

Cemeteries and Material Culture

Spatial, Temporal and Cultural Characteristics

The geographical area covered in this book includes parts of early medieval Croatia, the Littoral or Dalmatian region, between the Adriatic Sea and the northern slopes of the Dinaride, and up to the river Sava, as well as the area extending between that mountain range and the river.¹ This area, for the most part, coincides with the Roman province of Dalmatia, which remained, at least nominally, a category of geographical description in the early Middle Ages, as illustrated during the second half of the 9th century by Alfred the Great,² and in the mid-10th century by Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus.³

The cemeteries discussed have been chosen on the basis of the existing literature and mostly as a result of direct insight into material housed at various museums and institutes. Fieldwork was carried out, sites were visited and late medieval tombstones and other finds and material were recorded and published. Certain cemeteries were comprehensively excavated, either independently or in cooperation with others, for example, Stranče near Crikvenica (1974–1978), on Murter (1974), at Raška Gora north of Mostar (1977), Sveti Juraj u Trnju (St George in Trnje) near Čakovec (1984). Finds from the cemeteries beneath Velebit at Seline and Rovanjaska, at Ivinj near Murter were the first to be recorded in a computerized manner (1977–1980). Additional research was carried out in areas around the rivers Cetina and Neretva, and on the Pelješac peninsula (1975–1980). A total of 16 cemeteries have been selected, according to the degree to which they have been researched and, most importantly, to the existence of site plans and of complete descriptions of graves. Many other important cemeteries have only been partly published and there is no graphic documentation, for example, for Dubravice or Kosa near Šibenik. Such sites could not be taken into account. Of the 16 cemeteries, 12 have been published completely (under nos. 5–16; grave units, plans, photographs); a further 2 have been published in their entirety but have been damaged (nos. 2, 4); another cemetery (no. 1) has been published but lacks

(a lesser part of) the documentation. The Nin–Ždrijac cemetery (no. 3) has been published almost in its entirety: plans with all grave units, listings and a statistical overview of all finds, a table of grave units and typological tables, as well as photographs of finds—mostly earrings. The majority of those finds are in permanent exhibit at the Archaeological Museum in Zadar. Recently (2007), few more graves were published, excavated on the north-east edge of the cemetery.⁴

Key Cemeteries

1. **Kašić–Maklinovo Brdo.**¹ The site lies near the village of Kašić, 15 km northeast of Zadar at the Maklinovo Brdo site. Archaeological excavations carried out in 1955 and 1957 by Mate Suić in cooperation with the Archaeological Museum of Zadar brought to light an early medieval cemetery with 42 graves; in 1967 J. Belošević excavated a further 13 graves over an excavated area of around 2500 m². Grave chambers were rectangular in shape and were sometimes lined with stone slabs. Grave goods include: ceramic vessels, weaponry (arrow tips, arrows, axes, knives, spurs and fittings); a sickle, as well as a razor, awls, needle-cases, clay loops, belt fittings, flints and flintstones, nails. Jewelry included grape-shaped filigree earrings, links, torcs, necklaces, tin rings, pendants, buckles (see distribution and find typology on Plan 2). J. Belošević² provided information on the basic burial rite characteristics, grave typology, and dated the cemetery to the 8th and the first half of the 9th century. He also discovered a group of *cremation* graves some 50 metres to the southeast of the initial site, and dated those graves to the 7th century.³

On the basis of analyses carried out by a number of authors to date, in view of the jewelry and other grave goods, this pagan cemetery was dated to a period between the 7th or 8th century and the beginning/mid-9th century (Jurić, jewelry phase 1).

N. Jakšić dates the cemetery between the 9th and the 11th century.

1 Šišić 1925, maps 1–3.

