bogdanovci has parallels from grave 2 of Beremend (Jerem 1971, 74, Pl. 7: 2–4), tumulus I in Čitluci (Fiala 1893, 136, Fig. 21) and the double burial (?) at Velika (Sokač-Štimac 1984, 130, Pl. 2; Popović 1996, 106–107, Fig. 3: 10–11). With the same form and technique, the jewelry also included earrings as seen in grave Cx 50 at Aradou Nou, Donja Dolina, graves 63 and 67 of Belgrade-Karaburma (Ljuština, Spasić 2011, 369–370; Rustoiu, Urșutiu 2013), as a torque in grave 538 of Csepel Island (Horváth 2016, 145, Pl. 5: 2), Glasinac (Fiala 1893, 136, Fig. 21) and probably Timișoara-Cioreni (Rustoiu 2017, 185, Fig. 1: 1). In general, this jewelry type – also made of silver and bronze – was produced somewhere in the Northwestern Balkans and Southeastern Pannonia and can be dated between the late 5<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC at the latest (Rustoiu 2017, Fig. 9–10: with more sites).

Three silver rings with trapezoidal heads (Fig. 3h), two head fragments, and three rings with oval heads and overlapping strap ends decorated with filigree and granulation (Fig. 3i) were in the Čurug hoard (Garašanin 1954, 40, Pl. XXVIII:

8–12). The first type is interpreted as earrings due to their size (D: 3.5 cm), though it is questionable how they could have been attached to the ears. The possibility of having used them as hair rings also cannot be ruled out, however, the detailed decoration of filigree and granulation could easily get caught in the hair. Their exact parallels are known from Kruševica (Srejšović, Vukadin 1988, 7, Pl. I: 1–2). As for the oval-headed ring, a similar decoration is documented on one ring from Novi Pazar with a floral design (Vasić 1987b, Pl. LIX: 11) and another from Nikinci (Vasić 2006a, 72, Fig. 21). On the rectangular catch plate of a one-looped bow fibula from Trebenište, similar decoration shows up with granulations and lines made of filigree around them in a loop (Vasić 1987b, 727, Pl. LXXVII: 10). Several finger rings with overlapping strap ends have been found in female graves of southern Pannonia (Dizdar 2015, 49–50). While it is hard to find exact parallels of these latter rings in the northwestern Balkans, the southern influences are clearly seen in the fabrication techniques. This connection is also demonstrated by the filigree and granulation techniques on the assemblages of Pelagonija and the aforementioned Trebenište (Vasić 1987a, Pl. LXXIV; 1987b, Pl. LXXVII).

The silver omega-head pin originating from Bogdanovci (Fig. 2f) belongs to the "Glasinac type" (Maier 1956, 69–70), or variant III d as defined by R. Vasić, and can therefore be connected with the Glasinac-group. These pins were in use between the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC and were in use over a large territory (Vasić 2003, 122–123, Taf. 68). Contemporary with the Srem-group, another type III pin made of iron also came to light from a male grave with weapons in Szeged-Kiskundorozsma Sand Pit 4 (Pilling, Ujvari 2012, 232, Pl. 9: 8).

The silver pyxis decorated with granulation and filigree (Fig. 2g) originating from Bogdanovci has parallels with other items made of precious metals from the Vardar valley region, such as at Skopje-Ždanec, Tremnik, Grčište-Gloška Čuka, and Gevgelija-Vadarski Rid. D. Mitrevski dates the Tremnik hoard between the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC following comparisons with two coins of Philip II and Alexander III. He linked the hiding of these objects with the Celtic invasion to the south (Jevtić *et al.* 2006; Mitrevski 2011, Fig. 5). The jewelry from the double grave at Skopje-Ždanec also fits into this pattern as it dates to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Items from the Židovar hoard and graves from Gajtán and Gostilj show that the *pyxides* were used for long periods of time (Guštin, Kuzman 2016, 321–323).

A large number of beads made from different raw materials such as amber, coral, glass, and precious metals are known from graves attributed to wealthy women between the 5–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC. From Čurug, the museum obtained four irregular-shaped amber pieces, seven cylindrical amber beads and other fragments, seven half-knob formed stones, a bead made of yellow stone, a green rosette-form glass bead, and a hyacinthine-coloured, disc-shaped glass bead with yellow circles (Fig. 3k-r; Garašanin 1954, 40–41). From Bogdanovci, four small pieces of amber, an opaque yellow knobbed glass paste, and twelve oblong coral beads were collected (Fig. 2h-j; Brunšmid 1909, 235, Pl. 23: 8–10).

