

Dejan Vemić

**LATE MEDIEVAL TOMBSTONES (STEĆCI) IN THE AREA OF  
ŽABLJAK, MONTENEGRO**

***MA Thesis in Medieval Studies***

Central European University

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June 2011

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by

Dejan Vemić

(Serbia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,  
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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Thesis Supervisor

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Budapest, June 2011

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## INTRODUCTION

*Stećak* (sing.) or *stećci* (pl.) are late medieval tombstones found in the western Balkans, predominantly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, southern Croatia, northern Montenegro, and western Serbia (see Map 1). They are a unique phenomenon. Unlike antique sarcophagi, *stećci* are pseudo-sarcophagi; they are solid blocks of stone positioned on top of graves. They appear in the shape of slabs, trunks, crosses, and pillars; the shape most similar to antique sarcophagi is the high pseudo-sarcophagus (with a “roof”).<sup>1</sup> The term *stećak* itself literally means *standing tombstone*. It is the term mainly used by scholars and in the scholarly literature, while the local inhabitants usually call them by folkloric terms such as *Greek graveyards*, *Hungarian graveyards*, *limestones*, *stones*, and *graves*.<sup>2</sup> In older, mostly popular, literature these monuments were also known as *Bogomil gravestones* for their supposed association with the medieval Bogomil cult.

Although *stećci* have been investigated for more than a century and thousands of them have been found many questions still arise. Many monuments have been only been registered as existing, with no excavation; most of them have not been excavated archaeologically. Furthermore, many of the excavated cemeteries or single monuments have not been published,

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<sup>1</sup> *Stećci* gradually developed from slabs in late twelfth century to the shape of trunks and sarcophagi during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, getting higher during this time. See: Dubravko Lovrenović, *Stećci. Bosanko i humsko mramorje srednjeg vijeka* (*Stećci. Mramorje of Bosnia and Hum from the Middle Ages*) (Sarajevo: Rabić, 2009), 56-62; for the general classification of *stećci* shapes see: Šefik Bešliagić, *Stećci, kultura i umjetnost* (*Stećci, Culture and Art*) (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1982), 75-128; Emina Zečević, *Mramorje. Stećci zapadne Srbije* (*Mramorje. Stećci in West Serbia*) (Belgrade: Srpsko arheološko društvo, 2005), 25-50.

<sup>2</sup> In vernacular languages such names are: *Grčko Groblje* (*Greek Graveyard*), *Madjarsko Groblje* (*Hungarian Graveyard*), *Mramor* (sing.), *Mramorje* or *Mramorovi* (pl. meaning *Limestones*), *Kamenovi* (*Stones*), *Grobovi* (*Graves*).

so they still remain unknown to scholars. Finally, only a few attempts to present a general cultural framework and correlations amongst these monuments have been made until now. Furthermore, the fact is that some cemeteries have disappeared or are in danger.<sup>3</sup>

Scholarly research on *stećci* has already produced significant results for some general questions related to their number, dating, shapes, and motifs.<sup>4</sup> Several books published recently offer a complex picture of these monuments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, the region of Montenegro has remained mainly unexplored. Only a few articles have been published on the *stećci* of this region. A significant number of monuments and even cemeteries are still unknown or only recently discovered by scholarly research. Therefore, my intention is to present the relevant archaeological data from two cemeteries in Montenegro and to discuss these monuments in their regional context. The cemeteries of Novakovići and Bare Žugića are situated in northern Montenegro, both of them in the vicinity of the town of Žabljak.<sup>6</sup> In order to contextualize these cemeteries, I also present and discuss two other *stećci* from the region, monuments which have not been discussed in the scholarly literature until now. These *stećci* are particularly interesting because of their shapes and decorative motifs.

The primary aim of this thesis is to place these monuments within the broader group of all the *stećci* and to find potential correlations in their shapes and motifs with *stećci* from other regions. The general opinion is that all the influences on the *stećci* shapes and motifs can to be

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<sup>3</sup> At the medieval cemetery near Petrova Crkva in Nikšić (Montenegro) in 1949 about 400 *stećci* tombstones were registered, and some 30 years later only few dozen survived: Milenko Karan, *Psihologija stećka* (The Psychology of the Stećak) (Niš: Prosveta, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Šefik Bešliagić, *Stećci, kataloško-topografski pregled* (Stećci, a Catalogue and Topographic Survey) (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1971); eadem, *Stećci, kultura i umjetnost* (Stećci, Culture and Art) (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> Lovrenović, *Stećci. Bosanko i humsko mramorje srednjeg vijeka* (Stećci. Mramorje of Bosnia and Hum from the Middle Ages) (Sarajevo: Rabic, 2009); *Stećci-Katalog* (Stećci, the Catalogue) (Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2008); Emina Zečević, *Mramorje. Stećci zapadne Srbije* (Mramorje. Stećci in Western Serbia) (Belgrade: Srpsko arheološko društvo, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Šefik Bešliagić, “Stećci u okolini Žabljaka” (*Stećci in the Area of Žabljak*). *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja u Beogradu* 36 (1973): 111 – 138.

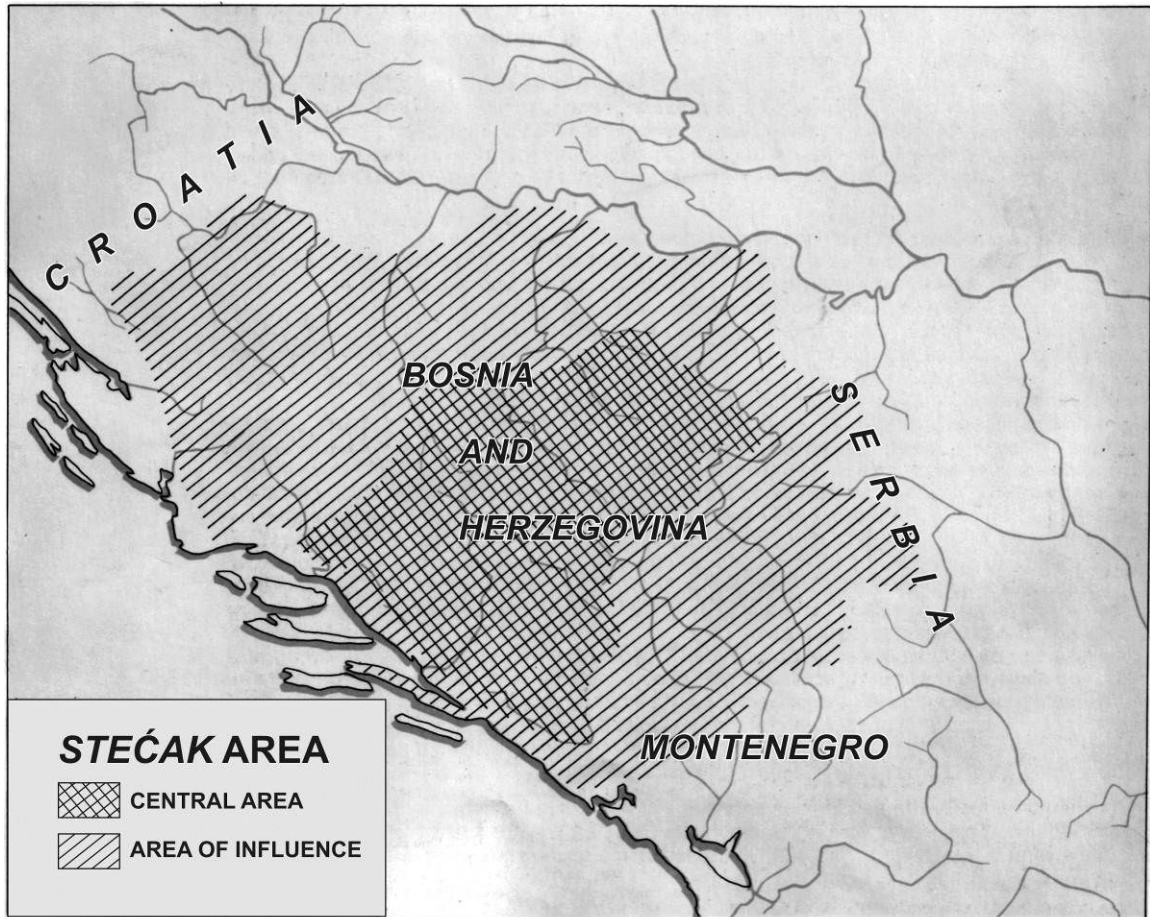
found in neighbouring areas. That opinion is to be tested here. Since these two cemeteries have not been excavated archaeologically, I will refer to some examples known from some other localities in order to give a more readable picture.

Some general questions concerning *stećci*, their construction, origin, and motifs will also be discussed here. Since the origin of *stećci* is a question of great scholarly debate, I shall refer briefly to that issue as well.

In general, this debate concerns whether their origin was religious (*Bogomil* hypothesis), ethnic (the *Vlach* hypothesis) or of a social character (*stećci* as a sign of social status).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Marian Wenzel, "Bosnian and Herzegovinian Tombstones--Who Made Them and Why," *Südost-Forschungen* 21 (1962): 102-143; Ante Milošević, *Stećci i Vlasi, Stećci i vlaške migracije 14. i 15. stoljeća u Dalmaciji i jugozapadnoj Bosni* (Stećci and Vlachs. Stećci and Vlach Migrations of 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries in Dalmatia and Southwest Bosnia) (Split: Regionalni zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture Split, 1991); Aleksandar Solovjev, "Simbolika srednjovjekovnih spomenika u Bosni i Hercegovini" (Symbolism of Medieval Tombstones in Bosnia and Herzegovina) *Godišnjak istorijskog društva Bosne i Hercegovine* 8 (1956): 5-67; "Le Symbolisme des monuments funéraires bogomiles et cathares" *Actes du 10. Congrès d'Etudes Byzantines*, Istanbul (1957): 162-165; "Bogomilentum und Bogumilengräber in den südslawischen Ländern," *Volker und Kulturen Südeuropas, Südeuropa-Verlagsgesellschaft* (1959): 173-199; John V. A. Fine, *The Bosnian Church. Its Place in State and Society from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A New Interpretation* (London: Saqi in association with The Bosnian Institute, 2007); eadem, *When Ethnicity Did Not Matter in the Balkans. A Study of Identity in Pre-Nationalist Croatia, Dalmatia, And Slavonia in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006); eadem, *The Early Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000); eadem, *The Late Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1987); eadem, *The Bosnian Church: A New Interpretation. A Study of the Bosnian Church and Its Place in State and Society from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1975).



Map 1



## 1. AN OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON *STEĆCI*

The oldest mention of *stećci* dates from 1530, from the notes of Benedict Curipeschitz, who was a member of an official Austrian delegation travelling to Constantinople.<sup>8</sup> Among the others, the Englishman Arthur Evans described some *stećci* during his travels through Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1875. For him they were “mysterious tombstones.”<sup>9</sup> He was the first to introduce the theory that *stećci* were the tombstones of medieval Bogomil heretics, a theory which enjoyed extreme popularity for quite a long time. During the Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina interest in these monuments increased, especially after the Provincial Museum (*Zemaljski muzej*) in Sarajevo was established in 1888. *Stećci* came into the focus of many foreign scholars. The first one who excavated them was an Austrian medical doctor, Felix Luschan. He found some Hungarian coins from the fourteenth century and was the first one to date the monuments to around the same period.

A Hungarian historian, János Asbóth, (his book in German was published under the name: Johann von Asbóth) travelled through Bosnia and Herzegovina several times between 1882 and 1885.<sup>10</sup> He described several necropolises throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina and ascribed *stećci* to the Bogomils.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, the first archaeologist who focussed on *stećci* was from Vienna, Dr. Moritz Hoernes. Since his field of interest was the Roman period, *stećci* did not make much of

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<sup>8</sup> Benedict Curipeschitz, *Itinerarum der Botschaftreise des Joseph v. Lamberg und Niclas Jurischitz durch Bosnien, Serbien, Bulgarien nach Konstantinopel 1530* (Innsbruck: 1910), 38-39.

<sup>9</sup> Bešliagić 1982, 12, 70; Arthur J. Evans, *Through Bosnia and the Herzegovina on Foot during the Insurrection, August and September 1875: with an Historical Review of Bosnia: and a Glimpse at the Croats, Slavonians, and the Ancient Republic of Ragusa* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1877), 170-175.

<sup>10</sup> His travel description on Bosnia is available in full text on the internet: the Hungarian version is at:

<http://www.archive.org/details/boszniasahercze01asbgoog> and the German version is at:

<http://www.archive.org/stream/bosnienunddiehe00asbgoog#page/n7/mode/1up>

<sup>11</sup> Bešliagić 1982, 14.

an impression on him. He examined about 100 necropolises and excavated some graves, although he did not find any cultural material in them. Regarding the motifs, Hoernes could not detect anything of Christian or religious character on them except the cross motifs.<sup>12</sup>

During the Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina, estimates of the number of *stećci* were made for the first time. The government of Bosnia and Herzegovina ordered the local police authorities and rangers to register all the visible *stećci*. During 1887 and 1888 they estimated the number of 27,067 monuments. Probably being aware of some irregularities, the authorities organised the same process again ten years later. During 1897 and 1898, the total number was established at 59,500, which appears to have been relatively precise and close to a later count from 1971.<sup>13</sup>

*Stećci* were presented internationally by Kosta Hörmann at the 11<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Congress in Kiev in 1899. He presented statistical data, maps and photos, and made a good impression among the scholars.<sup>14</sup>

A period of stagnation in research lasted from the beginning of twentieth century until the end of Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1918. The idea of the Bogomils as the creators of *stećci* took prominence, an idea that was widespread among scholars and influential for a long time.<sup>15</sup>

Between the World Wars, no systematic work was done on these monuments, and even interest among foreign scholars decreased a great deal. Only after the Second World War did a really methodological approach appear; due to the large number of localities and monuments a

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<sup>12</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 13-14.

<sup>13</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 16, 20.

<sup>14</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 15; Kosta Hörmann, "Srednjovjekovni spomenici Bosne i Hercegovine" (Medieval Tombstones of Bosnia and Herzegovina), *Trudy*, vol. 2 (Moscow 1902), 165-172; an interesting study written by Marina Antić, with good secondary literature on Kosta Hörmann is available on-line:

<http://wisc.academia.edu/MarinaAntic/Papers/124640/Historicizing-Bosnia--Kosta-H%C3%B6rmann-and-Bosnia%E2%80%99s-Encounter-with-Modernity>

<sup>15</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 16.

certain systematisation became a priority. The systematisation of recording the inscriptions on *stećci* in Bosnia and Herzegovina was done by the late 1960s. Several monographs about necropolises were published during the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>16</sup>

The first *summa* including all the regions with *stećci* was published in 1971, with the total number of *stećci* given as 69,356 found on 3162 localities.<sup>17</sup> Since it was primarily just a catalogue of the monuments and localities, the next logical step was the presentation of all the known data about the *stećci*. It was published in 1982.<sup>18</sup> These two studies of Šefik Bešliagić were the first serious attempts to discover a general framework of the complete use of these monuments.

Recently, Emina Zečević did the same systematisation for Serbia.<sup>19</sup> Her study has corrected the data given by Šefik Bešliagić that in Serbia there are 2267 monuments in 121 localities; Emina Zečević gives the number as 4118 monuments at 203 localities.<sup>20</sup> The most recent study is that by scholar Dubravko Lovrenović, presenting the most up-to-date data about the *stećci* in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>21</sup>

There is also a new catalogue of *stećci* covering the whole region.<sup>22</sup> The study of Croatian scholar Ante Milošević is of a special interest for my study. Although he mainly focuses on correlations between Vlach migrations and *stećci* in Dalmatia and south-western Bosnia (at the site of Bitelić), he did notice some similarities between the *stećci* of that area and those of northern Montenegro (Nikšić). My research in the area of Žabljak (northern Montenegro) has added more detail to detecting the relations between these two regions (see

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<sup>16</sup> Bešliagić 1982, 21.

<sup>17</sup> Bešliagić, 1971.

<sup>18</sup> Bešliagić, 1982.

<sup>19</sup> Zečević, *Mramorje*, (2005). Most of the *stećci* in Serbia are in its western part.

<sup>20</sup> Zečević 2005, 23-24.

<sup>21</sup> Lovrenović, *Stećci*, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> *Stećci-Katalog* (Stećci, the Catalogue). Zagreb, 2008.

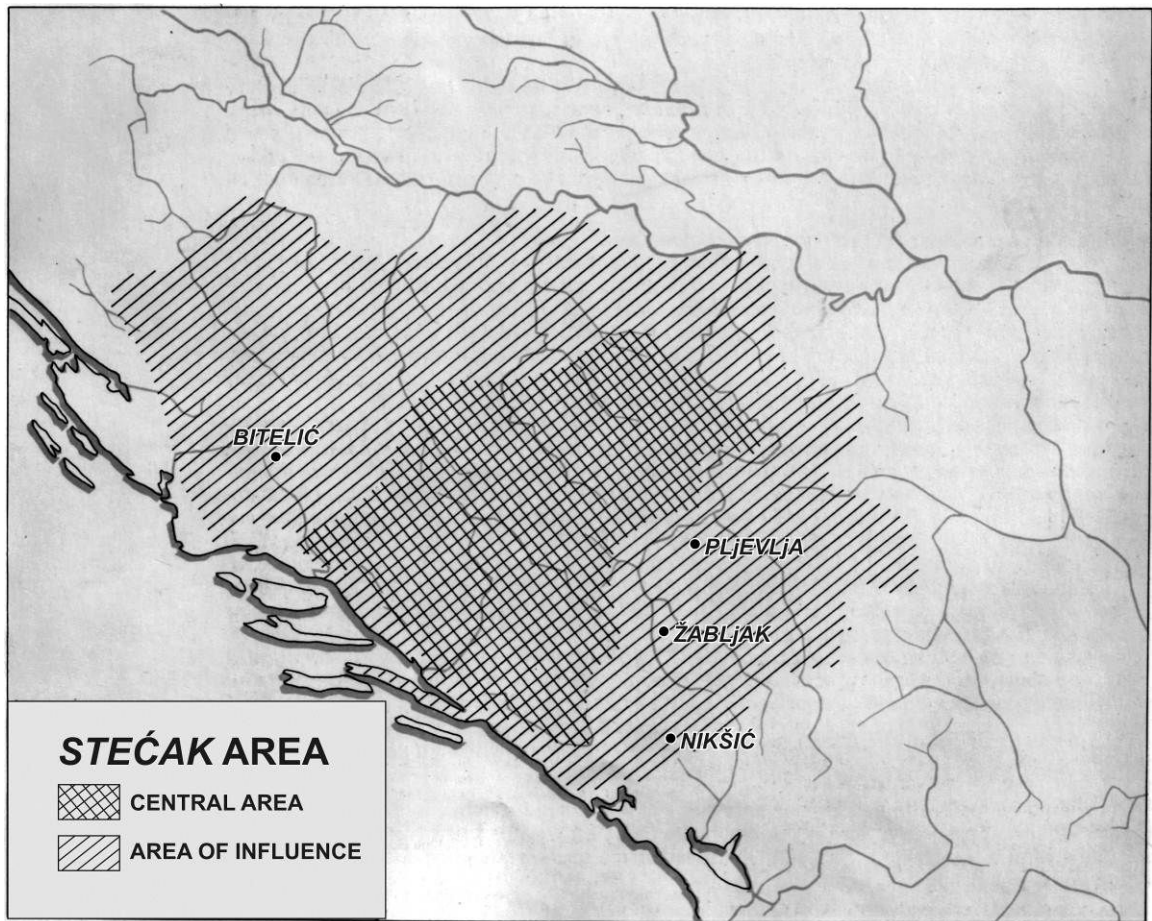
Map 2).<sup>23</sup> Due to their motifs, *stećci* in the vicinity of cities Pljevlja (Montenegro) are also of special interest for my study (see Map 2).

Among foreign scholars the greatest contribution to research on *stećci* was made by the American scholars Marian Wenzel and John V. A. Fine. While Marian Wenzel's field of interest was predominantly the decorative motifs on *stećci* and their origin, John V. A. Fine has mostly been interested in the political and religious history of medieval Bosnia and Herzegovina. His immense contribution is shedding light on the relations between *stećci*, the Bosnian Church, and Bogomilism.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Milošević 1991, 40-41. Until now there has only been one scholarly work concerning the two cemeteries of Novakovići and Bare Žugića particularly, actually the whole area of Žabljak. Bešlagić visited the area in July 1966, and presented the results of his research in 1973. The article contains just a short and incomplete description: Šefik Bešlagić, "Stećci u okolini Žabljaka" (Tombstones in the Area of Žabljak), *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja* 36 (1973): 111-136.

<sup>24</sup> Wenzel 1962; eadem 1965; Fine 1975; eadem 1987; eadem 2000; eadem 2006; eadem 2007.



Map 2

## 2. HOW AND WHY WERE *STEĆCI* MADE?

### 2.1. *Foundations of stećci*

Necropolises with *stećci* always seem to be in the vicinity of a quarry.<sup>25</sup> Although this is logical since these monuments are massive and heavy to transport, it also suggests that the presence of a quarry may actually have caused the foundation of a graveyard nearby. There are no historical sources describing exactly how the monuments were transported, yet one can assume that logs and sledges were used for this purpose. Some of the monuments weigh more than 30 tons.<sup>26</sup> All these facts imply the involvement of a large number of people. Once the stone (roughly modelled) was brought to the destination – the grave – a mason (called a *kovač*)<sup>27</sup> would undertake the final artistic job.

