

On three spearheads with decorated blades from the south-eastern periphery of the Alps

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Introduction

The regions inhabited by the south-eastern Alpine cultural groups of the La Tène period revealed relatively rare objects that could be brought into connection with either the influence or presence of the peoples from northern Europe. They include three stray finds of spearheads with decorated blades, one found at Britof near Kranj and two in the Ljubljana riverbed (*fig. 1*). These will be discussed in greater detail below by taking a closer look at how their decoration was executed and where to find their closest parallels, in an attempt to establish their spatial and historical context. The Britof spearhead has close similarities to finds from Pomerania and eastern Scandinavia, which indicates its most probable origin in the area of the Oksywie culture of the late part of the pre-Roman Iron Age. The two spearheads from the Ljubljana are of a rare form, but similar to those in use across wide areas between the south-western edges of the Alps and the southern coast of the Baltic Sea. Both objects are most likely the products of the La Tène culture workshops, but draw their geometric and sunken scale decoration from the array of designs on the spearheads characteristic of the Przeworsk and Oksywie cultures. Apart from mere influences, the spearhead from Britof might even give evidence to the movement of northern European warriors between the late 2nd and the mid-1st century BC, as suggested by the analysis of its spatial and historical context.

Decorated Late La Tène spearheads

The decorated spearheads from the Late La Tène period have been of much interest since the very beginnings of La Tène studies, primarily because of the otherwise rather modest decoration on the Late La Tène objects in comparison to earlier, Middle and even more so Early La Tène finds. As early as 1916, Martin Jahn observed that the decorated spearheads from the central area of the La Tène culture, objects of a very elegant and lively appearance with their volutes, curving and S-shaped motifs, stylised animals and mythological creatures, show a stark contrast to the simple, dull, mostly geometric designs characteristic of the '(East) Germanic' settlement areas¹. Spearheads with intricate motifs on their blades

¹ JAHN 1916, 67.

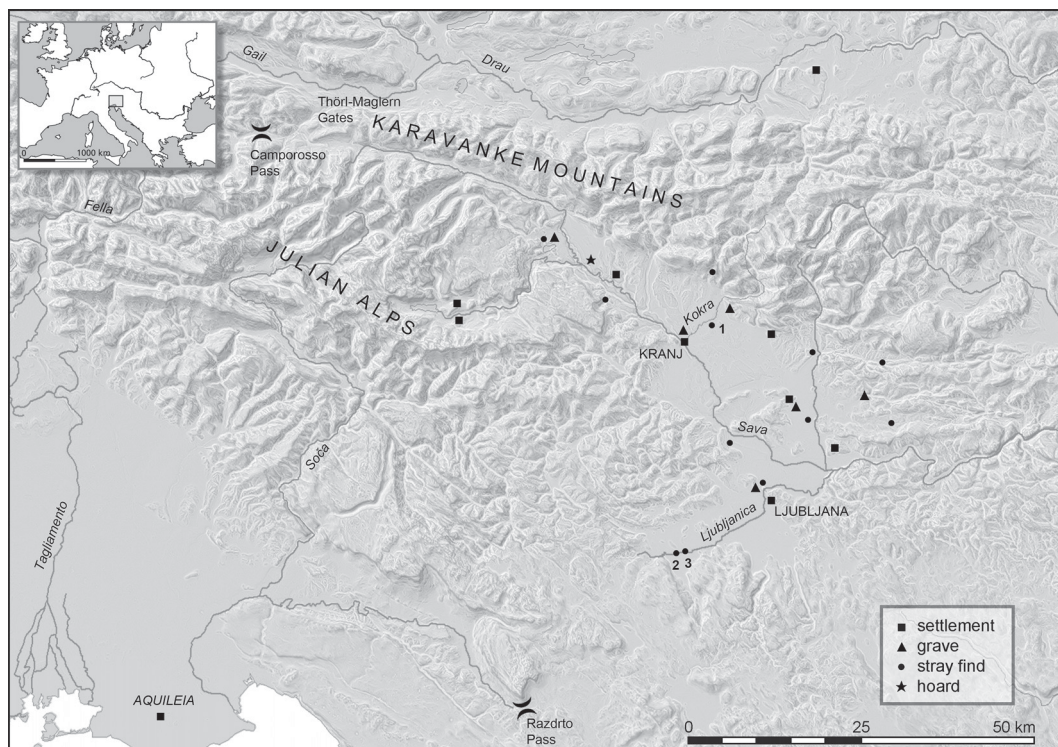


Fig. 1. Late Iron Age sites in the upper Sava valley and other locations mentioned in the text. 1 Britof near Kranj. 2 Kamin. 3 Borovnišča.

and even more often on their sockets, are typical for the Early and Middle La Tène periods and are associated with the Celts. In 'Germanic' regions, decorated spearheads with punched or presumably etched designs have only been documented in the so-called Late pre-Roman Iron Age. They appear at the beginning of Phase A2 of the pre-Roman Iron Age chronology, which corresponds with the end of LT C2 or LT D1 according to the central European chronology, to the south of the Baltic coast and in Scandinavia. Because of the rather imprecise chronology of their contexts, Piotr Łuczkiwicz left the question of the origin of these spearheads in the areas of the Przeworsk (central and southern Poland) and Oksywie (Pomerania) cultures open, but allowed for possible Scandinavian influences².

Craftsmen in the 'Germanic' cultural tradition presumably took up the idea of decorating their spearheads from the 'Celts' and then developed an array of their own designs. In the opposite direction, the new impetus in spearhead decoration in the Late La Tène period is believed to have been connected with 'Germanic' influences. Łuczkiwicz concludes that the decorated spearheads from the mid-2nd and the late 1st century BC cannot uncritically be ascribed to the '(East) Germanic' cultural groups and that these weapons certainly reflect a variety of influences. He cites a number of spearheads considered to be 'Celtic' products (e. g. Cornaux-Les Sauges (CH), Felsberg (CH), Gracarca (A), Kelheim (D) and Ülversheim (D), but showing 'Germanic' decorative designs and techniques. It is believed that these designs and techniques were very quickly adopted into the formal

² ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002a, 19.

vocabulary of the ‘Celtic’ masters, though a considerable number of the finds discovered outside the central distribution area is most probably ‘Germanic’ proper in origin. According to Łuczkiwicz, this is particularly apparent for the spearheads with zigzag designs (e. g. Alésia [F], Bludenz [A], Port [CH], Strasbourg [F], Wangen [CH]) and those with sunken dotted and reticular designs (e. g. Alésia). He associates such products with ‘Germanic’ military campaigns or mercenaries rather than trading links³.

The decorated Late La Tène iron spearheads found in the regions of Scandinavia, western Ukraine, the lower Danube basin, the edges of the Alps and the Central Rhineland, with the greatest concentration between the southern coast of the Baltic and southern Poland, most frequently bear a design that consists of four to eight zigzag lines running parallel to the midrib along the whole length of the blade (Group C after Łuczkiwicz); these lines are slightly raised and clearly discernible from the shallow background⁴.

A similar design is formed by opposing and contiguous zigzag lines forming a regular or simplified reticular design (Group E after Łuczkiwicz)⁵. In this design, the raised zigzag lines no longer form the main motif of the design, but rather serve to frame the sunken rhombic fields.

Jahn studied the technical side of these designs in greater detail and concurred with Otto Tichler who excluded the possibility of engraving as the decorative technique used. Jahn deemed that the technique of etching was more likely, even in comparison with punching, the latter refuted in his opinion by the sunken fields of unequal depths and the presence of decoration on the midrib of roughly the same depths despite the surface there being concave⁶. According to Jahn, etched designs are less precise and regular compared with the punched ones; the edges of etched surfaces are rough and ragged, the sunken surface not smooth, but grainy and uneven. Jahn further noticed that individual V-shaped elements in some of the lines were not regular but tilted to one side, similarly as in handwriting. From this, he concluded that the zigzag design was made in a combination of punching and etching⁷.

The decorative technique of these zigzag designs puzzled even the master chasers and fine metalworkers who inspected several of these spearheads in the early 20th century⁸. They consented that the decoration was probably punched using several differently sized punches with either a triangular or V-shaped work surface.

In etching, the surface not intended to be exposed to the mordant had to be covered by wax or similar acid-resistant substance. The pattern to remain raised was protected together with the blade edges and in rare cases also the midrib⁹. Tomasz Bochnak and Andrzej Przychodni suggested that either wax or tree resin were used to protect the parts not to be etched and that available weak organic acids (e. g. lactic, oxalic, formic or acetic) were used as mordant¹⁰.

The decorated spearheads have traditionally been considered either as ‘Germanic’ imports or as evidence of the mobility of individual warriors during the Late pre-Roman

³ Ibid. 29.

⁴ JAHN 1916, 64 figs 73a; 76a–b; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002a, 17.

⁵ JAHN 1916, 64 fig. 73b; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002a, 17.

⁶ JAHN 1916, 67.

⁷ Ibid. 67–72. A convincing example of this combination can be found on the spearhead from the cemetery at Kowalowice (formerly Kaulwitz; pow. namysłowski, woj. Opolskie / PL), where burial

took place in A2 and possibly A3 of the pre-Roman Iron Age (ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002b, 428 fig. 30; ID. 2006, 306).

⁸ JAHN 1916, 68–70.

⁹ Ibid. 61–73; on both techniques see also BOCHNAK 2005, 81–82.

¹⁰ BOCHNAK / PRZYCHODNI 2002, 90–91 (see also WYSS 1968, 665–674).