The number of amber beads started to grow during the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, and their pieces are documented at a high rate in graves dated to the 6–4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC in Southeastern Transdanubia and the Northwestern and Western Balkans, as well as in sites of the Scythian Alföld-group (Palavestra 1997, 38; Kemenczei 2012, 345). The disc-shaped and cylindrical amber beads representing a simple form are similar to others that were documented, for example in the grave of tumulus 1 in Atenica (Djuknić, Jovanović 1965, 9, Pl. XVI), the Kruševica hoard (Srejšović, Vukadin 1988, 8; Potrebecica, Dizdar 2014, 154), Sremska Mitrovica grave 1 (Brunšmid 1902, 75–76), Beremend grave 1 (Jerem 1971, 69, Pl. V: 4) and the graves of Szentlőrinc (Jerem 1968, 186, footnote 84). As the above-mentioned sites demonstrate, amber is also found in the "princely graves" during the 6–5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, hoards, and in flat cemeteries of the 5–4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. As for the different glass paste beads, they are commonly found in expanded territories. Parallels to these items in the form of stone beads were discovered at the cemeteries of Beremend (Jerem 1971, 83) and Szentlőrinc (Jerem 1968, 186, Fig. 19/3: 4, 21/19: 12, 25/40: 2, 26/44: 2, 29/67: 1). Of the seventy-two graves from Szentlőrinc, eighteen contained amber and glass paste beads, and two contained (graves 41, 44) silver filigree beads. Based on the anthropological analysis of the site, it seems women belonging to all age groups wore the beads as necklaces (Jerem 1968). Necklaces made of different materials (e.g. glass, amber, coral) are not unique in the Northwestern Balkan area; A. Rustoiu connects the wearing of these items with exogamy, as seen with burial no. Cx 50 in Adaru Nou or Belgrade–Karaburma. In general, coral beads originated from the Adriatic coast and since they often appear with amphora-shaped beads, it is probable that they arrived together in the Carpathian Basin and Northwestern Balkans. Following this theory, possible communication and trade routes can then be drawn. Parallels of coral beads (e.g. Sremska Mitrovica, Bunești, Aradu Nou, Csepel Island) date to the LT B1 and LT B2a phases (Rustoiu 2015, Fig. 3; Horváth 2016), and parallels of half-knobbed beads made of different stones (amulets?) occur in the cemetery of Szentlőrinc (Jerem 1968, 186; Fig. 19/3: 4; 25/40: 2) and Szeged–Kiskundorozsma Sandpit 4 where a piece was made of limestone or half limestone (Pilling, Ujvari 2012, 232, Pl. 8: 3).

Regarding their origin, three types of finds can be distinguished in the assemblages from Bogdanovci and Čurug. The imports show intercommunity connections in many directions. The omega-head pin corresponds with the Glasinac-group (Vasić 2003, 122–123), the silver pyxis also originates in the southern territories (Guštin, Kuzman 2016, 321–323), and the Dux-type fibula from Čurug came from the north (Popović 1996, 116) just like the loop-type fibulae (Szabó 1971, 508). We can also include the pearls in simpler forms that were manufactured from non-local raw materials (e.g. amber, coral, different types of stones), though their place of production is hard to determine. The other group of finds are the ones that imitate these foreign shapes, such as the Karaburma 63 variant of the Dux-type fibulae which has connections to the Celts (Božič 1981, 327), the prototypes of the Štrpci-type fibulae from Macedonia (Vasić 2006, 120–121)

and the open bracelets with trapezoidal endings and have parallels in Thrace (Dimitrova 1966). The open bracelets with backward-looking snakes also belong to this group. The purely local forms are represented by the silver bracelet made of twisted wire (Rustoiu 2013; 2017).

