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THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF THE OHRID-PRESPA-MALIQ LAKE REGION IN THE 1ST MILLENNIUM BCE

Abstract. – The paper presents a general overview of the economic context of the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq Lake region during the 1st millennium BCE i.e. from the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age to the Hellenistic period and the arrival of the Romans. By consulting archaeological, geological, zoological, botanical and historical data, the paper offers a summarized view at the economic sectors of forestry, hunting and fishing, agriculture and animal husbandry, ceramic production, mining and metallurgy, commerce and coin circulation in the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq Lake region, while also taking into account the changing settlement organization in the region during the 1st millennium BCE. The paper is intended as a baseline for further more comprehensive studies of the economic circumstances in the named region at the given time, and how they relate to the other aspect of culture.

Key words. – Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq Lake region, ancient Dassaretia, prehistoric economy, ancient economy, archaeology of economy.

The Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region (Pl. I: 1) stands out as a separate geographic and cultural unit within the Central Balkans, characterized by the rich hydrography of Lake Ohrid, Lake Prespa and the former Lake Maliq i.e. the so-called “Dessaretian Lakes” (according to the ancient tribe of the Dessaretii that inhabited the region). These bodies of water are, in turn, surrounded by high mountainous terrain with peaks that go over 2,000 meters above sea level (the highest peak being Pelister of the Baba Mountain, on the eastern coast of Lake Prespa, with a height of 2,601 mamsl). Such geomorphologic context had a key impact on the cultural development of the human communities living in this area, influencing their political, economic, social and religious life. The location and environmental characteristics of the region within wider Balkan frames determined its role as a crossroads where different cultural influences from west and east, north and south, collided. In fact, such role of the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region was clearly defined during the first millennium BCE, at the transition from the prehistoric to the historical way of living, with the establishment of the so-

called “Candavian Road” that later became the famous Via Egnatia (Pl. I: 1). In this paper, we will try to summarize the current archaeological knowledge on the economic context of the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region during the 1st millennium BCE. We believe that economic relations influence and in turn receive influence from all other aspects of culture, such as politics, social relations, religion and ideology. Therefore, our goal with this paper is to offer other researchers a baseline for the economic context of the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region during the 1st millennium BCE, as an aid in their own more comprehensive studies of the various aspects of culture in the given region at the given time.

1. Settlement organization

Before we go on to evaluate the sectors that made up the economic context of the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region in the 1st millennium BCE, we first must discuss the development of settlement organization in the region during the given timeframe. To date, the most comprehensive work in this direction has been done by Verčik et al. (2019), in regards to the Ohrid Plain, north of Lake Ohrid. According to this analysis, the Bronze Age in this region was characterized by the prevailing type of pile-dwelling settlements on the lake's coast (such as Plocha Michov Grad and Ohridati/Penelopa), with some occasional hilltop sites. However, all of this changed at the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE, in the Early Iron Age, when we see the gradual decline of pile-dwelling settlements (the last to be abandoned being Vrbnik near Struga in the 7th - 6th c. BCE). In contrast, the Early Iron Age brought in an increased number of smaller hilltop sites, all above 700 mamsl. It is interesting to note that the hilltop settlement of Plaoshnik-Ohrid, established in the Early Iron Age, at the time would have been an island, in later centuries eventually becoming a peninsula separated from the mainland by a marshy zone. The next trend in settlement organization in the Ohrid Plane came around the middle of the 1st millennium BCE, when a lot of the previously established small hilltop sites were abandoned. However, we now witness the regional consolidation into a fewer large hilltop settlements (like St. Erazmo and Trebenishko Kale), strongly fortified and located on strategic positions, controlling the main routes and entrances into the Ohrid Plain, and all sharing visual communication with each other. According to Verčik et al. (2019), this indicates "that they created a central and complex regional defense system within this region". In this context, during the 4th-3rd century BCE, the hilltop settlement of Plaoshnik-Ohrid developed into the main urban center of this settlement system in the form of ancient Lychnidos. The following big change in settlement organization came in the last couple of centuries of the 1st millennium BCE, with the arrival of the Romans and the establish-

ment of their Pax Romana. This time, we see the abandonment of the large forts in favor of lower positions, in the plain or on hillslopes.¹

We see a similar developmental line of settlement organization in the Korçë Plain, around the former Lake Maliq, south of Lake Ohrid. The Bronze Age pile-dwelling settlements like Sovjan and Maliq come to an end in the Early Iron Age, while we see an increase in the number of hilltop settlements, with prominent concentration on the eastern end of the plain i.e. the south-west tip of the Small Prespa Lake. However, in the centuries that follow, we again witness the abandonment of most of these hilltop settlements, with few of them, located on strategic positions, becoming larger and more heavily fortified (like the sites of Bellovodë, Zvezdë and Symizë). Here we should also mention the site of Selcë e Poshtëme, located on the route along the Shkumbin River leading into the Korçë Plain, which seems to have grown as an urban center in the 4th century BCE. As in the case with the Ohrid Plain, the Hellenistic and Roman period seems to have brought a return to lower positions in the Korçë Plain as well.²

The biggest mystery regarding settlement organization in the region of the Dessaretian Lakes remains the area around the Great Prespa Lake. Recent progress in this direction has been made in a paper by Bunguri et al. (2021), which presents an overview of archaeological sites in the Prespa region from Prehistory to Late Antiquity³ (although

¹ Verčík M., Kerschbaum S., Tušlová P., Jančovič M., Donev D., Ardjanliev P., “Settlement Organisation In The Ohrid Region”, In: *Studia Hercynia* XXIII/1 (2019), 26-54. Also see: Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Лухнуо у Десапѣиуја / Lychnidos et Dassaretie*, Skopje 2017, 15-122; Ardjanliev P., Verčík M., “Reconstruction of the Habitation in the Ohrid Region during the Iron Age and the Archaic Period”, In: Ardjanliev et al. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 167-175; Weissová B., Tušlová P., Ardjanliev P., Verčík M., “The Frontier Studies. Survey of the Northern Part of the Lake Ohrid Basin, Preliminary Report on the Season 2017”, In: *Studia Hercynia* XXII/1 (2018), 99-133. On Plaoshnik-Ohrid as an island in the Early Iron Age: Hošek J., Verčík M., Pokorný P., Beneš J., Komárková V., Radoměřský T., Atanasoska N., Todoroska V., Ardjanliev P., “Geoarchaeological evidence on a Late Bronze Age earthquake, Ohrid Basin (North Macedonia)”, In: *Journal of Quaternary Science* 36/6 (2021), 1003-1012.

² On the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age: Agolli E., “Mbi modelin e vendbanimit gjatë epokave të Bronxit të vonë dhe Hekurit të Hershëm rreth liqenit të Prespës së Vogël / The settlement pattern during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age around the small Lake of Prespa”, In: *Iliria* 40 (2016), 39-57. On the development of hilltop settlements during the Iron Age: Karauskaj G., “Fortifications illyriennes de la première période du fer dans les environs de Korçë”, In: *Iliria* 4 (1976), 197-221. On the development of the site of Selcë e Poshtëme: Ceka N., “Qyteti ilir në Selcën e Poshtëme”, In: *Iliria* 2 (1972), 151-194. Indications on the return to lower positions at the end of the millennium: Léra P., “Pitosa antike me vula nga rrethi i Korçës / Pythos antiques munis d'estampilles découverts dans le district de Korça”, In: *Iliria* 13/2 (1983), 211-222.

³ Bunguri A., Lera P., Oikonomidis S., Papayiannis A., Tsonos A., Atanasoska N., “Towards an archaeology of the lakes: The distribution of the Prespan sites from Prehistory to Late Antiquity”, In: *Iliria* 44 (2021), 131-191.

we think that the dating of some sites has to be revised). In any way, as per our current knowledge, it nevertheless seems that a similar developmental line in settlement organization, as in the Ohrid and Korçë plains, also occurred in the region around the Great Prespa Lake: settlements near the lakeshore in the Bronze Age (Asamati, possibly Nakolec?) > [unknown confirmed Iron Age settlements, with the exception of some Iron Age pottery on the island of Golem Grad and Late Iron Age jewelry from Nakolec] > hilltop settlements in the Classical and Early Hellenistic period (Kula-Izbishte, Kale-Gjavato, Kuli-Kurbino) > return to lower positions in Late Hellenistic and Roman times (Krani, Nakolec, Pretor, Dolno Dupeni, Kozjak/Sopotsko etc.). A notable feature of the Prespa Lake region are its islands, such as Golem Grad in the Great Prespa Lake and the island of Agios Achillios in the Small Prespa Lake, which have yielded some of the most valuable finds from the Classical, Hellenistic, Roman and Medieval periods in the region.⁴

2. Forestry

Forests are an important factor in the economic development of any given territory. On the one hand, they directly provide timber for construction, as well as fuel for heating and cooking, and also for smelting. On the other hand, more widespread woodlands are a prerequisite for greater hunting resources, while forest clearance makes way for more intensive agriculture and larger pastures for the grazing of livestock.

