

ON THE ISSUE OF FORTIFICATIONS AT VINČA

Dubravka Nikolić

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

Abstract: *During the first excavation by M. Vasić at Vinča in 1908, a defensive ditch was noted in the south section of the settlement. A part of the same ditch, dug in loess, was also noted in 1934. The analysis both of the published and a part of the unpublished technical documentation from the excavations at Vinča from 1911 to 1934 attempts to define more precisely the time when the ditch was constructed and the conditions that led to the foundation of a fortified settlement at Vinča at the beginning of the Late Neolithic.*

Key words: *Vinča, Late Neolithic, defensive ditch, building horizons.*

In 1908 Vasić began his excavations at the eponym site which gives its name to the Vinča culture. With some shorter and longer breaks, these excavations continued until 1934, and their most important results were presented in the four volumes of his major work *Prehistoric Vinča* (Vasić 1932; *idem* 1936a; *idem* 1936b; *idem* 1936c).

After the initial investigation in 1908, Vasić (1910: 23) noted a 6–8 m thick cultural layer created by a long-lived settlement on a 12 m high loess terrace above the Danube. The reports from these excavations inform us that the earliest settlement was characterized by pit-dwellings dug into the loess, above which there was an original humus layer (*ibid.*: 26). One of those pit-dwellings is said to have had quite large dimensions, with the bottom at a relative depth of 9.5 m. Based on the accompanying documentation, one may conclude that the pit-dwelling was located in the southern part of the investigated area, in quadrants A and D, with its limits reaching the upper surface of the original humus layer (*ibid.*: T. 7).

During the final stage of his excavations at Vinča in 1934, Vasić noted that “the pit-dwelling of large dimensions” found in 1908 was, in fact, part of a defensive ditch (1948: 99). Then an extension of that ditch was detected in the south section of excavation trench G. It was marked ditch Q and its limits were set at the loess level. Since both excavation trenches where the ditch was noted were 5 m wide, the total length of the excavated section of the ditch was

slightly less than 10 m. The trench excavated in 1908 and trench G were not connected. The distance between them is unknown, because no plan of the site with marked surfaces, *i.e.* trenches excavated by Vasić, is available.

The existence of the defensive ditch dug into the loess, which in Vasić's opinion was constructed by the first settlers of Vinča, poses several questions – when and why was the ditch constructed, how long was it used (being at the same time the southern boundary of the settlement), when and why was it backfilled? The answers to these questions lead us to contemplate the character of the settlement whose needs were to be met by the construction of the ditch. Furthermore, we may look into the possibility that cultural, chronological and even ethnic relations at the beginning of the Late Neolithic in the Central Balkans should be reconsidered from a different perspective.

In order to get some of these answers we must first investigate the whole of the excavated area at Vinča and then define in particular the mutual relations between the defensive ditch and the pit-dwellings, and the ditch and the oldest above-ground structures.

To the best of our knowledge, the only attempt to reconstruct the area excavated between 1908 and 1934 is presented in a paper by Jovanović, dealing with stratigraphy at Vinča (Јовановић 1984). He based his proposal for the reconstruction of the excavated area at Vinča on the preserved unpublished layouts, and a modest part of the technical documentation published in Vasić's works. Arguing that the ditch noted in 1908 and 1934 was almost the only connection between the area excavated in 1908 and later excavations, Jovanović assumed that, due to intensive erosion by the Danube, the line of the bank in 1933, when the topographical map of the site was presumably made, had changed considerably in relation to the situation in 1908, when Vasić began his excavation. This assumption would further imply that a large section of the site investigated by Vasić between 1908 and 1931 must have been destroyed and presumably had collapsed by 1933, so that the topographical map could show nothing more than the remaining, considerably smaller section of the already investigated area (Јовановић 1984: 27, сл. 21; Vasić 1936a: fig. 208). In other words, he assumed that two thirds of the land leased in 1911 had been destroyed, and that the line of the bank had moved to the southwest by more than 15 m, which would be the distance between the 1908 excavation trench and trench G. If this is the case, and taking into account the likely assumption that the defensive ditch also existed in the collapsed section of the site, the conclusion that the ditch had stretched at least 25 m along northeast-southwest line might be drawn (Јовановић 1984: сл. 21).

However, our analysis of the positions, dimensions and relations between the investigated areas, although based on almost the same elements of the technical documentation, has revealed a somewhat different picture.

It must be stressed that the published material on which we were able to base our reconstruction of the dimensions and shapes of the investigated areas

is extremely modest. It consists mainly of: two plans from 1908 (a longitudinal profile of the excavation trench and bases with the ditch and the pits dug into the loess subsoil) (Vasić 1910: T. 7), two plans from 1934 (a layout with the structures excavated between 1930 and 1934 and the base with the pits dug into the loess, which were excavated in 1931 and 1934) (*idem* 1936a: figs. 209–210), and the topographical map of the area leased in 1933 (*ibid.*: fig. 208).

The excavation reports show that an area of 40 x 5 m of the land owned by J. Jovanović was investigated in 1908 (Vasić 1910: 24). Its longer sides were parallel with the Danube. The only profile which has been published so far comes from these excavations (*ibid.*: T. 7a).

When excavations were renewed in 1911 an area of 1200 m² of the land owned by Ž. Simonović was leased. It was the highest section of the site and offered the most respectable cultural layer (Vasić 1932: VII). Here the excavations continued, with some interruptions, until 1931. Unfortunately, there is no layout showing the relation between this area and the excavation trench from 1908. Furthermore, no plan which could document the excavations conducted between 1911 and 1931 has ever been published.