## RESULTS

As noted above, among the different bracelets with snake heads (Fig. 8: black dots) a well-definable type can be outlined with at least three subtypes. The distribution of the bracelets occurs in Srem, northern Bačka, southeastern Transdanubia, and the Eastern Alpine region. Their punched decoration and form show a new hybrid type, and other types of bracelets with snakeheads were popular in the southern Balkans from where their use spread to the North. The idea of using snakes mixed with the form of the similarly decorated wide open trapezoid-ended band bracelets also originates from the south. This type of double snake-headed jewelry was of local origin as its form shows (punched geometric rich decoration). The presence of several other types of objects indicates the presence of local workshops during the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC in the northwestern Balkans and southeastern Pannonian territories (Popović 1996; Vasić 2006). This also raises the question as to where the bracelets in the East-Alpine region were produced (Velem-Szentvid, Smidt's Collection) and how they arrived in the area. Current theories include the exchange of material goods, marriage alliances, traveling craftsmen, merchant activities, and looting.

It is important to note that the production of these band bracelets did not require as high of a level of specialization as the finely decorated jewelry with filigree and granulation. According to R. Vasić, traveling artisans from the south (mainly from Macedonia) could also have worked in local workshops and helped with silver mining in the area from the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. While similarly rich silver and gold objects also appeared at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, the use of silver increased during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC to the detriment of gold (Vasić 2001, 26–27). Some researchers have analysed the components of gold and silver objects dated to the 5–4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC (Tonkova, Penkova 2009; Drnić, Franjić 2014), yet it remains difficult to identify the sources of the raw materials because the ancient mines could have also been used during historical and modern exploitation.

Traces of damage shows that many such objects could have been worn over a long period of time, for example one bracelet from Bogdanovci and two from Čurug. Several ribs and serpent heads also exhibit signs of damage. A high percentage of silver was detected using a pXRF analysis of the bracelets (99 wt.%, copper below 1 wt.%) and a *pyxis* (96.3 wt.% silver, 2.6 wt.% copper) from Bogdanovci. I. Drnić and A. Franjić presume that such differences in the metal are due both to a difference in metallurgical knowledge as well as a functional variation (more copper yields a harder material; Drnić, Franjić 2014, 87–88). The vertical breakages tended to occur near the midpoints of the bracelets, this was likely

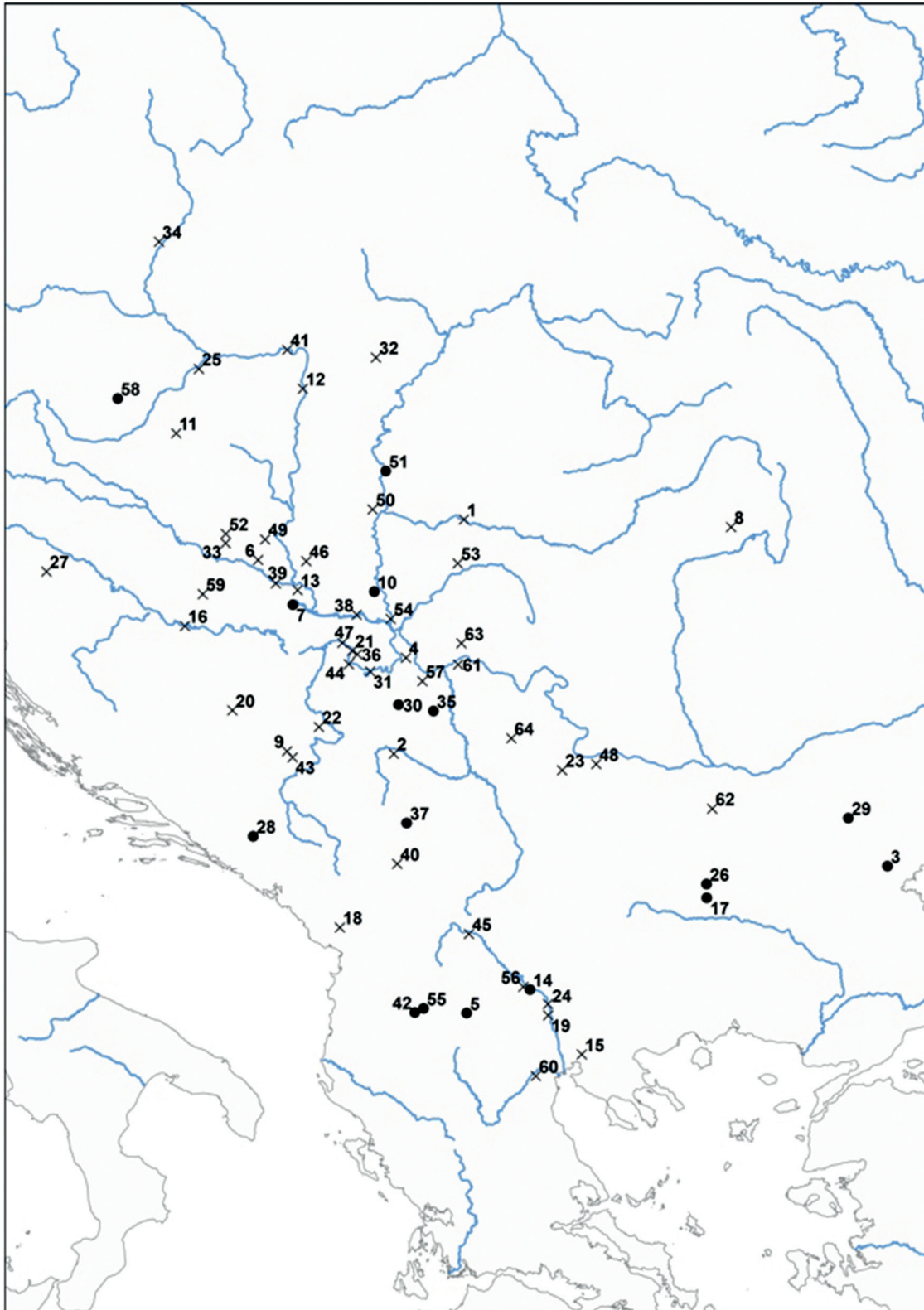
caused by spreading the objects wider in order to put them on. However, the broken pieces were not thrown away, even though the original context of these pieces are not documented. In the case of the Baranya-type bracelet, a straightening of the object and holes near the breakage show that it had a secondary use during modern times (Kemenczei 2001, 101).