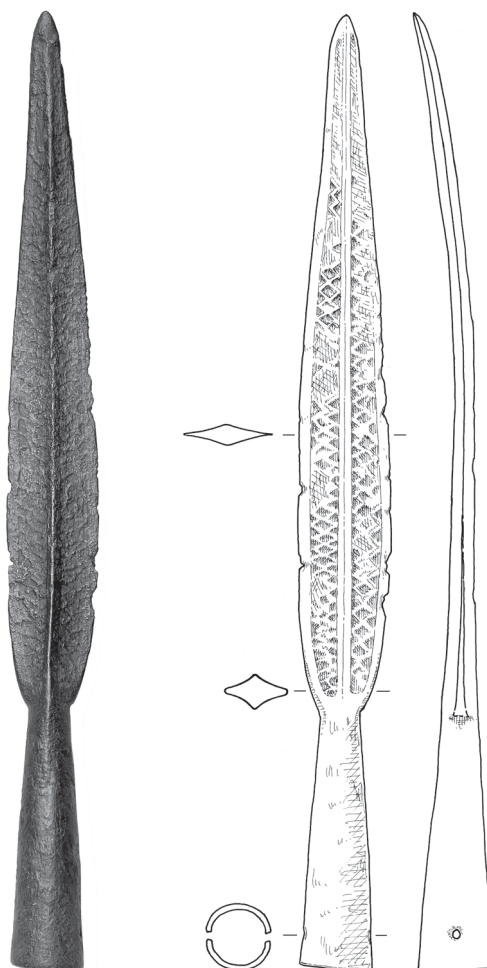


Fig. 2. Britof near Kranj. Spearhead. Iron. Scale 1 : 2.

Iron Age and of the incursion of ‘Germanic’ groups into different foreign territories. Łuczkiwicz noted that, despite a substantial increase in the number of discoveries since the early discussions in the first half of the 20th century, the questions of origin, possible cultural influences and the direction of the transfer of ideas and decorative techniques remained inadequately explained; this observation is certainly valid even today. He concluded that the context of the find and the design of the blade should be taken into consideration in addition to the analysis of the decorative pattern¹¹.

The spearhead from Britof near Kranj and its parallels

This spearhead was discovered in 2004, during the construction of a house in Britof near Kranj (mun. / obč. Kranj / SLO), not far from the edge of the terrace that descends towards the left bank of the Kokra river (*fig. 1,1*). The owner of the house who found it

¹¹ ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002b, 392–393.

reported that he stumbled upon the object after rain, on top of a spoil heap of very gravelly earth dug up during the construction of the house' sewage system and excluded the possibility of it being brought from elsewhere. He noticed no other objects, possible burnt remains or features. Prior to this spearhead, the Britof area revealed no traces from the Late Iron Age and Early Roman period.

The Britof spearhead (*fig. 2*) is of a rare form with a relatively short and conical socket, and with a long leaf-shaped blade of lozenge cross section with a slightly raised midrib. More precisely, the blade takes the shape of a laurel leaf with gently curved blade edges that reach maximum width just below the mid-point, above which they evenly (though somewhat asymmetrically) taper towards the tip. The transition from the socket to the rounded base of the blade is sharp. The spearhead is 25.3 cm long, of which the socket takes just under 7 cm, resulting in the spearhead / socket length index of 0.27. The maximum width of 2.6 cm is reached at 0.72 of the complete length of the blade, measured from the tip towards the base¹².

The decoration on the Britof spearhead consists of two zigzag lines running parallel to the midrib and forming a reticular design. The decoration is not clearly discernible at some places because of corrosion and other post-depositional processes. In spite of that, the well preserved and clearly visible parts reveal rather precise workmanship. The corners and edges of the raised parts of the design are regular, the sunken surfaces flat. There is no trace of either rough and ragged edges or grainy and uneven surfaces typical of etching. This suggests that the master metalworker decorated the spearhead with punching. The combination of the central rhombic and peripheral triangular shapes on each of the decorative bands indicates the use of at least two different punching tools.

As for its parallels, the territory of the Mokronog group and the regions of the Danube basin in Croatia and Serbia have not revealed comparable finds. The form is also foreign to the classic assemblages of finds from the regions of the Oppida culture between Gaul and Moravia, of the Padea-Panagiurski Kolonii group in the lower Danube basin and the Poinesti-Lukasevka culture in Bessarabia.

The closest parallels can be found among the decorated spearheads with relatively short sockets and long lozenge-sectioned blades, the width of which is not considerably greater than that of the socket, originating mostly in Pomerania and the Baltic Isles of eastern Scandinavia.

A number of comparable spearheads are presented below, all with the decoration covering the whole of the blade apart from the midrib and blade edges.

One of the closest examples, in form, proportions and decoration, is the considerably larger spearhead (l. approx. 41.2 cm; socket l. 7.9 cm; blade w. 3.6 cm) from Grave 38 at Rumia (pow. Wejherowo, woj. Pomorskie / PL), a burial site of the Oksywie culture (*fig. 3,5*)¹³. The blade has a pronounced midrib and is decorated with zigzag lines forming a rhombic pattern. The grave also contained a spear butt, a ceramic jar and a Type K brooch; the last object dates the grave group to the A2 phase of the Late pre-Roman Iron Age.

¹² The index values (spearhead / socket l. ratio and position of max. blade w. / blade l. index) correspond with the metrical description and indexes / ratios for the spearheads (A/L and Q/L) of the pre-Roman Iron Age from the territory of Poland

as used by BOCHNAK (2005) and ŁUCZKIEWICZ (2006).

¹³ PIETRZAK 1987, 16–17 pl. LXII; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002a, 32.

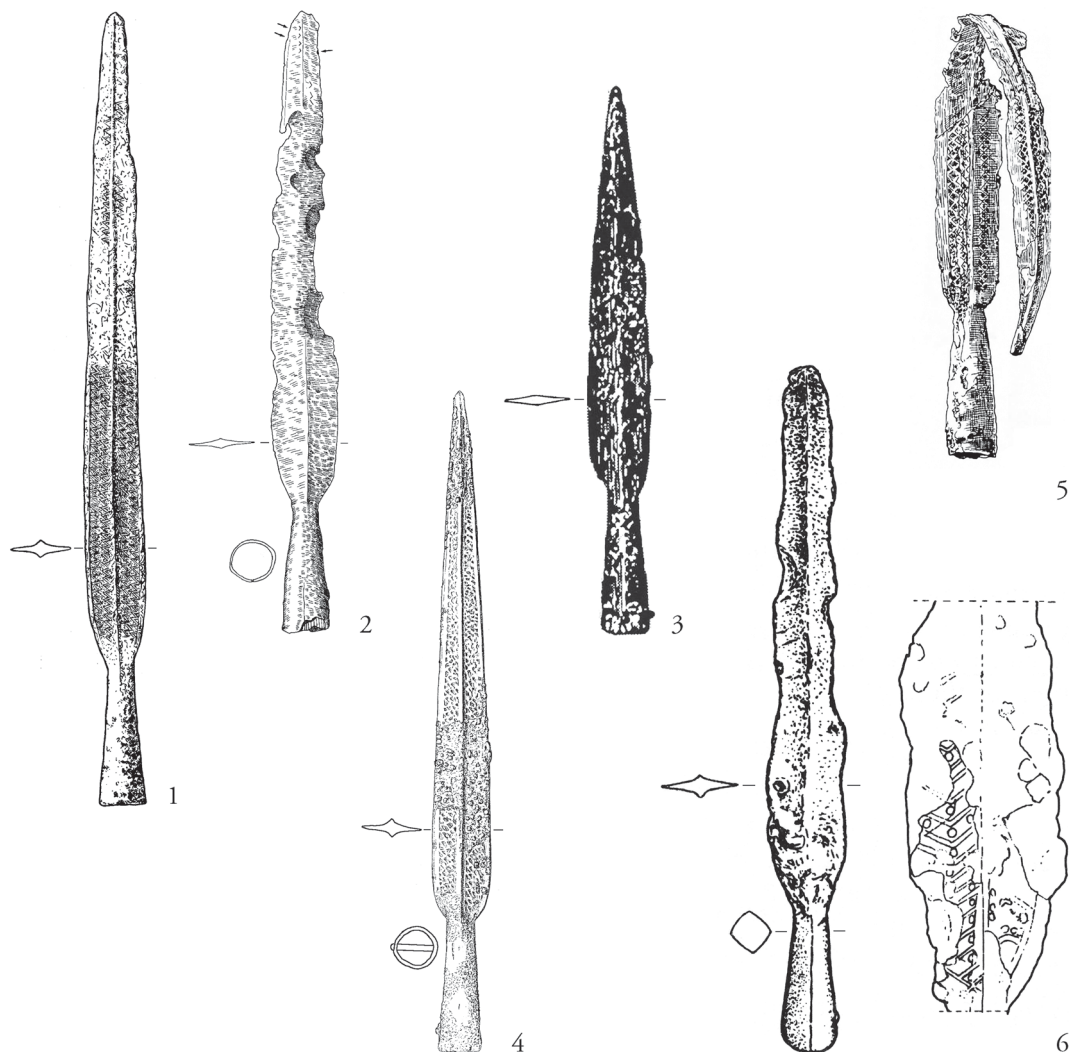


Fig. 3. 1 Vallbys (Ksp. Hogrån, Gotland / S). 2 Alésia (Alise-Sainte-Reine, dép. Côte-d'Or / F). 3 Kajęcin (pow. górowski, woj. dolnośląskie). 4 Gródek (pow. wysokomazowiecki, woj. podlaskie). 5 Rumia (pow. Wejherowo, woj. pomorskie). 6 Övra Ålebäck (Ksp. Gårdby, Öland / S). All iron. Scale 1 : 4.