The positions, dimensions or appearance of the area leased in 1911 are not precisely defined anywhere. The preserved yet unpublished layouts, where the limits of the investigated area are not marked, suggest an area covering 48 x 32 m, or 50 x 30 m, whereas Vasić, in his report on the excavation in 1912, mentions the area covering “about 50 x 32 m” (1913: 187). However, more detailed analyses of these layouts, Vasić’s field diaries and photographs indicate that the leased plot was not rectangular in shape. This is further confirmed by the topographic map of the area which was leased in 1933 thanks to funds provided by C. Hyde. Although it does not show the excavation trench from 1908, it shows a large section of the previously excavated area (Vasić 1936a: fig. 208) and makes it obvious that the recently leased area extended to the already investigated sections in the west and south (*ibid.*: 109). The comparison between the plans from 1911 and 1931 leads us to the conclusion that the picture of the area investigated between 1911 and 1931, as shown in the topographic map, does not match the original look of that area, because the line of excavation towards the Danube was changed, especially in the southwestern section. This does not necessarily mean that the change was caused by river erosion, at least not exclusively; the way Vasić organized his excavation is likely to have had an impact too, since excavations were conducted simultaneously at several locations (“ditches”) and at different depths.

In 1933 and 1934 the final excavations were conducted on a plot of land leased in 1933 (*ibid.*: 110). The location of two excavated trenches (“ditches G and P”) is clearly identified (*ibid.*: fig. 208). Two plans showing structures in trenches G and P and structures excavated in 1930 and 1931 (*ibid.*: figs. 209–210) were also made in 1934. Both of them, but particularly the layout

with aboveground structures, clearly indicate that the picture of structures and areas investigated between 1911 and 1929 is missing.

It has already been said that the preserved technical documentation, which is housed at the National Museum in Belgrade, the Centre for Archaeological Research and Archaeological Collection of the Faculty of Philosophy, is totally disproportionate to the extremely modest size of the material published in Vasić's works on Vinča (Јовановић 1984: 23). Thus, despite the fact that the documentation from the first excavations has not been preserved, the location of the excavation trench in 1908 and its relation to the area leased 1911 were identified thanks to a photograph found in Vasić's legacy (pl. I/2) and an unpublished layout from 1911.

The photograph shows the 1911 excavations and gives insight into Vasić's method of simultaneous work at different depths. The excavation trench from 1908 can be recognized in the same photograph – to the left of the area where the excavation was in progress in 1911. Identification of the trench, in other words the profile from 1908, in that photograph is also confirmed by another photograph of the same trench (pl. I/1), published in Vasić's report on the excavation in 1908 (1910: fig. 1). The photograph and unpublished layout from 1911 show that the trench profile in 1908 and the profile of the "lower ditch" (the trench nearest the Danube) in 1911 almost formed a straight line, with the southeast edge of the "lower trench" extending up to the trench from 1908 (fig. 5).

It has already been said that the published documentation offers few elements which could help in creating a rounded picture of the investigated area at Vinča and the relations between the individual trenches ("ditches") and the structures found in them. The spatial connection between trenches G and P and the land leased in 1911 was established on the basis of the published layout from 1934 (fig. 3) and one of the unpublished plans from 1912 (fig. 4), after they had been linked to each other. A very characteristic excavation line which can clearly be distinguished in the 1934 plan also appears in the 1912 plan. Analysis of Vasić's field diaries and the preserved plans supports the assumption that the plan was made after the excavation in 1912 (or close towards the end of that investigation campaign) and that it shows "the ditches" and marks the depths reached by the excavation. After the plans were linked and compared to each other and later connected with the excavation trench from 1908, it was possible to establish a connection for the whole investigated area at Vinča (fig. 5). By overlaying the plans, certain discrepancies became visible, but an absolute congruency cannot be expected when we know that those plans of the same area were made over an interval of almost 25 years. However, the plans connected in this way make it possible to define with considerable precision how large the section of the site which collapsed between 1911 and 1931 was. In addition, the established connection helped to determine the position and direction along which the defensive ditch stretched and its relation to the

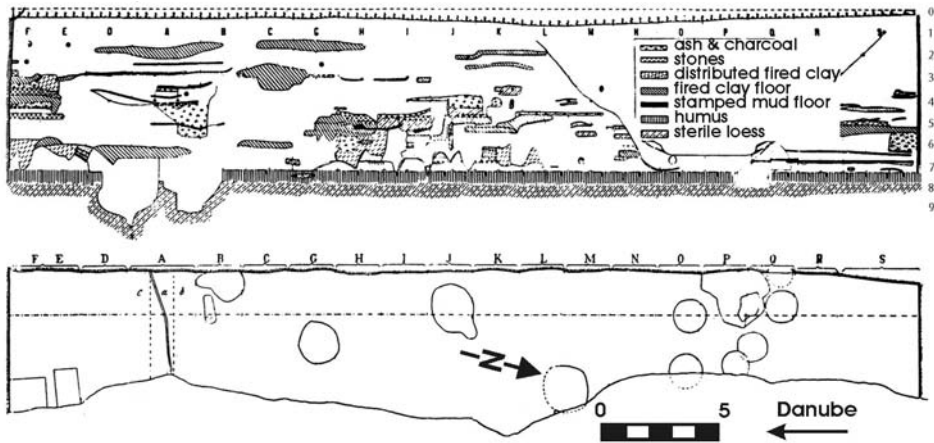


Fig. 1. Plan and profile of 1908 trench (after Vasić 1910: T. 7).