If we take a closer look, it turns out that every bracelet's decoration and scale are different, except those found in the same places. The fact that bracelets are often recovered in even numbers (e.g. two at Bogdanovci, four at Čurug, and those with trapezoidal endings at Sremska Mitrovica II) leads us to the conclusion that this type of jewelry could have been worn in pairs. This also probably holds for the bracelets from Velem and the piece from the Smidt's collection as their decoration and fabrication techniques are nearly identical. Bracelets with snake motifs from the south also support this hypothesis as pairs were recovered from rich female burials at Duvanlii, Demir Karija, Beranci-Crkvište, and Kačanj (Čović 1987, 626–633, Pl. 36: 31; Tonkova 1997; Guštin, Kuzman 2016, 323–324, Fig. 6: 8–9).

As A. Rustoiu argues: "The costume has an important symbolic role in social communication, being the visual (and carefully coded) expression of the individual or collective belonging to a particular ethnic, religious, gender, age, professional etc. group. [...], various costumes can be identified, each being adapted to a particular social context: civilian, ritual, military etc." (Rustoiu 2013, 10). As the assemblages from Bogdanovci and Čurug show, these bracelets can be connected with the local elite who had the power to possess finely decorated objects made of valuable materials coming from foreign cultures or imitated the foreign shapes. By this time, local society was highly stratified, and only the wealthiest members could wear such jewels. These bracelets were made of silver with the exception of one piece made of gold. This attests to the hypothesis that this type of bracelet was worn only by the elite because it was not produced in less valuable materials such as bronze and was low in number. Unpaired jewels were more variable and this could indicate distinct artisans or artisans working from memory. In this case, it would not have been the precise duplication that was important, but rather the main forms (i.e. wideness, openness, vertical ribs, and two backward-looking snake heads) as they relate to possible function.

The appearance of serpents on bracelets connected to the Srem-group points to similarities with the rich grave assemblages of the Northwestern and Central Balkans dated to the 5–4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. The similar material forms imply similar practices and customs, but one has to bear in mind that these elements were not adapted directly, they were transformed by the local preference and constantly changing. If there had been no demand amongst the elite to emphasize the symbolism of snakes, then their adoption would not have been important in different political and economic milieus. So the question arises: how did interpretations of snakes differ between the elite of the autochthonous people and people from the southern territories?