The lozenge-sectioned spearhead with a pronounced midrib (l. 42 cm; socket l. 7.2 cm; blade w. 3.2 cm) from Grave 5 from Vallbys (Ksp. Hogrån, Gotland / S) (fig. 3,1) is decorated with a pair of zigzag lines running on both sides of the midrib. The grave was covered by a stone mound and revealed, in addition to the spearhead, eight lance heads, at least eight single-edged swords and three shield bosses. The grave goods only offer a very broad date, into the late part of the pre-Roman Iron Age¹⁴.

¹⁴ NYLÉN 1955, 81 fig. 185,5; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002a, 35 fig. 8,4.

Grave 10 from Övra Ålebäck (Ksp. Gårdby, Öland / S) (*fig. 3,6*) yielded a spearhead (l. 36.5 cm; socket l. 6.2 cm; blade w. 3.1 cm) decorated with transverse zigzag lines, but also an archaic shield boss with a prolonged spike (*Stangenschildbuckel*), shield handgrip with round attachment plates, single-edged sword of Type II after Wołagiewicz, scabbard fittings, a variant of Type K brooches and bronze bowls of Type Eggers 74–75. The grave is dated to the early part of the Late pre-Roman Iron Age (presumably A2 according to Łuczkiwicz)¹⁵.

The grave marked 117/27.04.1888 from the cemetery at Rządź (formerly Rondsens; pow. grudziądzki, woj. kujawsko-pomorskie / PL) contained a ceramic vessel and an iron spearhead (l. 27 cm; socket l. 5.5 cm; blade w. 3 cm)¹⁶ that Łuczkiwicz ascribed to the heterogeneous Group C/1¹⁷. Based on the main distribution area of such spearheads, the grave is dated roughly to A2 or A3 of the pre-Roman Iron Age. The spearhead is decorated with a reticulate design made up of rhombic fields of similar sizes to those on the Britof spearhead.

A very similar decoration can be found on two other similar spearheads; one from the same, i. e. Rządź cemetery, but of an unknown grave group (Group C/1 after Łuczkiwicz; l. 28.5 cm; socket l. 7 cm; blade w. 3 cm)¹⁸ and the other (Group B/2 after Łuczkiwicz; l. 31 cm; blade w. 5.5 cm) from Grave 309 of the cemetery at Bystrzec (formerly Weißhof; pow. kwidziński, woj. Pomorskie / PL). The latter spearhead is dated, on the basis of the associated sword of Type I/1 after Kostrzewski, the shield boss of Type Bohnsack 4 and two Variant K brooches, to A2 of the pre-Roman Iron Age¹⁹.

Two similarly decorated spearheads were also found in the chariot burial at Verna (dép. Isère / F), dated to LT D1b (roughly 100–80 BC)²⁰, but they differ significantly from the finds discussed above in their general shape, commonly described as ‘classic’.

Spearheads of similar size and decoration, but with a blade base more pronouncedly rounded, were joined to form Łuczkiwicz’s Group F/2, which comprises around 30 examples from central and northern Poland. These spearheads measure from 25 to 35 cm in length and from 3 to 4.1 cm in blade width, with the centre of gravity lower down towards the socket (index 0.78–0.86). Also characteristic is the midrib that gives the blade a lozenge section and the relatively short socket (index of 0.2–0.3)²¹.

Two spearheads of this group are particularly close to the Britof spearhead. One, from the site of Kajęcín (pow. górowski, woj. Dolnośląskie / PL), measures 29 cm in length, 3.3 cm in blade width and 6.4 cm in socket length (*fig. 3,3*)²². The other has a slender decorated blade with straight blade edges (l. 34.8 cm; socket l. 6.9 cm; blade w. 3.1 cm) and was found in Grave 82 at Gródek (pow. wysokomazowiecki, woj. Podlaskie / PL) (*fig. 3,4*), which is unreliably dated to A3 of the pre-Roman Iron Age and possibly represents two mixed grave groups²³.

Group F/2 further includes a spearhead with a damaged tip (surv. l. 32.6 cm; socket l. 6.6 cm; blade w. 3.5 cm), found outside the main distribution area at the site of Caesar’s siege of *Alesia* in 52 BC (Alise-Sainte-Reine, dép. Côte-d’Or / F) (*fig. 3,2*)²⁴.

¹⁵ NYLÉN 1955, 533 fig. 313; HAGBERG / STJERN-QUIST / RASCH 1991, 452 fig. 26; RASCH 1994, 226–230 fig. 2B; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002a, 35.

¹⁶ ANGER 1890, 25 pl. 4,4.

¹⁷ ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, 105; 109; 349 map 19 fig. 33.

¹⁸ ANGER 1890, 10 pl. 4,5.

¹⁹ HEYM 1959/61, fig. 5,8; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, 333.

²⁰ PERRIN / SCHÖNFELDER 2003, 78 fig. 46.

²¹ ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, 113; 114 map 21 figs 36,7–8; 37,1–3.

²² Ibid. 304 fig. 36,8.

²³ ID. 2002a, 33 fig. 7,6; ID. 2006, 303 fig. 36,7.

²⁴ SIEVERS 2001, 223 pl. 59,234.

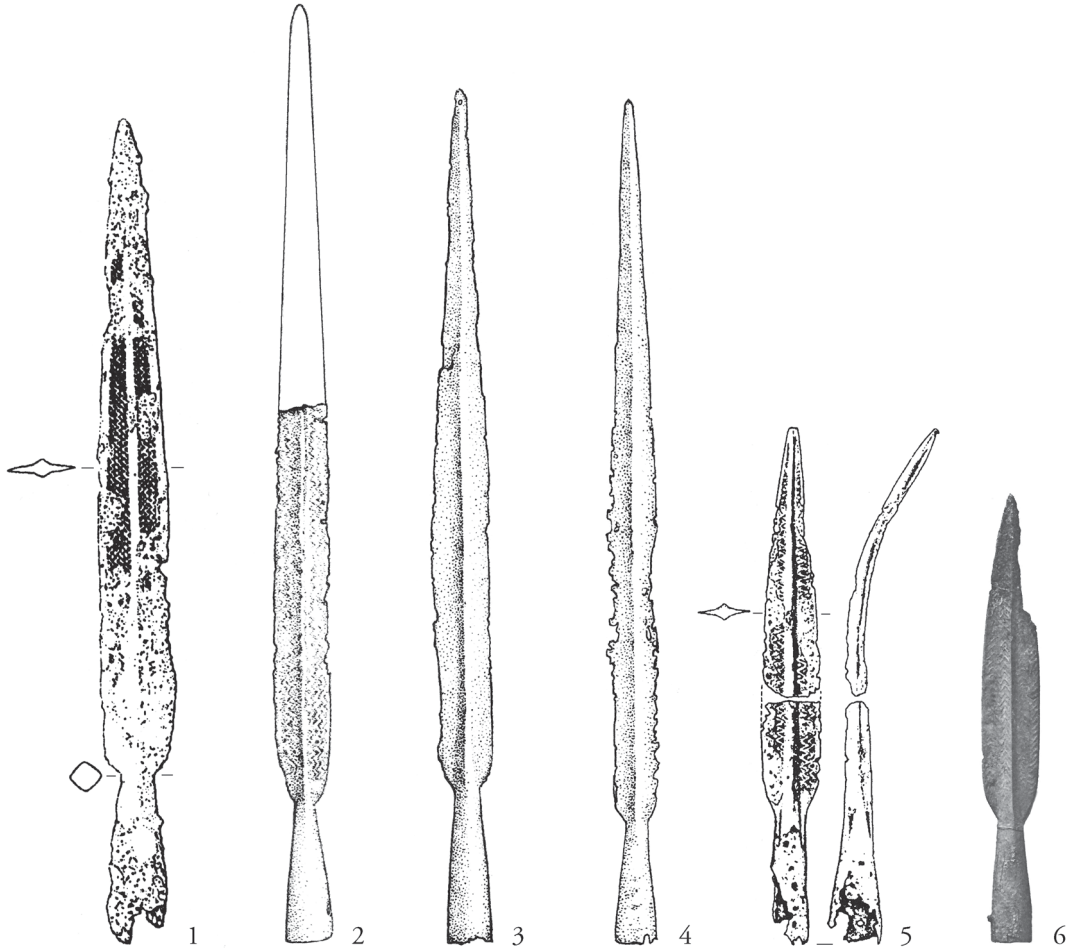


Fig. 4. 1 Simblegård (Bornholm / DK). 2–4 Zihl at Port (Kt. Bern / CH). 5 Pruszcz Gdański (formerly Praust; pow. gdański, woj. Pomorskie / PL). 6 Podwiesk (pow. chełmiński, woj. kujawsko-pomorskie / PL). All iron. Scale 1 : 4.

Also very similar are the spearheads with a narrow blade and a sharp transition from the socket to the rounded blade base, of Łuczkiwicz's Group L/2. They measure from 32 to 48 cm in length and from 2.8 to 4 cm in blade width. The socket is short, between 0.15 and 0.2 of the whole length, most frequently around 0.19. They are characterised by long parallel blade edges, which most often make it difficult to pinpoint the maximum blade width. The majority of these spearheads were recovered in the regions of the Oksywie culture in Pomerania, where they appear in A2 and A3 of the pre-Roman Iron Age²⁵.