central part of the settlement. After the spatial link between the excavation trench from 1908 and the rest of the investigated area was established, we could see that the line of the bank in the southern section of the site had not dramatically changed in the period following the initial excavations conducted by Vasić. This means that the 1908 excavation trench and trench G lay at a distance of no more than a few meters from each other (approximately 2 m in the south, and slightly less than 5 m in the north), and that the length of ditch Q, which can be comfortably confirmed, was considerably shorter than has been assumed. At present, based on the two investigated segments of the ditch and the area lying between them, we may assert that the existence of a ditch 12 m in length was certainly confirmed. The ditch was clearly perpendicular to the Danube and stretched, at least in the case of the excavation trenches from 1908 and 1933–1934, along a northeast-southwest line, which implies that the Vinča settlement was fortified on its southern side for some time. The direction along

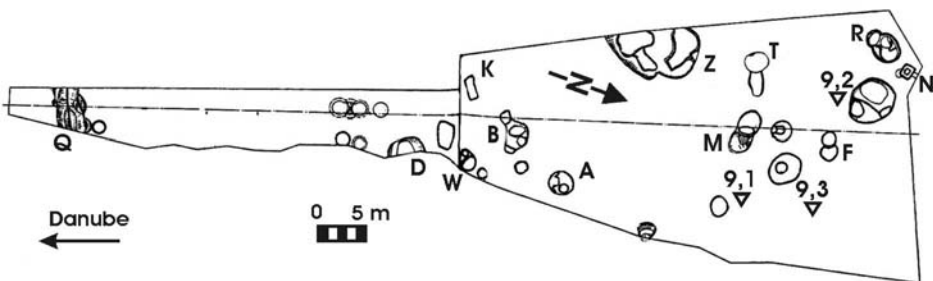


Fig. 2. Excavations in 1931 and 1934, plan with the pits (after Vasić 1936a: fig. 209).

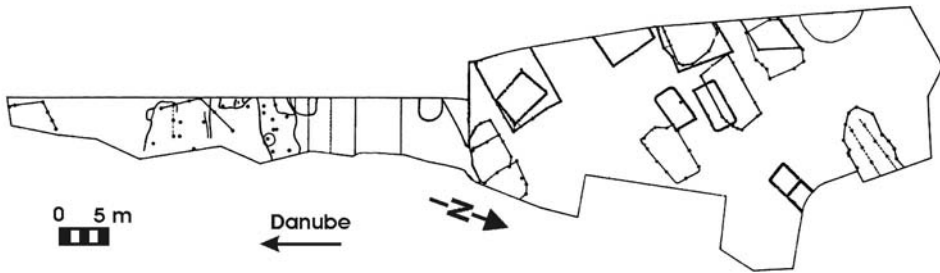


Fig. 3. Excavations 1930-1934 (after Vasić 1936a: fig. 210).

which the ditch may have continued remains unknown. We do not know if the whole settlement was protected by a ditch either. We may only assume, judging from the present day appearance of the profile in the north section of the site, that there was not a defensive ditch on that side, whereas the ditch is still visible on the south side.

The answer to the question when the ditch was dug seems quite simple. Although the ditch is not mentioned in the 1908 report, it is obvious that Vasić is referring to ditch Q when he writes about a pit with the bottom level at a depth of 9.5 m, which differed from other pits in that it had considerably larger

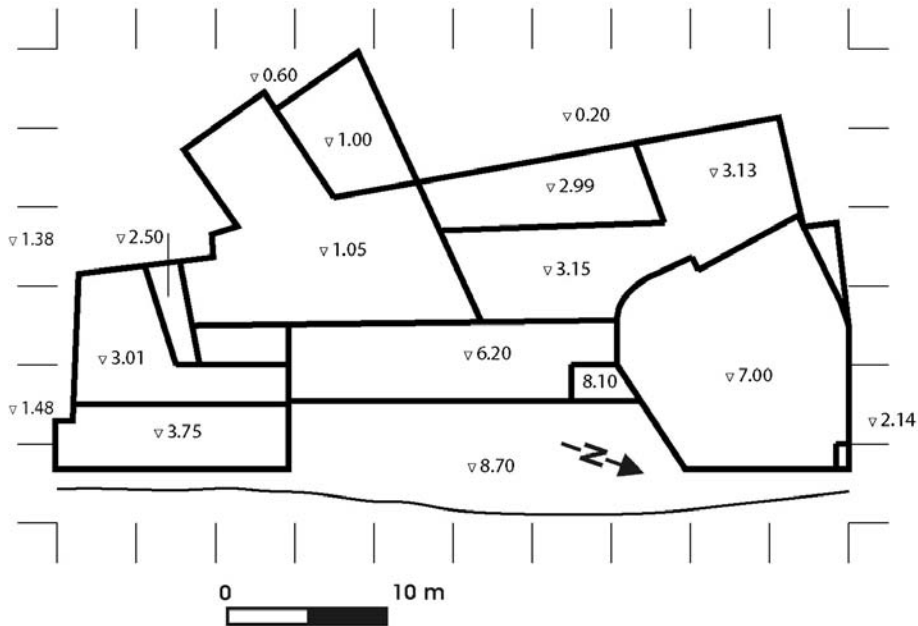


Fig. 4. Excavation in 1912 (documentation of the Archaeological Collection).