2 Matijević Sokol–Sokol 1999; 2005, 22–24.

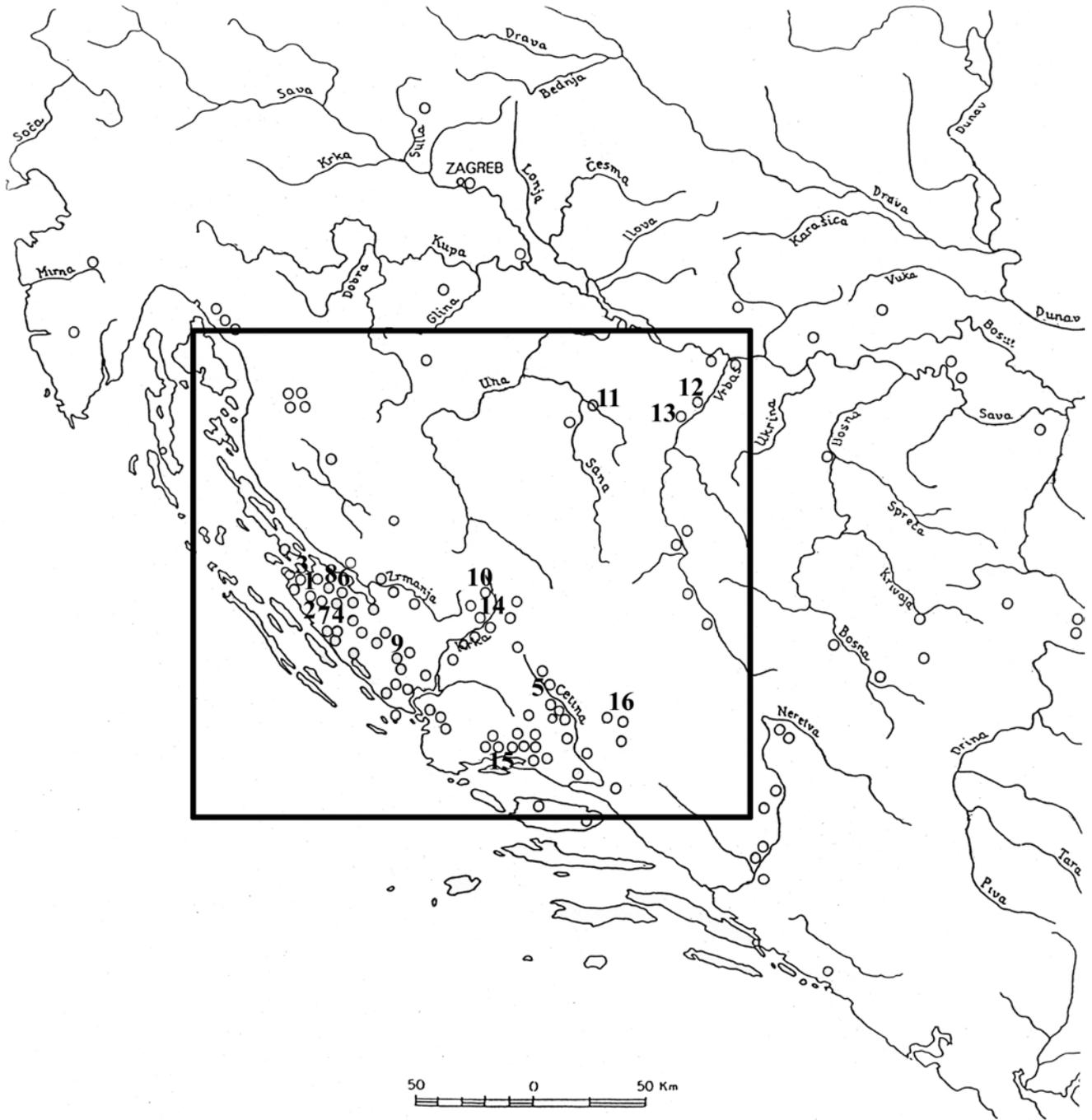
3 Ferjančić 1959.

4 Belošević 2007.

1 Lit.: Belošević 1980, 46–48; 2007, *passim*; 2010.

2 Belošević 1980, 46.

3 Belošević 1980, 46–48; 2007, 451.



MAP 1 Location of 16 selected sites taken from Basic data on cemeteries.