In our list of comparisons, we should also mention several similar spearheads found outside their main distribution area. One such iron example (l. 43 cm; socket l. 8.6 cm; blade w. 3.5 cm) was found in Grave 11/1896 at the site of Simblegård (Bornholm /

²⁵ ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, 123; 124 map 25 fig. 41,3–6.

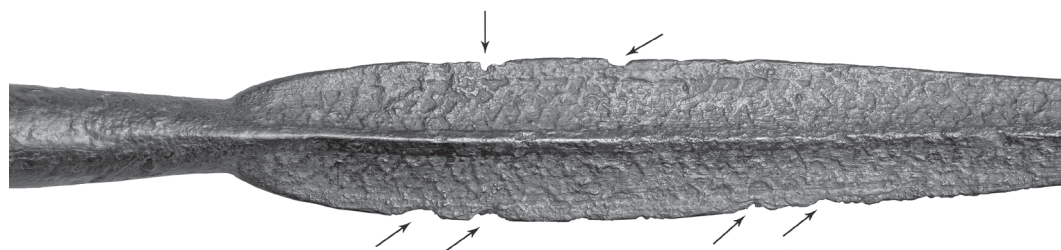


Fig. 5. Britof near Kranj. Damage to the spearhead. Not to scale.

DK)²⁶. It has a relatively narrow blade of lozenge section with an unpronounced midrib and a decoration of four zigzag lines on both sides of the midrib (*fig. 4,1*). The grave also contained a single-edged sword and is dated to around 100 BC.

The undecorated spearhead (l. 51 cm; socket l. 7 cm; blade w. 4 cm) from a horseman's grave unearthed near the village of Mutyn along the Seim river, a tributary of the Dnieper (obl. Sumy, raj. Krolewieckij / UKR) is dated to LT D2 or A3 of the pre-Roman Iron Age or somewhat later²⁷.

The spearhead with part of the blade missing (surv. d. 27.5 cm; socket l. 7.1 cm; blade w. 3.2 cm) forms part of a group of weapons recovered from the old riverbed of the Zihl at Port (Kt. Bern / CH) (*fig. 4,2*), close to the outflow into Lake Biel²⁸. It is probably contemporary with the LT C2 and LT D forms of swords and scabbards that are the predominant objects in this group²⁹. The group further includes two spearheads, roughly 45 cm long and with a pronouncedly triangular or biconvex midrib, that come close to the Britof spearhead in the high position of the widest part of the blade and a similar blade to socket ratio (*fig. 4,3–4*)³⁰.

Other parallels can be found in some of the spearheads from Łuczkiwicz's Group K, typical of A2 and A3 of the pre-Roman Iron Age³¹. These include a spearhead found in Grave 83/26.4.1888 at Rządź³², with a triangular-sectioned midrib and transverse zigzag lines on the blade (l. 23.9 cm; socket l. 6 cm; blade w. 3 cm). As opposed to the Britof example, this spearhead has a pronouncedly round base and the top part that shows a curving taper towards the tip (*fig. 4,6*). Similar to this spearhead is the fragmented one from Grave 303 at Podwiesk (pow. chełmiński, woj. kujawsko-pomorskie / PL), decorated with a reticular design³³. Łuczkiwicz dates the grave group on the basis of the iron brooch similar to those of Type K-1d to A2 of the pre-Roman Iron Age³⁴.

Group K further includes two spearheads decorated with vertical zigzag lines. One was found in Grave 269 at Pruszcz Gdański (formerly Praust; pow. gdański, woj. Pomorskie / PL) (l. 26 cm; socket l. 6.5 cm; blade w. 2.8 cm) (*fig. 4,5*), which is also dated to A2 of the pre-Roman Iron Age on the basis of a Variant D brooch³⁵. The other one (l. 40 cm; socket l. 8 cm; blade w. 3 cm) comes from an unknown context either from Babin (pow.

²⁶ BJØRNVAD 1989, 17 fig. 3,1.25; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002a, fig. 7,1.

²⁷ ŁUCZKIEWICZ / TERPILOVSKIJ 2012, 157; 161 fig. 4,1.

²⁸ WYSS ET AL. 2002, pls 41,85; 42,85; 48,85.

²⁹ PERNET 2009, 133.

³⁰ WYSS ET AL. 2002, pls 41,89.98; 42,89.98; 48,89.98.

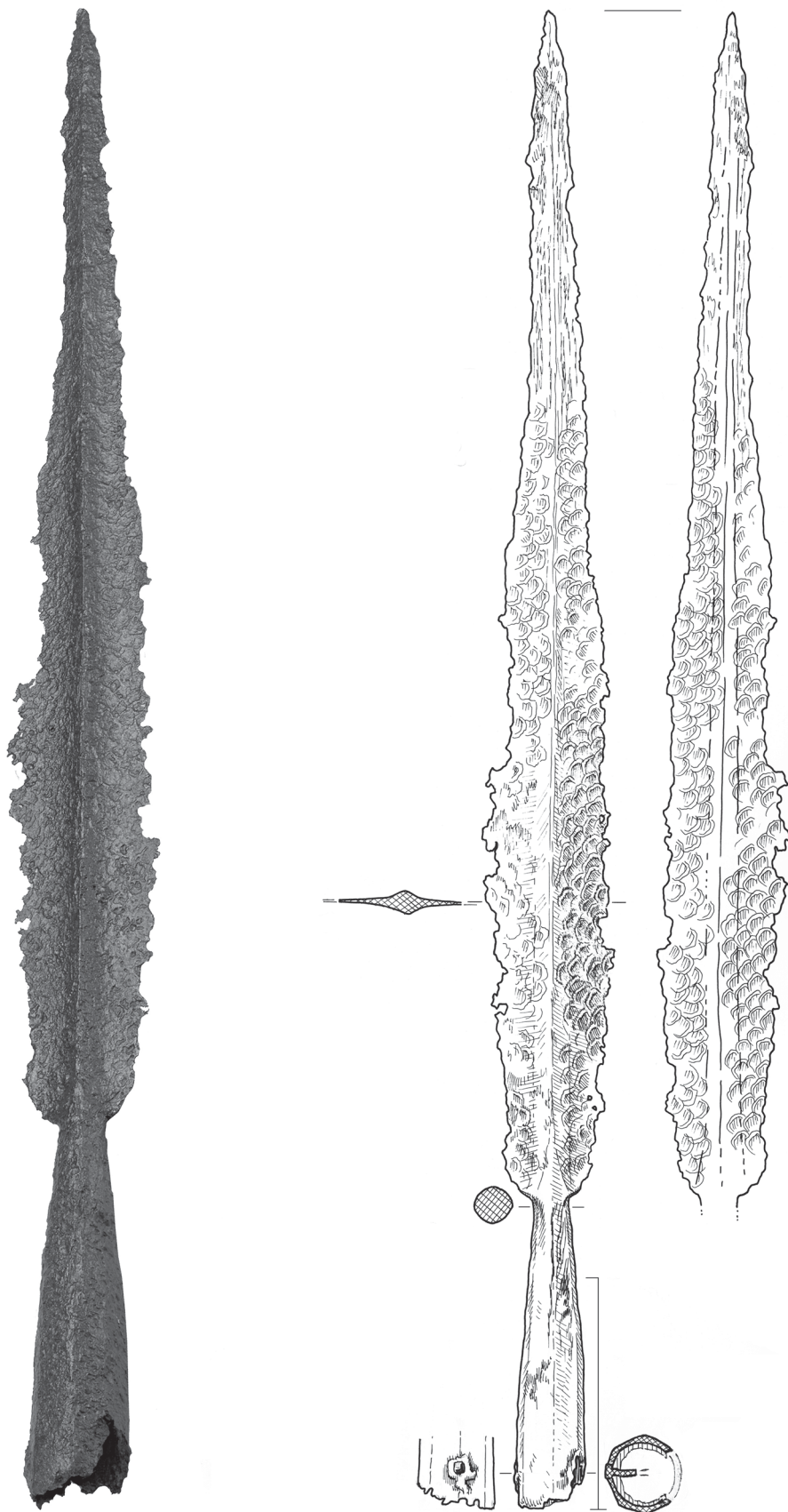
³¹ ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, 121.

³² ANGER 1890, 25 pl. 5,3; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, 349.

³³ BOKINIEC 2005, 62; 63 pl. CV,6.

³⁴ ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002a, fig. 7,5; ID. 2006, 342.

³⁵ Ibid. 346.



Pyrzyce, woj. Zachodniopomorskie / PL) or Dobropol (Dobropole, pow. Gryfin, woj. Zachodniopomorskie / PL)³⁶.

Summarising the regional and chronological comparisons we may conclude that, although the Britof spearhead cannot be identified as a particular (sub)type, its closest analogies originate in northern and central Poland and could be considered representative of this cultural environment. They are clearly foreign in Scandinavian contexts and their distribution shows that the appearance of similar spearheads in the Baltic Isles is most probably related to the connections with the southern coast of the Baltic, i. e. the area of the Oksywie culture. The closest comparisons, particularly from the graves at Rumia and Övra Ålebäck, point to their formation in the A2 phase of the pre-Roman Iron Age, although a later date within the 1st century BC cannot be excluded.