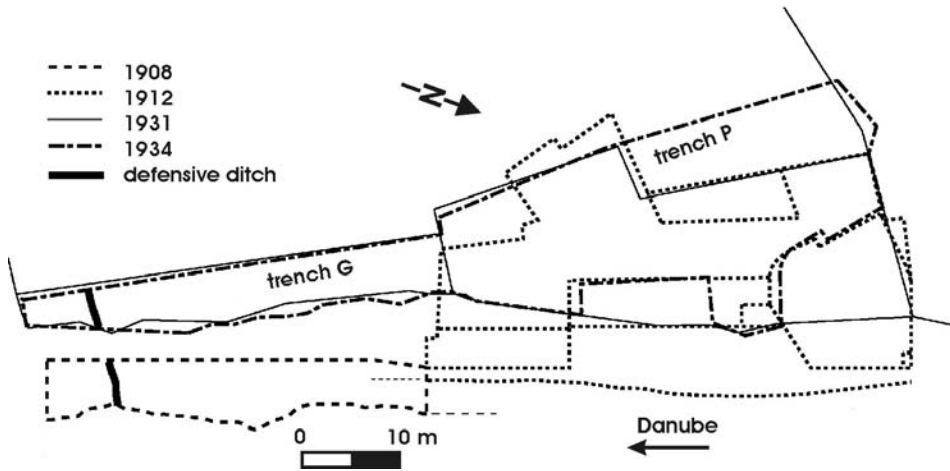


Fig. 5. Reconstruction of the area investigated between 1908 and 1934, with the location of defensive ditch.

dimensions (1910: 26). In addition, the pits are said to have been dug in loess, although the trench profile shows that the ditch and at least one pit were dug from the level of original humus (fig. 1). At that section of the site the thickness of the original humus was 60 cm, and its upper surface lay at a depth of 7 m. If the level from which the ditch had been dug was registered correctly, the depth of the ditch in the 1908 trench would reach 2.5 m, which is equal to the width of the ditch rim. The ditch got narrower from the rim downwards taking a funnel-like shape which ended at the bottom level forming a narrow 15 to 20 cm wide channel (fig. 1).

The other part of the ditch, noted in trench G in 1934 (fig. 2; pl. II/1–2), is almost identical in shape and dimensions. Vasić states that the ditch in trench G was noted at a depth of 9.12 m (1936a: 181). The published details – a cross-section and the trench profile showing what the ditch looked like – corroborate this claim, but at the same time partly amend it (*idem* 1936c: fig. 239). The cross-section of the ditch shows that its rim was at the level of 9.15 m, bottom at 11.08 m and that the depth of the ditch was 1.93 m (Vasić 1948: 99).

However, the published aspect of the ditch in the profile of trench G (*idem* 1936c: fig. 239), which is a detail borrowed from an unpublished profile of trench G, presents a somewhat different situation. It reveals that the ditch was not dug from the loess level, *i.e.* a depth of 9.12 m, but from the upper surface of original humus (pl. II/2). Here original humus appears at a depth of 8.27 m and is 85 cm thick. The rim of the ditch is at a depth of 8.25 m and its bottom is 10.97 m. Thus, the depth of the ditch at this point is 2.72 m.

The explanation for recording different levels from which the ditch may have been dug can be found in the already stated assumption that most of the digging activities at Vinča were noticed only when the excavations had pro-

gressed to the loess level, so that the accurate estimation of the depth reached by digging and the levels from which it had begun do not correspond fully to the situation recorded in the technical documentation (Korošec 1953: 9; Јовановић 1960: 11).

Vasić's records in the field diary from 1934 confirm this view, at least in case of ditch Q. The diary entry for August 18, notes pit-dwelling Q in "Gospava's ditch, close to the east end" (Vasić 1934: 62). The relative depth at which the pit was detected is not stated. Having cleared the pit, Vasić wrote on 25 August: "At the same spot in Gospava's ditch, where a cut believed to be a pit-dwelling was found in 1908, we noted the same cut with almost the same dimensions. Its profile, preserved on the ditch wall, begins at the level of the upper surface of the original humus." (*ibid.*: 75) (The trenches are called ditches in the field diaries; Gospava's ditch is trench G, and the ditch wall is the trench profile).

The different depths at which the rim of the ditch lay in the trench excavated in 1908 (7 m) and trench G (8.25 m), which is at the same time the upper surface of the original humus in those trenches, resulted from the introduction of "0-point" (the highest point of the site) in 1911 to the system of vertical measurement applied to all structures (Vasić 1936a: 109; Јовановић 1984: 29). The ground where trench G was excavated was lower than 0-point by 1.8 m (Vasić 1936a: 110), so that the cultural layer was also thinner there than at the highest ground level by 1.8 m (Јовановић 1960: 11). The unpublished profile of trench G shows that, in relation to 0-point, the northeast corner of the trench was 1.4 m lower, and southwest corner 2.2 m lower. This actually means that the stated value of 1.8 m is in fact their mean value, which conveniently served as the easiest way to define the approximate relation to 0-point.

The profile undoubtedly shows that the thickness of the cultural layer in the southern section of trench G was 6.92 m, which corresponds to the thickness of 7.2 m of the cultural layer in the trench excavated in 1908. It is also important to note that the ground excavated in 1908 was much lower than the 0-point. That point was defined in 1911, when it was noted that the highest point of the previously investigated area (in 1908) had lain 2.6 m below the level of the newly established 0-point (Vasić 1912: 263).