Another part in the process of making the final *stećak* tombstone was to prepare the grave for its foundation. On the surface and around the surface of a grave there is almost always a base made of rocks or smaller stone slabs. Its function is to keep the massive *stećak* standing above the grave. Some graves with lost tombstones can be recognized from the bases. Tombstones were usually put over long axis of the grave, oriented west-east, with the head of the deceased oriented towards the west, but some variations in the orientation of the graves were made due to the terrain. Some graves did not have such constructions and nor *stećci* above them. In fact, graves with *stećci* are in a minority in comparison with the graves without them. That relation is usually about 1:2 or even 1:3.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 37-39.

<sup>26</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 68.

<sup>27</sup> *Kovač* in modern Serbian means *smith/blacksmith*, although it seems that its archaic meaning was also *artist*.

<sup>28</sup> Maja Šunjić, “Medieval Monolithic Tombstones/*Stećci* at the Grebine Site Next to Čeveljuša (Plina) near Ploče.” *Opusculum Archaeologiae* 32 (2009): 153.

The graves are usually in a line, however, which suggests that graves without a tombstone may have had some kind of memorial made of wood. This indicates that probably not all of the population could afford massive decorated tombstones, but only wealthy people. A richly decorated, massive *stećak* was proof of someone's wealth and social power.<sup>29</sup>

## ***2.2. Construction of the Graves***

The graves differ a great deal in their construction.<sup>30</sup> Some of them have no construction at all, and the deceased would simply be laid into the ground. In some cases there was a board or a slab above the dead. Some were buried in coffins with or without metal fittings. There are also sarcophagi. Some of them are made of stone, but there are also those made of wood.<sup>31</sup> Some tombs were made of stone slabs with a kind of roof above the deceased.<sup>32</sup>

Each grave usually has just one individual, although in a number of cases there are several individuals inside the same grave. In many such cases this was apparently secondary burial.<sup>33</sup> In a few cases the skeleton was buried facedown. The reason for this is unknown; Šefik Bešliagić suggests that it was a punishment, while Ante Milošević gives an alternative remark. Namely, during excavations he noticed in some cases a small pin placed over the skeleton. In the case of an irregularly positioned person the pin was found under the skeleton. He concludes that in these cases the deceased were buried without a coffin, just in blanket fastened with a pin. The

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<sup>29</sup> Fine 1975, 90.

<sup>30</sup> Bešliagić 1982, 44-57.

<sup>31</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 170-172.

<sup>32</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 161.

<sup>33</sup> Bešliagić 1982, 46-50; Milošević 1991, 16-18; Zečević 2005, 81-84.

reason for such an unusual upside-down position would be simply that the body was accidentally overturned during the burial.<sup>34</sup>

Grave goods appear fairly frequently. A small number of *stećci* have been excavated, and a few complete necropolises. For example, two of the archaeologically excavated sites are Grborezi (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Bisko (Croatia). At Grborezi, 86 *stećci* were found and 265 graves with 355 skeletons; grave goods were found in 73 graves (28%). In Bisko only three *stećci* were found, but 28 graves with about 40 skeletons; grave goods were found in 12 graves (42%).<sup>35</sup>

These grave goods are almost always personal things like jewellery (earrings, rings, buttons, etc.). Only if coins appeared as “Charon’s coins” or soul money would they be considered real grave gifts. In Grborezi, 30 coins from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were found in 21 graves, mostly put in the mouth of the deceased.<sup>36</sup> In Bisko one coin from the fifteenth century was found.<sup>37</sup>

When it comes to weapons, two cases of swords found in graves beneath *stećci* are known.<sup>38</sup> There are two finds of spears, and one of a mace from graves.<sup>39</sup> It is interesting that in

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<sup>34</sup> Milošević 1991, 26-27.

<sup>35</sup> Milošević 1991, 35; Bešlagić 1982, 49-54; Bešlagić, Basler, *Grborezi*. Sarajevo: 1964.

<sup>36</sup> Evidence of coins may have been accidentally lost due to decay. Several coins were found in Hamar during the excavation. Green stains were also noted on Hamar skeletons in 13 cases. In two cases it was evident that such stains were caused by coins while in eight cases it seemed probable (although coins were not found) that the green stains were caused by coins according to their positions: on jaw bones, facial bones or neck vertebrae. In three other cases green stains were found on other parts of skeletons. See: Berit Sellevold, *From Death to Life in Medieval Hamar - Skeletons and Graves as Historical Source Material* (Oslo: Unipub forlag, 2001), 154-155; also P. K. Madsen “Sygdom og Død.” (Sickness and Death), in: *Dagligliv i Danmarks Middelalder – En arkeologisk kulturhistorie* (Sickness and Death. Daily Life in Denmark’s Middle Ages. An Archaeological Cultural History) (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1999), 348-349.

<sup>37</sup> Milošević 1991, 14.

<sup>38</sup> Maja Petrinec, “Nalazi u grobovima ispod stećaka” (Finds in the Graves beneath *stećci*), in: *Stećci-Katalog* (Stećci, the Catalogue) (Zagreb: Galerija Klovićevi dvori, 2008), 246-269.

<sup>39</sup> Petrinec 2008, 259-260.



several cases at different localities drinking glasses were found in the graves, while pottery so far is known from just one case.<sup>40</sup>

In most cases the deceased have their arms crossed over their abdomen or chest, they lay on their back with their head at the western end of the grave. In some cases one arm was over the abdomen, and the other stretched along the body. It is interesting that at Grborezi the deceased had their arms stretched along the body in 51 cases.<sup>41</sup> Two similar cases are known from Bisko.<sup>42</sup> Such a burial practice is sometimes considered more typical for pagan times; it has been well documented on Scandinavian medieval graveyards from the period of Christianization.<sup>43</sup>

One dating criterion which seems to apply to medieval graves in southern Sweden and Denmark is the arm position of the buried person. According to this criterion, in the oldest graves the buried individuals were laid out with their arms stretched along their bodies. In the younger graves the bodies lay with their hands placed over the pelvic region. Later, the bodies have their arms bent at a right angle at the elbows with the lower arms lying parallel over the stomach. In the youngest graves the persons buried have their lower arms crossed over the chest.<sup>44</sup> This shows that the criterion that applies to medieval graves in Southern Sweden and in Denmark, the arm position of the buried individual as a chronological indicator, cannot be applied to the graves beneath *stećci*.

Nevertheless, in neighbouring Hungary, in the churchyard in Esztergom (dated from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries), most of the 591 graves had the deceased with their arms

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<sup>40</sup> Petrinec 2008, 261-263.

<sup>41</sup> Bešliagić 1982, 51.

<sup>42</sup> Milošević 1991, 24, 31.

<sup>43</sup> Pulsiano, Phillip, & Kirsten Wolf, ed., *Medieval Scandinavia: an Encyclopedia*. (New York: Garland, 1993), 37-40.

<sup>44</sup> Sellevold 2008, 53. About the arm position in medieval Denmark see: Madsen 1999, 325-351.

Madsen, P. K. "Sygdom og Død." (Sickness and Death). In: *Dagligliv i Danmarks Middelalder – En arkeologisk kulturhistorie* (Sickness and Death. Daily Life in Denmark's Middle Ages. An Archaeological Cultural History), (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1999), 325-351.

stretched along the body, hands were crossed on chests occasionally, or one hand was placed either on the chest or pelvis.<sup>45</sup> There are various suggestions for how to interpret the position of hands in graves. The chronological interpretation is one, but there were also ethnic or religious interpretations. For example, in Central Europe some cemeteries with graves in which hands were crossed in front of the upper part of the body were interpreted as Orthodox Christians.<sup>46</sup> However, recently this has been questioned. It seems that no such general statements can be made; local communities could have had different funeral customs.<sup>47</sup>

### 2.3. *The Motifs*

There are many different hypotheses about the meaning of the decorative motifs on *stećci*. While some scholars have argued for their origin either in Bogomil or Vlach symbolism, others have stressed their connections with pagan or Christian beliefs.<sup>48</sup> All these hypotheses cannot be discussed here due to space limitations, but some general problems concerning the motifs can be raised.

Finding parallels for the motifs does not appear to be a great difficulty. Motifs like rosettes, crosses, crescents, weaponry, arcades, warriors, horsemen, tournaments or hunting scenes come from the general European assemblage of Romanesque and Gothic motifs. Some motifs like the dancing scene or what seems to be ritual bread can also be interpreted as the

<sup>45</sup> Erzsébet Molnár, "Zsidód, the Medieval Village in the Territory of Esztergom." In: *Death and Burial* (York: Medieval Europe, 1992), 79-83.

<sup>46</sup> Miklós Takács, "Egy vitatott kéztartásról" (On a Debated Gesture), *Opuscula Hungarica* 6 (2005): 85-101.

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem; Dóra Mérai, *The True and Exact Dresses and Fashion. Archaeological Clothing Remains and their Social Contexts in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Hungary* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2010), 48-49.

<sup>48</sup> Aleksandar Solovjev, "Jesu li Bogomili poštovali krst?" (Did the Bogomils Recognize the Cross?) *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu* 3, n.s. (1948): 81-102, and other works by the same author. Solovjev attributed *stećci* to Bogomils. For the Vlach hypothesis, see Marian Wenzel, *Ukrasni motivi na stećcima* (The Motifs on Stećci) (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1965); Wenzel 1962, 102-163. For a more general overview see Bešliagić 1982, 129-387; Nada Miletić, *Stećci* (Stećci) (Belgrade, Zagreb, Mostar: Jugoslavija, Spektar, Prva književna komuna, 1982), 37-100; Lovrenović 2009, 62-91.

influence of an older, pre-Christian tradition. Such a tradition can be also traced archaeologically, confirming the data from written sources telling about the feasts at the grave during and after the funeral.<sup>49</sup> The problem appears when one wants to find the reason for having them on *stećci* and to decode rules for their placement, if such rules existed.

The motifs on *stećci* remain enigmatic and mysterious despite archaeological excavations, even though it was believed that at least some answers could be found. Some motifs and scenes have been considered peculiar and their meanings hard to interpret. These are some combinations of astral and solar motifs and the *kamenica* (a shallow concavity) motif, etc. However, although arguing about the meaning of many motifs such as astral or solar, most scholars agree that the weapon presentations are probably the markers of local noblemen, warriors, or at least of male graves. Nevertheless, in Svojdruk (Serbia), under a slab with a representation of a sword as the only motif, archaeologists found a female skeleton.<sup>50</sup> From Imotski (Croatia) there is a tombstone with an inscription addressing Vladna, wife of Jerko Kustražić. There is a hunting scene on her tombstone and a horseman with a sword. Her husband died earlier and was buried under his own *stećak*.<sup>51</sup> No secondary burials were found in either case.

So far, it seems that one cannot really decode the meaning of the motifs and symbols on *stećci*: why some of them were used, whether they can tell something about the person buried under the tombstone, their social status, or cause of death. Nevertheless, a study of patterns (combinations of motifs) and a spatial approach like the regional distribution of motifs or the distribution patterns of motifs within a single cemetery can be useful. A good example of such

<sup>49</sup> Ante Milošević, “Prežetak poganskog obreda sahranjivanja na stećcima” (Survival of a Pagan Burial Rite on Stećci) *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 26 (1987): 91-97; Lovrenović 2009, 87.

<sup>50</sup> Zečević 2005, 81, 159.

<sup>51</sup> Milošević 1991, 54.

distribution patterns within the same cemetery is the bow and arrow motif, which appears on monuments grouped in certain clusters at Bare Žugića (see the situational plan of Bare Žugića: no.48, no.49, no.50, and no.75, no.81).

*Stećci* which have inscriptions on them are of great help in providing information on someone's social position, sex, or even the cause of their death.<sup>52</sup> Such monuments are rare; however, it is a hard task to give an adequate explanation for the most of these motifs. It seems that there was no special rule of having certain motifs in a certain place. They appear everywhere on the monuments. Scenes of hunting, tournament or architectural motifs are usually found on long sides of the monuments, which seems to be for practical reasons, since the long sides give more space. Crosses, if present, are more frequent on the eastern and western end (either one or both ends), but they also appear on long sides and upper sides as well.

Most of the motifs do not seem to follow any specific rule, and some of them, like the sword, appear where not expected at all – over graves where single female skeletons were found. These sword motifs should probably be seen as social symbols, part of what Lovrenović calls incomplete heraldry.<sup>53</sup> Other symbols of a person's social status besides weapons might also be simple heraldic emblems with animals, the lily motif (also called fleur de lis)<sup>54</sup> or rosettes. The bow and arrow motif is also frequent, then the sword and shield, sometimes in combination with a cross or crescent. It should be noticed here that a *stećak* itself is a symbol of someone's wealth and social status – to cite John V. A. Fine: “Under these stones are to be found rich Catholics, rich Orthodox, and rich members of the Bosnian Church, both lay and ordained.”<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> “A se leži Radonja Ratković, pogiboh pod gradom pod Ključem za svoga gospodina vojevodu Sandalja” (“Here lies Radonja Ratković, I have been killed beneath the town of Ključ, for my lord Duke Sandalj” (My translation). For this, and other inscriptions see: Lovrenović 2009, 91-128; Bešliagić 1982, 419-452.

<sup>53</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 62.

<sup>54</sup> Elma Hašimbegović, “Fleur-de-lis in Medieval Bosnia,” M.A. Thesis, (Budapest: Central European University, 2002).

<sup>55</sup> Fine 1975, 90.

So far, just one scene seems to follow the same rule more or less. This is a deer-hunting scene; in the most cases the deer is running towards the west. This scene is the most frequent amongst the hunting scenes on *stećci*, and it may also be seen in medieval legends about a hunted deer running towards the west, to the garden where the Mother of God is, with the spring of life.<sup>56</sup>

To explain and discuss the motifs from the Novakovići and Bare Žugića cemeteries, I shall refer to the explanations proposed by different scholars, particularly those frequent in the scholarly literature. My intention is to suggest that such explanations offer a range of possibilities.

#### ***2.4. The Bogomil Hypothesis***

Arthur J. Evans was the first to introduce the idea that *stećci* were the tombstones of medieval heretic Bogomils. In some motifs he saw the symbolism of Neo-Manichean beliefs which were believed to be associated with Bogomil beliefs. This theory was popular for a long time. The two main supporting arguments are that *stećci* and the Bosnian Church had existed at the same time, and within the same area. Aleksandar Solovjov strongly supported the hypothesis of a connection between *stećci* and the Bogomils, explaining their motifs as the religious symbols of Neo-Manichean Bogomils.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 79.

<sup>57</sup> Aleksandar Solovjev, "Simbolika srednjovjekovnih spomenika u Bosni i Hercegovini" (Symbolism of Medieval Tombstones in Bosnia and Herzegovina); *Godišnjak istorijskog društva Bosne i Hercegovine* 8 (1956): 5-67; eadem, "Le Symbolisme des monuments funéraires bogomiles et cathares" Actes du 10. Congres d'Etudes Byzantines, Istanbul (1957): 162-165.

According to John V. A. Fine, the popular theory that *stećci* were Bogomil tombstones, has now been abandoned for several reasons.<sup>58</sup> First of all, there are no motifs that can be positively interpreted as symbols associated with dualist beliefs of Bogomils. Crosses are frequent motifs, but Fine does not identify the Bosnian dualists with Bosnian Church itself and also assumes that the cross could have been used for magical reasons apart from the faith of the people. It simply might be to protect the deceased and the living people from the dead. The inscriptions on *stećci* clearly document that members of the Catholic, Orthodox, and Bosnian Churches all erected this kind of monument.<sup>59</sup> Consequently, the erection of these tombstones cannot be ascribed and limited to any particular confession.

## 2.5. The Vlach Hypothesis

The hypothesis that the Vlachs, a non-Slavic autochthonous Romanised population, were the creators of *stećci* was introduced by the American scholar Marian Wenzel.<sup>60</sup> Arguing against the Bogomil hypothesis she introduced a new one, that this practice had been mostly influenced by the Vlachs as a part of their tradition. She replaced the religious hypothesis with an ethnic one. Since they were horse breeders and herdsmen, Marian Wenzel attributes the motifs on the tombstones such as the horse, deer hunt, horseman, dancing or warriors particularly to them. In addition, for her the slabs are dubious as *stećci* since they exist in many other regions and cultures, and only pseudo-sarcophagi, the so-called trunks, and standing monuments such as the cross-shaped stones and pillars are the real *stećci*. According to Marian Wenzel, *stećci* ceased to

<sup>58</sup> Fine 1975, 89; see also Chap. 3 in: Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia. A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

<sup>59</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 239-246.

<sup>60</sup> Wenzel 1962, 102-143. See also: Malcolm 1994, Chap. 6; Tom Winnifrith, *The Vlachs: The History of a Balkan People*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987.

be erected at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the majority of Vlachs converted to Islam.

The Wenzel hypothesis has several weak points. One is the small number of monuments (16) known to have been erected for Vlachs known from historical sources.<sup>61</sup> However, stones were erected for many others who were not Vlachs. For the most of the tombstones it is not known whether they were connected with Vlachs or not. Finally, a particular problem is that the Vlachs in the late Middle Ages were already mostly assimilated by the Slavs and hard to distinguish from them.<sup>62</sup> When they ceased to be Vlach-speaking is unknown.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, due to the Turkish invasion and gradual decay of feudal society many of the dependent, settled peasants wanted to get the status of Vlach for the reason of greater social independence, including the right to migrate.<sup>64</sup> Such special status was guaranteed by the Turkish authorities as well.<sup>65</sup> Some scholars argue for the hypothesis that the Vlachs were in fact the last who erected *stećci*, mostly during the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>66</sup>

The Croatian scholar Ante Milošević argued recently for the Wenzel hypothesis. He was primarily interested in relations between the Vlach migrations and *stećci* in Dalmatia and southwestern Bosnia during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He concludes that those tombstones belonged “possibly to the Vlachs.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Milošević 1991, 8; Bešlagić 1982, 523-526.

<sup>62</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 525.

<sup>63</sup> Fine 1987, 19.

<sup>64</sup> Fine 1975, 381; Fine 1987, 12, 19; Fine 2006, 129-131; Bešlagić 1982, 525.

<sup>65</sup> Hazim Šabanović, *Bosanski pašaluk-Postanak i upravna podjela* (The Bosnian Pashaluk--Its Establishment and Administration) (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1982).

<sup>66</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 61-62, 165.

<sup>67</sup> Milošević 1991, 57.

## 2.6. *The Social Status Hypothesis*

Fine emphasizes the social element. He believes that *stećci* were erected by anyone rich enough to afford them. Rich Catholics, rich Orthodox, and rich members of the Bosnian Church are to be found under these tombstones. Although some motifs may have had a religious connotation, most of the motifs seem to have a secular character.<sup>68</sup> Fine suggests that one has to be cautious in interpreting the motifs and symbols, since the majority of the population were illiterate and the motifs had the purpose of sending a certain message instead of writing. That symbolic message appears quite blurred to modern people and, in fact, one can talk with certainty only about motifs instead of symbols.

If *stećci* themselves are symbols of higher social status and power, then their motifs may be seen in the same way. Usually seen as religious symbols, either in official religion or in popular belief, some motifs such as the star, crescent, rosette, or even cross may also be seen in a different perspective. If not taken separately from the weaponry motifs (sword, shield, helmet), as they usually are, such motifs appear as a part of heraldry. They may be seen as an incomplete heraldry having the same purpose – to emphasise the status of the deceased. Due to the gap between the *stećci* and our time and the lack of documentary evidence getting more confident knowledge about the symbolism seems improbable.

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<sup>68</sup> Fine 1975, 90.



## 2.7. The shapes – their origins and influences

The rise of economic power during the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries influenced the emergence of *stećci*, and from the mid-fifteenth century even members of the wider population could have afforded a grave stone.<sup>69</sup> However, the question remains – what influenced their emergence? While the slabs belong to the common European gravestone assemblage and may be attributed strictly to *stećci* art only if some specific motifs exist, high “trunks” and ridged pseudo-sarcophagi are monuments which appear to be quite original and therefore their emergence is intriguing.

It can often be found in the scholarly literature that Classical-period sarcophagi, as well as the medieval sarcophagi from the churches and monasteries of the Romanesque and Gothic periods, made the main influence on *stećci* tombstones.<sup>70</sup> This seems to refer predominantly to the ridged pseudo-sarcophagi, which, because they are usually the highest, largest, and house-shaped (with roofs), are the most similar to Classical sarcophagi. The high “trunks” are also quite like real sarcophagi.

However, according to Bešlagić, it was improbable that a large number of antique sarcophagi were still visible in the late Middle Ages that might have had some influence as models for *stećci*. According to him, Romanesque, Gothic, and Orthodox Church art are much more relevant patterns than the Classical forms. There is also a hypothesis that *stećci* are in fact stone monuments copied from earlier wooden grave markers, which had shapes quite similar to *stećci*.<sup>71</sup> Such wooden grave markers (usually in the shape of a house) are known from the Slavonic funeral tradition like the Russian *domovina*, and from the funeral tradition of the

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<sup>69</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 61.

<sup>70</sup> For the influences on *stećci* art see: Bešlagić 1982, 117-128 with further references. See also Lovrenović 2009, 56-62.

<sup>71</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 118-121.

western Balkans as well.<sup>72</sup> The main problem with this hypothesis is the chronological gap between the late Middle Ages and the first written evidence of such a tradition, as well as the absence of strong indications that such wooden grave markers actually existed in the western Balkans before or during the late Middle Ages.