Based on sediments from Lake Ohrid, Wagner et al. (2009) give two dates for greater human impact in the clearance of woodlands: 5000 cal. BP (3000 BCE, Bronze Age), and more significantly at 2400 cal. BP (400 BCE, Classical period).⁵ Increased human activity as a factor in deforestation during the Bronze Age has also been suggested by analyses done at the prehistoric pile-dwelling settlement of Sovjan at Lake Maliq, with Fouache et al. (2001) giving a date of 4000 uncal.

⁴ Based on information that can be found in: Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Голем Град: Преспа / Golem Grad: Prespa*, Vol. I & II, Skopje 2011 & 2015; Eftimovski I., „По трагите на Скиртијана – прилог кон убијација на една егнатиска патна станица во Преспанскиот регион / Following the traces of Scirtiana - locating an Egnatian road station in the Prespa region”, In: *AXIOS* 2 (2017), 30-56; Eftimovski I., „Прелиминарно рекогносцирање на локалитетот Кула-Избишта, Преспа / Preliminary survey of the site Kula-Izbishta, Prespa region”, In: *AXIOS* Vol.3, Skopje 2018, 38-47; Bunguri A., Lera P., Oikonomidis S., Papayiannis A., Tsonos A., Atanasoska N., “Towards an archaeology of the lakes: The distribution of the Prespa sites from Prehistory to Late Antiquity”, In: *Iliria* 44 (2021), 131-191.

⁵ Wagner B., Lotter A.F., Nowaczyk N., Reed J.M., Schwab A., Sulpizio R., Valsecchi V., Wessels M., Zanchetta G., “A 40, 000-year record of environmental change from ancient Lake Ohrid (Albania and Macedonia)”, In: *Journal of Paleolimnology* 41 (2009), 407-430.

BP.⁶ The second date given by Wagner et al. (2009), pointing to increased human impact during the Classical Period, is again confirmed by Wagner et al. (2010) for both Lake Ohrid and Lake Prespa as 2500 cal. BP (500 BCE). According to Aufgebauer et al. (2012), significant human impact on the environment surrounding Lake Prespa begins from 2700 cal. BP (700 BCE, Iron Age) and continues in the following 200-300 years. Even more intensified human impact is detected after 1900 cal. BP (1st century CE).⁷ The intensification of agriculture and deforestation in the Prespa region from 2000-1900 cal. BP is once again noted by Panagiotopoulos et al. (2013).⁸

Summarizing the presented data, we propose the following interpretation in correlation to the regional developments in settlement organization: Increased human impact on the woodlands surrounding the Dessaretian Lakes happened on a greater scale for the first time during the Bronze Age (3000-2000 BCE) i.e. the establishment of the Bronze Age pile-dwelling settlements. Greater human impact is noted once again beginning from the Developed Iron Age and throughout the Classical period (700-400 BCE) i.e. the consolidation of the hill-top settlements into a complex regional defense system. The next intensification in woodland clearance, probably even greater than the previous occurrences, came with the arrival of the Romans at the turn of the 1st millennium BCE to CE, in parallel with greater urbanization and a return to lower settlement positions in the plains and on hillslopes.

Regarding the utilization of specific species of trees as resources in day to day human practices during the 1st millennium BCE, we do not have much information. The only substantial archaeobotanical analyses in the region that would provide us with such data were carried out at the pile-dwelling settlements of Sovjan on Lake Maliq and Plocha Michov Grad on Lake Ohrid. Therefore, the gathered information is applicable only to the transitional period between the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age i.e. the first centuries of our timeframe. Nevertheless, we think that these analyses are of great importance in obtaining a general idea about the paleobotany in the Dessaretian Lakes Region during the 1st millennium BCE.

⁶ Fouache E., Dufaure J.-J., Denèfle M., Lézine A.-M., Léra P., Prendi F., Touchais G., “Man and environment around lake Maliq (southern Albania) during the Late Holocene”, In: *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 10/ 2 (2001), 79-86.

⁷ Aufgebauer A., Panagiotopoulos K., Wagner B., Schaebitz F., Viehberg F.A., Vogel H., Zanchetta G., Sulpizio R., Leng M.J., Damaschke M., “Climate and environmental change in the Balkans over the last 17 ka recorded in sediments from Lake Prespa (Albania/F.Y.R. of Macedonia/Greece)”, In: *Quaternary International* 274 (2012), 122-135.

⁸ Panagiotopoulos K., Aufgebauer A., Schäbitz F., Wagner B., “Vegetation and climate history of the Lake Prespa region since the Lateglacial”, In: *Quaternary International* 293 (2013) 157-169.

Based on pollen analyses, the dominant type of tree in the forests surrounding Sovjan at the end of the Early Iron Age (Layer 4) was the oak (*Quercus*), followed by pine trees (*Pinus*) and beech (*Fagus*), with rarer instances of hornbeam (*Carpinus*), walnut trees (*Juglans*), and spruce (*Picea*).⁹ Charred plant macro-remains collected from the Bronze Age and Iron Age levels of Sovjan point to the presence of oak (*Quercus*), pine (*Pinus*), ash (*Fraxinus*), elm (*Ulmus*), alder (*Alnus*), willow (*Salix*), and poplar (*Populus*).¹⁰ Regarding fruits and nuts, remains from the Middle and Late Bronze Age at Sovjan include acorns (*Quercus*), cornelian cherries (*Cornus mas*), raspberries (*Rubus*), elderberries (*Sambucus*), figs (*Ficus carica*), apples (*Malus*), and pears (*Pyrus*).¹¹ In the construction of their pile-dwelling settlement, the inhabitants of Sovjan mostly used oak, and occasionally pine, as support poles (Pl. I: 3). Analyses of the cuts done to sharpen the poles suggest that the builders used a metal axe or adze for this activity.¹²

The general archaeobotanical analyses done at Plocha Michov Grad, on the eastern shore of Lake Ohrid, in regard to the entirety of its occupation, show that the forests utilized by its inhabitants were composed of oak (*Quercus*), juniper (*Juniperus*), pine (*Pinus*), fir (*Abies*), and walnut trees (*Juglans*). The preferred wood for support poles (Pl. I: 2) in the construction of the pile-dwelling settlement was oak, with occasional instances of the other mentioned species. In terms of fruits and nuts, the inhabitants of Plocha Michov Grad had acorns (*Quercus*), hazelnuts (*Corylus*), cornelian cherries (*Cornus mas*), grapes (*Vitis*), blackberries (*Rubus fruticosus*), strawberries (*Fragaria vesca*) and figs (*Ficus carica*).¹³

⁹ Lera P., Prendi F., Touchais G., Dufaure J.-J., Fouache E., Denèfle M., Hansen J., Martinez S., “Sovjan (Albanie)”, In: *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 120/2 (1996), 995-1026.

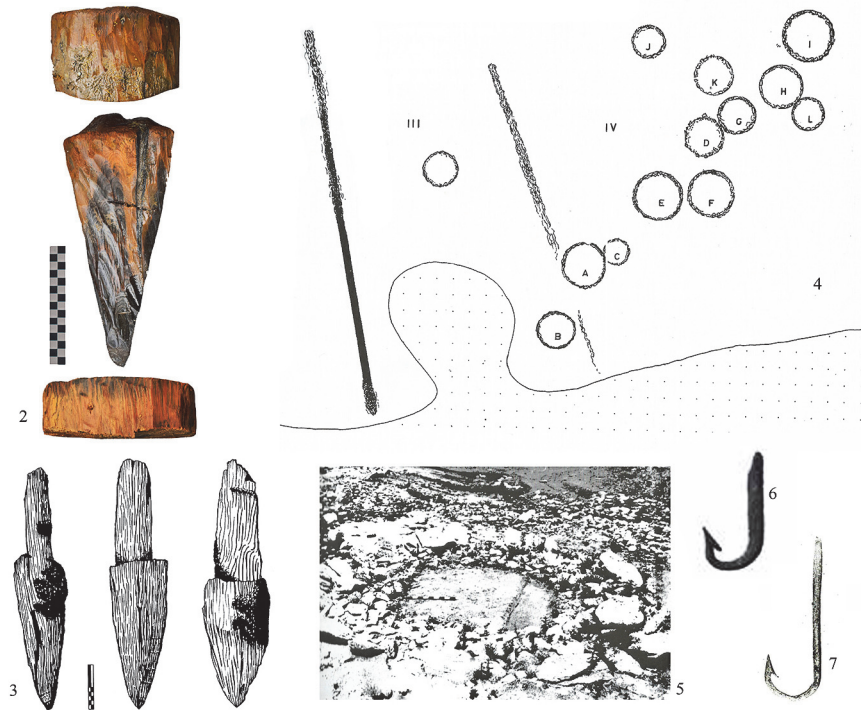
¹⁰ Fouache E., Dufaure J.-J., Denèfle M., Lézine A.-M., Léra P., Prendi F., Touchais G., “Man and environment around lake Maliq (southern Albania) during the Late Holocene”, In: *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 10/2 (2001), 79-86.

