

Goranka Lipovac Vrkljan
Ivana Ožanić Roguljić
Institute of archaeology
Gajeva 32
10000 Zagreb

Cuculli Liburnici – traces of wool production in Roman Dalmatia

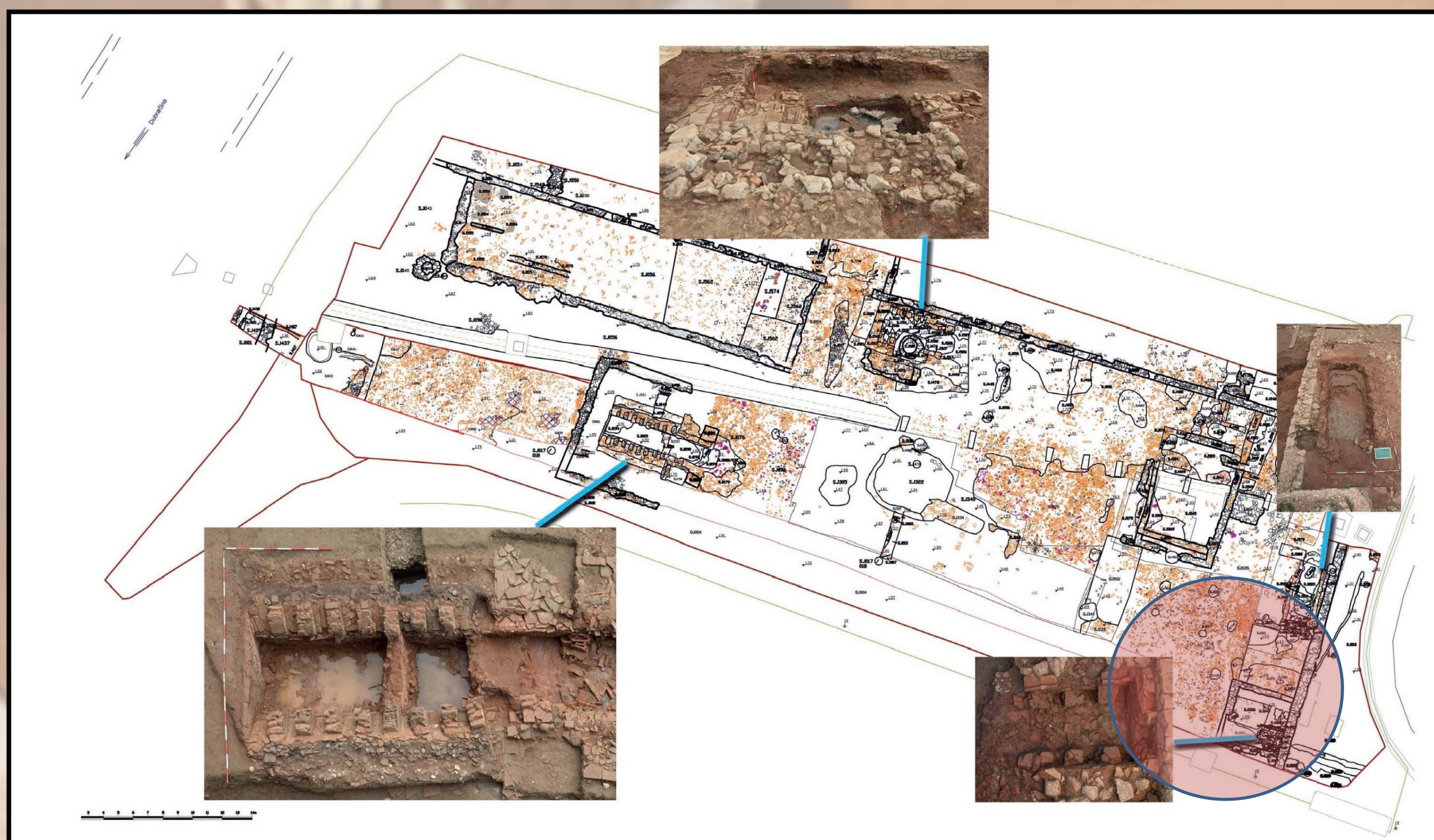
Crikvenica



In the Roman world, Liburnia was known for its distinctive cloaks with hood (*cuculli liburnici*, Martial 14.110). The beginning of the trade in Liburnian wool products has not been ascertained. In all likelihood the trade started as early as the 5th century BC when the Athenians established the first more or less regular trade connections with the Adriatic. Textiles and wool from Liburnia were sporadically mentioned in the sources from the 1st century. The last mention of a Liburnian cloak comes from Stephen of Byzantium in the 6th century (Steph. Byz. 415,10). These testimonies seem to echo the fact that finished products exported from Liburnia included cloth and clothes, i.e. cloaks (*cuculli liburnici*). The scanty information from the sources on textile production from the territory of Liburnia combined with the discoveries of truncated-pyramid weights in Crikvenica seem to highlight the great need for making vertical looms. Textile production leaves few traces, so the quantity of discovered weights sheds a new light on the evolution of the textile production in the territory of the Roman province of Dalmatia. These few notes on the Liburnian cloak and the Liburnian coarse wool which is not suitable for making clothes (Pliny N.H. 8.191) in Latin sources are very important, since they point to export to the territory of Italy during the 1st century, that is, at the time of intensive activity of the Crikvenica workshop.