The hypothesis about older wooden grave markers in the shape of later *stećci* is a “valuable hypothesis” for Lovrenović, but a better one is that Classical sarcophagi were relevant as models for the later *stećci*, since after the Slavs arrived in the Balkans they used the old Christian churches, and in many cases placed their cemeteries next to older Roman cemeteries.<sup>73</sup> According to him, the crucial moment for the emergence of *stećci* is the influence of antique sarcophagi and Romanesque art from the Dalmatian coast.<sup>74</sup> Lovrenović sees the tall pseudo-sarcophagi with their high and narrow roofs as the influence of Gothic art, with strong reminders of Gothic sarcophagi and coffins.

Briefly, three main models are emphasised in the scholarly literature as crucial for the emergence of *stećci*: antique sarcophagi, medieval sarcophagi, and the old Slavonic funeral tradition. Each model has advantages and disadvantages that rest on issues of the availability of the supposed models and chronological gaps in the transmission of ideas.

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<sup>72</sup> Vladimir Skarić, “Jedan slovenski uzor bosanskih mramorova” (One Slavic Model of Bosnian Marble Monuments), *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja* 15 (1928): 141 – 144. Also: Muhamed Hadžijahić, “Prilog Skarićevoj hipotezi o porijeklu stećaka” (A Contribution to Skarić’s Hypothesis of Stećci Origin), *Radovi* 3 (1973): 287-296.

<sup>73</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 60.

<sup>74</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 58-59.

### 3. THE REGION BETWEEN TARA AND PIVA RIVERS IN MONTENEGRO DURING THE LATE MIDDLE AGES: A GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The region between the Tara and Piva rivers is an area of high mountains such as Durmitor, Ivica and Sinjajevina, all of them over 2000 m high. This is the region with the highest mountains in Montenegro. The town of Žabljak is situated under Durmitor (2522 m). The Tara and Piva rivers are fast mountain rivers with deep canyons. Such a landscape makes this area difficult to reach. Owing to that fact the significance of the medieval road the *Via Anagasti* or *Via Jesera* is quite understandable. All late medieval tombstones *stećci* are found by this road.

In the late fourteenth and fifteenth century, the region between the Tara and the Piva was under the rule of the Bosnian nobles Sandalj Hranić and Stjepan Vukčić Kosača.<sup>75</sup> The town of Sokol in Šćepan Polje was a major centre; these nobles were even buried there in the church they had endowed. The whole region gained importance during their rule, affecting economic improvement as well.<sup>76</sup>

With the Ottoman-Turkish arrival there was a period of instability and strife for several centuries. In such conditions trade and production diminished. From open and tamer parts, the most liveable ones, the population retreated to rugged and inaccessible areas. The wide Jezera plateau was often mentioned in the documents of Dubrovnik before Turkish times. The necropolises in Novakovići and Bare Žugića, with over 350 preserved monuments, testify to the dense population in the Middle Ages along the Tara River to the interior. As the plain of Jezera

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<sup>75</sup> Sima Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države* (History of the Medieval Bosnian State) (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruka, 1964).

<sup>76</sup> "The Drobnjaks stood out among other Vlachs involved in the credit commerce in Dubrovnik by both their number and the credit amounts granted in the first half of the fifteenth century. Many of them probably no longer had the status of Vlach-cattle breeders, although the people of Dubrovnik still called them so." (My translation) In: Milica Malović-Đukić, *Prilog istoriji Drobnjaka u srednjem veku* (An Addition to the History of the Drobnjaks in the Middle Ages), *Glasnik Zavičajnog muzeja* (1999): 153-154.

was so accessible in case of an attack, primarily from the direction of Pljevlja, it is probable that soon after the Turkish arrival its settlements were deserted. However, the Turks were not interested in remaining in these parts due to the hostile surroundings. The Turks left many records of these turbulent times. A famous Turkish travel writer, Evliya Çelebi, passing through with the Turkish army in 1665 made some records about the situation in the region.<sup>77</sup>

Such a state of the affairs had lasted up to 1878, i.e., until the liberation of this area from the Turks. Valuable records were left by Svetozar Tomić.<sup>78</sup>

With the arrival of the Ottoman Turks the epoch of *stećci* tombstones and economic development of the region ended. The population retreated to rugged areas and was in a constant clash with the Turkish authorities. This brought the erection of *stećci* to a halt. The inhabitation of Jezera had ceased by 1878.

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<sup>77</sup> “The Pivska *nahiye* (administrative region) which was subdued and brought to heel by Serhab Mehmed-pasha, then the hills of Nikšić, Haternjak and Drobnjačka *nahiye*, often resist the pashas of Herzegovina, so the arms speak... In these mountains, many prisoners and loot were kept and over hundred *gazis* (warriors) and believers lost... It’s a real foe that lives in rugged mountains. They talk to the Pashas of Herzegovina only with the edge of the sword and let no Turkish authority approach there.” (My translation from Serbian into English) Cited in: Andrija Luburić, *Drobnjaci – pleme u Hercegovini* (The Drobnjaks – A Clan in Herzegovina) (Belgrade: 1930), 24.

<sup>78</sup> “Up to 1863, when the Turks were banished from Drobnjak, from Gornja Bukovica to Junčadola, all Ravna Jezera, there had been no house but one in Kovčica Karadžića and one in Pašina Voda and one somewhere in Kraja Komarska. There were only stables and winter huts along the edges... New villages began growing and spreading. So, in less than ten years after the banishment of the Turks, we became witnesses to many new villages, if we may say so, on the Jezera. This abrupt spreading and founding new villages was somewhat prevented by the last Serbian-Turkish warfare. In August 1877, all the villages up to Gornja Bukovica were burned down. There was not a house, hut, stable or stack left but levelled to the ground. Then they seemed like a brigand plain, where only human bodies remained and traces of many torching. There was no trace left of the villages founded. But after the Turks had gone everything changed. Jezera recovered.” In: Svetozar Tomić, “Drobnjak–antropogeografska ispitivanja” (Drobnjak – Anthropological-geographical Research), *Srpski etnografski zbornik* 4 (1902): 456-458.

#### 4. LATE MEDIEVAL *STEĆCI* IN THE AREA OF ŽABLJAK

Communications were of great importance in the study area during the Middle Ages; an important road that led from the coast to the interior, between the Piva and Tara rivers. During the Middle Ages that road from the seaside through the town of Nikšić crossed Mount Ivica (1700 m high), descended into the area called Jezera (the area where Žabljak is now located), and continued across the Tara River deeper into the interior. This road is known in the Dubrovnik archives as the *Via Anagasti*<sup>79</sup> or *Via Jesera* (see Map 2). This route coincides even now with the modern road, except for the part crossing the mountain, which is called the “clan’s” road because it ran through the territory of the Drobnjak clan.

Late medieval tombstones, *stećci*, lie near the *Via Jesera*. The two largest medieval cemeteries near the road are Novakovići and Bare Žugića, both of them called *Grčko Groblje* (Greek graveyard) by local inhabitants. Both cemeteries are situated besides the road, two kilometres apart.

##### 4.1. “Greek Graveyard” (*Grčko groblje*)

Post-medieval local inhabitants gave various names to medieval cemeteries with *stećci* tombstones, most often *Grčko groblje* (Greek Graveyard), as in the area of Žabljak. In Serbia there are 24 medieval cemeteries with *stećci* called Greek Graveyard, and about 10 called Hungarian Graveyard (*Madjarsko groblje*).<sup>80</sup> The latter name is to be found in northern Serbia, close to the Sava River, as well as in northern Bosnia, areas that adjoined the medieval Kingdom

<sup>79</sup> Anagastum is the medieval Onogošt, nowadays Nikšić in Montenegro.

<sup>80</sup> Zečević 2005, 22; Bešliagić 1982, 32.

of Hungary. Other recent names like Roman Graveyard and Bogomil Graveyard appear less frequently. They are probably products of popular historical and archaeological literature. The exact reason for giving such names is unknown, but the most probable explanation seems to be that people recognized some distant past, older than the Turkish occupation period.<sup>81</sup> The most frequent name within the whole *stećci* area is Greek Graveyard. Such a name is usually explained by some legend about “the Greeks who lived here, and because the winter once was too severe they could not plough any more, and they left.” In the area of Žabljak the same legendary story tells about the “Greeks who lived here a long time ago, but after a harsh winter that have lasted for seven years, they had had to leave.” I have not yet found any legend connected with Hungarian Graveyard in the literature.

Such names show a certain discontinuity between the cemeteries and the local communities. Through my observations I have noticed that such names are given only for the old, abandoned graveyards with long discontinuity of inhumation on them. In all cases where the inhumation has continuity (around churches), medieval tombstones are never given such names, but the usual as for recent monuments, *mramor* or *kamen*, meaning gravestone.

It is interesting that until 1982 only a few cemeteries were called Roman Graveyards, but by 2005 there were about 15 called that just in Serbia.<sup>82</sup> These names appear to be new; they may reflect a different sense of history than earlier names.

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<sup>81</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 32-33.

<sup>82</sup> Zečević 2005, 22; Bešlagić 1982, 32.

#### 4.2. *The late medieval cemetery of Novakovići*

A village called Novakovići is located in the area called Jezera, eight kilometers southeast of Žabljak. Nearby are two lakes, Vražje and Riblje, passed by the modern road following a route more or less identical to the medieval one. Riblje Jezero lake lies on the right side of the road (if the direction is from the coast – inland), and on the left side of the road, on the top of a hill, is the late medieval cemetery. The cemetery extends north-south along the top of the hill. The graves are in lines oriented west-east. The better-finished monuments are mixed with those less well-finished. That means there are no groups of well-finished (and more expensive) or less well-finished stones. Together with the amorphous stones and foundation stones, I counted eighty-six graves in the cemetery.<sup>83</sup> Following the assumption that every cemetery with more than fifty graves should be considered large, this is a large cemetery.<sup>84</sup> Travelling through this area towards the end of the nineteenth century, Pavel A. Rovinski, a Russian diplomat and scholar, left some interesting information about these tombstones.<sup>85</sup> According to him these two cemeteries were the biggest in Montenegro, but when he visited the place many tombstones had already been broken or used by the local inhabitants for building houses in new villages that were established after the Turks left. During Turkish rule the area of Jezera was regularly laid waste preventing permanent settlement.

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<sup>83</sup> Due to their weight many stećci have foundation stones under them in order to keep them standing firmly.

<sup>84</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 159-160.

<sup>85</sup> Pavel A. Rovinski, *Crna Gora u prošlosti i sadašnjosti* (Montenegro in the Past and Present) (Sremski Karlovci: Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića, 1993). First edition: Разборъ труда П.А. Ровинского: “Черногорія въ ея прошломъ и настоящемъ”. Санкт-Петербург: Типография Императорской академии наук, 1906.

After P. A. Rovinski, only Šefik Bešliagić conducted research, in 1966. In Novakovići he noted fifty-four tombstones (six slabs, 37 trunks and 11 pseudo-sarcophagus monuments) of which 22 had ornamentation (12 trunks and ten pseudo-sarcophagus tombstones).<sup>86</sup>

My observation is rather different. Following the general rule that slabs are up to 30cm high, trunks and pseudo-sarcophagi are from 30cm to 80cm high and those over 80cm are high trunks and pseudo-sarcophagi, then there are ten slabs, sixteen trunks, six high trunks, nine pseudo-sarcophagi monuments, and two pseudo-sarcophagi with double roofs.<sup>87</sup> Pseudo-sarcophagi tombstones and pseudo-sarcophagi with double roofs are usually high. Also, it should be emphasized that many of the tombstones have sunk into the ground and are difficult to measure precisely. Another point was omitted in previous observations. In many cases only foundation stones are visible and the tombstones are missing. They indicate the places of lost and destroyed monuments and should be placed on situational plans. Comparing the situation recorded in July 1966 with the situation recorded in 2001, there was no significant change over three decades. However, Šefik Bešliagić confused a few monuments, and has presented some incorrect data.<sup>88</sup>

The positioning of representations does not seem to follow any specific rule, although both human (warrior) representations appear on the northern sides of the stone. In one case (no. 6, fig. 11-12) a man is depicted with a large hand placed towards the sword and the shield (he does not hold them). Another representation is a warrior with helmet on his head and a bow with an arrow in his hand, hunting a deer, but in both cases the southern side is unknown because the tombstone has fallen on that side (no. 49, fig. 17-18). In another cases a single shield appears on the upper side and a shield with a sword on the eastern side (no. 6, fig. 11-12 and no. 82, fig. 29-

<sup>86</sup> Bešliagić 1973, 111-138. The article contains the basic data.

<sup>87</sup> For the classification of *stećci* according to their height, see Bešliagić 1982, 80-115.

<sup>88</sup> Bešliagić 1973, 116-117. Bešliagić confused motifs on no. 49 in Novakovići and no. 83 in Bare Žugića.



30, and no. 12 -- shield hardly visible).<sup>89</sup> The most probable explanation for arcades usually being on the southern and northern sides is the wider space available on the lateral sides. The vine motif and various kinds of bands always appear on the edges of the monuments.

The crescent appears alone on the upper side twice, and once on the eastern side together with a swastika above it (no. 63, figs. 20, 21, 22). It should be taken in consideration that many monuments have fallen on one or the other side (eastern or western) and therefore their representations are not visible. One stone has the image of a bas relief cross, a *crux ansata*, (the upper leg was made a bit round) on its upper side. It is oriented east-west, which means that the head of the deceased was toward the eastern end.

One of the monuments has what appears to be an imitation of boards as a motif on the top (no. 18, fig. 15). Earlier there was a hypothesis that such tombstones perhaps copied earlier patterns from hollow wooden monuments made in the same shapes of trunks and pseudo-sarcophagus monuments.<sup>90</sup> This hypothesis offers an explanation for sudden appearance of such *stećci* tombstones.

Another interesting monument is the highest one in the centre of the cemetery; it is a ridged, high pseudo-sarcophagus (no. 59, fig. 19). In contrast with others with better finishes, this one does not have any trace of relief or any other representation.

<sup>89</sup> On Hungarian medieval slabs (gravestones) a shield is often hanging from a cross. It is also mentioned in written sources from the fifteenth century that painted funeral shields were placed as grave markers in medieval Hungary: Pál Lövei, "Temetői sirjelek a középkori Magyarországon" (Grave Markers in the Cemeteries of Medieval Hungary) *Opuscula Hungarica* 6 (2005): 77-83.

<sup>90</sup> Vladimir Skarić, "Jedan slovenski uzor bosanskih mramorova" (One Slavic Model of Bosnian Mramors (Stećci), *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja* 40 (1928): 141 – 144.

### 4.3. The late medieval cemetery of Bare Žugića

Bare Žugića is a village 2 km northeast of Novakovići. This village is also situated on the *Via Jesera* road. On the left side, (in the direction from the coast to the interior), just by the road there is another late medieval cemetery with almost three hundred monuments. It is also considered a large cemetery; in fact, it is among the six largest with such tombstones in the whole *stećci* area.<sup>91</sup> In contrast with the Novakovići site, this cemetery is in a flat area. It is called *Grčko Groblje* by local inhabitants just like the cemetery in Novakovići. This cemetery was briefly researched by Šefik Bešliagić in 1966. He found ten pseudo-sarcophagi stones, fifty trunks and ten slabs, and classified all the others as amorphous. Again, the situation was not quite the same in 2001. I found nine pseudo-sarcophagus monuments, and some of the stones dislocated, which was probably the consequences of attempts at robbery. One of these monuments had a relief representation of the traditional line dance, the *kolo*. The proof that it existed is the photo in Šefik Bešliagić's article.<sup>92</sup> Because the traces of digging were obvious and some tombstones have been overturned some of the decorations cannot be seen.

I counted two hundred and seventy tombstones in Bare Žugića, of which two-thirds are amorphous. The amorphous tombstones have different dimensions, some of them are really large,<sup>93</sup> but basically they are similar to the trunks and pseudo-sarcophagus tombstones in size, but with no treatment – they are simply rocks. In contrast to Novakovići, here tombstones are clearly grouped according to their quality. Those of better quality are in the northern part of the cemetery and those mainly amorphous in shape in the southern part. The terrain in the center of the southern part is a little bit higher, and with no monuments. In the middle of this area plateau

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<sup>91</sup> Bešliagić 1973, 127.

<sup>92</sup> Bešliagić 1973, 125.

<sup>93</sup> 200x40x20cm, 170x80x20cm, 130x80x40 and so on.

is a broken pillar (20x20x25cm). The pillar may have been part of an altar, and the empty space may indicate that a church stood here at some earlier time. On the north, the cemetery stretches in a semicircular shape. The answer is that the whole area was, and still is to a certain extent, full of small shallow ponds called *bare* in the vernacular – therefore, *Bare Žugića*.<sup>94</sup> Now a pond is no longer present, but the shallow depression indicates that one probably existed in the past. The cemetery follows the curve of the road, which testifies to the fact that the road originated in the Middle Ages. The graves are in lines, east-west in orientation.

Concerning the symbols that appear on the tombstones in Bare Žugića, they are mainly the same as those in Novakovići, with only a few differences. The frequency of motifs is different although they all belong to the general assembly of *stećci* motifs (see Table 2).

There is a trunk with an original shape that imitates the pseudo-sarcophagus tombstone by a bas relief rib that stretches along its upper side. This pattern appears in two cases (no. 22, fig. 38-39 and no. 33, fig. 40-41), only at Bare Žugića but not at Novakovići. In contrast with Novakovići, here more motifs are on the upper sides of the tombstones. The crescent appears twice, in both cases on the upper side of the stone, once together with a star (rosette) and in another case together with the cross and four stars/rosettes (no. 39, fig. 42 and no. 60, fig. 49). The crescent motif appears either alone with a star, or with a cross like here, or with a swastika as in Novakovići. A pseudo-sarcophagus tombstone at Bare Žugića has a bas relief cross motif on the western side, with the legs in the shape of a crescent (no. 61, fig. 50-51). Most of the monuments have some bands as decoration, usually as borders. Also specific is the monument with bas relief zigzag bands on the southern and northern sides (no. 81, fig. 56). Such a motif has no parallels in Novakovići or further towards the south, but towards the north it occurs at the site of Vrulja near Pljevlja (Map 2). One tombstone has an image of a sword on the upper side (no. 53, fig. 48). One

<sup>94</sup> The name of the area – *Jezera* -- literally means the Lakes. The Jezera are a plateau surrounded by mountains.

stone has the *kamenica* motif, which is a circular recess with an unknown role. There are different theories about its function on the stone; the most common one is that its purpose was for libations.<sup>95</sup> It appears, although not very often, in different regions with *stećci*. In this particular case the *kamenica* is a part of the bas relief cross – it is the lower end of the cross (no. 79, fig. 54-55). Many crosses are simply engraved and they appear on the top (upper side), or on any of the lateral sides. They belong to the *crux immissa* type; all of its legs are of equal length; they could have been engraved later, after the stones were placed. One such cross is on one of the slabs (no. 31), grouped at the northern border of the cemetery (no. 29, 30, 31). This group of slabs can be seen as a cluster within the cemetery.

The engraved motif of a simple bow with an arrow is interesting; in general it appears on every type of *stećak* except the slab and on every side. Usually it is on the top, but can also be found on the sides or the bottom. The greatest enigma is that here such a motif was engraved on the lower side of the pedestal of one pseudo-sarcophagus stone, so it was not made to be seen. Now it can be seen due to the fact it was turned over in a robbery during the 1980s; this indicates that it was engraved before the stone was placed (no. 49, fig. 45). There is another such motif on the same monument, but on its top, together with the image of a deer. This stone is full of motifs: a traditional dance, the *kolo*, is shown on the southern side, now invisible because the stone lies on that side. It is a female *kolo* with five women.<sup>96</sup> There is a spiral vine above them. On the eastern side is a cross, and on the western side there are arcades, again with the spiral vine above. Behind this monument is another, a trunk, with similar motifs: arcades on the northern side with a spiral vine above. It is overturned on its southern side, but if the arcades are present on one side, they are always on the opposite side as well.

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<sup>95</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 382-384.

<sup>96</sup> See photo in Bešlagić 1973.

The motif of an engraved bow with an arrow appears seven times in Bare Žugića, but not even once in Novakovići. The scene of hunting deer, where the hunter (warrior) has a bow with an arrow, is completely different because that is a bas relief scene, and the images from Bare Žugića are not scenes, but signs or symbols. The regional distribution of motifs or the distribution patterns of motifs within a single cemetery can be useful. A good example of such distribution patterns within the same cemetery is exactly this bow and arrow motif, which appears on monuments grouped in certain clusters at Bare Žugića (see the situational plan of Bare Žugića: no.48, no.49, and no.75, no.81).

Such a motif seems to be connected to the north, to the site of Vrulja near Pljevlja, as well as the bas relief zigzag band (Map 2).<sup>97</sup> It is considered that there were two craft workshops in Montenegro: one in Nikšić, south of Jezera, and one in Pljevlja, further to the north.<sup>98</sup> There is a trunk in Novakovići with the imitation of boards on its upper side (no. 18, fig. 15). This is a motif particular for Montenegro, and appears only in the region from Jezera (fig. 1-2, dislocated monument at Bijeli Mramor and fig. 15, Novakovići) in the north to Nikšić in the south.<sup>99</sup> That is why the presence of such motif is unexpected in distant Bitelić (Croatia).<sup>100</sup> An additional enigma is the fact that both regions do not belong to the central *stećci* area, but to the area of influence (Map 1 and Map 2). Such motifs have not been found within the central *stećci* area until now.