¹¹ Allen S. E., “The Palaeoethnobotany of Sovjan, Albania: Preliminary Results”, In: Rénard J., Touchais G. (eds.), *L’Albanie dans l’Europe préhistorique, Suppléments au Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 42, Athens 2002, 61-72.

¹² Lera P., Prendi F., Touchais G., Dufaure J.-J., Fouache E., Denèfle M., Hansen J., Martinez S., “Sovjan (Albanie)”, In: *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 120/2 (1996), 995-1026.

¹³ Наумов Г., Хафнер А., Танески Б., Рајх Ј., Хоштетлер М., Тодороска В., Еменегер Л., Штехели К., Зидат С., Пападополу С., Француз Џ., Болигер М., “Истражување во 2018 година на локалитетот Плоча-Миќов Град во Охридското Езеро / Research in 2018 at Ploča-Mičov Grad site on the Lake Ohrid”, In: *Patrimonium MK* 16 (2018), 9-36; Наумов Г., Хафнер А., Танески Б., Балмер А., Рајх Ј., Хоштетлер М., Болигер М., Француз Џ., Мачковски А., Богард Е., Антолин Ф., Чарлс М., Тинер В., дел Молињо Џ.-М., Лотер А., “Истражување на локалитетот Плоча-Миќов Град кај Градиште (Охридско Езеро) во 2019 година / Research in 2019 at the site of Ploča-Mičov Grad near Gradište (Lake Ohrid)”, In: *Patrimonium MK* 17 (2019), 11-46.

PLATE I



2. Hunting and fishing

2.1. Archaeozoological data

The forests covering the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region were inhabited by a multitude of animals, which in turn were wild game for the prehistoric and ancient human hunters that lived there. In order to gain a general idea of which animal species were in fact prey for these hunters, we must once again rely on data provided by the pile-dwelling settlement of Sovjan on Lake Maliq.¹⁴ Archaeozoological studies of the animal remains from the Bronze Age and Iron Age layers of Sovjan point to the presence of the following wild animals: red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), wild boar (*Sus scrofa scrofa*), wildcat (*Felis silvestris*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), badger (*Meles meles*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), as well as a "large lion-sized feline" (probably an Eurasian cave lion - *Felis leo spelaea*).

Of the recovered bird remains from Sovjan, osteological analyses have determined the presence of: herons (*Ardeidae*), specifically the grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*) and little bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*); remains of birds from the *Anatinae* family (which includes swans, geese and ducks, however indistinguishable among the remains due to bad conservation of the samples); from the order of the *Gruiformes* there was the common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) and the Eurasian coot (*Fulica atra*); as well as indistinguishable remains of small birds from the order of the *Passeriformes*. With the exception of the bone fragments attributed to small passeriform birds, all other determined bird remains belong to water birds, which is quite understandable given the aquatic environment of Sovjan. The only reptile remains from the site belong to the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*).

Given that the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region is characterized by its lakes, fishing undoubtedly had an important role in the diet of its inhabitants during prehistoric and ancient times. Among the archaeozoological remains from Sovjan, experts have distinguished the following species of fish: European chub (*Leuciscus cephalus*); roach (either *Rutilus rubilio* or *Rutilus macedonicus*); and European bitterling (*Rhodeus amarus*). There were also other precisely indistinguishable remains belonging to the *Cyprinidae* family - possibly to the European chub (*Leuciscus cephalus*), common rudd (*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*), or common bleak (*Alburnus alburnus*), but in no way belonging to a tench (*Tinca tinca*), common bream (*Abramis brama*) or Eurasian carp

¹⁴ On all the presented archaeozoological data from Sovjan: Gardeisen A., Petit L. G., Piquès G., Cheylan M., Geniez P., "La recherche archéozoologique en Albanie: un état de la question à Sovjan (bassin de Korçë)", In: Rénard J., Touchais G. (eds.), *L'Albanie dans l'Europe préhistorique, Suppléments au Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 42, Athens 2002, 43-60.

(*Cyprinus carpio*). Also found at Sovjan were remains of mollusks, both land and aquatic species.

2.2. Visual representations of wild animals

Various wild animal species have also found their place within the pictorial, artistic and symbolic, repertoire of the material culture from the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region. For example, we have an image of a deer on an Iron Age fibula of Geometric Greek stylistic and typological origin discovered at Kuçi i Zi in the Korçë Plain.¹⁵ However, the most common Iron Age figural representations of animals in the region of our interest come in the form of birds or bird protomes, probably of aquatic birds. In fact, such representations are a common feature of the “Macedonian bronzes” group of symbolic bronze objects, as well as of the Balkan Iron Age visual repertoire as a whole. In the region of our interest, bronze pendants of various shapes that feature birds have been found at several Iron Age sites, such as the tumuli of Kuçi i Zi and Shuec in the Korçë Plain, as well as from the complex site of Plaoshnik in Ohrid (Pl. II: 10).¹⁶ We also have gold foil appliques in the shape of birds found within the rich graves of the famous Trebenishte necropolis, dated to the Late Iron Age i.e. Archaic Period (6th-5th c. BCE).¹⁷ In the following centuries, visual representations of birds become rarer. Surely, the most interesting of the later examples are the gold earring in the form of doves from the Hellenistic period, such as one beautiful pair from the site of Trebenishko Kale.¹⁸ Snakes also represent a very common and symbolically important motif among the material culture in the region from the Iron Age onwards. Examples of various types of objects featuring snakes, mostly jewelry, have been found on sites adjacent to all three lakes - Ohrid, Prespa and Maliq.¹⁹

¹⁵ Andrea Z., “La civilisation tumulaire du Bassin de Korçë et sa place dans les Balkans du Sud-Est”, In: *Iliria* 4 (1976), 135, 152, Pl. X.

¹⁶ From Kuçi i Zi: Andrea Z., “Tumat e Kuçit të Zi / Les tumuli de Kuç i Zi”, In: *Iliria* 6 (1976), 165-233, Tab. XV: 8-13. From Shuec: Andrea Z., “Tuma I e Shuecit (Rrethi i Korçës). Rezultatet e fushatës së parë të gërmimeve”, In: *Iliria* 34 (2009), 223-279, Tab. V: 63. From Ohrid: Кузман П., Димитрова Е., *Охрид sub specie aeternitatis*, Охрид 2010, 37.

¹⁷ Ardjanliev P., Chukalev K., Cvjetičanin T., Damyanov M., Krstić V., Papazovska A., Попов Н. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 238, 241, 255.

¹⁸ Битракова-Грозданова В., Маленко В., *Антички накит во Македонија: VI век пр. н. е. - VI век н. е.*, Скопје 1997, Cat. No. XXIII.