More precise dating of the bracelets is only possible with the assemblages of the Čurug hoard and the grave at



**Fig. 8.** Distribution map of bracelets with snake motifs and other sites mentioned in the text: 1: Aradu Nou, 2: Atenica, 3: Aytos, 4: Belgrade–Karaburma, 5: Beranci–Crkvište, 6: Beremend, 7: Bogdanovci, 8: Bunești, 9: Čitluci, 10: Čurug, 11: Csabrendek, 12: Csepel Island, 13: Dalj, 14: Demir Karija, 15: Derven, 16: Donja Dolina, 17: Duvanlii, 18: Gajtan, 19: Gevgelija, 20: Glasinac, 21: Gomolava, 22: Gostilj, 23: Granitovo, 24: Grčište–Gloška Čuka, 25: Győr–Ménfőcsanak, 26: Hisarya, 27: Jezerina, 28: Kačanj, 29: Kralevo, 30: Kruševica, 31: Kupinovo, 32: Ludas–Varjú-dűlő, 33: Magyartelek, 34: Mikulčice, 35: Mramorac, 36: Nikinci, 37: Novi Pazar, 38: Novi Sad, 39: Osijek, 40: Pečka Banja, 41: Pilismarót–Basaharc, 42: Radolište, 43: Rusanovići, 44: Šabac, 45: Skopje–Ždanec, 46: Sombor, 47: Sremska Mitrovica, 48: Staliyska mahala, 49: Szajk, 50: Szeged–Kiskundorozsma Sand Pit 4, 51: Szentés–Vekerzug, 52: Szentlőrinc, 53: Timișoara–Cioreni, 54: Titel, 55: Trebenište, 56: Tremnik, 57: Umčari, 58: Velem–Szentvid, 59: Velika, 60: Vergina, 61: Viminacium, 62: Vladinya, 63: Židovar, 64: Zlotska pečina (map by: T. Látos)

Description: black dots: bracelets with snake motifs, X: other sites mentioned in the text

Bogdanovci which dates to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The collection of finds could be somewhat younger than Sremska Mitrovica II as it did not contain La Tène elements, yet perhaps older than Karaburma 63 and 67 (Božič 1981, 326; Ljuština 2010, 61; Dizdar 2015, 51–56). The Srem-group had extensive links with Northern, Western, and Southern Hungary, and strong connections to the South during the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Dizdar 2015, 53). As seen in the style of the metal objects, the La Tène, Macedonian, Thracian, Greek and Glasinac cultural circles also influenced the communities living in Srem, southeastern Transdanubia, northern Bačka, and regarding the cemetery near Kiskundorozsma, southern part of the Great Hungarian Plain (Popović 1996; Vasić 2001; 2006; Rustoiu 2012; Pilling, Ujvari 2012).

According to Arrian (I 4, 6–8), Alexander the Great pursued the Triballoi to the Morava valley in 335 BC where he also met a Celtic delegation. During this time, Celtic objects start to be more visible in the Srem, Bačka, Banat, and the territories to the south. With the beginning of the LT B2, several graves can be attributed to these Celtic newcomers, but intercommunity communication also started during the LT B1 phase (Popović 1996; Rustoiu 2012). The process of moving to the southern territories by the Celts occurred in several different stages. However the local tribes were not passive recipients of the foreign influence, an effect that can be seen in hybrid archaeological material during the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Additionally, the influences were not one-sided, a phenomenon visible in the bracelets of the Kern- and Smidt's, collections that appear outside the territory attributed to the Srem-group.

## CONCLUSIONS

The wide-open band bracelets with double snakeheads can be attributed to the Srem-group. Specifying their chronological use is not easy as most are spare finds. According to the assemblages from Bogdanovci and Čurug, they were in use until the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Early La Tène and Štrpci-type fibulae facilitate the dating of the finds. The exact dates that these bracelets were in use is uncertain, however they cannot precede the late 5<sup>th</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.

The raw material, style and the accompanying finds of the bracelets point to the presence of a local elite who borrowed ideas and forms from different cultural circles and applied them freely to their own style. During the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, one way to express power was through the ownership of silver objects, which in turn indicates the presence of local silver mines. The territory between southeastern Transdanubia, eastern Slavonia and northern Bačka was at the crossroads of trade routes, and the imports and their imitations from the south and north show diversified intercommunity connections between local and long-range agents. The contacts were not one-sided as the diverse cultural milieu impacted each group even though the southern contacts were strong. Later, as the laténization also started in the area, the Srem-group was able to retain its identity and transform, reimagine and reuse several foreign forms. Because there are few bracelets with two backward-looking snakes and the symbology of the

animal occurs in rich graves in the south during the late 6–4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, it is possible that the wearer of these bracelets had certain symbolic and/or political roles in their communities. This supposition could also be supported by the role of snakes in the mythology of the Macedonians, Thracians and Greeks.