At Bare Žugića two clusters can be noticed (see the situational plan of Bare Žugića); one is a group of very similar slabs at the northern part of the cemetery (no. 29, 30, 31), and another one is the spatial distribution of the bow and arrow motif (no. 48-49; no. 75 and no. 81).

<sup>97</sup> Vanja Beloševac, "Srednjovekovni nadgrobni spomenici na nekropoli u Marinoj šumi" (The Medieval Tombstones at the Necropolis in Marina Šuma) Pljevlja: *Glasnik Zavičajnog muzeja* (1999): 99-143.

<sup>98</sup> Bešlić 1982, 469.

<sup>99</sup> Bešlić 1982, 374-375.

<sup>100</sup> Milošević 1991, 41.

According to the motifs from these two cemeteries, Novakovići was related to the south, toward Nikšić, and Bare Žugića is related to the north and the Pljevlja region (Map 2). A possible explanation for such divergence, even though these cemeteries are so close to each other, could be chronological. Due to some political or military event one centre was possibly inaccessible, but another was reachable, or one of them simply stopped being used for some reason.

In general, the types and shapes of the tombstones and the motifs and symbols that appear in these two cemeteries belong to the same cultural and historical framework, although there are some differences between them. First of all, in Novakovići the better-finished tombstones are mixed with the amorphous ones, but in Bare Žugića they are separated into two groups. The better-finished with ornaments are to be found in northern part of the cemetery, while the amorphous are mostly concentrated in southern part, around the possible church. However, the amorphous ones in Bare Žugića are bigger and better preserved than those in Novakovići (see the situational plan of Bare Žugića). It is worth mentioning that such amorphous tombstones were carefully chosen on purpose to imitate the well finished monuments in size and shape. They are simple rocks without any trace of stone working. The reason for such typological diversity within the cemetery might be either chronological or social. A final answer would only be possible after excavation.

#### ***4.4. Cross-shaped monuments***

Until the beginning of the 1990s 336 monuments in the shape of a cross were known.<sup>101</sup> That means that they are only 0.5% of the total number of *stećci* monuments. They are mostly situated in the region of eastern Herzegovina. Only 30 inscriptions are registered on them, of

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<sup>101</sup> Bešliagić 1982, 111.

which only 5 are dated to the fifteenth century and all others to the sixteenth and seventeenth century. The main problem with cross-shaped monuments is that such a shape continued even after the age of *stećci* tombstones, so it is sometimes hard to classify them strictly into the medieval period. As far as I know, none of them has been excavated archaeologically, but only studied as a subject of art history. Representations, symbols and inscriptions are the same as on the other *stećci* tombstones. When they appear in medieval cemeteries they are always on the edges of cemeteries. That fact has influenced many scholars to strongly adopt the opinion that cross-shaped monuments have to be the latest ones appearing at the end of the *stećci* era. This opinion has been adopted by all the scholars who have been interested in this kind of monument, such as Šefik Bešliagić, Nada Miletić, and others.<sup>102</sup>

My opinion is not quite the same. The fact that they are the latest because they appear on the edges of cemeteries is reasonable and acceptable, but no one has mentioned that such cases are rare. On the contrary, in most cases cross-shaped monuments appear separately, single, often far away from cemeteries and settlements. They are usually situated near roads. There is one cross-shaped *stećak* at the Bijeli Mramor site, situated beside the so-called “clan road” or medieval *Via Jesera*. It is a monument 1.70 meters high with the image of a warrior on it and four crosses, each of them inside a circle (figs. 3-7). All the representations are similar to those in Novakovići and Bare Žugića, which are almost fifteen kilometres away. This monument is alone there and the only cross-shaped one in a vast area. That is also the case with the majority of other cross-shaped monuments, as I have noted from the literature and field work.

Why is this so? My opinion is that there may be a significant difference between these, cross-shaped monuments and other *stećci*. All the others, with the exception of those in the shape of a pillar, are in the shape of a house (a pseudo-sarcophagus with a roof) or a trunk, so the

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<sup>102</sup> Nada Miletić, *Stećci* (Tombstones) (Belgrade: Vuk Karadžić, 1982).

shape of a construction emphasizes that it is the “eternal house” of the deceased person. That fact is emphasized with the roof, or if it is just a trunk, with architectural motifs such as arcades. Such motifs never appear on the cross-shaped monuments.

My opinion is that such monuments symbolize not the *eternal house* but the *monument* itself, in other words the place where something important (a duel or some kind of accidental death) happened. In most cases legends are connected with these monuments; in Drobnjak the legend is about a battle between two clans. Whether persons are buried under such monuments is not known because they have not been excavated yet, but there are some known cases of cenotaphs under *stećci*. However, it should also be taken into consideration that a cross-shaped *stećak* might have been connected to the road passing next to it, like the crosses at crossroads in the Middle Ages and even nowadays. Also, such a cross might have been a landmark, marking a boundary between estates. Such a custom of marking the place of someone’s sudden death is quite common in this region even now, and elsewhere, too. There was a custom in wider region of placing the monuments with images of deceased persons near roads, usually of men killed in wars far away from home, but they were cenotaphs. These single cross-shaped monuments could be cenotaphs, but there is also a custom of making single graves in this region even nowadays. Nearby, there is also a dislocated trunk with the imitation of board, used as a *spolia* for the local fountain. Since such a motif is rare, this *stećak* is of great significance as well.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Dejan Vemić, “Dva nadgrobna spomenika kod Bijelog Mramora i lokalno predanje” (Two Tombstones near Bijeli Mramor and the Local Saga), *Glasnik srpskog arheološkog društva* 21 (2005): 189-200.



#### 4.5. The motifs on *stećci* in the area of Žabljak

Besides the size, shape, and placement of *stećci*, which convey information of various kinds, their ornamentation is particularly interesting because it was clearly the choice of the people who put up the stone. What the motifs meant specifically is not known, but some general suggestions for meanings can be made. Symbols are crucial in any kind of communication, either verbal or visual. However, there are words (particularly in archaic languages) with two different meanings, and that is the case with visual messages as well. That makes their interpretation possible in many ways.<sup>104</sup> Consequently, such messages/symbols are not easy to de-code, particularly if there is a great time-gap between the time when they were made and their later interpreter. An additional problem with *stećci* is that there are very few written sources about them and among them not even one discussing their symbolism. Concerning gravestones in general, there is always great lack of evidence left behind by their makers and buyers about their motives or intentions; no record of why they carved or ordered some particular mode of gravestone. Briefly, when interpreting gravestones it should be taken into consideration that “a motif may have more than one motive.”<sup>105</sup>

Of 360 monuments in Novakovići and Bare Žugića only 45 have ornaments. No inscriptions were noted at all. The amorphous monuments, actually simple large rocks, have neither ornaments nor any sign of engraving on them. Typologically the greatest number of ornaments appears on pseudo-sarcophagi, then on trunks, while slabs rarely have any ornament. Such a situation is common for all the areas with *stećci*.

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<sup>104</sup> Carl Lindahl, “Transition Symbolism on Tombstones” *Western Folklore* 45 (1986): 165-185.

<sup>105</sup> James A. Hijiya “American Gravestones and Attitudes toward Death: A Brief History,” *Proceedings of the American Philological Society*, Vol. 127, No. 5 (1983): 339-363.

The ornaments can generally be divided into three groups:<sup>106</sup> decorative, symbolic, and figural – representations of humans and animals (see Table 1 and Table 2). I suggest this classification as a basic division, although it is not really appropriate to make such a sharp distinction between the ornaments because the same ornament could have had more than one meaning.

Decorative ornaments are primarily borders (engraved stripes with parallel lines), vines (also functioning as a border) and rope, which are the most frequent motifs, and zigzag stripes made in bas relief. Such motifs frame the main scene shown on the upper or any of the lateral sides of a monument. Decorative ornaments may have had some symbolic meaning as well as figural representations or symbolic motifs. For example, the vine may also symbolize the continuation of life (Christ himself).

Symbolic motifs are those in which meaning primarily *is not* only decorative (a cross, crescent, shield and sword, etc). The symbolic meaning of figural representations (a warrior, a dance-*kolo*), scenes (hunting deer) will be discussed with an understanding of the distance because the perception of a modern person cannot be equated with that of medieval times.

The motifs that appear on tombstones in Bare Žugića and Novakovići, also including the cross-shaped monument in Bijeli Mramor, (see Table 2) are: short parallel lines, rope (imitation of rope), zigzag lines, vine and wreath as decorative motifs. Symbolic motifs are the cross, crescent, star, bow and arrow, shield, sword, helmet, hollow (on the upper side), arcades, and boards. Figural motifs include: a warrior, a *kolo* (traditional dance) and animals (a deer).

Decorative motifs are the most frequent. Short parallel lines appear 44 times as a border. Similar to this, but more complicated, is the motif of rope, which appears 23 times, mostly as the

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<sup>106</sup> Classifications of the ornaments vary to a greater extent. For different opinions see: Lovrenović 2009, 62; Zečević 2005, 53-54; Bešlagić 1982, 136-139; Miletić 1982, 37; Wenzel 1965, 413-421.

border on the upper side of monuments. A zigzag bas relief stripe appears just once (no. 81) in Bare Žugića. The vine motif appears 32 times, and a unique one is the vine in combination with a lily on the upper side of no. 63 (fig. 21) in Novakovići. Also unique is the motif of half-arcades with wreaths, as the border of no. 4 (fig. 10) in Novakovići. All of these motifs frame the top or sides, except the zigzag bas relief stripe that is represented across the lateral side of the monument (no. 81, fig. 56 – Bare Žugića).

Symbolic motifs (of social and religious character) are the second group of motifs. The cross is the most frequently represented symbol. There are thirty-three crosses in various shapes, including the cross-shaped monument at Bijeli Mramor and the four crosses in circles that appear on it (fig. 2-7). Except for this one cross, all the others are carved on monuments of other shapes. Some of them are engraved; others are in bas relief. The most common are simple crosses, either with the arms of equal length (no. 31 – Bare Žugića) or with a longer lower arm. Many of the crosses are stylized as well; some of them end in the shape of an anchor (no. 39, fig. 42; no. 61, fig. 50 – Bare Žugića). Two crosses are anthropomorphic (no. 74, fig. 25-26; no. 78, fig. 28 – Novakovići).

The swastika is an ancient symbol, usually recognized as a solar or lunar symbol. It has appeared all over the world since prehistoric times and in medieval Europe from the Mediterranean to Scandinavia as well. Also used by Christians at the very beginning of the Christianity, it should also be recognized as one type of cross.<sup>107</sup> The swastika appears in bas relief on early Christian sarcophagi such as the so-called “dogmatic sarcophagus” from the

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<sup>107</sup> Bešliagić 1982, 189-194; Wenzel 1965, Tables 33, 34.

basilica of San Ambrogio in Milan.<sup>108</sup> A swastika (*crux gammata*) appears definitely once, on a high trunk (no. 63, fig. 22 – Novakovići) together with a crescent, within the same composition.

In one case (no. 74, fig. 25 – Novakovići) there is a representation of a *crux ansata* – its upper arm is a bit rounded. Two representations of crosses from this area that do not appear on any other *stećci* monuments were found in Novakovići and Bare Žugića: one is a cross with a hollow (perhaps for libations) on the end of its lower arm (no. 79, fig. 54-55 – Bare Žugića), and the other is a cross with three upper arms ending in the shape of a crescent (no. 61, fig. 50-51 – Bare Žugića). These motifs are unique in *stećci* art. On the cross-shaped monument (Bijeli Mramor) there are four crosses with arms of equal length (*crux immissa*) surrounding the image of a warrior (fig. 2-7). A cross in a circle is also usually recognized as a solar symbol. Here it appears four times, perhaps representing symbolically four seasons in a year, meaning descend and new appearance, the life and death of nature and human beings as well. This is the meaning usually attributed to all solar/astrol symbols.<sup>109</sup> The number of crosses (33) found on tombstones in the area of Žabljak is quite high in comparison with other regions. In the older literature it was considered that crosses are rare on *stećci* in order to attribute them to the Bogomils (it was believed that they did not recognize the cross) as creators of *stećci*, but later investigations have shown that was not true.<sup>110</sup> Crosses appear in every region on such monuments. Concerning such a high frequency of cross symbols, including the swastika, which is rare at other sites close to the Žabljak area, there is a similarity between the area of Žabljak and western Herzegovina,

<sup>108</sup> Ervin Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture, Its Changing Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964).

<sup>109</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 63-71.

<sup>110</sup> Aleksandar Solovjev, "Jesu li Bogomili postovali krst?" (Did the Bogomils Recognize the Cross?). *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu* 3, n.s. (1948), and other works by the same author. Solovjev attributed *stećci* to Bogomils. As the most recent work on that subject see: Dragoljub Dragojlović, *Krstjani i jeretička crkva bosanska* (Christians and the Heretical Bosnian Church) (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, 1987); Fine 1975: 90, Fine argues against the Bogomil hypothesis.

especially with the Imotski region, where about 30% of all monuments have some variant of the cross symbol.<sup>111</sup>

A circle is often recognized as a symbolic presentation of the sun. It appears twice in bas reliefs on the upper side of trunks (no. 83, fig. 31 – Novakovići), and once on the high trunk in Bare Žugića (no. 50, fig. 46). Three circles, in fact more hollow concavities (*kamenica*), are on the side of a pseudo-sarcophagus tombstone (no. 75, fig. 53– Bare Žugića). This case is exceptional because usually hollows are on the upper side of a monument, so maybe they had some other function than being for libations.

The crescent appears once at Novakovići (no. 63, fig. 20, 22). It appears in bas relief above the swastika on the eastern side of the monument. At Bare Žugića it appears twice. On the upper side of no. 39 it is in bas relief, together with a cross below a crescent (fig. 42). It is also represented together with a star on the upper side of trunk no. 60 (fig. 49). Representation of a crescent in bas relief is common in *stećci*. On *stećci*, a crescent usually appears together with a star or in combination with cross, and both cases are present here. The crescent is widely accepted as a symbol of death and resurrection.<sup>112</sup> Although this symbolism has an ancient, pre-Christian origin, it is definitely a part of Christian symbolism as well, and also part of medieval heraldry, here probably incomplete heraldry.

The star (similar or identical symbol to a rosette) is a part of astral symbolism appearing on *stećci* monuments. It occurs only once, in combination with a crescent (no. 60, fig. 49 – Bare Žugića). The star was made in bas relief as well as the crescent beside it, so they compose one

<sup>111</sup> Lovre Katić, "Stećci u Imotskoj Krajini" (Stećci in Imotska Krajina), *Starohrvatska prosvijeta* 3 (1954): 131-182.

<sup>112</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 166-168; Wenzel 1965, 143.

integral unit. The symbolic meaning of a star is similar to that of the sun; it is considered a symbol of light, namely, God.<sup>113</sup>

Weapons are relatively frequent motifs in the area of Žabljak in comparison with other sites with *stećci*. The most frequent is the motif of a bow and arrow, which appears eight times; the bow is strung, with an arrow in it. Regarding this motif there is a difference between Novakovići and Bare Žugića. In Novakovići it is shown in a scene of hunting deer, in the hunter's (warrior's) hands (no. 49, fig. 17-18). The whole scene is done in bas-relief. The situation is rather different in Bare Žugića. There it is always presented alone as a motif of a bow and arrow. Here it appears seven times, always engraved close to the same size of approximately 15 – 20 cm (no. 48, no. 49, fig. 44-45). In general, this motif is rare and Novakovići and Bare Žugića are among the biggest three cemeteries with *stećci* that have such a symbol. The total number from all sites is about one hundred, half of which are within some scene, like hunting or a tournament, and half are representations alone. All the sites with this motif are not far from Žabljak, like Popovo Polje and Boljuni near Stolac in eastern Herzegovina.<sup>114</sup> The most recent data found, also not far from Žabljak, in Marina Šuma near Pljevlja (Map 2), confirm this situation. Among thirty monuments nine of them have the same symbol of a bow and arrow as in Bare Žugića, also engraved and of the same size.<sup>115</sup> In comparison with all the other *stećci* sites with such a motif, this is a high number which does not appear at any other locality.

It is important to mention that these two sites, Bare Žugića and Marina Šuma, were connected by the same road and used by the same traders, the Drobnjaci clan, who were transporting goods from Dubrovnik further to the North. Why such an engraved symbol of a bow and arrow does not appear in Novakovići is an open question.

<sup>113</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 170-171; Wenzel 1965, 143.

<sup>114</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 234-235.

<sup>115</sup> Beloševac 1999, 99 -143.

A helmet (with a plume) is represented once (no. 49 – Novakovići), as part of a hunting scene, on the hunter's head. A shield appears five times. In four cases, it is a four-cornered shield called *scutus bosniensis*, also typical for tombstones in Herzegovina.<sup>116</sup> In one case the shield has a place for a lance on its upper side, usually considered a shield for tournament (no. 6 – Novakovići). A sword appears four times, three of the four times in combination with a shield, on the cross-shaped monument in Bijeli Mramor (fig. 3-7) and on no. 6 and no. 82 (fig. 30) in Novakovići. A sword alone is represented once on the upper side of a high trunk at Bare Žugića (no. 53, fig. 48). In all cases, the sword has a plain crossguard and a round pommel. The sword as a symbol is mostly recognized as a sign of knighthood and nobility.<sup>117</sup>

The hollow concavity appears once on the upper side of a trunk (no. 79, fig. 54-55 – Bare Žugića). Here the hollow is at the end of a lower arm of a cross, which seems to indicate a ritual function as a recipient for a liquid sacrifice (libation), probably wine. There are some theories that it was a recipient for a blood sacrifice in a ritual of making peace over the grave by mixing the blood of two opponents.<sup>118</sup>

Architectural motifs never appear on slabs or cross-shaped monuments and pillars, probably because architectural motifs symbolically represent a building. This is apparent from the shape of the pseudo-sarcophagus in the first place, then from the numerous arcades and pillars that also appear on pseudo-sarcophaguses, high trunks, and trunks (no. 3, fig. 9; no. 7, fig. 13; no. 71, fig. 22-23; no. 82, fig. 29 – Novakovići, and no. 50, fig. 46-47 – Bare Žugića). Tombstones with an imitation of boards made in stone appear three times (one in Bijeli Mramor, fig. 1-2 – dislocated; no. 18, fig. 15 – Novakovići; no. 33, fig. 40 – Bare Žugića). Such motifs they apparently imitated some sort of wooden construction. In cases from Bosnia it is apparent

<sup>116</sup> Bešliagić 1982, 225-229.

<sup>117</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 62.

<sup>118</sup> Bešliagić 1982, 56.

that they imitate wooden houses (they have roofs), but in these cases they are rather some kind of an ark. Interesting, but still unexplained, are disks, usually three of them that appear across the middle of an ark. There is a hypothesis that those discs are in fact ritual loaves of bread. The same gravestones are also found in Cetinska krajina, Bitelić (Croatia), which is a curiosity because of the geographical distance (see Map 2).<sup>119</sup> The imitation of wooden constructions in stone has been interpreted as indicating that wooden constructions were made above graves similar to those made of stone.<sup>120</sup>

Figural representations are the third group of motifs on *stećci* in the Žabljak area. A man (warrior) with a sword and shield is represented twice (on the cross-shaped monument in Bijeli Mramor, fig. 3-7, and no. 6, fig. 12 – Novakovići). A man as a deer hunter with a bow and arrow is represented only once (no. 49, fig. 17 – Novakovići). Scholars sometimes infer that such representations are in fact portraits of the deceased.<sup>121</sup> The representation of a warrior in Novakovići (no. 6, fig. 12) is particularly interesting because the warrior's right hand is extremely enlarged and it does not hold the sword and the shield in front of him. This drawing of the scene, made by Šefik Bešliagić, does not show exactly the real situation on the spot. When I saw it, the monument was too damaged and the body of a warrior almost unrecognizable, except the enlarged hand. Such a motif is fairly common on *stećci*; sometimes only the enlarged bare hand is represented. The importance and the role of a bare hand has been well known in funeral rites since the Middle Ages.<sup>122</sup> Its purpose is to protect the deceased from all kinds of evil that could endanger him either directly from evil forces, meaning devils, or from men who could

<sup>119</sup> Milošević 1991, 40-41.

<sup>120</sup> Skarić, 1928, 141-144; Bešliagić. 1982, 120-121, 377; Jelena Erdeljan, *Srednjovekovni nadgrobni spomenici u oblasti Rasa* (Medieval Tombstones in the Area of Ras) (Belgrade: Arheološki Institut, 1996), 113-140; Slobodan Zečević, *Kult mrtvih kod Srba* (The Cult of Dead in Serbian Culture) (Belgrade: Etnografski muzej, 1982), 65 – 71.

<sup>121</sup> Bešliagić 1982, 310-314; Lovrenović 2009, 82-86.