All this clearly indicates that the profiles from 1908 and 1933–1934 match each other in the most important elements (the thickness of the cultural layer, the relative depth of the original humus and loess), and in corroborating the assumption that ditch Q was dug from the upper level of the original humus. Besides the ditch itself, no other elements of a defensive structure, such as remains of a palisade, were noted (Vasić 1948: 99). Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to see ditch Q as part of the defensive system of the settlement. We may also consider the possibility that a rampart, presumably made of earth resulting from digging of the ditch, was later flattened or removed when the ditch lost its function. On the other hand, the assumption that the ditch was open,

but filled with water (Јовановић 1960: 11) seems less likely. The level of the loess terrace above the Danube is much higher than the level of the river, so that it is technically unfeasible to fill the ditch with water from the Danube.

A connection between the ditch and the oldest underground and above-ground structures at Vinča can be established in terms of chronology, based on the fact that it was dug from the upper surface of the original humus layer. Some stratigraphic indicators imply that the earliest settlement at Vinča was of a pit-dwelling type, or in other words that at least some of the pits dug in the loess were used as dwelling structures (Vasić 1936a: 8). Since the ditch was dug in loess, the first settlers at Vinča are believed to have fortified their pit-dwelling settlement with a defensive ditch (*idem* 1938: 362).

The definite line dividing the dug-in structures from the above-ground structures, which was established in Vasić's works in terms of stratigraphy and chronology (*idem* 1936c: 3), has rarely been questioned. Thus, the stratigraphic scheme of Vinča, based on potentially distinguishable building horizons, connects ditch Q with the pit-dwelling settlement only (Сталио 1984: 35), although Vasić himself modified and supplemented his remarks on the stratigraphic positions of the pit-dwellings. He explains that the rims of the pits were not outlined against the loess surface up to a depth of 9.1–9.3 m below 0-point, but appeared in the original humus with the upper surface lying at a depth of 8.659 m below 0-point (Vasić 1951: 35).

Although Vasić maintains that the 70–75 cm thick layer of original humus formed above almost horizontal loess (1936a: 8), unpublished profiles show that loess sporadically appeared at deeper levels and that the humus was in places thicker than the stated 75 cm. This means that some of the oldest above-ground structures, with floors noted at depths between 8.50 m and 8.81 m, lay in the original humus layer (Vasić 1948: 101; Сталио 1984: 35). With the possibility excluded that any of the pits could have been dug from loess level, the conclusion that at least some of the pits were contemporary with the first aboveground structures seems likely (Јовановић 1960: 11). Consequently, the defensive ditch should not be associated in terms of chronology with the pit-dwellings and pits only, but also with those aboveground structures whose bases appeared in the humus layer or immediately above it (such aboveground structures can be seen in unpublished profiles). This means that the ditch, the rim of which appeared on the upper surface of the original humus, came into existence at the time when the first aboveground structures were constructed, or soon after that. The pits and pit-dwellings are likely to have been dug at approximately the same time.

Although some authors do not accept the possibility of the simultaneous existence of the pits and the aboveground structures, arguing that there is a considerable chronological difference even among the very pits (Chapman 1981; Schier 1996), the character of small finds do not corroborate these arguments (Vasić 1936c: T. 2–15). It has to be noted, though, that the material

from the pits and layers lying at a depth of 9–8 m has never been published in detail, which opens the way to various interpretations of their contents and chronological positions within the existing periodization scheme of Vinča culture. However, after an insight into the entire unpublished material kept in the Archaeological Collection of the Faculty of Philosophy, one gets the impression that the material in question is homogenous, displaying features which fully match the definition of the Vinča-Tordoš I phase (Garašanin 1979: 152).

An issue which seems to be closely related is how long the ditch represented the southern boundary of the settlement or, in other words, when it was backfilled and lost its defensive purpose. The characteristics of the small finds discovered in the ditch may offer some answers. The information about the contents of the ditch is very limited. It is only stated in general terms that the ditch was filled with “debris and cultural remains”. The conclusion that it was open to a depth of 7.9 m, and probably later, is based on the characteristics of one of the figurines found in the ditch (Vasić 1948: 99; *idem* 1936b: 8, fig. 23, 24). The field diary from the excavation in 1934 does not provide any further details. Besides two figurines, “fragments of a human skull, a calcined cornel-cherry, a fragment of a bracelet made of fossil shellfish, obsidian” (*idem* 1934: 65) are noted to be the most important finds in the ditch. The pottery found in the ditch has never been published, except for one fragment (*idem* 1936c: fig. 5). However, 57 fragments found in ditch Q (No. 1998, 3195/1–56) are housed at the Archaeological Collection at present. The finds from the ditch, like all other finds from Vasić’s excavation campaigns, are clearly marked with labels stating a relative depth or a closed unit where they came from. They bear the label “34jQ1(...14)”, which indicates that they were found in pit¹ Q during the 1934 excavation. Those labels had obviously been written before Vasić came to the conclusion that the investigated structure was not a pit, but a part of a defensive ditch. The number at the end most likely represents the layer excavated in the ditch. Although small in number, the material supports Vasić’s assumption that the ditch was open in the earliest phase of the settlement, but it also indicates that the ditch was refilled in the subsequent phase of the settlement development. The pottery from the ditch (pls. III–IV) can safely be connected to the pottery found in the pit-dwellings in the 9–8 m layers, based on its typological and stylistic features. It does not exhibit any later elements which may indicate that the ditch was still open when the layers above a depth of 8 m were forming.