Damage to the spearhead from Britof near Kranj

The Britof spearhead is slightly bent in the upper third, which appears to be a post-depositional load damage. We could observe no recent (fresh) notches, grooves or cuts, nor traces of fire. The blade edges show one strike and at least five intercepting indentations, all covered with the same patina as the rest of the spearhead (*fig. 5*). This observation supports the presumption that the damage on the blade edges is related to the use and / or intentional damage and largely excludes the possibility of the indentations occurring after deposition (e. g. during excavation). The narrow cut on the lower part of left edge (*fig. 5*, perpendicular arrow) was most probably produced by a moderately powerful strike with a sharp object (possibly a sword or another spearhead) at a steep angle, while the broader indentations were made by blows at a lower angle (*fig. 5*, slanting arrows). This combination of damage does not allow us to determine the exact circumstances that led to such damage, but they most likely occurred in some sort of an armed conflict. None of the indentations show traces of repair, which might indicate that the weapon was either lost during conflict, was intentionally discarded or deposited after use or that the damage was considered minor and the owner did not bother to repair it.

The study of the damage and other traces on the swords and spearheads of the Roman Iron Age votive places in southern Scandinavia has shown that the damage caused in battle and that inflicted during votive rituals can appear together, on the same weapon, and the two are far from readily distinguishable³⁷. Found alongside the ritually folded or bent and broken swords were those with deep cuts, which can be associated neither to offensive nor defensive use in battle, but rather to blows most likely inflicted by an axe as part of a ritual. Battle damage has also been documented, on the blades of swords close to the hilt, on spearheads and shield bosses. Interestingly, only a portion of the finds shows clear signs of battle damage, in various degrees of intensity. According to some authors, this reflects the different skills of the warriors or their adversaries. There are other authors who argue this damage to be the consequence of ritual acts of intentionally damaging only the representative part of weaponry. An important observation in this respect comes from the offer-

³⁶ BOCHNAK 2009, fig. 10,6.

³⁷ GEBÜHR 1980; GUNDELWEIN 1994; BEMMANN / BEMMANN 1998, 312–317; BIBORSKI / ILKJÆR 2006, 343–346; LAU 2009, 138–140.

← Fig. 6. Ljubljana at Kamin (the Lichtenberg collection). Spearhead. Iron. Scale 1 : 2.

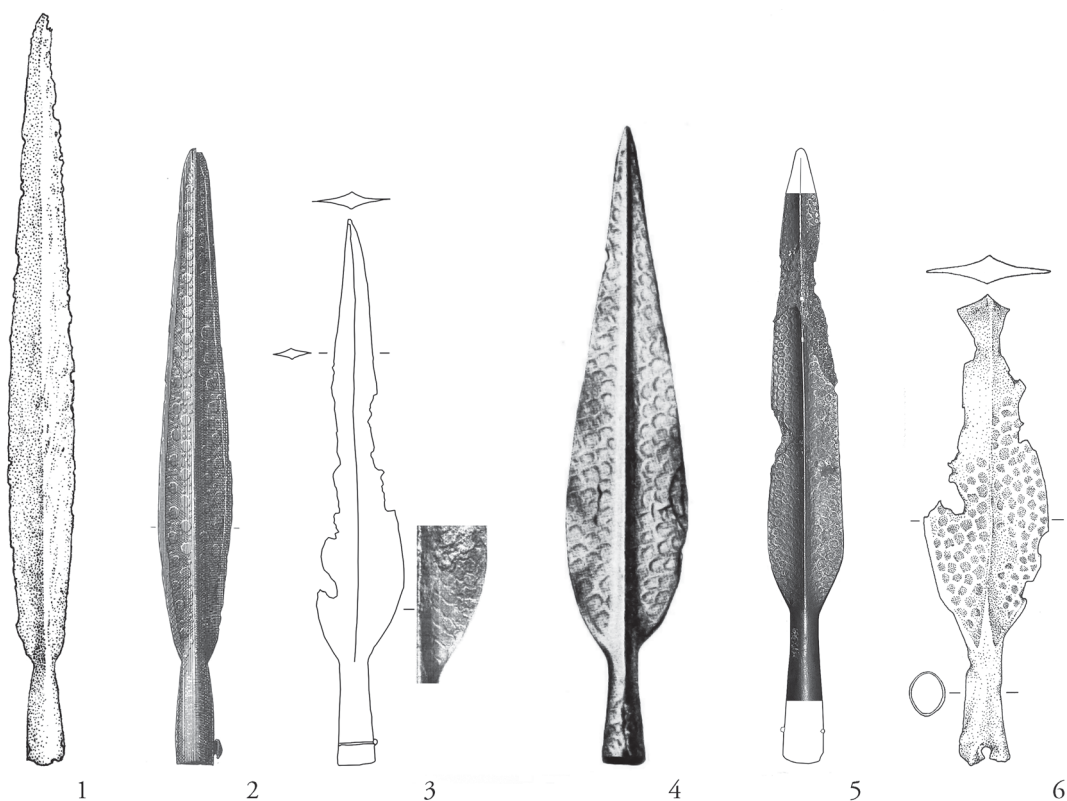


Fig. 7. 1 Zihl at Port (Kt. Bern / CH). 2 Thielle at Cornaux-Les Sauges (Kt. Neuenburg / CH). 3 Warszawa-Wilanów (woj. Mazowieckie / PL). 4 Gołębiewo (formerly Taubendorf, pow. Nidzica, woj. warmińsko-mazurskie / PL). 5 Kowalowice (formerly Kaulwitz; pow. namysłowski, woj. Opolskie / PL). 6 Podwiesiek (pow. chełmiński, woj. kujawsko-pomorskie / PL). All iron. Scale 1 : 4.

ing places at Illerup Ådal, Ejsbøl and Nydam (all DK), where only 10 % of the spears and lances show intentional damage, while 40 % is ascribed to damage during battle.

The exclusive appearance of damage in the shape of deep and sharp, roughly rectangular or triangular cuts as the consequence of blows at a steep or roughly right angle, as opposed to shallow and irregularly located indentations as characteristic of battle damage, indicates a controlled ritual and is, in the Middle and Late La Tène periods, typically found on the pieces of weaponry recovered from sanctuaries and cult places on land³⁸.

Such a context may be inferred from the damage on the surviving part of the Late La Tène style sword blade from Bled, found in his youth by prof. Josip Plemelj on the hill of Pecovca northeast of Lake Bled. On one of the edges, the blade bears three distinct and deep oblique cuts located close to one another. As stated by Alfons Müllner, who published the find in 1894, it took the fourth blow to break the sword in two³⁹.

³⁸ BRUNAU / RAPIN 1988, 164–165; MÜLLER 1990, 102–103; RAPIN 1993, 293; 297; KAENEL 2006, 120.

³⁹ MÜLLNER 1894, 119 pl. 10,29; see KNIFIC 2011, fig. 12b.

A similar observation can be made for the upper half of the blade from the roughly contemporaneous cult place on the slope of the hill of Sorantri near Raveo in Carnia (prov. Udine / I). It seems that this sword was broken in two during an offering ritual, while the shallow indentation on the blade edge near the hilt most probably occurred in combat⁴⁰.

Contrary to a part of the finds from the sanctuaries of Type Gournay and from the eponymous site of La Tène, the intentional damage to spearheads and other weapons at the cult places in the eastern Alpine area is limited to burning and bending. This ritual is thus close to the supraregional Celtic funerary ritual that only occasionally produced deep cuts on the blades of weapons⁴¹.

The combination of a narrow cut and broader notches on the Britof spearhead is similar to the damage on the heads of spears and lances from the foot of the oppidum of *Alesia*, which were most probably largely obtained in battle⁴², but also resembles that on the spear blades from the Roman Iron Age sacrificial places in southern Scandinavia⁴³ and the indentations on some of the spearheads from the Late La Tène graves in south-eastern Pannonia⁴⁴.

The condition of the spearhead and its damage indicate that we may see the object as either lost (during or immediately after an armed conflict) or intentionally deposited as a hoard or an offering, while the possibility of it being the remains of an unidentified grave cannot be entirely excluded.

The spearhead from the Ljubljana at Kamin (the Lichtenberg collection)

This decorated spearhead forms part of the Lichtenberg collection that was gathered in the years before World War II in the Ljubljana at Kamin near Bevke (mun. / obč. Vrhnika / SLO) (*figs 1,2; 6*)⁴⁵. It is 44.5 cm long, has a relatively short, octagonally faceted socket and a blade of a flattened lozenge cross section (socket l. 9.2 cm; reconstr. blade w. c. 4.3 cm; spearhead / socket l. index 0.21, position of max. blade w. / blade l. index 0.70). The blade has a narrow and semicircularly rounded base, it reaches maximum width very high towards the tip, after which it narrows markedly in the upper third, reminiscent of a bayonet blade.

The shape of the blade is comparable with that of the undecorated spearhead from the Zihl (Thielle) river at Port (*fig. 7,1*), which has a shorter socket with a slight swelling, and a higher maximum width of the blade (l. 40.6 cm; socket l. 5.6 cm; blade w. 3.8 cm; spearhead / socket l. index 0.13, max. blade w. index 0.59)⁴⁶.

A spearhead of a similar shape, with presumably etched decoration of raised round fields (l. 31.3 cm; socket l. 5.1 cm; blade w. 3.7 cm; spearhead / socket l. index 0.16, position of max. blade w. / blade l. index 0.71), was found in the area of the wooden bridge across the Thielle (Zihl) river at Cornaux-Les Sauges (Kt. Neuchâtel / CH) (*fig. 7,2*)⁴⁷. The construction of this bridge is radiocarbon dated to 120–115 BC, and its abandonment soon after 103–93 BC⁴⁸.

⁴⁰ RIGHI 2001, 114 fig. 7,1.

⁴¹ E. g. the sword with four cuts from the double Nîmes Pissevin grave (départ. Gard / F) from the Late La Tène period (PERNET 2010, 215 pl. 69,1).