<sup>122</sup> Traian Stoianovich, *Balkan Worlds* (Armonk, London: M. E. Sharpe, 1994); Erdeljan 1996: 143.



endanger him especially with the evil eye. Until recently, the beginning of 1990s, many south-Slavic village girls used to wear necklaces with symbols of power such as: crosses, swastikas, stars, hands, eyes, roosters, sickles, and swords as a protection from the evil eye. Many of these symbols appear on medieval tombstones as well. Such hands made of textile are put on the funeral flags in some parts of the western Balkans even nowadays. They occur together with the crosses, rosettes (stars) and crescents. The popular belief was that such a hand represents the deceased person's soul that was settled in the tombstone itself.<sup>123</sup> In other cases such hands are holding weapons, tools or even glasses. There are also some other explanations, such as that a hand alone or an enlarged one means that the person beneath the stone was murdered; the hand is calling for revenge, it has a protective function, or even the symbol of knighthood.<sup>124</sup> The protective function of symbols as probably their primary function should be taken in consideration. According to some scholars even the decorative motifs like volutes have such protective function, symbolically representing protective eyes.<sup>125</sup> Regarding this theory, the border on no. 4 (fig. 10) in Novakovići, made of half-volutes with wreaths (circles), is interesting and unique. That there was a fear of being disturbed in the afterlife is testified to by the inscriptions found on *stećci*. Although among almost 70,000 monuments only 384 (0.55%) have inscriptions, many of them have epitaphs like: "Don't disturb my bones..." or "Let him be damned who would touch me."<sup>126</sup>

That the representations of warriors are in fact portraits is questionable for the deer-hunting scene, which may be also allegorical. A deer also appears on no. 83 and no. 49 at Bare Žugića; the scenes are engraved, not bas reliefs as the one at Novakovići. Besides the deer there

<sup>123</sup> P. Kostić, "Običaj postavljanja zastava na grob" (The Funeral Custom of Putting a Flag over a Grave), *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja u Beogradu* 33 (1970): 20, 27.

<sup>124</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 296.

<sup>125</sup> Erdeljan 1996, 123.

<sup>126</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 422, 444-445.

is a bow with arrow (fig. 37). If there is some pattern, in this simplified scene the hunter may be reduced to a symbol – the bow and arrow may symbolize the hunter himself.

It is interesting that on the both of the monuments there is also a scene of the traditional dance, the *kolo*. On no. 49 (fig. 36) it is a female *kolo* with five figures in bas relief. Now that scene cannot be seen owing to the fact that the tombstone has been turned over. The scene is known from the photo made by Šefik Bešlagić in 1967. The other scene of a *kolo* on no. 83 (fig. 58), is mixed, with men and women dancing together. This monument is in poor condition now, but was described by Šefik Bešlagić.<sup>127</sup> On no. 83, Šefik Bešlagić noted a man riding a deer, in fact leading the *kolo*. Such a scene is known from other localities with *stećci* as well; it is interesting to suppose that there might be some connection between these two: the scene of hunting the deer and the *kolo*. At Novakovići (no. 49), where is also a scene with a hunter with a bow and arrow and a deer, this idea cannot be verified because the eastern side is not visible now because the tombstone was turned over on that side.

Concerning the motif of the *kolo* on *stećci*, it is well known from medieval sources to have been forbidden by the Church as a funeral rite, the so-called *mrtvačko kolo*, “*kolo* of the dead” or “for the dead,” danced at the graveyard during or after the funeral. Some remains of that funeral rite were alive until recently (about a hundred years ago), written down by several scholars.<sup>128</sup> Such dances were also forbidden by the Church in Hungary in the fifteenth century.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Bešlagić 1973, 121-122.

<sup>128</sup> Veselin Čajkanović, “Svekrva na tavanu” (Mother-in-Law in the Garret), *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja* 6 (1931): 6-8; Slobodan Zečević, “Igre našeg posmrtnog rituala” (The Dances of Our Funeral Rite). Rad XI Kongresa Saveza folklorista Jugoslavije (1966), 376.

<sup>129</sup> András Kubinyi, “Késő középkori temetkezések a történeti forrásokban” (Late Medieval Burials in the Historical Sources), *Opuscula Hungarica* 6 (2005): 13-18.

The symbolism of a deer on *stećci* is a special question. It is considered that deer played an important role in prehistoric cults of fertility and funeral rites.<sup>130</sup> In this region, there is a prehistoric representation of a deer with a swastika symbol besides it at Lipci in Montenegro.<sup>131</sup> Probably originally from Anatolia, a deer-god was present in Greco-Roman mythology and in Celtic tradition also, as the god Cernunos. The deer is a *psychopompos* – the leader of the soul into the after-life. The later, medieval and post medieval, tradition confirms the influence of such a divine creature in popular culture. Owing to such an importance of a deer-god, even Christ himself had to get deer horns. Representations of a deer on Merovingian sarcophagi are well known. Following such a pattern, the possible explanation might be that the deer symbolizes the soul itself struck by death (the hunter). It has been noticed that on *stećci* the deer in fact is never dead or fallen. In the most cases a deer is running towards the west. On no.49 in Novakovići a deer is facing the hunter (the east), although it is placed at the western part of monument. This scene is the most frequent amongst hunting scenes on *stećci*, and it may be seen in medieval legends about a chased deer running towards the west, to the garden with the spring of life where the Mother of God is.<sup>132</sup>

There was often some connection between the *kolo* and the deer on *stećci*.<sup>133</sup> It is seen even in the more recent name for a type of folk dance called the “deer’s dance” and “night dance” (*Jelenovo kolo* and *Noćno kolo*), which used to be danced only at night and only on occasions connected with the funeral cult. Nowadays such dances do not have any cultic character and are performed on any occasion. Another hypothesis reflects the attitude that the

<sup>130</sup> Dragoslav Srećković, “Jelen u našim narodnim običajima” (Deer in Our Folk Customs), *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja* 18 (1955): 231-232.

<sup>131</sup> *Istorija Crne Gore* (The History of Montenegro), vol. 1, no. 1 (Titograd: Redakcija za istoriju Crne Gore, 1967), 71-74.

<sup>132</sup> Lovrenović 2009, 79.

<sup>133</sup> Bešlić 1982, 327-329.

scene of hunting a deer is nothing more than simply a scene from the daily life of noblemen, their favorite recreation.<sup>134</sup> However, many of these explanations were based on ethnographic data from more recent times, and it remained dubious what in fact such symbolism really meant for the medieval inhabitants of these areas.

In general, according to their motifs the medieval cemeteries in the area of Žabljak: Novakovići, Bare Žugića and the site of Bijeli Mramor, with one cross-shaped and one dislocated monument, are part of late medieval *stećci* art. All of the motifs present on these sites are known at other localities as well.

Specific to these cemeteries is the high frequency of a bow and arrow motif, which is (including the site Marina Šuma near Pljevlja) the highest in whole *stećci* area. In Herzegovina this motif is not so frequent and in Bosnia and Serbia it is quite rare, with only twelve representations for the whole of Serbia.<sup>135</sup> A trunk from Novakovići and Bijeli Mramor, with the imitation of boards on its upper side (fig. 1-2, dislocated monument at Bijeli Mramor and fig. 15, Novakovići) is also interesting. Since this is a motif particular for Montenegro,<sup>136</sup> its only parallel is known from Bitelić (Croatia).<sup>137</sup> The frequency of the cross motif is also significant and it relates this area with the Imotski region of western Herzegovina, as does the swastika, which does not exist at sites closer than the Imotski region in Croatia. This relation is a bit enigmatic because there are numerous sites in between, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The frequency of other motifs that appear in the Žabljak area is more or less the same as the other regions with *stećci*.

<sup>134</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 338-341; Wenzel, 1965: 257.

<sup>135</sup> Zečević 2005, 65.

<sup>136</sup> Bešlagić 1982, 374-375.

<sup>137</sup> Milošević 1991, 41.

It should be mentioned that the tombstone itself was of great importance for medieval people. It was also an object for the corresponding of community with the deceased, meaning certain rituals for keeping the deceased being “satisfied.” Even when the tombstone above the grave was absent, there was at least one smaller stone within the grave, which has been shown by archaeological excavations of medieval cemeteries in the western Balkans.<sup>138</sup>

However, deeper insight into symbolism of stećci is hard task. It is improbable to get some more confident knowledge about it due to the gap between stećci and our time. According to their size, usually dominant position and sometimes very rich ornaments, the intention of people who made these monuments was to make them easily visible to the local community. It was the stylistic message expressed through their size, shape, ornaments and position that those people could understand. According to H. Martin Wobst such stylistic messages convey compliance to social norms and a certain common ideology. However, stylistic messages also give support to process of social differentiation. They enable people to “summarize and broadcast the uniqueness of their rank or status within a matrix of ranks and statutes” within their community. The less an artefact is visible to members of a community, the less probable it is to carry any stylistic messages. Conversely, those sets of material culture that are visible to all members of a community are “much more likely to show a society specific expression of stylistic form.”<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Erdeljan 1996, 115.

<sup>139</sup> H. Martin Wobst, “Stylistic Behaviour and Information Exchange,” *Anthropological Papers* 61 (1977): 317-337.

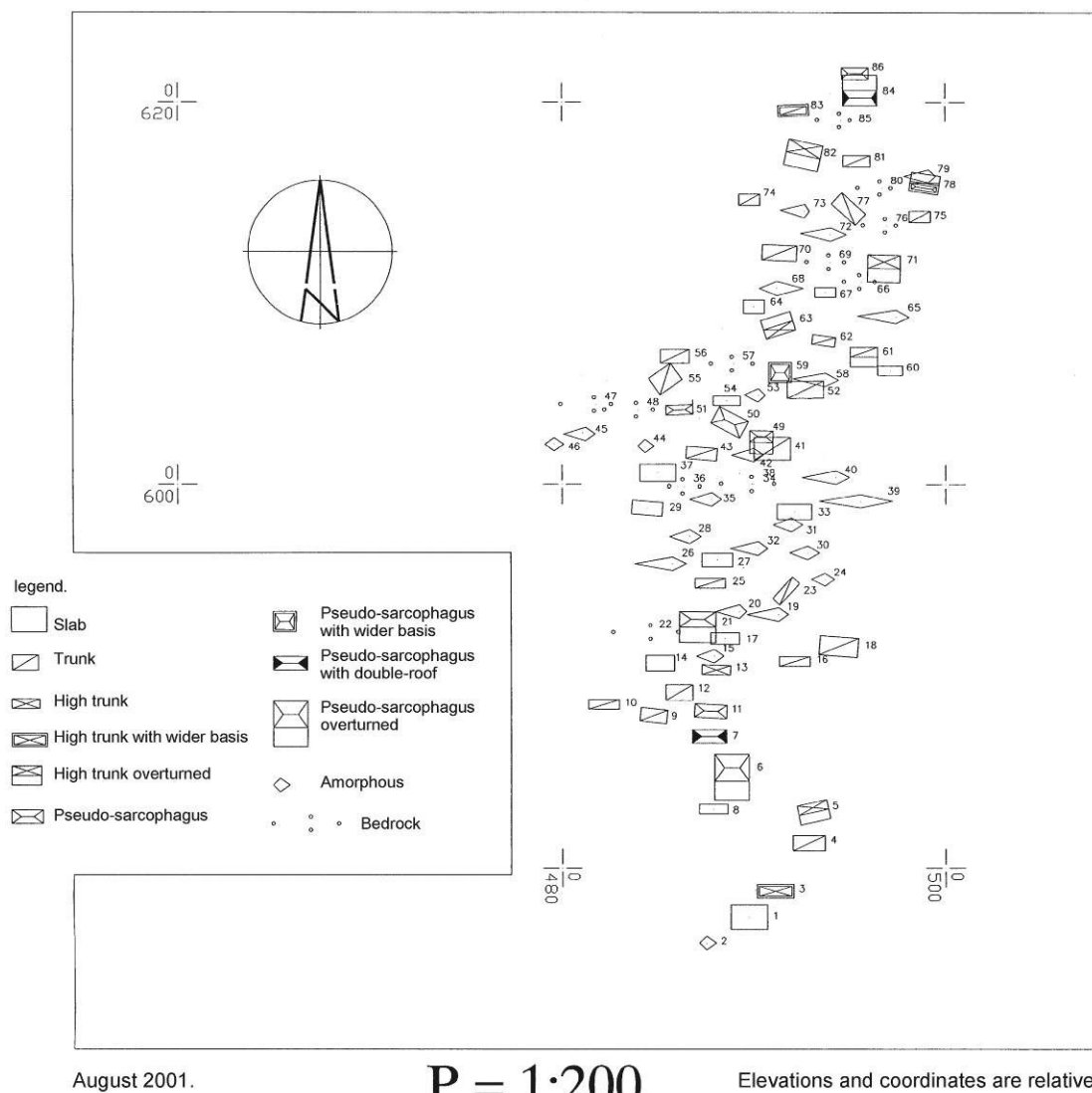
<b>Shape</b>	<b>Bijeli Mramor</b>	<b>Novakovići</b>	<b>Bare Žugića</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Slab</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Trunk</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>High trunk</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Pseudo- sarcophagus</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Pseudo- sarcophagus with double roof</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Cross – shaped</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>
<b>Pillar</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

Table 1. *Stećci* shapes at different sites.

<b>Motif</b>	<b>Novakovići</b>	<b>Bare Žugića</b>	<b>Bijeli Mramor</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Cross</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Crescent</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Rosette/Star</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>
<b>Bow and arrow</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>8</b>
<b>Shield</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Sword</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Helmet</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>
<b>Warrior</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Dance</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Deer hunt</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Pseudo - board</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>“kamenica” concavity</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>“rope”</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>23</b>
<b>Zigzag</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Vine</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>32</b>

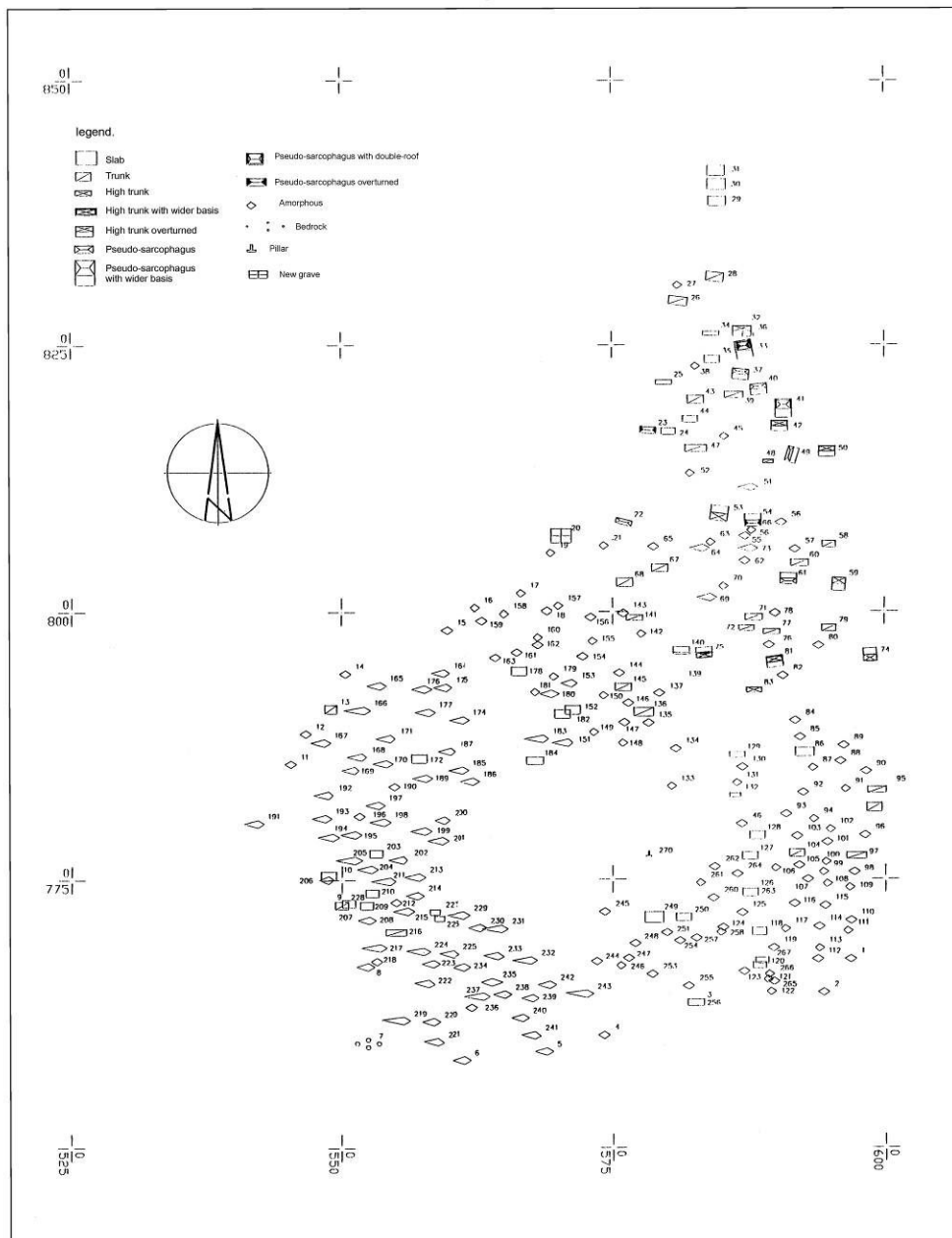
Table 2. *Stećci* motifs at different sites.

# Locality "Greek Graveyard"- Novakovići situational plan





# Locality "Greek Graveyard"- Bare Źugića situational plan



## CONCLUSION

The intention of this research was to present the relevant archaeological data from two medieval cemeteries in Montenegro and to discuss these monuments in their regional context. The cemeteries of Novakovići and Bare Žugića are situated in northern Montenegro, both of them in the vicinity of the town of Žabljak. I have also presented and discussed two other *stećci* from the region (Bijeli Mramor), monuments which have not been discussed in the scholarly literature until now. These *stećci* are particularly interesting because of their shape and decorative motifs.

The aim of this thesis was also to place these monuments within the whole area where *stećci* occur and to find potential correlations in their shape and motifs with other regions with *stećci*. I have noticed, surveying through many other localities with *stećci* that the decorative motifs are close to those from Nikšić and Pljevlja (both in Montenegro). Marina Šuma is located near Pljevlja that is relatively close to Žabljak area. Also, Nikšić and Pljevlja are situated by the same medieval road *Via Jesera or Via Anagasti* as are the two cemeteries in Novakovići and Bare Žugića.

The potential links with Cetinska Krajina (Croatia) are also intriguing. These localities are distant from each other (about 350 kilometers), with many other *stećci* graveyards among them. In fact, these localities do not belong to the central *stećci* area, but to the area of influence (see Map 1 and Map 2). Nevertheless, they have some clear relations. The Croatian scholar Ante Milošević has noticed a particular type of slab that he found in Bitelić (Croatia) has no other parallels apart from these in northern Montenegro. Through my work that hypothesis has been additionally supported, with two more specimens. Although it was known that such a type of

*stećak* existed in Nikšić, I found the same type in Novakovići and Bijeli Mramor. Furthermore, I noted an additional similarity between these two regions of northern Montenegro and Cetinska Krajina in Croatia. That is the higher percentage of cross motifs than in the other areas. The unique *stećak* no. 22 (fig. 38-39) from Bare Žugića is also quite similar to the one from Lučani, Cetinska Krajina (Croatia), which according to Milošević is “an isolated example.”<sup>140</sup> It would be the third direct relation between these two areas. Milošević’s hypothesis was that a migration took part between these regions in the past. My study supports the hypothesis that there was certainly cultural interaction, if not migration.

The general attitude in scholarly literature is that all the influences on *stećci* shapes and motifs have to be found merely in neighbouring areas. That opinion was tested here, and shown to be erroneous, since these examples revealed the direct influence between two distant areas.

Concerning the question of attributing *stećci* to some particular religious or ethnic group I agree with John V. A. Fine and Šefik Bešliagić: They cannot be ascribed to any particular religious or ethnic group. *Stećci* were first and foremost the symbolic representations of someone’s social status and wealth. They represent a unique but common cultural phenomenon in that period of the Middle Ages in the territory of the western Balkans.

In addition, I have made situational plans, maps and catalogues with detailed descriptions and photos for both cemeteries, with the precise position of every monument found. I find such methodology necessary since great numbers of *stećci* are vanishing rapidly from the whole *stećci* area.

It is to be expected that there are considerably more graves in Novakovići and Bare Žugića than the number of *stećci* indicates. Archaeology has already shown this situation at the other sites with *stećci*. Until now the region of Montenegro has been omitted from any serious

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<sup>140</sup> Milošević 1991, 44.

investigation of *stećci*. My belief is that spatial investigations like this one can be helpful in getting a more coherent and better picture of *stećci* occurrences in Montenegro.

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## CATALOGUE

### *Novakovići*

All comparative references from Bešlagić 1973.

No. 1 – Slab with no motifs, set into the ground: length 190 cm, width 130 cm.

No. 2 – Amorphous: length 50 cm, width 60 cm.

No. 3 – (Bešlagić no. 1). High trunk with a wide base: length 190, width 70 cm, and height 100 cm. It has representations of six arcades on the northern and southern sides. Above the arcades runs a band made in bas-relief. There is a star (rosette) on the upper side (figure 9-northern side).

No. 4 – (Bešlagić no. 2). Trunk: length 170 cm, width 80 cm, and height 45 cm. As an upper border on the lateral sides it has unique half-volutes with circles (wrenches). There is a stripe with parallel lines and rope on the upper side (fig. 10-southern side).

No. 5 – High trunk: length 160 cm, width 50 cm, and height 100 cm. Turned over on the southern side. Vine motif on the visible northern side as well as the lateral sides.

No. 6 – Pseudo sarcophagus: length 180 cm, width 50 cm, and height 140 cm. Turned over on the southern side, partially set into the ground. Representation of a man with an enlarged right hand on the lateral northern side. Except for his hand the body is hardly visible now. The motif of a shield and a sword with a plain crossguard and round pommel is better visible. The enlarged hand stretches towards the sword's handle. Above the representation runs a vine (fig. 11-eastern side and fig. 12).