There is another detail which backs up the thesis that use of the ditch was short-lived. A profile from 1908 (fig. 1) shows the remains of a house lying 25 cm below the rim of the ditch, which confirms that at that moment the ditch had already been refilled and the settlement extended beyond the boundary set by ditch Q.

¹ J – stands for the Serbian word for pit – *jama*.

A photograph of the profile of trench G supports a similar conclusion (pl. II/1) (Vasić 1936a: fig. 211a–b). The remains of a structure which, like in the 1908 trench, “close” the defensive ditch can be seen immediately above the rim of the ditch. The unpublished profile of trench G, where the remains of the structure lying above the ditch are not shown, reveals that several other structures lay almost along the same horizontal plane. The easiest to notice is compact daub – namely a structure at a depth of 8.24 m in the northwest corner of trench G (Vasić 1936a: fig. 211b). We may read the following sentence in the field diary from 1934: “Layers of a rammed-earth structure, or better to say a backfill can be seen in the cut, in the preserved profile up to the first leveling clay layer, *i.e.* above the surface of the original humus” (*idem* 1934: 76). It is quite likely that it was a clay layer spread to level the surface above the rim of the ditch, or a somewhat thinner floor of compacted clay. The unpublished profile from 1934 does not show all elements noted during the excavation and recorded in the field diaries. It only shows compact daub. This may be the reason why the layer of compacted clay above the rim of the ditch, which was recorded in the photographs and the diary, was not shown in the trench G profile. If we connect the compacted clay above the rim of the ditch to the house at a depth of 8.24 m in the northwest section of the trench along a horizontal line, we can draw the conclusion that the ditch was primarily dug to meet the needs of the oldest settlement. As, in all probability, the loess terrace where the settlement was founded was not horizontal, we cannot be certain, without a complete stratigraphic analysis, whether we should accept the existence of one or two building horizons, as suggested in the stratigraphic classifications of Vinča (Korošec 1953; Сталио 1984).

Finally, another question, perhaps the most important one for the understanding of the character of the earliest settlement at Vinča, arises: why was a defensive ditch dug immediately after the settlement had been founded?

Fortified settlements in the region of the Central Balkans are associated with the Gradac and Late Vinča culture phases, and what caused this phenomenon is mostly known (Garašanin 1979: 154). This makes it even more difficult to explain what may have necessitated, in completely different conditions, fortification of a settlement in the earliest phase of Vinča culture.

The existence of the defensive ditch at Vinča seems likely to change our ideas about stable communities settling in the Central Balkans towards the end of the Middle Neolithic and at the beginning of the Late Neolithic. On one hand, multilayered sites where sometimes the whole of the Vinča culture’s development, or some of its phases, can be followed indicate that the life of those communities continued under conditions of long-lasting and balanced economic and social relations, without strong tensions which would be resolved through conflict. On the other hand, Vinča itself, with a cultural layer comprising almost all of the development of the culture, suggests that the beginning of the Late Neolithic was not a completely stable period.

In terms of chronology, the final stage of the Starčevo culture and the initial phase of the Vinča culture seem almost certain to have overlapped (Garašanin 1979: 143; Dimitrijević 1979: 258), although we have only a small number of C14 dates (Tasić 1998; Schier 1996; Gläser 1991; *idem* 1996) and no stratigraphic evidence in support of this view. It is possible that this chronological overlap was the source of potential instability, which is confirmed at Vinča by the digging of a defensive ditch. The eponym site of the Starčevo culture on the left bank of the Danube, almost opposite Vinča, seems likely still to have been occupied when the settlement at Vinča was founded. The gap between the mostly animal breeding communities of the Starčevo culture and communities of the Vinča culture, who relied on different subsistence, may have prompted the digging of the ditch on the south side of the settlement at Vinča. The other Late Starčevo settlements in surrounding areas may also have been perceived as posing a potential threat to the new settlement. This could provide a clue as to why and when the ditch at Vinča was backfilled. At the time when the layers above 8 m were being formed at Vinča the Starčevo culture had already disintegrated and the territory of the Central Balkans, where it had spread in the Middle Neolithic, was occupied by the representatives of the Vinča culture. With such an environment, the need for protection of the settlement ceased to exist and consequently the defensive ditch lost its function and was backfilled.

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ДУБРАВКА НИКОЛИЋ

О ПРОБЛЕМАТИЦИ ФОРТИФИКАЦИЈЕ НА ВИНЧИ

Резиме

Ископавања епонимног локалитета винчанске културе Васић је започео 1908. Уз неколико дужих и краћих прекида, његова ископавања на Винчи трајала су до 1934. Приликом првих ископавања 1908. констатован је одбрамбени ров у јужном делу насеља. Део истог рова констатован је и 1934. у јужном делу сонде Г. Постојање одбрамбеног рова укопаног у лес, за који Васић наводи да су га направили први становници земуничког насеља на