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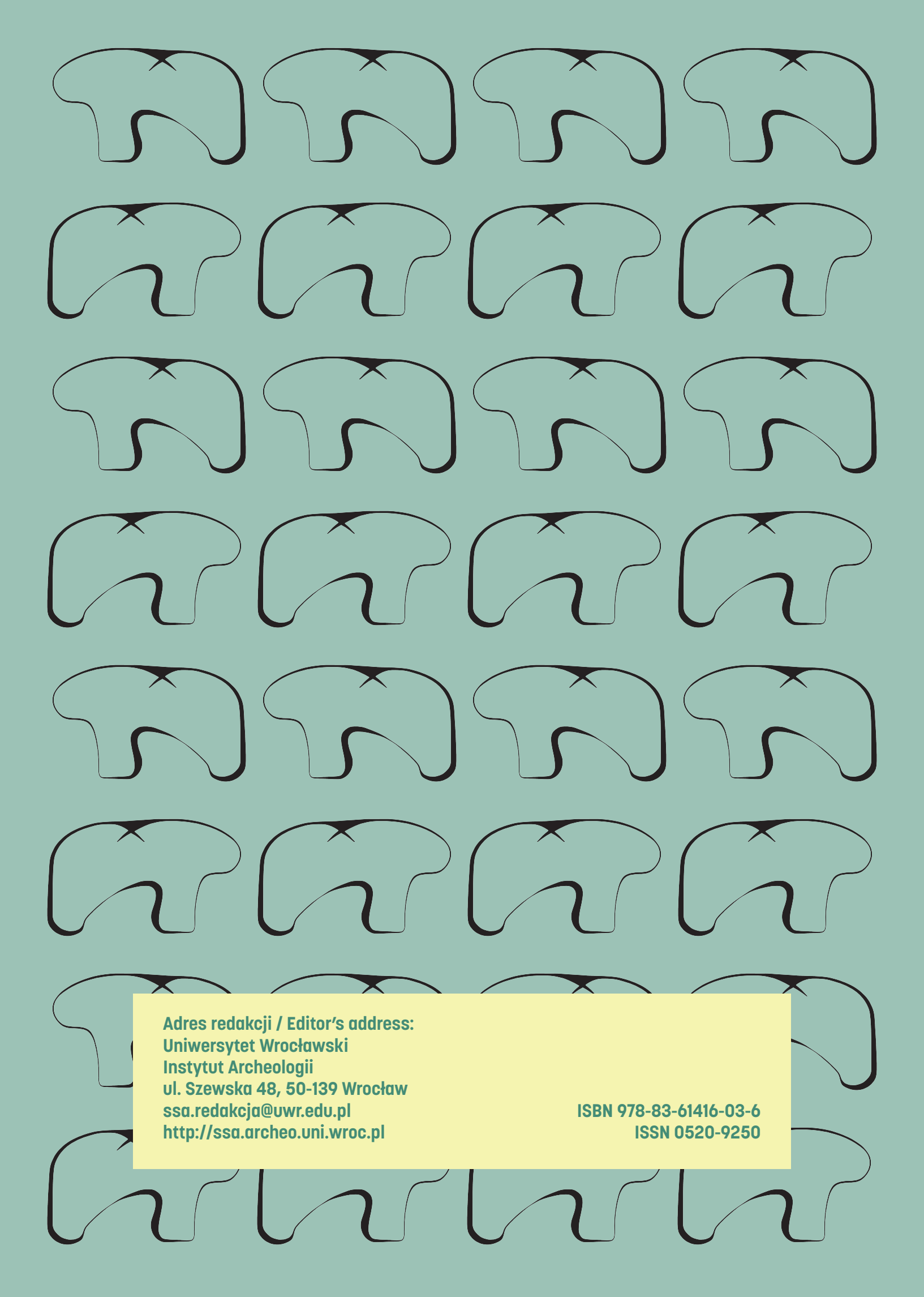
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