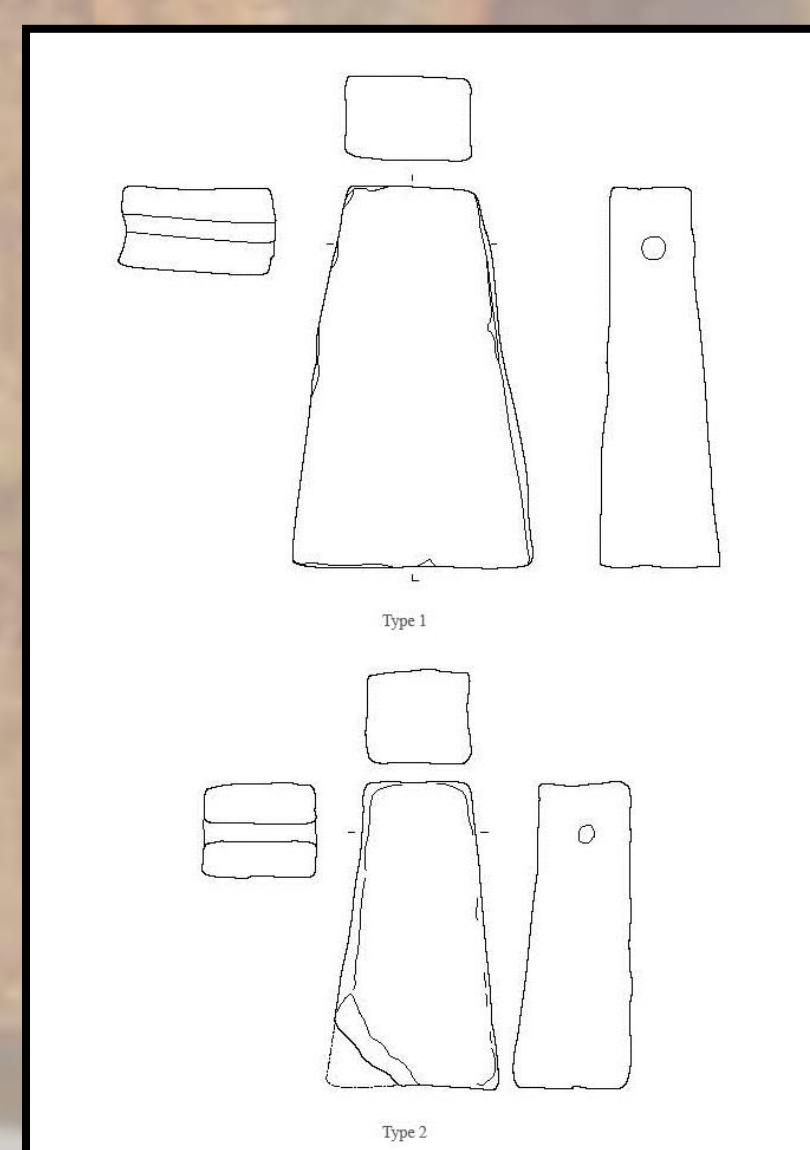
Systematic archaeological excavations have been carried out at the "Igralište" site in Crikvenica, in recent years there were determined the spatial distribution of the numerous workshop facilities of a Roman pottery complex. Based on the evidence, we have concluded that only a part of the workshop's production content lies within the area of the present archaeological excavations, which cover an area of 1,880 m². This includes kilns, structures for clay production, a working area, and drainage systems. Around the smallest kiln numerous finds of loom weights were found, which can indicate that, among other products, loom weights were fired in it.



Pottery from Crikvenica was distributed across Liburnia (northern Roman Dalmatia) from Tarsatica to Šibenik. A recent survey of the pottery assemblage from the investigation of the Roman station of Žuta Lokva (Lika, hinterland of Dalmatia) yielded truncated-pyramid weights that match the type and fabric of those from Crikvenica.

Textile workshops producing cloaks from Liburnia are not known, it is also possible that they were produced in domestic production or some kind of home industry.

It is also a question if the name *cuculli liburnici* at one point became a generally accepted term for a cloak with a hood.



Two types of weights are present, which differ in size, weight and shape of the upper part. The uniformity of shapes suggests that weights were made in moulds. Although Crikvenica has not yet yielded any finds of moulds, weights and similar ceramic objects were certainly made in wooden moulds that were not preserved.

Type 1 consists of larger weights weighing between 908 and 915 g, with rectangular base (e.g. 9 x 5.5 cm) and top (e.g. 3.5 x 5.5 cm) and height between 15-16.5 cm

Type 2 consists of smaller weights weighing between 603 and 610 g, with rectangular base (9 x 4 cm) and square (3.5 x 3.5 or 4 x 4 cm) or almost square top (3.5 x 4 or 4.2 x 3.8 cm), which are between 13.5 and 15 cm high