¹⁹ Jewelry from Trebenishte (Ohrid): Ardjanliev P., Chukalev K., Cvjetičanin T., Damyanov M., Krstić V., Papazovska A., Попов Н. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 230, 233, 234, 245, 260, 270, 280, 283, 284, 291, 299, 300, 306, 307, 318, 338, 341, 342, 355, 359, 360. Belt fittings from Selcë e Poshtëme: Проева Н., “Иконографија на токите за ремени од Десаретија и од северноилирските области / Des plaques de ceintures provenant des contrées illyriennes et de Dassarétie”, In: *Patrimonium* МК 3-4, 5-6 (2008-2009), 33-44. Jewelry from Golem Grad (Prespa): Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Голем Град: Преспа / Golem Grad: Prespa*, Vol. I, Скопје 2011, 164,

Another common animal motif in the region from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period is the lion (Pl. II: 5). Especially interesting are the depictions featuring a pair of symmetrical i.e. "heraldic" lions that flank an axial central motif, found on Archaic Period gold foil appliques from Trebenishte near Ohrid,²⁰ analogous to finds in Archontiko at Pella.²¹ Another pair of lions from Trebenishte, this time flanking i.e. attacking a wild boar, can be seen on a "Greco-Illyrian" helmet discovered in Grave VIII (6th-5th c. BCE).²² A particularly beautiful example is a gold pendant of a lion protome, combined with a Macedonian sun/star on the back, which was found on the island of Golem Grad in Prespa Lake, dated to the Classical Period.²³ Noteworthy are also the multiple gold earring with lion protomes from the Hellenistic Period, discovered at various sites in the wider region.²⁴ Given the great symbolic importance of the lion, especially in the cultural milieu of Ancient Macedonia, this should not come as a surprise to us. As noted by Herodotus and Aristotle, lions did in fact live in the territory between the rivers of Nestos and Achelous during the 1st millennium BCE.²⁵ This is even confirmed by archaeozoological data from the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age site of Kastanas in Central Macedonia²⁶ and, as we have seen - from Sovjan, where archaeologists have recovered the remains of a "large lion-sized feline".²⁷ It seems that, in

166, 167. From Nakolec (Prespa): Mitrevski D., "Prespa in prehistory according to archaeological finds", In: Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Голем Град: Пепеџа / Golem Grad: Prespa*, Vol. II, Skopje 2015, 44: Fig. 5, 45, 46, Tab.I:10. From Kuџi i Zi (Korџe/Maliq Lake): Andrea Z., "Tumat e Kuџit tе Zi / Les tumuli de Kuџi i Zi", In: *Iliria* 6 (1976), 192, Tab.X: V.71 - 1.

²⁰ Ardjanliev P., Chukalev K., Cvjetičanin T., Damyanov M., Krstić V., Papazovska A., Popov H. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 254, 263. Other lion depictions from Trebenishte: *Ibid.*, 235, 245, 312, 322.

²¹ Lilibaki-Akamati M., Akamatis I. M., Chrysostomou A., Chrysostomou P., *The Archaeological Museum of Pella*, Athens 2011, 298, 307, 321, 377, 381, 383.

²² Ardjanliev P., Chukalev K., Cvjetičanin T., Damyanov M., Krstić V., Papazovska A., Popov H. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 276, Cat.No.104. On the helmet and scene with parallels: Blečić M., "Status, symbols, sacrifices, offerings. The diverse meanings of Illyrian helmets", In: *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu* 40/1 (2007), 73-116.

²³ Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Голем Град: Пепеџа / Golem Grad: Prespa*, Vol. I, Skopje 2011, 168-172.

²⁴ From the northern shore of Lake Ohrid: Битракова-Грозданова В., Маленко В., *Антички наќиџ во Македонија: VI век љр. н. е. - VI век н.е.*, Скопје 1997, Cat. Nos. XI, XII, XIII, XIV, and XVI.

²⁵ Herodotus, *Histories*, VII. 125-126; Aristotle, *Historia animalium*, VI, 579b.

²⁶ On archaeozoological lion finds in the Balkans, including the site of Kastanas: Bartosiewicz L., "A lion's share of attention: Archaeozoology and the historical record", In: *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 60/1 (2009), 275-289.

²⁷ Gardeisen A., Petit L. G., Piquès G., Cheylan M., Geniez P., "La recherche archéozoologique en Albanie: un état de la question à Sovjan (bassin de Korџe)", In: Rénard J., Touchais G. (eds.), *L'Albanie dans l'Europe préhistorique, Suppléments au Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 42, Athens 2002, 44, 60.

addition to being an act of “pest removal” for the wellbeing of livestock, lion hunting was also an important social activity within Ancient Macedonian society, as evidenced by the famous lion hunting mosaic scene from the capital city of Pella.²⁸ Nevertheless, despite the abundance of animal depictions that fulfill our geographical and chronological criteria, none of them explicitly show a scene of humans hunting them.

2.3. Fishing implements

Given the geomorphology of the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region, fishing was surely an important economic activity for its inhabitants. From the pile-dwelling settlement of Plocha Michov Grad on Ohrid Lake we have several bronze fishhooks (Pl. I: 6) that were probably used in the Bronze Age or Early Iron Age, but unfortunately cannot be dated more precisely. The same site has also yielded numerous flat circular ceramic objects with small perforations of a varying number, which could have been used as weights for fishing nets.²⁹ Another bronze fishhook (Pl. I: 7), but this time from a Hellenistic context, was found on the island of Golem Grad in Prespa Lake, along with ichthyae ceramic plates for serving fish, as well as weights that were probably used for fishing nets.³⁰

When talking about fishing, we should also mention the 12 circular structures at the site of Anche near Krani (Pl. I: 4, 5), on the eastern coast of Lake Prespa, which according to Bitrakova-Grozdanova et al. (2015) could have been used for salting fish.³¹ The structures were circularly outlined by stone blocks and had a diameter of 5 to 8 meters. The three circular structures that were excavated did not yield any archaeological material that would date them. However, due to their immediate proximity to a Hellenistic residential complex, it is thought that they also belong to the same period. In support of their interpretation that the circular structures were used to salt fish, the authors reference an account by Strabo regarding this region: “Near the

²⁸ On the lion hunt mosaic from Pella: Lilibaki-Akamati M., Akamatis I. M., Chrysostomou A., Chrysostomou P., *The Archaeological Museum of Pella*, Athens 2011, 141-144.

²⁹ Наумов Г., Хафнер А., Танески Б., Балмер А., Рајх Ј., Хоштатлер М, Болигер М., Француз Ц., Мачковски А., Богард Е., Антолин Ф., Чарлс М., Тинер В., дел Молињо Ц.-М., Логер А., “Истражување на локалитетот Плоча-Миџов Град кај Градиште (Охридско Езеро) во 2019 година / Research in 2019 at the site of Ploča-Mičov Grad near Gradište (Lake Ohrid)”, In: *Patrimonium MK* 17 (2019), 23, 24, сл.15: в-г, сл. 17: з.

³⁰ Битракова-Грозданова В., “Ископувањата на Голем Град во 1980 година / Les fouilles de 1980 sur l'île de Golem Grad”, In: *Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica* 9, Скопје 1988, 203-210 (203, 207, Fig. 7, Fig. 8).

³¹ Grozdanova V. B., Pupaleski B., Radevski M., Lilčić V., “Settlements on the eastern shore of the Lake”, In: Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Голем Град: Преспа / Golem Grad: Prespa*, Vol. II, Скопје 2015, 21-28.

road to Candavia are the lakes about Lychnidus, which furnish large supplies of fish for salting, and rivers, some of which empty themselves into the Ionian Gulf.³²

3. Agriculture and animal husbandry

3.1. Agriculture (archaeobotanical data, agricultural tools, visual representations and historical accounts)

The archaeobotanical data from the Late Bronze Age layers of Sovjan, which we suspect would also apply to the subsequent Early Iron Age, shows that the inhabitants of this pile-dwelling settlement cultivated the following cereals: einkorn wheat (*Triticum monococcum*), emmer wheat (*Triticum diccoccum*), bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum*), hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) and millet (*Panicum miliaceum*). In terms of pulse crops, they had: lentil (*Lens culinaris*), bitter vetch (*Vicia ervilia*), peas (*Pisum* sp.), and fava beans (*Vicia faba*). Also recovered were remains of flax (*Linum* sp.) and poppies (*Papaver* sp.).³³ At the synchronous pile-dwelling settlement of Plocha Michov Grad, archaeologists have found remains of: einkorn wheat (*Triticum monococcum*), emmer wheat (*Triticum diccoccum*), lentils (*Lens culinaris*), peas (*Pisum* sp.), flax (*Linum usitatissimum*) and poppies (*Papaver somniferu*).³⁴ The harvesting and grinding of cereals at both pile-dwelling settlements has been indicated by the discovery of flint blades that were inserted into sickles, as well as the discovery of numerous grinding stones for cereals (Pl. II: 1).³⁵

³² Strabo, *Geographica*, VII. 7. 8.

³³ Lera P., Prendi F., Touchais G., Dufaure J.-J., Fouache E., Denèfle M., Hansen J., Martinez S., “Sovjan (Albanie)”, In: *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 120/2 (1996), 995-1026; Fouache E., Dufaure J.-J., Denèfle M., Lézine A.-M., Léra P., Prendi F., Touchais G., “Man and environment around lake Maliq (southern Albania) during the Late Holocene”, In: *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 10/ 2 (2001), 79-86; Allen S. E., “The Palaeoethnobotany of Sovjan, Albania: Preliminary Results”, In: Rénard J., Touchais G. (eds.), *L’Albanie dans l’Europe préhistorique, Suppléments au Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 42, Athens 2002, 61-72.