No. 7 – Pseudo sarcophagus: length 180 cm, width 60 cm, and height 70 cm. Partially set into the ground. There are five arcades on two lateral sides, northern and eastern, and above it an engraved stripe with parallel lines. The monument is well-preserved (fig. 13, southern side).

No. 8 – Amorphous: length 150 cm, width 50 cm.

No. 9 – Trunk with no motifs, in poor condition: length 140 cm, width 70 cm, and height 60 cm.

No. 10 – (Bešlagić no. 6) Trunk: length 160 cm, width 50 cm, and height 60 cm. There is a border on the northern and southern sides made of half-volutes with circles, what makes it similar to no. 4. There is a vine as a border on the upper side. It has a cross on both the eastern and western sides (fig. 14-southern side).

No. 11 – Pseudo sarcophagus with no motifs: length 170 cm, width 70 cm, and height 60 cm.

No. 12 – (Bešlagić no. 7) Trunk: length 140 cm, width 80 cm, and height 35 cm. On the upper side motifs of a shield (*scutus bosniensis*) and a border of a stripe with parallel lines are barely visible.

No. 13 – (Bešlagić no. 8) Pseudo sarcophagus: length 150 cm, width 60 cm, and height 80 cm. There are arcades on all the lateral sides, and a rope motif above them.

No. 14 – Slab with no motifs: length 150 cm, width 80 cm, and height 15 cm.

No. 15 – Amorphous: length 100 cm, width 60 cm, and height 15 cm.

No. 16 – Trunk with no motifs: length 140 cm, width 50 cm, and height 60 cm.

- No. 17 – Slab with no motifs: length 150 cm, width 60 cm, and height 15 cm.
- No. 18 – Trunk: length 200 cm, width 100 cm, and height 40 cm. There is an imitation of board on the upper side. It has twelve slots, and across the middle three circles (medallions). This monument is very similar to a dislocated one in Bijeli Mramor. This motif does not occur anywhere except in Montenegro (fig. 15-upper side).
- No. 19 – Amorphous: length 170 cm, width 60 cm.
- No. 20 – Amorphous: length 130 cm, width 50 cm.
- No. 21 – (Bešlagić no. 10). Pseudo-sarcophagus: length 190 cm, width 80 cm, height 130 cm. turned over on the southern side. Empty stripe follows the boundary of the roof.
- No. 22 – Foundation stone with floor space of 200 x 150 cm.
- No. 23 – (Bešlagić no. 12) Trunk: length 150 cm, width 50 cm, and height 40 cm. There is a rope bas-relief as a border on the upper side. According to Bešlagić<sup>141</sup> there should be one crescent on the upper side of the monument, but I could not recognize it. The tombstone is turned over on the northern side (fig. 16-south-eastern side).
- No. 24 – Amorphous: length 80 cm, width 60 cm.
- No. 25 – Trunk with no motifs: length 170 cm, width 70 cm, and height 30 cm. The trunk is set into the ground.
- No. 26 – Group of several smaller amorphous tombstones with floor space of 200 x 80 cm.
- No. 27 – Trunk with no motifs: length 120 cm, width 50 cm, and height 40 cm. The tombstone is set on the southern side and significantly damaged.
- No. 28 – Amorphous: length 110, width 70 cm.
- No. 29 – Slab with no motifs: length 160 cm, width 70 cm, and height 10 cm.
- No. 30 – Amorphous: length 100 cm, width 70 cm.
- No. 31 – Amorphous: length 100 cm, width 70 cm.
- No. 32 – Amorphous: length 150 cm, width 60 cm
- No. 33 – Slab with no motifs: length 180 cm, width 80 cm, and height 20 cm.
- No. 34 – Foundation stone with floor space of 180 x 100 cm.
- No. 35 – Amorphous: length 120 cm, width 60 cm.
- No. 36 – Foundation stone with floor space of 100 x 120 cm.
- No. 37 – Slab with no motifs: length 190 cm, width 90 cm, height 7 cm.
- No. 38 – Foundation stone with floor space of 180 x 120 cm.
- No. 39 – Group of amorphous tombstones with floor space of 220 x 170 cm.
- No. 40 – Amorphous: length 180 cm, width 80 cm.
- No. 41 – Trunk with no motifs, very damaged: length 190 cm, width 120 cm, and height 40 cm.
- No. 42 – Amorphous: length 120 cm, width 60 cm.
- No. 43 – Trunk with no motifs: length 160 cm, width 65 cm, and height 40 cm.
- No. 44 – Amorphous: length 50 cm, width 60 cm.
- No. 45 – Amorphous: length 120 cm, width 60 cm.
- No. 46 – Amorphous: length 60 cm, width 60 cm.
- No. 47 – Foundation stone with floor space of 180 x 70 cm.
- No. 48 – Foundation stone with floor space of 160 x 70 cm.
- No. 49 – (Bešlagić no. 13). Pseudo-sarcophagus: length 120 cm, width 60 cm, and height 90 cm. There is a representation of deer hunting in bas-relief on the lateral northern side. The hunter has a helmet with plume on his head and holds a bow and arrow. A vine runs above this scene. There are crosses on the eastern and western lateral sides. The tombstone is turned over on the southern

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<sup>141</sup> Bešlagić, 1973, 116.

side. Bešlagić apparently confused data when writing about this monument. According to him “there is a hunter riding a horse and chasing a deer (damaged).”<sup>142</sup> With this description he presented a photo of a different tombstone from Bare Žugića.<sup>143</sup> (fig. 17-northern side and fig. 18).

No. 50 – Pseudo-sarcophagus, very damaged: length 170 cm, width 100 cm, and height 40 cm. The tombstone has irregular orientation northeast southwest.

No. 51 – Pseudo-sarcophagus with no motifs: length 140 cm, width 50 cm, and height 40 cm.

No. 52 – Trunk with no motifs: length 190 cm, width 90 cm, and height 30 cm.

No. 53 – Amorphous: length 80 cm, width 50 cm.

No. 54 – Slab damaged on the western side: length 140 cm, width 50 cm. The slab is completely set into the ground. It has an engraved isosceles cross.

No. 55 – Trunk with no motifs: length 140 cm, width 105 cm, and height 40 cm. The orientation is northeast-southwest.

No. 56 – Trunk with no motifs, very damaged: length 150 cm, width 70 cm, and height 30 cm.

No. 57 – Foundation stone with floor space of 160 x 160 cm.

No. 58 – Amorphous: length 170 cm, width 70 cm.

No. 59 – Pseudo-sarcophagus with a wide base, with no motifs: length 120 cm, width 105 cm, and height 170 cm. It stands higher than the other monuments, in the centre of the graveyard. (fig. 19-eastern side).

No. 60 – Slab, very damaged, set into the ground: length 130 cm, width 50 cm.

No. 61 – Trunk with no motifs: length 140 cm, width 50 cm, and height 60 cm. The tombstone is turned over on the southern side.

No. 62 – Trunk with no motifs, damaged on the eastern side: length 120 cm, width 50 cm, and height 30 cm.

No. 63 – (Bešlagić no. 14). High trunk: length 170 cm, width 50 cm, and height 100 cm. The monument is turned over on the northern lateral side and set deeply into the ground. A vine motif is visible on the southern lateral side. The formerly visible representation below it is not visible now. There is a stripe with parallel line above the vine. There are two crosses on the lateral sides: a cross on the western side, and swastika with a crescent above it on the eastern lateral side. On the upper side there is again a vine motif and parallel lines (fig. 20-eastern side and figs. 21 and 22).

No. 64 – Slab, damaged and set into the ground: length 110 cm, width 70 cm.

No. 65 – Amorphous: length 200, width 70 cm.

No. 66 – Foundation stone with floor space of 160 x 110 cm.

No. 67 – Slab, very damaged and set into the ground: length 110 cm, width 50 cm.

No. 68 – Amorphous: length 90 cm, width 60 cm.

No. 69 – Foundation stone with floor space of 190 x 100 cm.

No. 70 – Trunk with no motifs, very damaged: length 180 cm, width 80 cm, and height 30 cm.

No. 71 – (Bešlagić no. 16). High trunk: length 170 cm, width 70 cm, and height 110 cm. The monument is turned over on the southern side. There are four arcades on the northern side and a vine with circles above it (Bešlagić incorrectly has five arcades in his drawing). There is a cross below the arcade on the eastern side (fig. 23-northeastern side and no. 24-drawing by Bešlagić).

No. 72 – Amorphous: length 160 cm, width 90 cm.

No. 73 – Amorphous: length 130 cm, width 40 cm, height 20 cm.

<sup>142</sup> Bešlagić. 1973, 116-117.

<sup>143</sup> Same, fig. 8.

No. 74 – Trunk: length 110 cm, width 60 cm, height 30 cm. The only motif is a cross on the upper side. The upper arm of the cross is a bit rounded (*crux ansata*). (Fig. 25-upper side, fig. 26-northern side).

No. 75 – Trunk with no motifs: length 110 cm, width 60 cm, and height 30 cm.

No. 76 – Foundation stone with floor space of 120 x 70 cm.

No. 77 – (Bešlagić no. 17). Trunk: length 170 cm, width 80 cm, and height 50 cm. There are parallel lines as the borders on the upper side, as well as on the lateral sides. The orientation is northeast-southwest.

No. 78 – (Bešlagić no. 18). Pseudo-sarcophagus with a wide base: length 150 cm, width 50 cm, and height 80 cm. The monument is turned over on the northern side. There is a rope motif along the roof's border, and a vine below it. According to Bešlagić: "On the visible lateral side it seems that there was a scene of hunting the deer, nowadays unrecognizable."<sup>144</sup> I could not recognize this scene either. There is an anthropomorphic cross on the eastern side (fig. 27-northwestern side and fig. 28).

No. 79 – Amorphous: length 130 cm, width 50 cm.

No. 80 – Foundation stone with floor space of 140 x 100 cm.

No. 81 – Trunk with no motifs, very damaged: length 130 cm, width 60 cm, and height 30 cm.

No. 82 – (Bešlagić no. 19). High trunk: length 170 cm, width 70 cm, and height 90 cm. The monument is turned over on the southern lateral side. There are two arcades with the pillars on the northern side, and a border with parallel lines on the upper side. On the western side a shield (*scutus bosniensis*) is represented, with a sword behind it. The sword has a round pommel and plain crossguard (fig. 29-northern side and fig.30).

No. 83 – (Bešlagić no. 20). Trunk with a wide base: length 160 cm, width 60 cm, and height 40 cm. There are two convex circles on the upper side, twelve centimetres in diameter each. The lateral sides are recessed in a form of niche (fig. 31-northeastern side).

No. 84 – (Bešlagić no. 21). A pseudo-sarcophagus with a double roof: length 180 cm, width 80 cm, and height 130 cm. The tombstone is turned over on the northern side. The only motifs are parallel lines along the lateral sides.

No. 85 – Foundation stone with floor space of 180 x 60 cm.

No. 86 – Pseudo-sarcophagus, very damaged and set into the ground: length 140 cm, width 60 cm, and height 30 cm.

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<sup>144</sup> Bešlagić. 1973, 119.

## *Bare Žugića*

All comparative references from Bešlagić 1973

No. 1 – 21: Mostly amorphous without any motifs.

No. 22 – (Bešlagić no. 11). Pseudo-sarcophagus carved like a trunk, but with a rib along the upper side which imitates the roof: length 140 cm, width 60 cm, and height 50 cm (fig. 38-southern side and fig. 39-southeastern side).

No. 23 – Pseudo-sarcophagus: length 150 cm, width 60 cm, and height 40 cm.

No. 24 – Slab: length 130 cm, width 60 cm, and height 15 cm.

No. 25 – Slab set into the ground: length 140 cm, width 40 cm.

No. 26 – Trunk with no motifs: length 170, width 60 cm, and height 30 cm.

No. 27 – Amorphous

No. 28 – Trunk with a border of parallel lines: length 160 cm, width 80 cm, and height 60 cm.

No. 29 – Slab: length 150 cm, width 60 cm, and height 10 cm.

No. 30 – Slab: length 170 cm, width 80 cm, and height 10 cm.

No. 31 – Slab with an engraved isosceles cross in the middle: length 160 cm, width 70 cm, and height 10 cm.

No. 32 – Pseudo-sarcophagus turned over on the southern lateral side: length 170 cm, width 50 cm, and height 90 cm.

No. 33 – (Bešlagić no. 20). Pseudo-sarcophagus with a rib across the upper side: length 150 cm, width 100 cm, and height 110 cm. Turned over on the southern lateral side. It has a double wide base and square frames as a motif on the northern side (fig. 40-northern side and fig. 41-southern side).

No. 34 – Trunk: length 150 cm, width 40 cm, and height 50 cm.

No. 35 – Slab: length 140 cm, width 70 cm, and height 10 cm.

No. 36 – Slab: length 100 cm, width 45 cm, and height 20 cm.

No. 37 – Pseudo-sarcophagus with a border on the upper side: length 180 cm, width 60 cm, and height 100 cm.

No. 38 – Amorphous.

No. 39 – (Bešlagić no. 17). Trunk with a cross, crescent and four stars on the upper side: length 170 cm, width 60 cm, and height 30 cm. Stars (rosettes) are around the cross and the crescent above it. Only the cross is easily recognizable now (fig. 42-detail of the cross).

No. 40 – Pseudo-sarcophagus with a border on the upper side: length 160 cm, width 60 cm, and height 130 cm. It is turned over on the southern side (fig. 43-southwestern side).

No. 41 – Pseudo-sarcophagus with a wide base with a border motif of rope: length 150 cm, width 50 cm, and height 120 cm.

No. 42 – High trunk with a wide base and border motif of rope: length 160 cm, width 60 cm, and height 110 cm.

No. 43 – Trunk, very damaged.

No. 44 – Slab, set: length 140 cm, width 60 cm.

No. 45 – Amorphous.

No. 46 – Amorphous.

No. 47 – Trunk: length 200, width 70 cm.

No. 48 – (Bešlagić no. 12). Trunk with a wide base and engraved bow with an arrow motif on the upper side, and parallel lines on the lateral sides: length 110 cm, width 40 cm, and height 70 cm (fig. 44-northern side).

No. 49 – Bešlagić (no. 13). High trunk with a wide base: length 150 cm, width 70 cm, and height 100 cm. There is a representation of a *kolo* dance on the southern lateral side with a vine above, invisible now due to the fact it was turned over and robbed during the 1980s. There is a cross on the eastern side, and arcades on northern lateral side. There is also a deer and a bow with an arrow on the upper side. Another bow and arrow is on the base itself (fig. 45- wider basis).

No. 50 – (Bešlagić no. 14). High trunk with a wide base: length 135 cm, width 50 cm, and height 140 cm. There is an “apple” in bas relief on the upper side, and five arcades with a vine above on the northern side (fig. 46-southwestern side and fig. 47-northern side).

No. 51 – Amorphous.

No. 52 – Amorphous.

No. 53 – (Bešlagić no. 10). High trunk, turned over on the northern side: length 160 cm, width 70 cm, and height 90 cm. There is a sword with plain crossguard and round pommel on the upper side (fig. 48-northern side).

No. 54 – Pseudo-sarcophagus, turned over on the southern side: length 140 cm, width 60 cm, and height 160 cm.

No. 55 – Amorphous.

No. 56 – Amorphous.

No. 57 – Amorphous.

No. 58 – Trunk: length 120 cm, width 60 cm, and height 30 cm.

No. 59 – High trunk, turned over on the southern side: length 120 cm, width 60 cm, and height 100 cm.

No. 60 – (Bešlagić no. 9). Trunk with the representation of a crescent with a star, both in bas relief on the upper side: length 160 cm, width 70 cm, and height 40 cm (fig. 49-detail of a crescent with a star).

No. 61 – Pseudo-sarcophagus: length 170 cm, width 70 cm, and height 150 cm. There is a cross on the western side with the upper arms in the shape of a crescent. There is a cross on the eastern side as well (fig. 50-western side and fig. 51-drawings).

No. 62 – 74: Amorphous, slabs and trunks without any motifs.

No. 75 – (Bešlagić no. 4). High trunk with a wider basis, turned over on the northern side: length 180 cm, width 60 cm, and height 170 cm. Southern lateral side is covered by slots as well as the upper side (imitation of a board). There is a bow with arrow and an engraved isosceles cross above the wide base, and three circles (rings) in bas relief above the slots. There is a cross or a lily motif on the eastern side<sup>145</sup>(fig. 52-detail and fig. 53-drawings).

No. 76 – Amorphous.

No. 77 – Trunk: length 150 cm, width 50 cm, and height 40 cm.

No. 78 – Amorphous.

No. 79 – (Bešlagić no. 5). Trunk with the representation of a cross on the upper side. The lower arm ends with a hollow (*kamenica*). There is also a double border on the upper side (fig. 54-upper side and fig. 55-drawing).

No. 80 – Amorphous.

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<sup>145</sup> Bešlagić. 1973, 123.



No. 81 – (Bešlagić no. 3). Pseudo sarcophagus with a wide base turned over and set on the southern side: length 130 cm, width 60 cm, and height 110 cm. There is a zigzag stripe in bas relief on the northern side, and a bow and arrow on the roof (fig. 56-northern side).

No. 82 – Amorphous.

No. 83 – (no. 2 according to Bešlagić). High trunk, very damaged and turned over on the southern side: length 160 cm, width 60 cm, and height 90 cm. There is a rope decoration on the upper side. There is a dog, according to Bešlagić, on the upper side, and a *kolo* with four figures, two males and two females, and a man riding a deer. Owing to fact that the monument has been much damaged I could not recognize the motifs (fig. 57-northern side and fig. 58-drawing).

No. 84 – 103: Amorphous.

No. 104 – (Bešlagić no.1). Trunk: length 150, width 60 cm, and height 30 cm. There is representation of a tetragonal shield (*scutus bosniensis*) on the upper side.

No. 105 – 269: Amorphous.

No. 270 – A pillar, broken, tetragonal: length 20 cm, width 20 cm, and height 25 cm.

## ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1. Locality Bijeli Mramor, dislocated monument (photo by Dejan Vemić)

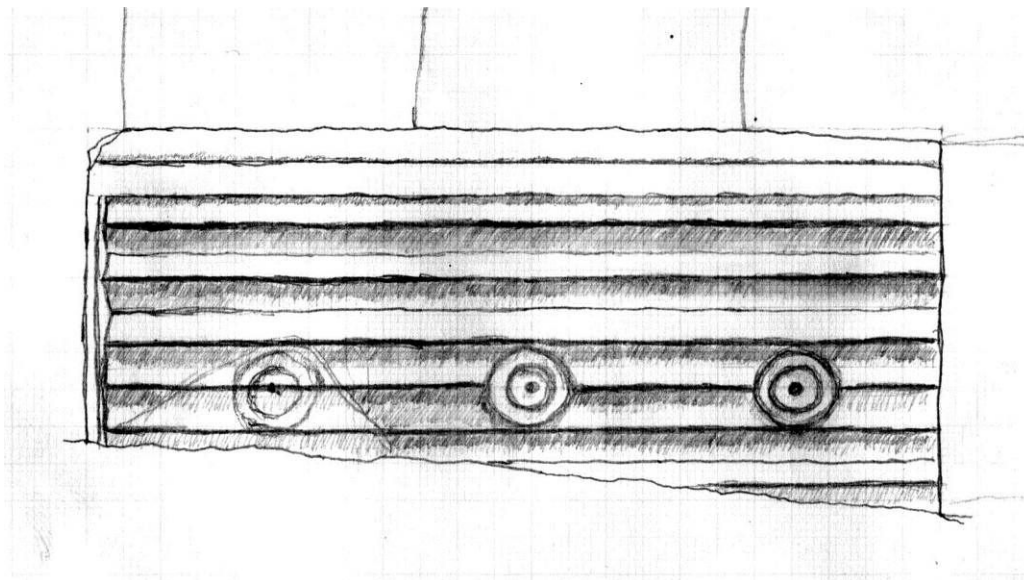


Fig. 2. Locality Bijeli Mramor, dislocated monument (drawing by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 3. Locality Bijeli Mramor, cross-shaped monument (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 4. Locality Bijeli Mramor, cross –shaped monument (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 5. Locality Bijeli Mramor, cross-shaped monument; detail (photo by Dejan Vemić)

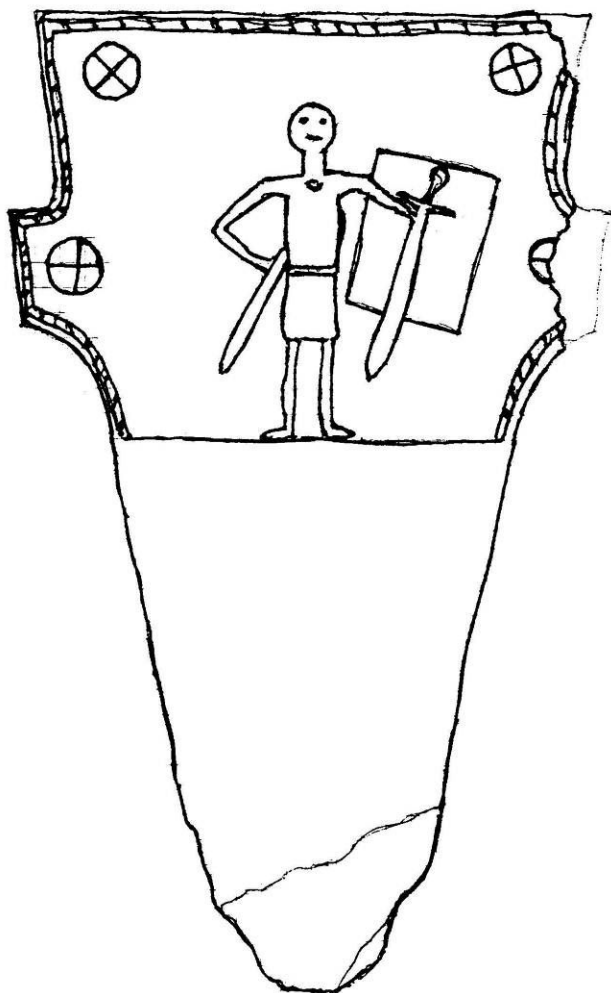


Fig. 6. Locality Bijeli Mramor, cross-shaped monument (drawing by Dejan Vemić)