⁴² SIEVERS 2001, pls 60,251.252.253; 61,258.266; 63,285.293; 64,295.298; 65,315.

⁴³ E. g. Nydam (JØRGENSEN / PETERSEN 2003, fig. 14; VON CARNAP-BORNHEIM / RAU 2009, 28 fig. 5).

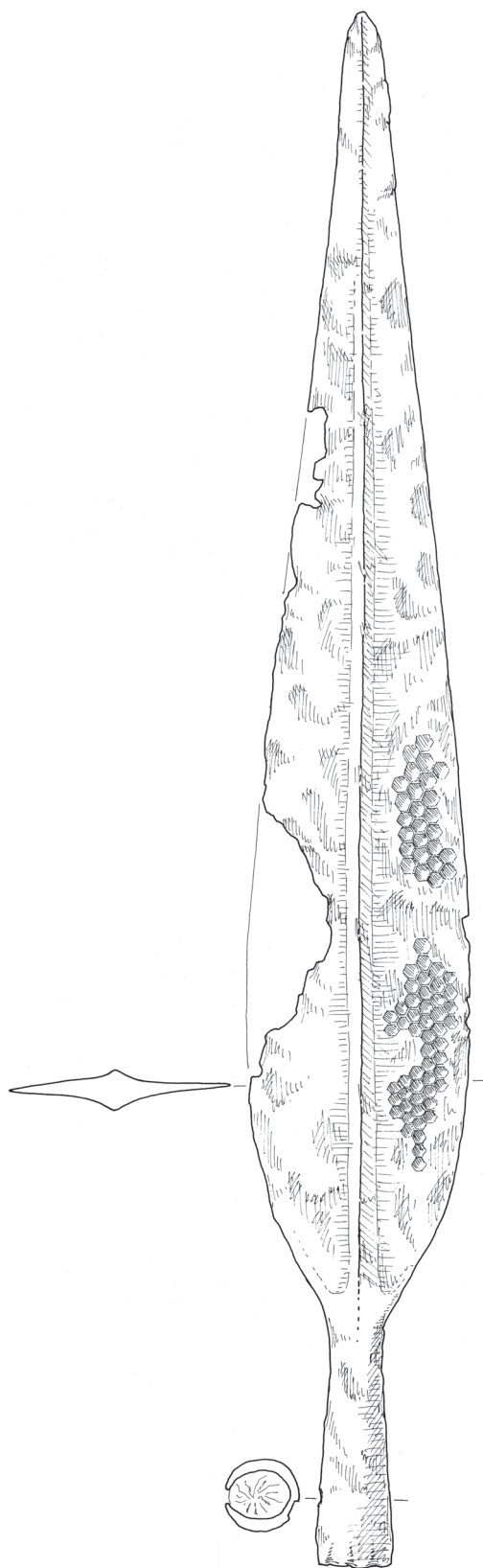
⁴⁴ E. g. Surčin (DRNIĆ 2015, 123 fig. 9,3).

⁴⁵ VUGA 1980, pl. 3,1; TÜRK ET AL. 2009, 224 cat. no. 32a; kept in the National Museum of Slovenia (NMS); inv. no. P 11366.

⁴⁶ WYSS ET AL. 2002, 61 pls 41,88; 42,88; 48,88.

⁴⁷ SCHWAB 1989, fig. 118.

⁴⁸ RAMSEYER 2009, 109.



It is noteworthy that faceted sockets, which first appear in the Alps and their periphery in higher numbers in the mid-1st century BC and are particularly common in the transition from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD, represent exceptional finds in the Late pre-Roman Iron Age of 'Germanic' areas⁴⁹. The spearhead from the Ljubljana, alongside the isolated lance head from Alésia⁵⁰, may be among the earliest evidence of the production of faceted sockets.

The presumably etched decoration of sunken and relatively small scale-shaped fields on the spearhead from the Ljubljana has a close parallel in the decoration of the 29.3 cm long flame-shaped spearhead from Grave 88 at Warszawa-Wilanów (*fig. 7,3*), roughly dated to A2 of the pre-Roman Iron Age⁵¹.

Similar decoration, albeit with larger fields, can be found on the spearhead of Group B/3 after Łuczkiwicz from Grave 1 at Gołębiewo (formerly Taubendorf, pow. Nidzica, woj. warmińsko-mazurskie / PL). The decoration consists of regularly spaced polygonal fields together with round, crescent-shaped, sickle-shaped and other irregularly spaced fields (*fig. 7,4*). The grave also contained a spear butt, a round shield boss of Type Bohnsack 1A, a Type C iron brooch of Middle La Tène construction, and a sword of Type I/1 with scabbard of Type 2a; it is dated to the beginning of A2 of the pre-Roman Iron Age⁵².

The spearhead from the Ljubljana below the outflow of the Borovniščica

The last but not least of the three spearheads was found in 1991 during diving in the Ljubljana riverbed just below the outflow of the Borovniščica stream near Preserje (mun./obč. Brezovica near Ljubljana / SLO) (*figs 1,3; 8*)⁵³. The spearhead has a short socket and a very wide blade with a triangular-sectioned midrib. It measures 42.9 cm in length, 6.5 cm in socket length and around 6 cm in blade width (spearhead / socket l. index 0.15, position of max. blade w. / blade l. index 0.71). To one side of the midrib are the remains of the decoration, presumably etched. It is a honeycomb design, i. e. of regularly and tightly spaced octagons measuring 4–5 mm across. The decoration is believed to have originally covered both halves of the blade.

This spearhead is also of a rare form of spearheads from LT C2 and LT D⁵⁴. Much commoner are the spearheads of similar shapes and sizes, but proportionally narrower blades with lower positioned maximum width and a characteristic, sharper transition from the socket to the blade.

In the size and shape of the blade, as well as the high maximum width, this spearhead from the Ljubljana is reminiscent of one of the leading spearhead forms of the Middle La Tène and early phase of the Late La Tène period⁵⁵. Spearheads of this form are known

⁴⁹ PERNET / SCHMID-SIKIMIĆ 2008, 375.

⁵⁰ SIEVERS 2001, pl. 69,362.

⁵¹ BOCHNAK 2005, fig. 21,3; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, 136; 322 fig. 46,8.

⁵² MACIAŁOWICZ 2008; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, 303.

⁵³ GASPARI 2007, fig. 2,4; TÜRK ET AL. 2009, 224 cat. no. 32b; kept in the City Museum of Ljubljana (MGML).

⁵⁴ E. g. Kapiteljska njiva: Gr. 239 / LT C2 (KRIŽ 2005, 109 pl. 64,5; l. 48.4 cm; socket l. 7.8 cm; blade w. 5.4 cm), Gr. 144 / LT D1 (KRIŽ 2005, 61 pl. 27,4; l. 72 cm; socket l. 11.2 cm; blade w. 9.8 cm).

⁵⁵ BRUNAUX / RAPIN 1988, 122; 133 Type Ib; e. g. Gr. 1 from Brestovik / LT C1 (Božič 1981, pl. 7,3), Gr. 3 from Sotin / LT D1 (Božič 1981, pl. 9,1).

from the territory of the Mokronog group, e. g. from Grave 2 at Dobova (mun. / obč. Brežice / SLO) (l. 43.2 cm; socket l. 6.9 cm; blade w. 5.8 cm) with typical LT C1 goods⁵⁶. A later example (l. 37.5 cm; socket l. 6 cm; blade w. 5.6 cm) was found in Grave 522 at Kapiteljska njiva (mun. / obč. Novo mesto / SLO), dated to LT C2⁵⁷.

The spearhead from the Ljubljana differs from the mentioned parallels in a proportionally wider blade and a rounded transition from the blade to the socket. In these features, it is again close to the finds from Masuria / Mazury, Greater Poland / Wielko Polska and Lesser Poland / Małopolska, which Łuczkiwicz joined to form his Group B/3. This group is characterised by a short socket (the spearhead / socket l. index 0.14–0.19)⁵⁸, a spearhead length of 35–46 cm and a blade width of 4–6.5 cm (position of max. blade w. / blade l. index 0.71–0.74).

Other parallels, with elongated pointed-oval blades, include the 45.8 cm long spearhead with a 6.5 cm wide blade from the Leszno district (woj. Wielkopolskie / PL), as well as the already mentioned 37 cm long spearhead with a decorated blade from Grave 1 at Gołębiewo (*fig. 7,4*). Two spearheads from the Central Rhineland are also comparable: the 45.5 cm long spearhead with a damaged blade from Bell (Kr. Mainz-Bingen / D)⁵⁹ and the 51 cm long spearhead (socket l. 7.8 cm; blade w. 8.4 cm) from Grave 1 at Nierstein (Kr. Mainz-Bingen / D) that Schumacher dates to LT D1⁶⁰.

As for the decoration on the Ljubljana spearhead, we can as yet name no close comparisons for its geometric design. The closest seems to be a spearhead of comparable shape, but smaller in size, from the cemetery at Kowalowice (formerly Kaulwitz; pow. namysłowski, woj. opolskie / PL) with vertical lines of equally-shaped sunken fields (*fig. 7,5*)⁶¹.

A similarly executed decoration can be observed on the 24.4 cm long spearhead from Grave 79 at Podwiesk (pow. chełmiński, woj. kujawsko-pomorskie / PL), which is dated to A2 of the pre-Roman Iron Age (*fig. 7,6*)⁶².