³⁴ Наумов Г., Хафнер А., Танески Б., Балмер А., Рајх Ј., Хоштатлер М., Болигер М., Француз Џ., Мачковски А., Богард Е., Антолин Ф., Чарлс М., Тинер В., дел Молињо Џ.-М., Лотер А., “Истражување на локалитетот Плоча-Миќов Град кај Градиште (Охридско Езеро) во 2019 година / Research in 2019 at the site of Ploča-Mičov Grad near Gradište (Lake Ohrid)”, In: *Patrimonium MK* 17 (2019), 11-46.

³⁵ Lera P., Prendi F., Touchais G., Dufaure J.-J., Fouache E., Denèfle M., Hansen J., Martinez S., “Sovjan (Albanie)”, In: *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 120/2 (1996), 995-1026; Наумов Г., Хафнер А., Танески Б., Рајх Ј., Хоштатлер М., Годороска В., Еменегер Ј., Штехели К., Зидат С., Пападополу С., Француз Џ., Болигер М., “Истражување во 2018 година на локалитетот Плоча-Миќов Град во Охридското Езеро / Research in 2018 at Ploča-Mičov Grad site on the Lake Ohrid”, In: *Patrimonium MK* 16 (2018), 9-36; Наумов Г., Хафнер А., Танески Б., Балмер А., Рајх Ј., Хоштатлер М., Болигер М., Француз Џ., Мачковски А., Богард Е., Антолин Ф., Чарлс М., Тинер В., дел Молињо Џ.-М., Лотер А., “Истражување на локалитетот

Diachronically, studies of carbonated cereals found in Hellenistic pithoi discovered in the Korçë Plain (3rd-1st c. BCE) indicate the presence of wheat, barley, and in some cases even hemp seeds. One of those pythoi, discovered at Goricat e Trenit, also features a schematized pictorial representation of a human plowing with the help of some harnessed animal (Pl. II: 2).³⁶ From the latter half of the 1st millennium BCE, we also have a metal blade discovered at Selcë e Poshtëme that could have been used for the pruning and harvesting of grapes.³⁷

In this context, we should also reference the account of Livy, who describing military action during the Second Roman-Macedonian War (200-197 BCE), indicates significant production of cereals among the Dassaretii, at least in the Hellenistic period: “He [the Roman consul] was leading the army through the territory of the Dassaretii, carrying with him untouched the grain he had brought from winter quarters, since the country supplied adequately the needs of the soldiers. ... He established a base near Lyncus on the river Bevus; from there he sent troops to forage among the granaries of the Dassaretii.”³⁸

3.2. Animal husbandry (archaeozoological data, relations with settlement organization, historical accounts and visual representations)

As in the case with the wild animals, in order to get a general idea of the domesticated animals that were present in the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region during the Bronze and Iron Ages, we must once again consult the archaeozoological study done by Gardeisen et al. (2002) regarding the pile-dwelling settlement of Sovjan.³⁹ The analyses of the recovered osteological remains point to the presence of the following domesticated animal species: small horse (*Equus* sp.), cattle (*Bos Taurus*), sheep (*Ovis aries*), goat (*Capra hircus*), pig (*Sus scrofa domestica*) and dog (*Canis familiaris*). The majority of the recovered remains belonged to sheep, followed by goats, then by pigs, and then by cattle. These were in fact the animals that were exploited for the consumpti-

Плоча-Миџов Град кај Градиште (Охридско Езеро) во 2019 година / Research in 2019 at the site of Ploča-Mičov Grad near Gradište (Lake Ohrid)”, In: *Patrimonium MK* 17 (2019), 11-46.

³⁶ Léra P., “Pitosa antike me vula nga rrethi i Korçës / Pythos antiquae munis d'estampilles découverts dans le district de Korça”, In: *Iliria* 13/2 (1983), 211-222.

³⁷ Ceka N., “Qyteti ilir në Selcën e Poshtëme”, In: *Iliria* 2 (1972), 157, Tab. VIII, 7; Shpuza S., “Importimi dhe prodhimi i verës dhe vajit në Ilirinë e Jugut (shekujt III-I p. e. s.) / Import and Local Production of Wine and Oil in the South Illyria (III-I Centuries B. C.)”, In: *Iliria* 33 (2007), 219-232 (227, 228, Fig.2).

³⁸ Titus Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, XXXI. 33. 4-6. (trans. Evan T. Sage, Loeb Classical Library, 1935)

³⁹ Gardeisen A., Petit L. G., Piquès G., Cheylan M., Geniez P., “La recherche archéozoologique en Albanie: un état de la question à Sovjan (bassin de Korçë)”, In: Rénard J., Touchais G. (eds.), *L'Albanie dans l'Europe préhistorique, Suppléments au Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 42, Athens 2002, 43-60.

on of meat, but also for acquiring secondary products such as milk, wool, leather, horn, and bones. The animals were killed at various ages, but half of the total remains belonged to young or very young animals, which, in turn, would suggest local breeding. The authors of the study claim that consumption of dogs is also attested at Sovjan. This last piece of information should in no way surprise us, given the plentiful evidence for the killing of dogs, for consumption or ritual purposes, from numerous prehistoric sites in the Balkans, including the synchronous site of Kastanas in Central Macedonia.⁴⁰

Another fact that should not surprise us is the majority presence of sheep and goat remains, given that these species of animals were the most numerous livestock in the wider Mediterranean and Balkan region. Given the location of this region in the western part of the Balkans, it is enticing to think where it would fit in the prehistoric tradition of Adriatic i.e. Dinaric pastoralism.⁴¹ The practice of caves being used as pastoral camps, reflected in the archaeological record of the East Adriatic, but also in Homer's written account of Odyssey's encounter with the pastoralist Cyclops, could perhaps be also connected to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age cave dwelling site of Tren⁴² at the Small Prespa Lake?

We also think that the changes in settlement organization that happened in the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region during the Early Iron Age, resulting in the movement of population towards higher ground i.e. hilltops, could have also led to greater dependence on animal husbandry, than in the previous Late Bronze Age period with its characteristic pile-dwelling settlements on lake shores. Regarding the significance of animal husbandry in the mountainous regions of Upper Macedonia, we should also mention the legend recorded by Herodotus' about the Argead brothers Perdikkas, Gauanes and Aeropus: "Three brothers of the lineage of Temenus came as banished men from Argos to Illyria, Gauanes and Aeropus and Perdikkas; and from Illyria they crossed over into the highlands of Macedonia till they came to the town Le-

⁴⁰ Trantalidou K., "Companions from the oldest Times: Dogs in Ancient Greek Literature, Iconography and Osteological Testimony", In: Snyder L., Moore E. (eds.), *Dogs and People in Social, Working, Economic or Symbolic Interaction*, Durham: 9th ICAZ Conference, August 2002 (2006), 96-119; Trantalidou K., "Active responses of Early Iron Age Aegean communities to their natural and social environment: the evidence from the animal bones", In: *Regional stories: towards a new perception of the early Greek world, Acts of an international symposium in honor of Professor Jan Bouzek, Volos 18-21 June 2015*, Volos 2017, 633-668.

⁴¹ Mlekuž D., "Who were the Cyclopes? Odyssey and Neolithic, Eneolithic and Bronze Age pastoralists from the east Adriatic coast and Dinarides", In: M. Blečić et al. (eds.), *Scripta praehistorica in honorem Biba Teržan, Situla 44*, Ljubljana 2007, 1-14.