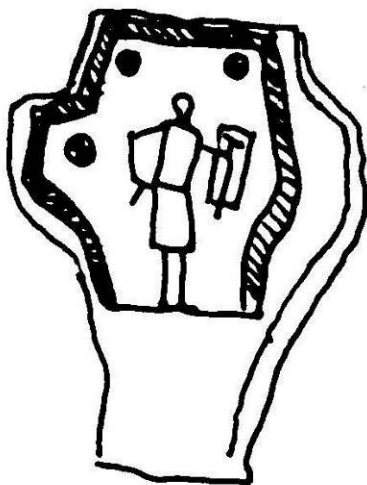


Fig. 7. Locality Bijeli Mramor, cross-shaped monument (drawing by Hermann Sterneck)

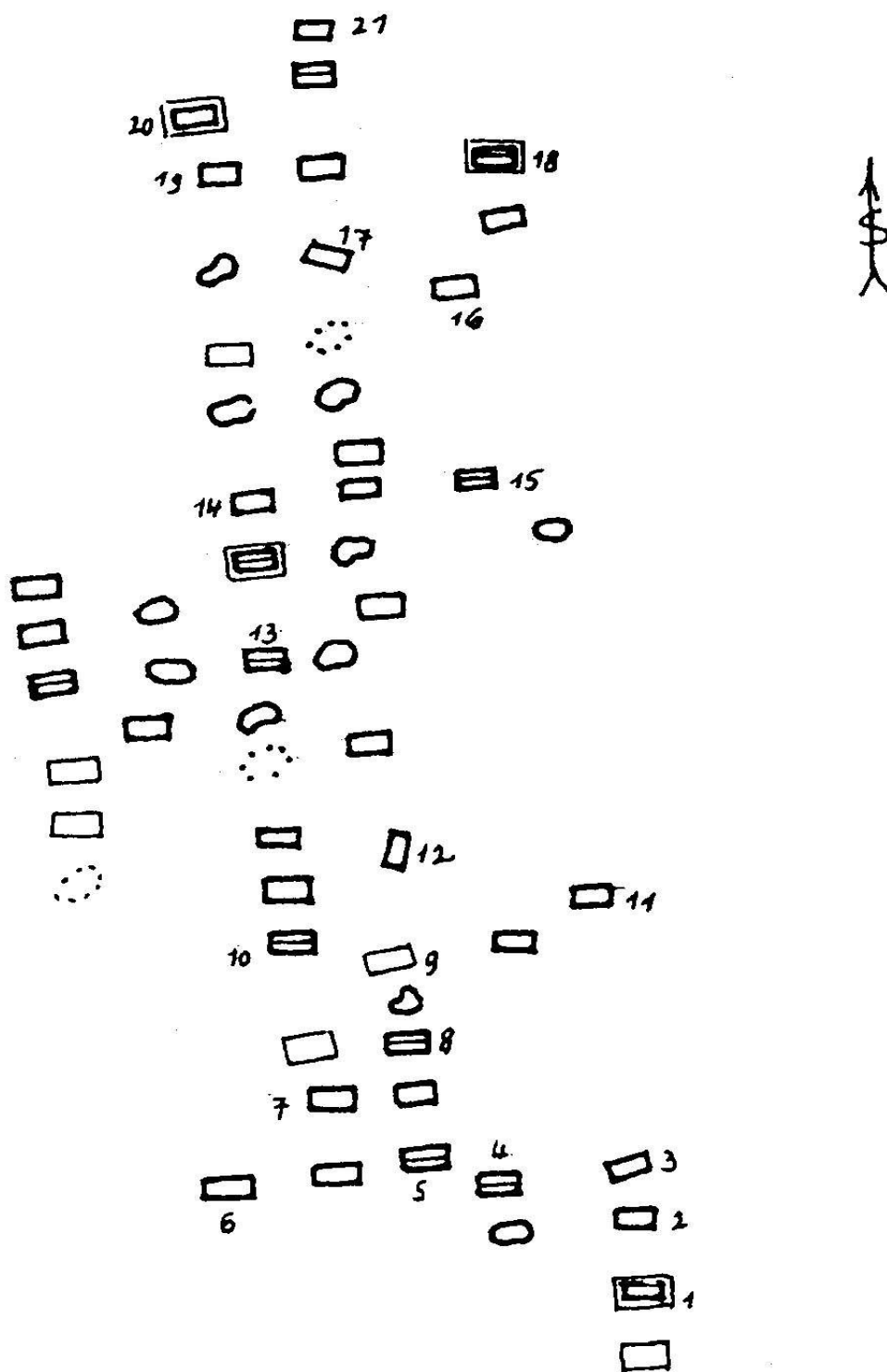


Fig. 8. Locality Novakovići (situational plan-drawing by Šefik Bešliagić)





Fig. 9. Locality Novakovići, no. 3. (photo by Dejan Vemić)

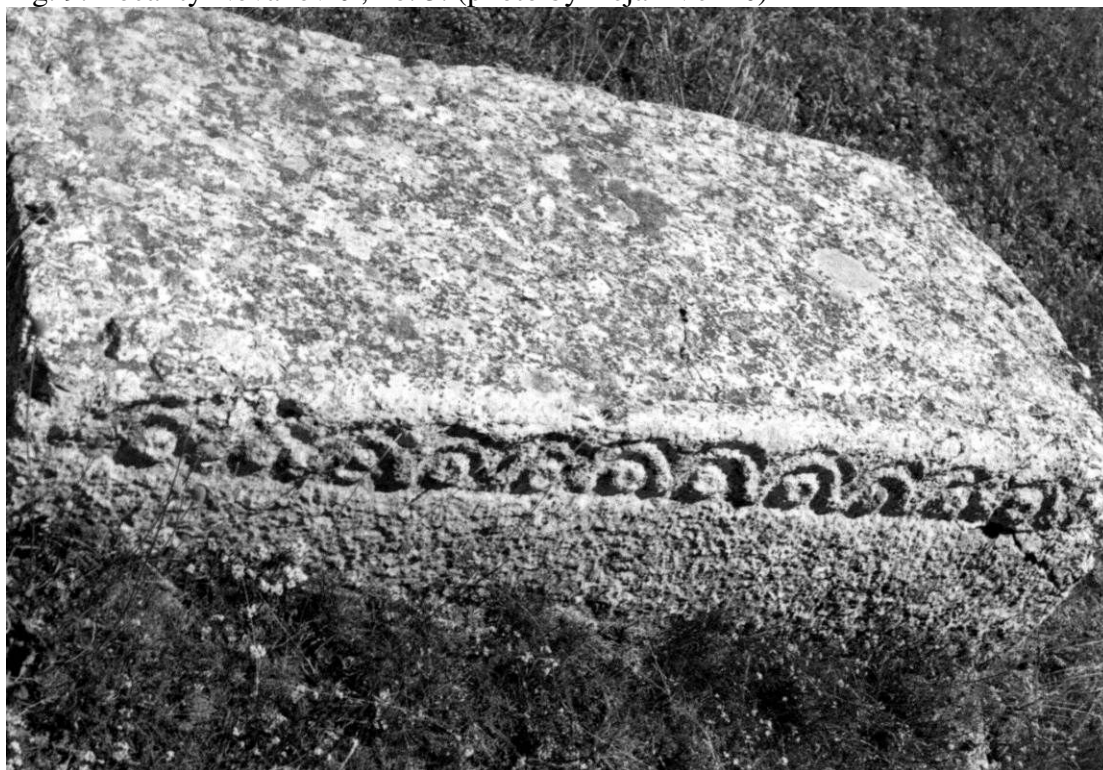


Fig. 10. Locality Novakovići, no. 4. (photo by Dejan Vemić)

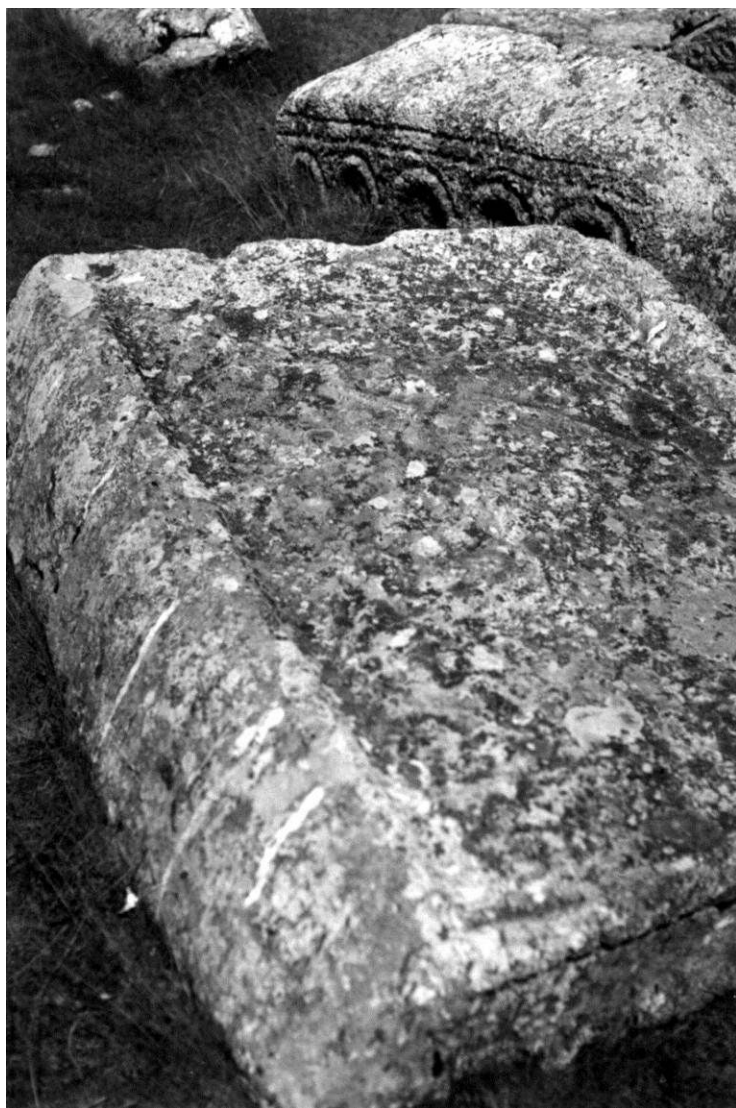


Fig. 11. Locality Novakovići, no. 6. (photo by Dejan Vemić)

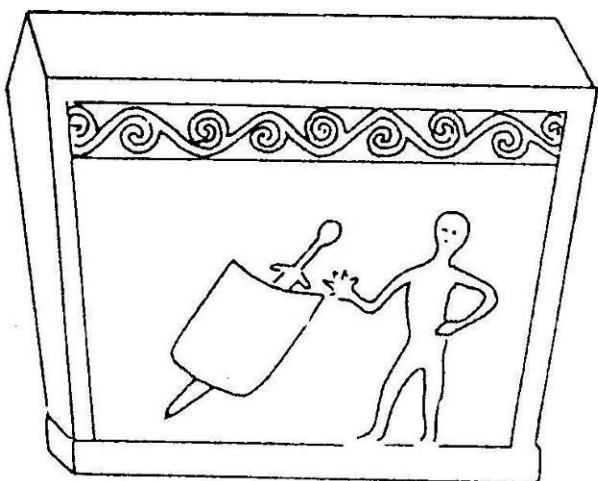


Fig. 12. Locality Novakovići, no. 6. (drawing by Šefik Bešliagić)





Fig. 13. Locality Novakovići, no. 7. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 14. Locality Novakovići, no. 10. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 15. Locality Novakovići, no. 18. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 16. Locality Novakovići, no. 23. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 17. Locality Novakovići, no. 49. (photo by Dejan Vemić)

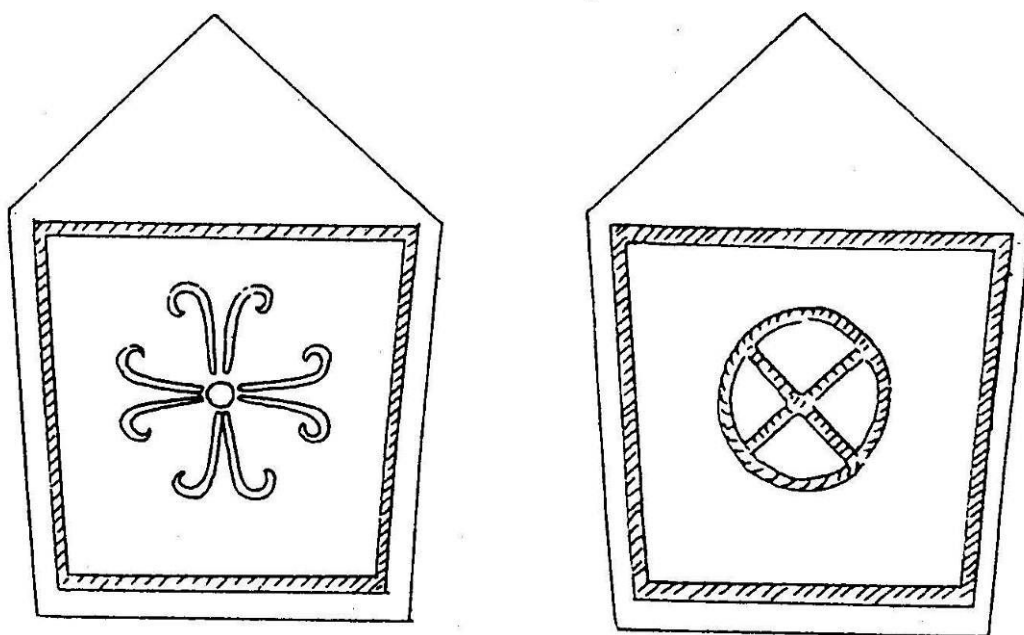


Fig. 18. Locality Novakovići, no. 49. (drawings by Šefik Bešliagić)



Fig. 19. Locality Novakovići, no. 59. (photo by Dejan Vemić)





Fig. 20. Locality Novakovići, no. 63. (photo by Dejan Vemić)

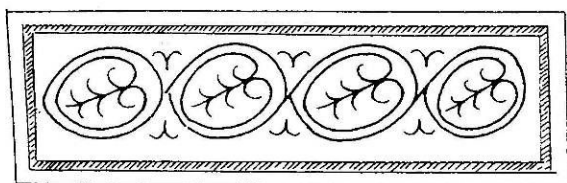


Fig. 21. Locality Novakovići, no. 63. (drawing by Šefik Bešliagić)

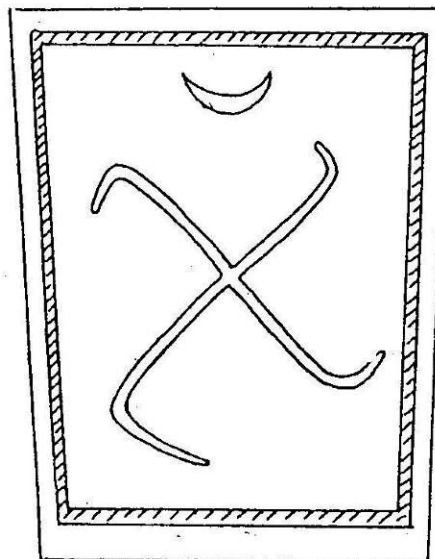


Fig. 22. Locality Novakovići, no. 63. (drawing by Šefik Bešliagić)



Fig. 23. Locality Novakovići, no. 71. (photo by Dejan Vemić)

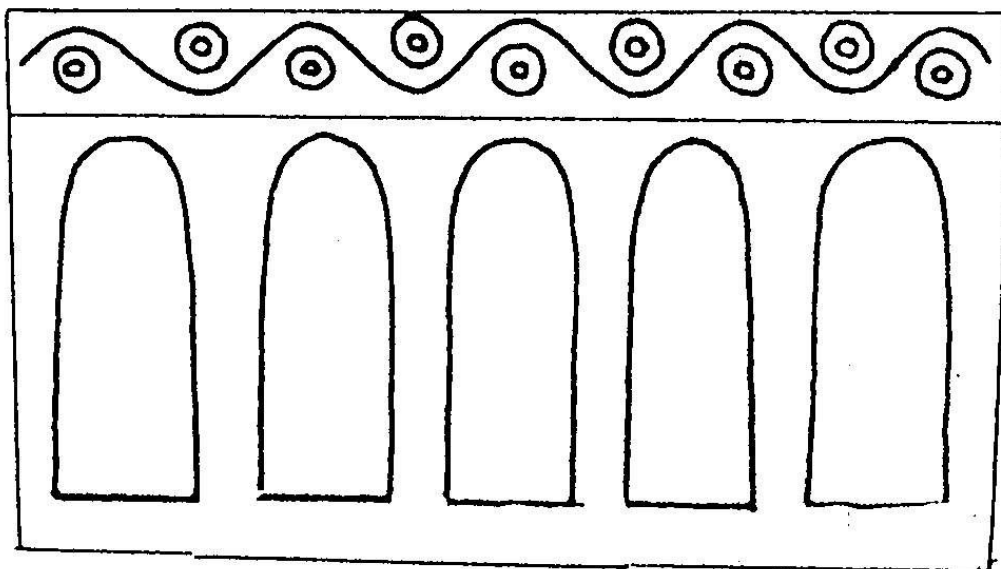


Fig. 24. Locality Novakovići, no. 71. (drawing by Šefik Bešlagić)



Fig. 25. Locality Novakovići, no. 74. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 26. Locality Novakovići, no. 74. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 27 Locality Novakovići, no. 78. (photo by Dejan Vemić)

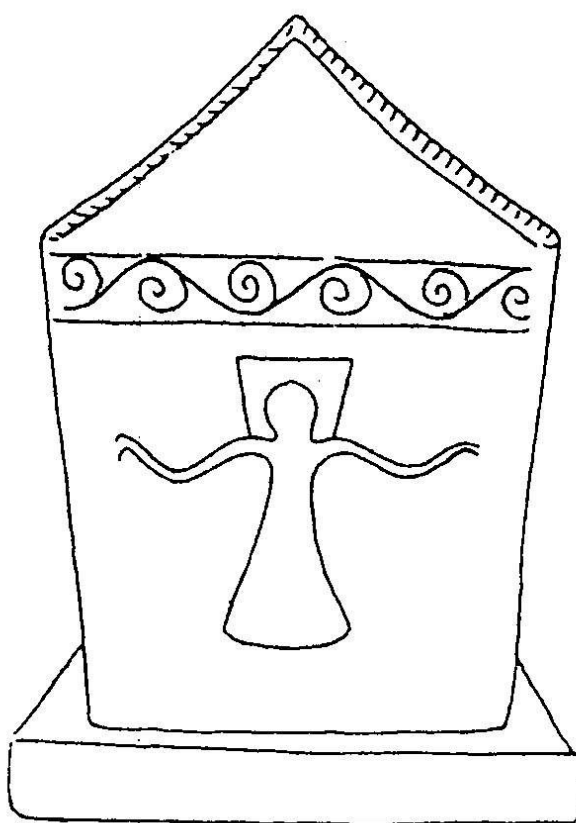


Fig. 28 Locality Novakovići, no. 78. (drawing by Šefik Bešliagić)





Fig. 29 Locality Novakovići, no. 82. (photo by Dejan Vemić)

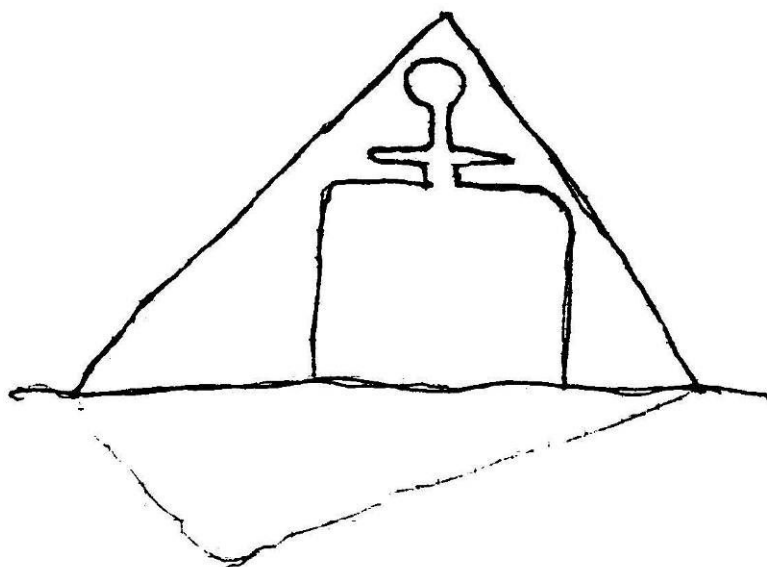


Fig. 30. Locality Novakovići, no. 82. (drawing by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 31. Locality Novakovići, no. 83. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 32. Locality Novakovići (photo by Dejan Vemić -southern part of the cemetery)