A related, presumably etched decoration of irregularly shaped polygons is known on the spearhead (l. 49 cm; socket l. 7 cm; blade w. 6 cm) from Grave 3 at Bęcze (formerly Hohwelze, pow. zielonogórski, woj. lubuskie / PL). The shape of this spearhead is close to that on the Ljubljana example, but has a lower positioned maximum width (Group A/3 after Łuczkiwicz)⁶³.

Regarding the possible origin of the spearheads from the Ljubljana, it is clear that both indicate contacts with regions north of Alps. Rare comparisons for the Kamin example are also known from the Late La Tène river assemblages from the Swiss Plateau. The same chronological frame applies to the spearhead from the Ljubljana riverbed below the outflow of the Borovniščica. It can be assigned to a type that is represented in low numbers only, with similarly shaped examples known in the south-eastern Alpine area, the Central Rhineland and particularly in Poland that yielded the closest comparisons for the geometric decoration.

⁵⁶ GUŠTIN 1977, pl. 5,4.

⁵⁷ KRIŽ 2005, 96 pl. 83,4.

⁵⁸ ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, 104; 105 map 18; 303 fig. 32,4–6.

⁵⁹ SCHUMACHER 1999, 138 pl. 63b.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 159 pl. 121b.

⁶¹ ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002a, fig. 4.

⁶² BOKINIEC 2005, pl. XXXV,5; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, 342.

⁶³ PETERSEN 1934, 242–243 fig. 3; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, 294.

Ethno-historical framework

Presuming that the discussed spearheads are foreign in their regional context, we attempt to understand them within an ethno-historical framework. Tying individual objects to particular historical events and ethnic groups involved in them as known from ancient literary sources is always a delicate subject, a topic where one should tread very warily and with extreme caution. In attempting to provide a proper chronological and cultural attribution of the Britof spearhead, however, we should not ignore the historical reports on the movements of 'Germanic' peoples in the late 2nd century BC. Based on the geographic location of the findspot, the proposed date and the nature of the damage on the spearhead, we will, very tentatively, venture the opinion that the object may be related to the movements of the Cimbri and associated peoples.

What may be deduced from the written sources is that the Cimbri must have entered recorded history around 120 BC, i. e. at the very beginning of phase A2 of the Pre-Roman Iron Age or in the first half of La Tène D1. Approximately at that time they left their presumed homeland on the south-eastern coast of the North Sea or neighbouring areas⁶⁴. The reasons for this have not yet been convincingly explained, with authors usually citing various natural disasters and overpopulation. Strabo, Greek geographer and historian who lived in the Augustan period and drew from the records of the philosopher, scientist and historian Posidonius living in the 1st century BC, wrote in his *Geography* (7. 2. 2 C 293)⁶⁵ that the Cimbri travelled across much of Europe and came as far as the Celtic Scordisci, i. e. to the wider area of the outflow of the Sava into the Danube. Their intention was probably to loot across Macedonia, Thrace and Greece, but they were halted by the Scordisci. After this, they turned westwards and reached as far as the territory of the Celtic Taurisci⁶⁶. Their sudden arrival in the vicinity of the Norican Kingdom spelt danger for the interests and security of the Roman state, which led to a Roman intervention and battle at *Noreia* in 113 BC. Strabo mentions this battle in another book of the *Geography* (5. 1. 8 C 214), stating that the Roman consul Gnaeus Papirius Carbo clashed with the Cimbri near *Noreia*. The location of the battle and of *Noreia* has not yet been established. Most historians and archaeologists write that the Cimbri arrived to the territory of the Taurisci in the south-eastern Alps by following the Sava upstream, and headed, after the battle that almost ended in a bitter defeat of the Romans according to Appian (*Keltiké* 13)⁶⁷, across the valley of Pustertal and the Brenner Pass to the territory of the Helvetii, who then lived in what is today southern Germany and northern Switzerland. Accepting the existence of two pre-Roman settlements of the same name, several authors allow for the possibility of locating the battle and the Tauriscan *oppidum* (*urbs*) of *Noreia* south of the Karavanke mountain range. This might be sought in the upper Sava valley (the Gorenjska region) or the northern part of the Ljubljana basin⁶⁸. Other interpretations are based on a single *Noreia* as the main settlement of the central Norican area rich in gold and high-quality iron, sought in the Austrian regions of Steiermark and Kärnten, which the Cimbri supposedly reached along the valleys of the Drava / Drau or the Mura / Mur⁶⁹.

Appian wrote that Papirius Carbo chose to intercept the Cimbri at the narrowest point of the passage across the Alps into Italy, which some authors locate in the area of the main

⁶⁴ NEUMAN / GRÜNEWALD / MARTENS 2000, 500–502.

⁶⁵ LEONARD JONES 1954.

⁶⁶ See ŠAŠEL KOS 2005, 519–527.

⁶⁷ WHITE 1912–1913.

⁶⁸ See STROBEL 2002; ID. 2003.

⁶⁹ DOBESCH 1982, 987.

communication from Aquileia towards Noricum, i. e. along the valley of the Tagliamento and its tributary Fella, across the Camporosso / Seifnitz / Žabnice Pass (820 m asl) and through the Thörl-Maglern Gates / Megvarska vrata into the Gail valley, others in the more western lying regions along the so-called Glockner route, north of the pass Monte Croce Carnico / Plöckenpass / Ploče Pass (1357 m asl)⁷⁰. Other authors suggest that the consul set off to meet the Cimbri from the Razdrto Pass / *Ocra* (575 m asl), i. e. the area of the so-called Italo-Illyrian Gates (*fig. 1*) as the neuralgic point of the defence of Italy along the main corridor towards the Balkans on the one side and the Moravian Gates and the Baltic on the other (the so-called Amber Route)⁷¹. In 1948, Max Schilcher even suggested, that the battle took place in the Kranj area⁷². For all of these suggestions, however, we should bear in mind the comment of Géza Alföldy, who noted that Strabo's information on the battle taking place at *Noreia* should not be taken literally, but rather as a general geographic reference⁷³.

As a brief digression, it is an almost impossible task to estimate the number of the *Germani* that the Roman consul attacked, during their rest according to Appian, but it could certainly have been much lower than the three hundred thousand armed and battle-ready men without their women and children as reported by Plutarch (*Mar.* 11)⁷⁴ in the context of the incursion of the coalition of the Cimbri and the Teutones into Italy in 102 BC.

Conclusion

Described as a homeland of the Celts by several Roman and Greek authors, the wider area of the Ljubljana basin in the upper Sava valley, with the strategically important area of the ancient river port of *Nauportus*, represents the westernmost part of the Late Iron Age cultural unit, archaeologically defined as the Mokronog group. It covers the present-day central and eastern Slovenia and north-western Croatia, controlled by the tribal alliance of the *Taurisci*. It is clear the Celtic newcomers did not drive out the indigenous population as they arrived at the plains of the major river valleys of this area in the early 3rd century BC. Some indigenous forms of artefacts (e. g. shaft-hole axes) and technology (e. g. hand-build pottery) persisted even up to LT C2, which proves a continuation of the local traditions and a certain degree of symbiosis of the two populations. The variations in the amounts of wheel-thrown pottery and the burial practices attest the regional differences and the influences from neighbouring communities during the Middle and Late La Tène periods⁷⁵.

Although not possessing the whole set of criteria defining the Oppida culture in central Europe in LT C2– LT D1⁷⁶, partially also because of the modest knowledge of central (fortified) settlements as major craft and trade centres of the period⁷⁷, the Mokronog group nevertheless displays close contacts and many shared cultural manifestations with the Oppida culture, such as monetary economy⁷⁸, characteristic material culture (e. g. graphite coarse ware, drinking horn mounts, Nauheim type fibulae, enamelled decoration, bronze ringlets, glass bracelets, knives with a flat handle terminating in a ring, swords

⁷⁰ HARL 2011, 108–113.

⁷¹ ŠAŠEL KOS 2005, 198–203.

⁷² SCHILCHER 1948.

⁷³ ALFÖLDY 1974, 35–38.

⁷⁴ PERRIN 1996.

⁷⁵ BOŽIČ 1999, 192–201; GUŠTIN 2011b.

⁷⁶ See SCHÖNFELDER 2014, 379–383; 385–386.

⁷⁷ E. g. TIEFENGRABER 2011.

⁷⁸ KOS 1977; ID. / ŠEMROV 2003.

and scabbards with S-shaped reinforcements, belt buckles, horse and cavalry equipment etc.)⁷⁹, similarities in fortification structures⁸⁰, import of Mediterranean goods (e. g. Italic bronze ware⁸¹ and brooches⁸²), as well as (rare) ingot and tool hoards⁸³ and ritual weapon deposits⁸⁴. One of the main differences is a complete absence of painted ware. Weapons from LT D, in particular several types of round shield-bosses, iron, bronze and possibly even silver helmets of the so-called Eastern Celtic (Novo mesto) type, as well as swords and scabbards⁸⁵ may be seen as a firm indication of a transfer of successful technological solutions and an interchange of goods, particularly in the eastern Keltiké and the lower Danube basin, but also the northern regions between the Rhein-Main-Mosel area and the Vistula river⁸⁶. There is little evidence in support of the presumed trend-setting artisanal centres in the south-eastern Alpine area⁸⁷, but their existence seems logical in face of the sheer amount of uniform military equipment, mainly found in the graves between the Ljubljana basin and the lower Krka valley, which possibly indicates their active role in shaping, but certainly following the supra-regional trends in armament, particularly from the mid-2nd century BC onwards.