⁴² Korkuti M., "Vendbanimi prehistorik i Trenit / L'agglomération préhistorique de Tren", In: *Iliria 1* (1971), 31-48; Agolli E., "Mbi modelin e vendbanimit gjatë epokave të Bronxit të vonë dhe Hekurit të Hershëm rreth liqenit të Prespës së Vogël / The settlement pattern during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age around the small Lake of Prespa", In: *Iliria 40* (2016), 39-57.

baea. There they served for wages as thralls in the king's household, one tending horses and another oxen, and Perdiccas, who was the youngest, the lesser flocks.”⁴³

While discussing animal husbandry in the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region during the 1st millennium BCE, we should also note the visual representations of domesticated animals that fit the geographical and chronological criteria. Visual representations of rams are found on a black-figured kylix from Trebenishte (late 6th c. BCE) (Pl. II: 7), on a gold bracelet from Gorna Porta-Ohrid, and on a bronze helmet also from Gorna Porta-Ohrid (both from the 4th c. BCE). Ram's horns are also an attribute of Zeus on the obverse of the local coins minted by the Dessaretii in the Hellenistic period (Pl. II: 14).⁴⁴ Depictions of bovine animals are present on a large bronze krater from Trebenishte (6th-5th c. BCE) (Pl. II: 4), on jewelry from the Hellenistic period, and on Hellenistic coins that were minted in the Adriatic towns of Dyrrachium and Appolonia or North Aegean towns of Amphipolis and Thessaloniki, but eventually found their way to the Prespa-Ohrid-Maliq region.⁴⁵ The necropolis of Trebenishte has also given us two solid bronze figurines of reclining goats (6th century BCE) (Pl. II: 3), which were probably applied to a dinos-krater. Other depiction of goats appear on Macedonian coins from the Hellenistic period found at Plaoshnik-Ohrid.⁴⁶ Depictions of horses are found on numerous types of ob-

⁴³ Herodotus, *Histories*, VIII. 137. (trans. A. D. Godley, Loeb Classical Library, Vol. IV, 1925)

⁴⁴ Kylix from Trebenishte: Ardjanliev P., Chukalev K., Cvjetičanin T., Damyanov M., Krstić V., Papazovska A., Popov H. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 325 (Cat.no.224); Санев Г., “Појава и карактеристики на црнофигуралната керамика во Охридско-Струшкиот регион / The appearance and features of the black-figure ceramics in the Ohrid-Struga region”, In: *Monumenta* 5, Skopje: MANU, 2021, 151-168 (156-157, T.II-2). On the bracelet and helmet from Gorna Porta-Ohrid: Guštin M., Kuzman P., “The Chrysomallos from Lychnidon”, In: Duev R. (ed.), *Science and society: Contribution of humanities and social sciences*, Skopje: Faculty of Philosophy, 2021, 73-91. On the coins of the Dessaretii: Арцанлиев П., “Монетоквањето на Десаретите / The coinage of the Desaretai”, In: *Patrimonium MK* 16 (2018), 127-136.

⁴⁵ Krater from Trebenishte: Ardjanliev P., Chukalev K., Cvjetičanin T., Damyanov M., Krstić V., Papazovska A., Popov H. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 233 (Cat.no.13). Examples of jewelry from Ohrid: Битракова-Грозданова В., Маленко В., *Антички накит во Македонија: VI век пр. н. е. - VI век н.е.*, Скопје 1997, Cat. No. XV, XVII. Examples of coins from Nakolec (Prespa): Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Голем Град: Преста / Golem Grad: Prespa*, Vol. II, Skopje 2015, 195-202. Examples of coins from Ohrid: Pavlovska E., “The coins of Macedon from Samuel's Fortress, Ohrid”, In: *Monumenta* 5, Skopje: MANU, 2021, 311-350 (Cat.nos. 152, 153, 209).

⁴⁶ Examples from Trebenishte: Ardjanliev P., Chukalev K., Cvjetičanin T., Damyanov M., Krstić V., Papazovska A., Popov H. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 234 (Cat.no.15); Mutafchieva Y., “The Bronze Vases from Trebenishte”, In: Ardjanliev et al. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 87-95; Blečić-Kavur M., “Medium and motif: Goat in the bestiary of the Iron Age Caput Adriae”, In: *Monumenta* 5, Skopje: MANU, 2021, 125-150. Coins from Plaoshnik-Ohrid: Pavlovska E., “The coins of Macedon from Samuel's Fortress, Ohrid”, In: *Monumenta* 5, Skopje: MANU, 2021, 311-350 (Cat. nos. 130, 135, 157, 202, 215).

jects - vessels, armor, belt fittings and coins, most commonly in the role of mounts for riders and warriors (Pl. II: 6).⁴⁷ Representation of canines are found on a bronze tripod from Trebenishte (6th-5th c. BCE), on a black-figured skyphos from Sveti Ilija near Delogozhda (6th-5th c. BCE), as well as on jewelry from Deboj-Ohrid and Plaoshnik-Ohrid discovered in Hellenistic period graves.⁴⁸

On one gold funerary mask from Trebenishte there is also a depiction of a bee.⁴⁹ Since bronze metal casting (see further) often uses a wax matrix, we could also assume that the inhabitants of the region were familiar with beekeeping and the production of honey and beeswax.

4. Ceramic production

As in many places in the world, ceramic production in the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region began with the Neolithic. Fast forward to the Early Iron Age i.e. the beginning of the timeframe that interests us, this region produced its own kind of matt-painted pottery (Pl. II: 8), as part of the cultural phenomenon of “Western Macedonian matt-painted pottery”, building upon the Late Bronze Age traditions of the Devoll cultural group.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Examples from Plaoshnik-Ohrid and Trebenishte: Ardjanliev P., Chukalev K., Cvjetićanin T., Damyanov M., Krstić V., Papazovska A., Popov H. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 175, 245, 257, 266, 276, 291. On belt fittings from Selcë e Poshtëme: Проева Н., “Иконографија на токите за ремени од Десаретија и од северноилирските области / Des plaques de ceintures provenant des contrées illyriennes et de Dassarétie”, In: Patrimonium MK 3-4, 5-6 (2008-2009), 33-44. On coins from Golem Grad (Prespa): Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Голем Град: Препџа / Golem Grad: Prespa*, Vol. II, Skopje 2015, 151-157. On coins from Ohrid: Pavlovska E., “The coins of Macedon from Samuel's Fortress, Ohrid”, In: *Monumenta 5*, Skopje: MANU, 2021, 311-350.

⁴⁸ On the bronze tripod from Trebenishte: Ardjanliev P., Chukalev K., Cvjetićanin T., Damyanov M., Krstić V., Papazovska A., Popov H. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 291 (Cat.no.134). On the skyphos from Sveti Ilija-Delgozhda: Санев Г., “Појава и карактеристики на црнофигуралната керамика во Охридско-Струшкиот регион / The appearance and features of the black-figure ceramics in the Ohrid-Struga region”, In: *Monumenta 5*, Skopje: MANU, 2021, 151-168 (157, T.II-3). Jewelry from Deboj-Ohrid: Битракова-Грозданова В., Маленко В., *Антички накит во Македонија: VI век пр. н. е. - VI век н.е.*, Скопје 1997, Cat. No. XXV. Jewelry from Plaoshnik-Ohrid: Кузман П., “Античка некропола во Самуиловата тврдина/цитадела во Охрид / A necropolis from the Hellenistic period at Samuel's Fortress/Citadel in Ohrid”, In: *Monumenta 5*, Skopje: MANU, 2021, 279-310.

⁴⁹ Ardjanliev P., Chukalev K., Cvjetićanin T., Damyanov M., Krstić V., Papazovska A., Popov H. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 226 (Cat.No. 1).

⁵⁰ Митревски Д., *На север од Етејскиот свет*, Скопје 2021, 140-144; Idem, “Карактерот на железнодопската култура во Охридско / The features of the Iron Age culture in the Ohrid region”, In: *Monumenta 5*, Skopje: MANU, 2021, 85-104; Papazovska A., “Geometric elements in Iron Age material culture / Геометриски елементи во материјалната култура на железното време”, In: *Monumenta 5*, Skopje: MANU, 2021, 105-124.

PLATE II



In the subsequent centuries, the region continued to produce its own local pottery (Pl. II: 9), in addition to the luxurious imports from distant production centers.⁵¹

Stamps on storage vessels⁵² and roof tiles⁵³ from the Hellenistic period also indicate the presence of local ceramic workshops, but such synchronous objects have so far not been discovered during archaeological excavations in the region. Instead, there have been discovered large kilns from the Late Roman period, which were used for producing ceramic construction materials, at Asamati in Prespa⁵⁴ and along the road from Ohrid to Sveti Naum.⁵⁵ In context of all this, it should also be noted that the Prespa region, due to its significant deposits of clay, has a long-standing tradition of ceramic production up to this day.⁵⁶

5. Mining and metallurgy

The stone moulds for the smelting of metal axes discovered at the pile-dwelling settlements of Maliq and Sovjan on Lake Maliq, as well as the final products of bronze axes found at various sites in the region, indicate that metallurgy was part of the local economy already in the Late Bronze Age.⁵⁷ However, it seems that its significance increased notably since the Early Iron Age i.e. the movement of the po-

⁵¹ Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Лихниг и Децапейџија / Lychnidios et Dassaretie*, Skopje 2017, 267-292; Blazhevska S., “Characteristics of the Local Pottery from Trebenishte”, In: Ardjanliev et al. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 143-149.