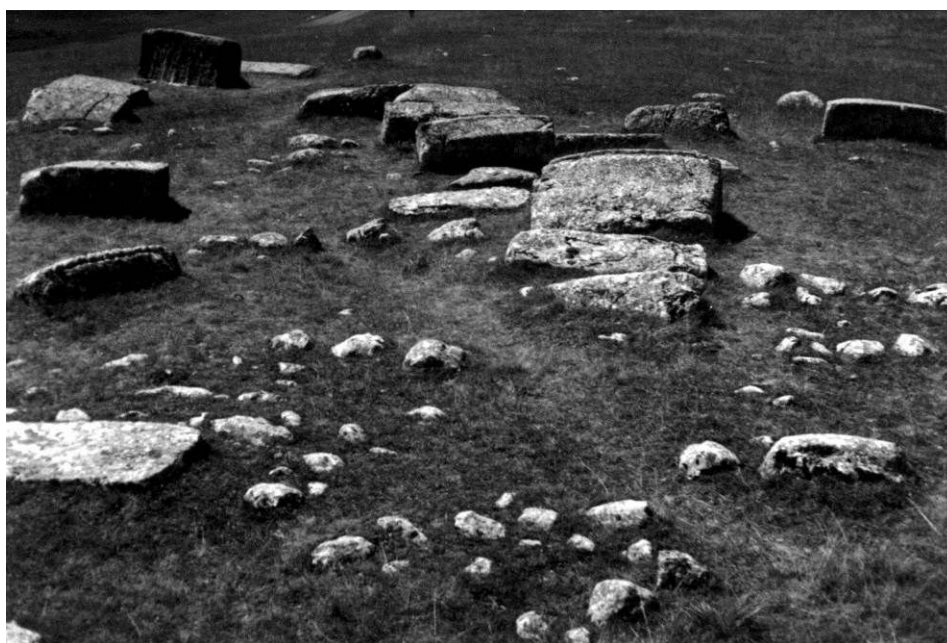


Fig. 33. Locality Novakovići (photo by Dejan Vemić -central part of the cemetery)



Fig. 34. Locality Novakovići (photo by Dejan Vemić -northern part of the cemetery)

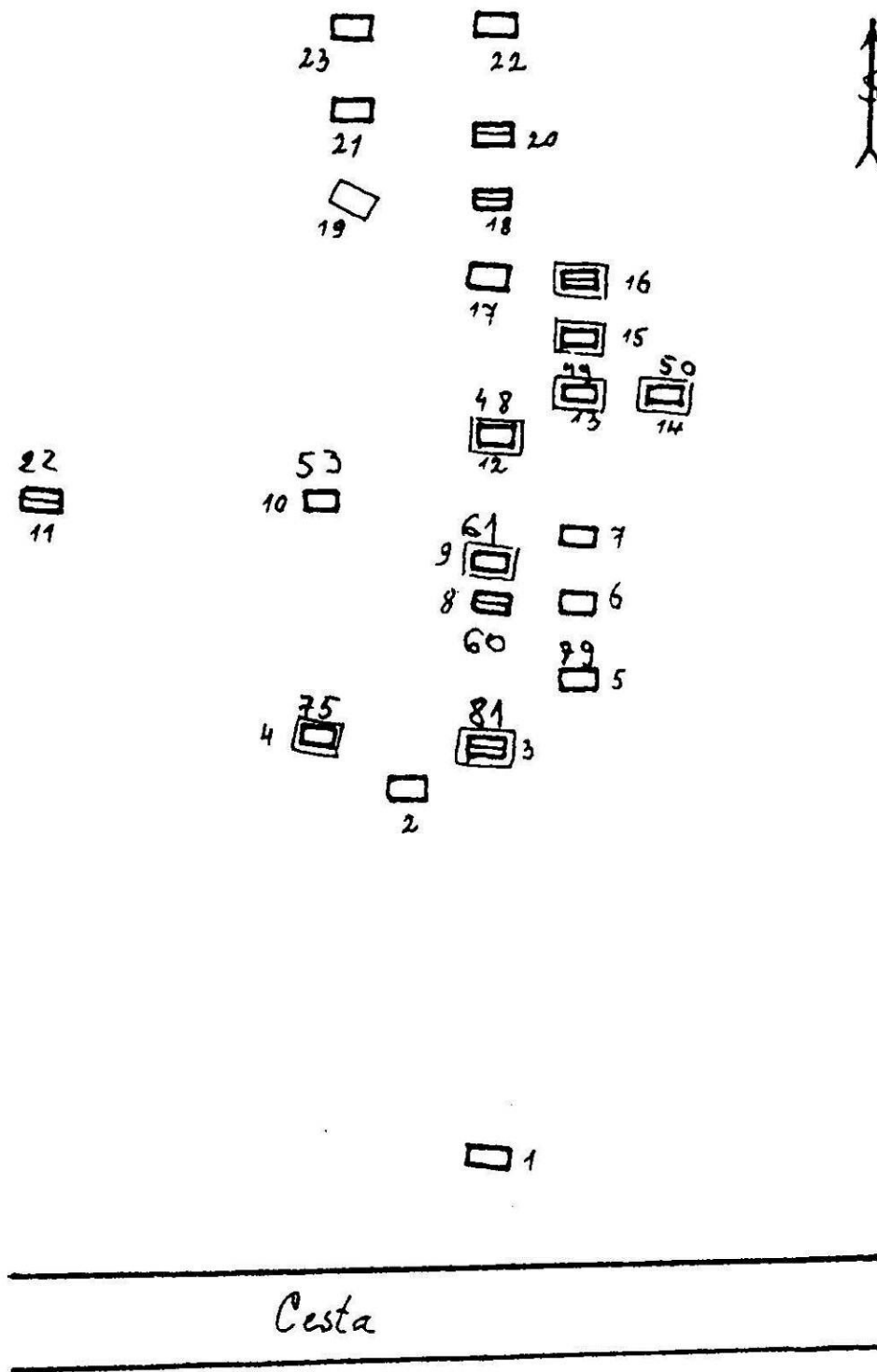


Fig. 35. Locality Bare Žugića (situational plan-drawing by Šefik Bešliagić)

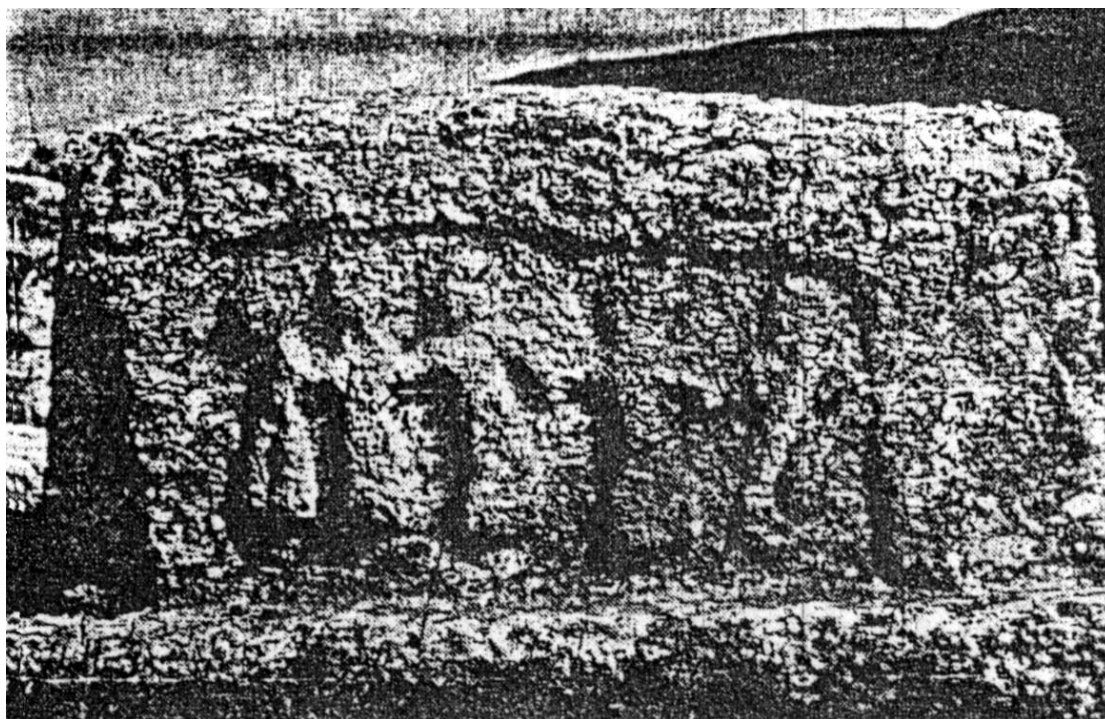


Fig. 36. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 49. (photo by Šefik Bešliagić)

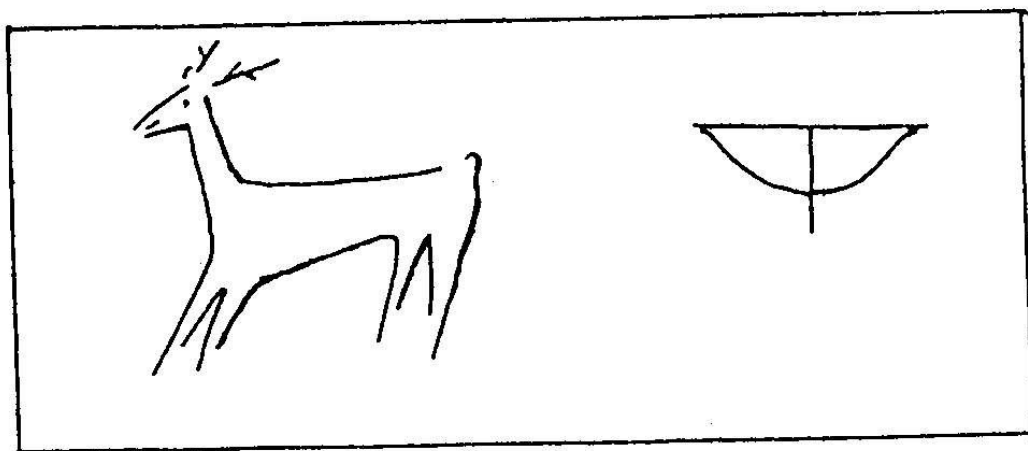


Fig. 37. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 49. (drawing by Šefik Bešliagić)





Fig. 38. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 22. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 39. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 22. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 40. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 33. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 41. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 33. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



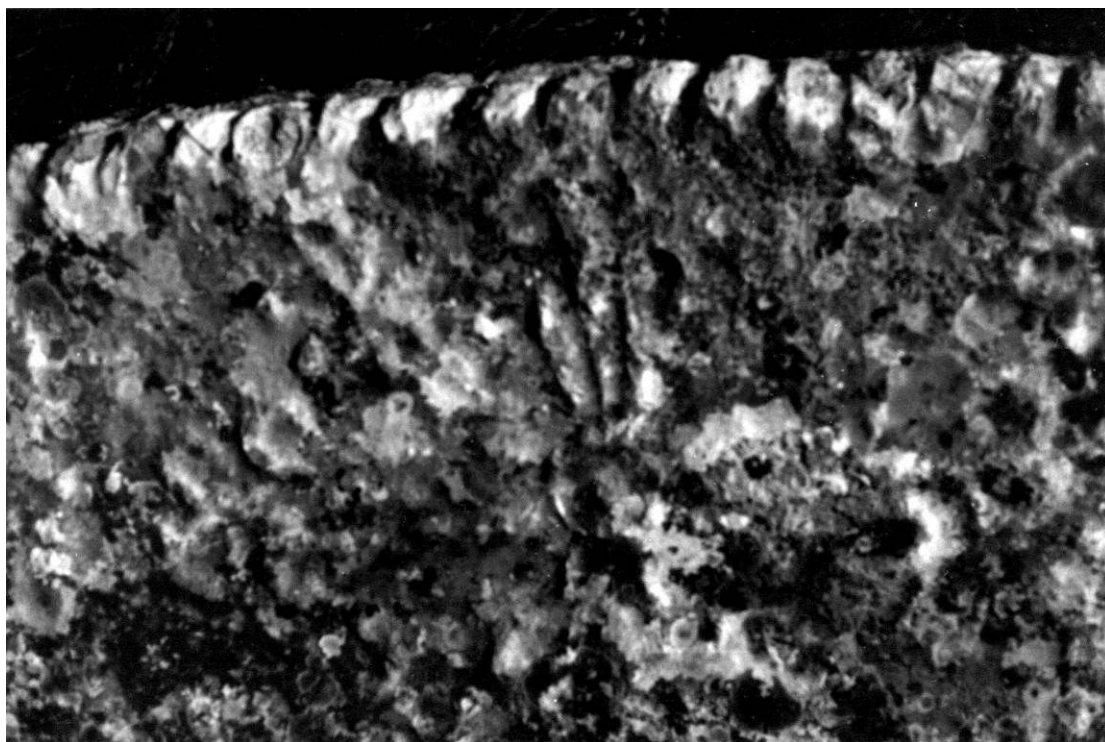


Fig. 42. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 39. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 43. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 40. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 44. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 48. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 45. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 49. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 46. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 50. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 47. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 50. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 48. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 53. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 49. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 60. (photo by Dejan Vemić)





Fig. 50. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 61. (photo by Dejan Vemić)

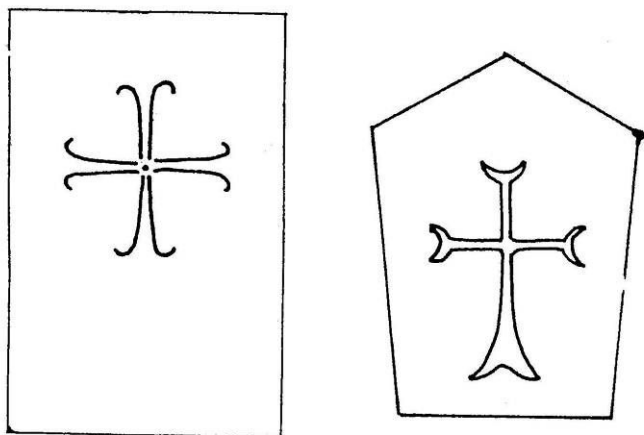


Fig. 51. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 61. (drawings by Šefik Bešlagić)



Fig. 52. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 75. (photo by Dejan Vemić)

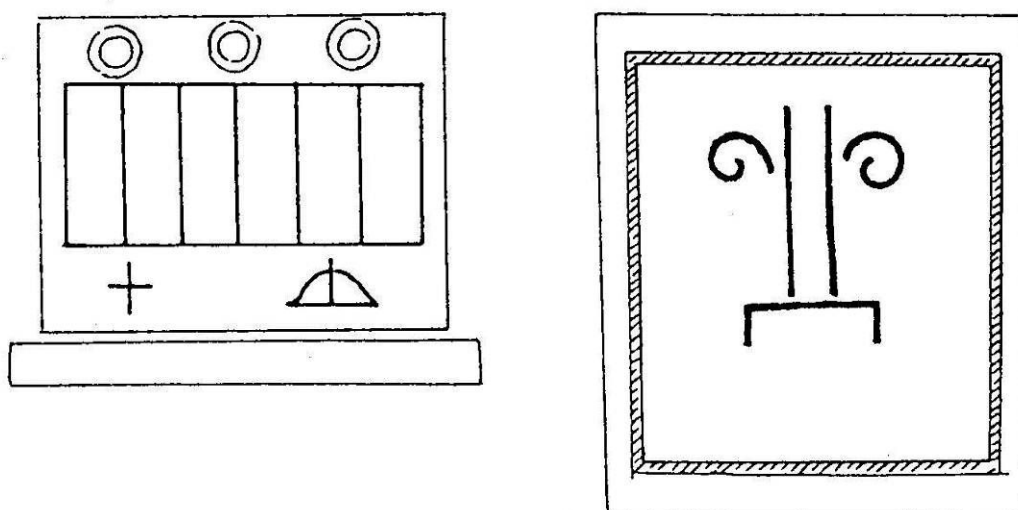


Fig. 53. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 75. (drawings by Šefik Bešliagić)



Fig. 54. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 79. (photo by Dejan Vemić)

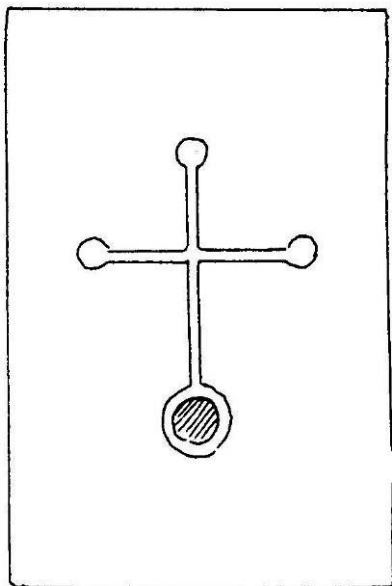


Fig. 55. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 79. (drawing by Šefik Bešliagić)



Fig. 56. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 81. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



Fig. 57. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 83. (photo by Dejan Vemić)



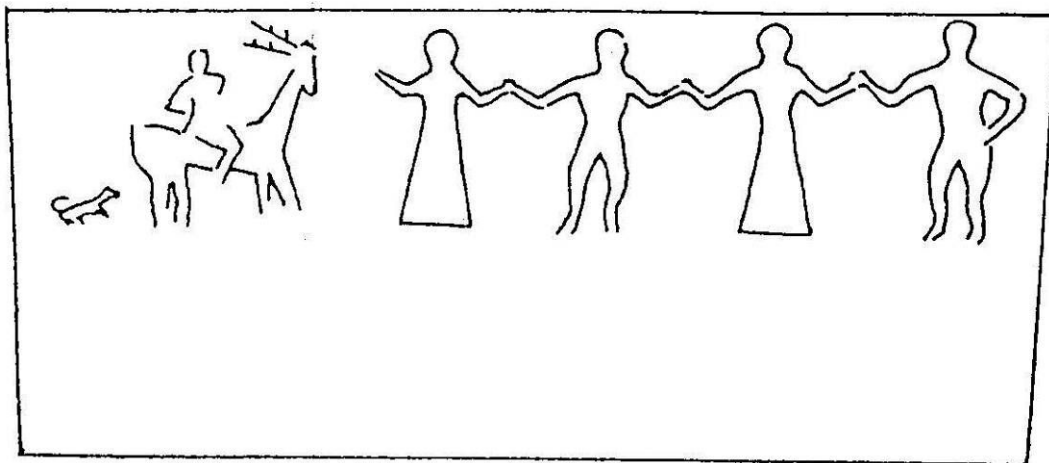


Fig. 58. Locality Bare Žugića, no. 83. (drawing by Šefik Bešliagić)

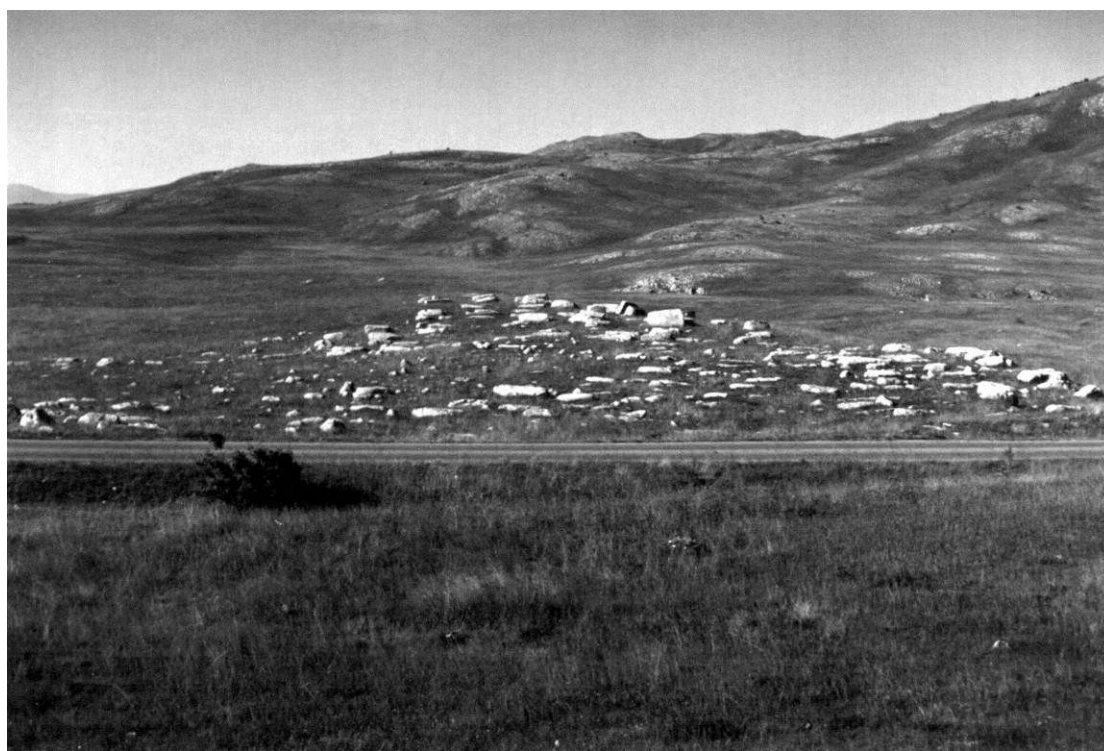


Fig. 59. Locality Bare Žugića (photo by Dejan Vemić -situation of the cemetery)