Винчи, отвара неколико питања: када и зашто је ров настао, те колико дуго је био у функцији (представљајући истовремено јужну границу ширења насеља)? Анализом већ објављене и дела сачуване непубликоване техничке документације са ископавања Винче 1911–1934, као и покретних налаза из рова Q (т. I–IV; сл. 1–4) учињен је покушај да се реконструише целокупна истражена површина на Винчи ради прецизног утврђивања положаја рова у односу на централни део насеља (сл. 5). Упоређивањем целокупне релевантне документације констатовано је да ров није укопан са нивоа леса, како је Васић претпоставио у неким радовима, већ са горње површине првобитног хумуса. Како су се у истом слоју налазили и ободи јама и земунца, као и неколико надземних објеката, закључено је да је ров настао у исто време или непосредно после изградње првих надземних објеката. Питање колико дуго је ров представљао јужну границу насеља, односно када је ров затрпан и тиме изгубио своју одбрамбену улогу, разрешено је анализом фотографија и Васићевих теренских скица и дневника са ископавања 1934. Констатовано је да се непосредно над ободом рова у сонди Г налази набијени слој глине (т. II/1), док ров у сонди из 1908. „затварају” остаци надземног објекта. Како на профилима постоји неколико објеката који се налазе готово у истој хоризонталној равни, могло би се закључити да је у време када се на Винчи формира културни слој изнад 8 m одбрамбени ров био већ затрпан. С обзиром на то да је насеље на Винчи основано у најстаријој фази винчанске културе, одбрамбени ров сугерише да почетак касног неолита на територији централног Балкана не представља сасвим стабилан период. Делимично хронолошко преклапање завршне фазе старчевачке и почетне фазе винчанске културе сасвим је извесно. Могуће је да је такво стање на широј територији централног Балкана творило извор потенцијалне нестабилности. Потврду такве могућности за сада пружа насеље на Винчи, јер се чини вероватним да је, у време оснивања винчанског насеља, епонимни локалитет старчевачке културе на левој обали Дунава, готово прекопута Винче, још увек био насељен. То би у исто време разјашњавало разлог и време затрпавања рова на Винчи. У време када се формирају слојеви изнад 8 m у Винчи, територија централног Балкана коју је у средњем неолиту обухватала старчевачка култура, у то време вероватно већ дезинтегрисана, насељена је носиоцима винчанске културе. У таквом окружењу нестаје потреба за заштитом насеља, па одбрамбени ров губи своју функцију и бива затрпан.

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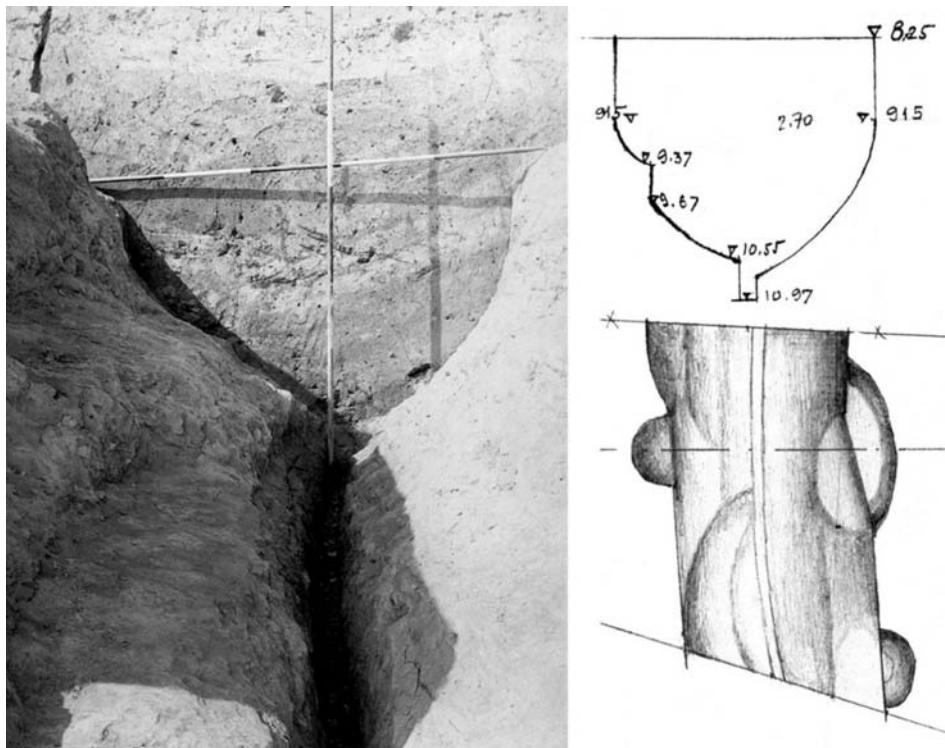
1. Excavation in 1908 (from Vasić 1910: fig.1).