The spearhead from Britof near Kranj is of a form very rarely encountered in the area of the Oppida culture, but relatively common in northern and central Poland and the Scandinavian Baltic Isles, which also yielded the closest comparisons. In Scandinavian contexts, however, they should be considered a foreign element, hence this particular form most likely originates in the area of the Oksywie culture. The two spearheads from the Ljubljana are also of rare forms, but with parallels across wide areas from the south-western edges of the Alps to the southern coast of the Baltic Sea. Both the spearhead with geometric decoration from the riverbed at Kamin and the spearhead with a sunken scale design from the outflow of the Borovniščica may be considered as products of the artisanal centres in the 'Celtic' environment of the Mokronog group that bordered on the southern periphery of the Oppida culture. In their decoration, however, they are again related to the designs in use among the 'East Germanic' (Przeworsk, Oksywie) cultural groups of the Late pre-Roman Iron Age.

Considering the chronological attributions of comparable finds, we believe that the date for the spearheads from Britof near Kranj and from the outflow of the Borovniščica should be sought in LT D1, while the spearhead from the Ljubljana at Kamin more likely dates to LT D2 according to the central European chronology.

The spearhead from Britof near Kranj is a stray chance find from an area where Late Iron Age remains are little known. The Middle and / or Late La Tène sites from the upper Sava valley, possibly settled by the Carni tribe, display a material culture and burial practices closely associated with those of the Mokronog group, but also with the communities in the mountainous hinterland of the *Caput Adriae*, especially the valleys of the Soča and of the Carnian Alps⁸⁸.

The two spearheads from the Ljubljana river form part of a rich collection of Late La Tène weapons from the riverbed in the western part of the Ljubljansko barje, which are interpreted as the remains of either individual rituals as part of *rites de passage* or as spoils

⁷⁹ Božič 1993.

⁸⁰ GABROVEC 1994, 129; 157–159.

⁸¹ Božič 1999, 199.

⁸² ID. 2008, 144–148.

⁸³ TRAMPUŽ OREL 2012, 25 fig. 5,1–2.

⁸⁴ GASPARI 2007.

⁸⁵ IŠTENIČ 2010.

⁸⁶ See BOCKIUS / ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2004; ŁUCZKIEWICZ / SCHÖNFELDER 2011.

⁸⁷ SCHÖNFELDER 2014, 383.

⁸⁸ See GABROVEC 1966; GUŠTIN 2011a; HORVAT 2015.

(trophies) of war⁸⁹. The objects from individual concentrations predominantly contain spearheads and swords in their scabbards characteristic of the Mokronog group and the so-called Eastern Celtic *koiné*. The ‘Celtic-style’ weapons that may be connected with more distant regions include the sword with a lenticular cross section of the blade in a scabbard with a ladder-shaped chape, the closest parallels for which are known from Gaul, as well as two spearheads that most probably originate in the area of the Scordisci in south-eastern Pannonia⁹⁰.

All three finds offer clear evidence of the ties between the central area of the Mokronog group and the wider central and northern European regions in the Late La Tène period. Its foreign character in a local or even regional environment, on the one hand, and the main area of distribution of the closest analogies for the combination of form and decoration, on the other, suggest that the Britof spearhead may even represent tangible evidence of the movements of warriors from the southern Baltic coast between the last few decades of the 2nd and the mid-1st century BC.

Two topographic features of the area must also be considered in assessing the findspot as a potential battle site or a site on the route of the Cimbrian migration. The first is the location on the left bank of the Kokra, which represents the first major natural obstacle on the way from the east part of the Ljubljana basin towards the upper Sava valley (*fig. 1*). Moreover, the area of Britof and Predoslje, placed on the left and the right bank of the Kokra respectively, is where the Kokra canyon is narrowest and enables easiest crossing⁹¹. The second important feature is the proximity of the conglomerate promontory overlooking the confluence of the Sava and the Kokra in Kranj that, in its size, natural protection and geostrategic location, provided a central role in the region to the La Tène period settlement and should therefore also have represented a logical spot for a respite by those who passed by these lands.

The circumstances of discovery of the Britof spearhead point to either accidental loss or deliberate deposition of the weapon, thus making its interpretation as an isolated trace of a short-term presence of the warriors from the North more plausible than as evidence of more complex remains of Cimbrian temporary dwellings or of limited traces of economic activities during their migration⁹². In spite of the reportedly high numbers of the Cimbri, they probably did not take time to establish proper settlements, but rather lived in more provisional houses or were housed among the local population. The migration most likely attracted growing numbers of people from the affected region, to the effect that, when arriving on the Mediterranean scene, it was a multiethnic phenomenon and did not show much, if any, of the original characteristics. This makes it almost impossible to archaeologically determine the origin of the peoples on the move; nevertheless, using the words of Jes Martens, it is still a riddle “that a migration has left so little impact on the areas it passed through on its way to its destiny”⁹³.

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⁸⁹ GASPARI 2007; TÜRK ET AL. 2009.

⁹⁰ GASPARI 2007, 146–147.

⁹¹ SAGADIN 2008, 173.

⁹² See BOCKIUS / ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2004, 3.

⁹³ NEUMAN / GRÜNEWALD / MARTENS 2000, 503.

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Abstract: On three spearheads with decorated blades from the south-eastern periphery of the Alps

The contribution presents three stray finds of iron spearheads with decorated blades; one from Britof near Kranj and the other two from the riverbed of the Ljubljanica in the western part of the Ljubljansko barje (Slovenia). The spearhead from Britof has close parallels in Pomerania and the Scandinavian Baltic Isles, indicating its most probable origin in the area inhabited by the 'East Germanic' cultural groups of the late pre-Roman Iron Age. The two spearheads from the Ljubljanica also rank among rare forms, with parallels known across wide regions between the south-western edges of the Alps and the southern coast of the Baltic Sea. Both are most likely local 'Celtic' products, with decoration again close to that on spearheads from the 'Germanic' milieu. These exceptional artefacts might perhaps be associated with the movements of Germanic peoples between the late 2nd and the mid-1st century BC.

Zusammenfassung: Zu drei verzierten Speerspitzen aus der südöstlichen Peripherie der Alpen

Dieser Beitrag stellt drei Lesefunde eiserner, verzierter Speerspitzen vor, von denen die eine aus Britof, nahe Kranj, stammt und die anderen beiden aus dem Flussbett der Ljubl-

janica im Westteil des Laibacher Moors (Ljubljansko barje, Slowenien). Zur Speerspitze aus Britof gibt es Vergleichsfunde aus Pommern und von den skandinavischen Ostseeinseln, was darauf hinweist, dass ihr Ursprung sehr wahrscheinlich im Gebiet der „ostgermanischen“ Kulturgruppen der späten vorrömischen Eisenzeit liegt. Die beiden Speerspitzen aus der Ljubljana gehören ebenfalls zu eher seltenen Formen; Parallelen sind aus dem weiten Gebiet zwischen dem Südwestrand der Alpen und der südlichen Ostseeküste bekannt. Beide sind höchstwahrscheinlich lokale „keltische“ Produkte, deren Verzierungen wiederum jenen ähneln, die von Speerspitzen aus „germanischem“ Milieu bekannt sind. Diese außergewöhnlichen Artefakte können vielleicht mit den Wanderungen germanischer Gruppen zwischen dem späten 2. und mittleren 1. Jahrhundert v. Chr. in Verbindung gebracht werden.

Résumé : A propos de trois pointes de lances décorées provenant de la périphérie sud-orientale des Alpes

Cet article présente trois pointes de lances décorées et trouvées en surface, dont une provenant de Britof, près de Kranj, les deux autres du lit de la Ljubljana dans la partie occidentale du marais de Ljubljana (Ljubjankso barje, Slovénie). La pointe de lance de Britof a des parallèles en Poméranie et dans les îles scandinaves de la Baltique, une indication sur son origine à chercher vraisemblablement dans la région des groupes culturels « germaniques orientaux » de la fin de l'âge du Fer préromain. Les deux pointes de lances de Ljubljana comptent aussi parmi les formes rares. On connaît des parallèles entre le pied sud-ouest des Alpes et la côte méridionale de la Baltique. Il s'agit très vraisemblablement de produits locaux « celtes » dont le décor ressemble fort à celui de pointes de lances issues d'un contexte « germanique ». Ces artefacts exceptionnels sont à relier peut-être aux migrations de groupes germaniques de la fin du 2^e et du milieu du 1^{er} siècle av. J.-C.

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References of figures:

Fig. 1: A. Gaspari. – *Figs 2; 6:* Drawing Ida Murgelj, photo Tomaž Lauko. – *Fig. 3:* 1 after NYLÉN 1955, fig. 185,5; 2 after SIEVERS 2001, pl. 59,234; 3 after ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, fig. 36,8; 4 after ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002a, fig. 7,6; 5 after PIETRZAK 1987, pl. LXII; 6 after RASCH 1994, fig. 2B. – *Fig. 4:* after BJØRNVAD 1989, fig. 3,1.25; 2 after WYSS ET AL. 2002, pl. 41,85.89.98; 5 after ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2002a, fig. 7,5; 6 after BOKINIEC 2005, pl. XXXV,5. – *Fig. 5:* Photo Tomaž Lauko. – *Fig. 7:* 1 after WYSS ET AL. 2002, pl. 41,88; 2 after SCHWAB 1989, fig. 118; 3 after BOCHNAK 2005, fig. 21,3; ŁUCZKIEWICZ 2006, fig. 46,8; 4 after MACIAŁOWICZ 2008, fig. 1; 5 courtesy of PIOTR ŁUCZKIEWICZ; 6 after BOKINIEC 2005, pl. XXXV,5. – *Fig. 8:* Drawing Janja Tratnik and Ida Murgelj.