⁵² Léra P., “Pitosa antike me vula nga rrethi i Korçës / Pythos antiques munis d'estampilles découverts dans le district de Korça”, In: *Iliria* 13/2 (1983), 211-222.

⁵³ Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Голем Град: Преспја / Golem Grad: Prespa*, Vol. I, Skopje 2011, 201-203.

⁵⁴ Митревски Д., “Црква Св. Недела, село Асамати”, Во: *Македонски археолошки преглед* 1, Скопје: УЗКН, 2008. On Late Roman ceramic roof tiles from the island of Golem Grad in Prespa Lake: Spasova D., “Керамички покривни елементи од Голем Град / Ceramic roof tiles from Golem Grad”, In: Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Голем Град: Преспја / Golem Grad: Prespa*, Vol. II, Skopje 2015, 87-100.

⁵⁵ Weissová B., Tušlová P., Ardjanliev P., Verčik M., “The Frontier Studies. Survey of the Northern Part of the Lake Ohrid Basin, Preliminary Report on the Season 2017”, In: *Studia Herceunia* XXII/1 (2018), 99-133 (112).

⁵⁶ Ефтимовски И., *Економијата на Преспја низ вековите - водич низ изложбата*, Ресен 2018, 4-5.

⁵⁷ Bunguri A., “Sëpatat dyshe prej bronzi në Shqipëri / Bronze Double Axes from Albania”, In: *Iliria* 36 (2012), 7-45; Kleitsas C. N., “Ideology, production and consumption of metal axes in Epirus and Albania during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age”, In: Lamboley J.-L., Përzhita L., Skenderaj A. (eds.), *L'Illyrie méridionale et l'Épire dans l'antiquité VI, Actes du VIe colloque international de Tirana (20–23 mai 2015)*, Paris 2018, 57-65 (60, 65). There are even older metal products found in this region, such as the Eneolithic/Early Bronze Age copper axe from Prespa (it might however be an import from the Danube-Carpathian region): Митовски М., *Рударството и металургијата низ праисторијата на тлошто на Република Македонија*, магистерски труд, Филозофски факултет, Скопје 2013, 304, 322, 369, Т.LV: Слика 92, Т. LVI: Слика 94, 1А.

pulation towards higher ground and the establishment of numerous hilltop settlements. Regarding the concentration of Early Iron Age hilltop settlements at the south-western tip of the Small Prespa Lake, G. Karauskaj proposes the following interpretation: "Perhaps, the pre-historic inhabitants of this region were pushed to group together between the villages of Tren and Bilisht for another reason, namely the desire to exploit the iron deposits of the village of Bitincke, which is precisely between these two agglomerations."⁵⁸ Bitincke is in fact the location of one of the most significant iron-nickel deposits in the wider region. We think that a similar motivation stood behind the hilltop settlements on the northern and north-eastern edges of the Ohrid Plain and in Debarca, such as Kutlina-Velmej and Stranshta-Zlesti.⁵⁹ They belong to a mountainous region at the intersection of the modern municipalities of Ohrid, Debarca, Resen and Demir Hisar, which has been for a long time known for its rich deposits of various metal ores, primarily iron.⁶⁰ Particularly interesting is the site of Storenska Tumba at Openitsa, where according to M. Mitovski, in the period between 1927 and 1929, there was exploitation of gold, silver, lead and nickel.⁶¹ P. Lisičar also gives information on remains of past silver and lead mining and smelting along today's road between Ohrid and Resen, connecting these deposits with the potential location of the ancient town and mint of Damastion (we are however cautious and skeptical regarding the latter claim).⁶² Geological studies also indicate the presence of copper deposits in the mountainous region west of Resen (villages of Petrino and Evla).⁶³

Probably the most indicative archaeological finds for the rising importance of metallurgy in the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region during the Iron Age are the numerous examples of "Macedonian bronzes" from sites such as Kuç i Zi, Shuec, Plaoshnik-Ohrid (Pl. II: 10) and others, which could even constitute a separate "Western subgroup" of these highly symbolic objects.⁶⁴ Metallurgy undoubtedly continued to play a

⁵⁸ Karauskaj G., "Fortifications illyriennes de la première période du fer dans les environs de Korčë", In: *Iliria* 4 (1976), 197-221 (citation on p. 204).

⁵⁹ On the periodization of the hilltop settlements: Verčik M., Kerschbaum S., Tušlová P., Jančovič M., Donev D., Ardjanliev P., "Settlement Organisation In The Ohrid Region", In: *Studia Hercynia* XXIII/1 (2019), 26-54.

⁶⁰ Mitovski M., *Рударството и металургијата низ праисторијата на шлојто на Република Македонија*, магистерски труд, Филозофски факултет, Скопје 2013, 290-293

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 292.

⁶² Lisičar P., "Legenda o Kadmu i veze Lihnida s Egejom i Jadranom / De Cadmi fabula", In: *Živa Antika / Antiquité Vivante* 3/1-2 (1953), 245-261.

⁶³ Mitovski M., *Рударството и металургијата низ праисторијата на шлојто на Република Македонија*, магистерски труд, Филозофски факултет, Скопје 2013, 250, 297.

⁶⁴ Митревски Д., "Праисторија на Република Македонија", Во: Кузман П., Димитрова Е., Донеv Ј. (ред.), *Македонија: милениумски културно-историски факти*, Скопје 2013, 83-266 (228, 229); Чаусидис Н., *Македонските бронзи и религија*

very significant role in the further development of the region in the centuries that followed. As noted by D. Mitrevski: “... only metallurgy could provide rapid economic development, more precisely, a surplus of products for the development of trade, and thus for the rise of the local tribal aristocracy.”⁶⁵ Perhaps the material used in the creation of the gold foil funerary masks and other appliqués found in the “princely” graves at Trebenishte (6th-5th c. BCE) originated precisely from the aforementioned deposits at Openitsa? In any case, the rich Grave IX from Trebenishte has given us two iron tools that were usually used by blacksmiths – a spade and a pair of pliers (Pl. II: 11).⁶⁶ Additionally, a blacksmith's chisel (Pl. II: 12) has been found at the Hellenistic necropolis of Sveti Ilija near Delogozhda.⁶⁷ However, the most interesting metallurgical implement is surely the mobile smelting furnace (Pl. II: 13), probably from the Hellenistic period, discovered at the Ohrid Fortress.⁶⁸ In the Hellenistic period, this region also started to mint its own local bronze coinage, signed as coins of the Dessaretii (Pl. II: 14),⁶⁹ or as coins of the city of Lychnidos (Pl. II: 15).⁷⁰

6. Commerce and money

As of current archaeological knowledge, it seems that the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region began to participate in more international commerce in the Late Bronze Age, though the penetration of Mycenaean influence along the Devoll River.⁷¹ This was probably the impetus for the future establishment, during the Iron Age, of the so-called “Candavian Road” i.e. the later Via Egnatia, as the main line in the commerce

та и митологичката на железнообниите заедници од Средниот Балкан, Скопје 2017, 30; Митревски Д., *На север од Егејскиот свет*, Скопје 2021, 159, 177, Сл.95. Митревски Д., “Карактерот на железнодопската култура во Охридско / The features of the Iron Age culture in the Ohrid region”, In: *Monumenta* 5, Скопје: MANU, 2021, 85-104.

⁶⁵ Митревски Д., “Карактерот на железнодопската култура во Охридско / The features of the Iron Age culture in the Ohrid region”, In: *Monumenta* 5, Скопје: MANU, 2021, 85-104 (citation on p. 91).

⁶⁶ Babić S., Palavestra A., “Trebenishte and the Princely Graves of the European Early Iron Age”, In: Arđjanliev et al. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018, 187-193.

⁶⁷ Битракова-Грозданова В., *Споменици од хеленистичкиот период во СР Македонија*, Скопје 1987, 148, Т.III: 10.

⁶⁸ Митревски Д., “Карактерот на железнодопската култура во Охридско / The features of the Iron Age culture in the Ohrid region”, In: *Monumenta* 5, Скопје: MANU, 2021, 85-104 (91, Fig. 11).

⁶⁹ Размовска-Бачевска Д., *Монетоковањето во Охрид (Lychnidos): II век пр.н.е. - XIII-XVII век*, Охрид 2016, 18, 30, 31; Арјанлиев П., “Монетоковањето на Десаретите / The coinage of the Desaretai”, In: *Patrimonium* MK 16 (2018), 127-136.