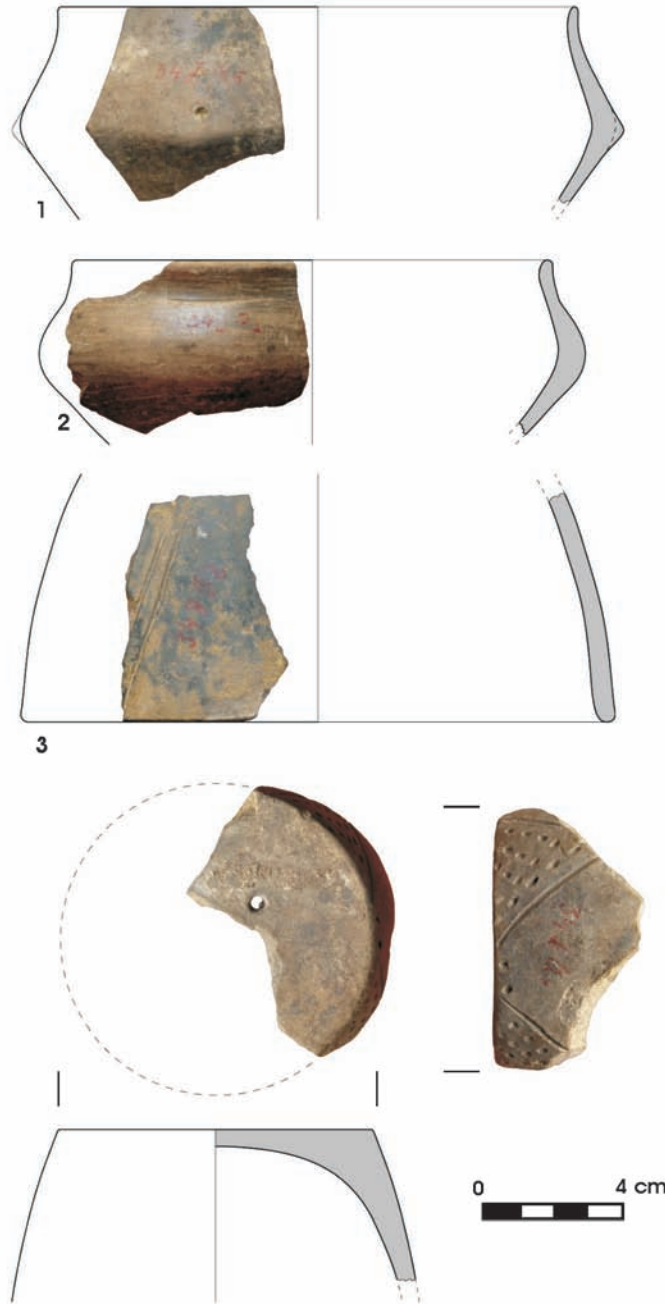
2. Excavation in 1911 (documentation of the Archaeological Collection).



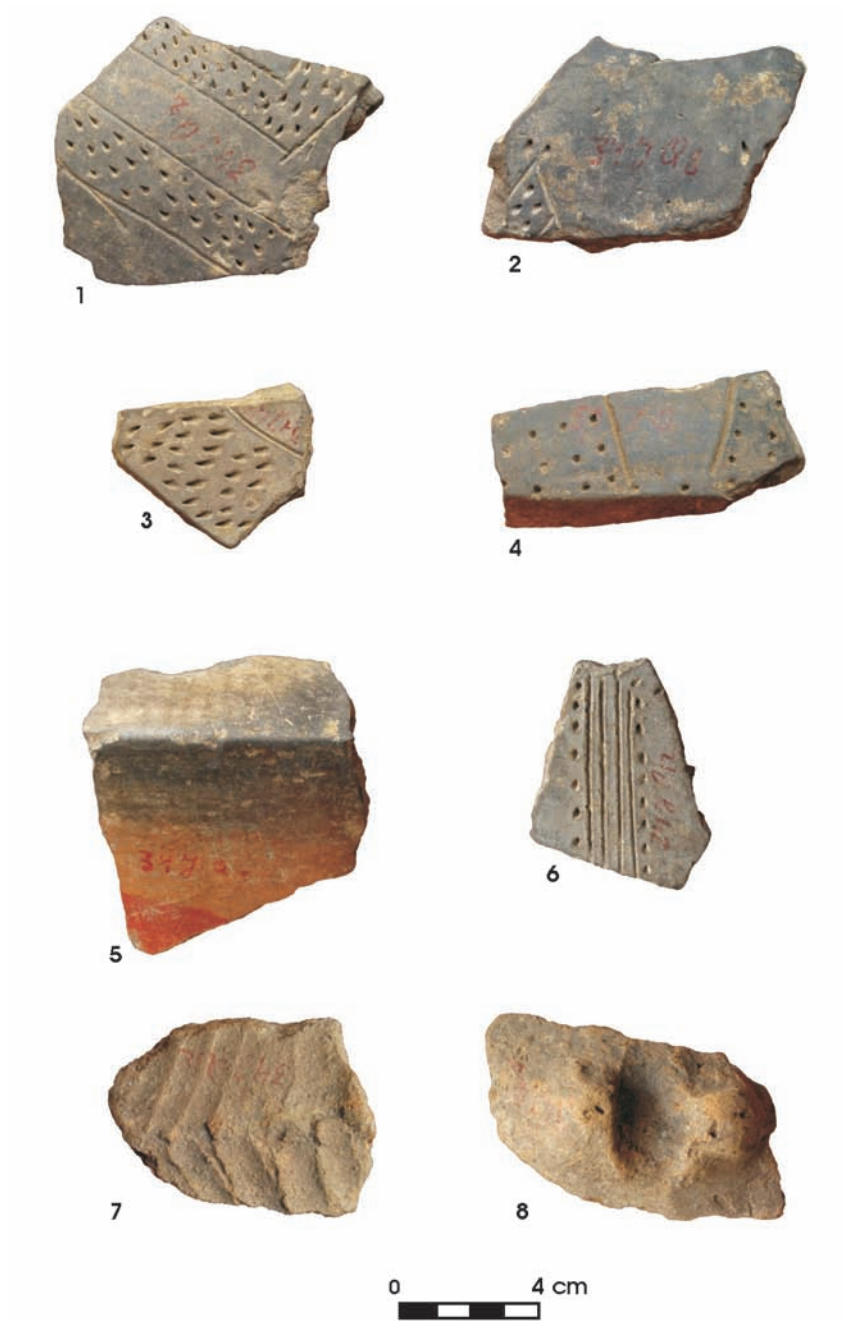
1. Excavation in 1934, trench G (documentation of the Archaeological Collection).



2. Defensive ditch Q (documentation of the Archaeological Collection).



Pottery from ditch Q: bowls (1-2), lids (3-4).



Pottery from ditch Q: decorated sherds (1-8).