⁷⁰ Размовска-Бачевска Д., *Монетоковањето во Охрид (Lychnidos): II век пр.н.е. - XIII-XVII век*, Охрид 2016; Битракова-Грозданова В., *Лихнид и Десаретија / Lychnidos et Dassaretie*, Скопје 2017, 413-416, 420.

⁷¹ Митревски Д., *На север од Егејскиот свет*, Скопје 2021, 88-93.

network of the Central Balkans, which also incorporated the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region (Pl. I: 1).⁷² In such a context, some even look for a historical basis in the legend of Cadmus and his arrival among the Encheleii that inhabited the region around Lake Ohrid.⁷³

In any case, the rich graves of the Trebenishte necropolis from the Archaic Period perfectly encapsulate the complex trade network in which this region began to participate at the middle of the 1st millennium BCE. Trebenishte was the final destination of amber from the Baltic, of bronze vessels from Southern Italy and Laconia, of pottery from Athens and Corinth, of glass and fiancé from the Levant and Egypt. At the same time, the local culture shared common features with Epirus to the southwest and especially with Macedonia to the east along the "Candavian Road" (the most notable being the golden foil masks and appliquéés with a funerary character).⁷⁴ With high probability, we could also propose that there was another trade route along the Drin River that connected our lake region with the lands to the north - the Polog Valley, Lake Shkodër, Kosovo, and from there further to Novi Pazar, Čačak, and Glasinac.⁷⁵

From the Classical period onwards, the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region also began to participate in monetary economy, with coins from both the east and west of the "Candavian Road" finding their way to this region.⁷⁶ As we noted previously, this region also began minting its own local coinage during the Hellenistic period, signed as coins of the town of Lychnidos, or of the Dessaretii (Pl. II: 14, 15).⁷⁷ With the arrival of the Romans, the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq region continued to function as an essential segment of the Via Egnatia (Pl. I: 1), connecting the South Adriatic with the North Aegean, the West with the East.⁷⁸

⁷² Ibid., 93, 142, 143.

⁷³ Lisičar P., "Legenda o Kadmu i veze Lihnida s Egejom i Jadranom / De Cadmi fabula", In: *Živa Antika / Antiquité Vivante* 3/1-2 (1953), 245-261.

⁷⁴ Ardjanliev P., Chukalev K., Cvjetičanin T., Damyantov M., Krstić V., Papazovska A., Popov H. (eds.), *100 Years of Trebenishte*, Sofia 2018. Also see: Stibbe C. M., *Trebenishte: The Fortunes of an Unusual Excavation*, Rome 2003, 89-109; Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., Лихнид и Десаретија / Lychnidos et Dassaretie, Skopje 2017, 179-194.

⁷⁵ Stibbe C. M., *Trebenishte: The Fortunes of an Unusual Excavation*, Rome 2003, 97-98, Fig.62.

⁷⁶ Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Голем Град: Преспа / Golem Grad: Prespa*, Vol. II, Skopje 2015, 151-157, 195-202; Pavlovska E., "The coins of Macedon from Samuel's Fortress, Ohrid", In: *Monumenta* 5, Skopje: MANU, 2021, 311-350.

⁷⁷ Размовска-Бачевска Д., *Монетоковањето во Охрид (Lychnidos): II век пр.н.е. - XIII-XVII век, Охрид* 2016; Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., *Лихнид и Десаретија / Lychnidos et Dassaretie*, Skopje 2017, 413-416, 420; Арцанлиев П., "Монетоковањето на Десаретите / The coinage of the Desaretai", In: *Patrimonium MK* 16 (2018), 127-136.

⁷⁸ Лилчиќ В., "Античка патна мрежа", Во: *Археолошка Карта на Република Македонија*, том I, МАНУ, Скопје 1994, 112-118; Лилчиќ В., "Виа Егнатија, Лихнид-

CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Plate I

1. Current map of the Ohrid-Prespa-Maliq Lake region with denoted sites mentioned in the paper and the route of the Via Egnatia (©Google Earth, edited by I. Eftimovski)

2. Parts of support poles from the pile-dwelling settlement of Plocha Michov Grad, Ohrid Lake, Bronze Age - Early Iron Age (photo: Г. Наумов, after Г. Наумов et al. 2018, 30, Сл.8)

3. Parts of support poles from the pile-dwelling settlement of Sovjan, Lake Maliq, Bronze Age - Early Iron Age (Drawing: S. Martinez, after P. Léra et al. 1996, 1010, Fig. 8)

4, 5. Circular structures at Anche, Krani, Prespa Lake, Hellenistic Period (?) (after V. Bitrakova-Grozdanova 2015, 27)

6. Bronze fishing hook from Plocha Michov Grad, Ohrid Lake, Bronze Age - Early Iron Age (photo: Г. Наумов/Т. Стојоска-Видовска, after Г. Наумов et al. 2019, 45, Сл. 16: з)

7. Bronze fishing hook from Golem Grad, Prespa Lake, Hellenistic Period (after В. Битракова Грозданова 1988, 207, Сл. 7)

Plate II

1. Grinding stone from Plocha Michov Grad, Ohrid Lake, Bronze Age - Early Iron Age (photo: Г. Наумов, after Г. Наумов et al. 2019, 46, Сл.17: а)

2. Depiction of a human plowing with the help of some harnessed animal, incision on a ceramic pythos, Goricat e Trenit, Hellenistic Period (after P. Léra 1983, 220, Tab. I: 2)

3. Bronze figurine of a goat, Trebenishte, Ohrid, Archaic Period, 6th-5th c. BCE (National Archaeological Institute with Museum Sofia, after P. Ardjanliev et al. 2018, 234, Cat.No.15)

4. Bovine figure in relief, detail from a bronze krater, Trebenishte, Ohrid, Archaic Period, 6th-5th c. BCE (National Archaeological Institute with Museum Sofia, after P. Ardjanliev et al. 2018, 56)

5. Bronze figurine of a lion, Trebenishte, Ohrid, Archaic Period, 6th-5th c. BCE (National Museum Belgrade, after P. Ardjanliev et al. 2018, 322, Cat.No.217)

6. Horseman in relief, detail from a bronze krater, Trebenishte, Ohrid, Archaic Period, 6th-5th c. BCE (National Museum Belgrade, after P. Ardjanliev et al. 2018, 57)

Ресен”, Во: *Македонско Наследство* 18, Скопје 2002, 33-44; Fasolo M., *La Via Egnatia I. Da Apollonia e Dyrrachium ad Herakleia Lynkestidos*, Roma 2003; Bitrakova-Grozdanova V., Лихнид и Десаретија / *Lychnidos et Dassaretie*, Скопје 2017, 147-178; Eftimovski I., “По трагите на Скиртијана – прилог кон убикација на една егнатиска патна станица во Преспанскиот регион / Following the traces of Scirtiana - locating an Egnatian road station in the Prespa region”, In: *AXIOS* 2 (2017), 30-56.

7. Painting of a ram, detail from a ceramic kylix, Trebenishte, Ohrid, Archaic Period, late 6th c. BCE (National Museum Belgrade, after P. Ardjanliev et al. 2018, 325, Cat.No.224)
8. Local matt-painted ceramic vessel, Plaoshnik, Ohrid, Early Iron Age (after Митревски 2013, Сл.78: 6)
9. Local ceramic oinochoe, Tri Celjusti and Vrtuljka, Trebenishte, Ohrid, late 4th c. BCE (Ohrid Museum, after P. Ardjanliev et al. 2018, 332, Cat. No.245)
10. Bronze pendants, Plaoshnik, Ohrid, Iron Age (photo: M. Тутковски, after П. Кузман & Е. Димитрова 2010, 37)
11. Iron spade and pliers, Trebenishte, Ohrid, Archaic Period, 6th-5th c. BCE (after S. Babić & A. Palavestra in P. Ardjanliev et al. 2018, 192: Fig. 4; 193: Fig. 5)
12. Iron blacksmithing chisel, Sveti Ilija, Delogozhda, Hellenistic period (after В. Битракова-Грозданова 1987, 148, Т.ІІІ:10)
13. Mobile smelting furnace, Plaoshnik, Ohrid, Hellenistic period (after Д. Митревски in Monumenta V, 2021, 104, Сл. 11)
14. Bronze coin of the Desaretii, Plaoshnik, Ohrid, Hellenistic period (after П. Арџанлиев 2018, 129, Т.І: 1)
15. Bronze coin of Lychnidios, Ohrid region, Hellenistic period, 2nd c. BCE (photo: M. Тутковски, after П. Кузман & Е. Димитрова 2010, 61).

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